

**GROVER FURR**  
**KHRUSHCHEV**  
**LIED**



THE EVIDENCE THAT EVERY "REVELATION" OF STALIN'S (AND BERIA'S) "CRIMES" IN NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV'S INFAMOUS "SECRET SPEECH" TO THE 20TH PARTY CONGRESS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION ON FEBRUARY 25, 1956, IS PROBABLY FALSE

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**THE MURDER OF**  
**SERGEI KIROV**



*History, Scholarship and the Anti-Stalin Paradigm*

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**BLOOD**  
~~LANDS~~  
**LIES**

The Evidence that Every Accusation Against Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union in Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands* Is False.

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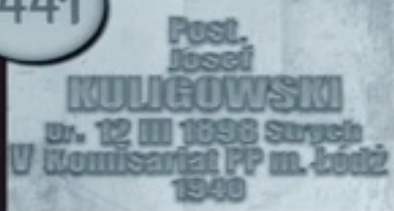
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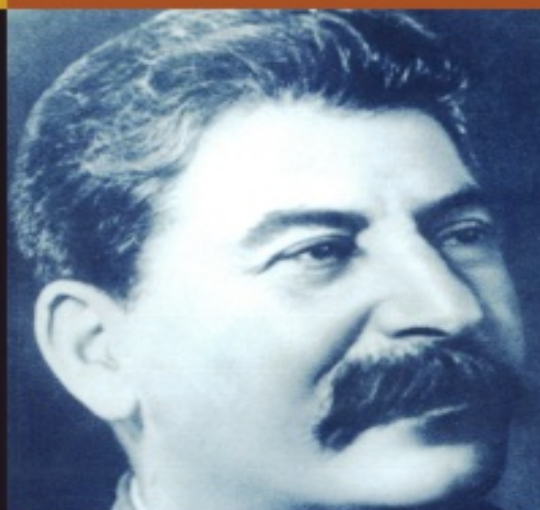
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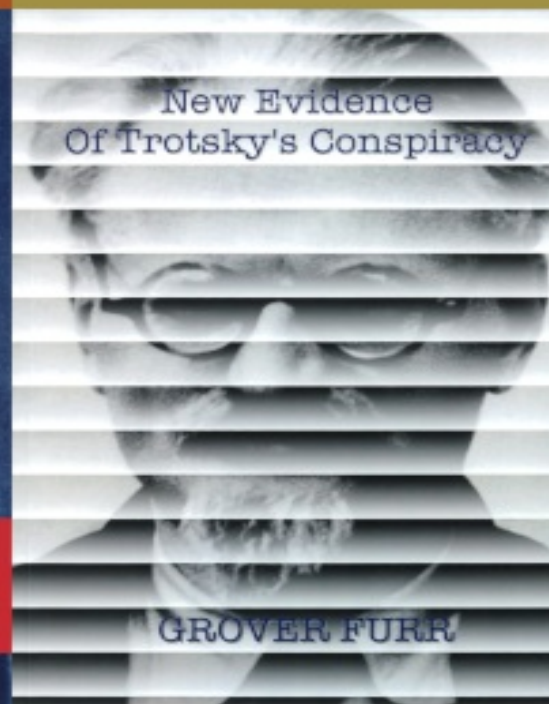


**STALIN**  
 WAITING FOR ... THE TRUTH

EXPOSING THE FALSEHOODS IN STEPHEN KOTKIN'S STALIN HITTING FOR HITLER, 1929-1941

**GROVER FURR**

New Evidence  
 Of Trotsky's Conspiracy



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# Log

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Non-English text not guaranteed. [See PDFs](#). Starting with B2 recommended as B1 is a bit of an encyclopedia. Please buy/donate a book to your public library.

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By Grover Furr

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(\*All except one, which I can neither prove true nor disprove.)

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\*\*\*

I dedicate this book to the memory of my son Joseph Furr: wonderful son and friend, skilled diesel truck mechanic, and one of "the salt of the earth."

Introduction. *The Khrushchev School of Falsification: "The 20th Century's Most Influential Speech"*

The fiftieth anniversary of Nikita S. Khrushchev's "Secret Speech", delivered on February 25, 1956, elicited predictable comment. An article in the London (UK) *Telegraph* called it "the 20th century's most influential speech." In an article the same day in the *New York Times* William Taubman, whose biography of Khrushchev won the Pulitzer Prize for Biography in 2004, called it a "great deed" that "deserves to be celebrated" on its anniversary.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The full text of Khrushchev's speech is available online at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/kl/speech.html>

Some time ago I reread Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" for the first time in many years. I used the HTML version of the edition of the speech published in a special issue of *The New Leader* in 1962.<sup>2</sup> During my reading I remarked that the noted Menshevik scholar Boris Nikolaevsky, in his annotations to Khrushchev's talk, expressed his opinion that certain of Khrushchev's statements were false. For example, early in his speech Khrushchev says the following:

Lately, especially after the unmasking of the Beria gang, the Central Committee looked into a series of matters fabricated by this gang. This revealed a very ugly picture of brutal willfulness connected with the incorrect behavior of Stalin.

Boris Nikolaevsky's note 8 to this passage reads:

This statement by Khrushchev is not quite true: Investigation of Stalin's terrorist acts in the last period of his life was initiated by Beria. ... Khrushchev, who now depicts himself as having well-nigh initiated the probe of Stalin's torture chambers, actually tried to block it in the first months after Stalin's death.

I remembered that Arch Getty wrote something very similar in his magisterial work *Origin of the Great Purges*



Other inconsistencies in Khrushchev's account include an apparent confusion of Ezhov for Beria. Although Ezhov's name is mentioned occasionally, Beria is charged with as many misdeeds and repressions; however, the latter was merely a regional secretary until 1938. Further, many reports note that the police terror began to subside when Beria took over from Ezhov in 1938. Could Khrushchev have conveniently substituted Beria for Ezhov in his account? **What else might he have blurred?** At any rate, Beria's recent execution by Khrushchev and the leadership made him a convenient scapegoat. **Khrushchev's opportunistic use of Beria certainly casts suspicion on the exactitude of his other assertions.** (p. 268 n.28; emphasis added GF)

So I suspected that today, in the light of the many documents from formerly secret Soviet archives now available, serious research might discover that even more of Khrushchev's "revelations" about Stalin were false.

In fact, I made a far different discovery. **Not one specific statement of "revelation" that Khrushchev made about either Stalin or Beria turned out to be true.** Among those that can be checked for verification, every single one turns out to be false. Khrushchev, it turns out, did not just "lie" about Stalin and Beria — he did virtually nothing else except lie. The entire "Secret Speech" is made up of fabrications. This is the "great deed" Taubman praised Khrushchev for! (A separate, though much shorter, article might be written to expose the falsehoods in Taubman's own *New York Times* Op-Ed article celebrating Khrushchev's meretricious speech).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> A few examples here: It was Beria, not Khrushchev, who released many prisoners, though not "millions", as Taubman claims. The "thaw" he celebrates had begun during the last Stalin years. Khrushchev **limited** it to "rightist", anti-Stalin material only. Stalin had tried to retire in October 1952, but the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress had refused to permit it. Taubman claims Khrushchev said he was "not involved" in the repressions, yet Khrushchev had not responded to Stalin's urgings, but had **taken the initiative**, demanding higher "quotas" for repressions than the Stalin leadership wanted. Taubman claims "Khrushchev somehow retained his humanity." It would be more accurate to say the opposite: Khrushchev appears more like a thug and murderer.

For me, as a scholar, this was a troubling and even unwelcome discovery. If, as I had anticipated, I had found that, say, 25% or so of Khrushchev's "revelations" were falsifications, my research would surely excite some skepticism as well as surprise. But in the main I could anticipate acceptance, and praise: "Good job of research by Furr", and so on.

But I feared — and my fears have been born out by my experience with the Russian-language original of this book, published in December 2007 — that if I claimed every one of Khrushchev's "revelations" was false, no one would believe me. It would not make any difference how thoroughly or carefully I cited evidence in support of my arguments. To disprove the whole of Khrushchev's speech is, at the same time, to challenge the whole historical paradigm of Soviet history of the Stalin period, a paradigm to which this speech is foundational.

The most influential speech of the 20<sup>th</sup> century — if not of all time — a complete fraud? The notion was too monstrous. Who would want to come to grips with the revision of Soviet, Comintern, and even world history that the logic of such a conclusion would demand? It would be infinitely easier for everyone to believe that I had "cooked the books," shaded the truth — that I was falsifying things, just as I was accusing Khrushchev of doing. Then my work could be safely ignored, and the problem would "go away." Especially since I am known to have sympathy towards the worldwide communist movement of which Stalin was the recognized leader. When a researcher comes to conclusions that suspiciously appear to support his own preconceived ideas, it is only prudent to suspect him of some lack of objectivity, if not worse.

So I would have been much happier if my research had concluded that 25% of Khrushchev's "revelations" about Stalin and Beria were false. However, since virtually all of those "revelations" that can be checked are, in fact, falsehoods, the onus of evidence lies even more heavily on me as a scholar than would ordinarily be the case. Accordingly, I have organized my report on this research in a somewhat unusual way.

The entire book is divided into two separate but interrelated sections.

In the first sections, consisting of Chapters 1 through 9, I examine each of the statements, or assertions, that Khrushchev made in his report and that constitute the essence of his so-called "revelations." (To jump ahead a bit, I note that I have identified sixty-one such assertions).

Each of these "revelations" is preceded by a quotation from the "Secret Speech" which is then examined in the light of the documentary evidence. Most of this evidence is presented as quotations from primary sources. Only in a few cases do I quote from secondary sources. I have set myself the task of presenting the best evidence that I can find, drawn in the main from former Soviet archives in order to demonstrate the false character of Khrushchev's Speech at the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress. Since, if interspersed with the text, long documentary citations would make for difficult reading, I have only briefly referred to the evidence in the text and reserved the fuller quotations from the primary (and occasionally secondary) sources themselves in the sections on each chapter in the Appendix.

The second section of the book, Chapters 10 through 12, is devoted to questions of a methodological nature and to a discussion of some of the conclusions which flow from this study. I have given special attention to a typology of the falsehoods, or methods of deception that Khrushchev employed. A study of the "rehabilitation" materials of some of the Party leaders named in the Speech is included here.

I handle the references to primary sources in two ways. In addition to the traditional academic documentation through footnote and bibliography I have tried wherever possible to guide the reader to those primary documents available either in part or in full on the Internet. All of these URL references were valid at the time the English language edition of this book was completed.

In a few cases, I have placed important primary documents on the Internet myself, normally in Adobe Acrobat (pdf) format. In a few cases this has made it possible for me to refer to page numbers, something that is either clumsy or impossible if using hypertext markup language (HTML).

In conclusion I would like to thank my colleagues in the United States and in Russia who have read this work in its earlier drafts and given me the

benefit of their criticism. Naturally, they bear no responsibility for any errors and shortcomings that remain in the book despite their best efforts.

My especial gratitude goes to my wonderful colleague in Moscow, Vladimir L'vovich Bobrov. Scholar, researcher, editor, and translator, master of both his native Russian and English, I would never have undertaken this work, much less completed it, without his inspiration, guidance, and assistance of all kinds.

I will be grateful for any comments and criticisms of this work by readers.

## **Chapter 1. *The Cult and Lenin's "Testament"***

### **1. The Cult**

Khrushchev:

Comrades! In the report of the Central Committee of the party at the 20th Congress, in a number of speeches by delegates to the Congress, as also formerly during the plenary CC/CPSU [Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union] sessions, quite a lot has been said about the cult of the individual and about its harmful consequences.

After Stalin's death the Central Committee of the party began to implement a policy of explaining concisely and consistently that it is impermissible and foreign to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism to elevate one person, to transform him into a superman possessing supernatural characteristics, akin to those of a god. Such a man supposedly knows everything, sees everything, thinks for everyone, can do anything, is infallible in his behavior.

Such a belief about a man, and specifically about Stalin, was cultivated among us for many years.

The objective of the present report is not a thorough evaluation of Stalin's life and activity. Concerning Stalin's merits, an entirely sufficient number of books, pamphlets and studies had already been written in his lifetime. The role of Stalin in the preparation and execution of the Socialist Revolution, in the Civil War, and in the fight for the construction of socialism in our country, is universally known. Everyone knows this well.

At present, we are concerned with a question which has immense importance for the party now and for the future — with how the cult of the person of Stalin has been gradually growing, the cult which became at a certain specific stage the source of a whole series of



exceedingly serious and grave perversions of party principles, of party democracy, of revolutionary legality.

This Speech is often referred to as one of "revelations" by Khrushchev of crimes and misdeeds done by Stalin. The issue of the "cult of personality", or "cult of the individual", around the figure of Stalin was the main subject of the Speech. Khrushchev did not "reveal" the existence of a "cult of personality" itself. Its existence was, of course, well known. It had been discussed at Presidium meetings since immediately after Stalin's death.

Yet Khrushchev does not **specifically** state at the outset that Stalin promoted the "cult". This was clearly deliberate on Khrushchev's part. Throughout his speech Khrushchev implies — or, rather, takes it for granted — what he ought to have proven, but could not that Stalin himself fostered this cult in order to gain dictatorial power. In fact, throughout his entire Speech, Khrushchev was unable to cite a single *truthful* example of how Stalin encouraged this "cult" — presumably, because he could not find even one such example.

Khrushchev's whole speech was built on this falsehood. All the rest of his "revelations" were fitted within the explanatory paradigm of the "cult" around himself which, according to Khrushchev, Stalin created and cultivated.

This study will show that virtually all of Khrushchev's "revelations" concerning Stalin are false. But it's worth mentioning at the outset that Khrushchev's explanatory framework itself — the notion of the "cult" constructed by Stalin and as a result of which the rest of his so-called "crimes" could be committed with impunity — this is itself a falsehood. Not only did Stalin not commit the crimes and misdeeds Khrushchev imputes to him. Stalin also did not 'construct the "cult" around himself. In fact, the evidence proves the opposite: that Stalin opposed the disgusting "cult" around himself.

Some have argued that Stalin's opposition to the cult around himself must have been hypocrisy. After all, Stalin was so powerful that if he had really wanted to put a stop to the cult, he could have done so. But this argument assumes what it should prove. To assume that he was that powerful is also

to assume that Stalin was in fact what the "cult" absurdly made him out to be: an autocrat with supreme power over everything and everyone in the USSR.

## **1. Stalin's Opposition to the Cult**

Stalin protested praise and flattery directed at himself over and over again over many years. He agreed with Lenin's assessment of the "cult of the individual", and said basically the same things about it as Lenin had. Khrushchev quoted Lenin, but without acknowledging that Stalin said the same things. A long list of quotations from Stalin is given here in evidence of Stalin's opposition to the "cult" around him.<sup>4</sup> Many more could be added to it, for almost every memoir by persons who had personal contact with Stalin gives further anecdotes that demonstrate Stalin's opposition to, and even disgust with, the adulation of his person.

<sup>4</sup> See the quotations for Chapter 1 in Appendix 1 for a long list of quotations of Stalin showing his opposition to the "cult" around him.

For example, the recently-published posthumous memoir Stalin. *Kak Ia Ego Znal* ("Stalin As I Knew Him", 2003) by Akakii Mgeladze, a former First Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party later punished and marginalized by Khrushchev, the author often comments on Stalin's dislike of the "cult" around him. Mgeladze, who died in 1980, recounts how Stalin wished to suppress any special celebration of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1949 and acceded to it with reluctance only because of the arguments made by other Party leaders that the event would serve to unite the communist movement by bringing together its leaders from around the world.

Stalin was more successful in preventing others in the Politburo from renaming Moscow "Stalinodar" (= "gift of Stalin") in 1937. But his attempt to refuse the award of Hero of the Soviet Union was thwarted when the award, which he never accepted, was pinned to a pillow which was placed in his coffin at his death.

## **2. Malenkov's Attempt to Call a CC Plenum Concerning the "Cult" April 1953**

Immediately after Stalin's death, Malenkov proposed calling a Central Committee Plenum to deal with the harmful effects of the cult. Malenkov was honest enough to blame himself and his colleagues and reminded them all that Stalin had frequently warned them against the "cult" to no avail. This attempt failed in the Presidium; the special Plenum was never called. If it had been, Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" could not have taken place.

Whether Khrushchev supported Malenkov's proposal or not — the evidence is unclear on this point — he was certainly involved in the discussion. Khrushchev knew all about Malenkov's attempt to deal with the "cult" openly and early on. But he said nothing about it, thereby effectively denying that it had occurred.

### **3. July 1953 Plenum — Beria Attacked for Allegedly Opposing "Cult"**

At the July 1953 Plenum, called to attack an absent (and possibly already dead) Beria, a number of the figures blamed Beria for **attacking** the cult. Khrushchev's leading role at this Plenum and in the cabal of leaders against Beria shows that he was complicit in attacking Beria and so in supporting the "cult" as a weapon with which to discredit Beria.

### **4. Who Fostered the "Cult"?**

A study of the origins of the "cult" is beyond the scope of this article. But there is good evidence that oppositionists either began the "cult" around Stalin or participated eagerly in it as a cover for their oppositional activities. In an unguarded moment during one of his *ochnye stavki* (face-to-face confrontations with accusers) Bukharin was forced to admit that he urged former Oppositionists working for *Izvestiia* to refer to Stalin with excessive praise, and used the term "cult" himself. Another Oppositionist, Karl Radek, is often said to have written the first full-blown example of the "cult", the strange futuristic *Zodchii Sotsialisticheskogo Obshchestva* ("The Architect of Socialist Society"), for the January 1, 1934 issue of *Izvestiia*, subsequently published as a separate pamphlet.

### **5. Khrushchev and Mikoian**

Khrushchev and Mikoian, the main figures from the Stalin Politburo who instigated and avidly promoted the "de-Stalinization" movement, were among those who, in the 1930s, had fostered the "cult" most avidly.

If this were all, we might hypothetically assume that Khrushchev and Mikoian had truly respected Stalin to the point of being in awe of him. This was certainly the case with many others. Mgeladze's memoir shows one example of a leading Party official who retained his admiration for Stalin long after it was fashionable to discard it.

But Khrushchev and Mikoian had participated in the Presidium discussions of March 1953 during which Malenkov's attempt to call a Central Committee Plenum to discuss the "cult" had been frustrated. They had been leaders in the June 1953 Plenum during which Beria had been sharply criticized for opposing the "cult" of Stalin.

These matters, together with the fact that Khrushchev's "revelations" are, in reality, fabrications means there must be something else at work here.

## **2. Lenin's "Testament"**

Khrushchev:

Fearing the future fate of the party and of the Soviet nation, V. I. Lenin made a completely correct characterization of Stalin, pointing out that it was necessary to consider the question of transferring Stalin from the position of the Secretary General because of the fact that Stalin is excessively rude, that he does not have a proper attitude toward his comrades, that he is capricious and abuses his power.

In December 1922, in a letter to the Party Congress, Vladimir Ilyich wrote: 'After taking over the position of Secretary General, Comrade Stalin accumulated in his hands immeasurable power and I am not certain whether he will be always able to use this power with the required care.'

We must interrupt this quotation to note an important fact Khrushchev here attributes to Lenin the accusation that Stalin "abuses his power." In reality,

Lenin wrote only that he was "not certain whether he [Stalin] will be always able to use this power with the required care." There is nothing in Lenin's words about accusing Stalin of "abusing his power."

Khrushchev continues:

This letter — a political document of tremendous importance, known in the party history as Lenin's "testament" — was distributed among the delegates to the 20th Party Congress. You have read it and will undoubtedly read it again more than once. You might reflect on Lenin's plain words, in which expression is given to Vladimir Ilyich's anxiety concerning the party, the people, the state, and the future direction of party policy.

Vladimir Ilyich said:

Stalin is excessively rude, and this defect, which can be freely tolerated in our midst and in contacts among us Communists, becomes a defect which cannot be tolerated in one holding the position of the Secretary General. Because of this, I propose that the comrades consider the method by which Stalin would be removed from this position and by which another man would be selected for it, a man who, above all, would differ from Stalin in only one quality, namely, greater tolerance, greater loyalty, greater kindness and more considerate attitude toward the comrades, a less capricious temper, etc.

This document of Lenin's was made known to the delegates at the 13th Party Congress who discussed the question of transferring Stalin from the position of Secretary General. The delegates declared themselves in favor of retaining Stalin in this post, hoping that he would heed the critical remarks of Vladimir Ilyich and would be able to overcome the defects which caused Lenin serious anxiety.

Comrades! The Party Congress should become acquainted with two new documents, which confirm Stalin's character as already outlined by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin in his "testament." These documents are a letter from Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya to [Lev B.] Kamenev,

who was at that time head of the Political Bureau, and a personal letter from Vladimir Ilyich Lenin to Stalin.

I will now read these documents:

LEV BORISOVICH!

Because of a short letter which I had written in words dictated to me by Vladimir Ilyich by permission of the doctors, Stalin allowed himself yesterday an unusually rude outburst directed at me. This is not my first day in the party. During all these 30 years I have never heard from any comrade one word of rudeness. The business of the party and of Ilyich are not less dear to me than to Stalin. I need at present the maximum of self-control. What one can and what one cannot discuss with Ilyich I know better than any doctor, because I know what makes him nervous and what does not, in any case I know better than Stalin. I am turning to you and to Grigorii [E. Zinoviev] as much closer comrades of V. I. and I beg you to protect me from rude interference with my private life and from vile invectives and threats. I have no doubt as to what will be the unanimous decision of the Control Commission, with which Stalin sees fit to threaten me; however, I have neither the strength nor the time to waste on this foolish quarrel. And I am a living person and my nerves are strained to the utmost."

N. KRUPSKAIA

Nadezhda Konstantinovna wrote this letter on December 23, 1922. After two and a half months, in March 1923, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin sent Stalin the following letter:

TO COMRADE STALIN:

COPIES FOR: KAMENEV AND ZINOVIEV

Dear Comrade Stalin!

You permitted yourself a rude summons of my wife to the telephone and a rude reprimand of her. Despite the fact that she told you that she agreed to forget what was said, nevertheless Zinoviev and Kamenev heard about it from her. I have no intention to forget so easily that which is being done against me; and I need not stress here that I consider as directed against me that which is being done against my wife. I ask you, therefore, that you weigh carefully whether you are agreeable to retracting your words and apologizing or whether you prefer the severance of relations between us.

SINCERELY: LENIN

MARCH 5, 1923

(Commotion in the hall.)

Comrades! I will not comment on these documents. They speak eloquently for themselves. Since Stalin could behave in this manner during Lenin's life, could thus behave toward Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya — whom the party knows well and values highly as a loyal friend of Lenin and as an active fighter for the cause of the party since its creation — we can easily imagine how Stalin treated other people. These negative characteristics of his developed steadily and during the last years acquired an absolutely insufferable character."

The document in question was not widely "known in the party history as Lenin's 'Testament'". Khrushchev took this term from Trotsky, who wrote a book with that title in 1934. It had never been known as such in the Bolshevik Party except among oppositionists. In fact there is a history to the very use of the term "Lenin's Testament" — one that does not reflect well on Khrushchev.

In 1925 Trotsky, in a sharp criticism of Max Eastman's book *Since Lenin Died*, had explicitly repudiated Eastman's lie that Lenin left a "testament" or "will." Along with the other members of the Politburo, Trotsky said that Lenin had not done so. And that appears to be correct there is no evidence

at all that Lenin intended these documents as a "testament" of any kind. Then, in the 1930s, Trotsky changed his mind and began writing about "Lenin's Testament" again, this time as a part of his partisan attack on Stalin. Therefore Khrushchev or, more likely, one of his collaborators, must have taken this usage from Trotsky- though they would never have publicly acknowledged doing so.

Other aspects of Khrushchev's speech are similar to Trotsky's writings. For example, Trotsky viewed the Moscow Trials as faked frame-ups — naturally enough, because he was an absent co-defendant in them. Although the first Moscow Trial defendant, Akbal Ikramov of the March 1938 "Bukharin" Trial, was not officially "rehabilitated" until May 1957, after the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress<sup>5</sup>, Khrushchev did deplore the executions of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Trotskyites in the Secret Speech. This constituted at least an implicit declaration of their innocence, since their punishment would not be considered too harsh for anyone really guilty of the crimes to which they confessed in 1936.

<sup>5</sup> Ikramov was rehabilitated on June 3, 1957. See *Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo. Febral' 1956 — nachalo 80-kh godov. Moskva: 'Materik', 2003.* (hereafter *RKEB 2*), 851. See also <http://www.memo.ru/memory/communarka/chapter5.htm>

But in fact the whole tenor of Khrushchev's speech, which blamed Stalin alone for derailing socialism through immense crimes of which Khrushchev held him alone responsible, was identical to Trotsky's demonized portrait of Stalin. Trotsky's widow recognized this fact, and applied for the rehabilitation of her late husband and within a day of the "Secret Speech".<sup>6</sup> The fact that Natalia Sedova-Trotskaia learned of the supposedly "secret" speech immediately it happened suggests that the Trotskyites may have still had high-level informants in the CPSU.

<sup>6</sup> Aimerkakh, I. V.IU. Afiani, et al. eds. *Doklad Khrushcheva o kul'te' lichnosti Stalina na XX s"ezdt KPSS. Dokumenty. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002.* (hereafter *Doklad Khrushcheva*) Razdel IV, Dok. No. 3, p. 610. The editors of this official volume note that the letter must be dated on or after February 25; that is, they relate it to Khrushchev's Speech, which was



delivered the same day. Another possibility is that Sedova's letter was written in response to Mikouan's speech to the Congress on February 16. A facsimile of Sedov's letter to the Presidium of the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress is at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/sedovaltr022856.jpg>

There are good reasons to suspect that Lenin's letter to Stalin of March 5, 1923 may be a forgery. Valentin A. Sakharov has published a major scholarly book on this subject on this thesis with Moscow University Press. His general argument is outlined in several articles of his and in reviews of the book.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> V.A. Sakharov, *"Politicheskoe zaveshchanie" V.I. Lenina: real'nost' istorii i mify politiki*. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo MGU [Moscow State University], 2003.

There is no question that at the time Stalin himself, and everybody who knew about it, believed that it was genuine. But even if genuine, Lenin's letter to Stalin of March 5 1923 does not show what it has often been assumed to show — that Lenin was estranged from Stalin. For less than two weeks later his wife Nadezhda Konstantinova Krupskaja (called "c(omrade) Ul'ianova (N.K)" in this exchange) told Stalin that Lenin had very insistently asked her to make Stalin promise to obtain cyanide capsules for him, in order to end his great suffering. Stalin agreed, but then reported to the Politburo on March 23 that he could not bring himself to do it, "no matter how humane it might be."

These documents were quoted by Dmitrii Volkogonov in his very hostile biography of Lenin.<sup>8</sup> Copies of them remain in the Volkogonov Papers in the Library of Congress. There is no doubt about their authenticity. Lidia Fotieva, one of Lenin's secretaries, had made a note in 1922 that Lenin had told her he would request cyanide capsules if his illness progressed beyond a certain point.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> A facsimile of Stalin's letter to the Politburo of March 23, 1923 is published in D.A. Volkogonov, *Lenin. Politicheskii portret. V 2-kh knigakh. Kn. II*. Moscow: Novosti, 1994, pp. 384-385. Stalin's letter to the Politburo of March 23, 1923 is reproduced, with commentary, at

<http://www.hrono.ru/libris/stalin/16-67.html> and in Appendix 1 of the present book.

<sup>9</sup> Volkogonov, Dmitri. *Stalin*. Vol. I. M., 1992, Ch. 2, par. 156; cited at [http://militera.lib.ru/bio/volkogonov\\_dv/02.html](http://militera.lib.ru/bio/volkogonov_dv/02.html)

Therefore, even if Lenin's letter of March 5, 1923 be genuine — and Sakharov's study calls this into serious question — Lenin still trusted and relied upon Stalin. There was no estrangement between them.

According to Volkogonov (and others),

In the morning of December 24 Stalin, Kamenev and Bukharin discussed the situation. They did not have the right to force their leader [Lenin] to be silent. But care, foresight, the greatest possible quite, were essential. A decision was taken:

1. Vladimir Ilich is given the right to dictate daily for 5-10 minutes, but this must not be in the form of correspondence, and Vladimir Ilich must not expect answers to these notes. No meetings are allowed.
2. Neither friends nor family are permitted to communicate anything of political life to Vladimir Ilich, so as not to thereby present materials for consideration and excitement.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Volkogonov, Dmitri. *Stalin*. Vol. I. M., 1992, Ch. 2, par. 156; cited at [http://militera.lib.ru/bio/volkogonov\\_dv/02.html](http://militera.lib.ru/bio/volkogonov_dv/02.html)

According to Robert Service (*Lenin*), Lenin suffered serious "events" (probably strokes) on the following dates:

- May 25, 1922 — a "massive stroke" (p. 443);
- December 22-23, 1922 — Lenin "lost the use of his whole right side" (p.461);
- The night of March 6-7, 1923 — Lenin "lost the use of the extremities of the right side of his body." (pp. 473-4).

On December 18 the Politburo put Stalin in charge of Lenin's health and forbade anyone to discuss politics with him. Krupskaya violated this rule and was reprimanded for it by Stalin, on December 22. That very night Lenin suffered a serious stroke.

On March 5, 1923 Krupskaya told Lenin that Stalin had spoken rudely to her back in December. Incensed, Lenin wrote Stalin the famous note. According to Krupskaya's secretary V. Dridzo, whose version of this event was published in 1989, it happened this way:

Now, when Nadezhda Konstantinovna's name and Stalin's relationship with her is more frequently mentioned in some publications, I wish to tell about those matters I know for certain.

Why was it only two months after Stalin's rude conversation with Nadezhda Konstantinovna that V.I. Lenin wrote him the letter in which he demanded that Stalin excuse himself to her? It is possible that I am the only one who really knows how it happened, since Nadezhda Konstantinova often told me about it.

It happened at the very beginning of March 1923. Nadezhda Konstantinovna and Vladimir Ilich were talking about something. The phone rang. Nadezhda Konstantinovna went to the phone (in Lenin's apartment the phone always stood in the corridor). When she returned Vladimir Ilich asked her: 'Who called?' — 'It was Stalin, he and I have reconciled.' — 'What do you mean?' And Nadezhda Konstantinovna had to tell everything that had happened when Stalin called her, talked with her very rudely, and threatened to bring her before the Control commission. Nadezhda Konstantinovna asked Vladimir Ilich to pay it no mind since everything had been settled and she had forgotten about it.

But Vladimir Ilich was adamant. He was deeply offended by I.V. Stalin's disrespectful behavior towards Nadezhda Konstantinovna and on March 5 1923 dictated the latter to Stalin with a copy to Zinoviev and Kamenev in which he insisted that Stalin excuse himself. Stalin had to excuse himself, but he never forgot it and did not forgive

Nadezhda Konstantinovna, and this had an effect on his relationship with her."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> V.S. Dridzo, "Vospominania." *Kommunist* 5 (1989).

The next day Lenin had a further serious stroke.

In each case Lenin had a stroke shortly after Krupskaja discussed political matter with him — something that, as a Party member, she was not supposed to do. This cannot have been a coincidence, for Lenin's doctors had specifically warned against getting Lenin upset about anything. So it seems more than possible that, in fact, it was Krupskaja's actions that precipitated Lenin's last two serious strokes.

As one of Lenin's long-time secretaries Lidia Fotieva said,

Nadezhda Konstantinovna did not always conduct herself as she should have done. She might have said too much to Vladimir Ilich. She was used to sharing everything with him, even in situations when she should not have done that at all... For example, why did she tell Vladimir Ilich that Stalin had been rude to her on the telephone? ...<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> L. Fotieva. Cited in A. Bek, "K istorii poslednikh leninskikh dokumentov. Iz arkhiva pisatel'ia, besedovavshego v 1967 s lichnymi sekretariami Lenina." *Moskovskie Novosti* No. 17, April 23, 1989, pp. 8-9.

Incidentally, when Stalin's wife committed suicide in 1932, Krupskaja wrote the following letter of consolation to Stalin, which was published in *Pravda* on November 16, 1932:

Dear Iosif Vissarionych:

These days everything somehow makes me think about you, makes me want to hold your hand. It is hard to lose a person who is close to you. I keep remembering those talks with you in Ilich's office during his illness. They gave me courage at that time.

I press your hand yet again. N. Krupskaja.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Cited in E.N. Gusliarov, *Stalin v zhizni. Sistematizirovannyi svod vospominanii sovremennikov, dokumentov zpokhi, versii istorikov*. Moscow: OLMA-Press, p. 237. Online at [http://www.stalin.su/book.php?action=page&fr\\_page=6&fr\\_book\\_id=1](http://www.stalin.su/book.php?action=page&fr_page=6&fr_book_id=1) Also cited in *Novoe Vremia* No. 46, Nov. 14, 2004.

This letter shows once again that Stalin was not estranged from Lenin's wife after the December 1922 dispute.

Stalin was held in very high esteem by all those in Lenin's household. The writer Aleksandr Bek wrote down the reminiscences of Lidia Fotieva, in which she said:

You do not understand those times. You don't understand what great significance Stalin had. Stalin was great... Maria Il'inichna (Ul'ianova, Lenin's sister] during Vladimir Ilich's lifetime told me: 'After Lenin, Stalin is the most intelligent person in the party... Stalin was an authority for us. We loved Stalin. He was a great man. Yet he often said: 'I am only a pupil of Lenin's.' (In Bek, *op.cit.*)

Khrushchev was simply trying to make Stalin "look bad," rather than transmit any understanding of what went on.

It is obvious that Khrushchev took Lenin's letter to Stalin out of context, and in so doing he seriously distorted the situation. He omitted the fact that the Central Committee had instructed Stalin to make sure Lenin was isolated from political issues for the sake of his health. This prohibition explicitly mentioned "friends" and "domestic persons." Since Lenin's secretaries were not likely to violate a Central Committee directive, probably the term "domestic persons" was specifically intended to include Lenin's sister and Krupskaja, his wife. Stalin had criticized Krupskaja for violating this isolation.

Nor did Khrushchev mention Stalin's reply of March 7, 1923 to Lenin's note, or Lenin's later request to Stalin for poison. By omitting these facts, Khrushchev seriously distorted the context in which Lenin's note to Stalin of March 5 1923 occurred, and deliberately distorted Lenin's relationship with Stalin.

Khrushchev omitted the accounts of Lenin's sister Maria Il'inichna. Lenin's secretaries Volodicheva and Fotieva, and Krupskaya's secretary Dridzo, were still alive, but their testimony was not sought. He omitted the evidence that Krupskaya's actions in violating the CC's prohibition about getting Lenin upset may well have been the cause of two Lenin's strokes. He omitted the fact that, far from making any break with Stalin, two weeks **later** Lenin trusted only Stalin with the secret request to be given poison if he asked for it. Finally, he omitted Krupskaya's reconciliation with Stalin.

Khrushchev strove to depict Stalin in a bad light in this affair at all costs. He showed no interest in what had really happened or an understanding of the events in their context.

## Chapter 2. *Collegiality "Trampled"*

### 3. "Collegiality" In Work

At several points in his speech, Khrushchev complains about Stalin's lack of collegiality and violation of collective leadership. Here is a typical passage:

We have to consider seriously and analyze correctly this matter in order that we may preclude any possibility of a repetition in any form whatever of what took place during the life of Stalin, who absolutely did not tolerate collegiality in leadership and in work, and who practiced brutal violence, not only toward everything which opposed him, but also toward that which seemed, to his capricious and despotic character, contrary to his concepts.

This very general accusation can be easily refuted, but only in similarly general terms, by citing the testimony of many others who worked with Stalin, some more closely than Khrushchev ever had. Marshal Georgii Zhukov had worked with him closely during the war, and testifies to Stalin's method of work. In the first quotation he obviously has the "Secret Speech" in mind and calls Khrushchev a liar. General Shtemenko says much the same thing.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> These and other quotations are given in Appendix 1.

According to Ivan A. Benediktov, long-time Minister for Agriculture, decisions were always taken collegially. Dmitrii T. Shepilov, by far Stalin's junior, did not work as closely with Stalin, but his anecdote is revealing. Even Khrushchev himself, in his memoirs, contradicted himself and called Stalin's ability to change his own mind when faced with someone who disagreed with him and defended his viewpoint well, "characteristic."

Anastas Mikoian supported Khrushchev wholeheartedly and was very antagonistic to Stalin. Yet Mikoian complained that democracy and collective leadership were never achieved at any time under Khrushchev or Brezhnev.

It was Khrushchev himself who refused to lead collectively, and was removed in large part for that in 1964. It appears that Mikhail A. Suslov, who gave the main speech against Khrushchev, echoed in his wording **both** Lenin's "characteristics" letter about Stalin of 1922 **and** Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" attacks on the "cult" around Stalin. The irony could not have been lost on Khrushchev or his audience.

#### **4. Stalin "Morally and Physically Annihilated" Leaders Who Opposed Him**

Stalin acted not through persuasion, explanation and patient cooperation with people, but by imposing his concepts and demanding absolute submission to his opinion. Whoever opposed this concept or tried to prove his viewpoint and the correctness of his position was doomed to removal from the leading collective and to subsequent moral and physical annihilation.

**There is not one single example, during Stalin's whole life, of his "removing" someone "from the collective leadership" because that person disagreed with Stalin.** It is significant that Khrushchev himself does not even allege a specific instance.

Stalin was the General Secretary of the Party's Central Committee. He could be removed by the Central Committee at any time. His was only one vote in the Politburo and in the Central Committee. Stalin tried to resign from his post as General Secretary four times. Each time his attempt was rejected. The last such attempt was at the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, in October 1952. It too was rejected.

Khrushchev and the rest not only could have opposed Stalin, but did in fact oppose him. Some examples are given below — for example, that of the taxes on the peasantry, which apparently came up in February 1953.<sup>15</sup> None of those who opposed the tax increase were "removed from the leading collective," "morally annihilated" — whatever that means — or "physically annihilated."

<sup>15</sup> This claim of Khrushchev's is discussed in Chapter 9.



Although Stalin never removed anyone from the leadership for opposing him, Khrushchev did. Khrushchev and the others had Lavrentii Beria arrested suddenly on June 26, 1953, on false charges and without any evidence. Subsequently they had Beria killed, together with six others — Merkulov, Dekanozov, Kobulov, Goglidze, Meshik, and Vlodzimirskii — who had been close associates of his.

Nor was Beria the only person in the leadership of the Party whom Khrushchev had removed for disagreeing with him. In July 1957 Khrushchev called a CC Plenum to have Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich, and Shepilov removed from the leadership simply because they disagreed with his policies and had tried to get Khrushchev voted out of the Party leadership. Khrushchev's high-handedness was a main reason for his removal by the Central Committee in 1964.

Khrushchev and those who supported him needed to have some kind of explanation or excuse for failing to oppose Stalin in all his alleged "crimes" during all the years they shared the Party leadership with him. It seems that this — the threat of "annihilation" — became their alibi. Khrushchev evidently said many times that, if "they" had tried to "restore Leninist norms to the Party," or to ask him to retire, "not even a wet spot would have remained of us."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> E.g. by IUrii Shapoval, "Proshchanie s vlast'iu", *Zerkalo Nedeli* Oct. 23-29, 2004. At <http://www.zerkalo-nedeli.com/nn/print/48113/>

Others in the communist movement saw through this thin excuse:

When the Soviet leader Anastas Mikoian led the CPSU delegation to China to attend the CCP's 8th Congress in 1956, P'eng [fe-huat] asked him face to face why it was only now that the Soviet party was criticizing Stalin. Mikoian apparently replied: 'We did not dare advance our opinion at that time. To have done so would have meant death.' To which P'eng retorted: 'What kind of a communist is it who fears death?'<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Roderick Macfarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution Vol. 2* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 194.

But of course the accusation itself was false.

## **5. Mass Repressions Generally**

Khrushchev:

Worth noting is the fact that, even during the progress of the furious ideological fight against the Trotskyites, the Zinovievites, the Bukharinites and others, extreme repressive measures were not used against them. The fight was on ideological grounds. But some years later, when socialism in our country was fundamentally constructed, when the exploiting classes were generally liquidated, when the Soviet social structure had radically changed, when the social basis for political movements and groups hostile to the party had violently contracted, when the ideological opponents of the party were long since defeated politically — then the repression directed against them began. It was precisely during this period (1935-1937-1938) that the practice of mass repression through the Government apparatus was born, first against the enemies of Leninism — Trotskyites, Zinovievites, Bukharinites, long since politically defeated by the party — and subsequently also against many honest Communists, against those party cadres who had borne the heavy load of the Civil War and the first and most difficult years of industrialization and collectivization, who actively fought against the Trotskyites and the rightists for the Leninist party line.

Nothing in Khrushchev's speech was more shocking than his accusation that Stalin had instigated massive and unjustified repression against high-ranking Bolsheviks. We will examine his specific allegations below, and preface those remarks here by stressing a few basic points.

Khrushchev himself was responsible for massive repressions, possibly more than any other single individual aside from Nikolai Ezhov, head of the NKVD from 1936 to late 1938, who was certainly bloodier than anyone else.<sup>18</sup> Unlike Stalin and the central Party leadership to whom he reported, but like Ezhov and many others, Khrushchev either had to know that many,

probably the vast majority of those he repressed were innocent or, at the very least, that their fates were decided without detailed investigation.

<sup>18</sup> IUrii Zhukov adds Robert I. Eikhe to this group of bloodiest repressors. See "Podlinnaia istoriia Iosifa Stalina?" *Literaturnaia Gazeta* No. 8, February 28, 2007. We will return to this question below.

Khrushchev was defending both Ezhov and Genrikh Iagoda (Ezhov's predecessor as head of the NKVD) as late as February 1 1956, twenty-four days before the "Secret Speech". He reiterated this defense, though in somewhat more moderate terms, in the "rough draft" of his speech dated February 18, 1956. This is hard to explain unless Khrushchev were already trying to deny that **any** conspiracies had actually taken place, and therefore that all those who had been repressed were innocent. Khrushchev did in fact take that position, though not till well after the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress. In his Speech Khrushchev claimed Stalin must have been responsible for all of Ezhov's repressions. He had to know this was false, since he had far more evidence at his disposal than we do today. It is clear from what relatively little we now have that Ezhov was guilty of huge illegal repressions.

Khrushchev was either candidate or full Politburo member during the investigations that established Ezhov's guilt. However, so were others, such as Mikoian, Molotov, Kaganovich, and Voroshilov. Mikoian was a close accomplice of Khrushchev's. But the acquiescence to Khrushchev's speech by Molotov, Kaganovich, and Voroshilov, though only temporary, can't be explained in the same way.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> We return to this question in the final chapter.

Khrushchev declared many executed Party leaders "rehabilitated", innocent, in defiance of the evidence we have today, after the release of a small fraction of the documents relating to them. Sometimes he declared them to have been innocent victims of unfounded repression *a priori*, even before the formality of a study of the evidence, Prosecutor's protest, and Supreme Court decision had been completed or even begun. The Pospelov Report<sup>20</sup> was drawn up to provide evidence for Khrushchev that the Party leaders had been unjustly executed, and came to foregone conclusions. It failed to

consider a great deal of the evidence we know exists. Even as it stands it does not prove the innocence of the persons whose repression it studies.

<sup>20</sup> The "Pospelov Commission Report" or simply "Pospelov Report" is dated February 9, 1956. Its official title is "The Report of the Commission of the CC CPSU to the Presidium of the CC CPSU to Establish the Causes of the Mass Repressions Against Members and Candidate Members of the CC CPSU Elected at the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress." The Report was signed by A.B. Aristov, N.M. Shvernik, and P.T. Komarov in addition to Pospelov. For the Russian text see *Doklad Khrushcheva* 185-230; *RKEB I* 317-348 does not contain the appendices, including Eikhe's letter.

All the evidence we presently have points to the existence of a widespread Rightist-Trotskyist series of anti-government conspiracies involving many leading Party leaders, both NKVD chiefs Iagoda and Ezhov, high-ranking military leaders, and many others.<sup>21</sup> Broadly speaking, this is more or less the picture drawn by the Stalin government at the time, except that some vital details, such as Ezhov's involvement in the leadership of the Rightist conspiracy, were never publicly revealed.

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter 4.

There is a lot of circumstantial evidence to suggest that Khrushchev himself may well have been a participant in this Right-Trotskyite conspiracy.<sup>22</sup> Such an hypothesis makes sense of much of the evidence we have, but it is suggestive rather than conclusive. However, such a hypothesis would go far towards explaining Khrushchev's attack on Stalin, and even the subsequent history of the CPSU.

<sup>22</sup> For some of this see the Appendix on the present chapter.

Included in the Appendix section below and online in Russian and English are:

- evidence of Khrushchev's massive repressions;
- excerpts from confessions by Iagoda, Ezhov, and Frinovskii (Ezhov's second-in-command) concerning their participation in the Rightist-

Trotskyist conspiracy, in the separate section on Ezhov.

## 6. "Enemy of the People"

Khrushchev:

Stalin originated the concept "enemy of the people." This term automatically rendered it unnecessary that the ideological errors of a man or men engaged in a controversy be proven; this term made possible the usage of the most cruel repression, violating all norms of revolutionary legality, against anyone who in any way disagreed with Stalin, against those who were only suspected of hostile intent, against those who had bad reputations. This concept "enemy of the people" actually eliminated the possibility of any kind of ideological fight or the making of one's views known on this or that issue, even those of a practical character. In the main, and in actuality, the only proof of guilt used, against all norms of current legal science, was the "confession" of the accused himself; and, as subsequent probing proved, "confessions" were acquired through physical pressures against the accused. This led to glaring violations of revolutionary legality and to the fact that many entirely innocent persons, who in the past had defended the party line, became victims.

We must assert that, in regard to those persons who in their time had opposed the party line, there were often no sufficiently serious reasons for their physical annihilation. The formula "enemy of the people" was specifically introduced for the purpose of physically annihilating such individuals.

Stalin certainly did not "originate the concept" The phrase *l'ennemi du peuple* was widely used during the great French Revolution. It was used by the writer Jean-Paul Marat in the very first issue of his revolutionary newsletter *L'Ami du Peuple* in 1793.<sup>23</sup> Subsequent use of the term derives from the French Revolution. It is famously the name of a play by Ibsen. Maxim Gorky used the term in his sketch "The Tauride Chersonese" ("Khersones Tavricheskii") in the "Oath of the Chersonesers," a sketch published in 1897.

<sup>23</sup> See <http://membres.lycos.fr/jpmarat/jpmif.html>

Because all the revolutionaries of 1917 tended to view the revolution in Russia through the lenses of the revolution of 1789, the term was used widely from the very beginning. Lenin used the term before the revolution. The Constitutional Democratic Party, called the "Cadets", which was the party of the rich bourgeoisie, was banned by the Council of People's Commissars on November 28 1917 as an "enemy of the people." It was signed by Lenin.

A *locus classicus* for the use of the term "enemy of the people" during the 1930s is the Decree of the Central Executive Committee and the Soviet of People's Commissars of August 7, 1932, also known as "the law of the three ears." Here the term "enemy of the people" does not refer at all to oppositionists in the Party, but rather to the pursuit, within the bounds of legality, of thieves, robbers, and swindlers of various kinds. The law was signed by Kalinin, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee (the Legislative Branch), Molotov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars (the Executive Branch), and Enukidze, Secretary of the CEC. Since he was not a leading member of either the Legislative or the Executive branches of the Soviet government Stalin did not sign it.

The phrase "enemy of the people" — in Russian, *vrag naroda* — occurs about a dozen times in Stalin's works after the beginning of 1917. Khrushchev himself also used it frequently.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> The last time Khrushchev used this term before the "Secret Speech" was just 11 days before in his regular report to the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress. See IU. V. Emel'ianov, *Khrushchev. Smut'ian v Kremle*. Moscow: Veche, p. 32.

## **7. Zinoviev and Kamenev**

Khrushchev:

In his "testament" Lenin warned that "Zinoviev's and Kamenev's October episode was of course not an accident." But Lenin did not pose the question of their arrest and certainly not their shooting.

By implication Khrushchev here accused Stalin of having Zinoviev and Kamenev shot without justification. He sidesteps the whole question of their confessions to serious crimes at their 1936 trial. This, of course, is the main issue.

Lenin was furious with Zinoviev and Kamenev for their "strikebreaking" activity near the time of the Bolshevik Revolution. But of course their arrest and execution were not contemplated — they were not charged with involvement in assassinations at that time.

No evidence has ever emerged to suggest that Zinoviev's or Kamenev's confessions were other than genuine. Evidence has emerged since 1991 that corroborates their confessions of guilt. The Russian government has so far refused to release the investigative materials of their case. We now have additional evidence of their guilt, however.

One such piece of evidence — at least, evidence that Stalin himself was convinced they were guilty, and just as convinced that their conspiracy really existed — is a private letter from Stalin to Kaganovich, first published in 2001. It's clear from this letter that Stalin is reading the confessions of the defendants at trial and trying to learn and draw conclusions from them.

The section of Dmitriev's confession first published in 2004 is part of an investigative report sent to Stalin by Beria on October 23, 1938. Beria was in the process of rooting out NKVD men who had conspired to frame innocent people, mislead investigations, and aid the Rightists Bukharin, Rykov and others to overthrow the government. The accused here, D.M. Dmitriev, had been head of the NKVD in Sverdlovsk *oblast'*. He refers directly to the interrogation of Kamenev's wife to which Stalin had referred, and so provides striking verification of the genuine nature of Stalin's letter to Kaganovich of August 23, 1936 printed among the documents in the Appendix. It is completely consistent with a Rightist plot.

We now have a few of Zinoviev's, Kamenev's, and Bukharin's pre-trial interrogations from the Volkogonov Papers, in which all mutually accuse one another — that is, all their confessions are mutually reinforcing, and consistent with their testimony at trial.

We also possess their appeals for clemency to the Supreme Court, which they wrote after their sentencing. In them they again reaffirm their guilt. Even the Rehabilitation report on them published in 1989, though heavily edited, contains suggestions of their guilt, for in it Zinoviev twice states that he is "no longer" an "enemy."

Sentencing Zinoviev and Kamenev, among others, to be shot for treason was not arbitrary if they were guilty, as all the evidence at our disposal at present suggests. We may assume Khrushchev had no evidence of their innocence, or he surely would have had it released. Therefore, we have every reason to conclude that Khrushchev lied hypocritically when he deplored Zinoviev's and Kamenev's fates.

## **8. Trotskyites**

Khrushchev:

Or, let us take the example of the Trotskyites. At present, after a sufficiently long historical period, we can speak about the fight with the Trotskyites with complete calm and can analyze this matter with sufficient objectivity. After all, around Trotsky were people whose origin cannot by any means be traced to bourgeois society. Part of them belonged to the party intelligentsia and a certain part were recruited from among the workers. We can name many individuals who, in their time, joined the Trotskyites; however, these same individuals took an active part in the workers' movement before the Revolution, during the Socialist October Revolution itself, and also in the consolidation of the victory of this greatest of revolutions. Many of them broke with Trotskyism and returned to Leninist positions. Was it necessary to annihilate such people?

In a speech to the February-March 1937 Plenum on March 3, Stalin did refer to Trotskyites in very hostile terms. But he did not advocate persecuting them. While stressing the need for renewed vigilance Stalin also proposed the establishment of special ideological courses for all leading party workers. That is, Stalin saw the problem of Trotskyism as a result of a low level of political understanding among Bolsheviks.



Meanwhile at the same Plenum, in his concluding speech on March 5, Stalin argued strongly **against** punishing everyone who had ever been a Trotskyist, and called for "an individual, differentiated approach." This is precisely what Khrushchev, in the "Secret Speech," claimed that Stalin did **not** do. So Khrushchev advocated exactly what Stalin advocated at the Feb.-March 1937 Plenum,<sup>25</sup> while denying that Stalin did this. The parallel between Khrushchev's and Stalin's speeches are so close that Khrushchev may in fact have copied this passage out of Stalin's very speech!

<sup>25</sup> There is now considerable evidence to support Soviet allegations of the 1930s that Trotsky was involved with other Oppositionists within the USSR in a conspiracy to overthrow the Stalin government, and even that he was in touch with the German and Japanese military. There is also evidence that clandestine Trotskyist groups, both outside and inside the Party, were involved in sabotage and espionage within the USSR, and in spreading false accusations of treason against others.

There's a great deal of documentary evidence that Trotsky and his supporters were involved in anti-Soviet conspiracies, including with the Nazis. Full documentation must await a separate study,<sup>26</sup> but General Pavel A. Sudoplatov's claim, together with some Nazi documentation showing that Sudoplatov was telling the truth, is cited in Appendix 1 at this point.

<sup>26</sup> See Grover Furr, "Evidence of Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan." *Cultural Logic* (2009), at <http://clogic.eserver.org/2009.Furr.pdf>

## **9. Stalin neglected Party**

Whereas, during the first few years after Lenin's death, party congresses and Central Committee plenums took place more or less regularly, later, when Stalin began increasingly to abuse his power, these principles were brutally violated. This was especially evident during the last 15 years of his life. Was it a normal situation when over 13 years elapsed between the 18th and 19th Party Congresses, years during which our party and our country had experienced so many important events?

Khrushchev implies that Stalin failed to call any such Congress. The little evidence that has been published so far from the former Soviet archives suggests that the Stalin leadership wished to call a Congress in 1947 or 1948, but that this suggestion was rejected by the Politburo for some reason that has not been disclosed. The proposal was made by Andrei Zhdanov, who was very close to Stalin. It is highly unlikely that Zhdanov would have made this proposal without Stalin's agreement.

Furthermore, as a member of the Politburo Khrushchev would have been there to hear it! This makes the fact that Khrushchev does not actually **state**, in so many words, that Stalin "refused" or "failed" to call a Congress, significant many in his audience may have been aware of the plan for an earlier conference. Nor did Khrushchev mention the war of 1941-45 or the Russo-Finnish War of 1939-40. If peacetime years only are counted, then a Congress in 1947 or 1948 would have been timely — three **peacetime** years (1940-1, 1946, 1947) since the Eighteenth Party Congress in 1939.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> See *Ustav Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (bol'shevikov) ...* Moscow, 1945, p. 13.

So once again Khrushchev was not being honest: a Congress **was** planned for 1947 or 1948, but was never held. Khrushchev must have known the details of this very interesting discussion, including the reasons for not calling the Congress. But he never alluded to the fact at all. Nor did he or any of his successors ever release the transcript of this and succeeding CC Plenums. It has not been released to date.

Khrushchev also made the following similar and equally false accusation:

It should be sufficient to mention that during all the years of the Patriotic War not a single Central Committee plenum took place. It is true that there was an attempt to call a Central Committee plenum in October 1941, when Central Committee members from the whole country were called to Moscow. They waited two days for the opening of the plenum, but in vain. Stalin did not even want to meet and talk to the Central Committee members. This fact shows how demoralized Stalin was in the first months of the war and how haughtily and disdainfully he treated the Central Committee members.

Even Boris Nikolaevsky's note to the original *New Leader* edition of this speech recognized that this is a lie, though in his final sentence Nikolaevsky shows that he prefers to believe Khrushchev rather than Stalin-era Soviet sources.

If one were to trust official Soviet sources, this statement by Khrushchev would not be true: According to the collection, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums* (published by the Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin Institute of the Party Central Committee in 1954), one Central Committee plenum was held during the war (January 27, 1944), when it was decided to give the various Union Republics the right to have their own foreign ministries and it was also decided to replace the Internationale by the new Soviet national anthem. But it is likely that Khrushchev is correct, that there was no Central Committee plenum in 1944 and a fraud was perpetrated: The plenum was announced as having occurred although it never had.

Wishful thinking on Nikolaevsky's part! For if Khrushchev lied here, where else might he have lied? The 1989 Russian edition of Khrushchev's Speech acknowledges that these two Plena were scheduled,<sup>28</sup> and that one of them took place, though without pointing up the obvious conclusion — that Khrushchev had lied.

In October 1941 leading party members were at the front and at this, the most crucial time of the war. With the Nazi armies near Moscow, they could not be recalled for a CC meeting. And not only was there, in fact, a CC Plenum on January 27, 1944 — it was the Plenum at which the Soviet National Anthem was changed. Virtually everyone in Khrushchev's 1956 audience had to know this! Yet Khrushchev still said it!<sup>29</sup> Perhaps this is best explained as one of Khrushchev's blunders. It was certainly one of many falsehoods in his speech that must have been obvious even at the time.

<sup>28</sup> Doklad Khrushcheva 152 n. 23.

<sup>29</sup> Further decisions of the January 1944 Plenum of the CC are described in a 1985 Soviet textbook *Velikaia Otechestvennaia Voina. Voprosy i Otvety*. Eds. P.N. Bobylev et al. Moscow: Politizdat, 1985. At <http://www.biografia.ru/cgi-bin/quotes.pl?oaction=show&name=voyna083>

### **Chapter 3. *Stalin's "Arbitrariness" Towards the Party***

#### **10. Reference to "a party commission under the control of the Central Committee Presidium"; fabrication of materials during repressions**

Khrushchev:

The commission has become acquainted with a large quantity of materials in the NKVD archives and with other documents and has established many facts pertaining to the fabrication of cases against Communists, to false accusations, to glaring abuses of socialist legality, which resulted in the death of innocent people. It became apparent that many party, Soviet and economic activists, who were branded in 1937-1938 as "enemies," were actually never enemies, spies, wreckers, etc., but were always honest Communists; they were only so stigmatized and, often, no longer able to bear barbaric tortures, they charged themselves (at the order of the investigative judges - falsifiers) with all kinds of grave and unlikely crimes.

[ ... ]

It was determined that of the 139 members and candidates of the party's Central Committee who were elected at the 17th Congress, 98 persons, i.e., 70 per cent, were arrested and shot (mostly in 1937-1938). (Indignation in the hall.) ... The same fate met not only the Central Committee members but also the majority of the delegates to the 17th Party Congress. Of 1,966 delegates with either voting or advisory rights, 1,108 persons were arrested on charges of anti-revolutionary crimes, i.e., decidedly more than a majority.

This statement is one of my three "Special Cases"<sup>30</sup> for the following reason: Khrushchev implies that Stalin was responsible for something, but does not say precisely what. Nor does he make an explicit accusation. Therefore, strictly speaking, there is no "revelation," and nothing to expose.

<sup>30</sup> See Chapter 10, "A Typology of Khrushchev's Prevarications," for discussion of this and other categories of Khrushchev's prevarications.

However, Khrushchev's statement was certainly meant to imply that Stalin simply had all these Party members murdered. That implication is completely false, and it will be refuted in the present section of this essay. However, even though this implication was clearly intentional and is, as we shall see, false, Stalin is not **explicitly** accused of anything.

We now have the report of this commission, known as the Pospelov Commission,<sup>31</sup> after Petr N. Pospelov, director of the Institute of Marx-Engels-Lenin and secretary of the Central Committee. An historian, Pospelov directed this commission and later wrote the first draft of Khrushchev's "Secret Speech." During Stalin's lifetime Pospelov's works were among the most flagrant examples of the "cult." He became a close ally of Khrushchev's. Pospelov is considered to have been a very politically-biased historian. Given his position, it would be surprising if he had not been. Even if we knew nothing about him, however, the report that bears his name would suggest that this was the case.

<sup>31</sup> Cr. *Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo. Dokumenty Prezidiuma TsK KPSS i drugie materialy. V 3-kh tomakh. Tom I. Mart 1953 — Fevral' 1956.* Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi Fond Demokratiia, 2000, pp. 317-348. Also at <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/inside/almanah-doc/55752>

The Pospelov Commission report does indeed conclude that many executed Party figures were innocent. **But the evidence cited in the report does not demonstrate their innocence.** The Commission simply declared them innocent. The whole structure of the report makes it clear that its purpose was to find Stalin guilty of massive repressions and to bush up any evidence that contradicted this foregone conclusion.

We also have the summary reports prepared for the "rehabilitations" of those leading Party figures repressed during the 1930s. Some of these reports were prepared before the Pospelov Report, and most of them were prepared afterwards. Edited and published by Alexandr N. Iakovlev's "Memorial" fund, they include the Pospelov Report within them, but much

other material too. "Memorial" is a very anti-communist organization extremely hostile to Stalin. It can be assumed that they would have included any and all evidence that tended to make Stalin look guilty of repressing innocent people.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Op. cit.* We have also studied the two further volumes of "rehabilitation" materials, but as they publish materials later than the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, they have no direct bearing on Khrushchev's "Secret Speech."

In this section we cover the following matters:

- There is a great deal of evidence suggesting that a significant number of the high-ranking Party members whose repression is cited by Khrushchev appear to have been guilty after all! At the very least, there is sufficient evidence of their guilt that the short summaries of their cases given in the Pospelov Report are utterly insufficient to establish their innocence.
- Ezhov was responsible for fabricating cases against many Soviet citizens. It is possible that this includes a few of the Party members cited by Khrushchev. Ezhov confessed to doing this and was tried and executed for it (See the separate section 17 on Ezhov, below).
- Many, if not most, of the investigations that established the fact of fabrications of confessions and torture against those arrested, were done during Beria's tenure as head of the NKVD, after he replaced Ezhov in late 1938.
- Khrushchev initiated a coverup of the specific reasons for arrests, investigative and trial information, and executions of Central Committee members.

Khrushchev referred to the large percentage of the Central Committee elected at, and Delegates to, the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 1934 who were subsequently the victims of repression. As with the more detailed "accounting" of the CC delegates later published<sup>33</sup> Khrushchev gives no details about when and why different delegates were arrested, tried, and many of them executed. His account gives the impression that his was done in an undifferentiated way by "Stalin."

<sup>33</sup> In *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* No. 12, 1989, pp. 82-113.

But Khrushchev knew better. We can be sure of that, because we have the "rehabilitation" reports, including the Pospelov Commission report. Their contents make clear that there were several different reasons for these arrests and executions.

According to the Commission,

- "Most" were innocent. That implies that some were not, although the Commission did not specify which were guilty, except for Ezhov.
- Some were falsely implicated by others. Both Eikhe and E.G. Evdokimov speak of falsely accusing others, including CC members, when they were beaten or otherwise tortured.
- Some were tortured into signing false confessions and accusations against others.

In addition the Commission emphasizes that Stalin was sent confessions and interrogations of many of those accused, which he then sent on to others on the Politburo. We know this is true, since a few of these have now been published.

Both Khrushchev and the Pospelov Commission try to blame Beria for repression as well as Ezhov. But their own facts — many gathered during Beria's investigation of NKVD crimes and excesses during Ezhov's tenure — and their own statistics, give the lie to this theory. The reality is that Beria **put an end to** the "Ezhovshchina".

The Pospelov Commission report lifts the curtain a tiny bit on what was really going on, while Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" keeps it all resolutely hidden. But neither during the existence of the USSR nor since 1991 have the relevant materials been made available to researchers. So the truth of what went on continues to be covered up. It is reasonable to surmise that this is so because such a study would tend to exculpate both Stalin and Beria, whom Khrushchev and Co. went to great lengths to blame for everything.



In fact Khrushchev himself was one of those most guilty of mass repression. We discussed this briefly in the previous chapter and cite documents as evidence in the Appendix.

In this chapter and the following one, we will examine the case of each of the repressed Party figures named by Khrushchev. In none of these cases did the "rehabilitation" materials, including the Pospelov Commission report, cite sufficient evidence to establish their innocence. In fact, in a number of cases the report itself admits the existence of contradictory evidence.

Since the end of the USSR and the very partial opening of former Soviet archives to a few researchers some evidence relating to the charges against the high Party officials mentioned by Khrushchev and discussed in the Pospelov Commission's report has come to light. The Russian government has refused to make public the full investigative materials about any of these figures. Therefore, we cannot be certain that these men were guilty. But the evidence available to us today demonstrates the utter inadequacy of the Pospelov Commission's conclusions that these men were innocent. The vast preponderance of evidence available to us today points towards their guilt.

### **11. December 1, 1934 "directive" signed by Enukidze**

Khrushchev:

On the evening of December 1, 1934 on Stalin's initiative (without the approval of the Political Bureau — which was passed two days later, casually)...

This is a false statement. Khrushchev was complaining to the Party leadership that this law had been signed by the Governmental body — the Presidium of the TsIK — but **not** by the Politburo of the Party.

But the Soviet Constitution said nothing about the Politburo of the Party, and there was thus no reason for the Politburo to pass on this decision. It was signed by Kalinin and Enukidze, Chairman and Secretary of the

Central Executive Committee respectively. Khrushchev gives no evidence that it was passed "on Stalin's initiative." Stalin wrote a note on the draft that he was "for publication." This means it had been submitted to him to ask him if he agreed with publishing it. Since it had been submitted to him, this draft at least cannot have come from him in the first place.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Volkogonov's photocopy shows that Stalin and Molotov agreed to the publication of the decision, then passed it back to Enukidze, whose signature appears a second time, dated December 2, 1934, to note it had been sent to the newspapers. See [http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/12\\_01\\_34\\_law.pdf](http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/12_01_34_law.pdf)

The question of this decree is distorted in the 1989 official Russian edition of Khrushchev's Speech, which states that it was not submitted for confirmation by a session of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR. No evidence is given in support of this statement. But even if this is so — what does it have to do with Stalin? He was not Chairman of the CEC. And it is irrelevant to our purpose anyway, as Khrushchev was not referring to ratification by the CEC at all. He was complaining that the Politburo — a Party organ — had not passed on it beforehand. But there was no need for it to do so.

The fact that Khrushchev complained Stalin had not sought approval by the Politburo for this decree supports the theory put forward by some researchers that one of Khrushchev's motives in attacking Stalin was Stalin's attempt to move the Party out of governing society and running the economy. This theory has been supported in various ways by researchers such as Iurii Zhukov, Arch Getty, and Iurii Mukhin, as well as the author of this present work.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Reform" (two parts) in *Cultural Logic* (2005). At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2005/Furr.html> and <http://clogic.eserver.org/2005/furr2.html>

## **12. Khrushchev Implies Stalin's involvement in Kirov's murder.**

Khrushchev:

It must be asserted that to this day the circumstances surrounding Kirov's murder hide many things which are inexplicable and mysterious and demand a most careful examination. There are reasons for the suspicion that the killer of Kirov, Nikolaev, was assisted by someone from among the people whose duty it was to protect the person of Kirov. A month and a half before the killing, Nikolayev was arrested on the grounds of suspicious behavior but he was released and not even searched. It is an unusually suspicious circumstance that when the Chekist assigned to protect Kirov was being brought for an interrogation, on December 2, 1934, he was killed in a car "accident" in which no other occupants of the car were harmed. After the murder of Kirov, top functionaries of the Leningrad NKVD were given very light sentences, but in 1937 they were shot. We can assume that they were shot in order to cover the traces of the organizers of Kirov's killing.

In this passage Khrushchev implied, though without stating it overtly, that Stalin was involved in Kirov's murder. As Arch Getty has pointed out, several Soviet and post-Soviet commissions tried to find evidence that Stalin was involved in Kirov's assassination, and all failed. In a longer discussion in *The Road To Terror* (141-7) Getty concludes that there is no evidence at present that Stalin had anything to do with Kirov's assassination. Sudoplatov too concluded there was no reason to suspect Stalin in this assassination.

Getty, along with most Russian researchers, believes that Stalin "framed" — fabricated a false case against — the Oppositionists who were tried, convicted, and executed for involvement in Kirov's assassination. But there is good evidence that they were not framed at all. For example, though only a tiny amount of the investigative material from the Kirov assassination is even open to researchers, and much less than that has been published, we have a partial transcript of an interrogation of Nikolaev, the assassin, in which he incriminates an underground Zinovievist group that included Kotolynov, and a partial interrogation of Kotolynov of the day before in which he accepts "political and moral responsibility" for the assassination of Kirov by Nikolaev.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> *Lubianka. Stalin I VChK-GPU-OGPU-NIKVD. IAnvar' 1922 — dekabr' 1936.* Moscow: IDF, 2003, Nos. 481 and 482, pp. 575-577. Vladimir Bobrov and I are preparing a detailed study of the Kirov Assassination.

### **13. Stalin's and Zhdanov's telegram to the Politburo of September 25 1936.**

Khrushchev:

Mass repressions grew tremendously from the end of 1936 after a telegram from Stalin and [Andrei] Zhdanov, dated from Sochi on September 25, 1936, was addressed to Kaganovich, Molotov and other members of the Political Bureau. The content of the telegram was as follows:

'We deem it absolutely necessary and urgent that Comrade Ezhov be nominated to the post of People's Commissar for Internal Affairs. Yagoda has definitely proved himself to be incapable of unmasking the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc. The OGPU is four years behind in this matter. This is noted by all party workers and by the majority of the representatives of the NKVD.'

This Stalinist formulation that the "NKVD is four years behind" in applying mass repression and that there is a necessity for "catching up" with the neglected work directly pushed the NKVD workers on the path of mass arrests and executions.

Stalin's phrase did not refer to repression, much less mass repression, at all but to dissatisfaction with the investigation of the recently-discovered Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc. Getty<sup>37</sup> shows that the phrase "four years behind" must mean four years, not from the Riutin Platform but from the discovery of the bloc of Rights and Trotskyites formed in 1932. That is, it showed suspicion of Iagoda. Thurston and Jansen and Petrov agree.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Getty, *Origins*, Chapter 5; Getty, "The Great Purges Reconsidered". Unpub. PhD diss. Boston College, 1979, p. 326.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Thurston. *Life and Terror in Stalin's Russia, 1934-1941*. (Yale University Press; 1998), p. 35; Marc Jansen, Nikita Petrov. *Stalin's Loyal Executioner: People's Commissar Nikolai Ezhov, 1895-1940*. (Hoover Institution Press, 2002), p. 54.

In fact, Khrushchev knew this too, but hid the fact in the "Secret Speech." The Pospelov-Aristov draft of Khrushchev's speech stated directly that the "four years" was since the formation of the bloc in 1932. (*Doklad Khmshcheva*, 125). Pospelov and Aristov introduced the words *naverstat' upushchennoe* "catch up what has been neglected"). But this was an invention of theirs. Stalin had not used these words.

Khrushchev picked up this expression, but omitted the fact that the "four years" was since the formation of the bloc. The Pospelov Report also omitted reference to the "bloc," interpreting the "four years" to mean the need for repression (*Doklad Khmshcheva*, 220). An important part of Khrushchev's and Pospelov's basic premise is that no bloc existed.

It's clear that the "neglected work" Stalin and Zhdanov meant in their telegram was the investigation of the Right-Trotskyite bloc and its involvement with representatives of foreign governments in planning a "palace coup" and with "terror" (*terror* = assassination, murder). Both Getty and prominent Trotskyist scholar Pierre Broué affirm that such a bloc really existed. Their studies in Trotsky's own archives at Harvard University, opened in 1980, prove this beyond doubt.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> J. Arch Getty, "Trotsky in Exile: The Founding of the Fourth International." *Soviet Studies* 38 No. 1 (January 1986), 28 and n. 19 p. 34; Pierre Broué, "Trotsky et le bloc des oppositions de 1932." *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* 5 (1980) 5-37.

#### **14. Stalin's report at the February-March 1937 CC Plenum**

Khrushchev:

Stalin's report at the February-March Central Committee plenum in 1937, 'Deficiencies of party work and methods for the liquidation of

the Trotskyites and of other two-facers', contained an attempt at theoretical justification of the mass terror policy under the pretext that as we march forward toward socialism class war must allegedly sharpen. Stalin asserted that both history and Lenin taught him this.

Stalin's report at this Plenum did not contain any such theoretical justification. Khrushchev seriously distorted Stalin's words. Stalin never said that "as we march forward towards socialism class war must sharpen." What he said was:

... the further forward we advance, the greater the successes we achieve, the greater will be the fury of the remnants of the broken exploiting classes, the sooner will they resort to sharper forms of struggle, the more will they seek to harm the Soviet state and the more will they clutch at the most desperate means of struggle, as the last resort of doomed people. It should be borne in mind that the remnants of the broken classes in the U.S.S.R. are not alone. They have the direct support of our enemies beyond the bounds of the U.S.S.R.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup> J.V. Stalin, *Mastering Bolshevism* (New York: Workers Library, 1937), p. 30. At <http://www.marx2mao.com/Stalin/MB37.html>

Stalin went on to call for an individual approach and for political education, not for anything like repressions or "terror." But about the "direct support of enemies beyond the bounds of the USSR" Stalin was correct. A great deal of evidence that foreign agents were recruiting Soviet citizens into sabotage and espionage had already been gathered, and a lot more would be uncovered in the months after the Plenum.

And, in fact, Lenin **had** said something very similar to this in a passage Stalin had quoted in a speech of April 1929. Even in this speech the solutions Stalin called for were vigilance, along with political education courses to be organized for all Party leaders above a certain rank. This call for political education, not mass repression, marks the culminating point of his speech.

On March 5 1937 Stalin also made another, concluding report at the February-March CC Plenum. This closing speech of the Plenum could

never be termed a "theoretical justification of the mass terror policy". Stalin explicitly argued that "there must be an individual, differentiated approach." Further on in the report Stalin made the same point again, explicitly arguing **against** a mass approach. Stalin argues that there are, at most, only a few thousand Party members who could be said to have sympathized with the Trotskyites, or "about 12,000 Party members who sympathized with Trotskyism to some extent or other. Here you see the total forces of the Trotskyite gentlemen."<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

Rather than calling for a "mass terror policy," Stalin made a strong argument **against** it. Iurii Zhukov (*Inoi Stalin*, 360 ff.) agrees that Stalin's speech was very mild. A resolution was prepared on his report. It was passed unanimously, but has never been published. Zhukov quotes it from an archival copy (362-3).

Far from calling for "mass repression", as Khrushchev falsely claimed, Stalin called for more inner-Party political education, especially for Party leaders such as those at the Central Committee Plenum. He called for each such Party leader to pick two replacements for him so he could go to Party courses that would last four months, while more local Party leaders would go to courses lasting six months.

Many or most of the Delegates to the Plenum were First Secretaries and local Party secretaries. They could have interpreted this plan as a threat. In effect, they were to choose their own potential replacements. A kind of "competition" for these high Party posts seemed to be in the offing. If the Party Secretaries went off to these courses, who could say that they would return?

In reality, it was the Party First Secretaries and others around the country — including, as we have seen, Khrushchev himself — who turned to "mass repression." These courses were never set up. At the next Plenum in June 1937, the Secretaries instead turned to Stalin with frightening stories of threats by reactionaries and returning *kulaks*. They demanded extraordinary powers to shoot and imprison tens of thousands of these people. This will be discussed in more detail below.

Earlier in the Plenum also, on February 27, Stalin gave the report of the commission on the investigation of Bukharin and Rykov. This marked a total of three reports by Stalin — the most he ever made at any Plenum. In this report he recommended a very mild resolution. Getty and Naumov (411-416) study the voting of the commission and point out that Stalin's recommendations were mildest of all — internal exile. Ezhov, the original reporter, along with Budienniy, Manuil'skii, Shvernik, Kosarev and Iakir all voted to "turn [them] over to trial with a recommendation to shoot them."

See the detailed discussion by Vladimir Bobrov and Igor' Pykhalov<sup>42</sup> in an article that examines a rumor, spread by Bukharin's widow Larina in her memoirs, that **Stalin** had been for execution and and **Iakir** had opposed it — exactly the opposite of what really occurred, but a bit of anti-Stalin "folklore" that became elevated to the status of historical "fact" until the documents were published in post-Soviet times.

<sup>42</sup> "Iakir I Bukharin: Spletni I Dokumenty.." <http://delostalina.ru/?p=333> and elsewhere. It is reprinted in Igor' Pykhalov, *Velikii Obolgannyi Vozhd'* (Moscow: Yauza, 2010), Chapter 6, 355-366.

Stalin had outlined a view that the class struggle had to sharpen as the Soviet Union developed towards socialism. But this was not in 1937, but at the April 1928 Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission:

What is the issue here? It's not at all the issue that the further ahead we drive, the stronger the task of socialist construction becomes developed, then the stronger will grow the opposition of the capitalists. **That isn't the issue.** The issue is why does the opposition of the capitalists grow stronger? (Emphasis added, GF)<sup>43</sup>

According to Bordiugov and Kozlov this thesis had been further developed by Valerian Kuibyshev at the September 1928 Plenum. They add that Bukharin had opposed it at the April 1929 Plenum, but in an equivocal way: Bukharin had agreed that class struggle sharpened at certain times — and agreed that 1929 was one of those times — but said that it was not a general principle.



## 15. "Many Members questioned mass repression", especially Pavel Postyshev

Khrushchev:

At the February-March Central Committee plenum in 1937 many members actually questioned the rightness of the established course regarding mass repressions under the pretext of combating "two-facedness."

Comrade Postyshev most ably expressed these doubts. He said:

I have philosophized that the severe years of fighting have passed. Party members who have lost their backbones have broken down or have joined the camp of the enemy; healthy elements have fought for the party. These were the years of industrialization and collectivization. I never thought it possible that after this severe era had passed Karpov and people like him would find themselves in the camp of the enemy. (Karpov was a worker in the Ukrainian Central Committee whom Postyshev knew well.) And now, according to the testimony, it appears that Karpov was recruited in 1934 by the Trotskyites. I personally do not believe that in 1934 an honest party member who had trod the long road of unrelenting fight against enemies for the party and for socialism would now be in the camp of the enemies. I do not believe it... I cannot imagine how it would be possible to travel with the party during the difficult years and then, in 1934, join the Trotskyites. It is an odd thing...<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> See *Lubianka. Stalin i Glavnoe upravlenie gosbezopasnosti NKVD 1937-1938*. Moscow: MDF, 2004 (hereafter *Lubianka 2*) No. 17, pp. 69 ff., a report made to Stalin by Ezhov on February 2, 1937 of an interrogation of Asranfian about a "Right-Leftist" organization in the Ukraine that was collaborating with the Trotskyist and Ukrainian Nationalist undergrounds. In the transcript of Asranfian's confession of January 14, 1937 Stalin circled Karpov's name and wrote "Who is this?" in the margin — p. 71-2.

In the mid-1990s the transcript of this February-March 1937 Central Committee Plenum was finally published. We can now see that, while this quotation of Postyshev is genuine, Khrushchev's commentary is deliberately false.

Khrushchev obviously knew he was lying about it. Khrushchev said "many members...questioned the rightness..." In fact, **not a single member** did so. Even Postyshev did not do so! After the section quoted by Khrushchev, Postyshev went on to condemn Karpov, and anyone else who had joined forces with the enemy.

Postyshev was actually harshest of all at expelling large numbers of people, and was removed as candidate member of Politburo for this at the January 1938 CC Plenum. Getty demonstrates at length how Postyshev was raked over the coals at this Plenum for excessive repression, speaking of "the overvigilant Postyshev as being sacrificed for the sake of ending mass expulsions in the party..."<sup>45</sup> (Getty & Naumov 517; cf 533ff.)

<sup>45</sup> Getty, J. Arch and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror. Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999 (hereafter Getty & Naumov)., 517; cf. 533 ff. The document confirming Postyshev's expulsion and arrest is reproduced on pp. 514-516.

Iuri Zhukov's analysis agrees that at the January 1938 Plenum the Stalin leadership again tried to put brakes on the First Secretaries' illegal repressions. The document confirming Postyshev's expulsion and arrest for repressing innocent people in a mass way is quoted at length, in translation, by Getty and Naumov.

Khrushchev was present at the January 1938 CC Plenum, and certainly knew all about Postyshev's fate and why he was sacked. As a Plenum participant Khrushchev also had to know that "many members" did not "question the rightness" of the repressions. Khrushchev himself made a harsh, repressive speech at the February-March 1937 CC Plenum in which he supported the repression wholeheartedly.

Furthermore, it was Khrushchev who replaced Postyshev as candidate member of Politburo.<sup>46</sup> According to Getty and Naumov Khrushchev

himself was one of those who were "speaking up forcefully against Postyshev."<sup>47</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Stalinskoe Politbiuro v 30-e gody. Sbornik dokumentov (Moscow: AIRO-XX, 1995), p. 167.

<sup>47</sup> Getty & Naumov, 512.

Therefore, Khrushchev was lying. Far from "questioning" the mass repressions, Postyshev was one of those who most flagrantly engaged in them himself, to the point where he was the first to be removed from candidate membership in the Politburo, and soon after that expelled from the Party and arrested. The partial transcript of this Plenum now available confirms this. Postyshev's lawless and arbitrary repressions are documented in a letter from Andreev to Stalin of January 31, 1938.

Postyshev was soon arrested, and later confessed to involvement in some kind of conspiracy to participating in a Rightist conspiracy, naming a number of others, including other First Secretaries and CC members. According to Vladimir Karpov, Postyshev confirmed his confession to Molotov.

Given the documentation cited above — a small fraction of all that is available but not yet released — there is every reason to believe that Postyshev's arrest, trial and execution were justified. His execution came more than a year after his arrest. We know there is a lengthy investigative file on him, and a trial transcript, but virtually none of this has been released by the Russian government.

## Chapter 4. *The "Cases" Against Party Members and Related Questions*

### 16. Eikhe

Khrushchev:

The Central Committee considers it absolutely necessary to inform the Congress of many such fabricated "cases" against the members of the party's Central Committee elected at the 17th Party Congress. An example of vile provocation, of odious falsification and of criminal violation of revolutionary legality is the case of the former candidate for the Central Committee Political Bureau, one of the most eminent workers of the party and of the Soviet Government, Comrade Eikhe, who was a party member since 1905.

Khrushchev goes on to quote from several documents pertaining to Eikhe's case, including part of the text of Eikhe's letter to Stalin of October 27, 1939. This letter — really a declaration of a complaint of mistreatment — exists. There's no reason to doubt Eikhe's claim in it, that he was beaten by the interrogators into confessing things he never did. However, there is no reason to believe that Eikhe was telling the truth, or the whole truth, either.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> The letter is published in *Doklad Khrushcheva*, pp. 225-229, without archival identifiers. The original letter, as well as perhaps much else from Eikhe's investigation file, is still kept top secret by Russian authorities today. Even the editors of this official publication were not permitted to cite its exact location in the archives. We have translated and annotated it in Chapter 11 below.

The Pospelov Report quotes somewhat more from the text of Eikhe's letter, but does not contain any evidence concerning Eikhe's guilt or innocence. It concludes with the single sentence: "At the present time it has been unquestionably established that Eikhe's case was falsified."<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> *RKEB* 1, p 328.

### Concerning "Torture"

We should keep in mind some things that are, or should be, obvious. The fact that somebody has been beaten or tortured does not mean that that person was "innocent." The fact that a person may have given false confessions under torture does not mean that person was not guilty of yet other offenses. The fact that a person claims that he was beaten, tortured, intimidated, etc., into giving a false confession does not mean that he is telling the truth — that he was, in fact, tortured or that the confessions he gave were false. Of course, it doesn't mean that he is lying, either.

In short, there is no substitute for evidence. Eikhe's letter is not sufficient evidence to establish anything, including whether he was tortured or not.

In one of the few quotations we have from his own trial in 1940, Ezhov claims to have been beaten into false confessions as well. Yet there can be no doubt that Ezhov was guilty of falsifying confessions, beatings and torture, fabricating cases against many innocent people and executing them.

However, this is only part of the Eikhe story. We do not know all of it, because neither Khrushchev, nor any of his successors as heads of the CPSU, nor Gorbachev, Yeltsin, or Putin, have ever seen fit to publish the documents in Eikhe's case, or even to make Eikhe's case available to researchers.

There is good evidence suggesting that it was precisely Eikhe who led the way for the First Secretaries in demanding extraordinary powers to shoot thousands of people and send thousands more to what became the GULAG — that it was, in fact, Eikhe who began the mass repression that Khrushchev is claiming to denounce.<sup>50</sup> Iuri Zhukov outlines the details we know. (KP Nov. 16, 2002). He believes that Ezhov was working with the First Secretaries on this, and would have arrested and executed Stalin if Stalin had refused them (Nov. 16 2002; Nov. 20, 2002).

<sup>50</sup> See S.N. Mironov's note to Nikolai Ezhov of June 17, 1937, printed in Ezhov's "special communication" to Stalin of June 22, 1937, in Vladimir Khaustov and Lennart Samuelson, *Stalin, NKVD i repressii 1936-1938 gg.* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2009) 332-333. Mironov explicitly names Eikhe in this note.

In early 2006 a volume was published with transcripts of a single, long interrogation each from Ezhov and Frinovskii, Ezhov's second-in-command in the NKVD.<sup>51</sup> Both confess to being a part of the conspiracy of the Rights that included Bukharin, Rykov, and Ezhov's predecessor as head of the NKVD Iagoda. Frinovskii names Evdokimov and Ezhov, as well as Iagoda, as leading Rightist conspirators. He specifically mentions Eikhe, once as a visitor of Evdokimov's, a second time together with both Ezhov and Evdokimov.<sup>52</sup> Evdokimov was very close to Ezhov, and was tried, convicted, and executed together with Ezhov in February 1940. It is clear that Frinovskii suspected Eikhe was involved in the same Rightist conspiratorial group that he, Ezhov, Evdokimov and others were, or he would not have mentioned him in this connection. But he does not give specifics concerning Eikhe.

<sup>51</sup> *Lubianka. Stalin i NKVD-NKGB-GUKR "Smersh". 1939 — mart 1946.* Moscow: MDF, 2006, Doc. No. 37, pp. 52-72, and Doc. No. 33, pp. 33-50. This volume will be cited hereafter as *Lubianka 3*.

<sup>52</sup> Eikhe confirms one such visit to Ezhov's together with Evdokimov in the letter to Stalin. Cf. *Doklad* p. 228.

Zhukov's hypothesis best explained the known facts even before the publication of Frinovskii's statement of April 11, 1939. In it Frinovskii confirms the existence of a very broad Rightist conspiracy all over the Soviet Union. Evdokimov, who outlined this conspiracy to Frinovskii in 1934, told him that already by 1934 the Rights had recruited a large number of leading Soviet officials around the USSR.<sup>53</sup> It was precisely the trials and executions of such people that Khrushchev claimed Stalin had fabricated. Frinovskii's statement makes it clear this was no fabrication.

<sup>53</sup> *Lubianka 3*, p. 38.

Evdokimov emphasized that it was now necessary to recruit among the lower levels of Party, state, and peasant — i.e., kolkhoz — members, in order to take charge of the wave of uprisings which were already under way, and which the Rights hoped to organize into a movement for a *coup*.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

According to documents available to Jansen and Petrov, many of which have been re-classified by the Russian government, Eikhe interfered in NKVD matters, insisting on the arrest of persons against whom there was no evidence.<sup>55</sup> Ezhov told his subordinates not to oppose Eikhe but to cooperate with him. This is consistent with Frinovskii's statement about the way Ezhov, and he himself, operated — beating and framing innocent persons in order to appear to be fighting a conspiracy while hiding their own conspiracy.

Zhukov believes that the goal of Eikhe, together with other First Secretaries, was to avoid at all costs the contested elections scheduled for December 1937, by claiming that the oppositional conspiracies were too dangerous.<sup>56</sup> Whether they really believed this or not, at the October 1937 CC Plenum they were successful in persuading Stalin and Molotov to cancel the contested elections.

<sup>56</sup> Stalin wanted elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR to take place with 2-3 candidates for a given position. Candidates would be proposed not just by the Communist Party (ACP(b)) but also by union-wide social organizations. As evidence Zhukov published a sample ballot for the December 1937 elections on which is written: "Leave on this ballot the last name of ONE candidate for whom you wish to vote. Cross out the rest." It is the sixth illustration after p. 256 in Zhukov, IU. *Inoi Stalin*. Moscow: Vagrius, 2003. I have put it online at [http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/sample\\_ballot\\_1937.html](http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/sample_ballot_1937.html)

Stalin was under other pressures, too. One of his closest collaborators on the Constitution and election issues, Ia. A. Iakovlev, was suddenly arrested on October 12, 1937. In a confession-interrogation that was first published only in 2004 Iakovlev said he had been working for the Trotskyist

underground since the time of Lenin's death, and was cooperating with Trotsky through a German spy.<sup>57</sup> Given this avalanche of evidence that **real** and extremely dangerous conspiracies involving highly-placed persons in the Soviet government, Party and military, Stalin and the Politburo were in no position to ignore firm demands from a number of First Secretaries for an all-out war against the danger.

<sup>57</sup> Lubianka 2 Doc. No. 26, pp. 387-395.

It is interesting that Eikhe appears to have been tried and executed at the same time as Ezhov and Ezhov's associates. Can it be that the *real* charges against Eikhe at trial were not those of espionage, but that he conspired with Ezhov to accuse, perhaps to torture, and to execute without evidence? A.S. Iakovlev, the famous aircraft designer, wrote in his memoirs that Stalin had told him Ezhov had been executed because he had "killed many innocent people."<sup>58</sup> It appears that Ezhov was executed for that, and for his own participation in the Rightist conspiracy. Perhaps that was so with Eikhe.

<sup>58</sup> A.S. Iakovlev, *Tsel' Zhizni*. Moscow: Politizdat, 1973, p. 264. This book is also available online at <http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/yakovlev-as/20.html>

The whole text Eikhe's letter to Stalin of October 27, 1939 was appended to the Pospelov Commission's report. In it, Eikhe makes clear that he was charged with either conspiring, or working closely with, Ezhov. (p. 229) The evidence we cite here, which was available to Petrov, strongly suggest that Eikhe was deeply involved in Ezhov's mass repression.

Eikhe's claims in his letter to Stalin that he was beaten and tortured into making false confessions is very credible, since he names Ushakov and Nikolaev [-Zhurid] as his torturers. We know independently that these two specific NKVD officers tortured many others, and in fact were tried and executed for precisely this under Beria.

Nikolaev-Zhurid was finally arrested in October 1939 under Beria. This is the same month that Eikhe wrote his letter to Stalin. Nikolaev-Zhurid was



also executed, and therefore probably tried, at the same time as were Ezhov and Eikhe, in early February 1940. So was Ushakov.

This suggests that Ezhov and his men may have been trying to put the blame on each other in order to disguise their own responsibility. This is consistent with the way Frinovskii described Ezhov. Frinovskii explicitly describes Ezhov as demanding that Zakovskii be shot so that Beria would not be able to question him and, possibly, learn about Ezhov's role in massive illegal repressions and in the Rightist conspiracy.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Lubianka 3, 45.

Eikhe was arrested on April 29, 1938, long before Beria joined the NKVD, and therefore long before Ezhov had to fear Beria's interrogating Eikhe. Given what we know from Jansen and Petrov's summary of the documents they got to see, it seems clear that Ezhov and Eikhe had some kind of falling out. We know from Frinovskii's statements and from other sources that Ezhov and his men routinely tortured those they arrested, whether guilty or not, to force them to make confessions incriminating themselves.

What we do not have is the rest of Eikhe's case file, including the trial documents — the actual accusations made against him at his trial in February 1940, evidence, testimony, the prosecution's charge (*obvinitel'noe zakliuchenie*) and sentence. We know that the "archival-investigatory file" on Eikhe exists — or did in Khrushchev's day, because it was cited as the place where Eikhe's letter was taken from (p.229).

But the only thing released from the Eikhe case file was the letter to Stalin. The rest of the contents of that file have not been released. And not all of Eikhe's letter to Stalin was in either Khrushchev's Speech or in the Pospelov Report. Specifically, Eikhe wrote that he was not willing to

...undergo beatings again for Ezhov, who had been arrested and exposed as a counter-revolutionary, and who was the undoing of me [or, "who has destroyed me"] was beyond my strength.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Doklad Khrushcheva, p. 229.

The underlined section was carefully excised from the Pospelov Report, as were the following words:

My confessions about counter-revolutionary ties with Ezhov are the blackest spot on my conscience.

Eikhe evidently believed that Ezhov was a counter-revolutionary; had confessed to counter-revolutionary ties with Ezhov which he here denies; and blamed Ezhov, rather than Beria, for his downfall.

Khrushchev wanted to blame Beria rather than Ezhov. Eikhe blamed Ezhov, so it's easy to see why Khrushchev omitted these passages. Eikhe's claim that Ezhov was in reality a counter-revolutionary would have raised questions in the minds of the Central Committee — questions inconvenient for Khrushchev. The recently-published interrogations of Ezhov and statement by Frinovskii flesh out Ezhov's conspiratorial activity and his frame-ups of innocent people. Khrushchev and Pospelov covered them up too, for the sake of casting all the blame on Stalin and Beria.

Though we'd like to know a lot more, the interrogation /confessions of Frinovskii and Ezhov are fully consistent with the facts outlined above.

## **17. Ezhov**

Although it breaks the order of the original somewhat, it is convenient to examine what Khrushchev says about Ezhov here, since it is closely linked to Eikhe.

Khrushchev:

We are justly accusing Ezhov for the degenerate practices of 1937. But we have to answer these questions: Could Ezhov have arrested Kossior, for instance, without the knowledge of Stalin? Was there an exchange of opinions or a Political Bureau decision concerning this? No, there was not, as there was none regarding other cases of this type. Could Ezhov have decided such important matters as the fate of such eminent party figures? No, it would be a display of naiveté to consider this the work of Ezhov alone. It is clear that these matters were

decided by Stalin, and that without his orders and his sanction Ezhov could not have done this.

The interrogations of both Ezhov and Frinovskii published in early 2006 fully confirm Ezhov's deliberate torturing and killing of a great many innocent people. He organized these massive atrocities to cover up his own involvement in the Rightist conspiracy and with German military espionage, as well as in a conspiracy to assassinate Stalin or another Politburo member, and to seize power by *coup d'état*.

These confessions are the most dramatic new documents to appear in years that bear upon our subject. They completely contradict Khrushchev's allegations on every point his contention that Ezhov was just doing Stalin's bidding; that the Military leaders were "framed"; and that the Moscow Trials were faked (as Khrushchev suggests). We now (2010) have a great many more interrogations of Ezhov's, all of which confirm the existence of his very serious conspiracy and give much detail about it.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup> English translation of the texts of all of Ezhov's interrogations published as of 2010 are in Grover Furr, "Interrogations of Nikolai Ezhov, former People's Commissar for Internal Affairs," at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/ezhovinterrogs.html>

Khrushchev, his supporters, and those who did the "research" for the Pospelov Report and the "rehabilitation" reports, had all this information at their disposal. So why did they not deal with it in those reports? The most obvious reason is that they covered it up in order to reach conclusions exactly the opposite from the truth.

The question naturally arises: Why did Ezhov do all this? Zhukov thinks he may have been in league with a number of the First Secretaries in some kind of conspiracy. Ezhov's men functioned together with the First Secretaries in the provinces. In documents available to Jansen and Petrov in the early '90s and extensively quoted by them in their book, S.N. Mironov, head of the NKVD of the Western Siberian region, tells of being instructed by Ezhov not to interfere with Eikhe even though the latter was insisting on the arrest of persons without evidence and was personally interfering in the

investigations.<sup>62</sup> The trial transcripts for those tried at the same time as Ezhov have not been released. But it seems very likely that a number of these men, of whom Eikhe was one, were tried and convicted of working with Ezhov to kill innocent people.

<sup>62</sup> See the Appendix to this chapter for quotations.

The recently published confessions of Frinovskii and Ezhov now confirm that Ezhov himself headed an important Rightist conspiracy, in collusion with the German military, and that he conspired to seize power in the USSR himself.

All this information, and much more, was of course available to Khrushchev and his investigators. Yet as late as February 1, 1956, Khrushchev took the position that Ezhov was completely innocent, and Stalin was to blame!<sup>63</sup> He modified this view of Ezhov only slightly in the "Secret Speech» as he tried to shift all the responsibility for Ezhov's actions onto Stalin.

<sup>63</sup> See *RKEB 1*, pp. 308-9 and Appendix to this chapter.

Stalin, however, blamed Ezhov, and his testimony is entirely consistent with the evidence presented by Jansen and Petrov. In Russia, at least, the passage from aircraft designer A. Iakovlev's memoirs, in which Stalin explained to him how Ezhov had innocent men framed, is very well known. Molotov and Kaganovich said similar things in their interviews with Felix Chuev.

Ezhov was removed from office, evidently with difficulty. In April 1939 Ezhov was arrested for, and immediately confessed to, gross abuses in investigations: beatings, falsified confessions, torture, and illegal executions. Jansen and Petrov, relying in part on documents no longer available to researchers and in part on some documents only released in 2006, show the tremendous extent of these abuses and describe the criminal methods of Ezhov and his men. There is **zero** evidence — none at all — that Stalin or the central leadership wanted him in any way to act like this, and plenty of evidence that they thought this criminal.

## 18. Rudzutak

Khrushchev:

Comrade Rudzutak, candidate-member of the Political Bureau, member of the party since 1905, who spent 10 years in a Tsarist hard-labor camp, completely retracted in court the confession which was forced from him. ... After careful examination of the case in 1955, it was established that the accusation against Rudzutak was false and that it was based on slanderous materials. Rudzutak has been rehabilitated posthumously.

According to the rehabilitation materials Rudzutak did, in fact, confess.<sup>64</sup> Evidently this was a very detailed confession in which he named "more than sixty people" with whom he was involved in the conspiracy — including Eikhe, who is named twice in the two pages of his rehabilitation report. Then he retracted this confession at trial, stating that he was "forced" to confess by "an abcess [*gnoynik*] not yet uprooted from the NKVD." It is interesting that he evidently did not claim he had been tortured, or the Rudenko's report would have so stated. Molotov later told Chuev Rudzutak had been tortured and did not confess.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> *RKEB 1*, pp. 294-5.

<sup>65</sup> F.I. Chuev. *Molotov: Poluderkhavnyi Vlastelin*. Moscow: OLMA-PRESS, 1999, p. 484.

There is a great deal of testimony against him. The Rehabilitation Materials by Rudenko of December 24, 1955 do not establish Rudzutak's innocence. Furthermore, they acknowledge that Rudzutak was inculcated by a great many other defendants.

Obviously it is problematic to convict someone of a serious crime based only upon his own confession. By the same token, a person cannot be declared innocent solely because he denies consistently denies his guilt. But multiple, independent accusations by different defendants, interrogated by different investigators, is strong evidence in any judicial system. For

example, in the United States today, defendants are routinely convicted of conspiracy solely on the testimony of alleged confederates. And co-conspirators are guilty of crimes committed by other members of the conspiracy.

There is no evidence in that "rehabilitation" that Rudzutak was innocent, as Khrushchev claimed. The only "evidence" the rehabilitation report can come up with is that the testimonies against him are "contradictory." This is not evidence that they are false. Just the opposite: if a substantial number of confessions or testimonies were identical that would be *prima facie* evidence that they had been "orchestrated" in some way.

Rudzutak evidently retracted his confession at trial. But we can't be sure he retracted **all** of it. The Rudenko Rehabilitation Materials of 1955 give much more extensive information on the accusations against Rudzutak. The Pospelov Report mentions only the accusation that he was in a "Latvian nationalist organization, engaged in sabotage, and was a spy for foreign intelligence."<sup>66</sup> Khrushchev falsified even this:

They did not even call him to the Politburo, Stalin did not want to speak with him. ... Through an exhaustive verification carried out in 1955 it was established that the case against Rudzutak was falsified. And he was condemned on the basis of slanderous evidence.

<sup>66</sup> *RKEB 1*, p. 328.

There's nothing in either the Rudenko materials or the Pospelov Report about these things. Perhaps Khrushchev just made them up.

And a great deal is omitted. For instance, the Rehabilitation materials on Rudzutak do not even mention Tukhachevsky, though Rudzutak was closely associated with him in expulsions, etc.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>67</sup> *RKEB 1*, pp. 294-5.

This is how we know Khrushchev lied — if the "rehabilitation" report on Rudzutak does not clear him, then Khrushchev did not know, in reality, whether Rudzutak was guilty or not. Khrushchev spoke "in flagrant

disregard for the truth" — he may not have known what it was, but he claimed to know. And of course Khrushchev and Pospelov had access to all of Rudzutak's file and to all of the investigative materials linked with it. If exculpatory evidence existed, why did they not cite it?

Still, we do know now that Ezhov and, at his instruction, his men, were fabricating confessions against many thousands of people. It's quite possible that there was some falsification in Rudzutak's case. Ezhov and his interrogators could have falsified some information against Rudzutak even though Rudzutak had admitted his guilt on some matters, and had been implicated by a great many others.

It is all the more important, then to be able to carefully scrutinize all the evidence available to Soviet investigators and courts at the time. But this is exactly what we cannot do. Neither in Khrushchev's day, in Gorbachev's time when "glasnost", or "openness", was supposed to lead to the archives being "opened", nor to this day, have any but a tiny proportion of the investigative materials against even the major defendants at the three famous Moscow Trials of 1936, 1937, and 1938 been released.

No materials from Rudzutak's case have ever been published, either during the USSR or since. This in itself is suspicious, as Rudzutak was arrested in close association with Tukhachevsky.

Rudzutak was one of the people accused by Stalin of involvement in the Military Conspiracy on June 2, 1937 at the expanded extraordinary expanded session of the Military Soviet.<sup>68</sup> Yet he was not executed until July 28, 1938, over a year after the Tukhachevsky group. This suggests that a long, serious investigation occurred. But we do not have access to any of it.

<sup>68</sup> Lubianka 2, No. 92 pp. 202 ff. On Rudzutak particularly see 204-5.

Rudzutak was convicted through the testimony of others, despite the lack of any confession of his own. He is named in several NKVD documents published in Lubianka 2, such as

- No. 290, M.L. Rukhimovich's very detailed confession. Rudzutak is named on p. 484.
- No. 323, pp. 527-37; Rudzutak is named on p. 530.

Of course these do not prove his guilt, all the more so since they are "Ezhov" documents, confessions made during Ezhov's tenure as head of the NKVD — and we have seen above the kind of stuff that went on under Ezhov. But they are incompatible with any claim Rudzutak was innocent — that is, with his "rehabilitation." A defendant's confession of guilt may not be truthful, for one reason or another. But it can never be evidence of innocence.

Stalin's private annotations on these<sup>69</sup> as well as other documents are consistent with someone trying to learn from the police reports being submitted to him, but not at all with someone "fabricating" anything. It is hard to imagine anyone making such annotations, intended only for the eyes of his closest supporters, if he did not in fact accept them as true.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.* p. 537.

Rudzutak is named many times in the 1938 Moscow Trial by defendants Grin'ko, Rozengol'ts and Krestinsky, who testify about him at length and in great detail. In another interrogation — confession just published in early 2006 Rozengol'ts is named by Tamarin as the person who recruited him into the Right-Trotskyite conspiracy.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Lubianka 3, 84-90, 92-93.

According to Krestinsky, Rudzutak was central to the whole conspiracy. Molotov agrees Rudzutak told him he had been beaten and tortured, but still refused to confess. However, there was much testimony against him.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Chuev, *Molotov*, 483-5.

## 19. Rozenblum

Khrushchev:



The way in which the former NKVD workers manufactured various fictitious "anti-Soviet centers" and "blocs" with the help of provocatory methods is seen from the confession of Comrade Rozenblum, party member since 1906, who was arrested in 1937 by the Leningrad NKVD.

During the examination in 1955 of the Komarov case Rozenblum revealed the following fact: When Rozenblum was arrested in 1937, he was subjected to terrible torture during which he was ordered to confess false information concerning himself and other persons. He was then brought to the office of Zakovskii, who offered him freedom on condition that he make before the court a false confession fabricated in 1937 by the NKVD concerning "sabotage, espionage and diversion in a terroristic center in Leningrad." (Movement in the hall.) With unbelievable cynicism, Zakovskii told about the vile "mechanism" for the crafty creation of fabricated "anti-Soviet plots."

"In order to illustrate it to me," stated Rozenblum, "Zakovskii gave me several possible variants of the organization of this center and of its branches. After he detailed the organization to me, Zakovskii told me that the NKVD would prepare the case of this center, remarking that the trial would be public. Before the court were to be brought 4 or 5 members of this center: Chudov, Ugarov, Smorodin, Pozem, Shaposhnikova (Chudov's wife) and others together with 2 or 3 members from the branches of this center...

"... The case of the Leningrad center has to be built solidly, and for this reason witnesses are needed. Social origin (of course, in the past) and the party standing of the witness will play more than a small role.

"'You, yourself,' said Zakovskii, 'will not need to invent anything. The NKVD will prepare for you a ready outline for every branch of the center; you will have to study it carefully and to remember well all questions and answers which the Court might ask. This case will be ready in four-five months, or perhaps a half year. During all this time you will be preparing yourself so that you

will not compromise the investigation and yourself. Your future will depend on how the trial goes and on its results. If you begin to lie and to testify falsely, blame yourself. If you manage to endure it, you will save your head and we will feed and clothe you at the Government's cost until your death."

This is the kind of vile things which were then practiced. (Movement in the hall.)

Khrushchev never explicitly states, but strongly implies, that Stalin was involved in this. In reality, the evidence we have today — and that Khrushchev had then — shows that Zakovskii was Ezhov's man.

Rozenblium testified about Zakovskii's fabrication of cases. Zakovskii was "one of Ezhov's closest coworkers."<sup>72</sup> Zakovskii was arrested on April 30, 1938, and sentenced to death on August 29, 1938. Beria was named as Ezhov's second-in-command in August 1938.

<sup>72</sup> Ezhov is called "one of the closest coworkers of N.I. Ezhov" in the Zakovskii biography from Zalesky, *Imperiia Stalina*, at <http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/zakovski.html>

If Rozenblium<sup>73</sup> was telling the truth here, then two conclusions emerge. First, Zakovskii would not have done all this without Ezhov's leadership. Therefore it's clear that Ezhov was involved in some kind of major conspiracy to build himself up by fabricating large-scale conspiracies. This is consistent with the details available to, and reported by, Jansen and Petrov concerning Ezhov's conspiracy, which we have examined briefly above.

<sup>73</sup> A.M. Rozenblium, according to the Pospelov Report of Feb. 9, 1956 — see *Doklad Khrushcheva*, p. 193, 865; *RKEB* 1, 323. When arrested in 1937 he was the chief of the Political department of the October railroad. In his speech Khrushchev did not refer to Rosenblium's criminal case file but to his statements to the Commission of the CC CPSU in 1955.

Second, Beria — which means Stalin and those around him in the Politburo — was involved in investigating, and ultimately uncovering and

eliminating, this conspiracy. Stalin and Beria were involved in smashing Ezhov's conspiracy, not in fomenting it. This is consistent with Zhukov's deductions.

Jansen and Petrov (151) quote Ezhov as having Zakovskii shot in August 1938 to get him out of the way, so he could not testify against him (Ezhov). Frinovskii affirms this in his recently-published (February 2006) confession statement of April 11, 1939. According to Frinovskii and the other evidence we have, Zakovskii was part of Ezhov's conspiracy. Frinovskii quotes Ezhov as telling him in October 1937 that Zakovskii "is completely 'ours'". Then on August 27-28 1938 Evdokimov, Ezhov's right-hand man, told Frinovskii to make sure Zakovskii and "all of Iagoda's men" had been shot, because Beria might reopen their cases and "these cases could turn against us."<sup>74</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Jansen & Petrov, 151. Lubyanka 3, p. 45. Cf text at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/frinovskyeng.html>

Zakovskii was explicitly blamed for torturing people "as a rule" in Stalin's telegram of Jan. 10, 1939 (which may in fact have been sent, or resent, in July — for this telegram, see below). Even without the recent statements and confessions by Ezhov, Frinovskii and others, this would be strong evidence that Stalin was opposed to this kind of behavior.

But Khrushchev omitted this part of the Stalin telegram in the "Secret Speech" — undoubtedly because it would conflict with the impression he was attempting to produce here. Therefore Khrushchev is blaming Stalin for Ezhov's conspiracy, while in fact Stalin had Ezhov arrested, tried, and executed for precisely this conspiracy.

## **20. I.D . Kabakov**

Khrushchev:

Even more widely was the falsification of cases practiced in the provinces. The NKVD headquarters of the Sverdlov Oblast "discovered" the so-called "Ural uprising staff" — an organ of the bloc

of rightists, Trotskyites, Socialist Revolutionaries, church leaders — whose chief supposedly was the Secretary of the Sverdlov Oblast Party Committee and member of the Central Committee, All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), Kabakov, who had been a party member since 1914. The investigative materials of that time show that in almost all kraia, oblasts [provinces] and republics there supposedly existed "rightist Trotskyite, espionage-terror and diversionary-sabotage organizations and centers" and that the heads of such organizations as a rule — for no known reason — were first secretaries of oblast or republic Communist party committees or central committees.

Despite the Russian government's refusal to release investigative materials of this period, there is quite a lot of evidence against Kabakov.

The American mining engineer John D. Littlepage was hired during the Depression to work in the USSR developing the mining industry, and wrote a memoir of his years there upon his return to the USA (he was from Alaska). In *In Search of Soviet Gold* NY: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1938 (1937) Littlepage discusses sabotage in Urals. He specifically suspects Kabakov; claims that Kabakov had never competently seen to the fruitful exploitation of the rich mineral area under his stewardship; claims he suspected some kind of conspiracy in all this; and expressed no surprise when Kabakov was arrested shortly after the Piatakov trial, since the two had long been closely associated. More recently, James Harris has seen and quoted evidence against Kabakov from Kabakov's criminal case without suggesting any fakery in it.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>75</sup> James R. Harris. *The Great Urals: regionalism and the evolution of the Soviet system* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1999) 163 at notes 78 and 81.

Kabakov was dismissed from both the CC and the Party itself by a resolution circulated to the CC on May 17-19, 1937 and confirmed at the June 1937 on June 29th. This may suggest some kind of relationship either with the Tukhachevsky — military conspiracy, which was being unraveled at that time, or with the Rightist conspiracy generally, as Iagoda was being intensively questioned about this time.

Kabakov was named by L.I. Mirzoian, former First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, as a leader of the Right-Trotskyite underground.<sup>76</sup> He figured in Ezhov's report to the June 1937 CC Plenum on the widespread nature of the conspiracy.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup> *RKEB 1*, Doc. No. 52, p. 280; cf Pospelov report, *ibid.*, p. 323.

<sup>77</sup> Jansen & Petrov, p. 75.

Kabakov was named by P. T. Zubarev, one of the defendants in the March 1938 "Bukharin" Moscow Trial, as known by him to be a member of the Rightist conspiracy in the Urals as early as 1929. Zubarev claimed to have worked closely with Kabakov in this conspiracy since that time. Rykov, one of the main defendants along with Bukharin, also named Kabakov as an important member of the Rightist conspiracy. There is no evidence that Rykov or, indeed, any of the defendants in this Trial were subjected to torture.

Kabakov was named as head of a counterrevolutionary organization in Urals in a note to the Politburo signed by Kabakov's successor, First Secretary of the Sverdlovsk Obkom A. Ia. Stollar. NKVD man D.M. Dmitriev of Sverdlovsk later confessed to being involved in a conspiracy himself, and fingered Stollar as a conspirator too. But he also speaks of the "liquidation of the *kabakovshchina*" in the Urals in 1937 — that is, Kabakov was the first to go but other conspirators, including him and Stollar, remained. Stalin's annotation on Stollar's note suggests he is not organizing this news, but learning of it.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Lubianka 2, Doc. No. 276, p. 463.

In declaring Kabakov "rehabilitated", therefore, Khrushchev was casting the strongest doubt on the 1938 Moscow Trial, as he had already done on the 1936 Trial in declaring that Zinoviev and Karnenev had been treated too harshly. For present purposes, though, it's clear that Khrushchev did not speak the truth about Kabakov in his "Secret Speech."

**21-24. S.V. Kossior; V. Ia. Chubar'; P.P. Postyshev; A.V. Kosarev**

Khrushchev:

Many thousands of honest and innocent Communists have died as a result of this monstrous falsification of such "cases," as a result of the fact that all kinds of slanderous "confessions" were accepted, and as a result of the practice of forcing accusations against oneself and others. In the same manner were fabricated the "cases" against eminent party and state workers — Kossior, Chubar, Postyshev, Kosarev and others.

(For Postyshev, see Chapters 3 and 9.)

Kosior, Chubar', Postyshev, and Kosarev are listed in that precise order in a letter of March 16, 1939, to Stalin from V. V. Ul'rikh, Chairman of the Military College of the Supreme Court of the USSR, which is reproduced in facsimile at:

<http://www.memo.ru/history/vkvs/images/ulrih-39.jpg>

The relevant section reads as follows:

Military Collegium

Of the Supreme Court

Of the Union of SSR

-----

March 15, 1939

No. 001119...

Re: No. I-68/112

TOP SECRET

Copy No. 1

TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE ACP(b)

To Comrade J.V. STALIN

Between February 21 and March 14 1939 the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR in closed court sessions in Moscow heard the cases of 436 persons.

413 were sentenced to be shot. The sentences have been carried out on the basis of the law of December 1, 1934.

At court sessions of the Military Collegium the following persons fully confessed their guilt KOSIOR S.V., CHUBAR', V. IA., POSIYSHEV P.I., KOSAREV A.V, ...

According to the rest of Ulrikh's note others among the accused renounced their confessions but "were exposed by other evidence in the case." That is, Kosior, Chubar', Kosarev, and Postyshev did not renounce their confessions, as others did, but reaffirmed them at trial.

### **Kosior and Chubar'**

In his confession-interrogation of April 26 1939 Ezhov names Chubar' and Kosior as two of a number of high-ranking Soviet officials who were passing information to German intelligence — in plain language, German spies. Ezhov says that the German agent Norden was in touch with "a great many" others.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Lubianka 3, p. 57.

According to the Rehabilitation materials of Postyshev prepared for Khrushchev, Kosior implicated Postyshev, then withdrew his confessions, but then reiterated them again.<sup>80</sup> In his own confessions Postyshev implicated Kosior, as well as Iakir, Chubar', and others. (ibid., 218) Chubar' was implicated in the Right-Trotskyite conspiracy by Antipov, Kosior, Pramnek, Sukhomlin, Postyshev, Boldyrev, and others.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>80</sup> *RKEB 1*, p. 219.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251.

Interviewed by Felix Chuev the aged Lazar' M. Kaganovich said that he had defended Kosior and Chubar', but had given up when he was shown a lengthy handwritten confession of Chubar's.<sup>82</sup> Molotov told Chuev that he himself was present when Antipov, Chubar's friend, accused Chubar'. Chubar' denied it heatedly and got very angry at Antipov. Molotov knew both of them very well.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Chuev. *Kaganovich. Shepliov*. Moscow: OLMA-PRESS, 2001, p. 117.

<sup>83</sup> Chuev, *Molotov*, pp. 486-7.

According to the Pospelov Report prepared for Khrushchev, Kosior was arrested on May 3, 1938 — that is, under Ezhov — and both tortured (no details are given) and subjected to prolonged interrogations of up to 14 hours at a stretch. Of 54 interrogations of Kosior only 4 were preserved.<sup>84</sup> So far this has all the earmarks of a Ezhov frameup.

<sup>84</sup> *RKEB 1*, p. 326.

However, Kosior was sentenced on February 26, 1939, three months after Ezhov's ouster. By this time cases were being reviewed, and it had long been recognized that Ezhov and his men had tortured innocent men.

We know, from the Ul'rikh letter cited above, that Kosior and Chubar' acknowledged their guilt at trial, though others did not. But no details of this trial have been released, either in the Pospelov Report or in the Rehabilitation Materials. Once again, it appears that the Khrushchev-era materials were not an objective study of the investigative materials, but rather a falsified attempt to make all those convicted **appear** to have been "innocent."

In the long transcript of the October 1938 confession — interrogation of Dmitriev, former head of the NKVD in Sverdlovsk. Dmitriev speaks of the "counterrevolutionary underground headed by Kosior, who was one of the most clandestine of the Rights in the Ukraine."<sup>85</sup>



<sup>85</sup> Lubianka 3, p. 590.

Ezhov's confession makes it clearer than ever that Chubar' and Kosior were guilty of being involved in the underground organization of Rights without more information. Even without it, it's obvious that there was a great deal of evidence against him. Khrushchev failed to release it, and it has never been released since.

### **Kosarev**

It is not true that, as Khrushchev stated, the Rehabilitation Materials established that the case against Kosarev had been fabricated.

There is very little information about Kosarev in the published Rehabilitation materials. (*Reabilitatsiia Kok Eto Bylo* 1, 79-80; 166-8; 219; in future *RKEB* 1) He did confess, and short parts are published — though the rehabilitation report of 1954 claims Kosarev was tortured into making the confession by Beria (167). His own dossier — interrogations, trial, etc. — has never been made available to researchers.

Kosarev is named in the Ul'rikh letter of March 16, 1939, as one of the accused who confirmed his admission of guilt at trial (see above). We also know that Postyshev accused Kosarev.

According to the rehabilitation report Kosarev had been hostile towards Beria when Beria was First Secretary of the Georgian party. They continue that Kosarev was tortured into confessing, and also perhaps framed. Kosarev did confess at trial. According to the rehabilitation report he was duped into thinking this would save him. We do know of examples in which defendants claimed they were beaten into confessing during interrogations but renounced those confessions at trial. But it is hard to imagine why anyone would confess to a capital crime at trial in order to save himself!

The Rehabilitation Materials on Kosarev are very concerned to blame Beria for everything, as is a letter written by Kosarev's widow in December 1953, at the time Beria and others were supposedly on trial. (*RKEB* 1, 79-80) And

Khrushchev was quick to claim that virtually anyone arrested and convicted during Beria's tenure as head of the NKVD was "framed."

Kosarev was arrested on November 29, 1937 after Ezhov was effectively ousted. He had had some contact with Ezhov, having been editor of the Komsomol newspaper that Ezhov's wife worked on. Jansen and Petrov speculate that he may have been involved with Ezhov in some way, though they caution that this was unlikely. (185)

But in a recently-published interrogation (February 2006) A.N. Babulin, Ezhov's live-in nephew, fellow conspirator, and witness to Ezhov's and Ezhov's wife Evgeniia's "moral degeneration," names Kosarev as one of the "most frequent guests in the Ezhov home," along with Piatakov, Uritsky, Mikhail Kol'tsov, Glikina, Iagoda, Frinovskii, Mironov, Agranov, and other NKVD men later tried and executed along with Ezhov. It was strange company for an "innocent" leader of the Komsomol to be keeping! In his own recently-published interrogation Ezhov himself names Kol'tsov and Glikina — both on Babulin's list of "most frequent guests" — as English spies, along with his late wife Evgeniia.

Vadim Rogovin wrote that Kosarev was dismissed from his post as head of the Komsomol and arrested for unjustified repression of Komsomol workers. A number of articles have appeared in the popular press, some by Kosarev's family, setting forth the view that he was unjustly accused and that Olga P. Mishakova, the Komsomol worker Kosarev had purportedly maltreated, had wrongly denounced him.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Some of these articles insist that Kosarev never confessed, despite the fact that the Khrushchev-era rehabilitation materials affirm that he was "tricked" into a confession while the Ulrikh letter states definitely that he confessed. Therefore, it's unlikely that these articles are reliable in the least. Without more evidence from interrogation and trial materials, we just can't tell.

Whoever was at fault, this does seem to be the reason for Kosarev's arrest, since it is referred to by Mgeladze in his memoirs. The rehabilitation report of 1954 does not mention it at all. Rather, it sets Kosarev's arrest down to a

personal hatred of him by Beria, for some negative things Kosarev had reputedly said about Beria.

After Beria's arrest in June 1953 Khrushchev, abetted by the rest of the CPSU leadership, went about demonizing Beria in every possible way. This failure to even mention the real reason for Kosarev's arrest is further evidence that the rehabilitation reports were fabricated for political purposes, not serious studies of the evidence against those repressed.

We don't have enough information about Kosarev that is reliable — that is, not based upon anecdote or rumor — to say more than that he had a very suspicious relationship with Ezhov and his wife, and many other associates of the Ezhovs, all of whom seem to have been involved in Ezhov's NKVD-centered Rightist conspiracy.

The Rehabilitation reports on Kosarev allege that he was tortured. (*RKEB* 1, 79-80; 166-8; 219). Since Frinovskii says that, in order to deflect the investigation away from his own conspiracy, Ezhov had the guilty as well as the innocent tortured, including some friends of his, it may well be that he had Kosarev tortured too. (See under 16. Ezhov, above).

We certainly do not have any evidence at all that either Stalin or Beria "framed" Kosarev. Even the anecdotal information merely accuses Stalin of being too credulous. What we do know is that Khrushchev and the "rehabilitation commission" hid a great deal of information about Kosarev, as about many others.

In the case of Kosarev, they hid his connections to Ezhov, which seem to have been his undoing. These are not even mentioned in the Khrushchev-era rehabilitation materials. The most cautious conclusion we can reach is that Khrushchev declared Kosarev innocent "in flagrant disregard for the truth," without any serious study of his guilt or innocence.

Akakii Mgeladze, later First Secretary of the Georgian Party but in the 1930s a leading Komsomol figure, had liked and respected Kosarev when the latter was the head of the Komsomol. According to his recently-published memoirs written in the 1960s Mgeladze discussed Kosarev with

Stalin in 1947 (p. 165). Stalin listened and then patiently explained that Kosarev's guilt had been carefully verified by Zhdanov and Andreev.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>87</sup> A.I. Mgeladze. Stalin. Kakim ia ego znal. Stranitsy nedavnogo proshlogo. N.pl., 2001, pp. 165; 172.

This is consistent with what we know from other sources — that these Politburo members, as well as others, had been assigned to check up on NKVD arrests and accusations against leading Party members.<sup>88</sup> Mgeladze, who clearly wished to believe that Kosarev was either entirely innocent and had been framed by Beria for personal reasons, or had simply made some mistake or other, then told Stalin he himself had read these reports, as well as one by Shkiriakov, and found it impossible to doubt what they said.

<sup>88</sup> Sovetskoe Rukovodstvo. Perepiska 1928-1941. Moscow: Rosspen, 1999, reprints a number of these letters by both Andreev and Zhdanov.

If Mgdadze's account is significant at all, it is because Mgeladze had great difficulty believing Kosarev was guilty — to the point where he confronted Stalin, however politely, on this question — and Stalin calmly repeated his belief, based on investigation, that Kosarev had been guilty. According to Mgeladze, Stalin went on to explain that everybody made mistakes, and that many mistakes were made in 1937. But Stalin did not apply this to Kosarev's case.

To this day all of the documentary materials relating to Kosarev's dismissal, attest, investigation, and trial are kept secret by the Russian government. Kosarev was criticized and removed from leadership of the Komsomol at the 7<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, held in Moscow on November 19-22 1938. The transcript of this Plenum exists; it is quoted in a recent biography of Georgii M. Popov, who spoke at this Plenum. Therefore it existed in Khrushchev's day. But Khrushchev never mentioned it.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>89</sup> E.V. Taranov, *Partiinii gubernator Moskvy Georgii Popov* (Moscow: Izd-vo Glavarkhiva Moskvy, 2004), 12-14 and note 17 p. 104.

## 25. The Lists

Khrushchev:

The vicious practice was condoned of having the NKVD prepare lists of persons whose cases were under the jurisdiction of the Military Collegium and whose sentences were prepared in advance. Yezhov would send these lists to Stalin personally for his approval of the proposed punishment. In 1937-1938, 383 such lists containing the names of many thousands of party, Soviet, Komsomol, Army and economic workers were sent to Stalin. He approved these lists.

These lists exist, and have been edited and published, first on CD<sup>90</sup> and now on the Internet, as the "Stalinist 'Shooting' Lists". But this is a tendentious, inaccurate name, for these were not lists of persons "to be shot" at all.

<sup>90</sup> Zhertvy politicheskogo teuora v SSSR. Na 2-kh diskakh. Disk 2  
Stalinskic rasstrel'nye spiski. Moscow: Zven'ia, 2004. At  
<http://www.memo.ru/history/vkvs/>

As Khrushchev did, the very anti-Stalin editors of these lists do in fact call the lists "sentences" prepared in advance. But their own research disproves this claim. The lists give the sentences that the prosecution would seek if the individual was convicted — that is, the sentence the Prosecution would ask the court to apply. In reality these were lists sent to Stalin (and other Politburo or Secretariat members) for "review" — *rassmotrenie* — a word that is used many times in the introduction to the lists.  
(<http://www.memo.ru/history/vkvs/images/intro1.htm>)

Many examples are given of people who were not convicted, or who were convicted of lesser offenses, and so not shot. A.V. Snegov, whom Khrushchev mentions by name later in this speech, is on the lists at least twice.

- At <http://stalin.memo.ru/spiski/pg13026.htm> No. 383;
- At <http://stalin.memo.ru/spiski/pg05245.htm> No.133.

In this last reference Snegov is specifically put into "1<sup>st</sup> Category", meaning: **maximum** sentence of death in the event of conviction. A brief summary of the Prosecutor's evidence against him is provided, and there seems to have been a lot of it. Nevertheless Snegov was not sentenced to death but instead to a long term in a labor camp.

According to the editors of these lists "many" people whose names are on them were not in fact executed, and some were freed.

For example, a selective study of the list for the Kuibyshev oblast' signed on September 29, 1938 has shows that not a single person on this list was convicted by the VK VS (the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court), and a significant number of the cases were dismissed altogether.

- <http://www.memo.ru/history/vkvs/images/intro.htm>

So Khrushchev knew that Stalin was not "sentencing" anybody but rather reviewing the lists in case he had any objections. We can be certain that Khrushchev knew this because the note from S. N. Kruglov, Minister of Internal Affairs (MVD) to Khrushchev of February 3, 1954 has survived. It says nothing about "sentences prepared in advance," but gives the truth:

These lists were compiled in 1937 and 1938 by the NKVD of the USSR and presented to the the CC of the ACP(b) **for review** right away. [emphasis added, GF]<sup>91</sup>

<sup>91</sup> At <http://www.memo.ru/history/vkvs/images/intro1.htm>

The Prosecutor went to trial not only with evidence, but with a sentence to recommend to the judges in case of conviction.

It appears that the names of **Party** members, but not of non-Party members, were sent on for review: The disingenuous Introduction notes that those signing the lists comprised "not all the Politburo members but only those of its members who were closest to Stalin"<sup>92</sup> But the evidence suggests that it was the members of the Party Secretariat rather than the Politburo to whom the lists were submitted. Even the editors note that Ezhov — a member of

the Secretariat but not of the Politburo — signed "as a secretary of the Central Committee."<sup>93</sup>

<sup>92</sup> "Not all the members of the Politburo, but only the members who were closest to Stalin, took part in the review (in reality, the cosigning) of the lists." At <http://www.memo.ru/history/vkvs/images/intro.htm>

<sup>93</sup> "On 8 lists we find the signature of Ezhov (evidently here he was acting not as the People's Commissar-for Internal Affairs, but as a secretary of the CC)", *ibid.*

Khrushchev concealed the fact that not Stalin, but he himself, was deeply involved in selecting the persons for inclusion on these lists, and for choosing the category of punishment proposed for them. Khrushchev mentions that the NKVD prepared the lists. But he does not mention the fact that the NKVD acted together with the Party leadership, and that a great many of the names on these lists — perhaps more than from any other region of the USSR — originated in the areas under Khrushchev's own power.

Until January 1938 Khrushchev was First Secretary of the Party in Moscow and Moscow *oblast'* (province). After that he was First Secretary in the Ukraine. The letter to Stalin (see section 4) asking for permission to shoot 8500 people is dated July 10, 1937, the same date as the first of the "shooting lists" from Moscow.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Cf. <http://www.memo.ru/history/vkvs/spiski/pg02049.htm>

In the same letter Khrushchev also confirms his own participation in the *troika* responsible for selecting these names, along with the head of the directorate of the NKVD for Moscow, S.F. Redens, and the assistant prosecutor KL Maslov (Khrushchev does admit that "when necessary" he was replaced by the second secretary A.A. Volkov).

Volkov served as second secretary of the Moscow Region of the AUCP(b) only till the beginning of August 1937, when he left to serve as First Secretary of the Belorussian party. After that he was no longer

Khrushchev's subordinate, which may have saved his life.<sup>95</sup> Maslov remained the Procuror (prosecutor) of the Moscow *oblast'* (province) until November 1937. In 1938 he was arrested and executed in March 1939, after having been found guilty of subversive counterrevolutionary activity.<sup>96</sup> The same fate befell KI. Mamonov who at first occupied Maslov's position and was later shot the same day as Maslov.<sup>97</sup> Nor did Redens escape punishment. He was arrested in November 1938 as a member of a "Polish diversionist-espionage group", tried and sentenced, and shot on January 21, 1940. Jansen and Petrov describe Redens as one of "Ezhov's men."<sup>98</sup> During the years of the "thaw" Redens was rehabilitated at Khrushchev's insistence but by such crude violations of legal procedures that in 1988 Redens' rehabilitation was reversed — at a time when a huge wave of rehabilitations was under way!<sup>99</sup>

<sup>95</sup> On August 11 1937 Volkov was chosen First Secretary of the CC of the Communist Party (b) of Belorussia, and from October 1938 to February 1940 occupied the post of First Secretary of the Chuvash Obkom of the ACP(b). As far as we can tell he died in 1941 or 1942. A more detailed account of Volkov was published in the newspaper *Sovetskaia Belorussia* of April 21, 2001. Cf <http://sb.by/article.php?articleID=4039>

<sup>96</sup> Cf. <http://www.mosoblproc.ru/history/prokurors/7/> and <http://www.memo.ru/memory/donskoe/d39.htm>

<sup>97</sup> Cf. <http://www.mosoblproc.ru/history/prokurors/8/> and

<sup>98</sup> Jansen & Petrov, pp. 84; 148.

<sup>99</sup> *RKEB* 3, p. 660.

In other words, with the exception of Volkov all of Khrushchev's closest co-workers who took part in repressions in Moscow and Moscow *oblast'* were severely punished. How did Khrushchev manage to escape the same punishment? The answer to this puzzle remains to be uncovered. In the final chapter we will examine some interesting facts concerning Khrushchev's successor as Moscow Party leader, A.S. Shcherbakov, that may bear on this question.



## 26. Resolutions of the January 1938 CC Plenum

Khrushchev:

Resolutions of the January plenum of the Central Committee, All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), in 1938 had brought some measure of improvement to the party organizations. However, widespread repression also existed in 1938.

Khrushchev implies — and states a little further on — that the repression was driven by Stalin. As we have already seen, though, the evidence strongly suggests that it was driven by Ezhov and a number of First Secretaries, including Khrushchev himself as one of the leading "repressers." Stalin and the central party leadership who were not involved in the Rightist conspiracy wanted the repression limited. Eventually they severely punished those who were proven to have fabricated cases and killed or punished innocent people.

Getty and Naumov have made the longest study so far of this January 1938 Plenum.<sup>100</sup> Their account makes it clear that the Stalin central Party leadership was very concerned about irresponsible repressions. It was at this Plenum that Postyshev was removed on just such grounds. Thurston's discussion confirms the fact that Stalin was trying to rein in the First Secretaries, the NKVD and repression generally.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Getty & Naumov 498-512.

<sup>101</sup> Robert Thurston. *Life and Terror in Stalin's Russia, 1934-1941*. (Yale University Press; 1998), p. 109, 112; also see Part 4 of his book.

At the January 1938 CC Plenum, Malenkov gave the report, obviously echoing Stalin, that far too many and capricious expulsions had taken place. For our present purposes it is most significant that Postyshev was the person singled out as most guilty. The Resolution of January 9, 1938 specifically blamed Postyshev for this, reprimanded him, and removed him from his post as first secretary of the Kuybyshev obkom (city committee).

According to I.A. Benediktov, who was a high official in agriculture (either People's Commissar or First Deputy Minister of Agriculture) from 1938 to 1953, on the CC and a frequent participant in Politburo meetings, Stalin began to correct the illegalities of the repressions at this Plenum. Lev Balaian, whose study of Khrushchev's falsifications, while incomplete, is very useful, gives additional details.

Khrushchev's head of NKVD in Ukraine from January 1938 was A.I. Uspensky. Having been warned by Ezhov, Uspensky fled arrest on November 14, 1938 and feigned suicide by leaving a note that he would jump into the Dnepr river. Uspensky was at length located and arrested on April 14, 1939. Stalin believed Ezhov had warned Uspensky by eavesdropping on his telephone call to Khrushchev.

Whatever Uspensky was guilty of, Khrushchev must have been guilty of framing innocent people as well — they were both in the same troika.<sup>102</sup> In interrogations no longer available to researchers today Uspensky revealed Ezhov's directions to falsify cases massively.<sup>103</sup> (Jansen and Petrov 84; 148).

<sup>102</sup> Khrushchev, *Vremia, Liudi, Vlast'. Kn. I, chast' 1* (Moscow: Moskovskie Novosti, 1999), pp. 172.3.

<sup>103</sup> Jansen & Petrov p. 84; p. 148.

## 27. "Beria's gang"

Khrushchev:

Meanwhile, Beria's gang, which ran the organs of state security, outdid itself in proving the guilt of the attested and the truth of materials which it falsified.

This is false. Thurston discusses Khrushchev's distortion of what really happened once Beria took over the NKVD, and the "astonishing liberalism" that was instituted immediately under Beria. Torture ended, and inmates

received privileges again. Ezhov's men were removed from office, many of them tried and convicted of repressions.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>104</sup> Thurston, pp. 118-119.

According to the Pospelov report, arrests dropped hugely, by over 90%, in 1939 and 1940 in comparison to 1937 and 1938. **Executions in 1939 and 1940 dropped to far less than 1% of the levels of mass executions in 1937 and 1938.**<sup>105</sup> Beria took over as head of the NKVD in December, 1938, so this corresponds precisely with Beria's period in command. Khrushchev, therefore, knew of this, but omitted it from the "Secret Speech" and so concealed it from his audience.

<sup>105</sup> *RKEB* 1, p. 317. Cf.

<http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/inside/almanah-doc/55752>

It was during the Beria years that trials and executions of men convicted of illegal repressions, mass killings, torture, and falsifications took place. Many — certainly more than 100,000 — persons wrongly repressed were released from GULAG camps and prisons.<sup>106</sup> Khrushchev knew, and concealed, this too.

<sup>106</sup> See the note by Okhotin and Roginskii in Danilov, V., et al., ed., *Tragediia Sovetskoi Devrevni* vol. 5 No. 2 (Moscow: ROSSPEN 2006) 517. Also Mark Iunge, Gennadii Bordiugov, Rol'f Binner, *Vertikal' Bol'shogo Terrora* (Moscow: Novyi Khronograf, 2008), 490, n. 55.

## 28. "Torture telegram"

Khrushchev:

When the wave of mass arrests began to recede in 1939, and the leaders of territorial party organizations began to accuse the NKVD workers of using methods of physical pressure on the arrested, Stalin dispatched a coded telegram on January 10, 1939 to the committee secretaries of oblasts and kraia, to the central committees of republic

Communist parties, to the People's Commissars of Internal Affairs and to the heads of NKVD organizations. This telegram stated:

"The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) explains that the application of methods of physical pressure in NKVD practice is permissible from 1937 on in accordance with permission of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) ... It is known that all bourgeois intelligence services use methods of physical influence against the representatives of the socialist proletariat and that they use them in their most scandalous forms.

"The question arises as to why the socialist intelligence service should be more humanitarian against the mad agents of the bourgeoisie, against the deadly enemies of the working class and of the kolkhoz workers. The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) considers that physical pressure should still be used obligatorily, as an exception applicable to known and obstinate enemies of the people, as a method both justifiable and appropriate."

Thus, Stalin had sanctioned in the name of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) the most brutal violation of socialist legality, torture and oppression, which led as we have seen to the slandering and self-accusation of innocent people.

Khrushchev deliberately deceived his audience in at least three, and possibly four ways.

- He omitted important parts of the text of the telegram that undermined his assertions.
- He did not tell his audience that the text of the "telegram" he had was certainly never sent. In fact, the text we have looks like a copy made in 1956.
- Khrushchev did not divulge the doubtful nature of the text of this supposed telegram. We know of it because it was discussed in the later June 1957 Central Committee Plenum called to punish Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich.
- Khrushchev may, in fact, have had this "telegram" forged.

- There are many problems with the text of the "original" of this telegram, which was published during the 1990s. It would take a full article-length study to disentangle all the problems with it. Some of them will become clear in the discussion below.

This entire "telegram" part of the speech is highly suspicious, beginning with the first sentence, which makes the Party Secretaries look like angels. And Khrushchev makes exactly this point in his speech — the "leaders of the local party organizations" were complaining about torture, and it was all Stalin's and Beria's fault! Stalin, with his henchman Beria, were the "bad guys" — the Party First Secretaries were trying to resist them!

Thanks to Zhukov's primary document research published in *Inoy Stalin*, we know that it was, in fact, these same Party First Secretaries that insisted on the mass executions to begin with. Stalin and that the central party leadership of the Politburo (the "narrow leadership", as Zhukov puts it) strongly resisted it. Zhukov claims he has seen the document in which Khrushchev asks for permission to raise "Category one" to 20,000 — a number, with no names. Getty cites Khrushchev's request for 41,000 people in both categories.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>107</sup> *Komsomolskaia Pravda* December 3 2002; J. Arch Getty. "Excesses are not permitted.: Mass Terror and Stalinist Governance in the Late 1930s". *The Russian Review*. Vol. 61 (January 2002), p. 127.

It appears, therefore, that a main purpose of the "Secret Speech" was to cover up the bloodthirstiness of the First Secretaries such as himself. Khrushchev does blame Ezhov somewhat — he mentions him a few times. But Khrushchev mainly blames Beria, whom he really hates, but who actually **stopped** the Ezhovshchina and corrected its abuses by reviewing sentences. And, of course, Khrushchev lays the main blame on Stalin, who was more responsible than anyone else for **stopping** the repression.

The first thing we should note, for our purposes, is what Khrushchev omitted — the entire passage in boldface (see Quotations). This passage does several things:

- It qualifies, limits, and restricts the conditions under which "means of physical pressure" are to be used.
- It names well-known, high-ranking NKVD men, close associates of Ezhov's, by name, and stresses that they have been punished.

This includes Zakovskii, whom Khrushchev, through Rozenblium, cited as a chief fabricator of false charges (see section 18. above). Had Khrushchev quoted this part of the telegram's text it would have undermined Khrushchev's main contention throughout the "Speech" that Stalin had been promoting the massive repressions rather than trying to rein them in. In the recently released confession-interrogation Ezhov names Zakovskii as one of his most devoted men, and confirms that he ordered Zakovskii killed so that he would not tell Beria about the falsifications and murders Ezhov and his men were engaged in.

The "Torture Telegram" is a complicated example of Khrushchev's prevaricating, and deserving of a lengthy analytical study. The main points for our purposes are these:

1. The document we have — the "January 10, 1939" document — is, at best, a draft copy. It is not on official stationery. It contains no signature, not Stalin's or anyone else's. The most recent, semi-official edition, no longer claims it was "signed" by Stalin, but contains the claim that handwritten emendations are in Stalin's handwriting.<sup>108</sup> This is pure bluff; the editors cite no evidence this is the case. What is clear is that the editors wish to convince readers that this is a genuine document from 1939.

<sup>108</sup> *Lubianka* 3, No. 8, pp. 14-15 and n. p. 15.

2. If it is not a forgery it may or may not be an unsent "draft!" It looks like a copy typed up in 1956, as this is stated directly on it. Furthermore, the typeface of the 1956 addition and that of the rest of the telegram looks identical.

All this would have to be scientifically and objectively verified. But the Russian government is not about to carry out this kind of study either with this document or with any of the many other documents of questionable

veracity supposedly discovered since the end of the USSR. But if it is a copy, as seems likely, where is the original document of which it is a copy?

3. At the July 1957 Central Committee Plenum, at which the "anti-Party group" of Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich, and Shepilov was arraigned for trying to have Khrushchev ousted the year before, Molotov states that a decision to use "physical pressure" against certain arrestees did exist, but that all Politburo members signed it. Khrushchev then insists that there were **two** such documents, and that he is talking about the **second** one. He never returns to the subject of the first one. What was this first document? We never learn.

As for the supposed second document, according to another CC member in this discussion the original has been destroyed, but one copy remained in the Dagestan *obkom* (regional committee). However, **that** copy is certainly not the copy we have, because the text we have is not on any stationery and is, at best, a draft, perhaps a later (1956) typed copy of a draft, and possibly even a forgery altogether. No other such copy has turned up, and the "Dagestan *obkom*" document has never turned up either.

Surely Khrushchev would never have destroyed such valuable evidence against Stalin — unless it incriminated himself, in some way. Or, unless it never existed in the first place! In this case A.B. Aristov's (one of Khrushchev's main supporters in the Central Committee) mention of the "copy from the Dagestan *obkom*" was a bluff to intimidate the "anti-Party group" in front of the rest of the C.C.<sup>109</sup>

<sup>109</sup> *Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich, 1957. Stenogramma iun'skogo plenuma TsK KPSS I drugie dokumenty.* Ed. A.N. Iakovlev, N. Kovaleva, A. Korotkov, et al. Moscow: MDF, 1998, pp. 121-2.

Getty has stated that he has found the text of a similar telegram dated July 27, 1939.<sup>110</sup> If it is genuine (it has not been published), and if Molotov was correct in July 1957 that all Politburo members had signed such a telegram, then Khrushchev would have signed it too, as Khrushchev was made a Politburo member on March 22, 1939, and was a candidate member (taking the disgraced Postyshev's place) after the January 1938 CC meeting). This

would have made Khrushchev just as responsible as Molotov, Malenkov, and Kaganovich.

<sup>110</sup> Getty, "Excesses" p. 114, n. 4.

If the telegram had really been sent on January 10, 1939, as stated by Khrushchev in the "Secret Speech", he would not have signed it. However, he would certainly have (a) seen it, and (b) been responsible for carrying it out, i.e. applying "physical pressure" to prisoners, since he was First Secretary of the Ukraine, where he was repressing thousands of people.

Therefore it's possible that Khrushchev searched for genuine copies of the July 27, 1939 telegram, and had all those he could find destroyed. Before doing that, he had a copy made with the same text (omitting Ezhov's name, which is in the later version), but predated to a period before he had joined the Politburo. We can't be sure.

Many scholars and others have assured us that Khrushchev had a great number of documents destroyed. Iuri Zhukov, Nikita Petrov, and Mark Junge and Rolf Binner all attest to the fact that it appears that Khrushchev destroyed more documents than anyone else.<sup>111</sup> Benediktov, former agriculture minister, said the same thing in an article published in 1989. In this scenario, the document Getty has found is a copy that Khrushchev failed to find and destroy. We don't really know.

<sup>111</sup> IU. Zhukov, "Zhupel Stalina", Part 3. *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, Nov. 12, 2002, Nikita Petrov, *Ivan Seroc*, Moscow 2005, pp. 157-162; Mark Junge and Rolf Binner, *Kak Terror Stal Bol'shim*. Moscow, 2003, p. 16, n. 14.

What we do know is that, at the **very least**, Khrushchev quoted selectively from this document with the intent to deceive his audience.

## **29. Rodos tortured Chubar and Kosior on Beria's orders**

Khrushchev:



Not long ago — only several days before the present Congress — we called to the Central Committee Presidium session and interrogated the investigative judge Rodos, who in his time investigated and interrogated Kossior, Chubar and Kosarev. He is a vile person, with the brain of a bird, and morally completely degenerate. And it was this man who was deciding the fate' of prominent party workers; he was making judgments also concerning the politics in these matters, because, having established their "crime," he provided therewith materials from which important political implications could be drawn.

The question arises whether a man with such an intellect could alone make the investigation in a manner to prove the guilt of people such as Kossior and others. No, he could not have done it without proper directives. At the Central Committee Presidium session he told us: "I was told that Kossior and Chubar were people's enemies and for this reason I, as an investigative judge, had to make them confess that they are enemies."

(Indignation in the hall.)

He would do this only through long tortures, which he did, receiving detailed instructions from Beria. We must say that at the Central Committee Presidium session he cynically declared: "I thought that I was executing the orders of the party." In this manner, Stalin's orders concerning the use of methods of physical pressure against the arrested were in practice executed. These and many other facts show that all norms of correct party solution of problems were invalidated and everything was dependent upon the willfulness of one man.

Khrushchev's deception here is in his implication that confessions, obtained by Rodos' beatings, were the only grounds on which Chubar' and Kosior were convicted and executed. As we have already seen, there is plenty of evidence against both Chubar' and Kosior that has nothing to do with "means of physical pressure." For example, they were both named by Ezhov in his confession-interrogation of April 26, 1939 as members of the Rightist conspiracy and German spies.

Khrushchev implies that Rodos was Beria's man.<sup>112</sup> But rehabilitation materials state that he was involved in the investigation of suspects during Ezhov's tenure too (*RKEB 1*, 176).

<sup>112</sup> Nikita Petrov states that Rodos was arrested on October 5 1953, during the same period that others in "Beria's gang" were under arrest and being interrogated. N. Petrov, *Pervyi predsedatel' KGB Ivan Serov*. Moscow, 2006, p. 393.

It is possible that Rodos had simply "followed orders", as he claimed he had done. If, as alleged by Khrushchev and the "torture telegram," torture had been authorized by the Central Committee, and if Rodos had been told to torture some defendants, as he seems to have admitted, then he had merely been following orders. If so, he had committed no crime. Perhaps his real crime was to have been an investigator under Beria as well as under Ezhov. Khrushchev did his best to blame everything on Beria.

Rodos was tried and sentenced **during** the period February 21-26, 1956 — during the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress itself!<sup>113</sup> (*RKEB 1* 411, n. 13). Why? This suggests that Rodos may have been "tried" and executed to shut him up. As the chief of the Investigative Section of the NKVD Rodos would have taken an active part in the investigations of Ezhov's activities and would have been in charge of the cases of those who were in the close circle around Ezhov's wife, including Isaac Babel, Vsevolod Meierkhol'd, and others.

<sup>113</sup> *RKEB 1*, p. 411, note 13. Rodos's investigative file has not yet been declassified. In the exhibition "1953 god. Mezhu proshlym i budushchim" (2004) in the Exhibition Hall of the Federal Archives in Moscow there were on exhibit two documents concerning Rodos. See the catalog of the exhibition at [http://www.rusarchives.ru/evants/exhibitions/stalin\\_sp.shtml](http://www.rusarchives.ru/evants/exhibitions/stalin_sp.shtml) , Nos 269 and 270. It seems likely that Rodos' investigative file still exists.

Another possibility is that his fate was intended to warn others to get them to cooperate with Khrushchev's "rehabilitations", say what he wanted them to say. Pavel' Sudoplatov, one of Beria's subordinates, was evidently imprisoned for fifteen years because he refused to falsify charges against

Beria, only escaping execution by the difficult stratagem of feigning insanity for a few years.

Rodos' trial materials have never been released. He had obviously not been prosecuted after Ezhov's dismissal, as had so many other NKVDers who had tortured defendants and fabricated cases. It was surely convenient for Khrushchev to have Rodos and Beria on whom to blame repressions. This rush to get rid of Rodos suggests that there may have been some kind of connection between Khrushchev and Ezhov that remains unknown to us today and whose origins go back to the years in which Khrushchev was one of the First Secretaries.

General Pavel Sudoplatov was asked by Roman Rudenko, head Soviet Prosecutor and a creature of Khrushchev's, to write false testimony against Beria after the latter's death. When Sudoplatov refused he was arrested and accused of being a participant in an imaginary "conspiracy" of Beria's. According to Sudoplatov's account General Ivan I. Maslennikov, a Hero of the Soviet Union, committed suicide rather than do the same thing. Sudoplatov evaded execution only by successfully feigning insanity but remained in prison for 15 years.<sup>114</sup> It's possible that something similar happened to Rodos.

<sup>114</sup> Pavel Sudoplatov, *Spetsoperatsii. Lubyanka i Kreml' 1930-1950 gody*. Moscow: Sovremennik, 1997. The chapter in question is online at [http://www.hrono.ru/libris/lib\\_s/beria1.php](http://www.hrono.ru/libris/lib_s/beria1.php)

## Chapter 5. *Stalin and the War*

### 30. Stalin didn't heed warnings about war

Khrushchev:

The power accumulated in the hands of one person, Stalin, led to serious consequences during the Great Patriotic War ... During the war and after the war, Stalin put forward the thesis that the tragedy which our nation experienced in the first part of the war was the result of the "unexpected" attack of the Germans against the Soviet Union. ... Stalin took no heed of these warnings. What is more, Stalin ordered that no credence be given to information of this sort, in order not to provoke the initiation of military operations ... everything was ignored: warnings of certain Army commanders, declarations of deserters from the enemy army, and even the open hostility of the enemy. ... Is this an example of the alertness of the chief of the party and of the state at this particularly significant historical moment?

Germany did indeed commit aggression against the Soviet Union, and so this is one assertion of Khrushchev's that is unquestionably correct. There is a huge amount of evidence to refute the rest of what he says.

Still, the attack did occur. Marshal A. E. Golovanov believed that any responsibility should be shared by all the top military commanders, as was the glory of victory.

Documents published since the end of the USSR have shown that Stalin and the Soviet leadership were expecting a German attack, but that the warnings from intelligence and other sources were contradictory and uncertain. V.V. Kozhinov points out the problems of distinguishing deliberate disinformation and just plain error from accurate information in the evaluation of intelligence, and how contradictory the intelligence available to Soviet leaders was.

The German Army had a disinformation plan to spread false rumors to the Soviet leadership. A detailed order to this effect by Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, dated February 15, 1941, has been published.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>115</sup> *1941 god. Dokumenty. V. 2-kh kn. Kn.1.* Moscow, 1998, pp. 661-664. The document is "Ukazanie Shtaba Operativnogo Rukovodstva O Meropriiatiakh Dezinformatsii." I have put it online at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/germandisinfo.html>

As Kozhinov points out, Khrushchev's accusations here can be turned around on his own thesis. Historians do not blame President Roosevelt for failing to foresee the attack on Pearl Harbor. Therefore to blame Stalin for not foreseeing the precise time and place of the Nazi attack is to fall prey to the "cult of personality", to believe Stalin was supposed to have superhuman abilities and inexplicably failed to use them.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>116</sup> Although Khrushchev does not directly address the question here, we wish to mention that good evidence has now been published that General Dmitry Pavlov, commander of the Western front, where the Red Army was taken completely unprepared, where the greatest losses were suffered, and where the Germans effected their greatest penetration into the USSR after June 22, was in fact guilty of plotting defeat to benefit the Germans. Some quotations and bibliography on this question are included in the Russian language section at this point.

The Soviets could not declare a mobilization because that was universally understood as a declaration of war. It was precisely such a mobilization that had set off the First World War. It would have given Hitler the opportunity to declare war, leaving the USSR vulnerable to a separate deal between Hitler and the Allies. And in a plan for "Operation 'Ost'" drawn up in 1940 German General-Major Marks make the regretful remark that "The Russians will not do us the favor of attacking us [first]."<sup>117</sup>

<sup>117</sup> *1941 god v 2-kh knigakh. Kniga pervaiia* (Moscow: MFD, 1998) p. 154.

The Soviets could not rely upon British warnings, for the British clearly wanted to Set Hitler against the Soviet Union and weaken both, if not use

the opportunity to make peace with Hitler against the Soviets, as many in the British establishment wanted.

Marshal K.A. Meretskov, no admirer of Stalin, believed the situation immediately preceding the war was very complex, impossible to predict. His memoirs were published after Khrushchev's ouster, in 1968. Zhukov, who had been demoted in disgrace after the war by Stalin and had helped Khrushchev attack Stalin in 1957, thought the Soviet Union under Stalin had done everything it could to prepare for the war.

Marshals Vasilevskii and Zhukov disagreed about whether Stalin should have ordered all the troops to take positions along the border. Commenting on Vasilevskii's article in 1965, after Khrushchev's ouster, Zhukov wrote said he believed this would have been a serious error.

Although Khrushchev does not refer to it here, it's worth mentioning the most famous "warning" of an impending German attack, that from the famous Soviet spy Richard Sorge who was in the German embassy in Japan, has recently been denounced as a fake created during the years of Khrushchev's "Thaw."<sup>118</sup>

<sup>118</sup> "22 iunia 1941 goda. Moglo li vse byt' po-inomu?" ("June 22, 1941: Could it have all been otherwise?"), *Krasnaia Zvezda* June 16 2001. Online at [http://www.redtstar.ru/2001/06/16\\_06/4\\_01.html](http://www.redtstar.ru/2001/06/16_06/4_01.html)

### **31. Vorontsov's Letter**

Khrushchev:

We must assert that information of this sort concerning the threat of German armed invasion of Soviet territory was coming in also from our own military and diplomatic sources; however, because the leadership was conditioned against such information, such data was dispatched with fear and assessed with reservation.

Thus, for instance, information sent from Berlin on May 6, 1941 by the Soviet military attaché, Captain Vorontsov, stated: "Soviet citizen

Bazer...communicated to the deputy naval attaché that, according to a statement of a certain German officer from Hitler's headquarters, Germany is preparing to invade the USSR on May 14 through Finland, the Baltic countries and Latvia. At the same time Moscow and Leningrad will be heavily raided and paratroopers landed in border cities... "

In this case we know that Khrushchev deliberately lied, because we now have the full text of the Vorontsov letter. Khrushchev omitted Admiral Kuznetsov's evaluation of it, which changes the whole meaning of the letter. Khrushchev deliberately concealed from his audience the fact that the Navy had decided this was disinformation intended to mislead the Soviet leadership! (See Appendix)

Khrushchev's dishonest reference to the Vorontsov letter was evidently his own idea. It is not mentioned in the Pospelov Report; in the Pospelov-Aristov draft of Khrushchev's Speech of February 18, 1956, or in Khrushchev's additions to that draft of February 19, 1956. We do not know how or from whom Khrushchev obtained the letter.

The editors of *Doklad Khrushcheva* do not reprint it, or identify where the original was published, or discuss it in any way. They could not possibly have been ignorant of the original of the letter, for it was published in the major military journal *Voenna-Istoricheskii Zhurnal* (No. 2, 1992, 39-40). They erroneously identify "Bozer" with the Soviet spy within the German SS Schulze-Boysen, even though Bozer is clearly identified as a "Soviet citizen."

It appears as though they wished to conceal Khrushchev's lie by not identifying it. All this points to a deliberate coverup by the editors of this supposedly authoritative book.

Examples such as Vorontsov's letter demand that we examine Khrushchev's possible motives for lying in the Secret Speech.

### **32. German soldier**

A little later in the "Secret Speech" Khrushchev returned to this theme of "warnings":

The following fact is also known: On the eve of the invasion of the territory of the Soviet Union by the Hitlerite army, a certain German citizen crossed our border and stated that the German armies had received orders to start the offensive against the Soviet Union on the night of June 22 at 3 o'clock. Stalin was informed about this immediately, but even this warning was ignored.

This statement of Khrushchev's is also false. Unlike the Vorontsov letter, which was secret until recently, the story of the German soldier must have been remembered by many people in Khrushchev's audience.

The soldier in question was Alfred Liskow. His warning was not ignored at all. His desertion, at 9 p.m. on June 21, was reported at 3:10 a.m. on June 22 by telephone, 40 minutes before the Nazi invasion. Therefore Stalin was **not** "informed immediately", nor is there any evidence that he "ignored" it, as Khrushchev said. Liskow's platoon commander, a lieut. Schulz, had told his men "towards evening" (*pod vecherom*) of the impending invasion.

Liskow was sent to Moscow. On June 27 1941 his story was printed in *Pravda*<sup>119</sup>. A leaflet with his story, picture, and a call for German soldiers to desert to the Soviet side, was produced. According to one account, one unit immediately blew a bridge and went to defensive positions, where they were wiped out to a man with the German attack a few hours later.

<sup>119</sup> I have put this article online at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/liskowpravda062741.pdf>

In his memoirs, written in the 1960s, Khrushchev himself does not repeat the claim that the German soldier's warning was ignored.

### **33. Commanders Killed**

Khrushchev:



Very grievous consequences, especially in reference to the beginning of the war, followed Stalin's annihilation of many military commanders and political workers during 1937-1941 because of his suspiciousness and through slanderous accusations. During these years repressions were instituted against certain parts of military cadres beginning literally at the company and battalion commander level and extending to the higher military centers; during this time the cadre of leaders who had gained military experience in Spain and in the Far East was almost completely liquidated.

Khrushchev does not directly state, but instead alludes to, the following claims which he and others made subsequently:

- Marshal Tukhachevsky and the seven other commanders condemned and executed with him on June 11, 1937, were innocent of what they were charged with — conspiring to overthrow the government and with espionage contacts with Germany and Japan.
- So many military commanders were executed or dismissed that Soviet military preparedness was greatly harmed. The military commanders executed or dismissed were better commanders — more educated, with more military experience — than those who replaced them.

Research has disproven these statements. The facts are otherwise.

1. Since the end of the USSR a large mass of evidence has been published that confirms that Tukhachevsky and these other commanders were guilty as charged. Since Khrushchev's time these same commanders have been considered heroes in the USSR and, now, in post-Soviet Russia. The government, which controls the Presidential archive where the materials for this and the 1936-1938 trials and investigations are kept today, has only released small bits of this documentation, and official historians still deny that the commanders were guilty.

But even that documentation demonstrates their guilt beyond any reasonable doubt. For example, in his recently-published (February 2006) confession-interrogation of April 26 1939 Ezhov fully confirms the existence of **three** separate, competing military conspiracies: one consisting of "major military leaders" headed by Marshal A.I. Egorov; a Trotskyist

group led by Gamarnik, Iakir and Uborevich; and a "Bonapartist group of officers" led by Tukhachevsky.<sup>120</sup>

<sup>120</sup> I have put this confession-interrogation of Ezhov's online at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/ezhov042639eng.html> (Russian text: [../ezhovru.html](http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/ezhovru.html) ). The full bibliographical reference to it is at the top of the article there.

To compound his dishonesty, Khrushchev had Tukhachevsky and most of the others "rehabilitated" in 1957. But Khrushchev did not set up a commission to study the question of their guilt until 1962. Its report, with additional evidence of their guilt, was kept secret until 1994.<sup>121</sup>

<sup>121</sup> There is an enormous amount of evidence that Tukhachevsky and the other commanders tried and executed with him were guilty as charged. The author and Moscow historian Vladimir L. Bobrov are preparing a lengthy study on the whole "Tukhachevsky Affair" question.

2. Khrushchev and the anti-communist historians who have come after him have greatly exaggerated the number and percentage of military commanders executed and dismissed during 1937-38. Good studies of this subject existed in Khrushchev's time, and have been done today. Likewise, the level of military training, and even of battlefield experience — at least; experience in the First World War — increased as a result of the replacement of executed, arrested, and dismissed officers with those promoted to replace them.

The best summaries of recent Russian publications on these subjects are:

- Gerasimov, G.I. "Destvitel'noe vliyanie repressiy 1937-1938 gg. Na ofitserkiy korpus RKKA. *Rossiiskiy Istoricheskii Zhurnal* No. 1, 1999. Also at [http://www.hrono.ru/statii/2001/rkka\\_repr.html](http://www.hrono.ru/statii/2001/rkka_repr.html)
- Pykhalov, Igor'. *Velikaya Obolganqya Voyna*. Moscow: "Yauza", "Eksmo", 2005, Ch. 2: "Byla li 'Obezglavlena' Krasnaya Armiya?" Also at [http://militera.lib.ru/research/pyhalov\\_i/02.html](http://militera.lib.ru/research/pyhalov_i/02.html)

Marshal Konev, speaking in 1965 with writer Konstantin Simonov, disagreed sharply with Khrushchev.

What's more, Khrushchev himself was directly responsible for "annihilating" most of the commanders in the Kiev (Ukraine) Military District. Volkogonov quotes a directive from Khrushchev, dated March 1938. The longer version, from the Russian edition, is translated here (see Appendix); a much shorter version is given in the English edition, Dmitrii A. Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy*. (NY: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991), p. 329.

### **34. Stalin's "Demoralization" after the beginning of the war**

Khrushchev:

It would be incorrect to forget that, after the first severe disaster and defeat at the front, Stalin thought that this was the end. In one of his speeches in those days he said:

"All that which Lenin created we have lost forever."

After this Stalin for a long time actually did not direct the military operations and ceased to do anything whatever.

This is completely false, and Khrushchev had to know that it was. Most of those who worked closely with Stalin during the first weeks of the war (and afterwards) were still alive and in high positions. Yet they never reported anything like this. Khrushchev himself was in the Ukraine during this whole period, and could have had no first-hand knowledge of anything Stalin said or did.

The logbooks of those who came to Stalin's office to work with him have been published now. They demonstrate that Stalin was extremely active from the very first day of the war. Of course, they were available to Khrushchev as well. The logbooks for June 21-28 1941 were published in *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* No. 2, 1996, pp. 51-54, and document Stalin's continuous activity. We have also put facsimile copies of the original handwritten pages online.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>122</sup> They have been reproduced at <http://www.hrono.ru/libris/stalin/16-13.html> . One convenient source for this information is in Igor' Pykhalov's article "Did Stalin Collapse into Inactivity?" ("Did Stalin Fall into Prostration?"), Chapter 10 of his book *Velikaya Obolgannaya Voina* (The Great Columniated War), also online at [http://militera.lib.ru/research/pyhalov\\_i/10.html](http://militera.lib.ru/research/pyhalov_i/10.html)

Facsimilies of the original archival copies are at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/stalinvisitors41.pdf>

The pages from *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* No. 2, 1996, are reproduced at [http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/stalinvisitors41\\_istarkh96.pdf](http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/stalinvisitors41_istarkh96.pdf)

Marshal Zhukov had no particular love for Stalin. Stalin had demoted him after the war when Zhukov had been caught stealing German war booty for himself. Zhukov had also supported Khrushchev in his 1957 ouster of the "Stalinists" Malenkov, Molotov and Kaganovich. Nevertheless Zhukov appears to have retained a good deal of respect for Stalin, and he refuted Khrushchev's claim in his memoirs.

Georgi Dimitrov, the Bulgarian head of the Comintern, wrote in his diary that he was summoned to the Kremlin at 7 a.m. on June 22 1941, where he found Poskrebyshev (Stalin's secretary), Marshal Timoshenko, Admiral Kuznetsov, Lev Mekhlis, editor of *Pravda* and head of the Political Directorate of the Army, and Beria, head of the NKVD. He remarked: "Striking calmness, resoluteness, confidence of Stalin and all the others."<sup>123</sup>

<sup>123</sup> *The Diary of Gerigi Dimitrov*, ed. Ivo Banac (Yale U.P., 2003), p. 166.

Attempting to rescue Khrushchev's falsehood about Stalin's alleged inactivity Cold-War biographers of Stalin have seized on the fact that there are no entries in the logbook of visitors to Stalin's office for June 29 and 30. Therefore, they conclude, his supposed breakdown must have occurred then.

Even Soviet dissident historian and ferocious anti-Stalinist Roi Medvedev has given the lie to this version of events. Khrushchev's version, says

Medvedev, is "a complete fabrication,"<sup>124</sup> but has appeared in biographies of Stalin by Jonathan Lewis and Phillip Whitehead (1990), Alan Bullock (1991), and the *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Second World War* (1995). Medvedev goes on to cite the evidence.

<sup>124</sup> R. Medvedev, Z. Medvedev. *The Unknown Stalin* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 2003), p. 242.

Stalin was continuously very active from June 22 onward, including June 29 and 30. On June 29 occurred a famous argument with his commanders, including Timoshenko and Zhukov. Mikoian described it to GA. Kumanev (*Riadam so Stalinym*, pp. 28-9). Also on June 29 Stalin formulated and signed the important directive concerning partisan warfare. On June 30 the Decree of the Supreme Soviet, the Council of People's Commissars, and the Central Committee of the Party, forming the State Defense Committee, was issued.

General Dmitri Volkogonov and Pavel' Sudoplatov agree that Khrushchev was lying. Both were hostile towards Stalin, Volkogonov extremely so, in the '90s, when they wrote their books.

### **35. Stalin A Bad Commander**

Khrushchev:

Stalin was very far from an understanding of the real situation which was developing at the front. This was natural because, during the whole Patriotic War, he never visited any section of the front or any liberated city except for one short ride on the Mozhaisk highway during a stabilized situation at the front. To this incident were dedicated many literary works full of fantasies of all sorts and so many paintings. Simultaneously, Stalin was interfering with operations and issuing orders which did not take into consideration the real situation at a given section of the front and which could not help but result in huge personnel losses.

Aside from Khrushchev, nobody says this! By contrast, writing after Khrushchev's fall Marshal Zhukov thought Stalin an extremely competent military leader. In his memoirs Marshal Vasilevsky specifically mentioned Khrushchev's statement here and strongly disagreed with it. Marshal Golovaaov spoke of Stalin and his abilities as a commander in the highest terms.

### **36. Khar'kov 1942**

Khrushchev:

I will allow myself in this connection to bring out one characteristic fact which illustrates how Stalin directed operations at the fronts. There is present at this Congress Marshal Bagramian, who was once the chief of operations in the headquarters of the southwestern front and who can corroborate what I will tell you. When there developed an exceptionally serious situation for our Army in 1942 in the Kharkov region...And what was the result of this? The worst that we had expected. The Germans surrounded our Army concentrations and consequently we lost hundreds of thousands of our soldiers. This is Stalin's military "genius"; this is what it cost us.

Not only is this wrong — most generals do not blame Stalin — but some say Khrushchev himself is to blame!

In an anniversary article on the subject of Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" writer Sergei Konstantinov summed up the reactions of many military leaders at Khrushchev's remarks about Stalin. (See Appendix) According to Academician A.M. Samsonov Zhukov disagreed with Khrushchev's account. In his memoirs Zhukov does blame Stalin, but only in part.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>125</sup> However, Zhukov was very angry at Stalin — Stalin demoted him for stealing German trophies. This is fully documented in *Voennie Arkhivy Rossii*, 1993, pp. 175 ff.,; for Zhukov's confession see pp. 241-44. Khrushchev knew this, and had it all quashed, undoubtedly to get Zhukov on his side.

As we have seen (see section 35, Appendix) Marshal Vasilevskii directly called Khrushchev's version of the Khar'kov defense a lie. He says that Khrushchev and General Kirponos were in fact given plans and sample rocket-launchers, as well as advice on how to build their own weapons. In effect, Vasilevskii says, the fault was Khrushchev's, not Stalin's. Historian Vadim Kozhinov points out that Khrushchev used this story to discredit Malenkov<sup>126</sup>, and completely avoided the obvious point that, as First Secretary of the Ukraine for over three years already, Khrushchev could have seen to the preparation of rifles long beforehand.

<sup>126</sup> Vadim Kozhinov, *Rossia. Vek XX (1939-1964)*. Moscow: Algoritm, 1999, p. 75. IUrii Emel'ianov says much the same thing in "Mif XX S'ezda". *Slovo* No. 3, 2000. Cf. <http://stalinism.newmail.ru/emelian2.htm> .

The *Short History of the Great Patriotic War* (1970 edition, pp. 164-5) published after Khrushchev's ouster carries this version, which blames the front command rather than Stalin and the GKO. This is consistent with Stalin's letter of June 26 1942 quoted by many sources, including Portugal'skii et al.'s biography of Timoshenko, and which blamed not only Bagramian, but also Timoshenko and Khrushchev himself.

Earlier in the "Secret Speech" Khrushchev claimed that "Whoever opposed this concept or tried to prove his viewpoint and the correctness of his position was doomed to removal from the leading collective and to subsequent moral and physical annihilation." This is not true, and Khrushchev did not even give a single example of it. Marshal Timoshenko outlived Stalin by 17 years, Khrushchev, by 18, Marshal Bagramian by 29 years. They all had insisted on their "viewpoint", and yet none was punished, much less "annihilated."

Dmitry Volkogonov, who was intensely hostile to Stalin, suggests that Khrushchev had either misremembered after so many years, or was simply lying on this point in his "Secret Speech."

### **37. Stalin Planned Military Operations on a Globe**

Khrushchev:

I telephoned to Vasilevsky and begged him: "Alexander Mikhailovich, take a map" — Vasilevsky is present here — "and show Comrade Stalin the situation which has developed." We should note that Stalin planned operations on a globe. (Animation in the hall.) Yes, comrades, he used to take the globe and trace the front line on it. I said to Comrade Vasilevsky: "Show him the situation on a map..."

This is perhaps the most obvious lie in Khrushchev's entire speech. No one has ever defended this statement. Many authorities refute it, some indignantly. I refer to the reader to the quotations from military leaders as well as from Molotov.

### **38. Stalin Downgraded Zhukov**

Khrushchev:

Stalin was very much interested in the assessment of Comrade Zhukov as a military leader. He asked me often for my opinion of Zhukov. I told him then, 'I have known Zhukov for a long time; he is a good general and a good military leader.'

After the war Stalin began to tell all kinds of nonsense about Zhukov, among others the following, "You praised Zhukov, but he does not deserve it. It is said that before each operation at the front Zhukov used to behave as follows: He used to take a handful of earth, smell it and say, 'We can begin the attack,' or the opposite, 'The planned operation cannot be carried out.'" I stated at that time, "Comrade Stalin, I do not know who invented this, but it is not true."

It is possible that Stalin himself invented these things for the purpose of minimizing the role and military talents of Marshal Zhukov.

No one else ever heard Stalin say this. According to a remark by Zhukov himself that is quoted by several writers, Stalin demoted him but never insulted him. This remark of Zhukov's was probably a direct rebuke to Khrushchev here, since it's hard to imagine any other reason he might have made it.



Stalin did have Zhukov demoted after the war when it was discovered that the Marshal had been stealing German war booty on a grand scale, instead of contributing it to the State to be used in rebuilding the immense destruction wrought by the Germans during the war.<sup>127</sup> Since everybody knew of Zhukov's demotion after the war, but few knew the details of why it had occurred, Khrushchev was probably just currying favor with Zhukov here. He needed Zhukov the following year, to help him defeat the "Stalinists" Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich, and Shepilov, who tried to get him voted out of office.

<sup>127</sup> The details were published in an obscure but evidently official journal *Voenniye Arkhivy Rossii* 1, 1993, pp. 175-245. There was never another issue of this mysterious journal. A facsimile of these specific pages may be downloaded from [http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/zhokovtheft4648\\_var93.pdf](http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/zhokovtheft4648_var93.pdf)

## Chapter 6. *Of Plots and Affairs*

### 39. Deportations of nationalities

Khrushchev:

Comrades, let us reach for some other facts. The Soviet Union is justly considered as a model of a multinational state because we have in practice assured the equality and friendship of all nations which live in our great Fatherland.

All the more monstrous are the acts whose initiator was Stalin and which are rude violations of the basic Leninist principles of the nationality policy of the Soviet state. We refer to the mass deportations from their native places of whole nations, together with all Communists and Komsomols without any exception; this deportation action was not dictated by any military considerations....

Not only a Marxist-Leninist but also no man of common sense can grasp how it is possible to make whole nations responsible for inimical activity, including women, children, old people, Communists and Komsomols, to use mass repression against them, and to expose them to misery and suffering for the hostile acts of individual persons or groups of persons.

Khrushchev is not "revealing" these deportations; they were well known at the time they happened. What was "new" was his three accusations against Stalin here: (1) the deportations were made "without any exception"; (2) the deportations were "not dictated by any military consideration"; (3) "whole nations" were punished "for the hostile acts of individual persons or groups of persons." These are the "revelations" we will deal with.

Khrushchev mentions Karachai, Kalmyks, Chechen-Ingush, Balkars. For some reason he does not mention Crimean Tatars or Volga Germans. The events leading up to these deportations, the deportations themselves, and the aftermath, are extremely well documented in Soviet archives. Though

none of this archival information was published until after the end of the USSR, Khrushchev undoubtedly had access to it. He, or his aides, had to know that each of the criticisms Khrushchev made was false.

1. Examples of exceptions to the deportations are cited by Pykhalov, from Soviet documents published by N.F. Bugai, the main Russian expert on this question and an extremely anti-Stalin researcher.
2. The military necessity for the deportations was to secure the Red Army's rear. In each of the cases of the deported nationalities, very large parts of the population were either actively or passively aiding the Germans in rebelling against the Soviet government, and constituted a serious danger to Soviet forces. In addition, the Soviets could not be sure that the German armies would not push eastward again in 1944, as they had done in each of the three previous years.

According to Bugai and A.M. Gomov, who are hostile to Stalin and do not approve of the deportations at all,

... the Soviet government had by and large allocated its priorities correctly, basing those priorities on its right to maintain order behind the front lines, and in the North Caucasus in particular.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>128</sup> N.F. Bugai and A.M. Gonov. "The Forced Evacuation of the Chechens and the Ingush." *Russian Studies in History*. vol. 41, no. 2, Fall 2002, pp. 43-61, at p. 59.

In the "Secret Speech" Khrushchev noted with an attempt at humor:

The Ukrainians avoided meeting this fate only because there were too many of them and there was no place to which to deport them. Otherwise, he would have deported them also. (*Laughter and animation in the hall.*)

This was supposed to be a joke, since Khrushchev did not seriously claim Stalin had wanted to deport the Ukrainians. But perhaps Khrushchev mentioned the Ukrainians for a reason, because, as he well knew, a tiny number of Ukrainians, most of whom had entered the Soviet Union along

with the Nazis and who had abetted the Nazis' crimes, was in revolt, on the Nazis' side and against the Soviet Union. This caused huge problems in the rear of the Red Army as it advanced westward towards Poland and Germany in 1944-45.<sup>129</sup> In the light of the massive nature of the anti-Soviet rebellions going on in Chechen-Ingushia and among the Crimean Tatars, the Soviets had every reason to fear that the same thing would have occurred there.

<sup>129</sup> Zhukov, IU. *Stalin: Tainy Vlasti*. Moscow: Vagrius, 2005, pp. 432.3.

3. The question of whether whole nationalities should have been deported or not resolves down to two points. First, how massive were the rebellions among these ethnic groups? Were they so massive that they involved a majority of the population? We'll cite evidence below that, in the case of two of these nationalities that we pick for examples here, the rebellions were massive, involving much more than half the population.

Second, there is also the question of genocide. To split up a small national group that is tightly knit by a unique language, history, and culture, is in fact to destroy it.

In the case of the Chechen-Ingush and the Crimean Tatars, collaboration with the Nazis was massive, involving most of the population. To try to isolate and punish "only the guilty" would have been to split the nation up, and would likely have in deed destroyed the nationality. Instead, the national group was kept together, and their population grew.

I assume that my readers, like I myself, support punishing individuals for the crimes of individuals. However, the Nazi collaboration of these groups was so massive that to punish the individuals involved would have endangered the survival of these ethnic groups as groups. It would have meant depleting these groups of young men, through imprisonment and execution, leaving very few young men for the young women to marry.

Deportation kept these groups intact. The deportations themselves were almost completely free of casualties. This enabled the populations of these groups to increase in future years, right up to the present. So their cultures and languages, and in fact their existence as peoples, did in fact remain

alive. Furthermore, they became so well established in the places of their deportation that many of them never returned to their aboriginal areas when they were permitted to do so.

Here is the conundrum: to punish only the individuals guilty of desertion or Nazi collaboration would have been consistent with Enlightenment views of individual, not collective, punishment — views that I myself share. But it would also have led to a greater evil: the destruction of these ethnic groups as "peoples" — in short, to genocide!

### **Crimean Tartars**

The Crimean Tartars were deported en masse. Many documents concerning their deportation have been published in Russia, from formerly classified Soviet archives. Naturally, they have been published by anti-communist researchers, whose commentaries are very tendentious. But the documents themselves are very interesting!

In 1939 there were 218,000 Crimean Tartars. That should mean about 22,000 men of military age — about 10% of the population. In 1941, according to contemporary Soviet figures, 20,000 Crimean Tartar soldiers deserted the Red Army. By 1944 20,000 Crimean Tartar soldiers had joined the Nazi forces and were fighting against the Red Army.

So the charge of **massive** collaboration sticks.<sup>130</sup> The question is: What should the Soviets have done about this?

<sup>130</sup> Researcher J. Otto Pohl, an extremely anticommunist author, has argued from German sources that not all these men joined Nazi forces. See "The False Charges of Treason against the Crimean Tatars." (International Committee for Crimea, Washington, DC, 18 May 2010). But even if true this makes no difference. The Soviets could not have known this; desertion was still a serious offense; and most men would have joined anti-Soviet partisan or bandit groups.

They could have done nothing — let them all go unpunished. Well, they weren't going to do that!

They could have shot the 20,000 deserters. Or, they could have imprisoned — deported — just them, the young men of military age. Either would have meant virtually the end of the Crimean Tartar nation, for there would have been no husbands for the next generation of young Tartar women.

Instead, the Soviet government decided to deport the whole nationality to Central Asia, which they did in 1944. They were given land, and some years of relief from all taxation. The Tartar nation remained intact, and had grown in size by the late 1950s.

### **The Chechens and Ingush**

In 1943 there were about 450,000 Chechens and Ingush in the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (CHASSR). This should have meant about 40,000-50,000 men of age for military service. In 1942, at the height of the Nazis' military successes, 14576 men were called to military service, of whom 13560, or 93%, deserted and either hid or joined rebel or bandit groups in the mountains.

There was massive collaboration with German forces on the part of the Chechen and Ingush population. On February 23 2000 Radio Svoboda interviewed Chechen nationalists who boasted proudly of a pro-German anti-Soviet armed rebellion in February 1943, when the German penetration towards the Caucasus was at its greatest.

The problem with this account is that it lies by omission. The revolt in question took place, but it was under a Nazi flag, and with the goal of a Nazi alliance.

Casualties among the deportees during the deportation were low — 0.25% of those deported, according to Bugai and Gomov.

NKVD records attest to 180 convoy trains carrying 493,269 Chechen and Ingush nationals and members of other nationalities seized at the same time. Fifty people were killed in the course of the operation, and 1,272 died on the journey. (p. 56)

Since it happened in the winter, and during the fiercest war in European, perhaps world, history, that figure does not seem very high.

But that is not our concern here, which is simply to verify or disprove Khrushchev's accusations. Khrushchev claimed: (1) that the national groups were deported "without any exception;" (2) there was no military reason for the deportations; (3) that the collaboration and treason were the "acts of individual persons or groups of persons." All three of these assertions of Khrushchev's are false: (1) exceptions existed; (2) as did military reason; and (3) there was massive, not merely individual, betrayal. Khrushchev's assertions were not truthful. The question of exceptions is covered by the quotations in the Appendix.

#### **40. The Leningrad Affair**

Khrushchev:

After the conclusion of the Patriotic War, the Soviet nation stressed with pride the magnificent victories gained through great sacrifices and tremendous efforts.

The country experienced a period of political enthusiasm. ...

And it was precisely at this time that the so-called "Leningrad affair" was born. As we have now proven, this case was fabricated. Those who innocently lost their lives included Comrades Voznesensky, Kuznetsov, Rodionov, Popkov, and others....

How did it happen that these persons were branded as enemies of the people and liquidated?

Facts prove that the "Leningrad affair" is also the result of willfulness which Stalin exercised against party cadres.

The Leningrad Affair is mysterious, important, and fascinating. There is plenty of reason to think that it was **not** simply a question of falsification, but that serious crimes were involved.

Fortunately for us, we do not have to try to unravel it here. We simply have to prove that Khrushchev was lying when he claimed the case was a result of "Stalin's willfulness."<sup>131</sup> This is a case of Khrushchev's "flagrant disregard for the truth."

<sup>131</sup> In fact there is good evidence that no fabrication was involved in the "Leningrad Affair" either, but we will not undertake a study of this complicated matter here.

Khrushchev changed his story about who was responsible for the "Leningrad Affair" several times, evidently to suit his needs of the moment. On June 25, 1953, the day before his arrest (and, possibly, his murder) at Khrushchev's hand, Beria wrote to the Presidium concerning the investigation of former NKVD man M.D. Riumin. In this document Beria accuses Riumin of falsifying the Leningrad Affair. The problem for Khrushchev seems to have been that this directly implicated Ignat'ev, the former head of the MVD and a man dismissed by Stalin.

A year later, on May 3 1954, the Presidium headed by Khrushchev issued a "Resolution [*postanovlenie*] of the Presidium of the CC CPSU on the 'Leningrad Affair.'" This document blames Abakumov and — Beria! But Beria had nothing to do with the MGB or MVD at the time of the "Leningrad Affair" or anything close to it.

Two years later in the "Secret Speech" Khrushchev laid all the blame on Stalin. Than again, little more than a year after the "Secret Speech", in June 1957 Khrushchev said that Stalin had been **against** the arrests of Voznesenskii and the others, and that Beria and Malenkov had instigated it!

Whatever Malenkov's role may have been, Beria was certainly not involved in it, since he was not in the MVD at the time. But there is no more reason to think Khrushchev was telling the truth in 1957 than there is to believe him at any other time.

## 41. The Mingrelian Affair

Khrushchev:



Instructive in the same way is the case of the Mingrelian nationalist organization which supposedly existed in Georgia. As is known, resolutions by the Central Committee, Communist Party of the Soviet Union, were made concerning this case in November 1951 and in March 1952. These resolutions were made without prior discussion with the Political Bureau. Stalin had personally dictated them. They made serious accusations against many loyal Communists. On the basis of falsified documents, it was proven that there existed in Georgia a supposedly nationalistic organization whose objective was the liquidation of the Soviet power in that republic with the help of imperialist powers.

In this connection, a number of responsible party and Soviet workers were arrested in Georgia. As was later proven, this was a slander directed against the Georgian party organization.

The only specific accusation Khrushchev makes here is that Stalin personally dictated the CC decisions of November 1951 and March 1952, and without prior discussion of them at the Politburo. We know this is not true.

A critical edition of the Politburo resolution of November 9, 1951 has been published. The editors note Stalin's corrections to the original text: in some cases to make it more precise, but in other places to soften harsher accusations of nationalism.<sup>132</sup> However, it and the March 27 1952 Politburo resolution (*ibid.*, 352-4) were both taken at Politburo sessions (*ibid.*, p. 351 n. 1; p. 354 no. 1). In the latter case Stalin wrote in the title, but the resolution was on the agenda of the Politburo.<sup>133</sup>

<sup>132</sup> Politburo TsK VKP(b) i Sovet Ministrov SSSR. 1945-1953 gg. Moscow, 2002, p. 350-352.

<sup>133</sup> For the texts see Appendix and facsimiles of the pages from *ibid.*, 349-354, at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/mingrelianres.pdf>

But Khrushchev's main claim is that Stalin was responsible for fabricating this case — that "All of this happened under the 'genial' leadership of Stalin, 'the great son of the Georgian nation,' as Georgians like to refer to

Stalin." This is untrue. Documents cited by Nikita Petrov, an extremely anti-Stalin researcher with the extremely anticommunist "Memorial" organization, suggest that the real matter was "the struggle against 'clannishness' in the Georgian leadership."<sup>134</sup>

<sup>134</sup> Petrov, Nikita. *Pervyi predsedatel' KGB. Ivan Serov*. Moscow: Materik, 2005, p. 114.

On April 10 1953, a month after Stalin's death, the Presidium of the CC of the CPSU adopted a decision blaming, above all others, S. D. Ignat'ev, the head of the MGB, for fabricating the entire affair and for subjecting a number of those arrested to prolonged torture, imprisonment, and maltreatment. Khrushchev himself was a member of the Presidium!

Ignat'ev was explicitly named as responsible at the least for not controlling his subordinates M.D. Riumin, Tsepkov, and others. On April 1 1953 Ignat'ev was also blamed by the Presidium in the frameup of the "Doctors' Plot" and on April 3 dismissed from his position as secretary of the CC for his negligence (p. 24). A report made by Beria on June 25, 1953 to the Presidium blames Ignat'ev for permitting Riumin and other subordinates to use torture against, among others, the "Leningrad Affair" defendants (p.66).<sup>135</sup>

<sup>135</sup> See facsimiles of Beria's reports from *RKEB* 1 at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/mingrelianaff.pdf>

Yet it was Khrushchev himself who restored Ignat'ev to responsible posts once Beria had been arrested or killed! Ignat'ev was present at the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress, and Khrushchev referred specifically to him with regard to the "Doctors' Plot" — for his role in which the Presidium had already sharply criticized and demoted him!

Boris Nikolaevsky's note to the *New Leader* edition also points to Ignat'ev's responsibility in the "Mingrelian conspiracy."

Khrushchev's statement on the "Mingrelian conspiracy" does explain the purges in Georgia in 1952. Though he implies that the "Mingrelian case," like the "Leningrad case," was also staged by Beria and Abakumov, this is a

deliberate distortion. It was precisely in November 1951 that S. D. Ignatiev, one of Beria's bitterest enemies, was appointed Minister of State Security; the "Mingrelian case" was, therefore, trumped up as a blow at Beria.

## 42. Yugoslavia

Khrushchev:

The willfulness of Stalin showed itself not only in decisions concerning the internal life of the country but also in the international relations of the Soviet Union.

The July plenum of the Central Committee studied in detail the reasons for the development of conflict with Yugoslavia. It was a shameful role which Stalin played here. The "Yugoslav affair" contained no problems which could not have been solved through party discussions among comrades. There was no significant basis for the development of this "affair"; it was completely possible to have prevented the rupture of relations with that country. This does not mean, however, that the Yugoslav leaders did not make mistakes or did not have shortcomings. But these mistakes and shortcomings were magnified in a monstrous manner by Stalin, which resulted in a break of relations with a friendly country.

This is another lie. In July 1953 Khrushchev, Molotov, and Malenkov attacked Beria for planning to improve relations with Yugoslavia. Meanwhile, they themselves called Tito and Rankovich "agents of the capitalists" who "behave like enemies of the Soviet Union."

But here Khrushchev refers to them as "comrades!" In other words, Khrushchev et al. attacked Beria for beginning a rapprochement with the Yugoslavs, and calling them "comrades," which is precisely what Khrushchev is doing here, and what he attacked Stalin for **not** doing!

## 43. The Doctors' Plot

Khrushchev:

Let us also recall the "affair of the doctor-plotters." (Animation in the hall.) Actually there was no "affair" outside of the declaration of the woman doctor Timashuk, who was probably influenced or ordered by someone (after all, she was an unofficial collaborator of the organs of state security) to write Stalin a letter in which she declared that doctors were applying supposedly improper methods of medical treatment.

Such a letter was sufficient for Stalin to reach an immediate conclusion that there are doctor-plotters in the Soviet Union. He issued orders to arrest a group of eminent Soviet medical specialists. He personally issued advice on the conduct of the investigation and the method of interrogation of the arrested persons. He said that the academician Vinogradov should be put in chains, another one should be beaten. Present at this Congress as a delegate is the former Minister of State Security, Comrade Ignatiev. Stalin told him curtly, "If you do not obtain confessions from the doctors we will shorten you by a head."

Stalin personally called the investigative judge, gave him instructions, advised him on which investigative methods should be used; these methods were simple — beat, beat and, once again, beat.

Shortly after the doctors were arrested, we members of the Political Bureau received protocols with the doctors' confessions of guilt. After distributing these protocols, Stalin told us, "You are blind like young kittens; what will happen without me? The country will perish because you do not know how to recognize enemies."

The case was so presented that no one could verify the facts on which the investigation was based. There was no possibility of trying to verify facts by contacting those who had made the confessions of guilt.

We felt, however, that the case of the arrested doctors was questionable. We knew some of these people personally because they had once treated us. When we examined this "case" after Stalin's death, we found it to be fabricated from beginning to end.

This ignominious "case" was set up by Stalin; he did not, however, have the time in which to bring it to an end (as he conceived that end),

and for this reason the doctors are still alive. Now all have been rehabilitated; they are working in the same places they were working before; they treat top individuals, not excluding members of the Government; they have our full confidence; and they execute their duties honestly, as they did before.

In organizing the various dirty and shameful cases, a very base role was played by the rabid enemy of our party, an agent of a foreign intelligence service — Beria, who had stolen into Stalin's confidence.

This is a completely false account of the "Doctors' Plot."<sup>136</sup>

- The "Doctors' Plot" was taken up by the MGB in 1952. Timashuk's letters were written in 1948. They concerned Zhdanov's treatment in his final illness. They mentioned no Jewish doctors at all. At no time did Dr. Timashuk have any connection with the "Doctors' Plot" whatsoever, which did not even arise until three to four years later. Khrushchev simply slanders her here.
- Ignat'ev was head of the KGB at this time, not Beria. On April 1 1953, less than a month after Stalin's death the Presidium — of which Khrushchev was a
- member — had criticized Ignat'ev for his responsibility in the "Doctors' Plot" frameups (Beria p. 22). It did not occur to them to blame Stalin.
- It was Beria who stopped the Doctors' Plot frameups, who freed the doctors, and arrested those responsible, including Ignat'ev, who was released shortly after Beria was done away with (arrested or killed) in late June 1953.
- According to his daughter Svetlana Stalin did not believe the Jewish doctors were guilty.

<sup>136</sup> All sources are quoted and identified in the Appendix to this chapter.

Stalin was in semi-retirement, and was not kept current with developments. Stalin had thought that the MGB had serious problems (Malyshev, about the Dec. 1, 1952 Presidium meeting, in *Vestnik S* (1997), p. 141). It's possible that Stalin planned to put Beria in charge to clean up these problems,

especially the phony "Doctors' Plot", though he may have had the "Mingrelian Affair" on his mind as well.

It is hard to imagine how Beria could have been chosen to head both the MVD and the MGB at the same time, at the emergency Presidium meeting at the dying Stalin's bedside — a great concentration of power in the hands of a single man — unless there had been a previous agreement. It's unlikely such an agreement would have been made during the preceding days while Stalin was ill, because no one could be sure that Stalin would die. Therefore, it seems most likely that Beria's joint appointment to these two ministries was decided with Stalin's agreement and perhaps, even probably, even at his suggestion.

The "Doctors' Plot" articles stopped appearing in the newspapers before Stalin died. Anti-Stalinist and former Soviet dissident Zhores Medvedev argues that this, together with other facts, shows it was Stalin himself who ended the "Doctors' Plot" attacks in the press. Medvedev points out that Stalin opposed the anti-semitism that had been a part of the campaign from the outset. (Zhores Medvedev, *Stalin i Evreiskaia Problema*. (Moscow, 2003), 208ff; 216 f.) Stalin himself was famously opposed to anti-semitism, as Medvedev admits.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>137</sup> In *The Unknown Stalin*, a collection of essays written at various times, Roi and Zhores Medvedev both accuse Stalin of inciting anti-Semitism and then of decisively ending the press campaign about, and preparations for a trial in, the "Doctors' Plot". That is, these two anti-Stalin authors decide that it was Stalin who put an end to the "Doctors' Plot" campaign. *The Unknown Stalin* (Woodstock and New York: Overlook Press, 2004), 32.

## Chapter 7. Beria, His "Machinations" and "Crimes"

### 44. Beria

Khrushchev:

In organizing the various dirty and shameful cases, a very base role was played by the rabid enemy of our party, an agent of a foreign intelligence service — Beria, who had stolen into Stalin's confidence.

Nobody today supports Khrushchev's tale of Beria's being a "foreign agent." It has been completely exploded by the evidence. Furthermore, neither Molotov nor Kaganovich believed it even at that time, though they did not say so in 1953.

No one mentioned such a charge during the vicious attacks upon him at the July 1953 Central Committee Plenum, as Mikoian admitted.<sup>138</sup> Khrushchev said that Beria's proposal for a united, neutralist Germany was "yielding to the West." But Stalin had suggested a neutral united Germany to the Allies in March 1952. *Pravda* repeated variations of this offer in April and May 1953, after Stalin's death. Beria could never have gotten this into the Party's newspaper by himself.

<sup>138</sup> Lavrentii Beriia. 1953. Stenogramma iul'skogo Plenuma TsK KPSS i drugie dokumenty. Moscow: MDF, 1999, p. 315.

And in fact Khrushchev's claim that this was "yielding to the West" was not true — the Allies were very much opposed to this, and turned down any consideration of a unified Germany. Had the Soviet Union chosen to stick with this offer, it would have been very embarrassing to the West, since it would have been extremely tempting to almost all Germans. If the West had continued to oppose it, it would have been they, not the USSR, who would have appeared unfriendly to Germany after the war.

In conversations with Felix Chuev the aged Molotov went on to explain (409-10) that he considers Beria's acts as an "agent of imperialism" to be

that of proposing a neutral Germany.<sup>139</sup> This was the same charge raised, at the July 1953 Plenum. But Beria was only one member of the Presidium, and it was only a proposal. There was nothing at all wrong with his raising the question; it could not have been put into practice without the Presidium's approval. To Chuev's direct question whether Beria really was an agent of foreign intelligence and whether that had been confirmed by evidence, Molotov answered in the negative.

<sup>139</sup> See also Feliks Chuev, *Kaganovich Ispoved' stalinskogo apostola*. Moscow, 1992, p. 66.

#### **45. Kaminsky accuses Beria of working with the Mussavat**

Khrushchev:

Were there any signs that Beria was an enemy of the party? Yes, there were. Already in 1937, at a Central Committee plenum, former People's Commissar of Health Kaminsky said that Beria worked for the Mussavat intelligence service. But the Central Committee plenum had barely concluded when Kaminsky was arrested and then shot. Had Stalin examined Kaminsky's statement? No, because Stalin believed in Beria, and that was enough for him.

Much material to refute this fabrication of Khrushchev's has been published since the end of the Soviet Union. For example, Pavlunovsky's letter of June 1937, testifying that Beria had indeed done Party underground work among nationalists, has only recently been published.

Beria's own Party autobiography cites his underground work among nationalists, something he would never have done if he had thought it would not distinguish his Party service.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>140</sup> *Beriia: Konets kar'ery*. Ed. V.F. Nekrasov. Moscow: Politizdat, 1991, pp. 320-325; 323. This tendentious and poorly-documented volume nonetheless contains interesting materials.



Zalessky's biographical encyclopedia, *Imperiia Stalina*, is extremely anti-Stalin, but agrees with Beria's contention that he did underground work. Indeed, it's impossible to imagine Sergei Kirov's intercession on Beria's behalf, or the Beria family's closeness to the Ordzhonikidze family as attested in Beria's memoirs, unless Beria's loyalty to the Party had been crystal clear.

It seems dear that Khrushchev simply revived an old rumor about Beria dating from his days in the nationalist underground. Undercover work is very dangerous, and Beria's "cover" had to be good enough to fool the Mussavat Party itself into believing Beria was working for them. It's not surprising that it would also fool rank-and-file Bolsheviks. Beria's own letter of 1933 to Ordzhonikidze shows that he was still trying to quash this vicious rumor. He would hardly have written a leading Politburo member about this unless he wanted to put it "on record."

Khrushchev had access to all the information we now have, and more. He had to know that this was a lie. It was another tool with which to smear Beria.

#### **46. Kartvelishvili**

Khrushchev:

The long, unfriendly relations between Kartvelishvili and Beria were widely known; they date back to the time when Comrade Sergo [Ordzhonikidze] was active in the Transcaucasus; Kartvelishvili was the closest assistant of Sergo. The unfriendly relationship impelled Beria to fabricate a "case" against Kartvelishvili. It is a characteristic thing that in this "case" Kartvelishvili was charged with a terroristic act against Beria.

Kartvelishvili (who was also known by his Russianized name Lavrent'ev) was expelled from the Party and arrested on June 22, 1937, at the June 1937 CC Plenum, and executed on August 22, 1938, under Ezhov, not Beria.

There exists a note from Beria to Stalin about Beria's alleged uncovering of an underground Rightist group in Georgia that included Kartvelishvili.

However,

- The note is from July 20 1937, a month after Kartvelishvili's arrest. (Lubianka 2, No. 142 p. 252)
- Kartvelishvili is mentioned in other documents by Liushkov, one of Ezhov's, not Beria's, men (No. 196 of Sept. 11, 1937, pp. 347 ff; No. 207 of September 19, 1937, pp. 368 ff.; No. 309 of March 29, 1938) Liushkov was involved in Ezhov's conspiracy, and had many innocent men tortured and killed. But Ezhov was 100% against Beria. There was no way that Liushkov was abetting Beria in naming Kartvelishvili.
- According to Postyshev's rehabilitation documents Kartvelishvili was identified as a conspirator by Postyshev too (RKEB 1, 219).
- Kartvelishvili was named by Ia. A Iakovlev, a close associate of Stalin's in the drafting of the 1936 Constitution, vice-Chairman of the Party Control Commission, and member of the CC. Iakovlev was arrested suddenly on October 12, 1937, and in his extensive confession of October 15-18 1937 he names Kartvelishvili, among many others. It is clear from the annotations and followup note by Stalin that Stalin was taken by surprise by Iakovlev's confession.

The Rehabilitation file on Kartvelishvili (RKEB 1, 331-2) blames Beria for everything. Even if Kartvelishvili was framed, though, this cannot be true. Most of the documents against him are by Liushkov or, in the case of Iakovlev's confession, have nothing to do with Beria at all.

Kartvelishvili was arrested in June 1937, long before Beria had anything to do with the Soviet NKVD. It's hard to find a firm date for his execution. One "Memorial" webpage gives it as August 1938.<sup>141</sup> If that is accurate, then Beria could not have been involved in his interrogation and, if any, torture, because Beria had just become Ezhov's second-in-command in the NKVD on August 21 or 22, 1938. Beria seems to have remained in his post as First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Georgian Communist Party until August 31 1938, and evidently did not arrive in Moscow to take his position until around the first of September.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>141</sup> See

[http://www.memo.ru/memory/communarka/Chapt10.htm#KMi\\_2450](http://www.memo.ru/memory/communarka/Chapt10.htm#KMi_2450)

<sup>142</sup> *Lubianka 2*, No. 334, p. 545; N.V. Petrov, K.V. Skorkin. *Kto rukovodil NKVD. 1934-1941. Spravochnik*. Moscow: Zven'ia, 1999, 107. Cf. <http://www.memo.ru/history/NKVD/kto/biogr/gb42.htm>

According to the Pospelov Report (*RKEB* 1, 332), Lavrent'ev-Kartvelishvili was tortured into confessing and naming others. This is plausible, since we have Frinovskii's statement that Ezhov and his subordinates, including Frinovskii himself, regularly did this.

Given the dates, though, Beria could not have been responsible for Lavrent'ev-Kartvelishvili's fate. Khrushchev had to know this. This is probably the reason that the date of Lavrent'ev-Kartvelishvili's execution is not given in the Pospelov Report, which was drawn up to help Khrushchev blame Beria. Citing a date for the execution before Beria had even arrived at the NKVD would have contradicted the whole purpose of the Pospelov Report, which was certainly not to arrive at the truth!

#### **47. Kedrov**

Khrushchev:

Here is what the old Communist, Comrade Kedrov, wrote to the Central Committee through Comrade Andreyev (Comrade Andreyev was then a Central Committee secretary): "I am calling to you for help from a gloomy cell of the Lefortovsky prison. Let my cry of horror reach your ears; do not remain deaf, take me under your protection; please, help remove the nightmare of interrogations and show that this is all a mistake.

"I suffer innocently..."

The old Bolshevik, Comrade Kedrov, was found innocent by the Military Collegium. But, despite this, he was shot at Beria's order.

We don't know the details of Kedrov's case because the materials have not been made available to researchers. But for our purposes, we do not need to do so. A Russian government agency has now published a collection of documents from which we can tell with certainty that the order for Kedrov's execution was signed by the State Prosecutor, Bochkov.<sup>143</sup> Beria was merely carrying it out. It was not "his order."

<sup>143</sup> Organy gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti SSSR v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine. T.2 Nachalo. Kn. 2 1 sentiabria - 31 dekabria 1941 goda. Moscow: Rus', 2000, p. 215-6 and note on p. 215. The facts laid out in these documents were confirmed by Vlodzimirskii and Kobulov during the investigation on the "Beria Affair"; see A.V. Sukhomlinov, Kto vy , Lavrentii Beria? Moscow: Detektiv-Press, 1993, p. 153 and 219-220. There is more information available about Kedrov . It is almost certain that he did, in fact, get sentenced to death at a trial See texts in the Appendix for this section. Suffice it to say that Khrushchev had all this information at his disposal, and lied about Beria's part in this.

In fact we now know more about Kedrov's case. For example, there seems to be no doubt that his death sentence was handed down by a court. We don't have the space to explore all the aspects of the Kedrov matter here. But all of it was available to Khrushchev, who was once again lying when he made his statements about Beria and Kedrov.

#### **48. Ordzhonikidze's brother**

Khrushchev:

Beria also handled cruelly the family of Comrade Ordzhonikidze. Why? Because Ordzhonikidze had tried to prevent Beria from realizing his shameful plans. Beria had cleared from his way all persons who could possibly interfere with him. Ordzhonikidze was always an opponent of Beria, which he told to Stalin. Instead of examining this affair and taking appropriate steps, Stalin allowed the liquidation of Ordzhonikidze's brother and brought Ordzhonikidze himself to such a state that he was forced to shoot himself.

According to Oleg Khlevniuk's research (*In Stalin's Shadow: the career of 'Sergo' Ordzhonikidze*. NY: Sharpe, 1995), Sergo committed suicide, most likely from bad health. He had been very sick a long time and, in fact, had had a normal work routine his last day of life.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>144</sup> Khevniuk. Chapters 12 -13; cf. O.V. Khevniuk, *Stalin i Ordzhonikidze. Konflikty v Politburo v 1930-e gody*. Moscow: Rossiia molodaia, 1993, p. 115. The English language version of Khlevniuk's book is somewhat different from the Russian original.

His death had nothing whatsoever to do with Stalin, his brother, or Beria. On the contrary: "Judging from well-known facts, Ordzhonikidze actively protected Beria and maintained good relations with him right up to the middle of the 1930s." (106)

Research by Vladimir L. Bobrov has recently (October 2008) proven that even the story that Ordzhonikidze committed suicide is without foundation, yet another Khrushchev-era fabrication. Ordzhonikidze undoubtedly died of natural causes — of heart failure — as was reported at the time.<sup>145</sup> Khlevniuk simply continues to repeat as fact the lies in an unattributed introduction to a Khrushchev-era biography of Ordzhonikidze. This introduction was omitted when the book was republished four years later, after Khrushchev's ouster.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>145</sup> Vladimir L. Bobrov, "Taina smerti Ordzhonikidze", at <http://vif2ne.ru/nvz/forum/archive/238/238967.htm> ; fully footnoted Russian version at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/bobrov-ordzhon08html> ; English translation at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/bobrob-ordzhon08eng.html>

<sup>146</sup> Compare the opening section of the 1963 version of I. Dubinskii-Mukhadze, *Ordzhonikidze* with that of the "second corrected edition" of 1967 (both editions Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia).

On or about Oct. 24, 1936, his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, Sergo heard his brother Papulia had been arrested in Georgia (p. 105).<sup>147</sup> Sergo's brother Valiko defended Papulia at the Georgian Central Committee, and was fired as a

result. Beria was head of Georgian party, so Sergo phoned Beria in mid-December to ask for help. According to Khevniuk "Beria showed remarkable concern..." looked into it, got Valiko reinstated, and sent a polite note to Sergo (p. 108).<sup>148</sup>

<sup>147</sup> Cf. Russian version, p. 77.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. Russian version, p. 80.

Sergo died of heart failure during the night of February 17-18, 1937 (147)<sup>149</sup>. He had had a completely normal workday that day. But he had long suffered from ill health, and it was getting worse. Khlevniuk, who has great hatred for Stalin, tries hard to come up with evidence that Stalin had something to do with Sergo's death, and attempts to "reconstruct" an argument over the telephone between the two men, but is finally unable to do so. Khlevniuk could not prove that such a phone call ever took place, much less what was said in it!

<sup>149</sup> Cf. Russian version, pp. 116-129.

Papulia was shot in November, 1937 (173). Khlevniuk gives no further information on this, since evidently he did not have any. It's obvious that Sergo's death could not have been related to Papulia's execution.

According to Sergo Beria, Sergo's relations with his brother Papulia were poor. Papulia himself was hostile to the Soviet Union; and Sergo always stayed with the Berias rather than with his own brother when he came to Tbilisi.

In Khrushchev's, and again in Gorbachev's day, stories circulated as "fact" that Ordzhonikidze was a "liberal", opposed to the Moscow Trials, and so on. There is no evidence for this. According to Arch Getty:

...Ordzhonikidze does not seem to have objected to terror in general, including that directed against Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Bukharin, and was in fact asked by Stalin to give the main speech on wrecking in industry to the February 1937 Plenum of the Central Committee. [n. 64] The draft of the speech Ordzhonikidze was preparing to give to the

February 1937 Plenum, as chief reporter on wrecking in industry, was approved by Stalin and was in character with the hard line of the times: RTsKhIDNI (TsPA), f.558, op.1 d. 3350, ll. 1-16.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>150</sup> J. Arch Getty, "The Politics of Repression Revisited," p. 131 and n. 64, p. 140. In Ward, Chris, ed. *The Stalinist Dictatorship*. London, New York: Arnold, 1998.

To sum up: every statement Khrushchev made about Beria and the Ordzhonikidzes is a lie.

- Ordzhonikidze was not Beria's opponent. Rather he stayed with the Beria family when he went to Tbilisi, instead of staying with his older brother Papulia.
- According to Khevniuk, Papulia was executed in November 1937, long after Sergo's death (February 17-18 1937), which therefore could not possibly have been motivated by Papulia's "liquidation."
- Ordzhonikidze's death had nothing to do with Beria. The very anti-Stalin Oleg Khlevniuk concludes that Ordzhonikidze killed himself because of his own poor health. But all the evidence suggests that the "suicide" story is a Khrushchev-era falsification.

## Chapter 8. *Ideology and Culture*

### 49. Stalin, Short Biography

Khrushchev:

Comrades: The cult of the individual acquired such monstrous size chiefly because Stalin himself, using all conceivable methods, supported the glorification of his own person. This is supported by numerous facts. One of the most characteristic examples of Stalin's self-glorification and of his lack of even elementary modesty is the edition of his Short Biography, which was published in 1948.

This book is an expression of the most dissolute flattery, an example of making a man into a godhead, of transforming him into an infallible sage, "the greatest leader, sublime strategist of all times and nations." Finally, no other words could be found with which to lift Stalin up to the heavens.

We need not give here examples of the loathesome adulation filling this book. All we need to add is that they all were approved and edited by Stalin personally and some of them were added in his own handwriting to the draft text of the book.

What did Stalin consider essential to write into this book? Did he want to cool the ardor of his flatterers who were composing his Short Biography? No! He marked the very places where he thought that the praise of his services was insufficient. Here are some examples characterizing Stalin's activity, added in Stalin's own hand:

In this fight against the skeptics and capitulators, the Trotskyites, Zinovievites, Bukharinites and Kamenevites, there was definitely welded together, after Lenin's death, that leading core of the party... that upheld the great banner of Lenin, rallied the party behind Lenin's behests, and brought the Soviet people into the broad road of industrializing the country and collectivizing the



rural economy. The leader of this core and the guiding force of the party and the state was Comrade Stalin. [(1) — see below for discussion, GF]

Thus writes Stalin himself! Then he adds:

Although he performed his task as leader of the party and the people with consummate skill and enjoyed the unreserved support of the entire Soviet people, Stalin never allowed his work to be marred by the slightest hint of vanity, conceit or self-adulation. [(2) — see below for discussion, GF]

Where and when could a leader so praise himself? Is this worthy of a leader of the Marxist-Leninist type? No. Precisely against this did Marx and Engels take such a strong position. This also was always sharply condemned by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin.

In the draft text of his book appeared the following sentence: "Stalin is the Lenin of today."

This sentence appeared to Stalin to be too weak, so, in his own handwriting, he changed it to read: "Stalin is the worthy continuer of Lenin's work, or, as it is said in our party, Stalin is the Lenin of today." [(3) — see below for discussion, GF]

You see how well it is said, not by the nation but by Stalin himself.

It is possible to give many such self-praising appraisals written into the draft text of that book in Stalin's hand. Especially generously does he endow himself with praises pertaining to his military genius, to his talent for strategy.

I will cite one more insertion made by Stalin concerning the theme of the Stalinist military genius. "The advanced Soviet science of war received further development," he writes, "at Comrade Stalin's hands. Comrade Stalin elaborated the theory of the permanently operating factors that decide the issue of wars, of active defense and the laws of counteroffensive and offensive, of the cooperation of all services and

arms in modern warfare, of the role of big tank masses and air forces in modern war, and of the artillery as the most formidable of the armed services. At the various stages of the war Stalin's genius found the correct solutions that took account of all the circumstances of the situation." [(4) — see below for discussion, GF]

And, further, writes Stalin:

Stalin's military mastership was displayed both in defense and offense. Comrade Stalin's genius enabled him to divine the enemy's plans and defeat them. The battles in which Comrade Stalin directed the Soviet armies are brilliant examples of operational military skill. [(5) — see below for discussion, GF]

In this manner was Stalin praised as a strategist. Who did this? Stalin himself, not in his role as a strategist but in the role of an author-editor, one of the main creators of his self-adulatory biography. Such, comrades, are the facts. We should rather say shameful facts.

The changes made by Stalin in this biography have now been published, first in *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* No. 9, 1990, and then reprinted widely. This allows us to see how Khrushchev lied about Stalin's changes to this biography. Even the anti-Stalin editor of these selections for the journal, V.A. Belianov, admitted that many of Stalin's corrections were in the direction of removing fulsome praise given him by the authors and make Stalin appear modest.

Khrushchev deliberately distorted the character of some of the quotations he himself cites. For example, Khrushchev cited only the first part of the following phrase, marked (2) in the passage above. In this way Khrushchev deliberately changed the meaning of the whole. Here is the part omitted by Khrushchev:

In his interview with the German writer Ludwig, where he remarks on the great role of the genius Lenin in the matter of transforming our country, Stalin said simply about himself: "As concerns myself, I am only a pupil of Lenin's, and my goal is to be worthy of him.

In the passage above marked (1), at the point of the ellipsis (three dots), Khrushchev omitted the names, inserted by Stalin, of many other Party leaders. Here is the full passage; the words omitted by Khrushchev are underlined>.

In this fight against the skeptics and capitulators, the Trotskyites, Zinovievites, Bukharinites and Kamenevites, there was definitely welded together, after Lenin's death, that leading core of the party...that upheld the great banner of Lenin, rallied the party behind Lenin's behests, and brought the Soviet people in to the broad road of industrializing the country and collectivizing the rural economy. The leading core was composed of Stalin, Molotov, Kalinin, Voroshilov, Kuibyshev, Frunze, Dzerzhinskii, Kaganovich, Ordzhonikidze, Kirov, Iaroslavskii, Mikoian, Andrecev, Shvernik, Zhdanov, Shkiriakov, and others...

In the passage marked (3) above, it is obvious even without the original that Stalin transformed a passage which equated him with Lenin, into a passage which makes it clear that he is only a continuer of Lenin's work.

Khrushchev attributed selections (4) and (5) above to Stalin. This is an error. In fact, they were written by General-Major M.R Galaktionov, who wrote this section of the biography. L. V. Maksimenkov, who points this out, continues:

What's more, in contradiction to Khrushchev's accusation Stalin, in editing this text, systematically lowered its triumphant character. For example, the bureaucratic-pseudodemocratic title "comrade Stalin" replaced the original "Generalissimo Stalin", "teaching" ["of the permanently operating factors"] was replaced by Stalin with "position," and "immortal forms of the military-operational art" became "significant."<sup>151</sup>

<sup>151</sup> I.V. Maksimenkov. "Kul't. Zemetki o slovakh-simolakh v sovetskoi politicheskoi kul'ture." *Svobodnaia mysl'*. 1993. At [http://www.situation.ru/app/j\\_ artp\\_677.htm](http://www.situation.ru/app/j_ artp_677.htm)

Maksimenkov discusses at length Stalin's very critical remarks, now available, about the draft of the second, postwar edition of his biography. The original document shows that Stalin's first directive was to write a new biography of Lenin — a fact not mentioned during the Khrushchev era or even later during Gorbachev's "perestroika."

Stalin strongly criticized the "Socialist-Revolutionary character" of the praise given to him by the authors of the "Short Biography", reproaching it as "the education of idol-worshippers." Stalin rejected any credit for any of the teachings attributed in the draft to him, giving credit to Lenin instead.

Maksimenkov concludes that Khrushchev completely distorted the nature of Stalin's changes to this biography, and points out that other writers of the Khrushchev and post-Khrushchev Soviet period did not correct them either. Other passages omitted by the original authors and inserted by Stalin include a long passage about the importance of women in the revolution and Soviet society.

In 1998, while going through the personal papers of VD. Mochalov, one of the members of the biographical team, Richard Kosolapov found his handwritten notes of two meetings with Stalin concerning the biography. He published them on pp. 451-476 of his book *Slovo Tovarishchu Stalinu*.

Kosolapov is an admirer of Stalin and leads one of the neo-communist parties in Russia. But this specific work of his is cited several times in the footnotes to Robert Service's recent biography of Stalin, a work very hostile towards Stalin.<sup>152</sup> So we may consider it appropriate to cite it here as well. An excerpt showing how Stalin condemned the adulation of himself in the first draft of the biography may be consulted in the Appendix.

<sup>152</sup> E.g. Robert Service. *Stalin. A Biography* (Harvard University Press, 2005) p. 654, note 1 to Chapter 50.

## **50. The 'Short Course'**

Khrushchev:

As is known, The Short Course of the History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) was written by a commission of the party Central Committee. ... This fact was reflected in the following formulation on the proof copy of the Short Biography of Stalin: "A commission of the Central Committee, All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), under the direction of Comrade Stalin and with his most active personal participation, has prepared a Short Course of the History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)."

But even this phrase did not satisfy Stalin: The following sentence replaced it in the final version of the Short Biography: "In 1938 appeared the book, History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), Short Course, written by Comrade Stalin and approved by a commission of the Central Committee, All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)." Can one add anything more?

As you see, a surprising metamorphosis changed the work created by a group into a book written by Stalin. It is not necessary to state how and why this metamorphosis took place....

And when Stalin himself asserts that he himself wrote *The Short Course of the History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)*, this calls at least for amazement. Can a Marxist-Leninist thus write about himself, praising his own person to the heavens?

It appears that no one but Khrushchev ever asserted that Stalin claimed authorship of the Short Course. Neither Khrushchev nor anyone else has ever adduced any evidence that Stalin claimed to have written it. Molotov flatly stated that Stalin never claimed to have written it.

Be that as it may, in reality the first indication of the authorship of the "Short Course" first appeared in the first edition of the "Short Biography" of Stalin (1940) — a book to which, according to Maksimenkov (cited above) Stalin had no relationship as either author or editor. Maksimenkov explains:

Occupied with directing the Soviet-Finnish 'Winter' war he [Stalin] distanced himself from the editing of the book... On December 14, 1939, a week before Stalin's sixtieth birthday, the first draft of the

biography in his name was sent with an accompanying letter signed by Mitin and Pospelov: "Dear Comrade Stalin. We are sending you this draft of your "Short biography", prepared by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute, along with the directions for propaganda and agitation. We request that you look through this work and give us your directions concerning the possibility of its publication." Stalin underlined the whole text of the accompanying letter and wrote with a green pencil across the page: "No time to 'look through' it. Return it to the MELI [Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute]. J. Stalin"<sup>153</sup>

The sentence about Stalin's role in the making of the "Short Course" was not inserted by Stalin himself about himself, but belongs to the pen of one of the many authors and editors who worked on the book. And here Khrushchev lied again.

There remains only to clarify the question: What was Stalin's actual role in the writing of the "Short Course"?

In one of his sketches Roi Medvedev, scarcely a sympathizer of Stalin's, writes of him as "the principal author of the 'Short Course'." The historian notes that Khrushchev's virtual arraignment of Stalin for plagiarism is utterly without foundation. In evidence of his position he refers to the publication in *Voprosy Istorii* of the typewritten texts with Stalin's corrections and a number of other materials.<sup>154</sup>

Regardless of the obvious lacunae and incomplete nature of the primary documents in Medvedev's opinion there is no doubt that work on the "Short Course" was conducted under the direction and with the active participation of Stalin as one of the principal authors of the textbook.

Khrushchev had asserted that Stalin had had no right to write that he was the author of the "Short Course" because, he said, he had not written it. As it turns out, in reality Stalin had every basis to claim that he had been one of the principal authors, but never made this claim to anyone or anywhere. Even Molotov, who had been one of Stalin's closest collaborators, did not know precisely how much Stalin had written and believed that he had only written the section on dialectics, since they had discussed this at some point.

In this instance Khrushchev outsmarted himself. He said Stalin claimed an authorship he did not deserve. In reality, Stalin was indeed the principal author, but never claimed to be such.

<sup>153</sup> Maksimenkov, "Kul't".

<sup>154</sup> "I.V. Stalin v rabote nad 'Kratkim kursom istorii VKP(b)'. Publikatsiia, kommentarii i vstupitel'naia stat'ia M.V. Zelenova." *Voprosy Istorii* Nos 11-12 (2002), Nos 3-4 (2003).

## **51. Stalin Signed Order for Monument to Himself on July 2, 1951**

Khrushchev:

It is a fact that Stalin himself had signed on July 2, 1951 a resolution of the USSR Council of Ministers concerning the erection on the Volga-Don Canal of an impressive monument to Stalin; on September 4 of the same year he issued an order making 33 tons of copper available for the construction of this impressive monument.

This is no "fact", but a bare assertion. We have only Khrushchev's word for this. The relevant documents have never been reproduced, and no one else has claimed to have seen them. Khrushchev never claims that Stalin **introduced** or **suggested** this monument, so we can assume he did not.

According to the "Journal of visitors to Stalin's Kremlin office," on July 2 1951 Stalin did work for 1 hour and 45 minutes. The Presidium had met on June 26 and its "Bureau", consisting of Beria, Bulganin, Kaganovich, Mikoian, Molotov, and Khrushchev himself, met with him on July 2 from 9:30 to 11:15 p.m.<sup>155</sup> So he **could** have signed such a resolution of the Council of Ministers, if it were presented on that date. We do not know whether it was or not.

But it is important to note here that the mere fact of "Stalin's signature" in and of itself means nothing at this period. On February 16, 1951 the Politburo adopted a decision that the Presidium would be chaired by others, and that a rubber stamp would be used for Stalin's signature when it was

necessary as the Head of State (Chairman of Council of Ministers). This document, and the rubber stamps, have been exhibited in Moscow<sup>156</sup> (see the Appendix for the URLs for these exhibits).

That is, Stalin no longer signed "decisions and instructions of the Council of Ministers of the USSR", but they were still issued under his signature, in his absence. Since that was the case since February 1951, it is logical to assume it was still the case in July of that same year. But we cannot tell one way or the other for certain whether Stalin personally signed these documents without seeing the originals, and perhaps not even then.

As for the September 4, 1951 "order" it is unlikely that Stalin could have issued it. He was on leave, or "vacation", probably for ill health, between August 10, 1951 and February 11, 1952, when he returned to his office.<sup>157</sup>

The main point is this — and Khrushchev knew it — Stalin was politically active only sporadically by this time. Politburo members, including Khrushchev himself, declared in 1953 that Stalin had not been politically active. Stalin said as much at the 19th Party Congress in October 1952: "I no longer read papers."<sup>158</sup>

According to the "Journal of visitors to Stalin's Kremlin office" Stalin's workload began to decrease in February 1950. Judging from this source, Stalin worked 73 days in 1950, but only 48 days in 1951, and 45 days in 1952.<sup>159</sup>

Therefore, it is very doubtful that Stalin personally signed the September 4, 1951 order. As for that of July 2, 1951, we simply do not know.

But even if Stalin did in fact personally sign this document — that is, even if this was not a case of the Politburo's voting to affixing his signature with the stamp — it has little significance. Even Khrushchev does not claim Stalin initiated the order for the monument.

<sup>155</sup> *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* No. 1, 1997, p. 24.

<sup>156</sup> A photograph of these stamps may be viewed at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/stalinsigstamps51.jpg>



<sup>157</sup> These pages from "Visitors to Stalin's Kremlin Office" may be consulted at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/istarkh197.pdf>

<sup>158</sup> "'V ch'i ruki vruchim estafetu nashego velikogo dela?' Neopublikovannaia rech' I.V. Stalina na Plenumе Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS 16 oktiabria 1952 goda (po zapisi L.N. Efremova)." *Sovetskaka Rossiia* January 13, 2000. At <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/stalinoct1652.pdf> , and also at [http://grachev62.narod.ru/stalin/t18/t18\\_262.htm](http://grachev62.narod.ru/stalin/t18/t18_262.htm)

<sup>159</sup> IU.N. Zhukov, *Tainy Kremliia. Stalin, Molotov, Beriia, Malenkov*. Moscow: TERRA, 2000, p. 549. Cf. also sources at note 7 above. The monument to Stalin was built but taken down during Khrushchev's time and later replaced by a monument to Lenin. Monument to Stalin: <http://elefantmuller.users.photofile.ru/photo/elefantmuller/2911172/xlarge/115411211.jpg> ; to Lenin: <http://foto-fleet.users.photofile.ru/photo/foto-fleet/95172224/xlarge/115411831.jpg>

## **52. The Palace of Soviets**

Khrushchev:

At the same time Stalin gave proofs of his lack of respect for Lenin's memory. It is not a coincidence that, despite the decision taken over 30 years ago to build a Palace of Soviets as a monument to Vladimir Ilyich, this palace was not built, its construction was always postponed and the project allowed to lapse.

In his recent article on the history of the plans, architectural contests, and ultimate abandonment of the project to build the Palace of Soviets, Maksim Volchenkov directly references Khrushchev's Speech, showing that the latter's statement here is simply not true. Nor did Khrushchev erect this building either. The committee in charge of it gradually changed its focus to other buildings. The plan to build a Palace of Soviets was abandoned — not by Stalin, but by his successors.

## **53. The Lenin Prize**

Khrushchev:

We cannot forget to recall the Soviet Government resolution of August 14, 1925 concerning "the founding of Lenin prizes for educational work." This resolution was published in the press, but until this day there are no Lenin prizes. This, too, should be corrected.

This is not true, and most of the audience at the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress must have known it. In fact, there had been Lenin prizes, from 1925 to 1934, in the fields of science, technology, literature, art, and architecture. It's not clear why they were ended, but nobody seems to have blamed Stalin for it.<sup>160</sup>

However, the Order of Lenin (*Orden Lenina*) was the highest decoration given by the USSR. It was continuously awarded for outstanding achievements in many fields from 1930 until the end of the Soviet Union.

Stalin also **rejected** the proposal that an "Order of Stalin" be created in his honor. Information about that is given in the Appendix. Khrushchev would have known about this, of course.

At the time of preparing for the celebration of Stalin's sixtieth birthday in December 1939 the question of instituting prizes in Stalin's name arose again.<sup>161</sup> We have no indication that Stalin had anything to do with this initiative. But one thing is well known: the Stalin prizes were **not** initiated instead of or in replacement of the Lenin prizes. They were instituted at a time when there were **no** annual prizes in sciences and arts in the USSR. Consequently Khrushchev's counterposition of the Lenin and Stalin prizes is incorrect and dishonest.

<sup>160</sup> It is likely that the pause, and then cessation in the award of the Lenin prizes was related to the closing of the Communist Academy, to which the commission on the Lenin prizes was attached. The question of closing the Communist Academy "in view of the inexpediency of two parallel Academies, the Academy of Sciences and the Communist Academy," a matter under discussion after the beginning of 1935. The Lenin prize awards ceased at this same time. See the Decree "Concerning the Liquidation of the Communist Academy", by the C.C. and the Council of

People's Commissars dated February 7, 1936, reproduced at <http://www.ihstru/projects/sohist/document/an/181.htm>

<sup>161</sup> The Decree of the Sovnarkom of the USSR of December 20, 1939 on the establishment of prizes and awards in honor of Stalin was signed by the Chairman of the SNK V.M. Molotov and its chief of staff M.D. Khlomov (*Pravda* December 21, 1939). At first these awards did not include the fields of artistic creation and criticism. At the beginning of 1940 a similar decree was passed titled "Concerning the establishment of Stalin prizes in literature". It was also signed by Molotov and Khlomov (*Pravda* February 2, 1940). See <http://feb-web.ru/feb/sholokh/critics/nos/nos-486-.htm>

## **Chapter 9. *Stalin's Last Years in Power***

### **54. Stalin Suggested Huge Tax Increase on Kolkhozes**

Khrushchev:

What is more, while reviewing this project ["to raise the prices of such products in order to create material incentives for the kolkhoz, MTS [machine-tractor station] and sovkhos workers in the development of cattle breeding"] Stalin proposed that the taxes paid by the kolkhozes and by the kolkhoz workers should be raised by 40 billion rubles; according to him the peasants are well off and the kolkhoz worker would need to sell only one more chicken to pay his tax in full.

Imagine what this meant Certainly, 40 billion rubles is a sum which the kolkhoz workers did not realize for all the products which they sold to the Government. In 1952, for instance, the kolkhozes and the kolkhoz workers received 26,280 million rubles for all their products delivered and sold to the Government. Did Stalin's position, then, rest on data of any sort whatever? Of course not. In such cases facts and figures did not interest him.

According to Khrushchev, Stalin said this in February, 1953, just before his death. No one else records this. We have only Khrushchev's word for this.

Khrushchev first mentioned this alleged tax increase during the July 1953 CC Plenum devoted exclusively to the condemnation of Beria. Mikoian and Malenkov both referred to the "40 billion ruble" figure after Khrushchev mentions it. But both do so in a way that makes it clear they had not heard of it prior to Khrushchev's mentioning it.

Mikoian, who spoke up against additional taxes on the peasantry at the October 1952 C.C. Plenum, affirms that Stalin suggested "only one more chicken" in taxes from the peasants. But Mikoian admits he did not hear this personally, since he was not present. Mikoian does not mention the "40 billion rubles" in his discussion of this incident in his memoirs.<sup>162</sup>

<sup>162</sup> A. I. Mikoian, *Tak Bylo*. Moscow: Vagrius, 1999, Ch. 46 , pp. 559-568.

## **55. Stalin Insulted Postyshev**

Khrushchev:

In one of his speeches Stalin expressed his dissatisfaction with Postyshev and asked him, "What are you actually?" Postyshev answered clearly, "I am a Bolshevik, Comrade Stalin, a Bolshevik."

This assertion was at first considered to show a lack of respect for Stalin; later it was considered a harmful act and consequently resulted in Postyshev's annihilation and branding without any reason as a 'people's enemy.'

We have already seen that Postyshev was dismissed, then arrested, and finally tried and executed, for repressing a huge number of Party members without any evidence. Khrushchev was present at this Plenum (January 1938), and knew this. Therefore Khrushchev lied when he said Postyshev was repressed "without any reason."

It's most likely that Khrushchev is lying about the exchange above too. Only Khrushchev records this purported exchange between Postyshev and Stalin, and only in his Secret Speech. No one else, apparently, ever claimed to have heard Stalin say it. It is not in Khrushchev's memoirs either.

According to Getty and Naumov there is no evidence of any particular friction between Stalin and Postyshev until the January 1938 Plenum. As we have seen, Postyshev was dismissed from candidate membership in the Politburo at that Plenum, and arrested not long afterwards. Therefore this "speech" of Stalin's — if it ever took place at all — must have happened at this January 1938 Plenum.

Commentators like Boris Nikolaevsky thought it was made at the February-March 1937 CC Plenum. That is because they believed Khrushchev's earlier assertion in this "Secret Speech" that Postyshev had opposed Stalin at this Plenum. But the voluminous transcript of that long Plenum was published

in 1992-5. Again, as we have already seen, that transcript proves Khrushchev lied: Postyshev did not oppose Stalin at all at that Plenum. Nor did this purported exchange between Stalin and Postyshev take place there.

The transcripts of the January 1938 Plenum have not been published in full: But they have been published in excerpt, and some researchers have read the whole transcripts in the archives. None of them have mentioned finding this exchange. So it is most probable that Khrushchev is lying again. But we can't be absolutely certain.

Even if, some day, evidence comes to light that Stalin did say it, it was certainly not the reason for Postyshev's arrest, trial, conviction and execution. They were the punishment for Postyshev's guilt in repressing large numbers of Party members. Whether Stalin said these words or not therefore — and, to repeat, there is no evidence that he did, aside from Khrushchev's assertion here — Khrushchev lied in saying this was the reason for Postyshev's fate.

So why did Khrushchev make the latter claim? Probably in order to provide an "alibi" for Politburo members who had worked closely with Stalin for many years.

Many communists and Soviet citizens would likely wonder: Why did Stalin's closest associates never call him on any of the "crimes" Khrushchev was accusing him of? Why did they not take steps to stop Stalin, since they knew of these things? Lame as it is, the only answer Khrushchev and the rest could give was this: "We'd be killed if we protested. Look what happened to Postyshev, just for saying 'I am a Bolshevik!'"

## **56. "Disorganization" of Politburo Work**

Khrushchev:

The importance of the Central Committee's Political Bureau was reduced and its work was disorganized by the creation within the Political Bureau of various commissions — the so-called "quintets,"

"sextets," "septets" and "novenaries." Here is, for instance, a resolution of the Political Bureau of October 3, 1946:

Stalin's Proposal:

1. The Political Bureau Commission for Foreign Affairs ('Sextet') is to concern itself in the future, in addition to foreign affairs, also with matters of internal construction and domestic policy.
2. The Sextet is to add to its roster the Chairman of the State Commission of Economic Planning of the USSR, Comrade Voznesensky, and is to be known as a Septet.

Signed: Secretary of the Central Committee, J. Stalin.

What a terminology of a card player! (Laughter in the hall.) It is clear that the creation within the Political Bureau of this type of commissions — "quintets," "sextets," "septets" and "novenaries" — was against the principle of collective leadership. The result of this was that some members of the Political Bureau were in this way kept away from participation in reaching the most important state matters.

As Edvard Radzinsky, a ferociously hostile biographer of Stalin, admits, Khrushchev was lying. Subcommittees within the Politburo were simply a way of dividing up the work to be done. This was nothing new, and not Stalin's innovation.

### **57. Stalin Suspected Voroshilov an "English Agent"**

Khrushchev:

Because of his extreme suspicion, Stalin toyed also with the absurd and ridiculous suspicion that Voroshilov was an English agent (Laughter in the hall.) It's true — an English agent.

In his memoirs Khrushchev relates many rumors that he said were known only to "a few of us". In this case there is no other documentation of it.

For example, it is not in Mikoian's memoirs, which have a lot of false "memories", like Stalin's telling him Benes had assured him about Tukhachevsky' guilt — an event which never occurred.<sup>163</sup> So even if Mikoian had "remembered" this, one might legitimately question it. In fact, he did not.

### **58. Andreev; 59. Molotov; 60 Mikoian**

These all have to do with the CC Plenum of October 16, 1952 that took place immediately after the 19th Party Congress.

#### **Andreev**

Khrushchev:

By unilateral decision, Stalin had also separated one other man from the work of the Political Bureau — Andrei Andreyevich Andreyev. This was one of the most unbridled acts of willfulness.

Strictly speaking, we don't know precisely what Stalin said, because no official transcript has ever been published (according to Mikoian, none was made). Neither has the transcript of the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress ever been published.<sup>164</sup> Immediately after Stalin's death the Party leadership did their best to change the major decisions taken at both these sessions and to obliterate any memory of them.

Therefore we do not have any **official** reason why Andreev was not retained in the newly renamed Presidium (formerly the Politburo). But we have enough information from other sources to see that Khrushchev is not telling the truth.

Andreev lost his position in the Council of Ministers on March 15, 1953, ten days after Stalin's death.<sup>165</sup> If it had been an "unbridled act of willfulness" not to reappoint Andreev to the Presidium of the CC of the CPSU, why did Khrushchev, Malenkov and Beria remove him also from the Soviet of Ministers? (He was appointed to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, a far less demanding position.)



According to the only part of Stalin's Speech at the CC Plenum of October 16 1952 that we have, he actually did not nominate Andreev to the new Presidium because Andreev was deaf.<sup>166</sup> Konstantin Simonov says something similar.<sup>167</sup> These are the only accounts of the Plenum that mention Andreev at all. Both of them affirm that Stalin explicitly excluded Andreev because of his health.

Despite the lack of any official transcript, therefore, this is good evidence that Khrushchev lied. Andreev was not excluded out of any "willfulness" on Stalin's part.

<sup>164</sup> At least, no as a separate publication. Formal speeches were all published in *Pravda* in October 1952, at the time of the Congress. Perhaps this is all there was.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. the biographical entry on Andreev at Hrono.ru / hrono.info — [http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/andreev\\_aa.html](http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/andreev_aa.html)

<sup>166</sup> According to L.N. Efremov's notes on the Plenum published in *Sovetskaia Rossia* January 13, 2000. At <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/stalinoct1952.pdf> and also at [http://grachev62.narod.ru/stalin/t18/t18\\_262.htm](http://grachev62.narod.ru/stalin/t18/t18_262.htm)

<sup>167</sup> Konstantin M. Simonov, *Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniia*. Moscow: Novosti, 1988, p. 246.

## **Molotov and Mikoian**

Khrushchev:

Let us consider the first Central Committee plenum after the 19th Party Congress when Stalin, in his talk at the plenum, characterized Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov and Anastas Ivanovich Mikoian and suggested that these old workers of our party were guilty of some baseless charges. It is not excluded that had Stalin remained at the helm for another several months, Comrades Molotov and Mikoian would probably have not delivered any speeches at this Congress.

From what we know about this Plenum from a few who were present and wrote down their notes on it, it is clear that Stalin did criticize Molotov and Mikoian.

To determine whether Khrushchev is telling the truth here, we need to examine

- Whether the "charges" Stalin leveled at Molotov and Mikoian were "baseless" or not; and
- Whether it's true that they would not have spoken at the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress if Stalin had lived.
- There are four accounts of Stalin's talk at this Plenum from people who were in attendance. They are: that of Mikoian himself (*Tak Bylo*, Ch. 46); that of the writer Konstantin S.i.monov (*Glazami cheloveka moego pokolenia*), that of Dmitrii Shepilov (*Neprimknuvshii*, pp. 225-8.), and that of Leonid Nikolaevich Efremov (*Sovetskaia Rossiia*, January 13, 2000, p. 6). Mikoian was, of course, a long-time CC and Politburo member; the other three were brand-new members of the CC. Except for a short note by Simonov which he wrote in March 1953, the rest were written down years after the event.

Shepilov relates Stalin's criticisms of Molotov in a few paragraphs. He is far briefer about Stalin's remarks about Mikoian. Shepilov claims that Mikoian defended himself and attacked Molotov for being close to the executed Voznesenskii, whom he called "a great criminal." Shepilov did not consider the charges "baseless", or see any kind of threat in them, but only Stalin's reasons for not including them in the new Bureau of the Presidium.

In his first short note on the Plenum made in March 1953 Simonov did not remark at all on Stalin's criticism of Molotov and Mikoiao, but only noted Stalin's insistence that they be as fearless as Lenin was. In 1979 what S.i.monov remembered was the vehemence of Stalin's criticism of Molotov, and a vague feeling that he and Mikoian were for "capitulationism". Simonov agrees that Stalin then criticized Mikoian, but could not recall why. He says that both men replied to Stalin's criticisms — something that in and of itself refutes Khrushchev's claim that Stalin demanded "absolute submission". Simonov believed that these criticisms, whatever their cause,

served to justify Molotov's and Mikoian's exclusion from the new Bureau of the Presidium.

Mikoian's account, also written years later, agrees that Stalin criticized Molotov for his weakness in foreign policy and both Molotov and himself, Mikoian, in domestic policy. But in Mikoian's account Stalin was critical yet respectful of them. Mikoian does not mention anything about feeling threatened. Efremov's account outlines Stalin's criticisms of the two men but it too does not make these criticisms sound threatening at all.

In his whole voluminous memoirs Khrushchev has only a few sentences to say about the October 1952 Plenum, and says nothing about any "danger" to Mikoian or Molotov.

Mikoian, Molotov, and Voroshilov too, were all named to the Presidium, and Voroshilov — but not Mikoian or Molotov — to the "Bureau of the Presidium."

But what about the truthfulness of Khrushchev's allegation? The charges — a better word would be "criticisms" — do not appear to have been "baseless". They may or may not have been correct. In essence, they reflected political differences between Stalin and these two Politburo members.

Strictly speaking Khrushchev's statement — that it is "possible" Molotov and Mikoian would not have addressed the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress if Stalin had lived — cannot be either proven or disproven. But it is inconsistent with Stalin's actions at the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress. Mikoian and Molotov, though not in the very highest body (the Bureau of the Presidium), were still in the Presidium of 25 members and, as such, would certainly have been in a position to address the next Congress.

In his own memoirs Khrushchev does not repeat the story that Molotov and Mikoian were under any kind of threat.

## **61. Expansion of the Presidium**

Khrushchev:

Stalin evidently had plans to finish off the old members of the Political Bureau. He often stated that Political Bureau members should be replaced by new ones.

His proposal, after the 19th Congress, concerning the election of 25 persons to the Central Committee Presidium, was aimed at the removal of the old Political Bureau members and the bringing in of less experienced persons so that these would extol him in all sorts of ways.

We can assume that this was also a design for the future annihilation of the old Political Bureau members and, in this way, a cover for all shameful acts of Stalin, acts which we are now considering.

Khrushchev lied here, for there is no evidence that his accusation had the slightest basis in fact. It is not supported at all by the accounts of the Plenum that survive. According to Efremov's notes on the October 1952 Central Committee Plenum Stalin was extremely clear in explaining his proposal to expand the Presidium beyond the limits of the old Politburo. Efremov, a young man at his first Plenum, may have been especially struck by Stalin's emphasis on the need for new blood in the Party leadership, for Stalin's explanation takes up a substantial place in his notes.

## Chapter 10. *A Typology of Prevarication*

### A Typology of Khrushchev's Prevarication

Before proceeding to discuss Khrushchev's **specific** methods of distortion, we should understand that the published version before us is itself falsified.

Published earlier in *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, the text of Khrushchev's report is based upon the text presented by Khrushchev to the Presidium of the CC CPSU on March 1 [1956], edited and accepted for dissemination to local party organizations by a decision of the Presidium of the C.C. of March 7, 1956. **This text is not identical to that which Khrushchev read from the podium of the Congress.** For example, according to the way all the participants in the Congress remembered it, total silence reigned in the hall as the report was read. But audience reactions were inserted into the text published in *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*: "Commotion in the hall", "Indignation in the hall", "Applause", etc. which, of course, completely failed to reflect the real atmosphere of the closed session.

- V.IU. Afiani, Z.K. Vodop'ianova, "Arkheograficheskoe predislovie" ['Archeographical preface'], in Aimermakher, K., et al., *Doklad N.S. Khrushcheva o Kul'te Lichnosti Stalina na XX S"ezde KPSS. Dokumenty*. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002, p. 44. (Emphasis added, GF.)

These same "audience reactions" were inserted into the English translation. Therefore we are examining a text that has been falsified not only in its content but in its presentation as well. We have left most of the "audience reactions" in the quotations from Khrushchev's speech cited in previous chapters as a continual reminder of the deliberate distortions introduced into this text.<sup>168</sup>

I have determined that in the so-called "Secret Speech" Khrushchev made **sixty-one** "revelations", or hitherto unknown and derogatory accusations, against Stalin or Beria. These statements constitute the substance of the

Speech. It was these assertions that shocked the world when it was made public.

It would, of course, be absurd to say that every one of Khrushchev's statements is false. A dramatic example of a "revelation" Khrushchev made that is true is the following:

It was determined that of the 139 members and candidates of the party's Central Committee who were elected at the 17th Congress, 98<sup>169</sup> persons, i.e., 70 per cent, were arrested and shot (mostly in 1937-1938). (Indignation in the ball.) What was the composition of the delegates to the 17th Congress? It is known that 80 per cent of the voting participants of the 17th Congress joined the party during the years of conspiracy before the Revolution and during the civil war; this means before 1921. By social origin the basic mass of the delegates to the Congress were workers (60 per cent of the voting members).

When I claim that every supposed "revelation" or accusation in Khrushchev's speech against Stalin and Beria<sup>170</sup> is false, I do not include the statement above, because Khrushchev is careful not to claim here that Stalin had them all killed. Had he made this claim explicitly, this statement would be demonstrably false, to be added to the list of other false accusations in the Speech.<sup>171</sup>

Khrushchev does mention a number of the more prominent of the Central Committee members executed during the late 1930s. In the case of one very prominent full member of the 1934 Central Committee — Nikolai Ezhov — Khrushchev fails to mention the fact that he too was executed! We will examine the evidence on all the C.C. members Khrushchev explicitly names in the Speech.

<sup>168</sup> In his memoirs, published first in *Life* magazine and then in book form, Khrushchev admitted these "audience reactions" were a lie. "The delegates listened in absolute silence. It was so quiet in the huge hall you could hear a fly buzzing." *Life*, December 11, 1970, p. 63; Strobe Talbot (trans. & ed.), *Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), 494.

<sup>168</sup> In the report published by the official journal *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* No. 12 (1989), p. 86 the number of delegates is given as 97 (44+53), not 98. Of course this does not change the essence of the matter.

<sup>170</sup> Except for the one I have marked as "Don't Know."

<sup>171</sup> The statement just quoted is one of my three "S", or "special cases."

### **The Problem of Introducing a New Paradigm**

The usual problem a researcher confronts is that of assembling the evidence needed to prove his thesis, and arranging it logically so that his thesis is proven. But in writing the present essay I soon realized that another problem, much larger and more intractable, confronted me.

Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" is not just a series of assertions that can, in principle, be proven either valid or invalid. It soon became the foundational document for a whole new paradigm of Soviet history. This paradigm was not entirely new. It confirmed in part, and itself drew upon, earlier Trotskyist, Menshevik, and Soviet émigré interpretations of Soviet reality.

But because it was rapidly accepted by the worldwide communist movement itself, and was soon followed by a huge wave of "rehabilitations" of those convicted of treasonable activity during the Stalin years, the "Khrushchev" paradigm attained a degree of widespread acceptance that the earlier versions never had. It became the dominant paradigm.

As a result, to attack the veracity of Khrushchev's speech is to attack the foundation of what I will call the "anti-Stalin" paradigm. Here are a couple of illustrations of what I mean.

- I gave a talk summarizing a few of the results of my research on Khrushchev's speech at an annual conference of a Marxist academic group. During the Q&A period one long-time Marxist said to me in an accusatory tone: "You are rehabilitating Stalin!"
- Another question was: "What about Trotsky?" Khrushchev does not mention Trotsky in the speech.

- When a colleague mentioned my research project on Khrushchev's speech to an editor of a prominent Marxist journal, his derisive response was: "Does he claim there was no GULAG?" (Khrushchev never mentions the GULAG in his speech).
- A sympathetic and helpful reader of an earlier draft suggested that I should write a history of the repressions of the 1930s instead.
- At first I could not understand remarks like this. But I came to realize that these responses were not directed towards my talk. Instead, they were responding to what they felt my talk implied. They reflected the fact that Khrushchev's speech is not only the foundational document of the "anti-Stalin paradigm" of Soviet history. It is also a synecdoche for that paradigm: it represents that paradigm as the part represents the whole. To prove, as I attempt to do, that the statements made in Khrushchev's speech are false is taken to be a claim that all the other components of this paradigm, most of which Khrushchev never mentions, are also false.

It's reasonable to expect a paper or book to prove what it sets out to prove. It's not reasonable to expect a paper or book on a single topic to refute a whole historical paradigm, disproving in the process an undefined — in fact, an infinite — number of fact claims that are not part of the paper.

The present book, therefore, confronts a strange rhetorical situation. It evokes, if not a "totalitarian", at least a "totalizing" response. Khrushchev's "secret speech" represents the "anti-Stalin paradigm" to such an extent that any reference to it conjures up the entire paradigm. Sometimes the response that results is one of indignation: How can I presume to smuggle in a refutation of the whole "anti-Stalin" paradigm when I am actually disproving only a part of it? But to others the paper is simply a disappointment. It fails to deal with the GULAG, or Trotsky, or Bukharin, or the Katyn massacre, or something else that does not feature at all in Khrushchev's speech, and so the paper is a failure and a disappointment, no matter how thoroughly it manages to prove the falsity of what Khrushchev **did** say.

I agree that Khrushchev's speech is the foundational document of the "anti-Stalin" paradigm. Moreover, the fact that Khrushchev's speech is a tissue of



fabrications virtually from beginning to end also has implications for further research. Given this degree of falsehood at the very beginning of what purported to be an exposure of "Stalin's crimes", it's unlikely that the story ends here. One is justified in suspecting that at least some of the other "revelations" over which Khrushchev presided may prove to be false as well.

And then the "anti-Stalin" paradigm is well and truly in play. For Roi Medvedev's *Let History Judge* (1971) and Robert Conquest's *The Great Terror. Stalin's Purge of the Thirties* (1968), the two major syntheses of Khrushchev-era "revelations," are precisely the formative popularizations of the "anti-Stalin" paradigm. They summarize what their authors gleaned from the Soviet press, "rehabilitation" announcements, and public and private memoirs. (For the account of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn see the note.)<sup>172</sup> Both Medvedev and Conquest took these "revelations" — including Khrushchev's Secret Speech, but going far beyond it — at face value, as "true." If Khrushchev's speech were proven false, what about these other materials?

My attempt to test the accuracy of the accusations made by Khrushchev in his speech, and my resulting conclusions that virtually all of them are false, does not comprise a direct attempt on my part to destroy the "anti-Stalin" paradigm. However, it does at least remove one of the main supporting pillars on which the whole edifice of this paradigm stands. Once convinced that Khrushchev's speech is little more than a long, carefully-planned and elaborate lie, no student can ever view Soviet history of the Stalin period in the same way again.

Statements of fact can only be evaluated on the level of their factuality — whether, given the evidence we have, such statements are the most accurate conclusions that can be drawn. No paradigm can be "disproven" by the disproving of one, or any particular number, of assertions of fact.

Those colleagues and critics whom I've mentioned, and no doubt innumerable others, are — as another colleague put it — "reasonable people in the grip of an unreasonable narrative." That unreasonable narrative is the "cult of personality" around Stalin in its Khrushchevian disguise.

Although he claimed to be critiquing and exorcizing what is better translated as the "cult of the great man" (*kul't lichnosti*), what Khrushchev really did was to reinforce it in an inverted form. He tried to replace the "all-knowing, all-good" Stalin of the "cult" with another Stalin who was equally all-powerful but malevolent. In this Khrushchev resembled Trotsky, who also focused on what he claimed were the personal failings of his arch rival and explained Stalin's rise to leadership, policies, oppositions, and repressions, by attributing them to Stalin's combination of cunning, ruthlessness, and moral defects.

In an outline of Noam Chomsky's criticism of the mass media Mark Grimsley has written:

A statement that fits an accepted world view requires little explanation and can therefore be outlined in a few words. In order to have any chance of being persuasive, a statement that challenges an accepted world view needs more than a sound bite."<sup>173</sup>

This also applies to scholarship that challenges a "received", widely accepted, historical paradigm.

Under such conditions, "equality is inequality." It is not only that it takes far greater time, effort, and space on the page to refute a falsehood than it does to state it. It is that the scholar whose work challenges the existing paradigm has **two** tasks, while the scholar whose research fits neatly into the prevailing paradigm has only one. The latter need only make sure his research follows the accepted canons of method, and his work will be greeted with approbation. In a certain sense, he is telling his readers what they already know to be true. He is "filling in a blank" in the greater model of an accepted, because acceptable, history.

But the scholar who challenges the prevailing paradigm has a far more demanding job. His research must not only meet the demands of method — use of evidence, logic, and so on — incumbent on all scholars. He must also persuade his readers to question the overall pattern of historical causation which has heretofore given shape to their vision of the past itself.

He challenges them to take seriously the possibility that their whole model of history may be wrong — a challenge that many will simply dismiss, and some will denounce as outrageous.

So I have to reiterate what should be obvious but, obviously, is not. The subject of this paper is Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" of February 25, 1956 in its published form. The surprising — to my mind at least, astounding — result of my research is this: that speech is comprised, virtually in its entirety, of falsifications. My aim in the present book is to demonstrate that result with the best evidence that exists, much of it from former Soviet archives.

I entered this project knowing that a few, at least, of Khrushchev's statements were untrue, and suspecting that some assiduous research would find that at least a few more of those statements were also untrue. I was very surprised — "shocked" is not too strong a word — to find that virtually every one of Khrushchev's "revelations" is, in fact, false.

I realize that the whole is more than the sum of its parts — that my conclusion that all of Khrushchev's "revelations" were false will be greeted with far more skepticism than would a more modest result that, say, half, or two-thirds, of his "revelations" were false. And I think this is so because a Khrushchev that lied about everything does not "fit" into the prevailing "anti-Stalin" paradigm, in which the Khrushchev who, in Taubman's words, "somehow retained his humanity," whose speech constitutes a "great deed," is an essential part of that paradigm.

<sup>172</sup> Solzhenitsyn's various accounts, most famously in *The GULAG Archipelago* in its various editions, are not, strictly speaking, historical works. Solzhenitsyn relied on rumor and unpublished memoirs almost exclusively. Critical interrogation of sources is virtually unknown to him. Solzhenitsyn also made a great many deliberately false statements, including many about his own life. Furthermore, it is clear that he did not compose all of *The GULAG Archipelago*. The extent to which Solzhenitsyn's life has itself been "constructed" and falsified has to be studied to be believed. For a detailed and highly documented account of all the problems with Solzhenitsyn and his work see Aleksandr V. Ostrovskii,

*Solzhenitsyn: proshchanie s mifom* ("Solzhenitsyn: Farewell to the myth")  
Moscow: I Auza, 2004.

<sup>173</sup> Mark Grimsley, "Noam Chomsky (1928-)". At  
<http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/grimsley1/h582/2001/Chomsky.htm>

### **Exposing a Lie is Not the Same as Establishing the Truth**

Analysis of Khrushchev's prevarications suggests two related but distinct tasks. By far the easier and shorter job is to show that Khrushchev was not telling the truth. This is the subject of the present book.

The interested student will naturally want to know more than the mere fact that Khrushchev lied. Once convinced that Khrushchev's version of reality is false, she or he will want to know the truth — *what really happened*.

But the present study cannot satisfy that curiosity. A separate investigation would be necessary in each case — virtually, sixty-one studies for as many falsehoods. Some would be short, in the main because we do not have enough evidence to settle the matter.

Others of these studies would have to be very lengthy, as there is a great deal of information, often contradictory, to be gathered and examined. Some, perhaps many, would be inconclusive, since not enough evidence has been made available to permit us to arrive at a definite solution. In any case, to study in depth each of the false assertions made by Khrushchev with an eye to discovering — as nearly as possible, given the present state of the evidence — what really happened, is necessarily beyond the scope of this essay.

The image of Stalin as "mass murderer" originated, for all practical purposes, during Khrushchev's time.<sup>174</sup> The very first such accusations, those that laid the foundation for the myth — and it is precisely a myth with which we are concerned here — are in the "Secret Speech." And of all Khrushchev's "revelations" those that made by far the greatest impression remain the accusations that Stalin initiated or approved the deliberate annihilation of many prominent Bolsheviks.

After the "Secret Speech" the quantity of "crimes" attributed to Stalin continued to grow. For example, not long afterwards Stalin began to be blamed for the executions on false charges of prominent Soviet military leaders. While Khrushchev remained in power a pleiade of semi-official writers continued to work indefatigably on adding to the list of victims of supposedly unjust sentences, and many of those persons were "rehabilitated" — declared to have been guilty of nothing.

In October 1964 Khrushchev was forced into retirement. By that time the image of Stalin as a mass murderer of innocent victims was already firmly established. In the late '60s and early '70s the weighty volumes of Soviet dissident Roi Medvedev and British Sovietologist Robert Conquest with their detailed descriptions of Stalin's so-called "crimes" were published in the West. They relied very heavily upon works published under Khrushchev. The years of Gorbachev and Eltsin saw the publication of even more such tendentious, blood-curdling "histories".

For this reason careful research on just what Khrushchev said about massive repressions in his "Secret Speech" may turn out to be even more useful than simply identifying more and more examples of Khrushchev's lies. Such research makes it possible to identify the sources of the myth of Stalin as "mass murderer", and begin to disclose some of the reasons this myth was created in the first place.

<sup>174</sup> In fact there is good reason to believe that Khrushchev took this view, along with others, from Trotsky. He certainly took other anti-Stalin stories from Trotsky, such as the notion that Stalin may have been involved in the murder of Sergei Kirov on December 1, 1934.

### **Historical vs. Judicial Evidence**

There's a qualitative difference between history and the legal process — what counts as evidence in a trial, and what counts as evidence in history.

The "rehabilitation" reports normally relied on determining that some legal procedure or other was not observed in the (late) defendant's investigation or trial. They asserted these violations of procedure; determined that

therefore the late defendant should not have been convicted; and set aside the conviction. Sometimes they provided evidence that procedures had been violated, sometimes they merely claimed this was so.

Since a defendant whose conviction has been set aside, and who has not been retried, must be considered "innocent", the late defendant is, therefore, "innocent" Rehabilitated! For an historian this is all wrong.

A court has to be concerned with a prisoner's rights, some of which concern the legal process. For example, a defendant's confession to a crime, absent any other evidence, or absent any other evidence that a crime has been committed, is normally not enough for conviction. The burden of proof on the prosecution — the defendant is not required to prove his innocence, though if he is able to do so, he may.

Evidence obtained through torture is invalid. One reason is to protect the defendant's rights. Also, if the police were allowed to abuse prisoners in order to get confessions, they might never do any actual investigation, and so never solve any cases, though they would no doubt get lots of convictions!

But history is not a "trial", where the defendant has various rights. Dead people have no rights that need to be preserved. Likewise, we are not interested in whether the defendants got a "fair trial" (however that is defined). We are interested in whether they were guilty or not.

Whether or not they got a "fair trial" may be a separate issue to look into. But it is not the same thing as guilt or innocence. For example, the question of the guilt or innocence of at least one of the "Haymarket martyrs" legally lynched by the State of Illinois in 1886-7 has recently been raised again in some academic articles. But nobody has questioned whether or not they got a "fair trial" — they did not, and were posthumously pardoned a few years later by the succeeding governor of Illinois.

In the Sacco-Vanzetti case there is now some evidence that Sacco, at least, may have been guilty. But it is clear that the two men did not have a "fair trial" by the standards of the day. There has been a lively discussion about whether or not Julius Rosenberg did pass atomic secrets or plan to do so if

he could. But there can be no doubt that he and his wife Ethel did not receive a fair trial.

Nor do historians need to be concerned with legal procedure. Whether you think a defendant has received a "fair trial" or not depends on whatever the legal procedures of the day and time were, as opposed to what procedures were actually observed, all compared with what you yourself actually think is "fair."

Historians are concerned with gathering and assessing all the evidence we have, and reaching a conclusion on that basis. This is not the same thing as determining whether a given person received a "fair trial" or not. A defendant may be guilty and still not receive a fair trial. An historian is interested in the "guilty or innocent" part. It is possible that no black person ever received a "fair trial" in the American South until the 1960s. But that does not mean that every black defendant was innocent.

This paper is not concerned with whether the defendants received a "fair trial" according to the standards of the Soviet judicial system of the 1930s. Neither is it concerned with the legal basis of the trials — whether accelerated trials, under emergency conditions, are "legal" or not. We are concerned with evidence that goes to the guilt or innocence of the defendant.

In all the cases of defendants mentioned in Khrushchev's speech we have ample evidence pointing towards their guilt. But our real point is the following. In all these cases, we know what Khrushchev and his advisers knew, because we have their reports. None of those reports demonstrates the innocence of those accused, as Khrushchev alleged.

In not one single case do I rely on the self-incrimination of anybody as the sole evidence. Though, frankly, if that were all the evidence we had, then we'd have to rely on it — there'd be nothing else. Likewise, if "heresay" evidence were the **only** evidence we had, then we'd have to rely on it, with appropriate skepticism and caveats.

### **Torture and the Historical Problems Related To It**

From Stalin's day on no one has denied that many prisoners arrested on political charges during the 1930s in the USSR were tortured.

"Rehabilitation" courts in Khrushchev and post-Khrushchev times have often "rehabilitated" defendants on the basis that they were tortured. Normally this took the form of declaring their convictions invalid. In a judicial procedure, even in the USSR during Stalin's time, evidence obtained from a defendant by torture was invalid and could not be validly used.

The fact that a defendant was tortured does not mean that defendant was innocent. It is not **evidence** that the defendant was innocent. But it is often erroneously assumed to be.

In reality, there are many different possibilities:

- A person may be guilty, be tortured, and confess;
- A person may be guilty, be tortured, and not confess;
- A person may be innocent, be tortured, and confess (to stop the torture);
- A person may be innocent, be tortured, and still not confess.
- A person may be innocent, not be tortured, and still confess to guilt to another crime. (Examples of this occur in the Rehabilitation documents).
- A person may have been tortured, but be found guilty by other evidence, such as testimony of other defendants or physical evidence. Other testimony, from other individuals, and other evidence, usually come into play.

Establishing the fact that someone really has been tortured is not always easy. The mere fact that someone claims he confessed because he was tortured is hardly foolproof. There are many reasons why people sometimes want to retract a confession of guilt. Claiming one was tortured is a way of doing this while preserving some dignity. So to be certain a person was tortured there has to be further evidence of the fact, such as a statement or confession by a person who actually did the torturing, or a firsthand witness.



When there is no evidence at all that a defendant was tortured objective scholars have no business concluding that he was tortured. This obvious point is often overlooked, probably because a "paradigm" that everybody was tortured, and everybody was innocent, acts powerfully on the minds of both researchers and readers.

Investigators can have different reasons for torturing a suspect. Convinced that a person is a dangerous criminal or spy, they may use torture to force him to yield information that may save lives or property, inculcate his confederates, or lead to the solution of previous crimes.

Or, investigators can torture suspects in order to get them to confess to crimes they never committed — perhaps in order to enhance the reputation of the investigators themselves. They can use torture to force the detainee to inculcate other persons, who can then be tortured for the same purpose. In that way a story about a huge conspiracy can be fabricated out of nothing.

Mikhail Frinovskii, deputy to Nikolai Ezhov, head of the NKVD (Commissar of Internal Affairs), in a confessional statement that has been quoted many times but was only published in its entirety in February 2006, stated that Ezhov and he had instructed some of their subordinates to do exactly that.<sup>175</sup>

But Frinovskii said that this was not always the case. Not all his subordinates confessed to doing that. Also, many defendants were not arrested during Ezhov's tenure. Also, we know that Stalin, and high-level commissions sent to investigate allegations of massive abuses like this, took strong, immediate efforts to stop them and arrest those responsible. Formerly secret internal documents make that dear.

In the interrogations I have cited above Ezhov also confessed to torturing and framing innocent persons on an enormous scale in order to sow discontent with the Soviet system and thus facilitate the overthrow of the Soviet government and Party leadership in the event of invasion by Japan and/or Germany.

For our purposes all this should just serve to remind us of the need for evidence.

- We can't assume a person was tortured without evidence that he was.
- We can't assume a person was guilty or innocent just because he was tortured, much less on the basis of a mere allegation that he was tortured.
- Each case has to be decided by itself, according to the evidence we have.

In most cases we simply do not have all the evidence that the Soviet investigators had. Neither the post-Stalin Soviet regimes nor the post-Soviet Russian regime has ever released it. What has been released has been selected according to some criteria. We are almost never told what those criteria are. But often it seems that the information was selected to make it appear as though the subject had been "framed" by the Stalin government.

Fortunately information often comes from different sources, at different times, and those who released it appear to have acted according to differing motives. The contradictions among the various bits of evidence are often very enlightening.

Still, we virtually never have the "whole story", all the evidence the prosecutors had. But the anti-Stalin bias of the Khrushchev, Gorbachev, Eltsin, and subsequent Russian governments can help us evaluate the evidence they do release: we may be reasonably certain that they would have released any evidence inculpatory to Stalin or his close associates, if it existed.

During Khrushchev's time (1956-64) and since Gorbachev's time, roughly 1987 to the present, the Soviet, and then later the Russian state, have put a lot of resources into an effort to criminalize Stalin. The Rehabilitation documents that have been published make this clear. It is hard to imagine that any evidence tending to show Stalin guilty of framing innocent persons would have been ignored.

By the same token, we may expect that a good deal of the material that has not been released tends to cast doubt on the "official" anti-Stalin version. And in fact documents have been released here and there that tend to exculpate Stalin. Sometimes it appears that this has been done because of bureaucratic infighting. Usually we simply do not know why it has been

done. Sometimes, too, documents are released several times, the later versions contradicting the earlier versions in such a way that it is clear that "primary" documents are being fabricated until a final forged version is declared "official" by its being inserted into an archive.

As always in the writing of history our conclusions must be provisional. There is no "certainty ." Historians are seldom, if ever, in the comfortable position of dealing with "certainties." As more evidence comes to light in future, we have to be prepared to adjust or even discard our earlier conclusions, if necessary.

We have to be prepared to question our own preconceived ideas and historical paradigms. It's not easy to do this. But if we don't keep the need to do it in the forefront of our consciousness, we risk looking with favor on evidence that tends to support our own preconceived ideas, while looking critically only at evidence that tends to disprove those same preconceived ideas.

<sup>175</sup> See Frinovskii's statement published in *Lubianka* 3 No. 33 pp. 33-50; my translation at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/frinovskyeng.html> See also the transcript of N.I. Ezhov's confession, *ibid.* No. 37 pp. 52-72; my translation at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/ezhov042639eng.html>

### **A typology of Khrushchevian prevarication**

The typology of "revelations" by Khrushchev, and the evidence in each case, represents my attempt to parse the different kinds of falsification, to distinguish the different ways Khrushchev misled his audience.

*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines "lie" as:

1. A false statement deliberately presented as being true; a falsehood.
2. Something meant to deceive or give a wrong impression.

As here, definitions of "lie" normally require that the liar know in advance that the statement s/he is making is false. This is often, though not by any means always, hard to demonstrate in historical research. Therefore I have used a broader definition in this article. When I call a statement by Khrushchev a "lie" I mean either one of two things:

1. Khrushchev must have known the statement in question was false when he made it.
2. Khrushchev made the statement "in flagrant disregard for the truth." In this latter case we cannot be certain that Khrushchev knew for certain his statement was false. Rather, he represented the statement as true without any good grounds for doing so.

In every case, however, Khrushchev and his researchers had access to all the evidence now available to us, and to a huge amount more — in practice, to all of the documentation. Therefore it is more than probable that Khrushchev did know these statements were false.

The normal practice among scholars is to consider the word "lie" a harsh term that ought to be used sparingly in serious research. I will do my best to avoid it.

More important than issues of propriety are those of analysis. There are different kinds of falsifications, and to apply any single term to them all, whether "lie" or another word, fails to bring out the subtleties of the means of rhetorical misdirection Khrushchev applied.

A typology is an attempt to lump together otherwise different things because of something they have in common. In this case all the false "revelations" by Khrushchev have in common an intention to deceive, but try to effect deception in somewhat different ways.

<b>The "Revelations"</b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Khrushchev's "Revelation"</b>	<b>Type</b>
1	"Cult of Personality"	L

2	Lenin's "Testament"	L
3	Lack of collegiality	L
4	Stalin "morally and physically annihilated" those who disagreed with him	L
5	The practice of mass repressions as a whole	S
6	The term "enemy of the people"	L
7	Zinoviev and Kamenev	S
8	Trotskites	L
9	Stalin's "neglect" of the norms of Party life	L
10	Politburo Commission	S
11	Directive of December 1, 1934 signed by Enukidze	L
12	Khrushchev hints that Stalin was responsible for Kirov's assassination	L
13	Telegram from Stalin and Zhdanov to Politburo of September 25, 1936	L
14	Stalin's Speech to the February-March 1937 Central Committee Plenum	L
15	"A number of Central Committee members doubted the correctness of the policy of mass repression." Especially Postyshev	L
16	The case of R.I. Eikhe	LW
17	N.I. Ezhov	LW
18	The case of Ia. E. Rudzutak	LW
19	Confessions of A.M. Rozenblium	LW
20	The case of I.D. Kabakov	LW
21-24	S.V. Kosior, V.Ia. Chubar', P.P. Postyshev, A.V. Kosarev	LW
25	The "Stalin shooting lists"	L
26	The decision of the January 1938 Central Committee Plenum	L
27	"Beria's gang"	L
28	The "torture telegram"	L

29	On Beria's order Rodos tortured Kosior and Chubar'	LW
30	Stalin "disregarded" warnings about the outbreak of the war	L
31	Vorontsov's Letter	L
32	The German deserter	L
33	The executed military commanders	LW
34	Stalin's "depression and passivity" at the outbreak of the war	L
35	Stalin a "poor military commander"	L
36	Khar'kov campaign of 1942	L
37	Stalin "planned military operations on a globe"	L
38	Stalin "belittled" Marshal Zhukov's services	KW
39	Mass deportations of peoples	L
40	"The Leningrad Affair"	L
41	"The Mingrelian Affair"	L
42	Relations with Yugoslavia	KW
43	"The Doctors' Plot"	L
44	Beria an "agent of foreign intelligence"	L
45	Kaminsky about Beria's work for the Mussavetists	L
46	The "Kartvelishvili — Lavrent'ev case"	L
47	Vengeance on M.S. Kedrov	LW
48	Papulia, Sergo Ordzhonikidze's brother	L
49	"J.V. Stalin. A Short Biography"	L
50	"History of the AUCB(b): A Short Course"	L
51	Stalin signed a decree of June 2, 1951 to erect a statue in his own honor	DK
52	The Palace of Soviets	L
53	The Lenin and Stalin prizes	L
54	Stalin's proposal to raise taxes on the kolkhozes	KW
55	Stalin's insult to Postyshev	KW
56	"Disorganization" of the work of the Politburo	L
57	Stalin suspected Voroshilov was an "English spy"	L

58	"Unbridled arbitrariness" with regard to Andreev	L
59-60	"Unfounded" accusations against Molotov and Mikoian	Lx2
61	Increasing the membership of the Presidium of the C.C.	L

## The Typology

**DK — "Don't Know"** — 1 statement (#51). Without studying the original of the relevant document, we cannot determine whether Khrushchev was telling the truth when he claimed Stalin personally signed the order for a monument to himself on July 2 1951. Khrushchev certainly distorted the **context** by omission.

What would constitute proof of this statement one way or the other is not certain. For example, a photocopy alone would not be sufficient, as will be explained when we consider this claim of Khrushchev's.

**KW — "Khrushchev's Word (only)"** — 4 statements. Khrushchev claims Stalin said something, but no one else has confirmed it. Even if others have denied it, it still can't be definitively established as false.

However, these statements probably **are** lies, since in only one case does Khrushchev say he was the sole person to hear these remarks of Stalin's. If the rest of these statements had been made in the presence of others, surely somebody would have confirmed them, since they all became well known after the Secret Speech. We can't be certain of this, however, hence the special "KW" classification.

**LW — "Lie, information Withheld"** — 12 statements. These are statements which give a false impression because essential context — other information — is omitted. Khrushchev himself may, or may not, have known this context, but those who did the research and reported to him certainly knew it, on the principle that what we know today, and much more, was certainly knowable then. It's more than unlikely his researchers would have dared to withhold this information from Khrushchev.

**S — "Special case"** — 3 instances. These are very broad statements that, when examined carefully, do not really make any specific accusation against Stalin, but rather imply an accusation, and so create a false impression without actually making a specific claim.

**L — "Lie"** — 41 statements, by far the largest category. These statements are either demonstrably false, or made in flagrant disregard of the facts. In this latter case we can show that Khrushchev did not know whether they were true or not.

An example or two from each category (except, of course, the first, which has already been cited) should give an idea of the kind of classification and deception that is involved in each.

### **KW — Khrushchev's Word**

According to Khrushchev Stalin said, in Khrushchev's presence, "I will shake my little finger — and there will be no more Tito. He will fall ." (p. 35) Khrushchev implies, though he does not explicitly state, that he was the only witness to these words of Stalin's. If so, there is no way to verify this incident. No one has confirmed this.

A second example is the question of Stalin's proposing to raise taxes on the peasantry by 40 billion rubles. Khrushchev claimed that in late 1952 or early 1953 Stalin suggested a 40 billion ruble tax increase on the peasantry. We show that either Stalin said this to Khrushchev alone, or Khrushchev made it up.

The other two examples are Stalin's alleged insult against Marshal Zhukov and Khrushchev's allegation that Stalin insulted Pavel Postyshev.

If Khrushchev had been an honest man, one whose statements on all other occasions had proven to be worthy of believe, then here we might rely on an unblemished reputation for veracity and presume these statements true. But Khrushchev was only rarely truthful. Therefore it's most likely that what he said on his own witness alone is false. But we cannot be completely certain; hence this classification.



## **LW — Lie, Information Withheld**

Khrushchev said "In the same manner were fabricated the "cases" against eminent party and state workers — Kossior, Chubar, Postyshev, Kosarev and others." (Nos 21-24)

The situation is not nearly as clear as Khrushchev claims it was. Some very incriminating information is now available to us concerning Kosarev, and much more is available about Kossior, Chubar', and Postyshev. For example, Postyshev was rebuked, removed, and finally arrested and convicted of massive, unfounded repressions against Party members in his area. Khrushchev was at the January 1938 C. C. Plenum at which Postyshev reported and was severely criticized.

Khrushchev had to know that Molotov had visited Postyshev in prison, where Postyshev had confessed his guilt to Molotov. Likewise Khrushchev had to know that Postyshev, and many others, had inculpated Kossior and Chubar', and that Kaganovich said he had seen a whole notebook of Chubar's confessions. A recently published document has shown that all four of these men confessed at trial, although other defendants retracted their confessions at trial. Khrushchev had to know this too.

A fifth example is Rozenblium's story about how Zakovskii fabricated confessions. Khrushchev implies, though without affirming it in so many words, that Stalin was behind this. In fact we have good evidence that Zakovskii was acting wider Ezhov's orders as part of a conspiracy. We have documentary proof that Stalin strongly condemned Zakovskii for torturing suspects.

It should be noted that some cases of "lie, information withheld" (LW) shade over into the category of "lie" (L). Examples of this are Nos 33 and 47. In the case of the "executed military commanders" (No. 33) Khrushchev expressed himself so vaguely that it's impossible to know exactly what, if anything, he was asserting; for the same reason it is impossible to say for sure that he was lying. There is ample published evidence that Marshal Tukhachevsky and the commanders condemned together with him in June 1937 were really guilty of the charges against them. So it is hard to classify

this statement of Khrushchev's, but we have put it into the category of "lie, information withheld."

"The cruel vengeance on M.S. Kedrov" (No. 47) is another such example. It is easy to see that Kedrov was not shot "on Beria's order", meaning "at his instigation." The initiating document did not originate with Beria. After confirmation with Bochkov, Prosecutor of the USSR Beria, as Commissar of Internal Affairs, received the decision to shoot Kedrov. So that it would also be incorrect to say that Beria had nothing to do with Kedrov's execution, and he certainly must have issued an "order."

In both cases we have to make do with crumbs of declassified evidence, on the basis of which it is quite impossible to gain a full understanding of those events. Still, the information we do have is sufficient to establish the fact that Khrushchev lied at least in some aspects of these cases (and possibly a great deal more). So both cases are both "lies" (L) and also "lies, information withheld" (LW), or a combination of the two.

## **S — Special Case**

Khrushchev discusses mass repressions generally (No. 5) before getting into specifics. He neglects to mention that he himself was heavily involved in mass repressions, as Party First Secretary of Moscow *oblast'* (province) and city committees during 1935-38 and then, after January 1938, of the Ukraine (1938-49).

The studies that are available to us today suggest that Khrushchev may well have repressed more people than any other single Party leader. Certainly he was among the leaders in repression. This context is entirely missing from the Secret Speech. I classify this here as S, "special case" rather than as LW, "lie, information withheld," because Khrushchev does not **explicitly** blame Stalin or Beria for all this repression, though that is the impression he no doubt intended to leave his audience with.

.Another example of this category is Khrushchev's statement about Zinoviev and Kamenev:

In his "testament" Lenin warned that "Zinoviev's and Kamenev's October episode was of course not an accident." But Lenin did not pose the question of their arrest and certainly not their shooting. (p. 9)

This statement sidesteps the whole question of Zinoviev's and Kamenev's innocence or guilt in plotting to overthrow the Soviet government and indirect involvement in Kirov's assassination. These were the charges brought against them in the first public "show trial" in Moscow in August 1936, and to which they confessed. These confessions together with all the rest of the investigation material were available to Khrushchev.

The very small portion of this information available to us today suggests that Zinoviev and Kamenev were guilty of what they confessed to. Even Khrushchev did not declare them innocent, as he did a number of other high-ranking Party leaders of whose guilt we have a good deal of evidence today. Instead Khrushchev just sets down their shooting to Stalin's "arbitrariness." But if indeed they were guilty, as the evidence suggests, then their executions were anything but "arbitrary."

The final example of category "S" is Khrushchev's reference to No. 10:

a party commission under the control of the Central Committee Presidium... charged with investigating what made possible the mass repressions against the majority of the Central Committee members and candidates elected at the 17th Congress ..."

Khrushchev claimed that this commission "established many facts pertaining to the fabrication of cases against Communists, to false accusations, to glaring abuses of socialist legality, which resulted in the death of innocent people."

In reality, this "Pospelov Commission," whose text has been published,<sup>176</sup> did **not** "establish" these facts. This tendentious study followed a predetermined agenda to reach conclusions convenient to Khrushchev, but in most cases unsupported by any evidence. Furthermore the Commission never established that Stalin was guilty of these abuses. Nor, of course, is this statement really a revelation at all, since it was widely acknowledged,

even at the time (1939 and thereafter) that many persons had been executed wrongly.

## **L-Lie**

By far the largest category is "L" — the outright lies. All lies rely on context — something with reference to which they can be recognized as contrary to fact. So depending upon the specific context some of them shade off into the "LW, or "Lie, information Withheld," category.

But some are just blatant falsehoods. Examples of these include "Vorontsov's letter" (No. 31). Here Khrushchev omits the last paragraph, which reverses the meaning of the whole letter and in fact **dis**proves his point.

Another is the "Torture Telegram" (No. 28), where again Khrushchev omitted crucial parts of the document. In it Stalin,<sup>177</sup> while reaffirming the use of "physical pressure" on "hardened" criminals, forcefully rejects this save as an "exception" while revealing that certain well-known NKVDists have been punished for making it a "rule." Khrushchev's quotation removes Stalin's order that torture only be used "in exceptional circumstances."

A third example is Stalin's purported "demoralization" at the war's outset (No. 34). This is refuted by virtually all the people who were present and working with Stalin at the time. And Khrushchev was not with Stalin or even in Moscow at all but in Kiev!

<sup>176</sup> For example in *Doklad Khrushcheva* (cited above), pp. 185-230.

<sup>177</sup> Or "Stalin" — the document itself is of questionable authenticity, as I explain separately in Chapter 4.

## **Chapter 11. *The Results of Khrushchev's "Revelations"; Falsified Rehabilitations***

### **Falsified Rehabilitations**

#### **Tivel — Postyshev — Kosarev — Rudzutak — Kabakov — Eikhe**

In his Speech Khrushchev announced that "a party commission under the control of the Central Committee Presidium" had determined that

...many party, Soviet and economic activists, who were branded in 1937-1938 as 'enemies', were actually never enemies, spies, wreckers, etc., but were always honest Communists.

He then went on to discuss a number of specific cases whose innocence, he said, had been established.

After the collapse of the USSR the documents of this commission headed by Petr Pospelov were published. So were the rehabilitation reports signed by Chief Prosecutor of the USSR Rudenko on which Pospelov relied.<sup>178</sup> Verbatim quotations and other similarities show that the rehabilitation reports were the factual basis for the Pospelov Report, which draws directly from them.

The Pospelov Report has been discussed a few times in a very credulous vein that has failed to expose the falsifications it contains. Some of these are very obvious ones. For example, one section of the report concludes that all the so-called "blocs" and "centers" of oppositional activity were fabricated by NKVD investigators. We know this is not so, since Trotsky's own papers mention a "bloc" of his supporters with the Rights.<sup>179</sup>

But the rehabilitation reports have never been subject to any scrutiny. Previous studies of the rehabilitations referred to in Khrushchev's Speech, such as those by Rogovin and Naumov, have been little more than summaries of Khrushchev's own memoirs and have credulously accepted Khrushchev's own self-aggrandizing accounts.<sup>180</sup>

In the pages that follow we discuss rehabilitation reports on a few of the Party figures who feature in Khrushchev's Speech and compare their contents with what we know from other sources published since the end of the USSR. We conclude that the rehabilitation reports in question were not compiled to discover the truth about the guilt or innocence of the defendants. They could not have been, because they did not review even all the materials we now have about these individuals. Who knows what else is in their investigative and judicial files that we do not know about?

So why were the rehabilitation reports prepared? As concerns the persons who figure in Khrushchev's Speech, all Central Committee members, the only logical explanation is that their purpose was to provide Khrushchev with plausible documentation for his claims that they were all innocent.

This can't have been the reason for the thousands of rehabilitation reports on lesser officials, Party members of lesser rank, and of private individuals. Most, if not all, of these were prepared as a result of petitions by the relatives of the defendants, and few of these have been published.

But even in these cases we cannot be confident that proper investigations to determine guilt or innocence were in fact carried out. One example is that of Alexandr Iul'evich Tivel'-Levit.

<sup>178</sup> *Reabilitatsia. Kak Eto Bylo. Dokumenty Prezidiuma Ts KPSS I Drugie Materialy. V 3-x tomakh. T. 1. Mart 1953 — Fevral' 1956 gg.* (Rehabilitation. How It Happened. Documents of the Presidium of the CC CPSU and Other Materials. In 3 volumes. Volume 1. March 1953-February 1956." Moscow: MDF, 2000. Hereafter *RKEB* 1. The Pospelov Report is on pp. 317-348; online at <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/inside/almanah-doc/55752>

<sup>179</sup> *RKEB* 1, 322-3. See J. Arch Getty, "Trotsky in Exile: The Founding of the Fourth International," *Soviet Studies* 38, No. 1 (January 1986), p. 28 & notes 18-21, p. 34; Pierre Broué, "Trotsky et le bloc des oppositions de 1932," *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* 5 (January-March 1980), pp. 5-37.

<sup>180</sup> Naumov, V.V. "K istorii sekretnogo doklada N.S. Khrushcheva na XX s"ezd KPSS," *Novaia i Noveishaia Istoriia* No. 4 (1996); also at

<http://vivovoco.rsl.ru/VV/PAPERS/HISTORY/ANTIST.HTM> ; Rogovin, Vadim. "Prilozhenie I: Iz istorii razoblacheniiia stalinskikh prestupleniy." *Partiia rasstrel'nykh*. Also at <http://web.mit.edu/people/fjk/Rogovin/volume5/pi.html> . Rogovin naively repeats Khrushchev's self-serving version of events. Naumov is a bit more critical of Khrushchev's and Mikoian's memoir accounts, but never questions the validity of the process itself, starting with the rehabilitation reports.

### Tivel'

Getty got to see Tivel's unpublished party file and briefly summarized Tivel's case as it is reflected in that file. In May 1957 the Supreme Court of the USSR overturned Tivel's 1937 conviction and expulsion from the Party. But there is no evidence that any serious study of Tivel's case was ever carried out, the Supreme Court merely stating that his conviction "had been based on contradictory and dubious materials."<sup>181</sup>

In fact we now have a good deal of information about Tivel'. That is because, as it turns out, he was hardly a "Soviet Everyman," as Getty termed him.<sup>182</sup> Tivel' had coauthored an official history of the first ten years of the Comintern. Tivel' was referred to by name as the interpreter in the transcript of the 17th Party Congress when, on February 2, 1934, Okano, a representative of the Japanese Communist Party, spoke.

Alexander Barmine, a Soviet official who fled to the West, wrote that Tivel' had been Zinoviev's secretary. Radek. called him "my collaborator" and testified that Tivel' was connected with a Zinovievist group. He was named as a conspirator by both Iuri Piatakov and Grigorii Sokol'nikov, two of the major defendants in the 1937 Trial. Sokol'nikov said Tivel' had approached **him**, Sokol'nikov, as a member of a Trotskyist group that was planning to assassinate Stalin.

Sokolnikov: In 1935 Tivel came to me and informed me that he was connected with the Zaks-Gladnyev terrorist group. Tivel asked for instructions about the further activities of this group....

The President: On whose life was this group preparing to make an attempt?

Sokolnikov: Tivel told me then that they had instructions to prepare for a terrorist act against Stalin... I was personally connected with Tivel, Tivel was personally connected with the Zaks-Gladnyev group. Whether Tivel himself was a member of this group, I do not know.<sup>183</sup>

There is quite a bit more. Zaks-Gladnev, who had been editor of *Leningradskaya Pravda* while Zinoviev headed the Leningrad Party, was Zinoviev's brother-in-law. Victor Serge wrote about meeting with Zinoviev in 1927 at Zaks' apartment after the unsuccessful Trotskyist demonstration against the Party leadership — Bukharin and Stalin at that time — and Adolf Yoffe's suicide protest (Yaffe was a devoted Trotskyite), where they planned an underground opposition.

Since Sokolnikov and Piatakov discussed Tivel' in their trial testimony they no doubt also mentioned him, and possibly at greater length, in pretrial investigative interrogations.<sup>184</sup> When they named him at trial Tivel' was not only still alive at the time — he had not yet been arrested, although he had evidently been expelled from the Party in August 1936. Perhaps his name came up in connection with the Zinoviev-Kamenev Trial of that same month. Tivel's name was mentioned by Ezhov in the face-to-face confrontation between Bukharin and Kulikov, one of Bukharin's accusers, in December 1936.<sup>185</sup>

According to Getty, Tivel's rehabilitation was the result of appeals from his widow, who wanted the blot of "child of an enemy of the people" removed from her son. From the little documentation that has been made available so far it is clear that despite his rehabilitation there was a good deal of evidence implicating Tivel' in the network of conspiracies alleged during the late 1930s. This is even more obviously true in the case of the far more prominent Bolsheviks whose examples are cited by Khrushchev in his Speech.

<sup>181</sup> Getty, J. Arch and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror: Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*. New Haven: Yale University



Press, 1999, p. 5; Tivel' is discussed on pp. 1-5.

<sup>182</sup> Getty & Naumov, p. 1.

<sup>183</sup> Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre. ... Verbatim Report. Moscow: People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R., 1937, pp. 162-3, 165.

<sup>184</sup> We know these pre-trial interrogations exist because a very short section of an interrogation of Sokol'nikov was published in 1991 in *Reabilitatsia: Politicheskie Protessy 30-x - 50-x gg.* (Moscow, 1991), pp. 228-9.

<sup>185</sup> "Stenogramma ochnykh stavok v TsK VKP(b). Dekabr' 1936 goda." *Voprosy Istorii* No. 3, 2002, pp. 3-31, at p. 6.

### **Postyshev**

Khrushchev claimed in his Speech that at the February-March 1937 Plenum "many members" of the Central Committee "questioned the right-ness" of "mass repressions," and that "Postyshev most ably expressed these doubts." This assertion could not be checked until the corresponding section of the transcript of that Plenum was published in mid-1995.<sup>186</sup>

The statement turns out to be a deliberate lie. In reality neither Pavel Postyshev nor a single other member questioned the repressions.

But Khrushchev's deception is far greater than this. Postyshev himself was guilty of massive repressions. Stalin called Postyshev's actions "a massacre ... shooting" of innocent Party members in his area. This was the reason that Postyshev himself was removed from his Party post, removed as candidate member of the Politburo, expelled from the Central Committee, then from the Party, arrested, tried, and executed (See our more detailed analysis of what Khrushchev said about Postyshev, and the evidence we have amassed, in Chapter Three).

To this day the Russian government continues to forbid the publication of, or even access to, Postyshev's case file.<sup>187</sup> Without access to such

investigative materials as the statements and confessions made by Postyshev himself, by those who accused him and those whom he accused, and the transcript of his trial, we cannot possibly have a full account of what really happened. This is the case with all the figures who Khrushchev claimed were executed though innocent.

Therefore, we can't know the whole story either in the case of Postyshev or that of any of the others. What we can do is to compare the rehabilitation reports which have now been published, with what we know about Postyshev from other sources that have become public.

The Pospelov Report section on Postyshev's rehabilitation is far shorter even than the brief rehabilitation report, and is taken wholly from it, with a personal attack on Stalin added.<sup>188</sup> Khrushchev certainly saw these reports, as they were all sent to the Presidium members. A few are signed by them, and a few more are even addressed personally to Khrushchev.<sup>189</sup> We'll concentrate on the more detailed rehabilitation report here.

One thing immediately becomes apparent: Postyshev's rehabilitation report<sup>190</sup> says nothing at all about his involvement in massive extra-legal executions of Party members, concerning which we do have a great deal of documentation. Raising this issue would not have induced sympathy towards Postyshev and hostility towards Stalin.

It is significant that nothing about this occurs in the report, since to really exculpate Postyshev it would have to be included. Any bona fide review of Postyshev's case would naturally have to re-examine the issue of mass murder! Had it been included, Khrushchev could have simply disregarded this information. But this would have left a paper trail. One of Khrushchev's political opponents like Molotov or Kaganovich might have wanted to read the rehabilitation report and seen through the fakery.

Khrushchev himself was present at the January 1938 Central Committee Plenum at which Postyshev was criticized, and expelled from the C.C., for this repression. Khrushchev certainly knew all about what Postyshev had done and the reasons for his expulsion from the C.C. No doubt he voted for it himself.

From the evidence it is clear that both the Pospelov Report and the rehabilitation report itself are faked. They were a put-up job to provide an excuse for declaring Postyshev innocent, rather than any genuine attempt to review his case. Khrushchev certainly knew this. No one would have dared to do this without Khrushchev's order.

It is remarkable that in the case of Postyshev's rehabilitation as well as in most, or all, of the others, those members of the Presidium who had been on the Politburo in 1938 — Molotov, Kaganovich, Mikoian, and Voroshilov — must have known this just as Khrushchev did.<sup>191</sup>

It is quite possible that Postyshev was only tried on one, or a limited number, of capital offenses — for example, for being involved in a Right-Trotskyite conspiracy. It is common in the USA as well for a defendant not to be tried consecutively for every capital offense. It is likely that Postyshev never stood trial on other capital offenses — after all, a person can only be executed once.

But in that case, in order to "completely rehabilitate" him, all that would be necessary would be to have his conviction **on the offense of which he was convicted** set aside. If **that** conviction could be set aside, he would then be "innocent", meaning: his only conviction had quashed. It looks as though this is what happened. It is probably the case of many, if not all, of those "rehabilitated" in the reports used by the Pospelov Report.

The report confirms that Postyshev confessed both to participation in a Right-Trotskyite conspiracy and to espionage for Poland, but that some of those those whom Postyshev named as his accomplices either failed to name him in their own confessions or named Postyshev as one of the targets of their own conspiracies.<sup>192</sup>

Some of the material in this report reads very strangely.

- Popov confessed that he, Balitskii and Iakir "attempted to use Postyshev in their anti-Soviet plans but were not successful." This is interesting! If Postyshev were "innocent", he would have reported such attempts to recruit him to a conspiracy. If he had done so, this fact

would surely have been noted in his favor. But if there's no evidence he did so, how can he be "innocent"?

- Iona Iakir, one of the military commanders tried and executed in the Tukhachevskii case, was named by Postyshev as one of his co-conspirators but "did not name Postyshev in any of his confessions." Was Iakir specifically asked about Postyshev? If not, the fact he did not mention Postyshev may not be important at all. Why is this detail not included?
- "Kosior S.V. at the beginning of the investigation named Postyshev as one of the participants of the military conspiracy in the Ukraine, then recanted this confession, then afterwards reaffirmed it." This hardly exculpates Postyshev. A confession does not prove guilt, any more than a recantation disproves it.
- "In Kosior's case file there is a statement by N.K. Antipov in which he affirms that there were very abnormal personal relations between Kosior and Postyshev and that Postyshev was not a member of the general center of counterrevolutionary organizations in the Ukraine."
- After March 1937 Postyshev was transferred from the Ukraine to the post of Oblast' (province) secretary in Kuibyshev. The fact that he was not in the leadership of the Ukrainian conspiracies does not prove him "innocent" of anything.
- "At the preliminary investigation Postyshev confessed that he carried out his espionage contacts with Japanese intelligence through B.N. Mel'nikov and B.I. Kozlovskii, members of the eastern division of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs of the USSR. As a verification has established, although B.N. Mel'nikov admitted guilt in contact with Japanese intelligence, he gave no confession about Postyshev, and B.I. Kozlovskii was not even arrested. In this way Postyshev's 'confessions' about his counterrevolutionary activities in the Ukraine and connections to Japanese intelligence were not confirmed, and as has been established at the present time they were falsified by the organs of the NKVD."

On the contrary: If Postyshev confessed to being a Japanese agent, named Mel'nikov, and Mel'nikov himself confessed to being a Japanese agent, this tends to confirm rather than to rebut Postyshev's guilt regardless of whether Mel'nikov mentioned him or not!

We are informed that investigator P.I Tserpento confessed to the NKVD that one specific interrogation transcript was written by himself and another interrogator, Vizeľ', on the instructions of G.N. Lulov — presumably their superior — and that Lulov had, evidently, warned Postyshev to confirm its contents. We are told that Tserpento himself was involved in falsifying cases, and confessed to collaborating in falsifying a single interrogation of Postyshev. However, there's no indication of the contents of this specific interrogation, and we are specifically informed that there is only a single interrogation in question here.

The final statement of the Postyshev rehabilitation report says merely:

The Prosecutor's office considers it possible to institute a protest against the sentence passed against Postyshev by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR with the object of closing his case and a posthumous rehabilitation. We request your agreement.

This rehabilitation note (**zapiska**) is dated May 19, 1955. Two months later, on July 18 1955 in the rehabilitation report of Ukhanov we are told:

It has been established by a process of verification that the investigation on the case of Ukhanov was carried out by the former associates of the NKVD of the USSR, Lulov and Tserpento, who were later exposed as criminals who had wormed their way into working for the organs of State Security and who were sentenced to be shot for a series of crimes, including that of falsifying investigations.

From Lulov's criminal case file it is clear that he stemmed from a socially foreign milieu: Lulov's brother Mendel' was a big capitalist who lived in Palestine. In Lulov's case file is his note to Zinoviev in which Lulov expresses his approval of one of Zinoviev's speeches. From Tserpento's case file it is clear that in 1934 he was a participant in a counter-revolutionary Trotskyite group at Saratov University. At that time Tserpento was recruited as a non-public agent-observer by the organs of the NKVD. In 1937 Tserpento was transferred to a government position in the central apparatus of the NKVD of the USSR.

In the confessions of Tserpento and Lulov are contained many facts that testify to the fact that, in interrogating arrested persons, they forced them to name innocent persons and in particular forced from them false accusations against leading Party and Soviet workers. In falsifying criminal cases Tserpento and Lulov did not stop at compelling false testimony in relations to certain leaders of the government and Party. In this way Tserpento and Lulov falsified many investigative cases, including the case against Postyshev, now posthumously completely rehabilitated, and other persons.<sup>193</sup>

Lulov and Tserpento, in short, are accused of having been supporters of the Rights (Lulov — Zinoviev) and of Trotsky (Tserpento) respectively. What this means about Postyshev we will see below. But it also confirms the existence of Trotskyite conspiracies, something that the Pospelov Report denied outright fewer than nine months later.

The Ukhanov report goes on to quote verbatim from an interrogation-statement by Ezhov's right-hand man in the NKVD Mikhail Frinovskii. In it Frinovskii details how Ezhov directed massive fabrications of confessions with the help of torture in order to cover up his own leadership in an anti-government Right-Trotskyite conspiracy of his own. Often selectively quoted, this document has only recently been published in Russia for the first time (February 2006).<sup>194</sup>

All of this tells us some important things.

- One interrogation of Postyshev's was composed by the interrogators before Postyshev was tried and executed.
- Frinovskii, Ezhov's right-hand man, is quoted as describing a method of falsifying confessions and framing people very similar to that allegedly used by Lulov and Tserpento against Postyshev.
- This means Postyshev's case was reviewed under Beria, after he replaced Ezhov in late November 1938, but evidently before Postyshev was tried and executed on February 26, 1939.<sup>195</sup> His interrogator Tserpento and his commander Lulov were tried and executed for falsifying cases, so this was under Beria too.

- The issue of massive repression of Party leaders did not even arise in Postyshev's rehabilitation report Yet Postyshev was "completely rehabilitated" two months after the original rehabilitation report
- A number of those implicated by Postyshev in his own confessions either implicated him in turn (Kosior) or failed to name him but did not necessarily clear him either (Iakir, Antipov, Mel'nikov).
- Some of those who confessed to plotting against Postyshev did, by the same token, confirm the existence of conspiracies.
- If Postyshev really had been in a conspiracy this would not have been known beyond a very restricted number of people. So the fact that other conspirators confessed to plotting against Postyshev does not exculpate him in the least.

<sup>186</sup> In *Voprosy Istorii*, 5/6, 1995. The Postyshev quotation Khrushchev cited dishonestly is on p. 4.

<sup>187</sup> One reason given for this is the passage of a strange law according to which the next of kin of those tried and executed must give their permission before such materials can be made public. Postyshev's son Leonid, a noted economist, has given some interviews in which he warmly recalls his father and takes for granted that he was innocent. Rehabilitation was advantageous for the family of those "rehabilitated", since there were various formal and informal ways in which family members of those executed for treason suffered discrimination. It seems that in most cases it was family members who petitioned for the rehabilitation of their executed relatives, though in Postyshev's case Khrushchev may have initiated it himself.

<sup>188</sup> *RKEB* 1, 325.

<sup>189</sup> Signed by Presidium members: pp. 203, 207, 217, 220, 227, 229, 231, 233, 236, 237, 251, 260, 261, 263. Addressed to Khrushchev: p. 192. In some cases the reports were not specifically addressed to Khrushchev but notes on them make it clear that they went directly to him. See p. 188, 191, 208, 233, 236, 237, 251, 264. A few were either sent first to Malenkov or Bulganin, or theirs are the copies that were found in the archives and printed.

<sup>190</sup> *RKEB* 1,218-220. Dated May 19, 1955.

<sup>191</sup> Aside from the Presidium members already mentioned (Khrushchev, Bulganin, Molotov, Kaganovich, Mikoian) the only other person who was a C.C. member before 1939 and also in 1956 was Shvernik, a close ally of Khrushchev's. Marshal Semion Budionniy was a candidate member in 1934, 1939 and 1956; and A.P. Zaveniagin was a candidate member in 1934, evidently in 1939 as well, and 1956. Bulganin was a candidate member in 1934.

<sup>192</sup> We know from a letter of Judge Ul'rikh to Stalin on March 16 1939 that Postyshev was among those who confessed at trial. Ulrikh is quoted at <http://stalin.memo.ru/images/intro1.htm> . See the facsimile of the actual letter at <http://stalin.meme.ru/images/ulrih-39.jpg> or, a more readable copy, <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/ulrih-39.jpg>

<sup>193</sup> *RKEB* 1, 233-4. The entire Postyshev rehabilitation report is at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/postyshevrehab.html>

<sup>194</sup> *RKEB* 1, 234. The Russian text of the Frinovskii statement is at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/frinovskyr.html> ; the English at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/frinovskyeng.html>

<sup>195</sup> Tserpento is quoted as saying that his statements could easily be verified by calling Postyshev and Bubnov — another arrestee — and talking with them (*RKEB* 1 219). It's possible too that Postyshev had already been executed and Tserpento just did not know that.

## **Conclusion**

There's only one theory that can account for all these issues: the rehabilitation report on Postyshev is a fraud. None of the important charges against Postyshev were really investigated, and so he was not really cleared of any of them. The purpose of the report was not to verify whether Postyshev was really guilty or not. It was to provide Khrushchev's phony research with a fig-leaf to justify his blaming Stalin for Postyshev's execution.



The Pospelov Report, which bases itself on these rehabilitation reports, is a fraud too. Its passage on Postyshev is much less detailed, blames Stalin more directly, and was clearly drafted for polemic rather than analytical purposes.

### **Kosarev**

We have a rehabilitation report on Alexandr Kosarev.<sup>196</sup> But there is no section devoted to him in the Pospelov Report; in the draft of the Speech by Pospelov and Aristov;<sup>197</sup> or in the draft of Khrushchev's additions.<sup>198</sup> Therefore it was added by Khrushchev himself, and constitutes the best evidence possible that Khrushchev worked not only from the Pospelov Report and the Pospelov-Aristov draft, but from the rehabilitation reports themselves.

We know much less about Kosarev's fate than about Postyshev's, but only because the Russian authorities have not released anything. The rehabilitation report on him, dated August 4, 1954, sets down Beria's arrest of Kosarev, dated November 28 1938, to a personal grudge. At first Kosarev refused to confess to any treasonable activities, but was beaten until he signed a false confession on December 5 in which he admitted to being a part of the Right-Trotskyite conspiracy to overthrow the Soviet government.

Everything is blamed on Beria, who is said to have hated Kosarev because Kosarev despised Beria for distorting the history of the Bolshevik Party in Georgia and for oppressing old Georgian Bolsheviks. Beria took his first opportunity as head of the NKVD to arrest Kosarev and his wife. When Kosarev refused to "confess", Beria had him beaten into a false confession.

Beria allegedly had Bogdan Kobulov, one of his right-hand men, and the main investigator Lev Shvartsman beat Valentina Pikina, a former coworker of Kosarev's in the Komsomol, though Pikina still refused to falsely accuse Kosarev. We are told that Kosarev confessed at his trial only because Beria and Kobulov assured him that by so doing his life would be spared. Beria then refused to pass on Kosarev's appeal to the court, and Kosarev was shot.

Khrushchev had already had Beria and seven of his closest associates, including Kobulov, shot in 1953. Investigator Shvartsman, who along with Kosarev's widow provided virtually all the information in the rehabilitation report, was to be executed under Khrushchev in 1955. So the report tells a Beria "horror story" similar to many others Khrushchev was spreading. Beria is said to have done all this just out of revenge, without any political motive at all.

This itself is suspicious, since we know from other documents that there were political charges against Kosarev. We review them briefly below (#24), and in somewhat more detail in the body of this study. The rehabilitation report does not even mention them, much less refute them.

Rogovin cites an account in which in March 1938 Kosarev met with a former Leningrad Komsomol leader named Sergei Utkin, who had complained that the NKVD had forced him to make false accusations. Kosarev then denounced Utkin to Ezhov and Utkin was sent to a camp for 16 years. A close relationship between Kosarev and Ezhov is also attested by Anatoly Babulin, a nephew of Ezhov's whose statement was recently published.

According to Rogovin, who based his summary on Gorbachev-era publications, Kosarev was really arrested right after a plenum of the Komsomol Central Committee which met November 19-22 1938 and at which most of the Politburo of the Party appeared and spoke: Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich, Andreev, Zhdanov, Malenkov and Shkiriakov. Kosarev and others had dismissed and persecuted a certain Mishakova, an instructor of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, who had denounced a number of Komsomol figures in Chuvashiia.

The memoirs of Akakii Mgdadze, a former Komsomol and, later, Georgian Party leader were published in 2001. They were written in the 1960s and concern his meetings with Stalin. Mgeladze recalled that sometime around 1950 he had asked Stalin about Kosarev, whom he had greatly admired. Mgeladze told Stalin that he could not believe the charges against Kosarev, and wondered if a mistake had been made.

Stalin listened quietly, and replied to Mgeladze that everybody made mistakes, including himself (Stalin). But, Stalin continued, the Politburo had discussed the Kosarev case twice, and had assigned Andreev and Zhdanov to verify the charges against him and to check the NKVD reports. Mgeladze then states that he himself had read the transcript of the Komsomol Plenum, including Andreev's and Zhdanov's speeches and Shkiriakov's report, and had found them entirely convincing in their evidence against Kosarev.

Obviously there were serious political charges made against Kosarev. They probably included involvement with Ezhov, who also confessed to being the head of a Right-Trotskyite conspiracy himself. The transcript of the Komsomol Plenum, NKVD investigation reports, and probably much other evidence too, existed in Khrushchev's day, and probably still does. It has never been open to researchers.

In his memoirs, published after he was deposed in 1964, Khrushchev mentions Kosa.re.v, Mishakova and the charges against Kosarev. He says nothing there about any "revenge" by Beria at all.<sup>199</sup> Yet Rudenko's report of August 1954 makes no mention of any of these matters, and everything is blamed on Beria's desire for revenge!

Whatever the truth may be, we can be sure that this isn't it. And this is the rehabilitation report Khrushchev based his speech on.

<sup>196</sup> *RKEB 1*, 166-168.

<sup>197</sup> "Proekt doklada 'O kul'te lichnosti I ego posledstviakh', predstavleniy P.N. Pospelovym I A.B. Aristovym. 18 fevralia 1956 g." *Doklad N.S. Khrushcheva O Kul'te Lichnosti Stalina na XX S"ezde KPSS. Dokumenty*. Ed K. Aimermakher et al. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002, pp. 120133; also in *RKEB 1*, 365-379.

<sup>198</sup> "Dopolneniia N.S. Khrushcheva k proektu doklada 'O kul'te lichnosti i ego posledstviakh'". *Doklad Khrushcheva*, pp. 134-150; also in *RKEB 1*, 365-379.

<sup>199</sup> Rudzutak and Tukhachevsky were named in the same Politburo resolution accusing them of participation in an anti-Soviet Right-Trotskyite conspiracy and espionage for Germany, on May 24 1937, and expelled by the Central Committee Plenum on May 25-26 1937 (Lubianka 2, Nos. 86 & 87, p. 190).

## **Rudzutak**

IAAn Rudzutak was arrested in May 1937, at the same time as Tukhachevsky and the other military leaders, and was accused of being involved with their conspiracy.<sup>200</sup> When Stalin spoke to the Expanded Session of the Military Soviet about the Right-Trotskyite-Tukhachevsky conspiracy, he named Rudzutak as one of the thirteen persons identified to that date.<sup>201</sup>

The rehabilitation report, dated December 24, 1955, says nothing at all about this.<sup>202</sup> We are told that Rudzutak confirmed "anti-Soviet activity" in his preliminary confession but that these confession statements are "contradictory, not concrete (i.e. specific), and unconvincing", and that at trial Rudzutak recanted them, saying that they were "imagined." Nothing at all is said about the involvement with the military conspiracy.

The corresponding short section on Rudzutak in the Pospelov Report<sup>203</sup> is based entirely on this rehabilitation report, adding that "a meticulous verification carried out in 1955 determined that the case against Rudzutak was falsified and he was condemned on the basis of slanderous materials." As we show below, this is false. The rehabilitation report on Rudzutak is a whitewash.

A large number of defendants inculpated Rudzutak. The Rehabilitation report dispenses with these in various ways:

- Some (Magalif, Eikhe, and others) named Rudzutak in their confessions but later recanted their confessions.

The fact that a confession is recanted does not make that recantation more "true" than the original confession.

- Some (Alksnis, German, "and other Soviet and Party workers of Latvian nationality") named Rudzutak, but their investigation had been carried out "with the most serious violations of legality" and so were discounted.
- The rehabilitation report on Iakov Alksnis<sup>204</sup> was not prepared until three weeks later. It says that Alksnis confessed and confirmed his confession at his trial, but says that he did so because he had been tortured, though no details, such as names of investigator — torturers, etc., are given in support of this statement Some (Chubar', Knorin, Gamarnik and Bauman) had already been declared innocent, "consequently they could not have had anti-Soviet ties with Rudzutak."
- According to the rehabilitation report on Chubar' himself (251-2) Chubar' had confessed to participating in a Right-Trotskyite conspiracy, and was named by a number of others such as Antipov, who himself was named by Rykov. Chubar also confessed to espionage for Germany. Chubar' also confessed fully at trial, a point we have documented in the body of this book.
- The confessions of Bukharin and Rykov stated only that Rudzurak was a "Rightist" and sympathized with them but was afraid to say so openly.
- The confessions of Krestinsky, Rozengol'ts, Grin'ko, Postnikov, Antipov, Zhukov and others are "extremely contradictory and lacking in concreteness", and "therefore cannot be accepted as evidence of Rudzutak's guilt."

There are a few rhetorical techniques used here that we should note.

- The fact that a confession is recanted does not mean the recantation is "true" and the confession "false." In this case we simply do not know which, if either, statement is true.
- Nor do we know whether Rudzutak recanted all of his confessions, or only a part of them. We actually know that in other cases, like that of Airforce General-Lieutenant Rychagov and former NKVD chief Iagoda, defendants admitted to conspiracy to overthrow the government and to sabotage, but vigorously denied claims that they had spied for Gennany.<sup>205</sup> Bukharin too confessed to certain specific serious crimes but firmly denied others.

- Chubar' and the other three men had been "rehabilitated", which usually means that their convictions had been set aside for procedural reasons. It is not the same thing as a finding of "innocence", though it was in fact accepted as such.
- There is no basis for dismissing such confessions on the basis of "contradictions." It is to be expected that confessions from many different defendants will have "contradictions" among them. This is far from meaning that they are worthless as evidence. On the contrary: identical confessions from different persons would be highly suspicious.

Rudzutak is named by Grin'ko and Rozengol'ts, and many times by Krestinskii, in the transcript of the March 1938 "Bukharin" trial. The rehabilitation report simply ignores this testimony.

In recently published confessions Rozengol'ts is named both by Ezhov himself and by his associate and relative A.M. Tamaro as having been involved with Ezhov himself in his own Rightist conspiracy. This fact tends to add credence to Rozengol'ts' incrimination of Rudzutak and of others too.

Rudzutak is also named in Rukhimovich's confession of February 8, 1938 (Lubianka 2, No. 290). There's no question that Ezhov and his men were fabricating confessions and forcing defendants to sign them by torturing them, as Frinovskii's recently-published statement confirms. There is eyewitness testimony that Rukhimovich was beaten (Lubianka 2, 656- 7), though not by one of Ezhov's men, many of whom were later punished for fabricating confessions.<sup>206</sup> However, the fact that someone was beaten does not mean their statements, or confessions, were either true or false.

<sup>200</sup> Rudzutak and Tukhachevsky were named in the same Politburo resolution accusing them of participation in an anti-Soviet Right-Trotskyite conspiracy and espionage for Germany, on May 24 1937, and expelled by the Central Committee Plenum on May 25-26 1937 (Lubianka 2, Nos. 86 & 87, p. 190).

<sup>201</sup> Stalin's speech is in *Istochnik* No. 3, 1994; Lubianka 2, No. 92, pp. 202-209 and is reprinted widely, e.g.

[http://grachev62.narod.ru/stalin/t14/t14\\_48.htm](http://grachev62.narod.ru/stalin/t14/t14_48.htm)

<sup>202</sup> *RKEB* 1, 294-5.

<sup>203</sup> *RKEB* 1, 328-329.

<sup>204</sup> *RKEB* 1, 300-1, January 14 1956.

<sup>205</sup> For Rychagov see *RKEB* 1, 165. For Iagoda, see his final statement at the March 1938 "Bukharin" Moscow Trial; English text at *The great purge trial*. Edited, and with notes, by Robert C. Tucker and Stephen F. Cohen. With an introd. by Robert C. Tucker. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1965, p. 675. Russian text at <http://magister.msk.ru/library/trotsky/trotlsud.htm>

<sup>206</sup> The eye-witness account says Rukhimovich was beaten by Meshik, later an associate of Beria's and executed with others in December 1953. The rehabilitation report on Rudzutak names Iartsev as a fabricator of one of Rudzutak's confessions, and notes that Iartsev was later executed for such falsifications (p. 295). Iartsev was arrested in June 1939 and executed along with Ezhov and many of Ezhov's NKVD men — under Beria. This would mean the accusation against Meshik, and therefore against Beria, is false. See Nikita Petrov and K.V. Skorkin, *Kto rukovodil NKVD 1934-1941. Spravochnik* (Moscow, 1999). At <http://www.memo.ru/history/nkvd/kto/biogr/gb572.htm>

### **Kabakov**

There is no rehabilitation report on Ivan Kabakov, who was simply included in the list of 36 along with Eikhe and Evdokimov, and no attempt to confront the charges against him. From the materials now available to us today (No. 19), and of course available, along with much more, to Khrushchev in 1956, there is a lot of testimony against Kabakov.

Rykov and Zubarev, both defendants in the March 1938 "Bukharin" Trial named Kabakov as a conspirator. No one claims these defendants were subject to torture or threats of any kind. This well-known testimony is simply ignored by the Pospelov Report and Khrushchev. The American

mining engineer John Littlepage expressed his conviction that Kabakov must have been involved in some kind of sabotage. American scholar John Harris has seen, and quotes from, Kabakov's *delo*, or investigative file. Harris cites no indication that Kabakov's confessions were other than genuine.

## Eikhe

Robert I. Eikhe was the first person Khrushchev named as unjustly repressed by Stalin. We have saved Eikhe's case for last because it reveals more than the other cases.

Our section on him (No. 16) details what we know about Eikhe's arrest and trial. As with other defendants neither the Soviet nor Russian authorities have released the investigative file and trial information to researchers. But it is clear that Eikhe himself was involved in large-scale repressions of innocent people, in concert with the NKVD. He was most likely punished for this, among other offenses. The fact that he worked so closely with Ezhov in these repressions would lead any investigator to wonder whether the two were conspiratorially linked — though we cannot be certain without more evidence.

At the end of the section of his speech on Eikhe, Khrushchev says:

It has been definitely established now that Eikhe's case was fabricated; he has been posthumously rehabilitated.

This statement is false. Khrushchev delivered his Speech on February 25, 1956. According to the rehabilitation materials Eikhe was not rehabilitated until March 6. Although Khrushchev devotes more space to Eikhe than to any other repressed Party official there was no rehabilitation report about Eikhe. He was one of 36 repressed Party officials all recommended for rehabilitation **en masse** on March 2 1956.<sup>207</sup> This document is merely a list; there are no details about any specific individual.

The main part, and the only substantive section, of Khrushchev's Speech devoted to Eikhe consists of a long quotation from his letter to Stalin dated



October 27, 1939. Without question, this is one of the most emotionally charged sections of the Speech. Eikhe vehemently protests his innocence, recounts how he has been tortured into signing confessions of crimes he never committed, and repeatedly affirms his loyalty to the Party and to Stalin personally.

The impression given is one of a wholly devoted communist going to his death on trumped-up charges. It is damning testimony. Since the full text was finally published in 2002, we can also tell this: as read by Khrushchev the letter was heavily falsified by significant omission.

The parts of Eikhe's "letter to Stalin" of October 27 1939 published in the Pospelov Report are not always the same parts Khrushchev cited in his Speech. Both documents contain significant ellipses from the full text of what is apparently the original letter. I say "apparently", because the published text is acknowledged by its editors to be a copy.

There are no archival identifiers at the end of the document, just the note that the original is in the "Eikhe's archival investigative file." That has no archival identifiers either. That means that the Russian government does not want researchers to know where the Eikhe investigative materials are — if, indeed, they still exist.

Even the compilers and editors of this official volume were not permitted to see the original, or Eikhe's original file!<sup>208</sup> We don't know why, but a study of the sections of Eikhe's letter that are not included in either the Pospelov Report or Khrushchev's Speech suggests some possible answers.<sup>209</sup>

A translation of the full text of Eikhe's letter is appended to this chapter. It is annotated to make it clear which sections are quoted in Khrushchev's Speech, which parts are in the Pospelov Report, and which parts are quoted in both of them. Most important for our purposes, the sections omitted from both the Speech and the Pospelov Report are highlighted.

It is immediately clear that it would not have been useful for Khrushchev's purposes to make the full text of this letter public.

- Eikhe refers to a letter he wrote to "Commissar L.P. Beria" — meaning he wrote it long after his arrest, which took place on April 29, 1938. Beria did not become Commissar until late November 1938, replacing Ezhov.
- Eikhe says that "Commissar Kobulov" had agreed with Eikhe that he could not have invented all the stories of treasonable activity he had confessed to. Kobulov was one of the seven KGB men who were judicially murdered in December 1953 for having been close to Beria. This passage would tend to make Kobulov, and hence Beria, look like responsible men, and so Khrushchev could not permit it to become public.
- Eikhe's letter reveals that he had been accused of conspiracy by a great many other Party officials. He calls all these accusations "provocations" and gives various explanations for them. This naturally suggests that his arrest was warranted. A person named as a co-conspirator by many other conspirators may, in fact, be guilty. Anyone would conclude that the whole investigative file must be examined to determine whether Eikhe was telling the truth or not. Such an examination would have shown that it was Khrushchev who was not telling the truth.
- Eikhe blames two NKVD investigators for torturing (beating) him: Ushakov and Nikolaev-Zhurid. We know something about the activities of these two men. They acted under Ezhov's orders and were arrested, tried and executed for fabricating confessions and torturing arrestees. Both Ushakov and Nikolaev [-Zhurid] were so closely associated with Ezhov that they were tried and executed at virtually the same time.<sup>210</sup>
- The arrests and investigations of NKVD men who tortured prisoners and fabricated confessions was carried out by Beria. Khrushchev had been the leading figure in the judicial murder of Beria in 1953, and never missed a chance to blame Beria for anything he could. Since in his Speech Khrushchev tries to blame Beria for Eikhe's plight — and for much else Beria did not do — it would not have been in Khrushchev's interest to release the text of Eikhe's letter.
- Likewise, Eikhe's letter makes it clear that some kind of proper investigatorial, i.e. judicial, procedure was now in place. He had been allowed to write to Beria, who was now the head of the NKVD

(People's Commissar for Internal Affairs). NKVD investigator Kobulov, one of Beria's men, had expressed some degree of agreement with his, Eikhe's, professions of innocence or, at least, was trying to figure out what was true and what was not. And of course Eikhe had been permitted to write this letter to Stalin, which Khrushchev implies was delivered to its recipient.

- All this implies that Beria, and Stalin as well, were trying to carry out a serious investigation, sort out the rights and wrongs. This is what Khrushchev's audience would have expected of Stalin, at least. But it goes directly contrary to the whole purpose of Khrushchev's Speech, which was to claim that Stalin and Beria did **not** act responsibly.
- Eikhe makes it clear that conspiracies did exist, and names a number of prominent CC members as having been implicated in them or in false accusations against himself. The whole thrust of Khrushchev's Speech is to cast doubt on all conspiracies.
- Eikhe states that both Evdokimov and Frinovskii implicated him as involved with Ezhov in conspiratorial activities. Eikhe blames Ezhov and Ushakov for having him beaten into false confessions. Eikhe claimed he had no conspiratorial ties with Ezhov, though Frinovskii had said he did.
- Eikhe calls Ezhov an "arrested and exposed counter-revolutionary", raising the issue of Ezhov's own conspiracy. This is a fact only revealed very recently when a single confession statement each by both Ezhov and Frinovskii have been published (February 2006).

There's no reason to doubt that Eikhe was beaten into false confessions by Ezhov's men, for Frinovskii and Ezhov admit to doing just that to many people. But in this case that fact does not necessarily suggest innocence on the part of Eikhe. Frinovskii admits that he and Ezhov fabricated cases against their own men, and had them shot as well, in order to avert any chance that they would "turn" on them when questioned by Beria.

Reproducing Eikhe's whole letter — to say nothing of the whole Eikhe investigation file — would have "muddied the waters" considerably. It would have raised the issue of Ezhov's conspiracy, a story which would have interfered with Khrushchev's goal of blaming everything on Stalin. It would have introduced the names of many other high-ranking Party

members, revealing that all these cases had to be looked into before the genuine confessions could be separated from the false ones.

- It would have introduced Evdokimov, named by both Frinovskii and Ezhov as a close co-conspirator of theirs. But Evdokimov's name is on the same "rehabilitation" of March 2, 1956 list as Eikhe's!
- Eikhe also names CC members Pramnek, Pakhomov, Mezhlauk, and Kosior. He says that Pramnek and Pakhomov have falsely implicated him.

A denial of guilt such as Eikhe's letter to Stalin is no more credible in itself than an admission of guilt. Yet the only exculpatory information cited by either Khrushchev or the Pospelov Report were the carefully selected excerpts from Eikhe's letter.

When the full text of this letter is put side by side with the other information about Eikhe's role in mass repressions the conclusion is inescapable: Pospelov and Khrushchev did their best to cover up any evidence that tended to suggest Eikhe's guilt. By doing this they forestalled any serious investigation into Eikhe's case, and by extension into Ezhov's conspiracy.

Eikhe also claims that Stalin had said all CC members were permitted to "acquaint themselves with the special files of the Politburo". Exactly what was in these *osoby papki* was probably not clear to the CC members of 1956. But they would have asked whether **they** themselves had such permission!

It would have made it impossible for Khrushchev to deny to the CC members the right to review the investigation materials on these and other persons — if they had believed they were entitled to do so. And we can be confident that they did not have this right, because even Politburo members like Molotov and Kaganovich had not seen these investigative materials. Presumably this was because Khrushchev denied them access. It is impossible to imagine otherwise how Khrushchev and his supporters could have gotten away with some of the false accusations they made against the "anti-party group" in 1957.

In sum: Eikhe's letter **as a whole** was very damaging to Khrushchev's case. Its contents tend to exculpate both Stalin and Beria and to confirm the existence of a serious conspiracy among at least some CC members, as well as among others. Khrushchev could only cite it if he had made certain beforehand that nobody but his own supporters could see it.

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Our examination of these three rehabilitation reports leads us to some conclusions that are important for our study of Khrushchev's Speech.

- The reports ignore a great deal of evidence against the persons "rehabilitated."
- They do not subject any of the evidence to a close analysis. Any contradictions among different confessions are considered sufficient to dismiss all of them.
- Until all the investigative materials are made available to researchers we can't know exactly what happened. For our present purposes this isn't necessary. What we can tell is this:
- The rehabilitation reports do not establish the innocence of the persons "rehabilitated."
- These reports did not attempt to determine the truth, but to provide a documentary basis to declare the persons "innocent".
- We have what Khrushchev had; what Pospelov had; and what Rudenko reported to them. The inescapable conclusion of our analysis of this material is that Khrushchev had instructed Rudenko to prepare "whitewashes" — documents that declared the accused innocent, tricked out with as much air of plausibility as necessary.
- When juxtaposed to what else we know about the charges against the defendants, the rehabilitation reports of Postyshev, Kosarev, and Rudzutak cannot stand up to scrutiny. Such a conclusion is consistent with the fact that Khrushchev lied in many other instances in his Speech, as we can now prove.

**Eikhe's Letter to Stalin of October 27, 1939**

Text from *Doklad Khrushcheva o Kul'te Lichnosti Stalina na XX S"ezde KPSS. Dokumenty*. Ed. K. Aimennakher et al Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002, pp. 225-228.

**Bold** — Khrushchev's Speech

*Italics* — Pospelov Report

***Bold Italics*** — both Khrushchev's Speech and the Pospelov Report

Regular Text — omitted from both.

October 27 1939

Top Secret

To Secretary of the CC ACP(b) J. V. Stalin

***On October 25 of this year I was informed that the investigation in my case has been concluded and I was given access to the materials of this investigation. Had I been guilty of only one hundredth of the crimes with which I am charged, I would not have dared to send you this pre-execution declaration; however, I have not been guilty of even one of the things with which I am charged and my heart is clean of even the shadow of baseness. I have never in my life told you a word of falsehood, and now, finding my two feet in the grave, I am also not lying. My whole case is a typical example of provocation, slander and violation of the elementary basis of revolutionary legality.*** I realized as early as September or October 1937 that some kind of foul provocation was being organized against me. In official transcripts of an interrogation of accused persons sent from Krasnoyarsk region in the course of exchange with other regions, including the Novosibirsk NKVD (in the transcript of the accused Shirshov or Orlov) the following clearly provocational question was written: "Haven't you heard about Eikhe's connection to the conspiratorial organization?" and the answer: "The person who recruited me told me that as a youth you were already a member of a counterrevolutionary organization and you'll find out about that later."

This foul provocational trick seemed to me so stupid and clumsy that I did not even consider it necessary to inform the CC CPSU and you about it. But if I had been an enemy, I really could have used this stupid provocation to construct a pretty good coverup for myself. What this provocation meant in my own case only became clear to me long after my arrest, and I have written Commissar Beria about it.

The second source of this provocation is the Novosibirsk prison where, since there is no isolation, enemies who have been exposed and who were arrested at my order remained together, and made plans to spite me and openly agreed that "now we must incriminate those who are incriminating us." According to Gorbach, chief of the NKVD office, this was said by Van'ian, whose arrest I actively pursued in the Commissariat of Transportation. ***The confessions which were made part of my file are not only absurd but contain a number of instances of slander toward the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and toward the Council of People's Commissars, because correct resolutions of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and of the Council of People's Commissars which were not made on my initiative and without my participation are presented as hostile acts of coounter-revolutionary organization made at my suggestion.*** This is the case with the confessions of Printsev, Liashenko, Neliubin, Levits and others. In addition during the investigation there was full opportunity to establish the provocational nature of this slander on the spot with documents and facts.

*All this is most clear from the confessions about my alleged sabotage in kolkhoz building, specifically that at regional conferences and at plenums of the regional committee of the ACP(b) I argued for the creation of gigantic kolkhozy. All these speeches of mine were transcribed and published, but not a single concrete fact or a single quotation was cited in accusation against me. And no one ever will be able to prove it, because the whole time I worked in Siberia I promulgated the Party's line with determination and without mercy. The kolkhozy in W. Siberia were strong and, when compared to the other grain-producing regions of the Soviet Union, were the best kolkhozy.*

You and the CC ACP(b) know how Syrtsov and his cadres who remained in Siberia warred against me. They formed in 1930 a group that the CC ACP(b) smashed and condemned as an unprincipled gang, yet I am accused of supporting this group and of being in the leadership of it after Syrtsov's departure from Siberia. Especially striking is the material about my founding a c.r. Latvian nat. organization in Siberia. One of my principal accusers is the Lithuanian, not Latvian (as far as I know, since I can neither speak nor read Latvian) Turlo, who came to Siberia to work in 1935. But Turlo's confessions about the existence of a c.r. nationalist organization start with 1924 (this is very important if one is to see with what provocational methods the investigation into my case was conducted). In addition to which Turlo does not even state from whom he heard of the existence of the Lat nat counterrevolutionary organization since 1924. According to Turlo's transcript he is a Lithuanian and joined the Latvian nation. c.r. organization with the goal of separating territory from the USSR and uniting it to Latvia. In the confessions of Tutlo and Tredzen it is said that a Latvian newspaper in Siberia praised bourgeois Latvia but did not give a single quotation nor identify a single issue. I must speak separately about the accusations of ties with the German consul and of espionage.

The confessions concerning banquets at the consul's and my supposed moral corruption of the Party activists are given by the accused Vaganov, who arrived in Siberia in 1932 or 1933. They begin with 1923 (this is the result of the same provocation as in Turlo's confessions), the description of banquetmania, moral corruption, etc., again without indication of anyone from whom he learned this. The truth is this: when I was chairman of the area executive committee and there was no representative of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, I would attend receptions at the consul's twice a year (on the day of ratification of the Weimar constitution and on the day the Treaty of Rapallo was signed). But I did this on the recommendation of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. I did not host banquets in return and the inappropriateness and incorrectness of such behavior was even indicated to me. I never went hunting with the consul and permitted no moral corruption of the activists. The housekeeper who lived with us, the workers of the economic section of the area executive committee, and the chauffeurs who drove with me in my auto can confirm the accuracy of my words. The clumsiness of these accusations is also



obvious from the fact that, if I had been a German spy, then German intelligence would have been obliged to categorically forbid any public association with the consul, in order to maintain my cover. But I have never been either a c.r. or a spy. Every spy, naturally, must strive to acquaint himself with the most secret decisions and directives. You have told the members of the Central Committee many times in my presence that every CC member has the right to acquaint himself with the special files ["osoby papki" — GF] of the P.B., but I have never consulted the special files, and Poskrebyshev can confirm that.

In his own confessions Gailit, former commander of the Siberian Military District, confirms the provocation about my spying, and I am forced to describe to you how these confessions were fabricated.

In May 1938 Major Ushakov was reading me an excerpt from Gailit's confessions that on a free day Gailit had seen me walking together with the German consul and he, Gailit, understood that I was transmitting to the consul secret information I had received from him. When I pointed out to Ushakov that beginning in 1935 a commissar and NKVD intelligence accompanied me, they tried to add in that I had escaped them by car. But when it was made clear to them that I do not know how to drive, they left me alone. Now in my case file a transcript of Gailit has been inserted from which that part has been excised.

Pramnek confesses that he established c.r. ties with me during the January 1938 plenum of the CC ACP(b). This is a bald-faced lie. I have never spoken with Pramnek about anything, and during the January plenum of the CC ACP(b), after he finished his report right there in front of the tribunal in a group of secretaries of regional committees, who demanded to be given a time when they could come to the PCA to decide a number of questions, the following conversation took place. Pramnek asked me when he could come to the PCA and I gave him an appointment for the next day after 12 o'clock at night, but he did not come. Pramnek lies that I was sick then, it can be established through the secretaries and the commissar of the NKVD that, starting the 11th of January, the day I got out of the hospital, I was in the Commissariat every day until 3-4 o'clock in the morning. The monstrous nature of this slander is also clear from the fact that an experienced

conspirator such as I fearlessly established contact through Mezhlauk's word a month after Mezhlauk's arrest.

N.I. Pakhomov confesses that even at the time of the June 1937 plenum of the CC ACP(b) he and Pramnek were discussing how to make use of me as Commissar of Agriculture for the c.r. organization. I only learned of my proposed appointment from you at the end of the October 1937 plenum and after the end of the plenum I remember that not all members of the Pb knew about this proposal. How is it possible to believe the 'kind of provocational slander that is in Pakhomov's and Pramnek's confessions?

Evdokimov says he found out about my participation in the conspiracy in August 1938 and that Ezhov told him he was taking steps to preserve my life.

In June 1938 Ushakov inflicted cruel torment on me so that I would confess to an attempt to kill Ezhov, and these confessions of mine were formulated by Nikolaev with Ezhov's knowledge. Could Ezhov have acted in this way if there were even one word of truth in what Evdokimov says?

I was at Ezhov's dacha together with Evdokimov, but Ezhov never called me either friend or supporter and did not embrace me. Malenkov and Poskrebyshev, who were there too, can confirm this.

In his confessions Frinovskii opens yet another source of provocation in my case. He confesses that, supposedly, he found out about my participation in the conspiracy from Ezhov in April 1937, and that Mironov (chief of the NKVD in Novosibirsk) was asking Ezhov in a letter at that time that he, Mironov, "could come out on Eikhe" concerning the conspiracy, as a participant in the conspiratorial organization. Mironov only arrived in Siberia at the end of March 1937, and without any materials had already received Ezhov's preliminary sanction on whom to conduct a provocation. Anybody can understand that what Frinovskii confesses is no attempt to protect me, but is rather the organization of a provocation against me. Above I have stressed, in the confessions of Turlo and Vaganov, the year with which they begin their confessions regardless of the clumsiness. *It should have been pointed out the Ushakov, who was chief investigator on my case, that the false confessions beaten out of me were contradicted by*

*the confessions in Siberia, and my confessions were being transmitted by telephone to Novosibirsk.*

*This was done with blatant cynicism and in my presence Lieutenant Prokof'ev ordered a telephone call to Novosibirsk. **Not I have come to the most disgraceful part of my life and to my really grave guilt against the party and against you. This is my confession of counterrevolutionary activity.** Commissar Kobulov told me that no one could just think all of this up and really I never could have thought it up. **Here is what happened: Not being able to endure the tortures to which I was submitted by Ushakov and Nikolaev and especially by the former who utilized the knowledge that my broken vertebra have not properly mended and have caused me great pain, I have been forced to accuse myself and others.***

*The greater part of my confession has been suggested or dictated by Ushakov, and the remainder is my reconstruction of NKVD materials from Western Siberia for which I assumed all responsibility. If some part of the story which Ushakov fabricated and which I signed did not properly hang together, I was forced to sign another variation. The same thing was done to Rukhimovich, who was at first designated as a member of the reserve net and whose name later was removed without telling me anything about it; the same was also done with the leader of the reserve net, supposedly created by Bukharin in 1935. At first I wrote my name in and then I was instructed to insert V.I. Mezhlauk. There were other similar incidents.*

I must pause especially on the provocational legend of the treason of the Latvian SPC in 1918. This legend was wholly invented by Ushakov and Nikolaev. There never was any tendency favoring separation from Russia among the Latv Soc Dems and I and the whole generation of workers of my age were educated in Russian literature and in revolutionary and Bolshevik legal and underground publications. The question of a separate state soviet body such as a Latvian soviet soc. republic seemed so wild to me as to many others that at the first congress of soviets in Riga I took a stand against it and I was not alone. The decision concerning the establishment of a soviet republic was only taken after it had been announced that that was the decision of the CC RCP(b).

I only worked for about two weeks in soviet Latvia and at the end of November of 1918 I left to do provision work in the Ukraine and was there until the collapse of soviet power in Latvia. Riga fell because it was in fact almost surrounded by the Whites. In Estonia the Whites were victorious and occupied Balk.:. The Whites also took Vil'no and Mitava and were advancing on Dvinsk. In this connection it had already been proposed in March 1919 to evacuate Riga, but it held out until May 15 1919.

I have never been at any c.r. meetings with either Kosior or Mezhlauk. Those meetings indicated in my confessions took place in the presence of a number of other people who could also be questioned. My confession of c.r. ties with Ezhov is the blackest spot on my conscience. *I gave these false confessions when the investigator had reduced me to the point of losing consciousness by interrogating me for 16 hours. When he stated, as an ultimatum, that I should choose between two handles (one of a pen and the other of a rubber truncheon) then I, believing they had brought me to the new prison in order to shoot me, once again demonstrated the greatest cowardice and gave slanderous confessions. I did not care what crimes I took upon myself as long as they shot me as soon as possible. But to subject myself again to beatings for that arrested and exposed c.r. Ezhov, who had doomed me who had never done anything criminal, was beyond my strength.*

This is the truth about my case and about myself. Each step of my life and work can be verified and no one will ever find anything other than devotion to the Party and to you.

***I am asking and begging you that you again examine my case, and this not for the purpose of sparing me but in order to unmask the vile provocation which, like a snake, has wound itself around many persons in part also because of my cowardice and criminal slander. I have never betrayed you or the party. I know that I perish because of the vile, base work of the enemies of the party and of the people, who have fabricated the provocation against me. My dream has been and remains the wish to die for the party and for you.***

Eikhe

The genuine statement is located in Eikhe's archival investigative file

### **"Rehabilitation by List"**

MEMORANDUM OF I.A. SEROV AND R.A. RUDENKO TO THE CC  
CPSU CONCERNING THE REVIEW OF THE CASES AND THE  
REHABILITATION OF MEMBERS AND CANDIDATE MEMBERS OF  
THE CC AUCP(b) CHOSEN AT THE 17<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS OF THE  
AUCP(b)

*March 2 1956*

CC CPSU

Having reviewed the cases of those members and candidate members of the CC AUCP(b) elected at the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress who were convicted, the Committee for State Security [KGB] of the Council of Ministers of the USSR and the Procuracy of the USSR have determined that the majority of these cases were falsified by the investigative organs, and that the so-called confessions of guilt of the persons arrested were obtained as the result of serious beatings and provocations.

Having reported this, we believe it expedient to propose that the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR review and posthumously rehabilitate the illegally condemned persons listed below:

1. Kosior Stanislav Vikent'evich — former vice-chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, member of the CPSU from 1907.
2. Eikhe Robert Indrikovich — former People's Commissar for Agriculture of the USSR, member of the CPSU from 1905.
3. Bubnov Andrei Sergeevich — former People's Commissar for Education of the RSFSR [the Russian Republic], member of the CPSU from 1903.
4. Evdokimov Efim Georgievich — former secretary of the Azov-Black Sea Regional Committee of the Party, member of the CPSU from 1918.

...

6. Kabakov Ivan Dmitrievich — former secretary of the Sverdlovsk *oblast'* committee of the Party, member of the CPSU from 1914.

...

14. Rukhimovich Moisei L'vovich — former People's Commissar for the Defense Industry of the RSFSR, member of the CPSU from 1913.

...

The cases concerning the accusations of other members and candidate members of the CC AUCP(b), members of the Commission of Party Control, of Soviet Control, and of the Central Review Commission, who were elected at the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, will also be reviewed and reported to the CC CPSU.

We request a decision.

Chairman of the Committee for State Security Of the Council of Ministers  
of the USSR

I. Serov

The General Procuror [Prosecutor] of the USSR

R Rudenko

The rehabilitation decree from the Presidium of the CC CPSU followed without delay:

*March 5 1956*

**No. 3.II.54 — Concerning the Posthumous rehabilitation of illegally condemned members of the CC AUCP(b) elected at the 17th Party Congress.**

To confirm the proposal of the Chairman of the Committee for State Security of the Council of Ministers of the USSR com. Serov and the General Procuror of the USSR com. Rudenko concerning the review of the cases and posthumous rehabilitation of the illegally condemned members of the CC AUCP(b) and candidate members of the CC AUCP(b), elected at the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Party: Kosior S.V., Eikhe R.I., Bubnov A.S., Evdokimov E.G. ...Kabakov I.D., ... Rukhimovich M.

## **Chapter 12. *Conclusion: The Enduring Legacy of Khrushchev's Deception***

For decades it's been assumed that Khrushchev attacked Stalin for the reasons he set forth in the "Secret Speech." But now that we have established that Khrushchev's accusations, or "revelations", against Stalin in the Speech are false, the question returns with even greater force: What was really going on?

### **Why Did Khrushchev Attack Stalin?**

Why did Khrushchev attack Stalin? What were his real motives? The reasons he stated cannot be the true ones. The "revelations" Khrushchev made are false, and Khrushchev either knew this (in most cases), or did not care.

Khrushchev had some kind of real motives, but it was precisely those that he remained silent about in his Speech at the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress and, for that matter, for the rest of his life. In other words, "behind" the "Secret Speech" known to the world there is a **second**, and real "secret speech" — one that **remained** "secret," undelivered. My purpose in this essay is to raise this question rather than to answer it. I'll simply mention a few possibilities and areas for further inquiry, some obvious, others less so.

Surely Khrushchev wanted to forestall anybody's dragging up his own role in the unjustified mass repressions of the 1930s by shifting the blame onto Stalin and initiating "rehabilitations." He probably surmised that the "rehabilitations" would make him popular in much of the Party elite, irrespective of whether those "rehabilitated" had been guilty or not. Even, perhaps, in Moscow and the Ukraine, where his reputation as architect of mass repressions was well earned and widely known, shifting the blame onto the dead Stalin while vindicating those repressed and, just as importantly, their surviving families, would mitigate the animosity many must have held for him.



Khrushchev's Speech has hitherto been taken at face value. The research published here proves that it is an error to do so. That leaves us with a number of questions. Why did Khrushchev give his speech? Why did he go to such lengths — phony research, hiding genuine documents, — and make such political sacrifices, in order to deliver a speech that was, for all practical purposes, nothing **but** falsehoods?

The Chinese Communist Party came up with one answer. They believed that Khrushchev and his allies wanted to lead the USSR onto a sharply different political trajectory than they believed it had taken under Stalin. We have briefly alluded to some economic and political policies instituted under Khrushchev that the CCP leadership saw as an abandonment of basic Marxist-Leninist principles.

There has to be some truth in this theory. But a base for such ideas already existed in the USSR. The origins of these policies, now identified with Khrushchev and his epigones Brezhnev and the rest, lie in the immediate post-Stalin period, long before Khrushchev came to dominate the Soviet leadership. In fact, many of them can be traced back to the late 1940s and early 1950s, the "late Stalin" period.

It is difficult to discern to what extent Stalin himself supported or opposed these policies. In his last years he was less and less active politically. Periodically it seems as though Stalin did try to assert a different path towards communism, — in his last book *Economic Problem: of Socialism in the USSR* (1952), for example, and at the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in October 1952. Later, Mikoian wrote that Stalin's late views were "an incredibly leftist deviation".<sup>211</sup> But immediately after Stalin died the "collective leadership" all agreed on dropping all mention of Stalin's book and on dumping the new system of Party governance.

Khrushchev used his attack on Stalin and Beria as a weapon against the others in the "collective leadership", especially Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich. This course was fraught with risk, however. How could he have known that they would not accuse him equally, or even more so? Part of the reason must have been that Khrushchev was able to rely on allies like

Pospelov, who helped him "purge" the archives of documentation of his own participation in mass repressions.

Khrushchev may have also realized that with Beria gone he alone had a "program": a plan and the initiative to carry it out. We can see in retrospect that the other Presidium members were amazingly passive during this period. Perhaps they had always relied on Stalin to take the initiative, to make important decisions. Or perhaps that seeming passivity hid a struggle of political ideas confined to the leadership body.

Historian Iuri Zhukov has set forth a third theory. In his view Khrushchev's aim was to decisively close the door on democratic reforms with which Stalin was associated and which Stalin's former allies in the Presidium (until October 1952 called the Politburo), especially Malenkov, were still trying to promote. Those reforms aimed at removing the Party from control over politics, the economy and culture and putting these in the hands of the elected Soviets. This would have been a virtual "perestroika", or "restructuring", but within the limits of socialism as opposed to the full-blown restoration of predatory capitalism to which Gorbachev's later "perestroika" led.

Zhukov details a number of moments in the struggle between Stalin and his allies, who wanted to remove the party from the levers of power, and the rest of the Politburo, who firmly opposed this. In May 1953, shortly after Stalin's death, the executive branch of the Soviet government, the Council (Soviet) of Ministers, passed resolutions depriving leading Party figures of their "envelopes", or extra pay, **reducing their income to a level or two lower than their corresponding government figures.** According to Zhukov, Malenkov promoted this reform. It is consistent with the project of turning power over to the Soviet government and downgrading the role of the Party, getting the Party out of the running of the country, economy and culture. Significantly, it was done before the illegal repression of Lavrentii Beria who, we now know, supported this same project.

In late June 1953 Beria was repressed, either by arrest and imprisonment or by outright murder. In August Khrushchev managed — how, we do not know — to reinstate the "envelopes" of special bonuses to high-ranking Party functionaries and even to get them the three months back pay they

had missed. Three weeks later, at the very end of a Central Committee Plenum, the post of First Secretary of the Party was reinstated (until 1934 it had been called 'General Secretary') and Khrushchev was elected to it. It is hard not to see this as the Party *nomenklatura's* reward for "their man."

Zhukov concludes:

It is my firm conviction that the true meaning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress lies precisely in this return of the Party apparatus to power. It was the necessity to hide this fact ... that necessitated distracting attention from contemporary events and concentrating them on the past with the aid of the "secret report" [Secret Speech — GF]<sup>212</sup>

The first two explanations, the anti-revisionist or "Chinese" and the "power struggle" explanations, surely contain elements of truth. In my view, however, Zhukov's theory best accounts for the facts at hand while also remaining consistent with the contents of the Secret Speech and the fact that, as we have discovered, it is virtually entirely false.

Stalin and his supporters had championed a plan of democratization of the USSR through contested elections. Their plan seems to have been to move the locus of power in the USSR from Party leaders like Khrushchev to elected government representatives. Doing this would also have laid the groundwork for restoring the Party as an organization of dedicated persons struggling for communism rather than for careers or personal gain.<sup>213</sup> Khrushchev appears to have had the support of the Party First Secretaries, who were determined to sabotage this project and perpetuate their own positions of privilege.

Khrushchev pursued policies, both internal and external, that contemporary observers recognized as a sharp break from those identified with Stalin's leadership. In fact similar policy changes not identical to those initiated or championed later by Khrushchev but broadly congruent with them were begun immediately after Stalin's death, when Khrushchev himself was still just another member, and not the most important one, of the Presidium of the Central Committee.<sup>214</sup> Among the "reforms" most often cited that went directly contrary to Stalin's long-held policies were

- A shift towards "market"-oriented reforms;
- A concomitant shift away from heavy industry and the manufacture of the means of production, towards consumer-goods production;
- In international politics, a shift away from the traditional Marxist-Leninist concept that war with imperialism was inevitable as long as imperialism exists, to the avoidance of any direct warfare with imperialism at all costs;
- A de-emphasis on the working class as the vanguard of social revolution in order to emphasize building alliances with other classes;
- A new notion that capitalism itself could be overcome without revolution by "peaceful competition" and through parliamentary means;
- An abandonment of Stalin's plans for moving on to the next stage of socialism and towards true communism.

Khrushchev could not have taken power, nor his "Secret Speech" been conceived, researched, delivered and had the success it did, without profound changes in Soviet society and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.<sup>215</sup>

<sup>211</sup> "Neveroiatno levatskii zagib." Mikoian, *Tak Bylo*, Ch. 46: "On the Even of and During the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress: Stalin's Last Days."

<sup>212</sup> IU. N. Zhukov, "Krutoi povorot...nazad" ("A sharp turn ... backwards"), *XX S"ezd. Materialy konferentsii k 40-letiiu XX s"ezda KPSS. Gorbachev-Fond, 22 fevralia 1996 goda*. Moscow: April-85, 1996, pp. 31-39; quotation on p. 39. This was the only presentation to which Gorbachev himself personally responded in sharp disagreement. Also at [http://www.gorby.ru/activity/conference/show\\_553\\_view\\_24755/](http://www.gorby.ru/activity/conference/show_553_view_24755/)

<sup>213</sup> I have outlined this hypothesis at some length in "Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform", *Cultural Logic* 2005. At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2005/2005.html>

<sup>214</sup> Indeed the "post-Stalin Thaw" can be said to have begun during Stalin's lifetime, at least as far as culture was concerned. This idea is developed by the late historian Vadim Kozhinov, in Chapter 8 of *Rossia: Vek XX (1939-*

1964). (Moscow: EKSMO / Algoritm, 2005), "On the so-called 'Thaw'", pp 309-344.

<sup>215</sup> Before 1952 the party's name was the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

### **The Khrushchev Conspiracy?**

Elsewhere Zhukov has argued that it was the First Secretaries, led by Robert Eikhe, who seem to have initiated the mass repressions of 1937-1938.<sup>216</sup> Khrushchev, one of these powerful First Secretaries, was himself very heavily involved in large-scale repression, including the execution of thousands of people.

Many of these First Secretaries were themselves later tried and executed. Some of them, like Kabakov, were accused of being part of a conspiracy. Others, like Postyshev, were accused, at least initially, of mass, unwarranted repression of Party members. Eikhe also seems to fall into this group. Later many of these men were also charged with being part of various conspiracies themselves. Khrushchev was one of the few First Secretaries during the years 1937-38 not only to escape such charges, but to have been promoted.

Might it be that Khrushchev **was** part of such a conspiracy — but was one of the highest-ranking members to have remained undetected? We can't prove or disprove this hypothesis. But it would explain all the evidence we now have.

Khrushchev's Speech has been described as aiming at the rehabilitation of Bukharin. Some of the figures in the 1938 "Bukharin" Moscow Trial were in fact rehabilitated. So it would have been logical to include Bukharin. But this was not done. Khrushchev himself wrote that he wanted to rehabilitate Bukharin, but did not because of opposition from some of the foreign communist leaders. Mikoian wrote that the documents had already been signed, but that it was Khrushchev who reneged.<sup>217</sup>

Of all the figures in the three big Moscow Trials, why would Khrushchev want to rehabilitate Bukharin specifically? He must have felt strong loyalty towards Bukharin more than he did towards others. Perhaps this loyalty was only to Bukharin's ideas. But it is not the only possible explanation.

Since Khrushchev's day, but especially since the formal rehabilitation under Gorbachev in 1988, Bukharin's "innocence" has been taken for granted. In a recently published article Vladimir L. Bobrov and I have shown that there is no reason to think this is true.<sup>218</sup> The evidence we have — only a small fraction of what the Soviet government had in the 1930s — overwhelmingly suggests that Bukharin was in fact involved in a wide-ranging conspiracy. In another study recently published in Russian<sup>219</sup> we have demonstrated that the Gorbachev-era decree of rehabilitation of Bukharin by the Plenum of the Soviet Supreme Court, issued on February 4, 1988, contains deliberate falsifications.

According to this theory Bukharin told the truth in his confession at the March 1938 Moscow Trial. But we know that Bukharin did not tell the **whole** truth. Getty has suggested that Bukharin did not begin to confess until after Tukhachevsky had confessed, and the imprisoned Bukharin could have reasonably known about that — at which time he named Tukhachevsky.

Evidence exists that Bukharin knew of other conspirators whom he did not name. Frinovskii claimed Ezhov himself was one of them.<sup>220</sup> This appears credible in the light of the evidence about Ezhov that we now have at our disposal. Could Khrushchev also have been one of these — whether known to Bukharin or not? If he had been, he would have been a highly-placed conspirator, and therefore very secret.

From what we can tell now, Khrushchev "repressed" a huge number of people — perhaps more than any other individual aside from Ezhov and his men, and perhaps Robert Eikhe. Perhaps that was because he was First Secretary in Moscow (city and province) until January 1938, and thereafter First Secretary in the Ukraine. These are two large areas. Given a party-based conspiracy, or suspicion of one, it would be logical that it would have

been strong in Moscow, while the Ukraine had always had its share of nationalist opposition.

Frinovskii stated flatly that he and Ezhov "repressed" — tortured, fabricated phony confessions of, and judicially murdered — a great many people in order to appear more loyal than the loyal and thereby to cover up their own conspiratorial activities. This admission by Frinovskii is not only credible; it is the only explanation that makes any sense. Ezhov himself cited the additional motive of spreading dissatisfaction with the Soviet system in order to facilitate rebellions in the event of foreign invasion.<sup>221</sup>

It appears that Postyshev and Eikhe, two First Secretaries who repressed many innocent people, acted from like motives, and we know Eikhe, at least, worked closely with Ezhov in so doing. May not other First Secretaries have also acted in this way? Specifically, may not Khrushchev have organized massive frameups, kangaroo trials, and executions, in order to cover up his own participation?

Alternative explanations are: (1) several hundred thousand people were in fact guilty of conspiracy; or (2) these people were simply massacred because "Stalin was paranoid" — i.e. wanted to kill anyone who *might* be a danger sometime in the future. But we know that it was **Khrushchev**, not Stalin and the Politburo, who took the initiative in demanding higher "limits" of numbers of persons to be repressed. And no one has ever claimed Khrushchev was "paranoid."

Anti-communists, Trotskyites, and adherents to the "totalitarian" paradigm have normally embraced the "paranoid" explanation, even though it really "explains" nothing but is, rather, an excuse for a lack of an explanation. But we know now that this is not so. Not Stalin, but the CC members — and, specifically, the First Secretaries — initiated the mass repressions and executions.

Frinovskii explicitly claims that Bukharin knew Ezhov was a part of the "Right-Trotskyite" conspiracy but refused to name Ezhov in his confessions or at trial. Frinovskii claims this was because Ezhov had told Bukharin that he would be spared in return for his silence. This is possible — though it is an explanation that does no credit to Bukharin who was, after all, a

Bolshevik, veteran of the very bloody days of the October revolution of 1917 in Moscow.

Underground revolutionaries sometimes went to execution rather than inform on all their comrades. Why not concede that Bukharin might have refused to name Ezhov for this reason alone? We know that Bukharin had not, in fact, told the "whole truth" in **any** of his statements previous to his trial. Why not — unless he were still not "disarmed", were still fighting against Stalin? Bukharin's cringing professions to "love" Stalin "wisely"<sup>222</sup> are embarrassing to read. They cannot have been sincere, and Stalin could hardly have believed them any more than we can today.

We have seen that Bukharin only named Tukhachevsky **after** he could have known the latter was under arrest and had confessed. If Bukharin, for whatever motive, went to his execution without naming Ezhov as a co-conspirator — as Frinovskii later claimed — why should he not have protected other co-conspirators as well?

We can't know for certain whether Khrushchev were one of these hidden conspirators, or that Bukharin knew about him. But we do know that anti-government conspirators continued to exist in the USSR **after** 1937-38,<sup>223</sup> and that some of them were in high positions. We know too that Khrushchev remained loyal to Bukharin even long after the latter was dead.

The hypothesis that Khrushchev may have been a secret member of one branch of the many-branched "Right-Trotskyite conspiracy" is enhanced by the fact that he was certainly involved in a number of other conspiracies that we do know of.

- On March 5 1953, with Stalin not yet dead, the old Politburo members met and abolished the enlarged Presidium which had been approved at the 19<sup>th</sup> Party Congress the previous October. This was virtually a *coup d'état* within the Party, neither voted on, nor even discussed, by the Presidium or Central Committee.
- Khrushchev was the moving force behind the conspiracy to "repress" — to arrest, perhaps murder — Lavrentii Beria. We know that this arrest was not planned much in advance, because Malenkov's draft



speech for the Presidium meeting at which the arrest (or murder) occurred has been published. That draft speech calls only for Beria's removal as head of the combined MVD-MGB and as Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and Beria's appointment as Minister of the Petroleum Industry.

- Since Khrushchev was able to deny other members of the Presidium access to the documents studied by the Pospelov Report and rehabilitation commissions, he had to head another conspiracy of persons who would feed information to him but not to others.

This conspiracy had to include Pospelov, who wrote the Report. It had to include Rudenko as well, because he signed all the major rehabilitation reports. Research on how the rehabilitation and Pospelov Commission reports were prepared has yet to be done. Presumably the other members of the rehabilitation commissions, plus the researchers and archivists who located the documents for these reports and for Pospelov, were sworn to silence, or were in fact part of the conspiracy too.

We do know the names and a little about some of the people who, supposedly, reviewed the investigation materials. For example we know a certain Boris Viktorov was one of the jurists involved in the rehabilitations. Viktorov at least one article about his work, in *Pravda* on April 29, 1988, the purpose of which was to reaffirm the innocence of Marshal Tukhachevsky and the other military commanders convicted with him on June 11, 1937. In 1990 Viktorov published a book claiming to give details about many other repressions.

His account is certainly a dishonest coverup. Viktorov **asserts** their innocence, but cannot **demonstrate** it. He quotes a disputed document and ignores some damning evidence that he himself certainly would have seen and that had not been made public when he wrote but which we now have. So Viktorov at least was part of the "conspiracy" to provide Khrushchev with phony evidence that those discussed in the Speech were, in fact, innocent.

There is general agreement that after he took power Khrushchev had the archives searched and many documents removed and doubtless destroyed.<sup>224</sup> The same scholars agree that these documents probably had to

do with Khrushchev's own role in the massive repressions of the late 1930s. Now that we know Khrushchev falsified virtually every statement in his Secret Speech, and that the rehabilitation reports and Pospelov Report are heavily falsified too, it seems likely that Khrushchev had other documents removed as well.

This is a big job, and would have taken a lot of archivists, who would have to have been supervised. It seems too big a job to have been supervised by Rudenko and Pospelov alone. A large number of researchers and officials, including of course Party officials loyal to Khrushchev but as yet unknown to us, would have had to be involved. Naturally those people would have known what evidence Khrushchev was hiding or destroying.

<sup>216</sup> I have briefly summarized and discussed Zhukov's theory, citing all his relevant books and articles, in the two-part series "Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform", in *Cultural Logic* for 2005. At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2005/2005.html>

<sup>217</sup> Khrushchev, N.S., *Vremia, Liudi, Vlast'. Vospominania*. ("Times, People, Power: Memoirs"). (Moscow, 1999), Book 2, Part 3, p. 192. Anastas Mikoian, *Tak Bylo* ("That's How It Was"). Moscow: Vagrius, 1999. Chapter 49, "Khrushchev u Vlasti" (Khrushchev in power), print version p. 611.

<sup>218</sup> Grover Furr and Vladimir L. Bobrov, "Nikolai Bukharin's First Statement of Confession in the Lubyanka". *Cultural Logic* 2007. At [http://clogic.eserver.org/2007/Furr\\_Bobrov.pdf](http://clogic.eserver.org/2007/Furr_Bobrov.pdf) This article was first published in the Russian historical journal *Klio* 1 (36), 2005, 38-52. I have put the Russian version online at [http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/furnrbobrov\\_bukharin\\_klio07.pdf](http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/furnrbobrov_bukharin_klio07.pdf)

<sup>219</sup> "Reabilitatsionnoe moshenichestvo", in Grover Furr and Vladimir Bobrov, *1937. Pravosudie Stalina. Obzhalovaniiu ne podlezhit!* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2010). Glava 2, 64-84.

<sup>220</sup> *Lubyanka* 3, p. 47.

<sup>221</sup> See Ezhov's interrogation-confession of August 4 1939 in Nikita Petrov, Mark Jansen. *Stalinskii pitomets* — *Nikolai Ezhov*. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008, pp. 367-379. English translation at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/ezhov080439eng.html>

<sup>222</sup> Bukharin's letter to Stalin of December 10, 1937, was published in **two** major Russian historical journals in the same year. For the passage cited, see "Poslednoe pis.mo," *Rodina* 2, 1993, p. 52 col. 2; "'Prosti menia, Koba...!' Neizvestnoe pis'mo N. Bukharina," *Istochnik* 0, 1993, p. 23 col. 2. It is translated in Getty & Naumov, *Road to Terror*, pp. 556 ff; quoted passage on p. 557.

<sup>223</sup> For one example see Grigory Tokaev, *Comrade X*. London: Harvill Press, 1956.

<sup>224</sup> IU. N. Zhukov, "Zhupel Stalina... Chast' 3". *Komsomol'skaia Pravda* Nov. 12 2002; Nikita Petrov, *Pervyi predsedatel' KGB Ivan Serov*. Moscow: Materik, 2005, pp. 157-162; Mark IUngel and R. Binner, *Kak terror stal "Bal'shim". Sekretnyi prikaz No. 00447 i tekhnologiiia eto ispolneniia*. Moscow: AIRO-XX, 2003, p. 16. For convenience I have repeated these references in my discussion of No. 28, the "Torture Telegram".

### **Aleksandr S. Shcherbakov**

In January 1938 Khrushchev had been removed as First Secretary of the Moscow City and Oblast' Party and sent to be First Secretary in the Ukraine. Replacing him in Moscow was Alexandr Sergeevich Shcherbakov.

In his memoirs Khrushchev shows real hatred for Shcherbakov, though the reasons Khrushchev cites are vague ones. The recent biography of Shcherbakov by A.N. Ponomarev published by the Central Moscow Archive examines Khrushchev's hostility in some detail. According to this study Khrushchev's hatred for Shcherbakov can be traced to the latter's refusal to permit Khrushchev to inflate harvest figures by double-counting seed grain as harvest grain.<sup>225</sup>

More threatening to Khrushchev was Shcherbakov's role in the appeals process whereby 90% of appeals by Party members expelled by Khrushchev in 1937-38, when Khrushchev headed the Moscow Oblast' and City Committees, were reinstated, more than 12,000 for the year 1937 alone. What Ponomarev leaves unsaid is that a great many of those Party members had been executed, their appeals brought forward by their families.<sup>226</sup>

Khrushchev was, of course, a member of the *troika* that decided upon these massive repressions, though he was sometimes represented by a deputy. **All** of the other Moscow *troika* members were executed for illegal repressions. It's logical to conclude that Khrushchev himself felt extremely vulnerable. Few, if any, other First Secretaries (Khrushchev was by 1939 in the Ukraine) had been responsible for as many expulsions and executions — as much "repression" — as he had been.

Ponomarev cites other evidence of Shcherbakov's coolness towards Khrushchev as well. At the 18<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 1939 Shcherbakov gave a report in which he pointedly failed to mention his predecessor Khrushchev even once. Georgii Popov, second secretary under both Khrushchev and Shcherbakov, pointedly did praise Khrushchev in his speech — a fact that highlighted Shcherbakov's silence.<sup>227</sup>

Using testimony from Shcherbakov's family as well as evidence from Moscow archives Ponomarev takes pains to refute a number of accusations against Shcherbakov that Khrushchev made in his memoirs — for example, his allegation that Shcherbakov was a serious alcoholic.<sup>228</sup> According to his children, Shcherbakov seldom drank at all.<sup>229</sup> Ponomarev details Khrushchev's two-faced behavior towards Shcherbakov's family after the latter's death. Khrushchev was friendly to them while Stalin lived. But once in power Khrushchev deprived them of their *dacha* and canceled all memorials to Shcherbakov.

Certainly, Khrushchev was a snake; to use the language Khrushchev himself used against the dead Shcherbakov, he had a "poisonous, serpent-like character."<sup>230</sup> Anastas Mikoian, though a close political ally, denounced Khrushchev as very dishonest and disloyal towards people, and also

dishonest in his recounting of historical facts.<sup>231</sup> But why was Khrushchev so vindictive towards Shcherbakov and his family? Why did he clearly hate Shcherbakov so much?

In his memoirs Khrushchev does not mention that Shcherbakov had been instrumental in unmasking A.V. Snegov as a conspirator in 1937.

Khrushchev later became very friendly with Snegov, got him released from a labor camp, gave him an important post, consulted with Snegov and cited him in his Secret Speech. According to Khrushchev's son-in-law Alexei Adzhubei Snegov became a friend and confidant of Khrushchev's.<sup>232</sup>

Why would Khrushchev have been so partial to Snegov that he personally interceded to get Snegov released from a camp in 1954 and then promoted and favored him so much? A good guess might be that Khrushchev must have been a friend of Snegov's long ago, before Snegov was arrested. Perhaps Khrushchev managed things so that Snegov avoided execution, even though there seems to have been much evidence against him, and he was in "Category One."

Given that Khrushchev and Snegov must have been close, that Snegov was convicted of being involved in a conspiracy, and that Khrushchev went to the trouble of "rescuing" and favoring Snegov — never a high-ranking Party member, certainly never a powerful person — is it not logical to suppose that Snegov knew something about Khrushchev? Of course, Khrushchev could have had Snegov killed, no doubt. But if they were old comrades it would make sense for Khrushchev to do what he did, and honor Snegov.

Contemporary scholars have established that Khrushchev rushed to cover up evidence of his own role in massive repressions. During Stalin's time many Party leaders and NKVD men were tried and even executed for such abuses. It follows that Khrushchev would have lived in fear for many years lest his role in massive unjustified repressions become known. His fear would have been all the greater if, as we suspect, he was involved in some kind of Right-Trotskyite conspiracy himself and had simply avoided discovery.

Shcherbakov was not only in a position to know about Khrushchev's role in mass repressions better than almost anyone else.<sup>233</sup> He was also influential enough that his word would carry weight with Stalin and the Politburo. In May 1941 Shcherbakov was made one of the secretaries of the Central Committee, a position more powerful than Khrushchev's own.

Shcherbakov died in May 1945 at the age of only 44 years. He had suffered a heart attack on December 10, 1944, and since then had been convalescing at home. On May 9, 1945 his doctors permitted him to get out of bed to go to Moscow to rejoice in the hard-won victory over Nazi Germany. This brought on a final heart attack from which he died on May 10.

Why did Shcherbakov's doctors let a man with a heart condition out of bed at all, when the basic treatment is complete bed rest?<sup>214</sup> One of Shcherbakov's doctors, Etinger, confessed to his interrogator M.T. Likhachev that he had "done everything he could to shorten Shcherbakov's life" as he considered Shcherbakov to be an anti-Semite.<sup>235</sup> Under questioning by Abakumov, Minister of State Security (head of the MGB), Etinger withdrew his confession, but thereafter repeated them again. Not long thereafter he died in prison.

This was all part of what later became the "Doctors' Plot," a very murky business, elements of which were certainly fabricated. Etinger's confession may have been forced, and he may have been innocent of causing Shcherbakov's death from mistreatment. Still, even the doctors in the "Doctors' Plot" who had actually treated Andrei Zhdanov in 1948 agreed that they had mistreated him and by so doing caused his death. They had not only permitted their patient to get out of bed and walk around; they called in a cardiologist to take his EKG and, when she reported that Zhdanov had had a heart attack, told her she was wrong and refused either to believe her or even to let her enter her findings into the report on Zhdanov's health. Some "mistake"! In fact, their behavior meets all the requirements of a "conspiracy" — though whether their conspiracy was to kill Party leaders, as later charged, or simply to "cover up" for one another, is far from clear.

Moreover, there was a history of this kind of thing. At the March 1938 Moscow Trial of Bukharin, Rykov and others two medical doctors, Pletnev and Levin, had confessed to a conspiracy to bring about the deaths of the writer Maxim Gorkii, Valerian V. Kuibyshev, a Politburo member, and Vyacheslav Menzhinsky, head of the OGPU, to whom Iagoda was second-in-command and whom Iagoda wanted out of the way as soon as possible. We now have confirmation of these charges from previously unpublished pretrial interrogations of Iagoda as well as from several "face-to-face confrontations", or *ochnye stavki*, between Iagoda and doctors Levin and Pletnev, as well as between Kriuchkov and Levin.

We now also have two pretrial interrogations of Avel' Enukidze. They confirm Iagoda's confessions generally. Dr. Levin even admits to direct contact with Enukidze. The present author has done a study of Dr. Pletnev's "rehabilitation" and the so-called "research" based on it. This study concludes that Pletnev's "rehabilitation" too was falsified. Pletnev admitted guilt and never retracted that admission.<sup>236</sup>

In June 1957 one of the defendants in the "Bukharin Trial", Akbal Ikramov, was "rehabilitated." The only evidence cited that Ikramov had been wrongly accused was the fact that those who accused him, including Bukharin, had also accused others who had previously also been declared "rehabilitated."<sup>237</sup> No claim was made that either Ikramov, who had confessed at trial, nor any of those who had accused him, acted under compulsion.

By December 1957 several other defendants had been similarly "rehabilitated." Though the rest of the defendants were not "rehabilitated" until 1988, under Gorbachev, this was only a formality. At a national convention of historians held in 1962 Pospelov was asked what should be said in the schools about the accused. He replied that "neither Bukharin nor Rykov, of course, were spies or terrorists."<sup>238</sup> However, Pospelov also refused the inquiring historians in the audience any access to the documentary evidence they had asked for!

Bukharin had confessed to being a terrorist, but not personally to espionage, only through his co-conspirators, while Rykov had refused to admit he was

a spy but agreed that he had tried to overthrow the government. In effect, therefore, Pospelov made explicit in 1962 what Khrushchev had only implied earlier: the claim — false, as we can now prove — that the Moscow Trials were a frameup, the testimony false.

In his Secret Speech Khrushchev declared the "Doctors' Plot" a fabrication. But he lied about it completely. He claimed it had been faked by Beria when in fact it was Beria's investigation that had discovered it was a fake in the first place. He also blamed Dr. Timashuk for starting the "plot". But Timashuk had nothing whatsoever to do with it. All the primary evidence we have attests to these facts.

In any case, Shcherbakov's death could not have been but welcome to Khrushchev. So much of what Khrushchev claimed to have revealed about the Stalin years has proven false that it would be imprudent to simply "believe" him in this case. In the light of the evidence we now have concerning the "doctors' plots" alleged in the 1938 Moscow Trial it would be a mistake to foreclose the possibility that some, at least, of the postwar "doctors' plots" might have had some basis in reality.

Finally, there is a long-recognized mystery of why medical care was not summoned for the gravely ill Stalin until a day or more after it had been discovered that he had had a stroke. Whatever the details of this affair Khrushchev was involved in it.

<sup>225</sup> A.N. Ponomarev. *Aleksandr Shcherbakov. Stranitsy biografii*. M: Izd. Glavarkhiva Moskvyy, 2004, p. 49.

<sup>226</sup> Ponomarev specifically gives the example of "troika" NKVD decisions appealed and heard in April 1939. Of the 690 protests, the judges reviewed 130 in April 1939 and reinstated all but 14 — about 90%.

<sup>227</sup> Ponomarev, pp. 51-2. Popov was not spared Khrushchev's wrath in later years and wrote about Khrushchev in strongly negative terms in his memoir. See Taranov, *Partiinii gubernator Moskvyy Gerogii Popov*. Moscow: Izd. Glavarkhiva Moskvyy, 2004.

<sup>228</sup> Khrushchev, N.S. *Vremia. Liudy. Vlast'*. Kn. 2. Chast' III, p. 41.



<sup>229</sup> Ponomarev, pp. 204-5. The allegation seems dubious on other grounds as well. During the war Scherbakov was a candidate member of the Politburo, acted as Stalin's replacement on the Defense Committee, was Political Commissar of the Red Army, and in charge of all the organs of war propaganda. Under Stalin's eye he had to work long hours. Impairment of his abilities through drink would simply not have been tolerated.

<sup>230</sup> These are the words Khrushchev uses about Shcherbakov at *op.cit.* p. 39.

<sup>231</sup> Ponomarev, p. 207 n. 32, citing Mikoian, *Tay Bylo*. I have verified these quotations with the digital version of Mikoian's memoirs.

<sup>232</sup> Scherbakov discusses confessions against Snegov in a letter to Zhdanov of June 18, 1937. See No. 206, p. 363 in *Sovetskoe Rukovodstvo. Perepiska. 1928-1941*. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1999. Adzhubei, *Krushenie Illiuzii* (Moscow: Interbuk, 1991), pp. 162-167. After Khrushchev's ouster Snegov was in fact disciplined by the Party for spreading Trotskyist ideas. See *RKEB* 2, Section 6, No. 23, pp. 521-525.

<sup>233</sup> As First Secretary in the Ukraine Khrushchev had carried out mass repression in the Ukraine as well as in Moscow. But he remained for 12 years, until 1949. He had plenty of time to cover his tracks there, and to leave the Ukrainian party in safe hands.

<sup>234</sup> Ponomarev, p. 275 and p. 277 n. 20, states that the doctors "did not object" to Shcherbakov making the trip that killed him. That is, Ponomarev raises, and so acknowledges, the question of the doctors' decision, incompetent if not criminal. But he does not pursue it

<sup>235</sup> IA.IA. Etinger, *Eto nevozmozžno zabyt'. Vospominaniia*. Moscow: Ves' Mir, 2001, p. 87. At [http://www.sakhacov-center.u/asfcd/auth/auth\\_pages.xttml?Key=10153&page=78&print=yes](http://www.sakhacov-center.u/asfcd/auth/auth_pages.xttml?Key=10153&page=78&print=yes) Riumin's letter to Stalin of July 2 1951, from which these details ultimately come, is printed in translation in Jonathan Brent and Vladimir P. Naumov, *Stalin's Last Crime: The Plot Against the Jewish Doctors, 1948-1953*. NY: Harper Collins, 2003, pp. 115-118. The book itself is terribly unreliable. But

the documents may well be genuine, as they come from Naumov who, as a prominent archivist, could certainly have had access to them. He has never made available the Russian originals. Ponomarev examines the accusations of anti-Semitism against Shcherbakov and concludes that they are all false; see pp. 212-3; 218 ff.; 227-8.

<sup>236</sup> The materials from Iagoda's interrogations and face-to-face confrontations are in *Genrikh Iagoda. Narkom vnutrennikhdel SSSR, General'niy komissar gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti. Sbornik dokumentov*. Kazan', 1997, pp. 218-223. The first of the two transcripts of interrogations of Enukidze, that of May 30, 1937, is published here too (pp. 508-517). In in the NKVD investigator refers to an earlier interrogation of Enukidze from April 27, 1937, which has now been published in *Lubianka 2* No. 60, pp. 144-156. This last publication, by the Iakovlev fund, has a semi-official status and therefore confirms the genuine nature of the first publication. On contacts between Levin and Enukidze see *ibid.* p. 222.

<sup>237</sup> *RKEB 2*, p. 135.

<sup>238</sup> *Vsesoiuznoe soveshchanie o merakh uluchsheniia podgotovki nauchno-pedagogicheskikh kadrov po istoricheskim naukam, 18-21 dekabria 1962 g.* Moscow: Nauka, 1964, p. 298. IUri Fel'shtinskii, a well-known Russian Trotskyist scholar, claims that Pospelov said this "summarized the official results of the secret researches undertaken by the appropriate organs of the CC CPSU." See IU. G. Fel'shtinskii, *Razgovory s Bukharinym. Kommentarii k vospominaniem A.M. Larionoi (Bukharininoi 'Nezabyvaemoe' s prelozheniami*. Moscow: Izd. Gumanitarnoi literatury, 1993, p. 92. There is no treason to think this is true, since the full context of Pospelov's statement is this: "I can state that it is sufficient to study carefully the documents of the 22nd Party Congress to say that neither Bukharin nor Rykov, of course, were spies or terrorists." We know that utter fabrications were stated as fact at the 22nd Party Congress — Shelepin's misreading of Iona IAKir's letter, discussed below, is an example — so there is no reason to think Pospelov was telling the truth here.

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## **Implications: The influence on Soviet society**

Khrushchev's personal motives aside, of greater interest and importance are the implications for Soviet society and politics suggested by the Speech.

The fact that the "Secret Speech" is not just untruthful in spots but rather is composed of falsehoods from beginning to end requires a profound readjustment of our historical and political frameworks.

The fact that the research and "rehabilitation" commission that provided Khrushchev with the information he used in his speech, the Pospelov Commission, did not carry out honest research has implications for any and all other commissions of historical investigation set up under Khrushchev and answerable to him.

For example, many commissions of "rehabilitation" were set up under Khrushchev in order to "study" the cases of individuals, overwhelmingly communists, who had been convicted and either executed or imprisoned in the GULAG for long periods. In almost all the cases we know of these commissions exculpated the accused and declared them "rehabilitated" — innocent, for all practical purposes. Those so "rehabilitated" were declared to have been "victims of Stalinist repression."

However, in few cases was any evidence presented sufficient to establish the innocence of the "rehabilitated" person. On the contrary: in some cases there is good reason to believe that the "rehabilitated" persons may not have been innocent at all.

For example, at the June 1957 Central Committee Plenum at which Khrushchev and his supporters expelled the "Stalinists" Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich for having plotted to have Khrushchev removed as First Secretary, Marshal Zhukov read from a falsified letter from Komandarm (General) Iona Iakir. Iakir had been tried and executed with Marshal Tukhachevskii in June 1937 for plotting with the Germans and oppositionists within the USSR, for a *coup d'état*.

Marshal Zhukov quoted it as follows:

On June 29 1937 on the eve of his own death he [Iakir — GF] wrote a letter to Stalin in which he says: 'Dear, close comrade Stalin! I dare address you in this way because I have told everything and it seems to me that I am that honorable warrior, devoted to Party, state and people, that I was for many years. All my conscious life has been passed in selfless, honorable work in the sight of the Party and its leaders. I die with words of love to you, the Party, the country, with a fervent belief in the victory of communism.'

On this declaration we find the following resolution: "Into my archive. St. A scoundrel and prostitute. Stalin. A precisely accurate description. Molotov. For a villain, swine, and b\*\*\*, there is only one punishment — the death penalty. Kaganovich.

- Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich. 1957. Moscow, 1998, p. 39.<sup>239</sup>

This text was falsified by the omission of the part of Iakir's letter in which he confirms his guilt and repents. Here is the text from the "Shvernik Report" on the Tukhachevskii case given to Khrushchev in 1964, shortly before his ouster, but not published until 1994. The sentences omitted in Zhukov's 1957 reading are in boldface here:

"Dear, close com. Stalin. I dare address you in this way because I have told everything and and it seems to me that I am **once more** that honorable warrior, devoted to Party, state and people, that I was for many years. All my conscious life has been passed in selfless, honorable work in the sight of the Party and its leaders. -- **then I fell into a nightmare, into the irreparable horror of treason ... The investigation is finished. The indictment of treason to the state has been presented to me, I have admitted my guilt, I have repented completely. I have unlimited faith in the justice and appropriateness of the decision of the court and the government. Now each of my words is honest,** I die with words of love to you, the Party, the country, with a fervent belief in the victory of communism.'

On Iakir's declaration we find the following resolution: "Into my archive. St." "A scoundrel and prostitute. I. St[alin]". "A precisely accurate description. K. Voroshilov." "Molotov". "For a villain, swine,

and bastard there is only one punishment — the death penalty.  
Kaganovich."<sup>240</sup>

Aside from relatively inconsequential errors in Zhukov's account — Iakir's letter was written on June 9 1937, not June 29 — there are important falsifications. In this letter Iakir repeatedly **confirmed** his guilt. Voroshilov, as well as Stalin, Molotov, and Kaganovich wrote on the letter, a detail Zhukov omitted. In 1957 Voroshilov had backed away from the plot to remove Khrushchev. The latter, though criticizing the old Marshal severely, spared him the punishment meted out to the others. This same falsified letter was read out at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Party Congress in November 1961 by Alexander Shelepin.<sup>241</sup>

In 1957 none of the accused — Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich — complained about Zhukov's falsification of Iakir's letter. Therefore we must assume that they did not have access to it, even though they were Presidium members themselves. It is possible that Zhukov himself may not have known that he was reading a falsified document. But Khrushchev's "researchers" had to have known — they provided the text! They would never have dared do this behind Khrushchev's back. Therefore Khrushchev knew too.<sup>242</sup>

(We should note too that even in the version of Iakir's letter published in 1997 there is an ellipsis — the three dots, in Russian a *troetochie* — after the word "treason." Something is still omitted from Iakir's letter, of which therefore the genuine and complete text is still being withheld from us by the Russian government.)

Therefore, none of the "rehabilitation" decisions, in which a great many repressed communists were declared innocent, can be taken at face value. But therefore the same is true of other documents created for Khrushchev's use.

One such set of documents is known as the "Colonel Pavlov" reports. A recent work by Oleg Khlevniuk calls them "the main source of our knowledge about the scale of repression."<sup>243</sup> These have provided the main sources for estimating the number of people "repressed" during the

1930s.<sup>244</sup> But since they were prepared for Khrushchev we cannot assume they were honestly done. Maybe it was in Khrushchev's interest to exaggerate — or, for that matter, minimize — the number of those executed? Or maybe Pavlov, like Pospelov, thought he should do one or the other? Given the fraudulent nature of other studies done for Khrushchev we can no longer simply assume that the "Colonel Pavlov" reports are accurate.

In terms of scholarship, almost all research on the Stalin years published during the past half-century relies heavily on Khrushchev-era Soviet publications.<sup>245</sup> It also includes many or most of the non-émigré sources cited in the numerous works by Robert Conquest such as *The Great Terror*, Stephen Cohen's famous biography of Bukharin<sup>246</sup>, and many other works. Cohen drew his evidence for his final chapter on the 1930s from Khrushchev-era sources and the Speech itself, with the result that almost every statement of fact in this chapter has turned out to be false. No such works can be accepted unless and until the assertions made in them can be verified independently.

This goes for the supposedly "primary-source" documents as well. Khrushchev and others cited dishonestly from many such sources. Unless and until scholars can see the originals, and their whole texts, it is invalid to assume that Khrushchev, or a Khrushchev-era book, article, or speaker, quoted them honestly.<sup>247</sup>

<sup>239</sup> *Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich. 1957. Moscow, 1998, p. 39.*

<sup>240</sup> *RKEB 2 (2003), 688; Voенно-Istoricheskii Arkhiv, Vypush 1. Moscow, 1997, p. 194. Also in Voенnye Arkhivy Rossi No 1, 1993, p. 50. This was the first publication of the "Shvernik Report." But this journal, whose sole issue is surrounded in mystery, is very hard to find. There was evidently never another issue, and this one, while dated 1993, may not have actually been published until the following year.*

<sup>241</sup> At the 22nd Party Congress in 1961, during which Khrushchev and his supporters leveled an even more virulent attack on Stalin than in 1956, Alexander Shelepin repeated this same distortion, reading aloud Iakir's letter while omitting the parts in which Iakir confirmed his guilt (Sokolov,

B.V. Mikhail Tukhachevskii. *Zhizn' I Smert' 'Krasnogo Marshala'*. Smolensk, 1999; also at <http://militera.lib.ru/bio/sokolov'09.html> ; Leskov, Valentin. *Stalin i Zagovor Tukhachevskogo*. Moscow: Veche, 2003, n. 171 p. 461. The actual transcript of Shelepin's Speech to the 22nd Party Congress of the CPSU is printed in Pravda, October 27, 1961. Shelepin's dishonest misquotation of Iakir's letter is at p. 10, col 3-4. It is also in the official transcript: *XXII s"ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza. 17-31 oktiabria 1961 goda. Stenograficheskii otchiot*. Moscow: Gos.. Izd. Politicheskoi Literatury, 1962, 399-409.

<sup>242</sup> Matthew Lenoe too concludes that Khrushchev kept important documents secret from Molotov and others. See *The Kirov Murder and Soviet History* (New Haven: Yale U.P. 2010) 592. I am preparing a detailed review of this extremely flawed book.

<sup>243</sup> *The History of the Gulag*. Yale U.P. 2004, p. 287.

<sup>244</sup> They are a main source in the now-famous article by Getty, Rittersporn and Zemskov, "Victims of the Soviet Penal System in the Prewar Years: A First Approach on the Basis of Archival Evidence," *AHR* October 1993, 1017-1049.

<sup>245</sup> Careful students have long questioned the historical worth of some of these works, like that of Roi Medvedev's *Let History Judge* (Russian title: *K sudu istorii*) or Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *The GULAG Archipelago*.

<sup>246</sup> Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution (1973).

<sup>247</sup> An article by myself and Vladimir Bobrov proves, by citing documents from the formerly secret Soviet archives, that every statement made by Cohen in the final chapter of his biography of Bukharin is false. All were based on Khrushchev-era sources, with a few émigré rumors thrown in. See "V krivoi zerkale «antistalinskoi paradigvy»" in *1937. Pravosudie Stalin. Obzhalovaniiu ne podlezhit'*. (Moscow: Eksmo 2010) 195-333. An English version of this article is scheduled to appear in the 2010 issue of *Cultural Logic*, which is scheduled to appear in 2011.

## Political Implications

The "Secret Speech" threw the world communist movement into crisis. But the **claim** was that all the damage done was necessary, prophylactic. An evil part of the past, largely unknown to the communists of the world and even of the USSR, had to be exposed, a potentially fatal cancer in the body of world communism had to be mercilessly excised, so that the movement could correct itself and once again move towards its ultimate goal.

In the years that followed it became more and more apparent that the USSR was not moving towards a classless society, but rather in the opposite direction. Even so, those who stuck with the Soviet-led movement did so because they still held to the original ideal. Millions of people around the world hoped and believed that a movement that could afford to take such huge losses, to admit such crimes had been committed in its name, to ruthlessly expose them — as Khrushchev claimed to have done — might have the integrity and fortitude to correct itself and move, with whatever political zigs and zags necessary, towards a communist future. This picture is no longer tenable.

Khrushchev was **not** trying to "right the ship of communism." A total trashing of the truth like the "Secret Speech" is incompatible with Marxism, or with idealistic motives of any kind. Nothing positive, democratic, or liberating can be built on a foundation of falsehood. Instead of reviving a communist movement, and Bolshevik Party, that had strayed from its true course through grievous errors, Khrushchev was killing it off.

Khrushchev himself is "revealed" not as an honest communist but instead as a political leader seeking personal advantage while hiding behind an official persona of idealism and probity, a type familiar in capitalist countries. Taking into account his murder of Beria and the men executed as "Beria's gang" in 1953, he seems worse still — a political thug. Khrushchev was guilty *in reality* of the kinds of crimes he *deliberately and falsely* accused Stalin of in the "Secret Speech."

The fraudulent nature of Khrushchev's Speech forces us to revise our view of those "Stalinists" who tried and failed to have Khrushchev removed from



leadership in 1957 and who were dismissed and, at length, expelled from the Party. With all their sins and failings the interviews of the aged Molotov and Kaganovich (as retold by Felix Chuev) reveal men devoted to Lenin, Stalin, and the ideal of communism to the end who often commented incisively on the capitalist developments within the late USSR. Molotov predicted the overthrow of socialism by capitalist forces within the Party even as, in his 80s and 90s, he sought reinstatement in it. Yet their acceptance of the main outlines of Khrushchev's attack on Stalin suggests that they had their own doubts about some of the policies followed during Stalin's time. To one degree or another they shared Khrushchev's political views. Furthermore, they did not know the details of the repressions of the 1930s and thereafter, and were utterly unprepared to refute anything Khrushchev and his supporters said about them — until it was far too late.

Perhaps the only positive step the post-Stalin Soviet leadership made was in criticizing, and partially dismantling, the disgusting "cult of personality" they themselves had built up around the figure of Stalin. Even here Khrushchev himself deserves no credit. He had opposed Malenkov's much earlier attempts — within days of Stalin's death — to criticize the "cult." And Malenkov had the honesty to blame, not Stalin, but those around him, himself included, for being too weak to stop the "cult", which Stalin finally grew accustomed to but never endorsed and viewed with distaste.

Khrushchev himself lost no time in attempting to build up around himself an even bigger "cult" than that around Stalin. He was criticized for doing so even by his supporters in 1956 and 1957, and his self-aggrandizement and arrogance was the main accusation made by the Presidium leadership that unseated him in October 1964.<sup>248</sup>

The fraudulent nature of Khrushchev's Speech demands that we rethink the Stalin years and Stalin himself. Stripped both of the idol-worshipping "cult" around him and of Khrushchev's calumnies the figure of Stalin, and the shape of the policies he tried to put into practice, reassert themselves as the central issue, the greatest question mark in Soviet and Comintern history. Stalin's successes and failures must be not just restudied; they have yet to be discovered and acknowledged.

<sup>248</sup> The transcript of the October 1964 Plenum at which Khrushchev was removed has been published in *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* 1, 1993, pp. 3-19.

## **Trotsky**

It also demands a reconsideration of Trotsky and of Trotskyism. In its essentials Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin in the "Secret Speech" echoed Trotsky's earlier demonization of Stalin. But in 1956 Trotskyism was a marginal force, its murdered leader most often dismissed as a megalomaniacal failure.

Khrushchev's speech breached new life into Trotsky's all-but-dead caricature of Stalin. Communists and anti-communists alike began to view Trotsky as a "prophet". Had he not said things very similar to what Khrushchev had just "revealed" to be true? They dusted off Trotsky's little-read works. Trotsky's reputation, and that of his followers, soared. That the "Secret Speech" constituted an unacknowledged "rehabilitation" of Trotsky was recognized by Trotsky's widow Sedova who, within a day of the Speech, applied to the Presidium of the 20th Party Congress for full rehabilitation for both her late husband and her son.<sup>249</sup> But now, no longer "confirmed" by Khrushchev's testimony, Trotsky's highly partisan portrait of Stalin and Soviet society and politics during his time needs to be revisited with a critical eye.

<sup>249</sup> *Doklad Khrushcheva*, p. 610. I have put a facsimile of Sedova's letter on the web at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/sedovaltr022856.jpg>

## **Unresolved weaknesses in the Soviet system of socialism**

It is easy and of course justified to criticize Khrushchev himself. He chose to undermine the CPSU and the international communist movement by deliberately lying about Stalin and Soviet history. Whatever we conclude about the historical conditions that produced Khrushchev and his era, nothing can absolve him of the responsibility for his own acts.

But Khrushchev could not have been promoted to the Politburo/Presidium if his concept of socialism had been worlds different from that shared by many other Party leaders. Khrushchev's rise is no doubt partly explained by his extraordinary energy and initiative, qualities that the rest of the Presidium members showed little of. But he could not have triumphed if he had been seen by Stalin and the Party elite as a rightist, or bad, communist. The concept of what was meant in the Bolshevik Party by "socialism" had evolved since the Revolution.

Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich, the major figures associated with Stalin for decades, did acquiesce, however grudgingly, to Khrushchev's "Secret Speech". It is clear that they themselves did not have access to the documents prepared for Khrushchev by his allies. Their remarks at the time and afterwards show that they did not suspect that what Khrushchev said was false. Moreover, they accepted the political implications of the Speech.

Had Malenkov managed somehow to fend off Khrushchev and kept the leadership of the CPSU, the "Secret Speech" would never have been delivered, and the history of the Communist movement, and therefore much of the history of the world, might have developed very differently. In like manner many people have reasoned that the Soviet Union might well still exist if Iurii Andropov had lived a normal lifespan as its leader and Mikhail Gorbachev never taken office. But the "role of the individual in history" does not grant unlimited choice even to the strongest leaders. Andropov's USSR was just as much in crisis as was Gorbachev's — or as was the USSR in 1953.

Khrushchev was able to take power, deliver the bombshell of the "Secret Speech" with all its fabrications, and then "make it stick": to win over the Soviet elite, along with most of the Soviet population and — though not after huge losses — most of the communists around the world. These facts themselves demand explanation. And the roots of that outcome have to be sought in the previous period of Soviet history, the period of Stalin's leadership, and of Lenin's before him, and in the very conditions that led to the Russian Revolution and Bolshevik victory.

There are historical and ideological roots to Khrushchev's Speech, and these must also be sought in Soviet history. Stalin tried hard to apply Lenin's

analysis to the conditions he found in Russia and the world communist movement. Lenin, in turn, had tried to apply the insights of Marx and Engels. Lenin had tried to find answers to the critical problems of building socialism in Russia in the works of the founders of modern communism.

Stalin, never claiming any innovations for himself, had tried to follow Lenin's guidelines as closely as he could. Meanwhile Trotsky and Bukharin, as well as other oppositionists, found support for their proposed policies in Lenin's works too. And Khrushchev, like his epigones up to and including Gorbachev, cited Lenin's words to justify, and give a Leninist or "left" cover to, every policy he chose.

Therefore, something in Lenin's works, and in those of Lenin's great teachers Marx and Engels, facilitated the errors that his honest successor Stalin honestly made, and that his dishonest successor Khrushchev was able to use to cover up his own betrayal.

But that is a subject for further research and a different book.

*January 2005-February 2007. Revised December 2010.*

# Appendix — Quotations from Primary and Other Sources

## 1. Cult.

Khrushchev:

"Comrades! In the report of the Central Committee of the party at the 20th Congress, in a number of speeches by delegates to the Congress, as also formerly during the plenary CC/CPSU [Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) sessions, quite a lot has been said about the cult of the individual and about its harmful consequences. After Stalin's death the Central Committee of the party began to implement a policy of explaining concisely and consistently that it is impermissible and foreign to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism to elevate one person, to transform him into a superman possessing supernatural characteristics, akin to those of a god. Such a man supposedly knows everything, sees everything, thinks for everyone, can do anything, is infallible in his behavior. Such a belief about a man, and specifically about Stalin, was cultivated among us for many years.

The objective of the present report is not a thorough evaluation of Stalin's life and activity. ...

At present, we are concerned with a question which has immense importance for the party now and for the future — with how the cult of the person of Stalin has been gradually growing, the cult which became at a certain specific stage the source of a whole series of exceedingly serious and grave perversions of party principles, of party democracy, of revolutionary legality."

### 1. Stalin's Opposition to the Cult

June 1926:

"I must say in all conscience, comrades, that I do not deserve a good half of the flattering things that have been said here about me. I am, it appears, a hero of the October Revolution, the leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the leader of the Communist International, a legendary warrior-knight and all the rest of it. This is absurd, comrades, and quite unnecessary exaggeration. It is the sort of thing that is usually said at the graveside of a departed revolutionary. But I have no intention of dying yet...

"I really was, and still am, one of the pupils of the advanced workers of the Tbilisi railway workshops." (J. V. Stalin: *Works*, Volume 8; Moscow; 1954; p. 182).

October 1927:

"And what is Stalin? Stalin is only a minor figure." (J. V. Stalin: *Works*, Volume 10; Moscow; 1954; p. 177).

December 1929:

"Your congratulations and greetings I place to the credit of the great Party of the working class which bore me and reared me in its own image and likeness. And just because I place them to the credit of our glorious Leninist Party, I make bold to tender you my Bolshevik thanks." (J. V. Stalin: *Works*, Volume 12; Moscow; 1955; p. 146).

April 1930:

"There are some who think that the article 'Dizzy with Success' was the result of Stalin's personal initiative. That, of course, is nonsense. It is not in order that personal initiative in a matter like this be taken by anyone, whoever he might be, that we have a Central Committee." (J. V. Stalin: *Works*, *ibid.*; p. 218).

August 1930:

"You speak of your 'devotion' to me. Perhaps this is a phrase that came out accidentally. Perhaps... But if it is not a chance phrase, I would

advise you to discard the 'principle' of devotion to persons. It is not the Bolshevik way. Be devoted to the working class, its Party, its state. That is a fine and useful thing. But do not confuse it with devotion to persons, this vain and useless bauble of weak-minded intellectuals." ("Letter to Comrade Shatunovsky." *Works*, Volume 13; Moscow; 1955; p. 20).

December 1931:

"As for myself, I am just a pupil of Lenin's, and the aim of my life is to be a worthy pupil of his...

"Marxism does not deny at all the role played by outstanding individuals or that history is made by people. But... great people are worth anything at all only to the extent that they are able correctly to understand these conditions, to understand how to change them. If they fail to understand these conditions and want to alter them according to the promptings of their imagination, they will find themselves in the situation of Don Quixote...

"Individual persons cannot decide. Decisions of individuals are always, or nearly always, one-sided decisions... In every collective body, there are people whose opinion must be reckoned with... From the experience of three revolutions we know that out of every 100 decisions taken by individual persons without being tested and corrected collectively, approximately 90 are one-sided...

"Never under any circumstances would our workers now tolerate power in the hands of one person. With us personages of the greatest authority are reduced to nonentities, become mere ciphers, as soon as the masses of the workers lose confidence in them." (J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 107-08, 109, 113).

February 1933:

"I have received your letter ceding me your second Order as a reward for my work.

"I thank you very much for your warm words and comradely present. I know what you are depriving yourself of in my favour and appreciate your sentiments.

"Nevertheless, I cannot accept your second Order. I cannot and must not accept it, not only because it can only belong to you, as you alone have earned it, but also because I have been amply rewarded as it is by the attention and respect of comrades and, consequently, have no right to rob you.

"Orders were instituted not for those who are well known as it is, but mainly for heroic people who are little known and who need to be made known to all.

"Besides, I must tell you that I already have two Orders.

That is more than one needs, I assure you." (J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 241).

May 1933:

"Robins: I consider it a great honour to have an opportunity of paying you a visit.

"Stalin: There is nothing particular in that. You are exaggerating.

"Robins: What is most interesting to me is that throughout Russia I have found the names Lenin-Stalin, Lenin-Stalin, Lenin-Stalin, linked together.

"Stalin: That, too, is an exaggeration. How can I be compared to Lenin?" (J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 267)

February 1938:

"I am absolutely against the publication of 'Stories of the Childhood of Stalin'.

"The book abounds with a mass of inexactitudes of fact, of alterations, of exaggerations and of unmerited praise...



"But... the important thing resides in the fact that the book has a tendency to engrave on the minds of Soviet children (and people in general) the personality cult of leaders, of infallible heroes. This is dangerous and detrimental. The theory of 'heroes' and the 'crowd' is not a Bolshevik, but a Social-Revolutionary theory...

"I suggest we burn this book." (J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 327).

February 1946:

"The ear is pained too by the sound of the dithyrambs in Stalin's honor — it is simply embarrassing to read." ("Answer to Comrade Razin", Works Vol. 16).

### **Dimitrov's diary**

Dimitrov: [Proposes toast with fulsome praise of Stalin, ending with the words] There can be no speaking of Lenin without linking him with Stalin!

Stalin: I respect Comrade Dimitrov very much. We are friends and will remain friends. But I must disagree with him. He has even expressed himself here in an un-Marxist fashion. What the victory of the cause requires is the correct conditions, and then leaders will always be found. (p. 66; November 7, 1937)

Dimitrov: ...This is a collective work, with Com[rade] Man[uilsky] as chief editor.

Stalin (regarding the passage in the appeal praising Stalin, especially:

"Long live our Stalin!

Stalin means peace!

Stalin means Communism!

Stalin is our victory!"

— Manuilsky is a toady!

He was a Trotskyite! We criticized him for keeping quiet and not speaking out when the purges of Trotskyite bandits were going on, and now he has started toadying!

There is something suspicious here.

— That article of his is *Pravda* — "Stalin and the World Communist Movement" — is harmful and provocative.

J. V. [Stalin] would not allow "under the banner of Marx-Engels-Lenin-*Stalin*" to remain in the appeal, but insisted on simply "Marx-Engels-Lenin." (pp. 104-105, April 26 1939)

Stalin refused to permit an exhibition about him in honor of his 55<sup>th</sup> birthday, December 1934:

"... on a letter from the All-Union Society of Old Bolsheviks, in which it was proposed to conduct a campaign of propaganda dedicated to his 55<sup>th</sup> birthday, he wrote the following resolution: 'I am opposed, since such undertakings lead to the strengthening of a 'cult of personality', which is harmful and incompatible with the spirit of our party.'"

- Rogovin, 1937, Chapter 41, citing *Voprosy Istorii KPSS*. No. 3, 1990, p. 104.

Stalin criticized playwright Afinogenov for using the term "Vozhd" (leader) about him:

"Having read, in 1933, the MS of the play *The Lie* by A.N. Afinogenov Stalin wrote an extensive letter to the playwright, in the notes to which he remarked: 'P.S. Your going on about "the leader" (*vozhd*) is not helpful. This is bad and, if you will permit me, indecent. It's not a question of "a leader", but of the collective leader — the C.C. of the Party. I. St[alin]' What did Stalin have in mind. One of the heroes of the play, the assistant Commissar Riadovoy, while arguing with the former oppositionist Nakatov affirmed with feeling: 'I speak

of our Central Committee. I speak of the leader who leads us, who has torn away the masks from many highly-educated leaders who had unlimited possibilities and yet showed themselves to be bankrupt I speak of the person whose strength is composed of the granite-like trust of hundreds of millions. His name on the tongues of men the world over sounds like a symbol of the fortress of the Bolshevik cause. And this leader is unconquerable... " Stalin edited and corrected this tirade with his own hand, making this key correction: 'I speak of our Central Committee which leads us, having torn away the mask from many highly-educated leaders who had unlimited possibilities and yet showed themselves to be bankrupt I speak of the Central Committee of the party of communists of the land of the Soviets, the strength of which is composed of the granite-like trust of hundreds of millions. Its banner on the tongues of men the world over sounds like a symbol of the fortress of the Bolshevik cause. And this collective leader is unconquerable...."

On January 27 1937 having seen a screening of the film "The Great Citizen" (the subject of this film by director F.M. Ermiler resembles the story of the murder of S.M. Kirov), Stalin wrote a letter to B.Z. Shwniatskii, director of Soviet cinematography, in which he gave the following well-known specific directive: "You must exclude any mention of Stalin. Instead of Stalin should be substituted the CC of the party." (*Surovaia drama naroda. Uchenye i publitsisty o prirode stalinizma*. Sost. IU. P. Senokosov. Moscow: Politizdat, 1989.).

"In 1936 was published a biographical sketch of the life of Sergo Ordzhonikidze compiled by M.D. Orakhelashvili. Stalin read this book and left many notations on its pages. In the sketch, for example, the July crisis of 1917 is retold like this: 'In this difficult period for the proletarian, when many faltered in the face of the approaching danger, comrade Stalin stood firmly at his post of the leadership of the CC and the Petrograd party organization. [Lenin was in hiding — L.M.]. Com. Ordzhonikidze was constantly with him, leading an energetic, wholehearted struggle for the Leninist slogans of the party.' (*ibid*, p. 33). These words were underlined by Stalin, and at the edge of the pages he wrote with a red pencil: 'And what about the CC? and the

party?' In another place the VI Congress of the RSDLP (summer of 1917) was discussed, about how Lenin, in hiding in Razliv, 'gave directives on the questions that stood on the Congress' agenda. In order to receive Lenin's directives com. Ordzhonikidze, on Stalin's orders, twice went to Lenin's hut.' Stalin again posed his question: 'And the CC — where is it?'"

- L. Maksimenkov, in *Al'manakh 'Vostok'* 12 (24), December 2004. Also quoted in Iulia Ivanova, *The Dreaming Doors*.

Stalin refused Hero of the Soviet Union (May 1945):

On the day after the parade, by order of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR J.V. Stalin was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Malenkov took the initiative in this affair, but Stalin refused this high honor and even spoke sharply with Kalinin, who had signed the order: "I", he said, "took no part in military actions, did no heroic deeds; I am only a leader."

V. F. Alliluev, 'Chronicle of a family': Alliluev — Stalin. Moscow, 1995, p. 195.

Other accounts confirm this:

...A conversation followed concerning the awarding to Stalin of the Hero of the Soviet Union after the war. Stalin said that he did not fit the criteria of Hero of the Soviet Union, which was awarded only for the demonstration of personal courage.

'I did not demonstrate such courage' — said Stalin. And he did not accept the Star. They only drew him with this star in portraits. When he died, the leader of the awards section gave him the Gold Star of the Hero of the Soviet Union. They pinned it on a pillow and carried it at the funeral."

Stalin wore only on e little star: Hero of Socialist Labor — added Molotov.

- Felix Chuev, p. 140; *Conversations with Molotov. From the Diary of F. Chuev*. Moscow, 1994, p. 254.

## **Khrushchev quote "hero vs masses" — exactly what Stalin had written**

Khrushchev:

"While ascribing great importance to the role of the leaders and organizers of the masses, Lenin at the same time mercilessly stigmatized every manifestation of the cult of the individual, inexorably combated the foreign-to-Marxism views about a "hero" and a "crowd," and countered all efforts to oppose a "hero" to the masses and to the people." (p. 2)

See Stalin's quotes above.

## **2. Malenkov's Attempt To Call a CC Plenum Concerning the "Cult" April 1953**

Zhukov, *Tainy Kremliia*. 617-621, in April 1953 Malenkov had wanted to call an extraordinary session of the Central Committee to discuss the cult of personality of Stalin. On pp. 618-9 Zhukov quotes from Malenkov's draft report and draft resolution

"Guided by these principled considerations the Presidium of the CC CPSU submits to the Plenum of the CC CPSU the following draft resolution for its consideration:

"The Central Committee of the CPSU considers that in our printed and oral propaganda there exists an abnormal situation that expresses itself in that our propagandists stray into an un-Marxist understanding of the role of the individual in history, and into the propagating of a cult of the individual.

[It is well known that comrade Stalin firmly condemned such a cult of the individual, and called it a Socialist Revolutionary error.] In this connection the Central Committee of the CPSU considers it obligatory

to condemn and to definitively put an end to the un-Marxist, essentially Socialist-Revolutionary tendencies in our propaganda, which flow from the line of the cult of the individual and of diminishing the significance and role of the political line worked out by the party, diminishing the significance and role of a consolidated, monolithic, united, collective leadership of the party and government.'

Many of those present know that com. Stalin often spoke out in this spirit and firmly condemned the un-Marxist, Socialist-Revolutionary understanding of the role of the individual in history."

- Zhukov, Taini Kremliia, pp. 618-9; sentence in brackets is quoted as part of this same draft resolution in M.P. Odesskii, D.M Fel'dman, "Cult of the Individual (Materials for a Hyper-reference)", in *Osvoboditel'noe Dvizheniie v Rossii*, 2003 (Saratov University), at <http://www.sgp.ru/files/nodes/9873/09.pdf>

According to these two scholars these remarks a.re from Pospelov's notes on the March 10 1953 Presidium discussion, less than a week after Stalin's death (March 5).

**Malenkov was not permitted to call a CC Plenum**, though it is not known who voted for and against it. Zhukov believes Khrushchev was most likely opposed.

### **3. July 1953 Plenum- Beria Attacked for Allegedly Opposing "Cult"**

At the July 1953 Central Committee Plenum attacking Beria Mikoian, later a major ally of Khrushchev's, strongly blamed Beria for beginning the attack on Stalin's 'cult':

Another question is his [Beria's] two-facedness. In the first days [after Stalin's death — GF] he spoke up strongly about the cult of personality. We understood that there were excesses in this matter even during comrade Stalin's lifetime. Comrade Stalin sharply criticized us. The fact that they have created a cult around me, said Comrade Stalin, the SRs have done that. We could not correct this matter at that time,

and so it went on. We must approach the question of the individual in a Marxist fashion. But Beria spoke up strongly. It turned out that he wanted to destroy the cult of Comrade Stalin and create his own cult.

- *Lavrentii Beria. 1953, p. 168*

Andreev (p. 207) also spoke up to blame Beria for raising the issue of the "cult", claiming it was simply not a problem. Kaganovich did likewise (*ibid.* p. 283).

Clearly they all knew that it had really be en Malenkov!

Maksimenkov too discusses Malenkov's March 1953 attack on "cults of personality" as "self-criticism," since Malenkov himself had engaged in it. In the dishonest criticisms leveled at Beria during the July 1953 Central Committee Plenum devoted to attacking him, Andreev blamed Beria for raising the issue of the "cult"!

#### **4. Who fostered the "Cult"?**

Roi Medvedev points out that

"The first issue of 'Pravda' for 1934 carried a huge two-page article by Radek, heaping orgiastic praise on Stalin. The former Trotskyite, who had led the opposition to Stalin for many years, now called him 'Lenin's best pupil, the model of the Leninist Party, bone of its bone, blood of its blood'... He 'is as far-sighted as Lenin', and so on and on. This seems to have been the first large article in the press specifically devoted to the adulation of Stalin, and it was quickly reissued as a pamphlet in 225,000 copies, an enormous figure for the time."

- R. A. Medvedev: *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism* London; 1972; p. 148. Quoted from Bland, pp. 8- 9.) Radek's article was published as a 32-page pamphlet: *Zodchii sotsialistic heskogo obshchestva*. (Architect of socialist society) Moscow: Partiinoe izdatel'stvo, 1934).

BUKHARIN: I recall one such incident. Following the instructions of Kliment Efremovich [Voroshilov] I wrote an article on the exhibition about the Red Army. There Voroshilov, Stalin and others were discussed. When Stalin said, "What are you writing there?" Someone retorted: "How could he not write something of the kind?" I explained all these things very simply. I knew that there's no reason to create a cult of Stalin, but as far as I am concerned, it is expedient.

SOSNOVSKY: And in my case you thought it essential.

BUKHARIN: For the very simple reason that you are a former Oppositionist. I see nothing wrong in this.

— *Voprosy Istorii* No. 3, 2002, p. 28

## 5. Khrushchev and Mikoian

Khrushchev himself was one of those most guilty of building up the "cult." (Bland, 9-11)

"It was Khrushchev who introduced the term 'vozhd' ('leader', corresponding to the German word 'Führer'). At the Moscow Party Conference in January 1932, Khrushchev finished his speech by saying:

"The Moscow Bolsheviks, rallied around the Leninist Central Committee as never before, and around the *vozhd'* of our Party, Comrade Stalin, are cheerfully and confidently marching toward new victories in the battles for socialism, for world proletarian revolution."

(Rabochoia Moskva, 26 January 1932, cited in: L Pistrak: *The Grand Tactician: Khrushchev's Rise to Power*, London; 1961; p. 159).

At the 17th Party Conference in January 1934 it was Khrushchev, and Khrushchev alone, who called Stalin "... 'vozhd' of genius!" ("nashego geneal'nogo vozhdia tovarishcha Stalina") (XVII S'ezd Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B.); p. 145, cited in: L. Pistrak: *ibid.*; p. 160). Transcript of Khrushchev's speech at [http://www.hrono.ru/vkpb\\_17/6\\_4.html](http://www.hrono.ru/vkpb_17/6_4.html)



In August 1936 during the treason trial of Lev Kamenev and Grigorii Zinoviev Khrushchev, in his capacity as Moscow Party Secretary, said:

"Miserable pygmies! They lifted their hands against the greatest of all men, ... our wise 'vozhd', Comrade Stalin!... Thou, Comrade Stalin, hast raised the great banner of Marxism-Leninism high over the entire world and carried it forward. We assure thee, Comrade Stalin, that the Moscow Bolshevik organisation — the faithful supporter of the Stalinist Central Committee — will increase Stalinist vigilance still more, will extirpate the Trotskyite-Zinovievite remnants, and close the ranks of the Party and non-Party Bolsheviks even more around the Stalinist Central Committee and the great Stalin."

(Pravda, 23 August 1936, cited in: L Pistrak: *ibid.*; p. 162 The entire speech is reprinted in N. G. Tomilina, ed. *Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev. Dva Tsveta Vrenemi. Dokumenty iz lichnogo fonda N.S. Khrushchev. Tom 1* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi Fond «Demokratii», 2009), pp. 440- 456.)

At the Eighth All-Union Congress of Soviets in November 1936 it was again Khrushchev who proposed that the new Soviet Constitution, which was before the Congress for approval, should be called the 'Stalinist Constitution' because

"...it was written from beginning to end by Comrade Stalin himself."

(Pravda, 30 November 1936, cited in: L Pistrak: *ibid.*; p. 161).

It has to be noted that Vyacheslav Molotov, then Prime Minister, and Andrey Zhdanov, then Party Secretary in Leningrad, did not mention any special role by Stalin in the drafting of the Constitution.

In the same speech Khrushchev coined the term 'Stalinism':

"Our Constitution is the Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism that has conquered one sixth of the globe." (Ibid.).

Khrushchev's speech in Moscow to an audience of 200,000 at the time of the treason trial of Georgii Piatakov (23) and Karl Radek in January 1937 was in a similar vein:

"By lifting their hands against comrade Stalin they lifted them against all the best that humanity possesses. For *Stalin* is hope; he is expectation; he is the beacon that guides all progressive mankind. Stalin is our banner! Stalin is our will! Stalin is our victory!"

(Pravda, 31 January 1937), cited in: L. Pistrak: *ibid.*; p. 162. Entire speech at Tomilina ed., *Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev T. 1* pp. 465-8; this exact passage at top of p. 467).

Stalin was described by Khrushchev in March 1939 as

"... our great genius, our beloved Stalin,"

(*Visti VTsVK*, 3 March 1939, cited in: L. Pistrak: *ibid.*; p. 164).

at the 18th Congress of the Party in March 1939 as

"...the greatest genius of humanity, teacher and 'vozhd', who leads us towards Communism, our very own Stalin"

(*XVIII S'ezd Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (b.)*, p. 174, cited in: L. Pistrak: *ibid.*, p. 164).

and in May 1945 as

"...great Marshal of the Victory."

(*Pravda Ukrainy*, 13 May 1945, cited in: L. Pistrak: *ibid.*; p. 164).

### **Mikoian**

On the occasion of the celebration of Stalin's fiftieth birthday in December 1929, Anastas Mikoian accompanied his congratulations with the demand

"...that we, meeting the rightful demand of the masses, begin finally to work on his biography and make it available to the Party and to all working people in our country." (*Izvestiia*, 21 December 1929, cited in: L. Pistrak: *ibid.*; p. 164).

Ten years later, on the occasion of Stalin's sixtieth birthday in December 1939, Mikoian was still urging the creation of a "...scientific biography" of Stalin. (*Pravda*, 21 December 1939, cited in: L. Pistrak: *ibid.*; p. 158)."

### **Stalin's suspicions of cult** — Tuominen, Feuchtwanger (Bland, 12)

That Stalin himself was not unaware of the fact that concealed revisionists were the main force behind the 'cult of personality' was reported by the Finnish revisionist Tuominen in 1935, who describes how, when he was informed that busts of him had been given prominent places in Moscow's leading art gallery, the Tretyakov, Stalin exclaimed:

"That's downright sabotage!" (A. Tuominen : *op. cit.*; p. 164).

Bland, 12-13 (fm Tuominen) — Bill Bland, "The Cult of the Individual," <http://www.mltranslations.org/Britain/StalinBB.htm> Bland has collected much more evidence of Stalin's opposition to the "cult."

The German writer Leon Feuchtwanger (24) in 1936 confirms that Stalin suspected that the 'cult of personality' was being fostered by 'wreckers' with the aim of discrediting him:

"It is manifestly irksome to Stalin to be worshipped as he is, and from time to time he makes fun of it... Of all the men I know who have power, Stalin is the most unpretentious. I spoke frankly to him about the vulgar and excessive cult made of him, and he replied with equal candour... He thinks it is possible even that 'wreckers' may be behind it in an attempt to discredit him."

(L. Feuchtwanger: *Moscow* 1937; London, 1937; p. 93, 94-95).

Stalin refused to allow the establishment of an Order of Stalin, which was proposed first in 1945 by five Politburo members, and again on his 70th birthday in 1949. It was established only after his death.

In the Politburo of the CC ACP(b)

We present for consideration by the Politburo the following resolutions:

1. To award com. Stalin with the order of "Victory";
2. To award com. Stalin the title of "Hero of the Soviet Union."
3. To establish an Order of Stalin;
4. To erect a Stalin Arch of Victory on the autoroute Moscow-Minsk at the entrance to Moscow.

We propose that the corresponding decrees be taken at the XII session of the Supreme Soviet.

22.VI.45

V. Molotov

L Beria

G.Malenkov

K. Voroshilov

A. Mikoian

- V.A. Durov, "Orden Stalina Stalin ne utverdil", Rodina No. 4, 2005. At <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/durovorden.pdf>

The last two proposals were not taken. Writing in pencil on the left-hand corner reads "My archive. J Stalin."

## **Stalin rejected renaming Moscow after himself**

In 1937-38 a proposal was made to rename Moscow "Stalinodar" ("gift of Stalin").

However, this renaming never happened. M.L Kalinin informed the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and RSFSR that J.V. Stalin expressed his categorical opposition to this proposal...

Moscow remained Moscow.

- B.A. Starkov, "Kak Moskva chut' ne stala Stalinodarom." *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*. 1990, No.12, pp. 126-127. At <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/stalinodar.pdf>

## **2. Lenin's "Testament"**

Khrushchev:

"In December 1922, in a letter to the Party Congress, Vladimir Il'ich wrote: "After taking over the position of Secretary General, Comrade Stalin accumulated in his hands immeasurable power and I am not certain whether he will be always able to use this power with the required care."

This letter — a political document of tremendous importance, known in the party history as Lenin's "testament" — was distributed among the delegates to the 20th Party Congress. You have read it and will undoubtedly read it again more than once. You might reflect on Lenin's plain words, in which expression is given to Vladimir Il'ich's anxiety concerning the party, the people, the state, and the future direction of party policy.

Vladimir Il'ich said:

"Stalin is excessively rude, and this defect, which can be freely tolerated in our midst and in contacts among us Communists, becomes a defect which cannot be tolerated in one holding the position of the Secretary General. Because of this, I propose that the comrades consider the method by which Stalin would be removed from this

position and by which another man would be selected for it, a man who, above all, would differ from Stalin in only one quality, namely, greater tolerance, greater loyalty, greater kindness and more considerate attitude toward the comrades, a less capricious temper, etc."

This document of Lenin's was made known to the delegates at the 13th Party Congress, who discussed the question of transferring Stalin from the position of Secretary General. The delegates declared themselves in favor of retaining Stalin in this post, hoping that he would heed the critical remarks of Vladimir Il'ich and would be able to overcome the defects which caused Lenin serious anxiety.

Comrades! The Party Congress should become acquainted with two new documents, which confirm Stalin's character as already outlined by Vladimir Il'ich Lenin in his "testament." These documents are a letter from Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaja to [Leo B.] Kamenev, who was at that time head of the Political Bureau, and a personal letter from Vladimir Il'ich Lenin to Stalin.

I will now read these documents:

"LEV BORISOVICH!

"Because of a short letter which I had written in words dictated to me by Vladimir Il'ich by permission of the doctors, Stalin allowed himself yesterday an unusually rude outburst directed at me. This is not my first day in the party. During all these 30 years I have never heard from any comrade one word of rudeness. The business of the party and of Il'ich are not less dear to me than to Stalin. I need at present the maximum of self-control. What one can and what one cannot discuss with Il'ich I know better than any doctor, because I know what makes him nervous and what does not, in any case I know better than Stalin. I am turning to you and to Grigorii [E. Zinoviev] as much closer comrades of V. I. and I beg you to protect me from rude interference with my private life and from vile invectives and threats. I have no doubt as to what will be the unanimous decision of the Control Commission, with which Stalin sees fit to threaten me; however, I

have neither the strength nor the time to waste on this foolish quarrel. And I am a living person and my nerves are strained to the utmost.

"N. KRUPSKAIA"

Nadezhda Konstantinovna wrote this letter on December 23, 1922. After two and a half months, in March 1923, Vladimir Il'ich Lenin sent Stalin the following letter:

"TO COMRADE STALIN:

"COPIES FOR: KAMENEV AND ZINOVIEV."

"Dear Comrade Stalin!

"You permitted yourself a rude summons of my wife to the telephone and a rude reprimand of her. Despite the fact that she told you that she agreed to forget what was said, nevertheless Zinoviev and Kamenev heard about it from her. I have no intention to forget so easily that which is being done against me; and I need not stress here that I consider as directed against me that which is being done against my wife. I ask you, therefore, that you weigh carefully whether you are agreeable to retracting your words and apologizing or whether you prefer the severance of relations between us.

"SINCERELY: LENIN

"MARCH 5, 1923"

(Commotion in the hall.)

Comrades! I will not comment on these documents. They speak eloquently for themselves. Since Stalin could behave in this manner during Lenin's life, could thus behave toward Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaja — whom the party knows well and values highly as a loyal friend of Lenin and as an active fighter for the cause of the party since its creation — we can easily imagine how Stalin treated other people. These negative characteristics of his developed steadily and during the last years acquired an absolutely insufferable character."

## Trotsky denies Lenin wrote a "Testament", 1925

"In several parts of his book Eastman says that the Central Committee concealed from the Party a number of exceptionally important documents written by Lenin in the last period of his life (it is a matter of letters on the national question, the so-called 'will', and others); there can be no other name for this than slander against the Central Committee of our Party. From what Eastman says it may be inferred that Vladimir Il'ich intended those letters, which bore the character of advice on internal organisation, for the press. In point of fact, that is absolutely untrue ... . It goes without saying that all those letters and proposals ... were brought to the knowledge of the delegates at the 12th and 13th Congresses, and always, of course, exercised due influence upon the Party's decisions; and if not all of those letters were published, it was because the author did not intend them for the press. **Vladimir Il'ich did not leave any 'will', and the very character of his attitude towards the Party, as well as the character of the Party itself, precluded any possibility of such a 'will'. What is usually referred to as a 'will' in the émigré and foreign bourgeois and Menshevik press (in a manner garbled beyond recognition) is one of Vladimir Il'ich's letters containing advice on organizational matters.** The 13th Congress of the Party paid the closest attention to that letter, as to all of the others, and drew from it the conclusions appropriate to the conditions and circumstances of the time. All talk about concealing or violating a 'will' is a malicious invention and is wholly directed against the actual desires of Vladimir Il'ich and the interests of the Party he founded".

- L.D.Trotsky: 'Concerning Eastman's Book *Since Lenin Died*: in: *Bolshevik*, 16; 1 Sep, 1925; p. 68, my translation; emphasis GF. Cf. the text in Trotsky, Leon, "Two Statements 'By Trotsky'". *The Challenge of the Left Opposition* (1923-25), p. 310.<sup>250</sup>

<sup>250</sup> The Trotskyist editors of this volume put quotation marks around Trotsky's name here to indicate that he wrote and signed these documents even though they did not express his true thoughts. The editors do not seem



to realize that this makes Trotsky look like the kind of unprincipled self-promoter his political opponents accused him of being!

In December 1922 the Plenum of the Central Committee took the decision to entrust to Stalin the responsibility to isolate Lenin, 1922:

DECISION OF THE PLENUM OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE  
OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (Bolshevik)

18 December 1922

In the case of the request of c(omrade) Lenin about the Plenum's decision on the question of foreign trade, with the agreement of Stalin and the doctors, to communicate to him [Lenin] the text of the resolution with the addition that both the resolution and the makeup of the commission were taken unanimously.

Not in any event to transmit [to Lenin] c(omrade) Yaroslavsky's report and to keep it in order to transmit it when permitted by the doctors, in agreement with c(omrade) Stalin.

To entrust c(omrade) Stalin with personal responsibility for the isolation of Vladimir Il'ich [Lenin] with respect both to personal contact with workers and to correspondence.

- *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* No. 12, 1989, p. 191. Also at <http://www.hrono.ru/libris/stalin/16-62.html>

According to Volkogonov (and others),

"On the morning of December 24 (1922) Stalin, Kamenev and Bukharin discussed the situation. They decided they did not have the right to enforce silence upon their Leader [Lenin]. But care, precautions, the maximum possible quiet were essential. They took the following decision:

'1. Vladimir Ilich has the right to dictate 5-10 minutes every day, but not to conduct a correspondence, and Vladimir Ilich must not expect

answers from these notes. Meetings are forbidden.

2. Neither friends nor domestic persons must communicate to Vladimir Ilich anything political, so as not to give him cause for reflections and upset."

- Volkogonov, Dmitri. *Stalin*. Vol. I. M., 1992, Ch. 2, par. 156; cited at [http://militera.lib.ru/bio/volkogonov\\_dv/02.html](http://militera.lib.ru/bio/volkogonov_dv/02.html)

### **Stalin's reply to Lenin concerning Krupskaja**

"March 7, 1923.

Comrade Lenin!

About five weeks ago I had a talk with com. N. Konst. [Natalia Konstantinova — Krupskaja's name and patronymic), whom I consider not only your wife, but also my old Party comrade, and told her (on the telephone) approximately the following:

The doctors have forbidden us to give Il'ich polit. information, and consider this regimen the most important means of treating him. Meanwhile you, N.K., as it turns out, are violating this regime. We must not play with Il'ich's life', etc.

My explanations with N.K. have confirmed that there is nothing in this but empty misunderstandings, and indeed there could not have been.

However, if you consider that I must "take back" the above words which I spoke for the sake of keeping our "relationship," I can take them back. But I do not understand what the problem here is, what my "fault" is, and what precisely is expected of me."

- *ibid*, p. 193. Also at <http://www.hrono.ru/libris/stalin/16-47.html> I have made a facsimile of the original letter handwritten by Stalin on March 7, 1923 available on the internet at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/staltolenin03071923.jpg>

According to Lenin's sister, Stalin's letter was not given to Lenin because his health was getting worse, and Lenin never knew that Stalin had written it:

"...and so V.I. never did know of his letter, in which Stalin excused himself."

- M. Ul'ianova. *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*. No. 12, 1989, p. 195.

According to M. Volodicheva, one of Lenin's secretaries during his final illness, when given Lenin's letter Stalin acted like this:

"I handed the letter to him personally. I asked Stalin to write a letter to Vladimir Ilich right away, as he was awaiting his answer and was upset Stalin read through the letter while standing, right there, in my presence. His face remained calm. He was silent a time, thought a bit, and then said the following words, pronouncing each word clearly, pausing between them: 'It is not Lenin but his illness that is speaking. I am not a medical doctor, I am a political person. I am Stalin. If my wife, who is a Party member, acted wrongly and was disciplined, I would not consider it right for me to interfere in the matter. And Krupskaja is a Party member. But since Vladimir Il'ich insists, I am prepared to excuse myself to Krupskaja for rudeness.'"

- M. Volodicheva, cited by A. Bek, *Moskovskie Novosti* April 23, 1989.

In one of his talks with the writer Felix Chuev L.M Kaganovich touched upon the subject of the mutual relations between Stalin and Lenin:

"Well, in Lenin's time there were some things that were very unpleasant Concerning Lenin's letter, Stalin once told me: 'But what could I do in this situation? The Politburo assigned me to make sure that he [Lenin] was not burdened, that the doctors' orders were carried out, not to give him paper, not to give him newspapers, and what could I do — violate the Politburo's decision? I just couldn't do that. And they attacked me.' He told me this personally with great bitterness, great bitterness. With such heartfelt bitterness."

- Chuev, F. *Tak govoril Kaganovich*. Moscow, 1992, p. 191. Also in Felix I. Chuev, *Kaganovich, Shepilov*. Moscow: OLMA-PRESS, 2001, p. 263.

For Maria Il'ioichn Ul'ianova's letters, published in *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* No. 12, 1989, pp. 195-199, see <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/ulianova.html>

Another of Lenin's assistants, Lidia Fotieva, remarked:

Nadezhda Konstantinova did not always conduct herself as she ought to have done. She could have discussed this with Vladimir Il'ich. She was accustomed to share everything with him. And even in those cases when she ought not to have done so ... For example, why did she tell Vladimir Il'ich that Stalin was crude to her on the phone?

- Cited by A. Bek, *Moskovskie Novosti* April 23, 1989.

Lenin asked Stalin to give him poison on demand:

On Saturday March 17 c. Ul'ianova (N.K) communicated to me in a very conspiratorial manner the request of VI. Il'ich to Stalin that I, Stalin, should assume the duty of obtaining and giving to VI. Il'ich an amount of sodium cyanide. In this conversation with me N.K said, among other things, that "VI. Il'ich is suffering unimaginable pain", that "it is unthinkable to go on living like this", and she stubbornly insisted that I "not refuse Il'ich's request". In view of N.K.'s especial insistence and the fact that V. Il'ich demanded my agreement (during this conversation with me V.I. twice called N.K to come to see him, demanding with great emotion Stalin's agreement), I considered it impossible to refuse and replied: "I ask V. Il'ich to calm himself and be assured that, when it becomes necessary, I will carry out his demand without hesitation." V. Il'ich did in fact become calm.

However, I must state that I do not have the strength to carry out V. Il'ich's request, and am forced to reject this commission, regardless of how humanitarian and necessary it may be. I will so inform the meeting of the members of the P.Buro of the CC.

J. Stalin

Remark: The note is on an official form of Secretary of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) J.V. Stalin and is dated March 21, 1923. In the upper part of the sheet are the signatures of those who read it: G. Zinoviev, V. Molotov, N. Bukharin, L. Kamenev, L. Trotsky, M. Tomsy. The last considered it essential to express his opinion: "Read. I consider St's 'indecision' correct. We must discuss this strictly among the members of the Pol. Buro. Without secretaries (I mean the technical ones).

- Dmitri Volkogonov, *Stalin*. Russian edition, vol 2, between pages 384 and 385. I have put an exact facsimile of the originals of these documents at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/stalinleninpoison23.pdf>

### **3. "Collegiality" In Work.**

At several points in his speech Khrushchev complains about Stalin's lack of collegiality and violation of collective leadership.

"We have to consider seriously and analyze correctly this matter in order that we may preclude any possibility of a repetition in any form whatever of what took place during the life of Stalin, who absolutely did not tolerate collegiality in leadership and in work, and who practiced brutal violence, not only toward everything which opposed him, but also toward that which seemed, to his capricious and despotic character, contrary to his concepts.

Stalin acted not through persuasion, explanation and patient cooperation with people, but by imposing his concepts and demanding absolute submission to his opinion. Whoever opposed this concept or tried to prove his viewpoint and the correctness of his position was doomed to removal from the leading collective and to subsequent moral and physical annihilation." (5-6)

"In practice, Stalin ignored the norms of party life and trampled on the Leninist principle of collective party leadership."

Marshal Zhukov:

"After J.V. Stalin's death appeared the tale about how he used to take military and strategic decisions unilaterally. This was not the case at all. I have already said above that if you reported questions to the Supreme Commander with a knowledge of your business, he took them into account. And I know of cases when he turned against his own previous opinion and changed decisions he had taken previously."

- Zhukov, G.K. *Vospominaniia i razmyshleniia*. V. 2 tt. Moscow: OLMA-PRESS, 2002, p. 163. Also at <http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/zhukov1/17.html>

"By the way, as I was convinced during the war, J.V. Stalin was not at all the kind of man before whom one could not post sharp questions and with whom one could not argue, and even firmly defend one's own point of view. If someone says differently (e.g. Khrushchev — GF] then I tell you directly — their affirmations are not truthful."

- *ibid.* p. 229. Also at <http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/zhukov1/09.html>

Zhukov again:

"His style of work, as a rule, was businesslike. Everyone could express his own opinion without being nervous. The Supreme Commander treated everyone the same way — strictly and officially. He knew how to listen attentively when you reported to him with knowledge of your topic. He himself was laconic, and did not like verbosity in others."

- *ibid.* p. 338. Also at <http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/zhukov1/11.html>

Anastas Mikoian:

"I must say that each one of us had the full ability to express himself and defend his opinion or proposal. We frankly discussed the most complicated and contested questions (as for myself, I can speak on this point with the fullest responsibility), and met on Stalin's part in most cases with understanding, a reasoned and patient attitude even when our statements were obviously disagreeable to him.

He was also attentive to the proposals by the generals. Stalin listened carefully to what was said to him and to counsel, listened to disagreements with interest, extracting intelligently from them that bit of truth that helped him later to formulate his final, most appropriate decisions which were born in this way, as a result of collective discussion. More than this: it commonly happened that, convinced by out evidence, Stalin changed his own preliminary viewpoint on one or another question."

- Mikoian, *Tak bylo*. Moscow: Vagrius, 1999. Chapter 37, p. 464.

... the companionable atmosphere of management work did not lessen Stalin's role. On the contrary, we almost always attributed our own proposals, formalized under Stalin's signature, entirely to Stalin, without revealing that their author was not Stalin but some other comrade. And he [Stalin] signed, sometimes making amendments, sometimes not, sometimes not even reading it, since he trusted us.

- Mikoian, *Tak bylo*, Chapter 41.

Benediktov, long-time high official in Agriculture:

Contrary to a widespread view, all questions in those years, including those involving the transfer of leading party, state and military figures, were decided in a collegial manner in the Politburo. At the Politburo sessions themselves arguments and discussions often flared up, different, sometimes contradictory opinions were expressed within the framework, naturally, of party directives. There was no quiet, untroubled unanimity — Stalin and his colleagues could not abide that. I am quite justified in saying this because I was present at Politburo sessions many times. Yes, as a rule Stalin's viewpoint came out on top. But this occurred because he was more objective, thought through problems in a more all-round way, saw further and deeper than others.

- I.A. Benediktov, "O Staline i Khrushcheve", *Molodaia Gvardiia* No. 4, 1989. At <http://stalinism.newmail.ru/benedikt.htm>

Marshal Shtemenko:

"General of the army S.M. Shtemenko who was closely associated by his work with J.V. Stalin during the war years, writes: 'I must say that Stalin did not decide, and in general did not like to decide, important military questions unilaterally. He well understood the necessity of collective work in this complex field. He recognized the authorities in this or that military problem, took their opinions into account, and gave each man his due. In December 1943 after the Teheran Conference, when we needed to work out plans for future military actions, the report at the joint session of the Politburo of the CC of the AUCP(b), the Supreme Defense Committee, and the General Staff concerning the course of the war at the front and its future course was made by A.M. Vasilevskii and A.I. Antonov, while N. A Voznesenskii reported on question of the war economy, and J. V. Stalin took upon himself the analysis of problems of an international character."

- S.M. Shtemenko, *The General Staff During the War Years*. Book 2. Moscow, 1981, p. 275. Cited from B. Solov'ev and V. Sukhdeev, *Polkovodets Stalin*. M 2003, at [http://militera.lib.ru/research/suhodeev\\_vv/04.html](http://militera.lib.ru/research/suhodeev_vv/04.html)

Dmitri Shepilov:

"Stalin looked very good and for some reason was very cheerful. He joked, laughed, and was very democratic.

— Shepilov has just told me that it is hard to lead *Pravda*. Of course it's hard. I thought, maybe we should nominate two editors?

Here everyone began to disagree noisily:

— No, there'll be a dual leadership... There'll be no order, no one will know whom to ask.

— Well, I see that the people do not support me. Where the people go, there too go I."

-*Neprimknuvshii*, M. 2001, pp . 236- 7. Also at <http://www.pseudology.org/ShepilovDT/11.htm>



Khrushchev himself admitted this quality in Stalin:

"I remained in my opinion. And here was something interesting (which was also characteristic of Stalin): this man, in a flareup of anger, could do a lot of harm. But when you demonstrated to him that you were right and if you adduced good facts, he would understand in the end that this was a man who was defending a useful cause, and would support you. ... Yes, there were cases when you could firmly disagree with him and if he was convinced you were right, then he would yield his own point of view and take the point of view of his interlocutor. Of course this is a positive quality.

But then Khrushchev hastened to add:

"But, unfortunately, you could count the number of times this happened on your fingers."

(Khrushchev had evidently already forgotten that he had just called this quality of Stalin's "characteristic.")

- Khrushchev, N.S. *Vrenia, Uudi, Vlast'*. Book 2, Part 3. Moscow: Moskovskie novosti, 1999, Chapter 3, pp. 43-4 (Russian edition). Also at [http://hronos.km.ru/libris/lib\\_h/hrush34.html](http://hronos.km.ru/libris/lib_h/hrush34.html)

In fact it was Khrushchev himself who refused to lead collectively and was removed in large part for that in 1964.

[From Suslov's speech] "Com. Khrushchev, having concentrated in his hands the posts of First secretary of the CC of the party and Chairman of the Council of Ministers, has by no means always correctly used the rights and obligations entrusted to him. Breaking with the Leninist principles of collectivity in leadership, he has begun to strive towards unilaterally deciding the most important questions of party and state work, has begun to neglect the opinions of the collective of party and government leaders, has stopped considering the views and advice of his comrades. More recently he has decided even the most important questions in an essentially individual manner, crudely insisting upon his own subjective, often completely incorrect point of view. He

believes himself to be without error, has appropriated to himself a monopolistic claim to the truth. To all comrades who have expressed their opinions and made remarks unpleasing to com. Khrushchev, he has arrogantly given all kinds of demeaning and insulting nicknames that lower their personal dignity.... As a result of com. Khrushchev's incorrect behavior the Presidium of the CC has become less and less an organ of collective, creative discussion and decision-making. Collective leadership has in fact become impossible.

It has become more and more dear that com. Khrushchev is striving for an exaltation of his own personality and the ignoring of the Presidium and the CC CPSU. These incorrect actions of com. Khrushchev can be interpreted as his striving to advance a cult of his own personality... "

- "Kak snimali N.S. Khrushcheva." *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* No. 1, 1993, pp. 7-10.

### **Stalin's Four Attempts to Resign as First Secretary, then as Secretary, of the Party**

August 19, 1924

To the Plenum of the CC RCP

One and a half years of working in the Politburo with comrades Zinoviev and Kamenev after the retirement and then the death of Lenin have made perfectly clear to me the impossibility of honest, sincere political work with these comrades within the framework of one small collective. In view of which I request to be considered as having resigned from the Pol[itical] Buro of the CC.

I request a medical leave for about two months.

At the expiration of this period I request to be sent to Turukhansk region or to the Iakutsk oblast', or to somewhere abroad in any kind of work that will attract little attention.

I would ask the Plenum [of the C.C. — GF] to decide all these questions in my absence and without explanations from my side, because I consider it harmful for our work to give explanations aside from those remarks that I have already made in the first paragraph of this letter.

I would ask comrade Kuibyshev to distribute copies of this letter to the members of the CC.

With com[munist] greet[ings], J. Stalin.

19.VIII.24

- *Rodina*. 1994. №7. C. 72-73.

### **December 27, 1926**

To the Plenum of the CC (to com. Rykov). I ask that I be relieved of the post of GenSec [General Secretary] of the CC. I declare that I can work no longer in this position, I do not have the strength to work any more in this position. J. Stalin.

27.XII.26

- *Rodina*. 1994. №7. C. 72-73.

### **December 19, 1927**

Fragment of the transcript of the CC Plenum.

Stalin: Comrades! For three years I have been asking the CC to free me from the obligations of General Secretary of the CC. Each time the Plenum has refused me. I admit that until recently conditions did exist such that the Party had need of me in this post as a person more or less severe, one who acted as a certain kind of antidote to the dangers posed by the Opposition. I admit that this necessity existed, despite comrade Lenin's well-known letter, to keep me at the post of General

Secretary. But those conditions exist no longer. They have vanished, since the Opposition is now smashed. It seems that the Opposition has never before suffered such a defeat since they have not only been smashed, but have been expelled from the Party. It follows that now no bases exist any longer that could be considered correct when the Plenum refused to honor my request and free me of the duties of General Secretary. Meanwhile you have comrade Lenin's directive which we are obliged to consider and which, in my opinion, it is necessary to put into effect. I admit that the Party was compelled to disregard this directive until recently, compelled by well-known conditions of inter-Party development. But I repeat that these conditions have now vanished and it is time, in my view, to take comrade Lenin's directive to the leadership. Therefore I request the Plenum to free me of the post of General Secretary of the CC. I assure you, comrades, that the Party can only gain from doing this.

Dogadov: Vote without discussion.

Voroshilov: I propose that we reject the announcement we just heard.

Rykov: We will vote without discussion. ... We vote now on Stalin's proposal that he be freed from the General Secretaryship. Who is for this proposal? Who is against? Who abstains? One.

The proposal of comrade Stalin is rejected with one abstention.

Stalin: Then I introduce another proposal. Perhaps the CC will consider it expedient to abolish the position of Gensec. In our Party's history there have been times when no such post existed.

Voroshilov: We had Lenin with us then.

Stalin: We had no post of Gensec before the 10<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Voice: Until the 11<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Stalin: Yes, it seems that until the 11<sup>th</sup> Congress we did not have this position. That was before Lenin stopped working. If Lenin concluded

that it was necessary to put forward the question of founding the position of Gensec, then I assume he was prompted by the special circumstances that appeared with us before the 10<sup>th</sup> Congress, when a more or less strong, well-organized Opposition within the Party was founded. But now we no longer have these conditions in the Party, because the Opposition is smashed to a man. Therefore we could proceed to the abolition of this position. Many people associate a conception of some kind of special rights of the Gensec with this position. I must say from my experience, and comrades will confirm this, that there ought not to be any special rights distinguishing the Gensec from the rights of other members of the Secretariat.

Voice: And the duties?

Stalin: And there are no more duties than other members of the Secretariat have. I see it this way: There's the Politburo, the highest organ of the CC; there's the Secretariat, the executive organ consisting of five persons, and all these five members of the Secretariat are equal. That's the way the work has been carried out in practice, and the Gensec has not had any special rights or obligations. The result, therefore, is that the position of Gensec, in the sense of special rights, has never existed with us in practice, there has been only a collegium called the Secretariat of the CC. I do not know why we need to keep this dead position any longer. I don't even mention the fact that this position, called Gensec, has occasioned in some places a series of distortions. At the same time that at the top no special rights or duties are associated with the position of Gensec, in some places there have been some distortions, and in all the oblasts there is now a struggle over that position among comrades who call themselves secretaries, for example, in the national CCs. Quite a few Gensecs have developed, and with them in the localities special rights have been associated. Why is this necessary?

Shmidt: We can dismiss them in these localities.

Stalin: I think the Party would benefit if we did away with the post of Gensec, and that would give me the chance to be free from this post.

This would be all the easier to do since according to the Party's constitution there is no post of Gensec.

Rykov: I propose not to give comrade Stalin the possibility of being free from this position. As concerns the Gensecs in the oblast and local organs, that should be changed, but without changing the situation in the CC. The position of General Secretary was created by the proposal of Vladimir Il'ich. In all the time since, during Vladimir Il'ich's life and since, this position has justified itself politically and completely in both the organizational and political sense. In the creation of this organ and in naming comrade Stalin to the post of Gensec the whole Opposition also took part, all those whom we have now expelled from the Party. That is how completely without doubt it was for everyone in the Party (whether the position of Gensec was needed and who should be the General Secretary). By which has been exhausted, in my opinion, both the question of the "testament" (for that point has been decided) and exhausted by the Opposition at the same time just as it has been decided by us as well. The whole Party knows this. What has changed now after the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress and why is it necessary to set aside the position of Gensec?

Stalin: The Opposition has been smashed.

(A long discussion followed, after which:)

Voices: Correct! Vote!

Rykov: There is a proposal to vote.

Voices: Yes, yes!

Rykov: We are voting. Who is for comrade Stalin's proposal to abolish the post of General Secretary? Who is opposed? Who abstains? No.

Stalin: Comrades, during the first vote about freeing me from the duties of secretary I did not vote, I forgot to vote. I ask that my vote be counted as "Against."

Voice from a seat: That does not mean much.

- Quoted from G. Cherniavskii. "Prizhok iz partiinykh dzhunglei." *Kaskad* (Baltimore, MD) at <http://kackad.com/kackad/?p=855>

**October 16, 1952**

In the memoirs of Akakii Mgeladze we read:

... At the first Plenum of the CC of the CPSU called after the XIX Congress of the Party (I had been elected member of the CC and took part in the work of this Plenum), Stalin really did present the question that he should be freed either of the post of General Secretary of the CC CPSU, or of the post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR. He referred to his age, overwork, said that other cadres had cropped up there were and people to replace him, for example, N.I. Bulganin could be appointed as Chairman of the Council of Ministers, but the CC members did not grant his request, all insisted that comrade Stalin remain at both positions.

- A.I. Mgeladze, *Stalin. Kakim ia ego znal. Strannitsy nedavnogo proshlogo*. N. p.l., 2001, p. 118. Also see Chapter 9, where Stalin's speech to this Plenum as recalled by L.N. Efremov is discussed.

#### **4. Stalin "Morally and Physically Annihilated" Leaders Who Opposed Him.**

Khrushchev:

"Stalin acted not through persuasion, explanation and patient cooperation with people, but by imposing his concepts and demanding absolute submission to his opinion. Whoever opposed this concept or tried to prove his viewpoint and the correctness of his position was doomed to removal from the leading collective and to subsequent moral and physical annihilation."

#### **5. Mass Repressions generally**

Khrushchev:

"It was precisely during this period (1935-1937-1938) that the practice of mass repression through the Government apparatus was born, first against the enemies of Leninism — Trotskyites, Zinovievites, Bukharinites, long since politically defeated by the party — and subsequently also against many honest Communists, ..."

Khrushchev killed more than others:

From the Interview of V.P. Pronin, Chairman of the Moscow Soviet in 1939-45, from *Voenna-Istoricheskii Zhurnal* No. 10, 1991.

"Question: And Khrushchev? What memories remain with you about him?"

Answer: [...] He actively aided the repressions. A sword of Damocles hung above his head. In 1920 Khrushchev had voted for the Trotskyist position. And therefore, obviously, he feared the consequences, and he himself 'battled' with especial zeal against carelessness, loss of political alertness, political blindness, etc. Khrushchev sanctioned the repressions of a large number of Party and Soviet workers. Under him almost all of the 23 secretaries of the raikoms of the city were arrested. And almost all the secretaries of the raikoms of the [Moscow] province [oblast'] J. All the secretaries of the Moscow Committee and the Moscow City Committee of the party were repressed: Katsenelenbogen, Margolin, Kogan, Korytniy. All the managers of the sections, including Khrushchev's own assistant. Even after he was in the Ukraine Khrushchev insisted, in the Politburo in 1938, upon the repression of the second tier of leadership of the Moscow City Committee of the Party.

We, at that time young [Party] workers, were astonished. How could Khrushchev instruct us about 'alertness', if everybody around him turned out to be enemies of the people? He was the only one in the Moscow Committee who remained unharmed.



Question: Do you believe that the scale of repressions in Moscow was Khrushchev's personal "contribution"?

Answer: To a significant degree. After the autumn of 1938, the arrival of Shcherbakov to the leadership of the [Moscow] City Committee, not one of the [Party] workers of the Moscow Soviet, the Moscow [Party] Committee, the Moscow City [Party] Committee, or the regional committees was repressed. I know that in July 1940, when the question arose of removing Shcherbakov from work for the poor work of the aviation factories, they accused him also of very rarely, and even then very unwillingly, giving his agreement to repressions. On the contrary; in my presence at a meeting of the secretaries of the City Committee and on Shcherbakov's motion the head of the investigative section of the NKVD was expelled from the Party for unfounded arrests.

— Cited in Vladimir Alliluev, *Khronika odnoi sem'i: Alliluevy, Stalin*. Moscow, Molodaia gvardiia, 2002, p. 172.

Khrushchev promoted repression:

"We must annihilate all these scoundrels. In annihilating one, two, dozens, we do the work for millions. Therefore our hand must not tremble, we must walk across the corpses of the enemy for the people's benefit."

- Khrushchev, August 14, 1937. Vadim Kozhinov, *Russia. 20th Century. 1939-1964*. Ch. 8, at [http://www.hrono.ru/libris/lib\\_k/kozhin20v11.php](http://www.hrono.ru/libris/lib_k/kozhin20v11.php) Mark IUnge and S.A. Kokin state that Khrushchev made this remark to a plenum of the Moscow City Soviet; "*Cherez tmy vruga na blago naroda*"... T. 1. (Moscow: ROSSPEN 2010), p. 13.

Historian IUrii Zhukov claims he has seen the document in which Khrushchev asks for permission to raise "Category one" to 20,000 — a number, with no names.

"Iuri Nikolaevich, we have Zoria Leonidovna Serebriakova on the line. Why do you, when you evaluate Stalin, not take into account the "lists

to be shot", in which are documented, by the mark of his own pencil, the thousands of people sent off to their deaths?

Zoria Leonidovna, and how is one to take into account those lists, where there are not even names, but simply the words: 'Permit me to shoot 20,000 people.' And the signature: 'Khrushchev, Nikita Sergeevich.' I will tell you where this document is."

- *Komsomolskaia Pravda* December 3 2002.

"...Half of the first harvest took place in the Moscow province [oblast'], by no means the largest in the country. On the 'troika' formed here were, as specified, the first secretary of the Moscow obkom of the Party N.S. Khrushchev. Next to his name and signature we always find the name and signature of Redens, head of the UNKVD for the Moscow oblast' and relative of N. Allilueva, Stalin's second wife. Today Redens is numbered among the lists of 'victims of Stalin's willfulness.' And here is what Khrushchev and Redens represented... well, it's better if I cite their request to the Politburo: 'To shoot: 2,000 kulaks, 6,500 criminals, and to exile: 5869 kulaks, 26,936 criminals.' And this was only one swing of the sickle!"

- Zhukov, *Komsomolskaia Pravda* Nov. 19, 2002:

Khrushchev asked for authority to repress huge numbers of people in Moscow, including killing thousands.

"CC ACP(b) — to comrade Stalin J.V.

I report that we have counted a total of 41,305 criminal and kulak elements who have served their sentences and settled in Moscow city and province. Of those there are 33,436 criminal elements. Materials at hand give us the basis to put 6,500 criminals in Category 1 [to be shot — GF], and 26,396 in Category 2 [to be exiled — GF]. Of this number, for orientation purposes in the city of Moscow there are 1,500 in Category 1 and 5,272 in Category 2.

We have calculated there are 7,869 kulaks who have served their sentences and settled in Moscow city and oblast'. Materials at hand give us the basis to put 2,000 from this group into Category 1 and 5,869 in Category 2.

We request that a commission be confirmed, consisting of comrades Redens, head of the UNKVD for the Moscow oblast'; Maslov, assistant prosecutory of the Moscow oblast', and Khrushchev, N.S. — Secretary of the Moscow Committee and Moscow City Committee, with the right, when necessary, to be replaced by A.A. Volkov — second secretary of the Moscow City Committee.

Secretary of the M[oscow] C[ommittee] of the ACP(b) — (N. Khrushchev)". July 10, 1937.

- *Trud* June 4, 1992; republished in *Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich*. 1957. p. 747, n. 22.

Getty (*Excesses*, 127) cites Khrushchev's request for 41,000 people in both categories:

In Moscow, First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev knew that he needed to repress exactly 41,805 kulaks and criminals. Nearly all of the submissions from the forty provinces and republics responding to Stalin's telegram were in such exact figures!

[Note: from Zhukov, totals are 41305; Getty writes 41,805. This must be from the same document cited above, so Getty copied wrong — GF]

According to Getty, after conferences in Moscow, the categories of people subject to this repression were greatly expanded, and "the target numbers submitted previously by the local authorities were revised, most often downward." (p.128) That is, the "Center" — Stalin and the Politburo — tried to limit these repressions.

Taubman's large (876 pp.) work *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (NY: Norton, 2003), does not even mention Khrushchev's repressions in Moscow, though they were greater in number than those in any other region.

As for the Ukrainian repression directed personally by Khrushchev, here is what he says:

"Yet the same Khrushchev presided over the purges, which apparently accelerated after his arrival. In 1938 alone, 106,119 people are said to have been arrested; between 1938 and 1940 the total was 165,565. According to Molotov, hardly objective but extremely well informed, Khrushchev 'sent 54,000 people to the next world as a member of the [Ukrainian] troika.' Khrushchev's speeches dripped venom, and at least one case has come to light in which he scrawled, 'Arrest,' across the top of a document that doomed a high official of the Ukrainian Komsomol."

-Taubman, 116.

An example of Khrushchev's complaining to Stalin about "Moscow's" — that is, Stalin and the Politburo's — lowering the numbers of people for repression is this note from Khrushchev to Stalin:

"Dear Iosif Vissarionovich! The Ukraine sends [requests for] 17,000 — 18,000 [persons to be] repressed every month. And Moscow confirms no more than 2,000 — 3,000. I request that you take prompt measures. Your devoted N. Khrushchev."

- cited from Kosolapov, *Slovo Tovarishchu Stalinu*. M: Eksmo, 2002, p. 355

Although this note is widely quoted, I have not been able to find an archival citation for this statement.

Khrushchev's appointment to the post of First Secretary of the CC of the Communist Party (b) of the Ukraine brought a qualitative increase in repression, testimony of which we find in a fragment from his speech at the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of the republic. "We will do everything, he said, in order to fulfill with honor the task and commands of the CC ACP(b) and of comrade Stalin — to make the Ukraine an impregnable fortress for enemies [of the people — GF].

... In his speech to the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Party N.S. Khrushchev deliberately avoided any mention of events in the Ukraine and cited facts concerning the repressions in other regions. But as they say, "You can't hide a needle in a sack." We must consider as purely objective the evaluation of his role in organizing mass repressions in the Ukraine given, for example, in the speech of the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the republic Uspensky at the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CP(b)U: "I, like many other comrades speaking here — said the Commissar — must acknowledge that the rout of enemies of the people in the Ukraine began for real just a few months ago, when we received to lead us that experienced Bolshevik, pupil and comrade-in-arms of great Stalin, Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev."

- S. Kuz'min. "K repressiiam prichasten. Strikhi k politicheskomu portretu N.S. Khrushchev. *Vozrozhdenie Nadezhdy*. No. 2, 1997. At <http://memory.irkutsk.ru/pub/fr2.htm> Also quoted in N.F. Bugai, *Narody Ukrainy v 'Osoboi papke' Stalina*. Moscow: Nauka, 2006, pp. 252-3.

More details about the huge number of persons "repressed" by Khrushchev in Moscow, 1936-37:

"N.S. Khrushchev, working as first secretary of the M[oscow] C[ommittee] and the M[oscow] City] C[ommittee] of the ACP(b) in 1936-1937, and from 1937 as first secretary of the CC of the CP(b)U (Communist Party of the Ukraine, Bolshevik), personally gave his assent to the arrests of a significant number of Party and Soviet workers. In the archive of the KGB there are documentary materials that attest to Khrushchev's participation in carrying out massive repressions in Moscow, Moscow oblast', and in the Ukraine in the prewar years. In particular he personally sent documents with proposals for the arrests of leading workers of the Moscow Soviet and Moscow Oblast' Committee of the Party. In all, during 1936-1937 55,741 persons were repressed by the organs of the Moscow and Moscow oblast' NKVD.

From January 1938 Khrushchev headed the Party organization of the Ukraine. In 1938 106,119 persons were arrested in the Ukraine. Repressions did not stop during the following years. In 1939 about 12,000 persons were arrested, and in 1940 — about 50,000 persons. In all, during the years 1938-1940 167,565 persons were arrested in the Ukraine.

The NKVD explained the increase in repressions in 1938 in the Ukraine in that, in connection with the arrival of Khrushchev, counter-revolutionary activity of the Right-Trotskyite underground grew especially quickly. Khrushchev personally sanctioned the repression of several hundred persons who were suspected of organizing terrorist acts [= assassination attempts] against himself.

In the summer of 1938 with Khrushchev's sanction a large group of leading Party, Soviet, and economic workers were arrested, among them the vice-chair of the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR, government ministers [*narkomy*], assistant ministers, secretaries of the oblast' committees of the Party. All were sentenced to execution or to long terms of imprisonment. According to lists sent by the NKVD of the USSR to the Politburo, for 1938 alone permission was given for the repression of 2,140 persons of the republican Party and Soviet cadre."

- "Massovye repressii opravdany byt' ne mogu." *Istochnik* No. 1, 1995, 126- 7; *Reabilitatsia. Kak Eto Bylo*. III (Moscow, 2004), 146- 7.

Khrushchev, February 1, 1956:

Question of com. Khrushchev [to Rodos]: Tell us in relation to coms. Postyshev, Kosior, you declared them enemies.

Com. Khrushchev:

The guilty parties are higher. Semi-criminal elements were brought into leading these investigations. Stalin is to blame.

Aristov: Comrade Khrushchev, do we have the courage to tell the truth?

Aristov: Eikhelidze refused to confess to the last, and they shot him nevertheless.

Com. Khrushchev: Ezhov, in all probability, was innocent, an honest man.

Com. Mikoian: The Decree about the struggle against terror was taken on December 1 1934.

[...]

Com. Khrushchev: Iagoda, in all probability, was an innocent [*chisty* = 'clean'] man. Ezhov [also].

- *RKEB I* 308-9, p. 308-9.

## 6. "Enemy of the people".

Khrushchev:

Stalin originated the concept "enemy of the people." This term automatically rendered it unnecessary that the ideological errors of a man or men engaged in a controversy be proven; this term made possible the usage of the most cruel repression, violating all norms of revolutionary legality, against anyone who in any way disagreed with Stalin, against those who were only suspected of hostile intent, against those who had bad reputations. This concept "enemy of the people" actually eliminated the possibility of any kind of ideological fight or the making of one's views known on this or that issue, even those of a practical character. In the main, and in actuality, the only proof of guilt used, against all norms of current legal science, was the "confession" of the accused himself; and, as subsequent probing proved, "confessions" were acquired through physical pressures against the accused. This led to glaring violations of revolutionary legality and to

the fact that many entirely innocent persons, who in the past had defended the party line, became victims.

We must assert that, in regard to those persons who in their time had opposed the party line, there were often no sufficiently serious reasons for their physical annihilation. The formula "enemy of the people" was specifically introduced for the purpose of physically annihilating such individuals."

Jean-Paul Marat used the term "l'ennemi du peuple" in the first issue of his journal *L'Ami du Peuple* of 1793. See <http://membres.multimania.fr/jpmarat/amidpaf.html#ennemi>

It is also famously the name of a play by Ibsen.

Maxim Gorky, in the story "Khersones Tavricheskii", 1897.

"...and in the conspiracy I will not act against the community, nor against any of the citizens who has not been declared an enemy of the people."

— Text at <http://www.archaeology.ru/ONLINE/Gorki/gorky.html>. S. Lifshits, "Preslovutiy Doklad Khrushcheva", at <http://www.m-s-k.newmail.ru/pub/1.htm> (retrieved July 5, 2004) gives the print citation as Gor'kii, M. *Sobranie sochinenii: V 30-ti t.* 23, p. 266.

Used by Lenin:

Lenin, "The land campaign and "Iskra's plan", 1903:

"Serious support by the workers of the Zemstvo appeals should consist not in agreement about the conditions on which the Zemstvo representatives can speak in the name of the people, but by striking a blow at the enemies of the people."

— <http://www.marxists.org/russkij/lenin/works/9-19.htm>

Lenin, "The beginning of the revolution in Russia," 1905.



"We Social-Democrats can and must proceed independently of the revolutionaries of the bourgeois democracy, guaranteeing the class independence of the proletariat, but we must go hand in hand with them during the uprising, while striking direct blows against Tsarism, in opposing the army, in attacking the Bastilles of the cursed enemy of the whole Russian people."

— <http://www.marxists.org/russkij/lenin/1905/01/12a.htm>

Lenin, May 9, 1918:

"To declare all owners of grain who have surpluses and do not bring them to the export points, and also all the grain supplies of all those who raise it for distilling spirits, as enemies of the people; to tum them over to the Revolutionary court and submit them from now on to prison sentences of not less than 10 years, confiscation of all property, and exile from their community [obshchina] for life, and in addition to subject distillers to forced social labor."

— Lenin, *Complete Works* v. 36, p. 318 (Russian edition). Quoted at [http://www.kursach.com/biblio/0010024/103\\_1.htm](http://www.kursach.com/biblio/0010024/103_1.htm) The Decree was taken with minor changes. *Dekrety Sovetskoi vlasti*. Ed. G.D. Obicbina et al. T. 2: 17 marta — 10 iulia 1918 g. Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1959, p. 265.

Decree of the Central Executive Committee and the Soviet of People's Commissars of August 7, 1932:

"...People who infringe upon social property must be considered enemies of the people, in view of which a determined struggle against plunderers of social possessions is the first duty of the organs of Soviet power."

— *Tragediia Sovetskoi Derevni. Kollektivizatsia I raskulachivanie. Dokumenty I materialy. 1927-1939. Tom 3. Konets 1930-1933*. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001. No. 160, p. 453. Also at the Russian Wikisource page <http://tinyurl.com/law-of-aug-7-32>

Khrushchev's use of the term:

"3. Enemies of the people have managed to do a lot of damage in the area of assignment of cadres. The military soviet has set as the main task to uproot completely the remnants of hostile elements by carefully studying each commander and political worker at the time of promotion, and to boldly promote verified, devoted and upcoming cadres..."

— quoted by Volkogonov, *Stalin*. Vol. 1, Ch. 7, at note 608. For full text and context, see below, under "Commanders Killed."

Trotskyites, Bukharinists, bourgeois nationalists and other evil enemies of the people, suborners of the restoration of capitalism, have made desperate attempts to destroy from within the Leninist unity of the Party's ranks — and they have all broken their heads on this unity.

- cited by I.U.V. Emel'ianov. *Khrushchev. Smut'ian v Kremle*. Moscow: Veche, 2005, p. 32.

## **6a. "Convincing and Educating".**

Khrushchev:

"An entirely different relationship with people characterized Stalin. Lenin's traits — patient work with people, stubborn and painstaking education of them, the ability to induce people to follow him without using compulsion, but rather through the ideological influence on them of the whole collective — were entirely foreign to Stalin. He discarded the Leninist method of convincing and educating, he abandoned the method of ideological struggle for that of administrative violence, mass repressions and terror." (pp. 7-8)

See below.

## **7. Zinoviev & Kamenev.**

Khrushchev:

"In his "testament" Lenin warned that "Zinoviev's and Kamenev's October episode was of course not an accident." But Lenin did not pose the question of their arrest and certainly not their shooting." (p. 9)

Stalin to Kaganovich, about testimony at the Zinoviev-Kamenev "Trial of the 16", August 1936 .

... Second. From Reingol'd's confessions it is clear that Kamenev, through his wife Glebova, was feeling out the French ambassador [Herve] Alphand concerning possible relations of the French government with / a future "government" of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc. I think that Kamenev also felt out the English, German and American ambassadors. That means that Kamenev must have disclosed to these foreigners the plans of the plot and of the murders of the leaders of the Bolshevik Party. That also means that Kamenev had already disclosed to them these plans, or else the foreigners would not have agreed to have discussions with him about a future Zinoviev-Trotskyite "government." This is the attempt of Kamenev and his friends to conclude a direct bloc with the bourgeois governments against the Soviet government. This explains the secret of the well-known advance obituaries of the American correspondents. Obviously, Glebova is well informed about all this sordid material. We must bring Glebova to Moscow and submit her to a series of meticulous interrogations. She might reveal many interesting things.

- Stalin i Kaganovich, *Perepiska 1931-1936 gg.* [Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence, 1931-1936] (Russian), No. 763, pp. 642-3

D.M Dmitriev's confession, concerning this event:

I remember the following cases:

1. The case of Tat'iana KAMENEVA. She was the wife of L.E. KAMENEV. We had information that Tat'iana KAMENEVA, on instructions from L.B. KAMENEV, went to the French ambassador in Moscow AL'FAND with a proposal to set up a meeting with L.B. KAMENEV for counterrevolutionary discussions concerning help by the French government to underground Trotskyites inside the USSR.

I and CHERTOK interrogated Tat'iana KAMENEVA "steered away" from this accusation, making it possible for her to avoid testimony about this fact during the investigation.

— *Lubianka 2*, Doc . 356, p. 586. "L.E. Kamenev" is a typographical error for L.B. Kamenev. The Kameneva referred to here is the same person as the Glebova of the previous quotation.

## 8. Trotskyites

Khrushchev:

"Or, let us take the example of the Trotskyites. At present, after a sufficiently long historical period, we can speak about the fight with the Trotskyites with complete calm and can analyze this matter with sufficient objectivity. After all, around Trotsky were people whose origin cannot by any means be traced to bourgeois society. Part of them belonged to the party intelligentsia and a certain part were recruited from among the workers. We can name many individuals who, in their time, joined the Trotskyites; however, these same individuals took an active part in the workers' movement before the Revolution, during the Socialist October Revolution itself, and also in the consolidation of the victory of this greatest of revolutions. Many of them broke with Trotskyism and returned to Leninist positions. Was it necessary to annihilate such people?"

Stalin on Trotskyites at February-March 1937 C.C. Plenum, March 3:

"5. It should be explained to our Party comrades that the Trotskyites, who represent the active elements in the diversionist, wrecking and espionage work of the foreign intelligence services, have already long ceased to be a political trend in the working class, that they have already long ceased to serve any idea compatible with the interests of the working class, that they have turned into a gang of wreckers, diversionists, spies, assassins, without principles and ideas, working for the foreign intelligence services.

It should be explained that in the struggle against contemporary Trotskyism, not the old methods, the methods of discussion, must be used, but new methods, methods for smashing and uprooting it."

— J.V. Stalin, *Mastering Bolshevism*. NY: Workers Library Publishers, 1937, pp. 26-7; cited from <http://www.marx2mao/Stalin/MB37.html>

Stalin, concluding speech of Plenum on March 5:

"But here is the question — how to carry out in practice the task of smashing and uprooting the German-Japanese agents of Trotskyism. Does this mean that we should strike and uproot not only the real Trotskyites, but also those who wavered at some time toward Trotskyism, and then long ago came away from Trotskyism; not only those who are really Trotskyite agents for wrecking, but also those who happened once upon a time to go along a street where some Trotskyite or other bad once passed? At any rate, such voices were heard here at the plenum. Can we consider such an interpretation of the resolution to be correct? No, we cannot consider it to be correct.

On this question, as on all other questions, there must be an individual, differentiated approach. You must not measure everyone with the same yardstick. Such a sweeping approach can only harm the cause of struggle against the real Trotskyite wreckers and spies.

Among our responsible comrades there are a certain number of former Trotskyites who left Trotskyism long ago, and now fight against Trotskyism not worse but better than some of our respected comrades who never chanced to waver toward Trotskyism. It would be foolish to vilify such comrades now.

Among our comrades there are also those who always stood against Trotskyism ideologically, but in spite of this kept up personal contacts with individual Trotskyites, which they did not delay in liquidating as soon as the actual visage of Trotskyism became clear to them. It is, of course, not a good thing that they did not break off their personal friendly connections with individual Trotskyites at once, but belatedly.

But it would be silly to lump such comrades together with the Trotskyites."

— *ibid.*, pp. 43-4.

Recall Khrushchev 's own words — exactly what Stalin advocated at the Feb.-March 1937 Plenum:

"After all, around Trotsky were people whose origin cannot by any means be traced to bourgeois society. Part of them belonged to the party intelligentsia and a certain part were recruited from among the workers. We can name many individuals who, in their time, joined the Trotskyites; however, these same individuals took an active part in the workers' movement before the Revolution, during the Socialist October Revolution itself, and also in the consolidation of the victory of this greatest of revolutions. Many of them broke with Trotskyism and returned to Leninist positions." (p. 9; see above)

Further on in the "Secret Speech, in a passage it will be convenient to consider here, Khrushchev returned to the question of Trotskyites in the USSR in the 1930s.

"We should recall that in 1927, on the eve of the 15th Party Congress, only some 4,000 votes were cast for the Trotskyite-Zinovievite opposition while there were 724,000 for the party line. During the 10 years which passed between the 15th Party Congress and the February-March Central Conunittee plenum, Trotskyism was completely disarmed; many former Trotskyites had changed their former views and worked in the various sectors building socialism. It is clear that in the situation of socialist victory there was no basis for mass terror in the country."

Stalin, at the February-March 1937 Central Committee Plenum:

"Call to mind the last discussion on Trotskyism in our Party in 1927... Out of 854,000 Party members, 730,000 members voted at that time. Among them, 724,000 Party members voted for the Bolsheviks, for the Central Committee of the Party, against the Trotskyites, and 4,000

Party members, or about one-half of one per cent, voted for the Trotskyites, while 2,600 members of the Party refrained from voting.... Add to this the fact that many out of this number became disillusioned with Trotskyism and left it, and you get a conception of the insignificance of the Trotskyite forces."

-J.V. Stalin, *Mastering Bolshevism*. NY: Workers Library Publishers, 1937, pp. 59-60. At <http://www.marx2mao.com/Stalin/LMB37.html> (Emphasis added in both cases — GF)

Khrushchev may very well have copied this passage out of Stalin's very speech!

Sudoplatov on guilt of Trotskyites:

"In the interests of the political conjuncture the activities of Trotsky and his supporters abroad in the 1930s are said to have been propaganda only. But this is not so. The Trotskyites were also involved in actions. Making use of the support of persons with ties to German military intelligence [the 'Abwehr'] they organized a revolt against the Republican government in Barcelona in 1937. From Trotskyist circles in the French and German special intelligence services came "indicative" information concerning the actions of the Communist Parties in supporting the Soviet Union. Concerning the connections of the leaders of the Trotskyist revolt in Barcelona in 1937 we were informed by Schulze-Boysen... Afterward, after his arrest, the Gestapo accused him of transmitting this information to us, and this fact figured in his death sentence by the Hitlerite court in his case.

Concerning other examples of the Abwehr's use of their ties to the Trotskyites for searching out leaders of the Communist Party of France who were in hiding in 1941 our resident in Paris, Vasilevsky, appointed in 1940 to the post of plenipotentiary for the Executive Committee of the Comintern, reported to us."

— English translation from Gen. Pavel Sudoplatov, *The Intelligence Service and the Kremlin*, Moscow 1996, p. 58:

The relevant paragraph from the Nazi military court, verifying Sudoplatov's contention:

Anfang 1938, während des Spanienkrieges, erfuhr der Angeklagte dienstlich, daß unter Mitwirkung des deutschen Geheimdienstes im Gebiet von Barcelona ein Astand gegen die dortige rote Regierung vorbereitet werde. Diese Nachricht wurde von ihm gemeinsam mit der von Pöllnitz der sowjetrussischen Botschaft in Paris zugeleitet.

English translation:

"At the beginning of 1938, during the Spanish Civil War, the accused learned in his official capacity that a rebellion against the local red government in the territory of Barcelona was being prepared with the co-operation of the German Secret Service. This information, together with that of Pöllnitz, was transmitted by him to the Soviet Russian embassy in Paris."

("Pöllnitz" was Gisella von Pöllnitz, a recent recruit to the "Red Orchestra" (Rote Kapelle) anti-Nazi Soviet spy ring who worked for United Press and who "shoved the report through the mailbox of the Soviet embassy." Shareen Blair Brysac, *Resisting Hitler: Mildred Hanratt and the Red Orchestra*. Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 237).

— Haase, N. *Das Reichskriegsgericht und der Widerstand gegen nationalsozialistisch Herrschaft*. Berlin, 1993, S. 105. See also Grover Furr. "Evidence of Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan." *Cultural Logic* 2009. At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2009/Furr.pdf>

## **9. Stalin neglected Party**

Khrushchev:

"Was it a normal situation when over 13 years elapsed between the 18th and 19th Party Congresses, years during which our party and our country had experienced so many important events?"



"At the February (1947) Plenum of the CC A[ndrei] Zhdanov spoke about the decision to convoke a regular, 19<sup>th</sup> Congress of the ACP(b) at the end of 1947 or in any case during 1948. Besides that, in the interests of enlivening inner-party life, he proposed adopting a simplified order of convoking party conferences, carrying them out every year with compulsory renewal of the totals of the membership of the Plenum of the CC not less than by one-sixth."

— Pyzhikov, A.V. "Leningradskaia gruppa: Put' vo vlasti (1946-1949)." *Svobodnaia Mysl'* 3, 2001, p. 96.

Khrushchev:

"It should be sufficient to mention that during all the years of the Patriotic War not a single Central Committee plenum took place. It is true that there was an attempt to call a Central Committee plenum in October 1941, when Central Committee members from the whole country were called to Moscow. They waited two days for the opening of the plenum, but in vain. Stalin did not even want to meet and talk to the Central Committee members. This fact shows how demoralized Stalin was in the first months of the war and how haughtily and disdainfully he treated the Central Committee members."

Boris Nikolaevsky's note to the original *New Leader* edition of this speech:

"If one were to trust official Soviet sources, this statement by Khrushchev would not be true: According to the collection, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums* (published by the Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin Institute of the Party Central Committee in 1954), one Central Committee plenum was held during the war (January 27, 1944), when it was decided to give the various Union Republics the right to have their own foreign ministries and it was also decided to replace the Internationale by the new Soviet national anthem."

Nikolaevsky goes on to add: "But it is likely that Khrushchev is correct, that there was no Central Committee plenum in 1944 and a fraud was

perpetrated: The plenum was announced as having occurred although it never had." (note 10)

But Nikolaevsky was wrong. It was Khrushchev, not Stalin, who "perpetrated a fraud."

1989 Russian edition of Khrushchev's Speech, note 8:

By a decree of the Politburo of the CC ACP(b ) of October 2, 1941 there was given the notice of the convocation of a Plenum of the CC ACP(b) on October 10, 1941, with the agenda: "1. The military situation of our country. 2. Party and state work for the defense of the country." By a decree of the Politburo of the CC ACP(b) of October 9, 1941 the convocation of the Plenum was put off "in view of the recently declared state of emergency at the fronts and the inexpediency of recalling leading comrades from the fronts." During the war years there was only one Plenum of the CC, which took place on January 27, 1944.

Decisions of the January 1944 Plenum of the CC are described in a 1985 Soviet textbook. See P.N. Bobylev et al, *Velilkaia Otechestvennaia Voina. Voprosy i Otvety*. Moscow: Politizdat, 1985, at <http://www.biografia.ru/cgi-bin/quotes.pl?oaction=show&name=voyna083>

### **10. Ref. to "a party commission under the control of the Central Committee Presidium"; fabrication of materials during repressions**

Khrushchev:

"The commission has become acquainted with a large quantity of materials in the NKVD archives and with other documents and has established many facts pertaining to the fabrication of cases against Communists, to false accusations, to glaring abuses of socialist legality, which resulted in the death of innocent people. It became apparent that many party, Soviet and economic activists, who were branded in 1937-1938 as "enemies," were actually never enemies,

spies, wreckers, etc., but were always honest Communists; they were only so stigmatized and, often, no longer able to bear barbaric tortures, they charged themselves (at the order of the investigative judges - falsifiers) with all kinds of grave and unlikely crimes."

...

"It was determined that of the 139 members and candidates of the party's Central Committee who were elected at the 17th Congress, 98 persons, i.e., 70 per cent, were arrested and shot (mostly in 1937-1938). (Indignation in the hall.) ... The same fate met not only the Central Committee members but also the majority of the delegates to the 17th Party Congress. Of 1,966 delegates with either voting or advisory rights, 1,108 persons were arrested on charges of anti-revolutionary crimes, i.e., decidedly more than a majority."

— See under Ezhov, below (#17).

## **11. December 1, 1934 "directive" signed by Enukidze**

Khrushchev:

"On the evening of December 1, 1934 on Stalin's initiative (without the approval of the Political Bureau — which was passed two days later, casually) ..."

The 1989 critical edition of the Russian text of Khrushchev's speech (ed. Ayermakher, K, ed. *Doklad NS. Khrushcheva o Kul'te Lichnosti Stalina na XX s"ezde KPSS. Dokumenty*. Moscow: ROSSPEN 2002) states, in n. 11:

This concerns the decree of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union of December 1, 1934 "On the correct method of handling cases concerning the preparation or commission of acts of terrorism," which was later called "the Law of December 1, 1934" and was in force until 1956. The Decree in question was not introduced for confirmation by a session of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR, as demanded in the Soviet Constitution.

See reproduction of the original copy from the Volkogonov Papers online at: [http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/12\\_01\\_34\\_law.pdf](http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/12_01_34_law.pdf)

## **12. Khrushchev Implies Stalin's involvement in Kirov's murder**

Khrushchev:

"It must be asserted that to this day the circumstances surrounding Kirov's murder hide many things which are inexplicable and mysterious and demand a most careful examination. There are reasons for the suspicion that the killer of Kirov, Nikolayev was assisted by someone from among the people whose duty it was to protect the person of Kirov. A month and a half before the killing, Nikolayev was arrested on the grounds of suspicious behavior but he was released and not even searched. It is an unusually suspicious circumstance that when the Chekist assigned to protect Kirov was being brought for an interrogation, on December 2, 1934, he was killed in a car "accident" in which no other occupants of the car were harmed. After the murder of Kirov, top functionaries of the Leningrad NKVD were given very light sentences, but in 1937 they were shot. We can assume that they were shot in order to cover the traces of the organizers of Kirov's killing."

Sudoplatov:

"No documents or evidence exist to support the theory of the participation of Stalin or of the apparatus of the NKVD in Kirov's assassination.... Kirov was not an alternative to Stalin. He was one of the staunchest Stalinists. Khrushchev's version was later approved and used by Gorbachev as a part of his anti-Stalin campaign."

— *Razyedka i Kreml'* Moscow, 1996, pp. 60-61.

Alla Kirilina:

"...Today under the conditions of 'all is permitted' and so-called pluralism articles appear whose authors do not bother with searching out documents and are not burdened by the effort of arriving at an

objective understanding of what happened on December 1, 1934. Their main goal is to declare yet again that 'Stalin murdered Kirov,' though they have neither primary nor secondary evidence for this statement, but instead make broad use of myths, legends, and rumor."

— *Neizvestniy Kirov*. Moscow, 2001, p. 304. On p. 335 of this work Kirilia reveals that Trotsky was the origin of the rumors that Stalin had had Kirov killed. This in turn implies that Khrushchev and Pospelov were copying from Trotsky here.

Arch Getty:

"On Kirov, and in no particular order:

1. Over the years, there were three, and perhaps four, "blue ribbon" investigations of the Kirov killing. Each was commissioned by the Politburo's General Secretary and each, in true Soviet fashion, started with a desired conclusion in advance. Stalin wanted to pin it on Zinoviev and Trotsky; Khrushchev and Gorbachev wanted to pin it on Stalin and all of them handpicked their investigators accordingly. Having been able to acquaint myself with archival materials from these efforts, it is clear that none of the three investigations produced the desired conclusions. In particular, the Khrushchev and Gorbachev-era efforts involved massive combing of archives and interviews and failed to conclude that Stalin was behind the killing. Stalin's effort, of course, concluded that the opposition did it and was the basis for the Moscow trials. But aside from the incredible confessions of the accused, there was no evidence to support this a priori conclusion either."

on the H-RUSSIA discussion list, August 24, 2000. See <http://tinyurl.com/hjput>

### **13. Stalin's and Zhdanov's telegram to the Politburo of September 25 1936.**

Khrushchev:

Mass repressions grew tremendously from the end of 1936 after a telegram from Stalin and [Andrei] Zhdanov, dated from Sochi on September 25, 1936, was addressed to Kaganovich, Molotov and other members of the Political Bureau. The content of the telegram was as follows:

We deem it absolutely necessary and urgent that Comrade Yezhov be nominated to the post of People's Commissar for Internal Affairs. Yagoda has definitely proved himself to be incapable of unmasking the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc. The OGPU is four years behind in this matter. This is noted by all party workers and by the majority of the representatives of the NKVD.

This Stalinist formulation that the "NKVD is four years behind" in applying mass repression and that there is a necessity for "catching up" with the neglected work directly pushed the NKVD workers on the path of mass arrests and executions."

Here is the full text of the telegram, a small fragment of which Khrushchev read out in the "Secret Speech."

CC of the VKP(b). Moscow.

To Comrades Kaganovich, Molotov, and other members of the Politburo.

First, We consider it absolutely essential and urgent that com. Ezhov be appointed to the post of People's Commissar of Internal Affairs. Iagoda has clearly not turned out to be up to his job in the matter of exposing the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc. The OGPU was four years late in this matter. All the party workers and most of the oblast' representatives of the NKVD say this. Agranov can remain as Ezhov's deputy at the NKVD.

Second. We consider it essential and urgent that Rykov be removed as People's Commissar of Communications and Iagoda be appointed to the post as People's Commissar of Communications. We do not think this matter requires any explanation, since it is clear as it is.

Third. We consider it absolutely urgent that Lobov be removed and com. Ivanov, secretary of the Northern Region committee, be appointed to the post of People's Commissar of the Timber Industry. Ivanov knows forestry, he is an efficient man. Lobov as People's Commissar is not up to the job and every year fails in it. We propose to leave Lobov as first assistant to Ivanov as People's Commissar for the Timber Industry.

Fourth. As concerns the PCC [Party Control Commission], Ezhov can remain as Chairman of the PCC at the same time provided that he devotes nine-tenths of his time to the NKVD, and Iakov A. Iakovlev could be promoted to Ezhov's first assistant at the PCC.

Fifth. Ezhov is in agreement with our proposals.

Stalin, Zhdanov

No. 44. 25/IX.36

— *Stalin i Kaganovich. Perepiska 1931-1936 gg.* Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001, No. 827, pp. 682-3. Also at [http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/193\\_dok/19360925stal.html](http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/193_dok/19360925stal.html) and <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/inside/almanah-doc/56532> A slightly different translation is in the English version of this book, *The Stalin-Kaganovich Correspondence*. Ed. R.W. Davies, Oleg V. Khlevniuk, and E.A. Rees. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003. No. 169, pp. 359-60.

Thurston:

What did the four years refer to? Western writers usually answer that the phrase meant the Riutin Memorandum. But in December 1936 Ezhov mentioned, once again in a speech to a Central Committee plenum, 'the formation at the end of 1932 of a Zinovievite-Trotskyite bloc on the basis of terror.' [n. 83, p. 244 to this passages cites an archival document. The partial transcript of the December 1936 CC Plenum printed in VI 1/95, pp. 5-6 mentions these same points, but

without the word "bloc", and without the direct quotation here.]. (p. 35)

Jansen & Petrov:

The "four years" referred to the formation in 1932 of a Trotskiist-Zinovievist bloc, which had been discovered no earlier than in June—July 1936... (p. 54)

#### **14. Stalin's report at the February-March 1937 CC Plenum.**

Khrushchev:

Stalin's report at the February-March Central Committee plenum in 1937, "Deficiencies of party work and methods for the liquidation of the Trotskyites and of other two-facers," contained an attempt at theoretical justification of the mass terror policy under the pretext that as we march forward toward socialism class war must allegedly sharpen. Stalin asserted that both history and Lenin taught him this.

Lenin, saying something like what Stalin said:

The annihilation of classes is a matter of long, hard, and stubborn class struggle, that after the overthrow of the power of capital, after the smashing of the bourgeois state, after the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat does not disappear (as the Philistines of the old socialism and old social-democracy imagine), but only changes its forms, becoming, in many respects, even more ferocious.

- Lenin, V.I. "Privet vengerskim rabochim. 27 maia 1919 g." *Complete Works* (Russian: *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, v. 38, p. 387. Stalin quoted this passage in his April 1929 speech "On the Right Deviation in the Bolshevik Party." At <http://www.hrono.ru/libris/stalin/12-9.html>

At the February-March 1937 Plenum of the CC of the ACP(b) Stalin did make the report with the title Khrushchev cited. But there is nothing in that report that alleges that the class struggle **must** sharpen "as we march forward toward socialism."



Concerning this distortion by Khrushchev in his Secret Speech Richard Kosolapov writes:

In reality the aforesaid thesis, endlessly repeated as "Stalinist", is neither in Stalin's report nor in his concluding speech. It is true that Stalin pointed out the need to "destroy and cast aside the rotten theory that with every advance we make the class struggle here of necessity would die down more and more, and that in proportion as we achieve successes the class enemy would become more and more tractable." Stalin also stressed that "while one end of the class struggle has its operation within the bounds of the U.S.S.R., its other stretches to the bounds of the bourgeois states surrounding us." But he never set forth any "theory of sharpening" in the second half of the 1930s, that is when in the USSR the absolute predominance of socialist forms of the economy had been guaranteed and the Constitution of victorious socialism had been passed..."

— R.K. Kosolapov, "Uverenno torit' tropy v budushchee. Doklad 'O resheniiakh XX i XXII s"ezdov KPSS po voprosu 'O kul'te lichnosti i ego posledstviiah'". (2003). At <http://www.cea.ru/~shenin/news/news20.htm>

Point 7 of Stalin's report of March 3, 1937, and published in *Pravda* on March 29, 1937.

7. We must destroy and cast aside the rotten theory that with every advance we make the class struggle here of necessity would die down more and more, and that in proportion as we achieve successes the class enemy would become more and more tractable.

This is not only a rotten theory but a dangerous one for it lulls our people, leads them into a trap, and makes it possible for the class enemy to rally for the struggle against the Soviet government.

On the contrary, the further forward we advance, the greater the successes we achieve, the greater will be the fury of the remnants of the broken exploiting classes,

the sooner will they resort to sharper forms of struggle, the more will they seek to harm the Soviet state and the more will they clutch at the most desperate means of struggle, as the last resort of doomed people.

It should be borne in mind that the remnants of the broken classes in the U.S.S.R. are not alone. They have the direct support of our enemies beyond the bounds of the U.S.S.R. It would be a mistake to think that the sphere of the class struggle is limited to the bounds of the U.S.S.R. While one end of the class struggle has its operation within the bounds of the U.S.S.R., its other stretches to the bounds of the bourgeois states surrounding us. The remnants of the broken classes cannot but be aware of this. And precisely because they are, they will continue their desperate assaults in the future.

This is what history teaches us. This is what Leninism teaches us.

We must remember all this and be on our guard."

— Joseph Stalin, *Mastering Bolshevism*. NY: Workers Library Pubs, 1937, pp. 1-40. <http://www.marx2mao.com/Stalin/MB37.html>

Stalin's proposal for political education, and for each higher Party official choosing replacements for himself:

The task is to raise the ideological level and political vigor of these command cadres and to introduce among them fresh forces awaiting promotion, and thus expand the ranks of our leading forces.

What does this require?

First and foremost, we must make the proposal to our Party leaders beginning with secretaries of our Party units to the secretaries of regional and republican Party organizations to select, during a definite period, two individuals, two Party functionaries each capable of being able to act as their effective deputies.

The question may be asked: Where are we to get these two deputies for each one, if we have no such people, no workers who correspond to

these requirements? This is incorrect, comrades. We have tens of thousands of capable and talented people. It only needs to know them and to promote them in time so that they should not remain in their old places too long and begin to rot. Seek and ye shall find.

Further, four-month Party courses must be established in each regional center to give secretaries of units Party training and to re-equip them. The secretaries of all primary Party organizations (units) should be sent to these courses and then when they finish them and return home their deputies and the most capable members of the primary Party organizations should be sent to these courses.

Further, to re-equip politically the first secretaries of the district organizations, eight-month Lenin courses must be established in the U.S.S.R., in, say, ten of the most important centers.

The first secretaries of district and regional Party organizations should be sent to these courses, and then when they finish them and return home their deputies and the most capable members of the district and regional organizations sent there.

Further, six-month courses for the study of history and the Party's policy under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union must be set up to achieve the ideological re-equipment and political improvement of secretaries of the town Party organizations. The first and second secretaries of town Party organizations should be sent to these courses and then when they have finished them and return home the most capable members of the town Party organizations should be sent there.

Finally, a six-month conference on questions of internal and international policy under the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. must be established.

The first secretaries of divisional and provincial organizations and the Central Committees of the national Communist Parties should be sent here. These comrades should provide not one but several persons

really capable of replacing the leaders of the Central Committee of our Party. This should and must be done.

— Joseph Stalin, *Mastering Bolshevism*. NY: Workers Library Pubs, 1937, pp.36-38. At <http://www.marx2mao.com/Stalin/MB37.html>

Stalin also made another report at the February-March CC Plenum. It was the concluding report, on March 5.

"But here is the question: how to carry out in practice the task of smashing and uprooting the German-Japanese agents of Trotskyism. Does this mean that we should strike and uproot not only the real Trotskyites, but also those who wavered at some time toward Trotskyism, and then long ago came away from Trotskyism; not only those who are really Trotskyite agents for wrecking, but also those who happened once upon a time to go along a street where some Trotskyite or other had once passed? At any rate, such voices were heard here at the plenum. Can we consider such an interpretation of the resolution to be correct?

No, we cannot consider it to be correct. On this question, as on all other questions, **there must be an individual, differentiated approach**. You must not measure everyone with the same yardstick. Such a sweeping approach can only harm the cause of struggle against the real Trotskyite wreckers and spies.

Among our responsible comrades there are a certain number of former Trotskyites who left Trotskyism long ago, and now fight against Trotskyism not worse but better than some of our respected comrades who never chanced to waver toward Trotskyism. It would be foolish to vilify such comrades now.

Among our comrades there are also those who always stood against Trotskyism ideologically, but in spite of this kept up personal contacts with individual Trotsky

-ites, which they did not delay in liquidating as soon as the actual visage of Trotskyism became clear to them. It is, of course, not a good thing that they did not break off their personal friendly connections with individual Trotskyites at once, but belatedly. But it would be silly to lump such comrades together with the Trotskyites." [Emphasis added, GF]

Further on in the report Stalin made the same point again, explicitly arguing **against** a mass approach (pp. 58-9):

"7. Finally, still another question. I have in view the question of the formal and heartless bureaucratic attitude of some of our Party comrades toward the fate of individual Party members, toward the question of expelling members from the Party, or the question of restoring the rights of Party membership to those who have been expelled.

The fact is that some of our Party leaders suffer from lack of attention to people, to Party members, to workers. Furthermore, they do not study the Party members, do not know what is close to their hearts, and how they are growing, do not know workers in general. They have, therefore, not an individual approach to Party members,

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to Party workers. And just because they have not an individual approach when appraising Party members and Party workers, they usually act at random, either praising them wholesale, without measure, or crushing them, also wholesale, and without measure, expelling thousands and tens of thousands from the Party.

Such leaders try, in general, to think in tens of thousands, not to worry about "units", about individual Party members, about their fate. They think it a mere bagatelle [trifle] to expel thousands and tens of thousands of people from the Party, comforting themselves by the fact that our Party is 2,000,000 strong, and that tens of thousands of people expelled cannot change anything in the position of the Party.

But, only people who in essence are profoundly anti-Party can have such an approach to members of the Party."

— Joseph Stalin, *Mastering Bolshevism*. NY: Workers Library Pubs, 1937, pp.40-63. At <http://www.marx2mao.com/Stalin/MB37.html> Note that in this edition it is erroneously dated March 3, not March 5, but is correctly titled "Concluding Speech."

Stalin's report of the commission on the investigation of Bukharin and Rykov, February 27, 1937. (See Getty & Naumov, 409-11; Russian text in *Voprosy Istorii* 1/94, 12-13, for whole text).

Getty & Nawnov on this report:

"It was quite unusual for Stalin himself to give such reports; this is the first and only time in party history that he did so. This text was truly a hidden transcript; it was never published with any of the versions of the stenographic report and was never transferred to the party archives with other materials of the plenum... The transcript of this ambiguous and contradictory decision on Bukharin never even found its way into the heavily edited and limited-circulation stenographic report, which showed the plenum beginning on 27 February — four days after it actually started." (411)

In his pathbreaking study of archival sources historian IUrii Zhukov cites the unpublished resolution of the February-March 1937 CC Plenum and comments on it.

Just as far from a 'witch-hunt' as were Stalin's final words was the resolution based upon Stalin's report. The Plenum's participants voted in favor of it unanimously and without any comment, as had become customary during the previous few years. The words "treasonous and espionage-sabotage activity of Trotskyist fascists" were mentioned only once and only in the preamble. They served only as a pretext for the presentation of serious shortcomings in the work of Party organizations and of their leaders. The resolution specified the following:

1. Party organizations had been carried away with economic activity and had retreated in their Party — political leading activity, 'had subordinated to themselves and had effaced the local organs of the People's Commissariat for Agriculture, replacing them with themselves, and had turned themselves into narrow economic chiefs.'
2. 'Our Party leaders have turned themselves away from Party-political work toward economic and especially agricultural campaigns, thereby gradually transferring the main base of their work from the city to the oblast. They have begun to look upon the city with its working class not as the leading political and cultural strength of the oblast, but as one of many sectors of the oblast.'
3. 'Our Party leaders have begun to lose the taste for ideological work, for work on the Party-political upbringing of the Party and non-Party masses.'
4. 'They have also begun to lose the taste for criticism of our shortcomings and of self-criticism of Party leaders...'
5. 'They have also also begun to retreat from direct responsibility to the masses of Party members ... they have taken upon themselves to replace elections with co-optation... in this manner a bureaucratic centralism has resulted.'
6. In cadre work, which the resolution also focused on, 'it is necessary to deal with workers not in a formal, bureaucratic manner, but according to the real situation, that is, first of all, from the political point of view (whether they are politically trustworthy) and, second, from the point of view of their work (whether they are suitable for the work they have been assigned).'
7. Leaders of Party organizations 'suffer from a lack of the necessary attention to people, to Party members, to workers ... As a result of such a soulless relationship to people, Party members, and Party workers dissatisfaction and hostility is artificially created in one part of the Party.'

8. Finally the resolution mentions that, despite their lack of education, Party leaders do not want to raise their educational level, to study, to retrain themselves.

Naturally, the resolution echoes with the demand for the immediate removal of the real shortcomings in Party work outlined in this manner. In points one through eight, to condemn the practice of usurpation and effacement of the local organs; to immediately return exclusively to Party-political work and transfer it above all to the city; to give more attention to the press. In points nine through fourteen, to reject decisively 'the practice of turning the Plenums of the oblast committees, regional committees, Party conferences, city activists, etc., into means for parades and demonstrations, and of vociferous praise for Party leaders'; to restore the accountability of Party organs to the Plenums, to stop the practice of cooptation in Party organizations. In points fifteen through eighteen the fundamentally new approach to cadre work is discussed, and in points nineteen through twenty-five the instruction and retraining of Party leaders.'

- IUrii Zhukov. *Inoi Stalin. Politichukie reformy v SSSR v 1933-1937 gg.* Moscow: Vagrius, 2003, pp. 360-363 and notes on p. 506, referring to the archives at RGASPI F.17 Op. 2 D. 612. Vyp. III L. 49 ob.-50.

## **15. "Many Members questioned mass repression". Especially Postyshev.**

Khrushchev:

"At the February-March Central Committee plenum in 1937 many members actually questioned the rightness of the established course regarding mass repressions under the pretext of combating "two-facedness."

Comrade Postyshev most ably expressed these doubts. He said:

"I have philosophized that the severe years of fighting have passed. Party members who have lost their backbones have broken down or



have joined the camp of the enemy; healthy elements have fought for the party. These were the years of industrialization and collectivization. I never thought it possible that after this severe era had passed Krupov and people like him would find themselves in the camp of the enemy. (Karpov was a worker in the Ukrainian Central Committee whom Postyshev knew well.) And now, according to the testimony, it appears that Karpov was recruited in 1934 by the Trotskyites. I personally do not believe that in 1934 an honest party member who had trod the long road of unrelenting fight against enemies for the party and for socialism would now be in the camp of the enemies. I do not believe it... **I cannot imagine how it would be possible to travel with the party during the difficult years and then, in 1934, join the Trotskyites. It is an odd thing...** "

Khrushchev seriously and deliberately distorted what Postyshev actually said in his speech to the February-March CC Plenum. The text of Postyshev's remarks has now been published in *Voprosy Istorii* nos. 5-6, 1995, pp. 3-8. This part is on p. 4.

I will now pause for a bit on my errors in the Kiev oblast Party committee. How is it that I did not personally notice people who sat very close to me. Why could I not notice them, since I worked with them for a fairly long period?

...Here is Karpov. I trusted him very much. Karpov was in Party work continuously for ten years. I took him with me to the Ukraine because he was an old Ukrainian worker, spoke Ukrainian, knows the Ukraine, had lived all the time in the Ukraine and was born in the Ukraine. And not only I myself, but a great many comrades knew him as a decent person.

What led me astray? In 1923-24 Karpov fought with the Trotskyites before my eyes. He also fought them in Kiev. ...**I have philosophized in this manner: that the severe years of fighting have passed**, in which there were such developments that people either **have broken down**, or remained firmly on their feet, **or have joined the camp of the enemy — the years of industrialization and collectivization**, there was a fierce struggle between the Party and the enemies in this

period. I never thought it possible that after this severe era had passed one would then go to the camp of the enemy. And now it turns out that from 1934 he has fallen in to the hands of the enemies and has become an enemy. Of course one can either believe or not believe this. I personally think that it would be terribly hard after all these years for a person **who had trod the long road of unrelenting fight against enemies for the party and for socialism would now be in the camp of the enemies. It is very difficult to believe this.** (Molotov: Hard to believe that he only became an enemy in 1934? Most likely he became one earlier.) Of course, earlier. **I cannot imagine how it would be possible to travel with the party during the difficult years and then, in 1934, join the Trotskyites. It is an odd thing.** There was some kind of worm inside him all the time. When this worm appeared- in 1926 or 1924, or 1930, it's hard to say, but obviously some kind of worm there was, something that did some kind of work on him so that he at length fell into the herd of enemies.

The words Khrushchev quoted in his "Secret Speech" are in **boldface** here. Postyshev's whole speech from the text of *Voprosy Istorii* No. 5, 1995, is here:

<http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/postyshevspmar0437.pdf>

Khrushchev's own harsh speech is in VI no.8, 1995, pp. 19-25. It is available at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/khrushchevspmar0537.pdf>

Postyshev was the harshest in mass expulsions, and was expelled for this at the January 1938 CC. Getty & Naumov discuss this at length on pp. 498-512. Getty quotes at length how Postyshev was raked over the coals at this Plenum for excessive repression.

Zhukov's analysis:

At the January 1938 Plenum the main report was done by Malenkov. He said that the first secretaries were brandishing not even lists of those condemned by the "troikas", but just two lines with an indication of the number of those condemned. He openly accused the first secretary of the Kuibyshev obkom of the party P.P. Postyshev: you

have imprisoned the entire Party and Soviet apparatus of the oblast"! At which Postyshev replied in the same vein, that "I arrested, am arresting, and will arrest, until I annihilate all enemies and spies!" But he was in a dangerous solitude: two hours after this polemic he was demonstratively dismissed from his post as candidate member of the Politburo, and none of the members of the Plenum stood up to defend him.

— *Komsomolkaia Pravda* Nov. 19, 2002.

The document confirming Postyshev's expulsion and arrest is reprinted in Getty & Naumov, pp. 514-6. Khrushchev was one of those who spoke up forcefully against Postyshev (G&N 512). For Khrushchev's appointment to replace Postyshev as candidate member of Politburo, *Stalinskoe Politbiuro...* p. 167.

Rogovin's excerpt from January 1938 CC Plenum on Postyshev:

On the character of Postyshev's speech, which was in fact converted into his interrogation, the following fragment of the transcript will give an idea:

Postyshev: The leadership there (in the Kuybyshev oblast), both that of the party and of the Soviets, was enemies, beginning from the oblast leadership and ending with that of the raions.

Mikoian: Everybody?

Postyshev: How can you be surprised? .... I added it up and it comes out that enemies have been sitting there for 12 years. On the Soviet side the same enemy leadership has been sitting there. There they sat and selected their cadres. For example, in our oblast executive committee we had the most obdurate enemies right down to the technical workers, enemies who confessed to their wrecking activity and behaved insolently, beginning with the chairman of the oblast executive committee, with his assistant, consultants, secretaries — all were enemies. Absolutely all the sections of the oblast executive committee were soiled with enemies. ... Now take the chairmen of the

raion executive committees — all were enemies. Sixty chairmen of raiispolkoms — all enemies. The overwhelming majority of second secretaries — I'm not even speaking of first secretaries — are enemies, and not only enemies, but there were also many spies among them: Poles, Latvians, they selected all kinds of dyed-in-the-wool swine...

Bulganin: Were there at least some honest people there... It turned out that there was not a single honest person.

Postyshev: I am talking about the leadership, the heads. From the leading body, of the secretaries of the raion committees, the chairmen of the raiispolkoms, there was almost not a single honest man. And how can you be surprised?

Molotov: Aren't you exaggerating, comrade Postyshev?

Postyshev: No, I'm not exaggerating. Here, take the oblast executive committee. People are in prison. We have investigative materials, and they confess, they themselves confess their enemy and espionage work.

Molotov: We must verify the materials.

Mikoian: It turns out that there are enemies below, in every raion committee.

Beria: Is it possible that all members of the plenums of the raion committees were enemies?

Kaganovich: There is no basis to say that they are all swindlers.

Stalin evaluated Postyshev's methods this way: "This is the massacre of the organization. They are very easy on themselves, but they're shooting everybody in the raion organizations.... This means stirring up the party masses against the CC, it can't be understood any other way."

— Rogovin, *Partiia rasstrel'nykh*. Ch. 2, Section III: "The January Plenum: The Case of Postyshev." At <http://trst.narod.ru/rogovin/t5/iii.htm> . Fuller text at *Stalinskoe Politbiuro v 30-e gody*, pp. 161-4. See the text of this session with Postyshev from *Stalinskoe Politbiuro...* at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/postyshev0138.pdf>

According to Russian historian, writer, and military figure Vladimir Karpov, Postyshev confirmed his confession to Molotov:

In my conversations with Molotov at his dacha we had a conversation about the repressions. Once I asked:

— Is it possible that you never had any doubts? After all, they were arresting people whom you knew well by their work even before the revolution, and then also in the Civil War.

— Doubts did arise, once I spoke to Stalin about this, and he answered: "Go to the Lubyanka and check on this yourself, take Voroshilov here with you. Voroshilov was then in the office. We both went right away. Those were exactly the days when we had fresh doubts about the arrest of Postyshev. We drove to Ezhov. He ordered Postyshev's file to be brought out. We looked through the transcripts of interrogations. Postyshev admitted his guilt. I said to Ezhov: "I want to have a talk with Postyshev himself." He was brought. He was pale, had lost weight, and generally looked depressed. I asked him: Were his confessions written down accurately in the transcripts of interrogation? He answered: They are written correctly. I asked again — "That means, you admit that you are guilty?" He was silent, and somehow reluctantly answered: "Since I signed them, that means, I admit it, what is there to say... " That's how it was. How could we not believe it, when the man himself said it?"

— Karpov, Vladimir Vasil'evich. *Marshal Zhukov, ego soratnikii i protivniki v gody voiny I mira. Book 1*. Chapter 6, "The Tukhachevsky Affair." At <http://militera.lib.ru/bio/karpov/06.html>

Letter from Andreev to Stalin of January 31, 1938 about Postyshev's lawless and arbitrary repressions:

2) Since August about 3,000 members have been expelled from the party, a significant part of whom were expelled without any basis whatsoever as "enemies of the people" or their confederates. At the plenum of the oblast committee the secretaries of the raion committees brought forward facts, when Postyshev became arbitrary and demanded the expulsion and arrest of honest party members either for the slightest criticism at party meetings of the leadership of the oblast committee [i.e. Postyshev himself] or even without any basis at all. In general this whole tone came from the oblast committee.

3) Since all these matters look like a provocation, we had to arrest a few of the most suspicious, zealous deviationists from the oblast and city committees, the former second secretary Filimonov, the obcom workers Sirotinskii, Alakin, Fomenko, and others. At the very first interrogations they all confessed that they were members of a Right-Trotskyite organization up to the present. Surrounding Postyshev and enjoying his full confidence, they developed their disorganizational and provocational work of dissolving the party organizations and mass expulsions of party members. We also had to arrest Pashkovskii, Postyshev's assistant. He confessed that he had concealed the fact that he had been a Social-Revolutionary in the past, had been recruited to the Right-Trotskyite organization in 1933 in Kiev, and obviously was a Polish spy. He was one of the most active of those in Postyshev's circle in the matter of arbitrariness and disorganization in Kuybyshev. We are untangling matters further, in order to unmask this gang.

4) The oblast committee plenum has not met a single time since the elections in June, the oblast committee directly forbade plenums of the raion committees in Kuybyshev to meet, there were also no activists.

— *Sovetskoe rukovodstvo. Perepiska. 1928-1941.* ed. A.V. Koshonkin et al., Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1999, p. 387. Full text at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/andreevpostyshev0138.pdf>

## 16. Eikhe

Khrushchev:

The Central Committee considers it absolutely necessary to inform the Congress of many such fabricated "cases" against the members of the party's Central Committee elected at the 17th Party Congress. An example of vile provocation, of odious falsification and of criminal violation of revolutionary legality is the case of the former candidate for the Central Committee Political Bureau, one of the most eminent workers of the party and of the Soviet Government, Comrade Eikhe, who was a party member since 1905."

— Eikhe's letter to Stalin of October 27 1939: selections in the Pospelov report, at <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/inside/almanah-doc/55752> . Published in full in Ayermakher, K., ed. *Doklad N.S. Khrushcheva o Kul'te Lichnorty Stalina na XX s"ezde KPSS. Dokumenty*. Moscow: ROSSPEN 2002, pp. 225-229.

We now have a statement by Frinovskii, Ezhov's right-hand man, from April 1939, in which he discusses Ezhov's and Evdokimov's involvement in the Rightist conspiracy. He mentions Eikhe in this connection. Evdokimov mentioned Eikhe in 1935 to Frinovskii:

At one of our meetings in 1935 Evdokimov, in his apartment, told me about a number of people who had been invited to work in Piatigorsk by him. He named Pivovarov, and a large group of Chekists: Boiar, Diatkin, and Shatsky. Here too he told me about his connections with Khataevich, praising him as someone who knew the countryside well; with Eikhe, and about a part of the Leningrad group...

— *Lubianka* 3, p. 40

After one of the sessions of the [October 1937 Central Committee] Plenum, in the evening, Evdokimov, I and Ezhov were at Ezhov's dacha. When we arrived there, Eikhe was already there, but Eikhe did not have any conversations with us. What took place with Eikhe before

our arrival at Ezhov's — Ezhov did not tell me. After dinner Eikhe went away, and we remained and talked almost till morning."

— *Lubianka* 3, p. 44

Iurii Zhukov:

It was June 29 [1937 — GF], the Plenum was already concluding, when a note arrived at the Politburo from the first secretary of the Novosibirsk oblast committee R. I. Eikhe, in which he applied to the Politburo with a request to give him extraordinary powers on a temporary basis in his territory. He wrote that in Novosibirsk oblast a mighty anti-Soviet counter-revolutionary organization, huge in numbers, had been uncovered, one which the organs of the NKVD had not succeeded in completely liquidating. It was, he said, necessary to create a "troika" with the following composition: the First Secretary of the Party obkom [i.e. Eikhe himself — GF], the oblast procurator [prosecutor — GF], and the head of the oblast directorate of the NKVD, with the powers to take operational decisions about the exile of anti-Soviet elements and the carrying out of death sentences on the more dangerous of the numbers of these people. That is, in fact, a military field court, without defense, without witnesses, with the right of immediate execution of sentences. Eikhe's request was rationalized by the fact that, in the face of such a powerful counterrevolutionary organization elections to the Supreme Soviet could bring about an undesirable political result.

— IUrii Zhukov. "Stalin. Inoi Vzgliad. Beseda s avtorom knigi 'Inoi Stalin'". *Nash sovremennik*. 2004, No. 12. Text at <http://nash-sovremennik.ru/p.php?y=2004&n=12&id=4>

Zhukov first developed these ideas in his now-famous series "Zhupel Stalina" ("The scarecrow of Stalin") in *Komsolmolskaia Pravda* in November 2002. This subject is covered in the article of November 16, 2002.

This series is now widely reprinted on the Internet; for example, at [http://www.x-libri.ru/elib/smi\\_958/00000001.htm](http://www.x-libri.ru/elib/smi_958/00000001.htm) (emphasis added — GF).



Zhukov again:

Well, Ezhov received the first [meeting with Stalin] with happiness: it was his appointment in April 1938."concurrently" as the People's Commissar of Water Transportation. The second warning was in August: for four hours Stalin and Molotov tried to convince Ezhov to agree to the candidacy of L.P. Beria as his first assistant [see *Lubianka* 2, 545, for this decree — GF]. And the third, final act of this long procedure was on November 23. Ezhov was again summoned to Stalin, where Molotov and Voroshilov were already present. I have held in my hands the document which Ezhov wrote, obviously at their dictation. It is written on three pages, all of different sizes, that is they snatched up the first sheets of paper they could find at hand and shoved them at Ezhov, just so that he wouldn't stop writing. The following rationale for his dismissal was arrived at: obviously, he resisted, protested. But it was necessary to somehow wrest from him a decision to leave "according to his own wishes." There was written a draft of a decree, which sounds like a guarantee: "To keep comrade Ezhov in the position of secretary of the CC ACP(b), Chairman of the Commission of Party Control and People's Commissar for Water Transportation." Finally the announcement was written and signed: "N. Ezhov." With this the ending of the "Ezhovshchina" began. The Politburo sent on the spot telegrams with the direct text Stop repressions, dissolve the "troikas." Having seized the initiative, the Stalin group had already at the end of 1938 achieved the promulgation of the first judicial processes against NKVD workers accused of falsification and fabrication of cases, according to which they tried, exiled, and executed thousands of people for almost a whole year. That is how they managed to stop the Great Terror."

— *KP* Nov. 20, 2002.

Jansen & Petrov, p. 91:

"Consider the objections raised at the time of the July 1937 Moscow conference by the Western Siberian NKVD chief, Mironov, to Ezhov against the First Party secretary, Robert Eikhe. Mironov reported to Ezhov — according to his testimony after attest — that Eikhe

"interfered in NKVD affairs." He had ordered the chiefs of the Kuzbass NKVD town branches to arrest Party members, although in most cases evidence was missing. Mironov thought his position difficult: either he had to liberate part of the prisoners and clash with Eikhe, or the NKVD organs were forced to "create fictitious cases." When Mironov suggested to orally instruct the NKVD organs concerned only to carry out orders approved by him, Ezhov answered: "Eikhe knows what he is doing. He is responsible for the Party organization; it is useless to fight with him. You better report to me the moot points arising, and I will settle them... Comply with Eikhe's instructions, and don't strain your relations with him." Mironov added that it was Eikhe's habit to "suddenly come to the NKVD apparatus, attend interrogations, interfere in the investigation, and then exert pres- / 92 / sure in this or that direction, thereby muddling the investigation."

But Ezhov stuck to his opinion.<sup>38</sup> [n. 38, p. 237, is to archival documents no longer available: 38. Ibid., [fm previous note — "TsA FSB, f. 3-os, op. 4, d. 6, l. 61."] Archival investigation case of Frinovskii, N-15301, t. 7, ll. 36-37.]

p.107:

Regional Party leaders feared that class enemies would take advantage of the freedom offered at the elections. At the June 1937 Plenum the Kazakh government leader, U. D. Isaev, warned: "We will clash here with a situation of direct class struggle. Even now, mullahs, Trotskiist, and every kind of other counterrevolutionary elements are preparing for the elections."<sup>108</sup> At the October 1937 Plenum the Moscow Party leader, A. I. Ugarov, again pointed to intensifying utterances of hostile activity. By now, however, his Western Siberian colleague R. I. Eikhe was able to establish that, on the contrary, thanks to the crushing of the organized counterrevolutionary base the situation had much improved. Stalin agreed: "People are glad to have freed themselves of the wreckers."<sup>109</sup> For safety's sake, during the same month it was decided to ban contested elections and introduce uncontested single candidacies.

[both nn. 108 and 109 are to archival documents no longer available:  
"108. RTsKhIDNI, f. 17, op. 2, d. 617, l. 167. 109. Ibid., d. 626, ll. 40-41, 62."]

## 17. Ezhov

Although it breaks the order of the original somewhat, it is convenient to examine what Khrushchev says about Ezhov here, since it is closely linked to Eikhe.

Khrushchev:

We are justly accusing Yezhov for the degenerate practices of 1937. But we have to answer these questions: Could Yezhov have arrested Kossior, for instance, without the knowledge of Stalin? Was there an exchange of opinions or a Political Bureau decision concerning this? No, there was not, as there was none regarding other cases of this type. Could Yezhov have decided such important matters as the fate of such eminent party figures? No, it would be a display of naiveté to consider this the work of Yezhov alone. It is clear that these matters were decided by Stalin, and that without his orders and his sanction Yezhov could not have done this.

Frinovskii's statement of April 11 1939:

Before the arrest of Bukharin and Rykov Ezhov, speaking with me openly, started to talk about the plans for Chekist work in connection with the current situation and the imminent arrests of Bukharin and Rykov. Ezhov said that this would be a great loss to the Rights, after that regardless of our own wishes, upon the instructions of the Central Committee large-scale measures might be taken against the cadres of the Right, and that in connection with this his and my main task must be to direct the investigation in such a way so that, as much as possible, to preserve the Rightist cadre. Then he outlined his plan for this matter. Basically this plan consisted of the following: "We must put our own men, in the main, in the apparatus of the Secret Political department (SPO) and to select as investigators those who might be

either completely tied to us or in whose records there are some kind of sins and they would know that they had these sins in their records, and on the basis of these sins we can hold them completely in our hands. We must connect them ourselves to the investigation and direct them." "And this consists in the following", said Ezhov, "not to write down everything that a person under arrest says, but the investigator must bring all the outlines, the rough drafts to the chief of the department, and in relation to those arrested persons who in the past occupied an important position and those who occupy a leading position in the organization of the Rights, it is necessary to write these people down in a special list and to report to him each time. It would be good, said Ezhov, to take into the apparatus people who have already been tied to the organization. "Here, for example, Evdokimov spoke to you about people, and I know some of them. It will be necessary in the first place to draw them into the central apparatus. In general it will be necessary to familiarize ourselves with capable people and from a businesslike point of view among those who are already working in the central apparatus, to somehow bring them close to ourselves and then to recruit them, because without these people it will be impossible for us to arrange our work, and it is necessary to somehow show the Central Committee some work."

In carrying out this suggestion of Ezhov's we chose a firm course in preserving Yagoda's cadres in leading posts in the NKVD. It is essential to mention that we only managed to do this with difficulty, since in various local organs [of the NKVD] there were materials on the majority of these people about their participation in the conspiracy and in anti-Soviet work generally. — p. 42

After the October 1937 Central Committee Plenum I and Evdokimov met for the first time at Ezhov's dacha. At that time Evdokimov started the conversation. Turning to Ezhov he asked: "What's the matter with you, you promised to straighten out Yagoda's position and instead the case is getting more and more serious and now is coming very close to us. Obviously, you are leading this affair poorly." Ezhov was silent at first, and then stated that "really, the situation is difficult, so now we will take steps to reduce the scope of the operations, but obviously, we

have to deal with the head of the Rights." Evdokimov swore, spit, and said: "Can't you get me into the NKVD, I'll be able to help more than the rest." Ezhov said: "It would be good, but the Central Committee will scarcely agree to transfer you to the NKVD. I think that the situation is not altogether hopeless, but you need to have a talk with Dagin, you have influence on him, it's necessary for him to develop the work in the operations department, and we need to be prepared to carry out terrorist acts." — p. 43

... And here Evdokimov and Ezhov together talks about the possible limiting of the operations but, as this was considered impossible, they agreed to deflect the blow from their own cadre and to try to direct to against honest cadres who were devoted to the Central Committee. That was Ezhov's instruction. — p. 44 After the arrests of the members of the center of Rights Ezhov and Evdokimov in essence became the center, and organized:

1) the preservation, as far as possible, of the anti-Soviet cadre of the Rights from destruction; 2) the direction of the blows against honest party cadre who were dedicated to the Central Committee of the ACP(b); 3) preservation of the rebel cadre in the North Caucasus and in other kraia and oblasts of the USSR, with the plan to use them at the time of international complications; 4) a reinforced preparation of terrorist acts against the leaders of the party and government; 5) the assumption of power of the Rights with Ezhov at their head. — p. 45

— *Lubianka 3*, also at:

<http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/frinovskyeng.html>

### **Investigative Work**

The investigative apparatus in all departments of the NKVD was divided into "investigator-bonebreakers", "bonebreakers", and "ordinary" investigators:

[NOTE: Jansen & Petrov translate this word, *kolol'shchiki*, as 'butchers'. 'Thugs' would be a modern English equivalent, meaning

someone whose job is to beat people up. — GF]

What did these groups represent and who were they? "Investigator-bonebreakers" were chosen basically from among the conspirators or persons who were compromised. They had unsupervised recourse to beating arrested persons and in a very short time obtained "confessions" and knew how to write up transcripts in a grammatical and elegant fashion. In this category belong: Nikolayev, Agas, Ushakov, Listengurt, Evgen'ev, Zhupakhin, Minaev, Davydov, Al'tman, Geiman, Lltvin, Leplevsky, Karelin, Kerzon, Iamnitsky, and others.

Since the quantity of those under arrest who confessed due to such methods grew daily and there was a great need for investigators who knew how to compose interrogations, the so-called "investigator-bonebreakers" began, each on his own, to create groups of simple "bonebreakers."

The group of "bonebreakers" consisted of technical workers. These men did not know the evidence concerning the suspect, but were sent to the Lefortovo [prison in Moscow], summoned the accused, and set to beating him. The beatings continued up to the moment that the accused agreed to give a confession. The remaining group of investigators took care of interrogations of those accused of less serious crimes and were left to themselves, without leadership from anyone.

The further process of investigation was as follows: the investigator conducted the interrogation and instead of a transcript put together notes. After several such inter-

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rogations a draft transcript was put together by the investigator. The draft went for "correction" to the chief of the appropriate department, and from him, still unsigned, for "review" to former People's

Commissar Ezhov and in rare cases to myself. Ezhov looked through the transcript, made changes and additions. In most cases those under arrest did not agree with the editing of the transcript and stated that they had not said that during the investigation and refused to sign it.

Then the investigators would remind the arrested party about the "bonebreakers", and the person under investigation would sign the transcript. Ezhov produced the "correction" and "editing" of transcripts, in most cases, never having seen with his own eyes the person under arrest and if he did see him, then only during a momentary inspection of the cells or investigative rooms.

With such methods the investigations supplied the names.

In my opinion I would speak the truth if I declared, in general, that very often the confessions were given by the investigators, and not by those under investigation.

Did the leadership of the People's Commissariat, that is I and Ezhov, know about this? We knew.

How did we react? Honestly speaking — not at all, and Ezhov even encouraged it. No one bothered to find out to which of the accused physical pressure was applied. And since the majority of the persons who were employing these methods were themselves enemies of the people and conspirators, then clearly false accusations took place, we took false accusations and arrested and shot innocent people who had been slandered by enemies of the people from among those under arrest and by enemies of the people among the investigators. Real investigation was wiped out. pp. 45-6.

### **The preparation of the trial of Rykov, Bukharin, Krestinsky, Yagoda and others**

An active participant in investigations generally, Ezhov kept himself aloof from the preparation of this trial. Before the trial the face-to-face confrontations of the suspects, interrogations, and refining, in which

Ezhov did not participate. He spoke for a long time with Yagoda, and that talk concerned, in the main, of assuring Yagoda that he would not be shot.

Ezhov had conversations several times with Bukharin and Rykov and also in order to calm them assured them that under no circumstances would they be shot..... Here Ezhov unquestionably was ruled by the necessity of covering up his own ties with the arrested leaders of the Right who were going into the public trial." — pp. 47-8.

### **Deceiving the party and government**

When Ezhov arrived in the NKVD, in all meetings, in conversations with operational workers, he rightly criticized the institutional narrow-mindedness and isolation from the party, stressed that he would instill a party spirit into the workers, that he did not hide and would never hide anything, ever from the party and from Stalin. In reality he was deceiving the party both in serious, major matters and in small things. Ezhov had these talks for no other purpose than to put to sleep any sense of watchfulness in the honest NKVD workers. — p. 49

— Original at

<http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/frinovskyeng.html>

Ezhov's interrogation of April 26 1939:

ANSWER: I must admit that, although I gave a truthful confession about my espionage work on behalf of Poland, in fact I hid from the investigation my espionage ties with the Germans. — p. 52

Having discussed with EGOROV the current situation, we came to the conclusion that the Party and the popular masses were going with the leadership of the ACP(b) and the soil for the *coup* had not been prepared. Therefore we decided that it was necessary to remove STALIN or MOLOTOV, under the flag of some kind of anti-Soviet organization or other, with the purpose of creating the conditions for my future accession to power. After that, once I had assumed a



position of more power, the possibility of further, more decisive changes in the policies of the Party and the Soviet government, in conformity to the interests of Germany, would be created.

I asked EGOROV to transmit to the Germans, through KÖSTRING, our plans and to ask the opinion of government circles in Germany about this.

QUESTION: What kind of answer did you receive?

ANSWER: Soon afterwards, from the words of KÖSTRING, EGOROV reported to me that government circles in Germany agreed with our suggestion.

QUESTION: What did you undertake in order to effect your traitorous plans?

ANSWER: I decided to organize a conspiracy in the NKVD and to attract into it people through whom I would be able to carry out terrorist acts against the leaders of the Party and government.

QUESTION: Was it only after the conversation with EGOROV that you decided to put together a conspiratorial organization within the NKVD?

ANSWER: No. In fact the matter was like this. Long before this conversation with EGOROV, at the time of my being named Commissar of Internal Affairs, I took with me into the NKVD a group of workers who were closely tied to me through counterrevolutionary work. In this way my confession that I set about organizing a conspiracy should be understood only in the sense that in connection with my conversations with GAMMERSHTEIN and my establishing contact with the military conspirators it became necessary to develop more widely, to accelerate, within the NKVD the setting up of the conspiratorial organization within the NKVD itself. — p. 64

As concerning EVDOKIMOV and FRINOVSKII, the latter was completed introduced to the details of the conspiracy by me, and knew

absolutely everything, including about my ties with the group of military conspirators in the Red Army and in military circles in Germany. — p. 65

... I informed KÖSTRING about the further arrests among the military workers and declared to him that it was beyond my ability to prevent these arrests. In particular I reported about the arrest of EGOROV, which could cause the collapse of the whole conspiracy. KÖSTRING was very much upset by this situation. He put to me sharply the question of whether it was not at this time essential to undertake some kind of measures towards a seizure of power, or you would be smashed one at a time. — p. 67.

ANSWER: I did not meet any more personally with KÖSTRING. After that communications between us were realized through KHOZIAINOV.

QUESTION: Did KHOZIAINOV know about the terrorist acts you were preparing against the leaders of the Party and government

ANSWER: Yes, he knew. Concerning them KHOZIAINOV had been informed not only by roe, but by German intelligence, since during the first meeting after the establishment of contact between us KHOZIAINOV transmitted to me a directive from the Germans: to accelerate as quickly as possible the completion of terrorist acts.

Besides that KHOZIAINOV transmitted to me the directives of German intelligence that, in connection with my dismissal from work in the NKVD and the naming of BERIA as People's Commissar for Internal Affairs German intelligence considered it essential to effect the murder of some one of the members of the Politburo and, in this way, to provoke a new leadership in the NKVD [i. e., Beria's dismissal — GF].

In this same period within the NKVD itself there began arrests of the active participants of the conspiracy I was heading, and there and then we arrived at the conclusion that it was essential to organize an action on November 7 1938.

QUESTION: Who is "we"?

ANSWER: I — EZHOV, FRINOVSKII, DAGIN and EVDOKIMOV.  
— p. 67.

...In one of the meetings in my office in the Commissariat of Water I communicated to LAZEBNY that there were compromising materials on him in the NKVD, that his arrest and doom was threatening.

I told LAZEBNY: 'There's no way out for you, you're doomed, but you can save a large group of people by sacrificing yourself.' During the corresponding questioning of LAZEBNY I informed him that the murder of STALIN would save the situation in the country.

LAZEBNY gave me his consent. — p. 69

— Original at

<http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/ezhov042639.html>

Reason for Ezhov's indictment: Jansen & Petrov, p. 108 ff.

p.108:

Legality was of no concern to Ezhov's NKVD. In January 1939, after his fall, a commission consisting of Andreev, Beriia, and Malenkov accused Ezhov of having used illegal investigation methods: "In a most flagrant way, investigation methods were distorted, mass beatings were indiscriminately applied to prisoners, in order to extort false testimony and 'confessions.'" "During twenty-four hours an investigator often had to obtain several dozen confessions, and investigators kept each other informed about the the testimony obtained so that corresponding facts, circumstances, or names could be suggested to other prisoners. "As a result, this sort of investigation very often led to organized slander of totally innocent people." Very often, confessions were obtained by means of "straight provocation"; prisoners were persuaded to give false testimony about their "espionage activity" in order to help the Party and the government to "discredit foreign states" and in exchange for the promise of release. According to Andreev et al., "the NKVD leadership in the person of comrade Ezhov not only

did not cut short such arbitrariness and excesses in arresting and conducting investigation, but sometimes themselves encouraged it." All opposition was suppressed.<sup>112</sup>

[note 112, p. 241, is to archival documents no longer available: "112. TsA FSB, f. 3-os, op. 6, d. 1, ll. 1-2."]

pp. 109-110:

The functioning of the troikas was also sharply criticized. Andreev et al. reported that there had been "serious slips" in their work, as well as in that of the so-called Grand Collegium [bol'shaia kollegiia], where during a single evening session from 600 to 2,000 cases were often examined. (They were referring to the examination in Moscow of albums in the national operations; before being signed by the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs and the Procurator, the albums were examined by a number of department chiefs of the central NKVD apparatus.) The work of the regional troikas was not controlled by the NKVD at all. Approximately 200,000 people were sentenced to two years by the so-called militia troikas, "the existence of which was not legal." The NKVD Special Board "did not meet in its legal composition even once."<sup>113</sup>

As an executive of the Tiumen' operational sector of the NKVD testified later, arrests were usually made arbitrarily — people were arrested for belonging to groups that did not actually exist — and the troika duly fell in line with the operational group:

At a troika meeting, the crimes of the defendants were not examined. In some days during an hour I reported to the troika cases involving 50-60 persons." In a later interview the Tiumen' executive gave a more detailed account of how the operational group carried out the troika's "first category" sentences. Those sentenced to death were executed in the basement in a special room with covered walls, with a shot in the back of the head, followed by a second shot in the temple. The corpses were then taken away to a cemetery outside town. In Tobol'sk, to which the person involved was transferred in 1938, they executed and

buried right in prison; for lack of space, the corpses were piled up.<sup>114</sup> The assistant chief of the Saratov police administration gave similar testimony: "The basic instruction was to produce as many cases as possible, to formulate them as quickly as possible, with maximum simplification of investigation. As for the quota of cases, [the NKVD chief] demanded [the inclusion of] all those sentenced and all those that had been picked up, even if at the moment of their seizure they had not committed any sort of concrete crime."<sup>115</sup>

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After arrest, Ezhov's deputy, Frinovskii, explained that the main NKVD investigators had been the "butchers" [sledovatelikolol'shchiki], mainly selected from "conspirators or compromised people." "Unchecked, they applied beatings to prisoners, obtained 'testimony' in the shortest possible time." With Ezhov approving, it was the investigator rather than the prisoner who determined the testimony. Afterward, the protocols were "edited" by Ezhov and Frinovskii, usually without seeing the prisoner or only in passing. According to Frinovskii, Ezhov encouraged the use of physical force during interrogations: he personally supervised the interrogations and instructed the investigators to use "methods of physical influencing" if the results were unsatisfactory. During interrogations he was sometimes drunk.<sup>116</sup>

As one of the investigators later explained, if somebody was arrested on Ezhov's orders, they were convinced of his guilt in advance, even if all evidence was lacking. They "tried to obtain a confession from that individual using all possible means."<sup>117</sup> Under arrest, the former Moscow NKVD deputy chief A. P. Radzivilovskii quoted Ezhov as saying that if evidence was lacking, one should "beat the necessary testimony out of [the prisoners]." According to Radzivilovskii, testimony "as a rule was obtained as a result of the torturing of prisoners, which was widely practiced both in the central and the provincial NKVD apparatuses."<sup>118</sup>

After arrest both the chief of the Moscow Lefortovo investigation prison and his deputy testified that Ezhov had personally participated in beating prisoners during interrogation.<sup>119</sup> His deputy, Frinovskii, had done the same thing.<sup>120</sup> Shepilov recalls how after Stalin's death Khrushchev told his colleagues that one day, while visiting Ezhov's Central Committee office, he saw spots of clotted blood on the skirt and cuffs of Ezhov's blouse. When asked what was up, Ezhov answered, with a shade of ecstasy, that one might be proud of such spots, for it was the blood of enemies of the revolution.<sup>121</sup>"

[Notes are on p. 241:

113. Ibid., ll. 2-3. [TsA FSB, f. 3-os, op. 6, d. 1, ll. 1-2 .]

114. Gol'dberg, "Slovo i delo po-sovetski."

115. Hagenloh, "Socially Harmful Elements," p. 301.

116. TsA FSB, Archival investigation case of Frinovskii, N-15301, t. 2, ll: 32-35.

117. B. A. Starkov, "Narkom Ezhov," in J. A. Getty and R. T. Manning, eds., *Stalinist Terror: New Perspective*: (Cambridge, Eng., 1993), pp . 21-39, esp. p. 33; Pravda, 29 April 1988.

11 8. "M. N. Tukhachevskii i 'voenno-fashistskii zagovor,' " *Voенно-istoricheskii arkhiv*, no. 2 (Moscow, 1998): 3-8 1, esp. pp. 55-56.

119. Ibid., p. 50; see also, V. Shentalinskii, "Okhota v revzapovednike," *Novyi mir* 1998, no. 12: 170-96, esp. p. 180.

120. Papkov, *Stalinskii terror v Sibiri*, p. 269; "Tukhachevskii," *Voенно-istoricheskii arkhiv*, no. 1 (Moscow, 1997): 149-255, esp. p. 179.

121. D. Shepilov, "Vospominaniia,". *Voprosy istorii* 1998, no. 4: 3-25, esp. p. 6. [NB: This passage is in Shepilov's memoirs in book format, *Neprimknusvshiy*, M. Vagrius, 2001, p. 43 — GF]

## Stalin blamed Ezhov

Jansen & Petrov, p. 210:

Only months after his fall, Stalin explained to the aircraft designer A. Iakovlev: Ezhov was a scoundrel! He ruined our best cadres. He had morally degenerated. You call him at the People's Commissariat, and you are told that he went out to the Central Committee. You call him at the Central Committee, and you are told that he went out for work. You send for him at home, and it turns out that he is lying in bed, dead drunk. He ruined many innocent people. That is why we have shot him.<sup>42</sup>

From Iakovlev's memoirs:

[Stalin] — Well, how is Balandin?

— [Iakovlev] He's working, comrade Stalin, as if nothing had happened.

— Yes, they imprisoned him for nothing.

Evidently Stalin read astonishment in my look — how then could innocent people be imprisoned? — and without any questions on my part he said:

— Yes, it happens that way. A sensible man, one who works hard, is envied, and they undermine him. And if, in addition, he is bold, speaks his mind — this evokes unease and attracts to him the attention of suspicious Chekists, who do not understand their business, but who willingly make use of all kinds of rumors and gossip.... (Chapter 20).

— Iakovlev, A.S. *The Purpose of Life*. Moscow, 1973, Ch. 20.

Jansen & Petrov:

Because he especially referred to 1938, Stalin suggested that in his opinion in that year, unlike 1937, the terror had gotten out of control

and endangered the country's stability.<sup>43</sup> At the end of his life, Stalin told his bodyguard that "the drunkard Ezhov" had been recommended for the NKVD by Malenkov: "While in a state of intoxication, he signed lists for the arrest of often innocent people that had been palmed off on him."<sup>44</sup>

In interviews in the 1970s, Molotov reasoned along similar lines. According to him, Ezhov had enjoyed a good reputation, until he "morally degenerated." Stalin had ordered him to "reinforce the pressure," and Ezhov "was given strong instructions." He "began to chop according to plan," but he "overdid it": "Stopping him was impossible." Extremely selective in his memory, Molotov gave the impression that Ezhov had fixed the quotas on his own and that therefore he had been shot. He did not agree that Ezhov had only carried out Stalin's instructions: "It is absurd to say that Stalin did not know about it, but of course it is also incorrect to say that he is responsible for it all."<sup>45</sup> Another former Stalin adjutant who justified the purges was Kaganovich. There was sabotage and all that, he admitted, and "to go against the public opinion was impossible then." Only Ezhov "overdid it"; he even "organized competitions to see who could unmask the most enemies of the people." As a result, "many innocent people perished, and nobody will justify this."<sup>46</sup>

[nn. 42-46, p. 261:

42. A. Iakovlev, *Tsel' zhizni*, 2d ed. (Moscow, 1970), p. 509.

43. Reference to 1938 in A. Iakovlev, *Tsel' zhizni: Zapiski aviakonstruktora* (Moscow, 1966), p. 179.

44. RTs.KhIDNI, f. 558, op. 4, d. 672, l. 10.

45. F. Chuev, *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym* (Moscow, 1991), pp. 398-400, 402, 438.

46. F. Chuev, *Tak govoril Kaganovich* (Moscow, 1992), p. 89.]

## 18. Rudzutak



Khrushchev:

"Comrade Rudzutak, candidate-member of the Political Bureau, member of the party since 1905, who spent 10 years in a Tsarist hard-labor camp, completely retracted in court the confession which was forced from him. ... After careful examination of the case in 1955, it was established that the accusation against Rudzutak was false and that it was based on slanderous materials. Rudzutak has been rehabilitated posthumously."

The arrests of Rudzutak and Tukhachevsky were ordered in the same Politburo decision of May 24 1937.

### **No. 136**

Resolution of the Politburo concerning Rudzutak and Tukachevsky

May 24, 1937

309. On Rudzurak and Tukhachevsky.

Set for a vote of the members and candidate members of the CC ACP(b) the following resolution:

"The CC ACP(b) has received information that exposes member of the CC ACP(b) Rudzutak and candidate member of the CC ACP(b) Tukhachevsky in participation in an anti-Soviet Trotskyist-Right conspiratorial bloc and in espionage work against the USSR in the interest of fascist Germany. In connection with this the "Politburo of the CC ACP(b) presents for vote of the members and candidates of the CC ACP(b) a resolution concerning the expulsion from the Party of Rudzutak and Tukhachevsky and giving their cases over to the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs.

— *Stalinskoe Politburo v 30-e gody*. Ed. O.V. Khlevniuk et al. Moscow: AIRO-XX, 1995, p. 156.

Rudzurak named by Stalin in Speech to Expanded Session of the Military Council attached to the People's Commissar for Defense June 2, 1937:

"Trotsky, Rykov, Bukharin — these are, so to speak, the political leadership. To them I also add Rudzutak, who also stood at the head and worked very craftily, confused everything, but all in all turned out to be a German spy; Karakhan; Enukidze."

"Let us continue. I have enumerated 13 people, and repeat their names: Trotsky, Rykov, Bukharin, Enukidze, Karakhan, Rudzutak, Iagoda, Tukhachevsky, Iakir, Uborevich, Kork, Eideman, Gamarnik."

"Bukharin. We do not have evidence that he informed [the Germans] himself, but he had very close connections with Enukidze, Karakhan, and Rudzutak, they advised him..."

"Rudzutak. I have already said that he does not admit he is a spy, but we have all the evidence. We know to whom he gave his information. There is a certain experienced female intelligence agent in Germany, in Berlin. When you may happen to visit Berlin, Josephina Genzi, maybe one of you knows her. She is a beautiful woman. An experienced intelligence agent. She recruited Karakhan. Recruited through sexual encounters [lit. 'on the female side' — GF]. She recruited Enukidze. She helped recruit Tukhachevsky. And she holds Rudzutak in her hands."

"This is the nucleus, and what does it show? Did any of these men vote for Trotsky. Rudzutak never voted for Trotsky, and yet he turned out to be a secret agent. ... There's the worth of your point of view of who voted for whom."

Rudzutak is named many times by defendants at the March 1938 "Bukharin" Trial, many times by Krestinsky alone. According to Krestinsky Rudzutak was one of the central figures of the antigovernment conspiracy.

KRESTINSKY: I learnt from Pyatakov, when he spoke to me about this in February 1935, that an organization had been formed, which united the Rights, Trotskyites and military men, and which set itself

the aim of preparing for a military coup. I also knew that the leading centre included Rykov, Bukharin, Rudzutak and Yagoda from the Rights, Tukhachevsky and Gamarnik from the military, and Pyatakov from the Trotskyites. ... In the beginning of 1935 Pyatakov informed me that an understanding had been reached, named the composition of the centre of which I spoke yesterday, and told me that myself and Rosengoltz, while not joining the centre, would work under its direction, mainly in connection with the planning and preparing of the future government machinery. Here was a division of labour. We were told that we would be connected in this work with Rudzutak from the Rights, and with Tukhachevsky. My impression was that only Rudzutak was mentioned. But Rosengol'ts took an active part in this and he subsequently spoke to me of his meetings with Rykov. In general, it was Rykov and Rudzutak from the Rights, and Tukhachevsky from the military group. There was no such thing as my knowing of the connections with Tukhachevsky and Rosengol'ts's not knowing of them; but, as part of the division of labour, he took upon himself mainly the connections with the Rights, although I was the one who used to see Rudzutak, and, as far as Tukhachevsky was concerned, it was mainly I, but he also.

*Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" Heard Before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R Moscow, March 2-13, 1938... Verbatim Report. (Moscow: People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R, 1938) , pp. 184; 279-80. (1938 Trial)*

Rudzutak is named in that Trial several times by Rozengol'ts, who is himself named by Ezhov:

Question: What did you undertake to do in order to accomplish the Germans' task?

Answer: I promised Kandelaki my support and in fact I did negotiate with Rozengol'ts about the desirability of concluding such an agreement. As a result the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade rendered a positive decision concerning this agreement.

— "Transcript of the Interrogation of the Prisoner Ezhov Nikolai Ivanovich of April 26 1939," *Lubianka. Stalin i NKVD-NKGB- GUKR "SMERSH": 1939-mart 1946*. Moscow, 2006, pp. 63-4. Translation at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/ezhov042639eng.html>

This also confirms his association with the Tukhachevsky military conspirators, with whom Rudzutak was accused of being involved with. Rozengol'ts is named many times as a major Rightist conspirator, and as the person who personally recruited him, by Tamarin, in a recently published interrogation-confession.

Rudzutak was named by Rukhimovich in the latter's confession of January 31, 1938:

Question: What do you know about the activities of this Latvian organization?

Answer: I have already confessed that it was BAUMAN and MEZHLAUK who maintained contact with the Latvians. Therefore they are the ones who should give you the details about the personnel and activities of this organization. All I know is that RUDZUTAK and ALKSNIS headed this organization. The organization was firmly connected with the Latvian and German intelligence services and had a rather large number of counterrevolutionary cadre. In particular the armed units of the military Latvian organization were to have been used in the plan for the 'palace coup.'

— *Lubianka* 3, No. 290, p. 484.

## **19. Rozenblum**

Khrushchev:

The way in which the former NKVD workers manufactured various fictitious "anti-Soviet centers" and "blocs" with the help of provocatory methods is seen from the confession of Comrade Rozenblum, party member since 1906, who was arrested in 1937 by the Leningrad NKVD.

During the examination in 1955 of the Komarov case Rozenblum revealed the following fact: When Rozenblum was arrested in 1937, he was subjected to terrible torture during which he was ordered to confess false information concerning himself and other persons. He was then brought to the office of Zakovskii, who offered him freedom on condition that he make before the court a false confession fabricated in 1937 by the NKVD concerning "sabotage, espionage and diversion in a terroristic center in Leningrad." (Movement in the hall.) With unbelievable cynicism, Zakovskii told about the vile "mechanism" for the crafty creation of fabricated "anti-Soviet plots."

"In order to illustrate it to me," stated Rozenblum, "Zakovskii gave me several possible variants of the organization of this center and of its branches. After he detailed the organization to me, Zakovskii told me that the NKVD would prepare the case of this center, remarking that the trial would be public. Before the court were to be brought 4 or 5 members of this center: Chudov, Ugarov, Smorodin, Pozern, Shaposhnikova (Chudov's wife) and others together with 2 or 3 members from the branches of this center..."

"...The case of the Leningrad center has to be built solidly, and for this reason witnesses are needed Social origin (of course, in the past) and the party standing of the witness will play more than a small role.

"'You, yourself,' said Zakovskii, 'will not need to invent anything. The NKVD will prepare for you a ready outline for every branch of the center; you will have to study it carefully and to remember well all questions and answers which the Court might ask. This case will be ready in four-five months, or perhaps a half year. During all this time you will be preparing yourself so that you will not compromise the investigation and yourself. Your future will depend on how the trial goes and on its results. If you begin to lie and to testify falsely, blame yourself. If you manage to endure it, you will save your head and we will feed and clothe you at the Government's cost until your death.'"

This is the kind of vile things which were then practiced."

For the whole method of beating confessions out of people, innocent or guilty, see part 16. above, on Ezhov, and quotations from Frinovskii's statement.

Jansen and Petrov quote Ezhov as having Zakovskii shot in August 1938 to get him out of the way, so he could not testify against him (Ezhov).

Frinovskii had returned to Moscow on 25 August, just after Beria's appointment, and he was invited straight to the NKVD and stayed with Ezhov for more than an hour. After arrest he testified: "I had never seen Ezhov in such a depressed state. 'Things are rotten,' he said, passing right away to the question that Beria had been appointed contrary to his wish." On 27-28 August Frinovskii met with Evdokimov, who insisted that before Beria arrived he must take care of any unfinished cases (nedodelki) that might compromise them. He told Frinovskii: "Check to see whether Zakovskii and all Iagoda people have been executed, because after Beria's arrival the investigation of these cases may be renewed and they may turn against us." Frinovskii then ascertained that a group of Chekists, including Zakovskii and Mironov, had been shot on 26-27 August (actually they were shot on 29 August).

— Jansen & Petrov, p. 151. This is the same document as the Frinovskii statement published recently (2006) and which I put on the Internet at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/frinovskyeng.html>

Zakovskii was part of Ezhov's conspiracy, along with Frinovskii and others.

Zakovskii was explicitly blamed for torturing people "as a rule" in Stalin's telegram of Jan. 10, 1939. See below for the discussion of this document and the reference to Zakovskii. Khrushchev had this, because he quoted fr. But he didn't quote the part involving Zakovskii, no doubt because it would have undermined his insinuation here that Zakovskii was acting in accordance with Stalin's wishes.

## **20. Kabakov**

Khrushchev:

"Even more widely was the falsification of cases practiced in the provinces. The NKVD headquarters of the Sverdlov Oblast "discovered" the so-called "Ural uprising staff" — an organ of the bloc of rightists, Trotskyites, Socialist Revolutionaries, church leaders — whose chief supposedly was the Secretary of the Sverdlov Oblast Party Committee and member of the Central Committee, All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), Kabakov, who had been a party member since 1914. The investigative materials of that time show that in almost all krajs, oblasts [provinces] and republics there supposedly existed "rightist Trotskyite, espionage-terror and diversionary-sabotage organizations and centers" and that the heads of such organizations as a rule — for no known reason — were first secretaries of oblast or republic Communist party committees or central committees."

From Mirzoian rehabilitation materials, 1955:

Mirzoian further confessed that in 1930-1933, while he was in the Urals, he was supposedly in touch with one of the leaders of the Rights — Kabakov — and continued his counterrevolutionary activity, and in 1933-1938, on the orders of Rykov and Bukharin, he supposedly headed the Right-Trotskyite underground in Kazakhstan.

— *RKEB* 1, No. 52, p. 280.

Kabakov was dismissed from both the CC and the Party itself by a resolution circulated to the CC on May 17-19, 1937 and confirmed at the June 1937 on June 29th.

Kabakov figured in Ezhov's report to the June 1937 CC Plenum on the widespread nature of the conspiracy:

In his report Ezhov sketched an all-embracing conspiracy against Stalin. Allegedly, already in 1933 on the initiative of various opposition groups a united "Center of Centers" had been created with Rykov, Tomskii, and Bukharin on behalf of the Rightists, SRs, and Mensheviks; Enukidze on behalf of the Red Army and NKVD

conspirators; Kamenev and Sokol'nikov on behalf of the Zinovievists; and Piatakov on behalf of the Trotskiists. The main task of the "Center of Centers" or "United Center" had been the overthrow of Soviet power and the restoration of capitalism in the USSR. Reportedly, the military conspirators led by Tukhachevskii, as well as Iagoda and his NKVD people, had also been subordinated to the Center. New in Ezhov's scheme was that in the leadership of every republic or province there were conspirators too. He mentioned the regional Party leaders Sheboldaev from Kursk, Razumov from Irkutsk, Kabakov from Sverdlovsk, and Rumiantsev from Smolensk—all of them Central Committee members who had already been arrested before the Plenum.<sup>104</sup>

104. TsA FSB, f. 3, op. 4, d. 20, ll. 117-22.

- Jansen & Petrov, p. 75 & 233.

Kabakov was named as head of a counterrevolutionary organization in Urals in a note to the Politburo signed by Obkom Secretary, Stoliar.

On the basis of evidence at hand in the obkom and the confessions of five arrested workers of the apparatus specially designated by the CPC [Commission of Party Control — GF] for this oblast the plenipotentiary of the CPC Bukharin [note: not the famous Bukharin — GF.] and the secretary of the Party college Nosov have been exposed as enemies of the people, as active participants in the counterrevolutionary organization headed in the Urals by Kabakov.

— *Lubianka* 2, No. 276, 7 Jan. 1938.

Kabakov was named by Zubarev, one of the defendants in the March 1938 "Bukharin" Moscow Trial, as known by him to be a member of the Rightist conspiracy in the Urals as early as 1929. Rykov, one of the main defendants along with Bukharin, also named Kabakov as an important member of the Rightist conspiracy.

ZUBAREV: ...When I consented he at once told me that I would not be the only one working in the Urals, that there was already an active



member of the counter-revolutionary organization there, very influential, that he was already directly connected with the Union centre through Rykov. He mentioned Kabakov.

ZUBAREV: Rykov referred to A.P. Smirnov and stated that he had heard from him that I was an active member of the Right organization. I described to him the general situation in the Urals, the state of our organization and told him that already at the end of 1929, in December, Kabakov and I had organized a regional leading group which co-ordinated the whole work. I told him who belonged to this group: Kabakov, myself Sovetnikov and others. I told him of the work I had done on Smirnov's instructions and on his, Rykov's, instructions conveyed by Kabakov.

RYKOV: ...There were a number of members of our organization in various places, as has been enumerated, including people like Kabakov, secretary...

— 1938 Trial pp. 139; 160.

Kabakov was named in the Pospelov report, Section II.

The UNKVD of the Sverdlovsk oblast 'discovered' a so-called 'Ural rebellion staff' — an organ of the bloc of Rights, Trotskyites, SRs, Orthodox believers, and the agency of the ROVS [a White Russian Émigré military organization — GF], led by the secretary of the Sverdlovsk obkom Kabakov, member of the CPSU since 1914. 'This staff supposedly united 200 subgroups, formed along military lines, 15 rebellion organizations and 56 groups.

— *RKEB* 1, p. 323; *Doklad Khrushcheva* p. 192.

John D. Littlepage discusses sabotage in Urals (See Chapters 9, 10 and 25 generally on sabotage, or "wrecking.")

On Kabakov specifically:

p. 99:

"It seemed clear to me at the time that the selection of this commission and their conduct at Kalata traced straight back to the Communist high command in Sverdlovsk, whose members must be charged either with criminal negligence or actual participation in the events which had occurred in these mines. / 100 /

However, the chief secretary of the Communist Party in the Urals, a man named Kabakoff, had occupied this post since 1922, all through the period of great activity in developing the mines and industries of the Urals. For some reason which was never clear to me he had always commanded the complete confidence of the Kremlin, and was considered so powerful that he was privately described as the 'Bolshevik Viceroy of the Urals.'

If this man's record was examined, there was nothing to justify the reputation he appeared to have. Under his long rule, the Ural area, which is one of the richest mineral regions in Russia and which was given almost unlimited capital for exploitation, never did produce anything like what it should have done.

... I told some of my Russian acquaintances at the time that it seemed to me there was a lot more going on in the Urals than had yet been revealed, and that it came from somewhere high up.

All these incidents became clearer, so far as I was concerned, after the conspiracy trial in January, 1937, when Piatkoff, together with several of his associates, confessed in open court that they had engaged in organized sabotage of mines, railways, and other industrial enterprises since the beginning of 1931. A few weeks after this trial had ended and Piatkoff had been sentenced to be shot, the chief Party Secretary in the Urals, Kabakoff, who had been a close associate of Piatkoff's, was arrested on charges of complicity in this same conspiracy."

- Littlepage, with Demaree Bess. *In Search of Soviet Gold* NY: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1938 (1937).

John R. Harris gained access to Kabakov's investigative file. He states:

As Kabakov put it, "A large number of party leaders were imperceptibly enveloped into the clique [by means of illegal gifts] such that within a year or two when they understood the criminal nature of what they were involved in, they were already beholden to us."

*The Great Urals: regionalism and the evolution of the Soviet system.* Ithaca: Cornell U.P. 1999, p. 163.

Khrushchev:

### **21. Kosior; 22. Chubar'; 23. Postyshev; 24. Kosarev**

"Many thousands of honest and innocent Communists have died as a result of this monstrous falsification of such "cases," as a result of the fact that all kinds of slanderous "confessions" were accepted, and as a result of the practice of forcing accusations against oneself and others. In the same manner were fabricated the "cases" against eminent party and state workers — Kossior, Chubar, Postyshev, Kosarev and others."

### **Kosior and Chubar'"**

Ezhov's recently-published interrogation-confession of April 26 1939 names both Kosior and Chubar' as among those who "visited" the German intelligence agent Norden who also recruited Ezhov:

Of the large number of people whom NORDEN consulted, I specifically remember GAMARNIK, IAK1R, CHUBAR', PETROVSKY, KOSIOR, VEINBERG, and METALIKOV. Norden also consulted me. — p. 57

— Ezhov interrogation-confession of April 26 1939; see <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/ezhov042639eng.html>

According to the Rehabilitation materials of Postyshev prepared for Khrushchev, Kosier implicated Postyshev, then withdrew his confessions, but then reiterated them again.

Kosior implicated him; then withdrew it; then repeated it. In his own confessions Postyshev implicated Kosior, as well as Iakir, Chubar', and others.

Kosior S.V. at the outset of the investigation named Postyshev among the number of the participants in the military conspiracy in the Ukraine. Then he recanted his confessions, but thereafter he confirmed them again. In Kosior's file there is a statement by Antipov N.K. in which he asserts that there were completely abnormal personal relations between Kosior and Postyshev, and that Postyshev was not in the general center of the counterrevolutionary organizations in the Ukraine. In this situation Kosior's confessions about Postyshev give serious cause for doubting their truthfulness.

— *RKEB* 1, 219-rehab of Postyshev.

Postyshev implicated Kosior:

Postyshev confessed he was guilty in that since 1934 he had been a member of the counterrevolutionary Right-Trotskyite organization in the Ukraine, and that together with Kosior and other participants in the organization he carried out sabotage and subversive work.

Postyshev confessed he was guilty also in that since 1920 he had been an agent of Japanese intelligence, to which he gave information constituting state secrets of the USSR right up to the day of his arrest.

At the preliminary investigation and at trial Postyshev said that he was guilty. However the facts set forth in the transcripts of Postyshev's interrogation were not confirmed during the process of verification.

In the "confessions" of Postyshev it is stated that he was personally tied, in his counterrevolutionary work, to Balitsky V.A., Kosior S.V., Iakir I. E., Chubar' V.Ia., Popov N.N., Musul'bas I.A., and other participants of the anti-Soviet organization in the Ukraine.

— *RKEB* 1, 218.

p. 251 — in rehabilitation documents about Chubar'

The accusations against Chubar' of membership in the Right-Trotskyite organization were based on the indirect confessions of the arrested persons Antipov, Kosior, Pramnek, Sukhomlin, Postyshev, Boldyrev, and others, who, in identifying him as a member of the counterrevolutionary organization, referred to Rykov, Grin'ko, Bubnov and other persons, whose confessions do not mention Chubar'.

p. 252: same, continued:

The accusation against Sukhomlin of membership in the Right-Trotskyite organization and in Japanese intelligence were based on the confessions of the arrested persons Tiagnibeda, Marchak, Shumiatsky, Ermolenko, and others, who referred to Kosior, Postyshev, Iakir, and other persons.

Chubar' was implicated in the Right-Trotskyite conspiracy by Antipov, Kosior, Pramnek, Sukhomlin, Postyshev, Boldyrev, and others.

Kaganovich, interviewed by Felix Chuev:

"The general situation, social opinion was such, that it was not possible. I defended Kosior and Chubar', but when I was shown a whole notebook written by Chubar', his confessions in his own handwriting, I yielded [lit. "spread my arms," a sign of acquiescence].

Chuev, *Tak govoril Kaganovich*, pp. 68-9.

Molotov told Chuev that he himself was present when Antipov, Chubar's friend, accused Chubar'. Chubar' denied it heatedly and got very angry at Antipov. Molotov knew both of them very well. (Chuev, *Molotov: Poludnerzhavnyi Vlastelin*, pp. 486- 7)

According to the Pospelov Report prepared for Khrushchev, Kosior was arrested on May 3, 1938 — that is, under Ezhov, long before Beria arrived at the NKVD — and both tortured (no details are given) and subjected to prolonged interrogations of up to 14 hours at a stretch. Of 54 interrogations

of Kosior only 4 were preserved. This is consistent with the recently-revealed statement by Frinovskii.

No. 139

June 16 , 1938

60. Concerning com. Chubar V.IA.

1. In view of the fact that the **confessions of Kosior, Eikhe, Tr. Chubar'**, and beside that, **the confessions of Rudzutak and Antipov, throw suspicion upon com. V. IA. Chubar'**, the Politburo of the CC considers it impossible for him to remain as a member of the Politburo of the CC and Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the SSR and considers it possible to give him work only in the provinces on a trial basis.

2. To decide the question of concrete work of com. Chubar' in the course of the next two days.

— *Stalinskoe Politburo v 30-e gody*, p. 167. (emphasis added, GF)

Dmitriev's confession:

LIUSHKOV told me that LEPLEVSKII came to the Ukraine and made a big fuss over rooting out all of BALITSKII's people. He arrested a series of leading workers of the Ukrainian NKVD and accused them of carrying out counterrevolutionary activity on BALITSKII's orders, and at the same time conspired with a number of plotters who were supposed to act under his instructions. LEPLEVSKII carried out the fight against the Rights in such a way that he always protected the leadership of the organization from exposure by any means.

In this case the person in question was KOSIOR S.V. He, according to LIUSHKOV 's words, was in fact in command of the operative work of the Ukrainian NKVD...

One time I had the impression and BALITSKII and LEPLEVSKII were at war with one another and were personal enemies. LEPLEVSKII told me that all this was for show only and that in reality he and BALITSKII were in the same counterrevolutionary underground, led by **KOSIOR, who was one of the most clandestine of the Rights in the Ukraine.**

— Lubyanka 2, No. 356, pp. 577-602, at 590-1 (emphasis added, GF).

### **Kosarev**

Kosarev is named by Babulin, Ezhov's live-in nephew, fellow conspirator, and witness to Ezhov's and Ezhov's wife Evgeniia's "moral degeneration," as someone who visited them frequent, along with other conspirators such as Piatakov:

Answer. EZHOV and his wife Evgenia Solomonovna had a wide circle of acquaintances which whom they were on friendly relations and simply accepted into their house. The most frequent guests in EZHOV's home were PIATAKOV, the former director of the State Bank of the USSR MAR'IASIN, the former manager of the foreign section of the State Bank SVANIDZE, the former trade representative in England BOGOMOLOV, the editor of the *Peasant Gazette* URITSKY Semion, KOL'TSOV Mikhail, KOSAREV A.V., RYZHOV and his wife, Ziniaida GLIKINA and Ziniaida KORIMAN.

— Babulin confession, p. 75. At <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/babulinru.html>

Working, it seems, with this same confession by Babulin plus other archival materials no longer available to researchers, Jansen and Petrov hypothesized some kind of similar relationship between Kosarev & Ezhov's wife.

Viktor Babulin added Aleksandr Kosarev and a student of the Industrial Academy, Nikolai Baryshnikov, as persons she had had intimate relations with.<sup>27</sup> Former Komsomol leader Kosarev (who had

been editor in chief of Evgeniia's USSR in Construction) had already been arrested on 28 November 1938 and was shot on 23 February of the following year. He was arrested as a participant in an alleged Komsomol conspiracy, however, and there is no evidence that his case was in any way intertwined with Ezhov's.

— Jansen & Petrov, 185.

Rogovin:

"The Plenum [of the CC of the Komsomol dismissed Kosarev from his position, as well as four other secretaries of the CC of the Komsomol for "callous, bureaucratic and hostile behavior towards honest Komsomol workers who had tried to disclose weaknesses in the work of the CC of the Komsomol, and for taking revenge on one of the best Komsomol workers (the case of comrade Mishakova)."

— Rogovin, *Partiia rasstrelennykh*. Ch. 26, at <http://trst.narod.ru/rogovin/t5/xxvi.htm>

According to Akakii Mgeladze, *Stalin. Kakim Ia Ego Znal*. N.p . (Tbilisi?), n.pub. 2001, Mgeladze, later First Secretary of the Georgian Party but in the 1930s a leading Komsomol figure, discussed Kosarev with Stalin in 1947 (p. 165). During this discussion Stalin told him:

...The question of Kosarev was discussed twice in the Politburo. Zhdanov and Andreev were assigned to verify the evidence. They confirmed that the declarations of Mishakova and others corresponded to reality, and the materials gathered by the NKVD gave no cause for doubt

Mgeladze, who clearly believed that Kosarev was either entirely innocent and had been framed by Beria for personal reasons, or had simply made some mistake or other, replied:

I read the transcript of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the VLKSM [abbreviation for the Komsomol, "All-Union Leninist Communist Soviet of Youth"— GF], at which Kosarev was removed.



In the speeches of both Zhdanov and Andreev, and in Shkiriakov's report everything was so thorough that it was not possible to doubt anything.

According to Mgeladze, Stalin went on to explain that everybody made mistakes, and that many mistakes were made in 1937. But Stalin did not apply this to Kosarev's case. (p.172)

## **25. The Lists**

See citations in the text of Chapter Four.

## **26. Resolutions of the January 1938 CC Plenum**

Khrushchev:

"Resolutions of the January plenum of the Central Committee, All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), in 1938 had brought some measure of improvement to the party organizations. However, widespread repression also existed in 1938."

Getty & Naumov:

"Thus the mass depredations in the party were to be blamed (not without some justification) on former party secretaries who for the most part had already been removed." (496)

"In the months that followed [the January 1938 Plenum], mass expulsions from the party ceased, large numbers of expelled members were readmitted, and recruitment of new members began for the first time since 1933." (497)

Robert Thurston:

Vyshinskii "questioned the whole course of the Terror." (109) "Without the Gensec's [Stalin's] approval, the Procuracy would never have taken the steps it did to protest and curb the Terror."

"Chuianov's account demonstrates that the NKVD had been out of control at the regional level, if not nationally. ... But all the evidence assembled here suggests that the Terror had two tracks: on one, Stalin pushed events forward personally, arranging the show trials and demanding, in a muddled way, that hundreds of thousands be arrested in 1937. **On another level the police fabricated cases, tortured people not targeted in Stalin's directives, and became a power unto themselves.**" (112; see Ch. 4 passim. Emphasis added, GF)

See also Zhukov, *Tainy Kremliia*, Ch. 2; Getty & Naumov 501- 2; Postyshev's insistence on mass expulsions, *Tainy* pp. 50-51. For Malenkov's report, see *Tainy* 48- 9. See decree (*postanovlenie*) "Ob oshibkakh...".)

Benediktov:

Stalin, undoubtedly, knew about the capriciousness and illegalities that took place during the course of the repressions, regretted them, and took concrete measures towards correcting the excesses that had taken place and the liberation of honest people who had been imprisoned I mention by the way that in those days we had little tolerance for slanderers and denouncers. Many of them, after they were uncovered, were hosted in the same camps to which they had sent their victims. The paradox is that some of them, released during the period of Khrushchev's "thaw", started to trumpet about Stalinist illegalities louder than anyone else, and even had the gall to publish their memoirs about them! ...

The January Plenum of the CC ACP(b) in 1938 openly admitted the illegalities committed towards honest communists and non-party people, and to this end adopted a special resolution which, by the way, was published in all the central newspapers. Just as openly, to the whole country, occurred the discussions at the 18<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 1939 concerning the harm done by unfounded repressions. Right after the January 1938 CC Plenum thousands of illegally repressed persons, including prominent military leaders, began to return from their places of imprisonment. They were all officially rehabilitated, and Stalin personally apologized to some of them."

— I.A. Benediktov, "O Staline I Khrushcheve", *Molodaia Gvardiia* No. 4, 1998, 12-65; cited at <http://rksmb.ru/print.php?143> Benediktov was either Minister or First Deputy Minister of Agriculture from 1938 to 1953 (<http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/benediktov.html>)

Lev Balaian:

All together in 1938 there were adopted six resolutions of the CC ACB(b) concerning the facts of violations of socialist legality. Besides those discussed above, they were ... [the six are then enumerated]. The "troikas" and "dvoikas" attached to the NKVD were abolished by order of the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs (L.P. Beria) on November 26, 1938.

- Balaian, *Stalin i Khrushchev*, 28-9/237. All but the first (28 March) are in *Lubianka 2*. The date of abolition of troikas was Nov. 17, 1938, by "Obarestakh..."

On February 1, 1938 Procurator of the USSR A. Ia. Vyshinsky reported to J.V. Stalin and V.M. Molotov that the Main Military Procuracy had heard, on the request of the secretary of the Vologodskii obkom facts concerning especially dangerous crimes committed by a series of employees of the Vologoskii UNKVD. It was established that falsifiers of criminal cases compiled fabricated transcripts of interrogations of accused people, who had supposedly confessed to the commission of the most serious state crimes .... The cases fabricated in this way were handed over to the troika attached to the UNKVD of the Vologodskii oblast, and more than 100 people were shot. ... During the interrogations atrocities were committed, all kinds of tortures were applied to those interrogated. It got to the point that during interrogations by these individuals four of the persons under interrogation had been killed.

The aforesaid case concerning the most serious crimes against socialist legality was held in closed session of the Military tribunal of the Leningrad Military District in the presence of a small group of operative workers of the Vologoskii directorate of the NKVD and the Vologodskii procuracy. The accused Vlasov, Lebedev and

Roskuriakov, as the initiators and organizers of the aforesaid outrageous crimes were sentenced to the supreme penalty — shooting, and the other seven of their collaborators were sentenced to lengthy terms of imprisonment. (L . Mlechin, *Smert' Stalina*, p. 215).

Throughout the whole country there were 11,842 such Vlasovs, Lebedevs and Roskuriakovs, repressed scoundrels who even during the period of careless Gorbachev-era pardoning of almost everyone the infamous Iakovlev Commission did not consider it possible to rehabilitate. (I. Rashkovets. "Nesudebnye Organy", in *Rasprava. Prokurorskie sud'by*, p. 317). It is precisely on the consciences of these falsifiers of criminal cases, accused of the commission of baseless massive arrests and the application of illegal methods of investigation (i.e. tortures — LB.), to whom even a half-century later rehabilitation by the Decree of the Supreme Court of the USSR of January 16, 1989 had been refused — on them lies the responsibility for those same "thousands and thousands of innocently repressed people" whom Khrushchev, and then his creation and student Gorbachev generously "hung" on the dead J.V. Stalin."

- Balaian, *Stalin i Khrushchev*, Ch. 2. at <http://www.stalin.su/book.php?action=header&id=6> Balaian refers to the collection *Rasprava. Prokurorskie sud'by* (Moscow: Iuridicheskaja literatura, 1990), p. 314 for the disbanding of the "troikas" and gives the incorrect date of November 26, 1938. In fact the decree is dated November 17, 1938 (cf. *Lubianka* 2. No. 362, pp. 607-11.)

Vyshinsky's letter to Stalin is in *Sovetskoe Rukovodstvo: Perepiska 1928-1939*. M, 1999, No. 239, pp. 398-400 and is online at [http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/vyshinsky\\_stalinfeb0139.html](http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/vyshinsky_stalinfeb0139.html)

Jansen & Petrov, on Uspensky about Ezhov's directions for massive falsification of cases:

... the notion that the regional NKVD chiefs silently opposed Ezhov's plans and that Ezhov forced them to conduct mass operations under threats of arrest is contradicted by the testimony of another conference

participant, the Orenburg NKVD chief, A. I. Uspenskii (given during investigation in April 1939). In his words, they "tried to surpass each other with reports about gigantic numbers of people arrested."

Uspenskii is of course incorrect in speaking of "people arrested," since the conference dealt with quotas of future arrests in each region.

According to him, Ezhov's instruction amounted to, "Beat, destroy without sorting out," and he quotes Ezhov as saying that in connection with the destroying of the enemies "a certain number of innocent people will be annihilated too," but this was "inevitable."<sup>15</sup> Two other sources offer similar wording: Ezhov announced that "if during this operation an extra thousand people will be shot, that is not such a big / 85 / deal.

During the conference, Ezhov and Frinovskii talked with each of the attending NKVD chiefs, discussing the quotas for arrest and execution put forward by them and giving instructions for the necessary measures in view of the preparation and the conduct of the operation. Mironov informed Ezhov about a "Rightist-Trotskiist bloc" that had been discovered within the Western Siberian leadership. When he called the evidence against some of those arrested unconvincing, Ezhov answered: "Why don't you arrest them? We are not going to work for you, imprison them, and then sort it out afterward, dropping those against whom there is no evidence. Act more boldly, I have already told you repeatedly." He added that in certain cases, with Mironov agreeing, department chiefs could also apply "physical methods of influencing."<sup>17</sup> When Uspenskii asked Ezhov what to do with prisoners older than age seventy, he ordered them to be shot.

Ezhov approved of the activity of those NKVD chiefs, who cited "astronomic" numbers of persons repressed, such as, for instance, the NKVD chief of Western Siberia, citing a number of 55,000 people arrested, Dmitriev of Sverdlovsk province — 40,000, Berman of Belorussia — 60,000, Uspenskii of Orenburg — 40,000, Liushkov of the Far East — 70,000, Redens of Moscow province — 50,000.\* The Ukrainian NKVD chiefs each cited numbers of people arrested from 30,000 to 40,000. Having listened to the numbers, Ezhov in his concluding remarks praised those who had "excelled" and announced

that, undoubtedly, excesses had taken place here and there, such as, for instance, in Kuibyshev, where on Postyshev's instruction Zhuravlev had transplanted all active Party members of the province. But he immediately added that "in such a large-scale operation mistakes are inevitable." (Jansen & Petrov, 131).

Uspenskii was astonished and alarmed by his drunken table talk. During the trip, Ezhov drank uninterruptedly, boasting to Uspenskii that he had the Politburo "in his hands" and could do literally anything, arrest anyone, including Politburo members. (J&P 133)

\* Redens was on the Moscow "troika" with Khrushchev himself.

## **27. "Beria's gang"**

Khrushchev:

Meanwhile, Beria's gang, which ran the organs of state security, outdid itself in proving the guilt of the arrested and the truth of materials which it falsified.

Thurston, p. 118:

"Khrushchev then suggested that police torture continued freely and even increased under Beria. Because part of Khrushchev's purpose in the speech was to show his archenemy and political opponent after Stalin's death in the worst possible light, this claim must not be taken as a definitive statement.

Beria's negative image... has... wrongly overridden the firsthand evidence of what happened when he replaced Ezhov. Boris Men'shagin, a defense attorney in Smolensk, commented that Beria "right away displayed astonishing liberalism." Attests "fell away practically to nothing," as the inmate Alexander Weissberg put it. ... a new and much improved policy was in place. / 119 / Political repression declined acutely in 1939 -41....

In late 1938 prison and camp inmates regained the rights, allowed under Iagoda but lost with Ezhov, to have books and play chess and other games ... Investigators now addressed them using the polite term "vy" instead of the condescendingly familiar "ty." ... torture once again became the exception, contrary to Khrushchev's assertion... prisoners like R.V. Ivanov-Razumnik, Mariia Ioffe, and Abdurakman Avtorkhanov, among others, reported that physical methods ceased where they were being held when Beria assumed control of the police.

Under Beria, a purge swept through the NKVD, removing most of Ezhov's lieutenants and many in the lower ranks as well."

According to the Pospelov report, arrests dropped hugely, by over 90%, in 1939 and 1940 in comparison to 1937 and 1938.

Year	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Arrests	114,456	88,873	918,671	629,695	41,627	127,313
Of whom were executed	1,229	1,118	353,074	328,618	2,601	1,863

<http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/inside/almanah-doc/55752>; published in many places, including *Doklad Khrushcheva*, p. 185.

Executions in 1939 and 1940 dropped to **far less than 1%** of the levels of mass executions in 1937 and 1938. Beria took over as head of the NKVD in December, 1938, so this corresponds precisely with Beria's period in command.

## 28. "Torture telegram"

Khrushchev:

When the wave of mass arrests began to recede in 1939, and the leaders of territorial party organizations began to accuse the NKVD workers of using methods of physical pressure on the arrested, Stalin dispatched a coded telegram on January 10, 1939 to the committee secretaries of oblasts and kraia, to the central committees of republic

Communist parties, to the People's Commissars of Internal Affairs and to the heads of NKVD organizations. This telegram stated:

"The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) explains that the application of methods of physical pressure in NKVD practice is permissible from 1937 on in accordance with permission of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) ... It is known that all bourgeois intelligence services use methods of physical influence against the representatives of the socialist proletariat and that they use them in their most scandalous forms.

The question arises as to why the socialist intelligence service should be more humanitarian against the mad agents of the bourgeoisie, against the deadly enemies of the working class and of the kolkhoz workers. The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) considers that physical pressure should still be used obligatorily, as an exception applicable to known and obstinate enemies of the people, as a method both justifiable and appropriate."

Thus, Stalin had sanctioned in the name of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) the most brutal violation of socialist legality, torture and oppression, which led as we have seen to the slandering and self-accusation of innocent people.

Getty on the original of this telegram, or a similar one.

In the course of this research, we have located the famous 1939 Stalin directive on "physical methods" of interrogation mentioned by Khrushchev in his 1956 Secret Speech (See I.V.Kurilov, N.N.Mikhailov and V.P.Naumov, eds., Reabilitatsia: Politicheskie protsessy 30-50-kh godov [Moscow, 1991], 40). It is in TsA FSB, f.100, op.1, por. 6, ll. 1-2 (second series). **Dated 27 July (not 10 July [this is an error for 10 January — GF] according to Khrushchev)**, it is a telegram from Stalin to party secretaries in all regions. It refers to a still unfound 1937 Central Committee directive authorizing physical methods in exceptional circumstances. Interestingly, the 1939 telegram was



written after N.I. Ezhov's fall, and **in a passage not mentioned by Khrushchev it accuses Ezhov's men of excessive torture, "converting an exception into a rule."**

— Getty, "Excesses Are Not Permitted." *The Russian Review* 61 (January 2002): 113-38, at p.114, n. 45.

I have put a photocopy of the only known text of the "Torture Telegram of January 10, 1939" at

[http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/ShT\\_10\\_01\\_39.pdf](http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/ShT_10_01_39.pdf)

### **Full Text of the "Torture Telegram"**

**Bold** — parts Khrushchev quoted;

*Italics* — section omitted by Khrushchev that proves his intent to deceive his audience.

BY CODE CC VKP(b)

TO THE SECRETARIES OF OBLAST AND REGIONAL PARTY COMMITTEES, CCS OF NATIONAL COMMUNIST PARTIES, PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS, HEADS OF NKVD DIRECTORATES

The CC [Central Committee] of the VKP [All-Union Communist Party] has learned that in checking up on employees of NKVD directorates secretaries of oblast and regional party committees have blamed them for using physical pressure against persons who have been arrested, as something criminal. **The CC of the VKP explains that use of physical pressure in the practice of the NKVD has been permitted since 1937 in accordance with permission of the CC of the VKP.** *At the same time it was stated that physical pressure is permitted as an exception and, in addition, only in relation to blatant enemies of the people who, taking advantage of the humane method of interrogation, stubbornly refuse to give up their co-conspirator; who refuse to confess for months; ;and who strive to slow*

*down the discovery of conspirators who are still at large; and so continue their struggle against Soviet power even from prison. Experience has shown that this policy has produced results by greatly speeding up the exposure of enemies of the people. It is true that subsequently in practice the method of physical pressure was sullied by the scum Zakovsky, Litvin, Uspensky, and others, because they turned it from an exception into a rule and employed it against honest people who had been accidentally arrested. For these abuses, they have been duly punished. But this does not invalidate the method itself, insofar as it is employed correctly in practice. It is well known that all bourgeois intelligence services use physical pressure against representatives of the socialist proletariat and in its most disgraceful forms at that. One won- / page break/ ders why a socialist intelligence service is obliged to be humane in relation to inveterate agents of the bourgeoisie and implacable enemies of the working class and collective farmers. The CC of the VKP considers that the method of physical pressure must necessarily be continued in future in exceptional cases in relation to manifest and unrepentant enemies of the people, as a completely correct and expedient method.* 'The CC of the VKP demands that the secretaries of oblast and regional committees [and] of the CCs of national communist party [evidently a misprint for "parties" — GF] act in accordance with this clarification when checking up on employees of the NKVD.

SECRETARY OF THE CC VKP(b) I. STALIN [typed, not signed — GF]

[Dated by hand — GF] 10/1.-39 g. 15 hrs]

Additionally printed

two cop. 8.II.1956 g.<sup>251</sup>

<sup>251</sup> My translation; that by Mark Kramer on the H-HOAC list Feb. 27 2005, at <http://tinyurl/bqp6j> and widely reprinted — for example, at the Marxist Internet Archive — is inaccurate.

The question of such a telegram was discussed at the June 1957 CC Plenum, more than a year after Khrushchev's "Secret Speech." The entire discussion is a mystery, for there is no reference at all to the document now

identified as the "torture telegram" (above). Instead a different, or two different, documents are under discussion here. The copy from the Dagestan Obkom (oblast' committee) of the Party that Aristov refers to here is not the copy we now have. This whole question has never been satisfactorily resolved.

Kaganovich: If I'm not mistaken, I seem to remember that a document like that was officially sent around to the Party *obkoms* [oblast', or province, committees — GF]. Let's search for it.

Khrushchev: A telegram like that was really sent around. But I am talking about another document. ...

Kaganovich: ... There's a document that was sent around to all the Party *obkoms*.

Voices: That's another document, we all know it.

Khrushchev: But the original is destroyed?

Molotov: The telegram about the use of physical measures of action against spies and the like, about which we are now speaking, was sent around to all members of the Central Committee and to all *obkoms*.

Malin: The original is not in the archive of the Central Committee, it has been destroyed. The telegram exists in the copy that was sent around to the *obkoms*.

Aristov: We found it in only one *obkom* of the Party, in Dagestan.

— *Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich, 1957. Stenogramma iiun'skogo plenuma TsK KPSS I drugie dokumenty*. Ed. A.N. Iakovlev, N. Kovaleva, A. Korotkov, et al. Moscow. MDF, 1998, pp. 121-2.)

Both Iurii Zhukov ("Zhupel Stalina", Part 3. *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, Nov. 12, 2002) and Mark Junge and Rolf Binner (*Kak Terror Stal Bol'shim*. Moscow, 2003, p. 16, n. 14) attest to the fact that Khrushchev seems to have

destroyed more documents than anyone else. Benediktov had also heard of this destruction:

Benediktov:

Competent people have told me that Khrushchev gave orders to destroy a number of important documents related to the repressions of the 30s and 40s. In the first place, of course, he wanted to hide his own part in the illegalities in Moscow and the Ukraine where, currying favor with the Center, he condemned many innocent people. At the same time were destroyed documents of another sort, documents that indisputably proved that the repressive actions undertaken at the end of the 1930s against some prominent party and military figures were justified. It's an understandable tactic: having sheltered himself, he tried to shift the whole blame for the illegalities onto Stalin and the "Stalinists", from whom Khrushchev expected the fundamental threat to his own power.

— *Molodaia Gvardiia* No. 4, 1989, cited at <http://rksmb.ru/print.php?143>

## **29. Rodos tortured Chubar' & Kosior on Beria' orders**

Khrushchev:

Not long ago — only several days before the present Congress — we called to the Central Committee Presidium session and interrogated the investigative judge Rodos, who in his time investigated and interrogated Kossior, Chubar and Kosarev. He is a vile person, with the brain of a bird, and morally completely degenerate. And it was this man who was deciding the fate of prominent party workers; he was making judgments also concerning the politics in these matters, because, having established their "crime," he provided therewith materials from which important political implications could be drawn.

The question arises whether a man with such an intellect could alone make the investigation in a manner to prove the guilt of people such as Kossior and others. No, he could not have done it without proper directives. At the Central Committee Presidium session he told us: "I

was told that Kossior and Chubar were people's enemies and for this reason I, as an investigative judge, had to make them confess that they are enemies."

(Indignation in the hall.)

He would do this only through long tortures, which he did, receiving detailed instructions from Beria. We must say that at the Central Committee Presidium session he cynically declared: "I thought that I was executing the orders of the party." In this manner, Stalin's orders concerning the use of methods of physical pressure against the arrested were in practice executed.

These and many other facts show that all norms of correct party solution of problems were invalidated and everything was dependent upon the willfulness of one man."

Rodos' interrogations, confessions, and case file have never been made available to researchers. As we note in the text, Rodos and other former NKVD men appear to have been scapegoats. If in fact they had followed CC directives, as the "torture telegram" above states, then they had broken no laws even if they did beat or otherwise torture some defendants.

### **30. Stalin didn't heed warnings about war**

Khrushchev:

The power accumulated in the hands of one person, Stalin, led to serious consequences during the Great Patriotic War ... During the war and after the war, Stalin put forward the thesis that the tragedy which our nation experienced in the first part of the war was the result of the "unexpected" attack of the Germans against the Soviet Union .... Stalin took no heed of these warnings. What is more, Stalin ordered that no credence be given to information of this sort, in order not to provoke the initiation of military operations .... everything was ignored: warnings of certain Army commanders, declarations of deserters from the enemy army, and even the open hostility of the enemy. ... Is this an

example of the alertness of the chief of the party and of the state at this particularly significant historical moment?"

Marshal Golovanov:

We normally lay all responsibility for the suddenness of Hitler's attack on our country, which was unexpected as to time, on J.V. Stalin, since he was the head of state, although S.K Timoshenko, as People's Commissar of Defense, and G.K Zhukov, as Head of the General Staff, as well as a number of other comrades, also had direct responsibility. But no one does this. It's just as proper both to speak of the strategic victories that had worldwide significance, and also to credit them to those people who stood at the head of those or other campaigns or of the war as a whole and who were responsible for their fulfillment. This is logical. The great, world-historical victory in the Second World War was won by the country, the party, and the army, all led by Stalin.

— Andrew Kazantsev, in *Nakanune*, June 22, 2005, at [http://www.nakanune.ru/articles/22\\_ijunja\\_dva\\_blickriga](http://www.nakanune.ru/articles/22_ijunja_dva_blickriga)

Vadim Kozhinov.

But if considered dispassionately, both Stalin's and Roosevelt's miscalculations have a completely convincing explanation. The communications of intelligence services are always contradictory to a greater or lesser degrees, because they derive from the most varied, and often deliberately misinformed — sources. Not long ago a collection of documents titled 'Hitler's Secrets on Stalin's Table. Intelligence and Counter-intelligence on the Preparation of German Aggression against the USSR. March-June 1941' was published. This work makes it clear that during this period Stalin received extremely varied intelligence, including disinformation, particularly, information according to which Germany (as Stalin also believed) intended to occupy England before invading the USSR. One of the leaders of the intelligence services of that time, General P. A. Sudoplatov, later remarked: "The information of three *reliable* (my emphasis — V.K) sources from within Germany deserved special attention, [that] the

leadership of the Wehrmacht decisively protested against any war on two fronts.'

Lack of trust of the intelligence information about a German invasion was also caused by the disagreements they contained about the dating of the beginning of the war. 'They specified May 14 and 15, May 20 and 21, June 15 and, at last, June 22 ... Once the first May periods had passed, Stalin ... finally came to believe that Germany would not invade the USSR in 1941 ... '

In the 1960s and later many authors wrote, with great indignation, for example, that no one believed the information that arrived about a week before the beginning of the war and which was obtained by the spy Richard Sorge, who later became world famous, and which gave the accurate date of the German invasion — June 22. However, it was impossible to simply believe it after a series of inaccurate dates that had been communicated through sources considered 'reliable.' (by the way, Sorge himself at first reported that the invasion would take place in May). And contemporary 'analysts', knowing — as does the whole world — that the war began precisely on June 22, and therefore waxing indignant at Stalin because he had neglected Sarge's precise information sent out on June 15, seem naïve at the very least... "

- Vadim Kozhinov, *Rossia. Vek XX. (1939- 1964). Opyt bespristrastnogo issledovaniia*. Moscow: Algoritm, 1999, pp. 73-4 (His chapter 2 is entitled "Suddenness and Lack of Preparation"). Also at [http://www.hrono.ru/libris/lib\\_k/kozhin20v03.php](http://www.hrono.ru/libris/lib_k/kozhin20v03.php)

In the "Secret Speech" Khrushchev said (p. 26):

This pertained, alas, not only to tanks, artillery and planes. At the outbreak of the war we did not even have sufficient numbers of rifles to arm the mobilized manpower. I recall that in those days I telephoned to Comrade Malenkov from Kiev and told him, "People have volunteered for the new Army and demand arms. You must send us arms."

Malenkov answered me, 'We cannot send you arms. We are sending all our rifles to Leningrad and you have to arm yourselves.'

According to Marshal Vasilevskii what really happened was quite different:

In conclusion the Supreme Commander said that he would take all measures to help the Southwestern Front, but at the same time asked them to reply more on themselves in this matter.

— It would be unreasonable to think — he said — that we will give you everything already prepared on the side. Learn to supply and resupply yourselves. Create supply sections with each army, prepare several factories for the production of rifles and machine guns, pull all the strings you need to pull, and you will see that you can create a great deal for the front in the Ukraine itself. That's the way Leningrad is acting at the present time, using its own machine manufacturing bases, and they are to a great extent successful, already have had some success. The Ukraine can do the same. Leningrad has already arranged for the production of RS's. This is a very effective weapon like a minesweeper, which literally crushes the enemy. Why not do this yourselves?

Kirponos and Khrushchev replied:

— Comrade Stalin, we will put all your orders into practice. Unfortunately, we are not acquainted with the construction details of RSs. We request that you order to send us one example of an RS with diagrams, and we will organize construction here. — This answer followed:

— Your people already have the diagrams, and you have had samples for a long time. Your inattention in this serious matter is at fault. Good. I'll send you a battery of RSs, drawings, and instructors in their manufacture. All the best, I wish you success."

- Marshal A.M. Vasilevskii, *Delo vsei zhizni* ('My life's work'). 3rd ed. Moscow, Politizdat 1978, Chapter 11. Cited from the Russian at <http://www.victory.rnil.ru/lib/books/memo/vasilevsky/11.html>



As Vadim Kozhinov points out,

Khrushchev, who in 1956 was striving to discredit Malenkov, his competitor in the struggle for supreme power, unconsciously discredited himself. For by June 22 he had already been 'supreme boss' in Kiev and over the whole of the Ukraine for 3 ½ years, since January 1938 (which, by the way, had a common border with Germany since September 1939!) but, it turns out, had not taken the trouble even to provide himself with rifles! So either Khrushchev either did not pay attention to the 'eloquent evidence' that he cited in 1956, or else he did nothing with this 'evidence' in a practical 'way (for in fact the first secretary of the CC of the Ukraine and member of the Politburo could have prepared those rifles in plenty of time...)

— Kozhinov, V.V., *Rossia: Vek XX (1939-1964)* Chapter 2, p. 50; also at [http://www.hrono.ru/libris/lib\\_k/kozhin20v03.php](http://www.hrono.ru/libris/lib_k/kozhin20v03.php)

The German Army's disinformation plan to spread false rumors to the Soviet leadership, signed by Keitel, is dated February 15, 1941. It is online at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/germandisinfo.html> (in Russian only)

Marshal Meretskov, 1968

I must say something else. Inasmuch as at the very beginning of the war England and the USA became our allies in the anti-Hitler coalition, most people who attempt to critical analyze the decisions made by our government at that time mechanically evaluate them only on the level of the Soviet-German war and thereby make a mistake. For the situation in the spring of 1941 was extremely complicated. At that time we could not be sure that an anti-Soviet coalition of capitalist countries including, let us say, Germany, Japan, England and the USA, would not arise. Hitler decided in 1940 against an invasion of England. Why? Did he not have the strength? Did he decide to deal with England later? Or were, perhaps, secret negotiations going on about a united anti-Soviet front? It would have been criminal negligence not to weigh all the possibilities, because in truth the well-being of the USSR depended on selecting the correct political position. Where will the

fronts be? Where should our forces be concentrated? Only on the Western borders? Or is a war on the southern border also possible? And what will be the situation in the Far East? This multiplicity of paths of possible action, together with a lack of a firm guarantee that the correct path could be immediately chosen in a given case, made for a doubly complicated situation.

— KA. Meretskov, *Na sluzhbe narodu* ("In Service to the People"). Moscow: Politizdat, 1968.

Marshal Zhukov:

I have thought for a long time about all this and here is what I arrived at. It seems to me that the matter of the defense of the country in its basic, broadest outlines and directions was carried out correctly. During a period of many years, in economic and social terms, everything, or nearly everything, was done that was possible. As for the period from 1939 to the middle of 1941, during that period special efforts that demanded all our strength and resources were made by the people and the party to strengthen our defense.

— G.K Zhukov, *Vospominaniia i razmyshleniia* ("Reminiscences and Thoughts"). Vol. 1, Ch . 9. Moscow, 2002.

Marshals Vasilevskii and Zhukov disagreed about whether Stalin should have ordered all the troops to take positions along the border. Commenting on Vasilevskii's article in 1965, Zhukov wrote:

I think that the Soviet Union would have been smashed if we had organized all our forces on the border. It's good that this didn't happen, and if our main forces had been smashed in the area of the state frontier, then the Hitlerite armies would have had the possibility of carrying out the war more successfully, and Moscow and Leningrad would have been taken in 1941. G. Zhukov, December 12, 1965.

— Shaptalov, B. *Ispytania voiny* ("The Trials of War"). Moscow: AST, 2002. Russian edition at <http://militera.lib.ru/research/shaptalov/02.html> . The same passage, with a longer quotation from Vasilevskii's unpublished

MS, is found in Gor'kov, I.U.A. Kremlin. Stavka. General Staff. Tver' 1995, Chapter 4, p. 68. Russian edition at <http://militera.lib.ru/research/gorkov2/04.html>

### **Evidence of Betrayal by Gen. Dmitri Pavlov**

Khrushchev does not explicitly name General Dmitri Pavlov, executed in July 1941 for dereliction of duty in not preparing the Belorussian Front for Hitler's invasion.

There is a good deal of evidence now, from former Soviet archives, that Pavlov was indeed guilty, and a member of a military conspiracy to boot. We omit this material here. Some of it and the references to it are contained in the original Russian language edition of this book (p.368).

### 31. Vorontsov's Letter

Khrushchev:

We must assert that information of this sort concerning the threat of German armed invasion of Soviet territory was coming in also from our own military and diplomatic sources; however, because the leadership was conditioned against such information, such data was dispatched with fear and assessed with reservation.

Thus, for instance, information sent from Berlin on May 6, 1941 by the Soviet military attaché, Captain Vorontsov, stated: "Soviet citizen Bazer ... communicated to the deputy naval attaché that, according to a statement of a certain German officer from Hitler's headquarters, Germany is preparing to invade the USSR on May 14 through Finland, the Baltic countries and Latvia. At the same time Moscow and Leningrad will be heavily raided and paratroopers landed in border cities ...

In *Voенно-Istoricheskii Zhurnal* No. 2, 1992, pp. 39-40 we have the full text of Captain Vorontsov's statement. It is contained in a letter of May 6, 1941 to Stalin from Admiral Kuznetsov. The crucial part omitted by Khrushchev is in **boldface**:

Top secret

May 6 1941

No. 48582cc

CC ACP(b)

Com. STALIN J.V.

Naval attaché in Berlin Captain 1 degree Vorontsov relates: Soviet citizen Bozer (**Jewish nationality, former Lithuanian subject**) communicated to the deputy naval attaché that, according to a

statement of a certain German officer from Hitler's headquarters, Germany is preparing to invade the USSR on May 14 through Finland, the Baltic countries and Latvia. At the same time Moscow and Leningrad will be heavily raided and paratroopers landed in border cities.

**Our attempts to clarify the primary source of this information and to amplify it have not as yet been successful, as bozer has declined to do this. Work with him and verification of the information continues.**

**I believe that this information is false, specially directed through this channel with the object of reaching our government in order to find out how the USSR would react to it.**

Admiral KUZNETSOV

### **32. German soldier**

Khrushchev:

The following fact is also known: On the eve of the invasion of the territory of the Soviet Union by the Hitlerite army, a certain German citizen crossed our border and stated that the German armies had received orders to start the offensive against the Soviet Union on the night of June 22 at 3 o'clock. Stalin was informed about this immediately, but even this warning was ignored.

The soldier, Alfred Liskow:

Many people know that on the night of June 22, 1941 a German soldier fled to our side and reported about the impending invasion of German forces. Beginning with the time of *perestroika* it became fashionable to state that this deserter was quickly shot as a provocateur. For example, here is what is seated on this matter in a biography of Stalin published in New York in 1990:

A German soldier and former communist bravely crossed the border in order to report the precise time of attack. Stalin ordered him to be shot immediately for disinformation.

This is completely false. It is a reference to Lewis Jonathan, Whitehead Phillip. *Stalin. A Time for Judgement*. New York, 1990. p. 121, cited from Zhores and Roi Medvedev, *Neizvestniy Stalin*, Russian ed. Moscow 2002, pp. 309- 10. The English edition of this book, *The Unknown Stalin* (Woodstock and New York: The Overlook Press, 2004), fully refutes Khrushchev's tale on pp. 240-1.

Khrushchev's story is false as well.

We can do no better than to cite at some length from Igor' Pykhalov's eye-opening study *Velikaia Obolganniai Voina* ["The Great Calumniated War" Moscow, 2005. Chapter 9: "The Fate of a Deserter."

Many people know that on the night of June 22, 1941 a German soldier fled to our side and reported about the impending invasion of German forces. Beginning with the time of perestroika it became fashionable to state that this deserter was quickly shot as a provocateur. For example, here is what is stated on this matter in a biography of Stalin published in New York in 1990:

A German soldier and former communist bravely crossed the border in order to report the precise time of attack. Stalin ordered him to be shot immediately for disinformation.\*

But is this so. Let's try to clarify the fate of this man.

German army soldier Alfred Liskow was detained on June 21 1941 at 2100 hours at a unit of the Sokalsk command of the 90th Border unit. At 310 on the night of June 22 the UNKVD of the L'vov oblast transmitted by telephone to the NKGB of the Ukrainian SSR a message with the following contents:

The German corporal who crossed the border in the region of Sokal' declared the following: His name is Liskow Alfred

Germanovich, 30 years of age, a worker, carpenter in a furniture factory in the city of Kohlberg (Bavaria), where he left his wife, baby, mother and father.

The corporal served in the 221st sapper regiment of the 15th division. The regiment is situated in the village of Tselenzh, 5 km north of Sokal'. He was drafted into the army from the reserves in 1939.

He considers himself a communist, is a member of the Union of Red Front-line soldiers, and says that life is very hard for workers in Germany.

Around evening his company commander Lieut. Schulz told them that tonight, after artillery preparation, their unit would begin the crossing of the Bug on rafts, boats and pontoons.

As a supporter of Soviet power, once he learned of this he decided to flee to us and tell us.'

More details about this event are given in the report of the commander of the 90th border unit Major M.C. Bychkovskii:

June 27 at 2100 in the area of the Sokal'sk command a soldier was detained who fled from the German Army, Liskow Alfred. Since there was no translator in the command station, I ordered the commander of the area Capt Bershadsky to take the soldier by truck to the staff of the unite in the town of Vladimir.

At 0030 June 22 1941 the soldier arrived in the town of Vladimir-Volynsk. Through an interpreter at approximately 1 :00 at night Liskow said that on June 22 at dawn the Germans were supposed to cross the border. I immediately reported this to the responsible duty officer of the army staff Brigade Commissar Maslovsky. At the same time I reported by telephone personally to the commander of the 5th army Major-General Potavpov, who regarded my report with suspicious and did not pay attention to it I personally was not firmly convinced of the truthfulness of the

report of soldier Liskow, but all the same I called out the commanders of the zones and ordered them to reinforce the guard at the state borders, to put special listening posts at the Bug river and in the case of the Germans crossing the river to fire upon and destroy them. At the same time I ordered that if anything suspicious is noted (any kind of movement on the opposite bank) to report it to me personally and immediately. I remained the whole time in the staff HQ.

At 100 on June 22 the commanders of the zones reported to me that nothing suspicious was noted on the opposite side of the river, all was calm. In view of the fact that the translators in our unit are not skilled, I summoned from the town a teacher of the German language who has an excellent knowledge of the German language, and Liskow again repeated the same thing, that is, that the Germans are prepared to invade the USSR at dawn on June 22 1941. He called himself a communist and declared that he came over to us on his own initiative especially to warn us. While the interrogation of the soldier was not yet finished I heard from the direction of Ustilug (the first command center) strong artillery fire. I understood that this was the Germans who had opened fire on our territory, which the soldier under interrogation confirmed. I immediately tried to call the commander by telephone, but the connection had been destroyed.

It's perfectly natural that Soviet propaganda tried to make use of Liskow's deed for its own purposes. Here is what is said about this in the memoirs of Major-General Burtsev, who headed the section (from August 1944 division) of special propaganda of the Main Political Directorate of the Red Army:

Already by June 27 the first leaflet of the German anti-fascist Alfred Liskow had appeared. Risking fire from both shores, he had swum the Bug in order to warn our border guards about the imminent invasion of the USSR. Liskow did this as soon as, in the 222nd regiment of the 75th division, where he served, they had been read the order for the invasion. We, of course, could not



miss the chance to speak with this first deserter. Soon Liskow was brought to Moscow. A tall German "of working-class cut" serving as a field medic seemed sympathetic and trustworthy.

"I am from a working-class family in the city of Kohlberg," he said. "My parents and I hate Hitler and his regime. For us the USSR is a friendly country, and we do not wish to fight with the Soviet people. There are many such working-class families in Germany. They do not want war with you."

His story was published in *Pravda*, and it was that story that served as the initial leaflet, printed with his portrait, to inform the German soldiers that there are within the Wehrmacht opponents of the war and Hitlerism, friends of the Soviet Union.

Many participants in the war remember the agitational materials in which Liskow's name appeared. For example, the Leningrad writer Dmitry Shcheglov:

June 28... In the newspapers pasted on the walls people are reading the announcement 'German soldier Alfred Liskow, not wishing to fight against the Soviet people, has deserted to our side.

Alfred Liskow has addressed German soldiers with a call to overthrow the Hitler regime.

And on a second sheet was Liskow's statement and portrait 'Among the German soldiers a mood of depression reigns.

Unfortunately I have not yet been able to trace the further fate of Alfred Liskow. M.I. Burtsev writes:

After that A. Liskow perished, remaining to his last breath true to the idea of the fight against fascism.

However even if it should be that Liskow was later repressed, that did not happen during the first days of the war.

Pykhalov's whole chapter may be consulted (in Russian) at [http://militera.lib.ru/research/pyhalov\\_i/09.html](http://militera.lib.ru/research/pyhalov_i/09.html)

In his memoirs Khrushchev repeats the story of the German soldier's desertion to warn the Soviets, but does not repeat his allegation that the soldier's warning was ignored. As with almost everything in Khrushchev's self-serving memoirs, his version is incorrect, either through design (i.e. a deliberate lie) or through faulty memory. At any rate, Khrushchev was not present and had no direct knowledge of the event.

A soldier fled to us from the forward area. He was interrogated, and all the details named by him and on which his story was based, were described logically and seemed trustworthy. He said that the invasion would start tomorrow at three o'clock. First, why specifically tomorrow? The soldier said that they had received dry provisions for three days. And why at three o'clock? Because the Germans always chose an early hour in such situations. I don't remember whether he said that the soldiers had been told about the three o'clock hour or whether they had heard it through the 'soldier's radio', which always learned the time of attack very accurately. What was left for us to do?

— Khrushchev's memoirs: *Vremia, Liudi, Vlast'*. Vol. 1, Part 2, p. 299.

The article featuring Liskow, with a photograph of him, from *Pravda*, June 27, 1941, p. 2 may be consulted here: <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/liskowpravda062741.pdf>

### **33. Commanders Killed**

Khrushchev:

Very grievous consequences, especially in reference to the beginning of the war, followed Stalin's annihilation of many military commanders and political workers during 1937-1941 because of his suspiciousness and through slanderous accusations. During these years repressions were instituted against certain parts of military cadres beginning literally at the company and battalion commander level and extending to the higher military centers; during this time the cadre of

leaders who had gained military experience in Spain and in the Far East was almost completely liquidated.

No doubt Khrushchev is alluding to the Military Conspiracy and the so-called "Tukhachevsky Affair." He doesn't mention them explicitly, and completely avoids any question of their guilt or innocence. There is a great deal of evidence that Tukhachevsky and the other high-ranking officers tried and executed with him were indeed conspiring with the Germans and Japanese, and with the Rightist forces in the Opposition to overthrow the Soviet government.

Khrushchev would rehabilitate them before long. It is telling that in 1957 and again in 1961 expurgated versions of Komandarm Iona IAKir's letter to Stalin of June 9, 1937, were used by Khrushchev's allies to smear Stalin and those who supported him. The real text of IAKir's letter makes it clear that he is guilty.

None of this means that **all** military commanders who were imprisoned, beaten, tortured, and executed were guilty. Ezhov and his henchmen no doubt framed a good many of them, as he did hundreds of thousands of other innocent persons.

Marshal Konev speaking in 1965 with writer Konstantin Simonov:

To portray the matter as though, if these ten, twelve, five or seven men had not been killed in '37-'38, but had been leading the military at the start of the war, the war would have turned out differently — that is an exaggeration.

— Konstantin Simonov, *Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniia* ("Through the Eyes of a Man of My Generation"). Moscow: Novosti, 1988, 393.

To answer the question which of the men who were killed then, how he would have fought the Germans, how and how long it would have taken to beat the Germans if these men were alive — all these questions, unfortunately, are speculation. At the same time there remains the undeniable fact that those men who remained, who

matured during the war and led the armies, it was precisely they who won the war, at the positions that they gradually came to occupy.

— *ibid* c. 401.

Khrushchev himself was directly responsible for "eradicating" most of the commanders in the Kiev (Ukraine) Military District. Volkogonov quotes a directive from Khrushchev, dated March 1938. The longer version, from the Russian edition, is translated below; a much shorter version is given in the English edition, Dmitrii A. Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy*. (NY: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991), p. 329.

Decree of the Military Soviet of the Kiev Military District concerning the Situation of Cadres of the Command, Operational Command, and Political Staff of the District.

1. As a result of the great work carried out for the cleansing of the forces of the Red Army of hostile elements and of the promotion from below of commanders, political workers, and operational commanders, unquestionably devoted to the work of the party of Lenin — Stalin, the cadre ... are firmly consolidated around our party [and] around the leader of peoples comrade Stalin, and guarantee political firmness and success in the work of elevating the military power of the units of the Red Army...

3. The enemies of the people [*vragi naroda* — here Khrushchev is using the very term he attacked Stalin for 'inventing' and which Stalin virtually never used — GF] succeeded in doing a lot of damage in the area of placing cadres. The Military Council sets as its main task the uprooting to the end of the remnants of hostile elements, deeply studying every commander, operational commander, [and] political worker upon his promotion, boldly promoting proven cadres, devoted and developing...

The commander of the forces of the Kiev Military District, Army Commander second rank Timoshenko; Member of the Military Council Corps Commander Smimov; Member of the Military Council,

Secretary of the CC of the Communist Party of the Ukraine,  
Khrushchev."

Later Timoshenko, Smimov and Khrushchev reported that 'in the total of mercilessly uprooting Trotskyite-Bukharinite and bourgeois nationalist elements' on March 28 1938 there was effected the following replacement of the leading staff of the District:

By rank:

Replaced corps commanders 9 9

Divisional commanders 25 24

Brigade commanders 9 5

Battalion commanders 137 87

Commanders of fortified areas 4 4

Heads of the staffs of Corps 9 b

Heads of divisional staffs 25 18

Heads of staff of the fortified areas 4 3

Heads of staff of battalions 135 78

Heads of sections of the staff of the District 24 19

— Volkogonov, *Stalin*. Vol. 1, Ch. 7, at note 608.

### **34. Stalin's "Demoralization after beginning of war**

Khrushchev:

It would be incorrect to forget that, after the first severe disaster and defeat at the front, Stalin thought that this was the end. In one of his speeches in those days he said:

All that which Lenin created we have lost forever.

The logbooks for June 21 -28, 1941 , were published in *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* No. 2, 1996, pp. 51-54. They have been reproduced here:  
<http://www.hrono.ru/libris/stalin/16-13.html>

Marshal Zhukov:

They say that in the first days of the war J .V. Stalin was supposedly so distraught that he could not even give a radio speech and gave over his presentation to Molotov. This judgment does not comport with reality. Of course during the first hours J.V. Stalin was distraught. But he quickly returned to normal and worked with great energy, though it is true that he showed an excessive nervousness that often hampered our work.

— G.K Zhukov, *Vospominaniia i razmyshleniia* ("Reminiscences and Thoughts"). Vol 1, Ch. 9. Moscow, 2002, cited from the Russian at <http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/zhukov1/10.html>

In his very useful book *Velileiaia Obolgannaia Voina* Igor' V. Pykhalov devotes Chapter 10 of his book, a whole chapter, to this question. It is online in Russian at [http://militera.lib.ru/research/pyhalov\\_i/10.html](http://militera.lib.ru/research/pyhalov_i/10.html)

Roi Medvedev:

Stalin did not go to his Kremlin office on the Sunday; however, the assertion by two biographers, Radzinsky and Volkogonov, that this was the day Stalin fled and shut himself up in the dacha hardly corresponds to what actually happened. Both authors have rather unreliably based their conclusions on the fact that there are no entries in the Kremlin office visitors' book for 29 and 30 June. But according to Marshal Zhukov, 'on the 29th Stalin came to the Stavka at the Commissariat for Defense twice and on both occasions was scathing about the strategic situation that was unfolding in the west.' On 30 June Stalin convoked a meeting of the Politburo at the dacha at which it was decided to set up the State Defense Committee (GKO).

— Roi and Zhores Medvedev, *The Unknown Stalin* (Woodstock & New York: Overlook Press, 2004), pp. 242-3.

Concerning what occurred during these two days, June 29 and 30, 1941 when the register of visitors at Stalin's office show no visitors, we may turn to the work *KPSS v rezolintsiiakh i resheniiakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i Plenumov TsK* ("The Communist Party of the Soviet Union in resolutions and decisions of congresses, conferences, and Central Committee Plenums"), vol. 6 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1971), p. 19.

June 29, 1941, that is one week after the beginning of the invasion was issued the Directive of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (b) to party and Soviet organizations of the oblasts at or near the front.

In regions occupied by the enemy, form partisan units and diversionist groups to fight against the units of the enemy army, to ignite partisan warfare everywhere, to blow up bridges, roads, to ruin telephone and telegraph communications, to set fire to stores, etc. In occupied areas, create unbearable conditions for the enemy and for all those who collaborate with them, pursue and destroy them at every step, break up all their undertakings.

— Cited by V.V. Kvachkov, *Spetsnaz Rossii*. Moscow: Voennaia literature, 2004, at [http://militera.lib.ru/science/kvachkov\\_vv/02.html](http://militera.lib.ru/science/kvachkov_vv/02.html). The full document is quoted at <http://www.battlefidd.ru/en/documents/87-orders-and-reports/314-order-to-soviet-organizations-frontline-1941.html>

On June 20 1941 the decision to form the State Committee for Defense, headed by Stalin, was formed.

Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR, and the Central Committee of the ACP(b) of June 30, 1941:

In view of the extraordinary situation that has arisen and in the interest of the rapid mobilization of all the forces of the peoples of the USSR for organizing resistance to the enemy that has treacherously invaded

our Motherland, the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Central Committee of the ACP(b), and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR has determined it is necessary:

1. To establish the State Committee for Defense, with the following members:

com. Stalin J.V. (Chairman)

com. Molotov V.M. (Deputy Chairman)

com. Voroshilov K.E.

com. Malenkov G.M.

com. Beria L.P.

2. To concentrate all the fullness of the power of the state into the hands of the State Committee for Defense.

3. To obligate all citizens and all party, soviet, Young Communist League, and military organs to unconditionally carry out the decisions and measures taken by the State Committee for Defense.

Chairman of the Presidium

Of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR M.I. KALININ

Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the SSR

And Secretary of the CC of the ACP(b) J.V. STALIN

Moscow. The Kremlin. June 30, 1941.

— <http://www.hrono.ru/libris/stalin/15-21.html>

Volkogonov:

"No, Stalin suffered no great shock on the first day of the war."



— Stalin, vol. 2, Ch. 8, cited from the Russian at [http://militera.lib.ru/bio/volkogonov\\_dv/08.html](http://militera.lib.ru/bio/volkogonov_dv/08.html)

According to Pavel Sudoplatov in his memoirs:

In various books, and in particular in Khrushchev's memoirs we read of the panic that seized Stalin in the first days of the war. For my part I can state that I observed nothing of the sort .... The published notes of the Kremlin visitors [to Stalin's office — GF) prove that he received people regularly and personally, directly followed the situation as it worsened day by day.

— *Razyedka i Kreml Zapiski nezhelatel'nogo svidetelia*. Moscow, 1996, pp. 159-60.

### **35. Stalin A Bad Commander**

Khrushchev:

Stalin was very far from an understanding of the real situation which was developing at the front. This was natural because, during the whole Patriotic War, he never visited any section of the front or any liberated city except for one short ride on the Mozhaisk highway during a stabilized situation at the front. To this incident were dedicated many literary works full of fantasies of all sorts and so many paintings. Simultaneously, Stalin was interfering with operations and issuing orders which did not take into consideration the real situation at a given section of the front and which could not help but result in huge personnel losses.

Marshal Zhukov:

In directing of military struggle as a whole J.V. Stalin was aided by his natural intelligence, experience of political leadership, wealth of intuition, [and] broad knowledge. He knew how to find the main link in a strategic situation and, by seizing it, to find the road for opposing the enemy, of successfully carrying out that or another offensive operation. Undoubtedly he was a worthy Supreme Commander...

Besides that, in guaranteeing operations, the creation of strategic reserves, in the organizing of the production of military technology and in general in the creation of everything essential for waging war the Supreme Commander, I tell you directly, showed himself to be a superb organizer. And it would be unjust if we were not to give him his due in this manner."

— Zhukov, *Memoirs and Reflections*, Ch. 11, cited from the Russian at <http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/zhukov1/11.html>

Marshal Vasilevskii:

I also had good relations with N.S. Khrushchev in the first postwar years. But they changed sharply after I refused to support his statements that J.V. Stalin was not able to understand operational-strategic questions and as Supreme Commander led the movements of armies in an unqualified manner. To this day I cannot understand how he could have said that. Having been a member of the Politburo of the CC of the party and member of the Military Soviets of a series of fronts, N.S. Khrushchev could not be ignorant of how the authority of the Stavka and of Stalin was in questions of leading military actions. Neither could he have been ignorant of the fact that the commanders of the fronts and armies related to the Stavka and to Stalin with great respect and valued them for their exceptional competence in the leading of military struggles.

— Marshal A.M Vasilevskii, *Delo vsei zhizni* ("My life's work"). 3rd ed. Moscow, Politizdat 1978, Chapter 11, cited from the Russian at <http://victory.mil.ru/lib/books/memo/vasilevsky/16.html>

Admiral N.G. Kuznetsov put it this way:

During the years of the war Marshal G.K Zhukov met with the Supreme Commander on military matters more often than anyone else, and no one could give a better characterization of him, and Zhukov called him 'A worthy Supreme Commander.' As far as I know, all the military commanders who saw and met with Stalin are of the same opinion, as far as I know.

— N.G. Kuznetsov, cited from his memoirs in Russian at [http://www.victory.rnil.ru/lib/books/memo/kuznetsov\\_ng3/01.html](http://www.victory.rnil.ru/lib/books/memo/kuznetsov_ng3/01.html) Also in *Voенно-Istoricheskii Zhurnal*, 4 (1993), p. 51.

Marshal Golovanov:

Stalin's specific gravity [i.e. weight — GF] in the course of the war was very high both among commanders of the Red Army and among all soldiers and officers. This is an indisputable fact....

I was fortunate to work with a great man, one of the greatest, for whom nothing was more important than the interests of our state and people, who lived his whole life not for himself and strove to make our state the most progressive and powerful in the world. And I say this, I who also went through the year 1937!

— Felix Chuev, "Nespisochnyi marshal" ("An unscheduled [i.e. extraordinary] marshal"), cited from the Russian at [http://www.pseudology.org/Chuev/Golovanov\\_01.htm](http://www.pseudology.org/Chuev/Golovanov_01.htm)

Concerning Stalin's supposedly making all decisions instead of his generals Marshal Bagramian, to whom Khrushchev referred as someone who was present and who would confirm what he said, instead wrote the following:

Aware of Stalin's immense power and truly iron will, I was amazed at his manner of leading. He could simply command: 'Commit the corps.' — period'. But Stalin, with great tact and patience, tried to lead the person who had to carry out the order to arrive at the conclusion that this step was essential. Afterwards I myself, as front commander, had the opportunity to speak with the Supreme Commander rather often, and I became convinced that he knew how to listen attentively to the opinions of his subordinates. If the officer in charge firmly stood his ground and, in defense of his own opinion, set forth weighty arguments, Stalin almost always yielded.

I. Kh. Bagramian. *Tak nachinalas' voina*. Kiev: Politizdat Ukrainy, 1977. Online at <http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/bagramyanl/index.html> This

exact citation is in Part 4, "Krushenie mifa." Chapter 2: "Otkhod otkhodu rozn", p. 404 (at <http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/bagramyanl/04.html>)

### **36. Khar'kov 1942**

Khrushchev:

I will allow myself in this connection to bring out one characteristic fact which illustrates how Stalin directed operations at the fronts. There is present at this Congress Marshal Bagramian, who was once the chief of operations in the headquarters of the southwestern front and who can corroborate what I will tell you. When there developed an exceptionally serious situation for our Army in 1942 in the Kharkov region ... And what was the result of this? The worst that we had expected. The Germans surrounded our Army concentrations and consequently we lost hundreds of thousands of our soldiers. This is Stalin's military "genius"; this is what it cost us.

According to Sergei Konstantinov:

It was not only many common people who were thunderstruck and upset by Khrushchev's de-Stalinization. How was it for those high-ranking military commanders sitting in the hall at the session of the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress, who knew all Stalin's strong and weak sides, to hear Khrushchev's bald-faced lie that in developing plans for military operations Stalin used only a globe? Khrushchev told an obvious lie in laying the whole responsibility for the Red Army's catastrophe at Khar'kov in 1942 exclusively on Stalin. Alexander Vasilevskii, Georgii Zhukov, [and) Sergei Shtemenko in their memoirs cite facts, fully confirmed by the latest archival publications, about how the main weight of responsibility for this catastrophe should fall on Khrushchev, on Semion Timoshenko, commander of the South-West front, and on Ivan Bagramian, member of the Military Council of that front. The majority of higher military leaders who had gone through the war with Stalin doubtless were very negative towards the de-Stalinization that Khrushchev carried out in the first place because Nikita Sergeevich crudely falsified historical facts. In addition some of these military

commanders harbored the warmest feelings towards Stalin simply as a man. The Chief Marshal of aviation Alexander Golovanov told the writer Felix Chuev about the following episode. Once Khrushchev asked Marshal Rokossovsky to write an article about Stalin in the spirit of the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress. As answer Khrushchev heard: 'Nikita Sergeevich, for me comrade Stalin is a saint.' On another occasion Rokossovsky together with Golovanov refused to drink a toast with Khrushchev at some banquet or other.

— Sergei Konstantinov. "Shokovaia terapia Nikity Khrushcheva." *Nezavisimaia Gazeta* February 14, 2001. At [http://www.ng.ru/style/2001-02-14/16\\_therapy.html](http://www.ng.ru/style/2001-02-14/16_therapy.html)

According to Samsonov, Zhukov disagreed with Khrushchev's account:

Concerning this situation Marshal of the Soviet Union Zhukov wrote that J.V. Stalin, relying on the reports of the Military Soviet of the Southwest front that said the offensive must be continued, rejected the General Staff's plans.

"The existing story about signals of alarm that supposedly came to Stavka (the General Staff) from the Military Soviets of the Southern and Southwestern fronts, does not conform to the facts. I can attest to this because I was personally present during the talks with the Supreme Commander."

— Samsonov, A.M. *Stalingradskaia Bitva*. 4 izd. isp. i dop. ("The Battle of Stalingrad, 4th corrected and enlarged edition"). Moscow, 1938, Ch. 2, at note 50, cited from the Russian at <http://militera.lib.ru/h/samsonov1/02.html>

In his memoirs Zhukov does blame Stalin in part. <http://mlitera.lib.ru/memo/russian/zhukov1/15.html> (However, Zhukov was very angry at Stalin — Stalin demoted him for stealing German trophies. See *Voennie Arkhivy Rossii*, 1993, pp. 175 ff. Zhukov's confession, 241-44.) Khrushchev knew this, and had it all quashed, undoubtedly to get Zhukov on his side.

The *Short History of the Great Patriotic War* carries this version, which blames the front command, not Stalin and the GKO:

The main reason of the failure of the Khar'kof operation was that the command of the Southwestern direction incorrecedly evaluated the situation, and when the forces of the Southwest front fell into a complex position, they failed to stop the offensive in time. What's more, they urged the General Staff to permit-them to continue the offensive. The decision taken on May 19 to cease the offensive was taken too late. The command of the Southwest front did not take the essential steps to protect the flanks by shock groups, were weak in studying the opponent, and in part underestimated his possibility for maneuver during the course of the battle. The staff of the front underestimated the forces of the enemy by 30%.

— *Velikaia Otechestvymnaia Voina. Kratkaia istoriia* ("The Short History of the Great Patriotic War. Short edition."). Moscow: Voenizdat, 1970, 164-5.

This is consistent with Stalin's letter of June 26 1942 quoted by many sources, including Portugal'skii et al.'s biography of Timoshenko, and which blamed not only Bagramian, but also Timoshenko and — Khrushchev!

The first to go was Bagramian. He was removed by the Stavka from the post he held for failing to fulfill his duties and 'being unsatisfactory to the Stavka as a simple bearer of information.' 'What is more', remarked Stalin, 'comrade Bagramian was incapable of learning the lesson from that catastrophe that developed on the Southwestern front. In the course of some three weeks the Southwest front, thanks to his carelessness, not only lost the Khar'kov operation, already have successful, but in addition succeeded in giving the enemy 18-20 divisions.' Having announced that Bagramian was being named the chief of staff of the 28th army and thus given a chance to redeem himself in practice, the Supreme Commander firmly underscored: 'It is to be understood that this is not simply a case of comrade Bagramian. The issue is also the errors of all members of the Military Soviet and above all of comrades Timoshenko and Khrushchev. If we had announced to the country the full extent of this catastrophe — with the

loss of 18-20 divisions, which the front suffered and from which it will still suffer, then I am afraid that it would have gone very hard with you. Therefore you must consider the errors you have made and take all necessary steps that they not take place in future.

— Portugal'skii, R.M., et al. Marshal S.K Timoshenko, M. 1994, Ch. 5, from the Russian version at <http://militera.lib.ru/bio/domank/05.html> The same letter of Stalin's is also quoted by Beshanov, *1942 god — uchebnyi*. ("The "Year of Learning" 1942"), Minsk: Kharvest, 2003. Chapter 14: "How Bagramian Alone Doomed Two Fronts", at [http://militera.lib.ru/research/beshanov\\_vv/14.html](http://militera.lib.ru/research/beshanov_vv/14.html)

Volkogonov:

N.S. Khrushchev devoted a whole section of his report to the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress to the events at Kharkov, when he [Khrushchev] had been member of the Military Council of the Southwest front. According to Khrushchev, he phoned from the front to Stalin at the latter's dacha. However, Malenkov came to the phone. Khrushchev insisted on speaking personally with Stalin. But the Supreme Commander, who was 'only a few steps from the telephone' [this is a quote from Khrushchev's Secret Speech — GF], did not come to the phone and through Malenkov instructed Khrushchev to speak with Malenkov. After transmitting the request of the front about stopping the offensive through Malenkov — as he told the delegates of the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress, Stalin said 'Leave everything the way it is!' In other words, Khrushchev unmistakably declared that it was precisely Stalin who was at fault in the Khar'kov catastrophe.

G.K. Zhukov sets forth another version, proposing that responsibility for the disaster should be born also by the commanders of the Military Councils of the South and Southwest fronts. In his book *Memoirs and Reflections* Zhukov writes that the danger was sensed at the General Staff before it was at the front. On May 18 the General Staff yet again spoke out for stopping our offensive operation at Khar'kov. ... Towards the evening of May 18 the talk took place on this subject with the member of the Military Council of the front N.S. Khrushchev, who

expressed the same views as did the command of the Southwest front: the danger from the side of the Kramator group of the enemy was seriously exaggerated, and there was no basis for stopping the operation. Relying on the reports of the Military Council of the Southwest front that it was essential to continue the offensive, the Supreme Commander rejected the views of the General Staff. The existing story about signals of alarm that supposedly came to Stavka (the General Staff) from the Military Soviets of the Southern and Southwestern fronts, does not conform to the facts. I can attest to this because I was personally present during the talks with the Supreme Commander."

I think that in this case the Marshal [Zhukov] was closer to the truth. N.S. Khrushchev, conveying his personal memories in the report, gave after the passage of many years belated reaction to the disaster that he had had when it had already become dear to everyone that a catastrophe was in the making. Marshal Zhukov repeatedly emphasized that the decision of the Supreme Commander was based on the reports of Timoshenko and Khrushchev. It's one thing if this was simply forgetfulness on Khrushchev's part. But if this is an attempt to create for himself a historical alibi after the fact — that is something else again.

— Volkogonov, Stalin, 2, Ch. 8, cited from the Russian at [http://militcra.lib.ru/bio/volkogonov\\_dv/08.html](http://militcra.lib.ru/bio/volkogonov_dv/08.html)

### **37. Stalin Planned Military Operations on a Globe**

Khrushchev:

I telephoned to Vasilevsky and begged him: "Alexander Mikhailovich, take a map" — Vasilevsky is present here — "and show Comrade Stalin the situation which has developed." We should note that Stalin planned operations on a globe. (Animation in the hall.) Yes, comrades, he used to take the globe and trace the front line on it. I said to Comrade Vasilevsky: "Show him the situation on a map... "



Marshal Meretskov:

In some of our books we find the story that J.V. Stalin led military operations on a globe. I have never read anything so ignorant!

— KA. Meretskov, *Na sluzhbe narodu* ("In Service to the People"). Moscow: Politizdat, 1968, cited from the Russian at <http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/meretskov/29.html>

Solov'ev and Sukhodeev, citing General Gribkov:

The lie about the "globe" is refuted by operational documents as well. General of the army A.I. Gribkov, who worked during the war years in the Operational directorate of the General Staff, testifies: "N.S. Khrushchev, in debunking the cult of personality around J.V. Stalin, asserted that, supposedly, Stalin led the fronts on a globe. Of course this is all a lie. The military archives hold maps of various scales with notes in the Supreme Commander's handwriting."

— B. Solov'ev and V. Sukbodeev, *Stalin the Military Leader*. Moscow, 2003, cited from the Russian at [http://militera.lib.ru/research/solovyov\\_suhodeev/01.html](http://militera.lib.ru/research/solovyov_suhodeev/01.html)

Refutation of Khrushchev's slander on the 'globe' matter can also be found from Admiral N.G. Kuznetsov in his book *On the Eve*. 'It is a completely untrue, malicious assertion that, supposedly, he [Stalin] evaluated situations and took decisions with the use of a globe. I could cite many examples of how Stalin, verifying the position on the fronts with the military leaders, knew when it was necessary, even the position of each battalion.' In the book by KS. Moskalenko *In the Southwestern direction*: 'When Nikolai Fiodorovich [Vatutin, front commander) told us about his talk with the Supreme Commander, I could not hide my amazement at the precision with which Stalin analyzed military activities, and despite myself I said 'What maps does the Supreme Commander use to follow our activities, if he sees more and deeper than we do?' Nikolai Fiodorovich smiled, and replied: "On maps of the scale of 1:2000 and 1:5000 on the fronts, and 1:100,000

for each army. The main thing — and this is why he is Supreme Commander — is to make suggestions, correct our errors...'

But Marshal of the Air Force Novikov gave the best response to Khrushchev: 'What is the worth of Khrushchev's declaration that Stalin planned operations in wartime and directed them on a large globe in his office? This one assertion of the author of the report [Khrushchev — GF] evoked at that time a fairly broad, though silent, protest, especially among military men, and also among many rank-and-file veterans of the war.'

— Balaian, *Stalin i Khrushchev*, Ch. 22: "Polkovodets Iosif Stalin", at <http://stalin.su/book.php?action=header&id=20>

Molotov:

Maps were on all the walls in the foyer. Khrushchev said that he gave leadership on a globe, — on the contrary, he loved geographical maps very much.

— Chuev, F. *Molotov: Poludnerzhavnyi Vlastelin*, 361.

Marshal Zhukov:

The story that has been disseminated that the Supreme Commander studied the situation and took decisions using a globe does not conform to reality ... He understood the use of operational maps and the situations drawn upon them very well.

— G .K. Zhukov, *Vospominaniia i razmyshleniia* ("Reminiscences and Thoughts"). Vol. 1, Ch. 9. Moscow, 2002, from the Russian at <http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/zhukovl/11.html>

### **38. Stalin Downgraded Zhukov**

Khrushchev:

"Stalin was very much interested in the assessment of Comrade Zhukov as a military leader. He asked me often for my opinion of Zhukov. I told him then, "I have known Zhukov for a long time; he is a good general and a good military leader."

After the war Stalin began to tell all kinds of nonsense about Zhukov, among others the following, "You praised Zhukov, but he does not deserve it. It is said that before each operation at the front Zhukov used to behave as follows: He used to take a handful of earth, smell it and say, 'We can begin the attack,' or the opposite, 'The planned operation cannot be carried out.'" I stated at that time, "Comrade Stalin, I do not know who invented this, but it is not true."

It is possible that Stalin himself invented these things for the purpose of minimizing the role and military talents of Marshal Zhukov."

According to Zhukov himself, Stalin never insulted him:

G.K. Zhukov stressed more than once that "Nowhere did Stalin say a single bad word about me", that "if anyone tried to insult me in his presence, Stalin would tear his head off on my behalf."

— B. Solov'ev and V. Sukhodeev. *Polkovodets Stalin* ("Stalin the General"). Moscow, EKSMO, 2003, Ch. 1, cited from the Russian at [http://militera.lib.ru/research/solovyov\\_suhodeev/01.html](http://militera.lib.ru/research/solovyov_suhodeev/01.html)

Zhukov was indeed demoted in 1948. But that was because he had been found guilty, and had admitted his guilt, in defrauding the Soviet government of very large sums by illegally keeping large amounts of looted German treasure for himself. This fact does not appear to be widely known even in Russia, although the relevant documents were published fifteen years ago. We have put these documents online at [http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/zhukovtheft4648\\_var93.pdf](http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/zhukovtheft4648_var93.pdf)

The quotations below give some idea of Zhukov's crime, and why Stalin demoted him.

Top Secret

## THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE USSR.

To comrade STALIN J.V.

...During the night of 8-9 January of this year a secret search was conducted of Zhukov's dacha, which is situated in the village of Rublevo near Moscow.

As a result of this search it was disclosed that two rooms of the dacha had been converted into storerooms in which a huge quantity of goods and valuables of various kinds are stored.

For example:

Woolen fabrics, silk, brocade, velvet, and other materials — in all, more than 4000 meters;

Furs — sable, monkey, fox., sealskin, Astrakhan [fine wool] — total 323 hides;

Kidskin of the best quality — 35 skins;

Valuable carpets and Gobelin rugs of very large size from the Potsdam and other palaces and homes of Germany — 44 pieces in all, some of which are laid or hung in various rooms, and the rest in the storeroom.

Especially worthy of note is a carpet of great size placed in one of the rooms of the dacha;

Valuable paintings of classical landscapes of very large sizes in artistic frames — 55 units in all, hung in various rooms of the dacha and a part of which remain in the storeroom;

Very expensive table and tea services (porcelain with artistic decoration, crystal) — 7 large chests;

Silver sets of table and tea place settings — 2 chests;

Accordeons with rich artistic decoration — 8 units;

Unique hunting rifles by the firm Gotland — Gotland and others — 20 units in all.

This property is kept in 51 trunks and suitcases, and also lies in heaps.

Besides that in all the rooms of the dacha, on the windows, staircase, tables and bedside tables are placed around great quantities of bronze and porcelain vases and statuettes of artistic work, and also all kinds of trinkets and knick-knacks of foreign origin.

I draw attention to the declaration by the workers who carried out the search that Zhukov's dacha is in essence an antique store or museum, with various valuable works of art hanging all around the interior...

There are so many valuable paintings that they could never be suitable for an apartment but should be transferred to the State fund and housed in a museum.

More than twenty large carpets cover the floors of almost all the rooms.

All the objects, beginning with the furniture, carpets, vessels, decorations, up to the curtains on the windows, are foreign, mainly German. There is literally not a single thing of Soviet origin in the dacha....

There is not a single Soviet book in the dacha, but on the other hand on the bookshelves stands a large quantity of books in beautiful bindings with gold embossing, all without exception in the German language.

When you go into the house it is hard to imagine that one is not in Germany but near Moscow...

Accompanying this letter please find photographs of some of the valuables, cloth and items we discovered in Zhukov's apartment and dacha.

ABAKUMOV.

January 10, 1948.

— *Voennie Arkhivy Rossii* (1993), pp. 189-191; also at the URL above.

### **39. Deportations of nationalities**

Khrushchev:

Comrades, let us reach for some other facts. The Soviet Union is justly considered as a model of a multinational state because we have in practice assured the equality and friendship of all nations which live in our great Fatherland.

All the more monstrous are the acts whose initiator was Stalin and which are rude violations of the basic Leninist principles of the nationality policy of the Soviet state. We refer to the mass deportations from their native places of whole nations, together with all Communists and Komsomols without any exception; this deportation action was not dictated by any military considerations....

Not only a Marxist-Leninist but also no man of common sense can grasp how it is possible to make whole nations responsible for inimical activity, including women, children, old people, Communists and Komsomols, to use mass repression against them, and to expose them to misery and suffering for the hostile acts of individual persons or groups of persons.

#### 1. Pykhalov, on exceptions to the deportations:

According to the view generally held, all the Crimean Tatars without any exception were subject to deportation, including those who had fought honorably in the Red Army or in partisan ranks. In reality this was not the case. 'Those who had taken part in the Crimean underground acting in the rear of the enemy were excepted from the status of 'special settler', as were members of their families. Thus the family of S. S. Useinov, who had been in Simferopol' during the period of the occupation of the Crimea and was a member of an underground patriotic group from December 1942 until March 1943, then was

arrested by the Hitlerites and shot. Members of his family were permitted to remain living in Simferopol."

...Crimean-Tatar veterans of the front immediately applied with a request that their relatives be exempted from the status of 'special settler.' Such applications were sent from the commander of the second air squadron of the first fighter battalion of the Higher Officer School of air combat Captain E.U Chalbash, Major of armored forces Kh. Chalbash, and many others... Requests of this nature were granted in part, specifically, the family of E. Chalbash was permitted to live in Kherson oblast.'

— I. Pykhalov, *Vremia Stalina: Fakty protiv mifov*. 'Leningrad' (St. Petersburg), 2001, p. 84, citing N. Bugai, L Beria — I. Stalinu: "*Soglasno Vashemu Ukazaniuu*"... Moscow: AIRO-XX, 1995, pp. 156-7.

Chechen nationalist account of a pro-German anti-Soviet armed rebellion in February 1943, when the German penetration towards the Caucasus was at its greatest, from Radio Svoboda (Radio Liberty), Feb. 23, 2000:

Here I would like to add an unknown fact of history that we have not yet touched on. The Chechens have always, permanently, fought for their freedom and self-determination, and in February 1943 a rebellion flared up in the mountains under the leadership of the lawyer Merbek Sheripov and the famous writer Khasan Israilov. Taking advantage of the fact that the Germans were fighting with the Russians the Chechens tried to separate from the USSR by armed struggle and to declare their independence. Their final goal was a union with the peoples of the Caucasus, in order to live freely in a confederation independently from the Soviet empire."

— <http://www.svoboda.org/programs/LL/2000/11.022300-3.shtml>

"Freedom" flag of Caucasian nationalist groups, with Nazi swastika:  
[http://stalinism.narod.ru/foto/chech\\_1.jpg](http://stalinism.narod.ru/foto/chech_1.jpg)

Casualties among Chechen deportees during the deportation were low.

Operation Chechevitsa, which began on 23 February [1944], was completed sometime during the third week of March. NKVD records attest to 180 convoy trains carrying 493,269 Chechen and Ingush nationals and members of other nationalities seized at the same time. Fifty people were killed in the course of the operation, and 1,272 died on the journey.

— Bugai and Gomov, *Russian Studies in History*, vol. 41, no. 2, Fall 2002, p. 56. This is 0.268% of those deported, about 2.5 deaths of every 1000 persons.

## 40. Leningrad Affair

Khrushchev:

After the conclusion of the Patriotic War, the Soviet nation stressed with pride the magnificent victories gained through great sacrifices and tremendous efforts. The country experienced a period of political enthusiasm. ...

And it was precisely at this time that the so-called "Leningrad affair" was born. As we have now proven, this case was fabricated. Those who innocently lost their lives included Comrades Voznesensky, Kuznetsov, Rodionov, Popkov, and others....

How did it happen that these persons were branded as enemies of the people and liquidated?

Facts prove that the "Leningrad affair" is also the result of willfulness which Stalin exercised against party cadres.

Beria's letter to the Presidium of June 25, 1953 accused Riumin of falsifying the Leningrad Affair:

Specifically RIUMIN took part in the falsification of the investigative materials in the so-called cases of the "Espionage center in the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee" supposedly headed by LOZOVSKY, MIKHOELS, FEFER and others, and of the "Leningrad Affair," in the



course of which, as is well known, were arrested and convicted the leading Party and Soviet workers of the city of Leningrad KUZNETSOV, POPKOV, KAPUSTIN, and others. In November 1950 RIUMIN, on orders from ABAKUMOV, was assigned the investigation in the case of the arrested professor ETINGER. Knowing that ETINGER had been one of the doctors who treated A.S. SHCHERBAKOV as a consultant, RIUMIN adopted illegal means of investigation and forced ETINGER to give imaginary confessions about incorrect treatment of A.S. SHCHERBAKOV, that supposedly led to his death.

*Lavrentii Beria. 1953. Stenogramma iul'skogo plenuma TsK KPSS I drugie dokumenty. Moscow, 1999, pp. 64-66.*

Having blamed Stalin's "willfulness" for the "Leningrad Affair" arrests, convictions, and executions Khrushchev claimed in June 1957 claim that Stalin had been **against** the arrests of Voznesenskii and the others!

Khrushchev: Malenkov, you know — and this is well known to Molotov, Mikoian, Saburov, Pervykhin ... the comrades I have named know that **Stalin was against the arrests of Voznesenskii and Kuznetsov. He was against the arrests**, and those Jesuitical beasts, Beria and Malenkov, influenced Stalin and instigated the arrests and executions of Voznesenskii, Kuznetsov, [and] Popkov. Malenkov, your hands are bloody, your conscience unclean. You are a low-down person.

Malenkov: You are slandering me.

Khrushchev: Stalin said in my presence, and others heard it too, why isn't Voznesenskii named to a post in the State Bank, why are there no motions to this effect? But Beria and Malenkov presented the case to Stalin that Voznesenskii, Kuznetsov, Popkov and others were criminals. Why? Because at some time Stalin, deservedly or not, promoted Kuznetsov instead of Malenkov, and wanted to make Voznesenskii Chairman of the Soviet of Ministers. That is why their heads rolled.

— *Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich. 1957. Stenogramma iun-skogo plenuma TsK KPSS I drugie dokumenty*. Moscow, 1998, pp. 201-2, emph. added GF.

## 41. Mingrelian Affair

Khrushchev:

Instructive in the same way is the case of the Mingrelian nationalist organization which supposedly existed in Georgia. As is known, resolutions by the Central Committee, Communist Party of the Soviet Union, were made concerning this case in November 1951 and in March 1952. These resolutions were made without prior discussion with the Political Bureau. Stalin had personally dictated them. They made serious accusations against many loyal Communists. On the basis of falsified documents, it was proven that there existed in Georgia a supposedly nationalistic organization whose objective was the liquidation of the Soviet power in that republic with the help of imperialist powers.

In the notes to the critical edition of the decrees of the Politburo on bribery in Georgia and "the anti-Party group of Baramia" of November 9, 1951 we read:

In the original of the transcript of the PB [Politburo] sessions there is a copy of the decree written by Poskrebyshv [Stalin's personal secretary — GF], and also a typed copy of the draft with Stalin's corrections, ...

There follow a number of Stalin's corrections to the decree. Another note in the same critical edition, this time to the decree of the Politburo about the situation in the Georgian Communist Party, from March 27, 1952, reads:

In the original transcript of the PB sessions Stalin wrote in the title of the decree on the draft. **The decree resulted from the Politburo sessions of March 25 and March 27 1952.** (emphasis added, GF)

These texts and the relevant context are from the work *Politbiuro TsK VKP(b) i Soviet Ministrov SSSR 1945-1953*. Ed . Khlevniuk, O.V. et al. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002, pp. 351 and 354. These pages and the relevant

context (texts of decrees) are now at  
<http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/mingrelianres.pdf>

Boris Sokolov, in *Rossiiskaia Gazeta* April 10 2003:

On April 10 1953 was announced the decree of the CC of the CPSU "On the violation of Soviet laws by former ministers of state security of the USSR and the Georgian SSR." This decree annulled the previous decree of the CC of November 9, 1951 and March 27, 1952 concerning the existence in Georgia of a Mingrelian nationalist organization. The Georgian leaders who were arrested earlier were liberated. However, soon thereafter many of them were arrested again under accusations of ties with Beria.

Boris Nikolaevsky's note to the *New Leader* edition:

51. "Khrushchev's statement on the "Mingrelian conspiracy" does explain the purges in Georgia in 1952. Though he implies that the "Mingrelian case," like the "Leningrad case," was also staged by Beria and Abakumov, this is a deliberate distortion. It was precisely in November 1951 that S. D. Ignatiev, one of Beria's bitterest enemies, was appointed Minister of State Security; the "Mingrelian case" was, therefore, trumped up as a blow at Beria. It and the purges which followed in Georgia (in April, September and November 1952) undermined Beria's position and cleared the way for the projected "second *Yezhovshchina*" which began, after the 19th Party Congress of November 1952, with the arrests in the "doctors' plot."

According to Khrushchev, Ignat'ev was among the listeners at the Speech:

"Present at this Congress as a delegate is the former Minister of State Security, Comrade Ignatiev." (p. 38)

Ignatiev was removed by the Presidium, of which Khrushchev was a member, for gross misconduct in fabricating the Mingrelian Affair, the Doctors' Plot, and other matters. See Beria's reports (in Russian) at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/mingrelianaff.pdf>

## 42. Yugoslavia

Khrushchev:

The July plenum of the Central Committee studied in detail the reasons for the development of conflict with Yugoslavia. It was a shameful role which Stalin played here. The "Yugoslav affair" contained no problems which could not have been solved through party discussions among comrades. There was no significant basis for the development of this "affair"; it was completely possible to have prevented the rupture of relations with that country. This does not mean, however, that the Yugoslav leaders did not make mistakes or did not have shortcomings. But these mistakes and shortcomings were magnified in a monstrous manner by Stalin, which resulted in a break of relations with a friendly country.

In July 1953 Khrushchev and other Presidium members attacked Beria for trying to repair relations with Yugoslavia — that is, they did not want relations as of one communist power to another.

Molotov: I think, comrades, that this fact — comrade Malenkov read the draft letter to 'comrade Rankovic', for 'comrade Tito' — with this fact the traitor [Beria — GF] showed himself red-handed. He wrote it to them in his own hand and did not want the Presidium to discuss this question. What kind of man is this?

True, we exchanged ambassadors.

Malenkov: And we wanted a normalization of relations.

Molotov: We wanted a normalization of relations, ... we decided it was necessary to establish with Yugoslavia the same kind of relations as with other bourgeois governments ... And what is this kind of thing: 'I make use of this opportunity to transmit to you, comrade Rankovic, hearty greetings from comrade Beria and to inform comrade Tito that it would be expedient if comrade Tito shares this viewpoint....' Etc. etc. What kind of thing is this?

...

He might have found support among foreign capitalists — Titos, Rankoviches, these are capitalist agents, he learned from them. He went straight from them to us.

...

But isn't it clear what it means, this attempt by Beria to reach an agreement with Rankovich and Tito, who conduct themselves like enemies of the Soviet Union? Isn't it clear that this letter, composed by Beria in secret from the present Government, was still one more blatant attempt to strike the back of the Soviet Government and to render a direct service to the imperialist camp? This fact alone would be sufficient to conclude that Beria is the agent of a foreign camp, the agent of the class enemy.

*Lavrentii Beria. 1953. Stenogramma iul'skogo plenuma TsK KPSS I drugie dokumenty. Moscow, 1999. pp. 103-4; 246.*

### **43. Doctors' Plot**

Khrushchev:

Let us also recall the "affair of the doctor-plotters." (Animation in the hall.) Actually there was no "affair" outside of the declaration of the woman doctor Timashuk, who was probably influenced or ordered by someone (after all, she was an unofficial collaborator of the organs of state security) to write Stalin a letter in which she declared that doctors were applying supposedly improper methods of medical treatment. Such a letter was sufficient for Stalin to reach an immediate 'conclusion that there are doctor-plotters in the Soviet Union. He issued orders to arrest a group of eminent Soviet medical specialists. He personally issued advice on the conduct of the investigation and the method of interrogation of the arrested persons. He said that the academician Vinogradov should be put in chains, another one should be beaten. Present at this Congress as a delegate is the former Minister of State Security, Comrade Ignatiev. Stalin told him curtly, "If you do

not obtain confessions from the doctors we will shorten you by a head."

Stalin personally called the investigative judge, gave him instructions, advised him on which investigative methods should be used; these methods were simple: beat, beat and, once again, beat.

Shortly after the doctors were arrested, we members of the Political Bureau received protocols with the doctors' confessions of guilt. After distributing these protocols, Stalin told us, "You are blind like young kittens; what will happen without me? The country will perish because you do not know how to recognize enemies."

The case was so presented that no one could verify the facts on which the investigation was based. There was no possibility of trying to verify facts by contacting those who had made the confessions of guilt.

We felt, however, that the case of the arrested doctors was questionable. We knew some of these people personally because they had once treated us. When we examined this "case" after Stalin's death, we found it to be fabricated from beginning to end.

This ignominious "case" was set up by Stalin; he did not, however, have the time in which to bring it to an end (as he conceived that end), and for this reason the doctors are still alive. Now all have been rehabilitated; they are working in the same places they were working before; they treat top individuals, not excluding members of the Government; they have our full confidence; and they execute their duties honestly, as they did before.

In organizing the various dirty and shameful cases, a very base role was played by the rabid enemy of our party, an agent of a foreign intelligence service — Beria, who had stolen into Stalin's confidence."

Dr Timashuk's letters have all been published since the end of the USSR.<sup>252</sup> She had nothing whatsoever to do with the "Doctors' Plot" affair. Her letters solely concerned the treatment, or mistreatment, she witnessed of Politburo

member Andrei Zhdanov in 1948. In reality it was Beria — probably at Stalin's suggestion — who put a stop to the "Doctors' Plot" frameups.

<sup>252</sup> "'Tsel' byla spasti zhizn' bol'nogo'. Pis'ma Lidii Timashuk v svoiu zashchitu." ['The goal was to save the patient's life.' Lidia Timashuk's letters in her own defense.] *Istochnik* 1997, No. 1, pp. 3-16.

Excerpts from Beria's report to the Presidium of April 1 1953:

Former Minister of State Security [= the MGB, GF] of the USSR com. IGNAT'EV did not fulfill the obligations of his positions, did not guarantee the necessary control over the investigation, came to the aid of RIUMIN and of a few other MGB workers who, taking advantage of this, tortured the arrested persons brutally and falsified investigative materials with impunity.

...

4) To review the question of the responsibility of former Minister of State Security of the USSR com. IGNAT'EV, S.D., the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR has taken measures to prevent in future the possibility of a repetition of such violations of Soviet laws in the work of the organs of the MVD.

Excerpt from Presidium decision on Doctors' Plot case of April 3 1953:

3. To propose to the former Minister of State Security of the USSR com. Ignat'ev S.D. to present to the Presidium of the CC of the CPSU an explanation of the most crude violations of Soviet laws and the falsification of investigative materials permitted in the Ministry of State Security.

— *Lavrentii Beria. 1953. pp. 21 -25.*

According to Soviet dissident Zhores Medvedev it must have been Stalin himself who put an end to the persecution of the "doctor-wreckers" in the press:

We can assume that Stalin called Pravda either on the evening of February 27 or in the morning of February 28 and arranged for the cessation of publication of anti-Jewish materials and of all other articles dealing with the "Doctors' Plot." ... In the Soviet Union at that time there was only one person who was able, with a single telephone call to the editor of Pravda or to the Department of Agitprop of the CC CPSU to change official policy. Only Stalin could do that...

Medvedev further stresses the following point:

Stalin's anti-Semitism, about which one may read in almost all his biographies, was not religious, nor ethnic, nor cultural [*bytovym* =based on lifestyle or mores — GF]. It was political, and expressed itself in anti-Zionism, not hatred of Jews [*iiudofobii*].

— ZH.A. Medvedev. *Stalin i evresikaia problema. Noviy analiz*. Moscow: Pravacheloveka, 2003, pp. 216-7.

In plain language, Medvedev confirmed that Stalin was not anti-Semitic at all, since opposition to Zionism is common among both religious and non-religious Jews, including in Israel itself.

Svetlana Allilueva:

"The Doctors' Plot" took place during the last winter of his life. Valentina Vasil'evna told me later that father had been very saddened by the tum of events. She heard how it was discussed at the table, during meals. She served at table, as always. Father said that he did not believe in their "dishonorableness," that this could not be — after all, the "proof" were just the accusations of Dr. Timashuk.

— *Twenty Letters to a Friend*, Letter 18.

## 44. Beria

Khrushchev:



In organizing the various dirty and shameful cases, a very base role was played by the rabid enemy of our party, an agent of a foreign intelligence service — Beria, who had stolen into Stalin's confidence.

Mikoian, at 1953 CC Plenum:

We have no direct evidence that he was a spy [or] received assignments from foreign governments...

— *Levrentii Beria. 1953. Stenogramma iiul'skogo plenuma TsK KPSS i drugie dokumenty.* Ed. Naumov, V., IU. Sigachev. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi Fond 'Demokratiia', 1999, p. 174.

Khrushchev:

Beria showed himself more clearly as a provocateur and agent of the imperialists in the discussion of the German question, when he posed the question of renouncing the construction of socialism in the GDR and yielding to the West. That means yielding 18 million Germans to the rule of the American imperialists. He said: "We must create a neutral democratic Germany."

The court has established that the beginning of L.P. Beria's criminal treasonous activity and the establishment by him of ties with foreign intelligence services relates to the period of the Civil War, when in 1919 L.P. Beria, being in Baku, committed treason when he accepted a position as a secret agent in the intelligence of the counterrevolutionary Mussavat government in Azerbaidjan, which acted under the control of English intelligence organs.

In the active struggle against the revolutionary workers movement in Baku in 1919, when Beria entered his position as a secret agent in the intelligence of the counterrevolutionary Mussavat government in Azerbaidjan, he established ties with a foreign intelligence service, and thereafter supported and extended his secret criminal connections with foreign intelligence services until the moment of his exposure and arrest, ...

— *Lavrentii Beria*, pp. 238; 388; 390.

Kaganovich:

I will say the following. They never gave us any documents establishing that Beria was connected to imperialist powers, that he was a spy, and so on. Neither I nor Molotov ever saw such documents.

I [Chuev] asked Molotov: "Was he a spy?" He said: "An agent, not necessarily a spy."

I asked Molotov — said Kaganovich — did you have any kind of documents concerning the charge that Beria was an agent of imperialism? He said: There were none. They gave us no such documents, and they did not exist. That's how it was. They said that at the trial there were [such] documents."

— Chuev, Feliks. *Tak govoril Kaganovich. Ispoved' Stalinskogo apostola*. Moscow: "Otechestvo", 1992, p. 66. Same text in Chuev, *Kaganovich. Shepilov*. Moscow: OLMA-Press, 2001, pp. 83-4.

Molotov agreed, as he told Chuev:

"They argue to this day about Beria: was he an agent of foreign intelligence, or not?"

— I think, he was not, — said Molotov."

— Chuev, *Molotov: Poluderkhavniy Vlastelin*. Moscow: OLMA-Press, 2000, p. 409.

Even more striking is the rough draft of Malenkov's speech at the Presidium session where Beria was ultimately either arrested or killed, and where Malenkov had planned to propose the following:

- a) MVD — to give this post to another (Kr[uglov]) and the CC ....
- b) To dismiss [Beria] from the post of deputy [Chairman] of the Council of Ministers, to app[oint] him min[ister] of petrol[eum]

ind[ustry].

— *Lavrentii Beria*, p. 70.

However, earlier in this draft speech Malenkov referred to "vragi" — enemies — trying to use the MVD. That denotes a lot of hostility towards Beria.

It appears as though what really bothered the other members of the Presidium (or some of them, including Malenkov and Khrushchev) was that the MVD was overseeing the activities of the Presidium members and other Party leaders. This meant that the Soviet government was above the Party, and Party leaders had to answer to the law. It would be similar to the FBI investigating high-ranking government leaders in the USA.

[Beria's] arrest took place at a session of the Plenum of the Central Committee on June 26 1953 [Note: This is an error; it was, supposedly, a session of the Presidium of the CC — GF], despite the fact that no concrete accusations at all had been leveled at Beria. His opponents understood this. At the outset even Khrushchev spoke only of "detaining" him in the interests of further investigation. "I said 'detain' him because we had no direct criminal accusations against him. I could have thought he was an agent of the Mussavat, but Kamensky had talked about that. And no one had verified these facts." It was proposed only to remove him from the post he held. Against this was, supposedly, Molotov, who was afraid to leave Beria at liberty: 'Beria is very dangerous, and I believe we must take more extreme measures.'

n.16: "His Presidium comrades arrested him preventively. They feared him very much. In fact no 'Beria plot', about which so much was said afterwards, ever existed. They thought it up so as to be able to explain, somehow, to the masses why they had arrested Stalin's most faithful pupil." Interview with M. Smirtiukov, *Kommersant-Vlast* [a business newspaper] August 2, 2000.

— Piotr Vagner, in *Arkhiv*. No. 20, 2002. At

[http://history.machaon.ru/all/number\\_14/analiti4/vagner\\_print/index.html](http://history.machaon.ru/all/number_14/analiti4/vagner_print/index.html) ;  
Smirtiukov article at <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=16455>

## **45. Kaminsky about Beria working with Mussavat**

Khrushchev:

Were there any signs that Beria was an enemy of the party? Yes, there were. Already in 1937, at a Central Committee plenum, former People's Commissar of Health Kaminsky said that Beria worked for the Mussavat intelligence service. But the Central Committee plenum had hardly concluded when Kaminsky was arrested and then shot. Had Stalin examined Kaminsky's statement? No, because Stalin believed in Beria, and that was enough for him.

Pavlunovsky's letter of June 1937, attesting to the fact that Beria had done underground work for the Bolshevik Party among nationalists:

To the Secretary of the CC ACP(b) com. Stalin concerning com. Beria. In 1926 I was assigned to Transcaucasia as the Chairman of the Transc. GPU. Before my departure for Tillis com. Dzerzhinsky, Chairman of the OGPU, summoned me and informed me in a detailed way of the situation in Transcaucasia. Then com. Dzerzhinsky informed me that one of my aides in Transcaucasia, com. Beria, had worked for the Mussavat counterintelligence during the Mussavat regime. I was not to allow this situation to confuse me in any way or to bias me against com. Beria, as com. Beria had worked in their counterintelligence with the knowledge of responsible Transcaucasian comrades and that he, Dzerzhinsky, and com. Sergo Ordzhonikidze knew about this. Upon my arrival in Tillis about two months later I dropped in to see com. Sergo and told me everything com. Dzerzhinsky had informed me about com. Beria.

Com. Sergo Ordzhonikidze informed me that in fact com. Beria had worked in the Mussavat counterintelligence, that he carried out this work upon the assignment of party workers, and that he, com. Ordzhonikidze, com. Kirov, com. Mikoian, and com. Nazaretian were

well informed about this. For this reason I should relate to com. Beria with full confidence and that he, Sergo Ordzhonikidze, completely trusted com. Beria.

In the course of two years' work in Transcaucasia com. Ordzhonikidze told me several times that he prized com. Beria very highly as a developing worker, that a staunch worker would be developed from com. Beria, and that he had informed com. Stalin of his evaluation of com. Beria.

In the course of my two years of work in Transcaucasia I knew that com. Sergo valued and supported com. Beria. Two years ago com. Sergo for some reason said to me in a conversation, do you know that Rightists and other such trash were trying, in their struggle against com. Beria, to use the fact that he had worked with the Mussavat counterintelligence, but that they will not be at all successful in this.

I asked com. Sergo whether com. Stalin was aware of this. Com. Sergo Ordzhonikidze replied that this was known to com. Stalin and that he had spoken to com. Stalin about it.

25 June 1937 Candidate to the CC VKP(b) Pavlunovskii.

— Aleksei Toptygin, *Lavrentii Beria*. Moscow: Iauza, EKSMO, 2005, pp. 11-12.

Beria's own Party autobiography, including passages about his underground work among nationalists:

From February 1919 to April 1920 while I was chairman of the comm. cell of technical workers, under the direction of senior comrades I carried out several tasks of the area committee, and handled other cells as instructor. In the autumn of that same year 1919 I entered service in counterintelligence from the "Gummet" party, where I worked together with comrade Mussevi. In about March 1920, after the murder of com. Mussevi I left work in counterintelligence and worked in the Baku customs house.

— *Beria: Konets Kar'ieriy.* Ed. V.F. Nekrasov. Moscow: Politizdat, 1991, pp. 320-5, at page 323. Beria's whole autobiography is online at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/researchb/beriaautobiog.pdf>

Zalesky, *Imperiia Stalina*:

In April-May 1920 Beria was a plenipotentiary of the registration section of the Caucasus front attached to the Revolutionary Military Council of the 11th Army, and then was dispatched to underground work in Georgia. In June 1920 he was arrested, but was released at the demand of the Soviet plenipotentiary representative S.M. Kirov and was sent to Azerbaidjan.

— At <http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/beria.html>

Beria to Ordzhonikidze, letter of March 2, 1933.

Dear Sergo!

... IV. Levan Gogoberidze is resting in Sukhumi. According to what com. Lakova and a number of other comrades say com. Gogoberidze is saying the vilest things about me and in general about the new Transcaucasian leadership. In particular, about my past work in the Mussavat counterintelligence, he is asserting that the Party supposedly did not know and does not know, about this.

But you know very well that I was sent by the Party into the Mussavat intelligence service, and that this question was settled by the CC of the ACP(b) in 1920, in your presence, that of coms Stasova, Kaminsky, Mirza Davud Guseinov, Harimanov, Sarkis, Rukhull, Akhundov, Buniat-Zade, and others. (In 1925 I handed you the official note of the decision of the CC AKB(b) about this, in which I was completely rehabilitated, that is the fact of my work in counterintelligence with the Party's knowledge was confirmed by the declarations of coms. Mirza Davud Guseinov, Kasum Ismailov, and others). Com. Datiko, who will give you this letter, will tell you the details.

Yours, Lavrentii Beria

March 2, 1933

— in *Sovetskoe Rnkovodstvo. Perepiska. 1928- 1941*. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001. No. 116, p. 204. Letter online at 381

<http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/beriatoordzhon33.pdf>

Even Khrushchev admitted in memoirs written in the late 1960s:

...We had no direct criminal accusations against him [Beria]. I might think he had been an agent of the Musavetists, like Kaminsky said. But no one ever verified this...

Khrushchev, *Vremia. Liudi. Vlast'. (Vospominaniia)*. Kn. 2, Chast' 3. Moscow: Moskovskie Novosti, 1999. Chapter "Tosle smerti Stalina", p. 168. Also in the online edition at [http://hrono.ru/libris/lib\\_h/hrush48.html](http://hrono.ru/libris/lib_h/hrush48.html)

## 46. Kartvelishvili (Lavrent'ev)

Khrushchev:

The long, unfriendly relations between Kartvelishvili and Beria were widely known; they date back to the time when Comrade Sergo [Ordzhonikidze] was active in the Transcaucasus; Kartvelishvili was the closest assistant of Sergo. The unfriendly relationship impelled Beria to fabricate a "case" against Kartvelishvili. It is a characteristic thing that in this "case" Kartvelishvili was charged with a terroristic act against Beria.

Beria uncovered an underground Rightist group in Georgia, including Lavrent'ev-Kartvelishvili.

20 July 1937

No. 1716/s

Dear Koba!

The investigation on the matter of the counterrevolutionaries in Georgia is developing further, uncovering new participants in the vilest crimes against the Party and Soviet power. The arrest of G. Mgaloblishvili, L. Lavrent'ev (Kartvelishvili), Sh. Eliava... shed a bright light on the traitorous work that they were carrying on as members of the counterrevolutionary organization of the Rights. ... In the Transcaucasian counterrevolutionary center of Rights are:

From Georgia: Eliava Sh., Orakhelashvili M., Lavrent'ev L. and Enekidze A.

— *Lubianka: Stalin I GUGB NKVD. 1937-1938. Dokumenty*. Moscow: Materik, 2004. No. 142, p. 252. Hereafter Lubianka 2.

SERGEEV was connected in espionage and diversionary work in Moscow with MUKLEVICH and STRELKOV, in the Far Eastern



Region with the regional center, consisting of LAVRENT'EV, DERIBAS, KRUTOV, KOSIOR.

— *Lubianka* 2, No. 196, p. 347 of Sept 11 1937 (Liushkov document)

LIU-KU-SEN declared that there was one meeting at LAVRENT'EV's apartment, at which they distributed ministers' portfolios, etc.

— *ibid.*, No. 207 p. 370 of September 19 1937 (Liushkov document)

Former regional procurator CHERNIN arrested in Khabarovsk admitted his participation in the plot, ties with LAVRENT'EV, KRUTOV, and other active conspirators.

— *ibid.*, No. 309, p. 507 of March 29, 1938 (Liushkov document)

Kartvelishvili named by Iakovlev (along with Kabakov and many others):

Besides that, through VAREIKIS-BAUMAN we were connected with the group of Rights in Moscow — KAMINSKY, BUBNOV; ... on the periphery with the leading workers of oblast and region Party organizations — Rights and Trotskyites who led anti-Soviet organizations, SHEBOLDAEV, KHATAEVICH, KABAKOV, IVANOV, LAVRENT'EV, SHUBRIKOV, PTUKHA, KRINITSKY.

— *ibid.*, No. 226, p. 392 of October 15- 18 1937.

The Rehabilitation file on Kartvelishvili blames Beria for everything. Even if Kartvelishvili was framed, though, this cannot be the case. Most of the documents against him are by Liushkov or, in the case of Iakovlev's confession, have nothing to do with Beria at all.

## **47. Kedrov**

Khrushchev:

Here is what the old Communist, Comrade Kedrov, wrote to the Central Committee through Comrade Andreyev (Comrade Andreyev

was then a Central Committee secretary): "I am calling to you for help from a gloomy cell of the Lefortovsky prison. Let my cry of horror reach your ears; do not remain deaf, take me under your protection; please, help remove the nightmare of interrogations and show that this is all a mistake.

"I suffer innocently..."

The old Bolshevik, Comrade Kedrov, was found innocent by the Military Collegium. But, despite this, he was shot at Beria's order.

Kedrov was in fact shot by order of Chief Prosecutor, not of Beria:

"October 17 1941 a decision of the NKVD of the USSR was taken concerning the necessity to execute by shooting, according to the direction of 'the directing organs of the USSR', 25 prisoners. It was signed by the chief of the investigative section for especially important matters of the NKVD USSR L. Vlodzimirsky, confirmed by the Assistant People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR B. Kobulov, and with the consent of the Procurator [= Attorney General of the USSR V. Bochkov. On the basis of this decision Beria signed, on October 18, 1941, the order to shoot the persons indicated."

— *Organy gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti SSSR v Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voine. T.2. Nachalo, Kn. 2. 1-sentiabtia — 31 dekabria 1941 goda.* Moscow: Rus', 2000. No. 617, p. 215, n. 1.

"Sentence", implying a judicial proceeding:

To Senior Lieutenant of State Security com. Seminikhin D.E. Upon receipt of the present you are instructed to proceed to the city of Kuibyshev and **to carry out the sentence — the highest measure of punishment** (shooting) in relation to the following prisoners... [emph. added GF]

— *ibid*, pp. 215-216.

Statement of the Prosecutor's conclusion (or, perhaps, a part of it) in Kedrov's case (reprinted by Prudnikova p. 386):

"The condemned prisoners Afonskii, Kedrov I.M and Shilkin have fully confirmed their confessions about Kedrov M.S. both at the preliminary investigation and at the court.

On the basis of the aforementioned Kedrov Mikhad Sergeevich, born 1878, living in Moscow, of Russian nationality, citizen of the USSR, of higher education, former landowner, member of the Bolshevik Party, a pensioner before his arrest, is accused —

In that he is a participant in an anti-Soviet organization, shared the counterrevolutionary ideas of the Rights and has repeatedly conducted anti-Soviet and provocational conversations.

In the interests of the British imperialists he engaged in traitorous behavior in the Northern fleet during the period of 1918 — that is in committing crimes covered by articles 58-1a, 58-10 and 58-11 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation.

Considering the preliminary investigation of the case of Kedrov M.S. closed and the charges laid against him proven, as laid down by a special order of the directive organs of the Union of SSR, —

Would propose:

That Kedrov Mikhail Sergeevich, born 1878 — to be shot (Signed) Vlodzimirsky."

— Sukhomlinov, A.V. *Kto vy Lavrentii Beria?* Moscow: Detektiv-Press, 2003, p. 216. Reprinted in Prudnikova, Elena. *Berria. Prestupleniia, kotorykh ne bylo.* Spb: Neva, 2005, p.386. Sukhomlinov believes Vlodzimirsky's signature on the facsimile is forged, while Prudnikova accepts it as genuine.

The report on M.S. Kedrov is attached to one of the "Stalin shooting lists", that of March 28, 1941:

An active participant in the anti-Soviet organization disguised as the society "Association of Northerners" in Moscow.

Was connected to the leading participant in the Zinovievite-Trotskyist organization G.Safarov and approved his counterrevolutionary methods in struggle against the Party and Soviet power.

KEDROV is suspected of secret collaboration with the Tsarist secret police ["Okhrana"] on the basis of the following facts:

In 1912, after he had been arrested several times by the Okhrana, he journeyed to Switzerland under suspicious circumstances, where he established ties with the Menshevik organization, and in 1914 received the right to return to Russia as "politically reliable".

KEDROV was closely connected with the leading participant of the conspiratorial organization in the NKVD and active agent of German intelligence ARTUZOV (condemned to death), whom he recommended for work in the organs of the Cheka-OGPU.

The brother of KEDROV's wife — MAIZEL' — who has lived all this time in America, made contact with KEDROV during several visits to the USSR.

MAIZEL' is known to the NKVD of the USSR as an agent of American intelligence.

In addition it has been established that in 1918 KEDROV, in command of the Northern front, upon an offensive by the British forces left Arkhangel'sk of his own accord, disorganizing military action and opening the front to invasion by the enemy.

He is exposed in hostile work by the confessions of SHILKIN P.P. former worker of the People's Commissariat of Water (sentenced to death), AFONSKY V.A., former company commander (sentenced to death), SAFAROV G.I. (under arrest, undergoing investigation by the NKVD), in face-to-face confrontations with SAFAROV and AFONSKY, and also by the confessions of witness TAGUNOVA V.I.

and by official documents about the treasonous work of KEDROV on the Northern front.

— <http://stalin.memo.ru/spravki/13-184.HTM>

But whatever the facts are about Kedrov's guilt or innocence, he was executed by an order signed by the Soviet Prosecutor.

## **48. Ordzhonikidze's brother**

Khrushchev :

Beria also handled cruelly the family of Comrade Ordzhonikidze. Why? Because Ordzhonikidze had tried to prevent Beria from realizing his shameful plans. Beria had cleared from his way all persons who could possibly interfere with him. Ordzhonikidze was always an opponent of Beria, which he told to Stalin. Instead of examining this affair and taking appropriate steps, Stalin allowed the liquidation of Ordzhonikidze's brother and brought Ordzhonikidze himself to such a state that he was forced to shoot himself.

Sergo Beria:

I knew Papulia Ordzhonikidze well, because we lived in the same house. He always occupied prominent posts, but was better known as a carouser, a hunter, and generally as a lover of the good life. He never called his brother Sergo anything but, excuse me, shit. He cursed socialism all day long.

Sergo was well informed about Papulia's riotous behavior. He resented him and, when he came to Thilisi, made a show of staying with us. Maybe from today's point of view Papulia could be considered a 'democrat', but at that time abusing the existing social order was not forgiven even in the case of a brother of one who was leading and heading that social order...

— Raul Chilachava, *Syn Lavrentiia Beriia raskayyvaet...* Kiev, KITS Inkopress, 1992, p. 17.

Khlevniuk's fiercely anti-communist study still exonerates Beria:

Valiko (Ivan) Ordzhonikidze worked as a budgetary inspector in the financial department of the Tbilisi Soviet. At the beginning of November 1936, one of his colleagues filed a statement with the party committee charging that Ivan Konstantinovich insisted upon the innocence of Papulia Ordzhonikidze and denied he fraternized with Trotskyites. The party committee of the Tbilisi Soviet issued a denunciation. Valiko was called "on the carpet," and not only confirmed everything written in the statement, but added: "Papulia Ordzhonikidze couldn't go against his brother, Comrade Sergo Ordzhonikidze, nor the leader of our people, Comrade Stalin, whom he personally knows.... It's impossible to believe such accusations against Papulia Ordzhonikidze — they are all untrue." To the members of the party committee, Valiko protested: "You can be sure of the innocence not only of my brother, but of others who will be freed in a short time." For such impertinence, they expelled him from the group of party sympathizers, and fired him.

Sergo then got involved in the case. In the middle of December he phoned Beria and asked for help. Beria showed remarkable concern this time: He spoke with the accused and sought an explanation from the chairman of the Tbilisi Soviet. Sergo received a package within a week that contained an explanatory letter from Beria. Beria wrote: "Dear Comrade Sergo! After your call I quickly summoned Valiko; he told me the story of his dismissal and roughly confirmed that which is expounded upon in the enclosed explanation from the chairman of the Tbilisi Soviet, Comrade Nioradze. Today, Valiko was restored to his job. Yours, L. Beria."

— Khlevniuk, Oleg V. *In Stalin's Shadow. The Career of 'Sergo' Ordzhonikidze*. (Armonk, London: M.E. Sharp, 1995), p. 108. The Russian edition of this book, *Stalin i Ordzhonikidze. Konflikty v Politburo v 30-e gody* (Moscow:; Izd. "Rossiia Molodaia", 1993) is not identical to the English translation.

## 49. Stalin, Short Biography

Khrushchev:

Comrades: The cult of the individual acquired such monstrous size chiefly because Stalin himself, using all conceivable methods, supported the glorification of his own person. This is supported by numerous facts. One of the most characteristic examples of Stalin's self-glorification and of his lack of even elementary modesty is the edition of his Short Biography, which was published in 1948.

This book is an expression of the most dissolute flattery, an example of making a man into a godhead, of transforming him into an infallible sage, "the greatest leader, sublime strategist of all times and nations." Finally, no oilier words could be found with which to lift Stalin up to the heavens.

We need not give here examples of the loathesome adulation filling this book. All we need to add is that they all were approved and edited by Stalin personally and some of them were added in his own handwriting to the draft text of the book.

What did Stalin consider essential to write into this book? Did he want to cool the ardor of his flatterers who were composing his Short Biography? No! He marked the very places where he thought that the praise of his services was insufficient. Here are some examples characterizing Stalin's activity, added in Stalin's own hand:

"In this fight against the skeptics and capitulators, the Trotskyites, Zinovievites, Bukharinites and Kamenevites, there was definitely welded together, after Lenin's death, that leading core of the party... that upheld the great banner of Lenin, rallied the party behind Lenin's behests, and brought the Soviet people into the broad road of industrializing the country and collectivizing the rural economy. The leader of this core and the guiding force of the party and the state was Comrade Stalin." [(1) — see below for discussion, GF]

Thus writes Stalin himself! Then he adds:

Although he performed his task as leader of the party and the people with consummate skill and enjoyed the unreserved support of the entire Soviet people, Stalin never allowed his work to be marred by the slightest hint of vanity, conceit or self-adulation.

[(2) — see below for discussion, GF]

Where and when could a leader so praise himself? Is this worthy of a leader of the Marxist-Leninist type? No. Precisely against this did Marx and Engels take such a strong position. This also was always sharply condemned by Vladimir Il'ich Lenin.

In the draft text of his book appeared the following sentence: "Stalin is the Lenin of today."

This sentence appeared to Stalin to be too weak, so, in his own handwriting, he changed it to read: "Stalin is the worthy continuer of Lenin's work, or, as it is said in our party, Stalin is the Lenin of today." [(3) — see below for discussion, GF] You see how well it is said, not by the nation but by Stalin himself.

It is possible to give many such self-praising appraisals written into the draft text of that book in Stalin's hand. Especially generously does he endow himself with praises pertaining to his military genius, to his talent for strategy.

I will cite one more insertion made by Stalin concerning the theme of the Stalinist military genius. "The advanced Soviet science of war received further development," he writes, "at Comrade Stalin's hands. Comrade Stalin elaborated the theory of the permanently operating factors that decide the issue of wars, of active defense and the laws of counteroffensive and offensive, of the cooperation of all services and arms in modern warfare, of the role of big tank masses and air forces in modern war, and of the artillery as the most formidable of the armed services. At the various stages of the war Stalin's genius found the correct solutions that took account of all the circumstances of the situation." [(4) — see below for discussion, GF]



And, further, writes Stalin: "Stalin's military mastership was displayed both in defense and offense. Comrade Stalin's genius enabled him to divine the enemy's plans and defeat them. The battles in which Comrade Stalin directed the Soviet armies are brilliant examples of operational military skill." [(5) - see below for discussion, GF]

In this manner was Stalin praised as a strategist. Who did this? Stalin himself, not in his role as a strategist but in the role of an author-editor, one of the main creators of his self-adulatory biography. Such, comrades, are the facts. We should rather say shameful facts.

V .A. Belianov, editor of Stalin's remarks:

His [Stalin's] supporters could even find confirmation of the Vozhd's modesty, since he crossed out numerous phrases praising him that had been included by the servile compilers (like "under Stalin's leadership," "genius", etc.)

Stalin's many changes included the addition of a paragraph stressing the importance of the role of women:

One of Stalin's great services has to be the fact that in this period, the period of the development of industrialization and collectivization, when it was essential to mobilize all our laboring forces to decide great tasks, he gave full attention to the woman question, the question of the position of women, of female labor, of the very important role of women, female workers, and women farmers in both the economic and the social-political life of society and, having raised this question to the necessary importance, gave it a correct resolution.

— *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* No. 9, 1990, pp. 113-129. Online at [http://grachev62.narod.ru/stalin/t16/t16\\_17.htm](http://grachev62.narod.ru/stalin/t16/t16_17.htm)

Maksimenkov's conclusion:

In contradiction to Khrushchev's thesis in these two examples what is obvious is the significant lowering of ideological expressions of the 'cult' by Stalin himself, and the exaltation of Leninist dogmas. All the

formulations about "the teachings of Stalin" were removed. In the draft of the biography of Lenin, prepared in 1950 in accordance with Stalin's directives, the Vozhd [Leader, i.e. Stalin — GF] himself systematically lowered the high style of information connected with the depiction of the parallel "Lenin — Stalin." ... For understandable reasons N.S. Khrushchev, P.N. Pospelov, M.A. Suslov, L.F. Il'ichev and other ideologists of "the Thaw" did not cite, in their own public statements and articles, examples of these corrections [by Stalin]. The present author is not aware of any mention of these primary sources even during the years of *perestroika*.

— Leonid Maksimenkov. "Kul't. Zametki o slovakh-simvolakh v sovetskoi politicheskoi kul'ture" ("Cult. Remarks about word-symbols in Soviet political culture"). *Svobodnaia Mysl'* 10 (1993). Also at [http://www.situation.ru/app/j\\_art\\_677.htm](http://www.situation.ru/app/j_art_677.htm)

Excerpt from Mochalov's notes about Stalin's remarks:

There are very many errors. The tone is bad, Socialist-Revolutionary. I'm said to have all kinds of knowledge, including some kind of knowledge of constant factors of war. It appears that I have knowledge about communism, while Lenin, you see, spoke only about socialism and said nothing about communism. And I, you see, spoke about communism. Further, it is as though I have knowledge about the industrialization of the country, about the collectivization of agriculture, and so forth, etc. In fact it is to Lenin that the achievement of the posing of the question of industrializing our country, as well as concerning the question of collectivizing agriculture, etc. must be attributed.

There's a great deal of praise in this biography, the exaltation of the role of the individual. What is left for the reader to do after reading this biography? Get on his knees and pray to me...

Here, about Baku it is written that, supposedly, before my arrival the Bolsheviks had done nothing, and all I had to do was to arrive and suddenly everything changed at once. Believe it or not! In reality, how

was it? We had to form our cadre. We did form cadre of Bolsheviks in Baku. I listed the names of these people in the corresponding place.

The same about another period — people like Dzerzhinskii, Frunze, Kuibyshev, lived and worked, but nothing is written about them, they are absent...

This has to do with the period of the Second World War. It was necessary to take capable people, gather them, forge them. Such people gathered around the main command of the Red Army.

Nowhere is it said that I am a pupil of Lenin... In fact I considered myself, and still consider myself, a pupil of Lenin. I said this clearly in the well-known conversation with Ludwig... I am a pupil of Lenin's, Lenin taught me, not the other way around. He laid out the road, and we are proceeding along this cleared road.

— Richard Kosolapov, *Slovo tovarishchu Stalinu*. Moscow: EKSMO-Algorithm, 2002, pp. 470-472.

Elsewhere Kosolapov recounts a story — possibly apocryphal, though it is attested by many others as well — about Stalin's disdain for his "image:"

Supposedly Joseph Vissarionovich had a conversation with his son Vasilii when, angered by the arrogance of his sons, he uttered this reproach: "Do you think that you are STALIN? Do you think I am STALIN? HE is Stalin — there!" he said, as he pointed at the pompous portrait.

— Speech on 122<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of Stalin's birth, *Solnce truda* No. 3 (2003), pp. 3-4. At <http://www.cprf.info/analytics/10828.shtml>

Non-Stalinist authors like IUrii Bogomolov, correspondent for *Izvestiia*, cite similar stories:

A rumor has spread about a conversation between papa Iosif and his son Vasia. "You think you are Stalin? You think I am Stalin? THAT is

Stalin!" said the Boss, as he finished his moral lesson and pointed at a portrait.

— "Stalin i TV", now at  
<http://web.archive.org/web/20050224073133/http://www.politcom.ru/2003/pvz74.php>

## 50. The Short Course

Khrushchev:

And when Stalin himself asserts that he himself wrote *The Short Course of the History of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)*, this calls at least for amazement. Can a Marxist- Leninist thus write about himself, praising his own person to the heavens?

Molotov:

Chuev: I have heard the assertion that it was Iaroslavskii who wrote *The Short Course*...

Molotov: — That's impossible. But it wasn't written by Stalin. And he never said that he had written it. He read to us the only chapter of his — the philosophical one.

— Chuev, Molotov: *Poluderzhavnyi Vlastelin*, 302.

In reality, as Roi Medvedev has pointed out, Stalin's role in preparing the textbook was far more significant. In the chapter with the title "Stalin — main author of the *Short Course*", Medvedev notes:

Stalin ... edited and wrote many of the pages of this Short Course. To Stalin belong not only the general plan of the book, but also the titles of each chapter and paragraphs within these chapters. He wrote all the sections and pages of the book that related to theory....

Already on November 28, 1938 Fiodr Samoilov, director of the State museum of the Revolution ... wrote a letter to A.N. Poskrebyshev,

chief of Stalin's secretarial staff:

"To the CC of the ACP(b), com. Poskrebyshev. In connection with the necessary exposition in the Museum of the Revolution of the USSR of the *Short Course of the History of the ACP(b)* we must turn to comrade Stalin with a request to permit us to receive a few pages, written or corrected by him, of the *Short Course*, or page margins corrected by comrade Stalin's hand. If it is not possible to receive originals of the indicated materials, then could not the Museum be provided with photocopies of them? The exposition of these materials would be extremely valuable and interesting for visitors to the Museum."

Poskrebyshev showed this letter to Stalin a few days later, and the latter wrote his answer directly on the letter form of the Museum of the Revolution: "Com. Samoilov. I would not think that in your old age you would bother yourself with such trifles. If the book has already been published in millions of copies, why do you want the manuscripts? With greetings. December 6, 1938. J. Stalin." This letter with Stalin's resolution was taken from the archives at the end of 1955 in preparation for the XX Congress of the CPSU. On the basis of this document N.S. Khrushchev virtually blamed Stalin for plagiarism. *The Short Course*, as Khrushchev said, was written by a collective of authors, and in the *Short Biography of Stalin* published in 1948 in Stalin's own hand was inserted the phrase "the book *History of the ACP(b). Short Course* was written by comrade Stalin and approved by a Commission of the CC ACP(b)." "As you can see, — exclaimed N.S. Khrushchev to the closed session of the Congress in his secret report, — this constitutes a conversion of the work created by a collective into a book written by Stalin.

In this case N.S. Khrushchev was in error. As is known, not all the manuscripts were burned. A part of the typescript of the *Short Course* with corrections and insertions of various kinds by Stalin has been retained, and these materials were published in 2002-2003 in the journal 'Vorposy Istorii'.

— R.A. Medvedev, *Liudi i Knigi. Chlo chital Stalin?* Moscow: Prava cheloveka, 2005, pp. 216-217.

## **51. Stalin Signed Order for Monument to Himself on July 2, 1951**

Khrushchev:

It is a fact that Stalin himself had signed on July 2, 1951 a resolution of the USSR Council of Ministers concerning the erection on the Volga-Don Canal of an impressive monument to Stalin; on September 4 of the same year he issued an order making 33 tons of copper available for the construction of this impressive monument.

February 16, 1951 the Politburo decision:

The Chairmanship at the sessions of the Presidium of the Soviet of Ministers of the USSR and the Buro of the Presidium of the Soviet of Ministers of the USSR is to be assigned by turns to the Vice-Chairmen of the Presidium of the Soviet of Ministers of the USSR comrades Bulganin, Beria and Malenkov, to whom are [also] assigned the duties of considering and taking decisions upon current matters.

Decrees and announcements of the Council of Ministers of the USSR will be issued under the signature of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR comrade Stalin J.V.

— IU. Zhukov, *Tainy Kremliia. Stalin, Mohtov, Beria, Malenkov*. Moscow: Terra-Knizhnyi Klub, 2000, pp. 544-5.

The original of this document:

[http://www.rusarchives.ru/evants/exhibitions/stalin\\_exb/29.shtml](http://www.rusarchives.ru/evants/exhibitions/stalin_exb/29.shtml)

The rubber stamps of Stalin's signature used to sign documents in his name:

[http://www.rusarchives.ru/evants/exhibitions/stalin\\_exb/31.shtml](http://www.rusarchives.ru/evants/exhibitions/stalin_exb/31.shtml)

Politburo members speaking in July 1953 concerning Stalin's political inactivity during final period of his life:

Khrushchev:

We all respect comrade Stalin. But the years take their toll. During recent times comrade Stalin did not read papers, or receive people, because his health was weak.

— *Lavrentii Beria*, p. 236.

Kaganovich:

It must be frankly said that in Stalin's day, since we had his general political leadership, we lived more calmly, although comrade Stalin, as has been accurately said, during recent times did not work very actively or take part in the work of the Politburo.

— *Lavrentii Beria*, p. 274.

Voroshilov:

Together with the rest of us he knew that, as a result of hard work, during the past years he was often ill...

— *Lavrentii Beria*, p. 334.

Mikoian:

Comrade Stalin at first took an active part in the formation of these organs, but during the past two years he stopped taking an interest in them.

— *Lavrentii Beria*, p. 170.

— All citations from *Lavrentii Beria. 1953*. Ed. Naumov and Sigachev. Moscow 1999.

## **52. Palace of Soviets**

Khrushchev:

At the same time Stalin gave proofs of his lack of respect for Lenin's memory. It is not a coincidence that, despite the decision taken over 30 years ago to build a Palace of Soviets as a monument to Vladimir Il'ich, this palace was not built, its construction was always postponed and the project allowed to lapse.

Maksim Volchenkov's, "Dvorets Sovetov" ("The Palace of Soviets"):

Despite the stormy beginning of the construction, the realization of the project had to be frozen. More than this, the metallic carcass of the Palace of Soviets was taken down during the war: the capital needed metal for defense materials against fascist Germany. After the victory they did not resurrect the building, although the idea of the structure of this grandiose conception never left Stalin until his very death. The Vozhd wanted to underscore, with this building, the superiority of the Soviet system over the structure of capitalist states. "We won the war and are recognized throughout the world as great victors. We should be ready for the arrival of foreign tourists in our cities. What will they think if they go around Moscow and do not see any skyscrapers? When they compare us to capitalist capitals, it may be to our detriment."

The resources set aside for the construction of the Palace of Soviets were used for the reconstruction of the state after this very severe war. In addition, the "Cold War" had begun, and many resources were needed to build the atom bomb. What was the sense of a grandiose building if the enemy, who had atomic weapons, could wipe the whole country off the face of the earth? Who would then admire the masterpiece of Soviet architecture? It was clear that the actualization of this magnificent conception was postponed for an indefinite time. Despite that, the directorate of construction of the Palace of Soviets attached to the Soviet of Ministers still remained in existence for several years. Then it was reassigned to the construction of other multistory buildings, using the experience of the designs of the Palace of Soviets that had been worked out with the years. A few more years passed, and the directorate would undertake the construction of the television tower in Ostankino.



...[Volchenkov quotes Khrushchev's attack on Stalin in the Secret Speech.] Despite Khrushchev's harsh criticism of the old project and its organizers, the new contest did not produce anything better, and the country never saw this building either during Khrushchev's time or later.

— Maksim Volchenkov. "Dvorets Sovetov."  
[http://www.4ygeca.com/dv\\_sovetov.html](http://www.4ygeca.com/dv_sovetov.html)

### 53. Lenin Prize

Khrushchev:

We cannot forget to recall the Soviet Government resolution of August 14, 1925 concerning "the founding of Lenin prizes for educational work." This resolution was published in the press, but until this day there are no Lenin prizes. This, too, should be corrected.

In the notes to the critical edition of Khrushchev's Speech the editors say nothing about any connection between the cancellation of the Lenin prizes and the establishment of the Stalin prizes.

The Lenin prizes were awarded for exceptional achievements in the fields of science, technology, literature, art, and architecture. They were established in 1925, and were not awarded between 1935 and 1957. In November [1955] to March 1956 the question of renewing of the Lenin prize awards was discussed in the Presidium and Secretariat of the Central Committee of the CPSU. From 1958 till 1990 they were awarded annually on Lenin's birthday.

— *Doklad Khrushcheva*, p. 161, n. 89

The idea of establishing prizes in the field of literature seems to have been first suggested by Gorky. Having read Stalin's speech to the unified Plenum of the CC and the Central Control Commission of the ACP(b) (January 7-12 1933), the writer responded with an enthusiastic letter.

January 16, 1933

Dear Iosif Vissarionovich!

The accumulation of materials for the first four volumes of the *History of the Civil War* has been completed by its secretariat.

It is now essential that the main editorial group confirm the materials of the authors who have been mentioned for reworking, and I urge you in this regard. The authors must submit their manuscripts by March 31. I implore you to move this matter forward! I have the impression that the main editorial group is sabotaging this effort.

I read your powerful, wise speech to the Plenum with a feeling of the deepest satisfaction and enthusiasm. I am completely certain that such a powerful echo will resound everywhere in the world of the working class. Beneath its serene, powerfully forged form lies such a resounding thunder that it seems that you have squeezed into your words all the noise of the construction of the years gone by. I know that you do not need any words of praise, but I think I have the right to tell you the truth.

You are a great man, a real leader, and the proletariat of the Soviet Union is fortunate that at its head there stands a second Il'ich by the force of your logic and by your inexhaustible energy. I shake your hand firmly, dear and respected comrade.

A. Peshkov.

On the reverse side of the writing paper in Gorky's hand are two notes, in the second of which, among other things, is written the following:

Aleksei Tolstoy has in mind an All-union contest in comedy — I hereby attach the draft resolution about this contest.

Among our writers there is felt a strong sense of renewed energy and the desire to work seriously, therefore the contest might yield good results. But for an All-union contest seven prizes are too few, we should increase the number to at least 15, and the amount of the first prize to 25 thousand — the devil with them! — **and give to the prizes**

**the name of Stalin** (emphasis added, GF), for indeed this plan comes from you.

In addition: why only comedy? Drama should also be included...

Forgive me for boring you.

A.P.

On February 3 1933 Stalin replied to Gorky:

Dear Aleksei Maksimovich!

I have received your letter of January 16, 1933. Thank you for your warm words and for your "praise." No matter how people may boast, no one can be indifferent to "praise." Understandably I, as a person, am no exception...

3. We will finish plans for a comedy contest soon. Will will not refuse Tolstoy. We guarantee everything according to your demands.

**Concerning "giving the prizes the name of Stalin", I protest most strongly (most strongly!).** (Emphasis added, GF)

Greetings! I shake your hand!

]. Stalin

P.S. Take care of your health.

— Soima, Vasilii. Zapreshchennyi Stalin. Moscow: OIMA-Press, 2005, pp. 20-21. This volume is online at [http://zapravdu.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=79&Itemid=51](http://zapravdu.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=79&Itemid=51)

This passage is on the second "page" of the online book, at [http://zapravdu.ru/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=79&Itemid=51?&Itemid=51&limit=1&limitstart=1](http://zapravdu.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=79&Itemid=51?&Itemid=51&limit=1&limitstart=1)

On December 21 1939 Pravda published a decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR concerning the establishment of prizes and awards in the name of Stalin. The decree, issued under the signature of Chairman of the CPC Molotov and the business manager Khlomov, reads as follows (emphasis added, GF):

In commemoration of the sixtieth birthday of comrade Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin the Council of People's Commissars of the Union of SSR decrees:

I. To establish 16 prizes **in the name of Stalin** (of 100,000 rubles each), to be awarded each year to activists in science and arts for exceptional work in the following fields:

1. physico-mathematical sciences;
2. technical sciences;
3. chemical sciences;
5. agricultural science;
6. medical science;
7. philosophical science;
8. economic science;
9. historical-philological science;
10. juridical science;
11. music;
12. painting;
13. sculpture;
14. architecture;

15. theatrical arts;

16. cinematography.

II. To establish the **Stalin prize**, to be awarded yearly for the best discovery:

Ten **first** prizes of 100 thousand rubles each,

Twenty **second** prizes of 50 thousand rubles each,

Thirty **third** prizes of 25 thousand rubles each.

III. To establish the Stalin prize, to be awarded yearly for exceptional achievements in the field of military knowledge:

Three **first** prizes of 100 thousand rubles each,

Five **second** prizes of 50 thousand rubles each,

Ten **third** prizes of 25 thousand rubles each.

Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars

Of the Union of SSR *V. Molotov*

Business manager of the Council of People's Commissars

Of the Union of SSR *M. Khlomov*

December 20, 1939

Moscow, the Kremlin.

— "Premii bez preni", *Kommersant'-Den'gi*, February 7, 2005. At <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=544976>

Thereupon still another decree was issued in which the question of the Stalin prizes received a further elaboration:

In addition to the decree of the CPC of the Union of SSR of December 20 1939 ... the CPC of the Union of SSR decrees:

One — for poetry,

One — for prose,

One — for dramaturgy,

One — for literary criticism.

Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars USSR

V. Molotov

Business manager of the Council of People's Commissars USSR

M. Khlomov

February 1, 1940

Moscow, the Kremlin.

From 1930 till 1991 the highest state award of the USSR was the Order of Lenin, not of Stalin. The Order of Stalin was indeed proposed but, as we have seen in Section 1 above, it was resolutely and successfully opposed by Stalin himself and never instituted.

Concerning the Establishment of Two New Orders of the Union of SSR: "The Order of Lenin" and "The Red Star"

The decree of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR [the highest State organ under the 1924 constitution — GF] of April 6, 1930:

1. To establish two new orders of the Union of SSR:

"The Order of Lenin" and "The Red Star."

The Statute of the Order "Order of Lenin".

The decree of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR of May 5 1930.

The Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of SSR ... decrees:

To confirm the statute below of the order 'The Order of Lenin...'

- Text at <http://glory.rin.ru/cgi-bin/article.pl?id=99>

## **54. Stalin Suggested Huge Tax Increase on Kolkhozes**

Khrushchev:

What is more, while reviewing this project Stalin proposed that the taxes paid by the kolkhozes and by the kolkhoz workers should be raised by 40 billion rubles; according to him the peasants are well off and the kolkhoz worker would need to sell only one more chicken to pay his tax in full.

Imagine what this meant. Certainly, 40 billion rubles is a sum which the kolkhoz workers did not realize for all the products which they sold to the Government. In 1952, for instance, the kolkhozes and the kolkhoz workers received 26,280 million rubles for all their products delivered and sold to the Government.

Did Stalin's position, then, rest on data of any sort whatever? Of course not. In such cases facts and figures did not interest him.

Khrushchev, at the July 1953 CC Plenum:

Khrushchev: Unfortunately when there was a third variant [of a proposed tax increase] he proposed by the way to raise the taxes on kolkhozes and kolkhozniks to 40 billion, but the whole income is only 42 billion.

Mikoian: To raise the current tax from 15 billion to 40 billion.

Khrushchev: No, raise it 40 billion more in taxes. That is already, I don't know what.

Mikoian: That would be impossible.

— *Lavrentii Beria*, p. 171. This same story is repeated in the second draft of the same meeting on p. 313, but Mikoian's words are elaborated to take a dig at Beria.

Malenkov later mentions the same figure, but makes it clear that he had not heard it before the Plenum.

In the course of the work of the current Plenum you, comrades, learned the following fact. In connection with the problems of improving animal husbandry in February of this year comrade Stalin insistently proposed increasing the taxes in the countryside by 40 billion rubles. We of course all understood the glaring injustice and danger of such a measure...

*Ibid.* p. 351. Note that Khrushchev had said Stalin mention this "by the way" or "as an aside" (*poputno*). Malenkov has turned that into "insistently" proposed.

Mikoian does not repeat this story of "40 billion rubles" in the account of this event in his memoirs. He says that it was Khrushchev that heard Stalin propose an additional tax on the peasantry.

Mikoian also fails to cite the "40 billion rubles" figure. "An extra chicken" per peasant family would not produce a large sum, much less this colossal figure — though Mikoian admits he did not ever hear Stalin say this! Evidently it was not Khrushchev, but "other CC members" who heard the remark about "an extra chicken."

It is interesting that Mikoian is very careful to state what he himself heard from Stalin, and to make it clear that he did not hear any of this himself.



This could be interpreted as meaning he did not necessarily believe it, especially Khrushchev's figure.

As always in the evening, when the other members of the Presidium were also at Stalin's, Malenkov laid out the essence of the matter in order to test Stalin's reaction. I was not present Khrushchev later said that Stalin got angry and said that we were were renewing the program of Rykov and Frumkin, that the peasantry was getting fat while the working class was living more poorly. Other CC members told me that Stalin spoke out on this subject during the October [1952) Plenum and sharply criticized me for the very idea of raising the purchase prices on meat and dairy products. They said that he looked very mean, walked back and forth as he usually did, grumbled, and said about me: 'A new Frumkin has turned up!' But truthfully, I did not hear that. Then I heard he said we needed yet another new tax on the peasants. He said 'What's that to a peasant. He'll give up an extra chicken — and that's all.'

And at that same discussion **Khrushchev heard about Stalin's proposal to levy an additional tax on the peasantry** and got upset, saying that if we were to raise taxes on the peasants then we needed to include people like Malenkov, Beria, and Zverev (the head of the Ministry of Finance) on the commission. Stalin agreed to that After a time we actually met in our new composition. The commission discovered that both Beria and Malenkov considered it impossible to carry out Stalin's directive. TIUs was explained, of course, in private conversations. They gave it to Zverev to do the accounting and explaining. In general, they drew this matter out as long as they could Everyone considered Stalin's suggestions about new taxes on the peasantry without any increases in the purchase prices to be impracticable. (emphasis added, GF)

— *Tak Bylo* (Mikoian's memoirs), Chapter 46, p. 578.

## **55. Stalin Insulted Postyshev**

Khrushchev:

In one of his speeches Stalin expressed his dissatisfaction with Postyshev and asked him, "What are you actually?"

Postyshev answered clearly, "I am a Bolshevik, Comrade Stalin, a Bolshevik."

This assertion was at first considered to show a lack of respect for Stalin; later it was considered a harmful act and consequently resulted in Postyshev's annihilation and branding without any reason as a 'people's enemy.'

Khrushchev is the sole source for this supposed statement by Stalin. This quotation has never been located anywhere. No one else has ever claimed that Stalin said it. Had it in fact been in a speech it would almost certainly have been found long before now. We discuss this matter in the text.

## **56. "Disorganization" of Politburo Work**

Khrushchev:

The importance of the Central Committee's Political Bureau was reduced and its work was disorganized by the creation within the Political Bureau of various commissions — the so-called "quintets," "sextets," "septets" and "novenaries." Here is, for instance, a resolution of the Political Bureau of October 3, 1946:

Stalin's Proposal:

1. The Political Bureau Commission for Foreign Affairs ('Sextet') is to concern itself in the future, in addition to foreign affairs, also with matters of internal construction and domestic policy.
2. The Sextet is to add to its roster the Chairman of the State Commission of Economic Planning of the USSR, Comrade Voznesensky, and is to be known as a Septet.

Signed: Secretary of the Central Committee, J. Stalin.

What a terminology of a card player! (Laughter in the hall.) It is clear that the creation within the Political Bureau of this type of commissions — "quintets," "sextets," "septets" and "novenaries" — was against the principle of collective leadership. The result of this was that some members of the Political Bureau were in this way kept away from participation in reaching the most important state matters.

Edvard Radzinsky, biographer of, and extremely hostile to, Stalin:

After Stalin's death Nikita Khrushchev in his famous report on the cult of personality waxed indignant that Stalin "diminished the role of the Politburo by the creation within the CC of certain "sextets", "quintets", to which were given special powers .... "What a terminology of a card player!" — fumed Khrushchev. But he, addressing himself to the post-Lenin generation of the Party, did not know (or pretended not to know) that he was threatening one of the oldest Party traditions. "Troikas", "quintets", and other "narrow structures" created by the Vozhd within his leading group and known only to the participants and the Vozhd himself, had appeared in Lenin's day.

— Radzinsky, *Stalin*. Chapter 4. The Russian edition, Stalin. Moscow: Vagrius, 1997, is online at [http://militera.lib.ru/bio/radzinsky\\_esl/02.html](http://militera.lib.ru/bio/radzinsky_esl/02.html)

## **57. Stalin Suspected Voroshilov as an "English Agent"**

Khrushchev:

Because of his extreme suspicion, Stalin toyed also with the absurd and ridiculous suspicion that Voroshilov was an English agent. (Laughter in the hall.) It's true — an English agent. — p.48

Khrushchev's memoirs:

Stalin even said to a few of us [lit. "a narrow circle of us," *v uzkom krugu*, GF] that he suspected Voroshilov was an English agent. Of course, improbable stupidities.

— Khrushchev, N.S. *Vremia. Liudi. Vlast'*. Kn.2. Chast' 3. Moscow: Moskovskie novosti, 1999, pp. 128-129. Online at [http://hrono.ru/libris/lib\\_h/hrush45.html](http://hrono.ru/libris/lib_h/hrush45.html)

There is no other source for this story. None of Khrushchev's colleagues in that "narrow circle" ever confirmed it.

## **58. Andreev; 59. Molotov; 60. Mikoian**

### **Andreev**

Khrushchev:

By unilateral decision, Stalin had also separated one other man from the work of the Political Bureau — Andrei Andreyevich Andreyev. This was one of the most unbridled acts of willfulness.

Efremov:

In the new list of those elected are all members of the old Politburo — except that of comrade A.A. Andreev who, as everyone knows now is unfortunately completely deaf and thus can not function.

— "'V Ch'I Ruki Vruchim Estafetu Nashego Velikogo Dela?' Neopublikovannaia rech' I.V. Stalina na Plenumе Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS. 16 Oktobria 1952 goda (po zapisi L.N. Efremova)" *Sovetskaia Rossiia*. 13 ianvariia 2000 g. p. 6. Facsimile online at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/stalinoct1652.pdf> Also at <http://www.prometej.info/solnce/st-03.htm>

Konstantin Simonov:

I remember only Stalin's reply about Andreev, who was not included among the members and candidates of the Presidium of the CC — that he had withdrawn from activity, and for all practical purposes could not work actively any more.

Simonov, *Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniia* ["Through the Eyes of a Man of My Generation"], 1988, p. 246.

### **Molotov; Mikoian**

Khrushchev:

Let us consider the first Central Committee plenum after the 19th Party Congress when Stalin, in his talk at the plenum, characterized Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov and Anastas Ivanovich Mikoian and suggested that these old workers of our party were guilty of some baseless charges. It is not excluded that had Stalin remained at the helm for another several months, Comrades Molotov and Mikoian would probably have not delivered any speeches at this Congress.

Efremov:

It's necessary to touch upon incorrect behavior on the part of a few prominent political figures, if we are speaking of unity in our affairs. I have in mind comrades Molotov and Mikoian.

Comrade Molotov — the most dedicated to our cause. If called upon, I do not doubt that, without hesitation, he would give his life for the party. But we cannot overlook his unworthy acts. Comrade Molotov as our Minister of Foreign Affairs, having taken a little too much liqueur at a diplomatic deception, gave his agreement to the British ambassador to publish bourgeois newspapers and magazines in our country. Why? On what basis did he have to agree to such a thing? Is it not clear that the bourgeoisie is our class enemy and to disseminate the bourgeois press amongst to the Soviet people can bring us nothing but harm. This faulty step, if we were to permit it, would be a harmful, negative influence on the minds and world-view of Soviet people, would lead to the weakening of our communist ideology and the strengthening of bourgeois ideology. This is the first political mistake of comrade V.M. Molotov.

And what about the offer by Molotov to give the Crimea to Soviet Jews? This is a crude error by comrade Molotov. Why did he have to do it? How could this be permitted? On what grounds did comrade Molotov make this offer? We have the Jewish Autonomous Republic. Isn't that enough? Let this Republic be developed. And comrade Molotov out not to be an advocate of illegal Jewish claims on our Soviet Crimea. This is the second political error of comrade V.I. Molotov! Comrade Molotov does not conduct himself as befits a member of the Politburo. And we reject categorically his fanciful offers.

Comrade Molotov has such deep respect for his wife that no sooner has the Politburo taken a decision on this or that important political question, that it is quickly made known to comrade Zhemchuzhina. It seems as though some kind of invisible thread united the Politburo with Molotov's wife Zhemchuzhina and her friends. And she is surrounded by friends who cannot be trusted. Clearly, such behavior by a member of the Politburo is impermissible.

Now regarding comrade Mikoian. He, do you see, is categorically against raising agricultural taxes on the peasants. Who is he, our Anastas Mikoian? What is it that is not clear to him? The peasant is our debtor. We have a first unity with the peasants. We have guaranteed the land forever to the kolkhozes. They must render the due debt to the state. Therefore we do not agree with comrade Mikoian's position.

(see former references under "Andreev").

Khrushchev's memoirs:

And at the Plenum Stalin, in his speech, hit Molotov and Mikoian "upside the head," put their honesty in doubt. In his speech he insinuated political distrust of them, suspicion in some kind of political dishonesty. Well, well!

— Khrushchev, N.S. *Vremia, Lindi, Vlast'*. Vol. 2 Part 3. Chapter "19<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of our country". Online at

[http://hrono.ru/libris/lib\\_h/hrush41.html](http://hrono.ru/libris/lib_h/hrush41.html)

D.T. Shepilov, one of the few eyewitnesses to the Plenum who left a written account of what took place, said:

Stalin at the CC Plenum and without any basis expressed political distrust of Molotov, accused him of "capitulationism towards American imperialism" and proposed not to appoint Molotov to the staff of the Buro of the Presidium of the CC. That was done. V. Molotov accepted this without a single word of protest.

Standing at the podium Stalin with a suspicious expression spoke about how Molotov was intimidated by American imperialism, that, when he was in the USA, he sent panic-stricken telegrams, that such a leader does not deserve our trust, that he cannot be in the leading nucleus of the party. In the same tones Stalin expressed political distrust of A. Mikoian and K Voroshilov.

...Molotov sat unmoving behind the table of the Presidium. He remained silent, and not a single muscle moved on his face. Through the glass of his pince-nez he looked straight out into the hall and only rarely moved the three fingers of his right hand on the tablecloth, as though kneading a bit of bread. A. Mikoian was very nervous. He delivered a trifling and disordered speech. He too, defending himself from these fantastic accusations, did not fail to kick out at Molotov that, as he claimed, he had been friends with Voznesensky, who was himself a terrible criminal.

— Shepilov, Dmitrii T. *Niprimknuvshii*. Moscow: Vagrius, 2001, p. 19; p. 229. Online at <http://www.pseudology.org/ShepilovDT/11.htm>

## **61. Expansion of the Presidium**

Khrushchev:

Stalin evidently had plans to finish off the old members of the Political Bureau. He often stated that Political Bureau members should be replaced by new ones. His proposal, after the 19th Congress,

concerning the election of 25 persons to the Central Committee Presidium, was aimed at the removal of the old Political Bureau members and the bringing in of less experienced persons so that these would extol him in all sorts of ways. We can assume that this was also a design for the future annihilation of the old Political Bureau members and, in this way, a cover for all shameful acts of Stalin, acts which we are now considering.

Efremov's notes:

Yes, we did hold the Congress of our party. It went very well, and many of you might think that, amongst us there exists full harmony and unity. But we have not this harmony and unity of thought. Some people disagree with our decisions.

They say, why did we significantly enlarge the membership of the Central Committee? But isn't it self-evident that we need to get new forces into the CC? We old people will die out, but we must think to whom, into whose hands we shall pass the baton of our great undertaking. Who will carry it forward? For this we need younger, dedicated people and political leaders. And what does it mean to bring up a dedicated, devoted political leader of the State? It takes ten, no, fifteen years to educate a state leader.

But just wishing for this is not enough. To educate ideologically firm state activists can only be done through practice, in the daily work of carrying out the general line of the party, of overcoming all sorts of opposition from hostile opportunist elements who are striving to slow down and interrupt the task of the building of socialism. And we must have political activists of Leninist experience, educated by our Party, in the struggle to defeat these hostile attempts and to achieve complete success in the realization of our great goals.

Is it not clear that we must lift up the role of our party and its party committees? Can we forget about improving the Party's work among the masses, as Lenin taught us? All this needs a flow of young, fresh forces into the CC, the general staff of our Party. This is what we have



done, following Lenin's instructions. This is why we have expanded the membership of the CC. And the Party itself has grown a little.

The question is asked as to why we relieved some prominent Party and state figures from their important posts as ministers. What can be said on this account? We replaced comrades Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov and others and replaced them with new workers. Why? On what basis? The work of a minister — this is hard, peasant labor. It demands great strength, concrete knowledge and good health. This is why we have relieved some deserving comrades from the posts they occupied and appointed in their places new, more qualified, workers who take initiative. They are young people, full of strength and energy. We must support them in their important work.

(see previous references).

## **Bibliography and Sources**

Many primary and secondary sources were consulted in preparing this book. Most are in Russian only; as of the date of publication very few are available in English. This is one reason for the many quotations from primary and secondary sources in the text. All translations are by the author unless otherwise noted in the text.

To include the full text of the many hard-to-find primary sources, the text of Khrushchev's Secret Speech, and a full bibliography would add 15%-20% to the cost of this book. Therefore:

- The full text of Khrushchev's speech in the translation used by the author is available online at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/kl/speech.html>
- For the convenience of interested readers who can read Russian the author has made available many hard-to-find primary sources online. The URLs for these primary sources, as well as a full bibliography of primary and secondary sources, are available at <http://chss.montclair.edu/english/furr/research/kl/bibliography.html>

*Editor*

# **The Murder of Sergei Kirov: History, Scholarship and the Anti- Stalin Paradigm**

By Grover Furr

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\*\*\*\*\*

I dedicate this book to Susana Magdalena Sotillo, Ph.D., dedicated scholar and teacher, incisive and supportive critic, *mi compañera y mi camarada*, with all my love and respect.

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## List of Abbreviations

Egge: Egge, Osmund. *Zagadka Kirova. Ubiystvo, razviazavshee stalinskii terror*. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011.

Kirilina: Kirilina, Alla. *Neizvestnyi Kirov*. St Petersburg: "Neva"; Moscow: "Olma-Press", 2001.

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RKEB 1: *Reabilitatsiia: Kak Eto Bylo. Mart 1953 — Fevral' 1956 gg. Dokumenty Prezidiuma TsK KPSS i Drugie Materialy*. Moscow: Mezhdunarodniy Fond "Demokratiia", 2000.

RKEB 2: *Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo. Febral' 1956 — nachalo 80-kh godov. T. 2*. Moscow: "Materik", 2003.

RKEB 3: *Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo. Seredina 80-kh godov — 1991. Dokumenty. T. 3*. Moscow: "Materik", 2004.

R-PP: *Reabilitatsiia: Politicheskie Protsessy 30-x — 50-x gg*. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1991.

## Introduction

The basic facts have never been seriously disputed. At about 4:30 p.m. on December 1, 1934 Sergei Mironovich Kirov, First Secretary of the All Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)<sup>1</sup> of Leningrad oblast' (province) and city, entered the Smolny Institute, headquarters of the Bolshevik Party. Kirov mounted the stairs and walked along the corridor of the third floor towards his office. Leonid Vasil'evich Nikolaev, an unemployed Party member, was standing in the hallway. Nikolaev allowed Kirov to pass by and then rushed towards him from behind, took out a pistol, and shot Kirov in the back of the skull. Nikolaev then tried to shoot himself in the head but missed and fell in a faint on the floor a few feet from Kirov's body.

<sup>1</sup> In Russian the Party's title was "VKP(b)" (Vsesoiuznaia Kommunisticheskaia Partiia (bolshevikov), or "All-Union Communist Party (bolshevik)"; informally, it was still referred to as the "Bolshevik Party", "Bolsheviks", etc.

Nikolaev was seized on the spot. From this point on there is little agreement.

Either late that night or sometime the next day his interrogations began. At first Nikolaev seems to have claimed that he had killed Kirov on his own, without any accomplices, in order to draw attention to what he felt was unfair treatment of himself. Within two or three days he began to, hint that others were involved. Before a week was out Nikolaev had admitted that he was part of a conspiracy by a clandestine group of Party members opposed to Joseph Stalin and favoring Grigorii Zinoviev, Leningrad First Secretary before Kirov.

NKVD investigators now turned their attention on this group. Interrogations of those Nikolaev had named, and then of the persons named by those men, led to a number of partial and a few fuller confessions. Three weeks after the murder fourteen men were indicted for conspiracy to kill Kirov. They were tried on December 28-29, convicted, and executed immediately. Meanwhile, Nikolaev's brother Piotr and wife Mil'da Draule had made more

and more self-incriminating confessions. In March 1935 Draule was tried, convicted, and executed.

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The larger significance of the Kirov murder unfolded only gradually during the next three years. The threads that bound the Kirov conspirators to Zinoviev and Kamenev, followed up by NKVD investigators, led to the three Moscow "Show Trials" of 1936, 1937 and 1938, and to the trial of the military commanders known as the "Tukhachevsky Affair" of 1937. This last led in turn to the "Ezhovshchina", also known as the "Great Terror" of 1937-1938, during which some hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens, most certainly innocent, were arrested and executed, with many others being imprisoned.

On March 5, 1953 Joseph Stalin died. Within months Nikita Khrushchev had become the most powerful leader of the Soviet Union. Before Stalin had been dead many months Khrushchev began organizing a campaign to attack Stalin. A major part of this effort was to declare that Stalin had fabricated false cases against all the defendants of the Moscow Trials and Tukhachevsky Affair.

Khrushchev hinted at these things in his famous "Secret Speech" of February 25, 1956. In the same speech he also cast doubt on the official version of the Kirov assassination. Within the party leadership Khrushchev and his men promoted the "rehabilitations" of a great many persons who had been executed during the 1930s, including some of the Moscow Trial defendants. Khrushchev and his men tried hard to find any evidence they could to prove that Stalin had been behind Kirov's murder. But they were unable to do so, and so at length settled for a story that Nikolaev had acted on his own.

The version that Stalin had caused Kirov to be killed continued to circulate, becoming widely believed both inside and outside the Soviet Union. Outside Russia the "Stalin did it" version continued for a while thanks to books by two well-known anticommunist writers: Robert Conquest, who wrote *Stalin and the Kirov Murder* in 1989, and Amy Knight, author of



Who Killed Kirov? (1991) Both these works rely heavily on rumors and hearsay.

During the Gorbachev period another attempt was made by highly placed Party officials to promote the view that Stalin had killed Kirov. This attempt also failed due to the utter lack of evidence to support it. Since 1990 the view officially accepted in Russia has been that Nikolaev acted alone, and that Stalin "used" Kirov's murder to frame former or putative rivals, forcing them to admit to crimes they had never committed, and executing them and, ultimately, many thousands more.

In 1993 Alla Kirilina's book *Rikoshet* appeared. Kirilina was long the head of the Kirov Museum in Leningrad, an official government position that gave her great familiarity with Kirov, his life and his death. This study contains references to a modest number of primary sources and even reprints a few of them. In 2001 this book was republished as the third part of Kirilina's much longer study *Neizvestnyi Kirov* ("The Unknown Kirov").

In the Fall of 2010 American historian Matthew Lenoe published *The Kirov Murder and Soviet History*, a mammoth 800-page work under the aegis of the prestigious Yale University Press series "Annals of Communism." While Lenoe acknowledges his debt to Kirilina's work, his book is much longer, with many more references to primary sources. While Kirilina's book is more discursive in nature Lenoe's is, or appears to be, evidence based. It contains translations, complete or partial, of 127 documents. A number of these are primary sources for the Kirov murder investigation.

## **The Problem**

Both Kirilina's and Lenoe's books contain evidence — the texts of many primary documents and references to yet others. Both arrive at the same conclusion: that Kirov's assassin Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" and that everyone else accused of complicity in the murder was "framed", falsely accused, forced to give false confessions incriminating themselves and others.

If Kirilina's book, or the more recent and much more detailed work by Lenoe, had solved the Kirov murder the present study would be largely superfluous. But any attentive reader will notice immediately that neither Kirilina nor Lenoe proves this case at all. Though they cite a large number of primary sources only two of those documents in any way support the hypothesis that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman". There are serious problems with both of these documents. All of the other primary documents support the original conclusion reached at the time by the Soviet investigators of the NKVD, the Soviet prosecution, and the court: that Nikolaev was part of a clandestine Zinovievite terrorist conspiracy linked with other similar conspiratorial groups.

In the present study our goal has been to solve the Kirov murder case. Towards this end we review all the evidence as objectively as possible, with appropriate skepticism, and without any preconceived conclusion in mind. The main conclusion of our study is that Nikolaev was not a "lone gunman" at all. The Soviet investigators and prosecution got it right in December 1934. A clandestine Zinovievite conspiratorial organization, of which Nikolaev was a member, killed Kirov.

The only sensible way to approach the Kirov murder is to begin with Kirilina's and Lenoe's studies. These two books set forth the present state of research on this question. Each contains much valuable evidentiary material that any future student must take fully into account. We study each of these works with great care, Kirilina's in one chapter, Lenoe's far longer and more ambitious work in several chapters. We expose in detail the very considerable — ultimately, fatal — flaws in each of them.

It is our conclusion that both authors began with the preconceived idea that is also the official position of the Russian government today, as it was of the Gorbachev regime that preceded it: that Nikolaev alone was guilty and everyone else was "framed." This conclusion is contradicted by virtually all the evidence, as our careful study of that evidence shows. We examine and reveal the errors Kirilina and Lenoe make in reaching their erroneous conclusion, exposing their faulty reasoning and use of primary sources.

We also draw upon much evidence that is directly relevant to the Kirov case but that neither Kirilina nor Lenoe used. It may not be coincidental that all

of this evidence supports the hypothesis that Nikolaev was part of a Zinovievite conspiracy — that is, the conclusion drawn by the Soviet prosecution and courts in the 1930s.

We do not try to account for the fact that Kirilina and Lenoe make a large number of faulty suppositions, errors of reasoning and argumentation, and omissions in their consideration of relevant evidence. It is hard to imagine that these scholars made so many flagrant errors without noticing them — that is, it is hard to believe that some of them were not made deliberately to attempt to force their conclusions to "fit" the preconceived "official" conclusion that only Nikolaev was guilty.

However, it is easy to underestimate the power of a well-established, privileged preconceived framework of analysis on the minds of any researcher who is himself seriously biased. The pressures, both psychological and academic, to reach a conclusion acceptable to leading figures in the field of Soviet history, as well as to officials in Russia who control access to archives, are considerable indeed. Consequently, the disadvantages, professionally and otherwise, of reaching a conclusion that, no matter how well demonstrated, will be displeasing to powerful forces in the archival, political, and academic communities, are clear to anyone who is familiar with the highly politicized nature of the field of Soviet and indeed of all of communist history.

We devote a great deal of attention to analyzing and detailing the defects in Kirilina's and Lenoe's research. We devote special attention to the crucial parts of Kirilina's and Lenoe's arguments — to Nikolaev's "first confession" and, in the case of Lenoe, to Genrikh Liushkov's article in the Japanese magazine *Kaizo* of 1939. This is essential in order to "clear the field" — to establish that these, the most authoritative works on this problem, have failed to solve the question of Kirov's murder. Our task is similar to that of an architect who, called to inspect a structure, discovers that its construction down to the very foundation is so faulty that the entire edifice must be razed and a sound structure erected in its stead. Once we establish that neither Kirilina's nor Lenoe's studies are adequate and that any objective study of the Kirov murder must begin again from the beginning, we proceed to do so.

A problem that confronts everyone interested in the Kirov assassination is that the Russian government continues to keep top-secret many, perhaps most, of the investigative materials for the Kirov murder, as well as or the subsequent and related investigations into the Kremlin Affair, the three Moscow "show trials", and the Tukhachevsky Affair. In Russia there is a statutory 75-year limit upon the expiration of which documents are supposed to be declassified and made public. Many documents from the 1930s have indeed been made public. But most of the investigative materials related to all of these alleged conspiracies are still classified, unavailable even to trusted scholars. Nevertheless, so many primary sources have been published over the past 20 years that, we argue, we have enough evidence to resolve the matter of the Kirov murder in a definitive manner.

## **Implications**

In his informative discussion of Khrushchev's campaign to "rehabilitate" those convicted of complicity in Kirov's murder Lenoë correctly situates the Kirov case at the foundation of the conspiracy trials of the 1930s in the Soviet Union as follows:

If the official charges in the first two trials — that former Zinoviev supporters had conspired to murder Kirov — were entirely bogus, then the indictments in all of the succeeding show trials collapsed. ... But if there was some truth to the charge that Zinovievites conspired to kill Kirov, then that preserved the possibility of arguing that the latter charges were also valid, at least in part. (591-2)

Lenoë understands the implications of the Kirov case. Khrushchev aimed to debunk the then-canonical narrative of Soviet history during the 1930s and create a new one out of whole cloth, one in which Stalin was the criminal who had framed and executed a great many innocent Party members. In order to construct this new narrative he had to begin by completely rewriting the Kirov case.

Lenoë goes on to cite some of the falsehoods invented by Khrushchev and his men in order to persuade the more pro-Stalin members of the Party Presidium that all those convicted of guilt in Kirov's murder save Nikolaev

had been innocent, "framed." But as we shall show Lenoe is still far too credulous of Khrushchev's lies. According to Lenoe even though Khrushchev and his men had concealed much evidence, destroyed other evidence, and generally lied in their study, they were basically correct in concluding in a secret report that Nikolaev had acted alone.

Khrushchev realized that the complete rewriting of Soviet history he wanted necessitated a reversal of verdicts in the Kirov case. And the reverse is also true. To reinstate the original verdict against the defendants in the December 1934 Kirov trial implies that the defendants in the conspiracy cases that followed it: the Moscow Center trial of January 1935, the Kremlin Affair of 1935, the three Moscow "show" trials of 1936, 1937, and 1938, and the Tukhachevsky Affair trial of June 1937, might well have been guilty. Since the testimony in all three "show" trials and in the Tukhachevsky Affair trial implicated Leon Trotsky, it raises the possibility that Trotsky might have been guilty too. Likewise it suggests that other party leaders tried and executed in non-public trials might be guilty as well.

In short, the whole post-Khrushchev paradigm of Soviet history that we have called, for short, the "anti-Stalin" paradigm<sup>2</sup>, is in play in the Kirov murder, many of its mainstay "facts" uncertain, questionable, or bogus. This would entail a reassessment of one of the major historical figures of the 20th century, Joseph Stalin, and consequently of the entire history of the Soviet Union, in which Stalin and the period of his sway is pivotal.

<sup>2</sup> See Grover Furr and Vladimir L. Bobrov, "Stephen Cohen's Biography of Bukharin: A Study in the Falsehood of Khrushchev-Era 'Revelations'". *Cultural Logic* 2010, page 5. At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2010/Furr.pdf>

A "paradigm shift" of this magnitude would disturb any academic discipline. Arguably, it would be especially threatening in such an overtly politically-charged field as the study of communism, of which Soviet history is inevitably a vital part. Perhaps it is not surprising that few scholars wish to squarely face the prospect of coming down on the side of such a change. As we discuss in this study Lenoe spends several pages of his Introduction assuring his readers that he is steadfastly anticommunist

and anti-Stalin even though he concludes that Stalin "didn't do it" — did not have Kirov assassinated.

The fact that Lenoe felt the need to publish what might be called a statement of his "political reliability" just because he has concluded that the evidence shows Stalin did not commit a certain crime of which others had suspected him, and despite the fact that both the Gorbachev-led Soviet regime and the Russian government since then had long concurred in this assessment, attests to the charged political and moral aura surrounding virtually every question of Soviet history during the Stalin period.

The Kirov murder case is one of a small number of cardinal and therefore "hot-button" issues in Soviet history. Others include the Moscow Trials, the Ezhovshchina, or "bad time of Ezhov" of 1937-1938 (also known, in Cold-War terminology, as "the Great Terror"), and Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" to the 20th Party Congress in 1956. All of these events are crucially linked to the Kirov affair. Of course there are other pivotal events in the Soviet history of this period too, such as collectivization, the famine of 1932-33, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and the Katyn Forest massacre, that are not immediately linked to the Kirov Affair except insofar as they all involve the Stalin leadership. Nevertheless the Kirov murder is fundamental to our understanding of both elite and mass politics of the 1930s in the USSR, and in fact to the fate of socialism itself.

The notion that Kirov was killed by a "lone gunman" and hence that Stalin framed all the rest of those accused of complicity and conspiracy is a foundational part of the anti-Stalin paradigm. This in turn means that many people — some of them powerful in academia and even in politics and the media — will be displeased at any research that calls this paradigm into serious question, regardless of the evidentiary basis of that research. The historical legitimacy not only of Russia but of the other post-Soviet states is constructed upon the demonization of the Stalin period and upon certain foundational events that are referenced to justify that demonization. Ideological anticommunism, always avidly promoted for obvious reasons by powerful capitalist forces, is also tied to a very negative interpretation of all communist movements, and especially that of Stalin.

It should surprise no one that scholars are wary of reaching conclusions that will prove unpopular in important circles. Powerful academic, economic, media, and other influential elites are strongly predisposed to favor negative historical portrayals of Stalin and the Soviet Union of his day. Meanwhile, there are no corresponding powerful interests that might look with equanimity, much less with favor, upon more positive interpretations. Nor do any powerful institutions exist to promote objective research to discover the truth by the best methods "and let the chips fall where they may."

Viewed from this perspective it is perhaps less surprising than it might otherwise be that until the present study no researcher has ever approached the primary source evidence in the Kirov murder case in a spirit of objectivity and decided the matter as though it were just another historical problem, albeit a fascinating one. Whatever their reasons, however, neither Kirilina nor Lenoë have done so. The evidence they themselves cite — to say nothing of the very large amount of primary source evidence that they unquestionably know about but have simply omitted — is sufficient to prove that their conclusions are incorrect. On the evidence there can simply be no doubt that Kirov was killed as a result of a conspiracy of clandestine terrorist Zinovievites.

## **Our Analysis**

This study begins by reviewing in detail the three most recent scholarly studies of the Kirov affair: by Kirilina, Lenoë, and the Norwegian historian Åsmund Egge. These are the only books whose authors gained access to and drew upon many primary sources. No study of the Kirov affair before Kirilina's was able to use the primary sources that have been made public since the end of the Soviet Union in 1991. Kirilina's study, titled *Rikoshet* ("ricochet") was republished in 2001 as the final part of her much longer book *Neizvestnyi Kirov*. (As the head for many years of the Kirov museum in Leningrad — St. Petersburg Kirilina resisted the attempt to reduce Kirov to the question of his murder.) We will use this edition rather than the first 1993 version because it is the more recent one.

We devote much more attention to Lenoë's 2010 study because it is far more recent still and, in addition, much fuller. Lenoë translates either in

whole or, usually, in part, a number of important primary documents. Lenoe also explicitly draws upon Kirilina's book. His is both the most recent and the most authoritative study of the Kirov murder to date. As we shall show, Lenoe's study is also very seriously flawed. Nevertheless, because of Lenoe's unprecedented access to primary source materials and the sheer length of his study, any reconsideration of the Kirov murder has to begin with a detailed critique of Lenoe's account. We devote several chapters to it.

Edge's book, published in Norway in 2009 and in Russia in 2011, has been anointed by the Boris Eltsin Foundation's "History of Stalinism" series. In many respects the most disappointing of the three, it does cite documents not mentioned by either Kirilina or Lenoe, a fact whose implications we explore. We devote a separate chapter to it as well.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Edge and Lenoe were apparently unaware of each other's work and do not reference each other. Both cite Kirilina.

We also devote several chapters to a detailed study of a number of especially crucial primary sources. Some, like Nikolaev's first interrogation, are also examined by both Kirilina and Lenoe. Others, such as Genrikh Liushkov's article in the March 1939 issue of the Japanese magazine *Kaizo*, are studied only by Lenoe. We also examine a large third group of very important evidentiary documents that constitute critical evidence in the Kirov murder and yet were ignored by Kirilina, Lenoe, and Edge.

In a concluding chapter we outline what we see as the major conclusion and its implications: that the version of the Kirov murder gradually uncovered by Soviet investigators in the December 1934 and January 1935 trials, the Kremlin Affair interrogations (we do not have any trial records in this case), and the pretrial and trial materials of the 1936, 1937, and 1938 Moscow "show trials", is basically accurate. The conspiracies alleged at these trials did exist, and Kirov was murdered as a part of them. We explore, as space permits, some of the implications of our conclusions, which contradicts — indeed, overturns — the scholarly consensus since Khrushchev's day both inside and outside the USSR and post-Soviet Russia.

We fully realize that this conclusion will be deeply displeasing, even unacceptable, to some scholars in the highly-politicized fields of Soviet and



communist history. Nevertheless, given the evidence we have it is the only objective conclusion possible. This study of the Kirov murder is one of a number of recent studies that tend to dismantle the "anti-Stalin" paradigm on purely evidentiary bases. We conclude that a new history of the Soviet Union during Stalin's time, one dramatically different from the version current since Khrushchev's day, is in the process of replacing the "anti-Stalin" paradigm.

## Chapter 1. *Kirilina*

In his introductory chapter Lenoë states that his "greatest debt is to Alla Kirilina, the most knowledgeable scholar in the world on Kirov's killing." (Lenoë 15) The long-time head of the Kirov Museum in Leningrad / St. Petersburg, Kirilina's most recent work on the Kirov murder is *Neizyestnyi Kirov* ("The Unknown Kirov") (2001). The third part of this work, "Rikoshet" (also the title of an earlier book by Kirilina) is Kirilina's discussion of the assassination, investigation, trial, and aftermath. In it Kirilina expounds the view of the murder implied in her clever title: that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" and the bullet that killed Kirov "ricocheted" to kill many others.

Kirilina wrote her study before the release of many of the evidentiary materials that we now have and that Lenoë and Egge cite. Apparently even her position as director of the Kirov Museum did not gain her access to these materials, let alone to those that have still not been declassified. For our present purposes Kirilina's study of Kirov's murder and its aftermath is important mainly because Egge and, especially, Lenoë admit they drew heavily on it. We will examine Kirilina's "Rikoshet" in two respects. First we will demonstrate that Kirilina has not solved — indeed, it seems she has not even attempted to solve — Kirov's murder. We will then point out some important facts that Kirilina reveals and that Lenoë has omitted or suppressed, matters missing from Lenoë's much longer study.

Since Khrushchev's day, and especially since the later Gorbachev period, the official Soviet and Russian view of the Kirov assassination is that the assassin, Leonid Nikolaev, was a "lone gunman". Kirilina, Lenoë, Egge, and virtually all other "mainstream" scholars of Soviet history have adopted this "official" position, the implication of which is that the Moscow Trials were fabrications or falsifications and the defendants innocent, unjustly executed by Stalin. In the present study we show that there is no evidence at all for this position, and a huge amount of evidence against it. It would appear that anticommunist scholars have embraced it for ideological reasons alone.

Kirilina begins with the assumption, all but universal among mainstream historians of the Soviet period, that the Moscow trials were frameups, "falsifications." (205) The problem with this assumption is that it basically predetermines the rest of Kirilina's study. The Kirov murder figured prominently in all three of the public Moscow "show" trials of 1936, 1937 and 1938. If the Moscow Trials are declared to have been frameups of innocent men, no one remains as an accomplice or accessory to Nikolaev's act. Since no one seriously believes any longer that Stalin had Kirov killed, the only remaining possibility permitted by the assumption that the trials were falsifications is that Nikolaev must have acted alone.

In short Kirilina "begs the question" of Kirov's assassination. She does not pose a hypothesis and then set out to determine whether the available evidence supports that hypothesis or another one. Rather, she assumes from the outset that Nikolaev acted alone. As we shall demonstrate, Lenoe and Egge do this as well. Like them Kirilina cites a lot of evidence to which she was the first scholar to have access. This evidence is very interesting and important. Moreover, it does not at all support her preconceived conclusion.

We will briefly examine some examples of what appears to be incompetence in Kirilina's book. We will also identify some statements that appear to be intentionally false. Of course, some form of prevarication is essential in a work such as Kirilina's — one that presents itself to its readers as an attempt to discover the truth, to "solve the crime", but instead presents a biased argument in favor of a preconceived conclusion.

Moreover, when that preconceived conclusion runs counter to virtually all the evidence we have — and we have a great deal of evidence concerning Kirov's death — an author determined to deny this fact and to promote instead a version of events which is contradicted by the evidence at every turn may be compelled to employ transparent means in her attempt to disguise the truth. What appears to the objective reader as incompetence may well be instead (or also), like the deliberate falsehoods, an attempt to persuade and deceive rather than genuine ignorance or incompetence.

## **Incompetence**

Like Lenoë, whose work we shall examine later, Kirilina makes a number of careless errors:

\* She reports a newspaper account that claims Andrei YA. Vyshinskii, prosecutor in the Moscow Trials and assistant prosecutor in the Kirov trial of December 1934, believed that "confession is the queen of evidence" (219):

The newspaper "Moskovskii Komsomolets in St. Petersburg", in its issue of 6-13 December 2000, published a short notice on the Kirov murder. It questions whether it was Nikolaev who murdered Kirov and argues that at the foundation of Nikolaev's confession is the incorrect conceptual position of A. Ia. Vyshinski, at that time Prosecutor General of the USSR, who considered that "confession is the queen of all evidence"...

This canard has long since been refuted. Vyshinskii's speech to the February-March 1937 Central Committee Plenum, published in 1995 (*Voprosy Istorii No.2*, 1995, p. 11), specifically *attacks* the notion of relying upon confessions instead of other evidence. In his later work, *The Theory of Trial Evidence in Soviet Law* (Moscow 1946) Vyshinskii *criticizes* the fact that confession, even when obtained under "torture" (*pytki*), was considered "queen of proofs" in the 15th and 16th centuries in Europe.

The methods of "proof" were also extremely simple and unique. The most reliable means of "proving" was the use of physical suffering, torture, under the blows of which it was easy to obtain the defendant's own confession, which was considered to be "the best evidence in the world", "the queen of evidence."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Vyshinsky, A. IA. *Teoriia sudebnykh dokazatel'stv v sovetskom prave* ("Theory of Trial Evidence in Soviet Law"), Section 3. At [http://scilib.narod.ru/Other/Vyshinsky/v.htm#1\\_3](http://scilib.narod.ru/Other/Vyshinsky/v.htm#1_3)

Though Kirilina is critical of the other assertions in this article she never points out the author's (Bastrykin's) error in falsely attributing to Vyshinskii what in fact he strongly opposed.

\* On p. 342 Kirilina states:

I note that it was Iagoda who first uttered these words at the trial of the Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites in 1938: "Zaporozhets released Nikolaev at my direction."

The text of the trial not only shows that Iagoda never uttered these words but that, on the contrary, Iagoda specifically denied doing any such thing! Iagoda stated in pre-trial interrogations available to Kirilina that he was informed of Nikolaev's release only after the fact. We discuss this issue in detail in another chapter of the present work.

\* On pp. 342-3 Kirilina again insists:

Zaporozhets had no connection at all to the release of Nikolaev on October 15 [1934].

citing as her evidence Khrushchev-era witness Anshukov, who testified that Zaporozhets was in the hospital in a cast.

But Iagoda had never claimed that Zaporozhets was in Leningrad at the time of Nikolaev's detention on October 15, 1934. On the contrary, in his pretrial interrogation of May 19, 1937 Iagoda stated "I personally did not give any directives about getting rid of Borisov. Zaporozhets was not in Leningrad at all at that time."<sup>5</sup> In this same interrogation Iagoda testified that he learned about the upcoming attempt to assassinate Kirov from Enukidze after a conference of the conspiracy, the Right-Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc, in the summer of 1934. Then, in Iagoda's words:

Answer: I summoned Zaporozhets (assistant head of the Political Division) from Leningrad, informed him about the possibility of an attempt on Kirov's life, and instructed him not to stand in its way.  
(181)

[...]

Answer: Zaporozhets told me about this a little while after Nikolaev had been released.

Question: What did he tell you?

Answer: Zaporozhets was in Moscow, came to see me, and related how in Leningrad a certain Nikolaev, who had been watching Kirov's automobile, had been detained by personnel of the Operations Division. He was brought to the Political Division and upon being searched in the presence of Gubin there were found materials that constituted evidence of terrorist intent. Gubin reported this to him and Zaporozhets released Nikolaev. (183)

<sup>5</sup>*Genrikh Iagoda. Narkom vnytrennikh del SSR. General'nyi komissar gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti. Sbornik dokumentov. Kazan', 1997, p. 184.*

So Iagoda never claimed that Zaporozhets was in Leningrad when Nikolaev was detained on October 15. The volume *Genrikh Iagoda* was published in 1997; Kirilina's book *Neizvestnyi Kirov* was published four years later, in 2001. Kirilina had ample time to consult the former volume and see that Anshukov's statement did not contradict Iagoda's testimony. But she failed to do so.

\* Kirilina notes that under the law of December 1, 1934, terrorist cases were to be tried without defense attorneys or the right of appeal. She then notes that at the August 1936 Moscow Trial defense attorneys were indeed permitted, but appeals were not allowed.

By order of the CEC of December 1, 1934 cases involving terrorists were to be conducted without defense attorneys, behind closed doors, and without the right of appeal. At the 1936 Moscow trial there were both defense attorneys and a public. Perhaps this departure from the order and providing the defendants with the right to appeal the sentence were a "guarantee" of Stalin's in collusion with the defendants?

In this case they did not allow the defendants this right. On the night of August 23-24 1936 the court announced its sentence and that same night they were taken straight from the courtroom to be shot. (Kirilina 369)

This is false. The post-trial appeals of a number of the 1936 trial defendants, including Zinoviev, Kamenev, I.N. Smirnov, and Natan Lur'e, were published on page three of the newspaper *Izvestiia* of September 2, 1992, years before Kirilina's book was published. Kirilina had no excuse for stating that the right of appeal was denied to these defendants. Either Kirilina invented this "fact" or copied it uncritically from some other source.

## **Falsehoods**

In addition to errors such as those above that might plausibly be laid to carelessness Kirilina makes many statements that are more accurately described as "deliberately deceptive" or "falsehoods". All are attempts to de-emphasize or discount evidence that supports the existence of a conspiracy involving Nikolaev.

Kirilina notes that in his interrogation of December 6, 1934 Nikolaev

...at first confessed that Kotolynov and Shatskii were participants in the "Terrorist act", but failed to cite a single bit of specific evidence in confirmation of this statement. (Kirilina 277)

By "specific (literally, "concrete") evidence" Kirilina evidently means "material evidence" of some kind. In support of this statement she cites IU. Sedov's article "Wrongfully executed" ("Bezvinno kaznennye") in the journal *Trud* of December 4 1990. But even Sedov did not demand "specific evidence" from a person giving a jailhouse confession.

Kirilina's demand for "concrete evidence" (*konkretnoe dokazatel'stva*) is dishonest. Does she really expect that Nikolaev would have carried around a piece of paper signed by Kotolynov and Shatskii in which they agreed to take part in Kirov's assassination? The phrase

... but failed to cite a single bit of specific evidence in confirmation of this statement

is a "tell" — a sign that Kirilina is all too conscious of the weakness of her case, an attempt to dismiss evidence that disproves her own hypothesis.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> A "tell" (short for "telegraph") is an unconscious gesture or expression by which a poker player gives a sign to other players whether his hand is good or bad. This makes it impossible to "bluff" his opponents, an essential skill in poker.

A few pages later Kirilina refers to an interrogation of Nikolaev of December 20, 1934, during which Nikolaev claimed he had approached the Latvian consul in Leningrad both for money and to ask him to make contact with Trotsky on behalf of their group. Kirilina says that this is "not supported by any documents." This is yet another "tell" — as though the imprisoned Nikolaev would have documents either on his person or, anywhere at all attesting to this. (280) However, this statement of Nikolaev's is an interesting one and begs further consideration. We will examine it in a later chapter.

\* According to Kirilina Nikolaev stated in a confession of December 4 1934 that

"he was a member of an underground counterrevolutionary organization", that its "participants adhered to the platform of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist bloc". "The former opposition had their own specific accounts to settle with Kirov in connection with the struggle which he had organized against the Leningrad oppositionists." (281)

We have known since the early 1980s from Trotsky's own pen that a real "Right-Trotskyist bloc" involving Zinoviev and Kamenev did in fact exist.

Kirilina states:

By the way, none of those who confessed about the "Leningrad center" named with Nikolaev or Shatski among its members. (283)

This is simply false. In the text of the December 12 interrogation of Zvezdov in Lenoe's book we read:



Question: Lay out for us the membership of the Center and the other branches of the Leningrad organization.

Answer: The membership is as follows:

1. The Leningrad Center:

a. Rumiantsev, Vladimir — head of the organization.

Kotolynov, Ivan.

Tsarkov, Nikolai.

[...]

h. Nikolaev, Leonid. (Lenoe 310)

Three of those arrested and tried alongside Nikolaev for Kirov's murder — Levin, Sositskii, and Miasnikov — were Trotskyites. (Kirilina 290). Lenoe admits as much in his treatment of the incident, even pointing out that there is some evidence the Latvian consul, Bissenieks, did in fact give some money to Nikolaev. Bissenieks never denied meeting with Nikolaev. (Lenoe 382-3) Moreover, Nikolaev talked the language of the opposition. We know that some others\_ arrested in connection with the case, like Evdokimov and Gorshenin, did as well. Kotolynov and others in the Zinovievite group were briefly expelled from the Party in 1927 for "Trotskyite" activity.<sup>7</sup> It would have been natural for lower-level conspirators to seek a connection with Trotsky.

<sup>7</sup> We will return to this point in the chapter "Bukharin and Kotolynov."

As Kirilina notes, the NKVD also did not consider the evidence of a "Trotsky connection" firm at that time (291). But Nikolaev's claiming to have asked to be connected with Trotsky would naturally have appeared to them as worth pursuing. Investigators are trained to follow up every possible avenue of inquiry. And it is certainly not evidence against the existence of a conspiracy!

Concerning the August 1936 "Zinoviev-Kamenev" trial Kirilina states that there was no material evidence:

Once again, not a single document, not a single piece of material evidence, not a single outside witness was brought forward at the trial. The whole indictment was built exclusively on the self-incrimination of the accused... (367)

Then on pages 368-9 Kirilina juxtaposes passages from the January 1935 trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev to some passages from the transcript of the August 1936 trial. Although Kirilina does not acknowledge it this section of her book is taken directly from Trotsky's "Bulletin of the Opposition" No. 52 of October, 1936! Kirilina even copies word for word Trotsky's claim that

...not a single document, not a single piece of material evidence, was brought forward at the trial. (367)

However, Trotsky proceeded to admit that the Honduran passport of V. Ol'berg, with which he entered the USSR illegally and which was, in his testimony, obtained with the aid of German Trotskyists, did constitute a piece of "material evidence." Kirilina conceals this part of Trotsky's statement from her readers, thereby deceiving them, for at least this one piece of "material evidence" was presented at the trial.

Furthermore, we know that Trotsky himself was deceiving his readership in this discussion of the August 1936 Moscow Trial, as he had done in his discussion of the Kirov murder in No. 41 of the "Bulletin of the Opposition". For Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov discussed between themselves the "bloc" of Trotskyites, Zinovievites and others. This bloc was indeed formed in 1932, just as stated in the testimony in the August 1936 Moscow Trial. Sedov informed his father that Zinoviev and Kamenev were indeed a part of the bloc. We will discuss this issue in another chapter.

All this Trotsky and his son denied in public. This was natural enough — in fact necessary, if they were to preserve their underground conspiracy within the USSR But this information about the bloc was discovered and published by Trotsky historian Pierre Broué in 1980. Then in 1991 it was discussed

again in an article in the Soviet journal "Voprosy Istorii KPSS" ("Questions of History of the CPSU") by American historian Arch Getty. It was publicized in Russia again in a work published in 1995 by Vadim Rogovin, who quoted it. Kirilina's book was published in 2001. She either did, or should have, known about the bloc and informed her readers.

As a final example of Kirilina's dishonesty consider the following:

In the Japanese magazine "Kiitso" of April 1939 Liushkov published materials in which he categorically rejects any involvement by Iagoda in the conspiracy against Kirov. Liushkov was at 4 Liteinyi pereulok (lane), in the NKVD, near Agranov, when Stalin phoned the latter and ordered him to send Borisov to the Smolny for questioning. Agranov immediately gave the appropriate instructions. It was only 30 minutes from the moment of Stalin's call to the moment of the auto accident with Borisov, as Liushkov pointed out. And we can agree with Liushkov's opinion that this amount of time was simply insufficient to organize the murder of Borisov. (353)

This can only be a deliberately deceptive statement.

- In both pretrial interrogations and at trial Iagoda repeatedly insisted that he had had nothing to do with Borisov's death while at the same time also insisting that he was, indeed, involved in the conspiracy to murder Kirov. Kirilina cites Iagoda's lack of participation in the first as evidence against Iagoda's confession to the second.
- Kirilina has clearly never read Liushkov's article in the journal *Kaizo* ("Reconstruction") of April 1939. If she had she would have seen that Liushkov insisted that Iagoda was indeed involved in a conspiracy — to force Zinoviev and Kamenev to falsely confess to Kirov's murder at their August 1936 trial.<sup>8</sup> Liushkov also claimed that Shatskii was Nikolaev's sole co-conspirator in the assassination of Kirov. Kirilina would certainly not have omitted these important details of Liushkov's article had she actually read it. Therefore, she gave her readers the false impression that she had read Liushkov's article but in reality she never did.

<sup>8</sup> Liushkov was lying in this article, which was written for propaganda purposes, as we shall show.

In his book Lenoe cites Liushkov's *Kaizo* article at length, setting it forward as the strongest evidence now available that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman." In a later chapter of the present work we too examine the *Kaizo* article and demonstrate that Lenoe's interpretation of it is incorrect. Lenoe, however, has clearly read Liushkov's article. It is just as clear that Kirilina has never read it.

### **Materials In Kirilina's Book But Omitted By Lenoe**

Kirilina and Lenoe share the same goal: to present Nikolaev as a lone assassin. Perhaps the most powerful method of arguing a preconceived idea is to suppress evidence that fails to support it. In the case of the Kirov murder there is so much evidence of a conspiracy that, were it all to be simply suppressed, almost nothing would remain. Therefore, in addition to the omission of evidence inconvenient to the preconceived conclusion, other techniques of misdirection must be employed.

Lenoe has told us that he considers Kirilina to be the greatest expert on Kirov's murder. He cites Kirilina's book many times, and ought to have cited it in some places where he did not. But Lenoe has also omitted some evidence that Kirilina presents. Lenoe has tailored his argument in a somewhat different and, arguably, more careful manner. Usually there is a discernable method to his omission of Kirilina evidence.

### **Nikolaev's Finances**

Kirilina frankly acknowledges the evidence that Nikolaev was not in financial difficulties in 1934. She quotes from December 11, 1934 interrogation of Nikolaev's mother, Maria Tikhonovna:

As far as its material situation the family of my son Leonid Nikolaevich did not experience any hardships. ... The children were also fully provided with all the necessities, including milk, butter, eggs, clothing and footwear. (238)

Kirilina quotes this passage from the article by historian IUrii Zhukov, where it is somewhat fuller.

As far as its material situation the family of my son Leonid Nikolaevich did not experience any hardships. They occupied a separate three-room apartment in a cooperative house, which he received in return for payment of the cooperative unit. The children were also fully provided with all the necessities, including milk, butter, eggs, clothing and footwear. During the last 3-4 months Leonid was unemployed, which somewhat worsened the provisioning of his family, but even then they did not experience any special hardship.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> IU. N. Zhukov. "Sledstvie I sudebnye protsessy po delu ob ubiystve Kirova." *Voprosy istorii* 2, 2000, p. 40. (Zhukov 2000)

Lenoe does not even mention this interrogation and passage. Perhaps he has omitted it because he argues that deprivation was a primary factor motivating Nikolaev's supposedly "lone assassination." This passage would constitute strong evidence against Lenoe's theory.

Lenoe writes "Nikolaev was desperate for money in the fall of 1934" (299). Even if he was — and the testimony just cited casts serious doubt on that statement — desperation for money does not necessarily entail neediness. Lenoe also quotes the indictment against Nikolaev:

Through the confessions of a series of persons who were interrogated in the present case as witnesses, including Nikolaev's mother T. Nikolaeva and his wife, Milda Draule, the investigation has established that the accused Nikolaev did not suffer from material need during this period of time, and neither did his family. (Lenoe 350)

Anyone reading Lenoe's book alone would have no idea where this testimony came from, and might assume it was fabricated by the NKVD instead of his mother's testimony and in fact represents Kirilina's viewpoint as well.

Kirilina continues:

Unmistakeable signs of the family's good material circumstances are the fact that L.V. Nikolaev himself possessed a bicycle (that was a sign in those years of a certain level of income), and in 1933-1934 the Nikolaevs rented a private dacha in the prestigious area of Sestroretsk. (238)

Nikolaev was even fined 25 rubles and ordered to pay an additional 19 rubles by the Party for hitting a pedestrian with his bicycle. (Kirilina 242-3) Kirilina cites evidence that Nikolaev always had had good jobs, even easy work, and was never unemployed until his dismissal from a job at the Institute for Party History in April 1934. She speculates that Nikolaev must have had good connections to be recommended for such jobs. (Kirilina 244-5) Neither Kirilina nor Lenoe try to account for these "good connections" as any good investigator would be sure to do. Perhaps they do not wish to suggest that these good connections were, most likely, the Zinovievites who were later tried and convicted of Kirov's murder along with Nikolaev. Nikolaev's wife Mil'da Draule also had a relatively well-paying job. (Kirilina 246)

If Nikolaev did indeed feel he was in need of money this "lack" was only a subjective one. He and his family still rented a private country house during the summer he was unemployed. Had they suffered genuine want they could simply not have done so. No one facing eviction or hunger rents a summer cottage. Lenoe never informs his readers that Kirilina acknowledged that Nikolaev was not in any real financial need.

We also know that Nikolaev chose not to take another job while he prepared to assassinate Kirov, a fact stated in the Prosecutor's Indictment ("Obvinitel'noe zakliuchenie", p. 20) as follows:

In one of his confessions the accused Nikolaev directly states:

"I informed him (Kotolynov) that I had decided not to go back to work during the period when I was preparing the [terrorist] act in order to have enough free time to carry out the murder of Kirov. Kotolynov approved my decision.

(vol. 2, l.d. 85)

The wife of the accused L. Nikolaev — Milda Draule, confirms this. She states:

"...From the end of March 1934 right up to his (i.e. L. Nikolaev's) arrest he did not work anywhere. The reason for this is not Nikolaev's inability to find work, but his stubborn refusal to accept any kind of work. Having devoted himself fully to the preparation of the terrorist act, I presume that he did not want to tie himself to work anywhere ..."

(vol. 3, l.d. 201).

Kirilina never mentions this fact. Lenoe quotes at length from the indictment but omits this part of it here — a point we will consider in another chapter of the present work.

### **Nikolaev's Interrogation of "After December 4"**

In a passage we have already quoted above Kirilina says that Nikolaev made the following admission "after December 4":

...[H]e was a member of an underground counterrevolutionary organization", that its "participants adhered to the platform of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist bloc". "The former opposition had their own specific accounts to settle with Kirov in connection with the struggle which he had organized against the Leningrad oppositionists." (281)

We do not know at what point "after December 4" Nikolaev made this statement. Without citing any evidence or reasoning Kirilina simply declares it "fabricated" — as indeed both she and Lenoe do with all the evidence that does not fit their predetermined schema:

That is why the investigation steadily fabricated the 'conspiracy' version (281)

But at least Kirilina does record this statement, thus allowing others to view it in a different light. Lenoe does not clarify or even cite this important quotation. He does quote parts of a December 13 interrogation of Nikolaev in which some wording appears similar to some of what is in Kirilina's

quote, but suppresses the passage in which Nikolaev cites the supposed motive of the Leningrad Trotskyite-Zinovievite group in killing Kirov — that "the former oppositionists had their own accounts to settle with Kirov in relation to the struggle that he had organized against the Leningrad oppositionists."

### **Nikolaev's Confession of *circa* December 8**

Kirilina quotes the following important remarks from Nikolaev without a precise date but implying December 8 or shortly afterwards:

The Kotolynov group was preparing a terrorist act against Kirov, and its direct implementation was entrusted to me personally. I was aware from Shatskii that the same task had been given to his group too, and also that this work was being conducted by them independently of our own preparation for a terrorist act.

...I first met Shatskii in 1933. Our next meeting was during the summer of 1934 at 28 Krasnye Zaria Street [Kirov's home address — GF], where Shatskii was conducting surveillance on the apartment and ascertaining all of Kirov's movements. He did this in order to prepare a terrorist act."

"Kotolynov said that ... getting rid of Kirov would weaken the leadership of the Party [literally, the ACP(b), or "All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik)"] ... Kotolynov worked out directly with me the technical details of carrying out the act, approved them, specially determined how accurately I could shoot. He was my immediate leader in carrying out the act. Sokolov determined the suitability of this or another point in Kirov's normal route, thus facilitating my work. ... Iuskin was informed about the preparation for the attempt against Kirov and worked out with me the variant of an attack in the Smolny.

Zvezdov and Antonov knew about the preparations for the act... They were directly tied to Kotolynov ... (Kirilina 281-2)



Lenoe does not reproduce this text or refer to it. He does summarize an interrogation of December 6 that contradicts this text in some places:

Eventually Nikolaev "confessed" that he had recruited Shatsky to watch Kirov's apartment for him, and strongly implied that Kotolynov had masterminded a conspiracy to murder Kirov. Moreover, he said that Kotolynov was planning to go to Moscow to assassinate Stalin. (Lenoe 288)

Though he relies heavily on Kirilina's book Lenoe does not clarify the relationship between the direct quotes cited by Kirilina of circa December 8 or shortly thereafter, and his own summary of part of a long interrogation of December 6.

On top of that Lenoe indulges in a favorite practice of his: to put quotation marks around any words or phrases that do not fit his preconceived conclusions, as he does here around the word "confessed". Lenoe acts as though using these "scare quotes" constituted some kind of argument that the confession was not genuine! This is one manifestation of the fallacy of "assuming that which is to be proven," a common error which Lenoe frequently commits. We will consider Lenoe's practice of "begging the question" and of "argument by scare quotes" in a separate chapter.

### **Kirov's Learning**

On pages 325-327 Kirilina discusses Kirov's broad reading, especially in philosophy, and his involvement in education. Indeed Kirilina seems to have some respect for Kirov! She was, after all, head of the Kirov Museum for many years. Lenoe omits all this in his introductory chapters on Kirov's life.

In contrast to Kirilina, Lenoe strives to insult Kirov at every turn. He says that Kirov is "generally perceived as one of the despot's thuggish henchmen." (119). By whom? Lenoe never tells us. Evidently he has invented this "fact". However, Kirov is not so "perceived" by Kirilina, Lenoe's major source, so this "perception" is not "general." The best Lenoe can do is to quote the British consul in Leningrad, who said that Kirov was

"brutal looking", whatever that means. British imperialists were "generally" regarded as "thuggish" by millions of people around the world. Perhaps Lenoe never mentions the evidence of Kirov's learning because it might contradict Lenoe's attempt to portray Kirov as "thuggish" and "brutal."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> We consider Lenoe's anticommunist bias in another chapter.

### **An Earlier Attempt To Kill Kirov?**

Kirilina writes:

In one of his interrogations L.V. Nikolaev confessed that he had first planned to kill S.M. Kirov on November 14, 1934. And with this goal in mind he met him at the Moscow Station in Leningrad. But he did not shoot since a large number of people met Sergei Mironovich there.

And so he mingled with the crowd of those people and went away.  
(341)

This event is also recorded in his diary under the date of November 14, where Nikolaev also seems to say that he had only tried to meet with Kirov on October 15. Yet in a diary entry of a few days beforehand, November 9, Nikolaev had written:

If on 10/15 and 11/5 I was not able to do this ... however now I am ready -that I am going to my execution is nothing — only it is easy to say it. (259)

This diary selection is quoted by Lenoe on page 242, along with a further section that appears to make it clear that he had intended to kill Kirov on November 5 as well. Since November 5 is in the past, it sounds as though Nikolaev is ready for yet another attempt — perhaps that of November 14, mentioned above.

It would have been useful to put this passage in Nikolaev's diary alongside the text from the undated interrogation quoted by Kirilina. From what we can see, the interrogation appears to confirm the notes in the diary that

Nikolaev had made not one, but several aborted attempts to kill Kirov earlier. Lenoë omits this.

In any case pages 18-19 of the indictment contain a quotation from Nikolaev's confessions in which he plainly states that his diary accounts were faked:

Here it should be noted that in order to conceal the traces of the crime and to hide my co-conspirators, and also to disguise the true motives for the murder of comrade Kirov, the accused L. Nikolaev prepared a number of documents (a diary, statements addressed to various institutions, etc.) in which he tried to portray his crime as an act of personal despair and frustration due to his supposedly serious material situation, and as a protest against the "unfair treatment of a living human being by some government officials."

(vol. 1, l.d. 6).

The accused L. Nikolaev himself admitted the falsity and fictional nature of this version, and explained that he had created this version by prior agreement with the members of the terrorist group, which had decided to portray the murder of comrade Kirov as a personal act and thus conceal the real motives of this crime.

In his confessions of December 13 of this year L. Nikolaev directly stated:

"...I was supposed to portray the murder of Kirov as the act of an individual, in order to hide the participation in it of the Zinovievist group."

(vol. 1, l.d. 266).

### **Zinoviev's Oppositional Activity**

Kirilina transcribes a short passage from one interrogation of Grigory Evdokimov, a Zinovievite and former Leningrad official accused as a

member of the Moscow Center of the bloc of Trotskyites, Zinovievites, and Rightists:

At interrogation on December 24 G.E. Evdokimov stated: "In November 1934 he [Zinoviev] criticized the work of forming a united front [in France] and blamed the French Communist Party and also the leadership of the Comintern for striving for a united front in France." (Kirilina 365)

Another arrested Zinovievite, LS. Gorshenin, went even further:

LS. Gorshenin went even further in his criticism of the foreign policy of the USSR. At interrogation on December 25 he stated: "Com. Stalin is consciously not activating the Comintern and is transferring the center of all attention onto the official diplomacy of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and in essence sacrificing the interests of world revolution to the idea of building socialism in one country." (Kirilina 365)

Kirilina explains these statements in the following manner:

I should note that it was towards the end of 1934. The Opposition, or rather its leaders, had voted for Stalin's political program — the building of socialism in one country — at the 17th Party Congress. However, they did not agree with it and continued the line of world proletarian revolution, carrying on a covert struggle against the Stalin leadership. (Kirilina 365)

Kirilina takes it for granted that the oppositionists were guilty of "double-dealing" (*dvurushnichestvo* — "two-facedness", deliberate deception) in that they had rejoined the Party dishonestly. By contrast Lenoë blames Stalin for suspecting "double-dealing", implying that Stalin had imagined this out of paranoia. We discuss this issue elsewhere in the present work.

Lenoë never mentions these statements. On the contrary, he chooses to reproduce large parts of an interrogation of Zinoviev from December 22, 1934 in which Zinoviev denies any oppositional activity, and denies even oppositional thoughts after 1932. (Lenoë 328-333) This facilitates Lenoë's

portrayal of Zinoviev as the innocent victim of a frameup — something that would be harder if he had juxtaposed Evdokimov's and Gorshenin's statements against Zinoviev's professions. In short, Kirilina admits that a "covert struggle" by Zinovievites and others against the Party line did in fact continue, while Lenoe ignores it, in effect denying it.

In his confession of January 13, 1935, to which neither Kirilina nor Lenoe refers, Zinoviev went further and agreed that a Moscow centre of former Zinovievites, hostile to the Party line, still existed. We will discuss this document when we set to resolving the Kirov murder ourselves.

So Kirilina's work is disingenuous in the same general way that Lenoe's is. Both of them proceed from the *idée fixe*, the preconceived conclusion that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" and, therefore, everybody else must have been "framed." But despite his acknowledged indebtedness to Kirilina's work Lenoe ignores it when he finds it convenient for his argument to do so.

## Chapter 2. *Lenoe's Introduction*

Lenoe organizes his Introduction as follows:

- He briefly summarizes the circumstances of Nikolaev's murder of Kirov at Smolny Institute in Leningrad on December 1, 1934.
- He outlines the thesis of his book.
- He briefly outlines the Khrushchev-era investigations and accounts of the murder.
- He discusses the evidentiary problems with testimony given long after the event and the reasons why accounts based on memories of past events are not to be trusted.
- Lenoe admits he had limited access to the former Soviet archives, so he has not seen all the evidence there is.
- He cites his debts to previous scholars.
- He makes a declaration of his anticommunist bias.

Much of what Lenoe writes in this chapter is useful. For example, he points out that the Khrushchev-era investigations of Kirov's murder had the ulterior motive of trying to inculcate Stalin. This meant that these so-called "studies" were not really studies at all. Rather the Khrushchev investigators, evidently led by Petr Pospelov<sup>11</sup> and Ivan Serov, Khrushchev's head of the KGB, pretended to carry out an objective study while cherry-picking the documents they chose to present to the "Molotov Commission", the high-level group formed to reinvestigate the repressions. Lenoe also points out that Serov had other important files concerning the Kirov murder destroyed altogether.

<sup>11</sup> Pospelov was an early supporter of Khrushchev, who promoted him to Secretary of the Central Committee and then Candidate Member of the Presidium of the CPSU (formerly named the "Politburo"). Like Khrushchev himself Pospelov had been an enthusiastic promoter of the "cult of personality" around Stalin.

Lenoe's discussion of the unreliability of accounts that rely on memories of events long past is sensible. Although these remarks are made in a general

way, in reality they constitute a criticism of the work of Conquest, Tucker, Knight, and all writers who have concluded that Stalin had Kirov killed. All such works have to rely on rumor and hearsay, since there is no real evidence whatsoever of any involvement by Stalin in Kirov's death.

Lenoe frankly admits that he was refused complete access to all of the evidence that still exists. This is refreshing — though it would have been better if he had discussed what this withholding of evidence strongly implies: that the evidence withheld by the Russian government must contradict the official version that Kirov's killer was a "lone gunman," or why would they withhold it? But this is Lenoe's version too, a fact that perhaps explains why he does not draw the logical conclusion from the fact that much evidence is withheld. Lenoe also neglects to point out that Kirilina, to whose work Lenoe acknowledges his "greatest debt", failed to acknowledge that she too did not have access to all the evidence.

Nor does Lenoe point out the obvious conclusion: if Khrushchev was determined from the outset to prove either that Stalin had Kirov killed or that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" — that is, that no conspiracy existed — then the evidence he and Kirilina were permitted to see has been carefully tailored to "fit" that conclusion and is as biased as Khrushchev's men could make it. That in turn means that anyone who, on the basis of this evidence, concludes that no conspiracy existed needs to reconsider that conclusion very carefully. By contrast if — as the present study demonstrates — despite all the attempts to expurgate, withhold, and distort it the available evidence should nevertheless point strongly towards the conclusion that a conspiracy did in fact exist, that itself is a powerful argument in favor of a conspiracy.

Lenoe's Introduction contains a number of weaknesses that characterize the remainder of his study: false statements; deliberate deceptions; "begging the question" or assuming the truth of statements that need to be proven; and anticommunist bias. Any one of these would prove fatal to any historical investigation.

### **Factual Inaccuracies and False Statements**

Lenoe describes the cohort of party members to which Leonid Nikolaev, Kirov's assassin, belonged as follows:

To bridge the distance between themselves — the avant garde — and the masses, Communist officials in the 1920s and early 1930s recruited factory workers into the party in large numbers. As Communists these "promotes" (*vydvizhentsy*) benefited from access to white collar jobs, as well as better apartments, better rations, and superior educational opportunities. ... Hundreds of thousands of others got an education and made professional or bureaucratic careers, becoming the backbone of the Soviet state by the 1940s. Yet others, thrust into positions for which they had little or no training, failed.

Then Lenoe describes Nikolaev as "one of these failures",

an unemployed communist named Leonid Nikolaev, ... had held about a dozen jobs since he joined the party in 1924, during the recruitment campaign that followed Lenin's death. Since his most recent firing in April 1934 he had been unemployed. (2)

Lenoe is mistaken; Nikolaev was anything but a "failure." Nikolaev had managed to get away from regular blue-collar work. He had one higher paying, non-production job after another until his firing in April 1934. That suggests that he almost certainly had "friends in high places", influential persons who were able to get him these kinds of jobs. Dismissed from a comfortable job with a good salary because he refused to leave Leningrad on a Party assignment, Nikolaev decided not to look for any more work. This is consistent with his being part of a Zinovievite conspiracy, though of course it does not prove it. (From 1917 to 1926 Zinoviev had been Chairman of the Petrograd, and then the Leningrad, Soviet — the political leader of the Leningrad Party. He was replaced by Kirov.)

According to the testimony of his family members Nikolaev and his family suffered no material difficulties despite the fact that only his wife, Mil'da Draule, was employed after April 1934. Entries in his diary record worries over finances. But that could be explained by evidence cited by Lenoe and Kirilina that suggests Nikolaev used this diary to create a "cover story" to



make it look as though the assassination was an act of individual protest. We study this question fully in the present work.

Nikolaev planned to shoot himself to death on the spot after killing Kirov. After he failed to do that and was questioned by NKVD investigators his story of "individual protest" quickly broke down. Before long he confessed that its purpose was to shield the other members of the conspiracy from suspicion.

Lenoe writes:

For the Communist leadership, the murder in Smolny was traumatic, not just because the victim was one of them but also because the murderer was a Communist and a worker. Something had gone badly wrong, for the party and the proletariat were supposed to be pillars of the regime. (2-3)

Lenoe returns repeatedly to this notion that Stalin and Party leaders would have felt especially chagrined by the fact that Nikolaev was a worker. (274; 344) But he gives no evidence to support this repeated assertion, which is certainly false. During the 1920s and early '30s virtually all the opposition groups in the Bolshevik Party had working-class members. Some were made up primarily of workers, or at least of people from working-class backgrounds. This was particularly true of the Zinovievites, followers of Grigory Zinoviev who had been First Secretary of the Leningrad Party until 1926. Leningrad was the most industrialized city, with the largest number of workers and working-class Party members, in the country.

After listing some of the Bolsheviks' successes during the 1920s and early 30s Lenoe writes:

They had also ruled with police terror, which increased greatly in the late 1920s...

Lenoe does not say what he means by "police terror" or give any examples of it. I can identify nothing that could accurately be so described during this period.

...suppressed all open political dissent...

In reality "open political dissent" was permitted and in fact was commonly expressed, for example at factory and union meetings. However, it is true that organized political dissent was not permitted. And factions within the Bolshevik Party had not been permitted since 1921, a ban suggested by Lenin. Opposition political parties were not permitted — but neither had they been since before 1920.

In making the three statements above Lenoë is guilty of a double standard. No one would accuse a Western capitalist country of such acts without citing specific examples. In the case of the Bolsheviks Lenoë acts as though evidence is not necessary.

...confiscated private property, banned most private businesses ...

Here Lenoë tacitly assumes that private property is somehow "sacred." Communism of course opposes "private property" and "private businesses" on principle. (Under President Lincoln the United States "confiscated private property" by freeing the slaves.) Such confiscations characterized Bolshevik policy from before the Revolution of 1917 when they advocated "land to the tiller" — that is, the confiscation of landlord property, and the nationalization of major industries. After the end of the Soviet Union authorities "confiscated public property" — that is, privatized it.

...and forced the peasants who still made up the majority of the population to work for very little on collective farms managed by the party/state apparatus. (3)

This statement is, to put it politely, highly misleading. *Most* peasants had always "worked for very little". Lenoë appears to imply here that most peasants had earned more than "very little." The real situation was very different. Most peasants in Russia were poor. About a quarter of them, the *batraki*, or farm laborers, had no land at all. About half of the rest were poor peasants, unable or barely able to sustain themselves even in the best years by farming a very small parcel of land with the most primitive means.

Whenever famines broke out many of the *batraki* and the *bedniaki* or poor peasants simply starved to death or died of malnutrition-related diseases. Considerable starvation occurred even in non-famine years when rich peasants (called *kulaks*) or middlemen who bought and resold grain, withheld grain from the markets to await higher prices.

Lenoe writes:

As a direct result of forced collectivization more than five million country people died of starvation in 1932-1933. (3)

Lenoe does not attempt to provide any evidence in defense of this statement, much less to prove it. He simply states this as a "fact". But it is false. There is no evidence that collectivization caused the famine of 1932-33. In reality it was due to crop failure. Professor Mark Tauger, the leading expert on the famine, points out that famines had wracked Russia, including the Ukraine, every 2-3 years for at least a millennium.<sup>12</sup> The famine of 1932-33 was yet another one in this seemingly endless series. Undoubtedly, had collectivization taken place during years when no crop failure occurred, a great many fewer people would have died. But this could not be known in advance, and in fact there were few such years.

<sup>12</sup> For a brief overview of this question see Mark Tauger. "Famine in Russian History". *Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History, Volume 10: Supplement*. (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 2011), 79-92. Tauger's own works on the famine are cited at page 92. Tauger cites E.P. Borisenkov and V.M. Pasketskii. *Tysiachtletniaia letopis' neobychainkh iavlenii prirody*. ("Thousand-year Chronicle of Extraordinary Natural Events'). Moscow: "Mysl", 1988. Wheatcroft argues that the 1946-1947 famine was due to factors beyond the Soviet government's control: poor weather conditions worldwide and the terrible destruction of the war. Wheatcroft, Stephen G. "The Soviet Famine of 1946-1947, the Weather and Human Agency in Historical Perspective." *Europe-Asia Studies*, 64:6, 987-1005

Every researcher knows these facts. We must assume that Lenoe knows them too. But he fails to engage them and their evidence, or even to refer to them. Therefore, this statement appears to be a "declaration of loyalty". In it

Lenoe self-consciously puts himself into what we may call the Cold-War anticommunist camp, one tenet of which is that collectivization was somehow immoral.

Lenoe further writes:

In the months following the murder, Stalin did all he could to heighten the atmosphere of suspicion and dread that accompanied the killing.

(3)

If, as Lenoe tries to argue, Kirov's murder really had been the act of a "lone gunman", if there was no underground terrorist conspiracy and Stalin knew it, then there would be much truth to this statement. However, the present study argues that, on the evidence, such a conspiracy did exist and went much farther than just the men convicted and executed for conspiring to kill Kirov. We now have a great many primary sources from this period of Soviet history. None of it suggests that Stalin and other Soviet leaders did not believe there was a conspiracy and were only cynically spreading this idea. But if they really did believe such an underground terrorist conspiracy existed, it would follow that the "atmosphere of suspicion" created was understandable.

He warned of terrorist plots to assassinate the entire Soviet leadership

... (3)

Lenoe implies that such plots did not exist. But there is a great deal of evidence that they did exist — including pretrial and trial confessions by Moscow Trial defendants, but much other evidence as well, including evidence from outside the Soviet Union — and no evidence that these confessions were "scripted", forced on the defendants by the NKVD, or otherwise faked. We will review some of this evidence in the present book.

...and proclaimed that no one could be trusted because "enemies" had penetrated the party itself. (3)

This is a false statement. Lenoe cites no evidence that Stalin ever said "no one can be trusted", nor can I find any such quotation by Stalin. Stalin did state that former oppositionists could not be taken at their word — i.e.,

simply believed when they claimed they had ceased their oppositional activity. But this was no more than an acknowledgement that conspirators lie in the service of their conspiracy.

Lenoe claims:

In Leningrad thirteen men, mostly former Left sympathizers, were framed, charged with plotting a terrorist attack on Kirov, and executed together with the actual assassin, Leonid Nikolaev. (3-4)

Here Lenoe anticipates the central hypothesis of his book. The present study argues that this hypothesis and statement of Lenoe's is wrong. As we shall show Lenoe fails to present any evidence whatsoever that these men were "framed." On the contrary: all the evidence we have points towards their guilt.

Lenoe continues:

Two of Stalin's most prominent former rivals, Grigory Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev, were tried in January 1935 for "moral complicity" in the assassination and sentenced to long prison terms. (4)

This statement is false. There is no mention of "moral complicity" in the charges or sentence handed down against Zinoviev, Kamenev and others.

Zinoviev was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for leading an underground conspiratorial group of his supporters whose members, with his knowledge, not only spread hatred of the party leadership but travelled to Leningrad and met with the leadership of the "Leningrad center" which carried out the murder of Kirov. One part of the sentence statement reads as follows:

As a result of the counterrevolutionary activities of the "Moscow Center" in specific links of the Zinovievist counterrevolutionary underground there arose purely fascist methods of struggle, and there appeared and strengthened terrorist sentiment directed against the leaders of the Party and government, which had as its result the murder

of comrade S.M. Kirov, prepared and organized by the "Leningrad Center" of the same counterrevolutionary group.

All of the defendants in the present case have fully admitted their guilt.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> "Prigovor" (Sentence), undated January 16, 1935), p. 6. In Volkogonov Archive, LOC. I have put a facsimile online at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/prigovor011635.pdf>

As leader of the group Zinoviev was sentenced to ten years imprisonment. Kamenev received the lightest sentence, five years, because the court found as follows:

11. KAMENEV, Lev Borisovich

As one of the leading members of the "Moscow Center", but who had not taken any active part in its activities during the recent period. (8)

We deal with other of Leno's falsehoods in his Introduction in a separate chapter.

### **Begging the Question**

Lenoe refers to:

false accounts of the assassination in the Soviet press during the 1930s (10)

...and...

They [Khrushchev-era investigators] made extensive use of the layer of falsified evidence from the Great Terror. (9)

These statements commit the fallacy of "begging the question." They "assume that which should be proven" — in fact, they assume away the problem that Leno supposedly did his research, and wrote his book, to solve.

That would not be so if, later in his book, Lenoë were to prove that the accounts of the Kirov assassination related in the Moscow Trials testimony (the source of the Soviet press accounts) were false. But he never does that. Moreover, he does not examine any of these accounts. He does not even identify them — say, in an appendix, or in a footnote to inform his readers where they can find this evidence should they want to examine it themselves.

Much less does Lenoë argue that the canonical version of Kirov's assassination, as it was gradually revealed in the various trials between December 1934 and March 1938, is false in any way. In fact, Lenoë conceals the existence of these accounts from his readers. Lenoë simply asserts that they were false without any evidence or, indeed, any argument at all. Yet this is the central thesis of his book. The principal result of the present study is that the much-maligned Soviet or "Stalin" account of the Kirov murder is, in fact, the correct one.

## **Torture**

In his Introduction Lenoë makes frequent reference to torture. He speaks of

...[d]ocuments from the renewed "investigation" of the Great Terror years (1936-1939), many of which are witness statements given under torture or the threat of same. (8)

NKVD officers tortured witnesses until they provided testimony supporting fantastic charges of conspiracy against former party leaders.

(9) ...the use of torture by Stalin and his secret police to extract false but politically useful 'confessions' of terrorist conspiracies. (17)

Lenoë fails to demonstrate even a single example of torture against a witness or defendant in any of the trials concerning the Kirov murder: those of December, 1934; January, 1935; the first Moscow public, or "show", trial of August 1936; the second Moscow trial of January 1937; the third Moscow trial of March 1938. He alleges, though he does not prove, that

some former NKVD officials once involved in the case were tortured in the later 1930s. But even if Lenoe could prove that these men really were tortured and their confessions scripted and false, it would not affect this central issue. Their testimony was peripheral at best to the basic question: Was there a conspiracy to murder Kirov?

Nor does Lenoe prove torture in any other instances. He merely cites allegations made in the 1950s. But by his own admission Khrushchev and his men were busy destroying documents and falsifying charges against Stalin in the '50s and '60s. The truthfulness of these, or any, allegations must be demonstrated, not taken for granted. Lenoe makes no attempt to do so.

In any case "allegations" are not evidence. The fact that someone alleges that he, or a third party, was tortured does not mean that he really was — especially when, as during the Khrushchev years, investigators were under pressure to try to prove the trials of the 1930s were fabricated and that torture had been employed. We devote a part of the present study to the fallacy of appeals to "torture" used as a rhetorical device of persuasion to conceal Lenoe's lack of evidence.

Even if it could be established — and it has not been — that one or more of the central defendants were in fact tortured, that would not mean that this testimony was false. A person may be tortured to induce him to tell what he knows, as well as to induce him to sign a false or "scripted" confession. Tortured people can either lie or tell the truth. Likewise, defendants who are not tortured may either lie or tell the truth. Therefore, even if Lenoe could establish that one or more of the main defendants who testified about the Kirov murder had been "tortured" (whatever that means), that would not establish that his testimony was false.

By ignoring the Moscow Trial testimony Lenoe is again positioning himself with respect to this historical question. All the Moscow Trial testimony supports the hypothesis that Nikolaev, Kirov's assassin, was a part of a network of clandestine Opposition terrorist conspiracies. It is considered unacceptable by some persons in the highly politicized field of Soviet history to reach the conclusion that the Moscow Trials were not "scripted"



and that Opposition conspiracies existed — even though on the evidence there is no doubt at all that such a conspiracy did in fact exist.

## **Anticommunism**

A researcher needs to be as objective as possible so that his preconceived ideas and biases do not fatally prejudice his investigation. By contrast, Lenoe takes pains to express his anticommunist bias in the strongest terms. He admits that he believes communism is "evil", a "cruel failure with millions of victims". (16) Statements of this kind serve no research or investigative purpose. They only serve to warn the reader that the writer who advertises his bias so blatantly cannot be trusted to be objective when gathering, examining, interpreting, and drawing conclusions from the evidence.

Imagine that Lenoe, instead of declaring that he believes communism to be "evil" and "a cruel failure with millions of victims", made the same statement but about capitalism! The impropriety for a scholar of even thinking in such terms, much less in parading these opinions before his readers, would become apparent to the most anticommunist reader.

Lenoe calls Stalin "one of the greatest mass murderers of modern world history" (3) as though it is a proven fact. So serious a charge requires strong evidence to justify it. Lenoe cites no evidence to support this statement. In reality, no study has ever proven such an accusation.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> We cannot discuss this question exhaustively in the present study. However, far from killing millions collectivization arguably saved millions of lives by sparing the USSR future famines. As for the NKVD's killing of a little fewer than 700,000 people in 1937-1938, the evidence shows that in fact Nikolai Ezhov did it without Stalin's knowledge. See the beginning of the next chapter for a little more on this question.

Lenoe asserts that "[i]n Leningrad thirteen men, mostly former Left sympathizers, were framed" [for Kirov's murder]. (4) It will astonish readers to learn, as we will demonstrate in the present study, that Lenoe has virtually *no evidence at all* to support his thesis that even a single one of the

defendants was innocent. This declaration of Lenoe's does put him squarely in support of the official Soviet / Russian government position and is consistent with the only "acceptable" and "mainstream" view that the Moscow Trials were frameups. But it is not in the least supported by the evidence — on the contrary, all the evidence we now have refutes it.

Lenoe asserts that:

...the end of constructing Communism justified means that included mass violence, summary trials, and the starvation of millions. (13)

As Lenoe makes no effort to prove any of these grave charges, we may conclude that he thinks they are "obvious". They are an obligatory component of anticommunist propaganda. All revolutions cause "mass violence" — but nothing compared to that of the First World War, believed "justified" by the leaders of all the major countries of Europe, Japan, the United States, and the Ottoman Empire. "Summary trials" characterized all sides during the World War. We have dealt briefly with "the starvation of millions" above.)

Lenoe refers to "Stalin's use of Kirov's death to justify terror" and claims Stalin "presided over the execution of thousands of senior party officials who had no record of political opposition" "in an apparent attempt to eliminate any possible source of resistance to his rule." (4) Neither of these statements are supported by any evidence. Lenoe provides not even a footnote for these statements.

Moreover, we question Lenoe's use of elusive language here. What does "presided over" mean in this context? It could mean no more than that Stalin was the de facto leader of the country at the time. Would we say that President Franklin D. Roosevelt "presided over" the Jim Crow system in the Southern United States? He certainly chose not to stop it and reaped political benefits from it. Yet historians would never say he "presided over it" even though his title was "president" — "one who presides."

As for "senior party officials who had no record of political opposition," Lenoe cannot possibly know this since even he admits that much evidence from the 1930s remains top secret in Russia today. But the main point is

surely this: what is pertinent is not whether a person, "senior party official" or not, had "a prior record" but whether they were guilty of the crimes they were charged with — i.e., whether they were convicted on the basis of credible evidence. To raise the question of executions without any context is to do what Khrushchev did. Khrushchev had reason to think his 1956 audience, all of them "senior party officials", would agree with him. But scholars must consider matters of evidence.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> We discuss a little of the evidence against those senior Party officials whom Khrushchev mentioned in his "Secret Speech" to the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in Grover Furr. *Khrushchev Lied: The Evidence That Every "Revelation" of Stalin's (and Beria's) Crimes in Nikita Khrushchev's Infamous "Secret Speech" to the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on February 25, 1956, is Provably False.* Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press Media LLC, 2011.

Lenoe claims that Stalin "insisted that NKVD investigators build a case against former party oppositionists". (9) By "build a case" Lenoe must mean "fabricate a case", for otherwise investigators are acting correctly in pursuing their investigations where the evidence leads them. It is the job of prosecutors everywhere to "build cases". But Lenoe gives no evidence that Stalin ordered the NKVD to fabricate any case against anyone: To our knowledge no such evidence exists.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> We know that Ezhov fabricated cases against a great many persons during 1937-1938, but no evidence connects Stalin with such fabrications.

Some of the statements Lenoe makes in his Introduction are clearly ideological rather than historical. For example, he writes:

Stalin's Communist denouncers were in the right, and the cause of de-Stalinization was just. (11)

A few pages later Lenoe is more explicit about why he feels that he needs to proclaim his anticommunist *bona fides* in strident tones.

Some may be tempted to accuse me of apologizing for Stalin because I do not take on faith the received narrative that he ordered Kirov's murder. (16)

It should be obvious that no historian ever has to explain or give reasons for not taking some historical conclusion "on faith." But Lenoë knows that the field of Soviet history has rules of its own, for he proceeds to compose a virtual credo of the faithful anticommunist:

To prevent misunderstandings, I want to make my position clear. I have an immense, personal contempt for despots and authoritarians of all stripes, from Stalin to Mao, from Hitler to Franco, from Rios Montt to Pinochet; Pol Pot, and King Leopold II, Belgian ruler of the "Congo Free State."...

Stalin was one of the deadliest tyrants of world history, and Communism as a system of government was a cruel failure with millions of victims. (16)

Lenoë then criticizes the Bush administration for its policies restricting civil liberties and use of torture in the wake of 9-11. (16-17)

What does any of this have to do with whether Kirov was murdered by a conspiracy of clandestine Oppositionists, as alleged by the Soviet government at the time; by Stalin; or by a "lone gunman"? Perhaps only this: Lenoë knows that Soviet history, particularly of the Stalin period, is a discipline in which ideological conformity is considered all-important in powerful circles.

To arrive at a conclusion that Stalin did *not* commit some crime of which he has been widely accused by famous anticommunist historians is to run the risk of being labelled "pro-Stalin" , "pro-communist", or at least "insufficiently anticommunist." In fact, the present study will undoubtedly be called "an apology for Stalin" because it "does not take on faith the received narrative", though that "received narrative has, since 1990, not been that Stalin killed Kirov, but that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" and because we prove that Stalin did not "frame" any of the Kirov defendants, any of the Moscow Trials defendants, any of the defendants in the

Tukhachevsky Affair. In fact, there is no evidence anywhere that Stalin ever "framed" even a single person.

The thesis Lenoe attempts to prove throughout this book is the same, in the end, as that of Soviet anti-Stalinists. Despite their attempts to "frame" Stalin for Kirov's murder, the government-sponsored researchers of both Khrushchev and Gorbachev eras were forced to conclude that there was no evidence to support this conclusion. This position is also supported by Alla Kirilina, the main Russian scholar of the Kirov assassination. Few of Lenoe's readers will know this. But the best-known books on the Kirov assassination outside of Russia — those by Robert Conquest and Amy Knight — both argue that Stalin had Kirov killed.

Lenoe does point out that Russian authorities still keep important documents of the Kirov assassination investigation top-secret, unavailable to him or to any other researchers. (14-15) It did not occur to Lenoe to ask why this might be. A logical hypothesis would be that the still-secret documents contradict the "orthodox" or "mainstream" position of today's Russian authorities that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" and that no clandestine Opposition conspiracies really existed during the 1930s.

We know this position is false. We shall discuss the fact that letters exchanged between Leon Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov revealed to researchers in the 1980s that a "bloc" of Trotskyites, Zinovievites, Rightists and others did in fact exist. Lenoe never refers to this bloc or to the implications for his thesis of the official Russian denial of its existence.

### Chapter 3. *Lenoe's Errors*

In order to demonstrate that Lenoe's book contains serious lapses of objectivity it is perhaps sufficient to enumerate some of the large number of outright falsehoods it contains. This section will identify and analyze those we think are the most noteworthy. We will not attempt to "psychologize" Lenoe as he attempts to do with Stalin. Unlike Lenoe, we admit that we have no way of knowing what was going on in his consciousness when he wrote these false statements. Perhaps he really thinks they are true! If so, he should have investigated them more carefully before printing them as fact.

As a direct result of forced collectivization more than 5 million died of starvation in 1932-33. (3)

This is false, unsupported by the best research. Excellent research has shown that there was a secular famine in 1932-33 as there had been every 2-4 years in Russia for at least the past thousand years. But the famine of 1932-33 was the last famine in Russian / Soviet history (except for the terrible 1946-7 famine caused by the huge destruction of the war and weather problems).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Much of the scholarship on the famine of 1932-33 is highly tendentious and even deliberately falsified. For the best, most objective and qualified research see Davies, R.W. and Stephen G. Wheatcroft. *The Years of Hunger. Soviet Agriculture, 1931-1933* Palgrave Macmillan 2009 (2004) and Tauger, Mark. Review of R.W. Davies and Stephen G. Wheatcroft, *The Years of Hunger: Soviet Agriculture, 1931-1933*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. At [http://eh.net/book\\_reviews/years-hunger-soviet-agriculture-1931-1933](http://eh.net/book_reviews/years-hunger-soviet-agriculture-1931-1933) Wheatcroft and Davies believe that bad weather was "a further major factor" in the famines. Tauger believes the poor weather was the single most important factor. Borisenkov and Pasketskii, previously cited, have shown that serious crop failures and famines had occurred every 2-4 years with frightening regularity for at least a millennium.

Stalin was:

One of the greatest mass murderers of modern history ... (3)

This too is a "declaration of loyalty" rather than the conclusion of scholarly research. In reality no mass murders, either by Stalin or that he was responsible for, have ever been demonstrated. Lenoë does not tell us what events he has in mind. Perhaps the following:

- The "Great Terror". Several hundred thousand persons were convicted falsely and / simply shot by the NKVD under Ezhov. Stalin never ordered or condoned these murders, which Ezhov and his accomplices committed under the guise of fighting active counterrevolutionary rebellions.<sup>18</sup> After Beria replaced Ezhov as head of the NKVD hundreds of thousands were freed from prisons and camps, while Ezhov and his accomplices in the NKVD were investigated, arrested, tried, convicted, and punished, often by execution.
- The Moscow Trials and Tukhachevsky Affair. ALL the evidence we have — and there is a great deal of evidence public now — support the guilt of these men.
- The "Katyn Massacre." Likewise, there exists much evidence that the Soviets tried and shot some Poles — not just prisoners of war but others — and the Germans later shot many more of them.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Apparently Robert Eikhe, and then a number of other First Secretaries, approached Stalin and the Politburo after the June 1937 Central Committee Plenum and asked for these special powers to deal with conspiracies, rebellions, and revolts in their areas. This led to the Politburo Decree "On Anti-Soviet elements" of July 2, 1937 which authorized all First Secretaries to arrest "kulaks and criminals" who had returned to their areas, shoot the "most dangerous" of them, and exile the rest to other areas. For the next year or more Stalin was flooded with reports of conspiracies and revolts from all over the USSR, some of which have been published. According to Khaustov, a very anti-Stalin researcher and one of the compilers of several of these invaluable document collections, Stalin believed these reports: "The most terrible thing was that Stalin made decisions on the basis of confessions that were inventions of certain NKVD workers. Stalin's reactions showed that he took these confessions completely seriously." Lubianka. *Sovetskaia elita na stalinskoi golgofo. 1937-1938*. Ed. V.N.

Khaustov (Moscow: MDF, 2011, p. 6. Now online at [http://www.k2x2.info/politika/lubjanka\\_sovetskaja\\_yelita\\_na\\_stalinskoi\\_golgofe\\_1937\\_1938/p4.php](http://www.k2x2.info/politika/lubjanka_sovetskaja_yelita_na_stalinskoi_golgofe_1937_1938/p4.php)

<sup>19</sup> See Grover Furr, "The "Official" Version of the Katyn Massacre Disproven?" *Socialism and Democracy* 2 (2) August 2013, 96-129 for a report on discoveries that refute the "official" version.

Once again, it is considered "beyond the Pale" in anticommunist circles, academic and otherwise, to state these facts.

According to Lenoë, Stalin:

insisted that NKVD investigators build a case against former party oppositionists in the days after the killing. (9)

In a later chapter of this study we demonstrate that this statement is false, another classic example of Lenoë's "begging the question" by assuming that which he ought to have proven.

Likewise, Lenoë refers to "false accounts of the [Kirov] assassination in the Soviet press during the 1930s. (10) Lenoë never even discusses these accounts, much less establish that they were "false". He is in no position to do so since he failed to examine the testimony presented before and during the 1936, 1937, and 1938 Moscow Trials. In reality, judging from the evidence available at the time and what we have today, the accounts of the Kirov assassination in the Soviet press during the 1930s were and conform far more closely to the evidence we now have than does Lenoë's own version.

Lenoë states:

I have consciously striven to include all plausible evidence contradicting my case. (16)

This is perhaps the most blatant falsehood in Lenoë's long book. As we will demonstrate, in reality Lenoë ignores virtually all the evidence presented after the trial of the Leningrad defendants in December 1934 until the end



of the March 1938 Moscow trial. This is a huge amount of evidence — in fact, it is most of the evidence now available to us. But Lenoë never studies any of it. In the present study we conclude that all this evidence, plus all the evidence Lenoë does discuss, demonstrates that Lenoë's hypothesis that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" is groundless, without any foundation in the evidence.

Lenoë writes of:

...the use of torture by Stalin and his secret police to extract false but politically useful "confessions" of terrorist conspiracies. (17)

There is no evidence whatsoever that torture was used to extract false confessions, and Lenoë cites none here. NKVD men, particularly under Ezhov's direction during 1937-1938, did use torture and fake confessions widely. In 1939 Ezhov and a number of his closest assistants were arrested and confessed to doing this. Though much still remains secret in Russia we now have enough of these confession statements to make it clear that Ezhov, not Stalin, was responsible for these faked confessions based in many cases on torture.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See Grover Furr, "The Moscow Trials and the "Great Terror" of 1937-1938: What the Evidence Shows." July 31, 2010. At [https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/trials\\_ezhovshchina\\_update0710.html](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/trials_ezhovshchina_update0710.html)

Kirov "stuck with" Stalin:

...whatever his private doubts or fears may have been. (63)

Lenoë presents no evidence whatsoever that Kirov had any "private doubts." This allegation appears to be a relic of earlier propagandistic accounts of Kirov's murder in which the killing was attributed to Stalin. Lenoë rejects these versions but retains a component part of them: that Kirov had some kind of "doubts" or "fears" of Stalin.

Lenoë states:

Molotov was a mass murderer, one of the two or three men closest to Stalin in the 1930s. (266)

This is an astounding statement. Lenoë cites no evidence that Molotov ever ordered anyone at all, much less "masses", to be murdered (nor, of course, did Molotov ever murder anyone himself). No doubt Lenoë could have made some sort of case to support this claim. After all, virtually all high-ranking Bolsheviks of the Stalin period and even before and afterwards have been called "murderers" by some anticommunist or other at some time. Such statements mean nothing unless accompanied by evidence — nothing, that is, except for proof that the author of such statements has strong biases. But Lenoë does not justify this statement in any way.

Concerning the Nakhaev case, about which little is known, Lenoë states

He [Nakhaev] was shot in short order.<sup>44</sup>

Lenoë's note on page 772 reads as follows:

Khlevniuk, *Stalin i Kaganovich*, 432, 459, 411-412. Agranov telegram to Stalin in Khaustov et al., *Lubianka, 1922-1936*, 565.

Agranov's telegram to Stalin makes no reference whatsoever to Nakhaev's trial or execution. The only one of these references that says anything about Nakhaev's fate is Khlevniuk, who states:

Nakhaev was probably shot.<sup>21</sup> (412)

<sup>21</sup> "Skoree vsego, Nakhaev byl rasstrel'ian."

Even Khlevniuk admits that he does not know even whether Nakhaev was shot, let alone "in short order." Lenoë turns Khlevniuk's surmise into a statement of fact — a falsehood that appears to be deliberate. What's more, this issue is irrelevant to proving Lenoë's case about Kirov's murder.

Lenoë states the following about a confession by Nikolaev of December 5, 1934:

In Nikolaev's quite plausible account Shatsky expressed anger at Stalin's Seventeenth Party Congress speech calling for the firing of former oppositionists... (287)

The problem is that this never occurred. Stalin did not call for firing former oppositionists. Neither of the two speeches Stalin gave at the 17th Party Congress says anything remotely resembling this. On the contrary: a number of prominent oppositionists who had renounced their opposition — dishonestly, as it turned out — and been readmitted to Party membership, had been promoted again to very high positions and addressed the Party Congress in January 1934, Bukharin, Piatakov, Zinov'ev, and Kamenev among them.<sup>22</sup> This seems to have been intended as a signal to all that former oppositionists would be readmitted once they renounced their opposition.

<sup>22</sup> The rough draft of the Politburo resolution proposing that Zinov'ev and Kamenev be reinstated in the Party and not have to pass through the "purge", or review of membership, then taking place, may be seen at <http://www.rusarchives.ru/evants/exhibitions/xviiexp/217.shtml> It appears that the handwriting is Stalin's. The resolution was passed on December 12, 1933, one month before the 17th Party Congress.

It's possible that Lenoe simply failed to check Stalin's speeches at the Congress to verify whether Nikolaev was telling the truth. If that is so, then this is a serious lapse on Lenoe's part. But the NKVD investigators would not have failed to check it. Assuming Nikolaev actually made such a statement, his doing so would have been strong evidence to the investigators that Nikolaev was lying. And in turn that would have signaled to the investigators that his story was beginning to fall apart. It would have encouraged them to press Nikolaev even harder on the falsehoods and inconsistencies in his statements. Sure enough, the very next day<sup>1</sup> December 6, Nikolaev first stated that Kotolynov and Shatskii were participants with him in the "terrorist act". (Kirilina 277)

On page 289 Lenoe writes:

To get him to interrogations the guards had to put him into a straitjacket and carry him down the hall while he struggled and

shouted, "It is I, Nikolaev, they're torturing me, remember me!"<sup>9</sup>

Note 19 to this passage (289) reads as follows:

See Kirilina, *Neizvestnyi Kirov*, 277.

The Kirilina reference states that Nikolaev declared a hunger strike but gives no evidence or source for this statement. The "Reply to Iakovlev" (June 1990) quotes the claim about torture but gives no source at all for it. We will examine the "Reply to Iakovlev" in a future chapter.

The actual source is the article by IUrii Sedov, "Wrongfully Executed" ("Bezvinno kaznennye") in the journal *Trud* of December 4, 1990. But Sedov gives no source for this statement either! Elsewhere in this review we have shown that Sedov himself has told deliberate falsehoods, including in this very article.

The lack of a source strongly suggests that this statement is no more than a rumor — unless Sedov or one of his staff simply invented it themselves. In either case it is of no value. It hardly needs to be said that rumors are not evidence. Lenoë himself never refers again to this allegation that Nikolaev was tortured.<sup>23</sup> He should not have included it — at a minimum, not without tracing its provenance, as we have easily done here.

<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the fact that Nikolaev may have claimed he was being tortured does not prove that he was in fact tortured, much less that what he testified was false. We discuss the issue of "torture as smokescreen" elsewhere in the present book.

On pages 312-3 Lenoë states:

Zvezdov gave the interrogators almost everything they needed. He placed Nikolaev inside a tightly organized "counterrevolutionary group" that aimed to replace Stalin. The group was made up of former Trotskyites and Zinovievites. It had strict rules of secrecy, so that the following Alice in Wonderland reasoning could be applied — the lack of evidence of a conspiratorial organization could serve to demonstrate

just how top secret, insidious, and widespread the organization really was.

On one level this is nonsense. There was no "lack of evidence of a conspiratorial organization". Zvezdov had confessed that there really was a secret Trotskyite-Zinovievite group. As we shall discuss and as Lenoe himself admits, many others among the accused, including Kotolynov and Nikolaev, also agreed such a group existed. Again as we discuss elsewhere in the present work Trotsky and his son Sedov agreed that it existed too.

Logically, Lenoe could only refer to "lack of evidence of a conspiratorial organization" if he were to state up front that he did not "count" confessions or interrogations as evidence. That is, if he were to take the position that only written agreements among the conspirators confirming their conspiracy constituted evidence of the existence of a conspiracy. Of course this would be absurd. The whole point of conspiracy is secrecy: to leave no evidence. A conspiracy that left written evidence of its existence would hardly be a conspiracy at all. Furthermore, even the existence of written evidence of such a conspiracy would not constitute more reliable evidence than the testimony of its participants, for documentary evidence can be fabricated just as easily as can confessions, if not more so.

Not once in his whole book does Lenoe argue that any of those who confessed did so because of torture or threats. He suggests this as a possibility, but never states it as a fact in even a single case. Presumably he would have done so if he had the slightest grounds. Therefore, Lenoe's reference here to "Alice in Wonderland" is disingenuous. There is plenty of evidence of a conspiracy.

Lenoe is so eager to deny that any counterrevolutionary organization existed that he makes absurd statements like the following:

At the trial ... Kotolynov testified that he had belonged to a "counterrevolutionary Zinovievite organization," but that all the members did was stay in contact with one another. They had no specific agenda or division of responsibilities. (314)

Lenoe does not trouble to examine this statement. And it is incredible. For one thing, if Kotolynov were correct, that "all the members did was stay in contact with one another", then why did he agree it was "counter-revolutionary"? For another thing, a number of other defendants testified that the Zinovievites were indeed involved in political activity. (We examine this statement by Kotolynov further on.)

On page 321 Lenoe writes of "the accelerating campaign to rewrite Soviet history ... to exaggerate Stalin's role..." His footnote to this passage (note 52 on p. 776) refers to Lavrentii Beria's book on the Bolshevik movement in the Caucasus and specifically refers to pages 54-62 of Amy Knight's book on Beria. But Knight's book says nothing about any such "campaign". Therefore this is a false reference, the only result of which can be to mislead the reader into believing that such a "campaign" existed.

On the same page Lenoe writes:

One important remaining hole in the case was that Nikolaev could not or would not provide convincing evidence that he'd actually belonged to the Zinovievite organization anytime during the 1920s. (321)

As we have shown elsewhere, Tsar'kov confirmed that Nikolaev was a member of the Zinovievite organization during the 1920s. What other "convincing evidence" of Nikolaev's, or anyone's, membership does Lenoe want — a membership card dated sometime during the 1920s? Of course illegal conspiratorial communist organizations do not have membership cards, lists, or other paraphernalia. Moreover, Nikolaev's membership during the 1920s is irrelevant to the question of whether he was a member in 1934! This kind of remark is a "tell", as we explain more fully elsewhere: a signal, no doubt unconscious, to the attentive reader that Lenoe has no evidence and is trying to disguise this lack with specious verbiage.

In an attempt to discredit the NKVD investigation Lenoe writes that, in order to inform Party leaders about the results of the investigation:

[m]oving with remarkable speed, the TsK executives called plenary sessions of the regional party committees in Moscow and Leningrad for December 15-16...

Lenoe implies that 15-16 days after the assassination was "remarkably" fast. That, one presumes, is intended to suggest to the reader that a "rush to judgment", some kind of phony procedure and trial, went on. But there was nothing "remarkable" about the "speed" in which the case against Nikolaev and the underground Zinovievite center in Leningrad was prosecuted. For the sake of comparison: in the USA in 1901 there were only 9 days between President McKinley's death on September 14, 1901 and the beginning of the trial of his assassin, Leon Czolgosz, on September 23. In the Kirov case there were 27 days between the assassination and the trial.

Lenoe states:

The Stalinist leadership drove the mass operations onward by issuing mandatory quotas for arrests and executions to provincial NKVD organizations. (468)

This is false. Ezhov did indeed call for arrest and execution quotas. This was in violation of the notes coming from Stalin and the central Party leadership, who always used the term "limits" of arrests and executions requested by local Party and NKVD leadership. "Limit" means no more than, but it can be less than", while "quota" means "no less than" — an enormous difference.<sup>24</sup> In any case, there is no reference or citation of evidence at all for this serious accusation.

<sup>24</sup> Ezhov might be considered part of "the Stalinist leadership" — but so was Stalin, of course. Lenoe's use of this evasive term suggests he may be aware of this contradiction and concealing it from his readers.

Lenoe states:

Tukhachevsky and his fellows were tortured and shot. (468)

This is a false statement. There has never been any evidence that Tukhachevsky was tortured. Lenoe's note to this statement (note 48, p. 7.87) reads as follows:

Getty, *Road to Terror*, 437-453; Jansen and Petrov, *Stalin's Loyal Executioner*, 69-78.

Getty's text does not claim Tukhachevsky was tortured. However, Jansen and Petrov do claim that "They [Tukhachevsky and other officers] were tortured until they confessed." (69) Jansen's and Petrov's source (note 74, p. 230) reads:

S. IU. Ushakov, A.A. Stukalov. *Front voennykh prok urorov*. M[oscow], 2001, p. 71.

This is the supposed memoirs of a prosecutor, Afanas'ev, who claims he was present while Ezhov, Stalin, Molotov and others discussed Tukhachevskii and decided to have him tortured. But there is no evidence that any of this is true. There is no reason to think Afanas'ev was present during any of these discussions, which he reproduces verbatim. None of the biographers of Tukhachevsky, including the recent and extremely anti-Stalin books by Iulia Kantor, even mentions Afanas'ev's account at all.

Concerning Trotsky, Lenoë states with indignation:

It was not Trotsky who collaborated with foreign imperialist powers ... it wasn't Trotsky who ordered Kirov's murder, but it might well have been Stalin. (513)

Lenoë has no evidence for these statements. But there exists a great deal of evidence to support both of these accusations against Trotsky. Specifically, there is a great deal of evidence to implicate Trotsky in collaboration with both Germany and Japan.<sup>25</sup> There is also a great deal of testimony that Trotsky had a role in the Kirov assassination. We will explore that in the present book as a part of our examination of the Moscow Trials. For now, we should recall that the group tried, convicted, and executed for the Kirov assassination in December 1934 — Nikolaev, Kotolynov, and the rest — were members of a Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc that, thanks to Trotsky's own admission, we know really did exist and that we know was indeed in touch with the exiled Trotsky.

<sup>25</sup> Grover Furr, "Evidence of Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan." *Cultural Logic* (2009), at <http://clogic.eserver.org/2009/Furr.pdf>

Other false statements:



Beria...accumulated in his safe materials incriminating other party leaders. (555)

There is no evidence whatsoever to support this allegation. Beria was charged with something like this, but all writers including Amy Knight, whom Lenoe cites elsewhere, make it dear that the charges against Beria were untrustworthy and unsupported by any evidence.

Khrushchev and many of his allies genuinely did want to end mass terror ... (555)

The problem with this statement is that there was no "mass terror" in 1953, nor had there been for many years before that. The only period in Soviet history that might be described as one of "mass terror" was the "Ezhovshchina" of 1937-1938. Khrushchev himself was in the thick of it, one of the worst perpetrators, while it was Stalin and Beria who had put an end to it.<sup>26</sup> In the three months he was Minister of the combined MGB and MVD after Stalin's death it was Beria who pushed reforms of the legal system.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> There is a great deal of documentation for these statements. See, for example, Furr, Khrushchev Lied 250-257.

<sup>27</sup> For a short discussion of this in English see Knight, Beria, Chapter 9. There are now many discussions of Beria and his reform activities in his "100 days" from March to June 1953. A list of Russian-language books available in 2005 is at the end of Furr, "Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform. Part Two." *Cultural Logic* 2005, at <http://clogic.eserver.org/2005/furr2.html>

### **Ivan Serov and "Katyn"**

Lenoe writes:

Ivan A. Serov...participated in the execution of nearly 15,000 Polish prisoners of war in the Katyn forest in 1940. (560)

This statement is false. Lenoë's footnote is to an article by Nikita Petrov, an investigator with the anticommunist "Memorial Society", in the Russian journal *Otechestvennaia Istoriiia* in 1997. No doubt few people will check this article. There Petrov says:

In 1940 Serov was a participant in one of the most disgusting Stalinist crimes — the mass murder of Polish prisoners of war and civilians, which later became known as the "Katyn affair" after the name of the locality near Smolensk where the remains of those executed were first discovered.

Executions also took place in the Ukraine. Serov was responsible for them. In the 1940s and 1950s the blame for these crimes was consistently laid to the Hitlerites. Serov, who was then the Chairman of the KGB, exposed himself by expressing dissatisfaction with the security officers who failed to cover up their crime. "They couldn't cope with such a small matter," — in anger Serov let the cat out of the bag. "There was a lot more of them (executed Poles — N.P.) in the Ukraine when I was there. But not a thing was said about it<sup>28</sup>, nobody found even a trace..."

<sup>28</sup> This saying, "Komar nosa ne podtochil", means "Nobody found fault with the job."

Below we will analyze the source Petrov cites. Here we note several matters.

- Serov does not at all claim he "participated in" the Katyn massacre. On the contrary: Serov makes it clear that he had nothing to do with "Katyn". He refers only to his time in the Ukraine.

According to this statement by Petrov, what Serov said is that those who did participate in Katyn had acted incompetently, while he himself had been more careful and no one had found any sign of those he had had executed.

- Serov did not admit to shooting any Poles at all. He refers to his victims as "them", a word that appears simply to mean *rasstre liamrykh*, "people who were executed". There's no suggestion that it

means "Polish prisoners of war and civilians", or even just "Poles." It is Petrov — "N.P." — not Serov, who inserted the reference to "executed Poles."

Petrov's source is page 204 of the first volume of Sergei Khrushchev's work *Nikita Khrushchev: krizisy i rakety; vgliad iznutri* (Moscow: Novosti, 1994). This passage is in the abbreviated English translation, as follows:

In Poland Stalin's name was associated with many bitter memories. These included the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, signed on the eve of the invasion of Poland, the anonymous graves of Katyn ... In those years I heard about Katyn for the first time. I was staggered by the monstrous accusations, and of course I didn't believe them. However, I soon realized they were true.

I happened to hear confirmation of them from General Serov, an authoritative source who had very vehemently denied the accusations. It was a topic he didn't mention in Father's presence, but for some reason he dropped in one day while Father was away.

At the time everyone was disturbed about Katyn. Rada's husband, Aleksei, in some connection I no longer recall, asked the general how they could have missed it.

Ivan Aleksandrovich reacted angrily, I would even say painfully, to the question. He started to make caustic remarks about the Belorussian Chekists, who in his opinion, had been unforgivably careless. "They couldn't cope with such a small matter" — in a fit of anger Serov let the cat out of the bag. "There was a lot more in the Ukraine when I was there. But not a thing was said about it, nobody found even a trace."<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Sergei N. Khrushchev. *Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower*. Tr. Shirley Benton. (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2000), 165-6. In the original, unabbreviated Russian language text it is on pp. 203-4.

This passage reveals yet more important points.

- The words that Sergei Khrushchev attributes to Serov here do not confirm that the Soviets had carried out the Katyn massacre or that he even knew about it, much less that he participated in it. Rather, they are an angry outburst against the incompetence of whoever shot the Poles buried at Katyn.
- Serov could not have been referring to any supposed participation by himself in killings at Katyn. Serov's sphere of activity had been the Ukraine.

There were allegedly executions at Khar'kov prison of Polish POWs from the Starobel'sk camp. These executions are indeed considered to be a part of the "Katyn' massacre." But Serov could not have been referring to these executions. He says "There was a lot more in the Ukraine when I was there," meaning people — it was Petrov who added "Poles" — executed, in the Ukraine. The alleged "Katyn'" executions in the Ukraine, in Khar'kov prison of prisoners from the Starobel'sk camp, were approximately 4,000. This is several thousand fewer, not more, than the Germans claimed were found in the mass graves at Katyn'.

There were plenty of executions in the Ukraine during the late 1930s, including many of Ukrainian nationalists. Serov must have been involved in those — Khrushchev himself certainly was, as First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, and Serov was Khrushchev's man.

Sergei Khrushchev supposedly heard these words when he was present at a conversation between Serov and Aleksei Adzhubei, Nikita Khrushchev's son-in-law. It is further evidence that either (a) Sergei Khrushchev's memory of this conversation is faulty; or (b) that it never took place at all, and he fabricated it.

Sergei Khrushchev writes that "At the time everyone was disturbed about Katyn." But it is impossible that Adzhubei, much less Serov, would have made the error of thinking that Katyn' was in Belorussia rather than where it actually is, in the Smolensk oblast' of Russia. Therefore, it is Sergei Khrushchev who has made this error.

Assuming that Sergei Khrushchev was, as he claims, present at a conversation between Aleksei Adzhubei and Serov during the period

shortly after the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress (February 1956), he has not remembered it correctly — he could not have heard "Belorussia". Moreover, even Sergei Khrushchev does not claim that Serov referred directly to Katyn' — this is his own interpretation. And that interpretation is incorrect, as we have shown above.

The history of the executions of Polish prisoners of war and other Poles, called the "Katyn massacre", is hotly contested. Belief that the Soviets were the culprits is a kind of shibboleth of respectability in some Cold War oriented circles, where it is indeed considered improper even to acknowledge the existence of the important and fascinating historical controversy around this topic. One possibility is that the Soviets shot all the Poles, as the Nazis claimed in their 1943 propaganda report. But Serov's account above does not confirm that.

In the Russian original Sergei Khrushchev said Serov "v serdtsakh progovorilsia." The translator renders this accurately with the phrase "in a fit of anger Serov let the cat out of the bag". But "letting the cat out of the bag" is exactly what Serov did *not* do. Much less did he admit that he had played a role in it.

Why would Sergei Khrushchev have claimed unequivocally that Serov had "let the cat out of the bag"? Only because he realized that the words he attributes to Serov do *not* do this. But Sergei Khrushchev *wanted* the text to confirm Soviet guilt in Katyn, and the only way to accomplish that was to invent it.

There is a more fundamental issue here. Petrov's, and therefore Jansen and Petrov's, and thence Lenoe's, analysis tacitly assumes that the passage in Sergei Khrushchev's book is genuine: not only that Serov actually said something like this in S. Khrushchev's presence but that Khrushchev's son accurately recalled the precise words Serov spoke in 1956. But Lenoe's own book contains a good, brief summary of research

...that human memory is highly malleable and oral transmission of narratives unreliable. (9)

No one else heard Serov say the words Sergei Khrushchev attributes to him. Under the principle "testis unus testis nullus" this fact alone disqualifies the statement as evidence.<sup>30</sup> In addition, Khrushchev evidently did not write them down until decades later. Moreover, by the time he did write them down Gorbachev and El'tsin had already claimed that the USSR did shoot the Poles at Katyn and this fact was very widely publicized. Leno's discussion of the fallibility of memory includes examples of memories being contaminated by statements made later on. No one has claimed that Aleksei Adzhubei, who Sergei Khrushchev claims was also present, recorded these words by Serov.

<sup>30</sup> For example, see the discussion at <http://www.livius.org/th/theory/theory-testis.html>

Leno should have checked this, as we have done here. He should have examined Petrov's words with care and compared them to Petrov's source, Sergei Khrushchev's account. After all, what else are scholars for if not to hunt for sources and evidence, and verify or disprove fact-claims? Had he done so he would have discovered what we have pointed out here — that even in Sergei Khrushchev's dubious account it is very clear that Serov did not claim that he had "participated" in the Katyn massacre.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> In addition, it is far from certain that the Soviets were in fact guilty of the "Katyn massacre". See the materials I have gathered in my page devoted to this question: "The Katyn Forest Whodunnit", <http://www.tinyurl.com/katyn-the-truth>

## **Shatunovskaia**

Shatunovskaya...again appealed to Mikoyan, and Mikoyan supposedly appealed to Stalin for clemency. Stalin refused. (563)

There is no evidence to support the claim that "Stalin refused" to liberate Shatunovskaia. Leno's footnote is to somewhere in Shatunovskaia's rambling memoirs — "passim", he writes — and to the second volume of the "rehabilitation" volumes (*Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo*, vol. 2, p. 904).

This latter reference of Lenoë's is pure bluff. Page 904 of the volume in question contains the thumbnail biographical sketch of Shatunovskaia. It says nothing about any appeal or any refusal by Stalin. In Shatunovskaia's memoir the passage in question is narrated not by Shatunovskaia herself but by her daughter.<sup>32</sup> But the real point is this: neither Shatunovskaia herself nor her daughter could have known what Stalin did and did not want to do. Mikoian mentions Shatunovskaia several times in his own memoir but has nothing like this. Shatunovskaia's book is full of such rumors and we will have occasion in this book to examine untruthful statements by her again.

<sup>32</sup> O.G. Shatunovskaia. *Ob Hshedshem Peke*. La Jolla, CA:DAA Books, 2001, 228-9. At the Sakharov Center site, [http://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfcd/auth/auth\\_book27b5.html?id=86374aid=1175](http://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfcd/auth/auth_book27b5.html?id=86374aid=1175)

In any case Lenoë himself has found her to be thoroughly unreliable. Evidently he included this rumor simply because it makes Stalin "look bad."

### **"Torture"**

Pospelov...chose to rely on "evidence" that was extracted under torture in the process of fabricating a case against arrested NKVD chief Yagoda. (573)

This claim itself is a fabrication. Anyone who reads the transcript of the March 1938 Moscow Trial will see that Iagoda was convicted not on the basis of evidence from others but on his own confessions. Other defendants testified about Iagoda's activities too, but we have no evidence whatsoever that any of this testimony was "fabricated", much less that any of those who gave this evidence were "tortured."

In another section of the present book we show that Iagoda himself confessed to involvement in the Kirov assassination but strongly disagreed with Prosecutor Vyshinskii's charge that he had been an "accomplice" in the murder. Iagoda also vigorously rejected other accusations against him. This is good evidence that he had not been tortured and did not fear torture in the future (say, as revenge for rejecting a number of Vyshinskii's charges). Moreover, Iagoda's testimony at trial agrees with his pretrial testimony in

interrogations published in 1997, which we also examine elsewhere in this book.

Lenoe repeats this same falsehood a page later:

Yakushev was a perpetrator, a torturer, and a collaborator in Stalin's fabrication of false cases against Yagoda and dozens of others. (574-5)

Lenoe avoids any examination of the Moscow Trials generally or the 1938 Moscow Trial in which Iagoda was a defendant, so he has no basis at all to declare the case against Iagoda "false." Lenoe cites no evidence that Iakushev was a torturer so he has no business claiming that he was. As for Lenoe's accusation that Iakushev was a "perpetrator", this is simply incoherent: "perpetrator" of what? It sounds "bad" — which is the point, no doubt — but doesn't mean anything at all.

In fact we know that Iakushev lied when interrogated by Khrushchev's men. In March 1956 Iakushev, former Leningrad NKVD man, claimed in a letter to Frol Kozlov, one of Khrushchev's most trusted aides, that Borisov had been murdered as part of NKVD involvement in Kirov's murder.<sup>33</sup> But Borisov was not murdered at all, as everyone — Gorbachev's investigators, Kirilina, Lenoe, Egge, and our own research too — agrees. Therefore Iakushev was lying about this, no doubt as instructed by Khrushchev's men. So nothing that Iakushev testified can be trusted. Lenoe fails to point this out.

<sup>33</sup> Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo. Febral' 1956 — nachalo 80-kh godov. Moskva: "Materik", 2003. (RKEB 2), 36-37.

### **Serov again**

A second memorandum added substantially to the picture of a lone gunman and a fabricated criminal case against the Zinovievites. (581)

The memorandum in question (582 ff.) gives a "picture" — the word Lenoe uses here — but it provides no evidence whatsoever to sustain the charge of fabrication. On the contrary, the memorandum is yet another part of the



Khrushchev-era campaign to try to prove Stalin had Kirov killed. In pursuit of this goal the authors of the memorandum disregarded any evidence that points towards any other conclusions. In fact the memo is good evidence that Serov and his men, who wrote the memorandum, had no evidence that could discredit the Moscow Trial verdicts.

Note the distinction between this statement and the logical fallacy that "absence of evidence is not evidence of absence", a form of the argument from ignorance. We are not claiming here that it is the "lack of evidence" that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" that proves he was not. Rather, we assert that Khrushchev's men would have brought forth any evidence they could find that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" since they very much wanted to prove he was, and went on to claim that he was anyway.

If Khrushchev's men had been able to find evidence to support their conclusions they would certainly have cited it. Therefore we can be certain that Khrushchev's men, Serov Co., could not find any such evidence. But they had total access to everything, including evidence they destroyed (592) and all the evidence that, Kirilina, Lenoe, and Egge were not allowed to see. This itself is the best possible indication that no such evidence exists. Meanwhile we have a huge amount of evidence that Nikolaev was a participant in a conspiracy.

Lenoe recognizes that Serov's word is not to be trusted:

Serov was Khrushchev's man throughout this period. (591)

Lenoe is sporadically skeptical about Serov's actions. But Lenoe's whole analysis is fundamentally based on the materials of Serov's reports on the Kirov assassination, all of which were aimed at framing Stalin and refuting any notion that Nikolaev was part of any conspiracy. Lenoe fails to add that this fatally compromises anything Serov had to say, whether about the Kirov assassination or about anything else. This is hardly surprising, since Lenoe comes to the same preconceived conclusion that Serov & Co. came to. In fact Lenoe admits that it was Khrushchev's men who in April 1956 invented the notion that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" (578-579)

Therefore despite his words of wisdom in cautioning his readers that Serov and Khrushchev were striving not to discover the truth but to implicate Stalin in Kirov's murder, Lenoë proves to be very credulous of what Serov says.

For example, Serov is the only source for the Khrushchev-era contention, still solemnly repeated today, that Beria and/or Stalin had Radek and Sokol'nikov murdered in their prison camp. There's no reason to accept this story.<sup>34</sup> Even if the NKVD men whom Serov named as having confessed to these murders did make the statements Serov attributes to them — and we do not have those statements, only Serov's claim — that would not mean that those statements are true. As Lenoë himself admits Serov and Khrushchev were fabricating a great deal during this period to try to exculpate all of those who had been repressed in the 1930s and to blame Stalin. Lenoë has a good discussion of the ways in which memories of past events can be reconstructed. (9-11)

But Lenoë does accept it. (486) Only a little checking is required to prove that Serov was lying here too. An article of our own examining this question is awaiting publication. Lenoë could have done this checking just as easily.

<sup>34</sup> We have an article pending in which we demonstrate that Serov fabricated this story.

Since Lenoë chose not to check Serov's claim he should at least have reasoned that, absent corroboration and given his practice, which Lenoë does document, of discrediting Stalin whenever possible, Serov's credibility is nil. Perhaps Lenoë's failure to exercise skepticism in this particular case is a reflection of the fact that, like Serov, Lenoë is devoted to a preconceived notion that there were no conspiracies and thus that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman."

They [authors of Serov report, below] demonstrate[ed] that the defendants, including Yagoda, were almost certainly innocent of any conspiracy. (595)

This statement of Lenoe's too is false. The text of the report that follows (595-599) contains demonstrable lies that Lenoe's book itself disproves. For example, the following statement from Serov's August 31 1956 report is disproven by Lenoe himself.

...it is worth noting that even on the eve of trial the investigators had no evidence of any interest on Nikolaev's part in any of the former oppositionists, much less of [closer] connections between him and Kotolynov, Rumiantsev, or others among the accused. (596)

Lenoe's own book proves that this statement of Serov's is a deliberate lie, as we show in other chapters of the present study. Nikolaev wrote about Kotolynov in his diary; directly implicated him as early as December 4 1934; and went on to describe Kotolynov's role in training himself (Nikolaev) for the assassination. We have this information today, and Lenoe himself records some of it. Serov simply withheld it from the Molotov Commission (to which his report was directed in 1956). Lenoe also points out that Serov withheld other materials from the Molotov Commission, and had yet other materials destroyed. So even had Molotov wanted to study the primary documents of the Kirov case himself, Serov could have hidden the evidence from him.

The rest of Serov's report deals with the Kirov-related testimony after 1934 which we will consider in a separate part of this study. For the present we simply note that Lenoe's remark above is incorrect. In reality Serov's report is highly dishonest. It contains numerous deliberate falsifications. We will identify some of the more important lies later. But there are so many lies in it that to identify them all would unduly lengthen this study to no purpose.

Most important for our purposes, Serov's report contains no evidence at all that Iagoda and the other Moscow Trial defendants were innocent of Kirov's murder, and nothing that might impeach any of the evidence that they were guilty. We will examine this question in detail in the section on the Moscow Trials. It is central to understanding how utterly bankrupt Lenoe's argument is.

Lenoe claims:

No one was "covering" for Stalin at this moment — the Khrushchevites revealed many of his most heinous crimes. (604)

This statement is false. In reality Khrushchev and his men did not reveal a single "crime" of Stalin. To this date, every single supposed "revelation" of "crimes" alleged by Khrushchev Co. against Stalin has been proven false.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> See Grover Furr, *Khrushchev Lied: The Evidence That Every "Revelation" of Stalin's (and Beria's) Crimes in Nikita Khrushchev's Infamous "Secret Speech" to the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on February 25, 1956, is Provably False*. Kettering, OH: Erythros Press Media LLC, 2011, *passim*. Russian edition: Ferr, Teni XX-go S"ezda, ili Antistalinskaia Podlost'. Moscow: Eksmo-Algorithm, 2010.

Lenoe mentions "...Zhukov apparently reading aloud from archival documents" at the 1957 Central Committee Plenum. But Lenoe fails to tell his readers that Zhukov read from a falsified copy of Iakir's June 9, 1937 letter to Stalin, omitting Iakir's frank admission of guilt in treason. Lenoe (635) refers to A.N. Shelepin's speech to the 22nd Party Congress in 1961 and quotes Khrushchev's reference to Shelepin's speech as well (636). Lenoe fails to note that Shelepin's speech is also comprised of falsifications from beginning to end. Shelepin also quoted a falsified copy of the letter of Iakir's to Stalin, again omitting Iakir's confession to treason.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> For a more detailed study of Iakir's letter and Zhukov's and Shelepin's falsifications of it see Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*, 209-211.

Lenoe quotes Aleksandr Iakovlev's 1990 letter about the Kirov murder, including the following line:

Yagoda was falsely placed among the members of the nonexistent "Right-Trotskyite Bloc." (639)

Lenoe has to know from Getty's and Broué's studies of the 1980s that the Right-Trotskyite Bloc did indeed exist. He cannot be ignorant of this work, since he states that he received help from Getty. But he fails to inform his

readers that Iakovlev was either lying or just incompetent here. We will take a closer look at this matter in another chapter.

Lenoe claims:

It was a fairly common practice for senior Bolsheviks officials to have partners identified as "housekeepers" — Stalin in his later years did.  
(672)

Lenoe gives no evidence to support this statement.

We could give more examples of false statements in Lenoe's book. But the general point should be clear now. Lenoe frequently makes assertions without evidence when those assertions are either demonstrably false or when there is no evidence to support them.

### **More Errors**

In the course of his long book Lenoe makes a number of statements that are false and have been disproven by scholarly research. Of course every scholar makes errors. But Lenoe does not make his mistakes at random. Each and every one of these false statements has the same political tendentiousness: they can all be usefully termed "anti-Stalin". In this long book I have not been able to find a single example of an erroneous statement that tends to make Stalin look "good." All of Lenoe's errors tend towards making Stalin appear "bad."

This cannot be explained as the usual occurrence of some errors or mistakes that may be expected to appear in any lengthy and complex scholarly work. Errors made by chance would vary in their political tendencies. Nor can it be set down to carelessness, for the same reason. Therefore Lenoe's errors constitute further evidence of his lack of objectivity, his *a priori* anticommunist and anti-Stalin bias.

### **The Famine of 1932-33**

Lenoe writes:

As a direct result of forced collectivization more than five million people died of starvation in 1932-1933. (3)

This is a false statement. No scholarship on the 1932-33 famine proves anything remotely like this. Anticommunists have been searching for such evidence for many years. The reality is that famines had occurred every 2-4 years in Russian history, going back at least a thousand years. The work of American scholar Mark Tauger, who has devoted his life to the study of these famines, demonstrates this decisively. We have discussed this issue, with appropriate references, in an earlier chapter.

In reality, collectivization was necessary in order to stop the endless cycle of famines and increase agricultural production at least to the point at which people did not starve or die of starvation-related diseases. It was thanks to collectivization that the famine of 1932-33 was the last famine in Soviet history except for the 1946-47 famine, caused by the confluence of the terrible destruction of the war with harsh climactic conditions. Whether the 1946-47 famine was handled well or poorly by the Soviet government is a debatable point, but no one claims it was deliberate.<sup>37</sup> After that, the USSR never again suffered a famine.

<sup>37</sup> The most recent study is by Stephen G. Wheatcroft, "The Soviet Famine of 1946-1947, the Weather and Human Agency in Historical Perspective." *Europe-Asia Studies*, 64:6, 987-1005. Wheatcroft concludes that this famine was part of "the World Food Crisis of 1946-1947" which "was the most serious global food shortage of modern history, when famine simultaneously threatened Central and Eastern Europe, India, Indo-China and China, and bread rationing was introduced in Britain for the first time ever" (1004) That is, the policies of the Soviet government had nothing to do with it.

**Dr. Lidia Timashuk**

Lenoe writes:

Nikita Khrushchev recalled two other "hysterical" female denouncers endorsed by Stalin, the history graduate student Nikolaenko in Kiev

and a Komsomol official in Moscow, Mishakova ... In the prosecution of the so-called Doctors' Plot just before his death, Stalin again used a woman pushed around by her male superiors, the doctor Lidiya Timashuk, although Timashuk was probably not psychologically ill in the clinical sense, as Volkova and Nikolaenko seem to have been.

Stalin's cynical use of exploited, desperate, and sometimes psychologically ill women was a particularly vicious instance of a basic practice of Soviet governance... (278)

This is all wrong. Khrushchev lied in his account of Timashuk and the "Doctors' Plot" in his "Secret Speech." Evidently Lenoë is ignorant of the fact that Timashuk had nothing to do with the "Doctors' Plot". She had tried to inform Party officials about the mistreatment of Politburo member Andrei Zhdanov in August 1948. Timashuk was awarded the Lenin Prize in January 1953 but had it taken away in April 1953, when Lavrentii Beria examined the "Doctors' Plot" charges, found them baseless, and persuaded the Presidium to release all the arrested doctors.

All of Timashuk's letters to various officials about all these events were published with commentary in the Russian historical journal *Istochnik* in 1997, long before Lenoë began to write his book. It appears that Lenoë may have "believed" — relied upon — Jonathan Brent and Vladimir Naumov, *Stalin's Last Crime* a terrible, dishonest book that mangles the details of the "Doctors' Plot" while deliberately omitting the evidence that fails to support their thesis — something that, unfortunately, Lenoë also does. The Brent-Naumov book received a devastatingly negative review by prominent anticommunist researcher Gennadii Kostyrchenko in the Russian Zionist journal *Lekhaim* in October 2004 and another just as negative by Fedor Liass in *Zametki po evreiskoi istorii* 2 (51), February 2005.

So Stalin did not "use" Timashuk. But the main issue for our purposes is this: Lenoë made this accusation not just despite the fact that he had no evidence to support it, but despite the fact that there is a lot of evidence to disprove it. Once again it appears to be a method to Lenoë's mistakes: make any statement as long as the result is a "fact" that reflects badly upon Stalin.

Lenoe evidently "believed" Khrushchev's stories about Nikolaenko and Mishakova as well. Yet a major theme of his book is to show how Khrushchev and his men tried to "frame" Stalin as Kirov's murderer by withholding and destroying evidence, before they finally had to abandon the attempt as hopeless. Why, then, would Lenoe "believe" Khrushchev here? Once again: evidently because it makes a good "anti-Stalin" tale.

<sup>37</sup> The most recent study is by Stephen G. Wheatcroft, "The Soviet Famine of 1946-1947, the Weather and Human Agency in Historical Perspective." *Europe-Asia Studies*, 64:6, 987-1005. Wheatcroft concludes that this famine was part of "the World Food Crisis of 1946-1947" which "was the most serious global food shortage of modern history, when famine simultaneously threatened Central and Eastern Europe, India, Indo-China and China, and bread rationing was introduced in Britain for the first time ever" (1004) That is, the policies of the Soviet government had nothing to do with it.

### **Sergo Ordzhonikidze's Death**

Lenoe writes:

...a number of specialists and administrators in Ordzhonikidze's commissariat were charged with sabotage, and some were arrested. Ordzhonikidze made an effort to defend some of these men, which culminated in a private conflict with Stalin on the eve of the February 1937 TsK plenum, and Ordzhonikidze's death, probably by suicide. (466)

Once again, this is false. Ordzhonikidze made no such attempt "to defend" his subordinates. Moreover, there was no "private conflict with Stalin" — quite simply, it never happened. There is no evidence of this.

Not only that — there is no evidence that Ordzhonikidze committed suicide, either!

Lenoe's only source here is the book by Oleg Khlevniuk, *Stalin i Ordzhonikidze* (1993 — there is an English version as well). Khlevniuk



asserts that Ordzhonikidze opposed Stalin, had an argument with him, and shot himself. But Khlevniuk has no evidence for any of this. He evidently based his version on a Khrushchev-era introduction to a biography of Ordzhonikidze in which these allegations were made, also without any evidence. When this biography was reissued a few years later, after Khrushchev's ouster, this unattributed information was cut out. Lenoë had no business using a secondary source as evidence. He should have checked.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> See Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*, 114-6, where I give more details.

### **Zhukov's Reading at the June 1957 Central Committee Plenum**

Lenoë states:

On the afternoon of April 25 [1957] the Presidium met to discuss the rehabilitation of Tukhachevsky, Yakir, and Uborevich, the three leading generals executed for treason in 1937... Khrushchev challenged, "Let the old members of the Politburo tell us how they decided the question of bringing Yakir to trial, how this first step was prepared." Marshal Zhukov seconded Khrushchev with "we've got to get to the bottom of this." (601)

On the following page Lenoë discusses the June 1957 Central Committee Plenum at which this question arose again:

Zhukov and Shvrnik denounced Molotov's, Kaganovich's, and Malenkov's prominent roles in the Terror, with Zhukov apparently reading aloud from archival documents. (602)

Lenoë cites the transcript of this Plenum, published in 1999, in which Zhukov read the text of a letter from Iakir to Stalin of June 9, 1937. The relevant section of the transcript reads as follows:

You all know Iakir, he was a well-known developing and very strong worker. He was arrested for nothing. On June 29 1937 [sic] on the eve

of his own death he [Iakir — GF] wrote a letter to Stalin in which he says:

'Dear, close comrade Stalin! I dare address you in this way because I have told everything and it seems to me that I am that honorable warrior, devoted to Party, state and people, that I was for many years. All my conscious life has been passed in selfless, honorable work in the sight of the Party and its leaders. I die with words of love to you, the Party, the country, with a fervent belief in the victory of communism.'

- Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich. 1957. Moscow, 1990, p. 39.

In 1994 the text of the 1963-4 "Shvernik report" to Khrushchev concerning these military men was published, containing a fuller text of Iakir's letter. Here is that text; the part omitted by Zhukov in 1957 is in boldface:

"Dear, close com. Stalin. I dare address you in this way because I have told everything and it seems to me that I am once more that honorable warrior, devoted to Party, state and people, that I was for many years. All my conscious life has been passed in selfless, honorable work in the sight of the Party and its leaders. — **then I fell into a nightmare, into the irreparable horror of treason ... The investigation is finished. The indictment of treason to the state has been presented to me, I have admitted my guilt, I have repented completely. I have unlimited faith in the justice and appropriateness of the decision of the court and the government. Now each of my words is honest,** I die with words of love to you, the Party, the country, with a fervent belief in the victory of communism.'

This fuller text was published in 1994 in *Voennyi Arkhivy Rossii* (1993), p. 50; in "Tragediia RKKa", *Voenno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv* 1 (1994), p. 194. Finally, it was published in the authoritative volume *Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo*. Vol. 2 (2003), p. 688.

This document is strong evidence that Iakir and, by extension, the other commanders tried and executed with him, were guilty. Their guilt suggests that Bukharin's confessions at the March 1938 Moscow Show Trial were

truthful, since Bukharin incriminated Tukhachevsky. They are of capital importance for the subject he is studying. But there is no trace of them in his book.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>39</sup> See Furr, Khrushchev Lied, 209-212.

We know that Lenoe is aware of the Shvernik report because he examines the part of it concerned with the Kirov assassination and concludes "the ongoing investigation appears to have been impartial." (630-637; 638) It is possible, of course, that Lenoe did not read the whole report, but only that part dealing with Kirov; if so, this was a grave error on Lenoe's part.

This passage is also further proof that Khrushchev and his men are never to be trusted. It's not clear whether Marshal Zhukov knew that he was reading a letter that had been faked through expurgation. Nor did this happen only one time. At the 22nd Party Congress in October 1961 Aleksandr Shelepin, Khrushchev's head of the KGB (after Serov), read the same Iakir letter in his address to the Congress, and also omitted Iakir's admission of guilt!<sup>40</sup> Lenoe warns his readers about Khrushchev's attempt to "frame" Stalin, but then fails to take his own counsel.

<sup>40</sup> "Speech of Com. Shelepin", in XXII s'ezd kommunisticheskogo partii Sovetskogo Soiuz. 17-31 oktiabria 1961 goda. Stenograficheskii otchiot. (Moscow: Gos. Izdat. Politicheskoi Literatury, 1962), II, 403.

### **Khrushchev's "Secret Speech"**

Lenoe discusses Khrushchev's secret report to the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress of February 25, 1956 (571 ff.). It is important for his purposes as it marks the beginning of the official inquiry into the Kirov assassination, the documentation of which comprises the second half of Lenoe's massive book. Yet Lenoe never mentions the fact that every "revelation" made by Khrushchev of alleged crimes and misdeeds by Stalin and Lavrentii Beria was false. This fact has been well known since at least early 2008.<sup>41</sup> Some of these falsehoods had long been recognized. But, unaccountably, Lenoe takes Khrushchev's speech at face value.

<sup>41</sup> Ferr, Grover (Furr). *Antistalinskaia Podlost'* Moskva: Algoritm, 2007. (Antistalinskaia) This is the Russian original. *Khrushchev Lied* is an updated version (2011).

### **Khrushchevites "Revealed Many Of Stalin's Most Heinous Crimes"**

Later, in connection with the June 1957 Plenum, Lenoe states "the Khrushchevites revealed many of his [Stalin's] most heinous crimes". (604) But Lenoe does not mention a single one of them.

It is hard to believe that this is an accident; for in reality there is no evidence that Khrushchev "revealed" even a single "crime" — not just at the June 1957 Plenum, but ever! Every single allegation Khrushchev made of a "crime" by Stalin that has been checked has proven to be a falsification. The Russian edition of the present author's book on *this* subject, *Antistalinskaia podlost'* was published and widely publicized in Russia long before Lenoe's book was completed. But even had it not been, or if Lenoe had not heard of it, neither Lenoe nor any historian has any business taking Khrushchev's word, or anyone's word, as "true" without looking for evidence. That is the case with any fact-claim by anyone. But it should be especially true for Khrushchev since Lenoe knows that Khrushchev and his men were falsifying and questions Khrushchev's motives in trying to pin the Kirov assassination on Stalin.

### **Post of General Secretary**

In a section titled "Was There a Move to Replace Stalin with Kirov?" Lenoe notes that a 1963 report states that "a number of delegates to the Seventeenth Party Congress [held in January 1934 — GF] wished to abolish the office of general secretary and return the party to 'collective leadership'... (614). Lenoe is evidently unaware that Stalin himself had already tried three times to resign from the post of General Secretary: on August 19, 1924, December 27, 1926, and December 19, 1927. On the latter date, when his request to be permitted to resign was not accepted by the Central Committee, Stalin made the suggestion to "annihilate"

(*unichtozhit'*) the post of General Secretary. This suggestion was also rejected. (For details see Furr, Khrushchev Lied 245-250)

However, after the 17th Party Congress the term "General Secretary" was no longer used. Stalin was elected simply to the secretariat and his name was among those of the other Secretaries. For example, in the relevant section from the transcript of the 18th Party Congress in March 1939 the secretaries are all listed alphabetically, i.e. as equals. On March 18, 1946 a Plenum of the Central Committee passed a resolution concerning the composition of the Politburo, Secretariat, and Orgburo of the party. Here Stalin was indeed listed before the other secretaries, out of alphabetical order. But Georgii Malenkov is also listed out of alphabetical order. One again, there is no mention of the post of "General Secretary." Once again Stalin was elected simply as a member of the Secretariat at the Central Committee Plenum after the 19th Party Congress in October, 1952. Even the official notice of Stalin's death on March 5, 1953 stated simply that his posts were Chairman of the Soviet of Ministers of the USSR and Secretary of the CC of the CPSU.

That is, Stalin was not General Secretary of the Party after 1934. Furthermore, he had wanted to resign from the position and abolish the position. Lenoë is either ignorant of these facts or does not share them with his readers.

Khrushchev, however, acted differently. At the September 1953 Central Committee Plenum Khrushchev got himself elected "First Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU", a post that did not exist before. In 1964 Leonid Brezhnev succeeded Khrushchev as First Secretary and in 1966 was elected to the new post of General Secretary of the Party, which was the title of all the Soviet leaders through Mikhail Gorbachev.

## Chapter 4. *Fallacies and Errors in Lenoe's Argumentation*

Lenoe writes:

With the arrests of Antonov, Tolmazov, and Zvezdov, Agranov's men began to accumulate substantial evidence about continuing social ties between former Zinoviev supporters. These were treated as threads in an extended web of political conspiracy. Stalin and the central NKVD officers were extraordinarily suspicious of *dvurushnichestvo* ("two-facedness") among the former Zinovievites. In particular they were concerned about a directive Zinoviev supposedly issued his followers in 1928 to recant their views and rejoin the party. Stalin and Agranov chose to view this directive as a sign that Zinoviev sought to undermine the party from within. (306)

A party member who rejoined the Party not out of commitment to its line but for some other reason, be it simple careerism or — as alleged here — a plan to "bore from within" in concert with others, to use Party membership in an attempt to gain privileged access to Party positions and members in pursuit of the goal of getting rid of the Party and government leadership — was said, understandably, to be guilty of "two-facedness", an expression that also exists in English meaning "deceitful, insincere". "Hypocrisy" is also a good translation of *dvurushnichestvo*. Such a person professed loyalty to the Party while in fact undermining it; vowing to follow Party discipline but in reality following the discipline of their own fraction. If the former Zinovievites were still loyal to Zinoviev then they were members of a secret Party fraction, and such fractions had been banned at Lenin's urging at the Tenth Party Congress in 1921.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> After the successful consolidation of power by the Communist Party following the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Russian Civil War, the Bolshevik leadership, including Lenin, instituted a ban on fractions within the party as Resolution No. 12 of the 10th Party Congress in 1921. It was passed in the morning session on March 16, 1921 (Protokoly 585-7). Supporters of Trotsky sometimes claim that this ban was intended to be temporary. But there is no language in the discussion at the 10th Party

Congress suggesting that it was intended to be temporary (*Protokoly 523-548*). See *10-i s'ezd RKP(b) (8-16 maria 1921 goda). Protokoly* (Moscow: Partizdat, 1933).

If the "ties between former Zinoviev supporters" were "social" rather than political then they would not be evidence of a conspiracy. However, Lenoe has no evidence that these ties were only "social" or that they were only "former" Zinovievites — i.e. no longer part of an active fraction, illegal under Party rules. No evidence, that is, other than the initial testimony of these men after their arrests. But this is not good evidence. For one thing, *all* suspects, the innocent as well as the guilty, can be expected to deny guilt when first questioned. For another, the suspects soon changed their stories and confessed to still being part of an underground Zinovievite group. For a third, we have evidence from other sources that these conspiracies were still persisting.

So Lenoe does not decide this question on the basis of the evidence available but instead simply asserts that these suspects were only "former" Zinovievites. Lenoe's thesis is that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman". It is essential for his thesis that these men did not have a political formation separate from that of their Party organizations.

There was nothing "extraordinary" in Stalin's suspiciousness about "two-facedness." If the men in question were sincere supporters of the Party's line, then all was well and Nikolaev was indeed only a "lone gunman." But if they were not sincere supporters of the Party line, then Nikolaev was a participant in a secret terrorist conspiratorial group within the Party. The question is not one of Stalin's psychology ("extraordinarily suspicious") but one of fact: Did such a conspiracy exist or not?

In 1928 Zinoviev had written his supporters to urge them to rejoin the Party as he had done. On December 10 1934 Antonov said:

Rumiantsev was...dissatisfied with the position taken by Zinoviev, who advocated return to the party under particular conditions. (307)

The only condition permissible for a person to join or rejoin the Party was that he pledge to support the Party's line. Antonov's phrase, "particular

conditions", are suspicious precisely because they mean Zinoviev had other reasons in mind. On December 11, one day later, Zvezdov confessed that he knew that an underground anti-Party organization did exist:

I am aware that in the course of 1933-1934 the former leaders of the Zinovievite opposition, Bakaev, Kharitonov, Gertik, and Zinoviev himself, renewed their efforts to revive their organization.

The former leaders of the Zinovievite opposition who were in Moscow and were [also] tightly connected with Leningrad hoped to drag our old Komsomol group of former Zinovievites into a battle with the party and the party leadership. Antonov, Nikolai, with whom I study at the Institute, told me about this. ... Antonov heard about this from Kotolynov. ... [Antonov] said that now the old ties were being activated and a new attack on the party leadership was being prepared. (309)

In the following pages of his book Lenoe cites a lot of evidence that the erstwhile Zinovievites had indeed formed an underground anti-leadership group and, therefore, had rejoined the Party in a duplicitous or "two-faced" manner. Lenoe's Document 55 is a confession by Zvezdov of December 12 in which he details the membership of the Leningrad groups. It begins with a reference to a December 11 interrogation in which Zvezdov had already "assert[ed] the existence in Moscow of a counterrevolutionary organization, founded on the base of the old Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc." (310)

After a lengthy excerpt from Zvezdov's December 12 confession Lenoe asks: "Why did Zvezdov and other purported members of the 'Leningrad Center' confess?" Thereupon Lenoe proceeds to suggest every reason — threats, torture, the "Rubashov" phenomenon<sup>43</sup> — except one: that they confessed because it was the truth. Lenoe does not even raise this as a possibility! This glaring omission exposes the fact that Lenoe simply assumes the confessions were false, untruthful and "scripted". And the fact that Lenoe feels compelled to make such an assumption, even tacitly, exposes another fact: Lenoe has no evidence whatever to support his assumption — because if he did have any he would certainly have cited it.



<sup>43</sup> Rubashov, a character in Arthur Koestler's 1940 novel *Darkness at Noon*, confesses to crimes of which he is innocent out of a mixture of guilt and loyalty to the party.

Lenoe reproduces parts of a confession by Tolmazov of December 12 (Document 56, 314-6). Tolmazov confirms the existence of the underground Moscow and Leningrad groups of Zinovievites. According to Lenoe's translation Tolmazov even used the word "center" to describe these groups.

On page 316 Lenoe concedes that Kotolynov admitted that the Zinovievites had rejoined the Party dishonestly and maintained their own organization. However, Lenoe does not give the text of this interrogation and conceals from his readers the fact that this text has been published elsewhere. We discuss this document in another chapter. In it Kotolynov admits that Zinoviev's letter of 1928 was "a written instruction to deceive the Party". (Lubianka 1922-1936, 577) Lenoe fails to inform his readers of this statement of Kotolynov's. Whatever Lenoe's reason for omitting it, this document is devastating to his argument.

To sum up: there is a great deal of evidence from the interrogations that the Zinovievites in Leningrad and Moscow did indeed rejoin the Party in a "two-faced" manner. There is no evidence at all to suggest that these confessions were "scripted."

The late Pierre Broué was a champion of Trotsky's and fiercely hostile to Stalin. According to him it was simply taken for granted by informed people that when Oppositionists in general rejoined the Party they were doing so "two-facedly:"

Lev Sedov called the Smirnov group either the "former capitulators" or the "Trotskyite capitulators." Everybody had known, from 1929 on, that people in the Smirnov group had not really capitulated but were trying to fool the apparatus, and were capable of organizing themselves as an Opposition within the party: the fact was so universally known that Andres Nin, the Spaniard deported from the Soviet Union in August 1930, explained it openly to his German

comrades of *Die permanente revolution* who printed his declaration without apparent problem.

"Young Turks," "Left Stalinists," they [Ian E. Sten and V.V. Lominadze] had already begun to organize and act as an opposition in 1929, had been unmasked in 1930 and were continuing their oppositionist activities despite public confession of mistakes and self-criticism, which induced the apparatus to call them "double dealers."<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Pierre Broué, "Party Opposition to Stalin (1930-1932) and the First Moscow Trial." In John W. Strong, ed. *Essays on Revolutionary Culture and Stalinism*. (Columbus, OH: Slavica, 1990), at p. 104

With "two-facedness" as brazen as this Stalin would have been foolish not to suspect it! In any event, he was correct in this case. Any competent, honest examination of the evidence must conclude that the underground Zinovievite groups did exist.

### **Anticommunist Bias**

It is the duty of scholars to train themselves in the ability to be objective in the interpretation of evidence. As scholars we should distrust our own preconceived ideas more than anyone else's. After all, it is our own ideas that are most likely to mislead us.

In the criminal justice system jurors are enjoined to judge the guilt or innocence of a defendant based solely on the evidence, reasonably interpreted. Judges and lawyers query jurors about anything that might prevent them from deciding a case purely on the basis of evidence. If a juror's biases or preconceived ideas are so strong that they would prevent him or her from deciding purely on the basis of the evidence, that juror is supposed to be excused from that case. His (or her) biases, prejudices, and/or preconceived ideas, will prevent the juror from studying the evidence objectively.

Everyone, historians included, has biases, prejudices, and preconceived ideas. The scholar in any field of study is obliged to be aware of them,

distrust them, and make allowances for them. This is as true, and as important, for the historian as it is for the physicist or chemist.

Overt, open, admitted, and obvious bias and prejudice is the easiest to identify. But, of course, it is possible to pretend objectivity while in reality permitting one's prejudices and biases to predetermine the results of one's study. This kind of covert bias is more insidious, harder to discern. It is more likely to lead astray those readers who are unwary or lack sufficient knowledge of the subject matter.

Lenoe makes no attempt to control or even to conceal his strong anticommunist bias. He gives it free rein. It is impossible not to be struck by Lenoe's frequent and vehement expression of his anticommunist views. It is as though Lenoe were unaware that any kind of bias fatally compromises objectivity and therefore makes the discovery of the truth impossible.

What follows is an examination of some of the more flagrant examples of overt expressions of bias in Lenoe's book. I make no claim to completeness, which would be otiose anyway, a mere catalog. Further examples of anticommunist bias are treated in other sections of this study. I also omit discussion of Lenoe's "Introduction" (1-18) here since I deal with it separately.

In Chapter 1 Lenoe calls Lenin "intolerant" and Stalin "vengeful". He gives no evidence for either statement. This lack of evidence reduces these remarks to the status of mere insult, nothing more than an expression of Lenoe's own personal bias. Moreover, Lenoe himself later cites evidence against Stalin's "vengefulness" by pointing out that Stalin "signed off on or even initiated the rehabilitations" of former Oppositionists who spoke at the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in January, 1934 (127).

Lenoe says Kirov "stuck with" Stalin "whatever his private doubts or fears may have been" (63), but cites no evidence that Kirov had any "doubts or fears" at all. Lenoe calls Stalin's "Dizzy with Success" article of March 2 1930 "in all probability a deliberate attempt to scapegoat local officials." (108) This is a good example of the anticommunist double standard. When a communist — let alone Stalin — issues a call for moderation, it is

assumed that he has a sinister, ulterior motive in mind. Normally, no such assumption would be made in the case of a non-communist — certainly not without evidence.

Lenoe calls Andrei Zhdanov a "hard-bitten Stalinist." (111) The word "hard-bitten" means "tough in a fight" — but Lenoe has cited no fights in which Zhdanov had proven his toughness. As used here it seems to be a kind of throw-away, generalized negative comment. Again, according to Lenoe, Kirov was "generally perceived as one of the despot's thuggish henchmen." (119) But his evidence for this "general" perception is Bullard, the British Consul in Leningrad, someone who can hardly represent a spokesperson for the "general" viewpoint. Lenoe has ample space to demonstrate how Kirov acted like a "thug" but does not do so.

As for "henchman" — a word that anciently had a positive connotation — Lenoe evidently uses it for its negative overtones alone. Like "hard-bitten", "henchman" tells us about Lenoe's biases but conveys no information about Kirov. This may be why he uses these terms: to assure the authorities in the anticommunist field of Soviet history that he has the appropriate anticommunist attitudes and values.

Lenoe calls penal labor "slave labor." (125) Yet inmates of American or other prisons who are required to work are never referred to as "slaves." The correct term is "penal labor", which has been employed in the United States and other capitalist countries, where it is never referred to as "slave labor." This is another example of the anticommunist double standard.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> The anticommunist double standard in historiography is discussed in, e.g. James Prickett, "Anti-Communism and Labor History," *Industrial Relations* 13 (October, 1974), 219-227. Online at <http://tinyurl.com/prickettindrel74>

Lenoe claims "Stalin admired Zakovsky for his scorched-earth approach to policing." (145) He cites no evidence for this claim. How can Lenoe "channel" Stalin — know what he was thinking? What does "scorched earth approach to policing" mean? The answer seems to be: nothing — but it "sounds bad." Once again, it is just an insult. Lenoe is again reassuring his readers that he is "politically correct" in that he despises communists and

never misses an opportunity to insult or belittle them. This passage simply represents Lenoe's prejudices on display.

In transcribing Nikolaev's "Plan" to murder Kirov Lenoe annotates Nikolaev's remark "Us and Them" as follows:

[note the contraposition of the general population to the Communist elite] (241)

This is an example of what could be termed "ventriloquism". These are Lenoe's words which he would like us to believe Nikolaev "meant to say." Lenoe would like Nikolaev to have said them. Alas for Lenoe, Nikolaev didn't say them, so Lenoe puts those words into his mouth. In reality there's no indication Nikolaev meant anything like this. In view of the rest of the evidence, by "us" Nikolaev almost certainly meant "we, the Zinovievites" or "we, the clandestine Zinovievite-Trotskyite bloc" and by "them" the Stalin leadership. But Lenoe's preconceived idea that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" precludes his considering this possibility. Lenoe is eager to identify evidence of anti-Bolshevik sentiment among workers generally.

Moreover, it is impossible that Nikolaev meant "the general population." In the excerpts from Nikolaev's diary, letters, and interrogations that have been made public Nikolaev never refers to "the general population" at all. The discourse of communists at that time was very class-conscious Nikolaev would never have assumed that the Soviet population was one "general" interest group. If he had meant "the working class" or "the peasantry" he would have said so.

Lenoe describes the special law passed in early December 1934 stipulating expedited and abbreviated trials and executions for terrorism as follows:

In a genuine emergency — Kirov was the first senior party leader to take a bullet since Lenin in 1918 — party leaders still claimed the right of resort to state terror. (255)

The December 1 1934 law describes a procedure similar to a military trial. This has nothing in common with "state terror" no matter how this vague term is understood. This is the anticommunist double-standard again. In his

introduction Lenoe expresses criticism of the Bush Administration's "Patriot Act" and indefinite detention without trial at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba of terror suspects — something he does not even accuse the Stalin-era USSR of doing. But Lenoe does not call the American administration's action "state terror." Moreover, this accelerated and simplified trial procedure was not applied in any of the three public Moscow trials of 1936, 1937 and 1938, at which the defendants did have the right of appeal. Some of their appeals have been published.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> "Rasskaz o desiati rasstrel'nykh" ("Story of ten who were shot"), *Izvestiia* September 2, 1992, p. 3.

Lenoe states:

...Nikolaev's real identity, a working-class Communist who had turned against the regime, was potentially devastating for official versions of reality. It needed to be kept quiet. (274)

On page 344 Lenoe repeats the notion that it would be a "disaster for Soviet propaganda" if Nikolaev turned out to be a worker. But nowhere does Lenoe cite any evidence to support this statement. No wonder! There could hardly be any. Many Oppositionists were workers or former workers. In the 1920s there had even been a "Workers' Opposition" group. The fact that yet another Oppositionist was from a working-class background was nothing new and by itself could have no special significance.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Wendy Z. Goldman *Terror and Democracy in the Age of Stalin* (Cambridge University Press, 2007) discusses the political struggles and opposition within the industrial working class in the 1920s and 1930s.

Moreover, though working class in his origins, in practice Nikolaev was well on his way out of the working class. He had enjoyed privileged blue-collar or white-collar work for a number of years. Nikolaev's own career was thus vastly different from that of most other workers in Leningrad or in the USSR generally. Lenoe shows no curiosity about how this could have happened. One obvious possibility is that he obtained these privileged positions by virtue of his membership in the underground Zinovievite

group. Some of the Zinovievites had medium-level Party posts and were in a position to exert influence.

Lenoe accuses Sinel'nikov, a Khrushchev-era biographer of Kirov, of ignoring Kirov's role in what Lenoe terms "the brutal pacification of the Azerbaijani countryside" during the Civil War (524). But he does not tell us what "brutality" allegedly occurred and what Kirov allegedly had to do with it. Lenoe's own summary of Kirov's time in Azerbaijan during the Civil War contains no such allegations (50-1; 57-63). Like Sinel'nikov, therefore, Lenoe himself "ignores" whatever happened during this period.

Later in the book Lenoe permits himself the following tirade:

The author of this report unwittingly reveals a great deal about the nature of the "truth" in Bolshevik rhetoric by the middle 1930s. The officer treats the centrally controlled show trial of August 1936 as establishing a "true" revolutionary narrative, while dismissing Yenukidze's alternative narrative as 'counterrevolutionary.'" Evidence for the competing narratives is irrelevant — the sole criterion for truth is now the declarations of the central authorities or the story-lines presented in the mass spectacles organized by them. Moreover, believers in the Stalinist "truth" care far less about whether it corresponds to the real world than whether they can demonstrate their power by forcing others to reiterate its tenets. For Stalin and his loyalists the ability to get the entire populace to repeat their "true" narrative of events both indexed and reproduced their power. (503-4)

Once again Lenoe cites no evidence for this sweeping generalization. This anticommunist rant also has the appearance of a coverup. The August 1936 Moscow Trial in fact presented a great deal of evidence concerning the Kirov assassination. Lenoe ignores all of it — and then has the temerity to claim that it was the communists who considered "evidence" irrelevant! Anyone who troubles to read those pretrial investigative materials now available — the published transcript of the August 1936 Moscow Trial, and the materials from the Harvard Trotsky Archive where the "bloc" of Trotskyites and Zinovievites, including its membership, is acknowledged by Trotsky himself, to mention but a few — can see that the Soviet authorities were very concerned indeed about evidence.

It is Lenoe, not the report's author or the Bolsheviks generally, for whom "evidence ... is irrelevant". We devote a part of the present study to an examination of the pretrial interrogations of Genrikh S. Iagoda, Commissar of Internal Affairs and thus head of the NKVD until August 1936 and a defendant at the March 1938 Moscow Trial. In those confessions Iagoda directly implicates Enukidze as an accessory in Kirov's murder. These confessions are cited unproblematically as evidence by prominent anticommunist scholars. Enukidze's involvement in Kirov's assassination would fully explain his attempt to frame the murder in terms of personal revenge rather than political terrorism. In that chapter we demonstrate that Lenoe is aware of these materials but conceals them from his readers. There can be little doubt that he does this because the evidence they contain thoroughly disproves Lenoe's "lone gunman" hypothesis.

### **"Argument By Scare Quotes"**

Lenoe has frequent recourse what we may call "argument by scare quotes." Lenoe puts scare quotes around certain statements and assertions without explaining to his readers what this means or why he does so. Evidently these are statements, such as confessions, and assertions that Lenoe believes to be false or that he wishes his readers to consider as false. But he never explains what makes him think they are false. Nor does Lenoe ever cite any evidence that they are false. We are forced to guess, to surmise that the scare quotes are intended to signal to the reader that s/he too ought to look upon these statements and assertions with suspicion, if not with outright disbelief. However, Lenoe does not explain just how his readers should alter their own opinions as a result of this use of scare quotes.

Principled researchers try to account for the evidence by formulating hypotheses. Broadly speaking, two hypotheses are relevant in the case of the Kirov murder:

Hypothesis #1: In murdering Kirov Nikolaev acted as a participant in a clandestine Opposition group.

Hypothesis #2: All the evidence that points to the existence of this clandestine Opposition group was falsified by "Stalin" — Stalin himself,



the NKVD and/or Prosecutor's office acting under his instructions, etc.

Late in his book Lenoë surveys the Khrushchev-era attempts to invalidate the 1930s testimony concerning the Kirov murder. We will examine Lenoë's survey later on. But Lenoë realizes that Khrushchev and his men were trying to pin the Kirov murder on Stalin and also trying to prove that no conspiracies at all existed. Lenoë acknowledges that the Khrushchevites had recourse to falsifications. In any case, his study of Khrushchev's machinations is no excuse for not studying the available evidence himself.

As employed by Lenoë this practice of using scare quotes is another form of "begging the question" — of assuming the falsehood of certain statements and assertions without citing any evidence that they are false, of "assuming that which is to be proven." Like any researcher Lenoë is obligated to prove that these statements are false. Since Lenoë never explains his use of scare quotes, it appears as though he is attempting to convey to his readers that he has proven, or disproven, something that he has not. We will cite some examples here.

Properly understood, this practice of "argument by scare quotes" is one type of "tell". By using scare quotes Lenoë is tacitly — and, no doubt, unintentionally — admitting to his attentive readers that he cannot prove what he claims he has proven, but that he is unwilling to honestly admit this fact. This type of argument, then, is one more example of the textual or rhetorical strategies Lenoë evidently feels he must employ in order to convince his readers he has proven his hypothesis while disguising the fact that in reality he has done nothing of the kind. For a researcher who had evidence would set it forth clearly, and Lenoë does not do this.

Lenoë writes:

Eventually Nikolaev "confessed" that he had recruited Shatsky to watch Kirov's apartment for him, and strongly implied that Kotolynov had masterminded a conspiracy to murder Kirov. (288)

All researchers need to be prepared to find evidence that does not support their hypotheses and to deal with such evidence honestly and with objectivity. Since Lenoë does not explain his use of scare quotes here, we

may conclude that he doubts this confession is genuine solely because it contradicts his hypothesis that no conspiracy existed and Nikolaev acted alone. Lenoe owes his readers an explanation for the scare quotes and the doubts or suspicions they imply.

Two pages later Lenoe does this again:

In the Nikolaev case, Agranov had made progress with Pyotr Nikolaev's "confession" of his participation in the plot to murder Kirov. ... There was the putative "counterrevolutionary group" consisting of former oppositionists from the Vyborg Ward Komsomol and other acquaintances of Nikolaev ...

In the case of the "counterrevolutionary group" that would eventually become the so-called "Leningrad Center" Sokolov had so far proved the one really productive arrest (other than Nikolaev himself). ...[H]e named a large number of former oppositionists who supposedly constituted a group still opposed to the party, and he placed Nikolaev inside the group. This was progress towards "proving" the kind of conspiracy that Agranov had to create for Stalin. (290-1)

On page 304 the words "Leningrad Center" and "Moscow Center" occur six times, and "center" once by itself. Lenoe puts scare quotes around them every time.

Lenoe's reasoning seems to be as follows:

- Lenoe's thesis is that Nikolaev acted alone.
- Therefore, there could have been no group and, consequently, no Leningrad and Moscow centers.
- Therefore any confession in which they appeared must be false and any proof or evidence fabricated.

It is, of course, fallacious to reason in this manner. Then Lenoe states:

On December 9 Vladimir Rumiantsev, arrested on December 6, provided interrogators with the first "evidence" of what might be interpreted as conspiratorial activity by Zinoviev and Kamenev. (304)

Why the scare quotes around "evidence"? Lenoe is devoted to the hypothesis that everybody except Nikolaev was falsely accused and convicted. But if this were so, then any evidence that contradicts his preconceived ideas has to be a fabrication — therefore, not really evidence, but "evidence". Lenoe, that is, sticks to his preconceived hypothesis no matter what the evidence says.

On page 308 Lenoe uses scare quotes four times, twice around "Leningrad Center." The other two concern Zvezdov's confessions:

It appears to have been Vasily Zvezdov who provided Agranov with breakthrough "evidence" about the existence of a well-organized "Leningrad Center" conspiring against the party leadership...Two days later...he did "confirm" the existence of an underground Zinovievite organization dedicated to fighting the party leadership. (308)

This passage does, in fact, convey useful information, however indirectly, to the reader: *namely, that there is no evidence that would persuade Lenoe such an underground Zinovievite organization did in fact exist!* For in the case of a secret, conspiratorial group there can scarcely be any other evidence for its existence than evidence — testimony — from its members. Those who, like Lenoe, discount all such evidence in advance ought to be forthright and admit directly that they have made up their mind to ignore all the evidence that does — or could reasonably be expected to — exist.

On the following page Lenoe puts scare quotes around "Leningrad Center", "Moscow Center", "groups", and "centers." Then he states:

Zvezdov was following their script.

What "script"? I use scare quotes advisedly here, since Lenoe gives no evidence at all that such a "script" existed. He imputes a "script" to the investigators but fails to inform us how they managed to get the suspects to utter confessions following this so-called "script". Absent any evidence of it, however, the "script" remains an invention of Lenoe's mind — hence my own use of scare quotes here. So Lenoe puts scare quotes around evidence that does not fit his preconceived hypothesis, but no scare quotes around

evidence that does not exist at all, evidence that he, Lenoë, has invented — this "script."

Lenoë's bias dictates his conclusions throughout. On page 313 he writes:

Why did Zvezdov and other purported members of the "Leningrad Center" confess?

Lenoë goes on to discuss "physical abuse", "other forms of torture", and other putative reasons why prisoners might give false confessions. But he cites no evidence that any means of coercing false confessions were used in this case, or in any of the Kirov investigation.

The possibility that Zvezdov and/or other defendants were coerced to give false confession is a hypothesis. Like all hypotheses it must fail if there is insufficient evidence to support it. A hypothesis that is not supported by any evidence does not have to be refuted; it "falls of its own weight." In the case of this hypothesis of Lenoë's — that those who, like Zvezdov, confessed that there was a conspiracy, that Nikolaev was in it, etc., because they were persuaded or coerced to follow a "script" composed by the investigators — Lenoë cites no evidence at all.

This fact — lack of evidence — would oblige any honest investigator to discard it in favor of hypotheses that better account for the existing evidence. But Lenoë never considers the possibility that the confessions might have been genuine, despite the fact that they are mutually confirmative and that he can find no evidence at all that they were false. Any competent and honest investigator considers all possible explanations that satisfy the evidence, including those that contradict his preliminary hypothesis. Lenoë consistently fails to act in this manner.

On page 324 Lenoë writes:

Also on the thirteenth Genrikh Liushkov took a damning "confession" from Rumiantsev, who detailed supposed connections between the Moscow and Leningrad "Centers." (324)

Later on the same page Lenoe uses scare quotes around "counterrevolutionary group", noting that "Kotolynov evidently did not contest the label." Correct! The only one "contesting the label" is Lenoe himself — and he gives no reason for doing so.

When Lenoe discusses Nikolaev's early confessions, during which the defendant claimed he acted on his own, he does not use scare quotes around the word "confession." Undoubtedly this may be explained by the fact that Lenoe's own hypothesis is that Nikolaev acted alone. Therefore he does not wish to convey to his readers that these early confessions might be false.

Nikolaev later explicitly admitted that part of his assignment was to pretend that he was a "lone gunman":

"...I was supposed to describe the murder of KIROV as an individual act in order to conceal the participation in it of the Zinovievite group." (vol. 1 p. 266).

This passage is taken from the Prosecutor's indictment. This document is reprinted by Lenoe in his book, but with some significant omissions. This passage is one of those that Lenoe omitted. We will discuss it in more detail in a later chapter on the documents Lenoe omits.

A moment's reflection is enough to make anyone realize that the earliest confessions of a defendant are normally those likely to contain the most falsehoods. Nikolaev could not deny his own role in murdering Kirov — he was caught red-handed. But he could deny any role by others, and this he did for at least a day or two.

On page 327 Lenoe writes:

The time had come for the press to reveal the "true" perpetrators of the crime.

On page 343 Lenoe writes:

...NKVD officials were concerned with demonstrating at trial that Nikolaev ... had belonged to the "counterrevolutionary Zinovievite-

Trotsky organization" in 1934.

In this case we know that Lenoe is wrong. We have known since the early 1980s that a bloc of Zinovievites and Trotskyites did indeed exist. Sedov and Trotsky wrote each other about it. It is simply not possible that Lenoe was ignorant of this fact, published in major journals a quarter-century before his own book was published. Furthermore, Lenoe acknowledges the help of Arch Getty (15), one of the researchers who, along with Pierre Broué, discovered Sedov's and Trotsky's correspondence about the bloc. Lenoe fails in his responsibility to inform his readers of this fact. Instead he tries to cast doubt on its existence through scare quotes.

### **Psychologizing; or, "When You Have No Evidence, Attack The Person"**

An old adage advises courtroom lawyers: "When you have no evidence, attack the person." Lenoe often permits himself to comment upon Stalin's character. These comments are always derogatory and never accompanied by any evidence.

What could possibly motivate an historian to so abandon any pretense at objectivity? Perhaps Lenoe feels it necessary to prove over and over again that he is "on the right side" — that although he is arguing that Stalin did not connive at Kirov's murder, that does not mean he is "pro-Stalin". After all, very early in his book Lenoe does make a big point of assuring and reassuring his readers of his impeccable anti-Stalin and anticommunist leanings. (16)

Whatever the reasons for it, the fact remains that *ad hominem* argumentation is a logical and rhetorical fallacy. Moreover, the careful reader understands that the *ad hominem* argument is a tacit admission that the person who uses it has only weak evidence to support his case, or no evidence at all. Whatever Lenoe's reasons for employing it, there is simply no legitimate defense for it. We will give some examples of this warrantless psychologizing as further evidence of the basic weakness of Lenoe's argumentation in this book.

Lenoe describes Stalin's friendship with Kirov, the fact that Kirov stayed at Stalin's apartment on his trips to Moscow, the evidence that Stalin "loved" Kirov, and Stalin's modest lifestyle. (138-139) Perhaps reluctant to be painting what could be construed as a positive picture of Stalin Lenoe continues:

At one level, the question of Kirov's and Stalin's personal friendship is irrelevant. Many people who knew Stalin have commented that he was a great actor, expert at concealing his real feelings and thoughts. He was undoubtedly capable of greeting someone warmly while plotting against them. (140)

Lenoe cites no evidence to support this claim. Nor does he even deign to name a single one of those "many people." Much less does he stop to ask himself how they could possibly "know" this about Stalin, or anybody. How did they know Stalin's "real feelings", so that they could know when he was "concealing" them? Conversely, if Stalin was so "expert at concealing his real feelings", how did these people "know" them?

This remark appears to be an example of the well-documented anticommunist double-standard. Under this double-standard when a non-communist is warm and friendly, this shows his true nature. When a communist acts the same way he is being duplicitous, "concealing his real feelings and thoughts" which must, of course, be "bad" ones — because he is a communist. Famed press critic A.J. Liebling mocked this knee-jerk anticommunism in the last edition of his book *The Press*:

The formulas most newspapers have fallen back on for foreign news are few. One is, "Man go to church, good, man, no lie. Man not go to church, bad, lie." Ergo "Franco, Salazar, Adenauer, Christian Democrats, good truthful. Communists, bad, whatever they say lie."

Liebling then usefully demonstrates how this bias affects reporting:

Thus, as an example of formula thinking, if Sicilians riot because living conditions are ghastly, and a Communist leader says, later, "Look at Sicily, *living conditions* are ghastly," then living conditions cease to be ghastly. By agreeing with *any* charge the Communist takes

the truth out of it, first, because he is trying to turn it to his own advantage — which, to revert for a moment to nonformula sanity, has not one thing to do with whether it is true or not — second, because even if it were not true it would be to his advantage, so he would invent it. It is therefore a lie, because (a) Communists and liars, they do not go to church, and (b) they invented it. And the Sicilians themselves are liars, because they allowed the Communists to agree with them, thus putting themselves in the position of people who agree with liars.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> A.J. Liebling. *The Press*. New York: Pantheon, 1975 (1961), 261.

Lenoe's thesis reflects this "formula": Stalin claimed Kirov was murdered by an oppositionist conspiracy; Stalin was a bad man; therefore Stalin was a liar; therefore Kirov was not killed by an oppositionist conspiracy; therefore all the evidence that points to an oppositionist conspiracy was fabricated by Stalin!

Lenoe follows up these sentences quoted above with an anecdote that is supposed to illustrate the duplicity he alleges.

Also, surface civility among top leaders and their families in the Stalinist elite often concealed bitter political rivalries. In December 1934, for example, Maria Svanidze's husband Aleksandr would denounce Avel Yenukidze to the NKVD for supposedly plotting a coup against the Soviet leadership.<sup>90</sup> Svanidze and Yenukidze saw Stalin regularly together in cordial home circumstances.

This passage is revealing, though not in the way Lenoe apparently intends. His footnote 90 is to the book by IUrii Zhukov, *Inoi Stalin* (759). Although Zhukov's book is a work over 500 pages in length Lenoe gives no page reference. We have taken the trouble to locate the passage, which is on page 176 of Zhukov's book. Zhukov actually dates Svanidze's denunciation of Enukidze not to December 1934 but to "the first days of January 1935". Lenoe omits to inform his readers that in the very next paragraph Zhukov cites the confessions of both Enukidze and Peterson, both made within



minutes of their respective arrests in cities far away from each other, that they had indeed been plotting such a coup.

One would never guess from any of Lenoe's numerous citations to Zhukov's book or to the same author's important article on the 1935 "Kremlin Affair" in *Voprory Istorii* (2000) that IUrii Zhukov concluded, on the basis of the evidence, that Enukidze was indeed plotting against Stalin, or that Zhukov was able to cite a great deal of evidence in support of that hypothesis, which he arrives at only reluctantly and towards the end of his article. Much less does Lenoe inform his readers that, if Zhukov is correct, Lenoe's own hypothesis that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" is exploded, since Enukidze confessed to being a major player in the conspiracy by the Rights, Trotskyites and Zinovievites to assassinate Kirov.

It was, of course, Svanidze's duty, as it was that of any Party member or, indeed, of any Soviet citizen, to report information about such a plot. The fact that Enukidze was a highly-placed and long-trusted person would have made such a conspiracy all the more dangerous. Therefore the passage Lenoe quotes to illustrate "bitter political rivalries" among "the Stalinist elite" does so — but in a very different manner than that intended by Lenoe. It corroborates a great deal of other evidence now available to us that the opposition conspiracies of the 1930s were genuine and serious, thus helping indirectly to disprove Lenoe's thesis about Kirov's murder.

After outlining an attempt by Stalin to investigate possible fabrication of cases by the OGPU (about to be changed, in mid-1934, to the NKVD) and his concern to get qualified prosecutors Lenoe asserts:

For Stalin the emphasis on "revolutionary legality" had to do with establishing order and riding herd on the NKVD and not necessarily with any concern for reducing state violence. (143)

One might object that "riding herd on the NKVD" is precisely an attempt to "reduce state violence". In addition we need to ask: How can Lenoe possibly know what Stalin's motives were? Lenoe assumes Stalin must have had authoritarian, manipulative, or bureaucratic motives rather than any motives, such as reducing violence, that Lenoe's readers could sympathize with. This shows Lenoe's anticommunist double standard at work again. A

non-communist politician who showed concern to obtain qualified prosecutors and to investigate faking of cases by the police would presumably be praised. But Stalin "communist, bad man, lie", so he must be up to something nefarious.

Another example of this psychologizing — really, name-calling — from Lenoë:

The Soviet leader was suspicious and held grudges. (256)

How does Lenoë know this? Don't ask! This is a minor example compared to many others, such as the following:

It is clear that Stalin in the early 1930s was bent on monitoring ex-oppositionists closely and crushing any hint of recalcitrance on their part. (277)

But according to the source Lenoë cites this has nothing to do with "monitoring ex-oppositionists." The editorial board of *Bol'shevik*, the Party's leading journal, had proposed publishing a letter by Engels. Stalin wrote an argument critical of Engels' letter and proposing that it not be published, and his document was subsequently ratified by the Central Committee. The Engels article itself was not published but instead Zinoviev, the expert on international affairs on the editorial board, wrote an article summarizing its contents. This was a violation of at least the spirit, if not the letter, of the Central Committee resolution. Kaganovich's reply a few days later was that Zinoviev had to write an explanation (but had not yet done so) and at the same time said that he himself had disapproved of the Engels article.

So this was not a case of "monitoring ex-oppositionists closely" at all. Had Zinov'ev's activities been "monitored closely" his article would not have been published in the first place. Had Stalin really been a man who "held grudges" Zinov'ev would not have been appointed to the editorial board of *Bol'shevik* at all. Zinov'ev had already been expelled from the Party, sent to work in a provincial town — but then restored to a high Party position when he vowed that he now supported the Party's line.

In the specific incident under discussion Vilhel'm Knorin, another Comintern specialist, was removed as editor-in-chief. Knorin had never been associated with any Opposition. Zinoviev was removed from the editorial board because he had actually written the article in question (under a pseudonym). Stalin's letter to Kaganovich emphasized that Zinoviev was not just not the only person at fault but that he was not even the *main* person at fault.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Stalin to Kaganovich, August 12, 1934. In *Stalin i Kaganovich. Perepiska. 1931-1936 gg.* Ed. Khlevniuk, O.V., et al. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001, p. 432.

Lenoe has misread this incident. What this sequence of events shows, in fact, is that Stalin did not "hold grudges" and had gone out of his way to give Zinov'ev yet another responsible post.

## **Nakhaev**

Lenoe states:

The Nakhaev mutiny and numerous other incidents show that Stalin's reaction to the Kirov murder was typical for him personally and for the Bolshevik regime as a whole. The insistence that a counter-revolutionary conspiracy must be behind the assassination, the immediate resort to extrajudicial procedures, the execution of hostages, the search for a foreign connection, and the anger at the NKVQ's supposed incompetence were all practically reflexive. (277)

In reality the Nakhaev mutiny shows nothing of the kind. Nakhaev tried to raise a revolt among civil defense volunteers by claiming that "Jewish Communists" were running the country. According to the sources Lenoe cites Nakhaev had quit the Party "as a protest against the expulsion of the leaders of the opposition in 1927." The authors of this note do not inform us whether the leaders whose expulsion Nakhaev was protesting were Zinov'ev and Kamenev, or Trotsky and his major supporters, or others.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> The list of those expelled from the Party at the 15<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 1927 is on p. 1247 of the Transcript of the Congress. A number of the Zinovievites later involved in the Kirov murder are among them.

Given the fact that Zinov'ev, Kamenev, Trotsky and his supporters, and many other oppositionists were in fact of Jewish background, while Stalin and his Politburo were not (with the exception of Lazar' Kaganovich), it certainly must have seemed to the NKVD that something was going on that did not make sense on the surface. Sure enough, Nakhaev proved to have contact with a General Bykov, who — as far as published documents permit us to see — was in touch with Estonian intelligence.

Of course if Lenoe had evidence that something else was going on — that Nakhaev was acting on his own, that Bykov was not involved or had no connection to Estonia — he could inform his readers of that evidence. We may therefore assume that he does not.

Aside from anticommunist bias there is no particular reason to doubt Bykov's alleged ties to Estonian intelligence — or, for that matter, to doubt Nikolaev's connection with Latvian intelligence through Georgs Bissenieks, the Latvian consul. Modern scholarship has amply documented the fact that, like Germany, Japan, and Poland, the Baltics had large-scale spy operations inside the USSR, as well as the effectiveness of Soviet countermeasures and penetration of these spy networks.<sup>51</sup> This does not mean, of course, that all suspicions of such activity were automatically valid. But Soviet suspicions of espionage activity were realistic, not paranoid.

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, Jeffrey Burds, "The Soviet War against 'Fifth Columnists': The Case of Chechnya, 1942-4," *Journal of Contemporary History* 42 (2007), 267-314. Despite the title Burds discusses far more than just Chechnya.

Lenoe's use of the phrase "numerous other incidents", without identifying a single one of them, is a "tell". It is a bluff, a tacit admission that he has no evidence and is fabricating what follows. No "extrajudicial procedures" were "resorted to" in the Nakhaev case. And a final point: none of the accounts Lenoe cites as his sources concerning the Nakhaev case mention

"the execution of hostages." What, therefore, are we to think — except that Lenoe must have added this phrase simply to parade his anticommunist bias before his readers!

## **The Ezhovshchina**

We now have a great deal of primary-source evidence about the so-called "Terror" — the traditional and more accurate Soviet term for this period was the "Ezhovshchina" (literally, "bad time of Ezhov") — and the reasons it took place. Rather than refer to it Lenoe attributes it to Stalin's character:

But to return to the Terror's immediate case — Stalin ordered it. He was a vengeful and power-hungry man, and possibly a sadist in the clinical sense. . . . At the same time, his resort to mass operations was a gesture of frustrated rage, or throwing up his hands...(470)

Always inclined to believe the worst, ... (470)

Once Stalin decided that the oppositionists were in some sense responsible, the details of individual guilt or innocence did not bother him. (471)

It is all false; none of it is supported by the evidence. Stalin ordered no "terror" but the suppression of rebel and criminal gangs which local Party leaders reported were ravaging their areas.

In this case we have a good deal of insight into Stalin's reactions to many of these events because many of the documents from that period that have been published are accompanied by marginal notations by Stalin which have also been published. But Lenoe, so eager to "psychologize" or "channel" Stalin to try to characterize his motives and thoughts, makes no reference to Stalin's notations. Perhaps this is because they show no indication whatever of "power-hunger", "vengefulness", or "rage". We have a great deal of evidence that Stalin was interested in evidence, in the details of the investigations. Yet this is what Lenoe offers as historical explanation for this complex and tragic period.

## Chapter 5. *Lenoe and the Fallacy of 'Begging the Question'*

The logical fallacy known as "begging the question", is well known to scholars. One source defines it as follows:

An argument is circular if its conclusion is among its premises, if it assumes (either explicitly or not) what it is trying to prove. Such arguments are said to beg the question. A circular argument fails as a proof because it will only be judged to be sound by those who already accept its conclusion.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Quoted from <http://www.logicalfallacies.info/presumption/begging-the-question>

As we will demonstrate, Lenoe commits this fallacy with astonishing frequency. This fact itself begs for an explanation. We shall suggest a hypothesis that may account for it. First, however, we will establish the truth of this claim through examination of a large number of passages where Lenoe commits this fallacy.

Lenoe states that Zvezdov was "arrested and shot on fabricated charges" (187). This is a baseless statement. This very question — the validity of the charges against the defendants in the December 1934 Kirov murder trial is the subject of Lenoe's book. Here, early in this 800+ page book Lenoe assumes, without evidence, what he is supposedly trying to discover. As we shall see, the real state of affairs is the opposite of what Lenoe says here. There existed in 1934 and exists today a great deal of evidence attesting to the guilt of Zvezdov and the others tried, convicted and executed for conspiracy to murder Kirov. There is no evidence whatever that the charges against Zvezdov, or against any of the other defendants, were "fabricated."

On page 313 Lenoe asks: "Why did Zvezdov and the other purported members of the 'Leningrad Center' confess?" He proceeds to assume that they were innocent and so must have been cajoled with "promises of clemency", threatened with torture, and so on. But it is the job of historians not to make assumptions, but to draw conclusions from evidence. Lenoe has

no evidence that any of the defendants were innocent. Furthermore, Lenoe himself informs us that Zvezdov was one of those who confessed at trial to participating in the murder (360). That is, evidence exists that the charges against Zvezdov were not fabricated. Lenoe does not show that this evidence is faked, or is outweighed by yet, other evidence. Indeed he never even attempts to do so.

When a historian wishes his readers to assume the validity of his hypothesis, a reader may be forgiven if he suspects that this must be because the historian in question knows that he does not have the evidence to prove his hypothesis. Such tactics may be understandable on the part of a defense attorney in a criminal trial who knows that his client has a very weak case — though they would evoke objections from the prosecutor. After all, defense attorneys are not after the objective truth. But tactics such as "begging the question" — "assuming that which is to be proven" — are entirely out of place in historical research. Lenoe claims that Stalin "had by December 9 chosen a framework for the conspiracy case ... the ultimate targets were Zinoviev and Kamenev." (304) This is a critical point in Lenoe's study to which we devote a special section later in the present study. In fact Lenoe cites no evidence about this or, in fact, any decision Stalin made "by December 9."

Lenoe assumes that Nikolaev's December 13 confession must be false, calling it "particularly implausible given the Russian tradition of revolutionary terrorism." But why assume that assassins always followed "tradition"? Moreover, Lenoe's statement is wrong-headed on its own terms. Lenoe argues that the "Russian tradition" was to strive "for maximum public exposure so as to propagate their views." (317) But we *know* (and Lenoe never contests this) that Nikolaev had tried to commit suicide, an act that would automatically preclude a public trial such as Lenoe claims was "traditional". Murder-suicide was never part of "the Russian tradition of revolutionary terrorism."

What's more, the "Russian tradition of revolutionary terrorism" was that of secret conspiracies like the "People's Will", not of "lone gunmen." In this sense — not at all the sense intended by Lenoe — Nikolaev's act was indeed "traditional."

Therefore the business about "the Russian tradition of revolutionary terrorism" is no argument at all. Much less is it evidence that the confession was faked. (317) Rather, it is a smokescreen, intended to take the place of evidence Lenoe does not possess. Lenoe notes that Nikolaev's early confessions were that he acted alone. But he has no evidence to support his tacit contention that only the early confessions were truthful. So he simply assumes it.

One might suspect that Lenoe "wants" Nikolaev's confession to have been faked because if it is genuine it disproves Lenoe's entire thesis. But the task of an historian is to test his hypothesis against the available evidence. When the evidence will not support his hypothesis, it is the hypothesis the historian must reject, not the evidence. Lenoe, however, does the latter.

Lenoe makes the following claim:

Agranov continued to work Nikolaev over. On December 15 and 16 the two of them put together a story of the conspiracy's development that relied on falsifying the conversations that occurred at Nikolaev's actual meetings with Shatsky and Sokolov, and on making up meetings with Kotolynov. (321)

Since Lenoe cites no evidence of any "falsifying" or "making up" it is fair to assume that he knows of none. Evidently he assumes this "falsification" for the sake of his predetermined conclusion, to "save" it in the face of evidence that disproves it. Lenoe seems to make this clear by then saying:

Nikolaev then had a series of almost certainly imaginary meetings with Kotolynov ... (321)

What is Lenoe's evidence and argument that these meetings were "almost certainly imaginary"? He has none. In reality it is not Agranov and Nikolaev, who were "fabricating" stories — it is Lenoe who is fabricating them! Besides, the word "almost" in Lenoe's phrase "almost certainly imaginary" leaves open the possibility that the meetings might not be imaginary — that is, that they did in fact take place. But Lenoe never considers this possibility.



By this point in the book the reader can discern a pattern. When Lenoë is forced to confront evidence that contradicts his preconceived conclusion — that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" and all the other defendants in all the trials were "framed" — he dismisses that evidence by assuming it is false.

On page 336 Lenoë admits that on December 15 and 18 Iuskin "confessed" — the scare quotes are Lenoë's — that he knew from their meetings that Nikolaev planned to attack Kirov. Lenoë continues:

It is likely that Yuskin's interrogators omitted from the protocols Yuskin's attempts to explain that his comments about killing Stalin were meant sarcastically. (321)

Why does Lenoë state that this purported omission is "likely"? He cites no evidence or even argument to support this statement. Evidently he simply assumes it because if he did not do so it would be inconvenient if not fatal to his thesis.

At the December 1934 trial Sokolov made a general confession, incriminating Zvezdov (who also confessed), Antonov, Kotolynov, and Nikolaev in the terrorist conspiracy. Lenoë says: "He followed the NKVD script closely." (361) But as we have already pointed out Lenoë fails to give any evidence whatever that such a "script" existed. Once again he seems unaware that he has to prove, not assume, that this, or any testimony that contradicts his thesis, was fabricated.

On page 460 Lenoë claims that the charges against Peterson, commander of the Kremlin garrison, were "manufactured". Lenoë's readers would never know it but a great deal of evidence against Peterson has been published. Whether it was all "manufactured" or not needs to be discussed, not assumed. As of this writing no evidence has been put forth by anyone to support a hypothesis that it was "manufactured." Other writers, notably military historian N.S. Cherushev, also *assume* that Peterson was framed but can cite no evidence that this is so.<sup>53</sup> Lenoë does not even refer the reader to these other historians.

<sup>53</sup> Cherushev nevertheless provides a lot of information about the arrests, charges against, and confessions of Peterson, as well as of many other

military officers. A military historian, Cherushev evidently had privileged access to investigative materials unavailable to anyone else. Peterson, his arrest and his confession are discussed especially in Cherushev, *Komendanty Kremliia v labirintakh vlasti*. Moscow: Veche, 2005, 350-421; Cherushev, N.S. *Nevinovnykh ne byvaet. Chekisty protiv voennykh, 1918-1953*. Moscow: Veche, 2004, 261, 283.

Lenoe raises the Peterson case in the midst of a discussion of the "Kremlin Affair" of 1935. Lenoe believes this case to have been fabricated as well. Once again he gives no evidence that it was. He cites Russian historian IUrii Zhukov's study of the Kremlin Affair several times. But he fails to inform his readers that Zhukov concluded that the Kremlin Affair conspiracy was not a fabrication, but was genuine.<sup>54</sup> Zhukov calls this conclusion "the most paradoxical" hypothesis of all. He feels compelled to spend almost five closely-printed pages outlining his evidence and reasoning. Zhukov concedes that this hypothesis would also mean that Ehlukidze and Peterson were guilty, and draws some of the corresponding conclusions. Zhukov, that is, does what a historian should do and what Lenoe consistently fails to do.

<sup>54</sup> Lenoe 459-460 and p. 786 nn. 15-19 and note 20 (to a book by Zhukov). Zhukov, 'Tainy «Kremlevskogo dela» 1935 goda isud'ba Avelia Ehlukidze.' ("The secrets of the "Kremlin Affair" of 1935 and the fate of Avel' Ehlukidze"), *Voprov Istorii* 9 (2000), 82-113. Zhukov outlines his reasons for considering the possibility that the Kremlin Affair conspiracy really did occur at some length, pp. 108-112.

A few pages later Lenoe writes:

The changes in Stalin's attitude from 1934 to 1935 had to do with his determination to deal with former oppositionists, at least those on the Left, for good... (462)

Of course Lenoe does not know what Stalin's "attitude" or "motives" were. Once again, he assumes it — the fallacy of "psychologizing". This specific assumption is an invidious one, in that it represents only one hypothesis — that the "former" (Lenoe's description) oppositionists were innocent of the conspiracies of which they were charged. But of course the ostensible

purpose of Lenoë's book is to investigate Kirov's murder and determine whether it was carried out by a "lone gunman" or, as the Soviet state contended at the time, by a clandestine terrorist conspiracy (or group of interrelated conspiracies) of oppositionists. To make the claim, as Lenoë does here, that the prosecutions in 1935 and thereafter were due not to the results of investigations but to Stalin's supposed desire to rid himself of "former oppositionists" is to assume that which is to be proven, to "beg the question" of guilt or innocence entirely.

By describing the Moscow trial of August 1936 as "infamous" and claiming it was "scripted" (464) Lenoë evidently assumes he does not have to cite any evidence that the testimony given there is false. That is, Lenoë attempts to conjure away this evidence, and his duty to analyze it, with words. But the single biggest issue in the 1936 trial was the Kirov assassination. It is discussed extensively by the defendants, who outline a Zinovievite conspiracy. It is true that other scholars have also assumed that the trial was "scripted". But that does not make such assumptions valid. It is Lenoë's responsibility to study all the evidence in the Kirov murder case — something he neglects to do.

No one has ever proven that any of the testimony of any of the defendants at any of the three Moscow Trials of 1936, 1937 and 1938 was forced upon them<sup>55</sup>. Nor has anyone even cited any evidence to that effect aside from rumor and hearsay. All of the pretrial materials we now have — a small part of what still exists, still classified top secret in Russian libraries — strongly supports the hypothesis that the defendants' testimony was genuine and that it was not "scripted" or falsified by the prosecution.

<sup>55</sup> We advisedly do not use the words "false" or "fabrication" here because some, at least, of the defendants did make false statements — lie — to the court. But they did so because they chose to do so, to conceal conspiratorial activity that they did not wish to reveal.

In similar fashion on page 466 Lenoë dismisses all the testimony at the January 1937 Moscow Trial as "a few grotesque confessions of terrified defendants", without examining it at all, much less proving or citing any

evidence that, as he claims, the confessions were "grotesque" or the witnesses "terrified".

Here is what Karl Radek, along with Iurri Piatakov one of the two most famous defendants at this trial, said in his final statement at trial:

When I found myself in the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, the chief examining official realized at once why I would not talk. He said to me: "You are not a baby. Here you have fifteen people testifying against you: You cannot get out of it, and as a sensible man you cannot think of doing so. If you do not want to testify it can only be because you want to gain time and look it over more closely. Very well, study it." For two and a half months I tormented the examining official. **The question has been raised here whether we were tormented while under investigation. I must say that it was not I who was tormented, but I who tormented the examining officials and compelled them to perform a lot of useless work.** For two and a half months I compelled the examining official by interrogating me and by confronting me with the testimony of other accused, to open up all the cards to me, so that I could see who had confessed, who had not confessed, and what each had confessed.

This lasted for two and a half months. And one day the chief examining official came to me and said: "You are now the last. Why are you wasting time and temporizing? Why don't you say what you have to say?" And I answered: "Yes, tomorrow I shall begin my testimony." And the testimony I gave contains not a single correction from first to last. I unfolded the whole picture as I knew it, and the investigation may have corrected one or another personal mistake about the connections of some person with another, but I affirm that not a single thing I told the examining officials has been refuted and that nothing has been added.<sup>56</sup> (Emphasis added — GF)

<sup>56</sup> *Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre. Heard Before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. Moscow, January 23-30, 1937.... Verbatim Report. Moscow: People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R., 1937. (1937 Trial), p. 549.*

*Protsess antisovetskogo trotskistskogo tentra (23 — 30 ianvaria 1937 goda). M.: NKIU Soiuz SSR. IUrlicheskoe izdatel'stvo, s. 230.*

In this passage as throughout his testimony Radek appears anything but "terrified". The same is true for the other defendants.

Lenoe, or somebody, could claim: "Maybe Radek was tortured or threatened into claiming he was not tortured or threatened?" To anyone who proposes to set forth the hypothesis that Radek, or any other defendant, was tortured, threatened, or otherwise forced to make a false confession, we must make the same demand that we make of any hypothesis: "What is your evidence that Radek was tortured, threatened, etc., to make this statement?" Lenoe has no such evidence. What's more, he does not even seem to realize that evidence is necessary!

We are forced to conclude that Lenoe's words about "terrified defendants" is in reality yet another instance of a "tell", a tacit admission of defeat. By these words Lenoe is unconsciously signaling to the attentive reader that he is unable to disprove anything the defendants said and therefore must either dismiss them out of hand or concede that the evidence shows they are probably truthful — in which case, his hypothesis fails.

A page later Lenoe claims:

The course of the murderous campaign that Stalin and Yezhov now unfolded can be summarized briefly ...

But Lenoe does not do this at all. He fails even to outline, much less to study, the many and complex events of April to July 1937. A few of them are: the gradual disclosure of the Military conspiracy, the interrogations, confessions, and trial of Tukhachevsky and his seven co-defendants; the first confessions of Iagoda, Enukidze, and many others; Bukharin's first confession and those of several other of the defendants at the 1938 Moscow Trial; the June 1937 Central Committee Plenum; the requests by local Party leaders for mass repressions. A great deal has been written about these events, and we now have many primary sources for them though a large number of other primary sources are still withheld by the Russian

authorities. But Lenoe does not refer to any of this scholarship or primary sources.

Failing at least a review of this research Lenoe is in no position to "summarize", "briefly" or otherwise, what ensued. Much less can he have any idea of what was actually going on and of the respective roles of Ezhov, Stalin and other important political actors. From the annotations on many documents now published<sup>57</sup> it appears that Stalin was reacting to events as they were reported to him, rather than controlling them. Other conclusions might be possible, but one would have to study the evidence. This Lenoe neglects to do.

<sup>57</sup> The "Lubianka" volumes published under the auspices of the Mezhdunarodniy Fond "Demokratia" record Stalin's annotations on many of the documents.

On page 471 Lenoe writes:

In the course of the Terror, Stalin masterminded the distortion of evidence in the Kirov murder. The most persistent distortions came about in the course of Yezhov's fabrication of cases against Yagoda ...

Lenoe cites no evidence in support of his claim that evidence was distorted in any of the Moscow trials. Nor does he have even a shred of evidence that Ezhov "fabricated" anything against Iagoda nor that Stalin "masterminded" such "fabrications". It is Lenoe who has "fabricated" here in asserting that these things occurred when he has not the slightest evidence that they did.

In reality we now possess a huge amount of evidence against Iagoda. This includes eight of his pretrial confessions, his testimony at trial, and his appeal to the Supreme Court published in 1992. Moreover, at his trial in March 1938 Iagoda confessed to some serious charges but stoutly and stubbornly refused to confess to others. This fact would appear to be strong evidence that his confessions were not made under compulsion. To establish otherwise would require even stronger evidence to the contrary, but Lenoe cites none.

Lenoe refers to "the imagined conspiracy" of the 1938 Trial (479) without any examination of the trial or its testimony whatsoever. A few pages later he again assumes, without any evidence or argument at all, "that the 1938 show trial version of the Kirov murder was false." (482) Lenoe never troubles himself to try to prove this. Nor does he refer to any other studies that have proven it — hardly surprising, since none exist. As we will demonstrate through an examination of the evidence the Soviet prosecution's version of the Kirov murder, as corrected by Iagoda himself in his 1938 trial testimony, is by far the most accurate account of the conspiracy to murder Kirov and, in fact, the only one consistent with the evidence.

As we have seen, on page 513 Lenoe asserts "It was not Trotsky who collaborated with foreign imperialist powers, as suggested in the indictment in the Kirov murders ..." It appears that Lenoe has never studied this matter. A great deal of evidence exists that supports exactly such a hypothesis.<sup>58</sup> To assert the opposite would also require evidence and an argument. Lenoe shows no sign that he even knows this evidence exists!

<sup>58</sup> See Grover Furr, "Evidence of Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan." *Cultural Logic* (2009), at <http://clogic.eserver.org/2009/Furr.pdf>

Likewise Lenoe claims "it wasn't Trotsky who ordered Kirov's murder". But he never examines the evidence that Trotsky had in fact done so. This evidence is mainly in the Third, but also in the Second Moscow Trial. We will examine it in detail further on. Lenoe avoids all of this evidence, possibly because it thoroughly refutes his own "lone gunman" thesis.

Lenoe is quick to state:

Given Stalin's fabrication of the case against the oppositionists...

This statement assumes the very thesis that his whole book is, supposedly, an attempt to prove! If Lenoe is going to make this assumption, then there was no need to write the book at all. The truth is not simply that this "fabrication" has never been proven, but that all the evidence presently at our disposal supports the hypothesis that the confessions of the Moscow

Trials' defendants were genuine, not fabricated nor the result of NKVD compulsion.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>59</sup> By "genuine" we do not necessarily mean "true." We know that some of the defendants made statements that were false in order to protect other conspirators still at large.

On page 524 Lenoë says:

Lobov, Pozem, and Kosaryov had been dead for twenty-five years, all shot in the Terror.

It is true that Lobov, Pozern and Kosarev were tried and executed. But it avoids — "begs" — the question again. What matters is whether or not they were guilty of the charges against them. Lenoë *assumes* they were not but without any evidence or argument. The few primary sources now, available suggests that there is much evidence they were guilty, though we cannot be sure of anything until the investigative materials are made public.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Khrushchev told several mutually-contradictory stories about Kosarev. But we now have more evidence against him, from former Soviet documents published within the past decade. Lobov was named by many others as a Rightist conspirator. In both cases the Russian authorities have refused to release the investigative files, as is the case in all but a few instances concerning the repressions of the 1930s. But the "rehabilitation" volumes do not cite any evidence that would support their innocence.

This statement illustrates the problem of using terms such as "the Terror." The term masks an illegitimate assumption that everyone shot during this period was innocent. Applying an epithet to a very large number of historical events over more than a year's time does not free the historian from the obligation to demand and study the evidence in each case, as Lenoë appears to believe. It is similar to the practice of appealing to the "consensus" of historians — a form of the logical fallacy of "argument from authority" — rather than to evidence, to decide an historical issue.

Lenoë calls the Soviet case against Kotolynov and the other defendants a "fabrication" and an "amalgam" (529)<sup>61</sup> In reality he makes no attempt to



prove this. As we show at length in the present study, there is a huge amount of evidence supporting Kotolynov's guilt. Nothing save his own denials support his innocence. The denials of an accused are of little weight when he is accused by many others, as is the case with Kotolynov. Bukharin himself pointed this out during the Third Moscow Trial when he said that the confession of the accused is not at all necessary for conviction and to insist that it is necessary is "medieval." What's more, Kotolynov's own denials are good evidence that he was not subjected to torture. Nor is there any evidence that those who testified against him were tortured, or threatened.

<sup>61</sup>In addition, the terms "fabrication" — something created — and "amalgam" — a mixture of two things, here of truth and falsehood — are not the same thing, though Lenoë uses them synonymously.

On page 544 Lenoë criticizes former Soviet NKVD man and defector Walter Krivitsky for "... the absurdity of presenting testimony from one of Stalin's kangaroo courts as established fact." Krivitsky is certainly to be blamed, for he committed the same error Lenoë has. Krivitsky accepted Moscow Trial testimony without trying to verify it, while Lenoë rejects it. The greater blame is Lenoë's, since we now have a great deal more evidence about the Moscow Trials than was available in Krivitsky's day. Krivitsky also falsified evidence in his own book.<sup>62</sup> Nor does Lenoë attempt to justify his use of the term "kangaroo court". This is another example of "assuming that which should be proven."

<sup>62</sup> For example Krivitsky states that on January 24, 1937 he was reading the transcript of the second Moscow Trial in the newspapers when he read that Karl Radek, one of the defendants, had named Tukhachevsky as "absolutely loyal" to the Party and the government. But this is impossible; Radek's statements about Tukhachevsky were not printed in the Russian transcript of the trial. They were only printed later, in the much longer English-language transcript. (*I Was Stalin's Agent*, Chapter 7; Russian edition at [http://sceptis.ru/library/id\\_623.html](http://sceptis.ru/library/id_623.html) )

On the same page (544) Lenoë refers to "... the dictator's fabrication of a case against the Zinovievites during the subsequent investigation." Once

again, Lenoe never cites any evidence at all that the case against the Zinovievites was fabricated in any way. He simply assumes that it was "fabricated". On page 551 Lenoe says that Nikolaev's December 14 interrogation and December 29 trial testimony was "obviously distorted." Here the word "obvious" substitutes for evidence and reasoning, which Lenoe fails to give.

## **Conclusion**

Lenoe commits the fallacy of "begging the question" with great frequency. Indeed, it is the single major fallacy upon which his study is based. He never comes close to proving his contention that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman". On the contrary, he tacitly gives up the attempt early in his book and thereafter relies on assertion rather than evidence.

We might consider the instances of Lenoe's question-begging to constitute a "tell", in the sense that the term is used in playing cards. Any attempt by any researcher to "beg the question", to assert what he should prove, constitutes a tacit admission of failure, a recognition that he can not prove his case and has been reduced to hoping his readers somehow will not notice. Lenoe picked a hypothesis that, on the basis of the evidence that he cites and other evidence that he remains silent about, must be rejected as false. He should have acted as honest researchers, those who are in search of the truth, are supposed to act: When your hypothesis is contradicted by the evidence, abandon that hypothesis and consider others. Whatever his reason, Lenoe chose not to do this. The collapse of his hypothesis and failure of his book is the inevitable result.

## **Chapter 6. *The Leningrad and Moscow Centers***

Nikolaev and the other defendants in the December 1934 Kirov murder trial were charged with belonging to a Leningrad center of the Zinovievite underground opposition conspiracy that was in touch with a center in Moscow. Lenoë denies that these conspiratorial centers existed at all. The existence of such conspiratorial organizations would of course disprove Lenoë's hypothesis that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman".

But there's much more at stake than just the question of whether Kirov's killer Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" or whether he was part of a conspiracy. Kirov's murder was a major issue in all three Moscow Trials. The path from a Leningrad-based conspiracy, to a Leningrad center in touch with, then taking leadership from, a Moscow center led NKVD investigators to unravel a large network of interconnected opposition conspiracies which culminated in the Tukhachevsky Affair and the so-called "Great Terror" of 1937-1938.

The official position of the Soviet government since Khrushchev's day, of the Russian government today, and of all anticommunist and Trotskyist writers, is that no such conspiracies ever took place. All these trials, charges, executions, and imprisonments are said to have been faked, "scripted" by Stalin and his men, and all those charged and convicted of these conspiracies were innocent "victims of Stalinism." This is Lenoë's position too.

If Kirov really was assassinated by a conspiratorial group in Leningrad that was in touch with a similar group in Moscow led by Zinoviev and Kamenev, that fact would be fatal to the contention — for that is all it is — that all the rest of these conspiracies were fabrications. If these conspiracies were not fabricated it would follow that they actually existed. That would strongly imply that the Moscow Trial defendants, the military conspirators, and Leon Trotsky were guilty as charged. And such a result would go far to justify the actions of Stalin and the NKVD in suppressing such dangerous conspiracies.

Therefore, the question of whether Kirov was killed by a "lone gunman" or by a real conspiracy is a very important matter to ideological anticommunists. Evidence that these conspiracies actually existed poses a serious problem not only for Lenoe specifically but for the whole canonical or mainstream interpretation of Soviet history during the Stalin period.

Our hypothesis in this study is that Lenoe's book (as well as Kirilina's, Egge's, and all other books on the Kirov murder) represents an attempt not to solve the Kirov murder but to construct the best possible argument against the idea that Kirov really was killed as a result of a conspiracy. The evidence we now have contradicts, even dismantles the anti-Stalin paradigm — certainly as far as the Kirov assassination goes. Those who, like Lenoe, write from within the anticommunist or anti-Stalin paradigm of Soviet history simply cannot accept this conclusion regardless of the evidence for it. Anyone who wants to prop up the anti-Stalin paradigm is faced with the need to conjure away the evidence that it is false and invent evidence that supports it.

Lenoe introduces his attempt to disprove the existence of any such "centers" as follows:

Stalin had by December 9 chosen a framework for the conspiracy case he was building against ex-oppositionists in Leningrad and Moscow. The ultimate targets were Zinoviev and Kamenev. According to separate reports by Olga Shatunovskaya and Party Control Committee officials, there exists a note in Stalin's archive listing members of two supposed conspiratorial groups — a "Leningrad Center" and a "Moscow Center." Control Committee officials stated in 1989 that the note is in Yagoda's handwriting, with corrections by Stalin. (Olga Shatunovskaya claimed in 1988 that the handwriting was Stalin's, and others have apparently identified it as Yezhov's.) If the Control Committee officials are correct, Stalin moved Zinoviev and Kamenev from the "Leningrad Center, "where Yagoda had placed them, to the "Moscow Center." Shatunovskaya, whose testimony is sometimes unreliable, claimed in the late 1980s that there was a date on the note, December 6. It is significant that the first mention of prominent former Zinovievite Vladimir Rumiantsev in interrogations was also on

December 6. Whatever the date of the note, by about December 10 Yezhov was outlining connections between the two "centers" in his notebook. It seems likely that the "Leningrad Center — Moscow Center" framework, with Zinoviev and Kamenev at the head of the whole organization, was decided upon at the December 8 meeting in Stalin's office attended by Yagoda, Agranov, and Yezhov, if not a day or two earlier. (304)

We will examine carefully the following claims made by Lenoë in this paragraph:

1. "the conspiracy case he [Stalin] was building against ex-oppositionists";
2. "separate reports" by
  - 2a. Olga Shatunovskaia, and
  - 2b. "Party Control Committee officials", testifying that  

"there exists a note in Stalin's archive listing members of two supposed conspiratorial groups — a 'Leningrad Center' and a 'Moscow Center.'"
3. "Party Control Commission officials stated in 1989 that the note is in Yagoda's handwriting";
4. "Shatunovskaya... claimed in the late 1980s that there was a date on the note, December 6."
5. "It is significant that the first mention of prominent former Zinovievite Vladimir Rumiantsev in interrogations was also on December 6."
6. "...by about December 10 Yezhov was outlining connections between the two "centers" in his notebook."
7. "It seems likely that the "Leningrad Center — Moscow Center" framework, with Zinoviev and Kamenev at the head of the whole

organization, was decided upon at the December 8 meeting in Stalin's office attended by Yagoda, Agranov, and Yezhov, if not a day or two earlier."

For the sake of clarity we will examine each statement of Lenoe's individually in the light of the evidence to us.

1. As we have argued in another part of the present study Lenoe has not proven that Stalin "was building a conspiracy case against ex-oppositionists" In fact Lenoe cites no evidence at all that Stalin was doing this. This is one of many examples in Lenoe's book of "begging the question", or "assuming that which must be proven".

2. It is clear from Lenoe's text that he has never seen this alleged "note in Stalin's archive." Lenoe appears to have taken the story of the note directly from Kirilina. (Kirilina 363-364) Quoting Shatunovskaia, Kirilina states flatly that Stalin's "final considered plan" was decided on in this note.

2a. "Separate Report" by Shatunovskaia

It appears that no such report exists — that this statement of Lenoe's is a "bluff."

A "report" is a formal document prepared for some audience — in this case, some Party or government body. But neither Lenoe nor anyone else gives any reference, even an archival one, for this supposed report, or for any document by Shatunovskaia that reproduces the text of this report or note or even discusses it or them. It is a striking omission. Therefore Lenoe refers to this report — but does not provide any reference to it and has clearly never laid eyes on it!

The note whose existence Shatunovskaia allegedly asserted has never been published. What's more — and setting Shatunovskaia herself aside — no one who has written about the Kirov assassination claims to have ever seen it: not Lenoe, nor Kirilina, nor anyone else, including the authors of the reports and hearings published in 2004 and upon which Lenoe relies heavily. There is no reference to it in any of the documents of the commission set up by Gorbachev and Iakovlev to study Kirov's murder.

Evidently there is no record of this note at all, except — allegedly — for Shatunovskaia's claim that it existed.

The only evidence that "others have apparently identified [the handwriting] as Yezhov's" are statements by Shatunovskaia. She claimed that "handwriting [*grafologicheskaiia*] experts from the USSR Procurator's office" had identified the handwriting as Stalin's, and that the document was "presented to members of the Politburo" along with a "photocopy of Stalin's handwriting and the certification of the handwriting experts".

Later, Shatunovskaia continued, a "representative of the Party Control Commission claimed that the handwriting was Ezhov's, not Stalin's."<sup>63</sup> In her letter to Iakovlev of June 12, 1989 Shatunovskaia claimed that this was Katkov.<sup>64</sup> Shatunovskaia claimed that Katkov had informed her that the sample of Stalin's handwriting and the certification of the handwriting experts that had been attached to the note were now missing.

<sup>63</sup> Shatunovskaia, O.G. *Rasskazy ob ushedshem veke*. "Prilozhenie 2. Vokrug tragedii v Smol'nom". At <http://www.daabooks.net/ola/smolny.koi.html>

<sup>64</sup> RKEB 3, 223. N.F. Katkov was a member of the commission to study the "repressions", including the Kirov assassination.

According to the published transcript one page is missing from Katkov's testimony about his meeting with Shatunovskaia. But in what remains there is no mention of this incident or of the note in question.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>65</sup> RKEB 3, 217-218.

On August 22, 1991 Katkov wrote a letter to the Central Committee in which he stated that Shatunovskaia's claims concerning the Kirov assassination were groundless. Katkov wrote:

Shatunovskaia's communication about the substitution and disappearance of a number of "important documents" was not confirmed.

Katkov specifically stated that they failed to confirm Shatunovskaia's claims that important documents about the Kirov murder were changed or had disappeared.<sup>66</sup> In her letter of June 12, 1989 Shatunovskaia had listed this note as one of eight documents from the investigation of the Khrushchev era that had been tampered with.

<sup>66</sup> RKEB 3, 597.

Nowhere does Katkov even mention the supposed note, much less confirm that he had ever seen it. Therefore, of course, Katkov does not affirm that he had examined it and told Shatunovskaia the handwriting was Ezhov's, not Stalin's. Nor is it credible that Katkov could have done this without reporting it to his high-ranking superiors on this official commission. Nor would he have had any reason not to report it. The commission was intent on blaming Stalin for illegal repressions and for framing innocent people. This note would have been evidence to support that contention.

According to the "Reply to Iakovlev" Roy Medvedev, who included the story about the "note" without attribution in his work *Let History Judge*<sup>67</sup>, got the story from Shatunovskaia.<sup>68</sup> But Medvedev does not mention her name or the December 6 date (or any other date).

<sup>67</sup> Medvedev, Roil. *Let History Judge. The Origin and Consequences of Stalinism*. New York: Knopf, 1971, p. 164; Russian edition *K sudu istorii* (New York: Knopf, 1974), 318-9.

<sup>68</sup> RKEB 3, 501. Lenoë notes Medvedev's use of Shatunovskaia's version at p. 650.

2b. "Separate report" by "Party Control Committee officials"

Lenoë also speaks of a "separate report" by the Party Control Commission that discusses this note. Again, he cites no reference for this report — that is, Lenoë does not identify it. Nor can I locate it anywhere.

Shatunovskaia claimed that Katkov had seen the note, informed her that the attachments to it were now missing, and said the handwriting was not Stalin's but Ezhov's. But Katkov does not mention the note. It is possible



that he did so, since one page is missing from the transcript of his remarks. But even if Katkov did see it and did report about it, neither he nor the commission members thought it important enough to mention it again. As we mentioned above, in his letter of August 22, 1991 Katkov flatly states that Shatunovskaia's statements about the Kirov assassination or claims that documents had been switched or removed could not be confirmed.

We assume that no such reports exist. Lenoë gives no reference to either of them, and we can find no trace of them. It seems clear that Lenoë himself has never seen it and cannot prove that it exists or has ever existed. Referring to it is another "bluff" — to use a polite word — on Lenoë's part.

3. Lenoë does not specify whence he learned that "Control Commission officials stated in 1989 that the note is in Yagoda's handwriting, with corrections by Stalin", as he claims. (304) This is a very vague reference to a very important document. It cannot be the archival document cited on page 775, note 38.<sup>69</sup> Lenoë prints excerpts from that document on pp. 654-655. He would not have omitted any reference to this note. In any case, this is not a "report" but the draft of a letter.

<sup>69</sup> "Concerning com. O.G. Shatunovskaia's letter of September 5, 1988. Draft", "O pis'me t. Shatunovskoi O.G. ot 5 sentiabria 1988g. Proekt."

I cannot find any reference to the note in the documents and reports by the members of the commission that re-investigated Kirov's murder in RKEB 3. Iakovlev himself, who strongly suspected that Stalin had had Kirov murdered, wrote a lengthy letter of 3900 words to the Politburo Commission setting forth his reasons. He did not mention this note. The Commission members wrote a far lengthier reply of over 23,000 words to Iakovlev's letter. They do not mention this note either. It is logical to conclude that they did not know of any such note.

If any discussion of the note by Katkov, Iakovlev, or a Party Commission could be found it would constitute evidence independent of Shatunovskaia that this note actually existed. It would be a second witness or the existence of this note. Without it, we have only — allegedly — Shatunovskaia's word that there ever was such a note. And Shatunovskaia fabricated — in plain

language, lied — a great deal. Lenoe himself concludes that in 1960 Shatunovskaia invented another note out of whole cloth. (616-617)

4. Kirilina writes that Shatunovskaia asserted that the note is dated December 6. However, that date is not mentioned in the document of Shatunovskaia's that Kirilina quotes or in any other document by Shatunovskaia that Kirilina or Lenoe cites or that we can find.

The quotation in Kirilina's book on pp. 363-4 that immediately precedes Kirilina's mention of the "note" is taken directly from Shatunovskaia's letter to Iakovlev of September 5, 1988. Kirilina states (364):

It is not so important whether Stalin himself wrote it or Ezhov did — and about this there are various opinions. What's important is something else: Shatunovskaia stated that there is a date — December 6 — on this note. Obviously, it was on this very day that the plan of struggle against his political opponents, finally thought out in full, came to Stalin.

But Kirilina does not quote the part of the Shatunovskaia's letter where the note is mentioned. Moreover, in no published source, neither in her letter to Iakovlev nor in the account in her memoir, does Shatunovskaia mention any date on this note. Kirilina never informs her readers whence she found the information above concerning this date.

Therefore it is not any document of Shatunovskaia's but the text quoted above from Kirilina's book that is the source for the December 6 date. As far as we can determine, this is the only source for the date. So the "claim" Lenoe cites comes not from Shatunovskaia but from Kirilina. Of course, even if it did come from Shatunovskaia we would need confirmation of the note's existence. We can't take Shatunovskaia's, or indeed anyone's, unsupported work for an important piece of evidence.

5. Lenoe never tells us why he believes it is "significant" that Rumiantsev's first interrogation was on December 6. Perhaps we may surmise that he means something like the following:

a. If the Shatunovskaia note existed, and

- b. if it really were dated December 6,
- c. then it might be evidence that Stalin and/or NKVD investigators had thought of Leningrad and Moscow centers before there had been any testimony suggesting the existence of such centers.
- d. And that in turn might be reason to suspect that Stalin and/or the NKVD had invented these centers and subsequently "scripted" later confessions about them by torturing, threatening, or otherwise compelling other defendants into confessing that they existed.

However, no such note is to be found, much less one with a date of December 6. This fact divests the December 6 date of Rumiantsev's first interrogation of whatever "significance" Lenoe would like to endow it with.

Lenoe himself states:

... by about December 10 Yezhov was outlining connections between the two "centers" in his notebook. (304)

We can assume that Lenoe has actually seen this document since he gives an archival identifier for this reference. We can assume he cannot date it earlier than "about December 10" or he would surely have done so. Then why does Lenoe expend so much effort on the supposed note mentioned by Shatunovskaia? I believe the following passage explains it:

It seems likely that the "Leningrad Center — Moscow Center" framework, with Zinoviev and Kamenev at the head of the whole organization, was decided upon at the December 8 meeting in Stalin's office attended by Yagoda, Agranov, and Yezhov, if not a day or two before. (304)

Aside from an alleged date of December 6 on an alleged Shatunovskaia note the earliest date that the Leningrad and Moscow centers were mentioned by the investigators is "about December 10."

Lenoe writes:

Stalin had by Dec 9 chosen a framework for the conspiracy case he was building against ex-oppositionists in Leningrad and Moscow. The ultimate targets were Zinoviev and Kamenev (304)

This statement is yet another example of Lenoe's "begging the question" — here, assuming that Stalin was "choosing a framework" and "building a case" in which the "ultimate targets were Zinoviev and Kamenev." Lenoe cites no evidence to support any of these assertions or the December 9 date, much less any earlier date. This is "assuming what is to be proven" with a vengeance!

On December 11 defendant Vasili Zvezdov confirmed that he knew that a counterrevolutionary organization of Zinovievites had been revived. (309) Zvezdov identified members in Moscow, including Zinoviev and Bakaev, and stated:

The former leaders of the Zinovievite opposition who were in Moscow and were [also] tightly connected with Leningrad hoped to drag our old Komsomol group of former Zinovievites into a battle with the party leadership.

It seems that this is why Lenoe wishes to establish a date "about December 10" or earlier for the beginning of Stalin's alleged frameup of the oppositionists. Evidently Lenoe would like to convince his readers that Stalin and the NKVD had somehow forced Zvezdov to make this statement of December 11.

But this is all wrong. We know that:

- On December 4 Nikolaev had identified Shatskii, Kotolynov and Bardin as "Trotskyites" who had influenced his decision to kill Kirov. (Kirilina 277; 281; Lenoe 281-2)
- On December 5 Nikolaev had told investigators "If I'd had trouble killing Kirov myself, I'd have recruited Bardin, Shatsky, and Kotolynov, and they'd have agreed to do it." (Lenoe 288-9)
- On December 6 Nikolaev confessed to a conspiracy involving at least Shatskii and Kotolynov and implicating Rumiantsev and Iuskin. (Lenoe 288)

- On December 6 Shatskii had confessed that he had kept up contact with Rumiantsev. (Lenoe 291)
- On December 7 Shatskii, after first denying that he knew Nikolaev, admitted that he did know him. (Lenoe 291)
- On December 7 Agranov wrote to Stalin that Nikolaev's brother Piotr admitted to taking part in Kirov's murder. (Lenoe 289)
- Kirilina quotes the following words from a confession of Nikolaev of about December 8 (she does not give the exact date):

The Kotolynov group was preparing a terrorist act against Kirov, and its direct implementation was entrusted to me personally. I knew from Shatskii that the same task had been given to his group as well, and that this work was being carried out by it independently of our preparation of the terrorist act.

I first met Shatskii in 1933. Our next meeting was in the summer of 1934, at 28 Krasnye Zaria Street, where Shatskii was conducting surveillance of the apartment and establishing all Kirov's movements. He was doing this with the aim of preparing a terrorist act.

Kotolynov said that ... getting rid of Kirov would weaken the Party leadership ... Kotolynov worked out the technical aspects of carrying out the act directly with me, approved this technique, specially verified how accurately I could shoot. He was my direct leader in the matter of carrying out the act. Sokolov explained how suitable this or that point in Kirov's usual route was, and in so doing made my work easier. ... IUskin was informed about the preparation for the act against Kirov; he worked out with me the variant of the attempt in the Smolny. (Kirilina 281-2)

- On December 9 Nikolaev's wife Mil'da Draule had also "confessed that she shared the anti-Soviet views of her husband." (Lenoe 306)
- Therefore, well before December 10 there was plenty of evidence of a Leningrad-based conspiracy of clandestine Zinovievites, and in fact of more than one group of such conspirators.
- On December 9 Rumiantsev had confessed to meeting with Zinoviev and Kamenev (Zinoviev and Kamenev were in Moscow). (Egge 181 n. 115)

- On December 10 Antonov confessed that Zinoviev had organized his supporters' return to the Party and had instructed Rumiantsev to do so. (Lenoe 307)

These two confessions meant that Zinoviev was continuing to give leadership to Rumiantsev and probably others too, and that Rumiantsev was giving leadership in turn to Antonov and, probably, others.

Given all the testimony we know about, if Ezhov had been making notes about a Leningrad Center and a Moscow Center by "about December 10" that would not suggest any fabrication at all. The existence of (a) one or more Leningrad conspiracies, and (b) contact between Moscow (Zinoviev and Kamenev) and Leningrad, had been well established by December 9.

Meanwhile, Lenoe admits that he cannot prove that Ezhov's "outlining connections between the two 'centers' in his notebook", was in fact written as early as December 10. Lenoe says "about December 10." It might well have been written on subsequent days. Lenoe tacitly admits that Ezhov could not have written it before December 10. He states:

Nikolai Yezhov returned to Leningrad with Agranov on the morning of December 9 to supervise the Kirov inquiry. His notebooks show that on December 9-10 he questioned witnesses about Leningrad NKVD negligence in guarding Kirov... (303)

Therefore there is no evidence at all to support Lenoe's statement that Stalin and NKVD chiefs invented the "Leningrad Center — Moscow Center framework." Likewise, it is logical to conclude that no such note as Shatunovskaia and Kirilina mention is available to researchers today.

This leaves a number of possibilities:

- Perhaps this note did exist at one time but has been destroyed.
- Perhaps it still exists, but the Russian government has reclassified it so that it lies among the immense number of documents from the 1930s that are still unavailable to researchers and whose very existence is still a secret.

- But probably this note never existed at all. In that case Shatunovskaia imagined it, and then perhaps came to believe it herself.

Lenoe admits that Shatunovskaia's "testimony is sometimes unreliable." (304) In fact Shatunovskaia was viewed as very unreliable. Lenoe himself concludes that she probably imagined another note supposedly written in 1956 concerning an alleged event in 1934 (617). He also concludes that she was probably removed from the Party Control Commission in 1962 because of the poor quality of her work (637-638). Lenoe devotes a good deal of space explaining some of the faults of Shatunovskaia's methods of investigation (607-627). As we have seen Katkov, of the Gorbachev-era commission, wrote that none of her claims could be confirmed.

For the purposes of our research what matters is this: neither this alleged document nor any transcript of it, or even description of it, is available to be considered for use as evidence. The very existence of this alleged note is doubtful. Lenoe cannot point to any evidence that even one person other than Shatunovskaia herself ever laid eyes on it. At best, therefore, the note falls in the category of *testis unus testis nullus* — a single source, in this case Shatunovskaia, is not enough to establish that an event occurred or, in this case, that a document once existed. Even if Lenoe could show that someone other than Shatunovskaia had seen it — and, to repeat, he does not demonstrate this — it would be of no significance unless that early date of December 6 were also on it.

But even if the note were found, and it did bear the date of December 6, it would not prove that Stalin and his men invented the Leningrad Center-Moscow Center "framework." That would still remain only one hypothesis, one possibility among others. It would not prove that the defendants who testified in detail about these two centers had been forced to do so or that their confessions had been "scripted". For the plain fact is that the Russian authorities have never permitted researchers to see all the evidence that they have on the Kirov case. Without access to all the documentary evidence we could never state with confidence that a December 6 note was the first mention of a Leningrad-based conspiratorial organization (the use of the term "center" is clearly just for convenience, the group as such would have had no name).

Lenoe wishes to argue that what he calls the "framework" of Leningrad and Moscow "centers" came not as result of deduction from the information obtained through interrogations of suspects, but rather was invented, worked out *a priori* by Stalin and his men. Ezhov's notes of "about December 10" on connections between Leningrad and Moscow will not serve the purpose. Lenoe says that Ezhov only arrived back in Leningrad on the morning of December 9 and began questioning witnesses. (303) So Ezhov's notes cannot be earlier than "about December 10". They could be from a day or two *later*.

I suggest that this is why Lenoe relies on Shatunovskaia's "note" and date. Without it there is no reason to suspect that the concept of a Leningrad Center and a Moscow Center of Zinovievite conspirators was fabricated by Stalin et al. Rather, the "framework" of the two centers is an inescapable deduction from the interrogation testimony. But Shatunovskaia's note does not exist, and Lenoe cannot show that it ever did exist, much less what it said or what, if any, date was on it; much less if such a date were on it, who wrote that date. Hence, I suggest, Lenoe's insistence on referencing this "ghost" document.

On December 12 Zvezdov outlined the memberships of both Moscow and Leningrad centers in detail, including Nikolaev in the latter (Lenoe 310-311). Before giving the text of this important interrogation Lenoe states:

*As we have seen, Stalin, Yagoda, and/or Yezhov were the real creators of both "centers." Zvezdov was following their script. (309; emphasis added GF)*

Lenoe proceeds to speculate why Zvezdov and others would have confessed to the existence of the centers.

We can now see that this claim of Lenoe's is false, a total "bluff". "We" have not "seen" any such thing. On the contrary: Lenoe has failed to prove this claim. *Lenoe has no evidence whatsoever that Stalin et al. invented the concept of the centers or "scripted" anybody's confessions.* We recall that Lenoe writes:



Whatever the date of the note, by about December 10 Yezhov was outlining connections between the two "centers" in his notebook.

"About December 10" could easily be a day or two later — Lenoe gives no evidence to support the December 10 date. But even by December 10 the investigators had plenty of reason to posit the existence of a Moscow Center connected to the Leningrad Centers.

7. Lenoe cites no evidence whatsoever for the following statement:

It seems likely that the "Leningrad Center — Moscow Center" framework, with Zinoviev and Kamenev at the head of the whole organization, was decided upon at the December 8 meeting in Stalin's office attended by Yagoda, Agranov, and Yezhov, if not a day or two earlier.

The statement "it seems likely" requires some evidence and reasoning to substantiate it. Lenoe has neither. His claim that Stalin et al. "created" the concept of the two centers is a hypothesis. Like all hypotheses it must be supported by evidence or it falls by itself. There is no need to disprove statements that are not supported by any evidence, and Lenoe has no evidence to support this one.

The testimony cited above shows that it was logical and natural for NKVD investigators to form their own hypothesis of two centers of underground Zinovievite activity. This was confirmed in subsequent interrogations of Zvezdov, Tolmazov (Lenoe 314-316), Kotolynov, and others. We examine Kotolynov's interrogation of December 12 in the chapter on documents that Lenoe ignores.

Why does Lenoe insist that Stalin and his investigators invented the "framework" of the Leningrad — Moscow centers? Perhaps because, in a real sense, the whole mainstream or "anti-Stalin" paradigm of the high politics of the USSR during the 1930s depends upon the assumption that Nikolaev was not a part of a conspiracy but a "lone gunman." Lenoe is aware of this issue, as were Khrushchev and his men, as the following passage shows:

If the official charges in the first two trials — that former Zinoviev supporters had conspired to murder Kirov — were entirely bogus, then the indictments in all of the succeeding show trials collapsed. ... *But if there was some truth to the charge that Zinovievites conspired to kill Kirov, then that preserved the possibility of arguing that the latter charges were also valid, at least in part.* (591-2; emphasis added GF)

According to Lenoe this is why Khrushchev's men, undoubtedly acting under their boss's instructions, invented the notion that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" who had acted alone and had had no connection with the Zinovievite conspiracy.

Lenoe recognizes that Khrushchev's men had to falsify matters in order to make this claim:

Therefore Serov and Rudenko ... chose to make a clear cut argument that Nikolaev had had no relationship at all with the ex-Zinoviev supporters convicted in the trial of the "Leningrad Center".

*It appears that Serov or his boss had thought through this strategy, to deny any connection at all between Nikolaev and the Zinovievites, even before the "Secret Speech."* On January 27, 1956 the KGB destroyed central records on the case file "Svoiak", the all-union surveillance operation against the Zinovievites. It seems likely that "Svoiak" contained more evidence than Serov wanted Molotov to see, either of counterrevolutionary talk among former Zinovievites and/or of Nikolaev's connections with the accused in the "Leningrad Center." Serov concealed other evidence of connections between Nikolaev and the ex-Zinovievites Kotolynov, Antonov, and Shatsky. The excerpts from Nikolaev's diaries that he released to the Molotov commission in April 1956 contained no references to these men. But we know from later releases of data that Nikolaev did mention all three in his diaries. Serov presumably feared that Molotov would construe such connections as evidence of criminal conspiracy.

At the same time the Molotov commission was debating these issues, Rudenko, Serov, and KPK officials were already taking actions based

on the assumption that the charges in the show trials were false...  
(Lenoe 592; emphasis added GF)

Khrushchev's men destroyed some evidence outright and concealed yet more. They did not undertake any kind of honest investigation of Kirov's murder but instead proceeded "on the assumption that the charges in the show trials were false". (Lenoe 592)

The same issue was further developed in April 1956, when the "Molotov Commission" was set to work by Khrushchev:

Commission members asked Baranov, the KGB, and the KPK (Shvernik) to answer a series of questions related to the official 1934-1935 version of the crime. These questions boiled down to: Was Nikolaev a Zinovievite? What were his ties to Zinovievite groups? What activities in Leningrad were the Zinovievites up to? *These questions are attributable to the desire of Molotov and his allies to defend at least the 1934-1935 version of the crime as presented at the trials of the Moscow and Leningrad "Center." Nikolaev was a Zinovievite terrorist, and hence his trial, the trials of Kamenev and Zinoviev, and probably also the later show trials of 1937-1938, were justified.* (Lenoe 578; emphasis added GF)

Meanwhile Khrushchev's men were pushing the view that Nikolaev had been a "lone gunman":

Using investigation records from the NKVD, the prosecutor's office, and the military tribunal, all of these reports explicitly denied the argument that the murder was political or that Nikolaev had connections with actual Zinovievite oppositionists. The trial of Nikolaev and the "Leningrad Center," according to these memoranda, was a fabrication created by the NKVD leadership in collaboration with Stalin. Nikolaev was a lone "psychopathic" killer. (579)

As Lenoe correctly points out, Khrushchev realized that the Kirov assassination was the keystone event to the subsequent Moscow Trials. In order to claim that Stalin fabricated the Moscow Trials and what flowed

from them, Khrushchev's men had to claim that Nikolaev was not a part of a Zinovievite conspiracy.

We don't know whether today's Russian leaders have destroyed any evidence, as Khrushchev's men did. However, Lenoë frankly admits that today's Russian leaders keep, some, perhaps much, of what they do have hidden. (14) A reasonable hypothesis would be that like Khrushchev's men in the 1950s and early 1960s today's Russian leaders must hide evidence so as to preserve some credibility for their theory that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman", that no conspiracy existed, and that all the defendants at the Kirov trials of December 1934 and January 1935, the three Moscow "Show Trials" of 1936-1938, the Tukhachevsky Affair defendants, and all others tried for conspiracy were innocent "victims of Stalin."

Lenoë follows this same construction of events. But there is no evidence to support it. It is reasonable to assume that this is the reason for his omissions and distortions, including the "Shatunovskaia note" and many other undocumented assertions, evasions, and even outright untruths that we examine elsewhere in the present study.

As we shall show, the evidence at our disposal today will not sustain the hypothesis that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" and the Leningrad and Moscow centers were invented by Stalin and his men. On the contrary: the evidence we have points unequivocally to the opposite conclusion: that Nikolaev killed Kirov as a result of a conspiracy by a clandestine Zinovievite organization of which he was a member.

## Chapter 7. *The Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites*

Shortly after the Leon Trotsky Archive at Harvard's Houghton Library was opened in January 1980 Trotskyist historian Pierre Broué discovered letters between Leon Sedov and his father Trotsky that proved the existence of a bloc between Trotskyists and other opposition groups within the USSR. Sometime in the middle of 1932 Sedov informed his father as follows:

[The bloc] is organized. In it have entered the Zinovievites, the Sten-Lominadze group and the Trotskyists (former "[capitulators]"). The group of Safar. Tarkhkan. has not formally entered yet — they stand on too extreme a position; they will enter in a very short time. — The declaration of Z. and K. concerning their enormous mistake in '27 was made during negotiations with our people concerning the bloc, immediately before the exile of Z and K. —<sup>70</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Harvard, Trotsky Archive 4782 p. 1; see Broué in *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* 1980 p. 36; Broué, "Party Opposition to Stalin...", p. 100.

About the same time American historian Arch Getty was discovering that Trotsky had secretly sent letters to at least Radek, Sokol'nikov, Preobrazhenskii, Kollontai, and Litvinov. The first three had been Trotskyists before publicly recanting their views. Getty did not find the letters — only the certified mail receipts for them. Getty realized this meant that the Trotsky Archive had been "purged". These letters had been removed. Other materials had undoubtedly been purged as well.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Other materials were certainly removed — "purged" — with traces of their removal remaining. For example, excerpts from a discussion between Trotsky and Sedov concerning the slogan "remove Stalin" ("ubrat' Stalina") remain in the archive, but the full letters from which these excerpts were made are not there.

The only reason to "purge" the archives would have been to remove materials that would have seemed incriminating — that would have negatively impacted Trotsky's reputation. As an examination of the question

of the letter to Radek shows, the letters that we know were removed proved, at the very least, that Trotsky lied during the 1930s by claiming he never maintained contact with oppositionists inside the USSR when, in reality, he was doing so, and by claiming that he would never agree to a secret bloc between his supporters and other oppositionist groups when in fact he had done precisely that.

Evidently Broué found the implications of this fact very disturbing. He never mentioned Getty's discoveries of Trotsky's letters to his supporters and others inside the USSR or the purging of the Trotsky archive, even though Broué cites the same Getty publications (an article and a book) in a very positive manner.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>72</sup> We will examine this whole question in detail in a forthcoming work.

Therefore it had been well established by scholars by the mid-1980s that a Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc did in fact exist and that it was formed in 1932 and that Zinoviev and Kamenev were personally involved. Sedov also foresaw the entry into the group of Safarov, who in any case had a group of his own.

In an interview with the Dutch social-democratic newspaper *Het Volk* during the second half of January 1937, at the time of the Second Moscow Trial, Sedov stated, in a slip of the tongue, that "the Trotskyists" had been in contact with the defendants at the First Moscow Trial of August 1936.<sup>73</sup> Sedov specifically named Zinoviev, Kamenev and Smimov. Concerning Radek and Piatakov Sedov went on to say that "[t]he Trotskyists have had much less contact with them than with the others. To be more exact: no contact at all." That is, Sedov tried to withdraw his "slip" about Radek and Piatakov.

<sup>73</sup> "Het process te Moskou. Wie niet wil bekennen al doodgeschoten?" *Het Volk* 28 Jan. 1937 pp. 1 and 5. My sincere thanks to Sven-Eric Holmström for tracking down this article and generously providing me with a copy.

But Sedov did not even try to retract the information that preceded it: that "the Trotskyists" had indeed been in contact with "the others" Smirnov, Zinoviev, and Kamenev. This interview, "slip of the tongue" included, was

published in a provincial edition of *Het Volk* on January 28, 1937. It was noticed by the Communist press, which called attention to Sedov's "slip of the tongue." *Arbeideren*, Oslo, February 5, 1937; *Abejderbladet*, Copenhagen, February 12, 1937.) Thanks to Getty we now know that the Communist press was correct. Sedov's remark really was a "slip of the tongue." We know that Sedov was lying because Getty had found evidence of Trotsky's letter to Radek. Trotsky had indeed been in touch with Radek. Sedov's first remark, about "much less contact", was accurate.

Therefore we have good, non-Soviet evidence, confirmed by the Trotsky Archive, of the following:

- A "bloc" of Zinovievites, Trotskyites, and others including at least the Sten-Lominadze and, perhaps, the Safarov-Tarkhanov group (with whom they were in any case in touch) and involving Zinoviev and Kamenev themselves, was indeed formed in 1932.
- Trotsky had indeed been in touch with Zinoviev and Kamenev, as well as others, probably through his son and chief representative Sedov.
- Trotsky was indeed in touch with at least Radek and Piatakov.
- Trotsky really did send a letter to Radek, who was in Geneva at the time, in the Spring of 1932, just as Radek testified in the January 1937 Moscow Trial.
- There is no reason to accept Trotskyist historian Pierre Broué's conclusion that this bloc was "ephemeral" and died out shortly after it was formed, because we know the Trotsky Archive was purged at some time, while Broué had no evidence to support his statement.

## **Soviet Rehabilitation Reports**

The proven existence of this bloc provides additional evidence that Soviet "Rehabilitation" reports of both the Khrushchev and Gorbachev eras are dishonest and untrustworthy, politically-motivated "whitewash" or "coverup" jobs, rather than honest reviews of the cases and determinations of innocence on the basis of evidence.

The "Shvernik Report", commissioned by Khrushchev in 1962 and finished in 1964, concluded that all the accusations against the accused at the

Bukharin Trial were falsified and denied the existence of a "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" itself. (RKEB 2, 625-30)

No "Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" existed in reality and those convicted in this case did not engage in counterrevolutionary activity. (630)

In 1989 the Gorbachev-era "Rehabilitation Commission" of the Central Committee of the CPSU came to the same conclusion:

It has therefore been established that after 1927 the former Trotskyites and Zinovievites did not carry out organized struggle with the Party, that they did not unite with one another either on a terrorist or on any other basis, and that the case of the "United Trotskyist Zinovievist Center" was artificially invented by the organs of the NKVD at the direct order and with the direct participation of J.V. Stalin. (*Izvestiia TsK KPSS* No. 8, 1989, p. 94)

It has been established that the accusations against those convicted of criminal contact with L.D. Trotsky and L. Sedov are without foundation. This has also been proven by a special verification process carried out by the Procurator's Office of the USSR in 1988. (*Izvestiia TsK KPSS* 9, 1989, p. 49)

As has been now established beyond doubt, the case of the so-called "Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" was totally falsified, and the trial itself staged by J.V. Stalin and his circle. (*Izvestiia TsK KPSS* 5, 1989, p. 81)

Not a single reliable fact of the carrying-out by the former participants of the "Zinovievite" opposition after 1928 of any kind of organized activity or organized declaration that could testify to the existence of an organization or the presence of hidden underground activity. (Reabilitatsiia. Politicheskie Protsessy 30-kh-50-kh godov. P. 166)

In reality, neither "blocs" nor so-called "centers" existed. (RKEB 3, 342)



Aleksandr Iakovlev, Gorbachev's expert who led the anticommunist campaign from the Politburo, repeated the falsehood that no bloc had existed.

Iagoda was artificially included among the membership of the non-existent "Right-Trotskyite" bloc. (RKEB 3, 328)

Gorbachev's commission and Iakovlev wrote long after Getty's and Broué's discoveries in the Harvard Trotsky archive had been published. In fact we know that this material became known to the Gorbachev investigators and to Iakovlev because Getty's 1986 article was published in the prestigious Party journal *Voprosy Istorii KPSS* in its May 1991 issue. Although it is possible that they did not learn of Getty's article until after 1990, when they exchanged letters on the Kirov murder, they certainly never had any evidence to support their statements that the "bloc" had never existed.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>74</sup> The Shvernik Commission had also concluded that no bloc existed. See RKEB 2, p. 630.

Evidently, Broué's and then Getty's revelations that the bloc of Zinovievites, Trotskyites and others really did exist incited consternation within Soviet Party historical circles. The 1991 Russian publication of Getty's article is accompanied by an afterword by Boris Starkov, writing on behalf of the editors of the Party journal. Starkov's commentary clearly shows that the discoveries in the Harvard Trotsky Archive were the cause of serious concern for the official Gorbachev-era view of the Stalin years. Starkov seriously distorts what Getty wrote. He mistakenly attributes to Getty the discovery that the bloc of Trotskyites, Zinovievites, and other oppositionists did exist. He attempts to cast doubt upon it and to argue that, in any case, it could not have posed any threat to Stalin. Starkov's note contains no evidence to support his contention. Moreover, he ignores altogether Getty's own discoveries: that Trotsky had indeed been in secret contact with his supporters, such as Radek, exactly as Radek testified at the January 1937 Moscow Trial, and that the Harvard Trotsky Archive had been purged. Gorbachev's commission and Iakovlev simply ignore this whole issue, declaring that no such bloc existed. This is further evidence that both the Shvernik Report and the Soviet Rehabilitation Reports are falsified.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Parts of the "Rehabilitation" report on the Moscow Trial of August 1936 are copied verbatim, or almost so, from the Shvernik Commission of twenty-five years earlier. No one could know this in 1988, since excerpts from the text of the Shvernik Report was not published until 1993-4 and the full text until 2003. The fact of the copying does suggest that it's possible, even likely, that no new study was carried out in 1987-88.

The Harvard Trotsky archive yielded to Broué and Getty unmistakable evidence that the "bloc" did exist; that Trotsky was in contact with the bloc's members and his own supporters inside the USSR, and that Trotsky lied consistently about all these matters both in the *Bulletin of the Opposition* and to the Dewey Commission. No scholar today denies this. Kirilina, Lenoe, and Egge simply ignore the whole matter.

The NKVD of the 1930s termed the complexly-interlocking set of oppositional conspiracies the "klubok", or "tangle." If any of these conspiracies were acknowledged to have existed, it would be hard to deny the existence of the rest, since all the defendants implicated others in a chain that, directly or indirectly, connected them all. Admitting that the bloc of Trotskyites and Zinovievites did in fact exist would present the danger of a "slippery slope" to any historian who wanted to deny the validity of the other conspiracies. For once it is conceded that the first alleged underground opposition conspiracy really did exist, and therefore that both the Khrushchev and Gorbachev official reports, rehabilitations, and official historians were lying, it logically follows that other conspiracies, which these same sources also denied, might have existed too.

### **Lenoe's Error**

The existence of underground organizations of Zinovievites, of Trotskyites, and of other oppositional groupings such as Safarov-Tarkhanov and Sten-Lominadze, as well as the existence of a formal "Zinovievite-Trotskyite bloc"<sup>76</sup> was firmly established long before Kirilina's and Lenoe's books were written. Either they were unaccountably ignorant of this fact, or they did know of it but concealed the fact from their readers.

<sup>76</sup> Broué conceded that Sedov and Trotsky used the term "bloc" in their correspondence with each other in 1932.

In any case, the existence of the bloc is of capital importance to any understanding of the Kirov assassination and fatal for his case that all the defendants were "framed."

Nor does Lenoe seem to be aware that their denial that the Zinovievite-Trotskyite bloc existed proves that the Shvernik Report of 1963-64, the Gorbachev-era "Rehabilitation" reports, and the "Reply to Iakovlev" document on which he relies so heavily in his book, are not honest attempts to discover the truth. On the contrary, Lenoe vouches for the honesty of the Shvernik Report:

Although official discussion of the Kirov murder in 1963-1964 was muted, the ongoing investigation appears to have been impartial. ...there was no need to doctor conclusions. (639)

We will pass over the fact that many other parts of the Shvernik Report give evidence of dishonesty as well. This single falsehood about the bloc is obviously, blatantly incorrect — a dishonest coverup, one Lenoe either is ignorant of or deliberately remains silent about.

Lenoe reproduces the texts of letters by Zinoviev and Safarov in which they vigorously deny any oppositional activity (326-327). Zinoviev claims that he has been loyal to the Party "from the moment that I returned from Kustanaya".<sup>77</sup> (326) Safarov says that he "honorably and frankly broke with counter-revolutionary Trotskyism." (327)

<sup>77</sup> This should be "Kustanai", the town in Kazakhstan to which Zinoviev had been exiled for a year. Apparently Lenoe does not realize "Kustanaya" is the genitive case.

Thanks to the Trotsky archive we know that Zinoviev and Safarov were lying. Zinoviev says he has been loyal since his return from exile, which was sometime in 1933. Safarov gives no specific time that his "break with counter-revolutionary Trotskyism" took place. We know that Safarov had been reinstated in the Party in November 1928 and served in an important

position in the Comintern until his arrest in December 1934 in connection with the Kirov murder. After returning from exile Zinoviev was placed on the editorial board of Bol'shevik, the Party's leading political journal. They and other oppositionists were not only reinstated in Party membership but were given privileged positions — something that could never have happened without Stalin's approval and, most likely, happened at his initiative. This very lenient treatment of those who had strongly opposed him but who had subsequently vowed loyalty to the Party and its line shows that, far from "holding grudges" as Lenoë claims, it was Stalin who was the "moderate" in the Party leadership.

Zinoviev and Safarov could not possibly have meant, in these letters:

"Yes, we were involved in leading secret counter-revolutionary organizations, in a bloc with Trotsky and the Trotskyites (Zinoviev) or very close to such a bloc (Safarov) — but not since 1932!"

If they had recanted since 1932 we would know about it. For one thing, it would be impossible for Khrushchev and the rest to deny the existence of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc, as they would have had to expose it. We know this didn't happen thanks to Sedov and Trotsky, who record nothing of the kind. Therefore they did not recant their 1932 membership in a bloc with Trotsky, as they were obliged to do so as Party members. Furthermore, there is no way Zinoviev and Safarov would have had important posts in 1934 if they had confessed in 1932 to being in a secret anti-Soviet bloc with Trotsky.

Therefore, Zinoviev and Safarov were lying in these letters. This is an elementary deduction from what we know from the important discoveries by Getty and Broué in Trotsky Archives.

But we learn not only that Zinoviev and Safarov were lying here. By the same token we also learn that those who named them as part of the clandestine Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc were telling the truth. A number of the defendants in the Kirov case named Zinoviev and/or Safarov. Consider the following document, omitted by Lenoë. It is a notice from the Prosecutor's office published on January 16, 1935:

In the course of an investigation of the case of LP. Bakaev, A.M. Gertik, A.S. Kuklin and others, brought to justice in connection with the disclosure in the city of Leningrad of an underground counterrevolutionary group that planned and carried out the murder of com. S.M. Kirov, there have been obtained facts related to underground counterrevolutionary activity by G.E. Zinoviev, E.E. Evdokimov, L.B. Kamenev, and G.F. Fedorov, whose cases have been preliminarily referred to the review of the Special Commission of the NKVD. In view of these facts and, in part, of confessions by LP. Bakaev which disclose the participation of G.E. Zinoviev, E.G. Evdokimov, L.B. Kamenev, and G.F. Fedorov in the underground organization "Moscow center", and of G.I. Safarov, who has informed the investigation of a series of facts concerning the underground counterrevolutionary activity of the persons named above right up to the present time, the case concerning the accusation of G.E. Zinoviev, E.G. Evdokimov, L.B. Kamenev and G.F. Fedorov has been handed over for review to the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR. (R-PP 156)

Lenoe tries to explain away Safarov's note in this manner:

There is good evidence that Safarov, who had called Zinoviev "a dirty rag" in 1930, was informing on the latter as part of proving his loyalty to the party. (334)

Yet, somehow, Lenoe fails to cite any of this "good evidence." This makes us suspect that this remark is a bluff — that Lenoe does not in fact have any such evidence, "good" or otherwise. But of course Safarov was trying to "prove his loyalty to the party" — that is, he was *claiming* to be loyal. His motive is not the question. The question is, rather, whether he was telling the truth in the note of December 16, 1934 that Lenoe quotes (327), or whether he was telling the truth in the confession referred to in the note. Sedov's letter proves that Safarov was indeed telling the truth — though probably not the whole truth — in the statements referred to in the Prosecutor's note of January 16, 1935. Safarov had been discussing the entry of his and Tarkhanov's group into the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc in 1932, so he knew it existed.

Thanks to the Trotsky Archive we know that Safarov was lying in his letter to Stalin of December 16. He had not, as he claimed in that letter, "honorably and frankly broke[n] with counterrevolutionary Trotskyism." (327) But when he gave information about the underground Zinovievite-Trotskyite group, as outlined in the Prosecutor's note of January 16, he was telling the truth — at least with respect to Zinoviev and Kamenev.

Sedov's letter also confirms the accuracy of Tsar'kov's confession of December 12, 1934, in which Tsar'kov names Zinoviev and Kamenev as the leaders of the underground organization. Gorshenin's confession of December 21, 1934 is also confirmed. He identified Zinoviev, Kamenev, Evdokimov, Bakaev, Kuklin, Fedorov and others, and said that the organization was active "up to the present."

Tohnazov confessed to belonging to the "counterrevolutionary" "Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc." (Lenoe 314-5). Moreover, Tolmazov says that during the 1920s Nikolaev "attached himself to the Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc". He also said that in 1930 Safarov "cursed Zinoviev as a 'dirty rag' in the sharpest tones." (314). This corresponds to what we know from Sedov's letter, in which he says that Safarov and Tarkhanov are "extreme" and will join the bloc in the future but have not done so yet.

Kotolynov also confirmed the existence of the "Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc" and named many familiar names (Lenoe 324-5). On December 18 Kotolynov again confirmed that he was a member of the "counterrevolutionary Zinoviev-Trotskyite organization." (335)

Lenoe's ignorance, whether real or feigned, of the proven existence of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc leads him far astray from the truth. He states:

The interrogators had finally forged (in both senses of the verb) a link between the ex-Zinovievites in the USSR and Trotsky abroad. (342)

Elsewhere Lenoe writes "Zinovievites (supposedly allied with the Trotskyites)" (380) and refers to the "supposed 'Right-Trotskyite Bloc'" (482). He notes without comment Iakovlev's 1990 reference to "the nonexistent 'Right-Trotskyite Bloc.'" (659) This, of course, is all wrong.

To sum up: it is hard to believe that, somehow, Lenoë never learned of the existence of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc. Lenoë thanks Arch Getty for his help — and Getty, along with Broué, was the scholar who discovered the evidence of this bloc in the Harvard Trotsky Archive, and whose article was republished in the Soviet Party journal in 1991. If he was not ignorant of the existence of this bloc then Lenoë deliberately concealed it from his readers. The existence of the bloc; Getty's discovery that the Trotsky Archive had been purged; Broué's discoveries of various lies that Trotsky and Sedov made in publication and to the Dewey Commission hearings about their contacts with the clandestine opposition inside the USSR — all these constitute strong evidence *against* Lenoë's hypothesis that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" unconnected with any organized terrorist opposition group in Leningrad.

## **Chapter 8. *Nikolaev's First Confession***

Lenoe reproduces a text (in English translation) of Nikolaev's first interrogation dated December 1, 1934 (256-259). This document constitutes the only primary-source evidence for the "lone assassin" theory. It is essential to Lenoe's case. A few days after making it Nikolaev had contradicted it and thereafter consistently discussed his act as part of a conspiracy.

One would expect that Lenoe would examine this confession of Nikolaev's carefully. But he fails to do so. It is tempting to form a hypothesis to account for this failure on Lenoe's part. An analysis of the text of Nikolaev's first confession shows that we cannot accept this document, so vital for Lenoe's thesis, as genuine.

Lenoe uses, praises, and cites Kirilina's account. But he fails to inform his readers that Kirilina also reproduces a text (in Russian) of Nikolaev's first confession — and Kirilina's text is significantly different from Lenoe's. We will study these differences here.

### **Petukhov and Khomchik**

But first we must consider a remark in a 1990 article by the Chairman of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR and his aide. In this article, cited by Kirilina, Lenoe, and Egge, we read the following:

At his first interrogation on December 1 Nikolaev did not in essence give any testimony. The employees of the Leningrad UNKVD only filled out the facts on their forms. Thereafter he refused to sign the transcripts and in one case even tried to rip up the transcript.

Isakov, former employee of the UNKVD who was present at these interrogations on December 1 and 2, stated in his explanations of March 15, 1961 that Nikolaev was "in some kind of state of prostration", looked like "some kind of completely alien person...



This was not a thinking human being, but a sack of bones and muscles, without any reason ... For a very long time Nikolaev completely refused to answer anything at all. In my opinion, at that time he could not think of anything ... He only wept ... According to his words, he had suffered enough from life troubles due to the lack of attention to him by the City Committee of the Party and personally by S.M. Kirov. Nikolaev...acted like a person in a seriously depressed condition or affect. He literally fell into hysterics every five minutes, after which a kind of stupor set in and he sat without speaking, staring at one point somewhere."<sup>78</sup>

<sup>78</sup> N. Petukhov, V. Khomchik. "Delo o Leningradskom Tsentre" ["The Case of the Leningrad Center"]. *Vestnik Verkhovnogo Suda SSSR* 5 (1991), p. 18.

We must assume that Petukhov and Khomchik had access to all the primary sources, including Nikolaev's interrogations. Here they state unequivocally that *Nikolaev did not say anything coherent at all at the first interrogation of December 1, 1934.*

Kirilina (250) also quotes the testimony of former NKVD man Fomin, which Lenoë (173) translates:

The assistant chief of the Directorate Fedr Timofeevich Fomin afterwards described Nikolaev's behavior during the first hours after his arrest in this way: "[F]or a long time after coming to consciousness the murderer screamed, babbled, and only towards the morning began to speak and shout 'my shot rang out around the world.'"

Kirilina found Fomin's testimony in a Khrushchev-era report by Petr Pospelov, who had continued the quotation from Fomin a little further:

I told him that he would not have anything in return for this shot except curses from the people. To the repeated questions asked by myself and by assistant chief of the Special Division Ianishevskii, "Who prompted you, Nikolaev, to carry out this shooting?" he fell into hysterics and began to shout, but did not give any answer of any kind." (Statement of com. Fomin of March 26, 1956).<sup>79</sup>

<sup>79</sup> «Zapiska P.N. Pospelova ob ubiystve Kirova» (P.N. Pospelov's note about the murder of Kirov). *Svobodnaia Mysl'* 1992, No. 8, p. 68.

In an earlier article prior to writing the first edition of her book Kirilina stated that there were two medical reports on Nikolaev dated December 1, 1934, both of which attest to the fact that the suspect was incoherent.

In Nikolaev's investigative case file there are two documents of medical observation dated December 1. One was from two hours after his arrest. It says: "Nikolaev does not answer questions; at times he moans and screams, he shows no signs of poisoning, there are signs of a general nervous excitement."<sup>80</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Kirilina, A. "Sledstvennoe Delo Leonida Nikolaeva." *S.Peterburgskie Vedomosti*. December 4, 1993.

Lenoe cites Isakov's testimony (173) and the article by Petukhov and Khomchik (n. 37, pp. 764-5), as does Kirilina (250-1). But this only compounds the problems. We'll consider them one at a time:

- Kirilina and Lenoe both claim that Isakov was present at the December 2 interrogations of Nikolaev, citing Petukhov and Khomchik. But Petukhov and Khomchik state that Isakov was present at the interrogations of *both* December 1 *and* December 2.

Lenoe also states "Fomin's and Isakov's signatures are both on December 1 and December 2 interrogations of Nikolaev." (n. 37 p. 764). He does reproduce a December 2 interrogation signed by Fomin, Ianishevskii (named by Fomin), and Isakov (260-261). But Isakov's signature is not on either Kirilina's or Lenoe's "December 1 interrogation", while Fomin's is on Lenoe's but not on Kirilina's.

In her 1993 article cited above Kirilina stated:

At the interrogations of December 1, 2 and 3 Nikolaev in fact did not answer one single question posed to him by the investigators. Only his personal data were written, on the forms along with his statement,

repeated many times, "I have accomplished an act of individual terror of personal revenge." He refused to sign the transcripts.

This wording is so similar to that of Petukhov and Khomchik that Kirilina may have copied it directly from them.

So we are immediately confronted by problems with any purported confession by Nikolaev of December 1, 1934:

- Neither Kirilina nor Lenoë mention the fact that Petukhov and Khomchik deny that Nikolaev gave any coherent confession at all at his first interrogation. The statements by Isakov and Fomin too are consistent with this conclusion. They leave no doubt that Nikolaev made no confession on December 1.
- Lenoë is embarrassed by the discrepancy in the dates. He tries to resolve this problem by saying "it seems that NKVD officers were unable to conduct a real interrogation of Nikolaev until around midnight of December 1-2 or even later." (173) However, the "first interrogation" Lenoë reproduces is dated December 1. Why would the NKVD men give a false date?
- Lenoë has already conceded that there can scarcely have been a single interrogation of Nikolaev of December 1. He was forced to assume that the interrogation dated December 1 that he reproduces must be of "around midnight of December 1-2 or even later."

But if there can scarcely be a single interrogation of December 1, it follows that there surely cannot be more than one. So, where is the interrogation of December with Isakov's signature to which Lenoë refers?

### **Two Different Texts of "Nikolaev's Interrogation of December 1"**

We have seen that there are serious problems with accepting as genuine *any* version of a Nikolaev interrogation dated December 1. But there's more. Kirilina and Lenoë reproduce different texts, both purporting to be that of Nikolaev's interrogation of the same date, December 1.

Kirilina's text is the shorter one. For the most part it appears to be closely similar to the first part of Lenoe's text ("appears" because we only have the English translation of Lenoe's version of this confession). But there are several significant differences:

- In Kirilina's text Nikolaev refers to letters to Kirov and Stalin, while this reference is unaccountably absent from Lenoe's letter.
- Kirilina's text begins by identifying the two NKVD officers conducting the interrogation: Lobov and Medved'. No such lines exist at the beginning of Lenoe's text.
- Kirilina's text ends with Lobov's signature. Medved's signature is lacking. At the end of Lenoe's text there are five signatures: Medved', Fomin, Molochnikov, Yanishevsky, and Stromin. Lobov's name is absent entirely.
- Neither Kirilina's nor Lenoe's text bears Isakov's signature.
- Kirilina's text ends with Nikolaev's signature. But Lenoe's text informs us that Nikolaev refused to sign the transcript and tried to rip it up.
- Lenoe's text is also significantly longer than Kirilina's. It is as though Kirilina's text, minus the five words about Nikolaev's letters to Stalin and Kirov present in Kirilina's text but absent from Lenoe's, has been expanded by the addition of an extra part at the end.

Here we will examine this additional section in Lenoe's text.

- After the end of the text common to both Kirilina and Lenoe, the first sentences of Lenoe's text read as follows:

**Question:** Your brother Pyotr knew of this plan.

Answer: If he knew of this, he would have handed me over [to the police] instantly.

It seems highly unlikely that already on December 1, within a few hours of Kirov's murder (which took place at 4:30 p.m.) the NKVD would have been able to locate, arrest, and interrogate Nikolaev's brother about Nikolaev's written plan. Neither Kirilina nor Lenoe mention any interrogation of Piotr Nikolaev before December 3. Therefore, these lines are incompatible with

any interrogation of Nikolaev of December 1 (or, as Lenoe would have it, December 1-2).

- The passage immediately following this one concerns a possible connection with Germany:

**Question:** In your appointment book there is the address and telephone number of the German consulate in Leningrad, written in your hand. Who gave you this address and telephone number?

**Answer:** The address and telephone number of the German consulate in Leningrad I copied from the 1933 telephone book.

**Question:** With what purpose?

**Answer:** I made that notation on purpose in order to show the party afterwards that I allegedly [sic] suffered much and in order to take the easiest route to exposure and signaling [of the wrongs done me]. I was obsessed with the idea of drawing down on myself suspicion of contacts with foreigners, and so that due to that [sic] I'd be arrested and then I would have the chance to expose all the outrages I knew about.

This alleged statement by Nikolaev appears very confused and raises a number of puzzling points.

- The interrogators had just begun to ask Nikolaev about the assassination plan they had found on his person. But after asking only one question about it they drop the matter and move on. Then the interrogators told Nikolaev that his brother Piotr knew about the plan. Nikolaev denied this, and again the interrogators just dropped the whole matter.

This is simply not the way interrogators act. They could scarcely have contented themselves with a single simple answer to questions about the assassination, let alone about the possible existence of a conspiracy.

- Nikolaev's answer about the German consulate information in his address book makes no sense at all. Visiting the German consulate

might have drawn suspicion on him, as Nikolaev supposedly claimed he wanted to do — although we later discover that he really had visited the Latvian consulate and no one had noticed.

But it is absurd to say that copying an address into his phone book would "draw down suspicion". Who would even know it was there? Moreover, Nikolaev had clearly tried to kill himself seconds after killing Kirov, so he could not have "had the chance to expose all the outrages." However, it would indeed have had the effect of drawing the NKVD investigators onto a false scent — looking for a German connection to the assassination if Nikolaev had in fact killed himself, as he had attempted to do. That is; it is consistent with other evidence that Nikolaev had deliberately falsified in advance some of his written materials.

- Nikolaev was now under arrest — for murdering Kirov. Yet in none of the interrogations reproduced by Kirilina or Lenoe does he "expose all the outrages". Though he claims he committed murder to draw attention to injustices against him, he does not give any harangues about those supposed injustices, or even any details. With the attention of the whole NKVD and Party on him, here is all he says:

...my estrangement from the party, from which I was alienated by the events at the Leningrad Institute of Party History, second my unemployment and the absence of material and most importantly moral aid from party organizations

...over the last eight to ten years of my life's road and work there has accumulated a backlog of unfair attitudes on the part of specific government persons towards a living human being. For a time I bore all of this as long as I was involved in directly useful civic work, but when I ended up discredited and alienated from the party, then I decided to signal all of this before the party.

I saw and still see that attack as a political act. With this murder I wanted to get the party to pay attention to a living human being and to the heartless bureaucratic attitude towards him. (Lenoe 257-258)

All these complaints are vague and extremely general. There is not a single specific example of a supposed injustice among them. Yet Nikolaev has just testified that it was to expose specific examples of unjust treatment towards himself that he has murdered Kirov. In failing to "expose" any "outrages" Nikolaev's statements strongly suggest that he was not prepared with any list of such "outrages," and therefore that "exposing outrages" was not his motive at all.

- With all the Soviet fears of German Nazism, how likely is it that the NKVD interrogators would have stopped asking about this German connection after two short, introductory questions?
- One final point: in justifying his act of murder Nikolaev first states:

I request that you note down that I am not an enemy of the working class and that if my recent hard experiences at the Institute had not occurred I would have borne all of the difficulties I have suffered and would not have gone so far as attempting the assassination.

But after one brief riposte by the interrogator Nikolaev both reverses and contradicts himself. He reverses himself in that he first denied being "an enemy of the working class", and then changed his mind:

Yes, I have to admit that I really did act morally as an enemy of the working class by making my attempt on Comrade Kirov's life ...

His self-contradiction about his motive is even more striking:

...but I did so under the influence of psychological distress and the deep impression made on me by events at the Institute, which placed me in an impossible situation. (Lenoe 258)

At first he continues with his explanation of the murder as a kind of protest against "recent hard experiences at the Institute" and "difficulties", reminding us of his claim to wish to "expose all of the outrages I knew about." But then he says he acted "under the influence of psychological distress..." These latter words make the murder appear not as an act of conscious political protest, as he had insisted up to this point, but rather

reduces it to the act of a psychologically disturbed person. These remarks *depoliticize* his act of murder.

## Conclusions

From the preceding analysis we can draw several conclusions that are important for our evaluation of Lenoe's book and for our further inquiry into Kirov's assassination.

- Lenoe had to be aware of these issues. But he does not point them out to his readers, much less analyze what they might mean. This glaring omission does suggest, however, that Lenoe is aware of the difficulties for his preconceived "lone gunman" thesis that the problems around this "first interrogation" create.
- Thanks to Petukhov and Khomchik we can be reasonably sure that there never was any December 1 interrogation of Nikolaev. Nikolaev was incoherent. The NKVD men noted his personal details — although we apparently do not have that document — and nothing else.
- But if that is the case, then both Kirilina's and Lenoe's texts are fakes, or contain falsified parts such as the date as well as more substantive falsifications.

We cannot exclude the possibility that they were created by Khrushchev's men in 1956 when, as Lenoe informs us, Khrushchev was trying to suppress any evidence that Nikolaev may have really been acting as a part of a conspiracy, and therefore trying to provide evidence that he had been a "lone gunman." If he had not been a "lone gunman", evidence would have to be created. The fake December 1 interrogations would fit that need.

But we think it more likely that these fake interrogations were created at the time, in December 1934. As we shall see later in our examination of Genrikh Iagoda's pretrial confessions Iagoda testified that he had only reluctantly agreed not to stand in the way of an attack against Kirov. Iagoda's disapproval of the assassination suggests that he might have tried to make Nikolaev's act appear like that of one individual in order to draw attention away from the conspiracy. At least Iagoda would have tried to



mislead the investigation. Medved' had the direct responsibility for Kirov's security and would bear the consequences of its failure. But according to Iagoda Medved' was not initiated into the conspiracy. It would not have made any difference to Medved' whether Kirov were killed by a conspiracy or by a lone gunman.

### **Enukidze's Story**

Thanks to a document published by Lenoë we know that Avel' Enukidze did his best to support a "lone gunman" theory virtually from the day Kirov was killed. Enukidze spread the story that Kirov was having an affair with Nikolaev's wife Mil'da Draule. Defendants in the "Kremlin Affair" of 1935 spread the same rumor. It seems likely that they got it from Enukidze. There has never been any evidence to support this rumor. Nikolaev never mentions it, or any personal animosity towards Kirov, even in his voluminous diaries. Lenoë gives good evidence on this point (691; 807 n.5)

Why would Enukidze spread this obviously false story? Lenoë thinks he did so out of "resistance" to the glorification of Stalin and to "parroting" "Stalin's" line about "class enemies." But that does not account for this specific false story, which is entirely groundless. It would be understandable, perhaps, if it originated from people who were utterly in the dark about events. But as a very high-ranking Party member and government official, Enukidze would certainly have been privy to what was going on.

Moreover, Enukidze could not possibly have known that Kirov's murder was *not* an expression of hostility to the Bolsheviks — unless, as he later confessed, he knew about the conspiracy to assassinate Kirov beforehand. *Not* to express the view that, at the very least, the assassination *might* have been the result of political opposition would be considered very suspicious, would attract unfavorable attention to him — as, in fact, it did. Why would Enukidze risk doing this — unless he had a powerful motive to do it?

Iagoda's confessions suggest an answer. Enukidze had the same motive that Iagoda had to try to deflect evidence away from any conspiracy. Enukidze and Iagoda were involved in a conspiracy of their own and therefore did not

want Stalin and the NKVD to be sharply on the lookout for conspiracies. Only two 1937 interrogations of Enukidze's have been made public so far.<sup>81</sup> They confirm his involvement in the Rightist conspiracy. Although Enukidze does not mention the Kirov assassination in these two confessions he must have done so in others. Iagoda did discuss the Kirov assassination in pretrial interrogations and implicated Enukidze. NKVD interrogators would therefore certainly have interrogated Enukidze very thoroughly about the Kirov assassination too.

<sup>81</sup> Lubianka 1937-1938, No. 60 pp. 144ff; Genrikh Iagoda No. 166 pp. 508-517. Between 4 and 5 pages of this latter confession have been omitted from this transcript. No reason is given for their omission (p. 517).

This alleged "December 1 interrogation" is the only one in which Nikolaev insists he killed Kirov on his own initiative alone.

- Kirilina (216) reproduces one sentence which she states is from a December 2 interrogation of Nikolaev. Lenoe (260-1) reproduces a longer passage from a December 2 interrogation that does not contain that sentence. Nikolaev is not asked whether he acted alone or not and does not say.
- We have one interrogation of Nikolaev from December 3. Kirilina (215-6 and 408-9) says she reproduces it in full. Evidently this is true, since it conforms to Lenoe's three partial quotations from it (157; 167; 249-50). Nikolaev makes no statement about whether or not he is a lone gunman.
- We have one interrogation of Nikolaev of December 4. Kirilina tells us (277) that he had "new investigators". Evidently by December 4 Medved's men of the Leningrad UNKVD were under suspicion and had now been replaced by Ezhov's men. In the part transcribed by Lenoe (281-2) Nikolaev now states that his ties to Trotskyists "influenced his decision to kill Comrade Kirov", and he names Shatskii, Kotolynov, Bardin, and Sokolov. This agrees with Kirilina's brief citation (277) of this same interrogation.

This confession obviously encouraged the interrogators. Lenoe (285) says that Nikolaev was interrogated five times on December 5. Agranov's letter

to Stalin of December 5, translated in Lenoe (285287) reveals that Nikolaev had begun to implicate others among the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc. The Russian text has been available for a decade in Vasili Soima's *Zapreshchennyi Stalin* ("The Prohibited Stalin").

Kirilina (281) says "after December 4" — Nikolaev confessed that

"He was a member of an underground counterrevolutionary organization", "its members stood on the platform of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc", "the former Opposition had their own special accounts to settle with Kirov in connection with the struggle he had organized against the Leningrad oppositionists."

This document may well be the very first time anyone had disclosed to the NKVD that the bloc of Zinovievites and Trotskyites existed! (We know there was such a bloc from Sedov's and Trotsky's letters in the Harvard Trotsky Archive.) But Kirilina does not tell us how long "after December 4" Nikolaev made these statements, or why she does not seem to know. Was she able to see the actual transcript? Or is she copying from some copy of something or other that was given to her? Kirilina very often does this — withholds from her readers information vital to assess the evidence she presents. Lenoe does the same thing.

- On December 6 for the first time Nikolaev specifically implicates Shatskii and Kotolynov as participants in the "terrorist act." (Kirilina 277) According to Lenoe (288) Nikolaev said that Kotolynov was planning to try to murder Stalin. From this point on Nikolaev and the other suspects elaborate the details of the conspiracy.

The only interrogation Kirilina or Lenoe know about in which Nikolaev explicitly claims he was a "lone gunman" and explicitly rejects the idea of a conspiracy in Kirov's murder is that of December 1. As we have shown, that interrogation is more than problematic. We do not have one text but at least two. Therefore "it" — really, "they" — cannot be genuine as they exist now. It appears as though an original confession of an early date, but not of December 1, has been seriously tampered with. Since neither can be genuine as it stands, we cannot accept either of them as evidence of anything without grave reservations.

This does not mean that Nikolaev never claimed that he was a "lone gunman". On the contrary: we can be certain that he did make this claim, since he explicitly retracts it later on. In the "Indictment" of Nikolaev and the rest, a document we will study later, we read the following statement:

In confessions of December 13 of this year L. Nikolaev directly states:

"... I was supposed to describe the murder of Kirov as an individual act in order to conceal the participation in it of the Zinovievite group." (p. 19)

This statement directly contradicts Leno's "lone gunman" thesis. Leno omits it from his lengthy excerpts from the "Indictment".

In any case we would expect Nikolaev to make an early statement of this kind. Nikolaev was caught red-handed. He could not possibly deny that he murdered Kirov. What he could deny was his participation in a conspiracy. Indeed, if he really were part of a conspiracy we would expect him to deny it. The first rule of a conspiratorial organization is not to tell the authorities about the other members so that the conspiracy may continue.

What the problematic nature of Nikolaev's "first confession" means for our inquiry is this:

- We have no reliable text of the claim Nikolaev made.
- This "first confession" has been tampered with for some reason.

Nikolaev had not planned to escape after killing Kirov. He had planned to commit suicide on the spot and almost succeeded in doing so. His ties with the Zinovievite and Trotskyite oppositionists with whom he was later to be tried and executed would, no doubt, have been discovered by the NKVD when they seized his diaries. But evidently those writings do not explicitly discuss any conspiracy. Had Nikolaev succeeded in killing himself the Leningrad Zinovievites who ultimately stood trial with him would surely have been interrogated. But there would have been no evidence to implicate them. Without something else in writing either on his person or at his home to explain the reason for his action, his diaries would have been the only

thing available. In them Nikolaev does discuss his dissatisfaction in terms of his personal situation, though in a vague and general way.

According to his wife Mil'da Draule Nikolaev had researched prominent political assassins of the past like Andrei I. Zheliabov, one of the organizers of the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881. (Lenoe 236; 769 n. 24). Genrikh Liushkov — not a reliable witness but one who was involved in the investigation — confirms this in a general way, although Liushkov might have simply learned about this from Draule. Zheliabov was one of probably eight members of the Narodnaia Volia who plotted the Tsar's assassination and one of five who was executed for it. Therefore, *if Nikolaev did research Zheliabov it would suggest that Nikolaev was more interested in assassins who were indeed part of an underground conspiratorial organization than in those who acted alone or from personal as opposed to political motives.*

We can conclude that Nikolaev did indeed wish to appear to the world as a "lone gunman" acting from personal motives. This would be logical whether he really acted on his own or was part of a conspiracy. A lone gunman would have no motive to name anyone else, and a conspirator would want to defend his co-conspirators. Of course NKVD investigators would have been aware of this too. Therefore, even if we did have evidence that Nikolaev claimed for a time that he was a "lone gunman" no investigator would have simply accepted this as the truth. Lenoe and Kirilina should not have done so either, if they had really been interested in an objective investigation of this murder.

Assuming for the sake of argument that Nikolaev was part of a conspiracy, what would have been the best scenario for that conspiracy? Best of all would be an assassination in which the perpetrators escaped unrecognized. That would best demonstrate the power of the conspiracy — its intelligence and reach, the depth of its support. Arguably, the next best would be a suicide assassination such as that Nikolaev planned. Therefore neither an assassination and successful suicide, nor an assassination and initial insistence by the assassin that he was acting alone, would be convincing evidence either of a "lone gunman" or of a conspiracy. NKVD investigators would have understood that too.

We can infer that Nikolaev did not implicate the oppositionists Kotolynov, Shatskii et al. before December 4, since that seems to be the first time their names are mentioned. Nikolaev mentions Kotolynov and others in his diaries. Once Nikolaev's diaries had been studied by the new NKVD team unconnected with Leningrad it was only a matter of time before Nikolaev was closely questioned about his relationships with them. Any investigator would consider it too much of a coincidence that Nikolaev should have been closely connected with several of these prominent oppositionists, and yet that this connection be completely unrelated to his assassination of the Party leader of Leningrad who had disciplined these same oppositionists and replaced their leader Zinoviev.

Lenoe (281) claims that it was Stalin who told Ezhov's investigators to "look for the killer among the Zinovievites" before December 4, when the names of the Zinovievites first appear in Nikolaev's confessions. Elsewhere in the present work we show that there is no basis for Lenoe's claim. Even if it were true, however, Stalin could simply have learned that their names were mentioned in Nikolaev's diary. Therefore it would not mean what Lenoe wants it to mean — that the NKVD interrogators, under strict instructions from Stalin through Ezhov, had somehow forced or persuaded Nikolaev to falsely accuse the oppositionists.

—————

### **The Text of "Nikolaev's Confession of December 1, 1934"**

Below we reproduce Lenoe's text with the insertion, in translation, of those parts of Kirilina's text that differ from Lenoe's **in boldface** (Kirilina 406-407).

Kirilina's full Russian text is at <http://tinyurl.com/nikolaev-dopros>

(Choose Character Encoding Cyrillic (Windows-1251) in your web browser.)

\*\*\*\*\*

Lenoe 256-259

Protocol of interrogation of Leonid Nikolaev, December 1, 1934. RGANI, f. 6, op. 13, d. I, ll. 92-99.

**[Kirilina: Interrogator: Assistant to the chief of the Special Division of the Leningrad and provincial NKVD Lobov.**

**Present at the interrogation: chief of the Leningrad and provincial UNKVD F.D. Medved']**

**Question:** Today, December 1, in the corridor at Smolny you shot Central Committee secretary Comrade Kirov with a revolver. Tell us who else participated in the organization of this attack with you.

**Answer:** I state categorically that there were no other participants in the attack I made on Comrade Kirov. I prepared the whole thing by myself, and I told no one of my plans.

**Question:** Since when have you been preparing this attack?

**Answer:** The idea of killing Comrade Kirov actually occurred to me at the beginning of November of 1934, from that time I have been preparing for this attack.

**Question:** What reasons motivated you to carry out this attack?

**Answer:** One reason — my estrangement from the party, from which I was alienated by the events at the Leningrad Institute of Party History, second my unemployment and the absence of material and most importantly moral aid from party organizations.

My whole situation developed from the moment of my exclusion from the party /eight months ago/, which tainted me in the eyes of party organizations.

I wrote to various party instances /the Smolny Ward Committee, the party committee of the Institute of Party History, the Regional Party Committee, and the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the Leningrad Commission on Party Control, and also the Central Control Commission/,

of my difficult material and moral situation many times, but [**Kirilina: ...the Ward Committee, Regional Party Committee, the CC, and the letters to Kirov and Stalin did not help**] I got no real help from any of these.

**Question:** What specifically did you write in all of these communications?

**Answer:** I wrote everywhere that I had been trapped in a situation without exit and that I had reached the critical moment that pushed me to commit a political assassination.

**Question:** What was the main goal of the attack you made today on Comrade Kirov?

**Answer:** The attempt on Kirov's life had the main goal of making a political signal before the party that over the last eight to ten years of my life's road and work there has accumulated a backlog of unfair attitudes on the part of specific government persons towards a living human being. For a time I bore all of this as long as I was involved in directly useful civic work, but when I ended up discredited and alienated from the party, then I decided to signal all of this before the party.

I have fulfilled this historic mission of mine. I must show the whole party the extreme to which they forced Nikolaev for repressing self-criticism [*sic* — Nikolaev obviously means "with their repression of self-criticism"].

**Question:** A plan written in your hand for an assassination attempt was found on you during the personal search, tell us with whom you worked up this plan.

**Answer:** Who could have helped make such a plan? Nobody helped me in making it. I composed it myself personally under the influence of the events around me at the Institute of Party History. In addition I composed it under the influence of the unfair attitude towards me when I worked at the regional committee and the regional control commission.

I affirm categorically that I worked up this plan personally, nobody helped me with it and nobody knew about it.



**[Kirilina:**

**Interrogation conducted December 1 Assistant to the chief**

**Special Division, NKVD for Leningrad**

**And province [signature](Lobov)**

**Transcribed accurately [signature](Nikolaev)**

Kirilina's text ends here.]

**Question:** Your brother Pyotr knew of this plan.

**Answer:** If he knew of this, he would have handed me over [to the police] instantly.

**Question:** In your appointment book there is the address and telephone number of the German consulate in Leningrad, written in your hand. Who gave you this address and telephone number?

**Answer:** The address and telephone number of the German consulate in Leningrad I copied from the 1933 telephone book.

**Question:** With what purpose?

**Answer:** I made that notation on purpose in order to show the party afterwards that I allegedly [sic] suffered much and in order to take the easiest route to exposure and signaling [of the wrongs done me]. I was obsessed with the idea of drawing down on myself suspicion of contacts with foreigners, and so that due to that [sic] I'd be arrested and then I would have the chance to expose all the outrages I knew about.

**Question:** With what foreigners did you have ties and discuss the attack you were planning?

**Answer:** I never had any ties or talked with any foreigners. It would have been bad indeed if I'd given my plan to foreigners, comrades. I worked out

the whole plan personally myself and I carried it out right to the end by myself.

**Question:** Tell us more clearly what purpose you were pursuing when you made your attack on Kirov?

**Answer:** I saw and still see that attack as a political act. With this murder I wanted to get the party to pay attention to a living human being and to the heartless bureaucratic attitude towards him.

I request that you note down that I am not an enemy of the working class and that if my recent hard experiences at the Institute had not occurred, I would have borne all of the difficulties I have suffered and would not have gone so far as attempting the assassination.

**Question:** How can we make sense of your statement that you "are not an enemy of the working class" when by your actions you have joined the camp of the enemies of the working class?

**Answer:** Yes, I have to admit that I really did act morally as an enemy of the working class by making my attempt on Comrade Kirov's life, but I did so under the influence of psychological distress and the deep impression made on me by events at the Institute, which placed me in an impossible situation.

Transcribed correctly from my words and read back to me in its entirety.

NOTE: While confirming that the above is correctly transcribed, the interrogated prisoner Nikolaev, Leonid Vasilevich categorically refused to sign the present protocol of his testimony, and attempted to rip it up.

[...]

Interrogated by:

Chief of the Leningrad Regional Directorate of the NKVD Medved'.

Deputy Chief of the Leningrad Regional Directorate of the NKVD Fomin.

Chief of the Economic Affairs Department of the Regional Directorate of the NKVD Molochnikov.

Deputy Chief of the Special Political Department of the Leningrad Military District Yanishevsky.

Deputy Chief of the Special Political Department of the Regional Directorate of the NKVD Stromin.

## Chapter 9. *Stalin's Remark to "Target the Zinovievites"*

The more or less "official" position on the Kirov assassination, common to the Khrushchev-era Shvernik Report, the Gorbachev-era Politburo commission, Kirilina and now Lenoe, has been that Leonid Nikolaev was a "lone gunman". According to this version everyone else was "framed" — falsely accused, in many cases somehow forced to confess, and then convicted and executed. This would include the Zinoviev supporters tried, convicted, and executed together with Nikolaev in late December 1934, and all the defendants in all three Moscow Trials who claimed to have been involved in, or to have known about, the assassination, plus all those who, like Avel' Enukidze, were accused of involvement with the assassination but were not in the public trials.

Since Khrushchev's day it has been ideologically unacceptable to conclude that Nikolaev was part of a conspiracy. For if Nikolaev's act was indeed the result of a conspiracy of underground Zinoviev supporters, then an underground conspiracy or series of conspiracies really did exist in the USSR. The whole "anti-Stalin" paradigm of Soviet politics in the 1930s would be seriously jeopardized.

Elsewhere in this study we discuss Lenoe's fear lest he be mistaken for an apologist for Stalin simply because he concluded that Stalin did not have Kirov murdered. There has never been any evidence to support that version. But that did not stop it from becoming virtually canonical both in Russia and in the West. Major scholars such as Robert Conquest and Amy Knight published whole books in which they falsely claim to have proven Stalin's guilt.

Aleksandr Iakovlev, a member of Gorbachev's Politburo and perhaps the world's leading anti-Stalinist during this time, urged the Gorbachev-era Politburo commission to investigate very seriously the possibility that Stalin had murdered Kirov. The commission explained to Iakovlev in a very carefully crafted reply that the version he preferred simply could not be supported by the evidence. Given the fact that this commission itself did not try to discover the truth but also decided on the "lone gunman" theory, their

letter to Iakovlev really means that they did not have the materials with which to "frame" Stalin for Kirov's murder. That is also why Khrushchev's Shvernik Commission decided to plump for the "lone gunman" theory: they could not satisfy Khrushchev's desire to "frame" Stalin.

With Kirilina's, and now with Lenoe's, works the "Stalin killed Kirov" hypothesis is definitively dead. Today those who adhere to the mainstream position insist that Stalin "framed" everybody except for Nikolaev. But they face a serious problem. There is no evidence at all to support the "frameup" hypothesis. Rather, we possess very strong evidence that Nikolaev was indeed part of a conspiracy, just as the prosecution in the Kirov trial of December 28-29 1934 and the three Moscow Trials, claimed. The Gorbachev-era Politburo commission, then Kirilina, and now Lenoe and Egge have striven to prove that Stalin "framed" everyone except Nikolaev. Lenoe is the latest author to do this<sup>82</sup> and his is the most detailed attempt in print.

<sup>82</sup> Lenoe's book was published in 2010, Egge's in 2009, in Norway.

The thesis of the present study is this: all the evidence now available — including, of course, all the evidence cited by Kirilina, Lenoe, and Egge, plus all the evidence available to us today and to them as well but which they did not cite — supports the hypothesis that Nikolaev was indeed a part of a conspiracy to murder Kirov. Moreover, it was Nikolaev himself who implicated the underground Zinovievite oppositionists in Kirov's murder. As we shall demonstrate, the evidence now available simply does not permit of any other conclusion.

Those who worked falsifying the history of the Stalin years for Khrushchev and Gorbachev knew this too. During Khrushchev's time a former NKVD man "remembered" that NKVD commanders had instructed him and other officers to build a case against the Zinovievite opposition. We will demonstrate that what this former NKVD man, a certain Makarov, testified in 1961, is demonstrably false. Then we will present the only genuine evidence we have and prove it shows that Nikolaev himself incriminated the others who were tried and convicted with him.

## The Evidence That Stalin "Framed" the Zinovievites

Lenoe cites two pieces of evidence to support his hypothesis that Stalin "framed" the Zinovievites. One of them is Genrikh Liushkov's 1939 essay in the Japanese magazine *Kaizo*. We devote a chapter later in this study to a detailed analysis of Liushkov's essay.

Here is the only other bit of evidence Lenoe cites:

"According to Officer Makarov, Agranov, Nikolai Yezhov, and Genrikh Liushkov told interrogators at a **December 3 meeting** to press the prisoners hard for evidence implicating the Zinovievite opposition in the killing. **If this is so**, then Stalin **must have** spoken to them in the same vein **on December 2 or 3**. **Based in part on this evidence**, Aleksandr Yakovlev suggested in 1990 that "Stalin arrived in Leningrad with prepared, well-thought-out ideas, and immediately these began to be implemented. Stalin said from the beginning that Zinovievites had done the deed." (Lenoe 271; emphasis added, GF)

This claim by Makarov is vital for Lenoe's thesis, though even Lenoe has doubts about it, as witnessed by his phrase "if this is so". As we will show, Makarov's claim here is demonstrably false.

The source of Lenoe's statement, at note 36, page 772 to this passage on page 271, reads: "'Reply to Yakovlev' 473, 482" Here are those passages, both from page 473:

In his statement to the Party Control Commission of the CC of the CPSU of January 22, 1961 former employee of the Special Political Division of the Leningrad OGPU N.I. Makarov indicated that until January 1935 he had conducted the agent work on the underground Trotskyist, Zinovievist, and Democratic-Centralist groups and among them was the work on the "Svoiaki" file where were concentrated the materials of the Leningrad and Moscow agent work concerning active members of the opposition who lived in Moscow and Leningrad.

On December 2, 1934 after a report to J.V. Stalin of the materials in the "Svoiaki" cases Agranov ordered him to prepare all the facts for

the arrest of the former members of the Zinoviev opposition named in this file, including Rumiantsev, Kotolynov, and Bashkirov, and in the evening of that same day he was ordered to prepare facts for the arrest of Zvezdov, Antonov, and others who were not named in the "Svoiaki" file but who were in their records as Zinovievists. That same evening the arrests indicated by Agranov were carried out. (RKEB 3, 473)

Makarov may have made these statements — or he may not have. We can't verify this because we do not have his testimony. But even supposing it exists, it is false, as we shall show. Moreover, Lenoë must be aware of this too. According to Lenoë himself Kotolynov was arrested on December 5 (Lenoë 283); Rumiantsev, on December 6 (288). Antonov and Zvezdov had still not been arrested on December 7 (289-90, Agranov statement). But Makarov said they were arrested on the evening of December 2. Therefore Makarov's statement is wrong.

It is possible that Makarov, pressured by Khrushchev-era researchers to inculcate Stalin, was deliberately lying. Lenoë himself admits that Khrushchev and his aides were suborning false testimony for this purpose.

To understand the positions that Serov and the USSR prosecutor's office took in their memoranda, it is necessary to see precisely what was at stake in the deliberations of the Molotov commission. The commission was charged with investigating the show trials of the later 1930s and determining whether the charges were valid. The Kirov murder and the trials of the "Leningrad Center" and "Moscow Center" that immediately followed were just the starting point of the inquiry, but everything that followed depended on these events. **If the official charges in the first two trials — that former Zinoviev supporters / 592 / had conspired to murder Kirov -were entirely bogus, then the indictments in all of the succeeding show trials collapsed. The latter indictments were built on the earlier ones, albeit in a confused and illogical way. But if there was some truth to the charge that Zinovievites conspired to kill Kirov, then that preserved the possibility of arguing that the later charges were also valid, at least in part. Therefore Serov and Rudenko (or their subordinates who authored the memoranda) chose to make a clear-**

*cut argument that Nikolaev had had no relationship at all with the ex-Zinoviev supporters convicted in the trial of the "Leningrad Center."*

*It appears that Serov or his boss had thought through this strategy, to deny any connection at all between Nikolaev and the Zinovievites, even before the "Secret Speech." On January 27, 1956 the KGB destroyed central records on the case file "Svoiak," the all-union surveillance operation against the Zinovievites. It seems likely that "Svoiak" contained more evidence than Serov wanted Molotov to see, either of counterrevolutionary talk among former Zinovievites and/or of Nikolaev's connections with the accused in the "Leningrad Center." Serov concealed other evidence of connections between Nikolaev and the ex-Zinovievites Kotolynov, Antonov, and Shatsky. The excerpts from Nikolaev's diaries that he released to the Molotov commission in April 1956 contained no references to these men. But we know from later releases of data that Nikolaev did mention all three in his diaries. (Lenoe 591-2; emphasis added, GF)*

I have put in **plain boldface** above the passage in which Lenoe outlines the importance of the Kirov case for anyone wanting to understand the rest of the Moscow "show trials." Obviously, Khrushchev and his men realized that by the evidence available in the archives, these trials and the conspiracies detailed at them did not appear to have been faked. It was they themselves who would have to fake: falsify, withhold and destroy evidence, in order to build a case that these conspiracies did not taken place. I have put in *italic boldface* the passages where Lenoe summarizes some of the falsifications that Serov, Khrushchev's man, accomplished in order to try to convince the Molotov Commission that Nikolaev was not linked to the clandestine Zinovievite conspirators.

Early in his book Lenoe explains how Khrushchev's men set out to "incriminate Stalin" (7) — in plain language, to frame him.

The 1960-1961 investigation run by the Party Control Committee (KPK) was aimed explicitly at inculcating Stalin in the Kirov murder.  
(8)



Lenoe is speaking of a separate investigation from that outlined above, which took place in the period 1953-1957.

The exposure of the dishonesty of the phony Khrushchev-era investigations — we could use scare quotes and write "investigations" — is one of the most useful parts of Lenoe's book. It also fits Lenoe's purpose, which is first of all to demolish the Khrushchev-Gorbachev account that Stalin had Kirov assassinated before going on to assert his own claim that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman."

But Lenoe does not seem to realize that this also undermines the credibility of Makarov's statement (above), which was made to the Party Control Commission on January 22, 1961—precisely the investigation Lenoe admits "was aimed explicitly at inculcating Stalin in the Kirov murder." Nor does he appear to realize that the arrest dates he himself cites prove that Makarov's statement is incorrect. At least, he fails to point out this obvious fact — obvious from the information he cites in his own book — to his readers. Lenoe does say:

First, many of the second-, third-, or more-hand tales the Kirov murder are directly contradicted by documentary evidence. (9)

But this is exactly the case with the third-hand account of Makarov (third-hand because of the supposed chain Makarov — Khrushchev-era study — "Reply to Iakovlev") of which we have only the text of the last.

The dates of December 2 and December 3 are crucial to any attempt to argue that Stalin "framed" the Zinovievites. Below is the specific passage that Lenoe cites, also from the "Reply to Iakovlev":

On December 3 1934 at a meeting of the investigators Ezhov, Agranov and Liushkov urged them to obtain as quickly as possible confessions from those arrested that there was in Leningrad a "terrorist center" of the underground organization of Zinovievites, according to whose assignment Nikolaev had carried out the murder of S.M. Kirov. In conclusion Ezhov urged the investigators to demonstrate the greatest perseverance and in the shortest possible time to "soften up" the

arrested men and to obtain from them confessions about their participation in the Zinovievist terrorist organization. (473)

But a passage on page 482 of "Reply to Yakovlev" proves that this cannot be true:

Only on the following day, December 3, 1934, at the time of a conversation with the leaders of the UNIVD Medved' and Fomin Stalin first said: "The murder of Kirov is by the hand of an organization, but of what organization it is hard to say at this moment."

In other words on December 3 Stalin had no idea what kind of organization was responsible. The "Reply" recognizes this fact:

We can consider it established that until December 4 there was no talk of Zinovievists, as on that day Agranov, in his report to Stalin, named Kotolynov and Shatskii Trotskyists, and not Zinovievists. (RKEB 3, 482)

Quoting the passage above from the "Reply" Lenoe (272) admits that on December 3

"Stalin told Medved and Fomin that "Kirov's murder is the doing of some organization, but it's hard to say at the moment what organization."

But thereupon Lenoe goes on to claim:

"He was less candid than he had been with Yezhov and Agranov, to whom he had **probably** already issued instructions to build a case against the ex-Zinovievites." (272; emphasis added, GF)

Lenoe bases this "probably" on Makarov's statement from "Reply." But, as we have already demonstrated, Makarov was wrong about the arrest date. As we have just seen, the authors of "Reply", Iurii Sedov et al. — the very work upon which Lenoe is drawing here — discount this date as well. Furthermore, as Lenoe himself admits, Makarov's testimony was part of the attempt by Khrushchev and his men to inculcate Stalin.

Lenoe himself discusses the fact that researchers have proven that false memories can be constructed by the influence of others (9-10). In addition, the passage of 16 years between the alleged event Makarov claims to "remember" (December 2-3 1934) and the date of his testimony to Khrushchev's men (January 22 1961) means that Makarov's memory of precise dates would be unreliable even if there had been no pressure to inculcate Stalin -a fact that Lenoe also recognizes .

We know that during the two following days, December 4 and 5, the NKVD investigators were still investigating possible Trotskyist involvement in the Kirov assassination. They would not have done so if Stalin had ordered them to follow up on a Zinovievite connection. Lenoe admits that in Agranov's telegram to Stalin of December 4 "There is no mention of the Zinovievites or other specific Communist opposition groups." (280)

Aside from Liushkov's 1939 article — we will return to it in detail later — Makarov's 1961 testimony is the **only** alleged evidence that Stalin in any way ordered the NKVD investigators to implicate the Zinovievites. And Makarov's 1961 testimony is false — that is, if he made it at all for, as we have already noted, we have it only at third hand.

Shortly after this Lenoe makes the following claim:

"...interrogation protocols show a sharp turn in the investigation on December 4. On that day Agranov began pressing Nikolaev for the first time about his connection with the **Zinovievites.**" (281; emphasis added, GF)

But this statement of Lenoe's is flatly false, as the evidence Lenoe cites immediately proves:

**Question:** What influence did your connection to former oppositionists-Trotskyites have on your decision to kill Comrade Kirov?

**Answer:** [Nikolaev] My ties with the **Trotskyites** Shatsky, Vanya Kotolynov, Nikolai Bardin, and others influenced my decision to kill

Comrade Kirov. However, I knew these people not as members of any group, but as individuals ... (281; emphasis added, GF)

Lenoe acknowledges that he has a problem here:

Government investigators in 1956 and 1990 used the fact that both Nikolaev and his interrogators at first labeled Kotolynov and the other / oppositionists Trotskyites to argue that as of December 4 Stalin had not decided to target the Zinovievites. (ML 283-4)

Lenoe tries to get around this obvious contradiction thus:

The boundary between Zinovievites and Trotskyites was not clear, either in reality or in the minds of the regime's security officers. (284)

NKVD men could not tell Zinovievites from Trotskyites? Lenoe does not even try to cite evidence to defend this absurd statement. Why does Lenoe do this, rather than following the evidence wherever it leads? Apparently Lenoe wants not to discover the truth but to argue that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman". It appears as though Lenoe may be doing what Khrushchev and his men did 60 years ago: trying to bolster a preconceived conclusion that is not supported by the evidence.

Let's review Lenee's sleight of hand here. Lenoe states: "On that day Agranov began pressing Nikolaev for the first time about his connection with the Zinovievites." But what Agranov actually said was: "What influence did your connection to former oppositionists-Trotskyites have on your decision to kill Comrade Kirov?" On December 4 Agranov was looking for a connection not to Zinovievites but to Trotskyites. Agranov's statement *disproves* Lenee's contention!

"In any case, no matter what opposition groups were named, the fact of their naming would not constitute evidence that Stalin had taken the initiative to "frame", or even to implicate, either Trotskyites or Zinovievites. Rather, this evidence favors the opposite thesis — that it was Nikolaev himself, not Stalin or NKVD investigators, who first raised the issue of involvement of oppositionists in the assassination.

It might be objected that this question-and-answer could suggest that it was the NKVD interrogators, rather than Nikolaev, who had insinuated the issue of oppositionists (in this case, Trotskyists) into the investigation. But this was not the case. Lenoë admits that Nikolaev had mentioned Kotolynov, Antonov, and Shatsky in his writings:

I remember how I. Kotolynov and I visited managerial offices collecting funds for Komsomol work. In the ward committee there was a strong team — Kotolynov, Antonov, and Shatsky on the periphery. In 1924-1926 Kotolynov joined the new opposition and at one of the Komsomol congresses traitorously declared that we are not St[alinists] but L[eninists]<sup>83</sup>, now he gnaws the granite of science. (283)

<sup>83</sup> We have located Kotolynov's speech in the transcript of the Komsomol congress in question and discuss it in one of the following chapters.

Lenoë has taken this passage too from "Reply ...", p. 462:

Nikolaev mentions Kotolynov and Antonov in his diary: "I remember how ... [the paragraph quoted immediately above follows — GF]

Lenoë concedes that the NKVD would have seized these and other writings of Nikolaev's on the very day of Kirov's murder, December 1 1934:

Leningrad NKVD officers seized this journal together with Nikolaev's "testament" and other "notes" (*zapisi*) when they raided Nikolaev's apartment on the evening of December 1, 1934, immediately after Kirov's murder. The NKVD also confiscated various other writings by Nikolaev in a raid on the apartment where his mother and sister Yekaterina lived, probably also on December 1. (193)

So from December 1 the Leningrad NKVD had Nikolaev's writings, in which he mentioned Kotolynov, Antonov, and Shatsky. And, as Lenoë admits,

Agranov had good reason to question Nikolaev about Kotolynov and Shatsky. In the NKVD library there were informer reports on both men

in a file labeled "Politikan" ("Politico"), which covered the activities of former Zinoviev supporters in Leningrad. (283)

This is also taken from the "Reply to Yakovlev", though for some reason Lenoë changes the name of the file from the plural, "politicos", to the singular<sup>84</sup>:

In the archival agent materials titled "Politicos" there was a list of persons that included Kotolynov, Levin, Mandel'shtam, Miasnikov, Rumiantsev, Sositskii, Tolmazov, Khanik, Antonov, Sokolov and Zvezdov... (RKEB 3, 469)

On December 4 Agranov wrote the following note to Stalin:

Via an agent report, based on Nikolaev's own words, it has been established that his best friends were the Trotskyites Kotolynov, Ivan Ivanovich and Shatsky, Nikolai Nikolaevich.

Although Lenoë cites an archival source for this statement in fact it too is in the "Reply to Yakovlev", which also states the following: (RKEB 3, 460)

Together with this, in the presence of the jailhouse workers of the NKVD Nikolaev in his cell on December 4 supposedly uttered aloud in his sleep the names of Kotolynov and Shatskii. Katsafa, who had overheard this, immediately reported this to Agranov. On December 4 Agranov informed Stalin by government communication: "Through an agent it has been explained from the words of Leonid Nikolaev that his best friends were the Trotskyists Kotolynov and Shatskii." Subsequently in a talk on February 3, 1935 at a meeting of the operatives of the NKVD of the USSR, Agranov said that once they had received these facts "we seized upon this slip of the tongue and developed the investigation in this direction."

<sup>84</sup> Lenoë does the same thing with the file he calls "Svoiak", "brother-in-law." In the Russian original it was called "Svoiaki", in the plural.

The Khrushchev-era report of 1956, which Lenoë cites approvingly, claims:

Katsafa... could have received from them [NKVD officials] the task of persuading Nikolaev to confess to being a participant in the Zinovievite opposition, and [sic] they also gave him [Katsafa] the names of Kotolynov and Shatsky. (Lenoe 285)

This is not evidence but pure speculation. Nothing could more clearly show the desperation of the Khrushchev-era researchers! They were obviously so frustrated by their inability to find any evidence to support either the story that Stalin had ordered Kirov's assassination or that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" that they were forced into distortions like this one.

Katsafa's testimony was as inconvenient for Khrushchev's men as it is to Lenoe's preconceived notions. Lenoe calls Agranov's recounting of Katsafa's story a "schoolboy lie" (284) but never gives any evidence or reason for calling it a "lie". This is the equivalent of "wishing it away", as Khrushchev's men had done. Once again, this is a "tell", a tacit but obvious admission by Lenoe that his hypothesis runs counter to all the evidence.

Lenoe is forced to rely heavily on the interpretation of the April 1956 KGB report from which he cites this statement.

Katsafa claimed that several days after his arrest Nikolaev gave revealing testimony of his participation in the Zinovievite organization. Katsafa at the time supposedly heard Nikolaev pronounce in his sleep the phrase, "If they arrest Kotolynov, there's no need to worry, he is a strong man, but if they arrest Shatsky, he's a punk [*meluzga*], he'll give everything away." Katsafa then supposedly wrote this phrase down in his notebook and immediately reported it to Agranov and Mironov, after which he received an order to prepare a detailed official report. (Lenoe 284-285)

As we have seen, by Lenoe's own admission the 1956 investigation was set up for the purpose of fabricating a case against Stalin. But Lenoe needs to have a reason not only to cast doubt upon Katsafa's story but to suggest that the NKVD had instructed Katsafa to get Nikolaev to inculcate the Zinovievites.

The April 1956 report continues:

Katsafa's claim is dubious, as Radin, whom we [also] questioned, who was together with Katsafa in the cell with Nikolaev, does not confirm it, but says that Nikolaev [...] often spoke deliriously in his sleep, mentioned some last names, but never pronounced complete phrases.

For this reason **it is to be supposed that** Katsafa, who was the person [the guard] closest to the leaders of the USSR NKVD /a relative of Leplevsky [I.M. Leplevsky, a prominent security official in Ukraine and Belarus in 1933-1935]/ **could have received** from them the task of persuading Nikolaev to confess to being a participant in the Zinovievite opposition, and [sic] they also gave him [Katsafa] the names of Kotolynov and Shatsky. (Quoted by Lenoë 285; emphasis added, GF)

This is just more desperate speculation by Serov, who was trying to provide Khrushchev with the phony evidence his boss needed to begin "rehabilitating" the Moscow Trials defendants. Kirilina, upon whose account Lenoë often relies and whose work he praises highly, does not suggest that this account was fabricated and gives the date: "the night of December 4". Given the date of Agranov's report to Stalin, this would have been December 3-4. (Kirilina 277)

Kirilina gives as her source for Katsafa's story the article by IU. Sedov in *Trud* of December 4, 1990. But in reality this time the quotation from Katsafa is not in that article but in the 1963 "Zapiska" of the Shvernik Commission. There it reads as follows:

From the materials of the case and the verification it is clear that one of the reasons for the arrest of the so-called co-participants of Nikolaev was the report of the NKVD worker Katsafa, who was guarding Nikolaev in his prison cell. In this report, written on December 4, 1934, he reported to Agranov that Nikolaev in his sleep had supposedly uttered the following words:

"If they arrest Kotolynov there's no need to worry, he is a strong-willed person, but if they arrest Shatskii — he is a punk, he will give up everything." (Archive of the KGB attached to the Soviet of Ministers of the USSR delo [case] No. OV-5, vol. 1, p. 39)



Despite the obvious clumsiness and meaninglessness of these words and of the report itself Agranov immediately reported to Stalin by telegraph that by "agent work" it had been established that Nikolaev's "best friends" were the former Trotskyist Kotolynov and the former anarchist Shatskii, "from whom he had learned much" (Archive of the KGB, archival investigative file No. 100807, vol. 15, pp. 221-222).

Soon Kotolynov and Shatskii, who really were former Zinovievists, were arrested, and confessions were obtained from Nikolaev that his ties to these persons influenced his decision to carry out the murder of Kirov.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>85</sup> "Zapiska Komissii Prezidiuma TsK KPSS v Prezidium TsK KPSS of Rezul'tatakh Raboty po Rassledovaniuu Prichin Repressiy I Obstoiatel'stv Politicheskikh Protsesov 30-kh Godov." In RKEB 2, 541-670. (Zapiska). Here at 546-547.

But all the effort expended by Khrushchev's men and by Lenoë in attempting to discredit Katsafa's statement was pointless. For, as Lenoë has already admitted, the NKVD men had more than enough reason to question Nikolaev closely about his ties with proven opposition figures. No investigator would have ignored or chalked up to mere coincidence the fact that prominent oppositionists, with good reasons to harbor hatred of Kirov, should have been so close to Nikolaev as to appear in his diaries.

According to Sedov et al., "Reply to Iakovlev" (RKEB 3, 460) it was Nikolaev himself who began talking about Kotolynov and Shatskii:

On December 4, 1934 Nikolaev explained during interrogation that he knew Kotolynov, Shatskii and Bardin "individually", and not as members of any grouping, and that these persons, in his words, had not taken part in the crime he had committed. In an interrogation of December 5 Nikolaev again stated: "I did not draw Kotolynov into this, since I wanted to be the sole perpetrator of the terrorist act against Kirov according to my own convictions."

At a second interrogation, also on December 5, Nikolaev confessed that "if for some reasons or other I was delayed in carrying out the

murder of Kirov then I would have set about creating a group to carry it out and would have drawn in, first of all, Bardin, Kotolynov, and Shatskii."

Lenoe translates the relevant parts of Nikolaev's confessions of these dates on pp. 281 and 287.

Nikolaev's statements here would have immediately aroused the suspicions of any investigator. First Nikolaev implies that Kotolynov would have agreed to be "recruited" to the murder scheme if Nikolaev had asked him, then he states openly that Bardin, Kotolynov, and Shatskii would have agreed to do it.

Nevertheless, Agranov's December 5 telegram to Stalin (Lenoe's document #45, 285-287) is further evidence that the NKVD was still not looking for Zinovievites but for Trotskyites. That means that as of December 5 Stalin had not directed investigation toward Zinovievites.

Agranov wrote:

1. According to Leonid Nikolaev's testimony the Trotskyists Shatskii, Bardin and Kotolynov were of a terrorist frame of mind.

Nikolaev confessed: "Nikolai Bardin is unquestionably of a terrorist frame of mind; he had the same frame of mind as I did, and I even consider that Bardin's frame of mind was more strongly disposed than was my own."

Further, in answer to the question whether Kotolynov had been drawn into the preparation of the terrorist act against com. Kirov Nikolaev confessed: "I did not draw Kotolynov into this, since I wanted to be the sole perpetrator of the terrorist act against Kirov according to my own convictions. Secondly, I thought Kotolynov would not have agreed to the murder of Kirov but would have wanted to aim higher, that is, to carry out a terrorist act against com. Stalin, to which I would not have agreed."

Lenoe cites this document from archives. It would have been helpful of Lenoe to inform his readers of the fact that it has long been available in print and on the Internet in Russian.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>86</sup> See <http://delostalina.ru/?p=1633> Once again it is in Vasilii Soima's book *Zapreshchennyi Stalin*.

There is no talk of Zinovievites. Agranov calls Shatskii, Bardin and Kotolynov "Trotskyites". Agranov et al. certainly knew the difference between Zinovievites and Trotskyites, despite Lenoe's lame attempt to confuse the two (284; see above).

But more than that: in order to "save" his hypothesis that it was the NKVD investigators, under Stalin's instructions, who inculpated the Zinovievites as terrorists, Lenoe has to account for Nikolaev's statement here. If Lenoe wished to argue that this statement of Nikolaev's was false, then he would have to argue that the investigators either (a) had somehow forced Nikolaev to make this statement; (2) had somehow persuaded him to falsely accuse them; or (3) had fabricated the statement outright and Nikolaev never made it at all.

But Lenoe does not claim any such explanation. It's easy to see why — he has no evidence. But this means that here Lenoe tacitly concedes it was Nikolaev and no one else who first accused the Zinovievites of terrorist aims.

Lenoe continues to try to rescue his theory that Stalin, via the NKVD, fabricated the involvement of the Zinovievites:

On December 5...[b]y encouraging him to monologue about the "moods" of his old Komsomol acquaintances, Agranov and Dmitriev seem to have nudged Nikolaev towards incriminating them directly in Kirov's murder. (287)

It appears that Lenoe would like very much to imply that the interrogators somehow forced Nikolaev to incriminate these men. But he has no evidence at all, so he has to make do with mere assertion. Here Lenoe also misconstrues normal investigative procedure. Any interrogator would have

done as Agranov and Dmitriev did — follow the investigator's adage to "keep the suspect talking". Particularly since Nikolaev had just claimed the Zinovievites had terrorist intentions themselves.

Lenoe continues:

For example, they had him describe again his meeting with Shatsky in August. In Nikolaev's quite plausible account Shatsky expressed anger at Stalin's Seventeenth Party Congress speech calling for the firing of former oppositionists ... (287)

But Stalin never called for any such thing at the 17th Party Congress — a fact that the interrogators could easily check since the transcript of the Congress had already been published, and in addition Stalin's speeches had been printed separately. Therefore, if Nikolaev really said this — Lenoe does not quote the text and it has not been published elsewhere — then he was now telling flagrant and therefore more desperate lies. This in turn would have been a signal to the investigators that Nikolaev had exhausted any cover story he might have worked out in advance and was now nearing the end of his endurance. For in addition to being false this story would not have helped Nikolaev even if it had been true.

Why does Lenoe not point this out? We can't say, but even if this story of Shatskii's motive were true it would not provide any evidence for Lenoe's contention that the NKVD men somehow compelled Nikolaev to inculcate the Zinovievites.

Lenoe continues:

Agranov and Dmitriev also prompted Nikolaev about the supposed terrorist moods of Kotolynov and Bardin until he said that "If I'd had trouble killing Kirov myself, I'd have recruited Bardin, Shatsky, and Kotolynov, and they'd have agreed to do it." (287-288)

Again Lenoe cites an archival document here, and once again it is in. Sedov et al., "Reply to Yakovlev". We have already quoted it above; here it is again.

At a second interrogation, also on December 5, Nikolaev confessed that "if for some reasons or other I was delayed in carrying out the murder of Kirov then I would have set about creating a group to carry it out and would have drawn in, first of all, Bardin, Kotolynov, and Shatskii." (RKEB 3, 460)

Sedov et al. don't claim that the NKVD men "prompted" Nikolaev's statement. But in a way they must have done so. They would have been fools not to just keep Nikolaev talking about his terrorist intentions. Nikolaev was running out of plausible lies. Sooner or later he would begin to contradict himself, let something of the truth slip.

When Lenoe comes to discuss the first occasion when Nikolaev directly implicated Shatsky, Kotolynov, Rumiantsev, and IUskin in Kirov's assassination he puts quotation marks around the word "confession:"

Eventually Nikolaev "confessed" that he had recruited Shatsky to watch Kirov's apartment for him, and strongly implied that Kotolynov had masterminded a conspiracy to murder Kirov. Moreover, he said that Kotolynov was planning to go to Moscow to assassinate Stalin. Nikolaev also implicated Vladimir Rumiantsev, the former Zinovievite who had returned to a prominent position on the Vyborg Ward executive committee, and Ignat Grigorevich Yuskin, a longtime acquaintance. (288)

This "argument by scare quotes" is a characteristic of Lenoe's presentation that we discuss in more detail elsewhere in this essay. It appears that Lenoe employs it when he wants his readers to doubt or discount the veracity of some statement but he cannot give any reason why they should do so. The reason in this case appears obvious: the statement contradicts Lenoe's preconceived conclusion that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman", so presumably Lenoe would like to discredit it or otherwise conjure it away. But Lenoe has no grounds to do that, so the scare quotes are his only recourse.

Therefore the scare quotes are also a "tell". Like a poker player trying unsuccessfully to bluff Lenoe's unjustified quotation marks "telegraph" his anxiety to the attentive reader: "I have nothing in my hand." If Nikolaev's

confession is genuine, Lenoe's whole thesis — that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman", that all the defendants were "framed" and murdered — falls apart. But Lenoe has no evidence whatsoever to suggest that Nikolaev's confession is anything but genuine! Hence, the "bluff."

Lenoe has also read a number of these December 6 interrogation confessions of Nikolaev's (n.16, pp. 773-4). According to this note there are *seven* confessions totaling 41 pages in length (Lenoe concedes that this may be a single long confession with alternating interrogators). These would appear to be very important texts!

But Lenoe does not quote anything from these documents. Why not? If he were an objective researcher Lenoe would be obligated to inform his readers why he is omitting all these confessions. He is especially obliged to do so since these seven confessions come at a crucial time in the investigation, when Nikolaev was beginning to directly implicate others, to change his story from "lone gunman" to conspirator.

Lenoe correctly notes that the better treatment Nikolaev was given when he proved cooperative was normal investigator practice.

How were these and later confessions extracted from Nikolaev? Like police interrogators all over the world, NKVD officers alternated soft treatment with coercion, threats, promises, and bargaining. (288)

It is interesting that Lenoe takes it for granted Nikolaev was not tortured. But it is less than forthright of Lenoe to refer to "coercion" and "threats", since he has no more evidence of them than he does of torture.

Lenoe tries hard to find some form of "coercion" or "threats". For example, he states:

Nikolaev was almost certainly promised that his family would not be harmed if he cooperated with the investigation."

He has no evidence whatsoever for this statement so he tries to invent some. At note 18 (p. 774) to this passage Lenoe writes:

Kirilina, *Neizvestnyi Kirov*, 251, provides the evidence that Nikolaev hoped to save his family. Unfortunately she does not provide a citation for her quotes.

But this statement is not accurate. Here is what Kirilina writes at that page:

Nikolaev undoubtedly loved his wife very much. At his interrogations he repeatedly said that ('my wife did not know anything', 'did not guess anything', asked for "mercy towards her."

Lenoe has distorted what Kirilina wrote. According to Kirilina Nikolaev was not at all asking to "save his family". He was simply trying to deny any guilt on the part of his wife. We can better understand why when we see the evidence that Mil'da Draule was a full participant in the conspiracy to murder Kirov.

Lenoe writes that "Kirilina ...provides the evidence". But this is false. Kirilina does not even provide a source for these short phrases in quotation marks. And they would mean nothing if she had provided sources for them, for they are not evidence that the investigators used his family either as bait or as a threat.

However, thanks to Lenoe we know:

- that Nikolaev's brother Piotr confessed to participating in the murder of Kirov along with his brother; (Lenoe 289)
- that on or about December 9 Mil'da Draule "confessed that she shared the anti-Soviet views of her husband" (306).

Thanks to Kirilina we know that on December 11 Draule confessed that she had been hiding the fact that her husband held oppositional views.

Nikolaev blamed the CC of the AUCP(b) for its militaristic policy, for spending huge sums on national defense, building military factories, and by doing so raising an artificial furor about an invasion threatening the USSR. This hubbub, in his words, was calculated to distract the attention of the workers from the hardships caused by the erroneous policy of the CC... The character of his sentiments and exasperation

against the Party apparatus took an especially sharp character after his expulsion from the Party. (Kirilina 258)

Although Kirilina is one of his main sources Lenoë omits any mention of this. Why? He does mention the following facts concerning Draule:

- that on January 10, 1935 "Milda Draule signed testimony asserting that Nikolaev had visited [Latvian consul in Leningrad] Bissenieks to discuss 'the question of detaching various national regions from the USSR'; (Lenoë 387)
- that at her trial on March 11, 1935 Mil'da Draule confessed that she had been seeking a pass to the Party meeting of December 1 in order to "help" her husband. (Kirilina 374-5; Lenoë 387-388). When asked "Help him in what?" she answered, somewhat vaguely, "It would have been obvious there, according to the circumstances."

To the question what aim she was pursuing by obtaining a pass to the December 1 meeting of the Party active at which com. Kirov was to have made a report Mil'da Draule replied that "she wanted to help Leonid Nikolaev". In what? "It would have been obvious there, according to the circumstances." In this way we have established that the accused wanted to help Nikolaev to carry out the terrorist act.

There must be other interrogations of Draule, plus her trial transcript, in which she states that she really was trying to get a pass to the Party meeting to which her husband was also trying to get a pass. These materials would no doubt help complete the picture of Draule's involvement in the murder. We can be sure that if these materials exculpated Draule in any way they would have been made public, as Gorbachev's men were trying hard to find any and all evidence that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman."

The matter of the time of Draule's first interrogation has always been somewhat of a mystery. But Draule's confession of March 11, 1935, cited above, implies that Draule must have been at Smolny at or near the time of the assassination. And this in turn could explain IUrii Zhukov's claim that Draule's first interrogation began at 4:45 p.m., only a quarter of an hour after the assassination. As Lenoë notes, this too implied that Draule was arrested near Smolny. It might still be the case that Draule was not arrested



until 6:45 p.m., as Lenoe suggests (176). But it would be a considerable coincidence if Draule had been seeking a pass to the meeting, and therefore had been at Smolny, but had then left and was arrested at her home.

Since Draule's presence in or near Smolny at the time of the assassination would naturally be incriminating, this may explain why Draule's interrogations and the transcript of her trial have not been made public to researchers. But whatever the case, the fact that she had been seeking a pass is itself deeply suspicious, given that her husband had been doing the same thing on the same day and with the intention of killing Kirov. Judge Ul'rikh interpreted this as a confession that Draule was an accessory to Kirov's murder and was prepared, if necessary, to act as an accomplice. It's difficult to interpret her words any other way. And, unlike us today, Ul'rikh had before him the transcripts of her interrogations and had heard her testimony at trial.

Neither Lenoe nor Kirilina present any evidence that any of Piotr's, or Mil'da Draule's, or for that matter, Nikolaev's own testimony, was obtained through compulsion. All the evidence we have points towards Nikolaev's brother's and wife's guilt in helping him.

Therefore there is no evidence at all that Stalin ordered or suggested the NKVD men to inculcate any oppositionists, whether Trotskyites or Zinovievites. This is strong evidence in itself that these men were guilty. When taken together with the other evidence, including the fact that a number of them confessed, while others implicated those who did not confess, any objective student is forced to conclude that the case against the Zinovievites was very strong.

## Chapter 10. *Iurii Sedov, "Reliable Researcher"*

Early in his book Lenoe states:

The archives of the Federal Security Service... are effectively closed, although a number of KGB documents on the murder have been released and *reliable researchers (such as Yu.I. Sedov)* have seen and reported on relevant files. (14; emphasis added, GF)

Late in the book Lenoe quotes from an article by Sedov in *Trud* of December 4, 1990 (668-9 and n. 103, p. 807). This article proves that, far from being "reliable", Sedov is a liar.

### "Svoiaki"

In this article Sedov wrote:

We brought to light several archives [where the authorities] ... do not like the eyes of outsiders, and which to this day are still closed ... These are the agent surveillance documents on persons counted as Zinovievites and other well-known oppositionists. We are talking about, for example, ... the operational file "Svoiaki" on which Stalin was briefed on December 2, 1934... (Lenoe 668)

Lenoe has to know that Sedov is not being truthful here, for earlier in his book Lenoe noted:

On January 27, 1956 the KGB destroyed central records on the case file "Svoiaki", the all-union surveillance operation against the Zinovievites. It seems likely that "Svoiaki" contained more evidence than Serov wanted Molotov to see ... (592)

Here, in the text, Lenoe prevaricates: "destroyed central records on the case file 'Svoiaki'" might suggest that some of the "Svoiaki" file might have been preserved. But the relevant part of Lenoe's footnote, which references a

June 14, 1990 report by Sedov and other official Soviet researchers, simply reads

(469 destruction of "Svoiaki");

- n. 49, p. 799.

About the original text of this report we are left in no doubt: "Svoiaki" did not exist when Sedov et al. did their work:

Unfortunately, the file "Svoiaki" itself has not been preserved; it was destroyed on January 27, 1956. (RKEB 3, 469)

On the same page the report does state that some of the materials from this file were included in the files on some specific defendants:

In the Directorate of the KGB of the USSR for Leningrad province materials from this case file are only partially present, discovered in the files on V.I. Zvezdov, V.S. Levin, and N.P. Miasnikov (all convicted in the case of the "Leningrad center") and in the agent file "Undergrounders."

...Here there are documents for the year 1928 under the heading "Zinovievites", in one of which it is stated that at a meeting of "Left Zinovievites" at Gertik's Rumiantsev was present, and in another it is stated that Kotolynov was maintaining contact with Trotskyists for the mutual exchange of information and of literature.

In this same file there is a series of documents headed "Svoiaki", in which is given a short list of the contents of statements of 1928-1930 of an informational character concerning the political affiliations of the persons under investigation and their meetings with each other, and also a list with the lists of first, middle, and last names of those covered in the case file, to the total of 26 persons, among whom of those brought to criminal justice in the case of the murder of S.M. Kirov Rumiantsev, Mandel'shtam, Kotolynov, and Levin are named.

In his 1990 article in *Trud* Sedov plainly states that "the operational file [delo] Svoiak" was one of the archives he and other Soviet investigators "brought to light" (подняли — a better translation would be "took up"). The USSR was still in existence when Sedov wrote this article in *Trud* in 1990.

The July 14, 1990 report he co-authored and in which he revealed that the "Svoiaki" delo (case file) had been destroyed in 1956 was not published until 2004. Therefore, no one reading Sedov's article in 1990 could know that Sedov was not telling the truth about the "Svoiaki" file.

Nor is this the only falsehood in Sedov's 1990 *Trud* article. Sedov wrote:

Under such circumstances, when all 13 of the defendants unanimously denied their guilt, and in which there is no other evidence aside from the oral, contradictory, and abstract confessions of Nikolaev, the direct perpetrator of the crime, the court had no legal basis to sentence these persons to death.

As we now know, this statement is false. Of course, Sedov and the other Gorbachev-era investigators knew this in 1990, when Sedov published this article. They had access to the investigative materials and the trial transcript. But no one else at that time had any way of knowing that Sedov was lying. It is hard to understand how Lenoë could have missed this, as he must have done when he called Sedov a "reliable researcher."

According to Alla Kirilina four of the defendants, in addition to Nikolaev, confessed both during the preliminary investigation and at trial. These were Antonov, Iuskin, Zvezdov, and Sokolov.

...of the 14 persons brought to trial in the case of the "Leningrad center" only three (not including Nikolaev) — Zvezdov, Sokolov, and Antonov — confessed their participation in the murder of Kirov at interrogation during the preliminary investigation. (Kirilina 283)

At the investigation and from the beginning at the trial Antonov, IUskin, Zvezdov and Sokolov admitted their guilt in participating in the terrorist group and in the preparation for the murder of Kirov and gave similar confessions against other defendants. (301)

According to Lenoë things were a bit more uncertain than Kirilina's account allows.

Late in the course of the investigation (December 17 and after), Antonov, Zvezdov, and Sokolov all claimed that they had heard in general that the organization of ex-Zinovievites was planning terrorist activities against the Soviet leadership (Antonov and Zvezdov said that Kotolynov had told them). This was as far as any of the ex-Zinovievites the NKVD placed in the "Leningrad Center" went in confessing terrorist activities. The indictments' assertions that Antonov and Zvezdov had "confessed themselves guilty in full" were deceptive. (Lenoë 353)

But Lenoë cannot possibly know that the indictments were "deceptive." He would only be able to say this honestly if he had access to all the investigative materials, including all the interrogations of Antonov, Zvezdov, and Sokolov. For all anyone knows, they may well have "confessed themselves guilty in full" in materials to which Lenoë did not have access. But Lenoë states himself that he did not have access to everything. Therefore he cannot know whether the indictments were "deceptive" or not.

Agranov's report to Yagoda [during the trial of December 28-9, 1934), transmitted at 7:30 p.m. on December 28, noted that Antonov pled guilty, confirming all of his depositions, that Zvezdov did the same, and that Yuskin confessed that they knew of Nikolaev's plans to murder Kirov, but did not take them seriously. Sokolov testified to being a member of a counterrevolutionary organization, and to knowing about preparations for an unspecified terrorist act.

Agranov was once again glossing over or ignoring inconvenient testimony. Antonov had in fact denied specific knowledge of preparations for any terrorist attack, and declared that "Terrorist acts are against my principles." Under questioning by Ulrikh he confessed that he still bore responsibility for the murder because he had done nothing to stop it. Antonov also said that he had only met Nikolaev once since 1923, and that was in 1932. This of course would put into serious question whether the two could have worked together on any

plot at all in 1934. Zvezdov denied knowledge of any terrorist plot against the Soviet leaders, declaring that he had hoped that they could be removed from their posts through political action. He claimed not to have met Nikolaev since the spring of 1934.

Careful reading of Yuskin's testimony in one archival transcript reveals that although he pled guilty to all charges, he admitted no wrongdoing under examination. ... In spite of aggressive questioning from Ulrikh, Yuskin insisted that he had had no idea Nikolaev was planning a murder. ...

Sokolov, who had been the first witness to link Nikolaev to a "counterrevolutionary" group of former Zinovievites in Leningrad (December 6), was the most cooperative of this group of defendants. He followed the NKVD script closely, incriminating Zvezdov, Antonov, Kotolynov, and Nikolaev in a terrorist conspiracy, but without giving specifics. (Lenoe 360-361)

Evidently Lenoe has had access to "one archival transcript" of the trial. But he fails to give us any analysis of the evidence presented at the trial as recorded in this transcript. Instead Lenoe only reports a few instances where the accused themselves tried to minimize their own guilt. Lenoe should have cited and discussed other testimony and evidence against each of the accused as well.

For example, Lenoe informs us that a number of the defendants accused Rumiantsev, another of the defendants. Kotolynov named him as one of the leaders of the "Leningrad Zinovievites." (362) Yet in his own testimony Rumiantsev denied any political relations with any of the Zinovievites after 1929, whereupon several others denounced him. (364) Obviously Rumiantsev's, or any defendant's, own denials of guilt would not be taken at face value by any court in any country at any time. Lenoe gives us some idea of the testimony of other defendants against Rumiantsev. But he fails to do the same thing in the case of the other defendants whose testimony he summarizes.

We can't account for the apparent discrepancies between Kirilina's and Lenoe's accounts of the defendants' testimony. Since Lenoe has stated that

he relied heavily on Kirilina's account and respects it, he should have addressed this important issue directly. Instead he fails to inform his readers of it at all. Again, Lenoe's reference to "one archival transcript" suggests that there are, or may be, others. But Lenoe does not discuss this important document in any way, so we have no information with which to evaluate it. This omission is a serious error for any professional historian to make.

Lenoe presents excerpts from the "draft indictments", though not of the actual indictment. In another chapter we have compared Lenoe's text (Document #72, 345-52) with the published indictment. There we discuss some of the important parts of the indictment that Lenoe deleted. In it we can see that the fourteen defendants did not make similar confessions. In the cases of Antonov, Zvezdov, and Sokolov, the three named (above) by both Kirilina and Lenoe,

- Antonov "confessed himself guilty in full";
- Zvezdov "confessed himself guilty in full";

Sokolov "confessed that he was guilty of belonging to an underground counterrevolutionary group, but denied his direct participation in Nikolaev's preparations for the murder of Comrade Kirov." (Lenoe 351-2)

This corresponds exactly to the text of the printed indictment (Indictment 22). Naturally, the indictment summarizes what the defendants confessed before trial, not what was stated at the trial.

We will examine the question of guilt or innocence in another place. It is enough for the present to note that Lenoe agrees that some of the defendants did plead guilty to some crimes.

Therefore, IUrii Sedov was lying when he wrote in the *Trud* article that "all thirteen defendants denied with one voice their guilt". Furthermore, Lenoe was well aware that Sedov was lying. How, then, could Lenoe describe Sedov as a "reliable researcher"? Two serious lies in one short article — about the "Svoiaki" file, and also about the defendants' "unanimously denying their guilt" — prove that Sedov is anything but the "reliable

researcher" that Lenoë called him. Why would Lenoë make such a statement when the very evidence he himself cites refutes that statement?

One hypothesis might be that this is one of Lenoë's many "tells." Lenoë embraces the preconceived conclusion promoted by the Khrushchev-era Soviet leadership, the Gorbachev-era Soviet leadership, the Russian leadership since 1991, and anticommunist researchers such as Kirilina, that Nikolaev acted alone and that the rest of the defendants were innocent, "framed" by the NKVD and, ultimately, by Stalin. Sedov promotes this view strongly. But he evidently cannot do so without having recourse to falsifications.

The same is true of Lenoë. We shall see many examples of this. There is, in fact, virtually no evidence that Nikolaev acted alone, and a huge amount of evidence that he was part of a conspiracy. At times it appears that Lenoë's main task throughout his book is not to try to uncover the truth about Kirov's murder but to try to cover up the evidence that Kirov was murdered by the Zinovievite conspiracy.

Before leaving Sedov we note one more lie — more accurately, a deception — of his. In his *Trud* article Sedov wrote:

The OGPU agents worked "tirelessly", reporting in writing to their unsleeping chiefs about every meeting, party, trips to other cities of the so-called ... oppositionists. Those whom the snoops were hunting did not realize that they were being thoroughly covered. The old OGPU-NKVD reports give off a bad, a very bad odor.

Let's set aside the phrase "so-called oppositionists" — although this too is a deception, a dishonest turn of phrase, since none of those in question ever denied being involved in oppositional activities and we have plenty of evidence that they still were active oppositionists — evidence that was, however, not available to Sedov's readers in 1990.

The truth is that the NKVD investigation of these oppositionists made perfect sense. We now know that Zinoviev, Kamenev, some leading Trotskyists, Safarov, and others too had formed a "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" in 1932, because Trotsky and Leon Sedov discuss this fact in



private letters preserved in the Harvard Trotsky archive. We know that Trotsky and Sedov, through Soviet-based Trotskyists, were in touch with Zinoviev and Kamenev. From this same unimpeachable source we know now — though Trotsky publicly denied it at the time — that Trotsky had written Radek in 1932 exactly as Radek testified at the January 1937 Moscow Trial, and had written to Preobrazhenskii, Sokol'nikov and other oppositionists as well.

Furthermore, we know that the promises of many oppositionists that they were loyal again to the Party line were false. Finally — for now — we know that some of Bukharin's followers had met in 1932 to discuss, among other things, the assassination of Stalin, and that Bukharin himself was already plotting with his followers to assassinate Stalin in 1927 or early 1928. And there is much more. We will discuss this topic more fully in the section of this study titled "dvurushnichestvo", or "two-facedness."

Given all this, NKVD surveillance of these "former" oppositionists was appropriate and, as it turned out, necessary. According to Iagoda's own testimony, this surveillance could have prevented Kirov's assassination — if Iagoda himself had not intervened to stop it.

We know this — and IUrii Sedov had to have known it in 1990 as well, since he and his fellow researchers had access to everything in the Soviet archives, as well as to the Trotsky archives in the USA. Sedov knew it, but fraudulently hid it from his readers in 1990. In 2010 Lenoe did the same thing.

## **Chapter 11. *Documents Lenoe Ignores***

Lenoe ignores a great deal of the available evidence concerning the Kirov assassination. In terms of quantity, most of this is comprised by the testimonial evidence related to the three public Moscow Trials. This Moscow Trial evidence is so extensive that we will reserve examination of it for later chapters.

As he describes in his Introduction, Lenoe did manage to obtain privileged access to much archival material. But despite this unparalleled, though far from complete, access to unpublished materials concerning the Kirov assassination Lenoe fails to discuss some of the evidence that has long been publicly available. Here we'll examine the evidence Lenoe passes over very briefly or ignores altogether.

I am aware of ten such documents:

- Kotolynov interrogation of December 12, 1934 (Lubianka 1922-1936)
- Tsar'kov interrogation of December 13, 1934; (Volkogonov Archive ((VA))
- Kotolynov interrogation of December 19, 1934; (VA)
- Gorshenin interrogation of December 21, 1934; (VA)
- Mil'da Draule interrogation of December 11, 1934; (Kirilina 258)
- Rumiantsev interrogation of December 22, 1934; (K 364)
- Tarasov interrogation of December 22, 1934; (K 364)
- Evdokimov interrogation of December 24, 1934; (K 365)
- Gorshenin interrogation of December 24, 1934; (K 365)

In addition, Lenoe omits altogether some parts of the Indictment of the Kirov defendants of December 24-25. (Lenoe 345-352) I will discuss those parts here as well.

### **Kotolynov Interrogation of December 12, 1934**

On page 316 Lenoe briefly summarizes this testimony by Kotolynov:

Kotolynov confessed that after the defeat of the opposition in 1927 the Zinovievites continued to maintain "an autonomous organization," and that their rejoining the party in 1928 was a "deliberate maneuver." He admitted that the ex-Zinovievites bore "political and moral responsibility for the murder of Kirov" because they had "nourished Nikolaev in an atmosphere of hostility to the Communist Party leadership.

The note to this passage is to an archival document that, naturally, none of his readers can see. For some reason Lenoë conceals from his readers the fact that this testimony has long since been published. (Lubianka 1922-1936, 577-8). Lenoë also omits some of the most important matters it contains.

**In this confession Kotolynov does the following:**

- He confesses to "dvurushnichestvo" — "two-facedness", or duplicity.
- Kotolynov directly incriminates Zinoviev and Kamenev by naming them as the leaders of the secret Zinovievite organization.
- He names members of both the Leningrad and Moscow organizations of Zinovievites.

Perhaps most striking is this:

- Kotolynov confirms that Nikolaev was a member of the secret anti-Party Leningrad group of Zinovievites.

**"Dvurushnichestvo"**

Kotolynov goes into some detail in confessing that the Zinovievites' statements that they now supported the Party line, the requirement for rejoining the Party, were deliberately false.

**Answer:** After the complete defeat of the Zinovievite-Trotskyite bloc by the Party the Zinovievites continued to exist as an independent organization.

All of us Zinovievites continued to maintain organizational contact and regarded all of ZINOVIEV'S declarations about his rejection of his antiparty views and of struggle with the party as a tactical maneuver.

ZINOVIEV'S written directive of June 30, 1928 is a direct confirmation of this tactic. I have already confessed about it and how it gave instructions about deceiving the Party. Together with other members of the organization I personally concealed from the Party this letter of ZINOVIEV'S and thereafter carried out its instructions.

In particular, at the moment we returned to the Party in August 1928 I. RUMIANTSEV, and I. TARASOV, when we were conducting negotiations with com. IAROSLAVSKII, in fact were being directed by KAMENEV who, after our informing him about our negotiations with com. IAROSLAVSKII, edited the final text of our statement of admittance into the Party.

Lenoe omits the fact that here Kotolynov directly accuses both Zinoviev and Kamenev of giving leadership to those who lied to the Party when they rejoined it. When NKVD investigator Liushkov asked him: "Who is the leadership of this counter-revolutionary organization?" — present tense — Kotolynov's answer is significant:

**Question:** Who is the leadership of this counterrevolutionary organization?

**Answer:** ZINOVIEV, KAMENEV, and EVDOKIMOV, BAKAEV, KHARITONOV, and GERTIK, who are in contact with the former.

Here Kotolynov directly implicates Zinoviev and Kamenev in leading the underground Zinovievite organization. This passage establishes the existence of a Moscow Center of clandestine Zinovievite anti-Party activists led by Zinoviev and Kamenev. Lenoe conceals Kotolynov's accusation of them here. Perhaps he does so because Kotolynov's admission is very inconvenient for Lenoe's unsubstantiated theory that no "Moscow Center" really existed and that Zinoviev and Kamenev were "framed" by Stalin (as, indeed, Lenoe insists everybody other than Nikolaev was).

## **Zinoviev and Kamenev Were Lying**

During December 1934 and January 1935 Zinoviev and Kamenev were both testifying that they no longer led such an organization. In an interrogation of December 22, 1934 that Lenoe partially reprints Zinoviev made the following statements:

The moods I have described remained with me until 1932. Naturally, in such a mood I cursed the party leadership and Comrade Stalin personally. But from the time I returned from Kustanaya<sup>87</sup> I have had no such unhealthy feelings. I did not meet with anyone, I did not have any antiparty conversations, I know of no organization nor do I know about any center. (330)

<sup>87</sup> The name of Zinoviev's place of exile was Kustanai, in Kazakhstan (now Kostanai). Lenoe has mistaken the genitive case for the nominative case of the noun.

Kamenev made a similar statement in the one interrogation we have of his from December 17, 1934 from the Volkogonov archive:

I deny not only leadership of any c-r anti-Party organization, but also membership in it, and also that I was informed about the existence of such an organization. From the moment of my departure to Minusinsk in November 1932 I did not have any contact with any of the former participants of the Zinovievite-Trotskyite bloc and did not see any of them.

(Lenoe also fails to mention this document or its contents.)

Elsewhere in his book Lenoe tries to claim that it was Stalin and the NKVD who invented the idea that there were Moscow and Leningrad "centers" of the Zinovievite conspiracy. We examine those arguments of Lenoe's in another chapter. But in discussing this December 12 confession by Kotolynov Lenoe omits the fact that Kotolynov not only agrees that there were Leningrad and Moscow groups but also names some of their members.

Kotolynov also confirmed that the Leningraders had contact with Moscow through Rumiantsev.

**Question:** Who among the members of the Leningrad counter-revolutionary organization are known to you?

**Answer:** V. RUMIANTSEV, S. MANDEL'SHTAM, A. TOLMAZOV, F. FADEEV, IA. TSEITLIN. In the industrial institute: ANTONOV, ZVEZDOV, M. NADEL'. I was in contact with all of them. I was also in contact with the Trotskyite SUROV, who it seems has been exiled for counter-revolutionary activity. Besides which I was in contact with NATANSON until his exile and with BOGOMOL'NIY.

I know LEVIN as an active Zinovievist and I assume that around him are the participants in the group of "the 23", specifically MIASNIKOV and ZELIKSON.

**Question:** Who else besides you maintained contact with the Moscow center of the counter-revolutionary organization?

**Answer:** RUMIANTSEV also maintained contact with Moscow. He was always kept informed and informed me about the latest political news. Specifically, at one of our meetings RUMIANTSEV told me about the removal of ZINOVIEV from the editorial staff of the journal "Bol'shevik". RUMIANTSEV expressed regret about ZINOVIEV and dissatisfaction with the Party leadership's relations with him.

A few pages earlier (310-311) Lerioe prints part of a December 12, 1934 interrogation of Vasili Zvedzov. Asked to list the members of the Leningrad Center — evidently he did not say "group" — Zvedzov named all the persons Kotolynov names here except for Mandel'shtam, plus a few more. One of those Zvedzov identified as a member of the Leningrad group but whom Kotolynov did not explicitly name was Nikolaev. Kotolynov's and Zvedzov's confessions corroborate each other.

The fact that Kotolynov did not name Nikolaev as a member of the Leningrad group is not surprising. Nikolaev had just murdered Kirov, so who would have wanted to volunteer that he had contact with Nikolaev? We

possess other testimony, including the evidence of Nikolaev's diary and Nikolaev's statement in his cell on December 4 (whether literally made in his sleep or while talking to himself during the night), that Nikolaev and Kotolynov were close.

We might expect, therefore, that Kotolynov would deny an association with Nikolaev whether he had one or not. But Kotolynov did not deny it. On the contrary: he affirmed it, though in an indirect manner.

**Question:** What can you confess concerning the terrorist act against com. KIROV by the member of your counter-revolutionary group L. NIKOLAEV?

**Answer:** Our organization bears political and moral responsibility for the murder of com. KIROV by NIKOLAEV. Under its influence NIKOLAEV was nourished in an atmosphere of hostility towards the leadership of the AUCP(b).

Kotolynov's statement is in fact an admission that Nikolaev was indeed a member of the Leningrad organization. For one thing, Kotolynov did not object when Liushkov referred to Nikolaev as "member of your organization." Moreover, Nikolaev could not possibly have been "nourished" by "our organization" "in an atmosphere of hostility" towards the Party leadership to the extent that it bore "political and moral responsibility" for the murder unless he had maintained regular contact with the organization over a period of time.

That means that Kotolynov here admits that Nikolaev had indeed been a member of the organization. After all, this was not an organization with "membership cards" or "general meetings" with all members in attendance. It was a conspiratorial communist organization. Probably members met in small groups of 2, 3 or 4 at a time. Such a "cell structure" is the usual manner of meeting for conspiratorial organization. Its members were those who met and whom everyone else considered to be members. There can be no "candidate members" or "one-time guest visitors" for an illegal conspiratorial group of oppositionists! Clearly Nikolaev was a member.

Furthermore, the fact that Kotolynov did not name Nikolaev as a member of the Leningrad center, while Zvezdov did, is evidence that neither Zvezdov's nor Kotolynov's confessions were the result of "means of physical pressure" and were not fabricated. If Zvezdov's (and, as we shall see, Tsar'kov's) naming of Nikolaev had been the result of torture, then torture could also have been applied to Kotolynov so as to make their confessions agree.

Therefore, this extract of Kotolynov's December 12 interrogation-confession, short as it is, contains important and damning evidence. Lenoe's failure to fully discuss it and its implications suggests that Lenoe may have suppressed it because Kotolynov's testimony in it goes counter to Lenoe's contention that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman." Whatever his reasons Lenoe did conceal its contents from his readers.

### **Tsar'kov Interrogation of December 13, 1934**

This interrogation-confession is of primary importance. Neither Kirilina nor Lenoe mentions it at all. For all we know, Kirilina may have never seen it. But Lenoe does not have this excuse. The document is in the Volkogonov Archive and has been available to the public since 2000 either through Inter-Library Loan on microfilm from the Library of Congress or at the LOC itself. Lenoe spent years researching and writing his book. He should have checked the Volkogonov Archive as a matter of course.

Tsar'kov's confession is important for the following reasons:

- He confirms that an oppositional underground Zinovievite group did exist in Leningrad.
- He confirms that Rumiantsev was the leader of the Leningrad group.
- He names Kotolynov as among the four persons who "were our direct leaders, who headed up our struggle against the Party".
- Tsar'kov explicitly states that the group "regarded Kirov with especial enmity, since it was he who personally defeated our leaders in the open struggle in front of the broad masses."
- He confirms that Zinoviev and Kamenev were the "leaders of the Zinovievite organization".



- Tsar'kov admits that the Zinovievites had two plans for overcoming the Party leadership and bringing their own leaders back to power. One was an invasion by imperialist countries, which they initially believed to be inevitable. He explicitly implicated Zinoviev and Kamenev in these plans.
- He confirms that the Zinovievites advocated the "removal of Stalin from the Party leadership" by assassination and explicitly links the Kirov assassination to this.
- Tsar'kov not only confirms that Nikolaev was a member of the Leningrad Zinovievite underground group but that he was "closest to Kotolynov."

We will discuss these last three points in more detail.

### **Plan To Get Rid of Stalin And His Leadership**

Here is the relevant part of the text of Tsar'kov's confession:

The directives which were issued significantly later by the center set forth the view that the possibility of the return of the leaders of the Zinovievite organization — ZINOVIEV, KAMENEV, and others, to the Party leadership could only be realized under one of two conditions:

1/ An invasion of the USSR by imperialist countries. The ensuing war — inevitable, as we believed — must of necessity lead to the return of our leaders to the Party leadership. In this case our policy coincided with the hopes and aspirations of all counter-revolutionary and fascist forces within the country and abroad.

2/ The removal of STALIN ("ustranenie Stalina") from leadership of the Party.

Our first hope was not justified: no war took place. Therefore, in our arsenal in our struggle against the Party, of our effective arguments only one remained: To remove STALIN. On this basis there appeared and grew among us young members the very most extreme sentiments.

NIKOLAEV' S shooting of KIROV, as a result, is a direct and immediate enactment of the sentiments that exist in our organization.

### **"Ustranenie Stalina" — The Removal of Stalin**

Tsar'kov's confession is important not only for the Kirov murder investigation, but for understanding the oppositions of the 1930s generally. The term "removal of Stalin" — *ustranenie Stalina* — was said to come directly from Trotsky, who used it in an article in his *Bulletin of the Opposition*. Elsewhere in this book we show that Bukharin also used it early on, perhaps before Trotsky did, and that his young supporters understood it to mean "by any means necessary" including murder.

In the January 1937 Moscow Trial Karl Radek said that he never had any doubt that it meant "assassination", though Trotsky had not used the word "assassination". Here Tsar'kov, several years before the January 1937 trial, says the same thing — assassination. Therefore, Tsar'kov has confessed that the "young" members of the group were bent on putting their leaders, Zinoviev and Kamenev, back into power through the assassination of Stalin and other party leaders, explicitly naming Nikolaev's murder of Kirov as an expression of this sentiment.

It's important to note what Tsar'kov does not say. He does not claim that anyone, including Nikolaev, was "ordered" or assigned to kill anyone. Rather, he claims that the younger member's "very most extreme sentiments" — this must mean an inclination towards assassination — were the result of two things: (a) the strong hatred towards the Stalin party leadership; (b) the lack of any alternative but the "removal of Stalin" to achieve this goal.

### **Nikolaev As Member of the Leningrad Zinovievite Organization**

Tsar'kov's preceding statement firmly situated Nikolaev's murder within the overall aims of the underground Zinovievite group, and so it was natural that NKVD interrogator Kogan asked him for more details about Nikolaev.

Question: What do you know about the murderer of com. KIROV - NIKOLAEV, Leonid?

Answer: I know NIKOLAEV through our joint work in the Vyborg region [of Leningrad]. He is a Zinovievite.

He was closest to KOTOLYNOV. I do not precisely remember whether he took part in our legal struggle with the Party during the first years of the appearance of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc, or whether he signed the platform of the bloc (all signatures to the platform went through myself and MURAV'EV, Mikh.), or whether he belonged to the category of persons who remained in an illegal position and did not stand forth openly as members of the organization. Our counter-revolutionary organization bears political responsibility for the terrorist act of NIKOLAEV, member of the organization, in whose ranks he was nourished.

### **Importance of Tsar'kov's Confession**

Tsar'kov confirms that Nikolaev was a member of the underground Zinovievite group. He does so in a forthright manner, by identifying him as a member. We recall that Kotolynov tacitly admitted that Nikolaev was a member without explicitly stating that he was one. Although Tsar'kov does not say that Nikolaev was assigned or ordered by the group to assassinate Kirov, he does say that murderous intentions were held by the younger members of the Leningrad organization.

This is confirmed by a passage from the face-to-face confrontation between Ignatii Iuskin and Nikolaev on December 19 and partially reprinted by Lenoë.

**Question to Yuskin:** Did you suggest to Nikolaev that he organize a terrorist attack on Comrade Stalin and did you agree to be a participant in preparation of that act?

**Answer:** Yes, in conversation with Nikolaev I told him that to kill Kirov [sic] it was necessary to kill Stalin.

**Question to Nikolaev:** Do you confirm Yuskin's testimony?

**Answer:** Yes I confirm it. I want to add that in this conversation Yuskin also talked with me about a trip to Moscow to make preparations for a terrorist act on Stalin. (337)

This evidence goes against Lenoe's hypothesis that Nikolaev acted alone. Rather than honestly acknowledging that this evidence goes counter to his hypothesis Lenoe states:

It is likely that Yuskin's interrogators omitted from the protocols Yuskin's attempts to explain that his comments about killing Stalin were meant sarcastically. (336)

Lenoe has no evidence at all to support this "likely" interpretation. On the contrary: judging from Tsar'kov's confession it is quite possible that Iuskin urged Nikolaev to assassinate Stalin instead of Kirov and offered to help him in that act rather than in the Kirov assassination. That is, it is likely that Tsar'kov was an accessory before the fact in the case of Kirov's assassination but may well not have played any role in planning or carrying out this specific murder.

According to Lenoe's summary of the indictment, no fewer than five members of the Leningrad Zinovievite group "attested to 'terrorist moods' among the former oppositionists", thus confirming what Tsar'kov said. In addition, Lenoe says that "Yuskin testified that he knew Nikolaev was planning to attack Kirov beforehand" (354), confirming our interpretation of the passage above.

On the same page Lenoe states:

Kotolynov now suspected that the investigators had lied when they told him that Nikolaev had belonged to the Zinovievite opposition. (354)

This statement refers to something Kotolynov evidently said during the trial and which Lenoe briefly summarizes (362). It would have been more accurate for Lenoe to say that Kotolynov claimed he suspected the investigators had lied to him. In reality there is plenty of evidence that Nikolaev really was a member of the Zinovievite group; moreover,

Kotolynov had, indirectly but unmistakably, identified him as a member as well. Tsar'kov's testimony that Nikolaev was indeed a member refutes Lenoe's statement here.

Kotolynov continued to deny that he knew anything about Nikolaev's membership or intentions. But denials of guilt are to be expected both from the guilty as well as the innocent. For example, Kotolynov testified that Rumiantsev was one of the leaders of the Leningrad organization(362), in which he agrees with Zvezdov and others. Yet Rumiantsev himself stoutly denied even being a member, much less a leader! (357) Clearly one of the two was lying, and it must have been Rumiantsev. Similarly, Kotolynov was lying when he denied knowing about Nikolaev's membership in the Zinovievite group. With all the testimony we have that Nikolaev was close to Kotolynov, including Tsar'kov's, there is no reason to believe Kotolynov's denials.

### **Gorshenin Interrogation of December 21, 1934**

There is also at least one interrogation of Ivan Gorshenin in the Volkogonov Archive. Neither Kirilina nor Lenoe refers to it.<sup>88</sup>

The points of interest for our purposes are the following:

- Gorshenin blames Zinoviev and Kamenev personally, and the Moscow Zinovievite center — he does use the word "center" — for Nikolaev's crime.
- Gorshenin testified that the Moscow center held meetings at which all the members of the center were present. Gorshenin himself claims to have been a member of this center.
- He stated that he himself was "especially" close to Zinoviev, with whom he has had a number of discussions not only in 1932 and before, but since Hitler's taking power January 1933) and "the revolution in Spain". The reference to Spain probably refers to the events of 1932, but those to Hitler's taking power certainly refer to a later year, 1933 at the earliest. Gorshenin also states that he met with Zinoviev after the latter's dismissal from his position on the editorial board of the Party

journal Bol'shevik in August 1934, less than four months before Kirov's murder.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Because the photocopy is poor I have been unable to decipher a few words, especially on the first page.

<sup>89</sup> Zinoviev was dismissed from the editorial board of Bol'shevik by a Politburo decision of August 16, 1934 initiated by Stalin. Khlevniuk, O.V. et al., *Stalin i Koganovich. Perepiska. 1931-1936 gg.* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001), n. 2 p. 433.

Gorshenin explicitly states that the Moscow center continued to spread hostility against the Party leadership "up to the present day", December 1934.

**Question:** What do you know about the political policies of the Moscow center and about its attitude towards the leadership of the VKP(b).

**Answer:** The Moscow political center of the counterrevolutionary organization of Zinovievites has remained up to the present with its position of critical attitude towards the decisions of the Central Committee of the VKP(b) and its hostile attitude towards the Party leadership. I know about this from what individual members of the centers have said and, mainly, from its leader — ZINOV'EV G.E., with whom I met in his apartment on Kalominskii pereulok.

Zinoviev testified that he had no disagreements with the Party's line after 1932. Therefore, Gorshenin's testimony is strong evidence that Zinoviev had been lying. The NKVD interrogator was probably referring to this very confession of Gorshenin's in the following exchange during the December 22, 1934 interrogation of Zinoviev:

Question: The depositions of Gorshenin establish that at the end of 1933 [at the time of] the Fascist coup in Germany and Hitler's coming to power, you personally explained to him the incorrect line of the Comintern and the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which facilitated Hitler's coming to power.

**Answer [Zinoviev]:** I cannot confirm that in any way. (Lenoe 333)

Zinoviev, like Kamenev, continued to change his story. In January 1935, at the time of his trial, he admitted that he was not telling the truth here. Arrested again in July and August 1936, in pretrial confessions both Zinoviev and Kamenev went much further still and admitted direct involvement in the Kirov assassination. We examine those statements elsewhere in this study.

Gorshenin testified that Zinoviev and Kamenev represented the overall leadership of a clandestine oppositional group that continued to meet and conspire against the Party leadership's line right up to December 1934.

In your admissions of 19 December of this year you stated that the political and moral responsibility for the terrorist act against com. KIROV, carried out by NIKOLAEV Leonid, falls upon the Moscow center of Zinovievites and, in the main, personally upon ZINOVIEV and KAMENEV. Tell us what you know about \_\_\_\_\_ of this center, about its activities and its personnel.

Concerning the Moscow Zinovievite center I know that, despite the fact that after the 15th Party Congress it was formally dissolved and liquidated, in reality, judging by the meetings and \_\_\_\_\_ it has in fact continued to exist until today.

In the personnel of the center, in my \_\_\_\_\_, until the present time, are the following persons: ZINOVIEV, Grigorii Evseevich, KAMENEV, Lev Borisovich, EVDOKIMOV, Grigorii Eremeevich, KUKLIN, Aleksandr Sergeevich, BAKAEV, Ivan Petrovich, and SHAROV, Iakov Vasil'evich. In comparison with the old Moscow Zinovievite \_\_\_\_\_ center that existed in the period before the XV Congress consisting \_\_\_\_\_ only in that in it also participated \_\_\_\_\_, Mikhail, and FEDOROV Grigorii.

\_\_\_\_\_ in the personnel \_\_\_\_\_ of the center in the recent period also \_\_\_\_\_ I assume that GERTIK, Artem Moiseevich also \_\_\_\_\_ as a member of it.

## Kotolynov Interrogation of December 19, 1934

Kirilina reprints the text of this interrogation (411-412) but Lenoe never mentions it. The significant points in this short document are these:

- Kotolynov admits to being one of the leaders of the "Leningrad group":

In this connection I admit that I have been in an organization and have been one of the leaders of the Leningrad group.

- He agrees that the mood created by this organization "objectively was bound to lead" [ob'ektivno dolzhny byli privesti] to terror against the leaders of the Party and government" and that he shared responsibility for this.

I admit that our organization bears the political and moral responsibility for the shooting by NIKOLAEV. We have created a mood that objectively had to lead to terror against the leaders of the Party and government. As an active member of this organization I too personally bear responsibility for this.

- He repeated that Kamenev had edited the statement he had written asking for readmission to the Party in 1928 and admitted it amounted to "dvurushnichestvo" or duplicity and that Kamenev helped him in this.

My declaration concerning my readmission to the Party, given in 1928, was first edited by KAMENEV, to whom I went for advice. This declaration was two-faced (*dvurushnicheskim*) and the declaration was in essence a deceiving of the Party. KAMENEV, in editing this declaration, aided me in this deception.

- Kotolynov stated that "after that" his duplicity against the Party continued, since he did not break with the opposition.

After that this deception of the Party on my part continued, since I did not break with the opposition.



- He admits he knew that Zinoviev and Kamenev continued to lead their organization from Moscow and that he had read a letter from Zinoviev to Rumiantsev.

That ZINOVIEV and KAMENEV and their followers lead our organization from Moscow I could have guessed and supposed, since they continued their contact with us. For example, I read the letter of ZINOVIEV to RUMIANTSEV.

This document repeats what Kotolynov confessed earlier, especially in his interrogation of December 12. He claims he had not met with Nikolaev since 1932 or 1933. Specifically:

- By accepting blame, both on his own part and on the part of the organization, for Nikolaev's murder of Kirov Kotolynov tacitly agrees that Nikolaev was a member of the Leningrad group, since it was that group that spread the mood of hostility against Party leaders.
- He states that someone was bound to commit such violence, while never even claiming that he himself tried to do anything to prevent such a result.
- Kotolynov agrees with Gorshenin and others that Zinoviev and Kamenev continued to lead the underground Zinovievite group, and thereby impugns their claims that they had abandoned all oppositional activity and contacts after 1932.

### **Mil'da Draule Interrogation of December 11, 1934**

Kirilina quotes two passages from this interrogation-confession. Lenoë does not mention it.

At the interrogation of December 11, 1934 M. Draule testified: "Nikolaev blamed the CC AUCP(b) for its militarist policy, spending immense resources on national defense, on building military factories, and for this reason it raised an artificial hubbub about the preparation of an invasion of the USSR ... This hubbub, in his words, was calculated to distract the attention of the working people of the USSR from the hardships caused by the incorrect policy of the CC." Draule

also asserted that "his mood and hostility against the Party apparatus took an especially sharp character after his expulsion from the Party." (K 258)

- Draule stated that Nikolaev accused the Party of spending great resources on military preparedness, which he said were meant to distract the attention of Soviet workers from the hardships caused by the Party's incorrect policies.
- Draule said that Nikolaev's mood and hostility were especially sharp against the Party apparatus after his expulsion from the Party.

This statement strongly implicates Draule herself. Kirilina states that she, Kirilina, had interviewed R.O. Popov, who had been in charge of the Special Political office of the Leningrad NKVD in 1934 and who claimed that he had personally interrogated Draule and written the transcript himself. On December 2 Draule had stated that:

She considered him (her husband — A. Kirilina) a secretive person and never heard political conversation from him. (Kirilina 252)

Evidently quoting from the same source, Kirilina summed up Draule's confessions of December 1 through 3 this way:

In general, the confessions of Mil'da Draule of December 1 and 3 come down to the following: "He (i.e. Nikolaev -A. Kirilina) was dissatisfied about his expulsion from the Party, but his sentiments did not take an anti-Soviet character. It was more a case of an affront at the insensitive, as he put it, relationship towards him. During the more recent past Nikolaev was of a depressed condition, was more silent, rarely spoke to me. His mood was also influenced by our unsatisfactory material situation and the lack of his ability to help his family."

Describing Nikolaev as a person Mil'da Draule noted that he was "a nervous, quick-tempered", "however these traits did not assume any especially sharp forms." (Kirilina 252)

According to a report to Stalin by Agranov on December 9, as summarized by Lenoe, Mil'da Draule had "confessed that she shared the anti-Soviet views of her husband". (306) This means Draule admitted that she had been lying earlier when she stated that Nikolaev's attitude had not been "anti-Soviet." By December 9 Draule was not only admitting that her husband's did indeed harbor anti-Soviet views, but also conceded that she herself shared them.

Draule's statement of December 11 amounts to a further admission that she had been lying. She knew Nikolaev's anti-Soviet views in some detail.

It is apparent that Lenoe has deliberately avoided discussion of these gradually escalating admissions by Draule. After the one clause Lenoe devotes to Agranov's December 9 statement about her (306, above) Lenoe next mentions Draule in connection with a January 10, 1935 statement:

On January 10, 1935 Milda Draule signed testimony asserting that Nikolaev had visited Bissenieks to discuss "the question of detaching various national regions from the USSR." (387)

Lenoe also reveals that Draule stated on March 8, 1935 that she knew Nikolaev had visited the Latvian consulate in Leningrad in October 1934 and knew about consul Bissenieks' 5000-ruble "loan" to Nikolaev. (387) Lenoe clearly does not believe Draule told the truth in these statements. But he gives no evidence or any reason for doubting them. Absent evidence, neither Lenoe's nor anybody else's "doubts" are of any relevance. Later in his book Lenoe states that Bissenieks has been "rehabilitated" by the Soviets. But that is not evidence that he or Draule were innocent. Anticommunist researchers have conceded that Soviet-era and post-Soviet "rehabilitations" are made for political reasons only. Those we have been able to examine seldom contain any evidence of the innocence of the persons "rehabilitated."<sup>90</sup>

<sup>90</sup> A number of "rehabilitation" reports are studied in detail in Grover Furr, *Khrushchev Lied...* (Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press Media LLC, 2011).

On p. 387-8 Lenoe reproduces a statement by Ul'rikh, the judge in Draule's case, to the effect that Draule admitted being an accessory to Nikolaev's

murder of Kirov. Given the fact that Draule first lied about Nikolaev's attitude, then revealed more about it, and at length admitted that she shared his anti-Soviet views, further progressive admissions by Draule should not be surprising. They certainly do not constitute evidence that her confessions were "scripted" or are otherwise faked.

### **Rumiantsev, Tarasov, Evdokimov, Gorshenin Interrogations, December 22 — 25, 1934**

Kirilina quotes briefly from these four interrogations. For some reason Lenoë does not mention them. We'll examine Kirilina's quotations here.

N.N. Tarasov, December 22, 1934:

On December 22, 1934 N.N. Tarasov stated at interrogation: "The country finds itself in a difficult situation. The Party leadership sees no exit from this situation. Stalin is leading the country to getting involved in a war, proceeding from the position that it is better to perish in war with the bourgeoisie than as a result of the failure of an internal policy that is the result of bad leadership ... Stalin is leading the proletarian revolution to its doom. (Kirilina 364)

V.V. Rumiantsev, December 22, 1934:

In a statement that supported Tarasov V.V. Rumiantsev, interrogated the same day, confessed as follows: "...as concerns the conversation about resorting to war, which would lead to the doom of the proletarian revolution, I deny that... In the event a war breaks out the current leadership of the AUCP(b) will not be able to deal with the problems that will arise, and the return of Kamenev and Zinoviev to the leadership of the country will be unavoidable. (Kirilina 364)

These two short paragraphs confirm that the Zinovievite group in Leningrad had a political position or "line" on the Party leadership: that they were relying on war with one or more capitalist countries to bring Zinoviev and Kamenev to power. This confirms the first part of Tsar'kov's confession of December 13, 1934, which we have discussed above.

Did Rumiantsev or Tarasov continue and confirm the second part of Tsar'kov's confession: that, once it had become clear that no war was going to take place, the Zinovievites planned to "remove Stalin" by the only remaining means — violence? Kirilina does not tell us. She too is wedded to the preconceived idea that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman". But any investigator, seeing that these two men confirmed the first part of the Zinovievites' plan as outlined by Tsar'kov, would certainly have examined them closely about the second part — assassination.

G.E. Evdokimov, December 24, 1934:

At interrogation on December 24 G.E. Evdokimov stated: "In November 1934 he (Zinoviev -A. Kirilina) criticized the work of creating a united front (in France — Kirilina), and blamed the French Communist Party and also the Comintern leadership because in France they were going for a united front." (Kirilina 365)

I.S. Gorshenin, December 25, 1934

I.S. Gorshenin went even further in his criticism of the foreign policy of the USSR. On December 25 he confirmed at interrogation: "com. Stalin is consciously not activating the activity of the Comintern and is transferring the center of all attention to the official diplomacy of the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and, in essence, is sacrificing the interests of the world proletarian revolution to the idea of building socialism in one country." (Kirilina 365, quoting Zhukov)

Both of these statements reflect the viewpoint, common to both the Trotskyists and the Zinovievists, that the Comintern could have stimulated revolutions in advanced industrial countries if the Soviet leadership had chosen to do so. We know from the Trotsky archives that it was in part on this basis that the Zinovievites joined with the Trotskyites in a bloc in 1932.

Evdokimov's statement affirms that Zinoviev was lying when he said that after 1932 he neither met nor engaged in political discussions with the "former" oppositionists. Both Zinoviev and Kamenev later admitted that they had been lying when making that claim. The confessions of Kotolynov, Gorshenin, and Evdokimov are good evidence that Zinoviev and Kamenev

were not "forced" by some nefarious means to admit to oppositional activity they never did but, on the contrary, were lying when they denied such activity when they were interrogated in December 1934.

### **Prosecutor's Indictment of December 25, 1934**

On pages 345-352 Lenoe translates most of the text of the indictment of the defendants composed by Prosecutor Andrei Ia. Vyshinskii. However, there are some ellipses — places where the text has been omitted. Lenoe notes them by inserting [...]. He doesn't tell the reader what he has omitted.

Lenoe also fails to tell the reader that the complete text of the indictment has been published, much less where. Lenoe quotes it from an archival copy, obviously inaccessible to readers. In short, Lenoe makes it very difficult to find the complete text of the indictment and discover what he has omitted.

However, the indictments were published at the time. I have taken the text of the indictment from the pamphlet *Obvinitel'nye materialy po dely podpol'noi kontrrevoliutsionnoi gruppy zinov'evtsev* (Moscow: Partizdat TsK VKP(b), January 1935; hereafter OM). A comparison with the translated text published by Lenoe shows that the texts are identical except that the country name "Latvia" and the name of the Latvian consul Bissenieks are omitted in the published Russian text, these omissions being marked with the *troetochie* or three dots that indicate an ellipsis.

We will first give the full text and translation of the sections of the indictment omitted in Lenoe's text. Then we'll examine them. Materials in square brackets [ ] are part of Lenoe's text inserted to make sense of the omitted parts.

#### **Omission #1: Lenoe 347; OM 10-11.**

["Nikolaev, L.V. himself, in his testimony of December 13, attested that he belonged to the group of former oppositionists consisting of Kotolynov, Shatsky, Yuskin and others, which carried out counterrevolutionary work"].

... and added:

"... The participants in the group stood on the platform of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist bloc. They considered it essential to replace the existing Party leadership with all possible means..."

(vol. 1, l.d. 266).

As the investigation has established, the whole work of the underground counterrevolutionary terrorist group was carried out under conditions of strict conspiracy. Concerning the strictly conspiratorial character of the relations within this group literally all the members of this group summoned as accused in the present case. In particular the accused Khanik has confessed:

"... For conspiratorial reasons only the members of the center had information about the organizational structure of the organization. However, according to Rumiantsev I knew that our organization had a number of links in places where youth are concentrated ..."

(vol. 2, l.d. 35)

On the conspiratorial nature of the underground counterrevolutionary group Miasnikov, one of the leaders of the Leningrad group, speaks in his confessions. It was at his direction that a full archive of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist opposition was seized at one of the apartments of the participants of this group.

## **Omission #2: Lenoe 349; OM 15-16.**

["The other group, according to the words of Nikolaev himself, acted under the leadership of Shatsky, N.N."]

The Kotolynov group — Nikolaev stated further — was preparing a terrorist act against Kirov, and the immediate accomplishment of it was assigned personally to me.

I knew from Shatskii that the same task had been given to his group too, and that this work was being carried out by it independently of our preparation for a terrorist act. I know from Kotolynov that his group was preparing a terrorist act against Stalin, utilizing those contacts that it had in Moscow. As I stated in my interrogation of December 6 1935 Shatskii and evidently his group were also preparing a terrorist act against Stalin. So each of the groups had a special assignment concerning terror and were pursuing them independently of each other, though their immediate aims often coincided. This is obvious from the way the preparation for the murder of Kirov went; it was being prepared by myself, mainly in the area of the Smolny, and by Shatskii, mainly in the area of Kirov's apartment..."

(vol. 1, l.d. 273-273)

Speaking about Shatskii's role in this affair Nikolaev confessed:

" ... I first met Shatskii in 1933. Our next meeting was in the summer of 1934, at 28 Krasnykh Zor' Street, where Shatskii was carrying out surveillance on the apartment and establishing all of Kirov's movements. He was doing this in connection with the preparation of a terrorist act. ...

During October 1934 I met Shatskii again near Kirov's apartment where he was continuing his surveillance. Since Shatskii was surveilling Kirov's apartment I shifted my attention to the Smolny and intended to kill Kirov at this spot..."

(vol. 1, l.d. 50-51)

Concerning the circumstances that immediately preceded the defendant Nikolaev's making his final decision about carrying out the terrorist act against com. S.M. Kirov, they may be described in the following manner.

**Omission #3: Lenoe 349; OM 17.**



Detailing the contents of this conversation L.V. Nikolaev confessed that it was precisely then that he and Kotolynov worked out the possible variants of the assassination attempt and it was decided that:

"...Which one of the variants of the attack that were under discussion should be taken would have to depend on the circumstances...."

(vol. 2, l.d. 82).

At that time, according to L.V. Nikolaev's confessions, Kotolynov said that -"... the removal of Kirov will weaken the existing leadership of the AUCP(b), that the former opposition has its own accounts to settle with Kirov in connection with the struggle he had organized against the Leningrad oppositionists..."

(vol. 2, l.d. 81). Afterwards...

**Omission #4: Lenoe 350, top; OM 18, top.**

[Nikolaev confessed that;]

Sokolov explained Kirov's route before the October 1934 celebrations.

**Omission #5: Lenoe 350, second ellipsis from top; OM 18, center of page:**

The investigation has established that L. Nikolaev, as a result of decision taken by the counterrevolutionary underground terrorist group to murder com. S.M. Kirov, during a long period of time together with his accomplices prepared very carefully for the accomplishment of this revolting crime.

**Omission #6: Lenoe 350, third ellipsis, center of page; OM 19.**

["The accused Nikolaev L. himself admitted the falsehood and artificiality of such a version of events, explaining that he created this version with the previous agreement of members of the terrorist group,

who decided to present [the] murder of Comrade Kirov as an individual act, and in this fashion to hide the real motives of this crime."]

In his confessions of December 13 of this year NIKOLAEV L. directly states this:

"... I was supposed to portray the murder of Kirov as an individual act in order to conceal the participation of the Zinovievist group in it."

(vol. 1, l.d. 266)

**Omission #7: Lenoe 350, bottom of page; OM 20.**

In one of his confessions the accused Nikolaev directly states: "I informed him (Kotolynov) that I had decided not to accept employment during the period when I was preparing the act, in order to have enough free time to carry out the murder of Kirov. Kotolynov approved my decision."

(vol. 2, l.d. 85).

Mil'da Draule, the wife of the accused L. Nikolaev, confirms the same thing. She testifies:

"...From the end of March 1934 until his (i.e. L. Nikolaev's) arrest he did not work anywhere. The explanation for this is not that Nikolaev could not find work, but that he had a determined aversion to being occupied by any kind of work. Having devoted himself wholeheartedly to preparing the terrorist act, I assume that he did not want to tie himself down with work anywhere..."

(vol. 3, l.d. 201).

The final omission (Lenoe 352; OM 22-24) is a list of the 14 defendants with short biographies. It will not be reproduced here.

**Discussion of Passages Omitted By Lenoe**

Some of the passages above add considerably to our evidence in the Kirov assassination matter. Lenoe does not explain why he has omitted them.

**Omission #1:** Nikolaev confirms the existence of a Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc. The very existence of such a bloc was denied during Khrushchev's time and again during Gorbachev's. But we know that it existed because we have the letters in which Sedov and Trotsky exchanged information about it. So Nikolaev's statement confirms other evidence that Khrushchev's and Gorbachev's men were lying. Yet Khrushchev-era and Gorbachev-era "research" — really, coverups — constitute Lenoe's main evidence that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman"!

Khanik's statement about "links ... in places where youth were concentrated" confirms Zvezdov's confession (Lenoe 310-11) in which he lists the members of the various "links" of the conspiracy, including Nikolaev in the "Leningrad center."

**Omission #2** confirms the existence of parallel conspiracies and gives another explanation for Shatskii's role. According to this passage Shatskii was not mainly helping Nikolaev at all, but instead was involved in a parallel plot to kill Kirov at or near his home. This gives the lie to Genrikh Liushkov's statement at one of his press conferences arranged for propaganda purposes by the Japanese. Lenoe takes Liushkov's statement and articles at face value. We discuss Liushkov, and Lenoe's treatment of him, in a separate chapter.

In **Omission #3** Nikolaev directly accuses Kotolynov of helping him to plan different scenarios for the assassination of Kirov. He also testified that Kotolynov gave a motive: revenge for Kirov's actions against the opposition in Leningrad.

**Omission #4** gives Nikolaev's claim that Sokolov was directly involved in planning the Kirov assassination. We already knew that Sokolov was one of those who confessed to being a knowing accomplice in Kirov's assassination — a confession that discomfits both Kirilina and Lenoe.

**Omission #7** is very significant. Lenoe's (and Kirilina's) case that Nikolaev was a disgruntled loner relies heavily on his supposed inability to find

work, and on his sense of victimization at the hands of Leningrad authorities. Here Nikolaev confessed that he had refused work in order to concentrate on the assassination. Moreover, his wife Mil'da Draule confirms that Nikolaev could have obtained work but chose not to.

Draule's statement is not easily compatible with any assumption that she was innocent, either. She says "I assume", by which she gives the impression that she did not know Nikolaev was preparing for the murder. But she also states that she knew he did not want to get any job. This directly contradicts her claim in her first confessions that Nikolaev was unable to work because (a) he was waiting for the resolution of his appeal to the Party; and (b) he could not work in production because of his health. This constitutes important additional evidence that Draule was an accessory to her husband's crime. She assumed that his decision not to seek work was related to his planning the assassination. Moreover, this puts his act in a quite different category: not one of individual revenge because of perceived injustice towards him, but of political opposition.

Evidently many investigative materials in the Kirov case have been withheld even from Kirilina, head of the Kirov museum for many years, and from Lenoe as well. From what we have, however, it seems clear that what has been withheld must strongly incriminate Nikolaev's wife and the other 13 men tried and executed with him. After all, the official Russian government position is that all but Nikolaev were "framed". Had there been anything at all that pointed towards their innocence it would surely have been released. Yet there is no evidence to support that conclusion.

Kirilina and Lenoe try to support this official position. They too would hardly have missed the opportunity to cite any evidence that supported it. Yet they have nothing.

None of the documents and passages omitted by Lenoe contains any evidence that would strengthen his contention that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman." All of those that contain information of evidentiary value run counter to this contention of Lenoe's and strengthen the other evidence we possess that Kirov was murdered as a result of a Zinovievite conspiracy. In light of these facts it seems likely that Lenoe omitted some of them deliberately because an examination of them weakens, rather than

strengthens, his preconceived conclusion. It is also possible that he did not bother to check the Volkogonov Archive for material relevant to the Kirov assassination, though it had been publicly available for a decade by the time his book was published in late 2010.

## **Chapter 12. Evidence Lenoe Ignores: Kirov Murder to 1936 Trial**

Kirilina and Lenoe examine most of the available evidence from the December 1934 investigation, indictment and trial of Nikolaev and his co-defendants, albeit with some important exceptions. We have carefully reviewed and studied both the evidence Kirilina and Lenoe did examine and that which they ignored, and have critically dissected Kirilina's and Lenoe's treatments of it.

We reached the following conclusions:

- On the evidence now available to researchers there is simply no room for doubt that all of Nikolaev's co-conspirators were guilty of conspiracy to murder Kirov. The evidence of their guilt is overwhelming.
- In fact, there is virtually no evidence that suggests any other conclusion. We devote an entire chapter to each of the two exceptions: Nikolaev's alleged first confession, and Liushkov's 1939 article in *Kaizo*. Upon close inspection we find that neither document is really evidence.
- Lenoe and Kirilina fail in their attempt to refute the validity of the evidence against Nikolaev's co-conspirators.
- Like the Khrushchev- and Gorbachev-era official commissions before them and upon whose work they draw heavily, both Kirilina and Lenoe proceed from the preconceived idea that the Kirov co-defendants must have been innocent.
- Neither Lenoe nor Kirilina investigated the Kirov murder objectively. Rather, they have tortured the evidence in order to arrive at the respectable but preconceived conclusion that Stalin "framed" everybody but Nikolaev. As we have shown, the evidence will not sustain that hypothesis.

Kirilina's book stops at the December 1934 trial. Lenoe claims to have studied all the relevant evidence, including that which became available after the trial.

But this is not so. Lenoë did not study all the relevant evidence.

- Between the end of 1934 (the Kirov trial) and the end of the third Moscow Trial in March 1938 a large amount of new evidence came to light. The Kirov murder figured prominently in the so-called "Kremlin Affair" of 1935 and in all three of the Moscow Trials.
- In addition, some of the pre-trial investigative materials never before available have been published since the end of the USSR in 1991, including a significant body of material dealing directly with the Kirov assassination and the Moscow Trials.

Lenoë fails to study any of this evidence. Instead, he either dismisses it unexamined with disparaging remarks about it, or ignores it, in effect concealing its existence entirely from his readers.

In this chapter we will:

- assemble and study all of the evidence that came to light after the December 1934 trial but before the 1936 Moscow trial, which we will examine in a separate chapter;
- outline and expose how Lenoë omits, dismisses, and/or distorts this evidence. One must assume Lenoë is compelled to resort to these devices in service to his preconceived idea that the defendants were "framed".

The evidence available to us from the Nikolaev investigation and trial of December 1934 by itself is more than sufficient to justify the conviction of all the December 1934 defendants. Naturally the Prosecution had all the pre-trial investigative material available to it, including much that was not available to Kirilina or Lenoë and is still secret today. However, we can be reasonably certain that none of the evidence that remains classified and unavailable today supports the "lone gunman" hypothesis, for if it did, it would have been published by the Russian authorities to support their official position that Nikolaev acted alone. (Khrushchev-era researchers could not find any such evidence either.) The additional evidence uncovered during the period 1935-1938 both confirms Nikolaev's role as a part of a conspiracy in Kirov's murder and exposes the wider network of conspiracies of which the Kirov assassination was one part.

1935

Lenoe was not permitted to read the transcript of the January 15-16 trial of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others of their supporters. He states: "Zinoviev apparently continued to deny that any organized 'center' existed." (378) But this statement cannot be true. Moreover, Lenoe ought to have been aware that it cannot be true.

Lenoe does not mention that on January 13, 1935, just *before* the trial took place, Zinoviev wrote a statement more than 3000 words in length in which he confessed that there was indeed a "center". This statement was first published in the official journal *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* No. 7, 1989, and republished in the collection *Reabilitatsiia — politicheskie protsessy 30-50-kh godov* in 1991.

In it Zinoviev stated the following:

I stated during the investigation that since 1929 we in Moscow have had no center of former "Zinovievites." And I have often thought about this: What kind of a "center" is this — it is simply Zinoviev, plus Kamenev, plus Evdokimov, plus two or three more persons. And they practically never see each other any more and no longer carry out any systematic antiparty fractional work.

But, in fact, this was a center.

The remaining cadres of former "Zinovievites" regarded it as such. They either did not know how to really dissolve their group into the Party or did not want to do so (especially the remaining "Leningradists").

All the other antiparty groups and grouplets also regarded it as such. ... All the antiparty elements once again set forth our candidacies [in discussions about the Party leadership — GF]<sup>91</sup>

<sup>91</sup> *Reabilitatsiia. Politicheskie Protsessy 30-kh — 50-kh godov* (Moscow, 1991), 160-161. (R-PP)



Surely Lenoë knows about this document because he cites both the journal in which it was originally published and the 1991 book in which it and other similar documents were collected.<sup>92</sup> But he never mentions this statement by Zinoviev.

<sup>92</sup> Zinoviev's statement was first published in *Izvestiia Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS* 7 (1989), 74-80 (IzvTsK KPSS) and was reprinted in R-PP 159-164.

The statement is significant for a number of reasons. In it Zinoviev in effect admits he was lying in his earlier statement of December 22, 1934, large parts of which Lenoë reproduces on pp. 328-333 of his book.

Zinoviev admits that a "center" existed. While claiming that the center did not "carry out any systematic anti-Party factional work" Zinoviev still admits that it was viewed as a "center" by "former Zinovievites" and other anti-Party groups, that it fostered "hostility" towards the Party leadership; that it was a "center of struggle against the Party." Most telling, he also admitted that, like all Party members, he was obliged to inform the Party of anti-Party activity by his "former" supporters but did not do so.

Zinoviev's statement is hard to believe in places even for a person who, like most readers of Lenoë's book, is not independently familiar with the evidence in the Kirov case and that from the Harvard Trotsky Archive. For example he states that he was unaware that a "Leningrad organization of 'Zinovievites'" even existed and admits that this was, at the very least, extremely naive on his part since he met with at least one of its members, Levin, in 1932 and was aware that Levin considered him an "authoritative person", someone whose views would be spread among others in Leningrad.

### **Zinoviev Continued To Lie**

That Zinoviev was continuing to lie in this statement we can affirm with certainty. For one thing, as we have seen Gorshenin testified that he had heard anti-Party statements from Zinoviev "up to the present day",

something that Zinoviev had already denied in his December 16 letter to Stalin and his December 22, 1934 interrogation. (Lenoe 330)

There is other important evidence that Zinoviev was lying here. He concealed the existence of the bloc with the Trotskyites formed in 1932 about which we know from the Sedov-Trotsky correspondence in the Harvard Trotsky archive. Clearly the prosecutors did not yet know about the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc or its existence would have surfaced at the January 1935 trial. Just as clearly, Zinoviev did not want them to know about this bloc. He could have told them, made a complete confession as he claimed he was doing. But he did not tell them. As we shall see in another chapter, Zinoviev could not tell them everything without putting his own head, and those of many of his fellow conspirators, in a noose.

Both the statement on the January 15-16, 1935 trial (Indictment 42) and Agranov's statement of February 3, 1935 (Lenoe 378; Kirilina 366) make it clear that in the first months of 1935 the prosecution could not prove that the Moscow Center encouraged or knew about the Kirov assassination. These important admissions are further evidence that no one was tortured or otherwise threatened to confess. However, they take on another dimension when we put them together with Genrikh Iagoda's pre-trial admissions of 1937, which we will examine later.

### **Renewed Investigation of the Kirov Assassination**

The Russian government still keeps all but a small number of the investigative materials from the 1930s top secret. We don't know precisely the stages by which the investigation proceeded or how the investigation into another antigovernment conspiracy, the "Kremlin Affair" of 1935, led to the reopening of the Kirov murder investigation — as it seems to have done. One of the "Kremlin Affair" defendants was B.N. Rozenfel'd, Kamenev's nephew (his father, N.B. Rozenfel'd, was Kamenev's brother). From the testimony that we now have it seems clear that the investigators concluded that Kamenev had not told the truth at the time of the January 1935 trial. We will examine Rozenfel'd's testimony along with that of others in the chapter "Enukidze and the Lone Gunman Story". Along with other evidence in the "Kremlin Affair" that bear directly on the Kirov murder.

IUrii Zhukov's article published in *Voprosy Istorii* in 2000 is the only detailed study of the materials of this affair. Zhukov concluded that this conspiracy probably did exist in fact.

Ezhov reported to the June 1935 Central Committee Plenum that the investigation of Enukidze and a subsequent interrogation of Kamenev showed that Zinoviev and Kamenev had organized the murder of Kirov and had planned other murders. (Getty Naumov 165) Getty points out that Stalin and other Politburo members did not follow up on this accusation. Evidently they were not ready to believe it on the basis of the evidence that was then available. This is yet more evidence, if more were needed, that Stalin was not out to "frame" anyone.

On January 5, 1936 Valentin Ol'berg was arrested.

On January 5, 1936, in Gorky, without any evidence of criminal activity, V.P. Ol'berg, who had just arrived from Germany in order to live permanently in the USSR, was arrested. A month after his arrest he had confessed that he arrived in the USSR from abroad supposedly with a special assignment from L.D. Trotsky to carry out counterrevolutionary work and to organize a terrorist act against J.V. Stalin.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>93</sup> *Izv. TsK KPSS* 8 (1989), 82; R-PP 176.

According to Arch Getty, who has had access to some archival materials:

His [Ol'berg's] wife testified that Olberg had received money and false passports from Trotsky's son Sedov and other Trotskyists in Paris and Prague. (Yezhov, 190)

We know that Ol'berg's wife was telling the truth insofar as that he had indeed been in touch with Trotsky, for letters of his to Trotsky are in the Harvard Trotsky archive. He had also attracted suspicion by travelling on a Honduran passport, obviously obtained illegally. Evidently Ol'berg began to implicate others, including Trotsky.

### **Ia. A. Mirovitskii's Confession**

On January 2, 1936 during the investigation of another Zinovievite conspiratorial group in Leningrad Iagoda and Vyshinskii sent to Stalin a report revealing that one of these defendants, Mirovitskii, claimed he had been recruited by Kotolynov for the purposes of assassinating Party leaders. (Lubianka 1922-1936, No. 559) Mirovitskii said that Kotolynov had recruited him to the clandestine Leningrad Zinovievite group in October 1933.

KOTOLYNOV told me that our views concerning collectivization and other measures of the current Party leadership are shared by many Party members who, like he himself, KOTOLYNOV, are members of the underground Zinovievite group that exists in Leningrad and which sets as its task the removal of the existing Party leadership and putting at the head of the leadership ZINOVIEV, KAMENEV, EVDOKIMOV, and others. KOTOLYNOV proposed that I join this organization and I gave him my assent.

...

The last time I met with KOTOLYNOV was in October of 1934 when he gave me the assignment of selecting especially reliable people and preparing them for active terrorist activity.

When he gave me this assignment Kotolynov stated that the time was coming when we would have to take up arms and shoot at the Party leadership from above, since by democratic methods the current incompetent leadership could not be forced to depart from the leadership of political life. (Lubianka 1922-1936, 718)

Mirovitskii named three persons whom he had recruited. Others arrested at this time also confessed that they considered themselves to be acting for Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Trotsky. Tills corroborates what we know from the Trotsky Archive materials: that Zinoviev and Kamenev, together with others, really were in a "bloc" with Trotsky from 1932 on.

### **M.N. Iakovlev's Confession**

On June 1, 1936 Iagoda sent to Stalin the transcript of an interrogation of a certain M.N. Iakovlev, who had been interrogated on May 27, 1936 as a member of a Trotskyite-Zinovievite organization in Leningrad. Iakovlev, who had been arrested in 1935 and sentenced to five years imprisonment as a member of a counter-revolutionary Zinovievite group, stated the following:

- In June 1934 Kamenev, who had traveled to Leningrad, informed him that the center had decided to prepare and carry out the assassination of Kirov in Leningrad and a further assassination in Moscow.
- Iakovlev was supposed to prepare to assassinate Kirov and not to mention Zinoviev's or Kamenev's name when talking with other participants in the group.
- Kamenev told him that Bakaev, who was subsequently one of the Zinovievite defendants at the January 1935 trial, had organized the Rumiantsev-Kotolynov group to prepare Kirov's assassination also.

IAKOVLEV and MATORIN confessed that from KAMENEV'S and BAKAEV'S words they knew that the Trotskyists and Zinovievists had united on the basis of terrorist struggle against the leadership of the AUCP(b) and that there exists a unified center made up of ZINOVIEV, KAMENEV, BAKAEV, SMIRNOV, TER-VAGANIAN, and MRACHKOVSKII. (758)

We can independently verify that this center existed. Sedov's letter to Trotsky in the Harvard Trotsky Archive reveals that Trotsky was in touch with Smirnov:

several days before his arrest IN said to our informer: X has begun to name names, I await arrest any day.<sup>94</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Sedov to Trotsky 1932; Trotsky Archive 4782.

Smirnov (= "I.N." for Ivan Nikitich, Smirnov's name and patronymic<sup>95</sup>), an old-time Trotsky supporter, would logically have been the contact for Ter-Vaganian and Mrachkovsky as well. Basic conspiratorial principles dictate that one person makes contact for the group.

<sup>95</sup> This identification was made by Pierre Broué, the world's leading Trotskyist historian, who discovered the document in 1980.

By the same letter, confirmed by Sedov's January 1937 "slip of the tongue", we know that the Trotskyists were in a bloc with Zinoviev and Kamenev.

[The bloc] is organized. In it have entered the Zinovievites, the Sten-Lominadze group and the Trotskyists (former "[capitulators]"). The group of Safar. Tarkhkan. has not formally entered yet — they stand on too extreme a position; they will enter in a very short time. — The declaration of Z. and K concerning their enormous mistake in '27 was made during negotiations with our people concerning the bloc, immediately before the exile of Z and K. -

No one denies that Bakaev was a Zinovievite. The Sedov letter constitutes corroborating evidence that Iakovlev and Matorin were telling the truth about the makeup of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc.

But how about the crucial claim that the bloc was formed "on the basis of a terrorist struggle"? The real question is: What constitutes "confirmation" or "disconfirmation" of this claim? As we shall see, ALL the evidence we have — and there is a great deal of it — confirms that this blot was formed for "terrorist" purposes, including assassination. At the same time we have no evidence to disconfirm this hypothesis.

Here are some passages from Iakovlev's confession:

**Answer:** ... I started on the road of direct terrorist struggle against the leaders of the Party and government in the middle of 1934.

**Question:** Under what circumstances do you start on this road?

**Answer:** In June 1934 L.B. KAMENEV travelled to Leningrad. I was in contact with KAMENEV through our mutual counterrevolutionary activity in the Zinovievist organization and went to tell him about the situation in the Leningrad organization and to receive directives from KAMENEV about further work. After hearing me out and discussing with me the situation in the Leningrad organization KAMENEV gave

me the decision of the center concerning the organization of struggle against the leaders of the AUCP(b) and the government by means of terror.

He asked me what I thought about this, received my positive response, and set forth his direct proposal that it was essential to prepare a terrorist act against Kirov while at the same time telling me that in Moscow an attempt on Stalin's life was under preparation by the organization.

**Question:** Confess what specifically KAMENEV told you about the decisions of the center of the organization about the preparation of terrorist acts against the leaders of the AUCP(b) and government.

**Answer:** KAMENEV told me that in the current conditions terror was the sole possible method of struggle against Stalin. KAMENEV said that every other way would inevitably lead to our final destruction. The only chance for success lay in terror. Therefore, while we have forces, we must use this last means. (Lubianka 1922-1936, 759-760)

[...]

**Question:** Did KAMENEV tell you in June 1934 that other groups also were preparing a terrorist act against com. KIROV, in particular, the terrorist group that carried out the murder of S.M. KIROV on December 1, 1934?

**Answer:** Yes, KAMENEV spoke to me about this.

When we were discussing the question about the preparation of a terrorist act against KIROV, KAMENEV asked me whether I was in contact with the RUMIANTSEV-KOTOLYNOV group. I answered him in the negative. KAMENEV then said that instructions about preparing and carrying out the murder of KIROV were also given to the RUMIANTSEV-KOTOLYNOV group and recommended that I avoid contact with this group on conspiratorial grounds.

**Question:** Did KAMENEV tell you who among the members of the center had organized the terrorist RUMIANTSEV-KOTOLYNOV group?

**Answer:** KAMENEV told me that the RUMIANTSEV KOTOLYNOV group was organized by BAKAEV on the instructions of the center. Besides that, from MATORIN, the former secretary of Zinoviev's and active member of the organization I know that he, MATORIN, had a personal meeting in the summer of 1934 in Leningrad with BAKAEV, who gave him, MATORIN, the task of organizing a terrorist group for the murder of KIROV, and also said to MATORIN that he had assigned the RUMIANTSEV-KOTOLYNOV group to make preparations in a parallel manner for a terrorist act against KIROV. (761)

Getty describes some ensuing parts of the investigation as follows:

By 23 July, Kamenev was admitting membership in a counterrevolutionary center that planned terror, but he denied being one of the organizers; he implicated Zinoviev as being closer to the matter. Three days later Zinoviev was confronted by one of his followers, Karev, who directly accused him. Zinoviev asked that the interrogation be stopped because he wanted to make a statement that, in the event, amounted to a full confession of organizing assassination and terror.<sup>43</sup> (Yezhov, 191)

### **The Secret Letter of the Central Committee of July 29, 1936**

The footnote 43 to this passage is to an interrogation of Kamenev of July 23-24 and of Zinoviev of July 26, 1936, both in an archive. Neither of these has been published. But we do have some other pretrial materials.

On July 29, 1936 the Central Committee sent a "closed letter" to all party leadership bodies above the very local levels. It was evidently drafted by Ezhov and revised by Stalin, whose handwritten editions remain in the original.<sup>96</sup> It appears to be the first attempt to outline the breadth and depth of the network of conspiracies as it was then understood by the Party and



NKVD leadership. It also set the stage for the first Moscow Trial three weeks later.

<sup>96</sup> A facsimile of a page of this report with Stalin's handwritten editions is reproduced in *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* 8 (1989), p. 102.

The "closed letter" cites selected quotations from interrogations of Zinoviev, of July 23-25; of Kamenev, of July 23, July 24, and July 23-24; of Mrachkovskii of July 4 and July 19-20; of Karev, of June 5; of Matorin, of June 30; of Bakaev, of July 17-:19; of Pickel', of July 22; of Dreitser, of July 23; of V. Ol'berg, of February 15 and May 9; of Berman-IUrin, of July 21; of Natan Lur'e, of July 21; of LS. Esterman, of July 2; of Mukhin, of December 11, 1935; of Moisei -Lur'e, of July 21; of Konstant, of July 21; of A.A. Lavrent'ev of November 9, 1935; of Reingol'd, of July 9 and July 17. The full texts of these interrogations probably still exist in the archives but as of 2012 are still being kept top-secret, unavailable to researchers.

The whole letter concerns the discovery by the NKVD of a large-scale Trotskyite-Zinovievite conspiracy that planned the Kirov assassination and much else. The letter provides a context for the Kirov assassination, which was only one part of the alleged aims of the conspiracy. We cite below only those quotations from the confessions that mention the Kirov assassination directly:

Kamenev:

...we, that is the Zinovievist center of the counterrevolutionary organization, the membership of which I have named above, and the Trotskyist counterrevolutionary organization in the persons of Smirnov, Mrachkovskii and Ter-Vaganian, agreed in 1932 about the union of both, i.e. the Zinovievist and Trotskyist counterrevolutionary organizations for cooperative preparation of terrorist acts against the leaders of the CC and first of all against Stalin and Kirov. (Kamenev, July 23 1936; *Izv. TsK KPSS* 8 (1989), 101; R-PP 198)

[...]

"Yes, I am forced to admit that even before the meeting in Il'inskoe Zinoviev informed me about the planned decisions of the center of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist bloc concerning the preparation of terrorist acts against Stalin and Kirov. At that time he told me that the representatives of the Trotskyists in the center of the bloc — Smirnov, Mrachkovskii, and Ter-Vaganian — categorically insist upon this decision, that they have a direct instruction from Trotsky on this and that they demand a practical transition to this undertaking towards the realization of the aims which form the basis of the bloc ... I agreed to this decision since I shared it completely.

- Kamenev. Transcript of interrogation of July 23-24, 1936.; Izv. TsK KPSS 8 (1989) 104; R-PP 199)

Zinoviev:

I was indeed a member of the united Trotskyist-Zinovievist center organized in 1932.

The Trotskyist-Zinovievist center considered as its chief task the murder of leaders of the VKP(b) and, first and foremost, the murder of Stalin and Kirov. The center was connected with Trotsky through its members I.N. Smirnov and Mrachkovsky. Direct instructions from Trotsky for the preparation of Stalin's murder were received by Smirnov.

- Getty Naumov, 251-252; Izv. TsK KPSS 8 (1989) 101; R-PP 198.

Karev:

I also confess that Bakaev and Karev, members of the organization, were entrusted by me, in the name of the united center, with the organization of terrorist acts against Stalin in Moscow and Kirov in Leningrad. These instructions by me were given in Il'inskoe in the fall of 1932.

Zinoviev. Transcript of interrogation of July 23-25, 1936; translation by Getty Naumov, 232 (they omit the words "in Il'inskoe"); (Izv. TsK

KPSS 8 (1989) 104; R-PP 199)

Zinoviev stated that at the basis of the admission by the Zinovievist center of terror as the basic means of struggle with the existing Party leadership contact had been established with the leaders of the Trotskyist organization in the USSR, Ivan Nikitich Smimov and Mrachkovskii, and that a decision of the unified Trotskyist-Zinovievist center exists concerning the organization of terrorist acts against Stalin in Moscow and Kirov in Leningrad. Zinoviev said that the preparation of terrorist acts against Stalin and Kirov was assigned to Bakaev, who was supposed to use for these ends his contacts with the Zinovievist groups in Leningrad and Moscow.

Zinoviev also proposed to me in turn to select people close to me from the organization which I led in the Academy of Sciences -in Leningrad who would be capable of carrying out a terrorist act against Kirov.

...at my conversation with Bakaev I found out that for the organization of the terrorist act against Kirov he intended to use the Zinovievist groups of Rumiantsev and Kotolynov that existed in Leningrad and that were in contact with himself, Bakaev.

Karev, N.A. Transcript of interrogation of June 5 1936. (Izv. TsK KPSS 8 (1989), 104; R-PP 200)

Motorin:

Zinoviev instructed me that the preparation for a terrorist act should be accelerated as much as possible and that by the winter Kirov must be killed. He chided me for insufficient decisiveness and energy and told me that on the question of terrorist methods of struggle it was necessary to reject all our prejudices."

Motorin, N.M. Transcript of interrogation of June 10, 1936. (Izv. TsK KPSS 9 (1989) 105; R-PP 200).

This whole document concerns the discovery of a broad conspiracy, only part of which was concerned with the assassination of Kirov. As such all of

it is in fact relevant evidence, since the Kirov assassination was but a part of this larger conspiracy.

### **Pretrial Confessions of Zinoviev and Kamenev**

The texts of only two pretrial interrogations of Zinoviev are available to researchers. The first is dated July 28, 1936. It begins with an explicit reference to the confrontation with Karev to which Getty refers. Although it may not be the very first confession of Zinoviev's after he broke off his face-to-face confrontation with Karev, it does fit Getty's description of "a full confession of organizing assassination and terror."

Zinoviev said the following about the Kirov assassination specifically:

**Question:** What concretely was done by the united center to carry out the terrorist plans?

**Answer:** At that time, in 1932, the center took a decision to organize terrorist acts against Stalin in Moscow and Kirov in Leningrad.

[...]

**Question:** You confess that GERTIK was in touch with the participants of the organization in Leningrad. We wish to turn once more to the question of GERTIK's ties to KOTOLYNOV. We know for certain that GERTIK in 193? [year not legible — GF] returned from Leningrad to Moscow and spoke about the terrorist character of his ties to KOTOLYNOV. You must have known about this?

**Answer:** Yes, I admit that in 1934, I can't remember the month but in the middle of the year, EVDOKIMOV told me about one of GERTIK'S trips to Leningrad, during which GERTIK got into contact with KOTOLYNOV. In addition, as a result of this meeting KOTOLYNOV told GERTIK that he was taking a direct role in the preparation of the murder of KIROV.

Zinoviev goes on to link Kamenev with M.N. Iakovlev, whose only published confession we have discussed above.

**Question:** With which of the participants of the organization did KAMENEV maintain contact in Leningrad?

**Answer:** In 1934 KAMENEV told me that in Leningrad he met with IAKOVLEV Moisei, a member of the organization, to whom he confirmed the decisions of the united Trotskyite-Zinovievite center to organize the murder of Kirov.

**Question:** Was IAKOVLEV carrying out the work of preparation for the murder of com. Kirov together with the RUMIANTSEV-KOTOLYNOV group or independently?

**Answer:** IAKOVLEV was preparing the murder of Kirov in parallel with the RUMIANTSEV-KOTOLYOV group.

[...]

I must add that a plan was developed for hiding the traces of the crimes that were under preparation by the united Trotskyite-Zinovievite center. **The forcible removal of the leaders of the Party and government had to be very carefully disguised as White Guardist acts or acts of "personal vengeance."** (Emphasis added — GF)

Zinoviev's statement about "disguising" the murder as an "act of personal vengeance" is of capital importance, in that it constitutes strong evidence against Kirilina's and Lenoe's hypothesis that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman."

Elsewhere in this study we examine a passage from a confession by Nikolaev, reproduced in the text of the December 1934 Indictment, that he had tried to disguise the assassination as an individual act. Avel' Enukidze and those with whom he was in contact in the Kremlin were spreading precisely this rumor — that Nikolaev had acted from personal motives. Enukidze's remarks are also consistent with Iagoda's pretrial confessions. We will examine them later.

We also have the text of a shorter confession of Zinoviev's of sometime in August, 1936. The month and year are clearly readable, but not the date. Zinoviev's statements in this confession are numbered in the text. The second and third points concern the Kirov assassination. It reads as follows:

2. After KAREV'S arrest since 1933 the matter of organizing of terrorist acts in Leningrad was transferred to the Zinovievite M. IAKOVLEV, about which this had been preliminary agreed with KAREV.

In 1934 it was assigned by the united center to KAMENEV to meet in Leningrad with IAKOVLEV. KAMENEV fulfilled this in the summer of 1934 and at that time I told KAMENEV that it was necessary to give the control and general leadership of this action to BAKAEV.

3. KAMENEV informed me in November 1934 that he had met with BAKAEV who had just returned from Leningrad and who informed him that he (BAKAEV) had met in Leningrad with LEVIN, RUMIANTSEV, KATALYNOV, and I think MANDEL'SHTAM. At this meeting was decided the question about where and when to murder Kirov. **Nikolaev, the murderer of Kirov, with whom BAKAEV spoke, was at that meeting.** [Emphasis added, GP]

BAKAEV familiarized himself in detail with the state of the preparation of the terrorist act against Kirov and finally sanctioned the attempt in the name of the united Trotskyite-Zinovievite center.

Here Zinoviev again reveals that the Moscow Center, which he headed, had directed the assassination of Kirov. He also reveals that Nikolaev had been present at the meeting, evidently in the fall of 1934, between Bakaev, representing the Moscow Center, and the main leadership of the Leningrad Center.

Zinoviev's revelation that Nikolaev was also present at the meeting is strong evidence of Nikolaev's direct participation in the Leningrad group of Zinovievites and, of course, it is evidence too of the central role in the Kirov murder of both the Moscow and Leningrad centers. It contradicts Leno's hypothesis of Nikolaev as a "lone gunman."

We have only one pretrial confession by Kamenev, of August 10, 1936. Concerning the Kirov assassination Kamenev confessed as follows:

Question: What precisely did SOKOL'NIKOV know about the bloc that existed between Trotskyists and Zinovievists?

Answer: He knew that this bloc was being organized on the basis of terror and that the practical task of the bloc was the organization of assassination attempts against STALIN and KIROV.

[...]

Question: That means SOKOL'NIKOV not only knew from you, that terrorist attempts on coms. STALIN and KIROV were being prepared by the center of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist bloc, but that he personally participated in the decision to create the leading terrorist group.

Do you confirm this?

Answer: Yes, I confirm it.

Kamenev's accusation of Sokol'nikov set off an investigation that was to lead to the second Moscow Trial of January 1937.

In the early 1980s Arch Getty discovered evidence in the Harvard Trotsky Archive that in 1932 Trotsky had sent a letter to Sokol'nikov, no doubt urging him to return to clandestine opposition. There may — almost certainly were — more letters of this kind, for Getty also discovered that the Trotsky Archive had been purged, no doubt of incriminating material.

## **Chapter 13. *Evidence Lenoe Ignores — The First Moscow Trial***

In this chapter we examine the Kirov testimony in the First Moscow Trial of August 1936. There is a great deal of it. Lenoe simply omits discussion of it entirely.

Lenoe evidently takes the position that the testimony in this and in the other two Moscow Trials was fabricated by the NKVD in some way. But he fails to give any evidence that this is so, nor does he make any kind of argument to justify these very considerable omissions. In effect Lenoe simply chose to ignore this and a great deal of other evidence. This may be because this evidence contradicts his preconceived conclusion that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman."

In reality, no one has ever come close to proving that any of the Moscow Trials were faked. However, in the highly politicized and biased field of Soviet history the position that the Moscow Trials were all fabrications and all the defendants "framed" is not merely the "mainstream" position — it is the only position that is tolerated. Anyone who suggests that the Moscow Trials may not have been fabrications faces ridicule or worse. So there is a great deal of professional pressure to regard the trials as fabrications and little incentive to do any serious research on them.

Any objective investigation must always confront the question of verification. Therefore in this chapter we will discuss two questions. First: What is the Kirov testimony in the first Moscow Trial? Second: To what extent can we confirm or disconfirm the testimony in the first Moscow Trial?

The first public Moscow Trial of August 19-24 1936 was preceded by a great deal of investigation. Only a very small amount of the documentation this investigation produced — confessions, statements, and some physical evidence as well — has ever been made public. Most of it by far is still top-secret in Russia today. Neither Kirilina nor Lenoe had access to anything like the full extent of it. Nor, of course, do we.



But in the materials we do have there is a great deal of testimony about the Kirov assassination. All of it corroborates the hypothesis that the defendants in the December 1934 trial of Nikolaev and others were guilty, and that the trial was not in any sense a "frameup." However, it goes beyond the December 1934 trial, in that some of the defendants in the January 1935 Kamenev-Zinoviev trial later confessed to direct planning of Kirov's murder.

Like Lenoe, or like any researcher or investigator, we are faced with the task of evaluating all this evidence according to objective criteria. We have already seen that Lenoe ignores material from between the December 1934 trial and the August 1936 trial, and also ignores the pretrial materials of the 1936 Trial. Likewise he ignores the testimony at the 1936 Trial itself. In his brief two-page summary of this trial Lenoe does not examine any of the testimony. He simply assumes that there was no merit to the charges and that Stalin was out to destroy the "former" oppositionists.

Whatever the specific trigger, if any, for reopening the Kirov investigation, Stalin's decision was obviously part of his ongoing drive to crush former party oppositionists. (464)

The show trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev made it clear that Stalin's agenda was total destruction of the former Left opposition. (465)

In reality there is nothing "obvious" or "clear" about these conclusions. There is no evidence whatsoever that Stalin had a "goal" of "crushing" or "destroying" former oppositionists. On the contrary: there is good evidence that prior to the Kirov murder Stalin was trying to conciliate former oppositionists — or people whom he believed were former oppositionists, whose opposition he believed was in the past, as they promised it was.

The omission of any study of the 1936 trial is yet another of many examples of Lenoe's committing the logical fallacy of "Begging the Question" by "assuming that which should be proven." Lenoe does not prove or even argue, but instead assumes, that the August 1936 trial is a fabrication. Lenoe dismisses the pretrial and trial testimony without bothering to examine it. The word "obviously" serves as Lenoe's excuse for the lack of

any evidence to support his statement. It is another of Leno's "tells", a sign that what he has to say is a "bluff", that he has no evidence to back it up.

This makes no sense if Leno's goal is to re-examine the Kirov murder and find out what really happened. It makes sense only if Leno has a preconceived conclusion that he wants to promote at any cost — that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" and that all other defendants were framed, forced or induced somehow to give false testimony. One who commits the fallacy of "assuming that which should be proven" demonstrates that he is not interested in finding out the truth. And he certainly will not stumble across it by accident, as it were, by refusing *a priori* to seriously examine the evidence that does not support his hypothesis.

In the present study we assume, as any investigator or researcher should, that the result of our inquiry is not a foregone conclusion. Therefore we must study all the evidence — not just that which Leno examines, but also the very considerable amount of evidence that Leno leaves unexamined.

### **Questions of Methodology**

How can these materials be assessed as to their truthfulness? What, in fact, can we reasonably expect to learn from them? This problem confronts Egge, Leno and Kirilina as well, though they do not directly address it. They have some interrogations, trial transcripts, and investigative materials, so we too have whatever of these materials they have chosen to disclose to us. In addition, we have all the evidence that, for whatever reasons, they omit.

Although a full examination of the Moscow Trials is beyond the scope of this study, we do wish to emphasize the following point: There is no evidence that any of the defendants in these trials was framed, falsely convicted, innocent. Not one shred of evidence has ever been produced that the defendants in the three Moscow Trials were anything but guilty of those charges to which they confessed. No one has ever produced any evidence that the defendants were forced to testify in some manner dictated by the prosecution or NKVD. None of the "rehabilitation" documents and reports produced during Khrushchev's and especially during Gorbachev's era

contains any evidence that the defendants were innocent. All the conclusions of all these rehabilitation reports are assertions only.

As we shall see, there is good evidence that some of the defendants at least did not tell "the whole truth" and that both Iagoda and other defendants, as well as Ezhov, distorted and concealed some matters at the trials. But none of this deception tends to exculpate any of the trial defendants either. It simply adds another dimension to their guilt, and to the picture of the conspiracies that we already have. From what we know, the defendants' testimony reflects what they wanted to say.

A central problem in evaluating the Moscow Trials testimony is the question of independent corroboration of statements made at the trial through evidence that could not have been arranged, planted, or otherwise created by the prosecution. Of course the lack of independent corroboration would not mean that the trial testimony and confessions were faked by the prosecution. In the case of a skillful conspiracy there might be no independent evidence at all. It would just mean that we would have no way of comparing this testimony with independent evidence. Even if we had no independent corroboration, we could evaluate the internal consistency of the statements made by different defendants at different times.

Fortunately some evidence external to the Moscow Trials and even to the USSR itself does exist. All of this external evidence tends to corroborate the confessions of the accused.

### **The Bloc: Its Formation and Composition**

The major prosecution claim that frames the 1936 Trial is that a bloc was formed in 1932 between Trotskyites and Zinovievites, with other forces also joining. This bloc really did exist, as is confirmed in Sedov's letter to Trotsky of sometime in mid-1932 (Trotsky Archive 4782). Sedov names Zinovievites, "the Sten-Lominadze group", "the group of Safar[ov]-Tarkhan[ov]"; and "I.N. [Smirnov]", as well as Zinoviev and Kamenev ("Z. and K.").

All of these groups were named by prosecution and defendants in the August 1936 Trial. Sedov identified I.N. Smirnov as the leader of the Trotskyite group and this is confirmed in the trial transcript. Sedov's letter and the trial transcript confirm that the bloc was formed by 1932.

### **Active planning for murder of Kirov**

According to testimony at the 1936 Trial active planning for Kirov's assassination began in the summer of 1934 and Leningrad conspirators were contacted in the autumn of 1934. This appears to coincide with certain indications in Nikolaev's diary upon which Lenoë has remarked. Concerning Nikolaev's "farewell letters" to family members, dated August 1934, Lenoë comments.

Moreover, some "farewell" letters that he wrote to family members in August, but may not have delivered, suggest that he was considering suicide, or possibly the assassination of party officials. (216)

For Nikolaev the murder and suicide went together. We recall that he tried to kill himself seconds after shooting Kirov.

According to trial testimony specific organizational plans for Kirov's assassination began in the autumn of 1934.

In order to prepare the murder, Bakayev went to Leningrad in the autumn of 1934 and there established contact with the active members of our organization: Kotolynov, Levin, Rumyantsev, Mandelstanun and Myasnikov, who formed the so-called Leningrad terrorist centre. The Leningrad centre had an active group of terrorists, directly engaged in preparations for the murder of Kirov. (Vol. XXXVI, p.6.)<sup>97</sup>

This was also fully confirmed during the investigation by the accused Evdokimov, who stated the following:

"I learned from Bakayev that in the autumn of 1934, he, Bakayev, together with one Trotskyite terrorist, whose name I do not know, went

to Leningrad to establish contact with the Leningrad terrorist centre and to organize the assassination of Kirov.

"While in Leningrad, Bakayev and the above-mentioned Trotskyite terrorist met Nikolayev and arranged with him that he would assassinate Kirov." (Vol. XXXVI, pp. 7, 8.) (Report 1936, 33-34)

At the end of Mrachkovsky's examination Vyshinsky asks Bakayev in what part of 1934 he went to Leningrad.

Bakayev: In the autumn.

Vyshinsky: For what purpose?

Bakayev: To ascertain the preparedness of the organization to assassinate Kirov.

Vyshinsky (to Kamenev): Did you give the instructions to make preparations for assassination of Kirov?

Kamenev: Yes, in the autumn.

Vyshinsky: In the autumn you and Evdokimov instructed Bakayev to go to Leningrad to check up on the progress which was being made by the Leningrad Trotskyite-Zinovievite group in its preparations to assassinate Kirov? Is that right, do you confirm that?

Kamenev: Yes that is true. I confirm that. (Report 1936, 46)

Continuing, Evdokimov says that for this purpose Bakayev, in the autumn of 1934, went to Leningrad to check up on the progress of preparations for the terroristic act against Sergei Mironovich Kirov by the Leningrad terrorists. These terrorist groups began to shadow Sergei Mironovich Kirov and waited for an opportune moment to commit their terroristic act.

(Report 1936, 48)

<sup>97</sup> *Report of Court Proceedings. The Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre.* Moscow: People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R., 1936, 30-31. (Report 1936)

The time period — autumn 1934 — corresponds with Nikolaev's lengthy diary entries of October 1934 in which he writes of "dying for my political convictions" (Lenoe 228) and his letter of "explanation before the Party and the Fatherland." (229-234). Nikolaev also wrote a letter to Kirov on October 30, 1934 (237-8). Within the next few days he "tried to outline concrete plans for assassinating Kirov" (238; 239-241)

### **Marxism and Terrorism**

The question of reconciling the use of terror with Marxism which, as is well known, rejects the use of terror, arose at the trial.

Vyshinsky: How did Zinoviev and Kamenev reconcile terroristic activities with Marxism?

Reingold: In 1932, Zinoviev, at Kamenev's apartment, in the presence of a number of members of the united Trotskyite-Zinovievite centre argued in favor of resorting to terror as follows: although terror is incompatible with Marxism, at the present moment these considerations must be abandoned. There are no other methods available of fighting the leaders of the Party and the Government at the present time. Stalin combines in himself all the strength and firmness of the present Party leadership. Therefore Stalin must be put out of the way in the first place. Kamenev enlarged on this theory and said that the former methods of fighting, namely, attempts to win the masses, combinations with the leaders of the Rightists, and banking on economic difficulties, have failed. That is why the only method of struggle available is terroristic acts against Stalin and his closest comrades-in-arms, Kirov, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Orjonikidze, Postyshev, Kossior and the others.

(Report 1936, 55)

## Trotsky and Terror

Trotsky proclaimed repeatedly in print and at the Dewey Commission hearings that he was unalterably opposed to "terror" — in English, to the use of violence and assassination against political opponents. In the words of Trotsky's advocate Goldman:

The accusation of individual terror, as will be shown on the basis of Trotsky's numerous articles, beginning in 1902, is in direct contradiction with the whole bent of his thought, with his political education, with the lessons of his revolutionary experience, and finally, with the entire tradition of Russian Marxism.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>98</sup>*The Case of Leon Trotsky. Report of hearings on the charges made against him in the Moscow trials. By the Preliminary Commission of Inquiry: John Dewey, chairman [and others].* New York: Harper Brothers, 1937. 1<sup>st</sup> Session, p. 11. (Case of Leon Trotsky)

Trotsky spoke many times in opposition to terror. Almost the whole of the seventh session of the Dewey Commission hearings was devoted to this point. For example:

On the 28th of December, 1934, four weeks after the Kirov assassination, Trotsky wrote in the Bulletin of the Opposition: ... If Marxists have categorically condemned individual terrorism ... even when the shots were directed against the agents of the Tsarist government and of capitalist exploitation, then all the more relentlessly will they condemn and reject the criminal adventurism of terrorist acts directed against the bureaucratic representatives of the first workers' state in history.

(Case of Leon Trotsky, 259-260)

Sedov devoted chapter 10 of his *Livre rouge*<sup>99</sup> ("Red Book") to demonstrating how vigorously Trotsky opposed terror.

*Entrer maintenant dans la voie de la terreur individuelle, renoncer au marxisme, signifierait pour Trotsky non seulement renoncer à lui-même, mais aussi réduire à néant le fruit de quarante années d'activité révolutionnaire. Cela signifierait se suicider politiquement. (70)*

To now take the path of individual terror, to renounce Marxism, would signify for Trotsky not only renouncing himself, but also reducing to nothing the fruits of forty years of revolutionary activity. That would signify political suicide.

*Lors du coup de revolver de Nikolai'ev, les communistes internationalistes ont déjà condamné la terreur individuelle de la façon la plus impitoyable, la plus résolue. Ils maintiennent aujourd'hui ce point de vue plus fermement que jamais. Si Staline, par sa politique, son régime et l'extermination de l'opposition, peut créer un état d'esprit terroriste, le devoir révolutionnaire dicte impérieusement aux bolchéviks-léninistes de répéter encore une fois de toute leur énergie: la voie de la terreur individuelle n'est pas notre voie, elle ne peut être que la voie qui mène à la perte de la révolution. (72)*

At the time of Nikolaev's revolver shot we, the communist-internationalists, had already condemned individual terror in the most pitiless and most decisive fashion. Today we maintain this point of view more firmly than ever. If Stalin, by his policy, his regime and the extermination of the Opposition, can create a terrorist state of mind, then revolutionary duty imperiously demands that the Bolshevik-Leninists repeat once again with all their energy: the path or individual terror is not our path, it can only be the path to the destruction of the revolution.

<sup>99</sup> L. Sedov. *Livre rouge sur le procès de Moscou*. Paris: Éditions Populaires, 1936.

In interviews with his biographer Feferman former Trotsky secretary Jan van Heijenoort insisted that in his own opinion Stalin should have been assassinated but that Trotsky would never consider it.



When he later described the enormous amount of work the Trotskyites had to do to prepare for the hearings, van Heijenoort wrote the odd sentence: "Needless to say, in all this work, there was nothing falsified, nothing hidden." Why needless to say? Why wouldn't Trotsky, the ex-commissar of war, have plotted a return? Why wouldn't there have been many plots against Stalin by those who, early on, were keenly and painfully aware of his diabolical cruelty and singlemindedness?

Fifty years after the Moscow trials, van Heijenoort's response to such questions was excited and emphatic:

Yes, that's exactly my opinion. ... But Trotsky always said 'We are against personal terrorism'. I say that is bunk. Of course Stalin should have been eliminated.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Anita Burdman Feferman. *Politics, logic, and love: the life of Jean Van Heijenoort*. Wellesley, Mass.: A K Peters, Ltd., 1993, 140.

But we know that, like Kamenev, Sedov did in fact believe that "terror" was an appropriate tactic for Marxists. Mark Zborowski was an NKVD agent who managed to gain Sedov's confidence. Zborowski wrote reports to his handlers while acting as one of Sedov's closest collaborators. In a report dated February 8, 1937 Zborowski wrote that on January 22, 1937, the eve of the Piatakov-Radek trial, Sedov suddenly began speaking to him of "terror":

February 8, 1937

On January 22 L. Sedov in our conversation at his apartment about the question of the second Moscow trial and the role in it of some of the accused (Radek, Piatakov and others) stated: "Now there is no reason to hesitate. Stalin must be killed."

For me this statement was so unexpected that I did not manage to react to it in any way. L. Sedov immediately redirected the conversation onto other questions.

On January 23 L. Sedov, in my presence and also that of L. Estrina, uttered a sentence with the same content as that of the 22<sup>nd</sup>. In answer to this statement of his L. Estrina said "Keep your mouth shut." They did not return to this question again.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Zborowski archive, F.31660 d. 9067 Papka No. 28. In Volkogonov Archive, Library of Congress. Online at [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/zbor\\_sedov\\_stalin0238.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/zbor_sedov_stalin0238.pdf)

Some of these same documents are confirmed by John Costello and Oleg Tsarev, *Deadly Illusions* (New York: Crown, 1993). Tsarev, a former KGB man, had privileged access to KGB files for a time in the early 1990s.

### **Mark Zborowski**

In a report with a handwritten date on it of February 11, 1938 but which is possibly from the previous year, 1937, Zborowski reported again:

Since 1936 "Sonny" had not talked with me about terror. Only about two or three weeks ago, after a meeting of the group, "Sonny" again began to speak on this subject. At first he only tried to "theoretically" prove that terrorism does not contradict Marxism. "Marxism" — in Sonny's words -rejects terrorism only insofar as the conditions of the class struggle are not suitable for terrorism, but there are situations in which terrorism is essential. The next time "Sonny" began to speak about terrorism when I arrived at his apartment to work. While reading newspapers "Sonny" said that since the whole regime of the USSR is held up by Stalin, it would be enough to kill Stalin for everything to fall apart. He had stated this thought earlier too, but until this time he had never formulated it this sharply. This last time he repeatedly returned to it, and underscored the necessity to kill com. Stalin with special care.

In connection with this conversation "Sonny" asked me whether I feared death generally and whether I would be capable of carrying out a terrorist act. To my answer that it all depends on the circumstances and whether it was called for, Sonny said that I do not at all correctly

understand what a "real" terrorist is and began to explain to me what kind of persons people suitable for carrying out terrorist acts are.

Moving to the tactics of terror he stopped on the question of cadres, considering that this is the basic point. A terrorist — in Sonny's words — just always be ready for death, death must be for the terrorist a daily reality, and he illustrated this thesis with the example of the psychology of the Narodovoltsy. Here he tossed out the remark that I, in his opinion, am too soft a person for this kind of affair.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Costello, John, and Oleg Tsarev. *Deadly Illusions*. NY: Crown, 1993, 283; 469 n.44. Tsarev Kostello, *Rokoovye Illiuzii*, 322-3, and n. 44 p.531 (Russian original). The other texts of Zborowski's reports are in facsimile in the Volkogonov Archiv, LOC. This archive also contains facsimiles of the reports published by Costello and Tsarev, thus verifying that they are the same ones.

Sedov was surely reflecting his father's view here. Sedov himself had no political organization or goals independent of those of his father whose primary and, on very sensitive issues, sole political confidant he was.

In his testimony at trial Smimov had claimed that first Sedov, in his meeting with him in 1931, and later Trotsky, through Gaven, had endorsed violence ("terrorism") as the only way to take power. In his *Livre rouge* Sedov conceded that he had met with Smimov in Berlin in July 1931 (96). Soviet agent Zborowski's reports that Sedov recommended assassination and specifically Stalin's assassination, is consistent with what Radek and others testified that Trotsky had advocated in letters and communications to them.

It is to be expected that Trotsky and Sedov would publicly deny the use of "terror" (assassination). Thanks to Pierre Broué's research in the Harvard Trotsky archive we know they lied to preserve their conspiracy when they thought it useful to do so.

## **The Rights and Terror**

Despite his denials, therefore, the evidence now available supports the hypothesis that Radek was telling the truth when he testified at the January 1937 Moscow Trial that Trotsky, along with other oppositionists, did advocate that Stalin be assassinated. This is to be expected in light of what we now know about the plans of the Rightists, with whom Trotsky's supporters had, with Trotsky's blessing, formed a bloc.

We can be certain that Bukharin, one of the main leaders of the Rights, was indeed advocating that Stalin be assassinated. In his memoirs published in Switzerland in 1971 Jules Humbert-Droz, a Swiss communist in the Comintern and close ally of Bukharin's, revealed that Bukharin told him the Rights were planning to kill Stalin as early as 1928.

Humbert-Droz met and talked with Bukharin for the last time in early 1929. The Swiss communist was about to leave for a conference of Latin American communist parties. In his memoirs, published in Switzerland in 1971, Humbert-Droz recalled this incident as follows:

Before leaving I went to see Bukharin for one last time not knowing whether I would see him again upon my return. We had a long and frank conversation. He brought me up to date with the contacts made by his group with the Zinoviev-Kamenev fraction in order to coordinate the struggle against the power of Stalin. I did not hide from him that I did not approve of this liaison of the oppositions. "The struggle against Stalin is not a political programme. We had combatted with reason the programme of the Trotskyites on the essential questions, the danger of the kulaks in Russia, the struggle against the united front with the social-democrats, the Chinese problems, the very short-sighted revolutionary perspective, etc. On the morrow of a common victory against Stalin, the political problems will divide us. This bloc is a bloc without principles which will crumble away before achieving any results."

**Bukharin also told me that they had decided to utilise individual terror in order to rid themselves of Stalin.** On this point as well I expressed my reservation: the introduction of individual terror into the political struggles born from the Russian Revolution would strongly risk turning against those who employed it. It had never been a

revolutionary weapon. "My opinion is that we ought to continue the ideological and political struggle against Stalin. His line will lead in the near future to a catastrophe which will open the eyes of the communists and result in a changing of orientation.

Fascism menaces Germany and our party of phrasemongers will be incapable of resisting it. Before the debacle of the Communist Party of Germany and the extension of fascism to Poland and to France, the International must change politics. That moment will then be our hour. It is necessary then to remain disciplined, to apply the sectarian decisions after having fought and opposed the leftist errors and measures, but to continue to struggle on the strictly political terrain."

**Bukharin doubtlessly had understood that I would not hind myself blindly to his fraction whose sole programme was to make Stalin disappear. / 380 / This was our last meeting.** It was clear that he did not have confidence in the tactic that I proposed. He also certainly knew better than I what crimes Stalin was capable of. In short, **those who, after Lenin's death and on the basis of his testament, could have destroyed Stalin politically, sought instead to eliminate him physically,** when he held firmly in his hand the Party and the police apparatus of the state. (Emphasis added, GF.)<sup>103</sup>

<sup>103</sup> Memoirs de Jules Humbert-Droz. De Lenine a Staline. Dix ans au service de l'internationale communiste 1921-1931. Neufchatel: A la Baconniere, 1971, pp. 379-380. The original French text is as follows: [long, see source page]

Humbert-Droz, who published this account in 1971 wrote without any pressure from the NKVD. He wrote, and lived most of his life, in his native Switzerland. Moreover, he was Bukharin's friend and political ally. At the time of writing he hated Stalin, as is clear from his remark about "crimes Stalin was capable of". Thus he had no motive that we know of to lie or to exaggerate what he knew. Furthermore, Humbert-Droz claims he heard of the plans to murder Stalin from Bukharin's own lips.

This corroborates the confessions of many other Rightists, some of which have been published. It also corroborates Bukharin's recently-published first

confession and his testimony at his 1938 trial.<sup>104</sup>

Thanks to Sedov's letter to his father and Trotsky's reply we know that Trotsky did enter a bloc with the Zinovievites and others. If Trotsky had held any kind of principled objection to assassinating Stalin he would not have entered into a bloc with persons whose goal that was.

He would also have not advocated "removing the leadership", a phrase which could not have reasonably been understood any other way than by assassination. No forms of activity except illegal ones were available to the defeated oppositions. Moreover, this same phrase is used by the oppositionists in the USSR to mean "assassination". We know the Rights had been planning to assassinate Stalin. Trotsky seems to have arrived at the same conclusion.

<sup>104</sup> Grover Furr and Vladimir L. Bobrov, "Nikolai Bukharin's First Statement of Confession in the Lubyanka". *Cultural Logic* 2007. At [http://clogic.eserver.org/2007/Furr\\_Bobrov.pdf](http://clogic.eserver.org/2007/Furr_Bobrov.pdf) This article was first published in the St. Petersburg historical journal *Klio* 1 (36), 2005, 38-52. I have put the Russian version online at <http://tinyurl.com/furr-bukharin>

## **Yurii Gaven**

In 1990 Pierre Broué announced that he had discovered that Trotsky and Sedov lied concerning their ties to some Party members inside the USSR. One of these figures was an Old Bolshevik, of Latvian background, Iurii Petrovich Gavenis or, in its Russian form, Gaven. At the 1936 Moscow Trial Gaven was named by I.N. Smirnov, one of the chief defendants and a longtime Trotskyist, as the person who had met with Trotsky in 1932 and received terrorist instructions from him — that is, instructions to assassinate Stalin and, perhaps, others.

Vyshinskii, quoting Smirnov:

I admit that the attitude which regarded terrorism as the only way of changing the situation in the Soviet Union was known to me from a conversation with Sedov in Berlin in 1931 as his own personal

position. I admit that this line on terrorism was confirmed by L. Trotsky in 1932 in his personal instructions conveyed to me through Y. Gaven.

(Report 1936, 17)

Vyshinsky: Another question to Smimov. Do you corroborate the testimony of Mrachkovsky that in 1932 you received a reply from Trotsky through Gaven?

Smimov: I received a reply from Trotsky through Gaven.

Vyshinsky: And in addition, did you receive verbal information on the conversation with Trotsky?

Smirnov: Yes, also verbal conversation.

Vyshinsky: You, Smirnov, confirm before the Supreme Court that in 1932 you received from Gaven the direction from Trotsky to commit acts of terrorism?

Smimov: Yes.

Vyshinsky: Against whom?

Smirnov: Against the leaders.

Vyshinsky: Against which?

Smirnov: Stalin and others. (Report 1936, 42)

Smirnov stated that he had also had contact with Sedov but that Gaven had conveyed to him a letter from Trotsky himself.

Vyshinsky: Was the letter you received through Gaven sent by Sedov or by Trotsky?

Smirnov: Gaven brought a letter from Trotsky. (Report 1936, 83-84)

[...]

Vyshinsky: What then do you admit?

Smirnov: I admit that I belonged to the underground Trotskyite organization, joined the bloc, joined the centre of this bloc, met Sedov in Berlin in 1931, listened to his opinion on terrorism and passed this opinion on to Moscow. I admit that I received Trotsky's instructions on terrorism from Gaven and, although not in agreement with them, I communicated them to the Zinovievites through Ter-Vaganyan.

Vyshinsky: And, while not in agreement, you remained a member of the bloc and worked in the bloc?

Smirnov: I did not resign officially from the bloc, but actually I did no work.

(Report 1936, 85)

Smirnov's behavior seems inconsistent with a "forced" or faked confession. Smirnov continued to stubbornly insist that he was not a member of the bloc even though he passed on the instructions about terrorism to the Zinovievites, a point Vyshinsky energetically contested.

Smirnov returned to this topic in his last plea.

This was the mistake I made, which later grew into a crime. It induced me to resume contact with Trotsky, it induced me to seek connections with the Zinovievite group, it brought me into a bloc with the group of Zinovievites, into receiving instructions on terrorism from Trotsky through Gaven in November 1932, it brought me to terrorism. I communicated Trotsky's instructions on terrorism to the bloc to which I belonged as a member of the centre. The bloc accepted these instructions and began to act.

(Report 1936, 171)



Both Sedov and Trotsky publicly denied any meetings with Gaven. Sedov, *Livre rouge*:

*Gaven, par exemple, dont nous parlerons plus amplement, bien qu'il ait été mentionné à diverses reprises comme ayant transmis les instructions terroristes de Trotsky à Smirnov, est absent du procès. (49)*

Gaven, for example, whom we will later discuss more fully, is mentioned several times as a courier of terrorist instructions from Trotsky to Smirnov, — and is absent from the trial.

Celui qui est mentionné comme ayant transmis les instructions de Trotsky sur la terreur, ce n'est pas Goltzman, mais I. Gaven, qui aurait personnellement reçu de Trotsky des instructions terroristes et les aurait transmises à I.N. Smirnov. C'est de Gaven, comme de l'unique personne qui ait transmis des instructions terroristes de Trotsky au Centre unifié que parle l'acte d'accusation... (99-100)

The one named at the trial who figures as the transmitter of Trotsky's instructions about terrorism is not Holtzman, but Y. Gaven, who supposedly personally received terrorist instructions from Trotsky, and passed them on to I.N. Smirnov. The charges speak of Gaven as the only person who had passed on terrorist instructions from Trotsky to the "Unified Center,"...

[...]

*Faut-il répéter que Trotsky n'a pas transmis par l'intermédiaire de I. Gaven, pas plus que par l'intermédiaire de quelqu'un d'autre, des instructions terroristes et ne s'est pas rencontré à l'étranger avec Gaven, pas plus qu'il ne s'est rencontré avec aucun des accusés? (100)*

Is it necessary to say that Trotsky did not transmit through I. Gaven, any more than through anyone else, any kind of terrorist instructions and did not meet with Gaven abroad, any more than he met with a single one of the defendants?

Trotsky, at the Dewey Commission hearings:

GOLDMAN: Did you ever hear of a man by the name of Gaven?

TROTSKY: Yes.

GOLDMAN: Who is he?

TROTSKY: He is a Latvian Bolshevik. He, if I remember, gave all his sympathies at a certain time to the Opposition. As Holtzman, for example. In 1926 or 1927, he was connected for a time with Smilga, a member of the Central Committee. But he disappeared from my eyes absolutely after 1926.

GOLDMAN: In the testimony of Mrachkovsky, and also Smirnov, there is a reference that you sent communications through Gaven to Smirnov about the necessity of killing Stalin.

TROTSKY: I don't know anything about it. No, it is an absolute falsehood. He is not among the defendants.

GOLDMAN: No, he is not. He is a witness.

TROTSKY: Not even a witness.

GOLDMAN: That's right.

TROTSKY: He disappeared.

GOLDMAN: It is simply mentioned by Mrachkovsky, by the defendant Mrachkovsky.

*(Case of Leon Trotsky, 6th session, 225-226)*

But in 1990 Broué revealed that Trotsky and Sedov had lied. Gaven did meet with Sedov at least.

In 1936 Trotskii and Sedov denied having any contact with him (Gaven]. In fact, they had. Allowed to go to Germany in order to receive medical care, Gavenis wrote to Trotskii and got an interview with Lev Sedov, who wrote an account of it. Gavenis gave information

about the bloc, supplementing Holzman's. He also gave information about his own "O"-group (probably Osinskii) and seems to have agreed to bring back to the Soviet Union a message to the Trotskiite group itself — in spite of his worry about the latter having been infiltrated by the OGPU.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>105</sup> Pierre Broué. "Party Opposition to Stalin (1930-1932) and the First Moscow Trial." In John W. Strong, ed. *Essays on Revolutionary Culture and Stalinism*. Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1990, pp. 98-111, p. 99. (Broué POS)

Broué does not identify the letter or letters either in the Sedov Papers at the Hoover Institution or in the Trotsky Archive at Harvard in which Trotsky and his son discuss Gaven. According to Vadim Rogovin, one of those letters may be Trotsky Archive 4858.<sup>106</sup> Broué suggests that other letters are at Hoover but gives no further details. In Broué's 1988 biography Trotsky we read only this:

*Gaven, l'ancien « émissaire » de Trotsky, est fusillé sur une civière.*<sup>107</sup>

<sup>106</sup> Rogovin, *Byla li Al'ternativa?*, Chapter 9; in Russian at <http://web.mit.edu/people/fjk/Rogovin/volume4/ix.html>

<sup>107</sup> Chapter 56; at [http://www.marxists.org/francais/Broué/works/1988/00/PB\\_tky\\_56.htm](http://www.marxists.org/francais/Broué/works/1988/00/PB_tky_56.htm)

The detail of being shot "on a litter" is taken from Roi Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, a unreliable book full of Khrushchev-era falsifications. In the same chapter Broué also accepts Medvedev's account that Stalin had Sergo Ordzhonikidze assassinated, a story for which there is no evidence at all and which has long been abandoned even by anticommunists who insist that Sergo committed suicide — also a falsehood, as Vladimir Bobrov has demonstrated.<sup>108</sup>

Broué writes:

The correspondence between Trotskii and Sedov demonstrates that father and son were astounded at the beginning of the trial when they

saw that Smirnov and Holzman, already guilty in Stalin's eyes, did not content themselves with confessing the truth but accused themselves of fantastic crimes. (Broué POS 99)

It would be important to see the text of such letters. If they are as Broué describes, they might constitute evidence that Smirnov's and Gol'tsman's testimony was false. But Broué neither quotes the text nor cites the specific letters in which this exchange supposedly took place. Therefore we can't verify Broué's claim that Trotsky and Sedov were "astounded" or that they discussed between themselves which of the accusations made by Smirnov and Gol'tsman were true and which were not.

Vadim Rogovin may have been informed of the contents of the Trotsky Archive by Broué; I have not found any evidence that he had access to the Trotsky Archives himself. We know that these men, the two most prominent Trotsky scholars in the world at the time, were in communication with each other.<sup>109</sup> Yet Rogovin cites only a letter in which Sedov discusses what he and Trotsky should admit and what they should conceal. This does not constitute evidence that they thought Smirnov's and Gol'tsman's testimony false.

<sup>109</sup> I know this from the person who drove Broué when he was doing research in the Nicolaevsky Archive at the Hoover Institution during the 1980s.

Therefore we have evidence that Trotsky and Sedov lied about Gaven. Gaven had indeed met with Sedov and, in Broué's words, "seems to have agreed to bring back to the Soviet Union a message to the Trotskyite group itself". Smirnov confessed that this letter, which he dates to November 1932, contained terrorist instructions. Broué and Rogovin deny this but give no evidence for this denial.

Neither Broué nor Rogovin have any coherent explanation for Trotsky's and Sedov's lying here. Broué attempts to explain it thus:

Sedov at first wondered whether he should tell the truth, publicly, but finally decided to deny everything, except proven contacts, which

seemed to him the only way of hindering the annihilation of the defendants. (Broué POS 99)

Rogovin opines:

Facts such as these argue that Trotsky and Sedov decided to deny everything that was not already thoroughly known to Stalin's inquisitors. (op.cit.)

Such statements do not explain why Trotsky did not simply publish the letter he did give to Gaven, with the names of individuals deleted. Gaven and many others were already known to the NKVD, so this would not have further endangered them. Publishing the letter would have been a major challenge to Stalin and the NKVD, and be strong documentary evidence that Smirnov, Gol'tsman, and others were lying when they said that Trotsky was urging "terror" — assassination.

But if the letter Sedov passed to Gaven really did advocate "terror", as Smirnov and Vyshinsky claimed, then of course Trotsky and Sedov could not publish it. Therefore their failure to admit to the discussion with and message to Gaven, and their failure to publish the message they gave Gaven, at the very least leaves open the possibility that Trotsky had indeed advocated "terror" in this letter. As we shall see in our examination of the Kirov evidence in the second Moscow Trial of January 1937, exactly the same situation arose a few months later with respect to the letter to Radek.

In the early 1980s Getty revealed that the Trotsky Archive at Harvard had been "purged" of incriminating materials. No further evidence of Trotsky-Sedov contacts with Gaven or the other clandestine oppositionists inside the USSR during the 1930s can be expected from that source. This suggests that Trotsky's letter to the bloc sent by Gaven was incriminating in some way and so was among the materials purged from the archive. It is possible that such materials may be held in former Soviet archives still top-secret in Russia.

### **The "Hotel Bristol" Question**

In 2010 Swedish researcher Sven-Eric Holmström proved that Trotsky laid down a smokescreen of lies and fabrication before the Dewey Commission. In his careful study of Gol'tsman's testimony at the 1936 Moscow Trial, the testimony by Trotsky and his witnesses at the Dewey Commission hearings, photographs of the Grand Hotel Copenhagen and Bristol Konditori (café), and the communist press of the time, Holmström has shown that the communist press was correct. Gol'tsman was telling the truth about the "Hotel Bristol". It was Trotsky and his witness, Esther Field, who were lying.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Holmström, Sven-Eric. "New Evidence Concerning the 'Hotel Bristol' Question in the First Moscow Trial of 1936." *Cultural Logic*, 2008. At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2008/Holmström.pdf> (Published 2010)

As Holmström points out, Trotsky took a serious risk in lying about the Hotel Bristol matter. The Danish Communist Party did check up on his story and published their findings in their newspaper. Had anyone in the mainstream press followed up on this story the fact that Trotsky had lied would have become broadly known. This in turn might have discredited the Dewey Commission's investigation. In fact the Commission itself could have easily taken the trouble to verify the "Hotel Bristol" issue. That it failed to do so is additional evidence that the commission was heavily biased in Trotsky's favor.

If Gol'tsman really had been lying in his testimony about meeting Trotsky, Trotsky could have simply denied meeting Gol'tsman anywhere in Copenhagen in November 1932, though it is a matter of record that Trotsky was indeed present in Copenhagen at the time. Gol'tsman had no other proof of the meeting. The fact that Trotsky took the risk of lying about it for the purpose of raising what amounted to a "red herring" concerning the name of the hotel in question suggests that he may have had something to hide that was worth the risk of being caught in a lie in order to conceal.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>111</sup> Holmström suspects that Gol'tsman did meet with Trotsky but that he did not meet with Sedov, as he claimed at the 1936 Moscow Trial, but with someone else whose identity he wanted to conceal. Holmström's study of

the question of IUrii Piatakov's claim that he visited Trotsky in Norway in December 1935 is well advanced.

## **Conclusion**

There is no direct confirmation from sources outside the Soviet Union of the charge that the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc conspired in the murder of Kirov. But such confirmation is hardly to be expected. In the interests of secrecy the details of such a conspiracy would be confined to a small number of persons. Experienced conspirators like Trotsky and his son would not have told anyone who did not "need to know".

We do have confirmation of a number of details in the Moscow Trial from the best possible source outside Soviet control — Trotsky and his son. Trotsky and Sedov publicly denied these allegations — evidence that they believed this information would add to the credibility of the chief criminal allegations made in the Trial, as in fact they do. Corroboration of those allegations we can check does not, of course, prove that all allegations and accusations made at the Trial were equally correct. But it does add to the credibility of those charges that cannot be directly corroborated.

We also know that Trotsky's and Sedov's public statements cannot be taken at face value. To the extent that we have corroborated allegations made at the Trial that Trotsky and Sedov publicly denied, we can be assured that they would probably also deny other, even more incriminating accusations, especially if they were in fact true.

## Chapter 14. *Evidence Lenoe Ignores — The Second and Third Moscow Trials*

The second Moscow Trial is formally known as "the case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre" and informally as the Piatakov-Radek trial after the two most famous defendants. It took place between January 23 and January 30, 1937. Lenoe dismisses the evidence given at this trial even more briefly than that of the first trial.

The second major show trial of the Terror opened on January 23, 1937. Stalin and Yezhov supervised. The state constructed a giant conspiratorial edifice on the basis of private grumbling about Stalin and a few grotesque confessions of terrified defendants. (466)

This is another example of Lenoe's recourse to the fallacy of "begging the question", assuming that which must be proven.<sup>112</sup> Lenoe has no evidence that the defendants' confessions are false or that the state, not the defendants, "constructed" the conspiracy. The reason is simple: no such evidence exists.

<sup>112</sup> One famous definition: "*Petitio principia* is, therefore, committed when a proposition which requires proof is assumed without proof." James Welton. *A Manual of Logic. Volume II.* (London: W.B. Clive, 1896), p. 279. "Petitio principia" is translated as "begging the question"

As for Lenoe's claim that the defendants were any more "terrified" than defendants in any capital trial anywhere, I suggest that no objective person who studies the transcript could come away with that opinion. On the contrary: the principal defendants gave the impression of calmness and lucidity. A well-known example is the following passage from Karl Radek's closing statement:

When I found myself in the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, the chief examining official realized at once why I would not talk. He said to me: "You are not a baby. Here you have fifteen people testifying against you. You cannot get out of it, and as a sensible man



you cannot think of doing so. If you do not want to testify it can only be because you want to gain time and look it over more closely. Very well, study it." For two and a half months I tormented the examining official. **The question has been raised here whether we were tormented while under investigation. I must say that it was not I who was tormented, but I who tormented the examining officials and compelled them to perform a lot of useless work.** For two and a half months I compelled the examining official, by interrogating me and by confronting me with the testimony of other accused, to open up all the cards to me, so that I could see who had confessed, who had not confessed, and what each had confessed.

This lasted for two and a half months. And one day the chief examining official came to me and said: "You are now the last. Why are you wasting time and temporizing? Why don't you say what you have to say?" And I answered: "Yes, tomorrow I shall begin my testimony." And the testimony I gave contains not a single correction from first to last. I unfolded the whole picture as I knew it, and the investigation may have corrected one or another personal mistake about the connections of some person with another, but I affirm that not a single thing I told the examining officials has been refuted and that nothing has been added in.<sup>113</sup> (Emphasis added — GF)

<sup>113</sup>*Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre. Heard Before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. Moscow, January 23-30, 1937.... Verbatim Report. Moscow: Moscow: People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R., 1937, 549. (1937 Trial)*

This passage is famous. But other defendants were almost as cool under Vyshinsky's questioning.

Such passages expose Lenoë's purpose in describing the defendants as "terrified". Lenoë appears to be unwilling to deal with the testimony about the Kirov assassination. Perhaps this is because, like so much other evidence, it is incompatible with his preconceived conclusion that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" and everybody else was "framed." Whatever his

motives, Lenoë uses language in an attempt to justify ignoring the testimony. Declaring the testimony "grotesque" and the defendants "terrified" is also a "tell", a tacit admission that he has no evidence to refute the trial testimony and so is reduced to the "bluff" of denial.

### **Was the Trial Testimony Falsified?**

Lenoë "begs the question" in that he assumes that the trial testimony was falsified in some way he does not specify. In this he follows the example of ideologically anticommunist researchers. It is easy to find historians of Soviet history who make this assumption. But it is impossible to find one who proves it, or indeed has any evidence for it at all. There has never been any evidence that the testimony at the Moscow Trials was falsified, the defendants forced to mouth confessions composed or dictated by others.

But though there is no evidence that the testimony in this trial was falsified, there is a lot of evidence of the contrary: that it was genuine. Here are a few examples of corroboration between testimony at the January 1937 trial and other established facts:

- Radek and others testify that they disagreed with the assassination of individuals (1937 Trial 71; 101-2). This corresponds to what Iagoda testified independently, as we will see in the chapter devoted to him.
- Radek's claim that he had received a letter from Trotsky in the spring of 1932 is confirmed by a certified mail receipt found by Getty in the Harvard Trotsky archive. (92)
- Radek testified that Bukharin had told him he (Bukharin) had "taken the path of terrorism." (99) We know from the memoirs of Jules Humbert-Droz, published in Switzerland in 1971, that Bukharin had decided to assassinate Stalin long before this.
- Sokol'nikov testified that the "united centre" of Zinovievites and Trotskyites had decided on planning terrorist acts against Stalin and Kirov "as early as the autumn of 1932." (147) This corresponds with the testimony of Valentin Astrov, one of Bukharin's followers one of whose confessions has been published. Astrov had the chance to recant this after the fall of the USSR but explicitly refused to do so. Astrov

- also insisted that the NKVD investigators had treated him with respect and used no compulsion against him.
- Muralov stated that Ivan Smimov had told him about his meeting abroad with Sedov. (217) In his *Livre rouge* Sedov admitted that he had met with Smimov, though he claimed the meeting was entirely innocent.
  - Muralov stated that Shestov had brought a letter from Sedov in 1932 with a secret message written with antipirin, or invisible ink. (218) We know that Sedov used antipirin to write secret messages since at least one such letter of Sedov's survives in the Harvard Trotsky archive. In it he recommends that his father Trotsky write him back with antipirin as well.
  - Radek stated that it was he who had recommended to Trotsky that Vitovt Putna, a military commander loyal to Trotsky, be the person to negotiate with the Germans and Japanese on Trotsky's behalf. This corresponds with Putna's later confessions as recorded by Marshal Budiennyi.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Furr, Grover, and Vladimir L. Bobrov. "Marshal S.M. Budiennyi on the Tukhachevsky Trial. Impressions of an Eye-Witness" (in Russian). *Klio* No. 2 (2012), pp. 8-24. At [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/budennyi\\_klio\\_12.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/budennyi_klio_12.pdf) Reprinted in *M.N. Tukhachevskii. Kak My Predali Stalina*. Moscow: Algorithm, 2012, 174-230.

Most of this evidence might be explained as faked — if there were any evidence that the confessions, and the alleged plots, had been scripted by the NKVD. But there is no evidence of any such conspiracy to fabricate the trials, while we do have evidence that they were not scripted.

In light of these facts it is impermissible for any competent and objective researcher to simply dismiss without any consideration the very significant evidence given in the trial transcript concerning Kirov's assassination.

## **The Kirov Assassination**

Radek had the most to say about the Kirov assassination plans. The following text is from the English version of the trial transcript, which is more than twice as long as the Russian version and so contains far more detail.

Vyshinsky: In what year was this?

Radek: This was in 1930-31. And here there were those transgressions which would have justified my being brought to trial even if I had not belonged to the bloc. There was the fact that, knowing from these talks of their vacillations -which already exceeded the bounds of vacillations — I did not consider it possible to inform the leadership of the Party of it. For example, if you were to ask me about my responsibility for the murder of Sergei Mironovich Kirov, I must say that this responsibility began not from the moment I joined the leadership of the bloc, but from that moment in 1930 when a man with whom I had close relations — Safarov — came to me looking black in the face and tried to convince me that the country was on the verge of ruin, and I did not report this — and what were the consequences? Safarov was connected with Kotolynov. If I had told the Party about Safarov's frame of mind, the Party would have got at the group of the former leaders of the Leningrad Young Communist League who later became the leaders of the assassination of Kirov. And so I declare that my responsibility dates not only from the time I joined the bloc, but that the roots of this crime lie in the Trotskyite views with which I returned and which I had not thoroughly abandoned, and in the relations I had retained with the Trotskyite-Zinovievite cadres. (83-4)

This specific passage is not in the Russian transcript, where Safarov is not mentioned at all.

Both the Russian and English texts contain the following passages by Radek:

Vyshinsky: Did you know from Mrachkovsky about the preparations for terrorist acts against the leaders of the Party and the government?

...

Radek: The conversation about Kirov was connected with the fact that in April 1933 Mrachkovsky asked me whether I could mention any Trotskyite in Leningrad who would undertake the organization of a terrorist group there.

Vyshinsky: Against whom?

Radek: Against Kirov, of course.

Vyshinsky: He requested your assistance?

Radek: Naming a person is assistance, that is clear.

Vyshinsky: And then?

Radek: I named such a person.

Vyshinsky: You named?

Radek: Yes.

Vyshinsky: Who was it?

Radek: Prigozhin.

Vyshinsky: Prigozhin? Who could find a murderer?

Radek: Yes.

Vyshinsky: This was in April 1933?

Radek: Yes.

Vyshinsky: And when was Kirov killed?

Radek: Kirov was killed in December 1934. (Report 90)<sup>115</sup>

<sup>115</sup> The account in the Russian transcript is slightly abbreviated.

We know from the Trotsky Archive that Sedov informed Trotsky in 1932 that Safarov would shortly join the newly-minted bloc of Zinovievites, Trotskyites, and some others. Radek testified that Safarov told him in 1930 that "the country was on the verge of ruin" and, by implication, that Stalin must be stopped. Further, Safarov "was connected with Kotolynov", thus implying that the Zinovievite underground group existed as early as that date.

Radek testified that the decision to turn to terror came from the Spring 1932 letter from Trotsky and this meant terrorist acts should be planned against "Stalin and his immediate colleagues", including Kirov.

Vyshinsky: Did you know anything about the preparations for the assassination of Sergei Mironovich Kirov?

Radek: When we discussed the projected terrorist struggle, the question arose against whom it should be directed in the first place.

Vyshinsky: This was in 1932?

Radek: When the question arose against whom terrorism should be directed, it concerned terrorism directed against the leading core of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. and the Soviet government. And although not a single name was mentioned during this conversation, I know very well who are the leaders and did not have the slightest doubt that the acts were to be directed against Stalin and his immediate colleagues, against Kirov, Molotov, Voroshilov and Kaganovich.

Vyshinsky: Were those your deductions or did he say this?

Radek: There was no necessity to say it because I knew very well who lead the Party and the Soviet government. (89)

...

Vyshinsky: And so it may be considered established that you learned about terrorism from Mrachkovsky?

Radek: Yes.

Vyshinsky: This was before you received the letter from Trotsky?

Radek: This was after I received the letter from Trotsky. The letter from Trotsky was received in February or March 1932.

Vyshinsky: That is, in February 1932 you received a letter from Trotsky in which he already spoke of the necessity of getting rid of ... .

Radek: Removing.

Vyshinsky: ... of the necessity of removing; consequently you understood that terrorism was meant?

Radek: Of course. (93)

In April 1933 Mrachkovsky asked Radek if he could find someone in Leningrad to assassinate Kirov. Radek mentioned someone who might be able to organize a terrorist group there — Prigozhin.

Then Mrachkovsky told him that the Trotskyists had no one in Leningrad but that the Zinovievites did and were planning to assassinate Kirov. Mrachkovsky named Bakayev as overall leader of the Zinovievite terrorist groups.

Vyshinsky: Consequently, many months before this villainous crime, you, Radek, knew that the Trotskyites were preparing to murder Kirov?

Radek: I can say even more. I knew that it was being prepared in general, and by the Zinovievites because since it had been decided to strike at the leaders -Kirov was one of the most prominent leaders, and the Zinovievites had their main centre in Petrograd — it was clear that their terrorist organization intended to strike at Kirov. Moreover, Mrachkovsky told me then that we had nothing in Leningrad; the Zinovievites were preparing there and of course we ought to have our own group. That much in this connection he told me; but he did not tell

me when and what would be. He only told me that the Zinovievites in Leningrad / 91 / were preparing for an assassination. He told me that, and I very clearly, without any ambiguity, knew that this concerned Kirov.

Vyshinsky: When you say here that Mrachkovsky informed you of the role of Bakayev, what do you mean by that?

Radek: He did not tell me that Bakayev personally directed the assassination of Kirov, but he named him as the leader of all the terrorist groups of the Zinovievites. I did not know whether Bakayev would commit this assassination or entrust it to somebody else, but it was clear to me that the preparations for the assassination could not proceed without Bakayev. (90-1; not in the Russian transcript)

Sokol'nikov, another leader with Radek and Piatakov of the "reserve center" of Trotskyites, also claimed he knew of terrorist planning in 1932 and of Bakayev's role. Sokol'nikov said that Kamenev had told him in the autumn of 1934 about an impending assassination attempt against Kirov. He also confessed that he knew as early as 1932 that the Leningrad center included Kotolynov, Mandelshtam, Levin "and others".

The President: Did you know of the preparations in 1934 for the assassination of Comrade Kirov? Did you know who were the members of the terrorist centre which prepared and carried out the assassination of Comrade Kirov?

Sokolnikov: I knew in the beginning of the autumn, or the end of the summer of 1934, I cannot say definitely, that an attempt on the life of Kirov was being prepared in Leningrad. As to who was to carry it out, that I did not know. I was not informed about the details of this affair. But in 1932 I heard who the members of the Leningrad centre were.

The President: Thus, you confirm your testimony that you knew of the existence in Leningrad of the terrorist centre, and in particular, that the members of this centre were Levin, Kotolynov, Mandelstamm and others. You confirm this?



Sokolnikov: Yes, I confirm it, I knew that in 1932.

The President: Did you know that the preparations for the terrorist act against Comrade Kirov were carried out under Bakayev's personal direction?

Sokolnikov: I was not told about that directly, but I knew that the direction of the preparation of a terrorist act was entrusted to Bakayev.

The President: To what extent were you connected with Reingold and his activities?

Sokolnikov: Reingold directed the terrorist groups in Moscow. I used to meet him, but he gave me no information about his work. About the functions that he was carrying out I learned from Kamenev.

The President: Reingold had more direct connections with you than with Kamenev?

Sokolnikov: But he gave me no information about his activities.

The President: Reingold frequently visited you and discussed things with you more than he did with Kamenev. How is it that you did not know about his activities?

Sokolnikov: I met him, but he gave me no information about his terrorist activities, and I cannot testify to the details of his work.

The President: If you did not know the details of Reingold's terrorist activities, how is it you knew such a detail as the fact that in November 1934 Bakayev went to Leningrad personally to prepare the murder of Comrade Kirov?

Sokolnikov: I had no connection whatever with the preparations for the murder of Kirov except that, as a member of the organization, I bear responsibility for all the actions and all the crimes committed by the organization. The reason why I knew about Bakayev is that Kamenev mentioned him to me. I had known Bakayev for a long time,

and evidently Kamenev, in conversation with me, mentioned him.  
(165-166)

This corresponds with Kamenev's confessions both before and at the 1936 trial. We have discussed them in a previous chapter. It also confirms the confessions of Valentin Astrov, a former follower of Bukharin's. Astrov confirmed these confessions in articles published in the post-Soviet period.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>116</sup> We discuss Astrov elsewhere in the present work, and at greater length in our essay "Verdikt - Vinoven" ("Verdict — Guilty"), Chapter One of Grover Furr and Vladimir Bobrov, 1937. *Pravosudie Stalina. Obzhalovaniiu ne podlezhit!* Moscow: Eksmo, 2010.

Muralov confirmed that I.N. Smirnov had told him in 1931 of his visit with Sedov and of "Trotsky's new line about resorting to terrorism against the leadership of the Communist Party and the government."

Vyshinsky: Tell us about the part you played in the West-Siberian underground Trotskyite centre.

[...]

Muralov: In the beginning of 1931. While I was on an official business trip in Moscow I met Ivan Nikitich Smirnov. He told me that he had been abroad and had seen Sedov. He told me about Trotsky's new line about resorting to terrorism against the leadership of the Communist Party and the government.

Smirnov advised us to re-establish the Siberian centre to consist of persons known to me and him, those who returned to the Party in 1929. These names were mentioned — Sumetsky and Boguslavsky. The first task of this centre was to gather Trotskyite forces and to organize serious terrorist acts. On my arrival in Novosibirsk I arranged to meet Sumetsky and Boguslavsky and told them what Ivan Nikitich Smirnov had proposed, which I accepted as proper. They also agreed with me and we three began to function as the Trotskyite counter-revolutionary centre in Siberia. I was the leader; Sumetsky was to

gather the cadres chiefly among the young people in the universities. I instructed the Trotskyite Khodoroze to organize a terrorist group. He formed it in 1932. The designated object of the terrorist act was the secretary of the Territory Committee of the C.P.S.U., Eiche. In the same year, 1932, Shestov arrived in Novosibirsk and brought a letter from Sedov.

This letter contained a lot of fiction and was written in the ordinary way, but what was not fiction was written with antipirin and when made visible was found to be Trotsky's directive to proceed to terrorist activities. The letter confirmed what Smirnov had said. (216-217)

This confirms what Broué was told by Lilia Dallin: that Sedov was the only person who knew all of Trotsky's plans. It is also consistent with Mark Zborowski's reports to Moscow that Sedov had confided to him that Stalin should be assassinated, despite the fact that both Sedov and Trotsky publicly denounced assassination as contrary to Marxism. We also have at least one letter in the Harvard Trotsky Archive by Sedov written with antipirin, a kind of invisible ink made visible when heated with an iron.

Like Radek and Piatakov — and, as we shall see, like Iagoda — Muralov was opposed to "working by Socialist-Revolutionary, guerrilla methods" of individual assassination, but nevertheless participated in plans for assassination.

Vyshinsky: Tell the Court please, did you meet Pyatakov after the murder of Sergei Mironovich Kirov?

Muralov: I did.

Vyshinsky: In Moscow?

Muralov: In Moscow.

Vyshinsky: And did you discuss the murder of Sergei Mironovich Kirov?

Muralov: We did, we discussed the impression this act had left on everybody, and noted that after all, the directive was being carried out; one man had already been removed.

Vyshinsky: One had been removed!

And did not Pyatakov say that now it was the turn of the others?

Muralov: He did not say that now it was the turn of the others; on the contrary, he said that it was necessary to do this in an organized way. Generally speaking, we did not say that it must be each in turn, or all at once; at all events we said that we must be well prepared, and reproaching me in this respect, he said that we must not act in this blunt soldier-like fashion, but cautiously, in an organized way, and so forth.

Vyshinsky: Cautiously, in an organized way, but act?

Muralov: Yes.

Vyshinsky: At the preliminary investigation, when you were examined at the office of the Procurator of the U.S.S.R., you testified as follows. Permit me to read Vol. XXV, p. 109:

"In 1934, after the murder of Sergei Mironovich Kirov, I met Pyatakov in Moscow and in conversation with me he said: 'One of those listed in the plan has been wiped off, now it is the turn of the rest; but we must not be impetuous.'"

Is that right?

Muralov: I confirm it, that is what I said.

(224-225)

[...]

Vyshinsky: But was it not said that terrorism in general produces no result if only one is killed and the others remain, and therefore it is

necessary to act at one stroke?

Muralov: Both I and Pyatakov felt that it was no use working by Socialist-Revolutionary, guerrilla methods. We must organize it so as to cause panic at one stroke. We regarded causing panic and consternation in the leading ranks of the Party as one of the means by which we would come into power. (226)

### **The Second Moscow Trial: Conclusion**

The testimony at the second Moscow Trial concerning the Kirov assassination situates that act in the context of a much broader conspiracy composed of a number of independent underground groups in touch with one another through a co-ordinating center. It also exculpates the Trotskyite conspiracy from direct participation in the Kirov assassination.

The conventional explanation of the anti-Trotskyite campaign of the 1930s is that it was a fabrication that demonstrated how Stalin saw Trotsky as his main rival and wanted to demonize him for that reason. However, if that had been the case, why would the NKVD "script" confessions that showed the Trotskyites were not directly involved in Kirov's murder? Of course they knew such an attempt was being planned by the Zinovievites. In a legal sense this made them responsible as well. But there is clearly a moral and a legal difference between being informed that an assassination is being planned and actively assisting in its accomplishment. Trotsky is portrayed as demanding assassinations, but his men did not carry them out.

It is also hard to square with the fact that two of the leading Trotskyite defendants, Radek and Sokol'nikov (along with two minor defendants), were given only prison sentences on the grounds that they did not participate either in the assassination of Kirov or in the sabotage to which the rest of the defendants confessed. Why would this have happened if Trotsky had been the main target of the trial?

The fact that some parts of Radek's confessions can be verified and that we have no evidence of any "scripting" of the confessions by Stalin or at his direction ought to compel any honest investigator to treat these confessions

as genuine unless and until evidence of such "scripting" or other evidence of falsification were to come to light. Absent such evidence, the confessions at this trial reveal that the conspiracy to assassinate leading Party members goes back to the formation of the bloc in 1932, and plans to murder Kirov to at least April 1933. Nikolaev's act appears as the culminating stage of a much broader conspiracy.

### **Evidence Leno Ignored: The Third Moscow Trial**

Genrikh Iagoda was the only one of the defendants in the March 1938 trial who had a close connection with the actual murder of Kirov. The testimony of other defendants gives more information concerning the conspiracy of the Rights, but it does not reveal anything more about the assassination plot or execution itself.

We will also examine the other testimony related to the Kirov assassination because it gives convincing evidence that the testimony of the defendants was not "scripted" or "fabricated" in the least, but genuine. Defendants Ivanov, Rykov, and Bukharin insist that they had no prior knowledge about the conspiracy to assassinate Kirov despite their prominent roles in the conspiracy of the Rights and the relationship of the Rights to the Trotskyite and Zinovievite conspiracies. Sharply differentiated confessions in which a defendant admits to some capital crimes, while staunchly denying his guilt in others, is strong evidence that the defendant was not acting under torture or threats. This is especially striking in the case of Bukharin.

Bukharin claimed that he had no prior knowledge of the Kirov assassination plot despite his admitted membership in the bloc of Rights and Trotskyites.

VYSHINSKY: Did the bloc stand for the organization of terrorist acts, the assassination of leaders of the Party and the Soviet government?

BUKHARIN: It did, and I think that the organization of this must be dated back roughly to 1932, the autumn.

VYSHINSKY: And what was your relation to the assassination of Sergei Mironovich Kirov? Was this assassination also committed with

the knowledge and on the instructions of the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites"?

BUKHARIN: That I did not know.

VYSHINSKY: I ask you, was this assassination committed with the knowledge and on the instructions of the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites"?

BUKHARIN: And I repeat that I do not know, Citizen Procurator.

VYSHINSKY: You did not know about this specifically in relation to the assassination of S. M. Kirov?

BUKHARIN: Not specifically, but...

VYSHINSKY: Permit me to question the accused Rykov.

THE PRESIDENT: You may.

VYSHINSKY: Accused Rykov, what do you know about the assassination of Sergei Mironovich Kirov?

RYKOV: I know nothing about the participation of the Rights or the Right part of the bloc in the assassination of Kirov.

VYSHINSKY: In general, were you aware of preparations for terrorist acts, for the assassination of members of the Party and the government?

RYKOV: As one of the leaders of the Right part of this bloc, I took part in the organization of a number of terrorist groups and in preparations for terrorist acts. As I have said in my testimony, I do not know of a single decision of the Right centre, through which I was related with the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" about the actual commission of assassinations ... .

VYSHINSKY: About the actual commission. So. Do you know that one of the aims of the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" was to organize

and commit terrorist acts against leaders of the Party and the government?

RYKOV: I said more than that, I said that I personally organized terrorist groups. But you are asking me whether I knew of such aims through some third person.

VYSHINSKY: I am asking whether the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" had any relation to the assassination of Comrade Kirov.

RYKOV: I have no information regarding the relation of the Right part to this assassination, and therefore I am convinced to this day that the assassination of Kirov was carried out by the Trotskyites without the knowledge of the Rights. Of course, I might not have known about it.<sup>117</sup>

<sup>117</sup>*Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" Heard Before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. Moscow, March 2-13, 1938...Verbatim Report. Moscow: People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R., 1938, 373-374. (1938 Trial)*

Bukharin's and Rykov's stubborn refusal to admit any knowledge of the role of the bloc in the assassination of Kirov is strong evidence that his testimony was not forced or fabricated. As we shall see, Vyshinsky had to address the court with the claim that he had successfully proven their complicity despite their denials.

In their concluding statements both Bukharin and Rykov again insist that they were ignorant about the assassination:

Rykov: ...The assassination of Kirov has formed the subject of two trials. Both the direct perpetrators and the organizers and leaders of this assassination have appeared in Court. I do not recall that my name was mentioned then. (1938 Trial, 738)

Bukharin: ... I categorically deny my complicity in the assassination of Kirov, Menzhinsky, Kuibyshev, Gorky and Maxim Peshkov. (771)



Of course, it might be the case that Rykov and Bukharin were lying here and really had known about the Kirov murder in advance. It is possible they thought that the question of complicity in these murders might have been a decisive one in determining whether they and others would face the death penalty or merely receive prison terms, as Radek and Sokol'nikov had at the January 1937 Moscow Trial. Both Radek and Sokol'nikov knew of Kirov's assassination but did not play any role in it, and had been spared execution.

Vyshinsky, the prosecutor, argued that it was highly unlikely that such leaders of the Rights as Rykov and Bukharin could have been ignorant about the Kirov murder no matter what they said at trial. Genrikh Iagoda testified that they had to know of the Kirov murder plot.

VYSHINSKY: Very well; please be seated. Permit me to question the accused Yagoda. Accused Yagoda, do you know that Yenukidze, of whom the accused Rykov just spoke, represented the Right part of the bloc and that he had direct relation to the organization of the assassination of Sergei Mironovich Kirov?

YAGODA: Both Rykov and Bukharin are telling lies — Rykov and Yenukidze were present at the meeting of the centre where the question of assassinating S. M. Kirov was discussed.

VYSHINSKY: Did the Rights have any relation to this?

YAGODA: Direct relation, because it was a bloc of Rights and Trotskyites.

VYSHINSKY: Did the accused Rykov and Bukharin in particular have any relation to the assassination?

YAGODA: Direct relation.

VYSHINSKY: Did you, as a member of the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" have any relation to this assassination?

YAGODA: I did.

VYSHINSKY: Are Bukharin and Rykov telling the truth when they say that they knew nothing about it?

YAGODA: That cannot be so, because when Yenukidze told me, that they, that is, the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" had decided at a joint meeting to commit a terrorist act against Kirov, I categorically objected... .

VYSHINSKY: Why?

YAGODA: I declared that I would never permit any terrorist acts. I regarded it as absolutely unnecessary.

VYSHINSKY: And dangerous for the organization?

YAGODA: Of course.

VYSHINSKY: Nevertheless?

YAGODA: Nevertheless Yenukidze confirmed ...

VYSHINSKY: What?

YAGODA: That at this meeting they ...

VYSHINSKY: Who were they?

YAGODA: Rykov and Yenukidze at first categorically objected... .

VYSHINSKY: To what?

YAGODA: To the commission of a terrorist act. But under the pressure of the remaining part of the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites"...

VYSHINSKY: Principally the Trotskyites?

YAGODA: Yes, under the pressure of the remaining part of the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" they gave their consent. So Yenukidze told me. (375-376)

Iagoda insisted that both Rykov and Bukharin were lying in denying that they had prior knowledge of the plot to kill Kirov. Yet when pressed by Vyshinskii Iagoda admitted that he did not know this at first hand but had heard it from Enukidze. This is evidence that this testimony was genuine. Vyshinskii was eager to prove that Bukharin and Rykov had prior knowledge of Kirov's murder. But none of his star witnesses would oblige him by admitting this.

In his summation to the court Vyshinskii claimed that this prior knowledge was "proven." But it is clear from the transcript that it was not in fact proven. There is no direct testimony to that effect; this is only Vyshinskii's deduction.

Yenukidze and Yagoda were members of the centre and closest associates of Bukharin and Rykov. How can we believe that Yenukidze and Yagoda who had a share in the assassination of Sergei Mironovich Kirov, who were closest associates of Rykov and Bukharin, and who were the centre of the whole system of terrorist acts against leaders of the Party and the government — how can we believe that Rykov and Bukharin did not know what was known to Yenukidze, the immediate friend, accomplice and coadjutor of Bukharin and Rykov, and what was known to Yagoda, the closest friend, accomplice and coadjutor of Bukharin and Rykov?

These are the circumstances which completely prove the participation of Rykov and Bukharin in the organization of the assassination of Sergei Mironovich Kirov.

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Had Iagoda been subject to torture or threats he could have claimed direct knowledge of Bukharin's and Rykov's prior knowledge, thus substantiating Vyshinskii's case. Had Rykov and Bukharin been subject to torture or threats they could have done likewise. The fact that they insisted upon their innocence in this regard while admitting to other very serious crimes argues that they were guilty of at least what they confessed to. Bukharin devoted his own final statement to the court to a detailed denial of a number of the charges against him, charges of which the prosecution spent a great deal of

time and effort trying to prove him guilty. We will discuss the issue of "torture" in a separate section of the present study. Bukharin's biography Stephen Cohen, perhaps the greatest authority on Bukharin in the world, has stated his conviction that Bukharin was not tortured.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>118</sup> Cohen, Stephen. "Bukharin na Lubianke." *Svobodnaia Mysl'* 21, No. 3 (2003), 58-63, at 60-61.

### **Bulanov's Testimony**

Bulanov's testimony appears to corroborate Iagoda's in one respect while contradicting it on another important matter. Bulanov testified that Iagoda informed him in 1936 that he and Zaporozhets had had prior knowledge of the Kirov murder plot. This far Bulanov's testimony agrees with that of Iagoda.

But then Bulanov testified that Iagoda had arranged the murder of Borisov, Kirov's bodyguard, supposedly because Borisov had been ordered not to prevent the assassination attempt.

Yagoda further told me that Borisov, an employee of the Leningrad Administration of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, had a share in the assassination of Kirov. When members of the government came to Leningrad and summoned this Borisov to the Smolny to interrogate him as a witness in connection with the assassination of Kirov, Zaporozhets, being alarmed by this and fearing that Borisov would betray those who stood behind Nikolayev, decided to kill Borisov. On Yagoda's instructions, Zaporozhets so arranged it that an accident occurred to the automobile which took Borisov to the Smolny. Borisov was killed in the accident, and in this way they got rid of a dangerous witness. (1938 Trial 558-559)

This is from the published trial transcript. But in 1995 Russian researcher IUrii Murin revealed that the original transcript of Bulanov's remarks says something quite different here:

In the original transcript:

"Bulanov ...I can't tell you exactly — the story was rather confused, but I seem to remember also that commissar Borisov, who was the sole participant in the murder [sic — GF] , who was supposed to give to the members of the government, who themselves had travelled there and were conducting the investigation, was supposed to give confessions, which he could have given, that Iagoda had also been there, then this commissar Borisov could not appear at the interrogation and was killed through an automobile accident. When he told me that he had been informed of the murder, then I understood that unusual concern of Iagoda's which he showed when Medved', Zaporopzhets and the other employees had been arrested and given over for trial as ordered."<sup>119</sup>

<sup>119</sup> IUrii Murin. "Ubiystvo v Smol'nom" [Murder in the Smolny]. *Rodina* 10 (1995), p.66.

In the original transcript Bulanov admitted that his memory of the details was imprecise — "I seem to remember." Bulanov did remember Borisov's death. It seemed suspicious to him, as it did to others at the time. But in the original transcript Bulaoov could not be certain that Iagoda had told him this. In fact he does not even directly attribute this story to Iagoda.

Lenoe states that this is an example of how "almost totally incoherent" Vyshinskii's case was. (480) But Lenoe is mistaken. Iagoda claimed he did not order Borisov to be killed, and Bulanov was unable to contradict him. Iagoda's testimony was not shaken on this point. Lenoe's false conclusion is based upon his claim that Iagoda "retracted" his testimony about Kirov's murder. That Iagoda never did so we have demonstrated in a separate section of this study.

This passage is evidence that yet another defendant testified honestly. Bulanov could have been forced to directly inculpate Iagoda in Borisov's death. But Bulanov was not forced. Instead he admitted his recollection was unclear.

Genrikh Iagoda was the only defendant in the March 1938 trial who had a close connection with the actual murder of Kirov. The testimony of other defendants gives more information concerning the conspiracy of the Rights,

but it does not reveal anything more about the assassination plot or its execution.

Here we will examine the other testimony related to the Kirov assassination because it gives convincing evidence that the testimony of the defendants was not "scripted" or "fabricated" in the least, but genuine. (By "genuine" we mean that the defendants said what they chose to say; we don't claim that they always told the truth.) Defendants Ivanov, Rykov, and Bukharin insist that they had no prior knowledge of the conspiracy to assassinate Kirov despite their prominent roles in the conspiracy of the Rights and the relationship of the Rights to the Trotskyite and Zinovievite conspiracies.

Bukharin's and Rykov's stubborn refusal to admit any knowledge of the role of the bloc in the assassination of Kirov is strong evidence that their testimony was not compelled or "scripted". As we shall see, Vyshinsky believed that they were lying. As we saw above, when he addressed the court Vyshinskii claimed that he had successfully proven their complicity. But in their concluding statements both Bukharin and Rykov once again insisted that they were ignorant about the assassination. (1938 Trial 737-8; 771)

There are no logical or rational grounds — much less evidentiary grounds — for doubting that the defendants at this trial testified what they wanted to testify. Had Iagoda been subject to torture or threats he could have claimed direct knowledge of Bukharin's and Rykov's prior knowledge, thus substantiating Vyshinskii's case. Likewise, had Bukharin or Rykov been tortured or threatened, or their families threatened, they would hardly have strenuously denied their guilt when the prosecution was eager to inculcate them.

## Chapter 15. *Iagoda's Confession*

Lenoe claims that Genrikh Iagoda, NKVD commissar from 1934 to 1936 and later defendant at the March 1938 Moscow Trial, "recanted" a confession concerning Kirov's assassination. Lenoe quotes from a report by Khrushchev-era NKVD chief Ivan Serov of August 31, 1956:

In his final words to the court Yagoda declared:

Not only is it false to say that I was an organizer but even to say that I was an accomplice in the murder of Kirov. I am guilty of a very serious dereliction of duty, that is true. I will answer for that in full measure, but I was not an accomplice. 'An accomplice' -you know as well as I do, comrade procurator, what that means. None of the materials of this trial or the preliminary investigation show that I was an accomplice in this villainous murder.

Yagoda in essence recanted his earlier testimony with regard to the participation of the Rightists in the murder of Kirov... (Lenoe 598)<sup>120</sup>

<sup>120</sup> For some reason Lenoe does not use the official Soviet translation of this passage, from the trial transcript published in Moscow in 1938. As a convenience to the reader who may wish to check this for herself, this passage is on p. 786 of the trial transcript, and is as follows:

Lenoe accepts Serov's interpretation of this passage, writing:

"It is not only untrue to say that I was an organizer but it is untrue to say that I was an accomplice in the murder of Kirov. I committed an extremely grave violation of duty — that is right. I answer for it in an equal measure, but I was not an accomplice. Citizen Procurator, you know what complicity is just as well as I do. The entire material of the Court proceedings and the preliminary investigation has failed to prove that I was an accomplice in this vile murder."

As we have seen, Yagoda recanted his confession at the trial's end.  
(666)

Lenoe's statement is false. In this section we shall show that Iagoda did not at all "recant his confession" concerning Kirov's assassination and his role in it. On the contrary: Iagoda confirmed all the essential aspects of his confession concerning his role in the Kirov assassination. The only thing he did "recant" was that he was legally an accomplice (*souchastnik*) — a technical legal matter concerning the definition of which he and Soviet prosecutor Andrei Vyshinskii disagreed.

We will first prove that this is the case. Then we will conclude this section with a discussion of how it is that Lenoe could have misunderstood what Iagoda said. Briefly: Iagoda's confessions disprove Lenoe's thesis that Nikolaev acted alone, that there was no conspiracy to kill Kirov. Lenoe evidently misread Iagoda's testimony accordingly. Lenoe's misreading was possibly facilitated by the fact that Serov had also misread it back in the 1950s. But, as Lenoe himself notes, Serov was deliberately falsifying matters as a part of Khrushchev's attempt to malign Stalin. Lenoe ought to have been more cautious in accepting Serov's interpretation.

### **Iagoda's Testimony**

In his introductory remarks at the March 1938 Moscow trial Soviet Prosecutor Andrei Vyshinskii introduced the matter of Iagoda's involvement with Kirov's murder this way:

The investigation has established that the vile assassination of S. M. KIROV committed by the Leningrad Trotskyite-Zinovievite terrorist centre on December 1, 1934, was also committed in pursuance of a decision of the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites," members of which are being charged in the present case.

The investigation has established that one of the participants in this vile murder was the accused YAGODA, who testified as follows:

"That preparations for the assassination of S. M. KIROV were being made in accordance with a decision of the conspiratorial centre, I had previously learnt from YENUKIDZE. YENUKIDZE told me not to hinder the organization of this terrorist act, and I agreed. With this



purpose I summoned ZAPOROZHETZ from Leningrad and instructed him not to hinder the terrorist act that was being prepared against S. M. KIROV." (Vol. II, p. 209.)

(1938 Trial 22)

This is the essence of the charge against Iagoda concerning Kirov's murder.

We shall show that, in Iagoda's view, this meant he was not an accomplice in Kirov's murder, while Vyshinskii insisted that he was indeed an accomplice. All that Iagoda and Vyshinskii disagreed about was the legal definition of "accomplice."

We now have the entire text of the specific pretrial interrogation of Iagoda from which Vyshinskii quotes here. It is in a collection of documents related to Iagoda that includes the texts of seven of Iagoda's pretrial interrogation-confessions. The paragraph above is taken word for word from the pretrial interrogation-confession of Iagoda that is dated January 10, 1938.<sup>121</sup> Elsewhere we have examined the *bona fides* of these confessions, demonstrated that they are genuine, and shown that even anticommunist authors have accepted them.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>121</sup> *Genrikh Iagoda. Narkom vnutrennikh del SSSR, General'niy komisar gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti. Sbornik dokumentov. Kazan', 1997.* (Genrikh Iagoda), p. 235. The Russian language quotation in this 1997 volume is the same, word for word, as that in the Russian-language trial transcript.

<sup>122</sup> Grover Furr, "Evidence of Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan." *Cultural Logic* (2009), at <http://clogic.eserver.org/2009/Furr.pdf>, p. 140 and notes 91 and 92. Hereafter cited as "Furr, Evidence".

The fact that we have the texts of all these pretrial interrogations is important for several reasons.

- They prove that Vyshinskii honestly quoted from the pre-trial investigation materials. That is, these pretrial interrogations are evidence that the trial was conducted honestly, insofar as the prosecution quoted accurately from real pretrial evidence.

- The pretrial interrogation-confessions contain no indication that Iagoda was forced to testify falsely because of threats or "torture." Iagoda denies guilt in the earliest of these pretrial confessions. In subsequent confessions Iagoda gradually discloses more and more details as he confesses to more crimes.

This conforms to a pattern common in the investigation of criminal defendants: an initial wholesale denial of guilt, followed by gradually escalating confessions to more and more crimes as the suspect becomes convinced that the investigators have enough evidence from other sources to convict him despite his denials and decides that his best course is to cooperate.

- Lenoë knows about these pretrial confessions by Iagoda, as we shall prove. But he never cites them, even in his footnotes. Perhaps this is because these pretrial confessions disprove his preconceived idea that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman." Rather, they corroborate the hypothesis that Kirov was indeed assassinated by a Right Trotskyite conspiracy, thereby also corroborating Moscow Trial testimony generally.

Lenoë claims that his goal in his book is to solve Kirov's murder ("Introduction"). But what Lenoë's book really does is to set forth a "best possible case" for the hypothesis that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" and that Stalin "framed" the defendants in the December 28-29 1934 trial and in the three public Moscow Trials of August 1936, January 1937, and March 1938.

Here from the official transcript of the March 1938 Moscow Trial is Iagoda's trial testimony about the Kirov assassination and his role in it (we have already quoted the first part of it in the previous chapter):

VYSHINSKY: Are Bukharin and Rykov telling the truth when they say that they knew nothing about it?

YAGODA: That cannot be so, because when Yenukidze told me, that they, that is, the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" had decided at a joint

meeting to commit a terrorist act against Kirov, I categorically objected. ...

VYSHINSKY: Why?

YAGODA: I declared that I would never permit any terrorist acts. I regarded it as absolutely unnecessary.

VYSHINSKY: And dangerous for the organization?

YAGODA: Of course.

VYSHINSKY: Nevertheless?

YAGODA: Nevertheless Yenukidze confirmed ...

VYSHINSKY: What?

YAGODA: That at this meeting they ...

VYSHINSKY: Who were they?

YAGODA: Rykov and Yenukidze at first categorically objected ...

VYSHINSKY: To what?

YAGODA: To the commission of a terrorist act. But under the pressure of the remaining part of the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites"...

VYSHINSKY: Principally the Trotskyites?

YAGODA: Yes, under the pressure of the remaining part of the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" they gave their consent. So Yenukidze told me.

VYSHINSKY: After this, did you personally take any measures to effect the assassination of Sergei Mironovich Kirov?

YAGODA: I personally?

VYSHINSKY: Yes, as a member of the bloc.

YAGODA: I gave instructions ...

VYSHINSKY: To whom?

YAGODA: To Zaporozhnetz in Leningrad. **That is not quite how it was.**

VYSHINSKY: We shall speak about that later. What I want now is to elucidate the part played by Rykov and Bukharin in this villainous act.

YAGODA: I gave instructions to Zaporozhnetz. When Nikolayev was detained...

VYSHINSKY: The first time?

YAGODA: Yes. Zaporozhnetz came to Moscow and reported to me that a man had been detained...

VYSHINSKY: In whose briefcase...

YAGODA: There was a revolver and a diary. And he released him.

**VYSHINSKY: And you approved of this?**

**YAGODA: I just took note of the fact.**

VYSHINSKY: And then you gave instructions not to place obstacles in the way of the murder of Sergei Mironovich Kirov?

YAGODA: Yes, I did. **It was not like that.**

VYSHINSKY: In a somewhat different form?

**YAGODA: It was not like that, but it is not important.**

VYSHINSKY: Did you give instructions?

YAGODA: I have confirmed that.

VYSHINSKY: You have. Be seated. (1938 Trial 375-376)

The passage above constitutes Iagoda's confession of guilt in Kirov' murder. Iagoda said that he had vigorously opposed any "terrorist acts " but had been outvoted in a meeting of the bloc of Rights and Trotskyites. He admitted to having prior knowledge that an attempt on Kirov's life would be made.

But in answering Vyshinsky's questions some matters are left unclarified here:

- What did Iagoda mean by his answer: "To Zaporozhnetz in Leningrad. That is not quite how it was"?
- What did he mean by denying he had "approved of" releasing Nikolaev but rather admitting "I just took note of the fact"?
- When Vyshinsky asked whether he, Iagoda, "gave instructions not to place obstacles in the way of the murder of Sergei Mironovich Kirov", what did Iagoda mean by saying: "It was not like that ... It was not like that, but it is not important"?

Lenoe does not ask these questions, much less answer them. But they can be answered. At the end of this chapter we will return to them and answer them.

Later in the trial Vyshinskii returned to Iagoda, peppering him with a long list of more than twenty rapid-fire questions. On the whole, Iagoda appears to have handled this series of questions rather well. He answered "Yes" to most of them, but was careful to give differentiated replies, while also refusing to assent to some of them. As an example we cite the following exchange:

VYSHINSKY: Did you know of their espionage activity and did you shield this espionage activity?

YAGODA: Yes.

(1938 Trial 576)

Vyshinskii then draws an apparently logical conclusions from Iagoda's admission:

VYSHINSKY: I consider that since you shielded this espionage activity, you helped them, assisted them.

YAGODA: No, I do not admit being guilty of that. Had I been a spy, I assure you that dozens of states would have been compelled to disband their intelligence services.

[...]

VYSHINSKY: So they passed on materials to foreign intelligence services with your knowledge?

YAGODA: No.

VYSHINSKY: Were you informed that they passed on materials to foreign intelligence services?

YAGODA: Undoubtedly.

VYSHINSKY: Since you were informed of it, then it was with your knowledge?

YAGODA: With my connivance.

(577)

In this passage Iagoda agrees that he had "shielded" espionage activity, yet denies that he "helped...assisted" this activity. He agrees that he was "informed" that spies were "passing materials to foreign intelligence services" — yet insists that, though this occurred with his "connivance", it did not occur with his "knowledge." The word *pokrovitel'stvo*, which is translated here as "connivance", might be more accurately translated as "protection."<sup>123</sup>

<sup>123</sup> See the Russian text at <http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/1938buharin/vec8-5-38-1.php>

After a few more rapid-fire questions Vyshinskii raises the issue of the Kirov murder:

VYSHINSKY: And do you admit being guilty of organizing and effecting terrorist acts: first the murder of Comrade Kirov on the orders and instructions of the bloc?

Iagoda replied:

YAGODA: I admit being guilty of complicity in the murder. (1938 Trial 577)

As we shall see, this — the legal matter of "complicity", *souchastie*, is the *only* confession Iagoda really did "recant" later in the trial.

Later in the trial Vyshinskii addresses the question of the legal definition of complicity:

First of all, the question of complicity. The Court investigation has shown that not all the accused participated to an equal extent in the crimes which were reviewed at this trial.

Hence the question: To what extent and in what degree can and should each of the accused be held answerable for the charges preferred against them in the indictment?

The second question: To what extent and in what degree have the charges preferred against the accused been proved?

(693-694)

Vyshinskii argues that Iagoda, Bukharin, and other members of the bloc of Rights and Trotskyites are "accomplices" in every one of the crimes undertaken by any of the bloc's members.

Each of the accused must be held answerable for the sum total of the crimes as a member of a conspiratorial organization whose criminal objects and aims, and whose criminal methods of carrying out these aims, were known to, approved of and accepted by each of the accused. ... There is an opinion current among criminologists that in order to establish complicity it is necessary to establish common agreement and an intent on the part of each of the criminals, of the accomplices, for each of the crimes. This viewpoint is wrong. We cannot accept it and we have never applied or accepted it.

[...]

To establish complicity, we must establish that there is a common line uniting the accomplices in a given crime, that there is a common criminal design. To establish complicity, it is necessary to establish the existence of a united will directed toward a single object common to all the participants in the crime. If, say, a gang of robbers will act in such a way that one part of its members will set fire to houses, violate women, murder and so on, in one place, while another part of the gang will do the same in another place, then even if neither the one nor the other knew of the crimes committed separately by any section of the common gang, they will be held answerable to the full for the sum total of the crimes, if only it is proved that they had agreed to participate in this gang for the purpose of committing the various crimes.

(694-695)

Iagoda insisently disagreed with Vyshinsky's definition of "complicity" (*souchastie*). In his final statement to the court he made the following statement — the same one quoted, as we have seen, by Serov in his report of August 31, 1956. This passage is also quoted by Lenoë on page 59 of his book and referred to again on page 666.

Not only is it false to say that I was an organizer but even to say that I was an accomplice in the murder of Kirov. I am guilty of a very serious dereliction of duty, that is true. I will answer for that in full measure, but I was not an accomplice. 'An accomplice' — you know



as well as I do, comrade procurator, what that means. None of the materials of this trial or the preliminary investigation show that I was an accomplice in this villainous murder. (Lenoe's translation; slightly different at 1938 Trial 786)

Lenoe, following Khrushchev's man Serov, writes "Iagoda recanted his confession at the trial's end." In reality, as the passages above make clear Iagoda never retracted the confession he made which we have quoted above from pages 375-6 of the trial transcript. The sole statement Iagoda did retract was the one he made on page 577 and quoted above: "I admit being guilty of complicity in the murder."

Iagoda did not accept Vyshinskii's view that his agreement with the overall aim of the bloc of Rights and Trotskyites made him an "accomplice" to Kirov's murder. Iagoda evidently believed — to use Vyshinsky's language — "that in order to establish complicity it is necessary to establish common agreement and an intent on the part of each of the criminals, of the accomplices, for each of the crimes." Since Iagoda opposed Kirov's murder, did not actively aid it, but nevertheless agreed not to stand in its way, we may say that, in English usage, Iagoda considered himself not an accomplice — one who actually *participates* in the commission of a crime — but an accessory — one who *assists* in the commission of a crime.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>124</sup>*The Oxford English Dictionary*: "Complicity. 1. The being an accomplice; partnership in an evil action.." "Accessory. B. adj. 1. Of persons: Acceding or adhering to; assisting as a subordinate. In Law: Participating or sharing in a crime, though not the chief actor; participant, privy." *Black's Law Dictionary* (1910 edition): "Accessory. Contributing to or aiding in the commission of a crime. One who, without being present at the commission of a felonious offense, becomes guilty of such an offense, not as a chief actor, but as a participator, as by command, advise, instigation, or concealment; either before or after the fact of commission ." (13) "An accessory after the fact is a person who, knowing a felony to have been committed by another, receives, relieves, comforts or assists the felon, in order to enable him to escape from punishment." (14)

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Now we can return to Iagoda's enigmatic words that we put in boldface in his confession above, in which he leaves somewhat vague the precise nature of what he did and did not do: "That is not quite how it was"; "It was not like that"; "It was not like that, but it is not important." In clarifying what Iagoda meant by these phrases we can confirm that in Iagoda's confession at trial he did claim a role in Kirov's murder which he never retracted or, as Lenoë writes, "recanted".

In his pretrial interrogation-confession of April 26, 1937 published in 1997 we read the following:

Question ... Above you admitted that if it had not been for your and Molchanov's traitorous role in the OGPU NKVD the centers of the organization of Rights, Trotskyites and Zinovievites, or more accurately, the centers of the bloc of these organizations could have been liquidated in time?

Answer: Yes, that is undoubtedly the case.

Question: That means that the murder of com. Kirov could have been prevented?

Answer: Unquestionably.

Question: And you did not do this?

Answer: No.

Question: That means you are an accomplice to this vile murder?

Answer: No, I cannot admit to that.

Question: You had materials about the active terrorist centers?

Answer: I had.

Question: Kirov was killed by them? Answer: By them.

Question: You concealed the activity of these terrorist organizations?

Answer: I did.

Question: How can you dare to deny your complicity in the vile murder of com. Kirov?

Answer: **I am not an accomplice in this murder, but undoubtedly must be responsible for the fact that I did not prevent the murder of com. Kirov.**

(Genrikh Iagoda 121-122; emphasis added, GF)

To the interrogator's continued astonishment at Iagoda's denial of complicity in Kirov's murder Iagoda answered:

Answer: You must understand that such disparate acts as the murder of com. Kirov would not enter my personal plans as People's Commissar of Internal Affairs.

I well understood that such acts could lead if not to my complete downfall as a participant in the organization of Rights, then in any case to my complete responsibility as Commissar and responsible for the security of the members of the government. So nothing could come of this for me personally but loss. And at just this same period my own personal plans had gone rather far and did not fully coincide with the plans of the bloc.

(Genrikh Iagoda 122-123)

Later in the same interrogation-confession Iagoda explained how his fears were realized:

The murder of Kirov, **about the concrete preparation for which I did not know**, elicited in me a natural alertness in the CC. I was put under the supervision of Ezhov, who pressed me and demanded the complete defeat of the organization of Trotskyites, Zinovievites and Rights. (Genrikh Iagoda 130; emphasis added, GF)

These passages in his pretrial confessions explain through amplification what Iagoda stated at trial. Lenoe knew about the Genrikh Iagoda volume. But he does not quote from it nor mention its existence to his readers. These confessions disprove Lenoe's contention that Iagoda "retracted his confession". They also provide additional evidence confirming the existence of a Right Trotskyite-Zinovievite conspiracy to assassinate Kirov.

The existence of this conspiracy also dismantles — refutes — the main thesis of Lenoe's book. No one who examines these passages carefully and objectively would assent to Lenoe's contention that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" and everyone else — those tried, convicted, and executed along with Nikolaev on December 28-29, 1934, and the defendants at the three public Moscow Trials of 1936-8 -was innocent, "framed" by Stalin.

In a later pretrial interrogation-confession of May 19, 1937 Iagoda gave more details about the events leading up to the decision to murder Kirov. For the readers' convenience I have boldfaced certain sections of the text.

Answer: The second meeting of the center of the conspiracy took place during the summer of 1934. Not long before this meeting I was at E nukidze's. He said that during the next few days a meeting of the center of the conspiracy would take place, at which the Trotskyites and Zinovievites will demand that their plan for terrorist acts against members of the Politburo of the AUCP(b) be confirmed.

**In the most determined fashion I told E nukidze that I would not permit the carrying-out of disparate terrorist acts against members of the CC, that I will not permit them to pay with my head in order to satisfy Trotsky's appetite. I demanded of E nukidze that he bring this declaration of mine to the knowledge of Rykov, Bukharin, and Tomskii. My categorical tone** must have had its effect on E nukidze and he promised me that at the meeting the Rights would oppose disparate terrorist acts.

E nukidze and I agreed that he would inform me about the center's decision immediately after the meeting.

A few days later Enukidze called me and I went again to see him, and he informed me that the meeting had already taken place, that Kamenev and Piatakov had presented a big plan for the commission of terrorist acts, in the first place against Stalin and Voroshilov, and then against Kirov in Leningrad.

Enukidze said that the Rights had succeeded, with great difficulty, in postponing the terrorist acts against Stalin and Voroshilov and, yielding to the Trotskyite-Zinovievite parts of the center, had sanctioned a terrorist act against Kirov in Leningrad.

**Enukidze told me that Kamenev and Piatakov had presented to the meeting a demand for carrying out a terrorist act against Stalin and Voroshilov, which was received from Trotsky.** They declared that their terrorist organizations were energetically preparing for these acts and that they scarcely had the power to stop them. But, remembering their agreement with me, Rykov, Tomskii and Enukidze actively protested and then, in the way of compromise, Kamenev submitted a proposal to immediately sanction a terrorist act against Kirov in Leningrad. He declared that it was essential to give an outlet to the mounting energy of the terrorist groups, which could rot on the vine without action.

Kamenev also argued that if the center did not approve even a single terrorist act, then partisan actions of individual terrorist groups would become essential. **And it was sanctioned. In the name of the center of the conspiracy Enukidze proposed that I not try to prevent this terrorist act, and I promised to do that.**

(Genrikh Iagoda 179-181)

The text in boldface further elucidates Iagoda's insistence that he was not an "accomplice". He took no active part in the assassination of Kirov, but did take steps to assure it was not prevented.

He elaborated this point a bit more in the succeeding passage. Here Iagoda explained precisely what kind of instructions he gave to Zaporozhets.

Question: At interrogation you constantly insist that you were opposed to terrorist acts against members of the CC because you were responsible for the security of members of the government. How then did you permit the terrorist act against com. Kirov?

Answer: Kirov was in Leningrad, and a terrorist act against him would have to be committed there. I supposed that if they were successful in killing Kirov it was Medved' who would have to answer for it. And I was not opposed to ridding myself of Medved'. He was hostile towards me. Everybody knew about my bad relations with Medved' and also that I was preparing to remove him, and that, I thought, would serve as yet another argument in favor of my innocence and Medved's guilt for the poor security around Kirov.

Question: Therefore, you mean, you accepted the proposal of the conspiratorial center that Enukidze gave you: "Do not try to prevent this terrorist act against Kirov in Leningrad"?

Answer: Yes.

Question: And you promised to do this? Answer: Yes. I was forced to do this.

**Question: What did you do, concretely?**

**Answer: I summoned Zaporozhets (the assistant chief of the Political Division) from Leningrad, informed him of the possibility of an attempt on Kirov's life, and proposed to him that he not hinder it.**

Question: You proposed this to Zaporozhets? Why him? What relation did he have to the conspiracy?

Answer: I forgot, when I was naming my confederates, to name Zaporozhets among their number. I had recruited him to the conspiracy at the end of 1933, during one of his trips from Leningrad to Moscow.

Before this I learned that Zaporozhets was recruited by German intelligence while abroad. He himself told me about this before he was appointed to Leningrad in 1931. He said that despite the fact that many years had passed since his recruitment no one had contacted him and he had done no work for them.

Question: Under what circumstances was Zaporozhets recruited by German intelligence?

Answer: It's possible that he told me about this, but I don't recall it now.

Question: And under what circumstances did you recruit him to the conspiracy?

Answer: Zaporozhets has always been a person of the Right. He was a Ukrainian SR for many years. I used all this plus his contact with German intelligence and recruited him rather easily.

I should say that already in 1931, when I sent Zaporozhets to Leningrad, I told him that he was going there as my man, since Medved' in Leningrad was not, and that Zaporozhets was to replace Medved' and take his place.

**Question: So what did you tell Zaporozhets in connection with the decision of the conspiratorial center concerning the terrorist act against com. Kirov?**

**Answer: I have already said that I summoned him from Leningrad, told him about an imminent attempt on Kirov's life and proposed to him, in case facts about preparation of the terrorist act should enter agents' materials, not to act upon these materials and to inform me. I did not entrust the details to him.**

**Zaporozhets fulfilled my directives.**

Question: But we know that Nikolaev, Kirov's murderer, was detained by the Operational Division in Leningrad some time before his

carrying out the terrorist act against com. Kirov. With him was a weapon and documents that exposed him as a terrorist and, despite this, he was released.

**Answer: Zaporozhets informed me about this some time after Nikolaev had been freed.**

**Question: What did he tell you?**

**Answer: Zaporozhets was in Moscow, dropped in on me, and told me that a certain Nikolaev, who was surveilling Kirov's automobile, had been detained by officers of the Opered in Leningrad. He was brought to the Political Division and after he had been searched in Gubin's presence materials were found on him that gave evidence of terrorist intentions. Gubin reported this to him and Zaporozhets released Nikolaev.**

(Genrikh Iagoda 181-183; emphasis added GF)

In the text above Iagoda explains that Zaporozhets had reported to him about Nikolaev some time after Nikolaev had been apprehended, detained, searched, and then released. In short, Iagoda learned about this after the fact. He did not specifically give Zaporozhets any "instructions" about Nikolaev, or about any specific person or act. This is why he denied "personally taking any measures to effect the assassination of" Kirov — as Vyshinsky put it — and why he answered, as we have seen, "That is not quite how it was."

Vyshinsky kept trying to get Iagoda to confess that he had in some way actively participated in Kirov's murder. But Iagoda insisted on precision in his confessions. In the passage below from Iagoda's pretrial interrogation of May 19, 1937 the NKVD interrogator tries to do the same thing by charging that Iagoda had given orders to weaken Kirov's personal security. Iagoda flatly denies this charge.

**Question: Your role in the murder of com. Kirov is not limited to the fact that you did not take measures to prevent the terrorist act against him and that you freed the murderer who had been detained by the**



officers of the Leningrad Operod. **You took steps to weaken as much as possible com. Kirov's physical security, and thereby facilitated the murderer's access to him.**

**Answer: I do not admit this. I gave no instructions about weakening the physical security of com. Kirov. Perhaps Zaporozhets did this on his own initiative, but he did not tell me about it.**

**Question: You not only made arrangements about weakening Kirov's security but after the accomplishment of the terrorist act you took measures to get rid of a witness. We are speaking about the murder of Borisov, an officer of the Operod who was guarding Kirov.**

**Answer: I also cannot admit to this. I myself did not give any instructions about getting rid of Borisov. At this time Zaporozhets was not in Leningrad at all. If this was indeed a case of murder, and not an unfortunate accident, then Gubin is responsible for it, but I do not know about that.**

**Question: You are not telling the truth. You will be exposed in your lie by the confessions of Zaporozhets and Gubin. We propose that you tell the truth right now about the circumstances under which Kirov was murdered.**

**Answer: I am not hiding anything. I am speaking sincerely and truthfully. I have nothing to add to my confessions about this matter.**

I can admit that after Kirov's murder I personally tried, or rather intended, to "squelch" this matter and limit it to arrests only in Leningrad. But the strengthened supervision by the CC and the participation of Ezhov in the investigation hindered this. As you know, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bakaev and others were arrested in Moscow.

The attempt to protect Zaporozhets from being brought to answer in the case of the Leningrad Chekists was also unsuccessful. Ezhov

became involved, and Zaporozhets was arrested.

(Genrikh Iagoda 184, emphasis added GF)

In the passage above Iagoda admits to taking definite steps with regard to Kirov's murder but only after it had taken place. He also confesses to trying to sabotage or sidetrack the investigation into Kirov's murder. Again, this crime was committed after the fact.

A week later, on May 26, 1937, Iagoda continued his discussion of the Kirov murder and his role in it.

Question: Let us continue the interrupted interrogation.

You have confessed that after the murder of com. Kirov you intended to "squench" the investigation into this case.

Circumstances beyond your control hindered this plan. **But we are interested to learn how you intended to avert, or as you say, "squench" the investigation?**

**Answer: I had no ready plan of action. Already during the investigation, when it had been determined and was clear that the murder of Kirov had been at the hands of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite organization, I greatly regretted that I had not remained in Leningrad myself to lead the investigation of the case. It's clear that if I had remained in Leningrad, the murder of Kirov would have been depicted in some way, but the real culprits, the Trotskyites and Zinovievites, would never have been caught.**

(Genrikh Iagoda 185; emphasis added GF)

Iagoda testifies above that he would have much preferred to be in Leningrad when Kirov was murdered so he could have turned the investigation in a false direction. This is evidence that he did not know anything specific about it in advance.

In the passage that follows Iagoda admits that he could not prevent the Zinovievite-Trotskyite group — Nikolaev, Kotolynov, and those others convicted of Kirov's murder — from being discovered. He was more successful in preventing the discovery of the Leningrad NKVD men ("Chekists") who were also accomplices and they were not exposed.

Of course all this is very conditional and suppositional, for it was not I who led the investigation but, as you know, Ezhov stayed in Leningrad and the real situation came to light, more or less.

**But I was compensated in Moscow in that I redirected the investigation in the case of the former Leningrad Chekists and put it on a false trail.**

Question: How did you do this. What precisely was concealed in the case of the former Leningrad Chekists?

Answer: First, at the beginning **I did not arrest Zaporozhets, who participated in the conspiracy. Zaporozhets' name is not on the list of the Leningrad Chekists, those fired from the NKVD and brought to trial (the list was published in the newspaper).**

**He was arrested much later, at the direction of the CC.**

**Second, before the beginning of the investigation into the case I called Prokofev and Molchanov to me and proposed that they lead the investigation personally. I assigned them two tasks:**

**1. That nothing that might compromise the central apparatus of the NKVD or its employees (most of all, me personally) should be in the investigative materials.**

**2. To reduce the case to simple carelessness and by doing so to protect Zaporozhets and Gubin, who had known about the preparations for the murder of Kirov.**

**My instructions were carried out in full.**

I must state here that Mironov took part in this affair. He was not acting on my direct orders but on his own initiative, he was actively protecting me in all the interrogations in which he took part.

(Genrikh Iagoda 185-186; emphasis added GF)

Iagoda explains how he attempted to blame Medved' for failing to protect Kirov.

If you look at the materials of the investigation of Medved' you'll undoubtedly notice that almost all the interrogation transcripts are composed in such a way that I, Iagoda, supposedly repeatedly warned him about the necessity of strengthening Kirov's physical security, but Medved' failed to do it. The outcome was that it appeared as though I was not guilty of anything, but Medved' and his apparatus were guilty.

As far as I recall Medved' was interrogated by Mironov and Prokof'ev or Mironov and Molchanov.

(Genrikh Iagoda 186)

At the same time Iagoda testifies that he successfully covered up the fact that, when Nikolaev was arrested, a gun and other incriminating materials were indeed discovered on him.

Lenoe notes that in his interrogation of December 8, 1934 Nikolaev admitted having a gun in his possession when he was detained by the Leningrad NKVD on October 15, 1934. (401) Nikolaev said that he did have a gun with him but asserted that he had not been searched.

But Lenoe first suggests, then states, that Nikolaev did not really have a gun in his possession, despite the fact that Nikolaev had stated clearly that he did have one. If Nikolaev really did have a gun with him as he had claimed, and if Nikolaev was searched, as the Leningrad NKVD men, including Gubin, stated he was, then it would be obvious that there was a conspiracy involving people in the Leningrad NKVD. That would mean Nikolaev was not a "lone gunman" — a conclusion fatal to the thesis of Lenoe's book. So Lenoe had a strong motive to conclude that Nikolaev did not have a gun

with him when he was detained despite all the testimony, including from Nikolaev himself, that he was carrying a gun (and incriminating papers as well).

Likewise Lenoë had a strong motive not to examine this pretrial testimony of Iagoda's or to inform his readers about its existence.

There was one other circumstance in this investigation that could have caused unpleasantness if it had flared up.

Question: What circumstance?

Answer: In 1933-1934 the SPO of the UNKVD of Leningrad oblast' uncovered and liquidated a rather serious Trotskyite-Zinovievite organization. In the investigative materials that were sent from Leningrad to Molchanov and me there were facts about the existence of this center in Moscow.

Neither I nor Molchanov did anything about these materials — we hid them.

The danger lay in the fact that the accused in the case of the Leningrad Chekists could have raised this question in their interrogations, while they were justifying their actions.

Molchanov and I spoke about this and agreed that these fact would not appear in the investigation. And that was done.

**There was also another danger. It was that someone among the arrested Leningrad Operod officers (Gubin and others) could have blurted out during interrogation that Nikolaev, Kirov's killer, was searched when he was first detained (before the murder) and that on him were found materials that attested to his terrorist intentions, and a weapon. But Molchanov was correct when he assured me that none of them would say this, if only out of a sense of self-protection.**

Question: That means Molchanov knew that Nikolaev, the murderer of com. Kirov, was freed in the Leningrad Operod after it had been established that he was a terrorist?

Answer: Yes, he knew. **I told Molchanov and Prokof'ev about all the circumstances related to the Kirov murder after his arrival from Leningrad during the first days of December 1934.**

**What did you tell them?**

**Answer: I told them that Kirov had been killed by a decision of the center of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc, that I was warned in advance about this, that I had proposed to Zaporozhets not to hinder it and told them about Zaporozhets having freed Nikolaev when he had been detained in Leningrad.**

**I was forced to warn Molchanov and Prokof'ev about all this because they were leading the investigation of the case of the former Leningrad Chekists and had to know all the circumstances of the case so as not to permit these facts to enter into the interrogations.**

(Genrikh Iagoda 187-188; emphasis added GF)

In these pretrial interrogation-confessions Iagoda gives more detail about the conspiracy, one part of which was the murder of Kirov. He describes how he and others of the Rights never liked the idea of individual assassination.

Question: You confessed above that at the time of the investigation into the "Klubok" case you did not meet with E nukidze in order to preserve the conspiracy. The investigation into "Klubok", as you know, began in 1935. Did you and E nukidze meet before that?

Answer: I met with E nukidze after the Kirov murder, soon after the arrests of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and the others in Moscow. Our conversation took place, as usual, in E nukidze's office. He was asking me how matters stood in Leningrad, whether there was any danger of a

total failure and expressed his outrage about the partisan actions of the Trotskyites and Zinovievites that expressed themselves in the murder of Kirov.

Question: What partisan activities are you talking about? The murder of com. Kirov had been sanctioned by the general center of the conspiracy, hadn't it?

Answer: That's true. But I have already said at the previous interrogation that the Rights were forced to go along with sanctioning the terrorist act against Kirov only by compromise.

In general we opposed individual terrorist acts that were not coordinated with the general plan for the conspiracy and the seizure of power.

This is what Enukidze had in mind when he spoke about partisan actions.

(Genrikh Iagoda 192-193)

Iagoda also mentions the accession of Sokol'nikov to the conspiratorial center after Kamenev's arrest.

At that time Enukidze told me that in the place of the arrested Kamenev the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc had promoted Sokol'nikov into the general center of the conspiracy.

Enukidze told me that in the conspiracy's new orientation Sokol'nikov's role had first-class importance.

(Genrikh Iagoda 192-193)

Iagoda echoes Radek's conclusion that the assassination of Kirov was counterproductive for the conspiracy. He claims that this lack of support among the Soviet population is what turned them towards Germany.

Second, the Kirov murder caused great alertness by the Party and the whole country to the Trotskyite and Zinovievite cadres, and we could

not count upon any kind of support within the country.

"Watchfulness, about which people shout on every street corner, will cost the heads of our people", Enukidze told me.

These were the considerations that lay at the basis of the orientation of the conspiracy beginning with 1935, towards Germany. And it was precisely in connection with them that the role of Sokol'nikov, who was then the assistant Commissar for Foreign Affairs, in the general conspiratorial center had special meaning, because contact with official circles in Germany could be established through him.

**Question: You say that contact with the Germans "could be" established through Sokol'nikov. But wasn't this possibility realized?**

**Answer: I cannot say. At that time during my talk with Enukidze we only spoke of possibilities.**

**Whether they were realized after that, I don't know.**

(Genrikh Iagoda 194; emphasis added GF)

Elsewhere we have analyzed a statement in an unpublished confession by Sokol'nikov that a Japanese official had approached him and informed him that the Japanese were in contact with Trotsky.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>125</sup>Furr, Evidence 66-68.

Iagoda returned to the question of Kirov's murder briefly on December 28, 1937. Here he explained how he objected to individual terrorism, and why he at length relented to the demands of the Zinovievites and Trotskyites yet kept a certain distance from the assassination.

**Question: That means we can confirm that V.R. Menzhinskii and M.A. Peshkov were killed by your direct order, and that in both cases you acted out of base person reasons?**



Answer: Yes, that is true. I admit my guilt in this.

I would like to tell about the circumstances that forced me to commit this even more monstrous crime, the organization of the killing of such persons as V.V. Kuibyshev and A.M. Gor'kii.

Question: Tell us.

**Answer: At one of these interrogations I told how the unified center of the Right-Trotskyite organization carried out its decision about the murder of S.M. Kirov. I told also about how I did not take part in this decision. Moreover, when Enukidze informed me about it, I protested. And it is clear to you, of course, why I did so. I feared direct terrorist acts because I was responsible for the security of members of the government.**

In the transcripts of my previous interrogations it is written that I was forced to warn Zaporozhets (in Leningrad) not to hinder the terrorist act against S.M. Kirov.

You know all this already from my confessions, but I did not tell everything then. What did I remain silent about? **I did not tell how, when Enukidze told me in the summer of 1934 about the decision to organize a terrorist act against S.M. Kirov, I proposed to him my own variant of killing Kirov by means of "death from disease."**

**I also told him then that this method had already been verified by me in practice (M.A. Peshkov and V.R. Menzhinskii), and that it was also safe for me, as assistant Chairman of the OGPU, responsible for security.**

**Enukidze rejected my proposal in relation to S.M. Kirov. He explained that the Zinovievites and Trotskyites were organizing a terrorist act against Kirov and that our job was simply not to hinder them, nothing more.**

"Death from disease" will not have the necessary resonance in the country. We must test how the country will react to the shooting of

Kirov," — Enukidze told me.

But at the same time Enukidze also seized upon my proposed method. He made me inform him in detail about how, technically, and who concretely would carry it out. I told him.

A little while later Enukidze again asked me to drop in on him. He told me that he had informed the center about my method, and that it had been decided to implement it without delay.

(Genrikh Iagoda 210-21 1; emphasis added GF)

The passage above concerning the medical murders of Gorky's son (Peshkov) and of Iagoda's former boss Menzhinskii confirm Iagoda's sensational testimony at the March 1938 trial. This testimony is widely, if not quite universally, dismissed today as a fabrication. However, the *Genrikh Iagoda* volume contains pretrial testimony from a number of figures besides Iagoda that bears witness to such a conspiracy. Moreover, there's nothing fantastic about it. The NKVD and its successors had a history of assassination by poison made to appear natural.

Iagoda's final pretrial remarks concerning Kirov's murder are in his interrogation of January 10, 1938. This includes the passage quoted by Vyshinsky above:

In the NKVD I established a counterrevolutionary group of a number of individual officers of the NKVD whom I drew into counterrevolutionary activity. Earlier I have confessed in detail about this counterrevolutionary group and its membership. I also confirm the facts given by me in my earlier confession about my part in the murder of S.M. Kirov.

I knew before Enukidze that the murder of S.M. Kirov was being prepared by decision of the conspiratorial center. Enukidze proposed that I not hinder the organization of this terrorist act and I agreed to this. **With this goal Zaporozhets was summoned by me from Leningrad, and I instructed him not to hinder the terrorist act against S.M. Kirov that was in preparation.**

**After the freeing of Nikolaev, the murderer of S.M. Kirov, when Nikolaev was detained the first time, Zaporozhets informed me about this.**

(Genrikh Iagoda 236-237; emphasis added GF)

Iagoda repeated this same version of events later during the trial:

Yenukidze insisted that I was not to place any obstacles in the way; the terrorist act, he said, would be carried out by the Trotskyite-Zinovievite group. Owing to this, I was compelled to instruct Zaporozhetz, who occupied the post of Assistant Chief of the Regional Administration of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, not to place any obstacles in the way of the terrorist act against Kirov. Some time later Zaporozhetz informed me that the organs of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs had detained Nikolayev, in whose possession a revolver and a chart of the route Kirov usually took had been found. Nikolayev was released.

(1938 Trial 572-573; emphasis added GF)

### **Lenoe Concealed These Confessions**

It appears that Lenoe may have deliberately concealed these confessions from his readers. In note 22 on page 786 of his book Lenoe writes Vyshinsky(in part):

See Mikhail Il'inskii, Narkom Yagoda: Dvadtsat'let v maske [Moscow: "Iauza", "ESKMO," 2005), 157, based on transcripts of Yagoda's interrogations in 1937.

Lenoe is familiar with the Il'inskii book. But the source for the quotations from Iagoda's pretrial confessions quoted extensively in Il'inskii's book is this same 1997 volume: Genrikh Iagoda. Since Lenoe read and cites Il'inskii Lenoe had to at least be aware that this latter work exists.

In the "Editor's afterword" to Il'inskii's book we read:

Of importance are the documentary publications, especially the collection "General'nyi komissar gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti Genrikh Iagoda", prepared by A.L. Litvin and V.K. Vinogradov ... (Il'inskii, 763).

This is more or less the way the book in question is listed in Il'inskii's bibliography as well:

"General'nyi komissar gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti Genrikh Iagoda. Sbornik dokumentov. Kazan', 1997. (Il'inskii 761).

The accurate bibliographical reference is slightly different:

Genrikh Iagoda. Narkom vnytrennikh del SSR General'nyi komissar gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti. Sbornik dokumentov. Kazan', 1997. — 542 pp. ISBN 5-900975-16-9

A.L. Litvin<sup>126</sup> is named as the "scientific editor" (*nauchnyi redaktor*) and V.K. Vinogradov is one of six men, including Litvin again, named as "compilers" (*sostavitel*).

<sup>126</sup> Alter L'vovich Litvin is a well-known Russian scholar, very anticomunist and anti-Stalin.

Il'inskii quotes directly from many of the confessions and other documents published in this book without, however, specifically identifying their source. And it would have been hard, perhaps, to locate this volume from the incorrect title given by Il'inskii if one did not know the actual title. But surely Lenoë knows the real title, for this book has been in circulation among American scholars for some years. For example, it is cited accurately in Jansen and Petrov's 2002 book on Ezhov, which Lenoë cites.

Therefore Lenoë ought to have known of this volume and these documents. But he never refers to them at all in his book. Moreover, Lenoë chose to ignore even those passages from Iagoda's pretrial interrogations that his source Il'inskii quotes.

Iagoda's testimony refutes Lenoe's hypothesis. The texts of Iagoda's pre-trial interrogation-confessions are strong evidence that a conspiracy did indeed exist. They also help corroborate the hypothesis that the Moscow Trials were not fabricated by Stalin or anybody else. This evidence demolishes Lenoe's "lone gunman" hypothesis.

### **What Iagoda's Pre-Trial Confessions Reveal**

We have reproduced here all the parts of Iagoda's published pretrial interrogation-confessions in which the murder of Kirov is discussed. None of this very important material has ever been made available in English before. They strongly corroborate Iagoda's testimony at trial. They also corroborate the testimony of the other defendants. These documents disprove Lenoe's allegations. They constitute strong evidence against the fraudulent claim that Iagoda (and, by extension, other defendants at the March 1938 Trial) was tortured, threatened, or otherwise induced to testify falsely to a conspiracy in order to hide a "frameup" of innocent people instigated by Stalin and/or others.

During his interrogation-confession of April 26, 1937 Iagoda insists that his actions, though criminal, did not constitute "complicity":

Question: How can you dare to deny your complicity in the vile murder of com. Kirov?

Answer: I am not an accomplice in this murder, but undoubtedly I must be responsible for the fact that I did not prevent the murder of com. Kirov.

(Genrikh Iagoda 122)

This testimony is entirely consistent with Iagoda's position at the March 1938 trial. Iagoda went into considerable detail about his contribution to the success of Kirov's murder. He insisted repeatedly that he helped facilitate Kirov's assassination. He admits that he had general, though not specific, prior knowledge of it. This was what he confessed to.

Therefore, despite what Lenoë (and before him Serov) asserts Iagoda *never retracted this confession*. Iagoda denied only that he was an "accomplice". He did so emphatically and consistently. His testimony explains his qualifications at pages 375-6 of the trial transcript that we have quoted above.

- First, Vyshinskii asked Iagoda whether he "personally took any measure to effect the assassination of ...Kirov." Iagoda naturally answered "That is not quite how it was."

As we can see from his pretrial testimony Iagoda stated that he had only given orders to Zaporozhets that no obstacle be placed in the way of such an attempt. He never "took any measure to effect the assassination" itself.

- In the second passage Vyshinskii refers to Nikolaev's release and then asks whether "then" — that is, subsequently to Nikolaev's release — Iagoda "gave instructions not to place obstacles in the way..." Again Iagoda replies: "It was not like that... but it is not important."

This is fully consistent with Iagoda's pretrial testimony. There he stated that he *first* gave orders not to hinder any attempt against Kirov. He never gave such orders "then" — that is, *after* Nikolaev's detention and release. In fact Iagoda confessed that he was informed of Nikolaev's detention and release only *after* it had occurred.

Iagoda's confession is strongly differentiated. He insisted on confessing only to those crimes he believed he had actually committed, and refused to confess to others. Both in the pretrial interrogations and at trial he stubbornly refused to agree that he was an accomplice. In this he was like Bukharin, who also confessed to many serious, capital crimes, but nevertheless spent much of his time on the stand and most of his final speech to the court strenuously denying certain of the accusations made by the prosecution.

Such behavior, both in pretrial interrogations and at trial, appears to be incompatible with torture or other compulsion, or with "terrified defendants." Yet Lenoë makes such allegations time and again:

- "a few grotesque confessions of terrified defendants." (Lenoe 467)
- "evidence that was extracted under torture in the process of fabricating a case against arrested NKVD chief Yagoda." (573)
- "[Klimov] made extensive use of 1937-1938 depositions from Gubin, Zaporozhets, other Leningrad NKVD officers, Yagoda and Yagoda's former deputy Bulanov, extracted under torture and used to incriminate Yagoda at the March 1938 trial." (622)

Lenoe employs the verbiage of "torture" when he wishes to dismiss without consideration some testimony that fails to fit into his preconceived schema. We'll analyze his use of "torture as smokescreen" later.

Vyshinskii's discussion of the legal definition of "complicity" which we reproduced above from the trial transcript proves that Iagoda never "recanted his confession", as Lenoe claimed. Iagoda only "retracted" one sentence — his admission of "complicity". Lenoe had to know this, of course, and therefore has concealed this from his readers.

## Chapter 16. *Bukharin and Kotolynov*

On page 135 of Lenoe's study we read:

Vyborg Ward party secretary Pyotr Smorodin (together with Nikolai Bukharin) sponsored a request by the physicist and secret police collaborator D.L. Talmud that OGPU chief Filip Medved assign the former Leningrad Komsomol official Ivan Kotolynov, now an ex-Zinovievite, to work in his lab.

Lenoe does not return to the question of Bukharin's recommendation of Kotolynov. The entry on Bukharin in the index of Lenoe's book (818) has a number of subheadings, but this reference is simply lumped in with other miscellaneous references to him.

Lenoe gives one footnote to this paragraph, though the note does not mention Bukharin:

75. On Talmud's request that Kotolynov be posted to his lab, see "Ubiistvo v Smol'nom," *Rodina*, no.10 (1995): 62-66.

The reader would never guess from Lenoe's footnote that this article is devoted entirely to an exploration of the connection between Bukharin and the Kirov murder. The author, Iurii Murin, has specialized in studying Bukharin and the March 1938 Trial.

A firm anticommunist, Murin rejects any suggestion that Bukharin was guilty even of those crimes to which he confessed. But Murin has usefully gathered some primary source evidence of Bukharin's involvement with the Kirov murder. Lenoe fails even to mention, much less examine, any of this evidence. Here we will consider only the question of Bukharin's recommendation of Kotolynov, reserving discussion of the other evidence linking Bukharin to the Kirov assassination for our chapters on the January 1937 and March 1938 Moscow Trials.

Bukharin's explanation of his recommendation of Kotolynov is contained in his letter to Stalin of April 15, 1937. This was published separately, also by



Murin, in 2000.<sup>121</sup> We have been able to compare it with a photocopy of the archival copy of Bukharin's letter that Murin used.<sup>128</sup> This is a long letter written personally to Stalin by Bukharin from the prison where he and Rykov had been confined after their arrest on February 27, 1937 at the conclusion of the discussion of the evidence against them at the February-March 1937 Central Committee Plenum. On page 19 of the typescript of this letter (Murin 1995, 64; 2000, 53-54) Bukharin writes:

In the concluding remarks of N.I. Ezhov at the plenum, as evidence that I also supposedly maintained contact with my "friends" whom I have condemned, there figured two of my letters:

1) to E. Iaroslavski concerning Vladimir Slepkov, and 2) to Medved' concerning Katalynov.

The last letter can be explained in this way (in general, I never had any contact with Katalynov): D. L. Talmud, a physicist and GPU employee, whom I had helped in constructing a laboratory of special assignment under GPU direction, came to me. He asked me to write Medved' to give him [Talmud] Katalynov, about whom he, Talmud, knew from Smorodin. Then, at Talmud's request, having no idea who Katalynov was (he told me his name was Vania Katalynov) I wrote to Medved' and as Talmud said that there were some kind of oppositional sins against K[at]alynov], I wrote in this same letter to Medved' about this and instructed him that it was necessary to verify K[at]alynov] specially along these lines (all this can be read in the original of the letter, and also verified by Talmud). So, what kind of contact is this. What kind of correspondence with friends is this letter of mine to a chief of the GPU at the request of an employee of the GPU?

<sup>127</sup> Murin, Iurri. "'No ia to znaiu, chto ia prav.' Pis'mo N.I. Bukharina I.V. Stalinu iz vnutrennei tiur'my NKVD." *Istochnik*, No. 3 (2000), 46-58.

<sup>128</sup> The archival identifiers given by Murin are handwritten on the first page of this copy. But they are written incorrectly. The precise archival identifiers are given at the end of the letter in larger handwriting, and show that Murin misread starting page 129 as "127".

Bukharin refers to two letters that Ezhov produced at the February-March 1937 Plenum. Lenoë never discusses them or anything about the context in which Bukharin's recommendation of Kotolynov came to light. We examine it here as it bears directly on the question of evidence against Bukharin.

In the course of his detailed indictment of Bukharin before the Central Committee Plenum in February 1937 Ezhov cited evidence that Bukharin, along with Rykov, had continued to be involved in a hostile oppositional fraction against the Stalin leadership while claiming to have long ago abandoned any opposition. That is, Ezhov accused Bukharin of "dvurushnichestvo" or "two-facedness", a subject that we explore in another chapter of the present work.

Immediately before discussing the two letters mentioned above Ezhov cites some evidence that we can now verify. Ezhov said:

Three main charges were presented. First, that Bukharin and Rykov, after they had given statements about their full submission to the Party and their renunciation of their right opportunist views, deceived the Party, two-facedly disguised themselves, while renouncing their right opportunist views they retained their fraction, the members of whom went underground, continued to stand on their old political platform, did not cease their struggle against the Party, and submitted only to their own internal fractional discipline. For the leadership of this fraction a center, which continued to exist until recently, had already been established in 1928. Bukharin and Rykov were very active participants and members of this center.

*(Voprosy Istorii No. 2, 1993, 26)*

In 1929 Bukharin personally told the Swiss Communist Jules Humbert-Droz, a member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern and one of Bukharin's few supporters on that body, that he and his people intended to kill Stalin:

Boukharine m'a dit aussi qu'ils avaient decide d'utiliser la terreur individuelle pour se debarrasser de Staline. (Humbert-Droz 379-380)

Bukharin also told me that they had decided to use individual terror to get rid of Stalin.

As we have written elsewhere there is no reason to doubt this evidence:

Humbert-Droz wrote without any pressure from the NKVD. He was Bukharin's friend and hated Stalin. He had no reason to lie or to exaggerate what he knew. And these are not "rumors," since Humbert-Droz wrote that he heard of the plans to murder Stalin from Bukharin's own lips.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>129</sup> Grover Furr, Vladimir L. Bobrov, "Nikolai Bukharin's First Statement of Confession in the Lubyanka." *Cultural Logic* 2007 17, n.34.

In his famous and influential book on Bukharin Stephen F. Cohen quoted from Humbert-Droz's memoirs. But Cohen failed to inform his readers about the Swiss communist's revelation that Bukharin and his faction were conspiring to murder Stalin not in 1932, as later testimony also confirms, but as early as 1929 or even perhaps a few months earlier, in 1928.<sup>130</sup>

By the time Ezhov spoke to the February-March 1937 Plenum there had been a great deal of testimony that Bukharin had continued his oppositional activity, including supporting other, especially younger, Party members in his fraction hostile to Stalin. At the time of this writing five face-to-face confrontations between Bukharin and his supporters have been published: those with Astrov, Kulikov, Piatakov, Radek, and Sosnovski. We have carefully studied all these accounts elsewhere.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>131</sup> "Verdikt: Vinoven!". Ch. 1 of Furr and Bobrov, *1937. Pravosudie Stalina*. (Moscow: F.KSMO 2010), 13-63. We hope to publish an English version soon.

We have no evidence or any other reason to believe any compulsion was applied to these men. But we can have confidence in the case of one of them. Born in 1898, Valentin Astrov survived till after the end of the USSR. In 1989 and again in 1993 when anticommunist and anti-Stalin articles were welcomed in the Russian press, Astrov continued to insist in print that he had not been manhandled, threatened, tortured, or even treated with any

disrespect. For example, he stressed that his NKVD investigators never even called him "ty" ("thou", a term of disrespect unless used to a close friend, relative, or lover). Astrov retracted only one statement he had made in the 1930s: that he had heard Bukharin personally call for "terror" against Stalin. He refused to retract anything else. No one would have contradicted Astrov if he had said that his confessions were due to torture or threats. In fact he would have gained the sympathy of many.

Astrov's account, plus that of Humbert-Droz, constitutes strong evidence that Bukharin continued his clandestine oppositional activities after having publicly sworn off them.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>132</sup> It is likely that Astrov lied when he stated that he did not really hear Bukharin call for "terror" against Stalin. During the 1940s Astrov had boasted of his role in helping to unmask the Rights. And we know from Humbert-Droz that Bukharin was plotting Stalin's assassination as early as 1928.

### **Letter To Radek, 1932**

After passing very briefly over the second accusation against Bukharin and Rykov (that they continued to support the re-establishment of capitalist relations in the countryside) Ezhov continued:

And, third, we have accused Bukharin and Rykov of having had direct recourse to a bloc with Trotskyites, Zinovievites, "Leftists", SR's, Mensheviks, and with all the other fractional groupings that had long since been smashed, in order to attain their end of overthrowing the Leninist-Stalinist leadership. In a bloc with all the enemies of the Soviet Union they adopted the method of terror, organizing an armed insurrection, and to sabotage.

*(Voprosy Istorii No. 2, 1993, 26)*

Thanks to the opening of the Harvard Trotsky archive in 1980 we now know that a "bloc" of this nature was indeed formed with Trotsky's approval. In January 1986 American historian Arch Getty revealed that the

Trotsky archive at Harvard closed to the public until 1980 (and so long known as the "Closed Archive") had been "purged". Someone had removed materials from it at some point before it was opened.

In Getty's words:

At the time of the Moscow show trials, Trotsky denied that he had any communications with the defendants since his exile in 1929. Yet it is now clear that in 1932 he sent secret personal letters to former leading oppositionists Karl Radek, G. Sokol'nikov, E. Preobrazhensky, and others. While the contents of these letters are unknown, it seems reasonable to believe that they involved an attempt to persuade the addressees to return to opposition.<sup>18</sup> (Getty, Trotsky in Exile 27-8)

Getty's note to this passage reads as follows:

<sup>18</sup> Trotsky Papers, 15821. Unlike virtually all Trotsky's other letters (including even the most sensitive) no copies of these remain in the Trotsky Papers. It seems likely that they have been removed from the Papers at some time. Only the certified mail receipts remain. (Getty, Trotsky in Exile 34)

In his 1985 book Getty was less hesitant in concluding that the archive had been purged. He also revealed some new information about dates and destinations for some of the missing letters.

Although Trotsky later denied that he had any communications with former followers in the USSR since his exile in 1929,<sup>19</sup> **it is clear that he did.** In the first three months of 1932 he sent secret letters to former oppositionists Radek, Sokolnikov, Preobrazhenskii, and others.<sup>20</sup> Although the contents of these letters are unknown, it seems reasonable to believe that they involved an attempt to persuade the addressees to return to opposition. (Getty Origins 119; emphasis added, GF)

The two footnotes:

(Origins n. 19 p. 245) The Dewey Commission, *The Case of Leon Trotsky*, New York, 1937, 91, 264, 273. See also *Bulletin of the Opposition* No. 52-3, Oct. 1936, 38-41."k

(Origins n. 20 p. 245) Trotsky Papers II, 15821. The letters are dated from April 1932 to December 1932. Those to Sokolnikov and Preobrazhenskii were sent to London, that to Radek in Geneva. Other letters were sent to Kollontai and Litvinov. Copies of these letters have been removed from Trotsky's papers, but whoever removed them failed to retrieve the certified mail receipts signed by Trotsky's secretaries. (Emphasis added GF)

Getty concluded the footnote of his 1986 article with these words:

At his 1937 trial, Karl Radek testified that he had received a letter from Trotsky containing 'terrorist instructions', but we do not know whether this was the letter in question. (34)

But we can in fact be certain that this was indeed the letter in question. In his testimony at the January 1937 trial Radek mentioned a number of letters from Trotsky, beginning with one that he received in February 1932. A little later Radek said:

Preliminarily, that preparations were being made, I learned from the letter Trotsky wrote to me in February-March 1932.

(1937 Trial 85)

We have obtained copies of the certified mail receipts of Trotsky's letters from the Houghton Library, Harvard University. The receipt of the letter to Radek is dated March 3, 1932. Radek stated:

Radek: This was after I received the letter from Trotsky. The letter from Trotsky was received in February or March 1932. (92)

This is strong evidence that the letter of which Radek is speaking was the same one as the letter purged from Trotsky's archive.

Radek described the contents of this letter of Trotsky's as follows:

Radek: Trotsky wrote that the information he possessed led him to conclude that I had become convinced that he was right, and that without the realization of the Trotskyite demands the policy would find itself at an impasse. Trotsky further wrote that since he knew me to be an active person he was convinced that I would return to the struggle.

Vyshinsky: And did Trotsky summon you to the struggle?

Radek: At the end of the letter Trotsky wrote approximately as follows: "You must bear in mind the experience of the preceding period and realize that for you there can be no returning to the past, that the struggle has entered a new phase and that the new feature in this phase is that either we shall be destroyed together with the Soviet Union, or we must raise the question of removing the leadership." The word terrorism was not used, but when I read the words "removing the leadership," it became clear to me what Trotsky had in mind. ... Trotsky informed me that not only the Trotskyites but also the Zinovievites had decided to return to the struggle and that negotiations for union were under way.

(1937 Trial 86-87)

Sedov's letter to Trotsky partially reprinted in French translation by Broué confirms Radek's words about the Zinovievites.

[The bloc] has been organized. In it have entered the Zinovievites, the Sten-Lominadze group and the Trotskyists (former "[capitulators]").

Radek testified that he had confirmed that Trotsky intended "terrorism" in a talk with Sergei Mrachkovsky that took place at the end of October or beginning of November 1932.

Vyshinsky: What did Mrachkovsky reply?

Radek: He replied quite definitely that the struggle had entered the terrorist phase and that in order to carry out these tactics they had now

united with the Zinovievites and would set about the preparatory work.

Vyshinsky: What preparatory work?

Radek: It was clear that since terrorism was the new position, the preparatory work must consist in assembling and forming terrorist cadres.

[...]

Vyshinsky: Did you know from Mrachkovsky about the preparations for terrorist acts against the leaders of the Party and the government?

[...]

Radek: The conversation about Kirov was connected with the fact that in April 1933 Mrachkovsky asked me whether I could mention any Trotskyite in Leningrad who would undertake the organization of a terrorist group there.

Vyshinsky: Against whom? Radek: Against Kirov, of course. (1937 Trial 89-90)

As a result, Radek testified, a plot to assassinate Sergei Kirov, Party leader in Leningrad, was hatched in April 1933, and Kirov was actually killed in December 1934.

### **"Remove The Leadership"**

Radek claimed that in February or March 1932 — we know now that it was on March 3, 1932 — he had received a letter from Trotsky while he, Radek, was in Geneva. That letter was a directive to "remove the leadership" ("ustranit' rukovodstvo") — which Radek understood to mean through "terror".

Getty surmised that this letter "involved an attempt to persuade the addressee[s] to return to opposition." Radek confirmed that Trotsky's letter did contain such an appeal but that it closed by saying "we must raise the



question of removing the leadership" ("nado postavit' vopros ob ustrani enii rukovodstva"). The terms *ustranit'* ("to remove") and *ustranenie* ("removal") are used many times by the defendants in the first Moscow Trial. All claimed that they understood it in the way Radek did — as meaning assassination. It was natural that they did so, for there was no other means of "removing the leadership" aside from winning a majority of the Central Committee — something they had been unable to do during the 1920s when they could campaign openly within the Party in the USSR.

According to Valentin Astrov Bukharin used exactly the same words in speaking to his clandestine faction:

I return to my exposition of BUKHARIN'S speech at the January 1930 meeting.

BUKHARIN said that it was not possible to determine how long the period of uprisings would be, it might last for a number of years. It was possible that during the process of the struggle for power it would be necessary to conclude temporary blocs with the SRs or the Mensheviks. BUKHARIN focused on STALIN'S very important role and said that as the main force in this leadership it would be necessary at any cost to remove STALIN ("STALINA ... ustranit'")

(Lubianka 1937-1938, 27)

Trotsky later wrote publicly that by "ustrait'" he did not mean "kill." According to Astrov, the meaning of the admittedly ambivalent word received clarification at the same conspiratorial meeting of January 1930:

BUKHARIN further referred to the approaching military intervention and said that the USSR in its present condition and with the policy of the Stalin leadership would be unable to defeat the imperialists. In the case of intervention the Rights should make use of the wartime situation, preserve their underground organization for the continuation of the struggle to overthrow the Stalin leadership.

The participants in the meeting who spoke after BUKHARIN expressed solidarity with him. In his speech KUZ'MIN spoke out for

the tactic of a "palace coup", with the arrests of STALIN and of other members of the Soviet government.

KUZ'MIN'S speech ended with his loud declaration, which he made in the heat of extraordinary hostility: "Give me a revolver and I will shoot Stalin." He was asked not to shout about this, since people under the window might be listening. SLEPKOV said that "hatred of Stalin is a sacred hatred", but that it should not be expressed so loudly.

A few days later, in MARETSKII'S apartment in my and KUZ'MIN'S presence BUKHARIN said to KUZ'MIN that such legitimate wishes, generally speaking such as "I will kill Stalin" must not be expressed where many people are present, since the GPU might find out about it.

(Lubianka 1937-1938, 27)

Later in the same statement Astrov recounted the story of how Bukharin had told him in the summer of 1931 that Stalin must be killed, since there was no other way to "take the Party leadership into our hands."

I remember my conversation with BUKHARIN that took place in the summer of 1931 or 1932, during which BUKHARIN this time in a direct manner stated the necessity of killing STALIN. Developing this thought further BUKHARIN emphasized that once STALIN was gone no one could consolidate the Party, and that would give us the possibility to take the leadership in our hands. (29)

The only thing that Astrov later denied was that he had heard Bukharin expressly utter the word "kill".

## **The Bloc**

As we have seen, in 1932 Trotsky and Sedov wrote of a bloc between the Trotskyites, the Zinovievites, and the Sten-Lominadze group, and that in January 1937 Radek also spoke of a bloc formed in 1932 between the Trotskyites and Zinovievites. Astrov testified that Bukharin had announced to his clandestine faction, also in 1932, the need to form a bloc with the Trotskyites.

In the Fall of 1924 BUKHARIN, with SLEPKOV present, told me that we must "make up" with TROTSKY at any cost, so as to later form a bloc with him against the Stalin leaders and change the Leninist line of the Party in his, BUKHARIN'S, direction.

[...]

In particular SLEPKOV made a similar reference in his speech at the illegal conference of Bukharinites at the end of August 1932, in explaining the necessity of a bloc of Rights with the Trotskyites.

[...]

In the Spring of 1932 SLEPKOV in his apartment directly expressed to me the necessity of killing STALIN ("either we, or STALIN, we cannot both continue to live") and informed me that the center of Rights had moved to the tactic of terror.

Parallel to this the practical formulation of our former idea about a bloc with the other counterrevolutionary and White Guardist organizations was proceeding. At the beginning of 1932 SLEPKOV in his apartment at a meeting of the active members of the organization explained the necessity of concluding a bloc with the Trotskyites. He said that "the Trotskyites had accepted the economic platform of the Rights and the Rights, the inner-Party platform of the Trotskyites. The tactic of terror united us. Disagreements between us and the Trotskyites are not essential.

[...]

SLEPKOV informed the meeting that his point of view concerning the necessity of concluding a bloc with the Trotskyites had been confirmed with BUKHARIN, that is, with the center of the Rights, and the meeting adopted this viewpoint. A few days later at SLEPKOV'S apartment with MARETSKII present BUKHARIN confirmed the necessity of such a bloc. ...

At the first session of the conference SLEPKOV informed those present that STEN had recently come to him and had proposed to conclude a bloc with them in the name of the group of "Leftists."

(Lubianka 1937-1938 32;23; 32; 35)

Astrov described how the Bukharinist group discussed the need for blocs with the "leftist" Sten-Lominadze group, with S-Rs, and with Mensheviks. As we've seen Sedov informed Trotsky of the formation of a bloc between the Trotskyites, Zinovievites, and the Sten-Lominadze group.

Sedov and Trotsky cannot possibly have been lying in their letters to one another. Astrov cannot have been lying either. He could have written anything at all in 1993, when his last published article on this matter appeared. If he had claimed he had been tortured, beaten, threatened, no one would have been able or willing to refute him. Indeed, such testimony would have been welcomed by those who are already committed to the proposition that all the testimony of the accused is false. Instead Astrov refused to do any of this.

### **The Two Bukharin Letters**

We recall that in the April 15, 1937 letter to Stalin Bukharin referred to two letters brought forth by Ezhov:

In the concluding remarks of N.I. Ezhov at the plenum, as evidence that I also supposedly maintained contact with my "friends" whom I have condemned, there figured two of my letters:

1) to E. Iaroslavskii concerning Vladimir Slepko, and 2) to Medved' concerning Katalynov.

At the Plenum on February 26, 1937 Ezhov described the letter about Vladimir Slepko as follows:

Moving on — a second argument: I, he says, you see, have long since distanced myself from all these people, have called them counterrevolutionaries, have not defended them, and therefore they are

naturally angry at me and are slandering me. Here I will show Bukharin several documents, about how he has distanced himself. He really did distance himself from Slepkov, that is, more accurately, he distanced himself from all the Slepkov brothers, distanced himself a long time ago, after their arrest, and in particular distanced himself from this Slepkov, when he was expelled from the Party and arrested. Here I mean Vladimir Slepkov. And nonetheless a little time later he secretly phoned Emel'ian Iaroslavskii and, having first asked him, sent him a letter. I tell you about this because he was arrested, expelled from the party, and after that you write Emel'ian. (Bukharin: True, but he had no relationship to this group.) But that's not true, you know very well that he had a direct relationship. (Bukharin: No, no.)

Wait, listen to the documents, be patient. He [Bukharin] writes a letter about Slepkov, the youngest of the brothers. "I can only say that I know very well that Vladimir Slepkov has never taken part in any trouble or fractional activities. It is possible that he had some doubts at one time, but he has kept himself politically at a distance from Aleksandr." And he asks that he be readmitted to the Party. (Stalin. To whom is Bukharin writing this?) He is writing this to Iaroslavskii. In fact he knows very well that Vladimir Slepkov, just like Vasilii, took part in that famous meeting in Pokrovskoe Streshnevo, where there were 17 people, where Kuz'min first stated that if everything depends on Stalin, then let's remove him ["uberiom", from "ubrat" — GF]. All of them talk about this and talk about it openly just like Vasilii and Vladimir Slepkov, who have been in this organization from the moment of its existence, that is, from the moment when their brothers recruited them. This Vladimir Slepkov took part in almost all the meetings. (Bukharin. But he was living in Leningrad.) Yes, he was living in Leningrad, quite true. This same Slepkov is arrested in 1933 and then is released and is expelled from the Party, and in 1934 Nikolai Ivanovich Bukharin intercedes for this person and then says that "they are slandering me because I distanced myself from them". That's how his two-faced behavior is evidence, even in these small details." (*Voprosy Istorii* No. 2, 1993, 27-28)

In his April 15, 1937 letter to Stalin from prison Bukharin tried to explain this accusation as follows:

The letter about Vlad. Slepko. (Vlad. Slepko must not be confused with Vasilii Slepko). I received by mail an almost insane letter from Vlad. Slepko (he was in a psychiatric hospital). I had never seen him and did not know that this "Volodia" was one of the Slepko group. And I then wrote a letter to the CCC, to E. Iaroslavskii. Not to Slepko, but to a member of the Party troika of the CCC. And this is a sin? And this is my "contact" with the Slepkovites whom I have condemned? (Murin 2000 54; Volkogonov Papers 20)

However, in his January 1937 statement Valentin Astrov specifically implicated Vladimir Slepko as well as his brothers.

In 1928-1930 our filial groups were created and conducted underground work, with the following membership:

1. Samara — SLEPKOV, LEVIN, AREF'EV, AREF'EVA, KROTOV, VOROB'EVA, Galina SHALAKHOVA, ZHIROV.
2. Saratov — PETROVSKII, ZAITSEV, SLEPKOV, SHALAKHOVA, ZAITSEVA, LEVINA, ALEKSANDROV, LAPKIN, IVANOV and others.
3. Kazan — Vas. SLEPKOV (I don't remember the rest of the members of the group).
4. Ivanovo — I (ASTROV), BASHENKOV, BOL'SHAKOV, BOGDANOV, ABOLIN.
5. Leningrad — MARETSKII, AIKHENVAL'D, **VI. SLEPKOV**, KANIN and others

(Lubianka 1937-1938, 28; emphasis added GF)

Astrov also discussed the conference in Pokrovsko-Streshnevo (near Moscow) to which Ezhov referred, saying that "V. Slepko" was present, but we can't tell whether this was Vasilii or Vlaclimir. Ezhov may have been confusing two separate meetings. After outlining the meeting at Pokrovsko-Streshnevo in the winter of 1930-1 Astrov spoke as follows:

At another meeting in this same apartment of MARETSKII'S that same winter of 1930-31 TSETLIN, in BUKHARIN'S presence, talked about the relationship of the Rights to Trotskyism as follows: we just once and for all admit, said TSETLIN, that in inner-Party questions we were incorrect in 1923-1928 and the Trotskyites were completely correct. They saw earlier than we did where the "Stalin regime" was leading us. This is where KUZ'MIN interrupted TSETLIN, crying out "kill STALIN".

(Lubianka 1937-1938, 31)

Astrov refused to recant his testimony on this point, so there is no reason to doubt that Vladimir Slepko was in fact involved in the underground opposition group.

As leader of this group it is hardly possible that Bukharin would not have known about Vladimir Slepko's participation, even if he were less active than his brothers — and we do not know that. Vladimir Slepko's participation would fully explain Bukharin's letter on his behalf to Iaroslavskii since it was the plan of the underground opposition groups to penetrate the party. Therefore it would expose Bukharin as a "double-dealer" just as Ezhov charged.

### **Bukharin's Letter To Medved' About Kotolynov<sup>133</sup>**

Bukharin does not dispute Ezhov's summary of and quotations from the letter, which is as follows:

The second document — is also such a friendship, rather suspicious: there was a famous little man, the terrorist Katalynov, the organizer of the murder of com. Kirov, the person who directed Nikolaev. So here, you see, also in 1934 Bukharin writes ... (Voice from the room: To whom?). To Medved' in Leningrad. He writes: "Dear comrade Medved', you lack one worker — and then he asks — it would be good to unload some administrative matters, you have in Leningrad a young man, Vania Katalynov", in a word, he sends him a detailed character reference from the words of others, tells him that Smorodinov can

recommend him. Then he writes: "I leave to one side that he was expelled from the party, and only know that I have heard about him as a very talented Party volunteer." (Bukharin. One very prominent, very staunch Chekist ...) Yes, but that's neither here nor there. (Bukharin. A Chekist, a scientific worker, asked me to give [a reference to] this Katalynov. I wrote Medved' and asked him to verify this person.) A strange acquaintance with terrorists. (Bukharin. I can summon the witnesses on whose request I did this.) (*Voprosy Istorii* No. 2 1993, 27)

<sup>133</sup> This is only part of the context in which we should consider Bukharin's letter recommending Kotolynov. For by February 26, 1937, the date of Ezhov's report, the second Moscow Trial of January 23-30 1937 had concluded. Of course the testimony against Bukharin at that trial also forms a part of the context in which Ezhov gave his report about Bukharin's two letters. In another part of this present study we examine how the Kirov assassination figured in the January 1937 trial.

Concerning Bukharin's letter to Iaroslavskii Ezhov pointed out that Bukharin wrote a recommendation that Vladimir Slepko, expelled from the Party, be admitted, all the while knowing that he was a member of an underground oppositional faction. Astrof had testified that Bukharin actively led this clandestine opposition group in which Vladimir Slepko was a member of the Leningrad branch.

Bukharin did not deny writing this letter or Ezhov's characterization of its contents. But Bukharin claimed he did not know of Vladimir Slepko's oppositional activity, thus directly contradicting Astrof's testimony. Bukharin's only response to the testimony of Astrof and of others — apparently many others -of his followers who testified against him was that they "had it in for him" since he had attacked and criticized them.

In his letter to Stalin Bukharin did not even try to explain why he would recommend reinstatement in the Party for a person in a psychiatric hospital who had written him one "insane letter" and who had been expelled from the Party not long before. Stalin could hardly have failed to notice this omission.



Moreover, Bukharin wrote not to Slepkov's original Party body, to the next highest body, or to any of the Leningrad Party leadership. He did not even write to Kirov, whom Bukharin professed to admire. Instead Bukharin went right to the top, to Emil'ian Iaroslavskii, member of the Central Control Commission (or, depending upon the date of the letter, the Commission of Party Control). Iaroslavskii was not only a person who could directly urge that someone be readmitted to Party membership. It was also unlikely that he would have known about Vladimir Slepkov. The leading party bodies in Leningrad, and of course Kirov himself, would have known about Slepkov and his oppositional past. Thus it appears that Bukharin was trying to get Slepkov readmitted to the Party by going over the heads of the Leningrad Party organization.

It would have made no sense for any ordinary Party member to recommend a person like Vladimir Slepkov. But it would indeed make sense if Bukharin knew that Slepkov was a co-conspirator. The whole point of the "double-dealing" tactic was to "bore from within", to retain as many, and as powerful, positions in the Party as possible. It is hard to explain Bukharin's action in any other way. At the very least it would have excited suspicion.

It is in this context that we need to view Bukharin's letter recommending Kotolynov to Medved'. While insisting that he did not know him personally Bukharin wrote a letter recommending Kotolynov to a position as an administrator in the Leningrad NKVD, despite the fact that Kotolynov had been expelled from the Party for oppositional activity. Here too Bukharin was going over the head of the Leningrad Party leadership, including Kirov. Any investigator would wonder why he would do that. Bukharin's explanation that he had done this because Talmud had asked him to do so would not have excused Bukharin's action either. Party members were supposed to recommend persons whom they knew and in whom they had confidence.

We possess evidence that Bukharin had long known about Kotolynov and his oppositional sympathies. At the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Komsomol in March 1926 Kotolynov spoke up against the supporters of Stalin:

...comrades, we must take a look at the psychology of a few Party workers who are carrying out these transfers. They show this kind of psychology:

Whom do you support? Are you a Stalinist or not? If you are not a Stalinist — press him, crush him, drive him far away so we don't hear even a squeak from him. In our organization this has nothing in common with a Leninist upbringing, and it must be clearly explained that our organization is not Stalinist, but Leninist.<sup>134</sup>

<sup>134</sup> *VII s'ezd vsesoiuznogj leninskogo kommunisticheskogo soiuzza molodezhi. 11-22 marta 1926 goda. Stenograficheskii otchet.* (Moscow-Leningrad: Molodaia gvardiia, 1926), p. 108.

Kotolynov's speech is recorded on pages 104-108 of the transcript; at the fifth session. Bukharin was present and spoke during the ninth session; his speech is on pages 230-258.

At the 15th Party Congress Kotolynov, as well as Bakaev, Gertik, Evdokimov, Kamenev, Kuklin, Levin, and Rumiantsev, all of whom reappear in the Kirov case, were expelled from the Party as "activists in the Trotskyite opposition". Kotolynov's name, spelled "Katalynov"<sup>135</sup> just as Bukharin spelled it in his letter to Stalin, is in the list of expellees on pages 1247 and 1318 of the transcript of the Congress. The letter signed by many expellees agreeing with the Party's line, renouncing oppositional activity, and requesting reinstatement in the Party, is in the Appendix on pages 1334-1335. It is countersigned by Kamenev, who states that he has verified the signatures of all the co-signers, and dated December 3, 1927.

<sup>135</sup> In most parts of Russia an unstressed "o" is pronounced as though it were a short "a", so "Kotolynov" would be pronounced "Katalynov", with stress on the third syllable.

Bukharin spoke several times during this Congress. He would probably have voted in favor of the expulsions. We know from Bukharin's friend Humbert-Droz that at this very time Bukharin was already fractionalizing against Stalin and probably already discussing plans to kill him. Kotolynov was a prominent Leningrad Zinovievite and one of those reinstated along with Kamenev. It seems more than unlikely that Bukharin would not have known who Kotolynov was.<sup>136</sup> Rather, it appears likely that Bukharin knew that Kotolynov was an active underground Oppositionist, a Zinovievite

allied with his own Rightists and with clandestine Trotskyites in the bloc that was planning to assassinate Kirov, Stalin, and others.

<sup>136</sup> My thanks to my colleague Vladimir L. Bobrov of Moscow, who informed me of the references to Kotolynov in the 7th Komsomol and 15th Party Congresses (personal email October 31, 2011).

## **Conclusion**

Ezhov said that the two letters of Bukharin's constituted "a strange acquaintance with terrorists" — strange, that is, if Bukharin were innocent of any clandestine oppositional activity, as he claimed to be. But given all of the evidence available by February 26, 1937 of Bukharin's involvement with an underground Rightist conspiracy, it must have appeared unlikely to the investigators that his recommendation of Kotolynov, whom he admitted he did not know, was simply a very strange coincidence. Investigators, like historians, are professionally suspicious of coincidences.

Evidence given at the January 1937 and March 1938 Moscow Trials indicated that Bukharin agreed with the tactic of terror. In the March 1938 Trial Iagoda and Vyshinsky expressed disbelief that Bukharin could have been ignorant of the fact that a plan was afoot to murder Kirov. But Bukharin's letter in favor of Kotolynov was apparently never raised again, either in the trials — whose transcripts we have — or in those few pre-trial investigative materials that have been released to researchers.

So either Bukharin did not know that Kotolynov was in a secret Zinovievite group that was preparing an assassination attempt upon Kirov, or the prosecution was not able to prove that he did and so did not raise this matter at the March 1938 Moscow trial. That would not mean his recommendation of Kotolynov was necessarily innocent. We do not have whatever investigation materials are available on Talmud, on whose behalf Bukharin claimed he wrote the letter in question. Talmud's name: does not appear in the most extensive list of "victims of Stalinism", the list maintained by the Memorial Society. The biographical information available about him is extremely sketchy and cites no repression.<sup>137</sup>

<sup>137</sup> <http://www.ipme.nw.ru/mirrors/PRAN/www/info/44/4429.htm> A Stalin prize laureate, Talmud signed the unpublished letter to *Pravda* in early 1953 critical of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and the Joint Distribution Committee. A slightly longer biography of Talmud at the semi-official Aleksandr Iakovlev site mentions no collaboration with the NKVD; see <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/inside/almanah-doc/person/1004070> The text of the unpublished letter is available in many places, including at <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/inside/almanah-doc/55578>

## Chapter 17. *Liushkov's Essay*

NKVD general Genrikh Samoilovich Liushkov defected to the Japanese on June 13, 1938 by crossing the border into Japanese-occupied Manchuria. He gave some press conferences and wrote articles attacking Stalin and the Soviet party and government. In at least one press conference, a report of which was published in *Asahi Shimbun* on July 2, 1938 and in *Yomiuri Shinbun* the following day, and in a long article in the Japanese journal *Kaizo* of March 1939 Liushkov discussed the Kirov assassination. As an NKVD investigator Liushkov had been directly involved in the Kirov assassination investigation and the later interrogations of Zinoviev and Kamenev prior to their August 1936 Trial.

On pp. 680-1 (Document #126) Lenoë prints an English translation of Liushkov's press statement of July 3, 1938. This brief document has long been available in Russian translation.<sup>138</sup> On pp. 681-686 (Document #127) Lenoë publishes a translation of that part of the *Kaizo* article in which Liushkov discusses the Kirov assassination at much greater length. As far as we can determine this article has never been published in full in English or Russian translation. We have arranged for a complete translation into English of Liushkov's *Kaizo* article and will refer to it here.

<sup>138</sup> See the entry in the Russian language Wikipedia at [http://ru.wikipedia.org/Люшков,\\_Генрих\\_Самойлович](http://ru.wikipedia.org/Люшков,_Генрих_Самойлович) and at the biographical site at [http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio\\_1/ljushkov\\_gs.php](http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio_1/ljushkov_gs.php)

Lenoë states that Liushkov's account is of primary importance for our knowledge of the Kirov assassination:

Liushkov's evidence, which has been ignored or downplayed by Western writers on the Kirov killing, is in fact the most important in the case. (687)

In this chapter I study Liushkov's account in detail. This detailed study concludes that Lenoë is mistaken about the value of Liushkov's article in understanding the Kirov assassination. I will demonstrate that Liushkov

deliberately falsified his writings in order to make anti-Soviet, and specifically anti-Stalin, propaganda for the Japanese.

My study shows that, ironically, Lenoe is correct — though not at all for the reasons he states. Liushkov is in fact "the most important evidence" — but not of the Kirov assassination. Rather, it turns out that Liushkov is the most direct non-Soviet testimony that the conspiracies during 1936-1938 in the USSR, and specifically the 1938 Moscow Trial and the military conspiracies known to history as the "Tukhachevsky Affair" of 1937, later discussed by defendants in the 1938 Moscow Trial, really did exist.

Lenoe notes correctly that all the alleged conspiracies, from the Kirov Affair in 1934 to the Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites in 1938, were linked to each other by overlapping leadership and inter-communication. This is why the NKVD referred to them all as the *klubok*, or "tangle." As we have seen in our study of the March 1938 Moscow Trial, the defendants there testify to their connection with the Zinovievites who murdered Kirov. Therefore Liushkov provides evidence not that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman", but of precisely the opposite — that the conspiracies as outlined in the December 1934 Kirov trial and the other Moscow Trials were genuine.

Our study of Liushkov's account is in three parts. First we will examine what Liushkov wrote on the Kirov assassination in the 1939 *Kaizo* article as translated by Lenoe and reprinted in his book. After that we will study the rest of Liushkov's *Kaizo* article — the part not translated by Lenoe. Then we will compare what Liushkov wrote for publication with what we know he told the Japanese privately. At the end we will return to Lenoe's view of what Liushkov wrote.

### **Liushkov's account of the Kirov affair in *Kaizo*, March 1939**

Liushkov wrote when no details about the Kirov assassination were available other than what had been published in Soviet newspapers. None of the other evidence — interrogation transcripts, for example — was available. The evidence we have today permits us to immediately discern some of Liushkov's falsifications simply by reading his 1938 and 1939 accounts.

For example, in the July 1938 interview Liushkov wrote:

Nikolaev definitely did not belong to the Zinoviev group.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>139</sup> «ЛЮШКОВ Генрих Самойлович».

[http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio\\_1/ljushkov\\_gs.php](http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio_1/ljushkov_gs.php) ; Lenoe, p. 681.

In his *Kaizo* article some months later he had altered this claim:

...[W]hen he was a member of the Komsomol, he [Nikolaev] had sympathies for the Zinovievite faction. (683)

Lenoe has printed parts of a confession of December 12, 1934 in which Zvezdov specifically identified Nikolaev as a member of the Leningrad Center, along with Rumiantsev, Kotolynov, Tsarkov, Severov, Tseitlin, Surov, and Tolmazov (310 Doc. 55; Lenoe has declined to make the Russian original public):

Question [to Zvezdov]: Lay out for us the membership of the Center and the other branches of the Leningrad organization [of underground Zinovievites — GF].

Answer: The membership is as follows:

1. The Leningrad Center.

a. Rumiantsev, Vladimir — leader of the organization.

b. Kotolynov, Ivan.

[...]

h. Nikolaev, Leonid. (310)

Moreover, in a confession of December 13, 1934 in the Volkogonov Archive Tsar'kov confirms that Nikolaev was a Zinovievite:

Question: What do you know about the murderer of com. KIROV — NIKOLAEV, Leonid?

Answer: I know NIKOLAEV through our joint work in the Vyborg region [of Leningrad]. He is a Zinovievite.

He was closest to KOTOLYNOV. I do not precisely remember whether he took part in our legal struggle with the Party during the first years of the appearance of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc, or whether he signed the platform of the bloc (all signatures to the platform went through myself and MURAV'EV, Milch.), or whether he belonged to the category of persons who remained in an illegal position and did not stand forth openly as members of the organization. Our counter-revolutionary organization bears political responsibility for the terrorist act of L. NIKOLAEV, member of the organization, in whose ranks he was nourished.

Tsar'kov's confession contains details that we can now confirm from other evidence, including the fact that a Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc did indeed exist, as we know from Trotsky's own correspondence.

As we have seen, Kotolynov agreed that his Zinovievist group bore responsibility for Nikolaev's murder of Kirov since it had nourished in him hostility towards the Party. As we have argued above, this could not have happened unless Nikolaev were a member of the Zinovievist group. Finally, Nikolaev himself admitted close contact with Kotolynov and the Zinovievist group.

Liushkov's other remarks concerning the Kirov assassination are of little interest to our inquiry. He insists that Borisov was not killed by Iagoda's order but by accident. This corresponds both to the conclusion the NKVD reached in December 1934 and to the position of the Russian government, Kirilina, and Lenoë today. Iagoda freely confessed to other heinous crimes, but he always insisted that he had nothing to do with Borisov's death. We examine this testimony elsewhere in this present study.

About Kamenev and Zinoviev Liushkov has little to say except to simply declare their confessions false:

... [A]t the August 1936 show trial, Zinoviev and Kamenev were the leaders of the conspiratorial organization and Bakaev was presented as



the direct organizer [of the killing]. Here I myself can serve as a witness. I was the person who conducted the interrogation of the aforementioned three men and I can confirm that their confessions were completely false.

Yagoda transmitted Stalin's orders to me and these orders were embodied in the text of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Bakaev's confessions. (Lenoe 685)

This does not come close to answering the questions that arise just from the evidence that we now have. Why did Zinoviev and Kamenev testify as they did in the public trial? Even more important: why did they, and all the other defendants whose confessions we now have, confess in the way they did *before* the multiple trials of December 1934 (the Kirov murder trial), January 1935 (the Zinoviev-Kamenev "Moscow Center" trial), and the Moscow Trial of August 1936? Liushkov did not have to account for these confessions — they were unknown to the public.<sup>140</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Liushkov was not being quite frank here. We know today that he did not conduct all the interrogations of Zinoviev and Kamenev. He was only one of the NKVD investigators who cosigned Zinoviev's interrogation-confession of July 28, 1936. Liushkov was the only NKVD man to cosign Zinoviev's confession of an unknown date in August, 1936. But Liushkov was not one of the three NKVD men who cosigned Kamenev's confession of August 10, 1936.

We have good evidence today that Liushkov was lying here. Arch Getty was apparently the first scholar to see recently-opened Ezhov materials. Concerning Zinoviev's and Kamenev's pretrial behavior he writes as follows:

By 23 July [1936), Kamenev was admitting membership in a counterrevolutionary center that planned terror, but he denied being one of the organizers; he implicated Zinoviev as being closer to the matter. Three days later Zinoviev was confronted by one of his followers, Karev, who directly accused him. Zinoviev asked that the interrogation be stopped because he wanted to make a statement that, in the event, amounted to a full confession of organizing assassination

and terror. Shortly thereafter, he submitted to his interrogators a 540-page manuscript he had written in prison. In "A Deserved Sentence" he wrote:

There is no question about it ... It is a fact. Whoever plays with the idea of "opposition" to the socialist state plays with the idea of counterrevolutionary terror. ... Before each who finds himself in my position this question stands in sharp relief. If tomorrow war comes — it stands yet a million times sharper and bigger. And for myself this question in prison for a long time is irreversibly decided. Rise from the dead! Be born again as a Bolshevik! Finish your human days conscious of your guilt before the party! Do everything to erase this guilt. (Getty, Yezhov 191)<sup>141</sup>

<sup>141</sup> We have obtained a copy of this 540-page document. It was clearly written when Zinoviev was still refusing to confess to being involved in assassination plots. It could not have done him any good at this point.

Liushkov mentions nothing about this huge manuscript by Zinov'ev. Of course! It would have been absurd for him to state that "Moscow" dictated all this material, none of which was even cited at the 1936 Moscow Trial, to NKVD officials so that Zinov'ev might "sign" it. Nor did Liushkov have to account for Zinov'ev's repeated confessions of guilt while in prison in 1935, for these too were unknown to the public at the time.

Nor does Liushkov's claim of falsification account for Zinoviev's and Kamenev's appeals to the Soviet Supreme Court following their death sentences. These secret documents were only made public in 1992. In them both Kamenev and, at greater length, Zinoviev, repeat their confessions of guilt and throw themselves upon the mercy of the court.

However, we have still stronger evidence that Liushkov was lying and that Lenoë knew it and covered it up.

### **Liushkov's Other Claims in his *Kaizo* Article**

In order to accurately assess Liushkov's assertions about the Kirov murder we need to look at them in two additional contexts. First, we need to study that part of Liushkov's *Kaizo* article that Lenoe does not make available to his readers. Then we need to compare what Liushkov says in his published articles with what he told the Japanese privately. Lenoe fails to do either.

Kirilina uses Liushkov's *Kaizo* article in a dishonest manner. She simply states that Liushkov's article "categorically refutes Iagoda's participation in Kirov's assassination." (Kirilina 353) In reality it does nothing of the kind. What Liushkov does is refute Bulanov's account at the March 1938 trial. But Iagoda also rejected Bulanov's account. As we show in another part of this review, Iagoda never claimed that he was free of guilt in Kirov's assassination.

But how would Kirilina's readers know what Liushkov wrote in *Kaizo*? We can be reasonably certain that Kirilina had not read this article herself, or she would have more to say about it. Any genuine scholar would inform her readers where they could obtain a translation of the article to check for themselves, or at least tell them how they themselves had done so. So Kirilina is "bluffing" here: she is claiming she has read Liushkov's article while she never has. This is consistent with other evidence that Kirilina's book is less than honest. Like Lenoe, Kirilina did not "begin with a clean slate" — try to determine who killed Kirov and how on the basis of the evidence now available. Instead she wrote a work of political propaganda to "prove", i.e. to convince her readers, of the preconceived position that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" — a position that happens to be that of the Gorbachev and of the subsequent Russian regimes.

Lenoe says nothing about the rest of the *Kaizo* article, as though it does not bear on the Kirov assassination. But it does — because an examination of the rest of the article proves that Liushkov was lying. We can: specify a number of individual falsehoods by Liushkov. For example, he wrote:

... Stalin exploited the deaths of the influential figures to show that the terrorist acts were not made-up but real stories and that the conspiracies were not fantasies.

Briefly, he established political resources thanks to their deaths. It may be questioned why he did not exploit the death of Ordzhonikidze. This main reason was that Ordzhonikidze complained about the wholesale arrests just before his death. ... Ordzhonikidze aggressively debated with Stalin because he had bitter experiences during that period. (*Kaizo* 107)

Khrushchev and his men spread a similar story about Ordzhonikidze's supposed opposition to arrests. But we know now that there is no evidence whatsoever to support this claim. Getty has shown that Ordzhonikidze agreed with the arrests in his Commissariat of Heavy Industry, particularly that of Piatakov. He reprints a speech the commissar gave in early February 1937, only days before his death, that demonstrates this conclusively.<sup>142</sup> This passage about Ordzhonikidze is enough in itself to establish that Liushkov was either inventing a story or, perhaps, repeating a rumor among opposition sympathizers. In any case, Liushkov would have had no way of knowing about discussions within the Politburo.

<sup>142</sup> Getty Naumov 292-294. Also online at: <http://www.red-channel.de/books/ordzhonikidze.htm>

In the part of his essay not published by Lenoë Liushkov claims to have attended the February-March 1937 Central Committee Plenum.

Stalin addressed this issue in the February-March Plenum of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party. I also attended these assemblies.

There Stalin criticized the recently-deceased Ordzhonikidz for not telling the Politburo about some oppositional communications he had received. This must also be the source for Liushkov's claim that "after a certain period of time, he ordered through Yezhov, to whom he had entrusted the investigation, that the Zinoviev group be targeted", as Ezhov made such a statement during that Plenum. (Lenoë 683)

## **What Liushkov Told the Japanese**

The heart of the rest of the *Kaizo* article is Liushkov's assertion that all the conspiracies of the 1930s were fabrications.

Of course, these do not cover all the dubious fabrications I know. Yet, is it still necessary to show more facts about the fabricated charges and trials? I do not think so. However, I want to mention one more thing. With simple logic, this could demolish the scenario of the conspiracy fabricated by Stalin. According to him, there was consistent conspiracy while each incident was revealed individually. As conspiracy members were arrested almost all commissars, commanders of military districts, senior commanders, clericals of committees of the party and the chairmen of the executive committees in each state, directors of NKVD, diplomats, and businesspeople. It could be judged by seeing the situations in the supreme organ of the party how intense those arrests were. Arrested were 49 out of 71 members of the central committee of the party (more than 2/3), 54 out of 68 alternate members of the same committee (more than 3/4), 16 out of 22 members of the central control office (more than 3/4), 3 out of 7 bureaucrats of the control office of the party (approx. 1/2), and finally 5 out of 16 Politburo members and alternate members (approx. 1/3). (Page 119) I affirm that these figures are accurate. If a part of them had engaged in the conspiracy against Stalin, who could have prevented them from carrying that out? They took enough power and had the practical forces, the army and the GPU. Suppose that they had contacted foreign staff headquarters and just waited for their interference against the Soviet Union? However, since badly failing at the cases in Leningrad and the Kremlin, at the public trial in August 1936, and so on, the conspiracy group could have immediately carried out their plan as their only solution. Also, although the dismissal of Yagoda, which could have kept the conspiracy from completely failing, was the last alarm, the fact that they still did not take any actions is to be considered. Nobody but a psychotic would act like a rabbit waiting to be killed, just passively observing. **This also demonstrates that no conspiracy did or could exist.** (*Kaizo* 118-119; emphasis added GF)

The statement I have put in boldface contradicts what Liushkov privately told the Japanese.

The late Alvin D. Coox spent many years studying Japanese-Soviet relations. In 1968 he published a preliminary survey of what he could discover about Liushkov's defection from the Japanese side. Thirty years later in 1998 he published two long articles with many more details. Coox managed to locate Liushkov papers long believed lost. He also studied the surviving report on Liushkov made by Soviet spy Richard Sorge. Most important, he was able to conduct extensive interviews with some of the Japanese military men who were in charge of Liushkov, worked with him, and spent much time with him. What follows here is a summary of those parts of Coox's study that are most relevant to our present purposes.<sup>143</sup>

<sup>143</sup> Coox, Alvin D. "The Lesser of Two Hells: NKVD General G.S. Lyushkov's Defection to Japan, 1938-1945." *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 11, 3 (1998) 145-186 (Part One) (Coox 1); 11, 4 (1998) 72-110 (Part Two). We will refer to these articles in the text as Coox 1 and Coox 2 respectively.

For our purposes Coox's most important discovery is this: Liushkov confirmed to the Japanese that real conspiracies did indeed exist in the USSR. Before being sent to the Far East Liushkov had a private meeting with Stalin during which Stalin made it clear that he believed that a military plot did exist. According to Liushkov Stalin informed him:

War with Japan is inevitable; the Far East is undoubtedly a theater of war. It is necessary to clean up the army and its rear in the most determined manner from hostile spy and pro-Japanese elements. The plot of Tukhachevsky, Gamarnik, and others, and also the arrest of Sangurski, Aronshtam, and Kashcheev show that all is not well with the army, that there are plotters with the leaders of the NKVD in the Far East. Deribas, Zapadni, and Barminski are Japanese spies, and Japan has a large base for spying and insurrection work by means of Koreans and Chinese. (Coox 1, 151)

Sent to the Far East to deal with these conspiracies Liushkov reported to the Japanese that they did indeed exist. By mentioning Gamarnik, who committed suicide when NKVD men went to arrest him, Liushkov indirectly confirmed the genuineness of the charges against Tukhachevskii

and the other seven high-ranking officers tried and executed together with him, as Gamarnik was one of them.

According to Lyushkov, the interrogations of Deribas, Zapadni, and Barminski established that in the NKVD and the border guard forces, a plot centering on Gamarnik had been fomented.

Liushkov also confirmed the connection of the Rights, convicted in the March 1938 Moscow Trial, with the military conspirators. For example, Liushkov told the Japanese:

For a long time Deribas had been in contact with Rykov and was the latter's 'hidden conspirator.'

Liushkov mentioned Rykov elsewhere as well (see below). He also revealed that the charges against Lavrent'ev (Kartvelishvili), arrested in July 1937 but not tried and executed until August 1938, were true. Khrushchev's man Aleksei V. Snegov later charged Beria with framing and then killing Lavrent'ev; Liushkov's testimony here proves that Snegov was wrong.

Liushkov also confirmed at least the intention of these Party and military conspirators to conspire with the Japanese.

In concert with Lavrenty Lavrentiev (former First Secretary of the Regional Committee of the Party until January 1937), with Grigory Krutov (shot in April 1938), and with the army plotters Sangurski, Aronshtam, and others, Deribas supposedly intended to conduct a putsch in the Far East and to reach agreement with the Japanese for help and for combined operations against the Soviet Union. In the NKVD the plotters had recruited Transtok, Chief of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Section, and many others. Lyushkov gave the names of about 20 officials, mostly NKVD types, and of ten border guards, all of whom he asserted were involved in the plots. (Coox 1, 156)

Coox emphasizes that Liushkov outlined this information to the Japanese in a manner that convinced them that he believed they were genuine:

About this murderous period as a whole, Lyushkov said little to the Japanese, but his enumeration of the suspects was straightforward, without any admission of NKVD-fabricated evidence, such as he said had occurred at Leningrad in the era of the Kirov assassination. (Coox 1, 156).

It is important to note that Coox's account of what Liushkov had to say about the Kirov murder is taken exclusively from an interview in *Asahi Shimbun* of July 2, 1938. (Coox 1, 149) Though we have not been able to obtain that specific newspaper, we assume the Liushkov interview reported in it must be the same interview printed in *Yomiuri Shimbun* on July 3, 1938, which is a report of the same news conference. We will discuss the importance of this fact in some detail below.

Briefly, however, it is this: Liushkov said one thing in public, but contradicted his public statements in private. For example, in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* article Liushkov said:

At the trial that took place in August 1936 the accusations that the Trotskyites through Ol'berg 1) had contact with the German Gestapo, the accusations of espionage against Zinoviev and Kamenev, the accusations that Zinoviev and Kamenev were connected with the so-called "Right center" through Tomskii, 2) **Rykov** and Bukharin — are complete fabrications. Zinoviev, Kamenev, Tomskii, Rykov, Bukharin and many others were executed as enemies of Stalin who acted to oppose his destructive policies.

Stalin used the convenient possibility which the Kirov case presented to him in order to rid himself of these people by fabricating broad anti-Stalin conspiracies, espionage trials, and terrorist organizations.<sup>144</sup>  
[Emphasis added, GF]

<sup>144</sup> Only the second of these two paragraphs is translated by Lenoe, 681; I have taken the other from the text at the Russian-language Wikipedia page, which is the same as that in the biographical encyclopedia at Hrono.ru. See [http://ru.wikipedia.org/Люшков,\\_Генрих\\_Самойлович](http://ru.wikipedia.org/Люшков,_Генрих_Самойлович) and [http://hrono.ru/biograf/bio\\_1/ljushkov\\_gs.php](http://hrono.ru/biograf/bio_1/ljushkov_gs.php)



But in private conversations to Japanese officers and others with whom he interacted Liushkov incriminated Rykov along with Marshal Blyukher and others:

[One] group of traitors belonging to the staff of the Far Eastern Army, people near to Blyukher himself, such as [Yan] Pokus, Gulin, Vasenov, Kropachev and others, tried to get round Blyukher and to draw him into politically dangerous conversations. Blyukher showed them the secret confessions of arrested plotters [without] the authority to do so. After his arrest Gulin told me that after the recall of Pokus to Moscow, Blyukher, when drinking with them, cursed the NKVD and the arrests recently carried out, and also Voroshilov, [Lazar] Kaganovich and others. **Blyukher told Gulin that before the removal of Rykov he was in connection with him and had often written that the 'right wing' wished to see him at the head of the armed forces of the country.** (Coox 1, 158; emphasis added, GF)

Publicly Liushkov was saying that all the conspiracies were fabrications by Stalin. But at the same time he was privately informing the Japanese that serious conspiracies did in fact exist. Moreover, what Liushkov told the Japanese is consistent with the charges at the January 1937 and March 1938 Moscow Trials (the guilt of Rykov) and with the charges against the military conspirators, both the Tukhachevsky Affair figures (Gamarnik) and those against military and Party officials in the Far East.

This is important for our purposes because Liushkov spoke about the Kirov assassination in published articles only. Coox did not know of any such remarks made privately to the Japanese. Since Liushkov lied in his published materials — writings that were first and foremost anti-Soviet propaganda — and since it was only in those published materials that Liushkov discussed the Kirov assassination, then it follows that, at a minimum, we can't put any store at all in what Liushkov wrote about the Kirov affair.

What's more, Liushkov wrote in his public article in *Kaizo* that "no conspiracy did or could exist" while at the same time he confirmed to the Japanese that a number of serious conspiracies had indeed existed. That is,

we know that the existence of conspiracies is one of the things that Liushkov deliberately lied about in his public statements.

At a news conference on July 13 1938 called by the Japanese to give the press a chance to ask Liushkov questions, Liushkov said the following, as summarized by Coox:

...though Lyushkov doubted that there was any basis for it, Gamarnik had been charged with conspiring with elements in the Soviet Far East. In particular, Stalin fabricated allegations that the party secretaries in Siberia — Y.M. Vareikis, Karlenev, and L.Y Lavrentiev — plotted with Gamarnik and other important individuals to wreck military preparations in the Far East. (Coox 1, 175)

Here Liushkov directly contradicted what he was saying privately to the Japanese, to whom he affirmed the existence of a conspiracy or conspiracies involving Gamarnik, Lavrent'ev, and others (see quotations from Coox 1, 156 above and Coox 2, 85 below). Head of the Political Directorate of the Red Army Ian Gamarnik was questioned by NKVD men in connection with the arrests of Marshal Tukhachevsky and others, after which he committed suicide.

### **Liushkov's *Kaizo* Article As Propaganda**

Coox discovered that during August 1938, only two months after his defection, Liushkov was transferred from the 5<sup>th</sup>, or Russia Section of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bureau of the Japanese Army to "the 11<sup>th</sup> (Propaganda and Subversion) Subsection of the 8<sup>th</sup> (Psychological Warfare and Sabotage) Section". According to Coox's informants the Japanese felt that Liushkov's military knowledge had been exhausted. He was, after all, NKVD, not regular Soviet army.

Yabe's successor Asada agrees that Lyushkov came to be viewed as possessing no further intelligence value for the 5<sup>th</sup> Section, which is why he was moved to the 8<sup>th</sup> Section to work in the area of propaganda and subversion, in anticipation of an ultimate outbreak of hostilities between Japan and the Soviet Union. (Coox 1, 179)

In addition to writing articles and an introduction to at least one anti-Soviet book Liushkov recorded "anti-Stalin speeches addressed to the Russian people in case of war" and wrote leaflets.

Liushkov related other facts to the Japanese that confirm Soviet accusations made at the time. For example, he cited many instances of genuine acts of sabotage. (Coox 2, 80, 81, 82, 83) Coox also recounts more of Liushkov's information about real military conspiracies in the Far East:

Lyushkov's opinion that, with respect to the situation of the Red Army in Siberia, the influence of the 'anti'-group was great and discontent was pent up in the military. (Coox 2, 73)

Perhaps of most interest to historians of the USSR generally, as well as to our present study, is Liushkov's outline of the various conspiracies that existed within the Soviet military.

Within the Soviet armed forces, elements hostile to the regime existed, universally hostile to Stalin but nurturing differing objectives. One group of commanders had been sincerely loyal to Trotsky; for example, V. K. Putna, V. M. Primakov, and others working in his favor. Another group of Soviet commanders of Polish, German, Lettish, and similar minority backgrounds were disappointed with the course of communism and had resurrected historic feelings; for example, A. I. Kork and R. P. Eideman. Still another grouping of commanders had served in the Tsarist Army, favored a military putsch, and had been prepared to cooperate with any other groups; e.g. Tukhachevsky, I. P. Uborevich, N. D. Kashirin, V. M. Orlov, etc. Others who were hostile to the regime and ready to work in opposition had included Gamarnik, LY. Yakir, Sangurski, Aronshtam, P.E. Dybenko, N. V. Kuibyshev, I. P. Belov, and M. K. Levandovsky. (Coox 2, 85)

This account shows some similarities to the description of the different groups of military conspirators that Ezhov gave after his arrest at his interrogation of April 26, 1939:

After three or four days Egorov came to my place again and this time told me in detail about the existence in the WPRA<sup>145</sup> of a group of

conspirators consisting of important military men and headed by himself, Egorov.

<sup>145</sup> *Roboche-Krest'ianskaia Krasnaia Armia*, "Workers and Peasants Red Army."

Egorov further gave me the names of the participants of the conspiratorial group that he led: Budiennyi, Dybenko, Shaposhnikov, Kashirin, Fed'ko, the commander of the Transbaikal military district, and a number of other important commanders whose names I will remember and give in a supplement.

Further Egorov said that in the WPRA there exist two more groups competing with each other: the Trotskyist group of Gamarnik, Iakir and Uborevich, and the officer-Bonapartist group of Tukhachevsky.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>146</sup> I have put an English translation of the complete text of Ezhov's confession of April 26, 1939 online at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhov042639eng.html> The Russia original is also online at my site at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhovru.html>

Ezhov called the Gamarnik-Iakir group "Trotskyist". Putna and Primakov had been closely connected to Trotsky in the 1920s. Ezhov's "Bonapartist" group headed by Tukhachevsky corresponds to Liushkov's group that had been Tsarist officers and "favored a military putsch." Of interest as well is that both Liushkov and Ezhov described Marshal Semion Budiennyi as a conspirator. Liushkov informed the Japanese as follows:

What was happening to Blyukher was happening to others at the top of the army. Thus Marshal S. M. Budennyi's difficulties were caused by his playing with various plotters. (Coox 2, 85)

In this second article Coox confirms that Liushkov was working "on anti-Stalinist strategy and propaganda" in late 1938. (Coox 2, 92)

### **The Importance of Liushkov's Testimony**

Lenoe correctly notes that Liushkov had inside knowledge of the investigation of the Kirov assassination. He could have added: of the investigation of Zinov'ev and Kamenev, and of the Far Eastern Region as well. Lenoe also writes:

Moreover, Liushkov gave his evidence outside the Soviet Union, free from the dictates of the party line, and under the protection of the Japanese military police (after World War II Japanese officers who worked with Liushkov testified that he did fear a Soviet assassination attempt. (687)

Lenoe also draws upon Coox's important articles, to which he refers repeatedly (687 and 808 nn. 11, 13, 16 17 and 18). Lenoe correctly points out that Liushkov's testimony about NKVD operations is consistent with other sources; that he told the truth about his private meeting with Stalin; that Liushkov's estimate of the numbers of arrests and executions is in line with what recent research has disclosed. (687-688)

But Lenoe neglects to mention the important information in Coox's article outlined above, although he obviously knew about it. Liushkov's confirmation to the Japanese of the existence of a number of important conspiracies, plus the knowledge that he deliberately concealed their existence in his public writings, undermines Lenoe's hypothesis about the Kirov case and the other conspiracies and trials of the 1930s.

To summarize:

- Coox showed that there is a big contradiction between what Liushkov said in his news conference and published articles, and what he privately told the Japanese.
- Liushkov informed the Japanese that real conspiracies did exist and were widespread in the USSR.
- Coox pointed out that Liushkov was explicitly working for Japanese military propaganda.
- Liushkov inculpated many of the military figures tried and executed as conspirators.
- Liushkov explicitly implicated Rykov. He told the Japanese:

For a long time Deribas had been in contact with Rykov and was the latter's 'hidden conspirator.' (Coox 1, 156)

Blyukher told Gulin that before the removal of Rykov he was in connection with rum and had often written that the 'right wing' wished to see rum at the head of the armed forces of the country. (Coox 1, 158)

These statements are broadly consistent with testimony at the March 1938 Moscow Trial, at which Rykov was a defendant. Rykov, Bukharin and others testified there about their contacts with conspirators in Siberia.

We also now have a few selections of interrogations of Bliukher in 1938. In one of them Bliukher explicitly mentions a letter from Rykov that stated exactly what Liushkov said.

The beginning of my contact with the Rights took place in 1930... These political waverings and unsteadiness of mine became known to Rykov and permitted Rykov in 1930 to write to me an anti-Party and anti-Soviet letter, **which I hid from the Party, and in which he spoke of his desire to see me at the head of the military...**<sup>147</sup>

<sup>147</sup> Nikolai Velikanov. *Izmena Marshalov*. M.: Algoritm, 2008. Interrogation of Bliukher of November 6, 1938, p. 343. Emphasis added, GF.

This agrees with Coox's account of what his Japanese informants told him about Liushkov's words, already quoted above:

Blyukher told Gulin that before the removal of Rykov he was in connection with him and **had often written that the 'right wing' wished to see him at the head of the armed forces of the country.** (Coox 1, 158, emphasis added, GF)

Other snippets of interrogations of Bliukher implicate Deribas, Lavrent'ev, Pokus, Aronshtam, and other figures whom Liushkov identified as participants in the military conspiracy in the Far East. Liushkov's statements to the Japanese confirm them. By the same token, Liushkov's statements to

the Japanese refute the notion that these statements were false, the result of torture, threat, or simple NKVD fabrication.

### **Lenoe's Hypothesis Refuted**

Lenoe wrote that Liushkov's testimony "is in fact the most important in the case". (687) We can now see that Lenoe's statement, in the form he meant it, is false — as referring to Liushkov's statements at the July 1938 press conference and his March 1939 *Kaizo* article. Ironically, however, Lenoe's statement is true — but in a sense Lenoe did not intend. For the information Liushkov gave privately about the conspiracies to the Japanese military was indeed given "outside the Soviet Union, free from the dictates of the party line, and under the protection of the Japanese military police", as Lenoe stated.

Someone might object to this conclusion on the following grounds:

"Thanks to Coox we know that Liushkov lied when he stated in pages 118-119 of his *Kaizo* article, quoted above, that "no conspiracy did or could exist." We know that because he privately informed the Japanese that serious conspiracies did indeed exist. So we know Liushkov lied about those conspiracies about which he told the Japanese.

But Coox does not cite any evidence that Liushkov spoke to the Japanese privately about the Kirov assassination. Coox only records what Liushkov said publicly about the Kirov assassination, and publicly he said it was a frameup and that only Nikolaev was guilty (and, in an accessory capacity, perhaps Shatsky).

No liar lies all the time. Any skilled liar must interweave his real lies with some truth, in order for the lies to be credible.

Therefore it is possible that Liushkov, while lying about the other conspiracies, was telling the truth about the Kirov assassination in asserting that it was a frameup, though the other conspiracies which he also called frameups really were not."

To such an objection I would reply as follows: it is a principle of logic and of historiography that one can draw no conclusion *e silentio* — in this case, from Liushkov's silence.<sup>148</sup> The fact that, as far as Coox (and we) know, Liushkov *did not* tell the Japanese privately that the Kirov defendants (except for Nikolaev and Shatsky) were falsely accused or "framed" does not permit us to say anything about what he might have told them.

<sup>148</sup> See, for example, the Wikipedia page:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argumentum\\_e\\_silentio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argumentum_e_silentio)

It's easy to imagine why Liushkov might well not have discussed this subject with the Japanese. They were military men, not historians. They were vitally interested in opposition movements against the Stalin regime and especially within the military. They would have had little interest in purely civilian conspiracies that had taken place years before. So either Liushkov did not tell them privately about the Kirov assassination, or they did not pay much attention and did not remember it when they spoke with Coox many years later.

But Liushkov confirmed to the Japanese that Rykov was a participant in the anti-Soviet conspiracy. One of Liushkov's two statements about Rykov agrees very closely with a statement in Marshal Bliukher's confession. Therefore, Liushkov's statements about Rykov partially corroborate not only Bliukher's confession but some of the testimony at the March 1938 Moscow trial. Lenoë failed to inform his readers about this very important information.

As we have shown in another chapter, Lenoë makes an attempt to dismiss the major testimony concerning the Kirov assassination made at this trial — that of Iagoda — and gets it wrong. Lenoë refuses to examine other evidence from the 1938 Moscow Trial. Likewise, he avoids any examination of the evidence given at the 1936 and 1937 Moscow Trials.

Therefore, Liushkov's failure to mention the Kirov assassination privately to the Japanese throws us back on the other evidence we have, and which we examine in other sections of the present study. Ironically, however, Lenoë's claim that Liushkov's testimony "is in fact the most important in the case" is true — but only if we "turn it around", apply it not to what



Liushkov said or wrote publicly, as Lenoe does, but to Liushkov's private statements to the Japanese.

In his remarks about the military purge and particularly about Tukhachevskii's involvement in it, and about Rykov's role in the Right-Trotskyite conspiracy Liushkov provides us with something very rare. He gives us evidence from outside the Soviet Union that confirms the existence of real anti-Stalin and anti-Soviet conspiracies and the guilt of Rykov and Tukhachevskii.

But Rykov and Tukhachevskii implicated all the other major figures in the network of interlocking conspiracies alleged in the three public Moscow Trials and the Tukhachevsky Affair. In this way Liushkov's statements to the Japanese constitute strong evidence not only that the 1938 Moscow Trial was not a fabrication but that the previous Moscow Trials were not fabrications either.

At the 1938 trial Genrikh Iagoda testified about his role in the Kirov assassination and the conspiracy surrounding it. Iagoda testified about it in even more detail in pretrial interrogations first published in 1997. In confirming a number of the essential charges made in the 1938 trial Liushkov did indeed provide us with the strongest evidence we now have about the Kirov assassination: that it was carried out not, as Lenoe, Kirilina, and others would have it, by a "lone gunman", but as outlined in the Moscow trials. What Liushkov told the Japanese corroborates a huge amount of other evidence we have that Kirov was indeed murdered as the result of a conspiracy.

Lenoe himself reveals the basic flaws in his approach to the Kirov assassination. He comments that

Liushkov confirms entirely the picture of the crime that emerges from documents of the 1934-1935 investigation (discounting of course the Stalinist accusations against the Zinovievites). (688)

Again, this statement is true — and again ironically, in precisely the opposite sense from what Lenoe intends. Lenoe misreads the evidence we have and that he cites and then claims that it proves the defendants (other

than Nikolaev himself) were "framed." Elsewhere in this study we have shown that in fact there is no evidence that Nikolaev acted alone or that any of the defendants was "framed", and a great deal of evidence to the contrary. Far from shaking that conclusion, Liushkov's statements to the Japanese corroborate it.

Lenoe also states:

Liushkov knew nothing of any conspiracy to murder Kirov. His evidence invalidates the Yagoda-Zaporozhets version of the killing put forward at the March 1938 show trial. (688)

Here too Lenoe is entirely mistaken. Liushkov's public statement and articles were anti-Soviet propaganda. But Liushkov directly contradicted his *public* statements in his *private* statements to the Japanese. In his private statements Liushkov confirms some of the accusations and confessions made at the Moscow Trials — not only the March 1938 trial but, indirectly, at others as well.

We don't know why Lenoe did not inform his readers of this vital evidence. What are the alternatives to the hypothesis that Lenoe realized all this and deliberately deceived his readers by hiding it from them? If we set aside the hypothesis that Lenoe deliberately lied, then we are forced to conclude that he did not understand Coox's articles at all; that he failed to read them properly. At best Lenoe has once again committed some serious errors in his assessment of the evidence provided about Liushkov by the full text of the March 1939 *Kaizo* article and Coox's research. As we demonstrate in the present study Lenoe made similar errors throughout his book.

How could this have happened? I can think of only two explanations. Lenoe may not have read the whole of the *Kaizo* article. He may have studied only that part that is translated in his book, that deals directly with the Kirov assassination. Certainly he shows no evidence that he has read the rest of it!

But even if that be so, I believe that another explanation is more probable: that Lenoe never really set out to investigate the Kirov murder objectively in the first place. Acting under the influence of what is acceptable to "mainstream" anticommunist Soviet historiography Lenoe began with the

preconceived idea that it must be a frameup. Lenoë confined his attention to the only real question in his book, and probably in his own mind: "Did Stalin mastermind Kirov's assassination, or did he simply make opportunistic use of it to frame real or imagined political enemies?"

Since there is no evidence that Stalin was behind Kirov's assassination Lenoë draws the latter conclusion: "[H]e used it." (689) Lenoë never really considers the hypothesis which is supported by not most, but *all* of the evidence we possess: that the Kirov assassination was carried out by conspirators much as was gradually revealed in the Kirov investigation and the subsequent Moscow Trials of 1936, 1937 and 1938.

Lenoë was determined from the start to see only what he wanted to see. If we discount deliberate falsification on Lenoë's part, this is the only explanation consistent with his reasoning and conclusions.

## Chapter 18. *Enukidze and the "Lone Gunman" Story*

Long thought to have an obvious solution, the Kirov murder has been made into a mystery which half a dozen Soviet commissions and a considerable number of professional scholars have endeavored to "solve". The "mystery" was created when Khrushchev and his people made the decision to reject the validity of the December 1934 trial of the Kirov defendants and of all the subsequent trials of oppositionists. Since Khrushchev's day only two hypotheses have been entertained by politicians and scholars alike. One was that Stalin had had Kirov killed; the other, that Nikolaev acted alone, for personal reasons.

The original conclusion — that Kirov was murdered by decision of a bloc of oppositionist groups — was long ago "ruled out of bounds", considered unfit for serious consideration. But it is the only conclusion that satisfies the evidence. Nevertheless, it is not acceptable to most researchers, just as it was unacceptable to the Khrushchev and Gorbachev regimes and remains unacceptable to the Russian government today. This conclusion is routinely, almost reflexively, dismissed — but not on evidentiary grounds. We believe it is dismissed because it disrupts, in fact refutes, the prevailing paradigm of Soviet history during the Stalin period.

Any honest study of the Kirov murder has at least two tasks. First, it must solve the Kirov murder in a manner that satisfies all the evidence available at the time. Second, it must consider the implications of its solution for our understanding of Soviet history after 1934. That is what we shall try to do in this and the concluding chapters.

There can be no doubt that Kirov was murdered by Leonid Nikolaev acting on behalf of a conspiracy by a clandestine illegal Zinovievite organization. We have a large amount of evidence supporting this conclusion, while no evidence whatever supports any other conclusion. This is the more striking since the Russian government continues to withhold much of the relevant evidence, though we do not know how much. It is hardly possible that they would have wanted to withhold any evidence that would point towards Nikolaev's having been a "lone gunman". That is the official viewpoint of

the Russian government and its predecessor, the Gorbachev-led Soviet government.

It was also the official position of the Khrushchev regime. Khrushchev's men devoted the work of several commissions and, one must suppose, of many researchers and archivists, to finding some other explanation of the Kirov assassination than the original "Stalinist" one. The Khrushchev, Gorbachev, and Russian regimes would have widely publicized any evidence that supported either the version that Khrushchev originally tried to support — that Stalin masterminded Kirov's murder — or the "lone gunman" conclusion. Any evidence that supported either of these scenarios would surely have been made public in Khrushchev's or in Gorbachev's time. But there is none.

Likewise there is no evidence to dispute the conclusion that Nikolaev was indeed the instrument of a Zinovievite conspiracy. There is no evidence of a "frameup" of innocent men. Lenoe tries twice to make a case for such a frameup. He suggests that Nikolaev confessed to being part of a conspiracy, and that some of the others made similar confessions, due to compulsion of some kind: threats, promises, and/ or torture. Lenoe does not explicitly test, much less abandon, this hypothesis. But he is unable to cite any evidence whatsoever in support of it.

Lenoe also claims that Stalin gave an order to "target the Zinovievites", thus ordering his NKVD men to frame them. We have examined the evidence Lenoe puts forward in support of both of these "frameup" hypotheses. In each case the supposed evidence cannot withstand any critical scrutiny. Both of Lenoe's hypotheses utterly fail the evidentiary test.

### **The "Lone Gunman" Version**

The only evidence for the "lone gunman" hypothesis is the early interrogations of Nikolaev. As we have demonstrated in this study, we do not have a reliable text of Nikolaev's first confession. Nor do we have a complete text of any subsequent confession by Nikolaev. From the evidence now available we can tell that by December 4 Nikolaev had already begun to abandon his claim that he acted completely alone. In a passage Lenoe

excised from his partial translation of the Prosecutor's indictment, by the middle of December Nikolaev was confessing that his early claim to have acted alone had been worked out in advance in order to shield his confederates.

But even if we did have reliable texts of Nikolaev's early confessions, and even if in them Nikolaev did claim to have acted completely on his own as the "lone gunman" hypothesis demands, that evidence would fail in the face of his subsequent confessions. Nikolaev tried to kill himself within seconds of killing Kirov. This means that in effect Nikolaev's plan was to assume sole responsibility for Kirov's murder. Such a hypothesis would also explain his wife Mil'da Draule's initial statements. They would have served as well or better if Nikolaev had been dead by his own hand. When Nikolaev failed to kill himself he at first tried to adhere to his original plan of shielding his fellow conspirators. He seems to have suffered some kind of temporary breakdown or anxiety attack. This is understandable — he had not expected to be in this situation and was unprepared for it. Nikolaev then began to insist that he had acted alone. But his story quickly broke down after only a few days.

We have demonstrated in this study that the text of Nikolaev's first confession is in doubt. Two versions have been published: one by Kirilina, the second by Lenoe, and they contain important differences. This first confession of Nikolaev's is the main evidence that supports the "lone gunman" hypothesis, which Lenoe shares with Kirilina. Lenoe does not mention these differences, although he wrote after Kirilina and acknowledges his debt to her study. Whatever the reason for this omission of Lenoe's, the doubtful nature of this first confession undermines one of the only two pieces of evidence that support the hypothesis that Nikolaev acted alone.

Nikolaev was the first to claim that he had acted alone, though he abandoned this story within days of the murder. The NKVD never believed him and they were proven correct. But the "lone gunman" hypothesis continued to circulate.

**Avel' Enukidze**

According to a document partially printed by Lenoë that purports to be the report of an NKVD man of September 1936 but concerning events of December 1934 and January 1935, Avel' Enukidze, secretary of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee, the highest executive body of the Soviet state, spread the story that Kirov was killed by Nikolaev because Kirov had been "courting" Nikolaev's wife. (502-503) The anonymous NKVD informant was right to think this behavior on Enukidze's part was more than strange. Enukidze would have had access to high-level, inside knowledge about the investigation. He would have known at least as much as, and almost certainly much more than, we do today.

There is no evidence for the story that Enukidze was spreading. If any existed, we would know about it — the Khrushchev and Gorbachev commissions searched very hard for exactly this kind of evidence. Therefore Enukidze's version came from somewhere other than suppressed evidence, and certainly other than the evidence available to NKVD investigators and high-level Party members. We have good reason to believe that it formed part of the plot from the beginning. Nikolaev had tried to commit suicide immediately after shooting Kirov, but later confessed that he had a plan to claim that he was the "lone gunman" in order to shield, his confederates. Enukidze had participated in the decision of the conspiracy center to authorize Kirov's assassination. Like Iagoda, Enukidze had agreed only reluctantly. Claiming it was an individual act could have been one way of trying to limit the investigation so that it would not lead to the discovery of, first, the Leningrad Zinovievite group, and then, gradually, all the other conspiracies related to it. This is the only explanation for Enukidze's version that makes sense. It is also consistent with what Iagoda told NKVD investigators in 1937.

The "lone gunman" theory was spread by rumor through the Kremlin library among persons to whom Enukidze had access. On March 1, 1935

P.I. Gordeeva, senior librarian, was interrogated concerning rumors he and others had been spreading.

Question: Who told you the slander connected with the murder of com. KIROV?

Answer: After the publication of the first government communication about the murder of com. KIROV the secretary of the consultative part of the secretariat of the CEC Vera Aleksandrovna EL'CHANINOVA, member of the Komsomol, came to me in the library. She told me that the murder of com. KIROV had no political character but was the result of personal revenge. EL'CHANINOVA explained that the information transmitted to her was trustworthy and was being kept in the greatest secrecy...

Question: What kinds of conversations connected with the murder of com. KIROV were there in the government library?

Answer: Among the library staff there was talk that the murder of com. KIROV was completely a matter of personal accounts...

Question: Which precisely of the library staff were spreading provocational fabrications about the murder of com. KIROV?

Answer: KONOVA told me that among the library staff there were conversations of this kind but she did not name the persons. I personally observed that ROZENFEL'D and RAEVSKAIA were gloating over the murder of com. KIROV.

Question: How, concretely, did this express itself?

Answer: The whole period of time from the moment of the murder of com. KIROV till the publication of the announcement of the uncovering of the "Leningrad center" of the Zinovievite organization ROZENFEL'D was in a very upbeat and joyful state, one that was normally quite uncharacteristic of her. ROZENFEL'D was always whispering with BURAGO and DAVIDOVA, and they, right after a talk with ROZENFEL'D went off to NELIDOVA and PETROVA, the staff members who give out the books. But after the publication of the announcement about the uncovering of the "Leningrad center" ROZENFEL'D's mood changed sharply and her former joy and upbeat demeanor disappeared.

- Lubianka 1922-1936, 618-619.



On March 8, 1935 K.K. Mukhanov was interrogated. His sister, Ekaterina K. Mukhanova, an employee of the government library, had been arrested in connection with the investigation of a terrorist conspiracy that later became known as the "Kremlin Affair."

Question: What did Ekaterina tell you about the murder of com. KIROV?

Answer: Ekaterina did not say anything about this to me. Someone told me that the murder of KIROV was done by NIKOLAEV for personal reason and that it had no political character. I can't remember from whom I heard this.

[...]

Question: Your sister Ekaterina MUKHAKOVA has systematically expressed counterrevolutionary views. Tell the investigation everything you know about this.

Answer: I admit that my sister Ekaterina MUKHANOVA is a supporter of the bourgeois system and in conversations with me has consistently expressed anti-Soviet views, and has shown a hostile attitude towards Soviet power.

As far as the politics of Soviet power, E. MUKHANOVA has stated that collectivization is leading to hunger and the dying out of the peasantry, to the doom of agriculture, that the intelligentsia who have no special knowledge is fated to a pauper's existence, and a part of the engineering and technical intelligentsia are being thrown into prison despite their innocence.

Arguing that Soviet power is having recourse to massive terror against the peasantry and intelligentsia MUKHANOVA has declared that the majority of the population, mainly the peasantry and also a part of the workers, are hostile towards Soviet power and in the event of a war not only will not defend this power but will come out against it with weapons in hand and will organize uprisings in the rear of the Red Army.

In the period 1931-33 MUKHANOVA stated that the policy of the Soviet power was directed against the interests of the overwhelming majority of the population and drew from this the conclusion that the country is going to its ruin.

- Lubyanka 1922-1936, 627.

On March 11, 1935 the NKVD interrogated B.N. Rozenfel'd, a nephew of Lev B. Kamenev (his brother's son). A 19-year old in 1927, Rozenfel'd had been expelled from the Komsomol for belonging to the Trotskyite opposition. His mother N.A. Rozenfel'd had already been arrested in connection with the "Kremlin Affair." He was questioned about the Kirov assassination.

Question: Did you know F.I. MUZYKA, the secretary of L.B. Kamenev?

Answer: I know him. N .B. ROZENFEL'D [his father] has often spoken about him as a person with whom he has good relations. The last time I saw MUZYKA after the murder of com. Kirov, was at the high-pressure hot water power plant, where he was doing his practicum and I was working as an engineer. MUZYKA told me Kamenev and Zinoviev were being hounded, pointing to an article in Pravda. I answered him that the murder of Kirov was a suitable excuse for Stalin to organize the hounding against Zinoviev and Kamenev. He agreed with me.

[...]

Answer: I remember that N .B. ROZENFEL'D told me that MUZYKA was a desperate man and is capable of extreme actions when in an excited state.

Question: What was the context in which N.B. ROZENFEL'D said to you that MUZYKA is capable of extreme actions?

Answer: I was telling N.B. ROZENFEL'D about my talk with MUZYKA and expressed the conjecture that MUZYKA would be

arrested. I said this because MUZYKA was informed about Kamenev's counterrevolutionary activity. From my father's statement about MUZYKA's personal "qualities" it became clear to me that he was a terrorist by conviction.

- Lubyanka 1922-1936, 630.

Young Rozenfel'd had more to say about terrorist conspiracies.

Question: At the interrogation of March 2 you confessed that M.V. KOROL'KOV took part in counterrevolutionary conversations that took place in your apartment. What more do you know about this?

Answer: We cannot speak about M.V. KOROL'KOV only in connection with counterrevolutionary conversations at our apartment.

In reality the situation is as follows:

M.V. KOROL'KOV is a hard-core counterrevolutionary and has close relations with M.N. PROKHOROV, who owned some kind of business before the revolution and is a notorious Black Hundreds and White Guardsman; with POPOV, the son of a tea merchant; with V.I. INKIZHIKOV, a film actor who has fled the country. Since we were aware of KOROL'KOV'S political feelings we had complete confidence in him.

KOROL'KOV shared the terrorist views of N.B. and N.A. ROZENFEL'D [i.e. his own father and mother], of MUKHANOV, and my own.

- Lubyanka 1922-1936, 631.

On the same day, March 11, 1935, the aforementioned M.V. Korol'kov was interrogated as well. He was questioned not only about the rumors concerning Kirov's assassination but also about the other terrorist views and plans that had emerged as a result of the investigation. Like all of those in the "Kremlin Affair" the whole interrogation is of interest. We will just quote those passages that illustrate how investigation of the rumors that

Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" who killed Kirov for personal reasons also led to uncovering other conspiracies.

Question: What slanderous rumors did N.A. ROZENFEL'D spread about the leaders of the Party and government and who took part with her in the spreading of these rumors?

Answer: N.A. ROZENFEL'D said in my presence and in that of my wife that ALLILUEVA died an unnatural death and that STALIN was responsible for her death.

She told us also that the men who occupy high positions have mistresses.

About com. KIROV she said that he was killed for personal reasons, because of NIKOLAEV'S wife, and that NIKOLAEV'S wife, in her words, is a beauty who after KIROV'S murder remained living in Leningrad and was not repressed. I also heard from N .A. ROZENFEL'D and from N.B. ROZENFEL'D that the latter likes to draw counterrevolutionary lampoons of com. STALIN, among other lampoons, in a Zinovievite-Trotskyite spirit.

Question: You have confessed that the ROZENFEL'DS carried out counterrevolutionary work and were preparing the murder of com. STALIN. Do you confess to being their accomplice?

Answer: I was not their accomplice, but I admit that I am guilty in that I did not inform the organs of power that the ROZENFEL'DS have a very counterrevolutionary attitude and hate STALIN to the extent that they raise the question of his murder.

- Lubyanka 1922-1936, 635.

On March 17, 1935 I.V. Bol'shikh was interrogated. She had been working as a supervisor in the Secretariat of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR — that is, directly under Enukidze, who was Secretary of the Presidium of the CEC. In addition to much else of interest

she also repeated the "Enukidze" rumor concerning Kirov and Nikolaev's wife.

Question: What counterrevolutionary slander were you spreading?

Answer: Right after the murder of S.M. KIROV, F.C. AGRANOVICH told me that the murder was carried out by NIKOLAEV for personal reasons, since KIROV had been close to NIKOLAEV'S wife, and the latter killed him out of jealousy, but the government announcement was untrue.

Question: To whom did you pass on this slander?

Answer: I passed this slander on to my sister Elena Vasil'evna KUR'EVA, who as I have already stated, works in the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR [i.e. for the executive branch of the government of the Russian Republic — GF]

Question: You are not telling us everything. The investigation insists that you say everything connected with the spreading by you of slander against the leadership of the AUCP(b).

Answer: I have not told you everything. I do not remember from whom among the employees of the Kremlin I heard that N.S. ALLILUEVA supposedly died an unnatural death, and committed suicide because STALIN drove her to it. I told F.C. AGRANOVICH and my sister Elena about this.

- Lubyanka 1922-1936, 648.

As the chief of the CEC Enukidze was a likely source for this rumor, all the more since we know, thanks to the NKVD report that Lenoë cites, he was saying the same thing at the same time, in December 1934.

On March 20, 1935 Lev B. Kamenev, the former member of the Politburo and ally of Grigory Zinoviev's, was interrogated. Among other matters the investigators inquired about the fact that his brother, N.B. Rozenfel'd, had confessed to involvement in a plot to assassinate Stalin. Kamenev denied

knowing about any such plot but admitted that Rozenfel'd had been present during some "counterrevolutionary talks" he, Kamenev, had had with Zinoviev, during which Zinoviev had said that he approved of some of the views about the Party and the situation in the country expressed by Trotsky in his *Bulletin of the Opposition*.

Question: Your brother, N.B. ROZENFEL'D, has been arrested by us for terrorist activity. During the investigation he has admitted that he took part in preparation to murder com. STALIN, and confessed that his terrorist intentions were formed under your influence.

What can you tell us about this matter?

Answer: I did not know that N.B. ROZENFEL'D took part in the preparation to murder STALIN.

ROZENFEL'D has been at my home from time to time, and I have helped him materially. While at my home he was present at conversations that took place at my apartment and at my dacha at Il'inskoe. These conversations were mainly with ZINOVIEV. In these conversations with ZINOVIEV we criticized the activities of the Party, the Central Committee, and permitted ourselves attacks on STALIN. At different times, with more or less sharpness, we talked with ZINOVIEV about our situation and expressed the conviction that we will not be permitted to return to active political life. In a few cases we reacted to the hopelessness of our situation with hostile attacks on STALIN.

The counterrevolutionary conversations that we had with ZINOVIEV in the presence of N.B. ROZENFEL'D caused the latter to become an enemy of Soviet power and of the Party and incited in him bitterness against STALIN. I concede that N.B. ROZENFEL'D, who was embittered by my exile to Minusinsk and reacted to this in an extremely painful manner, affected by the counterrevolutionary conversations that I later had with ZINOVIEV, in particular about STALIN, could have extended to terrorist intentions.

Question: What talks did you have with ZINOVIEV in connection with the counterrevolutionary documents published by Trotsky abroad?

Answer: ZINOVIEV has become familiar with the so-called bulletins of the opposition at the Lenin Institute. He informed me about the contents of these counterrevolutionary documents of Trotsky's and has expressed his positive attitude towards certain questions of the evaluation by Trotsky of the situation in the Party and in the USSR. I did not protest to ZINOVIEV and did not tell anyone about his counterrevolutionary views on this question right up to my arrest.

- Lubyanka 1922-1936, 649-650.

On May 12 Kamenev was bound over for trial on the grounds that he was an organizer of the plot to kill Stalin. Genrikh Iagoda, head of the NKVD, recommended that N.A. and N.B. Rozenfel'd, his sister-in-law and brother, be sentenced to 10 years in prison. Iagoda also recommended that six persons in this case be sentenced to death. On July 17, 1935 the Politburo reduced the sentence of five of the six and recommended that Kamenev be resentenced to 10 years in prison instead of the five years he had been sentenced to at the January 1935 trial. (Lubyanka 1922-1936, 681)

No. 535

DECREE OF THE POLITBURO OF THE CC AUCP(b)

CONCERNING THE MEASURES OF PUNISHMENT IN THE  
KREMLIN CASE

17 July 1935

No. 30, p. 82 — Matter for the NKVD.

[...]

6. L.B. Kamenev — sentence to 10 years in prison.

(Lubyanka 1922-1936, 681)

This represents a lessening of Iagoda's recommendation as well, since Iagoda had recommended that Kamenev stand trial on a capital offense that could have brought the death penalty.<sup>149</sup>

<sup>149</sup> According to Zhukov (p. 105) the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court sentenced two people, Sinelobov and Cherniavskii, to death. Zhukov states that this was down from 25, though I can't find the document he refers to.

Enukidze's insistence on spreading the rumor that Lenoë had acted alone out of personal motives appears to have been a futile attempt to deflect attention away from the search for a conspiracy. According to Iagoda's testimony both he and Enukidze had opposed the assassination from the beginning on the sensible grounds that it would endanger both the conspiracy itself and Iagoda's position as head of the NKVD and thus the person ultimately responsible for organizing protection for Party leaders like Kirov. But the united leadership of the conspiracy voted to go ahead with the assassination anyway.

Though Iagoda does not say so in those interrogations of his which have now been published there must have been a decision to portray the assassination as a lone act. An assassin had to be found who was dedicated enough to kill Kirov and then immediately kill himself. Under those circumstances the hypothesis of a "lone gunman" acting from personal motives would have been a plausible one. At the very least it would have been difficult to disprove, had Nikolaev's suicide attempt been successful.

During the first few days after the murder Nikolaev attempted to portray himself in just that way. But the "lone gunman" story quickly broke down under interrogation. Enukidze must have known about this. But the evidence cited by Lenoë shows that he refused to adopt the official, and quite correct, version of a conspiracy (Lenoë 502-505). This was bound to appear suspicious, and it would have been natural for the NKVD to wonder why one of the highest political figures in the land and a longtime comrade and friend of Stalin's would be behaving that way. Moreover, it seems to have led directly to the "Kremlin Affair", which in turn pointed the way to a gradual unraveling of the entire conspiracy. One consequence was that



Enukidze lost control over the Kremlin guard — the force that was to be used to kill or arrest the Party leadership in what the conspirators called the "palace coup" plan.

In 2000 Russian historian IUrii N. Zhukov published the only serious study devoted to the Kremlin Affair that has yet appeared. Zhukov had access to archival documents that have still not been declassified. His conclusion is that, on the evidence, the "Kremlin Affair" was not a fabrication, but the uncovering of a real conspiracy.

Therefore, at the present time — until there is a substantial widening of the evidentiary base, until the declassification of the materials in the Central Archive of the FSB, we just consider the following to be beyond doubt. Of all the possible hypotheses that can be formulated to explain both the "Kremlin Affair" and the Enukidze case, the only one that can account for all the known facts without exception is that which assumes that the conspiracy against Stalin and his group really existed.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>150</sup> IU. N. Zhukov, "Tainy 'Kremlevskogo dela' 1935 goda i sud'ba Avelia Enukidze" (The Secrets of the 'Kremlin Affair' of 1935 and the fate of Avel' Enukidze). *Voprosy Istorii* No. 9 (2000), 83-113, at p. 109.

## **Evidence**

Zhukov cites powerful evidence in support of his hypothesis, and all of it is circumstantial. In this connection Zhukov has some important things to say about evidence generally that is relevant to our purposes.

It goes without saying that in this hypothesis the lack of evidence should make us wary — either direct or indirect evidence, but indisputable evidence. And for this we must decide the question as to whether evidence is to be expected in general in such cases. Could such evidence be found in the investigation of the "Kremlin affair" and if so, what kind of evidence? Plans for the arrest of the members of the "narrow leadership"? A list of the future Politburo and government, or something similar. Or lists of conspirators, perhaps confirmed by their

signatures? Or, perhaps, declarations, decrees, orders intended for publication immediately after the seizure of power and prepared in advance? **Hardly, because any normal conspirator who was also preparing a *coup d'état* would do everything possible to be certain that no evidence of this kind existed.**

It would be just as futile to hope to find while searching the homes of the conspirators, let us say, plans of the Kremlin, on which were noted the apartments and offices of Stalin, Molotov, and others, the routes of their usual walks. The conspirators — if they were indeed such — would not need them either. Both Peterson and Enukidze, who had lived and worked in the Kremlin, would have long known these things.

We could not expect to find evidence of any other kind that definitively reflected the criminal plots that have been uncovered. Unless the conspirators suffered from dementia, they would never commit their plans to paper. Everything, absolutely everything, would be only in their heads. (Zhukov 110-111; emphasis added GF)

Zhukov cites an example of the kind of evidence that he finds convincing and reasonable to expect.

Now let us consider an alternative hypothesis, the most paradoxical one. Let us suppose that the conspiracy really existed. Are there any facts to confirm this? Yes, although they appeared only two years later, and also are of a very specific and unconvincing character — only confessions of suspects at interrogation. On the day of the arrests of Enukidze, February 11 [1937] in Khar'kov, and of Peterson, April 27 [1937] in Kiev they gave to different investigators confessions of guilt that are identical down to the details. They related how they were preparing a coup and the arrest or murder in the Kremlin of Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov and Ordzhonikidze.<sup>151</sup> (108)

<sup>151</sup> Zhukov has discussed these specific confessions and the conclusions he draws from them in more detail in a meeting with Vladimir L. Bobrov on December 6 2002. (Email letter LETTER\_V3o.doc, rec'd 1208.02 doc from Vladimir L. Bobrov to Grover Furr.)

Zhukov goes on to cite pretrial confessions by Iagoda published in 1997 in the same collection we have used earlier in the present study.

## Chapter 19. *Osmund Egge*

In December 2011, after the present book was largely completed and being translated into Russian, I learned about a book on the Kirov murder that had just appeared in Russia. "Zagadka Kirova: ubiystvo, raz viazavshee stalinskii terror" (The Kirov Mystery: the Murder that Unleashed Stalin's Terror) is a translation into Russian of the book *Kirov-gåten. Mordet som utløste Stalins terror*, published in 2009 in Norwegian by University of Oslo professor Åsmund Egge (in Russian: "Osmund Egge"). Son of the former prominent Norwegian communist and anti-Nazi resistance fighter Ørnulf Egge, Åsmund Egge was himself a prominent communist and then leftist for many years, before resigning and then becoming a professor.

Egge's book is published by the ROSSPEN publishing house, in its series "The History of Stalinism" (*Istoriia Stalinizma*). This series of what is to be 100 books was launched in order to combat the popularity of Stalin among the Russian population and is funded by the Boris N. Eltsin foundation.<sup>152</sup> Only anti-Stalin and anticommunist books are considered for this prestigious series. Under such conditions, when historical works have to conform to a certain tendentious paradigm instead of the discovery of the truth, historical objectivity is impossible. Rather than history, such works are "propaganda with footnotes". Sadly, Egge's book is no exception.

In this study we use the Russian translation of Egge's book. Egge certainly scrutinized it so we can be sure it reflects what he thinks. Not many people read Norwegian, the language Egge wrote his book in — and we cannot read it either, or at least not well. Surely the vast majority of people who read Egge's book at all will read it in Russian.

<sup>152</sup> See the series description at the ROSSPEN page <http://www.rosspen.su/ru/catalog/.list/id/56/>

There are a few things of interest in Egge's book -not in his conclusions, but surrounding his research. Egge's main archival sources are from Fond 617 of the Russian State Archiv of Social-Political History, or RGASPI. This is

Nikolai Ezhov's fond (archival collection) and much of it, though by no means all of it, has been declassified.

From this *fond* Egge cites a number of December 1934 interrogations from the NKVD investigation of Kirov's murder that are not mentioned by either Kirilina or Lenoe. Kirilina wrote before this fond had been declassified. But Lenoe claims that he consulted it (xix). Perhaps Lenoe did not bother to check this fond carefully. Or perhaps he did check it and found, as Egge did, that none of the additional investigative materials would help prove his predetermined conclusion that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" and that Stalin "framed" all the other defendants.

Like Kirilina and Lenoe, Egge does not try to solve the Kirov murder. Rather, like them Egge simply assumes that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" and then proceeds to ignore or dismiss any evidence that tends to contradict this predetermined conclusion. Since Egge is not trying to discover the truth—as we'll see, he literally thinks it is "obvious", without any evidence at all—there's no reason for him to be careful in his research. Consequently, he isn't careful. We'll give some examples here before examining in detail Egge's chapter on the evidence: the interrogations of the defendants carried out in December, 1934.

- Egge cites Genrikh Liushkov's remarks about the Kirov murder. He even quotes parts of Liushkov's April 1939 *Kaizo* article. This means that he may have had it translated. But, like Lenoe, Egge assumes Liushkov is telling "the truth". Egge "believes" Liushkov, who was specifically writing propaganda for the Japanese army, while "disbelieving" the many texts of NKVD interrogations of the men Nikolaev had named as his associates. Egge ignores Alvin Coox's articles of the late 1990s in which Coox shows that Liushkov privately confirmed to the Japanese the existence of a number of the conspiracies whose existence he denied in the *Kaizo* article. (For more details see our separate chapter on Liushkov.)
- Egge takes on faith any statements made by the Gorbachev commissions, such as the "Reply to Iakovlev". For example, he accepts the claim that Lobov killed Sokol'nikov in prison at Beria's orders (Egge 259; RKEB 3, 468) without any attempt to verify it. We have

refuted this story in a separate article to appear shortly. Like Lenoë, who also refers to it in passing, Egge could have done this too — tried to verify it. Instead, he just "accepts" it. This illustrates his attitude towards evidence: he simply "accepts" statements from highly anti-Stalin sources, presumably because they support his preconceived bias.

- In Chapter 5 Egge puts scare quotes around the word "bloc":

...Zinoviev, Kamenev, and two other men who had gone through the January trial a year earlier, G.E. Evdokimov and LP. Bakaev, were now accused not only of knowing about the terrorist goals of their counterparts in Leningrad but also that they had directly taken part in organizing Kirov's murder. They were also accused of forming a "bloc" with the Trotskyites and with Trotsky himself. (68)

As we have discussed in the present work, the existence of this bloc has been proven since 1980 from documents in the Harvard Trotsky archive. There is no excuse for Egge, a professional historian of the USSR, not to know about this — or, if he does know about it, there is no excuse for his putting scare quotes around the word "bloc," thereby giving his readers the impression that the bloc's real existence is in doubt.

- This means that Egge's discussion of Trotsky's "version" is wrong. Trotsky repeatedly denied the existence of the bloc. Of course he had to do this in order to preserve conspiratorial secrecy. But that also means that Trotsky's whole discussion of the Kirov murder is a deliberate falsification on Trotsky's part. Since he did not want to admit that a real bloc of Zinovievites, Trotskyites, and other oppositionists existed, Trotsky had to fabricate a story that it was Stalin who was supposedly "fabricating" here!
- Egge accepts as unproblematically true the testimony allegedly given during Khrushchev's studies of the Kirov murder. Lenoë demonstrates in his book that Khrushchev was out to pretend to prove Stalin had Kirov killed. Lenoë also adduces the evidence that memories of long-past events are often, if not usually, faulty — even if we assume that those who testified to Khrushchev's men in the '60s were actually remembering, rather than just telling Khrushchev's men what they wanted to hear, a more likely scenario. In effect Egge has made the

assumption that testimony given during the Stalin period is false, even when there is no evidence that it is false, while assuming the testimony given during Khrushchev's time is true, even when there's no evidence to confirm that. That is, Egge decided before writing his book that he would not solve the Kirov murder on the basis of the evidence. This means his conclusion is predetermined by his assumptions. Egge's work is an extended example of the fallacy of "begging the question."

Egge spends a great deal of space on unimportant, even trivial, matters. Chapter 6 summarizes "rumors and guesses". In fact, as I argue in another chapter, the rumor that Nikolaev killed Kirov out of "jealousy" or for "personal reasons" originated with the conspirators themselves, as shown by the fact that it can be traced to Avel' Enukidze. "Egge falsely claims that the rumor that Nikolaev's wife Mil'da Draule was involved with Kirov "had appeared in the city in the summer of 1933". His reference is to Kirilina, but Kirilina cites no evidence whatever that this is so. Otherwise, however, "rumors" are irrelevant to the historical question of who killed Kirov and why.

Egge also spends many pages exploring the death of Borisov, Kirov's bodyguard. But it only makes sense to do this in the context of trying to solve Kirov's murder — and Egge ignores all the evidence we have that any conspiracy was involved. If you insist, as Egge does, that Nikolaev acted alone and from personal motives, there's no reason whatever to question Borisov's death.

- Egge cites the important work Genrikh Iagoda three times, but always on inconsequential matters. As we have discussed extensively in the chapter on Iagoda, this source of Iagoda's pretrial interrogations has been recognized as genuine by anticommunist scholars, and gives primary evidence of first-rate importance on the conspiracy against Kirov. Egge never mentions these vital documents, which sharply contradict his theory that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman".

Egge does note some useful facts in his book, though he does not really make use of them as they do not help to prove his preconceived thesis. We'll review them here.

- Egge notes that Nikolaev held 13 jobs in 15 years, the last several of which were very good jobs at high pay. This strongly suggests that Nikolaev had friends in high places in the Leningrad party who obtained such jobs for him. The leaders of the underground Zinovievite group were just such men.
- He notes that Nikolaev and his family had a three-room apartment in a new building. This was very privileged housing in Leningrad at the time, but Nikolaev was far from a prominent person. This too suggests he had blat — connections, pull among influential people.
- Egge notes that Nikolaev lied in his early confession and in letters to Party officials such as Kirov.

+ In his first interrogation on December 1 Nikolaev said that the idea for the assassination had come to him at the beginning of November. Later he said it was September. (53)

+ In his letter to Kirov Nikolaev complained that his children were "starving". (56) He also complained that he could not find work, and that a job was "essential". (54) Yet Egge also documents that Nikolaev had turned down all offers of work. (48)

- Egge notes that Nikolaev's relatives were unanimous that the family was not in need. Yet in his "diary" — Egge correctly remarks that these documents are much more than just a diary and encompass other kinds of writing too — Nikolaev complained about poverty and hunger

It seems undeniable that Nikolaev was lying in these "private" writings. Egge notes the facts but never points out the conclusion: that Nikolaev wrote these false accounts for some ulterior purpose. Much less does Egge ask why Nikolaev would have done such a thing. We know, however, that Nikolaev later testified that he had faked these accounts in advance in order to strengthen the appearance that he had murdered Kirov for personal reasons. Egge must know this too — after all, it is in the Prosecutor's Indictment. But Egge does not tell his readers that Nikolaev had said this. We have discussed Nikolaev's confession about this fact in another chapter of the present work.



## **Egge's Account of the Investigation**

The central chapter in Egge's book is Chapter 8, titled "The 'investigation' and terror". The scare quotes around the first word are no doubt intended to convey Egge's opinion that the investigation was faked to conform to a supposedly predetermined conclusion, and that all the defendants, save Nikolaev, were innocent men whom the NKVD had "framed". In fact this is the central conclusion of this chapter and of Egge's book as a whole. As we shall see, Egge fails to cite any evidence whatever to support this hypothesis.

In the beginning of this chapter Egge reports rumors, and then notes that they are unsubstantiated. For example Egge reports, from Roi Medvedev, that at the Leningrad railway station Stalin slapped Leningrad NKVD head Medved' across the face — and then notes that Stalin's bodyguard Vlasik later denied that Medved' had been present at all. Egge reports another rumor — that Iagoda had ordered everyone at Smolny to stand at attention facing the wall as Stalin entered — but cites only Bastrykin and Gromtseva's lurid pot-boiler as a source. Bastrykin's evidence for this statement is his conversations with Tammi and Rosliakov, who reported this and other details. Egge, however, doesn't even tell us that fact. This is a good example of a serious failing by Egge. Sometimes he evaluates his sources, but at other times he does not bother.

Egge spends several pages reporting rumors — from Amy Knight, from Alexander Orlov, from Medvedev again, again from Bastrykin and Gromtseva, and from Nikita Khrushchev — before conceding that rumors are not history:

But some historians continue to believe these rumors, and some of them even consider them almost as proven facts. (156)

A little further on Egge cites Rosliakov concerning what happened during Stalin's questioning of Nikolaev — and then notes that Rosliakov was not present at the interview but was only in the same building at the same time! So this is yet another rumor. Moreover, it exposes the worthlessness of Rosliakov's account.

EGGE falsely reports Molotov's statements to Feliks Chuev that he believed the Zinovievites "used" Nikolaev. But then Egge claims that Molotov contradicted himself:

According to Molotov Nikolaev stated that the murder was ideologically motivated, since he was a supporter of Zinoviev. Nevertheless this story of Molotov's about Nikolaev does not fully correspond to other accounts by Molotov. He also said that Nikolaev was probably not a true Zinovievite nor a true Trotskyite, but that the Zinovievites used him. (158)

Later, Egge claims Molotov said Nikolaev acted alone:

During the talks with Chuev Molotov said that Nikolaev had acted alone. (191)

But this statement of Egge's is not true. According to Chuev's account, this is what Molotov actually said:

That same evening we travelled to Leningrad — Stalin, Voroshilov, and I. We spoke with Nikolaev, the murderer of Kirov.

An ordinary type, expelled from the Party. He said that he killed consciously, on an ideological basis. A Zinovievite. I think that women have nothing to do with this. Stalin interrogated Nikolaev in the Smolny.

— How did Nikolaev appear to you?

— An ordinary person. A white-collar worker. Of medium height. Rather thin. I think that he had obviously become embittered about something, expelled from the Party, a person who felt offended. And the Zinovievites used him. Probably he was neither a real Zinovievite nor a real Trotskyite.

— Not just Nikolaev, but a whole list of men were condemned, — I say.

The fact is that they were not condemned for the murder but because they participated in the Zinovievite organization. But as far as I remember, there was no specific document that this was done by decision of the Zinovievite group.

Therefore he acted as if separately, but by his past he was a Zinovievite.<sup>153</sup>

<sup>153</sup> Feliks I Chuev. *Molotov: Poludertzavnyi Vlastelin*. Moscow: OLMA-PRESS, 1999, 376.

So Molotov's opinion is, in fact, clear: he believed Nikolaev had acted "as if separately", but not separately in fact. In other words, Molotov confirmed the version of the Soviet government in the 1930s. Therefore Egge seriously distorted Molotov's words.

But in any case Molotov's opinion, given over 40 years later, is not evidence at all. Egge recognizes this himself (Chapter 8 at note 39). Molotov was not involved in the investigation and had no detailed knowledge about it. Like the rest of the Politburo, and like Stalin himself, Molotov was plenty busy with other things to do. So why does Egge record it — what's more, record it inaccurately? Evidently he does so because that inaccurate account supports his preconceived idea: that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman."

Egge begins to discuss the problem of using interrogations as evidence, but then makes the following statement:

It is obvious that the transcripts of the interrogations of the Kirov murder case do not give the full picture of what took place during these interrogations. This became especially clear after Stalin decided precisely who he should make the scapegoats. It is clear that after this the transcripts of interrogations distorted the real state of affairs. Those who were partly guilty were forced to give confessions that corresponded to a scenario created by the investigators. (169)

Egge's use of the words "it is obvious that", "especially clear", and "it is clear that", are the certain sign that he has no evidence. Of course none of

these statements is at all "clear" or "obvious." Elsewhere in this book we have shown that Stalin directed the investigators' attention towards the Zinovievites long after Zinoviev's and Kamenev's names had come up in the interrogations. Either Egge does not realize this or he has hidden it from his readers.

Egge then says:

However there is every reason to suppose that the earlier transcripts, despite all their omissions, were less tendentious and worthy of more trust than those that were compiled in order to drive the suspects into a corner. (170)

These are mere assertions by Egge, aimed at discrediting the later interrogations in the minds of his readers without any evidence. Egge does not tell his readers what "every reason" is<sup>154</sup> and gives no evidence that the interrogations were "composed in order to drive the suspects into a corner" — whatever that means. In general, no investigator ever believes that a suspect's earliest statements are the most truthful. The normal thing for a guilty person to do is to deny at first, and then gradually divulge more and more information. This was the case with Nikolaev's confessions, as we demonstrate in the present work.

<sup>154</sup> The original Russian is "vse osnovaniia", literally "all the bases". This is not idiomatic in English so I have translated it as "every reason."

Although he repeatedly attempts to discredit the evidence of a conspiracy Egge apparently cannot even convince himself. For example, he states:

However, Katsafa's confessions about how he heard Nikolaev talking in his sleep are not sufficiently reliable. Probably Katsafa was asked to make this claim in order to give the investigators a pretext to arrest Shatskii and Kotolynov. (170)

Egge does not say what is "not sufficiently reliable" about Katsafa's statement — much less what his criteria are to distinguish "reliable" from "not sufficiently reliable" statements.

Then he concedes that his own explanation cannot be true:

But why then did Agranov on the very same day speak about them [Shatskii and Kotolynov] in a report to Stalin as "Trotskyist" and "Anarchist"? (170-171)

EGGE tries to discredit the December 6 interrogation, in which Nikolaev named some of his Zinovievite confederates by claiming that he should have had "concrete evidence":

But Nikolaev could not present any concrete proof for such accusations. (172)

This is nonsense, a particularly desperate move by EGGE. For what can he possibly mean by "concrete evidence"? Does EGGE expect all "real" conspirators to carry around "material evidence" with them — say, a list of their fellow conspirators and plans for their activities? Therefore this remark is another "tell" — an admission that he has no way to discredit the confessions by the Zinovievite conspirators.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>155</sup> Elsewhere in this study we have quoted the cogent words of Russian historian IURII Zhukov, who sensibly points out that no sane conspirator would keep evidence of a conspiracy anywhere except in his head.

EGGE continues with the story that Nikolaev declared a hunger strike, twice tried to kill himself, and claimed he was being "tormented" (*menia muchaiut*). However EGGE fails to inform his readers that all these details come from Iurii Sedov, one of Gorbachev's investigators, and that Sedov gives no source, no "concrete evidence" — to use EGGE's own words — that Nikolaev ever even uttered these words. Much less has any evidence ever been presented to prove that these words, purportedly of Nikolaev's, are true, for the fact that someone claims he is being "tormented" does not mean he really is. Also, Sedov is a dishonest witness, some of whose falsifications we have examined in an earlier chapter.

On the following page we reach the central falsehood in EGGE's book. He writes:

The transcripts of Nikolaev's confession reflect two possible scenarios of the investigators. The result of the first is the preliminary insistence by Nikolaev that he alone carried out the murder, which could indicate his intention to conceal the guilt of other persons involved in the crime. After they gave him good conditions in the prison and promised to spare his life, and this did not yield the desired result, they applied harsh pressure against him (possibly, even torture). As a result he was broken and confessed to the existence of a conspiracy with the participation of a "Leningrad center." This interpretation corresponds to the Stalinist version of the murder. Otherwise, we must concede that Nikolaev was telling the truth when he denied having any accomplices. However gradually, under the pressures of promises and threats, he confessed to the participation in the conspiracy of the former Zinovievites, and this corresponded to the wishes of the Moscow investigators (after they had assumed control of the investigation). **From what we know today there can be no doubt that this second interpretation is the true one. It is obvious**, that the reason for Nikolaev's hunger strike and attempts to kill himself were the torments of conscience he experienced after implicating innocent people. (173-174; emphasis added GF)

Here Egge finally admits that he has no evidence whatsoever that Nikolaev's confessions were false. Once again we perceive that phrases like "there can be no doubt" and "it is obvious" are Egge's substitute for evidence — because he does not have any. And Egge has to go much further than this. He also has to "assume" that it is "obvious" that all the other defendants' confessions are false as well, as we shall see.

This is as clear an admission as we could wish for that *Egge has no evidence at all* to support his hypothesis that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" and all the rest of the defendants were innocent, "framed". If Egge is going to "assume away" all the evidence we have, why bother to look at the evidence at all? In fact, why write the book in the first place if you're going to ignore all the evidence — unless your only real goal is to make anti-Stalin propaganda?

Egge is either simply lying about Latvian consul Bissenieks, or — possibly — has just not done the research:

The Latvian consul Georg Bisseneks denied any contact with Nikolaev and Kotolynov. A verification of the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia also did not reveal anything... It appears that Nikolaev was strongly pressured to admit to that which the investigators demanded from him. All this looks like a complete falsification. (175-176)

Lenoe, who would also like to dismiss any charges against Bissenieks, admits that the Latvian consulate was a source of anti-Soviet propaganda, that Nikolaev was right about the layout of the Latvian consulate, and that he accurately picked Bissenieks out of a photo lineup (Lenoe 299-300). But Egge claims:

...there is no evidence of such "contacts" and the "consul affair" appears improbable. (176)

In fact Lenoe cites good evidence in support of Nikolaev's allegations against Bissenieks (Lenoe 384). Egge does not mention any of this. Maybe he didn't have access to it? But then Egge, like Kirilina, should have admitted to their readers that they did not have access to all the investigative materials — something that, to his credit, Lenoe does admit — and then taken this fact into account in his research and in drawing his conclusions. Egge fails his readers in this regard.

Egge makes an interesting admission concerning the indictment:

Kirilina asserts that the indictment was fabricated. However, it did reflect to a significant degree the contents of the interrogation transcripts. (184)

Though reluctant to say that Kirilina is wrong Egge in effect suggests that she is lying here by confirming that the indictment does indeed reflect the interrogation transcripts. But then Egge commits his own falsification:

But we must take into consideration that these transcripts reflect only crudely and tendentiously the confessions obtained during interrogation. Meetings of old comrades, probably devoid of any political content, were changed into meetings of the members of a counterrevolutionary organization. (184)

Edge has absolutely no evidence to support any of these statements. He simply decides to declare all the evidence falsified! He has no evidence that this is so. This is yet another "tell" on Edge's part — he has decided to ignore all the evidence and invent his conclusions out of thin air because he possesses no evidence to support his hypothesis.

Edge describes the following incident as though it actually occurred during the trial:

When Nikolaev was called into the courtroom he at first retracted his confessions at interrogation and asserted that he alone had planned the murder of Kirov. (185)

Lenoe (359) notes that Agranov's letter to Stalin does not record "this embarrassing moment", which of course is not reflected in the trial transcript either. But Lenoe also discloses that this detail only emerged in 1956, when Khrushchev's men, led by Pospelov and Serov, were trying hard to overturn the "conspiracy" version of the 1930s and were both destroying evidence (the file "Svoaki") and withholding other evidence even from Presidium members whom, like Molotov, Khrushchev did not trust.

Lenoe also fails to point out the fact that Khrushchev had taken terrible revenge upon some who did not tell the lies that he wanted them to tell,<sup>156</sup> and this was well known, especially to persons involved in the former NKVD and later MGB/MVD. So anyone questioned by Khrushchev's men had good reason to tell any story he wanted them to tell!

<sup>156</sup> In his memoirs Pavel Sudoplatov relates how he was arrested after refusing to fabricate stories against Beria. Sudoplatov might have ended up in Khrushchev's December 1956 "kangaroo court" being tried and executed as Beria's "accomplice" along with Kobulov, Dckanozov, Merkulov, Meshik, Volodzirnirskii, and Goglidze. None of the supposed "crimes"



Beria was charged with have ever been proven -good evidence that they did not exist. Sudoplatov also relates the story of how General Maslennikov killed himself rather than either fabricate a story against Beria or face trumped-up charges of helping Beria in the latter's supposed coup attempt. Evidently Sudoplatov gets the date of Maslennikov's suicide wrong — it was March 16, 1954, not August 1953. But in other respects his account agrees with other versions of Maslennikov's suicide.

Even setting that aside, there is still the matter of source criticism. Here Egge abandons his responsibility. We have no reason to doubt the confessions of the 1934 defendants, while we have good reason to question anything Khrushchev's men produced since we know they were lying and destroying evidence, as Lenoë admits. This is an important and interesting issue — one which Egge had the responsibility to lay before his readers but does not.

So Egge is correct, as far as it goes, when he writes:

Neither Nikolaev's reactions nor his statement that he had acted alone went into the transcript of the trial. (185)

Small wonder! Egge has no evidence that Nikolaev made such statements. There's no good reason to think he did. Although even if Nikolaev did try to revert to his initial story that he had acted alone — and we do not know that he did — it would have made no difference. There was plenty of evidence against him from the testimony of his confederates. Egge is guilty of blatantly lying when he writes that all the defendants (except for Nikolaev) denied knowing about the plan to kill Kirov:

In addition they all denied that they had anything to do with the murder or knew about plans for the murder. (186)

Egge's footnote here is to the "Reply to Iakovlev" and to Iurii Sedov's article in *Trud* of December 1990. But Egge has also studied Kirilina's book and cites it frequently. Yet Kirilina states that Sokolov admitted he knew that Nikolaev intended to kill Kirov but still tried to get him a ticket to the Smol'nyi (Kirilina 286; 299). Again, according to Kirilina:

During the investigation and at first at the trial Antonov, IUskin, Zvezdov, and Sokolov admitted their participation in the terrorist group and the preparations for the murder of Kirov and gave similar confessions against other defendants at the trial (Kirilina 301)

Since Egge studied and refers to Kirilina's book it appears as though Egge may have suppressed this evidence. It is logical to suppose he did so because this evidence supports the hypothesis that Nikolaev acted for a clandestine Zinovievite conspiracy and so does not fit Egge's preconceived idea that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman." Similarly, Egge accepts Katsafa's 1950s testimony about Kotolynov's "last words" in which he supposedly said that all the defendants were innocent except for Nikolaev. We should recall that even Lenoë does not believe Katsafa's story. (Lenoë 370-1).

Egge simply rejects evidence that is inconvenient for his conclusion. For example, he states:

Many of the interrogation transcripts were falsified, and those who were interrogated did not sign them. (188)

But he presents no evidence at all that even a single one of the interrogation transcripts were falsified. Nor does he identify any that were not signed.

(Parenthetically, this last point of Egge's is interesting, for at least two reasons. First, Egge quotes from Ezhov's *fond* (archival collection). It is probable that the interrogation transcripts in this *fond* were copies, not originals. Certainly multiple copies were made — for the Prosecutor, for the interrogators themselves, and probably for Stalin. Only the original would be signed. Yet Egge does not address this issue at all.

Furthermore if, as Egge assumes without any evidence, Nikolaev was tortured or threatened with torture, what would have stopped the NKVD from doing the same to other defendants and thereby forcing them to do whatever the investigators wanted: sign false transcripts, confess to taking part in Kirov's murder, etc.?

Therefore, even if the defendants had refused to sign the interrogation transcripts — and Egge does not establish this — that would be just as

likely to suggest that they were *not* fabricated, as to suggest the opposite.)

Again, Egge states:

In the interrogations Nikolaev is practically never mentioned as a participant in the "Leningrad center", however at Stalin's insistence he was included among its members. (189)

Once again Egge presents no evidence whatsoever to support this statement — and, by the way, this is a claim that neither Lenoë nor a made. On the contrary: as we have seen in a previous chapter, Zvezdov specifically named Nikolaev as a member of the Zinovievite group, and Lenoë reproduces his statement to this effect (Lenoë 310-311).

Concerning the Leningrad center Egge falsifies yet again. He writes:

The indictment was based exclusively on the confessions of the accused, who asserted that such a center did exist and who named names of its supposed members. No one ever mentioned again that this center carried out any activity at all. (189)

This is false. Earlier in this book we quoted from Nikolaev's testimony that Kotolynov personally helped train him, and several other defendants helped him monitor Kirov's movements. Several defendants named Rumiantsev as a leader of the center, which also kept touch with the Moscow center.

Egge quotes the 1961 testimony of Makarov that the interrogators used "provocational methods" — what are those? — and "moral and physical pressure" to force them to sign the transcripts. Lenoë demonstrated that Khrushchev was trying to "frame" Stalin and falsified materials, and we have shown elsewhere in this book that Makarov was seriously wrong about another detail in his testimony. His testimony is not a reliable primary source.

Egge lies again concerning Nikolaev's "diary". He states:

As already stated in Chapter 4, these notes bear witness to the fact that the motives for the murder were of a purely personal nature. However

the investigators attributed another meaning to these notes. Nikolaev had supposedly maintained his diary in order to deceive the investigation. In their opinion the diary represented a sophisticated trap which was aimed to deflect suspicious away from the Zinovievites who had planned the terrorist act with political aims. (190)

But Egge conceals from his readers the fact that Nikolaev himself had admitted that, as the following passage from the Indictment shows:

Here we must note that with the aim of concealing the traces of the crime and of his accomplices, and also of disguising the real motives of the murder of com. Kirov, the accused L. Nikolaev prepared a series of documents (a diary, statements addressed to different institutions, etc.) in which he attempted to describe his crime as an act of personal despair and dissatisfaction due to his supposed difficult material situation, and as a protest against "unjust treatment towards a living human being on the part of certain government figures."

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The accused L. Nikolaev himself admitted the falseness and invented nature of versions of this kind and explained that he created this version after preliminary agreement among the members of the terrorist group, which had decided to depict the murder of com. Kirov as an individual act and by so doing to conceal the real motives of this crime.

In his confession of December 13 of this year L Nikolaev states this directly:

"I was supposed to depict the murder of Kirov as an individual act in order to conceal the participation in it of the Zinovievite group.

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This situation is also confirmed in that, as has been exhaustively established during the investigation, the accused L. Nikolaev determinedly and systematically rejected any offers to arrange a job for

him, referring now to the weak state of his health and the necessity to recover, now to some other circumstances that supposedly prevented him from working.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>157</sup> I have put the original Russian text of the Indictment online at [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/obvin\\_zak\\_dec34.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/obvin_zak_dec34.html)

The section of Nikolaev's December 13 interrogation referred to in this excerpt from the Indictment has been published in the original and is translated by Lenoe, so we can be reasonably assured that the Indictment is honest here — and, if genuine here, the probability is high that it is also honest in other respects.<sup>158</sup> Yet Egge simply declares Nikolaev's testimony "obviously absurd" (190)<sup>159</sup> This appears to be simply an evasion on Egge's part, an attempt to cover up the fact that all the evidence supports the hypothesis that Nikolaev acted on behalf of the underground Zinovievite conspiratorial center, and that he has no evidence at all to refute this hypothesis. This is the fallacy of "begging the question" with a vengeance! If Egge is going to just "assume away" all the evidence that is inconvenient to his hypothesis, why bother to write the book in the first place?

<sup>158</sup> Lubianka 1922-1936 No. 482, pp. 578-579; Lenoe 316-317.

<sup>159</sup> "Absurdnost' etikh utverzhdanii ochevidna."

Like Lenoe, Egge quotes Liushkov's article in *Kaizo* of April 1939 but fails to contextualize it — Liushkov's job was to write propaganda for the Japanese Army — or to point out that Liushkov told his Japanese handlers the opposite of what he stated in this article. (190-191)

There is no limit to Egge's "begging the question"! He states:

There is not a shadow of a doubt remaining that the others accused in the case of the murder of Kirov were innocent, and that the whole story of the "Leningrad center" was invented in order to strike a blow at the opposition. (191)

Another bluff, or "tell"! Egge realizes that he has no evidence whatever to support his view that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman". So he is reduced to

assuring us that there is "not the shadow of a doubt." This is "begging the question" with a vengeance.

On page 130 Egge tries to explain away testimony inconvenient to his hypothesis with references to "brainwashing", "party loyalty", and "the Stockholm syndrome." But does he have even a shred of evidence for any of these things? No, he does not. Again, Egge states:

In the first case the investigators were able to find only a pair of defendants who supported Nikolaev's lie. (192)

As we have seen, Kirilina says that not a "pair", but four of the defendants confessed! But the real point here is the phrase "Nikolaev's lie" — Egge assumes Nikolaev is lying! He has no evidence to back up this statement. When a researcher simply "assumes" that which is to be proven — commits the fallacy of "begging the question" — then the text of his book becomes not scholarship but merely a smokescreen to hide something. Egge wants to smuggle in his preconceived ideas under the guise of "research."

Egge states:

It was Stalin himself who ordered the investigation to concentrate their attention on the Zinovievites. (193)

No one denies this. The question is: What does it mean? We have discussed this question in detail in our discussion of Lenoë's book. There we have shown that Stalin did not do this until there was already plenty of testimony about the Zinovievites from Nikolaev and other defendants.

Concerning the January 1935 trial of other Zinovievites, Egge states:

As has already been stated in Chapter 5, the press disclosed the arrest of these well-known Zinovievites, but they were not brought to trial yet because of the lack of evidence. (194-195)

Obviously if Stalin had wanted to "frame" — falsely accuse — these people he could have done so at any time. Therefore, he did not want to do so. If Stalin had wanted to falsify interrogations of these defendants, that could

have been done as well. But it was not done. Instead, the public was told that there was "insufficient evidence." *Clearly Stalin and the Soviet government were more interested in evidence than Egge is today!*

Egge states:

That same day, January 16 [1935], 77 persons of the 137 were sentenced by the Special Commission (*osoboe soveshchanie*) to sentences in a camp or to exile of 4 to 5 years. They were accused of membership in a "counterrevolutionary Zinovievite group" in Leningrad led by Safarov, Zalutskii, and others. Among those convicted were Nikolaev's mother, his sisters, and several other relatives, one of Nikolaev's neighbors, and also Anna, IUskin's wife. (195)

We have no reason — that is, no evidence — to suppose that Nikolaev's relatives were unjustly treated here. We know Nikolaev had explicitly implicated his sisters, as well as his brother (who had also confessed) and his brother-in-law. Of course, we do not have all the investigative materials either.

Despite the fact that we have a lot of testimony about them Egge calls the Leningrad and Moscow centers "mythical":

In addition, the trials in the case of the mythical members of the "Leningrad and Moscow centers..." (196)

Egge continues:

However, the executions of some of those arrested began quickly. Mil'da Draule, Nikolaev's wife, her sister Ol'ga and Ol'ga's husband Roman Kulisher, were sentenced to death by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, that is by the same organ that had passed sentence upon Nikolaev and his partners (soobshchniki). (196)

...and...

Nikolaev's step-brother Petr was also shot. On January 16 [1935] Nikolaev's older sister Ekaterina Rogacheva was sentenced to five years in a camp. Three years later the "troika" sentenced her to execution. Such "troikas" were usually comprised of two NKVD men and a judge; after meeting for 10-15 minutes they announced their sentence on a case or on a group of cases. (197)

Edge does not trouble himself to ask the only relevant question: What was the evidence against these defendants? Only have a few quotations from a few of the interrogations of Mil'da Draule have been made public, but from them we know that she implicated herself and other members of her family. Lenoë himself shows that Piotr Nikolaev confessed to helping Nikolaev.

Evidently Edge wants to create the impression that all these people were "innocent". He does this in part by concealing the evidence that we know existed against them. As for Rogacheva's execution three years later, we have just a little bit of information about it. Edge too could have revealed it to his readers instead of, as he does, withholding it:

On a "Memorial Society" web page we read the following:

Rogacheva Ekaterina Vasil'evna

Born 1899, Russian, born in the village of Mel'goshchina, Gvozd' region, Leningrad oblast'; member of the AUCP(b) 1918-1934; chair of the Profkom of the bath and ironing trust.

("Natural sister of Nikolaev, who committed the savage murder of S.M. Kirov.")

Lived in Leningrad.

Arrested December 1, 1934.

Sentenced: by the special Commission of the NKVD of the USSR on January 16, 1935, for "active participation in a counterrevolutionary Zinovievite group."



Sentence: 5 years in a concentration camp.

Source: *Leningradskii martirolog*, vol. 8 (in press).

Rogacheva Ekaterina Vasil'evna

Born 1899, Russian, born in the village of Mel'goshchina, Gvozd' region, Leningrad oblast'; member of the AUCP(b) 1918-1934; place of imprisonment: Solovki.

Sentenced: By the special troika of the UNKVD of the Leningrad Oblast' on February 14, 1938, for "counterrevolutionary Trotskyite agitation among the prisoners".

Sentence: Death. Shot February 17 1938. Place of burial: Solovki.

Source: *Leningradskii martirolog*, vol 8 (in press).

Rogacheva was one of the 77 persons convicted on January 16 as mentioned by Egge. She was executed in 1938 for something entirely different — Trotskyite agitation. Was she innocent? Guilty? In order to determine that we would need to study her investigative file. Did Egge ask to see it? Was he refused? He doesn't tell us. But without it, on what grounds can we decide whether the charges against her were supported by good evidence or not, her conviction and subsequent execution just or unjust?

Of the other defendants Egge writes: "Afterwards many of these defendants were arrested again and shot." How does he know this? What is his evidence? There's not even a footnote. It's reasonable to assume that once again Egge has no evidence and is "talking through his hat" here too.

## **Conclusion**

Egge reveals that there are other, perhaps many other, interrogations that are available to scholars, since they were available to him. But in other respects Egge's work is similar to those by Kirilina and Lenoë. However, it is useful — but in a negative sense, in that it confirms what we already knew: that

there is no primary-source evidence that can impugn the investigation of December 1934 or the conclusion that the defendants at that trial were guilty.

## **Chapter 20. *Conclusion: The Logic of the Evidence***

There are two possible hypotheses to explain the immense amount of evidence we now have confirming the guilt of the Kirov murder defendants and their accomplices:

**Hypothesis #1: All the evidence attesting to the existence of the conspiracy has been fabricated by one means or another.** Investigators lied; defendants were forced to give false testimony under some kind of threat or inducement; documents (where there are any) have been forged.

**Hypothesis #2: The conspiracy did exist, as attested by the evidence.**

Like all hypotheses, the first one must be supported by evidence in order to stand. Hypothesis #1 presupposes a "conspiracy" too — a conspiracy to falsify evidence. If there were some evidence of such a conspiracy — evidence that these investigative materials had been falsified or the defendants forced to lie — we could study it. Although one or two pieces of such evidence would not invalidate everything, they might well invalidate certain specific pieces of evidence.

But there is no evidence of any such conspiracy. No matter how "deep" into the archives the investigators go they have never found any indication of such a conspiracy, or of any fabrication of evidence. On the evidence, therefore, any objective scholar is forced to abandon Hypothesis #1 for lack of evidence, and decide in favor of the second hypothesis.

Accordingly, we can confidently state that the defendants in the Kirov trial of December 1934 were guilty as charged. There is a great deal of evidence against them. There is no evidence whatsoever to exculpate any of them. In light of these facts any objective student is forced to conclude that the trial was fair and the verdict just. Moreover, subsequent to the trial further evidence came to light of the conspiracy. We have examined it as well. It confirms the guilt of the Kirov trial defendants.

Like Iurii Zhukov, we too have discussed the kind of evidence that can be reasonably expected to exist in the case of conspiracies. We have had the

advantage of writing years after this article of Zhukov's and now have far more documentary evidence than Zhukov had in the late 1990s. To any objective student, as to Zhukov, the evidence of these conspiracies is overwhelming.

Most of the primary documents in the cases of the conspiracies of the 1930s are still classified top-secret in Russia today. A very few privileged researchers have evidently been permitted to see some of it. But other evidence is off-limits even to them. All the evidence from these archives that has been published has, obviously, either been official or semi-official — that is, it could not have been published without the permission of one or another official body. The fact that different archives are under the control of different agencies may account for the publication of documents such as the striking pretrial confessions of Genrikh Iagoda and others published in a tiny press run of 200 copies in 1997. Even this volume, however, was supervised by mainstream, highly anticommunist historians.

We also have the two Shvernik Commission reports done for Khrushchev in the early 1960s, the "Zapiska" and the "Spravka". We have the volumes of official documents, including the "rehabilitation reports", of the Gorbachev years, and many other documents in official collections. All of this material has been published by scholars with a strong anti-communist and anti-Stalin bias. Yet the result is always the same. All the primary source evidence confirms that the conspiracies of the 1930s did take place.

The only unofficial source of publication of still-secret documents from former Soviet Archives that have direct bearing on the conspiracies of the 1930s is the Volkogonov Archive. Dmitrii Volkogonov was ferociously anti-Stalin and on very good terms with both Gorbachev and El'tsin. It can be assumed that his research assistants would have brought out any documents that tended to support their boss's views. But all the documents in this archive that bear upon the conspiracies of the 1930s tend to confirm, not to dispute, the existence of the conspiracies and the guilt of the accused. We have mined this archive for several confessions from the December 1934 investigation of the Kirov murder and cited them here.

We do have some non-Soviet evidence attesting to the existence of these conspiracies: that of Liushkov, made when he was beyond the reach of the

Soviets, and Valentin Astrov's confirmation in 1993 of his 1937 confessions. This evidence is not only interesting in itself. By attesting to the conspiracies, it also corroborates the evidence of the Soviet investigations, including pre-trial interrogations and trial testimony.

## **The Coverup**

Despite the attempts to make it into one the Kirov murder is not a mystery. Nor has it ever been one. The claim that it is a mystery is part of the web of falsehoods spun around this event almost from the day Kirov was killed.

## **Trotsky's Coverup**

It was Leon Trotsky who, as early as December 1934, was the first person of note to claim that the assassination was a mystery.

The assassination of Kirov has remained a complete mystery for several weeks...

It was clear, however, that this information relating to the "Zinoviev group" was not issued by accident; it could imply nothing else but the preparation of a jural "amalgam", that is to say, a consciously false attempt to implicate in the assassination of Kirov individuals and groups who did not and could not have anything in common with the terrorist act. ...

Nicolaiev becomes the terrorist agent of an internal opposition to the party, at the head of which there were to be found the former Chairman of the Communist International, Zinoviev, and the former Chairman of the Political Bureau, Kamenev, both of them Stalin's colleagues in the "troika". It is clearly to be seen why we have called the dispatch of the TASS a colossal sensation. We can now also call it a colossal lie.<sup>160</sup>

<sup>160</sup> Leon Trotsky. "The Stalinist Bureaucracy and the Assassination of Kirov. A Reply to Friends in America." *Bulletin of the Opposition* No. 41 (January, 1935). Translated in Trotsky, "On the Kirov Assassination"

(December 1934). At

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1934/12/kirov.htm>

This article comprised the whole of issue #41 of Trotsky's *Bulletin of the Opposition* of January 1935.<sup>161</sup> Throughout this lengthy article Trotsky repeats over and over again that the indictment was a lie, the defendants arrested on false charges. Moreover, Trotsky predicts that Trotskyism, and he himself, will be accused of involvement in the Kirov assassination:

... At that moment, in a conversation with a friend (I apologize for these personal details, but they are necessary for the understanding of the psychological undercurrents in the case), I said, "The matter will not rest long on this plane, tomorrow they will bring Trotskyism to the fore."

<sup>161</sup> The Trotskyist editors of Marxists.org claim that this was published as a pamphlet. The *Biulleten'* version, in Russian, is at <http://www.mit.edu/people/fjk/BO/BO-41.html> (M.I.T., Boston USA) and at [http://www.1917.com/Marxism/Trotsky/BO/BO\\_No\\_41/Main.html](http://www.1917.com/Marxism/Trotsky/BO/BO_No_41/Main.html) (Russia)

In an appendix Trotsky notes that he is named in the indictment. Trotsky described his alleged motive for writing the article:

There is only one way to forestall en route the amalgams that are in preparation: *Expose the scheme in advance.*

Trotsky claimed that Zinoviev, Kamenev and the rest must be innocent because, like him, they were Marxists who disavowed individual terrorism:

They could not suddenly turn to a belief in the utility of individual terror for changing the social régime...

In this study we have examined the evidence that Trotsky's son Sedov did not disavow but instead embraced terrorism. Sedov's logic was the same as that voiced by Kamenev, Zinoviev, and other defendants: violence was the only way that the Stalin leadership could be removed. We noted that in his published work Sedov also rejected "terror" in the strongest possible terms,

and that Sedov had no political program separate from his father's. Other scholars have shown that Trotsky didn't hesitate to lie in his writings for political gain.

But we also know more: that Trotsky was deliberately lying in this specific article. From the Harvard Trotsky Archive we know that in 1932 the Soviet Trotskyists, including I.N. Smirnov, had formed a bloc with, among others, Kamenev and Zinoviev, with Safarov soon to enter it.

Trotskyist scholar Pierre Broué claimed, without any evidence, that this bloc was an "ephemeral" one that did not outlast the year it was formed. But even Broué knew that was not true. In his 1993 biography of Leon Sedov Broué wrote:

Liova est dans son élément. Il écrira plus tard au secretariat international cette phrase à la fois modeste et triomphante:

"I.N. Smirnov et d'autres qui nous ont quittés clans le temps sont revenus."

Liova [the diminutive of "Lev", Russian version of "Leon"] was in his element. He wrote later to the International Secretariat [of the 4th International] this phrase, at once modest and triumphant:

"I.N. Smirnov and others who left us in time came back."

Broué dates this remark to May, 1934:

L. Sedov. "La situation de l'opposition de gauche en URSS" [nd, mai 1934), rapport au SI. Archives J. Rous et Tamirnent Library, New York.<sup>162</sup>

<sup>162</sup> Pierre Broué, *Léon Sedov. Fils de Trotsky, Victime de Staline* (Paris: Editions Ouvrires, 1993), 79.

By May 1934 I.N. Smirnov had long been under arrest — an arrest that had been foreseen by the 1932 letter of Sedov to Trotsky. But among the "others who had left [who] had returned" were, certainly, Radek,

Sokol'nikov, and Piatakov. We know of Trotsky's letter to Radek, and we know from Sedov's "slip of the tongue" in January 1937, as well as from his exchange of letters with his father of 1932, that they had been in touch with Zinoviev and Kamenev as well as Radek.

Therefore, Trotsky was already lying in this December 1934 article about the Kirov murder. As Arch Getty has written,

The point here is that Trotsky lied... he had good reasons to lie. But what he said was not the truth. It was not "objective." (H-RUSSIA November 24, 1998)

In our capacity as historians we cannot blame Trotsky for lying. Indeed, no underground conspiratorial network can exist without lying. *But this also means we cannot accept what he wrote for public consumption as a true representation of what he thought and believed.* According to the evidence Trotsky was indirectly involved in the Kirov assassination through his supporters, to whom he sent his orders. The fact that Trotsky denied this should not distract us from the evidence, since we know that Trotsky lied when he found it to his advantage.

It was in Trotsky's interest to portray the Kirov murder as a mystery in order to anticipate and try to refute in advance the accusations against himself which he must have known would inevitably come if the conspiracy unraveled. In light of later testimony it seems clear that Trotsky suspected his own role in this bloc might well be exposed sooner or later. This is likely the reason for him to, as he put it, "expose the scheme in advance" - reveal that the NKVD would be accusing him soon.

## **Khrushchev**

But Trotsky's opinions were mainly influential only among his own followers — and he had only a very small following. Few people paid much attention to what Trotsky wrote until Nikita Khrushchev delivered his infamous "Secret Speech" to the 20th Party Congress in February 1956 in which Khrushchev savagely attacked Stalin (and Lavrentii Beria). In that speech Khrushchev too declared the Kirov murder a "mystery":



It must be asserted that to this day the circumstances surrounding Kirov's murder hide many things which are inexplicable and mysterious and demand a most careful examination. There are reasons for the suspicion that the killer of Kirov, Nikolayev, was assisted by someone from among the people whose duty it was to protect the person of Kirov.

A month and a half before the killing, Nikolayev was arrested on the grounds of suspicious behavior but he was released and not even searched. It is an unusually suspicious circumstance that when the Chekist assigned to protect Kirov was being brought for an interrogation, on December 2, 1934, he was killed in a car "accident" in which no other occupants of the car were harmed. After the murder of Kirov, top functionaries of the Leningrad NKVD were given very light sentences, but in 1937 they were shot. We can assume that they were shot in order to cover the traces of the organizers of Kirov's killing.

Even before Khrushchev gave this speech he had managed to force a reconsideration of the Kirov murder through the Presidium (the new name of the Politburo as of October 1952). In determining that Nikolaev's act was of a "political character" and asking for information about the activities of the various conspiratorial groups in Leningrad at the time the "Molotov commission" on April 23, 1956 basically reasserted the conclusion of December 1934.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>163</sup> Lenoë 577-8; Russian original in RKEB 2, 73-74.

But Khrushchev's men, including KGB chief Ivan Serov and Prosecutor Roman Rudenko, issued a report at about the same time that set for the "new line": that Nikolaev had been a "lone gunman." This became the basic position during the Khrushchev years, as Lenoë's book amply documents.

### **The Wider Implications of the Kirov Murder**

In a passage we have quoted elsewhere in this study Lenoë recognizes the implications of Khrushchev's "rewriting" of the Kirov assassination in this

way:

If the official charges in the first two trials — that former Zinoviev supporters / 592 / had conspired to murder Kirov — were entirely bogus, then the indictments in all of the succeeding show trials collapsed. ... But if there was some truth to the charge that Zinovievites conspired to kill Kirov, then that preserved the possibility of arguing that the latter charges were also valid, at least in part. Therefore Serov and Rudenko ... chose to make a clear-cut argument that Nikolaev had had no relationship at all with the ex-Zinoviev supporters convicted in the trial of the "Leningrad Center. (591-2)

Lenoe goes on to examine Khrushchev's "coverup" — a conscious plan to fabricate a false version of the Kirov assassination, which included destroying some evidence and concealing other evidence from the Molotov commission, which had been formed supposedly to resolve the "mystery" of the Kirov assassination.

We agree with Lenoe's analysis this far. Khrushchev's men did not want to know the truth about the Kirov assassination -or, perhaps more accurately, they did not want anyone else to know the truth about it. They wanted to perpetrate a fraud for political purposes. This preconceived purpose fatally compromised Khrushchev's investigation from the very beginning, as it was intended to do. Lenoe recognizes this, but he fails to perceive its implications. For having proven that Khrushchev's investigation was fraudulent, Lenoe then embraces the conclusion of this same investigation, the "lone gunman" hypothesis.

Can Lenoe possibly believe that Khrushchev's inquiry, which abandoned objectivity and pursued a preconceived conclusion from the outset, nevertheless somehow stumbled upon the truth despite itself? Evidently he does. Lenoe is extremely contradictory concerning Khrushchev and everything he did. Having proven to his readers that the Khrushchev-sponsored study of the Kirov assassination was dishonest from the beginning, Lenoe nevertheless assures us that it arrived at the truth. Lenoe then makes the further assumption that the other research Khrushchev's men did — the research that, supposedly, established Stalin's "heinous crimes"

and the "collaboration ... in mass murder" of his principal associates — that research was, somehow, honest.

For example, after examining in some detail the way in which Khrushchev's men biased the Kirov inquiry Lenoë says the following:

No one was "covering" for Stalin at this moment — the Khrushchevites revealed many of his most heinous crimes, as well as the collaboration of Molotov, Kaganovich, Malenkov, Beria, and others in mass murder. (604)

### **Khrushchev Lied**

Lenoë should have known better. To this point not a single one of the accusations of Khrushchev and his men of criminal behavior or mass murder against Stalin and his associates has been verified. For example, every single one of the accusations Khrushchev made against Stalin and Beria in the "Secret Speech" is false. Every allegation against Stalin made by Aleksandr Shelepin in his speech to the 22nd Party Congress is false. Marshal Zhukov was provided with dishonestly edited documents to read aloud at the June 1957 Central Committee Plenum at which Khrushchev ousted Stalin supporters Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich, and Shepilov.

Khrushchev never stated outright his real reasons for his mendacious attack on Stalin and others. Nor, of course, did Khrushchev ever publish the evidence to support his claims, while the little documentation he did cite has since been proven to have been falsified. Once we recognize this' immense deception for what it is the question returns with even greater force: Why did Khrushchev do this?

A generation later Mikhail Gorbachev carried out an essentially similar' attack on Stalin but with a much more overt motive: to justify capitalist-style market economics into the Soviet system and, ultimately, to do away with its socialist aspects altogether. Gorbachev's actions suggest that Khrushchev may have been up to something similar but at an earlier, stage of the process. Other, or additional, explanations are possible. Some have

suggested that Khrushchev may have wanted to stop the erosion of power away from Party First Secretaries towards the Soviet government.

Though somewhat suspicious of Khrushchev Lenoë accepts the Gorbachev-era studies completely. This means that he also accepts the Khrushchev-era conclusions despite his inconsistent expressions of distrust of them. He embraces Kirilina's book, which bases itself upon Gorbachev-era materials. Kirilina also proceeds from the preconceived idea that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman", without even the pretense that she is trying to resolve a question that has not been previously answered.

Her whole book is an exercise in "assuming that which ought to be proven."

Lenoë claims to be trying to solve the Kirov murder "mystery". But in fact Lenoë did not approach the Kirov assassination as a crime to be solved or a problem to which the solution is not known. Instead Lenoë wrote his book to present the best possible case for a preconceived idea: the "lone gunman" hypothesis. He ignores almost all of the evidence that is incompatible with this hypothesis. He twists the evidence he does deal with to try to force that evidence to appear compatible with the "lone gunman" hypothesis. In the end Lenoë utterly fails to find any evidence that supports this hypothesis, yet he still concludes it is correct. This means Lenoë had decided what his conclusion *must* be before he did his research.

The Kirov case opened the door to the rest of the high politics of the 1930s. NKVD investigators kept "pulling at loose ends", as Iagoda put it, and kept uncovering more and more conspirators, and conspiracies. We can trace this process in a general way despite the continued refusal of Russian authorities to release the documentation. Meanwhile more than the statutory 75 years have passed since the Kirov murder and trial, the period after which such materials are, apparently, supposed to be declassified in today's Russia. Yet the Russian authorities continue to keep many of the Kirov assassination materials secret. Although we do not know why, one possible explanation is that the evidence, once made public, would definitively disprove the "lone gunman" hypothesis.

In the previous chapter we gave a brief account of how the "Kremlin Affair" evolved from the Kirov case and how it began to lead to what was

to become the First Moscow Trial of August 1936. In pretrial interrogations and at the August 1936 Trial Sokol'nikov was named, along with some Trotskyite military figures. That led investigators to the January 1937 Trial, at which yet more figures were named, and that led to the Tukhachevsky Affair of May-June 1937 and ultimately to the 1938 Moscow Trial. Meanwhile all of these events, but especially the Tukhachevsky Affair, led directly to the "Ezhovshchina", or "Great Terror", of July 1937 to November, 1938. That ended only when Ezhov himself was persuaded to resign from his post as Commissar of the NKVD — in effect, when he gave up on the chances that his own bloody conspiracy would succeed.

### **The Big Coverup of Soviet History**

When Khrushchev assumed power in 1953 the revolution of 1917 was 36 years old. Kirov's murder had occurred only 19 years earlier, the Moscow Trials and Ezhovshchina more recently still. Khrushchev undertook the incredibly bold task of completely rewriting a history that was very recent and known to tens of millions of people. And his "rewriting" was a drastic one. Stalin had been touted as a hero by tens of millions of people within the USSR, to say nothing of hundreds of millions around the world. Khrushchev did not go half-way — he made a frontal assault on Stalin, and thereby on recent Soviet history.

In 1961 Khrushchev masterminded a second attack on Stalin at the 22nd Party Congress. This attack was, if anything, sharper than the one he had proposed five and one-half years earlier. This time it was followed by a veritable flood of officially-sponsored historical works in which Khrushchev's reversal of historical assessments was elaborated. This wealth of material became the source for anticommunist historiography for the next quarter-century and more, until Gorbachev sponsored an even more extensive and still sharper attack on Soviet history. Gorbachev went further in that he included Khrushchev and his contemporaries, the "anti-Stalinists" of a generation before, as secondary villains.

The "Gorbachev" paradigm of Soviet history is a version of the "Khrushchev" paradigm, which was the version of Soviet history almost universal outside the USSR and communist bloc during and after

Khrushchev's day. This paradigm of Soviet history — elsewhere I have called it, for the sake of brevity, the "anti-Stalin" paradigm — remains the "mainstream" model today. Most research is done in such a manner as to fit more or less seamlessly into this paradigm. This paradigm is rarely challenged in academic journals and books. Both Lenoe and Kirilina tailor their arguments and conclusions to fit comfortably within this paradigm. The only "left" version of Soviet history permitted in mainstream historiography is the Trotskyite version, which privileges Leon Trotsky to an absurd degree but otherwise partakes of all the anti-Stalin myths of the mainstream anticommunist paradigm.

But this mainstream "Khrushchev — Cold War — Gorbachev — Trotskyite — anti-Stalin" paradigm fares very poorly when the evidence for it is carefully examined. It is made up of a number of assertions none of which can be demonstrated by the evidence available now. This is the Soviet history of the Stalin period that is widely "known" and widely taught, and that provides the framework for most of the research on Soviet history that is done today.

The Kirov murder is a foundational part of this paradigm. As Lenoe noted with respect to Khrushchev's men: if Nikolaev and the other men convicted with him really were part of a clandestine terrorist Zinovievite conspiracy, then the possibility exists that the rest of the alleged conspiracies of the 1930s were true, more or less as they were described at the time. That would not only necessitate a rewriting of Soviet history of the 1930s. It would mean throwing out the whole "anti-Stalin" paradigm that has structured Soviet historiography in the West for 50 years, and that in the late USSR and Russia for more than 20 years.

There is a huge individual and institutional "investment" in this historical paradigm. It is fundamental to the careers of a great many historians. It is a component, even an essential, part of the Cold War narrative of communism. It is part of the foundational historical mythology of all the post-Soviet states. A paradigm such as this one serves powerful capitalist interests, which are always eager to embrace arguments that the exploitation of man by man cannot be ended, that attempts to end it lead to even greater horrors, that those who want to change the world through communist

revolution are really the enemies of mankind because they can only bring out greater suffering and destruction. Thus the "anti-Stalin" paradigm performs a great service for the cause of exploitation and inequality.

Like all historical paradigms the "anti-Stalin" paradigm is relatively impervious to refutation by research. No single piece of research can overturn a paradigm. At the same time the paradigm acts to contain research. Research results that do not fit within the paradigm are likely to be simply ignored or, at best, considered marginal by professional historians within the institutional structure of knowledge production — universities and other research institutes generally.

The present work, like the work we have published previously and the work of a few other researchers, constitutes a frontal challenge to and rejection of this mainstream "anti-Stalin" paradigm. We predict it will be ignored by some and marginalized by others. But it will also be welcomed — by those who are looking not for an elaboration of the mainstream anticommunist paradigm, but for the truth. It is to those readers we look for comment and criticism.

## Appendix One — The Issue of Torture

In the opening pages of his book Lenoe refers to what he terms "layers of evidence in the assassination case, the most important of which are:

1. Pre-murder documents related to the lives of Kirov and Nikolaev.
2. The materials of the December 1934 -January 1935 investigation of the killing [of Kirov].
3. Documents from the renewed "investigation" of the Great Terror years (1936-1938), many of which are witness statements given under torture or the threat of same. (8)

Lenoe uses no quotation marks around the word "investigation" in reference to the December 1934 — January 1935 investigation, but does use them in reference to the 1936-1938 investigation. He does not explain this variation. Likewise Lenoe does not allege "torture or the threat of torture" in the case of the 1934-35 investigation, but does so in the case of that of 1936-1938.

The reader of Lenoe's book will discover that Lenoe does examine a lot of the evidence of the December 1934 investigation. Lenoe suggests that some of the confessions made by suspects in December 1934 might have been due to torture, though he presents no evidence that any of them were.

The confessions of a number of the defendants at the December 1934 Kirov trial are disconcerting to Lenoe. If they were genuine, then Lenoe's entire thesis — that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" — falls to the ground. Yet Lenoe can produce no evidence that they are not genuine — for example, that they were false and either "scripted" or otherwise forced from the defendants by "torture or the threat of same" (Lenoe 8), by threats against family members, or by some other means. In a classic example of "begging the question" Lenoe simply assumes that the confessions of the December 1934 defendants were false. Lenoe never examines any -not a single one — of the many documents from 1936 — 1938 that bear on the Kirov murder. To any objective reader who has even a passing familiarity with the Kirov assassination this is an astonishing omission, one that demands an explanation.



We suggest that Lenoe uses the allegation of torture to avoid examining a great deal of evidence that would, if examined, disprove the thesis of his book that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" and that all the rest of those convicted of participation in Kirov's murder were innocent, "framed" by Stalin and/or the NKVD. That is to say, Lenoe employs "torture" as a "smokescreen" or a "bogeyman", either to obscure the fact that Lenoe has avoided examining huge amounts of important evidence, or to "frighten" the reader into acquiescing with Lenoe's decision to assume all this material was "fabricated" or forced unwillingly from the defendants, without Lenoe's having to give any argument or evidence at all that this was the case.

The bogeyman of "torture" has been employed before this by those who write about the history of the USSR during the 1930s. We believe Lenoe is doing just that in this book. In order to dispel the fog of confusion surrounding the concept of "torture" we need to examine it more closely.

### **Torture and the Historical Problems Related To It<sup>164</sup>**

<sup>164</sup> The following paragraphs are taken from Grover Furr, Khrushchev Lied 151-3. See also the section "The Charge of 'Torture' As A Smokescreen" in Furr, "Evidence of Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan", *Cultural Logic* 2009, 151-153. At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2009/Furr.pdf>

From Stalin's day on no one has denied that many prisoners arrested on political charges during the period that Nikolai Ezhov was head (People's Commissar) of the NKVD, particularly in the period 1937-1938, were tortured. "Rehabilitation" courts in Khrushchev and post-Khrushchev times have often "rehabilitated" defendants on the basis that they were tortured. Normally this took the form of declaring their convictions invalid. In a judicial procedure, even in the USSR during Stalin's time, evidence obtained from a defendant by torture was invalid and could not legally be used at trial.

The fact that a defendant was tortured does not mean that defendant was innocent. It is not evidence that the defendant was innocent. But it is often erroneously assumed to be. In reality, there are many different possibilities:

- A person may be guilty, be tortured, and confess;
- A person may be guilty, be tortured, and not confess;
- A person may be innocent, be tortured, and confess (e.g. in order to stop the torture);
- A person may be innocent, be tortured, and still not confess.
- A person may be innocent, not be tortured, and still confess guilt to another crime. (Examples of this occur in the Rehabilitation documents).
- A person may have been tortured, but be found guilty by other evidence, such as testimony of other defendants or physical evidence. Other testimony, from other individuals, and other evidence, usually come into play.

In addition, it is important to bear in mind that any "confession" may be honest — i.e. the person confessing is trying to tell the truth as he remembers it -or dishonest (the person confessing is deliberately lying).

Any confession may be truthful or untruthful: the fact that someone tells the truth as he remembers it does not mean that what he says really is truthful. An example of this is Bulanov's confession at the March 1938 Moscow Trial concerning the death of Borisov. Bulanov thought he remembered that Iagoda was involved in arranging for Borisov to be killed. But in the archival, i.e. original, version Bulanov admits that his memory is "rather confused" (*dovol'no sumburnyi*). And sure enough, Bulanov remembered incorrectly.

Establishing the fact that someone really has been tortured is not always easy. The mere fact that someone claims he confessed because he was tortured is hardly foolproof. There are many reasons why people might want to retract a confession of guilt. Claiming one was tortured is a way of doing this while preserving some dignity. To be reasonably certain a person was tortured we need further evidence of the fact, such as a statement or confession by a person who actually did the torturing, a corroborating witness, or physical injuries consistent with torture.

When there is no evidence at all that a defendant was tortured objective scholars have no business concluding that he was tortured. This obvious point is often overlooked, probably because a "paradigm" that everybody

was tortured, and thus that everybody was innocent, acts powerfully on the minds of both researchers and readers.

For our purposes all this should just serve to remind us of the need for evidence.

- We can't assume a person was tortured without evidence that he was.
- We can't assume a person was guilty or innocent just because he was tortured, much less on the basis of a mere allegation that he was tortured.

Most important, we can't assume that testimony was obtained through torture because that testimony is inconvenient for us or contradicts our own hypothesis. This is in fact what Lenoe and Egge do, time and again. Rather than consider each piece of evidence, including the evidence, if any, that it was obtained by torture or threat, Lenoe refuses to examine any of the pretrial or trial evidence of the three Moscow Trials of August 1936, January 1937, and March 1938. In effect, he simply rejects this evidence out of hand. A great deal of this evidence directly concerns the assassination of Kirov but all of it tends to disprove Lenoe's hypothesis that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman."

On page 9, Lenoe writes:

During the Great Terror NKVD officers tortured witnesses until they provided testimony supporting fantastic charges of conspiracy against former party leaders. This highly unreliable and self-contradictory body of testimony muddied the waters of the Kirov case...

Lenoe displays a lack of objectivity here. For example, he employs the word "fantastic" applied to the charges against the Moscow Trial defendants and others in a subjective manner. This is the logical fallacy known as the "argument from incredulity", which takes the following form:

P is too incredible (or I cannot imagine how P could possibly be true); therefore P must be false.<sup>165</sup>

<sup>165</sup> See for example, the discussion of the Argument from incredulity at [http://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Argument\\_from\\_incredulity](http://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Argument_from_incredulity)

This is a form of the argument from ignorance. The truth or falsehood of a hypothesis or proposition must be demonstrated by evidence. It cannot depend upon whether a given individual can "believe" it or not for, to quote Hamlet, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, / Than are dreamt of in your philosophy." There is nothing objectively "fantastic" about the confessions. The word "fantastic" is a statement about the person who is using it, not about the testimony itself.

It appears that Lenoe is attempting, through the use of rhetorical language, to persuade his reader to allow him to conjure away his obligation to examine all the evidence. His use of the words "highly unreliable" and "self-contradictory" are also indicative of deception. Lenoe does not inform us by what measure he has gauged the degree of "reliability" — whatever that means — of testimony. Of course, he has not done so. Lenoe is also guilty of the opposite fallacy: declaring someone's work "reliable" because it is convenient for his, Lenoe's, hypothesis (see the chapter "Iurii Sedov - "reliable researcher").

As we show elsewhere in this study the evidence about the Kirov assassination that we find in the transcripts of the three Moscow Trials is damning to Lenoe's hypothesis that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman." Rather than examine this evidence carefully and try to assess its strengths and weaknesses, Lenoe prefers to simply dismiss it with words like "tortured", "fantastic", "unreliable", and "self-contradictory."

The term "self-contradictory" hides a fallacy too. For we ought to suspect forgery if statements by different conspirators about the same events were identical in detail — that is, if they did not exhibit contradictions. This adjective, along with "unconvincing", occur in Khrushchev- and Gorbachev-era "rehabilitation" reports, in which the goal was to declare former oppositionists "innocent" without evidence. The same is true about testimony by a single suspect. If a suspect at first denies his guilt and then proceeds to admit guilt gradually — a common practice — then of course his later confessions will "contradict" his earlier confessions, and his confessions as a whole will be "self-contradictory." In reality, "self-

contradiction" of this kind is to be expected, and it would in fact be more suspicious if none were observed.

Lenoe's use of the word "torture" here represents the first example of a practice which we call "the use of torture as a smokescreen". Nowhere does Lenoe even attempt to demonstrate that testimony obtained through torture was material, much less crucial, in the prosecutions against former party leaders in the matter of Kirov's murder. We shall examine some more instances of Lenoe's allegations of torture as a "smokescreen" behind which to obscure his refusal to study evidence highly relevant to Kirov's murder but fatal to his own hypothesis that Nikolaev acted alone.

On page 17, discussing the Bush administration's use of torture in 2009, Lenoe refers to

...the use of torture by Stalin and his secret police to extract false but politically useful 'confessions' of terrorist conspiracies.

It is incorrect to refer to the NKVD as "his" — meaning Stalin's — NKVD, as Lenoe does here. To date scholarship has uncovered no evidence whatever — not a single example — that Stalin or those loyal to him used torture "to extract false but politically useful 'confessions' of terrorist activity". Lenoe's use of the word "his" here is an attempt to imply that Stalin ordered that innocent persons be tortured into giving false confessions when — to repeat — no scholar, no matter how anticommunist or anti-Stalin, has ever uncovered a shred of evidence to support that charge.

Moreover, if we did have some examples that would not mean that "everyone was tortured". Much less would it mean that "everyone whose testimony contradicts Lenoe's hypothesis gave that testimony 'under torture or the threat of same.'"

It is certainly true that the NKVD under Ezhov used torture widely to get innocent people to sign scripted confessions of guilt. We have a lot of evidence of this now in the form of testimony by former NKVD men themselves, those who tortured or who witnessed torture. All of this evidence is from the post-Ezhov period when, under Beria as Commissar of

the NKVD, Ezhov's horrifying practices were being examined, NKVD men arrested, tried, and convicted, and cases of condemned people being reviewed. That is, much of what we know about the torture of suspects in the Soviet Union during the 1930s comes from Beria's investigations which were, of course, supported by Stalin. Ezhov was involved in a conspiracy to overthrow Stalin and the Party and government leadership and also to assassinate Stalin. I have collected all the texts of Ezhov's confessions that have been published in various sources so the readers can study them for themselves.<sup>166</sup>

<sup>166</sup> The original Russian texts are at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhovpokazaniia.html> (English translations at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhovinterrogs.html> )

Lenoe fails to cite a single instance of the use of torture to "extract false confessions" of Moscow Trial defendants material to the Kirov murder case. This is another example of "torture as smokescreen." Lenoe assumes all of this testimony is false without studying any of it. He employs the unsupported allegation of torture as a smokescreen behind which Lenoe disposes of all the post-1934 evidence that contradicts his hypothesis.

Lenoe's allegations of torture to avoid discussion of the Moscow Trial evidence is also a "tell" — a tacit admission that he recognizes the contradiction between this evidence and his preconceived idea that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman" and that no opposition conspiracies took place. In this section we will examine a number of instances of this practice of Lenoe's.

On page 313 Lenoe asks: "Why did Zvezdov and other purported members of the 'Leningrad Center' confess?" and continues:

Then there was physical abuse. Beatings and other direct physical torture were not officially permitted by the NKVD leadership at this time, but they **undoubtedly** occurred. Interrogators **certainly** used other forms of torture ... (emphasis added, GF)

Lenoe tries to use this allegation of torture to cast doubt upon the confessions of Zvezdov and other defendants solely because those confessions are fatal for his "lone gunman" hypothesis. Lenoe should have informed his readers at this point that he has found no evidence at all that torture was used against them. Instead he goes on to use the words "undoubtedly" and "certainly" without any justification whatever. Lenoe fails to even consider the possibility that Zvezdov was telling the truth.

There is no evidence of torture used against Moscow Trial defendants. We have pointed out elsewhere with reference to the case of Valentin Astrov, a follower of Bukharin's who was interrogated about Bukharin and who confessed against him. In articles written after the end of the USSR, at a time when he was free to say anything at all, an aged Astrov insistently denied that he was tortured by the NKVD. Indeed, Astrov asserted that the NKVD investigators were respectful and never even called him "ty".

On page 369 Lenoe quotes, from an archival document, defendant Mandel'shtam's explanation, given during the December 28-29 1934 trial, for retracting part of a confession of December 19. Mandel'shtam allegedly said: "On December 19 I was in such a condition that I would have signed anything." Lenoe then writes: "The implication would seem to be that he had been tortured."

In fact, it is next to impossible that he had been tortured. He would have certainly said that to the court, since it would be the strongest and most convincing reason for retracting one's confession. During 1937-1938 a great many persons testified at their trials that they had been tortured. This testimony is recorded in the transcripts, portions of which have been quoted in the works of a few privileged researchers who have had access to them.<sup>167</sup>

<sup>167</sup> So what else could Mandel'shtam have meant? In the first place, it meant that he was withdrawing the confession in question. In Soviet law the defendant had to confirm any confessions made before trial, or that evidence could not be used against him at trial. This does not mean that the confession was either true or false, only that the defendant wished to withdraw it. That would force the prosecution either to get him to retract his

withdrawal or to rely upon other evidence -for example, the testimony of his co-conspirators.

It is common for people under intense interrogation to confess to things that they later wish to retract. For example: elsewhere in this study we examine Iagoda's testimony at the 1938 Moscow Trial. It seems clear from the published transcript that under intense interrogation Iagoda momentarily agreed that he was an "accomplice" in Kirov's murder. But later in the transcript he repeatedly and insistently denies his complicity, as he also had done during pretrial interrogations published in 1997.

On page 468 Lenoë writes "Tukhachevsky and his fellows were tortured and shot." This is simply false. Lenoë cites no evidence that the marshal was tortured because none exists.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>168</sup> Moreover, there is a great deal of evidence that they were guilty, including evidence from outside the USSR.

On page 573 Lenoë refers to "evidence" (in scare quotes) that was "extracted under torture in the process of fabricating a case against arrested NKVD chief Yagoda." Lenoë never even identifies, much less examines, a single piece of such "evidence". Nor does Lenoë provide any evidence whatsoever of torture. More importantly, he ignores all the evidence in the confessions by Iagoda himself, refusing even to tell his readers that it exists. We examine that evidence in a separate chapter.

On page 601 Lenoë writes:

...the 1937 testimony of the driver and guards who accompanied Borisov on December 2 was extracted under torture, and was therefore untrustworthy.

Lenoë provides no evidence to support this statement (and even if he had, it would not prove that the testimony was false). But in any case the issue is whether Iagoda and the bloc of Rights, Zinovievites, and Trotskyites conspired in Kirov's murder. The issue of Borisov is a detail that is irrelevant in this context. Whether Borisov was or was not a part of the



conspiracy to kill Kirov — and no one today thinks that he was — does not bear on the issue of whether the conspiracy existed.

### **"Torture" and evidence**

It is indicative of Lenoe's use of the torture issue to confuse matters that he states that "testimony ... extracted under torture ... was therefore untrustworthy." Lenoe should know, and convey to his readers, that ALL testimony is "untrustworthy" in that no testimony should be simply "trusted". All testimony, like all evidence of any kind, has to be carefully studied.

Moreover, it is not the case that testimony *not* given under torture is "more trustworthy" than testimony given under torture. People who are tortured may be lying — but people who are not tortured may also be lying. Simply knowing whether someone was "tortured" or not does not help us determine whether the testimony they gave was truthful or not.

On page 610 Lenoe is discomfited by the fact that in January 1961 Karl Ivanov, "an officer who sometimes guarded Kirov in the early 1930s" reconfirmed his testimony from the 1930s. Lenoe comments:

Obviously Shatunovskaya's practice of asking witnesses to confirm their testimony from the Terror years led to the perpetuation of falsehoods extracted under torture.

This is far from "obvious", as Lenoe would have it. Lenoe does not know that the 1930s testimony in question was obtained "under torture" or not, nor does he suggest that Ivanov's 1961 testimony was obtained "under torture." This would appear to be simply a chance for Lenoe to gratuitously raise the "torture bogeyman" again. He cites no evidence at all that Ivanov had been tortured, or that people were confirming testimony in the post-Stalin years that they had only made because of torture in the 1930s.

On page 622 Lenoe writes:

[Klimov] made extensive use of 1937-1938 depositions from Gubin, Zaporozhets, other Leningrad NKVD officers, Yagoda, and Yagoda's

forme'r deputy Bulanov, extracted under torture and used to incriminate Yagoda at the March 1938 trial.

Lenoe cites no evidence that Iagoda or Bulanov were tortured because there is none. On the contrary, as he did during the March 1938 Moscow Trial Iagoda made a differentiated confession — he confessed to some crimes during his pretrial interrogations but stoutly refused to confess to others, despite the efforts of his interrogators. This behavior is not consistent with a hypothesis that Iagoda was tortured.

Lenoe ignores the very extensive pretrial confessions of Iagoda that bear directly on the Kirov murder case, and of course ignores the testimony at the March 1938 trial as well. As for "depositions" of Gubin and Zaporozhets, none of them has been published and Lenoe does not quote any of them. But whether they were "tortured" or not is irrelevant. Iagoda's testimony implicates both of them directly. We examine Iagoda's testimony in a separate section.

### **Evidence that torture was not used**

The *only* piece of evidence that supports Lenoe's hypothesis and conclusion that Nikolaev acted alone are the texts of his early interrogations. These texts present significant problems that Lenoe hides from his readers; we examine them elsewhere in this study.

On page 289 Lenoe writes the following, referring to December 7 and 8 1934:

He [Nikolaev] declared a hunger strike, and resisted leaving his cell. To get him to interrogations the guards had to put him in a straitjacket and carry him down the hall while he struggled and shouted, "It is I, Nikolaev, they're torturing me, remember me!"

This is an important moment for Lenoe's hypothesis, since it is the *only* reference to torture in his examination of the December 1934 investigation of Kirov's murder. By December 6 Nikolaev had already renounced his early confessions that he acted alone. Now he was confessing to being a

part of an underground terrorist Zinovievite conspiracy. Since Nikolaev's early confessions constitute the sole evidence that supports the "lone gunman" hypothesis it is vital for the "lone gunman" theory that Nikolaev's later confessions be discredited.

Lenoe's source for Nikolaev's words about torture is an article in the popular magazine *Trud* of December 4, 1990 by IUrii Sedov.<sup>169</sup> However, Sedov gives no source for Nikolaev's words. We do not know whether they are from an official report by NKVD investigators or represent only a rumor — a fact Lenoe fails to tell his readers. Even if we knew and had access to the source, a study of that source would be essential before we could state it as a fact that this incident had occurred. Even if it did happen, that does not mean that Nikolaev was actually "tortured". There is no other evidence that Nikolaev was tortured, and Lenoe does not repeat the allegation.

<sup>169</sup> We examine Lenoe's further use of Sedov elsewhere in this study.

And we must remember that even if it were proven that Nikolaev was tortured — whatever that term means — this would not prove that he did not tell the truth. As we pointed out above, there is no correlation between torture / lack of torture and falsehood / truth. A person may be tortured and still tell the truth; a person who is not tortured may lie; and so on.

Lenoe repeats much later allegations that Nikolaev had been promised lenient treatment for himself and/or his family. Lenoe claims that these promises were "in exchange for giving the testimony they [the NKVD interrogators] desired". (288) But Lenoe is making this up. He has no evidence whatsoever to support these statements. He does not cite any testimony that the investigators demanded false confessions from Nikolaev. In any case it is legal even in the United States today for investigators to lie to suspects, give them better food or treatment, etc., in order to elicit information. This is not a form of compulsion, much less of "torture."

Lenoe reproduces on page 343 (Document #70) a note of December 21, 1934 from Lev G. Mironov, an NKVD chief, to investigator Genrikh S. Liushkov asking that he try to ascertain certain facts about Nikolaev. It is important to note — though Lenoe does not — that these are not "leading questions", but requests for facts.

On page 378 Lenoë admits that, on February 3, 1935 Agranov, chief of the now-concluded Kirov murder investigation, said "we were not able to prove that the 'Moscow Center' knew about the preparations for a terrorist attack on Comrade Kirov."<sup>170</sup> This constitutes additional evidence that no torture was used, since presumably at least one of the January 1935 defendants would have "cracked" under torture. It is, therefore, strong evidence that the defendants in the December 1934 Kirov trial testified voluntarily. A number of them confessed fully, as we discuss elsewhere in this study.

<sup>170</sup> Kirilina, 366, cites the original Russian text of Agranov's words.

Though he does not discuss the Moscow Trial testimony concerning Kirov's murder Lenoë does note that Bukharin and Rykov, while admitting their guilt to many capital offenses, vigorously denied any part in Kirov's assassination. (479) He does not seem to realize that this in fact constitutes evidence that they were not tortured or threatened.

## **Appendix Two — Texts of Primary Documents Ignored by All Previous Writers**

This section will contain the following documents that are relevant to the December 1936 Kirov trial and have not been published before anywhere. All translations are my own.

NOTE: For English pages choose Character Encoding Western (ISO-8859-1). For Russian page choose Character Encoding Cyrillic (Windows-1251)

- Kotolynov interrogation of December 12 1934 (English)
  - <http://tinyurl.com/kotolyn121234>
- Tsar'kov interrogation of December 13, 1934 (English)
  - <http://tinyurl.com/tsar-kov121334>
- Kotolynov interrogation of December 19, 1934 (English)
  - <http://tinyurl.com/kotolyn121934>
- Gorshenin interrogation of December 21, 1934 (English)
  - <http://tinyurl.com/gorshenin122134>

In addition, I include the following three documents. All are previously unpublished and all contain material references to the Kirov murder.

- Zinoviev interrogation of July 28, 1936
  - <http://tinyurl.com/zinoviev28jul36> (in Russian)
  - <http://tinyurl.com/zinoviev072836> (in English)
- Kamenev interrogation of August 10, 1936
  - <http://tinyurl.com/kamenev10aug36> (in Russian)
  - <http://tinyurl.com/kamenev081036> (in English)
- Zinoviev interrogation of August ?, 1936 (date not readable)
  - <http://tinyurl.com/zinovievaug36> (in Russian)
  - <http://tinyurl.com/zinoviev0836> (in English)

I have put the following documents on the Internet because they are important and hard to obtain:

- Nikolaev's First Confession, as in Kirilina's book;
  - <http://tinyurl.com/nikolaev120134kirilina> (in Russian)

- Nikolaev's First Confession, as in Lenoë's book;
  - <http://tinyurl.com/nikolaev120134lenoe> (in English not available in Russian)
- The "Indictment" (Obvinitel'noe zakliuchenie).
  - <http://tinyurl.com/indictment-russ> (in Russian)

## Bibliography and Sources

Many primary and secondary sources were consulted in preparing this book. Most are in Russian only; as of the date of publication very few are available in English. This is one reason for the many quotations from primary and secondary sources in the text. All translations are by the author unless otherwise noted in the text.

### *Editor*

The Bibliography has been put online in order to reduce the length, and the cost, of this book. It may be found at

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/kirov\\_bibl.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/kirov_bibl.html)

The significant errors in the first two printings, may be found at

<http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/errataaddenda.html>

## Sources

<sup>1</sup> In Russian the Party's title was "VKP(b)" (Vsesoiuznaia Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia (bolshevikov), or "All-Union Communist Party (bolshevik)"; informally, it was still referred to as the "Bolshevik Party", "Bolsheviks", etc.

<sup>2</sup> See Grover Furr and Vladimir L. Bobrov, "Stephen Cohen's Biography of Bukharin: A Study in the Falsehood of Khrushchev-Era 'Revelations'". *Cultural Logic* 2010, page 5. At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2010/Furr.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Egge and Lenoe were apparently unaware of each other's work and do not reference each other. Both cite Kirilina.

<sup>4</sup> Vyshinsky, A. IA. *Teoriia sudebnykh dokazatel'stv v sovetskom prave* ("Theory of Trial Evidence in Soviet Law"), Section 3. At [http://scilib.narod.ru/Other/Vyshinsky/v.htm#1\\_3](http://scilib.narod.ru/Other/Vyshinsky/v.htm#1_3)

<sup>5</sup> *Genrikh Iagoda. Narkom vnytrennikh del SSR. General'nyi komissar gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti. Sbornik dokumentov. Kazan', 1997, p. 184.*

<sup>6</sup> A "tell" (short for "telegraph") is an unconscious gesture or expression by which a poker player gives a sign to other players whether his hand is good or bad. This makes it impossible to "bluff" his opponents, an essential skill in poker.

<sup>7</sup> We will return to this point in the chapter "Bukharin and Kotolynov."

<sup>8</sup> Liushkov was lying in this article, which was written for propaganda purposes, as we shall show.

<sup>9</sup> IU. N. Zhukov. "Sledstvie I sudebnye protsessy po delu ob ubiystve Kirova." *Voprosy istorii* 2, 2000, p. 40. (Zhukov 2000)

<sup>10</sup> We consider Lenoe's anticommunist bias in another chapter.



<sup>11</sup> Pospelov was an early supporter of Khrushchev, who promoted him to Secretary of the Central Committee and then Candidate Member of the Presidium of the CPSU (formerly named the "Politburo"). Like Khrushchev himself Pospelov had been an enthusiastic promoter of the "cult of personality" around Stalin.

<sup>12</sup> For a brief overview of this question see Mark Tauger. "Famine in Russian History". *Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History, Volume 10: Supplement*. (Gulf Breeze, FL: Academic International Press, 2011), 79-92. Tauger's own works on the famine are cited at page 92. Tauger cites E.P. Borisenkov and V.M. Pasketskii. *Tysiachtletniaia letopis' neobychainkh iavlenii prirody*. ("Thousand-year Chronicle of Extraordinary Natural Events'). Moscow: "Mysl", 1988. Wheatcroft argues that the 1946-1947 famine was due to factors beyond the Soviet government's control: poor weather conditions worldwide and the terrible destruction of the war. Wheatcroft, Stephen G. "The Soviet Famine of 1946-1947, the Weather and Human Agency in Historical Perspective." *Europe-Asia Studies*, 64:6, 987-1005

<sup>13</sup> "Prigovor" (Sentence), undated January 16, 1935), p. 6. In Volkogonov Archive, LOC. I have put a facsimile online at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/r/research/prigovor011635.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> We cannot discuss this question exhaustively in the present study. However, far from killing millions collectivization arguably saved millions of lives by sparing the USSR future famines. As for the NKVD's killing of a little fewer than 700,000 people in 1937-1938, the evidence shows that in fact Nikolai Ezhov did it without Stalin's knowledge. See the beginning of the next chapter for a little more on this question.

<sup>15</sup> We discuss a little of the evidence against those senior Party officials whom Khrushchev mentioned in his "Secret Speech" to the 20th Party Congress in Grover Furr. *Khrushchev Lied: The Evidence That Every "Revelation" of Stalin's (and Beria's) Crimes in Nikita Khrushchev's Infamous "Secret Speech" to the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on February 25, 1956, is Provably False*. Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press Media LLC, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> We know that Ezhov fabricated cases against a great many persons during 1937-1938, but no evidence connects Stalin with such fabrications.

<sup>17</sup> Much of the scholarship on the famine of 1932-33 is highly tendentious and even deliberately falsified. For the best, most objective and qualified research see Davies, R.W. and Stephen G. Wheatcroft. *The Years of Hunger. Soviet Agriculture, 1931-1933*. Palgrave Macmillan 2009 (2004) and Tauger, Mark. Review of R.W. Davies and Stephen G. Wheatcroft, *The Years of Hunger: Soviet Agriculture, 1931-1933*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. At [http://eh.net/book\\_reviews/years-hunger-soviet-agriculture-1931-1933](http://eh.net/book_reviews/years-hunger-soviet-agriculture-1931-1933) Wheatcroft and Davies believe that bad weather was "a further major factor" in the famines. Tauger believes the poor weather was the single most important factor. Borisenkov and Pasketskii, previously cited, have shown that serious crop failures and famines had occurred every 2-4 years with frightening regularity for at least a millennium.

<sup>18</sup> Apparently Robert Eikhe, and then a number of other First Secretaries, approached Stalin and the Politburo after the June 1937 Central Committee Plenum and asked for these special powers to deal with conspiracies, rebellions, and revolts in their areas. This led to the Politburo Decree "On Anti-Soviet elements" of July 2, 1937 which authorized all First Secretaries to arrest "kulaks and criminals" who had returned to their areas, shoot the "most dangerous" of them, and exile the rest to other areas. For the next year or more Stalin was flooded with reports of conspiracies and revolts from all over the USSR, some of which have been published. According to Khaustov, a very anti-Stalin researcher and one of the compilers of several of these invaluable document collections, Stalin believed these reports: "The most terrible thing was that Stalin made decisions on the basis of confessions that were inventions of certain NKVD workers. Stalin's reactions showed that he took these confessions completely seriously." *Lubianka. Sovetskaia elita na stalinskoi golgofo. 1937-1938*. Ed. V.N. Khaustov (Moscow: MDF, 2011, p. 6. Now online at [http://www.k2x2.info/politika/lubjanka\\_sovetskaja\\_yelita\\_na\\_stalinskoi\\_golgofo\\_1937\\_1938/p4.php](http://www.k2x2.info/politika/lubjanka_sovetskaja_yelita_na_stalinskoi_golgofo_1937_1938/p4.php)

<sup>19</sup> See Grover Furr, "The "Official" Version of the Katyn Massacre Disproven?" *Socialism and Democracy* 2 (2) August 2013, 96-129 for a

report on discoveries that refute the "official" version.

<sup>20</sup> See Grover Furr, "The Moscow Trials and the "Great Terror" of 1937-1938: What the Evidence Shows." July 31, 2010. At [https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/trials\\_ezhovshchina\\_update0710.html](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/trials_ezhovshchina_update0710.html)

<sup>21</sup> "Skoree vsego, Nakhaev byl rasstrelan."

<sup>22</sup> The rough draft of the Politburo resolution proposing that Zinov'ev and Kamenev be reinstated in the Party and not have to pass through the "purge", or review of membership, then taking place, may be seen at <http://www.rusarchives.ru/evants/exhibitions/xviiexp/217.shtml> It appears that the handwriting is Stalin's. The resolution was passed on December 12, 1933, one month before the 17th Party Congress.

<sup>23</sup> Moreover, the fact that Nikolaev may have claimed he was being tortured does not prove that he was in fact tortured, much less that what he testified was false. We discuss the issue of "torture as smokescreen" elsewhere in the present book.

<sup>24</sup> Ezhov might be considered part of "the Stalinist leadership" -but so was Stalin, of course. Leno's use of this evasive term suggests he may be aware of this contradiction and concealing it from his readers.

<sup>25</sup> Grover Furr, "Evidence of Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan." *Cultural Logic* (2009), at <http://clogic.eserver.org/2009/Furr.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> There is a great deal of documentation for these statements. See, for example, Furr, Khrushchev Lied 250-257.

<sup>27</sup> For a short discussion of this in English see Knight, Beria, Chapter 9. There are now many discussions of Beria and his reform activities in his "100 days" from March to June 1953. A list of Russian-language books available in 2005 is at the end of Furr, "Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform. Part Two." *Cultural Logic* 2005, at <http://clogic.eserver.org/2005/furr2.html>

<sup>28</sup> This saying, "Komar nosa ne podtochil", means "Nobody found fault with the job."

<sup>29</sup> Sergei N. Khrushchev. *Nikita Khrushchev and the Creation of a Superpower*. Tr. Shirley Benton. (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2000), 165-6. In the original, unabbreviated Russian language text it is on pp. 203-4.

<sup>30</sup> For example, see the discussion at <http://www.livius.org/th/theory/theory-testis.html>

<sup>31</sup> In addition, it is far from certain that the Soviets were in fact guilty of the "Katyn massacre". See the materials I have gathered in my page devoted to this question=: "The Katyn Forest Whodunnit", <http://www.tinyurl.com/katyn-the-truth>

<sup>32</sup> O.G. Shatunovskaia. *Ob Hshedshem Peke*. La Jolla, CA:DAA Books, 2001, 228-9. At the Sakharov Center site, [http://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfcd/auth/auth\\_book27b5.html?id=86374aid=1175](http://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfcd/auth/auth_book27b5.html?id=86374aid=1175)

<sup>33</sup> Reabilitatsiia. *Kak Eto Bylo. Febral' 1956 — nachalo 80-kh godov*. Moskva: "Materik", 2003. (RKEB 2), 36-37.

<sup>34</sup> We have an article pending in which we demonstrate that Serov fabricated this story.

<sup>35</sup> See Grover Furr, *Khrushchev Lied: The Evidence That Every "Revelation" of Stalin's (and Beria's) Crimes in Nikita Khrushchev's Infamous "Secret Speech" to the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on February 25, 1956, is Provably False*. Kettering, OH: Erythros Press Media LLC, 2011, *passim*. Russian edition: Ferr, *Teni XX-go S"ezda, ili Antistalinskaia Podlost'*. Moscow: Eksmo-Algorithm, 2010.

<sup>36</sup> For a more detailed study of Iakir's letter and Zhukov's and Shelepin's falsifications of it see Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*, 209-211.

<sup>37</sup> The most recent study is by Stephen G. Wheatcroft, "The Soviet Famine of 1946-1947, the Weather and Human Agency in Historical Perspective." *Europe-Asia Studies*, 64:6, 987-1005. Wheatcroft concludes that this famine was part of "the World Food Crisis of 1946-1947" which "was the most serious global food shortage of modern history, when famine simultaneously threatened Central and Eastern Europe, India, Indo-China and China, and bread rationing was introduced in Britain for the first time ever" (1004) That is, the policies of the Soviet government had nothing to do with it.

<sup>38</sup> See Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*, 114-6, where I give more details.

<sup>39</sup> See Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*, 209-212.

<sup>40</sup> "Speech of Com. Shelepin", in *XXII s"ezd kommunisticheskogo partii Sovetskogo Soiuza. 17-31 oktiabria 1961 goda. Stenograficheskii otchiot.* (Moscow: Gos. Izdat. Politicheskoi Literatury, 1962), II, 403.

<sup>41</sup> Ferr, Grover (Furr). *Antistalinskaia Podlost'* Moskva: Algoritm, 2007. (Antistalinskaia) This is the Russian original. *Khrushchev Lied* is an updated version (2011).

<sup>42</sup> After the successful consolidation of power by the Communist Party following the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Russian Civil War, the Bolshevik leadership, including Lenin, instituted a ban on factions within the party as Resolution No. 12 of the 10th Party Congress in 1921. It was passed in the morning session on March 16, 1921 (Protokoly 585-7). Supporters of Trotsky sometimes claim that this ban was intended to be temporary. But there is no language in the discussion at the 10th Party Congress suggesting that it was intended to be temporary (*Protokoly 523-548*). See *10-i s'ezd RKP(b) (8-16 maria 1921 goda). Protokoly* (Moscow: Partizdat, 1933).

Rubashov, a character in Arthur Koestler's 1940 novel *Darkness at Noon*, confesses to crimes of which he is innocent out of a mixture of guilt and loyalty to the party.

<sup>44</sup> Pierre Broué, "Party Opposition to Stalin (1930-1932) and the First Moscow Trial." In John W. Strong, ed. *Essays on Revolutionary Culture and Stalinism*. (Columbus, OH: Slavica, 1990), at p. 104

<sup>45</sup> The anticommunist double standard in historiography is discussed in, e.g. James Prickett, "Anti-Communism and Labor History," *Industrial Relations* 13 (October, 1974), 219-227. Online at <http://tinyurl.com/prickettindrel74>

<sup>46</sup> "Rasskaz o desiati rasstrel'nykh" ("Story of ten who were shot"), *Izvestiia* September 2, 1992, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Wendy Z. Goldman *Terror and Democracy in the Age of Stalin* (Cambridge University Press, 2007) discusses the political struggles and opposition within the industrial working class in the 1920s and 1930s.

<sup>48</sup> A.J. Liebling. *The Press*. New York: Pantheon, 1975 (1961), 261.

<sup>49</sup> Stalin to Kaganovich, August 12, 1934. In *Stalin i Kaganovich. Perepiska. 1931-1936 gg.* Ed. Khlevniuk, O.V., et al. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001, p. 432.

<sup>50</sup> The list of those expelled from the Party at the 15th Party Congress in 1927 is on p. 1247 of the Transcript of the Congress. A number of the Zinovievites later involved in the Kirov murder are among them.

<sup>51</sup> See, for example, Jeffrey Burds, "The Soviet War against 'Fifth Columnists': The Case of Chechnya, 1942-4," *Journal of Contemporary History* 42 (2007), 267-314. Despite the title Burds discusses far more than just Chechnya.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted from <http://www.logicalfallacies.info/presumption/begging-the-question>

<sup>53</sup> Cherushev nevertheless provides a lot of information about the arrests, charges against, and confessions of Peterson, as well as of many other military officers. A military historian, Cherushev evidently had privileged access to investigative materials unavailable to anyone else. Peterson, his

arrest and his confession are discussed especially in Cherushev, *Komendanty Kremliia v labirintakh vlasti*. Moscow: Veche, 2005, 350-421; Cherushev, N.S. *Nevinovnykh ne byvaet. Chekisty protiv voennykh, 1918-1953*. Moscow: Veche, 2004, 261, 283.

<sup>54</sup> Lenoe 459-460 and p. 786 nn. 15-19 and note 20 (to a book by Zhukov). Zhukov, 'Tainy «Kremlevskogo dela» 1935 goda isud'ba Avelia Enukidze.' ("The secrets of the "Kremlin Affair" of 1935 and the fate of Avel' Enukidze"), *Voprov Istorii* 9 (2000), 82-113. Zhukov outlines his reasons for considering the possibility that the Kremlin Affair conspiracy really did occur at some length, pp. 108-112.

<sup>55</sup> We advisedly do not use the words "false" or "fabrication" here because some, at least, of the defendants did make false statements — lie — to the court. But they did so because they chose to do so, to conceal conspiratorial activity that they did not wish to reveal.

<sup>56</sup> *Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre. Heard Before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. Moscow, January 23-30, 1937.... Verbatim Report*. Moscow: People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R., 1937. (1937 Trial), p. 549. *Protsess antisovetskogo trotskistskogo tentra (23 — 30 ianvaria 1937 goda)*. M.: NKIU Soiuza SSR. IURidicheskoe izdatel'stvo, s. 230.

<sup>57</sup> The "Lubianka" volumes published under the auspices of the Mezhdunarodniy Fond "Demokratia" record Stalin's annotations on many of the documents.

<sup>58</sup> See Grover Furr, "Evidence of Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan." *Cultural Logic* (2009), at <http://clogic.eserver.org/2009/Furr.pdf>

<sup>59</sup> By "genuine" we do not necessarily mean "true." We know that some of the defendants made statements that were false in order to protect other conspirators still at large.

<sup>60</sup> Khrushchev told several mutually-contradictory stories about Kosarev. But we now have more evidence against him, from former Soviet documents published within the past decade. Lobov was named by many others as a Rightist conspirator. In both cases the Russian authorities have refused to release the investigative files, as is the case in all but a few instances concerning the repressions of the 1930s. But the "rehabilitation" volumes do not cite any evidence that would support their innocence.

<sup>61</sup>In addition, the terms "fabrication" — something created -and "amalgam" — a mixture of two things, here of truth and falsehood — are not the same thing, though Lenoë uses them synonymously.

<sup>62</sup> For example Krivitsky states that on January 24, 1937 he was reading the transcript of the second Moscow Trial in the newspapers when he read that Karl Radek, one of the defendants, had named Tukhachevsky as "absolutely loyal" to the Party and the government. But this is impossible; Radek's statements about Tukhachevsky were not printed in the Russian transcript of the trial. They were only printed later, in the much longer English-language transcript. (*I Was Stalin's Agent*, Chapter 7; Russian edition at [http://scepsis.ru/library/id\\_623.html](http://scepsis.ru/library/id_623.html) )

<sup>63</sup> Shatunovskaia, O.G. Rasskazy ob ushedshem veke. Prilozhenie 2. "Vokrug tragedii v Smol'nom". At <http://www.daabooks.net/ola/smolny.koi.html>

<sup>64</sup> RKEB 3, 223. N.F. Katkov was a member of the commission to study the "repressions", including the Kirov assassination.

<sup>65</sup> RKEB 3, 217-218.

<sup>66</sup> RKEB 3, 597.

<sup>67</sup> Medvedev, Roil. *Let History Judge. The Origin and Consequences of Stalinism*. New York: Knopf, 1971, p. 164; Russian edition *K sudu istorii* (New York: Knopf, 1974), 318-9.



<sup>68</sup> RKEB 3, 501. Lenoe notes Medvedev's use of Shatunovskaia's version at p. 650.

<sup>69</sup> "Concerning com. O.G. Shatunovskaia's letter of September 5, 1988. Draft", "O pis'me t. Shatunovskoi O.G. ot 5 sentiabria 1988g. Proekt."

<sup>70</sup> Harvard, Trotsky Archive 4782 p. 1; see Broué in *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* 1980 p. 36; Broué, "Party Opposition to Stalin...", p. 100.

<sup>71</sup> Other materials were certainly removed — "purged" — with traces of their removal remaining. For example, excerpts from a discussion between Trotsky and Sedov concerning the slogan "remove Stalin" ("ubrat' Stalina") remain in the archive, but the full letters from which these excerpts were made are not there.

<sup>72</sup> We will examine this whole question in detail in a forthcoming work.

<sup>73</sup> "Het process te Moskou. Wie niet wil bekennen al doodgeschoten?" *Het Volk* 28 Jan. 1937 pp. 1 and 5. My sincere thanks to Sven-Eric Holmström for tracking down this article and generously providing me with a copy.

<sup>74</sup> The Shvernik Commission had also concluded that no bloc existed. See RKEB 2, p. 630.

<sup>75</sup> Parts of the "Rehabilitation" report on the Moscow Trial of August 1936 are copied verbatim, or almost so, from the Shvernik Commission of twenty-five years earlier. No one could know this in 1988, since excerpts from the text of the Shvernik Report was not published until 1993-4 and the full text until 2003. The fact of the copying does suggest that it's possible, even likely, that no new study was carried out in 1987-88.

<sup>76</sup> Broué conceded that Sedov and Trotsky used the term "bloc" in their correspondence with each other in 1932.

<sup>77</sup> This should be "Kustanai", the town in Kazakhstan to which Zinoviev had been exiled for a year. Apparently Lenoe does not realize "Kustanaya" is the genitive case.

<sup>78</sup> N. Petukhov, V. Khomchik. "Delo o Leningradskom Tsentre" ["The Case of the Leningrad Center"]. *Vestnik Verkhovnogo Suda SSSR* 5 (1991), p. 18.

<sup>79</sup> «Zapiska P.N. Pospelova ob ubiystve Kirova»(P.N. Pospelov's note about the murder of Kirov). *Svobodnaia Mysl'* 1992, No. 8, p. 68.

<sup>80</sup> Kirilina, A. "Sledstvennoe Delo Leonida Nikolaeva." *S.Peterburgskie Vedomosti*. December 4, 1993.

<sup>81</sup> *Lubianka 1937-1938*, No. 60 pp. 144ff; *Genrikh Iagoda* No. 166 pp. 508-517. Between 4 and 5 pages of this latter confession have been omitted from this transcript. No reason is given for their omission (p. 517).

<sup>82</sup> Lenoe's book was published in 2010, Egge's in 2009, in Norway.

<sup>83</sup> We have located Kotolynov's speech in the transcript of the Komsomol congress in question and discuss it in one of the following chapters.

<sup>84</sup> Lenoe does the same thing with the file he calls "Svoiak", "brother-in-law." In the Russian original it was called "Svoiaki", in the plural.

<sup>85</sup> "Zapiska Komissii Prezidiuma TsK KPSS v Prezidium TsK KPSS of Rezul'tatakh Raboty po Rassledovaniuu Prichin Repressiy I Obstoiatel'stv Politicheskikh Protsesov 30-kh Godov." In *RKEB* 2, 541-670. (Zapiska). Here at 546-547.

<sup>86</sup> See <http://delostalina.ru/?p=1633> Once again it is in Vasilii Soima's book *Zapreshchennyi Stalin*.

<sup>87</sup> The name of Zinoviev's place of exile was Kustanai, in Kazakhstan (now Kostanai). Lenoe has mistaken the genitive case for the nominative case of the noun.

<sup>88</sup> Because the photocopy is poor I have been unable to decipher a few words, especially on the first page.

<sup>89</sup> Zinoviev was dismissed from the editorial board of Bol'shevik by a Politburo decision of August 16, 1934 initiated by Stalin. Khlevniuk, O.V. et al., *Stalin i Koganovich. Perepiska. 1931-1936 gg.* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001), n. 2 p. 433.

<sup>90</sup> A number of "rehabilitation" reports are studied in detail in Grover Furr, *Khrushchev Lied...* (Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press Media LLC, 2011).

<sup>91</sup> *Reabilitatsiia. Politicheskie Protsessy 30-kh — 50-kh godov* (Moscow, 1991), 160-161. (R-PP)

<sup>92</sup> Zinoviev's statement was first published in *Izvestiia Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS* 7 (1989), 74-80 (IzvTsK KPSS) and was reprinted in R-PP 159-164.

<sup>93</sup> *Izv. TsK KPSS* 8 (1989), 82; R-PP 176.

<sup>94</sup> Sedov to Trotsky 1932; Trotsky Archive 4782.

<sup>95</sup> This identification was made by Pierre Broué, the world's leading Trotskyist historian, who discovered the document in 1980.

<sup>96</sup> A facsimile of a page of this report with Stalin's handwritten editions is reproduced in *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* 8 (1989), p. 102.

<sup>97</sup> *Report of Court Proceedings. The Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre.* Moscow: People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R., 1936, 30-31. (Report 1936)

<sup>98</sup> *The Case of Leon Trotsky. Report of hearings on the charges made against him in the Moscow trials. By the Preliminary Commission of Inquiry: John Dewey, chairman [and others].* New York: Harper Brothers, 1937. 1<sup>st</sup> Session, p. 11. (Case of Leon Trotsky)

<sup>99</sup> L. Sedov. *Livre rouge sur le procès de Moscou.* Paris: Éditions Populaires, 1936.

<sup>100</sup> Anita Burdman Feferman. *Politics, logic, and love: the life of Jean Van Heijenoort*. Wellesley, Mass.: A K Peters, Ltd., 1993, 140.

<sup>101</sup> Zborowski archive, F.31660 d. 9067 Papka No. 28. In Volkogonov Archive, Library of Congress. Online at [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/zbor\\_sedov\\_stalin0238.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/zbor_sedov_stalin0238.pdf)

Some of these same documents are confirmed by John Costello and Oleg Tsarev, *Deadly Illusions* (New York: Crown, 1993). Tsarev, a former KGB man, had privileged access to KGB files for a time in the early 1990s.

<sup>102</sup> Costello, John, and Oleg Tsarev. *Deadly Illusions*. NY: Crown, 1993, 283; 469 n.44. Tsarev Kostello, *Rokoovye Illiuzii*, 322-3, and n. 44 p.531 (Russian original). The other texts of Zborowski's reports are in facsimile in the Volkogonov Archiv, LOC. This archive also contains facsimiles of the reports published by Costello and Tsarev, thus verifying that they are the same ones.

<sup>103</sup> *Memoirs de Jules Humbert-Droz. De Lenine a Staline. Dix ans au service de l'internationale communiste 1921-1931*. Neufchatel: A la Baconniere, 1971, pp. 379-380. The original French text is as follows:

Avant de partir, j'allai voir une dernière fois Boukharine, ne sachant si je le reverrais à mon retour. Nous eumes une longue et franche conversation. Il me mit au courant des contacts pris par son groupe avec la fraction Zinoviev-Kamenev pour coordonner la lutte contre le pouvoir de Staline. Je ne lui cachai pas que je n'approuvais pas cette liaison des oppositions: «La lutte contre Staline n'est pas un programme politique. Nous avons combattu avec raison le programme des troskystes sur des problimes essentiels, le danger des koulaks en Russie, la lutte contre le front unique avec les social-démocrates, les problèmes chinois, la perspective révolutionnaire très courte, etc. Au lendemain d'une victoire commune contre Staline, ces problimes politiques nous diviseront. Ce bloc est un bloc sans principes, qui s'effritera même avant d'aboutir.»

Boukharine me dit aussi qu'ils avaient décidé d'utiliser la terreur individuelle pour se débarrasser de Staline. Sur ce point aussi je fis d'expresses réserves: l'introduction de la terreur individuelle dans les luttes

politiques nees de la Revolution russe risquait fort de se tourner contre ceux qui l'emploieraient. Elle n'a jamais ere une arme revolutionnaire. «Mon opinion est que nous devons continuer la lutte ideologique et politique contre Staline. Sa ligne conduira, dans un avenir proche, a une catastrophe qui ouvrira les yeux des communistes et aboutira a un changement d'orientation. Le fascisme menace l'Allemagne et notre parti de phraseurs sera incapable de lui resister. Devant la debacle du Parti communiste allemande et l'extension du fascisme a la Pologne, a la France, l'Internationale devra changer de politique. Ce moment-la sera notre heure. Il faut donc rester disciplines, appliquer les decisions sectaires apres les avoir combatues et s'opposer aux fautes et aux mesures gauchistes, mais continuer la lutte sur le terrain strictement, politique.»

Boukharine a sans doute compris que je ne me liais pas aveuglement a sa fraction, dont le seul programme etait de fair disparaitre Staline. / 380 / Ce fut notre derniere entrevue. Manifestement ii n'avait pas confiance dans la tactique que je proposais. Il savait aussi bien sur, mieux que moi, de quelles crimes Staline etait capable. Bref, ceux qui, apres la mort de Lerune, sur la base de son testament, auraient pu liquider politiquement Staline, cherchaient a l'elimer physiquement, alors qu'il tenait fermement en main le parti et l'appareil policier de l'Etat.

<sup>104</sup> Grover Furr and Vladimir L. Bobrov, "Nikolai Bukharin's First Statement of Confession in the Lubyanka". *Cultural Logic* 2007. At [http://clogic.eserver.org/2007/Furr\\_Bobrov.pdf](http://clogic.eserver.org/2007/Furr_Bobrov.pdf) This article was first published in the St. Petersburg historical journal *Klio* 1 (36), 2005, 38-52. I have put the Russian version online at <http://tinyurl.com/furr-bukharin>

<sup>105</sup> Pierre Broué. "Party Opposition to Stalin (1930-1932) and the First Moscow Trial." In John W. Strong, ed. *Essays on Revolutionary Culture and Stalinism*. Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1990, pp. 98-111, p. 99. (Broué POS)

<sup>106</sup> Rogovin, *Byla li Al'ternativa?*, Chapter 9; in Russian at <http://web.mit.edu/people/fjk/Rogovin/volume4/ix.html>

<sup>107</sup> Chapter 56; at [http://www.marxists.org/francais/Broué/works/1988/00/PB\\_tky\\_56.htm](http://www.marxists.org/francais/Broué/works/1988/00/PB_tky_56.htm)

<sup>108</sup> Vladimir L. Bobrov, "Taina smerti Ordzhonikidze", at <http://vif2ne.ru/nvz/forum/archive/238/238967.htm> ; fully footnoted Russian version at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/bobrov-ordzhon08.html> ; English translation at <http://tinyurl.com/furr-bobrov>

<sup>109</sup> I know this from the person who drove Broué when he was doing research in the Nicolaevsky Archive at the Hoover Institution during the 1980s.

<sup>110</sup> Holmström, Sven-Eric. "New Evidence Concerning the 'Hotel Bristol' Question in the First Moscow Trial of 1936." *Cultural Logic*, 2008. At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2008/Holmström.pdf> (Published 2010)

<sup>111</sup> Holmström suspects that Gol'tsman did meet with Trotsky but that he did not meet with Sedov, as he claimed at the 1936 Moscow Trial, but with someone else whose identity he wanted to conceal. Holmström's study of the question of IUrii Piatakov's claim that he visited Trotsky in Norway in December 1935 is well advanced.

<sup>112</sup> One famous definition: "*Petitio principia* is, therefore, committed when a proposition which requires proof is assumed without proof." James Welton. *A Manual of Logic. Volume II.* (London: W.B. Clive, 1896), p. 279. "Petitio principia" is translated as "begging the question"

<sup>113</sup> *Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre. Heard Before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. Moscow, January 23-30, 1937.... Verbatim Report.* Moscow: Moscow: People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R., 1937, 549. (1937 Trial)

<sup>114</sup> Furr, Grover, and Vladimir L. Bobrov. "Marshal S.M. Budiennyi on the Tukhachevsky Trial. Impressions of an Eye-Witness" (in Russian). *Klio* No. 2 (2012), pp. 8-24. At [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/budennyi\\_klio\\_12.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/budennyi_klio_12.pdf)

Reprinted in *M.N. Tukhachevskii. Kak My Predali Stalina*. Moscow: Algorithm, 2012, 174-230.

<sup>115</sup> The account in the Russian transcript is slightly abbreviated.

<sup>116</sup> We discuss Astrov elsewhere in the present work, and at greater length in our essay "Verdikt — Vinoven" ("Verdict — Guilty"), Chapter One of Grover Furr and Vladimir Bobrov, 1937. *Pravosudie Stalina. Obzhalovaniiu ne podlezhit!* Moscow: Eksmo, 2010.

<sup>117</sup> *Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" Heard Before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. Moscow, March 2-13, 1938...Verbatim Report*. Moscow: People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R., 1938, 373-374. (1938 Trial)

<sup>118</sup> Cohen, Stephen. "Bukharin na Lubianke." *Svobodnaia Mysl'* 21, No. 3 (2003), 58-63, at 60-61.

<sup>119</sup> IUrii Murin. "Ubiystvo v Smol'nom" [Murder in the Smolny]. *Rodina* 10 (1995), p.66.

<sup>121</sup> Genrikh Iagoda. Narkom vnutrennikh del SSSR, General'niy komisar gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti. *Sbornik dokumentov*. Kazan', 1997. (Genrikh Iagoda), p. 235. The Russian language quotation in this 1997 volume is the same, word for word, as that in the Russian-language trial transcript.

<sup>122</sup> Grover Furr, "Evidence of Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan." *Cultural Logic* (2009), at <http://clogic.eserver.org/2009/Furr.pdf>, p. 140 and notes 91 and 92. Hereafter cited as "Furr, Evidence".

<sup>123</sup> See the Russian text at <http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/1938buharin/vec8-5-38-1.php>

<sup>124</sup> *The Oxford English Dictionary*: "Complicity. 1. The being an accomplice; partnership in an evil action.." "Accessory=. B. adj. 1. Of

persons: Acceding or adhering to; assisting as a subordinate=. In Law: Participating or sharing in a crime, though not the chief actor; participant, privy." *Black's Law Dictionary* (1910 edition): "Accessory. Contributing to or aiding in the commission of a crime. One who, without being present at the commission of a felonious offense, becomes guilty of such an offense, not as a chief actor=, but as a participator, as by command, advise, instigation, or concealment; either before or after the fact of commission." (13) "An accessory after the fact is a person who, knowing a felony to have been committed by another, receives, relieves, comforts or assists the felon, in order to enable him to escape from punishment." (14)

<sup>125</sup>Furr, Evidence 66-68.

<sup>126</sup> Alter L'vovich Litvin is a well-known Russian scholar, very anticommunist and anti-Stalin.

<sup>127</sup> Murin, Iurri. "'No ia to znaiu, chto ia prav.' Pis'mo N.I. Bukharina I.V. Stalinu iz vnutrennei tiur'my NKVD." *Istochnik*, No. 3 (2000), 46-58.

<sup>128</sup> The archival identifiers given by Murin are handwritten on the first page of this copy. But they are written incorrectly. The precise archival identifiers are given at the end of the letter in larger handwriting, and show that Murin misread starting page 129 as "127".

<sup>129</sup> Grover Furr, Vladimir L. Bobrov, "Nikolai Bukharin's First Statement of Confession in the Lubianka." *Cultural Logic* 2007 17, n.34.

<sup>130</sup> *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution. A Political biography 1888-1938*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1980 (1971), 294, 300, 309. Humbert-Droz's memoir is cited at 453 n.170.

<sup>131</sup> "Verdikt: Vinoven!". Ch. 1 of Furr and Bobrov, 1937. *Pravosudie Stalina*. (Moscow: F.KSMO 2010), 13-63. We hope to publish an English version soon.

<sup>132</sup> It is likely that Astrova lied when he stated that he did not really hear Bukharin call for "terror" against Stalin. During the 1940s Astrova had



boasted of his role in helping to unmask the Rights. And we know from Humbert-Droz that Bukharin was plotting Stalin's assassination as early as 1928.

<sup>133</sup> This is only part of the context in which we should consider Bukharin's letter recommending Kotolynov. For by February 26, 1937, the date of Ezhov's report, the second Moscow Trial of January 23-30 1937 had concluded. Of course the testimony against Bukharin at that trial also forms a part of the context in which Ezhov gave his report about Bukharin's two letters. In another part of this present study we examine how the Kirov assassination figured in the January 1937 trial.

<sup>134</sup> *VII s'ezd vsesoiuznogj leninskogo kommunisticheskogo soiuzz molodezhi. 11 -22 marta 1926 goda. Stenograficheskie otchet.* (Moscow-Leningrad: Molodaia gvardiia, 1926), p. 108.

<sup>135</sup> In most parts of Russia an unstressed "o" is pronounced as though it were a short "a", so "Kotolynov" would be pronounced "Katalynov", with stress on the third syllable.

<sup>136</sup> My thanks to my colleague Vladimir L. Bobrov of Moscow, who informed me of the references to Kotolynov in the 7th Komsomol and 15th Party Congresses (personal email October 31, 2011).

<sup>137</sup> <http://www.ipme.nw.ru/mirrors/PRAN/www/info/44/4429.htm> A Stalin prize laureate, Talmud signed the unpublished letter to *Pravda* in early 1953 critical of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and the Joint Distribution Committee. A slightly longer biography of Talmud at the semi-official Aleksandr Iakovlev site mentions no collaboration with the NKVD; see <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/inside/almanah-doc/person/1004070> The text of the unpublished letter is available in many places, including at <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/inside/almanah-doc/55578>

<sup>138</sup> See the entry in the Russian language Wikipedia at [http://ru.wikipedia.org/Люшков,\\_Генрих\\_Самойлович](http://ru.wikipedia.org/Люшков,_Генрих_Самойлович) and at the biographical site at [http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio\\_1/ljushkov\\_gs.php](http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio_1/ljushkov_gs.php)

<sup>139</sup> «Люшков Генрих Самойлович».

[http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio\\_1/ljushkov\\_gs.php](http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio_1/ljushkov_gs.php) ; Lenoe, p. 681.

<sup>140</sup> Liushkov was not being quite frank here. We know today that he did not conduct all the interrogations of Zinoviev and Kamenev. He was only one of the NKVD investigators who cosigned Zinoviev's interrogation-confession of July 28, 1936. Liushkov was the only NKVD man to cosign Zinoviev's confession of an unknown date in August, 1936. But Liushkov was not one of the three NKVD men who cosigned Kamenev's confession of August 10, 1936.

<sup>141</sup> We have obtained a copy of this 540-page document It was clearly written when Zinoviev was still refusing to confess to being involved in assassination plots. It could not have done him any good at this point.

<sup>142</sup> Getty Naumov 292-294. Also online at: <http://www.red-channel.de/books/ordzhonikidze.htm>

<sup>143</sup> Coox, Alvin D. "The Lesser of Two Hells: NKVD General G.S. Lyushkov's Defection to Japan, 1938-1945." *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 11, 3 (1998) 145-186 (Part One) (Coox 1); 11, 4 (1998) 72-110 (Part Two). We will refer to these articles in the text as Coox 1 and Coox 2 respectively.

<sup>144</sup> Only the second of these two paragraphs is translated by Lenoe, 681; I have taken the other from the text at the Russian-language Wikipedia page, which is the same as that in the biographical encyclopedia at Hrono.ru. See [http://ru.wikipedia.org/Люшков,\\_Генрих\\_Самойлович](http://ru.wikipedia.org/Люшков,_Генрих_Самойлович) and [http://hrono.ru/biograf/bio\\_1/ljushkov\\_gs.php](http://hrono.ru/biograf/bio_1/ljushkov_gs.php)

<sup>145</sup> *Roboche-Krest'ianskaia Krasnaia Armia*, "Workers and Peasants Red Army."

<sup>146</sup> I have put an English translation of the complete text of Ezhov's confession of April 26, 1939 online at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhov042639eng.html> The

Russia original is also online at my site at  
<http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhovru.html>

<sup>147</sup> Nikolai Velikanov. *Izmena Marshalov*. M.: Algoritm, 2008.  
Interrogation of Bliukher of November 6, 1938, p. 343. Emphasis added,  
GF.

<sup>148</sup> See, for example, the Wikipedia page:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argumentum\\_e\\_silentio](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argumentum_e_silentio)

<sup>149</sup> According to Zhukov (p. 105) the Military Collegium of the Supreme  
Court sentenced two people, Sinelobov and Cherniavskii, to death. Zhukov  
states that this was down from 25, though I can't find the document he  
refers to.

<sup>150</sup> IU. N. Zhukov, "Tainy 'Kremlevskogo dela' 1935 goda i sud'ba Avelia  
Enukidze" (The Secrets of the 'Kremlin Affair' of 1935 and the fate of Avel'  
Enukidze). *Voprosy Istorii* No. 9 (2000), 83-113, at p. 109.

<sup>151</sup> Zhukov has discussed these specific confessions and the conclusions he  
draws from them in more detail in a meeting with Vladimir L. Bobrov on  
December 6 2002. (Email letter LETTER\_V3o.doc, rec'd 1208.02 doc from  
Vladimir L. Bobrov to Grover Furr.)

<sup>152</sup> See the series description at the ROSSPEN page  
<http://www.rosspen.su/ru/catalog/.list/id/56/>

<sup>153</sup> Feliks I Chuev. *Molotov: Poludertzavnyi Vlastelin*. Moscow: OLMA-  
PRESS, 1999, 376.

<sup>154</sup> The original Russian is "vse osnovaniia", literally "all the bases". This is  
not idiomatic in English so I have translated it as "every reason."

<sup>155</sup> Elsewhere in this study we have quoted the cogent words of Russian  
historian IUrii Zhukov, who sensibly points out that no sane conspirator  
would keep evidence of a conspiracy anywhere except in his head.

<sup>156</sup> In his memoirs Pavel Sudoplatov relates how he was arrested after refusing to fabricate stories against Beria. Sudoplatov might have ended up in Khrushchev's December 1956 "kangaroo court" being tried and executed as Beria's "accomplice" along with Kobulov, Dckanozov, Merkulov, Meshik, Volodzirnirskii, and Goglidze. None of the supposed "crimes" Beria was charged with have ever been proven -good evidence that they did not exist. Sudoplatov also relates the story of how General Maslennikov killed himself rather than either fabricate a story against Beria or face trumped-up charges of helping Beria in the latter's supposed coup attempt. Evidently Sudoplatov gets the date of Maslennikov's suicide wrong — it was March 16, 1954, not August 1953. But in other respects his account agrees with other versions of Maslennikov's suicide.

<sup>157</sup> I have put the original Russian text of the Indictment online at [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/obvin\\_zak\\_dec34.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/obvin_zak_dec34.html)

<sup>158</sup> Lubyanka 1922-1936 No. 482, pp. 578-579; Lenoe 316-317.

<sup>159</sup> "Absurdnost' etikh utverzhdanii ochevidna."

<sup>160</sup> Leon Trotsky. "The Stalinist Bureaucracy and the Assassination of Kirov. A Reply to Friends in America." *Bulletin of the Opposition* No. 41 (January, 1935). Translated in Trotsky, "On the Kirov Assassination" (December 1934). At <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1934/12/kirov.htm>

<sup>161</sup> The Trotskyist editors of Marxists.org claim that this was published as a pamphlet. The *Biulleten'* version, in Russian, is at <http://www.mit.edu/people/fjk/BO/BO-41.html> (M.I.T., Boston USA) and at [http://www.1917.com/Marxism/Trotsky/BO/BO\\_No\\_41/Main.html](http://www.1917.com/Marxism/Trotsky/BO/BO_No_41/Main.html) (Russia)

<sup>162</sup> Pierre Broué, *Léon Sedov. Fils de Trotsky, Victime de Staline* (Paris: Editions Ouvrières, 1993), 79.

<sup>163</sup> Lenoe 577-8; Russian original in RKEB 2, 73-74.

<sup>164</sup> The following paragraphs are taken from Grover Furr, Khrushchev Lied 151-3. See also the section "The Charge of 'Torture' As A Smokescreen" in Furr, "Evidence of Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan", *Cultural Logic* 2009, 151-153. At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2009/Furr.pdf>

<sup>165</sup> See for example, the discussion of the Argument from incredulity at [http://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Argument\\_from\\_incredulity](http://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Argument_from_incredulity)

<sup>166</sup> The original Russian texts are at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhovpokazaniia.html> (English translations at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhovinterrogs.html> )

<sup>167</sup> So what else could Mandel'shtam have meant? In the first place, it meant that he was withdrawing the confession in question. In Soviet law the defendant had to confirm any confessions made before trial, or that evidence could not be used against him at trial. This does not mean that the confession was either true or false, only that the defendant wished to withdraw it. That would force the prosecution either to get him to retract his withdrawal or to rely upon other evidence -for example, the testimony of his co-conspirators.

<sup>168</sup> Moreover, there is a great deal of evidence that they were guilty, including evidence from outside the USSR.

<sup>169</sup> We examine Lenoë's further use of Sedov elsewhere in this study.

<sup>170</sup> Kirilina, 366, cites the original Russian text of Agrinnov's words.

**Blood Lies: The Evidence that  
Every Accusation against Joseph  
Stalin and the Soviet Union in  
Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands* Is  
False**

By Grover Furr

Red Star Publishers, July 2014

Blood Lies — The Evidence that Every Accusation Against Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union in Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands* is False

Plus: What Really Happened: The Famine of 1932-33; the "Polish Operation"; the "Great Terror"; the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact; the "Soviet invasion of Poland"; the "Katyn Massacre"; the Warsaw Uprising; "Stalin's Anti-Semitism"

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## **Acknowledgements and Dedication**

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\*\*\*\*\*

I dedicate this book to Vladimir L'vovich Bobrov, of Moscow, Russia.

A fine historian, superb translator, a tactful yet sharp critic, he contacted me first in March 1999 to suggest that we begin collaboration on a thorny mystery concerning Soviet history of the Stalin period. When I was hesitant to do so, his patient, persuasive voice convinced me. From there our collaboration has continued for more than fifteen years.

We have coauthored a number of articles and, at this point, one book. But everything I have written under my own name owes a great deal to him.

Without his collaboration, encouragement, and limitless help I would not have written this book or any of my previous books and articles. Words cannot fully express my debt to him, and my gratitude.

## List of Abbreviations

- Lubianka 1922-1936: *Lubianka. Stalin i VChK-GPU-OGPU-NKVD. Ianvar' 1922 — dekabr' 1936*. Moscow: IDF, 2003.
- Lubianka 1937-1938: *Lubianka. Stalin i Glavnae Upravlenie Gasbezapasnasti NKVD. 1937-1938*. Moscow: "Materik", 2004.
- Lubianka 1939-1946: *Lubianka. Stalin i NKVD-NKGB-GUKR "Smersh". 1939 — mart 1946*. Moscow: MDF, 2006.
- Lubianka Golgofa: *Lubianka. Sovetskaia elita na stalinskoj golgofe. 1937-1938*. Ed. V.N. Khaustov (Moscow: MDF, 2011).
- RKEB 1: *Reabilitatsiia: Kak Eta Bylo. Mart 1953 — Fevral' 1956 gg. Dokumenty Prezidiuma TsK KPSS i Drugie Materialy*. Moscow: Mezhdunarodniy Fond "Demokratiia", 2000.
- RKEB 2: *Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eta Bylo. Febral' 1956 — nachalo 80-kh godov*. T. 2. Moscow: "Materik", 2003.
- RKEB 3: *Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eta Byla. Seredina 80-kh godov — 1991. Dokumenty*. T. 3. Moscow: "Materik", 2004.
- R-PP: *Reabilitatsia: Paliticheskie Protsessy 30-x — 50-x gg*. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1991.

## ***Introduction: What is Bloodlands and Why Do We Need to Expose It?***

In 2010 a book was published that rewrites the history of the Soviet Union, Poland, and Ukraine between the years 1932 and 1945. Its title is *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*.<sup>1</sup> Its author is Timothy Snyder, a professor of Eastern European history at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut, USA. In *Bloodlands* Snyder equates the Soviet Union with Nazi Germany and Stalin with Hitler.<sup>2</sup>

*Bloodlands* is a worldwide success. It has been lavished with praise in dozens of book reviews worldwide, "praised as a work of near-perfect history by many critics."<sup>3</sup> A selection of the awards and praise can be seen at the special web page created for this book.<sup>4</sup>

Editor's Pick, *New York Times Book Review*; *Die Welt*, Book of the Week, *El País*, Book of the Week; *NDR Sachbuch des Monats*; *New York Times* non-fiction bestseller; *Der Spiegel* non-fiction bestseller (Germany); *Gazeta Wyborcza* non-fiction bestseller (Poland), *Wall Street Journal* #1 hardback history bestseller.

It has received high praise not only from predictable right-wing sources but from liberal outlets like *The Nation* (New York City). It has been translated into at least 25 languages, including Ukrainian, Polish, Hungarian, Romanian, and all three Baltic languages, plus German, French, Spanish, and all three Scandinavian languages.

And yet it is a complete fraud, false from beginning to end. It is no exaggeration to say that Snyder's *Bloodlands* is a litany of falsehoods. That fact is exemplified by the following story.

### **"Petro Veldii"**

During 2011 and 2012 Snyder had a standard book talk on *Bloodlands* that he delivered many times. Here are some passages transcribed from the Youtube video of that standard talk as delivered in Chicago in 2011:<sup>5</sup>

This is a difficult book to introduce, and I'd like to introduce it by way of what's most important to me — namely, the individuals who are its subjects.

In early 1933, in what was then the Soviet Ukraine, a young man dug his grave. The reason he dug his grave was that he was sure he was going to die of starvation — and he was right. The other reason he dug his own grave was that he knew that once he died his body would lie in a field beside the road until it was picked up, thrown in the back of a cart, and then dumped with a number of other corpses in a mass grave where there would be no marker. So he knew that he was going to die but he wished to preserve some element of dignity. So he dug his own grave. Then when the day came he went there.

Snyder returns to this story at the end of the talk:

So 14 million is not just 14 million but it is 14 million times one, where that one is not just an interchangeable unit but that one is an individual who is different than the individual that came before and the individual who came after. In other words, the book is ultimately about people and it succeeds insofar as it turns numbers back into people. I can't succeed with a lecture like this but what I would like to leave you with is the names of the three people that I mentioned at the beginning. The young man in Ukraine who dug his own grave is Petro Veldii...

This incident is described in *Bloodlands* on page 47, where it reads as follows:

To die of starvation with some sort of dignity was beyond the reach of almost everyone. Petro Veldii showed rare strength when he dragged himself through his village on the day he expected to die. The other villagers asked him where he was going: to the cemetery to lay himself down. He did not want strangers coming and dragging his body away to a pit. So he had dug his own grave, but by the time he reached the cemetery another body had filled it. He dug himself another one, lay down, and waited.<sup>6</sup>

Snyder's source for this story (n. 69, p. 466) is as follows: "On Vel'dii, see Kovalenko, *Holod*, 132." Snyder spells the man's name "Veldii" in the text but "Vel'dii" in the footnote (the apostrophe is the transcription of a Ukrainian letter.) As we shall see, neither is correct.

Kovalenko's book is rare in the United States, so few if any readers will check this story.

Here is the original, at page 132:

Бачу як сьогодні: йде селом Бельдїй Петро, несе в руках якийсь клуночок. Люди стоять біля сільради, на майдані. Йде Петро у святковій полотняній сорочці, штанах полотняних, з ціпком у руках. «Куди?» — питають люди. «На цвинтарь.» — «Чого?» — «Умирати. Таки не хочу, щоб мене на гарбі вивозили, йду сам». Пішов, але яма, яку сам для себе ще раніш був виколав, була уже зайнята. Петро ще виколав собі ямку і таки помер на цвинтарі.

Translated:

I can see like [it happened] today: Petro Bel'diy is going to the village and is carrying in his hands some kind of little bundle. People stand by the village Soviet, in the square. Petro is walking in a festive linen shirt, linen trousers, with a *tsipok*<sup>7</sup> in his hands. "Where are you going?" — the people ask. To the cemetery." "Why?" "To die. Since I do not want to be carried in a cart, I will go myself." He went, but the pit that he had dug earlier for himself was already occupied. Petro dug himself another grave and so died at the cemetery.

Snyder has seriously distorted this story.

- The man's name was not "Veldii" or "Vel'dii" but "Bel'diy."
- There is nothing at all about starvation or famine in the story. There is no indication that Bel'diy is even hungry.
- The original has nothing about Bel'diy "dragging himself through his village." It simply says that he walked to the village.
- Snyder's phrase "dragging himself" suggests weakness, and is no doubt also intended to suggest starvation and the famine. It permits Snyder to

- claim that "Veldii" "showed rare strength." But the original suggests nothing of the kind. In it the villagers standing around the village Soviet (local government headquarters) just wonder what he is doing.
- In the original Bel'diy is carrying a "little bundle." This account does not say what was in it. One likely possibility would be food. Snyder omits the bundle altogether.
  - In the original Bel'diy is dressed in his holiday clothes. Clearly he wants to be buried looking his best. Snyder omits this detail.
  - Snyder claims that Bel'diy "did not want strangers coming and dragging his body away to a pit." But there is nothing like this in the original. Kovalenko quotes Bel'diy as telling some of his fellow villagers that he did not want to be carried away in a cart. Since this is what normally happens when a person dies — the body is taken away in a cart — it means that Bel'diy has some private reason for not wanting this.
  - In the original Bel'diy dies in the cemetery after digging himself a second grave. In Snyder's version he "lay down and waited."
  - In his book talk Snyder calls "Veldii" a "young man." But in Snyder's source there is no indication at all of his age.

Snyder has falsified this story. He has appropriated it to the famine by adding some details that are not in the original story while omitting other details that are in it.

Even in Kovalenko's book the story says nothing at all about the cause of the 1932-33 famine, or anything about any famine at all. But more than that — Snyder's version simply can't be true. This man who, in Snyder's version, was starving to death — starving so badly that he thought he would die on that very day — dug not just one grave, but two!

It's no good to dig a shallow grave — the body would probably be dug up by dogs. Digging a deep grave is hard work. It shows exactly the opposite of the lassitude that accompanies slow starvation. But according to Snyder "Veldii" was not just starving — he was so far gone that he expected to die *that very day!*

This is impossible. A starving person would not have had the energy to dig up these two graves — one some days before, when he must have been

starving as well (or why dig the grave?) and another on the very same day he expected to actually die of starvation (in the original story, he does die). Sure enough, the original story has nothing about starvation, famine, "dragging himself," "strangers dragging his body to a pit," or even anything that suggest hunger.

This story has the form of a legend or folklore: "The man who dug his own grave and then waited for death to come." Here is a similar story about a legendary French Canadian *voyageur*, preserved in a ballad or folk-song:

Pursued by the Indians through the forest, Cailleux gradually weakened; he dug his own grave, erected a cross above it and composed a ballad about his misfortune, which he wrote in blood on birchbark; it was found by those who came to look for him.<sup>8</sup>

In any case, no conclusion can be drawn from this rumor, or from any rumor. It does not even mention famine or starvation. Even if the original version in Kovalenko's book could somehow be verified it would not prove anything relevant to Snyder's book.

### **Kovalenko's Book**

This book was the first collection in Ukraine of testimonies about the famine. Under the prodding of the anticommunist "Memorial" association Stanislav Kul'chyts'kyi, a Ukrainian scholar, published an advertisement in the widely-circulated newspaper *Sil's'ki Visti* ("Rural News") in which he solicited letters from those who had experienced the famine. He obtained 6,000 replies. According to Ukrainian scholar Heorhiy Kas'ianov:

Paradoxically, these questions and the memories they stimulated, regardless of the motives that led to their appearance, could have become one important element in a more adequate reconstruction in the picture of the events of 1932-33. However, the final product, that is the book created on the basis of the materials thus gathered, testified to the fact that at the turn of the 1990s the concept of the project had changed fundamentally. For the book they selected only information

from eyewitnesses who painted terrible pictures of people dying in their own homes and related excesses.<sup>9</sup>

Though Kovalenko's book, from which Snyder took this story before falsifying it, is hard to find in the USA it is famous and widely available in Ukraine.

In fact it is famous as the first collection in Ukraine, still at that time a Soviet Republic, of stories by those who lived through the famine of 1932-33. The book is so well known that we might expect that the Ukrainian translation of Snyder's book would reprint the original story from Kovalenko's volume. But instead, it translates Snyder's distorted version, even to the point of getting Bel'diy's name wrong as Snyder did!

Петро Вельдій виказав рідкісну силу волі й з останніх сил пішов у село в день, коли чекав, що по нього прийде смерть. Односельчани питали його, куди він іде: на цвинтар — лягати в могилу. Він не хотів, щоб чужі люди тягнули його тіло у яму. Тож він викопав собі могилу, але коли дошкандибав до цвинтаря, там уже лежало інше тіло. Він викопав собі ще одну, ліг і почав чекати (69).<sup>10</sup>

Translated:

Petro Vel'diy showed rare strength of will and with his last strength went into the village on the day that he was waiting for death to come for him. His fellow villagers asked him where he was going: to the cemetery, to climb into a grave. He did not want strangers to drag his body to a pit. So he dug himself a grave, but when he reached the cemetery, another body was already lying in it. He dug himself another grave, lay in it, and began to wait.

Anyone who checks the original version of this story against Snyder's version would see immediately that Snyder has seriously falsified it. It is hard to believe that no one — the translator, the Ukrainian publisher, the Ukrainian historians who work with Snyder, those who arranged for his many talks to Ukrainian audiences in Ukraine, the US, Canada — has ever done this. But they chose to remain silent about it.



The "Petro Veldii" story is an example of something we will see a great many times in this book: Snyder cannot be trusted to use his sources honestly. When Snyder makes an assertion of fact, or fact-claim, about something involving communists, the Soviet Union, or Stalin, the sources for this fact-claim must be double-checked.

Upon checking Snyder's source we normally find either (1) that his source does not support what Snyder's text says or imply that it does; or (2) that the source does reflect what Snyder says in his text but that source itself is dishonest, in that (a) it does not reflect what its own evidence states or (b) its source is yet another secondary source which, when examined, does not support the fact-claims given; or (c) it cites no evidence at all.

In his standard book talk Snyder names three people who were, supposedly, victims of Hitler and Stalin. He claims that two of these were in fact victims of Stalin. One is "Petro Veldii." That story is a fabrication. In fact the falsification goes far beyond the story of this one man. We shall show that there was no "Holodomor" at all — no "deliberate" or "man-made" famine in 1932-33.

Snyder's "Petro Veldii" falsification ought to make us curious about the second "victim of Stalin" whom Snyder features at the start of his book talk. He is Adam Solski, one of the Polish officers whose corpse was disinterred by the Nazis at Katyn in April-June 1943. Unlike "Veldii / Vel'dii / Bel'diy" there is no doubt about Solski's identity: he was a real person whose corpse was indeed unearthed by the Germans at the Katyn forest. However, the evidence available today points to the German rather than Soviet guilt in the murders of Solski and the other Polish prisoners. We will discuss the "Katyn massacre" later in this book.

.....

The present book presents a detailed, heavily documented critique of *Bloodlands*. It concludes that virtually all of Snyder's charges and statements about Stalin and the Soviet Union are false. I prove this by checking the evidence Snyder cites; by including when appropriate the evidence Snyder's sources cite; and by citing other evidence he omits.

Snyder's book has become a Bible for East European neo-Nazis and right-wingers generally. Here is a collection of articles from the Holocaust research site "Defending History" (collected February 2014):

Foreign Minister of Lithuania invokes Timothy Snyder in launch of newest European Union campaign for Double Genocide.

Vytautas Magnus University professor tells Lithuanian daily that Timothy Snyder is the one great hope...

Kaunas Professor tells the leading Lithuanian daily that the reburial of the wartime Nazi puppet prime minister reconfirms the "drama of Lithuanian history" while attacking "the Jews" who allegedly threatened university and national officials with "getting hit over the head with a club" over the reburial. He also refers to Timothy Snyder as his one great ray of hope.

Book Event for Lithuanian Edition of *Bloodlands* at Lithuanian Foreign Ministry; Historians Use the Occasion to Besmirch Holocaust Survivors who Joined the Anti-Nazi Partisans and to Cement Red-Equals-Brown Equation

Professor tells Lithuanian radio audience that 'It's not all hopeless' thanks to — Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands*.

At a symposium of historians speaking for a wider Lithuanian audience, one accomplished professor put on the record, when discussing the difficulties in selling the revisionist history to the West: 'But it's not all hopeless. Timothy Snyder has written an important book called *Bloodlands*'.<sup>11</sup>

Some Holocaust researchers have appealed to Snyder to dissociate himself from the political uses of his book:

List of Experts Cited during Preparation of Lithuanian Parliament Sponsored Film Glorifying the Local Holocaust Killers

For the record, I do sincerely regret the inclusion of Professor Snyder's name in the planning stages of a 2011 ultranationalist film, supported by the Lithuanian parliament, which glorifies the Holocaust-perpetrating LAF (Lithuanian Activist Front) as 'freedom fighters'. Its Vilnius premiere on 22 June 2011 included swastika stamped souvenir tickets (report on the event [here](#); review of the film by the longtime editor of the last Jewish newspaper in Lithuania [here](#); image of the souvenir ticket [here](#)).

I respectfully call on Professor Snyder to publicly disavow and/or sever any links to the planning for the film (which would have simply been naive), and to now condemn the final product as the product of ultranationalist, anti-Semitic East European Holocaust revisionism designed to glorify the perpetrators and deflect attention from local participation in the Holocaust in the making of state-sponsored revisionist history.

Good luck with that! There is no way that Snyder is not completely aware of the political tendency of *Bloodlands* and whom the falsehoods and distortions in his book benefit.

The page in question is titled "East European Nationalist (Ab)use of Timothy Snyder's 'Bloodlands'."<sup>12</sup> But it is not an "abuse" at all. This is in fact the political terror of *Bloodlands*. The East European "nationalists" and neo-Nazis have understood it all too well.

I have specialized in researching the history of the Soviet Union during the Stalin years, particularly the crucial decade between 1930 and the Nazi invasion of June 22, 1941. I first became acquainted with Snyder's research some years ago when studying the Volhynian massacres, the mass murders by Ukrainian Nationalist forces of 50,000 to 100,000 or more Polish civilians in the Western part of the Ukrainian SSR then under German-occupation. In the 1990s Snyder published the only scholarly studies in the English language of these horrifying slaughters, although his anti-communism and tendency to minimize the crimes of anticommunist nationalists are already evident in these articles.

Several years ago a friend and colleague asked me what I thought about one of Snyder's essays in the influential American journal *The New York Review of Books*. There Snyder asserted, without evidence of any kind, that the famine of 1932-33 was "man-made" and deliberately directed by Stalin to kill and terrorize Ukrainians.

Serious students of Soviet history have long known that there is, in fact, no evidence of any "Holodomor", any deliberate famine. This has been described as a fiction by mainstream Western anticommunist scholars since at least Robert Conquest's book *Harvest of Despair* was published in 1987.<sup>13</sup> Conquest himself has withdrawn his accusation that the famine was deliberate. We discuss this matter thoroughly in Chapters One through Three of the present book.

It is clear to any objective student of Soviet history that Snyder is wrong about the famine. But non-specialists like my friend and colleague do not know it. So I began collecting Snyder's essays. He publishes widely in intellectual and semi-popular journals, where he is assumed to be an expert on Eastern European history. It soon became clear to me that Snyder's book gives a false account not only of the famine of 1932-33 but virtually every point of Soviet history with which I was familiar.

It is the professional responsibility of historians to acknowledge disputes and disagreements in the fields they research. But Snyder never informs his readers about the scholarly disputes that exist over many of these issues, whether it be famine, the *Ezhovshchina* or "Great Terror," the "Katyn massacre," the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the partisan war, the Warsaw Ghetto revolt, the Warsaw Uprising, or others. Without exception Snyder repeats an anti-Soviet, anticommunist position without any qualification.

It is not only that many statements in Snyder's book are factually false. There are so many such false statements that they could not be the result of carelessness. Moreover, there is a systematic quality to all of them: every one is tendentiously anticommunist. I realized that I would have to systematically check every factual statement about the Soviet leadership or Soviet actions that had a negative tendency, every allegation of a crime or an atrocity.

In April 2012 Snyder was invited to speak at a Holocaust commemoration event at Kean University of New Jersey, not far from my own university. I wrote a two-sided flyer detailing a small number of Snyder's most brazen falsehoods and distributed 100 copies of it at the talk. The flyer was well received by the audience of students (who had been required to attend) and others interested in the Holocaust.<sup>14</sup> I am pleased that the present book, in which Snyder's falsehoods about Soviet history are exposed and refuted in a more detailed and complete manner, is now available to readers.

Like any work of history *Bloodlands* contains a great many assertions of fact — statements that affirm that something occurred. The present book examines and checks all of the assertions of fact that have a clearly anti-Soviet or anticommunist tenor. It does not verify other of Snyder's fact-claims, in particular, Snyder's statements about Nazi Germany. There are a great many experts on the history of Nazi Germany. If Snyder has made any factual errors in his discussion of Nazi war crimes it is unlikely that this will escape notice.

My working hypothesis was as follows: I would find that many of Snyder's anti-Soviet assertions or "fact-claims" were false, not supported by the evidence Snyder cites or indeed by any other evidence. My further hypothesis was that the secondary sources Snyder cites in support of these statements would either not support Snyder's fact claims, or would themselves be fallacious, unsupported by the evidence (if any) that they cited.

My research has fully corroborated both of these hypotheses. In fact, I discovered that my initial hypothesis was too cautious. I have found not that many, but that virtually *all* of Snyder's fact-claims of an anti-Soviet and/or anticommunist tendency are false. In this book I present the results of that research.

### **Organization of This Book**

The chapters in this book adhere to the following method of presentation. After an introductory section I quote every passage in which Snyder makes a fact-claim that accuses the Soviet Union or one of its leaders (e.g. Stalin)

or communists generally of some crime or that tends to reflect negatively upon Stalin or Soviet actions. Then the evidence Snyder cites to support his statement(s), normally found in a footnote, is identified and, where possible, reproduced. Then each of the sources in that footnote, whether primary or, usually, secondary, is checked and verified in order to assess whether that source provides support for Snyder's fact-claim.

In the case of secondary sources I have checked further for the primary sources that these secondary sources use. This is essential because the fact that one historian agrees with another does not constitute evidence. Only primary sources are evidence. Accordingly, in each instance where Snyder cites another secondary source in his footnote I have obtained and studied the primary source evidence upon which that secondary source relies. This procedure continues until we reach the primary sources upon which all other secondary sources are based, or until we discover that, in reality, there is no primary source evidence supporting the series of fact-claims, which are thereby revealed to be falsifications. This method is essential in order to verify Snyder's fact-claims concerning Soviet "crimes" — or, as it turns out, in order to demonstrate that they are false virtually without exception.

Whenever possible a summary title, or subheading, has been given to each of the passages from Snyder's book. The purpose of this subheading is to aid the reader in deciding whether he or she wants to examine these fact-claims, or wishes to pick and choose, examining some and passing over others.

In the case of the most famous alleged Soviet or "Stalinist" crimes: the 1932-33 famine, the "Ezhovshchina" or "Great Terror," the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the "Katyn massacre," the Warsaw Uprising of 1944, and Stalin's alleged antisemitism — I have preceded my investigation of Snyder's account with a section titled "What Really Happened."

No one else has taken the trouble to do this. This would not be a bad thing if Snyder's book were generally ignored. Historians of the USSR, like historians generally, should spend their time in discovering the truth rather than in double-checking every fact-claim and allegation made by other historians. But Snyder's book is very influential, as are his published articles in semi-popular journals. Snyder's fact-claims are normally *assumed*

to be true while the reality is that they are virtually always false. Through books such as *Bloodlands* falsehoods become accepted as truths, the current of historical understanding polluted.

## **The Anti-Stalin Paradigm**

In the present book I demonstrate, using Snyder's own sources and other evidence, that the fact-claims in *Bloodlands* are false; that *not a single one of the accusations Snyder levels against Stalin, the Soviet leadership, or pro-communist forces such as partisans, is true*. Such a conclusion demands explanation, and I outline my own views in the Conclusion. One important element of that explanation is what I call the "anti-Stalin paradigm", about which a little should be said here at the outset.

Since the Bolshevik Revolution itself the academic field of Soviet history has been dominated by anticommunist bias. In February 1956, at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Party and leader of the Soviet state, gave a "secret speech" in which he accused Stalin (and Lavrentii Beria) of great crimes. Khrushchev and other Party leaders under him went ever further in their attacks on Stalin at the 22nd Party Congress in 1961. After that and until Khrushchev's ouster in October 1964 a flood of pseudo-scholarly Soviet works were published in which accusations about Stalin's "crimes" multiplied wildly.

Khrushchev's 1956 "Secret Speech", the anti-Stalin speeches at the end of the 22nd Party Congress and the ensuing torrent of Khrushchev-orchestrated fabrications became the basis for the avalanche of anti-Stalin books that followed. Notable among them was, for example, Robert Conquest's tome *The Great Terror*, which drew heavily upon these Khrushchev-era materials (although Conquest also used, indiscriminately, any and all anti-Stalin works he could find, including many that preceded Khrushchev's speech). In an earlier article Vladimir L. Bobrov and I examined the last chapter of Stephen F. Cohen's book *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution* (1973), another of the anti-Stalin books based on Khrushchev-era materials. There we showed (a) that Cohen relied entirely upon Khrushchev-era "revelations" in this chapter of Bukharin's fate between 1930 and 1938; and

(b) that every single "revelation" Cohen makes in that long chapter is demonstrably false, thanks to evidence from Soviet archives now available to researchers.<sup>15</sup>

The Khrushchev-era Soviet works were not simply the result of bias. Rather, they were deliberate lies. Khrushchev and his men had all the evidence of the Soviet archives — everything we have today plus much, much more. The same is true of Gorbachev's people, who churned out another and even larger avalanche of anti-Stalin falsehoods after 1987, an avalanche that continues to the present day.

The academic field of Soviet history of the Stalin period has been constructed around the more or less uncritical acceptance of, first, Khrushchev-era, and second, of Gorbachev-era and post-Soviet-era lies. These lies cannot be sustained in the face of the evidence now available from former Soviet archives. However, to admit this would entail exposing the fact that the work of dozens of historians of the USSR are poisoned at the root.

Therefore the "anti-Stalin paradigm," as I call this model of Stalin-era Soviet history, goes unchallenged. As long as it continues to serve anticommunist ideological purposes, and as long as the truth can be ignored, buried, hidden, or otherwise disregarded, the demonization of Stalin, the Soviet leadership of his day, and the communist movement continues to perform its useful function in the economy of anticommunist propaganda, propped up by the prestige of academic experts in many countries. This is the tradition that has produced works like Snyder's *Bloodlands*.

Books like Snyder's do not have to fear that their falsehoods will be exposed by their peers in the field of Soviet history because anti-Stalin lies are very seldom exposed as such. In such an atmosphere, where the historian can accuse Stalin and the USSR of almost any crime, can say virtually anything as long as it has an anti-Stalin bias, a kind of "Gresham's Law" comes into play. Bad research drives out the good or — at the very least — makes the good research very cautious, very careful not to challenge the prevailing paradigm. This is the academic and political



environment that makes completely fraudulent works like *Bloodlands* possible.

Concerning the portrayal of Stalin by anticommunist historians like Snyder Professor Domenico Losurdo of the University of Urbino, Italy, writes:

Les philosophes aiment à s'interroger en évoquant non seulement les événements historiques mais aussi les catégories avec lesquelles nous interprétons ces événements. Aujourd'hui, quelle est donc la catégorie avec laquelle on interprète Staline ? Celle de folie sanguinaire. Cette catégorie a été déjà utilisée contre Robespierre, contre la révolution de 1848, contre la Commune, mais jamais contre la guerre, ni contre Louis XVI, ni contre les Girondins ou Napoléon. Pour ce qui concerne le XXème siècle, nous avons des études psychopathologiques sur Lénine, Staline, Trotski, Mao, mais pas, par exemple contre Churchill. Or, tout le groupe dirigeant bolchevik se prononçait contre l'expansionnisme colonial, tandis que Churchill écrivait « la guerre est un jeu auquel il faut sourire. » Il y eut ensuite le carnage de la Première Guerre mondiale, le groupe dirigeant bolchevik, Staline compris, est contre ce carnage, mais Churchill déclare encore : « la guerre est le plus grand jeu de l'histoire universelle, nous jouons ici la mise la plus élevée, la guerre constitue l'unique enjeu de notre vie ». Alors, pourquoi l'approche psychopathologique dans un cas et pas dans l'autre?<sup>16</sup>

Translated:

In their discussions philosophers like to evoke not only historical events but also the categories with which we interpret these events. Today, what is the category with which Stalin is interpreted? That of bloodthirsty madness. This category has already been used against Robespierre, against the Revolution of 1848, against the Paris Commune, but never against war, or against Louis XVI, or against the Girondins or Napoleon. Regarding the twentieth century, we have psychopathological studies of Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky, Mao, but not, for example, of Churchill. However, all of the Bolshevik leaders spoke up against colonial expansionism, while Churchill wrote: "War is a game at which one should smile." Then there was the carnage of the First

World War. The Bolshevik leadership group, including Stalin, was against this carnage, but Churchill said again: "War is the greatest game in world history, here I play with the highest stakes, war is the sole acute sensation of our lives." So why the psychopathological approach in the one case and not in the other?

### **Fabrications, Falsifications, and Lies**

It will surprise, even shock, many to learn that a major work by a prominent historian can be, at base, nothing but a chain of untruths, its scholarly trappings a demonstrable fraud, a trap intended to lure the unwary or the hopelessly biased into believing falsehoods. Yet *Bloodlands* is precisely such a book. That is the inevitable conclusion of my study.

It will appear to readers that many of Snyder's fact-claims are almost certainly "lies" in the strict sense. That is, they must have been made by conscious decision rather than as the expression of bias coupled with ignorance. At the same time many readers will assume that the word "lie" should only be used when *deliberate* dishonesty by a writer can be clearly demonstrated.

For this reason I am reluctant to have recourse to the word "lie." In all cases where the deliberate intent to deceive cannot be clearly demonstrated by the evidence I use another term such as "fabrication" or "falsification" that connotes something made up, not contained in any of the evidence cited. As I have previously written elsewhere,

[I]t is easy to underestimate the power of a well-established, privileged preconceived framework of analysis on the minds of any researcher who is himself seriously biased. The pressures, both psychological and academic, to reach a conclusion acceptable to leading figures in the field of Soviet history, as well as to officials in Russia who control access to archives, are considerable indeed. Consequently, the disadvantages, professionally and otherwise, of reaching a conclusion that, no matter how well demonstrated, will be displeasing to powerful forces in the archival, political, and academic communities, are clear to

anyone who is familiar with the highly politicized nature of the field of Soviet and indeed of all communist history.<sup>17</sup>

Accordingly I consider the word "lie" to be appropriate only when the evidence clearly shows that Snyder has made a statement in flagrant disregard for the truth, such as a statement that is not supported in the source Snyder cites in support of it or is even contradicted by that source. Yet even in such cases we should not rule out the power of a preconceived framework plus a strong bias to "blind" a non-objective historian like Snyder to inconvenient evidence and conclusions.

### **Objectivity and the Truth**

It is a commonplace today that Stalin committed mass murders and gross atrocities. This belief is like the notions almost universal before the 20th century (and by no means dead today) that women and non-whites were "intellectually inferior." Those notions were "common sense", taken for granted by almost every "white" male of European ancestry, including scientists. They were questioned by few, firmly rejected by fewer still. Yet they were never true. They were (and are) avidly promoted because they served (and, in some circles, still serve) definite political and economic interests.

An objective study of the evidence now available shows that, contrary to "whatever everybody knows" — what I call the "anti-Stalin paradigm" — none of the mass murders and atrocities alleged against Stalin and the Soviet leadership of his day can be verified by the evidence.

Because this conclusion will strike many readers as outrageous, the evidence supporting it must be more fully expounded than is normally the case in historical studies. After all, a major conclusion of this book is that, on any important matter, the fact-claims of historians should not be simply "believed" — accepted as true — but must be verified. Why, then, should any reader believe the fact-claims in this book — namely, that some statement in *Bloodlands* is false — when the same book cautions them not to believe Snyder?

Accordingly, the footnotes, references, and — where necessary — the primary documents essential for any reader to check my conclusion, are reproduced here. This adds to the length of this study. But there is no other way to document such a travesty of historical scholarship as *Bloodlands* presents us with. In some cases I have put longer passages from primary or secondary sources on the Internet as web pages and provided URLs to them.

The aim of the present study is to examine the allegations by Snyder against Stalin, the Soviet leadership, and pro-communist forces. Although *Bloodlands* reads something like a "prosecutor's brief" against Stalin and the USSR the present study is fundamentally different. It is not a "defense attorney's brief." It is not an attempt to prove either guilt or innocence. Rather, it is an attempt to find the truth.

I have tried hard to do what an investigator does in the case of a crime in which has no *parti pris* but only wishes to solve the crime. This is what all historians are supposed to do, and what most historians who investigate the more distant past do all the time. I wish to persuade the fair-minded, objective reader that I have carried out a competent, honest investigation. Namely, that I have done the following:

- collected all the evidence that Snyder has cited to prove his allegations against Stalin et al., and also any "negative" evidence that contests those allegations;
- studied all this evidence carefully and honestly;
- drawn my conclusions on the basis of that evidence.

Political prejudice predominates in the study of communism and in particular of Soviet history. Conclusions that contradict the dominant anti-Stalin paradigm are routinely ignored or dismissed. Conclusions that cast doubt upon accusations against Stalin or whose implications tend to make him look either "good" or even less "evil" than the predominant paradigm holds him to have been, are called "Stalinist." Any objective study of the evidence now available is bound to be called "Stalinist" simply because it must reach conclusions that are politically unacceptable to those who have a strong anticommunist bias, those who are in thrall to the false "anti-Stalin paradigm."

I wish to persuade the objective reader that I have reached my conclusions on the basis of evidence and its analysis and not on any other basis such as political bias. My aim is neither to arraign or "convict" Snyder nor to "defend" Stalin, the Soviet leadership, or pro-communist forces.

Specifically, I assure the reader that I remain ready to be convinced that Stalin et al. did commit the atrocities alleged by Snyder if and when evidence is disclosed that supports that conclusion and that evidence can withstand the scholarly scrutiny to which all evidence should be subject.

## **Evidence**

Before proceeding to study the relevant evidence we must briefly consider the question of evidence itself. Whereas "documents" are material objects — in our case, writing on paper — "evidence" is a relational concept. In the present study we are concerned with investigating Snyder's allegations in *Bloodlands* of criminal, atrocious activity by Stalin, the Soviet leadership, and pro-communist forces.

There is no such thing as "absolute" evidence. All evidence can be faked. Any statement — a confession of guilt, a denial of guilt, a claim one has been tortured, a claim one has not been coerced in any way — may be true or false, an attempt to state the truth as the speaker (or writer) remembers it or a deliberate lie. Documents can be forged and, in the case of Soviet history, often have been. False documents have on occasion been inserted into archives in order to be "discovered." Or it may be alleged that a given document was found in an archive when it was not. Photographs can be faked. Eyewitnesses can lie, and in any case eyewitnesses are so often in error that such evidence is among the least reliable kind. In principle there can be no such thing as a "smoking gun" — evidence that is so clearly genuine and powerful that it cannot be denied.

Identifying, locating, gathering, studying, and interpreting evidence are skills that can be taught to anyone. The most difficult and rarest skill in historical research is the discipline of objectivity. In order to reach true conclusions — statements that are more truthful than other possible statements about a given historical event — a researcher must first question and subject to doubt any preconceived ideas she may hold about the event

under investigation. It is one's own preconceived ideas and prejudices that are most likely to sway one into a subjective, inaccurate interpretation of the evidence. Therefore, the researcher must take special steps to make certain this does not happen.

This can be done. The techniques are known and widely practiced in the physical and social sciences. They can and must be adapted to historical research as well. If such techniques are not practiced the historian will inevitably be seriously swayed from an objective understanding of the evidence by her own pre-existing preferences and biases. That will all but guarantee that her conclusions are false even if she is in possession of the best evidence and all the skills necessary to analyze it.

Nowhere is a devotion to objectivity more essential or less in evidence than in the field of Soviet history of the Stalin period. As it is impossible to discover the truth absent a dedication to objectivity, the present study strives to be objective at all costs. Its conclusions will displease, even outrage, a good many persons who are dedicated not to objectivity and the truth but to promoting some nationalist anticommunist narratives or to defending the Cold War-anticommunist paradigm of Soviet and European history.

### **The Role of Appropriate Skepticism**

Throughout this essay I have tried to anticipate the objections of a skeptical critic. This is no more than any careful, objective researcher should do. In the body of the essay I follow each presentation of evidence with a critical examination.

Scholarship is the attempt to ascertain the truth. Arguments that proceed not from an objective search for truth but from some other motive, such as an attempt to attack or defend some specific allegation or historical paradigm, may fairly be labeled "propaganda." When accompanied by the trappings of scholarship — references, bibliography, assurances of objectivity devoid of its essence — such writing in reality constitutes not scholarship but "propaganda with footnotes." It is the conclusion of the present study that *Bloodlands* is precisely such a work.

I am aware that there is a subset of readers for whom evidence is irrelevant, for whom — to put it politely — this is not a matter of evidence but one of belief or loyalty. In any historical inquiry as in any criminal case "belief" and "loyalty" are irrelevant to the truth or falsehood of the hypothesis. By definition, a belief that is not rationally founded on evidence cannot be dispelled by a sound argument and evidence.

However, those who cannot bring themselves to question their preconceived ideas may nevertheless be provoked by those same prejudices to look especially critically at the evidence and to find weaknesses in its interpretation that might escape other readers for whom there is less at stake. This sometimes makes objections from such quarters worthy of attention. I have tried hard both to anticipate and to deal with such objections in an objective and satisfactory manner.

### **True Fact-Claims Are Acknowledged**

The results of my study of *Bloodlands* are so overwhelmingly negative that some readers may suspect that this study lacks objectivity. I wish to assure the reader that I have done my best to point out those very few cases in which Snyder makes a fact-claim about the Soviet Union that both is of a negative tendency and is true.

### **Polish and Ukrainian "Nationalism"<sup>18</sup>**

Snyder's falsehoods about Soviet history are not original to him. Snyder is a captive, albeit a willing one, of right-wing Polish and Ukrainian nationalists who have ruled these countries since the end of the Soviet Union and Soviet bloc. The lies and other falsehoods Snyder repeats come mainly from those sources.

This fact can be most easily seen from the books Snyder cites. When writing about Soviet history Snyder almost never cites Russian-language sources. His main sources are in Polish, secondarily in Ukrainian. But Snyder also frequently cites Ukrainian and Belarusian works in Polish translation. Polish nationalist, anticommunist writers, then, are the main fount from which Snyder draws.

I ask the reader to imagine how competent research on, say, the history of the United States could be done without citing a great many sources in the English language, or the history of France written without a preponderance of French sources. Yet Snyder seldom uses a Russian-language source. The blatant fraudulence of such an approach should be obvious — though many reviewers, sympathetic to Snyder's anti-Stalin and anticommunist bias, seem not to have remarked on it at all!

Snyder repeats and thus conveys to an unsuspecting audience the mythology of Polish and, secondarily, of Ukrainian nationalists. This is the distortion of history that is taught as truth in today's Poland and Ukraine, but also in Eastern Europe generally and increasingly, thanks to books like *Bloodlands*, in the rest of the world as well.

Here are some of the chief elements, the principal falsehoods, of Polish and Ukrainian historical mythology that compose the framework around which *Bloodlands* is constructed. We will examine all of them in the course of the present study.

**Poland:**

- The USSR was an "ally of Hitler's."
- The "Treaty of Non-Aggression between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics," popularly known as the "Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact" and called "The Hitler-Stalin Pact" by anticommunists, was an agreement to "attack" and "divide up" Poland and the Baltics.
- Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia were integral "parts of Poland", the "kresy wschodnie" or Eastern territories.
- The Soviets aimed to "eliminate the Polish elites" — a kind of "genocide" not unlike that of the Nazis.
- The Soviets shot about 22,000 Polish prisoners of war in the massacres called the "Katyn Massacre."
- The Polish "Home Army" (Armia Krajowa, AK), loyal to the Polish exile government in London, fought the Nazis but was duplicitously betrayed by their supposed ally the USSR.



- The Red Army stood by and allowed the German Army to suppress the Warsaw Uprising.
- Polish Home Army soldiers who remained armed and underground after June 1945 were fighting for "independence" and were unjustly hunted down and "repressed" by communist security forces.
- The Polish government and civilians were no more anti-Semitic than many other Europeans.

**Ukraine:**

- Stalin and his henchmen created the famine of 1932-33 by their criminal plan to collectivize agriculture.
- Then they deliberately starved Ukrainian peasants in order to "punish" Ukraine and/or to sell its grain abroad.
- The Volhynian Massacre during the war of 50,000-100,000 or more Polish civilians by armed forces of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN), who were armed by, allied with, and loyal to Nazi Germany, was a minor episode unworthy of more than the briefest attention.
- The Ukrainian nationalists in the OUN were "freedom fighters", "against both Stalin and Hitler." They were not significantly implicated in the Jewish Holocaust or other mass murders.
- The armed Ukrainian nationalist forces who remained after the war in the underground, killing Soviet civilians, soldiers, and policemen, were not terrorists but "heroic freedom fighters."

It is hard to exaggerate the vehemence with which these false historical mythologies are officially propagated in Poland and Ukraine, as well as in the rest of Eastern Europe. Snyder feeds them to a largely Western public that is unaware of the history of Eastern Europe and has been indoctrinated over many years to accept as true any accusations of crimes against Stalin and the Soviet Union.

Both nationalist mythologies are based on historical falsehoods. Both mythologies are aimed to cover up the crimes of the Polish and Ukrainian nationalists of the 1930s and wartime period. These crimes include:

**Poland:**

- Poland's imperialist invasion of Soviet Russia in 1919.
- Poland's seizure by conquest of Western Ukraine and Belorussia, ignoring the Curzon Line drawn by the Allies to show where Poles were in the minority.
- Poland's killing of between 18,000 and 60,000 Russian prisoners of war in Polish POW camps.
- Poland's imperialist seizure by force of Lithuania's capital Vilnius in 1922, restored to Lithuania by the USSR in October 1939.
- The sending of Polish veterans as "settlers" (Polish "osadnicy") to "Polonize" the conquered territories.
- Polish racist oppression against Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Jews, and suppression of their languages and cultures.
- The pervasive nature of anti-Semitism in Polish society during the Second Republic (1919-1939), an anti-Semitism officially promoted by the Polish government and Polish Roman Catholic Church<sup>19</sup>, which made Poland perhaps the most anti-Semitic country in the world at that time.
- The Polish government's deliberate sabotage of the Soviet attempts to build collective security against Hitler's Germany.
- Poland's participation with Germany in the partitioning of Czechoslovakia.
- The Polish government's abandonment of the country by fleeing to internment in Rumania on September 17, 1939, thus destroying the Polish state and condemning the Polish people to Nazi occupation and mass murder.
- The Polish Home Army's collaboration with the German Army against Soviet partisans and the Red Army.
- The Polish Home Army's murderous anti-Semitism and anticommunism.
- The Polish Home Army's failure to help the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of 1943.
- The crime of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944.
- The Polish Home Army's clandestine terrorism<sup>20</sup>, murder and sabotage in socialist Poland after 1945.

#### **Ukrainian "Nationalism"**

Since the Second World War the two pillars of Ukrainian nationalism have been (a) the "Holodomor", or deliberate starvation of several million Ukrainians by Stalin in the so-called "man-made famine" 1932-33; and (b) the supposed "heroism" of the armed forces of the OUN as "freedom fighters" against both Germany and the Soviet Union, for independence.

Both are myths. No "Holodomor" occurred. The terrible famine of 1932-33 was caused by natural phenomena. The OUN forces were Nazis and Nazi-like mass murderers. We discuss the 1932-33 famine, and Snyder's lies about it, in a separate chapter. The principle characteristics of Ukrainian nationalism, all of which Snyder either omits or mentions only in passing, include the following:

- The fascist nature of Ukrainian Nationalism.
- The collaboration of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) with the Nazis during the invasion of the USSR in 1941 and during the war.
- The OUN's participation in the mass murder of Soviet Jews (the Holocaust) and of a great many other Soviet citizens.
- The mass murder by Ukrainian Nationalist forces of 50,000 to 100,000 Polish civilians.
- The OUN's underground terrorism against Soviet citizens after the war, including collaboration with the American OSS/CIA.

## **Why Now?**

During the period of the Cold War Polish and Ukrainian nationalists pushed this mythology hard. It is easy to understand why they did so. Their aim was to try to help the Western capitalist powers to weaken and perhaps overthrow socialism in the USSR and Eastern Europe. Following the principles of the "Big Lie" outlined by Hitler they considered any means — in this case, any degree of lying and falsehood — to be legitimate towards this goal.

After 1990 (Poland) and 1992 (Ukraine) the nationalists found themselves in power in capitalist states. The goal of capitalists is to enrich themselves by extracting value from the working class. This meant lowering the

standard of living of the working class of Poland and Ukraine. Nationalism — the myths of the "heroic past" and of the "two Holocausts", one by Nazis, the other by the Soviets — has been the main way the economic and intellectual elites of Poland and Ukraine have attempted to "create a history" useful to the new anticommunist ruling elites. By constructing nationalist lies they also cover up the shameful truth about the past. Such national mythology also serves the important function of distracting the population away from the fact that its own rulers, through their government, are exploiting them more, lowering their standard of living. Most other "post-Soviet" countries, from the Baltics to Hungary have witnessed the imposition of similar false nationalist and anticommunist historical constructions by their new capitalist rulers.

Until recently this nationalist mythology was virtually unknown outside Eastern Europe. Why is it now being popularized in the rest of the world? There appear to be several reasons.

### **Anticommunism**

The anticommunist motive is simplest to understand. Polish and Ukrainian nationalist mythologies, like those of the other former Soviet and Soviet bloc countries, rely on pushing anticommunist lies, the more the better. They do this in order to disguise or minimize the fascist, racist, and pro-Nazi crimes of their nationalist predecessors, most of whom are praised as "heroes" today.

For capitalists anywhere it is always logical to promote anticommunism in order to disarm protests against the injustices of exploitation. By demonizing communism, and then by describing protests against socio-economic inequality as "communist", capitalists attempt to delegitimize any protest against their exploitative policies. Militant trade unionists, students fighting for lower tuition or free education, struggles against imperialist wars and military expenditures — all can be, and are, condemned as "communist." If communism can be equated with Nazism, then anti-communism — and, thereby, exploitation — can be portrayed as praiseworthy, even virtuous. Meanwhile the essential similarity between

Nazi-type anticommunism and ordinary capitalist anti-communism can be obscured, as can the fact that fascism was and is another form of capitalism.

Twenty years after the end of the Soviet bloc many citizens of Eastern Europe look back upon it with some, often much, nostalgia. Like the USSR these were social welfare states that provided basic benefits and jobs to all, or almost all, citizens: free or low-cost medical care, education, job training, retirement pensions, and many benefits for the youth. This basic economic security is entirely lacking in capitalist states, leaving most citizens vulnerable and fearful. Cultural activities were popular, free or low-cost, and encouraged by the government. Racism — the ethnic hatreds and rivalries that have been the curse of Eastern Europe in the 20th century and are now coming back — was at a minimum. The sense of internationalism within the socialist bloc, taken for granted at the time, is often remembered now with fondness.

## **Geopolitics**

The United States encouraged and aided the breakup of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc in an effort to weaken its main political and economic rival. An important ideological weapon in this effort was the demonization of the Soviet Union generally and especially of the Stalin era. Since then the United States and NATO have engaged in wars and killed civilians on a scale that no one could blame the Soviet Union for — a million civilians, mostly children, by the war and then boycott on Iraq from 1991-2003, and another several hundred thousand at least since then. This boycott and these invasions would have been impossible if the USSR and Soviet bloc had still been in existence.

Stimulated once again by the US and NATO ethnic hatreds have flared up again throughout Europe — hatred against immigrants, gypsies, and anybody of the "wrong" national background. These have led to terrible wars and anti-civilian atrocities in the former Yugoslavia, and to racist violence and murders and the rise of fascist parties throughout Europe.

When the USSR sent an army into Afghanistan in December 1979 the USA and Western capitalist governments howled with protest, cancelled the 1980

Olympic Games, and armed and trained the future Al-Qaida terrorists. In 2001 the United States invaded Afghanistan, in 2003 it invaded Iraq. Now the USA has gone far beyond what the Soviet Union ever did in the Middle East. The US is more heavily involved in military imperialist ventures in Africa as well. American influence has been challenged in Latin America by mildly reformist governments in Venezuela (Hugo Chavez), Ecuador (Rafael Correa), Bolivia (Evo Morales), and throughout the region.

In the Eurasian area one of the United States' main obstacles to expansion is Russia, still a major regional military and economic power now that the period of collapse and shrinkage of the post-Soviet period had ceased. China is now another major economic and military rival to American power — a fact which threatens to drive Russia and China into closer alliance against the United States.

### **US Competition with Russia**

This is the geopolitical context for the escalation of hostility in American scholarship and elite discourse concerning Soviet history, especially history of the Stalin period. The United States did not split up the Soviet Union. Top figures in the Soviet Communist Party did that. But the United States ruling elite has benefitted tremendously from the way the USSR broke up. Most of the countries that had previously been in the Soviet bloc, plus most of the new countries that had been part of the USSR itself, instantly became anti-Russian, more closely allied to the United States and Western Europe (NATO) than to Russia. This was a great geopolitical victory for the US ruling elite. It is presumably helpful to their interests to accept large parts of the nationalist mythology promoted by Polish and Ukrainian elites.

Russia is blamed as the successor state to the Soviet Union. The more crimes that can be attributed to the USSR, the more negative, even criminal Russia can be made to appear. The campaign to associate the Soviet Union with Nazi Germany serves to obscure the far more accurate parallels between the prewar capitalist states and Nazi Germany, and the fascist mass murders by capitalist states before and after World War 2. It is similar to the French and American "rewriting" of their wars to preserve colonialism in Vietnam by calling them "wars of liberation against communist aggression",

since the anti-colonial movement in Vietnam was indeed led by the communist party.

One could argue that there has indeed been a "second Holocaust" — not by the Soviet Union during 1930-1945 but by the Western imperialist nations in their colonial empires during their final century of roughly 1880-1975, with tens of millions of victims. This "second Holocaust" has only escalated since the demise of the Soviet bloc.

### **Method of Presentation**

The present book takes upon itself the task of examining and checking every single statement in *Bloodlands* that has an anti-Soviet or anticommunist tendency, and reporting the results of this research of verification. It presents for the reader's consideration the proof that virtually every fact-claim of an anti-Soviet tendency in Snyder's book is false.

Most people rely upon the statements by supposedly "authoritative" figures such as Snyder. They trust that scholars from respected institutions of learning with renowned academic reputations do not fabricate evidence and conspicuously lie about important historical events. It is this trust that enables false scholarship to shape opinion on important historical questions.

Most of the chapters in Snyder's book focus on a single event or chain of events; the famine of 1932-33 (Chapter 1)<sup>21</sup>; the *Ezhovshchina* (the anticommunist term is "Great Terror") (Chapter 2); the so-called "national operations", part of the *Ezhovshchina* (Chapter 3); the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (Chapter 4); the Resistance (Chapter 9); the post-war deportations intended to separate people of different nationalities (Chapter 10); Soviet suppression of Zionism within the USSR during the period up to 1953 (Chapter 11). Chapters 5 through 7 are not organized about a single event but deal with a number of events related to the war. Only Chapter 8, "The Nazi Death Factories", which is devoted solely to Nazi crimes, contains no fact-claims of an anti-Soviet tendency.

It is no exaggeration to state that, as concerns Soviet history, Snyder's *Bloodlands* is a work of falsification from beginning to end. I have

established that this is so through an exhaustive process of checking every footnote, every reference that Snyder cites in support of any fact-claim or statement of an anti-Soviet tendency.

### **The "Big Lie" Technique**

A normal practice for those who intend to deceive others is to mainly tell the truth, and smuggle in the falsehoods intermingled among the true statements. Snyder did not choose to follow this technique of deception. Rather, Snyder employs the method of "The Big Lie." Though it is ostensibly not a work of propaganda Snyder's book follows the technique of propaganda recommended by Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, such as the following:

The function of propaganda is, for example, not to weigh and ponder the rights of different people, but exclusively to emphasize the one right which it has set out to argue for. Its task is not to make an objective study of the truth, in so far as it favors the enemy, and then set it before the masses with academic fairness; its task is to serve our own right, always and unflinchingly.

It was absolutely wrong to discuss war-guilt from the standpoint that Germany alone could not be held responsible for the outbreak of the catastrophe; it would have been correct to load every bit of the blame on the shoulders of the enemy, even if this had not really corresponded to the true facts, as it actually did.<sup>22</sup>

The "Big Lie" was not original with Hitler. He learned of it by studying the anti-German propaganda put out by the Western Allies during the First World War. After the war a number of books were written, often by shocked and deceived journalists, exposing these Allied falsifications.<sup>23</sup> Thus there was no need for Snyder to learn the "Big Lie" technique from Hitler. That Snyder does utilize this technique is beyond question. The present book establishes this fact by carefully checking every one of the references Snyder uses to support his anti-Soviet fact-claims.



Snyder makes no attempt at objectivity. Indeed, his anti-Soviet hostility often boils over in passages of heated rhetoric, fervent moralizing, and moral condemnation that serve no analytical purpose. Yet objectivity is first among the requirements of any historian worthy of the name. If one does not strive for objectivity from the outset of one's study one will never discover the truth. The truth was never Snyder's goal in the first place.

Hitler also succinctly explained why the "Big Lie" technique is so effective:

In this they proceeded on the sound principle that the magnitude of a lie always contains a certain factor of credibility, since the great masses of the people in the very bottom of their hearts tend to be corrupted rather than consciously and purposely evil, and that, therefore, in view of the primitive simplicity of their minds they more easily fall a victim to a big lie than to a little one, since they themselves lie in little things, but would be ashamed of lies that were too big. Such a falsehood will never enter their heads and they will not be able to believe in the possibility of such monstrous effrontery and infamous misrepresentation in others; yes, even when enlightened on the subject, they will long doubt and waver, and continue to accept at least one of these causes as true. Therefore, something of even the most insolent lie will always remain and stick — a fact which all the great lie-virtuosi and lying-clubs in this world know only too well and also make the most treacherous use of.<sup>24</sup>

Some readers may think that it is inappropriate to compare Snyder's method to Hitler's regardless of the apparent accuracy of that comparison. As understandable as such reluctance may be, the reader should note that Snyder often compares Joseph Stalin to Adolf Hitler but utterly fails to demonstrate that similarity because the "evidence" he cites in support of this "Stalin-Hitler" comparison is not evidence at all but is based on falsification.

Consciously or not, Snyder uses the "Big Lie" technique to compare Stalin to Hitler, the communists to the Nazis, communism to Nazism. This comparison falls apart if one sticks to the truth — the truth dismantles it entirely. Hence the lies and falsehoods, "deliberate" or not.

A full professor at Yale University, publishing with a major American commercial publisher, can rely on "credibility" — the only coin in the propagandist's purse. The present study shows this coin to be counterfeit.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> New York: Basic Books, 2010

<sup>2</sup> Although Snyder concludes that the Nazis did kill some/what more people than did the Soviets, he still equates them in a moral sense.

<sup>3</sup> Oliver Bullough. "Poking with the human rights stick." January 20, 2012. At <http://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/oliver-bullough/poking-with-human-rights-stick>

<sup>4</sup> Translations are listed at <http://timothysnyder.org/books-2/bloodlands/>  
Award selection are at pages listed at <http://timothysnyder.org/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcXMV-4HfXs> accessed 02.15.2014

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<sup>7</sup> 'Tsipok' can mean a stick or cane. Bel'diy is dressed in his best! The cane would suggest he was elderly or infirm. I have been informed that *tsipok* can also mean one of several different kinds of digging implements depending on the specific area in the Ukraine where the word is used. Since Bel'diy thinks his grave has already been dug, he would probably not bring a digging implement. But then how does he dig himself another grave?

<sup>8</sup> "Cailleux, Jean." The Canadian Encyclopedia (Edmonton, AB: 1985), Vol. 1 p.254.

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<sup>11</sup> At <http://defendinghistory.com/east-european-nationalist-abuse-of-timothy-snyders-bloodlands>

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> See Jeff Coplon, "In Search of A Soviet Holocaust: A 55-Year-Old Famine Feeds the Right." *Village Voice* (New York) January 12, 1988. At <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/vv.html>

<sup>14</sup> "I Protest the Appearance of Professor Timothy Snyder!" (April 17, 2012). At [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/timothy\\_snyder\\_protest\\_0412.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/timothy_snyder_protest_0412.html)

<sup>15</sup> Grover Furr and Vladimir L. Bobrov. "Stephen Cohen's Biography of Bukharin: A Study in the Falsehood of Khrushchev-Era 'Revelations'." *Cultural Logic* 2010. At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2010/Furr.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Losurdo, "Staline et le stalinisme dans l'histoire (16)" (Debate with Nicolas Werth), April 12, 2012. At <http://www.lafauteadiderot.net/Staline-et-le-stalinisme-dans-1,855> Losurdo's quotations from Churchill may be found in his book *Stalin. Storia e critica di una leggenda nera*. Rome: Carocci, 2008, p.243. Their ultimate source is A.P. Schmidt, (1974), *Churchills privater Krieg. Intervention und Konterrevolution im russischen Burgerkrieg*, November 1918-Marz 1920, Atlantis, Ziirich, 1974, pp. 48-49.

<sup>17</sup> Grover Furr, *The Murder of Sergei Kirov: History, Scholarship, and the Anti-Stalin Paradigm*. Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press & Media, LLC, 2013, p.7

<sup>18</sup> In this chapter and the conclusion I have put scare quotes around the words "nationalism" and "nationalist." I do so because the right-wing "nationalists" claim that only anti-communists can be really "nationalist." Communist Poles, Ukrainians, Russians, and others claim "nationalism" too — "national in form, socialist in content" is one formulation. There is no reason that the right-wing, conservative, fascist, etc. definition of "nationalist" should be conceded to be the only "legitimate" nationalism. In

fact the very concept of nationalism has long since been deconstructed, though we cannot go into that here.

<sup>19</sup> Not the much smaller Polish Catholic Church, a different Catholic sect.

<sup>20</sup> The term "terrorism" here is used in its objective sense of organized violence by forces not representing any state.

<sup>21</sup> The first chapter of *Bloodlands* contains a great many more falsifications than those concerning the famine. Not only the first chapter, but most of the chapters of Snyder's book consist of a veritable litany of fact-claims whose purpose is to show the Soviet Union, its leadership, and its policies in a very negative light.

<sup>22</sup> Adolf Hitler. *Mein Kampf*. Part 1, Chapter 6: War Propaganda.

<sup>23</sup> There is a large literature about these Allied lies. A famous example is Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in war-time*, containing an assortment of lies circulated throughout the nations during the great war. London: G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1928. In the USA the so-called "creel Committee" co-ordinated false propaganda for the American home front.

<sup>24</sup> *Mein Kampf*- Part 1 Chapter 10.

## **Chapter 1. *The "Man-Made" Famine and "Deliberate Famine"* *Arguments in Bloodlands, Chapter 1***

More pages of *Bloodlands* are devoted to the subject of the famine of 1932-33 than to any other single event. Though he has never done research on the famine Snyder promotes a view that contradicts all the evidence as well as the view of the best scholars of this subject: that the famine was "man-made" and "deliberate." We present the conclusions of these scholars here.

In the course of studying Snyder's account of the famine and proving it wrong we also consider, and disprove, the works of scholars who are motivated not by objectivity and a desire to discover the truth but by ideological partisanship: anticommunism and Ukrainian nationalism.

Snyder devotes the whole first chapter of *Bloodlands* to insistence that the famine was deliberate. This is all wrong. Moreover, Snyder ought to be aware that it is wrong because the unanimous conclusion of the best experts who have studied this question is that the famine was a secular one caused by weather conditions and plant diseases. Snyder cites the works of these scholars. But he never informs his readers that they reject entirely the "deliberate starvation" notion that is central to Snyder's book.

There are two distinct though related parts to the "man-made famine" allegation. First, it is asserted that the Soviet government — "Stalin" — deliberately "murdered" the several million people, mainly Ukrainian peasants, who died from the famine. The reasons alleged for the decision to "murder" vary. Sometimes it is claimed that starvation was used to crush Ukrainian nationalism. Sometimes it is suggested that the Soviet government decided to export grain to fuel the program of crash industrialization in full knowledge that this meant death of millions by starvation. These two explanations are not mutually exclusive and are raised in an inconsistent manner, an inconsistency attributable to the fact that there is not the slightest evidence to support either one of them.

As a preface to our detailed critique of Snyder's account in Chapter One of *Bloodlands* we note the following passages from Snyder's articles in

influential American and British intellectual journals. These passages attest to the fact that Snyder promotes this false position with great energy and persistence. We have emphasized some phrases for the reader's convenience.

### **A. The Famine Itself Was Deliberate Murder**

Jewish communist partisans in Belarus or Ukraine obviously seem heroic as enemies of the Nazis and avengers of their families. Their legacy is muddled by the fact that they bore arms to defend **a system that had killed 3.5 million Ukrainians and a similar number of Kazakhs by famine** 10 years before, and a million other Soviet citizens by execution in 1937-1938 (2004-2)

The Soviets hid their mass shootings in dark woods and falsified the records of regions in which they had **starved people to death...** (2009-2)

...the Soviet policies that killed people directly and purposefully, by starvation... (2009-2)

Of the Stalinist killing policies, two were the most significant: the collectivization famines of 1930-1933 and the Great Terror of 1937-1938. It remains unclear whether the Kazakh famine of 1930-1932 was intentional, although it is clear that over a million Kazakhs died of starvation. **It is established beyond all reasonable doubt that Stalin intentionally starved to death Soviet Ukrainians in the winter of 1932-1933.** Soviet documents reveal a series of orders of October-December 1932 with evident malice and intention to kill. By the end, more than three million inhabitants of Soviet Ukraine had died. (2009-2)

Here Snyder says "over a million Kazakhs" died. In the previous quotation, from the same article, he says "3.5 million Ukrainians and a similar number of Kazakhs."

...millions of Ukrainians were **deliberately starved** by Stalin. (2009-2)

The preoccupation with Ukraine as a source of food was shared by Hitler and Stalin. Both wished to control and exploit the Ukrainian breadbasket, and both caused **political famines**: Stalin in the country as a whole, Hitler in the cities and prisoner-of-war camps. (2009-2)

The **famine** certainly did happen, and it was **deliberate**. (2010-1)

He threatened local officials with the Gulag, **forcing them to collect grain from the starving**; and he sealed the internal borders of the republic so that they could not beg in other parts of the Soviet Union. (2010-1)

...the **deliberate starvation** of the three million inhabitants of Soviet Ukraine by the Stalinist regime... (2010-2)

While it is true that Stalin's policy of collectivization — the state seizure of farmland and the coercive employment of peasants — brought enormous suffering throughout the USSR in the early 1930s, it is also true that Stalin made **deliberate decisions** about grain requisitions and livestock seizures that **brought death to three million people in Ukraine who did not have to die**. Some of the very worst of the **killing** took place in southeastern Ukraine, where Stalin is now being celebrated and where Yanukovich has his political base. The famine destroyed that region's rural society by killing many, cowing more, and permitting the immigration of people from beyond Ukraine — chiefly Russians, some of whom inherited the homes of the starved. The cult of Stalin is thus no empty symbol in Ukraine; it is a mark of active identification with a person who owed his mastery of Ukraine to a **campaign of death**. (2010-2)

We now know, after 20 years of discussion of Soviet documents, that in 1932 Stalin knowingly transformed the collectivization famine in Ukraine into a **deliberate campaign of politically motivated starvation**. (2010-5)

Of those who starved, the 3.3 million or so inhabitants of Soviet Ukraine who died in 1932 and 1933 were victims of a **deliberate killing policy related to nationality**. (2011-1)

Stalin requisitioned grain in Soviet Ukraine **knowing that such a policy would kill millions.** (2011-1)

(All emphases added.)

In these semi-popular articles Snyder is at liberty to make the charge of "deliberate famine" and "mass murder" without citing evidence of any kind. In *Bloodlands* Snyder finally has to present his "evidence" to the scrutiny of his readers. We shall examine his argument in detail and expose it for the fraud that it is.

### **The "Ukrainian Famine" and Post-Soviet Nationalism**

Since the 1950s Ukrainian Nationalist organizations have been claiming that Stalin and Bolshevik leaders deliberately starved the Ukraine in order to punish Ukrainian nationalist spirit. The same Ukrainian nationalist groups entered the USSR with the Nazis and collaborated in massacring at least hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens — mainly other Ukrainians, as they were largely confined to the Ukraine, as well as Jews. They also committed the "Volhynian massacres" of 50,000-100,000 Polish peasants in their attempt at "ethnic cleansing" — a little-known holocaust that has received attention only since the end of the USSR and Eastern bloc. Their version of the famine, which they call "Holodomor," or "deliberate death by starvation," is best known in the West from the 1986 book by Robert Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine*. Conquest has retracted his claim, as we shall see below.

The thesis of Conquest's book, that the famine was deliberate and aimed at Ukrainians, is today's "Holodomor" thesis, though this term was not yet used in the 1980s. Anticommunist Soviet-studies experts rejected it at the time the book was published.

"There is no evidence it was intentionally directed against Ukrainians," said Alexander Dallin of Stanford, the father of modern Sovietology. "That would be totally out of keeping with what we know — it makes no sense."



"This is crap, rubbish," said Moshe Lewin of the University of Pennsylvania, whose *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power* broke new ground in social history. "I am an anti-Stalinist, but I don't see how this [genocide] campaign adds to our knowledge. It's adding horrors, adding horrors, until it becomes a pathology."

"I absolutely reject it," said Lynne Viola of SUNY-Binghamton, the first US historian to examine Moscow's Central State Archive on collectivization. "Why in god's name would this paranoid government consciously produce a famine when they were terrified of war [with Germany]?"

These premiere Sovietologists dismiss Conquest for what he is — an ideologue whose serious work is long behind him. But Dallin stands as a liberal exception to the hard-liners of his generation, while Lewin and Viola remain Young Turks who happen to be doing the freshest work on this period. In Soviet studies, where rigor and objectivity count for less than the party line, where fierce anti-Communists still control the prestigious institutes and first-rank departments, a Conquest can survive and prosper while barely cracking a book.

"He's terrible at doing research," said veteran Sovietologist Roberta Manning of Boston College. "He misuses sources, he twists everything."<sup>1</sup>

In a polite but firmly negative review of Conquest's book in the *London Review of Books* in 1987 American Soviet scholar J. Arch Getty wrote:

Conquest's hypothesis, sources and evidence are not new. Indeed, he himself first put forward his view two years ago in a work sponsored by the American Enterprise Institute. The intentional famine story, however, has been an article of faith for Ukrainian émigrés in the West since the Cold War. Much of Conquest's most graphic description is taken from such period-pieces as *The Golgoltha of the Ukraine* (1953), *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin* (1953) and *Communism the Enemy of Mankind* (1955). Conquest's book will thus give a certain academic credibility to a theory which has not been generally accepted by non-partisan scholars outside the circles of exiled nationalities. In today's

conservative political climate, with its 'evil empire' discourse, I am sure that the book will be very popular.<sup>2</sup>

Despite their best efforts Ukrainian researchers have been unable to find *any* documentary support for their claim of deliberate starvation. A huge number of archival documents, a few of them reproduced in a Library of Congress volume *Revelations from the Russian Archives* (<http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ukfaminedocs97.pdf>), documents in English translation, make it clear that no such deliberate starvation occurred.

Nevertheless the myth of the "Holodomor" is now constitutive of the nationalist identity promoted by the independent state of Ukraine and is taught compulsorily in Ukrainian schools as fact. A few articles by the world's leading scholar on the 1932-33 famine, Mark Tauger of West Virginia University, whose work contradicts the Ukrainian nationalist account have just begun to appear in Russian-, though not in Ukrainian-language publications.

Even Robert Conquest has backed off his initial claim that the famine was deliberate, as Davies and Wheatcroft have revealed.

Our view of Stalin and the famine is close to that of Robert Conquest, who would earlier have been considered the champion of the argument that Stalin had intentionally caused the famine and had acted in a genocidal manner. In 2003, Dr Conquest wrote to us explaining **that he does not hold the view that 'Stalin purposely inflicted the 1933 famine. No.** What I argue is that with the resulting famine imminent, he could have prevented it, but put "Soviet interest" other than feeding the starving first — thus consciously abetting it'.<sup>3</sup> (Emphasis added)

Yet the "man-made famine" claim continues to be presented either as settled fact, as Snyder does, or as one plausible theory among others.

In 1995 Davies, Tauger, and Wheatcroft outlined their conclusions about the famine in this way:

We therefore conclude:

1. All planners' stocks — the two secret grain reserves, Nepfond and Mobfond or Gosfond, together with "transitional stocks" held by grain organizations — amounted on 1 July 1933 to less than 2 million tons (1.997 million tons, according to the highest official figure). Persistent efforts of Stalin and the Politburo to establish firm and inviolable grain reserves (in addition to "transitional stocks") amounting to 2 or 3 million tons or more were almost completely unsuccessful...

2. We do not know the amount of grain which was held by grain-consuming organizations, notably the Red Army, but we suspect that these "consumers' stocks" would not change the picture substantially.

3. These findings do not, of course, free Stalin from responsibility for the famine. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to assess the extent to which it would have been possible for Stalin to use part of the grain stocks available in spring 1933 to feed starving peasants. The state was a monopoly supplier of grain to urban areas and the army; if the reserves of this monopoly supply system — which amounted to four-six weeks' supply — were to have been drained, mass starvation, epidemics and unrest in the towns could have resulted. Nevertheless, it seems certain that, if Stalin had risked lower levels of these reserves in spring and summer 1933, hundreds of thousands — perhaps millions — of lives could have been saved. In the slightly longer term, if he had been open about the famine, some international help would certainly have alleviated the disaster. And if he had been more far-sighted, the agricultural crisis of 1932-1933 could have been avoided altogether. But Stalin was not hoarding immense grain reserves in these years. On the contrary, he had failed to reach the levels which he had been imperatively demanding since 1929.<sup>4</sup>

In their major work on the subject published in 2004 Davies and Wheatcroft outline their conclusions as follows:

Our study of the Famine has led us to very different conclusions from Dr. Conquest's. He holds that Stalin "wanted a famine," that "the Soviets did not want the famine to be coped with successfully," and that the Ukrainian famine was "deliberately inflicted for its own sake." This leads him to the sweeping conclusion: "The main lesson seems to

be that the Communist ideology provided the motivation for an unprecedented massacre of men, women and children."

We do not at all absolve Stalin from responsibility for the famine. His policies towards the peasants were ruthless and brutal. But the story which has emerged in this book is of a Soviet leadership which was struggling with a famine crisis which had been caused partly by their wrongheaded policies, but was unexpected and undesirable. The background to the famine is not simply that Soviet agricultural policies were derived from Bolshevik ideology, though ideology played its part. They were also shaped by the Russian revolutionary past, the experiences of the civil war, the international situation, the intransigent circumstances of geography and the weather, and the *modus operandi* of the Soviet system as it was established under Stalin. They were formulated by men with little formal education and limited knowledge of agriculture. Above all, they were a consequence of the decision to industrialize this peasant country at breakneck speed.<sup>5</sup>

Mark Tauger did not coauthor this book. Of these three authors only Tauger has devoted his professional life to the study of the 1932-33 famine, Russian famines, and famines generally. In his review of Davies' and Wheatcroft's book Tauger both sums up their conclusions and expresses some criticisms of them.

Popular media and most historians for decades have described the great famine that struck most of the USSR in the early 1930s as "man-made," very often even a "genocide" that Stalin perpetrated intentionally against Ukrainians and sometimes other national groups to destroy them as nations. The most famous exposition of this view is the book *Harvest of Sorrow*, now almost two decades old, by the prolific (and problematic) historian Robert Conquest, but this perspective can be found in History Channel documentaries on Stalin, many textbooks of Soviet history, Western and even World Civilization, and many writings on Stalinism, on the history of famines, and on genocide.

This perspective, however, is wrong. The famine that took place was not limited to Ukraine or even to rural areas of the USSR, it was not

fundamentally or exclusively man-made, and it was far from the intention of Stalin and others in the Soviet leadership to create such a disaster. A small but growing literature relying on new archival documents and a critical approach to other sources has shown the flaws in the "genocide" or "intentionalist" interpretation of the famine and has developed an alternative interpretation. The book under review, *The Years of Hunger*, by Robert Davies and Stephen Wheatcroft, is the latest and largest of these revisionist interpretations. It presents more evidence than any previous study documenting the intentions of Soviet leaders and the character of the agrarian and agricultural crises of these years.

Tauger also expresses some serious criticisms of Davies' and Wheatcroft's work:

Second, the book still does not satisfactorily explain why the famine took place when it did and especially why it ended. The authors' chapters on agriculture and procurements in 1933, which was of course the crucial agricultural year because this was when the famine basically ended, are substantially shorter than those on 1931 and 1932 and have a certain "rushed" quality. Davies and Wheatcroft identify several objective factors to which they attribute the declines in food production in 1931-1933 that in great part caused the famine. Most of those factors that they identify for 1932, however, still prevailed or were even worse in 1933. The decline in livestock numbers and draft forces, for example, continued into 1933 and possibly 1934 (depending on how one calculates the value of a tractor); the disorder in crop rotation was not overcome even by the reduced sowing plans of 1933, or for some years thereafter. Most important, famine conditions were much worse. The authors cite a few sources claiming that peasants somehow knew in 1933 that they had to work hard (p. 238), but they also acknowledge in another context that at least some peasants worked hard in 1932 as well (p. 418). In any case, all evidence about peasants' resistance is anecdotal and can be shown not to be representative of their views and actions generally (see my article "Soviet Peasants and Collectivization: Resistance and Adaptation"). Without any doubt, however, working conditions for peasants in 1933,

because of the more severe famine conditions, were much worse in 1933 than in 1932.

Given these inconsistencies, there remains one factor in explaining the cause of the small harvest of 1932 that can account for the improved harvest in 1933, and that is the complex of environmental factors in 1932. As I documented in a recent publication, the USSR experienced an unusual environmental disaster in 1932: extremely wet and humid weather that gave rise to severe plant disease infestations, especially rust. Ukraine had double or triple the normal rainfall in 1932. Both the weather conditions and the rust spread from Eastern Europe, as plant pathologists at the time documented. Soviet plant pathologists in particular estimated that rust and other fungal diseases reduced the potential harvest in 1932 by almost nine million tons, which is the largest documented harvest loss from any single cause in Soviet history (*Natural Disaster and Human Action*, p 19). One Soviet source did estimate higher rust losses in 1933 than 1932 for two provinces in the Central Blackearth Region, which is a small region of the country (approximately 5 percent of the total sown area). Davies and Wheatcroft cite this and imply that it applied to the rest of the country (p. 131-132 fn. 137), but that source does not document larger losses from rust in 1933 anywhere else. Further, the exceptional weather and agricultural conditions of 1932 did not generally recur in 1933.

Consequently, I would still argue, against Davies and Wheatcroft, that the weather and infestations of 1932 were the most important causes of the small harvest in 1932 and the larger one in 1933. I would also like to point out for the record here that the criticism they make (p. 444-445) of my harvest data is invalid and represents an unjustified statistical manipulation of what are in fact the only genuine harvest data for 1932 (see "The 1932 Harvest").<sup>6</sup>

Tauger attributes more importance to climatic conditions, and less to communist party ideology, policies, incompetence, and/or brutality, than do Davies and Wheatcroft.

## **B. Collectivization caused the famine**

Snyder also links the famine to collectivization. He writes:

...both regimes [i.e. the Nazi and Soviet] integrated mass murder with economic planning. (2009-2)

Eighty years ago, in the autumn of 1930, Joseph Stalin enforced a policy that changed the course of history, and led to tens of millions of deaths across the decades and around the world. In a violent and massive campaign of "collectivization," he brought Soviet agriculture under state control. (2010-5)

Once the agricultural sector of the USSR was collectivized, the hunger began. (2010-5)

...the shooting and deportation of the best farmers... (2010-5)

After Mao made his revolution in 1948, Chinese communists followed the Stalinist model of development. This meant that some 30 million Chinese starved to death 1958-1961, in a famine very similar to that in the Soviet Union. Maoist collectivization, too, was followed by mass shooting campaigns. (2010-5)

As we have seen above, Tauger believes that climatic conditions played a greater role in the famine than policy factors such as collectivization.

There have been hundreds of famines in Russian history, about one every 2nd or 3rd year. There were serious famines in 1920-1921, 1924, 1927, and 1928. The "Volga famine" of 1920-1921 is well known, in part because of the Nansen relief commission which took many horrifying photographs of the suffering. There was another weather-induced famine in 1924.

In 2001 Tauger published an article about the 1924 and 1928 famines titled "Grain Crisis or Famine?"<sup>7</sup> Official Soviet Ukrainian primary sources prove that the 1928-1929 famine was a serious famine, including in the Ukraine, which received more aid than it sent to other parts of the USSR. This disproves the "exploitation" theory of some Ukrainian nationalists. The 1928-1929 famine was caused by natural disaster, mainly drought. It was not induced by Soviet taxation or procurement policies. Moreover,

government relief efforts and agencies organized the shortage to distribute very significant amounts of food to the poorest persons, undoubtedly saving many lives.

But the famines of 1924 and 1927-1928 are largely ignored. When they don't ignore them anticommunist researchers deny that these were "famines," calling them instead "regional and local problems." Evidently they do this in order to hide the fact that famines of greater or lesser intensity occurred in Russia very frequently. Anticommunist writers would like others to believe that such famines were rare until collectivization.

But in reality famines were common. Collectivization was in large part an attempt to solve this perennial problem. In a famous passage in his memoir of World War 2 *Hinge of Fate* Churchill quoted Stalin as saying:

"Ten millions," he said, holding up his hands. "It was fearful. Four years it lasted. It was absolutely necessary for Russia, if we were to avoid periodic famines, to plough the land with tractors. We must mechanise our agriculture. When we gave tractors to the peasants they were all spoiled in a few months. Only Collective Farms with workshops could handle tractors."<sup>8</sup>

Churchill wrote these volumes years later and his memory was probably far from precise. But no one has suggested that Churchill invented this passage about "avoiding periodic famines."

Therefore, collectivization was necessary not simply to fund industrialization, although it was indeed essential for that purpose. It was essential to put an end to periodic famines, during which a great many people died. Indeed, 1932-33 was the last famine, except for the postwar famine of 1946-1947, the basic cause of which was the worst drought in many decades combined with the immense destruction caused by the war. Stephen Wheatcroft's recent article convincingly demolishes the ideological anticommunists who tried to make this famine too a "man-made" famine to "punish peasants."<sup>9</sup>

This fact — that collectivization saved the Soviet people from further famines — is virtually always erased in discussions of the famine of 1932-



33. Collectivization certainly caused deaths. *However, not to collectivize would also have caused deaths.* The status quo caused deaths — from famines. Continuing the NEP (New Economic Policy) would have caused deaths from famines. Poor peasants died from starvation even in non-famine years because they could not afford to buy enough grain.

The only alternatives to collectivization of agriculture were:

1. To permit famines to continue every 2-3 years indefinitely, as the Tsars had done;
2. To forego industrialization for decades, if not forever (if the Nazis had had their way all Slavs would have been killed or reduced to uneducated serfs).

In terms of the good that it did and the evils that it avoided, collectivization, with all of its problems and deaths, was one of the great triumphs of public policy of the 20th century. Had it been accomplished by a capitalist country it would probably have long since been generally acknowledged as such.

The Chinese Communists and Vietnamese Communists learned much from studying the Bolsheviks' experience with collectivization and industrialization. They resolved not to slavishly imitate the Soviet example, and they did not do so. But Stalin and the Bolsheviks were the first. They did not have the benefit of hindsight. It is to be expected that they would make many decisions that later turned out to have been mistakes. That is always the case with pioneers. During collectivization the Bolsheviks made many, many errors. But it would have been an immeasurably greater mistake not to try in the first place.

And here is the problem. It is unfashionable, "politically incorrect," to point these things out. The prevailing anticommunist, and specifically anti-Stalinist, orthodoxy among elites, East and West, make it literally unprintable. It's a fact, it's the truth — but "you can't say it."

**Collectivization and the Famine of 1932-33: What Really Happened**

This is a brief account of the 1932-1933 Soviet famine as supported by the primary source evidence now available. It is based upon the research of Professor Mark Tauger of West Virginia University. Tauger has spent his professional life of more than 20 years studying famines and is a world expert on Russian famines. He has written several special studies of the 1932-33 famine.<sup>10</sup>

## **Famines in Russian History**

Famine has struck Russia hundreds of times during the past millennium. A 1988 account by Russian scholars traces these famines through historical records from the year 736 A.D. to 1914. Many of these famines struck Ukraine as well.

The year of the two Russian revolutions, 1917, saw a serious crop failure leading to an urban famine in 1917-18. In the 1920s the USSR had a series of famines: in 1920-1923 in the Volga and Ukraine plus one in western Siberia in 1923; in the Volga and Ukraine again in 1924-25, and a serious and little-studied famine in Ukraine in 1928-1929.

In 1920-1923 Russia experienced a devastating famine, often called the Volga famine — a misnomer since it affected at least the Volga region, Ukraine, and the North Caucasus — with accompanying typhus epidemic. The Soviet government requested and received considerable help from abroad, including from the famous commission headed by Norwegian explorer and humanitarian Fridtjof Nansen and Herbert Hoover's American Relief Administration.<sup>11</sup>

Another famine struck in 1924-1925. Again in 1927-1928 a terrible crop failure struck the Ukraine, the result of a combination of natural disasters.

The Soviet Ukrainian government established a famine relief commission, the Uriadkom, the central government in Moscow transported food from the Russian Republic to Ukraine, and the Uriadkom distributed food to nearly 400,000 peasants, as well as livestock feed, farm equipment, and credits. (Tauger 2012a; Tauger 2001a)<sup>12</sup>

This history of a thousand years of frequent famine and of a dozen years that witnessed three significant crop failures and subsequent famines is the essential context for understanding the famine of 1932-1933 and the response of the Soviet government to it.

The Ukrainian famine of 1928-29 was the third famine in the Soviet Union in seven years due to a natural disaster and was the most extreme part of a broader food-supply crisis that affected most of the country. This crisis did not result exclusively or even mainly from price policies. The Soviet Union clearly had an extreme vulnerability to natural disasters, and Soviet leaders interpreted this vulnerability in comparison to the West as a sign of agricultural backwardness.

For Soviet leaders, the Ukrainian famine was an important part of the argument that Soviet agriculture had to be changed. (Tauger 2001a 169-70)

## **Collectivization**

The collectivization of agriculture was designed to end the cycle of famines that had tormented Russia and Ukraine for centuries. It was a reform — a significant improvement in the security and lives of the peasant population and therefore of the entire population. It was not undertaken to "tax" or "exploit" the peasants or to extract value from the countryside. On the contrary: during the decade 1929-1939 the Soviet government spent tens of billions of rubles on agriculture.

[T]heir primary goal was increasing food production by using what seemed to be the most modern and reliable methods available at the time. (Tauger 2004, 70)

Stalin and the Bolsheviks viewed collectivization as the only way to swiftly modernize agriculture, to put an end to the wasteful and labor-consuming cultivation of individual land holdings, often in tiny widely-scattered strips and put it on a large-scale basis. They used the large-scale, highly mechanized agriculture of certain American farms in the West as models for *sovkhozy* (Soviet farms). They did not see collectivization as a means of

exploitation or as "re-creating serfdom" and certainly not as deliberate killings or genocide. Nor was it.

### **Peasant Protests against Collectivization**

Peasant protests did occur. According to an OGPU (police) report of March 1931, right in the midst of collectivization, about five per cent of the peasant population was involved in protests. This also means that the vast majority of peasants were not involved in such protests. Most of these protests were settled peacefully; the OGPU reported that they had recourse to force in fewer than 2% of them. Many peasants actively supported collectivization. This number increased when local activists were experienced or sensitive enough to patiently explain the purpose of collectivization to the peasants. Some peasants "spontaneously form[ed] *kolkhozy* and consolidated their fields." (Tauger 2004, 75)

Tauger concludes that:

...the regime implemented collectivization coercively, violently and without adequate appreciation of or concern for its disruptive consequences (Tauger 2004, 88)

Nevertheless, he concludes:

[C]ollectivization was a programme to achieve a clearly necessary goal — to increase food production in a country plagued by famines — and that it was implemented after the apparently successful experiment of the sovkhos project and with substantial governmental investments. (Tauger 2004, 88)

Many historians claim that peasant opposition to and even rebellion against collectivization was widespread, and thus that collectivization produced "famine and failure." Tauger believes the facts show otherwise:

[T]hese studies minimize or ignore the actual harvest data, the environmental factors that caused low harvests, the repeated recovery from the famine and crop failures, the large harvests of the 1930s, the mechanization of Soviet farms in these years, Soviet population

growth, and the long-term increases in food production and consumption over the Soviet period. (Tauger 2004, 87)

In short, collectivization was a success for the Soviet and Ukrainian peasantry and for all of Soviet society which, of course, relied on the peasants' agricultural labor to feed it.

...collectivisation brought substantial modernisation to traditional agriculture in the Soviet Union, and laid the basis for relatively high food production and consumption by the 1970s and 1980s. (Tauger 2006, 109)

Many accounts of "dekulakization" and forcible grain procurements emphasize the violence that was often necessary to force determined opponents of collectivization off the land into exile, and the fact that peasants who were forced to give up grain during the famine experienced this force as cruelty. There must have been many incidents that could be described by anyone as "cruel". In Tauger's view "the cruel forced movement of population — dekulakization" or what Stalin called "the destruction of the class of kulaks", was "not necessarily the best means to achieve the regime's objective" of collectivizing agriculture.

I am not convinced by those who claim that the Soviets rejected "better" or "less cruel" methods of collectivization. The truth is that collectivization was a massive enterprise that was unprecedented in history. Stalin and the Soviet leadership undertook it because they saw no other way to avoid devastating famines in the future. They made a plan and carried it out, and that meant disempowering any people who were determined to stop it.

The Soviet leadership was flexible. The plan was changed several times in response to feedback from local activists who worked directly with peasants. The most famous change in plan is that associated with Stalin's article "Dizzy with Success," published on March 2, 1930. This article re-emphasized the need to persuade rather than to force peasants to join collective farms.

When the famine occurred — not caused by collectivization but by environmental factors, as we discuss below — the Soviet leadership had to

deal with that too. There was no choice but to take grain from peasants in the countryside in order to redistribute it in a more egalitarian manner, as well as to feed the cities and the army, which produced little food. Whatever excesses or cruelty took place were the inevitable result of errors in the plan for carrying out collectivization. Inevitable too was the unevenness in the abilities and characteristics of the tens of thousands of activists and of the peasants themselves. All were faced with a terrible situation under emergency conditions, where many people would inevitably die of starvation or its effects, simply because there was not enough food to feed the whole population.

No "perfect" plan is ever possible at any time. None was possible in 1932. A great many mistakes were made. It could not have been otherwise. But the biggest mistake would have been not to collectivize at all.

This evidence shows, in particular, that collectivisation allowed the mobilisation and distribution of resources, like tractors, seed aid, and food relief, to enable farmers to produce a large harvest during a serious famine, which was unprecedented in Russian history and almost so in Soviet history. By implication, therefore, this research shows that collectivisation, whatever its disruptive effects on agriculture, did in fact function as a means to modernise and aid Soviet agriculture. (Tauger 2006, 112)

### **The Famine of 1932-33<sup>13</sup>**

Two incorrect explanations of this famine are widely accepted. The Ukrainian nationalist explanation claims that Stalin and the Bolshevik leadership withheld grain from Ukrainian peasants in order to export it; deliberately starved Ukrainian peasants to suppress Ukrainian strivings for independence; or both. The alleged motives vary because there is no evidence to support any of them.

This is the myth of the "Holodomor". Consciously modeled on the Jewish Holocaust it originated in the Ukrainian diaspora, among and under the influence of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and veterans of the 14th Waffen SS "Galizien" division and Ukrainian Insurgent Army (OUN-

UPA). These forces had fought on the side of the Nazis and had fled to the west with German troops as the Red Army advanced. In true Nazi fashion early proponents of this "deliberate famine" myth blamed Jews for it.

Two Ukrainian quislings of Moscow, D. Shumsky and M. Khvylovyj, who believed that Moscow was working for a better communist Ukraine but eventually realised that she was only expanding her empire, committed suicide. They were replaced by L. Kahanovych as Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine and I. Shelehess, A. Shlihter, Y. Rahkis, among others, as assistant secretaries. All of them were Jews. The following Jews held positions in the Ministry of Police — V. Balicky, Karlsom, M. Latsis, F. Koch, C. Fuchs...

L. Kahanovych realised he would have a monumental task in bringing the Ukrainian villagers to heel. They were hard-working farmers, fiercely proud of their livelihood and land and would defend these to the death. Moscow's plan was to take all the land and reduce the villagers to virtual serfdom under the guise of collectivisation.

To achieve this, Kahanovych and the politburo organized a man-made famine in which 7 million Ukrainians died.<sup>14</sup>

When Ukraine became independent in 1991 these forces flooded into the country and exercised a determining influence in historical-ideological questions. They promoted the status of the OUN-UPA forces, guilty of immense mass murders of Jews, Poles, and Soviet citizens generally, as "heroes" who were "fighting for independence". (The assumption here is that "patriotism" and "nationalism" somehow excuse mass murder.)

Thus the myth of the "Holodomor" was never based upon any evidence. Rather, it was politically motivated from the beginning. It has been officially adopted by the Ukrainian state and is now compulsorily taught in Ukrainian schools and promoted by Ukrainian academics. Since there is no evidence at all to support it, it is simply "taken for granted". It is unofficially "taboo", forbidden to dissent from this view in the public sphere in Ukraine (and in the Ukrainian diaspora as well). A law threatening anyone who publicly dissented from this view with criminal

penalties was briefly considered under the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko (2005-2010), a leader of the "Orange revolution."

A more "mainstream" but still politicized interpretation states that the famine was due to the collectivization of agriculture, and excessive state grain requisitions, which led to disruptions, mismanagement, and peasant rebellion, and ultimately to famine and starvation. This is the official position of the Russian government. Neither of these explanations is borne out by primary source evidence.

### **Environmental Factors Caused The Famine**

The main causes of the 1932-33 famine were environmental factors that led to a poor harvest. These factors were: drought in some areas; unusually heavy rainfall in others; serious infestations of the crop diseases rust and smut; plagues of pests, including Asian locusts, beet weevils, meadow moths, and caterpillars; and a huge infestation of mice. The harvest was so small that the amount of food available in the USSR was apparently less than was necessary to feed the whole population.

Contributing factors were due to the interaction of human agency with these environmental causes. There was a widespread and serious problem of weeds, caused by a shortage of labor to weed the fields due to population flight and the weakness of many remaining peasants. Much land remained unplanted or unharvested due to labor shortages caused by population losses both from peasants moving to towns and cities and from peasants weakened by or dying of starvation.

Horses were the chief draught animals used for plowing and other agricultural tasks. Many horses had been lost or were already severely weakened by a famine in 1931-32 and by desperate peasants eating oats, the horses' fodder. The Soviet state imported some tractors and manufactured others. This did have some effect but not enough to overcome the loss of draft power from horses. (Tauger 2001b)

Much of the land had been planted in grain for years in a row. This resulted in soil exhaustion that severely reduced fertility. Farms and agricultural



officials were finding it hard to find additional land in the established agricultural regions. The increased area put the peasants under considerable strain. Nevertheless there was sufficient labor to bring in a good harvest in 1933 and so put an end to the famine. That means there had been enough labor in 1931 and 1932 as well. That the harvest in those years was fatally small was mainly due to the environmental factors listed above.

The Soviet leadership did not fully understand these environmental causes. Nor did their informants, the OGPU and local Party leaders. Therefore, they tended to blame human factors like mismanagement, faulty leadership, and, to some extent, peasant resistance and kulak sabotage. Not understanding, at least for many months, the primary importance of environmental causes, and believing reports that the harvest should have been a good one, the only logical alternative was that the famine was caused by various kinds of sabotage: direct sabotage by Ukrainian nationalists; peasants withholding grain; peasants and others hoarding grain for sale; peasants unwilling to work the fields; Party, kolkhoz, and other officials collaborating in these efforts, and so on.

Nevertheless the Soviet government did greatly reduce exports of grain. It also began to ship aid in food and seed to Ukraine and other hard-hit areas. Tauger (2004, 82-3) writes:

By early 1933 the USSR was in the throes of a catastrophic famine, varying in severity between regions but pervasive. After efforts in January to procure more grain, the regime began desperate efforts in February to aid peasants to produce a crop. The political departments (*politotdely*), which the regime introduced into the state farms (*sovkhozy*) and the machine tractor stations (MTS) in early 1933, played a crucial role in these efforts. These agencies, composed of a small group of workers and OGPU personnel in each MTS or *sovkhov*, removed officials who had violated government directives on farm work and procurements, replacing them with *kolkhozniki* or *sovkhov* workers who they thought would be more reliable, and organized and otherwise helped farms to produce a good harvest in 1933. They were supported by draconian and coercive laws in enforcing labour discipline in the farms in certain regions, but also by the largest

allocations of seed and food aid in Soviet history, 5.76 million tons, and by special sowing commissions set up in crucial regions like Ukraine, the Urals, the Volga and elsewhere to manage regional-level aspects of organization and supplies to the farms.

Historians seldom discuss the role of these *politotdely*. Tauger believes they made a significant contribution to the efforts to organize production and overcome the famine. He summarizes at some length a report of December 1933 from the Central Blackearth Oblast' (south of Moscow and directly north of Ukraine) about the important role these bodies played in helping the peasants bring in the good harvest of 1933:

The report first describes the crisis conditions of early 1933: peasants starving and dying, horses exhausted, dying and neglected, tractors repaired poorly or not at all, labour discipline weak among *kolkhozniki*, tractor drivers and individual peasants, with frequent cases of refusals to work and avoidance of responsibility. The *politotdely* began by talking with and organizing the *kolkhozniki*, and by purging *kolkhozy*, MTS, and other local agencies of what it termed kulak and counter-revolutionary elements. According to the report *kolkhozniki* participated in these actions and developed enthusiasm for work from them. With *politotdel* help, MTS and *kolkhozy* finished sowing 15 days earlier than they had in 1932, and sowed 3.4 million hectares instead of the 2.85 million hectares they had in 1932. They used fertilizer for the first time and sorted seed, they treated more seed against plant diseases, they weeded crops sometimes two and three times, and they took measures against insects. They completed harvesting grain crops in 65 days, versus 70 in 1932, and threshing in December 1933, a process that in 1932 had lasted in the region into March 1933. They completed grain procurements in November 1933 (those of 1932 had lasted like threshing into spring 1933), paid off all of their seed loans, formed the necessary internal funds in *kolkhozy* and still managed to distribute to *kolkhozniki* much more in labour-day payments than the previous year, thereby ending the famine in the region. The *kolkhozniki* also provided all their livestock with basic fodder, and built granaries, livestock shelters, clubs and other buildings...

As a result of these efforts, the CBO harvested some 24 per cent more grain in 1933 than in 1932 (Tauger, 1991b: 81). While weather conditions played a role in these successful results, clearly peasants worked harder and differently in 1933, during the peak of the famine, than they had earlier, and management by the *politotdely* contributed to this. (Tauger, 2004, 84)

Tauger cites evidence that many peasants who hated or did not like the *kolkhozy* nevertheless worked hard in them, while many other peasants "worked willingly during the whole period ... siding with the system." (Tauger 2004, 85)

As a result, on the whole peasants accepted collectivization:

All of this is not to deny that some peasants in the 1930s, especially in famine years, used the 'weapons of the weak' against the kolkhoz system and the Soviet government. The issue is how representative evidence is of peasants generally, which is another way of asking how important such incidents were. Certainly resistance was greater and more important in 1930 and possibly 1932. But any analysis of this must also take into account natural disaster, the diversity of peasants' responses, and overall results of their work. Studies conducted in the mid-1930s found that kolkhozniki actually worked harder than non-collectivized peasants had worked in the 1920s, clear evidence of significant adaptation to the new system. (Tauger 2004, 87)

## **The Question of Grain Exports**

Like the Tsarist governments the Soviet government exported grain. Contracts were signed in advance, which created the dilemma Tauger describes as follows:

The low 1931 harvest and reallocations of grain to famine areas forced the regime to curtail grain exports from 5.2 million tons in 1931 to 1.73 million in 1932; they declined to 1.68 million in 1933. Grain exported in 1932 and 1933 could have fed many people and reduced the famine: The 354,000 tons exported during the first half of 1933, for

example, could have provided nearly 2 million people with daily rations of 1 kilogram for six months. Yet these exports were less than half of the 750,000 tons exported in the first half of 1932. How Soviet leaders calculated the relative costs of lower exports and lower domestic food supplies remains uncertain, but available evidence indicates that further reductions or cessation of Soviet exports could have had serious consequences. Grain prices fell in world markets and turned the terms of trade against the Soviet Union in the early 1930s, its indebtedness rose and its potential ability to pay declined, causing western bankers and officials to consider seizure of Soviet property abroad and denial of future credits in case of Soviet default. Failure to export thus would have threatened the fulfillment of its industrialization plans and, according to some observers, the stability of the regime.

At the same time that the USSR was exporting it was also allocating much more grain to seed and famine relief. Tauger documents the fact that the Central Committee allocated more than half a million tons to Ukraine and North Caucasus in February, and more than half a million tons to Ukraine alone by April 1933. The government also accumulated some 3 million tons in reserves during this period and then allocated 2 million tons from that to famine relief. Soviet archival sources indicate that the regime returned five million tons of grain from procurements back to villages throughout the USSR in the first half of 1933 (Tauger 1991, 72; 88-89). All of these amounts greatly exceed the amount exported in this period.

The Soviet government was faced with a situation where there was simply not enough food to feed the whole population even if all exports had been stopped instead of just drastically curtailed, as they were.

The severity and geographical extent of the famine, the sharp decline in exports in 1932-1933, seed requirements, and the chaos in the Soviet Union in these years, all lead the conclusion that even complete cessation of exports would not have been enough to prevent famine. This situation makes it difficult to accept the interpretation of the famine as the result of the 1932 grain procurements and as a conscious

act of genocide. **The harvest of 1932 essentially made a famine inevitable.** (Tauger 1991 88;89. Emphasis added)

Grain delivery targets (procurement quotas) were drastically cut back multiple times for both collective and individual farmers in order to share the scarcity. Some of what was procured was returned to the villages. (Tauger 1991, 72-73) It is these collection efforts, often carried out in a very harsh way, that are highlighted by promoters of the "intentionalist" interpretation as evidence of callousness and indifference to peasants' lives or even of intent to punish or kill.

Meanwhile the regime used these procurements to feed 40 million people in the cities and industrial sites who were also starving, further evidence that the harvest was small. In May 1932 the Soviet government legalized the private trade in grain. But very little grain was sold this way in 1932-1933. This too is a further indication of a small 1932 harvest.

About 10 per cent of the population of Ukraine died from the famine or associated diseases. But 90 per cent survived, the vast majority of whom were peasants, army men of peasant background, or workers of peasant origin. The surviving peasants had to work very hard, under conditions of insufficient food, to sow and bring in the 1933 harvest. They did so with significant aid from the Soviet government. A smaller population, reduced in size by deaths, weakened by hunger, with fewer draught animals, was nevertheless able to produce a successful harvest in 1933 and put an end to the famine. This is yet more evidence that the 1932 harvest had been a catastrophically poor one. (Tauger 2004)

Government aid included five million tons of food distributed as relief, including to Ukraine, beginning as early as February 7, 1933; the provision of tractors and other equipment distributed especially to Ukraine; "a network of several thousand political departments in the machine-tractor stations which contributed greatly to the successful harvest in 1933" (Tauger 2012b); other measures, including special commissions on sowing and harvesting to manage work and distribute seed and food aid.

<http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/aidtoulkraine020733.pdf>

This interpretation of the 1932-1933 famine as the result of the largest in a series of natural disasters suggest an alternative approach to the intentionalist view of the famine. Some advocates of the peasant resistance view argue that the regime took advantage of the famine to retaliate against the peasants and force them to work harder. Famine and deaths from starvation, however, began in 1928 in towns and some rural areas because of low harvests and of some peasants' unwillingness to sell their surpluses. The food supply generally deteriorated over the next few years, due not only to exports in 1930-1931 but also to the crop failures of 1931-1932. The harsh procurements of 1931 and 1932 have to be understood in the context of famine that prevailed in towns as well as villages throughout the Soviet Union by late 1931; by 1932-1933, as noted above, workers as well as peasants were dying of hunger. If we are to believe that the regime starved the peasants to induce labor discipline in the farms, are we to interpret starvation in the towns as the regime's tool to discipline blue and white collar workers and their wives and children?

While Soviet food distribution policies are beyond the scope of this article, it is clear that the small harvests of 1931-1932 created shortages that affected virtually everyone in the country and that the Soviet regime did not have the internal resources to alleviate the crisis.

Finally, this essay shows that while the USSR experienced chronic drought and other natural disasters earlier, those which occurred in 1932 were an unusual and severe combination of calamities in a country with heightened vulnerability to such incidents. ... The evidence and analysis I have presented here show that the Soviet famine was more serious and more important an event than most previous studies claim, including those adhering to the Ukrainian nationalist interpretation, and that it resulted from a highly abnormal combination of environmental and agricultural circumstances. By drawing attention to these circumstances, this study also demonstrates the importance of questioning accepted political interpretations and of considering the environmental aspects of famines and other historical events that involve human interaction with the natural world. That the Soviet regime, through its rationing systems, fed more than 50 million

people, including many peasants, during the famine, however poorly, and that at least some peasants faced with famine undertook to work with greater intensity despite their hostility to the regime in 1933, and to some extent in previous years as well, indicate that all those involved in some way recognized the uniqueness of this tragic event. (Tauger 2001b, 46, 47)

Snyder has adopted the Ukrainian nationalists' "intentional" interpretation — the "Holodomor" myth, though Snyder chooses not to use this term. He strives to give the impression that the Soviet government cut the Ukraine off completely, making no effort to relieve the famine. Snyder ignores environmental causes — which were in fact the primary causes — and fails to mention the Soviet government's large-scale relief campaign which, together with their own hard work under the most difficult conditions, enabled the peasants to produce a large harvest in 1933. In Tauger's judgment:

[T]he general point [is that] the famine was caused by natural factors and that the government helped the peasants produce a larger harvest the next year and end the famine. (Tauger 2012b, 3)

This is the polar opposite from what Snyder and the Ukrainian nationalists contend. The so-called "Holodomor" or "deliberate" and "man-made" famine interpretation is not simply mistaken on some important points. Its proponents misrepresent history by omitting evidence that would undermine their interpretation. It is not history but political propaganda disguised as history, what I have called elsewhere "propaganda with footnotes."

Tauger's view is also significantly different from that of R. W. Davies and Stephen G. Wheatcroft, who attribute the famine to several causes, including collectivization.<sup>15</sup> In their opinion environmental factors played only a secondary role. Davies and Wheatcroft believe the Soviet government could have saved many, perhaps millions, of lives if collectivization had not been undertaken and mitigated if the Soviet government had not handled the famine in a "brutal" manner. The official position of the Russian government and academic establishment is similar:

that the famine was caused by excessive grain requisitioning and by collectivization.

This hypothesis is mistaken. The reality is that collectivization put an end to famines in the Soviet Union, except for a serious famine in 1946-47. Wheatcroft, author of the most recent study of this famine, has concluded that this famine too was due to environmental causes.<sup>16</sup>

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Jeff Coplon. "In Search of a Soviet Holocaust. A 55-Year-Old Famine Feeds the Right." *Village Voice* (New York City) January 12, 1988

<sup>2</sup> "Starving the Ukraine." Review of Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow the terror-famine*. *London Review of Books* January 22, 1987 pp. 8-9. Conquest's reply, Getty's response to it, and the ensuing back-and-forth, bitter on Conquest's part and skillful on Getty's, was online on October 24, 2013 when I accessed it. Now only 1/4 of it is available for free.

<sup>3</sup> R. W. Davies & Stephen G. Wheatcroft. "Debate. Stalin and the Soviet Famine of 1932-33: A Reply to Ellman." *Europe-Asia Studies* 58 (4) June 2006, 629; Also in Davies & Wheatcroft, *The Years of Hunger: Soviet Agriculture, 1931-1933* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 441 n.145.

<sup>4</sup> R.W. Davies, M.B. Tauger and S.G. Wheatcroft. "Stalin, Grain Stocks and the Famine of 1932-1933." *Slavic Review* Volume 54, Issue 3 (Autumn, 1995), 642-657, at 656-7.

<sup>5</sup> R.W. Davies and Stephen G. Wheatcroft, *The Years of Hunger: Soviet Agriculture, 1931-33*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p. 441.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Tauger. Review of R. W. Davies and Stephen G. Wheatcroft, *The Years of Hunger: Soviet Agriculture, 1931-1933*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.



<sup>7</sup> Mark Tauger, "Grain Crisis or Famine? The Ukrainian State Commission for Aid to Crop Failure Victims and the Ukrainian Famine of 1928-29." In Donald J. Raleigh, ed. *Provincial Landscapes. Local Dimensions of Soviet Power 1917-1953*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001, 146-170.

<sup>8</sup> Winston Churchill. *The Hinge of Fate*. Rosetta Books LLC 2002 (orig. ed. 1950), 447-8.

<sup>9</sup> Wheatcroft, Steven G. "The Soviet Famine of 1946-47, the Weather and Human Agency in Historical Perspective." *Europe-Asia Studies*, 64:6, 987-1005.

<sup>10</sup> For this brief introductory account I have drawn from the following works by Mark Tauger:

"The Harvest of 1932 and the Famine of 1933," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (1991), 70-89. (Tauger 1991)

"Grain Crisis or Famine? The Ukrainian State Commission for Aid to Crop Failure Victims and the Ukrainian Famine of 1928-29." In Donald J. Raleigh, ed. *Provincial Landscapes. Local Dimensions of Soviet Power 1917-1953*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001, 146-170, 360-365. (Tauger 2001a)

*Natural Disaster and Human Action in the Soviet Famine of 1931-1933*, Carl Beck Papers No. 1506 (Pittsburgh, Penn., 2001). (Tauger 2001b)

"Soviet Peasants and Collectivization, 1930-1939. Resistance and Adaptation." *Journal of Peasant Studies* (4) 2004, 427-456. Reprinted in *Rural Adaptation in Russia*, ed. Stephen K. Wegren. London and New York: Routledge, 2005, 65-94. (Tauger 2004)

"Stalin, Soviet Agriculture, and Collectivisation." In *Food and Conflict in Europe in the Age of the Two World Wars*. Edited by Frank Trentmann and Flemming Just. New York and Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. 109-142. (Tauger 2006)

"Famine in Russian History." *The Supplement to the Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History*. Edited by George N. Rhyne. Volume 10 (Gulf Breeze, FL, 2011) 79-92. (Tauger 2011)

I have also drawn upon two unpublished communications by Tauger of April 12, 2012 (Tauger 2012a) and April 13, 2012 (Tauger 2012b). I cite other works of Tauger's in the discussion of Snyder's version.

<sup>11</sup> The Nansen commission took many photographs of the dead, dying, and starving. Some of these have been used repeatedly by Ukrainian Nationalists to illustrate their works on the 1932-33 famine.

<sup>12</sup> Uriadkom is an abbreviation for the Ukrainian name "Uriadova komisija po dopomohi poterpilim vid nevrozhaiu selianam" — "State Commission for Aid to Peasants Suffering from the Crop Failure" (Tauger 2001a, 147)

<sup>13</sup> This section is largely taken from Tauger 2001b.

<sup>14</sup> See Jurij Chumatskij, *Why Is One Holocaust Worth More Than Others?* Baulkam Hills, NSW, Australia: Busnessl Press Printing Pty, 1986, 31. The title page informs us that it is "Published by Veterans of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army." In today's Ukraine, dominated by pro-Nazi "nationalist" ideology, this group (often called by its Ukrainian initials UPA, for *Ukrains'ka Povstans'ka Armii*a) is praised as "fighters for independence."

<sup>15</sup> *The Years of Hunger. Soviet Agriculture, 1931-1933*. Palgrave Macmillan 2009 (2004).

<sup>16</sup> Wheatcroft, Stephen G. "The Soviet Famine of 1946-1947, the Weather and Human Agency in Historical Perspective." *Europe Asia Studies*, 64:6, 987-1005.

## **Chapter 2. *The Famine of 1932-33 "Deliberate"? Snyder's "Seven Points" of Proof***

The central section of Snyder's first chapter is his attempt to prove that he has "evidence of clearly premeditated murder on the scale of millions" in the Ukraine. As evidence he outlines "seven crucial policies" that "were applied only, or mainly, in Soviet Ukraine in late 1932 or early 1933," each of which "had to kill."

Snyder must have been aware that no one else — none of the bevy of Ukrainian nationalist or Russian anticommunist scholars who claim that Stalin intended to kill Ukrainian peasants by intentionally starving them to death — has proven this claim. Snyder also knows that the Western experts on this question, Tauger and Davies-Wheatcroft, as well as many other historians of the Soviet Union including bitterly anticommunist writers like Nicholas Werth, reject the notion of a "deliberate famine."

Yet Snyder must claim the deaths were the result of "premeditated murder" because, without the five million famine deaths, the whole thesis of his book, that "the Nazi and Soviet regimes murdered some fourteen million people," falls to the ground, and with it goes the "Stalin-Hitler" comparison so treasured by ideological anticommunists.

Our analysis of Snyder's first chapter begins with a detailed study of each of what Snyder calls the "seven crucial policies." Snyder does not outline these seven points until the last third of his chapter. But the whole chapter, and indeed Snyder's whole book, depends upon these seven points. They are Snyder's "proof" that the several million Soviet citizens who died as a result of the famine of 1932-33 were "murdered" by Stalin and the Soviet leadership. It will be shown that in every case Snyder falsifies his claims and his evidence.

Because of the importance of these "seven points" to Snyder's whole project, somewhat more detail is devoted to them in the main text of the present study than to most of Snyder's other fact-claims. The reader may always consult the full documentation in the Appendix to this first chapter.

## **Point One (pp. 42-3): Were Ukrainian Peasants Required to Return Grain Advances?**

Snyder states that on November 18, 1932 "peasants in Ukraine were required to return grain advances" and that the leadership of the CP(b)U unsuccessfully protested this policy. His note to this passage cites the following sources (n. 57 p. 466):

Graziosi, "New interpretation," 8;

Kuśnierz, *Ukraina*, 143;

Maksudov, "Victory," 188, 190;

Davies, *Years*, 175 and, on seed grain, 151.

**Graziosi** — clearly Snyder's chief "source" here — indeed makes these charges. But Graziosi cites no evidence at all, not a single reference of any kind for these statements or for the entire paragraph of which they are a part. Snyder had to know this, of course, just as anyone who reads Graziosi's article would know it. But Snyder cites these statements anyway. Of course Snyder's readers will *not* know that Graziosi has no evidence for these very serious charges.

**Kuśnierz** has nothing about any decision of November 18, 1932 on p. 143. He has nothing about returning grain advances, taking away seed grain, the Ukrainian Party leadership trying to "protect" it, etc., as stated by Snyder. Nothing about "shooting" "hundreds of officials" or "arresting thousands" of them.

**Maksudov's** article, in *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* (2001), contains no evidence itself. Instead it refers the reader to a volume in Ukrainian, *Голод 1932-1933 років*. There are no relevant documents on the pages Maksudov cites from this book. Elsewhere in this volume there is a document dated November 18, 1932 regulating grain collections.<sup>1</sup> [This is the document discussed below.](#)

**Davies**, *Years 175* has nothing about either returning grain advances or anything at all about seed grain. On pages 151-2 Davies does record the struggle between Moscow — Stalin and Lazar Kaganovich — and the Ukraine, mainly Kosior. Both the decrees of November 18 and November 29, which in part concerned seed grain, were cancelled. In any case these decrees permitted confiscation of seed grain only in exceptional circumstances.

On November 18 [1932], under strong pressure from Moscow to collect more grain, it [the Politburo of the Ukrainian Communist Party] granted permission to district soviet executive committees to respond to the 'completely unsatisfactory' grain collection by confiscating the Seed Fund of the kolkhoz concerned, and its other Funds held in grain...

The USSR Politburo [Stalin et al., in Moscow] did not catch up with these Ukrainian moves until Kaganovich and Chernov descended on Ukraine towards the end of December. Following telegrams to Stalin from Kaganovich, on December 23 the USSR Politburo brusquely cancelled the Ukrainian Politburo decision of November 18. The Ukrainian Politburo itself cancelled its decision of November 29, and Kosior sent an apology to members and candidate members for this document, of which 'I was the main author.' (151-2)

On December 25, 1932 Kosior self-critically discussed his responsibility for these two documents and made it clear that it was a case of confiscating seed grain only from kolkhozes that did not fulfill their plan for delivering grain to the state:

Остановившись перед вывозом семенных фондов из колхозов, которые не выполняют план хлебозаготовок,...<sup>2</sup>

Translated:

Referring to the export of seed funds from the collective farms that do not fulfill the grain procurement plan,...

**Conclusion to Snyder's Point One:** Not only is Snyder wrong here — in fact, he has it exactly backwards. Not the Soviet, but the *Ukrainian* Politburo did approve a document allowing for confiscation of seed grain, though only under extreme circumstances. It was *Stalin and the Moscow* Politburo that cancelled this decision! As a result Ukrainian First Secretary Kosior apologized for drafting the document in question. This is the opposite of what Snyder claims!

### **Point Two (p. 43): Did the "Meat Tax" Cause Starvation?**

Snyder claims that on November 20, 1932 a "meat penalty" was imposed upon peasants "who were unable to make grain quotas" and that "they [the peasants] starved" as a result. His references (n. 58 p. 466) are:

concerning the meat penalty, Shapoval, "Proloh trahedii holodu," 162; and Maksudov, "Victory," 188;

for the "quotation," Dzwonkowski, *Głód*, 160 and 219.

Here is what **Shapoval**, Snyder's first citation has to say about the meat penalty (p. 162):

20 листопада 1932 року Раднарком УСРР ухвалив рішення про запровадження натуральних штрафів: «До колгоспів, що допустили розкрадання колгоспного хліба і злісно зривають план хлібозаготівель, застосувати натуральні штрафи порядком додаткового завдання з м'ясозаготівель в обсязі 15-місячної норми здавання даним колгоспом м'яса як усупільненої худоби, так і худоби колгоспників». 6 грудня ухвалено постанову ЦК КП(Б)У і Раднаркому УСРР «Про занесення на "чорну дошку" сіл, які злісно саботують хлібозаготівлі.» Це рішення спричинило збільшення жертв голодомору.

Translated:

On November 20, 1932 the People's Commissar of the Ukrainian SSR approved a decision to introduce fines in kind: "to the collective farms, which allowed the theft of kolkhoz grain and maliciously sabotaged

the grain procurement plan, to apply fines in kind of an additional task of meat requisitions in the amount of a 15-month norm in contribution by the kolkhoz in question of meat as socialized livestock and of the livestock of kolkhoz members." On December 6 was approved the decree of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian CP and of the People's Commissars of Ukrainian SSR "On entering on the 'black board' [= a "blacklist"] villages that willfully sabotage grain procurements." This decision caused an increase in the victims of the Holodomor.

We should note a few interesting things about this quotation from Shapoval's article — an article which is also available in Russian, in the volume cited by Snyder in his bibliography, and is also available [in Ukrainian on the Internet](#).<sup>3</sup>

There is no source, either printed or archival, for the quotation.

Nothing is said about how many kolkhozes this meat penalty was applied to, or indeed whether it was ever applied at all.

Nothing is said in the course about it contributing to the famine. This sentence is present in Shapoval's article and in all the other Internet sites, but there is no evidence to support it.

**Maksudov** is Snyder's second and last citation about the "meat penalty." He does discuss the meat tax, but not on page 188. On page 191 Maksudov writes as follows:

Among the punishments for those who did not fulfill required grain deliveries was the penalty of having to surrender a fifteen months' supply of meat in advance. In other words, the state officials knew there was no grain to be seized in payment. The peasants, of course, considered their livestock as insurance against a famine, either slaughtering the animals for food or selling them in order to buy grain. State confiscation of this livestock was a particularly malicious act. If a peasant sold his livestock on the open market, he could easily have paid his tax, but the authorities did not want it, preferring instead to take the livestock on a low fixed price as a form of punishment for the

peasant's non-payment of taxes. Such penalties in meat did not exempt the peasant from fulfilling his original grain procurement quote, which remained in effect.

Maksudov's conclusion in the second sentence does not follow from the first. It is likely — neither Snyder nor Maksudov gives sufficient context — that the "meat penalty" was intended to force peasants to give up grain that they claimed they did not have but in fact had hidden. Also, Maksudov says nothing about the meat tax causing starvation.

The question naturally arises: Why don't Snyder or any of his footnoted sources actually identify and quote the relevant passages from this meat penalty decree? As previously noted Shapoval quotes from it but does not give a reference to the original text. The document is called a "decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR" but without any indication as to where such documents can be consulted.

As it turns out, this is the same document Maksudov refers to (see note 2, above). It may also be found in the multi-volume collection of documents on collectivization entitled *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni*. The relevant part of the lengthy decree of the Bolshevik Central Committee, dated November 18, 1932, reads as follows:

5. В колхозах, допустивших разворовывание колхозного хлеба и злобно срывающих хлебозаготовки, применять натуральные штрафы в виде установления дополнительного задания по мясозаготовкам в размере 15-месячной нормы сдачи для данного колхоза мяса, как по обобществленному, так и индивидуальному скоту колхозника.

Применение этого штрафа проводится райисполкомом с предварительного разрешения в каждом отдельном случае облисполкома. Причем райисполкомы устанавливают сроки взыскания и размеры штрафа для каждого колхоза (в пределах 15-месячной нормы мясосдачи) применительно к состоянию отдельных колхозов.



Наложение штрафа не освобождает колхоз от полного выполнения установленного плана хлебозаготовок. В случае, если колхоз принял действительные меры к полному выполнению плана хлебозаготовок в установленный срок, штраф может быть отменен с предварительного разрешения облисполкома.<sup>4</sup>

Translated:

5. In collective farms that have permitted the theft of kolkhoz grain and are willfully frustrating grain procurement, to apply penalties in kind in the form of fixing additional targets for giving in meat procurements on the order of a 15-month delivery of meat for the collective farm in question, for both socialized livestock and that of the individual farmer.

The application of this penalty is to be carried out by the regional (raion) executive committee with prior approval in each case of the provincial (oblast') executive committee. Moreover, regional executive committees are to set deadlines for the recovery and the size of the fine for each farm (within the limits of the 15-month norm of meat delivery) according to the situation of the individual collective farms.

The imposition of this penalty does not relieve the collective farm of the requirement of full compliance with the established grain procurement plan. If the collective farm has made real efforts for the full implementation of the grain procurement plan within the prescribed period, the penalty can be waived with the prior approval of the provincial executive committee.

This Russian text corresponds exactly to the text published in Ukrainian by Shapoval. But Shapoval gave only the first paragraph. With the full text in hand, including the part that describes the "meat penalty" it is clear that Shapoval and Snyder have withheld a few important details from their readers:

The local officials — those most closely in touch with each farm — were to impose this meat fine.

They had to receive prior permission from the provincial government each time before imposing this fine.

The 15-month meat delivery was the limit of the fine, its maximum size. A lesser fine could be levied "according to the situation of the individual kolkhoz."

The third paragraph makes it clear that the purpose is to push recalcitrant kolkhozes to make "real efforts" to fulfill its grain collection plan. If they did so the fine could be cancelled even if already levied.

This means the purpose was to get each kolkhoz to make "real efforts" rather than to withhold — hide — grain and then claim that they had none. Clearly, the government felt that it had to have some way of forcing recalcitrant peasants and collective farms to cough up hidden stores of grain. If they did not, what was to prevent every kolkhoz and peasant from claiming that they had no more grain while hiding whatever amount they could? The result would be starvation in those areas that genuinely had no grain, including the cities and towns.

**Conclusion on Snyder's Point Two:** If Snyder did find and read this text, he falsified its contents to his readers. But most likely Snyder never troubled himself to find this text. Yet it constitutes the evidence for his fact-claims in his "Point Two." It is his responsibility to verify that the fact-claims he makes are backed up by evidence.

### **Point Three (p. 43): Did the "Black List" Cause "Zones of Death"?**

Snyder claims that the "black list," introduced in late November, 1932, required kolkhozes (= collective farms) that had not met their grain collection targets to give up fifteen times a one-month's tax in grain. As a result, says Snyder, such kolkhozes "became zones of death." His evidence (n. 59 p. 466):

Shapoval, "Proloh trahedii holodu," 162;

Maksudov, "Victory," 188;

Marochko, *Holodomor*, 172;

Werth, *Terreur*, 123.

*None* of these sources even mentions Snyder's central accusation here: the supposed "requirement to immediately surrender fifteen times the amount of grain."

Here, once again, is what **Shapoval** states:

6 грудня ухвалено постанову ЦК КП(Б)У і Раднаркому УСРР «Про занесення на "чорну дошку" сіл, які злісно саботують хлібозаготівлі.» Це рішення спричинило збільшення жертв голодомору. (162)

Translated:

On December 6 was approved the decree of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian CP and of the People's Commissars of Ukrainian SSR "On entering on the 'black board' [= a "blacklist"] villages that willfully sabotage grain procurements." This decision caused an increase in the number of victims of the Holodomor. (162)

Shapoval cites no evidence that anyone died as a result of the "blacklisting" of some villages.

**Maksudov** has nothing like this on page 188 or on any page of "Victory." He merely refers to the "meat procurement" of 15 months in advance (see discussion above). Marochko, *Holodomor* does not refer to such a policy on page 172 or on any page of this book, which in any case is merely a brief chronology of events. November 28, 1932 is dealt with on page 162; no such "black list" document is mentioned here. The December 6 1932 document, identified above, is mentioned on page 166. It says nothing about any fine of "fifteen times the amount of grain."

It is not clear that this "new regulation" was introduced on November 28, 1932. The collection by Georgii Papakin "Archival documents on the

'blacklist' as a weapon of Soviet genocide in the Ukraine in 1932-1933" mentions many documents, but none of them fit this description.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps the following resolution mentioned by Shapoval and dated December 6, 1932, is the one meant (the complete text of this document may be found in the Appendix at the end of this chapter):

№ 219

Постановление СНК УССР и ЦК КП(Б)У «О занесении на черную доску сел, злостно саботирующих хлебозаготовки» 1\*

...

СНК и ЦК постановляют:

За явный срыв плана хлебозаготовок и злостный саботаж, организованный кулацкими и контрреволюционными элементами, занести на черную доску следующие села:

1. с. Вербка Павлоградского района Днепропетровской обл.
2. с. Гавриловка Межевского района Днепропетровской обл.
3. с. Лютенки Гадячского района Харьковской обл.
4. с. Каменные Потоки Кременчугского района Харьковской обл.
5. с. Святотроицкое Троицкого района Одесской обл.
6. с. Пески Баштанского района Одесской обл.

В отношении этих сел провести следующие мероприятия:...<sup>6</sup>

Translated:

№ 219

Decree of the SNK of the Ukrainian SSR and CC of the CPU(b) "On inscribing on the black board of villages that maliciously sabotage grain collection."

...

The SNK and CC decree:

For flagrant disruption of the grain collections plan and malicious sabotage organized by kulak and counterrevolutionary elements, the following villages are inscribed on the black board:

1. v[illage]. Verbka, Pavlogradsk raion, Dnepropetrovsk obl[ast'].
2. v. Gavrilovka, Mezhevsk raion, Dnepropetrovsk obl.
3. v. Liuten'ki, Gadiachsk raion, Khar'kov obl.
4. v. Kamennye Potoki, Kremenchug raion, Khar'kov obl.
5. v. Sviatrotroitskoe, Troitsk raion, Odessa obl.
6. v. Peski, Bashtansk raion, Odessa obl.

In relation to these villages the following measures to be carried out...<sup>6</sup>

This decree is restricted to *six villages*. No evidence is given about any "zones of death," much less as a result of this regulation.

The "black board" — "chorna doshka" (Ukrainian) or "chiornaia doska" (Russian) had been used in the Russian empire since the 1840s and in the USSR since the 1920s.<sup>7</sup>

**Werth**, *Terreur*, 123 and surrounding pages consist mainly of quotations from Kaganovich's letters to Stalin and a mention of the "black list." There is no mention of anything concerning "fifteen times the amount of grain..." Werth, by the way, asserts that collectivization caused the famine — a claim that Tauger and Davies-Wheatcroft both disprove.

But Werth strongly rejects the notion that the famine was deliberate:

On a beaucoup de documents durs et forts sur les terribles famines qui se sont abattues à la suite de la collectivisation forcée, **qu'il serait absurde de qualifier de famines organisées**, mais qui sont des conséquences directes de cet énorme chaos, de cette désorganisation de tout le système de production traitionnel, au moment de la collectivisation forcée,...<sup>8</sup>

Translated:

... the terrible famines that took place following forced collectivization, **which it would be absurd to call organized famines**... (Emphasis added — GF)

**Conclusion on Point Three:** None of Snyder's sources show any knowledge of the text of the resolution to which he refers — one "requiring" the "immediate" "surrender of fifteen times the amount of grain that was normally due in a whole month" (43). Snyder certainly never saw it himself.

#### **Point Four (pp. 43-44): Did Vsevolod Balitskii Terrorize Ukrainian Party Officials?**

According to Snyder, Vsevolod Balitskii, NKVD chief of the Ukrainian SSR "handpicked" by Stalin, "terrorized" Ukrainian party officials by treating anyone who "failed to do [their] part" in the grain collection as a "traitor to the state."<sup>9</sup>

His sole source (n. 60, p. 466) is "Shapoval, "Holodomor" (no page number)." This article has been "forthcoming" for several years now in the journal *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*.<sup>10</sup> Evidently it was delivered at a conference at the Harvard Ukrainian Institute on November 17-18, 2008.<sup>11</sup> It has finally been published (2013) in English translation in a collection devoted to this 2008 conference.<sup>12</sup> There is nothing in this article about "terrorizing" the Ukrainian Party officials or treating anyone as a "traitor to

the state", as Snyder claims. As will be shown later in the present chapter, Snyder has a history of making false claims.

According to Snyder Balitskii claimed he had uncovered a Ukrainian Military Organization and underground Polish groups:

He would report, in January 1933, the discovery of more than a thousand illegal organizations and, in February, the plans of Polish and Ukrainian nationalists to overthrow Soviet rule in Ukraine. (44)

Snyder's sources: (n. 61 p. 466) are Davies, *Years 190*; Marochko, *Holodomor*, 171.

**Davies**, *Years 190* simply quotes a part of a Politburo resolution of December 14, 1932, stating in part:

[C]ounter-revolutionary elements — kulaks, former officers, Petlyurians, supporters of the Kuban' Rada and others — were able to penetrate into the kolkhozes [and the village soviets, land agencies and cooperatives]. They attempt to direct the work of these organizations against the interests of the proletarian state and the policy of the party; they try to organize a counter-revolutionary movement; the sabotage of the grain collections, and the sabotage of the village.

**Marochko**, *Holodomor* 171 does mention Balitskii's report of December 20, 1932 on Polish and Ukrainian nationalists as follows:

В. Балицького про арешт 27 тис. осіб за хлібозаготівельними справами, про засудження до розстрілу 108, про виявлення 7 тис. ям та «чорних комор» і вилучення з них 700 тис. пудів хліба, про викриття великих повстанських груп польського походження, організованих урядом УНР.

Translated:

V. Balitskii [reported] the arrest of 27 thousand persons for grain procurement cases of condemnation to death 108, the discovery of seven thousand holes and "black barns" and removing them from 700

thousands poods of grain, the exposure of major insurgent groups of Polish descent, organized by the leadership of the UNR [Ukrainian National Rada, = anticommunist nationalist Ukrainian Party from the time of the Civil War].

In other documents Balitskii refers to the arrest of 38,000 village residents on various charges, and the fight against the Ukrainian Nationalist rebels. But Snyder does not refer to these documents at all.<sup>13</sup>

**Conclusion to Snyder's Point Four:** There is nothing in the passages cited by Snyder about January or February 1933 reports by Balitskii. Snyder gives no reference to such reports, so he has not seen them himself.

There is no documentation of Snyder's claim that "anyone who failed to do his part in requisitions was a traitor to the state." Snyder claims that it documented in Shapoval's article but, as we have seen, nothing like it is there. But even if Balitskii did say this, that is not evidence of 'deliberate starvation' — only of the efforts of the State to obtain and share the little existing grain among as many people as possible.

### **Point Five. Did Kaganovich Condemn Millions To Die of Starvation?**

In his fifth point Snyder makes the following claims:

On December 21, 1932 Stalin and Kaganovich confirmed the grain collection quota for the Ukrainian SSR;

Kaganovich arrived on December 20 and forced the Ukrainian Politburo to meet and reaffirm the quota.

This was "a death sentence for about three million people."

Snyder concludes:

A simple respite from requisitions for three months would not have harmed the Soviet economy, and would have saved most of those three million lives. Yet Stalin and Kaganovich insisted on exactly the



contrary. The state would fight "ferociously," as Kaganovich put it, to fulfill the plan.

Snyder's sources for this paragraph (n. 63 p. 466) are:

Quotation: Davies, *Years*, 187.

For the December 20 meeting, Vasiliev, "Tsina," 55;

Graziosi, "New Interpretation," 9;

Kuśnierz, *Ukraina*, 135.

*None* of the statements in this paragraph of Snyder's are supported by the sources in Snyder's footnote 63 to this passage.

**Davies**, *Years*, 187: The only "quotation" in this paragraph is the single word "ferociously." Davies, 187, does not mention Kaganovich and does not contain the word "ferociously."

**Vasiliev**, "Tsina," 55 — the December 20th meeting is actually discussed on page 54. Vasil'ev is honest enough to note that:

Виступаючі були переконані в тому, що збіжжя сховано селянами в «чорних» коморах або закопано в ямах.

Translated:

The speakers were convinced that grain was hidden by peasants in "black" closets or buried in pits.

As we show below, there is clear evidence that peasants did indeed hide grain in pits and other places.

**Graziosi**, "New Interpretation," has no page 9. Snyder may have in mind this passage on the ninth page of the article, page 105:

On the night of 20 December, at the urging of Kaganovich, the Ukrainian Politburo committed itself to new targets for grain

requisitions. Nine days later it declared that the precondition to fulfilling the plan was the seizure of seed stock reserves.

Note 28 on p. 114 of Graziosi reads:

"28. Danilov, Manning, and Viola. *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni*, 3: 603, 611"

Now to check Graziosi's sources:

Vol. 3 p. 603 is Kaganovich's letter to Stalin of December 22, 1932 concerning the meeting of the Politburo of the Ukrainian CP on measures for strengthening the collection of grain.

Vol. 3 p. 611 is the same document briefly considered above from the volume *Golod 1932-1933 rokiv na Ukraini*. There it is document number 129. The text is as follows:

До сих пор еще районные работники не поняли, что первоочередность хлебозаготовок в колхозах, не выполняющих своих обязательств перед государством, означает, что все имеющееся наличное зерно в этих колхозах, в том числе и так называемые семенные фонды, должно быть в первую очередь сдано в план хлебозаготовок.

Именно поэтому ЦК ВКП(Б) отменил решение ЦК КП(Б)У от 18 ноября о невывозе семенных фондов как решение, ослабляющее наши позиции в борьбе за хлеб.

ЦК КП(Б)У предлагает в отношении колхозов, не выполнивших план хлебозаготовок, немедленно, на протяжении 5-6 дней, вывезти все наличные фонды, в том числе так называемые семенные, на выполнение плана хлебозаготовок.

ЦК обязывает немедленно мобилизовать для этого все перевозочные средства, живую тягловую силу, автотранспорт и трактора. В однодневный срок дать твердый ежедневный наряд на

поставку необходимого количества лошадей, в том числе и единоличниками.

Всякую задержку в вывозе этих фондов ЦК будет рассматривать как саботаж хлебозаготовок со стороны районного руководства и примет соответствующие меры.

Translated:

Even at this point the regional (*raionnye*) workers have not understood that the priority of grain collections **in those collective farms that have not fulfilled their obligations** to the state means that all the grain on hand in these collective farms, including the so-called seed reserves, must be included as a priority in the plan of grain collection.

That is the reason that the CC of the VKP(b) set aside the decision of the CC of the CP(b)U of November 18 on not exporting the seed reserves as a decision that weakens our position in the struggle for grain.

The CC of the CP(b)U proposes **in relation to those collective farms that have not fulfilled the plan for grain collection** to immediately, within the next 5-6 days, bring forth all the reserves they have, including the so-called seed reserves, for the fulfillment of the grain collection plan.

The CC demands immediate mobilization for this purpose of all means of transportation, live animal power, automobile and tractor transportation. Within one day give a firm daily accounting to supply the required number of horses, including by individual farmers.

The CC will regard any and all delay in the transportation of these reserves as sabotage of the grain collections on the part of the regional (*raion*) leadership and will take appropriate measures.

Here it is Graziosi who has falsified the meaning of the document. Recall that Graziosi wrote:

Nine days later it declared that the precondition to fulfilling the plan was the seizure of seed stock reserves.

But the document says nothing about any "precondition" and strictly limits seed stock seizures, as the bold-faced passages above indicate.

The issue seems to be as follows. Some kolkhozes had stated that they had no more grain except for seed grain. The Party did not believe them. If the Party accepted the statement of every such kolkhoz, then more kolkhozes would make the same claim, in order to avoid grain collections, and the grain collection would fail. That would mean starvation in the cities and towns, where the residents could not grow their own grain. Therefore, the excuse that "we only have our seed grain left" was not to be accepted.

Note that Graziosi lied when he stated that all seed grain had to be given in. The document Graziosi himself identifies as his source clearly states that seed grain was to be collected only from those kolkhozes that had failed to fulfill their quota in the grain collections.

Kuśnierz, *Ukraina* 135 simply outlines a few of the events and decisions of late November to late December 1934.

Snyder (45) says that Kaganovich toured the Ukrainian SSR, demanding "100% fulfillment" of the grain collection quota while "sentencing local officials and ordering deportation of families as he went." Moreover, Snyder claims, on December 29, 1932 Kaganovich told Ukrainian party leaders that they also had to collect the seed grain. His evidence (n. 64 p. 466): "Davies, *Years*, 190-192."

Davies does discuss Kaganovich's trip, though only on page 192. But Davies' outline of what Kaganovich's message was is quite different from Snyder's characterization of it.

When the Plenipotentiary of the USSR party central committee in Chernigov declared that the region would complete 85 per cent of its plan by January 1, Kaganovich interrupted: "For us the figure 85% does not exist. We need 100%. Workers are fed on grain and not on percentages."

He addressed a conference of district secretaries in Odessa region in even more uncompromising terms:

There is no need to punch people in the jaw. But carefully organized searches of collective farmers, communists and workers as well as individual peasants are not going too far. The village must be given a shove, so that the peasants themselves reveal the grain pits... When our spirit is not as hard as metal the grain collections don't succeed.

According to Davies Kaganovich specifically opposed the demand that collective farmers return the grain they had been issued as advance payment for their labor days.

...the compulsory return of part of their grain advances by collective farmers risked 'creating a united front against us, insulting the shock worker, and undermining the basis of the labor days.' Instead he [Kaganovich] advocated an intensive search for stolen grain... (194).

As for the seed grain,

Kaganovich defended the seizure of seed on the grounds that it could be assembled again after the grain collection was complete. (194)

In other words *Kaganovich never planned to keep the seed grain* but, evidently, to hold it hostage to guarantee grain deliveries and then to return it. Davies concludes:

The decision was perverse, and was ultimately ineffective. Its consequence was that the central authorities had to issue substantial seed loans to Ukraine during the spring sowing. (195)

So some seed grain was to be collected from recalcitrant peasants but it was returned for sowing in the spring.

**Conclusion for Snyder's Point Five:** There is no evidence for Snyder's claim that the demand that "requisition targets were to be met" meant "a death sentence for about three million people." Nor does Snyder cite any

evidence at all for his claim that "A simple respite from requisitions for three months would not have harmed the Soviet economy, and would have saved most of those three million lives." These are pure assertions by Snyder. They are good examples of the logical fallacy of "begging the question" — of "asserting that which should be proven."

According to Davies and Wheatcroft, where seed grain was collected it was returned for spring sowing. Since seed was not intended to be eaten in the first place, no one starved as a result of all the confiscating and returning.

### **Point Six (p. 45): Did Stalin Doom Peasants to Starve by Forbidding Train Travel?**

That the borders of the Ukrainian SSR and certain other areas were sealed is not disputed. But did this cause starvation? Snyder claims it did, concluding (45-6):

By the end of February 1933 some 190,000 peasants had been caught and sent back to their home villages to starve.

His evidence (n. 65 p. 466):

"On the interpretation of starving people as spies, see Shapoval, "Holodomor."

"On the 190,000 peasants caught and sent back, see Graziosi, "New Interpretation," 7.

"On the events of 22 January, see Marochko, *Holodomor*, 189; and Graziosi, "New Interpretation," 9."

As noted above **Shapoval's** Ukrainian language article "Holodomor" has not appeared but the English version has been published (2013). There is nothing about "interpreting starving people as spies" in it. Moreover, it is hard to believe that primary documents with contents as dramatic as Stalin describing starving people as "spies" have not been published somewhere else. But Shapoval may simply mean the document reproduced below.

**Graziosi**, "New Interpretation," p. 105 (not, as Snyder has it, page 7 or page 9) refers (note 29, p. 114) to the well-known order of January 22, 1933, to stop peasants generally, not just Ukrainian peasants, from moving to other areas. Here is the text:<sup>14</sup>

22 января 1933 г.

Ростов-Дон, Харьков, Воронеж, Смоленск, Минск, Сталинград,  
Самара

№ 65/ш

До ЦКВКП(б) и СНК дошли сведения, что на Кубани и Украине начался массовый выезд крестьян «за хлебом» в ЦЧО, на Волгу, Московскую обл., Западную обл., Белоруссию. ЦК ВКП и Совнарком СССР не сомневаются, что этот выезд крестьян, как и выезд из Украины в прошлом году, организован врагами Советской власти, эсерами и агентами Польши с целью агитации «через крестьян» в северных районах СССР против колхозов и вообще против Советской власти. В прошлом году партийные, советские и чекистские органы Украины прозевали эту контрреволюционную затею врагов Советской власти. В этом году не может быть допущено повторение прошлогодней ошибки.

Первое. ЦК ВКП и Совнарком СССР предписывают крайкому, крайисполкому и ПП ОГПУ Северного Кавказа не допускать массовый выезд крестьян из Северного Кавказа в другие края и въезд в пределы края из Украины.

Второе. ЦК ВКП и Совнарком предписывают ЦК КП(б)У, Балицкому и Реденсу не допускать массовый выезд крестьян из Украины в другие края и въезд на Украину из Северного Кавказа.

Третье. ЦК ВКП и Совнарком предписывают ПП ОГПУ Московской обл., ЦЧО, Западной обл., Белоруссии, Нижней Волги и Средней Волги арестовывать пробравшихся на север «крестьян» Украины и Северного Кавказа и после того, как будут отобраны

контрреволюционные элементы, водворять остальных в места их жительства.

Четвертое. ЦК ВКП и Совнарком предписывают ТО ГПУ Прохорову дать соответствующее распоряжение по системе ТО ГПУ.

Предсовнарком СССР

В. М. Молотов

Секретарь ЦК ВКП(б)

И. Сталин

(РГАСПИ. Ф. 558.Оп. 11. Д. 45. Л. 109-109об.)

Translated:

It has come to the attention of the CC of the VCP(b) and the SNK that there has begun a massive exodus of peasants "in search of bread" into the Central Black Earth District, the Volga, Moscow oblast', the Western oblast', and Belorussia. The CC VCP(b) has no doubt that this exodus of peasants, like the exodus from the Ukraine last year, is being organized by enemies of the Soviet Government, Socialist Revolutionaries, and agents of Poland with the goal of agitating, "through the peasants," in the northern regions of the USSR against the collective farms and against Soviet power in general. Last year Party, Soviet and Chekist organs of the Ukraine neglected this counterrevolutionary plot by enemies of Soviet power. This year a repetition of last year's mistake cannot be permitted.

First. The CC VCP(b) and the Council of People's Commissars [in Russian, "Sovnarkom," abbreviated SNK] of the USSR instructs the area committees, the area executive committee, and the PP [plenipotentiary representatives] of the OGPU of the Northern Caucasus not to permit a massive exodus of peasants from the



Northern Caucasus into other areas or entry into the regions of the area from the Ukraine.

Second: the CC of the VCP(b) and the Sovnarkom instructs the CC of the CP(b)U, Balitskii, and Redens, not to permit any massive exodus of peasants from the Ukraine into other regions or entry into the Ukraine from the Northern Caucasus.

Third: the CC VCP and the Sovnarkom require the PP of the OGPU of the Moscow oblast', Central Black Earth District, Western oblast', Belorussia, the Lower Volga, and the Middle Volga to arrest "peasants" making their way north from the Ukraine and Central Caucasus and, after detaining counterrevolutionary elements, to return the rest to their places of residence.

Fourth. The CC of the VCP and the Sovnarkom require the director of the GPU service division Prokhorov to give appropriate directives throughout the system of the service division of the GPU.

Representative of the Sovnarkom V.M. Molotov

Secretary of the CC of the VCP(b) J. Stalin

(RGASPI f. 558. Op. 11. D. 45. L. 109-109ob.)

Graziosi continues:

In the following month, the decree led to the arrest of 220,000 people, predominantly hungry peasants in search of food; 190,000 of them were sent back to their villages to starve.

This conclusion and these figures, which Snyder simply repeats verbatim, are not supported by any primary sources Graziosi cites.

Graziosi has no way of knowing how many of the persons stopped were "hungry peasants." In reality, very few of them, if any, could have been. Starving people do not travel long distances by train to seek food — they do not have the energy for long trips, much of which would have to be on foot.

Nor do starving people spend their money on train tickets. They would remain at home and use their money to buy food.

As in previous famines, most of these travelers would have been speculators trying to purchase grain and foodstuffs in areas not as hard-hit by the famine in order to return to famine areas to resell them at a high profit. This "market" process benefitted the well-to-do and guaranteed that only the poor would starve. In fact, poor peasants starved even when harvests were good, since speculators could drive up the price by buying it for resale elsewhere.

Note too that the document in question makes it clear that peasants were moving from the North Caucasus and Kuban *into* the Ukraine as well as the other way around. This is consistent with the movements of people buying and selling grain, but not of people who were starving.

Why would Snyder mention only the Ukraine? Probably to please Ukrainian nationalists, who have indeed celebrated Snyder's book, invited him to give talks in Ukraine, and published a Ukrainian translation of *Bloodlands*.

Marochko, 188-189, summarizes Stalin's and Balitskii's outline of peasant movements in and out of Ukraine and why they should not be permitted. Graziosi, "New Interpretation," 9 (really, p. 105, as already noted) briefly summarizes the document of January 22, 1933, reproduced in full above.

**Conclusion to Snyder's Point Six:** Snyder's claims are not supported by his documentation. There is no evidence that those who were travelling by train were "begging" or "starving," and of course few if any of them could have been.

### **Point Seven (pp. 45-6): Did Stalin Seize the Seed Grain in December 1932?**

As his seventh point Snyder claims that in December 1932 Stalin decided that seed grain should be seized to meet the grain collection quota, while the USSR still had a reserve of three million tons of grain and continued to

export grain. He further claims that "many" of the 37,392 people recorded as having been arrested that month were "presumably trying to save their families from starvation." His evidence (n. 66, page 466):

"On the 37,392 people arrested, see Marochko, *Holodomor*, 192."

Davies, *Years*, 161-163.

**Marochko**, *Holodomor*, 192, gives the number of 37,797, not 37,392.

Протягом січня скоєно 150 «терористичних актів», з них «фізичний терор» становив 80,9% випадків, а в селах арештовано 37 797 осіб. Серед арештованих із «політминулим» -8145 осіб, 1471 голова колгоспу, 388 голів сільських рад, 1335 голів правлінь колгоспів, 1820 завгоспів та комірників, 7906 колгоспників. Розглянуто 12076 справ звинувачених, із них до розстрілу засуджено 719, до концтаборів — 8003, до виселення — 2533, до примусових робіт — 281 / *Holodomor 1932-1933 роки в Україні: Документи і матеріали*. — К.,2007. — С. 633-634.

Translated:

During January, 150 "terrorist acts" were committed, of which "physical terror" amounted to 80.9% of the cases, and in villages 37,797 persons were arrested. Among those arrested were "fugitives" — 8145 people, 1,471 heads of kolkhozes, 388 heads of village councils, 1335 chairmen of boards of collective farms, 1820 steward and storekeepers, 7,906 kolkhozniks. 12,076 cases of those indicted were reviewed, including 719 sentenced to death, to labor camps — 8003, to exile — 2533, to forced labor — 281

This is a simple list of arrests and dispositions of cases during January, 1933. There is no indication whatsoever that even a single one of these cases have to do with "trying to save their families from starvation," as Snyder claims. Even Snyder has to add the word "presumably" — an admission that he has invented the business about "saving their families from starvation."

**Davies**, *Years*, 161-163, is entirely concerned with the illegal trade in grain and Soviet attempts to suppress it — with good, though far from complete, success.

The grain trade harmed everything the Soviets were trying to do: collect grain as tax from the collective farms to feed workers in the cities; ration grain so as to spread out what was available as equitably as possible given the crop failures and famine. Collective farmers who sold grain sometimes stole it from the kolkhoz, which meant it was not available either for grain collection by the State or for the use of the kolkhozniks. Only those with money — that is, not the village poor — could buy grain, so the grain trade threatened to destroy any attempt to ration grain in the famine conditions. That would mean that, as in all previous famines, those better off would eat while the poor would starve.

One last point here: Snyder claims that the Soviet Union had three million tons [of grain] in reserve. Davies and Wheatcroft do not directly state how much "reserve" (they use the term "stocks") were on hand in December 1932, but they say "the June [1933] plan" was for 3.608 million tons, and conclude:

This hopeful estimate must have been regarded with great skepticism by the few officials who knew the fate of previous attempts to stockpile grain. (186-7)

Later they state that in fact "on July 1, 1933 total stocks amounted to 1.392 million tons," some of which was seed grain. (229) Snyder does not tell us where he has found the figure of 3 million tons of reserves in December 1932.

**Conclusion to Snyder's Point Seven:** All of the significant claims in Snyder's paragraph are entirely undocumented by either of the sources he cites.

The following statement of Snyder's reveals his dishonesty with special clarity:

At the end of December 1932, Stalin had approved Kaganovich's proposal that the seed grain for the spring be seized to make the annual target. This left the collective farms with nothing to plant for the coming fall. (46)

Of course nothing of the kind happened. Stalin and Kaganovich would have indeed been stupid to take away seed grain and leave nothing to sow. This is probably a reference to the Politburo directive of December 29, 1932, and the other decisions, discussed above under Snyder's point 5.

The government refused to accept less than the grain delivery quota, assuming that kolkhozes and individual peasants who did not fulfill their grain collection quota were hiding grain. Why hide grain? To eat, of course — but also, to sell. Large profits could be made by selling grain illegally, on the black market, during a famine, when its price would be much higher than normal.

### **The Fraud of Snyder's "Seven Points"**

Snyder requires the "deliberate starvation" thesis in order to compare the Soviets with the Nazis, Stalin with Hitler, in respect to "mass murder." The "seven points" are supposed to represent Snyder's evidence that the Soviet leadership was deliberately starving the Ukraine. Readers should satisfy themselves that every reference Snyder cites to document his claims in the "seven points" has been carefully checked. Not a single one of them provides any evidence for Snyder's claim of deliberate starvation.

### **Types of Dishonest Citations**

Snyder employs several kinds of phony citations. In one type, the citation Snyder gives simply does not contain any evidence to support Snyder's statement. Such citations are "bluffs." The reader is evidently supposed to assume that a full professor of history at Yale University, as Snyder is, would cite his sources honestly, and therefore assume that Snyder does in fact have evidence to support the claims he makes in his text.

Phony citations of a second type do contain statements like those in Snyder's own text. But these citations either have no evidence to support these claims or they give further citations to yet other works — which do not support their statements either. An example of this type is Kuśnierz's book, which is Snyder's single most frequent secondary source on the famine. It is mainly a summary of Ukrainian nationalist studies rather than a work of independent scholarship. Moreover, Kuśnierz falsifies his summary of the scholarship on the famine. For example, Kuśnierz says the following:

Istnieją także inne, nie poparte w zasadzie żadnymi poważnymi dowodami, poglądy nt. powodów pojawienia się głodu na Ukrainie. Np. według Amerykanina Marka Taugera głód był rezultatem nieurodzaju, a Stalin musiał podjąć trudną decyzję o ratowaniu ludności miejskiej kosztem wsi. (197)

Translated:

There are also other views, not supported, in principle, by any serious evidence, about the reasons for the emergence of the famine in the Ukraine. For example, according to the American Mark Tauger the famine was the result of crop failures, and Stalin had to make a difficult decision to save the urban population at the expense of the village.

This is a lie. All of Mark Tauger's research on the famine of 1932-33 is heavily documented. But few of Kuśnierz's Polish readers will check Tauger's works and realize that Kuśnierz is lying here.

Kuśnierz is guilty of the same kind of scholarly malpractice as is Snyder: of pretending to do objective research while in reality supporting a preconceived idea. Kuśnierz's book, like that of Snyder, has no evidence at all either that the famine of 1932-33 was "caused by collectivization" or constituted "deliberate starvation" whether of Ukrainians or of anyone else.

A third type of phony citation is a form of "bias by omission." Snyder does not inform his readers about crucial information concerning the works to which he refers. For example, the long and detailed study by Davies and Wheatcroft, one of Snyder's major sources, concludes that the Soviet

regime was not guilty of deliberate starvation — but Snyder fails to inform his readers of their conclusion.

None of the many Ukrainian nationalist or anticommunist researchers who proclaim that "Stalin" deliberately starved the Ukraine has ever produced any evidence to support this claim. Of course Snyder, who is not a specialist in this field and who simply relies upon the work of other anticommunists, has not produced any such evidence either.

The anticommunists and Ukrainian nationalists have been searching assiduously for evidence to support their preconceived notion of "deliberate starvation" since at least the 1980s. The fact that they have never found any such evidence is perhaps the best possible evidence that there was no such deliberate starvation.

In fact there was no "Holodomor" — no deliberate or "man-made" starvation. There was just "holod" — a famine, as there had been every few years for centuries. Thanks to collectivization and mechanization of agriculture, the famine of 1932-33 was to be the last famine in Russian history (except for the post-war famine of 1946-47, which was also not "man-made").<sup>15</sup>

### **False Statements in Shapoval's article "Lügen und Schweigen."**

Snyder cites Yuri Shapoval's work very frequently. Shapoval is a leading Ukrainian nationalist, and highly anticommunist, scholar. But Shapoval cannot be trusted to quote his sources accurately. Here is one example from the very beginning of the article, "Lügen und Schweigen," that Snyder cites here:

Čuev hat diese Begegnungen in einem Büchlein aufgearbeitet:  
"Einhundertvierzig Gespräche mit Vjaceslav Molotov," in dem  
folgendes zu lesen ist:

- Unter Schriftstellern wird darüber gesprochen, daß die Hungersnot 1933 absichtlich von Stalin und Ihrer gesamten Führung organisiert worden ist.

- Das sagen die Feinde des Kommunismus!
- Aber es hat den Anschein, daß beinahe 12 Millionen Menschen bei der Hungersnot 1933 zugrunde gegangen sind.
- Ich halte diese Fakten für nicht bewiesen, behauptete Molotov.
- Nicht bewiesen?
- Nein, keinesfalls. Ich bin in jenen Jahren bei der Getreidebeschaffung herumgereist. Ich komme an solchen Dingen nicht vorbeigehen. Ich bin damals zweimal in der Ukraine wegen der Getreidebeschaffung gewesen, in Sichevo, im Ural war ich, in Sibirien — have ich etwa nichts gesehen? Das ist ja absurd! Nein, das is völlig absurd!

Das ist tatsächlich absurd, denn auf der Sitzung des Politbüros des ZK der VKP(B) am 3. August 1932 sagte niemand anderes als Molotov: "Wir stehen tatsächlich vor dem Gespenst einer Hungersnot, und zwar in den reichen Getreiderayons."

Translated:

Felix Chuev wrote an account of this meeting in a little book, *One Hundred Forty Talks with Viacheslav Molotov*, where we read the following:

- Some writers have said to one another that the famine of 1933 was organized on purpose by Stalin and your whole leadership.
- The enemies of communism say that.
- But it appears that almost 12 millions persons died because of the famine in 1933.
- I consider that these facts are unproven, asserted Molotov.
- Unproven?



- No, not at all. During those years I travelled around to the grain collections. I never encountered such things. At that time I was in the Ukraine twice because of the grain collection, I was in Sichevo, in the Urals, in Siberia — and was there something I did not see? That is absurd. No, that is completely absurd.

That is certainly absurd, because at the session of the CC of the VCP(b) on August 3, 1932 Molotov, and no one else, said: "We are really facing the specter of a famine, and particularly in the rich grain regions."

Here is what the text of this book, *Molotov. Poluderkhavnyi Valstelin* (Moscow, 1999), p. 453, actually says:

- В писательской среде говорят о том, что голод 1933 года был специально организован Сталиным и всем вашим руководством.

- Это говорят враги коммунизма! Это враги коммунизма. Не вполне сознательные люди. Не вполне сознательные...

Нет, тут уж руки не должны, поджилки не должны дрожать, а у кого задрожат — берегись! Зашибем! Вот дело в чем. Вот в этом дело. А у вас все — давай готовенькое! Вы как дети.

Подавляющее большинство теперешних коммунистов пришли на готовое, и только давай все, чтоб у нас хорошо было все, вот это главное. А это не главное.

Найдутся люди, которые займутся этим. Найдутся такие люди. Борьба с мещанским наследием должна быть беспощадной. Не улучшается жизнь — это не социализм, но даже если жизнь народа улучшается из года в год в течение определенного периода, но не укрепляются основы социализма, неизбежно придем к краху.

- Но ведь чуть ли не 12 миллионов погибло от голода в 1933-м...

- Я считаю, эти факты не доказаны, — утверждает Молотов.

- Не доказаны?

- Нет, нет, ни в коем случае. Мне приходилось в эти годы ездить на хлебозаготовки. Так что я не мог пройти мимо таких вещей. Не мог. Я тогда побывал на Украине два раза на хлебозаготовках, в Сычево, на Урале был, в Сибири — как же, я ничего не видел, что ли? Абсурд! Нет, это абсурд. На Волге мне не пришлось быть. Там, возможно, было хуже.

- Конечно, посылали меня туда, где можно хлеб заготовить.

- Нет, это преувеличение, но такие факты, конечно, в некоторых местах были. Тяжкий был год.

Translated:

- Some writers have said to one another that the famine of 1933 was organized on purpose by Stalin and your whole leadership.

- The enemies of communism say that. That's the enemies of communism. Not completely conscious persons. Not completely conscious...

- No, here our hands, or muscles could not tremble, and beware those whose do tremble — beware! We'll throw them out. And if you have everything — give up what you have prepared! You are like children. The vast majority of present-day communists came when everything had been prepared, and just make it so everything is good for us, that's the main thing. But that is not the point.

- There are those who will be engaged in it. There are people. The fight against the bourgeois heritage must be ruthless. If you don't improve life — that is not socialism, but even if the life of the people is improving from year to year for a specified period, but the foundations of socialism are not being strengthened, we will inevitably come to ruin.

- But almost 12 million persons died of hunger in 1933....

- I consider that these facts are unproven, asserted Molotov.

- Unproven?

- No, not at all. During those years I had to travel around to the grain collections. I could not have missed such things. Impossible. At that time I was in the Ukraine twice because of the grain collection, I was in Sichevo, in the Urals, in Siberia — and was there something I did not see? That is absurd. I did not go to the Volga. Perhaps it was worse there. Naturally, they sent me to places where it was possible to get grain.

- No that is an exaggeration, but such things, of course, did exist in some places. It was a very difficult year.

Note that:

\* Molotov does not deny that a famine existed. Rather, he denies that "12 million people died of hunger in 1933."

\* Shapoval has omitted Molotov's last two sentences: "No, this is an exaggeration, but such things did exist in some places. It was a very difficult year."

Shapoval quotes this passage to "prove" that Molotov was "telling lies and remaining silent" ("Lügen und Schweigen") about the famine. In reality Molotov *did* know and *did* speak out about it in 1932. In addition, Molotov did *not* remain silent about the famine. Shapoval simply omitted Molotov's reference to it!

\* Molotov did not "lie." What he said was correct: (a) the estimate of 12 million dead of starvation in 1933 was an exaggeration — in fact, a gross, "absurd" exaggeration; and (b) this story was indeed spread by "enemies of communism" — specifically, the Ukrainian Nationalists who collaborated with the Nazis. They originated the false story about the "Holodomor" after the war.<sup>16</sup>

Shapoval's statement should not be accepted as accurate any more than Snyder's should. Every fact-claim has to be checked. In practice this ruins his usefulness as a historian — as it does Snyder's.

~||For Snyder's story about "Petro Veldii / Vel'dii, which occurs at this point in *Bloodlands*, see the Introduction||~

### **Snyder Falsifies Gareth Jones's Story**

Snyder praises Gareth Jones as one of "a very few outsiders" who "were able to record" something of the famine. He states that Jones boarded a train from Moscow to Khar'kiv, "disembarked at random at a small station and tramped through the countryside with a backpack full of food." He found "famine on a colossal scale." Snyder concludes his account of Jones' account as follows:

Once, after he had shared his food, a little girl exclaimed: "Now that I have eaten such wonderful things I can die happy." (47)

Snyder (n. 70 p. 466) gives his source as "New York Evening Post, 30 March 1933." According to the Gareth Jones website the only article in the *New York Evening Post* by Jones is the one of March 29, 1933. It does not contain this story.

However, in an article published in the London (UK) *Daily Express* of April 6, 1933 Jones wrote:

When I shared my white bread and butter and cheese one of the peasant women said, "Now I have eaten such wonderful things I can die happy."<sup>17</sup>

Not "a little girl" but a peasant woman! Perhaps Snyder felt that putting these words into the mouth of "a little girl" would make the story more pathetic? Or perhaps Snyder never bothered to read the article at all? Whatever the case, it is another of Snyder's false statements.

### **Raphael Lemkin and the Accusation of "Soviet Genocide"**

Snyder says:

Rafał Lemkin, the international lawyer who later invented the term genocide, would call the Ukrainian case "the classic example of Soviet genocide." (53)

Lemkin's view was never accepted by the United Nations Genocide Convention. Lemkin's attempts to redefine the concept of genocide to cover Soviet actions have been universally rejected.<sup>18</sup> So why does Snyder mention Lemkin and his long-discredited attempt to redefine genocide so as to cover the USSR? According to Anton Weiss-Wendt Lemkin's efforts received support in one corner only — that of right-wing Eastern European émigrés:

At the time when Lemkin and his ideas found little support in government offices, East European ethnic communities became Lemkin's most trusted allies. (Weiss-Wendt 555)

Lemkin became closely involved with these right-wing anticommunist groups.

Lemkin was actively involved with émigré organizations: he attended their meetings, participated in their lobbying campaigns, and even edited their public appeals. For example, on December 20, 1954, the Assembly of Captive European Nations adopted a resolution which had the following line: "Communist puppet governments have suppressed all freedoms and all human rights." Lemkin augmented that sentence by adding: "By resorting to genocide they are threatening our civilization and weaken the forces of the free world." For his planned three-volume *History of Genocide* Lemkin intended to write a chapter on Soviet repression in Hungary. The chapter was to be drawn from the "UN report" on the Soviet invasion of the country. (Weiss-Wendt 556)

Weiss-Wendt concludes that the term "genocide" became just another expression of Lemkin's strong anticommunism — in short, an insult:

Lemkin explicitly stated that for him "Soviet genocide" was just an expedient: "genocide is a concept that carries the highest moral condemnation in our cold war against the Soviet Union."

Snyder has to be aware of this well-known critique of Lemkin but withholds it from his readers.

### **Snyder: Almost No One Claimed that Stalin Meant To Starve Ukrainians To Death..."**

Snyder laments that the famine "never took on the clarity of an undisputed event. Almost no one claimed that Stalin meant to starve Ukrainians to death..." (56) Indeed, "deliberate famine" was not reported at the time — but that was because the myth of the "deliberate famine" had not yet been invented! The notion of a "deliberate famine" or "Holodomor"<sup>19</sup> was invented by pro-Nazi, anticommunist Ukrainian nationalists after World War II. One of the earliest statements of it, if not the earliest, is in Volume 2 of *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin* published in Toronto in 1953. Some of the coauthors of this book were complicit in the mass murder of Ukrainian Jews during the Nazi occupation and had written hair-raising anti-Semitic propaganda linking Jews with communism.<sup>20</sup> The same book also claims that there was no starvation outside the Ukraine — completely false, of course.

### **Snyder's Dishonest Attack on Walter Duranty**

Snyder claims that New York Times Moscow correspondent Walter Duranty "did his best to undermine Jones's accurate reporting."

Duranty, who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1932, called Jones's account of the famine a "big scare story." Duranty's claim that there was "no actual starvation" but only "widespread mortality from diseases due to malnutrition" echoed Soviet usages and pushed euphemism into mendacity. ... Duranty knew that millions of people had starved to death. Yet he maintained in his journalism that the hunger served a higher purpose. Duranty thought that "you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs." (56)

Snyder's evidence (n. 95 p. 468): "For Duranty, see *New York Times*, 31 March 1933."

Snyder is wrong about Duranty and Duranty's article of March 31, 1933. Duranty did use the words "a big scare story" — but to refer to Jones' "conclusion that the country was 'on the verge of a terrific smash'." Duranty said of Jones' words to him, "nothing could shake his conviction of impending doom." This is where Duranty said he disagreed with Jones. Of course it was not Jones but Duranty who was right — the USSR did not suffer "a terrific smash."

Then Duranty goes on to say that he agreed with Jones! He wrote:

But to return to Mr Jones. He told me there was virtually no bread in the villages he had visited and that the adults were haggard, gaunt and discouraged, but that he had seen no dead or dying animals or human beings.

I believed him because I knew it to be correct not only of some parts of the Ukraine but of sections of the North Caucasus and lower Volga regions and, for that matter, Kazakstan, ...

According to Duranty Jones himself had said he had seen "no actual starvation" — that is, "no dead or dying animals or human beings." Snyder gives no evidence that "Duranty knew that millions of people had starved to death."

As for this claim of Snyder's:

Yet he maintained in his journalism that the hunger served a higher purpose. Duranty thought that "you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs."

Here is what Duranty actually wrote:

But — to put it brutally — you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs, and the Bolshevik leaders are just as indifferent to the casualties that may be involved in their drive toward socialization as

any General during the World War who ordered a costly attack in order to show his superiors that he and his division possessed the proper soldierly spirit. In fact, the Bolsheviki are more indifferent because they are animated by fanatical conviction.

Snyder is deliberately deceiving his readers. There is no hint here that Duranty "maintained... that the hunger served a higher purpose." In reality Duranty explicitly stated that Bolshevik leaders were even more "indifferent to the casualties" than were commanders in WW1 who callously ordered attacks for the purposes of career advances only.

Why does Snyder go out of his way to attack this article of Duranty's when in it Duranty states plainly that he agrees with what Jones told him concerning what he, Jones, had observed; called the Bolsheviks "indifferent" to casualties; and termed them "fanatical," therefore even "more indifferent to casualties"?

The reason seems to lie in his sponsors, the Ukrainian nationalists. For some reason the Ukrainian Nationalists have tried time and again to have Duranty's Pulitzer Prize posthumously revoked on the grounds that he did not report the famine. Their latest effort of about a decade ago was unsuccessful, in large part due to the fact that Duranty's Pulitzer was for reporting done in 1931, before any famine existed, and therefore had nothing to do with anything he wrote (or did not write) about the famine later on.

Evidently, therefore, Snyder's misrepresentation of Duranty's March 31, 1933 article is simply a "tell," a signal that he is taking his cues from the Ukrainian nationalists.

Duranty was one of the *New York Times* Russian correspondents whose reporting on the Russian Revolution and ensuing Civil War was so anticommunist and biased that it completely distorted the truth, as determined in the famous study "A Test of the News" by Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz, published as a supplement to the August 4, 1920 edition of *The New Republic*. Lippmann went on to be advisor to presidents and Merz to being an editor of *The New York Times*. After this experience, it



seems, Duranty determined to curb his anticommunist bias and report only what he himself had witnessed, as reporters are trained to do in the US.

### **Resolution of the Soviet of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian SSR and the CC of the Communist Party of the Ukraine on the "Black Board"**

This is the full text, the first part of which we quoted verbatim in the main part of this chapter.

No. 219

Resolution of the Council of People's Commissars [CPC] of the USSR and the Communist Party (Bolshevik) "On the inscription on the black board of villages that maliciously sabotage grain reserves."

December 6, 1932

In view of the particularly shameful failure of grain procurements in some regions of the Ukraine, the CPC and Central Committee [CC] pose before the regional executive committees and regional committees, district executive committees and regional party committees the task of breaking the sabotage of grain procurements organized by kulak and counterrevolutionary elements, of destroying the resistance of a part of the rural communists, who have become in fact agents of sabotage and eliminate passivity and conciliation towards saboteurs, which is incompatible with the title of party member, and of ensuring a rapid increase in the rate of full and unconditional implementation of the grain procurement plan.

The CPC and CC decree:

For blatant failure of the grain procurement plan and malicious sabotage organized by kulak and counterrevolutionary elements, to inscribe on the black board the following villages:

1. Verbka, Pavlograd district, Dnepropetrovsk oblast'.

2. Gavrylivka, Mezhevskii district, Dnepropetrovsk oblast'.
3. Liuten'ki, Gadiach district, Khar'kov oblast'.
4. Kamennye Potoki, Kremenchug district, Khar'kov oblast'.
5. Sviatotoitskoe, Trotskii district, Odessa oblast'.
6. Peski, Bashtanksy district, Odessa oblast'.

With regard to these villages to conduct the following activities:

1. Immediate cessation of the transport of goods, the complete cessation of cooperative and state trade in place and removal from the relevant cooperative and state stores of all available products.
2. Complete prohibition of collective farm trade for both collective farms, kolkhoz farmers, and individual farmers.
3. Termination of any kind of lending, the holding of early loan credits, and other financial obligations.
4. Verification and purging by the organs of Workers and Peasants Inspection Bureau of the cooperative and state apparatus from any kind of alien and hostile elements.
5. Verification and purging of the collective farms in these villages by removing counter-revolutionary elements and organizers disrupting grain procurements.

The CPC and CC call upon all collective farmers and individual peasants who are honest and loyal to the Soviet government to organize with all their forces for a ruthless struggle with kulaks and their accomplices in order to overcome kulak sabotage of grain procurements in their villages, for procuring an honest conscientious fulfillment of grain collection obligations to the Soviet state, and for the strengthening of the collective farms.

Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Ukrainian  
SSR V. Chubar

Secretary of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of the Ukrainian SSR S.  
Kosior

RGASPI. F. 17. Op. 26. D. 55. L. 71-72. Certified copy

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>№ 293 cc. 388-395.

<sup>2</sup>At <http://www.archives.gov.ua/Sections/Famine/Publicat/Fam-Pyrig-1932.php#nom-126>

<sup>3</sup>For some reason Shapoval is not cited here as author of this article.

<sup>4</sup>*Tragediia sovetskoï derevni. T. 3. Konets 1930 — 1932.* M.: ROSSPEN, 2001, p. 543.

<sup>5</sup>Georgiy Papakin. "Arkhivni dokumenty pro 'chorni doshky" jak znariadda radians'kogo genotsidu v Ukraini v 1932-1933 rokakh." In *Golodomor 1932-1933 rokiv — Genotsid ukrains'kogo narodu.* (2008), 14-28.

<sup>6</sup>ТСД Т. 3, cc. 562-3. The same decree in Ukrainian is widely available on the Internet.

<sup>7</sup>For example see [http://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Чорні\\_дощка](http://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Чорні_дощка) and [http://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Чёрные\\_доски](http://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Чёрные_доски)

<sup>8</sup>Nicolas Werth, "Staline et le stalinisme dans l'histoire." April 12, 2012.

<sup>9</sup>This was Balitskii's office from July 15, 1934 to May 11, 1937, according to Petrov and Skorkin, *Kto rukovodil NKVD 1934-1941. Spravochnik.* (Moscow, 1999)

<sup>10</sup>This journal is subsidized by Ukrainian nationalists. As of December, 2012 the last issue of this journal published is that of 2007. Snyder's book was published in 2010 and, presumably, written a year or more before that time. Shapoval's article has now been "forthcoming" for six years. The article is probably the same one that has now been published in a 2013 collection; see below.

<sup>11</sup>Cf. *Свобода*, No 46 п'ятниця, 14 листопада 2008 року, с. 14: «Конференція про Голодомор.»

<sup>12</sup>Yuri Shapoval, "The Holodomor. A Prolog to Repressions and Terror in the Soviet Ukraine." In *After the Holodomor. The Enduring Impact of the Great Famine in Ukraine*. Ed. Andrea Graziosi et al. (Cambridge, MA: Ukrainian Research Institute, 2013) 99-122.

<sup>13</sup>Pyrig, R. ed., *Holodomor 1932-1933 rokiv v Ukraini: dokumenty i materialy* (Kyiv, 2007), No. 458, pp. 631-634; No. 476, cc. 672-3.

<sup>14</sup> *Tragediia sovetskoï derevni t.3*, 634-5; Document No. 258.

<sup>15</sup>This postwar famine is briefly discussed in a later chapter. For the present, see Stephen G. Wheatcroft, "The Soviet Famine of 1946-1947, the Weather and Human Agency in Historical Perspective." *Europe-Asia Studies* 64 no. 6 (2012), 988-1005.

<sup>16</sup>Heorhiy Kar'ianov. *Danse macabre. Holod 1932-1933 rokiv u polititsi, masoviy svidomosti ta istoriografii (1980-ti — pochatok 2000-kh)*. Kiev, 2000, gives the history of the concept of the "Holodomor."

<sup>17</sup>The quotation is in the third column of the story.

<sup>18</sup>See Anton Weiss-Wendt, "Hostage of Politics: Raphael Lemkin on "Soviet Genocide." *Journal of Genocide Research* 7 (4) 2005, 551-559.

<sup>19</sup>The term "Holodomor," or "famine-death" to denote that the famine was deliberate and aimed at Ukrainians did not come into official use until the

1990s. See J.-P. Himka, "Encumbered Memory. The Ukrainian Famine of 1932-33," *Kritika* 14, 2 (Spring 2013), 420.

<sup>20</sup>(<http://www.rationalrevolution.net/special/library/tottlefraud.pdf>) See Douglas Tottle. *Fraud, Famine, and Fascism. The Ukrainian Genocide Myth from Hitler to Harvard* (Toronto, Canada: Progress Books, 1987), Appendix: "From Third-Reich Propagandist to Famine-Genocide Author," outlining the career of Olexa Hay-Holowko.

### Chapter 3. *Snyder, Chapter One — Appendix*

In order to make the main text of this book a more readable narrative we have added Appendices to several of the chapters of this analysis. In these Appendices are presented direct quotations from *Bloodlands* together with our dissection and critique of the assertions Snyder makes in them.

We have examined and critiqued every fact-claim of an anti-Stalin or anti-Soviet tendency in *Bloodlands*. Those that are not studied and critiqued in the main chapters are covered in the Appendices. In addition, the full texts of some of the longer documents that are referred to in the body of each chapter are contained in the Appendices. This too improves the readability of the main text while still making additional important documentation available to scholars or whoever wants it.

Each such section or "unit" in the Appendices is comprised of the following elements:

A quotation from *Bloodlands* where the Soviet Union or a pro-Soviet force is accused of some "crime," misdeed, etc. These quotations contain some assertion or "fact-claim."

The text of the footnotes, which constitute the evidence or "proof" of Snyder's fact-claims;

Our study and analysis of the evidence in the footnotes;

Our conclusion as to whether Snyder's fact-claims have been verified or — as almost always is the case — proven to be fraudulent.

Whenever possible we have provided each unit with a title in boldface. These titles are intended only for shorthand reference. They do not fully reflect the contents of the paragraph of Snyder's text that is analyzed in the unit below.

Unlike the main body of the book these Appendices do not constitute a flowing narrative. Some readers will content themselves to studying our

critique of Snyder's principle allegations, which is contained in other chapters. Others will want to go further and study our critique of some or all of the anti-Soviet allegations Snyder makes in the book but that are not examined in the texts of the chapters themselves.

## **The Starving Children**

Snyder (22-23) gives some anecdotal accounts of famine-stricken children. A number might be true but are not recorded in any of the sources Snyder cites.

Starving peasants begged along the breadlines, asking for crumbs. In one town, a fifteen-year-old girl begged her way to the front of the line, only to be beaten to death by the shopkeeper. The housewives making the queues had to watch as peasant women starved to death on the side-walks. A girl walking to and from school each day saw the dying in the morning and the dead in the afternoon. One young communist called the peasant children he saw "living skeletons." A party member in industrial Stalino was distressed by the corpses of the starved he found at his back door. Couples strolling in parks could not miss the signs forbidding the digging of graves. Doctors and nurses were forbidden from treating (or feeding) the starving who reached their hospitals. The city police seized famished urchins from city streets to get them out of sight. In Soviet Ukrainian cities policemen apprehended several hundred children a day; one day in early 1933, the Kharkiv police had a quota of two thousand to fill. About twenty thousand children awaited death in the barracks of Kharkiv at any given time. The children pleaded with police to be allowed, at least, to starve in the open air: "Let me die in peace, I don't want to die in the death barracks." (22-23)

Sources:

"Quotations: Falk, *Sowjetische Städte*, 299, see also 297-301";

Kuśnierz, *Ukraina*, 157, 160.

"On the schoolgirl and the hospitals, see Davies, *Years*, 160, 220. See also Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror*, 171, 184."

Snyder's claim in this paragraph that "about twenty thousand children awaited death in the barracks of Kharkiv at any given time" is not documented by any of the sources Snyder cites.

**Falk**, *Sowjetische Städte*, 299 contains a quotation, in German translation, from the report of a Komsomol activist to the Khar'kov city Soviet on July 4, 1933, describing peasant children coming into Khar'kov: "Wenn man auf die Kinder schaut, sieht man lebendige Skelette..." (When one looks at the children one sees living skeletons...).

**Kuśnierz**, 157: The quotation "Let me die in peace, I don't want to die in the death barracks" is here. Snyder states that it was the "about twenty thousand children" "in the barracks of Kharkiv" who made this "plea." This is false. According to Kuśnierz, Snyder's source, it was the homeless children in the streets who said this to policemen. What's more, the source of this is the Italian consul in Kharkov — in other words, a fascist, hardly a reliable source.

**Kuśnierz**, 156 (not 157), citing a Ukrainian nationalist source, says that 27,454 homeless children were "rounded up" in the whole Kharkov oblast by May 28, 1933. It does not say that all, or indeed any, of these children were in "the barracks of Kharkiv" or "awaiting death," as Snyder claims. Evidence cited below shows that children were given special priority for emergency food supplies, and that the Soviet Politburo — "Stalin" — issued some of these orders.

Kuśnierz notes (p. 156, n. 277) that "according to other data" 6378 children had been taken from the streets of Khar'kov by the end of May, 1933. This figure is contained in Kuśnierz's source, [Document 233 of Голод 1932-1933 рокиВ](#). This document appears to reflect attempts by the Khar'kov city authorities to aid homeless children. Snyder has fabricated the claim that the purpose was "to get them [the homeless children] out of sight." It is not in his source.



**Kuśnierz**, 160: "The schoolgirl" story is here, not in Davies, *Years*. Kuśnierz quotes it in Polish translation from the collection published by the U.S. Congress in 1990, "*Oral History Project of the Commission on the Ukraine Famine*, p. 1588." (Page 1588 is in volume 3 of this work.) Kuśnierz errs in copying her name, calling her "Olga Lodyga." In reality she identified herself as Ol'ga Odlyga, née Antonova. In the Ukrainian-language interview Odlyga refuses to testify that she saw policemen arresting starving people, despite leading questions by the Ukrainian-speaking interviewer.

**Davies**, *Years*, 160, 220, despite Snyder's claim, has nothing at all about "the schoolgirl and the hospitals."

However, on pages 221 ff. Davies and Wheatcroft outline Soviet efforts to help Ukrainian children:

Considerable efforts were made to supply grain to hungry children, irrespective of their parents' roles in society. The Vinnitsa decision of April 29, insisting that most grain should be distributed to those who were active in agriculture, also allocated grain specifically to crèches and children's institutes in the badly-hit districts. On May 20, the USSR Politburo [In Moscow, led by Stalin — GF] issued a grain loan to the Crimea specifically for children in need and aged invalids...

Snyder fails to inform his readers about these and similar efforts documents in Davies and Wheatcroft. This work is one of the most important studies of the 1932-33 famine (along with those by Mark Tauger) and firmly concludes that it was not "deliberate" in any way.

A similar resolution of February 22, 1933, by the Kiev Oblast' buro of the Ukrainian Communist Party to provide food relief to all those struck by famine, is reproduced in translation in the 1997 Library of Congress volume *Revelations from the Russian Archives*, ed. Diane P. Koenker and Ronald D. Bachman, as document 187 on pp. 417-418.

I have put these documents online at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/ukfaminedocs97.pdf> The document in question is on p17-18 of this 22-page collection.

These works refute Snyder's entire hypothesis of a "deliberate famine." For if the Stalin regime wanted to deliberately starve Ukrainians, why would it take special measures to feed hungry children and aged invalids?

**Kuromiya**, *Freedom and Terror*, 171, 184: Page 171 relates the "fifteen year-old girl beaten to death by the shopkeeper" story. Snyder distorts the story by omitting the detail that the "storekeeper" was "communist," although the original version and Kuromiya, Snyder's source, include it. Why? Could it be because this detail — making the shopkeeper a "communist" — makes the whole story seem phony, sound like anticommunists "going overboard"?

But there is a more serious problem with this story. It is taken from *The Black Deeds of the Kremlin*, Volume 1, page 284. Its source is an unidentified person using the name "Mariupilsky" — the story is set in the town of Mariupil'. This book was published in the mid-1950s by Ukrainian émigrés in Canada who had collaborated with the Nazis and written hair-raising antisemitic propaganda to recruit other Ukrainians to the pro-Nazi forces. At least one identifiable Ukrainian fascist recounts a story in it.<sup>1</sup>

There's no reason to accept any of them as true. Eyewitness stories are notoriously unreliable as history under any circumstances. A volume of self-serving, largely anonymous stories by Nazi collaborators such as this one is even more unreliable as history. Moreover, the volume claims that there was plenty of food in Russian areas outside the Ukraine, an absurd statement that even fervent anticommunists do not make today.

This collection became known beyond the circles of Nazi collaborators only because Robert Conquest cited it many times in his 1986 book *Harvest of Sorrow*. Conquest was paid by the Ukrainian Nationalists to write this book. The work is never cited except by extreme anticommunists, such as Kuromiya. Moreover, Conquest has repudiated his original accusation that the famine is deliberate, as we discuss below.

**Kuromiya**, *Freedom and Terror*, 184, does not document anything at all in Snyder's paragraph.

**Conclusion:** Many of Snyder's claims in this paragraph are not in the sources he cites:

the "city housewives making the queues";

the "party member in Stalino";

the allegation that doctors and nurses were forbidden to treat the starving;

the quota that the Khar'kiv police supposedly had;

the story of the "about 20,000 children" in the "death barracks";

- none are documented. But even if they were true none of these stories would be evidence for Snyder's insistence that the famine was either caused by collectivization or constituted the "deliberate starvation of Ukrainians."

### **Snyder "Begg the Question" of the Famine (Assumes What He Needs To Prove)**

Snyder:

The mass starvation of 1933 was the result of Stalin's first Five-Year Plan, implemented between 1928 and 1932. In those years, Stalin had taken control of the heights of the communist party, forced through a policy of industrialization and collectivization, and emerged as **the frightful father of a beaten population**. He had transformed the market into the plan, **farmers into slaves**, and the wastes of Siberia and Kazakhstan into a chain of concentration camps. His policies had killed tens of thousands by execution, **hundreds of thousands by exhaustion, and put millions at risk of starvation....** (24-25. Emphasis added)

n. 8. For a sophisticated guide to the meanings of the Plan, see Harrison, *Soviet Planning*, 1-5.

Snyder cites *no evidence whatsoever* to support this paragraph of invective. We have dealt, or are dealing, with the falsehoods in boldface. In reality,

like all previous famines in Russian and Ukrainian history this famine too had environmental, not human, causes.

**Harrison**, *Soviet Planning*, 1-5, is a very brief introduction to what Harrison sees as the tensions between balance and "voluntarism" within Soviet economic planning in the early 1930s, concluding that "there was a sense in which they [these two tendencies] needed each other." It contains nothing — no evidence, or even reference — to Snyder's claims of "frightful father," "beaten population," peasants as "slaves," or "concentration camps." It does not even support Snyder's claim that collectivization caused the famine.

### **The Lie of "Slave Labor"**

One hallmark of anticommunist bias and falsification is to call Soviet collective farmers or labor camp prisoners "slaves." The penal systems of the United States today, and many other countries, employ the labor of prisoners. This is never called "slave labor." The proper term used for prisoners' labor in all capitalist countries is "[penal labor](#)." Peasants on collective farms (kolkhozes) and Soviet farms (sovkhozes) had nothing in common with the institution of "slavery," any more than they did with serfdom. Neither did prisoners in the Soviet GULAG.

A writer who uses that term is making no attempt to be accurate and so is likely to be untruthful about other matters too. But the basic point to note here is that Snyder "assumes that which is to be proven." Instead of citing evidence that the Five-Year Plan and collectivization resulted in the famine, Snyder simply states it as a fact.

We have already shown that Mark Tauger, and Davies and Wheatcroft have established that the famine was not caused by collectivization but by environmental factors, like virtually all the numerous famines that preceded it. Quotations from these authors are in the main body of Chapter One of this book.

### **Was the Threat of Mass Starvation "Clear" to Stalin by June 1932?**

Snyder:

The threat of mass starvation was utterly clear to Soviet Ukrainian authorities, and it became so to Stalin. ...That same day, 18 June 1932, Stalin himself admitted, privately, that there was "famine" in Soviet Ukraine. The previous day the Ukrainian party leadership had requested food aid. He did not grant it. His response was that all grain in Soviet Ukraine must be collected as planned. He and Kaganovich agreed that "it is imperative to export without fail immediately. (34-5)

n. 34 — On the reports of death by starvation, see Kuśnierz, 104-105. On Stalin, see Davies, *Kaganovich Correspondence*, 138. On the request for food aid, see Lih, *Letters to Molotov*, 230. On Kaganovich (23 June 1932), see Hunczak, *Famine*, 121.

Nothing in any of the sources cited by Snyder here gives any evidence that "the threat of mass starvation" "became clear to Stalin." On the contrary: these sources show that in mid-1932 the Soviet leadership was far from recognizing that a devastating famine was to come.

**Kuśnierz**, 104-105 contains several reports about starvation. These reports contain nothing about and are therefore irrelevant to charges of "man-made famine" and "deliberate starvation."

**Davies**, *Kaganovich Correspondence*, 138: In this letter of Stalin's of June 18 1932 (p. 179 of the Russian edition) Stalin explains to Kaganovich his conclusion that the starvation that does exist in the Ukraine is the result of improper accounting by the grain-collection teams, who instead of accounting for differences have been taking the same from everyone:

В результате этого механически-уравниловского отношения к делу получилась вопиющая несообразность, в силу которой на Украине, несмотря на неплохой урожай, ряд урожайных районов оказался в состоянии разорения и голода, а на Урале обком лишил себя возможности оказать помощь неурожайным районам за счет урожайных районов области.<sup>2</sup>

Translated:

The mechanical equalizing approach to the matter has resulted in glaring absurdities, so that a number of fertile districts in the Ukraine, despite a fairly good harvest, have found themselves in a state of impoverishment and famine, while the regional party committee in the Urals has deprived itself of the capacity to use the districts with good crops in the region to assist regions with bad harvests.

Five days later, on June 23, 1932, Kaganovich wrote to Stalin that, in his opinion, the quantity of grain for the 3rd quarter of 1932 must be "somewhat" reduced. Snyder does not mention this.

10 июля 1932 г. ПБ решило сократить намеченную цифру экспорта хлеба в III квартале и окончательно установить ее 16 июля (Там же. Оп. 162. Д. 13. Л. 11). На заседании ПБ 16 июля экспорт хлеба в III квартале был установлен в размере 31,5 млн пудов (включая бобовые), 20 млн пудов для варранта и 10 млн пудов переходящих остатков, всего — 61,5 млн пудов (Там же. Л. 30). 20 октября 1932 г. ПБ приняло решение сократить экспорт из урожая 1932 г. с 165 до 150 млн пудов (Там же. Л. 133).<sup>3</sup>

Translated:

On July 10 1932 the PB [Politburo] decided to lower the indicated amount of grain for export in the 3rd quarter and to establish it firmly on July 16....At the PB session of July 16 the export of grain for the 3rd quarter was set at 31.5 million poods (excluding legumes), 20 million poods as a guarantee [i.e. in reserve] and 10 million poods carried over, in total: 61.5 million poods. On October 20 1932 the PB adopted a decision to reduce the export from the 1932 harvest from 165 to 150 million tons.

**Lih**, "Letters to Molotov," is a translation from the Russian original, which we reproduce and discuss below.

3. Forced collectivization resulted in widespread famine.

Before proceeding we should note that this sentence, "Forced collectivization resulted in widespread famine," is an addition by the

editors, who assume this rather than trying to prove it. As we have shown, neither Davies and Wheatcroft nor Tauger think this is true.

Lih's text continues:

On 17 June 1932, the Ukrainian Politburo sent Kaganovich and Molotov the following telegram:

On the instructions of our Central Committee, Chubar' has initiated a request to grant food assistance to Ukraine for districts experiencing a state of emergency. We urgently request additional means for processing sugar beets, and also supplemental aid: in addition to the 220,000, and other 600,000 pounds of bread.

In Stalin's view, Ukrainian crop failures were caused by enemy resistance and by poor leadership of Ukrainian officials. On 21 June 1932, the Central Committee sent a telegram, signed by Stalin and Molotov, to the Ukrainian Central Committee and Council of Commissars, proposing to ensure the collection of grain "at all costs." The telegram stated:

No manner of deviation — regarding either amounts or deadlines set for grain deliveries — can be permitted from the plan established for your region for collecting grain from collective and private farms or for delivering grain to state farms.

On 23 June 1932, in response to S. V. Kosior's telegram requesting aid, the Politburo passed the following resolution: "To restrict ourselves to the decisions already adopted by the Central Committee and not to approve the shipment of additional grain into Ukraine." (All quotations are from *The 1932-1933 Ukrainian Famine in the Eyes of Historians and in the Language of Documents* [In Ukrainian. Kiev, 1990], 183, 186, 187, 190.

The original document reads as follows:

В результате насильственной коллективизации в ряде районов страны, в том числе на Украине, насался голод. Руководители

Украины обращались в Москву за продовольственной помощью. Так, 17 июня 1932 г. Политбюро ЦК КП(Б)У приняло решение послать в ЦК ВКП(Б) Кагановичу и Молотову следующую телеграмму:

«Чубарь по поручению ЦК КП(Б)У возбудил ходатайство [об] отпуске Украине продовольственной помощи находящимся [в] тяжелом положении районам. Настоятельно просим сверх отпущенных для обработки свеклы, а также дополнительной продовольственной помощи 220 тысяч еще 600 тысяч пудов [хлеба].»

По мнению Сталина провалы в сельском хозяйстве на в Украине объяснялись сопротивлением врагов и плохим руководством правительства/республики. 21 июня 1932 г. в ЦК КП(Б)У и Совнарком Украины была направлена телеграма ЦК ВКП(Б) и СНК СССР за подписью Молотова и Сталина. В ней предлагалось обеспечить зернопоставки «во что бы то ни стало». В телеграмме говорилось:

«Никакие уклонения от выполнения установленного для вашего края ... плана по зернопоставке колхозами и единоличными хозяйствами и по сдаче зерна совхозам не должны быть допущены ни под каким видом как в отношении количеств, так и сроков сдачи зерна».

23 июня 1932 г. ПБ в ответ на телеграмму С.В. Косиора о помощи приняло следующее постановление:

«Ограничиться уже принятыми решениями ЦК и дополнительного завоза хлеба на Украину не производить» («Голод 1932-1933 годов на Украине: глазами историков, языком документов» (на украинском языке) Киев 1990 С. 183, 186, 187, 190)<sup>4</sup>

The primary documents cited here are all in various editions of the book Snyder cites.



The June 23, 1932 telegram refusing "to approve the shipment of additional grain to Ukraine" is genuine. But note the word "additional." It implies that grain was already promised to the Ukraine.

This is indeed the case. The Ukrainian Politburo telegram of June 17, 1932 quoted in the Stalin-Molotov volume was preceded *the previous day* by the following decree of the Politburo of the All-Union Party — that is, by Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich, et al.:

№ 144 Постанова Політбюро ЦК ВКП(Б) про продовольчу допомогу УСРР

16 червня 1932 р.

- а) Отпустить Украине 2000 тонн овса на продовольственные нужды из неиспользованной семсруды;
- б) отпустить Украине 100 тыс. пудов кукурузы на продовольственные нужды из отпущенной на посев для Одесской области, но неиспользованной по назначению;
- в) отпустить 70 тыс. пудов хлеба для свекловичных совхозов УССР на продовольственные нужды;
- г) отпустить 230 тыс. пудов хлеба для колхозов свекловичных районов УССР на продовольственные нужды;
- д) обязать т. Чубаря лично проследить за использованием отпущенного хлеба для свекловичных совхозов и колхозов строго по назначению;
- е) отпустить 25 тыс. пудов хлеба для свекловичных совхозов ЦЧО на продовольственные нужды в связи с уборкой урожая, обязав т. Варейкиса лично проследить за использованием отпущенного хлеба строго по назначению;
- ж) настоящим решением считать продовольственную помощь свекловичным совхозам и колхозам исчерпанной.<sup>5</sup>

Translated:

No. 144. Decree of Politburo of the CC VCP(b) [= Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), the formal name for the Party until October 1952] concerning foodstuff aid to the Ukrainian SSR of June 16, 1932 [the title is in Ukrainian; the text in Russian]:

- a) To release to the Ukraine 2000 tons of oats for food needs from the unused seed reserves;
- b) to release to the Ukraine 100,000 poods of corn for food of that released for sowing for the Odessa oblast' but not used for that purpose;
- c) to release 70,000 poods of grain for collective farms in the sugar-beet regions of the Ukrainian SSR for food needs;
- d) to release 230,000 poods of grain for collective farms in the sugar-beet regions of the Ukrainian SSR for food needs;
- e) to require com. Chubar' to personally verify the fulfillment of the released grain for the sugar-beet Soviet and collective farms, that it be used strictly for this purpose;
- f) to release 25,000 poods of grain for the sugar-beet Soviet farms of the Central Black Earth Region for food needs in connection with the gathering of the harvest, first requiring com. Vareikis to personally verify that the grain released is used for the assigned purpose;
- g) by the present decision to consider the question of food aid to sugar-beet producing Soviet and collective farms closed.

So it is true that Stalin rejected the June 17 request of the Ukrainian Party's Politburo for more food aid. But what Snyder, as well as the editors of the Stalin-Molotov correspondence, did not disclose to their readers is that *one day earlier, on June 16, Stalin et al. had ordered a very large quantity of food grains to the Ukraine.*

It is crucial to Snyder's thesis to claim or imply that the Soviet government did not send food aid to the Ukraine. "Deliberate starvation of Ukraine", the "Holodomor", is incompatible with serious attempts by the Soviet state to alleviate the famine. But that is what happened.

Here is a passage from a 1991 article by Mark Tauger:

The harvest decline also decreased the regime's reserves of grain for export. This drop in reserves began with the drought-reduced 1931 harvest and subsequent procurements, which brought famine to the Volga region, Siberia, and other areas. Soviet leaders were forced to return procured grain to those areas in 1932. The low 1931 harvest and reallocations of grain to famine areas forced the regime to curtail grain exports from 5.2 million tons in 1931 to 1.73 million in 1932; the declined to 1.68 million in 1933. Grain exported in 1932 and 1933 could have fed many people and reduced the famine: The 354,000 tons exported during the first half of 1933, for example, could have provided nearly 2 million people with daily rations of 1 kilogram for six months. Yet these exports were less than half of the 750,000 tons exported in the first half of 1932. How Soviet leaders calculated the relative costs of lower exports and lower domestic food supplies remains uncertain, but available evidence indicates that further reductions or cessation of Soviet exports could have had serious consequences. Grain prices fell in world markets and turned the terms of trade against the Soviet Union in the early 1930s, its indebtedness rose and its potential ability to pay declined, causing western bankers and officials to consider seizure of Soviet property abroad and denial of future credits in case of Soviet default. Failure to export thus would have threatened the fulfillment of its industrialization plans and, according to some observers, the stability of the regime.

While the leadership did not stop exports, they did try to alleviate the famine. A 25 February 1933 Central Committee decree allotted seed loans of 320,000 tons to Ukraine and 240,000 tons to the northern Caucasus. Seed loans were also made to the Lower Volga and may have been made to other regions as well. Kul'chyts'kyi cites Ukrainian party archives showing that total aid to Ukraine by April 1933 actually

exceeded 560,000 tons, including more than 80,000 tons of food. Aid to Ukraine alone was 60 percent greater than the amount exported during the same period. Total aid to famine regions was more than double exports for the first half of 1933. It appears to have been another consequence of the low 1932 harvest that more aid was not provided: After the low 1931, 1934 and 1936 harvests procured grain was transferred back to peasants at the expense of exports.

The low 1932 harvest meant that the regime did not have sufficient grain for urban and rural food supplies, seed, and exports. The authorities curtailed all of these, but ultimately rural food supplies had last priority. The harsh 1932-1933 procurements only displaced the famine from urban areas, which would have suffered a similar scale of mortality without the grain the procurements provided (though, as noted above, urban mortality rates also rose in 1933). The severity and geographical extent of the famine, the sharp decline in exports in 1932-1933, seed requirements, and the chaos in the Soviet Union in these years, all lead to the conclusion that even a complete cessation of exports would not have been enough to prevent famine. **This situation makes it difficult to accept the interpretation of the famine as the result of the 1932 grain procurements and as a conscious act of genocide. The harvest of 1932 essentially made a famine inevitable.**<sup>6</sup>

For our present purposes Tauger's heavily-documented account shows that:

1. The Soviet Politburo did provide a great deal of aid, both in seed grain and in food, to the Ukraine.
2. Stopping all exports would have seriously harmed, perhaps destroyed, Soviet foreign credit and either seriously delayed industrialization or caused it to fail altogether. In a footnote Tauger provides evidence from British archives that Soviet failure to meet its export obligations would have brought disaster: a refusal of future credits, seizure of Soviet assets abroad, and so, probably, the failure of the industrialization program.

But it was industrialization that, together with collectivization, broke the thousand-year cycle of famines in Russia. Industrialization was essential to

prevent further famines, as well as to industrialization of other areas of the economy and the modernization of the military.

3. Tauger concludes that "even a complete cessation of exports would not have been enough to prevent famine." Davies and Wheatcroft outline the deepening crisis after the Spring of 1932, along with the extensive aid in both seed grain and food granted by the authorities to the affected areas, including to the Ukraine. They document how hunger weakened the farmers and led to late sowing and poor weeding, which further lessened the harvest. Armed with more accurate weather information they "conclude that the weather in 1932 was much more unfavourable than we had previously realized." (119) The state made advances to collective farmers in order to bring in the harvest (124-5). As we noted in the last chapter, the best research on the environmental causes of the famine is by Tauger.

The Soviet authorities greatly overestimated the crop that would be harvested in late 1932. But so did foreign experts, as Davies and Wheatcroft show (127). Hunger limited the strength of the harvest workers (128). Plant diseases were a serious problem. According to Davies and Wheatcroft:

During the harvest of 1932, the poor weather, the lack of autumn and spring ploughing, the shortage and poor quality of the seed, the poor cultivation of the crop and the delay in harvesting all combined to increase the incidence of fungal disease. Reports in the Narkomzem [=People's Commissariat for Agriculture] archives complain that traditional campaigns to disinfect the fields, the storehouses and the sacks for the harvested grain, were all carried out extremely badly in Ukraine. Cairns [the British expert whose overestimation of the 1932 harvest they cited earlier] found that in the North Caucasus 'the winter wheat was extremely weedy and looked as though it was badly rusted', and 'all the spring wheat I saw was simply rotten with rust'. (131)

**Conclusion:** In June 1932 the authorities were still looking forward to a good harvest. A few pages earlier, Davies and Wheatcroft quote the opinion of one of the foreign experts:

Andrew Cairns, the Scottish grain specialist, travelled extensively in the major grain regions in May and July [1932], reporting very bad

conditions, and dismissed the official estimate that the yield would be 7.8 tsentners as 'absurdly too high'. He nevertheless concluded in a cable: 'do not like to generalise about comparative size this and last years harvest tentatively of opinion this years appreciably larger stop.'  
(127)

Snyder conceals these facts from his readers. The result of his doing so is to suggest that the famine could have been averted through different policies but that Stalin and the Politburo refused to do so. This is false.

Snyder conceals the fact that Stalin et al. shipped large quantities of food grains to the Ukraine in June 1932. This fact alone is fatal to his "deliberate starvation" thesis: one does not ship food to those whom one wishes to starve.

### **"Stalin's First Commandment": Another Snyder Fabrication**

Snyder:

Understanding this religiosity, party activists propagated what they called Stalin's First Commandment: the collective farm supplies first the state, and only then the people. As the peasants would have known, the First Commandment in its biblical form reads: "Thou shalt have no other God before me." (29)

Sources (n. 20, p. 464):

"For the Stalinist "First Commandment," see Kulczycki, *Hołodomor*, 170.

"See also Kuśnierz, *Ukraina*, 70."

Here Snyder seems to be trying to deliberately deceive his readers. For why was "the state" collecting produce from collective farms? Naturally, for the non-agricultural areas and for export. The workers in the cities and towns could not grow their own food. Contracts for export had been made a year earlier. In mid-1932 the fact that there was going to be a widespread famine was of course not known to anyone.

**Kulczycki, *Hołodomor*, 170:**

Pierwsze przykazanie" Były kleryk Józef Stalin używał niekiedy wyrażeń zapożyczonych z Biblii. Dzięki aparatowi propagandowemu największy rozgłós zdobyło wyrażenie "pierwsze przykazanie." Było ono adresowane do chłopów i chodziło w nim o to, że kołchoz powinien najpierw rozliczyć się z państwem, a dopiero potem pozostałe plony podzielić na podstawie roboczodni między pracowników. Deficyt chleba na wsi został spowodowany, jak już wiemy, przez dostawy obowiązkowe dla państwa.

Translated:

"The First Commandment"

The former seminarian Joseph Stalin sometimes uses phrases borrowed from the Bible. Thanks to the propaganda apparatus the expression "the First Commandment" gained great circulation. It was addressed to the peasants, and it meant that the collective farm should first settle with the state, and then divide the remaining crop on the basis of man-days among employees. The deficit of bread in the country was caused, as we have seen, by the supply required for the state.

**Kuśnierz, *Ukraina*, 70:** This is a phony citation. There is nothing in Kuśnierz's book about the "First Commandment" or the OGPU using religious language. On the contrary, Kuśnierz records the recollection that *some kulaks* dressed up as devils and informed superstitious peasants that entering the collective farm was a "pact with the devil" and that the OGPU arrested three of them and sentenced them to prison.

**Conclusion:** Snyder is untruthful here. Judging from the very sources he cites, the term "The First Commandment" was invented by Kul'chyts'kyy as a section heading. Kul'chyts'kyy does claim that somebody — either the Party propagandists or the peasants — called the grain collection plan by this name, but he cites no evidence that anybody used this term, much less that it was well known.

Snyder claims "that Stalin's own policy of collectivization could cause mass starvation was also clear." (35) His evidence (n. 35 p. 465):

- Cameron, "Hungry Steppe," chap. 2;
- Pianciola, "Collectivization Famine," 103-112;
- Mark, "Hungersnot," 119.

Chapter 2 of **Cameron**, "Hungry Steppe," a 2010 Yale Ph.D. dissertation, contains nothing that supports Snyder's claim that collectivization "could cause mass starvation," much less that this was "clear".

**Pianciola**, "The Collectivization Famine in Kazakhstan," was published in Harvard Ukrainian Studies, 25 (2001). It contains no evidence that collectivization "could cause mass starvation," much less of deliberate starvation.

**Mark**, "Hungersnot" does not appear in Snyder's bibliography. The following article is almost certainly the one meant: Rudolf A. Mark, Gerhard Simon, "Die Hungersnot in der Ukraine und anderen Regionen der USSR 1932 und 1933", *Osteuropa* 54 (2004), S. 5-12. This article is a long series of undocumented assertions reflecting the Ukrainian Nationalist viewpoint that Snyder also echoes. It contains no evidence to support its assertion, which is also Snyder's, that the famine was caused by collectivization, much less that this was predictable from the outset, as Snyder claims.

Davies & Wheatcroft discuss the Kazakhstan famine (322-326 and 408-9). This basic work is also cited by Cameron and Pianciola. They conclude that there was a "population deficit" by 1939 of "some 1.2 million." This is an estimate based on a projection of what the Kazakh population of Kazakhstan *would* have been if (a) its natural increase of 1926 had continued through to January 1939 — that is, if there had been no famines in 1928 and 1932-33; and (b) all Kazakhs had remained in Kazakhstan during this entire period. Davies and Wheatcroft cite evidence that large numbers of Kazakhs migrated to other regions in Kazakhstan, and to other regions and republics in search of a livelihood or simply seeking food, while others emigrated to China. (409) For these reasons we cannot know



precisely how many Kazakhs died of famine — i.e. the surplus of deaths during the famine years.

None of these sources establish that collectivization was the "cause" of "mass starvation." Snyder is guilty of the logical fallacy of "begging the question" — asserting that which ought to be proven.

### **More False Citations; Stalins "Personal Politics"; "Starving Peasants on Tour"**

Stalin, a master of personal politics, presented the Ukrainian famine in personal terms. His first impulse, and his lasting tendency, was to see the starvation of Ukrainian peasants as a betrayal by members of the Ukrainian communist party. He could not allow the possibility that his own policy of collectivization was to blame; the problem must be in the implementation, in the local leaders, anywhere but in the concept itself. As he pushed forward with his transformation in the first half of 1932 ... (35)

This paragraph is really Snyder's own imagination. Snyder declares that he has determined what Stalin "intended"; what Stalin's "first impulse" was; what Stalin "could not allow"; what "problems" he "saw." How can he possibly know these things? Therefore it is both nonsense, and a deception.

This passage concerns "the first half of 1932." As the discussion above has pointed out, the famine had not yet made itself clear in early 1932. At that time Stalin wrote that he believed the incipient hunger was the result of mismanagement.

Starving Ukrainian peasants, he complained, were leaving their home republic and demoralizing other Soviet citizens by their "whining."  
(35)

Sources (n. 36 p. 465):

"Quotation: Davies, *Kaganovich Correspondence*, 138."

("On Stalin's predisposition to personalized politics"), Kulczycki, *Holodomor*, 180; Kuśnierz, *Ukraina*, 152.

### **Travelling Peasants Were "Whining" — Just Not Starving**

There are few factual statements that we can check, such as the statement about "whining." **Davies**, *Kaganovich Correspondence*, 138: The relevant part of Stalin's letter to Kaganovich of June 18, 1932 reads thus:

Результатл этих ошибок сказываются теперь на посевом деле, особенно на Украине, причем несколько десятков тысяч украинских колхозников все еще разъезжают по всей европейской части СССР и разлагают нам колхозы своими жалобами и нытьем.  
(179)

Translated:

The results of these mistakes can now be seen in the matter of sowing, especially in the Ukraine, in that several tens of thousands of Ukrainian collective farmers are still travelling all around the European part of the USSR and are degrading the collective farms for us by their complaints and whining.

So Snyder is correct that Stalin accused the kolkhozniks of "whining." But these peasants could not possibly have been starving, as Snyder claims, and he cites no evidence that they were. Train travel costs money, which starving people would spend on food, not travel. Likewise, moneyless starving people would not have the strength to travel "all over the European part of the USSR." They would need food to have the energy to travel anywhere.

If these farmers were not starving what were they doing? Most likely they were traveling to trade: either taking grain from the Ukraine to trade for other things — the harvest was bad in European Russia too — or taking money, or other goods, to trade for grain.

In normal times this activity was not immoral or illegal. But during a famine the price of food increases greatly. The Soviet government's efforts

to distribute food according to need, rather than according to who had the money to buy it at inflated prices, stood in complete contradiction to permitting speculators to travel around buying and selling grain.

A capitalist approach to the famine would mean that, as usual, the well-off would eat and the poor would starve. The Bolsheviks needed to stop any trade in grain because that would destroy all attempts to ration grain, reserving grain only for those who could pay for it with money or goods.

**Kulczycki**, *Hołodomor*, 180 — This is a phony citation. There is nothing on this page about any "predisposition to personal politics," whatever that might mean, on Stalin's part. Stalin is not even mentioned on this page, or on the pages before and after it, 179 or 181.

Incidentally, this is a Polish translation of a Ukrainian-language book. What is the point of using it as a secondary source? It is very hard to find. Snyder cites Ukrainian-language works elsewhere, so why not here? Moreover, how could it contain any information about Stalin's "predispositions" that isn't available elsewhere? It is absurd to do what Snyder does — to write about Soviet history from Polish, Ukrainian, German, and English books and articles while failing to use Russian works.

From this and other indications in *Bloodlands* it appears that Snyder can read Polish well enough. Perhaps he reads Ukrainian too. Perhaps Snyder cannot read Russian, at least not well — or why wouldn't he use Russian primary and secondary sources for Soviet history, instead of Polish and even Ukrainian translations? Or perhaps Snyder has nationalist Polish and Ukrainian historians helping him, but not Russian scholars?

**Kuśnierz**, *Ukraina*, 152, is another phony citation. There is nothing about Stalin's supposed "predisposition to personalized politics" here. In fact Stalin's name does not occur on p. 152 of Kuśnierz's book. Stalin is briefly mentioned on page 148 (a report was sent to Stalin), and not again until page 174.

**Did Molotov and Kaganovich Explain Starvation as "Laziness"?**

Snyder claims that in July 1932 Molotov and Kaganovich

told Ukrainian comrades that talk of starvation was just an excuse for laziness on the part of peasants who did not wish to work and activists who did not wish to discipline them and requisition grain. (37)

His evidence (n. 40 p. 465): "... On talk of starvation as an excuse for laziness, see Šapoval, "Lügen" 136."

This is another phony citation. Šapoval, "Lügen" says nothing of the kind anywhere in this article, let alone on this specific page. The only statement even close is this:

Im Kreml war man davon überzeugt, daß der Getreidebeschaffungsplan realistisch sei und daß die Führer der Ukraine sich mit ihren Bitten lediglich das Leben erleichtern wollen.

Translated:

In the Kremlin they were convinced that the plan for grain collection was realistic and the leaders of the Ukraine just wanted to make their lives easier by their requests.

Šapoval's note to *this* passage is not a reference to any evidence. Rather it is to yet another secondary source: an entire article by Šapoval himself: "III Konferentsia KP(b)U: Prolog tragedii goloda," in a hard-to-find collection of articles coedited by Šapoval and Vasil'ev in Kiev in 2001. I obtained the book (written partly in Russian and partly in Ukrainian) and have studied the article. Evidently Snyder did not. Had he done so he would have — or, at any rate, should have — footnoted it instead of "Lügen..."

In any case, nothing in this article either corresponds to Snyder's claim of "talk of starvation as an excuse for laziness." As he has done many times in this book Snyder has falsely "documented" this fact-claim too with citations which do not, in fact, document it.

**Were "Women Routinely Raped, Robbed of Food"?**

Snyder asserts:

Women who lived alone were routinely raped at night under the pretext of grain confiscations — and their food was indeed taken from them after their bodies had been violated. This was the triumph of Stalin's law and Stalin's state. (39-40)

Source (n. 48 p. 465): "...On the party activists' abuses, see Kuśnierz, *Ukraina*, 144-145, 118-119; and Kuromiya, *Freedom and Terror*, 170-171."

**Kuśnierz**, 144-145: the relevant sentences are as follows:

Dochodził też do gwałtów na kobietach. Członkowie komisji ds. Chlebozagotowok we wsi Wesianyki (rejon koziatyński) po libacji alkoholowej w domu chłopa zgwałcili po kolei jego córkę, a później jeden z nich przez pół godziny trzymał nagą dziewczynę na mrozie.

Translated:

There were also examples of rapes of women. Members of the Committee on grain collection in Wesianyki village (koziatyński *rayon*) after alcoholic libations in a peasant's house in turn raped his daughter, and later one of them for about half an hour held the naked girl in the cold.

Kuśnierz mentions this example at page 145. This was a crime, and Kuśnierz cites an archival document. It would be useful to know what kind of document this is. It might be a record of a Party report or even of a prosecution of the offender.

Rape — which is undoubtedly among the most deplorable forms of victimization — occurs in a variety of settings and conditions and is not unique to those discussed in the present narrative. No doubt that the alleged intoxication of male authorities might exacerbate these conditions as well. As such, the question of whether these crime was punished is an important one. Source criticism is fundamental part of the historical method, but Kuśnierz makes no attempt to describe, much less to analyze, this archival source.

On page 117-118 (not 118-119) Kuśnierz writes:

Podczas chlebozagotowok w 1932 r. we wsi Surśko-Mychajliwka w obwodzie niepropietrowskim sekretarz ośrodka komsomolskiego Kotenko gwałcił kobiety oraz brał udział w biciu chłopów.

Translated:

During grain collection in 1932 in the village of Surśko-Mychajliwka, Dnepropetrovsk district, the Komsomol secretary Kotenko raped women and took part in the beating of peasants.

Kuśnierz's source is an article in Ukrainian by V.I. Prilutskii, "Molod' u suspil'no-politychnomu zhitti USSR (1928-1933 rr)" — "Youth in the socio-political life of the USSR (1928-1933)" — in the "Ukrainian Historical Journal" (*Український Історичний Журнал*) for 2002. The source cited by Prilutskii is a report by the Odessa district committee of the Komsomol to Andreev, head of the Ukrainian Komsomol.

The citation is as follows:

Так, в с. Сурсько-Михайлівському Солонянського р-ну Дніпропетровської обл. секретар комсомольського осередку Котенко брав участь у гвалтуванні дівчат, побитті селян, за що був засуджений "аж" на 3 роки. (р. 73)

Translated:

Thus, in the village of Surskaya-Mikhailovskoye, Solonyans'kyu raion, Dnipropetrovsk oblast', secretary of the Komsomol cell Kotenko participated in raping women, and beating peasants, for which he was sentenced to "up to" 3 years.

The Odessa district party committee was reporting *a crime committed by a Komsomol member for which the guilty man was tried, convicted, and sentenced to "up to" three years*. Neither Kuśnierz nor Snyder mentions this fact. (It would be important to have the document from which Prilutskii is quoting, evidently a trial transcript or sentence, but he does not provide it.)

**Conclusion:** There is no evidence that rape was "routine," as Snyder claims. Moreover, neither of these examples — the only two examples given in the works he cites — concern "women living along," the "pretext of grain confiscations," of "food taken from them after" the rape, etc.

### **Stalin's New Malice"**

Snyder:

The next day Stalin approached the problem of the famine with a new degree of malice. ...Two politburo telegrams sent out on 8 November 1932 reflected the mood: individual and collective farmers in Soviet Ukraine who failed to meet requisition targets were to be denied access to products from the rest of the economy. A special troika was created in Ukraine to hasten the sentencing and execution of party activists and peasants who, supposedly, were responsible for sabotage. Some 1,623 kolkhoz officials were arrested that month. Deportations within Ukraine were resumed: 30,400 more people were gone by the end of the year. The activists told the peasants: "Open up, or we'll knock down the door. We'll take what you have, and you'll die in a camp."  
(40)

Sources:

Quotation: Kovalenko, *Holod*, 44.

The two politburo telegrams: Marochkko, *Holodomor*, 152; and Davies, *Years*, 174.

The 1,623 arrested kolkhoz officials: Davies, *Years*, 174.

For 30,400 resumed deportations, Kuśnierz, *Ukraina*, 59.

**Kovalenko**, *Holod*, 44: The quotation is actually on p. 45. It is the recollection of a child of a kulak family; a 1927 photo of the family is also on p. 45. The original:

Через певний час бригада появлялась біля нашої хати. Рвали двері, тарабанили в шибки так, що ось-ось повилітають. Я й досі не забуду погроз: «Відчини, бо виб'ємо двері. Заберемо — і зогинеш в тюрмі.»

Translated:

After a certain time the team appeared near our house. They tore down the door, and drummed on the windowpanes so that they were about to shatter. I still have not forgotten their threat: "Open up or we'll knock down the door. We will take away [what we want] — and you will die in jail.

Snyder claims that "the activists told the peasants" in a general sense. But this is false: the account in questions is a single incident.

Moreover, "the activists" had good reason to threaten this peasant. In another part of this same account not quoted by Snyder the author describes how his family did in fact hide wheat, potatoes, and other beets in two holes, in case one was found. The authorities had the obligation to collect any food over and above a minimal amount for the peasant family's own survival, in order to distribute it to others who were starving to death. In fact the peasants were obliged to do this, hence the threat of prison.

Petro Danilovich Gumeniuk, the person whose account this is, born in 1923, would have been 8 or 9 at this time (no year is given). He went on to become a doctor of economics and professor at the Ternopil' Institute of Finance and Economics. His membership in a prosperous peasant family did not prevent him from having a fine career in the USSR. And his family did not starve.

**Davies**, *Years* 174 states:

On November 8, Stalin and Molotov insisted in a telegram to Kosior that 'from today the dispatch of goods for the villages of all regions of Ukraine shall cease until kolkhozy and individual peasants begin honestly and conscientiously to fulfill their duty to the working class and the Red Army for the delivery of grain.'



Davies indeed does report on the special commission of three, or "troika," "to simplify further the procedure for confirming death sentences in Ukraine." This is another of the few accurate claims Snyder makes in this book (another is Stalin's remark about "whining" kolkhozniks, above).

The 1,623 kolkhoz officials, plus others arrested for "counterrevolutionary offenses," are also mentioned in a document of December 9. Davies, but not Snyder, informs us that "over 2,000 of those arrested were allegedly former supporters of Petlyura or Makhno" — that is, former anti-Soviet rebels.

It appears that none of these documents have been published in any of the great collections of documents concerning the famine. Snyder has certainly not seen them.

**Marochko**, *Holodomor*, 152: First telegram. Marochko says that this is from Stalin to Khataevich:

Відповідаючи на його "шифровку про завезення товарів на Україну," Сталін підкреслив, що ЦК ВКП(Б) обговорює питання про "заборону" завезення товарів для українського села на темрін, поки Україна не розпочне чесно та акуратно виконувати зменшений план хлібозаготівель.

Translated:

Responding to his "coded message about the delivery of goods to Ukraine," Stalin said that the CPSU(b) was discussing the issue of "banning" delivery of goods to the Ukrainian village until the Ukraine frankly and accurately fulfills the reduced grain procurement plan.

It would be good to have the text of this telegram, but Marochko does not give it. Even his "quotations" from it are in Ukrainian, not Russian.

Second telegram. Marochko says this is from Molotov and Stalin to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine:

Повідомлено, що з 8 листопада "призупиняється відвантаження товарів для сіл всіх областей України," допоки колгоспи та

"індивідуальні селяни" не розпочнуть "чесно і добросовісно виконувати свій обов'язок перед робітничим класом і Червоною Армією" в справі хлібозаготівель.

Translated:

It is reported that on November 8 "shipment is suspended of goods to villages in all regions of Ukraine" as long as kolkhozes and "individual farmers" do not start to "honestly and faithfully perform their duty towards the working class and the Red Army" in the case of grain procurement.

Marochko does not identify the actual text of this telegram either. Both these telegrams would certainly have been in Russian.

"On the 30,400 resumed deportations, see **Kuśnierz**, *Ukraina*, 59." Here is the relevant text in Kuśnierz's book:

Rozkułaczanie i deportacje miały również miejsce w okresie późniejszym. 29 marca 1932 r. Biuro Polityczne Komitetu Centralnego KP(b)U w tajnym postanowieniu uchwaliło wywózkę 5 tysięcy rodzin kułackich z Polesia na lewy brzeg Dniepru, w celu wykorzystania ich do pracy w kamieniołomach. Dla zesłanych utworzono tam stałe osiedla kułackie. W okresie pomiędzy 28 listopada a 25 grudnia 1932 r. wysłano na północ ZSRR ponad 30 400 osób.

Translated:

Dekulakization and deportation also took place at a later date. On 29 March 1932 the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the KP(b)U by secret deportation order approved the deportation of 5,000 kulak families from Polesie to the left bank of the Dnieper, in order to use them to work in the quarries. For the exiles there have been established permanent kulak settlements there. In the period between 28 November and 25 December 1932 r. more than 30,400 persons were exiled to the north of the USSR.

Kuśnierz's footnotes are to archival documents which we cannot obtain and check. However, the authoritative 2005 volume *Salinskie deportatsii 1928-1953. Dokumenty*<sup>7</sup> records no such deportations during any period of 1932, much less the last 6 months. (790)

**Conclusion:** Marochko does not quote the original text of Stalin's two telegrams as Snyder's reference suggests. Therefore Snyder has not seen the texts either.

According to what Marochko does cite, it appears that if collective farms and individual farmers were to "begin honestly and conscientiously to fulfill their duty," they would not be denied "products from the rest of the economy." The telegram quoted by Davies and by Marochko does not state that a farm or peasant had to completely fulfill their grain delivery quota, only that they had to make an "honest and conscientious" attempt.

It is difficult to find any fault with this regulation, much less to discern in it any "degree of malice" at all. If farms and peasants had money to buy, or agricultural produce to exchange for, manufactured products then they were obligated to do their best to "pay their taxes" — for that's what grain deliveries were.

Nothing in the paragraph supports Snyder's hypothesis of a "deliberate famine."

### **Did Stalin Call the Famine a "Fairy Tale"?**

Snyder says that at the end of 1932 Stalin came to believe that the famine was "a fairy tale", "a slanderous rumor spread by enemies." (41)

His source (n. 52 p. 465): Šapoval, "Lügen," 159; and Davies, *Years*, 199. The quotation is from *Pravda*, May 26, 1964.

Davies, but not Shapoval or Snyder, states:

It is not clear whether this statement comes from the archives, from memoirs, or from hearsay.

Either Terekhov, the man who supposedly made this statement, claimed Stalin said this to him or Stalin really did say this to him. Or the whole matter is a fabrication. This is quite possible, as Khrushchev and his men were fabricating — deliberately falsifying and lying — a great deal about Stalin and the Stalin years. We already know, and Snyder has acknowledged, that Stalin knew there was a famine in the Ukraine and elsewhere. Therefore it seems unlikely that Stalin would have used the term "fairy-tale about hunger" ("takuiu skazku o golode").

According to the *Pravda* article R.Ia. Terekhov, the Khar'kov First Secretary, told this story orally, evidently in 1964. Russian famine scholar [Viktor Kondrashin states](#) that Stalin said or wrote these words to Terekhov on *February 22, 1933*.<sup>8</sup> However, [according to a newspaper source](#) "Terekhov R.A." was removed from the post of First Secretary of the Khar'kov Oblast' and city committees on January 29, 1933.<sup>9</sup> [Viktor Danilov states](#) that this exchange with Stalin took place "*at the end of 1932*" (в конце 1932 г.) and Terekhov was removed from office "by decree of the Central Committee of the VKP(b) of January 24, 1933" ("Postanovleniem TsK K VKP(b) ot 24 ianvaria 1933 g.")<sup>10</sup>

None of this tells us whether Stalin actually said these words to Terekhov or why. But it seems clear that either the story is untrue, a rumor — which would account for the disagreement about when it happened — or it was a minor flare-up on Stalin's part. Terekhov was moved from Party to government and production work, where he remained until his retirement in 1956.<sup>11</sup> Roman Ia. Terekhov attended the 22nd Party Congress in October 1961 during which Khrushchev made his most ferocious — and utterly mendacious — attack on Stalin but apparently did not speak at the Congress.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps Shapoval took this story from the 1974 Russian language edition (New York: Knopf) of Roi Medvedev's book *Let History Judge* (In Russian: *K sudu istorii*), where it occurs on page 213. Medvedev's book is the source of many rumors about Soviet history that have been passed on as "fact."

As to the rest of the quotation, Snyder again "begs the question" by "assuming that which should be proven": namely, that collectivization

caused the famine. Amazingly enough, though Snyder's whole thesis of "Soviet mass murder" is largely predicated upon this statement, he never tries to prove it or provides any evidence at all that it is so. As we have already shown, it cannot be proven, because it is false. Famines had occurred every 2-4 years in Russia and Ukraine for at least a millennium.

Nor does Snyder give any evidence at all for his claim that:

Stalin had developed an interesting new theory: that resistance to socialism increases as its successes mount, because its foes resist with greater desperation as they contemplate their final defeat. Thus any problem in the Soviet Union could be defined as an example of enemy action, and enemy action could be defined as evidence of progress.  
(40-41)

But even in this *Pravda* version Stalin does not refer to "enemies," as Snyder claims. Therefore this is pure fabrication on Snyder's part, unless it is an oblique reference to one of the accusations Khrushchev made against Stalin in his famous "Secret Speech" to the 20th Party Congress in February 1956. The present author has fully exposed Khrushchev's falsehoods in this speech in an earlier book.<sup>13</sup>

### **Did Stalin Believe that "Starvation Was Resistance"?**

Snyder makes the following claim:

Resistance to his policies in Soviet Ukraine, Stalin argued, was of a special sort, perhaps not visible to the imperceptive observer. Opposition was no longer open, for the enemies of socialism were now "quiet" and even "holy." The "kulaks of today," he said, were gentle people, kind, almost saintly."

His sources (n. 53 p. 465):

Quotations: *Ukraina*, 124.

"See also" Vasiliev, "Tsina," 60; Kuromiya, *Stalin*, 110.

Here we have three citations — to Kuśnierz, Vasiliev, and Kuromiya. But in reality they all refer to the very same document! Moreover, it is a document that has been available in English for 60 years and can be easily found on the Internet today.

Kuśnierz, *Ukraina*, 124 quotes from the well-known speech of Stalin's of January 1, 1933. This speech was published in 1950 in volume 13 of Stalin's *Collected Works* and has been available in English, to say nothing of Russian, for more than 60 years. Is on the internet [in Russian and English](#). The fact that Snyder quotes this document from a Polish-language book once again suggests either that Snyder does not read even the most basic texts in Russian, or that he is not interested in helping his readers find the sources.

In this speech Stalin was ironic in calling the "kulaks of today" "gentle, kind, almost saintly." The context shows this:

People look for the class enemy outside the collective farms; they look for persons with ferocious visages, with enormous teeth and thick necks, and with sawn-off shotguns in their hands. They look for kulaks like those depicted on our posters. But such kulaks have long ceased to exist on the surface. The present-day kulaks and kulak agents, the present-day anti-Soviet elements in the countryside are in the main "quiet," "smooth-spoken," almost "saintly" people. There is no need to look for them far from the collective farms; they are inside the collective farms, occupying posts as store-keepers, managers, accountants, secretaries, etc. They will never say, "Down with the collective farms!" They are "in favour" of collective farms. But inside the collective farms they carry on sabotage and wrecking work that certainly does the collective farms no good. They will never say, "Down with grain procurements!" They are "in favour" of grain procurements. They "only" resort to demagoguery and demand that the collective farm should reserve a fund for the needs of livestock-raising three times as large as that actually required; that the collective farm should set aside an insurance fund three times as large as that actually required; that the collective farm should provide from six to ten pounds of bread per working member per day for public catering, etc.

Of course, after such "funds" have been formed and such grants for public catering made, after such rascally demagoguery, the economic strength of the collective farms is bound to be undermined, and there is little left for grain procurements.

**Vasiliev**, "Tsina," 60: Vasiliev summarizes this same speech on pp. 59-61 — but in Ukrainian! It adds nothing by way of commentary.

**Kuromiya**, *Stalin*, 110: This is simply two quotations from Stalin's January 1933 report to the joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Committee. This speech is the fuller version of the talk "Work in the Countryside" quoted above. It is identical to the first citation in this note.

Snyder's citation of a document in a Polish and a Ukrainian source of a document readily available in English as well as in the original Russian can have no purpose except to "impress" his readers with this show of "scholarship." Readers of *Bloodlands* will have no idea that he is doing this. They will think that Kuśnierz and Vasiliev actually have something to add. Nor is there any need here for the Kuromiya citation, when the primary source is available on the Internet.

### **"Starvation Was Resistance": Another Snyder Fabrication**

There is no evidence whatever for the following statements made by Snyder here, who merely relies on the same footnote 53 as discussed above:

People who appeared to be innocent were to be seen as guilty. A peasant slowly dying of hunger was, despite appearances, a saboteur working for the capitalist powers in their campaign to discredit the Soviet Union. Starvation was resistance, and resistance was a sign that the victory of socialism was just around the corner. These were not merely Stalin's musings in Moscow; this was the ideological line enforced by Molotov and Kaganovich as they traveled through regions of mass death in late 1932. (41)

Snyder has simply invented all this. Few readers of *Bloodlands* will realize that it is a pure fabrication of Snyder's own — and that, no doubt, is why Snyder inserted it.

Snyder:

Forced to interpret distended bellies as political opposition, they [Stalin's "comrades in the Soviet Ukraine"] produced the utterly tortured conclusion that the saboteurs hated socialism so much that they intentionally let their families die. Thus the wracked bodies of sons and daughters and fathers and mothers were nothing more than a façade behind which foes plotted the destruction of socialism. (41)

Sources (n. 54, p. 466): "On the family interpretation (Stanislaw Kosior), see Davies, *Years*, 206."

Snyder's statement is false — a fabrication. Kosior said nothing about "hatred of socialism" or any "tortured conclusions."

**Davies**, quoted below at the reference Snyder gives, accurately summarizes Kosior's statement. We would add that Kosior gave only two examples, and only the first was of a farmer who let his children go hungry while keeping grain. Kosior does not give the age of the farmer's children, whom he cast out. For all we know, they could have been adults.

**Davies**, *Years*, 206:

"And on February 9, Kosior circulated a report to the Ukrainian Politburo listing cases where, he claimed, 'malicious withholders of grain have brought their families to real hunger (the children swell up)', even though they possessed several tsentners of grain.

n. 281 — "TsDAGOU, 1/101/1282,2, published in *Golod 1932-1933* (1990) 375-6.

In Davies, *Years*, Bibliography, p. 526, the full title of this book is given thus: "*Golod 1932-1933 rokiv na Ukraini: ochima istorikiv, movoyu*



*dokumentiv*" (Kiev, 1990). [The text in the original Ukrainian, from this source](#), is as follows:

№ 161

ДОВІДКА ІНФОРМАЦІЙНОГО СЕКТОРА  
ОРГІНСТРУКТОРСЬКОГО ВІДДІЛУ ЦК КП(б)У

ПРО ВИПАДКИ УДАВАНОВОГО ГОЛОДУВАННЯ З МЕТОЮ  
НЕЗДАЧІ ХЛІВА

У ХАРКІВСЬКІЙ ОБЛАСТІ\*

9 лютого 1933 р.

Некоторые РПК сообщают, что в борьбе против хлебозаготовок злостные несдатчики хлеба доводят свою семью до действительного голода (дети пухнут).

Бригадировский РПК (Харьковская область) пишет 1 февраля: в Васильевском сельсовете, контрактант III группы Яковец Влас, имея 4,45 га посева, контрактации 27,8 ц не сдал ни одного килограмма хлеба, но покинул детей, которые сейчас нищенствуют.

Бригада по хлебозаготовкам обнаружила у него закопанный хлеб в ямах: 5 ц, 2,35 ц, 5,23 ц и 6,42 ц.

Подобное же сообщает и Якимовский РПК. Колхозник Клименко из артели им. Молотова кричал: "Я голодный и мои дети пухнут." После проверки у него выявлено 2,5 ц хлеба, хотя на трудодни он получил только 90 кг.

Заведующий информационным сектором Оргинструкторского  
отдела ЦК КП(б)У

Стасюк

Па ІІІ при ЦК Компартіі України. Ф. 1. Оп. 101. Спр. 1282. Арк. 2.

\* Ця довідка за дорученням С. В. Косіора була направлена для ознайомлення всім членам та кандидатам у члени Політбюро ЦК КП(б)У.<sup>14</sup>

(РПК = Районные общества потребительской кооперации, или РайПотребКооперация.)

Translated:

Some of the RPK reported that in the fight against grain procurements malicious withholders of grain bring their families to real hunger (the children swell up).

Brigadirovsky RPK (Khar'kov region) writes on February 1: in the Vasil'evskii village hall, the contractor of group III Yakovets Vlas, with 4.45 hectares of crops, contracting 27.8 tsentners, did not give a single pound of bread, but cast his children out, and they now live by begging.

The team for grain procurement found at his place, buried in pits: 5 ts[entners], 2.35 ts[entners], 5.23 ts[entners] and 6.42 ts[entners].

The Iakimovski RPK gives a similar report. Collective farmer Klimenko of the Molotov artel' shouted: "I'm hungry and my children are swelling up." After verification 2.5 tsentners of grain were found at his place, although he had received only 90 kg. in workday pay.

(RPK = Regional Society of Consumer Cooperatives)

**Conclusion:** Snyder's fabrications here are as follows:

There is no evidence that Stalin was "forced to interpret distended bellies as political opposition."

There is nothing here about "intentionally let[ting] their families die."

There is nothing about "the wracked bodies of sons and daughters and fathers and mothers were nothing more than a façade behind which foes plotted the destruction of socialism."

Yet these are the statements for which Snyder cites the Davies passage evidence. Davies cites Kosior, whose actual statement we have reproduced above. It could hardly be clearer that Snyder has invented all this.

### **Should Stalin Have Predicted The Future?**

Snyder:

Yet Stalin might have saved millions of lives without drawing any outside attention to the Soviet Union. He could have suspended food exports for a few months, released grain reserves (three million tons), or just given peasants access to local grain storage areas. Such simple measures, pursued **as late as November 1932**, could have kept the death toll to the hundreds of thousands rather than the millions. Stalin pursued none of them. (41-2; emphasis added)

His sources (n. 55 p. 466): "For similar judgments, see, for example"

Jahn, *Holodomor*, 25;

Davies, Tauger, and Wheatcroft, "Grain Stocks," 657;

Kulczycki, *Hołodomor*, 237;

Graziosi, "New Interpretation," 12.

**Jahn**, *Holodomor*, 25 cites no evidence for any of the claims on this page. One might object that Snyder simply claims he makes "similar judgments." But "judgments" are of no validity without evidence. Like Snyder himself, Jahn has none. Jahn's article is in the ideologically anticommunist journal *Osteuropa*; it is a statement of his anticommunist beliefs, not a scholarly study of the famine or of anything else.

Jahn also claims that there was no natural famine caused by environmental reasons, or even from insufficient food production, but solely from deliberate "Nahrungsentzugs" — "withdrawal of foodstuffs." Jahn even doubts whether the government was aware of the starvation! None of the specialists on the famine like Davies and Wheatcroft or Tauger conclude anything like this.

**Davies, Tauger, and Wheatcroft**, "Grain Stocks," 657: In Snyder's list of references the only specialists on the famine with any claim to objectivity are Davies, Tauger, and Wheatcroft.<sup>15</sup> Here is what they have to say:

We therefore conclude:

1. All planners' stocks — the two secret grain reserves, Nepfond and Mobfond or Gosfond, together with "transitional stocks" held by grain organizations — amounted on 1 July 1933 to less than 2 million tons (1.997 million tons, according to the highest official figure). Persistent efforts of Stalin and the Politburo to establish firm and inviolable grain reserves (in addition to "transitional stocks") amounting to 2 or 3 million tons or more were almost completely unsuccessful. In both January-June 1932 and January-June 1933 the Politburo had to allow "untouchable" grain stocks set aside at the beginning of each year to be used to meet food and fodder crises. **On 1 July 1933 the total amount of grain set aside in reserve grain stocks (fondy) amounted not to 4.53 million tons as Conquest claimed but only 1.141 million.** It is not surprising that after several years during which the Politburo had failed to establish inviolable grain stock, Kuibyshev in early 1933 recommended a "flexible approach" to Nepfond and Mobfond, denied that they were separate reserves and even claimed that the flexible use of the two fondy had enabled uninterrupted grain supply in spring and summer 1932. (Emphasis added)

In the quotation above Snyder claims, without any reference, that the USSR held three million tons of grain in reserve "as late as November 1932."

But here Davies and Wheatcroft claim that (a) the grain reserves were likely less than two million tons; (b) that in the first half of 1932 and again in the first half of 1933 "the Politburo had to allow 'untouchable' grain stocks set

aside at the beginning of each year to be used to meet food and fodder crises." That is, *the Politburo did, in fact, release grain reserves to alleviate the famine.*

Davies and Wheatcroft continue:

2. We do not know the amount of grain which was held by grain-consuming organizations, notably the Red Army, but we suspect that these "consumers' stocks" would not change the picture substantially.

3. These findings do not, of course, free Stalin from responsibility for the famine. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to assess the extent to which it would have been possible for Stalin to use part of the grain stocks available in spring 1933 to feed starving peasants. The state was a monopoly supplier of grain to urban areas and the army; if the reserves of this monopoly supply system — which amounted to four-six weeks' supply — were to have been drained, mass starvation, epidemics and unrest in the towns could have resulted. Nevertheless, it seems certain that, if Stalin had risked lower levels of these reserves in spring and summer 1933, hundreds of thousands — perhaps millions — of lives could have been saved. In the slightly longer term, if he had been open about the famine, some international help would certainly have alleviated the disaster. And if he had been more far-sighted, the agricultural crisis of 1932-1933 could have been avoided altogether. **But Stalin was not hoarding immense grain reserves in these years. On the contrary, he had failed to reach the levels which he had been imperatively demanding since 1929.** (Emphasis added.)

Snyder claimed that Stalin "could have kept the death toll to the hundreds of thousands rather than the millions." Davies, Tauger, and Wheatcroft surmise that "hundreds of thousands — perhaps millions — of lives could have been saved" — but only by risking "mass starvation, epidemics and unrest in the towns."

Mark Tauger, as we have seen, goes further:

The severity and geographical extent of the famine, the sharp decline in exports in 1932-1933, seed requirements, and the chaos in the

Soviet Union in these years, all lead to the conclusion that **even a complete cessation of exports would not have been enough to prevent famine.** (Emphasis added — GF)

However, both Snyder and Davies et al. tacitly assume that the Soviet leadership — "Stalin" — could have known in advance that the famine would end in 1933 with a good harvest. Of course neither the Soviet leadership nor anyone could possibly know this. For all they or anyone knew, the famine would continue unabated during 1933. Since they could not know when the famine would end the Soviet state retained grain stocks.

Moreover, no government in the world would have deprived its army of foodstuffs. That was especially the case with the USSR, which was surrounded by hostile states. Nor would any government have deprived the cities of food reserves and risked "mass starvation, epidemics and unrest." A central aspect of the plan to end the cycle of starvation, collectivization, depended upon production of labor-saving farm machinery such as tractors and harvesters. These were produced in the cities.

The USSR had received large-scale international aid during the Volga famine of 1921-22 that followed the incredibly destructiveness of the First World War and Civil War, the typhus epidemic, and very poor weather conditions. But there is no reason to think that significant international aid would have been forthcoming in the same way in 1933, the depths of the Great Depression. Davies, Tauger and Wheatcroft do not give any evidence for this assertion.

**Kulczycki, *Hołodomor*, 237:**

W 1932 roku na rynki zagraniczne wysłano 107,9 miliona pudów zboża. W bilansie ziarna spożywczego i paszowego, sporządzonym przez Ukrzernocentr, na wyżywienie jednej osoby na wsi przewidziano 16 pudów rocznie. Oznacza to, że dzięki zbożu wywiezionemu w 1932 roku można było uratować od śmierci wszystkich zmarłych z głodu w Związku Radzieckim w 1933 roku.

Translated:

In 1932 there were sent to foreign markets 107.9 million poods of grain. According to the balance of food and feed grains, prepared by Ukrzernocentr [Ukraine Grain Center], to feed one person in the village were required 16 poods per year. This means that the grain exported in 1932 could have saved from death all who died of starvation in the Soviet Union in 1933.

Here Kul'chyts'kyy too absurdly suggests that if only Stalin had known a year in advance that there would be a great famine in 1933, he ought not to have exported any grain in 1932!

**Graziosi**, "New Interpretation" has no "page 12." On p. 108, the twelfth page in the article, we do read "similar judgments," in that Graziosi asserts that the famine was deliberate. But, like Snyder, Graziosi fails to cite any evidence that this was the case. The simple assertion of Graziosi, or of anyone, is not evidence.

### **"Begging the Question" Again: Assertions Without Evidence**

Snyder:

This final collection was murder, even if those who executed it very often believed that they were doing the right thing. As one activist remembered, that spring he "saw people dying from hunger. I saw women and children with distended bellies, turning blue, still breathing but with vacant, lifeless eyes." Yet he "saw all this and did not go out of my mind or commit suicide." He had faith: "As before, I believed because I wanted to believe." Other activists, no doubt, were less faithful and more fearful. Every level of the Ukrainian party had been purged in the previous year; in January 1933, Stalin sent in his own men to control its heights. Those communists who no longer expressed their faith formed a "wall of silence" that doomed those it surrounded. They had learned that to resist was to be purged, and to be purged was to share the fate of those whose deaths they were now bringing about.

(46)

Sources (n. 67 page 466):

"For the recollections of the activist," Conquest, *Harvest*, 233.

"For quotation and details on the importance of purges," Šapoval, "Lügen," 133.

"On purges of the heights," Davies, *Years*, 138.

Snyder cites no evidence at all that "this final collection was murder." Rather, this is yet another example of "begging the question": he is supposed to *prove* "murder," not merely assert it.

The "activist" quoted by **Conquest** is Lev Kopelev, from his memoir published in 1980. The quotation only documents that people starved, a fact that no one denies. Snyder quotes this passage later in the book as well. In his old age Kopelev came to believe that the famine was "man-made" but he had no such doubts at the time.

In Chapter One of the present books we have quoted Robert Conquest's repudiation of his former position, expressed in his book *The Harvest of Sorrow* (1986) that the famine was "man-made." Snyder is aware of this too because he cites, and therefore has read, Davies and Wheatcroft, where Conquest's repudiation is published. Therefore, Snyder is simply concealing this information from his readers.

**Shapoval**, "Lügen," has no such quotation on p. 133. He does mention arrests of heads of kolkhozes for sabotaging grain collections, but up to January 1, 1932 — well before the famine. He states that 80% of raion secretaries were removed in the first half of 1932, but says nothing about any relation to the famine.

But even these statements do not refer to any primary source evidence. Instead Shapoval refers us to a book of his own that is hard to find in the US. Shapoval refers to "page 160" of this book. This is a page of an article of his own, Shapoval's, in Ukrainian. The very same text — the entire article — is also published in Russian, immediately following the Ukrainian text. Ukrainian p. 160 corresponds to Russian pp. 173-174.



And this page does contain interesting information. For instance, *it reveals that the 1932 plan for grain collection from the Ukraine was officially reduced three times*. Even then it had been less than half-fulfilled by November 1, 1932.

Делегаты конференции прняли резолюцию, которую 9 июля 1932 года утвердил пленум ЦК КП(б)У и которой «к безусловному исполнению» прини мался установленный для Украины план хлебозаготовок — 356 млн. пудов по крестьянскому сектору. **Этот план впоследствии трижды сокращался**, а к 1 ноября 1932 года от крестьянского сектора Украины поступило лишь 136 млн. пудов хлеба.<sup>16</sup>

Translated:

Delegates to the conference passed a resolution which was confirmed by the Plenum of the CC of the CP(b)U on July 9 1932 and by which "for unconditional fulfillment" the established grain collection plan for the Ukraine was accepted — 356 million poods from the peasant sector. **This plan was thereafter reduced in size three times**, and by November 1 1932 only 136 million poods of grain had been obtained from the peasant sector of the Ukraine. (Emphasis added)

Shapoval's source for this statement is [a 48-page pamphlet published in 1989 by Kul'chyts'kyy](#).<sup>17</sup> But it isn't likely that Shapoval invented it, since it does not tend to support his anticommunist and "Holodomor" bias. Why would Stalin et al. reduce the plan for grain collection from the Ukraine if their aim was to starve Ukrainians?

In a later work Kul'chyts'kyy explains that *in 1989 he did not understand that the famine was a "Holodomor"*!<sup>18</sup> In 1990 the fabrication-myth of the "Holodomor" had not yet become obligatory, the "Ukrainian Nationalist party line."

**"To Be Purged = Death"?**

Shapoval has nothing about the "purged," i.e. demoted officials "sharing the fate of those whose deaths they were now bringing about" — i.e., suffering execution. Snyder apparently invented this, as he invented the "five million murdered." Even Shapoval does not claim that these sources have any bearing at all on Snyder's point: the question of whether the famine was "deliberate."

**Davies**, *Years*, 138 has nothing about any "purges of the heights" or of anything else in Snyder's paragraph. Davies discusses January 1933 in the pages beginning at p. 197 ff. There is nothing about "the heights" here either.

### "Collective Farming Did Not Work"

Snyder makes the following claim which can only be called bizarre:

Ukrainians who chose not to resist the collective farms believed that they had at least escaped deportation. But now they could be deported because **collective farming did not work**. Some fifteen thousand peasants were deported from Soviet Ukraine between February and April 1933. Just east and south of Soviet Ukraine, in parts of the Russian republic of the Soviet Union inhabited by Ukrainians, some sixty thousand people were deported for failing to make grain quotas. In 1933 some 142,000 more Soviet citizens were sent to the Gulag, most of them either hungry or sick with typhus, many of them from Soviet Ukraine. (47-8; emphasis added GF)

Sources (n. 72 p. 466):

"On the fifteen thousand people deported," Davies, *Years*, 210.

"On the sixty thousand people deported from Kuban," Martin, "Ethnic Cleansing,"

Snyder's claim that "collective farming did not work" is ideologically-motivated nonsense. There had been famines for a thousand years in Russia and in the Ukraine, long before collective farming. Like it or not — and Snyder obviously doesn't — collective farming put an end to the age-old

cycle of famines. The collective farms "worked" until the end of the USSR when they were forcibly dissolved.

Evidently Snyder is trying to please today' Ukrainian nationalists, who favor the kulaks and despise the poor peasants, many of whom helped the collectivization movement. For a great many poor peasants did help collectivization and also helped grain procurement. The late James E. Mace, a hero to Ukrainian Nationalists and a staunch anticommunist, reluctantly acknowledged the important role of the Committees of Poor Peasants, or "Komitety nezamozhnykh selian" in the collectivization movement in the Ukraine.<sup>19</sup>

**Davies**, *Years*, 211 relates that 15,000 *households*, not "peasants," were exiled "for refusing to collect in the seed, and to sow, and for much vaguer reasons." Davies refers briefly to archival materials. These persons were clearly not starving, since they had grain, including seed grain.

## **Deportations and Martin's Error**

**Martin**, "Ethnic Cleansing," 846 states:

... ultimately, a total of 60,000 Kuban Cossacks were deported for failing to meet their grain requisitions.

The 2005 volume *Stalinskie Deportatsii* gives the number as 45,000 (790). However Martin's whole article is of questionable reliability since it contains at least one serious error. On this same page 846 Martin states:

The December 14 Politburo decree ordered the deportation of the entire Kuban Cossack town of Poltava for "the sabotage of grain delivery."

Martin is in error. Poltava is a city in the Ukraine. Its inhabitants were *not* deported. Martin has confused this town with *stanitsa Poltavskaia*, or just plain Poltavskaia, a Kuban Cossack village in the Krasnodar region of Russia. All of its 9,000 inhabitants were deported in December, 1932 for

sabotage of grain collection, and the town was resettled by demobilized Red Army men and renamed "Krasnoarmeiskaia" (= "Red Army village").

The Bolsheviks published a booklet explaining why its inhabitants had been deported.<sup>20</sup> This pamphlet is cited in Roi Medvedev's book *Let History Judge*. Today the whole text of that pamphlet [is available to anyone on the internet](#).<sup>21</sup> There's no excuse for this elementary error by Martin.

The deportations in question were from the Kuban. Moreover, Martin explicitly states these were Kuban Cossacks, not Ukrainians. Cossacks do not consider themselves either Ukrainians or Russians, though Kuban Cossacks usually speak Ukrainian.

Snyder evidently wants us to believe that this was somehow an anti-Ukrainian action, and so does not say "the Kuban," but instead uses the clumsy circumlocution "parts of the Russian Republic of the Soviet Union inhabited by Ukrainians." This is another passage suggesting that Snyder is trying to conform to the historical falsehoods of Ukrainian nationalists.

According to the authoritative book *Stalinskie deportatsii 1928-1953* (2005) published by the strongly anticommunist and anti-Stalin "Memorial Society" during 1932 313,000 kulaks and others were deported "from various areas" to Western Siberia, Kazakhstan, the Urals, "and elsewhere."

Snyder gives no evidence for the following statement:

In 1933 some 142,000 more Soviet citizens were sent to the Gulag, most of them either hungry or sick with typhus, many of them from Soviet Ukraine.

Neither Davies nor Martin say anything about any 1933 sending of "Soviet citizens to the Gulag," as Snyder claims in the passage under discussion, much less that they were "hungry, or sick with typhus" or that "many" were "from Soviet Ukraine."

Snyder:

In the camps they tried to find enough to eat. Since the Gulag had a policy of feeding the strong and depriving the weak, and these deportees were already weak from hunger, this was desperately difficult. When hungry prisoners poisoned themselves by eating wild plants and garbage, camp officials punished them for shirking. At least 67,297 people died of hunger and related illnesses in the camps and 241,355 perished in the special settlements in 1933, many of them natives of Soviet Ukraine. Untold thousands more died on the long journey from Ukraine to Kazakhstan or the far north. Their corpses were removed from the trains and buried on the spot, their names and their numbers unrecorded. (48)

Sources (n. 73 p. 467):

"On the 67,297 people who died in the camps," Khlevniuk, *Gulag*, 62, 77.

"On the 241,355 people who died in the special settlements," Viola, *Unknown Gulag*, 241.

Oleg V. **Khlevniuk**, *The History of the GULAG from Collectivization to the Great Terror* (Yale University Press, 2004), 77, does indeed cite this figure. Khlevniuk usefully gives the death rate for 1932 (4.8%) and for 1933 (15.2%). Assuming the difference is due to the famine, if 4.8% of the 440,008 prisoners in 1933 had died, that would be 21,121 people instead of 67,297, meaning that about 46,176 deaths in 1933 were above the rate of 1932 and thus largely or wholly attributable to the famine.

But this doesn't really tell us anything. Nobody denies that there was a terrible famine in 1932-33. The question is: Was the famine "man-made" by collectivization, and "deliberate," in that "Stalin" took grain away from starving people for the purposes of political punishment? These figures tell us nothing about this.

Lynne **Viola**, *The Unknown GULAG. The Lost World of Stalin's Special Settlements* (Oxford University Press, 2007) cites the figure of 241,355 deaths on page 141, not page 241. Viola herself cites V.N. Zemskov, *Spetsposelelntsy v SSSR 1930-1960* (Moscow: Nauka, 2003).

Zemskov's figures are 89,754 deaths in 1932 and 151,601 in 1933 for the total of 241,355. These figures tell us nothing about the famine. The special settlements, as their name implies, were villages, not prisons, and included families — old persons, parents, children. There is no indication how many of these people died above the number that would be expected to die in non-famine years.

**Conclusion:** Snyder gives no evidence for the following statements:

that "the Gulag had a policy of feeding the strong and depriving the weak";

that "hungry prisoners" were "punished for shirking" for "eating wild plants and garbage";

that "untold thousands" died on the journey or that no records were kept of such deaths.

Evidently he has invented these "facts."

Snyder relates more horror stories of starving people. Whether these specific stories are true or not is not important. Terrible things happen during famines, so these stories could be true and, if they are not, other similar to them undoubtedly were.

But they have nothing whatsoever to do with the issue of whether the famine was "man-made," "deliberate" or not. They do not even help us understand whether the Soviet authorities should have handled it differently than they did.

### **Snyder: "Half a Million Youngsters in Watchtowers"**

In a broader sense, though, it was politics as well as starvation that destroyed families, turning a younger generation against an older. Members of the Young Communists served in the brigades that requisitioned food. Still, younger children, in the Pioneers, were supposed to be "the eyes and ears of the party inside the family." The healthier ones were assigned to watch over the fields to prevent theft. Half a million preadolescent and young teenage boys and girls stood in

the watchtowers observing adults in Soviet Ukraine in summer 1933. All children were expected to report on their parents. (50)

Sources (n. 79 p. 467):

"On the half a million boy and girls in the watchtowers," Maksudov, "Victory," 213.

Quotation," Kuśnierz, *Ukraina*, 119.

**Kuśnierz** does have this quotation on page 119 ("the eye and the ear of the Party in the family") — it is the familiar story of Pavlik Morozov.

### **Maksudov's Falsification**

**Maksudov**, "Victory," 213, states:

Surveillance towers appeared across the countryside; mounted patrols hid in ambush; adults and even small children were employed to spy on their friends and relatives. Kosior estimated that 500,000 Pioneers guarded the fields from their own parents during the summer of 1933. The law of August 7 that threatened execution or imprisonment for anyone caught stealing grain came to be called the "ears of wheat" law.

Maksudov's note 58 (p. 234) says: "Ivan Trifonov, *Ocherki istorii klassovoi bor'by v SSSR, 1921-1937*. (Moscow, 1960), 258."

The actual title of this book is *Ocherki istorii klassovoi bor'by v SSSR v gody NEPa (1921-1937)*.<sup>22</sup> Here is what Trifonov actually wrote:

Лучшими помощниками политотделов являлись комсомольцы. Во всех колхозах Северного Кавказа она создали отряды «легкой кавалерии». Отряды бдительно охраняли общественное имущество, боролись с потравами, задерживали воров и расхитителей. На Украине в 1933 г. в сборе колосков и охране урожая участвовало 540 тыс. детей. В колхозах республики работали 240 тыс. комсомольцев и 160 ударных комсомольских бригад по ремонту тракторов.

Translated:

The best assistants of the political departments were the Komsomol members. In all the collective farms of the North Caucasus the Komsomol established "light cavalry" squads. Detachments vigilantly guarded public property and struggled against damage by animals, detained thieves and plunderers. In Ukraine in 1933 540 thousands children took part in the collection of ears and crop protection. In the collective farms of the republic worked 240 thousand Komsomol members and 160 Komsomol shock brigades in repairing tractors. (258)

Maksudov has seriously falsified this passage. Trifonov say nothing about "surveillance towers"; about any statement at all by Kosior; about Pioneers "guarding the fields from their own parents"; or about children "spying on their friends and relatives"; or — as Snyder adds — about "reporting on their parents." The "half million children" Trifonov mentions were not "standing in the watchtowers," as Snyder claims, but helping to glean the fields and protect the crops.

The "Law of Three Ears" — this is in fact the sobriquet of this law — punished theft of government property, included the property of collective farms and cooperatives.(23) Michael Ellman, a very anti-communist researcher, claims that 11,000 persons were executed under this law but gives no evidence whatsoever for this statement. (Ellman, 2007, p. 686) The relevant document, available to Ellman in 2007 but evidently not used by him, states that 2,052 persons had been sentenced to death under the law. A number of cases of very large-scale theft are noted in this report to Stalin of March 20, 1933 (Lubianka 1922-1936 No. 349, p. 417). It does not note how many of these death sentences were commuted, though such commutations were generally frequent.

This law was supported by many peasants, as Tauger argues:

Without question, however, many other peasants had worked willingly during the whole period, earning many labour-days and siding with the system. As an example of this, we can consider peasants' views of the notorious 7 August 1932 law on socialist property, which authorized



arrests of people for thefts and imposed capital punishment in some cases, and under which more than 100,000 people (mostly peasants) were arrested. **An OGPU study of peasant attitudes towards this law in Ivanovo oblast found that most peasants supported it and even considered it overdue, because of the numerous outrages and scandals involving theft that they had witnessed and could not prevent.** (Tauger 2004 85-6. Emphasis added.)

Snyder cites a document in the multi-volume *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni* ("Tragedy of the Soviet Countryside"), edited by staunch opponents of collectivization but still a very useful collection of primary source materials. The document in question, a report on the reaction of peasants in a certain region to the August 7, 1932 law, contains a section on "negative reactions" but a longer one on "positive reactions", with examples given. (24)

On February 1 1933 the Politburo decreed that the following persons should *not* be prosecuted under this law:

лиц, виновных в мелких единичных кражах общественной собственности, или трудящихся, совершивших кражи из нужды, по неосознанности и при наличии других смягчающих обстоятельств.

Translated:

those guilty of individual acts of petty theft of public property, or workers who have committed theft because of need (poverty), or from lack of consciousness and in the presence of other mitigating circumstances.

This was confirmed by an order of the Presidium (the executive body of the Soviet government) of March 27 1933. A joint instruction of the Central Committee and the Central Executive Committee — that is, the main bodies of the Party and the Government, of May 8 1933 greatly restricted the punishments under this law. Several other decrees limited punishment under this law and released persons convicted under it.

In any case it is evident that the 500,000 Pioneers and their parents were not starving.

Snyder relates more horrifying stories, none of which have any bearing on the issue at hand: whether the starvation was "deliberate."

### **Why Were Those In Charge of the 1937 Census Arrested?**

Snyder:

The Soviet census of 1937 found eight million fewer people than projected: most of these were famine victims in Soviet Ukraine, Soviet Kazakhstan, and Soviet Russia, and the children that they did not then have. Stalin suppressed its findings and had the responsible demographers executed. In 1933, Soviet officials in private conversations most often provided the estimate of 5.5 million dead from hunger. This seems roughly correct, if perhaps somewhat low, for the Soviet Union in the early 1930s, including Soviet Ukraine, Soviet Kazakhstan, and Soviet Russia. (58)

n. 87, p. 467: "On the Soviet census, see Schlögel, *Terror*. For discussion of 5.5 million as a typical estimate, see Dalrymple, "Soviet Famine," 259."

Karl **Schlögel**, *Terror und Traum: Moskau 1937* (Munich, 2007) isn't an easy book for most readers to find, so why pick it? Possibly because it is another work of the "USSR, land of terror" school, relentlessly anticommunist. It is devoid of any effort at historical objectivity, and is full of outright falsifications.

**Dalrymple's** article is from the 1960s, merely an attempt to establish that there had indeed been a famine. Far more recent estimates have been made by recent scholarly studies.

Mark Tauger estimates roughly five million deaths as a result of the famine. But others estimate a much lower figure. The careful Ukrainian-Canadian scholar John-Paul Himka writes:

These could not be specialists in demography, however, since all recent studies based on a careful analysis of census data come up with numbers in the range of 2.6 to 3.9 million.... Jacques Vallin, France Meslé, Serguei Adamets, and Serhii Pirozhkov, "A New Estimate of Ukrainian Population Losses during the Crises of the 1930s and 1940s," *Population Studies* 56, 3 (2002): 249-64; this study arrives at the figure of 2.6 million. (25)

The 1937 census was not cancelled because the population count was "too low," as hinted by Snyder and stated by Schlögel. It was declared defective and rescheduled for 1939, when the questions about nationality were simplified, the questions about literacy were changed, and the question about religious belief was omitted altogether, so respondents did not have to say whether they were religious or not.

Several of those in charge of the census were indeed arrested, tried, and at least in one case, executed. But this had nothing to do with the census. Ivan Adamovich Kraval', the main official in charge of the census, was named by one of the defendants in the March 1938 Moscow Trial (the "Bukharin-Rykov" trial) as a member of the Right-Trotskyite conspiracy against the Soviet government and Party leadership. The census was cancelled in January 1937 but Kraval' was not even arrested until May.

In fact as early as January 11, 1937 Kraval' had been named as a clandestine Bukharinite from as far back as 1919-1921 and again in 1924 by Valentin Astrov, also a Bukharin supporter and member of his "school." This is significant because Astrov lived until 1993, long enough to write that the NKVD had not mistreated him in any way and that his testimony to them against Bukharin and his supporters was truthful, not the result of any compulsion.(26)

Lazar' S. Bradgendler, another leading census official, was also arrested, tried, and convicted of involvement in a Right-Trotskyite conspiracy. He was not executed but sentenced to 10 years in a camp.

Fortunately there are a number of Russian studies of the Soviet census of 1937 where all these matters are explained. Snyder failed to consult any of them.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup>See the note to the book by Douglas Tottle in the previous chapter.

<sup>2</sup>[\*Stalin i Kaganovich. Perepiska 1931-1936 gg.\*](#) Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001, p. 179.

<sup>3</sup>*Stalin i Kaganovich*, 198 note 3. Emphasis mine (GF)

<sup>4</sup>*Pis'ma I.V. Stalina V.M. Molotovu. 1925-1936 gg. Sbornik dokumentov.* Moscow: "Molodaia Gvardiia" 1995, p. 242.

<sup>5</sup>*Holod v SSSR 1929-1934. Tom pervyi. 1929-iiul' 1932. Dokumenty. Kniga 2* ((Moscow: MFD, 2011), pp. 261-2. Note that Davies and Wheatcroft transliterate the first word as „Golod”.

<sup>6</sup>Mark Tauger, "The 1932 Harvest and the Famine of 1933." *Slavic Review* 50, 1 (Spring 1991), 88-89. Emphasis added

<sup>7</sup>Moscow: MDF, lzd. "Materik," 2005.

<sup>8</sup>"Историк Виктор Кондрашин: 'Не Россия убивала Украину. Вождь — свой народ.'" *Известия* 22 октября 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Сайт Новостей. «Критика на тормозах.»

<sup>10</sup> The January 24 document is referred to in a published source, so we may assume it is correct. See *Golod 1932-1933 rokiv na Ukraini: ochyma istorykiv, movoiu dokumentiv*. Ed. Ia. Pyrih Kyiv: Polityvdav Ukrainy, 1990, No. 157 (*Голод 1932-1933 років на Україні: очима істориків, мовою докумеитіе*. Кер. кол. упоряд. р. Я. Пиріг. — К.: Полівидав України, 1990. № 157).

<sup>11</sup> In late January and early February 1933 he was removed from his posts as secretary and member of both the Orgburo and the Politburo, and First Secretary of the Khar'kov Oblast' Committee, of the CP(b)U. However, he moved to the position of Chairman of the Central Committee of the Union

of Metal Workers, and 2nd Secretary of the Donetsk Oblast' Committee of the CP(b)U. Terekhov remained a candidate member of the CC VKP(b) until the 17th Party Congress in January 1934. He was not re-elected to this position, but was transferred to government work in the Commission of Soviet control attached to the SNK of the USSR. From 1939 to 1956 Terekhov was the Assistant Chief of Light Metal Working industry, and retired in 1956.

<sup>12</sup> R. Ia. Terekhov appears in a photograph taken at the XXII Party Congress in *Ogoniok* 29.X. 1961, p. 17. "Tertkhov Roman Iakovlevich" is listed as a voting delegate to the Congress in the transcript of the Congress. See *XXII S"ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuz. 17-31 1962*. Т. 3, p. 533. (*XXII Съезд Коммунистической Партии Советского Союза. 17-31 октября 1961 года. Стенографический Отчёт*. М.: Гос. Изд. Политической Литературы, 1962. III, с. 533.

<sup>13</sup> Furr, Khrushchev Lied.

<sup>14</sup> At <http://www.archives.gov.ua/Sections/Famine/Publicat/Fam-Pyrig-1933.php#nom-161>

<sup>15</sup> Klu'chyts'kiy, also a famine specialist, is so politically biased that he tailors his results to "fit" the myth of the "Holodomor." This makes his research worthless. See, for example, his four-part essay in English "What Is The Crux of the Ukraine-Russia Dispute?" at <http://www.day.kiev.ua/263850> (accessed 02.24.2014)

<sup>16</sup> IUrii Shapoval, "'Povelitel'naia neobkhodimost': god 1932-y." *Den'* November 23, 2002. At <http://www.day.kiev.ua/ru/article/panorama-dnya/povelitel'naya-neobhodimost-god-1932-y> This is a Ukrainian newspaper of nationalist tendency.

(17)Kul'chyts'kyu S. V. 1933. *Tragedia holodu*. Kyiv: T-vo "Znania" URSR, 1989. (Кульчицький С. В. 1933. *трагедія голоду*. К. Т-во «Знання» УРСР, 1989).

<sup>18</sup> "And I did not yet understand the special nature of the Ukrainian famine." ("Та специфіки українського голоду я ще розумів.")  
Кульчицький С. "Голодомор 1932-1933 рр. в Україні як геноцид." (Kul'chyts'kyu S. "Holodomor 1932-1933 rr. v Ukrainiiaak henotsyd.") In *Проблеми історії України: факти, судження, пошуки*. — Київ: Інститут історії України НАН України, 2005 — № 14. — с. 225-300. Quotation at p. 252.

<sup>19</sup> James E. Mace. "The *Komitety Nezamozhnykh Selian* and the Structure of Soviet Rule in the Ukrainian Countryside, 1920-1933." *Soviet Studies* 35 (4) October 1983, 487-503.

<sup>20</sup> Radin, Shaumian. *Za chto zhiteli stanitsy Poltavskoi vysyliaiutsia s Kubani v severnye kraia*. Rostav-na-Donu, 1932.

<sup>21</sup> In the 1970s I requested this book from the Lenin Library in Moscow through the Inter-Library Loan office at my university (then a college). The Lenin Library refused my request though I was able to obtain other books from Soviet libraries.

<sup>22</sup> Трифонов И. *Очерки истории классовой борьбы в СССР в годы НЭПа (1921-1937)*. М.: Изд-во политической литературы, 1960.

<sup>23</sup> The text of the law, in Russian, is online [here](#)

<sup>24</sup> V. Danilov et al., eds., *Tragediia sovetskoii derevni* t. 3 (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001), Dok. No. 170, 479-481.

<sup>25</sup> "Encumbered Memory. The Ukrainian Famine of 1932-33." *Kritika* 14 (2) Spring 2013, p. 426 and note.

<sup>26</sup> Astrov, "Kak Eto Proizoshio.." *Literaturnaia Gazeta* March 29, 1989; Astrov, "...S menia sledovateli trebovali pokazaniia." *Izvestiia* February 27, 1993, p. 3. Vladimir Bobrov and I have discussed Astrov's confessions in detail in "Verdikt: Vinoven!" Chapter 1 of *Pravosudie Stalina* (Moscow: EKSMO, 2010), 13-63. I discuss it more briefly in English in Chapter 16 of *The Murder of Sergei Kirov* pp. 318-319.

## **Chapter 4. Bloodlands *Chapter 2: Snyder's Claim of the Soviets' "Class Terror" Examined***

In this chapter Snyder does not focus on any one central event. Instead, he touches on a number of different issues: collectivization, Hitler's coming to power, the Spanish Civil War, the Moscow Trials and the so-called "Military Purges" (also known as "the Tukhachevsky Affair") and the *Ezhovshchina* or "Great Terror," which Snyder has already dealt with in Chapter One, and to which he will return in Chapter Four. Every fact-claim that has an anti-Soviet tendency is examined here, and all of the evidence that Snyder or his sources cite, is checked.

### **Collectivization**

His policy of collectivization had required the shooting of tens of thousands of citizens and the deportations of hundreds of thousands, and had brought millions more to the brink of death by starvation — as Jones would see and report. (59-60)

Snyder states that collectivization was accompanied by "tens of thousands of executions." The two most crucial years for collectivization were 1930 and 1931. In 1930 there were 20,201 executions for all crimes, and 9876 executions in 1931, for a total of 30,077. Executions in the adjacent non-collectivization years were much lower: 1383 for the year 1929; 3912 (or, alternatively, 3194) in 1932; 2154 in 1933.<sup>1</sup>

It is logical to assume that most of these additional executions above the level of the preceding year (1929) and the following year (1932) would have been related to collectivization. These would have been due to the struggle against organized armed groups rebelling against collectivization, and against other kinds of sabotage of the collectivization movement. This would make the approximate number of executions due to collectivization around 20,000 to 25,000. Snyder is correct in this instance.

It was inevitable that kulaks — rich peasants who lived by exploiting the labor of others — and other rural opponents of Soviet power would oppose

collectivization, often violently. Tauger has shown that collectivization was also supported by many peasants, and by poor and landless peasants above all. Indeed, this has been admitted even by such staunch anticommunists and opponents of collectivization as James Mace.

Documents from former Soviet archives do indeed confirm hundreds of thousands of deportations of peasants who resisted collectivization, as Snyder states. But Snyder's main fact-claims here are false. Collectivization did not cause the famine. Snyder has no evidence that it did and, in fact, does not even bother to try to prove it but simply "asserts" it. We have discussed this question thoroughly in connection with our analysis of Chapter 1 of *Bloodlands*. The famine was a secular event caused by poor weather conditions. There had been famines every 2-3 years in Russian history for at least a millennium.

Snyder is also prevaricating when he tries to associate Jones' genuine account of the famine itself with his, Snyder's, falsehood that the famine had been caused by collectivization. Jones could not have "seen" the cause of the famine that he witnessed because causes cannot be "seen." Jones witnessed famine conditions. But Snyder says Jones "saw and reported" that "collectivization... had brought millions to the brink of death by starvation." This is false.

Nor did Stalin "order the shooting of hundreds of thousands more Soviet citizens" "later in the 1930s." (59) No one has ever found such an "order," so Snyder has not seen it either. Therefore, Snyder's claim is deliberately false. We will discuss this in our analysis of Chapter 3.

### **Did "Soviet Cruelty" Lead to Support for Nazism?**

Snyder states:

For some of the Germans and other Europeans who favored Hitler and his enterprise, the cruelty of Soviet policy seemed to be an argument for National Socialism. (60)



Snyder's claim that some chose Nazism because it was "less cruel" than communism is bizarre. As though even Nazism's supporters thought that it was "not cruel!" Some kind of humanitarian alternative to communism, perhaps? But collectivization was certainly "cruel" to kulaks, as the Revolution of 1917 had been "cruel" to capitalists — and as capitalism had been "cruel" to working people the world over, for centuries. Many capitalists supported Nazism because it seemed to be the best bulwark against communism, which threatened to dispossess them of their wealth.

As we have shown, *not* to have collectivized would have been the "cruel" policy with respect to the vast majority of the Soviet population, whether peasants or workers. Collectivization stopped the centuries-old cycle of famines in Russia which mainly killed the poorest.

### **Did Communist Hostility to Social-Democrats Facilitate Hitler's Rise to Power**

Communists were to maintain their ideological purity, and avoid alliances with social democrats. Only communists had a legitimate role to play in human progress, and others who claimed to speak for the oppressed were frauds and "social fascists." They were to be grouped together with every party their right, including the Nazis. In Germany, communists were to regard the social democrats, not the Nazis, as the main enemy.

In the second half of 1932 and the first months of 1933, during the long moment of Stalin's provocation of catastrophe, it would have been difficult for him to abandon the international line of "class against class." The class struggle against the kulak, after all, was the official explanation of the horrible suffering and mass death within the Soviet Union. (61-2)

Snyder cites no evidence at all for his contention that communist suspicion of, and failure to work with, the Social-Democrats (SPD) helped the rise of Nazism. We cannot go deeply into this historical contention here. But it is important to note that the Social Democrats were intensely hostile to communism as well. Each party saw the other as its main rival for the

allegiance of the German working class. The well-known book by noted Indian-born communist R. Palme Dutt, *Fascism and Social Revolution* (1934) sets forth the Comintern's view of the social democratic parties at this time and details their numerous betrayals both of the communists and of their own working classes.<sup>2</sup>

Once again Snyder tries to sneak in his unproven, and unprovable, assertion that it was collectivization that caused the famine. The "horrible suffering and mass death" was caused by the famine, not by "the struggle against the kulak," which was part of the struggle to collectivize agriculture. Nor did Stalin "provoke catastrophe." The truth is quite the opposite: collectivization ended the cycle of famines and enabled rapid industrialization, without which the USSR would certainly have been defeated by Hitler's armies — a true catastrophe.

### **Was Collectivization Like Hitler's Anti-Jewish Scapegoating?**

In this respect Hitler's policies resembled Stalin's. The Soviet leader presented the disarray in the Soviet countryside, and then dekulakization, as the result of an authentic class war. The political conclusion was the same in Berlin and Moscow: the state would have to step in to make sure that the necessary redistribution was relatively peaceful. (62)

Snyder's main goal in *Bloodlands* is to argue that the USSR was similar to Nazi Germany, Stalin similar to Hitler. Here Snyder tries to smuggle past his readers the suggestion that collectivization was somehow similar to Nazi racism against Jews. But Snyder cannot find any real similarities. Therefore, he claims that collectivization was somehow "spontaneous," with the State just "stepping in." This is more than simply false — it is a statement made in flagrant disregard of the facts. There is no evidence to support it.

In essence Snyder is arguing that socializing private property (collectivization in the USSR) is somehow similar to violently dispossessing German Jews while strengthening the position of large-scale industrialists, and private business generally (Hitler's policy in Germany).

This absurdity is a good example of the lengths to which Snyder will go in order to force some comparison between the USSR and Nazi Germany. Nazi Germany was a form of capitalism. Collectivization was its polar opposite.

Snyder is wrong as well when he states as fact, with no evidence at all that "Stalin" — i.e. the USSR — had "policies" of "shooting," "deportation," or "starvation." As we showed in our discussion of Chapter One of *Bloodlands* Soviet policy was to collectivize agriculture. Collectivization was the only policy that could end the constant cycle of killer famines and allow the USSR to industrialize. No other policy that would accomplish either of these goals, much less both of them, has ever been dreamed up by anyone else, including anticommunist researchers.

Executions were for rebellions against the government or serious violations of laws controlling food supply. Deportations were for less violent opposition to collectivization. They were not "policies."

### **Had the USSR and Germany Planned to Dismantle Poland since 1922?**

Snyder writes:

Since 1922, the two states [Germany and the USSR] had engaged in military and economic cooperation, on the tacit understanding that both had an interest in the remaking of eastern Europe at the expense of Poland. (64)

This is false. The 1922 Rapallo Treaty between Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia did not concern the "remaking of Eastern Europe" and had nothing to do with Poland at all. Moreover, if the "understanding" was "tacit," how does Snyder know about it? He cites no evidence of any such "tacit understanding" because there is none.

In reality the opposite is true. In 1939 the USSR tried many times to get Poland to sign a mutual defense treaty aimed at Germany. In a later chapter we show that the Polish government wanted no treaties at all with the USSR even if it meant facing Hitler's Wehrmacht alone.

Snyder fails to examine the legitimacy of Poland's claim to Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia. Both lie east of the Curzon Line in an area in which Poles were a distinct minority of the population. Regardless of the ethnicity or the desires of the population Pilsudski and other Polish nationalists wanted these lands because they had been within the boundaries of the Polish-Lithuanian state of 1772. This state occupied almost all of Western Ukraine, all of Belorussia, much of Latvia and Lithuania, and had a large part of the Black Sea coast. Polish imperialist ambitions aimed to reestablish a greater Poland along these lines.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, *when Poland "lost" Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia in September 1939 it lost nothing that it had any right to possess in the first place.* Even today's Polish state, both capitalist and highly nationalistic, no longer claims Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia.

### **The *Ezhovshchina***

Aside from the famine of 1932-33 the *Ezhovshchina* or "bad time of Ezhov," called by anticommunists the "Great Terror," is the only source for mass murder that Snyder can find to blame "Stalin" (the Soviet government) for. A campaign of mass murder did indeed take place during the period of July or August 1937 through September 1938. Anticommunist historians sometimes claim that these mass murders took place because Stalin either ordered them — Snyder simply states this as a "fact" — or at least authorized them.

During the period of the Popular Front, from June 1934 through August 1939, about three quarters of a million Soviet citizens would be shot to death by order of Stalin... (67)

This is false. There is no evidence of any such "order of Stalin," so of course Snyder has never seen any and gives no reference to one. The reader of *Bloodlands* is left to assume that Snyder has such evidence when Snyder knows he does not. Snyder is deliberately misleading his readers. On the contrary, it is clear now that Stalin and the Politburo did not know that Ezhov was engaging in these massive executions of innocent people. We

discuss this important matter in much more detail in Chapter Six of the present book.

## **The Spanish Civil War**

The Spanish Civil War of 1936-1939 was a very important event, the only war on the European continent and a "prequel" to World War II. Six months after the end of the Spanish Civil War Hitler invaded Poland. Hitler and Mussolini sent thousands of troops, tanks, and aircraft to attack the bourgeois Spanish Republic. Without them the fascist army, led by General Francisco Franco, could not have won.

In a brief paragraph Snyder claims that Soviet NKVD men were "sent to Spain to shoot" Trotskyists for "treason." But none of the works in Snyder's footnote to this passage demonstrate that. The reason is that, aside from the case of Andres Nin which we discuss below, there is no firm evidence that even a single Trotskyist (or anyone else) was shot in Spain by the Soviet NKVD.<sup>4</sup>

Snyder is correct when he states that the communists presented Trotskyists — more accurately, Trotskyism — as "fascist." Based on the evidence we now have, it appears to be true that some Trotskyists were involved in sabotaging the Spanish Republic. We simply have far too much primary source evidence directly about this, including from Nazi sources, for all of it to be fabrication.<sup>5</sup> In addition, Karl Radek testified at the January 1937 Moscow Trial that Trotskyists were active in Spain and appealed to them to stop.

A few pages later Snyder briefly picks up the Spanish Civil War again:

Orwell watched as the communists provoked clashes in Barcelona in May 1937, and then as the Spanish government, beholden to Moscow, banned the Trotskyite party [the POUM]. (75)

This is false. The Barcelona "May Days" revolt was precipitated by an Anarchist seizure of the Barcelona telephone station, which the Republican government of Barcelona took back. The phrase "beholden to Moscow," is

likewise false. Neither the government of Largo Caballero (September 4 1936 to May 17 1937) nor that of his successor Juan Negrín were under communist control. Both Caballero and Negrín were suspicious of the communists.

The "Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxist" or POUM had participated in the Barcelona revolt. The Soviets had evidence then, and we have evidence today, that both Franco's and German agents were involved in the revolt.<sup>6</sup> It was logical to think that the POUM leaders were conspiring with them. POUM was not an "official" Trotskyist party, but it was friendly to Trotsky and unfriendly to the USSR. The head of POUM, Andres Nin, had been one of Trotsky's leading aides. The Soviets knew that Trotsky and some of his supporters — Karl Radek and Iurii Piatakov at least — had publicly denounced each other in the harshest terms as a cover for their continued secret collaboration. It was logical to assume that Nin had done likewise — as, in fact, he may well have done. Nin strongly supported the armed revolt against the Republican government, which benefitted only Franco and his Axis allies.

Meanwhile the high-ranking Soviet commanders executed on June 12, 1937 in the "Tukhachevsky Affair" confessed at trial that they had been in collaboration with both Nazi Germany and Trotsky. One of them stated that Trotsky had given him the honor of opening the Leningrad front to the rebels in the event of a successful revolt against the Soviet leadership. Nin and the POUM leadership were arrested a few days later, on June 16, 1937, by Orlov, head of the Soviet NKVD in Spain. He was not tortured but refused to confess and was murdered a few days later.<sup>7</sup>

### **Snyder Claims The Soviets Made No Progress Towards Socialism**

Snyder makes the bizarre claim that Soviet "progress toward socialism" was "largely a matter of propaganda." (71) The Soviet Union built an industrial, socialist society during the decade of the 1930s. A great many visitors to the USSR reported on the phenomenal changes that had taken place in Soviet society since the late 1920s. Any number of scholars have remarked upon the same thing.<sup>8</sup>

Snyder gives no evidence at all to support this statement, nor does he define what he means by "progress toward socialism." By social-democratic definitions of socialism — wide-ranging social welfare benefits for all workers in an industrialized or industrializing society — the Soviet Union had indeed achieved socialism by the mid-1930s.

### **No Foreign Subversion?**

Snyder makes the following claim:

...the explanation of famine and misery at home depended upon the idea of foreign subversion...(72)

Snyder then claims that this idea "was essentially without merit" — that there was in fact no "foreign subversion."

Snyder does not deign to cite any evidence for either of these claims. It's no wonder that Snyder does not try to prove that there was no "foreign subversion," for Snyder himself documents considerable Polish espionage in his book *Sketches from a Secret War*.<sup>9</sup> There is a great deal of evidence of espionage by other countries too, especially Germany and Japan. If Snyder believes it to be false or fabricated, he should say so and state the reason for his suspicions. We examine this issue in more detail later in the present book.

### **Did Stalin Have No Political Opposition?**

Snyder claims:

By 1937 Stalin faced no meaningful political opposition within the Soviet communist party, but this only seemed to convince him that his enemies had learned political invisibility. Just as he had during the height of the famine, he argued again that year that the most dangerous enemies of the state appeared to be harmless and loyal. (72)

Today there are available to researchers a great many primary documents giving evidence of multiple conspiracies against the Soviet government that

involved high-ranking Party members along with many others. Some of these conspiracies resulted in the various trials of 1934-1938, plus the military conspiracy (Tukhachevsky Affair), Ezhov's conspiracy, and much else. This includes important evidence from outside the USSR, from sources that could not have possibly have fabricated it. Much of this evidence is from 1937, the year Snyder names here. We have discussed some of this in a recent book (see the following footnote).

Since there is so much documentary evidence of these conspiracies — "political opposition" — it is incumbent on Snyder to give evidence that these documents have been forged, faked, or in some way are not what they appear to be. He does not do this because he cannot. No one has ever proven these documents fakes. Moreover, there are far too many of them, from too many different sources, for them to all have been forged or falsified.

### **The Murder of Sergei Kirov — Did Stalin Have No Evidence For His "Theory"?**

Since 2000 a great deal of scholarly attention has been devoted to investigating the assassination of Leningrad Party First Secretary Sergei M. Kirov in the Party Headquarters in the Smolny Institute in Leningrad on December 1, 1934. Four major studies, one of them by the present writer, have been devoted to it.

Snyder writes:

Stalin's interpretation of the Leningrad murder was a direct challenge to the Soviet state police. His was not a theory that the NKVD was inclined to accept, not least because there was no evidence. (73)

Snyder does not know what he is talking about. Stalin had no "interpretation." He instructed the NKVD to seek for the assassins among Zinovievites in Leningrad only after evidence of the assassin's, Leonid Nikolaev's, ties to these underground Zinovievites had been uncovered during the course of the investigation, both in Nikolaev's own notebooks and from the assassin's own statements to the investigators.



A very large body of evidence in the Kirov murder case has now been available to researchers. Much of it has been public for over a decade. All of it supports the official position of the Soviet prosecution at the time that Kirov was murdered by a conspiracy of underground Zinovievites; that Zinoviev and Kamenev were in overall charge of the murder; and that Trotsky and his followers were at least aware of it. Few of Snyder's readers will know this.

The present writer's book on the Kirov murder has now been published in both English and Russian editions. The evidence now available — not only from former Soviet archives but from non-Soviet sources — clearly proves that the conspiracies that constituted the main accusations against the defendants at the Kirov murder trial of December 1934, the First, Second, and Third Moscow "Show" Trials of August 1936, January 1937, and March 1938, and the Military or "Tukhachevsky Affair" trial of June 1937, really did exist.<sup>10</sup>

### **Snyder on the Moscow Trials**

According to Snyder,

Beginning in August 1936, Yezhov charged Stalin's former political opponents with fantastic offenses in public show trials. (73)

Snyder is "bluffing" again. He uses the word "fantastic" in an attempt to confuse his readers, and so permit him to avoid the normal scholarly obligation to study the evidence that exists.

In reality there is a great deal of evidence that the charges against the defendants in the August 1936 Moscow Trial and the other two in January 1937 and March 1938 were true. Like other anticommunist writers Snyder prefers to pretend that it does not exist. Perhaps he is deliberately concealing it; perhaps he is unaware of it, and therefore incompetent to write about this subject. Again, few of his readers will know about it.

There was nothing "fantastic" in the charges brought in the Moscow trials. Leon Trotsky declared some of them to be "fantastic" — but Trotsky was

secretly in league with at least some of the defendants, as we have known for more than 30 years now thanks to Trotsky's own admissions preserved in the Trotsky Archives in Harvard and the Hoover Institution.

Words like "fantastic" say nothing about the matter at hand — in this case, the charges against the Moscow Trial defendants. "The charges were fantastic" means, in fact, "*I consider* the charges to be fantastic," just as the statement "pistachio ice cream is delicious" simply means "*I think that* pistachio ice cream is delicious." In each case the statement tells us about the person who makes the statement. It says nothing about reality.

Snyder claims that "these old Bolsheviks had been intimidated and beaten, and were doing little more than uttering lines from a script." But once again, intentionally or not, Snyder is deceiving his reader. He cannot possibly have any evidence that the defendants were "beaten" since there never has been any. In 2003 Stephen F. Cohen, the world's greatest authority of Bukharin, wrote that Bukharin was definitely not tortured. Nor has there ever been any evidence that any of the other defendants were tortured. Likewise, there has never been any evidence of any "script."

Once again Snyder's falsehood is also a "bluff." Perhaps many of Snyder's readers will think: "A full professor of history like Snyder must have evidence that the defendants had been 'intimidated' and 'beaten' and so gave false testimony." But neither Snyder nor anybody else has any such evidence. On the contrary, we have a lot of evidence that the defendants in the Moscow Trials testified as they wanted to. That does not mean that they always told the truth, but that if and when they lied, they did so because they chose to lie to the prosecution.

Snyder writes:

The party newspaper, *Pravda*, made the connection clear in a headline of 22 August 1936: "Trotsky-Zinoviev-Kamanev-Gestapo." Could the three Bolsheviks in question, men who had built the Soviet Union, truly be paid agents of capitalist powers? Were these three communists of Jewish origin likely agents of the secret state police of Nazi Germany? They were not, but the charge was taken seriously, even outside the Soviet Union. (74)

This is a falsehood — specifically, a "straw man." *None* of the testimony in the August 1936 Moscow Trial portrays Zinoviev and Kamenev as either "paid agents of capitalist powers" or "agents of the secret state police of Nazi Germany," as Snyder alleged. Any reading of the trial transcript, which is widely available on the Internet, will show this.

The testimony at the August 1936 Moscow trial simply confirms that Zinoviev and Kamenev and their followers were in touch with Trotskyites, who were also in touch with Trotsky, and that some of the Trotskyites had conspired with agents of the German Secret Police. It is a shibboleth of respectability, *de rigueur* in certain corners of anticommunist scholarship, to assert that the Moscow Trials were all "faked." But there is no evidence at all that they were, and much evidence that corroborates the confessions of the most important defendants.

It is striking that Snyder seems to believe that he can tell whether the charges against and confessions of the defendants in the August 1936 Moscow Trial were true or not simply by ratiocination. This is the fallacy of disbelief, a version of the logical fallacy of "begging the question": "I cannot believe it, therefore it is not true." It is a statement about the speaker, not a statement about the matter at hand, as competent historians are aware.

Snyder falsely claims that:

He [Stalin] believed that the Spanish government was weak because it was unable to find and kill enough spies and traitors...(74)

Sources (n. 35 p. 470):

\* Werth, *Terreur*, 282.

\* "See also" Kuromiya, *Stalin*, 121.

This is a false statement. Here follows an examination of these sources.

**Werth, *Terreur*, 282:** This reference contains no evidence to support Snyder's statement. Werth merely refers to a conference presentation by Oleg Khlevniuk, claiming that Khlevniuk has "shown" (*montré*) that the

defeats of the Spanish Republic were caused by their inability to uproot spies from their midst. These conference papers have proven impossible to obtain. At any rate Snyder never read this essay, or he would have referred directly to it. Therefore, Snyder does not know what Khlevniuk actually said, only what Werth claims he said.

**Kuromiya**, *Stalin*, 121, quotes from essays published by Khlevniuk in 1995 and 1998. It is likely that Khlevniuk said the same thing here as in the unpublished essay cited by Werth. Here is the relevant quotation from Kuromiya:

As Oleg Khlevniuk has convincingly shown, the Spanish Civil War (which Stalin closely followed) demonstrated to him that 'the situation in Spain itself, the acute contradictions between the different political forces, including those between the Communists and Trotsky's adherents, provided Stalin with the best possible confirmation of the need for a policy of repression as a means of strengthening the USSR's capacity for defense'.

The part in quotation marks above is evidently from Khlevniuk. However, even Kuromiya gives no evidence to support this statement of Khlevniuk's.

Kuromiya continues (121):

As Soviet military dispatches from Spain in 1936 and 1937 made clear, the war was characterised by 'anarchy, partisan and subversive and divisionist [*sic*, diversionist] movements, relative erosion of the frontiers between front and rear, betrayals.' The events in Spain were for Stalin direct proof that there existed, and very obviously, just such a threat from within.

This represents either Khlevniuk's views, with which Kuromiya agrees, or Kuromiya's views alone. In either case, they deliberately omit some crucial facts:

\* At the January 1937 Moscow Trial former Trotskyist Karl Radek called upon Trotskyists in Spain to stop their subversive activities there.

\* In May 1937 anarchist and Trotskyist forces rebelled against the Republican government of Barcelona in an event known as the "May Days" revolt. This rebellion during wartime was regarded as a stab in the back by the Republican government and by the Soviets as well.

\* We have documentary evidence of Nazi German and Francoist involvement in the May Days revolt. Trotskyists like Andres Nin and the POUM, friendly to Trotsky, were also involved.

\* The Tukhachevsky Affair defendants testified that Trotsky was in collaboration with them and the German general staff in planning a revolt within the USSR.

\* On June 4, 1937, in the midst of the Tukhachevsky Affair, Stalin told an expanded meeting of the Military Soviet that the accused Soviet generals had wanted to make of the Soviet Union "another Spain."

Kuromiya (121-2) claims that from the disorder within the Spanish Republic Stalin drew the conclusion that subversion was rife and a "quiet rear" was essential.

None of Snyder's sources — or anybody else — claims that Stalin believed the Spanish Republic should "find and kill enough spies and traitors." Evidently Snyder has invented this.

### **The Tukhachevsky Affair**

Snyder:

Eight high commanders of the armed forces were show-tried that same month; about half of the generals of the Red Army would be executed in the months to come...<sup>37</sup> (75)

This is an unusually incompetent falsehood even for Snyder. The definition of "show trial" in the Oxford English Dictionary conforms to common usage — a highly publicized, public trial. But the trial of the eight "Tukhachevsky Affair" defendants on June 11, 1937, was top-secret.

Although the transcript exists no one, even anticommunist Russian scholars trusted by the Russian government, has been allowed to see it since Col. Viktor Alksnis in 1991. After reading the transcript Alksnis, who until that time thought the generals had been framed, changed his mind and concluded that they were guilty. This information has been available since 2001 when Alksnis revealed these facts in an interview in Russia. He has recently repeated this in print.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, Marshal Semion Budiennyi's letter to Marshal Voroshilov, and NKVD General Genrikh Liushkov's statements to his Japanese handlers, leave no room for doubt that Tukhachevsky and the military leaders convicted with him, plus many others, were guilty. Either Snyder does not know about all this evidence or he has withheld this information from his readers.

### **Snyder's "Fundamental" Source — A Hitler Supporter**

Snyder's footnote to this statement about the Military Purges reads as follows:

n. 37 ... On the Red Army generals, see Wiczorkiewicz, *Łańcuch*, 296. **This is a fundamental work on the military purges.** (Emphasis added — GF)

The book by Pawel Wiczorkiewicz that Snyder recommends here, *Łańcuch śmierci* (= "Chain of Death"), it is not only not a "fundamental work" — it is worthless. Wiczorkiewicz's book reflects pre-1991 "scholarship" — essentially, Khrushchev- and Gorbachev-era falsehoods. It does not use any of the large quantity of evidence that has been published since the end of the USSR in 1991, especially during the past decade. It is never cited by any of the highly anticommunist Russian scholars who write on the Tukhachevsky Affair.<sup>12</sup> This is another of the many references that suggest that Snyder does not study Russian-language materials and is not familiar with the scholarship, yet insists on writing about Soviet history.

But Snyder is concealing from his readers something that is widely known in Poland. The late Pawel Wiczorkiewicz (he died in 2009) was a far right-

wing crackpot whose views were extreme even among far-right Polish nationalists.

Wieczorkiewicz's admiration for Hitler's Germany led him to wish that Poland had united with Hitler to invade the USSR. He had great trust in Hitler and wished Polish leaders could have stood beside Hitler in Red Square, taking a victorious salute after the defeat of the USSR.

Nie chcieliśmy znaleźć się w sojuszu z Trzecią Rzeszą, a wylądowaliśmy w sojuszu z tak samo zbrodniczym Związkiem Sowieckim. A co gorsza, pod jego absolutną dominacją. Hitler zaś nigdy nie traktował swoich sojuszników tak jak Stalin kraje podbite po II wojnie światowej. Szanował ich suwerenność i podmiotowość, nakładając jedynie pewne ograniczenia w polityce zagranicznej. Nasze uzależnienie od Niemiec byłoby więc znacznie miejsce niż to, w jakie wpadliśmy po wojnie wobec Związku Sowieckiego. Mogliśmy znaleźć miejsce u boku Rzeszy prawie takie jak Włochy, a na pewno lepsze niż Węgry czy Rumunia. W efekcie stanęlibyśmy w Moskwie i tam Adolf Hitler wraz z Rydzem-Śmigłym odbieraliby defiladę zwycięskich wojsk polsko-niemieckich. Ponurą asocjacją jest oczywiście Holokaust. Jeżeli jednak dobrze się nad tym zastanowić, można dojść do wniosku, że szybkie zwycięstwo Niemiec mogłoby oznaczać, że w ogóle by do niego nie doszło. Holokaust był bowiem w znacznej mierze funkcją niemieckich porażek wojennych.

Translated:

We did not want to be in an alliance with the Third Reich and ended up in alliance with the also criminal Soviet Union. And what is worse, under its absolute domination. Hitler never treated its allies as Stalin did the conquered countries after World War II. He respected their sovereignty and subjectivity, requiring only some limitations in foreign policy. Our dependence on Germany would have been much less than the one in which we ended up with after the war against the Soviet Union. We could have found a place at the side of the Reich almost like Italy, and definitely better than Hungary or Romania. As a result, we would have been in Moscow and there Adolf Hitler together with Rydz-Smigly would have reviewed the parade of the victorious Polish-

German armies. A grim association is, of course, the Holocaust. If, however, you consider it well, one can conclude that a rapid German victory would have meant it would not have come to that. The Holocaust was in fact largely a function of the German military defeats.

Wieczorkiewicz's favorite historian was British pro-Nazi, forger, and Holocaust denier David Irving, about whom Wieczorkiewicz said:

To najlepszy i najwybitniejszy znawca historii II wojny światowej. Badacz, dla którego miarodajne są źródła, a nie poglądy historiografii, opinie kolegów, czy wrzask mediów. Człowiek, któremu z racji ogromnych zasług — zebrania lub odtajnienia i udostępnienia kluczowych dokumentów III Rzeszy, czapką buty czyścić by trzeba. Historyk tej miary, że ma prawo napisać i powiedzieć wszystko.

Translated:

He is the best and most prominent expert on the history of World War II. A researcher for whom sources, not the viewpoints of historiography, the opinions of colleagues, or the media uproar, are what is meaningful. A man, who by virtue of his enormous merits — of collecting or declassifying and sharing key documents of the Third Reich — we should shine his boots with our hat. A historian of such caliber that he has the right to write and tell everything.<sup>13</sup>

Wieczorkiewicz openly wished that Poland had sided with Nazi Germany in World War II! In an interview published in the Polish journal *Wiadomości* on January 2, 2006, Wieczorkiewicz said the following:

Talaga: Wybuch wojny poprzedziło zawarcie paktu Ribbentrop-Mołotow. Co by się stało, gdyby Polska zgodziła się wówczas na żądania Niemiec? Początkowo Hitler wcale nie chciał atakować Polski, uderzenie było raczej efektem okoliczności niż przemyślanego, tworzonego wiele lat planu. Czy Polska swoim twardym stanowiskiem sprowokowała poniekąd układ sowiecko-niemiecki?



Wieczorkiewicz: Beck zrobił, moim zdaniem, kardynalny błąd: nie dostrzegł czynnika sowieckiego. Rozgrywał grę polityczną perfekcyjnie, ale przy założeniu, że nie ma Związku Sowieckiego. Co by było, gdybyśmy poszli z Hitlerem na Związek Sowiecki? Polska byłaby jednym z głównych twórców — obok Niemiec i Włoch — zjednoczonej Europy ze stolicą w Berlinie i z niemieckim językiem urzędowym.

Translated:

Talaga: The outbreak of war was preceded by the conclusion of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. What would have happened if Poland agreed to the requests of Germany? Initially, Hitler did not want to attack Poland, the strike was the result of circumstances rather than a deliberate plan that was years in creation. Did Poland provoke somewhat by its hard position the Soviet-German agreement?

Wieczorkiewicz: Beck committed, in my opinion, a cardinal error: he overlooked the Soviet factor. He played the political game perfectly, but without taking the Soviet Union into account. What would have happened if we had gone with Hitler against the Soviet Union? Poland would have been one of the main creators, along with Germany and Italy, of a united Europe with its capital in Berlin and with German as the official language.<sup>14</sup>

Snyder continues:

The Germans, however, were not counting on help from the Soviet population in that coming war. In this respect, Stalin's scenario of threat, the union of foreign enemies with domestic opponents, was quite wrong. Thus the still greater terror that Stalin would unleash upon his own population in 1937 and 1938 was entirely fruitless, and indeed counterproductive. (78)

This is all wrong. From non-Soviet sources interested scholars have known since the late 1980s that Hitler was indeed expecting a military coup in the USSR and the establishment of a pro-German military regime.<sup>15</sup> It has been clear since the late 1990s that the military conspiracies really did exist and

were coordinated with the conspiracy of the "Rights and Trotskyites," and much more evidence has come to light since the late Alvin D. Coox's work.<sup>16</sup> And there is even more evidence of these conspiracies today.

All this evidence accords very well with the great deal of evidence that we have from former Soviet archival documents now declassified.<sup>17</sup> This is as good confirmation of Tukhachevsky's collaboration with the Germans as we are likely to ever have. Snyder is either ignorant of this fact (incompetent) or knows about it but fails to tell his readers (dishonest).

Collaboration with the Germans was the substance of many of the confessions of defendants in the Moscow Trials and in the Tukhachevsky Affair. In 1939 Nikolai Ezhov, head of the NKVD during the so-called "Great Terror", admitted that by means of mass murder the conspirators under his command were trying to make enough people dissatisfied with the Soviet government that they would either revolt in the case of invasion, or would not oppose it. There is no evidence that these confessions were coerced or fabricated. Certainly Snyder has never seen any such evidence. If he had, he would have cited it.<sup>18</sup> Once again, Snyder's statement is a "bluff."

### **Snyder Says There Were No Such People as "Kulaks"**

Snyder claims that there were in reality no such people as "kulaks" and that the Soviets had invented the term:

As a social class, the kulak (prosperous peasant) never really existed; the term was rather a Soviet classification that took on a political life of its own. (78-9)

This is either incompetence or deliberate deception. The term "kulak" had existed long before the Russian Revolution or Russian Marxism. Kulaks were defined as those peasants who employed other workers on their farms.

Here are quotations from three pre-revolutionary non-Russian writers who commented on the "koolaks" and their role in the peasant society. English author Emile Joseph Dillon wrote:

...this type of man was commonly termed a Koolak, or fist, to symbolize his utter callousness to pity or truth. And of all the human monsters I have ever met in my travels, I cannot recall any so malignant and odious as the Russian Koolak.

-Emile J. Dillon. *The Eclipse of Russia*. New York: George H. Doran, 1918, p. 67.

Other prerevolutionary references to the kulak are the following:

The great advantage the *koulaks* possess over their numerous competitors in the plundering of the peasants, lies in the fact that they are members, generally very influential members, of the village commune. This often enables them to use for their private ends the great political power which the self-governing *mir* exercises over each individual member. The distinctive characteristics of this class are very unpleasant. It is the hard, unflinching cruelty of a thoroughly uneducated man who has made his way from poverty to wealth, and has come to consider money-making, by whatever means, as the only pursuit to which a rational being should devote himself.

— "Stepniak" (a pseudonym), *The Russian Peasantry*. London: George Rutledge; New York: E.P. Putnam & Co., 1905, p. 55.

On the other side arise the *kulak* (literally, the "fist"), a name coined to designate those ex-serfs and simple peasants who, utilising the unpropitious condition of their fellow members of the commune, made one after another their debtors, next their hired labourers, and appropriated for their own individual use the land shares of those economical weaklings.

The *kulak* is a very interesting figure in rural Russia ... There is no doubt that the methods used by this usurer and oppressor in the peasant's blouse have not been of the cleanest. ... The conspicuous position he now occupies came about during the last twenty or thirty years. In Russian literature he has been dubbed the "village eater," and has been clothed with all sorts of diabolical qualities. ... He is the natural product of a vicious system. ...

— Wolf von Schierband, *Russia, her Strength and her Weakness*. New York and London: G.P. Putnam's, 1904, p. 120.

**Conclusion:** The category of "kulak" is well documented from pre-Soviet times. Snyder's false claim that it was a "Soviet classification" is ignorant.

### **The *Ezhovshchina*, Again**

In a telegram entitled "On Anti-Soviet Elements," Stalin and the politburo issued general instructions on 2 July 1937 for mass repressions in every region of the Soviet Union. The Soviet leadership held kulaks responsible for recent waves of sabotage and criminality, which meant in effect anything that had gone wrong within the Soviet Union. The politburo ordered the provincial offices of the NKVD to register all kulaks who resided in their regions, and to recommend quotas for execution and deportation. Most regional NKVD officers asked to be allowed to add various "anti-Soviet elements" to the lists... (80-1)

...The killing and imprisonment quotas were officially called "limits," though everyone involved knew they were meant to be exceeded. Local NKVD officers had to explain why they could not meet a "limit," and were encouraged to exceed them. No NKVD officer wished to be seen as lacking élan when confronting "counter-revolution," especially when Yezhov's line was "better too far than not far enough." (81)

This outline of the *Ezhovshchina* — called the "Great Terror" by anticommunists — is all wrong. The text of the Politburo Decree "On Anti-Soviet Elements" is online in Russian as is a facsimile of the original telegram.<sup>19</sup> It is published in a well-known documentary collection.

Extract from Protocol #51 of the Politburo of the CC resolution of 2 July 1937

STRICTLY SECRET Central Committee All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)

No. P51/94 3 July 1937

To: Comrade Yezhov, secretaries of regional and territorial committees, CCs of the national Communist parties.

#94. On anti-Soviet elements.

The following telegram is to be sent to secretaries of regional and territorial committees and to the CCs of national Communist parties:

"It has been observed that a large number of former kulaks and criminals deported at a certain time from various regions to the north and to Siberian districts and then having returned to their regions at the expiration of their period of exile are the chief instigators of all sorts of anti-Soviet crimes, including sabotage, both in the kolkhozy and sovkhozy as well as in the field of transport and in certain branches of industry. The CC of the VKP(b) recommends to all secretaries of regional and territorial organizations and to all regional, territorial, and republic representatives of the NKVD that they register all kulaks and criminals who have returned home in order that the most hostile among them be forthwith administratively arrested and executed by means of a 3-man commission [*troika*] and that the remaining, less active but nevertheless hostile elements be listed and exiled to districts [*raiony*] as indicated by the NKVD. The CC of the VKP(b) recommends that the names of those comprising the 3-man commissions be presented to the C within five days, as well as the number of those subject to execution and the number of those subject to exile."

Secretary of the CC I. Stalin<sup>20</sup>

It is not a "general instruction" for "mass repressions" but instructions for opposing rebellions against the government. This volume and other documentary collections make it clear that the Soviet leadership was correct in believing that a serious crisis existed.

The disclosure of a widespread conspiracy by the top leaders of the Red Army, and the continuing uncovering of high- and medium-ranking Party

leaders and officials in several secret conspiratorial organizations, proved that plans — probably several plans — for a coup against the government and Party leadership in favor of Germany and Japan had been far advanced.

In his recent study *Practicing Stalinism* Soviet historian J. Arch Getty has written:

Stalin and his associates seem to have believed that a large-scale conspiracy was about to overthrow them.<sup>21</sup>

Getty points out that Molotov and Kaganovich continued to believe this decades later. (263-4). We have excellent evidence today that such conspiracies did in fact exist. The Tukhachevsky Affair defendants gave details about some of them. Existence that these military conspiracies not only existed but were connected to the Rightist conspiracy involving Nikolai Bukharin and Aleksei Rykov, defendants at the third Moscow Trial of March 1938, come from NKVD escapee Genrikh Liushkov, who informed the Japanese of them after he fled the USSR in 1938.<sup>22</sup>

What Stalin and the Party leadership did not know was that Nikolai Ezhov, head of the NKVD, was also a conspirator. Ezhov conspired with other Party leaders and with his own subordinates to kill as many Soviet citizens as he could, in order to spread discontent with the Soviet system and aid any invasion by Germany or Japan.

Snyder claims that there were "quotas" for executions — and then admits that there were none. In fact all the documents we have today show that the center — Stalin and the top leadership — insisted that the **limits** on executions and imprisonments be restricted. Snyder's claim that "everybody knew" that "limits" really meant "quotas" is false. Like other anticommunist writers Snyder would like to have evidence that Stalin set "quotas" for executions. But Snyder goes too far when he implies that he does have such evidence. And he does imply this, for otherwise how would he know that "everybody knew"?

Arch Getty makes this clear:

Order No. 447 established limits (*limity*) rather than quotas; maximums, not minimums. (*Practicing* 201)

He goes on to insist that Stalin could not possibly have intended these numbers to be exceeded (232). Getty also adds the following about the "limits-quotas" issue:

One of the mysteries of the field [of Soviet history — GF] is how *limity* is routinely translated as "quotas." (*Practicing* 340 n. 109)

Getty's specific example is Oleg Khlevniuk, another researcher whose anticommunist bias and lack of objectivity ruin his scholarship. But it applies to Snyder as well. Maximums are different from minimums. Ideological anticommunists like Khlevniuk and, as here, Snyder, would like their readers to believe that Stalin demanded "minimums," so that's what they write.

Snyder is fabricating again when he states the following:

Under time pressure to make quotas, officers often simply beat prisoners until they confessed. Stalin authorized this on 21 July 1937. (82)

It is certainly true that Ezhov and his men beat prisoners until they made false confessions. Some of Ezhov's men confessed to doing this and/or observing other NKVD men doing it. We know this because it is documented, and these documents exist because Ezhov and his men were prosecuted, tried, and punished for these crimes after Ezhov had been removed as Commissar of the NKVD and replaced by Lavrentii Beria.

But the claim that Stalin "authorized this" is false. Neither he nor anyone else has seen any such authorization by Stalin of July 21, 1937, or any other date, because none has been found. If it existed, it would have been well publicized — it is just the kind of evidence that anticommunist writers have been eagerly looking for. It is needless to add that Snyder provides no source for his claim. But few of his readers will know this.

Snyder fill page 82-84 with accounts of mass shootings. Not all are reliable — many of the secondary sources Snyder uses are by scholars just as lacking in objectivity and prone to making undocumentable statements as Snyder is. Ezhov and his men did shoot hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens. The point is that Ezhov's mass murders were part of his anti-government conspiracy.

Snyder makes a number of false statements in these pages too. For example:

Yet even Stalin presented his own policies as inevitable... (85)

This is false. Snyder cites no such statement by Stalin, nor — to our knowledge — has anyone else.

### **Phony NKVD "Shorthand"**

Snyder claims that NKVD men justified "victimizing" Poles in the following manner:

In a kind of a operational shorthand, NKVD officers said: "Once a Pole, always a kulak. (86)

Snyder's note to this statement reads as follows: "n. 62 — Gurianov, "Obzor," 202." This is a reference to the following work:

A. Ie. Gurianov, "Obzor sovetkikh repressivnykh kampanii protiv poliakov i pols's'kikh grazhdan," in A.V. Lipatov and I.O. Shaitanov, eds., *Poliaki i russkie: Vzaimoponimanie i vzaimoneponimanie*, Moscow: Indrik, 2000, 199-207.

This is a phony reference. There is no such passage in the article by Gur'ianov (note correct spelling of his name). The expression "Raz poliak — znachit, kulak" was in use in the USSR at the time, perhaps mainly in Ukraine and Belorussia.<sup>23</sup> Crude as it was, such an expression made some sense. Poles in Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia were likely to be "osadnicy," imperialist "settlers," and therefore landlords.



**Conclusion to *Bloodlands*, Chapter Two:** Every fact-claim Snyder makes in this chapter that alleges some kind of criminal or immoral action by Stalin and/or the Soviet leadership is false.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Oleg Mozokhin is the expert on this question. His book, *Pravo na repressii* (Moscow, 2006), contains serious misprints: numbers are put in the wrong columns. Mozokhin's web pages give the corrected figures for executions, which are reported here. For 1931, see <http://mozohin.ru/article/a-41.html> ; for 1932,

<sup>2</sup> It is now available online at <http://www.plp.org/books/dutt.pdf> (accessed February 2014)

<sup>3</sup> See the map at [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Polish-Lithuanian\\_Commonwealth\\_in\\_1764.PNG](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Polish-Lithuanian_Commonwealth_in_1764.PNG)

<sup>4</sup> Trotsky activists Mark Rein, Kurt Landau, and Erwin Wolf vanished. Paul Preston, the foremost historian of this period, believe they were abducted and killed either by "Soviet agents" or by the "Grup d'Informació", the secret intelligence unit for the Catalanian government, the Generalitat. It is logical to think so, though not proven. See Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth Century Spain*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2012) 407, 418-419.

<sup>5</sup> Grover Furr, "Communist Anti-Trotskyism, and the Barcelona "May Days" of 1937," in press.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Details about Nin's activities, arrest, and murder are in Preston, *Spanish holocaust*, 402, 411-412. The trial of the "Tukhachevsky Affair" generals is reported and a key document examined in Vladimir L. Bobrov and Grover Furr, "Marshal S.M. Budiennyi on the Tukhachevsky Trial. Impressions of an Eye-Witness", *Klio* (St Petersburg) 2012 (2), 8-24 (in Russian). At

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/budennyi\\_klio12.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/budennyi_klio12.pdf)

Reprinted in M.N. Tukhachevskii: Kak My Predali Stalina ("M.N. Tukhachevsky. How We Betrayed Stalin") Moscow: Algorithm, September 2012, pages 174-230.

<sup>8</sup> A good discussion by a noted economic historian is Robert C. Allen, *From Farm to Factory. A Reinterpretation of the Soviet Industrial Revolution*. Princeton University Press, 2003. It has a good bibliography too.

<sup>9</sup> Timothy Snyder. *Sketches from a secret war: a Polish artist's mission to liberate Soviet Ukraine*. Yale University Press, 2005. The subject of this book, Henryk Józewski, supported greater autonomy for Ukrainians in Volhynia but was a staunch anticommunist. We will return to this book in a future chapter.

<sup>10</sup> Grover Furr, *The Murder of Sergei Kirov: History, Scholarship and the Anti-Stalin Paradigm*. Kettering, OH: Erythros Press and Media LLC, 2013. For evidence from beyond the USSR see Chapter 17. Russian translation: Grover Ferr (Furr). *Ubiystvo Kirova. Novoe issledovanie*. Moscow: Russkaia panorama, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Alksnis's recent statement of February 2013 is at:

<http://www.echo.msk.ru/programs/graniweek/1012648-echo/#element-text>

For Alksnis' earlier statements see «Последний полковник империи». Интервью «Элементов» с народным депутатом СССР Виктором Алкснисом // *Элементы*, 1993. No 3; also Алкснкс В.И. Я не согласен! // *Русский обозреватель*. 2009, 31 окт. см.: <http://www.rus-obr.ru/opinions/4577>

<sup>12</sup> The present author bought and studied a copy of Wiczorkiewicz's book 10 years ago while researching the Tukhachevskii Affair.

<sup>13</sup> "Politica poprawność, a prawda historyczna, rozmowa z profesorem Pawłem Piotrem Wiczorkiewiczem z Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego." ("Political correctness and historical truth — conversation with Professor Pawel Piotr Wiczorkiewicz of Warsaw University"). *Templum Novum*, March 2006.

<sup>14</sup> At <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/kiosk/historia/zabraklo-wodza,3,3331024,wiadomosc.html>

<sup>15</sup> We refer to the Mastny-Benes note of February 9, 1937, concerning Mastny's private talk with German emissary von Trouttmannsdorff. See, for example, Ivan Pfaff, *Die Sowjetunion und die Verteidigung der Tschechoslowakei 1934-1938: Versuch der Revision einer Legende*. Koeln — Wiemar — Wien: Bohlau Verlag, 1996, "Prag unde die Affaere Tuchacevski," 191-216. First published in Pfaff, "Prag und der Fall Tuchatschewski." *Vierteljahresheft fuer Zeitgeschichte* 35 (1987), 95-134. Pfaff's own interpretation of this important document is very faulty. We have obtained a copy of the document and plan to publish a study in the future.

<sup>16</sup> See, Coox, "The Lesser of Two Hells: NKVD General G.S. Lyushkov's Defection to Japan, 1938-1945." *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 11, 3 (1998) 145-186 (Part One) (Coox 1); 11, 4 (1998) 72-110 (Part Two).

<sup>17</sup> These documents are published, mostly in excerpt, in Kantor, Iulia. *Voina i mir Mikhaila Tukhachevskogo*. Moscow: Izdatel'skii Dom Ogoniok "Vremia," 2005, and Kantor, Iulia. *Zakliataia druzhba. Sekretnoe sotrudnichestvo SSSR I Germania v 1920-1930-e gody*. M-Spb: "Piter," 2009. Kantor tries to contend that Tukhachevsky was innocent nonetheless. The documents alone are in a series of articles by Kantor in *Istoriia Gosudarstva i Prava* (2006). I have put them online at [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/kantor\\_4articles\\_igp06.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/kantor_4articles_igp06.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> For the complete texts in Russian and in English translation of all of Ezhov's confessions that had been published by 2010 see Grover Furr, "The Moscow Trials and the "Great Terror" of 1937-1938: What the Evidence Shows." At [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/trials\\_ezhovshchina\\_update0710.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/trials_ezhovshchina_update0710.html) See also Bobrov and Furr, "Marshal S.M. Budiennyi."

<sup>19</sup> Text of decree at: <http://www.alexanderyakoviev.org/fond/issues-doc/61096> Facsimile of the original at <http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6f/>

[Решение Политбюро ЦК ВРешение Политбюро ЦК ВКП\(б\) № П5 194.jpg?uselang=ru](#) This translation is from Getty and Naumov, 470-1. They capitalize the text. The Russian language edition does not, so we have restored the text to normal sentence format.

<sup>20</sup> Lbianka. Stalin I Glavnoe Upravlenia Gosbezopasnosti NKVD 1937-1938 Dokumenty. Moscow: MFD, 2004, No. 114, pp. 234-5. (Лубянка. Сталин и Главное Управление Госбезопасности НКВД. 1937-1938. Документы.) Hereafter Lbianka 1937-1938.

<sup>21</sup> J. Arch Getty. Practicing Stalinism: Bolsheviks, Boyars, and the Persistence of Tradition. Yale University Press, 2013, 263.

<sup>22</sup> For a summary and further bibliography see Furr, Murder of Sergei Kirov, Chapter 17.

<sup>23</sup> Per Anders Rudling suggests that this term was used in Belorussia during 1937-1938. "Vialikaia Aichynnaia vaina u sviadomastsi belaruu (The Great Patriotic War in the minds of Belorussians)" Arkhe (Minsk) 5 (2008), p. 44.

## ***Chapter 5. Examining Snyder's Claim of "National Terror" in Bloodlands, Chapter 3***

In Chapter 3 of *Bloodlands* Snyder turns to the *Ezhovshchina* of 1937-1938 and specifically the "Polish Operation", Nikolai Ezhov's mass murders of Soviet citizens of Polish descent. Snyder also discusses the NKVD campaign against Polish espionage and the "Polish Military Organization."

Snyder's account is completely false. This is partly due to Snyder's deliberate falsifications and withholding of evidence from his readers. Without doubt, it is also due in part to Snyder's ignorance of Soviet history. It seems clear that Snyder has never devoted any serious study to the extremely important issue of the illegal mass murders called the *Ezhovshchina*.

A full history of the *Ezhovshchina* is beyond the scope of this book. We can state that all the evidence available to researchers today confirms that the mass murders, and especially the "national operations" against persons of various nationalities, were part of the conspiracy by Nikolai Ezhov to maximize discontent with the Soviet system and so facilitate uprisings in the wake of any invasion of the USSR by hostile powers such as Germany or Japan.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter of *Bloodlands* is of sufficient interest that we will deal with most of it in the body of this book. In the following chapter we'll discuss a few aspects of the *Ezhovshchina* in more depth, and also point out some falsifications in a few of Snyder's published articles.

### **Another Falsification by Snyder...**

People belonging to national minorities "should be forced to their knees and shot like mad dogs." It was not an SS officer speaking but a communist party leader, **in the spirit of the national operations of Stalin's Great Terror...** (89) (Emphasis added — GF)

Snyder's note to this passage (n. 1 p. 471):

\* Martin, "Origins," which, Snyder claims "brings analytical rigor to the national operations."<sup>2</sup>

\* "Quotation": Jansen, *Executioner*, 96;

\* "See also" Baberowski, *Terror*, 198.

The quotation is actually in **Jansen and Petrov**, page 98 at note 96. It reads as follows:

In the words of the Krasnoïarsk province Party secretary, Sobolev: "Stop playing internationalism, all these Poles, Koreans, Latvians, Germans, etc. should be beaten, these are all mercenary nations, subject to termination... all nationals should be caught, forced to their knees, and exterminated like mad dogs." This may have been an exaggeration, but (after Ezhov's fall) he was accused of this by the Krasnoïarsk state security organs' Party organization: "By giving such instructions, Sobolev **slandered** the VKP(b) and comrade Stalin, in saying that he had such instructions from the Central Committee and comrade Stalin personally."

(Emphasis added — GF)

The revised and updated Russian version of 2007 reads similarly.<sup>3</sup> The words of the original edition, "this may have been an exaggeration," are omitted in the later Russian edition. No doubt this omission is intended to lend a more anticommunist flavor to the passage. Petrov is a leading figure in the "Memorial Society", a fervently anticommunist organization, and Petrov's publications on Soviet history, tendentious and full of vituperation, cannot be trusted.

Once again, Snyder is misleading his readers here. He claims that this statement was "in the spirit of the national operations of Stalin's Great Terror." *But the very quotation he cites says precisely the opposite of this — that this statement was "slander"* (see above).

Jansen and Petrov (henceforth J&P) inform us that this statement is an accusation made against Sobolev during the investigations, arrests, and

prosecutions against Ezhov and his men (their footnote is to an archival document in Ezhov's files). In fact we only know about the statement at all because of this investigation — it is attributed to Sobolev by his accusers, Beria's men, who were working to investigate and prosecute Ezhov's massive crimes. They and Beria were of course doing so at the behest of Stalin and the Soviet leadership.

Jansen and Petrov, both extremely anticommunist and anti-Stalin writers, admit that the NKVD claim that Sobolev made this statement "may have been an exaggeration." But Snyder does not inform his readers of this fact. Nor was it, in Snyder's words, "Stalin's Great Terror." On the contrary: it was Ezhov's. Ezhov and hundreds of his men were investigated, prosecuted, and many of them executed, because the massacres they committed were *not* authorized by Stalin or the Soviet Party or government. Later in this chapter we cite some of the relevant evidence.

### **Another Lie by Jörg Baberowski**

The second reference Snyder cites here — **Baberowski**, *Terror*, 198, — falsifies just as flagrantly as does Snyder. Baberowski claims that Ezhov said "The Poles must be completely annihilated" (*Die Polen müssen vollständig vernichtet werden*). Baberowski's own footnote to this paragraph gives two references:

Zitiert in Suvenirov, *Tragedija*, S. 208; Jansen/Petrov, *Stalin's Loyal Executioner*, S. 98.

Anyone who checks these sources will discover that the supposed "quote" from Ezhov is Baberowski's own creation — a fabrication. Neither Suvenirov nor J&P documents it. It would not be surprising if Ezhov did say it, or something like it, since it is consistent with his conspiracy. But Baberowski does not say that "it would be logical" for Ezhov to have said it — he says that Ezhov *did* say it. Therefore, he is lying.

Baberowski frequently falsifies as he does here. Several years ago I wrote an article about another example of his dishonesty: "Baberowski's Falsification."<sup>4</sup> But Snyder is responsible for this lie as well. It is a

historian's duty to verify the fact-claims he cites, as we are doing in the case of Snyder's book. This is a "circular citation" — a reference that simply refers again to materials Snyder has already cited. The Jansen/Petrov reference is to the same passage Snyder has also cited dishonestly.

**Suvenirov**, *Tragediia RKKA 1937-1938*, p. 208, quotes from interrogations of Ezhov's men by Beria's men — in other words, the investigation of Ezhov's unauthorized mass murders, undertaken by Beria at the instigation of the Politburo and, of course, of Stalin.

Neither Snyder, nor any of the "sources" he cites here tell their readers that *such evidence as they have comes from prosecutions of Ezhov's men, and Ezhov himself, for massive illegal repressions*. All these authors — Snyder, Jansen/Petrov, Baberowski, and Suverinov — deliberately give the impression that this was official Soviet policy, sanctioned by Stalin and the Politburo when, in reality, the opposite was the case.

### **The Case of "The Polish Military Organization"**

The "Polish operation" was a part of Ezhov's mass murder campaign. Snyder seriously falsifies it. He writes:

Stalin was a pioneer of national mass murder, and the Poles were the preeminent victim among the Soviet nationalities. (89)

This is false, the national mass murder was Ezhov's. Snyder continues:

The Polish national minority, like the kulaks, had to take the blame for the failures of collectivization. The rationale was invented during the famine itself in 1933, and then applied during the Great Terror in 1937 and 1938. In 1933, the NKVD chief for Ukraine, Vsevolod Balytskyi, had explained the mass starvation as a provocation of an espionage cabal that he called the "Polish Military Organization." According to Balytskyi, this "Polish Military Organization" had infiltrated the Ukrainian branch of the communist party, and backed Ukrainian and Polish nationalists who sabotaged the harvest and then used the starving bodies of Ukrainian peasants as anti-Soviet propaganda. It had



supposedly inspired a nationalist "Ukrainian Military Organization," a doppelganger performing the same fell work and sharing responsibility for the famine. (89-90)

Source: (n. 2 p. 471): "For greater detail on the Polish line, see Snyder, *Sketches*, 115-132."

Snyder is wrong. We showed in the first chapter that Balitskii<sup>5</sup> did not "explain the mass starvation as a provocation" of Polish military intelligence or of any other organization — and, of course, Snyder does not cite any evidence that he did.

Snyder cites Chapter Six of his own book *Sketches from a Secret War: A Polish Artist's Mission to Liberate Soviet Ukraine*, 115-132. In this work Snyder documents the fact that Polish espionage really did exist in the USSR during the 1930s!

<sup>6</sup> In *Sketches*, but not in *Bloodlands*, Snyder admits that Polish spies were active in the USSR in the 1930s — the hero of his book, Henryk Józefski, ran some of them — and that some of these spies were indeed active within the Polish Communist Party. For example, he writes:

These, and similar sources, such as the records of the counterintelligence sections of the Polish Army's field commands, can now be read in a different light. They suggest the degree of Polish penetration of the Soviet Union in the late 1920s and the early 1930s, and the political design that lay behind the border crossings, the sabotage, and the support of local nationalists. (*Sketches*, xviii)

Jozewski's Volhynia Experiment united these two goals, supporting Ukrainian culture in Poland while serving as a base for espionage operations within the Soviet Union. (xxi)

By 1932 the work of the Lwow command brought measurable results. In March it could boast sixty-one active agents, and missions in the GPU in Proskuriv, Iampol, Shepetivka, and Kam'iants' Podil's'kyi, in the Dniester fleet, and in the Kyiv and Kharkiv garrisons of the Red Army. (89; emphasis added.)

Many more such quotations from Snyder's *Sketches* could be cited.

In the one confession statement by Witold Wandurski now available to scholars and cited by Snyder in *Sketches* (but not in *Bloodlands*), Wandurski says concerning his Polish communist contacts working in the USSR:

W okresie moich kontaktów z wymienionymi osobami przekonałem się, że mam do czynienia z ludźmi, grającymi podwójną rolę: z jednej strony zajmowali wysokie stanowiska w partii, a z drugiej byli zagaorzałymi piłsudczykami. (504)

Translated:

In the course of my contacts with these people I realized that I was dealing with people who were playing a double role: on the one hand they held high positions in the party, on the other, they were staunch Pilsudski supporters.

Wandurski outlines the way he himself was torn between his desire for social reform, which drew him towards the communist party and resulted in his being arrested several times in Poland, and his Polish nationalism. Due to his close relations with Polish nationalists he was finally drawn into subversive work in the USSR:

Jeśli chodzi o Granta, to po rozmowach i kontaktach z nim nie miałem nawet cienia wątpliwości, że zachował on przekonania peowiaka i wciąga mnie w szeregi POW, abym później pracował w ZSSR.

Tak więc, gdy w 1929 r. przyjechałem do ZSRR, byłem już w gruncie rzeczy, choć nie formalnie, członkiem POW. (504)

Translated:

As for Grant, after my conversations and dealings with him I did not have even the shadow of a doubt that he retained the beliefs of a "Peowiak" (POW member) and he drew me into the ranks of the POW for later work in the USSR.

So when in 1929 I came to the USSR, I was already fundamentally, though not formally, a member of the POW.

As these passages prove, Snyder is perfectly aware that Polish espionage was a real threat in the USSR at this time. But he withholds this information from his readers and pretends that there was no such threat (see below).

Snyder gives no evidence at all that Balitskii "explained the mass starvation" as the result of espionage. This section of Snyder's paragraph appears to be a falsification of his own invention.

### **The Polish Military Organization (PMO)**

(Note: The PMO is often referred to as the "POW" and "PVO", Polish and Russian abbreviations respectively for "Polish Military Organization")

Snyder's chief falsification in this section is his statement that this PMO no longer existed, and therefore was an invention by the Soviet NKVD. He states:

This was a historically inspired invention. There was no Polish Military Organization during the 1930s, in Soviet Ukraine or anywhere else. It had once existed, back during the Polish-Bolshevik War of 1919-1920, as a reconnaissance group for the Polish Army. The Polish Military Organization had been overmastered by the Cheka, and was dissolved in 1921. Balytskyi knew the history, since he had taken part in the deconspiracy and the destruction of the Polish Military Organization back then. (90)

This is a particularly bizarre falsehood by Snyder since many sources, including some Snyder himself cites in his book *Sketches*, document the continued existence of the PMO. We shall demonstrate this below.

Snyder then claims that during the 1930s Polish espionage in the USSR "played no political role" — i.e. was impotent.

In the 1930s Polish spies played no political role in Soviet Ukraine. They lacked the capacity to do so even in 1930 and 1931 when the

USSR was most vulnerable, and they could still run agents across the border. They lacked the intention to intervene after the Soviet-Polish nonaggression pact was initialed in January 1932. After the famine, they generally lost any remaining confidence about their ability to understand the Soviet system, much less change it. Polish spies were shocked by the mass starvation when it came, and unable to formulate a response. Precisely because there was no real Polish threat in 1933, Balytskyi had been able to manipulate the symbols of Polish espionage as he wished. This was typical Stalinism: it was always easier to exploit the supposed actions of an "organization" that did not exist.

Sources:

\* Snyder, *Sketches*, 115-116.

\* "The 'Polish Military Organization' idea seems to have originated in 1929, when a Soviet agent was placed in charge of the security commission of the Communist Party of Poland." (Snyder refers to Strónski, *Represje*, 210.)

Snyder's claims that "this was a historically inspired invention" and that "there was no Polish Military Organization" are false. Not only did the PMO exist during the 1930s; *it continued to exist in the 1940s, under German occupation*. In 1942 German intelligence considered the PMO to be the largest continuing Polish threat in Nazi-occupied Lithuania:

Из отчёта оперативной группы А полиции безопасности о положении в Прибалтике, Белоруссии, Ленинградской области, за период с 16 октября 1941 г. по 31 января 1942 г. ...

3. Литва...

Из польских тайных организаций, действовавших еще в советское время, сегодня доказано существование следующих:

1. ПОВ — Польска организация войскова

2. Млода польска — Молодая Польша

### 3. ЦВП — Связь вольных поляков

### 4. Блок сражающейся Польши

Эти организации в большинстве своем возглавляются бывшими офицерами. Однако и польские священнослужители широко представлены в их руководстве. Главной организацией является ПОВ. Она обучает свои подразделения военному делу и готовит их к партизанской войне...

Source: РГВА. Ф. 500к «Главное управление имперской безопасности (РСХА)» (г. Берлин). Оп. 4 Д. 92 Л. 120-147<sup>7</sup>

Translated:

From the report of operative group A of the security police concerning the situation in the Baltics, Belorussia, and the Leningrad oblast' for the period from October 16, 1941 to January 31, 1942...

### 3. Lithuania ...

Of the Polish secret organizations still active during Soviet times today we have evidence of the existence of the following:

1. PMO — Polish Military Organization ("Polska Organizacja Wojskowa")

2. Młoda Polska — Young Poland.

3. TsVP — Union of Free Proles

4. The Bloc of Fighting Poland.

These organizations, for the most part, are led by former officers. However, Polish priests are widely represented in their leadership as well. The main organization is the PMO. It gives its units military training and prepares them for partisan warfare...

Source: RGVA, F. 500k "Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA)" (Berlin)  
Op. 4 D. 92. II.120-147.

Snyder's bizarre claim that no PMO existed after the early 1920s can, I think, only be explained if we assume that Snyder believed (a) his readers will be too ignorant of the history of this period to realize how incompetent (or dishonest) his statement really is; and (b) those researchers who might know it will be too anticommunist to expose such a useful anticommunist falsehood.

Snyder cites his own book *Sketches*, pp. 115-116, where he describes the beginning of the "POV" (= PMO) case, evidently as outlined by his secondary sources. But Snyder presents no evidence that the PMO had ceased to exist in 1921, "was a historically inspired invention", no longer existed, etc., nor that "there was no real Polish threat."

In reality, there can be no such evidence in principle. Any country with a secret military espionage service in an enemy country would surely deny its existence. Therefore, such a denial would not constitute evidence worthy of attention that the group did not in fact exist. But Snyder does not even cite any official Polish denial of the PMO's existence!

The reference Snyder cites here — "**Strónski**, *Represje*, 210" — states that the Polish Communist Party was riven by fights and splits. In 1929 Viktor Zytłowski, a Polish immigrant to the USSR and "an employee of the GPU" was appointed head of a "security commission" for the Party by its Politburo. In 1934 Zytłowski announced the discovery of a PMO cell in the Polish Party's leadership. Strónski cites no evidence that this charge was false.

In fact the evidence now available strongly suggests the contrary, as we shall see. We have a great deal of testimony concerning the existence and activities of the PMO.

The "Polish Military Organization," Balytskyi had argued back in summer 1933, had smuggled into the Soviet Union countless agents who pretended to be communists fleeing persecution in their Polish homeland. ...The arrests of Polish political émigrés in the Soviet Union

began in July 1933. The Polish communist playwright Witold Wandurski was jailed in August 1933, and forced to confess to participation in the Polish Military Organization. With this link between Polish communism and Polish espionage documented in interrogation protocols, more Polish communists were arrested in the USSR. The Polish communist Jerzy Sochacki left a message in his own blood before jumping to his death from a Moscow prison in 1933: "I am faithful to the party to the end." (90)

Sources:

- \* Strónski, *Represje*, 211-213.
- \* "On Sochacki, see Kieszczyński, "Represje," 202."
- \* For further details on Wandurski, see Shore, *Caviar and Ashes*."
- \* "At least one important Polish communist did return from the Soviet Union and work for the Poles: his book is Reguła, *Historia*."

**Strónski**, *Represje*, 211-213 simply summarizes the PMO conspiracy, especially in the Ukraine, that the NKVD had allegedly uncovered, including alleged contacts with Ukrainian nationalists. Strónski does *not* claim that the conspiracy was fabricated by the GPU, did not exist, etc.

**Kieszczyński**, "Represje," 202: This essay was published in 1989. It is basically a list of information that was known — or merely suspected, since little documentation is given — about the fates of the members of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party. At that time, in 1989, virtually none of the Soviet archival materials now available had been made public. Therefore, aside from a few bits of biographical information, the Kieszczyński article is outdated and useless. Snyder must have known this. But it is unlikely that his readers will know it.

Much more information about Sochacki is now available. We discuss it more fully below. As for Marci Shore, in *Caviar and Ashes* she simply assumes, without evidence, that Wandurski was innocent. This is an invalid assumption in principle: a scholar should always require evidence.

Moreover, there is a lot of other evidence concerning Wandurski too. One confession of Wandurski's has been published.<sup>8</sup> Wandurski is also named by others who were arrested and confessed to espionage for Poland.<sup>9</sup>

In his earlier book *Sketches* Snyder cites the one published confession of Witold Wandurski, in which Wandurski states that he was indeed recruited to the POW:

Tak więc w 1929 r. wyjechałem do ZSRR będąc już przygotowany do praktycznej działalności w POW, chociaż ani Bratkowski, ani Wróblewski czy Wojewódzki nie używali tego terminu w rozmowach ze mną.

Translated:

So, already in 1929 I left for the USSR, being prepared for practical work with the POW, although Bratkowski, Worblewski and Wojewodski did not use that term in their talks with me. ("Zezanania Wandurskiego," 493)

Snyder deceives his readers concerning "the Polish communist Jerzy Sochacki" by omitting the evidence that Sochacki really was a Polish spy. In *Sketches* Snyder writes:

In November 1933, a Polish officer in Kyiv implied in a report to his superior that the communist Jerzy Czeszejko-Sochacki, arrested that summer, was working for Polish intelligence. (123)

Snyder then adds the following remark:

It is perhaps worthy of note that the Second Department's information about Jan Bielewski, the representative of the Polish Party in the Communist International, was much more precise. (123)

Snyder knows, but hides from his readers, that Sochacki was named as a leader of PMO work within the USSR in detailed confession statements by Wandurski. For example:



Przez cały okres naszych kontaktów Grant ostrożnie i stopniowo przygotowywał mnie do pracy na rzecz POW, co zakończyło się wciągnięciem mnie do działalności tej organizacji. Grant był jedną z osób najbliższych Bratkowskiemu i poinformował go o wciągnięciu mnie do POW. Stało się to dla mnie jasne po kilku spotkaniach z Bratkowskim, podczas których wieloznacznie podkreślał, że jest zadowolony z układu, jaki powstał między mną a Grantem. (508)

Translated:

Throughout the period of our contacts Grant was cautiously and gradually preparing me to work for the POW, which ended up by my being drawn into the activities of this organization. Grant was one of the people closest to Bratkowski (= Sochacki) and told him about my being drawn into the POW. This became clear to me after several meetings with Bratkowski, during which ambiguously emphasized that he was satisfied with the arrangement between me and Grant.

In the recent document collection *Sprava POV v Ukraini 1920-1938 rr*<sup>10</sup> (The Case of the PMO in the Ukraine, 1920-1938) Sochacki is named by one of those arrested as a leader of the Moscow branch of the POW, along with Wandurskii and others.

Руководящий центр «Польской Военной Организации» на территории СССР находился в Москве (ранее он находился в Киеве, затем в Минске). В его состав входили:

СОХАЦКИЙ-БРАТКОВСКИЙ — б[ывший] секретарь ППС, агент 2-го отдела Польглавштаба, непосредственно был связан с начальником 2-го отделения военной контрразведки ВОЕВУДСКИМ, зав[едующим] пол[ьским] сектором в Институте Маркса-Энгельса-Ленина.

...

ВАНДУРСКИЙ — б[ывший] член КПП, писатель, б[ывший] директор поль[ского] театра в Киеве, и др. (197)

Translated:

The leadership center of the "Polish Military Organization" on Soviet territory is situated in Moscow (formerly it was in Kiev, then in Minsk). Among its members:

Sochacki-Bratkowski — former secretary of the PPS [= Polish Socialist Party], agent of the 2nd section of the Polish General Staff, was directly connected to the chief of the 2nd division of military counterintelligence WOJEWÓDSKI, head of the Polish sector in the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute.

...

WANDURSKI — former member of the PKK [= Polish Communist Party], writer, former director of the Polish theater in Kiev, and others (197)

Sochacki is named many times in the various interrogations.<sup>11</sup> In his published interrogation Wandurski named Sochaki as well (503). Both Sochacki and Wandurski, along with many others, are named in interrogations of others accused of PMO activities in 1933 published in 2010.<sup>12</sup>

The unavoidable implication of all this evidence is this: Sochacki was indeed a leader of Polish espionage for military intelligence. The name "PVO", the Russian abbreviation for PMO, is the one uniformly used in all these documents. Whether the "official" name for this service, if it had one at all, was still PMO or not would appear to make no difference.

As for Snyder's claim that the Polish Military Organization had been shut down in 1921, here is what Wandurski had to say in his confession (cited above):

Jednak również po drugim aresztowaniu Skarżyński nie został zdemaskowany i wyjechał do Polski, gdzie w 1922 r. przypadkowo spotkałem go w Warszawie w jednej z kawiarni. Ucieszył się z naszego

spotkania i z pasją opowiadał mi o pracy w szeregach POW na Radzieckiej Ukrainie.

Translated:

But even after his second arrest Skarzynski was not exposed and went to Poland, where in 1922, I accidentally met him in Warsaw in one of the cafés. He was pleased with our meeting and passionately told me about working in the ranks of the POW in the Soviet Ukraine.

The continued existence of the PMO is cited many times in the published interrogations and in NKVD reports now available. How likely is it that all of them could have been "forged" or otherwise faked? At any rate, as with any historical statement such a forgery cannot be simply *assumed*, as Snyder does — it would have to be supported with evidence. But it is very likely that a clandestine military intelligence — espionage — organization would keep its existence secret and "deniable." Therefore there is no reason to assert, as Snyder does, that the PMO no longer existed.

In his study of the Comintern<sup>13</sup> during the 1930s William Chase records Bielewski's report to the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) about the dangers of infiltration by Polish intelligence of the Polish Communist Party.

On 4 September, Bielewski wrote a "top secret" document entitled "On the Issue of the Crisis of the Leadership of the CPP" that focused on the dangers posed by fascists, reactionaries, and their agents, especially the Trotskyists. In light of the alleged dangers, he asserted that the destruction of these counterrevolutionary elements by the "NKVD under the direction of comrade Yezhov is a necessary act of self-defense." According to Bielewski, the arrested leaders of the CPP pursued an emigration policy designed to penetrate agents of the Polish Military Organization into the USSR. After listing and decrying the party leadership's errors, which dated back to 1919, and its repeated failure to promote workers' causes, he recommended that the "healthy elements" carry out a complete reorganization of the party and its leadership and enhance its ties to the masses.

Chase expresses skepticism about the charges in Bielewski's report, and suggests that Bielewski's arrest a week later was unfounded.

As fantastic as this conspiratorial explanation seems, it was the assumption upon which Yezhov's NKVD built its case against present and former leaders of the CPP, including Bielewski, who was arrested a week after writing his report. The NKVD's assumption became the ECCI's conclusion.

Evidently the NKVD's suspicions of Bielewski were correct. And Bielewski was on the ECCI (Executive Committee of the Communist International), the highest Comintern body. This is evidence of Polish espionage at the highest levels. Chase prints the notes ordered by Georgy Dimitrov, head of the Comintern, of the confession of Julian Lenski, another high-ranking Polish CP member, concerning the investigation of the Polish Communist Party. (266-273). Along with many others, Bielewski is named as a Polish spy:

[We] also agreed on using Cichowski, Bielewski, Redens [Mieczyslaw Bernstein], and Maksymowski. We used the first three and planted [them] in the Comintern. (271)

I suggested appointing the following individuals, who were the POW members, to the verification commission: Próchniak, Skulski, Bielewski, Bortnowski, Krajewski. (272)

Snyder cites no evidence disproving the existence of the PMO. Soviet NKVD reports do document clandestine Polish spies, some of whom confessed to being members of the PMO.

Thus there is no evidence that Wandurski, Bielewski, or any of the others was forced to *falsely* confess, as implied by Snyder's phrase "forced to confess." (*Bloodlands* 90) Strónski too claims that Sochacki was "forced to confess" (*Wymuszone na nim zeznania*, p. 210). But Strónski also fails to cite any evidence that this was so. Shore, whose book Snyder cites here, also affirms that Wandurski was forced to make a false confession, and also without any evidence. Use of such language as "forced to confess" implies

that the confession was a fabrication. In fact *none* of these authors has any evidence that Wandurski's confession was false.

According to William Chase, Sochacki was denounced as a police provocateur by the Politburo of the Polish Communist Party:

On 10 October, [Osip] Pyatnitsky sent to Lazar Kaganovich, a VKP Politburo member and one of Stalin's staunchest allies, a draft declaration by the Central Committee of the Polish CP asserting that Sochacki was a provocateur. Jan Bielewski [aka Jan Paszyn], a member of the Politburo of the Polish CP, composed the declaration... (119)

Chase gives the political context for these suspicions on pages 118 ff. It was not a case of being suspicious of Poles, but of the heterogeneous origins and history of the Polish CP.

Snyder does mention the "Soviet agent" in the Polish CP. Chase has more to say about this man, Mitskevich-Kapsukas:

An early May 1929 report from Mitskevich-Kapsukas provided material to support that suspicion. Entitled "The Work of Polish Wreckers," the report expressed concern over the growth of factionalism and the increasing influence of former Mensheviks within the Polish CP. It asserted that a wide network of provocateurs had weakened the party's ability to function and that Polish police had hamstrung many organs of the CPWU and CPWB. (118)<sup>14</sup>

Even Snyder suggests that "at least one" Polish communist was, or became, a Polish spy. The Comintern suspected many more than this. At least some of them confessed. Chase's study provides much more evidence about these suspicions. As we have seen, those allegations that we can now check against published primary documents appears to be true.

It is clear from the documents Chase quotes that the initiative for such suspicions came from the Comintern leadership. Stalin was reacting to them, not initiating them.

## More Falsehoods by Snyder about Polish Espionage

Yezhov followed Balytskyi's anti-Polish campaign in Soviet Ukraine, and then reconceptualized it. As the show trials began in Moscow in 1936, Yezhov drew his subordinate Balytskyi into a trap. While prominent communists confessed in Moscow, Balytskyi was reporting from Kiev that the "Polish Military Organization" had been re-created in Soviet Ukraine. No doubt he simply wished to claim attention and resources for himself and his local apparatus at a time of security panic. Yet now, in a turn of events that must have surprised Balytskyi, Yezhov declared that the "Polish Military Organization" was an even greater danger than Balytskyi claimed. It was a matter not for the regional NKVD in Kiev but for the central NKVD in Moscow. Balytskyi, who had invented the plot of the "Polish Military Organization," now lost control of the story. Soon a confession was extracted from the Polish communist Tomasz Dąbal, who claimed to have directed the "Polish Military Organization" in the entire Soviet Union. (91-2)

Sources (n. 7 p. 427):

- \* Strónski, *Represje*, 227;
- \* Snyder, *Sketches*, 119-120.

Neither of these sources provides any evidence for the statements in this paragraph. **Strónski**, *Represje*, 227 concerns events in 1938. None of the matters in this paragraph are discussed there. **Snyder**, *Sketches*, 119-120 outlines the investigation and suppression of the PMO espionage within the USSR during the mid-1930s.

Snyder has no evidence whatsoever to sustain his repeated claim that there was no such espionage and that those who were arrested, named by others, confessed, etc., as Polish spies were not guilty. But instead of acknowledging this fact Snyder uses "argument by quotation mark", putting "scare quotes" around everything he would like his readers to believe is false. This is a form of the logical fallacy of "begging the question" — assuming that which ought to be proven.

Snyder's claim that the PMO did not exist and was a falsification by the NKVD is itself a falsification, an attempt to mislead his readers. As we have shown above, Snyder himself, in his earlier book *Sketches*, acknowledges the seriousness of Polish espionage inside the USSR in the 1930s. Moreover, Snyder cites materials in that book that document Polish spies confessing to participation in the PMO. We have also cited the recent Ukrainian book about the PMO in the USSR and a German intelligence document of 1942 that states that the PMO was the most active Polish underground organization in Nazi-occupied Lithuania at the time.

Snyder, like Strónski, assume that Dombal (Russian spelling of Dąbal) was innocent, forced to confess. This is "begging the question" again — assuming that which should be proven. There is no evidence that Dombal was forced to falsely confess. We do have one confession of Dombal's, dated January 16, 1937 (Lubianka 1937-1938, No. 5). Dombal was arrested on December 29, 1936.

We also have two very detailed reports by Ezhov concerning the "Polish Operation" (Lubianka 1937-1938 Nos. 167, 200). Balitskii is not mentioned in any of them.

Snyder continues:

Thanks to Yezhov's initiative, the "Polish Military Organization" lost any residue of its historical and regional origins, and became simply a threat to the Soviet Union as such. On 16 January 1937 Yezhov presented his theory of a grand Polish conspiracy to Stalin, and then with Stalin's approval to a plenum of the central committee. In March Yezhov purged the NKVD of Polish officers. Although Balytskyi was not Polish but Ukrainian by nationality, he now found himself in a very awkward position. If the "Polish Military Organization" had been so important, asked Yezhov, why had Balytskyi not been more vigilant? Thus Balytskyi, who had summoned up the specter of the "Polish Military Organization" in the first place, became a victim of his own creation. He yielded his Ukrainian position in May to his former deputy, Izrail Leplevskii — the NKVD officer who carried out the kulak operation in the Soviet Ukraine with such vigor. On 7 July Balytskyi was arrested on charges of espionage for Poland; a week

later his name was removed from the stadium where Dynamo Kiev played its soccer matches — to be replaced by Yezhov's. Balytskyi was executed that November. (92)

Snyder's sources (n. 8 p. 471):

\* Nikol's'kyi, *Represyvna*, 337;

\* Strónski, *Represje*, 227.

\* "For details on Balyts'kyi, see Shapoval, "Balyts'kyi," 69-74."

Snyder is inventing stories again. There's nothing in any of his sources about Ezhov asking Balitskii why he had not been more vigilant or Balitskii "becoming a victim of his own creation."

**Nikol's'kyi**, *Represyvna*, 337 simply describes the beginning of the *Ezhovshchina* of July 1937 onwards, with quotations from a few of the central NKVD texts. There's nothing about the POW/PMO, Ezhov report, Balitskii, Leplevskii, or any of the matters specifically mentioned in this paragraph.

**Strónski**, *Represje*, 227 does discuss Ezhov and the PMO case. But it does not deal with any of the matters in this paragraph: Ezhov's January 1937 report, or Balitskii, or Leplevskii. Strónski does not mention Balitskii after 1936.

According to the Bibliography in *Bloodlands* **Shapoval**, "Balyts'kyi", is an article in a Ukrainian language collection.<sup>15</sup> The text of the article ends on p. 73, so the reference cannot be "69-74." Only pages 69-70 give relevant information about Balitskii, but that is interesting.

Балицького заарештували 7 липня 1937 р. у службовому вагоні за ордером № 15 без дати за підписом М. Єжова. Провели обшук, відібрали урядові нагороди: три ордени Червоного прапора, ордени Червоної Зірки та Трудового Червоного Прапора УРСР, два знаки почесного чекіста. Він протримався недовго, і в заяві від 17 липня зізнався, що був втягнутий Й Якіром наприкінці 1935 р. у



"військово-фашистський заколот." А на допиті 26 липня, який провели заступник наркома внутрішніх справ СРСР Л. Бельський, начальник 5-го відділу ГУДБ НКВД СРСР М Ніколаєв-Журід та помічник останнього Р. Лістенгурт, Балицький засвідчив, що особисто завербував своїх заступників М. Бачинського та В. Іванова, начальника 6-го відділу УДБ НКВД УРСР Я. Письменного та начальників УНКВД по Харківській області С. Мазо та по Воронежській області О. Розанова.

Translated:

Balitskii was arrested July 7, 1937 in his official car on the undated warrant number 15 signed by N. Ezhov. They searched him and took away his government awards: three Orders of the Red Banner, the Order of the Red Star and the Red Banner of Labor of the USSR, two awards "Honorable Chekist." He did not hold out long, and his statement of July 17 admitted that he was recruited by I. Yakir at the end of 1935 into the "military-fascist rebellion." And on July 26 interrogation, conducted by deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR L. Belsky, head of the 5th Division HUDB NKVD of the USSR N. Nikolayev-Zhurid and his assistant R. Listengurt, Balitskii testified that he personally recruited his deputies M. Bachinskii and V. Ivanov, chief of the 6th Division UDB NKVD USSR Ia. Pismennyi and heads UNKVD in the Kharkov region S. Mazo and in Voronezh region O. Rozanov. (69)

The dates of these interrogations may or may not be correct — Shapoval gives only an archival identifier that of course cannot be verified.

(Parenthetically, it would appear inexcusable in this day of the Internet for honest researchers to cite archival documents as evidence without either publishing them, perhaps online, or else stating plainly that archival authorities will not allow their publication.)

A statement summarizing Balitskii's confessions and including all the information Shapoval gives above is printed in Lubyanka 1937-1938 No. 144, dated July 21, 1937. Snyder shows no familiarity with this vital and

widely known collection of Soviet primary documents that bear directly upon his subject. Shapoval does not refer to it either.

Balitskii's other confessions have not been declassified. But his statements are corroborated in a very long and detailed confession of D.M. Dmitriev, another NKVD head (Sverdlovsk) of October 16, 1938, after Beria had effectively taken over the NKVD from Ezhov. (Lubianka 1937-1938 No. 356, pp. 577 ff.) Some of Dmitriev's confession can be verified by comparing it with other evidence we now have.

None of Snyder's sources document that "Balytskyi was arrested on charges of espionage for Poland." It appears that Snyder has invented this, or copied it from someone else who invented it first.

We now have overwhelming evidence, including evidence from beyond the borders of the USSR, that the conspiracy of Soviet military leaders against the Stalin regime, often called the "Tukhachevsky Affair", really did take place.<sup>16</sup> There has never been any evidence — as opposed to assertions by Soviet and Russian authorities — that this was a frameup of innocent men. In view of the evidence we now have, it could not have been.

Therefore there is no basis — no evidence — to sustain any doubt that Baliskii really was involved with the Tukhachevsky military conspiracy. Snyder could and should have used these primary sources instead of the older secondary source by Shapoval. As for Shapoval himself, we cannot accept his unsupported word. As we showed in Chapter One by examining one of his articles Shapoval cannot be trusted to quote his sources honestly.

There is some very interesting and important material about Balitskii in Shapoval's article, and in other documents not cited by Snyder but which he should have used. But Snyder ignores all these matters, perhaps because he doesn't know about them, perhaps because they do not support his conspiracy theories.

Even if the idea of a deep Polish penetration of Soviet institutions persuaded Yezhov and Stalin, it could not serve as the evidentiary basis for individual arrests. There simply was nothing resembling a vast Polish plot in the Soviet Union. ... Yezhov told Stalin that Polish

political émigrés were major "supplier of spies and provocateur elements in the USSR." Leading Polish communists were often already in the Soviet Union, and sometimes already dead. Some sixty-nine of the hundred members of the central committee of the Polish party were executed in the USSR. Most of the rest were behind bars in Poland, and so were unavailable for execution. And in any case, these numbers were far too small. (94)

Source (n. 13 p. 472):

- \* "On the "suppliers," see Kuromiya, *Stalin*, 118."
- \* "On the Polish diplomats, see Snyder, *Sketches*, 121-127."
- \* For the data on the central committee, see Kieszczyński, "Represje," 198.
- \* "On the experiences of Polish communists in the USSR, Budzyńska's *Strzępy* is invaluable."<sup>17</sup>

In contrast to Snyder **Kuromiya**, *Stalin* 118 admits that "there may well have been assassination plans against Soviet leaders." Snyder chooses not to inform his readers that Kuromiya, who is extremely hostile to Stalin, considers the idea of conspiracies plausible. In fact we have a great deal of evidence concerning such plots.

As for Jansen and Petrov, on the pages cited by Kuromiya (J&P 40-1) they also assert that the "Polish Military Organization" (POW/POV/PMO) no longer existed. But this is a bluff. As we have explained above, they cannot possibly know whether a secret organization did or did not exist. All they, or Snyder, can in fact know is that it had been *publicly* disbanded — but they do not cite any evidence of that either. We have already shown that there is plenty of evidence that the "Polish Military Organization" continued to exist as late as 1942.

Jansen and Petrov also add:

In September 1935 a new wave of arrests started, with a view to end an alleged POV network. During the same month, the representative of

the Polish Communist Party in the Comintern Executive Committee, B. Brondowski (Bortnowski), sent Ezhov a memorandum on deficiencies in the NKVD work concerning the exposure of the agent provocateur and espionage role of Polish agents.

In the more recent Russian edition of 2007 this passage is the same (page 54).

As head of the NKVD whose duties included state security Ezhov would have been a fool not to heed such a warning from one of the leaders of the Polish Communist Party. In note 87 Jansen and Petrov inform their readers that they "were not allowed to see the document." They repeated this note in the recent Russian language edition of this book (p. 54). But they believe it exists, or they would not have included this information in their book.

**Snyder**, *Sketches*, 121-127 documents the considerable network of spies that the Polish government did in fact have in the USSR. On pp. 125-6 Snyder quotes documents indicating that by November 1937 Polish intelligence had very little remaining of its network. Of course that means that Polish intelligence did have such a network prior to that date. By the evidence Snyder himself cites, that network was active earlier in the decade.

No "central committee" is mentioned by **Kieszczyński**, "Represje," 198.<sup>18</sup>

### **Snyder Falsifies a Quotation**

In the following paragraph Snyder makes a dramatic charge:

One Moscow NKVD chief understood the gist of the order: his organization should "destroy the Poles entirely." His officers looked for Polish names in the telephone book. (94-95)

Snyder's sources are the following (n. 14 p. 472):

\* "Quotation: Petrov, "Pol'skaia operatsiia," 23."

\* "The phone book anecdote is in Brown, *No Place*, 158."

This is the passage in Petrov (really, Petrov and Roginskii, two leading researchers of the Moscow-based "Memorial" Society):

По признанию А.О. Постеля, сотрудника УНКВД по Московской области, «когда нам, начальникам отделений, был зачитан приказ Ежова об аресте абсолютно всех поляков (о всех поляках в приказе не говорилось, но характерно, что было услышано именно это. — Авт.), польских политэмигрантов, бывших военнопленных, членов польской коммунистической партии и др., это вызвало не только удивление, но и целый ряд кулуарных разговоров, которые были прекращены тем, что нам заявили, что этот приказ согласован со Сталиным и Политбюро ЦК ВКП(б) и что нужно поляков громить всюю».

Translated:

As A.O. Postel', UNKVD officer in Moscow oblast', admitted: "When we, heads of departments, heard Ezhov's order to arrest absolutely all Poles (the order did not say "all Poles", but it was characteristic that it was heard that way — Authors), Polish political émigrés, former POWs, members of the Polish Communist Party, et al., this caused not just amazement but a number of unofficial conversations that only ceased when we were told that this order had been approved by Stalin and the Politburo of the CC VKP(b) and that it was necessary to smash the Poles completely.

Snyder does not inform us, as Petrov and Roginskii do, of the source of this statement:

п. 3 — Архив УФСБ по Москве и Московской области.  
Следственное дело А.О. Постеля № 52668. Допрос от 11 декабря 1939 г.

Translated:

"Archive of the UFSB for Moscow and Moscow oblast'. Investigative file of A.O. Postel' No. 52668. Interrogation of December 11, 1939.

Postel' was being interrogated in 1939 in the case of the mass murders carried out by Ezhov and his men. We have further evidence of this fact in Suvenirov's work:

БЫВШИЙ начальник 3-го отделения 3-го отдела по УНКВД Московской области лейтенант госбезопасности А. О. Постель за грубые нарушения законности (необоснованные аресты, применение физических методов и т. п.) был в апреле 1940 г. осужден к 15 годам лишения свободы. (207)

Translated:

Former chief of the 3rd division of the 3rd department of the UNKVD of Moscow oblast', Lieutenant of State Security A.O. Postel', was sentenced in April 1940 to 15 years deprivation of freedom for serious violation of the law (arrests without foundation, application of physical force, etc.).

Postel', that is, was arrested on January 9, 1939<sup>19</sup>, shortly after Beria had replaced Ezhov, and investigated for the crimes he had committed as an NKVD man. He was punished with a long sentence. This is further evidence of Beria's — and, therefore, Stalin's — prosecution of Ezhov's men for participation in Ezhov's conspiracy against the Soviet government.

**Brown**, *No Place*, 158 (actually 158-159) writes:

[NKVD agent Stanislav] Redens confessed that agents hunted down Polish spies by looking through the Moscow phone book for Polish last names.<sup>19</sup>

Brown's source for this is a 1993 article in a rare Ukrainian journal by Ukrainian nationalist historian Serhii Bilokin'.<sup>21</sup> This interrogation of Redens is also reprinted in a book by Leonid Naumov that Snyder cites three times in his footnotes, including on the very next page of his book!<sup>22</sup> Why didn't he tell his readers that they can find it there? Evidently he did not know this because he had not taken the trouble to check the original source.

Here is the passage Snyder and Brown refer to:

После моего отъезда в Казахстан Заковский провел явно преступную деятельность по этим делам, он за 2 месяца арестовал 12500 человек, причем аресты проводились по телефонной книжке, лишь бы фамилия была похожа на польскую, латышскую, болгарскую и т.д. (Bilokin', 41; Naumov, 526)

Translated:

After my departure to Kazakhstan Zakovskii carried out obviously criminal activity in these cases. In two months he arrested 12,500 persons and arrests were made by consulting a telephone book, as long as the name seemed Polish, Latvian, Bulgarian, etc.

Both Snyder and Brown have interpreted this passage incorrectly.

Redens testified that *he had heard* that Zakovskii's men used the telephone book to look for Polish last names. This happened after he had left for Kazakhstan, so Redens did not know this at first hand. Rather, Redens accused Zakovskii and his men of doing so after he, Redens, left to become Commissar of the Kazakhstan NKVD. This was in January 1938, when Zakovskii had just been appointed head of the UNKVD in Moscow oblast' (the Commissar was, of course, Ezhov).

Snyder compounds this error by misreading what Brown wrote. Snyder claims that the officers who used the telephone book were under the command of the "NKVD chief" who thought Ezhov said to "destroy the Poles entirely." The NKVD man who understood Ezhov's order in this way — Petrov and Roginskii add that Ezhov did not actually say this — was Postel', not Zakovskii. Zakovskii was the "NKVD chief", not Postel'.

Redens made this statement under arrest, while he was being investigated for helping Ezhov in mass murder. Redens was arrested on November 22, 1938, virtually as soon as Beria took Ezhov's place as the head of the NKVD. According to Bilokin' (40) Redens was tried, convicted, and executed in January 1940, at the same time as many other top Ezhov NKVD leaders.

Snyder omits all the facts above and the entire context in which these statements were made. The result is that Snyder gives the impression that these tactics were Soviet, and therefore Stalin's, policies. In fact the *opposite* was the case: these men were arrested, and being investigated, for flagrant violations of Soviet law by Ezhov and his cronies. The context, which Snyder completely omits, is crucial, as it is part of the vast amount of evidence we now have that Ezhov carried out these "national operations" independently, without the knowledge of the Stalin government and in an attempt to further its overthrow.

### **Snyder Claims That Stalin Hated All Poles**

Snyder claims that Stalin made a racist anti-Polish statement:

Yezhov reported to Stalin that 23,216 arrests had already been made in the Polish operation. Stalin expressed his delight: "Very good! Keep on digging up and cleaning out this Polish filth. Eliminate it in the interests of the Soviet Union. (96)

Sources (n. 17 p. 472):

\* "Quotation and number: Naumov, *NKVD*, 299-300."

\* "For examples, see Stroński, *Represje*, 223, 246."

Snyder's statement is false. According to Naumov, Snyder's own source, Stalin wrote "pol'sko-shpionskuiu griaz'" — "Polish spy filth" or "the filth of Polish spies" (this sounds wrong in English but is correct in Russian). That is, the "filth" were spies who happened in this case to be Polish. The Stalin quotation is indeed in Naumov.<sup>23</sup> The original source — a note by Stalin on a report sent to him by Ezhov dated September 14, 1937, is at the foot of page 359 of the important document collection we have noted before (Lubianka 1937-1938).<sup>24</sup>

Here is Stalin's remark on Ezhov's report:



«\*Т. Ежову\*. Очень хорошо! Копайте и вычищайте и впредь эту польско-шпионскую грязь. Крушите ее в \*интересах СССР\*.» И. Сталин. 14.1X-37 г.

Translated:

"Com. Ezhov. Very good! Dig up and clean out in the future too this Polish spy filth. Smash it in [u]the interests of the USSR[/u]. I. Stalin 14/IX/-37"

To be able to discern Snyder's falsehood you have to read Russian and to know where to look. Snyder's readers will believe — falsely — that "Stalin called Poles 'filth'!" — as Snyder intends they should.

Snyder tries to make it seem as though Stalin hated all Poles. Later on the same page (96) Snyder says:

People such as the Juriewiczes, who had nothing to do with Polish espionage of any kind, were the "filth" to which Stalin was referring.

He also repeated this same falsehood in one of his essays

...Stalin spoke of "Polish filth." (2010-4)

Evidently Snyder thinks that none of his readers will bother to check the dramatic allegation that Stalin made such a racist statement. Snyder uses this phony quotation in his standard "talk" on his book as well.<sup>25</sup> Later in this same chapter Snyder repeats the same accusation that Stalin hated Poles and deliberately set out to murder them:

Although Stalin, Yezhov, Balystkyi, Lепlevskii, Berman, and others linked Polish ethnicity to Soviet security... (104)

This is yet another falsehood. Snyder has no evidence that Stalin ever did anything of the kind; no such evidence exists.

But perhaps, Stalin reasoned, killing Poles could do no harm. (105)

The breathtaking dishonesty of such a statement hardly needs to be pointed out. Stalin never supported "killing Poles", and of course Snyder has no evidence that he did. Those responsible for the mass murders of the Ezhov period, including of Poles, were arrested, tried, convicted, and in many cases executed for these immense crimes.

### **Snyder Falsifies Yet Another Citation**

On the next page — this whole chapter concerns the period 1937-1938 — Snyder writes the following:

Leningraders and Poles had little idea of these proportions at the time. There was only the fear of the knock on the door in the early morning, and the sight of the prison truck: called the black maria, or the soul destroyer, or by Poles the black raven (nevermore). As one Pole remembered, people went to bed each night not knowing whether they would be awakened by the sun or by the black raven... (97-8)

His source (n. 21 p. 472) is:

\* "Awakened: Dzwonkowski, *Głód*, 236. Black raven appears in Polish and Russian, black maria in Russian...."

Snyder cites no evidence at all to support his claim about the "fear" of Leningraders. He has only one anecdotal story about the "fear" of Poles — and this is about a period a few years earlier (the Dzwonkowski passage).

<sup>26</sup> Without evidence to support his claim about the "fear" of "Leningraders and Poles" it is misleading and dishonest for Snyder to insert these claims into his book.

### **Was the "Belorussian Intelligentsia" the Special Target of the NKVD?**

Snyder makes the following dramatic accusation:

The mass killing in Soviet Belarus included the deliberate destruction of the educated representatives of Belarusian national culture.

Snyder gives the following details:

As one of Berman's colleagues later put it, he "destroyed the flower of the Belarusian intelligentsia." No fewer than 218 of the country's leading writers were killed. Berman told his subordinates that their careers depended upon their rapid fulfillment of Order 00485: "the speed and quality of the work in discovering and arresting Polish spies will be the main consideration taken into account in the evaluation of each leader." (98)

Source (n. 23 p. 472):

\* "On the national purge, see Naumov, *NKVD*, 262-266; flower quotation at 266."

\* "Berman quotation: Michniuk, "Przeciwko Polakow," 115." [This should be "Polakom" — GF]

\* "On the 218 writers, see Mironowicz, *Białoruś*, 88-89."

\* "See also Junge, *Vertikal'*, 624.

As is almost always the case, a check of Snyder's sources reveals quite a different story.

**Junge**, *Vertikal'*, 624 is only a very short list of the NKVD "troikas" in Belorussia of 1937-1938. It adds nothing to any understanding of what happened. It appears that Snyder added it to "pad" his footnote, make it look more thoroughly researched. Meanwhile, as we demonstrate, Snyder omitted crucial information that his sources do supply.

**Mironowicz**, *Białoruś*, 88-89: I had access to the 2004 Belarusian<sup>27</sup> and 2007 Polish editions. The figure of 218 writers killed is in both of them (Polish 2007 edition on p. 94): "Of 238 Belorussian literary figures of the Stalin period only some 20 survived." ("Spośród 238 literatów białoruskich epokę Stalina przeżyło jedynie dwudziestu"; (Belarusian edition: "[[cyrillic]]3 ліку 238 беларускіх літаратараў эпоху Сталіна пражыло толькі 20 тварцоў.") But no evidence or source for this information is cited.

Nor is "the Stalin period" defined. But Mironowicz certainly means the period of the *Ezhovshchina*, 1937-1938, when Ezhov was killing as many Soviet citizens as he could in order to sow discontent with the USSR among the population and facilitate an uprising to coincide with an invasion by one or more imperialist countries.<sup>28</sup>

As we shall see, Belarussian historian Shybeka (Polish spelling Szybieka), whom Snyder cites elsewhere, claimed that the anticommunist Polish AK (Armia Krajowa, Home Army) killed thousands of Belorussian teachers and intellectuals — a fact Snyder omits.

In my 2010 edition of **Naumov**, NKVD, the national operation is covered not on pp. 262-266 but on pp. 207 and following. The "flower of the Belarusian intelligentsia" quotation is indeed in Naumov. Its origin is a quotation from the book by famed Soviet spy D.A. Bystrioletov (sometimes spelled Bystroliotov), *Pir Bessmertnykh*. (The Feast of the Immortals). This is a quotation at third hand. Bystroliotov claimed that these were the words of A.A. Nasedkin, Boris Berman's successor as NKVD chief of Belorussia.

— Слушайте: Борис расстрелял в Минске за неполный год работы больше восьмидесяти тысяч человек. Слышите?

— Слышу.

— Он убил всех лучших коммунистов республики. Обезглавил советский аппарат. Истребил цвет национальной белорусской интеллигенции. Тщательно выискивал, находил, выдёргивал и уничтожал всех маломальски выделявшихся умом или преданностью людей из трудового народа — стахановцев на заводах, председателей в колхозах, лучших бригадиров, писателей, учёных, художников. Воспитанные партией национальные кадры советских работников. Восемьдесят тысяч невинных жертв... Гора залитых кровью трупов до небес...

Translated:

— Listen: in Minsk during less than one year of work Boris shot more than eighty thousand people. Do you understand me?

— I understand you.

— He killed all the best communists in the [Belorussian] republic. He decapitated the Soviet apparatus. He destroyed the flower of the national Belorussian intelligentsia. He carefully sought out, found, pulled up and destroyed every one of the working people who stood out in terms of intelligence or dedication — Stakhanovite workers in factories, chairmen of collective farms, the best team leaders, writers, scholars, and artists. The national cadres of Soviet workers who had been trained by the Party. Eight thousand innocent victims... A sky-high mountain of blood-soaked corpses...

Third-hand quotations — Nasedkin to Bystroliotov to us, over a period of many years — are notoriously subject to distortion or even invention. However, we should note what Snyder does *not* mention in this quotation. Nasedkin allegedly told Bystroliotov that Berman had killed:

- \* the best communists in Belorussia;
- \* government officials ("the Soviet apparatus");
- \* "the flower of the national Belorussian intelligentsia";
- \* Stakhanovite workers;
- \* chairmen of collective farms;
- \* team leaders;
- \* writers, scholars, artists.

But Snyder mentions only the "Belorussian intelligentsia." This implies that they were Berman's special target. But Bystroliotov mentions them third of seven or eight groups of people that he says were targeted by Berman.

Moreover, by omitting the essential context of this statement, Snyder leaves the impression that this mass murder was not just Berman's and Ezhov's aim, but also that of Stalin and the Soviet government. In reality, it was just

the opposite: Ezhov, Berman, Nasedkin, and others were being prosecuted, for their mass murders.

Berman was arrested in September, 1938. At this time Ezhov was still the head (People's Commissar) of the NKVD. But Lavrentii Beria had been appointed as his deputy in August 1938, unquestionably to oversee Ezhov's activities, which had finally aroused the suspicions of Stalin and the Soviet leadership. Berman's arrest must reflect Beria's involvement.

Of equal interest is this: a study of the pages from Naumov's book that Snyder cites, 262-266, reveals some important information that Snyder withheld from his readers.

For example:

Интересно, что в январе 1939 г. был арестован С. Н. Миронов-Король и почти сразу он дал показания, что еще в июле 1937 г. Фриновский в частной беседе сказал ему о намерении Ежова придти к власти, опираясь на своих соратников в НКВД. Конечно, это можно было бы списать на фантазии бериевских следователей. Но вот интересная деталь. Жена Миронова — **Агнесса Миронова в своих мемуарах говорит практически то же самое: «Нам казалось, что Ежов поднялся даже выше Сталина»** 365. Мысли эти, судя по тексту мемуаров, относятся где-то к середине 1938 г. **А вот кто это «мы», у которых такие мысли? Судя по тексту мемуаров Мироновой, общалась она тогда только с членами своей семьи, с братом С. Миронова — разведчиком Давидом Король и его семьей, и с семьей Фриновских... (209)**

Translated:

Interestingly, in January 1939, S. Mironov-Korol' was arrested, and almost immediately testified that in July 1937 in a private conversation Frinovsky told him of Ezhov's intention to come to power on the basis of their group in the NKVD. Of course, one might attribute this to the imagination of Beria's investigators. But here's an interesting detail: **Mironov's wife Agnes Mironov in her memoirs says almost the same thing: "We thought that Ezhov had risen even higher than**

**Stalin."** These thoughts, according to the text of the memoirs, are from some time in mid-1938. **But who is this "we" who were thinking such thoughts? Judging by the text of Mironova's memoirs, she was then talking only with the members of her family, with Mironov's brother, the intelligence official David Korol' and his family, and with the Frinovsky family. (209)**

(Emphasis added)

We have a great deal of other documentary evidence that Ezhov led a conspiracy of his own that was linked to other Right conspiracies, including that of Bukharin and Rykov and that of Tukhachevsky. For example, we have confessions by Frinovsky, Ezhov himself, and other which I have made available online in Russian and in English translation.<sup>29</sup>

Once again Snyder has deliberately deceived his readers. This passage from Naumov's book, which Snyder cites several times, is the proof that he knows about it. Jansen and Petrov also discuss Ezhov's conspiracy. The more recent Russian-language edition of their book, Petrov and Jansen (the author's names are reversed for the Russian edition) discusses it in even more detail. But Snyder fails to tell his readers about it. No doubt this is because *it reveals that Stalin and the Soviet state had not ordered the Ezhov mass murders.*

**Michniuk**, "Przeciwko Polakow," 115 does record the statement quoted by Snyder:

Po raz drugi uprzedzam, ze tempo i jakość pracy dotyczącej wykrywania i aresztowania polskich szpiegów będą przede wszystkim brane pod uwagę przy ocenianiu pracy każdego naczelnika. — Berman 22 października 1937 r.<sup>30</sup>

Translated:

Once again I warn you that the pace and quality of work on the detection and arrest of Polish spies will first of all be taken into account when evaluating the work of each director. — Berman, 22 October 1937

In order to evaluate this statement we need to know more about Berman. Snyder has failed to inform us that Berman was part of Ezhov's conspiracy against Stalin and the Soviet government.

On August 4, 1939 Ezhov gave a lengthy and very important confession about his anti-Soviet conspiracy, during which he questioned Berman's role in the "National Campaign." This confession is printed for the first time in Petrov and Jansen. In it Ezhov describes his plan, which included massive illegal repressions so as to sow dissent among the Soviet population and facilitate an anti-Soviet uprising.

Question: Are you aware of the facts concerning how the dissatisfaction of the population was concretely expressed?

Answer: ... From what Uspensky said I know that flight through the border posts into Poland increased as a result of the provocational conduct of the mass operations, especially in the border regions of the Ukraine. The families of those repressed began to be expelled from kolkhozes, and in connection with that, robberies, arson, and thefts began. There were even a few examples of terrorist acts against workers of the village soviets and kolkhozes. Not only families of the repressed, but rank-and-file kolkhoz members and even Party members began to write complaints.

Dissatisfaction with the punitive policy was so great that local party organizations began to insist that all the family members of persons who had been repressed be resettled from the Ukraine to other regions.

Such in general terms were the results of the provocational conduct of the mass operations in the Ukraine.

We were successful in achieving about the same results in Belorussia too.

At the time the mass operations were taking place B. Berman was in charge of the NKVD of Belorussia.



Question: Was Berman a member of the conspiratorial organization in the NKVD?

Answer: Berman was not a member of our conspiratorial organization. However, Frinovsky, Bel'sky, and I knew by the beginning of 1938 that he was an active member of Yagoda's anti-Soviet conspiratorial group.

We did not plan to draw Berman into our conspiratorial organization. Already at that time he was sufficiently compromised and was subject to arrest. However, we delayed his arrest. In turn Berman, who feared arrest, worked very hard. I only had to give him general directives that Belorussia was badly infested and that it was necessary to purge it in a thoroughgoing way, and he carried out the mass operations with the same result as Uspensky.

Question: With what result specifically?

Answer: He incessantly demanded an increase of "limits" and, following Uspensky's example, put "nationalists" into the category of persons subject to repression, carried out completely unfounded arrests, created exactly the same kind of dissatisfaction in the border regions of Belorussia, and left the families of those repressed where they were.

There were even more warnings sent to the NKVD and the Procuracy concerning dissatisfaction among the population of the border regions of Belorussia than in the Ukraine. We left all these too without investigating them and hid them from the Central Committee of the Party and the government.<sup>31</sup>

Two days earlier, on August 2, 1939, Ezhov had testified as follows concerning Berman:

In Belorussia you sent **Boris Berman? Did you know that he was an old German agent? Yes. Artnau told me that Berman was working for German intelligence as soon as I became Commissar of Internal Affairs.** He had been recruited at the beginning of the 'thirties, when he was [Soviet] resident in Germany. I immediately

established espionage contacts with him, then he was the assistant chief of the INO [Foreign Department]. In 1937 I specially sent him from our organization to Belorussia and made him Commissar of Internal Affairs. There he met with German agents and received assignments and instructions.

That means your widespread espionage organization in the case of an attack on the USSR by Japan and Germany could seize power not only in Moscow but in border areas, opening the road to the invaders. Do I understand this correctly from your confessions?

Yes. That was exactly what we had planned. It's useless to deny such things.<sup>32</sup>

(Emphasis added — GF)

Berman was tried, convicted, and executed in February, 1939, after Beria had replaced Ezhov. According to Ezhov Berman was really a "Iagoda" man. A.A. Nasedkin, on the other hand, was one of the Ezhov's men, tried and sentenced to death in January 1940 with many other of Ezhov's closest NKVD collaborators (Ezhov himself was tried and executed in early February, 1940). As one of Ezhov's chief henchmen it is hard to imagine Nasedkin claiming somebody else was "bloody." It would be "the pot calling the kettle black."

Snyder has omitted all the evidence long available that Berman, along with Ezhov, were conspiring against Stalin and the Soviet government. The effect is to create the false impression that Berman and Ezhov were carrying out the orders of the Soviet government. This is in fact what Snyder states. Once again Snyder has deceived his readers.

There is no hint of all these important details in Snyder's account, and that account is false to boot. Either Snyder knows virtually nothing about the *Ezhovshchina* — i.e. he has not studied the scholarship from it — or he does know something but has concealed it from his readers in order to give his book a suitably "anti-Stalin" and anti-Soviet bias.

According to Jansen and Petrov:

Aleksei Nasedkin, the former Smolensk NKVD chief and from May 1938 on Interior People's Commissar<sup>33</sup> of Belorussia, described the situation at the conference this way: Ezhov approved of the activity of those NKVD chiefs, who cited "astronomic" numbers of persons repressed, such as, for instance, the NKVD chief of Western Siberia, citing a number of 55,000 people arrested, Dmitriev of Sverdlovsk province — 40,000, Berman of Belorussia — 60,000, Uspenskii of Orenburg — 40,000, Liushkov of the Far East — 70,000, Redens of Moscow province — 50,000. The Ukrainian NKVD chiefs each cited numbers of people arrested from 30,000 to 40,000. Having listened to the numbers, Ezhov in his concluding remarks praised those who had "excelled" and announced that, undoubtedly, excesses had taken place here and there, such as, for instance, in Kuibyshev, where on Postyshev's instruction Zhuravlev had transplanted all active Party members of the province. But he immediately added that "in such a large-scale operation mistakes are inevitable."

(J&P 131; same quotation in Russian, P&J 146).

Nasedkin made this statement on July 16, 1939, under arrest and during the investigation of his case by Beria's men. *Having regained control of the NKVD from Ezhov Stalin and his forces were investigating the enormous atrocities committed by Ezhov and his men and punishing the guilty parties.* It is this that the ideological anticommunists like Snyder wish to conceal from their readers.

### **Snyder Claims That Japan Did Not Move Against the USSR After Mid-1937**

The Japanese leadership had decided upon a southern strategy, toward China and then the Pacific. Japan intervened in China in July 1937, right when the Great Terror began, and would move further southward only thereafter. (105)

It is hard to imagine how anyone could make such an ignorant statement and think it would not be noticed. In reality Japan attacked the USSR *twice* after 1937. In the "Lake Khasan" or "Changkufeng" incident of July-August

1938 the Red Army lost about 236 killed, the Japanese Army perhaps twice that number.

But from May to mid-September 1939 a real war was fought between the USSR and Japan. This was the "Battles of Khalkhin Gol" or "Nomonhan Incident." The Soviet Union and Japan each lost about 8,000 soldiers. It played an important part in Soviet negotiations with the UK and France, since the USSR was determined not to fight two wars at the same time, one in Europe against Germany, and the second in Asia against Japan. The Soviet victory at Khalkhin Gol convinced the Japanese not to attack the USSR.

Snyder has to know about this. Evidently he thinks his readers are so ignorant that they would accept his statement here at face value.

### **Snyder Invents "Stalin's Theory of Interrogation"**

Stalin had brought to life his theory that the enemy could be unmasked only by interrogation. (107)

Where did this "theory" come from? Snyder has no documentation for this statement, not even false "documentation." There is no evidence that Stalin had any such "theory." This is yet another falsehood.

### **Snyder Reads Stalin's Mood**

It is evidently important to Snyder's project that Stalin be personally responsible for the mass murder of the *Ezhovshchina*. The problem is that all the evidence now available points in the opposite direction. Presumably this is why Snyder, like other ideologically-motivated writers, repeatedly invents his "facts."

For example, Snyder claims that Stalin was made happier, or something like that, by all the mass murders:

Yet the conversion of columns of peasants into columns of figures seemed to lift Stalin's mood... (107)

Snyder has fabricated this weird factoid. How can Snyder know "Stalin's mood" anyway? Its purpose, evidently, is to portray Stalin as some kind of bloodthirsty monster. Once again, there is no evidence to support it. Historians have no business engaging in this cheap psychologizing, propaganda disguised as history.

### **The *Ezhovshchina* as "Stalin's policy"**

At this point in Chapter 4 Snyder inserts the quotation with which we open our discussion of the *Ezhovshchina* (see the following chapter).

...and the course of the Great Terror certainly confirmed Stalin's position of power. Having called a halt to the mass operations in November 1938, Stalin once again replaced his NKVD chief. Lavrenty Beria succeeded Yezhov, who was later executed. The same fate awaited many of the highest officers of the NKVD, blamed for the supposed excesses, which were in fact the substance of Stalin's policy. (107-8)

For ideologically anticommunist researchers it is important that these mass murders be Stalin's plan and intention. But this is false. When Stalin acted he did so on the basis of reports sent to him through Ezhov. According to V.N. Khaustov, a very anti-Stalin researcher and one of the compilers of several of these invaluable document collections, these reports were falsified.

[[cyrillic]]И самым страшным было то, что Сталин принимал решения, основываясь на показаниях, которые являлись результатом вымыслов конкретных сотрудников органов госбезопасности. Реакция Сталина свидетельствовала о том, что он воспринимал эти показания в полной мере серьезно.<sup>34</sup>

Translated:

And the most frightening thing was that Stalin made his decisions on the basis of confessions that were the result of the inventions of certain

employees of the organs of state security. Stalin's reactions attest to the fact that he took these confessions completely seriously.

### **Snyder: Stalin Didn't Lose, Therefore He Was Always In Control**

Snyder then says:

Because Stalin had been able to replace Yagoda with Yezhov, and then Yezhov with Beria, he showed himself to be at the top of the security apparatus. Because he was able to use the NKVD against the party, but also the party against the NKVD, he showed himself to be the unchallengeable leader of the Soviet Union. Soviet socialism had become a tyranny where the tyrant's power was demonstrated by the mastery of the politics of his own court. (107-8)

Source (n. 43 p. 474):

\* "Khlevniuk, "Party and NKVD," 23, 28;"

\* Binner, "Massenmord," 591-593.

The false logic in this paragraph of Snyder's is worth examining also because it is used by other anticommunist researchers as well. Snyder commits the logical fallacy of "post hoc ergo propter hoc." Because Iagoda and Ezhov both conspired to overthrow Stalin but both failed, Snyder concludes that Stalin was always in control.

Imagine applying this to football games: the team that won was always going to win, and the fact that they won proved that they were in control of the outcome the whole time! "Logic" like this is evidently intended to "absolve" anticommunist researchers of the normal scholarly trouble of having to find evidence to support their assumptions.

These are puzzling statements that require examination. Of course it has to be true that Stalin ended up "at the top of the security apparatus" after Ezhov's removal. But this does not address the main question here, which is: did Ezhov violate the Politburo's — "Stalin's" — orders in pursuing

these mass executions of innocent persons, or not? And when did Stalin "use the party against the NKVD"?

Evidently Snyder is trying to imply that Stalin planned everything that Ezhov did because Stalin had succeeded in removing Ezhov. Of course the latter does not imply the former at all. If Stalin did not know about Ezhov's criminal mass murders and then found out about them, he would have wanted to remove him. From the evidence we have this appears to be what happened.

Once again Snyder appears to be trying to insinuate something that he cannot prove. Naturally Stalin did not have any "court." Nor was he a "tyrant" — whatever that means — or a dictator, one "whose word is law." Stalin had been openly challenged at the June 1937 Central Committee Plenum, and was to be decisively defeated in October 1937 in his desire to have competitive elections to the Soviets as stipulated by the new constitution.<sup>35</sup>

Turning for clarification to the sources Snyder cites here, we find that **Khlevniuk**, "Party and NKVD," 23, 28 contains no evidence to support any of the claims in this paragraph. It merely summarizes in very general terms the situation after Ezhov's resignation in late 1938.

**Binner**, "Massenmord" — actually Binner and Junge, and titled "Wie der Terror 'Gross' Wurde: Massenmord unter Lagerhaft nach Befehl 00447" — also summarizes the events of September to November, 1938. While insinuating their conviction that Stalin was in control of what Ezhov was doing — this assumption is common to all anticommunist researchers — neither Binner and Junge nor any of the other anticommunist researchers have any evidence to support their conviction.

This is pure ideology, common to most if not all anticommunist writers. They "want" evidence that Stalin was "in charge" of Ezhov's mass murders. Unfortunately, all the evidence points in the opposite direction so they can just *assert* that Stalin was "really" in charge.

Binner and Junge do note that as early as 1993 Boris Starkov claimed that Ezhov "had not informed Stalin of his actions." Although Binner and Junge

disagree with this statement of Starkov's they have no evidence to support their disagreement. It should not surprise us that Snyder fails to mention this. But we know now that Starkov was correct. In fact he did not go nearly far enough. We now have the evidence that Ezhov's mass murders were not authorized at all, and were part of Ezhov's conspiracy to overthrow the government and Party leadership.

36

### **Snyder: Noting A Person's Nationality Is "Not So Very Different From" Nazism**

Germany's Nuremberg laws of 1935 excluded Jews from political participation in the German state and defined Jewishness according to descent. German officials were indeed using the records of synagogues to establish whose grandparents were Jews. Yet in the Soviet Union the situation was not so very different. The Soviet internal passports had a national category, so that every Soviet Jew, every Soviet Pole, and indeed every Soviet citizen had an officially recorded nationality. In principle Soviet citizens were allowed to choose their own nationality, but in practice this was not always so. In April 1938 the NKVD required that in certain cases information about the nationality of parents be entered. By the same order, Poles and other members of diaspora nationalities were expressly forbidden from changing their nationality..." (110)

n. 47 — Hirsch, *Empire*, 293-294.

This is another dishonest attempt by Snyder to bracket Soviet policy with Nazi racism.

Snyder has certainly not read the NKVD "requirement" he refers to. He does not even give a date for it. His source, Francine Hirsch,<sup>37</sup> discusses the fact that both the cancelled 1937 census and the subsequent 1938 census permitted all citizens to "declare their national identities 'according to their conscience and not their birth.'" Hirsch then cites, though without quoting it,



an archival document according to which in April 1938 the NKVD began to require *new* passports to record the nationality of the holder's *parents*.

In later pages Hirsch goes on to discuss the struggle between census officials, who wanted to retain self-designation of nationality, and the NKVD, which was concerned about possible loyalty conflicts of persons with foreign roots. Hirsch explicitly disagrees with two other anticommunist researchers (Tony Martin and Eric Weitz) who she believes greatly exaggerate the significance of this NKVD directive.

Hirsch completely rejects any comparison of Soviet and German Nazi policies on nationality because, in fact, they were very different. In a very multinational state such as the USSR nationality was an important component of individual identity. It had nothing to do with Nazi notions of genetic superiority and inferiority.

However, there are some problems with Hirsch's analysis. For one thing, Hirsch interprets the new NKVD policy as indicative of Soviet policy, as she does "terror." She appears ignorant of the fact that in 1937-1938 the NKVD, under Nikolai Ezhov, was out of control.

We have taken the trouble to obtain the text of this document. It has never been reprinted since its first appearance in an obscure Memorial Society newsletter. Now that we have the text of the NKVD directive of April 1938 we can discern a more serious problem with Hirsch's discussion: she misrepresents what the NKVD directive actually says. She states:

The explicit aim [of the "NKVD passport decree of April 1938"] was to ferret out members of "suspect" nations who, the NKVD claimed, were "concealing" their true identities. (275)

The NKVD introduced this decree in April 1938, directing registrars to write the nationality of a passport recipient's parents — and *not* the self-defined nationality of the passport recipient — in newly-issued passports....If a person's parents belonged to two different nationalities and one "belonged to a foreign state," the registrar was to write the nationality of both parents in the passport. ... Even Poles and Germans

who had lived in Russia for generations were designated as people who "belonged to" a foreign state... (294)

Hirsch cites archival documents, so we cannot be certain that she is referring to the April 1938 NKVD passport decree we quote below. But this document is the only one now available. It contains nothing about "suspect" nations and does not mention "foreign states" at all.

Hirsch spreads false information about this NKVD regulation, making it appear much more sinister than its text actually warrants. This is possible only because the document is so hard to locate. Petrov and Roginskii, both of "Memorial Society", refer to it and certainly read it since it is published in a "Memorial Society" publication. Hirsch must have read it too. But her description of it varies widely from the text we have.

Snyder fails to inform his readers that the NKVD order is discussed, and quoted in part, in Petrov and Roginskii, "'Pol'skaia operatsiia' NKVD 1937-1938 gg." Snyder is certainly aware of this fact, as he repeatedly cites this work.

Petrov and Roginskii mention two different NKVD documents of two different dates: "Circular No. 65 of April 2, 1938" and "Explanatory directive of the Department of Citizenship of the NKVD of the USSR No. 1486178 of April 29, 1938." Footnote 18 in Petrov/Roginskii states that the second of these documents was published in the very rare journal "*Memorial-Aspekt*" in 1994. They give no source at all for the first document.

18 Разъясняющее указание Отдела актов гражданского состояния НКВД СССР No 1486178 от 29 апреля 1938 г. см.: Мемориал-аспект. 1994. No 10.<sup>38</sup>

Here is the text of this document from the rare *Memorial-Aspekt* journal (no longer published):<sup>39</sup>

[[cyrillic]]ОТДЕЛ АКТОВ

Гражданского Состояния

29 апреля 1938 г.

№ 1486178

Всем Начальникам ОАГС НКВД и УНКВД

Циркуляром НКВД СССР №65 от 2 апреля 1938 г. (разосланный нач. УРКМ) установлен новый порядок указания национальности при выдаче или обмене паспортов, бязывающий при записи национальности владельца паспорта исходить исключительно из национальности по рождению (по родителям).

В связи с этим, существовавшее до настоящего времени положение, когда национальность граждан при регистрации актов гражданского состояния записывалась та, к которой причислял себя регистрирующийся — изменяется.

Во всех случаях актовых записей национальность должна указываться на основании предъявленных при регистрации паспортов.

Там, где паспортизация отсутствует, уточнение вопроса о национальности регистрирующегося проводится в процессе записи, путем опроса заявителей. При этом надо иметь в виду, что запись национальности должна быть произведена в соответствии с фактическим национальным происхождением родителей регистрирующегося. Если родители немцы, поляки и т.д " вне зависимости от их места рождения, давности проживания в СССР или перемены подданства и друг., нельзя записывать регистрирующегося русским, белоруссом и т.д.

В случаях несоответствия указанной национальности родному языку или фамилии, как например: фамилия регистрирующегося Попандопуло, Мюллер, а называет себя русским. белоруссом и т.д. и если во время записи не удастся установить действительную национальность регистрирующихся, — графа о национальности не заполняется до представления заявителями документальных

доказательств о принадлежности регистрирующегося к той или иной национальности.

Разъяснить сотрудникам загс, что непредставление документов о национальности может повлиять только на запись о национальности, но ни в коем случае не задерживать регистрацию вообще, руководствуясь в этих случаях указаниями главы 3 22 инструкции о записях актов.

Национальность ребенка при рождении, если родители разных национальностей, записывать по желанию родителей, о чем в графе «особые отметки» указывать, что национальность ребенку записана на основании саглашения родителей, т.е. по национальности отца или матери. При отсутствии соглашения — вопрос разрешается органами опеки (согласно ст. 39 Кодекса законов РСФСР и соответствующих ст.ст. кодексов союзных республик). До вынесения решения пункт о национальности не заполняется

Нач. Отдела актов граждан. состояния

майор государственной бе'зопасности

Алиевский.

Translated:

BUREAU OF REGULATIONS

CIVIL STATUS

April 29, 1938

No 1486178

To All chiefs of the OAGS<sup>40</sup> of the NKVD and UNKVD

Circular NKVD number 65 of April 2, 1938 ... has established a new procedure for indicating nationality at the time of the issuance or

exchange of passports, requiring that the nationality of the passport holder be based solely on birth nationality by birth (of the parents).

In this regard, the situation which has existed up to now when nationality of citizens in registering civil documents is recorded as that reported by the registrant — is changing.

In all cases of documentation that nationality should be indicated on the basis of the passports presented at registration.

Where no passport is present, the determination of the nationality of the registrant is to be done by questioning the individual present. Bear in mind that the notation of nationality must be carried out in conformity with actual national origin of the registrant's parent. If the parents were German, Poles, etc., regardless of their place of birth, length of time they have resided in the USSR, or change of citizenship, etc., the registrant must not be recorded as a Russian, a Belorussian, etc.

When the indicated nationality does not correspond to [the registrant's] native language or surname — for example: a registrant's surname is Popandopulo, Mueller, but [the registrant] calls himself Russian, Belorussian, etc., and if at the time of recording it is not possible to establish the actual nationality of the registrant — do not fill out the section on nationality until the individual has presented documentary proof that the registrant belongs to one or another nationality.

Explain to the employees of the ZAGS that failure to present documents about nationality can influence only the recording of nationality, but may not delay the registrant in general, which is guided in such cases by directives of chapter 3 22 of the instruction on recording documents.

Record the nationality of a baby at birth, if the parents are of different nationalities, according to the parents' wishes. In such cases indicate in the section "special remarks" that the baby's nationality has been recorded on the basis of the agreement of the parents, i.e. according to the nationality of the father or the mother. If they do not agree, the

matter should be decided by the organs of guardianship (according to article 39 of the Code of Laws of the RSFSR and corresponding articles of the Codes of the union republics). Do not fill in the nationality until a decision has been reached.

Chief of the Bureau of regulations of civil status

Major of state security

Alievskii

A study of this document yields some important results.

\* Although they do not admit as much, evidently even Petrov and Roginskii have not seen "NKVD USSR circular No. 65 of April 2, 1938." It is simply referred to at the beginning of the document above.

\* The examples cited in the document make it clear that the aim of the new requirement — to determine a citizen's nationality on the basis of his parents' nationality or statement — is to avoid absurdities. The examples given are of persons surnamed "Popandopoulo" and "Müller" who claim that they are Russian by nationality.

\* In such cases the directive requires officials to request documentary proof of nationality. It does not give officials the right to determine this themselves.

In the USSR nationality was an important marker of citizenship. Persons of certain nationalities had certain privileges in certain areas of the USSR where that nationality comprised a substantial part of the population. In Soviet institutions an attempt was made to have "affirmative action" — a proportion of citizens of minority nationalities that approximated their percentage of the Soviet population. Failure to do this would run the danger of the domination of all important posts by Russians, Ukrainians, or Jews, who usually did predominate unless affirmative steps were taken to promote persons of minority nationalities.

It is outrageous for Snyder to suggest that official registration of a citizen's nationality was "not so very different" from the Nazi practice of racial stigmatization, removal of civil and legal rights, repression, persecution, imprisonment and murder. Snyder's doing so demonstrates how desperately he strives to bracket Soviet actions with Nazism whatever the cost to the truth.

Snyder sums up his treatment of the *Ezhovshchina* as follows:

The Soviet Union benefited from the public violence in Nazi Germany. In this atmosphere, supporters of the Popular Front counted on the Soviet Union to protect Europe from the descent into ethnic violence. Yet the Soviet Union had just engaged in a campaign of ethnic murder on a far larger scale. It is probably fair to say that no one beyond the Soviet Union had any notion of this. A week after Kristallnacht, the Great Terror was brought to an end, after some 247,157 Soviet citizens had been shot in the national operations. As of the end of 1938, the USSR had killed about a thousand times more people on ethnic grounds than had Nazi Germany. The Soviets had, for that matter, killed far more Jews to that point than had the Nazis. The Jews were targeted in no national action, but they still died in the thousands in the Great Terror — and for that matter during the famine in Soviet Ukraine. They died not because they were Jews, but simply because they were citizens of the most murderous regime of the day. (111)

This is an important paragraph, in that it combines one truthful fact — the number of people killed in the *Ezhovshchina* — with a fallacious interpretation of that fact. The phrases "the Soviet Union had just engaged", "the USSR had killed", "the Soviet had...killed", and "the most murderous regime" are falsifications, in that they express the assumption that these killings were the policy of the Soviet government and the Politburo headed by Stalin.

It is a substitute for understanding what was going on. The 1932-1933 famine was not deliberate, so the USSR didn't "kill" anybody in it. Nor did "the regime" kill people on a national basis. It was Ezhov who did this, in pursuit of his own conspiracy to overthrow the Soviet government.

In the official sense the Soviet government, the Politburo, Stalin, all bore responsibility for Ezhov's mass murders in that they were, formally, in overall charge of the country and therefore were obliged to take steps to stop criminal activity and to punish those responsible. This is true of all governments and heads of state anywhere at any time.

However, no one holds a government morally responsible for *illegal* crimes and atrocities committed by government officials unless the government discovers those crimes and yet refuses to punish the perpetrators. The Stalin government did vigorously pursue, investigate, prosecute, and punish Ezhov and the NKVD men under him who were responsible for these atrocities.

Therefore it is not true that the Soviet government or "regime" was guilty of these mass murders or that Ezhov was some kind of "scapegoat." Ezhov's mass murders were a rebellion against the Soviet government, Party, and Stalin.

### **Snyder Admits That Poland Was Anti-Semitic, Like Nazi Germany**

Grand deportation schemes made a kind of sense in 1938, when leading Nazis could still delude themselves that Poland might become a German satellite and join in an invasion of the Soviet Union. More than three million Jews lived in Poland, and Polish authorities had also investigated Madagascar as a site for their resettlement. Although Polish leaders envisioned no policies toward their large national minorities (five million Ukrainians, three million Jews, one million Belarusians) that were remotely comparable to Soviet realities or Nazi plans, they did wish to reduce the size of the Jewish population by voluntary emigration. After the death of the Polish dictator Józef Piłsudski in 1935, his successors had taken on the position of the Polish nationalist right on this particular question, and had established a ruling party that was open only to ethnic Poles... (112)

Here Snyder finally admits the truth: *it was prewar Poland that was racist like Nazi Germany*. The USSR was not in the least.



## Snyder Denies Poland Wanted to Invade the USSR Alongside Germany

Piłsudski's heirs in this respect followed Piłsudski's line: a policy of equal distance between Berlin and Moscow, with nonaggression pacts with both Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, but no alliance with either. On 26 January 1939 in Warsaw, the Poles turned down the German foreign minister, Joachim van Ribbentrop, one last time. (113)

In one of his articles Snyder makes the same false claim:

Ribbentrop's master Adolf Hitler wanted a deal so that he could begin a war. For the Nazis, the Soviet Union was the main enemy, and its agriculture and oil the prize. But between Germany and the USSR lay Poland, and the Poles expressed no interest in being the junior partner in the adventure. (2009-4)

This is all false. Up till the beginning of 1939, when Hitler decided to turn against Poland before making the war on the USSR, the Polish government was maneuvering to join Nazi Germany in a war on the USSR in order to seize more territory.

Here is what really happened on January 26, 1939, the date Snyder mentions. Polish Foreign Minister Josef Beck was in negotiations with Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop in Warsaw. Ribbentrop wrote:

... 2. I then spoke to M. Beck once more about the policy to be pursued by Poland and Germany towards the Soviet Union and in this connection also spoke about the question of the Greater Ukraine and again proposed Polish-German collaboration in this field.

M. Beck made no secret of the fact **that Poland had aspirations directed toward the Soviet Ukraine and a connection with the Black Sea...**<sup>41</sup>

(Emphasis added.)

Beck told Ribbentrop that Poland would like to seize much of the Ukraine from the USSR, for that was the only way Poland could have had "a

connection with the Black Sea." Such aspirations could not have been fulfilled without an invasion of the Ukraine. Poland could never have undertaken such an invasion by itself. Therefore Beck was stating his openness to a joint Polish-German invasion of the Ukraine, if the conditions became favorable.

*This means that, far from "expressing no interest in being the junior partner" with the Nazis in carving up the USSR, Beck expressed considerable interest — but, given the current political situation, begged off. Snyder withholds this information from his readers.*

### **Snyder Terms Stalin's Anti-Hitler Move a 'Pro'-Hitler Move**

In spring 1939, Stalin made a striking gesture toward Hitler, the great ideological foe. Hitler had pledged not to make peace with Jewish communists; Nazi propaganda referred to the Soviet commissar for foreign affairs, Maxim Litvinov, as Finkelstein. Litvinov was indeed Jewish — his brother was a rabbi. Stalin obliged Hitler by firing Litvinov on 3 May 1939. Litvinov was replaced by Stalin's closest ally, Molotov, who was Russian. The indulgence of Hitler... (115)

Source (n. 56 p. 474):

\* Haslam, *Collective Security*, 90, 153.

\* "On Litvinov, see Herf, *Jewish Enemy*, 104; and Orwell, *Orwell and Politics*, 78."

That is completely wrong. Let's look at Snyder's sources.

**Haslam**, *Collective Security*, page 90 concerns Litvinov's gloomy conclusions in late 1935 that France was drifting in an anti-Soviet direction. Jakob Surits was sent to "activate contacts in Berlin", since the last thing the USSR wanted was any kind of Franco-German alliance against the Soviet Union. Surits, by the way, was Jewish. At page 163 Haslam outlines similar remarks by Litvinov to the effect that if France would not ally, or "have anything to do with" the USSR, then the Soviets would have to turn towards Germany.

Snyder's reference "On Litvinov, see **Herf**, *Jewish Enemy*, 104" is pure bluff. Page 104 of Herf's book discusses *how satisfied Goebbels was to see Litvinov back in a prominent position after the Nazi invasion*. This says the opposite of what Snyder states, so Snyder probably meant "Herf, 93." There Herf writes:

The replacement of the Jewish foreign Minister Maxim Litvinov by Vyacheslav [sic] Molotov had signaled the end of Soviet support for popular-front antifascism. As the historians of the Soviet Union Mikhail Heller and Alexander Nekrich put it, "for the first time since the founding of the Soviet state anti-Semitism was becoming official policy."

Soviet policy was becoming "officially" anti-Semitic? What is Herf's evidence for such a serious accusation? Herf's footnote 2 is to Heller and Nekrich, *Utopia in Power* (NY, 1986), p. 364. But there the search for evidence ends, for Heller and Kerich, visceral haters of Stalin, have *no evidence at all* to support this statement.

Here is what Geoffrey Roberts, one of the best academic historians of the Stalin period in the West, says:

Why did Stalin choose to replace Litvinov at such a critical moment? A common interpretation is that it was a prelude to the pact with Nazi Germany signed in August 1939. The problem with this explanation is that far from abandoning the triple alliance negotiations with Britain and France, Molotov pursued them with even more vigor than Litvinov. The most likely explanation is that Molotov's appointment was connected to Litvinov's failure to make any headway in the negotiations. (Roberts, *Molotov*, p. 21.)

As Roberts concludes, Snyder, Herf, and Heller and Nekrich, are all wrong. In fact *the opposite* was the case. Molotov was the closest person to Stalin in the Soviet leadership. His appointment signaled redoubled efforts to get "collective security" — guarantees from Britain and France that they would fight Germany if the USSR did. These talks only failed in the end because the British envoy, Admiral Drax, arrived in the USSR by slow boat and

without any authority to sign any agreement. There is no evidence that any desire to "indulge Hitler" had anything to do with Litvinov's replacement.

Snyder appears to recognize this, in a vague way, in the following paragraph:

The alternative to a German orientation, an alliance with Great Britain and France, seemed to offer little. London and Paris had granted security guarantees to Poland in March 1939 to try to deter a German attack, and tried thereafter to bring the Soviet Union into some kind of defensive coalition. **But Stalin was quite aware that London and Paris were unlikely to intervene in eastern Europe if Germany attacked Poland or the Soviet Union.**

(Emphasis added.)

Once again Snyder is completely wrong in claiming that London and Paris had "tried...to bring the Soviet Union into some kind of defensive coalition." In reality, *just the opposite* was the case. The USSR had tried to negotiate a mutual defense pact with the UK and France. This attempt foundered because the British did not want it, and the French went along with the UK. The transcript of the negotiations between the British, French, and Soviet representatives was published in the Soviet Union in 1959 in two successive issues of the Soviet journal *Mezhdunarodnaia Zhizn'* [= "International Life"].<sup>42</sup> The texts are available online (in Russian), including:

\* the August 12, 1939 session, during which British Admiral Drax admits that he has no powers to conclude any agreement;<sup>43</sup>

\* the August 16 telegram from French Foreign Minister Bonnet to the French Ambassador to Poland Noel, insisting that he make clear to the Poles that their agreeing to allow Soviet troops to cross Polish territory to engage German forces is absolutely essential for any collective security agreement;<sup>44</sup>

\* Polish Foreign Minister Josef Beck's August 20 telegram to Juliusz Łukasiewicz, Polish Ambassador to France, declaring that Poland refuses

any military agreements with the Soviet Union. This is the document that definitively sabotaged any collective security agreement, thus guaranteeing both the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and Poland's defeat in September 1939.<sup>45</sup>

[[cyrillic]]Французский и английский послы обратились ко мне в результате переговоров франко-ангლოსоветских штабов, во время которых Советы потребовали предоставления возможности вступления в контакт с германской армией в Поморье, на Сувалщизне и в восточной Малой Польше. Эта позиция поддержана английским и французским демаршем.

Я ответил, что недопустимо, чтобы эти государства обсуждали вопрос о военном использовании территории другого суверенного государства. Польшу с Советами не связывают никакие военные договоры, и польское правительство такой договор заключать не намеревается.

Французский посол сказал, что в таком случае они ответят Советам, что польское правительство отказалось от обсуждения или что французское правительство не взялось сделать формальный демарш, будучи уверено в отрицательном ответе.

Оставляю вопрос об ответе Советам на усмотрение Франции и Англии, оговаривая, чтобы ответ не давал повода для недоразумений.

Бек

A Polish source states that this document was sent to Polish Ambassador to London Edward Raczynski rather than to Łukasiewicz and gives the Polish original as follows, of which the Russian text above is a faithful translation: (Polish) English translation:<sup>46</sup>

The French and English ambassadors have approached me as a result of negotiations of the Franco-Anglo-Soviet staffs, during which the Soviets demanded the possibility of entering into contact with the German army in the Pomorze, Suwalszczyna, and in eastern Little

Poland [i.e. Western Belorussia and the Western Ukraine — GF]. This position is supported by an English and French demarche.

I responded that it is impermissible that these states discussed the question of the military use of the territory of another sovereign state. **No military treaties bind Poland with the Soviets, and the Polish government does not intend to conclude a treaty of this kind.**

The French ambassador said that in that case they will reply to the Soviets that the Polish government has refused any discussion or that the French government has not undertaken a formal demarche since it is certain of a negative reply.

I leave the question of a response to the Soviets to France and England, with the stipulation that the answer will not give any reason for misunderstanding.

Beck

(Emphasis added.)

This was the direct cause of the failure of collective security against German aggression. It was thereby also the direct cause of the German invasion of Poland. Hitler feared a two-front war; his general staff even more so. He would not have invaded had collective security been established. And it would have been established — except for England and Poland.

In his interview in *Izvestiia* of August 27 1939 Marshal Voroshilov put it this way:

[[cyrillic]]Советская военная миссия считала, что СССР, не имеющий общей границы с агрессором, может оказать помощь Франции, Англии, Польше лишь при условии пропуска его войск через польскую территорию, ибо не существует других путей для того, чтобы советским войскам войти в соприкосновение с войсками агрессора. Подобно тому как английские и американские войска в прошлой мировой войне не могли бы

принять участия в военном сотрудничестве с вооруженными силами Франции, если бы не имели возможности оперировать на территории Франции, так и Советские Вооруженные Силы не могли бы принять участия в военном сотрудничестве с вооруженными силами Франции и Англии, если они не будут пропущены на территорию Польши.

Несмотря на всю очевидность правильности такой позиции, французская и английская военные миссии не согласились с такой позицией советской миссии, а **польское правительство открыто заявило, что оно не нуждается и не примет военной помощи от СССР.**

Это обстоятельство сделало невозможным военное сотрудничество СССР и этих стран.

В этом основа разногласий. На этом и прервались переговоры.<sup>47</sup>

Translated:

The Soviet military mission considered that the USSR, having no common frontier with an aggressor, can render assistance to France, Great Britain, and Poland only if its troops will be allowed to pass through Polish territory, because there is no other way for Soviet troops to establish contact with the aggressor's troops.

Just as the British and American troops in the past World War would have been unable to participate in military collaboration with the French armed forces if they had no possibility of operating in French territory, the Soviet armed forces could not participate in military collaboration with armed forces of France and Great Britain if they are not allowed access to Polish territory.

Despite the fact that this position is obviously correct, the French and English military missions did not agree with this position of the Soviet mission, **and the Polish government openly declared that they did not need and would not accept military help from the USSR.**

These circumstance made military collaboration between the USSR and these countries impossible.

This is the basis of the disagreements. Over this the negotiations have been broken off.<sup>48</sup>

(Emphasis added)

There is also good evidence that Beck had been well paid by the Germans to act in their interest — that he was, in fact, a German agent.<sup>49</sup>

### **Snyder Falsifies the "Molotov-Ribbentrop" Nonaggression Pact**

Snyder states "[t]he two regimes immediately found common ground in their mutual aspiration to destroy Poland." (116)

In fact, the very opposite is the truth. Far from "destroying Poland", the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was intended to guarantee the continued existence of Poland in case the German Army overran it. Here is the text of the secret protocol to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact:<sup>50</sup>

Article II. In the event of a territorial and political rearrangement of the areas belonging to the Polish state, the spheres of influence of Germany and the U.S.S.R. shall be bounded approximately by the line of the rivers Narev, Vistula and San.

The question of whether the interests of both parties make desirable the maintenance of an independent Polish State and how such a state should be bounded can only be definitely determined in the course of further political developments.

By this secret protocol, as long as "an independent Polish State" continued to exist, it would be east of the Narev-Vistula-San line and Germany could not occupy it.

<sup>51</sup> That would be desirable for the USSR. Such a rump Polish state would (a) provide a buffer between German troops and the Soviet border; and (b)



be hostile to Germany and more likely to agree to a mutual defense treaty with the USSR, something that, as we have seen, Poland rejected as late as August 1939, less than a month before the Polish-German war.

But no one had foreseen that the Polish government would abandon its country without appointing a successor government, thus leaving Poland without any government at all. Without any command for the military and without any entity with which to negotiate a surrender Hitler had the pretext — and, in fact, a good case in international law — to take the position that Poland as a state no longer existed.

German declaration that Poland as a state no longer existed amounted to a threat to repudiate the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which concerned "the Polish state." If Germany insisted there was no "Polish state" any longer it was free to send its troops hundreds of miles further to the East, to the borders of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia. And this is exactly what happened. Hitler's government stopped referring to "Poland" and began referring to "in the area lying to the east of the German zone of influence."

The USSR could not stand by while Hitler's army rolled up to its pre-1939 borders. No state in the world would have acted this way. Nor did international law demand it. This compelled the USSR to enter "the former Polish state" in order to prevent the German army from marching up to the 1939 Soviet border.

Chapter Seven of the present book is devoted to a more detailed examination of the issue of the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact and questions related to it.

### **Snyder Fabricates a "Justification for Mass Murder" by Stalin**

The irony was that Stalin had very recently justified the murder of more than one hundred thousand of his own citizens by the false claim that Poland had signed just such a secret codicil with Germany under the cover of a nonaggression pact. (116)

This statement is just another outright falsification by Snyder. Stalin never made any such statement, and — naturally — Snyder does not cite a shred of evidence that he did.

### **Snyder Begins His False Account of the "Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact"**

Officially, the agreement signed in Moscow on 23 August 1939 was nothing more than a nonaggression pact. In fact, Ribbentrop and Molotov also agreed to a secret protocol, designating the areas of influence for Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union within eastern Europe: in what were still the independent states of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania.... **now the Soviet Union had agreed to attack Poland along with Germany.** (116)

(Emphasis added — GF)

This is a lie. We have quoted the Secret Protocol above. It contains no agreement whatever to "attack Poland" at all, ever, much less "along with Germany." Of course Snyder cannot cite any evidence in support of his statement here.

Throughout the rest of his book, and in many of his articles, Snyder writes about the "alliance" between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. For example:

...the Nazi-Soviet alliance... ...the union between Moscow and Berlin...  
(116-7)

Two days after the Soviet military victory over Japan, on 17 September 1939, the Red Army invaded Poland from the east. The Red Army and the Wehrmacht met in the middle of the country and organized a joint victory parade. (117)

All these statements are false, and of course Snyder has no evidence to support any of them.

1. There was no "Nazi-Soviet alliance." Snyder repeats this over and over again. But it never existed, so of course he has no evidence that it did. Nor

was there any "union between Moscow and Berlin."

2. The Red Army did not "invade Poland." It sent troops into "the former Polish state" only after the Germans had informed the USSR that there was no longer any "Poland." This meant that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was no longer in effect, because it was a pact concerning Poland — and Germany considered that Poland no longer existed. Germany told the Soviets that if they did not send in troops, "new states" would be formed in Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine. That meant a pro-Nazi Ukrainian Nationalist state, as the Soviets no doubt knew.<sup>52</sup>

Given this situation the Soviets had no choice but to send in the Red Army. No state in the world would have permitted the German Wehrmacht to march right up to its borders without taking some kind of action to prevent it.

3. There was no "joint victory parade." In the next chapter we will expose, in detail, Snyder's lies about the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and related issues.

By opening half of Poland to the Soviet Union, Hitler would allow Stalin's Terror, so murderous in the Polish operation, to recommence within Poland itself. Thanks to Stalin, Hitler was able, in occupied Poland, to undertake his first policies of mass killing. In the twenty-one months that followed the joint German-Soviet invasion of Poland, the Germans and the Soviets would kill Polish civilians in comparable numbers for similar reasons, as each ally mastered its half of occupied Poland. (117-118)

Every one of these statements is false. Naturally Snyder has no evidence for any of them.

\* The "Polish operation" was not "Stalin's Terror." The many murders in the "Polish operation" were carried out by Ezhov in pursuit of his conspiracy against the Soviet government and Party. Stalin had nothing to do with them. This is well demonstrated by the evidence we have. At least one expert though highly anticommunist historian, Khaustov, has admitted that this is what happened.

\* The USSR did not carry out any "terror" in Poland at all. As we shall see, Snyder is unable to find any evidence of such a "terror."

\* To say that Hitler's "mass killing" was "thanks to Stalin" is the reverse of the truth. As though Hitler would not have killed Poles if he had occupied all of Poland instead of just the Western half! On the contrary: he would have killed many more Poles if he had had the whole country under his control.

\* Hitler's conquest of Poland and the subsequent mass killings of Polish citizens were the direct result of the Polish government's rejection of collective security, and then of their abandonment of their own country, leaving it without any government. *The Polish government must share with Hitler the responsibility for the immense death and destruction visited upon Poland by Hitler.*

The Polish regime's refusal either to agree to collective security with the USSR or to avoid war with Germany by yielding to Hitler's demands (more German rights in Danzig and a "corridor" to it and to East Prussia) was suicidal. No one believed that the Polish army could stand up to the Germany army unaided. Yet the Polish regime flatly refused any alliance with the Red Army, the only military force that could have intervened in a timely manner if Germany should attack Poland, as in fact it did.

\* The Polish government made the situation qualitatively worse by committing an unprecedented act of cowardice. The government, along with the military leaders, abandoned the country and crossed the border to internment in Rumania. Since Rumania was neutral in the war it had to "intern" the Polish government, rather than permit it to operate safely on Rumanian soil, or be guilty of a hostile act against Germany.

Moreover, the Polish government failed to appoint a successor government, either within Poland or in exile, before fleeing into Rumania and being interned. Once interned, the former Polish government figures could not perform and governmental functions. That meant that there was no Polish government and no one with whom Hitler could negotiate. It also meant that the Polish Army, parts of which were still fighting — Warsaw had not yet fallen to the Germans, for example — no longer had a legitimate

commander. Therefore, as a state, Poland had ceased to exist. No other government in World War 2 acted in this manner.

Naturally, one could also blame the governments of Great Britain and France, who failed to honor their obligation to attack Germany if Germany attacked Poland. Their actions proved that Soviet suspicions were correct. The Western Allies were not inclined to hinder Hitler as long as he kept "moving East", towards the hated Soviet Union.

Even Winston Churchill acknowledged that the Soviet Union was correct to enter Poland rather than allow the German army to march right up to the pre-1939 Soviet border. In his radio speech of October 1, 1939, printed in the *New York Times* on October 2, 1939, p. 6, Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, said:

Russia has pursued a cold policy of self-interest. We could have wished that the Russian Armies should be standing on their present line as the friends and allies of Poland. **But that the Russian Armies should stand on this line was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace.**

Churchill also agreed that it was in the interest of the Allies to have the Red Army occupying these territories:

**... here these interests of Russia fall into the same channel as the interests of Britain and France.**

(Emphasis added — GF)

The Soviets declared their neutrality in the German-Polish war. Their neutrality was accepted by every state as well as by the League of Nations.

\* The Soviets killed *no* "Polish civilians" in the following 21 months, let alone for "comparable reasons" to Hitler's. Hitler's reason was the extermination of Slavs!

\* The part of Poland "occupied" by the Soviet Union had been seized by Poland in an imperialist war in 1919-1920. Poles were a minority among

the population. The Western Allies immediately recognized that Poland had no claim to these territories and they would not be returned to Poland after the war ended.

Since 1939 these same lands have been part of Belarus and Ukraine and remain so today. The Polish government no longer claims that these lands are a part of Poland or should be returned to Poland.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> See Furr, "The Moscow Trials and the 'Great Terror' of 1937-1938: What the Evidence Shows," cited in the last chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Martin, "Origins" is in fact an overview of Soviet ethnic policy. But it is composed from the materials available in the mid-1990s, when a great many important primary sources on the Ezhovshchina had not yet been published, and so is of limited usefulness today.

<sup>3</sup> [[cyrillic]]"Так, первый секретарь Красноярского крайкома С. М. Соболев, выступая на оперативных совещаниях УНКВД, заявлял: «Довольно играть в интернационализм, надо бить всех этих поляков, корейцев, латышей, немцев и т.д., все это продажные нации, подлежащие истреблению». Всех националов надо ловить, ставить на колени И истреблять как бешеных собаю». После падения Ежова, парторганизация УНКВД осудила Соболева, посчитав, что «давая такие указания, Соболев клеветал на ЦК ВКП(б) и тов. Сталина, говоря, что он такие указания имеет от ЦК ВКП(б) и лично от тов. Сталина.»" (114)

<sup>4</sup> Grover Furr, "Baberowski's Falsification." At: <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/furr-baberowski10.html>

<sup>5</sup> Snyder uses "Balytskyi.", a Ukrainian spelling (another, more accurate, transliteration of the Ukrainian would be "Balyts'kyy") though almost all the sources we have concerning him are in Russian. I will use the Russian spelling.

<sup>6</sup> It is possible that the Polish military intelligence no longer referred to itself as the POW, the Polish acronym for the "Polska Organizacja Wojskowa" or Polish Military Organization, although some of those arrested as Polish spies had been in the POW and referred to the Polish underground intelligence organization as the POW.

<sup>7</sup> At: <http://9may.ru/unsecret/m10009059>

<sup>8</sup> Maria Wosiek. "Zeznania Witolda Wandurskiego we wienzeniu GPU." Pamietnik Teatralny, Nos 3-4, 1996, pp. 487-510.

<sup>9</sup> Sprava 'Pol's'koi Orhanizatsii Viys'kovoii' v Ukraini 1920-38 rr. Kyiv, 2011, pp. 197, 198, 220, 299. See following footnote.

<sup>10</sup> [[cyrillic]]СПРАВА «Польської"Організації" Військової» в Україні. 1920-1938 рр. Збірник документів та матеріалів. Київ 2011.

<sup>11</sup> See pages 198, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 209, 210, 216, 217, 218, 225, 241, 249, 268, 270, 271, 272, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 293, 296, 298, 308, 312, 316, 354, 408.

<sup>12</sup> [[cyrillic]]Томазова Наталія. Олександр Скібневський: До Історії Польського Театру в Києві. Пам'ятки. 2010, се. 215-245. (Natalia Tomazova. Oleksandr Skibnevs'kyu. Do istorii pol's'koi teatru v Kyevi. Pam'iatki, 2010):

<sup>13</sup> William Chase. Enemies Within the Gates? The Comintern and the Stalinist Repression, 1934-1939. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001, p. 264

<sup>14</sup> Communist Party of Western Ukraine and Communist Party of Western Belorussia.

<sup>15</sup> [[cyrillic]]Юрій Шаповал, Володимир Пристайко, Вадим Золотарьов. ЧК-ГПУ-НКВД в Україні: особи, факти, документи. К.: Абрис. 1997.

<sup>16</sup> For example, see Grover Furr, *The Murder of Sergei Kirov* Chapter 17; Furr and Vladimir L. Bobrov, "Marshal S.M. Budiennyi on the Tukhachevsky Trial. Impressions of an Eye-Witness" (in Russian). *Klio* No. 2 (2012), pp. 8-24, available at:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/budennyi\\_klio12.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/budennyi_klio12.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Budzyńska, "Strzępy" is a book of personal memoirs, not relevant to any of the specific assertions Snyder makes here.

<sup>18</sup> If there were, why go to a Polish book published in the 1980s to find out about it? There has to be a great deal of detailed information in former communist archives.

<sup>19</sup> [[cyrillic]]"Документ № 22. Из материалов расследования прокуратуры Московского военного округа методов проведения «латышской операции» НКВД СССР в 1938 г. 26.04.1955. Изд. «Рано или поздно Сталина все равно убьют»: Оппозиционеры под ударом Кремля и Лубянки. 1926-1936 гг. Архив Александра Н. Яковлева. At: <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/inside/almanah-doc/1012583>, Title page at: <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/inside/almanah-doc/1012214>

<sup>20</sup> Kate Brown. *A Biography of No Place. From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004 (2003).

<sup>21</sup> [[cyrillic]]«Документи з історії НКВД УРСР» Наше Минуте 1(6)1993, 39-41. "Dokumenty z istorii NKVD URSR". *Nashe Minute* 1 (b) 1993, 39-41.

<sup>22</sup> Леонид Наумов. *Сталин и НКВД* (М.: Новый Хронограф, 2010). Leonid Naumov. *Stalin I NKVD*. Moscow: Novyi Khronograf, 2010.

<sup>23</sup> In my edition of Naumov's book this quotation is on page 209 and 210.

<sup>24</sup> It is also online at the very bottom of the page at:



<sup>25</sup> Stronski, Represje, 223, 246: the former page recounts some sentences of terms in a camp or to death; the latter, of some persons whose bodies were found by the Germans in Vinnitsa in 1943, where they organized another mass exhumation for propaganda purposes and wrote a report along lines identical to their Katyn report. Stronski's point here is simply that some of these victims had Polish-sounding names.

<sup>26</sup> In Dzwonkowski, Głód, 236 the passage about the "czarny kruk", or "black raven" concerns 1933 and 1934, during the famine, while Snyder's text concerns the "Polish Operation" of 1937-1938.

<sup>27</sup> As a republic of the Soviet Union the country, now called Belarus after its name in its official language (Belarusian), was usually called "Belorussia" or "the Belorussian SSR." Between 1921 and 1939 Belorussia was divided between the USSR and Poland.

<sup>28</sup> See Furr, "The Moscow Trials and the Great Terror...", for the evidence for this statement.

<sup>29</sup> Grover Furr, "The Moscow Trials and the "Great Terror" of 1937-1938: What the Evidence Shows." (Written July 2010). At: [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/trial\\_ezhovshchina\\_update0710.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/trial_ezhovshchina_update0710.html)

<sup>30</sup> If this document dated October 22, 1937 has been published, I can't find it.

<sup>31</sup> Nikita Petrov, Marc Jansen. "Stalinskii pitomets" — Nikolai Ezhov. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008, pp. 367-379. At: Russian original at: <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/ezhov080439ru.html>

<sup>32</sup> Ezhov interrogation 08.02.39 by Rodos, In Aleksei Polianskii, Ezhov. Istoriia «zheleznogo» stalinskogo narkoma. Moscow: «Veche», «Aria-AiF», 2001. 275-280. At: <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/ezhovinterrogs.html> Russian original at: <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/ezhovpokazaniia.html>

<sup>33</sup> Jansen and Petrov mean "People's Commissar of Internal Affairs"

<sup>34</sup> Lubyanka Golgofa p. 6. Now online at:

[http://www.k2x2.info/politika/lubjanka\\_sovetskaja\\_yelita\\_na\\_stalinskoi\\_golgofe\\_1937\\_1938/p4.php](http://www.k2x2.info/politika/lubjanka_sovetskaja_yelita_na_stalinskoi_golgofe_1937_1938/p4.php)

<sup>35</sup> See Grover Furr, "Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform. Part One." *Cultural Logic* 2005, paragraphs 112 ff., and the sources cited there. At: <http://clogic.eserver.org/2005/furr.html>

<sup>36</sup> Starkov's statement is in his essay "Narkom Ezhov", in J. Arch Getty and Roberta T. Manning, eds., *Stalinist Terror. New Perspectives* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 38.

<sup>37</sup> *Empire of Nations. Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Cornell U.P. 2005), 293-4.

<sup>38</sup> This is confirmed in Аллен Блюм, Мартина Меспуле. Бюрократическая анархия Статистика и власть при Сталине. Москва: РОССКЯН 2008, п. 223. At: <http://burokraticeskaya-anarhiya.blogspot.com/2011/10/67.html> ; note 52 to Chapter 10 at: <http://burokraticeskaya-anarhiya.blogspot.com/2011/10/77.html> : This is a translation of Alain Blum et Martine Mespoulet. *L'anarchie bureaucratique. Statistique et pouvoir sous Staline*. Paris, Éditions la Découverte 2003.

<sup>39</sup> The journal *Memorial-Aspekt* is apparently not held by any American library. I would like to thank my valued colleague Vladimir L. Bobrov of Moscow for obtaining this document for me.

<sup>40</sup> "Otdel aktov grazhdanskogo sostoiania" — Division of documents of civil status.

<sup>41</sup> Original in *Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik...* Serie D. Bd. V. S. 139-140. English translation in *Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945. Series D. Vol. V*. The document in question is No. 126, pp. 167-168; this quotation on p. 168. Also in Russian in *God Krizisa* T. 1, Doc. No. 120.

<sup>42</sup> : "Peregovory voennykh missii SSSR, Anglii i Frantsii v Moskve v Avguste 1939 g." *Mezhdunaronaia Zhizn'* 2 (1959), 144-158; 3 (1959), 139-158.

<sup>43</sup> At: [http://www.hrono.info/dokum/193\\_dok/19390812cccp.html](http://www.hrono.info/dokum/193_dok/19390812cccp.html)

<sup>44</sup> At: [http://www.hrono.info/dokum/193\\_dok/19390816bonne.html](http://www.hrono.info/dokum/193_dok/19390816bonne.html)

<sup>45</sup> At: [http://www.hrono.info/dokum/193\\_dok/19390820bek.html](http://www.hrono.info/dokum/193_dok/19390820bek.html)

<sup>46</sup> At: <http://www.ibidem.com.pl/zrodla/1918-1939/polityka/miedzynarodowa/1939-08-20-telegram-beck-londyn.html>

<sup>47</sup> [[cyrillic]]"Интервью главы советской военной миссии К. Е. Ворошилова о переговорах с военными миссиями Великобритании и Франции." At: [http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/193\\_dok/19390827vorosh.html](http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/193_dok/19390827vorosh.html)

<sup>48</sup> Translation of the first two paragraphs of Voroshilov's statement is taken from "Soviet 'Explains' Break with Allies", *New York Times* August 27 1939, p. 28

<sup>49</sup> See the document cited at: <http://tinyurl.com/beck-german-agent-1> from a large collection of documents from Soviet archives. A discussion of this important document took place in 2011 on the H-RUSSIA mailing list. See the posts beginning June 29, 2011 at: <http://tinyurl.com/beck-german-agent-1> and ending November 21, 2011 at: <http://tinyurl.com/beck-german-agent-11>

<sup>50</sup> From Paul Halsall's "Modern History Sourcebook", Fordham University. At: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1939pact.html>

<sup>51</sup> See here for a map: <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/m-rpact.html>

<sup>52</sup> Some primary source documentation of these statements may be found in an appendix to my article on the M-R Pact at:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/mlg09/no\\_partition.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/mlg09/no_partition.html) See also Chapter Seven of the present work.

## **Chapter 6. *The Ezhovshchina, or "Great Terror", and the "Polish Operation": What Really Happened***

Snyder's fourth chapter relies upon a completely falsified account of this important topic.

...and the course of the Great Terror certainly confirmed Stalin's position of power. Having called a halt to the mass operations in November 1938, Stalin once again replaced his NKVD chief. Lavrenty Beria succeeded Yezhov, who was later executed. The same fate awaited many of the highest officers of the NKVD, blamed for the supposed excesses, which were in fact the substance of Stalin's policy. (107-8)

Snyder is wrong. We know now, from primary source evidence, that Ezhov acted directly against "Stalin's" — the Soviet leadership's — "policy", i.e. intentions. This information was available when Snyder was writing his book. Either he was ignorant of this research and evidence or he knew about it but suppressed any discussion of it from his book. If the former, Snyder is incompetent and had no business writing about the subject at all. If the latter, he has deliberately deceived his readers.

We now have the telegram sent on June 17, 1937, just prior to the June Central Committee plenum, in which Ezhov transmits the request of S.M. Mironov, NKVD chief in Western Siberia, reporting the threat of revolts by subversives in concert with Japanese intelligence. In it Mironov reports that Robert I. Eikhe, Party First Secretary of Western Siberia, will request the ability to form a "troika" to deal with this threat.<sup>1</sup> We also have at least one of the reports Mironov sent to Ezhov to justify this request.<sup>2</sup>

Apparently Eikhe, and then a number of other First Secretaries, approached Stalin and the Politburo after the Plenum and asked for these special powers to deal with conspiracies, rebellions, and revolts in their areas. This led to the Politburo Decree "On Anti-Soviet elements" of July 2, 1937, which authorized all First Secretaries to arrest "kulaks and criminals" who had

returned to their areas, shoot the "most dangerous" of them, and exile the rest to other areas.<sup>3</sup>

This vision of organized internal revolts in conjunction with foreign powers (Japan, in the case of Western Siberia) occurred in the context of the Tukhachevsky Affair of less than a month earlier. In that case the top commanders of the Red Army were convicted of collaboration with foreign powers and a plot to overthrow the Soviet government. The loyalty of the military commanders was in grave doubt — rightly so, as we now know. The NKVD appeared to be the only force that Soviet power could rely upon. It did not become clear until much later that Ezhov himself was conspiring with foreign powers to overthrow the government and Party leadership, and was using massive executions of innocent people to stir up resentment.

The document authorizing the NKVD to proceed on a virtual war footing against the rebels is Order No. 00447 of July 30, 1937. It is available in Russian in many places, and (in excerpt) also in English.<sup>4</sup>

This document authorizes actions only against those involved in rebellions and criminal activities:

#### I. GROUPS SUBJECT TO PUNITIVE MEASURES.

1. Former kulaks who have returned home after having served their sentences and who continue to carry out anti-Soviet sabotage.
2. Former kulaks who have escaped from camps or from labor settlements, as well as kulaks who have been in hiding from dekulakization, who carry out anti-Soviet activities.
3. Former kulaks and socially dangerous elements who were members of insurrectionary, fascist, terroristic, and bandit formations, who have served their sentences, who have been in hiding from punishment, or who have escaped from places of confinement and renewed their anti-Soviet, criminal activities.

4. Members of anti-Soviet parties (SRs, Georgian Mensheviks, Dashnaks, Mussavatists, Ittihadists, etc.), former Whites, gendarmes, bureaucrats, members of punitive expeditions, bandits, gang abettors, transferees, re-émigrés, who are in hiding from punishment, who have escaped from places of confinement, and who continue to carry out active anti-Soviet activities.

5. Persons unmasked by investigators and whose evidence is verified by materials obtained by investigative agencies and who are the most hostile and active members of Cossak-White Guard insurrectionary organizations slated for liquidation and fascist, terroristic, and espionage-saboteur counterrevolutionary formations. In addition, punitive measures are to be taken against elements of this category who are kept at the present under guard, whose cases have been fully investigated but not yet considered by the judicial organs.

6. The most active anti-Soviet elements from former kulaks, members of punitive expeditions, bandits, Whites, sectarian activists, church officials, and others, who are presently held in prisons, camps, labor settlements, and colonies and who continue to carry out in those places their active anti-Soviet sabotage.

7. Criminals (bandits, robbers, recidivist thieves, professional contraband but not yet considered by the judicial organs.

[[[SWAMPMAN NOTE: This is the text in the book. I've been correcting the occasional stray punctuation and obvious typo; this is the first significant lapse in formatting without explanation. It's not clear if the error is from Furr, or Getty & Naumov.]] 8. Criminal elements in camps and labor settlements who are carrying out criminal activities in them. 9. All of the groups enumerated above, to be found at present in the countryside — i.e., in kolkhozy, sovkhozy, on agricultural enterprises — as well as in the city — i.e., at industrial and trade enterprises, in transport, in Soviet institutions, and in construction — are subject to punitive measures. (G&N 474-5)

For the next year or more Stalin was flooded with reports of conspiracies and revolts from all over the USSR. A large number of these have been

published (in Russian). Undoubtedly a great many more remain unpublished in former Soviet archives throughout the former Soviet Union. According to Khaustov, a very anti-Stalin researcher and one of the compilers of several of these invaluable document collections, Stalin believed these reports.

И самым страшным было то, что Сталин принимал решения, основываясь на показаниях, которые являлись результатом вымыслов конкретных сотрудников органов госбезопасности. Реакция Сталина свидетельствовала о том, что он воспринимал эти показания в полной мере серьезно.<sup>5</sup>

Translated:

And the most frightening thing was that Stalin made his decisions on the basis of confessions that were the result of the inventions of certain employees of the organs of state security. Stalin's reactions attest to the fact that he took these confessions completely seriously.

It is important to ideologically anticommunist researchers that these mass murders be seen as Stalin's plan and intention. Khaustov is honest enough to admit that the evidence does not bear this out. Some, and no doubt many, of the confessional and investigative documents Ezhov sent on to Stalin and the Soviet leadership must have been falsifications. But in reality Khaustov has no idea which were fabrications and which were not.

What is important here is that *Khaustov admits the existence of a major conspiracy by Ezhov and concedes that Stalin was deceived by him*. Ezhov admits as much in the confessions of his that we now have. *Khaustov admits that Stalin acted in good faith on the basis of evidence presented to him by Ezhov*, much of which must have been false.

Russian historian Iurii Zhukov suggests that after Eikhe got these special powers for Western Siberia the other First Secretaries asked Stalin for the same powers, and received them. Evidently there was a connection between this campaign of repressions, carried out as a virtual war against rebellious anti-Soviet forces throughout the country, and the cancellation of the competitive elections that had been stipulated under the new 1936 Soviet



Constitution. Stalin and his supporters in the central Soviet government and Party fought for such elections but failed to win the Central Committee to approve them. Zhukov has traced the final decision not to hold such elections to October 11, 1937. He also located a draft or sample ballot for contested elections — a ballot never used but preserved in a Soviet archive.<sup>6</sup>

## **Ezhov's Conspiracy Gradually Uncovered**

Beginning perhaps at the January 1938 Central Committee Plenum Stalin and the Politburo began to uncover evidence of massive illegal repressions, first of all against Party members. Politburo member Pavel Postyshev was dismissed from his post on the grounds that he was killing off the Party infrastructure.<sup>7</sup> From what we can tell from the documents now published the suspicions continued to grow in the Politburo that massive, unauthorized repressions were going on. In August 1938 Ezhov's second-in-command, Mikhail Frinovskii, was replaced by Lavrentii Beria. Evidently Beria was chosen as a reliable person to keep watch over Ezhov, as Ezhov himself later stated.

In November 1938 Ezhov was convinced to resign his position as Commissar of the NKVD. We are not sure exactly how everything happened. There is some evidence that Ezhov and his men planned one final desperate effort at seizure of power by assassinating Stalin and others at the November 1938 celebration of the Bolshevik Revolution but that timely arrests forestalled this.<sup>8</sup> Zhukov claims to have seen Ezhov's actual resignation and claims that it was done in a rushed way, on any scrap of paper available. Zhukov concludes from this that Ezhov was only persuaded to resign with difficulty.<sup>9</sup>

As soon as Ezhov resigned, to be replaced by Beria, orders were given to immediately stop all the repressions, to repeal all the NKVD Operational Orders that enabled them, to stop the work of the *troikas*, and to re-emphasize the need for oversight by the Prosecutor's Office of all cases of arrest. This document is available in English.<sup>10</sup>

After this there began a flood of reports to Beria and the central Party leadership concerning massive illegitimate repressions and shootings on the part of local NKVD groups. We have many of these documents now, and no doubt there are many more of them. The central Party leadership began to investigate.

On January 29, 1939 Beria, Andreev, and Malenkov signed a report about the massive abuses during Ezhov's tenure.<sup>11</sup> It begins as follows:

We consider it essential to report to you the following conclusions about the situation of cases in the NKVD USSR:

1. During the period of time that com. Ezhov headed the Narkomvnutel [People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, the NKVD] of the USSR right up until the moment he left the duties of People's Commissar a majority of the leading positions in the NKVD USSR and in the organs under its supervision (the NKVDs of union and autonomous republics, the UNKVDs of the krais and oblasts) – have been occupied by enemies of the people, conspirators, and spies.
2. Enemies of the people who penetrated the organs of the NKVD have consciously distorted the punitive policy of Soviet power, have carried out massive, unfounded arrests of completely innocent persons, while at the same time covering up real enemies of the people.
3. The methods of conducting investigations have been perverted in the most brutal manner. They had recourse to beatings of prisoners on a massive level in order to force them into false confessions and "admissions." The quantity of admissions that each investigator was supposed to obtain from prisoners in the course of 24 hours has been decided upon in advance. In addition, the quotas have often reached several dozen "admissions."

Investigators have widely made use of the practice of fully informing one another concerning the content of the confessions they obtained. This gave the investigators the ability, during interrogations of "their" prisoners, to suggest to them by one means or another facts, circumstances, and names of persons about whom confessions had

earlier been given by other prisoners. As a result this kind of investigation very often led to organized false slanders against persons who were completely innocent.

In order to obtain a greater number of admissions in a number of organs of the NKVD had recourse to direct provocation: they convinced prisoners to give confessions about supposed espionage work for foreign intelligence services by explaining that these kinds of fabricated confessions were needed by the party and government in order to discredit foreign states. They also promised the prisoners that they would be liberated after they gave such "admissions."

The leadership of the NKVD in the person of com. Ezhov not only did not put a stop to this kind of arbitrariness and extremism in arrests and in the conduct of investigations, but sometimes itself abetted it.

The slightest attempts by Chekist party members to oppose this arbitrariness were stifled.

.....

Com. Ezhov concealed in every way from the Central Committee of the ACP(b) the situation of the work in the NKVD organs. Besides that he hid from the CC ACP(b) materials that compromised leading NKVD workers.

.....

In addition we believe it essential to note that all the above disgraceful actions, distortions and excesses in the matter of arrests and conduct investigation were carried out with the sanction and knowledge of the organs of the Procuracy of the USSR (coms. Vyshinsky and Roginsky). Assistant Procuror of the USSR Roginsky has been especially zealous in this matter. Roginsky's practice of work raises serious doubts about this political honesty and reliability.

The report continues in this vein. Reports and investigations of NKVD abuses continued rapidly.

In April Mikhail Frinovskii, Ezhov's "zam", or deputy commissar, and Ezhov himself were arrested. They immediately began to confess. All the confessions published so far are now available online in both the Russian original and in English translation.<sup>12</sup> These confessions revealed the broad outlines of Ezhov's conspiracy against and deception of the Soviet leadership and of Stalin. During the next few years, up to beginning of the war, further investigations and prosecutions of guilty NKVD men proceeded. Over 100,000 persons were released from camps and prisons after reviews of their cases.<sup>13</sup>

## **The "Polish Operation"**

The "Polish Operation" of the NKVD was enabled by NKVD Order No. 00485 of August 11, 1937. It has been published many times in Russian and is also online.<sup>14</sup> We have now made it available in English translation for the first time.<sup>15</sup>

The following are the major scholarly works on the Polish Operation. The second and fourth are cited by Snyder.

\* James Morris. "The Polish Terror: Spy Mania and Ethnic Cleansing in the Great Terror." *Europe-Asia Studies* 56, 5 (July 2004), 751-766.

\* A. Ie. Gur'ianov, "Obzor sovetskikh repressivnykh kampanii protiv poliakov i pol'skikh grazhdan," in A. V. Lipatov and I. O. Shaitanov, eds., *Poliaki i russkie: Vzaimoponimanie i vzaimoneponimanie*, Moscow: Indrik, 2000, 199-207.

\* A. Ie. Gur'ianov, "Obzor sovetskikh repressivnykh kampanii protiv poliakov i pol'skikh grazhdan," in *Massovye repressii protiv poliakov*. Memorial Society. At <http://www.memo.ru/history/polacy/vved/index.htm> [This is a brief summary of Gur'ianov's longer article above.]

\* N. V. Petrov and A. B. Roginskii, "Pol'skaia operatsiia' NKVD 1937-1938 gg.," in A. Ie. Gur'ianov, ed., *Repressii protiv poliakov i pol'skikh grazhdan*, Moscow: Zven'ia, 1997, 22-43.

All these studies agree in the following conclusions:

\* The "Polish Operation" was aimed at Polish spies only, not at Poles as such. This can of course be seen from the text of Operational Order No. 00485 itself.

The intention of the regime was not to terrorize or murder minority populations... (Morris 759)

... it [NKVD Order No. 00485, the "Polish Operation" order] did not concern Poles as such, but Polish spies... (Petrov & Roginskii)

Least of all was the massive nature of the repression "along Polish lines" the result of some kind of special personal hatred by Stalin of Poles. It was not a matter of Poles as such, but of Poland.

...their nationality was not a criterion of "criminal guilt" (*prestupnosti*)

...

...to equate the concept of "Poles" and "Polish operation" would be a mistake. (Petrov & Roginskii)

\* Many of those arrested and either executed or imprisoned were not Poles or of Polish background at all.

These numbers show that many of the victims were not ethnic Poles. (Morris 762)

\* Petrov and Roginskii stress repeatedly that nationality itself was not a criterion for arrest or execution. The central NKVD did not keep records of the nationality of those arrested.

\* Ezhov confessed that he and his men had arrested people who were not Poles on the pretext that they were Poles:

As a result of this pressure the practice of repressions without any incriminating evidence whatsoever on the sole basis of one criterion alone, that the person repressed belonged to such-and-such a

nationality (Pole, German, Latvian, Greek, etc.), was broadly expanded.

However, that was not enough. The practice of including Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, et al. in the category of Poles, Finns, Germans, et al., became a rather mass phenomenon, especially in certain oblasts.

Of those who especially distinguished themselves in this manner were the People's Commissars of Internal Affairs of such republics as: the Ukraine, Belorussia, Turkmenia, and the heads of the UNKVDs of such oblasts as the Sverdlovsk, Leningrad, and Moscow.

So for example Dmitriev, former head of the NKVD of the Sverdlovsk oblast included a great many Ukrainians, Byelorussians, and even Russians under the category of repressed Polish refugees. In any case for every arrested Pole there were no fewer than ten Russians, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians.

There were many cases in which Russians, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians generally were made into Poles with falsified documents.

The practice in Leningrad was the same. Instead of Finns Zakovsky arrested many native inhabitants of the USSR — Karelians, and "transformed" them into Finns.

**Uspensky, under the pretence of their being Poles, arrested many Ukrainian Uniates**, that is, selected them not on the basis of national origin but according to their religion. I could multiply many times examples of this kind. They are characteristic for the majority of oblasts.

(Ezhov interrogation of August 4, 1939. Emphasis added<sup>16</sup>)

\* There were few guidelines from Stalin and the Politburo — if, indeed, there were any at all. The whole operation was run by Ezhov and his men,

who themselves gave little specific guidance to the local NKVD men.  
(Petrov & Roginskii)

Through neglect of his responsibilities the Soviet Prosecutor (*Prokurator*) Vyshinskii was partly responsible for the fact that Ezhov and his men were able to get away with these immense crimes. In his 1939 confessions Ezhov claimed that the Prosecutor's Office failed to conduct the oversight it was supposed to, and Ezhov and his men could shoot and imprison people with virtually no hindrance from Vyshinskii's office. This passage from Ezhov's interrogation of August 4, 1939 illustrates this negligence of Vyshinskii's office:

**Question:** Confess in what manner you managed to deceive the organs of prosecutorial oversight in implementing this clear, obvious, and criminal practice of repression?

**Answer:** I can't say that we had any special thought-out plan to consciously deceive the organs of the Procuracy.

The prosecutors of the oblasts, krais, and republics, and also the Procuracy of the USSR could not have been unaware of such a blatant criminal practice of mass provocational arrests and falsification of investigative facts, since they bore responsibility, together with the NKVD, for the review of such cases.

This inactivity of prosecutorial supervision can only be explained by the fact that in charge of the Procuracy in many oblasts, krais, and republics were members of various anti-Soviet organizations who often practiced even more widespread provocational repressions among the population.

Another group of the prosecutors, those who were not involved in participation in anti-Soviet groupings, simply feared to argue with the heads of the UNKVDs on these questions, all the more so since they did not have any directives on these matters from the center, where all the falsified investigative reports that had been mechanically signed by themselves, i.e. the prosecutors, went through without any kind of restraint or remarks.

**Question:** You are talking about the local organs of the Procuracy. But didn't they see these criminal machinations in the Procuracy of the USSR?

**Answer:** The Procuracy of the USSR could not, of course, have failed to notice all these perversions.

I explain the behavior of the Procuracy of the USSR and, in particular, of Prosecutor of the USSR Vyshinsky by that same fear of quarreling with the NKVD and by [the desire] to prove themselves no less "revolutionary" in the sense of conducting mass repressions.

I have come to this conclusion also because Vyshinsky often spoke to me personally about the tens of thousands of complaints coming in to the Procuracy and to which he was paying no attention. Likewise, during the whole period of the conduct of the operations I do not recall a single instance of a protest by Vyshinsky concerning the mass operations, while there were instances when he insisted on more severe sentences in relation to some persons or other.

This is the only way I can explain the virtual absence of any prosecutorial supervision at all during the mass operations and the absence of any protests from them to the government against the acts of the NKVD. I repeat, we the conspirators and specifically, I myself did not have any kind of thought-out plans.

The first document issued after Ezhov had been induced to resign from office stressed the lack of Prosecutorial oversight. In 1939 Vyshinskii was replaced as Prosecutor. It seems likely that this was because he had failed to do his duty during the *Ezhovshchina*.

\* The notion that the *Ezhovshchina* and the "Polish Operation" of which it was a part were undertaken to forestall a potential "fifth column" is false. This theory was evidently first stated by Oleg Khlevniuk in 1996<sup>17</sup> and has been uncritically repeated ever since, including by Snyder.

**Bukharin, Not Stalin, Was To Blame for the Massive Repressions**



One interesting fact that emerges from the primary sources now available — and, we note, available during the time Snyder was writing *Bloodlands* — is that Nikolai Bukharin, leading name among the Rightists and one of its leaders, knew about the *Ezhovshchina* as it was happening, and praised it in a letter to Stalin that he wrote from prison.

Bukharin knew that Ezhov was a member of the Rightist conspiracy, as he himself was. No doubt that is why he welcomed Ezhov's appointment as head of the NKVD — a view recorded by his widow in her memoirs.<sup>18</sup>

In his first confession, in his now-famous letter to Stalin of December 10, 1937, and at his trial in March 1938 Bukharin claimed he had completely "disarmed" and had told everything he knew. But now we can prove that this was a lie. Bukharin knew that Ezhov was a leading member of the Rightist conspiracy — but did not inform on him. According to Mikhail Frinovsky, Ezhov's right-hand man, Ezhov probably promised to see that he would not be executed if he did not mention his own, Ezhov's, participation. This is documented in Mikhail Frinovskii's confession of April 11, 1939. Frinovskii was Ezhov's second-in-command.

An active participant in investigations generally, Ezhov kept himself aloof from the preparation of this trial. Before the trial the face-to-face confrontations of the suspects, interrogations, and refining, in which Ezhov did not participate. He spoke for a long time with Yagoda, and that talk concerned, in the main, of assuring Yagoda that he would not be shot.

Ezhov had conversations several times with Bukharin and Rykov and also in order to calm them assured them that under no circumstances would they be shot.<sup>19</sup>

If Bukharin had told the truth — if he had, in fact, informed on Ezhov — Ezhov's mass murders could have been stopped in their tracks. The lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent people could have been saved.

But Bukharin remained true to his fellow conspirators. He went to execution — an execution that Bukharin himself swore in his appeal for

clemency that he deserved "ten times over" — without revealing Ezhov's participation in the conspiracy.

This point cannot be stressed too much: the blood of the hundreds of thousands of innocent persons slaughtered by Ezhov and his men during 1937-1938, is on Bukharin's hands.

Bukharin's two appeals for clemency, both dated March 13, 1938, were reprinted in *Izvestiia* on September 2, 1992. They were rejected, and Bukharin was executed on March 15, 1938. I have translated them and put them online in English"<sup>20</sup>

### **Ezhov's Confessions**

All ideologically anticommunist accounts suppress the evidence of Ezhov's conspiracy against the Soviet government. None of them refer to the confessions of Ezhov and his men, though these confessions were all available to them.

The apparent reason for the failure to discuss Ezhov's conspiracy is the desire on the part of ideologically anticommunist researchers to falsely accuse the Soviet leadership, Stalin most of all, of having ordered all the huge number of executions carried out by Ezhov. However, Ezhov explicitly states many times that his repressions and executions were carried out in pursuit of his own private conspiratorial goals and that he had deceived the Soviet government. Thus Ezhov's own confessions are evidence that Stalin and the central Soviet leadership were not responsible for his massive executions.

Ezhov's confessions that he deceived the government for his conspiratorial purposes are not contradicted by any other evidence. In addition, we now have the judgment of Khaustov, an anticommunist researcher himself, who concludes on the basis of massive evidence at his disposal that Stalin believed the false reports Ezhov was sending him.

Thus, the only conclusion supported by the evidence contradicts the "anti-Stalin" ideological aims of these anticommunist researchers. It is important

to them that Stalin and the Soviet leadership be "guilty" of "mass murders." By omitting evidence that tends to disprove this conclusion — Ezhov's confessions — their assertions may be accepted by their readers.

All of the confessions of Ezhov that the Russian government has seen fit to make public to date, plus one of Ezhov's "zam" or Deputy Commissar Mikhail Frinovskii, are available online in both Russian and English.<sup>21</sup>

In his confession of August 4, 1939 Ezhov specifically states that he deceived the Soviet government about the extent and nature of espionage:

**Question:** Did you succeed in obtaining a government decision to prolong the mass operations?

**Answer:** Yes. We did obtain the decision of the government to prolong the mass operation and to increase the number of those to be repressed.

**Question:** What did you do, deceive the government?

**Answer:** It was unquestionably essential for us to prolong the mass operation and increase the number of persons repressed.

However, it was necessary to extend the time period for these measures and to set up a real and accurate account so that once we had prepared ourselves, we could strike our blow directly on the most dangerous part, the organizational leadership of the counterrevolutionary elements.

The government, understandably, had no conception of our conspiratorial plans and in the present case proceeded solely on the basis of the necessity to prolong the operation without going into the essence of how it was carried out.

**In this sense, of course, we were deceiving the government in the most blatant manner.**

(Emphasis added.)

## Was Ezhov a Polish Spy?

Of the sources on the Polish Operation only Morris mentions this fact:

Ironically, Ezhov was accused of being a Polish spy when he was arrested a short time later. (763)

Morris cites no evidence or source at all here. He may well have taken it from Jansen & Petrov (2000, p. 187), where it is briefly stated as one of the charges against Ezhov at trial on February 1, 1940. But we now know somewhat more about this. Pavliukov had access to some of Ezhov's confessions including those of April 18-20, 1939, shortly after his arrest. After a brief verbatim quote Pavliukov (520-521) summarizes thus:

Ezhov related that he was drawn into espionage work by his friend F.M. Konar, who had long been a Polish agent. Konar learned political news from Ezhov and gave them to his bosses in Poland and on one occasion told Ezhov about this and proposed that he volunteer to begin working for the Poles. Since Ezhov had in fact already become an informant of Polish intelligence, since he had transmitted to them via Konar many significant party and state secrets, he supposedly had no other choice than to agree with this proposal.

The Poles supposedly shared a part of the intelligence received from Ezhov with their allies the Germans, and so after a time an offer of collaboration from the latter was also made.

According to Ezhov Marshal A.I. Egorov, first assistant Commissar for Defense, acted as the middleman [between Ezhov and the Germans]. He met with Ezhov in the summer of 1937 and told him that he knew about the latter's ties with the Poles, that he himself was a German spy who on orders from the German authorities had organized a group of conspirators in the Red Army, and that he had been given a directive to establish close working contact between his group and Ezhov.

Ezhov agreed with this proposal and promised to protect Egorov's men from arrest.

This corresponds generally to other evidence we have about the military conspiracies and the charges against Egorov.

## **Objectivity and Evidence**

I agree with historian Geoffrey Roberts when he says:

In the last 15 years or so an enormous amount of new material on Stalin ... has become available from Russian archives. I should make clear that as a historian I have a strong orientation to telling the truth about the past, no matter how uncomfortable or unpalatable the conclusions may be. ... I don't think there is a dilemma: you just tell the truth as you see it.<sup>22</sup>

The conclusions about the *Ezhovshchina* outlined here will be unacceptable to persons motivated not by the pursuit of the objective truth out of any desire to "apologize" for the policies of Stalin or the Soviet government but because they are the only objective conclusions possible based on the available evidence.

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### Footnotes

1) Vl. Khaustov, Lennart Samuelson. Stalin, NKVD, I repressii 1937-1938 gg. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2009, 332-333. (Вл. Хаустов, Леннарт Самуэльсон. Сталин, НКВД, и репрессии 1937-1938 гг. М.: РОССПЭН, 2009). Online at: <http://istmat.info/node/24544>

<sup>2</sup> Danilov, et al., eds. Tragediia sovetskoi derevni t. 5,1, pp. 256-7.

<sup>3</sup> At: widely reprinted in Russian. Available in English in Getty & Naumov Doc. 169 pp. 470-471.

<sup>4</sup> English translation in Getty & Naumov, Doc. 170 pp. 473-478 (in excerpt). Hereafter G&N.

<sup>5</sup> Lubianka golgofa, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> See Grover Furr, "Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform, Part One", in *Cultural Logic* 2005, paragraphs 60 — end. At: <http://clogic.eserver.org/2005/furr.html> Much of this material is summarized from IUrii N. Zhukov, *Inoi Stalin. Politicheskie Reformy v SSSR v 1933-1937 gg.* Moscow: Vagrius, 2003.

<sup>7</sup> On Postyshev see Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*, 45ff; 282-288.

<sup>8</sup> See "transcript of the interrogation of the arrested person Ezhov Nikolai Ivanovich of April 26 1939," *Lubianka 1939-1946* at pp. 68 ff. English translation at:

<http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/ezhov042639eng.html>

<sup>9</sup> IU.N. Zhukov, "Zhupel Stalina", *Komsomolskaia Pravda* 20 November 2002.

<sup>10</sup> Getty & Naumov Doc. 190 pp. 532-537.

<sup>11</sup> Nikita Petrov, Marc Jansen. "Stalinskii pitomets" — Nikolai Ezhov. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008, pp. 359-363. Russian text online at:

<http://istmat.info/node/24582> English translation at:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/beria\\_andreev\\_malenkov012939eng.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/beria_andreev_malenkov012939eng.html)

<sup>12</sup> See "Additional Bibliography — Documents" at the bottom of the following page:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/trials\\_Ezhovshchina\\_update0710.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/trials_Ezhovshchina_update0710.html)

<sup>13</sup> Okhotin and Roginskii of the "Memorial Society", both highly anticommunist and anti-Stalin researchers, estimate "about 110,000 persons formerly accused of counterrevolutionary crimes" were freed during 1939 as a result of Beria's investigation of NKVD crimes under Ezhov. *Tragedia sovetskoi derevni t. 5, 2* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2006), p. 571

<sup>14</sup> One site is: [http://ru.wikisource.org/wiki/Приказ\\_НКВД\\_от\\_11.08.1937\\_№\\_00485](http://ru.wikisource.org/wiki/Приказ_НКВД_от_11.08.1937_№_00485)

<sup>15</sup> At: <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/no00485.html>

<sup>16</sup> This was published for the first time in Nikita Petrov, Marc Jansen. "Stalinskii pitomets — Nikolai Ezhov. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008, pp. 367-379. Russian original online at: ; English translation at:

<sup>17</sup> Note 14 in Petrov & Roginskii states this as fact. Khlevniuk's only evidence is an off-the-cuff statement by an aged Molotov to his biographer Felix Chuev.

<sup>18</sup> Anna Larina (Bukharina), Nezabyvaemoe. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo APN, 1989, 269-70.

<sup>19</sup> See the English translation at:  
<http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/frinovskyeng.html>

<sup>20</sup> At: <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/bukharinappeals.html>

<sup>21</sup> See the following web page, under "Additional Bibliography"  
"Documents": <http://hnn.us/roundup/entries/35305.html>

<sup>22</sup> "Stalin's War", February 12, 2007. At:  
<http://hnn.us/roundup/entries/35305.html>

## **Chapter 7. *The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact: What Really Happened*<sup>1</sup>**

### **Introduction**

Did the Soviet Union invade Poland on September 17, 1939? Why ask? "We all know" this invasion occurred. "You can look it up!" Almost all contemporary authoritative accounts agree that this historical event happened.

Here is how Snyder puts the matter in an article in *The New York Review of Books* (April 30, 2009, p. 17).

Because the film (although not the book)\* begins with the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 rather than the joint German-Soviet invasion and division of Poland in 1939... the Soviet state had just months earlier been an ally of Nazi Germany... (\* "Defiance")

The Public Broadcasting System's documentary "Behind Closed Doors" (2009) describes the invasion as an unproblematic fact:

After invading Poland in September 1939, the Nazis and the Soviets divided the country as they had agreed to do in the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact...<sup>2</sup>

The Wikipedia article: "Soviet invasion of Poland", undoubtedly composed by Polish nationalists like virtually all Wikipedia material on Poland and the USSR:

... on 17 September, the Red Army invaded Poland from the east...<sup>3</sup>

### **The Soviet Union Did Not Invade Poland in September, 1939**

The truth is that the USSR did not invade Poland in September, 1939. However, so completely has this non-event passed into historiography as



"true" that I have yet to find a recent history book from the West that actually gets this correct.

And, of course, the USSR had never been an "ally" of Nazi Germany. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (henceforth "M-R Pact") was a non-aggression pact, not an alliance of any kind. The claim that the USSR and Hitler's Germany were "allies" is simply stated over and over again but is never backed up with any evidence.

The present chapter and the one preceding it present a great deal of evidence in support of this statement. There is a great deal more evidence to support what I say — much more than I can present here, and no doubt much more that I have not yet identified or located. Furthermore, at the time it was widely acknowledged that no such invasion occurred.

### **The Soviet Union and Hitler's Germany Were Never "Allies"**

Strictly speaking, it is impossible to prove a negative — in this case, that no "alliance" existed. The burden of proof is on those who use the terms "alliance", "allies", and "ally" with respect to the USSR, Germany, and the M-R Pact. The complete text of the Pact is online at the Modern History Sourcebook.<sup>4</sup> It is short. Anyone who reads it can see that there is no "alliance" of any kind.

The truth about these matters is another victim of the post-WWII Cold War, when a great many falsehoods about Soviet history were invented and popularized. The truth about this and many other questions concerning the history of the first socialist state has simply become "politically incorrect." In "respectable academia" it is "taboo."<sup>5</sup>

Demonizing — I use the word advisedly; it is not too strong — the history of the communist movement and anything to do with Stalin has become *de rigeur*, a shibboleth of respectability. And not only among avowed champions of capitalism but also among those on the left and opponents of capitalism generally, including many Marxists, the natural constituency of a movement for communism.

## **The Nonaggression Treaty between Germany and the USSR of August 1939<sup>6</sup>**

Before examining the question of the invasion that did not take place, the reader needs to become familiar with some misconceptions about the Nonaggression Treaty and why they are false. These too are based on anticommunist propaganda that is widely, if naively, "believed."

The most common, and most false, of these is stated above in the PBS series "Behind Closed Doors:"

...the Nazis and the Soviets divided the country as they had agreed to do in the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact...

This is completely false, as any reading of the text of the M-R Pact itself will reveal.

## **The Secret Protocols to the M-R Pact Did NOT Plan Any Partition of Poland**

Up to at least September 7 Hitler was considering making peace with Poland if Poland sued for peace. General Franz Halder, Chief of the General Staff of the Army (*Chef des Generalstabs des Heeres*), wrote in his "War Diary" — Halder F. *Kriegstagebuch. Tägliche Aufzeichnungen des Chefs des Generalstabes des Heeres 1939-1942*. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1962-1964. I have used *Band I. Vom Polenfeldzug bis zum Ende der Westoffensive (14.8.1939 — 30.6.1940)*.

OB beim Führer (7.9. nachmittag): 3 Möglichkeiten:

1. Polen kommen zu Verhandlungen: er bereit zur Verhandlung: Trennung von Frankreich und England, Restpolen wird anerkannt. Narew — Warschau = Polen. Industriegebiet wir. Krakau, Polen. Nordrand Beskiden wir. Ukraine selbständig. (I, S. 65)

7 September 1939

The High Command with the Fuehrer (second half of the day 7 September): Three different ways the situation may develop.

1. The Poles offer to begin negotiations. He [Hitler — GF] is ready for negotiations [on the following conditions]: [Poland must] break with England and France. A part of Poland will be [preserved and] recognized. [The regions from the] Narev to Warsaw — to Poland. The industrial region — to us. Krakow — to Poland. The northern region of the Beskidow mountains — to us. [The provinces of the Western] Ukraine — independent.

So on September 7 Hitler was considering independence for Western Ukraine even though, according to the "Secret Protocol" of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact the Western Ukraine lay within the Soviet sphere of influence. This shows that:

- \* The Secret Protocol about spheres of influence was not about the "partition of Poland."
- \* Hitler was prepared to negotiate over the Western Ukraine with the Poles, not with the Soviets. The Western Ukraine lay entirely within the Soviet "sphere of influence" as defined by the Secret Protocol of the M-R Pact.
- \* As late as September 7 Hitler was planning to preserve a shrunken Polish state.

In his entries for September 9 and September 10 Halder repeats that the Germans are discussing the formation of an independent state in the Western Ukraine. This is further evidence that the Secret Protocols of the M-R Pact did not concern any "partition of Poland."

September 9:

*OB vormerken:* ... b) Selbständigkeit der West-Ukraine. (I, S. 67)

*Bring to the attention of the Supreme Command:* b) The independence of the Western Ukraine.

September 10:

*Warlimont*: a) Aufruf Westukraine kommt. (I, S. 68)

*Warlimont*: a) A call to the Western Ukraine is imminent.

Col. Walter Warlimont was deputy head of operations at the German High Command. A note in the annotated text of Halder's diary reads:

Nämlich für die Errichtung eines selbständigen Staates aus der polnischen Ukraine. (I, S. 68 Anm. 6)

Translated:

That is, for the setting up of an independent state out of Polish Ukraine.

Under September 11 Halder noted that:

Grenzübertritt polnischer *aktiver Soldaten* nach Rumänien hat begonnen. (I, S. 71)

Translated:

The flight of *active* Polish *soldiers* [= combat troops] into Rumania has begun.

On September 12 Halder noted: "Talks between the High Command and the Fuehrer" and said:

*ObdH-Führer*: Russe will wahrscheinlich nicht antreten.... [Russe] halt Friedenswunsch Polens für möglich. (I, S. 72)

Translated:

The Russian apparently does not want to come in.... [The Russian] believes it is possible that Poland wants [to conclude a] peace [with Germany].

This is further proof that the Germans had no agreement with the USSR to partition Poland. It is also evidence that the USSR expected that a negotiated settlement would leave a rump Polish state in existence between Germany and the Soviet border.

Halder also noted:

Rumänien will polnische Regierung nicht aufnehmen; [Grenzen] zumachen. (I, S. 72)

Translated:

Rumania does not wish to accept [the entry of] the Polish government; will close [its borders].

Halder:

[Hitler] denkt an sich bescheiden mit Ost-Oberschlesien und Korridor, wenn Westen wegbleibt. (I, S. 72)

Translated:

He [Hitler] is prepared to be content with the Eastern part of Upper Siberia and the Polish Corridor, if the West doesn't interfere.

This would have meant that most of Western Poland would have remained part of a shrunken Poland. This is additional evidence that Hitler did not plan on liquidating the Polish state.

By September 12 the issue of whether the Polish government might try to flee to Rumania had obviously been raised, but it had not yet happened. This means that on September 12 Hitler still believed the Polish government would stay in Poland — because he assumed he would have someone to negotiate peace with.

The same date General Wilhelm Keitel, Head of the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces (*Chef des Oberkommandos der Wehrmacht*) ordered Admiral Canaris to activate units of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) on Polish territory with the aim of forming an

independent Polish and Galician Ukraine. This was to be accompanied by a general massacre of Poles and Jews. During post-war interrogation by Soviet authorities General-major Erwin von Lahousen of the *Abwehr* (German Military Intelligence) confirmed this:

**Oberst Amen:** Was, wenn überhaupt etwas, wurde über eine mögliche Zusammenarbeit mit einer Ukrainischen Gruppe gesagt?

**Lahousen:** Ja, es werde — und zwar vom damaligen Chef OKW als Weitergabe einer Rechtlinie, die er offenbar von Ribbentrop empfangen hatte, weil er sich in Zusammenhang mit dem politischen Vorhaben des Reichsaußenministers Ribbentrop bekanntgegeben hat — es wurde Canaris aufgetragen, in der Galizischen Ukraine eine Aufstandsbewegung hervorzurufen, die Ausrottung der Juden und Polen zum Ziel haben sollte...

Nach den Eintragungen im Tagebuch von Canaris fand sie am 12. September 1939 statt. Der Sinn dieses Befehls oder der Anweisung, die von Ribbentrop ausging, von Keitel und Canaris weitergegeben war und dann in kurzer Unterredung nochmals von Ribbentrop Canaris gegenüber aufgezeigt wurde, war folgende: Die Organisationen nationaler Ukrainer, mit denen das Amt Ausland / Abwehr im militärischen Sinne, also im Sinne militärischer Operationen zusammenarbeitete, sollten in Polen eine Aufstandsbewegung hervorrufen — in Polen mit den Ukrainern. Die Aufstandsbewegung sollte den Zweck haben, Polen und Juden, also vor allem Elemente oder Kreise, um die es sich ja bei diesen Besprechungen immer wieder drehte, auszurotten.<sup>7</sup>

Translated:

**Colonel Amen** [Interrogator]: What, if anything, was said about possible collaboration with a Ukrainian group?

**Lahousen:** Yes, and it was given by the then Chief of Staff of the Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht [General-Fieldmarshal Keitel] as the transmission of a straight line, which he had evidently received from Ribbentrop, because he had announced it in connection with the

political project of Reichs Foreign Minister Ribbentrop — Canaris was assigned to bring about an insurgency in the Galician Ukraine, which should have as its goal the extermination of Jews and Poles....

According to the entries in Canaris' diary this meeting took place on September 12, 1939. The purpose of this command or the statement that came from Ribbentrop, was passed by Keitel and Canaris and was in a short conversation again assigned by Ribbentrop to Canaris, was as follows: The organizations of national Ukrainians [i.e. the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists] with which the Office Ausland / Abwehr was collaborating in a military sense, that is in the sense of military operations, should produce an insurgency in Poland — in Poland, with the Ukrainians. The insurgency should have the purpose of exterminating Poles and Jews, that is, in particular the elements or circles that were repeatedly the subjects of these meetings.

### **The Soviets Wanted to Protect the USSR — and Therefore to Preserve Independent Poland**

It is conventionally stated as fact that the M-R Pact was an agreement to "partition Poland", divide it up. This is completely false. I've prepared a page with much fuller evidence.<sup>8</sup>

No doubt a big reason for this falsehood is the inconvenient fact that *Britain and France did sign a Nonaggression Pact with Hitler that "partitioned" another state — Czechoslovakia*. That was the Munich Agreement of September 30, 1938.<sup>9</sup>

Poland also took part in the "partition" of Czechoslovakia. Poland seized a part of the Teschen (Polish: Cieszyn) area of Czechoslovakia, even though only a minority of the population was Polish. This invasion and occupation was not part of the Munich Agreement. But neither France nor Britain did anything about it. Therefore, they consented to it. Later, in March 1939 Hitler seized the remaining part of Czechoslovakia. This had not been foreseen in the Munich Agreement either. Once again Britain, France, and Poland did nothing about it.

So the anticommunist "Allies" Britain, France and Poland really did participate in the partitioning of a powerless state! Perhaps this may explain, at least in part, why the anticommunist position today is that the USSR did likewise. But whatever the reason, it is a lie.

The Soviet Union signed the Nonaggression Pact with Germany not to "partition Poland" like the Allies had partitioned Czechoslovakia, but in order to defend the USSR. The Treaty included a line of Soviet interest within Poland beyond which German troops could not remain in the event that Germany routed the Polish army in a war.

The point here was that, if the Polish army were beaten, it and the Polish government could retreat beyond the line of Soviet interest and so find shelter, since Hitler had agreed not to remain further into Poland than that line. From there they could make peace with Germany. The Polish state would still exist.

The Soviets — "Stalin", to use a crude synecdoche (= "a part that stands for the whole") — did not do this out of any love for a ferociously anticommunist and anti-Soviet Poland that was rapidly becoming fascist. The Soviets wanted a Polish government — *any* Polish government — as a buffer between the USSR and the Nazi armies. The betrayal by the Polish Government of its own people frustrated this plan.

In the event that, as all military experts expected, its army was smashed by the German army the Polish government had two alternatives:

- \* It could stay inside the country, moving its capital to the East, away from the advancing German army into the Soviet sphere of influence. From there it could have sued for peace.

- \* Or the Polish Government could have fled to either France or England, Allied countries that were at war with Germany.

But the Polish government did neither. Instead, the Polish government and General Staff fled into neighboring Rumania. Rumania was neutral in the war. By crossing into neutral Rumania the Polish government became "interned." Under internment it could not function as a government from



Rumania, or pass through Rumania to a country at war with Germany like France. To permit the Polish government to do either would be a violation of Rumania's own neutrality and a hostile act against Germany.<sup>10</sup>

### **The USSR Did Not Invade Poland — and Everybody Knew it at the Time**

When Poland had no government, Poland was no longer a state. That meant that Hitler had nobody with whom to negotiate a cease-fire, or treaty. Furthermore, the M-R Treaty's Secret Protocols were void, since they were an agreement about the state of Poland. But *no state of Poland existed any longer*.

Unless the Red Army came in to prevent it, there was nothing to prevent the Nazis from coming right up to the Soviet border. Or — as we now know they were in fact preparing to do — Hitler could have formed one or more pro-Nazi states in what had until recently been Eastern Poland. That way Hitler could have had it both ways. He could claim to the Soviets that he was still adhering to the "spheres of influence" agreement of the M-R Pact while in fact setting up a pro-Nazi, highly militarized fascist Ukrainian nationalist state on the Soviet border.

Once the Germans had told the Soviets that they, the German leadership, had decided that the Polish state no longer existed, then it did not make any difference whether the Soviets, or some hypothetical body of international jurists, agreed with them or not. In effect the Nazis were telling the Soviets that they felt free to come right up to the Soviet border. Neither the USSR nor any state would have permitted such a thing. Nor did international law demand it.

At the end of September a new secret agreement was concluded. In it the Soviet line of interest was to the East of the "sphere of influence" line decided upon a month earlier in the Secret Protocol and published in *Izvestiia* and in the *New York Times* during September 1939.<sup>11</sup> In this territory Poles were a minority, even after the "polonization" campaign of settling Poles in the area during the '20s and '30s.<sup>12</sup>

## How Do We Know This Interpretation of Events is True?

How do we know the USSR did not commit aggression against, or "invade", Poland when it occupied Eastern Poland beginning on September 17, 1939 after the Polish Government had interned itself in Rumania? Here are nine pieces of evidence:

1. The Polish government did *not* declare war on USSR.

The Polish government declared war on Germany when Germany invaded on September 1, 1939. It did not declare war on the USSR.

2. The Polish Supreme Commander Rydz-Smigly ordered Polish soldiers not to fight the Soviets, though he ordered Polish forces to continue to fight the Germans.<sup>13</sup>

3. The Polish President Ignaz Moscicki, interned in Rumania since Sept. 17, tacitly admitted that Poland no longer had a government.

4. The Rumanian government tacitly admitted that Poland no longer had a government.<sup>14</sup>

The Rumanian position recognized the fact that Moscicki was lying when he claimed he had legally resigned on September 30. So the Rumanian government fabricated a story according to which Moscicki had already resigned back on September 15, just before entering Rumania and being interned (NYT 10.04.39, p. 12). But even Moscicki himself did not make this claim!

Rumania needed this legal fiction to try to sidestep the following issue: once Moscicki had been interned in Rumania — that is, from September 17, 1939 on — he could not function as President of Poland. Since resignation is an official act, Moscicki could not resign once he was in Rumania.

For our present purposes here's the significant point: Both the Polish leaders and the Rumanian government recognized that Poland was bereft of a government once the Polish government crossed the border into Rumania and were interned there. Both Moscicki and Rumania wanted a legal basis

— a fig-leaf — for such a government. *But they disagreed completely about this fig-leaf, which exposes it as what it was — a fiction.*

5. Rumania had a military treaty with Poland aimed against the USSR. Yet Rumania did not declare war on the USSR.

The Polish government later claimed that it had "released" Rumania from its obligations under this military treaty in return for safe haven in Rumania. But there is no evidence for this statement. It is highly unlikely that Rumania would have ever promised "safe haven" for Poland, since that would have been an act of hostility against Nazi Germany. Rumania was neutral in the war and, as discussed below, insisted upon interning the Polish government and disarming the Polish forces once they had crossed the border into Rumania.

The real reason for Rumania's failure to declare war on the USSR is probably the one given in a *New York Times* article of September 19, 1939:

The Rumanian viewpoint concerning the Rumanian-Polish anti-Soviet agreement is that it would be operative only if a Russian attack came as an isolated event and not as a consequence of other wars. -  
"Rumania Anxious; Watches Frontier." *NYT* 09.19.1939, p. 8.

That means Rumania recognized that the Red Army was *not* allied with Germany in its war with Poland.

6. France did not declare war on the USSR, though it had a mutual defense treaty with Poland. See this page<sup>15</sup> for the reconstructed text of the "secret military protocol" of this treaty, which has been "lost" — which probably means that the French government still keeps its text secret.

7. England never demanded that the USSR withdraw its troops from Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine, the parts of the former Polish state occupied by the Red Army after September 17, 1939. On the contrary, the British government concluded that these territories should not be a part of a future Polish state. Even the Polish government-in-exile agreed!<sup>16</sup>

8. The League of Nations Covenant required members to take trade and economic sanctions against any member who "resorted to war."<sup>17</sup> But no country took any sanctions against the USSR. No country broke diplomatic relations with the USSR over this action.

However, when the USSR attacked Finland in 1939 the League did vote to expel the USSR, and several countries broke diplomatic relations with it. This very different response tells us that the League viewed the Soviet action in the case of Poland as qualitatively different, not as a "resort to war."<sup>18</sup>

9. All countries accepted the USSR's declaration of neutrality.

All, including the belligerent Polish allies France and England, agreed that the USSR was *not* a belligerent power, was *not* participating in the war. In effect they accepted the USSR's claim that it was neutral in the conflict. Here is President Franklin Roosevelt's "Proclamation 2374 on Neutrality", November 4, 1939:

...a state of war unhappily exists between Germany and France; Poland; and the United Kingdom, India, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa,...<sup>19</sup>

FDR's Statement on Combat Areas" of November 4, 1939, defines

belligerent ports, British, French, and German, in Europe or Africa...<sup>20</sup>

The Soviet Union is not listed among the belligerent states. That means the United States government did not consider the USSR to be at war with Poland.

For more detail on the Soviet Union's claim of neutrality see the texts reproduced here.<sup>21</sup>

Naturally, a country cannot "invade" another country and yet credibly claim that it is "neutral" with respect to the war involving that country. But no country — not the United States, or Britain, or France, or any country in the

world — declared the USSR a belligerent. Even the Polish government-in-exile, at first in Paris, did not declare war on the Soviet Union.

In 1958 UCLA Professor George Ginsburgs published an article examining the Soviet Union's claim of neutrality in the German-Polish war. With reference to international law and the statements of the parties at the time Ginsburgs concluded that the USSR was indeed neutral and that this neutrality was internationally recognized.

In spite of the doubtful legality of its action, the Soviet Government succeeded in not losing its status as a neutral. Even after the invasion of Eastern Poland by the Red Army the USSR continued to be treated as a neutral both by the belligerents and by third parties. No municipal neutrality laws were applied to Soviet-Polish hostilities. The major reason for the Narkomindel's success lies, of course, in the political decision of France and Great Britain who found it politically inexpedient to challenge the Soviet action. Questions of law apart, Soviet neutrality was confirmed simply because the belligerents thought it impractical to question it.

It emerges quite clearly that the main preoccupation of the Soviets was to act so as not to jeopardize Soviet neutrality, or, in Molotov's words, to act so as not to 'injure our cause and promote unity among our opponents.' Thus the march of the Red Army was held up until Warsaw had fallen, until the military disintegration of Poland was far advanced and its total collapse was clearly imminent. In these circumstances the action of the USSR, buttressed by not unreasonable legal arguments, took upon itself less and less of the appearance of a full-fledged military intervention on the side of Germany. To many Poland's doom already appeared to be sealed by 17 September 1939, and, by and large, it was thought that in the East the war had already come to an end with Poland's defeat. For all these various reasons, the Soviet move did not assume the proportions of a flagrant violation of its duties as a neutral and the USSR succeeded in maintaining the legal status quo.

From 1939 to 1941 it seems to have been in the interests of the USSR to pursue a more or less scrupulous policy of neutrality and to have

this policy recognized by the world at large *de jure* and *de facto*.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Collapse of the Polish State**

By September 17, 1939, when Soviet troops crossed the border, the Polish government had ceased to function. The fact that Poland no longer had a government meant that Poland was no longer a state. On September 17 when Molotov met with Polish Ambassador to the USSR Grzybowski the latter told Molotov that he did not know where his government was, but had been informed that he should contact it through Bucharest.<sup>23</sup> The last elements of the Polish government crossed the border into Rumania and so into internment during the day of September 17, according to a United Press dispatch published on page four of the *New York Times* on September 18 with a dateline of Cernauti, Rumania.<sup>24</sup>

Without a government Poland as a state had ceased to exist under international law. This fact is denied — more often, simply ignored — by Polish nationalists, for whom it is highly inconvenient, and by anticommunists generally.

We take a closer look at this issue in the next section below. But a moment's reflection will reveal the logic of this position. With no government — the Polish government was interned in Rumania and had not appointed a successor before interning itself — there was no Polish body to claim sovereignty over those parts of Poland not yet occupied by Germany; no one to negotiate with; no body to which the local police, local governments, and the military were responsible. Polish ambassadors to foreign countries no longer represented their government, because there was no government. See the page "Polish State Collapsed" cited in a previous footnote, and especially the NYT article of October 2, 1939 quoted there.<sup>25</sup>

### **Germany No Longer Recognized the Existence of the State of Poland**

By September 15 German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop was writing to Friedrich Werner von der Shulenburg, German ambassador to

Moscow, that if the USSR did not enter Eastern Poland militarily there would be a political vacuum in which "new states" might form:

Also the question is disposed of in case a Russian intervention did not take place, of **whether in the area lying to the east of the German zone of influence** a political vacuum might not occur. Since we on our part have no intention of undertaking any political or administrative activities in these areas, apart from what is made necessary by military operations, without such an intervention on the part of the Soviet Government there might be the possibility of the construction of new states there.<sup>26</sup>

(Emphasis added)

Ribbentrop no longer referred to "Poland", only "...the area lying to the east of the German zone of influence..." This shows that he considered that the Polish government was no longer functioning and so no longer had sovereignty even in the East where there were no German forces and where the Soviets had not yet entered.

Schulenburg reported this to Molotov and summarized Molotov's reply (to Ribbentrop) the next day, September 16:

Molotov added that he would present my communication to his Government but he believed that a joint communiqué was no longer needed; the Soviet Government intended to motivate its procedure as follows: the Polish State had collapsed and no longer existed; therefore all agreements concluded with Poland were void; third powers [i.e. Germany] might try to profit by the chaos which had arisen...<sup>27</sup>

So even if the USSR had disagreed with the Germans and had held to the position that a Polish state still existed, the Soviets would have to deal with the fact that Germany no longer did. Germany considered that a Polish state no longer existed. Therefore the Secret Protocol about spheres of influence, agreed upon in the Secret Protocol to the M-R Pact a few weeks earlier, was no longer in effect.

Germany felt it was now free either to occupy what had been Eastern Poland right up to the Soviet border or — as we now know Hitler was planning — to form one or more pro-Nazi, anti-Soviet puppet states there. The USSR simply could not permit either of these outcomes.

German General Kurt von Tippelskirch, in his *Geschichte des Zweiten Weltkrieges* (Bonn, 1954) wrote:

When the Polish government realized that the end was near on September it fled from Warsaw to Lublin. From there it left on September 9 for Kremenetz, and on September 13 for Zaleshchniki, a town right on the Rumanian border. **The people and the army, which at that time was still involved in furious fighting, were cast to the whim of fate.**<sup>28</sup>

(Emphasis added)

### **The Question of the State in International Law<sup>29</sup>**

Every definition of the state recognizes the necessity of a government or "organized political authority." Once the Polish government crossed the border into Rumania, it was no longer a "government." Even the Polish officials of the day recognized this by trying to create the impression that the government had never been interned since it had been handed over to somebody else before crossing into Rumania. See the discussion concerning Moscicki and his "desire to resign" on September 29, 1939, also cited above.<sup>30</sup>

Everybody, Poles included, recognized that by interning itself in Rumania the Polish government had created a situation whereby Poland was no longer a "state." This is not just "a reasonable interpretation" — not just one logical deduction among several possible deductions. It was virtually everybody's interpretation at the time. Every major power, plus the former Polish Prime Minister himself, shared it.

Once this problem is squarely faced, everything else flows from it:



\* The Secret Protocol to the M-R Pact was no longer valid, in that it was about spheres of influence in the state of Poland. By September 15 at the latest Germany had taken the position that Poland no longer existed as a state. We have discussed this further at this page.<sup>31</sup>

Once Poland ceased to exist as a state this Secret Protocol did not apply any longer. If they wanted to the Germans could march right up to the Soviet frontier. Or — and this is what Hitler was in fact going to do if the Soviet Union did not send in troops — they could facilitate the creation of puppet states, like a Pro-Nazi Ukrainian Nationalist state.

In any case, once Hitler had taken the position that Poland no longer existed as a state and therefore that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact's agreement on spheres of influence in the state of Poland was no longer valid, the Soviet Union had only two choices. It could send the Red Army into Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia to establish sovereignty there. Or it could stand passively by and watch Hitler send the Nazi army right up to the Soviet border.

\* Since the Polish state had ceased to exist, the Soviet-Polish non-aggression pact was no longer in effect. The Red Army could cross the border without "invading" or "committing aggression against" Poland.

By sending its troops across the border the USSR was claiming sovereignty, so no one else could do so — e.g. a pro-Nazi Ukrainian Nationalist state, or Nazi Germany itself.

\* Legitimacy flows from the state, and there was no longer any Polish state. Therefore the Polish Army was no longer a legitimate army, but a gang of armed men acting without any legitimacy. Having no legitimacy, the Polish Army should have immediately laid down its arms and surrendered. Of course it could keep fighting — but then it would no longer be fighting as a legitimate army but as partisans. Partisans have no rights at all except under the laws of the government that does claim sovereignty.

Some Polish nationalists claim that the Soviets showed their "perfidy" by refusing, once they had sent troops across the Soviet frontier, to allow the Polish army cross the border into Rumania. But this is all wrong. The USSR

had diplomatic relations with Rumania. The USSR could not permit thousands of armed men to cross the border from areas where it held sovereignty into Rumania, a neighboring state. Imagine if, say, Mexico or Canada tried to permit thousands of armed men to cross the border into the USA!

### **The Soviet Position Was Valid Under International Law**

In a 1958 article in *The American Journal of International Law* UCLA professor Ginsburgs determined that the Soviet claim that the State of Poland no longer existed was basically a sound one:

For all these various reasons, it may safely be concluded that on this particular point the Soviet argument was successful, and that the "above considerations do not allow for any doubt that there did not exist a state of war between Poland and the U.S.S.R. in September, 1939."

In spite of scattered protests to the contrary, the consensus heavily sides with the Soviet view that by September 17, 1939, the Polish Government was in panic and full flight, that it did not exercise any appreciable control over its armed forces or its remaining territory, and that the days of Poland were indeed numbered.

De facto, then, one may well accept the view that the Polish Government no longer functioned as an effective state power. **In such a case the Soviet claim that Eastern Galicia was in fact a *terra nullius* may not be unjustified and could be sustained.**<sup>32</sup>

(Emphasis added)

### **Re-negotiation of "Spheres of Influence" September 28 1939<sup>33</sup>**

All this is referred to directly in Telegram No. 360 of September 15-16 1939 from German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop to Graf Werner von Schulenburg, German ambassador to Moscow, with its reference to "the possibility of the formation in this area of new states."<sup>34</sup>

Note that Ribbentrop was very displeased with the idea that the Soviets would "tak[e] the threat to Ukrainian and White Russian populations by Germany as a ground for Soviet action" and wants Schulenberg to get Molotov to give some other motive. He was unsuccessful; this was exactly the motive the Soviets gave:

Nor can it be demanded of the Soviet Government that it remain indifferent to the fate of its blood brothers, the Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians inhabiting Poland, who even formerly were without rights and who now have been abandoned entirely to their fate.

The Soviet Government deems it its sacred duty to extend the hand of assistance to its brother Ukrainians and brother Byelo-Russians inhabiting Poland.<sup>35</sup>

## **Polish Imperialism**

We should try to understand the Soviet explanation regarding the reference to "the fate of its blood brothers, the Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians inhabiting Poland."

At the Treaty of Riga signed in March 1921 the Russian Republic (the Soviet Union was not officially formed until 1924), exhausted by the Civil War and foreign intervention, agreed to give half of Belorussia and Ukraine to the Polish imperialists in return for a desperately-needed peace.

We use the words "Polish imperialists" advisedly, because Poles — native speakers of the Polish language — were in the minority in Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine, the areas that passed to Poland in the treaty. The Polish regime then encouraged ethnic Poles to populate these areas to "polonize" them (make them more "Polish"). The Polish government put all kinds of restrictions on the use of the Belorussian and Ukrainian languages.

Up till the beginning of 1939, when Hitler decided to turn against Poland before making war on the USSR, the Polish government was maneuvering to join Nazi Germany in a war on the USSR in order to seize more territory.

As late as January 26, 1939, Polish Foreign Minister Beck was discussing this with Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop in Warsaw. Ribbentrop wrote:

... 2. I then spoke to M. Beck once more about the policy to be pursued by Poland and Germany towards the Soviet Union and in this connection also spoke about the question of the Greater Ukraine and again proposed Polish-German collaboration in this field.

M. Beck made no secret of the fact that **Poland had aspirations directed toward the Soviet Ukraine and a connection with the Black Sea...**<sup>36</sup>

Polish Foreign Minister Beck was telling Ribbentrop that Poland would like to seize ALL of the Ukraine from the USSR, for that was the only way Poland could have had a "connection with the Black Sea."

In occupying Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine the USSR was reuniting Belorussians and Ukrainians, East and West. This is what the Soviets meant by the claim that they were "liberating" these areas. The word "liberation" is conventionally used when an occupying imperialist power withdraws. That is what happened here.

Ginsburgs wrote:

...theoretically the U.S.S.R. still retains a better claim than Poland to the incorporated territories on the basis of the principle of national self-determination, if the ethnic composition of the area's population is taken into account. For, though the Soviet title rests on a plebiscite of doubtful validity, the Polish one derives from a direct act of force and military conquest, not even remotely claiming parentage with the concept of national self-determination.<sup>37</sup>

### **The Polish Government-in-Exile**

At the beginning of October 1939 the British and French governments recognized a Polish government-in-exile in France (later it moved to

England). This was an act of hostility against Germany, of course. But the UK and France were already at war with Germany. The US government wasn't sure what to do. After a time it took the position of refusing to recognize the conquest of Poland, but treated the Polish government-in-exile in Paris in an equivocal manner.

The USSR could not recognize it for a number of reasons:

- \* Recognizing it would be incompatible with the neutrality of the USSR in the war. It would be an act of hostility against Germany, with which the USSR had a non-aggression pact and a desire to avoid war. (The USSR did recognize it in July 1941, after the Nazi invasion).

- \* The Polish government-in-exile could not exercise sovereignty anywhere.

- \* Most important: if the USSR were to recognize the Polish government-in-exile, the USSR would have had to retreat back to its pre-September 1939 borders — because the Polish government-in-exile would never recognize the Soviet occupation of Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine. Then Germany would have simply marched up to the Soviet frontier. To permit that would have been a crime against the Soviet people as well as against all residents of these areas, including Poles, because they would have been abandoned to Hitler. And, as the British and French soon agreed, a blow against them, and a big boost to Hitler as well.<sup>38</sup>

### **The Polish Government Was Uniquely Irresponsible**

No other government during WW2 acted as the Polish government did. Many governments of countries conquered by the Axis formed governments in exile to continue the war. But only the Polish government interned itself in a neutral country, thereby stripping itself of the ability to function as a government and stripping their own people of their existence as a state.

What should the Polish government leader have done, once they realized they were completely beaten militarily?

\* The Polish government should have remained somewhere in Poland — if not in the capital, Warsaw, then in Eastern Poland. If its leaders had set up an alternative capital in the East — something the Soviets had prepared to do East of Moscow, in case the Nazis captured Moscow — then they could have preserved a "rump" Poland. There it should have capitulated — as, for example, the French Government did in July 1940. Or, it could have sued for peace, as the Finnish government did in March 1940. Then Poland, like Finland, would have remained as a state. It would certainly have lost a great deal of territory, but not *all* of it.

\* Or, the Polish government could have fled to Great Britain or France, countries already at war with Germany. Polish government leaders could have fled by air any time. Or they could have gotten to the Polish port of Gdynia, which held out until September 14, and fled by boat.

Why didn't they do either of these things?

\* Did Polish government leaders think they might be killed? Well, so what? Tens of thousands of their fellow citizens and soldiers were being killed!

\* Did they perhaps really believe that Rumania would violate its neutrality with Germany and let them pass through to France? If they did believe this, they were remarkably stupid. There is no evidence that the Rumanian government encouraged them to believe this.

\* Did they believe Britain and France were going to "save" them? If so, that too was remarkably stupid. Even if the British and French really intended to field a large army to attack German forces in the West, the Polish army would have had to hold against the Wehrmacht for at least a month, perhaps longer. But the Polish Army was in rapid retreat after the first day or two of the war.

Perhaps they fled simply out of sheer cowardice. That is what their flight out of Warsaw, the Polish capital, suggests. Warsaw held out until early October, 1939. The Polish government could have simply remained there until the city capitulated.

Everything that happened afterwards was a result of the Polish government being interned in Rumania. Here's how the world might have been different if a "rump" Poland had remained after surrender to Hitler:

\* A "rump" Poland might finally have agreed to make a mutual defense pact that included the USSR. That would have restarted "collective security," the anti-Nazi alliance between the Western Allies and the USSR that the Soviets sought but UK and French leaders rejected.

That would have:

- \* greatly weakened Hitler;
- \* probably prevented much of the Jewish Holocaust;
- \* certainly prevented the conquest of France, Belgium, and the rest of Europe;
- \* certainly prevented the deaths of many millions of Soviet citizens.

Poland could have emerged from WW2 as an independent state, perhaps a neutral one, like Finland, Sweden, or Austria. All this, and more — if only the Polish government had remained in their country at least long enough to surrender, as every other government did.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> The formal name for this agreement is the Nonaggression Pact between the USSR and Germany. It is often called the "Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact" or "Treaty" after the two foreign ministers who signed it. Ideological anticommunists call it the "Hitler-Stalin Pact", in furtherance of the goal of associating the USSR to Nazi Germany and Stalin to Hitler. An earlier version of this essay is at: <http://www.tinyurl.com/furr-mlg09>

<sup>2</sup> At: <http://www.pbs.org/behindcloseddoors/in-depth/struggle-poland.html>

<sup>3</sup> At: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet\\_invasion\\_of\\_Poland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_invasion_of_Poland)

<sup>4</sup> At: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1939pact.html>

<sup>5</sup> Some time ago a colleague on an academic mailing list tweaked me for supposedly "defending Stalin." He wrote: I could make a crack about what defenses of Stalin have to do with a 'sensible materialism,' but that would be beneath me. My colleague thinks he knows something about Stalin and the USSR during Stalin's time. He doesn't! But you can't blame him too much, since almost none of us do. More precisely: We "know" a lot of things about the Soviet Union and Stalin, and almost all of those things are just not true. We've been swallowing lies for the truth our whole lives.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the events that led up to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 an excellent account is still Bill Bland, "The German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact of 1939" (1990) at: <http://marxism.halkcephesi.net/Bill%20Bland/german%20soviet%20pact.htm> I have checked every citation in this article; most are available online now. It's very accurate, but far more detailed than the present account requires.

<sup>7</sup> Julius Mader, Hitlers Spionagegenerale sagen aus. Berlin: Vlg. der Nation. 1971, 122; 124.

<sup>8</sup> See: [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/no\\_partition.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/no_partition.html)

<sup>9</sup> For a brief overview see "Munich Agreement" at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Munich\\_Agreement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Munich_Agreement)

<sup>10</sup> I discuss "internment" and the international law on this question extensively below.

<sup>11</sup> See the map here: [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/new\\_spheres\\_0939.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/new_spheres_0939.html)

<sup>12</sup> A map that shows' ethnic and linguistic population is here: <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/curzononline.html>



<sup>13</sup> See the documents at this page:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/rydz\\_dont\\_fight.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/rydz_dont_fight.html)

<sup>14</sup> See the evidence at:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/moscicki\\_resignation.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/moscicki_resignation.html)

<sup>15</sup> <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/m-rpact.html>

<sup>16</sup> See the texts reproduced here:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/maisiky\\_101739\\_102739.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/maisiky_101739_102739.html)

<sup>17</sup> See: [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/leagcov.asp#art16](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp#art16)

<sup>18</sup> The League of Nations Resolution is reproduced here:

<http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1939/391214a.html>

<sup>19</sup> At: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=15831&st=&st1=>

<sup>20</sup> At: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=15833&st=&st1=>

<sup>21</sup> For the Soviet Union's claim of neutrality see:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/soviet\\_neutrality.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/soviet_neutrality.html)

<sup>22</sup> "The Soviet Union as a Neutral, 1939-1941." *Soviet Studies* 10 (1) (July 1958), pp. 12-35. At pp. 25, 25-6; 33.

<sup>23</sup> See the documents reproduced at this page:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/polish\\_state\\_collapsed.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/polish_state_collapsed.html)

<sup>24</sup> See the articles at:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/polish\\_leaders\\_flee.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/polish_leaders_flee.html)

<sup>25</sup> At:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/polish\\_state\\_collapsed.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/polish_state_collapsed.html)

[html#Polish Government Blamed](#)

<sup>26</sup> At: [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/ns072.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/ns072.asp)

<sup>27</sup> At: [http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/ns073.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/ns073.asp)

<sup>28</sup> I have used the Russian edition of Tippleskirch's book. The passage in question is online at: <http://militera.lib.ru/h/tippleskirch/02.html>

<sup>29</sup> See this page for more detail:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/state\\_international\\_law.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/state_international_law.html)

<sup>30</sup> At:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/moscicki\\_resignation.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/moscicki_resignation.html)

<sup>31</sup> At:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/mlg09/no\\_partition.html#Germany%20No%20Longer%20Recognized%20the%20Existence%20of%20Poland](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/mlg09/no_partition.html#Germany%20No%20Longer%20Recognized%20the%20Existence%20of%20Poland)

<sup>32</sup> "A Case Study in the Soviet Use of International Law: Eastern Poland in 1939." *The American Journal of International Law* 52 (1) 69-84, at pp. 72 and 73. The term "terra nullius" is a Latin expression deriving from Roman law meaning "land belonging to no one," which is used in international law to describe territory which has never been subject to the sovereignty of any state, or over which any prior sovereign has expressly or implicitly relinquished sovereignty.

<sup>33</sup> For more documentation and a map see:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/new\\_spheres\\_0939.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/new_spheres_0939.html)

<sup>34</sup> Text of the telegram at:

[http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th\\_century/ns072.asp](http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/ns072.asp)

<sup>35</sup> TASS, September 17, 1939; quoted in *New York Times* September 18, 1939, p. 5; also Jane Degras (Ed.), *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy*

1933-1941, vol. III (London/New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 374-375.

<sup>36</sup> Original in Akten zur deutschen auswärtigen Politik... Serie D. Bd. V. S. 139-140. English translation in Documents on German Foreign Policy. 1918-1945. Series D. Vol. V. The document in question is No. 126, pp. 167-168; this quotation on p. 168. Also in Russian in God Krizisa T. 1, Dok. No. 120.

<sup>37</sup>Ginsburgs, Case Study, 80.

<sup>38</sup> See the further discussion at:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/mlg09/should\\_the\\_ussr\\_have\\_permitted.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/mlg09/should_the_ussr_have_permitted.html)

## **Chapter 8. *Snyder's Fraudulent Claims About the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in Bloodlands Ch. 4***

Snyder writes more often about the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact than about any other single subject except the Soviet famine of 1932-33. These events — or, to be accurate, a fraudulent version of them — are foundational to contemporary right-wing anticommunist Polish and Ukrainian nationalism respectively. This cannot be mere coincidence. Snyder's articles and *Bloodlands* present this nationalist mythology to English readers with something the nationalists are not able to provide for themselves: the prestige of a Yale professor.

Snyder does not cite any of the primary source evidence concerning the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and Soviet actions in September 1939. In fact he shows no knowledge of it at all. Nor does he cite, much less refute, the accounts of Western, Soviet, or Russian historians. Perhaps this is because all except a few of the most right-wing of these scholars disagree with him completely.

### **"Joint Invasion" of Poland by "Allies": The "Big Lie" At Work**

The notion that the Soviet Union and Hitler's Germany were "allies" from 1939 to 1941 is one of the central falsehoods in Snyder's book. This allegation is false and there is no evidence whatever to support it. But by the principle of the "Big Lie" a falsehood repeated over and over again as if it were simply the obvious truth may eventually be *assumed* to be true by those who hear or read it enough times. This is especially so if the Big Lie emanates from a source thought to be "authoritative" such as a full professor at Yale University.

Therefore Snyder simply assumes — takes for granted — his contention that the USSR and Nazi Germany had an alliance. Snyder refers to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact as an "alliance" fifteen times in this book. He calls Germany and the USSR "allies" eight times. He asserts three times that they were "allied." Snyder uses the word "joint" or "jointly" fifteen

times to refer to the "invasion" and occupation of Poland. This is the Big Lie at work with a vengeance!<sup>1</sup>

The USSR did not invade Poland. As a practical matter Poland as a state had ceased to exist when its government abandoned its governmental functions. It ceased to exist in a legal sense when its government interned itself in Rumania without appointing a successor government, even one in exile.<sup>2</sup>

As a legal as well as a practical matter Poland ceased to exist as a state when Germany could no longer locate the Polish government to try to open negotiations with it. On September 15, 1939, German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop informed the Soviet Union that Poland no longer existed.<sup>3</sup> This implied that Germany no longer recognized the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact<sup>4</sup> since that was an agreement about "the Polish state."

Despite German insistence that the USSR invade Poland the Soviet leadership was slow to send any troops into Eastern Poland. When the Red Army did cross the border it was only to prevent German troops from coming right up to the Soviet frontier. No government would have permitted that to happen. Winston Churchill recognized this in a speech of October 1, 1939; we quoted his remarks in the previous chapter.<sup>5</sup>

The USSR was not an "ally" of Nazi Germany, as Snyder repeatedly claims. There was no "alliance." The USSR declared its neutrality in the German-Polish war. This claim was accepted by all the powers at the time and by the League of Nations.<sup>6</sup>

That the Soviet Union was not in any way "allied" militarily with Hitler's Germany can be shown by the facts. A good source of these facts is the book by Russian historian Oleg Vishliov, [\*On The Eve of June 22, 1941\*](#).<sup>7</sup>

Publications that pursue the aim of exposing the "Polish policy" of the USSR in 1939 are distinguished by one remarkable trait: they fail to set forth any concrete examples of how the Russians and Germans fought against the Poles "shoulder to shoulder." The difficulties of authors who write about the "military cooperation" of the USSR and

Hitlerite Germany but who fail to cite any concrete evidence of such collaboration, may easily be accounted for. There is no such evidence, and there is no place to obtain any, since the Soviet Union never intended to take part in, and never did take part in Germany's war against Poland, and the Red Army command did not work out with the Wehrmacht command any operational plans aimed at Poland, did not plan any military operations against the Polish army together with the German armed forces, and did not carry out any such. Germany had its war of conquest, the USSR its campaign of liberation. Their actions were not synchronized, different in character, and were directed towards the attainment of different aims.<sup>8</sup>

### **Who Destroyed the Polish State?**

There was no "joint invasion" of "Poland." There was no Polish government, legitimate or otherwise, after sometime in the middle of September of 1939. Neither the Soviets nor even the Germans "destroyed the Polish state." The Polish government did that by interning itself in Rumania and leaving no government behind.

The Polish government was uniquely cowardly and unprincipled. Hitler himself was ready to negotiate with the Polish government and leave a shrunken Poland in existence. But there was no government with which to negotiate — it had fled the country and deserted its people. No other government on any side of the war did this.<sup>9</sup>

### **There Was No "Joint Victory Parade"**

Snyder twice refers to a supposed "joint victory parade" by German and Soviet troops. This is a falsehood. There was no such "joint victory parade." Brest, on the border between the German and Soviet spheres of influence, was handed over to the Soviet commander General Semion M. Krivoshein by the German commander, Heinz Guderian.

Both men wrote about this event in their memoirs. Krivoshein wrote that a parade had been stipulated in the agreement between the Soviet and German commands and therefore he was forced to agree to one, though

unwillingly. But Krivoshein refused to have a joint parade since the German troops had been rested for a week while his own had just made a night march of 120 kilometers and would not have the spit-and-polish appearance necessary for a parade. The two commanders agreed that the German troops would march by while the Soviet troops, upon entering Brest, would stand on the side of the road and salute the German troops while the two orchestras played military marches.<sup>10</sup>

Guderian called this a "farewell parade" and "ceremony of changing of flags", after which the German troops withdrew from Brest:

Eine Abschiedsparade und ein Flaggenwechsel in Gegenwart des  
Generals Kriwoschein beendete unsern Aufenthalt in Brest-Litowsk.<sup>11</sup>

Krivoshein described the great joy with which the Belorussian inhabitants of Brest greeted the Soviet forces as they approached the city:

Подъезжаем к окраине, все улицы забиты народом, поздравления, радость, слезы. Танки остановились, пройти невозможно. Люди лезут прямо на танки, целуют, обнимают ребят, угощают яблоками, арбузами, молотом — ну, словом, всем, что есть. Народ с красными транспарантами и лозунгами: «долой панскую Польшу!», «да здравствует Советский Союз — польских панов!» Из окон и с балконов многих домов свисают целые красные полотнища. На мой танк поднялся старый крестьянин, в лаптях и рваной свитке. Долго, по-крестьянски обстоятельно, рассказывал он о горькой доле белорусов в панской Польше.

Другой оратор — старый рабочий — говорил о том, что в панской Польше для получения работы недостаточно было иметь квалификацию отличного слесаря. Требовались еще свидетельство о благонадежности от полиции, справки о прохождении исповеди от ксендза и рекомендация от фашистской организации «Стрелец». Затем на танк взобрался ученик старшего класса и со слезами на глазах кричал, что они больше не позволят, чтобы их секли розгами и били линейками.

— Такая встреча — доказательство того, что нам здесь рады, что нас считают большими друзьями, — сказал я. — Это очень хорошо. Теперь займемся подготовкой людей к проходам немецких частей из города. Разуши, пожалуйста, нашего капельмейстера и передай ему мое приказание, чтобы шумел не меньше немцев.

(Krivoshein 263-4)

Translated:

We drive to the outskirts, the streets clogged with people, congratulations, joy, tears. The tanks have stopped, it is impossible to pass. People are climbing right on the tanks, kissing, hugging children, giving us apples, watermelons, milk — well, in a word, everything. People with red banners and slogans: "Down with bourgeois Poland", "Long live the Soviet Union — the liberator of the Belorussian people from the yoke of the Polish *pans* [gentry]!" From the windows balconies of many homes hang the whole lengths of red cloth. An old peasant in bast shoes and tattered peasant's overcoat climbed upon my tank. At length, in peasant fashion and in detail, he told me about the bitter lot of Belorussians in Poland of the *pans*.

Another speaker, an old worker, said that in the Poland of the *pans*, to get a job it was not enough to have the qualifications of an expert mechanic. They also demanded a certificate of loyalty from the police, a priest's certification that you had taken confession, and a recommendation of the fascist organization "Sagittarius" (*Strzelec*). Then a student from the senior class climbed up on the tank and with tears in his eyes shouted that they would no longer allow themselves to be whipped with rods and beaten with rulers.

— A meeting like this is proof that people are glad to see us, that they consider us to be great friends, I said. It is very good. Now let us prepare the people for the transit of German units out of the city. Please locate the conductor of our orchestra and tell him that I command him to make no less noise than the Germans.



Krivoshein and — surprisingly — Guderian agree that the Soviet forces prevented the Germans from driving off with trucks of booty looted from Brest. There is an article online, in Russian, that gives yet more evidence.<sup>12</sup> Vishliov's well-documented refutation of the "joint parade" fiction is strongly recommended.<sup>13</sup>

## **The Soviets Did Not "Occupy" or "Annex" "Poland" or "Polish Territory"**

The areas of the former Polish state that the Red Army entered had been taken by Poland by conquest from the Russian Republic at the Treaty of Riga in 1921. They were east of the Curzon Line — the line marking the area west of which speakers of Polish were in the majority — and had only a minority of Polish inhabitants. Most of the inhabitants were Belorussians and Ukrainians, as well as a great many Jews, who were counted as a separate nationality.<sup>14</sup>

Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine were in Poland solely due to the Polish imperialist conquest during the Russo-Polish War of 1920. The Polish leadership wanted Ukraine and Belorussia, or as much of both as they could conquer, because at its height in the 18th century the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had possessed Belorussia and most of Ukraine<sup>15</sup>. The map shows that it reached to the Black Sea. Readers should recall that in January 1939 Polish Foreign Minister Józef Beck told German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop that Poland still had aspirations to the Black Sea.

Within a month representatives of the populations of Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine had voted to join the USSR. Whatever one thinks about this vote, we note that Poland had never permitted the inhabitants of these areas to hold any plebiscite about whether they preferred to be part of Poland.

## **What "Legitimate Polish Government"?**

Snyder claims that the Polish government in exile, first in Paris, then in London, was the "legitimate" government. This is the logical fallacy of *petitio principii*, "assuming that which must be proved"; in plain English, of "begging the question." Who says the "legitimate" government of Poland was in London?

The Polish government ceased to be a government when it interned itself in Rumania without appointing a successor government. Great Britain and France recognized the Polish government in exile in Paris because they were at war with Germany and that government was anti-German. But by international law the former Polish government now in internment in Rumania could not perform any political function, including appointing a successor government in Poland or in exile. And without a government Poland was no longer a state.

The USSR only recognized the Polish government-in-exile, which had by that time having moved to London, once Germany had invaded and the USSR was at war with Germany. The USSR withdrew its recognition of the London Polish government when that government took Hitler's side on the "Katyn massacre" issue despite its formal alliance with the USSR. The USSR severed relations with the London Polish government on April 25, 1943 and then recognized another, pro-Soviet Polish entity, the Union of Polish Patriots. After the war the UPP became the basis of the pro-Soviet socialist government of Poland.

Why doesn't Snyder explain this issue for his readers? That is the responsibility of an historian. Instead, he simply "assumes what is to be proven" — that the London-based Polish government was the "legitimate" one.

Great Britain and the United States withdrew recognition of the London Polish government on July 6, 1945, and recognized the pro-Soviet Polish government in Warsaw. Thereafter the self-proclaimed London-based "Polish government" remained in the U.K., recognized by no major country.

#### **Specific Falsehoods in *Bloodlands*, Chapter 4**

On page 120 Snyder states, without explanation:

Poland fought alone.

Poland did indeed fight Germany alone — because of the anti-communism and brinksmanship of its government. The Polish government refused any military alliance with the Soviet Union, the one force that could have had troops in Poland in time to fight the German army. The British had tried in vain to point out to the Poles the obvious: that only the Red Army could give them any real help in the event of a German invasion. The Poles were firm in rejecting any treaties with the USSR. This sealed their fate.

On pages 120-121 Snyder outlines some German atrocities against the Poles. Snyder ignores alleged Polish atrocities against German civilians in Poland. For example, Polish nationalists have long denied the Nazi charges that Poles massacred German civilians in Bromberg/Bydgoszcz when the war began. Włodzimierz Jastrzębski, a professor at the Bydgoszcz University who had specialized in studying this event, concluded in 2003 that there was no "German provocation" and that the German civilians were indeed massacred by Poles.<sup>16</sup>

On page 122, Snyder states:

Poland never surrendered, but hostilities came to an end on 6 October 1939.

Once again Snyder fails to explain something important: Why did Poland never surrender? The answer is simple: *The Polish government could not surrender because there was no Polish government.* Having interned itself in Rumania it could not exercise any governmental functions, including that of surrender, ceasefire, negotiation. Because the Polish government had failed to appoint a successor government outside the country, no one else could exercise those functions either. No doubt the reason Snyder does not state why "Poland never surrendered but hostilities came to an end" is that the true explanation would expose the bankruptcy of the Polish regime.

**The Lie the USSR Entered the German-Polish War on Germany's Side**

Snyder states:

Germany had all but won the war by the time the Soviets entered it on 17 September. (123)

This statement is false. The USSR never entered the German-Polish war at all. The USSR declared its neutrality from the very outset. This neutrality was accepted by all parties, including the U.K. and France, who were, in a formal sense, at war with Germany.<sup>17</sup>

Snyder begins to pay at least some lip-service to the political reality that the Polish government created.

The Soviets claimed that their intervention was necessary because the Polish state had ceased to exist. Since Poland could no longer protect its own citizens, went the argument, the Red Army had to enter the country on a peacekeeping mission. Poland's large Ukrainian and Belarusian minorities, went the Soviet propaganda, were in particular need of rescue.

True enough — but Snyder does not tell his readers the evidence for and against this position. Nor has he given his readers any of the explanation or context for these statements. He never explains why the Soviets claimed "the Polish state had ceased to exist" — i.e. what realities this claim was based on. He never outlines Polish oppression of the Belorussian and Ukrainian majorities. He fails to inform his readers about the anti-Polish uprisings that accompanied the outset of the Polish-German war.

Snyder continues:

Yet despite the rhetoric the Soviet officers and soldiers were prepared for war, and fought one. The Red Army disarmed Polish units, and engaged them wherever necessary.

Snyder fails to explain to his readers why the Polish army had to be disarmed. It was no longer the army of the Polish state, which had disappeared when its government interned itself in Rumania without appointing a successor. But some Polish units did not know their

government had abandoned them — the Polish government had not informed them. So some Polish military units did oppose the Red Army and had to be fought.

Whereupon Snyder writes:

Half a million men had crossed a frontier that was no longer defended, to fight an enemy that was all but defeated.

This is false. The Red Army did not cross the border to fight with the Poles but to keep German troops away from its borders and to keep a fascist pro-German state, probably a Ukrainian Nationalist state, from being formed there. Quotations from the relevant documents can be found in the preceding chapter and my online article.<sup>18</sup>

### **The Lie that Stalin Spoke of an "Alliance" with Hitler**

Snyder concludes:

Soviet soldiers would meet German soldiers, demarcate the border, and, in one instance, stage a joint victory march. Stalin spoke of an alliance with Germany "cemented in blood." It was mainly the blood of Polish soldiers, more than sixty thousand of whom died in combat. (123)

This paragraph is replete with evasions and falsehoods. The Soviet Union entered Poland because not to do so would have been to allow the German Army to stand on the Russian border. Since there was no government any longer that claimed sovereignty in Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia, the Soviet Union claimed sovereignty. Germany had already informed the USSR that "new states" — most likely, a Ukrainian fascist state closely tied to Nazi Germany — would arise if the Soviets did not claim sovereignty.

An essential aspect of sovereignty is the monopoly of force. The Red Army became the only legitimate military force. Since there was no Polish government anywhere, the Polish Army has no legal status and was obliged

to disarm. Some commanders did not know about this, and the Red Army had to engage them.

Snyder writes that "Stalin spoke of an alliance with Germany 'cemented in blood.'" He gives his source for it as follows:

n. 12 — Quotation: Weinberg, *World at Arms*, 57.

Snyder's statement is false. Weinberg notes that Stalin did not mention the term "alliance" at all. Instead, in response to von Ribbentrop's congratulations to him on his 60th birthday in December 1939, Stalin used the word "friendship."

Here is the full text of Stalin's reply telegram to Ribbentrop.

Министру иностранных дел Германии господину Иоахиму фон Риббентропу Берлин Благодарю Вас, господин министр, за поздравления. Дружба народов Германии и Советского Союза, скрепленная кровью, имеет все основания быть длительной и прочной. И. Сталин<sup>19</sup>

Translated:

To the German Foreign Minister Mr. Joachim von Ribbentrop, Berlin:

Thank you, Mr. Minister, for your congratulations. Friendship between the peoples of Germany and the Soviet Union, cemented by blood, has every reason to be long and strong.

J. Stalin

Weinberg uses the word "friendship", as did Stalin. This means that Snyder deliberately deceived his readers when he used the word "alliance." The USSR vigorously declared its neutrality in the Polish-German war.

The term "cemented in blood" cannot refer to fighting the Polish Army. As Vishliov points out, Stalin did not speak of friendship between the German and Soviet *governments*, but between the German and Soviet *people*.

Не о "дружбе" большевизма и нациза говорил Сталин, как это нам сегодня преподносят, а о дружбе народов двух стран. Эту дружбу он с полным основанием мог назвать скрепленной кровью.

Напомним, что немцев и русских связывали прочные революционные традиции, что народы обеих стран принесли немалые жертвы на алтарь общей борьбы за социальный прогресс против фашизма на земле Испании.<sup>20</sup>

Translated:

Stalin spoke not of "friendship" between Bolshevism and Nazism, as we are falsely told today, but of the friendship of the peoples of the two countries. This friendship he could describe as "cemented by blood." Let us remember that strong revolutionary traditions bound Germans and Russians, that the peoples of both countries had made great sacrifices on the altar of the common struggle for social progress, that German and Soviet internationalists fought shoulder to shoulder fascism on the earth of Spain.

Concerning Polish POWs taken by the Red Army Snyder writes:

The removal of these men — and all but one of them were men — was a kind of decapitation of Polish society. The Soviets took more than one hundred thousand prisoners of war, but released the men and kept only the officers. More than two thirds of these officers came from the reserves. Like Czapski and his botanist companion, these reserve officers were educated professionals and intellectuals, not military men. Thousands of doctors, lawyers, scientists, professors, and politicians were thus removed from Poland. (125)

Sources (n. 15 p. 475):

\* "Hrycak estimates 125,000 prisoners of war ("Victims," 179)";<sup>21</sup>

\* Cienciala, 230,000-240,000 (*Crime*, 26).

e for hard labor in the mines and in road-building, of whom some two thousand died in 1941 during evacuations; see Hryciuk, "Victims," 180."

**Hryciuk** does cite the figure of 125,000 POWs (on page 180, not page 179). The problem with all of Hryciuk's other estimates is that they come from the Polish Katyn volumes, which are based upon tendentious interpretations of Soviet archival materials. On the same page he gives the figure of approximately 2,000 killed during the 1941 evacuations.

Here as elsewhere Hryciuk's numbers do not add up. On page 180 he states that "nearly 39,000 [Polish] prisoners" remained in the USSR in December 1939, while on the next page he states that in July 1941, after the alleged Katyn killings and the 2000 supposedly killed during evacuations there still remained 25,184 Polish prisoners "in Soviet captivity." That would mean a difference of about 12,000, far fewer than the number of victims usually attributed to the Katyn massacres.

**Cienciala** ("Crime", page 26) states that Polish historians figure about 10,000 Polish officers ended up in Soviet captivity. This figure too does not tally with the total number of officers supposedly killed in the Katyn massacre plus those remaining to join the "Anders army" in 1941. Numerical problems like those of Hryciuk's and Cienciala's contribute to the mystery of the Katyn massacres. We discuss this controversy further in Chapter 10 of the present work.

Meanwhile, Snyder "wants it both ways." If the officers were the "head of Polish society", then *the Polish Army itself "decapitated" Poland by surrendering to the German forces and by fleeing to internment in Hungary (35,000), Rumania (32,000), and the Baltic states (12,000).* Meanwhile the Polish government and military high command "decapitated Poland" by interning themselves in Rumania, thus leaving their country with no leadership.

### **How Many Poles Did the NKVD Arrest, and Why?**

In the background, the NKVD entered the country, in force. In the twenty-one months to come it made more arrests in occupied eastern Poland than in the entire Soviet Union, seizing some 109,400 Polish citizens. The typical sentence was eight years in the Gulag; about 8,513 people were sentenced to death. (126)



Sources (n. 17 p. 476):

\* "On the typical sentence, see Jasiewicz, *Zagłada*, 172."

\* "On the 109,400 people arrested and the 8,513 people sentenced to death, see Hryciuk, 182.

\* "On the disproportion between arrest and imprisonment numbers, see Khlevniuk, *Gulag*, 236; and Głowacki, *Sowieci*, 292."

**Jasiewicz**, *Zagłada*, 172 states correctly that the *maximum* sentence was eight years. The *Osoboe Soveshchanie* (Special Commission) of the NKVD, essentially "troikas" operating like military courts and without appeal, was not empowered to impose sentences longer than eight years.

According to Jasiewicz, 74% of the sentences of *Polish residents of Western Belorussia* who were put on trial were for the maximum of eight years. This was the Polish imperialist infrastructure: police, government officials, and the "settlers" (*osadnicy*) sent to "polonize" the conquered territories.<sup>22</sup>

**Hryciuk**, 182 does give the number 109,400 for "Polish citizens" arrested — that is, including Belorussians and Ukrainians from Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine (on the following page Hryciuk says "roughly 110,000"). In reality, of course, all these people were *former* Polish citizens since the state of Poland no longer existed and Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia were now part of the USSR. These arrests were for all reasons.

Hryciuk notes that:

Among those imprisoned, an increasingly large group came from Polish conspiratorial organizations, which had begun to take shape in 1939 after the September defeat. They made up a considerable part of all Poles arrested in 1940 and 1941. (182)

In a good example of "bias by omission" Snyder fails to mention this important fact. Naturally the USSR was justified in arresting such people,

as any government would do. No state would permit hostile conspiratorial groups to carry on their activities with impunity.

Snyder also fails to note that on page 183 Hryciuk includes "7,305 persons murdered" in the Katyn massacres. That is, once again Hryciuk rejects the numbers normally given for the Katyn killings of 14,000, 22,000 etc. Hryciuk doesn't explain this. We discuss "Katyn" in a later chapter.

**Khlevniuk** (*Gulag*, 236) says nothing at all about "the disproportion between arrest and imprisonment numbers." In any case Khlevniuk's book is biased by many assertions that are not supported either by the documents Khlevniuk cites or by any footnotes.

**Głowacki** (*Sowieci*, 292) says nothing about any "disproportion between arrest and imprisonment numbers" either. The top half of the page is a list of political crimes and the sentences for them. This passage does occur:

Ustalenie bezpośredniej zależności między wysokością kary a narodowością ofiary jest trudne. **Związek taki chyba nie istniał.** Niewątpliwa surowość wymiaru „sprawiedliwości„ miała w założeniu działać odstrasżająco wobec wszystkich obywateli.

Establishing a direct relationship between the amount of the punishment [i.e. sentence] and the nationality of victims is difficult. **I do not think such a link existed.** The undoubted severity of the dimension of "justice" was designed to act as a deterrent to all citizens.

(Emphasis added — GF)

If this is the passage that Snyder had in mind when he referred to a "disproportion between arrest and imprisonment numbers", then he has misunderstood the passage. The remainder of the page is a summary of the statistics of persons imprisoned and in exile in 1939-1941 published by the well-known Russian scholar Viktor N. Zemskov in 1991.

Snyder writes:

After the conquest of Poland was complete, the Germans and their Soviet allies met once again to reassess their relations. On 28 September 1939, the day Warsaw fell to the Germans, the allies signed their treaty on borders and friendship,... Poland had ceased to exist. (127)

This is all wrong.

\* Germany and the USSR were never "allies." No agreement between Germany and the USSR mentions any "alliance." Like some other anticommunist writers Snyder simply asserts that the Soviet Union and Hitler's Germany were "allies." They do this repeatedly. Perhaps their aim is to create the impression in the readers' minds that this is "common knowledge" for which no evidence needs to be cited.

\* Poland ceased to exist not on September 28, 1939 but from the time the Polish government ceased to exercise control over it. This was, at the latest, on September 17 when the Polish government crossed into Rumanian internment. As a practical matter it was some days before that, when the government was in flight towards the Rumanian border and out of touch with its military command and its ambassadors.

Snyder writes:

On 4 December 1939 the Soviet politburo ordered the NKVD to arrange the expulsion of certain groups of Polish citizens deemed to pose a danger to the new order: military veterans, foresters, civil servants, policemen, and their families. Then, on one evening in February, 1940, in temperatures of about forty below zero, the NKVD gathered them all: 139,794 people taken from their homes at night at gunpoint to unequipped freight trains bound for special settlements in distant Soviet Kazakhstan or Siberia. ... The special settlements, part of the Gulag system, were the forced-labor zones to which the kulaks had been sent ten years before. (129)

Sources (n. 24 p. 476):

\* "On the 139,794 people taken from their homes, see Hryciuk, "Victims," 184."

\* "Głowacki records temperatures of minus 42 Celsius, which is minus 43 Fahrenheit; see *Sowieci*, 328."

\* Jolluck, *Exile*, 16.

**Hryciuk** does cite the number 139,794 (on page 186, not 184) while admitting that this count is approximate. The recent Russian account, *Sovetskie deportatsii*, states "approximately 140,000."

**Głowacki** (*Sowieci*, 328) states the following:

Akcję wysiedleńcza rozpoczęto o świcie 10 II 1940 r. Mróz dochodził wtedy nawet do minus 42°C....

Translated:

The resettlement began at dawn on February 10, 1940. The frost reached as low as minus 42° Celsius [=Centigrade]...

What is the evidence that the temperature at the time of deportation was minus 42° Celsius (= -44° Fahrenheit)? Głowacki admits that he has no definite reference, much less any evidence, for this assertion.

**Jolluck**, (*Exile*, 17), whom Snyder cites here, quotes an account from one of the deportees that mentions "that freezing and gloomy day 10 February 1940." "Freezing" suggests at or below 0° C or 32° F, whereas minus 40° C equals minus 40° F, literally a killing temperature. It is unlikely that anyone would refer to a temperature of -40° C as "freezing." To establish such facts is the job of historians; Snyder ignores this responsibility.

It is interesting to note that Głowacki does not claim anyone died from the cold. Some surely would have, if they had really been shipped off in -42° C temperatures. He states that he has taken his accounts of deportation from personal accounts:

Jej przebieg szczegółowo dokumentuje bardzo liczna już dziś literatura wspomnieniowa, relacje i wydawnictwa źródłowe (patrz bibliografia). W tym miejscu ograniczę się jedynie do wskazania przykładowych pozycji: „W czterdziestym nas Matko na Sibir zesłali,„ *Polska a Rosja 1939-42*. Wybór i opracowanie J.T. Gross, I. Grudzińska-Gross. Wstęp J.T. Gross (Warszawa 1990); *Wspomnienia Sybiraków*, [t.] 1-9, Warszawa 1989-1997.

Translated:

A very large body of literature — memoirs, reports and primary source publications available today — documents in detail the course of the deportations (see references). At this point I will confine myself only to indicate the sample items: "On the fortieth day Mother sent us to Siberia." *Poland and Russia 1939 to 1942*. Selection and development by J.T. Gross, I. Grudzinska-Gross. Introduction J.T. Gross (Warsaw 1990), *Memories of Siberians*, [t] 1-9, Warsaw, 1989-1997.

Though it's not our purpose here to delve deeply into this memoir literature we note in passing that this very paragraph of Głowacki's — evidently a direct quotation from the memoir in his footnote — contains some important contextual information. For example:

Do otoczonych domów (mieszkań) osób przewidzianych do zsyłki załomotali uzbrojeni funkcjonariusze NKWD. Nierzadko asystowali im cywile — przedstawiciele lokalnych władz.

Translated:

Armed NKVD officers were called to the surrounded homes or apartments of the persons proposed for exile. They were often assisted by civilians — representatives of the local authorities.

And:

Czasami wręczali gospodarzom spis pozostawionego przez nich dobytku, który miał być później sprzedany, a uzyskany przychód —

przesłany na zesłanie (w zasadzie cały majątek zesłańców powinien zostać opisany przez rejestratorów i oddany pod kontrolę komitetów chłopskich).

Translated:

Sometimes a list was handed to the owners of their property, which was to be later sold and the resulting money sent to them in exile (in fact all the property of the exiles was supposed to be described by a recorder and put under the control of the peasant committees).

The "local authorities" and "peasant committees" were made up of the local peasants — Ukrainians or Belorussians — who had been exploited by the Polish landowners imposed upon them after the conquest of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia by Poland in 1920.

This account confirms what is well known: those exiled were the "osadniki" (in Polish, *osadnicy*), settlers or colonists sent to "polonize" these non-Polish areas. When Poland had conquered Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia in 1920 the Polish authorities had repressed Ukrainian and Belorussian communists, and then all the non-Polish ethnics. The Soviets could hardly have tolerated the presence of the Polish imperialist administration in what was now the Ukrainian and Belorussian Republics of the USSR.

The term "forced labor" implies imprisonment. This is false: they were not imprisoned but sent to settlements where, of course, they had to work to support themselves.

### **Did Soviet Journalists and Teachers Keep Saying "Poland Will Never Rise Again"?**

Snyder writes:

As Soviet journalists kept writing and teachers kept saying, Poland had fallen and would never rise again. (130)

If this statement were true — "Soviet journalists kept writing and teachers kept saying" — there must be considerable written record of it. But Snyder does not give a single citation for this statement! Surely he would cite at least one if he could do so. In fact this sounds like a quotation from one of Hitler's speeches after the conquest of Poland, when he said: "Poland of the Versailles Treaty will never rise again."<sup>23</sup>

In the following statement Snyder tells a part of the truth:

When the Soviets said that they were entering eastern Poland to defend Ukrainians and Belarusians, this had at least a demographic plausibility: there were about six million such people in Poland. (131)

But Snyder fails to inform his readers that in Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine there were more Belorussians and Ukrainians than there were Poles. Nor does Snyder mention the Curzon Line, Polish imperialism, the Polish government's "polonization" policy, or the official racism against non-Polish nationalities.

Snyder describes the prisoner-of-war camps where the Polish officers were kept as follows:

The three camps were a sort of laboratory for observing the behavior of the Polish educated classes. Kozelsk, Ostashkov, and Starobilsk became Polish in appearance. (134)

Snyder has invented the "laboratory" fantasy. It has no basis in reality. It sounds sinister; as though the Soviets were planning to do something to "the Polish educated classes" and wanted a "laboratory" to see how they behaved. No doubt this is the effect Snyder is trying to achieve. But what evidence is there that the Soviets used the camps "for observing the behavior of the Polish educated classes?" None.

Moreover, Snyder does not bother to argue that these prisoners were representative of "the Polish educated classes" — as, of course, they were not. Snyder does not mention the fact that, even if the Katyn "smoking gun" documents were genuine — there has long been serious doubt about that —

they mention only 9631 Polish officers. All the rest mentioned in these documents are:

civil servants, landlords, policemen, intelligence agents, military policemen (gendarmes), immigrant settlers, and prison guards; ...11,000 members of various counter-revolutionary organizations engaged in spying and sabotage, former landlords, manufacturers, former Polish officers, clerks and refugees:...

This is not a sample of the "Polish educated classes." Yet Snyder has to claim that they were because he wishes us to believe that the Soviets were "decapitating" Polish society, "killing off its elite", etc.

The Nazis were indeed killing off the Polish elite in a special murder program called "AB-Aktion." Therefore, since Snyder wants to compare or equate the Soviets with the Nazis whenever he can, he has invented this fiction. Here as throughout *Bloodlands* Snyder is simply parroting the rightwing Polish nationalist historical "line."

We will discuss the "Katyn massacre" story, and Snyder's treatment of it, in Chapter 10.

Snyder claims:

At the same time, in March 1940 NKVD chief Beria had ordered a deportation of people who had declined to accept a Soviet passport. This meant a rejection of the Soviet system, and also a practical problem for Soviet bureaucrats. Polish citizens who refused to allow their identities to enter Soviet records could not be observed and punished with desirable efficiency.

This is just anticommunist nonsense. The Soviets did not need a person's permission to "enter their identities in Soviet records." Snyder wishes his readers to believe that the Soviets wanted to "observe and punish" everybody. Of course he has no evidence to support this statement; he has invented it. Historians are not supposed to "make things up."



As it happened, the vast majority of people who had rejected the Soviet passport were Jewish refugees from western Poland. These people had fled the Germans, but had no wish to become Soviet citizens. They feared that, if they accepted Soviet documents, they would not be allowed to return to Poland — once it was restored. So, in this way, Jews proved to be loyal citizens of Poland, and became victims of both of the regimes that had conquered their homeland.

Snyder has no evidence concerning what they "wished" or whether some of them wanted to "return to Poland." Then we have this interesting factoid:

They had fled the depredations of the SS, only to be deported by the NKVD to Kazakhstan and Siberia. Of the 78,339 people deported in the June 1940 action that targeted refugees, about eighty-four percent were Jewish. (141)

Source (n. 54 p. 478):

"Of the 78,339 people deported, about eighty four percent were Jewish; see Hryciuk, "Victims," 189."

This statement is false. There are problems with Hryciuk's figures. Hryciuk cites the "84% Jewish" figure (though on page 191, not page 189) from a 1989 article by Parsadanova. On page 175 of his article Hryciuk notes a very serious error of exaggeration in Parsadanova's article. Gur'ianov, whose work on the repression of Poles Snyder cites, also notes Parsadanova's "curious error in interpretation."<sup>24</sup> Since Snyder cites both Hryciuk and Gur'ianov, he knows this but fails to inform his readers.

In addition to whatever errors she made Parsadanova's article was published in 1989, long before the release of many documents from former Soviet archives. There seems to be no evidence that "the vast majority of people who had rejected the Soviet passport were Jewish refugees from western Poland", as Snyder claims.

The recent Russian collection of documents on Soviet deportations includes nothing about the ethnic breakdown of the deportees.<sup>25</sup>

However, it does discuss the intention of the Soviet state to find them all employment fit for their qualifications.<sup>26</sup>

Snyder has this to say concerning the city of Vilnius:

Throughout the interwar period Lithuania had claimed the city of Vilnius and its environs, which lay in northeastern Poland. (142)

Snyder fails to inform his readers how Vilnius came to "lie in northeastern Poland" and how it was that "Lithuania had claimed this city." The reason for Snyder's silence is not hard to understand. The seizure of Vilnius from Lithuania by Poland in 1920 was another egregious example of Polish aggression and imperialism. The Red Army had given Vilnius to the new Lithuanian state on July 7, 1920. Poland recognized Vilnius as belonging to Lithuania. Nevertheless, two days later a Polish army occupied Vilnius and part of Lithuania. Lithuania never recognized this annexation and continued to refer to its capital as "occupied Vilnius."

Thus Vilnius "lay in northeastern Poland" because Poland had seized it by force. Just as Poland had seized Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia by force in 1919-1921. On October 10, 1939 the USSR returned Vilnius and the part of Lithuania formerly annexed by Poland to Lithuania.

### **Did Stalin Refuse Hitler's Offer to Accept Two Million Jews? (No, He Didn't)**

Snyder claims:

The Germans proposed a transfer of European Jews in January 1940. Stalin was not interested. ... The Soviets had rejected a deportation of Jews to the Soviet Union,..." (144-145)

Snyder has made this claim elsewhere as well:

In early 1940, the German leadership tried to persuade its Soviet ally to take two million Jews from Polish territory; Stalin refused. (2011-2)

Snyder's evidence is as follows:

"On Eichmann and the January 1940 proposal, see Polian, "Schriftwechsel," 3, 7, 19."

It is instructive to check this reference. The bibliography in *Bloodlands* informs us that this is a reference to the following article:

Pavel Polian, "Hätte der Holocaust beinahe nicht stattgefunden? Überlegungen zu einem Schriftwechsel im Wert von zwei Millionen Menschenleben," in Johannes Hurter and Jürgen Zarusky, eds., *Besatzung, Kollaboration, Holocaust*. Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2008, 1-20.

But this is a secondary source; what we need is evidence. Continued searching reveals that the source is in Gennady Kostyrchenko's very anticommunist book *Tainaia politika Stalina. Vlast' i Antisemitizm* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2001). Here we read:

Между тем нацистами предпринимается новая попытка давления на Москву. На сей раз инициатива исходила из структур Центральной имперской службы по делам еврейской эмиграции, которой также руководил Гейдрих. Но, как и следовало ожидать, советские власти ответили категорическим отказом, / 189 / обоснованным начальником Переселенческого управления Е.М. Чекменевым в запнске к Молотову от 9 февраля 1940 г.:

«Переселенческим управлением при СНК СССР получены два письма от Берлинского и Венского переселенческих бюро по вопросу организации **переселения еврейского населения из Германии в СССР** — конкретно в Биробиджан и Западную Украину. По соглашению Правительства СССР с Германией об эвакуации населения на территорию СССР эвакуируются лишь украинцы, белорусы, русины и русские. Считаю, что предложения указанных переселенческих бюро не могут быть приняты».

Translated:

Meanwhile, a new attempt was made by the Nazis to put pressure on Moscow. This time the initiative came from the structure of the Reich Central Service for Jewish Emigration, which was also headed by Heydrich. But, as expected, the Soviet authorities responded with a categorical refusal, / 189 / which was explained by the head of the Resettlement Department E.M. Chekmenev in a note to Molotov on February 9, 1940:

"The Resettlement Department at the CPC [Council of People's Commissars, the executive part of the Soviet government] has received two letters from the Berlin and Vienna Offices of Resettlement on the question of **the resettlement of the Jewish population from Germany** to the Soviet Union — particularly to Birobidzhan and the Western Ukraine. According to the agreement between the Government of the USSR and Germany concerning the evacuation of the population into the territory of the USSR only Ukrainians, Belorussians, Ruthenians, and Russians are to be evacuated. We consider that the proposals of the Offices of Resettlement cannot be accepted."

(Emphasis added)

Now we have the text from a primary source — something Snyder should have given his readers but did not, possibly because he never bothered to locate it himself. From it we can draw certain conclusions.

\* The German letters have not been published or even directly referred to. Apparently they have not been located.

\* Judging from the Soviet reaction reproduced above Heydrich offered to resettle not "European" but **German** Jews to the USSR. The wording is unequivocal: "the resettlement of the Jewish population from Germany."

Hitler did not allow non-German Jews into Germany. Therefore the Jews in question were German Jews — no more than 214,000 persons (see below).

\* These people were not volunteering to be deported to the rugged pioneer agricultural life of Birobidzhan, the Soviet Jewish Autonomous Region in

Eastern Siberia. Nor were they volunteering for Western Ukraine, where there were already millions of inhabitants. They were not volunteering to be sent to the USSR at all!

German Jews had applied in large numbers to be allowed to move to Western Europe and the United States. As is well known, in 1939 the United States and Canada rejected the Jewish refugees on the MS St Louis, a trip often called the "Voyage of the Damned" after a book about this event. They were eventually accepted by Great Britain, France, Belgium and the Netherlands. None of the countries was willing to accept more than 288 of them, the number accepted by Great Britain.

\* Neither the figure two million nor "Polish territory" are mentioned in the Russian original. In fact no number of Jews is mentioned in the Russian document. By the beginning of the war there were only about 214,000 Jews remaining in Germany.<sup>27</sup>

\* In his 2011 article Snyder falsely states that the Germans wanted the Soviets "to take two million Jews from Polish territory." In *Bloodlands*, published the previous year (2010), Snyder appears confused. In the passage quoted above he mentions neither the two-million figure nor anything about "Polish territory", only "a transfer of European Jews." Later, on pp. 160-161, he again cites the "two million" figure.

Snyder may have copied the error from Polian's article. Polian writes:

Jedoch hat Čekmenev den wesentlichen Inhalt der fehlenden deutschen Briefe ebenso knapp wie deutlich übermittelt: Hitler schlägt Stalin vor, **alle Juden zu übernehmen, die sich zu diesem Zeitpunkt unter dem deutschen Stiefel befinden.** (3)

Translated:

However Chekmenev did briefly and clearly transmit the essential content of the missing German letter: Hitler proposes that Stalin accept **all the Jews who were under the German boot at that point in time.**

(Emphasis added)

Now it is obvious that Polian was in error. The Russian document says nothing about "all the Jews who were under the German boot at that point in time." Nor is it a question of mistranslation, for the German translation quoted by Polian clearly says "Umsiedlung der jüdischen Bevölkerung aus Deutschland" — the resettlement of the Jewish population **from Germany**, not "under German control" or "from German-occupied territory." In other words, at most about 214,000 unwilling persons.

Once again, Snyder's claim is false.

The Wnuk brothers, who hailed from a region that had once been in east-central Poland but was now quite close to the German-Soviet border, met the same fate. Bolesław, the older brother, was a populist politician who had been elected to the Polish parliament. Jakub, the younger brother, studied pharmacology and designed gas masks. Both married in 1932 and had children. Jakub, along with the other experts from his institute, was arrested by the Soviets and killed at Katyn in April 1940. Bolesław was arrested by the Germans in October 1939, taken to Lublin castle in January, and executed in the AB-Aktion on 29 June 1940. He left a farewell note on a handkerchief: "I die for the fatherland with a smile on my lips, but I die innocent." (149)

n. *75 Zagłada polskich elit*, 77.

This book is a catalog of an exhibition. It does not document the quotations, and only makes the claim without evidence.

Jakub Wnuk is number 4121 in the German list, p. 272 in the official German report *Amtliches Material zum Massenmord von Katyn*. We explore the Katyn issue in Chapter 10.

## **Deportations Just Prior to June 22, 1941**

According to Snyder:

The Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists now began to take action against the institutions of Soviet power. Some leading Ukrainian nationalists had interwar connections with German military intelligence and with Reinhard Heydrich's SS intelligence service, the Sicherheitsdienst. As Stalin knew, several of them were still gathering intelligence for Berlin. Thus a fourth Soviet deportation from the annexed territories of eastern Poland chiefly targeted Ukrainians. The first two operations had targeted mainly Poles, and the third mainly Jews. An action of May 1941 moved 11,328 Polish citizens, most of them Ukrainians, from western Soviet Ukraine to the special settlements. The very last deportation, on 19 June, touched 22,353 Polish citizens, most of them Poles. (151)

As we have seen above, Snyder has no evidence of a deportation that "targeted...mainly Jews," nor is this recorded by the most authoritative Soviet volume.

Snyder's evidence is as follows (n. 78 p. 479):

\* "On the Ukrainians targeted, see HI 210/14/7912. These operations were part of a series of June 1941 deportation actions that were then organized throughout the newly annexed regions of the Soviet Union, from the Baltics to Romania."

\* "On the 11,328 and 22,353 Polish citizens, see Hryciuk, "Victims," 191, 193."

\* "See also Olaru-Cemirtan, 'Züge.'"

"**HI 210/14/7912**" is an archival identifier of the Hoover Institution in Palo Alto, CA. The Hoover Institution Library has informed me that this number is insufficient to identify the document in question.

Moreover, no citation of this nature is of any use unless it is accompanied by source criticism. The mere fact that a piece of paper is in an archive somewhere does not make it "evidence." Much less can we assume it is truthful. We need to know what the document is — when written, by whom, its relationship to the events recorded in it, etc. Snyder knows this — or

ought to know it, since he is a historian. But he tells his readers nothing about any of this.

The Ukrainian Nationalists were fascists like the German Nazis. They were more active in the Western Ukraine than in the Eastern Ukraine in the USSR. Naturally the Soviets had to deal with them.

Snyder's second source, **Hryciuk**, ("Victims," 191, 193) does not mention any "11,328 Poles." He does mention 22,353 Poles from Western Belorussia. These are described as family members of the Polish imperialist infrastructure: persons arrested, sentenced to death, persons "in hiding", i.e. fleeing arrest, persons who had fled the country, "leaders and active members of counterrevolutionary insurgent organizations," imprisoned landowners, arrested gendarmes and policemen, merchants, traders, repressed Polish military officers and former high-ranking Polish officials.

Hryciuk takes his figures from a Polish article published in 1994 and therefore written well before that year. But we cannot consider the information in this article to be accurate, as most Soviet archives now available had not been opened by 1994, and no other sources would have recorded accurate data about deportations. Snyder has to know this — or should know it, since he is a historian working in this area. But if he does, he ignores it.

**Olaru-Cemirtan**, "Züge" is a Rumanian article translated into German that outlines the deportation of Rumanian governmental and other figures from Bessarabia, which was being transferred to the USSR from Rumania and renamed Moldovia. It has nothing to do with Poland at all.

The recent Russian document collection to which I have referred previously records 21,000 "counterrevolutionaries and nationalists" deported from Western Belorussia (p. 792, l. 3 col. 5), without accompanying documents.

Snyder then states:

Germany invaded the Soviet Union in a surprise attack on 22 June, and its bombers caught up with the Soviet prison trains. About two thousand deportees died in the freight cars, **victims of both regimes**.



(Emphasis added — GF)

This is a good example of Snyder's bias. Members of the Polish imperialist infrastructure were hardly "victims" of the Soviets by any normal meaning of the word. When the Germans killed them, they were "victims" only of Germany, not of the Soviets. Moreover, *the Soviets were, in fact, moving them out of the way of the Nazi invasion* — that is, attempting to fulfill internationally-recognized obligations to care for prisoners.

In the previous two years, the Soviets had repressed about half a million Polish citizens: about 315,000 deported, about 110,000 more arrested, and 30,000 executed, and about 25,000 more who died in custody...(51)

Sources (n. 80 p. 479):

\* "Some 292,513 Polish citizens were deported in four waves, along with thousands more individually or in smaller actions. See *Deportacje obywateli*, 29"

\* "... and Hryciuk, "Victims," 175."

\* "Of the deportees, some 57.5 percent were counted by the Soviets as Poles, 21.9 percent as Jews, 10.4 percent as Ukrainians, and 7.6 percent as Belarusians; see Hryciuk, "Victims," 195.

\* "For overall counts I rely on Hryciuk, "Victims," 175;

\* "...and Autuchiewicz, "Stan," 23."

\* "See also Gurianov, "Obzor," 205."

A highly anticommunist historian of the Russian "Memorial Society" has stated that Polish historians have exaggerated the figure of roughly 300,000 Poles deported by five to eight times — that is, that the real figure should be in the order of 40,000.

Таким образом, **оценки традиционной польской историографии (от 200 тысяч до свыше 300 тысяч человек)**

**оказываются завышенными в пять-восемь раз.** Возможно, что не все высланные с указанных территорий сами считали себя польскими гражданами, даже если они формально и были таковыми до 17 сентября 1939 г. — например члены семей участников Организации украинских националистов, составлявшие, согласно донесениям УНКВД/НКВД регионов расселения, большинство среди ссыльнопоселенцев из западных областей УССР.

Translated:

Therefore **the evaluation of traditional Polish historiography (from 200,000 to over 300,000 people) is too high by from five to eight times.** It is possible that not all those expelled from these territories regarded themselves as Polish citizens, even if they were formally until September 17, 1939 — for example, the family members of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists [OUN], which constituted, according to the reports of the UNKVD/NKVD regional settlement, the majority of exiles from the western regions of the USSR.

(Emphasis added)<sup>28</sup>

The OUN members were pro-Nazi nationalists on whom Hitler counted heavily and who later participated in the Holocaust of Jews and immense mass murders of Poles known as the "Volhynian massacres."

Who was deported? The best evidence we have is the order signed by NKVD Commissar Lavrentii Beria. It specifies deportation of the following groups:

1. Members of counterrevolutionary parties and anti-Soviet nationalist organizations;
2. Former policemen, security guards, leaders of the police and prisons, and rank and file police.
3. Officers and jailers if there is evidence to incriminate them;

4. Landowners, large-scale merchants, factory owners and officials of the bourgeois state apparatus;
5. Former officers and White Guards [=those who had fought against the Soviets during the Civil War], including officers of the Tsarist army and the officers who had served in the territorial corps of the Red Army (formed from the units and the national armies of the former independent states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia after their incorporation into the Soviet Union);
6. Criminals;
7. Prostitutes registered with the police and continuing to work as prostitutes;
8. Family members of persons enumerated in points 1-4;
9. Family members of participants in the counterrevolutionary nationalist organizations, whose heads were sentenced to capital punishment or who went into hiding;
10. Anyone who had escaped from Poland and refused to accept Soviet citizenship;
11. Persons repatriated from Germany as well as Germans who were registered to emigrate and refuse to go to Germany.<sup>29</sup>

Here we will discuss only Snyder's allegations about those who were killed or died.

1. Snyder gives no source at all for his claim that "25,000 more who died in custody." This factoid is another of Snyder's fabrications.
2. By "30,000 executed" Snyder appears to be just "rounding up" the figure of 22,000 allegedly shot by the Soviets at Katyn, Ostashkov, and Starobelsk, the "Katyn massacre." We will return to the Katyn issue in much more detail in Chapter 10. But where do the other 8,000 "executed"

come from? All the footnotes above concern deportations. Snyder appears to have invented this figure.

Together, between September 1939 and June 1941, in their time as allies, the Soviet and German states had killed perhaps two hundred thousand Polish citizens, and deported about a million more. Poles had been sent to the Gulag and to Auschwitz, where tens of thousands more would die in the months and years to come. Polish Jews under German occupation were enclosed in ghettos, awaiting an uncertain fate. Tens of thousands of Polish Jews had already died of hunger or disease. (153)

"Allies" again! There was no alliance between the USSR and Germany. Snyder evidently thinks that if he repeats it often enough his readers — or some of them, at least — will believe it. This is the technique of "the Big Lie."

But the main falsehood is this: To write "the Soviet and German states had killed perhaps two hundred thousand Polish citizens" is to suggest some kind of equivalence between the numbers killed by each. But Snyder claims the Soviets "killed" 30,000 Poles. Even if that were true that would still be only 15% of 200,000, which would mean that the Germans killed 170,000, or 85%. And Snyder ignores the whole scholarly dispute over Katyn while blithely attributing 22,000 of those 30,000 dead Poles to the Soviets.

So even with his fraudulent arithmetic Snyder cannot really demonstrate any equivalence at all between the number of Poles killed by Germany and those killed by Soviets. All he can do is *assert* that there was such an equivalence. Moreover, Snyder assumes that all of the Poles "executed" by the Soviets were "innocent", since those killed by the Nazis certainly were — they were killed on a racial basis because the Nazis wanted to eradicate any Polish elite through mass murder. No one has ever claimed that the Soviets had any such aim.

**Did the Soviets Aim to "Decapitate Polish Society?" (No, They Didn't)**

Snyder declares that the Nazis and the Soviets had similar, basically genocidal, intentions:

A particular wound was caused by the intention, in both Moscow and Berlin, to decapitate Polish society, **to leave Poles as a malleable mass that could be ruled rather than governed.** (153, emphasis added, GF)

Snyder does cite some evidence that this was the Nazis' intention:

Hans Frank, citing Hitler, defined his job as the elimination of Poland's "leadership elements."

But what is his evidence that the Soviets intended anything of the kind?

NKVD officers took their assignment to a logical extreme by consulting a Polish "Who's Who" in order to define their targets.

"A Who's Who? So what?" you may ask. Here is Snyder's exegesis:

**This was an attack on the very concept of modernity, or indeed the social embodiment of Enlightenment** in this part of the world. In eastern Europe the pride of societies was the "intelligentsia," the educated classes who saw themselves as leading the nation, especially during periods of statelessness and hardship, and preserving national culture in their writing, speech, and behavior. The German language has the same word, with the same meaning; Hitler ordered quite precisely the "extermination of the Polish intelligentsia." The chief interrogator at Kozelsk had spoken of a "divergent philosophy"; one of the German interrogators in the AB-Aktion had ordered an old man to be killed for exhibiting a "Polish way of thinking." It was the intelligentsia who was thought to embody this civilization, and to manifest this special way of thinking. (153-4)

(Emphasis added — GF)

So by consulting a "Who's Who" the Soviets were "attacking the social embodiment of Enlightenment", "the very concept of modernity" — or so

Snyder claims. How terrible! Just as though the Soviets were promoting the geocentric theory of the universe or the burning of witches!

But what is Snyder's evidence? He cites the following (n. 85 p. 479):

\* "On Frank, see Longerich, *Unwritten Order*, 47."

\* "On the NKVD, see Kołakowski, *NKWD*, 74."

\* "On Hitler, see Mańkowski, "Ausserordentliche," 7. Compare Aly, *Architects*, 151."

Of these works only Kołakowski, *NKWD*, is about the Soviets; the other books are about the Germans. Checking Kołakowski, we see that, once again, Snyder has fabricated this "fact" — invented it.

Kołakowski, *NKVD*, 74:

Dane te potwierdzają pogląd o skierowaniu pierwszej fali represji na ziemiach północno-wschodnich II Rzeczypospolitej głównie przeciwko przedstawicielom społeczeństwa polskiego. Objęły one rzeczywistych i domniemanych przeciwników systemu komunistycznego spośród wszystkich warstw społecznych. Listy osób przewidzianych do zatrzymania sporządzono posługując się miejscowymi informatorami oraz wykorzystując dokumenty przejęte z polskich archiwów, urzędów i przedsiębiorstw, a także zarekwirowane podczas rewizji w mieszkaniach. Do celów tych wykorzystywano **książki i opracowania, które wymieniały nazwiska osób walczących o granice II Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1918-1921**. Takimi wydawnictwami były m.in.: Książka Bolesława Waligóry "Bój pod Radzyminem" lub opracowanie pod red. Stanisława Łozy "Czy wiesz, kto to jest", wydane w Warszawie w 1938 r. jako polskie "Who is who."

Translated:

These data support the view of directing the first wave of repression in the north-east of the Second Republic mainly against representatives of

the Polish society. These include real and suspected opponents of the communist system **from all social strata**. Lists of people prepared for detainment were prepared using local informants and documents seized from Polish archives, offices and businesses and confiscated his review of residences. For these purposes they **used books and studies containing the names of those who fought for the boundaries of the Second Republic in 1918-1921**. Such releases included the book of Boleslaw Waligora "The Battle of Radzymin" [a battle in the Polish-Soviet War, August 12-15, 1920] or the work, edited by Stanislaw Łoza "Do you know who this is", published in Warsaw in 1938 as a Polish "Who's Who." (Emphasis added.)

Kołakowski makes it clear that the two books he cites were used by the Soviets to identify "the names of those who fought for the boundaries of the Second Republic in 1918-1921." Snyder's own source contradicts Snyder's statement that the Soviets aimed repression at "the leadership elements" of Polish society. The Soviets had no aim to "decapitate Polish society" or to target the intelligentsia. They aimed to remove the structures of Polish imperialism that had been responsible for the racist oppression of Belorussians, Ukrainians, and Jews in Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine.

Moreover, Kołakowski says that "real and suspected opponents of the communist system *from all social strata*" were targeted. Kołakowski does not even mention "the intelligentsia." Much less does he claim that the Soviets targeted it.

So this is yet another attempt by Snyder to associate the Soviets with the Nazis, and again Snyder has to flagrantly abuse his sources in order to do it.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Chapter Six of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is the classic source for the doctrine of the "Big Lie."

<sup>2</sup> See:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/moscicki\\_resignation.h](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/moscicki_resignation.h)

[tml](#)

<sup>3</sup> See:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/no\\_partition.html#Germany\\_No\\_Longer\\_Recognized\\_the\\_Existence\\_of\\_Poland](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/no_partition.html#Germany_No_Longer_Recognized_the_Existence_of_Poland)

<sup>4</sup> See:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/did\\_ussr\\_invade\\_poland.html#The\\_Question\\_of\\_the\\_State\\_in\\_International\\_Law](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/did_ussr_invade_poland.html#The_Question_of_the_State_in_International_Law)

<sup>5</sup> See:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/should\\_the\\_ussr\\_have\\_permitted.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/should_the_ussr_have_permitted.html)

<sup>6</sup> See:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/soviet\\_neutrality.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/soviet_neutrality.html)

<sup>7</sup> Олег Викторович Вишлёв, Накануне 22 июня 1941 года. М.: 2001.  
(Oleg Viktorovich Vishliov. Nakanune 22 iunlia 1941 goda. Moscow 2001):

<sup>8</sup> Vishliov, Ch. 4. — Вишлёв, гл. 4: «"Дружба, скрепленная кровью?" (К вопросу о характере советско-германских отношений. 1939-1940).»

<sup>9</sup> See: [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/no\\_partition.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/no_partition.html) and in the preceding chapter.

<sup>10</sup> Krivoshein, Mezhdubur'e. Voronezh-Belgorod, 1964, p. 258.

<sup>11</sup> Heinz Guderian, Erinnerungen eines Soldaten (1951) p. 74.

<sup>12</sup> Myth: the Joint Soviet-German Parade in Brest": [http://wiki.istmat.info/миф:совместный\\_парад\\_в\\_бресте](http://wiki.istmat.info/миф:совместный_парад_в_бресте)

<sup>13</sup> Vishliov 108-110.

<sup>14</sup> The Curzon Line and the boundaries since 1919 may be seen here: <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/curzonline.html> A slightly different view, with the post-1945 borders clearly marked along



with the Curzon Line, is here:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cuzon\\_line\\_en.svg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cuzon_line_en.svg)

<sup>15</sup> See the map of 1764 here:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Poland1764physical.jpg>

<sup>16</sup> See: : "Włodzimierz Jastrzębski: To co się zdarzyło w Bydgoszczy miało podłoże emocjonalne." RMF September 1, 2003. At:

<http://www.rmfm24.pl/tylko-w-rmf24/wywiady/news-wlodzimierz-jastrzebski-to-co-sie-zdarzylo-w-bydgoszczy-mial,nId,138894>

<sup>17</sup> For the evidence see the preceding chapter and Furr, "did the Soviet Union..." generally and specifically the section "Soviet Neutrality" at:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/mlg09/soviet\\_neutrality.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/mlg09/soviet_neutrality.html)

<sup>18</sup> At: [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/mlg09/no\\_partition.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/mlg09/no_partition.html)

<sup>19</sup> Text at: <http://old.novayagazeta.ru/data/2009/092/22.html>

<sup>20</sup> Vishliov, 502. — Вишлѐв, «О какой дружбе говорил Сталин?».

<http://militera.lib.ru/research/vishlev/04.html> с. 502:

<http://militera.lib.ru/research/vishlev/04.html>

<sup>21</sup> This is a misprint; Snyder obviously means Polish nationalist scholar Grzegorz Hryciuk.

<sup>22</sup> All Polish citizens in the USSR were freed after the fascist invasion of the USSR in June 1941 and the treaty of alliance between the Soviet government and the Polish government in exile.

<sup>23</sup> "Das Polen des Versailler Vertrags wird niemals wieder erstehen!" — Speech before the Reichstag, October 6, 1939. In *Der Grossdeutsche Freiheitskampf. Reden Adolf Hitlers vom 1. September 1939 bis 10 März 1940*. Munich: Franz Eher Vgl, 1940, p. 93. English here:

<sup>24</sup> A. Ie. Gur'ianov, "Obzor sovetskikh repressivnykh kampanii protiv poliakov i pols's'kikh grazhdan," in A.V. Lipatov and I.O. Shaitanov, eds.,

Poliaki i russkie: Vzaimoponimanie i vzaimoneponimanie, Moscow: Indrik, 2000, 199-207, at 205.

<sup>25</sup> Stalinskie deportatsii 1928-1953. Dokumenty. Moscow: MDF / Izd. "Materik", 2005, 156-168. — Сталинские депортации, сс. 156-158.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. № 2-37 сс. 159-160.

<sup>27</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Holocaust Encyclopedia. "German Jews During the Holocaust. 1939-1945.":  
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005469>

<sup>28</sup> A.E. Gur'ianov, "Masshtaby deportatsii naselenia v glub' SSSR v mae-iiune 1941 g." Repressii protiv poliakov I pol'skikh grazhdan. Moscow: Zven'ia, 1997: [http://www.memo.ru/history/polacy/g\\_2.htm](http://www.memo.ru/history/polacy/g_2.htm)

<sup>29</sup> Gur'ianov, "Masshtaby deportatsii naselenia v glub' SSSR v mae-iiune 1941 g." This information is not in the 2000 version of Gur'ianov's article that Snyder cites.

## **Chapter 9. *Snyder's Fact-Claims in Bloodlands, Chapters 5 and 6 Examined***

Snyder's fifth chapter deals with the period immediately before the German invasion of the Soviet Union. There is little new here. Many of the fact-claims he makes about the Soviet Union, Stalin, etc., in this chapter are repeated from other chapters.

### **The Oft-Repeated Lie: "German-Soviet Alliance"**

Snyder frequently repeats the falsehood that there was an "alliance" between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany.

...in the second, during the German-Soviet alliance (1939-1941), the killing was balanced. (155)

How could the Soviets make an alliance with the Nazis? (155)

What was it about the Nazi and Soviet systems that permitted mutually advantageous cooperation, between 1939 and 1941, but also the most destructive war in human history between 1941 and 1945? (156)

After this ideological compromise ("socialism in one country"), Stalin's alliance with Hitler was a detail. (157)

Here Snyder *assumes* that Leon Trotsky was correct in claiming that "socialism in one country" was in opposition to Lenin's ideas. He does not even allude to the well-known debate over this question. Evidently Snyder is eager to seize upon any argument that is "anti-Stalin."

The allied Soviet Union had rejected Germany's proposal to import two million Jews. (160-161)

We have discussed this falsehood in the preceding chapter. In addition, we should note that all the Western capitalist countries had "mutually

advantageous cooperation" with Nazi Germany. What else was the Munich Accord, or the trade agreements between the U.K. and Germany?

### **The Lie that the USSR Wanted to "Destroy the Polish Upper Classes"**

Thus it was legitimate to destroy the Polish upper classes (Stalinism)...  
(156)

Snyder cites no evidence whatsoever that the Soviets wanted to "destroy the Polish upper classes" — because, of course, they did not. Nothing of the kind occurred. Polish "settlers" (*osadnicy*) and the Polish imperialist officials were not "destroyed" — they were deported from the lands they had occupied, Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine.

### **Snyder Equates Nazi Imperialism with Soviet Anti-Imperialism**

Hitler wanted the Germans to become an imperial people; Stalin wanted the Soviets to endure the imperial stage of history, however long it lasted. The contradiction here was less of principle than of territory. (157)

If this convoluted statement means anything at all it suggests that genocidal and imperialist Nazism and Soviet anti-imperialism are basically the same. If you want to "endure the imperial stage of history" — that is, to survive it — you are somehow similar to those who want to impose it! True nonsense.

In reality, Nazi imperialism was fundamentally similar to the imperialism of Great Britain, France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Portugal, and Japan. The difference was that Hitler wanted an empire in Europe — specifically, Eastern Europe and the USSR — while the Western imperialists had imposed their imperial rule on other continents. The worldwide communist movement was the single most significant force opposing all of these imperialisms.

Hitler's Garden of Eden, the pure past to be found in the near future, was Stalin's Promised Land, a territory mastered at great cost, about

which a canonical history had already been written (Stalin's *Short Course* of 1938). (157)

If *this* means anything, it is that the racist and genocidal Nazi Aryan empire, in which all except ethnic Germans would be killed off or reduced to slavery, was the same as the Soviet ideal of a multiracial state free of exploitation — a breathtakingly cynical statement.

Snyder is also wrong on elementary facts. Stalin's *Short Course* was a history of the Bolshevik Party, not a history of the USSR. Its title is *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks). Short Course*. Either Snyder is deliberately misleading his readers, or he has never read the book and does not know what he is talking about.

### **Was Collectivization of Agriculture a Form of Colonialism?**

The secret of collectivization (as Stalin had noted long before) was that it was an alternative to expansive colonization, which is to say a form of internal colonization. (159)

This is not only nonsense — it is yet another dishonest attempt to equate the USSR with Nazi Germany. There is no such thing as "internal colonization." And where did Stalin "note" that collectivization was "an alternative to colonization"? Snyder does not even attempt to document this claim, which is no more than name-calling. Basically, Snyder assumes, without evidence, that the purpose and function of collectivization was exploitation. This is false, as Tauger has argued. (Tauger 2006)

Collectivization had brought starvation to Soviet Ukraine, first as an unintended result of inefficiencies and unrealistic grain targets, and then as an intended consequence of the vengeful extractions of late 1932 and early 1933. (162)

Snyder is relating two distinct falsehoods here. First, collectivization did not cause the famine. Snyder does not even attempt to prove that it did; he simply asserts it. In reality, as we have seen, collectivization put an end to the age-old cycle of famines caused by Russia's and Ukraine's extreme

vulnerability to natural disasters and the primitive — actually, medieval — methods of traditional Russian and Ukrainian peasant agriculture. Second, there was no "intended" famine or "vengeful extraction." We have examined this question in Chapter One.

Stalin himself received more than a hundred such indications [that Hitler would invade the USSR in 1941], but chose to ignore them.  
(165)

This is false. Everybody makes mistakes of judgment; Stalin unquestionably made them as well. As, of course, did the British and French, who were caught totally unprepared when Hitler sent his army against them in May 1940, even though they had officially been at war for more than eight months.

But Stalin did not make this specific error. We now have a great deal of evidence that Stalin and the Soviet leadership were expecting a German attack around June 21, 1941. I have collected many of them in *Khrushchev Lied*.<sup>1</sup> We also have American sources, such as the following:

In Moscow on June 20, Steinhardt received a cable from Washington that advised him to evacuate all American citizens from Russia. On June 21 a United States diplomatic official traveling east to Vladivostok observed between 200 and 220 westbound trains, of twenty-five cars each, partially loaded with troops and army supplies. The same day, Nikita S. Khrushchev, Ukrainian Communist Party leader, lifted the phone in his Kiev office to hear Stalin alert him that the Nazis might begin military operations against Russia the next day, June 22.<sup>2</sup>

We now know that the Red Army commanders were instructed to go to battle stations on June 18, 1941, though some failed to do so. This question was the source of an interesting and acrimonious debate in a leading Soviet / Russian military journal 20 years ago. General Dmitrii Pavlov, commander of the Belorussian front, was tried and executed for failing to bring his army to battle readiness. The very partial evidence in his case that has been released suggested that there is some evidence that he was deliberately aiding Hitler.

The Red Army did indeed suffer serious defeat during the early months of the German invasion. This was certainly a mistake — it was not supposed to happen. However, the same is true of the other armies that Hitler's forces had attacked. At the war's outset none of the Allied armies were prepared to deal with the German *Blitzkrieg*. The entire French army was smashed in less than six weeks and Paris occupied. The British expeditionary force on the continent was routed, barely saving some of its remnants at Dunkirk thanks to bad weather for the Luftwaffe and indecisiveness on the part of the German commander. American forces were badly defeated in their first battle with German forces by German Field Marshal Rommel's *Afrika Korps* in February 1943 at the Kasserine Pass in Tunisia.

Eight years before, it had taken a strong Soviet state to starve Soviet Ukraine.... Under his rule, people in Soviet Ukraine (and elsewhere) stooped over their own bulging bellies to harvest a few sheaves of wheat that they were not allowed to eat. (172)

This is a grotesque idea, false in every detail, as we have shown in Chapter One. The image of starving peasants harvesting grain that they could not eat is absurd. Needless to say, Snyder did not document any examples of this. All of the available documentation shows that those who were working in the fields had a priority claim on whatever limited food was available during 1932 and 1933.

It was near Kharkiv that starving peasant children in 1933 had eaten each other alive in a makeshift orphanage. (172)

There was a serious famine, so of course terrible things occurred. But Snyder gave no evidence for this statement in his chapter on the famine and cites none here.

During the Great Terror, Stalin had made sure that Finns were targeted for one of the deadliest of the national actions, believing that Finland might one day lay claim to Leningrad. (172)

Not only does Snyder state as a fact that Stalin "targeted" Soviet Finns but also claims that he knows the reason Stalin supposedly did so. Yet he gives not a single citation to any evidence, or any document of any kind, to

substantiate his claims. There is no evidence that Stalin even knew at the time about Ezhov's murder of thousands of ethnic Finns.

During the interrogations in 1939 Ezhov admitted that he deceived the Soviet government concerning these national actions:

The government, understandably, had no conception of our conspiratorial plans and in the present case proceeded solely on the basis of the necessity to prolong the operation without going into the essence of how it was carried out.

In this sense, of course, we were deceiving the government in the most blatant manner.<sup>3</sup>

### **Was Stalin's "No Retreat" Order Similar to Nazi-type Racism?**

By treating Soviet soldiers horribly, he [Hitler] wished to ensure that German soldiers would fear the same from the Soviets, and so fight desperately to prevent themselves from falling into the hands of the enemy. It seems that he could not bear the idea of soldiers of the master race surrendering to the subhumans of the Red Army. **Stalin took much the same view:** that Red Army soldiers should not allow themselves to be taken alive. He could not counsel the possibility that Soviet soldiers would retreat and surrender. They were supposed to advance and kill and die. .... This tyranny of the offensive in Soviet planning caused Soviet soldiers to be captured. Soviet commanders were fearful of ordering withdrawals, lest they be personally blamed (purged, and executed). Thus their soldiers held positions for too long, and were encircled and taken prisoner. **The policies of Hitler and Stalin** conspired to turn Soviet soldiers into prisoners of war and then prisoners of war into non-people. (175. Emphasis added.)

This is false, yet another attempt by Snyder to yoke the Soviet Union with Nazi Germany. Specifically, Snyder is trying to blame Stalin for Hitler's mass murder of Soviet POWs.

In one of his published articles Snyder writes:



Germans took so many Soviet prisoners of war in part because Stalin ordered his generals not to retreat. (2011-1)

## **Stalin's "No Retreat" Order and Those of the Allies in 1918 Compared**

There are more similarities between the policies of Hitler and Great Britain than between those of Hitler and the USSR. Stalin's orders not to retreat recall that given by Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, on April 11, 1918, which reads in part:

There is no other course open to us but to fight it out. Every position must be held to the last man: there must be no retirement [= retreat]. With our backs to the wall and believing in the justice of our cause each one of us must fight on to the end.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time Sir Arthur Currie, Commander of the Canadian Corps, issued a similar order:

...I place my trust in the Canadian Corps, knowing that where Canadians are engaged there can be no giving way.

Under the orders of your devoted officers in the coming battle you will advance or fall where you stand facing the enemy.<sup>5</sup>

Stalin's orders were the same as these Allied commanders in 1918 — no retreat, fight till death. Both Haig and Currie ordered "fight on to the end", "fall where you stand," no retreat.

But there is a big difference between Stalin's orders and those of Haig and Currie. British and Canadian troops were being told to fight to the end, without retreat, simply to hold a given position at a given time. The British and Canadians were fighting on the soil of France. Their homes and families were not at all threatened in the case of a German victory. Even French homes and families were not threatened, any more than were German homes and families when the Allies won the war.

But for Red Army soldiers the situation was far different. They really were fighting for their homes and families. The Germans were bent on mass extermination. Hitler had already murdered millions of Soviet citizens. Even Snyder admits that Hitler planned to murder tens of millions more Soviet people if Germany were victorious. Snyder fails to make this distinction or to even inform his readers about World War I precedents for Stalin's order.

For hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war, this was the second political famine in Ukraine in the space of eight years. (181)

And:

As during the Soviet starvation campaign of 1933...

Snyder is just repeating his falsehoods. As we demonstrated in our examination of Chapter One, there was no "political famine in Ukraine" or "Soviet starvation campaign of 1933." Snyder falsifies his "evidence" at every turn. In fact, he has no real evidence to support his contention of "political famine."

At Buchenwald in November 1941, the SS arranged a method of mass murder of Soviet prisoners that strikingly resembled Soviet methods in the Great Terror, though exhibiting greater duplicity and sophistication. Prisoners were led into a room in the middle of a stable, where the surroundings were rather loud. They found themselves in what seemed to be a clinical examination room, surrounded by men in white coats — SS-men, pretending to be doctors. They would have the prisoner stand against the wall at a certain place, supposedly to measure his height. Running though the wall was a vertical slit, which the prisoner's neck would cover. In an adjoining room was another SS-man with a pistol. When he saw the neck through the slit, he would fire. The corpse would then be thrown into a third room, the "examination room," be quickly cleaned, and the next prisoner invited inside. Batches of thirty-five to forty corpses would be taken by truck to a crematorium: a technical advance over Soviet practices. (182-3)

Snyder's sole source (n. 58 p. 483): Streim, *Behandlung*, 102-106.

The only reference Snyder cites here refers to German murders. Snyder has no evidence whatever to support his statement that "Soviet methods in the Great Terror" resembled those of the Nazis. Evidently this is another cheap attempt to associate the USSR with Nazi Germany.

Moreover, there were no "*Soviet* methods in the Great Terror" because these were Ezhov's unauthorized mass murders, not those of the Soviet government, for which he and many of his men were tried and executed. But Snyder has no evidence, not even phony evidence, for this spurious claim.

### **Again the Lie that Stalin Rejected Jews from Germany**

By late 1941 the Nazi leadership had already considered, and been forced to abandon, four distinct versions of the Final Solution. The Lublin plan for a reservation in eastern Poland failed by November 1939 because the General Government was too close and too complicated; the consensual Soviet plan by February 1940 **because Stalin was not interested in Jewish emigrations;...**

(185. Emphasis added).

There was no such plan for Jewish emigration to the USSR. We have examined this falsehood of Snyder's in a previous chapter.

.....

### ***Bloodlands* Chapter 6**

This chapter is mainly about the Germans. It makes very limited reference to the Soviets. However, Snyder continues his attempt to put the Nazis and the Soviets side by side.

...in June 1940, eastern Poland had been annexed by the Soviets nine months before that, in September 1939. Here the Germans found evidence of a social transformation. Industry had been nationalized,

some farms had been collectivized, and **a native elite had been all but destroyed...**

(194, Emphasis added, GF)

This statement exposes Snyder's own elitist assumptions. The Soviets did not "destroy" any "native elite." The Poles deported from Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine were not "native" to those lands at all. They were mainly *osadnicy*, the Polish imperialist "settlers."

The Soviets also had what may be termed a "class-conscious understanding" of what an "elite" was — and it wasn't the same as Snyder's. For the Soviets, the "elite" consisted of leading Party members and advanced workers such as Stakhanovites, as well as intellectuals.

For the pre-war Polish ruling class, and for Snyder, the "elite" was the rich — the landowners, government officials, retired military men, and police commanders, together with the upper level of the intelligentsia. These people were not "destroyed" — killed — at all. They were "demoted" — their property confiscated, and they and their families subject to deportation so that the common people and the Soviets could be rid of them.

The Soviets had deported more than three hundred thousand Polish citizens and shot tens of thousands more. The German invasion prompted the NKVD to shoot some 9,817 imprisoned Polish citizens rather than allow them to fall into German hands. The Germans arrived in the western Soviet Union in summer 1941 to find NKVD prisons full of fresh corpses. These had to be cleared out before the Germans could use them for their own purposes.

Soviet mass murders provided the Germans with an occasion for propaganda. (194)

Sources (n. 16 p. 485):

\* "The 9,817 count in *Verbrechen* is at 93."

\* "See also Wnuk, *Za pierwszego Sowietu*, 371 (11,000-12,000)"

\* Hryciuk, "Victims," 183 (9,400).

We have already pointed out that the figure of 300,000 Polish citizens deported is exaggerated by a factor of five to eight.

Böhler, **Verbrechen**, is not a work of scholarship but a catalog of an exhibition about German army crimes in Poland in September-October 1939. Böhler himself is a specialist on the German war and German crimes in Poland. He has not researched Soviet history.

**Hryciuk**, "Victims," does state that 9400 persons — not "Polish citizens" — were killed by the Soviets:

\* In Western Ukraine, "Of 20,094 prisoners in custody on 10 June 1941 ... more than 8700 were murdered...";

\* In Western Belorussia, "Of the 6,375 prisoners in custody as of 10 June 1941... over 700 were murdered (mainly those in prison in Glębokie)..."

However, Hryciuk provides no evidence for these figures.

Nazi propaganda claimed that the Soviet NKVD shot many prisoners in L'vov and elsewhere before retreating from the city. Other sources claim that Ukrainian Nationalists killed many communists and Jews when the German army occupied L'vov. There is a controversy about just what happened, with little agreement.<sup>6</sup>

Soviet documentary evidence exists, as does at least one article by the anticommunist "Memorial" association that examines that evidence: "The Evacuation of the Prisons 1941," by Aleksandr Gur'ianov and Aleksandr Kokurin.<sup>7</sup> Both of these authors, like the "Memorial Society" itself, are extremely anti-Soviet and anticommunist. It is impossible that they would *underestimate*, let alone ignore, Soviet murders or crimes of any type.

According to the evidence cited and examined by Gur'ianov and Kokurin the only prisoners executed were those convicted of or, in some cases, under investigation for, capital crimes. Many or most of those were probably members of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN),

active Nazi collaborators. This article is well documented from Soviet-era records and seems credible, though of course it cannot claim any precision in numbers of persons killed.

Other prisoners were shot while attempting to escape either from prisons under bombardment or from evacuation columns. A great many prisoners were either left in the prisons or set free by their NKVD guards. It is doubtful, therefore, whether Hryciuk's use of the term "murdered" here is legitimate.

We note in passing that Snyder fails to mention the murders of Ukrainian nationalists in Lviv after the Soviets had retreated. A good recent account is that by anticommunist but also anti-nationalist scholar John-Paul Himka: "The Lviv Pogrom of 1941" (2011). Himka concludes:

In sum, the Lviv pogrom was an action undertaken at German initiative, but carried out largely by the Ukrainian militia set up by the Bandera faction of the OUN [Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, allied with the German Nazis] as the policing arm of the newly proclaimed Ukrainian State. Mob participation supplemented the violence. The pogrom took place on 1 July 1941, a day after Lviv was occupied by the Germans and the Ukrainian nationalists declared statehood. The pogrom itself probably took dozens or at most hundreds of lives, but systematic executions during the pogrom and in its aftermath took thousands. In the executions, OUN militia were also active in the round up and beating of Jews, just as they had been during the pogrom preceding them.<sup>8</sup>

Snyder has done no research on these matters and evidently doesn't know anything about them. On the next page (197) he states:

The NKVD, usually discreet, had been revealed as the murderer of prisoners. Germans broke through the levels of mystification, secrecy, and dissimulation that had covered the (far greater) Soviet crimes of 1937-1938 and 1930-1933. The Germans (along with their allies) were the only power ever to penetrate the territory of the Soviet Union in this way, and so the only people in a position to present such direct evidence of Stalinist murder. Because it was the Germans who

discovered these crimes, the prison murders were politics before they were history. Fact used as propaganda is all but impossible to disentangle from the politics of its original transmission.

A page after claiming that the Soviets shot roughly 10,000 prisoners, Snyder admits that it is impossible to extract the truth from German — that is Nazi — documents! Snyder has evidently not consulted, is ignorant of, or at least does not cite, the Soviet studies and documents that reveal that the killings were not "murders", as the Germans and Ukrainian Nationalists described them. And, of course, such logic applies to the Katyn Massacres, which were "politics before they were history."

The act of killing Jews as revenge for NKVD executions confirmed the Nazi understanding of the Soviet Union as a Jewish state.

...

Yet this psychic nazification would have been much more difficult without the palpable evidence of Soviet atrocities. The pogroms took place where the Soviets had recently arrived and where Soviet power was recently installed, where for the previous months Soviet organs of coercion had organized arrests, executions, and deportations. They were a joint production, a Nazi edition of a Soviet text. (196)

Here Snyder tries to make the Soviets share the blame for Nazi murders and pogroms! In reality Poles and Ukrainians had carried out antisemitic pogroms long before the Soviets came along.

Snyder's long footnote 21 (on pages 485-6 of *Bloodlands*) has to be read to be believed. It contains no sources or evidence, only a convoluted "theoretical" argument with which Snyder tries to justify blaming the Nazi pogroms and murders on the Soviets. It is too long to reproduce here.

In reality, *there is no evidence of "Soviet atrocities."* To say this is not denial, or even defensiveness. It is the simple truth: we have no such evidence. The evidence cited by the "Memorial Society" authors above is of executions of prisoners convicted or under investigation for capital crimes, and shootings of prisoners while the NKVD guards suppressed prisons

escapes and uprisings or escapes from evacuation convoys. These are not atrocities but acts under conditions of martial law, when normal judicial procedures do not apply.

Soviet atrocities would help German SS-men, policemen, and soldiers justify to themselves the policies to which they were soon summoned: the murder of Jewish women and children. Yet the prison shootings, significant as they were to the local people who suffered Soviet criminality, were for Nazi leaders rather catalyst than cause. (197)

It would be interesting if Snyder had cited some accounts from memoirs, or indeed from any primary source, of German "SS-men, policemen, and soldiers" who actually "justified to themselves" the mass murder of "Jewish women and children" with reference to "Soviet atrocities." Historical honesty should prevent him from making such a statement unless he had evidence to support it. Of course such self-justification would still be Nazi thinking, not sober historical analysis. But this is what Snyder is doing here — engaging in such Nazi thinking — and he is the only one doing it! Once again Snyder is trying to connect Nazi atrocities to the Soviets without even a fig-leaf of evidence.

There was a group whose activities at this time could validly be connected to Nazi atrocities, because they were engaged not only in aiding the Nazis in committing mass murders but were carrying out mass murders of their own. That group is the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists. But the OUN is praised as "freedom fighters" and "heroes" in today's Ukraine. It was also the OUN that invented the "Holodomor" fabrication.

*Bloodlands* is popular among today's Ukrainian Nationalists. Snyder has been honored repeatedly by Ukrainian nationalist groups in Ukraine and elsewhere. It is no wonder, then, that Snyder has virtually nothing to say about their atrocities. Instead, he fabricates Soviet crimes that did not happen.

The Reichskommissar [of the Ukraine], Erich Koch, was a man known for his brutality. Hitler's advisors called Koch a "second Stalin," and they meant it as a compliment...(222)



Snyder has evidently invented this falsehood too, as he has so many others. He does not cite any evidence to support it. It is not made in any of the sources Snyder cites in his footnote 70. I have tracked it down in a biography of Erich Koch:

...als „brauner Zar" der Ukraine soll er sich als „zweiter Stalin" geriert haben...(12)

... as "Brown Tsar" of the Ukraine he is said to have boasted of himself as "a second Stalin."<sup>9</sup>

It is not at all a reference to Koch's brutality — something Hitler's advisors would not object to in any case. Nor was it a "compliment." Rather it was Koch's own arrogant posturing. The Ukraine was once ruled by the Tsar, then by Stalin, and now by "the brown Tsar" and "second Stalin." It means only that Koch saw himself as the successor to the other two.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Grover Furr, Khrushchev Lied: The Evidence That Every "Revelation" of Stalin's (and Beria's) Crimes in Nikita Khrushchev's Infamous "Secret Speech" to the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on February 25, 1956, is Provably False. Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press & media LLC, 2011. See the two sections titled "30. Stalin Did Not Heed Warnings About War", 84-86 and 334-340.

<sup>2</sup> Robert H. Jones. The Roads to Russia: United States Lend Lease To The Soviet Union, Norman, University of Oklahoma, 1969, 31-32.

<sup>3</sup> Nikita Petrov, Marc Jansen. Stalinskii pitomets — Nikolai Ezhov. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008, p. 368. "No. 21. From the transcript of the interrogation of the accused Ezhov Nikolai Ivanovich. August 4, 1939." Online at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhov080439eng.html>

<sup>4</sup> At <http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/backstothewall.htm>

<sup>5</sup> At [http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/lys\\_currie.htm](http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/lys_currie.htm)

<sup>6</sup> See "The Lviv pogroms controversy" ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Controversy\\_surrounding\\_the\\_Lviv\\_pogroms\\_of\\_1941](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Controversy_surrounding_the_Lviv_pogroms_of_1941)) and Alfred De Zayas' account, "The Lviv Massacre" (<http://www.alfreddezayas.com/Chapbooks/Lembergmassacre.shtml>) De Zayas is well known as an apologist for the Nazis. Naturally, he is also a strong anticommunist, so other anticommunists continue to rely on his work.

<sup>7</sup> «Evakuatsiia tiurem 1941.»: <http://www.hro.org/node/6729>

<sup>8</sup> Himka, Paper for ASN Convention, April 2011: [https://www.academia.edu/1314919/The\\_Lviv\\_Pogrom\\_of\\_1941\\_The\\_Germans\\_Ukrainian\\_Nationalists\\_and\\_the\\_Carnival\\_Crowd](https://www.academia.edu/1314919/The_Lviv_Pogrom_of_1941_The_Germans_Ukrainian_Nationalists_and_the_Carnival_Crowd)

<sup>9</sup> Ralph Meindl, Ostpreußens Gauleiter: Erich Koch — eine politische Biographie. Osnabrück: fibre Verlag, 2007. In his note Meindl cites a report of September 1941 to Alfred Rosenberg.

## Chapter 10. *The "Katyn Massacre"*

### What Really Happened?

Anticommunists claim that there is an historical consensus about the "Katyn massacre" issue. This is not true. Rather, "Katyn" has become a shibboleth, a marker of historical partisanship. Anti-communists accept without question the version that blames the Soviets for all the shootings and demand that everybody else do so as well — or the anticommunists will call them bad names. Critics of this version often call it the "Goebbels" version since taking this position means assuming that the Nazi report of 1943 tells the precise truth.

It is almost impossible to have a rational discussion about the "Katyn massacre."<sup>1</sup> I would appear even-handed, neutral, and therefore objective if I could honestly lay the blame for this state of affairs equally on both "sides:" those who think the Soviets shot 14,800 to 22,000 Polish POWs, and those who think the Germans did it. But that is not the case. In reality it is the "Soviets-did-it" side that has declared the matter "settled" and demonizes or ridicules anyone who dares to question this position.

This makes political sense: Why acknowledge your opponents and thus bring them to public notice when you have a monopoly on public opinion concerning this issue? But from the historiographical point of view it is irresponsible.

In normal historical discussion it is considered essential to outline the disputes and disagreements among the experts. In the case of Katyn it is just the opposite. Proponents of the "Soviets-did-it" position normally refuse to acknowledge the viewpoint they oppose. This is Snyder's practice. Or, in a few cases, they insult and belittle those who think that the Soviets did *not* "do it", or call them "communists." This is not scholarship but political propaganda — as though communists cannot be trusted while, by contrast, anti-communists, including the German Nazis, can be. Under such conditions it is already a declaration of partisanship to acknowledge and discuss the controversy at all.

The only objective way to approach the historical dispute about the "Katyn massacre" is to begin by acknowledging that such a dispute actually exists. Anyone who studies the "Katyn massacre" dispute carefully, in detail, and over a long period of time, and tries their best to do so without predetermining their conclusions, will see that there is indeed more than one "side" to the dispute.

## **The Historical Dispute**

There is a very important historical debate concerning the question of the "Katyn massacre." Unfortunately for those who want to know "what really happened" this debate is divided along purely political lines.

The viewpoint that the Soviets shot all the Poles and that the Nazi report of 1943, aside from its anti-Semitic statements, is entirely truthful, is accepted without question by all anticommunists everywhere, including in Russia.<sup>2</sup> The viewpoint that the Germans shot all the Poles and that the Soviet Burdenko report of 1944 is the accurate one is accepted by communists and pro-communists (except for Trotskyists) and by many Russian nationalists.

A few researchers tend toward a more nuanced position something like the following. First the Soviets shot some of the Polish POWs, perhaps because they were found guilty of anti-Soviet or anticommunist crimes. This is the version that Lazar' Kaganovich, a former Politburo member very close to Stalin, reportedly told military historian A.N. Kolesnik in November 1985.<sup>3</sup> Then the Germans shot the rest of the Poles, obviously for very different reasons. Then in 1943 the Germans staged a "discovery" of bodies — really a propaganda stunt — unearthing corpses of Polish officers they had shot elsewhere (and so the location of which they knew) and bringing them for reburial and "discovery" to "Katyn" (in reality the small area called Koz'i Gory).

In 1990-1992 Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Eltsin claimed that the Stalin-era leadership of the USSR had indeed shot the Poles, confirming virtually all the details of the anticommunist Polish nationalist version. In 1992 Eltsin presented to Polish officials facsimiles of documents from "Closed

Packet No. 1" which, if genuine, would put Soviet guilt beyond reasonable doubt.

But beginning in 1995 Russian researchers began to argue that these documents were forgeries. Analysis of these documents mainly by Russian researchers who reject the "official version" of Katyn has continued since, growing ever more detailed and sophisticated. These studies have shown there is at least a *prima facie* case for suspecting that the documents are forgeries. But long before this positions on both sides had hardened. Among those who believed the Soviets guilty very few changed their opinion on the basis of the new evidence. I count myself among the few since I changed my own view, shifting it from thinking that "the Soviets did it" to an agnostic position.

Recent years have seen two dramatic developments in the Katyn issue. The first was in October 2010, when material evidence came to light that the documents in the famous "Closed Packet Number 1" may be forgeries. Documents were published that appear to be drafts prepared for the final forgery. This had long been suspected by some in Russia. But these revelations represent the first documentary evidence of such a forgery. Thereafter the question became, and remains: Which set of documents is genuine — those from "Closed Packet No. 1" or those disclosed in 2010 — and which set is a forgery?<sup>4</sup>

### **The Ukrainian Excavations**

Since 2010 much more important evidence has come to the fore that casts the strongest doubt upon the "official version" of Katyn. In Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy, Ukraine, Polish and Ukrainian archaeologists found evidence that at least two Polish policemen believed to have been shot by the Soviets in April or May 1940 in or near Kalinin (now Tver'), Russia, were in fact murdered by the Germans and their Ukrainian Nationalist allies in the second half of 1941, after the fascist invasion of the USSR. This fact alone dismantles the "official" version of the "Katyn massacre" narrative.<sup>5</sup> The present writer has endeavored to describe and examine this new evidence and to explain just how it proves that the "official" version has to be false.<sup>6</sup>

These discoveries illustrate how corrupt the history around the "Katyn massacre" has become. The discovery of the badges of the two Polish policemen previously said to have been shot and buried sixteen months or more later and seven hundred miles away is by far the most important find at the Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy excavation. It is the most important development in the Katyn issue since the disclosure of the "forgery evidence" in October 2010. So why has it not received the publicity that it merits? Undoubtedly because powerful political forces in Poland and Ukraine do not want to publicize it — because it casts doubt on Soviet guilt.

Therefore it has been hushed up. The Polish archaeological report mentions only one of the Polish policemen's badges. Even that is buried in a footnote with only the most cryptic reference to Katyn — literally a "coded" reference, understandable only to those who are extremely familiar with the Katyn issue. But at least the Polish report draws the obvious conclusion that the victims in this mass grave were shot by Germans and their Ukrainian nationalist collaborators in 1941. The Ukrainian archaeological report does not mention the discovery of the Polish policemen's badges at all! Moreover, one of the Ukrainian archaeologists explicitly said that this site could "cast doubt" on other shootings of Polish prisoners by Soviets — that is, on the "official version" of the "Katyn massacre."<sup>7</sup>

The coverup began before this. The October 2010 revelations of the "draft forgery" documents were presented on the floor of the Russian Duma by Duma deputy Viktor Iliukhin. Yet this dramatic story was virtually blacked out of the mainstream Russian media. I was able to find only one article about it, and that was a snide dismissal. The mass media outside Russia has completely ignored the 2010 discovery of the "draft forgery" documents, while the mass media outside Poland and Ukraine has ignored the Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy discoveries. I have been unable to find any articles about either of these discoveries in Western European or American mass media. The left-wing and Internet media did cover it, a fact that makes the absence of coverage in the mainstream news media all the more noteworthy.

Judging from early media reports on this excavation it appears that they believed the victims had been shot by the Soviet NKVD.<sup>8</sup> It is safe to assume that Poland and Ukraine would never have proceeded with the

excavation of the mass graves at Volodymyr-Volyns'skiy if either had thought for a moment that the results would cast doubt upon the "Katyn massacre."

There is good evidence that OUN (Ukrainian Nationalist) forces participated in the mass murders of the victims at Volodymyr-Volyns'skiy. The OUN is honored in Western Ukraine. Volodymyr-Volyns'skiy even has a street named after OUN leader and Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera, whose men participated in the mass murders there.<sup>9</sup>

Soviet guilt in the "Katyn massacre" is literally constitutive of post-1990 Polish nationalism. Poland has transformed "Katyn" into an anticommunist and anti-Russian orgy of veneration for its victims. Polish governments have spent hundreds of millions of dollars on hundreds of monuments and memorials to "Katyn." Hundreds of ceremonies, some very large in scope, have been devoted to "Katyn," as have hundreds or thousands of publications and the efforts of dozens of scholars. The "official version" of Katyn is taught in all Polish schools. In addition to the motive of anticommunism "Katyn" is kept alive as a weapon to beat Russia with, for Russia is the heir to the Soviet Union. Poland continues its years-long struggle to have "Katyn" declared "genocide" and make Russia pay reparations to the families of the victims.

Yet now we know that there was no "Katyn" — no single chain of events during which the Soviets shot all the Polish POWs. But Poland, Ukraine, and anticommunists generally do not want to acknowledge this. Much less do they want their own citizens or the world at large to doubt Soviet guilt at Katyn.

The story of "Katyn" is a fascinating historical conundrum. Any similar event in, for example, American history would have long ago attracted the attention of scores of researchers, professional and amateur. But in Poland it is "taboo" to question even for a minute the "official", "Soviets-did-it" version of "Katyn." Hence the coverup and the denial.

### **The "Katyn Massacre": What Really Happened**

We don't know what really happened, at least not in any detail. There are a number of reasons for this. First, according to one of the documents from "Closed Packet No. 1", the "Shelepin letter" dated March 3, 1959, thousands of relevant documents have been destroyed. Whether the "Shelepin letter" is genuine or a forgery those documents were certainly destroyed; the only question would be by whom and when.

Second, a great many Soviet-era documents concerning controversial historical matters are still classified in Russia today, inaccessible even to trusted historians. Russian scholar Sergei Strygin claims to have learned of many such documents that disprove the "official version" of Katyn. He enumerates some of them in his now-famous "voluntary confession" of December 6, 2012.<sup>10</sup> Among the most interesting of these: a report of an inter-agency commission that supposedly worked in 1952-53 as a response to the U.S. Congressional Madden Commission on Katyn that held hearings in 1952. According to Strygin the archival materials of this Soviet commission, still kept secret, confirm German guilt in the mass murders at Katyn and the findings of the 1944 Soviet Burdenko commission.

Strygin also claims that more bodies wearing Polish policemen's uniforms were discovered in the Koz'i Gory / Katyn area in March 2000 but the finding was covered up. This claim is echoed in a recent Polish book (which, naturally enough, assumes these are victims of the Soviets). If these documents alleged by Strygin do indeed exist they would definitively prove Soviet innocence.

Our ignorance about "what really happened" is in large part the fault of Polish historians. They continue to pretend that the "official version" of Katyn is seamless, without contradictions, and unquestionable. In short, they "do not want to know" anything that might cast doubt on this foundational myth of right-wing Polish nationalism. If archaeologists at the dig in Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy should uncover evidence of more victims thought to have been shot at one of the three sites where the "official version" of the "Katyn massacre" says they were shot, we will surely never learn about it.

There is no reason to think that only two of the Polish POWs are in these mass graves just because — at least, as far as we know — only two badges



have been found. Parts of Polish policemen's uniforms and other Polish military relics, along with many other Polish artifacts, have been found there. For all we know there could be hundreds of "Katyn" victims buried in these same mass graves, shot by German troops and their Ukrainian Nationalist collaborators in late 1941. A thorough excavation of the hundreds or thousands of mass graves in the former Soviet Union would surely turn up more evidence of Polish POWs.

Although the Volodymyr-Volens'kiy discoveries definitively refute the "official" Polish version of Katyn they do not tell us what really happened. The hypothesis that most closely fits the evidence we have today is that the Germans and/or their Ukrainian Nationalist allies shot most of the Polish POWs. It is likely that the Soviets shot some Poles too. Even those Russian researchers who have long argued that the official version of the "Katyn massacre" is false say it is likely that some of them were executed by the Soviets for some crimes or other. But all the evidence we now have suggests that the Germans and Ukrainian Nationalists, not the Soviets, shot the Polish officers whose corpses the Germans exhumed at Katyn in April-June 1943.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore there was no "Katyn massacre" in the sense of the event known to history by that name. The Polish POWs, officers and others, were killed, but probably in different places where their bodies have never been recovered, as the Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy site was unexcavated until a few years ago.

It is possible that we will never learn any more. Neither Poland nor Ukraine — nor, at this time, Russia — wants to find any evidence that casts doubt upon the "official version" of Katyn.

Meanwhile, where are the 14,800+, or 22,000, or whatever the number of missing Polish POWs? Those executed by the Soviets may well be buried at Mednoe (near Kalinin / Tver') and/or Piatykhvatky (near Khar'kov / Kharkiv) as the "official version" claims. But all are under the earth somewhere in the Western part of the former Soviet Union — Russia, Ukraine, Belarus. They are among the millions of victims of fascist<sup>12</sup> aggression, both soldiers and civilians, who were slaughtered and whose bodies were never recovered.

Indeed, the 22,000 Polish POWs are a very small percentage of all the missing victims of the war in the Soviet Union.

### **The Katyn Shell Casings**

The Polish officers whose bodies were unearthed at Koz'i Gory, near Katyn, near Smolensk, Russia, by the Germans in April-June 1943, then again by the Russians in October-January 1943-44, were almost certainly shot by German and/or Ukrainian nationalist forces, for German shell casings were found in these mass graves. The official German report contains photographs of the shell casings. In a telling omission, these photographs are side views of these casings. There are no photographs of the "headstamps" or ends where the percussion cap and identifying marks are located. Most German bullets of the era had date stamps, just as most of those found at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy did. If any of those had been stamped 1940 or earlier the Germans would surely have photographed them, since they would have been excellent proof of Soviet guilt. The fact that they did not suggests that the headstamps contained numbers or codes indicating manufacture in 1941. This is consistent with the other circumstantial evidence now available that points strongly to German, not Soviet, guilt.

### **Snyder's Account of Katyn**

It is the duty of an honest historian to explain this important and polarized historical dispute to his readers. Snyder cannot possibly be unaware of it. But he fails to inform his readers about it. Once again, Snyder commits the fallacy of "assuming that which is to be proven" — in this case, that the Soviets shot the Poles in question.

In *Mein Kampf* Hitler wrote that no one interested in swaying the public should ever tell the truth — only what benefits one's own cause. Those who take the position that the Soviets shot all the Poles tacitly assume that *in this one case* the Nazis' investigation told the pure truth (except for blaming the Jews). Under any other circumstances to accept a Nazi propaganda report as an honest piece of research would be considered a risky thing to do. But in the case of "Katyn" it is a leap that anticommunists insist that everyone

make. World public opinion has followed them, but only because the arguments against it have been excluded from public consciousness.

In the case of the "Vinnitsa massacre", the other large-scale disinterment staged by the Nazis of what they claimed were victims of Soviet mass shootings in which they followed their "Katyn" script very closely, it appears that the Germans insisted upon "gilding the lily" by burying some of the bodies of Soviet citizens they themselves had killed, then later digging them up, putting them with buried corpses of victims of NKVD shootings during the *Ezhovshchina* of 1937-1938, and blaming the Soviets for everything. But even this is not certain — nothing about these hotly contested events is "certain."<sup>13</sup>

It is interesting that anticommunist Ukrainian nationalists, who once paid a great deal of attention to the Vinnitsa massacre, just as the anticommunist Poles had always done with Katyn, have not written much about it in recent years. The "Holodomor" has become one of the two cornerstones of right-wing Ukrainian nationalism. Vinnitsa has received much less attention.<sup>14</sup>

Snyder is closely aligned in sympathy with contemporary anticommunist Polish nationalism. He supports the anticommunist myths of the Ukrainian nationalists only when they do not clash with those of the Polish nationalists. This is not the only form of Polish nationalism. Pro-communist Poles had and still have a competing form of pro-socialist nationalism.<sup>15</sup>

But with the end of the USSR the anticommunist brand of nationalism has become hegemonic in Poland. This ideology bans any overt expression of doubt about the "Katyn massacre." Soviet guilt is literally constitutive of anticommunist Polish national identity. No discussion of Katyn as an historical controversy is tolerated. Questioning Soviet responsibility for Katyn is virtually outlawed in Poland, as well as in anticommunist circles, including academic circles, in the rest of the world. Polish nationalists and anticommunists generally make none but the most derogatory reference to the alternative versions.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Case of the Two Sets of Siblings: Snyder's Nazi-Soviet Parallel Again**

Snyder's main purpose in *Bloodlands* is to draw as many parallels between the Nazis and the Soviets as possible, in order to suggest that these regimes were more similar than different.

Some of the people going to their deaths in the AB Aktion were thinking of family who had been taken prisoner by the Soviets. Although the Soviets and the Germans did not coordinate their policies against the Polish educated classes, they targeted the same sorts of people. The Soviets acted to remove elements that they regarded as dangerous to their system, on the pretext of fighting a class war. The Germans were also defending their territorial gains, though also acting on their sense that the inferior race had to be kept in its place. **In the end, the policies were very similar**, with more or less concurrent deportations and more or less concurrent mass shootings. (149, Emphasis added)

This is false. The Nazis AB-Aktion<sup>17</sup> was explicitly aimed at murdering members of the Polish elite. Snyder would like to be able to prove that the Soviets did the same thing, and so were in this way like the Nazis. But there is no evidence of this, so he simply asserts it.

It is true that the Soviets "removed elements that they regarded as dangerous to their system" — but through arrest and deportation, not murder. Nor does a class war have anything in common with murderous racist violence. The Polish government too had "removed dangerous elements", mainly communists, when they took control of Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine after the Treaty of Riga in 1921. Snyder never compares this policy to the Nazis. Indeed, he never mentions it.

Snyder claims that "In the end, the policies [Nazi and Soviet] were very similar." In reality there is no similarity at all between them. If there is any similarity it is between the racism of the Polish nationalists, who refused to consider Jews, Ukrainians, or Belorussians as "Poles" even if they spoke Polish and were citizens of Poland, and Nazi racial doctrines that refused to consider Jews as "Germans" even if they were culturally German and were German citizens. In contrast, all citizens of the Soviet Union regardless of nationality were considered equally part of "the Soviet people."

Snyder then turns to the "case of the two sets of siblings", which we will now briefly investigate.

In at least two cases, the Soviet terror killed one sibling, the German terror the other. (149)

### **Set #1: The Wnuk Brothers**

The Wnuk brothers, who hailed from a region that had once been in east-central Poland but was now quite close to the German-Soviet border, met the same fate. Bolesław, the older brother, was a populist politician who had been elected to the Polish parliament. Jakub, the younger brother, studied pharmacology and designed gas masks. Both married in 1932 and had children. Jakub, along with the other experts from his institute, was arrested by the Soviets and killed at Katyn in April 1940. Bolesław was arrested by the Germans in October 1939, taken to Lublin castle in January, and executed in the AB Aktion on 29 June 1940. He left a farewell note on a handkerchief: "I die for the fatherland with a smile on my lips, but I die innocent.

Source:

n. 75 *Zagłada polskich elit*, 77.

Snyder took the case of the two sets of siblings directly from this book without informing his readers that this is merely a catalog of an exhibition. It contains a photograph of Bolesław's farewell note. But it offers no evidence about who killed Jakub, about the "Katyn massacre," or about anything.

Jakub Wnuk is number 4121 in the German list, page 272 in the official German report *Amtliches Material zum Massenmord von Katyn*. But the question is not whether he was killed, but rather by whom — the Soviets or the Germans?

He is on the Soviet transit list of prisoners sent on April 2, 1940 from the Polish POW camp at Kozel'sk to the NKVD at Smolensk. Aside from the German — that is, Nazi — report of 1943 there is no evidence that he or

any other Polish POWs were shot by the Soviets. Recent archaeological discoveries have proven that the "transit" lists are not lists of Polish POWs being sent to execution, as has long been assumed. As of this writing the evidence is that the Soviet Burdenko Commission report of January 1944 was correct: the Polish POWs disinterred at Katyn were shot by the Germans.<sup>18</sup>

## **Set #2: The Dowbor Sisters: The Legend of Janina Lewandowska**

Snyder writes:

Janina Dowbor was the only female among the Polish officers taken prisoner by the Soviets. An adventurous soul, she had learned as a girl to hang glide and parachute. She was the first woman in Europe to jump from a height of five kilometers or more. She trained as a pilot in 1939, and enlisted in the Polish air force reserve. In September 1939 she was taken prisoner by the Soviets. According to one account, her plane had been shot down by the Germans. Parachuting to safety, she found herself arrested by the Soviets as a Polish second lieutenant. She was taken to Ostashkov, and then to Kozelsk. She had her own accommodations, and spent her time with air force comrades with whom she felt safe. On 21 or 22 April 1940, she was executed at Katyn, and buried there in the pits along with 4,409 men. Her younger sister Agnieszka had remained in the German zone. Along with some friends, she had joined a resistance organization in late 1939. She was arrested in April 1940, at about the time that her sister was executed. She was killed in the Palmiry Forest on 21 June 1940. Both sisters were buried in shallow graves, after sham trials and shots to the head. (149)

Sources:

n. 74 — Dunin-Wąsowicz, "Akcja," 22-25; Bauer, *Dowbor*, 217, 241; *Crime of Katyń*, 33; *Zagłada polskich elit*, 73.

Snyder asserts that Janina Lewandowska was shot at Katyn by the Soviets. This allows him to further assume that her fate parallels that of her sister

Agnieszka, shot by the Nazis. For some reason Snyder says that Janina had a "sham trial." Even in the version of Katyn that blames the Soviets for all the shootings there is no talk of any "trials", "sham" or otherwise.<sup>19</sup>

Moreover, there is no decent evidence that Janina Lewandowska was shot by the Soviets at all.

### **The Mystery of Janina Lewandowska, Part 1: Khar'kov**

During the period 1990 to 1992 retired Soviet NKVD man Mitrofan Vasil'evich Syromiatnikov gave six interviews to Soviet (1990-1991), Polish (1991), and Ukrainian (1992) investigators, and one to Polish journalist Jerzy Morawski (1991). Syromiatnikov had been a guard at the NKVD prison in Khar'kov where, he testified, he had participated in the execution of Polish officers and policemen in the spring of 1940.

In two of these interviews Syromiatnikov testified that one female was among the prisoners. During his third interrogation, on May 15, 1991, Syromiatnikov referred briefly to the female prisoner:

Pamiętam. że do budynku więzienia wewnętrznego UNKWD wśród polskich wojskowych była dostarczona jedna kobieta. Teraz nie przypominam sobie dokładnie, kto to był, czy była wojskowym, jednakże dobrze pamiętam, że wśród dostarczonych Polaków była kobieta. Jej dalsz w losy nie są mi wiadome, najwidoczniej także została rozstrzelana.<sup>20</sup>

I remember that to the building of the internal prison of the NKWD among Polish military men one woman was [also] delivered. I do not remember now exactly who it was, whether she was military, but I remember well that among that Poles brought there was a woman. Her fate thereafter is unknown to me, apparently she was shot.

The Polish editor of this interrogation attached a note to this passage explaining that this must have been Janina Lewandowska, as she was the only female among the Polish prisoners.

Jedyna znana kobieta jeńiec wojenny, zamordowana na podstawie decyzji z 5 marca 1940 r., to ppor. Janina Lewandowska z obozu kozielskiego, nr 53 na liście śmierci 040/1 z [20] kwietnia 1940 r. (481)

The only known female military prisoner, murdered according to the decision of March 5, 1940, was second lieutenant Janina Lewandowska from the Kozel'sk camp, number 53 on the death list 040/1 of [20] April 1940.<sup>21</sup>

This should have raised a problem for the editors of these confessions. Syromiatnikov was in Khar'kov, where Polish POWs from the Starbelsk camp were sent. Smolensk, where the Kozel'sk prisoners were sent, is about 700 km (= 450 miles) from Khar'kov.

Syromiatnikov gave more detail about the female prisoner in his fourth interview on July 30, 1991. Now he is certain that the woman was shot.

Syromiatnikov: Tak. Była wśród nich kobieta. Ubrana zwyczajnie, w płaszczyku.

Przywieziono ją z Polakami. Ją także rozstrzelano.

...

Trietiecki: Czy jest Pan pewien, że kobieta również została rozstrzelana?

Syromiatnikov: Mogę z całą pewnością powiedzieć, że była rozstrzelana, dlatego że sam ją prowadziłem. Rozumiecie. Uściślam swoje poprzednie zeznania. Wiem, że jej palto zostało rzucone pod wiatr. Podniosłem je, był tam pierścionek miedziany lub złoty. Pokazałem go komendantowi, on powiedział, abym odniósł Karmanowowi magazynierowi.

Translated:



Syromiatnikov: Yes. Among them was a woman. Dressed casually in a coat.

They brought her with the Poles. She was also shot.

...

Trietiecki: Are you sure that the woman also was shot?

Syromiatnikov: I can say with complete certainty that she was shot dead, because I myself accompanied her. Understand. I am refining my previous testimony. I know that her coat was thrown in the carport. I picked it up, there was a copper or gold ring. I showed it to the commander and he told me to bring it to Karmanov the quartermaster.

In his 1991 interview with Polish journalist Jerzy Morawski Syromiatnikov changed his story again. He now claimed that he did not know whether the woman had been shot or not, and said she might have been a Russian, not a Pole.

— Czy pan potwierdza, że wśród polskich jeńców znajdowała się kobieta?

— Kobieta? Tak, widziałem ją, jak przechodziłem przez podwórze. Właśnie ją prowadzili. Tak, tak.

— Co stało się z nią?

— Nie wiem, czy to była Polka czy Rosjanka. Akurat wychodziłem z komendantury, a ją prowadzili.

Translated:

— Can you confirm that among the Polish prisoners was a woman?

— A woman? Yes, I saw it as I walked through the yard. They were just leading her. Yes, yes.

— What happened to her?

— I do not know if it was a Pole or Russian. Just left the headquarters, and they were leading her.

Here Syromiatnikov retracts the most important details of the previous confessions. He says "they were leading her", and he did not know whether she was a Pole or a Russian. There's nothing about execution, and he no longer claims that he himself accompanied her.

There are many such contradictions and inconsistencies in the confessions of the three aged NKVD men. However, instead of carefully studying these confessions and parsing the contradictions in and among them, the Polish and Russian researchers of the "Katyn massacre" have just neglected them entirely. We do not even have the Russian originals of their statements — only Polish translations. This neglect may be due to the Polish attempt to make the "official version" appear seamless and unproblematic.

## **The Mystery of Janina Lewandowska, Part 2: Katyn**

Nevertheless as of 1991 it seemed that the question of Janina Lewandowska's fate was somewhat confused. Supposedly she had been brought to Khar'kov prison where she was then supposedly executed along with an undetermined number of other Polish POWs and buried in the Piatykhatty forest outside Khar'kov.

Sometime in the late 1990s, a new story is created that contradicts this story while leaving the Lewandowska story as mysterious as ever. We are told that Lewandowska was buried at Katyn and her skull identified. We are told that she was shot not at Khar'kov but at Katyn in April 1940. This explanation is confidently stated in Polish sources. But a careful study reveals that there is no evidence for it at all.

Snyder's source, the exhibition catalog-booklet *Zagłada polskich elit* states that Lewandowska's body was exhumed by the Germans:

Zwłoki Janiny Lewandowskiej odanleżli Niemcy podczas pierwszej ekshumacji katyńskiej. (73)

Translated:

The Germans discovered the remains of Janina Lewandowska during the first Katyn exhumation.

But there is no evidence at all for this statement. Lewandowska's name does not appear in the German list of names of identified corpses at Katyn. At least Jacob Wnuk's name does appear in this official German propaganda report.

Some Polish accounts offer the explanation that the Germans were confused or embarrassed by finding the body of a single woman and so they never mentioned it. But there is no evidence for this explanation. Nor is it likely. The whole purpose of the German disinterments at Katyn was to embarrass the Soviets and hopefully drive a wedge between the Soviets and the rest of the Allies. Reporting the body of a woman would not have interfered with German propaganda. Indeed, it would probably have made Soviet actions seem even more heinous.

Lewandowska's presence in the Soviet camp for Polish officer POWs at Kozel'sk, near Katyn, was supposedly attested by two Polish officers, Rafał Bniński and Waclaw Mucho, who themselves survived this camp.<sup>22</sup> Mucho is identified at the Griazowiec camp (Tucholski 528). Tucholski also mentions Mucho as a doctor at Koziel'sk (19). Rafał Bniński is named at Kozel'sk by Tucholski (77) but is not named in any of the "transit lists." How he got out of Kozel'sk is unclear. Perhaps he was never there in the first place. Evidently Tucholski includes him only because he is *said* to have been there.

These two men claimed Lewandowska had assumed a false name to hide her identity. But this is not true either. The Soviet "transit list" of prisoners shipped from Kozel'sk to Smolensk, as printed by an official Polish source, lists her by her real first and last names but with a false name for her father and an age 6 years younger than her real age:

53. ЛЕВАНДОВСКОЙ ЯНИНЫ Марьяновны 1914 г.р.<sup>23</sup>

Either Soviet records are in error or Lewandowska tried to conceal her father's identity and, for some reason, her own age. This is a poor means of disguising one's identity! It would only work if there were multiple people

with the same first and last names, so that the only way of distinguishing among them was by age or patronymic. That was clearly not the case here. Did she give some false information in a private act of defiance? But wouldn't her military identification papers record accurately her patronymic and, at the very least, her year of birth?

Lewandowska's skull was supposedly one of six skulls from Katyn saved by the German medical chief Dr. Gerhard Buhtz that after his death passed into the hands of a Polish scientist, Dr. Jerzy Popielski. Supposedly Popielski did not reveal the existence of these skulls until 1997, "before he died." We are not told why he waited so long; pro-Soviet Poland had come to an end in 1990. We are told that the skull, or fragments of it, were identified as Lewandowska's by "computer analysis", not by DNA analysis. To our knowledge there is no process that can do this.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Mystery of Janina Lewandowska, Part 3: The Falsification**

Lewandowska could not have been shot at Khar'kov, as Syromiatnikov suggested, but buried at Katyn, near Smolensk. That means that somebody — or everybody — is in error.

There are various possible scenarios:

\* Bniński is said to have told Lewandowska's family that she was flying a Polish plane when she was shot down and captured by the Red Army.<sup>25</sup> However, Polish-American historian Professor Anna Cienciala, a leading expert on Katyn, recently rejected this story:

Please note that the brief information on Lewandowska in the 2007 edition of the Katyn book, is wrong. She was not shot down, but was evacuated to eastern Poland by train and taken prisoner there. This corrected information is in the revised reprint of the book issued in 2009 (see Lewandowska in Index for pages).<sup>26</sup>

Cienciala does not state where she has learned this new information. It may come from the booklet *Zagłada polskich elit* used by Snyder, which says more or less the same thing. However, it directly contradicts what Bniński

reportedly told to Lewandowska's family in January 1941. The only way Bniński could have learned that Lewandowska had been shot down was from Lewandowska herself or from others at the Kozel'sk POW camp. If Lewandowska had not been shot down, why would she tell Bniński that she had been?

The Russian record reproduced in Tucholski's book is good evidence that Lewandowska was indeed at Kozel'sk and was shipped to Smolensk, near Katyn. As we have argued elsewhere, recently discovered evidence makes it next to impossible that she was shot by the Soviets.<sup>27</sup>

\* But if Syromiatnikov was telling the truth, then Lewandowska was shot at Khar'kov and buried outside the town at Piatykhvatky. In that case the story about her being disinterred by the Germans, her skull taken by Buhtz, its rediscovery and identification in Poland, etc., is a fabrication.

\* Perhaps Syromiatnikov was mistaken. Then Lewandowska was not shot and buried at Khar'kov. Instead she was taken to Katyn, and shot and buried there — from the evidence we now have, by the Germans.

\* Perhaps Syromiatnikov was telling the truth about the "one female" among the prisoners, but the Polish records are wrong — there were at least two female Polish prisoners. The one shot and buried at Khar'kov was not Lewandowska. The problem is that the Soviet transit records of Polish POWs shipped from Starobielsk POW camp to Khar'kov do not record any other female prisoners.

We have no idea what Syromiatnikov was told informally. It is possible that he told the very brief story about the "female prisoner" in order to provide closure to the Polish story about Lewandowska and so to please his interrogators. In 1991 the "skull at Katyn" story had not yet appeared. But it is also possible that he told the truth as he remembered it. He said himself that he had a poor memory of those long-ago events and he contradicted himself on some points, including this one.

With the appearance in the late 1990s of the version that Lewandowska was shot by the Soviets at Katyn, disinterred by the Germans who never

mentioned it, and finally identified through a skull that had ended up in the possession of a Polish scientist, Syromiatnikov's confession has been forgotten. None of the historians and writers on the Katyn question mention it or the problem of falsification that it raises. Snyder does not mention it either.

The significance of this is that it casts further doubt upon the confessions of the three NKVD men who, in the early 1990s, were important evidence of Soviet guilt in the Katyn massacre. Russian researchers of the Katyn story have long doubted these confessions. This would be further evidence that they are indeed corrupted, at least partly false, probably an attempt to tell the Polish and Russian interrogators what they wanted to hear.

Why spend all this space on the question of Janina Lewandowska and Katyn, which occupies few pages in *Bloodlands*? One reason is to show that what we have called the "official version" of the "Katyn massacre", the "Soviets-did-it" story, is not a simple matter. The fascinating complexity of the Janina Lewandowska story highlights the fact that Snyder is uncritically repeating the official Polish nationalist version not only of Lewandowska but of the whole Katyn question without acknowledging — informing his readers — that he is doing so.

The "Janina Lewandowska" story shows that the "official version" — really, the anticommunist and Polish nationalist version — of Katyn is very far from the seamless narrative, devoid of contradictions, that its proponents pretend it is. And it does not even help Snyder's "number's game." Given that his goal is to make the Soviets into mass murderers on almost the Nazi scale, Katyn is scarcely relevant. Even if the Soviets had "done it" — shot all the Polish POWs — that would be 22,000, scarcely a drop in the bucket compared to the millions of mass murder victims he needs in order to make his Soviet-Nazi comparison even remotely credible.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> I use scare quotes — "Katyn massacre" — to remind the reader that the "official version" is certainly incorrect.

<sup>2</sup> Russian President Vladimir Putin has voiced a somewhat different version of this viewpoint. He does not question that the Soviets shot the Poles but has suggested that they may have done so "in revenge for" the tens of thousands of Russian POWs who died or were killed in Polish captivity in 1920-1921. "Putin dopuskaet, chto Katyn mogla byt' mest'iu Stalina za gibel'v Pol'she sovetskikh plennykh." (Putin concedes that Katyn could have been Stalin's revenge for the deaths in Poland of Soviet prisoners).

Корреспондент.net 7 апреля 2010

г.: <http://korrespondent.net/world/russia/1064467/print> Accessed March 23, 2014

<sup>3</sup> See Sergei Strygin, "L.M. Kaganovich o Katynskom dele" (L.M. Kaganovich on the Katyn affair), "Pravda o Katyne" site: <http://www.katyn.ru/index.php?go=Pages&in=view&id=936>

<sup>4</sup> It is also possible that both sets of documents — those from "Closed Packet No. 1" and the "draft forgery" documents and materials disclosed in October 2010, may be forgeries. It is not possible that both sets of documents are genuine. See the more detailed discussion at my web page "The Katyn Forest Whodunnit"

<sup>5</sup> Sergei Strygin. "'Volynskaia Katyn' okazalas' delom ruk gitlerovtsev." — Сергей Стрыгин. "Волынская Катынь" оказалась делом рук гитлеровцев: <http://katyn.ru/index.php?go=News&in=view&id=253>

<sup>6</sup> Grover Furr. The 'Official' Version of the Katyn Massacre Disproven? Discoveries at a Mass Murder Site in Ukraine." *Socialism and Democracy* 27 (2) July 2013. 96-129

<sup>7</sup> Furr, Official version 127.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, "Volyn's Own Katyn." *Ukrainian Week*, October 3, 2011: <http://ukrainianweek.com/Investigation/32076>; "Poland will finance the excavation of NKVD victims' graves in Volyn." *Day* (Den', Kyiv, Ukraine): <http://www.day.kiev.ua/en/article/society/poland-will-finance-excavation-nkvd-victims-graves-volyn>; "Mass Graves in Ukraine Hold Polish Victims?" Polish Radio August 4, 2009:

<http://www.polskieradio.pl/thenews/international/?id=113330> (accessed 01.15.2010; no longer online here); at <http://forum.axishistory.com/viewtopic.php?f=6&t=156119> Accessed 03.15.2014

<sup>9</sup> It is marked as route P15 on the Googlemaps map but shown clearly on Ukrainian maps, such as the map at OpenStreetMap.org: <http://www.openstreetmap.org/relation/2101524#map=19/50.84526/24.31109>

<sup>10</sup> "Координатор 'Правды о Катыни' Сергей Стрыгин направил в ФСБ России 'Заявление о явке с повинной'." ("The Manager of 'Truth about Katyn' Sergei Strygin has sent to the Russian FSB a 'Declaration of Voluntary Confession'.": <http://katyn.ru/index.php?go=News&in=view&id=224>

<sup>11</sup> Strygin, "Volynskaia Katyn" — Сергей Стрыгин. «"Волынская Катынь" оказалась делом рук гитлеровцев». Katyn.ru 06 Январь 2013 <http://katyn.ru/index.php?go=News&in=view&id=253> Accessed 03.14.2014; Furr, Official Version.

<sup>12</sup> I prefer the term "fascist" rather than "German" invasion, advisedly, for it was not Germany alone that invaded the USSR on or shortly after June 22, 1941. The armies of Italy, Romania, Hungary, and Finland did as well. Among the fascist forces were units from almost every European country. Ukrainian Nationalist forces were involved in the Volodymyr-Volyn'skiy murders. It is more accurate to say: "Europe invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941."

<sup>13</sup> See "Erwin Bingel. Eyewitness to Mass Murder at Uman and Vinnitsa in the Ukraine." This is an abbreviated version of the article "The Extermination of Two Ukrainian Jewish Communities. Testimony of a German Officer." Yad Vashem Studies 3 (1959), 303-320: <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/einsatz/bingel.html>

<sup>14</sup> The other "cornerstone" issue for today's rightwing Ukrainian Nationalists is their claim that the "Ukrainian Insurgent Army" were



"freedom fighters" and opposed both the Soviets and the Germans. In reality the UPA was comprised of Ukrainians who worked under the Germans and took a personal oath to Adolf Hitler. There is a huge literature about the UPA. A good, objective article is Per Anders Rudling, "'The Honor They So Clearly Deserve': Legitimizing the Waffen-SS Galizien," *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 26:1 (2013): 114-137.

<sup>15</sup> See the essay by the late Professor Ryszard Nazarewicz, "Kontrowersje Wokół Najnowszej Historii Polski" (ca. 1998). A veteran of the Warsaw Uprising Nazarewicz worked for Polish communist security and then became a noted historian in socialist Poland:

<http://smp.republika.pl/polemiki/Nazarewicz.kontrowersje.htm>

<sup>16</sup> The present author has created an extensive web page on this controversy: "The Katyn Forest Whodunnit":

<http://www.tinyurl.com/katyn-the-truth>

<sup>17</sup> There is a Wikipedia page on AB-Aktion in English and in Polish, though not in Russian. Both these pages include the deliberate lie that the Nazis "discussed" these murders "with Soviet officials during a series of secretive Gestapo-NKVD Conferences.": <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AB-Aktion>; In reality there were no such conferences, even though there is a Polish nationalist Wikipedia page about them. See О.В. Вишлëв, «Миф об 'антипольском соглашении'», Накануне 22 июня 1941 года. М.: Наука, 2001, сс. 120-122. On the web at

<http://militera.lib.ru/research/vishlev/04.html>

<sup>18</sup> See Furr, Official version

<sup>19</sup> Snyder may have been thinking of the end of the "Beria letter", which talks about a review of 14,800+ files by an NKVD "troika." This is the main "smoking gun" document from "Closed Packet No. 1." Its *bona fides* are in serious doubt. For much more detail about this fascinating matter see the account on my "Katyn Forest Whodunnit" page:

<http://www.tinyurl.com/katyn-the-truth>

<sup>20</sup> Katyn, Dokumenty zbrodni, Tom 2, Zagłada. Marzec-Czerwiec 1940 (Warsaw, 1998), 480-481.

<sup>21</sup> The list number refers to the Russian transit lists given to the Polish government and published in Jędrzej Tucholski, Mord w Katyniu. Kozielsk, Ostaszków, Starobielsk. Lista ofiar. Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1991. Lewandowska is indeed listed on p. 703, number 53, though the list in Tucholski does not specify April 20. As mentioned above, we now know that these lists were not "death lists" but merely transit lists, lists of what POWs were being sent where, when, and in what convoy (Furr, Official version).

<sup>22</sup> This account was evidently first published in Zbrodnia Katyńska w świetle dokumentów, preface by General Władysław Anders. The first edition was in 1948; I have checked the third, enlarged edition: London: "Gryf", 1962, pp. 30-31.

<sup>23</sup> Jędrzej Tucholski. Mord w Katyniu. Kozielsk, Ostaszków, Starobielsk. Lista ofiar. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1991, l. 703.

<sup>24</sup> These details come from a number of sources, mainly the article by Kamila Baranowska, "Jedyna kobieta wśród ofiar Katynia: Janina Lewandowska" Rzeczpospolita April 22, 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Zbrodnia Katyńska, 31.

<sup>26</sup> Cianciana, post to the H-POLAND list of August 15, 2012: <http://tinyurl.com/lewandowska-1>

<sup>27</sup> See Furr, Official version.

## **Chapter 11. *The Partisan War and Related Issues in Bloodlands***

### ***Chapter 7***

This chapter deals principally with the partisan warfare in Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine, which the Polish exile government in London and its underground army the Home Army (Armia Krajowa, AK) still considered to be part of Poland.

Snyder's obvious aim throughout is to portray pro-Soviet partisans as murderous, completely insensitive to the safety and needs of civilians, misogynistic, opponents of independence, and illegitimate. By "independent" Snyder means "capitalist", and by "legitimate" he means "obedient to the Polish government-in-exile in London" (e.g. on page 298).

Setting aside the language of propaganda, the London-based Polish government-in-exile was completely dependent upon, thus not at all "independent" of, the U.K. and the Western Allies. Nor was it any more "legitimate" than was the pro-Soviet formation that became the Polish government. In July 1945 the pro-Soviet Polish government was officially recognized by the Allies, thereby making it the only "legitimate" government of Poland.

An honest historian would explain these matters to his readers rather than foist Polish nationalist propaganda onto them through the use of value-laden terms like "legitimate" and "independent" without explanation. In fact much of Snyder's book is anticommunist Polish "nationalist" mythology and moralizing thinly disguised as historiography.

#### **Did Stalin's Speech of November 7, 1941 Favor Russians?**

In November 1941 Stalin was thus preparing an ideological as well as a military defense of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union was not a state of the Jews, as the Nazis claimed; it was a state of the Soviet peoples, first among whom were the Russians. On 7 November, as the Jews marched through Minsk to their deaths, Stalin reviewed a military parade in Moscow. To raise the spirits of his Soviet peoples

and to communicate his confidence to the Germans, he had actually recalled Red Army divisions from their defensive positions west of Moscow, and had them march through its boulevards. In his address that day he called upon the Soviet people to follow the example of their "great ancestors," mentioning six prerevolutionary martial heroes — all of them Russians. At a time of desperation, the Soviet leader appealed to Russian nationalism. (227)

Source (n. 5 p. 489): Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism*, 118-119.

Properly speaking this is not an anti-Soviet statement. Apparently Snyder included it so he could accuse Stalin of being "pro-Russian" instead of simply "pro-Soviet."

**Brandenberger** says: "...all of Stalin's examples were defenders of the old regime if not outright counterrevolutionaries." (118) Brandenberger is correct to note the appeals to Russian nationalism in Soviet rhetoric during the war. But this specific statement is nonsense. It is an anachronism and thus an absurdity to call these historical figures of centuries ago "counterrevolutionaries", as though they were living in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup>

Stalin's speech on November 7 1941 mentions six traditional Russian military heroes.<sup>2</sup> One might suspect that Stalin referred to Russian heroes because he spoke in Moscow, the historic capital of Russia that in November 1941 was again threatened with capture as it had been in earlier wars. All six leaders were relevant to the situation the USSR found itself in on November 7, 1941: defeating an invader, or fighting successful retreats (Suvorov) as the Red Army had been forced to do since June 22, 1941.

- Alexander Nevsky, who defeated the Teutonic Knights (Germans) and later the Finns.
- Dmitry Donskoy, who defeated the Mongols at Kulikovo when they tried to conquer Moscow in 1380.
- Kuz'ma Minin, who raised a volunteer army (*opol'chenie*) in Nizhnii Novgorod and worked with Pozharsky (see below). During World War 2 the Soviet "home guard" of those unfit for service in the regular Red Army were also called "opol'chenie."

- Dmitry Pozharsky: Minin's army led by Pozharsky cleared the Kremlin of Polish-Lithuanian forces in 1612.
- Alexander Suvorov, who led a great strategic retreat across the Alps in 1799.
- Mikhail Kutuzov, who fought the French army at Borodino and then drove the Grand Army out of Russia in 1812. This war was also referred to as the "Patriotic War" (*Otechestvennaia*), as the war against the Nazis was already being called.

The Marxist view of history is that the Tsars were indeed imperialist exploiters, but also that the great land empire they had built laid the basis for socialism to seize one-sixth of the world. In the latter task the Tsars' expansion was progressive in both the bourgeois and Marxist senses of the word, as were all the bourgeois imperialist expansions from the 16<sup>th</sup> century on. Similarly, Ivan IV ("the Terrible") and Henry VII of England were progressive in unifying their kingdoms and suppressing the power of the feudal nobility because by doing so they laid the political basis for the development of capitalism and the capitalist class, precursor to socialism and communism.

The vast majority of Muscovites (as well as of Russians and Soviet citizens generally) were not communists. They had to fight and, in many cases, die for something — not for communism, then, but for their country. For all these reasons an appeal to traditional Russian patriotism at that critical time must have seemed logical.

Snyder continues:

People who had distinguished themselves in the Minsk of the 1930s had been shot by the NKVD at Kuropaty. ... Left to themselves, they would have endured Hitler for fear of Stalin. (231)<sup>3</sup>

His source (n. 13 p. 490): Epstein, *Minsk*, 130.

This is another fraudulent reference. There is nothing about Kuropaty in **Epstein's** whole book, let alone on this page. Neither Snyder nor anyone else knows who was "shot by the NKVD at Kuropaty," much less whether the victims buried there were "people who had distinguished themselves in

the Minsk of the 1930s." Kuropaty has never been thoroughly studied and there is no list of identified victims. If Snyder had written: "It is a reasonable surmise that some people who had distinguished themselves..." he would have been on firmer ground.

Snyder also fabricated — invented — this "fact":

Left to themselves, they would have endured Hitler for fear of Stalin.

On the very page Snyder cites for this statement Epstein stresses that the Minsk underground did not act out of fear. On the contrary, "they supported the Soviet concept of authority..." (130).

### **Did Soviet Partisans Cause Nazi Atrocities?**

Hitler, who saw partisan warfare as a chance to destroy potential opposition, reacted energetically when Stalin urged local communists to resist the Germans in July. Even before the invasion of the Soviet Union, Hitler had already relieved his soldiers of legal responsibility for actions taken against civilians. Now he wanted soldiers and police to kill anyone who "even looks at us askance." (234)

Source (n. 20 p. 490): "...Quotation: Lück, "Partisanbekämpfung," 228.

Here Snyder tries to blame Soviet partisans, and therefore Stalin, for Hitler's murder of civilians. He implies that Hitler stepped up his killing of civilians because of Stalin's setting up of partisan warfare. Snyder does this repeatedly in the last part of his book.

The citation from Lück is from Martin Bormann's notes of a discussion in Hitler's HQ of July 16, 1941. Bormann quotes Hitler as saying:

Die Russen haben jetzt einen Befehl zum Partisanen-Krieg hinter unserer Front gegeben. Dieser Partisanenkrieg hat auch wieder seinen Vorteil: er gibt uns die Möglichkeit, auszurotten, was sich gegen uns stellt.<sup>4</sup>

Translated:

Now the Russians have given the order for a partisan war behind our front. This partisan war also has an advantage: it gives us the possibility to exterminate anything that opposes us.

However, Lück notes that this was nothing new for Hitler:

...diese "Strategie" hatte die SS ohnehin schon längst angewendet...  
(Lück 228 n. 17)

Translated:

...this "strategy" had long been used by the SS...

Snyder suggests that Hitler's words should be taken literally: that he needed an "opportunity" to take murderous action against civilians, an "excuse" that Hitler did not have before. That is to say, Snyder is suggesting that if the Soviets had not begun partisan warfare Hitler would not have exterminated so many people! But Lück, Snyder's own source, makes it clear to his readers that in reality Hitler had been exterminating people long before Stalin's order for partisan warfare.

Hitler also made the second statement claimed by Snyder — to "kill anyone 'who even looks at us askance'":

Der Riesenraum müsse natürlich so rasch wie möglich befriedet werden; dies geschehe am besten dadurch, daß man Jeden, der nur schief schaue, totschieße.<sup>5</sup>

Translated:

Naturally the huge area had to be pacified as quickly as possible and the best way to do this is to shoot dead anybody who looks wrong.

It is not true, as Snyder suggests, that Hitler also made this statement in relation to Soviet declaration of partisan warfare. Rather, Hitler just suggested that shooting as many people as possible on any pretext at all was the best way to "pacify this gigantic area."

By Snyder's logic all the Allies were facilitating Nazi mass murders, for French, Czech, Italian, and other partisans also fought the Nazis. Polish partisans fought the Nazis too, though the Polish underground generally considered Jews and communists just as much their enemies as the Germans and Ukrainian nationalists. But Snyder never raises this issue in connection with them. Snyder's goal is to associate the Soviet Union, but not Poland or the Allies, with Nazi atrocities.

Snyder does the same thing in the following passage:

Partisan operations, effective as they sometimes were, brought inevitable destruction to the Belarusian civilian population, Jewish and gentile alike. When the Soviet partisans prevented peasants from giving food to the Germans, they all but guaranteed that the Germans would kill the peasants. A Soviet gun threatened a peasant, and then a German gun killed him. Once the Germans believed that they had lost control of a given village to the partisans, they would simply torch houses and fields. If they could not reliably get grain, they could keep it from the Soviets by seeing that it was never harvested. When Soviet partisans sabotaged trains, they were in effect ensuring that the population near the site would be exterminated. When Soviet partisans laid mines, they knew that some would detonate under the bodies of Soviet citizens. The Germans swept minds by forcing locals, Belarusians and Jews, to walk hand in hand over minefields. In general, such loss of human life was of little concern to the Soviet leadership. The people who died had been under German occupation, and were therefore suspect and perhaps even more expendable than the average Soviet citizen. German reprisals also ensured that the ranks of the partisans swelled, as survivors often had no home, no livelihood, and no family to which to return. (238-9)

Sources (n. 34 p. 491):

- Musial, *Mythos*, 189, 202;
- Lück, "Partisanbekämpfung," 238;
- Ingraio, *Chasseurs*, 131;
- Verbrechen, 495.



Lück, Ingrao, and the volume "Verbrechen der Wehrmacht" do not discuss Soviet partisans at all, much less blame them for German atrocities. **Musial**, an intensely anticommunist Polish nationalist historian, notes that the communist partisans forced the Belorussian peasants to feed them and "often" robbed them, while the German forces murdered them. But even Musial does not claim that the German murders were due to the Soviet partisans — the claim that Snyder makes here.

Once again Snyder is trying to blame the Soviet partisans, and therefore Stalin and the Soviet leadership, in part for Nazi atrocities against civilians. Again Snyder fails to acknowledge that all the Allies, including the Polish nationalist Home Army, to whom Snyder is sympathetic, supported partisan groups and therefore were, in Snyder's sense, all as "responsible" for Nazi atrocities as were the pro-Soviet partisans.

It must be noted that Soviet partisans could not "take control of a given village" — only pro-German Ukrainians or Polish partisans working with the Germans could do that.

The logic of the Soviet system was always to resist independent initiatives and to value human life very cheaply...

Snyder cites no evidence to support his statement that the Soviets "valued human life very cheaply." There is evidence to the contrary, as witness this exchange between Marshal Vasilevskii and Stalin concerning a military operation to liberate Leningrad:

On January 10 Stalin and Marshal Vasilevsky talked with him [Marshal Meretskov] by direct wire. They expressed the frank opinion that the operation would not be ready even by January 11 and that it would be better to put it off another two or three days. 'There's a Russian proverb,' Stalin said. 'Haste makes waste. It will be the same with you: hurry to the attack and not prepare it and you will waste people'.<sup>6</sup>

The same thing — "valuing human life very cheaply" — was said of American commanders in World War 2 — for example, in the island-hopping campaign in the Pacific, where tens of thousands of American

soldiers were killed in frontal assaults on islands that could have been bypassed, leaving the Japanese garrisons to starve or surrender. And what about the "over-the-top" tactics of the commanders on all sides of the First World War, when they could think of no better way of dealing with trench warfare than to order suicidal charges against barbed wire and machine guns at the enemies' trenches, often losing thousands of men in a day? Here, as elsewhere, Snyder's judgment is ruined by his strong anticommunist bias.

The Polish Home Army leadership that unleashed the Warsaw Uprising without a hope of victory and led to the deaths of a quarter million Polish civilians at Nazi hands, was far more guilty of "valuing human life very cheaply" than the Soviets. We will discuss the Warsaw Uprising later.

The previous hesitation of local Minsk communists turned out to be justified: their resistance organization was treated as a front of the Gestapo by the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement in Moscow. The people who rescued Minsk Jews and supplied Soviet partisans were labeled a tool of Hitler.

Source: (n. 35, p. 491): Slepyan, *Guerillas*, 17, 42.

**Slepyan**, *Guerillas*, pages 17 and 42, is a phony reference; Slepyan has nothing to say about anything in this passage of Snyder's.

But Barbara Epstein's book, which Snyder recommends elsewhere, does indeed discuss the Soviet authorities' suspicion against the Minsk Ghetto partisans and the persecution of its surviving members. What Epstein writes concerning this tragic and mistaken suspicion is worth quoting:

Why did Ponomarenko and others want to discredit the Minsk underground, and why did they continue their campaign against it for so many years? **The simplest answer is that Ponomarenko honestly thought that the Minsk underground was a nest of German spies**, and was determined to protect partisan units in the Minsk region from betrayal by its members. Ponomarenko was doubt informed of the mass arrests of underground members that took place in late September and early October 1942. He no doubt heard that all the members of the City Committee had been arrested, that Kovalyov and

some others were providing the names of other underground members, and that photographs apparently of Kovalyov giving a speech to factory workers in which he urged them to drop their resistance to the Germans appeared in the *Minsker Zeitung*, that the City Committee had been created by the Germans to lure Soviet patriots and lead to just such a mass arrest. Certainly the second failure of the Minsk underground could be used to bolster such a view, as could the first failure, which had similar features: leaders of the Military Council, under arrest, had given the Germans names, and a mass arrest of underground members had followed. (244-245. Emphasis added.)<sup>7</sup>

However tragically mistaken he may have been in this case Ponomarenko had reason to suspect a Gestapo connection.<sup>8</sup>

Snyder writes:

Since both sides knew that their membership was largely accidental, they would subject new recruits to grotesque tests of loyalty, such as killing friends or family members who had been captured fighting on the other side. (244)

Sources (n. 45 p. 491):

- Szybieka, *Historia*, 345, 352;
- Mironowicz, *Białoruś*, 159.

This is a phony citation. Neither Szybieka nor Mironowicz say anything at all about "killing friends or family members" or any such "grotesque tests of loyalty." Szybieka does state that many Belorussians fought in the ranks of Soviet partisans, seeing the USSR as the only way to defeat the Nazis. He also describes battles between Belorussian partisans and the Polish Home Army.

### **It Was the Polish Home Army Who Massacred the Belorussian<sup>9</sup> "Elite"**

Both Mironowicz and Szybieka are virulently anti-Soviet. Their sympathies are with the far-right Belorussian nationalists who paid lip service to

"independence for Belorussia" — that is, with the Nazi collaborators. A further problem with both of these books (Szybieka's is a translation from the Belarussian) is that they contain few footnotes or other evidentiary information.

Szybieka — this is the Polish spelling of his Belarussian surname; the proper English transliteration is "Shybek" — is a Belarussian professor. Mironowicz is a Polish professor who specializes in Belarussian history. He too is strongly anticommunist and respectful of the Nazi collaborators who presented themselves as "nationalists."

However, according to Mironowicz it was not the Soviet partisans but the Polish Home Army that was responsible for massacring Belarussian teachers and other "elites":

Urzednicy bialoruscy w przypadku konfliktu interesow z reguly wydawali decyzje niekorzystne dla Polakow. Chetniej takze wysylali na przymusowe roboty do Niemiec mlodziez polska niz bialoruska (wczejniej czynili tak urzednicy polscy wobec mlodziezy bialoruskiej). Na narastajaca dominacje bialoruska w strukturach wladzy okupacyjnej AK odpowiedziala antybialoruskim terrorem. W okregu lidzkim konflikt przerodził sie w wojne na wyniszczenie elit. W wspoldzialanie AK i dominujacej w tym okregu polskiej policji pomocniczej doprowadzilo do fizycznej likwidacji znacznej czesci organizatorow bialoruskiego zycia narodowego — nauczycieli, urzednikow i dzialaczy Związku Mlodzięzy Bialoruskiej. Wspolpraca z policja byla tak widoczna, ze miejscowi Bialorusini postrzegali AK jako ugrupowanie militarne realizujace dyrektywy wladz niemieckich. Niemiecki historyk pisze, ze spoldracujacy z AK policjanci polscy zastrzelili kilkuset Bialorusinow, w lidzkim komisariacie rejonowym. Komendant nowogrodzkiego okregu AK pisal natomiast, ze jego zolnierze w drugiej polowie 1943 r. wykonali ponad 300 wyrokow smierci na Bialorusinach, a 80 zadenuncjowali na gestapo jako komunistow. Zrodla bialoruskie podaja liczbe 1200 Bialorusinow zabitych w 1943 r. przez polskie podziemie jedynie w rejonie lidzkim. **Wedlug historykow bialoruskich podczas okupacji z rak zolnierzy AK miało zginac okolo 10 tys. Bialorusinow.**<sup>10</sup>

Translated:

Belarusian officials in the event of a conflict of interest as a rule made decisions unfavorable to the Poles. Also they were more likely to send Polish rather than Belarusian youth to forced labor in Germany (previously Polish officials had done the same to Belarusian youth). To the growing Belarusian dominance in the structures of the occupying power the AK responded with an anti-Belarusian terror. In the district of Lida the conflict escalated into a war of the annihilation of elites. In cooperation of the AK with the Polish auxiliary police who were dominant in the sub-district this led to the physical liquidation of a large part of the organizers of Belarusian national life — teachers, officials and activists of the Belarusian Youth Union. Cooperation with the police was so apparent that the Belarusian locals saw the AK as a military group implementing the directives of the German authorities. A German historian writes that the Polish police, in cooperation with the AK, shot and killed hundreds of Belarusians in the Lida police district. The commander of the AK in the Novgorod district, however, wrote that his troops in the second half of 1943 carried out more than 300 death sentences against Belarusians, and denounced 80 to the Gestapo as communists. Belarusian sources cite the number of 1200 Belarusians killed in 1943 by the Polish underground in the region of Lida alone. **According to Belarusian historians, during the occupation about ten thousand Belarusians perished at the hands of AK soldiers.** (Emphasis added.)

Snyder cites Moronowicz's book elsewhere — but not this passage, in which Mironowicz claims to expose mass murders by the Polish Home Army of Belorussians, including of "elites"! This fact serve to remind us once again that Snyder's book is not historiography, but "propaganda with footnotes."

### **Snyder Falsifies the Nalibocki Incident**

Polish civilians were massacred by Soviet partisans when Polish forces did not subordinate themselves to Moscow. In Naliboki on 8 May 1943, for example, Soviet partisans shot 127 Poles. (247)

Sources (n. 50 p. 492):

- "On the shooting of 127 Poles, see Musial, *Mythos*, 210.
- "See also Jasiewicz, *Zagłada*, 264-265."

As in the case of the Katyn Massacres there is a scholarly dispute about Nalibocki. And as in the former case Snyder conceals the dispute from his readers and presents the anti-Soviet version as the only version. Everyone agrees that the Soviet partisans attacked a fortified police outpost in Nalibocki. However, this armed outpost could not have existed without German permission and German-supplied weapons. Snyder does not mention this important fact to his readers. A Russian language source states:

Б отчете советских партизан было указано, что в бою в селе разбит немецкий гарнизон самообороны. Было также установлено, что вооружённой ячейки Армии крайовой действовали под контролем оккупационных властей и сотрудничали с ними. По воспоминаниям узника минского гетто Михаила Окуня, в 1943 году «очень много партизан погибло от рук этих аковцев, и с ними началась война.»<sup>xx</sup>

Translated:

In the report of the Soviet partisans it was stated that in the battle in the village German self-defense garrison was smashed. It was also found that the self-defense forces in Naliboki, an armed cell of the Armia Krajowa (Polish Home Army) were functioning under the control of the occupying authorities and cooperating with them. According to the memoirs of Minsk ghetto prisoner Mikhail Okun, in 1943, "a lot of guerrillas were killed by these AKers [*akovtsev*] and we began a war with them."

German historian Bernhard Chiari has documented the collaboration between the Home Army and the German army against their mutual enemy, the Red Army. We will return to Chiari's research later in this book.

Bogdan **Musial** is an anticommunist Polish nationalist historian. But even one of Musial's books records a different version from Snyder's account. According to this account<sup>12</sup> the Nalibocki attack was

...einen überraschenden Angriff auf die deutsche Garnison der Selbstverteidigung in der Ortschaft Nalibocki [und zerstorten sie].

Translated:

...a sudden attack against the German self-defense garrison in the village of Nalibocki [and destroyed it].

In a note Musial claims that 128 "unbeteiligte Zivilisten" — "civilians not involved in the fight" — were killed and the village "plundered and burned." However, Musial's only source is interviews with surviving villagers. He made no effort to get the surviving Soviet partisans' accounts, as anyone would who was interested in the truth rather than simply in writing anticommunist propaganda.

The different perspectives on the Nalibocki affair can be illustrated by comparing the pages from different language versions of Wikipedia. For example, on the English Wikipedia page<sup>xx</sup> there's no ambiguity — the Soviet partisans broke an agreement with the Polish Home Army and slaughtered the townspeople. But the Russian Wikipedia<sup>xx</sup> says that the Soviet partisans attacked a unit of the Home Army that was armed and collaborating with the German army, and quotes Mikhail Okun, a veteran of the Minsk ghetto who states that these Home Army men ("akovtsev") killed many Soviet partisans, so the Soviet partisans fought them.<sup>xx</sup>

The English page stresses that the Bielski Jewish partisan group was not involved in the Nalibocki attack. But the [specifically accuses the Bielsky partisans of collaborating with the Soviet partisans in murder the innocent villagers, emphasizing that they were "of Jewish ethnicity" — "osób narodowości żydowskiej."](#) The reality is that [not just the Bielski partisan group, but all Jewish partisan groups, collaborated with the Soviets since Polish partisans consistently murdered Jewish partisans, as well as Jewish civilians, whenever they could do so.](#)

So there is a serious controversy — one with more than a little anti-Semitism by the Polish nationalists — about what happened at Nalibocki and why. Snyder ignores his responsibility as an historian to objectively explore the different versions, or even to inform his readers that they exist.

**Jasiewicz**, *Zagłada*, 264-265 claims that the Soviet partisans attacked pro-German Polish farms and killed some Poles, families included. Perhaps some communist partisans did consider pro-German civilians — that is German collaborators — to be fair targets, as French and Italian partisans did. But these allegations are anecdotal, like Musial's account of Nalibocki. Ukrainian insurgents also disguised themselves as Soviets and committed atrocities.

### **Snyder Claims that Collective Farms Were Similar to Nazi Racism**

The collective farm was to be maintained to extract food; Kube proposed to dissolve it and allow Belarusians to farm as they wished. By undoing both Soviet and Nazi policies, Kube was revealing their basic similarity in the countryside. Both Soviet self-colonization and German racial colonization involved purposeful economic exploitation. (249)

The comparison is nonsense. Snyder again tries to force some similarity between Nazi and Soviet policies. If collective farms maintained by the Nazis to feed German troops and by the Soviets to feed the Soviet population had a "basic similarity," as Snyder claims, then so would individual farms, whether under Nazi or Soviet control.

Snyder hates collective farms — that's clear! So he tries to associate collective farms with Nazi genocide whenever he can. But there is no such things as "self-colonization." Collective farmers paid a tax on what they produced so that the rest of society could be fed, the army maintained, industry built. This has nothing in common with deliberately murderous German exploitation. Moreover, Soviet peasants benefitted immensely from collectivization, which put an end to the age-old cycle of deadly famines.



The Jews who became partisans were serving the Soviet regime, and were taking part in a Soviet policy to bring down retributions upon civilians. The partisan war in Belarus was a perversely interactive effort of Hitler and Stalin, who each ignored the laws of war and escalated the conflict behind the front lines. (250)

This is another instance of a lie that Snyder often repeats. The Soviets had no "policy to bring down retribution upon civilians" any more than did all the other Allies, including the London Polish government. Of course Snyder has no evidence to support his contention — and no responsible historian would make such a serious charge without at least some evidence. In addition, Snyder touches here on a point which he tries to avoid throughout: the fact that Jewish partisans always sided with communist partisans because they had no choice. The Home Army, loyal to the Polish government in exile in London, did not accept Jews in its ranks and normally murdered Jews whenever it could do so.

Partisan warfare was also carried on by the Polish Home Army and Ukrainian Nationalists, to say nothing of General De Gaulle's partisan forces in France. Snyder never makes this statement about the Home Army partisans, who also (sometimes) fought the Germans. Why not?

### **"Ponomarenko's Report" — Another Example of Snyder's Bias**

Snyder:

Red Army officers invited Home Army officers to negotiate in summer 1943, and then murdered them on the way to the rendezvous points. The commander of the Soviet partisan movement believed that the way to deal with the Home Army was to denounce its men to the Germans, who would then shoot the Poles. (247)

Sources (n. 51 p. 492):

- Brakel, *Unter Rotem Stern*, 317;
- Gogun, *Stalinskie komandos*, 144.

Let's take a look at this interesting question.

**Brakel** does claim that at a session of the Central Committee on June 24, 1943 Panteleimon Ponomarenko, First Secretary of the Belorussian Party and head of the partisan movement in Belorussia, ordered that as much information as possible concerning Home Army units be collected and passed to the Germans, who would then presumably liquidate the Home Army partisans.

Zwei Tage später konkretisierte er [Ponomarenko] auf einer Sitzung des Büros des ZK KP(b) B seine Anweisungen nochindem er forderte, möglichst viel Informationen über die Einheiten der Heimatarmee zu sammeln und sie (wohl über Mittelmänner) bei den Deutschen zu denunzieren.

— n. 437 Stenogramm der Sitzung des Büros ZK KP(b)B vom 24.6.1943, zit. nach Dokumenty o stosunki, S. 233-245, hier S. 243.

Translated:

Two days later he [Ponomarenko] concretized his instructions at a meeting of the Bureau of the CC CP(b)B by demanding the collection of as much information about the units of the Home Army and the denunciation of these units (probably through intermediaries) to the Germans.

But Brakel has biased his account by significant omission. Here is the fuller context of Ponomarenko's remarks from the document published in the Polish journal from which Brakel took it:

Следовательно, сточки зрения предстоящей борьбы с польскими националистическими организациями и польскими соединениями, а она будет при вступлении на территорию Западной Белоруссии, при чем здесь разумеется очень широка борьба, здесь не исключена возможность, а нужно предвидеть, что польские подпольные боевые организации, для того, чтобы ослабить влияние партизанских отрядов и наших подпольных коммунистических организаций на массы, **они обязательно будут ставить под удар немецких оккупантов наши партизанские отряды и партийные организации. Это нужно предвидеть и**

поэтому сейчас нужно уже в своих указаниях, которые мы будем давать в части конспирации наших партийных организаций, в части контактов со стороны партизанских отрядов с различными представителями польскими, которые приходят для переговоров о совместной борьбе и т.д., а поляки очень умеют вести крепко разведывательную работу и умеют конспирировать свою деятельность, — это нужно иметь в виду. Поэтому параллельна с этой работой нам нужно ориентировать наши партизанские отряды и партийные организации на то, чтобы все эти польские организации, польские соединения, которые создаются, их выявлять и всячески ставить под удар немецких оккупантов. Немцы не постесняются расстрелять, если узнают, что это организаторы польских соединений или других боевых польских организаций.

Но тут нужна организация. Как это сделать? Методами тут не нужно стесняться. На это нужно идти широко, но обставлять нужно таким образом, чтобы это было гладко. Повидимому, придется поставить вопрос о разоружении **польских националистических патриотов**, разоблачении их, как агентов Сикорского и предателей польского народа.<sup>17</sup>

Translated:

Accordingly, from the point of view of the coming struggle with the Polish nationalist organizations and Polish units, and there will be one upon the entry [of the Red Army] into the territory of Western Belorussia — and by this we must understand a very broad struggle — here not only is it not impossible but it is necessary to foresee, in order to weaken the influence of our partisan detachments and our underground communist organizations upon the masses, **that the Polish underground military organization will expose our partisans and party organizations to the German occupiers.**

**We need to anticipate this** and so now it is necessary in the instructions that we will give in terms of the conspiratorial work of our Party organizations, in terms of contacts by guerrilla groups with various Polish representatives who arrive for talks concerning fighting

together, etc., and the Poles are very skilled in the conduct of intelligence work and are able to keep their activities secret — you need to keep this in mind in mind. Therefore, in parallel with this work, we need to focus our partisan units and party organizations to ensure that all of these Polish organizations and Polish units that are being created should be discovered and exposed in every way to the blows of the German occupiers. The Germans will not hesitate to shoot them if they find that these are the organizers of the Polish units or other Polish fighting organizations.

But here organization is necessary. How to do it? We must not restrict ourselves in the way of method. We must take this on broadly, but we must arrange things so that they go smoothly. Evidently we will have to raise the question of disarming the **Polish nationalist patriots**, of exposing them as agents of Sikorski and traitors to the Polish people. (Emphasis added)

Brakel is quoting a document in a Belarusian archive published by a Polish journal. Several issues with this document should excite our suspicions about it. In the notes immediately before this one Brakel cites another document by Ponomarenko dated June 22, 1943, from a *Russian* archival source. Evidently he could not locate the June 24, 1943 report in question in a Russian archive or the June 22 document in a Belarusian archive.

Another account of this same June 24 meeting records it differently:

24 июня 1943 года состоялось заседание бюро Центрального Комитета Компартии Белоруссии. Обсуждался один вопрос — «О разрушении железнодорожных коммуникаций». С небольшим докладом выступил П. К. Пономаренко.

— Задача состоит в том, чтобы за короткий период подорвать как можно больше железнодорожных путей, — подчеркнул он. — Противник вынужден будет проводить огромные трудоемкие работы по замене рельсов. Потребуется колоссальное количество стали, проката, которых у немцев теперь не так уж много...

В принятом постановлении отмечалось, что железные дороги в Белоруссии почти на всем протяжении находятся под контролем партизан, а это имеет огромное значение для срыва оперативных и стратегических замыслов противника.<sup>18</sup>

Translated:

On June 24, 1943 there took place a meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belarus. One question was discussed: "Concerning the destruction of rail communications." P. K. Ponomarenko made a short report.

— The task is to blow up as many railroad lines as possible in a short period of time. — he stressed. The enemy will be forced to carry out huge time-consuming works to replace the rails. That will require an enormous amount of steel and rolling stock, of which the Germans do not now have very much...

It was noted in the adopted resolution that the railways in Belorussia throughout most of their length are controlled by the guerillas, and that fact is of great importance for the disruption of the operational and strategic plans of the enemy.

The assertion that there was only one topic discussed at this meeting — the question "Concerning the destruction of rail communications" — is repeated in Vladimir P. Ilin, *Partizany ne zdaiutsia!*<sup>19</sup>

Brakel's source is a Polish collection of supposedly Soviet documents. A more detailed account of this same meeting is widely cited with all citations coming back to the book by Bogdan Musial, *Sowjetische Partisanen in Weißrussland* (Munich, 2004), p. 223. Musial cites a Russian archive but also cites the same Polish source as Brakel.<sup>20</sup>

Musial has been described as an anti-Semitic writer who strives in his research to blame all Polish anti-Semitism on the fact that Jews were "pro-Soviet" — essentially the Nazi "Judaeo-Bolshevism" argument.<sup>21</sup>

There are a number of points about this document that are relevant to our evaluation of Snyder's book:

*First:* Is the lengthy account from the Belorussian archive of the June 24, 1943 meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belorussia genuine? There are reasons to question its authenticity:

- The two accounts by Kalinin and Ilin claim that there was only one topic discussed at the meeting, and that Ponomarenko's report was short. The *Studia Podlaskie* document (pages 233-245 in the journal), and Ponomarenko's remarks are part of a discussion, not of a report.
- In this document Ponomarenko calls the Polish underground "patriots." But it is unlikely that the real Ponomarenko would have used the word "patriots" to refer to the anticommunist Polish underground. By this time the Soviets had already formed a pro-Soviet Polish organization and military. The Home Army was attacking and murdering Soviet and Jewish partisans. Ponomarenko might well call pro-Soviet Polish partisans "patriots." But how could he also call these hostile, anticommunist forces "patriots"? This ought to awaken the suspicions of any competent historian.

*Second:* Even if it is genuine Brakel — and, therefore, Snyder — have omitted a number of important facts necessary to evaluate Ponomarenko's statement:

Ponomarenko claims that the Polish underground will expose the Soviet Party organizations and pro-Soviet partisans to the Germans, and therefore the Soviet forces must plan to do the same thing to the Polish underground. Brakel, like Musial, omits this context.

- Brakel and Snyder know that the Home Army was extremely hostile to communists as well as to Jews. The Polish Government-in-exile in London regarded the Soviets as an enemy just as much as they did the Germans. By February 1943 the massive German defeat at Stalingrad had already taken place, and everyone recognized that Germany would eventually lose the war. The Soviets suspected Polish collaboration with the Germans over the Katyn affair in April, 1943, when the London Poles worked closely with the Germans in a manner that

completely undermined any sense of alliance with the Soviet Union. Soviet partisans would have regarded Katyn as a Nazi-Polish government-in-exile provocation, since this was Moscow's position.

- With eventual German defeat inevitable and a pro-Soviet Polish leadership and army already set up, by June 1943 it was obvious that the Home Army would begin to fight the Soviets in any way they could. This is the context for Ponomarenko's remarks — assuming they are genuine, and they may not be. By the end of 1943 at the latest some officers of the Home Army were beginning direct military collaboration with the Germany Army against the Soviets.

**Gogun**, *Stalinskie komandos*, 144: Snyder gets this all wrong. The page is 145, not 144; the time is not "summer 1943" but November 6, 1943; the Polish nationalists were allegedly shot not before but *after* the meeting took place; and they are not identified as Home Army men.

Gogun claims that a commander of the guerrilla band of the famous Soviet Ukrainian partisan leader Aleksei Fedorov invited three Polish nationalist commanders to a celebration of the Bolshevik Revolution and then asked them to join the Soviet partisans. The Polish nationalist partisans refused and then left, whereupon the Soviet partisans shot them in the back and hid their bodies.

Did this event happen this way? Snyder did not check. Gogun cites two sources. One is a Polish nationalist history of an Home Army unit to which we do not have access. The other is the diary of the Soviet partisan commander — but this is unpublished, cited from an archive. Moreover, the Soviet commander's diary says only this:

«Тов. Зубко (заместитель Балицкого. — А. Г.) организовал убийство польских националистов — заядлые были нашей советской Родины.»

Translated:

"Comrade Zybko (Balitsky's assistant — A.G.) organized the killing of Polish nationalists — they were inveterate enemies of our Soviet Motherland."

It is Gogun who identifies the event referred to in this statement as the same murder described by a Polish nationalist source, asserting that they are "obviously" the same. But he cites no evidence that this is so. Evidently, neither source describes what took place at the meeting.

Other works on Soviet partisans and on the Home Army note occasions when Home Army forces killed pro-Soviet partisans. For example, there are several such accounts in the collection of essays edited by Bernhard Chiari, *Die Polnische Heimatarmee* in which Snyder himself has an essay. Snyder does not mention them.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Brandenberger does note the establishment in 1943 of the order of Bogdan Khmel'nitskii, awarded to Ukrainians in the Ukrainian language. This caused much dissatisfaction because of the anti-Jewish pogroms carried out by Khmel'nitskii's men in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. Along with his Ukrainian provenance Khmel'nitskii's alliance with the Tsar and organizing the struggle of Ukrainian peasants against Polish exploiters appear to have been the reason for the award.

<sup>2</sup> An English translation of Stalin's speech is at <http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1941/11/07.html>  
The Russian text is at [http://grachev62.narod.ru/stalin/t15/t15\\_14.htm](http://grachev62.narod.ru/stalin/t15/t15_14.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Kuropaty (Russian) / Kurapaty (Belarusian) is an area outside Minsk, Belarus, where an unknown number of persons shot by the NKVD, probably in 1937-1938 under Ezhov, plus an unknown number of other victims including, possibly, victims of the Nazis, may have been buried. It has never been thoroughly excavated and studied. Estimates of the total number of persons buried there vary from 7000 to 250,000. The higher numbers are promoted by anticommunist Belarusian nationalists.

<sup>4</sup> Martin Bormanns. Abschrift einer Besprechung im Führerhauptquartier (16 Juli 1941): <http://www.ns-archiv.de/krieg/1941/nationalsozialistische-besatzungspolitik.php>



<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Harrison Salisbury. *The 900 Days. The Siege of Leningrad*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969, p. 559.

<sup>7</sup> During most of the war Pantaleimon Kondrat'evich Ponomarenko, first secretary of the Communist Party of Belorussia, was head of the Central Staff of the Partisan Movement.

<sup>8</sup> Ponomarenko has been called an anti-Semite. However, Epstein's book, the latest and very thorough study of the Minsk partisan movement, gives no evidence that he was one.

<sup>9</sup> As part of the Soviet Union the republic was normally spelled "Belorussia", which is a Russian spelling. Since independence the country is called Belarus, its name in Belarusian language. Both Russian and Belarusian are official languages in Belarus today as during Soviet times.

<sup>10</sup> Mironowicz, Bialorus, 217-218.

<sup>11</sup> At [http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Массовое\\_убийство\\_в\\_Налибоках](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Массовое_убийство_в_Налибоках) Accessed on December 1, 2012. Since then the last sentence, quoting Okun, has been removed. This page is highly contested.

<sup>12</sup> Musial, ed. *Sowjetische Partisanen in Weißrussland*, 116 Doc. 2 — Soviet partisan report.

<sup>13</sup> At [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naliboki\\_massacre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naliboki_massacre) Accessed June 2, 2014

<sup>14</sup> At [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Массовое\\_убийство\\_в\\_Налибоках](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Массовое_убийство_в_Налибоках) Okun's claim is in the version of this page from March 23, 2013. As of June 2, 2014 it had been removed.

<sup>15</sup> The source of Okun's account is the excerpt from his memoirs "106-I evreiskii partizanskii..." (106th Jewish Partisan Unit) at the Mark Solonin site: [http://www.solonin.org/live\\_106-y-evreyskiy-partizanskiy](http://www.solonin.org/live_106-y-evreyskiy-partizanskiy).

<sup>16</sup> At [http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zbrodnia\\_w\\_Nalibokach](http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zbrodnia_w_Nalibokach)

<sup>17</sup> "Stenogramma zasedaniia biuro TsK KP(b)B of 24 iunia 1943 goda." In Michal Gnatowski. "Dokumenty o stosunku radzeickiego kierownictwa do polskiej konspiracji niepodległościowej na północno — wschodnich kresach rzechypospolitej w latach 1943-1944." *Studia Podlaskie* (Białystock) V (1995), p. 243.

<sup>18</sup> Petr Zakhkarovich Kalinin. *Partizanskaia respublika*. M.: Voenizdat, 1964. Part 3: "Partizanskaia razvedka", p. 292:  
[http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/kalinin\\_pz/10.html](http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/kalinin_pz/10.html)

<sup>19</sup> Ilin, *Partizany ne zdaiutsia!* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2007) Chapter 3, p. 375:  
[http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/ilin\\_vp/03.html](http://militera.lib.ru/memo/russian/ilin_vp/03.html)

<sup>20</sup> An article by Musial translated into Russian from the newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine* includes what is supposed to be a quotation from Ponomarenko's directive to pass information about the AK on to the Germans: В выборе средств можете не стесняться. Операцию нужно провести это широко и гладко. Translated: We must not restrict ourselves in the way of method. We must take this on broadly, but we must arrange things so that they go smoothly. These two sentences, but no more of Ponomarenko's directive, are widely reproduced on the Internet. They do not correspond to the text of the document we cite above. Evidently they are a re-translation back into Russian of the German-language passage quoted by Musial himself in *Sowjetische Partisanen: Bei der Wahl der Mittel dürft ihr keine Skrupel haben. Dies muß breit angelegt werden und so, dag es glatt vor sich geht.* (223) Like Brakel Musial does not quote the actual document, much less the context of the quotation.

<sup>21</sup> Joanna B. Michlic. "Anti-Polish and Pro-Soviet? 1939-1941 and the Stereotyping of the Jew in Polish Historiography." *Shared History — Divided Memory. Jews and Others in Soviet-Occupied Poland, 1939-1941.* (Leipzig, 2007), 67-101, at 85 ff.

## **Chapter 12. Bloodlands *Chapter 9: Poland and the Home Army***

### **Snyder's Falsehoods about the Home Army**

Snyder states:

Like the Polish government, by now in exile in London, the Home Army was to represent all political and social forces in the country. It was to fight for the restoration of Poland within its prewar boundaries, as a democratic republic with equal rights for all citizens. (281)

The reference for this statement, footnote 6, reads as follows:

6 On fighting for the restoration of Poland as a democratic republic, see Libionka, "ZWZ-AK," 19, 23, 34. (495)

But the passages in Dariusz Libionka's article "ZWZ-AK" contradict Snyder's statement. On page 19 Libionka quotes "several vague but significant declarations" by General Sikorski "dictated by the need to clearly distance itself from the pre-war Polish policy towards national minorities, which had terrible connotations in Western Europe."<sup>1</sup> But Libionka goes on to say that "[t]hese pronouncements were met with violent resistance from agents in the country" that spoke out strongly about "Jewish treason in the *Kresy*", a "deepening anti-Semitism of Polish society", "criticism of the government's position on national minorities", and so on. The rest of Libionka's paragraph details the strong anti-Semitism of forces in occupied Poland and their opposition to Sikorski's statements.

On page 23 Libionka notes that a member of the Polish exile government issued a declaration about the government's position that after the war the Jewish minority was to be granted equal rights. But again it did not speak for the forces in occupied Poland which were more concerned with "resolving the Jewish question" through emigration.

On page 34 Libionka quotes statements by Sikorski of January 1 and February 24, 1942 concerning the government's determination to grant

equal rights to national minorities, including Jews. But Libionka shows that these general statements by London government officials were contradicted in the pro-London Polish press. One publication ("Rzeczpospolita Polska", = "Polish Republic") interpreted the January statement as supporting:

...[t]he settlement of the Jewish question in a manner consistent with Christian traditions of Polish politics, but at the same time so that it ceased to be a factor that makes of us a crippled nation, severely suffering due to the fact that the disparity in many areas of our economic and cultural life rests in the hands of strangers [that is, of Jews].

Another pro-government periodical wrote:

In Poland the current war, more strongly than any other period in our history, has demonstrated the alien nature of the Jewish masses for the political and historical aspirations of the Polish nation.

The Polish government-in-exile adhered to the racist policy of its predecessor regimes by refusing to call all citizens of Poland "Poles." It did issue some general statements promising equal rights for all "inhabitants" of Poland. Perhaps it felt obliged to make such statements in order to placate the Allies.

### **Polish Government-in-Exile Plan for Postwar Fascism**

Meanwhile the Delegatura, the Polish government inside occupied Poland, was preparing for a very different post-war policy. The documents below were quoted by a few scholars during the 1970s and 1980s, while the pro-Soviet socialist government was still in power. Since then they have been ignored.

W instrukcji bezpieczeństwa wydanej przez Departament Spraw Wewnętrznych Delegatury przewidywano, iż bezpośrednio po uchwyceniu władzy przez obóz londyński nastąpi, jak określano — "ograniczenie swobód obywatelskich", które postawi poza prawem opozycję. Przygotowany w tym celu projekt Ustawy

antykomunistycznej przewidywał uznanie za zbrodnię, karaną śmiercią lub więzieniem nie niższym niż 10 lat, przynależności do organizacji komunistycznych, propagandy komunizmu itp. Za zbrodnie zostały uznane także "(...) wywoływanie strajków, propaganda przeciwko prawu własności, przeciwko rodzinie, religii, armii, urzędowi.

Translated:

The Security Instructions issued by the Department of Internal Affairs of the Delegatura provided that immediately after the capture of power by the London-based camp will take place, as it is described — "a restriction of civil liberties," which puts the opposition outside the law. The draft of the Anticommunism Act prepared for this purpose provided for recognition as a crime punishable by death or imprisonment of not less than 10 years, membership in Communist organizations, propaganda for communism, etc. Also considered as crimes were "(...) calling strikes, propaganda against the law of property, against family, religion, the military, the authorities [urzędowi]."2

A somewhat fuller citation from the same archival document is found in another book:

W opracowanej przez "Antyk" "ustawie antykomunistycznej" zawarto art. 14, którego § 1 brzmiał: "Kto w zamiarze obalenia Państwa i zburzenia ładu społecznego organizuje związek lub stoi na czele związku mającego za cel propaganda komunizmu lub anarchizmu, w szczególności przez wywoływanie strajków, propagandę przeciwko prawu własności, przeciwko rodzinie, religii, armii, urzędowi podlega karze śmierci lub więzienia do lat 10, lub dożywotnio."3

Translated:

In the "Anticommunist Law" developed by "Antyk" is article 14, § 1, which stated: "Whoever with intent to overthrow the state and the destruction of social order organizes an association or is the head of an association having as a goal the propaganda of communism or anarchism, in particular by calling strikes, by propaganda against

property rights, against the family, religion, the military, the government authorities, is punishable by death or imprisonment up to 10 years, or for life."

These documents show that the London government was planning for a polity that was essentially fascist: a conservative, anti-communist and anti-labor regime similar to the prewar Polish regimes. Homicidal anti-Semitism is not mentioned here but was carried out during and after the war by the anticommunist Polish underground.

Therefore, contrary to Snyder's claim, in reality the London Polish Government in exile and its arm the Home Army never aspired to "represent all political and social forces." It did not recruit among Jews and firmly rejected communists. It fought against Jewish and communist partisan units. Moreover, both during and after the war the Polish underground murdered Jews and communists.

The prewar Polish government had vigorously opposed "equal rights for all citizens" and discriminated against all who were not ethnic Poles. It was explicitly anti-Semitic and strongly anticommunist. There is no reason or evidence to suggest that the London Polish government would not be the same, or similar.

Further evidence of the London Poles' lack of interest in democracy: they, and their arm the Home Army, insisted on a Poland "within its prewar boundaries," including Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine. The prewar Polish government had never held plebiscites to ask the Belorussian and Ukrainian majorities whether they "chose" to be in Poland. On the contrary: the Polish governments had discriminated against them and sent "settlers" to "Polonize" these areas.

None of the Allied powers supported the restoration of Western Ukraine or Western Belorussia to Poland. Poland never had any legitimate claim to these lands in the first place. Even today's Polish state, the successor to the London Polish government, no longer claims that these lands ought to be returned to Poland.

### **Snyder Tries to Excuse Home Army Anti-Semitism**

In Poland, the Home Army (A.K. — Armia Krajowa), the general Polish Partisan Movement, was not open to Jews. Moreover, thousands of Jews were murdered by the rightist factions of the official Polish underground. In eastern Poland, in Byelorussia, and sometimes in other areas as well, groups of Polish rightist guerillas took an active role in the killing of many Jewish families and partisans in the forest. Among their victims was also a group of Jewish fighters who had succeeded in breaking out of the Warsaw Ghetto at the time of the uprising, had reached the forests, and launched guerilla warfare against the Nazis. — Yitzhak Arad, introduction to Isaac Kowalski, comp. and ed., *Anthology on Armed Jewish Resistance, 1939-1945* (Brooklyn, New York: Jewish Combatants Publishers House, 1984-1991), vol. 1 (1984), 27. Arad was a partisan fighter who fought in a pro-Soviet partisan group. He later headed Yad Vashem, the Holocaust research center and memorial in Israel.

Snyder writes:

Warsaw Home Army commanders had strategic concerns that militated against giving the Jews any weapons at all. Although the Home Army was moving in the direction of partisan action, it feared that a rebellion in the ghetto would provoke a general uprising in the city, which the Germans would crush. The Home Army was not ready for such a fight in late 1942. (284)

There are a number of falsehoods and evasions here. Snyder has just finished assuring his readers that "the Home Army was to represent all political and social forces in the country." But the Jews were Polish citizens. Therefore, Snyder is tacitly admitting that the Home Army was *refusing* to represent its own citizens. It refused because of its racist and anti-Semitic definition of national identity.

In this respect it was the prewar Polish government, the London Poles, and the Home Army who resembled the Nazis. The Soviets and Polish communists did not. The prewar Polish government and its underground partisan arm the Home Army privileged Roman Catholic Poles who were born of Polish-speaking parents above all other citizens of Poland, whether Jewish (not Roman Catholic), Ukrainian, Belorussian, Czech, German, etc.

The Polish government's racist idea of the Polish nation was similar to the Nazis' idea of the German "Volk" (people). It remains so to the present day. The President of Poland's "Instytut Pamięci Narodowej" (Institute of National Memory) swears "to serve faithfully the Polish nation." Leon Kieres, founding president of the IPN, still refers to "fellow citizens of Jewish nationality"<sup>4</sup> — that is he does not consider Jews a part of the "Polish nation."

Roman Dmowski, a prewar politician and political theorist who promoted the idea that only Roman Catholics can be true Poles and who was an outspoken anti-Semite, is honored by the governments of today's capitalist Poland. Dmowski was a Polish fascist — a "Hitlerite," as the editor of the Polish edition of *Le Monde Diplomatique* has called him.<sup>5</sup> Dmowski was a virulent Polish imperialist who advocated harsh treatment of national minorities. Yet in January 1999 the Polish Sejm (Parliament) passed a resolution honoring Dmowski as an "outstanding Pole."<sup>6</sup>

Snyder:

Home Army commanders saw a premature uprising as a communist temptation to be avoided. They knew that the Soviets, and thus the Polish communists, were urging the local population to take up arms immediately against the Germans. The Soviets wanted to provoke partisan warfare in Poland in order to weaken the Germans — but also to hinder any future Polish resistance to their own rule when it came. The Red Army's task would be easier if German troops were killed by partisan warfare, as would the NKVD's if Polish elites were killed for resisting Germans. (284)

This is a particularly odious lie. Snyder suggests that the Soviets encouraged resistance to the Germans because they "wanted" German troops to kill "Polish elites." But he cites no evidence to support this statement — because there isn't any.

Slurs like this are indicative. Snyder evidently wants to find any and all "dirt" he can on Stalin, Soviet policies in Poland, and Polish communists. If he could find any genuine crimes by these parties against Poles or Poland



he would certainly include them. Assertions of "crimes" that are unsupported by evidence, or — as here — assertions that the Soviets had "bad intentions" (as though Snyder can read minds) expose his failure. Despite his best efforts, Snyder is unable to document *any* Soviet or Polish communist "crimes." But this is an unacceptable result: it is essential to claim that such crimes occurred if one is to curry favor with Polish nationalists. Apparently this is the motive behind Snyder's undocumented insults such as this one.

The Jewish Combat Organization included the communists, who were following the Soviet line, and believed that Poland should be subordinated to the Soviet Union. (284)

So what? If, as Snyder claimed on page 281 (see above),

Like the Polish government, by now in exile in London, the Home Army was to represent all political and social forces in the country.

Then it should have tried to "represent" both Jews and communists too.

But Snyder does not even cite any evidence that the communists "believed that Poland should be subordinated to the Soviet Union." Moreover, the London Polish government was "subordinate to" first France, then to the U.K. and the Western Allies, without whose support at every step it simply would have ceased to exist.

Snyder's statement is also an evasion — as though "independence," not anticommunism and support for capitalism, was what kept the London Polish government and the Home Army from including communists. A communist Poland would certainly have friendly relations with the USSR. But Snyder cites no evidence that Polish communists "believed" in "subordination" to the Soviet Union.

The London Polish regime, like the Western Allies, wanted a capitalist and anticommunist Poland, which would necessarily mean an anti-Soviet Poland. As for the Soviet Union, it required friendly countries on its borders, as did all of the Western Allies. The USA would never tolerate a

hostile Mexico, for example, and has invaded Mexico every time that country threatened to become hostile.

As the Home Army command could not forget, the Second World War had begun when both the Germans and the Soviets had invaded Poland. Half of Poland had spent half of the war inside the Soviet Union. The Soviets wanted eastern Poland back, and perhaps even more. (284)

Snyder's talk about "eastern Poland," meaning Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia, is dishonest. Both territories had been seized from Soviet Russia by Poland through conquest; Polish speakers were in a minority in both. There was no reason they should have been taken back by the USSR at the first opportunity. Snyder avoids the whole issue of the Curzon Line and Polish imperialism. He does not wish his audience to remember that *none* of Poland West of the Curzon Line, the line that divided majority Polish territory from majority Ukrainian or Belorussian lands, had been occupied by the Soviets, and none would ever be.

To say "the Soviets wanted eastern Poland back" is not objective. One could just as accurately say "Poland wanted Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine back." Then the question would be obvious: "Why should Poland have them? Why should Poland *ever* have had them?"

From the perspective of the Home Army, rule by the Soviets was little better than rule by the Nazis. Its goal was independence. There were hardly any circumstances that would seem to justify a Polish independence organization arming communists inside Poland. (284)

Snyder's statement here is a devastating criticism of the Home Army — though Snyder, evidently, does not understand this. The Nazis considered the Poles to be "Untermenschen" (subhumans) and targeted Poles for extermination — mass murder. The Soviets had no such racist concepts or genocidal goals. The Soviets did not commit mass murder against Poles or anybody else. Their desire was to build a socialist state that would benefit the working people rather than the traditional elites and that would be friendly to the USSR, unlike the prewar Polish regime which was as hostile as can be imagined.

The Soviets helped in rebuilding a socialist Polish state after the war. The Polish communists organized the reconstruction and carried it out. Would the Nazis have rebuilt a Polish state? The question answers itself.

If the Home Army really did consider "rule by the Soviets" "little better than rule by the Nazis," that means they cared nothing for the fate of the majority of Poles as long as the status of the Polish elite was maintained. This might well be true.

If the Home Army and London Polish government really did strive to "represent all Poles," as Snyder has claimed, then they should have armed communists and Jews just as they armed other Poles. But the London Polish government in exile and the Home Army were anticommunist and anti-Semitic — just as the Nazis were.

In reality, of course, the Home Army did *not* merely want "independence." The Home Army and the Polish government in exile were fighting for capitalism and against communism. They were fighting for Polish imperialism too — to regain Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia, which they regarded as "theirs" despite the fact that Poles had never been the majority of the population.

After World War Two "imperialism" becomes a dirty word to most of the world's peoples. Therefore the imperialist countries, Poland included, stop describing their imperialist aims as such and being describing them as "fighting communism," "fighting for freedom," and so on.

### **Dariusz Libionka's Account of Warsaw Ghetto Revolt Contradicts Snyder's**

The note to the five passages from page 284 reproduced above reads:

n. 13 (p. 496): Libionka, "ZWZ-AK," 60, 71.

Dariusz Libionka is widely regarded as one of the foremost experts on the subject of Jews in Poland during the war. It is not surprising that Snyder cites him as a source — except for one thing: Libionka's article does not really support what Snyder says. Libionka details the Home Army's almost

total indifference to the Jewish fighting groups. Libionka's discussion on these pages documents the lack of interest of the Home Army in Jewish issues and Jewish rebels generally.

In the Appendix to this chapter we have quoted at length, with translations, some of the passages from these two pages of Libionka's so readers may judge for themselves. Some especially striking passages have been boldfaced for the reader's convenience. But all the passages are worth studying, as is the entire article for those who can read Polish.

Snyder then claims that subsequently the Home Army did give much of its own cache of weapons to the Jewish rebels:

This worked powerfully against the anti-Semitic stereotype, present in the Home Army and in Polish society, that Jews would not fight. Now the Warsaw command of the Home Army gave the Jewish Combat Organization a substantial proportion of its own modest arms cache: guns, ammunition, explosives. (286)

Sources (n. 17 p. 496):

\* "On the arms cache, see Libionka, "ZWZ-AK," 69";

\* "...and Moczarski, *Rozmowy*, 232."

\* "On the anti-Semitic minority, see Engelking, *Żydzi*, 193, and passim."

Kazimierz **Moczarski**, *Rozmowy z katem*, is a book about the author's imprisonment with Jürgen Stroop, the German and fanatical Nazi who commanded the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto and murder of thousands of its Jewish citizens.

There is nothing on page 69 of Libionka's long article, cited here by Snyder, about the Polish government or Home Army giving any arms to the Jews. In the Appendix to this chapter we also quote much of Libionka's page 70, where discussion of the arms question is continued. These passages make

clear that Libionka does not believe that the Home Army sent the Jewish forces any significant arms.

Yet this is the very source Snyder cites! Why? We suspect that very few of Snyder's readers will bother to obtain Libionka's article, written in Polish in a journal that is not easy to find and check to see whether Libionka's research does in fact support what Snyder says. Meanwhile, Snyder can appear as though he is citing one of the most respected authorities on the subject in favor of his conclusions.

**Engelking**, *Żydzi 193* recounts an aborted attempt by a Home Army man to shoot unarmed Jews found hiding in a cellar simply because they were Jews. There are indeed many examples of Home Army men murdering Jews.

### **Snyder Claims the Home Army Aided the Warsaw Ghetto Rebels**

Among the Western Allies, only Polish authorities took direct action to halt the killing of Jews. By spring 1943 Żegota<sup>7</sup> was assisting about four thousands Jews in hiding. The Home Army announced that it would shoot Poles who blackmailed Jews. On 4 May, as the Jews of the Warsaw ghetto fought on, Prime Minister Władysław Sikorski issued an appeal: "I call on my countrymen to give all help and shelter to those being murdered, and at the same time, before all humanity, which has for too long been silent, I condemn these crimes." As Jews and Poles alike understood, the Warsaw command of the Home Army could not have saved the ghetto, even if it had devoted all of its troops and weapons to that purpose. It had, at that point, almost no combat experience itself. Nevertheless, seven of the first eight armed operations carried out by the Home Army in Warsaw were in support of the ghetto fighters. Two Poles died at the very beginning of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, trying to breach the ghetto walls. Several further attempts to breach the walls of the ghetto failed. All in all, the Home Army made some eleven attempts to help the Jews. (291)

Source (n. 29 p. 496):

\* "Quotation: Engelking, *Warsaw Ghetto*, 795."

\* "On the eleven attempts to help the Jews, see Engelking, *Getto warsawskie*, 745;

\* "... and Libionka, "ZWZ-AK," 79.

None of Snyder's sources identify any Home Army announcement about "shooting Poles who blackmailed Jews." The reference in **Engelking**<sup>8</sup> to the "eleven attempts" is as follows:

According to Strzembosz, acts of armed assistance to the ghetto, which included about eleven documented stories, "were usually restricted to attacking individual posts or gun emplacements." Did [they] constitute real help for the Jewish fighters who were defending themselves for four weeks?

Engelking clearly believes this Home Army "support" was symbolic only.

The passages from **Libionka**'s essay quoted in the Appendix show that the Home Army was indeed "reluctant" to arm the ghetto fighters and in fact provided very few arms. More evidence of this reluctance is seen in the quotations from pages 79-80 of Libionka's work that are reproduced in the Appendix to this chapter. Libionka, Snyder's source, say that Home Army actions to help the Warsaw Ghetto revolt were very weak. Libionka also states communist groups did take part in helping the Revolt, though he does not specify precisely what they did.

Joshua D. Zimmerman, a source that Snyder cites, but not here, is equally negative about the Home Army's attitude towards helping the Warsaw Ghetto rebels.

Rather it was "not possible," Komorowski wrote, to extend "extensive aid" to Jews for the following reasons:

1. The population treats Jews as a foreign element and in many cases as being inimical to Poland which was documented by their actions during the Soviet occupation...

2. Large numbers of armed Jews are brigands or members of communist groups which plague the nation. Jews who are members of these groups have displayed extreme cruelty to Poles.

3. Societal opinion as well as the rank and file of the underground would not be amenable to greater assistance to Jews as they would see this as a depletion of their own resources...<sup>9</sup>

Following the Polish nationalist position Snyder tries to depict Home Army support for the Warsaw Ghetto rebels in a positive light. But the evidence he himself cites reinforces the view that the Polish government in exile and Home Army were rife with anti-Semitism and wished to do as little as possible to help the Uprising. And, as we have seen before, the Polish government in exile and Home Army did not consider Polish Jews to be Poles.

As for the quotation of **Engelking** — it is on pages 794-5 — it is taken from the account by Iranek-Osmecki. Sikorski may well have said it. But it was hypocrisy, as forces loyal to the Polish government in exile in London continued to murder Jews in large numbers and with complete impunity. Iranek-Osmecki is an apologetic source, a command officer of the Home Army in occupied Poland and one of those responsible for starting the disastrous Warsaw Uprising in July 1944 without coordination with the Red Army.

### **Snyder Admits the Anti-Semitism of the Home Army:**

Some Jews did survive the ghetto uprising, but found a hard welcome beyond the ghetto. In 1943 the Home Army was even more concerned about communism than it had been in 1942. As a result of an arrest and a plane crash in summer 1943, a more sympathetic Polish commander and prime minister were replaced by less sympathetic ones. Despite its promises to do so, the Home Army never organized a Jewish unit from veterans of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Over the course of 1943, units of the Home Army sometimes shot armed Jews in the countryside as bandits. In a few cases, Home Army soldiers killed Jews in order to steal their property.

Here, Snyder begins, correctly, to relate the Home Army's anti-Semitism to its anticommunism. Polish nationalists, like other right-wing nationalists in the Baltics, Ukraine, Hungary, Rumania, and elsewhere, had a concept of "Jew-communism" (*żydokomuna*) virtually identical to that of the Nazis.<sup>10</sup>

Snyder greatly understates the extent of Home Army anti-Semitism. He does not use the term "anti-Semitism" with respect to the Home Army. Instead he suggests that Home Army discrimination against Jews was a reflection only of their anticommunism. In anticommunist historiography it is considered illegitimate to be anti-Semitic, but essential to be anticommunist. Later in this book we will present evidence of the truly shocking extent of anti-Semitism in the Polish underground forces including the Home Army.

Then, as though to mitigate these unpleasant truths, Snyder adds:

On the other hand, the Home Army did execute Poles who turned in Jews or tried to blackmail them. (292-3)

n. 33 — See Zimmerman, "Attitude," 120; and Libionka, "ZWZ-AK," 119-123.

This is not true. The very source Snyder cites, Dariusz **Libionka's** article, documents a number of incidents of Home Army murders of Jews and communists. But it does not document a single execution of a Pole because he murdered Jews or the punishment of any Poles because he had blackmailed Jews.

Concerning Home Army commander codenamed "Orzeł" (= eagle) Libionka states that he was put on trial and shot, but Libionka states clearly that this was **not only** for his actions against the Jewish partisans:

W czerwcu 1944 r. "Orzeł" został rozstrzelany z wyroku Wojskowego Sądu Specjalnego, lecz powodem była **nie tylko** likwidacja oddziału ŻOB. ("ZWZ-AK", 121)

Translated:



In June 1944, "Orzeł" was shot by a sentence of a Special Military Court, but **not solely** for the elimination of the Jewish Fighting Organization branch. (Emphasis added.)

**Zimmerman**, "Attitude," 120 does not support Snyder's statements in the least. Zimmerman documents Home Army commander Komorowski's relentlessly anti-Semitic attitude during the war, including towards Jewish partisans. Zimmerman points out that Komorowski claimed the Home Army had provided only "limited supplies" to the Jews as "a foreign element" (these were Polish citizens!), liable to be pro-communist, and the Home Army underground did not want to share their supplies.

### **Back to the Same Old Lie of Soviet "Invasion" and "Alliance with Hitler"**

Although their British and American allies could afford to have illusions about Stalin, Polish officers and politicians could not. They had not forgotten that the Soviet Union had been an ally of Nazi Germany in 1939-1941, and that its occupation of eastern Poland had been ruthless and oppressive. (297)

Snyder repeats the same lie again. The Soviet Union was never an "ally of Nazi Germany." The British and Americans knew this very well — they had accepted the USSR's claim of neutrality in the German-Polish war of September 1939. It may have been the "position" of the Polish government-in-exile that the USSR had been an "ally" of Hitler's, but the rest of the world knew better.

### **Snyder Ignores Oppression by the Polish Government**

Poland's own occupation of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia had been both "ruthless and oppressive" to Ukrainians, Belorussians, and Jews, who did not enjoy the same civil liberties and rights as did Poles. Poland also oppressed communists, who likewise did not have civil rights in Poland.

In a response to one of Snyder's articles Jeffrey Burds outlines something Snyder left out: Polish government terror against Ukrainians in pre-war Western Ukraine.

Alexander Motyl has described the roots of Ukrainian violent opposition to Polish rule. [3] But the brutality of ethnic Poles towards ethnic Ukrainians is rarely discussed outside of tendentious nationalist accounts. The most widespread and intense violence took place in the anti-Ukrainian pogroms of 1934-1938. For this, alas, we do not need to rely on Polish or Ukrainian accounts alone. Monsignor Dr. Philippe Cortesi, the Papal Nuncio in Warsaw, condemned the violence in a private letter to the Polish Minister of Internal Affairs regarding just one such event of 2-3 November 1938. Polish members of the 'En-De' ('National Democracy', a militant Polish patriotic-nationalist organization) attacked Ukrainian students in their dormitories in Warsaw, unhindered by Polish police who stood by watching the brutal violence, and who waited until the end of the riots to arrest Ukrainian students for disturbing the peace. Several Ukrainian institutes were attacked, with the subsequent "destruction of everything that falls into the hands of the aggressors." A Ukrainian shop was destroyed when Polish "nationalist fanatics" set fire to the interior and then hurled a screaming young Ukrainian woman into the flames. The worst violence occurred at the Ukrainian Catholic seminary, located a mere 200 meters from the central office of the Polish state police. In the Polish crowd's iconoclastic rage, irreparable damage was done to the interior of the Ukrainian church, where icons were defiled and a priceless portrait of St. Peter destroyed. The seminary was ravaged as the angry Polish crowd systematically broke apart furniture and hurled the pieces through broken windows to the streets below. In all, at least eight Ukrainians were hospitalized with serious injuries, and two were killed. Consistent with its usual policy, the official Polish press remained mysteriously silent about such incidents. And wherever possible, the Polish police confiscated and suppressed Ukrainian underground newspapers and publications where the incidents were discussed.<sup>11</sup>

Evidently it is inconsistent with Snyder's aim — which is to portray Polish nationalists as "victims" and yoke the Soviets with the Nazis — to honestly point out the truth: *It was the Polish nationalists who had a great deal in common with the Nazis*, who were similarly racist German nationalists. The Soviet state was proudly internationalist and favored ordinary working people over "elites."

There was no "Eastern Poland" to occupy. Poland had ceased to exist. This happened entirely because of the Polish government. They had rejected collective security and then abandoned their country, leaving it without a government.

The Soviet Union never had any intention of supporting any institution that claimed to represent an independent Poland. (299)

Here Snyder tacitly assumes that only a capitalist Poland, no matter how anticommunist, racist, anti-working class and undemocratic, could be "independent," while a communist Poland could somehow not be "independent." This linguistic deception simply reveals his anticommunist bias.

The United States has never tolerated a country anywhere near its borders that was not "closely aligned" to it. Canada and Mexico are both "closely aligned" with the United States today yet they are regarded as "independent." Therefore this is less a question of independence than of who was going to hold state power in independent Poland after the war.

The Soviet leadership and the NKVD treated every Polish political organization (except the communists) as part of an anti-Soviet plot. (299)

n. 45 — "*Operatsia 'Seim'*," 5 and passim.

Snyder fails to tell his readers that "*Operatsia 'Seim'*" was aimed only against the Polish political parties — but only those in the Western Ukraine, Belorussia, and the Vil'no oblast'. These were the areas incorporated into the Soviet Union (in the case of the Vil'no oblast', into Lithuania) in 1939, and were part of the Soviet Union. The document on page 5 cited by Snyder

specifies precisely this: a campaign to identify Polish nationalist organizations in these areas of the USSR and infiltrate "anti-Soviet formations". (14) The interested reader may find the document at page 5-14 of *Operatsia "Seim"* on the Internet.<sup>12</sup>

It would have been more accurate to say that the London Polish government and the Home Army treated every Jewish and communist-oriented political organization as part of a plot against them! In fact the Polish Socialist party and other such parties were courted by the communists during and after the war.

Indeed, in some cases Soviet partisans were turned against the Polish fighters. The partisan unit of Tuvia Bielski, for example, took part in the disarming of the Home Army. (299)

Snyder is being dishonest here by implying there was something wrong in disarming the Home Army. In fact it was the London Polish government itself that ordered the Home Army to disband and give its arms to the Red Army. Moreover, the Home Army was intensely hostile to the Red Army.

The Home Army was highly anticommunist and anti-Semitic and often murdered Jews and communists. The prewar Polish government had not even considered communists and Jews to be Poles. The sources that Snyder himself uses — Chiari and Libionka — document this. In contrast to the murderous anti-Semitism of the Home Army the Soviet partisan leaders combatted anti-Semitism. Siding with them was the only sensible thing for Jewish partisans to do.

Snyder knows, but conceals from his readers, that the Home Army conspired with the German army against Soviet partisans and against the Red Army. German historian Bernhard Chiari has written about this in a volume on the "Myth of the Home Army" in which Snyder himself also has an article.<sup>13</sup>

## **The Warsaw Uprising: What Really Happened**

On July 31, 1944 General Komorowski, commander of the Home Army loyal to the Polish Government in Exile (GIE) in England, gave the order for an uprising in Warsaw against the German occupying forces. The Warsaw Uprising of August 1 to October 2 1944 was a disastrous defeat for the hugely outgunned and, in the end, outnumbered partisan forces in the city. At least 17,000 insurgents were killed, while the Germans and their allied forces killed about 200,000 civilian residents of Warsaw and destroyed 60% of the buildings in the city.

The uprising was directly militarily against the Germans, but politically against the Soviet Union and especially the Polish forces allied with the Red Army: the Polish Army (Wojsko Polskie) and the People's Army (Armia Ludowa). The Uprising was a part of the Polish GIE's "Operation Storm" (*Burza*). This plan was designed to try to seize power in Polish towns once the Red Army crossed into Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine. Poland had seized these regions by conquest from Soviet Russia in 1921 and they had been retaken in 1939 after Poland's defeat and merged into the Belorussian and Ukrainian Republics of the USSR. The Polish GIE continued to insist that these lands were part of Poland until the early 1990s.

Operation Storm was designed to present to the Soviet government with the necessity of either recognizing the Polish GIE or of having to arrest its authorized representatives, thus admitting that it was a conqueror, not a liberator. The plan was for Home Army forces in the towns to wait until the Red Army was on the point of liberating a town from the Germans. In the interval between the German troops' withdrawal and the arrival of the Red Army the Home Army was to occupy the government buildings. When the Red Army arrived the Home Army was to greet them as the lawful government and representatives of the GIE. When the Red Army removed them from office and replaced them with their own Polish forces the Home Army was to inform the GIE which would then make a formal protest to the Allies. The Allies would then, supposedly, make a protest to the Soviet government.

Operation Storm did not work as planned in those cities where the Home Army did manage to time its exit from the underground precisely enough to

seize the government buildings without too much fighting against superior German forces and before the Red Army arrived. In these cases the Allies showed no interest in disturbing their relations with the Red Army, which was taking huge casualties and bearing by far the brunt of the war against the fascists. In the case of Warsaw, the Normandy landing had occurred on June 6, 1944 and the Western Allies faced hard fighting.

General Komorowski, Home Army commander in Warsaw, was authorized by the GIE to declare an uprising at a time of his choice. The plan was still to wait until the Soviet forces were on the point of entering Warsaw and the German forces on the point of leaving it, and then seize power. Taking power in Warsaw would be of symbolic importance as it was the capital of Poland.

On July 31 Komorowski and his staff were mistakenly informed that Soviet tanks were on the point of crossing the Vistula and entering Warsaw. Komorowski gave the order for the uprising to begin at 5 p.m. on August 1. On the same day Col. Iranek-Osmecki, head of intelligence, told the staff that this information was false and suggested the uprising be called off. Komorowski refused. This decision ignited the chain of events that ended in the defeat of the Uprising and the destruction of Warsaw, called by many Poles at the time a "crime" and a "disaster."

No one ever thought that the Home Army and other partisan forces in Warsaw would be able to defeat the German and allied forces there. These included, at various times, part or all of five tank divisions, one of them an SS division, the German 9th Army, a company of the 29th SS grenadier division, the "Sonderkommando" Dirlewanger, infamous for its savagery against civilians, and a number of Cossack and other forces recruited from anti-communists within the USSR. These forces were supported by Stuka dive bombers and Messerschmitt fighters.

The only chance for success for the Uprising was to count on the Red Army's defeating the German forces and driving them out of the city. Then, with a minimum of fighting against retreating troops, the Home Army hoped to take control of Warsaw and present the Red Army with a *fait accompli*.

Given the hostility to the USSR on the part of the GIE and its representatives in Poland, the Soviet government could not be blamed if it did indeed stand by and let the German forces slaughter the Home Army. This is in fact what some anticommunist Polish writers and politicians have alleged ever since. But others equally anticommunist, and virtually all who are not, plus the Soviet government, Red Army commanders, and even the anticommunist Russian government today, reject this charge. More important, there is no evidence at all that the Red Army acted in this way. Like its inception, the defeat of the Warsaw Uprising was purely the responsibility of the GIE and the Home Army leadership.

The Home Army leadership started the "blame game", pointing fingers at others, during the Uprising itself. At first they tried to blame the British. Subsequently they decided it was all the Soviets' fault — despite the fact that the Uprising was supposed to be directed against the Soviets in the first place. One person Komorowski never blamed was himself. But a great many other Poles, including anticommunists and his own Home Army members, blamed him and continue to do so.

During the first two weeks of the Uprising the British sent aircraft from Italy to try to drop supplies to the Home Army forces in Warsaw. At first Stalin refused to have anything to do with the Uprising, even preventing the British airplanes from landing at Soviet airports for refueling. Stalin's position was that the Uprising was a crime because it had been undertaken without coordination with the Red Army, which was the only way it could have been successful. Nevertheless, after pressure from the British Stalin started Soviet supply flights. British, American, and Soviet flights dropped many tons of supplies, though it appears that most either fell into German hands or were destroyed by being dropped from too high an altitude. In any case such drops were symbolic only. No amount of air drops could enable poorly-armed and largely civilian partisans to defeat heavily armed, trained, and utterly ruthless German forces.

Post-1990 anticommunist Polish governments and scholars vacillate on the question of blaming Stalin for not coming to rescue the Uprising. This is impossible to prove for lack of evidence, though some researchers continue to make the attempt. Komorowski and the GIE leaders are honored as

heroes on the grounds that the Uprising was necessary because it was a "fight for independence" that had to be attempted whatever the cost. "Independent" in a deliberate obfuscation, a code word for "anticommunist", anticommunists generally holding that being pro-Soviet means lacking independence while being pro-British — indeed, wholly dependent upon the British — and pro-capitalist is the only way to "independence."

### **Snyder's Falsifications about the Warsaw Uprising**

Snyder claims:

Almost certainly, more Jews fought in the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944 than in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of April 1943. (302)

Sources (n. 50 p. 497):

\* Engelking, *Żydzi*, 91 for Zylberberg, and passim;

\* National Armed Forces<sup>14</sup> at 62, 86, 143.

**Engelking's** book at pages 91-92 does quote from Michael Zylberberg's *A Warsaw Diary, 1939-1945*. But Zylberberg also makes it clear that these were Jews with Polish surnames. Zylberberg fought under his assumed name of Jan Zielinski (p. 92). **Libionka** records that in the communist-led "People's Army" (Armija Ludowa) Jews could fight under their Jewish names:

Warto zwrócić też uwagę na to, że Żydzi, którzy walczyli w strukturach AL nie musieli się już dłużej ukrywać, mogli się czuć bezpiecznie, powrócić do własnego nazwiska.<sup>15</sup>

Translated:

It is also interesting to turn one's attention to the fact that Jews who fought in the structures of the AL did not have to hide anymore, could feel themselves safe, return to their own surnames.



Here's what Snyder wrote in a *New York Review of Books* review of June 24, 2009:

Indeed, it is quite possible that more people of Jewish origin took part in the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 than in the Ghetto Uprising of 1943.

Evidently Snyder has no evidence that "most of these Jews joined the Home Army" — *but those who did felt that they had to hide the fact that they were Jews*. As Libionka points out it was the communist-led People's Army, or Armia Ludowa, not the anticommunist Home Army, or Armia Krajowa, that accepted the Jewish fighting group into its ranks. Snyder obviously knows this but hides it from his readers.

### **Snyder Blames the Soviets for the Warsaw Uprising Disaster and Exonerates Those Really Responsible**

Snyder states:

From the Soviet perspective, an uprising in Warsaw was desirable because it would kill Germans — and Poles who were willing to risk their lives for independence. The Germans would do the necessary work of destroying the remnants of the Polish intelligentsia and the soldiers of the Home Army, groups that overlapped. (306)

This is a shameful fabrication by Snyder. Stalin and Soviet generals said over and over again that the uprising, uncoordinated with the Red Army, was highly undesirable. Snyder has no evidence to the contrary.

As soon as the Home Army soldiers took up arms, Stalin called them adventurers and criminals. (306)

This too is a falsehood. Stalin did not call the "Home Army soldiers" any such thing, so of course Snyder does not cite any evidence for this assertion. Stalin did refer in similar terms to the *leaders* of the Uprising, the Polish commanders who had begun it.

Moreover, it was not only Stalin — General Wladyslaw Anders thought the Uprising was a "crime":

General Władysław Anders uważał powstanie warszawskie za kardynalny błąd z politycznego i wojskowego punktu widzenia, a z moralnego za zbrodnię, za którą odpowiedzialność ponosili jego zdaniem dowódca Armii Krajowej gen. Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski i jego sztab.<sup>16</sup>

Translated:

General Wladyslaw Anders considered the Warsaw uprising as a cardinal mistake from a political and military point of view, and from the moral point of view a crime, for which, in his opinion, commander of the Army General Tadeusz Bor-Komorowski and his staff bore the responsibility.

This was widely known at the time as well, as recorded in the following source from 1948:

Znane jest powiedzenie ANDERSA o powstańcach warszawskich "Niech giną, kiedy głupi."<sup>17</sup>

Translated:

Anders' statement about the Warsaw rebels is well known: "Let them die, since they are stupid."

If Snyder's readers knew that General Anders and other anticommunist Poles thought the Warsaw Uprising was "criminal," Stalin's agreeing with him would not ring the anticommunist tone that Snyder desires. So he does not tell his readers.

Snyder does admit that:

Given German anti-partisan tactics, an uprising looked like suicide to many. The Germans had been killing Poles in massive reprisals throughout the war; if an uprising failed, reasoned some commanders in Warsaw, the entire civilian population would suffer. (300)

But Snyder vastly understates the matter. The Uprising was far worse than "suicide." Suicide means killing only oneself. The Uprising entailed the killing of several hundred thousand citizens of Warsaw and the destruction of much of the city. As Snyder admits, this was predictable in advance. Yet the Home Army leadership went ahead anyway! No wonder, then, that like Stalin, General Anders called it a crime against Poland. Anders was not alone in condemning the Warsaw Uprising as a crime. Jan M. Ciechanowski, an anticommunist and historian at both British and Polish universities and, at the age of 14 years, a fighter in the Uprising, has long condemned the Uprising. Here, at the end of the article where his views are briefly summarized, Ciechanowski's conclusion is given:

Ciechanowski zgaza się z oceną Władysława Andersa, który wybuch powstania określił jako "nieszczęście" i "zbrodnię."<sup>18</sup>

Translated:

Ciechanowski agrees with the assessment of Anders, who described the uprising as a "disaster" and "crime."

In his own book *Powstanie Warszawskie*, which has had many editions in both English and Polish, Ciechanowski writes that this "criminal" act was undertaken *because it was directed politically against the Soviets*:

Within a few hours of learning of it Gen Anders informed his superiors in London that he considered it to be 'a misfortune'. Some days later he stated that he and his soldiers regarded the order for the rising as 'a serious crime'. In his considered opinion the capital was 'doomed to be annihilated' in spite of 'the heroism, unparalleled in history' of the insurgents. The General was certain that the insurrection had not a 'half-chance' of success. He saw it as 'a madness', a 'flagrant crime'.

On 13 August Mikolajczyk sent a telegram to Stalin imploring him, in the name of the future of Russo-Polish relations, to save Warsaw from destruction, by ordering the Red Army to enter the capital of Poland as its 'liberators' rather than as grave-diggers 'to bury the dead in a destroyed city'. Five days later the Polish Premier sent another telegram to Moscow, in which he said that the insurrection seemed

premature and that the Soviet High Command could not be held responsible for it...<sup>19</sup>

Not only were the highest Polish authorities abroad fully aware, from the beginning of the insurrection, that it had been ill-timed, but in Warsaw itself, a number of high-ranking Home Army officers also regarded the insurrection as premature. Col Bokszczanin wrote in 1965 that he had always considered Bor-Komorowski's decision of 31 July 1944 'as unjustified and premature'. (263)

We can only conclude that the Underground leaders' decision to try to capture Warsaw was dictated more by a desire to forestall occupation of the city by the Russians than by a wish to render unqualified support to the Red Army, as the Soviet appeals requested.

The Warsaw rising was to be the means by which the pro-London Poles were to assume power, initially in the capital and then in the whole of newly-liberated Poland. **The pro-London leaders intended to forestall, with their rising, the assumption of power by the Russian-supported Polish Communists...** (266)

(Emphasis added — GF)

All these facts are openly discussed in Poland. Snyder's account foregrounds and whitewashes the right-wing nationalist perspective while ignoring all the others.

Snyder has several times condemned the Soviets and communist partisans for being the cause of German reprisals against civilians. This is dishonest of him since, if made at all this criticism should be leveled at all partisan activity, including that of the Home Army and the Western Allies.

All other German reprisals against all civilians for all partisan activities in all German-occupied countries would not exceed the number of Poles the Germans murdered as a reprisal for the Warsaw Uprising. Yet Snyder utters no word of blame!

**Did the USSR Prosecute Poles Who Resisted Hitler?**

Later on, when the Soviet Union gained control of Poland, resistance to Hitler would be prosecuted as a crime, on the logic that armed action not controlled by the communists undermined the communists, and that communism was the only legitimate regime for Poland. (306)

If they did so, it should be easy to find evidence of the fact. But Snyder gives no evidence, not even a citation, in support of his claim that the communists "prosecuted resistance to Hitler as a crime."

In mid-September, when it could make absolutely no difference to the outcome in Warsaw, he [Stalin] finally allowed American bombing runs and carried out a few of his own. (307)

It is absurd to suggest that any amount of supply drops could *ever* have "made any difference." The reason many Poles considered the Warsaw Uprising a "crime" is precisely because it could not possibly succeed and would obviously result in an unprecedented massacre of Polish civilians and the destruction of the city itself.

The dropping of supplies could never have been decisive. There was no way that the poorly-armed Polish rebels could stand against 20,000 German troops. The Soviets dropped a great many supplies — by some estimates, more than the British did. But both British and Soviet supplies fell mostly into German-occupied areas.

The crime was the Uprising itself. The Warsaw Uprising led to many thousands of rebels being killed. That is a huge number of casualties of brave people. But as many as 200,000 Polish civilians were also killed by the Germans, and most of the city destroyed. The overwhelming majority of these casualties could have been avoided if the Home Army had coordinated their uprising with the Red Army.

But that was precisely what the anticommunist Home Army *refused* to do. The whole purpose of the Warsaw Uprising was to seize power in the city *after the Red Army had forced the Wehrmacht to begin abandoning it*, and then present the Red Army with a "fait accompli" — the Home Army in charge of the city. This would, supposedly, have given the London Polish government leverage with which to demand that the Western Allies support

their claim to be the legitimate government in Warsaw and, therefore, in Poland as a whole.

After the Germans, it is the Home Army leadership itself that must bear responsibility for the disaster of the Warsaw Uprising. Many Poles, including Polish commanders in the Home Army, thought the Uprising not only had no chance of success, but was a "crime." Stalin thought so too, and acted accordingly.

Snyder wants it "both ways." He agrees, with the majority of historians, that "the Red Army had been halted, by unexpectedly strong German resistance, just beyond Warsaw." (305) But Snyder cannot resist an attempt to blame the Soviets for the crime of the Uprising. So he says:

It made perfect Stalinist sense to encourage an uprising, and then not to assist one. Right to the last moment, Soviet propaganda had called for an uprising in Warsaw, promising Soviet assistance. The uprising came, but the help did not. (305)

This is false and absurd to boot. First, there is not evidence for Snyder's statement. Second, anyone who might heed such a call from the Soviets would certainly coordinate it with the Red Army's advance. Third, the last person on earth that Home Army commanders would have heeded was Stalin!

While the Red Army hesitated just east of the Vistula River from early August 1944 through January 1945, the Germans were killing the Jews to its west. During those five months, the Red Army was less than a hundred kilometers from Łódź. (310)

But Snyder himself has already stated that the Red Army did not "hesitate" but was "halted by unexpected strong German resistance!" (305) It was not this "halt" that "doomed the Polish fighters" — it was the refusal of the Home Army commanders to coordinate the uprising with the Red Army that doomed them, and 150,000 — 200,000 Polish civilians.

Had the Home Army coordinated its activity with the Red Army it could have put all its efforts into preventing the Germans from blowing up the

bridges across the Vistula and greatly facilitated the Red Army's advance from the east bank into Warsaw. The Home Army commanders' refusal to work with the Red Army guaranteed the murder of 200,000 inhabitants of Warsaw, the destruction of most of the city, *and* the deaths of the Jews of Łódź!

It is particularly foul of Snyder to blame the Red Army for the deaths of Jews murdered by the Nazis when the Red Army liberated more Jews, and more concentration and death camps, than all the other Allied forces.

### **Did the NKVD Shoot Poles Just Like the Germans Had?**

When Soviet soldiers finally crossed the Vistula and advanced into the ruins of Warsaw on 17 January 1945, they found very few buildings still standing. The site of Concentration Camp Warsaw, however, was still available. The Soviet NKVD took over its facilities, and used them for familiar purposes. Home Army soldiers were interrogated and shot there by the Soviets in 1945, as they had been by the Germans in 1944. (311)

Source:

n. 70 — Kopka, *Warschau*, 51, 116.

It is instructive to follow out the chain of evidence, which Snyder certainly did not bother to do. Snyder's source, Kopka, *Konzentrationslager Warschau* (2007), page 51, simply mentions the fact that the NKVD and UB (*Urząd Bezpieczeństwa*, Polish communist security force) occupied the site of the former KL (= *Konzentrationslager*) Warsaw. On page 116 Kopka states only this:

Zachowały się fragmentaryczne przekazy o egzekucjach w tym obozie, jak choćby ten: "W Warszawie na ul. Gęsiej odbywają się systematycznie likwidacje członków AK przez NKWD"

Translated:

Fragmentary messages have been preserved about executions in the camp, such as this: "In Warsaw, on Gęsiej Street liquidations of AK members by the NKVD regularly take place."

The only evidence cited is a further reference. Note 2 in Kopka reads:

K. Żmuda-Wilczyńska, Prokurator żądał kary śmierci, "Na przedpolu Warszawy" 1995, z. 5, s. 17 (za: S. Kalbarczyk, Sowieckie..., s. 152-153).

A specific reference to the Kalbarczyk article is given in Kopka's preceding footnote:

S. Kalbarczyk, Sowieckie represje wobec polskiego podziemia niepodległościowego w Warszawie i okolicach na przełomie 1944 i 1945 roku, "Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość" 2002, nr 2 (2),..."

I have obtained this article. The relevant passage in it (pp. 152-3) reads as follows:

Inne placówki NKWD w Warszawie opisywane są w materiale źródłowym w sposób wysoce enigmatyczny. Z dostępnych źródeł wynika, że od stycznia 1945 r. przy ul. Gęsiej funkcjonował obóz NKWD ("Gęsiówka"). W straszliwych warunkach przetrzymywano tu żołnierzy Armii Krajowej, a ponadto jeńców niemieckich i innych "przestępców". Są wzmianki o egzekucjach w tym obozie: "W Warszawie na ul. Gęsiej odbywają się systematycznie likwidacje członków AK przez NKWD."

Translated:

Other NKVD facilities in Warsaw are described in the source material in a highly enigmatic manner. The available sources indicate that from January 1945, an NKVD camp functioned on Gęsia Street (the "Gęsiówka"). Soldiers of the Armia Krajowa as well as German prisoners of war and other "criminals" were held there in terrible conditions. There is mention of executions in this camp: "In Warsaw



on Gęsia Street liquidations take place on a regular basis of members of the AK by the NKVD."

The reference at note 94 is to an archival document, "CAW, O VI SG NW, II/52. 34, k. 16; ibidem, II/52. 100, k. 4." But Kalbarczyk gives us no way to evaluate it: no source criticism is given about this document; no information about what it is, why it was produced and by whom, nothing.

To conclude: this is the only evidence that the NKVD was shooting Home Army soldiers in that prison — "mentions" — *wzmianki* — that are "highly enigmatic." No names are given of Home Army victims. Moreover, if Home Army men were shot and could be identified, the question of why they were shot would still remain: what the charges against them were, whether they were given any kind of trial. After all, the underground Home Army was at war with the communist forces, murdering Jews and communists long after the war had ended.

If a charge of "systematic executions" were made against the British, French, or Americans, a close examination of the evidence would certainly take place before any conclusions were drawn. As Kalbarczyk admits, the evidence is "highly enigmatic." This is a red flag, a warning to the reader: "We do not know whether the contents of this document are reliable!"

But Snyder does not bother with scholarly exactness, when the charges are against communists. For Snyder as for the Nazis communists are "unpersons," to be treated unequally; virtually any charge against communists is acceptable for him.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> "...kilku ogólnikowych, lecz znaczących deklaracji, podyktowanych potrzebą wyraźnego zdystansowania się od polskiej przedwojennej polityki wobec mniejszości narodowych, mającej fatalne konotacje w Europie Zachodniej."

<sup>2</sup> Ryszard Nazarwicz. *Z problematyki politycznej Powstania Warszawskiego 1944*. Warsaw: Wydawn. Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1985, p. 78.

Nazarewicz, Drogi do wyzwolenia: koncepcje walki z okupantem w Polsce i ich treści polityczne, 1939-1945. Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1979, p. 379.

<sup>3</sup> Czesław Żerosławski. Katolicka myśl o ojczyźnie. Ideowopolityczne koncepcje klerkalnego podziemienia 1939-1944. Warszawa: Państwo wydawnicwo naukowe, 1987, 264.

<sup>4</sup> Marci Shore, "Conversing with Ghosts: Jedwabne, Zydokomuna, and Totalitarianism." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 6 (2), Spring 2005 (New Series), p. 362.

<sup>5</sup> Stefan Zgliczynski, Roman Dmowski — hitlerowiec, December, 2010: [http://monde-diplomatique.pl/LMD58/index.php?id=1\\_5](http://monde-diplomatique.pl/LMD58/index.php?id=1_5)

<sup>6</sup> "Uchwała Sejmu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 8 stycznia 1999 r o uczczeniu pamięci Romana Dmowskiego"(Resolution of the Polish Sejm of 8 January 1999 to commemorate Roman Dmowski): [http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/proc3.nsf/uchwaly/783\\_u.htm](http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/proc3.nsf/uchwaly/783_u.htm)

<sup>7</sup> Żegota was an organization set up by the Polish Government-in-Exile in London to rescue Jews from the Germans.

<sup>8</sup> Here I quote from the English edition of Engelking, p. 792, rather than from the much harder-to-find Polish edition. Oddly, Snyder also refers to the English edition in this same footnote!

<sup>9</sup> Joshua D. Zimmerman, "The Attitude of the Polish Home Army (AK) to the Jewish Question during the Holocaust: The Case of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising." In *Varieties of Anti-Semitism. History, Ideology, Discourse*. Eds. Murray Baumgarten, Peter Kenez, and Bruce Thompson. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2009, 109-126; at 121.

<sup>10</sup> See the useful Polish-language Wikipedia page on this topic at <http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Żydokomuna> The English-language page has been extensively written up in a highly apologetic and anticommunist manner. (Accessed 06.19.2013)

<sup>11</sup> Jeffrey Burds, "Comment on Timothy Snyder's article...":  
<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~hpcws/comment13.htm>

<sup>12</sup> [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/operatsia\\_seim05-14.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/operatsia_seim05-14.pdf)

(13) Bernard Chiari, "Kriegslist oder Bündnis mit dem Feind? Deutsch-Polnische Kontakte 1943-44." In *Die Polnische Heimatarmee. Geschichte und Mythos der Armia Krajowa seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*. Munich: R. Oldenbourg Vlg, 2003, 497-527. Snyder's article is on pp. 549-561.

<sup>14</sup> There is no entry in Snyder's bibliography for "National Armed Forces." Snyder cites it only twice, in notes 50 and 51, page 497. The NSZ was an especially racist and murderous group in the Polish underground. It is now officially honored in Poland; see Zgliczyński, *Jak Polaci* 10, n. 4.

<sup>15</sup> From the review by Kasia Przyborska in the Appendix to this chapter.

<sup>16</sup> Jan M. Ciechanowski. "Nie tylko głupota, ale zbrodnia" ("Not only stupidity, but a crime"). *Przegląd Tygodnik* 30 (2010). As we discuss below, this is Ciechanowski's own view as well: <http://www.przegladygodnik.pl/pl/artykul/nie-tylko-glupota-ale-zbrodnia>

<sup>17</sup> *Obóz reakcji Polskiej w latach 1939-1945*. (Warszawa, Maj 1948 r.), 118.

<sup>18</sup> Prof. Jan Ciechanowski: Powstanie Warszawskie było klęską i błędem, Dzejje.pl 07.24.09: <http://dziejje.pl/aktualnosci/prof-jan-ciechanowski-powstanie-warszawskie-bylo-kleska-bledem>

<sup>19</sup> Jan M Ciechanowski, *The Warsaw Rising of 1944*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1974.

## **Chapter 13. Bloodlands *Ch. 10: Accusations of Soviet Crimes Near the War's End***

### **Expulsion of German Colonists — Like Soviet Expulsion of Polish *Osadnicy* ("Settlers")**

Snyder says, of the Germans expelled from Poland at the war's end:

Perhaps 1.5 million of them were German administrators and colonists, who would never have come to Poland without Hitler's war. They lived in houses or apartments that they had taken from Poles expelled (or killed) during the war or from Jews who had been killed. (314)

But the same had been true of the Polish imperialist "settlers" (Polish "osadnicy") sent by the Polish state after 1921 to "polonize" Western Ukraine and Belorussia, the areas seized by Poland from Soviet Russia by military conquest but in which Poles were a minority. Echoing Snyder's words they were indeed "Polish administrators and colonists, who would never have come to Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine without Pilsudski's war."

These lands were east of the Curzon Line. It is impossible to understand the history of this period and region without reference to the Curzon Line. But Snyder never mentions it even once in *Bloodlands*. He writes of these areas as though they were "naturally" part of Poland, and therefore that there was something "unnatural," unjust, etc., that they should be reunited with Eastern Belorussia and Eastern Ukraine within the USSR. In reality Poland had conquered these lands through an imperialist war and treated their Ukrainian, Belorussian, and Jewish populations like colonial subjects in an imperialist — that is, brutal and racist, manner.

### **Poles Murdered Polish Jews**

There were also many cases of Poles murdering Jews during the war to take their property and of Poles blackmailing Jews not to turn them into the Germans until the Jews ran out of money, and then turning them in. The

cruelty and greed of these *szantażysty* or *szmalcowniki* (blackmailers) is commonly portrayed in accounts by Jews who hid in Poland during the war.

This is yet another way in which capitalist Poland resembles Nazi Germany. The Soviet Union was completely different. No one, not even Snyder, has ever accused the Soviet Army or Soviet citizens of acting in this way against Soviet Jews.

After the war was over there were many cases of Poles murdering Jews in order to keep the property they had taken from them while the Jews had been in hiding. The Polish Home Army, now underground "freedom fighters," and other Polish bands and gangs, killed a great many Jews, sometimes for their property, sometimes because, like the Nazis, many Polish nationalists equated Judaism with communism, sometimes because they did not consider Jews to be Poles and wanted Poland *judenrein*, "cleaned of Jews," just as the Nazis did.

Since he cites a number of the works produced by the researchers at the Research Center for the Holocaust ("Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów") Snyder must know about them, and Snyder remains silent about them.

### **Rapes of German Women by Red Army Soldiers**

During the march on Berlin, the Red Army followed a dreadfully simple procedure in the eastern lands of the Reich, the territories meant for Poland: its men raped German women and seized German men (and some women) for labor. The behavior continued as the soldiers reached the German lands that would remain in Germany, and finally Berlin. Red Army soldiers had also raped women in Poland, and in Hungary, and even in Yugoslavia, where a communist revolution would make the country a Soviet ally. Yugoslav communists complained to Stalin about the behavior of Soviet soldiers, who gave them a little lecture about soldiers and "fun." (316)

Source (n. 7 p. 498): "...Yugoslav quotation: Naimark, *Russians*, 71."

Snyder does not tell his readers the source here, which is Milovan Djilas's book *Conversations with Stalin*. Published in 1961, it appeared long after (a) the events described; (b) the very hostile break between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union; and (c) Djilas's own rejection of communism.

So Djilas's account, published 17 years after the fact, might be inaccurate because of his bias — Djilas hated Stalin, and by 1961 had come to hate communism — because the passage of time had reshaped his memory of events; or because he had fabricated it. Or, it might be accurate. We can't know. The historical principle of "Testis unus, testis nullus" — means that a single "witness," or piece of evidence to an event, is not enough to establish that the event actually occurred.<sup>1</sup>

This short passage illustrates why good historians insist upon *source criticism* — an examination of the source of the evidence. Any lawyer knows the importance of sources. If a defendant, or a witness, claims that a third party made a certain statement, opposing counsel is sure to ask: "What is your source? How do we know that statement is genuine?" But Snyder doesn't do this. He never does when it might call into question an otherwise perfectly good anti-Stalin or anticommunist statement.

So did Stalin say this? Given the source, we can't be sure. But one thing is certain: Stalin's alleged statement had nothing whatsoever to do with any rapes in Germany. Djilas states that it was made during his trip to Moscow "during the winter of 1944-1945" (p. 93). The war against Hitler was far from over and allegations of rape against German women had not yet been made.

Bottom line: We don't know whether Stalin made this statement — i.e. whether Djilas was reporting the truth or writing anticommunist propaganda. But we know it was not made with reference to Red Army rapes in Germany. Neither **Naimark** nor Snyder point this fact out.

On pp. 316-318 Snyder expatiates upon the widespread story of mass rapes of German women by Red Army soldiers. There are many Russian responses to this accusation, most of them defensive, some of them quoting accounts of exemplary treatment of German women by Red Army soldiers. There are also accounts of the rape of German women by Red Army

soldiers who were then tried and shot or imprisoned. None of them have the kinds of well-founded total numbers that we would like to have.

The whole question has become so ideologically charged that it is hardly possible to get objective information. Nazi propaganda claimed a great many rapes, in order to strengthen resistance to the Red Army. Anticommunist propaganda since the war has made the claim of massive rape a central focus.

So, what was the situation? Were there "more rapes than could be expected" by Red Army men of German women? Most people want simple answers. But there aren't any simple answers here. The "massive rape" story is mainly spread by professional anticommunists who are not objective about anything else, so there's no reason to think they are objective in this matter either.

It has never even been established that there was a higher *rate* of rape by Red Army men — number of confirmed rapes divided by the number of soldiers — than there was in the other Allied armies. Also, the Red Army occupied areas that had sided with the Nazis and participated in the unprecedented slaughter of civilians and murder of Red Army prisoners, whereas much of the areas occupied by the Allies were anti-German. Other factors: German women could get abortions by claiming rape by a Soviet soldier, which must have led to some false claims. Allied soldiers could pay for sex with desperate women with food, cigarettes or other goods. Such arrangements were not considered "rape" though women in desperate need often had no choice.

The question of widespread rape by American soldiers, evidently encouraged by U.S. Army propaganda — moreover, in "friendly" countries such as France, rather than in pro-Nazi countries whose soldiers had participated in enormous atrocities in the USSR like Hungary, Rumania and Germany — has only recently begun to attract some attention.<sup>2</sup> The issue seems to be that publicity about rape by Red Army soldiers started some years earlier than that about rape by American soldiers and has been vigorously promoted for anticommunist purposes, as Snyder is doing.

Was there a high incidence of rape in the liberated USSR? I have attempted to survey the Russian-language literature on this question. As far as I can tell no one has alleged that this was the case. That tends to make me suspect that anger and resentment towards Germans and their allies were a major factor in whatever rapes occurred. So in one respect this is part of the anticommunist "numbers game" — to fabricate or multiply alleged Soviet atrocities.

On the other hand, given the unprecedented level of atrocities and destruction inflicted on the USSR by the German armies it would be surprising if there were not a higher level of rape of German, Hungarian, Rumanian etc., women by Red Army men than there were among Allied soldiers. But it is impossible to get any precise figures.

So we really do not know. Historians ought to admit ignorance on the basis of lack of good evidence, which is very often the case. But lack of evidence does not stop ideological anticommunists from drawing the conclusions they desire and then using their own fictions to moralize, in the manner of Josef Goebbels' diaries.

As so often, Stalin's crimes were enabled by Hitler's policies. (318)

"As so often" what? What "crimes"? *Snyder has yet to establish a single "crime" of Stalin's.* This is Snyder's anticommunism in overdrive again. It seems clear that Snyder will stoop to any propaganda technique to dishonestly associate the Soviet Union with Nazi Germany.

### **Snyder Barely Refers to the Real Genocide: the "Volhynian Massacres"**

The Germans had killed about 1.3 million Jews in the former eastern Poland in 1941 and 1942, with the help of local policemen. Some of these Ukrainian policemen helped to form a Ukrainian partisan army in 1943, which under the leadership of Ukrainian nationalists cleansed the former southwest Poland — which it saw as western Ukraine — of remaining Poles. The OUN-Bandera, the nationalist organization that led the partisan army, had long pledged to rid Ukraine of its national



minorities. Its capacity to kill Poles depended upon German training, and its determination to kill Poles had much to do with its desire to clear the terrain of purported enemies before a final confrontation with the Red Army. The UPA, as the partisan army was known, murdered tens of thousands of Poles, and provoked reprisals from Poles upon Ukrainian civilians.(326)<sup>3</sup>

Sources (n. 34, p. 500):

"Documentation of the UPA's plans for and actions toward Poles can be found in TsDAVO 3833/1/86/6a; 3833/1/131/13-14; 3833/1/86/19-20; and 3933/3/1/60. Of related interest are DAR 30/1/16=USHMM RG-31.017M-1; DAR 301/1/5=USHMM RG-31.017M-1; and DAR 30/1/4=USHMM RG-31.017M-1. These OUN-B and UPA wartime declarations coincide with postwar interrogations (see GARF, R-9478/1/398) and recollections of Polish survivors (on the massacre of 12-13 July 1943, for example, see OKAW, II/737, II/1144, II/2099, II/2650, II/953, and II/775) and Jewish survivors (for example, ŻIH 301/2519; and Adini, Dubno: sefer zikaron, 717-718). The fundamental study is now Motyka, *Ukraińska partyzantka*. See also Il'iushyn, *OUN-UPA*, and Armstrong, *Ukrainian Nationalism*. I sought to explain this conflict in "Causes," *Reconstruction*, "Life and Death," and Sketches.

This page contains the only reference in *Bloodlands* to the Volhynian Massacres of 50,000-100,000 or more Polish civilians by Ukrainian Nationalist forces armed by the Germans but acting on their own initiative. Snyder has researched these important and neglected mass murders and has published on them in the past. Yet he neglects them in *Bloodlands*. Why?

This was true genocide: an attempt to kill so many Poles that survivors would flee and rid the Ukraine of Poles completely. Even if the Soviet NKVD or army had been guilty of killing all the "Katyn" Poles — and we can now be certain that the "official version" of the Katyn massacre is false — that would be less than ½ to less than ¼ of the number of Poles murdered by the Ukrainian Nationalists.<sup>4</sup> Yet the Volhynian massacres are

scarcely ever discussed! Snyder himself spends only one-half of one paragraph on it. Why?

Snyder follows contemporary Polish nationalist practice in virtually ignoring the Volhynian massacres in *Bloodlands*. The reason for this neglect seems to be that it is highly embarrassing to today's Ukrainian Nationalists, who heap praise upon the Ukrainian Nationalist forces as anti-Bolshevik "freedom fighters" despite the fact that they fought on the side of the Nazis and murdered, at the very least, hundreds of thousands of Jews and Poles. The state of Ukraine has periodically declared the same forces who were guilty of these horrific and massive atrocities — the OUN-Bandera, the 14<sup>th</sup> SS Division "Galizien," later renamed the "Ukrainian Insurgent Army" (*Ukrains'ka Povstans'ka Armiia*) — to be "heroes."

It can hardly be a coincidence that the Volhynian massacres are also neglected in today's right-wing, capitalist Poland. Poland follows what is often called the 'Giedroyc doctrine,' named for anti-communist political theorist Jerzy Giedroyc who proposed that the mass murders by Ukrainian nationalists be "forgotten" in the interests of good relations with post-Soviet Ukraine, while the "Katyn massacres" be emphasized as a political toll against Russia. According to Polish historian Bogumił Grott:

Do dziś pamiętam, jak Jerzy Giedroyc w radiowym wywiadzie, dokładnie dwa tygodnie przed śmiercią, problem mordów UPA na Polakach skwitował krótkim: „należy zapomnieć."

Translated:

I still remember how Jerzy Giedroyc in a radio interview given just two weeks before his death, briefly summed up the problem of the UPA murders of Poles: "We must forget them."<sup>5</sup>

Since Snyder follows this practice we note that he expresses his gratitude towards Jerzy Giedroyc:

The late Jerzy Giedroyc, ...helped me to ask some of the right questions. (421)

In the immediate post-Soviet period Polish researchers finally began to publish lengthy, well-documented accounts of the really hair-raising atrocities committed by Ukrainian nationalist soldiers against Polish civilians in order to drive them out of Western Ukraine. This brought attention to these horrific mass murders for the first time and caused a lot of embarrassment between anticommunist Poland and anticommunist Ukraine.

In 2003 the two highly anticommunist states organized a sort of "reconciliation" conference. Since that time the Polish side has relented somewhat. Both sides agreed that "It was a long time ago and everybody who did it is dead" — not true, of course, even today, much less a decade ago. They evidently want to bury the hatchet about all these mass murders, including retributive killings of perhaps 10,000-20,000 Ukrainian civilians by Polish forces, so they could get back to their primary business — blaming Stalin, communism, the Soviet Union, and Russia for all bad things. This attempt at coverup has been under way for the past decade.

The more publicity the Volhynian massacres got, the worse the anticommunist Ukrainian and Polish forces seem. Even the "Katyn massacre" pales in comparison! And this tells us something about the enormous publicity and propaganda given in today's Poland to Katyn. Clearly this is not at all about the victims but about anti-communism, and also about keeping anti-Russian sentiment alive. Polish nationalism is largely based on anti-Russian propaganda. This is a plausible hypothesis to explain why Snyder devotes less than a paragraph to these massacres.

Snyder asserts that the book by his friend Grzegorz Motyka, *Ukraińska partyzantka 1942-1960* is "now the fundamental study." Hardly! Motyka's book is only partly about the Volhynian massacres. Much of the rest of it is about the "heroic" struggle of Ukrainian nationalist — and fascist — partisans against the Soviets.

Motyka has been a member of the "Instytut Pamięci Narodowej," the Polish "Institute of the People's Memory," a fanatically nationalist research-propaganda group funded by the Polish government and innocent of any aim of objectivity. The IPN's President takes an oath "to the Polish people." This is reminiscent of Nazi practice — who is to define what constitutes

"loyalty to the people?" And who are "the people" anyway? Moreover, historians are supposed to be loyal to *the truth*, not to their own *Volk*.

Imagine what American historians would think of an organization name "Institute of the American People's Memory." It would be immediately recognized as a far-right nationalist effort and scorned by all respected historians. The IPN is primarily anticommunist and anti-Soviet. No *objective* historian would associate with it, just as no objective historian would associate with the Hoover Institution in Palo Alto, California, a similar anticommunist propaganda mill in the guise of a "research center."

Yet Motyka appears to disagree with Snyder on the question of Volhynian massacres. Motyka wrote a long essay in *Gazeta Wyborcza* titled "Forget About Giedroyc: Poles, Ukrainians, and the IPN."<sup>6</sup> He takes the position that the Ukrainian massacres of Poles were "one of the bloodiest Polish episodes of the Second World War and must not be forgotten." Motyka does not shrink from calling these massacres "genocide" (*ludobójstwo*). Motyka also admits that "some actions of the Polish underground could also be called genocide", such as the murders of dozens of Belorussians in 1946 or murders of 200 Ukrainians in June 1945, both after the war.

According to Motyka there are very few memorials concerning these horrific mass murders in Poland today:

To wstyd, że do takich miejsc jak masowy grób w wołyńskiej Parośli można dotrzeć tylko leśnym duktem zrytym przez dziki.

Translated:

It is shameful that places like the mass grave in Parośla, Volhynia, can only be reached only by a forest path cut through wilderness.<sup>7</sup>

Motyka makes the gesture of mentioning Soviet "crimes" and falsely claims that the Soviets wanted to "annihilate class enemies" — something the Soviets never advocated. These are general remarks apparently obligatory for Polish historians today. If the Soviets, or pro-Soviet partisans, had ever done anything remotely resembling the mass murders carried out not only by Ukrainian nationalist forces but by the Polish Home Army and NSZ

underground "in response" to the Ukrainian mass murders, the whole world would have known about it for decades. There would be many large, expensive memorials to the victims, a library of books exposing the "communist atrocities," and no doubt lawsuits for damages before the European Court of Human Rights.

The reality is that there is no such evidence that the Soviets and pro-Soviet forces ever did anything like this. This is another reminder that it is the Polish and Ukrainian "freedom fighters", rather than the Soviet Union, who most resemble the Nazis.

The point, though, is that Motyka does not advocate downplaying Ukrainian massacres, as in practice Snyder does. The fundamental study of these horrendous events remains that by Władysław and Ewa Siemaszko.<sup>8</sup> A number of books are available in Russian. For a brief English introduction see the Internet page "Genocide Committed by Ukrainian Nationalists in Occupied Poland."<sup>9</sup>

The eagerness of Polish and Ukrainian nationalist elites to "bury the hatchet" over 50,000 to 100,000 or more atrocious murders contrasts with the Polish elite's never-ending complaints about the Katyn massacres which comprised 1/4 or 1/7 the number of victims. Moreover, as we have discussed in a previous chapter the "official" version has now been definitively disproven. In like manner Snyder devotes less than a paragraph to these horrifying massacres while inventing Soviet "atrocities" left and right.

### **More False Numbers of "Victims"**

Between 1944 and 1946, for example, 182,543 Ukrainians were deported from Soviet Ukraine to the Gulag: not for committing a particular crime, not even for being Ukrainian nationalists, but for being related to or acquainted with Ukrainian nationalists. At about the same time, in 1946 and 1947, the Soviets sentenced 148,079 Red Army veterans to the Gulag for collaboration with the Germans. There were never more Soviet citizens in the Gulag than in the years after the

war; indeed, the number of Soviet citizens in the camps and special settlements increased every year from 1945 until Stalin's death. (328)

Sources (n. 36 p. 500):

\* "On the 182,543 Ukrainians deported from Soviet Ukraine to the Gulag, see Weiner, "Nature," 1137."

\* "On the 148,079 Red Army veterans, see Polian, "Violence," 129."

\* "See also, generally, Applebaum, *Gulag*, 463."

In an article published since *Bloodlands* Snyder claimed even more:

At war's end, the Ukrainian nationalists were defeated by the Soviets, who killed tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians and deported hundreds of thousands more to concentration camps. (2011-3)

This is all false. Snyder presents no evidence whatsoever that *any* Ukrainian civilians were killed, much less "tens of thousands."

According to the authoritative collection of Soviet documents published by the highly anticommunist "Memorial" society in 2005 the number of all persons deported from the Ukraine between 1944 and 1948 inclusive is 131,935. This number includes 16,996 persons from the following groups: German repatriates, family members of convicted traitors, convicted German citizens of the USSR (e.g. Volga Germans, called "Folksdoich"), and those who had served in the German military or police formations. Subtracting these, the total number of Ukrainian nationalists is 114,969 (another possible total number from the same report is 114,936). (*Stalinskie Deportatsii* 630-1) These people were not sent to "camps" but were "exiled" (*ssylka*) to the Eastern USSR.

Snyder cites an article by Amir **Weiner** published in 1999. The citation and its footnote may be found in the Appendix to this chapter.<sup>10</sup> As usual, the "devil is in the details" — the evidence.

Weiner's figure of 110,825 "nationalists killed" (see the first quotation in the Appendix to this chapter) comes from a secondary source written by a Ukrainian nationalist, as does the figure of 182,543 deported between 1944 and 1952. The number from Nikolai Fiodrovich Bugai, the leading Russian scholar on deportations, covers the years 1939 to 1945, meaning all the Polish "settlers" deported from the Western Ukraine in 1939-1940, as well as during the war. Bugai also explicitly includes deportations of Germans and others from this area (Bugai 12, 13). It tells us nothing about the period from 1944 onward.

**Weiner** claims the Soviets "emphasized almost total annihilation" since they "repeatedly failed to mention prisoners taken alive." This is false. Weiner is in error. Bugai is the acknowledged Russian specialist on deportations and is conveniently anticommunist and anti-Stalin. In the Appendix to this chapter the reader will find primary source evidence printed by Bugai with emphasis added at the passages referring to the *large numbers of prisoners taken*. Bugai cites primary sources — Beria's reports to Stalin — that speak of tens of thousands of prisoners and those who have turned themselves in.

Elsewhere Weiner uses and cites Bugai's work. So how can Weiner — Snyder's source here — state that "the campaign against nationalists" was "a war without prisoners"? How can he talk about "NKVD reports" failing "to mention prisoners taken alive, emphasizing almost total annihilation"? The answer appears to be that Weiner doesn't use Bugai here. Instead he cites Ukrainian nationalist historians. Ukrainian nationalists (like Polish, Baltic, etc. nationalists) have every reason to falsify and exaggerate Soviet "atrocities." This is the only way they have to try to excuse, or at least explain, the important role Ukrainian nationalist forces played in the Holocaust of the Jews and in the Volhynian massacres of 50,000 to 100,000 or more Polish civilians.

The Soviets did indeed "kill tens of thousands" in the Ukraine: not civilians, as Snyder falsely claims, but OUN-UPA fighters. No country would fail to combat armed bands within its own territory. Moreover, these forces had fought on the Nazi side and helped carry out the Holocaust, to say nothing of the mass murders of Polish and Soviet civilians.

As for the number deported, Snyder's claim of "hundreds of thousands" "deported to concentration camps" is fallacious. *Sovetskie deportatsii*, the collection of primary sources cited above, published in 2005, give the figure of 37,145 persons during 1944-1946.

**Polian**, "Violence," 129, cites the same number — 148,079. Here is the passage:

En 1946-1947, 148 079 "Vlassoviens," furent exilés pour une durée de six ans avec le statut de "colons de travail" dans les regions les plus inhospitalières de l'URSS. (129)

Translated:

In 1946-1947, 148,079 "Vlassovites" were exiled for a period of six years with the status of "labor colonists" to the most inhospitable regions of the USSR.

Polian's source is a Russian study published in 1992 by Guboglo and Kuznetsov. However, it's just as likely that Polian just copied this from the end of the twelfth chapter of the notorious *Black Book of Communism*, since both the same number and same reference are given.

Snyder, remember, said that these were "Red Army veterans," and then referred to Polian. But his own source Polian calls them "Vlassoviens," men who had been recruited to Nazi armies, such as the Vlasov army. Snyder has lied about this to make it look to the reader as though Red Army soldiers were sent to the Gulag.

**Applebaum**, *Gulag*, 463 contains no information of relevance to this paragraph.

Snyder continues:

In a few days in October 1947, some 76,192 Ukrainians were transported to the Gulag. (329)

Sources (n. 38 p. 501): Motyka, *Ukraińska partyzantka*, 535.



**Motyka**, *Ukraińska partyzantka*, 535 does give number 76,192. But Snyder has falsified what occurred. In fact, they were not sent to the Gulag — that is, to camps — but were exiled. The relevant document — by Kruglov, Minister of the MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs, successor to the NKVD) may be found in the Appendix to this chapter.

### **Snyder Cares About "Elites." About Other People? Not So Much...**

Snyder:

Men of elite families were killed at Katyn and other sites... (380)

Let's set aside for a moment the fact that Snyder has not even tried to establish what happened at Katyn, nor to inform his readers of the scholarly controversy that exists over this event.<sup>11</sup> Once again, it is revealing that Snyder cares about "elites" so much. It is an example of Snyder's deeply reactionary way of thinking.

Of course it is a historical truism that *all* progressive social and political upheavals and revolutions target "elites." Slave revolts and peasant revolts throughout history; the English Revolution of the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century; the American Revolution; the French Revolution; the United States' defeat of the Confederacy in the American Civil War; the Russian Revolution, the Yugoslav, Chinese, and Vietnamese revolutions, and many others — all disproportionately targeted "elites" because those "elites" were the exploiters or their agents. History shows that the common working people can do without the wealthy "elites" very well indeed!

Leading about 120,000 special forces, he [Lavrentii Beria] rounded up and expelled 478,479 people in just over a week... Because no Chechens or Ingush were to be left behind, people who could not be moved were shot. Villages were burned to the ground everywhere; in some places, barns full of people were burned as well. (330)

Sources (n. 41 p. 501):

\* "See Polian, *Against Their Will*, 134-155, for all of the cited figures."

\* "See also Naimark, *Fires*, 96";

\* Lieberman, *Terrible Fate*, 206-207";

\* Burleigh, *Third Reich*, 749.

Snyder is wrong again. There is *no* evidence that *anyone* "who could not be moved" was "shot"; nor that *any* "villages were burned to the ground," much less "everywhere"; nor that "barns full of people were burned as well." The story about *one* barn of people being burned alive — not multiple barns, as Snyder claims — is a forgery, probably American in origin due to the clumsy literal translation of into Russian of American "intelligence slang." It is thoroughly discussed and refuted in the two works cited in this footnote.<sup>12</sup>

Snyder fails to inform his readers about this research. Does he even know anything about this issue? If not, why write about it — except to make anticommunist propaganda?

**Lieberman**, *Terrible Fate* 206-7 quotes a Chechen nationalist source that records only that some people did die on the journey. It does not record the number, for which see below.

Nikolai Bugai is the most authoritative Russian expert on deportations, and an anti-Stalinist to boot. Here is what he has written:

Operation Chechevitsa, which began on 23 February, was completed sometime during the third week of March. NKVD records attest to 180 convoy trains carrying 493,269 Chechen and Ingush nationals and members of other nationalities seized at the same time. **Fifty people were killed in the course of the operation, and 1,272 died on the journey.**

Other reports indicate that during the Cheka military actions and the resettlement 2,016 Chechen and Ingush anti-Soviet elements were arrested, and 20,072 firearms and 479 submachine guns were confiscated.<sup>13</sup> (Emphasis added, GF.)

**Naimark**, *Fires of Hatred* 96, agrees with Bugai: "the NKVD reported only sporadic cases of resistance."<sup>14</sup>

## **The "Numbers Game" Again, Falsified Once More**

Snyder writes:

In all of the civil conflict, flight, deportation, and resettlement provoked or caused by the return of the Red Army between 1943 and 1947, some 700,000 Germans died, as did at least 150,000 Poles and perhaps 250,000 Ukrainians. At a minimum, another 300,000 Soviet citizens dead during or shortly after the Soviet deportations from the Caucasus, Crimea, Moldova, and the Baltic States. If the struggles of the Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian nationalists against the reimposition of Soviet power are regarded as resistance to deportations, which in some measure they were, another hundred thousand or so people would have to be added to the total dead associated with ethnic cleansing. (332)

Sources (n. 43 p. 501):

\* "Weiner ("Nature," 1137) notes that the Soviets reported killing 110,825 people as Ukrainian nationalists between February 1944 and May 1946.

\* "The NKVD estimated that 144,705 Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, and Karachai died as a result of deportation or shortly after resettlement (by 1948); see Lieberman, *Terrible Fate*, 207."

Snyder gives *no source at all* for his figures of the deaths of 700,000 Germans, "at least" 150,000 Poles, and "perhaps 250,000 Ukrainians." Nor does he give any evidence for his blaming the Red Army for whatever deaths did occur. Weiner's fraudulent claim of "110,825 people killed" has been refuted above.

Snyder gives no evidence for the deaths of 100,000 Baltic nationalists. Nor does he tell his readers that Nazi collaborators in the Baltics and Baltic

participants in the Holocaust described themselves as "nationalists," hoping that the word "nationalist" would "justify" their anti-Soviet terrorism. We should recall that all fascists justified their fascism as "nationalism."

As for this claim of Snyder's:

The NKVD estimated that 144,705 Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, and Karachai died as a result of deportation or shortly after resettlement (by 1948); see Lieberman, *Terrible Fate*, 207.

This too is a falsification. We have seen that Bugai published the NKVD report that 50 Chechen and Ingush died during deportation. We have no way of knowing how many of the 493,000 who were deported would have died during the same time period had they remained in their villages. Surely some would have, so the 1272 who "died on the journey" cannot all be persons who would not have died as a result of the deportation.

During 1946-47 there was a serious famine in the USSR. The famine was caused by catastrophic weather conditions. No doubt it was made even worse by the massive destruction of the war. Nor was the famine not confined to the USSR. According to Stephen Wheatcroft, who has written the latest study of the Soviet famine of 1946-1947:

The World Food Crisis of 1946-1947 was the most serious global food shortage of modern history, when famine simultaneously threatened Central and Eastern Europe, India, Indo-China, and China, and bread rationing was introduced in Britain for the first time ever. The British and American governments had requested food aid from Stalin to ease the World Food Crisis before they became aware of the situation in the USSR. The international context of the Soviet famine of 1946-1947 was strikingly different to 1921, when America had been able to provide large amounts of relief grain to Russia.<sup>15</sup>

Claiming that the deaths of whatever number "by 1948" were "a result of deportation" is plainly dishonest. As Snyder notes, Lieberman makes this claim on page 207 of his book. His source is an early book of Bugai, who cites the number 144,704. Bugai wrote:

According to the NKVD Department on Special Settlements, among all deported Chechens, Ingush, Balkarians (1944) and Karachai (1943) during 1944-1948, 144,704 persons died (23.7%), i.e. in Kazakhstan, — 101,036 Chechen, Ingush and Balkarians; in Uzbekistan, — 16,052 (10.6%) persons (during a 6-month stay); in 1948 — 13,883 persons (9.8%).<sup>16</sup>

In this same article Bugai also says that between 1944 and 1946 "1468 deported people died in Kazakhstan." This refutes the accusation that those who died "by 1948" died as a result of deportation. Neither Lieberman nor Snyder mentions this fact. Nor do they calculate the number of deaths above the normal mortality rate for the large population there. Bugai also discusses the extra provisions allotted by the Soviet state to deportees (pp. 117ff).

Immediately after the paragraph above Bugai adds the sentence:

The number of sources for this study is very poor.

Neither Lieberman nor Snyder mention that either. In fact, this short book by Bugai, published in English in 1996, is the translation of an article published in 1989 — that is, before the end of the USSR.<sup>17</sup> Better documentation began to appear after the end of the USSR in 1991. In 1998 Bugai and his associate Gomov wrote the account quoted above. It appears that he does not repeat the death figures he cited in 1989. Lieberman (206-7) repeats *undocumented* stories of many deaths during the deportation. Bugai relates some of them too. But he also reports the official accounts, above.

As others have suggested, it is very likely that the official, and very low, estimates of the deaths are accurate. There would certainly have been a head count at the end of the journey. Discrepancies would have raised the suspicion that, for example, NKVD men might have let some persons escape in exchange for bribes. Therefore it is unlikely that many — if indeed any — persons died and were buried along the route, in addition to those reported.

In his 1992 book *Ikh nado deportirovat'* Bugai quotes selections of a "report of the section of special resettlement of the MVD of the USSR concerning work among those resettled" and dated April 10, 1953 where the same number of those who died, 144,705, is also cited.

(...) **С момента расселения до настоящего времени на спецпоселении родилось 82 391 чел., в том числе: детей бывших кулаков- 22 209, немцев- 22 210, чеченцев, ингушей, балкарцев, карачаевцев- 26 002, других контингентов- 11 970.**

(...) Из общего числа умерших 309 100 чел. умерло после высылки на спецпоселение: чеченцев, карачаевцев, ингушей, балкарцев- 144 704, немцев- 42 823, спецпоселенцев из Крыма- 44 887, калмыков- 16 594, турок, курдов, хемшинов- 14 895, членов семей оуновцев- 10 384, бывших кулаков- 30 194, других контингентов- 5958 чел.

Наибольший процент смертности имелся среди спецпоселенцев, переселенных в 1944 г. Так, из общего количества переселенцев в этом году до настоящего времени умерло: чеченцев, ингушей, балкарцев, карачаевцев- 23,7%, крымских татар, болгар, греков, армян- 19,6%, калмыков- 17,4%, турок, курдов, хемшшюв- 14,6%.  
- pp. 264-5.

Translated:

(...) **From the moment of resettlement [February 1944] to the present time** in the special settlements 82,391 people have been born, including: children of former kulaks, 22,209, Germans, 22,210, Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, and Karachai 26,002, others 11,970...

The greatest percentage of mortality is among those special resettled persons who were resettled in 1944. Of the total number of persons resettled in that year to the present time there have died: Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Karachai — 23.7%; Crimean Tatars, Bulgarians, Greeks, Armenians — 19.6%, Kalmyks — 17.4%, Turks, Kurds, Khemshshiu v - 14.6%... (Emphasis added.)

It appears as though the relevant figures are for the period between "the moment of resettlement" — i.e., of deportation — "to the present time": that is, between 1944 and 1953.<sup>18</sup> This would contradict Bugai's earlier statement that the period in question was 1944-1948.

### **Why Did Stalin Reject Marshall Plan Aid?**

In 1947 it [the United States] offered economic aid, in the form of the Marshall Plan, to European countries willing to cooperate with one another on elementary matters of trade and financial policy. Stalin could reject Marshall aid and force his clients to reject it as well,...

(335)

The Soviet Union did reject Marshall Plan aid — because it appeared to be an attempt to subvert its influence in Europe. Geoffrey Roberts writes:

Although the Americans were thinking mainly in terms of Western Europe, the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were not excluded from the proposed aid programme. Indeed the British and French governments responded to Marshall's Harvard speech by inviting the Russians to a conference in Paris to discuss a European response to the plan. In Moscow, however, the Soviets were in two minds. On the one hand, they welcomed the possibility of American loans and grants, for themselves and for their East European allies. On the other, they feared that the Marshall Plan was an economic counterpart of the Truman Doctrine — a means of using American financial muscle to build an anti-Soviet alliance in Western Europe.

At the Paris conference in July 1947 Moscow's worst fears were realized. The British and French insisted (in accordance with Marshall's express wishes) that any American aid programme had to be co-ordinated and organized on a pan-European basis. This was seen by the Soviets as a western device for interference in the economic and political life of the East European countries. Such interference was completely unacceptable to Stalin. Consequently the USSR withdrew from all negotiations concerning the Marshall Plan and insisted its East European allies did not participate either.<sup>19</sup>

## Did Non-Collectivized Agriculture "Save" the Ukraine from Famine?

Ukrainians returned to a country where famine was raging again. Perhaps a million people starved to death in the two years after the war. It was western Ukraine, with a private agricultural sector that the Soviets had not yet had time to collectivize, that saved the rest of Soviet Ukraine from even greater suffering."

Source (n. 44 p. 501): "Survivors of the famine mention this in their memoirs. See Potichnij, "1946-1947 Famine," 185.

Potichnij's study is published in a right-wing Ukrainian nationalist book and is not referred to by any expert scholars on the subject. The latest study of the 1946-7 famine is that by Stephen Wheatcroft. Snyder offers no evidence that uncollectivized Western Ukraine "saved" the Soviet Union in the famine of 1947 or, indeed, that collectivization had anything to do at all with the famine. As the quotation from Wheatcroft's article cited above shows, there was still a bread shortage in the U.K. although, of course, agriculture was not collectivized there. Wheatcroft says nothing specifically about the harvest in Western Ukraine.

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### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> See the explanation here:

[http://dic.academia.ru/dic.nsf/latin\\_proverbs/2504/Testis](http://dic.academia.ru/dic.nsf/latin_proverbs/2504/Testis)

<sup>2</sup> Jennifer Schuesser, "The Dark Side of Liberation," *New York Times* May 21, 2013 p. C1.

<sup>3</sup> For a brief overview in Polish see Ewa Siemaszko, "Genocyd Polaków na Wołyniu i w Galicji Wschodniej (1942/1943-1946/1947)" (December, 2009): <http://szturman.livejournal.com/260126.html> There is a Russian translation: Геноцид Поляков на Волыни И В Восточной Галици: <http://misha18.livejournal.com/35007.html>

<sup>4</sup> See the discussion above in Chapter Ten



<sup>5</sup> Bogumił Grott, Wiktor Poliszczuk — historyk przemilczanych zbrodni, '27 Dywizja Wołyńska AK, Biuletyn Informacyjny, nr 1(101), styczeń-marzec 2009 Warszawa, s. 27: : <http://ien.pl/index.php/archives/1217>

<sup>6</sup> "Zapomnijcie o Giedroyciu: Polacy, Ukraińcy, IPN." *Gazeta Wyborcza* May 24, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Parośla is in the Lublin region of Poland almost at the border of Belarus and a little north of the border with Ukraine. The tiny monument can be seen at the Polish Wikipedia page:

[http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zbrodnia\\_w\\_Parośli\\_I](http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zbrodnia_w_Parośli_I)

<sup>8</sup> Ludobójstwo dokonane przez nacjonalistów ukraińskich na ludności polskiej Wołynia 1939-1945 (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo "von Borowiecky" 2000), in two volumes, 1433 pages in length. Motyka's work has been criticized as apologetic towards the Ukrainian Nationalists. See Zbigniew Małyszczycycki, Motykowanie historii:

<http://chomikuj.pl/henrypk/Galeria/KRESY/Motykovanie+historii.pdf> Russian translation, Мотыкование истории: <http://poacher.borda.ru/?1-11-0-00000016-000-0-0>

<sup>9</sup> At [http://electronicmuseum.ca/Poland-WW2/ukrainian\\_insurgent\\_atrocities/ua.html](http://electronicmuseum.ca/Poland-WW2/ukrainian_insurgent_atrocities/ua.html) The Russian language Wikipedia page is helpful as an introduction: [http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Волинская\\_резня](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Волинская_резня)

<sup>10</sup> See Chapter 13 — Appendix at <http://tinurl.com/blood-lies-appendix-ch13>

<sup>11</sup> In reality, as we have argued earlier in this book, the "official version" of the Katyn massacre cannot possibly be true — a fact that anticommunists try to hide at any cost. See also Furr, Official Version

<sup>12</sup> Pykhalov, Igor'. Mestechkovye strasti v chechnskikh gorakh. In his book (with A. Diukov), *Velikaia obolgannaia voina*, 2, chapter 2. It may be read online (in Russian) here:

[http://militera.lib.ru/research/pyhalov\\_dukov/02.html](http://militera.lib.ru/research/pyhalov_dukov/02.html) Nikita Mendkovich,

"Khaibakhs кое delo", in the online history journal *Aktual'naia Istoriia* (Current History): <http://actualhistory.ru/poilemics-haibach>

<sup>13</sup> N.F. Bugai and A.M. Gonov. "The Forced Evacuation of the Chechens and the Ingush." *Russian Studies in History*, vol.41, no.2, Fall 2002, pp.43-61, at p.56

<sup>14</sup> An associate of the Hoover Institution, Naimark is an ideological anticommunist, so he writes: "Anyone who resisted was shot." There is no evidence for this assertion. It is likely that those who offered *armed* resistance were shot, but they were few.

<sup>15</sup> Wheatcroft, "The Soviet Famine of 1946-1947, the Weather and Human Agency in Historical Perspective." *Europe-Asia Studies* 64:6 (2012), 1004.

<sup>16</sup> Nikolai F. Bougai. *The Deportation of Peoples in the Soviet Union*. New York: Nova Science Publishers, 1996, page 98.

<sup>17</sup> Н.Ф. Бугай. "К вопросу о депортации народов СССР в 30-40 годах." *История СССР* 1989 (6), 135-144.

<sup>18</sup> Because of the excerpted nature of the document Bugai cites it is impossible to be certain what the period of time is.

<sup>19</sup> "Historians and the Cold War," *History Review* December 2000.

## **Chapter 14. *Snyder's Accusations of Soviet Anti-Semitism in Bloodlands Chapter 11***

### **What is the Truth?**

И вдруг на этом обсуждении премий Сталин, обращаясь к членам Политбюро и говорит:

- У нас в ЦК антисемиты завелись. Это безобразие!

- *Так это было. Тихон Хренников о времени и о себе.* М.: «Музыка» 1994, с. 179.

Translated:

And suddenly during this discussion of the prizes Stalin turned towards the members of the Politburo and said:

- Anti-Semites have turned up in our Central Committee. It is a disgrace!

- *Thus it Was. Tikhon Khrennikov about His Times and Himself.* Moscow: "Muzyka" 1994, p. 179.

### **The Lie That Stalin Was Anti-Semitic**

Snyder's book is subtitled "Europe Between Hitler and Stalin." He speaks of "twelve years, between 1933 and 1945, while both Hitler and Stalin were in power." (vii) Hitler committed suicide in April 1945.

So why does Snyder have a chapter that deals with events in the USSR from 1948 to 1952, when Hitler was long dead? The reason, presumably, is that Snyder cannot find any anti-Semitism by Stalin, the Soviet government, or pro-Soviet forces like the Polish communist-led People's Army (Armia Ludowa, AL). On the contrary: all the anti-Semitism between 1933 and 1945, aside from the Nazis, was by anticommunist forces like the

Polish government in exile, its underground Home Army and Ukrainian nationalists. And their anti-Semitism was immense!

Snyder supports, and is supported by, the political forces in present-day Poland and Ukraine that are fiercely anticommunist — Snyder approves of that — but are also anti-Semitic in their unguarded moments. They revere and honour the anticommunist forces of the war and post-war period — but these forces too were violently anti-Semitic. Snyder obviously cannot document any Soviet anti-Semitism before 1945 or he would have done it. So Snyder tries hard to find anti-Semitic acts by Stalin and the Soviet leadership after 1945, even though this violates the parameters Snyder himself has chosen for his book.

The final chapter in Snyder's book is titled "Stalinist Anti-Semitism." If one is going to sustain a comparison between Hitler and Stalin, as Snyder wishes to do, then it's important to claim, somehow or other, that Stalin was anti-Semitic. This is not easy to do, as the quotation from composer Tikhon Khrennikov's memoirs above shows. There is much evidence that Stalin vigorously opposed anti-Semitism. There is no evidence that Stalin was anti-Semitic and, consequently, no reason to think that he was. But Snyder tries to "square the circle" anyway. We examine his logical contortions and falsifications in the present chapter.

### **Did Stalin Murder Solomon Mikhoels?**

Snyder introduces the chapter as follows:

In January 1948, Stalin was killing a Jew. Solomon Mikhoels, the chairman of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and the director of the Moscow Yiddish Theatre, had been sent to Minsk to judge a play for the Stalin Prize. Once arrived, he was invited to the country house of the head of the Soviet Belarusian state police, Lavrenty Tsanava, who had him murdered, along with an inconvenient witness. Mikhoels's body, crushed by a truck, was left on a quiet street. (339)

This is false. Stalin did not order Mikhoels to be murdered. The documents purporting to "prove" this are crude forgeries. This forgery has been

discussed in Russia for over a decade. Iurii Mukhin discussed the evidence of a forgery in *Ubiystvo Stalina i Beria* (2002). Mukhin has written some absurdities in his day, but his discussion of the "Mikhoels murder documents" is very cogent. Zhores Medvedev, a Soviet dissident with strong anti-Stalin and anticommunist credentials, wrote that he does not believe the story to be true either.<sup>1</sup> Snyder shows no familiarity with this issue whatsoever.<sup>2</sup>

### **Did Stalin's Daughter Overhear Stalin "Covering Up" Mikhoel's Murder?**

Svetlana Allilueva, Stalin's daughter, overheard her father arranging the cover story for the murder with Tsanova: "car accident." (340)

Here Snyder is misleading his readers by significant omission. In 1966 Svetlana Allilueva, Joseph Stalin's only daughter, emigrated from the USSR to the West. In her first book of memoirs, *Twenty Letters to a Friend*, published in 1967, a year after her arrival, she wrote:

A new wave of arrests got under way at the end of 1948... Lozovsky was arrested, and Mikhoels was killed, pg. 196<sup>3</sup>

A footnote to this passage in the English edition (p. 245) states that Mikhoels "died in mysterious circumstances" in 1948.

About a year later Allilueva published a second volume of memoirs, *Only One Year* (1969). Here she tells a very different story:

One day, in father's dacha, during one of my rare meetings with him, I entered his room when he was speaking to someone on the telephone. Something was being reported to him and he was listening. Then, as a summary of the conversation, he said, "Well, it's an automobile accident." I remember so well the way he said it: not a question but an answer, an assertion. He wasn't asking; he was suggesting: "an automobile accident." When he got through, he greeted me; and a little later he said: "Mikhoels was killed in an automobile accident." (p. 154)

Had Stalin's daughter somehow "forgotten" to mention this detail in her earlier account? That can hardly be the case. People do not forget details like the involvement of their father in a murder. Nor can people who hear only one side of a phone conversation tell whether a person making a statement is instructing someone else, or repeating a fact just heard from the other party.

One thing is clear: in 1967 Allilueva did not yet "know" that Mikhoels had been murdered at all, much less that it was her father who had murdered him. Most likely she had been "coached" during the year between the two books. Her second volume was written after moving to the US and befriending several virulent anticommunists, some of whom she thanks in the book. No doubt it was they who "convinced" her to put a different interpretation on what she had heard her father say in 1948.

Despite its obvious lack of validity as evidence some writers, e.g. Joshua Rubenstein and Vladimir P. Naumov,<sup>4</sup> Snyder among them, still cite Allilueva's statement from *Only One Year* while omitting any mention of her earlier statement in *Twenty Letters To A Friend*. To do so is dishonesty of a high order: propaganda, not scholarship.

### **Did Stalin Say Russians Had Been the War's Greatest Victims?**

Given the centrality of the Second World War to the experience of all east Europeans, in the USSR and in the new satellite states, everyone in the new communist Europe would have to understand that the Russian nation had struggled and suffered like no other. Russians would have to be the greatest victors and the greatest victims, now and forever. (347)

Snyder does not even bother to cite any evidence to support this false statement.

### **Was the Number of Soviet Jews Killed by the Germans a "State Secret"?**

The number of Jews killed by the Germans in the Soviet Union was a state secret. (342)

This statement is also false, and again Snyder does not cite any evidence to support it. (Snyder's footnote to the paragraph that begins with this statement is also false — he vastly understates the number of Soviet citizens killed in the war. We omit this here.)

### **Did the Soviets Try to Hide the Fact of Collaboration with the Germans?**

It was unmentionable that Soviet citizens had staffed Treblinka, Sobibór, and Bełżec. That the Germans needed collaborators, and found them, is not surprising. But collaboration undermined the myth of a united Soviet population defending the honor of the fatherland by resisting the hated fascist invader. (342-3)

Another false statement, and again Snyder cites no evidence. There was no "myth of a united Soviet population..." Trials of collaborators continued throughout the Soviet period, as did prosecutions of, and public attacks upon, Ukrainian and other nationalists who aided the Nazis and who found safe haven in the West.

### **"Some" Nationalist Partisans Were Anti-Semitic?**

In the Baltics and Ukraine and Poland, some partisans were openly anti-Semitic, and continued to use the Nazi tactic of associating Soviet power with Jewry. (344; no reference given.)

This is a vast understatement: Baltic and Ukrainian nationalists were *uniformly* anti-Semitic. During the German occupation they participated in, and often initiated, mass murders of Jewish civilians, often outdoing the Germans in gruesome sadism. The same was true of most Polish nationalists, including the Home Army.

### **Polish Anti-Semitism**

Pre-war Polish society was perhaps the most anti-Semitic society in the world. Polish Jews were not considered "Poles" and were subject to many kinds of discrimination. The Polish Catholic church urged discrimination against Jews, the boycott of Jewish businesses, etc.

During the war Polish civilians carried out many murderous pogroms against Jews. Often the Germans had nothing to do with these attacks. Jewish memoirs repeatedly record that Polish Jews who left the ghettos were more afraid of Poles than they were of Germans. Polish civilians robbed, beat, and murdered Jews, and turned them in to the Germans. This last was very important as Germans were not familiar with the clues of Jewish identity and often could not tell Polish Jews from Polish non-Jews. Poles were much more sensitive to these differences and could use their ability to blackmail Jews. *Szmalcownictwo*, the blackmailing by Polish civilians of Jews who managed to get outside the ghetto, took place everywhere.<sup>5</sup>

Polish civilians killed Jews to gain favor with the Germans, but also to steal their victims' possessions — homes, lands, belongings, money, clothes — or simply because they were Jews. Sometimes refined forms of torture were used. Jews were burned to death; Jewish women and girls were often raped before being killed, and so on.

Polish nationalists are fond of pointing out the fact that Israel has named more Poles as "Righteous Among the Nations" — persons who helped Jews during the war — than people of any other nationality. But many Poles who saved Jews during the war were hounded and persecuted by their Polish neighbors and other Poles who learned that they had helped to save Jews. Nationalist historians avoid this issues. Dariusz Libionka, a researcher at the Polish Center for Holocaust Research (Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów) whose work Snyder cites in *Bloodlands*, writes:

Jak wspomina Michał Borwicz, dyrektor Żydowskiej Komisji Historycznej w Krakowie, po wojnie ukrywający Żydów robili wszystko, aby ich "zbrodnia" nie została ujawniona:

Zaraz po ukazaniu się pierwszego ŻKH (Dokumenty i zbrodnie męczeństwa) zaczęły się wizyty paradoksalne. Ludzie cytowani



po nazwisku (i to właśnie dobroczyńcy!) przychodzili przygnębieni, z wyrzuytami: że publikując ich "zbrodnię", [...] wydajemy ich na pastwę zemsty sąsiadów ... i nie tylko sąsiadów. Z kolei z podobnymi pretensjami zaczęli się zjawiać niektórzy uratowani Żydzi, wysłani do nas przez swoich dobroczyńców. Inni jeszcze (autorzy zeznań spisanych już, lecz na razie jeszcze nie ogłaszania w przyszłości [...]). Staaliśmy, ja i moi współpracownicy, przed kwadraturą koła.

Translated:

Michael Borwicz, director of the Jewish Historical Commission in Krakow, said that after the war those who had hidden Jews did everything they could to prevent their "crime" from being disclosed:

Immediately after the release of the first ZKH (Documents and crimes of martyrdom) there began to occur paradoxical visits. People quoted by name (and mainly the benefactors [those who had rescued Jews]!) arrived depressed, with reproaches: that by publishing their "crime," [...] we were delivering them to the mercy of the revenge of their neighbors ... and not only of their neighbors. In turn, with similar claims there began to unexpectedly appear some rescued Jews, sent to us by their benefactors. Still others (authors of written testimony but at that time as yet not published) came preventively, to prohibit their publication in the future [...]. I and my colleagues were faced with the problem of squaring the circle [i.e. of publishing the names of those who had saved Jews, and so exposing them to danger from other Poles, or of not publishing their names, and so leaving their benevolence unrecognized].<sup>6</sup>

A Polish woman who saved Jews, Marysia Michalska, told one of those she was hiding, that she had a "guilty conscience" for helping her Jewish wards:

Byli też i tacy, którzy z powodów religijnych uważali, że nam, Żydom, wstyd pomagać. Na przykład Marysia Michalska, osoba dosyć kulturalna, lecz przesadnie pobożna, zawsze miała wyrzuty sumienia,

że nam udzieliła pomocy ... w rozmowie ze mną niejednokrotnie zaznaczała, że modli się, by Bóg jej nie ukarał za to, że nam pomaga.

Translated:

There were also those who, for religious reasons thought that it was shameful to help us Jews. For example, Mary Michalska, a quite cultured person but overly pious, always had a guilty conscience that she had provided assistance to us ... in conversation with me she repeatedly stressed that she was praying that God would not punish her for having helped us.

- Leokadia Schmidt, *Cudem przeżyliśmy czas zagłady* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1983), 160.

Michalska evidently got the idea that helping Jews was sinful from the anti-Semitic Polish Roman Catholic Church, whose influence intensified the ideological anti-Semitism of the Polish elites. After the war many Jews who returned to their homes, shops, and businesses found them occupied by Poles who refused to leave. Many were murdered by their Polish neighbors.

The anticommunist Polish underground that carried out terrorist activity for years after the war also targeted Jews as well as Soviet soldiers and officials, Polish communists, and anyone whom they deemed unpatriotic. Jewish survivors record Home Army units after the war stopping trains, taking the Jewish passengers off and shooting them.

The Center for Holocaust Research (Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów) in Warsaw has published many books and journal articles detailing the horrific acts of anti-Semitic violence by Polish civilians and by the Home Army. Polish-American professor Jan Tomasz Gross, a highly anticommunist author, has published a number of books in English detailing Polish anti-Semitism during and after the war that have brought this question to the attention of persons who are not specialists in Polish history.

A recent and very useful account drawn from the works of the Centrum, of Gross, of memoirs of Polish Jews, and other sources, is by Stefan Zgliczyński, *Jac Polacy Niemcom Żydów Mordować Pomagali* — "How

Poles Helped Germans Murder Jews." The title is misleading, however, as most of the accounts in the book deal with Poles, both partisans and civilians, murdering Jews on their own initiative without any encouragement or assistance, much less orders, from Germans.

Zgliczyński, who is the editor of the Polish edition of the French journal *Le monde diplomatique*, concludes his book with this damning statement:

Dlatego też logika każe zadać pytanie: z kim przede wszystkim walczyli Polacy podczas ostatniej wojny — z okupantem, czy też ze swoimi żydowskimi sąsiadami i współobywatelami?

Translated:

Therefore, logic forces us to ask the question: against whom, above all, did Poles fight during the last war — against the occupier or also against their Jewish neighbors and fellow citizens? (265)

Zgliczyński's book serves as an accessible introduction to the large body of research by scholars from the Centrum and of other works such as memoir literature that is available only in Polish. Someone really should translate it.

Most Jews in the former "Kresy," as Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine were called by the Polish imperialists, welcomed the Red Army enthusiastically. There were many Jews in the Red Army, the NKVD (Soviet political police) and the Soviet administrative organs. Likewise, Jewish escapees from the ghettos and Jewish partisans joined the Soviet-backed People's Army (AL), while the Home Army rejected them at best and often murdered them. After the war the communist administration arrested, tried, and punished Poles who participated in the pogroms against Jews.

Polish nationalists today do their best to minimize Polish anti-Semitism by ignoring it; by falsely claiming that the Germans "instigated" pogroms by Polish civilians; or by blaming the Jews themselves for being "disloyal" to Poland. Polish nationalists never discuss the official racism against Jews by the prewar Polish government; the role of the Polish schools and Roman Catholic church leadership in actively promoting anti-Semitic ideas; or the admiration of many in the Polish elite for Adolf Hitler's anti-Jewish

campaigns. Why *any* Polish Jews should have been loyal to the racist Polish state is the real question, never explained.

Discussion of the official anti-Semitism under the Second Polish Republic, in the Home Army and other Polish formations during and after the war, and of the phenomenal level of anti-Semitism among the Polish population makes the Soviet Union and communist Poles look very good by comparison.

### **Who Was Harmed By Soviet "Occupation"?**

No Soviet account of the war could note one of its central facts:  
German and Soviet together was worse than German occupation alone.  
(344)

This has to be one of the most cynical statements in this highly dishonest book. Snyder makes no argument and cites no evidence to support it. The reality is just the opposite: German and Soviet occupation was far, far better than German occupation alone. Had the Soviets not driven the Germans out, the Germans would have killed not just the millions of Poles and Soviet citizens they did kill, but almost all of them. That was Hitler's expressed aim.

The Soviet retaking of areas formerly occupied by the Germans was certainly far better for Jews, communists, and all those who were fighting or resisting the German occupation. The Red Army saved the majority of Poles, Belorussians, Ukrainians, Russians and Jews from annihilation or at best slave labor (See the Nazi "[Generalplan Ost](#)"). For example, most of the members of the anticommunist Home Army surrendered in early 1945 when ordered to do so by the London Polish government, and either lived peacefully in postwar Poland or chose to emigrate. Had the Red Army not liberated Poland the Germans would eventually have captured and killed them.

In the article cited previously Grzegorz Motyka, an anticommunist and a researcher whose work Snyder recommends, says that it was the Red Army that stopped the pro-Nazi Ukrainian Nationalists from slaughtering even

more Polish citizens and that thousands of Poles joined the pro-Soviet partisan movement as a result.

Of course, the Soviet occupation was indeed "worse" for some people. For Poles who were prosecuted for anti-Semitic and/or anticommunist crimes. For those who had collaborated with the Germans — though it is not clear how many of even these Poles would have survived if Germany had won the war. For those who fought in or supported the underground anticommunist terrorist movements.

In short, the Soviet occupation was worse for fascists, anti-Semites, and those who fought for the restoration of capitalism. The political tendency of *Bloodlands* is aimed to please these very forces, who are honored as "freedom fighters" by today's nationalists in Poland, the Baltics, Ukraine, and to a lesser extent in Belarus.

### **"The Big Lie" Yet Again: "Soviet Invasion of Poland," "Soviet Alliance with Germany"**

The whole Soviet idea of the Great Patriotic War was premised on the view that the war began in 1941, when Germany invaded the USSR, not in 1939, when Germany and the Soviet Union together invaded Poland. In other words, in the official story, the territories absorbed as a result of Soviet aggression in 1939 had to be considered as somehow always having been Soviet, rather than as the booty of a war that Stalin helped Hitler to begin. Otherwise the Soviet Union would figure as one of the aggressors, which was obviously unacceptable. (344; no reference given)

And:

The Soviet citizens who suffered most in the war had been brought by force under Soviet rule right before the Germans came — as a result of a Soviet alliance with Nazi Germany...

Also to be forgotten was that the Soviet Union had been allied to Nazi Germany when the war began in 1939... (345)

This falsehood is crucial to Snyder's thesis. We have thoroughly discussed it earlier in the present book. We have shown exhaustively in previous chapters that there was no "alliance" with Nazi Germany and no "Soviet aggression." Apparently Snyder thinks that his readers will believe this falsehood if he repeats it often enough. This is the technique of mind-numbing repetition called "the Big Lie" that Adolf Hitler advocated in *Mein Kampf*.

The following sentence begs for a little more comment:

...in the official story, the territories absorbed as a result of Soviet aggression in 1939 had to be considered as somehow always having been Soviet, rather than as the booty of a war that Stalin had helped Hitler to begin.

Snyder is referring to Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia, which had been "the booty of a war" all right — the booty of the Polish imperialist invasion of Russia in 1919-1921. Poland had taken these lands by force then, and lost them again in 1939. Evidently Snyder hopes that his readers will be ignorant of this history.

And of course it was not Stalin who had "helped Hitler to begin" the war. The British, French, and Polish governments did that. They encouraged Hitler's aggression with the Munich Accord. Then they torpedoed collective security against Hitler despite the Soviets' struggle to convince them of its necessity. We have discussed this, with evidence, in previous chapters.

### **Was There Official Anti-Semitism in the USSR After World War 2?**

In late 1948 and early 1949, public life in the Soviet Union veered toward anti-Semitism. The new line was set, indirectly but discernibly, by *Pravda* on 28 January 1949. An article on "unpatriotic theater critics," who were "bearers of stateless cosmopolitanism," began a campaign of denunciation of Jews in every sphere of professional life. *Pravda* purged itself of Jews in early March. Jewish officers were cashiered from the Red Army and Jewish activists removed from leadership positions in the communist party. ...Jewish writers who had

taken an interest in Yiddish culture or in the German murder of Jews found themselves under arrest. As Grossman recalled, "Throughout the whole of the USSR it seemed that only Jews thieved and took bribes, only Jews were criminally indifferent towards the sufferings of the sick, and only Jews published vicious or badly written books." (348)

Sources (n. 12 p. 502):

\* "On the *Pravda* article, see Kostyrchenko, *Shadows*, 152."

\* "On the decreased number of Jews in high party positions (thirteen percent to four percent from 1945 to 1952), see Kostyrchenko, *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitizm*, 352."

\* "The Grossman quotation is from Chandler's translation of *Everything Flows*.

The *Pravda* editorial discussed by Kostyrchenko was written by Aleksandr A. Fadeev, General Secretary of the Writers Union, and David I. Zaslavskii, a longtime editor of *Pravda* and of Jewish background himself. The article is [available online](#) at a [number of places](#). Many, though not all, of the theatre critics who are criticized in it do have recognizably Jewish names. But that in itself does not make the article anti-Semitic, despite the claims of Kostyrchenko and others. It's impossible to criticize anyone without mentioning that person's name. It is not anti-Semitic to criticize a Jewish writer. And the criticism in the *Pravda* editorial is not anti-Semitic at all. Rather, it is directed against criticism that belittled Soviet culture in comparison to Western European culture.

By 1952 the per centage of persons "of Jewish origin" in Party organizations had indeed declined to approximately the per centage of Jews in the Soviet population (the correct reference is to the table in Kostyrchenko, *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitizm* pp. 353-355). But this is not evidence of anti-Semitism either. Previously the percentage of Jews in high positions in the Party and cultural spheres had been two or more times their proportion in the population. The large-scale *overrepresentation* of Jews in these fields was only possible if other nationalities were seriously

*underrepresented*. Reducing the percentage of Jews was inevitable as the percentage of other nationalities was increased.

It was also inevitable that there would be an increase in anti-Semitism in the USSR after the war. Tens of millions of Soviet citizens had lived for several years under German occupation and been subject to an unprecedented barrage of Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda. Nationalists among the Baltic, Belorussian, and Ukrainian population had promoted anti-Semitism too, often more vehemently than the Germans did. This was bound to leave its mark on postwar Soviet society. But Snyder is not discussing *this* anti-Semitism.

### **Stalin Opposed Anti-Semitism**

In the paragraph cited above, Snyder writes:

A few dozen Jewish poets and novelists who used Russian literary pseudonyms found their real or prior names published in parentheses.  
(348)

This is true — and it was Stalin himself who reacted vehemently against it. Stalin opposed the publication of Jewish names after the "pen" names of authors. Noted Soviet author, war correspondent, and editor of literary journals Konstantin Simonov records the following:

— Почему Мальцев, а в скобках стоит Ровинский? В чем дело? До каких пор это будет продолжаться? В прошлом году уже говорили на эту тему, запретили представлять на премию, указывая двойные фамилии. Зачем это делается? Зачем пишется двойная фамилия? Если человек избрал себе литературный псевдоним — это его право, не будем уже говорить ни о чем другом, просто об элементарном приличии. Человек имеет право писать под тем псевдонимом, который он себе избрал. Но, видимо, кому-то приятно подчеркнуть, что у этого человека двойная фамилия, подчеркнуть, что это еврей. Зачем это подчеркивать? Зачем это делать? Зачем насаждать антисемитизм? Кому это надо? Человека надо писать под той фамилией, под которой он себя пишет сам.



Человек хочет иметь псевдоним. Он себя ощущает так, как это для него самого естественно. Зачем же его тянуть, тащить назад?<sup>7</sup>

Translated:

Why 'Mal'tsev', and then 'Rovinskii' in parentheses? What's going on here? How long is this going to continue? ... Why is this being done? We already spoke about this last year, forbidding double last names in works presented for the [Stalin] prize. Why write a double last name? If a person has chose a literary pseudonym — that's his right. We're not speaking of anything other than elementary decency. A person has the right to write under a pseudonym he has chosen for himself. But, obviously, somebody wants to emphasize that this person has a double name, to emphasize that he is a Jew. Why emphasize that? Why do that? Why spread anti-Semitism? Who benefits from that? We must write down a person with the surname that the person himself has chosen. A person wishes to have a pseudonym; he himself feels that this is natural for him. So why pull him, drag him back?

Simonov's book and this quotation are well known to students of Soviet history. If Snyder is ignorant of it he is unqualified to write about the subject. If he does know about it but kept it from his readers he is being deliberately dishonest. Stalin made other remarks after the war showing that he personally opposed anti-Semitism.

Snyder cites no evidence that "Jewish officers were dismissed from the Red Army" because they were Jewish or that "Jewish writers... found themselves under arrest." These are serious allegations. If they were made against, say, the American government we would demand evidence. Perhaps Snyder is counting on reflexive, "knee-jerk" anti-Stalinism among his readers to blind them to the absence of any evidence?

The Grossman quotation is from a novel written years after Stalin's death. A quotation from a novel is not documentation of an historical fact. Grossman himself was a tragic case of the consequences of Khrushchev's lies about Stalin and the Stalin years. And the reader should be clear on this point: Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" was deliberately falsified from beginning to end. Grossman believed these slanders and incorporated Khrushchev's false

history of the USSR into the book Snyder cites, *Everything Flows (Vsiotechiot)*. In it the protagonist accepts Khrushchev's false "revelations" about the Stalin years at face value and decides that all the years of communism have been a cruel hoax, the defendants in the Moscow Trials innocent, and so forth.<sup>8</sup>

Grossman's translator, Robert Chandler, believes this false history himself and has said that Grossman's novels are important "as history." Quite the opposite is the case. Grossman believed Khrushchev's lies and built his novel around them. Many people would conclude that this ruins Grossman's novel, for the novel is constructed entirely around Khrushchev's politics. If he had known Khrushchev's "revelations" were lies Grossman would never have written this novel in the first place! But many more people than just Grossman were duped and disillusioned by Khrushchev's lies.

Snyder writes:

Jews across the Soviet Union were in a state of distress. The MGB reported the anxieties of the Jews in Soviet Ukraine, who understood that the policy must come from the top, and worried that "no one can say what form this is going to take." Only five years had passed since the end of the German occupation. For that matter, only eleven years had passed since the end of the Great Terror. (348)

Source (n. 13 p. 502): "... For the MGB report, see Kostyrchenko, *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitizm*, 327."

The letter in question does indeed show that some Jewish nationalists in the Western Ukrainian city of Chernovtsy reacted negatively to the line on Soviet patriotism of the anti-cosmopolitan campaign. However, according to the letter, not all the Jewish figures quoted considered it anti-Semitic. Some of them simply thought it was anti-Marxist. Benjamin Pinkus, Professor of Jewish History at the Ben-Gurion University in Israel, states that: "...It is important to emphasise that in these attacks [the anti-cosmopolitanism campaign] there was no anti-Jewish tone, either explicitly or implicitly."<sup>9</sup>

## The "Berlin Blockade"

Snyder gives the following brief account of the "Berlin Blockade":

The western Allies had announced that they would introduce a new German currency, the Deutschmark, in the zones they controlled. The Soviets blockaded West Berlin, with the evident goal of forcing West Berliners to accept supplies from the Soviets, and thus accept Soviet control of their society. The Americans then undertook to supply the isolated city by air, which Moscow claimed could never work. In May 1949, the Soviets had to give up their blockade. The Americans, along with the British, proved capable of supplying thousands of tons of supplies by air every day. In this one action, goodwill, prosperity, and power were all on display. (349)

This is false. "Soviet control of their society" was not at all the Soviet "goal." Even Snyder does not claim he can demonstrate this, calling it "the evident goal." Snyder has distorted what the Berlin crisis was all about. Historian Geoffrey Roberts describes it as follows:

Although termed a "blockade" by the West, the Soviet action consisted of a limited set of restrictions on land access to the Western sectors of Berlin from West Germany. It did not preclude supplies to West Berlin from the Soviet zone of occupation, which continued to trickle into the city, nor was air access prohibited — hence the famous airlift.

The goal of Stalin's pressure tactics was to force the Western allies to rescind their London communiqué and return to the CFM [Council of Foreign Ministers] negotiating forum. Stalin was quite frank about his aim in two conversations he held with the British, French, and American ambassadors in August 1948. In January 1949 Stalin made this position public when he agreed with a Western interviewer that the blockade would be lifted if the West agreed to convene another CFM session devoted to the German question. In May 1949 the blockade was lifted when the Western powers agreed to reconvene the CFM in Paris.<sup>10</sup>

Snyder does not mention the fact that it was the Soviet Union that offered to reunite Germany — something all Germans wanted — but the Western Allies refused.

### **Snyder Falsifies — Again — About Litvinov's Dismissal**

He [Molotov] had been appointed to the job [Soviet Foreign Minister] in 1939, in part because he (unlike his predecessor Litvinov) was not Jewish, and Stalin had then needed someone with whom Hitler would negotiate. (351)

We have exposed this falsehood in a previous chapter. There is no evidence to support it. It seems that Molotov was appointed because Stalin wanted desperately to conclude a treaty for mutual defense not with Hitler but with the West, and Molotov was the person closest to him.

It was very dangerous to be a Jew in postwar Poland — though no more so than to be a Ukrainian or a German or a Pole in the anti-communist underground. (352)

This is a striking admission by Snyder, though he appears to be unaware he has made it. Snyder is comparing the situation of Jewish civilians, who he admits were subject to murderous anti-Semitic pogroms by Poles in Poland, to armed terrorists who were of course being hunted by the police.

Many of these terrorists had collaborated with the Germans — some Home Army men had done this, as had virtually all the Ukrainians and Germans in what Snyder calls "the anti-communist underground." Many of them had participated in the Holocaust and/or themselves taken part in the murder of Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian civilians. It was right that it be "dangerous" for them, just as it was wrong that there was so much Polish anti-Semitism that it was dangerous for Jews in Poland.

In this passage and in fact throughout *Bloodlands* Snyder is clearly doing propaganda work for — "rehabilitating" — pro-Nazi, anti-Semitic forces in Eastern Europe who are considered "heroes" by today's right-wing Eastern

European nationalists. Of course these forces were also anti-Soviet, which is the reason Snyder minimizes their crimes.

In 2013 Poland declared a holiday in honor of the "Doomed Soldiers" (in Polish, „Żołnierze wyklęci") of the Polish anticommunist underground, proclaiming them to be "heroes." A Ukrainian newspaper has this to say about them:

"Прокляті солдати": настав час бочити героїв такими, якими вони були

Парламент Польщі підтримав надання статусу національного свята дню пам'яті т.зв. "проклятих солдатів" — учасників антирадянського збройного підпілля в 1940-1950-ті рр. Серед них є і ті, хто відверто співпрацював з нацистами, і ті, хто по-звірчому вбивав мирних українців.<sup>11</sup>

Translated:

"Doomed Soldiers" [more accurately, "damned soldiers"] — The Time Has Come to See These Heroes As They Really Were

The Parliament of Poland had supported the proposal for the status of a national holiday to the day of memory of the so-called "Doomed Soldiers" — the participants in the anti-Soviet armed underground of the 1940s and 1950s. Among them are those who openly collaborated with the Nazis and those who viciously killed peaceful Ukrainians.

Snyder does not mention the fact that the Soviets and pro-Soviet Poles actively persecuted anti-Semites. For example, the perpetrators of the murderous pogrom of Jews in Kielce, Poland in July 1946 were captured, tried, convicted, and executed within a month of their crime.

### **Did the Polish Communists Claim that Only Communists Led the Warsaw Ghetto Revolt?**

All resistance to fascism was by definition led by communists; if it was not led by communists, then it was not resistance. The history of

the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943 had to be rewritten such that communists could be seen as leading Polish Jews — just as they were supposedly leading the Polish anti-Nazi resistance generally. In the politically acceptable history of the Second World War, the resistance in the ghetto had little to do with the mass murder of Jews, and much to do with the courage of communists. This fundamental shift of emphasis obscured the Jewish experience of the war, as the Holocaust became nothing more than an instance of fascism. It was precisely Jewish communists who had to develop and communicate these misrepresentations, so that they could not be charged with attending to Jewish rather than Polish goals. In order to seem like plausible Polish communist leaders, Jewish communists had to delete from history the single most important example of Jews resisting Nazis from Jewish motivations. The bait in Stalin's political trap was left by Hitler. (322)

Source (n. 22 p. 502): Shore, "Język," 60.

This is contradicted by Snyder's own source. According to Marci Shore Jewish historians did not "delete" the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising from history but continued to celebrate it every year while downplaying the role of Zionists and exaggerating that of the Communists.

Shore, "Język," 60:

W ten sposób zakończyła się pewna epoka. Co roku komuniści — z Zachariaszem na czele — obchodzili rocznicę powstania. Nie było już żadnej wzmianki o syjonistach. Generalnie chodziło tu o proces, w którym komuniści żydowscy zdradzali syjonistyczną lewicę, swoich byłych towarzyszy.

Translated:

Thus ended an era. Every year the communists, with Zacharias in charge, celebrated the anniversary. There was no longer any mention of Zionists. Generally, this meant a process in which Jewish Communists betrayed the Zionist left, their former comrades.

.....

Po wyjedzie Hermana i innych syjonistów, Ber Mark stał się autorem oficjalnej historii powstania w getcie warszawskim. Według cenzora: "Tow. Markowi udało się przeprowadzić w swej pracy słuszną polityczno-ideologiczną linię ... Tow. Mark przeprowadza w swej pracy tę linię zasadniczą, że jedyną siłę, która rzuciła hasło walki, że jedynym czynnikiem, który zorganizował i kierował ruchem oporu w getcie — była PPR i GL."

Translated:

After the departure of Herman and other Zionists, Ber Mark was the author of the official history of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. According to the censor: "Comrade. Mark carried out in his work the legitimate political and ideological line ... Comrade. Mark carries out in his work in this line of principle that the only force which threw the signal for the fight, that the only factor that organized and directed resistance in the Ghetto, was the PPR and the GL [the Polish Workers Party and the Gardia Ludowa, communist groups]."

But there is reason to doubt the truth of Shore's statement here. Ber Mark's official history, *Powstanie w getcie warszawskim*, published in Polish in 1959, was published in English translation in 1975. Here are two short passages from the early pages of that book, *Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto*:

Its [the Anti-Fascist Bloc's] member bodies were the Polish Workers Party (P.P.R.), Hashomer Hatzair, Left and Right Labor Zionists, and Hechalutz. (5)

Commander-in-chief [of the Jewish Fighting Organization] was [Mordechai] Anielewicz, a twenty-four-year-old Hashomer Hatzair activist. Other members were Hersz Berlinski (Left Labor Zionist), Marek Edelman (Jewish Labor Bund), Itzhak Cukierman (Hechalutz), and Michal Roisenfeld (Polish Workers Party). (6)

Here is one final passage to show that Mark did not neglect the Zionists in the rest of the book:

In brief, here [at Mila 18] were the mind and heart of the Uprising: the leaderships of the Jewish Fighting Organization, Hashomer Hatzair, and the Communists; plus activists and commanders in D'ror (a Zionist group), the Jewish Labor Bund, and Akiva. (72)

The issue here is not how historically accurate Mark's depiction is. Snyder claims that the postwar communist version of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising portrayed communists as in the lead. Snyder's source Shore claims that Ber Mark wrote that "the only factor that organized and directed resistance in the Ghetto was the PPR and GL." These quotations from Ber Mark's book prove that this is not true. Mark mentions the communists prominently but often mentions Zionist and other non-communist Jewish forces first. Moreover, Mark does not show communists as the leaders of the Uprising, as Shore claims.

Snyder then again claims, without evidence, that Stalin was anti-Semitic:

This was Polish-Jewish Stalinist self-defense from Stalin's own anti-Semitism. (356)

Another blatant falsehood by Snyder. As we have seen and will see again, Stalin was not in the least "anti-Semitic" and Snyder has no evidence that he was.

According to Zhores Medvedev,

Антисемизм Сталина, о котором можно прочитать почти во всех его биографиях, не был ни религиозным, ни этническим, ни бытовым. Он был политическим и проявлялся в форме антисионизма, а не юдофобии.

Translated:

Stalin's anti-Semitism, about which one reads in almost all of his biographies, was not based on religion, or race, or culture. It was political and expressed itself in the form of anti-Zionism, and not of racial anti-Semitism [*iudofobii*]<sup>12</sup>



Here Medvedev takes the position that opposition to Zionism is "anti-Semitic." Of course this is wrong. Many Jews, including Israeli Jews, are strongly anti-Zionist. Medvedev states that there is no evidence that Stalin was anti-Semitic, but anticommunist writers routinely claim that he was. Snyder is one of these.

### **Again Snyder Claims Stalin "Slandered the Home Army and the Warsaw Uprising"**

The associated slander of the Home Army and the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 was an easy labor. Since it had not been led by communists, it could not have been an uprising. Since the Home Army soldiers were not communists, they were reactionaries, acting against the interests of the toiling masses. The Polish patriots who died seeking to liberate their capital were fascists, little better than Hitler. The Home Army, which had fought the Germans with much greater determination than the Polish communists, was a "bespittled dwarf of reaction." (356)

n. 23: This was part of the slogan of one of the more striking propaganda posters, executed by Włodzimierz Zakrzewski.<sup>13</sup>

This is false. The communists never called the fighters of the Warsaw Uprising "fascists" and Snyder cannot cite any evidence that they did so. Furthermore, many communists also fought in the Warsaw Uprising.

As we have discussed in an earlier chapter, it was not only Stalin and the communists, but General Anders, Jan Chiechanowski, and many other anticommunist Poles thought the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 was a "crime." The criminals were the Home Army leadership, not the ordinary fighters. Many other non-communist Poles came to think the same thing, since the Uprising predictably led only to disaster.

There is no question that the Home Army fought to restore prewar Poland, a violent, imperialist regime, racist against Jews, Ukrainians, and Belorussians, and hostile even to the Polish trade union movement. Snyder cites no evidence at all for his claim that the Home Army fought the Germans "with much greater determination than the Polish communists" of

the People's Army. Moreover, here Snyder seems to forget that he has already claimed that the activity of pro-Soviet partisans against the Germans simply brought down German violence upon the local population. To the extent the Home Army fought the Germans their actions would have the same effect.

Snyder omits that the Home Army was conspiring with the German military against communist forces. Nor does he mention that the Home Army hunted down and killed Jews, including Jews who escaped from the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, and collaborated with the Nazis against the Red Army.

### **Should Stalin Have Left Terrorists Alone Because A Few Of Them Had Once Tried to Save Jews?**

Berman, a very intelligent man, understood all of this as well as anyone could, and he brought these premises to their logical conclusions. He presided over a security apparatus that arrested members of the Home Army who had accepted the special assignment of saving Jews. (357)

This is a dishonest statement. Snyder apparently wishes to imply that Polish communist security arrested some Home Army men *because* they had been assigned to save Jews. Snyder does not say this is plain language, because it is untrue. Does he then wish to imply that "accepting the special assignment of saving Jews" should have exempted them from arrest no matter what else they did?

Snyder gives no note or citation of evidence for this statement. He does not tell us the names of any of these Home Army men. But one of them — if not the only one — was Witold Pilecki. Pilecki did indeed struggle to save Jews. But he also remained in post-war Poland as a leader of the violent underground terrorist Home Army which murdered thousands of Poles, Jews, and Soviet citizens.

This is what he was tried and executed for in 1948. No country, capitalist or communist, permits underground terrorists to roam and murder freely.

Zgliczyński's book gives many examples of wartime and, especially, of post-war murders of Jews, communists, Soviet citizens, and others by underground terrorists of the Home Army and the NSZ (Narodowe Siły Zbrojne, "National Armed Forces"). There is at least one book that gives names and details about more than one thousand members and veterans of the pro-communist People's Army (Armia Ludowa, AL) murdered by these underground anticommunist "nationalist" groups *after* the war's end.<sup>14</sup>

### **Snyder Lies About Purge of the Polish Communist Party**

Polish communists who were in power in the late 1940s usually knew, from personal experience, just what had happened to their comrades in the 1930s. Back then, Stalin had sent a signal; Polish communists had duly denounced each other, which led to mass murder, and the end of the party itself. ... (359)

Source (n. 30 p. 503): "This explanation of the absence of a communist blood purge in Poland can be found inter alia in Luks, "Brüche," 47. One Polish communist leader apparently murdered another during the war; this too might have bred caution."

Evidently Snyder has invented this falsehood. There has never been any evidence that Stalin gave such a "signal." Luks, "Brüche," — the correct page reference to it is p. 43, not p. 47 — says nothing about a "signal" from Stalin, about "Polish communists duly denouncing each other," "mass murder," or anything of the kind.

### **The "Doctors' Plot"**

Snyder spends more space on this event than on any other in this chapter. He gets virtually everything wrong, as he has so many times before. It is hard to believe that Snyder has studied the Doctors' Plot himself. He appears to rely instead on the extremely anticommunist and incompetent secondary accounts by Brent and Naumov, and by Arno Lustiger. But Snyder, not they, is responsible for what goes into his book.

Shcherbakov had died the day after he had insisted, against doctors' orders, on taking part in a Victory Day parade. (363)

Source (n. 39 p. 503): "On the Victory Day parade, see Brandenberger, *"Last Crime,"* 193."

Brandenberger simply repeats what Brent/Naumov say: that Shcherbakov ignore the doctors' advice to remain in bed — he had suffered a heart attack on December 1944 — and instead went out to view the Victory Day celebrations and died of another heart attack the next day, May 10, 1945. But neither Brandenberger nor Brent/Naumov cite any evidence for their contention that Shcherbakov ignored the doctors' advice.

A.N. Ponomarev, author of the only full-length biography of Shcherbakov, had access to evidence from the Moscow party archive and from the Shcherbakov family. Ponomarev states that Shcherbakov went to the celebration *with his doctors' permission*:

Вечком (врачи не возрожали) Александр Сергеевич в сопровождении жены приехал с дачи в столицу, побывал на улицах и площадях, порадовался вместе с москвичами долгожданной победе.<sup>15</sup>

Translated:

In the evening (the doctors did not object) Aleksandr Sergeevich together with his wife drove from his dacha to the capital, spent a while on the streets and in the squares, rejoicing together with the Muscovites over the long-awaited victory.

Ponomarev is honest enough to admit that he is not certain about this, since the testimony came a few years later during the investigation of the Doctors' Plot. How, then, can Brandenberger, Brent/Naumov, and Snyder claim *without qualification* that Shcherbakov's doctors *did* object?

In the case of Zhdanov things are clearer, and again Snyder gets them wrong:

Zhdanov, too, had ignored doctors' orders to rest. (363)

This can only be a deliberate falsehood either by Snyder or by his source. Snyder cites the Brent/Naumov book so he must know that even this dishonest book discusses how the doctors in charge of treating Zhdanov allowed him to leave his bed and walk around despite the fact that the consulting cardiologist, Dr. Lidia Timashuk, determined that Zhdanov had suffered a recent heart attack and recommended strict bed rest.

### **There Really Was a "Doctors' Plot Against Zhdanov**

In fact there was indeed a conspiracy among Zhdanov's doctors to mistreat Zhdanov: to deny that he had suffered not just one heart attack but two recent ones and possibly a third the month before; to ignore the diagnosis of Dr. Timashuk, the cardiologist, and therefore to allow Zhdanov to get out of bed. The direct result of this was Zhdanov's death. Gennady Kostyrchenko quotes from Dr. Vinogradov's note to Beria on March 27, 1953:

Все же необходимо признать, что у А.А. Жданова имелся инфаркт, и отрицание его мною, профессорами Василенко, Егоровым, докторами Майоровым и Карпай было с нашей стороны ошибкой. При этом злого умысла в постановке диагноза и метода лечения у нас не было.<sup>16</sup>

Translated:

All the same, it must be admitted that A.A. Zhdanov did have a heart attack and the denial of this fact by myself, professor Vasilenko and Egorov, and doctors Maiorov and Karpai was a mistake on our part. We had no evil intention in making our diagnosis and our treatment.

Brent and Naumov claim to have had access to an even earlier document in which Vinogradov makes the same admission:

On November 18, 1952, Vinogradov was still able to deny a premeditated plot to kill Zhdanov: "I allowed a mistake in the diagnosis that led to grave consequences and then to [Zhdanov's]

death. There was no evil plan in my action ... I want only to repeat that at the basis of this crime, its original source, was medical error that I allowed as a consultant, leading the treatment of A.A. Zhdanov. (Brent/Naumov, 231)

A semi-official [collection of documents](#) cites the following original:

Я признаю, что по моей вине жизнь А.А. Жданова была сокращена. При лечении я допустил ошибку в диагностике, приведшую к тяжелым последствиям, а затем к его смерти. Злого умысла в моих действиях не было.

Translated:

I admit that it was my fault that A.A. Zhdanov's life was shortened. In the course of treating him I made a mistake in diagnosis which led to serious consequences and then to his death. There was no evil intent in my actions.

Therefore there really was a "doctors' plot" against Zhdanov in 1948! Vinogradov admitted that the consulting doctors ignored the findings and recommendation of the cardiologist, Dr. Timashuk. The only question is whether Vinogradov and the others did this, as Vinogradov claimed, to "hide my mistake in order to protect myself and those who had taken part in Zhdanov's treatment," or whether they had deliberately killed Zhdanov.

Understandably, the Soviet investigators had to investigate the latter possibility. The job of policemen is to be suspicious. If medical doctors in the United States today were to make such an admission they would certainly be stripped of their licenses to practice medicine and face criminal prosecution and civil lawsuits.

Snyder must have know this since both Brent/Naumov and Kostyrchenko relate it. Moreover, many of the primary sources, including this document, have been publicly available for years. But Snyder failed to tell his readers the facts about this important question.

**Did Stalin Order the Doctors To Be Beaten in 1952?**

In autumn 1952 several more Soviet doctors were under investigation. None of them had anything to do with Zhdanov or Shcherbakov, but they had treated other Soviet and foreign communist dignitaries before their deaths. One of them was Stalin's personal doctor, who had advised him to retire in early 1952. At Stalin's express and repeated orders, these people were beaten terribly... (365)

Source (n. 46 p. 503): "Quotation: Brent, *Plot*, 250."

Snyder gives no evidence for the claim that Stalin ordered the doctors to be beaten. Neither do Brent and Naumov, who state that "the doctors were 'beaten to a pulp'" but give no reference.

This opens up an interesting mystery. On August 22, 2011, a purported letter to Beria from Sergei A. Goglidze, Deputy Head of the MVD at the time and dated March 26, 1953, [was published by \*Gazeta\*](#). This is an ideologically anticommunist newspaper of which Mikhail Gorbachev is part owner along with a Russian billionaire, while "Memorial" is a highly anticommunist research institution. Neither has any reputation for historical objectivity. In this letter Goglidze supposedly claimed that Stalin himself had told him to beat suspects ["with deadly beatings."](#)

Is this document genuine? Petrov claims that he found it "in the 1990s" but does not explain why he waited until 2011 to publish it. It is not mentioned in the "Memorial"-sponsored volume *Lavrentii Beria, Part I*, published in 1991, where Documents 5 and 6 deal with the "Doctors Plot." Nor is it in the 1085-page volume of Beria-related documents published in 2012.<sup>17</sup> Petrov quoted from it in an earlier article in *Novaia Gazeta* of October 16, 2008, but did not publish it at that time. Instead, he published an often-reprinted reproduction of the so-called "torture telegram" of January 10, 1939, along with a handwritten facsimile of a letter from Semion Ignat'ev to Stalin of November 15, 1952 that does not mention beatings.

All this raises suspicion about whether this document is genuine. Even if it is, the further question is: was Goglidze telling the truth? The truth is: it is impossible to say. Anti-Stalinist have every reason to fabricate documents to make Stalin look bad, and have done so. Goglidze, if he did write this

letter, had every reason to pass the blame for mistreatment of the doctor-prisoners onto the dead Stalin, since doing so might help him avoid punishment (Goglidze was one of six MGB officers shot in December 1953 for their association with Lavrentii Beria). The historian's dictum "Testis unus — testis nullus" applies here too; one "witness" is never enough to establish a fact. Source criticism, an obligation for every responsible historian, is essential here — and once again Snyder fails to give us any.

Snyder also fails to inform his readers of this passage in his daughter's memoir:

The "case of the Kremlin doctors" was under way that last winter. My father's housekeeper told me not long ago that my father was exceedingly distressed at the turn events took. She heard it discussed at the dinner table. She was waiting on the table, as usual, when my father remarked that he didn't believe the doctors were "dishonest" and that the only evidence against them, after all, was the "reports" of Dr. Timashuk.<sup>18</sup>

Snyder quotes Svetlana Allilueva's memoirs elsewhere, so why not here? Obviously because *this* quotation would cast doubt on Stalin's guilt in the "Doctor's Plot" case. Brent/Naumov also fail to cite this passage, no doubt for the same reason.

We have seen above that Snyder quotes from Svetlana Allilueva's writings — but only when they have an anti-Stalin tendency. When they do not or, as here, when they contradict an anti-communist story, Snyder ignores them. This is not the way a historian is supposed to act. Snyder is writing not history but "anticommunist propaganda with footnotes."

### **Snyder Falsifies Stalin's Words**

Snyder states:

Stalin, a sick man of seventy-three, listening to no counsel but his own, pushed forward. In December 1952 he said that "every Jew is a



nationalist and an agent of American intelligence," a paranoid formulation even by his standards. (366)

Source (n. 49 p. 503): "For "every Jew...," see Rubenstein, *Pogrom*, 62."

Rubenstein does have this quotation — but it is a lie. Rubenstein refers to the source, the memoirs of Minister Malyshev about a December 1 1952 meeting during which Stalin said:

Любой еврей-националист, это агент америк[анской] разведки. Еврей-нац[ионалисты] считают, что их нацию спасли США (там можно стать богачом, буржа и т.д.)

Translated:

Every Jewish nationalist is an agent of American intelligence. Jewish nationalists consider that their nation was saved by the USA (there one can become rich, a bourgeois, etc.)

- *Istochnik* 5 (1997), 140-1.

By "Jewish nationalist" Stalin clearly means "Zionist." Since April 2008 there has even been an Internet page exposing this misquotation, which it attributes to Brent and Naumov. But as recently as April 2012 Snyder was repeating this false quotation in the standard talk he was giving about *Bloodlands*.<sup>19</sup>

Snyder is either deliberately lying or never bothered to check the source of this quotation. Whatever is the case, it does him no credit as a historian.

### **Anything To Make Stalin Appear Anti-Semitic? Snyder Falsifies the Draft Letter**

Snyder writes:

In February 1953, the Soviet leadership was drafting and redrafting a collective Jewish self-denunciation, including phrases that might have come straight from Nazi propaganda. It was to be signed by prominent

Soviet Jews and published in *Pravda*. Vasily Grossman was among those intimidated into signing the letter. ... (367)

Sources (n. 52 p. 504):

\* "On the drafting and redrafting, see Kostyrchenko, *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitizm*, 470-478."

\* "On Grossman, see Brandenberger, "*Last Crime*," 196.

\* "See also Luks, "*Brüche*," 47."

In an article published in 2009, when *Bloodlands* must have been nearing completion, Snyder wrote:

In early 1953, the Soviet leadership was circulating a petition among prominent Soviet Jews, who were to apologize to Russians for claiming that Jews had suffered, and thank Russians for saving them."

(note to Kostyrchenko, *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitizm* 470-478.)(2009-4)

Snyder's characterization of the unpublished letter is false. The letter in question says nothing whatsoever about any apology, to Russians or to anyone else. It says nothing about "claiming that Jews had suffered." It says nothing about "thanking Russians" — or anybody — "for saving them." It does not contain any "Jewish self-denunciation," whatever that might mean. It contains no "phrases that might have come straight from Nazi propaganda."

Of course, Snyder's readers will have no idea that he is lying — and here I say "lying" advisedly, because it is not credible that Snyder has simply failed to read the letter himself. But Snyder's readers will not have read the letter. What's more, Snyder has failed to inform them where they might read it. The first draft of the letter in question is translated into English in Brent/Naumov (300-305). Snyder cites this book. But Snyder does not inform his readers that they can read this letter there. Could that be because

anyone who does read the letter would see that Snyder is not being truthful about it?

Nor was it "the Soviet leadership" that was circulating this letter. Dmitrii Shepilov, one of the Secretaries of the CPSU, and N.A. Mikhailov, head of the Agitprop section of the Party, sent it to Malenkov, who was in the leadership of the Party, the Politburo. Neither Shepilov nor Mikhailov was in the "Soviet leadership." After criticism by Il'ia Erenburg a second draft was sent to Mikhailov by Shepilov but never circulated farther, much less printed.

Here is what Lazar Kaganovich told Feliks Chuev about this letter:

Когда Михайлов принес мне бумагу для публикации против этих врачей — я вам рассказываю кое-что личное — по еврейскому вопросу, и там были подписи Рейзена и многих других еврейских деятелей. Михайлов был секретарем ЦК, потом министром культуры. Я ему сказал: «Я не подпишу».

— А что, там осуждали их?

— Да, да. Он говорит: «Как? Мне товарищ Сталин поручил.» — Скажите товарищу Сталину, что я не подпишу. Я ему сам объясню.

Когда я пришел, Сталин меня спрашивает: «Почему вы не подписали?» Я говорю: «Я член Политбюро ЦК КПСС, а не еврейский общественный деятель, и буду подписывать бумагу как член Политбюро. Давайте такую бумагу я напишу, а как еврейский общественный деятель не буду подписывать. Я не еврейский общественный деятель!»

Сталин внимательно на меня посмотрел: «Ладно, хорошо».

Я говорю: «Если нужно, я напишу, статью, от себя».

«Посмотрим, может, надо будет и статью написать».<sup>20</sup>

Translated:

When Mikhailov brought me the paper for publication against these doctors — I am telling you something personal — concerning the Jewish question, there were the signatures of Reizen and of many other Jewish figures. Mikhailov was a secretary of the Central Committee, and then Minister of Culture. I told him: "I will not sign it."

— What? Are you condemning them?

— Yes, yes. He said: "What? Comrade Stalin gave me this." — Tell comrade Stalin that I will not sign it. I will explain it to him myself.

When I arrived, Stalin asked me. "Why didn't you sign?" I said: "I am a member of the Politburo of the CC of the CPSU, and not a Jewish public figure, and I will sign papers as a member of the Politburo. Give me a paper like this and I will sign it, but I will not sign as a Jewish public figure. I am not a Jewish public figure."

Stalin looked attentively at me. "OK, that's fine."

I said: "If necessary, I will write an article of my own."

"Let's see, maybe we'll need you to write an article."

There is no evidence that Vasili Grossman was "intimidated into signing the letter." His signature simply appears alongside those of many others. Brandenberger cites no evidence that Grossman was "coerced." Nor does it seem likely. Judging from his novels, at this time Grossman was making great efforts to be a loyal communist.

In vicious press attacks, it suddenly emerged that his [Grossman's] recently published novel of the war, *For a Just Cause*, was not patriotic enough. *For a Just Cause* was a vast novel of the Battle of Stalingrad, mostly within Stalinist conventions. (367)

Several of these criticisms are [available online](#). None of them are "vicious," though some are sharp. Their main point is that Grossman's novel is not

Marxist enough for a Party member.

### **Snyder: Rumors Are History — Almost**

Snyder writes:

Judging by the rumors circulating at the time, Soviet citizens had no trouble imagining the possible outcomes: doctors would have been show-tried with Soviet leaders who were their supposed allies; remaining Jews would have been purged from the state police and the armed forces; the thirty-five thousand Soviet Jewish doctors (and perhaps scientists as well) might have been deported to camps; and perhaps even the Jewish people as such would have been subject to forced removal or even mass shootings. (386, emphasis added)

It is true that rumors like this circulated at the time in the USSR. Today in the USA rumors are circulating that Israel had advance warning of the 9/11 terrorist attack; that the attack was permitted, maybe even planned, by the Bush Administration itself; that the Twin Towers were demolished not by the jetliners' impacts but by explosive charges carefully placed in advance, etc.

In other words, rumor is not history — far from it! There are plenty of rumors in Russia today that reflect very positively on Stalin. Of course, Snyder ignores them. For Snyder, rumor only belongs in an historical work when that rumor conforms to his own prejudices.

Snyder has to know, but does not tell his readers, that Gennady Kostyrchenko, anticommunist, Zionist, and hater of Stalin, has long since disproved the stories about a "planned deportation of Jews." Kostyrchenko's article is titled "[Deportatsiia — Mistifikatsiia](#)", and one does not need to know Russian to understand its meaning. Snyder also fails to inform his readers that in his book *Stalin i evreiskaia problema* ("Stalin and the Jewish Problem," 2003) Zhores Medvedev writes:

Можно предположить, что Сталин позвонил в «Правду» либо вечером 27 февраля, либо утром 28 февраля и распорядился

прекратить публикацию антиеврейских материалов и всех других статей, связанных с «делом врачей. ...»

В Советском Союзе в это время был только один человек, который мог простым телефонным звонком редактору «Правды» или в Агитпроп ЦК КПСС изменить официальную политику. Это мог сделать только Сталин. (216-7)

Translated:

We can assume that Stalin called *Pravda* either on the evening of February 27 or in the morning of February 28 and arranged for the cessation of publication of anti-Jewish materials and of all other articles dealing with the "Doctors' Plot." ...

In the Soviet Union at that time there was only one person who was able, with a single telephone call to the editor of *Pravda* or to the Department of Agitprop of the CC CPSU to change official policy. Only Stalin could do that...

In their collection of essays, *The Unknown Stalin*, Zhores and his brother Roi Medvedev come to a similar conclusion:

We still have no way of knowing exactly how the anti-Semitic campaign was stopped on 1 March or who was ultimately responsible. ... It is clear, however, that the end of the propaganda campaign was associated with a decision to abandon preparations for the trial of the doctors. The actual order could only have come from Ignatiev. It is also conceivable, however, that Stalin had given the instruction himself on 27 or 28 February.<sup>21</sup>

It appears more than likely that Ignatiev would have sent such an order without at least obtaining Stalin's approval. The Medvedev volumes are very well known but Snyder does not mention these passages. Incompetence? Or deliberate deceit?

**Snyder Still Believes Khrushchev's "Secret Speech"**

Snyder:

He [Nikita Khrushchev] even revealed some of Stalin's crimes in a speech to a party congress in February 1956... (371)

No, he did not. The evidence proving Khrushchev's famous "Secret Speech" was falsified from beginning to end was published in Russian in late 2007, long before Snyder's book was completed. If Snyder did not know about this he is incompetent to write about the matter.<sup>22</sup>

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### Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Stalin i Evreiskaia Problema. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo 'Prava cheloveka', 2003, pp. 10-26.

<sup>2</sup> My Moscow-based colleague Vladimir L. Bobrov and I have an article pending publication that proves conclusively that the documents purporting to prove Stalin's murder of Mikhoels are crude forgeries.

<sup>3</sup> Svetlana's chronology is confused here. There was no such clear connection among the events she cites, for Mikhoels was killed on January 13, 1948, not at the end of the year.

<sup>4</sup> Stalin's Secret Pogrom. The Postwar Inquisition of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee. (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 39.

<sup>5</sup> Szmalec means "lard, grease" — that is, money.

<sup>6</sup> Dariusz Libionka, "Polskie piśmiennictwo na temat zorganizowanej i indywidualnej pomocy Żydom (1945-2008)", Zagłada Żydów 4 (2008), 23.

<sup>7</sup> Konstantin Simonov. [Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniya](#). Moscow: Novosti, 1988, p. 216.

<sup>8</sup> See Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*. The English version of this book was not published until 2011, after *Bloodlands*. But the Russian version was published in 2007, long before *Bloodlands*. Гровер Ферр. Антисталинская

подлость. М.: Алгоритм. 2007. Republished as Тени XX-го съезда, или антисталинская подлость. М.: Эксмо-Алгоритм, 2010. Snyder should have known about it.

<sup>9</sup> *The Jews of the Soviet Union: The History of a National Minority*. Cambridge University Press, 1989, p 152. Pinkus shows that some Jews "took an active part in the anti-cosmopolitanism campaign." (157) Pinkus also argues that Jewish writers were attacked more frequently and perhaps more intensely. So the anti-cosmopolitan campaign may not have been entirely free of anti-Semitism. But it was not **official** anti-Semitism.

<sup>10</sup> Roberts, Molotov. Stalin's Cold Warrior Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2012), 118-9.

<sup>11</sup> The reader will recall that anticommunist historian Motyka states that Ukrainian partisans murdered 100,000 or more peaceful poles in the Volhynian Massacres.

<sup>12</sup> Stalin i evreiskaia problema, p. 92.

<sup>13</sup> The Zakrzewski poster, "The giant and the bespittled dwarf of reaction," may be [viewed here](#). The "giant" in the poster is either a People's Army (Armia Ludowa) fighter or a Polish Army (Wojsko Polskie) man, and the "bespittled dwarf of reaction" is the AK. The AK attacked and killed pro-Soviet partisans and Jews generally, and had collaborated with the Nazis, so it is neither surprising or unjust that the communists attacked it as "reactionary".

<sup>14</sup> *Żołnierze Armii Ludowej polegli i zamordowani przez podziemie zbrojne po wyzwoleniu kraju*. Warsaw: Wydawca Rada Krajowa Żołnierzy Armii Krajowej przy ZG Związku Kombatanów RP i b. Więźniów Politycznych, 1997. Some excerpts from this book, very hard to find outside Poland, [are online](#).

<sup>15</sup> A.N. Ponomarev. Aleksandr Shcherbakov. Stranitsy biografii. M: Izd. Glavarkhiva Moskvy, 2004, p. 275.



<sup>16</sup> Tainaia politika Stalina. Vlast' i antisemitizm (2003), 642.

<sup>17</sup> Politbiuro i delo Beria. Sbornik dokumentov. Moscow: Kuchkovo Pole, 2012.

<sup>18</sup> Twenty Letters to a Friend, p. 207.

<sup>19</sup> <http://holocaustcontroversies.blogspot.com/2006/04/correction-corner-1-every-jew-is.html> — When Snyder repeated this lie during his talk on April 17, 2012 at Kean University I called from the floor: "That's not true!" Snyder's reply was "Yeah, sure!"

<sup>20</sup> Feliks Chuev, Tak govoril Kaganovich. Moscow: Otechestvo, 1992, p. 174.

<sup>21</sup> Woodstock and New York: Overlook Press, 2004, p. 32

<sup>22</sup> Г. Ферр, Антисталинская подлость (2007). In English since 2011 as Khrushchev Lied.

## **Chapter 15: *An Examination of the Falsehoods in Bloodlands.***

Since *Bloodlands* is not an attempt to give a truthful account of the events it discusses, it is something else: an attempt to convince the reader — including the academic reader — that it is a truthful account. In other words: *Bloodlands* is a work of propaganda disguised as a work of historical research or a summary account of works of historical research. *Bloodlands* is a book that intends to mislead its readers, and it has been very successful.

The main reason for its success is what I have called "the anti-Stalin" paradigm." *Bloodlands* tells its readers what they were, broadly speaking, already "knew" — that is, thought they knew: that Stalin and the Soviet leadership were morally evil people who deliberately murdered millions of people and so were, broadly speaking, like the Nazis. *Bloodlands* fills out the paradigm of "Stalin and the Soviets as evil" with examples and scholarly-looking documentation much as hot air fills out a balloon.

In addition to the techniques of scholarly misrepresentation and misdirection, other factors are involved. Chief among them is the power of the anti-Stalin paradigm. This epidemic of self-imposed blindness exists because there is not powerful institution that is devoted to the pursuit of historical truth. The historical profession is supposed to be such an institution. But it is not, at least as regards Soviet history of the Stalin period. In this field falsehood is rewarded as long as it serves anticommunist purposes while the truth is discouraged or penalized when, as is usually the case, it does not serve those purposes.

The techniques of misdirection employed in *Bloodlands* are not original or sophisticated. Once they have been pointed out they appear almost transparent. But they have fooled dozens of reviewers, including academic reviewers. At the time I am writing this (May 2014) I have yet to find a single reviewer who has identified even one of the dozens of falsifications in Snyder's book.

If someone were to write a book accusing the American government of atrocities on the scale of those Snyder falsely attributes to Stalin and the Soviet leadership, we can be certain that many scholars would check every statement and examine all the evidence. That up to now no one has done this is, no doubt, due in part to the fact that in *Bloodlands* Snyder is simply telling people that which they have assumed to be true all along.

What we have done in the present book is simply to apply to Snyder's fact-claims, accusations, and allegations against Stalin, the Soviet leadership, and pro-Soviet forces in *Bloodlands* the skeptical attitude that any careful reviewer of a book alleging crimes by the United States government and leadership would adopt. The result is devastating to Snyder's book.

.....

Within the anti-Stalin paradigm, a number of rhetorical techniques of misdirection are employed in *Bloodlands*. In an earlier work I called the different kinds of falsification in Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" a "typology of prevarication."<sup>1</sup> In that work I was able to show that what Khrushchev stated in this infamous speech was false. Because Russian authorities still keep most primary source documentation of the events of the high politics of the 1930s top secret, in most cases I did not have enough evidence to discover what really happened — only enough to prove that more than 40 "revelations" made by Khrushchev in that speech are deliberate lies and that twenty more are false, probably but not demonstrably deliberate falsehoods.

In *The Murder of Sergei Kirov* I discussed the studies by Matthew Lenoë, Åsmund Egge, and Alla Kirilina. I discover that these scholars had tortured the available evidence in order to reach the only conclusion congruent with the anti-Stalin paradigm: that Kirov's assassin, Leonid Nikolaev, was a "lone gunman" and that Stalin fabricated the criminal case against everyone else. In the case of Kirov's murder we do have enough evidence to prove that those persons convicted of the murder by the Soviet court in December 1934 were indeed guilty. But I did not give a summary or theoretically-informed account of the errors and methods of misdirection that these prior scholars used.

In the case of *Bloodlands* I think such an account is warranted. The fact-claims against Stalin and the Soviets are so universally false, and the failure of expert reviewer to notice this so complete, that were are forced to admit that the techniques of falsification in *Bloodlands* have been successful. If they have fooled the experts they will also fool the general reader. These techniques of falsification are simple in principle. But they are only disclosed as simple in practice if one studies them closely.

The widespread acceptance of the anti-Stalin paradigm discourages any attempt to verify fact-claims that are convenient to that paradigm, since the process of verification dismantles the paradigm itself. A review of the techniques of misdirection in *Bloodlands* may prove helpful in warning the reader against naive acceptance of the anti-Stalin paradigm. Under its controlling influence every piece of evidence is bent to fit it, while everything that does not fit it is ignored or discarded.

In the ideologically-charged field that is Soviet history of the Stalin period no accusation of wrongdoing against Stalin, the Soviet leadership, or pro-Soviet forces, no matter what its source, should ever be accepted as true unless it has been thoroughly verified. The sooner this fact is generally recognized, and the sooner the practice of verifying everything that "fits" the anti-Stalin paradigm is taken seriously, the better for those who wish to discover the truth

### **Methods of Falsification in *Bloodlands***

Avoidance of objectivity takes different specific forms. There are many different ways to make fact claims without evidence.

<b>Technique Description</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Example<sup>2</sup></b>
Begging the Question ( <b>BQ</b> )	<i>Petitio principii</i> : Assuming that which is to be proven.	"The mass starvation of 1933 was the result of Stalin's first Five-Year Plan, implemented between 1928 and 1932." ( <i>Bloodlands</i> Ch.3)
Bias of Omission ( <b>BO</b> )	Rely on the readers' ignorance.	"Poland never surrendered, but

hostilities came to an end on 6 October 1939." (*Bloodlands* Ch.4); 'Snyder Barely Refers to the Real Genocide: the "Volhynian Massacres.'" (Ch.13)

Fabrication (FA)	Statements that are anticommunist bias only, without any evidence at all.	"Stalin's First Commandment": Another Snyder Fabrication.' (Ch.3)
The Big Lie (BL)	Repetition of the same falsehood over and over to give the reader the impression that it has previously been established as true.	The USSR and Nazi were "allies"; Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was an agreement to partition Poland; "joint invasion" of Poland; USSR and Nazi Germany wanted to eliminate "Polish elite." ( <i>passim</i> )
Communism — Nazism (CN)	Miss no chance to compare if not to equate them. Communism is to be linked with Nazism whenever possible regardless of logic. Often the attempts to bracket the two together is awkward, even bizarre, and sometimes seemingly irrational. The rationality lies in the BL repetition. The aim to get the reader used to the	GULAG prisoners were "slave labor" ( <i>Bloodlands</i> , Ch.3); 'Did "Soviet Cruelty" Lead to Support for Nazism?'(Ch.4); 'Snyder Terms Stalin's Anti-Hitler Move a 'Pro'-Hitler Move.' (Ch.7); 'Snyder: Noting a Person's Nationality Is "Not So Very Different From" Nazism'(Ch.7); 'Snyder Equates Nazi Imperialism with Soviet Anti-Imperialism'(Ch.9); 'Did Soviet Partisans Cause Nazi Atrocities?' (Ch.11)

comparison as though  
it were a natural one.

Nazi actions are  
blamed on the Soviets  
whenever possible.

Communist motives  
must be made to  
appear as similar as  
possible to the Nazis  
motives.

Phony Citation  
(**PC**)

The work or works  
cited as evidence in  
support of a fact-  
claim do not in reality  
support it.

'The Lie that Stalin Spoke of an  
"Alliance" with Hitler.' (Ch.8);  
'Snyder Falsifies Stalin's Words.'  
(Ch.14)

In *Bloodlands* this  
trope services the **CN**  
trope.

Anti-Semitism  
(**AS**)

The Nazis were anti-  
Semitic so Stalin and  
the Soviet leadership  
must be shown to  
have been anti-  
Semitic as well.

'The Lie That Stalin was Anti-  
Semitic' (Ch.14); 'Did Stalin's  
Daughter Overhear Stalin  
"Covering Up" Solomon Mikhoels'  
Murder?' (Ch.14); 'Anything to  
Make Stalin Appear Anti-Semitic?  
Snyder Falsifies the Drafter Letter'  
(Ch.14)

This is impossible, so  
fabrications (**FA**) and  
Phony Citations (**PC**)  
must be employed.

Numbers

'More False Numbers of "Victims"'

Game (NG) This trope also (Ch.13)  
services the CN trope.  
For the Communism-  
Nazism/Stalin-Hitler  
comparison to work it  
must be asserted that  
the Soviets murdered  
very large numbers of  
people, since the  
Nazis did so.

Anti-  
Communist  
Scholarship  
(AC) Often the PC is taken  
from secondary  
sources by other anti-  
communist scholars. A great many of Snyder's false fact-  
claims are taken from AC scholars,  
such as these: 'Snyder's  
"Fundamental" Source — A Hitler  
Supporter' (Ch.4); 'Snyder Falsifies  
the Nalibocki Massacre' (Ch.11)

False or  
Falsified  
Quotation  
(FQ) This is a hybrid  
category. Sometimes  
there is no real source  
for the quotations at  
all, which makes it a  
special kind of FA —  
a fabricated quotation.  
Sometimes a genuine  
quotation is cited  
incorrectly. The  
quotation really says  
and means something  
else.

'Were "Women Routinely Raped,  
Robbed of Food"?' (Ch.2); 'Snyder:  
"Half a Million Youngsters in  
Watchtowers".' (Ch.4)

Psychologizing  
(PS) Snyder claims that  
Stalin was "thinking"  
something. "'Stalin's New Malice.'" (Ch.3);  
'Snyder Reads Stalin's Mood.'

(Ch.7); 'Snyder Claims That Stalin Hated All Poles.' (Ch.7)

Anti-Communist Statements that Do Not Prove Anything but "Sound Bad" (SB)

'Stalin's "Personal Politics."' (Ch.3)

First-Person Accounts (FP)

(See discussion below.)

### **First-Person Accounts (FP)**

A final category that does not lend itself to tabular presentation is that of the first-person account. Snyder uses them a lot in *Bloodlands*. The deception comes when, as in *Bloodlands*, they are used as though they can establish an historical fact.

The problems of first-person accounts are as follows:

- \* They are normally collected long after the event. But memory is a creative process. Memories change, often to fit ideological assumptions made later in the person's life. Such memories are useless as historical evidence, even as evidence of the personal experience of the individual whose account it is.
- \* The principle *testis unus, testis nullus* applies in all but exceptional cases. One testimony is not sufficient to establish that an event occurred.
- \* First-person testimony is often collected in a biased, unrepresentative way. For example, the book by Kovalenko from which Snyder took his story of "Petro Veldii" was compiled by selecting 1000 personal accounts of



the famine of 1932-33 from among 6000 collected, but only "negative" accounts were published.

First-person accounts are often used for their emotional appeal. The appeal to emotion has long been recognized as a rhetorical strategy to disarm rational attempts at evaluating evidence: in short, as a technique of propaganda. Snyder uses purported first-hand accounts of the famine. Even without source criticism — some of these accounts come from the works of Nazi collaborators — such accounts are not evidence that any specific event actually occurred. The "Petro Veldii" story in Chapter One of *Bloodlands* that we examine in the Introduction is a good example of this.

### **Analysis of the Prevarications in *Bloodlands***

The international success of a work as corrupt as *Bloodlands* requires explanation. How can a book that is largely composed of demonstrable, provable falsehoods have been published? Once published, how can it be praised by newspaper and magazine reviewers and by professional historians whose job it is to critically examine historical studies? How can a work utterly lacking in integrity be published in the hundreds of thousands of copies, garnered awards in several countries, and be translated into dozens of languages?

Part of the answer lies in the historical role of pseudo-scholarship as propaganda for anti-communist purposes. The demonization of Soviet history dates back to the revolution itself. Already in 1920 Walter Lippmann and Charels Merz showed how the *New York Times*, newspaper "of record" then as today, "reported" the triumph of the Whites and the defeat of the Reds numerous times, always falsely. Lippmann and Merz concluded that the reporters had not deliberately lied. Rather they had reported not what they saw but what they and their bosses *wanted* to see.<sup>3</sup> The *Times'* reporters included Walter Duranty, later to be attacked for being "insufficiently anticommunist" when in the 1930s he insisted on reporting only what he saw or knew for a fact rather than what he had not witnessed.

*Bloodlands* was published by Basic Books, a commercial rather than an academic publisher. Academic presses require that manuscripts submitted

for publication be vetted by academic specialists in the field. This does not guarantee that falsehoods will be caught and that standards of evidence routine in other areas of history will be observed. Nevertheless, I suspect that at least some of the more glaring falsifications in *Bloodlands* might well have been recognized as such by an academic review — unless the reviewers had been selected more for their anticommunist fervor than for excellence of research.

For example, there is a good chance that academic reviewers would not have permitted Snyder's account of the fraudulent "Holodomor" to pass without at least some qualification. And the millions of "deliberate murders" of the Holodomor fraud are essential to Snyder's Stalin-Hitler/Communist-Nazi comparison; without them he would have had no book. But academic vetting is not necessary in commercial publishing.

The many awards *Bloodlands* has garnered from newspapers and magazines are understandable. All these publications are dogmatically anticommunist. Indeed, some of them, like the WSJ and "Reason Magazine," stand politically on the far right. But when it comes to hostility to Stalin there is often little or no difference along the continuum from left-liberal to neoconservative. And it is publicity and promotion from these publications that determine commercial success; hence, "non-fiction bestseller," etc. The author and his publisher are making a lot of money! Not a careful search for the truth but profit is the goal of commercial publication, and anticommunist bias is not a barrier but a requirement for mass commercial success.

*Bloodlands* has not been greeted by scholars with the criticism it deserves. On the contrary, many academic specialists in the field of East European history have praised the book. Although, as the reader of the present study realizes, *Bloodlands* is composed of little except falsehoods concerning the actions of Soviet leaders and Soviet and communist actors, these academic reviewers have managed to miss virtually all of them.

### **Three "Review Forums" on *Bloodlands***

As illustration of this fact we here consider the first three "review forums" in professional historical journals that Snyder himself listed on his web page as of April 2014.<sup>4</sup> Together they represent considered responses to *Bloodlands* by thirteen prominent academic scholars.

Book reviews and "review forums" are of some value if the participants really are expert in the same field as the subject of the book. But in the present case only two of the thirteen, Hiroaki Kuromiya and Jörg Baberowski, are specialists in Soviet history of the Stalin period. Both of them are on the far right of even the anticommunist scholarly spectrum; both are passionately anticommunist and make no pretense at objectivity. Baberowski has nothing of interest to say at all. Kuromiya is the only one of the thirteen who questions whether the Soviet famine of 1932-33 was in fact deliberate mass murder. But he does not draw the obvious conclusions: that if the famine was not mass murder the whole framework of Snyder's book collapses. The other twelve all accept without question Snyder's importation of the Ukrainian nationalist myth of the "Holodomor." None of them seems to know that the major Western studies of the famine of 1932-33 by Mark Tauger, Stephen Wheatcroft, and R.W. Davies, even exist. One of them even misspells the clearly unfamiliar term.

Kuromiya is also the only one of the thirteen to point out Snyder's gross error about Japanese military intentions after 1937.<sup>5</sup> Aside from him none of these scholars questions a single one of Snyder's fact-claims. None of them, Kuromiya included, checks even one of Snyder's fact-claims to verify whether it is based on primary source evidence or whether that evidence in fact supports what Snyder claims in his text.

All these scholars (with the exception of the two mild demurrers by Kuromiya) simple accept every one of Snyder's assertions or fact-claims about the actions of Stalin, the Soviet leadership, and communist forces. Yet, as the present study demonstrates, every one of these fact-claims is false. All of these scholars repeat the verbiage about Soviet or Stalinist "mass murders". Yet as the present study has shown, the evidence is clear that the only mass murder, the terrible *Ezhovshchina*, was not sanctioned by Stalin or the Soviet leadership. Not one of these scholars seems to know

anything about this event. Not one of them knows of the long-standing scholarly debate over the Katyn massacre. And so on.

Kuromiya and Baberowski aside, the rest of the reviewers — eleven out of thirteen — are specialists in Nazism, or in the Holocaust of Jews, or in Eastern Europe. They show profound ignorance about the historiography of the Soviet Union during the 1930s. They are not in the least qualified to judge whether Snyder's fact-claims about Soviet history are accurate or not. Of course they themselves knew this. But none of them was forthright enough to admit it.

Whether knowledge about the history of the Stalin era or not, all of these scholars could have done what any reviewer should do. They could have selected a few of Snyder's assertions about Soviet history and then checked Snyder's footnotes to see whether those references supported what Snyder claims they support. If unable to read Polish or Ukrainian they could have asked help from colleagues. This is elementary, the kind of thing graduate students are trained to do; what Ph.D. students regularly do in the course of researching for their dissertations.

Moreover, if it is not done then the readership is being deliberately misled. These scholars are giving the impression that they can approve or certify Snyder's research when they know themselves they are in no position to do so. They claim they have found Snyder's research to be good — most of them say as much — while in reality they are taking Snyder's book "on faith." But they don't admit this.

But this seldom happens. Book reviews "count" little in a scholar's career so few scholars spend much time on them. If the book is on a subject the scholar knows very well then their independent judgment can indeed be of value. But when, as in this case, the book is on a subject that the scholar knows little or even nothing about, their judgment is worthless. The scholar should either recuse themselves or write only about those aspects of the book they are expert on and openly admit that they do not know enough about the other parts of the book to have any opinion about them. But none of the reviewers in these three "review forums" were forthright enough to do this. Therefore their endorsements of Snyder's book are dishonest. They mislead their readers.<sup>6</sup>

To understand how this can happen we must briefly examine the system of anticommunist pseudo-scholarship on Soviet history of the Stalin period that not only permits but lavishly rewards dishonest works like *Bloodlands*.

## **Objectivity**

In any field of study it is essential that the researcher determine to be objective from the outset of his study. History is no different. The historian must make every effort to survey all the primary sources that bear upon his subject, and all the secondary sources that study this evidence regardless of whether these secondary sources reflect the same biases, preconceived ideas, or values as his own.

Since objectivity is, among other things, an attitude of distrust of the self and of one's own preconceived ideas and biases, the historian must compensate for their own limitations by trying especially hard to give a supportive reading to primary and secondary sources whose tendency is opposed to their own biases and preconceived ideas. At the same time they must determine to be especially suspicious of that evidence and those works of scholarship that tend to confirm or agree with their own biases, to counteract their natural tendency to look with special favor upon statements that reflect their own views.<sup>7</sup>

In their historical practice, the historian must observe the tenets of objective research from the outset, and even before. If the historian does not begin with a determination to find the truth no matter whose ox is gored, ready at every moment to discover a truth that they find disillusioning, their research is doomed. They will never stumble across the truth by accident along the way. Moreover, if an historian does not begin from a determination to discover the truth we must ask the question: What, then, is their purpose in writing their book? If they are not out to discover the truth and report it to their readers, what are they doing?<sup>8</sup>

Snyder ignores every tenet of historical objectivity. Therefore, no one should be surprised that his book is devoid of historical truth. It could not be otherwise.<sup>9</sup>

## **Anticommunist Scholarship**

Snyder's determined flouting of objectivity would be of little consequence if it were an exception. *Bloodlands* and similar works would be rejected during the vetting process and not be published. Those works that for whatever reason managed to evade the vetting process and be published anyway would be quickly critiqued, their errors, carelessness, and deliberate dishonesty identified and exposed. Negative reviews would warn potential readers away. This is how the system of scholarly and semi-popular reviewing is supposed to work.

But in reality it does not work this way. Scholarship on the Stalin period in the Soviet Union is constrained by an informal but strict code of "political correctness." Stalin must be depicted as a moral monster and the Soviet Union during his time as a place of government-sponsored mass murder and repression. No substantive deviation from this formula is tolerated.

Only rarely can one find a refutation of even the most absurd accusations of crimes by Stalin. In his 2010 study that concluded that Stalin did not have a hand in the murder of Sergei Kirov in Leningrad on December 1, 1934 Matthew Lenoe felt compelled to write a two-page profession of his anticommunist and anti-Stalin convictions. Lenoe admits that he did so lest someone suspect him of being "pro-Stalin" for rejecting an interpretation which had been abandoned by Soviet and Russian experts for decades and for which there had never been any evidence in the first place.

Even this is an exception. Claims that Stalin committed some crime, no matter how poorly supported by evidence, are typically passed over in silence if really absurd and otherwise accepted and even repeated, as Snyder does many times in *Bloodlands*.

In history of the Stalin period a kind of "Gresham's Law" prevails where "bad scholarship drives out the good." When good scholarship is produced it is carefully written so as not to contradict any tenets of anti-Stalinism that the researcher thinks may be an inviolable part of the anti-Stalin paradigm.

Good research is being done in the field of Stalin-era Soviet history. But it is typically confined to the close examination of primary sources, especially

when newly-available sources are used. Research that is narrowly focused on specific events, places, and time periods can be very revealing. Even when marred by bias, research that reproduces new primary sources can be valuable because flawed interpretation can be discarded and the texts of the primary sources themselves appropriated for more objective research.

An anticommunist scholarly environment or "industry" has been created where "scholars" churn out anticommunist falsehoods and then cite each other's falsehoods as evidence that the falsehoods are true. Primary sources are distorted by misinterpretation or ignored entirely. The "scholars" or academic practitioners in this "industry" assume in their writings that it is not primary source evidence and its interpretation, but the consensus of anticommunist researchers, that establishes a statement as "true".

Snyder follows this practice with enthusiasm. *Bloodlands* is a product of it. Snyder rarely cites primary sources at all. When he does, he gets them wrong. For the most part Snyder cites secondary sources by "scholars" of the anticommunist "industry". This produces a body of anticommunist pseudo-scholarship based upon bias alone — that is, upon ignorance.

In addition to falsehood this system reproduces ignorance. Anticommunist scholars inevitably become lazy when no one criticizes their research because it has the "correct" anticommunist tendency or "line." Why worry about the truth if what matters is not objectivity in skillful analysis and interpretation of primary source evidence but in striking the right anticommunist tone? why bother to do the hard, time-consuming work of real research, of discovering the truth, when the path to academic success is to repeat anticommunist assertions without regard to the evidence?

Our study of *Bloodlands* has disclosed that Snyder is not only biased. He is also ignorant about much or most of the history of which he poses as an expert. His readers should not assume that Snyder has worked hard to discover the truth and then gone on to construct deliberate lies in order to disguise this truth. The reverse is much more likely: that Snyder has no idea what the truth is because he has never tried to find it. He has mastered the anticommunist position or "line" on many issues, and this can be got from reading the works of a limited number of recognized anticommunist

"scholars" without troubling oneself about primary sources or real research of any kind.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Khrushchev Lied, Chapter 10, 137-158

<sup>2</sup> Chapter references are to the chapters in the present book unless *Bloodlands* is specifically mentioned.

<sup>3</sup> Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz. "A Test of the News." Supplement to The New Republic August 4, 1920. It is available online at: <https://archive.org/details/LippmannMerzATestoftheNews> (Accessed May 5 2014)

<sup>4</sup> At: <http://timothysnyder.org/books-2/bloodlands/review-forums/>

<sup>5</sup> See the discussion in Chapter Five of the present book.

<sup>6</sup> WEB EDITOR'S NOTE: For some reason the pronouns in this paragraph and the following paragraphs were mostly feminized (with one masculine pronoun). Snyder is referenced as a "she" at one point. Since this appears to be a mistake I've edited pronouns to the third-person.

<sup>7</sup> See above.

<sup>8</sup> See above.

<sup>9</sup> See above.



## ***Conclusion: The Missing "Crimes of Stalinism"***

### **"An Attack on the Enlightenment"**

In Chapter 4 of *Bloodlands* Snyder accuses the Soviet Union of "an attack on the very concept of modernity, or indeed the social embodiment of Enlightenment" (153). In Chapter Seven of the present book we proved Snyder's accusation to be fraudulent. But it is true of Snyder's book. In virtually every accusation he makes against Stalin, the Soviet Union, or pro-communist forces such as pro-Soviet partisans and the Red Army, Snyder thrusts falsehoods at his readers and calls them the truth.

*Bloodlands* is a work completely devoid of integrity. It is a cloth woven of lies and falsifications from beginning to end, an outrage against the canons of historical research and the historian's responsibility. As such it is itself "an attack on the Enlightenment", debauching history to serve political ends.

### **Failure of the Field of Soviet and East European History**

*Bloodlands* has received many very positive reviews by professional historians in historical journals. A few reviewers have questioned Snyder's historiographical or theoretical paradigm. Still others, experts on the history of the Jewish Holocaust, have criticized him for his tendency to repeat the "nationalist" mythologies of today's right-wing Eastern European regimes.

But at the time of this writing I have yet to read a single review of *Bloodlands* where the reviewer is knowledgeable about the history of the Soviet Union during the 1930s and brings that knowledge to bear in the discussion of Snyder's book. Even reviewers who raise criticisms of other aspects of *Bloodlands* accept Snyder's fact-claims about the actions of Stalin, the Soviet leadership, and pro-Soviet forces. Yet any specialist in Soviet history of this period who has kept abreast of the scholarship and recently published documents could not fail to find a great many false statements in Snyder's presentation.

Here are two examples from major history journals. In his review of *Bloodlands*<sup>1</sup> Thomas Kühne rightly criticizes Snyder for his "move to link Soviet and Nazi crimes":

As it seems to reduce the responsibility of the Nazis and their collaborators, supporters and claqueurs, it is welcomed in rightist circles of various types: German conservatives in the 1980s, who wanted to 'normalise' the German past, and East European and nationalists today, who downplay Nazi crimes and up-play Communist crimes in order to promote a common European memory that merges Nazism and Stalinism into a 'double-genocide' theory that prioritises East European suffering over Jewish suffering, obfuscates the distinction between perpetrators and victims, and provides relief from the bitter legacy of East Europeans' collaboration in the Nazi genocide.

Kühne is certainly right that Snyder's book plays to the right-wing "nationalists" of Eastern Europe. But Kühne accepts without question Snyder's viewpoint about purported Soviet (often "Stalin's" or "Stalinist") "crimes":

"Snyder is not the first to think about what Hitler and Stalin had in common and how their murderous politics related to each other."

"...the Hitler-Stalin Pact as the actual springboard of the two dictators' collaboration in the destruction of Poland..."

"...the links between Hitler's and Stalin's mass-murder policies."

"...Stalinist and Nazi terror..."

"...Stalin's victims need to be included in these stories as well, he points out, that is, victims of Ukrainian holodomor (death by hunger), of the Great Terror in 1937-38, and not least of Stalin's 'ethnic cleansings' and anti-Semitic purges around and after 1945."

"...an account on the mass crimes of the Nazi and Soviet regimes which infamously 'turned people into numbers'..."

None of these accusations against "Stalin" and the Soviet leadership are interrogated in the least. Kühne just accepts them as established, though where they have supposedly been established and by whom he does not say.

As the reader of this book will now realize, all these statements are false. Stalin had no "murderous politics"; there was no "collaboration in the destruction of Poland"; Stalin had no "mass-murder policies"; there was "Stalinist terror"; there was no "Holodomor" but a great famine in which the Soviet government, by all evidence, did the best it could. There was a "Great Terror", or *Ezhovshchina*, but it was not that of Stalin or the Soviet state. Stalin had no "ethnic cleansings" or "anti-Semitic purges." The Soviet regime committed no "mass crimes".

In *Kiritika*, a journal specializing in Russian and Soviet history, Michael Wildt<sup>2</sup> is rightly critical of *Bloodlands* on many counts. But Wildt shows no knowledge of scholarship on the Soviet Union and so he takes the following assertions straight from Snyder's book, without any question, much less examination:

"...the two most murderous regimes of the first half of the 20th century..."

"And while the Nazi regime killed about 10,000 people in concentration camps and prisons before the outbreak of World War II in 1939, the Stalinist leadership had already allowed millions to die from hunger and had shot about one million people."

"The first events Snyder recounts are the deaths from hunger during the early 1930s of millions of people, not only in Ukraine but also in Kazakhstan and other parts of the Soviet Union. These deaths were due to the arbitrary and rash collectivization of agriculture organized by the Stalinist leadership in Moscow."

"After the catastrophic harvest of 1931, which was partly a result of collectivization, the Stalinist leadership exported grain in order to be able to purchase industrial goods abroad. It consciously accepted the mass deaths that resulted from this policy. In December of that year, Stalin decreed that kolkhozes that could not meet their grain delivery

quotas should also deliver their seeds to the authorities. Thus in 1932-33 death from hunger became an ineluctable fate for millions of people."

"Stalin was certain that the peasants' falling short of grain delivery quotas was proof of their collaboration with foreign enemies and of their resistance, both of which had to be crushed ruthlessly."

"Between 1934 and 1939, when popular fronts against fascism were forged in Europe, the Soviet repressive organs shot about 750,000 people as alleged enemies of the people and deported an even greater number to the Gulag. The local secret police arrested and murdered according to quotas from above."

"...the Stalinist regime also murdered according to ethnic criteria, as, for instance, in the so-called "Polish operation."

"...the assumption that Soviet citizens of Polish nationality were enemies of the Soviet system."

"...a non-aggression treaty on 23 August 1939, which amounted to nothing less than yet another German-Russian partition of Poland."

"The Polish elite was shot or deported. The systematic murder of about 15,000 Polish officers, who had fled from the German troops in the east, literally decapitated the Polish army."

"Snyder is correct in emphasizing the commonalities in the violent practices of the two regimes in Poland. Both Germany and the Soviet Union desired the "decapitation of Polish society" (125) and the ruthless exploitation of the remaining civilian population through forced labor. Both sides waged an ethnic war against the Poles."

"The millions of dead from famine in the Soviet Union at the beginning of the 1930s were the consequence — no doubt, a foreseeable consequence and one that the Stalinist regime deliberately accepted — of a brutal industrialization policy carried out at the expense of the rural population."

Every one of these claims has been disproven in the present book. Many of them, such as Snyder's account of the famine of 1932-33 which Wildt echoes uncritically here, have been disproven by respectable Western scholars. The "official version" of the "Katyn massacre" has been under sharp criticism by some Russian scholars for fifteen years. Highly anticommunist and anti-Stalin Russian scholars have shown that USSR did not "murder according to ethnic criteria" in the "Polish operation." Wildt appears oblivious to all of this.

Why do Wildt and Kühne repeat Snyder's fact-claims about the Soviet Union uncritically when they are by no means uncritical of other aspects of *Bloodlands*? In part it is because neither knows much about Soviet history. Wildt admits as much:

...here I should register the caveat that I am a specialist of Nazism, not Soviet collectivization..."

Nobody can be a "specialist" in everything. But most of Snyder's book is about Soviet, not German, actions. Why did Kühne and Wildt agree to review *Bloodlands* when each of them knows he is unqualified to have an independent judgment on Snyder's statements about Soviet actions?

I suggest that the reason is that the anticommunist paradigm, in the form of anti-Stalinism, is simply "taken for granted" in academia in a way that statements about, for example, Hitler and Nazi Germany are not. The scholarship on Hitler is meticulous and detailed. Misstatements about Nazi actions and crimes are caught, parsed, and subjected to criticism. But claims of "Stalin's crimes" are accepted without any interrogation at all.

### **How Could This Happen?**

No scholarly field should function like this. It is a disgrace that a book like Snyder's could be published and widely read for years while his falsifications, phony references, dishonest use of sources, and incorrect statements pass not only unchallenged but accepted even praised, by professional historians. Any graduate student in this field could check

Snyder's evidence and find what I have found: that every allegation of "crimes" against Stalin and the Soviet leadership is false.

Could a collapse of the historian's responsibility of this magnitude happen in any area of American or British history — always excepting the history of the communist movement in those countries? I doubt it. The spectrum of viewpoints in those fields is too broad. There are no "sacred cows" so firmly ensconced as such that all criticism, or all praise, of them is *a priori* ruled out of bounds.

There is no excuse for the ease with which statements about "crimes of Stalinism," unsupported by primary evidence, have been and continue to be accepted as truth. But there is an explanation. From its inception as an academic discipline the primary function of Soviet studies has been to provide a fount of anticommunist propaganda propped up by scholarship or the appearance of it.

For several generations anticommunist Russian exiles were among the most prominent figures in the field. Their anticommunist bias was enhanced by the advent of the Cold War and abetted by an influx of Soviet defectors, some of them former Nazi collaborators. The range of viewpoints acceptable in the field has been stretched to include Trotskyists and socialists of the social democratic type. But pro-communist viewpoints and researchers with and openly pro-communist orientation have always been excluded. This makes sense once one recalls that this field was created as a weapon against Soviet communism from the beginning.

More than two decades after the end of the Soviet Union the field of Soviet history remains first and foremost a weapon of political and ideological warfare. It has never encompassed those who challenge what I have called the "anti-Stalin paradigm" of Soviet history: anyone who insist on drawing conclusions about Soviet history based upon evidence rather than upon ideological grounds.

### **The Strength of the "Anti-Stalin Paradigm"**

Indeed, in important respects the ideological blinders in this field have hardened since the end of the USSR because of the post-Soviet states. Ukraine and Poland and, in a somewhat different way, Russia too have constructed national mythologies along rigidly anticommunist lines and upon historical falsehoods. Today a professional historian in the field of Soviet or Eastern European history cannot get published, get access to archives, be invited to historical conferences, — in short, have a career — if they seriously question the mendacious historical mythologies propagated by the political and academic elites in these countries such as the "Katyn massacre," the "Holodomor," or the "innocence" of Marshall Tukhachevsky or Nikolai Bukharin.<sup>2a</sup>

The history of the Soviet Union is fatally constrained by the anti-Stalin paradigm. It is simply "not done," virtually taboo, to find Stalin *not* guilty of some crime or other he has been charged with. If the evidence does not support the anti-Stalin conclusion, then so much the worse for the evidence! It will be ignored, or phony evidence will be invented, or conclusions based on not evidence at all. Utter falsehoods are acceptable

The sad fact is that in its broad outlines the field of Soviet history functions more like propaganda than like history. Good research is done on very specific topics, especially when based on archival evidence. But the framework or paradigm of Soviet history during the Stalin period in which such studies situate themselves sets firm limits on what conclusions are acceptable. The academic field of Soviet history of the Stalin period is governed by a form of "political correctness" far more than it is by normal canons of historical research.

This is the context in which Snyder's disgraceful book, one that is nothing but falsehoods, falsifications, rumors, and lies, can receive positive reviews not just from obvious ideologues in the media or avowedly pro-capitalist organizations and publications but from professional academic historians.

### **What Can We Do?**

The most basic conclusion of this book concerns Snyder himself. Nothing he writes about Stalin, the Soviet Union, communism, or Eastern European

history can be assumed to be accurate. Every claim he makes must be double-checked. After all, that is what this book presents — a check of every statement of an anticommunist tenor that Snyder makes in *Bloodlands*, with the result that all of the are false, fabrications.

A scientist who is expose as guilty not just of making an error here and there — that is inevitable — but of nothing but "errors", of making nothing but false statements and therefore of reporting nothing but false statements and therefore of reporting nothing but false results, would be distrusted by fellow scientists forever thereafter. Science functions on the presupposition that the scientists of the past have reported truthful results in their work, results which can be used in the future work of other scientists. We would not trust the "research" of a biochemist hired by the Tobacco Institute to provide "evidence" that cigarette smoking was not causally related to lung cancer. We would assume his "research" was, in reality, not research at all but propaganda aimed at a preconceived and false result.

## **Distrust**

Historians work in an analogous way. One historian who does false research and reports untruthful results is a threat to the field as a whole. His work should never be cited since it cannot be trusted. Like the biochemist hired to produce genuine-looking but phony "research" to support a preconceived conclusion, a historian who writes anticommunist propaganda in the guise of "research" has produced not history but propaganda. He has violated the canons of the historical profession. His work can never be trusted again.

But distrusting Snyder's work in the future is too narrow a response to *Bloodlands*. Snyder has failed to find a single "crime of Stalinism" despite his own best efforts and those of a battalion of Polish and Ukrainian academics. If they had found any such "crimes of Stalinism" we can be sure that they would have reported them. But they did not find any — hence all the falsifications.

This means that, as far as Soviet history of the Stalin period is concerned, *all* allegations of "crimes of Stalinism," "crimes" of communists, should be reflexively distrusted. We should be even more suspicious when such



allegations emanate from persons with a preconceived ideological anticommunist commitment.

### **A Renewed Insistence Upon Objectivity**

We need to distrust anti-Stalin allegations and anticommunist stories unless and until we can verify them ourselves. But we also need to take steps to ensure, as far as possible, our own objectivity in historical inquiry.

Everyone has preconceived ideas. It is one's own preconceived ideas and biases that are most likely to mislead one. To maintain a determination to be objective a historian must develop the habit of (a) giving an especially generous reading — suspending doubt and suspicion to a considerable extent — to any evidence that appears to go contrary to one's own preconceived ideas; and (b) adopting an especially critical attitude towards any evidence that tends to support one's own preconceived ideas or ideological positions. A further technique is to have colleagues who are aware of your preconceived ideas and commitments give a critical pre-publication reading to your research, having been asked in advance to be on the lookout for places where you may have unintentionally allowed your own prejudices to override your commitment to objectivity.

### **The Falsehoods of Polish "Nationalist" Mythology**

Snyder has chose to adopt the framework, bias and falsehoods that characterize the work of Polish anticommunist "nationalist" historians. We have checked the evidence cited by Snyder in support of his fact-claims and found that it is fraudulent. Either it doesn't exist at all or it points to conclusions different from the conclusions Snyder draws, even contrary to what he claims. Since in the main Snyder is rehashing Polish "nationalist" mythology we have in effect, examined the main premises of that mythology and show it to be false.

Specifically, we have examined and refuted the following "myths";

**Myth:** The "Kresy Wschodnie" (Eastern Borderlands), the Polish term for the Western Ukraine and Wester Belorussia, were inalienable parts of

Poland.

**Fact:** The "Kresy" became part of Poland in 1921 through military conquest in an imperialist war with Soviet Russia. The Polish government held no plebiscites to ask the population whether they wished to be in Poland or not. The "Kresy" never had a majority Polish population. Poland had to have recourse to a large-scale program of "settling" Poles — mainly military men — in these areas in the hopes of "polonizing" them (making them more "Polish"). These *osadnicy* (settlers) became the imperialist infrastructure of the "Kresy".

**Myth:** The Second Polish Republic of 1919 to 1939 was a decent society to which its citizens owed loyalty.

**Fact:** Poland was strongly imperialist. The Polish Army seized Vilnius from Lithuania in 1922 and the Teschen area of Czechoslovakia from that country in October 1938. As late as January 1939 Polish Foreign Minister Josef Beck told German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop that Poland had aspirations to the Black Sea — that is, to take over about half of present-day Ukraine. Polish "nationalist" historians never discuss these land-grabs as imperialist.

The long-term aim of the Polish ruling elite was a Poland with the border of the 18th century, when the Grand Duchy of Poland and Lithuania encompassed Western Ukraine to the Black Sea and most of present-day Belarus.<sup>4</sup> The Polish leadership cared nothing for the desires of the populations of these areas.

The Polish ruling elite was viciously racist. Only Roman Catholics were considered "Poles." All minorities suffered significant discrimination, which increased during the late 1930s.

**Myth:** The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was a plot to destroy Poland and provided for a "joint German-Soviet invasion."

**Fact:** This is false. The M-R pact divided Poland into spheres of influence, requiring that the German army would have to withdraw from Eastern Poland. This pact would have preserved an independent Polish state if the

Polish government had not abandoned the country and its inhabitants to the Nazis.

**Myth:** The Soviet Union invaded Poland on September 17, 1939.

**Fact:** There was no such "invasion." The USSR occupied Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia to prevent the Wehrmacht (German Army) from marching up to the Soviet border. The USSR's claim that it remained neutral in the German-Polish war was accepted by all the Allies except the Polish Government-In-Exile.

**Myth:** Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Soviet Union were "allies."

**Fact:** There was no alliance of any kind. The M-R Pact was non-aggression pact.

**Myth:** German and Soviet troops held a "joint victory parade" at Brest-Litovsk.

**Fact:** The parade was a handing over of power from the German army to the Red Army, since under the M-R Pact Brest was within the Soviet sphere of influence.<sup>5</sup>

**Myth:** In April and May 1940 the Soviets shot about 22,000 Polish prisoners, including officers, in a series of mass murders known as the Katyn massacre.

**Fact:** As of 2013 at the latest — some historians would choose a much earlier date — we have clear evidence that the "official version" of the event known to history as the "Katyn massacre" is false.

The myth of the "Katyn massacre" is central to right-wing Polish nationalism and important to anticommunist discourse generally. In anticommunist scholarship it is considered "taboo", akin to "Holocaust denial", to question Katyn, regardless of the evidence.

At the very minimum, no one interested in the truth should pay any attention whatever to any account of the "Katyn massacre" that does not

included a thorough and objective account of the historical dispute over this subject, including full discussion of the numerous Russian-language studies by Russian scholars who have long rejected and claim to have disproven the "official version" of Katyn.

**Myth:** After taking them back from Poland in September 1939 the Soviets were guilty of "atrocities" and "terror" in the former "Kresy".

**Fact:** There was no "terror". Anticomunist historians use the word "terror" to describe the arrests and deportation of the Polish imperialist "settlers" (osadnicy) in 1939-1941. Claims of "communist", "Soviet", or "Stalinist" "terror" or "atrocities" are a verbal ploy that serves to avoid the issue of Polish imperial conquest and racist oppression in Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia.

**Myth:** The **myth** of Polish "victimhood": Post-1939 Polish nationalism claims that Poland was "victimized" by two invasions, the German and the Soviet, in September 1939, which destroyed the Polish state.

**Fact:** This is false. In reality the Polish state disappeared because, in an unprecedented act of betrayal, the Polish government abandoned the country, leaving it without a government. We have shown this in our extensive discussion on the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the German-Polish war of September-October 1939.

**Myth:** The **myth** of Polish "heroism".

**Fact:** Many Poles did indeed heroically fight against the Germans. But the Home Army, the armed force of the Polish government-in-exile (in Paris until June 1940, thereafter in London) also fought communist partisans, with whom they were supposedly in alliance. The Home Army routinely murdered Jews who were hiding from the Germans. Some Home Army commanders collaborated with the Germans (see below). Fighting against communist partisans, murdering Jews, and collaborating with the Germans is not "heroic" behavior.

The Polish People's Army (Armia Ludowa, AL) and the pro-Soviet Polish Army (Wojsko Polskie, WP) led by Zygmunt Berling did fight the Germans

heroically. They did so without anti-Semitic terror or collaboration with the Germans. These forces were pro-communist and led by communists. Praising Polish communist forces or expressing pride in their accomplishments is "taboo" in mainstream Polish "nationalist" historiography because that historiography promotes not truth but "political correctness" in the form of anticommunist lies.

**Myth:** Poland faced "two totalitarianisms": Nazi Germany and the USSR.

**Fact:** This is false, just another verbal ploy, a play on words. For the most part the term "totalitarian" has no fixed meaning. It is simply an epithet meaning "bad". It is sometimes used to refer to a state with only one political party. Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union each had only one legal political party. But Nazi Germany and the USSR were diametrically opposite in every other way. Moreover, the existence of multiple political parties does not constitute real "democracy." Capitalist countries typically have multiple parties while being run by the wealth either openly or behind the scenes.

Poland was much more similar to Nazi Germany than the Soviet Union was. Like Hitler's regime the Second Polish Republic was authoritarian, imperialist, anticommunist, anti-labor, fiercely racist against ethnic minorities, viciously and officially anti-Semitic, and militarist. Most important, it was capitalist. Not surprisingly, many leading Polish politicians and intellectuals admired Hitler and Nazi Germany.

**Myth:** The Soviets betrayed the heroic "Warsaw Uprising".

**Myth:** The murderous postwar Polish underground was a "heroic" war for "freedom" and "liberation."

### **Why Tell Lies If the Truth Is On Your Side**

Since the end of the Soviet Union in 1991 a flood of primary source documents from former Soviet archives have gradually been made available to researchers. I have been locating, obtaining, and studying these

documents — more precisely, those among them dealing with the Stalin period and the historical controversies about it — for more than a decade.

Based on this reading and research I studied Nikita Khrushchev's famed "Secret Speech" to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union of February 25, 1956. To my amazement and no little discomfort I made the astounding discovery that every single accusation leveled by Khrushchev in that speech against Stalin and Lavrentii Beria is demonstrably false.<sup>6</sup> To date no one, specifically no historian of the Soviet Union, has challenged any of the results of my study. Khrushchev has no defenders.

I proceeded to formulate the hypothesis that many, perhaps even most, of Snyder's accusations of crimes against Stalin and the Soviet Union would turn out to be false. As it turned out, my hypothesis was correct — but it was also incorrect. I did not expect to discover that not many, not most, but virtually every accusation involving the claim of a crime of one kind or other, every crime alleged by Snyder against Stalin, the Soviet Union, and pro-Soviet forces, would turn out to be false. Yet that is the case. No ideological bias of mine but the evidence itself demands this conclusion.

Anyone who reads Snyder's book will see that he has tried to include any and all crimes and misdeeds that can be alleged against Stalin and the Soviet Union between the period of collectivization virtually until Stalin's death in 1953. It is worth of note that Snyder was unable to find even a single genuine crime.

This bears repeating: not one of the crimes alleged by Snyder against Stalin and the Soviet leadership is genuine. All are fabrications. Snyder was unable to find a single example — not even one — of a "crime" that really was committed by the Stalin and/or the Soviet leadership. The implications of this fact should be considered.

Snyder has not done all his research by himself. He has had the resources of many ideologically-committed anticommunist researchers of Eastern Europe, especially of Poland and Ukraine whose governments sponsor research facilities specifically devote to fabricating tales of "communist atrocities." It appears that some of these professional anticommunist

researchers may have helped Snyder. In addition Snyder has been able to draw on decades of publication by well-funded Cold War publicists and propagandists. Snyder has also had at his service the magnificent bibliographical and research facilities of the major research libraries and institutes of the world.

And yet, despite all these resources, human and material, Snyder has not been able to find even a single crime that Stalin or the Soviet leadership of his day was guilty of. He has not been able to identify even a single genuine "crime of Stalin" or "crime of Stalinism." He has had to fabricate alleged by others before him.

### **Where are the "Crimes of Stalinism"**

It is in principle impossible to "prove a negative." You can only prove a positive. You can't prove that Mr. X *was* not present in, say, Moscow on a given date and at a given time. All you can do is to prove that Mr. X *was* somewhere else — say, Leningrad — on that same date and at that time. This means that in principle no one can prove that Stalin and the Soviet leadership of his time did not commit even a single "crime"; that the set of events that historians conventionally call "crimes of Stalinism" is an empty set.

However, the fact that the combined efforts of all the anticommunist, anti-Stalinist, researchers in the world over a period of more than 70 years — "all the King's horses and all the King's men"<sup>7</sup> — and with the facilities of all the world's best libraries and archives, have not been able to come up with a single, genuine "crime of Stalin" of the period 1932-1945 — this is a fact that is worthy of attention. *It is strong evidence in support of the negative conclusion: that there were no such "crimes of Stalin."* For if there were any such crimes, surely these highly motivated and well-provisioned anticommunist researchers, with unprecedented and privileged access to the archives, would have found them by now.

Of course there are really a number of categories of acts that have been termed "crimes" of Stalinism." One is the category of acts that are crimes by any definition, such as deliberate killings of innocent persons. This is the

"empty set." The anticommunists of decades have never yet succeeded in identifying even a single one of them.

The second category consists of "crimes" against property and the resistance of the propertied. Collectivization of agriculture deprived many rich, and also many not-so-rich, peasants of their private property in land, just as the Revolution of 1917 deprived capitalists of their private property in the means of production, landlords of their estates, urban landlords of their rentable buildings, and so on. These were "crimes" by a kind of class-conscious definition — the definition of the property-owning class. At the same time they were acts of liberation from the viewpoint of the exploited classes of workers, peasants, and many others. The liberation of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia by the Red Army is considered a "crime" by the Polish "nationalist"-imperialists.

A third category is the crimes committed by members of the Soviet leadership during Stalin's period. The principle example here is the *Ezhovshchina*, the mass murder of several hundred thousand Soviet citizens under the pretense of fighting organized counter-revolutionary groups. This was certainly a massive crime by any standard. But a truthful account of these horrendous events is not useful to ideological anticommunists because it was carried out unbeknownst to Stalin and the Soviet government who eventually, and far too late, realized what was going on, stopped it, and punished the criminals. We have presented the relevant evidence in chapters 5 and 6 of the present book.

Unquestionably the *Ezhovshchina* represents a massive failure of the Soviet system. Arch Getty termed it "the self-destruction of the Bolsheviks."<sup>8</sup> Some such term certainly applies. But it was not "Stalin's" crime in that he and the Soviet top leadership did not order it or wish it, and when they learned of it they acted to stop it and punish the guilty.

It is crimes of the first kind, and especially alleged atrocities — mass murders — that are the subject of Snyder's book. Without them Snyder's attempt to compare Stalin with Hitler, the USSR with Nazi Germany, and Bolshevism with Nazism, falls apart.



## The Crimes of Western Imperialism

In the absence of such atrocities by the Soviet Union it is the acts of the Western imperialist countries, especially in the colonial world, that most closely resemble the crimes of Nazism. Not "Stalin + Hitler" but "Churchill + Hitler," "Daladier + Hitler," "Roosevelt and Truman + Hitler." To quote again from Professor Domenico Losurdo:

On a d'ailleurs longtemps comparé le colonialisme anglais et occidental et le colonialisme hitlérien. Gandhi disait: «en Inde nous avons un gouvernement hitlérien, faut-il le camoufler en termes plus légers?», «Hitler a été le péché de la Grande-Bretagne.»

Translated:

British and Western colonialism has long been compared to Hitler's colonialism. Gandhi used to say: "In India we have a Hitlerite government. Must we disguise it with softer terms?" "Hitler was Great Britain's sin."

To count the millions of colonial victims of the Western "democratic" powers would be a large task. They certainly amount to the tens of millions. Even as concerns World War II it is hard to be precise in calculating the crimes of the Western Allies against non-combatant civilians such as the victims of the terror-bombings against Japanese and German cities, or of the two atomic bombs which could have been dropped on, for example, the Japanese Kwangtung Army but instead were dropped on defenseless civilian cities virtually devoid of military significance.

There is the "man-made famine" in Bengal, India, which cost the lives of between 1.5 and 5 million persons and for which the British government was completely responsible.<sup>9</sup> Then, shortly after the war, the murder of 40,000 Korean peasants on the island of Cheju-do, where with American knowledge and support South Korean leaders, until recently Japanese collaborators, sent in fascist killers against a peasant revolt in an area where peasant revolts had taken place for many years.<sup>10</sup>

There is the horrific mass murder — mass torture campaign by the British against the Kenyan "nationalist" movement. Within the last decade major scholarly works by Western authors have begun to bring to Western attention facts about this world-class atrocity that have been well known in Kenya but suppressed in the "Free World."<sup>11</sup>

The [Vietnamese anti-imperialist struggle for independence](#), first against France, then against Japan, then again against France, then against the United States, cost the lives of between 2 and 4 million Vietnamese. None of them would have been killed if the French imperialists had simply ceded independence. During the course of this thirty-year war both French and American forces committed numerous horrific atrocities against civilians. A recent book about American atrocities in Vietnam is titled *Kill Anything That Moves*.<sup>12</sup>

This is just a short selection. The list of horrors committed by Western anticommunist nations could be greatly lengthened. One can understand, therefore, why it is important that enemies of the communist movement — who are at the same time defenders of Western imperialism and its crimes — find it so important to fabricate "crimes of Stalinism."

### **The Crimes of Eastern European "Nationalists"**

An equally powerful motive is the ideological requirements of the right-wing "nationalists" of the former Soviet bloc and former Soviet Union. Holocaust researchers centered around the website "Defending History"<sup>13</sup> have increasingly come to realize, and point out to others, the fact that Snyder's *Bloodlands* has become a kind of "Bible" of the anticommunist "nationalists" whose political predecessors sided with the Nazis and helped them murder millions of Jews and others, often outdoing the Nazis themselves.

Snyder's book is also valued by Polish "nationalists" who have based their claims to legitimacy on the mythology that the prewar Polish regime was heroic and a "victim" of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The truth is almost diametrically the opposite. Pre-war Poland was a horrific imperialist regime, ferociously anti-labor, fierce racist against its non-Polish citizens.

The prewar Polish regime rejected collective security with the Soviet Union, the only policy that could have foiled Hitler's aggression. Once Hitler's forces attacked, the Polish government abandoned first its capital, Warsaw, and then the country itself without forming a government-in-exile. No other government did this. This unique act of cowardice and indifference to the fate of their people guaranteed the destruction of Poland as a state and condemned the Polish population to Nazi occupation and mass murder.

Poland had a shameful history of anti-Semitic attacks against its Jewish citizens — attacks that continued under German occupation and even after the war. Polish anti-Semitism was the fault of the Polish political, religious, cultural, and educational elite. It continues to be very strong on the Polish right today despite the fact that few Jews remain in Poland. The Polish elite also encouraged racist pogroms against Ukrainians. In a previous chapter we have quoted American scholar Jeffery Burds' brief description of one such anti-Ukrainian pogrom. Research done by the Polish "Center for Holocaust Research" (Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów) and the work of the highly anticommunist scholar Jan T. Gross document the astounding extent of violent anti-Semitism, as well as anticommunism, in prewar, wartime, and postwar Poland.

During the 1980s the Solidarność "union" made Marsha Pilsudski and the regime of the "colonels" that followed Pilsudski its symbols and its national heroes. The post-1990 capitalist Polish governmental and educational elite have made it their task to "rehabilitate" the prewar Polish elite. This entails denying their crimes. It has also meant fabricating prewar and wartime "crimes" by communists and especially by the Soviet Union.

### **"Nationalism" Justifies Nothing**

The anticommunist Polish and Ukrainian researchers from whose works Snyder draws his allegations in *Bloodlands* have looked hard for "crimes of Stalinism." Snyder has foisted their fabrications upon a Western audience largely unfamiliar with this self-serving, right-wing version of history that predominates in Eastern Europe. In the present book we have proven, citing

the evidence, that all of these claims made by Snyder in *Bloodlands* are false.

Snyder's book has won the praise of anticommunists and crypto-fascists. The "Defending History" site quotes enthusiastic praise for *Bloodlands* by a right-wing Lithuanian academic. On first glance one might think this strange, since Snyder says virtually nothing about Lithuania. But the reason is not far to seek. The Lithuanian regime, like most Eastern European regimes, bases its claim to historical legitimacy and nationalism on the prewar regime — an authoritarian, elitist and racist dictatorship, anti-labor, anticommunist, and anti-Semitic — that was closely aligned with Nazi Germany

Important parts of this elite collaborated in the mass murder of Soviet Jews and fought on Hitler's side in the war. As in the other Baltic countries, Poland, and Ukraine, "nationalist" soldiers went underground after the war and devoted themselves to terrorism — murder and sabotage. This terrorist activity is officially praised as "heroic" in today's Baltic states as in Poland. In some cases like that of the Ukrainian OUN these terrorists received aid from the American CIA just as did Al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden four decades later. Now the soldiers who fought for the Nazis are praised as "freedom fighters" while the Red Army soldiers who liberated these countries from Nazism are called "invaders" and "imperialists."

Most post-socialist countries of Eastern Europe are dominated by anticommunist regimes that justify their reactionary policies in part by their claim to be "true nationalists." All have been engaged in constructing national mythologies — false "nationalist" histories. All these countries, again with very few exceptions, have turned from being allies of the Soviet Union to being allies of NATO and the United States and hostile to post-Soviet Russian.

But "nationalism" justifies nothing. Hitler and his lieutenants were all German "nationalists". The Nazi leaders who went to the gallows after Nuremberg proclaimed with their last words their devotion to Germany. We can assume they were being truthful. Like the Polish, Ukrainian, and other Eastern European "nationalists" the Nazis committed their massive crimes in the name of patriotism, of "the nation."

## **The Role of NATO and the United States**

The United States wasted no time in taking advantage of the collapse of the Soviet Union. It attacked Iraq in 1991, and subsequently organized an embargo that killed a half million Iraqi children.<sup>14</sup>

In 2001 the USA led an invasion of Afghanistan and, in 2003, of Iraq, that have cost the lives of at least another 100,000 innocent civilians. None of this would have been possible if the Soviet Union had remained intact. None of it could have been done, or done as thoroughly, without the collaboration of the new "nationalist" regimes of the former Soviet bloc and USSR.

The stability and legitimacy of the countries of the former Soviet bloc and former USSR are of obvious importance to the American elite, which plans to keep military forces in the Middle east indefinitely. This pits the interests of the US elite against those of the Russian elite. Snyder's book plays a role in de-legitimizing Russia, as the successor state to the Soviet Union, just as it helps to justify the far-right and even crypto-fascist politics of Eastern Europe.

## **Apology for Holocaust Perpetrators — But Not Only for Them**

Historians of the Holocaust have been the most prominent critics of *Bloodlands*. But neither they nor the few other critics of this book have noted the fact that Snyder has not only falsified World War II and the role of Polish and Ukrainian Nationalists — though he has indeed done that. All of Snyder's claims about Soviet "crimes" are also false. Yet this fact has drawn virtually no attention from Snyder's critics. It seems that they do not realize it, or do not object to it.

This is the task that the present book takes up. The falsehoods in *Bloodlands* are all of a piece: both apology for anticommunist (and anti-Semitic) "nationalists" and falsification of what the Soviet Union did. But the latter has attracted no scholarly attention — until now.

Snyder is a significant figure in American intellectual life. He is a frequent columnist for the most influential intellectual journals. His book is taken as

a statement of facts, his lies and falsehoods about the Soviet Union and Stalin are accepted as true. In mainstream Western intellectual circles, and even on most of the Left, it is "taboo" to question any charge against Stalin or the Soviet Union, no matter how absurd.<sup>15</sup> If you try to challenge them — the present author has done so — the response is: "You are a defender of Stalin!"<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, the present book will inevitably be called "an apology for Stalin," even "for Stalin's crimes." But by now the reader knows this is false. This study is simply an attempt to get at the truth. Not to "defend Stalin" or "defend the Soviet Union," but simply to discover and document what really happened, using the best evidence, research methods, and appropriate means of deduction and conclusion.

Any blow in defense of the truth is a blow for the enlightenment, for civilization, and for the future, and against the injustices not just of the past but of the present and against those who lie about the past but of the present and against those who lie about the past to justify their exploitative practices today. May this book contribute, however modestly, towards those goals.

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## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> "Great Men and Large Numbers: Undertheorizing a History of Mass Killing." *Contemporary European History*, 21, 2, (2012), pp. 133-143.

<sup>2</sup> Wildt review of *Bloodlands* in *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 14, 1 (Winter 2013), 197-206.

<sup>2a</sup> WEB EDITOR'S NOTE: Changed pronouns to third-person, see web editor footnotes in Ch.15

<sup>3</sup> The present author has demonstrated this in detail with respect to the December 1 1934 murder of Sergei Kirov, Leningrad Party leader. See Grover Furr, *The Murder of Sergei Kirov, History, Scholarship, and the Anti-Stalin Paradigm* (Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press & Media, LLC, 2013).

<sup>4</sup> See the map at: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Poland1764physical.jpg>

<sup>5</sup> A related myth is that the Nazi Gestapo and the Soviet NKVD held three "conferences" at which the killing of the Polish elites was planned. There is no evidence whatever for such conferences. Not all Polish nationalists make this specific claim today. Snyder does not mention it.

<sup>6</sup> All but one minor accusation, which I could neither confirm nor disprove. See Furr, Khrushchev Lied.

<sup>7</sup> From the British nursery rhyme "Humpty Dumpty Sat on a Wall"

<sup>8</sup> J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror, Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999

<sup>9</sup> Among many sources for the Bengal famine see Mark Tauger, "the Indian Famine Crises of World War II." *British Scholar* 1, No. 2 (March 2009), 166-196; Scott Horton, "Churchill's Dark Side: Six Questions for Madhusree Mukerjee." *Harper's* November 4, 2010. At : <http://harpers.org/archive/2010/11/hbc-90007797>; Gideon Polya, "The Famine of History — Bengal 1943" *International Network on Holocaust and Genocide* 10 (1995) 10-15; *The Bengal Famine, 1943-45*. "Freedom from Famine at: <http://www.duo.uio.no/publ/statsvitenskap/1997/514/3/7/8.html>

<sup>10</sup> See John Merrill, "The Cheju-Do Rebellion" *Journal of Korean Studies* 2 (1980), 139-197. This horrific slaughter is thoroughly studied by South Korean scholars but virtually unknown in the west.

<sup>11</sup> Begin with David M. Anderson, "Atoning for the Sins of Empire", *NYT* June 12, 2013. Continue with Anderson's book *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (2006) and Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning. The Untold Story of the End of Empire in Kenya*. (New York: Henry Holt, 2005).

<sup>12</sup> Nick Turse, *Kill Anything That Moves, The Real American War in Vietnam*. New York: Metropolitan Books — Henry Holt, 2013

<sup>13</sup> At: <http://defendinghistory.com>

<sup>14</sup> Lesley Stahl on U.S. sanctions against Iraq: "We have heard that a half million children have died. I mean, that's more children than died in Hiroshima. And, you know, is the price worth it?" Secretary of State Madeleine Albright: "I think this is a very hard choice, but the price — we think the price is worth it." — "60 minutes" (American news commentator television program), May 12 1996

<sup>15</sup> Russia is one of the few countries where some space still remains in intellectual life for honest research into the Stalin period.

<sup>16</sup> An example of an essay that takes Snyder's claims in *Bloodlands* as fact is István Deák's review "Could Stalin Have Been Stopped?" *New York Review of Books*, March 13 2013. As a youth, Deák was in a labor battalion in fascist Hungarian Army that invaded the Ukraine alongside Hitler's forces and that killed at least hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens, to say nothing of Red Army soldiers. The present author wrote a response to Deák's essay, and also sent it to a few email lists.



## **Bibliography**

To reduce the number of pages and, thereby, to keep the cost of this book as low as possible, the bibliography for this book has been put on the Internet at the URL below:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/blood\\_lies\\_bibliography.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/blood_lies_bibliography.html)

## **Corrigenda and Addenda**

Corrections of errors discovered after this book has been printed, and significant material added after the book has gone to press, will be listed on the following page as they are discovered:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/blood\\_lies\\_corrigenda\\_addenda.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/blood_lies_corrigenda_addenda.html)

# **Trotsky's 'Amalgams': Trotsky's Lies, The Moscow Trials As Evidence, The Dewey Commission**

Trotsky's Conspiracies of the 1930s, Volume One

By Grover Furr

Erythrós Press and Media, LLC, 2015

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\*\*\*\*\*

### **Dedication**

I dedicate this book to Karla Cecilia Schultz (Furr) — hardworking school nurse; dedicated opponent of racism; good, objective critic; wonderful, supportive daughter.

## Introduction

Why another book about Leon Trotsky? Several new books on Trotsky are published every year. At least ten Trotsky biographies have been published just since the year 2000.

The justification for this book is twofold. First, during the past several decades a great many primary historical sources have been made available for the first time. Second, none of those who have written about Trotsky have made use of these sources.

These primary sources are important. They permit us to know a great deal more about Trotsky's activities during the 1930s than ever before. Yet despite this fact — or, perhaps, because of this fact — they have been almost entirely neglected.

These new primary sources are:

The Trotsky Archive at Houghton Library, Harvard University, open since January 2, 1980. In this book we refer to this as the "Harvard TA" or simply "TA."

A flood of documents from former Soviet archives published since the end of the Soviet Union in 1991 and continuing to this day.

Other collections of primary sources include the Trotsky-Sedov correspondence at the Hoover Institution, and documents made available but not published at various archives in Russia and elsewhere.

The documents from former Soviet archives have revolutionized our knowledge and understanding of Soviet history of the Stalin period, and thus of Soviet history as a whole. They permit us to see that much of what was written about Stalin and his era during Khrushchev's time, then during Gorbachev's tenure, and still today, is deliberately false — in plain language, lies.

The documents in the Harvard TA, and the research based on them by the late Pierre Broué, plus an article by American historian Arch Getty, continue to be neglected by all writers on Trotsky even though — or perhaps because — they demand of us a radically different view of Trotsky's activities during the 1930s and even before.

These primary sources now make it possible to check many of the fact-claims made by defendants in the Moscow Trials in the course of their testimony. For the first time we are able to objectively evaluate this important body of evidence by verifying some of the statements made in the Moscow Trials against independent sources.

This too has never been done. Since Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" to the XX Party Congress in February 1956 virtually all historians have dismissed the Moscow Trials testimony as false. The paradigm of the Moscow Trials has been that of innocent defendants forced to mouth false confessions to crimes they never committed by means of threats to themselves, against their families, etc. Their testimony has been universally rejected as fabricated, faked, "scripted" by the NKVD investigators, the prosecution, "Stalin."

But there has never been any evidence that the Moscow Trials testimony was fabricated. This has simply been asserted. This assertion has been "believed," accorded almost universal credence because it has been voiced by seemingly diverse authorities: by Trotsky himself; by Soviet émigrés and dissidents who fled the USSR in the 1930s and thereafter; then by Khrushchev and by commissions and writers during his time; then by Mikhail Gorbachev and the commissions and writers sponsored by him; and since 1991 by both Russian and Western historians who claim to be drawing upon the newly-available documentation from former Soviet archives.

However, the truth is not constituted by any "consensus" of authorities. Nor is "credibility" a category of analysis. Whether a statement, fact-claim, etc. is "believed" has no bearing at all on whether it is true, no matter how many "authorities" affirm it. Only primary sources are evidence.

These newly-available primary sources — evidence — permit us to see for the first time that the history of the Soviet Union during the Stalin period, including the roles of Stalin and Trotsky, is very different — indeed, in many respects the diametrical opposite — from what we have been taught, and from what is still the "mainstream," "consensus" version.

Thanks to these newly-available sources we can now see that Khrushchev, and then Gorbachev, lied about Soviet history of the Stalin period.

We can also see now that Trotsky lied too — deliberately, as did Khrushchev and Gorbachev. Like them, Trotsky lied a lot.

I have written a number of books and articles about the lies perpetrated under the auspices of Khrushchev and Gorbachev, about anticommunist historians East and West who have drawn upon their lies, and about the new version of Soviet history that emerges from the newly-available archival sources. In the present volume and in the one that will follow it I will identify and study some of Trotsky's lies and examine how this changes our understanding of Trotsky's activities and of Soviet history during the 1930s.

### **Trotsky's Lies**

We owe, in great part, our introduction to the fact that Trotsky lied to a number of seminal works of research. First is the work of the late Pierre Broué, the foremost Trotskyist historian in the world during his time (Broué died in 2005). Second is the seminal article by J. Arch Getty, "Trotsky in Exile: The Founding of the Fourth International," published in *Soviet Studies* in January, 1986. Third is the brilliant article by Sven-Eric Holmström, "New Evidence Concerning the 'Hotel Bristol' Question in the First Moscow Trial of 1936," published in *Cultural Logic* for 2008. Inspired by the efforts of these researchers I have discovered some more lies by Trotsky.

### **Verifying the Moscow Trials Testimony**

Part One of the present book consists of the process of verification of those fact-claims made by defendants in the three Moscow Trials that we can now check from other, independent sources. This project is important for understanding what Trotsky was doing during the 1930s.

According to the Moscow Trials testimony Trotsky, in the leadership of his clandestine followers within the USSR and in a political bloc with many other Oppositionists, was involved in the following conspiracies:

to assassinate a Stalin and other Soviet leaders (called "terror" or "individual terror" in Russian);

to sabotage as much of the Soviet economy as possible, principally in industry, in mining, and in transportation;

to conspire with commanders of the Soviet armed forces in order to promote a *coup d'état* against the Stalin regime;

to take over leadership of the Soviet Union with the help of Hitler's Germany, militarist Japan, and other foreign powers at the price of making important economic concessions and of ceding parts of the Soviet Union to them, stopping support for the Comintern, and returning much or most of the economy back to private ownership.

Trotsky vigorously denied all of this. Especially since Khrushchev and Gorbachev, Trotsky's denials have been almost universally believed. But the primary source evidence available to us today enables us to see that at the very least many, and perhaps all, of the charges against Trotsky and the confessions made by the Moscow Trials' defendants were true. On the evidence, Trotsky's denials were lies.

We will examine those lies of Trotsky's that bear directly upon his conspiratorial activities and upon our verification of the Moscow Trials testimony. I do not mean to imply that these were all Trotsky was lying about. The more we study, the more lies of Trotsky's we discover.

### **Lenin's "Peppery Dishes" Statement**



One example of a lie by Trotsky that does not bear directly upon his conspiracies or upon verification of the Moscow Trials testimony will serve to illustrate the fact that Trotsky lied a great deal. This is his claim that Lenin opposed Stalin's appointment as General Secretary of the Party because of his crude behavior towards others, which Trotsky called "peppery dishes."

We begin with what we believe to be the first time that Trotsky used this story. This was in his speech of October 23, 1927, to a combined meeting of the Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Committee, called to consider his expulsion from the Party.

**Троцкий.—Через Октябрьскую революцию наша партия получила в свои руки могущественный аппарат принуждения, без которого немислима пролетарская диктатура. Средоточием диктатуры является Центральный Комитет нашей партии (Шум). При Ленине, при ленинском Центральном Комитете организационный аппарат партии был подчинен революционной классовой политике мирового масштаба. Пранда, Сталин, в качестве генерального секретаря, внушал Ленину опасения с самого начала. «Сей повар будет готовить только острые блюда»,—так говорил Ленин в тесном кругу в момент X съезда партии. Сегодня было сервировано здесь одно из таких острых блюд под видом сообщения о военном заговоре. (Шум).**

The earliest version of Trotsky's "cook ... peppery dishes" story

***Pravda* November 2, 1927**

[[cyrillic]]<sup>1</sup>

Translated:

Trotsky:—Through the October Revolution our Party received into its hands a powerful apparatus of compulsion without which the proletarian dictatorship is unthinkable. The concentration of the dictatorship is the Central Committee of our Party. In Lenin's time, in the time of Lenin's Central Committee, the organizational apparatus of the Party was subordinated to revolutionary class politics of a global scale. True, Stalin in his capacity of General Secretary instilled fear in Lenin from the very beginning. "This cook will prepare only peppery [literally: sharp — GF] dishes," — so said Lenin to a small circle at the time of the X Party Congress.

<sup>1</sup> "Rech'tov. Trotskogo." *Pravda* November 2, 1927. Felix Kreisel has usefully put a photographic reproduction of this page of *Pravda* at <http://web.mit.edu/fjk/www/images/Pravda/1927-11-02-4.pdf> and transcribed the somewhat different version of Trotsky's speech from the MS in the Harvard TA at <http://web.mit.edu/fjk/www/Trotsky/sochineniia/1927/19271023.html>

In this its first occurrence the "cook ... peppery dishes" story is clearly separated from Stalin's being made General Secretary. Trotsky states that Lenin made this remark "at the time of the X Party Congress," which took place March 8-16, 1921. Stalin was named to the post of General Secretary as a result of the XI Congress held a year later, March 27 — April 2, 1922.

This would have been a good opportunity for Trotsky to name others that also heard Lenin make this remark. It would, arguably, have helped him, given his speech more impact, if he had done so. But he did not. This makes us suspect that perhaps he *could* not do so — that the story may be false.

It is difficult to prove that Lenin did *not* make this remark. Most events do not leave a paper trail. For our purposes what is most important here is that

even Trotsky does not claim that Lenin made the remark in connection with Stalin's being made General Secretary.

In February 1929, the same month he went into exile to Turkey, Trotsky once again cited the "peppery dishes" story.

"This cook will prepare only **peppery dishes**," Lenin warned the party as early as 1922.

- "How Could This Happen?" February 25, 1929. WLT '29. p. 38.

Here Trotsky does not explicitly tie the story to Stalin's gaining the General Secretary post. But he does so implicitly by shifting the date from 1921 to 1922, the year of the Eleventh Party Congress, the year Stalin was chosen as General Secretary. Here are some of the citations of this statement in Trotsky's work (I don't claim that this is an exhaustive list):

### Trotsky on "Peppery Dishes"

When at the Tenth Congress, two years after the death of Sverdlov, Zinoviev and others, not without a hidden thought of the struggle against me, supported the candidacy of Stalin for General Secretary — that is, placed him de jure in the position which Sverdlov had occupied de facto — Lenin spoke in a small circle against this plan, expressing his fear that "this cook will prepare only **peppery dishes**." That phrase alone, taken in connection with the character of Sverdlov, shows us the differences between the two types of organizers: the one tireless in smoothing over conflicts, easing the work of the Collegium, and the other a specialist in **peppery dishes** — not even afraid to spice them with actual poison.

- "On the Suppressed Testament of Lenin (December 1932)."  
<https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1932/12/lenin.htm>

The necessity of removing the boss who was specializing in **peppery dishes** became clear to Lenin immediately after his return to work.

- Ibid.

In 1921, warning his most intimate comrades against electing Stalin as general secretary, Lenin said, "This cook will prepare only **peppery dishes**."

- "Some Results of the Stalin Amalgam" WL T '34-'35; also <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1935/01/amalgam.htm>

From being the instrument of the revolution, the G.P.U. has become the instrument of the soviet aristocracy, the personal instrument of Stalin about whom Lenin warned in 1922: "This cook will prepare only peppery dishes."

- "The Moscow 'Confessions'" 18 Dec. 1936

In 1922, when Stalin was first elected general secretary of the party, Lenin remarked warningly to a small circle: "This cook will give us only **peppery dishes**."

- "Is Stalin Weakening or the Soviets?" January 1932. WLT 1932 p. 38.

True to his evaluation of people and circumstances, Lenin in March 1922 spoke out decisively against the appointment of Stalin as general secretary ("that cook will make only **peppery dishes**")...

- "From the Archives," Sept. 1932 WLT p. 208.

Lenin saw the democratization of the administration as the most important task of the dictatorship. "Every cook must learn how to govern." The process that has taken place is quite the reverse. The number of administrators did not grow to include "every cook"; it constricted instead to a single chef, and at that a specialist in **peppery dishes** only.

- "Alarm Signal!" March 3, 1933. WLT 1932 p. 112.

In 1921, warning his most intimate comrades against electing Stalin as general secretary, Lenin said, "This cook will prepare only **peppery**

**dishes."**

- "Some Results of the Stalin Amalgam." January 12, 1935. WLT 1934-35 p. 207.

You may remember that in 1921 Lenin had strongly advised the party against electing Stalin to the post of general secretary. "This cook" — Lenin literally said — "will prepare only **spicy dishes**." In any case, Lenin could not at that moment have had the slightest idea of just how spicy this cook's dishes would be.<sup>2</sup>

- "Stalin Is Not Everything." August 23, 1936. WLT 1935-36 p. 411.

From being the instrument of the revolution, the GPU has become the instrument of the Soviet aristocracy, the personal instrument of Stalin, about whom Lenin warned in 1922: "This cook will prepare only **peppery dishes**."

- "Shame!" December 18, 1936. WLT 1935-36 p. 496.

It is astounding how persistent Zinoviev was, as he pulled Kamenev along, in preparing over a number of years his own tragic finale. If not for Zinoviev's initiative, Stalin would have hardly become the General Secretary of the Party. Zinoviev was bent on utilizing the episodic trade union discussion in the winter of 1920-21 for a further struggle against me. Stalin appeared to him — and not without foundation — the man most suitable for the behind-the-scenes work. It was during these very days that Lenin, objecting to the appointment of Stalin as General Secretary, made his famous remark: "I do not advise it — this cook will prepare only **peppery dishes**." What prophetic words!

- "Pages from Trotsky's Journal," 1936-1937.

In March 1921 Lenin had already given the advice not to choose Stalin as the general secretary since, as he put it, "This cook will prepare only **peppery dishes**."

... Thus the Kremlin "cook" came to the most peppery "dishes" in the form of the Moscow trials.

- "Statement to Journalists on the Dewey Verdict." December 13, 1937. WLT 1937-38 p. 98-9.

Lenin did not trust Stalin in 1921, when Zinoviev recommended him for the post of general secretary. Lenin gave the following warning: "I don't advise this. This cook will prepare only **peppery dishes**."

- "Behind the Moscow Trials." March 3, 1938. WLT 1937-38 p. 203.

It was precisely at this point that Stalin brought into complete view the dangerous qualities which Lenin had warned against: rudeness, disloyalty, propensity to abuse power. The "cook of the Kremlin" had indeed prepared **the most peppery of dishes**.

- Ibid. p. 205.

... why it was precisely Stalin ("the cook of **peppery dishes**," according to Lenin's definition as far back as March 1921) who became head of the avid and conservative caste of usurpers of the revolution;

- "The Priests of Half-Truth." March 19, 1938. WLT 1937-38 p. 280.

Lenin proposed in his testament (January 1923) to remove Stalin from the post of general secretary of the party, giving as his reasons Stalin's rudeness, disloyalty, and tendency to abuse power. Two years earlier Lenin warned: "This cook will prepare only **peppery dishes**." No one in the party liked or respected Stalin... That is why the cook of **peppery dishes** became the leader of the totalitarian bureaucracy.

- "The Comintern and the GPU. The Attempted Assassination of May 24 and the Communist Party." WLT 1939-40 p. 349-350.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The Russian term is "ostrye bliuda," literally "sharp dishes," meaning "spicy" or "peppery." For some reason the translators used the term "spicy"

here but "peppery" elsewhere.

<sup>3</sup> his statement is also to be found three times in Chapter 12 of the English language edition of Trotsky's biography of Stalin. But this book was not completed at Trotsky's death. It was completed by Charles Malamuth, who was later criticized for adding materials of his own. (My thanks to David Walters for this information.) It is not in the Russian version edited by Yuri Fel'shtinsky from, he says, the copy in the TA. But of course it would not be, for that volume only goes up to the year 1917.

Trotsky made this claim many times. He vacillates between 1921 and 1922 as the year Lenin supposedly said it. Trotsky also vacillates over the question of to whom Lenin made this remark. Trotsky wrote "in a small circle," "his most intimate comrades," "his famous remark," "warned the part," "to a small circle," "spoke out decisively," "strongly advised the party," "gave the following warning."

Trotsky always claimed that others besides himself had heard Lenin make this remark. His accounts differ significantly about who and how many those people were, and never specifically name anybody but himself. In addition, only Trotsky records it, no one else. These considerations might provide reason enough to reject this oft-repeated story of Trotsky's as a lie.

There is a yet more essential point: After his initial version of the story in October 1927 Trotsky usually ties it to the discussion around the choice of Stalin as General Secretary of the Party, which took place at the XI Party Congress in March-April 1922. This is how we know Trotsky was lying. First, because initially even Trotsky did not connect the story with Stalin's appointment. Second, because, by all accounts, it was Lenin himself who proposed Stalin as General Secretary.

Yuri Fel'shtinsky is a prominent and devoted Russian Trotskyist scholar who, predictably, hates Stalin. Fel'shtinsky writes:

Отметим, что до начала болезни Ленина никаких политических разногласий между Лениным и Сталиным не было. (Vozhdy 250)

Translated:

We note that before the onset of Lenin's illness there were no political disagreements between Lenin and Stalin.

The XI Party Congress took place immediately *before* Lenin became ill.

Fel'shtinsky does not cite any other source for the "peppery dishes" statement. In fact he does not endorse it himself but merely quotes Trotsky's text (p. 274). He then goes on to quote (p. 333, note 5) Lenin's ringing endorsement of Stalin at this 11th Party Congress from the Russian edition of Lenin's *Complete Collected Works*:

Вот Преображенский здесь легко бросал, что Сталин в двух комиссариатах А кто не грешен из нас. Кто не брал несколько обязанностей сразу. Да и как можно делать иначе. Что мы можем сейчас сделать, чтобы было обеспечено существующее положение в Наркомнаце, чтобы разбираться со всеми туркестанскими, кавказскими и прочими вопросами. Ведь это все политические вопросы. А разрешать эти вопросы необходимо, это вопросы, которые сотни лет занимали европейские государства, которые в ничтожной доле разрешены в демократических республиках. Мы их разрешаем, и нам нужно, чтобы у нас был человек, к которому любой из представителей наций мог бы пойти и подробно рассказать, в чем дело. Где его разыскать. Я думаю, и Преображенский не мог бы назвать другой кандидатуры, кроме товарища Сталина.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Lenin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii* 45, p. 122. At [http://ngllib-free.ru/book\\_view.jsp?idn=001579&page=122&format=html](http://ngllib-free.ru/book_view.jsp?idn=001579&page=122&format=html) Also in the transcript of the 11<sup>th</sup> Party Congress: *[[cyrillic]]*, 1936, p. 150 (March 27). This is the first edition of the transcript of this Party Congress (Worldcat Accession Number 83723613).

Translated:

Here is Preobrazhensky casually tossing out the remark that Stalin is head of two commissariats. But who among us is not guilty of the same thing? Who has not taken several responsibilities at the same time? Moreover, how could it be otherwise? What can we do now to



guarantee the current situation in the Commissariat of Nationalities, to deal with all the Turkestan, Caucasus, and other questions. For these are all political problems. And it is essential to resolve these problems, these are problems that have occupied European powers for centuries and which are scarcely resolved in the democratic republics. We are resolving them and we need a man whom any of the national representatives can approach and explain in detail what is the matter. Where can we find him? I think that even Preobrazhensky could not name another candidate besides comrade Stalin.

<sup>5</sup> А. Авторханов Загадки смерти Сталина .. Барнаул. Алтайское книжное издательство, 1993. At - <http://mario21.narod.ru/docs/stalin/7.htm> Also in *Novyi Mir* 1991, p. 205.

Abdurakhman Avtorkhanov, a ferociously anti-Stalin writer, stated that Stalin was elected General Secretary on April 3, 1922, "at Lenin's proposal."

Еще при первом послесталинском "коллективном руководстве" вышел Энциклопедический словарь, где в биографии Сталина прямо и недвусмысленно написано следующее: и После XI съезда партии, 3 апреля 1922 пленум Центрального Комитета партии по предложению В. И. Ленина избрал И. В. Сталина генеральным секретарем ЦК партии. На этом посту И. в. Сталин работал до октября 1952, а затем до конца своей жизни являлся секретарем ЦК" (разрядка моя. - А. А.) (Энциклопедический словарь в 3 томах. М. 1955, т. 111, стр. 310).<sup>5</sup>

Translated:

During the first post-Stalin period of "collective leadership" the *Encyclopedic dictionary* was published, where in the biography of Stalin we find written, directly and unequivocally, the following: "After the XI Congress of the Party, on April 3, 1922, the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party, according to the proposal of V.I. Lenin, elected J.V. Stalin as General Secretary of the CC of the Party. J.V. Stalin worked at this post until October 1952, and then until his

death was Secretary of the CC" (emphasis mine — A.A.). —  
[*Encyclopedic dictionary in 3 volume*. Moscow, 1955, vol. 3, p. 310].

Molotov agrees and even says that Lenin worked hard to overcome objections to this proposal.

[[cyrillic]].<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Felix Chuev, *Molotov. Poluderkhzhavniy Vlastelin*, pp. 239-241. This is an expanded version of the book published in English as *Molotov Remembers*.

Translated:

Unexpectedly, in 1921, I became a Secretary of the Central Committee. The Secretariat was comprised of three secretaries: Molotov, Yaroslavsky, and Mikhailov. As has been published, Molotov was executive secretary. There was not at that time a first or General secretary but an executive secretary. Reception days were made public. I met with Lenin. We discussed a number of questions and then walked around the Kremlin. He said: "But I advise you: as Secretary of the CC you must take care of the political work. Leave, all the technical work to your second-in-command and assistants. Here we had until now Krestinsky as Secretary of the Central Committee but he was a business manager, not Secretary of the CC! He occupied himself with every trivial matter but not with politics!"

This was after the X Congress of the Party. And at the XI Congress appeared the so-called "list of ten" — the names of proposed members of the Central Committee, Lenin's supporters. And besides Stalin's name in Lenin's hand was written: "General Secretary." Lenin organized a factional meeting of the "ten." Somewhere near Sverdlovsk Hall of the Kremlin I found a room. They were persuaded: this is a factional meeting, Trotskyists, workers' opposition, the Democratic Centralists — don't invite them, only the first supporters of the "ten," that is, the Leninists. I gathered, I think, about twenty people from among the strongest organizations before the vote. Stalin even reproached Lenin, saying that we are having a secret or semi-secret meeting during the convention, something factional is taking place,

and Lenin said: "Comrade Stalin, you are an old, experienced factionalist! Have no doubt, we can't do otherwise now. I want everyone to be well prepared for the vote, it is necessary to warn the comrades to vote for this list without amendment! We need to carry through with the list of 'ten' as a whole. There is a great danger that if people vote for individuals they will say: Here is a good writer, we need him; this is a good speaker — they will tear up this sheet and once again we will not have the majority. And then, how can we lead!"

But at the X Congress, Lenin had banned factions.

And they voted with this note in brackets. **Stalin became General Secretary. This cost Lenin a lot of work.** But he, of course, had thought through the question deeply enough and made it clear who to rely on. Lenin apparently decided that I was not enough of a politician, but he left me as a Secretary and in the Politburo and made Stalin General Secretary. He, of course, was preparing himself, feeling his sickness. Did he see Stalin as his successor? I think you can count on that. But what was the need for a General Secretary? There had never been one. But gradually Stalin's authority rose and grew into something much larger than Lenin had anticipated or even thought desirable. But of course it was impossible to foresee everything, and under conditions of sharp struggle an active group began to form itself around Stalin — Dzerzhinsky, Kuibyshev, Frunze and others, very different people.

Robert Service cites Molotov here, and does not question what he says. For Service, Lenin either "chose Stalin" or "supported a proposal" by someone else.

He [Lenin] was eager to have Stalin back at his side. Having recruited him to the Leninist cause in the trade union dispute, Lenin supported a proposal to make him General Secretary of the Russian Communist Party.

Conventionally it has been supposed that Stalin was put in office because he was an experienced bureaucrat with an unusual capacity for not being bored by administrative work. The facts do not bear this

out.... The reason why Lenin chose Stalin was less administrative than political. He wanted one of his allies in a post crucial to the maintenance of his policies. (Stalin 189-190)

Other sources agree that at the XI Party Congress Lenin nominated Stalin to the post of General Secretary. Stalin was formally appointed on April 3, 1922, at the first meeting of the new Central Committee after the Congress. In fact I cannot find any source that disagrees — except, implicitly, Trotsky, and Trotskyist writers who just echo what Trotsky later wrote.

Trotsky contradicted himself about when Lenin supposedly made the remark, under what circumstances, and who heard him make it. Therefore the "peppery dishes" story is a lie. But Trotsky told it over and over again, many times over a number of years. Eventually he even called it Lenin's "famous remark." This is a propaganda technique: claim the remark is so "famous" that "everybody knows it" and no evidence for it is necessary.

It's easy to see why Trotsky liked this story and wanted others to believe it. It made himself look close to Lenin, part of the "small circle," one of Lenin's "most intimate comrades." It made Stalin look like someone whom Lenin opposed from a date much earlier than 1923, when Lenin was very ill.

But how could Trotsky think that he could get away with repeating this lie over and over again? For one thing, it would not have been easy to refute it in the 1930s. The proceedings of the XI Congress were not published until 1936. Very few people would have bothered to check them. The rest of the sources we cite here were not to be published for many years.

We should also consider to whom Trotsky was addressing this lie and the other lies we document in this work. This was, in the main, his supporters, the Trotskyists. Who else was reading Trotsky's materials? (Trotsky also wrote articles for the capitalist press. Naturally, whatever lies he told in his own publications had to be repeated there too. But readers of the capitalist press were not his primary audience.)

Trotsky's followers *believed* Trotsky. Virtually no one else did. And Trotsky wanted his own followers to believe that he, not Stalin, had been Lenin's

closest associate. Trotsky's essays were published, in the main, in Russian in his *Biulleten' Oppozitsii*. Many were translated and distributed in pamphlets and in newspapers but always by Trotsky's own supporters.

This specific lie of Trotsky's is relatively easy to expose today. But we can't find that it has been exposed before. One might think that members of the Trotskyist movement might have done so. After all, few other people in the world are really interested in Trotsky, really motivated to study his works carefully and use them in judging Soviet history. We noted above that Yuri Fel'shtinsky noticed this incongruity between Trotsky's "peppery dishes" tale and the reality that Lenin had proposed Stalin as General Secretary. But even Fel'shtinsky, surely among the most capable Trotskyist historians today, did not come out and state: "Trotsky must have been lying; he must have fabricated this story," etc.

Whatever the difficulty of uncovering this specific lie of Trotsky's, it is much harder to uncover those of Trotsky's lies we discuss and utilize as evidence in this book. We were only able to find them because we were looking for them. We were guided by the hypothesis that Trotsky often lied. This hypothesis suggested itself to us after studying the research of Pierre Broué, Arch Getty, and Sven-Eric Holmström. They had uncovered the fact that Trotsky lied about important matters.

At length it occurred to us to wonder: "If Trotsky lied about these things, maybe he also lied about other important things too?" Only then did we begin to look for other lies by Trotsky. And, sure enough, we discovered some.

## **The Structure of This Book**

Trotsky's "peppery dishes" lie is, in terms of its practical impact, not very important. I include it here because it illustrates an interesting fact about Trotsky that we will see in other contexts many times: Trotsky lied a lot!

Trotsky was not afraid to lie even when it was not important, at that moment, to tell that particular lie. After all, in telling this "cook...peppery dishes" like Trotsky took some chance that his lie would be discovered. But

what did he stand to gain by telling it that he would not have gained if he had not told it? Nothing, as far as I can determine. If he had never told this particular lie no one would have missed it because no one would have expected it in the first place. Probably no one became a Trotskyist, or gave money to the Trotskyist movement, just because of that story. The most one can say for this fable is that it is consistent with Trotsky's overall project of presenting himself as Lenin's closest confidant, his best student, and therefore his rightful heir.

Perhaps this is the reason that Trotsky was willing to lie repeatedly even when there was little gain to be had and despite the fact that there was always a risk of being exposed as a liar. And that was a possibility. Anyone who found that speech of Trotsky's in the November 2, 1927, issue of *Pravda* and compared the "cook...peppery dishes" version there with the way Trotsky told it repeatedly during the 1930s could easily see that Trotsky had changed his story.

This is a very interesting fact about Trotsky. It is a kind of bravado or arrogance: "I can make stuff up, and people will believe it." How much more, therefore, should we expect Trotsky to be willing to lie when there *was* something important at stake, something to be gained by lying and/or to be lost by not lying? Under such circumstances we should expect Trotsky to lie readily, whenever he thought it expedient to do so. And that is exactly what we have found.

Part One of this book reproduces the process of checking up on, of verifying, Moscow Trials testimony. The rich archival materials now available to us make this possible. For the first time we do not have to either accept or reject the Moscow Trials testimony on the word of others, whether pro- or anti-Stalin. For the first time we can independently verify some important testimony — statement, fact-claims — made by Moscow Trials defendants. We will go through this process, studying all the evidence in detail.

An important part of the evidence we draw on is Trotsky's own proven lies. Both parts of this book may be read as an examination of those of Trotsky's lies that we can now recognize as such and the beginning of the task of

examining what they imply for our understanding of the history of that time.

Our conclusion is unequivocal: on the evidence, by means of an objective verification process, the only legitimate conclusion is that the Moscow Trials testimony is genuine, in that it represents what the defendants themselves chose to say. This conclusion will be unacceptable to some readers on political grounds. We will consider that fact as well.

Part Two is the discussion of some interesting and bold lies. I will argue that, together with other evidence, Trotsky's lies reveal much about his clandestine conspiratorial activities. Moreover, what they reveal is consistent both with Moscow Trials testimony — testimony whose validity we can now accept, having tested and proven it in Part One — and with other primary source evidence.

Trotsky's lies — those discovered first by others like Broué, Getty, and Holmström, and some that I have discovered — are central to both parts of the book. The book as a whole can be read as a commentary on some very interesting falsehoods that Trotsky chose to propagate, and which he was, on the whole, successful at getting others to believe. Indeed, they are still widely believed today.

The facts uncovered and discussed in this book should be of great interest to those who wish to learn the truth about the high politics of the Soviet Union during the 1930s, and also those who have a genuine interest in the prominent political actors of that period, including Trotsky himself.

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Some quotations are repeated in different chapters. I have done this because many readers will read the chapters individually, rather than read the book from beginning to end. I wish the chapters to be as understandable as possible if read in this way.

All boldface emphases are by me unless otherwise noted.

My special thanks to Bill Sacks, whose advice and criticism has been more helpful than I can truly say; to Mike Bessler, my tireless publisher, editor, and friend; and to Dr. Susana M. Sotillo, incisive critic, great scholar, and supportive *compañera*.



**Part One. Trotsky's Lies and The Moscow Trials  
Testimony As Evidence.**

## Chapter 1. *The Moscow Trials As Evidence*

Our task in this first section of this book is to determine the reliability of the confessions and statements — the fact-claims — made by defendants at the three Moscow Trials of 1936, 1937, and 1938 by comparing those fact-claims with other, independent evidence.

### Source Criticism of Evidence

When confronted with a body of testimony like the Moscow Trials transcripts we need to figure out how to deal with it. The Moscow Trials testimony is evidence. It can and must be evaluated as a source like all evidence should be. All evidence must be evaluated according to objective criteria, a process often called source criticism. This applies to the Moscow Trials testimony no more and no less than to all other evidence used in any kind of research, from scientific to historical.

One objective procedure, in this and in all such cases, is to begin by studying the Moscow Trials testimony carefully, reading it many times. This is done very rarely if at all. The logical fallacy at play here is that of *petitio principii* — in plain English, "begging the question," or "assuming that which must be proven, not assumed." The fact is this: there is not now nor has there ever been any evidence that the Moscow Trials defendants were in reality innocent, compelled or persuaded by some means (threats to them or against their families, loyalty to the Party, etc.) to testify falsely.

This false hypothesis and logical fallacy result from, are in service to and under the domination of, what I have called the "anti-Stalin paradigm." Under its influence the Moscow Trials testimony is declared to be false *a priori*, without any attempt to evaluate it, to subject it to source criticism in the same way as all historical evidence should be evaluated.

Years of study have convinced me that the reason for this striking failure on the part of generations of historians of the Stalin period of history is fear. If the Moscow Trials transcripts were shown to be reliable as evidence, the "anti-Stalin paradigm" of Soviet history — and therefore of world history

— would be dismantled, with consequences for the dominant paradigm of world history too.

This would be unacceptable to the controlling authorities in the field of Soviet history, who are closely tied to political authorities in many countries because of the hostility between the communist movement and the capitalist powers. The field of Soviet history itself was instituted in the West to be in service to the political project of discrediting and destroying the communist movement.

There is no other way to account for the nonsense that dominates in the field of Soviet history of the Stalin period and about the person of Joseph Stalin himself — for example, the common lapse by experienced scholars into well-known logical fallacies, unsupported and unquestioned assumptions, assertions without proof, the language of vituperation and moral condemnation — except by attributing it to the overwhelming ideological influence of the obligatory "anti-Stalin paradigm."

The Moscow Trials are routinely *regarded* as fabrications concocted by the NKVD investigators, the Soviet Prosecution, and ultimately by Stalin. It is generally *assumed* that the defendants confessed to crimes that they did not commit; that the confessions were forced upon them, dictated, or scripted; that the innocent defendants were forced to falsely testify by threats of some kind against themselves or their families. Because there has long been a "consensus" that the Moscow Trials were fabrications and the testimony given there is false, the more than 1500 pages of the trial transcripts have been little studied and seldom even read.

Once the Trials transcripts have been studied carefully, the next step should be to compare the contents with other evidence now available in order to determine whether the trials testimony can be either confirmed or contradicted by other evidence. I have set about to do this. I have found that every time I can check a statement made at the Moscow Trials against evidence from outside the trials, it turns out that the Moscow Trial testimony or charge is verified.

This means that we have no objective basis to reject the confessions made at the Moscow Trials as false or fabricated. And this means that the

Moscow Trials testimony is in fact what it appears to be — evidence.

### **Source Criticism of the Moscow Trials Testimony**

In this and in all source criticism the student must begin by studying the evidence, beginning by reading it carefully and repeatedly. We must attempt to determine the reliability of the Moscow Trials testimony to see whether some of the fact-claims contained in it can be verified in other sources that are independent of it. When a number of *independent* sources agree on the same fact-claim, the likelihood that the fact-claim is true increases dramatically. If we can verify a number of fact-claims made by Moscow Trials defendants through independent sources, then we have established that the Moscow Trials testimony should be considered to be legitimate evidence. This is the process we have undertaken to carry out in the first section of the present book.

A few scholars who believe in the "prosecution-fabrication" theory and have studied parts, at least, of the testimony have seriously distorted that testimony in an attempt to force it to fit the Procrustean bed of the anti-Stalin paradigm. In the 1960s and 1970s Stephen F. Cohen studied Nikolai Bukharin's testimony in the Third Moscow Trial of March 1938. Cohen proposed a novel conclusion: that Bukharin had confessed only in very general terms to crimes that he did not specify but had refused to confess to any specific crimes.

Some years ago Vladimir Bobrov and I studied Cohen's argument and evidence. In our article we demonstrate that Cohen is completely incorrect. In his trial testimony Bukharin did indeed confess to a number of very serious, and the important point here, very specific crimes. At the same trial Bukharin stubbornly proclaimed himself innocent of other very serious crimes with which the Prosecution charged him. We argued there that, under the influence of the predominant "anti-Stalin" paradigm, Cohen seriously misread Bukharin's testimony. (Furr and Bobrov, Cohen)

Yet Cohen's fallacious characterization of Bukharin's testimony has been widely accepted as accurate. Even Mikhail Gorbachev's Politburo commission appointed to study and to find evidence to support Gorbachev's

predetermined decision to "rehabilitate" Bukharin was misled by Cohen's false conclusion. One of the commission members, P.N. Demichev, said:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

If we consider this carefully, in essence he [Bukharin] denied everything. (RKEB 3 40)

In 2010 Matthew Lenoe concluded that Genrikh Iagoda, another defendant in the Third Moscow Trial, later retracted the confessions that he had made prior to the trial and earlier in it. Our study of Lenoe's argument published in 2013 shows that Lenoe seriously misunderstood Iagoda's testimony, and that in fact Iagoda did not at all retract his confession of guilt. We concluded that Lenoe forced his conclusions into the predetermined framework of the anti-Stalin paradigm, seriously distorting Iagoda's testimony in the process. (Furr, Kirov Ch. 15)

Cohen's and Lenoe's misreadings of the trial testimony can be best explained by the power of the anti-Stalin paradigm. *The fact is this: there is not now, nor has there ever been, any evidence that the Moscow Trials defendants were in reality innocent, compelled or persuaded by some means (threats to them or against their families, loyalty to the Party, etc.) to testify falsely.*

### **The Role of Logical Fallacies**

The out-of-hand rejection of the Moscow Trials testimony as evidence rests on the naïve acceptance of a number of logical fallacies. Among the most common are the following:

\* The Moscow Trials testimony has been *assumed* to be false. This is the fallacy of *petitio principii* — "begging the question," or "assuming that which must be proven, not assumed." No evidence, in any scientific inquiry, should ever be either accepted or rejected without critical examination.

\* The appeal to "expert" authority. The truth is never constituted by a consensus of authorities or experts," no matter how many of them there are, still less by the consensus of anticommunist and Trotskyist "authorities."

This fallacy is close to the "where there's smoke there's fire" or "hasty conclusion" fallacy where "what everybody knows" substitutes for evidence.

\* The argument from incredulity. This takes the form: "The charges against the defendants at the Moscow Trials are absurd, therefore they are false (or more likely to be false)." This is equivalent to saying: "I *consider* these charges absurd, therefore they are false." This is a statement about the person making the statement, not a statement about the charges in the Moscow Trials. Likewise, it would be invalid to say: "The charges against the defendants are credible, therefore they are true (or more likely to be true.)"

\* Another form this fallacy takes is the "failure to persuade": "I am not persuaded by your argument, therefore it is wrong (or, more likely to be wrong, etc.)."

\* The argument from ignorance. This fallacy often takes the form: "This statement has not been proven to be true, therefore it is false (or "likely to be false," or "therefore we can assume that it is false until proven otherwise.")

\* The "*ad hominem*" argument. Like practitioners of any scientific inquiry historians are supposed to strive to be objective. Historians are supposed to be on guard against their own biases so as not to be swayed by them. Yet it is very common for historians of the Stalin period to continually apply derogatory moral terms to Stalin and other leading figures. Most historians of the Stalin period do not make any effort even to disguise their own bias and subjectivity, let alone to make allowances for it by adopting strategies to minimize the effects that their biases will have on their research.

\* The "demand for certainty." A common form that lack of objectivity takes is the demand for "certainty." For example, we have a great deal of circumstantial evidence that Leon Trotsky did in fact collaborate with

German and Japanese intelligence. How can this evidence be accounted for, except to conclude that Trotsky did in fact collaborate? The most common form is denial. "There is no certainty, therefore it is false."

\* "It might be a lie." It is not a refutation of a fact-claim to state that it "might be a lie." At any time any person might be deliberately lying, making false statements in good faith, or telling the truth. The same is true for any document. No evidence should be rejected because it "might be a lie." Instead, the researcher must try to verify the fact-claims in the document as far as possible.

\* The "lack of material evidence." Leon Trotsky was the first to state that the lack of material evidence at the Moscow Trials helped to disprove the charges. This argument has been repeated by many historians since.

The logic is patently false. Any police force capable of compelling seasoned revolutionaries to confess in open court to crimes they did not commit would also be able to forge incriminating documents and force the defendants to swear that they were genuine. Moreover, in a conspiracy seasoned revolutionaries would either destroy incriminating documents or, more likely, would never commit their plans to paper in the first place. Therefore not the absence but the *presence* of substantive "material evidence" in a case involving a serious conspiracy would logically raise suspicions of fakery.

### **The Need For, and Lack of, Objectivity**

Everybody has biases. But everybody can learn to be objective in studying any subject, whether it be physics or history. The techniques are basically similar. Objectivity as a scientific method is a practice of "distrust of the self." One can learn to be objective by training oneself to become aware of, to articulate, and then to doubt one's own preconceived ideas. One must be automatically suspicious of evidence that tends to confirm one's own preconceived ideas, prejudices, and preferences. One must learn to give an especially generous reading, to search especially hard for, to lean over backwards to consider, evidence and arguments that contradict one's own preconceived ideas.

This is simply what every bourgeois detective in every detective story knows. As Sherlock Holmes said:

It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence. It biases the judgment. (Conan Doyle, *Study in Scarlet*)

In other words: keep your mind free of precipitate conclusions. Get the facts before you form your hypotheses. Be ready to abandon a hypothesis that does not explain the established facts.

If one does not begin one's research with a determined attempt to be objective, accompanied by definite strategies to minimize one's own biases, then one cannot and will not discover the truth. Put colloquially: if you don't start out to look for the truth you will not stumble across it by accident along the way, and what you do find will not be the truth.

This principle is well known. Therefore the real purpose of most research into Soviet history is *not* to discover the truth. Instead it is to arrive at politically acceptable conclusions and to disregard the evidence when that evidence does not support those politically acceptable conclusions. This is the "anti-Stalin paradigm."

The fallacies cited above are widely known. How is it possible that they are so commonly applied to the Moscow Trials testimony by scholars and other educated persons? I believe this is due to the power of the "anti-Stalin paradigm." Stalin has been so maligned, by so many "experts" and for so long a time, that many people believe "where there's smoke, there's fire" — "there must be something to this." This is all wrong.

There is no substitute for evidence. In this study we examine the evidence and draw conclusions from the evidence alone. This is the only rationally defensible way of proceeding, in history as in any other field of scientific investigation.

### **Verifying the Moscow Trials Transcripts as Evidence**

What's the historian's job? Many people would probably say: To find out what "really" happened, or what "probably" happened. I think this is the



wrong question, leading to a wrong method.

What's the "right question"? To formulate a hypothesis. To ask: "What hypothesis best accounts for the evidence that we have?"

Concerning the Moscow Trials testimony we have considered two possible hypothesis:

- The hypothesis that the Moscow Trials testimony is a fraud, a fabrication by the investigation and the prosecution.
- The hypothesis that the Moscow Trials testimony is what it purports to be; that the defendants testified as they chose to testify and were not forced to testify falsely.

I chose to test the second hypothesis because in the course of my research on Soviet history I had run across a lot of evidence that appeared consistent with it. I have never encountered any evidence that appeared consistent with the first hypothesis. Therefore it appeared to me that the second hypothesis would be more fruitful. I present the results of my study in this first section of this book.

*Every time we can check a statement made in Moscow Trials testimony against independent evidence, we find that the Moscow Trials testimony or charge is verified.* This means that we have no objective basis to reject the confessions made at the Moscow Trials as false or fabricated. And this means that the Moscow Trials testimony is in fact what it appears to be — evidence.

I came to adopt this hypothesis in much the same way Stephen Jay Gould, in his essay "Dinosaur in a Haystack," describes how his colleague Peter Ward decided to test the "Alvarez hypothesis," the so-called Cretaceous-Tertiary catastrophic extinction that contradicted the hitherto widely accepted theory of the gradual dying out of so many life-forms about 60 million years ago.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Stephen Jay Gould, "Dinosaur in a Haystack" *Natural History* 101 (March 1992): 2-13. It is widely available online, including at <http://www.inf.fu-berlin.de/lehre/SS05/efs/materials/Dinosaur-Leviathan.pdf>

In the course of reading many documents from various archives for other research projects I had identified a number that appeared to provide evidence that verified testimony by defendants in the Moscow Trials. It seemed to me that more such documentary evidence might well be found if I actually set out to look for it. I also realized that, if no one ever set about looking for it, it would probably never be found and we would never know. The fact that we have formed this hypothesis does not at all mean that we have predetermined the result of our research. Some hypothesis or "theory" is a necessary precondition to any inquiry. Gould reminds us of Darwin's perceptive statement made to Henry Fawcett in 1861:

How odd it is that anyone should not see that all observation must be for or against some view if it is to be of any service!

The present study is a "test" in Gould's sense: "a fine example of theory" — Gould means "hypothesis" here — "confirmed by evidence that no one ever thought of collecting before the theory itself demanded such a test."

I have also been mindful of Gould's caution that a test does not prejudice the inquiry itself:

Please note the fundamental difference between demanding a test and guaranteeing the result. The test might just as well have failed, thus dooming the theory. Good theories invite a challenge but do not bias the outcome.

In the first section of this book we undertake to evaluate the Moscow Trials testimony with the view to verifying, or disproving, its validity as evidence. Our first step was to carefully study the transcripts of the three Moscow Trials of August 1936, January 1937, and March 1938. Our next step was to compare the fact-claims made in these transcripts with other evidence now available. Our goal has been to determine whether the trials testimony can be either confirmed or contradicted by other evidence.

## **"Rehabilitations"**

By the final years of the existence of the Soviet Union while Mikhail Gorbachev was head of state all the defendants in the Moscow Trials had been "rehabilitated" — declared to have been innocent victims of a frameup — by high-level government and Communist Party commissions and judicial bodies. Elsewhere we have shown that many of the "rehabilitations" of persons convicted and punished during the 1930s of crimes against the State are in fact fraudulent in nature. (Furr Khrushchev Lied 163-196)

Trotsky has been "rehabilitated" with respect to his exile to Siberia on December 31, 1927, his banishment from the USSR on January 10, 1929, and the removal of his Soviet citizenship and ban on returning to the country of February 20, 1932.<sup>2</sup> Trotsky and Sedov were not formally convicted of the crimes alleged in the three Moscow Trials because they were never brought to trial. The verdict in the First Moscow Trial of August 1936 stated only that they were "subject, in the event of their being discovered on the territory of the U.S.S.R., to immediate arrest and trial." (1936 Trial 180) Trotsky and Sedov never returned to the USSR and so were never tried and convicted of any crime. Trotsky and Sedov have been declared innocent *de facto* by implication: those through whom they were supposed to have worked have been declared innocent, so they are assumed to have been innocent as well.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *'Milaia moia resnichka. Sergei Sedov. Pis'ma iz ssylki.* Sbp. NITS "Memorial"; Hoover Institution Archives (Stanford university), 2006, p. 133. Online at <http://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfcd/auth/?t=page&num=1481>

<sup>3</sup> Trotsky's relatives and supporters reportedly advocated for his and his son Leon's "rehabilitation" during the Gorbachev years. But it soon became evident that the Soviet, and then the Russian, authorities were bent on demonizing all Bolshevik leaders, including those they later found to have been unjustly convicted. That would no doubt be the case with Trotsky, whose use of violence during the Civil War was notorious. Also, with the disappearance of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (it was declared illegal in 1991) Trotsky cannot be "reinstated in Party membership." The successor party to the CPSU, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, is firmly anti-Trotsky.

However, no evidence to support these decisions has ever been released. It seems safe to conclude that if any such exculpatory evidence did exist in Soviet archives it would have been found and published by now. But a great deal of evidence of Trotsky's and Sedov's *guilt*, rather than of their innocence, has been discovered and continues to be published. We will examine some of it in the present book and more of it in volume two of this study.

Today we have access to evidence that was not available to historians only a few years ago. We are no longer in the position of being forced to "believe" or "disbelieve" the testimony given at the Moscow Trials, Trotsky's denials, or the Gorbachev-era "rehabilitation" statements. We can now check many statements made by Moscow Trials defendants by comparing them to other evidence.

In addition to the Moscow trial testimony and Trotsky's own denials we now have more sources from both Soviet and non-Soviet evidence upon which we can draw. We'll discuss these sources in detail.

### **Non-Soviet Evidence**

The non-Soviet evidence will be of particular interest since it cannot have been fabricated by the Soviet investigation or prosecution. However, we do not mean to suggest that this evidence is more valid in any *objective* way than is the Soviet or partly Soviet evidence. It is *subjectively* more important to those people who have been influenced by the propaganda which has long contended that Soviet evidence is *ipso facto* of less validity because it "might have been fabricated" even when there is no evidence that fabrication has taken place. Non-Soviet evidence may *seem* to be "more credible" to many people that Soviet evidence does. This is, in fact, an example of the "argument from incredulity."

All evidence, regardless of its origins, must be studied carefully to determine whether it is valid or not. It is never the case that Soviet evidence is *ipso facto* less valid than non-Soviet evidence. In reality, both Soviet and non-Soviet evidence must be critically examined in the same way to determine its validity.

We will examine the following non-Soviet evidence:

- Documents from the Harvard Trotsky Archive.
- Valentin Astrov's 1989 and 1993 testimony concerning his January 1937 testimony, as well as that testimony itself which is not, of course, non-Soviet.
- Statements by NKVD defector Genrikh Smoilovich Liushkov to his Japanese handlers.
- The Mastys-Benes note of February, 1937.
- The memoir of Jules Humbert-Droz, published in Switzerland in 1971.
- The reports of Sedov confidant and NKVD spy Mark Zborowski to his Soviet handlers in 1937 and 1938.
- The testimony of John D. Littlepage and of Carroll G. Holmes.

## **Soviet Evidence**

There is a great deal of Soviet evidence that confirms the genuine character of the Moscow Trials. One rich source of such evidence is in the recent (2013) and hard-to-find volume *Politburo i Lev Trotskii. Tom 2*. In the second volume of the present work I will subject the several hundred documents in this volume to detailed examination.

Here we will consider some other documents of Soviet origin that confirm the genuineness of the testimony of the defendants in the Moscow Trials:

- The statement by Mikhail Frinovsky, the second-in-command to Nikolai Ezhov in the NKVD, of April 11, 1939.
- The appeals of their sentences by a number of the defendants in the Moscow Trials.
- Pretrial statements by Grigori Zinoviev.
- Evidence of Trotsky's collaboration with Germany and Japan confirming the genuine character of the Second and Third Moscow Trials since Trotsky was charged with these crimes there. We will examine this fascinating question in detail in volume two of the present study. Here we discuss only:
  - Marshall Semion Budyonny's letter to Marshal Kliment Voroshilov.

- The Arao Document.
- Nikolai Ustrialov's confessions.

## **Differential confessions**

Many Moscow Trials defendants stubbornly denied some of the accusations leveled at them by the Prosecution while confessing guilt to other serious crimes. The most famous example of such differential confessions is that of Bukharin, who confessed to a number of specific, serious crimes but spent much of his testimony and almost all of his final remarks stoutly rejecting his guilt in yet other serious crimes with which the prosecution had charged him. This itself is good evidence that Bukharin's confessions were not the result of force.

## **Evidence and Conspiracy**

The Oppositionist groups within the USSR, including the Trotskyists, and Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov who were outside the USSR, were engaged in conspiracies. The Trotsky archives at Harvard and the Hoover Institution have revealed some information about Trotsky's conspiracies during the 1930s. However, there is a great deal that these archives do not disclose to us. The Moscow Trials concern conspiracies carried on in secret, of which little — if, indeed, any — written documentation can be expected.

It would be absurd to blame Trotsky for using conspiratorial techniques in his conspiracy (many would blame him for the conspiracy, itself, however). But we must take these conspiratorial techniques fully into account when we discuss evidence. It is just as absurd to expect the same level of evidence in the case of a conspiracy as we would expect to find in documenting other kinds of historical events.

To those who refuse to accept the logic of the evidence we put the following question: What kind of evidence would you accept, from among the kinds of evidence that it is reasonable to expect might exist?

- There is a huge amount of Soviet evidence. No evidence exists that any of this Soviet evidence has been fabricated or faked.

- We have significant non-Soviet evidence that corroborates the Soviet evidence.
- Some of the non-Soviet evidence that corroborates the Soviet evidence is from the Harvard Trotsky Archive — from Trotsky and Sedov themselves.
- Trotsky's archive at Harvard has been purged of incriminating documents.
- Only Sedov and Trotsky knew the full extent of their conspiracy.

We will consider all of these points in the present book.

### **Significance of Our Results**

We can now verify many of the statements made in the testimony of Moscow Trials defendants. We can also show that, in a few cases, Moscow Trials defendants lied in their testimony. All the lies we have identified, with one exception, concealed important matters from the Prosecution. In each case (with the one exception mentioned) this appears to be an attempt by the defendant to shield himself in some way, not an attempt to confess to additional wrongdoing.

The one exception is the so-called "mercury affair" (*rtutnoe delo*) in the Third Moscow Trial. One of the defendants, P.P. Bulanov, confessed that he and former NKVD chief G.G. Iagoda had conspired to poison Nikolai, head of the NKVD, with mercury. The Prosecution in the Third Moscow Trial was indeed fooled. Subsequent investigation under Lavrenti Beria, the new head of the NKVD, uncovered the fact that Ezhov himself had instructed Bulanov to fabricate this lie in order to give himself, Ezhov, additional credibility. The "mercury affair" was indeed a fabrication foisted upon a Moscow Trials defendant by the NKVD. But it was done behind the backs of the Prosecution and, of course, of Stalin.

This first section of the present book is devoted to the source criticism of the Moscow Trials testimony. Our research has validated the Moscow Trials testimony as evidence. The implications of this fact for this study may be stated simply. There is no reason to believe that the defendants were forced to testify to matters they knew were false or, therefore, that the defendants

were innocent of the crimes to which they themselves confessed. Moscow Trials testimony may be cited as evidence alongside any other evidence.

In the following chapters we will examine fact-claims made by Moscow Trials defendants that can be checked in non-Soviet or Soviet sources now available. The chapters are organized around the examination of the non-trial evidence to be used as the control or "check" on the Trials testimony.

In this book we are primarily interested in this non-Trials evidence for the purpose of verifying the Trials testimony. However, we will also discuss other important aspects of the documents containing this non-Trials evidence. In many cases these documents are of great interest not only for their usefulness in providing a check on the Moscow Trials testimony, but as evidence in the investigation of other important events in Soviet history. We will provide some overview of the importance of this evidence in the investigation of these other important events as well.



## **Chapter 2. *Non-Soviet Evidence — The Harvard Trotsky Archive***

In 1939, 1940, and again in 1953 Leon Trotsky's archives were sold and transferred to Harvard University. Trotsky stipulated that the personal section remain closed until 40 years after his death. It was opened to researchers on January 2, 1980. (Van Heijenoort History)

Among the first to study its contents was Pierre Broué (1926-2005), at that time the foremost Trotskyist historian in the world. From 1980 until his death in 2005 Broué edited the journal *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* (hereafter CahLT) in which he published many articles outlining his discoveries in the Harvard Trotsky Archive (TA). His 1987 biography of Trotsky made some use of these discoveries, as did his 1993 biography of Leon Sedov.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Trotsky*. Paris: Fayard, 1987; *Léon Sedov. Fils de Trotsky, Victime de Staline*. Paris: Editions Ouvrières, 1993. A detailed discussion of Broué's life and activities can be read in the bio-bibliographical article "The Meaning of Pierre Broué (1926-2005). A biographical sketch." At [http://www.trotskyana.net/Trotskyists/Pierre\\_Broué/Pierre\\_Broué\\_Meaning.html](http://www.trotskyana.net/Trotskyists/Pierre_Broué/Pierre_Broué_Meaning.html) The publication *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* is discussed, with a table of contents of each issue, at [http://www.trotskyana.net/Research\\_facilities/Journals/journals.html#clt](http://www.trotskyana.net/Research_facilities/Journals/journals.html#clt)

Very soon after the TA was opened Broué and his team began to discover that Trotsky had deliberately lied in his published works. First they found evidence that the bloc of Oppositionists, including Trotskyists, Zinovievists, Rights, and others, had really existed. The activities of this bloc were the major allegation in all three of the Moscow Trials. Trotsky and Sedov always denied that any such bloc existed and claimed that it was an invention by Stalin. Broué identified documents in the TA that proved that Trotsky and Sedov had lied: the bloc had indeed existed.

In subsequent articles Broué disclosed other lies by Trotsky. Most of his evidence was found in the Harvard TA. Some of it came from the collection of Trotsky-Sedov correspondence in the Nicolaevsky Collection at the Hoover Institution.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This collection is outlined at this page:

[http://www.trotskyana.net/Research\\_facilities/PublicArchives\\_America/publicarchives\\_america.html#hoover](http://www.trotskyana.net/Research_facilities/PublicArchives_America/publicarchives_america.html#hoover)

Broué always claimed that these lies by Trotsky were of very limited significance. He insisted that Trotsky and Sedov lied only to protect those Trotskyists in the underground within the USSR. But in fact Broué never explored the significance of Trotsky's lies for evaluating the Moscow Trials testimony as evidence or for understanding Trotsky's activities generally. Like non-Trotskyist anticommunist researchers, he continued to assume, without evidence, that the Moscow Trials testimony was fundamentally false, coerced from innocent defendants by the NKVD investigators, by the Soviet prosecution, and therefore by Stalin

Broué wrote:

I think that the new data concerning the "Opposition bloc," the organization of two Communist blocs of Oppositions, the attempt to unify the Communist Opposition, definitively destroys all the legends and preconceived ideas about an all-mighty, blood-thirsty, machiavelian Stalin. The Soviet Union in the thirties was passing through a serious economic and political crisis. Stalin was more and more isolated and many people, including some from the ranks of privileged bureaucracy of which he was only the best expression and the unifier, began to think about the necessity of getting rid of him. The Moscow Trials were not a gratuitous crime committed in cold blood, but a counter-strike in a conflict which was really, as Trotskii wrote, "a preventative civil war." (Broué POS 110)

This remark by Broué is more than enigmatic. It begs the whole question: had the conspiracies alleged in the Moscow Trials really existed, or not? If, as Broué says here, the Moscow Trials were a "counterstroke," then does this not imply that the originating "stroke" was, or were, conspiracies by those who wanted to get rid of him (Stalin)? And since the evidence on which Broué based this paragraph was that of Trotsky's falsehoods, does that not mean that Trotsky was also a party to these conspiracies?

In this article we see Broué carefully approach the question of a completely new view of the Moscow Trials and the conspiracies alleged in them. But then Broué retreats. He never develops this idea. As far as we know, he never mentions it again.

In 1985 and 1986 American historian Arch Getty published the evidence, also discovered in the TA, that Trotsky and Sedov had lied about Trotsky's continued contact with some of his supporters within the USSR. Trotsky had either maintained or renewed relations with some of them long after he had claimed to have cut off all contact with them. Getty identified evidence of this in the TA.

Getty also discovered that the TA had been "purged" — materials had been removed. Getty logically concluded that these materials must have been incriminating, politically sensitive materials. Broué, who knew and referred to Getty's research, never mentioned this very important discovery by Getty. This is curious, since Broué had himself suggested that other materials had been removed from the TA. Later in this book we explore this pregnant omission of Broué's.

Most of the falsehoods by Trotsky that Broué discovered are directly or indirectly related to the Moscow Trials. Some of Trotsky's lies that we ourselves have discovered concern the Kirov Assassination of December 1, 1934. Trotsky's lies about the Kirov murder became relevant to the Moscow Trials subsequently, when members of the bloc of oppositionists confessed to having planned and executed Kirov's murder.

Broué's interest in Trotsky's and Sedov's falsehoods was curiously limited. We do not know why Broué never chose to explore the implications of Trotsky's lies. This is a striking omission, as we will point out in future chapters. It is possible that Broué sensed that the full implications of the lies by Trotsky and Sedov that he had discovered, plus those discovered by Getty, would necessitate a more radical revision of Trotsky's activities during the 1930s than he himself was prepared to face.

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In the following chapters we will demonstrate that the lies by Trotsky that Broué and Getty discovered, as well as some further lies discovered by Swedish scholar Sven-Eric Holmström and some that we ourselves have found, are directly relevant to our evaluation of the validity of the Moscow Trials testimony. Trotsky's falsehoods provide one of the major sources by which we can verify Moscow Trials testimony.

In addition, Trotsky's falsehoods provide important evidence about Trotsky's conspiracy within the USSR during the 1930s. We will also explore this topic in subsequent chapters.

### **Chapter 3. *Non-Soviet Evidence — The Bloc of Oppositions***

The earliest and most dramatic discovery emerged from the Harvard Trotsky Archive within months of its opening to researchers on January 2, 1980. This was the proof that the bloc of oppositions inside the Soviet Union had really exists. The existence of the bloc was the chief framework for the conspiracies charged against the defendants in all three Moscow trials. The bloc was the link among the different conspiratorial oppositionist groups in which the Moscow Trials defendants confessed membership.

Pierre Broué, whose team made this discovery, minimized its significance. He never explored the implications of his own discovery of the bloc's existence for our understanding of the Moscow Trials, of Trotsky's own activities, and of our understanding of the high politics of the Soviet Union during the 1930s. All researchers after Broué have either done likewise, like Vadim Rogovin, or have ignored the discovery altogether. Gorbachev's men in the USSR, then Russian and Western anticommunist researchers since 1991, have also ignored this important revelation.

In this chapter we outline the discovery of the bloc and the evidence for it, and explore its significance for our project of verifying the testimony at the Moscow Trials.

#### **The Bloc of Oppositions**

Defendants in all three Moscow trials testified that Trotskyists, Zinovievists, and other oppositionists inside the Soviet Union had formed a bloc and agreed to carry out assassinations (in Russian, to employ "terror") against Soviet leaders.

In the transcripts of each of the three Moscow Trials the word "bloc" occurs dozens of times. Here are just a few citations:

#### **First Moscow Trial**

The investigation has also established that the Zinovievites pursued their criminal terroristic practices in a direct **bloc** with the Trotskyites and with *L. Trotsky*, who is abroad. (1936 Trial 11)

The testimonies of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Evdokimov, Mrachkovsky, Bakayev and a number of others accused in the present case, have established beyond a doubt that the only motive for organizing the Trotskyite-Zinovievite **bloc** was their striving to seize power at all costs ... (12)

Another member of this centre, Reingold, during examination on July, 1936, testified:

"...The main thing on which all the members of the **bloc** agreed was... the recognition of the necessity of consolidating all forces to capture the Party leadership. I must admit that the fundamental aim of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite **bloc** was to remove by violence the leadership of the C.P.S.U. and the Soviet Government, and Stalin in the first place. At the end of 1932 the centre adopted a decision to organize the fight against the leadership of the C.P.S.U. and the Government by terroristic means. I know that the Trotskyite section of the **bloc** received instructions from L. D. Trotsky to adopt the path of terrorism and to prepare attempts on the life of Stalin." (Vol. XXVII, p. 52) (13)

VYSHINSKY: What was the attitude of the Trotskyite part of your **bloc** on the question of terrorism?

ZINOVIEV: In our negotiations on the formation of a united centre this question played a decisive part. By that time the so-called Zinovievite part of the **bloc** was fully ripe for such decisions.

VYSHINSKY: Did Smirnov display any activity in relation to this, or not?

ZINOVIEV: Smirnov, in my opinion, displayed more activity than any one else, and we regarded him as the undisputed head of the Trotskyite part of the **bloc**, as the man best informed about Trotsky's views, and fully sharing these views. (53)

KAMENEV: ...When we returned to Moscow, we made no change whatever in the basis of our **bloc**. On the contrary, we proceeded to press forward the terroristic conspiracy. (66)

ZINOVIEV: ...At the same time (says Zinoviev), I conducted negotiations with Tomsy, whom I informed about our **bloc** with the Trotskyites. Tomsy expressed complete solidarity with us. (73)

SMIRNOV: I admit that I belong to the underground Trotskyite organization, joined the **bloc**, joined the centre of this **bloc**, met Sedov in Berlin in 1931, listened to his opinion on terrorism and passed this opinion on to Moscow. (85)

## **Second Moscow Trial**

RADEK: Pyatakov and I arrived at the conclusion that this directive sums up the work of the **bloc**, dots all the i's and crosses all the t's by bringing out very sharply the fact that under all circumstances the government of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite **bloc** could only be the government of the restoration of capitalism. (6)

PYATAKOV: Kamenev came to visit me at the People's Commissariat on some pretext or other. He very clearly and distinctly informed me about the Trotskyite-Zinovievite centre which had been formed. He said that the **bloc** had been restored; then he mentioned the names of a number of people who belonged to the centre ... (36)

PYATAKOV: It was during this conversation with Radek that we discussed the question about the very great predominance of Zinovievites in the main centre, and whether we should not raise the question of making certain changes in the composition of the main centre.

VYSHINSKY: In which direction?

PYATAKOV: In the direction of introducing more of the Trotskyite faction in the Trotskyite-Zinovievite united **bloc**.

RADEK: From the moment the **bloc** was formed the circle of persons against whom it was intended to carry out terrorist acts was known. (76)

LIVSHITZ: :Yes. I considered that since we were carrying on a struggle for the coming to power of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite **bloc**, it was necessary to do this. (118)

ROMM: I was Tass corresponent in Geneva and Paris. I went to Moscow on official business and met Radek who informed me that in pursuance of Trotsky's directives, a Trotskyite-Zinovievite **bloc** had been organized, but that he and Pyatakov had not joined that centre. (139)

SOKOLNIKOV: In comparison with what we had had, to some extent, since 1932 and, in the main, since 1934, when the defeatist attitude of the **bloc** finally took shape. (154)

SEREBRYAKOV: In the autumn of 1932, Mrachkovsky came to see me and informed me about the creation of a Trotskyite-Zinovievite **bloc**, told me who were the members of this centre, and then informed me that the centre had decided to create a reserve centre in the event of its being exposed. (168)

### **Third Moscow Trial**

The title of the transcript of this trial is:

"Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet '**Bloc** of Rights and Trotskyites.'"

...the accused in the present case organized a conspiratorial group named the "**bloc** of Rights and Trotskyites," ... (5)

GRINKO: Along with wrecking activities in the sphere of capital construction and agriculture, the **bloc** of Rights and Trotskyites carried on quite extensive undermining activities in the sphere of trade turnover. (81)



IVANOV: Fully and entirely. I consider myself responsible and guilty of the gravest crimes. I was one of the active members of the group of the Rights, the "**bloc** of Rights and Trotskyites." (110)

VYSHINSKY: Ivanov states that he learnt from you of the existence of a **bloc** between the Trotskyites, the Right groups and the nationalist groups. Do you corroborate this?

BUKHARIN: I do. (137)

VYSHINSKY: Did you know that the program of this centre and of the whole group of the **bloc** of Rights and Trotskyites included terrorist acts?

ZUBAREV: Yes, I did know. (144)

VYSHINSKY: Will it be right or wrong to say that in the period of the years 1932-33 a group was organized which we may call the Anti-Soviet **Bloc** of Rights and Trotskyites?

RYKOV: It was so in fact. Its organizational expression, since 1933-34, was the so-called contact centre. (180)

VYSHINSKY: This **bloc**, you said, included the Rights. Who else was included in this **bloc**?

RYKOV: The Rights, the Trotskyites and the Zinovievites. (181)

VYSHINSKY: ...Were Tukhachevsky and the military group of conspirators members of your **bloc**?

BUKHARIN: They were.

VYSHINSKY: And they discussed with the members of the **bloc**?

BUKHARIN: Quite right. (189)

VYSHINSKY: As the preliminary investigation and the Court proceedings in the present case have established, the dastardly assassination of S. M. Kirov on December 1, 1934, by the Leningrad Trotskyite-Zinovievite terrorist centre was organized in accordance with a decision of the "**bloc** of Rights and Trotskyites."

Trotsky always denied this accusation, as in the following passage from his testimony to the Dewey Commission in April, 1937:

GOLDMAN: Did you ever discuss with anyone the possibility of organizing a united center between your political followers and the followers of Zinoviev and Kamenev in the Soviet Union, after the break-up of your bloc with Zinoviev and Kamenev?

TROTSKY: Never. My articles show that it is absolutely impossible. My appreciation of them, my total contempt after the capitulation, my hostility to them and their hostility to me, excluded that absolutely.

GOLDMAN: Have you read the testimony of Zinoviev and Kamenev and the other defendants in the first Moscow trial?

TROTSKY: Yes.

GOLDMAN: Wherein these defendants claimed that you instructed several of them to establish a united center between your political followers and their political followers? Have you read such testimonies?

TROTSKY: Yes.

GOLDMAN: What have you to say about that?

TROTSKY: It is a falsehood organized by the GPU and supported by Stalin. (CLT 87-88)

**Evidence of the Bloc in the Harvard Trotsky Archive**

In 1980 Trotskyist historian Pierre Broué discovered materials in the Harvard Trotsky Archive that proved that a bloc of oppositions was indeed formed with Trotsky's agreement.

C'est en effectuant à la Bibliothèque du Collège de Harvard les recherches documentaires prévues pour l'édition des volumes des oeuvres des années 1936 et 1937 que les chercheurs et collaborateurs de l'Institut Léon Trotsky ont été amenés à une découverte d'importance: l'existence, en Union soviétique en 1932, d'un « bloc des oppositions » contre Staline.

Translated:

While doing documentary research at the Library of Harvard College for the edition of the volumes of the works of the years 1936 and 1937 the researchers and assistants from the Institut Léon Trotsky made an important discovery: the existence, in the Soviet Union in 1932, of a "bloc of oppositions" against Stalin. (Broué 1980, 5)

Trotsky and Sedov had lied about this, obviously for the purpose of preserving their conspiracy. A Trotskyist as well as a scholar, Broué explicitly excused Trotsky's lying on these grounds.

Broué denied that the parties in the bloc agreed upon "terror." He also claimed that the bloc had been dissolved shortly after being formed without having done anything. But Broué cited no evidence to support these assertions. The evidence shows that the bloc did continue to function. In a future chapter and in the second volume of this work we will examine the evidence that the Rightists and Trotskyites in the bloc did indeed agree to use "terror" against the Soviet leadership, as the prosecution in the first and Second Moscow Trials alleged and as the defendants admitted.

### **The "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" Existed**

The evidence of the bloc's existence discovered by Broué is contained in a complex of documents in the TA:

\* A copy of a letter in German from Trotsky to his son Sedov.

\* This is accompanied by a letter from Trotsky's secretary Jean van Heijenoort dated July 3, 1937, who made the copy of — retyped — Trotsky's letter.

The original of Trotsky's letter is missing. It must have been destroyed when the Trotsky Archive was "purged" of incriminating materials. We know about this "purging" because it was done imperfectly. We will discuss this "purging" later in this study.

Broué reported that his team uncovered one more piece of evidence concerning the bloc:

- A letter in invisible ink from Sedov to Trotsky in which the formation and composition of the bloc is outlined.

Some curious statements in Broué's 1980 article suggest that he and his team found other materials which they do not directly identify.

\* Broué states (7) that Trotsky replied on November 3, 1932, to the letter in invisible ink written by his son. But the copy of Trotsky's letter retyped by van Heijenoort and identified by Broué bears no date. On the previous pages (5-6) Broué had dated it "at the end of 1932, in October or November," by internal evidence.

Broué is unlikely to have simply imagined a date as precise as "November 3, 1932." Therefore, this remark suggests either that Broué has seen another letter by Trotsky that he does not further identify, or that he has made an error here.

\* Broué states that the letter from Sedov to Trotsky in invisible ink enumerates the groups in, or about to enter, the bloc as follows:

Le lettre à l'encre sympathique de Léon Sedov fait apparaître l'existence des groupes suivants: le groupe trotskyste d'U.R.S.S. («notre fraction»), les «zinoviévistes," le groupe d'I.N. Smirnov, le groupe Sten-Lominadzé, le groupe «Safar(ov)-Tarkhan(ov)," «les droitiers» et «les libéraux.» (7)

Translated:

The letter in invisible ink of Leon Sedov's revealed the existence of the following groups: the Trotskyist group in the USSR ("our fraction"), the "Zinovievites," the group of I.N. Smirnov, the group of Sten-Lominadze, the group "Safar(ov)-Tarkhan(ov)," "the Rights" and "the liberals." (7)

However, the letter in question does not mention Rightists ("droitiers") or liberals ("libéraux") at all. The letter of Trotsky to Sedov referred to above does mention "Rightists" ("die Rechten"), implying that they will "become more involved." None of the three documents makes any mention of "liberals." Assuming again that Broué did not simply imagine that "Rightists" and "liberals" were mentioned, it follows that he conflated in his mind at least two separate documents: the letter in invisible ink, in which the other groups are mentioned, and another letter or document that mentions "Rightists" and "liberals" as being part of the bloc.

We do not know who was meant by the term "liberals." Sedov refers to I.N. Smirnov and those around him, including Eduard S. Gol'tsman, by this term in his *Red Book (Livre rouge sur le procès de Moscou)*<sup>1</sup>. But Sedov did this while he and Trotsky were denying any contact with Smirnov. Broué discovered that Trotsky was indeed in touch with Smirnov. Smirnov was in fact the leader of the clandestine Trotskyist group inside the USSR and the central figure in the bloc. That suggests that in calling Smirnov a "liberal" in his book Sedov may have been "covering" for him.

<sup>1</sup> Paris: Editions Ourviers, 1936, 97-98.

The following cryptic remark of Broué's suggests that he and his team located other documents that mention the bloc:

Elle a découvert également d'autres allusions au «bloc," toute une discussion sur les conditions nouvelles créés par son apparition, dans la correspondance entre Trotsky et son fils, ainsi que des textes, dont certains avaient été publiés, qui éclairent cette période de l'histoire de l'U.R.S.S. (7)

Translated:

The team [of researchers, led by Broué] has also discovered other allusions to the bloc and a whole discussion on the new conditions created by its appearance, in the correspondence between Trotsky and his son, as well as texts, of which some have been published, that shed light on this period of the history of the USSR.

According to Broué Trotsky discussed the "liberals" in a letter to Sedov of October 12, 1932, which he identifies as No. 4777 of the Harvard Trotsky Archive. (16 and n. 42)

On the same page Broué suggests that there must have been other documents that made clear who the "liberals" were and what they had done for the Trotskyists — documents that, he suggests, "have probably been destroyed." (16) This is an interesting remark by Broué, for he deliberately omits any mention of the discovery by Arch Getty that the Trotsky Archive has been "purged," with incriminating documents removed from it.

As we shall see, Broué's further discussion of the bloc rests upon several assumptions, one of which is that the bloc came to nothing because there is no mention of it in the Trotsky Archive after these documents of 1932. As Broué admits in passing in a later work, even this latter claim is not true. Later we'll explore Broué's self-contradictions on the question of the bloc.

Trotsky's remark that they must not "yield the field to the Rightists" implies that the Rightists were already active on their own accord. Writing in 1980 Broué stated that there was no evidence of any activity by those known at the time as the "Rightists" — Bukharin, Rykov, Tomskii and their followers. (12-13) However, thanks to documents published since the end of the USSR we know today that the Rightists were indeed active at this time.

Broué's article thus supposes at least the following documents, only some of which are extant and identified:

- Correspondence between Trotsky and Sedov about setting up the bloc (not extant);

- A letter from Sedov to Trotsky of October 12, 1932, concerning participation of the "liberals," no doubt in the bloc (#4777, Broué p. 16, extant);
- Trotsky's letter to Sedov accepting the proposal of a bloc (#13095, extant);
- Sedov's letter in invisible ink to Trotsky announcing that the bloc has been formed (#4782, extant);
- Trotsky's response to this letter dated November 3, 1932 (Broué p. 7; not further identified);
- Trotsky's letter of October 30, 1932, concerning the "liberals" and mentioning the "Rightists." (#10047, Broué p. 16, extant);
- Another letter of Sedov to Trotsky in invisible ink naming "Rightists" and "liberals" as among the groups in or about to join the bloc (Broué p. 7 and p. 14; not further identified);
- Other documents "not found at Harvard and which were probably destroyed" (Broué p. 16).

Judging from the one document by Trotsky that we have that mentions the Rightists and from Broué's discussion of other documents we have not seen, it seems clear that the Rightists were in fact a part of the bloc from 1932. This accords with the testimony of Valentin Astrov in January 1937. We will examine it later.

### **Soviet Rehabilitation Reports Lie About the Bloc**

The existence of this bloc provides additional evidence that Soviet "Rehabilitation" reports of both the Khrushchev and Gorbachev eras are dishonest and untrustworthy, political whitewash jobs rather than honest reviews of the cases and determinations of innocence on the basis of evidence.

The "Zapiska" of the Shvernik Report, commissioned by Khrushchev in 1962 and finished no later than February 18, 1963, concluded that all the accusations against the accused at the Bukharin Trial were falsified and denied the existence of a "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" itself. (RKEB 625-30)

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

No "Anti-soviet bloc of Rights and Trotskyists" existed in reality and those condemned in this case did not engage in any counterrevolutionary activity. (630)

In 1989 the Gorbachev-era "Rehabilitation Commission" of the Central Committee of the CPSU came to the same conclusion:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

It has been established therefore that after 1927 the former Trotskyists and Zinovievists did not carry out any organized struggle against the party, did not unite with each other either on a terrorist or any other basis, and that the case of the "United Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Center" was fabricated by the organs of the NKVD upon the direct order and with the direct participation of J.V. Stalin. (Izv TsK KPSS 8 (1989) 94)

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

It has been established that the accusation against the accused of "criminal ties" with L.D. Trotsky and L.L. Sedov are without foundation. This was also proven by a special verification process of the USSR Procuracy in 1988. (Izv TsK KPSS 9 (1989) 49)

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

As has now been established beyond any doubt, the case of the so-called "Anti-Soviet Right-Trotskyite Bloc" was completely fabricated... (Izv TsK KPSS 5 (1989) 81)



[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

In reality, neither the "blocs" nor the so-called "centers" existed. (RKEB 3 342).

Aleksandr Iakovlev, Gorbachev's expert who led the anticommunist campaign from the Politburo, repeated the falsehood that no bloc had existed.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

Yagoda was falsely included among the members of the nonexistent "Right-Trotskyite Bloc." (RKEB 3 328)

This means that both the Shvernik Report and the Soviet "Rehabilitation" reports are falsified.<sup>2</sup> Already in 1980 the Harvard Trotsky Archive yielded to Broué unmistakable evidence that a broad bloc of oppositionist forces, including Trotskyists, Zinovievists, and others, did in fact exist. The NKVD of the 1930s termed the complexly-interlocking set of oppositional conspiracies the "klubok," or "tangle." If any of these conspiracies were acknowledged to have existed, it would be difficult to deny the existence of the rest, since all the defendants implicated others in a chain that, directly or indirectly, connected them all.

<sup>2</sup> Parts of the 1988 "Rehabilitation" report on the Moscow Trial of August 1936 are copied verbatim, or almost so, from the Shvernik Commission of twenty-five years earlier. No one could know this in 1988, since the text of the Shvernik Report was not published until 1993-1994.

The Gorbachev-era "Rehabilitation" report on the 1936 Trial defendants is likewise falsified. Though it has not been officially published and is still secret in Russia today the Decree of the Soviet Supreme court dated June 13, 1988, is in the Volkogonov Archive. It states, concerning Gol'tsman:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

During the trial E.S. Gol'tsman ... declared that before his arrest he did not know about the existence of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist center. These explanations by E.S. Gol'tsman remain without refutation.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> "Postanovlenie No. 79 88 Plenuma Verkhovnogo Suda SSSR. 13 iyunia 1988 g.," p. 7. (151). Volkogonov Papers Reel 3 Container 4 Folder 16. In the author's possession.

This statement is false. Trotsky's and Sedov's correspondence in 1932, published in part in French translation by Broué, shows that Gol'tsman was the person who carried messages concerning the formation of the bloc to Smirnov inside the USSR (Broué 1980 35-37; Broué POS 99). What's more, this information was available to the Soviet authorities in 1988, when they began once again to deny that the bloc had ever existed (Khrushchev's men had denied it too).

In 1991 Getty's article was published, in Russian translation, in the authoritative Party journal *Voprosy Istorii KPSS*. At the end of the article Boris Starkov, acting for the Party journal, denied as best he could the contents of Getty's article.<sup>4</sup> In today's Russia too most of these investigative materials remain effectively classified.<sup>5</sup> This proves that the "Rehabilitation" report itself is a fraud.

<sup>4</sup> Getti, Dz.A. "Trotskii v izgnanii. Osnovania IV Internatsionala." *Voprosy Istorii KPSS* 5 (1991), 72-83. Starkov's "commentary" is at the end, pp. 82.83.

<sup>5</sup> In volume two of this study we will discuss and publish some of these materials that have become available only very recently.

**Valentin Astrov's Testimony**

On January 11, 1937, Valentin Astrov, one of Bukharin's former students and a participant in the conspiratorial meetings that constituted the Rightist part of the bloc, gave a confession statement to NKVD investigators. Two days later Astrov confronted Bukharin and accused him directly.

In his January 1937 confession to the NKVD Astrov was specific that the Rightists had joined a bloc with the Trotskyists in 1932.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

In the beginning of 1932 in a meeting of the active members of the organization in his apartment Slepko justified the necessity of forming a bloc with the Trotskyists. He said that "the Trotskyists have accepted the economic platform of the Rightists, and the Rightists, the inner Party platform of the Trotskyists. The tactic of terror unites us. Differences between us and the Trotskyists are secondary."

Referring to his and Maretskii's experience of numerous underground meetings with Trotskyists in Moscow, Samara, Saratov, and Leningrad, Slepko asserted that the Trotskyists were evolving, coming close to us. Slepko informed the meeting that his views on the necessity of forming a bloc with the Trotskyists had been agreed to by Bukharin, that is with the Rightists center, and the meeting accepted this view. A few days later in Slepko's apartment and with Maretskii present Bukharin confirmed the necessity of such a bloc. (Lubianka 1937-1938 32)

Both Broué (13) and Astrov name Slepko and Maretskii as members of the Rightist part of the bloc. Broué says:

L'ensemble du matériel montre que le «bloc» ou, au moins, l'une de ses parties constituantes était en contact avec le group Rioutine-Slepko, «les droitiers». (Broué 1980 16)

...les comptes rendus de réunions du secrétariat international de l'Opposition de gauche et quelques lettres de Léon Sedov font

apparaître qu'il désigne systématiquement à l'époque par le terme de «droitiers» ce que les historiens désignent par «groupe Rioutine,» un groupe original apparu précisément en 1932. Nous ne possédons sur son existence et son activité que des témoignages indirects et ses documents n'ont jamais été connus, même partiellement. Rioutine ... avait, avec P. A. Galkin, constitué un groupe dont personne ne nie le caractère conspiratif organisé, dans lequel se retrouvaient des éléments d'origine diverse comme les disciples de Boukharine, fleurons de l'Institut des professeurs rouges, Alexandre Slepkov et Dimitri Maretsky, ... (Broué 1980 13)

Translated:

The material as a whole demonstrates that the bloc, or at least one of its constituent parts, was in contact with the Riutin-Slepkov group, "the Rights."

... the transcripts of the meetings of the International Secretariat of the Left Opposition and a few letters of Leon Sedov's make it clear that it [the term "droitiers", or "Rightists" — GF] regularly designated at the time by the term "Rightists" what the historians call the "Riutin group," an original group that appeared precisely in 1932. We have only indirect evidence about its existence and activities, and its documents have never been made public, even in part. Riutin... with P.A. Galkin, constituted a group whose organized conspiratorial nature has never been denied by anyone and in which persons of different origins could be found, including pupils of Bukharin's, products of the Institute of Red Professors, Alexander Slepkov and Dmitri Maretsky, ...

Astrov himself was also a former student at the Institute of Red Professors.

### **Did the Bloc Shut Down by Early 1933?**

In 1980 Broué claimed that the bloc was no more by sometime in early 1933 with the arrests of some of its leading members.

Pourtant, quand ces textes paraissent à Berlin dans le *Biulleten Oppositsii*, le «bloc» — si tant est qu'il ait pu se traduire autrement dans la réalité et, par exemple, tenir des reunions formelles — est déjà terminé par l'arrestation de ses principaux protagonistes. La lettre de Sedov qui indique les composantes du bloc mentionne à la fois l'arrestation des dirigeants du groupe d'I. N. Smirnov et de Smirnov lui-même et l'effondrement des « anciens » de l'Opposition de gauche. (Broué 1980 19)

Translated:

However, when these texts appeared in Berlin in the *Bulletin of the Opposition*, the bloc — if it could be said to have had a real existence and, for example, hold formal meetings — had already been terminated by the arrests of its principal protagonists. Sedov's letter identifying the composition of the bloc mentions at the same time the arrest of the leaders of I.N. Smirnov's group and of Smirnov himself and the collapse of the "old ones" of the Left Opposition.

Broué repeated this claim in his 1987 biography of Trotsky. According to Broué Smirnov's arrest and imprisonment and the exile of Zinoviev and Kamenev brought the bloc to an end.

Ce n'est que peu à peu que la vérité s'impose à lui et à Sedov. L'exil de Zinoviev et de Kamenev, la condamnation d'I.N. Smirnov, qui purge sa peine à Souzdal, ont sonné le glas du bloc des oppositions.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Broué, *Trotsky*, Ch. 44 note 49. At [https://www.marxists.org/francais/Broué/works/1988/00/PB\\_tky\\_44.htm#sdfootnote49anc](https://www.marxists.org/francais/Broué/works/1988/00/PB_tky_44.htm#sdfootnote49anc)

Translated:

Only gradually did Trotsky and Sedov come to understand the truth. The exile of Kamenev and Zinoviev, the conviction of I.N. Smirnov, who was serving his time at Suzdal, had sounded the funeral bell of the bloc of oppositionists.

## Broué's Misreading of Safarov's Deposition

Broué claims that Safarov testified "publicly" about the bloc's "decomposition":

Safarov, définitivement brisé en prison et clairement devenu informateur, sera le premier, en tant que témoin à charge au procès de Zinoviev et Kamenev en janvier 1935, à parler publiquement de la naissance et de la décomposition du bloc.<sup>49</sup> (Broué, Trotsky Ch. 44)

Translated:

Safarov, definitely broken in prison and clearly turned informant, would be the first, as a witness at the trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev in January 1935, to speak publicly about the birth and decay of the bloc.<sup>49</sup>

Note 49 to this passage reads as follows:

49 Déposition de Safarov au procès de Zinoviev et Kamenev, *L'Humanité*,<sup>7</sup> 17 janvier 1935.

<sup>7</sup> *Humanité* was (and still is) the daily newspaper of the French Communist Party

Translated:

49. Deposition of Safarov at the trial of Zinoviev and Kamenev, *L'Humanité* January 17, 1934.

But this is not true. In the corresponding passage in *L'Humanité* of January 17, 1935, Safarov said nothing about any "decay" (*décomposition*) of the bloc:

Caractérisant les méthodes contre-révolutionnaires employées par le roupe illégal Zinoviev dans sa lutte contre le pouvoir soviétique, un des participants, Safarov (dont l'affaire est soumise à une instruction complémentaire et sera examinée séparément) déclara «Après des

rencontres particulièrement fréquentes et animées en 1932, quand les conspirateurs compatièrent à inscrire à leur actif certaines difficultés temporaires qui eurent lieu durant la transition du premier au second plan quinquennal, **tous les cercles du groupe illégal, effrayés par la débâcle du groupe contre-révolutionnaire de Rioutine, revinrent à leur activité secrète, à la contré-revolution rampante.»**<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> "Zinoviev, Kamenev et 17 complices devant le tribunal militaire de l'U.R.S.S.." *L'Humanité* 17 janvier 1935 p. 3 col 7.

Translated:

Characterizing the counterrevolutionary methods used by the illegal Zinoviev group in its struggle against Soviet power one of the participants, Safarov (whose case has been submitted to further investigation and will be examined separately) declared: "After especially frequent and lively meetings in 1932, when the conspirators had to take account of certain temporary difficulties that occurred during the transition between the first and second Five-Year Plans, **all the circles of the illegal group, frightened by the downfall of the Riutin counterrevolutionary group, returned to secret activity, to rampant counterrevolution.**

Far from attesting to any "decay" of the bloc Safarov stated that "all the circles" (the cells) "of the illegal group" (the bloc) returned to secret activity, meaning to "rampant counterrevolution." *Safarov claimed that the bloc continued to exist and to be active — the opposite of what Broué claimed.*

We will leave aside the question of whether Broué somehow misread this passage or whether he deliberately falsified Safarov's words in order to convince his readers that the bloc really had ceased to function. Even if Safarov had testified to the court that the bloc had ceased to function, that would not mean it really had ceased, for such testimony could simply be an attempt at self-protection. But in fact Safarov stated just the opposite: the bloc continued its work, only in a more clandestine manner.

Broué continued to repeat this claim that the bloc was "dismantled" shortly after February 1933.<sup>9</sup> However, Broué has no evidence that the bloc came

to an end. We discuss what we call Broué's, and Vaid Rogovin's, "coverup" in the chapter on the purging of the Harvard Trotsky archive.

<sup>9</sup> E.g. Broué, "Liova, le 'fiston'". CahLT 13 (1983), 17.

Broué's main error here is his assumption that the bloc was ended when some of its principal members were arrested. This assumption is false. Astrov testified that the bloc continued even in prison:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

In Suzdal' prison I and the participants of our organization Khakharev, Domashin ... and Somov established contact and friendship with the Trotskyists also imprisoned there: Gaevskii, Bolonikov, and Mikhalevich. All of us came together on the basis of mutual acceptance of terror as a method of struggle with the party and Soviet power. ... Analogous terrorist attitudes were expressed by the Trotskyist Somer, the Rightist Radivilin, and the Trotskyist Gaevskii. (Lubianka 1937-1938 37)

We know that Astrov's testimony here was truthful because he confirmed it in 1993, after the end of the Soviet Union, when he could have denied it and no one would have known. We examine Astrov's testimony as evidence in another chapter.

Astrov claimed that the bloc of Rights and Trotskyists which, he repeats, was explicitly organized around terror continued to be active in Suzdal' prison, a political "isolator," or special prison with better conditions for political prisoners. In his biography of Trotsky Broué states that Smirnov was also in Suzdal' prison:

L'exil de Zinoviev et de Kamenev, la condamnation d'I.N. Smirnov, qui purge sa peine à Souzdal, ont sonné le glas du bloc des oppositions. (Broué Trotsky Chapter 44)

Translated:



The exile of Zinoviev and Kamenev, the conviction of I.N. Smirnov, who was serving his sentence in Suzdal, sounded the death knell of the opposition bloc.

Broué is correct that I.N. Smirnov was imprisoned in Suzdal' prison. Biographical accounts of Smirnov's life and a commemorative plaque at the former site of the prison itself attest to that fact.<sup>10</sup> We know that the Trotskyists whom Astrov names as participants of the bloc with him while they were in Suzdal' prison were adherents of Smirnov's group. Gaevskii and Bolotnikov are identified as members of Smirnov's Trotskyist group in a Gorbachev-era "Rehabilitation Commission" meeting of May 29, 1990.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Biographical accounts of I.N. Smirnov's life that mention his imprisonment in Suzdal' prison include: the Russian language Wikipedia on him: [http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/\[\[cyrillic\]\]](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/[[cyrillic]]) ; The "Memorial Society"'s list of "victims of Stalinism," at <http://lists.memo.ru/d30/f361.htm#n199> . The plaque at the site of the former prison may be seen at [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d//d4/\[\[cyrillic\]\].JPG](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d//d4/[[cyrillic]].JPG)

<sup>11</sup> *Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo. Seredina 80-kh godov -1991*. Moscow: MDF, 2004. Razdel IV. No. 13, pp. 337 ff. At <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/67974>

Astrov's statement proves that the bloc of Rights and Trotskyists did not end but continued to plan terrorist activities in Suzdal' prison. I.N. Smirnov, the leader of the Trotskyist group and imprisoned at the same prison, may have participated in it too. At the first Moscow trial in August 1936 Smirnov said that after 1931, when he "received Trotsky's instructions on terrorism" and passed them on, he did not resign from the bloc but "did no work." It may be that Smirnov did not participate in meetings of the bloc while in Suzdal'. But there can be no doubt that the bloc continued to meet "on the basis of mutual acceptance of terror." And in fact we do have some evidence that Smirnov had remained active in prison, from a remark by Sedov of May 1934.

### **Sedov's remark of May 1934**

In his short biography of Sedov published in 1993, in the midst of a discussion of the events of 1932, Broué quotes a report Sedov made in May 1934 to the "international secretariat" of Trotsky's Fourth International. Sedov wrote:

Il faut indiquer que, parmi ces camarades, se trouvent aussi I.N. Smirnov et d'autres, qui nous ont quittés dans le temps, mais qui sont revenus et qui, voici plus d'une année déjà, se trouvent emprisonnés sous le régime d'isolement le plus sévère.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The report is published in Leon Sedov, "La situation des bolcheviks-léninistes russes," CahLT 24 (1985), 116 - 120; the quote is on page 120. It is also quoted by Pierre Broué, Léon Sedov. Fils de Trotsky, Victime de Staline. Paris: Éditions Ouvrières, 1993, p. 79.

Translated:

It should be noted that among these comrades are also I.N. Smirnov and some others who left us in the past but who have returned and who have now been imprisoned under conditions of the severest isolation for more than a year.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> As we will see, Ante Ciliga's memoir shows that the "isolation" in the Suzdal' isolator was anything but "severe."

Broué assumes that Sedov is referring here to the events of 1932. This appears to reflect Broué's conviction that the bloc was finished by the beginning of 1933. In reality there is no reason to think that Sedov was referring here to the formation of the bloc in 1932. Broué characterizes Sedov's tone as "modest and triumphant" (79). Why would Sedov have been "triumphant" about a bloc that had collapsed more than a year beforehand? In terms of psychology, as well as of chronology and simple logic, we must assume that Sedov was referring to the contemporary situation in May 1934.

At that time Smirnov had been in prison for about 16 months. Why would Sedov report that he "and some others" had "returned" unless they were still active in May 1934? As we have seen, Astroff testified that he was still

discussing terror with Trotskyists in Suzdal' prison. And Smirnov never denied that he remained part of the Trotskyist conspiracy after 1932, only that he "did no work." There is no reason to think that Smirnov was being truthful here.

So Broué and Rogovin are guilty at least of the fallacy of presuming that the bloc was no longer active after 1932 because there was no further evidence of it in the Trotsky Archives. It is also possible that they did recognize the significance of Sedov's May 1934 remark but deliberately hid it from their readers. For Broué and Rogovin crossed the line from logical error into the realm of deliberate deception when they ignored Getty's discovery that the Harvard Trotsky Archive had been purged (we discuss their coverup of Getty's discovery at the beginning of Chapter 6, below). Thanks to Getty we know that evidence of Trotsky's contacts with oppositionists, supporters, and others in the USSR was among the materials purged.

Again, suppose the purging of the Trotsky archive had been thorough enough to remove not only the letters Trotsky sent to Oppositionists in the USSR but the certified mail receipts that Getty found. We would not know that Radek was telling the exact truth when he said he had received a letter from Trotsky in the spring of 1932. Trotsky and Sedov both denied such contact. Many people would reject Radek's claim at trial and "believe" Trotsky and Sedov. Yet the contact — the correspondence — would still have taken place. We discuss this letter in another chapter.

### The "Conspiracy" Factor

Conspirators commit as little as possible — ideally, nothing at all — to writing. They confine knowledge of details of the conspiracy to as few persons as they can. This was the case even with Trotsky and Sedov, who were outside the USSR but always aware that they were under surveillance and that their correspondence could be stolen — as, indeed, some of Sedov's archives were stolen in Paris.

Vadim Rogovin identified one letter that Sedov wrote to Trotsky on the eve of the First Moscow Trial in which some peculiarities," such as the use of the formal *vy* for "you" instead of the familiar *ty* suggest Sedov thought it

might be intercepted. In it Sedov repeats his and his father's version of the Gol'tsman-Smirnov story, i.e. that Gol'tsman did not meet with Trotsky. But the fact that Sedov wrote it in anticipation that it might be "seized" compromises it as evidence: it is not secure, let alone secret, correspondence.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Rogovin 1937 64-65. The document is identified as Trotsky Archives, document n. 4858.

Anyone who studies Jean van Heijenoort's memoir or NKVD agent Marc Zborowski's notes to his handler will realize that these trusted secretaries actually knew very little about Trotsky's and Sedov's contacts with the USSR. In February 1980 Trotskyist historian Pierre Broué interviewed Lilia (Lola) Dallin, formerly Estrina, Sedov's most trusted secretary during the 1930s. She told Broué:

Il est faux qu'Étienne ait pu trahir autre chose que Sedov ou des archives: les adresses du BO qu'il avait étaient celles de l'extérieur de la Russie. Sedov cloisonnait tout. Il était seul à savoir, par exemple, qui allait en Russie, les gens qui en sortaient etc. Je ne savais pas ce que faisait Étienne et réciproquement. En fait, pour "savoir," il aurait fallu faire parler LD et Liova. (Broué Léon Sedov 210)

Translated:

It is not true that Etienne [the name Zborowski used — GF] could have betrayed anything except Sedov or the archives: the addresses of the B[ulletin of the O[pposition] that he had were those outside of Russia. Sedov compartmentalized everything. He was the only person who knew, for example, who was going to Russia, the people who were coming out of Russia, etc. I did not know what Etienne was doing and vice versa. To "know" you would really have had to make LD [Trotsky] and Lyova [Sedov] tell you.

Broué too was of this opinion: only Trotsky and Sedov knew about political activity and contacts with the Soviet Union:

Bien que rien ne prouve qu'il ait été au courant du détail de l'activité politique de Sedov, notamment de ses liens avec des oppositionnels russes...<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Broué "Le GPU à la chasse aux trotskystes." CahLT 70 (2000), 91.

Translated:

Although there is no evidence that he was familiar with the details of Sedov's political activity, especially of his ties with the Russian oppositionists...

Again, according to Broué Sedov even refused to give Zborowski his own personal address!

En fait, cet homme jeune était un vieux conspirateur: Lola Estine nous a confié qu'elle n'a jamais su, par exemple, de quelles tâches était chargé Etienne et que ce dernier ne savait rien de ses tâches à elle. En 1955, Etienne lui-même a raconté que Sedov avait refusé de lui donner son adresse personnelle, et qu'il l'avait finalement obtenue en passant par "les Français" ce qui avait provoqué une grande colère de Sedov.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> "Liova, le 'fiston'" 19.

Translated:

In fact this young man was an old conspirator. Lola Estrine has told us that she never knew, for example what assignments Etienne had been charged with and that he knew nothing about her own assignments. In 1955 Etienne himself told how Sedov had refused to give him his own personal address, and that he had at last obtained it through "the Frenchmen," which had made Sedov very angry.

Dallin/Estrina was a devoted worker for Sedov. It was she who told Sedov to "keep his mouth shut" when Sedov expounded to Zborowski upon the need to assassinate Stalin. When, in the 1950s, Zborowski met with her again and explained that he had spied on Sedov for the NKVD Dallin/Estrina immediately severed all ties with him.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See "Testimony of Mrs. Lilia Dallin, New York N.Y." *Scope of Soviet Activity in the United States...*, March 2, 1956. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1956), 136-150.

This kind of secretive behavior is, of course, to be expected in the case of any conspiracy, including Trotsky's. It would be absurd to blame Trotsky for using conspiratorial techniques in his conspiracy. But we must take these conspiratorial techniques fully into account when we discuss evidence. It is just as absurd to expect the same level of evidence in the case of a conspiracy as we would expect to find in documenting other kinds of historical events.

## **Chapter 4. *Non-Soviet Evidence — Trotsky's Contacts Inside the USSR***

Testimony of defendants in the Moscow Trials claimed that Trotsky was in contact with Radek, Sokol'nikov, Gaven, Piatakov, and Preobrazhensky. Trotsky denied contact with them after his exile (with Preobrazhensky, by implication). But evidence in the TA confirms that Trotsky lied: he did in fact have contact with all these men.

During the First Moscow Trial Gol'tsman claimed he had met with Leon Sedov multiple times. Trotsky at first denied any contact with Gol'tsman. But Sedov had already admitted such contact, so Trotsky changed his story. Trotsky and Sedov at first claimed only one meeting between Sedov and Gol'tsman. Later they admitted that there had been a number of such meetings.

Each of these cases represents a verification that Moscow Trial testimony was accurate and Trotsky was lying.

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In January 1986 American historian Arch Getty revealed that the Harvard Trotsky Archive<sup>1</sup> had been "purged." Someone had removed materials from it at some point before it was opened to the public on January 2, 1980. In Getty's words

At the time of the Moscow show trials, Trotsky denied that he had any communications with the defendants since his exile in 1929. Yet it is now clear that in 1932 he sent secret personal letters to former leading oppositionists Karl Radek, G. Sokol'nikov, E. Preobrazhensky, and others. While the contents of these letters are unknown, it seems reasonable to believe that they involved an attempt to persuade the addressees to return to opposition.<sup>18</sup> (Getty TIE 27-8)

(TIE n.18 p. 34) Trotsky Papers, 15821. Unlike virtually all Trotsky's other letters (including even the most sensitive) no copies of these

remain in the Trotsky Papers. **It seems like that** they have been removed from the Papers at some time. Only the certified mail receipts remain. At his 1937 trial, Karl Radek testified that he had received a letter from Trotsky containing 'terrorist instructions,' but we do not know whether this was the letter in question.

<sup>1</sup> This used to be known as the "Closed Archive," since it was closed by Trotsky's instructions until 40 years after his death. (Van Heijenoort, History 295)

In his 1985 book Getty was less hesitant in concluding that the archive had been purged. He discovered certified mail receipts of letters to five persons of whom three were Trotsky supporters and two, Kollontai and Litvinov, never had been. He also revealed some new information about dates and destinations for some of the missing letters.

Although Trotsky later denied that he had any communications with former followers in the USSR since his exile in 1929,<sup>19</sup> it is clear that he did. In the first three months of 1932 he sent secret letters to former oppositionists Radek, Sokolnikov, Preobrazhenskii, and others.<sup>20</sup> Although the contents of these letters are unknown, it seems reasonable to believe that they involved an attempt to persuade the addressees to return to opposition. (Getty Origins 119.)

(Origins n. 19 p. 245) The Dewey Commission, *The Case of Leon Trotsky*, New York, 1937, 91, 264, 273. See also *Biulleten' oppozitsii*, no. 52-3, Oct. 1936, 38-41."

(Origins n. 20 p. 245 Trotsky Papers II, 15821. The letters are dated from April 1932 to December 1932. Those to Sokolnikov and Preobrazhenskii were sent to London, **that to Radek in Geneva**. Other letters were sent to Kollontai and Litvinov. **Copies of these letters have been removed** from Trotsky's papers, but whoever removed them failed to retrieve the certified-mail receipts signed by Trotsky's secretaries.

## **Trotsky's Letter to Radek in February-March 1932**



Getty wrote:

At his 1937 trial, Karl Radek testified that he had received a letter from Trotsky containing 'terrorist instructions,' but we do not know whether this was the letter in question. (TIE n.18 p.34)

In fact we can be certain that this was indeed the letter in question. In his testimony at the January 1937 trial Radek mentioned a number of letters from Trotsky, beginning with one that he received in February 1932. A little later Radek said "The letter from Trotsky was received in February or March 1932." (1937 Trial p. 92). Postal imprints on the certified mail receipt of Trotsky's letter to Radek, consulted in Harvard's Houghton Library, show that it was delivered on March 3, 1932. This corresponds exactly to Radek's account during the 1937 trial:

VYSHINSKY: How are these dates to be reconciled — February 1932 and the spring?

RADEK: February in Geneva is already the beginning of the spring, and so I conceived this period as the spring. It may have been in March. (1937 Trial 93)

Radek described the contents of this letter of Trotsky's as follows:

Trotsky wrote that the information he possessed led him to conclude that I have become convinced that he was right, and that without the realization of the Trotskyist demands the policy would find itself at an impasse. Trotsky further wrote that since he knew me to be an active person he was convinced that I would return to the struggle.... At the end of the letter Trotsky wrote approximately as follows: "You must bear in mind the experience of the preceding period and realize that for you there can be no returning to the past, that the struggle has entered a new phase and that the new feature in this phase is that either we shall be destroyed together with the Soviet Union, or we must raise the question of removing the leadership." **The word terrorism was not used, but when I read the words "removing the leadership," it became clear to me what Trotsky had in mind. ... Trotsky informed me that not only the Trotskyites but also the Zinovievites had**

**decided to return to the struggle and that negotiations for union were under way.** I sent no reply, believing that the matter must be thought over very thoroughly. (1937 Trial 86-7.)

Sedov's letter to Trotsky, partially reprinted in French translation by Broué, confirms Radek's words about the Zinovievists.

The [bloc] has been organized. It includes the Zinovievists, the Sten-Lominadze group, and the Trotskyists (the former "[capitulators]").

Radek testified that he had confirmed that Trotsky intended "terrorism" in a talk with Sergei Mrachkovsky that took place at the end of October or beginning of November 1932.

VYSHINSKY: What did Mrachkovsky reply?

RADEK: He replied quite definitely that the struggle had entered the terrorist phase and that in order to carry out these tactics they had now united with the Zinovievites and would set about the preparatory work.... It was clear that **since terrorism was the new position**, the preparatory work must consist in assembling and forming terrorist cadres. (1937 Trial 88.)

According to Radek's testimony here it was only later in 1932 that Trotsky explicitly used the word "terror." This corresponds with information from Valentin Astrov. In January 1937 Astrov testified that the Rightists formally decided to form a bloc with the Trotskyists and others at their August 26-September 1, 1932, conference. Only at this time was terror specifically approved as a method of struggle. The fact that in 1932 the main members of the bloc were the Trotskyists and the Zinovievists is confirmed in the matter from Sedov to Trotsky that Broué and Getty found in the Harvard Trotsky archive.

Radek:

When the question arose against whom terrorism should be directed, it concerned terrorism directed against the leading core of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U, and the Soviet government. And although

not a single name was mentioned during this conversation, I ... did not have the slightest doubt that the act were to be directed against Stalin and his immediate colleagues, against Kirov, Molotov, Voroshilov and Kaganovich. (89)

As a result, Radek testified, a plot to assassinate Sergei Kirov, Party leader in Leningrad, was hatched in April 1933.

RADEK: The conversation about Kirov was connected with the fact that in April 1933 Mrachkovsky asked me whether I could mention any Trotskyite in Leningrad who would undertake the organization of a terrorist group there.

VYSHINSKY: Against whom?

RADEK: Against Kirov, of course. (1937 Trial 90)

Kirov was actually killed in December 1934 by Leonid Nikolaev, a member of a clandestine terrorist Zinovievist opposition group in Leningrad.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Though the fact is denied by Alla Kirilina and Matthew Lenoe, the two most recent scholars of the Kirov assassination, the evidence that Nikolaev was indeed a member of a clandestine Zinovievite group in Leningrad is unequivocal. See Furr Kirov.

Getty surmised that the letter Radek said he had received from Trotsky in February or March 1932 while he, Radek, was in Geneva, "involved an attempt to persuade the addressee[s] to return to opposition." Radek confirmed that Trotsky's letter did contain such an appeal but that it closed by saying "We must raise the question of removing the leadership."

The terms "remove" (*ustranit'*, *ubrat'*, *ustranenie*) are used several times by the defendants in the Moscow Trials.

Mrachkovsky goes on to say that already in 1931 this Trotskyite group openly discussed the question of terrorism.

I. N. Smirnov, who had visited Berlin, brought back instructions from Trotsky, which he received through Trotsky's son, L. Sedov, to the following effect: "Until we put Stalin out of the way ("uberem"), we shall not be able to come back to power."

VYSHISNKY: What do you mean by the expression: "Until we put Stalin out of the way ("uberem")"?

MRACHKOVSKY: **Until we kill ("ub'iem") Stalin.** At that very meeting, in the presence of Smirnov, myself, Ter-Vaganyan and Safonova, I was given the task of organizing a terrorist group, that is to say, to select reliable people. (1936 Trial 41; Russian original: *Pravda* August 20, 1936, p. 4)

VYSHISNKY: That is to say, you received a letter from Trotsky through Sedov and Shestov?

PYATAKOV: Yes.

VYSHINSKY: What was in this letter?

PYATAKOV: In this letter, which was written in German, ...

VYSHISNKY: You know German fairly well?

PYATAKOV: Yes.

VYSHISNKY: And you write and read it quite fluently?

PYATAKOV: I do not write it quite grammatically, but I read it quite fluently and also converse.

VYSHINSKY: What did the letter say?

PYATAKOV: The letter, as I now recall, began as follows: "Dear friend, I am very glad that you have followed my request..." It went on to say that fundamental tasks were facing us, which he briefly formulated. **The first task was to use every means to remove ("ustranit'") Stalin and his immediate assistants. Of course,**

**"every means" was to be understood above all as violent means.** Secondly, in this same note Trotsky spoke of the necessity of uniting all anti-Stalin forces for this struggle. (1937 Trial 32; Russian edition 27-28)

We have already quoted Radek's statement that in 1932 Trotsky wrote him "we must raise the question of removing ("**ustraneni**") the leadership... when I read the words "removing ("**ustranenie**") the leadership," it became clear to me what Trotsky had in mind." (1937 Trial 87; Russian edition 52)

Astrov confirmed that these were the terms used among the Rightists. It appears that all who used this term claimed that they understood it in the way Radek did — as meaning assassination. It was natural that they did so, for the only other means of "removing the leadership" was by winning a majority of the Central Committee — something they had been unable to do during the 1920s when they could campaign openly within the Party in the USSR. In a later chapter we discuss the "Remove Stalin" issue in more detail.

### **Trotsky Denied Contact with Radek**

If the letter that Trotsky unquestionably sent to Radek in Geneva in the Spring of 1932 had been an innocent one Trotsky could have simply published it, or presented it to the Dewey Commission<sup>3</sup> as proof that Radek was falsifying the content of that letter. Trotsky and other presented a great many documents to the Commission which were retained in its exhibits.

<sup>3</sup> The Dewey Commission held hearings in 1937, supposedly to investigate the charges against Trotsky and his son at the Moscow Trials. We discuss its proceedings in two later chapters.

Instead, Trotsky lied. He claimed that he had not been in touch with Radek or with Piatakov since 1929, when he had been exiled from the USSR. In his opening statement to the Dewey Commission Trotsky's lawyer, Albert Goldman, stated:

The testimony will show that Trotsky has had no connection either direct or indirect with Radek since the time of his expulsion from the U.S.S.R., and that he has neither received from Radek nor written to him a single letter. (CLT 10)

Trotsky did indeed make that statement in his testimony.

GOLDMAN: Now, were you in communication with Radek, either directly or indirectly, since you left the Soviet Union, Mr. Trotsky?

TROTSKY: The only communications are represented by the quotations; no other communication.

GOLDMAN: You mean that you wrote about him, but you did not write to him?

TROTSKY: Never.

GOLDMAN: Did you receive any letters from him?

TROTSKY: Never.

GOLDMAN: Did you send letters to him through an intermediary?

TROTSKY: No. (CLT 116)

Goldman's assertion is false. Trotsky's testimony did not *show* that Trotsky had had no communication with Radek. Nor could he do so. Trotsky just *asserted* that he had not and the Dewey Commission accepted Trotsky's assertions.

Goldman was Trotsky's lawyer. Perhaps he assumed it was his duty to "defend" Trotsky — to interpret his client's statements and evidence in the most positive light for his client. That makes sense in a trial at law, where there would also be a prosecutor to set forth the argument *against* the defendant. It was up to the Dewey Commission members to perform this function. This they failed to do.

Throughout the Dewey Commission hearings Trotsky acted as though he would simply, gullibly, be believed with respect to charges made in the Moscow Trials. The very friendly Dewey Commission members did not call him on any of these attempts, as any objective student, much less a prosecutor or "devil's advocate," certainly would have done.

### **The Sten-Lominadze Group**

At a meeting, which Astrov says took place between August 26 and September 1, 1932, the "leftists" Sten, Lominadze, Shatsky "and others" joined a bloc with the Rightists.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

At the very first session of the conference Slepkov informed those present that a few days earlier Sten had come to him and in the name of the group of "Leftists" had proposed that we form a bloc with them. Slepkov entered into contact with them, saying that he would put this question up for discussion among the active participants of the organization. This question was discussed at the second session of the conference and it was decided to conclude a bloc with the group of Leftists (Lominadze, Sten, Shatsky and others).

6) [[cyrillic]]

Translated:

6) To confirm the correctness of the tactic, taken by the center of the Rightists, of a bloc with the Trotskyists and to conclude a bloc with the Leftists (Lominadze, Sten, Shatsky). (Lubianka 1937-1938 35-36)

This confirms what we know from Sedov's letter to Trotsky, where Sedov says that the Sten-Lominadze group is part of the bloc.

[The bloc] is organized. In it have entered the Zinovievites, the Sten-Lominadze group and the Trotskyists (former "[capitulators]").

There can be no doubt that these two completely independent sources — Sedov and Trotsky, on the one hand, and Astrov, on the other — are describing the the formation of the same bloc and agree that it was formed in the second half of 1932. According to Broué the Rightists also entered the bloc with the Trotskyists.

Here the words bloc and "capitulators" have been physically cut out from the original with a knife or razor but have been added by Broué and are undoubtedly correct.<sup>4</sup> The quotation marks around the excised word "capitulators" are in the original. The "capitulators" had only pretended to capitulate to Stalin, as Broué recognized:

Lev Sedov called the Smirnov group either the "former capitulators" or the "Trotskiite capitulators." **Everybody had known**, from 1929 on, that people in the Smirnov group had not really capitulated but were trying to fool the apparatus, and were capable of organizing themselves as an Opposition within the party: the fact was so universally known that Andrés Nin, the Spaniard deported from the Soviet Union in August 1930, explained it openly to his German comrades of *Die permanente Revolution* who printed his declaration without apparent problem. (POS 104)

<sup>4</sup> Broué says nothing about these excisions except to note them. It seems likely that they were done by Broué's assistants. Trotskyists had a clear motive to hide evidence that Trotsky had lied. Broué's team had been the first to study the TA in detail after its opening in January 1980. The person or persons who had earlier "purged" the Trotsky Archive would have simply removed the whole document.

Broué does not say whom he means by "everybody" here. Stalin certainly did not know that Smirnov's "capitulation" was phony. Between 1929 and his arrest in January 1933 Smirnov held high-ranking positions in the People's Commissariat for Heavy Industry, as did Iurii Piatakov. They would never have obtained those or any other positions of influence and trust if their "capitulation" — disavowal of Trotskyism and pledge that they now supported the Party line — had been recognized as dishonest.



We have seen that both Sedov and Astrov mention the Sten-Lominadze group, which is also mentioned repeatedly in the First Moscow of August 1936.

I. N. Smirnov stated:...

"I admit that Ter-Vaganyan, who with my knowledge conducted negotiations with the Leftists and the Zinovievites in the name of the Trotskyite group, formed in 1932 a bloc with Kamenev, Zinoviev and **the Lominadze group** for the joint struggle against the C.P.S.U. and the Soviet Government, and that L. Trotsky's instructions regarding terror against the leaders of the C.P.S.U. and the Soviet state were made the basis of this bloc." (Vol. XXIX, pp. 93, 104.) (1936 Trial 17)

The accused Mrachkovsky testified as follows:

"... In the middle of 1932, I. N. Smirnov put before our leading trio the question of the necessity of uniting our organization with the Zinoviev-Kamenev and **Sten-Lominadze groups** ... It was then decided to consult L. Trotsky on this question and to obtain his directions. L. Trotsky replied, agreeing to the formation of a bloc on the condition that the groups uniting in the bloc would agree to the necessity of removing by violence the leaders of the C.P.S.U. and Stalin in the first place." (Vol. XVIII, pp. 44, 45) (1936 Trial 21-22)

Mrachkovsky then goes on to tell the Court about the activities of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite terrorist centre. The members of this centre were Zinoviev, Kamenev, **Lominadze**, Mrachkovsky, Ter-Vaganyan and others. (1936 Trial 44)

In connection with Mrachkovsky's testimony, the accused Ter-Vaganyan is examined. He admits that negotiations for the formation of a united Trotskyite-Zinovievite terrorist bloc were started as far back as June 1932 and that in the first stages of the negotiations he, Ter-Vaganyan, had served as intermediary between **Lominadze** and Kamenev, and between Smirnov and Zinoviev. (1936 Trial 45)

... Reingold says: "I can confirm that Zinoviev, Kamenev, Bakayev, Evdokimov, Smirnov, Mrachkovsky, Ter-Vaganyan and Sokolnikov were members of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite centre. Negotiations were carried on about joint activity with the 'Leftists': Shatsky, **Lominadze and Sten**, and also with the representatives of the Right deviation: Rykov, Bukharin and Tomsy." "The idea of the Zinovievites uniting with the Trotskyites," says Reingold, "arose as far back as 1931. Meeting Zinoviev in his apartment and in his villa that year, I heard him say that it was a pity that we had fallen out with Trotsky." Continuing his testimony, Reingold states that in discussing the general political situation, Zinoviev emphasized that the economic position of the Soviet Union had become stronger and that it was absolutely no use talking about collapse. It was necessary to unite all the forces opposed to the present leadership. That is how the way was paved for a bloc with the Trotskyites. The basis for the union of the Trotskyites with the Zinovievites, emphasizes Reingold, was terrorism. (1936 Trial 54-55)

Continuing, Zinoviev says: "At the same time, certain underground groups of the Right as well as of the so-called 'Left' trend, sought contact with me and Kamenev. Approaches were made by the remnants of the 'Workers' Opposition': by Shlyapnikov and Medvedyev. Approaches came from the groups of the so-called 'Leftists': that is, **Lominadze**, Shatsky, **Sten** and others. Approaches also came from the so-called 'individuals,' to whose numbers belonged Smilga, and to a certain extent, Sokolnikov. (1936 Trial 71-72)

TER-VAGANYAN: Yes, it was terrorist.

"In the autumn of 1931," continues Ter-Vaganyan, "my very close connection and friendship with **Lominadze** began. I met Lominadze frequently, and on these occasions we talked about a bloc." Continuing his testimony, Ter-Vaganyan says that at that period the Trotskyites

began negotiations for union with the Zinovievites and the "Leftists," and that the terroristic stand was perfectly clear.

VYSHINSKY: When was that?

TER-VAGANYAN: After Smirnov came back from Berlin.

VYSHINSKY: At that period was the terroristic stand clear?

TER-VAGANAYN: Yes, it was clear, because the instructions had already been brought. (1936 Trial 110-111)

In clarifying the question as to the basis on which the bloc with the "Leftists" was formed, Comrade Vyshinsky puts a number of questions to the accused Smirnov. Smirnov's replies make it clear that the bloc was formed on a terroristic basis.

VYSHINSKY (to Smirnov): Did you organize the bloc or not?

SMIRNOV: I instructed Ter-Vaganyan to negotiate with **Lominadze**.

VYSHINSKY: What for?

SMIRNOV: For a union.

VYSHINSKY: Did the union take place?

SMIRNOV: Yes.

VYSHINSKY: With the "Leftists"?

SMIRNOV: Yes.

VYSHINSKY: Did you join the bloc?

SMIRNOV: Yes.

VYSHINSKY: At the time the instructions regarding terrorism were in operation?

SMIRNOV: Yes. (1936 Trial 111)

According to Valentin Astrov the bloc was formed around an agreement to use "terror" against Stalin and the Soviet leadership associated with him.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

At the beginning of 1932 Slepkov in a meeting of activists of the [Rightist] organization in his apartment was justifying the necessity of forming a bloc with the Trotskyists. He said that "the Trotskyists have accepted the economic platform of the Trotskyists. The tactic of terror unites us. The disagreements between us and the Trotskyists are secondary." (Lubianka 1937-1938 32)

This is not mentioned in the documents discussed by Broué. This is not surprising, however, since the Trotsky archive has been purged. We shall return to the questions of Trotsky's attitude towards terror and the post-Soviet verification of Astrov's testimony.

### **Contact with Other Oppositionists: The Case of Yuri Gaven**

In 1990 Pierre Broué announced that he had discovered that Trotsky and Sedov had lied concerning their ties to some Party members inside the USSR. One of these figures was Yuri Petrovich Gavenis or, in its Russian form, Gaven, an Old Bolshevik of Latvian background. At the 1936 Moscow Trial Gaven was named by I.N. Smirnov, one of the chief defendants and leader of the clandestine Trotskyists in the Soviet Union, as the person who had met with Trotsky in 1932 and received terrorist instructions from him — that is, instructions to assassinate Stalin and, perhaps, others.

Vyshinsky, quoting Smirnov:

"... I admit that the attitude which regarded terrorism as the only way of changing the situation in the Soviet Union was known to me from a conversation with Sedov in Berlin in 1931 as his own personal

position. I admit that this line on terrorism was confirmed by L. Trotsky in 1932 in his personal instructions conveyed to me through Y. Gaven." (1936 Trial 17)

VYSHINSKY: Another question to Smirnov. Do you corroborate the testimony of Mrachkovsky that in 1932 you received a reply from Trotsky through Gaven?

SMIRNOV: I received a reply from Trotsky through Gaven.

VYSHINSKY: And in addition, did you receive verbal information on the conversation with Trotsky?

SMIRNOV: Yes, also verbal conversation.

VYSHINSKY: You, Smirnov, confirm before the Supreme Court that in 1932 you received from Gaven the direction from Trotsky to commit acts of terrorism?

SMIRNOV: Yes.

VYSHINSKY: Against whom?

SMIRNOV: Against the leaders.

VYSHINSKY: Against which?

SMIRNOV: Stalin and others. (1936 Trial 42)

Smirnov stated that he had also had contact with Sedov but that Gaven had conveyed to him a letter from Trotsky himself.

VYSHINSKY: Was the letter you received through Gaven sent by Sedov or by Trotsky?

SMIRNOV: Gaven brought a letter from Trotsky. (1936 Trial 83-84)

...

VYSHINSKY: What then do you admit?

SMIRNOV: I admit that I belonged to the underground Trotskyite organization, joined the bloc, joined the centre of this bloc, met Sedov in Berlin in 1931, listened to his opinion on terrorism and passed this opinion on to Moscow. I admit that I received Trotsky's instructions on terrorism from Gaven and, although not in agreement with them, I communicated them to the Zinovievites through Ter-Vaganyan. (1936 Trial 85)

Smirnov insisted that though he passed on the instructions about terrorism to the Zinovievites and was a member of the center, or leadership of the bloc, he "did not work" in it — a point Vyshinsky energetically contested. (85)

Smirnov returned to this topic in his last plea.

This was the mistake I made, which later grew into a crime. It induced me to resume contact with Trotsky, it induced me to seek connections with the Zinovievite group, it brought me into a bloc with the group of Zinovievites, into receiving instructions on terrorism from Trotsky through Gaven in November 1932, it brought me to terrorism. I communicated Trotsky's instructions on terrorism to the bloc to which I belonged as a member of the centre. The bloc accepted these instructions and began to act. (1936 Trial 171)

Both Sedov and Trotsky denied any meetings with Gaven. But Sedov's letter confirms that Smirnov was telling the truth about the bloc with the Zinovievites. Broué found evidence that Trotsky did meet with Gaven and send a message back to the USSR with him.

Sedov:

Faut-il répéter que Trotsky n'a pas transmis par l'intermédiaire de I. Gaven, pas plus que par l'intermédiaire de quelqu'un d'autre, des instructions terroristes et ne s'est pas rencontré à l'étranger avec Gaven,

pas plus qu'il ne s'est rencontré avec aucun des accusés? (Livre rouge 100)

Translated:

Is it necessary to say that Trotsky did not transmit through I. Gaven, any more than through anyone else, any kind of terrorist instructions and did not meet with Gaven abroad, any more than he met with a single one of the defendants?

Trotsky, at the Dewey Commission hearings:

GOLDMAN: Did you ever hear of a man by the name of Gaven?

TROTSKY: Yes.

GOLDMAN: Who is he?

TROTSKY: He is a Latvian Bolshevik. He, if I remember, gave all his sympathies at a certain time to the Opposition. As Holtzman, for example. In 1926 or 1927, he was connected for a time with Smilga, a member of the Central Committee. But he disappeared from my eyes absolutely after 1926.

GOLDMAN: In the testimony of Mrachkovsky, and also Smirnov, there is a reference that you sent communications through Gaven to Smirnov about the necessity of killing Stalin.

TROTSKY: I don't know anything about it. no, it is an absolute falsehood. He is not among the defendants.

GOLDMAN: No, he is not. He is a witness.

TROTSKY: Not even a witness.

GOLDMAN: That's right.

TROTSKY: He disappeared.

GOLDMAN: It is simply mentioned by Mrachkovsky, by the defendant Mrachkovsky. (CLT 225-226)

In 1985 and again in 1990 Broué revealed that Trotsky and Sedov had lied.

Gaven est «Sorokine," comme Holzman est «Orlov," et Smirnov «Kolokoltsev," dans la correspondance de Sedov et de son père.

Translated:

Gaven is "Sorokin," as Holzman is "Orlov," and Smirnov is "Kolokoltsev," in the correspondence between Sedov and his father.<sup>5</sup>

In another article (published in English) Broué states:

In 1936 Trotskii and Sedov denied having any contact with him [Gaven]. In fact, they had. Allowed to go to Germany in order to receive medical care, Gavenis wrote to Trotskii and got an interview with Lev Sedov, who wrote an account of it. Gavenis gave information about the bloc, supplementing Holzman's. He also gave information about his own "O"-group (probably Osinskii) and seems to have agreed to bring back to the Soviet Union a message to the Trotskiite group itself — in spite of his worry about the latter having been infiltrated by the OGPU. (POS 99)

<sup>5</sup> "Compléments à un article sur les trotskystes en U.R.S.S.," CahLT 24 (1985), 69.

Broué does not identify the letter or letters wither in the Sedov Papers at the Hoover Institution or in the Trotsky Archive at Harvard in which Trotsky and his son discuss Gaven.<sup>6</sup> In Broué's 1988 biography *Trotsky* we read only this:

Gaven, l'ancien «émissaire» de Trotsky, est fusillé sur une civière.<sup>7</sup>

Translated

Gaven, Trotsky's old "emissary," was shot on a stretcher.



<sup>6</sup> Broué suggests that the information that Sedov did meet with Gaven is in a letter in the Hoover collection, but does not give further details. Cf. Broué, *Trotsky*. Ch. XLIV note 34: "34 Lettre de Gaven à Moscou et rapport de Sedov à Trotsky sur son entretien avec Gaven, A.H.F.N. Également, P. Broué « Compléments sur les trotskystes en U.R.S.S. », CahLT, no 24, décembre 1985, p. 69." But this final citation does not identify the letter. The abbreviation A.H.F.N. used by Broué means "Archive Hoover Fonds Nicolaevsky" — Hoover Archive, Nicolaevsky Collection. Broué does not identify any specific letter. In POS 111, note 4, Broué announces his plan to publish all the Trotsky-Sedov correspondence, but this project was never realized.

<sup>7</sup> Chapter 56. At

[http://www.marxists.org/francais/Broué/works/1988/00/PB\\_tky\\_56.htm](http://www.marxists.org/francais/Broué/works/1988/00/PB_tky_56.htm)

The detail of being shot "on a litter" is taken from Roy Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, a completely unreliable book full of Khrushchev-era falsifications. This is only a rumor, though treated as "fact" by Broué, Medvedev, and Conquest. It is interesting to note how the story becomes elaborated. Medvedev writes: "In the thirties he was carried on a stretcher to be shot." Conquest paraphrases Medvedev's account. But Broué states flatly that Gaven was actually *on* a stretcher when he was shot.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Roy Medvedev, *Let History Judge: the origins and consequences of Stalinism*. (New York, 1971), p. 273. This is Robert Conquest's only source for this "fact" as well: *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 104 and n. 159, p. 500.

In the same chapter of his biography of Trotsky Broué also accepts Medvedev's account that Stalin had Sergo Ordzhonikidze assassinated — a story for which there is no evidence at all and which has long been abandoned even by anticommunists who insist that Sergo committed suicide. But, as Vladimir Bobrov has recently demonstrated, this "suicide story" is also a falsehood invented during the Khrushchev era. There is no reason to doubt the official story that appeared in the Soviet press the day afterwards, that Ordzhonikidze had died of a heart attack.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Vladimir L. Bobrov, "Taina smerti Ordzhonikidze," at <http://vif2ne.ru/nvz/forum/archive/238/238967.htm> ; fully footnoted Russian version at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/bobrov-ordzhon08.html> ; English translation at [msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/bobrov-ordzhon08eng.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/bobrov-ordzhon08eng.html) See also Furr, Khrushchev Lied 116-118.

Broué writes:

The correspondence between Trotskii and Sedov demonstrates that father and son were astounded at the beginning of the trial when they saw that Smirnov and Holzman, already guilty in Stalin's eyes, did not content themselves with confessing the truth but accused themselves of fantastic crimes. (POS 99)

It would be important to see the text of such letters, as they might constitute evidence that Smirnov's and Gol'tsman's testimony was false. But in this article Broué neither quotes the text nor cites the specific letters in which this exchange supposedly took place. In his biography of Trotsky Broué identifies the document as Harvard 4868. (Broué, Trotsky, Ch. LIII n.15) Rogovin, who also cites it, puts it in context:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

After the appearance of the first announcements about the Trial of the Sixteen [the August 1936 Zinoviev-Kamenev Trial], Sedov sent a letter by special courier to Trotsky. **Fear that it might somehow be seized** explains some of the peculiarities of this letter (using the formal "vy," etc.). (Rogovin 1937 64)

Therefore we cannot consider this letter as evidence that Trotsky and Sedov really were "astounded," as Broué claims. A letter written with a special style for fear it might be intercepted is, obviously, a letter that does not reveal anything secret, as actual terrorist communications would.

Judging from the number of citations to the Harvard and Hoover Trotsky archives in his books Rogovin appears to have had extensive access to both. Yet he cites only a letter in which Sedov discusses what he and Trotsky should admit and what they should conceal. This would not constitute evidence that they thought Smirnov's and Gol'tsman's testimony false.

The question is not whether Smirnov brought a letter from Trotsky to the Trotskyists within the USSR — all agree that he did — but whether that letter contained terrorist instructions. Broué and Rogovin deny this but neither has any evidence to support his denial. And without evidence, how could they possibly know this? This is their Trotskyist bias speaking. Neither Broué nor Rogovin makes any attempt to maintain that objectivity without which no historian's work is of any value. This ruins their works as historical studies.

We have evidence that Trotsky and Sedov lied when they publicly claimed that Trotsky had not met with Gaven. Gaven had indeed meet with Sedov and, in Broué's words, Gaven "seems to have agreed to bring back to the Soviet Union a message to the Trotskyite group itself." Smirnov confessed that this letter, which he dates to November 1932, contained terrorist instructions.

The volume *Politbiuro i Lev Trotskii t.2* published in 2013 contains many interrogations and statements in which Gaven's role is exactly as Smirnov outlines in his trial testimony — that is, that Gaven carried a message from Trotsky that "terror" must be the new tactic for the opposition. We will examine these very important materials in the second volume of the present work.

## **Trotsky's Contacts with Trotskyists inside the USSR**

### **Contact with Sokol'nikov**

TROTSKY: Sokolnikov has original ideas. He has a very inventive mind, and that is the reason why he is not fit, he does not fit into the bureaucratic régime.

GOLDMAN: Did you ever have any communication from him when you left Russia?

TROTSKY: Never.

GOLDMAN: Did you in any way communicate with him since you left Russia?

TROTSKY: No.

GOLDMAN: Either directly or indirectly?

TROTSKY: No. (CLT 123)

We can now confirm that the following statement made by Sokol'nikov in his final statement at trial, is false:

I can add nothing to the information and the evaluations which were here given by the members of the centre — Pyatakov and Radek. I think that these evaluations have been sufficiently frank, and I fully share them. But I cannot add anything of my own, because **I was not in direct communication with Trotsky, I was not directly connected with him,** and received information through third persons. (1937 Trial 555)

Getty found a certified mail receipt of a letter to Sokol'nikov in London that Trotsky mailed sometime during 1932. Assuming the letter reached him — a similar letter did reach Radek — it follows that Sokol'nikov falsely denied having been in contact with Trotsky in 1932, although Radek admitted he had received Trotsky's letter in the same year. We don't know why Sokol'nikov did this.

### **Contact with Piatakov**

Trotsky also specifically denied any contact with Piatakov since 1928:

TROTSKY: He capitulated openly, publicly; he capitulated in February, 1928. He was the first "Trotskyite" who capitulated publicly.

GOLDMAN: And after that did you have any correspondence with him at all?

TROTSKY: None.

GOLDMAN: Either when you were in the Soviet Union or outside of the Soviet Union?

TROTSKY: Exactly. (CLT 117)

As we have seen, Trotsky also denied any contact with Radek. We know Trotsky was lying because Getty found the certified mail receipt of a letter to Radek in the Trotsky archive. There is no such evidence in the archive of letters to Piatakov. However, we must be mindful of the fallacy of the argument from silence. "Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence" — especially since Getty discovered that the Harvard Trotsky Archive has been purged.

Sedov's "Slip of the Tongue"

But Holmström has uncovered other evidence of Trotsky-Piatakov contact in the pages of *Het Volk*, the newspaper of the Dutch social-democratic party Arbeiderspartij. On January 28, 1937, *Het Volk* published an account of an interview with Trotsky's son and principal political assistant Leon Sedov. In it Sedov says:

Dit tweede proces is veel beter dan het eerste in elkaar gezet. De tegenstanders worden nu niet voornamelijk als belagers van Stalin, als politieke tegenstanders coorgesteld. En juist het omgekeerde is erder het geval. De beschuldigen in het eerste proces waren het in hun hart niet eens met Stalin, al capituleerden zij dan ook vor hem. Zij waren om hun critiek en politieke activiteit jaren voor het begin van het proces verbannen of gearresteerd: Smirnow 3 ½ jaar tevoren, Zinowjew en Kamenew anderhalf jaar voordien. Radek en Pjatakow waren echter tot het laatste toe aangangers van Stalin en waren zijn ideeën volledig toegedaan. Met hen hebben de Trotzkiïsten veel minder in verbinding gestaan dan met de anderen. Om het precis uit te drukken: in geen enkel verband.

Translated:

The second trial has been organized much better than the first. The defendants are now not presented as enemies of Stalin, as political opponents. Just the opposite is clearly true. The defendants in the first trial were in their hearts not in agreement with Stalin, even though they capitulated to him. They had been exiled or arrested years before the start of the trial for their criticism and political activity: Smirnov 3 ½ years earlier, Zinoviev and Kamenev one and a half years before. Radek and Piatakov were two of the last supporters of Stalin and were totally committed to his ideas. The Trotskyists have had much less contact with them than with the others. To be more exact: no contact at all.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> "Het proces te Moskou. Wie Niet Wil Bekennen Al Doodgeschoten? Trotski Jr. uit zijn opvatting." ("The Moscow Trial. Not all who want to confess are shot? Trotsky Jr. about its conception.") *Het Volk*, Haarlem edition, January 28, 1937, p. 5. My thanks to Sven-Eric Holmström for providing me with this article.

This interview, in a provincial edition of the newspaper, was noticed by the Communist press, which called Sedov's remark a "slip of the tongue." (*Arbeiden*, Oslo, February 5, 1937; *Arbeiderbladet*, Copenhagen, February 12, 1937.) Thanks to Getty we now know that the Communist press was correct. Sedov's first remark, about "much less contact" — that is, *some* contact — was accurate: Trotsky had indeed been in touch with Radek.

Sedov tried to withdraw his "slip" about Radek and Piatakov. But he did not even attempt to retract the information that preceded it, that "the Trotskyists" had indeed been in contact with "the others": Smirnov, Zinoviev, and Kamenev. Broué agrees that Gol'tsman carried at least one letter from Trotsky to Smirnov. Sedov's 1932 letter in invisible ink to his father about the bloc revealed that Zinoviev and Kamenev had joined the bloc. This is perhaps enough to show that Trotsky, or at any rate "the Trotskyists," had indeed been in touch with them. Moreover, unless they had been in touch with them, how could Sedov or Trotsky have known that the defendants at the First Moscow Trial, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Smirnov,

Mrachkovsky, and others, "were in their hearts not in agreement with Stalin"?

The *Het Volk* interview would have revealed a great deal if anyone had taken it seriously. But the capitalist media did not notice or publicize Sedov's slip. Only the communist press caught it. The Dewey Commission and Trotsky himself ignored it. No one else paid it any attention. Trotsky was lucky.

In 2015 we obtained a part of Piatakov's NKVD investigation file. Among other materials it includes a long statement Piatakov wrote to Ezhov in December 1936. In it Piatakov goes into considerable detail about his own oppositional activities. It includes a lengthy account of Piatakov's secret visit in December 1935 to Trotsky in Norway, in which Piatakov outlines in some depth Trotsky's views and instructions. The second volume of the present study will include a careful study of this statement and an English translation of it.

### **Contact with Preobrazhensky**

In the Second and Third Moscow Trials, defendants named Evgeny A. Preobrazhensky as one of the clandestine Trotskyist members of the bloc. It appears that Trotsky did not explicitly state that he had not been in touch with Preobrazhensky. Getty discovered that Trotsky had written Preobrazhensky in 1932: one of the certified mail return receipts in the TA is of a letter to Preobrazhensky.

### **Contacts with Gol'tsman**

At the August 1936 Moscow Trial defendant Gol'tsman — his name is often Anglicized as "Holtzman" — claimed that he had met with Trotsky's son Sedov "many times." He further claimed that, at Sedov's suggestion, he had travelled to Copenhagen in late November 1932, when Trotsky was visiting that city to make a public speech, and met with both Sedov and Trotsky. This alleged visit is known as the "Hotel Bristol" affair.

At the Dewey Commission hearings in April 1937 in Mexico Trotsky firmly denied any contact with Gol'tsman.

GOLDMAN: Have you in any way had any communications with any Holtzman since you left Russia?

TROTSKY: Never.

GOLDMAN: Directly or indirectly?

TROTSKY: Never. (CLT 91)

However, in late 1936 Sedov had already admitted meeting with Gol'tsman. In Chapter 14 of the *Red Book* the French reads "these meetings"; the English, "this meeting."

Par tout le caractère de **ces rencontres**, il est absolument évident que Goltzman ne reçut ni «instructions» ni lettre, et qu'il n'en demanda pas non plus. (*Livre rouge* 98)

Translated:

From the entire character of **this meeting**, it is absolutely clear that Holtzman received neither "instructions" nor a letter, and did not ask for any either.

Trotsky was compelled to send a correction to the Dewey Commission on June 29, 1937, noting this indirect contact. We will return to it below.

In the third volume of his biography of Trotsky Isaac Deutscher wrote as follows:

Lyova and Goltzman **often** met and discussed developments in the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> (165)

Deutscher says these meetings occurred "early in the autumn" of 1931. This is an error. Getty and Sedov himself agree that contact with Gol'tsman occurred in the fall of 1932. Getty says "sometime in October" (TIE 28); Sedov "in the fall of 1932" ("en automne 1932," *Livre rouge* 97)



In the footnote appended to the sentence above Deutscher wrote:

This account is based on Lyova's correspondence with his father, and on his deposition to the French Commission of Inquiry which, in 1937, conducted investigations preparatory to the Mexican counter-trial. *The Archives*, Closed Section.

Deutscher's account agrees with what Gol'tsman testified at trial: "Thus I met him six or eight times in the course of four months." (1936 Trial 100) According to the published account of Sedov's testimony to the French Commission of Inquiry to which Deutscher refers Sedov said:

Je ne suis pas à même de préciser combien de fois j'ai rencontré Holzman, mais il ne fait pas de doute que je l'ai rencontré plusieurs fois.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> "Sedov et V. Serge devant la commission rogatoire." CahLT No. 41 (July 1990), p. 89.

Translated:

I cannot now be precise about the number of meetings I had with Holzman, but there's no doubt that I met him several times.

In his *Red Book* Sedov suggests that he had only one meeting with Gol'tsman, although there is a bit of vacillation in the French edition. The Russian version, published in Trotsky's *Biulleten' Oppozitsii* No. 52, used the singular — *vstrecha* (genitive singular *vstrechi*):

[[cyrillic]]

The English version also uses the singular here:

From the entire character of this *meeting*, it is absolutely clear that Holtzman received neither "instructions" nor a letter...

The French version, published as *Livre rouge sur le process de Moscou*, equivocates. At the passage above it uses the plural one time, "these

meetings":

Par tout le caractère de *ces rencontres*, il est absolument évident que Goltzman ne reçut ni «instructions» ni lettre, ...

Translated:

By the whole nature of these meetings, it is absolutely obvious that Goltzman did not receive either "instructions" or a letter...

But the referent is vague because the meeting between Sedov and Smirnov had been discussed immediately before this. So the term "these meetings" could be construed as referring to meetings with both Smirnov and Gol'tsman and not necessarily more than a single meeting with Gol'tsman. Furthermore, Sedov immediately reverts to the singular, unmistakably indicating a single meeting:

Main comme pour les buts de la Guépou, *cette entrevue* de Goltzman avec ne donnait rien... (98)

Translated:

But since for the goals of the G.P.U. *this interview* of Goltzman with Sedov did not give anything...

The Russian version also uses the singular here (*svidanie*):

[[cyrillic]].<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Biulleten' Oppozitsii* No. 52 ([[cyrillic]] 1936), «[[cyrillic]]», «[[cyrillic]]». At <http://web.mit.edu/fjk/www/FI/BO/BO-52.shtml>

...while the English also uses the singular "meeting" instead of the more technically correct word "interview." The French version is the only one that even gives a hint that there was more than one meeting between Sedov and Gol'tsman before reverting to the singular. But which is the original? The Russian version was published in the October 1936 issue of the *Biulleten'* with a note that it is a translation from French:

([[cyrillic]])

Translated:

(A translation from the French. L. Trotsky, interned in Norway, is deprived of the possibility of writing in Russian.)

On the face of it this is absurd: Trotsky claims that while in Norway he is not permitted to write in Russian but, therefore, somehow he is allowed to write in French? A possible explanation for this is that Sedov had had to promise the French authorities that he would stay aloof from politics during this stay in France. But Trotsky had been obliged to make a similar pledge to the Norwegian authorities. Evidently Sedov and Trotsky soon decided that claiming that Sedov wrote the *Red Book* would not endanger the status of either of them.

The French edition, dated October 28, 1936, by Sedov, states that the French is a revised version of the Russian text:

Il a déjà paru en langue russe, comme article rédactionnel dans le *Bulletin de l'Opposition*; l'auteur l'a revu pour l'édition française. (7)

Translated:

It has already appeared in Russian as an editorial article in the *Bulletin of the Opposition*; the author has reviewed it for the French edition.

This vacillation concerning the number of meetings between Sedov and Gol'tsman in a text that has admittedly been revised and translated numerous times suggests that Sedov and Trotsky had not decided whether to admit to more than a single meeting. At the Dewey Commission hearing Sedov used the singular only (*rencontre*) until directly asked how many times he had met with Gol'tsman.

When questioned about the notes to which he kept referring, he said that they pertained only to the first meeting. The questioner did not pursue the matter of what Sedov and Gol'tsman had discussed during their other meetings.

This was — to say the least — curious and unfortunate, since it left the main issue completely unexplored. We know from the Harvard Trotsky Archive that Gol'tsman had been the "informer" (*informator*) who had been the mediator between I.N. Smirnov and Sedov. It was Gol'tsman who had brought Smirnov's idea of a bloc to Sedov, who then obtained his father's permission.

Broué says that Smirnov brought "**at least** one document from the pen of one of the leaders of the groups in the bloc":

L'«informateur» a incontestablement apporté à Sedov **au moins un** document de la plume d'un des dirigeants des groups constituant le bloc... (Broué 1980, 17.)

Translated:

The messenger had certainly brought to Sedov **at least one** document from the pen of one of the leaders of the groups that comprised the bloc...

Sedov and Trotsky admitted only to this document. Even Broué suspected there may have been more. Given the plurality of meetings between Sedov and Gol'tsman and Sedov's reluctance to discuss them, Broué's suspicion is reasonable.

At the 1936 trial Gol'tsman confessed to bringing "Trotsky's personal instructions to organize terrorist acts" back to the bloc. (1936 Trial 40) Gol'tsman testified that Trotsky had used the term "remove Stalin," saying this could only be done by terrorism (i.e. violence). A turn to "terror," together with the discussions necessary to justify it in Marxist terms, at the present conjuncture, and perhaps arrangements for Gol'tsman to hear it from Trotsky directly, might well have occupied those several mysterious meetings.

It appears that Sedov had gone into the hearing intending to claim that he had met Gol'tsman only once. Then, when asked directly, he changed his mind and decided to admit to the multiple meetings. In effect Sedov counted on the Dewey Commission not to follow up on this matter and

probe him about what was discussed in the other meetings, and they did not. The Dewey Commission's final report, *Not Guilty*, states that after Sedov's first meeting with Gol'tsman there were "several subsequent meetings." (Not Guilty 61) Sedov's two accounts contradict one another, and the earlier account in the *Livre rouge*, as well as all the text in the English *Red Book* and that in the Russian *Biulleten' Oppozitsii*, are false.

In his book Deutscher did not mention that Gol'tsman had brought a proposal for a bloc of Trotskyists with Zinovievists and others. But we know that he did; both Getty (TIE 28; Origins 119) and Broué (1980) discuss this. Broué published an excerpt from a letter of Sedov to Trotsky (1980 35-36) in which Gol'tsman's role is discussed.

This is one of the matters we know Sedov refused to disclose to the French Commission. Like Trotsky, Sedov, lied to the Dewey Commission as well as in the *Red Book*. Sedov and Trotsky both denied sending terrorist directives through Gol'tsman. Of course they would deny doing this whether they had done so or not. Trotsky and Sedov lied when they thought it was expedient to do so. They had to lie, as every conspirator must. But it does mean that we cannot believe what they said or wrote.

## **Chapter 5. *Non-Soviet Evidence — Other Lies By Trotsky***

### **The "Hotel Bristol" story in the First Moscow Trial**

At the First Moscow Trial Gol'tsman testified as follows:

In November I again telephoned Sedov and we met once again.

Sedov said to me: "As you are going to the U.S.S.R., it would be a good thing if you came with me to Copenhagen where my father is."

VYSHINSKY: That is to say?

HOLTZMAN: That is to say, Trotsky.

VYSHINSKY: Did you go?

HOLTZMAN: I agreed, but I told him that we could not go together for reasons of secrecy. I arranged with Sedov to be in Copenhagen within two or three days, to put up at the Hotel Bristol and meet him there. I went to the hotel straight from the station and in the lounge met Sedov. About 10 a.m. we went to Trotsky. (1936 Trial 100)

Shortly after the trial the fact was widely publicized that there was no "Hotel Bristol" in Copenhagen. Trotsky utilized this fact to attack the credibility of the trial itself. Testimony about the "Hotel Bristol" issue took up a good deal of space in the Dewey Commission hearings.

In his 2008 article "New Evidence Concerning the 'Hotel Bristol' Question in the First Moscow Trial of 1936" Sven-Eric Holmström examined this issue carefully. Holmström suggested that Gol'tsman could have misidentified the Grand Hotel Copenhagen as the "Bristol" because of the large sign beside its door for the adjacent "Bristol" Konditori (café and pastry shop). We refer interested readers to this article rather than repeat here the quotations and documentation carefully amassed and reproduced by Holmström.

In view of the many lies that Trotsky and Sedov told concerning the Moscow Trials it is interesting to note that they did not bother to get the correct story about the former Hotel Bristol. Trotsky said that "the Hotel Bristol was demolished in 1917,"<sup>1</sup> "torn down as far back as 1917."<sup>2</sup> During the Dewey Commission hearings Albert Goldman, Trotsky's lawyer, stated that the Hotel Bristol "was burned down in 1917." (CLT 167) But the Hotel Bristol had neither been torn down nor burned in 1917. It was sold to an insurance company, which maintained the building. It is hard to understand why Trotsky and his supporters never bothered to verify what had in fact happened to the Hotel Bristol.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "An Interview for Americans," (January 1937). WLT 1936-1937, 97.

<sup>2</sup> "A New Moscow Amalgam," (January 21, 1937), Ibid. 125.

<sup>3</sup> See Holmström for all the appropriate documentation. On this point see p. 13, note.

### **The "Hotel Bristol" story in the *Bulletin of the Opposition***

Holmström has shown that Esther Field, one of the witnesses at the Dewey Commission hearings, lied about the relative positions of the Grand Hotel Copenhagen and the Konditori Bristol, testifying that they were not next to each other when she had visited them in 1932.<sup>4</sup> Since her testimony was designed to help Trotsky, Trotsky must have known about her lie in advance. Perhaps he had even asked her to lie for him.

<sup>4</sup> Sven-Eric Holmström, "New Evidence Concerning the 'Hotel Bristol' Question in the First Moscow Trial of 1936." *Cultural Logic* 2008. At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2008/Holmström.pdf>

Three months after his testimony to the Dewey Commission Trotsky published yet another version of the "Hotel Bristol" story in which he contradicted this earlier account. In an article titled "Hotel Bristol" published in July 1937 but dated March 13, 1937, Trotsky wrote:

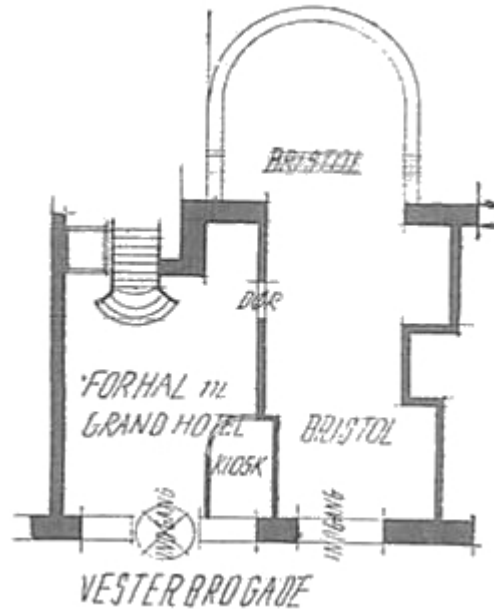
Only in February of this year the press of the Comintern made a discovery that saved them: true, there is no Hotel Bristol in Copenhagen, but there is a Bristol pastry-shop [NOTE: *konditerskaia*, in Danish *Konditori*], which is attached to the hotel by one wall. True, this hotel is called "Grand Hotel Copenhagen," but it is a hotel. True, a pastry-shop is not a hotel, but it is called "Bristol." According to Gol'tsman's words the meeting took place in the vestibule of the hotel, which is not called Bristol, does have a vestibule. **In addition it must be added that, as is clear even from the drawings printed in the Comintern press, the entrances of the pastry-shop and the hotel are on different streets.** Where then did the meeting take place? In the vestibule without the Bristol, or in the Bristol, without the vestibule?

In one respect this version is more accurate than Trotsky's account to the Dewey Commission. There Trotsky's witnesses Esther Field and A. Vikelsø Jensen testified that the Bristol Konditori was *not* adjacent to the Grand Hotel Copenhagen. Holmström has proven this to be untrue. Here Trotsky admitted that they were indeed attached to each other.

The only "Comintern press" account we know of is that of the Danish Communist Party newspaper *Arbejderbladet*. It printed a single drawing — Trotsky mentions "drawings." As Trotsky admits, the drawing clearly shows that the pastry-shop and hotel are adjacent. However, Trotsky added the curious, and false, statement that the entrances are "on different streets." This explains why Trotsky did not refer specifically to the drawing he mentioned, much less reproduce it. The drawing shows that the entrances are side by side and on the same street, Vesterbrogade. Trotsky's readers would have had no way of locating the drawing from the vague description Trotsky gave.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Holmström has confirmed this fact with great care. The drawing in question is reproduced on p. 21. Holmström's whole article repays careful study.





**Revolving door entrance to hotel beside entrance to Bristol Konditeri, showing door connecting Bristol Konditori to hotel. From Holmström 2009 (*Arbejderbladet* January 29, 1937, p. 8)**

Trotsky also failed to mention that the drawing in question shows an interior passageway between the pastry-shop and hotel. One could access the hotel and its vestibule by entering the pastry-shop door, the one immediately beside the large "Bristol" sign. However, it is not necessary to assume Gol'tsman did that. Holmström has verified that the entrances of *both* pastry-shop and hotel were also right next to each other, and that it would have been natural for anyone to confuse the large sign "Bristol" with the name of the hotel and go directly into that entrance.

Not only are Trotsky's two accounts of the "Hotel Bristol" matter both false; they also contradict each other. Trotsky did not bring his two mutually contradictory versions into agreement. He could easily have done so: the second version was not published till three months after the Dewey Commission hearings. He could also have sent a letter of correction to the Dewey Commission as he did about his indirect contact with Gol'tsman (CLT 592-3). But he did neither.

**Why did Trotsky lie about "Bristol"?**

Trotsky took a terrible risk in permitting both stories to stand. Once again he was lucky. Aside from the communist press no one seems to have noticed the contradiction between Trotsky's two versions. Had they done so Trotsky's Dewey Commission testimony and Trotsky's general truthfulness would have been called into question at a crucial time. Why did Trotsky take such a risk?

Trotsky had certainly been in Copenhagen at the end of November 1932. He tried to prove Sedov had not been able to get to Copenhagen, even though Sedov's wife did manage to do so (Not Guilty 88). In light of Trotsky's other falsifications to the Dewey Commission there is no reason to simply "accept" Sedov's alibi. But even if Sedov was not in Copenhagen, why did Trotsky not stop there? That would have been enough to refute Gol'tsman's claim that he had met Sedov in the vestibule of the "Bristol Hotel." Why did Trotsky proceed to falsify the relative positions of the Bristol Konditori and the Grand Hotel Copenhagen (Esther Field's testimony to the Dewey Commission), and then, three months later, proceed to publish an account in *Bulletin of the Opposition* that both contradicted this version and also contained yet another falsehood?

Why tell a lie when the truth is on your side? It is very unlikely that Trotsky would take such a risk, tell falsehoods that could easily have been discovered, unless he were trying to hide something important. So let us suppose Trotsky had something to hide. The question is: What? The most obvious thing Trotsky could possibly be hiding that was worth the risk of being caught in a serious lie was the he had in fact met with Gol'tsman much as Gol'tsman had testified.

But why did Trotsky not admit to meeting with Gol'tsman? Apparently Sedov did not have a prepared story ready for the Dewey Commission. As we have seen, Sedov at first lied to the Commission by saying that he and Gol'tsman had met only once. Only at the last moment of his testimony did he change his mind and admit to a number of meetings with Gol'tsman. Sedov was only able to get away with remaining silent about the content of these subsequent meetings through the complaisant attitude towards him on the part of the Dewey Commission members, who simply let the matter drop. Aggressive questioning of Sedov concerning the contents of his

numerous other meetings with Gol'tsman might well have turned up something interesting.

We have already suggested a reason for Sedov's insistence, which he maintained until almost the very end of his Dewey Commission testimony, that he had met only once with Gol'tsman in Berlin. Gol'tsman testified that he met with Sedov "six or eight times in the course of four months." So many meetings over such a period of time would certainly suggest that a good deal of business was being conducted. Trotsky and Sedov had admitted only that Gol'tsman had delivered an article on the economic situation in the USSR that Trotsky published in the *Bulletin* in November 1932. Sedov stated that this information had been conveyed during the first meeting, which he initially said had been the only meeting.

At the 1936 Moscow trial Gol'tsman testified that he brought back terrorist instructions from Trotsky. This would explain the numerous meetings with Sedov. It would also explain the subsequent meeting of Gol'tsman with Trotsky in Copenhagen in November, 1932. As he testified during the First Moscow Trial of August 1936, Smirnov did not consider Sedov to be an "authority." He wanted to get the instructions for terror via Gol'tsman from Trotsky himself.

There appears to be no explanation for the fact that Trotsky took the risk of flagrantly lying about the "Bristol" affair when he could have simply told the truth without endangering anyone — unless the meeting was no an innocent one, unless "something happened" that Trotsky did not wish brought to light. In any case, Trotsky's denial of meeting with Gol'tsman in Copenhagen cannot be trusted. Broué and Getty have established that Trotsky lied whenever he considered it in his interest to do so.

Did Gol'tsman meeting with *Sedov* first, as he claimed? We do not know. None of the evidence that Trotsky submitted in an effort to prove that his son was not in Copenhagen is definitive. neither is Gol'tsman's unsupported word. We know that Trotsky lied very frequently both when he wrote about the Moscow Trials and about other issues as well. But that does not in itself mean that he was lying here.

Ongoing research by Sven-Eric Holmström suggests the possibility that Gol'tsman may have said he had met with Sedov in order to conceal the identity of some person or persons he had really met with but whose identity he wished to conceal. Everyone already knew Sedov was his father's chief representative, so perhaps Gol'tsman named Sedov instead of another person. According to Holmström, who has been researching this question for years now, something like that appears to be involved in the case of Iurii Piatakov's alleged flight to Norway to meet personally with Trotsky in December 1935.

We can establish that some of the other Moscow Trial defendants lied deliberately to the court. For example, at the January 1937 trial Karl Radek let slip the name of Marshal Tukhachevsky, but was then quick to assure the court that he knew Tukhachevsky to be a completely loyal Party member. This was of course untrue and Radek had to know it — for Bukharin knew it, and Bukharin was closely in touch with Radek. Again, Bukharin claimed he had "made a clean breast of things" not only at the 1938 Moscow trial but also in pre-trial interrogations and statements that we now have and were never intended for publication. Yet we know now that Bukharin knew that Nikolai Ezhov, the Commissar of Internal Affairs, was a member of the bloc of conspirators, yet Bukharin said nothing about it. We discuss this issue later in the present book.

Therefore Gol'tsman too may have told a story that was partly true — a real meeting with Trotsky in Copenhagen — but partly false — that Sedov met him there. That would account for the following facts:

- Gol'tsman's error in confusing the name of the hotel with that of the Konditori "Bristol" — a mistake that, as Holmström has convincingly shown, could never have been invented by anybody, but could only have been made by someone who had actually been there briefly, as Gol'tsman claimed he had been.

The NKVD file on Gol'tsman has recently been declassified. Thanks to my Moscow-based colleague Vladimir Bobrov I have obtained a copy. It fully confirms Holmström's conclusions here. Will discuss it, and reproduce the relevant texts, in the second volume of this study.

- Trotsky's lying — twice — about the "Hotel Bristol" matter in a way that could have caused him serious embarrassment if anyone had done the slightest checkup on his story.
- The fact that Sedov and Trotsky concentrated all their effort on trying to establish that Sedov could not possibly have been in Copenhagen during this period of time.

This was a "red herring." The essence of the matter was, of course, not yet another meeting between Gol'tsman and Sedov, but a meeting between Gol'tsman and Trotsky. At the Dewey Commission hearings Trotsky was successful in keeping the focus on the question of whether Gol'tsman had met with Sedov. The real issue — whether Gol'tsman had met with Trotsky and received terrorist instructions, as Gol'tsman claimed at the 1936 Moscow Trial, was barely mentioned.

- Sedov's claim that he had met with Gol'tsman only once — a story that he changed at the last minute, when he had no "cover story" ready about what was discussed at all the meetings after the first one.

Why would Sedov have not just freely admitted that Gol'tsman was correct when he referred to "six or eight" meetings? The only plausible reason would be an attempt to hide something — an attempt nearly botched by, it seems, indecision and lack of planning.

The obvious purpose of Gol'tsman's visit to Trotsky in Copenhagen would have been to hear Trotsky's instructions for terror from Trotsky's own lips. At the 1936 Moscow trial Smirnov and Mrachkovsky both said that Sedov was not an authority for them, but Trotsky was.

VYSHINSKY: Did Smirnov speak about Trotsky?

MRACHKOVSKY: Yes, he spoke about Trotsky, since Sedov was no authority either for him or for us.

VYSHINSKY: Accused Smirnov, is it true that Sedov was not an authority for you?

SMIRNOV: No, Sedov was not an authority for me. (1936 Trial 80)

Smirnov then testified that he had accepted Gaven's message because it had come directly from Trotsky rather than from Sedov. Likewise Gol'tsman would have wanted, or have been instructed, to get the terrorist instructions not just from Sedov but from Trotsky himself. Gol'tsman's testimony was that Trotsky told him orally to convey to Smirnov that "it was 'necessary to remove Stalin.'" (1936 Trial 100)

Reich-Johannson

Trotsky does not comment on Reich-Johansson, who figures significantly in Bessonov's testimony. On pp. 45-47 of the transcript of the Third Moscow Trial Bessonov relates the story of a Soviet citizen, an engineer named Reich who worked for the Berlin Trade Representation and had been a Trotskyist since 1923 (45). Bessonov claimed that Reich became a Danish citizen in order to make it easier for him to go from one European country to another without attracting attention, and was afterwards known as Johannson [*sic*].

VYSHINSKY: What sort of a naturalization was it if he had never been to Denmark?

BESSONOV: The passport was an official one, a real one.

VYSHINSKY: But actually?

BESSONOV: Actually there was a double citizenship. At the end of 1931 or the beginning of 1932, Reich, while a Soviet citizen and a member of the staff of the Trade Representation, thanks to the assistance of the Trotskyites and money, became a Danish citizen. In the spring of 1932 he was commissioned to go to Moscow, but he did not return to Moscow and became a deserter. And from that time I knew him as Johannson, who served as liaison man between me and Trotsky.

VYSHINSKY: Reich became a Dane and a deserter. He was a double.

BESSONOV: For some period of time he had two citizenships, of which one Soviet citizenship was open, and the Danish citizenship was

secret.

VYSHINSKY: Which citizenship was open?

BESSONOV: The Soviet citizenship, but the Danish citizenship was secret.

...

VYSHINSKY: Did this Reich play an important role as a liaison man in Trotskyite affairs?

BESSONOV: undoubtedly, he played an important role. I know that Reich carried out commissions for Trotsky in a number of other countries. I want to speak only about what I know. (1938 Trial 47)

The activities of Reich-Johannson are mentioned frequently in other passages of testimony by Bessonov. (48; 62; 63; 65). He is also mentioned by Krestinsky:

KRESTINSKY: No, that was an entirely different person.

Reich-Johannson was Bessonov's man, with whom he maintained connections. (1938 Trial 265)

KRESTINSKY: ...Bessonov conveyed this letter to Trotsky, who at that time was still in Norway. My impression then was that Bessonov did it by sending for Sedov, but as it turns out he sent the letter through Reich-Johannson, and a reply was received to this letter. Trotsky replied that he agreed. (1938 Trial 282)

This strange story sounds false on its face. But in 1985 Pierre Broué made a discovery that led him to conclude that it was most likely true.

Le compte rendu du procès Boukharine mentionne deux autres «trotskystes» dans les services de Berlin, Birkengof et Reich. Nous ne savons rien d'autre du premier. L'accusé-témoin de l'accusation,

Bessonov, assure que Reich, ingénieur métallurgiste, organisateur des «voages» en U.R.S.S. refusa de revenir en U.R.S.S. à son rappel en 1932 et devint citoyen danois, avec un passeport au nom de «Johanson.» Les trotskystes ont nié à l'époque cette affirmation, mais il y a à cette époque, à Copenhague, un abonné du *Biulleten* qui s'appelle Reich et Jo Jacobsen, utilise en 1933 la boîte à lettres d'un autre Reich célèbre, Wilhelm, le père de la «sexpol». On note aussi la présence, mais beaucoup plus tôt, au début des années 20, d'un Ilya Reich dans la délégation commerciale soviétique.<sup>6</sup>

Translated:

The Report of Court Proceedings of the Bukharin trial mentions two other "Trotskyists"...in the service of Berlin, Birkengof and Reich. We know nothing else about the first. The accused witness, Bessonov, asserted that Reich, a metallurgical engineer and organizer of "trips" to the USSR, refused to return to the USSR when he was recalled in 1932 and became a Danish citizen with a passport in the name of "Johanson." The Trotskyists denied this statement at the time but there was, at that time, in Copenhagen, a subscriber to the *Biulleten'* named Reich and Jo Jacobsen, who in 1933 was using the postal box of another famous Reich, Wilhelm, the father of "sexpol." We also note the presence, though much earlier, at the beginning of the 1920s, of an Ilya Reich in the Soviet trade delegation.

<sup>6</sup> Broué, "Compléments à un article sur les trotskystes en U.R.S.S," *CahLT* 1985 (24), 65-66.

Broué repeated this discovery in an article published in English in 1990.

Victor Serge, who was personally acquainted with all the defendants in the second trial, wrote to Sedov that he thought it necessary to discover real "discussions" and real "grouplets" as the only way to throw some light on what he thought to be more "provocation" than "lies." One example will be enough to demonstrate the necessity of such an investigation: Procurator Vyshinskii mentioned in the third trial as a "Trotskiite agent" a Russian engineer named Reich, who later became, according to him, a Danish citizen under the name Johanson. Trotskii



and his friends denied any knowledge of a Dane, formerly named Reich and now called Johanson. However, we can find in the list of subscriptions to *Biulleten Oppositsii* in Denmark the name of Reich, also called Jacobson. We must admit that a bit of truth was hidden behind the false charge. (POS 108)

Trotsky fails to comment on the story about Reich-Johannson/Jacobsen at all, though it occupies two pages in Bessonov's testimony. Anyone who might be reading the trial transcript with care might well have noted this curious omission. After all, if no such person existed, why would Trotsky miss the chance of exposing yet another "amalgam" of Stalin's?

Thanks to Broué's research we know that such a person did exist. It is expecting too much of coincidence to think that Bessonov was lying about a Copenhagen "Reich-Johannson" and yet, by accident, a different person known as "Reich-Jacobsen," who lived in Copenhagen, read Russian, and subscribed to Trotsky's Russian journal, did exist.

Perhaps Trotsky did not wish to draw attention to this person. Broué states that Reich-Johannson had a subscription to Trotsky's *Bulletin*, which was published in Russian. There could not have been many Danes who did, and so Trotsky had to assume he might be known to the Danish police. Even a denial by Trotsky might lead the police to investigate Reich-Jacobsen (or Reich-Johannsen) and imperil his usefulness to Trotsky.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Sayers and Kahn state that Reich-Johannsen was the same person who in December 1935 under the name Gustav Stirner arranged for Piatakov's passport and clandestine flight to Norway to see Trotsky. They cite no evidence for this statement. See Michael Sayers and Albert E. Kahn, *The Great Conspiracy: The Secret War Against Soviet Russia*. Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1946, p. 279, note 1.

## **Iakov Bliumkin**

In 1929 Iakov Bliumkin was tried and convicted in the USSR for being a spy for Trotsky, who by this time was in exile in Turkey. Bliumkin had been Trotsky's adjutant when the latter was People's Commissar for the Army

and Navy. Bliumkin had edited Trotsky's book *How The Revolution Armed Itself* (1923). Bliumkin then became an agent in the foreign division of the OGPU under Feliks Dzerzhinsky. In 1929 he was OGPU resident in Constantinople.

In 1929 Bliumkin contracted Trotsky. Evidence now available suggests that he worked for Trotsky there. The OGPU discovered this and, upon his return to the USSR, Bliumkin was arrested, tried, and executed. Trotsky admitted that he had met with Bliumkin after the latter had met his son Leon Sedov by chance on a street in Constantinople. Trotsky told the Dewey Commission that it was Radek, in whom Bliumkin had confidence, who had informed on Bliumkin.

Trotsky wrote extensively about Bliumkin immediately after he had been executed. He interpreted Bliumkin's execution as evidence that Stalin was very much afraid of the Trotskyist movement, "which abroad, in a number of countries, was having serious success in ideological and organizational ways." (*Biulleten'* No. 9, January — March 1930)

In the same issue of his *Bulletin* Trotsky claimed that a "rumor" was current that Bliumkin had gone first to Radek but that Radek, as a "capitulator," had insisted that Bliumkin turn himself into the OGPU. Thanks to discoveries in the Harvard Trotsky Archive, we now know that Radek had not, in fact, genuinely "capitulated" to Stalin at all. Trotsky also speculated that I.N. Smirnov and Preobrazhensky might have played some role in Bliumkin's demise. We know now too that Smirnov was the head of the Trotskyist underground in the USSR and that Preobrazhensky was a part of it as well. Trotsky's naming of Radek, Smirnov, and Preobrazhensky was therefore a "cover," an attack intended to disguise the fact that they were really part of the Trotskyist movement.

According to Soviet Prosecutor Vyshinsky, Radek, in interrogations before the Second Moscow Trial of January 1937, had testified that he, Radek, was helping Bliumkin distribute smuggled Trotskyist literature within the USSR:

In 1929, according to Radek, "he, Trotsky, having persuaded the Trotskyite Blumkin to organize the smuggling of literature into the

U.S.S.R., sent his son Sedov to Radek's hotel with the instruction to organize raids on Soviet Trade Representations abroad for the purpose of obtaining money which Trotsky needed for his anti-Soviet activities." (1937 Trial 485-486)

Perhaps in revenge for Radek's testimony and final denunciation of him Trotsky began to claim that it was Radek who had denounced Blumkin.

TROTSKY: Blumkin, a member of the Bolshevik Party and a former member of my military secretariat, was in Constantinople on an official mission.

GOLDMAN: When?

TROTSKY: In Constantinople, he visited me and also met my son in the street.

GOLDMAN: In Constantinople?

TROTSKY: In Constantinople. He took him to his room to his hotel. My son saw Blumkin.

Blumkin said: "I will see the old man." My son came to me and said: "He will see you." I said, "Absolutely impossible. It is too risky." He insisted so that I had to accept, but very secretly. He went to Russia, to Moscow. Radek came from Siberia as a capitulator. He had absolute confidence in Radek — an old confidence.

GOLDMAN: You mean Blumkin had?

TROTSKY: Yes, Blumkin. He was younger than Radek.

He visited him, and Radek denounced Blumkin immediately to the GPU.

GOLDMAN: Blumkin visited Radek, and, according to your information, what did Blumkin say to Radek?

TROTSKY: He informed him about his visit to me, on his own initiative. Because, if he had asked me about telling of this visit, it would have been absolutely impossible for him to do such a stupid thing.

GOLDMAN: What did Radek do after Blumkin informed him of his visit to you?

TROTSKY: He denounced him for his visit to me.

GOLDMAN: What happened to Blumkin?

TROTSKY: He was shot. (CLT 105-106)

Pierre Broué discovered that all of Trotsky's stories about Blumkin were lies, probably intended to cover up Blumkin's close collaboration with Trotsky.

La version donnée en 1930 de l'affaire Blumkin par Trotsky et Sedov était une version défensive, en réalité destinée à limiter les dégâts après cette arrestation catastrophique<sup>8</sup>. Les mencheviks avaient probablement raison sur le fond quand ils assuraient alors que Blumkin travaillait pour Trotsky, effectuant les liaisons les plus importantes, et que la visite de l'été ou de l'automne 1929 n'était pas un hasard résultant d'une rencontre fortuite avec Sedov dans la rue à Istanbul. Blumkin rendit effectivement visite à Trotsky, probablement en août, ce qui nous a été confirmé par plusieurs de ses visiteurs qui l'ont rencontré et à qui fut donnée la version du hasard<sup>9</sup>. Mais Sedov a fait savoir le contraire à la postérité en précisant de sa main sur le document en question que c'était Blumkin qui avait rédigé, le 2 avril, à sa demande et celle de Trotsky, une notice nécrologique sur Dreitser qui avait été son compagnon d'armes, mais qu'eux ne connaissaient pas<sup>10</sup>. (Broué Compléments 64.)

Translated:

The story given out in 1930 about the Blumkin affair by Trotsky and Sedov was a defensive story, in reality aimed at limiting the damage

after this catastrophic arrest. The Mensheviks were probably basically correct when they asserted at that time that Bliumkin was working for Trotsky, maintaining the most important contacts and that his visit in the summer or fall of 1929 was not an accident resulting from a chance meeting with Sedov on a street in Istanbul. In reality Bliumkin was visiting Trotsky, probably in August. This has been confirmed to us by several of his visitors who met him (Bliumkin) and were told the story of the chance meeting. But Sedov informed posterity of the opposite when he put in his own handwriting on the document in question that it had been Bliumkin who had edited, on April 2, at his request and that of Trotsky, an obituary notice on Dreitser who had been his companion-in-arms but whom they [Sedov and Trotsky] did not know.

This account of Broué's is sufficient to show that Trotsky was lying again. Curiously, Broué's account as its own inaccuracies as well. At the Dewey Commission hearings Trotsky admitted that he did know Dreitser (spelled "Dreitzer" in the hearings volume.) Dreitser was later a defendant in the First Moscow Trial of August 1936.

GOLDMAN: ... Do you know E.A. Dreitzer, Mr. Trotsky?

TROTSKY: Yes, he was of the younger generation. Dreitzer was an officer of the Red Army. During and after my expulsion from the Party he had, together with ten or twelve officers, organized a guard around my home. He was among them. (CLT 89)

Bliumkin's confession to the OGPU was published in 2002.<sup>8</sup> In it he stated that he met Trotsky only once, on April 16, 1929, in Turkey. According to Broué here, Sedov stated that he was already working with Bliumkin on April 2, 1929. So Bliumkin lied in his confession.

<sup>8</sup> "Ispoved' terrorista." *Voенно-Istoricheskii Arkhiv* No. 6 (2002), 25-59.

According to the annotations by Oleg Mozokhin, the FSB<sup>9</sup> researcher who edited and published Bliumkin's confession, Bliumkin told a number of other lies in his confession. This probably had something to do with the decision to execute him. In 1918, when he had been a member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, Bliumkin had murdered the German

ambassador Count Mirbach, in an attempt to sabotage the Bolsheviks' attempt to make a separate peace with Germany. Bliumkin had been amnestied, evidently on condition that he work as a foreign agent. No doubt it was understood that he refrain in future from any other attempts to undermine Soviet policy. That alone might well have been enough to account for his execution.

<sup>9</sup> "Federal'naia Sluzhba Besopasnosti" — Federal Security Service, the continuer of the KGB, MGB, NKGB, and ultimately of the security divisions of the NKVD.

But Bliumkin did state that Radek, along with Smilga, tried to draw him (Bliumkin) "into some new fractional work." Since both Radek and Smilga were Trotskyists, this could only have been Trotskyist work. So Trotsky's claim that it was Radek who denounced Bliumkin to the OGPU is another lie.

Moreover, how could Trotsky possibly know who, if anyone, had denounced Bliumkin? If the Dewey Commission members had really been what they claimed to be, objective investigators carrying out an honest investigation to see whether Trotsky were guilty or not, they would have at least asked him this question. We discuss the Dewey Commission and its problems in another chapter of the present work.

### **The Slogan "Remove Stalin"**

According to testimony at the First Moscow Trial and the 1937 statements of Valentin Astrov the oppositionists in the bloc used the slogan "remove Stalin" as a euphemism meaning "assassinate Stalin." Evidence in two Trotsky Archives, as cited by Broué, shows that Trotsky and Sedov were discussing the relative merits of employing this slogan in the second half of 1932, at exactly the same time as the bloc of oppositionists was being formed inside the Soviet Union and its members were discussing the same slogan in the sense of "assassination."

At the January 1937 trial Karl Radek testified that, in his letter of the Spring of 1932, Trotsky had said that once "union" with the Zinovievists had been

achieved "the question of removing the leadership" would have to be raised. This term — "remove Stalin" — can be *partially* traced in both the Trotsky-Sedov correspondence of late 1932 and in Astrov's confession and confrontation with Bukharin of January 1937.

During the Second Moscow Trial of January 1937 Radek described the contents of this letter of Trotsky's as follows:

Trotsky wrote that the information he possessed led him to conclude that I had become convinced that he was right, and that without the realization of the Trotskyite demands the policy would find itself at an impasse. Trotsky further wrote that since he knew me to be an active person he was convinced that I would return to the struggle.... At the end of the letter Trotsky wrote approximately as follows: "You must bear in mind the experience of the preceding period and realize that for you there can be no returning to the past, that the struggle has entered a new phase and that the new feature in this phase is that either **we shall be destroyed together with the Soviet Union, or we must raise the question of removing ("ustraneni") the leadership.**" The word terrorism was not used, but when I read the words "removing the leadership," it became clear to me what Trotsky had in mind. ... **Trotsky informed me that not only the Trotskyites but also the Zinovievites had decided to return to the struggle and that negotiations for union were under way.** I sent no reply, believing that the matter must be thought over very thoroughly. (1937 Trial 86-7 / Russian ed. 52)

Sedov's letter to Trotsky partially reprinted in French translation by Broué confirms Radek's words about the Zinovievites.

The [bloc] has been organized. It includes the Zinovievists, the Sten-Lominadze group, and the Trotskyists (the former "[capitulators]").

Radek testified that he had confirmed that Trotsky intended "terrorism". in a talk with Sergei Mrachkovsky that took place at the end of October or beginning of November 1932.

VYSHINSKY: What did Mrachkovsky reply?

RADEK: He replied quite definitely that the struggle had entered the terrorist phase and that in order to carry out these tactics they had now united with the Zinovievites and would set about the preparatory work.... It was clear that since terrorism was the new position, the preparatory work must consist in assembling and forming terrorist cadres. (1937 Trial 88.)

According to Radek's testimony here it was only later in 1932 that Trotsky explicitly used the word terror. This corresponds with the information from Astrov. In January 1937 Astrov testified that the Rightists formally decided to form a bloc with the Trotskyists and others at their August 26 — September 1, 1932, conference. Only at this time was terror specifically approved as a method of struggle. The fact that in 1932 the main members of the bloc were the Trotskyists and the Zinovievists is confirmed in the letter from Sedov to Trotsky that Broué and Getty found in the Harvard Trotsky archive.

Radek:

When the question arose against whom terrorism should be directed, it concerned terrorism directed against the leading core of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U, and the Soviet government. And although not a single name was mentioned during this conversation, I ... did not have the slightest doubt that the acts were to be directed against Stalin and his immediate colleagues, against Kirov, Molotov, Voroshilov and Kaganovich. (1937 Trial 80)

As a result, Radek testified, a plot to assassinate Sergei Kirov, Party leader in Leningrad, was hatched in April 1933. Kirov was actually killed in December 1934 by Leonid Nikolaev, a member of a clandestine terrorist Zinovievist opposition group in Leningrad.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Though the fact is denied by Alla Kirilina, Matthew Lenoe, and Åsmund Egge, the three most recent students of the Kirov murder who work within the "anti-Stalin paradigm," there is overwhelming evidence that Nikolaev was indeed a member of a clandestine Zinovievist group in Leningrad. For a detailed discussion see Furr, Kirov.



Getty surmised that the letter Radek said he had received from Trotsky in February or March 1932 while he, Radek, was in Geneva, "involved an attempt to persuade the addressee[s] to return to opposition." Radek confirmed that Trotsky's letter did contain such an appeal but that it closed by saying, "We must raise the question of removing the leadership."

The terms for "remove" (*ustranit'*, *ubrat'*, *ustranenie*) are used several times by the defendants in the Moscow Trials.

Mrachkovsky goes on to say that already in 1931 this Trotskyite group openly discussed the question of terrorism.

I. N. Smirnov, who had visited Berlin, brought back instructions from Trotsky, which he received through Trotsky's son, L. Sedov, to the following effect: "Until we put Stalin out of the way ("uberem"), we shall not be able to come back to power."

VYSHINSKY: What do you mean by the expression: "Until we put Stalin out of the way ("uberem")"?

MRACHKOVSKY: **Until we kill ("ub'iem") Stalin.** At that very meeting, in the presence of Smirnov, myself, Ter-Vaganyan and Safonova, I was given the task of organizing a terrorist group, that is to say, to select reliable people. (1936 Trial p. 41; Russian original: *Pravda*, August 20, 1936, 4)

We have quoted Piatakov's and Radek's comments on the question of "removing" Stalin in a previous chapter and will not repeat them here.

At the 1936 trial Gol'tsman confessed to bringing "Trotsky's personal instructions to organize terrorist act" back to the bloc. (1936 Trial 40) Gol'tsman testified that Trotsky had used the term "remove Stalin," saying this could only be done by terrorism (i.e. violence). A turn to "terror," together with the discussions necessary to justify it in Marxist terms, at the present conjuncture, etc., and perhaps arrangements for Gol'tsman to hear it from Trotsky directly, might well have occupied those several mysterious meetings with Sedov.

## The Slogan "Remove Stalin" in the Trotsky Archive

At the January 1937 trial Karl Radek testified that, in his letter of the Spring of 1932, Trotsky had said that once "union" with the Zinovievists had been achieved "the question of removing the leadership" would have to be raised. This term — "remove Stalin" — can be partially traced in both the Trotsky-Sedov correspondence of late 1932 and in Astrov's confession and confrontation with Bukharin of January 1937.

We say "partially traced" because, in reality, only excerpts — called "vyderzhki" or "vypiski" at the top of each document — from the correspondence in the Harvard Trotsky Archive. Evidently these excerpts — all have been retyped in a uniform manner — were prepared by a secretary, probably Jean Heijenoort, for possible use at the Dewey Commission hearings in Paris, which took place later than those in Mexico.

The full texts of these letters is not in the Archive. They have been removed at some time. This is further evidence of what Getty called the "purge" of the Trotsky Archive, involving incriminating materials.

Broué outlines the discussion between Trotsky and Sedov concerning the use of this slogan in several of his published works. In the documents we have, Sedov appears to have been the more ardent partisan of the slogan "remove Stalin." Trotsky agreed with the concept but in October 1932 told Sedov that they should not adopt it as yet, in order not to alienate other potential allies.<sup>11</sup> Broué concedes that "we do not know which one convinced the other" (Léon Sedov 81). Writing in Russian Rogovin puts quotation marks around the phrase: "*ubrat' Stalina*."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Broué, Trotsky et le bloc 20-22; Broué, "Liova le 'fiston'" 15.

<sup>12</sup> Rogovin, 1937. Ch. 44.

Trotsky also says that the "allies" and the "Rightists" support the slogan "remove Stalin." (Broué 20) This corresponds exactly to Astrov's assertions:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

... "the situation will not change until Stalin is removed (*ubran*) from the CC" [Bukharin in 1928]

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

The slogan "remove (*ubrat'*) Stalin" was already cultivated in every way at this stage of the organizations's activity in a whole series of meetings and conversations... [from 1928 on]

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

He [Bukharin in 1928] subjected Stalin to harsh attacks, saying that he "is leading the country to ruin and must be removed (*ubran*) at any cost."

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

[In 1931] Matveev remarked that the main task is to remove (*ubrat'*) Stalin by any means, including by terror.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

[In 1930] Speaking about Stalin's role, one of the greatest importance, Bukharin said that it was essential to get rid of (*ustranit'*) Stalin at any cost, as he was the main force in this leadership.

(Lubianka 1937-1938 23, 24, 30, 27)

Astrov repeated this in his confrontation with Bukharin two days later:

[[cyrillic]].<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> "'...Ni razu ne govorilos' otnositel'no terrora.' Stenogramma ochnoi stavka N.I. Bukharina s V.N. Astrovym v Politburo TsK VKP(b) 13 ianvaria 1937 g." *Istochnik* No. 2, 2001, 99.

Translated:

EZHOV: In your confessions you say that the question of replacing the Party leadership in its sharpest form, in the form "remove (*ubrat'*) Stalin," arose for the first time at a meeting in 1928 in the dacha in Zubalovo, where Bukharin, Slepkov, and you were present. Do you confirm this?

ASTROV: Yes.... Then Bukharin said that the situation will not change if Stalin is not removed (*ubran*).

Astrov did say that in 1928 "most Rightists" did not understand the word "remove" as meaning "kill."

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

EZHOV: What was meant at that time by the term "remove" (*ubrat'*)?

ASTROV: At this state, at any rate as I understood it, I think that the majority of the Rights understood it not as an act of terrorism.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

Bukharin said that Stalin, by his leadership, is ruining the country and therefore must be gotten rid of (*ustranen*).

EZHOV: Was this understood at that time more concretely, as to what should be done?

ASTROV: Not yet..

This too corresponds with the excerpts from the Trotsky Archive. It does seem that, at first, Trotsky may not have wished the slogan "remove Stalin" to mean assassination. Of course, Trotsky may well have been lying on this point, as he did on so many others. Also, we have only "excerpts" from the Trotsky-Sedov correspondence concerning the slogan "Remove Stalin." It is always possible that the aim of assassination was contained in other correspondence. The full correspondence, and even the full texts of the letters excerpted, is no longer in the Trotsky Archive. These items were among the materials "purged."

In a report published in the book *Politbiuro i Lev Trotskii. Tom 2*, NKVD chief Iagoda stated that a letter from Trotsky seized in the USSR revealed the "unexpected" discovery that in 1931 Trotsky did not endorse the slogan "Remove Stalin." This corresponds with the materials in the Trotsky archive identified by Broué and also with Astrov's testimony that "terror" was not decided on until 1932. (PiLT 2, 37) Its existence is good evidence that in 1931 the GPU was looking for the truth, not trying to "frame" Trotsky. We will discuss this valuable collection of materials in volume two.

Astrov said that Bukharin repeated this to him privately when they were together on a hunting trip in 1931 or 1932:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

I recall that we were talking about Stalin's role in the Party. Bukharin said that from the point of view of the Rightists it was essential to remove (*ubrat'*) Stalin.

Bukharin at a meeting of his supporters in 1930 or 1931:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

Bukharin said that Stalin, as the main leading force in the Party leadership, must be gotten rid of (*ustranit'*) in the process of this struggle.

There are a number of striking correspondences between documents in the Harvard Trotsky Archive, on the one hand, and Astrov's and Radek's testimony on the other. The chief difference we wish to consider now is the question of assassination — in Russian, "individual terror" or just "terror."

Both Radek and Astrov claim that Trotsky (Radek) and the Trotskyists, like the Rights with whom they were in a bloc (Astrov), supported "terror." In their public statements Trotsky and Sedov strongly and consistently denied the accusation that they advocated terror and argued that it was inconsistent with Marxism. There is no indication in the Trotsky Archive documents that Trotsky or Sedov urged their followers or the bloc generally to kill Stalin or others.

Broué regards this as definitive. But why? Getty discovered that the Trotsky Archive at Harvard has been purged. As we argue in the present essay, it is most likely that the materials removed were considered incriminating by those who removed them. Trotsky's and Sedov's lies and falsifications, which we also discuss elsewhere in the present essay, suggest that they were anxious to keep some of their actions hidden. If they were advocating that Stalin and other Soviet leaders associated with him be murdered it is logical that Trotsky and Sedov would have wanted to deny this fact publicly in order to keep it secret.

In the next chapter we examine Broué's attempt at what can only be called a coverup, an attempt to conceal from his readers Getty's important discoveries. The obvious motive for this coverup is to leave unchallenged the notion that the bloc ended shortly after it had begun and consequently that Trotsky could not have instructed his followers to resort to "terror" against the Stalin leadership, as alleged in the Moscow Trials.

## Chapter 6. *Non-Soviet Evidence — The Trotsky Archive Purged*

### Pierre Broué's coverup

When he wrote his biography of Trotsky Broué knew and cited Getty's research on the Harvard Trotsky Archive.<sup>1</sup> He refers to it as follows:

On pourrait faire les mêmes remarques à propos du bloc des oppositions de 1932 que d'autres chercheurs ont aperçu sans le reconnaître, faute d'un outil chronologique suffisant ou du fait de préjugés solides et d'idées préconçues. Comment expliquer la difficulté à donner à cette découverte la publicité qu'elle méritait ? Le premier écho à l'article de 1980 où je mentionnais le bloc et reproduisais les documents qui l'attestent<sup>20</sup> est de l'Américain Arch J. Getty et date de 1985.<sup>21</sup>

Translation:

One could make similar remarks concerning the bloc of oppositions of 1932, which other researchers have noticed without recognizing it for lack of a suitable chronology or because of firm prejudices and preconceived ideas. How else to explain the difficulty of giving this discovery the publicity that it deserves? The first echo of the 1980 article in which I mentioned the bloc and reproduced the documents that attest to it<sup>20</sup> is by the American Arch J. Getty [sic] and dates from 1985.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pierre Broué. *Trotsky*. Paris: Fayard, 1988. Online edition at <https://www.marxists.org/francais/Broué/works/1988/00/index.htm> This citation at [https://www.marxists.org/francais/Broué/works/1988/00/PB\\_tky\\_48.htm](https://www.marxists.org/francais/Broué/works/1988/00/PB_tky_48.htm), note 21. (Broué Trotsky)

Broué's note 20 is to his own 1980 article. His note 21 that follows only a few words later reads:



"J. Arch Getty, *Origins of the Great Purge. The Soviet Communist Party Reconsidered*. Cambridge, Ma., 1985, pp. 119 & 245, n. 24."

Getty's note 24 again cites Broué's 1980 article.

But Broué does *not* cite Getty's note 20, the one that documents the purging of letters from Trotsky's archive. In his book at note 20 Getty's statement is definite, conclusive — the archive *has* indeed been purged.<sup>2</sup> Broué also ignores the second of the striking discoveries in Getty's article: the certified mail receipts that prove Trotsky was in touch with at least Radek, Sokol'nikov, and Preobrazhenskii. Broué does not *challenge* Getty's conclusion that the archives opened in 1980 had been purged. Instead he *ignores* it, together with the certified mail receipts which are the evidence for it.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter Four above for the text of Getty's notes.

It is obvious that Broué "covered up" — deliberately concealed — from his readers the fact that the archive was purged and the evidence that proves it. The purging of the archive is as significant a discovery as was the proof that a bloc had really existed.

Why did Broué cover up such an important discovery? Perhaps because the fact that the archive was purged would invalidate Broué's central conclusion: that the bloc was "ephemeral," that it had collapsed almost immediately, that it had led to nothing. It would also leave open the possibility that Trotsky had indeed plotted "terror" against Stalin and other Soviet leaders and had collaborated with Germany and Japan.

Only if the archive had *not* been purged could Broué submit the lack of further references to the bloc as evidence that the bloc did indeed collapse. Getty's discovery that the archive had been purged removes the basis for Broué's notion that the bloc had ceased to function soon after it had been formed.

This, therefore, is the likely reason for Broué's coverup. The pretense that the archive had not been purged was necessary for Broué to preserve his belief that the charges in the first and subsequent Moscow trials were

fabrications. For Broué to admit that the archive had been purged would entail the corollary that the bloc might well have continued but that evidence of its continuation had been among the purged materials.

If the bloc had continued, the possibility would exist that it could have had terrorist aims. If Trotsky's archive was purged, the possibility would exist that Trotsky had been in contact with his Soviet followers after 1932 and been advocating "terror," as the Trotskyists in the Moscow trials confessed. The dominant Trotskyist-anticommunist paradigm of Stalin would be seriously crippled.

### **Vadim Rogovin's account**

In his own discussion of the bloc Vadim Rogovin cites Broué's work. Like Broué Rogovin ignores Getty's discoveries of Trotsky's missing letters to Radek, Sokol'nikov and others and of the purging of the archive. Rogovin does not explicitly take up the question of whether the bloc lasted after 1932. But he does refer to the bloc as "the 1932 bloc," thus tacitly accepting Broué's contention that the bloc did not survive.

In a lecture he delivered in May 1996 Rogovin stated:

Although many members of these opposition tendencies were arrested at the end of 1932 and in early 1933, not a single one of them gave information about the formation of this single united anti-Stalinist bloc. In 1935 and 1936, when a new wave of arrests followed the murder of Kirov in December of 1934 and **many people were subjected to the worst tortures**, did the secret police, the GPU, find out about the existence of the united bloc from 1932. This was one of the main factors which drove Stalin to unleash the Great Terror.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Rogovin, "Stalin's Great Terror: Origins and Consequences." University of Melbourne, May 28 1996. At <http://www.wsws.org/exhibits/1937/lecture1.htm>

In his book *1937* published in Moscow the same year (1996) Rogovin elaborated this same point:

[[cyrillic]].<sup>4</sup>

The anti-Stalinist bloc finally took form in June 1932. After a few months, Goltsman passed information to Sedov about the bloc, and then brought back to Moscow Trotsky's reply about agreeing to collaborate with the bloc.

In relations between Trotsky and Sedov and their cothinkers in the USSR, the conspiracy was outstandingly maintained. Although the GPU conducted careful surveillance of them, it was unable to uncover any meetings, correspondence or other forms of their contact with Soviet oppositionists. And far from all of the opposition contacts inside the Soviet Union were tracked down. Although there was a series of arrests of participants in illegal opposition groups at the end of 1932 and the beginning of 1933, not a single one of those arrested mentioned negotiations about the creation of a bloc. For this reason several of / 64 / the participants in these negotiations (Lominadze, Shatskin, Goltsman and others) remained at liberty until 1935-36. Only after a new wave of arrests following Kirov's assassination, after interrogations and reinterrogations of dozens of Oppositionists, did Stalin receive information about the 1932 bloc, which served as one of the main reasons for organizing the Great Purge.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Rogovin, *1937*. Ch. 9. At <http://trst.narod.ru/rogovin/t4/ix.htm>

<sup>5</sup> Rogovin, *1937*. Ch. 9. At <http://trst.narod.ru/rogovin/t4/ix.htm> (Rogovin 1937); Rogovin. 1937. *Stalin's Year of Terror*. Translated by Frederick Choate. Oak Park, MI: Mehring Books, 1998, 63-64.

In his 1996 lecture Rogovin alleges that the arrestees who did confess about the bloc's existence were tortured into doing so. Neither Rogovin nor anyone else has ever had any evidence that these prisoners were tortured at all, much less "subjected to the worst tortures" And Rogovin later dropped this claim.

This is not only a lie. It is a "tell" — a sign that Rogovin was dishonest, not above fabricating falsehoods when he needed to do so. But why did he feel that he needed to do so in this case? Perhaps because the defendants in the

Moscow Trial confessed to something truthful, something Rogovin could not deny: the existence of the bloc. To preserve his belief that the *rest* of the defendants' confessions were false Rogovin felt impelled to posit that they had been tortured.

But let us consider the logic of this specific falsehood of Rogovin's. It is particularly revealing. Rogovin falsely assumed that the NKVD had tortured the prisoners — *and then the prisoners had told the truth!* In fact we have no evidence that the prisoners were tortured. But even if they had been tortured, they revealed something truthful — the existence of the bloc. That would logically suggest that (a) the NKVD was attempting *not* to fabricate false stories, but to discover the truth; and therefore (b) other parts of the confessions made by these prisoners, including Moscow Trial defendants, were also true.

Perhaps Rogovin belatedly realized the logic of his lie about torture. That would explain why he omitted the claim about torture in the account in his book, where he only mentions "interrogations and reinterrogations." His lie about torture contradicted his central thesis that the defendants had lied about Trotsky's conspiracy.

In reality Rogovin had no evidence whatever that the defendants had been tortured. Nor did he have any evidence that the rest of what they confessed — Trotsky's involvement in conspiracies to murder Kirov and other Soviet leaders — was false. Like Broué, Rogovin seems to have thought it unacceptable to admit the possibility that Trotsky had been plotting these murders, and therefore that the testimony to that effect by the Moscow Trial defendants was true. This must have been a very important value to these two Trotskyite researchers for them to have recourse to such blatant falsifications and illogicalities.

Despite some minor differences Rogovin's overall analysis is the same as Broué's. Both claim the Moscow Trials were an "amalgam": not pure fiction, but 90% falsehoods combined with 10% truth. Neither has any evidence — non whatever — to support the "90% falsehood" part of their assertion. The "10% true" is taken from the title of the tenth chapter of Rogovin's book *1937. Stalin's Year of Terror: "Ten Percent of the Truth, or What Really Happened."* Rogovin took it from a statement by A.N.

Safonova, the former wife of I.N. Smirnov, who in 1956 told Khrushchev's KGB and Procuracy that her confessions and those of Mrachkovskii, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Evdokimov, and Ter-Vaganian "to the degree of 90% did not reflect reality."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Safonova's remark is quoted in *Reabilitatsiia. Politicheskie Protsessy*, p. 181.

Neither Broué nor Rogovin considers the possibility, even theoretically, that Trotsky may have been lying when he claimed he did not instruct his followers to engage in "terror." But why not? After all, both Broué and Rogovin admit that Trotsky and Sedov lied about the bloc and about Gaven. Both ignore Getty's discovery that Trotsky lied about being in contact with Radek and others, though they certainly knew about it.

Both Broué and Rogovin excuse Trotsky's recourse to falsehood as a necessity imposed by the need to act in a conspiratorial manner. However, if Trotsky had in fact instructed his Soviet followers to engage in "terror" and sabotage, he would certainly have denied it. After all, he denied much less serious accusations such as the formation of the "bloc" and his correspondence with Radek and others. Here as elsewhere, then, the fact that Trotsky denied advocating "terror" means nothing.

There are no rational grounds to reject out of hand the hypothesis that Trotsky may have indeed advocated "individual terror" — individual violence — against Stalin and his associates, as charged in the Moscow Trials. Trotsky was well acquainted with violence. He participated in a great deal of it during the Civil War. Trotsky used the strongest possible language against Stalin. And we have Zborowski's reports to his NKVD handlers. We will examine them in a later chapter.

Broué's and Rogovin's refusal to consider this possibility can be explained only by their strong preconceived bias in favor of Trotsky. They both take it for granted that Trotsky would never have done this, though they have no grounds for this assumption. They could have even claimed that plotting to kill Stalin was the right thing to do, as van Heijenoort stated to his biographer Anita Burdman Feferman.

We can't be certain why Broué and Rogovin found admitting this possibility so distasteful that they were willing to lie in order to avoid it. Whatever the reason, though, Broué and Rogovin are not alone. Virtually every mainstream anticommunist historian assumes, without evidence, of any kind, that the defendants at the Moscow Trials, Trotsky and Sedov included, were innocent. Trotsky's innocence of any conspiracy to use "terror" is a constituent part of the "anti-Stalin paradigm" of Soviet history — the paradigm that Trotsky did much to inaugurate but that did not achieve widespread acceptance until Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" at the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in February 1956.

### **The Purge of the Harvard Trotsky Archive**

Getty discovered that the Harvard Trotsky Archive has been purged. But who did the purging?

There are only four persons who could possibly have purged the Trotsky archive. One is Trotsky himself. This can't be completely ruled out. But Jean Heijenoort, who managed the Trotsky archive in the 1930s, prepared it for shipment to Harvard, and then oversaw the cataloging of the entire archive, does not mention that Trotsky was involved in the archive. As far as we know he relied on his secretaries to manage his archive for him. This hypothesis also fails to explain Deutscher's and van Heijenoort's silence about what we know had remained in the archive — a matter we discuss below.

### **Natalia Sedova**

Trotsky's widow Natalia Sedova had access to the Harvard Trotsky Archive. In 1959 she gave Issac Deutscher access to what was then referred to as the "closed archive." But Sedova spent no time at Harvard. She lived the last years of her life in Mexico and Paris. Van Heijenort testified that she did not use the archived in connection with her work with Victor Serge on a biography of her husband, of which he writes:

Long passages printed between quotation marks were written or dictated by Natalia Sedova. They contain valuable information but ...

she did not have the opportunity of using the archives in order to refresh her memory. Hence these texts contain inaccuracies, in particular glaring errors in chronology. (WTIE p. 151)

In a previous article I wrote:

Trotsky's wife also had access. But at least one very personal letter of Trotsky's to his wife remains in the archives — something that his wife might be expected to have removed. (Furr, Evidence 38 at note 35)

It is unlikely that Sedova purged the archive.

### **Deutscher and van Heijenoort**

Both Deutscher and van Heijenoort omit any mention of the materials found by Getty and Broué, such as the existence of the bloc of oppositionists; Sedov's and Trotsky's discussion and approval of it; Trotsky's correspondence with Radek, Sokol'nikov, and others whom he denied having any contact with; etc.

Obviously the materials found in the archive in the early 1980s must have been there when van Heijenoort worked with the archive over many years and when Deutscher used it. Broué even published the letter from van Heijenoort to Sedov of July 3, 1937, in which the former reminds Sedov of the other two documents concerning the bloc: the letter from Trotsky to Sedov and another, probably the answering letter, of Sedov to Trotsky.

One might wonder why either Deutscher or van Heijenoort would fail to mention the materials found by Getty and Broué when they knew that this failure would show them to be liars after January 1980, when the archive was scheduled to be opened. Deutscher was born in 1907. He could have reasonably expected to be alive at the age of 73 in 1980 (in fact he died in 1967, only sixty years of age.)

### **Isaac Deutscher**

Deutscher gained access to the "closed archive" of correspondence in 1959 in time for his research on the third volume of his trilogy on Trotsky's life *The Prophet Outcast: Trotsky, 1929-1940* (pp. x, xii). Deutscher wrote that there was nothing surprising in the "closed archive."

...there was little or nothing strictly confidential or private in the political content of that correspondence. Indeed, with much of it I had become familiar in the nineteen-thirties — I shall presently explain in what way — so that re-reading it in 1959 I found hardly anything that could startle or surprise me. (xii)

Deutscher does not mention the materials documenting Trotsky's approval of the bloc of Rights and Trotskyites. Nor does he mention the secret letters of 1932 to Radek, Sokol'nikov, Preobrazhensky, Kollontai and Litvinov identified by Getty from their certified mail receipts.

How can we account for these striking omissions by Deutscher? There are a limited number of possible explanations. It may be that Deutscher did a quick, careless job and missed a great deal of evidence, including the material in question. In van Heijenoort's opinion Deutscher made many errors:

I must also say that, at the beginning, Mr. Mieke used, in good faith, Isaac Deutscher's book, and this book is notoriously deficient as far as dates, places, spelling of names and so on, are concerned.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Van Heijenoort, J. "The History of Trotsky's Papers." *Harvard Library Bulletin* July 1980, 296. (van Heijenoort 1980) Patrick Mieke catalogued the papers for Harvard Library. (February 297)

In his memoir van Heijenoort gives almost two pages of corrections to Deutscher's account (153-155). He attempts to explain Deutscher's errors in the following way:

My impression is that Deutscher worked hurriedly in the archives, more like a reporter who grabs any information than a historian who sifts the documents. (WTIE 154)



We may also attribute Deutscher's omissions to his strong pro-Trotsky bias. His biography often lapses into hero-worship. He seldom draws upon historical sources — for example, on contemporary newspaper and magazine accounts — other than Trotsky's own writings and papers. Nor does Deutscher note contradictions in Trotsky's own writings and statements of the kind we and Holmström have pointed out.

A work of history like this in any other field would have long ago been dismissed as shoddy, incompetent, and unreliable. But in the topsy-turvy world of Soviet history where books are too often judged according to whether they have reached acceptably anti-communist and anti-Stalin conclusions rather than on the merits of their scholarship, Deutscher's biography has always enjoyed a respect that is entirely unmerited.

Deutscher's pro-Trotsky bias could coexist easily with a rushed and slipshod approach. The work of a researcher in a hurry would be guided by the biases he already possessed. Although it may have been Deutscher who purged the Trotsky archive, it is also possible that Deutscher did not study the archive thoroughly. His omissions may have been due to hasty and careless work rather than, or in addition to, deliberate suppression.

### **Jean van Heijenoort**

Van Heijenoort was Trotsky's secretary longer than anyone else. He was in charge of putting together the Trotsky archive, including the "closed archive." He too omitted any mention of Trotsky's letters to Opposition figures or the purging of this archive as noted by Getty, or the evidence of the bloc that both Broué and Getty examined.

The most detailed account of the Trotsky Archive is chapter fourteen of Feferman's 1993 book. Feferman took most of the information for her book from interviews with van Heijenoort himself. But in this chapter she also cites independent sources, so we can be sure van Heijenoort did in fact know the archive, including the closed archive," extremely well — better than anybody else, Trotsky included. Van Heijenoort himself had written some of the materials in it. He had gone through everything many times: probably multiple times when he was Trotsky's secretary from 1932 to 1939, again

when he put the TA together for shipment to Harvard in 1939 (290), again during several trips to Harvard beginning in 1940 (291). He went through it yet again "in the early 1950s" (291) "to organize it, catalogue it, and to make its contents accessible" (292).

There was no one who knew more about the archives or their creator than he, no one who had the proximity and, at the same time, the neutrality... As for the archive itself, as in all things, he had an intense desire to be exact, to correct the mistakes others had made, and to insure that the record was as complete as possible. (292-3)

Feferman doesn't tell us what she meant by van Heijenoort's "neutrality." She rather naively depicts him as both non-political and as a far-Rightist who nevertheless retained a great deal of regard for Trotsky. Perhaps these views appeared to Feferman to cancel each other out and leave "neutrality"? Whatever Feferman may have believed, van Heijenoort was anything but objective in his handling of the Trotsky archive.

Feferman quotes the words of Douglas Bryant, head of Harvard libraries, spoken at a memorial gathering for van Heijenoort at Harvard in April 1986. Bryant had begun his career at Harvard working on the Trotsky archive. According to Bryant,

"He [van Heijenoort] alone organized and directed the immense job of cataloguing the vast and complex archive of Leon Trotsky which Harvard had acquired in two parts." (294)

Van Heijenoort published his memoir, *With Trotsky in Exile* (WTIE), in 1978 and his essay on the archive in the *Harvard Library Bulletin* in 1980. Thus he wrote about the archive on the threshold of its being made public, and again when it opened.

In his 1978 memoir van Heijenoort wrote of the preparation for the Dewey Commission, in the course of which he once again went through the whole of Trotsky's archive,

Needless to say, in all this work [in searching the archives and preparing materials for the Commission hearings — GF], there was

nothing falsified, nothing hidden, no thumb pressed upon the scales.  
(WTIE 109)

In a talk delivered on the occasion of the opening of the archive van Heijenoort said:

Finally, I want to speak on the significance of the correspondence, that is, of the part of the archives that has just been opened. One should not expect startling revelations on the political plane. Trotsky was not a man to have two sets of ideas, one presented in his published writings and one reserved for his private letters. The continuity on the political plane between the published writings and the correspondence will be apparent to all. There is no contradiction. (Van Heijenoort 1980, 297)

We know today that this is not true at all, for we have van Heijenoort's letter to Sedov in which he discusses the bloc of 1932 and states that he will not submit it to the Paris session of the Dewey Commission hearings (Broué 1980 34-5). In that letter van Heijenoort refers to the other two letters, also reproduced by Broué, in which Trotsky discusses the bloc. As the person who repaired the TA van Heijenoort must have also known the letters to Soviet Oppositionists whose certified mail receipts Getty found and about which Broué remained silent. We also know that van Heijenoort copied excerpts from letters between Trotsky and Sedov. But the full texts of those letters is not in the TA. Van Heijenoort must have known that too.

Therefore van Heijenoort lied in his memoir. He knew that very important materials were withheld from the Dewey Commission. Contrary to what van Heijenoort wrote in 1978 and said in 1980, Trotsky did indeed publicly deny what he was doing in private. He did indeed have "two sets of ideas, one ... in his published writings and one reserved for his private letters." Van Heijenoort knew this. He chose to deliberately mislead his readers. Let us consider van Heijenoort's claim of 1980: "One should not expect startling revelations on the political plane." How could he have made this statement when the doors to the formerly "closed archive" had been thrown open and it would be subject to the closest scrutiny? We cannot attribute it to a superficial, careless, or hurried acquaintance with the archive, as van Heijenoort himself assumed of Deutscher. Van Heijenoort could have made these statements only if he had first assured himself that the horde of

students about the scrutinize the newly-opened archive would not immediately prove him a liar.

The most likely explanation may be that van Heijenoort assumed the second sentence was literally true. "Those who would consult the TA "should not expect startling revelations" because van Heijenoort was certain that those revelations were no longer there — because he himself had taken them out. Getty discovered that someone had purged the Trotsky Archive. That person must have been Jean van Heijenoort.

It may be objected that this conclusion assumes van Heijenoort did not do a "perfect job." Obvious whoever did the purging did not do it perfectly — or we would have no evidence internal to the archive itself that it had been purged. Despite an attention to detail for which he was evidently well-known van Heijenoort failed to find and destroy all the traces of his expurgations.

It is conceivable that Isaac Deutscher confiscated some materials while working the last volume of his trilogy. I consider this unlikely for the reasons I examined above. Moreover, Deutscher could simply not have done so without van Heijenoort's collusion since van Heijenoort might well have noted that some documents were missing. Most likely Deutscher did no more than fail to mention anything that conflicted with Trotsky's own published accounts and with his own romanticized vision of a heroic, tragic Trotsky. Therefore, the overwhelming likelihood is that the "purger" of the Trotsky archive was van Heijenoort. If Deutscher were involved in the purging van Heijenoort was a party to it as well.

Van Heijenoort had an additional motive, one shared by no other person, for purging the Trotsky archive of incriminating materials. For if Trotsky deceptions came to light, Trotsky's would not be the only reputation adversely affected. Van Heijenoort had known Trotsky's archive at the time it was being formed more closely than anyone else. He had prepared it for shipment and then gone through it again and again. Of all living persons only van Heijenoort would be called upon to account for any of Trotsky's secret deceptions, should they come to light.

## Chapter 7. *Non-Soviet — Soviet Evidence — Frinovsky, Liushkov, Mastny*

The commission of the Central Committee set up by Mikhail Gorbachev to study and, in essence, to find evidence that Bukharin had been unjustly convicted at his trial in 1938 was unable to find any such evidence at all. The proceedings of this commission published in 2004 show the commission members' consternation at this failure.

The result was that the decree (*Postanovlenie*) of the Plenum of the Soviet Supreme Court which was issued on February 4, 1988, and which declared that Bukharin had been forced to make a false confession was never published and remains secret in Russia to this day. Its text, only recently discovered, shows that the central piece of evidence of Bukharin's innocence cited in it is, in fact, a deliberate falsification.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Vladimir L. Bobrov and I have prepared an edition of this document and an accompanying article as Chapter Two in our book *1937. Pravosudie Stalina. Obzhalovaniya ne podlezhit!* Moscow: Eksmo, 2010. Glava 2. "Reabilitatsionnoe" moshenichestvo, 64-84.

In it the confession-statement of Mikhail Frinovsky, a document that provides strong evidence of the guilt of Bukharin and other defendants in the First and Third Moscow Trials, was deliberately misquoted so it could be employed as evidence that Bukharin was innocent.<sup>2</sup> In fact Gorbachev's experts could find no evidence whatever to support their theory that Bukharin was innocent.

<sup>2</sup> Frinovsky's confession-statement was published in early 2006 and is available on the web at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/frinovskyr.html> . I have put an English translation of it on the web here <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/frinovskyeng.html> Both Russian and English web versions have the full bibliographical information of the original publication. For Frinovsky's statement of Bukharin's guilt see pp. 40, 42, 47-8, or just search for the word "Bukharin" («[[[cyrillic]]»).

We now have a number of statements from other high-ranking conspirators who implicate Zinoviev and Kamenev in their own confessions.

For instance, Mikhail Frinovsky stated:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

At the time of the trial of Zinoviev, Kamenev and others, when the testimony about Bukharin was published in the press, Evdokimov was in Moscow. He became very upset and in a conversation with me, said: "The devil only knows how he [Iagoda] will be able to extract himself from this whole affair. I just don't understand Iagoda at all, what he is doing, why he is broadening the circle of persons for repression, or maybe the nerves of these people are weak — they will give out. But it could have been possible to direct the course of the investigation in such a manner as to leave oneself safe in any case." (41)

### **Zinoviev and Kamenev**

Zinoviev and Kamenev knew about NKVD Commissar Iagoda's involvement in the conspiracy of Rightists but did not reveal that fact before or at their August 1936 trial. We know this now because in 1997 eight pretrial interrogations of Iagoda were published in Russia in the provincial city of Kazan' in a tiny press run of only 200 copies. In 2004 a semi-official volume of documents copublished by Yale University and the Aleksandr N. Iakovlev Fund also published one of these interrogations, making it clear that they are genuine.

Iagoda rushed Kamenev and Zinoviev to execution before they could expose yet more of the conspiracy. From other similar events Stalin concluded that the Oppositionists had an agreement to kill any of their number who named names. Stalin concluded that the unsupported word of a former Oppositionist should no longer be accepted at face value. We have reproduced Iagoda's and Stalin's statements in other chapters of the present study.<sup>3</sup> Like Bukharin Iagoda certainly knew about Ezhov's participation in

the conspiracy as well, and like Bukharin he did not tell "the whole truth" at his trial.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> For Stalin's remarks online see

<http://msuweb.montclair/~furrgr/research/stalinonoppsvi11995.html>

<sup>4</sup> This is confirmed both in Iagoda's confessions in the 1997 volume *Genrikh Iagoda. Narkom vnutrennikhdel SSSR, General'niy komissar gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti. Sbornik dokumentov*. Kazan', 1997, and in the April 11, 1939 confession-statement by Ezhov's right-hand man Mikhail Frinovsky, a translation of which may be consulted at

<http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/frinovskyeng.html>

### **Rehabilitation Documents of Bukharin**

The decree of the Plenum of the Soviet Supreme Court of February 4 1988 by which Bukharin and other defendants in the March 1938 Moscow Trial were "rehabilitated" is still secret in Russia. Only very short fragments of it have been published.

Some years ago I discovered a copy of the original Rehabilitation Decree in the Volkogonov Archives, on microfilm at the Library of Congress.<sup>5</sup> It bears the title "Decree of the Plenum of the Supreme Court of the USSR of 4 February 1988."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> General Dmitri Volkogonov was given unprecedented access by Mikhail Gorbachev to official, secret archives of the Soviet period. With their aid he wrote highly tendentious works including biographies of Lenin, Stalin, and Trotsky. Volkogonov photocopied thousands of pages of documents, and somehow many or all of them were transmitted to Western libraries, including the Library of Congress. For a brief summary of Volkogonov's career and his relationship with politics and archives, see Amy Knight, "U.S. POWs and Russian Archives," *Perspective* Volume IX, Number 3 (January - February 1998), at <http://www.bu.edu/iscip/vol9/Knight.html>

<sup>6</sup> "Postanovlenie Plenuma Verkhovnogo Suda SSSR [[cyrillic]] 4 fevralia 1988 g." Volkogonov Archives, Library of Congress, Washington DC.

The Rehabilitation Decree quotes the statement-confession made by Mikhail Frinovsky, Deputy Commissar of Internal Affairs under Nikolai Ezhov. Together with Ezhov and other of his men Frinovsky was arrested for massive fraudulent repressions and murders, and was tried and executed with Ezhov on these charges in February 1940.

Frinovsky's statement was first published in early 2006. We can now see that the Soviet Supreme Court's Rehabilitation Decree falsifies what Frinovsky wrote.

The Rehabilitation Decree reads:

According to Frinovsky's confessions Ezhov talked with Bukharin, Rykov, Bulanov and others of the accused several times; **he assured each of them that the court would preserve their lives if they confessed their guilt.** (Postanovlenie 1988, 6.)

This is a lie. Frinovsky did not say that at all. Instead he *confirmed* the guilt of Bukharin and Rykov as participants in a Right conspiracy, while also confirming that Ezhov and he himself were also involved in a similar and related conspiracy.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

Before the arrests of Bukharin and Rykov, speaking frankly with me EZHOV began to talk about his plans for Chekist [NKVD, GF] work in connection with the situation that was taking shape and **the imminent arrests of BUKHARIN and RYKOV. EZHOV said that this would be a serious loss for the Rights. After this, whether we like it or not, by direction of the Central Committee there might be undertaken large-scale measures concerning the Rightist cadres, and that in connection with them his and my fundamental task was to guide the investigations in such a matter that, to the extent possible, the Rightist cadre would be preserved safe.** (Lubianka 3 42)



Frinovsky discussed the "preparation" for the Bukharin trial a second time in another part of his statement. Here too he made it clear that Bukharin and the rest were guilty. There is nothing about "preparing" the defendants to make false confessions implicating themselves. Frinovsky said that Ezhov's falsifications concerned keeping Ezhov's own ties with the leaders of the Rights out of the defendants' statements at trial.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

The preparation of the trial of RYKOV, BUKHARIN, KRESTINSKY, IAGODA, and others

Actively taking part in the investigation generally, EZHOV kept his distance from the preparation of the trial. Before the trial there occurred the face-to-face confrontations of the arrestees, the elaboration of details, in which EZHOV did not take part. He spoke with IAGODA for a long time and this conversation concerned, in the main, assurances to IAGODA that he would not be shot.

EZHOV spoke several times with BUKHARIN and RYKOV and also in the course of calming them assured them that under no circumstances would they be shot.

Once EZHOV had a conversation in the presence of the investigator and myself, and ended the conversation one on one, having asked us to leave.

On that occasion BULANOV at that moment began talking about the poisoning of EZHOV. EZHOV did not tell me what the conversation was about.' When he asked us to come in again, he was saying: "Conduct yourself well at trial — I will ask that you not be shot." After the trial EZHOV always expressed regret about BULANOV. At the time of the execution itself EZHOV proposed that BULANOV be shot first, and did not himself enter the building where the execution were taking place.

Without questions, here EZHOV was moved by the necessity of covering up his own relations with the arrested leaders of the Rights who were undergoing the public trial. (Lubianka 1939-1946, 47-48.)

The Rehabilitation Decree falsifies the contents of Frinovsky's statement by giving it the opposite meaning from that it really bears. Frinovsky *confirmed* the existence of a conspiracy of Rights, his and Ezhov's participation in it, Bukharin's participation in it as well, and therefore Bukharin's guilt.

Had the Soviet Prosecutor and Supreme Court found any evidence to impugn Bukharin's confessions they would surely have cited it. Instead, in the interest of their purposes — to make a case that Bukharin and the other defendants at the Third Moscow Trial were innocent — they were forced to have recourse to falsifying Frinovsky's statement, a document that was still secret at that time. Then they kept the Rehabilitation Decree itself secret, as it still officially is in Russia.

The Commission had access to 276 volumes of investigative files on Bukharin. (RKEB 3 33) The fact that this blue-ribbon commission, with all of the archives at its disposal, could find no evidence to exculpate Bukharin or cast doubt upon his confession is itself the strongest evidence we are likely to ever have — that is, that no such evidence exists.

The following correspondences assure us that the document in question from the Volkogonov Archives, hereafter called the Rehabilitation Decree, is in fact the genuine text of the Supreme Court decree rehabilitating Bukharin.

- The header of the first, and end of the last, pages of this same document are photographically reproduced in *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* 1, 1989 at page 121, and in text format in a volume of "rehabilitation" documents published in 1991.<sup>7</sup> The texts of both correspond exactly to the respective parts of the document from the Volkogonov Archive.
- In the official collection *Reabilitatsia: Kak Eto Bylo. Seredina 80-kh godov-1991*<sup>8</sup> a quotation is given from the "Decision of the Plenum of the Supreme Court of the USSR of 4 February 1988" (*postanovlenie Plenuma Verkhovnogo Suda SSSR ot 4 fevralia 1988 g.*) which

corresponds exactly to a passage at the bottom of page 5 of the document from the Volkogonov Archive. On page 615 at note 31 another passage is cited from the same "postanovlenie," and this one can also be found in the Volkogonov Archive document towards the top of page 7.

<sup>7</sup> *Reabilitatsia. Politicheskie Protessy 30-50-kh godov* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1991), pp. 240-1.

<sup>8</sup> RKEB 3 614, n. 30.

The Rehabilitation Decree contains the following passage:

Former Vice-Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR [NKVD, GF] Frinovsky, in his statement of April 11, 1939, admitted that employees of the NKVD of the USSR "prepared" arrestees for the interrogations at face-to-face confrontations, pressing on them the answers they should give to possible questions. Ezhov often conversed with those under interrogation. If the arrestee renounced his confessions, the investigator was given directions to "restore" the arrestee, i.e. to obtain from him his previous false confessions. (6)

The same statements are made with slightly different wording the "Protest," or request for reconsideration, from the State Prosecutor (*Prkuror*) to the Soviet Supreme Court in this case:

The former Vice-Commissar of Internal Affairs Frinovsky, convicted on February 3, 1940, for falsification of criminal cases and of massive repressions, in his statement of April 11, 1939, indicated that workers of the NKVD of the USSR prepared arrestees for face-to-face confrontations, discussing with them possible questions and answers to them. The preparation ended with the publication of previous confessions concerning the persons with whom face-to-face confrontations were planned. After this Ezhov would summon the arrestee to him or he himself would drop in to the investigator's room, ask the person under interrogation whether he would confirm his confessions, and as though in passing, reported that members of the government might be present at the face-to-face confrontation. If the arrestee renounced his confessions Ezhov would go

away and the investigator was given directions to "restore" the arrestee, which meant to obtain from him his previous false confessions.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> "Plenumu Verkhovnogo suda Soiuzna SSR Prokuratura Soiuzna SSR. Protest (v poriadke nadzora) po delu N.I. Bukharina, A.I. Rykova, A.P. Rozengol'tsa, M.A. Chernova, P.P. Bulanova, L.G. Levina, I.N. Kazakova, V.A. Maksimova-Dikovskogo, P.P. Kriuchkova, Kh.G. Rakovskogo. 21 ianvaria 1988 g." ("To the Plenum of the Supreme Court of the Union SSR of the Procurator of the Union SSR. Protest (in the order of oversight) concerning the case of B.I. Bukharin, A.I. Rykov, A.P. Rozengol'ts, M.A. Chernov, P.P. Bulanov, L.G. Levin, I.N. Kazakov, V.A. Maksimov-Dikovsky, P.P. Kriuchkov, Kh.G. Rakovsky. January 21, 1988.) *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* 1989 № 1, pp. 114-119. p.118. This text is reprinted in the collection *Reabilitatsia. Politicheskie Protsessy 30-50-kh dogov*. Moscow: Izd-vo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1991, pp. 235-240.

Publication of the full text of Frinovsky's statement of April 11, 1939, which had remained classified until early 2006,<sup>10</sup> now permits us to affirm with confidence that these statements in the Rehabilitation Decree constitute a deliberate deception by the Soviet Supreme Court.

<sup>10</sup> "NARODNOMU KOMISSARU VNUTRENNIKH DEL SOIUZA SOVETSKIKH SOTS. RESPUBLIK — KOMISSARU GOSUDARSTVENNOI BEZOPASNOSTI 1 RANGA: BERIA L.P. Ot arestovannogo FRINOVSKOGO M.P. ZAIAVLENIE" 11 aprelia 1939. ("To the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the Union of Soviet Soc. Republics — Commissar of State Security of the First Rank Beria L.P. From the arrestee Frinovsky M.P. Statement." April 11, 1939.) In *Lubianka. Stalin i NKVD — NKGB — GUKR "SMERSH" 1939- mart 1946*. Moscow 2006, pp. 33-50; also online at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/frinovskyengl.html> Russian origianl at [../frinovskyru.html](http://frinovskyru.html)

Frinovsky did state something resembling the quotations above. However, in this passage Frinovsky was not discussing "preparation" of the defendants at the 1938 Trial but a different case.

Later in the same document Frinovsky does comment on Ezhov's "preparations" for the March 1938 Trial as follows:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

In the course of the investigation in the case of IAGODA and the arrest Chekist conspirators, and also of other arrestees, especially the Rights, the procedure established by EZHOV of "correction" of the transcripts followed **a purpose — that of the preservation of the cadres of the conspirators and the prevention of any possibility of the failure of our participation in the anti-Soviet conspiracy.**

I could cite dozens and hundreds of examples in which the arrestees under investigation did not give up the names of persons with whom they were involved in their anti-Soviet work.

The most graphic examples are those of the conspirators IAGODA, BULANOV, ZAKOVSKY, KRUCHINKIN and others who, though they knew of my participation in the conspiracy, did not reveal it in their confessions. (47)

Frinovsky does admit that Ezhov — obviously with the assistance of subordinates like Frinovsky himself — did falsify the transcripts of interrogations in the cases of arrested NKVD men and especially in the cases of arrested Rightists like Iagoda. *But this was done not to make the innocent appear guilty but for the opposite reason: to prevent yet more conspirators, and especially Ezhov and his men themselves, from being disclosed.*

### **Statements by the NKVD defector Genrikh Liushkov to his Japanese handlers**

NKVD eneral Genrikh Smoilovich Liushkov defected to the Japanese on June 13, 1938, by crossing the border into Japanese-occupied Manchuria. He gave some press conferences and wrote articles attacking Stalin and the Soviet party and government. In his press conferences, arranged by the

Japanese for propaganda purposes, Liushkov claimed that all the Moscow Trials were frameups and that no conspiracies existed at all.

But he told his Japanese military handlers something very different. American professor Alvin D. Coox spent years tracking down the former Japanese military men who had been assigned to handle Liushkov. In 1968, and again in 1998, Coox published lengthy, detailed articles about what these men reported Liushkov had told them.

In an article published in March 1939 in Japanese for anti-Soviet propaganda purposes Liushkov claimed that all the conspiracies in the USSR were fabrications. But to his Japanese handlers Liushkov made it clear not only that Stalin himself believe there was a real military conspiracy but that he, Liushkov, also knew that there was, or had been, a real military conspiracy that involved Gamarnik, a member of the Tukhachevsky group who committed suicide on May 31, 1937, when he learned that he would soon be arrested.

### **The Tukhachevsky Conspiracy**

According to Lyushkov, the interrogations of Beribas, Zapadni, and Barminski established that in the NKVD and the border guard forces, a plot centering on Gamarnik had been fomented. (Coox 1 156)

General Ian Gamarnik was one of the leading figures in the so-called "Tukhachevsky Affair" of high-ranking military conspirators. He is named a number of times in the Third Moscow Trial by Grigori F. Grinko, one of the defendants.

GRINKO: ... How did I carry out the tasks that were entrusted to me by this national-fascist organization?

Firstly, connections with the Right and Trotskyite centre. I maintained these connections with Gamarnik, Pyatakov and Rykov. I established connections with Gamarnik through Lyubchenko, who had connections with Yakir and Gamarnik. Through Gamarnik I established connections with Pyatakov, and then with Rykov.

Simultaneously I carried out tasks in foreign politics, in so far as Pyatakov and Gamarnik had told me that Trotsky had agreed to paying compensation at the expense of the Ukraine for the military assistance that we were to receive in our fight against the Soviet power.

Simultaneously with the establishment of connections with the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" I accelerated the establishment of connection with foreign forces through Krestinsky, with whom Pyatakov had connected me.

I established connection with Gamarnik, Pyatakov and Rykov about the end of 1935. (1938 Trial 71)

VYSHINSKY: In short, in Rosengoltz's criminal activities there were the same defeatist motives as in your activities?

GRINKO: They lay at the base of everything.

VYSHINSKY: So we can say that it is not only Rykov and Bukharin, but also Rosengoltz, I have one more question. Did you know about the Tukhachevsky plot, and if so, from whom?

GRINKO: From Gamarnik. (1938 Trial 87)

Liushkov also confirmed at least the intention of these Party and military conspirators to conspire with the Japanese and to support a Japanese invasion of the Soviet Union:

In concert with Lavrenty Lavrentiev (former First Secretary of the Regional Committee of the Party until January 1937), with Grigory Krutov (shot in April 1938), and with the army plotters Sangurski, Aronshtam, and others, Deribas supposedly intended **to conduct a putsch in the Far East and to reach agreement with the Japanese for help and for combined operations against the Soviet Union.** In the NKVD the plotters had recruited Transtok, Chief of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Section, and many others. Lyushkov gave the names of about 20 officials, mostly NKVD types, and of ten border guards, all of whom he asserted were involved in the plots. (Coox 1 156)

Coox emphasizes that Liushkov outlined this information to the Japanese in a manner that convinced them that he believed they were genuine:

About this murderous period as a whole, Lyushkov said little to the Japanese, but his enumeration of the suspects was straightforward, without any admission of NKVD-fabricated evidence, such as he said had occurred at Leningrad in the era of the Kirov assassination. (Coox 1, 156)<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Quoted from Furr, Kirov 345-346.

### **Aleksei Rykov**

Liushkov told the Japanese that the commanders in the Far Eastern Army had been in secret contact with Rykov. Along with Nikolai Bukharin Rykov was one of the top leaders of the clandestine Rightist conspiracy.

Liushkov confirmed the connection of the Rights, convicted in the March 1938 Moscow Trial, with the military conspirators. For example, Liushkov told the Japanese:

For a long time Deribas had been in contact with Rykov and was the latter's "hidden conspirator." (Coox 1 156)

Liushkov mentioned Rykov elsewhere as well (see below). He also revealed that the charges against Lavrent'ev (Kartvelishvili), arrested in July 1937 but not tried and executed until August 1938, were true.

Liushkov also revealed that Marshal Bliukher had been conspiring with Rykov and the Rights.

But in private conversations to Japanese officers and others with whom he interacted, Liushkov incriminated Rykov along with Marshal Bliukher and others:

[One] group of traitors belonging to the staff of the Far Eastern Army, people near to Blyukher himself, such as [Yan] Pokus, Gulin, Vasenov, Kropachev and others, tried to get round Blyukher and to draw him



into politically dangerous conversations. Blyukher showed them the secret confessions of arrested plotters [without] the authority to do so. After his arrest Gulin told me that after the recall of Pokus to Moscow, Blyukher, when drinking with them, cursed the NKVD and the arrests recently carried out, and also Voroshilov, [Lazar] Kaganovich and others. Blyukher told Gulin that before the removal of Rykov he was in connection with him and had often written that the "right wing" wished to see him at the head of the armed forces of the country. (Coox 1 158)

All this was exactly the opposite of what Liushkov was telling the world for propaganda purposes in his press conferences. The Japanese were convinced that Liushkov was telling them the truth.

Liushkov's revelations to the Japanese are directly relevant to the Third Moscow Trial, where a number of the defendants testified about their involvement in and knowledge of Marshal Tukhachevsky's military conspiracy. Liushkov's testimony is strong evidence that the testimony at the Moscow Trials was genuine.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See the fuller discussion in Furr, Kirov Chapter 17: "Liushkov's Essay."

### **The Masty-Benes Note of February 9, 1937**

Since 1987 we have had archival evidence from a source in the German government, from January-February 1937, that the Soviet military was indeed planning a *coup d'état* and a reversal of Soviet policy from enmity towards friendship with Nazi Germany.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Ivan Pfaff. "Prag und der Fall Tuchatschewski." *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 35, 1 (1987), 95-134. Pfaff's translation of the note from the Czech into German is on pages 120-121.

Dramatic indeed! But few people are aware of this evidence. It has been virtually ignored since it was discovered.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Some years ago I obtained a copy of the document from the Czech national archive, where it is held. Then I paid a professional translator to translate it into English and give me the rights to publish her translation.

In 1987 Ivan Pfaff published an account of a note he found in the Czech national archive. This is a note from Voytech Mastny, Czech minister in Berlin, to Eduard Benes, Czech Prime Minister, dated February 9, 1937. In it Mastny recorded that the German official with whom he had been dealing, Maximilian Karl Graf zu Trauttmansdorff, had informed him that Hitler was no longer interested in a settlement with Czechoslovakia because he expected a military coup in the Soviet Union and a subsequent turn of Soviet policy towards positive relations with Germany.

Most importantly, with regards to the current delays, he considered the possibility, requesting absolute secrecy, that the real reason behind the Chancellor's hesitation was his assumption that, according to certain reports which he received from Russia, there was a growing probability of a sudden turn of events very soon, the fall of Stalin and Litvinov, and the imposition of a military dictatorship. Should that happen, the Reich Chancellor would supposedly change the entire position towards Russia...<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Archive of the National Museum, Mastny papers (ANM-M).

Documents from the German Foreign Ministry Archive were published in 1974 that showed a special interest in Tukhachevsky on the part of the German General Staff at exactly this time, February 1937.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See Grover Furr, "New Light On Old Stories About Marshal Tukhachevsky: Some Documents Reconsidered." *Russian History* 13, No. 2-3 (Summer-Fall 1986; actually published in 1988), 293-308.

This is strong corroboration that Marshal Tukhachevsky was indeed planning a coup against the Stalin regime, as he confessed in late May 1937. There is also a great deal of evidence from within the Soviet archives that the Tukhachevsky conspiracy really existed and that the Soviet commanders were guilty.

In the Third Moscow Trial of March 1938 defendant Arkadii Rozengol'ts confessed that he had gotten in touch personally with Tukhachevsky and Rykov of behalf of Trotsky.

ROSENGOLTZ: Krestinsky said that he had instructions with regard to Rykov and Rudzutak. Sedov spoke a lot about the necessity of the maximum, the closest possible connections with Tukhachevsky, inasmuch as, in Trotsky's opinion, Tukhachevsky and the military group were to be the decisive force of the counterrevolutionary action. During the conversation it was also revealed that Trotsky entertained fears regarding Tukhachevsky's Bonapartist tendencies. In the course of one conversation Sedov said that Trotsky in this respect even expressed the fear that if Tukhachevsky successfully accomplished a military coup, it was possible that he would not allow Trotsky into Moscow, and in this connection he referred to the necessity for the greatest vigilance on our part. (1938 Trial 245-246)

Defendants Bessonov, Rykov, Bukharin, Grinko, and Krestinsky also testified about the collaboration in or knowledge of Tukhachevsky's conspiracy.

### **Rykov**

RYKOV: I knew about Tukhachevsky's military group.

VYSHINSKY: What did you know?

RYKOV: This military group was organized independently of the bloc, independently of shades—Trotskyite or Bukharinite. The military group set itself the object of violently removing the government of the [Soviet] Union and, in particular, it took part in the preparations for a Kremlin coup.

VYSHINSKY: You were aware of that?

RYKOV: Yes.

VYSHINSKY: When did you learn of it?

RYKOV: I learnt of it from Tomsy in 1934.

VYSHINSKY: In 1934?

RYKOV: Probably. (1938 Trial 84)

## **Bukharin**

VYSHINSKY: Wait a while, it still remains to be seen how you objected. We want to establish what actually happened. So Tomsy told you that it would be necessary or expedient to open the front?

BUKHARIN: Yes, he inclined to this opinion.

VYSHINSKY: That it would be expedient to open the front to the Germans in case of war?

BUKHARIN: Yes, in case of war.

VYSHINSKY: And what does this mean?

BUKHARIN: It means high treason.

VYSHINSKY: And as to how to open the front, who spoke to you about that?

BUKHARIN: Tomsy spoke about it, that there was such an opinion among the military men.

VYSHINSKY: Which military men?

BUKHARIN: The Right conspirators.

VYSHINSKY: Concretely, who?

BUKHARIN: He named Tukhachevsky, and Kork, if I am not mistaken; then the Trotskyites. (188)

VYSHINSKY: ...Were Tukhachevsky and the military group of conspirators members of your bloc?

BUKHARIN: They were.

VYSHINSKY: And they discussed with the members of the bloc?

BUKHARIN: Quite right.

VYSHINSKY: That means that Kork, Tukhachevsky and the Trotskyites generally intended to open the front in case of war with Germany, and it was of this that Tomsy spoke to you?

BUKHARIN: Yes, that there was such an opinion among them. (189)

### **Krestinsky**

VYSHINSKY: Permit me to interrogate Krestinsky.

Accused Krestinsky, do you know that the Trotskyites belonged to the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" of which we are speaking here?

KRESTINSKY: I learnt from Pyatakov, when he spoke to me about this in February 1935, that an organization had been formed, which united the Rights, Trotskyites and military men, and which set itself the aim of preparing for a military coup. I also knew that the leading centre included Rykov, Bukharin, Rudzutak and Yagoda from the Rights, Tukhachevsky and Gamarnik from the military, and Pyatakov from the Trotskyites. He never told me that representatives of national-democratic organizations were included in this centre, and when I was in this centre with Rosengoltz in 1937, there were no representatives of these organizations in the centre then either. (184)

The Mastny-Benes note thus provides strong evidence from a high-placed German source that the Tukhachevsky conspiracy really existed.

Why has this important document been ignored? Because the hypothesis that the Tukhachevsky Affair really existed, and was stopped by Stalin, the

Politburo, and the NKVD, is unacceptable to anticommunists and Trotskyists, and therefore to the Soviet history establishment, East and West.

Pfaff and Igor Lukes, who also discussed the Mastny-Benes note<sup>17</sup>, said that Trauttmansdorff must have been lying to Mastny, to try to "frame" Tukhachevsky and so lure Stalin to kill off his best military commanders and weaken the country. A tale like this was indeed spread right after World War Two by three former German intelligence men. We have discussed it briefly in a 1988 article.<sup>18</sup> This story was widely publicized after the war.

<sup>17</sup> Igor Lukes, *Czechoslovakia between Stalin and Hitler*. The diplomacy of Edvard Benes in the 1930s. London: Oxford University Press, 1996, Chapter 4, 99ff.

<sup>18</sup> Furr New Light 302-304 and the footnotes there.

Khrushchev's men heard about this "SD forgery plot" story and checked in the Soviet archives for any evidence to support it. Khrushchev's Shvernik Commission studied this story in detail and searched in the archives for any trace of it. They found none, and ended by rejecting it completely, along with the documents supposedly produced in it. (RKEB 2 737-738) But this false story is retained by anticommunists because the opposite — that "Stalin" (the Soviet leadership) actually disarmed this dangerous conspiracy — might reflect well on Stalin.

There is a huge amount of other evidence to support the charge that Tukhachevsky and the rest were guilty. But here we actually have an archival document — German evidence from a Czech archive, and it is virtually ignored.

We might consider for a minute what WW2 would have been like if Tukhachevsky and his co-conspirators had been successful. The industrial and military might of the Soviet Union, plus its resources of raw material and manpower, would have been teamed up with those of Hitler's Germany. The history of Europe — of the whole world — would be dramatically different, and far, far worse.

This fact — and it is a fact, we have a huge amount of evidence to support it — changes dramatically the way historians should look at the history of Europe in the 1930s, the Stalin regime in the USSR, and World War. One could conclude, without exaggeration that in uncovering and stopping this conspiracy the Soviet leadership — "Stalin" — saved European civilization from Nazism. But in the fatally politicized world of Soviet historiography such a conclusion is simply "not permitted" because far from documenting a "crime" by Stalin it tends to make Stalin look good. So, it is ignored, in fact lied about. Stalin "framed" these poor generals! He *must* have done so — and the evidence be damned!

The transcript of the 11-hour long trial of Tukhachevsky and the other seven military commanders is still top secret in Russia today. No one is allowed to see it, not even the most ferociously anti-communist researchers. But we do have two reports of the trial.

One is by Col. Viktor Alksnis, whose grandfather was a member of the military tribunal who tried Tukhachevsky and the rest. In 1990 he was allowed to read the transcript. Alksnis went from someone who had always believed that the Soviet generals had been framed, to firmly believing that they were guilty. Since him, no one else has been allowed to see the transcript.

The other report is that of Marshal Semion Budyonny, in a letter to Marshal Voroshilov. We study these materials briefly in other chapters of the present book.

## Chapter 8. *Non-Soviet Evidence — Humbert-Droz, Littlepage, Holmes*

### **Jules Humbert-Droz's memoir**

Jules Humbert-Droz had been a close friend and political ally of Bukharin's in the Communist International. In his memoir published in Switzerland in 1971 Humbert-Droz revealed that Bukharin told him in 1928 that he, Bukharin, and his followers, the Rights, were already plotting to assassinate Stalin.

There can be no question of this testimony having been forced from him under pressure. Humbert-Droz had long since quit the communist movement and was living peacefully in his native country of Switzerland. Indeed, it is not an important part of his memoirs, occupying less than two pages in a long work.

Avant de partir, j'allai voir une dernière fois Boukharine, ne sachant si je le reverrais à mon retour. Nous eûmes une longue et franche conversation. Il me mit au courant des contacts pris par son groupe avec la fraction Zinoviev-Kamenev pour coordonner la lutte contre le pouvoir de Staline. Je ne lui cachai pas que je n'approuvais pas cette liaison des oppositions: «La lutte contre Staline n'est pas un programme politique. Nous avons comattu avec raison le programme des troskystes sur des problèmes essentiels, le danger des koulaks en Russie, la lutte contre le front unique avec les social-démocrates, les problèmes chinois, la perspective révolutionnaire très courte, etc. Au lendemain d'une victoire commune contre Staline, ces problèmes politiques nous diviseront. Ce bloc est un bloc sans principes, qui s'effritera même avant d'aboutir.»

**Boukharine me dit aussi qu'ils avaient décidé d'utiliser la terreur individuelle pour se débarrasser de Staline.** Sur ce point aussi je fis d'expresses réserves: l'introduction de la terreur individuelle dans les luttes politiques nées de la Révolution russe risquait fort de se tourner contre ceux qui l'emploieraient. Elle n'a jamais été une arme



révolutionnaire. «Mon opinion est que nous devons continuer la lute idéologique et politique contre Staline. Sa ligne conduira, dans un avenir proche, à une catastrophe qui ouvrira les yeux des communistes et aboutira à un changement d'orientation. Le fascisme menace l'Allemagne et notre parti de phraseurs sera incapable de lui résister. Devant la débâcle du Parti communiste allemand et l'extension du fascisme à la Pologne, à la France, l'Internationale devra changer de politique. Ce moment-là sera notre heure. Il faut donc rester disciplinés, appliquer les décisions sectaires après les avoir combattues et s'opposer aux fautes et aux mesures gauchistes, mais continue la lutte sur le terrain strictement politique.» **Boukharine a sans doute compris que je ne me liais pas aveuglément à sa fraction, dont le seul programme était de faire disparaître Staline.** / 380 / Ce fut notre dernière entrevue. Manifestement il n'avait pas confiance dans la tactique que je proposais. Il savait aussi bien sûr, mieux que moi, de quels crimes Staline était capable. Bref, **ceux qui, après la mort de Lénine, sur la base de son testament, auraient pu liquider politiquement Staline, cherchaient à l'éliminer physiquement**, alors qu'il tenait fermement en main le parti et l'appareil policier de l'Etat.<sup>1</sup> (Humbert-Droz 379-380)

Translated:

Before leaving I went to see Bukharin for one last time not knowing whether I would see him again upon my return. We had a long and frank conversation. He brought me up to date with the contacts made by his group with the Zinoviev-Kamenev fraction in order to coordinate the struggle against the power of Stalin. I did not hide from him that I did not approve of this liaison of the oppositions. "The struggle against Stalin is not a political programme. We had combatted with reason the programme of the Trotskyites on the essential questions, the danger of the kulaks in Russia, the struggle against the united front with the social-democrats, the Chinese problems, the very short-sighted revolutionary perspective, etc. On the morrow of a common victory against Stalin, the political problems will divide us. This bloc is a bloc without principles which will crumble away before achieving any results."

**Bukharin also told me that they had decided to utilise individual terror in order to rid themselves of Stalin.** On this point as well I expressed my reservation: the introduction of individual terror into the political struggles born from the Russian Revolution would strongly risk turning against those who employed it. It had never been a revolutionary weapon. "My opinion is that we ought to continue the ideological and political struggle against Stalin. His line will lead in the near future to a catastrophe which will open the eyes of the communists and result in a changing of orientation. Fascism menaces Germany and our party of phrasemongers will be incapable of resisting. Before the debacle of the Communist Party of Germany and the extension of fascism to Poland and to France, the International must change politics. That moment will then be our hour. It is necessary then to remain disciplined, to apply the sectarian decisions after having fought and opposed the leftists errors and measures, but to continue to struggle on the strictly political terrain."

Bukharin doubtlessly had understood that I would not bind myself blindly to his fraction whose sole programme was to make Stalin disappear. / 380 / This was out last meeting. It was clear that he did not have confidence in the tactic that I proposed. He also certainly knew better than I what crimes Stalin was capable of. In short, those who, after Lenin's death and on the basis of his testament, could have destroyed Stalin politically, sought instead to eliminate him physically, when he held firmly in his hand the Party and the police apparatus of the state.

### **Relevance to the Moscow Trials Testimony**

Humbert-Droz's memoir confirms Bukharin's confessions, both before and at the March 1938 Moscow Trial, that he and his followers had plotted to kill Stalin. Since Bukharin was already advocating Stalin's assassination in 1928 it stands to reason that he might have done so in later years as well. Valentin Astrov testified to something very similar, as we shall see.

The Testimony of Two American Engineers in the Soviet Union

Contemporary testimony of two American engineers who had been hired to work in the Soviet Union during the early to mid-1930s, gives independent evidence of some of the striking testimony by Iurii Piatakov in the Second Moscow Trial of 1937. John D. Littlepage and Carroll G. Holmes witnessed examples of different forms of industrial sabotage that closely parallels the testimony given by Piatakov and others at this trial.

### John D. Littlepage

John D. Littlepage was an American mining engineer who hired on to work in the Soviet gold industry during the 1930s. He left valuable confirmation of Iurii Piatakov's testimony in the Second Moscow Trial of January, 1937. Littlepage himself attested to sabotage in the goldfields.

A short summary of Littlepage's conclusions as expressed in his articles in the *Saturday Evening Post* is given by Sayers and Kahn:

In a series of articles concerning his experiences in Soviet Russia, published in the *Saturday Evening Post* in January 1938, Littlepage wrote:

I went to Berlin in the spring of 1931 with a large purchasing commission headed by Pyatakov; my job was to offer technical advice on purchases of mining machinery...

Among other things, the commission in Berlin was buying several dozen mine hoists, ranging from 100 to 1,000 horse-power... The commission asked for quotations on the basis of pfennigs per kilogram. After some discussion, the German concerns [Borsig and Demag]... reduced their prices between 5 and 6 pfennigs per kilogram. When I studied these proposals, I discovered that the firms had substituted cast-iron bases weighing several tons for the light steel provided in the specifications, which would reduce the cost of production per kilogram, but increase the weight, and therefore the cost to purchaser.

Naturally, I was pleased to make this discovery, and reported to members of the commission with a sense of triumph... The matter

was so arranged that Pyatakov could have gone back to Moscow and showed that he had been very successful in reducing prices, but at the same time would have paid out money for a lot of worthless cast iron and enabled the Germans to give him very substantial rebates. . . . He got away with the same trick on some other mines, although I blocked this one.

Later, Littlepage observed several instances of industrial sabotage in the Urals, where, because of the work of a Trotskyite engineer named Kabakov, production in certain mines was deliberately kept down. In 1937, states Littlepage, Kabakov was "arrested on charges of industrial sabotage.... When I heard of his arrest, I was not surprised." Again, in 1937, Littlepage found further evidence of sabotage in Soviet industry directed personally by Pyatakov. The American engineer had reorganized certain valuable mines in southern Kazakhstan and left detailed written instructions for the Soviet workers to follow so as to ensure maximum production. "Well," writes Littlepage, "one of my last jobs in Russia, in 1937, was a hurry call to return to these same mines... Thousands of tons of rich ore already had been lost beyond recovery, and in a few more weeks, if nothing had been done meanwhile, the whole deposit might have been lost. I discovered that... a commission came in from Pyatakov's headquarters... My instructions had been thrown in the stove, and a system of mining introduced throughout those mines which was certain to cause the loss of a large part of the ore body in a few months." Littlepage found "flagrant examples of deliberate sabotage." Just before he left Russia, and after he had submitted a full written report on his findings to the Soviet authorities, many members of the Trotskyite sabotage ring were rounded up. Littlepage found that the saboteurs had used his instructions "as the basis for deliberately wrecking the plant" by doing exactly the opposite of what he had instructed. The saboteurs admitted, Littlepage stated in the *Saturday Evening Post* that "they had been drawn into a conspiracy against the Stalin regime by opposition Communists, who convinced them that they were strong enough to overthrow Stalin and his associates and seize power for themselves." (Sayers and Kahn 223-224; quotation verified against the original *SEP* article.)

At the January 1937 Trial Piatakov had testified that he had met Trotsky's son Leon Sedov in Berlin in 1931. From Sedov he had received instructions to give orders for equipment from two specific German firms, Borsig and Demag. These firms would then give kickbacks to Trotsky, who would use them in furtherance of his conspiracy within the Soviet Union.

PYATAKOV: Without any beating about the bush, Sedov said: "You realise, Yuri Leonidovich, that inasmuch as the fight has been resumed, money is needed. You can provide the necessary funds for waging the fight." He was hinting that my business position enabled me to set aside certain government funds, or, to put it bluntly, to steal.

Sedov said that only one thing was required of me, namely, that I should place as many orders as possible with two German firms, Borsig and Demag, and that he, Sedov, would arrange to receive the necessary sums from them, bearing in mind that I would not be particularly exacting as to prices. If this were deciphered it was clear that the additions to prices that would be made on the Soviet orders would pass wholly or in part into Trotsky's hands for his counterrevolutionary purposes. There the second conversation ended.

VYSHINSKY: Who named these firms?

PYATAKOV: Sedov.

VYSHINSKY: Did you not enquire why he named these firms particularly?

PYATAKOV: No. He said that he had connections with these firms.

VYSHINSKY: You had connections with other firms as well?

PYATAKOV: Yes, I had very many connections. But Sedov mentioned these firms, apparently because it was with them that he had connections.

VYSHINSKY: Consequently, it was clear to you that these particular firms were mentioned by Sedov for specific reasons?

PYATAKOV: Of course, that is what he said.

VYSHINSKY: And what was the nature of these connections?

PYATAKOV: I have just said that I do not know. He, Sedov, said that since I, Pyatakov, could not steal money, what was required of me was to place as many orders as possible with the firms I have mentioned.

VYSHINSKY: And those firms were named by Sedov himself?

PYATAKOV: Yes, and he added that he would secure the necessary sum from them.

VYSHINSKY: You did not ask how, through whom?

PYATAKOV: I considered it inconvenient to ask that.

VYSHINSKY: Were you personally connected with representatives of these firms in a conspiratorial way?

PYATAKOV: No. True, I had connections with the chief of the Demag firm, but I never permitted myself to speak of these subjects in order not to compromise myself and give myself away.

VYSHINSKY: And you did what Sedov advised?

PYATAKOV: Quite correct.

VYSHINSKY: Tell us, what form did this take?

PYATAKOV: It was done very simply, particularly since I had very many opportunities and a fairly large number of orders went to these firms.

VYSHINSKY: Perhaps orders were given to these firms because that was more advantageous to us?

PYATAKOV: No, not for that reason. As to Demag, it could be done very easily. Here it was a question of prices; it was paid more than,

generally speaking, it should have been paid.

VYSHINSKY: That means that you, Pyatakov, by virtue of an arrangement with Sedov, paid the Demag firm certain excessive sums at the expense of the Soviet government?

PYATAKOV: Unquestionably.

VYSHINSKY: And the other firm?

PYATAKOV: As regards the Borsig firm, a certain amount of effort was required.

VYSHINSKY: It was more advantageous to place the orders with other firms?

PYATAKOV: Demag in itself is a high-class firm and no effort was required in recommending that orders be placed with it.

VYSHINSKY: All that was required was to make a big addition in prices?

PYATAKOV: Yes. But as regards Borsig it was necessary to persuade and exercise pressure in order to have orders passed to this firm.

VYSHINSKY: Consequently, you also paid Borsig excessively at the expense of the Soviet government?

PYATAKOV: Yes.

VYSHINSKY: Consequently, from the standpoint of the interests of our industry and our state, it was not advantageous to place orders with Borsig, and it was advantageous to place orders with other firms, but nevertheless you, guided by criminal motives, deliberately placed orders with the Borsig firm.

PYATAKOV: Yes.

VYSHINSKY: By virtue of your agreement with Sedov.

PYATAKOV: With Sedov.

VYSHINSKY: And did not Sedov tell you that Trotsky had an arrangement with these firms?

PYATAKOV: Of course, that is what he began with. Only he did not say what exactly the conditions were, what the technique was, how it would be done.

VYSHINSKY: And what did he say?

PYATAKOV: He said that if I placed orders with these firms he would receive money from these firms.

VYSHINSKY: By agreement?

PYATAKOV: Yes. (1937 Trial 26-28)

In a few pages of his memoir Littlepage discusses this charge and declares that it was quite credible, as he had had experiences that partly confirmed Piatakoff's testimony.

I was particularly interested in that part of Piatakoff's confession which concerned his actions in Berlin in 1931, when he headed the purchasing commission to which I was assigned as technical adviser. It then became clear to me why the Russians around Piatakoff had not been pleased when I discovered that German concerns had substituted cast-iron for light steel in specifications for mine-hoists.

Piatakoff testified that anti-Stalin conspirators, headed by Leon Trotsky, exiled former Commissar of War, needed foreign currency to build up a fund for their work abroad. Inside Russia, with so many conspirators occupying important positions, he said it was easy to get funds, but Soviet paper money was no good abroad. Trotsky's son, Sedoff, according to Piatakoff, therefore worked out a scheme to get foreign currency without rousing suspicion.



At his trial Piatakoff testified that he met Sedoff in Berlin in 1931, by previous arrangement, in a restaurant near the Zoo. He added, "Sedoff said that only one thing was required of mee—namely, that I should place as many orders as possible with two German firms—and that he, Sedoff, would arrange to receive the necessary sums from them, bearing in mind that I would not be particularly exacting as to prices."

Questioned by the prosecutor, Piatakoff added that he was not required to steal or divert Soviet money, but only to place as many orders as possible with the firms mentioned. He said that he made no personal contacts of any kind with these firms, but that the matter was arranged by others without any further action on his part than throwing business to them.

Piatakoff testified: "It was done very simply, particularly since I had very many opportunities and a fairly large number of orders went to those firms." He added that it was easy to act without rousing suspicion in the case of one firm because that firm itself had a fine reputation, and it was simply a question of paying slightly higher prices than were necessary.

The following testimony then was given at the trial:

PIATAKOFF: But as regards the other firm, it was necessary to persuade and exercise pressure in order to have purchases placed with this firm.

PROSECUTOR: Consequenelt you also paid this firm excessively at the expense of the Soviet Government?

PIATAKOFF: Yes.

Piatakoff then went on to say that Sedoff did not tell him exactly what the conditions were, what the technique was for this transfer of money, but assured him that if Piatakoff placed orders with these firms Sedoff would receive money for the special fund.

This passage in Piatakoff's confession is a plausible explanation, in my opinion, of what was going on in Berlin in 1931, when my suspicions were roused because the Russians working with Piatakoff tried to induce me to approve the purchase of mine-hoists which were not only too expensive, but would have been useless in the mines for which they were intended. I had found it hard to believe that these men were ordinary grafters, as they did not seem to be the kind interested in feathering their own nests. But they had been seasoned political conspirators before the Revolution, and had taken risks of the same degree for the sake of their so-called cause.

Of course, I have no way of knowing whether the political conspiracy mentioned in all confessions at this trial was organized as the prisoners said it was. I never attempted to follow the ins and outs of political disputes in Russia, and wouldn't have known what anti-Government conspirators were talking about if they had tried to drag me into their affairs, which none of them ever did.

But I am absolutely sure that something queer was taking place in Berlin in 1931 during the period mentioned by Piatakoff at his trial. I have already said that my experiences at that time puzzled me for years, and that I couldn't work out any sensible explanation until I read Piatakoff's testimony in the Moscow newspapers at the time of his trial.

Another part of this testimony that some Moscow journalists found it hard to believe was that German firms should give commissions to Sedoff. But I have already mentioned in an earlier chapter that Russian émigrés were in the habit of collecting commissions from German firms for using their alleged influence to throw Soviet business in their direction. The managers of these German firms might consider that Sedoff was simply another Russian émigré, and would make the same kind of a deal with him that I know they had been making for years with other émigrés.

In such cases it was the usual procedure for German firms merely to work the promised commissions into their prices, and if the Russians accepted the prices nothing more was necessary. But in the case of these mine-hoists the commission must have been put so high that the firm had to juggle the specifications in order to clear its profit. When they did this my attention was attracted and the deal was blocked. Piatakoff testified that he had to exert pressure to have some orders passed, and I have told how pressure was put on me.

The testimony at this trial roused a great deal of scepticism abroad, and among foreign diplomats at Moscow. I talked with some Americans there who believed it was a frame-up from beginning to end. Well, I didn't attend the trial, but I did follow the evidence very closely, and it was printed verbatim in several languages. A great deal of the testimony about industrial sabotage sounded more probable to me than it did to some of the Moscow diplomats and correspondents. I know from my own experiences that a good deal of industrial sabotage was going on all the time in Soviet mines, and that some of it could hardly have occurred without the complicity of highly placed Communist managers.

My story is valuable, so far as this trial is concerned, only as regards the incident in Berlin. I have described what that was, and how, so far as I was concerned, Piatakoff's confession cleared up what had happened.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John D. Littlepage and Memaree Bess, *In Search of Soviet Gold*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1938. I have used the edition by George Harrap & Co. Ltd, London, 1939, 101-104.

In 1938 Littlepage published three articles in the *Saturday Evening Post* about his experiences in the USSR. In the first of the, "Red Wreckers in Russia," he outlined additional evidence of sabotage involving Piatakov.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Littlepage, "Red Wreckers in Russia." *SEP* January 1, 1938, 10-11, 54-55.

## Source Criticism

In 1979-1980 I undertook to check Littlepage's background in order to assess the reliability of his accounts in three articles in the *Saturday Evening Post* and in his memoir, *In Search of Soviet Gold*. I contacted a number of people who had known Littlepage, who had died in 1946. All attested to the fact that he was a technical expert who was not interested in politics and was conventionally anti-communist. He had taken the job in the Soviet Union because work was scarce during the Great Depression in the United States.

I interviewed Professor John Hazard of Columbia University, at the time the greatest expert on Soviet law outside the USSR. As a graduate student Hazard had lived with the Littlepage family in the Soviet Union and knew Littlepage personally. He confirmed the characterization of Littlepage as a technical man with little interest in any kind of politics and no interest in or sympathy with communism.

### Carroll G. Holmes

Holmes was another American engineer who went to work in Soviet industry in 1931. In an article in *Soviet Russia Today* Holmes wrote about his experiences with sabotage in the USSR. He documents the purchase of unnecessary German equipment at a machine-building foundry in Moscow.

I soon discovered that the whole equipment for this plant was being purchased under the same conditions, which could only be described as sabotage. In some cases machinery was ordered far in excess of any possible requirements — in other cases types of machinery they could have no use for at all. The chief engineer, who was an appointee of Piatakov's, then assistant commissar of Heavy Industry, backed the German consultant every time and my plans were rejected.

According to Holmes when he returned to the plant in 1934:

[t]hey were using the German equipment and methods I had opposed. The place was full of cranes and other equipment purchased at the

Demag firm in Germany far in excess of requirements.

In 1932 Holmes worked in Nizhnii Tagil in a huge locomotive and rail car build plant. He wrote:

Dozens of conveyors and large amounts of other material for which there was absolutely no need in this plant were being purchased in Germany.

Holmes continues to report that I.N. Smirnov, who was the assistant director of Glavtransmash, the central directorate for the production of transportation machinery, tried to offer him a contract which would have taken him back to Moscow and out of direct contact with the factory. Smirnov told him that "it will be necessary to hold back production of the Nizhnii Tagil plant" and wanted Holmes' collaboration to do this. Holmes knew there was something wrong since the shortage of railroad stock was constantly being made known in the USSR.

I.N. Smirnov was indeed a high official in the Commissariat of Heavy Industry, chief of the directorate of new construction (*nachal'nik upravliennia novopostroek*). He was also the head of the clandestine Trotskyist network within the USSR.

Back in Nizhnii Tagil in January 1935 Holmes witnessed the results of yet more sabotage, which he worked to correct. He then records this incident:

While I was working at Nizhnii Tagil Piatakov arrived one day to look over the plant. He was shown around by Mariasin, chief of construction. They stood next to me, where I was working on the castings that day, and I heard Piatakov say to Mariasin, "Get rid of that American!"

Holmes' articles, of which we have only given a brief notion here, is worth study. I have not been able to independently check up on Holmes himself. During the late 1930s rumors circulated among anticommunists that Holmes had somehow been coerced to write this article by the Soviet, but no evidence to support such accounts was cited. Like Piatakov's testimony at the Second Moscow Trial, Holmes's account is consistent with that of

Littlepage, a source that can be checked. Thus there seems to reason to doubt it.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Carroll G. Holmes, "I Knew Those Wreckers!" *Soviet Russia Today* April, 1938. Available at [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/holmes\\_wreckers\\_srt38.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/holmes_wreckers_srt38.pdf)

## Chapter 9. Soviet Evidence — Appeals, Budyonny's Letter, Zinoviev.

### Appeals of Moscow Trials Defendants

In September 1992 the texts of ten appeals for clemency of defendants in the three Moscow Trials were published in *Izvestiia*, by this time a regular capitalist newspaper. The appeals are those of Kamenev, Zinoviev, I.N. Smirnov, and Natan Lur'e, from the First Moscow Trial of August 1936; of Piatakov and Muralov, from the Second Moscow Trial of January 1937; and of Bukharin, Rykov, Krestinsky, and Iagoda from the Third Moscow Trial of March 1938. Bukharin and Rykov each composed two appeals.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>82</sup> "Rasskaz o desiati rasstrel'iannykh" ("Story of ten who were shot"), *Izvestiia* September 2 1992, p. 3.

In 2013 the uncorrected Russian text of the transcript of the Third Moscow Trial was published. Some other materials are included in this important book, including texts of the appeals from all the defendants who had been sentenced to death, plus one from Dr. D.D. Pletnev, who had been sentenced to 25 years in prison. The confessions of Bukharin (2 appeals), Rykov (2 appeals), Krestinsky, and Iagoda were republished along with those of V.I. Ivanov (2 appeals), M.A. Chernov, G.F. Grin'ko, I.A. Zelensky, A. Ikramov, F. Khodzhaev, V.F. Sharangovich, P.T. Zubarev, P.P. Bulanov, L.G. Levin, I.N. Kazakov, V.A. Maksimov-Dikovskiy (2 appeals), P.P. Kriuchkov, plus that by Pletnev. No appeal of Kh. Rakovsky, who had been sentenced to 20 years imprisonment, was published. Presumably he did not submit one.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>83</sup> *Protsess Bukharina 1938. Dokumenty*. M: Mezhdunaordniy Fond "Demokratiiia" i Fond Stivena Koena i Katriny Vanden Khiuvel, 2013, 737-750.

All the convicted men affirmed their guilt, often in the strongest terms.

Bukharin, short appeal:

I am deeply guilty before my socialist homeland, and **my crimes are beyond measure**. I acknowledge all their profundity, and all their shame.

Bukharin, long appeal:

I consider the sentence of the court to be just punishment for the very serious crimes that I have committed against my socialist homeland, her people, the party, and the government. In my soul there is not a single word of protest. **For my crimes I should be shot ten times over.**

I do not say, and would not dare to say, that I could atone for my guilt. The crimes I have committed are so monstrous, so enormous, that I could not atone for that guilt no matter what I did in the rest of my life.

Not out of fear of **death, on the threshold of which I stand as before a just retribution**, do I ask the presidium of the Supreme Soviet for mercy and clemency. I retain knowledge and abilities, my whole cerebral machine, whose activity was previously directed in a criminal direction.

The **counterrevolution** has been crushed and rendered impotent. I am glad that the proletarian power has smashed all **the criminal business** that saw in me its leader and **the leader of which I was in reality**.

I have translated Bukharin's appeals and put them online in English. They are online in Russian as well.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>84</sup> In English:

<https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/bukharinappeals.html> ; in Russian: <http://istmat.info/node/45780> (short appeal); <http://istmat.info/node/45781> (long appeal).

Zinoviev's appeals is notable for this phrase:

I beg you to believe me that **I am not an enemy any longer...**



I.N. Smirnov, leader of the Trotskyist underground in the USSR, renounced Trotsky:

At the end of my life I made an enormous mistake: I followed Trotsky, and for a number of years I struggled against the party as a Trotskyist.

This struggle, oppositional at first, became **counterrevolutionary...I admit my guilt before the party and the workers' state in full measure.** For a long time the party tried to help me correct my errors, but I stubbornly adhered in them. I deceived the part and behaved hypocritical ("two-facedly").

Natan Lur'e, convicted of plotting to murder some of the Soviet leaders, repeated his confession:

Following the assignment of Trotsky, the leader of the terrorist center, I wanted to deprive the Soviet people and the whole world proletariat of its leader Stalin and other leaders of the great Communist party. I repeatedly prepared terrorist acts against Voroshilov, Stalin, Ordzhonikidze, Kaganovich, and Zhdanov, **having armed myself for the fulfillment of this plan.**

Following the assignment of Franz Weitz, a representative of the Gestapo, I really was preparing the murder of Voroshilov.

Piatakov:

I disclosed everything that I know about **the counterrevolutionary activities of the Trotskyists**, including about my own activities.

### **Interpreting This Evidence**

These reiterated confessions of guilt are further evidence of guilt an the genuineness of the confessions made by these defendants during the Moscow Trials.

One could say: "Perhaps they were made insincerely. Perhaps these men reiterated their confessions of guilt in a final hope that doing so might

secure a prison sentence instead of the death penalty. Doesn't this possibility annul any evidentiary value these appeals might have?" It is important to respond to such questions, especially since they are so commonly voiced in respect to the Moscow Trials.

Any statement, made by anyone, at any time, *might* be a lie. It is invalid to *assume* that a statement is a lie unless there is some *evidence* that it is. Doing so would lead to an absurd conclusion: it would be that, *a priori*, *no* evidence for *any* historical event would ever be valid because, after all, "it might be a lie" (a fabrication, forgery, etc.), even though there were no evidence that it is. If no evidence of fabrication or fakery can be found, to take the position, "Because it *might* be a lie, therefore it is of no interest," is invalid. To do so would be to commit the logical fallacy of *petitio principii*, "begging the question" — assuming that which should be proven.

Yet undeniably there are many people who are incapable of objectively judging the evidence from the Moscow Trials, or indeed any evidence that tends to show that Stalin and the Soviet leadership of his day were *not* guilty of some alleged crime or other. The fact that this whole line of thinking is invalid does not mean that it is not also very common.

Materialists in any field of inquiry — the sciences are the clearest example — do not decide truth based upon evidence. History too is an evidence-based field of inquiry. It is an affront to materialism and the spirit of the Enlightenment itself to claim to decide upon the truth or falsehood of any hypothesis other than by the evidence. Yet when it comes to considering the historical events concerning Stalin and the Soviet Union of his time such as the Moscow Trials, many people give their biases free rein and make no serious attempt to be objective, to decide on the basis of evidence rather than according to one's preconceptions.

Let us try to state the problem before us in a more objective way. If one were to formulate the hypothesis: "Bukharin's appeal is insincere, does not represent a genuine confession of guilty," it now becomes clear that one must have evidence to support that hypothesis. A hypothesis that can't be supported by evidence does not require refutation. Such a hypothesis "falls of its own weight."

These appeals support the contrary hypothesis: "The defendants at the Moscow Trials were guilty of the crimes to which they confessed." Moreover, the evidence of the appeals is consistent with *all* the other evidence that exists concerning the Moscow Trials. There is no question of a "preponderance of evidence." There is no evidence whatever to support the hypothesis that the defendants were innocent of the crimes to which they confessed. The hypothesis that that the defendants were guilty is the only hypothesis that is supported by evidence.

### **Budyonny's Letter to Voroshilov**

On May 22, 1937, Mikhail Nikolaevich Tukhachevsky, one of the five Marshals of the Red Army, was arrested in Kuibyshev. Within two days he had begun to give detailed confessions about his conspiracy with many other military commanders, with civilian Party leaders, with the German General Staff, and — significantly — with Leon Trotsky, to overthrow the Stalin-ed Soviet government.

Tukhachevsky and seven other top military commanders were tried behind closed doors by a military tribunal on June, 11, 1937. They were found guilty and shot the next day. During the Khrushchev era Tukhachevsky and the other military commanders were officially "rehabilitated" — said to have been the victims of a frameup by Stalin and his supporters and declared innocent. From traitors they became regarded as heroes, a status they retain in Russia today.

Today we have a great deal of evidence that they were guilty. To discuss all this evidence, as well as the arguments and evidence that these men were innocent, would take a volume. In the present study we briefly discuss other important pieces of this evidence: the Mastny-Benes letter of February 9, 1937, and Genrikh Liushkov's statements to his Japanese handlers in previous chapters; and, in future chapters, the Arao document, and Nikolai Ustrialov's confession.

Another important piece of evidence is the report to Marshal Voroshilov, People's Commissar for Defense and a close Stalin associate, by Marshal Semion M. Budyonny, a member of the military court. This document is

still top-secret in Russia. It has been cited occasionally since the end of the USSR in excerpts only. In the ongoing effort by Russian officials to deny the guilty of these men — and here they follow the Soviet leadership since Khrushchev — those excerpts have been carefully chosen to distort the meaning of Budyonny's document through significant omission. The thrust and therefore presumed purpose of these omissions is to preserve the impression that Tukhachevsky and the others were innocent.

Some years ago I found a copy of the entire text of Budyonny's report to Voroshilov in the Volkogonov Papers in the Library of Congress. In 2012 Vladimir L. Bobrov and I published a lengthy article in which we study the document and review its dishonest use by previous writers. At present this article is only available in Russian.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>85</sup>Vladimir Bobrov and Grover Furr, "Marshal S.M. Budiennyi on the Tukhachevsky Trial. Impressions of an Eye-Witness" (in Russian). *Klio* (St. Petersburg) No. 2 (2012), 8-24.

According to Russian law the transcript of the trial itself ought to have been officially "declassified" because the 75 year period of classification has expired. Nevertheless, as of this writing (August 2015) the transcript is still inaccessible. No one is permitted to read it. But in 1990 one person did receive special permission from the KGB to read the entire transcript: Col. Viktor Alksnis, at the time a member of the Duma of the USSR.

Col. Alksnis went into the experience convinced that the commanders were innocent victims of a frameup. This had been a fundamental credo in his family for more than 50 years. General Jan Alksnis, Col. Alksnis' grandfather, had been a member of the military tribunal that tried Tukhachevsky and the others and that passed on them the death sentence. The following year General Alksnis was arrested, convicted, and executed as a member of a Latvian nationalist organization.

After studying the transcript, Alksnis changed his mind. On the basis of what he read, he now insists that the accused must have been guilty. He published articles in 2000 and again in 2009 about this experience.<sup>86</sup> In a 2002 interview with Vladimir Bobrov, Alksnis reiterated his certainty that

the generals were guilty. Alksnis said that the transcript is "a cannon aimed at the present" — that there are serious political consequences today in finding the generals guilty:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

It seems that there, in the '30s, there is some kind of cannon that could fire upon us, upon our own time. And then everything would turn out to have been completely different. And meanwhile... meanwhile a certain version of these events has been prepared and everything is being done to maintain this version.

<sup>86</sup> "Poslednii polkovnik imperii," *Elementy* No. 3 (2000). Now online at <http://arctogaia.org.ru/article/423> ; "Ia ne soglasen!" *Russkii Obozrevatel'* October 31, 2009. At <http://www.rus-obr.ru/opinions/4577>

### **The Tukhachevsky Affair and the Moscow Trials**

In the chapter on the Mastny-Benes letter we noted the importance of the Tukhachevsky Affair to the Moscow Trials. The military conspiracy figured prominently in the Third Moscow Trial, where a number of the defendants testified that that military figures were working in conjunction with their own conspiracies.

In the chapter on Liushkov's statements to his Japanese handlers we discussed Liushkov's matter-of-fact revelations that military conspiracies did exist in the Soviet Far East and that Marshall Bliukher had been in contact with Aleksei Rykov, one of the major defendants in the Third Moscow Trial.

In his letter to Voroshilov Budyonny briefly outlines the role of these civilian conspiracies, and especially the role of Trotsky, with the military conspiracy.

Concerning the bloc:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

In other words there were discussion about unsatisfactory leadership of the army, an incorrect treatment by part of the party leadership and government towards "well-known," "great" men of the Zinoviev-Trotsky and Right Opposition. The measures taken by the party and government in the collectivization of 1930-31 were also subjected to sharp criticism.

In 1934 from these "unprincipled talks" they went over to the unification of like-minded person and in his office Tukhachevsky stated that it was time to move from words to deeds and then and there it was decided that the recruitment of like-minded persons in the Red Army should become the business of their work. For this the most suitable persons in the army were the Trotskyites, Zinovievites, and Rights. It was decided to popularize these people in every way in social and military opinion and promote them to responsible positions in military, political, and economic spheres, and also in armament work and organizing mobilization.

As a political figure the conspirators were oriented towards Trotsky and his bloc, in which were included Trotskyites, Zinovievites, Rights, nationalists, Mensheviks, S-Rs, etc.

Concerning the opposition and its ties to Germany:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

Obviously, Kork suggested, the leaders of the conspiracy, specifically, Tukhachevsky, had hidden many matters from him, like, for example, Gamarnik's work in the East and the contact with Trotsky, Bukharin, and Rykov. However Kork confessed that he was aware all the same that the leaders of the military -fascist counterrevolutionary organization regarded the contact with Trotsky and the Rights as a temporary phenomenon. Concerning this Tukhachevsky had told Kork, in the sense that the Trotskyites, Rights et al. were only fellow

travelers for the time being, but when the military coup had taken place then he, Tukhachevsky, would play the role of Bonaparte. And on November 29, 1934, as Kork confessed, Tukhachevsky had in his apartment stated this completely and categorically, in the presence of all those who were there.

Budyonny continued:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

PRIMAKOV: And from this I draw the conclusion that we, the conspirators, imagined that we would be able to lead this huge country and the Soviet people and that to do this we would need a half-dozen or dozen Napoleons. We were Napoleons without an army. We were working for fascist Germany. But it is completely clear that of this half-dozen Napoleons there would remain only one Napoleon and that would be the one who most slavishly carried out the will of Hitler and of fascist Germany.

According to Budyonny Primakov and Putna said that they had special ties to Trotsky.

Primakov:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

Primakov very insistently denied the allegation that he had led a terrorist group against com. Voroshilov made up of Shmidt, Kuz'michev, and others, and likewise that he had supposedly before his arrest led a Leningrad terrorist group made up of Makshi, the former chief of the staff of the mechanized corps, and Ziuk. He denied that on the basis that supposedly **he, Primakov, had been entrusted by Trosky with a more serious task — to raise and armed insurrection in Leningrad, for which he, Primakov, must keep**

**himself strictly apart from any terrorist groups, break his ties with all Trotskyites and Rights, and at the same time win for himself authority and absolute trust from the party and the army command.**

Primakov:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

In connection with this special assignment of Trotsky's, Primakov had worked on the 25th cavalry division headed by the commander of the division Zybin. According to his words, Zybin had been supposed to meet Trotsky at the border once the rebels had taken over Leningrad.

Primakov:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

And I, Primakov, am the tail end of a so-called petty bourgeoisie with Trotskyite leanings, having passed through the school of Trotskyism from beginning to end in the course of 18 years. In this school the rejects of human society were concentrated. The Trotskyite opposition and the people who take part in it are the most evil and confirmed enemy.

Primakov

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

I do not wish that anyone in the world should fall into this fascist-Trotskyite pit.

I must say honestly and openly before the court that we have violated our Red Army oath and you should shoot and annihilate all of us like



vermin, criminals, and traitors to the Soviet people.

Putna:

[[cyrillic]]

### **Translated:**

Putna in his final word said: "Of course, I don't ask for any mercy from the court, but I do ask the court to consider that I was a commander of the RKKKA, during the revolution I fought for it. **Nevertheless, after the civil war I became a firm supporter of Trotsky. I thought: everything that Trotsky says is the truth. Obviously, I did not understand the Bolshevik essence of revolution although organically I felt that I was with the Bolsheviks, but nevertheless I remained a Trotskyite.** I never thought about where my Trotskyite position was going to lead me.

### **Did the Tukhachevsky Conspiracy Exist?**

Since Khrushchev, the Soviet leadership, and now the Russian leadership, have insisted that Tukhachevsky and the rest were innocent, victims of a frameup. That is, the situation is the same as that concerning the Moscow Trials, Trotsky's conspiracy with Germany and Japan, and many other events of Soviet history during the Stalin period.

That mainstream Soviet, Russian, and Western history of the Stalin period is seriously and deliberately falsified there can be no doubt. We have published about this in the past and there is much more to do. In any case, the question history is not "What is the consensus of experts?" Much less is it: "What is the consensus of anti-Stalin experts?" For all honest researchers the question is: "What is the evidence?"

We have cited only a tiny quantity of the evidence now available that Tukhachevsky and the rest were guilty. Their testimony interlocks with that of the Moscow Trials and the allegations of Trotsky's ties both to the Soviet-based conspiracies and to this collaboration with Germany. There is

no evidence that this material has been faked, and every reason to conclude that it is valid.

### **Zinoviev's Statements of 1935-1936**

On January 15-16, 1935, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and some of their Moscow-based supporters were put on trial for maintaining a clandestine "center" of oppositionists who discussed politics and remained in communication with a similar center in Leningrad. The Leningrad center had murdered Sergei M. Kirov on December 1, 1934. A number of its arrested members had named Zinoviev and Kamenev as their leaders, while not yet implicating them in the murder itself.

On January 13, 1935, just *before* the trial took place, Zinoviev wrote a statement more than 3,000 words in length in which he confessed that there was indeed a "center." This statement was first published in the official journal *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* No. 7, 1989, and republished in the collection *Reabilitatsiia. Politicheskie Protessy 30-50-kh godov* in 1991.

In it, Zinoviev stated the following:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

I stated during the investigation that since 1929 we in Moscow have had no center of former "Zinovievites." And I have often thought about this: What kind of a "center" is this — it is simply Zinoviev, plus Kamenev, plus Evdokimov, plus two or three more persons. And they practically never see each other any more and no longer carry out any systematic antiparty fractional work.

But, in fact, this was a center.

The remaining cadres of former "Zinovievites" regarded it as such. They either did not know how to really dissolve their group into the Party or did not want to do so (especially the remaining "Leningradists").

All the other antiparty groups and grouplets also regarded it as such.  
...All the antiparty elements once against set forth our candidacies [in discussions about the Party leadership — GF] (R-PP 160-161)

In an interrogation of December 22, 1934, Zinoviev had denied any continued oppositional activity and any contact with other oppositional centers. Zinoviev knew he was obliged, like other Party members, to inform the Party about oppositional centers but had not done so. As a result, at the January 1935 trial Zinoviev was sentenced to five years imprisonment.

On April 14, 1935, Zinoviev wrote a letter to Stalin, parts of which were published in 1989. In it, Zinoviev wrote as follows:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

Now I want to achieve one thing: that about this last period of my life it be said that I recognized the whole horror of what has happened, repented everything, told the Soviet power absolutely everything that I know, broke with everything and everyone who was against the part, and was prepared to do anything, anything, to prove my sincerity.

My soul burns with one desire: to prove to you that **I am no longer an enemy**. There is nothing that I would not do in order to prove this...I have come to the point where I stare fixedly and for a long time at your portrait and those of other Politburo members in the newspapers with the thought: Dear friends, please look into my soul, do you not see that **I am no longer your enemy**, that I am yours body and soul, that I have understood everything, that I am prepared to do anything to earn forgiveness and mercy...<sup>87</sup> (R-PP 184)

<sup>87</sup> Originally published in *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* 8 (1989), 89-90.

The highlighted phrase is the same one Zinoviev later used in his appeal of his death sentence, which we have quoted above.

In 1936 the investigation into the Kirov murder and been reopened. By July some members of Zinoviev's group were accusing hum of involvement in Kirov's murder. Arch Getty describes some ensuing parts of the investigation as follows:

By 23 July, Kamenev was admitting membership in a counterrevolutionary center that planned terror, but he denied being one of the organizers; he implicated Zinoviev as being closer to the matter. Three days later Zinoviev was confronted by one of his followers, Karev, who directly accused him. Zinoviev asked that the interrogation be stopped because he wanted to make a statement that, in the event, amounted to a full confession of organizing assassination and terror. (Getty Yezhov, 191)

Zinoviev went on to confess to direct participation in the planning of Kirov's murder and that of other Soviet leaders.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

I was indeed a member of the united Trotskyist-Zinovievist center considered as its chief task the murder of leaders of the VKP)b) and, first and foremost, the murder of Stalin and Kirov. The center was connected with Trotsky through its members I.N. Smirnov and Mrachkovsky. Direct instructions from Trotsky for the preparation of Stalin's murder were received by Smirnov.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Getty & Naumov, 251-252; *Izv. TsK KPSS* (1989) 101; R-PP 198.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

I also confess that Bakaev and Karev, members of the organization, were entrusted by me, in the name of the united center, with the organization of terrorist acts against Stalin in Moscow and Kirov in Leningrad.

These instructions by me were given in Il'inskoe in the fall of 1932.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Zinoviev. Transcript of interrogation of July 23-25, 1936; translation by Getty & Naumov, 232 (they omit the words "in Il'inskoe"); *Izv. TsK KPSS* 8 (1989) 104; R-PP 199.

Zinoviev gave more details in other pretrial confessions — we have only one of them at present — and at the August 1936 First Moscow Trial.

By this point Zinoviev had proven himself to be completely untrustworthy. In his December 1934 interrogation he had denied any oppositional activity. Exposed by members of his group he had only partially confessed at the January 1935 trial. In letters to Stalin in April and May 1935 he had sworn that he had revealed everything and had completely repented. His July and August 1936 confessions proved that these statements too were lies.

Zinoviev's duplicity had gone even further. During the eighteen months of his imprisonment prior to his confession of July-August 1936 he had composed a 540-page typescript in which he claimed to confess all of his guilt towards the Party. It was intended to be a demonstration of the thoroughness with which he had supposedly examined his anti-Party actions and repented of them.

We have obtained and studied this lengthy document. In it Zinoviev says nothing about his involvement in the planning of Kirov's murder and plans for future assassinations. He says nothing about the secret bloc with the Trotskyists and the Rights, about which we know from the Sedov-Trotsky correspondence in the Harvard Trotsky Archive. In essence this is a 540-page attempt by Zinoviev to cover up his involvement in the block of oppositionists and in Kirov's murder by "confessing" at great length to a host of lesser misdeeds.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>89</sup>"Zasluzhennyi prigovor."

Ironically, in his post-conviction appeal of his death sentence, dated August 24, 1936, 4:30 a.m., Zinoviev again used the same phrase — "I am no longer an enemy" — that he had used in his April 1935 letter to Stalin.

Zinoviev had nothing to lose by saying it. But Stalin would have been a fool to believe him this time.

In addition to evidence of his own guilt Zinoviev's confessions provide evidence of Trotsky's involvement in Kirov's murder and in other planned assassinations — "terror." When Trotsky indignantly denied this he also denied the existence of any bloc with the Zinovievites. Like Zinoviev, Trotsky was lying too.

### **Conclusion: The Moscow Trials and the Evidence**

The appeals by the Moscow Trials defendants, Budyonny's letter to Voroshilov, and Zinoviev's statements and pretrial confessions are consistent with all the other evidence we have reviewed in our study of the Moscow Trials. They all provide evidence that supports the hypothesis that the defendants' confessions of guilt at these trials were truthful.

## Chapter 10. Non-Soviet — Soviet Evidence — The Arao Document

### Non-Soviet / Soviet Evidence

#### The Arao Document

Nikita Khrushchev had Marshal Tukhachevsky "rehabilitated" in 1957. According to the information now public the sentence passed by the Military Collegium of the Soviet Supreme Court on June 11, 1937 was set aside on January 31, 1957. All the executed military leaders were reinstated in their Party membership by the Party Control Commission on February 27, 1957. (Viktorov 234)

Normally there was some kind of study or report prepared beforehand — usually an appeal, or "Protest" by the Soviet Prosecutor, and a following report by the Supreme Court. Normally too, the Soviet Prosecutor's "Protest" was based on some kind of investigation. Viktorov gives a very general idea of what kind of investigation took place in 1956. But we can't tell much about it.

It's clear that there had been a decision to exculpate the military leaders beforehand, and that the decision was a political one. We have the decree of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU posthumously reinstating Tukhachevsky and the others tried with him to their Party membership. The "Molotov Commission" set up in 1956 by Khrushchev evidently in order to officially rehabilitate the Tukhachevsky defendants among others, was sharply divided. Within weeks after it ceased its operation Molotov, Malenkov, and Kaganovich tried to oust Khrushchev but failed and were ousted themselves instead.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>90</sup> The documents available related to the "Molotov Commission" are published in Razdel III (Section 3) of RKEB 2, 150-274.

For reasons never made clear, in the months before the 22<sup>nd</sup> Party Congress in 1961 Khrushchev decided to sponsor another investigative report on the

Tukhachevsky case. A commission was established under the chairmanship of Nikolai M. Shvernik, an Old Bolshevik of working-class origins who had spent most of his Party career as a trade union bureaucrat and was at the time the Chairman of the Part Control Commission. It is possible that Khrushchev was hoping that Shvernik's researchers would discover some "smoking gun" evidence of, perhaps, a frameup of the military men. If so, he was disappointed. The commission found nothing of the kind. This may account for the fact that the report was not published during either Khrushchev's or Gorbachev's tenure.

Shvernik's Commission issued a report addressed to Khrushchev, to which Shvernik added the following note:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

To Comrade N.S. Khrushchev. I am sending to you a report concerning the verification of the accusations presented in 1937 by judicial and party organs against comrades Tukhachevsky M.N., Iakir I.E., Uborevich I.P. and other military figures, of treason to the motherland, terror, and military conspiracy.

The materials about the causes and conditions in which the case against com. Tukhachevsky M.N. and other prominent military figures arose, have been studied by a Commission created by the Presidium of the CC CPSU by decision of January 5, 1961, and May 6, 1961. N. Shvernik, June 26, 1964.

## **The Arao Document**

It's reasonable to suppose that the purpose of the Shvernik commission was to uncover evidence that would justify the rehabilitation of the Party members convicted in the three public Moscow trials and the Military purges. The mere fact of such a study implies that whatever reports had been prepared in 1956 for the official "rehabilitations" had been lacking in such evidence. No doubt the commission had the additional goals of further



blackening Stalin's name and, especially, the names of his leading supporters who were still alive — people like Molotov, Kaganovich, and Voroshilov.

The Commission duly reached the predetermined conclusion that Tukhachevsky and those tried and executed with him were innocent. But rather than proving their innocence, the report contained evidence that contradicted it. One bit of such evidence is the "Arao document."

Here is what we know of it, from the 1964 "Shvernik" report to Khrushchev, first published in 1993.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

(c) Actions of Japanese intelligence and its role in the Tukhachevsky "case"

In the course of verifying the "case" of Tukhachevsky an important document was discovered in the Central State Archive of the Soviet Army, a special communication of the 3<sup>rd</sup> department of the GUGB [Main Directorate for State Security] of the NKVD [People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs] of the USSR, which had been sent by Ezhov to Voroshilov, the People's Commissar of Defense, with the annotation "personal," on April 20, 1937, that is at the time immediately before the arrests of the major Soviet military commanders. ... We reproduce here this special communication in the form in which it reached Voroshilov:

#### SPECIAL COMMUNICATION

The 3rd department of the GUGB has photographed a document in the Japanese language that was in transit from Poland to Japan by diplomatic pouch and that originated with the Japanese military attaché to Poland, Savada Sigeru, addressed personally to the director of the Main department of the Japanese General Staff Nakazima Tetsudzo.

The letter is written in the hand of Arao, aide to the military attaché in Poland.

The text of the document is as follows:

"Concerning the establishment of ties with a prominent Soviet figure.

12 April 1937

The Military Attaché in Poland Savada Sigeru.

On the matter mentioned in the title, we have been successful in establishing contact with a secret emissary of Marshal of the Red Army Tukhachevsky.

The essence of the conversation concluded that there should be a discussion. (2 characters and one sign in- decipherable) concerning the secret emissary from the Red Army No. 304 who is known to you."

The special communication is signed by the assistant head of the 3<sup>rd</sup> section of the GUGB NKVD USSR, Commissar of State Security 3<sup>rd</sup> class Minaev. Neither the photograph that accompanied this document nor the original of the translation have been discovered in the archive of the NKVD.

The authors of the Shvernik report went on to claim that they believed this document was a "provocation," faked to incriminate Tukhachevsky.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

This disinformation was passed by one means or another to the Soviet organs [of security — GF] by Japanese intelligence, perhaps in cooperation with Polish Intelligence, or perhaps with the Germans.

The Arao Document evidently presented the researchers on Shvernik's Commission with a considerable problem. Here was documentary evidence

that Tukhachevsky was in contact with Japanese intelligence — was, in fact, a Japanese spy!

The Commission attempted damage control to discredit their discovery. In 1937 the document had been turned over to a prisoner, a certain R.N. Kim, an NKVD "worker" — his former job was not specified — who had been himself arrested as a Japanese spy. The whole sequence of events merits a careful look.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

Since the quality of the photographic copy of the document was poor and the Foreign Section of the NKVD, where it had been sent for the decoding of the document, could not accomplish this work, the Assistant Chief of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Office of the GUGB Minaev-Tsikanovskii proposed to M.E. Sokolov, who during that period worked as the chief of the 7<sup>th</sup> section of this Office, to take the document to the Lefortovo prison to R.N. Kim, an arrested employee of the Foreign Section of the NKVD who was imprisoned there, and to assign him, as a qualified expert in the Japanese language, to decode the document. Kim had been arrested on April 2, 1937, under suspicion of espionage for Japan and the investigation of his case was led by the staff of the section headed by Sokolov.

Sokolov has now informed the CC of the CPSU that Kim succeeded in decoding this poorly photographed document after two or three visits. Kim was very excited when he informed Sokolov that in the document Marshal Tukhachevsky is mentioned as a foreign spy. Sokolov confirms that the contents of the special communication that was sent to Voroshilov agrees with the contents of the translation done by Kim. Moreover, at that time Sokolov and other coworkers who knew the document's contents were convinced that it was genuine. Now, however, Sokolov considers that they were then deeply mistaken and that the document was obviously disinformation by Polish or Japanese intelligence who counted upon our seizing upon this forgery.

There are some issues to consider here.

\* Why would a document of this importance be turned over to a suspected Japanese spy for a reliable translation? If Kim had in fact been a Japanese agent, the possibilities this presented to him for creating a havoc of distrust within the Soviet leadership would have been immense. And were there in truth no experts in the Japanese language who were at liberty, and *not* under suspicion of being Japanese agents, to whom the NKVD could have turned?

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

In his explanation to the C of the CPSU Kim, who is now living in Moscow, confirms that in reality in April 1937 Sokolov, referring to an order by People's Commissar Ezhov, assigned him to translate from the Japanese a document that none of the employees of the GUGB, because their knowledge of the Japanese language was weak, could read because of the defective nature of the photograph. Kim was promised that if he decoded the document, that would have a positive effect on his fate.

\* The Commission claims that it located and questioned Kim, living in Moscow in the early 1960s. Kim supposedly told them that he had been given the document at the instruction of Ezhov along with an unspecific promise that it would "affect his fate in a positive manner."

The Kim of 1962, however, did not testify that he had been pressured to concoct a false reading of the document. Instead he claimed that he had doubted the genuineness of the document from the first, and had written a note suggesting that this was Japanese disinformation.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

Kim asserts that after he had translated the document he also wrote a conclusion in which he deduced that the document had been passed to us by the Japanese. This conclusion cannot be found in the archives. The document that Kim dealt with was composed, in his own words, of one page and was written on the official form of the military attaché in the handwriting of the Assistant Military Attaché in Poland Arao (Kim knew this handwriting well since he had previously read a series of documents written by Arao). The document stated that a document had been sent to the General Staff concerning the fact that contact had been established with Marshal Tukhachevsky. Kim reported all these facts to the CC of the CPSU before the text of the special report had been presented to him.

This story provides a possible avenue of refutation of the "Arao document." Kim, the Japanese language expert, wrote that it was a fake, disinformation (though not a forgery — see below), but the NKVD did not pass this on.

That created an opportunity for placing the blame on Ezhov, who had supposedly directed that it be given to a person who might be amenable to concluding whatever Ezhov wanted. Blaming Ezhov would have allowed for blaming Stalin, Khrushchev's main target, since Khrushchev had claimed that Ezhov did nothing without checking with Stalin first. But Kim instead wrote a note exculpating Tukhachevsky. In this scenario Ezhov did not pass Kim's note along to the Politburo, but also failed to punish Kim for coming to the "wrong" conclusion.

A further difficulty in the Shvernik Commission's discussion of the document is that GUGB officer Sokolov, who had brought the Arao document to Kim, knew nothing about Kim's "note" in the early 1960s. For if he had known, he would never have given the testimony that he did give to the Commission.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

Sokolov confirms that the contents of the special communication that was sent to Voroshilov agrees with the contents of the translation done

by Kim. Moreover, at that time Sokolov and other coworkers who knew the document's contents were convinced that it was genuine.

Sokolov, who had supposedly dealt with Kim directly, could not have believed the document was genuine in 1937 if Kim really had written a note saying that he suspected the document was phony, disinformation. Obviously Sokolov's view about the document *bona fides* would have come from Kim. But Sokolov and his coworkers did believe in April 1937 that it was genuine. Therefore, at that time Kim must have believed that too.

Moreover, how could Kim, a man imprisoned for suspected espionage for Japan, have gotten out of prison to "communicate these matters to the Central Committee" — much less "before he had been presented with the text"? If he had done this, how could Sokolov and his coworkers not have known about all this?

The Shvernik Commission report states that Kim was able to identify the handwriting of the document as that of Arao because "he had previously read a series of documents written by Arao." The Assistant Military Attaché of Japan to Poland would not have been writing to the Soviets at all, much less in handwritten Japanese. So we can conclude that Soviet intelligence had intercepted other handwritten documents by Arao, intended for delivery to Japan, before this, and had given them to the same R.N. Kim to translate. This specific Arao Document was indeed a bombshell, or so it appears to us today. But it must have been far from the first document by Arao that Soviet intelligence had received.

This means that Kim's story of the early '60s about his "note" was itself a lie. Everyone concerned — Kim, Sokolov, and no doubt Ezhov and Voroshilov — had believed the note was genuine.

The Commission chose not to confront these problems, and dismissed the Arao Document as follows:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

After evaluation of the available Japanese materials it is possible to make the following deductions.

First: we must consider the Arao Document that Ezhov sent to Voroshilov as a provocation. This disinformation was passed by one means or another to the Soviet organs by Japanese intelligence, perhaps in cooperation with Polish intelligence, and possibly also with German intelligence.

The possibility cannot be excluded that the document was fabricated by the NKVD with a directly provocational purpose or that the secret sender, if he called himself that in Warsaw, was in reality an NKVD agent.

Second, despite the dubious value as evidence against Tukhachevsky the Arao Document that reached Ezhov, Voroshilov, and probably Stalin also, could have been taken under consideration by them and in April — May 1937 could have played a certain role in the formation of accusations against Tukhachevsky.

At the same time, the fact that during the investigation the question about the "secret representative of Tukhachevsky" and about his ties with Japanese intelligence played no role in the interrogations could be explained precisely by the implausibility of this document. In the [Tukhachevsky Affair] case file there is neither the document itself nor a copy of it. No operational work was developed concerning this seized Japanese document; it was used against Tukhachevsky in the same form in which it existed in the hands of the NKVD worker.

According to the Commission's analysis, the Document was some kind of provocation by either Japanese, Polish, or German intelligence, or some combination of them, or possibly even an NKVD forgery — despite Kim's attestation that he recognized Arao's handwriting.

The Commission then contradicted itself by claiming that the fact the document was not used in the investigation and prosecution of Tukhachevsky at all and that this could be explained by "precisely the improbability of this document" — and *then* claims that "it was used against

Tukhachevsky." but if the case against Tukhachevsky was intentionally fabricated from the beginning, the "improbability" of the document — assuming that it was "improbable" — would not have been an issue. Furthermore, NKVD man Sokolov, who dealt with Kim, thought it was genuine.

We can best make sense of all the contradictions in the Shvernik Commission's report about the Arao Document by recognizing that its editors were trying to find a reason to dismiss this document, since they had been tasked to find evidence to exonerate Tukhachevsky and the rest. One hypothesis would be that those who compiled the report did not wish to conceal from their powerful superiors this document that their researchers had uncovered, so they supplied an explanation that would permit their superiors to disregard it, if they so wished.

Since the Commission's report informs us that Voroshilov had seen the document and, therefore, Stalin knew about it too, the most likely reason it was not used in the prosecution of Tukhachevsky is that it was not needed — other evidence was available. We can't know for certain, since the Tukhachevsky case file (*delo*), like those of all the other military defendants, has never been declassified and only selected researchers have been able to see even parts of it. But the fact that it was not used in the case against Tukhachevsky does not imply anything about whether it was genuine or not.

We do not know whether the actual Arao Document is still extant somewhere. We know about it only from the Shvernik Report. Either it is among the Tukhachevsky investigation materials that are still top-secret in Russia today, or it has been destroyed. It is not mentioned by Iulia Kantor, author of three books on Tukhachevsky, who was who was given special permission by the Marshal's family family to see his investigative file and in whose works a great deal of evidence pointing not towards Tukhachevsky's Innocence, but towards his guilt, may be found. Kantor herself, with no pretense of objectivity, firmly takes the position that all the military commanders were innocent victims of a frame-up.

The Arao Document represents good evidence that Tukhachevsky was in direct contact with the Japanese military figures in Poland. The attempted



refutation of the Document contained in that report is filled with contradictions and should be discarded.

We have documented in another chapter that the Tukhachevsky Affair features prominently in the Third Moscow Trial. We have a great deal of documentary evidence that the Tukhachevsky conspiracy did exist. This evidence is relevant to our task of verifying the Moscow Trials testimony from other, independent sources.

## **Chapter 11. Soviet Evidence — Ustrialov's Confession**

### **Ustrialov on Tukhachevsky's Contacts with the Japanese**

The consideration of Nikolai Ustrialov's confession requires some explanation. Ustrialov's is a Soviet — NKVD confession-interrogation. This will raise in the minds of some readers the possibility that Ustrialov might have been "forced" to falsely confess that these confessions might be fabrications, and so on.

In reality, there is no evidence that this is the case and much evidence against it. Therefore, it may be useful to examine this issue here.

Ustrialov's confession cannot have been an attempt to "frame" Tukhachevsky or even to get additional evidence against him, since by the date it was given — July 14, 1937 — Tukhachevsky, executed on June 12, 1937, had been dead for more than a month.

Might it be an attempt to "frame," or at least get more evidence against, Bukharin and the Rights? As we shall see, they are in fact mentioned in the confession. But this is impossible for a number of reasons:

- The allusions to Bukharin and the Rights are all hearsay. Ustrialov simply reported what one Japanese journalist-spy who called himself Nakamura had told him. Nakamura had no direct knowledge about the Rights. He just repeated what he had been told by still other parties. Such testimony would have been useless in any criminal trial, including in the USSR in the 1930s.
- Why would the NKVD or prosecution fabricate material that could not be used? When, during the Ezhovshchina or "Great Terror" the NKVD fabricated confessions they did so to falsely incriminate innocent people. In this case they would have fabricated direct testimony, forced Ustrialov to say that he had direct knowledge of the Rights' desires to overthrow the Soviet government, make deals with Japan and Germany, and so on. But they did not do that.

- Liudmila A. Bystriantseva, the expert on Ustrialov's life and thought who edited and introduced this confession, is convinced that it is genuine despite the fact that it contradicts the reigning historical paradigm according to which Tukhachevsky et al. were innocent, "framed" by Stalin, Ezhov, or both. At the end of this chapter we will review what she says.
- The confession might well be useful to the NKVD for further investigation. But that would mean that the investigators were in fact trying to discover the truth. That, in turn, would mean that they did not fabricate Ustrialov's confession.
- Ustrialov's confession is consistent with the Soviet charges against Tukhachevsky and against the Rights. We now have good corroborative evidence, including non-Soviet evidence, that these charges were accurate. The prevailing paradigm of the Moscow Trials and the Tukhachevsky Affair cannot account for this evidence. Therefore, the prevailing paradigm must be discarded.

All this suggests that the confession is genuine. We have no grounds to think that it might be a fabrication by the investigators or the prosecution, and every reason to think it was not. And the confession itself is very interesting — in fact, a bombshell. Not surprisingly, it has been virtually ignored by those who are committed not to discovering the truth but to what I have elsewhere called the "anti-Stalin paradigm" of Soviet history.

These are our grounds for including this somewhat lengthy discussion of Ustrialov's confession here.

\*\*\*

Nikolai Vasil'evich Ustrialov was a Russian philosopher who had taught law at Moscow University during World War I. He had been a member of the Kadet (Constitutional Democrat) Party, the leading party of businessmen and intellectuals. During the Civil War he supported the White generals Kolchak and Denikin against the Bolsheviks.

Eventually he settled in Harbin, China, and worked for the China East Railroad, jointly owned by China and then USSR. During his years of exile he visited Japan several times and met with Japanese government figures.

These visits became the focus of interest. when the railroad was sold to Japan in 1935 Ustrialov returned to the USSR with other Russian nationals.

Once back in the USSR Ustrialov was hired to teach as a professor economic geography at two universities in Moscow. Clearly Soviet authorities believed that he had accepted the Bolshevik Revolution and his stated desire to support the USSR for nationalist reasons.

Ustrialov was arrested on June 6, 1937.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

In the USSR he worked as a professor of Economic Geography at the Moscow Institute of Transport Engineers and for a time at Moscow State University. But on June 6, 1937, he was arrested by the NKVD of the USSR, and on September 14, 1937, he was sentenced to be shot by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR for "espionage, counterrevolutionary activity and anti-Soviet agitation" (articles 58-1, 58-8 and 58-11 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Republic). The sentence was carried out on the same day in Moscow.

From another source we learn that Ustrialov pled guilty at trial to espionage for Japan.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

Ustrialov was declared guilty by the court in that "since 1928 he has been an agent of Japanese intelligence and has carried out espionage. In 1935 he established counterrevolutionary contact with Tukhachevsky, from whom he learned about the preparation of terrorist acts against the leaders of the VKP(b) and the Soviet government and about contact with the anti-Soviet terrorist organization of the Rights. In addition Ustrialov conducted active counterrevolutionary propaganda and slandered the leadership of the

VKP(b)" (from the sentence, p. 52). "The sentence against Ustrialov N.V. was carried out the same day (p. 53)." ... The accusation of espionage and other counterrevolutionary activity was based solely on Ustrialov's confessions, which he gave during the preliminary investigation and confirmed at trial.

Ustrialov was himself convicted of espionage for Japan. This constitutes our main interest in him here. It's important to note, however, that Ustrialov did not confess to everything his interrogator accused him of. Specifically, he rejected the accusation that he had returned to the USSR at the instruction of the Japanese.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

QUESTION: It is useless for you to reduce your activity only to counterrevolutionary propaganda. The investigation is aware that you arrived in the USSR upon the direct proposal of Japanese intelligence with special assignments — do you admit this?

ANSWER: I do not admit this.

<sup>91</sup> Bystriantseva, L.A. "Ustremlenie k istine. Protokol doporosa N.V. Ustrialova." *Klio* (St. Petersburg) No. 1 (1999), 246-256.

This kind of differentiated confession — confession of guilt to some charges while rejecting other charges — suggests an effort on the part of the defendant to be truthful at least about the charges to which the defendant has confessed guilt.

Bystriantseva argues convincingly that Ustrialov did not "spy" the ordinary sense of the word, and in the sense that the NKVD interrogator at first accused him of. But she fails to point out the obvious: that Ustrialov's discussion with the Japanese agent Nakamura (see below) itself constituted a form of espionage — that is, secret collaboration with a hostile foreign power — if not reported to the authorities.

The transcript of one of his interrogations, that of July 14, 1937, was published in 1999. Here we quote only those sections of the interview that are directly relevant to the question of Japanese collaboration.

In this interrogation Ustrialov outlined the contents of a conversation he had with Tukhachevsky at Tukhachevsky's own home sometime in the autumn, probably September, of 1936. He then summarizes a ninety-minute discussion he had in late December 1936 with a Japanese agent, one Nakamura, who was traveling under journalistic cover.

We'll comment on these two sections of Ustrialov's confession separately. After that, we'll consider issues of authenticity.

### **Part One. Autumn 1936: Ustrialov discusses his talk with Marshal Tukhachevsky**

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

QUESTION: Describe the contents of this conversation.

ANSWER: I will try to present our conversation word for word insofar as I am able to remember it. Tukhachevsky first touched upon the main problems of our politics and expressed interest in my point of view. I told him that, in my opinion, in the current historic situation, Soviet foreign policy is being conducted upon the only possible line, if we bear in mind the orientation toward peace. I felt that my companion did not share this point of view. In very careful, laconic, roundabout terms, he began to say that the orientation toward peace would require some mitigation of our relations with Germany, which now poison the whole international atmosphere.

I immediately remarked that we are not to blame for the tensions in these relations; that I firmly believed that as long as fascism is in power in Germany no improvement of our relations is possible.

Expansion to the East is the cornerstone of Hitler's foreign policy. "Yes, but to the East of Germany is Poland — replied Tukhachevsky. — Territorial questions allow for a variety of solutions." From his further, although cautious, statements it turned out that he had a very different picture of the European equilibrium than the one that now exists. In his words the well-known concept of the so-called "German orientation" was revived, about which so much was said and written at one time.

It was clear at whose expense in such a case the settlement of the disputed territorial problems was conceived. "Not every Polish campaign ended in a Riga Treaty. History also knows the 'Congress of Vienna.'"

This aphorism by my interlocutor was a more than clear hint.

I — "But our contradictions with Germany are not limited to territorial problems. We can not lose sight of the profound opposition of our social and political regimes."

Tukhachevsky — "Yes, of course, but regimes develop, they evolve.<sup>92</sup> In politics we need flexibility. Every conflict is the beginning of the agreement."

[p. 253]

I — "However, there are basic, fundamental conditions which constitute the essence of the political system. With us these conditions are defined by the program of the ruling party."

Tukhachevsky — "Yes, but besides the program there are people. The party is people. In the Party there are **realist politicians**<sup>93</sup>, and the future belongs to them."

From his further remarks it was clear that he was not only "theorizing," but already felt a certain amount of ground under his feet. The "**realist politicians**" in the Party were not a fiction but a reality. Not fiction either were the words about a new course towards Germany. From

these words, somewhat disjointed but still quite clear, it was not hard for me to understand the basic political aspirations of my interlocutor. It only remained for me to ask him one question about the specific domestic program of those "**realist politicians**" in the Party that he had mentioned. To this question Tukhachevsky replied that their internal political program was based on the need to smooth the acuteness of the contradictions between the Soviet state and the outside world, even at the cost of a certain retreat from the political line currently being carried out by the Party. Since his lessening of contradictions is dictated by the situation — it was necessary to take this path.

After this response I finally realized that under the nickname of "**realist politicians**" Tukhachevsky had in mind the Right opposition in the party, the Bukharin-Rykov group.

<sup>92</sup> Ustrialov was a central figure in the "Smenovekhist" movement. He believed that the USSR would "evolve" towards a more bourgeois capitalist form of state. This fact may explain Tukhachevsky's interest in him. According to Bystriantseva, Ustrialov had abandoned these views by the mid-1930s, but he was — and is — still famous for them.

<sup>93</sup> I have put the phrase "realist politicians" in boldface in both Russian and English in order to draw the reader's attention to it.

## **Analysis**

A significant point for our purposes is that the main subject of Ustrialov's interrogation was Marshal Tukhachevsky. At the date of the interrogation, July 14, 1937, Tukhachevsky and the seven other high-ranking military leaders who had been arrested with him had all been tried and executed. What would have been the purpose of fabricating an interrogation that implicated a person already dead and other minor figures some of whom, as we shall see, were never repressed?

Ustrialov had been arrested on June 6, 1937, a few days before the trial and execution of Tukhachevsky and the rest and during the continuing



investigation of the military conspiracy. We don't know what led to Ustrialov's arrest.

As an attempt to investigate networks of Japanese espionage the interrogation makes perfect sense. The NKVD was also gathering further information on the Rights, on their connection to the military conspirators and others. Bukharin had already begun to confess about this in his first confession of June 2, 1937. (Furr and Bobrov Bukharin) So had Iagoda, Krestinsky, and others who would eventually figure in the March 1938 Moscow Trial.

Ustrialov knew that Bukharin and Rykov had been arrested — their arrests had taken place on February 27, 1937, during the February-March 1937 Central Committee Plenum. But he could not have known how closely the confessions they had already made were consistent with what Ustrialov reported about Tukhachevsky's views.

As Ustrialov described his conversation with Tukhachevsky, it began by his professing his loyalty to the Soviet "orientation to peace" — no doubt the attempted rapprochement with the Western capitalists, entry into the United Nations, the new Constitution, and other reforms. Tukhachevsky immediately began to question this policy, which was also predicated on an attempt to build "collective security" — a set of alliances — against Hitler's Germany.

The Marshal said that "some degree of softening" (*nekotorogo smiagcheniia*) of Soviet opposition to Nazi Germany was needed. He said that the hostile relations between the USSR and Nazi Germany were "poisoning the whole international atmosphere." That is, Tukhachevsky was telling Ustrialov that he thought the whole policy of anti-Fascism and collective security against Nazi Germany was wrong.

In Ustrialov's words Tukhachevsky was "resurrecting" the notion of a "German orientation." The two "losers" of the Versailles peace after World War I, the USSR and Weimar Germany, had collaborated secretly under the provisions of the Treaty of Rapallo. Tukhachevsky and many other Soviet officers, including most of those executed along with him, had trained in Germany. Such ties had been terminated at Hitler's rise to power.

When Ustrialov referred to Hitler's *Drang nach Osten*, the cornerstone of his foreign policy since the beginning and enshrined in his credo *Mein Kampf*, Tukhachevsky replied that Poland, not the USSR, could satisfy Hitler's territorial ambitions. He referred to the Treaty of Riga (March 1921) in which Poland had acquired much of Ukraine and Belorussia at the expense of the newly-socialist Russian Republic.

To that treaty Tukhachevsky counterposed the Congress of Vienna at which in 1815 Russian imperial control over Poland had been established with a fig-leaf of Polish independence which was snuffed out by the Tsar in 1832. In effect Tukhachevsky seemed to be hinting that under a new political leadership the USSR could be a German ally once again and help to put an end to the Polish state.

To this Ustrialov objected in surprise that the socio-political differences between Germany and the USSR were "deeply contradictory to one another." Tukhachevsky's response was that "regimes develop and evolve." But the only "evolution" he spoke of was of a change in the Soviet regime and Party, guided by "**realist politicians**" [*real'nye politiki*]. According to Ustrialov Tukhachevsky said nothing about Nazi Germany's "evolving."

Tukhachevsky then said that the "internal political program" of these "realist politicians" would flow from the "necessity to remove the sharpness of the contradictions between the Soviet state and the outside world." Given what he had already said, however, it is clear Tukhachevsky meant the contradictions between Nazi Germany and the USSR, on the one hand, and the existence of the Comintern on the other. By the autumn of 1936 there were already serious and deepening contradictions between France and Germany. But all the capitalist countries were in agreement in their hostility to the Comintern.

The exact same term "realist politicians" (*real'nye politiki*) was used by Karl Radek in the Second Moscow Trial of January 23-30, 1937, in the same way that, in Ustrialov's account Tukhachevsky used it in speaking to Ustrialov in the autumn of 1936.

Radek:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

"I told Mr. K. that it was absolutely useless expecting any concessions from the present government, but that the ... government could count upon receiving concessions from the **realist politicians** in the U.S.S.R., i.e., from the bloc, when the latter came to power.

(1937 Trial 9)

Radek:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

RADEK: This was in May 1934. In the autumn of 1934, at a diplomatic reception, a diplomatic representative of a Central European country who was known to me, sat down beside me and started a conversation. Well, he started this conversation in a manner that was not very stylish. He said (speaking German): "I feel I want to spew.... Every day I get German newspapers and they go for you tooth and nail; and I get Soviet newspapers and you throw mud at Germany. What can one do under these circumstances?" He said: **"Our leaders" (he said that more explicitly) "know that Mr. Trotsky is striving for a rapprochement with Germany. Our leader wants to know, what does this idea of Mr. Trotsky's signify? Perhaps it is the idea of an émigré who sleeps badly? Who is behind these ideas?"**

It was clear that I was being asked about the attitude of the bloc. I could not suppose that this was an echo of any of Trotsky's articles, because I read everything that was written by Trotsky, watched what he wrote both in the American and in the French press; I was fully informed about what Trotsky wrote, and I knew that Trotsky had never advocated the idea of a rapprochement with Germany in the press. If this representative said that he knew Trotsky's views, that meant that this representative, while not, by virtue of his position, a man whom

his leader treated confidentially, was consequently a representative who had been commissioned to ask me. Of course, his talk with me lasted only a couple of minutes; the atmosphere of a diplomatic reception is not suited for lengthy perorations. I had to make my decision literally in one second and give him an answer, and I told him that altercation between two countries, even if they represent) diametrically opposite social systems) is a fruitless matter, but that sole attention must not be paid to these newspaper altercations. I told him that **realist politicians** in the U.S.S.R. understand the significance of a German-Soviet rapprochement and are prepared to make the necessary concessions to achieve this rapprochement. This representative understood that since I was speaking about **realist politicians** it meant that **there were realist politicians and unrealistic politicians in the U.S.S.R.: the unrealistic politicians were the Soviet government, while the realist politicians were the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc.** And he also understood that what I meant was: if the bloc comes into power it will make concessions in order to bring about a rapprochement with your government and the country which it represents. (1937 Trial 108-109)<sup>94</sup>

<sup>94</sup> The English transcript of the January 1937 Second Moscow Trial is much longer than the Russian transcript.

Radek:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

RADEK: Several months later, approximately, November 1935, at one of the regular diplomatic receptions, the military representative of that country...

THE PRESIDENT: Do not mention his name or the country.

RADEK: ... approached me and began to complain about the complete change of atmosphere between the two countries. After the first few

words he said that during Mr. Trotsky's time the relations between the armies of the two countries were better.

**He went on to say that Trotsky had remained true to his old opinion about the need for Soviet-German friendship.** After speaking in this strain for a little while longer he began to press me hard as one who had formerly pursued the Rappalo line. I replied to this by uttering the same formula when I was first sounded, namely, that the **realist politicians** of the U.S.S.R. appreciate the significance of the Soviet-German friendship and are prepared to make the necessary concessions in order to ensure this friendship. To this he replied that we ought at last to get together somehow and jointly discuss the details, definitely, about ways of reaching a rapprochement.

I told him that when the circumstances permitted I would be glad to spend an evening with him. This second conversation revealed to me that there was an attempt on the part of military circles to take over the connections which Trotsky had established with certain circles in Germany, or that it was an attempt to verify the real content of the negotiations that were being conducted. Perhaps, also, it was an attempt to ascertain whether we knew definitely what Trotsky had proposed. (1937 Trial 444-445)

In his summing-up statement to the court Prosecutor Vyshinsky referred repeatedly and sarcastically to Radek's use of the term "realist politicians." (1937 Trial 480).

Ustrialov concludes this part of the interrogation with the remark that he realized this was the plan of the "Rightist Party opposition, the Bukharin-Rykov group." Evidently enough information about the political program of the Rights had been published by this time, or at least bruited about in conversations, perhaps at *Izvestiia* of which Bukharin was the editor and where Ustrialov himself was to publish an article in December 1936. The program of the bloc was shared by both the Trotskyists and the Rights. Ustrialov would have naturally been drawn more to the Rights.

If there were any reason to think that Ustrialov's confession were an NKVD "fabrication" we might attribute the use of the term "realist politicians" to

an NKVD attempt to falsely link the confession, and thereby the Rights, with the Trotskyists of the Second Moscow Trial of January 1937, which had taken place only a few months earlier. But, as we have seen, there is no reason to think that Ustrialov's confession is a fabrication.

Therefore the recurrence of the term "realist politicians" represents what Radek meant by it: a coded reference to the bloc of Trotskyists, Zinovievists, Rights, and other oppositionists that, in collaboration with the Tukhachevsky group and Germany, planned to overthrow the Stalin leadership.

## **Part Two. Late December 1936: Ustrialov Meets with a Japanese Agent**

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

[USTRIALOV]: However, soon However, soon I learned much more concrete things that forced me to think about possible cardinal changes in the leadership of the VKP(b) and of the whole political line of the Soviet government and learned about the direct connection between the Bukharin-Rykov group and Tukhachevsky.

QUESTION: From whom did you learn this?

ANSWER: A Japanese man told me about this when I met him at the end of 1936.

QUESTION: What Japanese man? Where did you meet with him?

ANSWER: Soon after my article "The Self-Awareness of Socialism" appeared in the December issue (1936) of *Izvestiia* a person unknown to me called me on the telephone and asked for a meeting, giving me greetings from "Harbin acquaintances." When I asked to whom I had the honor of speaking the latter answered: "You do not know me, so my name is irrelevant, but it is essential for me that I meet personally with you and transmit to you greetings from 'Harbin friends.'"

After some hesitation I consented to a meeting and we did to meet each other the same day around ten o'clock agree in the evening in the Losinka [probably the park of that name — GF], not far from the Institute of the People's Commissariat of Transportation. At the agreed-upon time I arrived at that place. Soon after 10 p.m. an automobile approached the Institute. Out of it stepped a man, Japanese in appearance, wrapped in a fur coat. The Japanese man approached me, called me by my name, said his name was Nakamura, and stated that he was a correspondent of one of the Tokyo newspapers and that he was in transit from Japan to Europe and was staying for several days in Moscow.

Nakamura gave me greetings from Tanaka and expressed the desire to exchange views with me about a few questions that interested him.

[p. 254]

Our whole conversation was carried on in French.

QUESTION: The circumstances of your meeting with Nakamura, as you describe them, unquestionably show that this meeting had been arranged by the two of you when you left Harbin for the USSR. Otherwise the motives that prompted you to meet in Moscow with a Japanese man completely unknown to you are incomprehensible. Do you admit this?

ANSWER: You are quite correct, I do not at all intend to conceal the fact that at the end of 1934 Tanaka, during a conversation with me in Harbin, warned me that if it became essential to receive a consultation from me about one or another question connected with the so-called Russian problem, the Japanese would try to seek the possibility of establishing contact with me in Moscow. I assert, however, that no final agreement about the circumstances of this meeting between us had been agreed upon.

Let us return to the circumstances of your meeting with Nakamura. Where about what did you talk with him?

ANSWER: Nakamura invited me to sit in his automobile and for about an hour and a half we drove between Moscow and the Losinka, talking all the while. At the outset he spoke about my article in "Izvestiia," asked whether I had worked at this newspaper long and whether I was acquainted with Bukharin and his friends. To this I answered in the negative. He was further interested to learn what circles I frequented, and again spoke of the milieu of the Bukharin-Rykov group, which he called the group of **realist politicians**, much more far-sighted and possessing more social support than the Zinoviev-Kamenev group that had recently failed. To my reply that now it was scarcely possible to speak seriously about any role for the Bukharin-Rykov group, he noted that this group, in his opinion, was not at all as weak as it seemed, and that it had many overt and secret supporters in the different links of the Soviet apparatus. Then he asked me about the mood of the Soviet intelligentsia and about my own evaluation of the political situation. I briefly informed him about my point of view.

QUESTION: What did you tell Nakamura?

ANSWER: I set forth to Nakamura my evaluation of the situation in the country from the viewpoint of my theory of Bonapartism. I said that the revolution was steadily moving along a Bonapartist road, that this Bonapartism of a certain sort was developing — above all as the principle of the limitless personal power of the leader.

Then I turned Nakamura's attention to such measures of the government as the establishment of titles, awards, the institution of the rank of Marshal, the reestablishment of the Cossacks, etc. ... The emergence of "notable people" as it were emphasized the creation of a new aristocracy, that is it once again reminded one of the analogy to the Bonaparte epoch. I said that the execution of the Zinovievites was the first example in the history of the Russian Revolution of the acceptance of the methods of the Jacobins in struggle with revolutionaries: the "wet" guillotine instead of the "dry." In this spirit I gave him my evaluation about other events of the internal life of the country.

QUESTION: How did Nakamura react to the questions you laid out?



ANSWER: As though in answer to these "Bonapartist notes" of my remarks my interlocutor, unexpectedly for me, began to speak on the topic of **the Red Army and mentioned that, according to his information, the Rights had supports in its ranks also, more precisely in the milieu of its high command. That the Rights were not as powerless as I believed. The Japanese had reliable information about this, not only their own, but also that obtained from an allied source, just as interested as they were in the struggle against the Comintern.**<sup>95</sup> There were reasons to affirm that the hopes and plans of the Rights were not at all baseless. And, so as not to be too vague, he could even name one name that was, in relation to this, rather weighty. **According to his information "Mister Tukhachevsky" was connected by close political sympathies with the group of the Right communists. And Tukhachevsky was an impressive name, well known to political circles of all foreign governments,** and that even the Russian emigration predicted that he was a "Russian Napoleon." Moreover, as one of the marshals, he was popular in the USSR.

To my question how he imagined the political program of such a Right-Military bloc he developed to me a series of conceptions that reminded me of the judgments expressed by Tanaka in 1934.

In the event of political success, the government of the Bukharin-Rykov group would fundamentally change the course of Soviet politics towards the side of coming closer to the desires of foreign states. In particular, Japan expected that this government would stop the work of the Comintern in China and would give Japan full freedom of action in China. At the same time Japan was expecting the significant expansion of various concessions in the Soviet Far East, possibly even an amicable agreement about the sale to it on acceptable terms of the northern part of Sakhalin. All this would radically lessen the current tense relations between Japan and the USSR.

To my question about the position of such a government in the sphere of European foreign policy Nakamura answered that a sharp improvement in Soviet-German relations would take place. A change

in the system of the monopoly of foreign trade would reinvigorate commercial ties between both countries and German commercial expansion in the USSR. Territorial-political difficulties could be decided, to a significant extent, at the expense of Poland. The decommissioning of the activities of the Comintern would meet Hitler's basic conditions. In a word, here we could expect a decisive turn in the whole contemporary international situation and the establishment of a peaceful equilibrium on a new basis. The Soviet Union would firmly enter the society of "normal" states that carry out the politics of healthy national egoism.

...

As he said goodbye to me the Japanese man gave me to understand that he would be very interested to hear more detailed and concrete thoughts from me about the questions touched upon in our talk. **He expressed the hope that on the basis of my collaboration on "Izvestiia" I would succeed in seeing Bukharin or some other Right communists, and also with their help meet with Tukhachevsky.** He added that in a few months on his way back from Europe to Japan he would like to meet with me again. On this note our conversation, which had lasted about one and a half hours, ended.

QUESTION: After your talk with Nakamura did you try to get in touch with Bukharin and his circle?

ANSWER: No, I did not. The meeting with Nakamura took place at the end of December [1936], and in the middle of January 1937 we already knew about the upcoming trial of the parallel center [the Second Moscow Trial of January 23-30, 1937], and a month after that there came the rumor of the arrests of Bukharin and Rykov. All these events impelled me to take a position of waiting, and during this period came my arrest.

<sup>95</sup> Presumably Germany.

Ustrialov believed there was a connection between his publication of a philosophical article in *Izvestiia* in December 1936 and his being contacted

by a Japanese agent and subsequently meeting with him at the end of that month. At this time Bukharin was editor of *Izvestiia* and was publishing articles by well-known former oppositionists. Ustrialov was a former leading member of the Kadet (Constitutional Democrat) Party, the main capitalist party at the time of the Revolution, and former minister in the White Russian government of Admiral Kolchak. He had returned to the USSR when the Soviet share in the Chinese-Eastern Railway had been sold to Japan in 1935.

Though by this time he had "accepted" the Soviet regime as a Russian patriot he was also known as a right-winger in politics, founder of the *Smenovekhist* movement of exiled Russian intellectuals who believed that the Soviet regime would "evolve" into something less radical. In essence this was a political perspective that counted on the Russian Revolution's evolving along similar lines to the French Revolution. Ustrialov saw in Stalin the "new Napoleon," or "Caesarism," as he put it.

Harbin, the city in Heilongjiang Province occupied by the Japanese from February 1932 was the largest settlement of White Russians in the world and teemed with agents and spies from all over the world.<sup>10</sup> Ustrialov lived there between 1920, when it was still an outpost of the White Russian military resistance to the Bolshevik Revolution, and 1935, when Russian employees of the railroad were permitted to repatriate to the USSR if they wished, as Ustrialov chose to do.

<sup>96</sup> "Harbin was a nest of the world's intelligence services and secret operations of the 1930s." ([[cyrillic]]) Mikhail Vishliakov, "Faces of the Transbaikal." [[cyrillic]] № (2004).  
[http://www.hrono.ru/text/2004/vish\\_0204.html](http://www.hrono.ru/text/2004/vish_0204.html)

In the course of this second part of his interrogation Ustrialov admitted that he had been contacted by Tanaka, whom Bystriantseva identifies as a member of the Upper House of the Japanese Diet (Parliament), an expert on Russian affairs, and as such, an agent of the Japanese government. Ustrialov had met Tanaka as early as 1926.

Tanaka had told Ustrialov in 1934 in Harbin that the Japanese government would try to reestablish contact with him in Moscow in order to ask his

advice on the so-called Russian problem." Nakamura, the Japanese correspondent and, obviously, intelligence agent who contacted Ustrialov and met with him in late December 1936, gave an introduction — "greetings" — from "Harbin friends" and, when they met in person, from Tanaka. "Harbin friends" would have either been anti-Soviet Russian émigrés who had refused to repatriate or the Japanese themselves.

Ustrialov agreed to meet him in a clandestine manner. Ustrialov also did not volunteer this information, but only divulged it when his interrogator suggested that he knew this already. In the eyes of the NKVD and prosecution this would have been another mark against him. Citizens were supposed to report to the proper authorities any attempts by suspected agents of foreign powers to meet with them. The ninety-minute talk also took place in Tanaka's automobile. This was obviously an attempt at secrecy too.

Failure to contact the Soviet government at this point to inform them of the attempt by an obvious Japanese agent to contact him would certainly have put Ustrialov outside the law. The Soviet government would have regarded this as an agreement by Ustrialov to be a Japanese spy. Ustrialov did not notify the government, but was evidently found out anyway. He was in fact convicted and executed in September 1937 for espionage for Japan.

Nakamura asked about Bukharin "and his friends," showed much interest in them, and called them "realist politicians, much more far-sighted and having more social support than the Zinoviev-Kamenev group that had recently failed." He called them "not at all as weak as it seemed" and said they had much open and secret support within different areas of the Soviet Party and apparatus.

Nakamura then revealed that support for the Right opposition existed in the highest echelons of the Red Army, saying that the Japanese knew this not only from their own information but from "another anti-Comintern ally." This was certainly Germany. The "anti-Comintern pact" between Germany and Japan had been formed in November 1936 and no other countries had joined it by July 1937 (Mussolini's Italy did not join it until November 1937). We have a great deal of evidence of collaboration of Tukhachevsky

et al. with Germany. One small bit of it, the Mastny-Benes note, is discussed briefly earlier in the present volume.

Nakamura named Tukhachevsky as one of those who were very sympathetic to the Rights. He outlined the political program of Rights in the same way Tanaka had done in 1934. According to Nakamura the Bukharin-Rykov group would, if they came to power, sharply change Soviet policy in the following ways:

- Halt Comintern work in China. That would mean stopping all support for the Chinese Communist Party of Mao Tse-tung.
- Let Japan have "a free hand" in China, to make it a Japanese colony.
- Give Japan "significant concessions" in the Soviet Far East, including perhaps selling back to Japan the northern part of Sakhalin island.
- Effect a sharp improvement in Soviet-German relations.
- Expand trade with Germany and German markets in the USSR.
- Stop supporting the Comintern. This presumably meant in Axis and pro-German countries at least, unless it meant "shutting it down entirely."
- Enter into some kind of alliance with Germany against Poland.

This outline of the program of the Rights corresponds closely to that given briefly by Bukharin in his first confession of June 2, 1937, and that which emerges from the testimony of Bukharin, Rykov, and the other defendants at the March 1938 Moscow Trial. It would mean that the USSR would then, in Ustrialov's words, "enter the society of 'normal' states," promoting national, rather than internationalist and class, interests.

Nakamura expressed the wish that Ustrialov should meet with Bukharin or other Rightists and hopefully, with their help, with Tukhachevsky again. This confirms that the Japanese government believed the possibilities for a Rightist — Military seizure of power was still very much alive in December 1936. And this is consistent with the information surrounding the Trauttmansdorff-Mastny talks only a few weeks later in early 1937. We have much evidence that at this time Hitler was still hoping the Rights and military could still take power.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>97</sup> See, for example, our discussion of the Mastny-Benes note in a previous chapter.

### **Bystriantseva's Analysis**

In her introduction to the text of this interrogation Bystriantseva, an expert on Ustrialov's life and works, admits that she is unable to establish that the remarks in it were forced upon Ustrialov by the interrogators. Despite whatever doubts she has, she goes on to take the interview seriously anyway and, in her other remarks, assumes it does indeed express Ustrialov's own views.

She states:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

I wish to emphasize a rule that it seems, should be generally understood but is frequently broken: the analysis of this document presupposes the obligatory knowledge not only of all the activity of N.V. Ustrialov but also of his world-view as a whole.

...

It can be said that his transcript represents the final conversation, by Ustrialov with the generation of the future.

This argues strongly for the genuineness of Ustrialov's confessions in two ways. For one thing, how would an NKVD interrogator know Ustrialov's views so well that he could forge or "script" the transcript of an interrogation to sound genuine to an expert like Bystriantseva? For another, Bystriantseva herself is expert in Ustrialov's works and worldview. Yet she admits that she is unable to conclude the transcript of the interview with Tukhachevsky was faked.

Bystriantseva herself obviously believes that the interrogation was not falsified. She writes that she considers this interrogation Ustrialov's "last

thoughts, his hopes, his words to the future." Her words are further evidence that the interrogation is genuine, and that the remarks attributed to Ustrialov in it were, in fact, his own.

But if the interrogation was not falsified in those parts of it where Ustrialov expresses his political and philosophical views, then this is additional strong evidence that the rest of the interrogation is genuine as well, including the sections that interest us.

Elsewhere in the article Bystriantseva notes that in the transcript Ustrialov's friend, the jurist Nikolai Pavlovich Sheremet'evskii, is called Nikolai Borisovich — an error that the real Ustrialov could not possibly make in the case of a friend. She is undoubtedly right that Ustrialov would not have made such a mistake. But this is an error that a typist working from a shorthand transcript could easily make. It proves nothing in itself.

Ustrialov's cousin Ekaterina Grigor'evna Shaposhnikova did in fact tutor Tukhachevsky's daughter in the in the Russian language, as Ustrialov states elsewhere in the transcript. Bystriantseva notes that Shaposhnikova's son's denial that the meeting took place has no significance.

Ustrialov states that his cousin Shaposhnikova was "an elderly woman of about fifty" and completely apolitical. As Bystriantseva suggests, Ustrialov undoubtedly said this to keep suspicion away from her. In fact Shaposhnikova was born in 1896 and would have been no more than forty-one at the time of the meeting with Tukhachevsky. She did in fact escape arrest and lived until 1983. In any event, this detail seems to be genuine.

Bystriantseva also published notes on the "rehabilitation hearings" held in Ustrialov's case in 1988. This was a time when rehabilitations of the "victims of Stalinism" were proceeding at a high rate and in large numbers. But the military prosecutor failed to recommend Ustrialov's rehabilitation based on the evidence he had. The documents reveal that a previous rehabilitation investigation in 1955-56 also failed to reach any conclusive results, and left a number of unanswered questions. This earlier study confirmed that Ustrialov had been a leading member of the Kadet Party and had been personally singled out by Lenin as an enemy of the Soviet regime.

Ustrialov had certainly been an outspoken opponent of the Soviet regime in this period.

Ustrialov confessed as well to long contact with Japanese intelligence. In effect this made him a Japanese agent. The Khrushchev- and early Gorbachev-era rehabilitation commissions must have considered this in their decisions not to rehabilitate him. Although Ustrialov was at length rehabilitated on October 17, 1989, the materials Bystriantseva cites suggest that these points were not cleared up even at that time. By the late Gorbachev period almost every application for rehabilitation was being accepted.

The earlier rehabilitation study of Ustrialov's criminal case file reveals that Ustrialov's criminal case file reveals that Ustrialov confirmed his guilt at his trial, while it states that no other inculpatory material were presented at the trial other than his own confessions in the preliminary investigation and again at his trial on September 14, 1937.<sup>98</sup> We would expect that the indictment would state the grounds on which the suspicion of "counterrevolutionary activity" was based — that is, what circumstances had excited the interest of the NKVD and led to Ustrialov's arrest.

<sup>98</sup> We discuss this issue of convictions based only upon the defendant's confession in a short appendix to this chapter.

Ustrialov named a number of his friends among whom, he said, he had "set forth his counterrevolutionary views." Some of them were repressed between 1937 and 1940. But others were evidently not repressed in any way and lived into the '50s, '60s, '70s and even '80s.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

The names named by Ustrialov — if it was he — were no secret to the "organs" (and we consider it essential to specially emphasize the fact that most of these persons not only were not repressed, but even continued to work and received awards from the Soviet government.



This suggests that the names were not suggested by the interrogators in order to find a pretext to arrest and repress these people. The only logical conclusion that remains is that Ustrialov did in fact name them himself.

Ustrialov's statement is consistent with Tukhachevsky's confessions; with the pre-trial confessions we have from Bukharin and Krestinsky; and with the testimony at the March 1938 Moscow trial. Both Tukhachevsky and Nakamura referred to the Rights, or Bukharin-Rykov group, as the "realist politicians." Radek said that he used the same term for the bloc of Rights and Trotskyists in his discussions with the German military attaché General K. (evidently German military attaché General Ernst Köstring).

In this context there seems little reason to doubt the genuineness of the Arao document, since it is obviously compatible with Nakamura's knowledge of Tukhachevsky's political orientation against the Soviet government and towards the Axis.<sup>99</sup> Ustrialov's confession also argues in favor of its being genuine.

<sup>99</sup> We discuss the Arao document in an earlier chapter of this work.

### **The Ustrialov Evidence and The Moscow Trials**

The relevance of Ustrialov's confession to our evaluation of the Moscow Trials, including the accusations made there of Trotsky's collaboration with the Germans and Japanese, are very clear. The bloc of Rights and Trotskyites was accused of working with Tukhachevsky and his military co-conspirators and confessed to doing that.

In a previous chapter we have reproduced passages from the testimony of Rozengol'ts, Rykov, Grinko, Krestinsky, and Bukharin concerning the Tukhachevsky conspiracy. In them the defendants at the Third Moscow Trial admit collaboration with Tukhachevsky and his group of military men, and indicate that Trotsky was involved in this collaboration also.

Ustrialov's confession is thus strong evidence in support of the essentially reliable nature of Moscow Trials confessions as evidence, as well as of

Trotsky's involvement in the conspiracy of the bloc — something we know from the Trotsky Archive is true in any case.

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During the Khrushchev and Gorbachev years "rehabilitations" were often justified by the statement that the only evidence against the defendant presented at trial was the defendant's own confessions. Works by anticommunist scholars repeat this charge as though it represented some kind of tyrannical practice.

This is deliberately misleading. In the American criminal justice system and, perhaps, others as well, the prosecution does not go to the expense and trouble of presenting a case, calling witnesses, and presenting evidence, if the defendant has pled guilty. A defendant's guilty plea does not imply that the prosecution did not have evidence and witnesses in case the defendant pled innocent. In the Soviet criminal justice system in the 1930s a defendant had to confirm his confessions of guilt (if he had made any) at trial. Many defendants confessed before trial, confirmed their confessions to the investigation before trial, and then refused to confirm them at trial. In those cases the prosecution presented the evidence it had. This happened in the case of Nikolai Ezhov in February 1940. Despite the fact that he refused to confirm his many confessions at trial Ezhov was convicted on the testimony of others who testified against him.

## Chapter 12. Conclusion — The Moscow Trials As Evidence.

### Moscow Trial Defendants Who Lied

We can establish that some of the Moscow Trial defendants lied deliberately to the court.

A few words of caution are needed lest the reader mistakenly conclude: "If a witness tells a lie once, he must be lying all the time." Of course this is not so. The fact that someone has made *one* verifiably false statement does not in the least mean that *all* his or her statements must be false. Likewise, someone who had made a verifiably *true* statement does not necessarily tell the truth all the time. Each statement must be checked. Historians should verify, not "believe."

The fact that in example after example we have shown that Trotsky lied while defendants at the first two Moscow Trials told the truth does not mean that *all* the testimony and accusations in the Moscow Trials were true. Verifiable falsehoods can be found in them — but not, as is commonly believed, in the form of false accusations by the prosecution or false confessions of guilt by innocent defendants. Rather the falsehoods we can now demonstrate were told by guilty defendants who continued to deceive the prosecution and court.

### Sokol'nikov

For example, we can now confirm that the following statement made by Sokol'nikov in his final statement at trial, is false:

I can add nothing to the information and the evaluations which were here given by the members of the centre — Pyatakov and Radek. I think that these evaluations have been sufficiently frank, and I fully share them. But I cannot add anything of my own, because **I was not in direct communication with Trotsky, I was not directly connected with him**, and received information through third persons. (1937 Trial 555)

Getty found a certified mail receipt of a letter to Sokol'nikov in London that Trotsky mailed sometime during 1932. The receipt is strong evidence that Sokol'nikov did receive the letter. Assuming the letter reached him — a similar letter did reach Radek — it follows that Sokol'nikov falsely denied having been in contact with Trotsky in 1932 although Radek admitted he had received Trotsky's letter in the same year.

We don't know why Sokol'nikov did this. Possibly Sokol'nikov believed that direct contact with Trotsky would be considered a more serious crime.

## **Radek**

Some Moscow Trial defendants withheld more substantive matters from the prosecution. During the first part of his testimony Radek mentioned the name of Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky (105). Later Vyshinsky asked Radek why he had done so. Radek replied "Of course, Tukhachevsky had no idea either of Putna's role or of my criminal role," adding

I say that I never had and could not have had any dealings with Tukhachevsky connected with counterrevolutionary activities, because I knew Tukhachevsky's attitude to the Party and the government to be that of an absolutely devoted man. (146)

These passages in which Tukhachevsky's name is mentioned are omitted from the published Russian-language transcript, which is less than half the length of the English transcript. We don't know why. It is possible that the much shorter Russian transcript was published soon after the trial while the fuller English version was published later in the year after Tukhachevsky and other top military leaders had been arrested, tried, and convicted of espionage and treason in May-June 1937.

Radek must have known about Tukhachevsky's conspiracy. Bukharin knew about it, and he was closely in touch with Radek. Maybe Radek was still hoping in January 1937 that Tukhachevsky and the other military men would be successful in overthrowing the Stalin regime. Even Bukharin waited to mention Tukhachevsky's participation in the conspiracy until June

2, 1937, a week after Tukhachevsky had been arrested and had begun to confess.

Similarly, Bukharin concealed the involvement of Commissar of the NKVD Nikolai Ezhov with the conspiracy. We know that Bukharin knew of Ezhov's role by 1935 at the latest. In his first pretrial confession, again at his trial, and finally in his two appeals to the Soviet Supreme Court Bukharin claimed that he had completely "disarmed," confessed everything he knew. He said the same thing in his letter of December 10, 1937, to Stalin in which he retracted all his previous confessions, and whose content he then later retracted in turn. Perhaps Bukharin too was still hoping that Ezhov would be successful where Tukhachevsky and his own bloc of Rights and Trotskyists had failed.

If Bukharin had named Ezhov as a co-conspirator the Soviet government could have dismissed him from his post as Commissar of Internal Affairs — head of the NKVD — as much as 18 months before he was finally induced to resign in November 1938. The hundreds of thousands of murders of innocent Soviet citizens carried out under Ezhov's leadership in 1937-1938, often called the *Ezhovshchina* or "Great Terror," could have been greatly reduced in number and perhaps prevented altogether.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>100</sup> Grover Furr and Vladimir L. Bobrov, "Verdikt: Vinioven" [Verdict: Guilty]. In *1937. Pravosudie Stalina. Obzhalovaniu ne podlezhit!* Moscow: Eksmo-Algorithm, 2010, 13-63.

## **Zinoviev and Kamenev**

Zinoviev and Kamenev knew about NKVD Commissar Iagoda's involvement in the conspiracy of Rightists but did not reveal that fact before or at their August 1936 trial. We know this now because in 1997 eight pretrial interrogations of Iagoda were published in Russia in the provincial city of Kazan' in a tiny press run of only 200 copies. In 2004 a semi-official volume of documents published by the right-wing anticommunist "Memorial" organization also published one of these interrogations, making it clear that they are genuine.

Iagoda testified as follows:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

In relation to Zinoviev and Kamenev my policy was twofold. I could not permit the investigation of their case to go too far. I was afraid of any frank confessions from them. They could give up the whole conspiracy. ...

At the same time I was still troubled by the situation of Zinoviev and Kamenev who had been convicted and were in prison. Lest, suddenly, they get to thinking too much, get tired of sitting in prison, and suddenly burst out with full and frank confessions about the conspiracy, about the center, about my role (**Kamenev, as a participant in the general center of the conspiracy, unquestionably knew about me and about the fact that I was a participant in the conspiracy**). I say that this situation was troubling me all the time. True, I took all means to obtain for Zinoviev and Kamenev the most agreeable conditions in prison: books, paper, food, walks — all this they receive without limit. But what the devil! They were dangerous witnesses. Therefore when I reported on this case to the Central Committee, in order to be finished with them, I proposed that Zinoviev and Kamenev be shot. This was not accepted because the facts necessary for their execution [to convict them of a capital crime — GF] really did not exist.

... In the summer of 1936 Zinoviev and Kamenev were sent from the political prisons to Moscow in order to be brought to trial in the case of the Trotskyist-Zinovievite bloc. As I have already said, I needed to finish them. They were already doomed, about to be tried for the third time; and I was very worried lest at some point in the investigation they let drop something they should not. Therefore I began to make rounds of some of the cells of arrested suspects in the inner prison. I dropped in to almost all the cells together with Popov, the chief of the prison. I also dropped in on Zinoviev and Kamenev (separately on each of them), after telling Popov to remain outside.

In the space of 5-10 minutes I succeeded in informing Zinoviev and Kamenev about who had been arrested and what kind of confessions they had made. I told them that the investigation did not know any facts about the other centers that were taking part in the conspiracy, much less about the general center. **Everything is not lost, do not give up anything yourselves. The conspiratorial center is still functioning. No matter what sentence the court hands down you will return to me," I told them. And Zinoviev and Kamenev, as you know, carried out my instructions during the investigation and at the trial. And after their sentencing they were shot. This was in August 1936.** Genrikh Iagoda 192; 198-9)

Iagoda rushed Kamenev and Zinoviev to execution before they could expose yet more of the conspiracy.

It appears that Nikolai Bukharin felt the same way. We now have some of the letters that Bukharin wrote to Party leaders after the Zinov'ev-Kamenev trial. In his letter of August 27, 1936 to Stalin, Bukharin wrote:

Excellent that these scoundrels have been executed; the air became immediately cleaner.

In a letter to Voroshilov of a few days later, September 1, 1936, Bukharin calls Kamenev "cynic and murderer," "most loathsome of men," "human carrion." It had been Kamenev who at the August 1936 Moscow Trial implicated Bukharin as one of the leaders of the Rights as late as 1934, something Bukharin loudly denied. Bukharin added that he was "fearfully glad" (*strashno rad*) that "the dogs" — he means Zinov'ev and Kamenev — "have been shot."

Bukharin's words have the sound of someone who "doth protest too much." Sure enough, in these letters Bukharin is trying hard to convince Stalin and others that what Zinov'ev and Kamenev said about him at their 1936 Trial was false. In fact, it was anything but!<sup>101</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Furr, Grover and Vladimir L. Bobrov. "Stephen Cohen's Biography of Bukharin: A Study in the Falsehood of Khrushchev-Era 'Revelations.'" In *Cultural Logic* 2010. At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2010/Furr.pdf>

From other similar events Stalin concluded that the Oppositionists had an agreement to kill any of their number who named names. In reply to a remark by Bukharin, Stalin explained this at the December 1936 Central Committee Plenum.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

But as for how things have turned out, you can see yourself! After that we questioned about 50 people, at least. They really turned Piatakov inside out. It turns out that he's a monster of a person! So why did he agree to be the public prosecutor? Why did he agree to shoot his comrades himself? It turns out that they have a rule like this: If your fellow Trotskyist is arrested and has begun to give up the names of others, he must be destroyed. You can see what kind of hellish joke this comes to. Believe after this in the sincerity of former oppositionists! We can't take former oppositionists at their word even when they volunteer to shoot their friends with their own hands.

(*Voprosy Istorii* 1, 1995, pp. 9-10.)<sup>102</sup>

<sup>102</sup> For Stalin's whole remarks see

<http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/stalinonoppsvi11995.html>

### **Bukharin, Iagoda and others**

Like Bukharin, Iagoda certainly knew about Ezhov's participation in the conspiracy as well, and like Bukharin he did not tell "the whole truth" at his trial. In another chapter we have quoted the remarks by Mikhail Frinovsky in which he states that Bukharin, Iagoda, Bulanov, and perhaps others knew about Ezhov's conspiracy and did not reveal it.

In the "mercury affair" (*rtutnoe delo*), which we mentioned in Chapter 1, Ezhov told Bulanov to lie in order to build up his own, Ezhov's, credibility. It was discovered after Ezhov's arrest.



<sup>103</sup> This is confirmed both in Iagoda's confessions in the 1997 volume *Genrikh Iagoda. Narkom vnutrennikhdel SSSR, General'niy komissar gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti. Sbornik dokumentov*. Kazan', 1997, and in the April 11, 1939 confession-statement by Ezhov's right-hand man Mikhail Frinovskii, a translation of which may be consulted at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/frinovskyeng.html>

## **Results Beyond Trotsky: The Moscow Trial Testimony**

The conclusion of our verification of the Moscow Trials testimony is this:

- Whenever we can check independent evidence concerning a contradiction between Moscow Trial testimony and Trotsky's responses, it is the Moscow Trial testimony, not Trotsky's denial, that proves to have been truthful.
- As far as we can now determine, on the basis of the evidence we now possess, none of the Moscow Trial defendants gave false testimony that was wrung from them by the NKVD, the Prosecution, or anyone else, including Stalin.

The present study too adds credibility to the Moscow Trials themselves, while casting doubt on Trotsky's denials and on the Khrushchev-era and Gorbachev-era "Rehabilitation" reports.

In the second part of this book and in volume two we examine further evidence that Trotsky did urge "terror" against the Soviet leadership and did collaborate with Germany and Japan. These were among the most important and most dramatic charges made at the trials. The evidence that Trotsky was guilty of spurring his Soviet followers to the use of "terror or assassination against the Stalin leadership goes a step further towards confirming the basic trustworthiness of the testimony given at the Moscow trials.

As far as we can now determine, on the evidence now available the Moscow Trial defendants:

1. were guilty of at least those crimes to which they confessed;
2. said what they themselves chose to say in their trial testimony.

This conclusion will be ideologically unacceptable to those who cut their historical conclusions to fit their political prejudices. There is no lack of such persons in and around the field of Soviet history and in politics. In the present case neither ideological anticommunists nor, of course, Trotskyists will be persuaded by this or any conceivable evidence. "Political correctness" — ideological acceptability to influential forces motivated not by the search for historical truth but by political agendas is, of course, not a category of historical evidence and has no place in the struggle to discover the truth.

In the eyes of many persons the evidence that Trotsky really did urge his followers in the USSR to employ "terror" would appear to justifying the Moscow Trials. By the same token the evidence that the defendants in the Moscow Trials were guilty will appear to justify the actions of Stalin and the Soviet government of the day. After all, no country would fail to pursue and deal harshly with persons and groups who were guilty of the crimes to which the Moscow Trials defendants confessed.

Powerful forces both within the field of Soviet studies and beyond it will find this conclusion to be intolerable on political grounds. The Cold War in historical studies against communism continues with a vengeance. The histories of most if not all of the new post-Soviet states are constructed upon a demonization of communism, especially of Stalin and the USSR during his time. The academic study and teaching of Soviet history is dominated by a tacit requirement that Stalin and the USSR during his day be condemned.

Meanwhile Trotskyism is not just tolerated but accorded an honored place in the field of Soviet history. Two avowedly Trotskyist journals, *Revolutionary History* and *Critique*, publish articles in the field of Soviet history. The latter is published by Taylor and Francis Ltd., a major publisher of mainstream academic journals in the U.K. Pierre Broué was eulogized by Bernhard Bayerlein, editor of the anticommunist *Jahrbuch für historische Kommunismusforschung*. Broué worked with Bayerlein on a number of anticommunist research projects. Broué was a member of the board of Bayerlein's "International Newsletter of Communist Studies."<sup>104</sup>

<sup>104</sup> See details at <http://www.dr-bayerlein.eu/books.html>

Knowledge that the Moscow Trials were honest and the defendants guilty will do much to debunk other harmful "cults" that are still thriving. In some countries the "cult" around Trotsky remains influential on the anti-imperialist and pro-working class Left. The cult of the demonization of Stalin is even more widespread, not only geographically but ideologically, its adherents raging from anarchists and Trotskyists, to liberals, to conservatives and fascists.

These "cults" are nourished by the myth that Trotsky and the Moscow Trials defendants were "framed" in the Moscow Trials. They persist only through ignoring the evidence that we have and through misinterpretation, often flagrant, of the evidence that is not ignored.

### **The Moscow Trials Testimony as Evidence**

Whenever we can check a fact-claim made by a defendant in the Moscow Trials against independent evidence we have found that the defendant was telling the truth, in that the fact-claim in question can be verified independently.

In a few cases a defendant chose to deceive the prosecution apparently with a view concealing his responsibility for a acts of which, he hoped, the prosecution was unaware, or of preserving what remained of the conspiracy, or both.

Since the defendants' fact-claims that we can check have turned out to be truthful, we have no basis to dismiss other fact-claims whose truthfulness we cannot check. The success of this verification process means that researchers may properly use the fact claims made by Moscow Trial defendants as evidence.

The importance of this result for our further investigation of Leon Trotsky's conspiratorial activities during the 1930s should be obvious. We now have no reason to reject the statements made by defendants concerning Trotsky's conspiratorial activities.

However, we now possess much more evidence of Trotsky's conspiratorial activities than that contained in statements by Moscow Trials defendants. In the second part of this book we examine other evidence of Trotsky's conspiracies. Much of this evidence comes from Trotsky's own false statements through which he carelessly or unconsciously revealed, in part, that which he wished to conceal.

The second volume of this work will examine more evidence concerning Trotsky's collaboration with Germany and Japan.

## **Part Two. Trotsky's Lies and the Murder of Sergei Kirov.**

### Chapter 13. Trotsky on the Kirov Assassination.

On December 1, 1934 Sergei M. Kirov, First Secretary of the Bolshevik Party in Leningrad, Politburo member, and close associate of Joseph Stalin, was murdered outside his office by Leonid Nikolaev, an unemployed party member. Nikolaev tried to commit suicide but failed and was captured. Within a few days he had named as his accomplices a number of members of an underground group of Party members loyal to Grigory Zinoviev, whom Kirov had replaced as Leningrad party chief.

Our study of the discoveries made during the past several decades in the Harvard Trotsky Archive and of documents from former Soviet archives published since the end of the USSR permits us to read Trotsky's writings on the Kirov assassination in a new light. Trotsky's article purports to be an attempt to understand the Kirov assassination by scrutinizing the Soviet government's reporting about it. But we can now see that it is not this at all. Rather, Trotsky's article is a coverup, an attempt to use lies and misdirection to keep hidden Trotsky's and his followers' involvement in a bloc with the clandestine Zinovievist group that did carry out Kirov's murder.

The *Biulleten' Oppozitsii* — in English, the Bulletin of the [Russian] Opposition (henceforth B.O.) — was Leon Trotsky's periodical journal during the years between his expulsion from the Soviet Union 1929 and his assassination in August 1940. Written and published in Russian, it has never been translated in its entirety. But many of Trotsky's individual articles published first in the B.O., have been translated and published separately. In the case of B.O. #41 of January 1935, a single article of Trotsky's occupied an entire issue. We have verified that the English version, titled "The Stalinist Bureaucracy and the Assassination of Kirov," is a faithful translation of the entire issue #41 of the B.O. and will use the English translation here.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>105</sup> "Leon Trotsky: On the Kirov Assassination (December 1934)." At <http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1934/12/kirov.htm> Unless otherwise identified all quotations attributed to Trotsky here are to this two-part article. The Russian original of *Biulleten' Oppozitsii* is at

<http://www.mit.edu/people/fjk/BO/BO-41.html> and at  
[http://www.1917.com/Marxism/Trotsky/BO/BO\\_No\\_41/Main.html](http://www.1917.com/Marxism/Trotsky/BO/BO_No_41/Main.html)

## "Amalgam"

We need to say something about Trotsky's frequent use of the word "amalgam." In Russian *amal'gama* can be used to mean any kind of mixture or combination. Trotsky uses it very frequently in Russian to mean something like "false account of events." Following Trotsky's practice his English translators employ the word "amalgam." Trotsky uses the word "amalgam" two dozen times in this one article alone. He defines it in the following way:

It was clear, however, that this information relating to the "Zinoviev group" was not issued by accident; it could imply nothing else but the preparation of a jural "amalgam," that is to say, a consciously false attempt to implicate in the assassination of Kirov **individuals and groups who did not and could not have anything in common with the terrorist act.**

One interesting result of our research is the discovery that it was not Stalin but Trotsky himself, who composed "amalgams" the "consciously false" accounts of events surrounding the Kirov murder.

Trotsky's "amalgams" — one of which was the charge that it was Stalin who was composing "amalgams" — served Trotsky's aims in two ways. They were an attempt to discredit accusations made by the Soviet prosecution against the various oppositionists. All of these men had been followers of Trotsky's, had worked closely with Trotsky, or were themselves followers of one or more of the oppositionists who had, such as Zinoviev. Also, by accusing Stalin of composing "amalgams," i.e. of lying, Trotsky deflected attention from his own falsehoods. Since many of these could have easily been discovered if anyone had checked, perhaps the only effective "smokescreen" or cover-up at Trotsky's disposal was to call Stalin the liar first.

Trotsky listed the fifteen Moscow based Zinovievists whose arrests had been announced in *Pravda*. Two of those arrested were Grigory Zinoviev and Lev Kamenev, who we know were part of the bloc of Trotskyists and Zinovievists formed with Trotsky's permission in 1932. A third was Safarov, A Zinoviev follower whom Leon Sedov, Trotsky's son and main political aide, had identified in 1932 as one who would shortly join the bloc.<sup>106</sup> We have reproduced the texts of Sedov's and Trotsky's letters about the bloc at the end of the present volume.

<sup>106</sup> Letters by Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov discussing the formation of the bloc in 1932 and its composition were discovered in 1980 in the Harvard Trotsky Archive by Pierre Broué, "Trotsky et le bloc des oppositions de 1932." *CahLT* 5 (1980) 5-37. The discovery of the bloc is discussed and the relevant part of Sedov's letter quoted in English translation in *Furr Kirov* 131-133.

We have independent evidence from Soviet archives that Safarov was recruiting others to this same bloc in August 1932. According to this testimony Safarov was telling others that the bloc had regular contact with Trotsky, a fact confirmed by materials in the Harvard Trotsky Archive.

<sup>107</sup> Interrogation of S. Kh. Khodzhanov, July 31, 1937. Lubyanka. 1937-1938 Document No. 155 p. 290.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

In August 1932 I was with him in Moscow at 5 Granovsky Street, in the Palace of Soviets. SAFAROV, convinced that my anti-Soviet convictions had not changed, informed me that the Zinovievists had their conspiratorial center and in a bloc with the Trotskyists were continuing the struggle against the CC of the VKP(b). Seeing that in SAFAROV I could find a possible ally for our anti-Soviet organization, I told him in turn that I had joined an illegal nationalist anti-soviet organization that was struggling against the VKP(b) and against Soviet authority. SAFAROV posed the question of a bloc between the Trotskyist-Zinovievist center and our organization for



mutual struggle against the VKP(b). He also informed me that they had regular contact with TROTSKY, and that they considered it essential to act in concert with aggressor countries.

<sup>107</sup> Interrogation of S. Kh. Khodzhanov, July 31, 1937. Lubyanka. 1937-1938 Document No. 155 p. 290.

The fact that we know from the Trotsky Archive that the bloc existed and included both Trotskyists and Zinovievists, as Khodzhanov testifies here, is further evidence that the NKVD was *not* falsifying interrogation-confessions. In Part One of the present volume we set forth a great deal of evidence that the Moscow Trials testimony is genuine — represents what the defendants chose to say.

Trotsky did his best to distance himself from Zinoviev and Kamenev by attacking them:

There is not the slightest reason or motive for us to defend the policies or personal reputations of Zinoviev, Kamenev and their friends. They were at the head of that faction which inaugurated the struggle against Marxist internationalism under the name of "Trotskyism"; they were subsequently driven against the bureaucratic wall raised with their own efforts and under their own leadership; having taken fright at their own handiwork, they joined the Left Opposition for a brief period and revealed the frauds and falsehoods utilized in the struggle against "Trotskyism"; frightened by the difficulties of the struggle against the usurping bureaucracy, they capitulated; reinstated to the party, they substituted for principled opposition, sniping, secret machinations; they were again expelled — they capitulated for the second time.

They disavowed the banner of Marxism and camouflaged themselves, hoping to gain a place in the party which had been corrupted and strangled by the apparatus. Having generally lost esteem and confidence, and even the possibility of waging a struggle, they found themselves, in the end, cruelly punished. It is not our task to defend them!

These paragraphs are a lie. We know now that Trotsky and his Soviet-based followers really were in a bloc with Zinoviev, Kamenev, Safarov, and others. That means that this verbal assault by Trotsky on Zinoviev, Kamenev "and their friends" was a coverup intended to mask Trotsky's real relations with these men through the bloc. It was a part of Trotsky's "amalgam." Likewise, Trotsky often wrote sharp attacks on Karl Radek claiming that, on principle, he had not been in any contact direct or indirect, with Radek, when in fact we know that he had indeed written Radek at exactly the time Radek disclosed during his testimony at the January 1937 Moscow Trial.

<sup>108</sup>Evidence of this letter was discovered in the Harvard Trotsky Archive by American historian J. Arch Getty. See Getty TIE 24-35. For the evidence that this letter was the one Radek mentioned in his testimony at the January 1937 Moscow Trial (sometimes called the "Radek-Piatakov Trial" or "Second Moscow Trial") see Furr, Kirov, 321. We discuss this matter in detail in another chapter of the present book.

Documents from Trotsky's own archive now permit us to see that in the cases of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Radek Trotsky's attacks were a cover for conspiratorial ties. Therefore we cannot take any of Trotsky's attack on any opposition figures at face value.

Trotsky argued that Zinoviev and Kamenev "could not" have be involved in Kirov's assassination on two grounds. First, because these "old Bolshevik, the most intimate collaborators of Lenin, those who shared power with Stalin, members of the 'Old Guard,'" could not possibly "have posed for their task the *restoration of capitalism*." Second, because Bolshevism and Marxism-Leninism firmly prohibit "individual terror" (assassination).<sup>109</sup>

<sup>109</sup>A careful reading of all the Soviet materials related to the Kirov murder and published during December 1934 reveals that Zinoviev and Kamenev were not, in fact, accused of plotting "the restoration of capitalism." We explore this apparently unaccountable remark of Trotsky's in a later chapter.

**"Terror"**

Trotsky insisted that the Zinovievists could not be involved in the assassination of Kirov because terrorism is incompatible with Marxism.

The negative attitude of Marxism towards the tactic of individual terror is known to every worker able to read and write. A great deal has been written on this question.

Therefore, Trotsky asserted, Zinoviev and Kamenev could not have been involved in Kirov's murder.

Zinoviev and Kamenev were lacking in character; but no one considered them fools or ignorant buffoons. The other thirteen above named Bolsheviks lived through the experiences of the Bolshevik party for 25-30 and more years. They could not suddenly turn to a belief in the utility of individual terror for changing the social regime...

Nor, says Trotsky, could he himself be suspected of stooping to terror. Quoting from an article of his own published in 1911 he continued:

To this article which counterposed to terrorist adventurism the method of preparing the proletariat for the socialist revolution, I can add nothing today, twenty-three years later.

Trotsky theorized that terrorists were guilty of the same kind of cult-of-great-man thinking as he discerned in the Soviet party.

Individual terrorism is in its very essence bureaucratism turned inside out. For Marxists this law was not discovered yesterday. Bureaucratism has no confidence in the masses, and endeavors to substitute itself for the masses. Terrorism works in the same manner; it seeks to make the masses happy without asking their participation. The Stalinist bureaucracy has created a vile leader-cult, attributing to leaders divine qualities. "Hero" worship is also the religion of terrorism, only with a minus sign.

Then he uses language similar to that used by his son Leon Sedov when talking to Mark Zborowski in January 1937.

*Trotsky, December — January 1934-1935*: "The Nikolaievs imagine that all that is necessary is to remove a few leaders by means of a revolver in order for history to take another course."

*Sedov, January 1937*: "While he was reading newspapers 'Sonny' said that since the whole regime in the USSR is held up by Stalin, it would be enough to kill Stalin for it all to fall apart."

## **Trotsky and Terror**

Mark Zborowski was an NKVD agent who managed to gain Sedov's confidence. Zborowski wrote reports to his handlers while acting as one of Sedov's closest collaborators. In a report dated February 8, 1937, Zborowski wrote that on January 22, 1937, the eve of the Piatakov-Radek trial, Sedov suddenly began speaking to hum of "terror":

February 8, 1937

On January 22 L. Sedov in our conversation at his apartment about the question of the second Moscow trial and the role in it of some of the accused (Radek, Piatakov and others) stated: "Now there is no reason to hesitate. Stalin must be killed."

For me this statement was so unexpected that I did not manage to react to it in any way. L. Sedov immediately redirected the conversation onto other questions.

On January 23 L. Sedov, in my presence and also that of L. Estrina, uttered a sentence with the same content as that of the 22nd. In answer to this statement of his L. Estrina said "Keep your mouth shut." They did not return to this question again.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Zborowski archive, F.31660 d. 9067 Papka No 28. In Volkogonov Archive, Library of Congress. Online at [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/zbor\\_sedov\\_stalin0238.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/zbor_sedov_stalin0238.pdf) Some of these same documents are confirmed by John Costello and Oleg Tsarev, *Deadly Illusions* (New York: Crown, 1993), 283; 469 n. 44. Tsarev,

a former KGB man, had privileged access to KGB files for a time in the early 1990s. The same texts are quoted in Tsarev & Kostello, *Rokovye Illiuzii*, 322-3, and n. 44 p. 531 (Russian original). These and other texts of Zborowski's reports are in facsimile in the Volkogonov Archive, LOC. This archive also contains facsimiles of the reports published by Costello and Tsarev, thus verifying that they are the same ones.

Trotsky claimed that terrorism was in violation of Marxism:

But if Marxists categorically condemned individual terrorism, obviously for political and not mystical reason, even when the shots were directed against the agents of the Czarist government and of capitalist exploitation, they will even more relentlessly condemn and reject the criminal adventurism of terrorist acts directed against the bureaucratic representatives of the first workers' state in history.

But in 1937 Sedov justified terrorism to Zboroski in language similar to what I.I. Reingol'd, a codefendant in the 1936 Moscow Trial, attributed to Zinoviev and Kamenev, and that another codefendant, K.B. Berman-Yurin attributed directly to Trotsky.

Reingol'd:

VYSHINSKY: How did Zinoviev and Kamenev reconcile terroristic activities with Marxism?

REINGOLD: In 1932, Zinoviev, at Kamenev's apartment, in the presence of a number of members of the united Trotskyist-Zinovievite centre argued in favor of resorting to terror as follows: although terror is incompatible with Marxism, at the present moment these considerations must be abandoned. There are no other methods available of fighting the leaders of the Party and the Government at the present time. Stalin combines in himself all the strength and firmness of the present Party leadership. Therefore Stalin must be put out of the way in the first place. (1936 Trial 55)

Berman-Yurin:

In the evening we continued our conversation. I asked him how individual terrorism could be reconciled with Marxism. To this Trotsky replied: problems cannot be treated in a dogmatic way. He said that a situation had arisen in the Soviet Union which Marx could not have foreseen. (1936 Trial 95)

Zborowski:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

Since 1936 "Sonny"<sup>111</sup> had not talked with me about terror. Only about two or three weeks ago, after a meeting of the group, "Sonny" again began to speak on this subject. At first he only tried to "theoretically" prove that terrorism does not contradict Marxism. "Marxism" — in Sonny's words — "rejects terrorism only insofar as the conditions of the class struggle are not suitable for terrorism, but there are situations in which terrorism is essential."

The next time "Sonny" began to speak about terrorism when I arrived at his apartment to work. While reading newspapers "Sonny" said that since the whole regime of the USSR is held up by Stalin, it would be enough to kill Stalin for everything to fall apart. He had stated this thought earlier too, but until this time he had never formulated it this sharply. This last time he repeatedly returned to it, and underscored with special care the necessity to kill com. Stalin.

<sup>111</sup> "Sonny" (Russian *synok*) was the NKVD code name for Sedov. Pierre Broué rendered *synok* in French as "le fiston."

Sedov tried to recruit Zborowski as a terrorist to kill Stalin:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

In connection with this talk "Sonny" asked me whether I feared death in general, and whether I would be capable of committing a terrorist act.

When Zborowski temporized without giving a definite answer Sedov outlined his own conception of what a terrorist must be like:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

To my answer that everything would depend on the necessity and the expediency, Sonny said that I did not understand accurately at all what a "real" terrorist was and began to explain to me just what persons who were suitable for carrying out terrorist acts must be like.

Speaking of the tactic of terror he paused on the subject of cadres, saying that this was basic. A terrorist — in Sonny's words — must always be prepared for death, death must be for the terrorist a daily reality. Here he illustrated this thesis with the example of the psychology of the Narodovol'tsy.<sup>112</sup> At this point he tossed out the remark that I, in his opinion, was too soft a person for this kind of affair.

<sup>112</sup> Members of the terrorist "Narodnaia Vol'ya" or "People's Will," who carried out numerous assassinations of Tsarist officials, including that of Tsar Alexander II in 1881.

According to Mark Zborowski, Sedov told him on January 22, the day *before* the Second Moscow Trial began, that Stalin should be killed:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

On January 22 L. Sedov, during our conversation in his apartment about the question of the Second Moscow

Trial and the roles in it of certain defendants (Radek, Piatakov, and others) declared: "Now there is no reason to hesitate. Stalin must be killed." (Emphasis in original)

On October 28, 1936, a little less than three months earlier, Sedov had signed the introduction to the *Livre rouge sur le proces de Moscou* (*The Red Book on the Moscow Trial*). The *Libre rouge* repeats Trotsky's insistent claim that Marxists generally, and Trotsky himself specifically, completely eschew "terror" — individual assassination.<sup>113</sup> The *Bulletin of the Opposition*, Trotsky's Russian-language periodical, ##52-53 also dated October 1936 says exactly the same thing.

<sup>113</sup>Livre rouge pp. 68-71, "Marxisme et terreur individuelle." The *Livre rouge* and B.O. ##52-53 are the same work. This work was translated into English as *The Red Book on the Moscow Trials*. It is online at <http://marxists.org/history/etol/writers/sedov/works/red/>

The Second Moscow Trial began on January 23, 1937. Zborowski reported:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

On January 23 L. Sedov in my presence and that of L. Estrina<sup>114</sup> repeated what he had said on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. In answer to this declaration L. Estrina said: "Keep your mouth shut." They did not return to this question again.

<sup>114</sup> Lola or Lilia Estina was a supporter of Trotsky's movement and secretary to Sedov.

It is legitimate to assume that Sedov's views on terror were also those of his father. Sedov was Trotsky's main political representative. He had no political positions of his own.

We know from the memoir of Jules Humbert-Droz that by 1928 at the latest Bukharin was advocating the murder of Stalin.<sup>115</sup> The Rights group led by Bukharin was again discussing the need to kill Stalin in 1932, the same year



they united with the Trotskyists, Zinovievists, and others in the bloc.<sup>116</sup> If Trotsky had really opposed terror in principle, as he repeatedly proclaimed, he would not have joined a bloc with those who championed it.

<sup>115</sup> See Part One, Chapter 8 of the present book. See also the discussion of Jules Humbert-Droz's revelation in his 1971 memoir in Grover Furr and Vladimir L. Bobrov. "Stephen Cohen's Biography of Bukharin: A Study in the Falsehood of Khrushchev-Era 'Revelations.'" *Cultural Logic* 2010 (published January 1, 2012) 1-5.

<sup>116</sup>Furr and Bobrov, 64-67.

Both Pierre Broué and Arch Getty have pointed out that Trotsky lied when he believed it was expedient to do so. For example, Trotsky denied the existence of the bloc, and also denied that he had written to Radek, as Getty discovered. Sven-Eric Holmström showed that Trotsky lied repeatedly concerning the "Hotel Bristol" matter.<sup>117</sup> Broué discovered a number of other issues Trotsky lied about.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>117</sup> Holmström, *New Evidence*.

<sup>118</sup>Broué summarizes some of them in POS.

All the evidence we now have supports the hypothesis that Trotsky advocated assassination. There is no evidence to impugn this hypothesis except for Trotsky's and Sedov's public denials. We are compelled to discount their denials since we know they both lied when they thought it to their advantage to do so in the interests of their conspiratorial work.

Even Pierre Broué, in his day the most prominent Trotskyist historian and researcher in the world, accepted Zborowski's reports as genuine.

Les general [Volkogonov — GF] est capable de passer des documents sous silence, mais ke ne le crois pas capable de falsifier un document.  
(Broué Leon Sedov 210-211)

Translated:

The general is capable of remaining silent about documents but I do not believe that he is capable of falsifying a document

In another chapter of the present book we discuss Zborowski's remarks at greater length and note that John Costello and Oleg Tsarev have verified that they come from Zborowski's NKVD file, to which they gained access in the early 1990s.

Therefore we have good evidence that Trotsky was indeed advocating "terror" despite his vehement professions that he would never do so.

### **The Name of Trotsky**

The first of Trotsky's two essays

The first of Trotsky's two essays in issue #41 of the B.O. (also in the translation), dated December 28, 1934, does not cite any Soviet source that mentions Trotsky's name. Nevertheless, Trotsky stated he has deduced that he himself was the real target:

By dealing this blow to the Zinoviev group Stalin, as we said, aimed at consolidating the ranks of the bureaucracy. But that is only one aspect of the matter. There is another, and no less important, side: *Using the Zinovievist group as a footstool, Stalin is aiming to strike a blow at Trotskyism.* And cost what it may, he must strike that blow. In order to understand the goal and the direction of this new stage of the struggle against "Trotskyism," it is necessary to consider — even though briefly — the international work of the Stalinist faction.

As Trotsky knew then and we know today, he and his followers in the USSR were in a bloc with the Zinovievists. Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others had been arrested. Therefore it was obvious that the Zinovievists had already named their own leaders. Having done that they would have no reason not to also name those with whom they had long been in a bloc: the Trotskyists. And the Trotskyists would not ally with with persons who planned "terror" unless Trotsky had declared that terror was necessary. We

know that the bloc was in touch with Trotsky. So Trotsky had good reason to think that his name would be mentioned by the Zinovievists.

Trotsky claimed that he had predicted this new "amalgam:"

When the first dispatch appeared in which Nikolaiev was said to have been a member of the Leningrad Opposition in 1926, there was no further room for doubt. The new campaign against Zinoviev and Kamenev was not long in following. **At that moment, in a conversation with a friend (I apologize for these personal details, but they are necessary for the understanding of the psychological undercurrents in the case), I said, "The matter will not rest long on this plane; tomorrow they will bring Trotskyism to the fore." To be able to make such a prediction, it was really not necessary to be a prophet.** The December 25 issue of the *Temps* which I received two or three days later contained in a telegraphic dispatch from Moscow the following item: "We must point out ... that as the days go by, Trotsky's name is being mentioned more and more often alongside Zinoviev's." [3] Kirov's corpse and the Zinoviev group thus become preparatory steps for a much wider and bolder scheme: to deal a blow at international Leninism.

Trotsky's name was indeed mentioned, but only because the French newspaper had misidentified as a Trotskyist Grigori Evdokimov, a Zinovievist arrested on December 9 in connection with the Kirov investigation. This was an easy error to make because Evdokimov had been identified as a Trotskyist when, along with many others, he had been expelled from the Party in 1927. Trotsky would of course have known this.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Page 2 of the December 25, 1934 issue of the Paris newspaper *Le Temps* did carry an article that contained these words — but only because of the arrest on December 10 (he was actually arrested on December 9) of Grigori Evdokimov. Evdokimov had been expelled from the Party at the XV Party Congress in 1927 as "an active member of the Trotskyist opposition." Evdokimov is listed in *XV S"ezd Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii — (b). Stenograficheskie otchet* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1928), p. 1247, No. 17 and p. 1318 No. 18. Evdokimov was No. 31 of 121

persons who signed a letter dated December 3, 1927 agreeing to the Party's line and requesting reinstatement; see *ibid.*, p. 1334.

### **"Expose the Scheme In Advance"**

Trotsky claimed that he had deduced that his name would be mentioned and publicized in order to "expose the scheme in advance."

There is only one way to forestall en route the amalgams that are in preparation: Expose the scheme in advance. The Stalinists are trying to mold the public opinion of the world police towards expulsions, extraditions, arrests and other more decisive measures. The Leninists must prepare the public opinion of the world proletariat for these possible events. In this case, as in others, it is necessary to speak out openly about what is; that is also the aim of the present article.

We know today that the NKVD's connecting Trotsky with the Zinovievists was not a "scheme" but the truth. Evidently Trotsky hoped to make what was true appear so patently false as to be predictable in advance and so to dissipate any suspicion about his activities. It was Trotsky's story that was the real "amalgam."

### **"The Indictment"**

In the same issue #41 of B.O. (and in the same English translation) Trotsky published an article titled "The Indictment" and dated it December 30, 1934, two days after the first. In it Trotsky claimed that he was examining the summary of the indictment of the Kirov defendants that was published in the French Communist Party's newspaper *Humanité* of December 28, 1934 along with a short introductory front-page article by future French CP leader Jacques Duclos.

This article by Trotsky contains a number of revealing remarks that we need to examine carefully. We have obtained a copy of this issue of *Humanité* so we can compare Trotsky's remarks against the text of the articles upon which he is commenting.<sup>120</sup>

Short front-page article: "L'acte d'accusation de Nikolaïev montre la complicité de Trotski dans l'assassinat de Kirov" par Jacques Duclos. Summary and discussion of the indictment: "La Revolution se defend. L'accusation contre Nikolaïev et ses complices terrorists revele l'activite contre-revolutionnaire du groupe zinovieviste," p. 3.

Trotsky begins:

Just as one could have expected, **the indictment doesn't mention the Zinoviev-Kamenev group by so much as a word.** In other words: the initial amalgam fell apart into dust.

Anyone who read the *Humanité* article in question can see that Trotsky is lying here. The indictment mentions the Zinoviev-Kamenev group repeatedly. Here are the relevant passages from the article in *Humanité*

"des participants de l'ancien **groupe antisovietique Zinoviev**" (col. 1);

"...par les chefs de **notre organization: Zinoviev, Kamenev** et autres..." (col. 1);

"...pour cacher la participation du **groupe Zinoviev**" (col. 3.)

"...les anciens members du **groupe antisovietique Zinoviev...**" (col. 4);

Therefore, Trotsky's claim that "the initial amalgam fell apart into dust" is false as well. On the contrary: once more the "amalgam" or "consciously false" story is by Trotsky.

Immediately after the words quoted above, Trotsky wrote the following:

However, concurrently it has fulfilled its task by psychologically preparing for another amalgam: in the indictment there emerges suddenly — suddenly for naive people — the name of Trotsky. Nikolaïev, the murderer of Kirov, was — according to his confession — in contact with a consul of a foreign power. During one of Nikolaïev's visits to the consulate, the consul gave

him 5,000 roubles for expenses. Nikolaiev adds, "He told me that he can establish contact with Trotsky, if I give him a letter to Trotsky from the group." And that is all. Period! The indictment does not subsequently return to this episode .... But how and why does my name suddenly appear here? **Is it, perhaps, because the terrorist group was seeking contact with Trotsky? No, even the GPU does not dare to assert this.** Perhaps Trotsky was seeking contact with the terrorist group? No, the indictment does not dare say this either. **The consul himself was the one to assume the initiative** and, while giving Nikolaiev *5,000 roubles on the eve of the terrorist act that was being prepared, he requested a letter addressed to Trotsky.*

This statement of Trotsky's is also untrue. The text of the *Humanité* article reads as follows:

J'ai ensuite demande au consul de nous preter une aide materielle, lui disant que nous lui rendrions l'argent prete aussitot que contre situation financiere changerait.

A l'entrevue suivante, la troisieme oi la quatrieme au consulat, le consul m'informa qu'il etait pret a satisfaire a ma demande et me remit 5.000 roubles.

Il dit qu'il pouvait etablir **la liaison** avec Trotsky si je lui remettais une lettre du groupe a Trotsky.

Translated:

Then I asked the consul to lend us material help and told him that we would return the money borrowed as soon as our financial situation changed.

At the following interview, the third or fourth at the consulate, the consul informed me that he was ready to satisfy my request and gave me 5,000 rubles.

He said that he could establish **the contact** with Trotsky if I gave him a letter from the group to Trotsky.

The first mention in this text of contact with Trotsky is by the consul. Neither the Russian text nor the abbreviated French translation explicitly specifies which party first suggested contact with Trotsky. However, the French text in *Humanité* says "la liaison" — "the contact" — meaning a contact previously mentioned. Since the consul then asks Nikolaev for a letter "from the group to Trotsky" the most obvious interpretation would be that Nikolaev, on behalf of "the group," had asked for the contact with Trotsky.

This passage is identified as an extract from a confession of Nikolaev's of December 20. We know now that it was indeed Nikolaev who, in a part of his December 20 statement not quoted in the indictment, "asked the consul to connect our group with Trotsky."<sup>121</sup>

<sup>121</sup> See Lenoé Document 69 pp. 341-2. Osmund (Åsmund) Egge, *Zagadka Kirova* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011), 175 quotes these passages in the Russian original.

A little further on Trotsky wrote:

The version we have adduced, which unfailingly flows from the indictment itself, if one is able to read it, presupposes consequently that the GPU itself, through the medium of an actual or fake consul, was financing Nikolaiev and was attempting to link him up with Trotsky. This version finds its indirect but very actual confirmation in the fact that all the responsible representatives of the GPU in Leningrad were kicked out immediately after the assassination.

This statement too is false. It is also inconsistent with any logical interpretation of the text of the indictment. In reality the Leningrad NKVD men who were dismissed and later brought to trial were charged with criminal dereliction of duty for failing to protect Kirov. This became known only at the end of January 1935.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>122</sup> See Lenoé 436-445.

Trotsky continued:

The consul himself was the one to assume the initiative and, while giving Nikolaiev 5,000 roubles on the eve of the terrorist act that was being prepared, he requested a letter addressed to Trotsky.

The dismissals of the Leningrad NKVD men in early December do not at all support Trotsky's "theory" that "the GPU itself...was financing Nikolaiev." It is clear from the text of the indictment in *Humanité* that it was Nikolaev who asked the consul for money, not the consul who offered it first: "*J'ai ensuite demande au consul de nous preter une aide materielle...* "

Trotsky was evidently betting that his readers would not compare his own article with the text in *Humanité*, much less with the original Russian text of the indictment published in *Pravda* and in newspapers all over the Soviet Union. Trotsky knew what his readers did not: that through his clandestine supporters within the USSR he really was in contact with the Zinovievite group that had murdered Kirov. Therefore this is yet another "amalgam" of Trotsky's — a version of events he knew to be false. The NKVD (Trotsky calls it by its former name, the GPU) was not financing Nikolaev nor trying to "link him up with Trotsky."

### **Trotsky's Silence about the Bloc**

Towards the conclusion of his second article Trotsky makes the following statement:

The Soviet authorities were compelled to admit openly that the participation of Zinoviev, Kamenev and others was not proved": **The official dispatches generally made no mention of me at all.** The indictment refers only to the anxiety of the "consul" to obtain a letter to Trotsky — without drawing any conclusions.

Then Trotsky comments on "the unbelievable tone of *Humanité*."

The lackeys of *Humanité* write that Trotsky's participation in the murder of Kirov was "proved."



The tone of Duclos' article in *Humanité* might indeed be considered "unbelievable" if, as Trotsky claimed in this article, the only mention of his name was in the passage concerning the unidentified consul.

But Trotsky has concealed from his readers something that anyone who reads the actual article in *Humanité* can see for themselves: numerous references to the bloc of Trotskyists and Zinovievists. The bloc and Trotsky's name is mentioned four times in *Humanité*'s summary article about the indictment:

"Ce groupe se forma sur la base d'un ancien **bloc trotskiste-zinovieviste.**" (col.1)

"Nikolaïev, au cours de ses dépositions, le 13 septembre, confirma qu'il appartenait au groupe d'anciens oppositionnels qui faisait un travail contre révolutionnaire, ajoutant que «*les membres de ce groupe ralliaient la plate-forme du bloc trotskyste-zinovieviste.*» (col. 1)

"L'inculpé Khanik, un des membres actifs de ce groupe, caractérisant ses conceptions «idéologiques et politiques» reconnut que «ces conceptions avaient pour point de départ **la plate-forme du bloc Trotsky-Zinoviev** cherchant de miner l'autorité de la direction actuelle du Parti et à remplacer cette direction par des chefs de notre organisation: Zinoviev, Kamenev et autres qui sont partisans du changement de l'orientation actuelle du Parti.» (col. 1)

"Durant la période 1933-1934 les anciens membres du groupe antisoviétique Zinoviev s'organisèrent à Leningrad en groupe terroriste contre-révolutionnaire illégal, agissant comme tel et se osant comme but de désorganiser la direction du gouvernement soviétique au moyen d'actes terroristes dirigés contre les chefs du pouvoir soviétique et changer ainsi la politique actuelle dans l'esprit de **la plate-forme Zinoviev-Trotsky...**" (col. 4)

In its summary *Humanité* actually *reduced* the number of such references. The original published Russian text of the indictment contains not four but *six* references to the "Zinoviev-Trotsky" or "Trotsky-Zinoviev" bloc or

platform. The term "Trotskyist-Zinovievist bloc" occurs *four* times in the Russian original but only three times in the French version.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>123</sup> *Obvinitelnye materialy po delu podpol'noi kontrrevolutionnoi gruppy zinov'evtsev*. Moscow: Partizdat TsK VKP(b), 1935. This text was published in *Pravda* on December 27, 1934, just before the December trial. We have put this version online in Russian at [https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/obvin\\_zak\\_dec34.html](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/obvin_zak_dec34.html)

Thanks to the materials Broué discovered in the Harvard Trotsky Archive we know that the Soviet-based clandestine Trotskyists asks Trotsky's permission to form a bloc with the Zinovievists, the Sten-Lominadze group, Safarov, and other oppositionists.

At the present stage of our discussion we can conclude that it is unlikely that the Zinovievists would have murdered Kirov without the agreement of the Trotskyists in the bloc. The Trotskyists would at the very least have obtained their leader's—Trotsky's—blessing to collaborate with those who were planning the murder.

This conclusion finds confirmation in a pretrial confession of Genrikh Iagoda, NKVD chief during the Kirov investigation and defendant in the March 1938 Moscow Trial, who confessed to being one of the "Right" conspirators in the bloc with the Trotskyists, Zinovievists, and others.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

He [Avel' Enukidze] informed me that the bloc between the Trotskyists and the Zinovievists was conclusively formed by the organization of a general center, that the Rights also enter into this bloc but have kept their own independent organization and their own special line.

QUESTION: What was their own special line?

ANSWER: Enukidze and I discussed this question for quite a long time. Of course, I cannot now relate our whole conversation in detail

but its general sense comes down to the following:

The Trotskyists and Zinovievists, said Enukidze have now entered into one organization with a single center and a single program. From the viewpoint of our final aims we Rights have nothing special that divides us from the Trotskyists and Zinovievists. Like them, we are also against the general line of the Party. Against Stalin.

In the struggle for our final aims, for bringing them into being, for our attaining power, we recognized all means of struggle, including also terror against the Party leadership and the Soviet government. On this basis the agreement of the Rights was reached with the center of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist bloc.

But what separates us from this bloc? In what does the special nature of our line consist? The fact is this: the Trotskyists and Zinovievists are spurred on by Trotsky who finds himself in exile and so they are in a hurry to accomplish terrorist acts. No doubt it is not easy for Trotsky abroad and he expresses malice, foams at the mouth, and thirsts for blood. He does not permit his center in the Soviet Union to think it over, he demands terrorist acts against members of the CC and does not consider the general situation inside and outside the country, does not consider the fact that such a terrorist act, in isolation from the plan of the conspiracy, will not yield us any concrete result, and might cost us a dozen of our people's heads.

But we, the Rights, said Enukidze, cannot permit and do not wish to permit adventurist acts dictated more by a thirst for revenge and malice than by sound judgment and reason. Of course that does not mean that we are against terrorist acts, that we harbor any sympathy towards Stalin and his Politburo. No! We, like the Trotskyists, are full of hatred and indignation, we, like they, are prepared for terrorist acts, but we will have recourse to such acts when they suit our general plan. "We are not in danger, we are not in emigration. All of our people are inside the Soviet Union, we have not taken any serious blows. We can prepare ourselves more calmly, seriously prepare for the seizure of power and have our own plans," — said Enukidze. (Genrikh Iagoda 169-171)

What Iagoda states here is consistent with everything else we know about the bloc and about Trotsky's support for terror. In other passages Iagoda discusses the bloc's involvement in the Kirov murder in a manner that is consistent with the confessions and indictment in the Kirov murder case of December 1934 and with the confessions, both pretrial and during the trial, of Kamenev and Zinoviev.

We do not know why Trotsky did not wish to acknowledge that there really was a Trotskyist-Zinovievite bloc or that the bloc included other opposition groups. Pierre Broué and Vadim Rogovin, skilled researchers but devoted Trotskyists, suggested that Trotsky told his lies in order to save his followers inside the USSR. But this apologetic explanation makes no sense. If Trotsky had admitted only what the Soviets had already made public he would have put no one in danger who was not already known to the Soviets. Therefore Trotsky could not have been trying to defend his Soviet-based followers or to fool "Stalin" and the NKVD.

Trotsky may have believed that he had to preserve "plausible deniability" in order to fight attempts by the Soviet government to deny him any place of exile. Trotsky may also have believed that denying only *some* Soviet charges — for instance, involvement in terror — while admitting to others like the bloc, would not be credible. Perhaps Trotsky feared that he would lose many of his followers if he were to concede that the Soviet NKVD was telling the truth *some* of the time.

Whatever his reasoning, Trotsky decided to deny everything the Soviets charged him and his followers with, including charges that we now know to be true. Given that the bloc was mentioned prominently in the Kirov indictment and that he had decided to deny everything the Soviet prosecution said, Trotsky could do one of two things. He could quote those parts of the indictment that mentioned the "Trotskyist-Zinovievite bloc" and then deny the existence of such a bloc. Or he could ignore those passages — in effect, act as though there were no such passages in the indictment.

Trotsky chose the latter course of action. In doing so he ran a considerable risk. Anyone who read the article in *Humanité* — let alone the original article in *Pravda* — and compared it with what Trotsky had written would immediately notice Trotsky's failure to even mention—much less deny—the

repeated allegations in the indictment that the Zinovievite terrorists were in a bloc with the Trotskyists.

Any such reader would ask: "Why does Trotsky remain silent about these, the most striking allegations in the indictment?" Once noticed, Trotsky's failure not only to deny the charge of a bloc with the Zinovievite terrorists, but even to mention it — if only to call it "yet another amalgam," etc. — would strike any reader as suspicious. Failure to deny a serious charge is often interpreted as a tacit admission.

Trotsky must have believed that the risk of openly discussing and denying the Trotskyist-Zinovievite bloc was greater than that of simply passing over it in silence. This suggests that he was writing with a sympathetic, even credulous, readership in mind, or at least one favorably predisposed towards anti-Stalin propaganda, one that would be unlikely to compare the *Humanité* or *Pravda* articles with Trotsky's account. Trotsky's lies were aimed above all at duping his own followers.

This is also suggested by this habit of inserting into his writings attacks on Stalin in the form of gratuitous and unverified remarks. Two examples occur in the first of his two essays here. Towards the end of this essay Trotsky makes the following claims:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

In 1926, N.K. Krupskaya, who along with Zinoviev and Kamenev then adhered to the Left Opposition, said, "Were Lenin alive, he would most assuredly be in a GPU prison."

It would be difficult to prove that Krupskaya did not make this statement. The burden of proof is on Trotsky to prove she did. Besides, it is more than unlikely. In 1926 not a single Oppositionist had been imprisoned — not Zinoviev, not Kamenev, not Trotsky, nor any of their supporters. No matter how opposed Krupskaya was to Stalin's political line in 1926, the idea that she could have said that Lenin would have been in prison is not credible.

Moreover, no one else had any independent knowledge of this purported remark. Boris Bazhanov, who worked from 1923 as Stalin's secretary until he fled the USSR in 1928, published the first volume of his strongly anti-Stalin memoirs, *I Was Stalin's Secretary*, in Paris in 1930. Bazhanov recorded many insulting rumors about Stalin. But this one only gets into his book in editions published after the French edition of Trotsky's biography *Staline*, which Bazhanov credits as his source, therefore after 1948:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

In his Secretariat Stalin did not hold back and from some of his phrases, remarks, and intonations I saw clearly what he really thought of Lenin. Moreover, others understood this too, for example, Krupskaja, who said a little later (in 1926): "If Volodia were alive he would now be in prison" (according to Trotsky in his book about Stalin, French edition, p. 523).<sup>124</sup>

<sup>124</sup> See Bazhanov, *Vospominaniia byshego sekretaria Stalina* ("Memoirs of Stalin's former secretary"), Moscow 1990, Chapter 7; online at [http://www.hrono.ru/libris/lib\\_b/bazhan07.php](http://www.hrono.ru/libris/lib_b/bazhan07.php) The French edition of Trotsky's biography of Stalin was published by Grasset (Paris) in 1948.

An otherwise unattested anecdote such as this one would be credited only by persons who were accustomed to accepting Trotsky's unsupported statements at face value — that is, by Trotskyists.

Trotsky also stated the following as fact:

During the last two years of his life, Lenin saw in the bureaucracy the principal danger to the revolution and in Stalin the most consummate representative of this danger. Lenin fell ill and died during a feverish preparation of the struggle against the Stalinist apparatus.

This is not true either. There is no evidence of any struggle by Lenin "against the Stalinist apparatus." That was true at the time, and we can confirm it today, since the publication of the relevant documents of Lenin's

last year of life since 1989. Unlike the previous remark which, in theory at least, *might* have been uttered by Lenin privately to Trotsky alone, no "feverish preparation" of struggle "against the Stalinist apparatus" could have been kept secret.

This is part of Trotsky's attempt to portray himself as Lenin's rightful successor, to counter Stalin's similar claim that *he* was Lenin's rightful successor.<sup>125</sup> The genuineness of the documents called "Lenin's Testament" has been called into serious question by research based upon the originals.<sup>126</sup> But even if they are genuine, as they were believed genuine at the time, Lenin trusted Stalin — and, apparently, only him — enough to ask Stalin alone to give him poison if he, Lenin, should find the pain of his illness unbearable.

<sup>125</sup> For a brief discussion of these issues, translations of some of the relevant documents, and references to others, see Furr, *Khrushchev Lied* pp. 11-19 and 232-239.

<sup>126</sup> The main study of this question is the monumental work by V.A. Sakharov, *"Politicheskoe zaveshchanie" Lenina. Real'nost' istorii i mify politiki*. Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 2003. A very short summary by the author is *Podlog zaveshchania vozhdia. Kto avtor?* Available at a number of internet sites including <http://stalinism.narod.ru/vieux/saharov.htm>

## **Conclusion**

The major finding of our study is dramatic. Trotsky did not only deny the bloc of Trotskyists, Zinovievists, Rightists, and other oppositionists, the very, the very evidence of whose real existence was discovered by Pierre Broué in the Harvard Trotsky Archive. He denied his contacts with Zinoviev, Kamenev, Piatakov, and Radek. He also denied accusations made at the Moscow Trials that he had had contact with still other oppositionists, contacts that Broué has verified.

These accusation were central to all three Moscow trials. This means *that not just Trotsky's essay and other discussions of the Kirov murder but all of*

*Trotsky's essays about the Moscow Trials contain deliberate falsifications.*

Once Trotsky had embarked on the practice of declaring that all the evidence in the Kirov assassination, and then in all the future prosecutions of former oppositionists, was faked from beginning to end, there was no turning back. To admit that he had lied would have done more damage to his movement and his credibility than admitting even a part of the truth from the beginning. Unwilling to risk the consequences, it is only logical that Trotsky would stick to this story — that it was Stalin who had fabricated everything.

This means that Trotsky spent the rest of his life repeating and elaborating a picture of the Moscow Trials and of Stalin that he knew to be, at least in significant part, a lie of his own making. Beginning no later than his essay on the Kirov assassination in late December 1934 Trotsky concocted a series of "amalgams" to the effect that the trials were nothing more than frame-ups by Stalin, the NKVD, and the Prosecutor. Trotsky knew what he wrote was not the truth but his own fabrication. His followers and the broader readership of his articles in the mainstream press did *not* know this.

A devoted Trotskyist all his life, Pierre Broué shrank from drawing the obvious conclusions from his own discovery that Trotsky had lied about the bloc and other contacts with oppositionists. For example, Broué did not reconsider the two volumes that the Dewey Commission published. How likely is it that the commission would have found Trotsky "Not Guilty"<sup>127</sup> if its members had known that Trotsky really had been in a bloc with the Zinovievists and Rightists; that he really had been in secret contact with Zinoviev, Kamenev, Radek, and Piatakov, whom he had publicly excoriated, and with others whom he had denied contacting? But Broué continued to defend the Commission and its findings as though the documents he himself had discovered in the Trotsky Archives did not exist. We discuss the Dewey Commission in other chapters of the present study.<sup>128</sup>

<sup>127</sup> The title of the Dewey Commission's report is *Not Guilty. Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Charges Made Against Leon Trotsky in the*



*Moscow Trials*, John Dewey, chairman. New York, London, Harper & Brothers, 1938.

<sup>128</sup> See Broué, "L'historien decant la vie. Charles A. Beard et les proces de Moscou." CahLT 19 (1984), 68-77.

Broué did realize that these discoveries would necessitate a complete revision of the conventional anticommunist and Trotskyist view of the Moscow Trials:

I think that the new data concerning the "Opposition bloc," the organization of two Communist blocs of Oppositions, the attempt to unify the Communist Opposition, definitively destroys all the legends and preconceived ideas about an all-might, blood-thirsty, Machiavellian Stalin. (Broué POS 110)

But even this very cautious statement, in which Broué carefully limits the implications of Trotsky's lying, is ignored by anticommunists and Trotskyists generally. It appears that, like Trotsky himself, they are afraid to concede that *any* part of the Moscow Trials testimony was true. As we have shown in Part One, to do so would be to open a "Pandora's box," a cascade of other discoveries that destroys what we have called the "anti-Stalin paradigm," an essential part of which is that the Moscow Trials were frame-ups of innocent defendants.

### **Trotsky and Anticommunism**

Trotsky has sometimes been called an anticommunist. It is worth recalling this epithet in light of the facts uncovered in this essay.

On the one hand, Trotsky considered himself to be a true communist and his movement the true communist movement. In that sense he was not an anticommunist as that term is normally understood.

However, one understanding of "anticommunist" is someone who deliberately fabricates false tales of terrible crimes which he then blames on communists. This is the sense in which it is logical to call Nikita

Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" "anticommunist." It was filled with deliberate falsehoods. It provided ammunition, grist for the mills, of pro-capitalist anticommunists.

In the long run Trotsky's "amalgams," like those of Khrushchev, were more effective than similar lies invented or spread abroad by opponents of communism.<sup>129</sup> Trotsky and Khrushchev had spent decades as leading communists themselves. Their "revelations" — for such they claimed their deliberate lies to be — had far more credibility than those of overtly pro-capitalist propagandists.

<sup>129</sup> For a sample of Khrushchev's lies about Stalin see Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*.

As far as I can tell, Trotsky was the very first writer to characterize the Soviet Union as "totalitarian." Certainly it was Trotsky who put this term in us on the Left. Prior to Trotsky's use of the word in his "amalgam" about the Moscow Trials the word "totalitarian" simply meant a one-party state — something that Trotsky himself had advocated. Trotsky extended the use of the word "totalitarian" to accommodate his "amalgam" that Stalin had fabricated all the charges against the former oppositionists in all the trials, as well as all of the confessions. Trotsky knew that this was not so. He knew that a number — perhaps many, perhaps even all — of the charges against and statements of the defendants, including those against and by his own followers, were true. But he pretended that they were all grotesque fabrications and shouted that falsehood to all the world.

Trotsky's term "amalgam" has become common usage in the anticommunist Soviet historiography, a term regularly employed by historians as though it described an established practice on Stalin's part. Witness the following quotation from Oleg Khlevniuk, one of the leading anticommunist historians of the Stalin period:

As in other political affairs of the Stalinist era, the Syrtsov-Lominadze case was, to use Trotsky's apt characterization of the 1936-38 show trials, "an amalgam," a peculiar combination of real facts and falsifications.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Oleg V. Khlevniuk, "Stalin, Syrtsov, Lominadze: Preparations for the 'Second Great Breakthrough.'" *The Lost Politburo Transcripts. From Collective Rule to Stalin's Dictatorship*. Ed. Paul R. Gregory and Norman Naimark. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution (2008), 79.

In reality, it does describe an established practice — but by Trotsky rather than Stalin.

Not the least of the conclusions we may draw from the discovery of Trotsky's "amalgams" is this: that there is no obvious limit to them. We have established that Trotsky's essay on the Kirov assassination was full of lies, one after the other. Some were obvious, if anyone had bothered to check them. Others, involving the truth about Trotsky's bloc with the Zinovievists, Rights, and others, were closely guarded secrets, known only to Trotsky, his son, and one of his most loyal secretaries, Jean van Heijenoort.

This means that we should take a fresh look at the allegation that Trotsky collaborated with the Germans and Japanese. We know that Trotsky lied when he claimed that he would never form a bloc with Zinoviev and Kamenev, and also lied when he ridiculed the idea that he could ever have recourse to "terror," i.e. assassination. Yet we know that he did both of these things.

We have previously attempted to gather and study the Soviet evidence that Trotsky collaborated with Germany and Japan. Now we have even less reason to question that Soviet evidence than we had before. In the present chapter we have suggested that the fact that Trotsky falsely claimed that Zinoviev and Kamenev were falsely charged with plotting the restoration of capitalism is consistent with the hypothesis that Trotsky really did collaborate with the Germans and Japanese. We will explore this point in more detail in volume two of this study.

Just as we have discovered that Trotsky was lying, it turns out that, in each case where we can check, Soviet prosecutor Vyshinsky and the Moscow Trial defendants were telling the truth. In another chapter of the present book we examine other Moscow Trial allegations that Trotsky denied. Likewise, now that we know Trotsky attacked Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Radek to cover up his continuing contacts with them it would be

worthwhile to examine whether Trotsky remained in contact with others with whom he had once been in open alliance but later supposedly broke with, like POUM<sup>27</sup> leader Andres Nin.

<sup>131</sup> This is the common acronym for Partido Obrero de Unificacion Marxista — Spain.

## Chapter 14. Trotsky and the Charge of "Armed Intervention"

### Introduction

On December 1, 1934, Sergei M. Kirov, First Secretary of the Bolshevik Party in Leningrad, was assassinated outside his office in the Smolny Institute by Leonid Nikolaev, an unemployed Party member. Within a few days Nikolaev was naming men whom he claimed were his associates in a clandestine oppositional group who supported Grigory Zinoviev, Leningrad Party leader before Kirov.

Living in France at the time Leon Trotsky followed these events in *Humanité*.<sup>1</sup> *Humanité* covered the Kirov murder case closely, often summarizing articles in *Pravda* and *Izvestiia* supplemented by summary and analysis written by their own staff. Sometimes *Humanité* printed translations of important documents verbatim or in long excerpts.

By consulting the pages of *Humanité* and supplementing them with copies of the two Moscow papers we have read the same articles that Trotsky read and have compared his coverage of the Kirov case with that of his sources. In doing this we have discovered a number of instances where Trotsky falsified the contents of the articles on the Kirov murder and investigation. One of these instances of falsification concerns the allegation that Zinoviev and his close associate Lev Kamenev had been charged with planning "armed intervention."

### Trotsky's allegations

Trotsky wrote about the supposed accusation of "armed intervention" in two issues of his publication, *Biulleten' Oppozitsii* (in English, "Bulletin of the [Russian] Opposition," henceforth B.O.) We reproduce Trotsky's words below:

B.O. #42 February 1935:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

The first government communique and official articles after the arrest of the Moscow group of Old Bolsheviks said that Zinoviev-Kamenev and their friends had taken as their aim "the restoration of the capitalism system" and they were trying to provoke "armed intervention" from abroad (by the intermediacy of a consul — from Latvia!). No serious person could believe it; that is understood.

...

Stalin's lackeys, who cover themselves with the name of "leaders" of the Communist International, don't, however, recoil at the assertion that Zinoviev, Kamenev and the others "have themselves admitted their crimes." Which ones? Preparation of the restoration of capitalism? Preparation of armed intervention?\

...

Let us admit that Zinoviev's criticism was false. Let us even grant that the lackeys were right to judge criticism directed against them "criminal." But are we to see in that the "restoration of capitalism" and "armed intervention"? What connection is there between the demand for a more revolutionary policy against the bourgeoisie and a program for "the restoration of a bourgeois regime"? Where has common sense gone? It is completely buried beneath a monstrous defecation of infamy.<sup>2</sup>

B.O. #43 April 1935:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

In the government communique as well as in numerous article in *Pravda* there was, as is well known, the direct and categorical assertion that Zinoviev and Kamenev *had as their goal the restoration of capitalism and military intervention...*<sup>3</sup>

Today Maisky, in the rank of ambassador, accuses "Zinovievists" and "Trotskyists" of striving to **provoke military intervention** in order to restore capitalism...<sup>4</sup>

...

This will probably be said by Stalinists, who will add for good measure that we have changed our position in order the more easily to provoke military intervention.

### **Trotsky's "Amalgam"**

Trotsky did not give an specific references to the "first government communique" — in Russian the word is in the plural, *soobshcheniia*, "communiques" — or "numerous" "official" articles "in *Pravda*" or anywhere else. This is understandable, for there were none to give. These statements of Trotsky's are false. Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others in the "Moscow Center" who were to be tried in mid-January 1935 were not charged with planning "armed intervention" any more than they were with the "restoration of capitalism."<sup>5</sup> Trotsky was lying.

I have searched all the issues of *Humanité*, the newspaper of the French Communist Party that was Trotsky's source of information about what the Russian press was publishing. I have reproduced below all the passages where "armed" or "foreign intervention," or language to that effect, are cited in any articles dealing with the Kirov assassination or its aftermath, including the arrests of Zinoviev, Kamenev and others, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others in the "Moscow Center" are not accused in any of them.

*Humanité* Dec. 28 p. 1 col. 6 bottom:

EN 3e PAGE

**A Leningrad**, les adhérents du groupe étaient en liaison avec le consul d'une puissance capitaliste et escomptaient que l'assassinat de Kîrov provoquerait une **intervention étrangère**.

André Marty article, p. 2 col. 1:

« L'instruction a établi que le groupe n'espérant pas que le meurtre de Kirov servirait de signal à un mouvement intérieur, du pays contre le Parti communiste de l'U.R.S.S. et contre le pouvoir soviétique, comptait sur l'aide directe du dehors, sur **l'intervention de l'armée** et sur l'appui de certains Etats étrangers »

Article on Kirov indictment p. 3 col. 3

Aidés par l'étranger!

Cependant, ne comptant pas sur la réalisation de telles actions à « l'intérieur du pays », le groupe TABLAIT DIRECTEMENT SUR L'AIDE « DU DEHORS , " SUR **L'INTERVENTION ARMEE ET L'AIDE DE CERTAINS ETATS ETRANGERS.**

L'espoir de **l'intervention** comme moyen unique de renverser le pouvoir soviétique caractérise nettement le point de vue de l'inculpé Nikolaïev qui ne le cachait pas à ses amis intimes.

L'instruction a établi que Nikolaïev, conformément à un accord préalable avec Kotolynov, a rendu visite à plusieurs reprises à un certain consul de Leningrad...

*Humanité* Dec. 29 p. 3 col. 2:

« Détail caractéristique les anciens partisans de Zinoviev, qui basaient tous leurs plans antisoviétiques sur le secours de la bourgeoisie internationale par la voie de « **l'intervention** , " après avoir noué des relations avec le consul étranger, essayent maintenant, par son intermédiaire de se lier avec la contrerévolution.

*Humanité* Dec. 31 1934 p. 3 col. 5

Les *Isvestia* écrivent dans un éditorial « La sentence qui a frappé les assassins de Kirov est l'expression directe (le la volonté de millions de travailleurs remplis d'indignation et d'une haine profonde envers les terroristes fascistes, restes de l'opposition de Zinoviev, qui, s'étant assuré que leur activité antisoviétique ne peut pas trouver de sympathie



dans les masses, sont entrés; non seulement dans la voie de la terreur, mais ont misé sur **l'intervention de l'étranger**. Rien ne peut désorganiser le pouvoir soviétique ni arrêter la marche triomphale du socialisme. »

*Humanité* Jan. 8 1935 p. 2 col. 1:

C'est Nikolaïev qui parle. « Le groupe tablait directement sur l'aide dit dehors, sur **l'intervention armée** et l'aide de certains États étrangers. »

*Humanité* Jan. 8 1935 p. 3 col. 7:

Les terroristes et leurs liaisons LE CONSUL COMPLICE DES ASSASSINS DE KIROV FUT L'ALLIÉ DES BLANCS ET L'HOMME DE HITLER

Moscou (Du notre correspondant particulier).

— On sait que le consul de Lettonie, qui eut contact avec les terroristes révolutionnaires et qui est considéré comme complice des assassins de Kirov, a été rappelé par son gouvernement, et l'ambassadeur de ce pays en U.R.S.S. a pris connaissance des pièces de l'instruction. L'activité du consul en question ne fut nullement une activité diplomatique: elle comprenait une aide pécuniaire aux terroristes contre-révolutionnaires, la participation à la préparation de leur fuite à l'étranger, le concours à l'introduction d'autres terroristes en U.R.S.S. et la préparation d'une situation facilitant **une intervention antisoviétique armée**.

Or, chacun comprend qu'une intervention ne se fait pas par de petits États: même dans le cas où les forces armées de pareils États envahissent le territoire d'un grand État, elles jouent seulement le rôle d'éclaireurs pour les armées de puissances beaucoup plus importantes, dont elles remplissent la mission militaire, politique et sociale.

Il n'est donc pas difficile de supposer que les derniers actes du diplomate si étrange de ce petit État cachaient des forces de beaucoup plus d'envergure pour le compte desquelles il travaillait en réalité.

## **The Charge of "Armed Intervention"**

The accusation of attempting to provoke, counting upon, or hoping for "armed" or "foreign" "intervention" was not applied to Zinoviev, Kamenev, or others of the "Moscow Center" at all. No Soviet documents charge Zinoviev, Kamenev, and the other Old Bolsheviks arrested and tried together with them with planning, counting on, etc., "armed intervention." It was applied in newspaper articles and by other Soviet courts only to the members of the Leningrad Center of Zinovievists who had conspired successfully to murder Sergei Kirov. But even against them it was not applied "officially" in any "government communique." It was not mentioned either in the indictment, or in the sentence.

Trotsky fabricated this false story. He must have had some reason for doing so. To discover that reason is the goal of the present chapter.

Beginning with the January 1937 Moscow trial this same accusation was leveled at Trotsky himself, by his own followers and then by the Soviet court. Thereafter the accusation of plotting "armed intervention" was repeated and elaborated. This cannot be mere coincidence. There must be some relationship between Trotsky's false claim in 1934 and 1935 that Zinoviev and Kamenev had been accused of plotting "armed intervention" and the public accusations beginning in January, 1937 by the Soviet prosecutor and by Trotsky's followers charging that it was Trotsky himself who was plotting "armed intervention."

In the present chapter we investigate that connection. Our hypothesis is as follows: Trotsky suspected that, at some point in the near future, members of the bloc would testify that one aspect of the bloc's activities had been the plotting of an armed intervention. (This is in fact what happened, only much later, in 1936-1937).

The only way Trotsky could successfully "predict" that such an accusation would be forthcoming is if he knew that it was true and therefore that one or more of the defendants who were members of the bloc was likely to reveal it.

## Why Did Trotsky Run the Risk of Discovery?

This threat accounts for Trotsky's lying about the "armed intervention" charge. Trotsky took a considerable risk in telling this lie. It would have been easy for anyone who checked either the Russian newspapers or *Humanité* to see that Trotsky was lying about the accusations against Zinoviev and Kamenev. It is logical to think that he only assumed this risk out of some powerful motive.

Trotsky was once again composing a false story or "amalgam" of which the essential part is that it was Stalin who is guilty of an "amalgam." Trotsky continued to derisively repeat the falsehood that Zinoviev and Kamenev were accused of planning "armed intervention" until the April 1935 issue of the B.O. After that he abandoned it. Unlike the "restoration of capitalism" story, which Trotsky was still repeating at the Dewey Commission testimony in April 1937, his false claim that Zinoviev and Kamenev were charged with plotting "armed insurrection" disappears from his writing after April 1935. (We discuss Trotsky's "restoration of capitalism" "amalgam" in the next chapter.)

In the case of the "Zinovievite-Trotskyite bloc" story we know why Trotsky repeated his falsehood. Such a bloc did exist and Trotsky decided to deny it completely. This decision forced Trotsky to concoct a different version of the Kirov murder — one he knew to be false — and foist it on the world in order to conceal the existence of the bloc. Trotsky argued tirelessly that the story of the bloc was an invention, an "amalgam" of Stalin's, when he knew that in reality it was he himself who was composing an "amalgam." It was Trotsky, not "Stalin," i.e. the Soviet prosecution, who was lying.

The clandestine Zinovievists who had been arrested for the Kirov murder had started to confess and had named their leader, Zinoviev. It was a safe guess that soon they would also name Trotsky, whose followers were in the bloc with the Zinovievists. We know from the Harvard Trotsky Archive that Trotsky had given his approval for the formation of this bloc. So Trotsky "predicted" that his name would come up in connection with the Kirov investigation. Sure enough, it did. Trotsky was able to "predict" that his

name would become implicated in the Kirov murder story while claiming that this was yet another of Stalin's "amalgams."

In the next chapter we suggest that the same logic holds in the case of the "restoration of capitalism" "amalgam." There we show that the "restoration of capitalism" story more or less accurately reflected the economic plan that Trotsky had been proposing since 1930. It also reflected the "Riutin Platform," which was really the platform of the whole bloc of Zinovievists, Trotskyists, and Rightists. In addition we have evidence from the January 1937 and March 1938 Moscow Trials testimony that Trotsky was instructing the leaders of the clandestine Trotskyist group in the Soviet Union that a reversion towards capitalism would be the price of cooperation of the capitalist powers, especially Germany and Japan, in connection with the overthrow of the Stalin regime.

As in the case of the "Zinovievite-Trotskyite bloc," "name of Trotsky" and "restoration of capitalism" "amalgams," once we realize that this "armed intervention" story is false we are left to wonder why Trotsky chose to tell this lie and to tell it repeatedly. Why did he fabricate false accusations instead of simply dealing with the real ones? Trotsky must have thought that he had much to lose if he did not tell this lie.<sup>6</sup>

### **Trotsky's strategy: "Expose the scheme in advance."**

In the previous chapter we examined Trotsky's reactions to the Kirov murder and discussed his strategy of pretending to "predict" that which he knew or could reasonably expect would follow:

There is only one way to forestall en route the amalgams that are in preparation: *Expose the scheme in advance*. The Stalinists are trying to mold the public opinion of the world police towards expulsions, extraditions, arrests and other more decisive measures. The Leninists must prepare the public opinion of the world proletariat for these possible events. In this case, as in others, it is necessary to speak out openly about what is; that is also the aim of the present article.

Trotsky restated this strategy in his final speech to the Dewey Commission in April 1937:

The author of these lines and his closest co-thinkers followed attentively the intrigues and provocations of the GPU, and **in advance**, on the basis of particular facts and symptoms, **warned time and again**, in letters as well as in the press, **against Stalin's provocative plans and against amalgams in preparation.** (CLT 486)

We propose that the only way Trotsky could have thought that his mention of the accusation in the newspaper article presaged an "official" accusation to come was if that accusation were true.

This time Trotsky's attempt "to expose the scheme in advance" misfired somewhat. No accusation that Zinoviev and Kamenev had been relying upon "armed intervention" surfaced during the Kirov murder investigation, indictment, trial, and sentencing, nor in the articles or indictment concerning the arrests and trial of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and their followers in the "Moscow Center."

Still, Trotsky must have calculated that the "armed intervention" allegation might come to the fore sooner or later. Trotsky could not prevent this from happening. The only thing he could do was to "get out in front of" the accusation by claiming that he had already "exposed the scheme in advance." We know that this was his strategy in "predicting" that his own name would surface during the investigation of the Kirov murder by Zinovievist members of the bloc.

In the present case our hypothesis is as follows: Trotsky calculated that future confessions would include the charge of "armed insurrection." This is what led Trotsky to anticipate this accusation by "predicting" it.

There are a number of reasons Trotsky could have believe that the "armed intervention" accusation would be forthcoming:

- Trotsky could have known that Zinoviev and Kamenev had been planning for "armed intervention," and therefore that their followers would probably expose this fact.

- Trotsky could have known that the Rights, who were also part of the bloc, were planning for "armed intervention," and therefore their followers too would probably expose the fact.

In any of the Zinovievists or Rights confessed they would certainly inculcate the Trotskyists and Trotsky himself. In either of these cases the Trotskyists, as a constituent part of the bloc, would have known about and agreed to this tactic. That means that Trotsky himself must have at least approved it.

In fact we have good evidence from the Moscow Trials transcripts, from Budyonny's letter to Voroshilov, and from Piatakov's recently-declassified NKVD file, that Trotsky actively promoted armed intervention against the USSR. We discuss the first two sources in the present volume and will examine Piatakov's NKVD file in the next volume.

- Trotsky himself had been advocating "armed intervention" to his supporters in the USSR. The Zinovievists and Rights would have known about this. Even if they did not know about it, the Zinovievists had named Trotsky. So the arrests of yet more Trotskyists would have been imminent and they might well reveal that Trotsky was relying on "armed intervention."

The evidence now available supports this last scenario. We will present the evidence that supports this as a hypothesis.

But in any case Trotsky's "amalgam," or lie, about "armed intervention" must be accounted for. In the rest of this essay we will give:

- the evidence that Trotsky was planning "armed intervention" as a means to gain power in the USSR;
- evidence that corroborates or confirms this evidence;
- a consideration of other possible hypotheses that might be cited to explain Trotsky's repeated lie that Zinoviev and Kamenev were accused of plotting armed intervention.

**Evidence: The January 1937 Moscow Trial**

We have evidence from the January 1937 and March 1938 Moscow Trials testimony that Trotsky was instructing the leaders of the clandestine Trotskyist group in the Soviet Union that a reversion to capitalism might well be the price of cooperation of the capitalist power, especially Germany and Japan. The Trotskyist leader on trial also testified that they might have to rely on the military might of capitalist powers in order to seize power.

In his opening statement at the 1937 Trial Andrei Y. Vyshinsky, the Soviet prosecutor, summarized pretrial testimony by Karl Radek:

The main task which the parallel centre set itself was **the forcible overthrow of the Soviet government** with the object of changing the social and state system existing in the U.S.S.R. L.D. Trotsky, and on his instructions the parallel Trotskyite centre, aimed at **seizing power with the aid of foreign states** with the object of restoring capitalist social relations in the U.S.S.R. (5)

Proceeding from this program, L.D. Trotsky and his accomplices in the parallel center entered into negotiations with agents of foreign states with the object of overthrowing the Soviet government with the aid of **armed intervention.** (6)

The investigation has established that L.D. Trotsky entered into negotiations with one of the leaders of the German National-Socialist Party with a view to **waging a joint struggle against the Soviet Union.**

L.D. Trotsky and his accomplices in the U.S.S.R. considered it necessary, during the forthcoming war, to adopt an active defeatist position and to do all they could **to assist the foreign interventionists in their fight against the U.S.S.R.**

For example, the accused Pyatakov, relating the conversation he had with L. Trotsky in December 1935 near Oslo, testified:

As regards the war, L.D. Trotsky spoke of this very explicitly. From his point of view, war is inevitable in the near future.

He, Trotsky, considered it absolutely necessary to adopt a distinctly defeatist attitude in this war. He considers that the bloc's coming into power can certainly be hastened by **the defeat of the U.S.S.R. in war.** (Vol. I, p. 258) (10)

Piatakov's testimony:

I recall that Trotsky said in this directive that without the necessary support from foreign states, a government of the bloc could neither come to power nor hold power. It was therefore a question of arriving at the necessary preliminary agreement with the most aggressive foreign states, like Germany and Japan, and that **he, Trotsky, on his part had already taken the necessary steps in establishing contacts both with the Japanese and the German governments.** (53)

...later, in the middle of the 1935, Sokolnikov himself told me of this step and recounted the conversation in which he had sanctioned **Trotsky's negotiations with the Japanese government.** (53-4)

About the end of 1935 Radek received a long letter—instructions from Trotsky. In this directive Trotsky advanced two possible variants of our coming into power. The first variant was the possibility of our coming into power before a war, and the second variant, during a war. Trotsky visualized the first variant resulting from a concentrated terrorist blow, as he said....**The second variant, which in Trotsky's opinion was the more probable, was a military defeat.** (55)

In this connection Trotsky again said that in his opinion war was imminent, that he knew for a fact that it was a question not of, say, a five-year period, but of a short time....The other task was a more practical one: to train cadres for the event of war, that is to say, **to train diversionists and those who would engage in destruction, helpers for the fascist attack on the Soviet Union.** (62)

In connection with the international question Trotsky very emphatically insisted on the necessity of **preparing diversionists cadres.** He rebuked us for not engaging energetically enough in diversive, wrecking and terrorist activities. He told me that he had



come to an absolutely definite agreement with the fascist German government and with the Japanese government that they would adopt a favourable attitude in the event of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc coming to power. (64)

First, the German fascists promise to adopt a favourable attitude towards the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc and to support it if it comes to power, either in time of war, ... (64)

...since Hess and Trotsky had discussed the question of war and a military *coup d'état*, accession to power, that is to say, the defeat of the U.S.S.R.—Hess, of course, quite naturally raised the point: Well, you are fighting over there; while in this case we are a much better organized and a better armed force. It is clear once we negotiate you must go the whole length. **In the event of military attack the destructive forces of the Trotskyite organizations which would act within the country must be co-ordinated with the forces from without acting under the guidance of German fascism.** The diversive and wrecking activity which is being conducted by the Trotskyite-Zinovievite organization within the Soviet Union must be carried out under the instructions of Trotsky, which are to be agreed upon with the German General Staff.

Towards the end there was talk to the effect that, say, the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc comes into power **with the aid of certain external forces, they put us into power.** (65)

The testimony of Trotskyist defendant G.Y. Sokol'nikov addresses the question of "armed intervention" most directly:

VYSHINSKY: And what about the aggressors?

SOKOLNIKOV: We were prepared to come to an agreement with them, the result of which would be that in the course of war and as a result of the defeat of the Soviet Union, the government of the bloc would come to power.

VYSHINSKY: It would therefore be correct to say that you were banking on **help from foreign interventionists?**

SOKOLNIKOV: You see ... perhaps it is something worse ...

VYSHINSKY: I am not speaking of what is worse or of what is better. I am not passing moral judgment. I am establishing facts. I, as the representative of the State prosecution, assert that you were directly staking on **the assistance of foreign aggressors, on the assistance of foreign interventionists.** Is my assertion correct?

SOKOLNIKOV: It is correct that we calculated on the help of foreign aggressors. Interventionists—I would not say. (156)

### **The Rights Also Confessed To Plotting "Armed Intervention"**

Genrikh Iagoda was head of the OGPU and, between 1934 and October 1936, Commissar of Internal Affairs and head of the police force known as the NKVD.<sup>7</sup> Iagoda himself was arrested at the beginning of March 1937 and began to confess to being an important participant in the conspiracy of the Right oppositionists. In 1997 pretrial confessions of Iagoda were published in a small academic edition in Russia. These confessions are routinely cited as genuine by mainstream scholars of the Soviet period.

Iagoda testifies about the bloc's relations with Germany:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

I recall that Karakhan talks about two variants of the agreement: one, if the center of the conspiracy should come to power independently, without the Germans' help; the second, **if German bayonets were to help the conspirators to take power during wartime.**

In the first variant the following conditions would apply:

1. The cancellation by the USSR of agreements about alliance with France and Czechoslovakia.
2. The conclusion of military and economic agreements with Germany.
3. The liquidation of the Comintern.
4. The presentation to Germany of [rights to] long-term concessions of sources of chemical resources in the USSR (the Kola peninsula, petroleum sources, and so on).
5. The establishment in the USSR of a political and economic system that would guarantee to German companies the full possibility of development of their private initiative on the territory of the USSR.

In the case of the second variant, i.e. **in the event [the bloc] came to power during wartime with German help**, these same conditions would hold, plus some territorial concessions, but I do not remember exactly what they were. Karakhkan himself should confess about this more fully and accurately.

...

QUESTION: And how was the coming to power in the case of war imagined?

ANSWER: Through an uprising of our parties in the rear, the arrest of members of the government while at the same time opening the front to the enemy by the conspirators of the military bloc.

Nikolai Bukharin, along with Aleksei Rykov, was arrested and imprisoned at the close of the discussion of their cases at the February-March 1937 Plenum of the Central Committee. It has long been known that Bukharin made his first confession on June 2, 1937. A copy of that confession, which is still secret in Russia today, is in the Volkogonov Archive in the National Archives Washington, DC. We have published it, together with a commentary.<sup>8</sup>

In that first confession Bukharin testifies about the bloc's, and specifically Trotsky's, reliance upon armed intervention:

In the summer of 1934 I was at RADEK'S apartment when RADEK informed me about TROTSKY'S external political arrangements. RADEK said that **Trotsky, stressing terror, all the same considered the main chance for the arrival in power of the bloc to be the defeat of the USSR in war with Germany and Japan**, and in connection to this was promoting the idea of an agreement with Germany and Japan at the cost of territorial concessions (Ukraine to the Germans, the Far East to the Japanese). (17)

### **Evidence: Tukhachevsky's confessions**

Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky was arrested in the fourth week of May 1937. Within two days he began to make detailed confessions about his conspiracy against the Stalin leadership. Among other matters he discussed the plans for intervention by foreign powers.

...Romm also passed on that it was Trotsky's hope that Hitler would come to power and would support him, Trotsky, in his struggle against Soviet power.<sup>9</sup> (Main 159)

Round about this time, 1933/1934, Romm visited me in Moscow and told me that he had to pass on Trotsky's new instructions. Trotsky pointed out that it was no longer feasible to restrict our activities to simply recruiting and organizing cadres, that it was necessary to adopt a more concrete programme, that German Fascism would render the Trotskyists assistance in their struggle with Stalin's leadership and that the military conspiracy must supply the German General Staff with intelligence data, as well as working hand in glove with the Japanese General Staff, carrying out disruptive activities in the army, prepare diversions and terrorist acts against members of the government. These instructions of Trotsky I communicated to the centre of our conspiracy. (Main 160-161)

During the winter of 1935/1936, Pyatakov told me that Trotsky had now asked us to ensure the (future) defeat of the USSR in war, even if this meant giving the Ukraine to the Germans and the Primor'ye to the Japanese. In order to prepare the USSR's defeat, all forces, both within

the USSR and out with [should be "-side" — GF] the USSR would have to be made ready; in particular, Pyatakov stated that Trotsky would carry out a decisive struggle to plant his people in the Comintern. Pyatakov stated that such conditions would mean the restoration of capitalism in the country... (Main 163)

Thus, developing our platform based on supporting the Rightists in their struggle against the general line of the Party, adding to it, subsequently, Trotskyite solgans, the end result was that the anti-Soviet military Trotskyite conspiracy had embarked on the path of overthrowing Soviet power through a counter-revolution by terror, espionage, diversionary activities, sabotage, defeatist activity [leading to] the restoration of capitalism in the USSR. (Main 163)

In the autumn of 1935, Putna came to my office and handed over a note from Sedov, in Trotsky's name, insisting that I more energetically attract Trotskyite cadres to the military conspiracy and more actively use them. I told Putna to say that this would be done. In addition, Putna told me that Trotsky had established direct links with Hitler's government and the General Staff, and that the center of the anti-Soviet military Trotskyite conspiracy should task itself to prepare defeats on those front where the German Army would operate. (Main 166)

As I have already pointed out in the first section, during the strategic military exercises carried out in April 1936, on the question of the operational position of our armies, I exchanged opinions with Yakir and Uborevich. Taking into account Trotsky's directive to prepare for defeat on that front where the Germans would attack, as well as General Rundstedt's instruction to prepare for defeat on the Ukrainian Front, ... (Main 185)

Primakov, as quoted in Budyonny's letter to Voroshilov:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

He denied that on the basis that supposedly **he, Primakov, had been entrusted by Trotsky with a more serious task — to raise an armed insurrection in Leningrad**, for which he Primakov must keep himself strictly apart from any terrorist groups, break his ties with all Trotskyites and Rights, and at the same time win for himself authority and absolute trust from the party and the army command. ... **In connection with this special assignment of Trotsky's**, Primakov had worked on the 25th cavalry division headed by the commander of the division, Zybin. According to his words **Zybin had been supposed to meet Trotsky at the border once the rebels had taken over Leningrad.**

## **Liushkov**

The testimony of Genrikh Samoilovich Liushkov, NKVD General and defector in June 1938 to the Japanese, is some of the strong evidence we presently have from outside the USSR and beyond the reach of the NKVD, that confirms the truthfulness of some of the testimony and charges at the Moscow Trials. Liushkov's remarks to his Japanese handlers confirm key elements of Tukhachevsky's confessions. It also confirms the charges at the March 1938 Moscow Trial including, explicitly, Rykov's involvement in the anti-government conspiracy and the conspiracy of some leading military officers.<sup>11</sup>

Concerning the issue of "armed intervention" Alvin Coox summarized what Liushkov told his Japanese handlers as follows:

According to Lyushkov, the interrogations of Deribas, Zapadni, and Barminski established that in the NKVD and the border guard forces, a plot centering on Gamarnik had been fomented. For a long time Deribas had been in contact with Rykov and was the latter's 'hidden conspirator'. In concert with Lavrenty Lavrentiev (former First Secretary of the Regional Committee of the Party until January 1937), with Grigory Krutov (shot in April 1938), and with the army plotters Sangurski, Aronshtam, and others, Deribas supposedly intended to conduct a putsch in the Far East and **to reach agreement with the**

## **Japanese for help and for combined operations against the Soviet Union. (Coox 1, 156)**

We also examine Liushov's disclosures to his Japanese handlers in another chapter of the present study.

### **Evidence: the March 1938 Moscow Trial**

Prosecutor Vyshinskii:

The extensive application of wrecking measures in Uzbekistan was also fully corroborated by the accused IKRAMOV, who testified that the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" had set him the following tasks:

...a) to make extensive preparation in Uzbekistan for armed insurrection, to be started simultaneously with the beginning of intervention; ... (17)

GRINKO: ... At the beginning of 1935 I heard from Lyubchenko about the creation in the Ukraine of a national-fascist organization, the object of which was to sever the Ukraine from the U.S.S.R., and which **counted on receiving assistance in the shape of military intervention** on the part of those forces and elements with whom I had already established personal contact at that time. The national-fascist organization also set itself the aim of uniting with the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites," which had established contact with the military conspirators. (70)

IVANOV: We assembled insurrectionary groups, chiefly around Archangel, so as, **at the moment of intervention**, to cut off communication between Archangel and the central arteries of our country, and thus make it easier for the British to seize this timber region and most valuable port. (124)

IVANOV: ... During this conversation in particular, I asked: where is the intervention, where is the attack on the Soviet Union. Bukharin told me that measures were being taken to induce the fascist countries

Japan and Germany to take action without fail in 1937, and the chances of this were good. (127)

KRESTINSKY: This was the question which confronted us, and in our brief conversations with Pyatakov we were thinking, we were saying that without help from the outside, that is to say, **without intervention, without armed assistance from outside, we could not manage**, and when I went abroad ...

IKRAMOV: ... Antipov informed me about the German-Japanese orientation and about the connections with the Germans and Japanese. He also told me that there was a military group, and that in the event of war they would act by **opening the front to the attacking forces of the interventionists**. (360)

IKRAMOV: It was during the Congress of Soviets in November or the beginning of December 1936. During the Congress of Soviets I met Bukharin on the staircase; nobody was about, and I asked him about this. He answered in the affirmative, and formulated it as follows: **if there will not be a war just now, if there will not be intervention soon, it is all over with our business**. (361)

BUKHARIN: Tomsy considered it permissible to take advantage of war and preliminary agreements with Germany. This I opposed by the following arguments, I said that in the first place **if Germany were to intervene in one way or another during the war to help the counter-revolutionary coup**, then, as it always happens, Germany, being rather a strong military and technical factor, would inevitably put her feet on the table and tear up any preliminary agreement which had been concluded. (431)

BUKHARIN: When I asked Tomsy how he conceived the mechanics of the coup he said this was **the business of the military organization, which was to open the front**.

VYSHINSKY: So Tomsy was preparing to open the front?

BUKHARIN: He did not say that.



VYSHINSKY: Yes or no?

BUKHARIN: I asked how he visualized **the mechanism of this intervention.**

VYSHINSKY: Whose intervention?

BUKHARIN: Of certain foreign states. (433)

BUKHARIN: I said that I asked Tomsy: "**How is the mechanism of this intervention visualized?**" He answered: "This is the business of the military organization, which is **to open the front to the Germans.**" (434)

### **Corroborating evidence**

The evidence cited above is direct evidence that not only Trotsky but the "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" itself, including the Rights, advocated "armed intervention" as a part of a plan for seizing power in the USSR. There is also a good deal of corroborating evidence—evidence tending to strengthen or confirm the direct evidence in some way. The subject of the present article — Trotsky's lie that Zinoviev and Kamenev were accused of planning "armed intervention" — can itself be considered as corroborating evidence that confirms or strengthens the case that Trotsky conspired with Germany and Japan.

### **Piatakov's Face-To-Face Confrontation with Bukharin December 7, 1936**

In 2002 the transcript of Iurii Piatakov's "face-to-face" confrontation with Nikolai Bukharin was published in a leading Russian history journal. In it Piatakov confirms all his previous confessions. He does not specifically mention his charge that Trotsky was conspiring with Germany. If he had done so it would be direct, not corroborating, evidence.

Its significance is that not only Nikoloi Ezhov, People's Commissar of Internal Affairs (head of the NKVD), but Marshal Kliment Voroshilov,

Commissar for Heavy Industry Sergo Ordzhonikidze, and Stalin himself were present. It was never intended for publication.

There is no reason to think Piatakov's statements were "forced" and there is no evidence they were. Bukharin privately told his wife, Anna Larina, about this meeting, as Larina recounted in her memoirs. Bukharin told her that Ordzhonikidze had asked Piatakov repeatedly whether his testimony were "voluntary." Piatakov assured him that it was entirely voluntary.<sup>12</sup>

In his confrontation with Bukharin Piatakov did confirm that at their meeting in 1931 Leon Sedov gave him Trotsky's instructions about the formation of a Trotskyist bloc with the Rightists within the USSR, one that was already in the process of formation. We know this independently from Trotsky's and Sedov's own documents in the Harvard Trotsky Archive. Therefore, in this one rare instance where we can check Piatakov's confession against information we know to be true from another source, Piatakov was telling the truth. This lends credibility to the rest of Piatakov's statements.<sup>13</sup>

### **Sokol-nikov and Radek**

Just before the end of the USSR a short excerpt from pretrial confessions by Sokol'nikov and Radek were published. In the course of the pretrial investigation in December 12, 1936, Sokol'nikov testified that Tamekiti Ota, Japanese ambassador to the USSR, asked him, Sokol'nikov, on April 13, 1935, whether he was aware that "Mr. Trotsky has made certain proposals to my government." In the trial transcript the identity of the country and the ambassador were omitted. In volume two of the present study we will present evidence that corroborates the validity of Sokol'nikov's testimony that he was approached by the Japanese concerning Trotsky's collaboration with them.<sup>14</sup>

It is not likely that this testimony was "fabricated" — faked — and then the details omitted at the trial itself and in the transcript. Such a charade would have been pointless. Moreover, as we point elsewhere in the present volume in more detail, there never has been any evidence that the defendants' testimony at the Moscow Trials was "compelled" in any way. All the

evidence we have is that the Moscow Trials defendants said *what they wanted to say*.

On December 16, 1936, just four days after this testimony by Sokol'nikov, Georgi Dimitrov wrote about it in his private diary. Dimitrov copied or summarized a passage that must be at the conclusion of the transcript of this interrogation of Sokol'nikov:

QUESTION: Thus, the investigation concludes that Trotsky abroad and the center of the bloc within the USSR entered into negotiations with the Hitlerite and Japanese governments with the following terms:

First, to provoke a war by Germany and Japan against the USSR;

Second, to promote the defeat of the USSR in that war and to take advantage of that defeat to achieve the transfer of power in the USSR or [their] government bloc;

Third, on behalf of the future bloc government to guarantee territorial and economic concessions to the Hitlerite and Japanese governments.

Do you confirm this?

REPLY: Yes, I confirm it.<sup>15</sup>

Some pretrial testimony of Radek's likewise confirms his testimony at trial, where crucial details were omitted. We refer the reader to our longer discussion elsewhere.<sup>16</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Trotsky lied in stating that Zinoviev and Kamenev had been charged with "provoking" or otherwise counting on "armed intervention" in order to oust Stalin et al. and bring themselves to power. The question is: Why did he fabricate this particular lie? Why did he take such a clear risk of exposure. Why did Trotsky repeatedly make statements that anyone who took the trouble to verify them could readily see were false?

Our hypothesis is that Trotsky told this lie in order to anticipate an accusation that he could reasonably expect to emerge at some point: that he, Leon Trotsky, had been urging his followers to count on the intervention of hostile powers to bring him and the bloc to power. He could reasonably expect this accusation would be made because (a) he had indeed been doing this, and his followers in the bloc knew it and (b) because others in the bloc — Zinovievists and Rights — not only knew that Trotsky advocated "armed intervention" but were doing so themselves. Hence if they were caught — say, through the confession of one or more of their members — they would have no reason not to inculcate Trotsky too. Since the NKVD had arrested many members of the bloc and on the basis of their confessions was continuing the investigation and arresting more of them, it was likely that, sooner or later, one or more of these men would reveal what Trotsky had been doing. This is in fact what happened.

### **Other possible hypotheses**

No single piece or unit of evidence is unequivocal. When viewed individually, in isolation from the whole concatenation of evidence, any piece of evidence can be accounted for in multiple ways. The explanatory power of circumstantial evidence is revealed when multiple pieces of evidence can all be accounted for by only one hypothesis, one single explanatory narrative.<sup>17</sup> In this essay we have outlined that hypothesis.

It is important to inquire what other hypotheses might be able to account for Trotsky's deliberate lies that Zinoviev, Kamenev, and their followers were planning to "provoke armed intervention" by a hostile state. Any alternate hypothesis would have to satisfy the same requirements:

- It would have to account for the obvious "coincidence" that, although Trotsky's claim that Zinoviev and Kamenev had been charged with desiring "armed intervention" was false, he himself and other members of the bloc were to be accused of exactly this almost exactly two years later.
- It would also have to set forth a different yet equally persuasive reason for Trotsky's lie. Trotsky took a considerable risk of being exposed as a liar. If Trotsky had simply criticized and/or ridiculed the real

accusations against Zinoviev and Kamenev, without lying about the charges against them, he would have run no such risk. Indeed, he would have been expressing the doubts many people had about who the real murderers of Kirov were. Therefore we must assume that Trotsky had a very compelling reason to lie in precisely this way.

The hypothesis set forth in the present essay satisfies both of these requirements: it accounts for both the apparent "coincidence" and Trotsky's motive for telling such a blatant lie.

Our hypothesis is strengthened because it suggests that Trotsky was once again relying on his strategy of "exposing the scheme in advance": of feigning to predict an accusation that he knew was likely to be made in the future since he knew it to be true and also knew that at least one of those in the bloc who knew about it too would be likely to reveal it when arrested and questioned. We have shown that Trotsky employed this tactic on other occasions.

The fact that Trotsky denied the accusations that he was relying on "armed intervention" is not significant. Trotsky would have denied this accusation whether it were true or false. We know the bloc of Trotskyists, Zinovievists, and Rights did exist despite the fact that Trotsky repeatedly and strenuously denied it. Thanks to Broué, Getty, and Holmström we know that Trotsky lied about other matters as well. Thanks to Getty we also know that Trotsky's Archive has been "purged," no doubt of incriminating materials.

We do not know of any other hypothesis that can account for Trotsky's false claim that Zinoviev and Kamenev had been accused of planning on "armed intervention." Moreover, our hypothesis is the most obvious one, the one that would immediately present itself to any objective researcher.

Despite this fact, we predict that our hypothesis will be rejected by some people on political, not evidentiary, grounds. Contemporary historiography of the Soviet union is dominated by ideological anticommunism. Under the sway of this anticommunism many people refuse to accept any historical explanation, no matter how well it accounts for the evidence, if it tends to make the Moscow Trials testimony appear basically accurate, or if it fails to

reinforce the dominant paradigm of Joseph Stalin as bloodthirsty dictator and falsifier.

This is true of Trotskyist historians as well, who are accepted at the margins of mainstream anticommunist historiography. Typically, Trotskyists are unwilling to consider the possibility that Trotsky lied other than in order to save his followers in the Soviet Union. They are ideologically unwilling to countenance the possibility that Soviet accusations of Trotsky's involvement with Germany and/or Japan might be accurate despite all the evidence now available to support that conclusion.

We believe that political bias accounts for the fact that the research reported in this paper was not done before this. In another, less politicized, field of historical study some scholar or student would have long ago done what we did: obtain the articles from *Humanité*, *Pravda*, and *Izvestiia*, and compared them to what Trotsky wrote. The fact that this has not occurred speaks to the strong political biases that dominate the field of Soviet studies.

The phenomenon of Trotsky's "amalgam" about "armed intervention" should not be ignored, no matter how inconvenient it may be for politically-motivated persons. It has to be accounted for. It may be that there is another hypothesis that better explains Trotsky's taking the risk he did in lying about Zinoviev and Kamenev being accused of supporting "armed intervention." But until such an alternative hypothesis is shown to account for the evidence better than the one we have proposed here, we must consider our hypothesis as proven by the available evidence — not proven "beyond any doubt," but proven "beyond reasonable doubt."

## Chapter 15. Trotsky's Kirov Assassination Article.

### "The Restoration of Capitalism"

In his article "On the Kirov Assassination" dated December 30, 1934, which comprises the entire issue #41 of the *Biulleten' Oppozitsii*, Trotsky listed the men arrested in the fourth week of December and charged with being the "Moscow Center" of the clandestine Zinovievist organization whose Leningrad Center had carried out Kirov's murder. Trotsky wrote:

... these fifteen individuals are implicated, no more, no less, in the assassination of Kirov and, according to explanations given by *Pravda*, **they had as their aim the seizure of power, beginning with Leningrad, "with the secret intention of reestablishing the capitalist regime."**

Trotsky thought that this charge was important enough to devote two paragraphs to denouncing it:

#### 3. Was the Purpose to Restore Capitalism?

The first question which must inevitably arise in the minds of all thinking workers is the following: How could it come to pass that at a time like this, after all the economic successes after the "abolition" — according to official assurances — of classes in the USSR and, and the "construction" of the socialist society — **how could it come to pass that old Bolsheviks, the most intimate collaborators of Lenin, those who shared power with Stalin, members of the "Old Guard," could have posed for their task the restoration of capitalism?** Do Zinoviev, Kamenev and the others consider that the socialist regime is no boon to the masses? Or, on the contrary, do they expect from capitalism personal advantages both for themselves and their descendants? And what sort of advantages?

Only utter imbeciles would be capable of thinking that capitalist relations, that is to say, the private ownership of the means of production, including

the land, can be reestablished in the USSR by peaceful methods and lead to the regime of bourgeois democracy. As a matter of fact, even if it were possible in general, capitalism could not be regenerated in Russia except as the result of a savage counter-revolutionary *coup d'état* which would cost ten times as many victims as the October Revolution and the civil war. In the event of the overthrow of the Soviets, their place could only be taken by a distinctly Russian Fascism, so ferocious that in comparison to it the ferocity of the Mussolini regime and that of Hitler would appear like philanthropic institutions. Zinoviev and Kamenev are no fools. They cannot but understand that the restoration of capitalism would first of all signify the total extermination of the revolutionary generation, themselves, of course, included. Consequently, there cannot be the slightest doubt here that **the accusation concocted by Stalin against the Zinoviev group** is fraudulent from top to bottom, both as regards the goal specified — restoration of capitalism; and as regards the means — terrorist acts.

Trotsky repeated this accusation in an article dated January 26, 1935, published in the February 1935 issue number 42 of the B.O.:

The first government communique and official articles after the arrest of the Moscow group of Old Bolsheviks said that Zinoviev-Kamenev and their friends had taken as their aim "**the restoration of the capitalist system**" and they were trying to provoke "armed intervention" from abroad (by the intermediacy of a consul — from Latvia!). No serious person could believe it; that is understood.

Stalin's lackeys, who cover themselves with the name of "leaders" of the Communist International, don't, however, recoil at the assertion that Zinoviev, Kamenev and the others "have themselves admitted their crimes." Which one? Preparation of the restoration of capitalism? Preparation of armed intervention?

...

Let us admit that Zinoviev's criticism was false. Let us even grant that the lackeys were right to judge criticism directed against them "criminal." But are we to see in that the "**restoration of capitalism**" and "armed intervention"? What connection is there between the



demand for a more revolutionary policy against the bourgeoisie and a program for "the restoration of a bourgeois regime"? Where has common sense gone? It is completely buried beneath a monstrous defecation of infamy.<sup>1</sup>

Trotsky continued to repeat this charge in B.O. #43, of April 1935:

Today Maisky, in the rank of ambassador, accuses "Zinovievists" and "Trotskyists" of striving to **provoke military intervention in order to restore capitalism...**<sup>2</sup>

...

In the government communique as well as in numerous articles in *Pravda* there was, as is well known, the direct and categorical assertion that Zinoviev and Kamenev **had as their goal the restoration of capitalism and military intervention...**<sup>3</sup>

And in B.O. #44 of July 1935:

Of the six congresses in the history of the Comintern to date, **Zinoviev** was president of five. Now he is in prison, ostensibly for **having wanted to restore capitalism by a terrorist act...**<sup>4</sup>

Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov repeated this charge yet again in their attack on the August 1936 Moscow Trial of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others in B.O. #52-53, republished in French as Leon Sedov, *Livre rouge sur le proces de Moscou / Red Book on the Moscow Trial* (October 1937).

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

Le 16 janvier 1935, les journaux soviétiques publiaient l'acte d'accusation de l'affaire du prétendu Centre de Moscou, avec Zinoviev, Kaménev, Evdokimov et autres en tête. ... Les 15 et 16 janvier, le tribunal statuait sur le sort de Zinoviev, de Kamenev, etc., 19 inculpés en tout. **Ils étaient accusés d'aspirer au «rétablissement du**

**capitalisme**» et de mener une activité contrerévolutionnaire *en général*. Aucum fait concret, aucune preuve ne furent apportés par accusation. (*Livre rouge*, pp. 23-24)

Translated:

On January 16, 1935, the Soviet newspapers published the formal indictment in the case of the so-called Moscow Center, with Zinoviev, Kamenev, Evdokimov and the others at its head. ... On January 15 and 16 the court pronounced judgment on the fate of Zinoviev, Kamenev, et al., 19 defendants in all. **They were accused of striving for the "restoration of capitalism"** and of counterrevolutionary activity in general. Not a single concrete fact, no proof, was introduced by the prosecution.<sup>5</sup>

This charge is again repeated in the following section (called "chapters" in the French and English books):

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

**The "Restoration of Capitalism" or the "Thirst for Personal Power"?**

In connection with the first trial<sup>6</sup>, Zinoviev and Kamenev had been accused of supporting the return to capitalism, "capitalist restoration." It is with this refrain that the Soviet newspapers of that period (the beginning of 1935) persecuted Zinoviev and Kamenev.

If one could not — then — establish the nature of the activity of Zinoviev and Kamenev (terror), **at least their purpose had been clearly established: the re-establishment of capitalism.**

**At the second trial, the "restoration of capitalism" was completely forgotten.** A new version was given: "... It is irrefutably established that the only motive for the organization of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist block was the attempt to seize power at any cost." (The Indictment) (Red Book, Chapter 4)

Trotsky continued to repeat this charge long after the First Moscow Trial of August 1936. In the middle of his lengthy final statement at the Dewey Commission hearings in April 1937 — a statement that occupies 171 pages of print in the published transcript — Trotsky made the following statement:

In January, 1935 Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others were sentenced, in connection with the Kirov assassination, to some years of imprisonment. **During the trial they confessed a desire "to restore capitalism."** (CLT 533)

In another undated article of about this time Trotsky again repeats the same charge:

These questions relate above all to Zinoviev and Kamenev. Just what were their motives — and these motives must have been exceptionally forceful — that guided them in their purported terror? **At the first trial in January 1935**, Zinoviev and Kamenev, while denying their participation in the assassination of Kirov, did acknowledge, by way of compensation, their "moral responsibility" for the terrorist tendencies, and in doing so **they cited** as the incentive for their oppositional activity **their urge "to restore capitalism."** If we have nothing else to go by except this inhuman political "confession," it would be sufficient to expose the lie of Stalinist justice.<sup>7</sup>

### **Trotsky's "Amalgam"**

All these statements of Trotsky's are false. No such charge or anything like it figures in either December 28, 1934 indictment of the Leningrad Zinovievist group charged with the assassination of Sergei Kirov or the January 1935 trial indictment (*obvinitel'noe zakliuchenie*) published in *Pravda*, January 16, 1935 on page 6. Nothing at all about restoring capitalism, or even the word "capitalism" itself, can be found among the charges as listed in the "rehabilitation" document published in the official Gorbachev-era Party journal *Izvestiia Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS* in 1989.<sup>8</sup> The archival copy of the court's sentence against the defendants in this case does not mention anything about reestablishing capitalism.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, the word "capitalism" does not occur in any of these documents at all.<sup>10</sup>

The transcript of this January 1935 trial has never been published, so we have not seen it and Trotsky did not read it either. However, some quotations from the words of a few of the defendants were reproduced in a newspaper article which we discuss below. Trotsky quoted from it in 1936, as we shall see. But it is none of the accused confessed to desiring "to restore capitalism."

The passage from Chapter 3 of the *Red Book* quoted above correctly identifies the date — January 16, 1935 — that the indictment (*obvinitel'nyi akt*) against Zinoviev, Kamenev, and their Moscow-based supporters was published in Soviet newspapers, including *Pravda*. But nothing about this charge or anything like it can be found there.

There is no question about the use of different texts. In the paragraphs immediately before the section subtitled "The 'Restoration of Capitalism' or the 'Thirst for Personal Power'" (quoted above) Trotsky/Sedov quote from the statements of four of the January 1935 defendants: Kamenev, Bakaev, Zinoviev, and Evdokimov. The quotations from the first three are taken directly from the text of the indictment which, as Trotsky/Sedov correctly noted, was published in *Pravda* and other Soviet newspapers on January 16, 1935 (in *Pravda* on page 6).

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

Kamenev acknowledged that he "did not fight actively or energetically enough against the demoralization which was the consequence of the struggle against the party and upon which ground a band of brigands (Nikolaev and others) could spring up and carry out their crime."

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

"[acknowledged] ...that he did not break all ties with Zinoviev."

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

[Bakaev declares that] "here [among Zinovievists] there was only malevolent and hostile criticism of the most important measures taken by the party."

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

[Zinoviev says that] "...the party is absolutely correct when it speaks of the political responsibility of the old 'Zinovievist' anti-party group for the assassination which has just been accomplished."<sup>11</sup>

The quotation from Evdokimov is taken directly from the separate article published on the same page opposite the text of the indictment and titled "From the Hall of the Supreme Court of the USSR. Declaration of the defendant Evdokimov to the court of January 15 of this year."<sup>12</sup>

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

"We must bear the responsibility [for Kirov's murder], because it is the venom with which we poisoned those around us during a 10-year period which made possible the realization of this crime."<sup>13</sup>

The article quoting Evdokimov is summarized in *Humanité* of January 18, 1935.<sup>14</sup> Trotsky and Sedov had read either the Russian original in *Pravda* or the briefer French summary. In *Pravda* the Evdokimov article and the text of the Indictment are on the same page.

Therefore Trotsky and Sedov knew that Zinoviev, Kamenev and the other defendants, arrested December 1934 and put on trial in mid-January 1935, were not charged with conspiring to "restore capitalism" or "provoking

armed intervention," nor did they confess to it, nor did the issue arise in any way.

### **Rogovin's "Amalgam"**

Vadim Z. Rogovin was a historian whose works constitute the most sustained Trotskyist interpretation of Soviet history of the Stalin period. In his books Rogovin always cited Trotsky prominently and positively. But Rogovin could not find any evidence of the "restoration of capitalism" charge that Trotsky claimed was in newspaper accounts. Rather than acknowledge this fact, however, Rogovin just repeated Trotsky's claim without any footnote or citation.

In the newspaper commentaries accompanying the trial transcript, the desire to restore capitalist society in the USSR was given as the incentive for these terrorist moods and for oppositional inclinations in general.<sup>15</sup>

Rogovin realized that the "restoration of capitalism" charge was not mentioned in the August 1936 trial. But instead of noting the fact that Trotsky (and Sedov) lied about this Rogovin concocted what we may call "Rogovin's amalgam" — a story according to which Zinoviev and Kamenev made a deal with Stalin to withdraw this charge, in return for which they would plead guilty to terrorist activity. He then refers to "the shift from the version about wanting to restore capitalism to the one about the naked thirst for power". (28)

In this way Rogovin avoided exposing Trotsky's lie. Perhaps he believed he was saving Trotsky's reputation. After all, how many people would scour the Soviet press to see whether the "restoration of capitalism" charge was actually raised in it?

Even nineteen months later, at the First Moscow Trial of August 1936, this charge was not part of the indictment, or charges against the defendants, including Zinoviev and Kamenev. In fact, nothing about the "restoration of capitalism" was mentioned in any way during that trial. Zinoviev, Kamenev, et al. did *not* confess to anything even remotely resembling this. They were

*not* charged with supporting any "return to capitalism," "restoration of capitalism," etc.

This charge is a fabrication by Trotsky. To use Trotsky's own term, this story is an "amalgam." Is it not true that, as Trotsky/Sedov claimed, "'the restoration of capitalism' was completely forgotten" at the First Moscow Trial of August 1936. There was nothing to "forget." This accusation had never been made in the first place.

### **Why Did Trotsky Lie About This?**

Pierre Broué and Vadim Rogovin wrote that Trotsky and Sedov lied about the bloc with the Zinovievists, Rights, and other oppositionists, and about Trotsky's contacts with some of the other people with whom he publicly and repeatedly denied having had any contact because they did not want to endanger supporters in the Soviet Union whom the NKVD had not yet identified. We have argued elsewhere that this cannot be the correct explanation because it would not have endangered anyone whom the NKVD and Soviet prosecution did not already know about.

Moreover, this explanation does not apply to Trotsky's claim that Zinoviev, Kamenev, et al. were accused of, and confessed to, plotting to restore capitalism. Anyone who bothered to obtain and read the issues of *Pravda* could have discovered that Trotsky was lying. Therefore, Trotsky had to know that by making this claim he was taking a serious risk of being exposed as a liar.

Trotsky must have had some very compelling reason for taking such a risk. A statement attributed to psychoanalyst Alfred Adler runs: "A lie would have no sense unless the truth were felt to be dangerous." Trotsky would not have lied if the truth had been on his side. It follows that he was hiding something. But what?

### **"Expose The Scheme In Advance"**

Towards the end of his December 30, 1934 article on the Kirov Assassination, Trotsky inserted a section titled "The Inevitability of New

Amalgams Had Been Foretold." In it he claimed to have "predicted" that his own name would be raised "alongside Zinoviev's."

When the first dispatch appeared in which Nikolaiev was said to have been a member of the Leningrad Opposition in 1926, there was no further room for doubt. The new campaign against Zinoviev and Kamenev was not long in following. At that moment, in a conversation with a friend (I apologize for these personal details, but they are necessary for the understanding of the psychological undercurrents in the case), I said, "The matter will not rest long on this plane. Tomorrow they will bring Trotskyism to the fore." To be able to make such a prediction, it was really not necessary to be a prophet. The December 25 issue of the *Temps* which I received two or three days later contained in a telegraphic dispatch from Moscow the following item: "We must point out ... that as the days go by, Trotsky's name is being mentioned more and more often alongside Zinoviev's." Kirov's corpse and the Zinoviev group thus become preparatory steps for a much wider and bolder scheme: to deal a blow at international Leninism.<sup>16</sup>

We know now how Trotsky was able to "predict" this. In 1980 Pierre Broué found proof in the newly-opened Harvard Trotsky Archive that Trotsky and his Soviet-based followers really were in a bloc with the Zinovievists. Once the Zinovievists had inculpated their own leaders by name there was no reason for them not to also name Trotsky. Therefore it was "predictable" that they would do so.

Trotsky chose not to reveal that he and his followers in the USSR were in a bloc with the Zinovievists, the Rights, and some other oppositionists. That meant he had to account for the progressive revelations by the NKVD and Soviet prosecution in some other way.

So he created an "amalgam." According to this false story the "campaign" against the Zinovievists was a "preparatory step" to "a much wider and bolder scheme": namely, an attack on Trotsky himself and his new movement. Trotsky claimed that his name was brought up because of Soviet alarm at "the growth of international Leninism," as he called the Trotskyist



movement. Of course Trotsky knew better. Since Broué's 1980 article we have known better too.

Then Trotsky wrote:

There is only one way to forestall en route the amalgams that are in preparation: *Expose the scheme in advance*. The Stalinists are trying to mold the public opinion of the world police towards expulsions, extraditions, arrests and other more decisive measures. The Leninists must prepare the public opinion of the world proletariat for these possible events. (195; italics in the original.)

Here Trotsky explicitly claims that he "predicted" his name would come up so that he could "forestall" future fabrications — show them to be false because "predictable." In reality, the truth appears to be that Trotsky was able to "predict" things that he knew would come to light because they were true.

## **Hypothesis**

This suggests an explanation for Trotsky's claim that Zinoviev, Kamenev, and the rest were charged "with the secret intention of reestablishing the capitalist regime," and his persistence in repeating it over and over again. Our hypothesis is that he did so because the charge was true — not only about Zinoviev and Kamenev but, more importantly, about Trotsky himself. According to testimony in the 1937 and 1938 Moscow Trials Trotsky really had instructed his followers that re-establishing capitalism would be necessary in order to placate the Germans and Japanese.

Trotsky may have been prompted to anticipate this charge by a press release printed in *Humanité* of December 23, 1934 (p. 5 col. 7) which states that the restoration of capitalism was the goal of the Kirov assassins, the Leningrad Center: "la préoccupation secrète de restaurer le régime capitaliste." This accusation is *not* leveled at Zinoviev, Kamenev, et al., whose arrests are signaled in a brief article immediately below the former.

An article in *Humanité* the following day (Dec. 24, p. 3) titled "Le groupe terroriste zinovévist-trotskiste est le résultat de la persistance dans l'opposition à la ligne du parti" quotes *Izvestiia* of December 22 or 23 as follows:

Le sens entier de leur activité et de leurs aspirations était la restauration du régime capitaliste.

Translated:

The whole sense of their activity and hopes was the restoration of the capitalist regime.

This too is stated of the Kirov assassins, not of Zinoviev and Kamenev. Trotsky cited *Humanité* as a source for his early article on the Kirov murder.

These articles concern only the Leningrad-based Zinovievists who were charged with murdering Kirov. Moreover, it only claims that the "sense" of their program would be a reversion to capitalist forms of production and distribution characteristic of the New Economic Policy — which, of course, they were.<sup>17</sup> There is no indication in this article or any other than Zinoviev, Kamenev, and the Moscow-based Zinovievists, under arrest by December 22, were to be charged with plotting to restore capitalism.

Trotsky must have assumed this charge would be brought forth quickly, just as he assumed his name would be mentioned very soon. In the latter case he was correct — Trotsky's name came up almost immediately. In the former case, though, Trotsky miscalculated. In 1935 Zinoviev and Kamenev did not expose the bloc and the "parallel," or secret, leadership. The charge of "plotting to restore capitalism" was not brought up against Trotsky until sometime after the First Moscow Trial of August 1936.

However, Trotsky could reasonable have anticipated that this charge against him might be still brought up at some future time. Once Zinoviev and Kamenev had been arrested it was possible that they would name Radek, Piatakov, and Sokol'nikov. But Trotsky could not have known in advance

when this might happen or when the charge against him would be made public.

If this was Trotsky's plan it made a good deal of sense. If the names of the leaders of the "parallel center" Radek, Piatakov, and Sokol'nikov did not come up or if, when interrogated, these men did not reveal Trotsky's plans, Trotsky could simply continue to claim that Stalin had made up the "restoration of capitalism" charge and then abandoned it. Trotsky could then cite this as further "proof" of Stalin's duplicity. In fact Trotsky and Sedov did make this claim, as we have seen:

At the second trial, the "restoration of capitalism" was completely forgotten.

But if, as eventually did happen, the charge of plotting "the restoration of capitalism" was raised against him Trotsky would have the option of claiming that he had once again refuted an "amalgam in preparation" by "exposing the scheme in advance." So Trotsky continued to repeat the baseless charge that Zinoviev and Kamenev had been accused of plotting to "restore capitalism."

According to this hypothesis, therefore, Trotsky was able to make this assumption with some confidence because he had indeed instructed his followers in exactly this way — to restore capitalism. Trotsky's repeated claim in December-January 1934-5 that the Soviet government had charged Zinoviev, Kamenev, et al. with plotting to "reestablish the capitalist regime" can be explained as Trotsky's attempt to anticipate accusations that he assumed would probably be made against himself sometime in the future.

Under this hypothesis Trotsky's "prediction" that the defendants would be charged with reestablishing capitalism is like his "prediction" that his own name would soon be raised in the Kirov assassination case. In both instances Trotsky knew the charge against him was true and would almost certainly be made sooner or later. By anticipating this charge — by "exposing the scheme in advance" — Trotsky hoped to prepare public opinion — or, at any rate, his own supporters, the people who read his *Bulletin* — for the time when the Soviets really did make it, and so to

"refute" it in advance by making it look all too "predictable" and therefore false.

## **Radek's and Piatakov's Testimony**

This accusation that Trotsky was overtly proposing the "restoration of capitalism" did finally surface during the Second Moscow Trial in January 1937. It was a major, and shocking, feature of the trial. Trotsky, widely considered a fiery revolutionary more "left" than Stalin, was accused of promoting the re-establishment of capitalism, or at least many aspects of it, since that seemed to be the only way to get the help of the capitalist powers to overthrow Stalin.

Iurii Piatakov, one of the chief defendants (the trial is often called "the Radek-Piatakov trial") testified:

As for the **retreat**, Trotsky wrote that Radek and I were mistaken in thinking that the **retreat** would be inconsiderable — we would have to **retreat** very far, and on this was based the bloc, not only with the Zinovievites, but also with the Rights. (1937 Trial 39-39)

... In this connection also it would be necessary, for consideration of home policy, to effect a fairly big **retreat**, in addition to concessions to foreigners. Radek quite justly mentioned this **retreat** in town and country, such as permitting capitalist trade and so forth. To put it simply, Trotsky explained that it would be a very serious **retreat**. This is exactly what he said: you and Radek are still under the sway of the old ideas of 1925-26 and you are unable to see that in essence our coming to power will mean that we will have to **retreat very far in the direction of capitalism**. (1937 Trial 65)

Karl Radek outlined how Trotsky's views changed between 1934 and 1935:

VYSHINSKY: Three facts: the April letter of 1934, the December letter of 1935 and Pyatakof's meeting with Trotsky in December 1935. How was the question put in Trotsky's letter in 1934? War, working for defeat?

RADEK: Yes.

VYSHINSKY: A return to capitalism in substance?

RADEK: No, a return to capitalism is not raised in the letter.

VYSHINSKY: No? What then?

RADEK: A **retreat** which we then thought...

VYSHINSKY: To where?

RADEK: To the positions of the NEP, with industry strengthened in comparison with what it had been before 1928.

VYSHINSKY: A **retreat** towards strengthening what elements?

RADEK: A **retreat** which was to restore apart of the capitalist elements as well, but this **retreat**, if compared with the state of things in 1927 — there would be a possibility during this **retreat**, on the one hand, of admitting capitalist restoration, but at the same time of strengthening industry, thanks to the First Five-Year Plan, the state farms and part of the collective farms — that is to say, we would have an economic base on which in my opinion a proletarian government could have maintained itself.

VYSHINSKY: So a proletarian government could still have maintained itself? But the tendency was to go backward?

RADEK: The tendency was to go backward.

VYSHINSKY: In 1935 this stood out more clearly in comparison with 1934?

RADEK: In 1935 the question was raised **of going back to capitalism.**

VYSHINSKY: To what limits?

RADEK: What Trotsky proposed was without any limits. To such limits as the enemy might require. (122)

According to Sokol'nikov the Trotskyists understood that they had no choice; it was retreat or be crushed:

SOKOLNIKOV: ... We considered that fascism was the most organized form of capitalism, that it would triumph, would seize Europe and stifle us. It was therefore better to come to terms with it, it was better to consent to a compromise in the sense of **retreating from socialism to capitalism.** (151)

The hypothesis that Trotsky did advocate the "restoration of capitalism" as Radek, Piatakov, and others asserted, is consistent with much other evidence we now possess.

Radek, Piatakov and Sokol'nikov also testified that Trotsky was directly conspiring with the Germans and Japanese. Such negotiation is a logical corollary to the assumption that the USSR would be defeated in a war and the Stalin leadership overthrown. The Germans and Japanese would have to be persuaded to allow the opposition to take power rather than simply to dismember the USSR by themselves. Trotsky allegedly either assumed or knew for a fact that Germany and Japan would demand considerable territorial concessions — the Ukraine and the Pacific Coast region — as well as economic concessions, as their price.

Thanks to the partial opening of some former Soviet archives we possess a great deal of Soviet evidence to corroborate the Moscow Trial testimony that Trotsky was conspiring with the Germans and Japanese. There is no indication that this evidence was faked. Moreover, there appears to be no reason to suspect it was faked since it was all secret until the partial opening of Soviet archives after the end of the USSR.<sup>18</sup> This evidence is consistent with the testimony that Trotsky was planning to "restore capitalism" in the sense of making serious economic (as well as territorial) concessions to the fascist powers.

### **Trotsky's 1930 Program**

The program of "restoring capitalism" that, according to Radek and Piatakov, Trotsky outlined to them, is closely similar to what Trotsky had openly advocated when the collectivization-industrialization campaign was under way. Here are some of Trotsky's programmatic proposals from issue #10 of the *Bulletin of the Russian Opposition*<sup>19</sup> dated March 23, 1930, in the article titled "Open Letter to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The State of the Party and the Tasks of the Left Opposition":

A **retreat** is inevitable in any case. It must be carried out as soon as possible and as orderly as possible.

Put an end to "complete" collectivization, replacing it with a careful selection based on a real freedom of choice. ... Put an end to the policy of administrative abolition of the kulak. Curbing the exploiting tendencies of the kulak will remain a necessary policy for many years.

Put an end to the "racetrack-gallop" pace of industrialization. Re-evaluate the question of the tempos of development in the light of experience, taking into account the necessity of raising the standard of living of the masses. Pose point-blank the question of the quality of production, as vital for the consumer as it is for the producer.

Give up the "ideal" of a closed economy. Work out a new variant of the plans based on as much interaction as possible with the world market.

To make the necessary retreat, to renew its [the USSR's] strategic arsenal without too much damage and without losing its sense of perspective...<sup>20</sup>

The abandonment of collectivization, of the destruction of the kulaks as a class, and of crash industrialization; a greatly increased role for foreign trade, and what Trotsky termed the "necessity" of raising the standard of living — these policies (if they were possible at all) would have meant a greater reliance on markets and a smaller role for the state. Trotsky was advocating a form of state-regulated capitalist commodity production similar to that of the New Economic Policy. Trotsky justified this as an "inevitable" and a "necessary retreat."

This 1929 program of Trotsky's is similar to the Rights' "Riutin Platform" of 1932.<sup>21</sup> Arch Getty noted that Trotsky's program in the 1930s was not essentially different from that of the Rights.

... Trotsky's spirited defence of the *smychka* and rural market relations, his criticism of the ultra-leftist campaign against the kulaks, and his advocacy of planning on the basis of "real potentials" were similar to the strictures of Bukharin's "Notes of an Economist." (Getty TIE 34 note 21)

Although the Riutin Platform originated in the right wing of the Bolshevik Party, its specific criticisms of the Stalinist regime were in the early 1930s shared by the more leftist Leon Trotsky, ... Like the Riutin group, Trotsky believed that the Soviet union in 1932 was in a period of extreme crisis provoked by Stalin's policies. Like them, he believed that the rapid pace of forced collectivization was a disaster and that the hurried and voluntarist nature of industrial policy made rational planning impossible, resulting in a disastrous series of economic "imbalances." Along with the Riutinists, Trotsky called for a drastic change in economic course and democratization of the dictatorial regime within a party that suppressed all dissent. According to Trotsky, Stalin had brought the country to ruin.<sup>22</sup>

The economic section<sup>23</sup> of the "Riutin Platform" shows clear similarities to Trotsky's proposals:

### III. In the field of industrialization.

1. The immediate cessation of anti-Leninist methods of industrialization and growth in the game by robbing the working class, civil servants and villages through direct and indirect, overt and concealed unbearable taxes and inflation. Industrialization on the basis of the actual and the steady growth of the welfare of the masses.

2. Reduction of investment in capital construction in accordance with the general condition of all the available resources of the country.

### IV. In the field of agriculture.



1. Immediate dissolution of all the inflated collective farms (kolkhozy) formed by force. Truly voluntary collectivization on the basis of machine technology and all possible assistance to collective farms.

2. Immediate creation of all necessary conditions and real support for the development of individual poor and middle peasant farming.

3. Elimination of all unprofitable collective farms. Retention in our hands only of that number of the best collective farms that we are actually able to make truly exemplary socialist enterprises.

4. Transmission of large-scale machine inventory of liquidated state and collective forms into the hands of local agricultural machinery associations.

...

6. The immediate cessation of grain, and harvesting seizure campaigns and seizures of other agricultural products, [which are] modern methods of robbing the village.

Land development and consolidation of individual farmers and confirming their long-term use of the allocated land.

V. In the area of trade.

1. Cessation of exports of agricultural products at very low prices.

2. Cessation of exports of consumer goods at very low prices.

3. Return to the Leninist policy of prices. A decisive decline in prices. Restoration of cooperation and its rights.

VI. In the field of finance and tax.

1. The termination of inflation, heavy tax burden on the proletariat and all workers.

2. Termination of the endless exactions of every kind in the form of loans placed by virtually mandatory continuing increase in pay differentials in cooperation, etc.

3. A maximum and effective reduction of taxes on workers, employees and workers of the village.

VII. In the field of legal material living conditions of workers and peasants.

1. Restore all of the rights of workers to clothing, marriage payment, etc., of which they have been deprived during the past 4 years.

2. Restore the old rules of layoffs that existed 4 years ago.

3. Restore the old rules and a Leninist policy in the work of the trade unions.

4. Immediately stop the adventurist policy of dekulakization in the countryside, which is in fact aimed against the entire basic population of the village. (R-PP 441-3)

The similarities between the Riutin Platform and Trotsky's "Open Letter" of 1930 are obvious. At the Second Moscow Trial in January 1937 Sokol'nikov stated:

As regards the principles of the program, as early as 1932 the Trotskyites, the Zinovievites, and the Rights had all come to agree in the main on the program which previously had been described as the program of the Rights.

This was the so-called Ryutin platform. As early as 1932 it expressed to a large extent just these principles of program which were common to all three groups. (1937 Trial 150-1)

The similarities between the "Riutin Platform" and Trotsky's proposals cannot be a coincidence. In 2004 an interrogation-confession of Valentin Astrov was published. Astrov was a student of Bukharin's and a member of

his underground group of Rights. He revealed that the so-called "Riutin Platform" was not really written by Martemian Riutin at all, but by the leaders of the Rights, Rykov, Bukharin, Tomsy, and Uglanov.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

The Riutin Platform was in essence not RIUTIN's document but that of the center of the Rights. ... SLEPKOV even stated that the main authors of the Riutin platform were RYKOV, BUKHARIN, TOMSKY, and UGLANOV and that it had been agreed, in the event of our failure [i.e. exposure, arrest] to depict this document as a document of RIUTIN alone, so as not to endanger the top leadership of the Rights. (Lubianka 1937-1938 86)

During the March 1938 Moscow Trial, Rykov confirmed what Astroff had stated in January 1937, that the Riutin Platform was composed by the leadership of the Rights: himself, Bukharin, Tomsy, Uglanov, and Vasili Shmidt. Rykov also confirmed that it had been named after Riutin in order to provide cover for the leadership of the Rights.

The platform was called after Ryutin, because it was published by supporters of the Rights, the Ryutin group, from Uglanov's Moscow organization. During the investigation instituted in connection with this platform, this group took the whole responsibility upon itself. This had been decided on beforehand, so that we ourselves should not be called to account for the platform... And to make it easier to do this, the program itself contained a phrase which expressed a certain sense of aloofness from Bukharin, Tomsy and myself; it said something to the effect that these three were waste steam. This was done from motives of double-dealing.

(1938 Trial 163)

Bukharin confirmed what Astroff had testified:

BUKHARIN: The Ryutin platform was adopted at the notorious conference held in the autumn of 1932, or in the summer, and it was approved at the meeting of which Alexei Ivanovich Rykov spoke.

VYSHINSKY: That means 1932?

BUKHARIN: The autumn of 1932. (1938 Trial 168)

Rykov's and Bukharin's testimony here is important to us since we know that Astrov was not subject to any kind of compulsion at his January 1937 interrogation. We also know that he testified truthfully since he had the chance to withdraw his testimony in 1938 and 1993 but instead he confirmed it. This constitutes further evidence that the confessions in the Moscow Trials are not fabrications forced upon innocent, unwilling defendants by the investigators or the prosecution but genuine confessions that represent what the defendants wished to say. We studied this question in detail in the first section of the present book.

Astrov testified that the Rights considered that the Trotskyists had adopted the economic program of the Rights:

At the beginning of 1932 in a meeting of the activists of our organization in his apartment SLEPKOV justified the necessity of concluding a bloc with the Trotskyists. He said that "the Trotskyists have accepted the economic platform of the Rights, and the Rights — the internal party program of the Trotskyists. The tactic of terror unites us. The disagreements between ourselves and the Trotskyists are insignificant. (32)

Bukharin confirmed this too in his testimony at the March 1938 trial:

Much has been said here about the Ryutin platform, and perhaps there is no need to dwell upon it. It was called the Ryutin platform for reasons of secrecy, as an insurance against exposure; it was called the Ryutin platform in order to conceal the Right centre and its top leadership. Furthermore, I must say in addition: I think that the Ryutin platform, as far as I can remember during the trial, **the platform of the Right counterrevolutionary organization, was perhaps already**

**actually a common platform of the other groupings, including the Kamenev-Zinoviev and Trotskyite groupings.**

It was just at this very moment that the situation became such that Trotsky had to throw off his Leftist uniform. When it came to exact formulations of what had to be done after all, his Right platform came into evidence at once, that is, he had to speak of decollectivization, etc.

VYSHINSKY: That is, you equipped Trotskyism ideologically too?

BUKHARIN: Quite true. (1938 Trial, 388-389)

Pierre Broué agreed that the Rights were part of the bloc.<sup>24</sup> Writing in 1980, Broué did not know that behind Riutin and Slepko, whom he named, were Rykov, Bukharin, and Tomsky.

La lettre à l'encre sympathique de Léon Sedov fait apparaître l'existence des groupes suivants : le groupe trotskyste d'U.R.S.S. (« notre fraction »), les « zinoviévistes », le groupe d'I. N. Smirnov, le groupe Sten-Lominadzé, le groupe « Safar(ov)-Tarkhan(ov) », « les droitiers » et « les libéraux ». Bien entendu, tous ne participent pas au « bloc », mais tous en connaissent l'existence et, selon Sedov, ont des contacts avec lui. (7)

Le groupe appelé par Sedov « les droitiers » pose en revanche plus de problèmes. Le terme désigne habituellement, on le sait, les éléments du parti qui ont, depuis l'époque de la Nep jusqu'à l'autocritique de leurs chefs de file, suivi le trio Boukharine, Rykov, Tomsky (26). ... les comptes rendus de réunions du secrétariat international de l'Opposition de gauche et quelques lettres de Léon Sedov font apparaître qu'il désigne systématiquement à l'époque par le terme de « droitiers » ce que les historiens désignent par « groupe Rioutine », un groupe original apparu précisément en 1932. (12-13)

Translated:

The letter from Leon Sedov in invisible ink reveals the existence of the following groups: the Trotskyist group in the USSR ("our fraction"),

the Zinovievists," the group of I.N. Smirnov, the Sten-Lominadze group, the "Safar(ov)-Tarkhan(ov)" group, "the Rights" and "the liberals." Of course not all took part in the bloc but all of them knew of its existence and, according to Sedov, were in contact with him. (7)

The group Sedov called "the Rights," by contrast, poses more problems. We know that the term usually means those elements of the Party who, since the NEP period until the self-criticisms of their leaders, had followed the troika of Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky (26). ... The accounts of the meetings of the international secretariat of the Left Opposition and a few letters from Leon Sedov reveal that at that time what the historians call the "Riutin group," an original group that appeared precisely in 1932, was systematically designated by the term "the Rights."

Broué goes on to name Galkin, Maretsky, Uglanov, and Kaiurov. The real history of the "Riutin group" was unknown to Broué, writing in 1980.

It is noteworthy that Broué recalls that Ante Ciliga, a dissident who was released and left the USSR, stated the relationship between the Rights and the Trotskyists in virtually the same words as Astrov:

Ante Ciliga dit qu'il y affirmait : « Les droites ont eu raison dans le domaine économique et Trotsky dans la critique du régime du parti (31).»<sup>27</sup>

Translated:

Ante Ciliga said that it was affirmed: "The Rights were correct in the economic arena, and Trotsky in the criticism of the regime of the Party."

Ciliga had this information at first hand, for he was imprisoned for a time in the political "isolator" at Verkhneural'sk where a number of Rights and Trotskyites, including both Astrov and I.N. Smirnov, were also imprisoned and where the opposition conspiracy of the bloc continued.<sup>26</sup>

## **Evidence and Proof**

We have proposed the hypothesis that Trotsky did in fact advocate as a "retreat" the restoration of many or most aspects of capitalism, as Radek, Piatakov, and Sokol'nikov testified at the January 1937 Moscow Trial. We believe this hypothesis is the only one that can satisfy the following conditions:

- It explains why Trotsky again and again took the risk of exposure as a liar by falsely claiming that Zinoviev and Kamenev had been accused of, charged with, confessed to, and been convicted of, "plotting to restore capitalism" and that this could be verified through articles in *Pravda*.
- It is consistent with the Riutin Platform of the Rights. We know that Trotsky approved the bloc with the Rights and other oppositionists in 1932, which was also the year that the Riutin Platform was adopted.
- It is consistent with the other evidence we now possess about the deliberate falsehoods Trotsky invented and repeated throughout the period under question. We examine them elsewhere in the present work.
- It is also consistent with the evidence we have collected from Soviet sources that Trotsky was indeed conspiring with Germany and Japan.
- We have shown in Part One that Moscow Trials testimony is valid as evidence in that, whenever we can check it from independent sources, it turns out to reflect what the defendants chose to say rather than fabrications forced upon innocent defendants.

The defendants in the January 1937 Moscow Trial made it clear that Trotsky's plan to "retreat" to capitalism was motivated by his belief that the opposition could only come to power in one of two ways: either through a war with the fascist powers — which they assumed the USSR would lose — or through a *coup* against the Stalin leadership, which would only succeed in establishing itself with cooperation from other imperialist countries. In either case German and Japanese cooperation would only be purchased at a very stiff price. According to them, Trotsky realized this and drew the necessary conclusions.

Considered dispassionately, the views these three defendants attributed to Trotsky make sense. Whether by assassination or by defeat in war at the

hands of invaders the removal by force of Stalin would certainly evoke a violent reaction, probably leading to rebellion and serious social instability. The Soviet Union's major capitalist enemies would likely try to take advantage of this situation, possibly by invading and attempting to dismember the enormous country and by setting up one or more capitalist regimes with political and social policies approved by them. To any Opposition that hoped to take the reins of power during such a crisis it was obvious that some kind of agreement would have to be arranged, in advance, with these aggressive imperialist capitalist powers.

### **A Hypothesis Must Account for the Evidence**

We have a lot of evidence, in the form of testimony at the 1937 and 1938 Moscow Trials, that Trotsky did advocate the "restoration of capitalism." His denial can be dismissed because he would deny the charge whether he had advocated it or not, and because we know Trotsky lied when he thought it expedient. Trotsky's archive has been "purged" so the absence in it of evidence there of this or other conspiratorial aims can bear no weight.

Therefore two hypotheses are possible:

1. That Trotsky did advocate "restoration of capitalism." This is the hypothesis that represents the most straightforward explanation in that it accounts for all the evidence.
2. That some other hypothesis can account for Trotsky's "amalgam" under consideration here: that Zinoviev and Kamenev were charged with, and confessed to, plotting "the restoration of capitalism."

This essay has laid out the evidence in support of hypothesis #1. As far as we can determine, there is no evidence to support *any* other hypothesis.

This leads us to an important conclusion. On the evidence, Trotsky did advocate the "restoration of capitalism" as Radek, Piatakov, and Sokol'nikov testified. No other hypothesis explains the evidence before us.

What does this mean for the further hypothesis that Trotsky conspired with Germany and Japan?



## Evidence Internal to Trotsky's Writings

Trotsky was highly intelligent, a prolific writer, a skilled theorist, and a dedicated revolutionary activist. How then is it possible that Trotsky was an incompetent liar? Yet again and again he composed falsehoods that anyone could have discovered and exposed simply by checking the sources Trotsky himself cited.

The "restoration of capitalism" claim is one of these lies. During the period from December-January 1935 to January 1937 Trotsky made it repeatedly. It was a lie that could easily be exposed by anyone who took the trouble, as we have done here, to compare what Trotsky claimed was in the articles in *Humanité* and Soviet newspapers with what Trotsky claimed was in them. Therefore Trotsky took a significant risk in telling this "amalgam." Moreover, he told it repeatedly. It follows that this "amalgam" had to be very important to him for some reason.

The only explanation we can find that would account for his repeating this lie over and over again is Trotsky's stated tactic to "expose the scheme in advance." Trotsky must have raised this issue as a pre-emptive strike to ward off the charge that he believed would come sooner or later by making it appear "predictable" and therefore "obviously" false. At length Trotsky was indeed charged with it by Radek, Piatakov, and Sokol'nikov. Radek, Piatakov, and Sokol'nikov linked Trotsky's advocacy of "restoring capitalism" to his view that the opposition would have to make serious concessions to aggressive capitalist states in order to be able to take and hold power.

Trotsky vehemently denied having been in touch with Radek, Piatakov, and Sokol'nikov. But we know that here too Trotsky was lying — he had indeed been in touch with them. We know that Radek was telling the precise truth when he described receiving a letter from Trotsky at the end of February or beginning of March 1932. There is no reason to think that Radek did not tell the truth in the rest of his testimony as well.

Radek, Piatakov, and Sokol'nikov linked Trotsky's alleged statements that they would have to "restore capitalism" to the need to collaborate with

Germany and Japan. And it stands to reason that no plans to replace the Stalin leadership would make any sense without making some kind of advance agreement with Germany and Japan. These were the policies that were described in the January 1937 Trial as constituting a "restoration of capitalism."

We have a good deal of other evidence that Trotsky conspired with Germany and Japan.<sup>27</sup> We will identify and discuss yet more evidence in volume two. Trotsky's "restoration of capitalism amalgam" is consistent with such a conspiracy. We conclude that this "amalgam" of Trotsky's *corroborates* the other evidence we have that Trotsky conspired with the Germans and Japanese.

## **Conclusion**

In raising time after time the false claim that Zinoviev and Kamenev had been accused of, confessed to, and been convicted of "plotting the restoration of capitalism" Trotsky was doing his best to defuse, through anticipation, the accusation he knew would sooner or later be leveled at himself. He knew it would be leveled against himself because he himself had been advocating exactly the "restoration of capitalism" to the leadership of his Soviet-based followers for some time — at least since 1935, according to Radek, perhaps as early as 1933, according to Piatakov and Krestinsky. This hypothesis is consistent with a great deal of other evidence we now possess. We have no reason to doubt the Soviet evidence that Trotsky collaborated with Germany and Japan. Trotsky's denials cannot be taken seriously. Thanks to the research of Broué, Getty, and Holmström we now know that Trotsky routinely lied whenever he thought it expedient to do so. Trotsky's lies went far beyond denying the involvement in this conspiracy of individuals. He also lied about important issues of principle such as his willingness to enter a bloc with other oppositionists and his willingness to employ "individual terror" or assassination against Stalin and others.

We cannot find *conclusive* evidence — whatever that might be — of Trotsky's collaboration with Germany and Japan. Any demand that "conclusive evidence," a "smoking gun," be produced is simply a form of

denial. In the case of a deeply conspiratorial organization as the opposition underground in the USSR necessarily had to be, one whose goal was to leave *no* evidence behind, we are forced to be content with composing a mosaic of *circumstantial* evidence. We possess even this circumstantial evidence only because (a) the Soviet Union came to an end and some documents from Soviet archives have become public, and (b) the "purging" of incriminating documents from the Harvard Trotsky Archive done imperfectly.

Absent these archival materials Trotsky would still have formed a bloc with the Zinovievists and other opposition groups, would still have written Radek, Sokol'nikov, and others, and — we argue — would still have conspired with Germany and Japan. The defendants in the Moscow Trials would still have been telling the truth, and Trotsky would still have been lying, in those cases we can now verify. But we would not have had the evidence that this was so. We would have only the testimony from the Moscow Trials.

This is yet more evidence that the Moscow Trials testimony should be taken far more seriously when we cannot check it, since it turns out to be truthful in those few examples where, by accident of history, we can check it. It also means that nothing Trotsky wrote during the 1930s about his own activities or the USSR should be accepted as true unless it can be independently verified.

## Chapter 16. Trotsky in *Biulleten' Oppozitsii*.

Trotsky dated issue #42 of the *Biulleten' Oppozitsii* February 1935, a month after the Kirov assassination issue #41 of January 1935. After the first few years of publication it had become unusual for Trotsky to publish back-to-back issues of the B.O. For example, there had been only two issues during the whole of 1934. So why did Trotsky do so this time?

Three articles, comprising about two-thirds of this issue, were devoted to the Kirov murder and related matters, especially the January 1935 indictment and trial of Zinoviev, Kamenev, Safarov, and the rest of the men whose arrests Trotsky had mentioned in the previous issue. These three articles have been published in English translation in the volume *Writings of Leon Trotsky [1934-1935]*. We will analyze them here. They are:

- "Some Results of the Stalin Amalgam." (January 12, 1935)<sup>1</sup>
- "The Case of Zinoviev, Kamenev and Others." (January 16-18, 1935)
- "Everything Gradually Falls Into Place." (January 26, 1935)

Like the whole of the Kirov murder issue #41, these articles set forth Trotsky's "amalgam," what he claimed was his theory about what was really going on. In reality they represent Trotsky's coverup, his "smokescreen." At the very least, Trotsky and his Soviet-based supporters were in alliance with the Zinovievists who murdered Kirov. In fact we now have evidence that they were much more deeply involved in the murder than that and Trotsky knew almost everything about the Kirov murder. We will explore this question further in volume two of this work.

Trotsky had decided not reveal his ties to the Zinovievists, and through them to the Leningrad-based Zinovievist group that had murdered Kirov or to the bloc of Rights and Trotskyists, and Zinovievists. So he had to invent a fictitious version of events. While claiming that he was trying to deduce the truth of what was happening inside the USSR around the Kirov murder, in reality Trotsky was creating a false — fictional — story that might accomplish several aims.

First, it would stand as his claim that he and his Soviet-based followers were innocent of Kirov's murder and of any thought of resorting to "terror." Second, it would demonize Stalin and his colleagues as bloodthirsty thugs who not only were using Kirov murder to suppress anyone they considered a threat to their power but who also may even have killed Kirov themselves.

Trotsky's alternative narrative would also serve to misdirect readers, get them to begin asking not, "Why is the Opposition using 'terror'?" but "Why is *Stalin* using 'terror'?" Therefore it would serve as Trotsky's "cover" for the real conspiratorial activities of his Soviet-based followers.

It is worth noting that Trotsky never refers to anything his Soviet-based adherents really were doing. After all, if the "Left Opposition," the "Bolshevik-Leninists" (as Trotsky referred to his followers) were viewed by Stalin as such a threat, then they must have been doing something! But Trotsky never mentions any activity at all by Soviet-based Trotskyists. A discerning reader at the time would have wondered whether Trotsky's silence about his followers' activities might not suggest that those activities were indeed what the Soviet prosecution alleged.

Ironically, therefore, it was not Stalin and the NKVD but Trotsky himself who had to fabricate what Trotsky liked to call "amalgams" — deliberately false and misleading accounts of what was happening. Trotsky's "amalgams" are composed of a number of elements:

- He severely distorted what he has found in the Soviet or other communist press accounts.
- Some of his falsehoods serve as "straw men" — statements he falsely attributes to Soviet sources and which he can easily claim to "refute."
- Sometimes these falsehoods serve as "red herrings," permitting Trotsky to deflect his readers' attention from the real developments in the USSR and to fabricate imaginary "amalgams," fictions in which Stalin and his men are the villains while the Opposition are innocent of any unprincipled acts and are in fact doing nothing at all.
- Sometimes Trotsky simply lied outright about what these accounts say.

Trotsky also lied about his own activities and principles.

- He claimed that he always broke completely with "capitulators." We know today, from materials in the Harvard Trotsky Archive, that this was a lie: he did not break off with them.
- He pretended to attack these same "capitulators" in print in what we now know was an attempt at a "cover" to disguise continued secret collaboration with them.
- He suppressed the truth about his real ties to the Zinovievists who were the subjects of the arrests and trials.
- He salted his presentation with anti-Stalin rumors and lies which he reported as fact.

### "Some Results of the Stalin Amalgam" (January 12, 1935)

It is in this issue that Trotsky begins to set forth an "amalgam" that was destined to become for many years the mainstream, or standard, version of the Kirov assassination: that it was Stalin who had Kirov killed.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

1. The mysterious consul has now turned out to be a Latvian consul; our supposition that a petty consul of a tiny nation would be chosen for the amalgam has been fully confirmed. However, it became necessary to name the consul — obviously because of diplomatic pressure — and this necessity threatened to blast the amalgam, for who would believe that a consul of Latvia is **the organizer of world intervention against the USSR?** (208)

In an essay titled "The Indictment" ([[cyrillic]]) in B.O. #41 Trotsky had indeed said:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

... the consul represented, I suppose, some very small and provincial state: that would be safer).

The fact that even before the Latvian consul had been publicly identified Trotsky had "predicted" the consul would be from a very small country suggests that Trotsky knew this in advance. Trotsky's words "that would be safer" do not explain his remark. After all, the consul could easily have been Polish or German. We know today that Nikolaev, Kirov's assassin, had the address and phone number of the German consulate in his notebook. (Lenoe 258) Aside from the Baltics there were simply no other "very small and provincial states" anywhere near the USSR. Indeed, the Latvian consul ma have already initiated contact with Trotsky.

Then comes a "straw man." The *Humanité* text of the indictment mentions the word "consul" nine times, but never accuses him of being "the organizer of world intervention against the USSR." It is easy for Trotsky to ridicule this allegation as though the Soviet indictment had stupidly made it — unless some reader bothered to check the text of the indictment.

But any reader who did so would immediately see that Trotsky was lying. And that implies that Trotsky believed he had something important enough to hide to be worth the risk of exposure.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

2. The Zinoviev group was arrested in connection with the Kirov assassination. Yet the indictment does not so much as let out a peep concerning a single one of the Zinovievists arrested in Moscow. But why then are they arrests? (208-209)

This too is a straw man. The indictment Trotsky mentions is that of the Leningrad group of Zinovievists who were tried to murdering Kirov. The Moscow Zinovievist group — Zinoviev, and others — had been arrested because the Leningrad group of Zinovievists that had planned and carried out Kirov's murder was in touch with them. The Moscow-based Zinovievists were not indicted for the murder because the NKVD had found no evidence they were aware of it. (Such evidence was eventually found, but no until much later.)

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

3. What charge, politically, may be brought against Zinoviev, Kamenev, and their friends? Their capitulation?

This is a "red herring." Trotsky is discussing the indictment of the Leningrad Zinovievist group for the Kirov murder. Then he asks this rhetorical question about the Moscow-based Zinovievist group who were not indicted and so, logically, were not mentioned in the indictment.

Trotsky of course knew that Zinoviev, Kamenev, Safarov, and other leading members of the bloc that he himself, Trotsky, had approved in 1932, had "capitulated" dishonestly. Their "capitulations" — renunciation of oppositional views and oaths to follow the Party line — were false. In the language of the Soviet investigators they were guilty of "two-facedness" or "double-dealing" (*dvulchie, dvurushnichestvo*). Pierre Broué firmly stated that this was a common practice and that "everybody had known" that Smirnov and his group had been lying in their "capitulation" and that Safarov had been the first one to suggest this as a necessary tactic. (Broué POS 104) Naturally, Trotsky hid this fact from his readers.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

There is a specific historical stench to this attempt at connecting the Left Opposition with the idea of intervention.<sup>2</sup>

Trotsky's accusation is a "straw man." The Leningrad Zinovievist group was indeed accused in the Soviet press (but not by the Prosecution) of trying to provoke foreign intervention:

Cependant, ne comptant pas sur la réalisation de telles actions à « l'intérieur du pays », le groupe TABLAIT DIRECTEMENT SUR L'AIDE « DU DEHORS », SUR L'INTERVENTION ARMEE ET L'AIDE DE CERTAINS ETATS ETRANGERS.<sup>3</sup>



Translated:

However, not counting on the realization of such actions "inside the country" the group WAS COUNTING DIRECTLY ON AID "FROM OUTSIDE," ON ARMED INTERVENTION AND THE HELP OF CERTAIN FOREIGN STATES.

<sup>3</sup> *Humanité*, December 28, 1934, p. 3 col. 3, subhead "Aidés par l'étranger!"

But Trotsky cannot point to any claims in the Soviet press linking the Left Opposition — Trotsky and his followers — to "intervention." In a previous chapter we examined in more detail Trotsky's "amalgam" or false allegation that the Soviet investigators and prosecution — "Stalin" — were trying to connect him — Trotsky — with "foreign intervention."

The events of 1926 and 1917 consume all of points 4 and 5 of this article while saying nothing about the matter at hand. Perhaps Trotsky preferred to turn his readers' attention to these years, when he himself played an important role.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

The fourteen who were accused in connection with the Kirov assassination were all shot. Did they all participate in the terrorist act? The indictment answers this question in the affirmative, but it does not adduce even the semblance of proof.

This is a lie. Both the original indictment in the Kirov murder case, which had been published in *Pravda* on December 27, 1934 and even the abbreviated version in *Humanité* of December 28 which Trotsky explicitly cited, summarized a lot of evidence, as anyone who read them would know. This evidence is the confessions of several of the defendants, partial confessions of others, and mutual accusations by some defendants of others. We have put both the Russian text of the Indictment and the abbreviated French text from *Humanité* online. Matthew Lenoe has translated most of it into English; and we have published a criticism of Lenoe's omissions.<sup>3</sup>

As in the previous issue of B.O. Trotsky is taking a risk — namely, that his readers will not think to compare what he is writing with the text of the indictment.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

We have seen with what brazen and cowardly tendentiousness it has injected the name of Trotsky into its text and how deliberately it passes over in silence what happened to the consul's provocation regarding the "letter." (210)

There are two falsehoods in this sentence:

- As in the previous issue of B.O., Trotsky says nothing about the "Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc," although it is mentioned three times in the abbreviated indictment. This is a transparent, even an incriminating omission. Anyone who read both texts would notice it and might wonder what the reason for this omission could be. Trotsky must have felt that remaining silent about the bloc was worth this risk. So the claim that "the name of Trotsky" was mentioned "with brazen and cowardly tendentiousness" is deigned only to confuse the reader.
- The Indictment does not "deliberately pass over in silence" the issue of the consul and letter to Trotsky at all. On the contrary, they are mentioned prominently:

«Il dit qu'il pouvait établir **la liaison** avec Trotsky si je lui remettais une lettre du groupe à Trotsky.»

Translated:

He said that he could establish **the contact** with Trotsky if I gave him a letter from the group to Trotsky.<sup>4</sup>

The French text clearly implies that the consul was not the first one to mention contact with Trotsky. The consul does not say "liaison" (contact)

but "la liaison" — "the contact," a contact previously mentioned. The original Russian text of the indictment contains the same implication:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

He [the consul] also said that, as for establishing contact with Trotsky, he could do so if I should give him some kind of letter from the group to Trotsky.

The indictment never states that Nikolaev actually gave the consul such a letter. If the investigators had known that he did, the indictment would certainly have mentioned it. And the investigators could not interrogate or search the consul of a foreign country, as Trotsky knew. Here as elsewhere Trotsky was hoping that no one would bother to check what he wrote against the text of the indictment available in *Humanité*.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

What is here involved is not so much the struggle of the Soviet bureaucracy against Trotsky and the "Trotskyists" but the question of the moral atmosphere of the world working class movement. The vile amalgam constructed around the "consul," who apparently was in the simultaneous employ of three governments, stands today as one of the number of ordinary and normal measures utilized by the Stalinist bureaucracy in the struggle for its caste positions.

Understandably Trotsky wanted to direct his readers' attention away from discussion of his and his followers' involvements with the Leningrad Zinovievist terrorists. This is the most likely explanation for his silence about the "Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc."

The sentence about the consul is another "straw man." Trotsky later claimed that the Latvian consul had "given 5000 rubles for the organization of Kirov's murder." (227) This is a lie. What the indictment really stated was

something quite different: that it was Nikolaev who asked the consul for money for the Leningrad Zinovievist group:

«J'ai ensuite demandé au consul de nous prêter une aide matérielle, lui disant que nous lui rendrions l'argent prêté aussitôt que contre situation financière changerait.

«A l'entrevue suivante, la troisième ou la quatrième au consulat, le consul m'informa qu'il était prêt à satisfaire à ma demande et me remit 5.000 roubles.

Translated:

I then asked the consul to lend us material help and told him that we would return the money loaned to us as soon as our financial situation changed.

At the next interview, the third or fourth at the consulate, the consul told me that he was ready to satisfy my request and handed me 5,000 rubles.

Nor does the indictment say anything at all about the consul being aware of an attempt to kill Kirov.

The "three governments" alleged by Trotsky would have been, besides Latvia, Hitler's Germany and the USSR, since Trotsky proposed that Kirov's murder was organized by the NKVD:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

A new version was necessary: the consul of Latvia was at the same time an agent of Hitler.

- "Some Results of the Stalin Amalgam," B.O. #42

Anyone who read the Indictment or the abbreviated French version in *Humanité* would know that neither the Soviet press nor the Indictment

against the Kirov defendants accused the Latvian consul of working with or for Germany.

Meanwhile the notion that Stalin was involved in Kirov's murder was another "red herring." Blaming Stalin for killing Kirov was yet another example of "exposing the scheme in advance," of "getting out in front" of the accusation that Trotsky could be reasonably certain would be aimed before long at himself.

Trotsky includes his "peppery dishes" tale here:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

In 1921, warning his most intimate comrades against electing Stalin as general secretary, Lenin said, "This cook will prepare only peppery dishes."

In the Introduction we showed that this story too is a lie.

### **"The Case of Zinoviev, Kamenev and Others." (January 16-18, 1935)**

Trotsky continues constructing his own "amalgam," or deliberately false account, of the events in the USSR.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

They [Zinoviev, Kamenev and 14 of their associates] were arrested with a view to an amalgam, that is to say in order to establish a connection between the terrorist assassination and the Opposition, all opposition, all criticism in general, past, present or future. It was decided to arrest them when everything seemed to have been already settled. (213)

Trotsky knew from reading the abbreviated indictment as published in *Humanité* that the Kirov murder defendants had revealed the existence of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist bloc.<sup>5</sup> Therefore the connection between the terrorist murder and both the Zinovievist and the Trotskyist oppositions had already been established. But although he had personally approved its formation Trotsky had decided to deny that the bloc existed. Consequently we are dealing with Trotsky's own "amalgam," or false story, here.

Trotsky continues by elaborating his own "amalgam" of Stalin's involvement, via the GPU (NKVD), with Kirov's murder:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

The NKVD was conversant with the preparations for the Leningrad terrorist act. The "consul" had carried out the task assigned to him; he was the link in the amalgam. The real terrorist, Nikolaev, however, it appears, at the last moment for conspiratorial reason — detached himself from his own group, including the agents of the NKVD who were playing a part in it. The fatal shot rang out. It wasn't in Stalin's program. But that was the risk in the enterprise. Kirov fell victim. The NKVD agents paid for it: the higher officials were dismissed, the lower ones were shot together with the terrorists. ("The Case of Zinoviev, Kamenev and Others," WLT 1934-35, 213)

This is all invention, more "smokescreen" and "red herrings." No lower-ranking NKVD workers were shot together with Nikolaev's group ("the terrorists"). There was never any evidence of contact between the NKVD and the Latvian consul. There was never any evidence of Stalin's involvement in Kirov's murder. Trotsky, of course, knew that it was not Stalin but the bloc that had been planning the assassinations of Kirov, Stalin, and others.

It is tempting to hypothesize that Trotsky may have known about Iagoda's indirect involvement with the Kirov murder, of which we know from Iagoda's pretrial confessional of 1937 as well as from the testimony at the March 1938 Moscow Trial.<sup>6</sup> Iagoda discussed with Radek his attempts to

stop or at least minimize the repression of the underground Trotskyists in the aftermath of the Kirov murder. It is possible that Radek conveyed to Trotsky whatever he knew himself.

Trotsky repeats a falsehood from his article in B.O. #41:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

It was necessary to leave out from the trial the case of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and their friends. The indictment in the Nikolaev case said not one word about them... (214)

This is a lie. The Kirov indictment, including the abbreviated version in *Humanité*, did indeed mention Zinoviev, Kamenev, and the "group antisoviétique Zinoviev" numerous times. We have studied this lie of Trotsky's in a previous chapter.

Under the heading "17 January" Trotsky asserts that Bakaev, one of the defendants, "must have" testified under threat of being tried as one of Kirov's assassins. (217) This is an interesting statement by Trotsky.

Bakaev was indeed involved in Kirov's murder, as were Zinoviev and Kamenev. But Trotsky does not claim that Zinoviev and Kamenev had testified out of a threat of being tried as among Kirov's killers. Bakaev was in Moscow, as were Zinoviev and Kamenev. Along with Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others Bakaev, like Zinoviev and Kamenev, admitted to involvement in the plan to kill Kirov. All three had been named by so many of their accomplices that further denial was pointless.

In the present book we demonstrate that Trotsky, whose strategy was to deny all accusations, sometimes made a statement that did not fit his fictive narration and thus was a "tell" that revealed more than he intended. In the light of what we know now about Trotsky's strategy of falsification we can see that this remark of Trotsky's about Bakaev is such a "tell."

Under "18 January" Trotsky discusses the abbreviated text of the indictment against Zinoviev, Kamenev, Safarov et al. published the previous day, January 17, in *Humanité*.<sup>7</sup> Safarov began to testify, albeit in a veiled manner, about the formation of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist bloc in 1932, while not calling it a bloc. This was a threat to Trotsky and he describes Safarov's quoted testimony as follows:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

The chief witness for the prosecution, Safarov, whose case — we don't know why — was examined separately (the role of this individual in the affair appears most enigmatic), shows that the "counterrevolutionary" activity of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and the others was particularly intense in 1932! Yet it was precisely for this activity that in 1932 they were expelled from the party and deported. (218)

<sup>7</sup> We have put the text of this abbreviated indictment, from *Humanité* January 17, 1935, p. 3 online at [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/zin-kam\\_indict\\_humanite011735.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/zin-kam_indict_humanite011735.pdf)

Trotsky's "deductions" here are pure misdirection. The fact that Safarov named the year 1932 must have been especially alarming to Trotsky. Sedov's 1932 letter to Trotsky explicitly identifies Safarov as someone who has not yet joined the bloc as it was being formed in 1932 but whose joining is expected shortly. But Safarov was not a Trotskyist. Perhaps Trotsky thought that Safarov might be more likely to identify Trotsky, Zinoviev, and others in order to save himself.

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

The indictment does not mention by a single word the connection of the accused with Nikolaev. (220)



Another false statement. The abbreviated indictment in *Humanité* cites the contact between the Moscow group of Zinovievists and the Leningrad group that killed Kirov and of which Nikolaev was a part, as illustrated by this passage (more could be cited):

L'instruction préliminaire établit que Zinoviev, Evdokimov, Guertik, Bakev, Koukline, Kamenev, Charaov, Fedorov et Garchenine adhéraient au «Centre de Moscou», réunissant autour d'eux nombre des membres les plus actifs de l'ancien groupement antisoviétique Zinoviev et **entretenant des rapports réguliers avec les membres du groupe de Leningrad**, condamnés par le Collège militaire du Tribunal supreme de I.U.R.S.S. (affaire de l'assassinat de Kirov).

Le « Centre de Moscou » ne se bornait pas seulement à l'entretien de rapports avec le groupe illégal de Leningrad et de certains de ses partisans dans 'd'autres villes, mais jouait un rôle de *centre politique dirigeant systématiquement*, au cours d'un certain nombre d'années, l'activité contre-révolutionnaire secrète, **tant du groupe de Moscou que de celui de Leningrad.**

Translated:

The preliminary instruction has established that Zinoviev and Gorshenin belonged to the "Moscow Center" and brought together under them a number of the most active members of the old Zinoviev anti-Soviet grouping and **maintained regular contact with the members of the Leningrad group** condemned by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR (the Kirov assassination case).

The "Moscow Center" did not limit itself only to the maintenance of contact with the illegal Leningrad group and with certain of its members in other town, but played the role of the *political center that systematically directed*, for a number of years, the secret counterrevolutionary activity of **both the Moscow group and of that of Leningrad.**

Once again, it appears that Trotsky was so intent upon construction an "amalgam" that would direct attention away from the accusations of the Soviet court that he did not worry about the reactions of any reader who might compare what he wrote with the texts themselves.

Trotsky mentioned that the Kirov murder indictment cited the "platform" of 1926":

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

The indictment in the Nikolaev case tried, as we recall, to connect the terrorists with the "platform" of the 1926 Opposition. (150)

So it did — but, as we have shown in an earlier chapter, it also mentioned the "Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc" four times (three in the French abbreviation). Trotsky remained silent about that.

Once again Trotsky falsely claimed that he has always broken with "capitulators":

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

Did Stalin try to complete the consul's work by means of the military tribunal in order to extract declarations against Trotsky? I don't doubt it. In any case, he didn't succeed. The constant principle of the Bolshevik-Leninist faction is: break irreconcilably with capitulators. We do not allow double bookkeeping... We broke in the past with the Zinovievists as resolutely as last year we broke with Rakovsky. (221)

Thanks to Broué's and Getty's discoveries in the Harvard Trotsky Archive we know that this is a lie. Trotsky did not "break irreconcilably with capitulators." On the contrary: some, perhaps most, perhaps even all, such cases were a deception, designed to facilitate the continuation of clandestine opposition work inside the Party. Therefore in his own words Trotsky did

indeed "allow double bookkeeping." His claim of principled oppositionism was a pose, undoubtedly essential for him to retain his non-Soviet followers and those Soviet followers who were not "in the know."

The following paragraph raises an interesting example: that of Khristian Rakovsky. At the March 1938 Moscow Trial Rakovsky testified that he too had remained with Trotsky after making a false "capitulation":

This took place in July or August 1932. One and a half years later, in February 1934, I sent a telegram to the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., saying that I had completely disarmed myself both ideologically and organizationally and asked to be reinstated in the Party. This telegram was insincere, I was lying. It was my deliberate intention to hide from the Party and the government my association with the Intelligence Service ever since 1924, and Trotsky's association with the Intelligence Service ever since 1926. (1938 Trial 288-289)

Broué has admitted that "[e]verybody" understood these "capitulations" to be a smokescreen. (POS 104) Trotsky's mentioning Rakovsky in the same breath as Zinoviev and Kamenev strongly suggests that Trotsky's supposed "break" with Rakovsky in 1934 was also a "cover" for the latter's continued secret Trotskyist work. Trotsky confirms that his phony "break" with the false "capitulators" is his best defense:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

This complete rupture in personal and political relations has made impossible — despite the help of a consul and a military tribunal — future success in developing amalgams from the side of the Bolshevik-Leninists. (221)

This, of course, is another lie. Thanks to the research of Pierre Broué and other we know that there was no "break" with Zinoviev, Kamenev, and the others in the bloc formed in 1932, or with Radek and others to whom Trotsky wrote the same year. This confirms Rakovsky's testimony that his "break" too was a smokescreen.

## "Everything Gradually Falls Into Place." (January 28, 1935)

Here Trotsky continues his misdirection, or "amalgam," of his own. He writes:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

On December 30, 1934 I expressed the firm conviction that the GPU from the outset knew about the terrorist act that was being prepared. The participation of the "consul" who could only be an agent of the GPU, was the irrefutable evidence. Now we have the proof. On January 23, a military tribunal condemned twelve responsible representatives of the GPU in Leningrad, with, at their head, their chief, Medved, to hard labor: two to ten years' imprisonment! The sentence on them was for the charge that, no more, no less, "they were aware of the attempt being prepared against Kirov but showed criminal negligence (!) in not taking the necessary security measures." (223)

Trotsky's text is so close to the text in *Pravda* that Trotsky must have had access to the Soviet paper. We have reproduced below the words in *Pravda* of January 23, 1935 concerning the sentencing of the NKVD men with Trotsky's words in his article dated January 26. Trotsky wrote:

[[cyrillic]]

The text in *Pravda* of January 23, 1935 reads thus:

[[cyrillic]]

Trotsky's language:

[[cyrillic]]

The text in *Pravda*:

[[cyrillic]]

Trotsky's language:

[[cyrillic]]

The text in *Pravda*:

[[cyrillic]]

These passages prove that Trotsky had access to *Pravda* within a day or two of its publication in the USSR. Trotsky's words either echo those of the *Pravda* article precisely or are a very close paraphrase. Trotsky must have read the *Pravda* article himself or had someone read it to him while he made notes.

Here Trotsky was continuing his attempt to deflect attention away from the involvement of the "Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc" onto another — any other — target, by falsely asserting that NKVD men were among the 14 executed for the Kirov murder; that Stalin was involved in the Kirov murder.

Trotsky concludes with phrases that are full of irony for us today:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

Revolutionary terrorism does not need a mask because it finds its immediate justification in the consciousness of the popular masses.  
(228)

We know from sources outside the USSR that Trotsky did indeed sanction the use of "terror." both from Sedov's words to Zborowski and from Trotsky's bloc with the Rights, who according to Jules Humbert-Droz were already planning Stalin's assassination in 1928. Like his declarations of permanent "break" with "capitulators" Trotsky's insistence in denouncing "terror" is more "cover" for his machinations.

Concerning Stalin's "amalgams" Trotsky wrote:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

The need for amalgams emerges when a bureaucracy rises above the revolutionary class a privileged caste, with its special interests, secrets, and machinations. fear for its power and its privileges, the bureaucracy is compelled to deceive the people. (228)

What becomes of this analysis when we realize that it was not Stalin who was forging "amalgams" — false stories — but Trotsky himself? Moreover, on the evidence we now have, Stalin and the Soviet prosecutors had not fabricated anything. They were really trying to find out what was going on, trying to solve the crime.

Posing as a champion of the truth Trotsky denounces Stalin's "amalgams," or deliberate falsifications. Meanwhile it was Trotsky who was creating "amalgams" to disguise his real activities. Ironically it was not Stalin but Trotsky himself who felt "compelled to deceive the people."

On the evidence we have today it is clear that the Stalin-era Soviet investigators did solve the Kirov murder.<sup>8</sup> Further investigation into the murder eventually led the NKVD to discover the bloc of Oppositionists — Zinovievists, Trotskyists, Rightists, and others — who were the defendants in all three of the public Moscow Trials of 1936, 1937, and 1938.

With the following words Trotsky was also positioning himself to declare any future revelations by the NKVD and Soviet prosecutors as even larger fabrications:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

*Stalin is forced to cover up the unsuccessful amalgams with new, broader and more successful ones. We must meet them well armed. The struggle against the ferocious repressions against the Marxists opposition in the USSR is inseparable from the struggle for the liberation of the world proletarian vanguard from the influence of Stalinist agents and Stalinist methods. Not one honest revolutionary*

proletarian ought to be silent. Of all political figures, the most despicable is Pontius Pilate. (228; Emphasis in the original.)

At this point we should recall that Trotsky's principal tactic in covering up the bloc and his own activities was to "expose the scheme in advance." In his first article on the Kirov murder in B.O. #41 Trotsky had written:

There is only one way to forestall en route the amalgams that are in preparation: *Expose the scheme in advance*. The Stalinists are trying to mold the public opinion of the world police towards expulsions, extraditions, arrests, and other more decisive measure. The Leninists must prepare the public opinion of the world proletariat for these possible events. In this case, as in others, it is necessary to speak out openly about what is; that is also the aim of the present article. ("The Stalinist Bureaucracy and the Assassination of Kirov")

Trotsky knew then — and we know now — that it was he himself, not the Soviet prosecution ("Stalin"), that was cooking up a false story or "amalgam" concerning Kirov's murder. Trotsky also suspected that the NKVD investigation would uncover more details of his own followers' activities, and therefore that more accusations against him would be forthcoming in the future.

Once he had begun to deny that the bloc with Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others existed Trotsky had no choice but to compose a false account of the Kirov murder while pretending to be deducing what had really happened. The obvious tactic was to turn the tables and blame Stalin for Kirov's murder, and then blame Stalin again for trying to pin Kirov's murder on the real culprits, the bloc — including himself, Trotsky.

For the rest of his life Trotsky continued to falsely claim that the Moscow Trials were a frameup and that all the defendants including himself were its innocent victims. In a great historical irony, Trotsky's "amalgam" was to become the most influential account of Kirov's murder. Of course, Trotsky's followers accepted it. But the central event in its further development was Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" of February 25, 1956 when Khrushchev said:

It must be asserted that to this day the circumstances surrounding Kirov's murder hide many things which are inexplicable and mysterious and demand a most careful examination.

In 1964 the Shvernik Commission appointed by Khrushchev to find evidence for the "rehabilitations" of the Moscow Trials victims and many others, suggested that Stalin was behind Kirov's murder. In conformity with Khrushchev's goals the Commission concluded:

[[cyrillic]]

Translated:

No "Anti-Soviet Right-Trotskyist bloc" existed in reality...

This report was not published until 1994, after the end of the Soviet Union. But in the late 1980s it was studied and used by Gorbachev's men. Aleksandr Iakovlev, a Politburo member and Gorbachev's chief for ideology, ordered an attempt to find evidence that Stalin was behind Kirov's murder. Iakovlev's high-level commission reluctantly concluded that there was no such evidence. So they settled for a compromise solution: they claimed that Nikolaev had been a "lone gunman," that there had never been a bloc, and that Stalin had used Nikolaev's crime to "frame" innocent people whom he thought were against him.

Thanks to the Harvard Trotsky Archive we know today that the bloc did exist. The Shvernik Commission and Iakovlev reports are as phony as the version by Trotsky on which, through Khrushchev, they were ultimately based. This story, which originated in Trotsky's need to deny and conceal his conspiracy, has become the canonical version of the Kirov murder.



**Part Three. Trotsky's Lies and The Dewey  
Commission.**

## Chapter 17. The Dewey Commission I — The Testimony

The "Commission of Inquiry into the Charges Made against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trial," called the Dewey Commission (D.C.) after its chairman, John Dewey, was formed in 1937 ostensibly to investigate the charges made against Trotsky in the first two Moscow Trials.

The objectivity of the D.C. and its intention to conduct an impartial hearing was sharply questioned from the outset.

Columnist and Editor of the Baltimore Sun Mauritz Hallgren, one of the original Commission members, resigned at the beginning of February 1937 in protest against what he felt was an attempt by Trotsky and his followers to use the Committee as a tool in Trotsky's struggle against the Soviet government.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Holmström, *New Evidence* 42. Hallgren explained his reasons for his resignation in a letter to *The New York Times* of February 5, 1937, p. 20. Hallgren's letter of resignation to Felix Morrow of the American Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky, dated January 27, 1937, may be read at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/hallgrentomorrow.pdf> Hallgren's letter to *The New York Times* may be read at [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/hallgren\\_nyt020537.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/hallgren_nyt020537.pdf)

One of the initial members, Carleton Beals, dropped of the Commission when he became convinced that it was pro-Trotsky and not object. Deals called the D.C. hearings a joke." Beals' full statement was printed in *The New York Times* of April 19, 1937. Beals published a second explanation for his resignation in the *Saturday Evening Post* of June 12, 1937.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The *New York Times* article about Beals' resignation may be read at [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/beals\\_nyt041937.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/beals_nyt041937.pdf) Beals' SEP article may be read at [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/beals\\_sep061937.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/beals_sep061937.pdf)

Nevertheless its hearings, held in Mexico in April 1937, and its report made later that year, have often been said to have disproved some at least of the accusations made against Trotsky at these two Moscow Trials.<sup>3</sup> The D.C. is often cited as a definitive refutation of the charges leveled at Trotsky in the first two Moscow Trials. It is even referred to as a successful debunking of the trials testimony as a whole.

<sup>3</sup> We have used, among other accounts, the unpublished Masters degree dissertation of the late John M. Belton, *The Commission of Inquiry Into Charges Made Against Leon Trotsky in the Great Purge Trials in Moscow*. Emory University, 1966, and Thomas Ray Poole, "Counter-Trial." *Leon Trotsky on the Soviet Purge Trials*. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 1974; Alan Wald, "Memories of the Dewey Commission: forty years later." *Antioch Review* 35 (Fall 1977) 438-451.

In fact, it appears as though the D.C. has never been carefully studied. For no one who carefully examines the text of the two volumes of the D.C. proceedings with any attempt at objectivity could reach such a conclusion. We will demonstrate that fact in the following chapters.

It has always been possible to assess the statements and claims made by Trotsky, his advocate, and his witness on the basis of their logic. We can now also evaluate the conclusion reached by the D.C. in the light of the greater knowledge afforded to us by archival materials. These materials are: the Trotsky archive at Houghton Library, Harvard University; the Trotsky archive that forms part of the Nicolaevsky papers at the Hoover Institution; and certain materials from Soviet archives that have been published since the end of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The D.C. published two volumes. In this chapter we will examine the first volume, *The Case of Leon Trotsky*. It is a transcript of the hearings held by the D.C. in Coyoacán, Mexico between April 10 and April 17, 1937 — plus some additional supplementary materials related to them. The following chapter is devoted to a study of the second volume: *Not Guilty*. It contains the D.C.'s consideration of the testimony and its conclusions.

Earlier in this book we have listed a number of Trotsky's proven lies. Trotsky repeated most of them in his testimony to the D.C. This and the

following chapter are organized around an examination of those of Trotsky's demonstrable falsehoods that he employed in his testimony to the D.C. Thanks to the archival discoveries we can now prove that Trotsky deliberately lied in much of his most important testimony to the D.C.

### **Trotsky's falsehoods dealt with elsewhere in this study**

When issues arise in the D.C. transcript that are considered in other parts of the present book we will refer to those discussions. We want to mention two of them at the outset:

The Kirov murder. Trotsky refers extensively to the Kirov murder and his own writings about it. We examine these writings of Trotsky's in other chapters of the present work.

The question of the "Hotel Bristol" and whether Gol'tsman (called "Holtzman" in the English translation of the 1936 Trial transcript and in the D.C. hearings), a defendant in the First Moscow Trial of August 1936 (the "Zinoviev-Kamenev trial"), met Sedov, and then Trotsky, in Copenhagen in November 1932, is examined in Sven-Eric Holmström's article of 2009. We refer to that excellent study, and only add a few additional points that Holmström did not address there.

### **Trotsky's principal lies to the Dewey Commission**

#### **"Capitulators"<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>4</sup> "Capitulators" is the name given to Bolshevik Party members who were loyal to an Opposition group within the Party, were expelled for violating the 1921 resolution forbidding Party factions, and who then "capitulated" to the Party leadership — Stalin — by signing a statement in which they renounced their dissident views and swore to uphold the Party's line in the future.

Trotsky lied to the D.C. when he stated:

We do not discuss with the capitulators. We merely exclude them from our ranks and keep them out of the argument. (CLT 119)

Pierre Broué insisted that this was not true.

Lev Sedov called the Smirnov group either the "former capitulators" or the "Trotskiite capitulators." Everybody had known, from 1929 on, that people in the Smirnov group had not really capitulated but were trying to fool the apparatus, and were capable of organizing themselves as an Opposition within the party: the fact was so universally known that Andres Nin, the Spaniard deported from the Soviet Union in August 1930, explained it openly to his German comrades of *Die permanente Revolution* who printed his declaration without apparent problem. (POS 104)

According to Broué, by 1929 at the latest none of the "capitulations" were genuine. All the "capitulators" were "two-faced," hypocritical, and "capitulated" in order to gain reinstatement in the Party where they could continue their conspiracy. The Moscow Trials testimony and other evidence now available suggests that dishonest "capitulations" began far earlier than 1929.

By 1932 Trotsky had reached out to them and some of them had responded. That means that by 1932 at the latest Trotsky's public rejection of "capitulators" was a smokescreen behind which to hide their dealings with each other.

#### **The Bloc with other Oppositionists**

In his D.C. testimony Trotsky denied the possibility of a bloc with Zinoviev and Kamenev because they were "capitulators."

GOLDMAN: Did you ever discuss with anyone the possibility of organizing a united center between your political followers and the followers of Zinoviev and Kamenev in the Soviet Union, after the break-up of your bloc with Zinoviev and Kamenev?

TROTSKY: Never. My articles show that it is absolutely impossible. My appreciation of them, my total contempt after the capitulation, my hostility to them and their hostility to me, excluded that absolutely.

GOLDMAN: Have you read the testimony of Zinoviev and Kamenev and the other defendants in the first Moscow trial?

TROTSKY: Yes.

GOLDMAN: Wherein these defendants claimed that you instructed several of them to establish a united center between your political followers and their political followers? Have you read such testimonies?

TROTSKY: Yes.

GOLDMAN: What have you to say about that?

TROTSKY: It is a falsehood organized by the G.P.U. and supported by Stalin. (CLT 87-88)

Trotsky's explanation for the testimony concerning the bloc at the 1936 Moscow Trial was that the bloc did not exist, was a fabrication of the G.P.U. (the name for the NKVD until 1934) at Stalin's order. Trotsky was lying. To use one of Trotsky's favorite words, this was an "amalgam" — of his own. We have known since 1980 that Trotsky was lying here thanks to Broué's discovery of Sedov's bloc letter and of Trotsky's reply.

Trotsky repeated this "amalgam," or falsehood, throughout the D.C. hearings. In his long closing statement Trotsky said:

3. The testimony of the defendants — at least those whose political physiognomy is well known — is, however, false also in those sections where they expose their own criminal activity. We are not dealing with bandits, or with criminal perverts, or with moral degenerates, but with the unfortunate victims of the most horrible inquisitorial system of all time. (CLT 488)

The Zinoviev-Kamenev trial (August 1936) was constructed entirely on the basis of terror. (CLT 498)

Trotsky knew that this was not true. The Prosecutor's charge that Zinoviev and Kamenev were in a bloc with Trotsky and the Soviet Trotskyists was not false, not "constructed ... on the basis of terror." It was, in fact, true.

Trotsky knew much more than this. He certainly knew, for example, that the Zinoviev-Kamenev underground planned and carried out the December 1, 1934 murder of Sergei Kirov in Leningrad. We have discussed this in more detail in another chapter. We now have good evidence that Trotsky and his supporters in the USSR were more directly involved in Kirov's murder. We will discuss this in the second volume of this study.

In his essays on the Kirov murder and on the January 1935 trial of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and their Moscow-based co-conspirators Trotsky claimed repeatedly that he despised Zinoviev and Kamenev and that he had had no contact with them. This was all deliberate falsehood, a smokescreen to camouflage the bloc and its activities.

**I.N. Smirnov**

Trotsky lied to the D.C. when he denied any contact with Smirnov:

GOLDMAN: After his capitulation in November, 1929, did you have any connection with Smirnov?

TROTSKY: I, directly, not. My son met him in Berlin in 1931, in the street.

GOLDMAN: Did you son give you any information?

TROTSKY: Yes, he told us that the man is absolutely unhappy and disoriented, without any political orientation, that he gave him some information about old friends, capitulators and non-capitulators, and that he was very friendly in conversations with him — he knew my son as a boy, and then as a young lad — contrary to Pyatakov, who met

my son also on the street, but turned his head away. My son called him a traitor. That was o Unter den Linden. (CLT 89)

Trotsky was lying here as well. In reality Smirnov was one of the members of the bloc named in Sedov's letter to Trotsky. Sedov had been in touch with him and communicated this to Trotsky.

**Gaven**

Trotsky lied to the D.C. when he denied having any contact with Gaven:

GOLDMAN: Did you ever hear of a man by the name of Gaven?

TROTSKY: Yes.

GOLDMAN: Who is he?

TROTSKY: He is a Latvian Bolshevik. He, if I remember, gave all his sympathies at a certain time to the Opposition. As Holtzman, for example.. In 1926 or 1927, he was connected for a time with Smilga, a member of the Central Committee. But he disappeared from my eyes absolutely after 1926.

GOLDMAN: In the testimony of Mrachkovsky, and also Smirnov, there is a reference that you sent communications through Gaven to Smirnov about the necessity of killing Stalin.

TROTSKY: I don't know anything about it. No, it is an absolute falsehood. He is not among the defendants.

GOLDMAN: No, he is not.

TROTSKY: He is a witness.

GOLDMAN: That's right.

TROTSKY: He disappeared. (CLT 225-6)



Pierre Broué discovered that Trotsky had indeed met with Gaven and given him a message for Smirnov.

Some documents found in Sedov's Paper in Hoover cast useful supplementary light on the case. For the first time, we learn something about the man who was depicted by procurator Vyshinsky and some of the defendants as the one who brought the terrorist directives from Trotskii to the USSR, that is Iuri Petrovich Gavenis (sometimes Gaven), an Old Bolshevik working in Gosplan.... In 1936 Trotskii and Sedov denied having had any contact with him. In fact, they had. Allowed to go to Germany in order to receive medical care, Gavenis wrote to Trotskii and got an interview with Lev Sedov who wrote an account of it. Gavenis gave information about the bloc, supplementing Holzman's. He also gave information about his own "O"-group (probably Osinskii) and seems to have agreed to bring back to the Soviet Union a message to the Trotskiite group itself — in spite of his worry about the latter having been infiltrated by OGPU. (POS 99)

Elsewhere in the present volume we discuss Trotsky's contact with Gaven. We will return to this contact in volume two.

### **Preobrazhensky**

Trotsky mentions Preobrazhensky's "capitulation" a number of times. Though he never states outright whether he had subsequently been in contact with Preobrazhensky, Trotsky did say he never again contacted the "capitulators," of which Preobrazhensky was one. He wrote about Preobrazhensky as he did about Radek.

The discussion revolving around Radek took on an international character. Thus, the German oppositional organization, the Leninbund, published the declaration of Radek, Smilga and Preobrazhensky, and offered to print my declaration. In October, 1929, I answered the leadership of the Leninbund: "Isn't it monstrous? In my brochure I defend the point of view of the Russian Opposition. Radek, Smilga and Preobrazhensky are renegades, bitter enemies of the Russian Opposition. Radek, Smilga and Preobrazhensky are renegades, bitter enemies of the Russian Opposition, and furthermore Radek does not

stop at any calumny." In the publications of the Left Opposition during those years one can find, in several languages, not a few scornful articles and comments flaying Radek. (CLT 531)

Trotsky implied that he was not collaborating with Preobrazhensky. But he was. In January 1932 Preobrazhensky was one of the persons to whom Trotsky wrote a letter, of which only the certified mail receipt remains in the Harvard Trotsky Archive. In the same year Preobrazhensky is named in Sedov's 1932 "bloc letter" to Trotsky.

**Radek**

Trotsky and his lawyer Goldman insisted that Trotsky had had no contact with Radek since his exile from the USSR in 1929.

**GOLDMAN: ... The testimony will show that Trotsky has had no connection either direct or indirect with Radek since the time of his expulsion from the U.S.S.R., and that he has neither received from Radek nor written to him a single letter. (CLT 10)**

**GOLDMAN: Now, were you in communication with Radek, either directly or indirectly, since you left the Soviet Union, Mr. Trotsky?**

TROTSKY: The only communications are represented by the quotations; no other communication.

**GOLDMAN: You mean that you wrote about him, but you did not write to him?**

TROTSKY: **Never.**

GOLDMAN: Did you receive any letters from him?

TROTSKY: Never.

**GOLDMAN: Did you send letters to him through an intermediary?**

TROTSKY: **No.** (CLT 116)

Trotsky was lying again. In reality Trotsky did write Radek. Moreover, he did so at exactly the time Radek specified in his testimony at the Second Moscow Trial of January 1937. We discuss this in another chapter of the present volume.

Trotsky repeated this lie in his long closing statement:

The year 1929 was the breaking-point in his political life as in his attitude towards me, the story of our relations before and after 1929 can be followed without difficulty from year to year through articles and letters. In this question, as in others, to reestablish the basic facts is to refute the accusation. (CLT 524)

During the trial, Radek testified: ". . . in February, 1932, I received a letter from Trotsky . . . Trotsky further wrote that since he knew me to be an active person he was convinced that I would return to the struggle." Three months after this alleged letter, on May 14th, 1932, I wrote to Albert Weisbord in new York... (CLT 532)

I have declared more than once, and I declare again, that Pyatakov, like Radek, for the past nine years was not my friend but one of my bitterest and most treacherous enemies, and that there could have been no question of negotiations and meetings between us. (CLT 554)

#### **Sokol'nikov**

Trotsky testified tot he D.C. that he had not contacted Sokol'nikov:

GOLDMAN: December, 1927. Was Sokolnikov ever in disfavor with the ruling, bureaucratic apparatus, as far as you know—before the trials, I mean?

TROTSKY: Sokolnikov has original ideas. He has a very inventive mind, and that is the reason why he is not fit, he does not fit into the bureaucratic regime.

GOLDMAN: Did you ever have any communication from him when you left Russia?

TROTSKY: **Never.**

GOLDMAN: Did you in any way communicate with him since you left Russia?

TROTSKY: **No.**

GOLDMAN: Either directly or indirectly?

TROTSKY: **No.** (CLT 123)

Trotsky was lying Getty discovered in the Harvard Trotsky Archive the certified mail receipt of a letter from Trotsky Sokol'nikov of January 12, 1932.

It is interesting to note that at the Second Moscow Trial of January 1927 Sokol'nikov also denied having been in touch with Trotsky. This shows that witnesses at the Moscow Trials did not either lie or tell the truth consistently. Therefore, the discovery of a single lie by a witness is not grounds to dismiss all his testimony as false. The D.C. frequently committed this error, as we shall see.

#### **Piatakov**

As with Radek, Preobrazhensky, and Sokol'nikov Trotsky claimed that he had had no contact with Piatakov since leaving the USSR.

GOLDMAN: When did he [Piatakov] capitulate?

TROTSKY: He capitulated openly, publicly; he capitulated in February, 1928. He was the first "Trotskyite" who capitulated publicly.

GOLDMAN: And after that did you have any correspondence with him at all?

TROTSKY: None.

GOLDMAN: Either when you were in the Soviet Union or outside of the Soviet Union?

TROTSKY: Exactly. (CLT 117)

GOLDMAN: So, you state you never saw Pyatakov in Oslo in December of 1935, or at any other place, and that you never saw him since 1927 or thereabouts?

TROTSKY: **Never.**

GOLDMAN: Never had any communication with him?

TROTSKY: **Never.**

GOLDMAN: Either with him directly or through some intermediary?

TROTSKY: **Never.** (CLT 210-211)

No evidence remains in the Trotsky Archives of Trotsky's having been personally in contact with Piatakov. However, Piatakov was in touch with Radek, with whom Trotsky was in contact. This is certainly "communication ... through an intermediary." So Trotsky was lying here too.

We also have Piatakov's own testimony at the Second Moscow Trial of January 1937 and his statement to Ezhov of December 19-20, 1936. In both documents Piatakov discussed in detail his clandestine contacts with Trotsky and Trotsky's demands for terror and sabotage. We have submitted the Moscow Trial testimony to a rigorous process of verification and have established that it is valid as evidence. We will return to Piatakov in volume two where we will present a detailed study of Piatakov's very important statement to Ezhov.

#### **Piatakov and the Flight to Norway Question**

Trotsky concentrated on trying to prove that Piatakov could not have landed at Kjeller, at that time the main Oslo airport, during December 1935.

GOLDMAN: There is an article in the *Arbejderbladet* of Oslo of January 29, 1937, where the director of the airport, Director Gulliksen,

says: "No foreign aeroplane at Kjeller." (CLT, Sixth Session, 214)

But Piatakov had explicitly never claimed to have used that airport.

VYSHINSKY: I have a question to put to Pyatakov. Accused Pyatakov, please tell me, you travelled in an airplane to Norway to meet Trotsky. Do you know in which aerodrome you landed.

PYATAKOV: Near Oslo.

...

VYSHINSKY: Have you heard of a place called Kjeller or Kjellere?

PYATAKOV: No.

VYSHINSKY: You confirm that you landed in an aerodrome near Oslo?

PYATAKOV: Near Oslo, that I remember. (1937 Trial 442-443)

In his testimony at trial Piatakov had claimed that he and Bukhartsev had met in the Tiergarten in Berlin with an emissary of Trotsky's who provided him with a German passport and took care of all the customs formalities. A person who could do such things obviously had to have some kind of German official status. Piatakov could have flown on a non-commercial airplane, a military or diplomatic plane. He could have arrived at a different airport. Sven-Eric Holmström has already identified other airfields at which Piatakov could have landed.

Radek had claimed that Trotsky was collaborating with the German government. If that were so the German government could have arranged matters with Norwegian officials so that the flight was not recorded. Or, Piatakov could have taken a Norwegian rather than a "foreign" airplane in the first place.<sup>5</sup>

As of 2015 we have much more evidence from NKVD files to supplement Piatakov's statements at the Second Moscow Trial. It is clear that Trotsky

had been personally in contact not just with Radek but with Piatakov too, and that the latter really did make a secret visit to Trotsky in Norway in December 1935. We will discuss this material and provide the documentation — including translations into English — in volume two of the present work.

<sup>5</sup> Sven-Eric Holmström is presently studying the "Piatakov flight to Norway" question.

A more important consideration is Trotsky's credibility in general. Trotsky lied many times in instances where we can now prove that he lied. But Getty showed that Trotsky's archives were purged of incriminating documents. Moreover, Trotsky himself conceded that he would have purged his own archives if they had contained anything incriminating. Since Radek told the truth in the only instance which we can independently verify it is likely that others, including Piatakov, did as well. The fact that we cannot prove that through independent evidence does not imply that Trotsky did not contact Piatakov individually. It only means that we can't prove it.

Elsewhere in this book we examine Sedov's "slip of the tongue" to a reporter from a Dutch Social-Democratic newspaper in which Sedov admitted that Trotsky had had contact both with Zinoviev and Kamenev and with Radek and Piatakov.

### **Gol'tsman**

During the First Moscow Trial (August 1936) Gol'tsman (Holtzman) had admitted having had six or eight meetings with Trotsky's son Sedov in Berlin in 1932. During the D.C. hearings Trotsky denied both direct and indirect contact with Gol'tsman.

On June 29, 1937, two months after the D.C. hearings, Trotsky wrote the Commission to inform them that Gol'tsman had indeed met Sedov:

1. To a question regarding Holtzman I replied that after my departure from Russia I had neither "directly or indirectly" any communication with him (see session 3). In fact, Holtzman met my son, Sedov, in Berlin in 1932 and communicated to him, **as I subsequently learned**, some factual reports

about the situation in the USSR. These reports were published in the Russian Bulletin of the Opposition (No. 31, November 1932). This fact can be interpreted as an "indirect" communication between Holtzman and myself. (CLT 592)

Trotsky was lying. He had not learned "subsequently" — after his D.C. testimony — about Sedov's meetings with Gol'tsman. In his *Livre rouge* published in October 1936 Sedov had admitted to one meeting with Gol'tsman. This same claim was made in the Russian edition of the *Bulletin of the Opposition* Nos. 52-53, also dated October 1936.<sup>6</sup> Trotsky certainly reviewed both texts before publication. He may well have coauthored one or both Sedov.

But on May 31, 1937 Sedov testified at the Paris session of the D.C. that he had met with "Gol'tsman "several times" (*plusieurs fois*), as Gol'tsman had testified. Trotsky had no choice but to correct his statement to the D.C.

The question arises: Why did Sedov and Trotsky lie about the number of meetings with Gol'tsman? What really went on during those meetings? We have discussed this interesting issue in another chapter of the present work.

### "Terror"

During the D.C. sessions more time and attention was paid to the question of "terror" — the Russian term for mass killing or individual assassination — than to any other. Sessions Seven, Eight, Ten, and Eleven were given over mainly to discussion of this issue. Trotsky and his attorney Goldman devoted a lot of effort to arguing that Trotsky had always and consistently opposed the use of violence in political struggle ("terror"). Here are a few of many citations from the testimonial section of the D.C. hearings.

GOLDMAN: ... The accusation of individual terror, as will be shown on the basis of Trotsky's numerous articles, beginning in 1902, is in direct contradiction with the whole bent of his thought, with his political education, with the lessons of his revolutionary experience, and finally, with the entire tradition of Russian Marxism. (CLT 11)



TROTSKY: This was the sense of our fight. During my first exile, from 1902 to 1905, I held dozens and dozens of lectures, wrote dozens of articles against individual terrorism in favor of mass action. During my second exile, which was after 1907 — after the defeat of the first revolution of 1905, and when the wave of terrorism became very important because the reaction was terrible; after the defeat of the revolution the desire of revenge became imperative with the youth — my second exile was filled with lectures and written articles against individual terrorism. (CLT 45-46)

During the Seventh session of the hearings Goldman read into the record many quotations from Trotsky's writings in which Trotsky condemned individual terror (assassination). During the Eighth and Tenth sessions Trotsky discussed terror and his opposition to it at great length. Trotsky claimed to oppose terror on practical political grounds even while conceding that it could sometimes be justified on moral grounds:

FINERTY: Your opposition to individual terror, while it may be morally justified, is that it is not an effective political movement?

TROTSKY: Absolutely so.

FINERTY: I understood you, on direct examination, to testify that your opposition to individual terror as a political means was that it was an ineffective political means, while it might be morally justified under certain conditions.

TROTSKY: Totally right.

FINERTY: It was not suitable as a political measure?

TROTSKY: Totally right. (CLT 368)

During the Eleventh session John Dewey pointed out that Trotsky had signed a statement by the Opposition in which the use of terror was justified under certain circumstances.

DEWEY: Can I ask you a question on terrorism? In the appeal of the Russian Opposition to the Communist International, made after your expulsion from the Party, you state that it is still possible without new revolutionary disturbances to put in order and reinforce the system of the proletarian dictatorship. When I say you, I mean the leaders of the Opposition. Before that it says:

Terror can play a great affirmative role if it is based on a correct political line and promotes the dissolution of reactionary groups. As Bolsheviks we fully understand the rôle of the revolutionary terror. We applied it to the bourgeoisie and their agents, the Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and not for one moment do we intend in the future to renounce the revolutionary terror as against enemies of the proletariat. We well remember, however, that the terror of the parties hostile to the Bolsheviks was powerless.

That is on page 356 of the English *The Real Situation in Russia*. Part of it runs over the top of 357. I am merely asking you whether there is anything inconsistent in that with what you stated this morning, whether it is in the same line with the remarks you made this morning? (CLT 385)

Trotsky seems to have been caught off guard by this quotation, and replied:

TROTSKY: I don't remember all this document, but it was not signed by me. It was after my expulsion.

Thereupon Dewey pointed out that Trotsky had indeed signed the statement.

DEWEY: Yours is the first name there.

TROTSKY: Oh, yes, it is signed. My exposition in the first session today was in a larger historical line. I say if the society becomes genuinely Socialist, if solidarity is the cement of the society, then terroristic methods would be dying out, and the line of dictatorship, and that the status of terrorism must be declining.

Trotsky's reply is doubletalk. The quotation read out by Dewey is a forceful affirmation of the use of terror in certain circumstances. It says nothing about terrorism "dying out" or "declining." An honest investigation would have followed up vigorously on this evasion by Trotsky. But the D.C. let it pass.

Trotsky devoted the whole of Part IX of this long closing statement (Session 13) to repeating his renunciation of individual terror. (CLT 488-494)

we know now, and not only from Moscow Trials testimony, that Trotsky was lying. Leon Sedov had tried to recruit his own chief assistant, Mark Zborowski, to go to the Soviet Union as an assassin, or "terrorist." Zborowski was a secret NKVD agent. On two occasions that we know of — not all of his reports to his NKVD handlers have been made public — Zborowski stated that Sedov had, in private conversation with him, justified the use of terror in general and the murder of Stalin specifically. We have discussed these reports in detail elsewhere in the present book.

#### **"Get Rid of Stalin"**

Trotsky never denied using the term "ubrat' Stalina" — roughly, "get rid of Stalin" — in his "Open Letter to the Central Executive Council of the U.S.S.R." of March 1932. The English translation says: "to remove Stalin."<sup>7</sup> The Russian original, published in *Biulleten' Opozitsii* No. 27 of March 1932 uses the Russian term "ubrat' Stalina."

Trotsky's defense attorney Goldman quoted an article of March 1933 in which Trotsky called for Stalin's removal but rejected the slogan "Down with Stalin."

GOLDMAN: "Syndicalist" in English means something different from "trade unionist." Then in the article published in *The Militant* on March 25th, 1933, by Trotsky, this is continued:

As far back as 1926 Stalin was told that he was clearly grooming himself as a candidate for the post of undertaker to the Party and the Revolution. For the past six years, Stalin has come very close

to the fulfillment of this role. Throughout the Party, and outside of it, there is spreading ever wider the slogan, "Down with Stalin!" The causes for the origin and the growing popularity of this "proverb" require no explanations. But, nevertheless, we consider this slogan incorrect. The question touches not Stalin personally, but his faction. It is true that for the last two years it has become extremely constricted in its scope. But it still includes many thousands of apparatus functionaries. Other thousands and tens of thousands, whose eyes have been opened as regards Stalin, continue to support him, nevertheless, from fear of the unknown. The slogan "Down with Stalin!" may be understood, and could inevitably be understood, as the slogan for the overthrow of the faction now in power, and even more — the overthrow of the apparatus. But we do not want to overthrow the system, but to reform it by the efforts of the best proletarian elements.

It is self-evident that an end must and will be put to the Bonapartist regime of a single leader and of the pack compelled to revere him, because that is the most shameful perversion of the idea of the revolutionary Party. But the matter touches not the expulsion of individuals, but the changing of a System.

It is precisely the Stalinist clique that indefatigably circulates rumors to the effect that the Left Opposition will return to the Party not otherwise than with a sword in its hand, and that it will immediately begin merciless reprisals against its factional opponents. This poisonous lie must be refuted, repudiated, and exposed. There is no feeling for revenge in politics. Bolshevik-Leninists —

By that is meant the Left Oppositionist faction...

— never were motivated by it in the past, and least of all do they intend to be motivated by it in the future ... We are ready to work hand in hand with every one who seeks to prevent catastrophe through the restoration of the Party. (CLT 268)

About his use of this term Trotsky testified as follows:

FINERTY: Mr. Trotsky, when you say "eliminate" do you mean "exterminate"?

TROTSKY: No.

FINERTY: In other words, when you say "eliminate" you mean to eliminate politically?

TROTSKY: Yes, to deprive them of the apparatus of the dictatorship and replace them by democracy.

FINERTY: When you said "Remove Stalin," you used it in the same political sense?

TROTSKY: Not only that; I am astonished to what degree I was cautious in my article. I wrote a second time to the Central Committee: "You must remove Stalin." But as a slogan, "Down with Stalin!" I repudiated it in my article. Because in the Central Committee everybody understands that it is in a legal way I proposed to remove him; to change the secretary. When it becomes a slogan of the masses, it cannot mean assassination. I repudiate it. (CLT 277)

Trotsky did indeed repudiate the slogan "Down with Stalin" in his article "Alarm Signal" published in *The Militant* of March 25, 1933. (p. 3 col. 6, bottom) However, this article was written before Trotsky began to call for a revolution in the USSR. As late as March 1933, in his letter to the Soviet Politburo of March 15, 1933 Trotsky was offering concessions in hopes of being allowed to return to the Soviet Union. As Getty pointed out in 1986, Trotsky kept this letter secret and never informed his followers about it. Trotsky had not yet decided that no return to the Soviet leadership was possible for him. According to Getty, Trotsky made this decision later, announcing it in his July 15, 1933 article on the Comintern. (Getty TIE 29-31)

By the time of the D.C. hearings in early 1937 Trotsky had changed his attitude towards the Stalin regime and was calling for its overthrow. His "repudiation" of the slogan "Down with Stalin" belonged to an earlier period, now long in the past.

"Ubrat" is an ambiguous term, like "get rid of" in English. Depending upon the context it might, or might not, imply violence. But what it does *not* mean is "remove from office." Trotsky could have just said that — "remove Stalin from office" — but chose not to.

Elsewhere in this book we have outlined how the term "ubrat' Stalina" was a loaded term among the Oppositionists in the early 1930s. We have good evidence that by 1932 at the latest it was interpreted by Right Oppositionists to mean assassination. As Radek noted in his testimony, it could not mean anything else in the context of the time.

In 1937 Trotsky's secretary Jean van Heijenoort prepared excerpts from Trotsky's and Sedov's 1932 correspondence with each other on this subject. In those excerpts Trotsky argues that the slogan "ubrat' Stalina" should not be understood as advocating his assassination, which Sedov was less categorical.

In the end Trotsky did not use these excerpts at the Dewey Commission, for example as exhibits. We can't be sure why he did not. It may be that Trotsky feared that the Commission would have asked for the originals. Those originals are not in the Trotsky Archive today. They were among the materials "purged" for some reason, probably because they contained incriminating information. Getty suggested this in 1986 and it is hard to account for the disappearance of these letters on any other grounds.

The underground Oppositionists in the USSR understood "ubrat'" to mean "get rid of by assassination." They were discussing this very term at the same time as Trotsky used it in his open letter to the C.E.C. and in discussions with Sedov. It seems likely that at the very least the missing letters between Trotsky and Sedov did not firmly oppose "terror."

No experienced conspirator would unambiguously advocate murder in a written communication. It is easy to see how Radek, or anyone else, could have interpreted the term "ubrat'" as a call to violence. Thanks to Zborowski's reports about Sedov, we know that Trotsky meant it as a term that would be understood as a call to violence while perhaps retaining some slight degree of "plausible deniability."<sup>8</sup>

## Other Lies and Evasions by Trotsky

### "Evidence"

At several points in his testimony to the D.C. Trotsky claims that the Soviet prosecution has no evidence of his guilt while he, Trotsky, has evidence of his own innocence.

These two fundamental features of the Moscow trials — the absence of evidence and the epidemic character of the confessions — can but arouse suspicion in every thinking man. (CLT 481)

Trotsky accuses the Soviet prosecution of lacking "material proof" (evidence) of his guilty.

1. Despite long years of struggle against the Opposition, despite tens of thousands of raids, arrests, banishments, imprisonments, and hundreds of executions, the Soviet judicial authorities do not have at their disposal even a single substantial fact, not a shred of material proof to confirm the truth of the accusations. This fact constitutes the most damning evidence against Stalin. (CLT 487)

Trotsky knew this statement was false and the D.C. members ought to have known as well.

In the First Moscow Trial of August 1936 Moisei Ol'berg's Honduran passport was submitted as a prosecution exhibit.

VYSHINSKY: ... It was Paul Olberg who put his brother V. Olberg, as both of them testify, in touch with the Gestapo and helped V. Olberg to obtain from the Gestapo the passport of a citizen of the Republic of Honduras, which figures as an exhibit in the present case. (1936 Trial 25)

This passport was shown to the court as an exhibit on page 89.

At the Second Moscow Trial of January 1937 Vyshinsky produced the diary of Stroilov, one of the defendants, as evidence and interrogated Stroilov

about it.

VYSHINSKY: Next, please hand to the accused Stroilov this black book. (Stroilov is handed a book of an office journal type in a black binding.) What is that black book?

STROILOV: It is my diary.

VYSHINSKY: Where did you keep it?

STROILOV: I kept it while I was abroad.

VYSHINSKY: In what year?

STROILOV: All the time I lived there.

VYSHINSKY: Is it in your handwriting?

STROILOV: Everything here...

VYSHINSKY: Please look first, do not take it for granted.

STROILOV: Everything here is mine.

VYSHINSKY: Yours?

STROILOV: Yes.

VYSHINSKY: And is the meeting with Wüster and Berg recorded in your handwriting?

STROILOV: All this was written when I was in Germany, and when I returned to the Soviet Union I continued it probably for about two months. That was already here in the Soviet Union.

VYSHINSKY: When did all this happen?

STROILOV: In 1930-31.



VYSHINSKY: And it was then that you wrote it?

STROILOV: Immediately.

VYSHINSKY: Very well, Let me have that book back again. This book has been attached to the files as material evidence. I request the Court to look at page 23, which contains a reference to the meeting with Berg; page 27, which contains a reference to a conversation with Berg; page 37, which contains a reference to a letter from Wüster; page 33, which also contains a reference to Wüster; page 35, which contains a reference to Wüster; page 43, which contains a reference to Sommeregger. The character of these meetings and conversations was explained to you by the accused Stroilov yesterday. I want to draw your attention to the fact that these meetings are confirmed in the diary of 1931.

STROILOV: Of 1930 and 1931. (1937 Trial 272-3)

During the 1938 Moscow Trial Nikolai Bukharin, the most famous of the defendants, said that incriminating evidence (*uliki*) was important in convincing him to stop denying all the charges against him and begin to confess.

BUKHARIN: I shall now speak of myself, of the reasons for my repentance. Of course, it must be admitted that incriminating evidence plays a very important part. (1938 Trial 777)

This evidence itself was not presented at trial. We know that the same thing is true about at least some of the other defendants, since some of the incriminating evidence against them has been published in Russian in recent years.

Vyshinsky also addressed the issue of material evidence in his summary statement to the January 1937 trial:

VYSHINSKY: But what proof have we in our arsenal from the point of view of juridical procedure?

It must be said that the nature of the present case is such that it predetermines the peculiar nature of the proof possible in the case. We have a conspiracy, we have before us a group of people who conspired to bring about a coup d'état, who organized themselves and for a number of years carried on, or secured the carrying on, of activities directed towards ensuring the success of this conspiracy, a conspiracy with fairly wide ramifications, a conspiracy which connected the conspirators with foreign fascist forces. How can the question of proof be presented under these circumstances? The question can be put this way: a conspiracy, you say, but where are the documents? YOU say there is a program, but where is the program? Have these people a written program anywhere? They only talk about it.

You say there is an organization, that there is some sort of a gang (they call themselves a party), but where are their decisions, where is the material evidence of their conspiratorial activities — rules, minutes, a seal, and so on and so forth?

I am bold enough to assert, in keeping with the fundamental requirements of the science of criminal procedure, that **in cases of conspiracy such demands cannot be put.** You cannot demand that cases of conspiracy, of coup d'état, be approached from the standpoint: give us minutes, decision, membership cards, the numbers of your membership cards; you cannot demand that conspirators have their conspiratorial activities certified by a notary. No sensible man can put the question in this way in cases of state conspiracy. In fact we have a number of documents to prove our case. But even if these documents were not available, we would still consider it right to submit our indictment on the basis of the testimony and evidence of the accused and witnesses and, if you will, circumstantial evidence. **In the present case I can quote a brilliant authority on the law of evidence such as the old, well-known English jurist, William Wills, who in his book on circumstantial evidence shows how strong circumstantial evidence can be, and how, not infrequently, circumstantial evidence can be much more convincing than direct evidence.**<sup>9</sup> (1937 Trial 512-513)

Elsewhere we have quoted the Russian historian Yurii Zhukov, an article in the Comintern magazine, and a C.I.A. source to the effect that no documentary evidence should be expected in any competent conspiracy of this kind. (Furr Evidence)

An experienced revolutionary conspirator like Trotsky would have known not to entrust much to writing. Broué reported that Lilia Estina (Dallin), one of Sedov's secretaries, told him as much. Dallin said that only Sedov and Trotsky himself knew the most important secrets of Trotsky's conspiracy. (Broué Leon Sedov 210)

Trotsky, however, claimed in his closing statement that by contrast he had presented "documentary proof" of his innocence.

The very expression, "Stalinist amalgam," was given currency by us almost eight years before the Kirov assassination and the spectacular trials which followed it. **The relevant documentary proofs have been placed at the disposal of the Commission of Inquiry. They show with absolute incontestability that what is involved is not an underground Trotskyite conspiracy first unearthed in some startling manner in 1936, but a systematic conspiracy of the GPU against the Opposition, with the aim of imputing to it sabotage, espionage, assassinations and the preparation of insurrections.** (CLT 486)

This statement is both a lie and a bluff. It is a lie because we have the evidence that the bloc — the "underground Trotskyite conspiracy" — did exist. It is a bluff because Trotsky presented no such evidence. Nor could he have done so. No such evidence existed then, and none exists today. But as with so many other statements of Trotsky's the D.C. members did not challenge it — did not ask him for clarification ("What 'relevant documentary proofs' that prove there was no 'underground Trotskyite conspiracy' are you referring to, Mr. Trotsky?")

**Doubletalk about Trotsky's Archive**

A little further on Trotsky stated:

The Commission is in a position to compare my private correspondence with my articles and books, and in this way determine whether my activity bears the slightest tinge of double-dealing. (CLT 486-487)

Here Trotsky was again lying, as anyone who reads the D.C. transcript can instantly see. For earlier in the same closing statement he had already made the following admission:

Furthermore, it is absolutely indisputable that I would not preserve in my archives records of my crimes had I committed any. (CLT 467)

Early in the D.C. sessions Carleton Beals questioned Trotsky on this same point:

BEALS: ... For the purpose of this line of question, I am considering you guilty, and therefore I would like to ask you what assurance the Commission would have in examining your archives that you have not destroyed that which was unfavorable to yourself.

After first agreeing with Beals that the question was "absolutely natural" Trotsky evaded it completely:

TROTSKY: That is an absolutely natural question. But my aim is not to convince the Commission by the document which I have allegedly destroyed, but by the documents which remain in my archives.

He then proceeded to make an argument based on consistency:

I will prove to the Commission that the man who wrote from year to year those thousands of letters, those hundreds of articles, and those dozens of books and had those friends and those enemies, that this man could not commit the crimes of the indictment. It is the most genuine evidence I have.

Noticing this evasion, Beals tried to ask it again:

BEALS: Answering the question I have —

Trotsky again doged the question with what can only be described as doubletalk:

TROTSKY: If you will permit me a supplement.. It is impossible to introduce allegedly destroyed documents. They could not find place in these archives.

Whereupon he reiterated what amounts to an argument to consistency:

If you suppose, if you have the hypothesis of criminal documents to the German Minister Hess, to Hitler or the military of the Mikado, then you must find in my archives a place for them. Such a duplicity of character is impossible. (CLT 52)

First, Trotsky admits that he would have destroyed any incriminating documents in his archive. Then Trotsky says that he could not introduce documents that he would have destroyed had they existed, which therefore could not be in his archives. Then he concludes by saying that if he had composed criminal documents they must be in his archive: "then you must find in my archive a place for them."

The result of this smokescreen of confusing doubletalk is that Trotsky never answered Beals' question and the Commission never followed up on it. No wonder Beals resigned! What point would there be in the Commission's examining his archive unless Trotsky told them that he had not removed incriminating documents? The Commission allowed Trotsky to evade this question completely. As we know today, there were indeed incriminating documents in Trotsky's archive — at least those identified by Getty and Broué, but undoubtedly more, perhaps many more since, as Getty was the first to note, the archive has been "purged," though imperfectly.

Trotsky affirmed a logical absurdity. He agreed that he would have removed any incriminating documents from his archive. Yet at the same time he asserted that the same archive — the letters, articles, and books that remained after anything incriminating had been removed from it — would prove his innocence!

Once again Trotsky's bluff worked on the Commissioners — either that, or they never intended to do the necessary work to verify Trotsky's statement in the first place.

### "Torture" at the Moscow Trial

In his concluding statement Trotsky claimed that the defendants at the 1936 and 1937 Moscow Trials were tortured and threatened with the torture of their families.

Read Pyatakov's, and especially Radek's, last pleas, and between the lines you will read as follows: "You demanded that we degrade and stultify ourselves in order to expose Trotsky and Trotskyism. Because we are broken and demoralized individuals, because of the mental torture our loved ones as you are torturing us, we have agreed to say everything that you dictated to us. Now grant us our lives, and, if not, then shoot us and save our fathers, mothers, wives and children." (CLT 453)

4. Although Nikolayev and the thirteen other executed men said everything that was asked of them (and *I assume that Nikolayev and his companions were subjected to physical torture*), **they did not have a word to say about the participation of Zinoviev, Bakayev, Kamenev**, or any other "Trotskyite" in the assassination. The GPU, obviously, never once questioned them along these lines. (CLT 496, italics in original)

Trotsky's "torture" talk was a smokescreen. In his testimony at the January 1937 Moscow Trial Karl Radek had referred explicitly to the issue of torture and ridiculed it:

RADEK: When I found myself in the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, the chief examining official realized at once why I would not talk. He said to me: "You are not a baby. Here you have fifteen people testifying against you. You cannot get out of it, and as a sensible man you cannot think of doing so. If you do not want to testify it can only be because you want to gain time and look it over

more closely. Very well, study it." For two and a half months I tormented the examining official. **The question has been raised here whether we were tormented while under investigation. I must say that it was not I who was tormented, but I who tormented the examining officials and compelled them to perform a lot of useless work.** For two and a half months I compelled the examining official, by interrogating me and by confronting me with the testimony of other accused, to open up all the cards to me, so that I could see who had confessed, who had not confessed, and what each had confessed.

This lasted for two and a half months. And one day the chief examining official came to me and said: "You are now the last. Why are you wasting time and temporizing? Why don't you say what you have to say?" And I answered: "Yes, tomorrow I shall begin my testimony." And the testimony I have contains not a single correction from first to last. I unfolded the whole picture as I knew it, and the investigation may have corrected one or another personal mistake about the connections of some person with another, but I affirm that not a single thing I told the examining officials has been refuted and that nothing has been added.

I have to admit on other guilt. Having already confessed my guilt and having disclosed the organization, I stubbornly refused to testify with regard to Bukharin. I knew that Bukharin's position was just as hopeless as my own, because our guilt was the same, if not juridically, then in essence. But we are close friends, and intellectual friendship is stronger than any other kind of friendship. (1937 Trial 549)

Anyone who reads the transcript of the Radek-Piatakov trial can see that it would be hard to imagine a cooler customer than Radek. But Trotsky could count on the fact that very few people would read this long, 580-page transcript with both care and objectivity.

Trotsky's statement about Nikolaev (the assassin of Sergei Kirov) is interesting in a somewhat different way. We know today that neither Nikolaev nor any of the defendants were "tortured." This might, or might not, count as a lie. After all, Trotsky assumed, but did not assert, that these men were "tortured."

But Trotsky's following statement — in boldface above — is a deliberate lie, for the Kirov Trial defendants did indeed implicate Zinoviev, Bakaev, Kamenev, and other Zinovievists. The names of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others were mentioned in the press, and Trotsky read it. We have examined Trotsky's lying about the Kirov murder in earlier chapters.

Concerning Holtzman (Gol'tsman) Trotsky stated:

Suffice it to say that, despite the insistence of the Prosecutor, Holtzman denied any participation whatever in the terrorist activity. (CLT 516)

This is a veiled reference to page 158 of the 1936 Trial transcript, where Vyshinsky says:

Holtzman adopted the same position as Smirnov — I admit everything except terrorism — because he knows that for terrorism he may have to pay with his head.

Trotsky does not seem to realize that this is evidence that Gol'tsman was **not** tortured since, presumably, enough torture would have forced him to admit to anything the Prosecution charged him with. Or perhaps he just did not expect the D.C., or anyone who might read the 603-page transcript of its hearings, to realize it. Sure enough, the D.C. did not realize that Gol'tsman's refusal here contradicted Trotsky's claim that the defendants were tortured.

Trotsky does not mention the fact that Smirnov also denied terrorist activity but was exposed by the testimony of a number of others, including Gaven, Mrachkovsky, Safonova, Dreitser, and Gol'tsman. In the case of a conspiracy, where documentary evidence is not to be expected, the mutual accusations by other members of the conspiracy are considered to be strong evidence of guilt in any judicial system.

### **Could Trotsky Speak Norwegian?**

During the discussion about Piatakov's putative secret trip to Norway to see Trotsky the following exchange took place:

GOLDMAN: Did you ever take any trips without anybody at all?



TROTSKY: Never.

GOLDMAN: All alone?

TROTSKY: Never. It is impossible, Mr. Attorney, because if I am on the street and recognized by the people I am absolutely helpless. I am surrounded by people, and especially in Norway — **I don't speak Norwegian** — I must have some Norwegian people who can defend me.

GOLDMAN: Didn't you learn Norwegian while you were there?

TROTSKY: Not sufficiently to speak. (CLT 209)

Now it seems that Trotsky was lying even in this apparently small matter! Sven-Eric Holmström has amassed contemporary testimony from Norwegians who conversed in that language with Trotsky.

This may not be so unimportant after all. Holmström has been researching the possibility that Piatakov did in fact fly to Norway to talk with Trotsky. Trotsky made the claim that he could not speak Norwegian as evidence that he could not have met with Piatakov unless accompanied by a Norwegian speaker, and Konrad Knudsen's family was prepared to swear that they did not accompany him on any such trip. Holmström has identified a person who spoke both Norwegian and Russian, who may have accompanied Piatakov to a meeting with Trotsky, and who had the authority to make such a meeting secret.

## Chapter 18. *The Dewey Commission II — The Report*

### Charles Beard's First Letter

In Part III of his lengthy closing statement during the Dewey Commission (D.C.) hearings Leon Trotsky discusses a letter of March 19, 1937 from Charles Beard, addressed to George Novack. In it the renowned American historian gives his reasons for refusing the invitation to become a member of the Commission.

Trotsky reproduced, with comments, two direct quotations from the letter and one paraphrase. We'll examine each of them here. The letter itself was not included in the Appendix-Correspondence section of the Hearings volume. No one could check its text to verify whether Trotsky were quoting it accurately or honestly describing its contents.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Beard's letter is published in Harold Kirker and Burleigh Taylor Wilkins. "Beard, Becker and the Trotsky Inquiry." *American Quarterly* 13, No. 4 Winter 1961 pp. 516-525, at page 519.

Trotsky's first description of Beard's letter includes a direct quote from it:

First of all, he says, the accusation against Trotsky rests *exclusively* on the confessions. "From a long study of historical problems, I know that confessions, even when voluntarily made, are not positive proof."

Trotsky's paraphrase:

Furthermore, Professor Beard deems it proper to apply a rule which governs American jurisprudence, namely: The accused must be considered innocent if there have not been brought against him objective proofs which leave no room for reasonable doubt.

Trotsky's second description of Beard's letter contains a quotation from it:

Finally, the historian writes that "it is almost, if not entirely, impossible to prove a negative in such a case; namely, that Mr. Trotsky did not enter into the relations of conspiracy charged against him. Naturally, as an old revolutionist, experienced in the art, he would not keep incriminating records of the operations, if he did engage in them. Furthermore, no person in the world could prove that he has not engaged in a conspiracy, unless he had a guard set over him every moment of the time covered by the charges. In my opinion it is not incumbent upon Mr. Trotsky to do the impossible — that is, prove a negative by positive evidence. It is incumbent upon his accusers to produce more than confessions, to produce corroborating evidence to specific and overt acts." (CLT 464-465)

On the first quotation concerning confessions not being "positive proof" Trotsky made the following comment:

The word "even" indicates clearly enough that the question of the voluntary character of the Moscow confessions is for this scholar, at the very least, open. As an example of false self-accusations, Professor Beard cites the classic cases of the trials of the Inquisition, along with instances of the darkest superstition. That single comparison, which coincides with the development of the thought of Friedrich Adler, secretary of the Second International, speaks for itself. (CLT 464)

Trotsky' remarks here are not accurate. Beard did not refer tot he Inquisition at all. The passage in question reads as follows:

Accused person have confessed to personal communications with the devil, to riding broomsticks in the sky, to witchcraft, to sorcery, and to causing death and destruction by resort to evil spirits.

Beard was referring to confessions "even when **voluntarily made.**" He did not refer to the Inquisition, which would raise the question of torture and compulsion. It is Trotsky who raises the question of "the trials of the Inquisition." Trotsky states that Beard was comparing the Moscow Trials to the Inquisition, as Trotsky himself did. But Beard did no such thing.

Beard said that even voluntary confessions "are not positive proof." That is, they are not conclusive. He did not deny that they are "proof," that is, important evidence.

Beard continued:

Confession unsupported by other evidence is not proof beyond a reasonable doubt. As far as I am able to ascertain the confessions made in the Russian trial court were not supported by any corroborating evidence which has been made available to us. Hence I do not regard the charges that Mr. Trotsky entered into a conspiracy against the Russian government as proved beyond all reasonable doubt.

The issue here is: What constitutes "other evidence," "corroborating evidence"? Competent criminal conspirators do not leave written evidence of the conspiracy lying about to be found by the police.

In Trotsky's first quotation above he claims to be paraphrasing a passage in Beard's letter. But Trotsky' paraphrase is inaccurate. Here is what Beard actually wrote:

In the second place, I apply to Mr. Trotsky the rule applied in American jurisprudence, namely, that he is to be deemed innocent of the charges until they are proved beyond all reasonable doubt. He may be distressed by charges but he is entitled to be deemed innocent of these charges until corroborating evidence has been produced.

Trotsky's statement is false. Beard did not mention "objective proofs which leave no room for reasonable doubt." Beard wrote "...until corroborating evidence has been produced." It is easy to see why Trotsky preferred to put words into Beard's mouth instead of quoting him directly. Mutual confirmation by defendants of each other's confessions is indeed "corroborating evidence."

Evidently Trotsky would have pressed that Beard had commented on a situation where corroborating evidence to confessions does exist but in which all the corroborating evidence has been deliberately faked by the police, the false mutually corroborating confessions obtained by torture,

threats, or some other form of compulsion. That is what Trotsky contended was the case in the first two Moscow Trials. But Beard did not make any such reference.

Trotsky agreed with the substance of his second quotation from Beard's letter. He stated:

... it is absolutely indisputable that I would not preserve in my archive records of my crimes had I committed any. (CLT 467)

But then he continues with an absurdity and a false conclusion.

But my archives are important for the investigation, not for what they lack, but for what they contain. Positive acquaintance with the daily development of my thought and acts over a period of nine years (one year of banishment and eight of exile) is entirely sufficient to demonstrate a "negative fact" — namely, that I could not have committed acts contrary to my conviction, to my interests, to my whole character.

This is doubletalk coupled with false logic. The doubletalk is the first sentence, in which Trotsky claims that his archives would provide proof of his innocence even if he had removed all the incriminating materials.

The false logic is that what was left in his archive could "prove a negative"—that his archives would be fully consistent with his public writings and statements. Not only is this nonsense — Trotsky has just admitted that he would have removed anything incriminating beforehand — but we know it is false. Evidence of the bloc, of correspondence with Radek, Sokol'nikov et al., and of other matters Trotsky stoutly and dishonestly denied to the D.C. have indeed been found in his archive. Trotsky's discussion of Beard's letter to Novack is dishonest — a bluff.

### **Beard's Second Letter**

On March 22, 1937, Beard wrote another letter<sup>2</sup> concerning the D.C. This letter was in reply to a letter by John Dewey in which Dewey evidently urged Beard to join the D.C. Dewey's letter has not been located.

<sup>2</sup> Harvard Trotsky Archive, bms Russ 13.1 13783.

Neither Trotsky nor the members of the D.C. made any reference to Beard's letter replying to Dewey. It is not hard to imagine why Trotsky didn't mention it. It was not in Trotsky's interest to refer to it. Beard made it clear that there was nothing Trotsky could do to demonstrate his innocence. It was clearly against Trotsky's interest that his opinion by so prominent a historian be made known.

But the D.C. ought to have found some way to make its contents public. The fact that it did not do so argues that the D.C. was not objective but, on the contrary, suppressed documents that contradicted its professed mission.

Beard wrote:

If Trotsky is guilty, he would not, as an experienced revolutionist, keep incriminating records in his files and papers; nor, if he even had them, would he keep them in his files to be examined by any commission of inquiry. On the other hand, if he is not guilty, he certainly could not demonstrate the fact by an absence of records—i.e. prove his innocence. It requires no trip to Trotsky to know that the Commission of Inquiry would have to report "no evidence" of guilt in Trotsky's papers.

Beard was correct. Trotsky could not prove his innocence "by an absence of record." Trotsky would have to "prove a negative" — that he did not do some things. As Beard had pointed out in his letter to Novack of March 19, 1937, that would be impossible "unless he had a guard set over him every moment of the time covered by the charges." Moreover, as we know now, Trotsky was *not* in fact innocent of at least some of the charges against him. Indeed, on the evidence we now have — including the Moscow Trials testimony, which we have verified in the first part of this book — Trotsky was guilty of *all* of those charges.

What Beard wrote next cut the ground out from under the entire D.C. enterprise:

Well, that would be seized upon by ignorant partisans as evidence that he is not guilty, and encourage them to declare the claim of innocence proved. Now I cannot be a party to an enterprise that can have only one outcome which is fully known in advance.

This is exactly what happened. the D.C. "declared Trotsky's claim of innocence proved." What's more, the Commission itself promoted this falsehood — that they had proved Trotsky "Not Guilty," the title of the concluding D.C. volume.

Beard continued:

So my judgment stands in my mind: (1) a confession is not proof; (2) Trotsky is innocent until proved guilty; (3) no matter what papers Trotsky may have, he cannot prove his innocence by anything he can show; (4) only a court with power to summon the principals and compel them to give testimony could come anywhere near the truth.

We've examined Beard's statement that "a confession is not proof" above. Point 3 here is the central issue. Beard recognized that it was impossible for Trotsky, as it would be for anyone, to "prove his innocence" by anything he could show.

Beard also wrote that "Trotsky is innocent until proven guilty." However, in Beard's point (2) "innocent" means something different from "innocence" in point (3). In point (2) "innocent" means "in a juridical sense" — that the burden of proof is on the accuser. The fact that a defendant in a trial may be found "not guilty" does not mean that s/he is, in fact, innocent of the charge, that s/he did not commit the crime in question. It is not a statement about the defendant at all but about the evidence (as assessed by the judge or jury). In a judicial sense, "not guilty" does not mean "innocent"; it means guilty is "not proven." This is the most that the D.C. could do — find Trotsky's guilt "not proven."

But the D.C. went far beyond that. The Commission claimed that they had "found" — that is, proven — that Trotsky was in fact "innocent."

(22) We therefore find the Moscow trials to be frame-ups.

(23) We therefore find Trotsky and Sedov not built. (NG xxiii)

In Beard's terms, Dewey and the rest of the Commission members were the "ignorant partisans" who "declare[d] the claim of innocence proved." Beard recognized that the D.C. was "an enterprise that can have only one outcome which is fully known in advance" and did not want to be associated with it. Beard was correct. What's more, Beard did not know what we know today: he did not know about Trotsky's lying to the Commission and withholding of evidence.

Nor did Beard know that the Commission would not even bother to examine Trotsky's archives, Perhaps the Commission members did not do this because they recognized the truth of what Beard said and to which Trotsky agreed — that anything incriminating would have been removed in advance, and so it would be fruitless to search Trotsky's archive. It is ironic that materials incriminating Trotsky and proving his duplicity did remain in Trotsky's archive despite an attempt at some time to "purge" it.

Whatever their reasons for not examining Trotsky's archives at his invitation, the Commission should have stated them in order to avoid the impression that they simply "believed" whatever Trotsky told them. But this was the fundamental problem with the D.C.: it did, in fact, "believe Trotsky."

Beard continued:

... let Trotsky publish everything he think will clear him of the charges, for the capitalist press is eager to have everything that will discredit Soviet Russia.

In a letter to his fellow Trotsky supporters Bernard Wolfe and Herbert Solow, Felix Morrow wrote the following:

Beard absolutely won't talk to us. His second letter (to Dewey who wrote him after his first letter) indicates that he will not be gotten now or ever. There is a sentence in the second letter, stating that anything Trotsky offers the capitalist press is eagerly printed, because the cap



press desires to discredit Soviet Russia — this is revealing and a warning to us not to press him.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Harvard Trotsky Archive, bms 13.1 6898, Houghton Library.

Morrow saw this statement of Beard's as a reason that Trotsky supporters should stop urging Beard to participate in the Commission. But who could deny the truth of what Beard had written? Surely it was obvious that the capitalist press did not print Trotsky's articles out of sympathy for the anti-capitalist, revolutionary aims that Trotsky professed, but out of sympathy for his anti-Soviet views.

Pierre waxed indignant over Beard's statement:

C'est avec un véritable charin que l'on prend conscience que des hommes dont les qualités d'esprit, l'honnêteté intellectuelle — our — et le dévouement au travail ont permis d'ouvrir à leurs contemporains la perspective d'une meilleure compréhension de leur passé comme de leur avenir, se soient révélés aussi médiocres au moment où ils auraient dû savoir, comme John Dewey, prendre leur temps pour une bonne cause et justifier leur combat d'historien par un combat dans le présent pour l'avenir. Ce n'est pourtant pas en eux qu'il faut chercher la clé de leur comportement mais dans la campagne forcenée menée au cours des semaines précédentes par les staliniens américains et leurs agents en milieu littéraire, contre le comité et ses membres, contre Trotsky, contre Dewey, contre le droit d'exprimer et de critiquer l'Union soviétique et son chef "genial." La malheureuse phrase de Charles Beard sur l'empressement de la presse capitaliste à imprimer Trotsky porte la marque de sa fabrique.<sup>4</sup>

Translated:

It is with a real sense of sadness that we realize that men whose qualities of mind, intellectual honesty — yes — and dedication to work have opened for their contemporaries the prospect of a better understanding of their past and their future, have proven as mediocre at the moment that they should have known how, like John Dewey, to devote some time to a good cause and justify their struggle as a

historian by a struggle in the present for the future. It is, however, not in them that we must look for the key to their behavior, but in the frenzied campaign conducted during the preceding weeks by American Stalinists and their agents in literary circles, against the committee and its members, against Trotsky, against Dewey, against the right to express [oneself] and to criticize the Soviet Union and its "genius" leader. Charles Beard's unfortunate phrase about the willingness of the capitalist press to print what Trotsky writes bears the mark of this factory.

<sup>4</sup> Pierre Broué, "L'historien devant la vie.: Charles A. Beard et le procès de Moscou." CahLT 19 (Sept. 1984) 68-77, at 73.

Broué called Beard's statement "the unfortunate phrase" and opined that Beard said it under the influence of "American Stalinists and their agents in the literary world." but Broué did not say it was untrue. The capitalist press was certainly printing Trotsky because he was attacking the Soviet Union, which the capitalists also hated.

A passionate Trotsky partisan, Broué believed that Dewey was correct in deciding that Trotsky was innocent and that Beard was wrong. Broué was unable to see that it was Beard, not Dewey, who was objective.

Et c'est là que se situe le véritable problème, esquivé par nos excellents collègues. Relisant aujourd'hui l'admirable rapport de la commission Dewey sur la falsification de l'histoire par les procureurs et les policiers de Staline, relisant sa déclaration d'innocence pour Trotsky et Sedov, morts de la façon qu'on sait moins de trois années après, on ne peut qu'éprouver un sentiment d'indignation pour des hommes, aussi éminents soient-ils, qui ont invoqué "leur travail" et tant de mauvaises raisons pour éviter de se compromettre avec une cause qu'ils savaient juste, mais qu'ils croyaient perdue, en adorateurs du fait accompli qu'ils étaient peut-être, ou, tout au moins, en historiens plus soucieux de questions "académiques" que de problèmes relevant de la rue ou de la vie. (72-3)

Translated:

And this is where the real problem lies, dodged by our excellent colleagues. Rereading today the admirable report of the Dewey Commission on the falsification of history by Stalin's prosecutors and policemen, rereading its declaration of innocence for Trotsky and Sedov, dead less than three years later by the manner of which we know, one can only feel a sense of outrage for men, eminent though they are, who cited "their work" and so many bad reasons to avoid compromising themselves in a cause they knew to be just, but that they believed to be lost worshipers of the accomplished fact which they perhaps were, or, at least, historians more concerned with issues "academic" than with problems from the street or in life.

How could Broué have written these words when he already knew that Trotsky had lied about the bloc with the Soviet Oppositionists, and therefore that Trotsky had lied repeatedly in his testimony? Evidently Broué was blinded by his loyalty to Trotsky to such a degree that he was incapable of recognizing the truth of what Beard had written: that it was impossible for the Commission to establish Trotsky's innocence or guilt.

Broué knew more about Trotsky's lies than anyone else at that time. But he never set what he knew about Trotsky's lies beside Trotsky's testimony, articles, and interviews. To do so would have required a degree of objectivity: the determination to concede that his hero might have been wrong. This fundamental precondition of historiography, objectivity — the determination to question one's own preconceived ideas and to take concrete steps so as not to be blinded by them — proved to be beyond Broué's ability. Broué appears to have been ignorant even of the fact that historians are *supposed* to struggle for objectivity.

Dewey and the Commission were wrong to conclude that the trials were a "frame-up" and Trotsky was innocent. As Beard realized, they could not reach such a conclusion with any validity. What they could do was to "declare [Trotsky's] claim of innocence proved" and to delude others to that effect. This is what the D.C.'s report has done since its volumes were published: they have deluded others.

**"Not Guilty"?**

In this chapter we will examine Volume 2 of the D.C.'s publications: the book *Not Guilty. Report of the Inquiry Into The Charges Made Against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trials*. We will point out a few of the many errors in logic and reasoning that the Commission members made in reaching their conclusions. We will also indicate where we now know Trotsky lied.

We know today that the Commission could have discovered that Trotsky was lying if they had accepted Trotsky's offer and assigned a team to study his archive. Trotsky would no doubt have "purged" his archive of whatever he could, as quickly as possible. But it is doubtful whether he could have done a thorough job. There must have been much more compromising material in the archive in 1937 than what remained in it in 1980, when it had been gone over numerous times by Trotsky's secretary Jean van Heijenoort, almost certainly the person who imperfectly "sanitized" the archive.

The D.C. elected not to study Trotsky's archive. But they should have known that he *might* be lying. It was an error on their part, born of bias, of ignorance, or both, not to recognize this possibility. After all, they certainly recognized that the defendants in the Moscow Trials might be lying.

The Commission made error after error of logic and deduction. It failed to check up on statements Trotsky made — and, in the case of the Paris hearings, that Sedov made. They failed to verify facts even when, as in the "Hotel Bristol — Bristol Konditori" matter, it was completely in their power to check them.

The D.C. may have been reasoning from a bias against Stalin and soviet communism, or a bias in favor of Trotsky, or both. But it also reasoning from a position of naiveté about their own abilities. Non-historians often believe that no special training is needed in order to assess historical evidence. Many people, especially those with some education, commonly believe that they are good judges of historical evidence even though they have never had the training, or trained themselves, to learn how to analyze historical evidence objectively; even though they have never given the question of how to interpret historical evidence any serious thought, or even

any thought at all. This was clearly the case with the D.C. members and of John Dewey himself.

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### **I.N. Smirnov**

In its "Summary of Findings" the Commission wrote the following about I.N. Smirnov:

(3) On the basis of all the evidence, we find that Trotsky never gave Smirnov any terrorist instructions through Sedov or anybody else.  
(xxi)

This is a fault of logic. There are no grounds for this conclusion. It was impossible for the D.C. or anyone else to reach this conclusion validly on the basis of the evidence and testimony before it.

Moreover, we know the D.D. was factually wrong. Pierre Broué showed that Gol'tsman did carry messages between Trotsky and Smirnov. We know that Sedov, and therefore Trotsky, did advocate "terror," i.e. assassination. We know that Trotsky was in a bloc with Rightists whose leader, Bukharin, had been plotting to assassinate Stalin since at least 1928. Therefore, these messages could have been "terrorist" messages, as they were asserted to be in testimony at the Moscow Trial. In volume two of this study we will examine much more evidence about Smirnov's role in planning "terror."

### **Gol'tsman**

(5) On the basis of all the evidence, we find that Holtzman never acted as a go-between for Smirnov on the one hand and Sedov on the other for the purposes of any terrorist conspiracy. (xxi)

This is a fault of logic. Again, there are no grounds for this conclusion. It was impossible to validly reach it on the basis of the evidence and the testimony the D.C. had.

Moreover, we know that Gol'tsman did indeed act as go-between between Sedov (Trotsky) and Smirnov. Broué admitted that Gol'tsman carried at least one message to Smirnov. But Gol'tsman met with Sedov perhaps as many as eight times. He could have carried "terrorist" instructions, as testified at the 1936 Moscow Trial. But the D.C. never asked Sedov anything about these meetings.

## **Piatakov**

(12) We find that Pyatakov did not fly to Oslo in December, 1935; he did not, as charged, see Trotsky; he did not receive from Trotsky any instructions of any kind. (xxii)

This is another fault in logic. The D.C. goes on to talk about "the disproof of the testimony of the defendant Pyatakov" and how that "completely invalidates the testimony" of others. But the D.C. did not disprove Piatakov's testimony at all. They could not do so, with the evidence and testimony they had.

Furthermore, it is invalid to reason that if *any* part of a defendant's testimony is untruthful, then *everything* is untruthful. It is simply not the case that either everything a defendant said is true, or everything is false. Human beings, including defendants at trials, do not either tell the truth all the time or lie all the time. The fact that a person tells a lie does not in the least mean that person always lies. In fact, no human being always lies or always tells the truth. For the D.C. to be ignorant of this elementary issue is a strong sign of bias and incompetence, or of dishonesty.

But in fact the D.C. did not prove that *any* part of Piatakov's testimony was untruthful. They simply *asserted* that it was. The Commission "believed Trotsky."

In his "slip of the tongue" interview with the Dutch Social-Democratic newspaper *Het Volk* Sedov revealed that Trotsky had been in touch with Radek *and* Piatakov. We know today that this was true. We know that Trotsky was in contact with Radek, though Trotsky lied repeatedly about this. Logically, it is possible that Trotsky was also in direct contact with

Piatakov. And we have demonstrated in Part One there there is no reason not to accept the Moscow Trials testimony as valid, including Piatakov's here.

As for the flight to Norway, it is, perhaps, conceivable that Piatakov made it all up. But there is a great deal of testimony from various trial defendants that Piatakov did fly to Norway and met with Trotsky either at the time he testified or at another time and in another manner. The D.C. did not investigate the issues surrounding Piatakov's alleged flight. We have examined Trotsky's evasions about this issue in Part One. We will have more to say about Piatakov's flight in volume two.

We now have the transcript of the face-to-face interrogation with Bukharin, Stalin, Ezhov, and Ordzhonikidze of December 7, 1936. This transcript was published in 2002. Piatakov confesses privately to being involved in the Trotskyist reserve leadership though he says nothing about the flight to Norway.

[[cyrillic]].<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> "Stenogramma ochnykh stavok v TsK VKP(b). Dekabr' 1936 goda." *Voprosy Istorii* No. 3, 2002, 3-4.

Translated:

EZHOV: In your confessions given during the course of three interrogations you confessed concerning the membership of the so-called **reserve Trotskyist center** in which you were a member, and concerning the **bloc with the Rights**. Do you confirm this?

PIATAKOV: I confirm it.

...

PIATAKOV: In 1931 I had a **meeting with Sedov**, concerning which I have confessed together with other things. Sedov said that he knew about the activization of the work of the Rights, that **the Trotskyist center** which at that time was being formed in the USSR was **in**

**contact with the Rights**, and that from his standpoint, this was a question of the **renewal of a serious struggle, in which all means should be utilized**. The question of the bloc with the Rights or, as Sedov informed me at that time, contacting the Rights, was essential.

Since Sedov, as I have already confessed, was no equal for me in the matter of discussion of political questions, I listened **only to that which he transmitted from the words of Trotsky**, and did not ask him on what basis the bloc was being formed, etc. All the more so since he informed me that **the Trotskyist center in the USSR had established these contacts**.

Trotsky knew my relationship with Bukharin and he proposed that I should renew my **contact with Bukharin**, since I had never had personal relations with Rykov...

...

I can't remember now whether this was at the beginning or in the middle of 1932. I can't recall the exact date. But I told Bukharin about **my meeting with Sedov**, about **Trotsky's terrorist instructions**, about **the bloc with the Rights**. Bukharin showed no special surprise, from which fact I concluded that he was more or less aware of these matters from other sources.

...

At one of the Politburo sessions Tomsy and I had a 10 or 15 minute conversation and from that conversation it became clear that **he was seeing Sokol'nikov** and was discussing and approved **a bloc with us Trotskyists**.

...

PIATAKOV: In concrete terms we have a conversation about the directives of Trotsky which were given to me by Sedov.



Here Piatakov outlines his contacts with Sedov and the Trotskyist group with the Rights and Bukharin. We know that the bloc of which Piatakov speaks did exist. We simply have no evidence that Piatakov was lying, and therefore no reason to think that he was — for example, that he had been "forced" to make false statements here.

In Part Two, Chapter Two we cited Anna Larina's account of what Bukharin told her when he returned from this face-to-face confrontation. Bukharin confirmed that Piatakov had confessed his guilt to Ordzhonikidze. Bukharin did not tell Larina that he thought Piatakov was lying — if he had done so, Larina would have said that. But she does not.

We also have Sergo Ordzhonikidze's speech of February 5, 1937, to leading members of the Commissariat of Heavy Industry, where Piatakov had been his assistant. It is clear from his speech that Ordzhonikidze believed Piatakov guilty. (Getty & Naumov 292-294)

You think if I had as my first deputy a man like Piatakov, who had worked in industry for the past 15 years, who had tremendous connections with all sorts of people, you think that this person couldn't possibly sneak one or two of his people in. But sneak them he did! Some of them were found out, others were not. You have, after all, heard of their tactics. Who among you has raised the question of finding out how things are going on in your chief directorate?

You think that a wrecker [*vreditel'*] is someone who walks around with a revolver in his pocket, someone who hides in some dark corner somewhere, waiting for his victim? Who could imagine that Piatakov could be a saboteur, and yet he turned out to be a saboteur, and, more still, a fine talker. He told how he did it.

Ordzhonikidze went on to explain how he had had Todorskii, someone who Piatakov had named, expelled from the Party.<sup>6</sup> Ordzhonikidze further explained how the Party had reprimanded him for expelling Todorskii on these grounds — presumably, without a Party hearing or trial.

<sup>6</sup> In the public transcript of the January 1937 Moscow Trial Todorskii is named by Rataichak another of the defendants, not by Piatakov. (1937 Trial

420) Piatakov must have named him in an interrogation not made public.

We also have an extract from Stalin's presentation at the December 1936 Central Committee Plenum, from which we have quoted in Part One, Chapter 12. Rather than quote this statement at length here, we refer the reader to our translation of it, which is online.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See note 3 of Part One, Chapter Seven, and note 3 of Part One, Chapter Twelve, above.

In short, we have a great deal of testimony to Piatakov's guilt, and no evidence to the contrary. Meanwhile, we know that Trotsky lied about all this to the D.C. The evidence shows that Trotsky was in touch not only with Radek but with Piatakov as well. There is no reason to doubt Piatakov's confession that Trotsky had given him "terrorist directives" since we know Trotsky supported the use of terror.

## **Romm**

(14) We find that the disproof of Vladimir Romm's testimony and that of Pyatakov completely invalidates the testimony of the defendant Radek. (Not Guilty xxii)

This is a fallacy. The D.C. could not have proven that Romm had not met Trotsky at the end of July 1933, as Romm had testified. Trotsky *asserted* that he had not visited Paris at that time. (CLT 181) But the D.C. could not *prove* that he had not done so. Trotsky's biographers agree that he arrived in St. Palais-sur-Mer, near Royan, France, on July 25, 1933, and resided there until October of that year. This is about eight hours by car from Paris. On November 1, 1933, Trotsky moved to Barbizon, a town less than two hours from Paris by car.

We know that Trotsky travelled incognito from Barbizon to Paris multiple times. We know that he visited Simone Weil in Paris at the end of December. Here is how Weil's biographer, basing his account on Weil's own, describes Trotsky at that time:

Trotsky arrived on the twenty-ninth or thirtieth, with his wife Natalia Sedova and two bodyguards. He had shaved off his goatee and mustache and had used pomade to flatten his thick mane of hair. Thus transformed and dressed like a bourgeois, he was quite well disguised. ...<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Simone Pétrement. *Simone Weil. A Life*. Translated from the French by Raymond Rosenthal. New York: Pantheon Books, 1976, 188.

Trotsky and "his family, his guards, and some friends" went to see an Eisenstein film showing in the neighborhood. Despite what Pétrement describes as their furtive behavior no one recognized them.

We know about this visit because Simone Weil wrote about it. Could Trotsky not have made other visits to Paris in disguise, about which no one wrote? Of course he could have. According to leading Trotskyist historian and biographer Jean-Jacques Marie, Trotsky visited Paris in disguise about once a week after November 1933. (Marie, Trotsky 423) It is possible that Trotsky did so before November as well — from St. Palais to Paris, for example.

Also, Romm might have misremembered the date he met with Trotsky, or lied about it for some reason. So the D.C. could never "disprove" Romm's statement in general.

In any case it is invalid to conclude that if any part of a defendant's testimony is untruthful, all of it is untruthful. Charles Beard, in his letter to Dewey, wrote:

Even if he could prove the falsity of the charge that he did not meet Romm in Paris,<sup>9</sup> that would be only a detail, though presumptive evidence against the general charge. It would not settle the issue.

<sup>9</sup> Beard clearly intended to write "...that he met Romm in Paris..."

Beard is correct. The fact that an accused makes a false statement does not prove that all the accused's statements are false — it does not "completely invalidate" Romm's testimony. In fact we know

- that Trotsky was in contact with Radek;
- that Trotsky lied about this, and about many other matters, to the D.C.

We cannot establish even today that Romm's testimony was false, even as to the month he named. Trotsky travelled about *in disguise, secretly*. It is simply not possible to "prove" that he did *not* go to Paris to meet Romm. Neither could the D.C. The Commission could of course take Trotsky's, and his friends', word for it. In the end, that is basically what the D.C. did do. But then, why bother with a commission of inquiry at all — unless it was intended to be a "whitewash" from the beginning?

## Conspiracy

(16) We are convinced that the alleged letters in which Trotsky conveyed alleged conspiratorial instructions to the various defendants in the Moscow trials never existed; and that the testimony concerning them is sheer fabrication. (xxii)

This is another fault in logic. The D.C. had no basis in evidence for its "conviction" that the letters "never existed" or for its conclusion.

What's more, we can be certain that the Commission was wrong. Trotsky did write Radek a letter at exactly the same time that Radek testified at the January 1937 Trial. Radek also testified that Trotsky's letter was "conspiratorial."

There is no reason to believe that Radek was lying here. Trotsky would scarcely have written to him for any other reason than a conspiratorial purpose. But we know that Trotsky lied to the D.C. on this point as on many others.

## Terror

(17) We find that Trotsky throughout his whole career has always been a consistent opponent of individual terror. The Commission further finds that Trotsky never instructed any of the defendants or witnesses in the Moscow trials to assassinate any political opponent. (xxii)

This is patently groundless. The fact that Trotsky has never *publicly* supported "individual terror" and therefore could not have *privately* done so is absurd. The D.C. had no way of determining that Trotsky never contacted any of the Moscow Trial defendants, much less what he might have told them.

Moreover, Dewey himself had caught Trotsky out on this very question. Trotsky had advocated "terror," without specifying "individual" or some other form of "terror." As we have seen, Trotsky was flustered by Dewey's question, at first denying that he had signed the document in question and then claiming that it said something other than what, in fact, it did say. We discussed this in the previous chapter. So the D.C. *knew* that Trotsky had indeed advocated "terror" and that he had lied about this to the D.C. until the evidence was put in front of him. (CLT 385-6)

Today we know that Trotsky did send a letter to Radek at exactly the same time Radek testified he received a letter from Trotsky, and that he also wrote to other Oppositionists. We also have Zborowski's testimony that Sedov tried to recruit him to be an assassin in the USSR, and advocated assassination of Stalin.

None of this documentary material is worth anything so far as concerns the existence of a "Trotskyite" conspiracy, or the alleged connections of these accused with such a conspiracy. **And indeed no documentation supporting the charge of conspiracy** was either shown to any accused for identification or attached to the records. Yet the accused, according to testimony, had not hesitated to write and send at considerable risk of exposure letters concerning the most compromising of their alleged criminal activities. (NG 29)

This is a failure of logic. We know that Trotsky did send such letters. The D.C. did not know this. But it should have been obvious to them, as it was to Charles Beard, that they could not know either Trotsky had sent any or not.

Nothing can be concluded from the *lack* of documentary evidence of conspiracy. In this case as in many others the D.C. was guilty of committing a logical fallacy — here, the "argument from ignorance." It's an error to

expect "documentation" supporting the charge of conspiracy. Conspirators try to leave *no* evidence of their conspiracy.

Even the presence of documentation could not by itself prove or disprove the charge of conspiracy. Such documentation could be forged, no doubt even more easily than testimony can be compelled. We have already noted that *if such documentation existed, its existence would itself be suspect*. Experienced conspirators would never have committed their conspiracy to writing in the first place.

As Charles Beard noted in his letter to Novack,

Naturally, as an old revolutionist, experienced in the art, he would not keep incriminating records of the operations, if he did engage in them.

The D.C. should have recognized this elementary fact as well.

### **Chapter VII. The "Capitulators," pp. 35-48.**

On pages 38 and following of *Not Guilty* the D.C. accepts Trotsky's claim that he could not possibly have formed a bloc with "capitulators." This is an example of the "argument from incredulity," another logical fallacy.

On page 43 the D.C. raises the issue of "cloaking the conspiracy":

§ 28. The question arises, of course, whether all these expressions of mutual enmity might not have been published for the purpose of cloaking the alleged conspiracy.

The Commission goes on to dismiss this idea. They had no grounds to do so. And in fact we know that Trotsky did indeed "cloak the conspiracy." As we have noted, Pierre Broué wrote:

Lev Sedov called the Smirnov group either the "former capitulators" or the "Trotskiite capitulators." Everybody had known, from 1929 on, that people in the Smirnov group had not really capitulated but were trying to fool the apparatus, and were capable of organizing themselves as an Opposition within the party: the fact was so universally known that Andres Nin, the

Spaniard deported from the Soviet Union in August 1930, explained it openly to his German comrades of *Die permanente Revolution* who printed his declaration without apparent problem. (POS 104)

The Commission continues:

And Trotsky, who had been fought by Zinoviev and Kamenev during the period of the Troika, and repudiated by them at the 15th Congress, would appear to have had very little reason to trust them in an alliance as dangerous as an underground conspiracy. (NG 47)

The Commission had no way of knowing whether Trotsky was dissembling, as indeed he was. Thanks to Broué's discovery of the proof that the bloc of Trotskyists, Zinovievists, Rights, and other Oppositionists really existed, we know Trotsky was lying here.

Then the Commission proceeds to compound their error as follows:

Thus the contention that those Trotskyists who returned to the Party did so in pursuance of a deliberate policy of duplicity inaugurated by Trotsky himself is borne out neither by the evidence nor by any tenable theory. (NG 47-8)

This is true nonsense. Apparently there is no theory that the D.C. would consider "tenable." Moreover, since in fact we do possess evidence of "a deliberate policy of duplicity... by Trotsky" — evidence that the D.C. refused to look for — no theory, "tenable" or otherwise, is required to fill in any gaps. Even Broué admitted that the "capitulationists" were duplicitous.

On the other hand, the evidence introduced in rebuttal indicates that capitulations were often due to repressions by the GPU; that "capitulators" were systematically pressed to become informers against the Opposition; and that Oppositionists were therefore obliged for the sake of their own safety to abstain from all relations with them and to regard them as enemies. It [the evidence — see above] also indicates that mutual distrust existed between the Trotskyists and Zinovievists, even in exile and in political prisons, and constitutes **a legitimate basis for doubting the**

**probability of a new "Trotskyist-Zinovievist" bloc for the purposes of a terrorist conspiracy." (NG 48)**

This is yet another error of logic. There could not be any "legitimate basis" for "doubting the probability for a new 'Trotskyist-Zinovievist' bloc" — which we now know did in fact exist — or that it was "for the purposes of a terrorist conspiracy." Today we have a great deal of evidence of such a conspiracy.

We find that all this evidence warrants due consideration, in weighing the charges and confessions in the two Moscow trials, of Trotsky's contention that he had regarded the "capitulators" in those trials as his political enemies from the time of their capitulations.

In short, the D.C. *chose* to "believe" Trotsky and to "disbelieve" the Moscow Trial testimony. Beard had predicted as much. He had written Dewey:

... I cannot be a party to an enterprise that can have only one outcome which is fully known in advance.

No wonder Beard refused to join the Commission! And no wonder Felix Morrow expressed relief when Beard refused to join.

### **Dreitser**

The accused Dreitzer confessed that in the autumn of 1931 he had two conversations with Sedov in Berlin, having been instructed by Smirnov to ascertain Trotsky's attitude on the formation of a bloc with the Zinovievites (ZK<sup>10</sup> 51-52); and that in October, 1934, he received from Trotsky a letter in invisible ink, containing instructions on terrorism and defeatism (ZK 22, 52). (NG 51-2)

<sup>10</sup> ZK is the D.C.'s abbreviation for the transcript of the 1936 Moscow Trial, the "Zinoviev-Kamenev" trial.

Today we know the following:



- The bloc was indeed formed.
- Gol'tsman did carry messages about the bloc back to Smirnov.
- Sedov and Trotsky did write letters in invisible ink (antipirin).

Therefore there is nothing the least improbable about Dreitser's claim to have discussed this with Sedov the year beforehand.

The accused Holtzman testified that he delivered to Sedov in 1932 a report and a secret code from Smirnov; that he had several conversations with Sedov ... (NG 52)

We know that Gol'tsman did meet with Sedov and deliver a report. We also know that Sedov and Trotsky tried to cover up the fact that Sedov met with Gol'tsman multiple times.

...and at his suggestion went in November, 1932, to see Trotsky in Copenhagen where he received from him verbal instructions to the effect that Stalin must be killed, and that for this purpose it was necessary to choose cadres of responsible people fit for this task. (ZK 101.)

In view of the fact that the first statements are true there is nothing improbable about these second statements.

Gol'tsman may have met Sedov as he stated, or he may not have. But that does not mean he did not meet with Trotsky. Sven-Eric Holmström has shown, and the Gol'tsman NKVD file confirms, that Gol'tsman must have visited the hotel in Copenhagen where he said he met Sedov (we will study the Gol'tsman NKVD file in volume two of this study.) As we mentioned in a previous chapter, it is possible that Gol'tsman met in Copenhagen not with Sedov but with someone else whose identity he wanted to shield. But whether Gol'tsman met Sedov in Copenhagen or not, the real question is whether he met with Trotsky there.

Trotsky dodged this issue. That raises the question: Why did he dodge it? The D.C. should have pursued this question. It did not.

Gol'tsman is another example of a Moscow Trial defendant some of whose testimony can now be verified — his multiple meetings with Sedov, which Trotsky and Sedov tried to hide. Today we can verify part of Gol'tsman's testimony. We cannot disprove any of it. That does not mean that all of Gol'tsman's testimony was true. It does mean that there are no grounds for dismissing *any* of it.

## **The Bloc**

The D.C. stated:

Thus there is, as we have said, **no direct evidence** of the attitude of either Sedov or Trotsky toward the formation of the bloc, or concerning their role, if any, in its formation. (NG 53)

This statement makes no sense. What "direct evidence" could there have been, other than the testimony about it during the Moscow Trials? If there had been "direct evidence" — whatever that means — of a secret conspiratorial bloc, we ought to expect forgery. In fact we know that Trotsky and Sedov lied about the bloc, denying it many times when, in fact, they had formed it.

The D.C. never searched Trotsky's archive, as he repeatedly offered. Had they done so they might well have found what Broué and Getty found in 1980 and thereafter — direct evidence that Sedov and Trotsky had been trying to form the bloc and approved of it — and maybe a lot more besides.

Trotsky testified as follows:

Furthermore, it is absolutely indisputable that I would not preserve in my archives records of my crimes had I committed any. (CLT 467)

Charles Beard said the same thing:

If Trotsky is guilty, he would not, as an experienced revolutionist, keep incriminating records in his files and papers; nor, if he even had them, would he keep them in his files to be examined by any commission of inquiry. (Letter to Dewey 03.22.37)

*There the D.C. believed that it would not find any "direct evidence" and in fact did not look for any.* Then why did they even raise the question of "direct evidence"? The answer appears to be that the D.C. was strongly biased in Trotsky's favor.

During the hearings phase of the Commission Trotsky had asserted that he could prove his innocence with the aid of his Archive.

BEALS: ... For the purpose of this line of questioning, I am considering you guilty, and therefore I would like ask you what assurance the Commission would have in examining your archives that you have not destroyed that which was unfavorable to yourself.

TROTSKY: That is an absolutely natural question. But my aim is not to convince the Commission by the documents which I have allegedly destroyed, but by the documents which remain in my archives. I will prove to the Commission that the man who wrote from year to year those thousands of letters, those hundreds of articles, and those dozens of books and had those friends and those enemies, that this man could not commit the crimes of the indictment. It is the most genuine evidence I have.

BEALS: Answering the question I have —

TROTSKY: IF you will permit me a supplement. It is impossible to introduce allegedly destroyed documents. They could not find place in these archives. (CLT 52)

This is a bluff — in plain language, a lie. Moreover, it is doubletalk — it doesn't make any sense. But Trotsky persisted in this bluff:

TROTSKY: The Commission has at its disposal all my archives, ... (CLT 486; 13<sup>th</sup> session, point 7)

Furthermore, it is absolutely indisputable that I would not preserve in my archives records of my crimes had I committed any. (CLT 467)

Trotsky admitted that he would have removed incriminating documents from his archives. So what good would the archives have been to the D.C.? He continued:

But my archives are important for the investigation, not for what they lack, but for what they contain. (CLT 467; 13<sup>th</sup> session, end of III)

This is doubletalk too. Everything Trotsky said about his archives was deliberate evasion. Trotsky admitted that he would have removed any incriminating documents from his archive.

Beard's letter to Dewey of March 22, 1937, is the only document that states the matter correctly. The fact that the D.C. did not publish it, or summarize it, or even reveal its existence, is not only further evidence of its incompetence and lack of objectivity — it is evidence of the Commission's dishonesty.

### **Bloc with Zinovievists**

Zinoviev set the beginning of negotiations for the formation of the bloc, "on Trotsky's instruction," in the autumn of 1931 (ZK 72), and its actual formation in the summer of 1932 (ZK 44). Kamenev stated that at a meeting of the Zinovievite center in "our villa," in the summer of 1932, Zinoviev reported that the union with the Trotskyites "was an accomplished fact" (ZK 66). (NG 54)

We know now that this was true. Sedov's letter to Trotsky of 1932 indicates that previous discussions had already taken place. But on pages 55 through 58 the D.C. tries to argue that contradictions among the various defendants about when the bloc was formed means that no bloc existed!

In the summer of 1932, at a meeting in Kamenev's villa, Zinoviev announced that the bloc was an accomplished fact (ZK 66). Yet in the second half of 1932, Smirnov posed to the leading trio of the Trotskyite organization the question of a bloc with the Zinovievites and Leftists, and sent a letter to Sedv through Holtzman, asking Trotsky's opinion on this question (ZK 21, 41-2). In the autumn of

1932, a letter was received from Trotsky approving the decision to unite, and at the same time Trotsky sent word through his emissary Gaven that the union must be on the basis of terrorism. After having received these instructions Smirnov instructed Ter-Vaganyan to bring about the formation of a bloc. (ZK 42.) The bloc was formed for the second time at the end of 1932 (ZK 11, 42). (NG 55)

We know that Sedov approved terrorism, so Trotsky did as well. Therefore there's nothing improbable in any of this.

Yet in his [Gol'tsman's] testimony there is nothing about Trotsky's attitude toward the proposed Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc, which, assuming that it was about to be formed at that time, must, one would think, have been uppermost in his own mind and that of Trotsky. (NG 56)

This too is faulty logic. Gol'tsman was a messenger between I.N. Smirnov and Trotsky. He was not a significant opposition figure in his own right. There was no testimony that he was part of the bloc himself. And we know that Trotsky did approve of the bloc.

This illustrates another common fallacy of the D.C.: the expectation that accounts from different individuals will not contradict each other in minor ways. In reality, the opposite is the case: *If all accounts by trial defendants were in agreement down to small details, that in itself would be grounds for suspected that they were "scripted."*

## **Gaven**

The D.C. stated:

Trotsky denied that he had communicated with Smirnov through Gaven, whom he had not seen since 1926 (PC 225-6). (NG 60)

Here, one again, is exactly what Trotsky testified:

GOLDMAN: Did you ever hear of a man by the name of Gaven?

TROTSKY: Yes.

GOLDMAN: Who is he?

TROTSKY: He is a Latvian Bolshevik.. He, if I remember, gave all his sympathies at a certain time to the Opposition. As Holtzman, for example. In 1926 or 1927, he was connected for a time with Smilga, a member of the Central Committee. But he disappeared from my eyes absolutely after 1926.

GOLDMAN: In the testimony of Mrachkovsky, and also Smirnov, there is a reference that you sent communications through Gaven to Smirnov about the necessity of killing Stalin.

TROTSKY: I don't know anything about it. No, it is an absolute falsehood. He is not among the defendants.

GOLDMAN: No, he is not. He is a witness.

TROTSKY: Not even a witness:

GOLDMAN: That's right.

TROTSKY: He disappeared.

Thanks to Broué's research we know that Trotsky was lying here. Trotsky did meet with Gaven and send a message to Smirnov through Gaven. In 1980 Broué did not know about Sedov's meeting with Gaven. But by 1985 Broué had identified Gaven.<sup>11</sup>

In view of the nature of Smirnov's testimony concerning this alleged communication, in view of the Prosecutor's failure to call the witness Yuri Gaven, and in view of his further failure to make any attempt to secure Trotsky's testimony, we consider that this testimony of the accused Smirnov as against Leon Trotsky worthless. (NG 69)

<sup>11</sup> Broué, "Compléments à un article...", CahLT 1985, p. 69; Broué, POS (1990) p. 99.

This is all wrong, one more failure of reasoning. The D.C. had no grounds to draw this conclusion. It is invalid to dismiss evidence as "worthless" just because it is uncorroborated. The Commission should have just noted that Smirnov's testimony was uncorroborated and left the matter there.

Today we possess a lot of corroboration of Smirnov's testimony. We will discuss this question further in volume two.

Moreover, we know now that the D.C. was wrong: We now know that Smirnov was telling the truth when he stated that Gaven had brought =him a message from Trotsky, and when he testified about the bloc. Therefore the D.C.'s conclusion, "we consider that this testimony of the accused Smirnov as against Leon Trotsky is worthless," is not only illogical; it is also factually incorrect.

The D.C. was dishonest in claiming that the Soviet Prosecutor should have made attempts "to secure Trotsky's testimony" without explaining how he could have done that. Ask Trotsky to travel to the Soviet Union and appear at the trial? As for the Commission's "invitation" to the USSR to send a representative to their hearings: why would the Soviet have attended hearing that had no legal status and that, as Charles Beard pointed out, could never resolve the issue of Trotsky's guilt or innocence anyway?

### **The "Hotel Bristol" affair**

The fullest and best discussion of the major issues in the "Hotel Bristol" question is Sven-Eric Holmström's article in *Cultural Logic* 2009. We will just add a few more considerations here.

Evidence that Gol'tsman did not meet with Sedov is not evidence that he did not meet with Trotsky. We know that Gol'tsman did meet with Sedov numerous times, as Gol'tsman testified at the 1936 Trial.

We know that Trotsky and Sedov needed to hide this fact for some reason. We don't know what that reason was. The most likely hypothesis is that during these additional meetings Sedov and Gol'tsman discussed Trotsky's new directive that "terror" must be used against the Stalin leadership.

Trotsky, through Sedov, may have also given Gol'tsman other documents during their meetings, in addition to the document Gol'tsman gave to Sedov at their first meeting.

At any rate, it is clear that Trotsky and Sedov did not wish to be questioned about what happened during all these meetings. Sure enough, the D.C. did not ask Sedov any questions about what happened during those subsequent meetings, or about any other documents. The D.C. failed to follow up on this, just as they failed to follow up on the question of the relative positions of the hotel and the Bristol Konditori.

On page 91 Vikelsø Jensen claims that *Arbejderbladet* diagram of January 29, 1937, was wrong (in Part One, Chapter Five we have reproduced this diagram). But on page 92 the D.C. report admits that Jensen's two accounts are contradictory. In any case Holmström's photographs prove that Gol'tsman and *Arbejderbladet*, not Trotsky's witnesses, were correct.

Why didn't the D.C. take the trouble to obtain a contemporary photograph of the hotel and Bristol Konditori of 1932? Why didn't they just do what Holmström did more than 70 years later: check the street directory for Copenhagen, *Kraks Vejviser*, for the years in question and report what they found? Why didn't they just ask the proprietors of the two establishments, both of them still in business in 1937, what their relative situations had been in 1932?

The D.C. chose to devote a great deal of space and time to the "Hotel Bristol" question. It should obviously not have been relegated to contradictory testimony. It could easily have been verified. Any competent investigatory body would have done this. But the D.C. never made any effort to do so.

### **Sokol'nikov**

§ 113. The accused Sokolnikov, fourth member of this alleged parallel or reserve center, not only claimed no direct contact with either Trotsky or Sedov, but expressly differentiated between himself and the members "of Trotskyite origin." (NG 143)



In his testimony at the January 1937 Moscow Trial Sokol'nikov denied any contact with Trotsky. On page 144 the D.C points out that Sokol'nikov said in his final plea that he was not in direct communication with Trotsky.

But we know that Trotsky sent him a letter from Istanbul through Jan Frankel, his secretary, on January 12, 1932, because Getty discovered the certified mail receipt in the Harvard Trotsky Archive. Unless he just forgot it — not impossible, perhaps, but unlikely — Sokol'nikov was deliberately lying to the Prosecution.

Assuming the latter, this seems to have been a smart move on Sokol'nikov's part. The Prosecution did not challenge Sokol'nikov on this point. Clearly it had no independent knowledge of this letter. This is a good example of how defendants sometimes tell falsehoods they themselves choose to tell for reasons of their own, *not* forced upon them by the Prosecution.

Both Sokol'nikov and Trotsky denied contact with each other. Yet we know, through independent documentation, that they were indeed in contact. That is, we know for certain that Trotsky was lying (the certified mail receipt) and can be reasonably certain Sokol'nikov was lying too.

## **Radek**

We have already noted (§ 121) that Radek claimed to have received six letters from Trotsky. Radek twice stated (PR<sup>12</sup> 41, 543) that he burned these letters. (NG 192)

He testified that he first learned that preparations were being made for a united Trotskyite-Zinovievite center in a letter from Trotsky, which he received in February-March 1932. (NG 193-4)

Thus Trotsky, in February-March 1932, is alleged to have sent to a "capitulator" who had returned to the Party, with whom his own personal relations had been greatly strained, and with whom he is not alleged to have any previous communication since the "split" in his faction which caused the strain, a letter which made it clear to that "capitulator" that Trotsky had in mind terrorism against the leadership

of the Soviet Union, and in which he definitely stated that a bloc was being formed between the Trotskyites and the Zinovievites. We have already remarked on the recklessness of Trotsky's conduct as represented in the records of these trials. This testimony of Radek offers a striking example. (NG 195-6)

In our opinion, therefore, neither Radek's testimony as this motivation in joining the alleged conspiracy, nor his testimony that it was an unsolicited letter from Trotsky which informed him of it and urged him to join, is convincing. **It becomes incredible** when one considers Trotsky's own testimony and the materials he has submitted in its support. (NG 200-201)

<sup>12</sup> This is the abbreviation used in *Not Guilty* for the transcript of the January 1937 Moscow Trial, the "Pyatakov-Radek" trial.

This is another example of the logical fallacy of the "argument from incredulity."<sup>13</sup> The D.C actually claimed that the fact that they found a statement "incredible" meant that it could not be true or was unlikely to be true. The Commission members — Dewey included — did not realize that the statement "it is incredible" — in other words, "We don't believe it" — is a statement not about the matter at hand but about the person making the statement.

Moreover, we know for a fact that Radek was telling the truth in this case. Thanks to the certified mail receipt found by Getty in the Trotsky Archive in 1980 we can independently verify that Radek did receive a letter from Trotsky at exactly the time and place Radek named in his testimony at the January 1937 Moscow Trial. This makes the Commission's fallacy more obvious. But it would still be a fallacy even if we did not have the certified mail receipt.

Getty discovered that the Trotsky Archive had been purged, undoubtedly of incriminating materials. It is probable, therefore, that the Archive originally contained other evidence of acts that the D.C. found "incredible."

We therefore hold that none of the letters allegedly exchanged between Trotsky and Radek, whether through Vladimir Romm or by

unspecified means, every existed, and that all testimony to the contents of these alleged letters is sheer fabrication. (NG 229)

This is yet another example of faulty reasoning. The D.C. had no grounds for concluding this. It is both illogical, and a further example of the D.C.'s bias in favor of Trotsky.

Furthermore, as we know now, the D.C. was factually wrong. Radek was telling the truth at least about the February-March 1932 letter. Based upon our verification of the Moscow Trials testimony, it is probably that other details about which Radek testified concerning the Trotskyist conspiracy were also true. There is no evidence to suggest otherwise.

### **Charge of Terrorism, page 246 ff.**

The D.C.'s error here is, once again, that they chose to "believe" Trotsky's professions that he would never have recourse to "terror" (assassination, sabotage, etc.). They quote some of Trotsky's statements opposing "individual terror" (assassination) on page 250-251. During his testimony to the Commission Trotsky summarized a great many such passages from his various writings.

Once again, the D.C. committed the fallacy of incredulity:

§ 179. One may assume that if Trotsky anywhere at any time had come out for individual terror, the Prosecutor would have quoted him honestly. This he could not do because the fact is that all of Trotsky's writings on the problem reject individual terror and justify only revolutionary mass action. We therefore find that apart from the evidence in our possession which disproves the testimony connecting Leon Trotsky with the alleged terrorist conspiracy, the charge of individual terrorism is not only not proved but **incredible**. (NG 255-6)

In addition to fallacious reasoning — here we see the "argument from incredulity" again — the D.C. was terrible naïve. Why would Trotsky' ever have "come out for individual terror" at any time? Did the D.C. think that

conspirators are in the habit of announcing, publicly in advance, their intention to conspire?

Moreover, assuming Trotsky did advocate terror — *any we know, thanks too Zborowski's reports, that he did* — he would, of course, have had to publicly deny it, just as he denied his bloc with the Zinovievists and the Rights. Trotsky's followers inside and outside the USSR believed him to be the model of a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary. Marx and, especially, Lenin always denounced terror. Therefore Trotsky's reputation depended upon his publicly denouncing it too.

We have already found, on the basis of the evidence, that the testimony of Radek and Pyatakov is worthless. (NG 315)

The D.C. had no grounds for this conclusion — which, as it turns out, was factually wrong. Today we know that much, at least, of what Radek and Piatakov testified was truthful. It is quite possible that *all* of their testimony concerning their Trotskyist conspiracy was truthful.

### **Natan Lur'e, p. 132**

§ 103. In view of all these considerations, and the evidence in our possession concerning these defendants, we find no basis whatever for the attempt in the Zinoviev-Kamenev trial to link Moissei Lurye and Nathan Lurye with Leon Trotsky **or the Trotskyist movement, or with an alleged "terrorist line."** (NG 132)

Once again the D.C. had no basis whatever to draw this conclusion. Moreover, we now have evidence that Lur'e was telling the truth.

In 1992 the post-conviction appeals of their sentences of death of ten of the Moscow Trial defendants were published.<sup>14</sup> Natan Lur'e insisted on his guilt in his Appeal. In it he repeats that he was assigned by the leader of the Trotskyist organization.

I have committed a serious crime against the Soviet people. I wanted, in accordance with the assignment of the leader of Trotsky's terrorist

center, to deprive the Soviet people and the entire world proletariat of our leader Stalin and of other leaders of the great Communist Party. I repeatedly prepared for terrorist acts against Voroshilov, Stalin, Ordzhonikidze, Kaganovich, and Zhdanov, having been armed in order to carry out this plan.

I really did prepare to assassinate Voroshilov in accordance with the assignment of Franz Weitz, a representative of the Gestapo. I wanted to carry out these revolting murders because I had been poisoned by the poison of Trotskyism during my long residence in Germany....

Natan Lazarevich Lur'e, 24 August 1936.

<sup>14</sup> They are Kamenev; I.N. Smirnov, Zinoviev, Natan L. Lur'e, Piatakov, Muralov, Bukharin (2), Rykov (2), Krestinsky, Iagoda. *Izvestiia* September 2, 1992.

Absent any evidence that Nathan Lur'e was lying even in this, his last appeal, it is futile to assert that he was. All the evidence we have is that Lur'e was truthful in incriminating himself. As always, we must be prepared to change our conclusions if new evidence, or compelling reinterpretation of existing evidence, should come to light. Unless and until that happens, the only conclusion consistent with evidence available today is that Lur'e was telling the truth.

It is incorrect to say, as the D.C. repeatedly did: "This is incredible" — that is, "we don't believe it" — "and therefore it must be false." This is the "argument from incredulity" again. It is also incorrect to say, as the D.C. did, "We assume this testimony is false since it is not accompanied by any corroborating or documentary evidence." It could be true despite the absence of such evidence. And what kind of "corroborating evidence" could be expected in the case of a competent conspiracy?

## **Conclusion**

Charles Beard was right. The D.C. was ill-conceived from the outset. It was impossible to prove Trotsky's innocence based on the testimony and

documentation he presented, or could present. The fact that Trotsky claimed he could do so should have served as a warning to all concerned.

There was no way Trotsky could be proven guilty in the D.C. hearings. No way unless he told the truth — and he was not going to do that. But neither could Trotsky prove his innocence.

Had there been a trial, we do not know what the verdict might have been. Trotsky might have been found "not guilty" in the judicial sense, meaning "insufficient evidence to prove guilt." Or Trotsky might have been found guilty on the basis of the large number of his self-confessed co-conspirators who testified against him. The confession of the accused is not necessary for his conviction — something that Bukharin pointed out during his own trial in March 1938.

But the D.C. was not a trial. There was no prosecution. The evidence that the Soviet prosecutors had — pretrial interrogations, documentation — was not available to the D.C.

Trotsky was free to lie to the Commission. We can show now that he did so many times. Given the fact that Trotsky's archive has been "purged" Trotsky may have lied many more times than we can now prove. There was no way the Commission could have known whether he was telling the truth or not simply from his published works and the statements he chose to make. But the Commission made no serious attempt to verify what Trotsky told them.

The D.C. was shockingly incompetent. It committed error after error in reasoning. It repeatedly committed elementary logical fallacies. Above all the D.C. members were arrogant. None of its members possessed experience in evaluating historical evidence. None of them had any experience as investigators.

Yet the members of the Commission still believed that they could determine whether the Moscow Trials were honest or were frame-ups. In the end the D.C. deliberately confused the juridical finding of "not guilty," meaning "insufficient evidence to convict," with the concept of "innocence."

The D.C. was a travesty in every respect. However, in the long run it was a triumph for Trotsky. It was a public relations victory for him. It remains a basic document in the arsenal of Trotskyists and of Cold-War anticommunists to the present day.

Like the Moscow Trials transcripts the D.C.'s two volumes — 1012 pages of text — go largely unread and *a fortiori* unstudied. When I undertook to examine these volumes carefully I was genuinely shocked to find that there were so many logical fallacies and outright failures to check up on those fact-claims that could have been verified. Clearly, none of those persons who think the D.C. actually proved anything, or was ever more than a public relations stunt, has ever studied the Commission's two volumes with anything approaching a spirit of objectivity.

Today, thanks to revelations from the Trotsky and former Soviet archives, we know that Trotsky lied over and over again to the D.C. The Commission's members could not have known that. but they should have known that no defendant's word can be taken at face value. They should have known what Charles Beard knew — that their job was hopeless. The D.C. could only end as it did — as a public relations triumph for Trotsky and a swindle on the public.

By far the most famous, honored, and prominent of the Commission members, John Dewey was already a long-time anticommunist. Other Commission members had anti-Soviet and, some of them, pro-Trotsky backgrounds as well. They never acknowledged this history in the course of the Commission's sessions, thereby giving the public — whoever read the Commission's two volumes or read about it in the newspaper or other accounts — the impression that they were unbiased, neutral, or objective.

### **The Dewey Commission's Verdict Set Aside**

The report of the D.C. drew invalid conclusions from the evidence and testimony due to faulty logic and reasoning. It never had remotely enough evidence to justify its verdict that Trotsky and Sedov were "not guilty" and the Moscow Trials "frame-ups." But it was not due to faulty logic and reasoning alone that the D.C. reached its invalid conclusions.

Trotsky lied in his testimony to the Commission. He lied repeatedly, about very important matters that were central to the charges against him. In this essay we have outlined how Trotsky's provable lies made his testimony a travesty.

If Trotsky had told the truth, would the D.C. have found Trotsky "not guilty"? Certainly not. Had the Commission known then what we know today they would never have undertaken the inquiry in the first place.

It is impossible to imagine Trotsky admitting:

- that he had formed a clandestine bloc with the Zinovievites, the Rights, and others;
- that he had written Radek at exactly the time and place Radek testified at the January 1937 Moscow Trial;
- that he had also written Sokol'nikov and Preobrazhensky;
- that he had indeed communicated to Smirnov through Gol'tsman and Gaven;
- that he had lied in all his writings about the Kirov murder;
- that his archives did in fact contain evidence to incriminate him;
- that his son, Leon Sedov, was advocating Stalin's murder.

— and yet think that the D.C. members would still have agreed to hold its hearings, much less that they would have found Trotsky "Not Guilty!"

Trotsky's archive has been "purged" of incriminating materials. We don't know of what, though at least of the letters to Radek and to other supporters, the exchange with Sedov about the slogan "remove Stalin," the letter to Gaven referred to during the 1936 Trial.

Had Trotsky told the truth, his credibility would have been destroyed. Many or most of his followers would have deserted him. It would have been a public relations triumph not for Trotsky but for the Stalin leadership and the Soviet Union.

We may never know about all of Trotsky's lies. However, given what we know today, we can state with confidence that the D.C. reached a foregone



conclusion that they could just as easily have reached without going through this travesty of a hearing.

If the members of the Dewey Commission were alive today, there can be no doubt that, in light of all that we now know, they would have no recourse but to reverse their original decision. They are, of course, not alive.

Therefore it remains for us to draw the only possible conclusion about the D.C. and to "do the right thing." We recognize that the Dewey Commission's verdict was unjust and invalid, and we declare it overturned.

## Conclusion

Our research has produced two significant and complementary results:

\* The defendants in the Moscow Trials were not innocent persons compelled to falsely testify by the investigation (NKVD) or prosecution. They said what they intended to say.

We have determined this by verifying, with independent primary source evidence, a number of the statements made in testimony by Moscow Trials defendants. In the few cases where we can prove a defendant lied, he did so to further the conspiracy of which he was a part and/or in an attempt to protect himself, not to incriminate himself or to placate the prosecution.

\* Leon Trotsky lied a great deal during the 1930s. It is fair — accurate — to say that, concerning the Soviet Union and the Stalin leadership, Trotsky did little except lie. Many of those lies are directly related to the accusations made against him by the defendants and the prosecution at the three Moscow Trials.

Other of Trotsky's lies concern the aftermath of the murder of Sergei Kirov in December 1934, an event which eventually led investigators to uncover the bloc of Trotskyists, Zinovievists, Rightists, and other Oppositionists, which Trotsky had approved and in which his secret Soviet-based supporters participated along with other oppositionists, including those who had killed Kirov.

We have determined that Trotsky lied so frequently and about so many things that nothing he wrote about the Soviet Union after the end of 1934 — the date of his first essays on the Kirov murder — represents what he himself really thought.

Trotsky lied in two basic ways. First, he denied any role in the conspiracies of which he was accused: with his own followers and other oppositionists within the Soviet Union; with foreign governments; with the German military; with the Red Army leaders. He denied the existence of the bloc of Trotskyists, Zinovievists, Rights, and other oppositionists. He denied

having contact with a number of persons with whom we now know he did have contact.

Second, Trotsky chose the strategy of claiming that he would "expose the scheme in advance." It is asking too much of coincidence to think that Trotsky really did "predict" that the bloc members, including his own supporters and himself, would be accused of these things. The only explanation for these so-called prediction that is consistent with the evidence we not possess is that Trotsky knew that these accusations would eventually be forthcoming. Sooner or later, some of the bloc members would confess to them. So he anticipated them in order to make them seem so false they were "predictable."

Trotsky's declared strategy of "exposing the scheme in advance" is a "tell." His supposed "predictions" actually "telegraph" to us confirmation of some of the actions that Trotsky really had engaged in. Just as we know that the confession of the Moscow Trials defendants are genuine, so we also know that Trotsky's denials are not reliable, because we can disprove many of his denials, and because Trotsky lied whenever he considered it expedient to do so.

During the investigation of the Kirov murder Trotsky claimed that he could "predict" that his name would be raised, when he knew that it would be because of his and his supporters' participation in the bloc with the Zinovievists.

Trotsky claimed that Zinoviev and Kamenev were charged with plotting "armed intervention" and the "restoration of capitalism." In reality, they were not charged with either. But Trotsky had advocated both. He could reasonably assume that he himself and his followers would be charged with these crimes sooner or later, as eventually happened.

In a conspiracy such as Trotsky's we can expect to find little or no *material* evidence. Conspirators do their best to leave no physical trace of their conspiracy. We have long had a great deal of *testimonial* evidence in the confessions of the Moscow Trials defendants. Having verified many details of the Moscow Trials confessions from independent sources, we can now accept the Moscow Trials testimony concerning Trotsky's conspiracies with

a high degree of confidence. As additional confirmation we now have Trotsky's "predictions." They dovetail nicely with the later accusations against him.

It appears that in lying Trotsky acted from several motives:

- to cover up the activities of his followers in the Soviet Union;
- to preserve his image before his followers and on the world stage as a principled revolutionary and the true follower, by rights the heritor, of Lenin;
- to maintain a posture of non-involvement in politics, necessary to preserve his ability to find countries which would let him live there as an exile;
- above all, to maintain and continue his conspiracies against the Soviet leadership, in hopes of returning to power within the USSR.

The reality was very different from Trotsky's false accounts. His former followers testified at the Moscow Trials that Trotsky was

- advocating the murder of Stalin and other Soviet leaders and the sabotage of Soviet industry and transportation;
- conspiring with Germany and Japan either to support a *coup d'état* against the Stalin regime or to stimulate mutiny within the Soviet military in support of German and Japanese attacks, thereby facilitating the overthrow of the Stalin regime and the assumption of power by the bloc and by Trotsky himself.

In the present volume we have cited good evidence of these activities by Trotsky, including evidence that corroborates the Moscow Trials testimony. We will examine yet more such evidence in volume two.

## Denial

Soviet history is so politicized, and opinions about Soviet history so impassioned, that many readers will reject the results of this study not out of rational evaluation and criticism of the evidence, but out of simple denial thinly disguised by faulty reasoning.

For anticommunists and Trotskyists it is unthinkable that the Moscow Trials testimony should have turned out to be, on the whole, reliable. This fact invalidates what we have called the "anti-Stalin paradigm" of Soviet and world history. In the service of anticommunism, and of the cult around the figure of Trotsky, anticommunists and Trotskyists will continue to deny the truth as demonstrated by primary source evidence and sound analysis.

Nevertheless, we look forward to criticism for all quarters. Dishonest or incompetent criticism will expose the dishonesty and incompetence of those who employ it. Good, incisive, logical, and above all, *evidence-based* criticism will help to advance the cause of discovering the truth about Soviet history. Hopefully, such honest and competent criticism will also provide correctives that we can use to improve subsequent editions of this work.

Volume Two, the companion to the present work, will center on Trotsky's involvement in "terror" — the advocacy of violence and assassination. It will contain analysis of recently-released documents from the former Soviet archives that bear on Trotsky conspiracies, including important confirmation of Trotsky's conspiracy with Japan; further details of Trotsky's promotion of "terror" and sabotage; details concerning Piatakov's secret flight to Norway in December 1935; and much else.

Volume Two is scheduled to be published in late 2016.

## Appendix: Documents

(Note: I had originally intended to put many of the important archival documents cited in this book into this Appendix. But doing so would make this book, already longer than I had planned, much longer still.

I plan to include more documents in Volume Two, to be published within a year.)

### Document 1. Sedov to Trotsky 1932 Trotsky Arch. 4782

[[cyrillic]]

#### English Translation:

[The bloc] has been organized. In it have entered the Zinovievists, the Sten-Lominadze group and the Trotskyists (former "capitulators"). The group of Safar. Tarkhan. has not formally entered yet — they stand on too extreme a position; they will enter in a very short time. — The declaration of Z. and K. concerning their enormous mistake in '27 was made during negotiations with our people concerning the bloc, immediately before the exile of Z. and K. —

The downfall of the group of I.N. Preobr. and Uf. (these three were the center) was done by some half-insane, sick person. They arrested by chance, — he began to name names. It is unlikely that they found materials ("Trotsk. literature") on IN and others. Several days before his arrest IN said to our informer: X has begun to name names, I await arrest any day. He was prepared thanks to the presence of his Morkovkin, who brought all the informat. Unfortunately IN did not have time to transfer it. —

Informer says that no downfalls of those who are going abroad, of those connected generally with abroad, have taken place. If there are very important questions — then by telegraph before Thursday (the same instruction).

The downfall of the "former" is a great blow, but factory contacts are being preserved.

Letter No. 2 received by mail (chem). 2. Big informat. — personally. Both from Vetter (remember). Great guy!

Recently three have departed for R. I await 2 soon. The "small ones" have been transferred. The organiz. of these trips, their use, transfer etc. demanded in each case many hours of discussion and work, sometimes the post of "the jewelry" (I'll tell you when I have a chance). Often I had not only to "instruct," but also above all to convince. No one (with one exception) did not go alone, it was necessary to find and recruit. I now have a permanent "agent" in Berlin, who sometimes travels. I trust him absolutely.

Of all the trips there not one was completed "by itself." I write about all this for the sole purpose of defining the question of my own future from this point of view.

My departure from Eur. will in reality mean the liquidation of my contacts; the maximum that could be preserved is a part of the one-sided correspondence from there. That is the opinion of the Mosc. friends who are dejected. They "consider," that it is essential for me to stay in E.

The situation that is being created places before me the question of whether I need to try to remain illegally in Eur. (Brl or Paris with easy travel to Brl), if they do not grant me visas. Opinion. I do have a passport.

In any case the absence of any kind of serious connections in Fr. and Vienna, obviously poses the problem thus: Turk. or illegal.

The illeg. questions of the Germ. Organization. 1) the most important: creation of an illegal typogr. in Berlin (in Leipz. and Hamb. there are). To buy one is for the time being not hard: 400-600 (maxim) marks, — but there's no money. Difficulties in arrangement, in living quarters. To find it is our main concern. Theref. we need money. (same situation with question of Germ. Confer. — for now there's no money, but Paris has promised). 2) Illeg. buro (center) [in] Berlin has been successfully set up. We have an

absolutely pure c-rad Kaufmann from R. who will open a commerc. buro with representation of various foreign firms. He is now preparing these representations. The buro, consequen., will not even be a fictional one. One of the members of the center will work in the buro as an employee. Here there'll be a hideout, etc. (for a very narrow circle, of course)

3) In the sense of a base abroad we are focusing our attention on R. (Reichenberg). 3 ½ -4 hours of travel from Brl, a group of 7-8 very devoted, well-off people. An easy border (sympathizers have autos). There people can be concealed, publish a newspaper for delivery to Germ. etc.

Bring out the chemical with an iron — it's faster.

Please confirm receipt of the chemical — letter.

**Document 2. Zborowski — Sedov on Killing Stalin, on Sedov's dissolution — Russian**

Costello & Tsarev, *Deadly Illusions* p. 283 — Jan, 1937, & Feb 11, 1937, dispatches translated. Jan 23, 1937, remark translated in n. 44, p. 469.

Exactly the same texts, with Russian original, in Tsarev & Kostello, *Rokovye Illiuzii*, p. 169/322-3, and n. 44 p. 273/531

[[cyrillic]]

**English translation:**

February 8, 1937

On January 22 L. Sedov, in our conversation at his apartment on the question of the Second Moscow Trial and the role in it of individual defendants (Radek, Piatakov, et al.) stated: "Now there is no reason to hesitate. Stalin must be killed."

For me this statement was so unexpected that I did not manage to react to it in any way. L. Sedov immediately turned the conversation on to other



questions.

On January 23 L. Sedov, in my presence and also that of L. Estrina, said something of the same content as that of the 22nd. In answer to his statement L. Estrina said: "Keep your mouth shut." We did not return to this question any more.

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Since 1936 "Sonny" has not talked with me about terror. Only two or three weeks ago, after a meeting of the group, "Sonny" began to speak again on this theme. The first time he tried only to "theoretically" prove that terrorism does not contradict Marxism. "Marxism" — in "Sonny's" words — rejects terrorism only insofar as the conditions of the class struggle are unfavorable for terrorism, but there exist conditions under which terrorism is essential." The next time "Sonny" began to talk about terrorism when I arrived at his apartment to work. While he was reading newspapers "Sonny" said that since the whole regime in the USSR is held up by Stalin, it would be enough to kill Stalin for it all to fall apart. He had expressed this idea earlier as well but until this last time he had never formulated it so clearly. This last time he returned repeatedly to this subject, and emphasized the necessary of the murder of com[rade] Stalin with especial care.

In connection with this conversation "Sonny" asked me whether I feared death in general and whether I would be able to carry out an act of terror. At my answer that this all depends on whether it is essential and expedient, Sonny said that I did not understand correctly what a "real" terrorist is and began to explain to me what kind of qualities people suitable for carrying out terrorist acts should be.

As far as the tactics of terror he stopped at the question of cadre. He considered that the fundamental thing. A terrorist, in Sonny's words, must always be prepared for death, death must be a daily reality for a terrorist, and he then illustrated this thesis by the example of the psychology of the Narodovoltsy. Thereupon he threw out the remark that I, in his opinion, am too soft a person for this kind of business.

The conversation of this subject was suddenly cut short by the appearance of Neighbor, and it did not start up again afterwards.

M. Zborowski

II.II. 1938

### **Excerpt from Letter of Gamma of July 23, 1937**

Mak and Sonny [= Zborowski and Sedov]. On the occasion of the birth of his son Mak invited Sonny to his place for dinner. Sedov sat the whole day drinking at Mak's and got seriously drunk. That evening Neighbor [= Estrine] was expecting Sonny at his home to do work. After Mak, from 6 till 11 in the evening, Sonny dragged Mak around to various bars in Montparnasse, and when Mak said goodnight to him Sonny, instead of going home and seriously drunk, went into a brothel rather than return home where Neighbor was waiting for him.

Sonny drank heavily without losing consciousness, but became very sentimental. He apologized to Mak, and almost in tears asked for forgiveness for the fact that at the beginning of their acquaintance he suspected him of being an agent of the GPU. He explained his suspicions by the fact that in the past, in his Berlin period, the GPU had repeatedly tried to send its agents to him, etc.

Towards the end in the process of his "revelations" Sonny said that the struggle of the opposition had been hopeless from the very beginning, and that no one believed that this struggle would succeed. That he had lost all belief in the revolution already in 1927, and that now he did not believe in anything at all, that he was a pessimist about everything. The work and the struggle that was going on now were a simple mechanical continuation of the past. The main thing in life for him was women and wine. He also liked to gamble for money.

He told a story about how, when they were in Monte Carlo Jeanne [Sedov's wife] would not give him more than 50 francs a day, which he would always lose immediately playing roulette. He dreamed of going to Monte Carlo with money.

The day before this particular evening Sonny complained to Mak that he was hard up for money. When they went in the evening to a bar Sonny, already seriously drunk, pay the tab and took out a wallet, and Mak saw in it a solid packet of thousand-frank notes. Sonny changed a thousand-frank note in order to pay the tab.

After that time Sonny began to drag Mak out to drink with him almost every evening. Every time Mak met with Sonny, even in his own house, Sonny would bring a bottle of wine without any hesitation, like before. Mak behaves himself carefully during these drinking bouts, he is strong generally in relation to drink, and besides that — he would drink one wine glass and pour Sonny three.

Copied accurately

(Alekseev)

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# **Yezhov vs. Stalin: The Truth About Mass Repressions and the So- Called 'Great Terror' in the USSR**

By Grover Furr

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\*\*\*\*\*

I dedicate this book to my son Derek James Furr, once a wonderful boy, now a valued friend.

Grover C. Furr

Bloomfield and Montclair, NJ

November 2016

Remarks about Grover Furr's previous books, originally on the back cover:

*Trotsky's 'Amalgams': Volume One* (2015) Published by Erythrós Press and Media, LLC

In this brilliant book, Professor Furr shows that "on the evidence, by means of an objective verification process, the only legitimate conclusion is that the Moscow Trials testimony is genuine, in that it represents what the defendants themselves chose to say." He shows that "there is not now, nor has there ever been any evidence that the Moscow Trials defendants were in reality innocent, compelled or persuaded by some means (threats to them or against their families, loyalty to the Party, etc.) to testify falsely." He sums up, "Every time we can check a statement made in Moscow Trials testimony against independent evidence, we find that the Moscow Trials testimony or charge is verified."

— Will Podmore, Librarian, The British School of Osteopathy and author of *British Foreign Policy Since 1870* (2011) and *The War Against the Working Class*

*Blood Lies: The Evidence that Every Accusation Against Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union in Timothy Snyder's Bloodlands Is False* (2013) Published by Red Star Publishers

"No creed is more obligatory than the 'anti-Stalin paradigm,' analyzed by Grover Furr, a rare scholar to risk vicious opprobrium for challenging allegations of Stalin's crimes, which serve as the main obstacle to belief in socialism. One approaches with expectation this follow-up to his critique of its quintessential expression in Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*, where Stalin is Hitler's evil twin and his USSR Nazi Germany's close cousin despite their claim to be polar opposites, embattled in the war in which the USSR defeated fascism. In *Blood Lies: The Evidence that Every Accusation Against Joseph Stalin and the Soviet*

*Union in Timothy Snyder's Bloodlands Is False*, Furr employs new archival material to expose the typical errors and dishonesty of charges against Stalin. Unlike Snyder's work, which strives for an emotional affirmation of its assertions, Furr undertakes a scrupulous demolition of Snyder's argument as based on fabrication, distortion or omission of evidence. Even worse, Ukrainian anti-fascist decry his reliance on ultranationalists, allies of the Nazis, now touted as founders of ukrainian neo-fascists for whom this narrative is a weapon in their present quest for power. Consequently, whatever one thinks of Stalin, one owes oneself exposure to the rarely told story found in Furr's works."

— Jackie DiSalvo, Professor of English, Baruch College — The City University of New York

*Khrushchev Lied* (2011) Published by Erythrós Press and Media, LLC

"The essence of Furr's investigation is the claim that not one accusation leveled by Khrushchev against Stalin and Beria is true. *Not one*. Indeed, Furr becomes the accuser, in turn, and charges Khrushchev with consciously and maliciously warping the truth about Stalin for political gain. Furr provides a mountain of documentation refuting Khrushchev. So much so, that, in fact, this becomes the book's main shortcoming. Furr is so painstaking and meticulous in marshalling his evidence that the reader is often numbed by the sheer volume of documents, quotes, and citations he provides. This is not a book for the casual reader or for anyone not versed in Soviet history. However, despite its non-reception in professional historical circles, *Khrushchev Lied* is an essential work of Soviet history. Moreover, it is a work that not merely solidly proves its premise; but one that stands out as a courageous effort to restore historical truth and balance.

— Professor Alfonso Casal, Colorado Technical University

## **Publisher's Note on Spelling and Transliteration**

By and large, transliteration of Russian names and terms presented herein follows a transliteration system utilized by the OCLC database. With regard to the names "Ezhov" and "Ezhovshchina," — which are integral to the volume at hand — we have utilized a scholarly transliteration, save for the noteworthy exception of the title, which utilizes the more commonly accepted spelling of "Yezhov." By using the latter transliteration in the book's title, we hope to make this book easier to locate for Western librarians and researchers who are more familiar with that spelling.



## **Introduction.**

### **What It Was**

On February 25, 1956 Nikita S. Khrushchev delivered his famous "Closed Report" — inaccurately called, in English, "Secret Speech" — to the delegates at the XX Party Congress of the CPSU. Khrushchev attacked Stalin (and Lavrentii Beria) for committing a number of crimes against members of the Party. Khrushchev stated:

I was determined that of the 139 members and candidates of the party's Central Committee who were elected at the 17th Congress, 98 persons, i.e., 70 per cent, were arrested and shot (mostly in 1937-1938). ... Of 1,966 delegates with either voting or advisory rights, 1,108 persons were arrested on charges of anti-revolutionary crimes, i.e., decidedly more than a majority.

... Now, when the cases of some of these so-called "spies" and "saboteurs" were examined, it was found that all their cases were fabricated. Confessions of guilt of many arrested and charged with enemy activity were gained with the help of cruel and inhuman tortures.

Khrushchev claimed that Nikolai Ezhov, the Commissar of the NKVD from August 1936 until November 1938, must have acted under Stalin's orders.

It is clear that these matters were decided by Stalin, and that without his orders and his sanction Yezhov could not have done this.

At the XXII Party Congress in October 1961 Khrushchev's men attacked Stalin even more strongly. From this point until sometime after Khrushchev was ousted from power in October 1964 many books and articles appeared that amplified and elaborated Khrushchev's attack against Stalin. However, archival evidence in support of these attacks was not published.

### **The "Great Terror"**

In 1968 British writer Robert Conquest published a book titled *The Great Terror. Stalin's Purge of the Thirties*. Conquest's sources were Khrushchev-era books and articles, and a hodgepodge of other accounts that alleged crimes by Stalin. Conquest cited all this material without source criticism, as though the claims made in it were unproblematically accurate, were "evidence."

To any careful student of history it was obvious from the outset that Conquest's book was without value as an attempt to establish historical truth. But it proved to be of enormous value as anti-communist *propaganda*. Scholars of Soviet history began to use the title of Conquest's book, "the great terror," as a designation for this period of Soviet history.

Between 1987 until the end of the USSR in December 1991, under the auspices of Mikhail Gorbachev, an even more powerful wave of accusations and denunciations of Stalin as a mass murderer poured from Soviet presses, again without archival evidence.

A report prepared for Khrushchev no later than February 18, 1963 and using archival materials stated that in 1937 and 1938 681,692 persons were shot, while the number shot in 1935-1936 was 2347 and the number shot in 1939 and 1940 was 4464. The source was a report sent to Malenkov and Khrushchev on May 5, 1954 prepared by a certain Colonel Pavlov of the MVD and signed by S.N. Kruglov, Minister of the MVD. These figures have been confirmed in recent publications by the FSB, the successor to the MVD — NKVD.

In the Soviet Union the period of mass repressions in 1937-1938 was known as the "Ezhovshchina," or "bad time of Ezhov." After Conquest's book Western historians began to call it the "great terror." Since the end of the Soviet Union anticommunist historians from the former Soviet states including Russia have largely adopted this term.

We will use the term "Ezhov's mass repression" for the large-scale executions and imprisonments of roughly July 1937 to November 1938. Although it is good as a Russian term, "Ezhovshchina" conveys no meaning in other languages. The term "great terror" is useful to anticommunists and anti-Stalinists, including Trotskyists, as a term of abuse

against the Soviet government led by Stalin. Furthermore, it conveys a falsehood — that the Stalin leadership ruled by "terror" or that "terror" was the outcome of its policies. A number of Western historians, including some who are strongly anticommunist, agree that the term is unsuitable.

## **The Anti-Stalin Paradigm**

The goal of the present book is to identify the causes of the repressions of, and properly locate the responsibility for, this period. Historians of the Soviet Union propose several different explanations. All of them are fundamentally wrong. Simply put, the reason for this failure is that these historians are not in fact trying to discover the causes of the mass repressions. Instead, they are trying to find the explanation that best fits the preconceived historical framework, or paradigm, for this period. I call this the "anti-Stalin paradigm."

The proximate origin of the anti-Stalin paradigm is in the 1930s writings of Leon Trotsky, by then exiled from the USSR. Trotsky depicted Stalin as a monster. But Trotsky did so in service to his own conspiracy. In reality Trotsky was lying about almost everything that concerned Stalin and the USSR. Of course Trotsky had to lie to his followers too, and they believed him, as did a few others.

In his "Secret Speech" of 1956 Nikita Khrushchev took up a number of the same falsehoods that Trotsky had invented, perhaps directly from Trotsky's works. At the XXII Party Congress in 1961 Khrushchev and his men accused Stalin of yet worse crimes. Today we know that Khrushchev was lying in virtually everything he said about Stalin as well as about Lavrentii Beria, who had replaced Nikolai Ezhov as chief (People's Commissar) of the NKVD in November 1938.

From 1962 on Khrushchev sponsored hundreds of articles and books in which Stalin and his associates were accused of yet more crimes. These were taken up by Western anticommunist writers. Among the most notable were Robert Conquest and Stephen F. Cohen. They and many other anticommunist writers in the capitalist world spread Khrushchev's and

Trotsky's lies along with lies concocted by Nazi collaborators and other anticommunists of all stripes.

Mikhail Gorbachev sponsored an avalanche of more anti-Stalin writings that outdid that of Khrushchev's last years. These contributed mightily to the ideological dismantling of the Soviet Union. They are perpetuated by today's anticommunist academics.

According to the anti-Stalin paradigm:

- Stalin was a "dictator." Therefore, he either initiated or could have stopped everything important that occurred. Therefore, whatever happened, happened because he wanted it, or something very like it, to happen. Stalin was always "in control."
- The alleged conspiracies against the Stalin government were all fabrications. None of them really existed.
- It follows that the evidence produced in the testimony at the Moscow Trials, and in the interrogations and confession statements that have gradually been published since the end of the USSR in 1991, must be fabrications and so are disregarded.
- Stalin never wanted democratic elections. The struggle by Stalin and his supporters for contested elections to the soviets (the legislative arm of the Soviet government) was either a sham or intended as a mechanism to get rid of entrenched local leaders whose power Stalin perceived as threatening in some way.

Mainstream historians of the Stalin period in the USSR bind themselves *a priori* to these tenets. They are not questioned. Nor is there any attempt to validate them. These strictures dictate the kinds of explanations and the types of evidence that are deemed acceptable in mainstream historiography. Their purpose is to guarantee that the only historical explanations set forth in mainstream historiography are those that make Stalin and the USSR "look bad." They are convenient to the view of the USSR as "totalitarian," a "dictatorship" ruled by "terror." They reinforce the concept of this period as "the great terror" and are in turn reinforced by this inaccurate term.

These are *disabling* assumptions. Accepting them makes it impossible to understand Soviet history of the Stalin period accurately.. But their aim was

never to facilitate an accurate account of history. Rather, their purpose is to reinforce an anticommunist, virtually demonized view of Stalin and the USSR, and thereby of the world communist movement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this book I make no such *a priori* assumptions.

Books about the so-called "great terror" continue to appear. A recent example is *The Great Fear: Stalin's Terror of the 1930s* (Oxford University Press, 2016) by British historian James Harris. Harris is not one of the fire-breathing anti-Stalinists. His tone is moderate and, for the field of Soviet history, relatively objective.

However, in common with all other mainstream academic historians of this period, including the Trotskyist historians, Harris ignores all the evidence long available that proves that the massive executions were not Stalin's doing by the product of Ezhov's conspiracy. This is the only way to "save" what I have called "the anti-Stalin paradigm" of Soviet history — the only paradigm acceptable to mainstream scholarship. Harris endorses the long-disproven story of the German SD plot to frame Marshal Tukhachevskii (169-70), repeats the similarly disproven tale that Kirov's murderer "was almost certainly acting alone" and decides, in the face of all the evidence, that the fears of challenges to the Stalin government were false. (186) As the reader of this book will discover, this is all wrong.

### **The Need for Objectivity**

Everybody has biases. But everybody can learn to be objective in studying any subject, whether it be physics or history. The techniques are basically similar. Objectivity as a scientific method is a practice of "distrust of the self." One can learn to be objective by training oneself to become aware of, to articulate, and then to doubt one's own preconceived ideas. One must be automatically suspicious of evidence that tends to confirm one's own preconceived ideas, prejudices, and preferences. One must learn to give an especially generous reading, to search especially hard for, to lean over backwards to consider, evidence and arguments that contradict one's own preconceived ideas.

This is simply what every bourgeois detective in every detective story knows. As Sherlock Holmes said:

It is a capital mistake to theorize before you have all the evidence. It biases the judgment. (Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*)

In other words: keep your mind free of precipitate conclusions. Get the facts before you form your hypotheses. Be ready to abandon a hypothesis that does not explain the established facts. Confirmation bias, "the tendency to search for, interpret, favor, and recall information in a way that confirms one's preexisting beliefs or hypotheses, while giving disproportionately less consideration to alternative possibilities," is a powerful force, and "the effect is stronger for emotionally charged issues and for deeply entrenched beliefs."

If one does not begin one's research with a determined attempt to be objective, accompanied by definite strategies to minimize one's own biases, then one cannot and will not discover the truth. Put colloquially: if you don't start out to look for the truth you will not stumble across it by accident along the way, and what you do find will not be the truth.

### **The Anti-Stalin Paradigm**

The need for objectivity and the fallacies that result when this principle is not observed, are well known. Therefore the real purpose of most research into Soviet history is not to discover the truth. Instead it is to arrive at politically acceptable conclusions and to disregard the evidence when that evidence does not support those politically acceptable conclusions. This is the "anti-Stalin paradigm."

How is it possible that these fallacies are so commonly applied to Soviet history of the Stalin period by scholars and other educated persons? I believe this is due to the power of the "anti-Stalin paradigm." Stalin has been so maligned, by so many "experts" and for so long a time that many people believe "where there's smoke, there's fire" — "there must be something to this."

This is all wrong. There is no substitute for evidence. In this study we examine the evidence and draw conclusions from the evidence alone. This is the only rationally defensible way of proceeding, in history as in any other field of scientific investigation.

## The Key Questions

Briefly stated, the keystone questions concerning the mass repressions known as the "Ezhovshchina" or "Great Terror" are these:

1. Did hundreds of thousands of innocent victims meet their deaths?
2. Was Stalin responsible for these murders, as is usually claimed?
3. If — as the evidence demands that we conclude — Stalin was innocent and put a stop to this crime against humanity, how could he and his colleagues have been oblivious to what was happening for so long? Why were Ezhov and his men able to go on killing so many innocent people for over a year?

The present study attempts to answer these questions.

## Procedure

The goal of this book is to explain the Ezhov mass repressions of 1937-1938. Two related sets of events are crucial to understanding these mass repressions. The first is Stalin's struggle for electoral democracy and its defeat. The second is the set of interlocking conspiracies involving supporters of Grigorii Zinoviev, of Leon Trotsky, of Nikolai Bukharin, Genrikh Iagoda, Nikolai Ezhov, and many others, called the "Rights"; and of military figures, of which the "Tukhachevskii Affair" is the best known.

We will review the evidence in as objective a manner as possible, and draw our conclusions based on the evidence and on logical interpretations of it. Mainstream historians of the Soviet Union cannot do this because they are bound by the disabling strictures of the "anti-Stalin paradigm." Therefore the final result of our study — the only one that satisfies the evidence now available and that refuses to throw out any of this evidence on *a priori*

grounds — is very different from any of the interpretations of mainstream Soviet historians.



## Chapter 1. Elections

This chapter outlines Joseph Stalin's attempts, from the early 1930s until 1937, to democratize the government of the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is an abbreviated version of "Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform, Part One," where full documentation and longer quotations can be found. See *Cultural Logic*, April 2005. At <http://eserver.org/clogic/2005/furr.html>

This story is well known in Russia, where respect for, even admiration of, Stalin is common. However, this story and the facts that sustain it are virtually unknown outside Russia, where the Cold War paradigm of "Stalin as Villain" so controls what is published that the works cited here are still scarcely noted.

This chapter does not simply inform readers of new facts about, and interpretations of, the history of the USSR. Rather, it is an attempt to bring to a non-Russian readership the results of new research, based on Soviet archives, on the Stalin period and Stalin himself. The facts discussed herein will be utterly unacceptable — in fact, will appear outrageous — to those whose political and historical perspectives have been based upon erroneous and ideologically motivated "Cold-War" notions of Soviet "totalitarianism" and "Stalinist terror."

The Khrushchevite interpretation of Stalin as power-hungry dictator, betrayer of Lenin's legacy, was created to fit the needs of the Communist Party's top leadership in the 1950s. But it shows close similarities, and shares many assumptions, with the canonical discourse on Stalin inherited from the Cold War, which served the desire of capitalist elites to argue that communist struggles, or indeed any struggles for working-class power, must inevitably lead to some kind of horror.

It also suits the Trotskyists' need to argue that the defeat of Trotsky, the "true revolutionary," could only have come at the hand of a dictator who, it is assumed, violated every principle for which the revolution had been

fought. Khrushchevite, Cold-War anti-communist, and Trotskyist paradigms of Soviet history are similar in their dependence on a virtual demonization of Stalin, his leadership, and the USSR during his time.

During the 1930s the Stalin leadership was concerned not only to promote democracy in the governance of the state, but to foster inner-party and trade-union democracy as well. We will discuss how the struggle for democracy in all three areas — government, trade union, and Party — developed and were ultimately defeated.

This book draws upon primary sources whenever possible. But it relies most heavily upon scholarly works by Russian historians who have access to unpublished or recently-published documents from Soviet archives.

## A New Constitution

In December 1936 the Extraordinary 8<sup>th</sup> Congress of Soviets approved the draft of the new Soviet Constitution. It called for secret ballots and contested elections.

Candidates were to be allowed not only from the Bolshevik Party — called the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik) at that time — but from other citizens' groups as well, based on residence, affiliation (such as religious groups), or workplace organizations. This last provision was never put into effect. Contested elections were never held.

The democratic aspects of the Constitution — by "democratic" here were mean "consistent with social-democratic, i.e. capitalist, notions of democracy" — were inserted at the express insistence of Joseph Stalin. Together with his closest supporters in the Politburo of the Bolshevik Party Stalin fought tenaciously to keep these provisions. He, and they, yielded only when confronted by the complete refusal by the Party's Central Committee, and of the panic surrounding the discovery of serious conspiracies, in collaboration with Japanese and German fascism, to overthrow the Soviet government.

In January 1935 the Politburo assigned the task of outlining the contents of a new Constitution to Avel' Enukidze who, some months later, returned with

a suggestion for open, uncontested elections. Almost immediately, on January 25, 1935, Stalin expressed his disagreement with Enukidze's proposal, insisting upon secret elections.

Stalin made this disagreement public in a dramatic manner in a March 1936 interview with American newspaper magnate Roy Howard. Stalin declared that the Soviet constitution would guarantee that all voting would be by secret ballot. Voting would be on an equal basis, with a peasant vote counting as much as that of a worker; on a territorial basis, as in the West, rather than according to status (as during Tsarist times) or place of employment; and direct — all Soviets would be elected by the citizens themselves.

We shall probably adopt our new constitution at the end of this year. ... As has been announced already, according to the new constitution, the suffrage will be universal, equal, direct, and secret.

Most important, Stalin declared that all elections would be contested. Different citizens' organizations would be able to set forth candidates to run against the Communist Party's candidates. Stalin told Howard that citizens would cross off the names of all candidates except those they wished to vote for.

Stalin also stressed the importance of contested elections in fighting bureaucracy.

You think that there will be no election contests. But there will be, and I foresee very lively election campaigns. There are not a few institutions in our country which work badly. ... Our new electoral system will tighten up all institutions and organizations and compel them to improve their work. Universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage in the U.S.S.R. will be a whip in the hands of the population against the organs of government which work badly. In my opinion our new Soviet constitution will be the most democratic constitution in the world. (Stalin-Howard 15)

From this point on, Stalin and his closest Politburo associates Viacheslav Molotov and Andrei Zhdanov spoke up for secret, contested elections in all

discussions within the Party leadership.

Stalin also insisted that many Soviet citizens who had been deprived of the franchise, called *lishentsy* ("those who have been deprived") should have it restored. These included members of former exploiting classes such as former landlords, and those who had fought against the Bolsheviks during the Civil War of 1918-1921, known as "White Guardists," as well as those convicted of certain crimes (as in the USA today). Most important, and probably most numerous, among the *lishentysy* were two groups: "kulaks," the main targets during the Collectivization movement of a few years before; and those who had violated the 1932 "law of three ears" — who had stolen state property, usually grain (those who stole it to avoid starvation were explicitly exempted from this law.)

These electoral reforms would have been unnecessary unless the Stalin leadership wanted to change the manner in which the Soviet Union was governed. They wanted to get the Communist Party out of the business of *directly* running the Soviet Union.

During the Russian Revolution and the critical years that followed, the USSR had been legally governed by an elected hierarchy of soviets (= "councils"), from local to national level, with the Supreme Soviet as the national legislative body, the Council (= *soviet*) of People's Commissars as the executive body, and the Chairman of the Council as the head of state. But in reality, at every level, choice of these officials had always been in the hands of the Bolshevik Party. Elections were held, but direct appointment or nomination by Party leaders (*koopatsiia*) was also common. Even the elections were controlled by the Party, since no one could run for office unless Party leaders agreed.

To the Bolsheviks, this had made sense. It was the form that the dictatorship of the proletariat took in the specific historical conditions of the revolutionary and post-revolutionary Soviet Union. Under the New Economic Policy, or NEP, the labor and skills of former and current exploiters were needed. But they had to be used only in service to the working class dictatorship — to socialism. They were not to be permitted to rebuild capitalist relationships beyond certain limits, nor to regain political power.

Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s the Bolshevik Party recruited aggressively among the working class. By the end of the 1920s most Party members were workers and a high percentage of workers were in the Party. This massive recruitment and huge attempts at political education took place at the same time as the tremendous upheavals of the first Five-Year Plan, crash industrialization, and the collectivization of individual farms into collective (*kolkhoz*) or soviet farms (*sovkhos*). The Bolshevik leadership was both sincere in its attempt to "proletarianize" their Party, and successful in the result.

Stalin and his supporters on the Politburo gave a number of reasons for wanting to democratize the Soviet Union. These reasons reflected the Stalin leadership's belief that a new stage of socialism had been reached.

Most peasants were in collective farms. With fewer individual peasant farms every month, the Stalin leadership believed that, objectively, the peasants no longer constituted a separate socio-economic class. Peasants were more like workers than different from them.

Stalin argued that, with the rapid growth of Soviet industry, and especially with the working class holding political power through the Bolshevik Party, the word "proletariat" was no longer accurate. "Proletariat," Stalin averred, referred to the working class under capitalist exploitation, or working under capitalist-type relations of production, such as existed during the first dozen years of the Soviet Union, especially under the NEP. But with direct exploitation of workers by capitalists for profit now abolished, the working class should no longer be called the "proletariat."

According to this view, exploiters of labor no longer existed. Workers, now running the country in their own interest through the Bolshevik Party, were no longer like the classic "proletariat." Therefore, the "dictatorship of the proletariat" was no longer an adequate concept. These new conditions called for a new kind of state.

## **The Anti-Bureaucracy Struggle**

The Stalin leadership was also concerned about the Party's role in this new stage of socialism. Stalin himself raised the fight against "bureaucratism" with great vigor as early as his Report to the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in January 1934. Stalin, Molotov and others called the new electoral system a "weapon against bureaucratization."

Party leaders controlled the government both by determining who entered the Soviets and by exercising various forms of oversight or review over what the government ministries did. Speaking at the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of Soviets on February 6, 1935 Molotov said that secret elections "will strike with great force against bureaucratic elements and provide them a useful shock."

Government ministers and their staffs had to know something about the affairs over which they were in charge, if they were to be effective in production. This meant education, usually technical education, in their fields. But Party leaders often made their careers by advancement through Party positions alone. No technical expertise was needed for this kind of advancement. Rather, political criteria were required. These Party officials exercised control, but they themselves often lacked the technical knowledge that could in theory make them skilled at supervision.

This is, apparently, what the Stalin leadership meant by the term "bureaucratism." Though they view it as a danger — as, indeed, all Marxists did — they believed it was not inevitable. Rather, they thought that it could be overcome by changing the role of the Party in socialist society. The concept of democracy that Stalin and his supporters in the Party leadership wished to inaugurate in the Soviet Union would necessarily involve a qualitative change in the societal role of the Bolshevik Party.

Those documents that were accessible to researchers did allow us to understand... that already by the end of the 1930s determined attempts were being undertaken to separate the Party from the state and to limit in a substantive manner the Party's role in the life of the country.  
(Zhukov, Tainy 8)

Article 3 of the 1936 Constitution reads "In the U.S.S.R. all power belongs to the working people of town and country as represented by the Soviets of

Working People's Deputies." The Communist Party is mentioned only in Article 126, as "the vanguard of the working people in their struggle to strengthen and develop the socialist system and is the leading core of all organizations of the working people, both public and state." That is, the Party was to lead *organizations* but not the legislative or executive organs of the state.

Once the Party was out of direct control over society, Stalin believed, its role should be confined to agitation and propaganda, and participation in the selection of cadres. What would this have meant? Perhaps something like this:

- The Party would revert to its essential function of winning people to the ideals of communism as they understood it.
- This would mean the end of cushy sinecure-type jobs, and a reversion to the style of hard work and selfless dedication that characterized the Bolsheviks during the Tsarist period, the Revolution and Civil War, the period of NEP, and the very hard period of crash industrialization and collectivization.

During these periods Party membership, for most, meant hard work and sacrifice, often among non-Party members, many of whom were hostile to the Bolsheviks. It meant the need for a real base among the masses.

Stalin insisted that Communists should be hard-working, educated people, able to make a real contribution to production and to the creation of a communist society. Stalin himself was an indefatigable student.

To summarize, the evidence suggests that Stalin intended the new electoral system to accomplish the following goals:

- Make sure that only technically trained people led, in production and in Soviet society at large;
- Stop the degeneration of the Bolshevik Party, and return Party members, especially leaders, to their primary function: giving political and moral leadership, by example and persuasion, to the rest of society;
- Strengthen the Party's mass work;

- Win the support of the country's citizens behind the government;
- Create the basis for a classless, communist society.

## **Stalin's Defeat**

During 1935, under the aegis of Andrei Vyshinskii, Chief Prosecutor of the USSR, many citizens who had been exiled, imprisoned, and — most significantly for our present purposes — deprived of the franchise, were restored. Hundreds of thousands of former kulaks, richer farmers who were the main target of collectivization, and of those who had been imprisoned or exiled for resisting collectivization in some way, were freed. The enfranchised population was expanded by at least hundreds of thousands of people who had reason to feel that State and Party had treated them unfairly.

At the June 1937 Central Committee Plenum Iakov A. Iakovlev, one of those who had worked on the draft of the new constitution, said that the suggestion for contested elections was made by Stalin himself. This suggestion seems to have met with widespread, albeit tacit, opposition from the regional Party leaders, the First Secretaries. After the Howard interview there was not even the nominal praise or support for Stalin's statement about contested elections in the central newspapers — those most under the direct control of the Politburo. *Pravda* carried one article only, on March 10, and it did not mention contested elections.

From this historian Iurii N. Zhukov concludes:

This could mean only one thing. Not only the 'broad leadership' [the regional First Secretaries], but at least a part of the Central Committee apparatus, Agitprot under Stetskii and Tal', did not accept Stalin's innovation, did not want to approve, even in a purely formal manner, contested elections, dangerous to many, which as followed from those of Stalin's words that *Pravda* did underscore, directly threatened the positions and real power of the First Secretaries — the Central Committees of the national communist parties, the regional, oblast', city, and area committees. (Zhukov, Inoi 211)



The Party First Secretaries held Party offices from which they could not be removed by defeat in any elections to the Soviets they might enter. But the immense local power they held stemmed from the Party's control over every aspect of the economy and state apparatus — kolkhoz, factory, education, military. The new electoral system would deprive the First Secretaries of their automatic positions as delegates to the Soviets, and of their ability to simply choose the other delegates. Defeat of themselves or of "their" candidates (the Party candidates) in elections to the soviets would be, in effect, a referendum on their work.

A First Secretary whose candidates were defeated at the polls by non-Party candidates would be exposed as someone with weak ties to the masses. During the campaigns, opposition candidates were sure to make campaign issues out of any corruption, authoritarianism, or incompetence they observed among Party officials. Defeated candidates would be shown up to have serious weaknesses as communists, and this would probably lead to their being replaced.

Senior Party leader were usually Party members of many years' standing, veterans of the really dangerous days of Tsarist times, the Revolution, the Civil War, and collectivization, when to be a communist was fraught with peril and difficulty. Many had little formal education. Unlike Stalin or Beria, it seems that most of them were unwilling or unable to "remake themselves" through self-education.

All of these men were long-time supporters of Stalin's policies. They had implemented the collectivization of the peasantry — a step essential to escape the cycle of famines — during which hundreds of thousands had been deported. During 1932-33 perhaps as many as three million, had died by a famine that had not been "man-made," despite anticommunist claims to the contrary. These Party leaders had been in charge of crash industrialization, again under necessarily severe conditions of poor housing, insufficient food and medical care, low pay and few goods to buy with it.

Now they faced elections in which those formerly deprived of the franchise because they had been in opposition to these Soviet policies would suddenly have the right to vote restored. It's likely that they feared many would vote against their candidates, or against *any* Bolshevik candidate.

## **Trials, Conspiracies, Repression**

Plans for the new constitution and elections had been outlined during the June 1936 Plenum of the Central Committee. The delegates unanimously approved the draft Constitution. But none of them spoke up in favor of it. This failure to give at least lip service to a Stalin proposal certainly indicated latent opposition.

During the 8<sup>th</sup> All-Russian Congress of Soviets meeting in November-December 1936 Stalin and Molotov again stressed the value of widening the franchise and of secret contested elections. In the spirit of Stalin's interview with Howard, Molotov again stressed the beneficial effect, for the Party, of permitting non-communist candidates for the Soviets:

This system ... cannot but strike against those who have become bureaucratized, alienated from the masses. ... will facilitate the promotion of new forces... that must come forth to replace backward or bureaucratized [*ochinovnivshimsya*] elements. Under the new form of election the election of enemy elements is possible. But even this danger, in the last analysis, must serve to help us, insofar as it will serve as a lash to those organizations that need it, and to [Party] workers who have fallen asleep. (Zhukov, *Repressii* 15).

Stalin himself put it even more strongly:

... if the people here and there elected hostile forces, this will mean that our agitational work is poorly organized, and that we have fully deserved this disgrace. (Zhukov, *Inoi* 293; Stalin, "Draft").

This was Stalin's position, and once again the First Secretaries showed tacit hostility to it. We do not really know why. Did they consider Stalin's proposal to be a violation of the dictatorship of the proletariat? Did they regard it as too great a concession to capitalist concepts of democracy? Even in the most "democratic" of capitalist states, avowed enemies of capitalism are not permitted to participate freely in elections unless pro-capitalist parties have overwhelming advantages. And even in those states, the system — capitalism or socialism — is never "up for grabs."

The December 1936 Central Committee Plenum, whose session overlapped with the Congress, met on December 4<sup>th</sup>. But there was virtually no discussion of the first agenda item, the draft Constitution. Ezhov's report, "On Trotskyite and Right Anti-Soviet Organizations," was far more central to the C.C. members' concerns.

On December 5 1936 the Congress approved the draft of the new Constitution. But there had been little real discussion. Instead, the delegates — Party leaders — had emphasized the threats from enemies foreign and domestic. Rather than giving speeches of approval for the Constitution, which was the main topic reported on by Stalin, Molotov, Zhdanov, Maksim Litvinov, and Vyshinskii, the delegates virtually ignored it. A Commission was set up for further study of the draft Constitution, with nothing fixed about contested elections.

The international situation was indeed tense. Victory for fascism in the Spanish Civil War was only a question of time. The Soviet Union was surrounded by hostile powers. By the second half of the 1930s, *all* of these countries were headed by fiercely authoritarian, militaristic, anti-communist and anti-Soviet regimes. In October 1936 Finland had fired across the Soviet frontier. That same month the "Berlin-Rome Axis" was formed by Hitler and Mussolini. A month later, Japan joined Nazi Germany and fascist Italy to form the "Anti-Comintern Pact." Soviet efforts at military alliances against Nazi Germany met with rejection in the capitalist of the West.

While the Congress was attending to the new Constitution the Soviet leadership was between the first two large-scale Moscow Trials. Zinoviev and Kamenev had gone on trial along with some others in August 1936. The second trial, in January 1937, involved some of the major followers of Trotsky, led by Iurii Piatakov, until recently the deputy Commissar of Heavy Industry..

## Chapter 2. Conspiracy

In 1898, the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party was formed as the Marxist party of the Russian Empire. In 1903 it experienced a major split into Bolshevik ("majority") and Menshevik ("minority") factions. The Bolshevik faction was led by Vladimir Lenin (Vladimir Il'ich Ul'ianov). This split became more marked when the majority of the Mensheviks supported Russia in the World War. In 1918 the Bolsheviks changed their name to the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) to distinguish themselves from the Socialist International or Social-Democrats.

Factional disputes, which had existed in the Bolshevik Party before 1918, intensified after the Revolution of November 1917 and during the ensuing Civil War. Some of them, like the bitter dispute over whether or not to sign a separate peace with Germany, were reflected in the later factional splits of the 1920s.

When the Civil War was over the Bolshevik Party was faced with rebuilding a largely shattered society and constructing socialism. All had hoped that socialist revolutions in some of the advanced capitalist countries of Western Europe would help backward Russia. But the attempts at such revolutions in Hungary and Germany were crushed.

The Bolsheviks were left to figure out how to build socialism by themselves. There was no blueprint, no guidelines aside from some very general remarks by Marx and Engels who, after all, also lacked any relevant experience. Disagreements over Party policy took place at the Party Congresses, held once a year from 1917 (the VI Congress) until 1925 (the XIV Congress).

Factions were formed along the lines of principal disagreements. Factional organizing also continued outside the meetings of the Party Congresses. The principle of democratic centralism was understood to mean that all Party members were required to support the political decisions taken by the Party Congresses. The continuation of factions outside the Congresses was in contradiction to this principle.

At the X Party Congress in 1921 a resolution banning party factions was passed by a large margin. Nevertheless, factions continued to exist. But factions had been banned, and since all Party members were obliged to carry out the decisions of the Party Congresses, most factional activity now took place in a clandestine manner.

The factions formed around certain well-known party figures. In 1926 and 1927 the Zinoviev and Trotsky factions joined forces to form the United Opposition. In 1927 a number of its members were expelled from the Party for factionalizing. Most of them soon rejoined, after pledging to follow the Party's line. But it was clear that they had not abandoned their dissenting view. In fact the Party majority, led by Stalin, did not demand that they do so.

At the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Revolution in November 1927 the united Opposition attempted to lead a counter-demonstration. It was broken up by the police. Soon after this Leon Trotsky, who refused to reconcile to the Party majority, was exiled to Alma-Ata.<sup>1</sup> There Trotsky continued his factional activity and in January 1929 he was exiled from the Soviet Union and moved to Istanbul, Turkey.

<sup>1</sup> Today named Almaty, the largest city in Kazakhstan.

### **The Bloc of Oppositionists**

At the public Moscow trials of 1936, 1937, and 1938 the prosecution charged that a clandestine and, from the Party's standpoint, illegal bloc of the various opposition groups was formed in 1932 and continued to conspire against the Stalin leadership. During Khrushchev's time, and again during the period of Mikhail Gorbachev's leadership of the Soviet Party and state, these conspiracies were declared to have been inventions, fabrications by Stalin and his men for the purpose of justifying the repression and murder of their supposed members.

From exile in France, then Norway, and finally in Mexico, Leon Trotsky vigorously denied that he and his followers had joined or ever would join such a bloc. But in 1980 Pierre Broué, at that time the most prominent

Trotskyist historian in the world, discovered evidence in the Harvard Trotsky Archive that this bloc did in fact exist and that Trotsky had approved it.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For a fuller discussion of Broué's discoveries and Trotsky's lies in general see Furr, *Amalgams*.

During the next dozen years Broué continued to work in the Harvard Trotsky Archive and in another archive of Trotsky's writings preserved at the Hoover Institution in Stanford, California. He discovered more evidence that Trotsky had falsely denied some of the charges against him made at the Moscow Trials. American researcher Arch Getty discovered that Trotsky had indeed remained in contact with prominent supporters in the USSR like Karl Radek and Ivan Smirnov who had publicly renounced their Trotskyist views and with whom Trotsky claimed to have broken off contact.

Since the end of the Soviet Union in 1991 a great many documents from former Soviet archives have been published in Russia. Research based on these documents, together with other materials, has transformed our understanding of Soviet history during the Stalin period. One important discovery is that Nikita Khrushchev's accusations against Stalin in his famous "Secret Speech" to the XX Party Congress in February, 1956 are all false (Furr, *Khrushchev*).

On December 1, 1934 Sergei M. Kirov, First Secretary of the Leningrad oblast' and city Party Committees, was murdered in Party headquarters at the Smolny Institute in Leningrad. The Stalin-led Soviet government stated that their investigation proved that the assassin, Leonid Vasil'evich Nikolaev, had acted on behalf of a secret Zinovievist group.

Trotsky claimed that this could not be true and that Stalin was falsifying whatever had really happened. We know now that Trotsky himself had something to do with Kirov's murder. Khrushchev's and, later, Gorbachev's men claimed that no secret Zinovievist group existed and that Nikolaev had been a lone assassin. Western anticommunist scholars either echoed Khrushchev and Gorbachev or claimed that Stalin had had Kirov killed. Thanks to evidence from the former Soviet archives and the Trotsky

archives we now know that the Stalin-era police and prosecution were correct.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> For a full discussion of the evidence, and discussion of the coverup by Khrushchev, Gorbachev, and all mainstream historians to this day see Furr, Kirov.

Further evidence was uncovered by the Soviet police in 1936, often called the Zinoviev-Kamenev trial, both Zinoviev and Kamenev confessed to collaborating in Kirov's murder. They admitted that a bloc of oppositionists including Zinovievists, Trotskyists, and others did exist whose goal was to seize power in the USSR by violence. Other Trotskyists confessed to plotting assassinations of Soviet leaders, Stalin included.

The former Soviet archives have disclosed some pretrial interrogations and confessions of these defendants. We also have the texts of the appeals of their death sentences by most of these defendants to the Soviet Supreme Court. In them they repeat their guilt in unequivocal terms.

The defendants in the 1936 Moscow Trial had disclosed the existence of a parallel leadership for the bloc and had named Trotskyists and Rightists as participants. Trotskyists named included Karl Radek and Iurii Piatakov. Rightist leaders named included Mikhail Tomsky, Aleksei Rykov, and Nikolai Bukharin.

Among those convinced by the evidence was Sergo Ordzhonikidze, Commissar for Heavy Industry and Piatakov's superior. Documents from former Soviet archives make it clear that the story, first recorded by Khrushchev and his men, that Ordzhonikidze had opposed Piatakov's prosecution, is false. Khrushchev also claimed that Ordzhonikidze had committed suicide in despair over Stalin's wrongful persecution of Piatakov and others. This tale too has been proven false.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See Bobrov, Taina.

Between September and December 1936 Radek, Piatakov, and other involved with them revealed details about Trotsky's conspiracies with Hitler's Germany and with anti-Soviet and pro-fascist forces inside the

USSR. At the second Moscow Trial in January 1937 the defendants detailed Trotsky's plans to dismantle socialism in the USSR in exchange for Germany and Japanese support in seizing power in the USSR. They implicated Bukharin, Rykov, and other Rightists as members of the bloc, fully informed about Trotsky's plans.

During December 1936 and January 1937 Bukharin had face-to-face confrontations with some of his accusers: E.F. Kulikov and Iurii Piatakov on December 7, 1936; Karl Radek and Valentin Astrov on January 13, 1937. All these men accused Bukharin of being in a clandestine opposition that aimed to assassinate Stalin.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See Bukharin-Kulikov; Bukharin-Piatakov; Bukharin-Astrov. For Astrov's statements in 1989 and 1993 see Furr, Kirov 318-319.

In the case of Valentin Astrov, we can be confident that he was telling the truth. In 1989 and again in 1993 Astrov, by now very aged, had the opportunity to retract his accusations against Bukharin. But he retracted only his claim that he had heard Bukharin use the word "terror." He also affirmed that the NKVD had treated him politely, never even raising their voices. If Astrov had wanted to claim that he had been tortured he could have easily done so. But he insisted that this had not happened.

Until February 1937 the NKVD continued to send to Bukharin confessions by other Rightists, some of the Bukharin's former students, accusing Bukharin of being a leader of the secret bloc of Trotskyists, Rightists and others. Bukharin said that the investigators sent him as many as 20 such confessions against him in a single day. This enormous amount of evidence virtually guaranteed that Bukharin would face arrest and trial.

On February 5 Ordzhonikidze gave a talk to managers of the Commissariat of Heavy Industry in which he made it clear that he firmly believed that Piatakov had betrayed them all and had used his position as Ordzhonikidze's assistant to do enormous harm to the industrialization of the Soviet Union. (Getty & Naumov 292-4) On February 18 Ordzhonikidze died. In the evening of February 23 the Central Committee Plenum convened. It was to be by far the longest and most dramatic CC meeting in the history of the Bolshevik Party.



### Chapter 3. Convergence of Conspiracy and Elections

The February-March Plenum of the Central Committee, the longest ever held in the history of the USSR, dragged on for two weeks. Almost nothing was known about it until 1992, when the plenum's huge transcript began to be published in *Voprosy Istorii* — a process that took the journal almost four years to complete.

This plenum dramatized the contradictory tasks that confronted the Party leadership: the struggle against internal enemies, and the need to prepare for secret, contested elections under the new Constitution by year's end. The gradual discovery of more and more groups conspiring to overthrow the Soviet government demanded police action. But to prepare for truly democratic elections to the government, and to improve inner-party democracy — a theme stressed over and over by those closest to Stalin in the Politburo — required the opposite: openness to criticism and self-criticism, secret elections of leaders by rank-and-file Party members, and an end to "cooptation" by First Secretaries.

Alongside the discussion of former oppositionists, party leaders introduced two new concepts: democracy (demokratiia) and criticism of authority. ... Stalin, Zhdanov, and N. M. Shvernik, the head of the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions, emphasized the need for multicandidate, secret-ballot elections for posts within the Party, the soviets, and the unions. Contending that the political culture had become increasingly ossified, self-serving, and bureaucratic, they invited the rank and file to reinvigorate their governing institutions. ... The plenum strongly urged not only rank-and-file party and union members but also ordinary citizens to challenge their local and regional leaders and rebuild democracy from below. (Goldman, *Inventing* 65)

Party leaders, insisting on democracy and multicandidate, secret-ballot elections, attempted to bust up the controlling "family circles" within

the unions and party organizations. They urged the rank and file to exercise their democratic rights, expose hidden oppositionists, and oust entrenched leaders from power. (Goldman, Terror 96)

The plenum... was a rich and complicated affair. The "new wave of mass repression" was prompted not only by the arrest of Bukharin and Rykov, but, more importantly, also by a new and unprecedented emphasis on "democracy." Several keynote speakers, including Stalin and A. A. Zhdanov, secretary of the Central Committee and the Leningrad regional and city committees, stressed the need for multicandidate, secret ballot elections for posts within the Party, the soviets, and the unions. They sharply criticized a political culture that had grown increasingly ossified and bureaucratic, stressing the need to reinvigorate governing institutions from below.... Party leaders, angry at the inability of lower organizations to purge themselves of oppositionists, moved to mobilize the rank and file. Democracy was thus a way to increase support, invigorate the rank and file. (Goldman, Terror 110-111)

Ezhov's report about the continuing investigations into conspiracies within the country was overshadowed by Nikolai Bukharin, who, in loquacious attempts to confess past misdeeds, distance himself from onetime associates, and assure everyone of his current loyalty, managed only to incriminate himself further. (Thurston, 40-42; Getty & Naumov 563)

After three whole days of this Zhdanov spoke about the need for greater democracy both in the country and in the Party, invoking the struggle against bureaucracy and the need for closer ties to the masses, both party and non-party.

The new electoral system ... will give a powerful push towards the improvement of the work of Soviet bodies, the liquidation of bureaucratic bodies, the liquidation of bureaucratic shortcomings, and deformations in the work of our Soviet organizations. And these shortcomings, as you know, are very substantial. Our Party bodies must be ready for the electoral struggle. In the elections we will have to deal with hostile agitation and hostile candidates. (Zhukov, Inoi 343)

Zhdanov spoke out strongly for democracy in the Party as well.

This meant secret ballot re-election of all party organs from top to bottom, periodic reporting of party organs to their organizations, strict party discipline, and subordination of the minority to the majority, and unconditional obligatory decisions of higher bodies on all party members. He complained about co-option (appointment) to party buros rather than election, and candidates for leading positions being considered behind closed doors, 'in family order'. When he called this 'familyness [*semeistvennost'*]' Stalin interjected, 'it is a deal' [*sgovor*, literally, a marriage agreement]. This was a virtual declaration of war against the regional clan leaderships, and their reaction in the discussion to Zhdanov's report (which they at first unprecedentedly greeted with angry silence) showed that they were angry. (Getty, Rise 77)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Zhdanov's presentation was on the evening of February 26, 1937. It is in *Voprosy Istorii* 5 (1993) 3-14.

Goldman agrees:

In his keynote speech on the erosion of democracy within the Party, Zhdanov advanced the idea that the Party needed to empower the rank and file. He highlighted the widespread practice of *kooptatsiia* or "appointments," which had replaced elections in staffing posts. *Kooptatsiia* promoted the formation of tight cliques, loyal only to the leader who appointed them. The practice had become so common that some local organizations did not have a single elected official.... Moreover, when elections were held, the results were predetermined. Several days before a party conference, Zhdanov explained, the secretary of the primary party organization would "go into a corner somewhere" and draw up a list of candidates. The list would be formalized in advance in a small closed meeting, and the election "transformed into a simple formality" lasting no more than twenty minutes. Zhdanov complained that this "back-door" decision-making was "a violation of the legal rights of party members and of party democracy."

- (Goldman, Terror 118.)

Nikolai Shvernik, representing the Stalin leadership of the Party, also issued a strong call for democracy in the trade unions.

Shvernik argued that the unions, like the Party, lacked internal democracy.

"I should say here, directly and with all frankness," he explained, "that the unions are in even worse shape." With the development of new industries during the first five-year plan, the country's 47 unions had split into 165, creating thousands of new jobs. Positions at every level were filled by appointment, rather than election....Shvernik concluded his speech with the suggestion that elections were needed not only in the Party, but in the unions as well. (Goldman, Terror 126)

The 6<sup>th</sup> Plenum of the All-Union Central Council [Soviet] of Professional Unions (VTsSPS), the Soviet trade union federation, met from April 24 to May 15, 1937, after the February-March CC Plenum.<sup>2</sup> Goldman states:

New elections based on secret ballots were to be held in every union organization from central to factory committees. Union members would have "the unlimited right to reject and criticize" individual candidates. Voting by lists was forbidden. (Goldman, Terror 141)

<sup>2</sup> "Pbshchenatsional'nye s"ezdy profsoiuzov Rossii i SSSR, plenumy VTsSPS." At <http://istprof.ru/2062.html>

Speaking for the Stalin leadership Zhdanov foresaw electoral contests with non-party candidates that seriously opposed developments in the Soviet Union. This fact alone is utterly incompatible with Cold-War and Khrushchevite accounts. Zhdanov also emphasized, at length, the need to develop democratic norms within the Bolshevik Party itself.

If we want to win the respect of our Soviet and Party workers to our laws, and the masses — to the Soviet constitution, then we must guarantee the restructuring [*perestroika*] of Party work on the basis of

an indubitable and full implementation of the bases of inner-party democracy, which is outlined in the bylaws of our Party.

He enumerated the essential measures, already contained in the draft resolution to his report: the elimination of appointment; a ban on voting by slates; a guarantee "of the unlimited right for members of the Party to set aside the nominated candidates and of the unlimited right to criticize these candidates." (Zhukov, Inoi 345)

### **Party Secretaries' Fear of Elections**

Zhdanov's report was drowned by discussion of other agenda items, mainly discussions about "enemies." A number of First Secretaries responded with alarm that those who were, or might be expected to be, preparing most assiduously for the Soviet elections were *opponents* of Soviet power: Social-Revolutionaries, the priesthood, and other "enemies."<sup>3</sup>

As early as October 1936, deputy NKVD chief G. A. Molchanov had written to Politburo members about how kulaks and anti-Soviet elements were disrupting election meetings. He wrote about how kulak elements were spreading provocative rumours 'in connection with the publication of the new constitution' about the dissolution of the collective farms and reopening of churches. He quoted one kolkhoznik, 'Soon we will get an order that we can leave the kolkhozes. It's the end of the communists.' In January 1937, a special NKVD report quoted several peasants, including one who said, 'The new constitution gives us special settlers rights as citizens of the USSR. In a few days, everyone will go home. The first thing we will do is settle scores with those activists who dekulakized and deported us, and then we'll go somewhere where they can't find us.' (Getty, Fever 228)

<sup>3</sup> Getty notes that CC members pointedly refused to respond to Zhdanov speech, putting the Chair, Andreev, into confusion (Excesses 124). Zhukov places less emphasis on this, as Eikhe and other First Secretaries did reply at the next session, while emphasizing the struggle against "enemies." (Inoi 345)

Apprehension about the outcome of elections to the Soviets was shared even by the Stalin leadership.

Although the plenum delegates uniformly praised the new constitution, they were deeply concerned about the outcome of the upcoming elections. Many feared that the Party lacked sufficient support to maintain its predominant political position. Zhdanov noted gravely that the introduction of democratic elections was "a very serious exam [test — GF] for our Party." A gallows humor, based on anxiety that the Party might not weather a genuine referendum on its leadership, characterized many of the delegates' comments. ... Zhdanov warned that the Party, lacking experience with secret-ballot elections and individual candidates, would face "enemy agitation and enemy candidates." Religious groups were already reviving and petitioning to reopen the churches. (Goldman, *Terror* 116)

Molotov replied with a report stressing, once again, "the development and strengthening of self-criticism," and directly opposed the search for "enemies":

There's no point in searching for people to blame, comrades. If you prefer, all of us here are to blame, beginning with the Party's central institutions and ending with the lowest Party organizations. (Zhukov, *Inoi* 349)

But those who followed Molotov to the podium ignored his report and continued to harp on the necessity of "searching out 'enemies'. of exposing 'wreckers,' and the struggle against 'wrecking'." (352) When he spoke again Molotov marveled that there had been almost no attention paid to the substance of his report, which he repeated, after first summarizing what *was* being done against internal enemies.

Stalin's speech of March 3 was likewise divided, returning at the end to the need for improving Party work and of weeding out incapable Party members and replacing them with new ones. Like Molotov's, Stalin's report was virtually ignored.

From the beginning of the discussion Stalin's fears were understandable. It seemed he had run into a deaf wall of incomprehension, of the unwillingness of the CC members, who heard in the report just what they wanted to hear, to discuss what he wanted them to discuss. Of the 24 persons who took part in the discussions, 15 spoke mainly about "enemies of the people," that is, Trotskyists. They spoke with conviction, aggressively, just as they had after the report by Zhdanov and Molotov. They reduced all the problems to one — the necessity of searching out "enemies." And practically none of them recalled Stalin's main point — about the shortcomings in the work of Party organizations, about preparation for the elections to the Supreme Soviet. (Zhukov, Inoi 357)

The Stalin leadership stepped up the attack on the First Secretaries. Iakovlev criticized Moscow Party leader Khrushchev, among others, for unjustified expulsions of Party members. Malenkov seconded his criticism of Party secretaries for their indifference to rank-and-file members. This seems to have stimulated the CC members to stop speaking temporarily about enemies, but only in order to begin defending themselves. There was still no response to Stalin's report. (Zhukov, Inoi 358-60)

In his final speech on March 5, the concluding day of the Plenum, Stalin minimized the need to hunt enemies, even Trotskyists, many of whom, he said, had turned towards the Party. His main theme was the need to remove Party officials from running every aspect of the economy, to fight bureaucracy, and to raise the political level of Party officials.

Stalin had upped the ante in the criticism of the First Secretaries:

Some comrades among us think that, if they are a People's Commissar, then they know everything. They believe that rank, in and of itself, grants very great, almost inexhaustible knowledge. Or they think: If I am a Central Committee member, then I am not one by accident, then I must know everything. This is not the case. (Stalin, Zakliuchitel'noe; Zhukov, Inoi 360-1)

Most ominously for all Party officials, including First Secretaries, Stalin stated that each of them should choose two cadre to take their places while they attended six-month political education courses that would soon be

established. With replacement officials in their stead, Party secretaries might well have feared that they could easily be reassigned during this period, breaking the back of their "families" (officials subservient to them) a major feature of bureaucracy. (Zhukov, Inoi 362)

Thurston characterizes Stalin speech as "considerably milder," stressing "the need to learn from the masses and pay attention to criticism from below." Even the resolution passed on the basis of Stalin's report touches on "enemies" only briefly, and dealt mainly with failings in party organizations and their leaderships. According to Zhukov, who quotes from this unpublished resolution, not a single one of its 25 points was mainly concerned with "enemies." (Thurston, Life 48-9; Zhukov, Inoi 362-4)

Stalin's speech too touches only very briefly on the subject of "enemies" and even then to warn the CC against "beating" everyone who had once been a Trotskyist. Stalin insists that there are "remarkable people" among former Trotskyists, specifically naming Feliks Dzerzhinsky.



## **Chapter 4. From the February-March 1937 CC Plenum to the June 1937 CC Plenum**

After the February-March 1937 Plenum the First Secretaries staged a virtual rebellion. First Stalin, and then the Politburo, sent out messages re-emphasizing the need to conduct secret Party elections, opposition to appointment rather than election, and the need for inner-Party democracy generally. The First Secretaries were doing things in the old way, regardless of the revolutions of the Plenum.

During the next few months Stalin and his closest associates tried to turn the focus away from a hunt for internal enemies — the largest concern of the CC members — and back towards fighting bureaucracy in the Party and preparing for the Soviet elections. Meanwhile, "local party leaders did everything they could within the limits of party discipline (and sometimes outside it) to stall or change the elections." (Getty, Excesses 126; Zhukov, Inoi 367-71)

But a very ominous period loomed. In late March 1937 Genrikh Iagoda, head of the NKVD, was arrested. In April he began to confess to having played an important role in the secret bloc of oppositionists that had been the main target of the First and Second Moscow Trials.

During the January 1937 Moscow Trial Karl Radek had warned against the danger of Trotskyist elements in Spain. Soviet intelligence had information that German and Francoist agents were active in stirring up the revolt as well. At the beginning of May 1937 an armed revolt erupted in Spain against the Spanish Republican government. Among the leading figures in the revolt were Andres Nin, a former political aide to Trotsky, Erwin Wolf, Trotsky's emissary in Spain, and Kurt Landau, a militant opponent of the Stalin leadership who had been an active Trotskyist and was still politically close to him. The POUM party, of which Nin was a leader, had consistently taken pro-Trotsky and anti-Stalin positions.

More shocking discoveries were to come. In May and early June 1937 high-ranking military commanders confessed to conspiring with the German

General Staff to defeat the Red Army in the case of an invasion of the USSR by Germany and its allies, and also to being linked to conspiracies by political figures, including many who still occupied high positions. (Getty, Excesses 115, 135; Thurston, Rise 70, 90, 101-2) Other prominent Party leaders were arrested in connection with the military conspiracy, including Ian Rudzutak, a candidate member of the Politburo.

This situation was far more serious than anything the Soviet government, or any modern government, had faced before. In the case of the 1936 and 1937 Moscow Trials the government had taken some time to prepare the case and organize a public trial for maximum publicity. But the military conspiracy was handled far differently. A little more than three weeks passed from the date of Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky's arrest in late May to the trial and execution of Tukhachevsky and seven other high-ranking military commanders on June 11-12. Dozens of high-ranking military commanders were recalled to Moscow to read the evidence against their colleagues — for most of them, their superiors — and to listen to alarmed analyses by Stalin and Marshal Voroshilov, People's Commissar for Defence and the highest ranking military figure in the country.

The Politburo had planned that the Constitutional reforms be the central agenda item at the upcoming June 1937 Plenum. But by June the situation was different. The discovery of plots by the former chief of the NKVD and by top military leaders to overthrow the government and kill its leading members entirely changed the political atmosphere.

In his June 2 speech to the expanded session of the Military Soviet Stalin portrayed the series of recently uncovered conspiracies as limited and largely successfully dealt with. At the February-March Plenum he and his Politburo supporters had minimized the First Secretaries' overriding concern with internal enemies. But the situation was "slowly, but decisively, getting out of his [Stalin's] control." (Stalin, Vystuplenie; Zhukov, Inoi Ch. 16, *passim*; 411).

Iagoda and the military commanders around Tukhachevsky named many other high-ranking Party members who were involved in the network of conspiracies, including Central Committee members and candidate members. Among them was Avel' Enukidze. In 1935 Enukidze had been

removed from his post in the Kremlin and expelled from the Party for negligence in permitting conspirators to find employment in the Kremlin but he had been readmitted to the Party in June 1936. Now he was rearrested. In April 1937 he began to confess to his part in the conspiracy to carry out an armed *coup d'état*.

Bukharin along with Aleksei Rykov, had been arrested during the February-March 1937 CC Plenum. For three months he continued to maintain his innocence. Abruptly on June 2, 1937 Bukharin reversed his position and made a lengthy confession of guilt. Some have speculated that Bukharin may have been prompted to do so upon hearing of the arrest of Tukhachevsky and the other commanders. Perhaps he had been hoping that he would be released after a successful military *coup* against Stalin

Between the end of the February-March 1937 CC Plenum on March 5, 1937, 18 members of the Central Committee and 20 candidate members were arrested for participation in the anti-Soviet conspiracy. Their expulsions were voted on at the June Plenum.

### **The Conspiracies Were Genuine**

In his source book (with Oleg V. Naumov) on the Bolshevik Party during the 1930s Arch Getty writes:

It is, of course, difficult to know the inner thoughts of the top leaders about the degree of guilt of those they destroyed. But if the following rare example of their private correspondence is typical, there apparently was little difference between the Stalinist leaders' private thoughts and their public positions. They seem really to have believed<sup>1</sup> in the existence of a far-flung conspiracy. (Getty & Naumov 455)

<sup>1</sup> Getty and Naumov do not believe that such conspiracies existed.

On June 19, 1937 Stalin received a telegram, address to the Soviet government, sent by Trotsky from his exile in Mexico. In it Trotsky stated that Stalin's policies would lead "to external and internal collapse." On it Stalin signed his name and wrote: "Dirty spy! Brazen spy of Hitler!" It was

also signed by Molotov, Voroshilov, Mikoian, and Zhdanov. Clearly they all believed that Trotsky really was in contact with the Germans. Given Tukhachevsky's confession and Marshal Budennyi's comments on the Tukhachevsky trial, there can be no doubt that this conspiracy did exist. The collection cited above of Iagoda's interrogation-confessions and other materials consists mainly of investigators' interrogations of Iagoda and a few of his associates and Iagoda's confessions of involvement in the conspiracy to carry out a coup against the Soviet government; Trotsky's leadership of the conspiracy; and, in general, all that Iagoda confessed to in the 1938 Trial. There is no indication that these confessions were other than genuine. The volume's editors deny that any of the facts cited in the interrogations are accurate, and declare the interrogations themselves "falsified." But they do not give any evidence that this is the case.

Jansen and Petrov (p. 226 n. 9) though very anti-Stalin, cite this volume as evidence and without comment. Furthermore, there is good evidence that this was so in fact — that these conspiracies did exist, that the confessions given at the public trials were genuine rather than coerced, and that the major charges against the defendants were true. Other large volumes of primary documents contain a great many NKVD report of conspiracies and texts of interrogations. We will discuss them in the following chapters.

The most plausible explanation for the existence of all this evidence is that much of it, and perhaps all of it, is true. We also have a great deal of evidence concerning the Tukhachevsky Affair. All of it points to the guilt of the military men.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For detailed, evidenced discussions of the Tukhachevsky Affair see Furr, Kirov Chapter 17, and Furr, Amalgams Chapter 10-12.

## Chapter 5. The June 1937 Central Committee Plenum

On June 17, 1937, just prior to the June CC plenum, Nikolai Ezhov, who had replaced Iagoda as head (commissar) of the NKVD, transmitted a message from S.N. Mironov, NKVD chief in Western Siberia, reporting the threat of revolts by subversives in concert with Japanese intelligence. In it Mironov reported that Robert I. Eikhe, Party First Secretary of Western Siberia, would request the ability to form a "troika" to deal with this threat.

June 22, 1937

No 58010

Top secret

To Comrade Stalin

I hereby direct to you a brief report by the chief of the UNKVD of the Western Siberian krai com. [S.N.] Mironov. I consider that it is essential to allow the formation in this krai of a *troika* for the purposes of extra-judicial review of cases concerning the liquidated anti-Soviet insurgent organizations.

People's Commissar for Internal Affairs

Commissar of State Security Ezhov

I direct to you a report on the combined cases of the 3 and 4 sections of the UGB [Directorate of State Security] concerning the S-R and ROVS underground.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> section has been conducting the investigation concerning the liquidated agent case "Aristocratia" of the Cadet-monarchist

organization ROVS, which includes a group of exiled princes, noblemen, and former officers, and has crushed the groups of S-Rs and insurgents.

The 4<sup>th</sup> section has developed the case of the Siberian Bureau of the S-Rs, after the discovery of the fighting S-R organization headed by General Eskin and has crushed the ROVS insurgent movement....

On this matter, considering that the development of the case ... will probably exceed considerably the number of participants that we have already uncovered, your special authorization is needed.

[...]

2) It is desirable, on the one hand, to accelerate the sending to me of a visiting session of the Military Tribunal [of the Supreme Court] to consider the cases of Japanese-German, Trotskyist, espionage, and other cases in the order previously stipulated. The cases against 500 persons were be formulated in the coming days. And, on the other hand, **either to give us the right on the spot, in a simplified procedure**, through a special college of the krai court or a special *troika*, to carry out capital punishment in the S-R / ROVS cases, which is where most of the kulaks are concentrated, or the exiled former White officers ...

Com. Eikhe, to whom I have given one copy of this report, is preparing to request the agreement to create *troikas* from the proper authorities. (Khaustov & Samuel'son pp. 332-3.)

Robert Eikhe, First Secretary of the Western Siberian Krai, must have subsequently made the request to which Mironov refers, though Eikhe's specific request has not been located.

### **Anti-Soviet Conspiracies**

No transcript of the June 1937 Plenum has been published. However, Iurii Zhukov quotes extensively from some archival transcript materials. We also

have a "konspekt" (synopsis) of the remarks Ezhov made. It is dated June 23, which would make Ezhov's remarks the first report of the Plenum. Ezhov's report was extremely alarming. It begins as follows:

During the last three months the NKVD has uncovered a series of fascist anti-Soviet formations of former Trotskyist, Rights, S-Rs, and others. The most important of these anti-Soviet organizations are the following:

- a) The military-fascist conspiracy headed by leading commanders of the Red Army — Tukhachevsky, Gamarnik, Ikair, Uborevich, Kork, Eideman, and others.
- b) the Right-Fascist conspiracy within the NKVD, headed by Iagoda.
- c) The powerful espionage organization "POV" [= Polish Military Organization] headed by Unshlikht, Loganovskii, Doletskii and others.
- d) the Polish group of National-Democrats in Belorussia, headed by Goloded and Cherviakov.
- e) An anti-Soviet Right-Trotskyite group in the Azov-Chernmor'e and Ordzhonikidze oblasts headed by Sheboldaev, Pivovarov, Larin and others, united not only with Trotskyists and Rights but also with powerful anti-Soviet Cossack and reel partisan formations.
- f) An anti-Soviet Right-Trotskyist group in Eastern Siberia headed by the First Secretary of the krai committee Razumov.
- g) A Right anti-Soviet group in the Ural region headed by the First Secretary of the Sverdlovsk oblast' committee Kabakov.
- h) An anti-Soviet Right-fascist group in the Western oblast' headed by the oblast' secretary Rumiantsev.
- i) a very powerful Right-Trotskyist espionage organization in the Far East, headed by the Chairman of the krai executive committee Krutov, by Shmidt, and others.

j) A strong organization of Rights in Western Siberia which has united rebel partisan cadre among the special settlers [exiles].

k) An anti-Soviet organization in Orenburg oblast which has united Cossack and insurgent cadre and is tied to the ROVS (anticommunist White Russian émigré group] headed by the Chairman of the executive committee Vasil'ev and the Chairman of the City Soviet Kashirin.

l) A Right-Trotskyist anti-Soviet sabotage group in the People's Commissariat of Agriculture and the People's Commissariat of Soviet Farms.

The above is a list of only the most important groups.

Besides these, in almost all krajs and oblasts there have been uncovered anti-Soviet formations in a bloc with the Rights, Trotskyists, Zinovievists, S-Rs, Mensheviks, and others. (Petrov & Iansen 293-4)

The first day of the June 1937 Plenum also saw proposals to exclude 7 sitting CC members and candidates for "lack of political trustworthiness." During the remaining Plenum sessions a further 19 members and candidates were expelled for "treason and active counterrevolutionary activity." These last 19 were to be arrested by the NKVD. Including 10 members expelled on similar charges before the Plenum by a poll of the CC members (including those military commanders already tried, convicted, and executed), this meant that 36 of the 120 CC members and candidates as of May 1 had been removed from office.

## **Elections**

Iakovlev and Molotov criticized the failure of Party leaders to organize for independent Soviet elections. Molotov stressed the need to move even honored revolutionaries out of the way if they were unprepared for the tasks of the day. He emphasized that Soviet officials were not "second-class workers" (persons of little importance). Evidently some Party leaders were treating them as such.



According to the agenda of the CC Plenum that has survived Iakovlev spoke on June 27. He exposed and criticized the failure of First Secretaries to hold secret elections for Party posts, relying instead on appointment. He emphasized that Party members who were elected delegates to the Soviets were not to be placed under the discipline of Party groups *outside* the Soviets and told how to vote. They were *not* to be told how to vote by their Party superiors, such as the First Secretaries. They were to be independent of them. And Iakovlev referred in the strongest terms to the need to "recruit from the very rich reserve of new cadre to replace those who had become rotten or bureaucratized." All these statements constituted an explicit attack on the First Secretaries. (Zhukov, Inoi 424-7; Tainy, 39-40, quoting from archival documents)

The Constitution was finally outlined and the date of the first elections was set for December 12, 1937. The Stalin leadership again urged the benefits of fighting bureaucracy and building ties to the masses.

However, all this followed the shocking, unprecedented, summary expulsion from the CC of 26 members, 19 of whom were directly charged with treason and counter-revolutionary activity. (Zhukov, Inoi 430)

Perhaps most revealing is the following remark by Stalin, as quoted by Zhukov:

At the end of the discussion, when the subject was the search for a more dispassionate method of counting ballots, [Stalin] remarked that in the West, thanks to a multiparty system, this problem did not exist. Immediately thereafter he suddenly uttered a phrase that sounded very strange in a meeting of this kind: "We do not have different political parties. Fortunately or unfortunately, we have only one party." [Zhukov's emphasis] And then he proposed, but only as a temporary measure, to use for the purpose of dispassionate supervision of elections representatives of all existing societal organizations **except for the Bolshevik Party**... The challenge to the Party autocracy had been issued. (Zhukov, Inoi 430-1; Tainy 38)

The Bolshevik Party was in severe crisis, and it was impossible to expect that events would unroll smoothly. It was the worst possible atmosphere

during which to prepare for the adoption of democratic — secret, universal and contested — elections.

Evidently Eikhe, and then a number of other First Secretaries, approached Stalin and the Politburo after the plenum and asked for authority to deal with conspiracies, rebellions, and revolts in their areas. This must have been when he made his formal request for special power, as outlined in the report by NKVD man Mironov that we have quoted above.

Protocol #51 of the meeting of the Politburo VKP(b)

66. On the discovery of counterrevolutionary insurrectionist organizations among exiled kulaks in Western Siberia

Decision of 28 June 1937

Item #66. Re: The uncovering of a counterrevolutionary, insurrectionary organization among reported kulaks in Western Siberia.

1. We consider it necessary to apply the supreme penalty to all activists belonging to this insurrectionary organization of deported kulaks.

2. In order to speed up the review of cases, troikas to be formed consisting of Comrade Mironov (chairman), head of the NKVD for Western Siberia, Comrade Barkov, public prosecutor (*prokuror*) for Western Siberia, and Comrade Eikhe, secretary of the Western-Siberian Territorial Committee.

Secretary of the CC. (Getty & Naumov, 469; Lubyanka 1937-1938 232 No. 110)

Zhukov thinks that Eikhe may have been acting on behalf of an informal group of First Secretaries, for after Eikhe several other First Secretaries met with Stalin. They probably also demanded the extraordinary powers that they were granted shortly afterward: the authority to form *troikas*, groups of three officials, to combat widespread conspiracies against the Soviet government in their area.<sup>1</sup> These troikas were given the power of execution

without appeal. Numerical limits — not "quotas," as many anticommunist scholars dishonestly claim, maximum, not minimum, numbers — for those to be shot and others to be imprisoned on the sole authority of these *troikas* were set. When those were exhausted, the First Secretaries asked for, and often received, higher limits. (Getty, Excesses 129; Zhukov, Inoi 435)

<sup>1</sup> The order for setting up a troika in Eikhe's Western Siberian region exists. Eikhe's request has not been found, but he must have made such a request, either in writing or orally. See Zhukov, Repressii 23, n. 60; Getty, Excesses 127, n. 64.

94. On anti-Soviet elements.

The following telegram is to be sent to secretaries of regional and territorial committees and to the CCs of national Communist parties:

"It has been observed that a large part of the former kulaks and criminals deported at one time from various oblasts to Northern and Siberian districts and then having returned to their regions at the expiration of their period of exile — are the chief instigators of all sorts of anti-Soviet crimes and sabotage, both in the kolkhozy and sovkhozy as well as in transport and in certain branches of industry.

The CC VKP(b) recommends to all secretaries of oblast' and krai organizations and to all oblast', krai, and republic representatives of the NKVD that they register all kulaks and criminals who have returned to their native homes in order that the most hostile among them be immediately arrested and shot through an administrative study of their cases by a troika, and that the remaining, less active but nevertheless hostile elements be listed and exiled to regions [raiony] according to the directions of the NKVD.

The CC VKP(b) recommends that the names of the staffs of the troikas and also the number of those subject to execution and the number subject to exile, be presented to the CC within five days.

To Com. Ezhov, the secretaries of the oblast' and krai party committees, and to the CCs of the national Communist parties.

(Lubianka 1937-1938 234-235 No. 114)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Online at <http://www.memo.ru/history/document/pbkulaki.htm> A slightly different translation is in Getty & Naumov, Doc. 169, 470-471.

The mass repressions of Ezhov, also known as the *Ezhovshchina* and, prejudicially, as "the Great Terror," were about to commence.

## Chapter 6. Causes of the Repression

Who were the targets of these draconian trials-by-troika?

In common with virtually all historians of the USSR Iurii Zhukov largely discounts the existence of real conspiracies. He believes they must have been *lishentsy*, the very people whose citizenship rights, including franchise, had recently been restored and whose votes potentially posed the greatest danger to the First Secretaries' continuance in power. This may indeed have been one of the motives of some of the regional Party leaders. But it should not simply be assumed, and as yet we have no evidence to support it.

Other historians claim that this mass repression was led by Stalin, who was trying to kill anybody who might be disloyal, a "Fifth Column," if the Soviet Union were invaded. (While that was the goal of the leadership, including Stalin, the mass repressions by the troikas were organized by Ezhov. They were not part of Stalin's effort. The Moscow Trials and their outcome, and later the trials, sentences and executions that put an end to Ezhov's conspiracy, were a part of Stalin's effort.) Still others claim that Stalin was out to murder any and all possible rivals, or was paranoid, or simply mad. There is no evidence to support these notions.

In fact the reason for the campaign of repression stands out clearly in all the evidence we have — and we have a lot of evidence. The subversive activities and rebellions that Mironov, Eikhe, and other regional Party leaders and NKVD men reported were a logical consequence of the conspiracies that had been gradually discovered since the assassination of Sergei M. Kirov over the previous 2 ½ years:

- The Kirov murder of December 1, 1934.
- The Kremlin Affair conspiracy, uncovered during 1935.
- Those disclosed in the First Moscow Trial of August 1936, of Zinoviev, Kamenev, their co-conspirators, and some Trotskyists who were collaborating with the Germans.

- Those disclosed in the Second Moscow Trial of January 1937 of a far-flung Trotskyist conspiracy in league with Germany, Japan, England, France, and homegrown Russian fascists.
- Genrikh Iagoda's NKVD conspiracy, uncovered beginning in April 1937 — part of the Rightists' conspiracy disclosed at the January 1937 trial and the subject of the Third Moscow Trial of March 1938.
- The "May Days" revolt in Barcelona, at the beginning of May 1937.
- The Tukhachevsky Affair military conspiracy, uncovered in April, May, and June 1937.

Before Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" to the XX Party Congress of the CPSU on February 25, 1956, few anticommunist specialists in Soviet studies doubted the real existence of these conspiracies. Only the Trotskyist movement, faithful to their murdered leader, claimed that these conspiracies were fabrications by Stalin.

This changed after Khrushchev's speech. Virtually all anticommunists, as well as most communists and, of course, all Trotskyists, chose to believe Khrushchev's allegations against Stalin. It followed from what Khrushchev implied in 1956, and from what his supporters claimed even more stridently at the XXII Party Congress in October 1961 that the defendants in all the Moscow Trials, plus the Tukhachevsky Affair defendants, had all been innocent victims of a frame-up. Mikhail Gorbachev's lieutenants made the same assertions.

Since Khrushchev's day the consensus among professional students of Soviet history has conformed to the Khrushchev-Gorbachev position: there were no conspiracies, all were inventions by Stalin. This is all false.

There has never been any evidence that any of these conspiracies were frame-ups or that any of the defendants were innocent. Just the opposite is the case. The evidence is overwhelming that Kirov was indeed murdered by the clandestine Zinovievist group and that Zinoviev and Kamenev were involved in the groups activities, including Kirov's murder. Trotskyists and Trotsky himself were also implicated. (Furr, Kirov)

We have a great deal of evidence that the conspiracies alleged in all three Moscow Trials were real and that all the defendants were guilty of at least

what they confessed to. In some cases, we can now prove that defendants were guilty of crimes that they did not reveal to the Prosecution. We also have a great deal of evidence on the Tukhachevsky Affair. All of it supports the hypothesis that the defendants were guilty as charged. (Furr Amalgams)

The evidence that all these conspiracies did in fact exist allows us to view the Ezhov mass repressions of July 1937 to October-November 1938 objectively and in their proper context.

It was logical for the Stalin leadership to accept the claims of regional NKVD and Party leaders that serious conspiracies and violent insurgencies existed throughout the country. Some of the most senior military commanders in the country had just admitted to plotting a *coup d'état* and, failing that, to sabotage the country's defenses in the event of invasion by Germany and/or Japan, with which enemy regimes there were coordinating their actions. Genrikh Iagoda, until recently the head of the NKVD, was confessing that he too had been a secret oppositionist implicated in the murder of Sergei Kirov and in plots to get rid of Stalin and his associates.

Tukhachevsky and the rest had ties with the bloc of Rights, Trotskyists, and other oppositionists too. Like Radek and Piatakov, Trotsky's senior lieutenants, Tukhachevsky and some of his co-defendants testified that Trotsky was collaborating with the Germans. Defendants at the January 1937 Moscow trial had revealed that German agents and Russian fascists were active in anti-Soviet conspiracies in the Kuzbass coal fields.

## **Denial**

Since Khrushchev's day academic Soviet history has been committed to a demonized view of Stalin. We have called this the "anti-Soviet paradigm." Western historians of the USSR have accepted Khrushchev's supposed "revelations" as unproblematically true despite the fact that Khrushchev never gave any evidence for his charges against Stalin and in fact withheld evidence from Party researchers who asked for it.

The main evidentiary basis for Robert Conquest's book *The Great Terror* and for works by dissidents such as Roi Medvedev's *Let History Judge* and

Alexander Nekrich's *June 1941*, was the Khrushchev-era "revelations." Western historians' accounts of the Stalin period continue to rely heavily on Khrushchev-era accounts.

Some years ago Vladimir L. Bobrov and I studied the tenth chapter of Stephen F. Cohen's famous book *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution*. In this chapter Cohen traces Bukharin's life from 1930 until his trial and execution in March 1938. Through the use of primary source evidence from former Soviet archives we showed that every fact-claim Cohen makes in this chapter that in any way alleges wrong-doing by Stalin is false. Cohen relied on Khrushchev-era sources — and all of them have proven to be lies. The result is that Chapter 10 of this celebrated book is entirely false. (Furr & Bobrov, Cohen)

From the time of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 the study of Soviet history has developed as an adjunct of political anticommunism. It has always had a dual character: that of discovering what happened, and that of defaming Stalin, the Soviet Union, and communism generally.

The result is that academic historiography of the Soviet Union is rarely if ever objective. It has "sacred cows," tenets that are never questioned. This is that "anti-Stalin paradigm." Academic historians of the USSR are pressured to conform to this paradigm, or at least not openly violate it.

Chief among the tenets of the anti-Stalin paradigm is that all the Moscow Trials, plus the Tukhachevsky Affair, were frame-ups. Today we know that this is false. An objective study of the evidence now available from former Soviet archives, from the Trotsky archives, and elsewhere, proves that these conspiracies did indeed exist.

But the political demands that constrain the academic field of Soviet history require the denial that *any* of these conspiracies existed! According to this view — the only one officially permitted in the field — the Moscow Trials defendants, Tukhachevsky & Co., and all other alleged conspirators were forced to confess and then executed, an act attributed to Stalin alone, for whatever reason you like only *not* for any real conspiracy to overthrow the Soviet government and Party leadership and ally with the Axis — that is, to act as a Fifth Column.



This false paradigm deprives academic historians of the ability to understand the conspiracy trials. It robs them of the ability to understand the context for the Ezhov-era mass repressions. They conclude that the reasons for these repressions are inscrutable because they have declared that the previous conspiracies could not have existed.

### The Threat Was Real

On the evidence now available we can confidently state that these conspiracies did exist. Archival documents show that the central Party leadership, Stalin and the Politburo, were constantly receiving very credible police accounts of conspiracies, including transcripts of confessions and details of NKVD investigations. Certainly Stalin and others in Moscow believe these conspiracies existed. On the evidence we now have it appears that at least some of the alleged conspiracies really did exist. (Zhukov, KP Nov. 13 02; Inoi, Ch. 18; Repressii 23)

We also possess a number of accounts of these conspiracies from beyond the borders of the USSR (and thus beyond any power of the Soviet prosecution or NKVD to fabricate them). Examples of such accounts include the following:

- Gregory Tokaev, *Comrade X*. Tokaev describes a widespread secret anti-Stalin conspiracy involving several figures expelled from the Party, tried and executed for such conspiracies, such as Sheboldaev and Enukidze. (6) Sheboldaev was expelled on June 25, 1937, during the June 1937 Plenum. Avel' Enukidze had been arrested much earlier and, by April 1937, was already confessing to his own involvement in the conspiracy. Tokaev names others and also confirms the existence of a military-civilian conspiracy led by a military man, "Comrade X."
- A. Svetlanin — real name N.N. Likhachev — *Dal'nevoostochnyi Sagovor* (The Far Eastern Conspiracy). Likhachev became editor of the CIA-sponsored émigré journal *Posev*. He confirms the military conspiracy in the Far Eastern Army and its links to civilian conspirators. One of the latter was Ivan Rumiantsev, First Secretary of the Western Oblast', also expelled from the Party during the June 1937 Plenum.<sup>1</sup>

- Genrikh S. Liushkov, an NKVD general who defected to the Japanese in June 1938. Liushkov privately told his Japanese handlers that there really were military conspiracies in the Far East with connections to the Rights through Aleksei Rykov, who with Bukharin was a major defendant in the Third Moscow Trial.
- Discoveries in the Harvard Trotsky Archive confirm the existence of the bloc of oppositionists referred to in all the Moscow Trials.
- American engineers John D. Littlepage and Carroll G. Holmes confirmed sabotage by Piatakov and I.N. Smirnov, or by those under their guidance, consistent with the charges at the second Moscow trial of January 1937.

<sup>1</sup> In the early 1980s I tried to verify this account by writing to persons who had known Likhachev. Prof. Nikolai Andreyev, of Cambridge University (now deceased), wrote me two letters telling me of his close friendship with Likhachev/Svetlanin/Frolov; of how highly he thought of his trustworthiness.

I have discussed these last two points in detail in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*.

Accounts like these confirm and supplement the large amount of evidence from Soviet sources that we now possess. The sheer volume of police documentation concerning such conspiracies, only a little of which has yet been published, argues strongly against any notion that all of it could have been fabricated. Furthermore, Stalin's annotations on these documents make it clear that he believed they were accurate. (Getty, Excesses 131-4; Lubianka 1937-1938)

The NKVD and regional Party leadership — however compromised by the very recent revelations that some of their number had been active in these conspiracies too — must have appeared to be the only force that Soviet power could rely upon. It did not become clear until much later that Ezhov too was conspiring with foreign powers to overthrow the government and Party leadership, and was using massive executions of innocent people to stir up resentment.

Getty summarizes the hopeless situation this way:

Stalin was not yet willing to retreat from contested elections, and on 2 July 1937 *Pravda* no doubt disappointed the regional secretaries by publishing the first installment of the new electoral rules, enacting and enforcing contested, universal, secret ballot elections. But ... [t]he very same day the electoral law was published, the Politburo approved the launching of a mass operation against precisely the elements the local leaders had complained about ... (Excesses 126)

Getty appears to think that Stalin gave the local party leaders the right to arrest and kill or deport those who might oppose them in elections. But there is no evidence of any such thing. There *is* evidence of conspiracies, some in collaboration with Germany or Japan.

At first the Politburo tried to limit the campaign of repression by ordering that it be completed within *five days*. Something convinced or compelled them to extend the period to *four months* — August 5-15 to December 5-15. Was it the large numbers of those arrested? The conviction that the Party faced a widespread set of conspiracies and a huge internal threat? This explanation seems likely, though we can't be sure.

But this was exactly the period during which the electoral campaign was to take place. Even though the Politburo continued preparation for the contested elections, with rules about how voters were to indicate their choices, and how officials should handle runoff elections, local officials actually controlled the repression. They could determine what opposition, if any, to the Party — which meant, in great part, to themselves — would be considered "loyal," and what would lead to repression. (Getty, *Excesses*, *passim*.; Zhukov, Inoi 435)

Primary documents show that Stalin and the central Politburo leadership were convinced that anti-Soviet conspirators were active and had to be dealt with. This is what the regional Party leaders had asserted during the February-March Plenum. At that time the Stalin leadership had minimized this danger and had kept focusing attention back to the preparations for new elections and the replacement of "bureaucratized" leaders with new ones.

By the June Plenum the First Secretaries were in a position to say, in effect: "We told you so. We were right, and you were wrong. Furthermore, we are

*still* right — dangerous conspirators are still active, ready to use the electoral campaign in their attempt to raise revolt against the Soviet government." Was this how it happened? It seems plausible, but we cannot be sure.

Stalin and the central leadership could have had no idea how deep these conspiracies extended. Nor could they know what Nazi Germany or fascist Japan might do. On June 2 Stalin had told the expanded Military Soviet meeting that the Tukhachevsky group had given the Red Army's operational plan to the German General Staff. This meant that the Japanese, who were bound in a military alliance (the "Axis") and an anti-communist political alliance (the "Anti-Comintern Pact") with fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, would doubtless have it too.

Stalin had told the military leaders that the plotters wanted to make the USSR into "another Spain" — form a Fifth Column in coordination with an invading fascist army. Faced with this terrible and imminent danger, the Soviet leadership was determined to react decisively (Stalin, *Vystuplenie*)

Much evidence suggests that the central (Stalin) leadership wanted both to restrain the "troika" repressions demanded by the First Secretaries and to continue to implement the new Constitution's secret and contested election. From July 5 to 11 most First Secretaries followed Eikhe's lead in sending in precise figures of those whom they wanted to suppress — by execution (category 1) or imprisonment (category 2). Then...

[S]uddenly on 12 July, Deputy NKVD Commissar M.P. Frinovskii sent an urgent telegram to all local police agencies: "Do no begin the operation to repress former kulaks. I repeat, do not begin." (Getty, *Excesses* 127-8)

### **NKVD Evidence of Conspiracies Sent to Stalin**

For the next year or more the Stalin leadership was flooded with reports of conspiracies and revolts from all over the USSR. A large number of these have been published (in Russian). Undoubtedly a great many more remain

unpublished. The principal collections of published documents for the years of the mass repressions, 1937 and 1938, are these:

- *Lubianka. Stalin i Glavnoe Upravlenie Gosbezopasnosti NKVD. 1937-1938.* Moscow: "Materik," 2004. (Lubianka 1937-1938)
- *Lubianka. Sovetskaia elita na stalinskoii golgofe 1937-1938. Dokumenty.* Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi Fond "Demokratiia." 2011. (Lubianka Golgofa)
- *Lubianka. Stalin i NKVD-NKGB-GUKR "Smersh." 1939 — mart 1946.* Moscow: MDF, 2006 (Lubianka 1939-1946)

The first two volume contain dozens of reports sent to Stalin by the NKVD — meaning, by Ezhov. They include many confessions of leading Party officials and NKVD men concerning their involvement in anti-Soviet conspiracies. The final volume contains a number of confessions and interrogation-confessions from 1939. We will carefully examine two of these documents in future chapters: Mikhail Frinovskii's statement to NKVD chief Lavrentii Beria of April 11, 1939, and Nikolai Ezhov's interrogation-confession of April 26, 1939.

A number of these documents are reproduced from copies studied and marked up by Stalin himself. These remarks give us insight into how Stalin interpreted the documents. In every case it is clear that Stalin studied their contents very carefully and took them very seriously. He asked questions, often very probing ones, and made suggestions for further investigation based on the contents of the interrogations and confessions presented to him. These remarks show that Stalin was not fabricating these reports — he was *studying* them. Stalin was trying to find out what was going on, what the extent of the dangerous conspiracies was.

The editor of the second volume above is V.N. Khaustov, a very anti-Stalin researcher and one of the compilers of several important document collections. According to Khaustov, Stalin believed these reports.

And the most frightening thing was that Stalin made his decisions on the basis of confessions that were the result of the inventions of certain employees of the organs of state security. Stalin's reactions attest to the

fact that he took these confessions completely seriously. (Lubianka Golgofa 6)

What is important here is this:

- Khaustov admits the existence of a major conspiracy by Ezhov and concedes that Stalin was deceived by him. Ezhov admits as much in the confessions of his that we now have.
- Khaustov admits that Stalin acted in good faith on the basis of evidence presented to him by Ezhov, much of which may, or must, have been false.

It is important to ideologically anticommunist researchers that these mass murders be seen as Stalin's plan and intention. Khaustov is honest enough to admit that the evidence does not bear this out. Some of the confessional and investigative documents Ezhov sent on to Stalin and the Soviet leadership must have been falsifications. But in reality Khaustov has no idea which were fabrications and which were not.

These documents, and Stalin's comments on them, are rarely discussed by mainstream historians of the Soviet Union when they are considering the mass repressions of 1937-1938. They dismantle the "anti-Stalin paradigm." They show Stalin reacting thoughtfully and attentively to the reports sent to him. Of course this is what any student would expect — unless he or she were blinded by the "anti-Stalin paradigm."

Iurii Zhukov suggests that after Eikhe got these special power for Western Siberia and other First Secretaries asked Stalin for the same powers, and received them. Evidently there was a connection between this campaign of repressions, carried out as a virtual war against rebellious anti-Soviet forces throughout the country, and the cancellation of the competitive elections that had been stipulated under the new 1936 Soviet Constitution.

Stalin and his supporters in the central Soviet government and Party fought for such elections but failed to win the Central Committee to approve them. Zhukov has traced the final decision not to hold such elections to October 11, 1937. He also located a draft or sample ballot for contested elections — a ballot never used but preserved in a Soviet archive.

## Chapter 7. The Course of the Repressions

This chapter discusses the major events of the Ezhov mass repressions of July 1937-November 1938. We have determined what events to discuss by consulting the following work:

- N.G. Okhotin and A.B. Roginskii, "'The Great Terror': 1937-1938. A Short Chronology." (Khronika)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This long document is online and thus lacks pagination. I have divided it into 20 "pages."

Roginskii is the chairman of the "Memorial Society," a fanatically anticommunist organization in Russia. Okhotin is a principal researcher in the same organization.

Nothing published by "Memorial" can make any claim to objectivity; everything is heavily biased. These authors would never exclude anything that would show Stalin and the Stalin government in a negative light.

One important aspect of this document's bias is what it omits. The chronology ignores all the context and all the evidence coming to the Politburo from the NKVD around the country. It lists the decrees, orders, and events without any reference to the documentary evidence that were the basis for these events. We listed three of the collections of this material in the last chapter.

The "Memorial" researchers assume that all the alleged conspiracies were frame-ups, that the defendants at these trials were innocent, and that no conspiracies existed. This is the logical fallacy of *petitio principii* — "begging the question" or "assuming that which is to be proven."<sup>2</sup> This fallacy is very common in mainstream historiography of the Stalin period. It follows that they consider all those accused and convicted of anti-Soviet conspiracies to be "victims" and their punishment "repression" — terms not used for the conviction and punishment of criminals.

Since the "Memorial" people believe all the conspiracies alleged during the Stalin years were frame-ups, the Okhotin-Roginskii chronology begins with March 1936, the prelude to the First Moscow Trial of August 1936, and included references to all the Moscow Trials. Here we will define the period of mass repression as beginning in July 1937, the month the troikas were formed and at the end of which Operational Order No. 00447 was issued, and ending in November 1938, when Ezhov resigned and a series of resolutions suddenly stopped all the mechanisms of special repression.

During this period, July through November 1938, Khronika lists 107 events. Only a few of these events deal with actions outside the normal bounds of security operations. Those are the ones we will examine here. They are:

- Operational Order of the NKVD No. (OO NKVD) 00439 — German Operation July 25, 1937 (Khronika 9)
- OO NKVD 00447 July 31 1937 (Khronika 9)
- OO NKVD 00485 Polish Operation August 11 1937 (Khronika 10)
- OO NKVD 00486 — Wives and children August 15 1937 (Khronika 10)

First we will examine two other issues: That of the "lists" (Khronika 5) and that of "limits." A truthful account of these topics is essential to any accurate understanding of the Ezhov mass repressions. This is the reason that accounts of both of them are falsified by most academic experts on Soviet history.

## **The Lists**

Khrushchev:

The vicious practice was condoned of having the NKVD prepare lists of persons whose cases were under the jurisdiction of the Military Collegium **and whose sentences were prepared in advance.** Yezhov would send these lists to Stalin personally for his approval of the proposed punishment. In 1937-1938, 383 such lists containing the names of many thousands of party, Soviet, Komsomol, Army and economic workers were sent to Stalin. He approved these lists.



These lists exist, and have been edited and published, first on CD and now on the Internet. They are titled the "Stalin 'Shooting' Lists." Some writers dishonestly call them "death warrants." These are both tendentious, inaccurate names, for these were not lists of persons "to be shot" at all.

Following Khrushchev, the anti-Stalin editors of these lists do in fact call the lists "sentences prepared in advance." But their own research disproves this claim. The lists give the sentences that the NKVD *recommended* the prosecution would seek if the individual were convicted — that is, the sentence the Prosecution would ask the court to apply.

In reality these were lists sent to Stalin (and other Politburo or Secretariat members) for "review" — *rassmotrenie* — a word that is used many times in the introduction to the lists.<sup>3</sup> Many people on these lists were not convicted, or were convicted of a lesser offense, and so not shot. One example is that of A.V. Snegov, whom Khrushchev mentions by name in his "Secret Speech." Snegov is on the lists at least twice:

- At <http://stalin.memo.ru/spiski/pg13026.htm> No. 383;
- At <http://stalin.memo.ru/spiski/pg05245.htm> No. 133.

<sup>3</sup> The introduction is at <http://www.memo.ru/history/vkvs/images/intro1.htm> The next quotation is also from this source.

According to the editors of these lists "many people whose names are on them were not in fact executed, and some were freed.

For example, a selective study of the list for the Kuibyshev oblast' signed on September 29, 1938 shows that not a single person on this list was convicted by the VKVS (the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court), and a significant number of the cases were dismissed altogether.

So Khrushchev knew that Stalin was not "sentencing" anybody but rather reviewing the lists in case he had any objections. We can be certain that Khrushchev knew this because the note of February 3, 1954, to Khrushchev

from S. N. Kruglov, Minister of Internal Affairs (MVD) has survived. It says nothing about "sentences prepared in advance," but gives the truth:

These lists were compiled in 1937 and 1938 by the NKVD of the USSR and presented to the CC of the ACP(b) **for review** right away.

The Prosecutor went to trial not only with evidence but with a sentence to recommend to the judges in case of conviction.

It appears that the names of Party members, but not of non-Party members, were sent on for review. The disingenuous Introduction notes that those signing the lists comprised "not all the Politburo members but only those of its members who were closest to Stalin." But the evidence suggests that it was the members of the Party Secretariat rather than the Politburo to whom the lists were submitted. Even the editors note that Ezhov — a member of the Secretariat but not of the Politburo — signed "as a secretary of the Central Committee."

We do not know whether additional information — for example, evidence, summaries of testimony against those named on the lists, etc. — was sent to the Secretariat along with the lists. As we saw in the last chapter, during the period in question Stalin was receiving reports, often very lengthy and detailed ones, from Ezhov on an almost daily basis. That means we know that Stalin and others in the Secretariat possessed other materials to consult when reviewing the names on these lists. The lists were part of a complex of information and cannot be objectively understood without taking this context into account.

It is obvious too that the lists were a kind of safety mechanism. If Stalin had received no lists, or if reports were presented to him only in oral format, there would be no such lists. Then we would know less about what was going on. Also, anticommunists would not have these lists to present, in a decontextualized manner, as supposed "evidence" of Stalin's purported "murders."

Khrushchev concealed the fact that not Stalin but he himself was one of the persons deeply involved in selecting the persons for inclusion on these lists and choosing the category of punishment proposed for them. Khrushchev

mentions that the NKVD prepared the lists. But he does not mention the fact that the NKVD acted together with the Party leadership, and that a great many of the names on these lists — perhaps more than from any other region of the USSR — originated in the areas under Khrushchev's own authority.

Until January 1938 Khrushchev was First Secretary of the Party in Moscow and Moscow oblast' (province). After that he was First Secretary in the Ukraine. His letter to Stalin asking for permission to shoot 8500 people is dated July 10, 1937, the same date as the first of the "shooting lists" from Moscow.

"CC ACP(b) — to comrade Stalin J.V.

I report that we have counted a total of 41,305 criminal and kulak elements who have served their sentences and settled in Moscow city and province.

Of those there are 33,436 criminal elements. **Materials at hand give us the basis to put 6,500 criminals in Category 1** [to be shot — GF], and 26,396 in Category 2 [to be exiled — GF]. Of this number, for orientation purposes in the city of Moscow there are 1,500 in Category 1 and 5,272 in Category 2.

We have calculated there are 7,869 kulaks who have served their sentences and settled in Moscow city and oblast'. Materials at hand give us the basis **to put 2,000 from this group into Category 1** and 5,869 in Category 2.

We request that a commission be confirmed, consisting of comrades Redens, head of the UNKVD for the Moscow oblast'; Maslov, assistant prosecutory of the Moscow oblast', and Khrushchev, N.S. — Secretary of the Moscow Committee and Moscow City Committee, with the right, when necessary, to be replaced by A.A. Volkov — second secretary of the Moscow City Committee.

Secretary of the M[oscow] C[ommittee] of the ACP(b) —

(N. Khrushchev)." July 10, 1937.<sup>4</sup>

Getty (excesses, 127) cites Khrushchev's request for 41,000 people in both categories:

In Moscow, First Secretary Nikita Khrushchev knew that he needed to repress exactly 41,508 kulaks and criminals. Nearly all of the submissions from the forty provinces and republics responding to Stalin's telegram were in such exact figures.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Trud* June 4, 1992; republished in *Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich. 1957*. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi Fond "Demokratiia," 1998 p. 747, n. 22; *Tragediia sovetskoi derevni t. 5 kn. 1. 1937*. Moscow: ROSSPEN 2004, 324. Online at <http://istmat.info/node/33727>

<sup>5</sup> The printed source in the previous note gives the total as 41305; Getty writes 41, 805. This must be from the same document so someone has copied incorrectly.

In the same letter Khrushchev also confirms his own participation in the troika responsible for selecting these names, along with the head of the directorate of the NKVD for Moscow, S.F. Redens, and the assistant prosecutor K.I. Maslov (Khrushchev does admit that "when necessary" he was replaced by the second secretary A.A. Volkov).

Volkov served as second secretary of the Moscow Region of the AUCP(b) only till the beginning of August 1937, when he left to serve as First Secretary of the Belorussian party. After that he was no longer Khrushchev's subordinate, which may have saved his life. Maslov remained Procuror (prosecutor) of the Moscow oblast' (province) until November 1937. In 1938 he was arrested and was executed in March 1939, after having been found guilty of subversive counterrevolutionary activity. The same fate befell K.I. Masmonov who at first occupied Maslov's position and was later shot the same day as Maslov.

Nor did Redens escape punishment. He was arrested in November 1938 as a member of a "Polish diversionist-espionage group," tried and sentenced, and shot on January 21, 1940. This was precisely when Nikolai Ezhov and

many of his henchmen in the NKVD were tried and executed. In fact Jansen and Petrov describe Redens as one of "Ezhov's men." During the years of the "thaw" Redens was rehabilitated at Khrushchev's insistence but by such crude violations of legal procedures that in 1988 an attempt was made to reverse Redens' rehabilitation — at a time when a huge wave of rehabilitations was under way!

This means that with the exception of Volkov all of Khrushchev's closest co-workers who took part in repressions in Moscow and Moscow oblast' were severely punished. How did Khrushchev manage to escape the same punishment? The answer to this puzzle remains to be uncovered.

### **The Limits**

The Politburo set limits on the numbers of persons the Party leaders and NKVD could execute and imprison in the campaigns against insurgents and conspirators.

Order No. 00447 established limits [*limity*] rather than quotas, maximums, not minimums. ... As we have seen, for years Stalin had been putting limits on mass executions by provincial leaders. If the Politburo had at this moment expected or wanted an open-ended terror, there would be no reason to call them 'limits' at all. The word's meaning was well known: it never meant 'quotas'. Reflecting Stalin's concern that locals might go out of control (or out of his control) Order No. 00447 twice warned that 'excesses' in local implementation of the operation were not permitted. (Getty, *Fever* 232-233)

Getty also emphasizes this fact in a recent book:

One of the mysteries of the field [of Soviet history — GF] is how *limity* is routinely translated as "quotas." (Getty, *Practicing* 340 n. 109)

One writer who constantly translates "limity" as "quotas" is Oleg Khlevniuk. Another is Timothy Snyder. Ideologically biased, anti-communist writers *want* Stalin to have called for "quotas" so that Stalin appears more bloodthirsty.

## The Operational Orders of the NKVD

No. 00439 — the "German Operation" order July 25, 1937

Okhotin and Roginskii describe it as follows:

Operational Order of the NKVD No. 439 "Concerning the operation to repress German citizens suspected of espionage against the USSR" (primarily intended were those working in the defense industry and in transportation). Arrests began on July 29. Beginning in the autumn the operation gradually began to spread to some categories of Soviet Germans and other citizens accused of ties with Germany and espionage in Germany's behalf. (Khronika 9)

They go on to say that Order No. 00439 was abused to the extent that 41,898 persons were sentenced to death under it. Okhotin and Roginskii know how and why this happened — that this was Ezhov's doing, not authorized by Stalin and the Politburo. Their readers will not know this. We will discuss this in a future chapter.

No. 00447 — the "Kulak Operation" order July 31, 1937

After the June 1937 Plenum local NKVD chiefs were recalled to Moscow for conferences, after which Order No. 00447 was issued. This long, detailed instruction both expanded the kinds of people subject to repression (basically including priests, those who had previously opposed Soviet power, and criminals), and — usually — lowered the "limits" or numbers requested by the provincial secretaries.

Order No. 00447 is available in Russian in many places, and (in excerpt) also in English. This document authorizes action *only* against those involved in rebellions and criminal activities.

### I. GROUPS SUBJECT TO PUNITIVE MEASURES.

1. Former kulaks who have returned home after having served their sentences **and who continue to carry out active, anti-Soviet sabotage.**
2. Former kulaks **who have escaped** from camps or from labor settlements, as well as kulaks who have been in hiding from dekulakization, **who carry out anti-Soviet activities.**
3. Former kulaks and socially dangerous elements who were members of insurrectionary, fascist, terroristic, and bandit formations who have served their sentences, **who have been in hiding from punishment, or who have escaped from places of confinement and renewed their anti-Soviet, criminal activities.**
4. Members of anti-Soviet parties (SRs, Georgian Mensheviks, Dashnaks, Mussavatists, Ittihadists, etc.), former Whites, gendarmes, bureaucrats, members of punitive expeditions, bandits, gang abettors, transferees, re-émigrés, **who are in hiding from punishment, who have escaped from places of confinement, and who continue to carry out active anti-Soviet activities.**
5. Persons unmasked by investigators and **whose evidence is verified by materials obtained by investigative agencies and who are the most hostile and active members of Cossack-White Guard insurrectionary organizations slated for liquidation and fascist, terroristic, and espionage-saboteur counterrevolutionary formations.** In addition, punitive measures are to be taken against elements of this category who are kept at the present under guard, whose cases have been fully investigated but not yet considered by the judicial organs.
6. **The most active anti-Soviet elements** from former kulaks, members of punitive expeditions, bandits, Whites, sectarian activists, church officials, and others, who are presently held in prisons, camps, labor settlements, and colonies **and who continue to carry out in those places their active anti-Soviet sabotage.**

7. Criminals (bandits, robbers, recidivist thieves, professional contraband smugglers, recidivist swindlers, cattle and horse thieves) **who are carrying out criminal activities and who are associated with the criminal underworld.** In addition, punitive measures are to be taken against elements of this category who are kept at the present under guard, whose cases have been fully investigated but not yet considered by the judicial organs.

8. Criminal elements in camps and labor settlements **who are carrying out criminal activities in them.**

9. All the groups enumerated above, to be found at present in the countryside—i.e., in kolkhozy, sovkhozy, on agricultural enterprises, as well as in the city—i.e., at industrial and trade enterprises, in transport, in Soviet institutions, and in construction, are subject to punitive measures. (Getty & Naumov, 474-5)

We have used **boldface** type to emphasize the fact that those at whom Order No. 00447 was aimed were not to be targeted or punished because of their identity or because of past activity but *solely for current criminal activity*. Ezhov and his men ignored these strictures.

Order 00447 continues by specifying two categories of punishment: death and imprisonment.

## II. CONCERNING THE PUNISHMENT TO BE IMPOSED ON THOSE SUBJECT TO PUNITIVE MEASURES AND THE NUMBER OF PERSONS SUBJECT TO PUNITIVE MEASURES.

1. All kulaks, criminals, and other anti-Soviet elements subject to punitive measures are broken down into two categories:

a) To the first category belong all **the most active** of the above-mentioned elements. They are subject to immediate arrest and, after consideration of their case by the troikas, to be shot.

b) To the second category belong all **the remaining less active but nonetheless hostile** elements. They are subject to arrest and to



confinement in concentration camps for a term ranging from 8 to 10 years, while the most vicious and socially dangerous among them are subject to confinement for similar terms in prisons as determined by the troikas.

Limits were then established by region for the "limit" or maximum number of persons to be sentenced in each category.<sup>6</sup> A few examples:

<b>Region</b>	<b>Category 1</b>	<b>Category 2</b>	<b>Total</b>
Azerbaijan SSR	1,500	3,750	5,250
Armenian SSR	500	1,000	1,500
Belorussian SSR	2,000	10,000	12,000
Georgian SSR	2,000	3,000	5,000
Kirghiz SSR	250	500	750
Tadzhik SSR	500	1,300	1,800
Turkmen SSR	500	1,500	2,000

<sup>6</sup> Both the Wikipedia article [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NKVD\\_Order\\_No.\\_00447](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NKVD_Order_No._00447) and the article by Nicolas Werth in the "Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence" use — dishonestly — the word "quotas" instead of "limits." Neither of these articles quotes the text of the order itself.

Treatment of families of those arrested is specified.

... 4. The families of those sentenced in accordance with the first or second category are not as a rule subject to punitive measures.

Exceptions to this include:

- a) Families, members of which are capable of active anti-Soviet actions. Pursuant to the special decree by the three-man commission, members of such families are subject to being transferred to camps or labor settlements.
- b) The families of persons punished in accordance with the first category, who live in border areas, are subject to expulsion beyond the

border area within the republics or regions.

c) The families of those punished in accordance with the first category who live in Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Tbilisi, Baku, Rostov-on-the-Don, Taganrog, and in the districts of Sochi, Gagry, and Sukhumi, are subject to expulsion from these centers to other regions of their choice, except districts near the border.

5. All families of persons punished in accordance with the first and second categories are to be registered and placed under systemic observation...

Investigation and carrying out of sentences:

#### IV. ORDER FOR CONDUCTING THE INVESTIGATION.

1. Investigation shall be conducted into the case of each person or group of persons arrested. The investigation shall be carried out in a swift and simplified manner. During the course of the trial, all criminal connections of persons arrested are to be disclosed.

2. At the conclusion of the investigation, the case is to be submitted for consideration to the troika....

#### VI. ORDER OF IMPLEMENTATION OF SENTENCES.

1. The sentences are to be carried out by persons in accordance with instructions by the chairmen of the three-man commissions—i.e., by the people's commissars of the republic NKVDs, by the heads of governing boards, or by the regional departments of the NKVD.... The basis for the implementation of the sentence shall be the certified extract from the minutes of the troika session containing an account of the sentence regarding each convicted person and a special directive bearing the signature of the chairman of the troika, which are to be handed to the person who carries out the sentence.

2. The sentences included under the first category are to be carried out in places and in the order as instructed by the people's commissars of

internal affairs, by the heads of governing boards, or by the regional departments of the NKVD.... Documents concerning the implementation of the sentence are attached in a separate envelope to the investigative dossier of each convicted person.

3. The assignment to camps of persons condemned under the second category is to be carried out on the basis of warrants communicated by the GULAG of the NKVD of the USSR.

During the Civil War and again during World War II the Bolsheviks declared martial law in areas close to the battlefield. Under martial law the rights citizens enjoyed under normal circumstances were sharply curtailed. Military commanders had ultimate authority over citizens and their property. Punishment of violations by citizens of military orders was harsh, and appeals were limited or not permitted at all.

Operational Order 00447 describes a situation that is *less* drastic than martial law. Citizens who did not fall into any of the categories set forth in Section I. 1-8 continued to live with their rights unimpaired. Normal legal and constitutional rights of citizens were only abrogated in the cases of persons caught in anti-Soviet acts. Only for them was normal judicial procedure abrogated.

Martial law would not have been appropriate because there were no armies, fronts, or battles. This was intended to be an operation against subversion by domestic enemies abetted by agents of hostile foreign countries — Germany, Japan, and Poland.

As in the case of martial law Order No. 00447 put a great deal of power into the hands of the authorized parties: the investigators and the police, the NKVD. The troika courts had power of summary execution or imprisonment of anyone against whom solid evidence was presented.

No. 00485 Polish Operation August 11, 1937

The "Polish Operation" of the NKVD was enabled by NKVD Order No. 00485 of August 11, 1937. It has been published many times in Russian and is also online.<sup>7</sup> We have now made it available in English translation for the first time.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> One site is [https://ru.wikisource.org/wiki/Приказ\\_НКВД\\_от\\_11.08.1937\\_№\\_00485](https://ru.wikisource.org/wiki/Приказ_НКВД_от_11.08.1937_№_00485)

<sup>8</sup> At <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/no00485.html>

The following are the major scholarly works on the Polish Operation.

- James Morris. "The Polish Terror: Spy Mania and Ethnic Cleansing in the Great Terror." *Europe-Asia Studies* 56, 5 (July 2004), 751-766.
- A. Ie. Gur'ianov, "Obzor sovetskikh repressivnykh kampanii protiv poliakov i pol'skikh grazhdan," in A. V. Lipatov and I. O. Shaitanov, eds., *Poliaki i russkie: Vzaimoponimanie i vzaimoneponimanie*, Moscow: Indrink, 2000, 199-207.
- A. Ie. Gur'ianov, "Obzor sovetskikh repressivnykh kampanii protiv poliakov i pol'skikh grazhdan," in *Massovye repressii protiv poliakov*. Memorial Society. At <http://www.memo.ru/history/polacy/vved/index.htm> This is a brief summary of Gur'ianov's longer article above.
- N. V. Petrov and A. B. Roginskii, "'Pol'skaia operatsiia' NKVD 1937-1938 gg." in A. Ie. Gur'ianov, ed., *Repressii protiv poliakov i pol'skikh grazhdan*, Moscow: Zven'ia, 1997, 22-43. (Petrov & Roginskii)

All these studies agree in the following conclusions:

\* The "Polish Operation" was aimed at Polish spies only, not at Poles as such. This can of course be seen from the text of Operational Order No. 00485 itself.

The intention of the regime was not to terrorize or murder minority populations... (Morris 759)

... it [NKVD Order No. 00485, the "Polish Operation" order] did not concern Poles as such, but Polish spies... (Petrov & Roginskii)

\* Least of all was the massive nature of the repression "along Polish lines" the result of some kind of special personal hatred by Stalin of Poles. It was not a matter of Poles as such, but of Poland.

...their nationality was not a criterion of "criminal guilt" (prestupnosti)

...

...to equate the concept of "Poles" and "Polish operation" would be a mistake. (Petrov & Roginskii)

\* Many of those arrested and either executed or imprisoned were not Poles or of Polish background at all. These numbers show that many of the victims were not ethnic Poles. (Morris 762)

\* Petrov and Roginskii stress repeatedly that nationality itself was not a criterion for arrest or execution. The central NKVD did not keep records of the nationality of those arrested.

\* In 1939, after his arrest for mass illegal repressions Ezhov confessed that he and his men had arrested people who were not Poles on the pretext that they were Poles:

Uspensky, under the pretense of their being Poles, arrested many Ukrainian Uniates, that is, selected them not on the basis of national origin but according to their religion. I could multiply many times examples of this kind. They are characteristic for the majority of oblasts.

(Ezhov interrogation of August 4, 1939)

We will discuss this more fully in the chapter on this confession of Ezhov's.

\* There were few guidelines from Stalin and the Politburo — if, indeed, there were any at all. The whole operation was run by Ezhov and his men, who themselves gave little specific guidance to the local NKVD men. (Petrov & Roginskii)

Ezhov and his men got away with these immense crimes for many months. In his 1939 confessions Ezhov claimed that the Prosecutor's Office failed to conduct the oversight it was supposed to, and Ezhov and his men could shoot and imprison people with virtually no hindrance from Vyshinskii's office. This pass from Ezhov's interrogation of August 4, 1939, illustrates this negligence of Vyshinskii's office:

**Question:** Confess in what manner you managed to deceive the organs of prosecutorial oversight in implementing **this clear, obvious, and criminal practice of repression?**

**Answer:** ...This inactivity of prosecutorial supervision can only be explained by the fact that **in charge of the Procuracy in many oblasts, krais, and republics were members of various anti-Soviet organizations who often practiced even more widespread provocational repressions among the population.**

This may account for the executions of Maslov and Mamonov, the prosecutors in Moscow when Khrushchev was First Secretary.

Ezhov continued:

Another group of the prosecutors, those who were not involved in participation in anti-Soviet groupings, simply feared to argue with the heads of the UNKVDs on these questions, all the more so since they did not have any directives on these matters from the center...

**Question:** You are talking about the local organs of the Procuracy. But didn't they see these criminal machinations in the Procuracy of the USSR?

**Answer:** The Procuracy of the USSR could not, of course, have failed to notice all these perversions.

I explain the behavior of the Procuracy of the USSR and, in particular, of Prosecutor of the USSR Vyshinskii by that same fear of quarreling with the NKVD and by [the desire] to prove themselves no less "revolutionary" in the sense of conducting mass repressions.

The first document issued after Ezhov had been induced to resign from office stressed the lack of Prosecutorial oversight.<sup>9</sup> On May 31, 1939 Vyshinskii was relieved of his post as Prosecutor of the USSR. It seems likely that this was because he had failed to do his duty during the *Ezhovshchina*.

<sup>9</sup> "On Arrests, Supervision by the Procuracy, and the Conduct of Investigations." November 17, 1938. English translation at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/onarrestseng.html> Also in Getty & Naumov, Document 190, 532-537.

No. 00486 — Wives and children August 15, 1937

This order called for the arrest and imprisonment of wives of those convicted of acts of treason since August 1 1936 — basically since the First Moscow Trial of later that month, the Zinoviev-Kamenev trial.

Certain wives were excluded from arrests: the pregnant; those with babies at the breast; the seriously or infectiously ill; those whose children were ill and needed care; those who were aged. Also, those who have given the authorities evidence against their husbands.

Children over the age of 15 who were considered "dangerous," capable of carrying out anti-Soviet acts, were subject to being sent to a labor camp. Others were to be put in orphanages. If the children wanted to remain with relatives or to work on their own and support themselves, this was to be permitted. Several sections of the Order give details about the treatment of and record-keeping concerning the children.

## Chapter 8. The Elections

### Contested Elections to the Soviets Are Cancelled

The Central Committee Plenum of October 1937 saw the final cancellation of the plan for contested elections to the Soviets, the legislative branch of government. This represented a serious defeat for Stalin and his supporters in the Politburo. A sample ballot, showing several candidates, had already been drawn up. At least one copy of such a ballot has survived in an archive. Zhukov has included a photograph of it in Inoi, 6th illustration.. I have put it online.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At

[https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/sample\\_ballot\\_1937.html](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/sample_ballot_1937.html)

Instead, the Soviet elections of December 1937 were implemented on the basis that the Party candidates would run on slates with 20-25% of non-party candidates — in other words, an "alliance" of sorts, but without a contest. Originally the elections were planned without slates; voting was to be only for individuals — a far more democratic method in that candidates would not get votes simply by being "on the ticket." (Zhukov, Zhupel 19 Nov. 02; Zhukov, Tainy. 41; Zhukov, Inoi 443)

Iakov Iakovlev

Iakov Iakovlev had been one of those closest to Stalin in drafting the 1936 Constitution to which Stalin was so committed. Along with A.I. Stetskii and B.M. Tal', Iakovlev was a member of the small commission that worked on the text of the constitution. They had presented a "rough draft" (*chernovoi nabrosok*) to Stalin in February 1936 — the draft that Stalin referred to in his celebrated talk with Roy Howard on March 1. (Zhukov, Inoi 223)

Evidently there had been some question on the part of some persons about trusting Iakovlev, who had been a Trotskyist in 1923. Stalin stood firmly by him. On April 3, 1937, Stalin had sent the following telegram to A.I. Krinitskii, secretary of the oblast' committee of the Party in Saratov:



... the CC of the VKP(b) considers that the obkom was incorrect to question the [political] reliability of com. Iakovlev, plenipotentiary of the Commission of Party Control. **The CC is aware of Com. Iakovlev's former waverings in 1922. These waverings were liquidated in 1924, and since that time com. Iakovlev has not given any occasion for any doubts whatever concerning his Bolshevik firmness. The CC trusts com. Iakovlev** and proposes that the obkom consider this matter closed. (Zhukov, Inoi 370)

On June 27 Iakovlev delivered a report about the new electoral system to the June 1937 CC Plenum. After the Plenum Iakovlev continued to work on documents detailing how contested elections would be run. (Zhukov, Inoi 467) He met with Stalin several times in September and early October, no doubt to work on questions concerning the constitution. The electoral campaign for the contested Soviet elections was to begin on October 12.

But on October 10 all the members of the Politburo and Secretariat met in Stalin's. office. The meeting ended at 10 p.m. after approving the main points of Molotov's presentation at the opening session of the CC Plenum, to be held the next day.

The second point of Molotov's presentation was:

"Contested [literally "parallel"] candidates (not obligatory)."

Contested elections were effectively ruled out, since no one expected the regional Party leaders, the First Secretaries, to permit them unless they were required to do so. Moreover, point three of Molotov's outline reads: "Non-Party members: 20% - 25%."

What happened? Zhukov concludes that there was simply no majority in the Politburo, let alone the Central Committee, in support of contested elections and a strong insistence on guaranteeing that the Party — which meant the regional Party leaders — would dominate the Soviets.

## **Iakovlev's Arrest and Confession**

On October 12, the day after the opening of the CC Plenum, Iakovlev was arrested. Two days later he confessed to having been a clandestine Trotskyist "sleeper" since 1923. An even greater shock was the fact that Iakovlev also confessed to having been recruited by a German agent who told him that they, the Germans, were in contact with Trotsky and wished to work with Iakovlev on the same terms.

Iakovlev's confession is arguably one of the most important documents from the former Soviet archives published in recent years. That no doubt explains why it is virtually never mentioned, let alone studied, by mainstream historians of the USSR. Iakovlev inculpated as conspirators a number of leading Soviet figures.<sup>2</sup> In a few cases we also have one or more confessions from some of these figures which themselves confirm statements Iakovlev makes here.

<sup>2</sup> A full examination of the Iakovlev confession document is beyond the scope of this study. We return to it in the second volume of our work on Trotsky.

For example, Iakovlev names Rukhimovich as the person through whom he contacted Piatakov. In the one interrogation of his that has been published to date Rukhimovich details his conspiratorial relationship with Piatakov. (Lubianka 1937-1938, No. 290)

For our purposes the significance of Iakovlev's confession is two-fold.

First, he gives detailed testimony concerning the underground conspiracy founded by Trotsky personally within the leading echelons of the Bolshevik Party. Iakovlev told how he was recruited to a secret Trotskyist conspiracy against the Party even before Lenin had died. Iakovlev outlines his conspiratorial relations with, among others, Piatakov and Ian Gamarnik. He had been especially close to Gamarnik, from whom he learned directly about the military conspiracy that included Marshal Tukhachevsky and Komandarms Iakir and Uborevich.

Second, Iakovlev outlines how he was recruited by German intelligence in 1935 in Berlin. The German agent who recruited him did so on two bases.

- From Russian émigrés in Germany the Germans knew that Iakovlev had collaborated with the Russian Tsarist Okhranka, or secret police, towards the end of 1916 in Petrograd. They blackmailed Iakovlev by threatening to expose this.
- The Germans knew about Iakovlev's participation in the Trotskyist underground from Trotsky himself.

**Question:** You speak about GAMARNIK'S and VAREIKIS' connections with foreign intelligence services. Did you yourself have such connections?

**Answer:** Yes, I had ties with German intelligence.

**Question:** Tell us concretely, when did you establish ties with German intelligence?

**Answer:** I was recruited by German intelligence when I was in Germany, in Berlin, in the autumn of 1935, and at that time and until my arrest I collaborated with this intelligence and maintained contact with it through a special representative in Moscow.

In Berlin I was in the hospital "Catholic Commune" for treatment. About a week after my arrival in Berlin a man in a suit, whom I did not know, came to me in the hospital, and introduced himself to me by the name SHMUKE, and said that 'he had instructions to have discussions with me on a number of questions of interest to him and of urgency for me.' He announced that he knew 'from my political friends' about my membership in the underground organization that was struggling with the existing powers in the USSR and that, following orders of the German government, he wished to establish businesslike relations with me....

Fearing a provocation, I naturally did not want to disclose myself to this unknown person and expressed my total confusion concerning what he had proposed to me. However, SHMUKE stubbornly continued that it was useless for me to deny facts that both he and I knew; that the German government was not turning to me alone, among leaders of underground organizations in the USSR, with such a

proposal. **At last he said to me emphatically: "Your chief leader L. TROTSKY is acting in full contact and on the basis of mutual benefit with the new Germany."** I still attempted to end this conversation and made as though I wanted to stand up in order to say goodbye and force SHMUKE to leave. But SHMUKE did not budge from the spot and told me that I was too careful and, clearly, did not trust him; that this carefulness was a good sign in me, on the one hand, however, he had the full possibility of proving to me the 'official nature' of his visit and had the full information of the German government about me.... Then he said that "in Germany live emigrants from Russia, including former members of the Russian police, who have informed the German authorities about certain episodes of my collaboration with the Russian police at the end of 1916 in Petrograd. Although they had the full ability to compromise me with the Soviet authorities at any moment they, said SHMUKE, did not wish to do that, since **they hope to establish with me the same kind of contact as they have with TROTSKY.**"

I understood that I had fallen into a pitfall and there was no other way out. Faced with this fact, and realizing that the Germans were fully informed about me, I decided to agree with SHMUKE'S proposal, all the more since **SHMUKE'S information about TROTSKY'S connections with Germany completely corresponded with what PIATAKOV had said to me and what TROTSKY had written.**

... Considering the matter more thoroughly, I decided that if possible I would sell my collaboration to the Germans more dearly, first of all to obtain from German intelligence corresponding possibilities for foreign connections for our organization and, in the first place, with TROTSKY, and also to increase my importance in the eyes of the German government.

(Lubianka 1937-1938, 394-5)

Iakovlev admits direct ties with German intelligence. This confirms allegations by others that Trotsky's movement had such contacts. He also confirms German ties of Gamarnik — that is, the Military conspirators led by Tukhachevsky — and Vareikis, head of the Party in the Far East.

There is no reason to think that Iakovlev had been forced to make a false confession. He had worked closely with Stalin for a long time. As we have seen, Stalin had stood up for him when the oblast committee of the Saratov Party had questioned Iakovlev's political reliability. But the oblast committee had been right — Stalin had been wrong. Iakovlev had worked so closely with Stalin that it is very likely Stalin met with him to ask whether his confession was truthful. We know that he did this in other cases — with Piatakov and Bukharin, for example.

We do know that Stalin believed that Iakovlev's confession was truthful. The following document in this same volume is a copy of Stalin's handwritten questions.

- 1) Did he know about Vareikis' service with the Tsarist secret police (okhranke)?
- 2.) His opinion about Mikhailov from Voronezh and his participation in the c.-r. org. [counter-revolutionary organization — GF].
- 3) His contact with Trotsky (did he see him personally in 1935 or in 1934).
4. How did he want to use MOPR? Whom in MOPR did he make use of? [*Mezhdunarodne Obshchestvo Pomoshchi Revoliutsioneram*, International Organization for Aid to Revolutionaries, the Soviets' organization to give help to revolutionaries in fascist countries where communist parties were illegal and subject to severe repression. — GF]
- 5) "Turn"" Iakovlev's wife: he is a conspirator and she must tell us everything. Ask her about Stasova, Kirsanova, and other friends — acquaintances of hers. (Lubianka 1937-1938, No. 227 396)

Stalin also voiced the same suspicions about Elena Stasova and Klavdiia Kirsanova to Georgii Dimitrov. But neither Stasova nor Kirsanova was even arrested, much less convicted or punished.

Therefore Stalin was trying to find out the truth. This is important because it means that a serious investigation about Iakovlev took place. It also provides additional evidence for the existence of a widespread Trotsky-German conspiracy that included high officials in Soviet Society.

## **Party and Trade Union Elections**

Contested elections were not held for the Soviets (councils). But they were held for Party and trade union positions. At the February-March 1937 CC Plenum

Zhdanov called for the 'democratization' of party organizations in the regions. This meant secret ballot re-election of all party organs from top to bottom, periodic reporting of party organs to their organizations, strict party discipline, and subordination of the minority to the majority, and unconditional obligatory decisions of higher bodies on all party members. He complained about co-option (appointment) to party buros rather than election, and candidates for leading positions being considered behind closed doors, 'in family order', ... This was a virtual declaration of war against the regional clan leaderships, and their reaction in the discussion to Zhdanov's report (which they at first unprecedentedly greeted with angry silence) showed that they were angry. (Getty, Rise 77)

Stalin and the central Party leadership pushed hard for Party elections.

Based on a strong keynote speech by A. A. Zhdanov, seconded by Stalin, the plenum had attacked the high-handed, authoritarian, and "undemocratic" practices that had made regional party secretaries such powerful magnates. Making a play for grassroots support against the "feudal princes," the Central Committee denounced the secretaries for a lack of self-criticism and scheduled new party elections for the spring of 1937. The election proposal showed that Stalin and his leadership were becoming serious about trying to weaken the power of the territorial secretaries. **The voting was to be by secret ballot, with multiple candidates nominated from below** and was therefore a direct assault on the regional party barons' patronage power. Both

Zhdanov and Stalin called for much stronger criticism and self-criticism by the party bosses. (Getty, Practicing 203)

During the months following the February-March CC Plenum the Party elections described by Zhdanov were actually held.

The elections were in fact so conducted. See Smolensk Archive, files WKP 110, pp. 258-79; WKP 322, pp. 52-57; WKP 105, passim. For the national election results, see *Pravda*, 23 May 1937. Nationally, about half of all party secretaries were voted out of office. (Getty, Practicing 334 n. 79)

The Party elections gave rise to excitement among the rank-and-file.

The center was stimulating criticism of local leaders on the eve of the elections. "Little people" were being encouraged to speak up. As unofficial accounts and novels of the time show, there were already many of the rank and file complaining about local leaders even before 1937. Both the novelist Kataev and the American worker John Scott described an atmosphere in which there was always grassroots, enthusiast discontent with local leaders. The Smolensk Archive contains many files of complaint letters from average citizens about the abuses of lower and higher officials. These letters were sent to newspapers, prosecutors, and party officials and reflect widespread and often bitter discontent on lower levels. **The February plenum awakened and unleashed this sentiment; it did not create it. The meetings after the plenum saw for the first time a situation in which rank-and-file members stood up at meetings and openly disagreed with reports they had just heard.** (Getty, Origins 161)

It appears that it was mainly lower-level Party officials who failed in re-election and were replaced by new people.

... it seems clear that the main attrition in the secretarial ranks occurred below raion level. Of the dozens of raikom first secretaries across the region, only nine failed reelection. Raion party committees were turned over by half, and most of the replacement was at this level or below.

More than half of the lower-level party leadership was turned out of office in secret-ballot voting that took place after open (and sometimes insulting) criticism from the floor.... (Getty, Origins 161-162)

A more recent article shows this result in one area, Iaroslavl'.

Over the next few weeks, the Iaroslavl' party organization held the new party elections by secret ballot mandated by Zhdanov in his speech to the February plenum... In 726 of 1,272 (57 per cent) primary party organizations of the oblast', the election meetings had found party work 'unsatisfactory', and in Iaroslavl' it was higher (67 per cent). Across the oblast', there were objections to 26 per cent of the proffered candidates (32 per cent in Iaroslavl'). Nevertheless, the Vainov clan retained its hold on top positions. Although 36 per cent of the new party secretaries in major party organizations were new cadres elected for the first time, 'in the large party organizations, the old cadre partkom secretaries were preserved'. (Getty, Rise 81)

Getty believes that Stalin and Zhdanov really wanted to break up local cliques but failed, perhaps inevitably.

Given the ability of the local leaders to control and influence events, it might seem naive of Stalin and Zhdanov to hope that the local machines would reform themselves. But what choices did they have? Their past attempts to secure "fulfillment of decisions" had included public exhortations by Stalin, control-commission inspectors, and strong press denunciations of particular offenders. When these failed, Stalin and Zhdanov proposed reeducation of the secretaries, attempted to strip the secretaries of their patronage power, and tried to achieve control from below with new elections. Populist control from below was not naive; rather, **it was a vain but sincere attempt to use the rank and file to break open the closed regional machines.** (Getty, Origins 162)

Stalin did indeed have democratic intentions. Relying on the rank-and-file to vote out local leaders, if they chose to do so, is one of the things democracy is all about.



At the same February-March 1937 CC Plenum Shvernik had called for contested Trade Union elections:

Shvernik argued that the unions, like the Party, lacked internal democracy.

"I should say here, directly and with all frankness," he explained, "that the unions are in even worse shape." With the development of new industries during the first five-year plan, the country's 47 unions had split into 165, creating thousands of new jobs. Positions at every level were filled by appointment, rather than election... Shvernik concluded his speech with the suggestion that elections were needed not only in the Party, but in the unions as well. ... "I think this would clean our ranks of bureaucratic elements, closely connect us with the broad masses, and give the unions the chance to get closer to the masses." (Goldman, Terror 126)

In April and May 1937 the Sixth Plenum of the All-Union Council of Trade Unions had called for new, secret ballot elections to union positions.

The resolutions adopted by the 6th Plenum demanded that the unions be recast, from top to bottom. New elections based on secret ballots were to be held in every union organization from central to factory committees. Union members would have "the unlimited right to reject and criticize" individual candidates. Voting by lists was forbidden. The plenum mandated deadlines as well: elections for factory and shop committees were to be held between June 1 and July 15, followed by regional (oblast) conferences, union congresses, and elections for higher-level posts between July 15 and September 15. (Goldman, Terror 141)

During the second half of 1937 the unprecedented democratic trade union elections were in fact conducted.

By the end of 1937, new central committees were elected in 146 of the country's 157 unions. Party and union leaders proclaimed the campaign a great success. About 1,230,000 people or 6 percent of the 22 million membership were elected to union posts, including 31,000

to regional (oblast' krai) and republic committees, 830,000 to factory committees, 160,000 to shop committees, and 163,000 to group organizations (profgrupy). **The VTsSPS nullified hundreds of elections that violated "the principles of union democracy" by not offering secret ballots and more than one candidate. This "made a deep impression on the workers," according to one report.** (Goldman, Terror 147)

Party and VTsSPS leaders pointed with pride to the fact that many newly elected officials were not party members, evidence that "new people," "the best Stakhanovites," were becoming active in union affairs... **Party leaders' active endorsement of nonparty candidates stood in sharp contrast to their usual policy of promoting their own members.** (Goldman, Terror 148-149)

But in 1939, after the abandonment of secret, contested elections for the legislative bodies (soviets), such elections were abandoned in the trade unions as well.

In spring 1939, union and party leaders stealthily reversed the campaign for union democracy. The Moscow party committee called a joint meeting of heads of the partkomy and factory committees. Shvernik, the head of the VTsSPS, explained that the Moscow party committee would "oversee" the upcoming union elections. **New rules abolished direct elections.**

... **[O]fficials were instructed to disguise the fact that voting by list, a practice banned in 1937, was reinstated. The campaign for union democracy had been linked at its inception to democratic national elections to the Supreme Soviet. The ill-fated experiments in democracy were also twinned in their demise. Shvernik noted that Moscow party officials had decided to abolish direct union elections based on their experience with elections to the Supreme Soviet. *Profdemokratiia* — union democracy — the great rallying cry of 1937, was dead.** (Goldman, Terror 258-259)

The forces that were powerful enough to defeat Stalin's struggle for democratic, contested elections to the legislative branch of the Soviet

government, the soviets, had not been powerful enough to stop democratic elections in the Party and the Trade Unions. These did take place in 1937. But they did not happen again.

## **Chapter 9. The Mass Repressions Are Stopped**

Accounts of the repressions of 1937-1938 by mainstream historians are useful insofar as they document how the repressions proceeded. By surveying the large number of primary sources now available the mainstream accounts show how Stalin and the top Party leadership gradually came to understand what was happening. What they had been told was a battle against counterrevolutionary conspiracies had in fact very often been directed against loyal Party members and completely innocent citizens.

But mainstream historians do not discuss the most important sets of documentary evidence that bear directly on the causes, course, and conclusion of Ezhov mass repressions:

\* The conspiracies that we know existed. This includes all those that were the subject of the three Moscow Trials plus the conspiracy of military commanders and other officers that is often referred to simply as the Tukhachevsky Affair. These conspiracies provided the impetus for the resolutions of early June 1937 concerning the need to use massive force.

\* The investigation documents detailing the confessions of alleged conspirators and the conclusions of NKVD investigators with which Ezhov bombarded Stalin and the central Party leadership for more than a year after the June 1937 CC Plenum. Dozens of these reports, often very long and always very detailed, have been published. We cited the principal document collections in a previous chapter. Only a few have been translated into English. Iakov Iakovlev's confession is one of them. We don't know how much more documentation Stalin received. This is probably just a fraction of it.

\* The confession of Ezhov's assistant Mikhail Frinovskii of April 1939 and Ezhov's many confessions of 1939 are entirely ignored by mainstream scholars.

The few remarks mainstream historians make about this material shows that they prefer to "not believe" it. This is the fallacy of "begging the question,"

"assuming that which is to be proven." It is illegitimate for historians to ignore evidence simply because that evidence is not consistent with some preconceived paradigm of "what must have happened." But these confessions dismantle the "anti-Stalin paradigm." Consequently, they are ignored.

Mainstream scholarship ignores all the evidence that explains the reason for the mass repression of the Ezhov era. Then these scholars declare that the reason for these repressions is a mystery: "We will never know" why they took place, and so on. Naturally, if one decides in advance to ignore the evidence, then the events are indeed "inexplicable."

\*\*\*\*\*

Already at the October 1937 CC Plenum the first protest against the mass repressions was uttered by Kursk First Secretary Peskarov:

They [the NKVD? The troika? — GF] condemned people for petty stuff... illegally, and when we ... put the question to the C.C., comrade Stalin and Molotov strongly supported us and sent a brigade of workers from the Supreme Court and Prosecutor's office to review these cases ... And it turned out that for three weeks' work of this brigade 56% of the sentences in 16 *raiony* were set aside by the brigade as illegal. What's more, in 45% of the sentences there was no evidence that a crime had been committed. (Zhukov, Tainy 43)

Getty cites some signs that Ezhov's activities may have come under some negative scrutiny as early as December 1937. (Origins 182-185) He concludes:

**The police had been implicitly insulted and criticized in late 1937,** particularly when they tried to associate themselves with rank-and-file interests. Yet Ezhov's NKVD establishment remained strong despite transfers and Ezhov's simultaneous duties at Water Transport. **Stalin**

**wanted to stop local chaos without totally discrediting the NKVD,** for he supported continued investigations and repression of oppositionists and other "suspicious" persons. (Getty Origins 188)

### **The January 1938 CC Plenum**

It appears that this Plenum was called in a hurry to deal with a serious situation of mass expulsions and arrests of Party members, including many Party officials.

Sometime around the beginning of the year, Politburo member A. A. Andreev was assigned the task of gathering compromising material on Postyshev's party expulsions in Kuibyshev. These documents included **documentation of mass party expulsions** from the Kuibyshev soviet, from the ranks of party district committee secretaries, and from other organizations. One report from the Bazarno-Syzgansky district noted that **large numbers had been expelled as enemies by order of Postyshev's men, though the NKVD subsequently found reason to arrest very few of them.**

... based on the materials Andreev compiled, the Politburo decided only on 7 January to use the occasion of a Supreme Soviet meeting to convene a plenum for 11 January, a lead time of only four days. (Getty & Naumov 498-499; 501)

Pavel Postyshev, First Secretary of the Kuibyshev oblast' committee of the Party, was sharply criticized and then removed first from his position as Candidate Member of the Politburo and then, at the end of the month, from his position as First Secretary of the Kuibyshev obkom.

Postyshev's actions had shocked Stalin and other Politburo members.

Beria: Is it possible that all members of the plenums of the raion committees were enemies?

Kaganovich: There is no basis to say that they are all swindlers.

Stalin evaluated Postyshev's methods this way: "This is the massacre of the organization. They are very easy on themselves, but they're shooting everybody in the raion organizations.... This means stirring up the party masses against the CC, it can't be understood any other way."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Stalinskoe Politbiuro v 30-e gody*, pp. 161-4. See the Russian text of this session with Postyshev from *Stalinskoe Politbiuro...* at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/postyshev0138.pdf>

Postyshev later admitted to being a member of the Right-Trotskyist conspiracy and deliberately wrecking the Party apparatus.

Molotov told Vladimir Karpov that he had doubted that Postyshev was guilty. Stalin suggested that he, Molotov, and Marshal Voroshilov go to interview Postyshev personally. Karpov writes:

In my conversations with Molotov at his dacha we had a conversation about repressions. Once I asked:

— Is it possible that you never had any doubts? After all, they were arresting people whom you knew well by their work even before the revolution, and then also in the Civil War.

— Doubts did arise, once I spoke to Stalin about this, and he answered: "Go to the Lubyanka and check on this yourself, take Voroshilov with you.

Voroshilov was then in the office. We both went right away. Those were exactly the days when we had fresh doubts about the arrest of Postyshev. We drove to Ezhov. He ordered Postyshev's file to be brought out. We looked through the transcripts of interrogations. Postyshev admitted his guilt. I said to Ezhov: "I want to have a talk with Postyshev himself." He was brought. He was pale, had lost weight, and generally looked depressed. **I asked him: Were his confessions written down accurately in the transcripts of interrogation? He answered: They are written correctly. I asked again — "That means, you admit that you are guilty?" He was**

**silent, and somehow reluctantly answered: "Since I signed them, that means, I admit it, what is there to say..." That's how it was. How could we not believe it, when the man himself said it?"<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>2</sup> Karpov, Vladimir Vasil'evich. *Marshal Zhukov, ego soratnikii i protivniki v gody voiny i mira*, Book 1, Chapter 6, "The Tukhachevsky Affair."  
<http://militera.lib.ru/bio/karpov/06.html>

The Politburo sent Andrei A. Andreev to Kuibyshev to make an on-the-spot checkup. Below are parts of the letter Andreev sent to Stalin on January 31, 1938, about Postyshev's lawless and arbitrary repressions:

2) Since August about 3,000 members have been expelled from the party, a significant part of whom were expelled without any basis whatsoever as "enemies of the people" or their confederates. At the plenum of the oblast committee the secretaries of the raion committees brought forward facts, when Postyshev became arbitrary and demanded the expulsion and arrest of honest party members either for the slightest criticism at party meetings of the leadership of the oblast committee [i.e. Postyshev himself] or even without any basis at all.

In general this whole tone came from the oblast committee.

3) Since all these matters look like a provocation, we had to arrest a few of the most suspicious, zealous deviationists from the oblast and city committees, the former second secretary Filimonov, the obcom workers Sirontinskii, Alakin, Fomenko, and others. **At the very first interrogations they all confessed that they were members of a Right-Trotskyite organization up to the present. Surrounding Postyshev and enjoying his full confidence, they developed their disorganizational and provocational work of dissolving the party organizations and mass expulsions of party members.** We also had to arrest Pashkovskii, Postyshev's assistant. **He confessed that he had concealed the fact that he had been a Social-Revolutionary in the past, had been recruited to the Right-Trotskyite organization in 1933 in Kiev, and obviously was a Polish spy. He was one of the most active of those in Postyshev's circle in the matter of**



**arbitrariness and disorganization in Kuybyshev.** We are untangling matters further, in order to unmask this gang.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Sovetskoe rukovodstvo. Perepiska. 1928-1941.* ed. A.V. Kvashonkin et al., Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1999, p. 387. Full text at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/andreevpostyshev0138.pdf>

A resolution of the January 1938 Plenum hinted that those who use "formalistic and callously bureaucratic attitude" towards Party members might really be "cleverly disguised enemies who try to disguise their hostility with shouts about vigilance, in that way to maintain themselves in the Party ranks, who strive through repressive measures to beat up our Bolshevik cadres and to sow uncertainty and excess suspicion in our ranks."

During the January 1938 Plenum, more leaders criticized excesses in the examination of personal cases of communists. Politburo candidate member Zhdanov demanded that people should not be accused without grounds and that accusations against every suspect should be investigated. Kalinin wanted people to be judged on the basis of their actions instead of their relations. Even Molotov thought that people who had erred should be distinguished from wreckers. (Jansen & Petrov 125-6)

Postyshev himself was arrested on February 22, 1938. On April 9 he wrote a statement to Ezhov in which he said he would "give the investigation a frank confession about his counterrevolutionary activity against the Party and Soviet power, which I have been carrying out for a number of years." The investigation determined that "P.P. Postyshev, for a number of years, had been a member of the center of the Right-Trotskyist organization in the Ukraine. In his subversive work he was connected with Kosior, Chubar', Balitskii, Iakir, Ashrafian, Veger, Kosarev, and others." He was accused of having been a Japanese spy since 1920.

Postyshev confessed against others and reiterated his confession at trial. (Furr, Khrushchev No. 23, text and Appendix). His trial was in February, 1939, after Beria had replaced Ezhov as commissar of the NKVD and had begun to re-investigate all those repressed under Ezhov.

We have a little documentation about early suspicion by the Politburo against the NKVD itself.

In early 1938, the Central Committee sent Shkiriakov to Ordzhonikidze to "investigate evidence that had come through about criminal perversions during the mass operations" committed by regional NKVD organs. (Jansen & Petrov)

According to Iurii Zhukov, Stalin warned Ezhov twice. The first time was in April 1938, when Ezhov was named to be Commissar for Water Transportation. Getty states:

... it could not have escaped notice that Yezhov's predecessor Yagoda had been eased out of his police position by first appointing him to a similar post. (Getty & Naumov 528)

The second warning was unmistakable. On August 22 Beria replaced Frinovskii as Ezhov's assistant.

### **Genrikh Liushkov Defects to the Japanese June 1938**

On June 13, 1938, NKVD General Genrikh S. Liushkov walked across the border between Soviet Siberia and Japanese-occupied Manchuria and defected. Within a few days he had given press conferences during which he attacked Stalin and denounced all the Moscow Trials and the Tukhachevsky Affair as fabrications. To his Japanese military handlers, however, Liushkov admitted that the conspiracies were genuine.

Later, Frinovskii testified that during the summer of 1937 the Georgian NKVD had sent them T. I. Lordkipanidze's testimony that Liushkov belonged to the "conspirators around Iagoda," but Ezhov had not only withheld the evidence from the Central Committee but had also appointed Liushkov Far Eastern NKVD chief. He had instructed Frinovskii to reinterrogate Iagoda, thereby leaving Liushkov out of it. Understanding what was expected of him, Iagoda had testified that Liushkov was not involved in the conspiracy.

... Testimony by L. G. Mironov and others about Liushkov's conspiratorial activities was also withheld. ... In March or April, when reinterrogating Mironov, Ezhov induced him to retract his testimony against Liushkov. Around the same time, on 16 April, Liushkov's deputy, M. A. Kagan, was summoned to Moscow and arrested upon arrival. According to Frinovskii, this was meant to signal Liushkov to commit suicide, but he did not react. The Central Committee wanted him dismissed soon. A second signal was Ezhov's telegram to Liushkov of late May 1938 about his promotion to the central NKVD apparatus in Moscow. But Liushkov, instead of committing suicide, escaped to Japan. (Jansen & Petrov 144-145)

This evidence that Liushkov was involved with Ezhov in a real conspiracy — a fact we also know from the other sources mentioned above — contradicts Jansen and Petrov's position that no such conspiracies existed.

### **August 22 1938: Beria replaces Frinovskii**

On August 22, 1938 Lavrentii Beria was appointed Assistant Commissar of the NKVD, replacing Mikhail Frinovskii. According to the evidence now available Ezhov considered this to be a hostile move against himself.

Significantly, by 10 August there were rumors that a new deputy was to be appointed to Ezhov and that this boded ill for him. It was no accident that the largest group of prisoners was shot in a rush on 29 July; a month later, on 26 and 29 August, another group was shot, including Zakovskii, Salyn', and L. G. Mironov. Ezhov was in a hurry to get rid of people who might testify against him.

On 22 August 1938, the Georgian Party leader, Lavrentii Beria, was made First Deputy People's Commissar of the Interior. Ezhov, it appears, had started collecting incriminating evidence against him, in connection with his growing influence. (Jansen & Petrov 148)

On 27-28 August Frinovskii met with Evdokimov, who insisted that before Beria arrived he must take care of any unfinished cases (*nedodelki*) that might compromise them. He told Frinovskii: "Check

to see whether Zakovskii and all Iagoda people have been executed, because after Beria's arrival the investigation of these cases may be renewed and they may turn against us." Frinovskii then ascertained that a group of Chekists, including Zakovskii and Mironov, had been shot on 26-27 August (actually they were shot on 29 August). **Ezhov, Frinovskii, and Evdokimov were with good reason concerned about Chekists who had been arrested on charges of conspiracy and might under Beria's regime testify against Ezhov's circle, or even against Ezhov himself. It was no accident that the executions took place in a hurry in late August, while Beria was away in Georgia.** (Jansen & Petrov)

Here as elsewhere, Jansen and Petrov's text is compatible only with the hypothesis which these same authors reject: that Ezhov himself was involved in a conspiracy against the Soviet government.

A Politburo resolution of 8 October formed a special commission to study arrest procedures and the apparent lack of judicial supervision over police activities. (Getty & Naumov 529)

Although Ezhov chaired the special commission, Beria was on it and none of Ezhov's NKVD men were members.

### **November 1938: Orders to stop all mass repressions**

On November 15 1938 the hearing of cases by troikas was stopped, along with military tribunals and the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court.

15 November 1938

To confirm the following directives by the Council of People's Commissars

(SNK) of the USSR and of the CC of the VKP(b) ...

It is ordered in the most strict terms:

1. To stop from November 16 of this year until further notice the review of all cases by troikas, military tribunals, and the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, that have been sent for their review by special orders or by any other simplified procedure.

...

V. Molotov, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars (SNK)

I. Stalin, Secretary of the CC of the VKP(b) (Lubianka 1937-1938 606 No. 361; Getty & Naumov 531-2)

On November 17, 1938 was issued the Decree of the Central Committee "On arrests, prosecutorial supervision, and conduct of investigations."<sup>4</sup> An important section of this decree reads as follows:

... [E]nemies of the people and spies employed by foreign intelligence agencies, having wormed their way into both the central and local organs of the NKVD sought in every way possible to hamper the work of investigators and agents. They sought to consciously pervert Soviet laws by carrying out mass, unjustified arrests while at the same time rescuing their confederates (especially those who had joined the NKVD) from destruction.

The chief deficiencies, brought to light recently, in the work of the NKVD and the Procuracy are as follows:

First of all, **officials of the NKVD had totally abandoned the work with agents and informers in favor of the much simpler method of making mass arrests without concerning themselves with the completeness or with the high quality of the investigation.**

<sup>4</sup> Shearer, Lubianka 221-4; Getty & Naumov, 532-7. Online at <http://istmat.info/node/36068> and many other sites; Lubianka 1937-1938 No. 362, 607-611. English translation online at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/onarrestseng.html>

**November 22, 1938: Ezhov resigns**

Iurii Zhukov says that he has held in his hand the resignation statement Ezhov signed on November 23, 1938.

On November 23 Ezhov was again summoned to Stalin's office. Molotov and Voroshilov were already present. I have held in my hands the document that Ezhov signed, evidently at their dictation. It is written on three pages, all of different dimension. That is they grabbed the first sheets of paper they could get their hands on and passed them to Ezhov just so that he would not stop writing. The formula of his leaving his position is changed twice. Evidently he protested, offered some resistance. But it was necessary to wrest from him a decision to resign "according to his own desire." ... The Politburo sent around telegrams with the direct instructions: Immediately stop repressions and dissolve the "troikas." Having seized the initiative, the Stalin group once again at the end of 1938 managed to conduct the first trials at law of NKVD workers accused of the falsification and fabrication of cases. Through these trials, over a period of almost a year, were tried and exiled or executed thousands of persons. This is how the great terror was brought to an end. (Zhukov, *Komsomolskaia Pravda* 20 Nov. 2002)

Getty notes that the process of review and rehabilitation of Ezhov's victims began immediately.

On December 8, the press announced that he had been relieved of his duties as head of the NKVD "at his own request." Four days later, the Moscow Regional Court reversed the first of many convictions of former "enemies." **The declaration noted that the Supreme Court had not only released five construction engineers but had recognized that the five had actually tried to thwart "real enemies."** (Getty, *Origins* 188-189)

## Chapter 10. The Ezhov Conspiracy

### Ezhov's Conspiracy Gradually Uncovered

"...legality is reintroduced under Beriia, November 1938."  
(Wheatcroft, Agency 41)

By the time of the October 1937 CC Plenum Stalin and the Politburo had begun to uncover evidence of massive illegal repressions. Suspicions continued to grow in the Politburo that massive, unauthorized repressions were going on. In August 1938 Ezhov's second-in-command, Mikhail Frinovskii, was replaced by Lavrentii Beria. Beria was chosen as a reliable person to keep watch over Ezhov, as Ezhov himself later stated.

As soon as Ezhov resigned, to be replaced by Beria, orders were given to immediately stop all the repressions, to repeal all the NKVD Operational Orders that enabled them, to stop the work of the troikas and to re-emphasize the need for oversight by the Prosecutor's Office of all cases of arrest.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This document is available in English in Getty & Naumov Doc. 190 pp. 532-537.

After this there began a flood of reports to Beria and the central Party leadership concerning massive illegitimate repressions and shootings on the part of local NKVD groups. We have many of these documents now, and no doubt there are many more of them. The central Party leadership began to investigate.

On January 29, 1939 Beria, Andreev, and Malenkov signed a report about the massive abuses during Ezhov's tenure. (Petrov & Iansen 359-363)<sup>2</sup> This very important evidence that the massive repression was Ezhov's, not Stalin's, doing was only published in 2008. It begins as follows:

We consider it essential to report to you the following conclusions about the situation of cases in the NKVD USSR:

1. **During the period of time that com. Ezhov headed the Narkomvnutel [People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, the NKVD] of the USSR right up until the moment he left the duties of People's Commissar a majority of the leading positions in the NKVD USSR and in the organs under its supervision (the NKVDs of union and autonomous republics, the UNKVDs of the krais and oblasts) have been occupied by enemies of the people, conspirators, and spies.**

2. Enemies of the people who penetrated the organs of the NKVD have consciously distorted the punitive policy of Soviet power, have carried out **massive, unfounded arrests of completely innocent persons, while at the same time covering up real enemies of the people.**

3. The methods of conducting investigations have been perverted in the most brutal manner. **They had recourse to beatings of prisoners on a massive level in order to force them into false confessions and "admissions."** The quantity of admissions that each investigator was supposed to obtain from prisoners in the course of 24 hours has been decided upon in advance. In addition, the quotas have often reached several dozen "admissions."

Investigators have widely made use of the practice of fully informing one another concerning the content of the confessions they obtained. This gave the investigators the ability, during interrogations of "their" prisoners, to suggest to them by one means or another facts, circumstances, and names of persons about whom confessions had earlier been given by other prisoners. As a result this kind of investigation very often led to **organized false slanders against persons who were completely innocent.**

In order to obtain a greater number of admissions a number of organs of the NKVD had recourse to direct provocation: **they convinced prisoners to give confessions about supposed espionage work for foreign intelligence services by explaining that these kinds of fabricated confessions were needed by the party and government in order to discredit foreign states.** They also promised the prisoners that they would be liberated after they gave such "admissions."



The leadership of the NKVD in the person of com. Ezhov not only did not put a stop to this kind of arbitrariness and extremism in arrests and in the conduct of investigations, but sometimes itself abetted it.

**The slightest attempts by Chekist party members to oppose this arbitrariness were stifled.**

[...]

**Com. Ezhov concealed in every way from the Central Committee of the ACP(b) the situation of the work in the NKVD organs.**

Besides that he hid from the CC ACP(b) materials that compromised leading NKVD workers.

[...]

In addition we believe it essential to note that **all the above disgraceful actions, distortions and excesses <in the matter of arrests and the conduct of investigation> were carried out with the sanction and knowledge of the organs of the Procuracy of the USSR (coms. Vyshinskii and Roginsky).** Assistant Procuror of the USSR Roginsky has been especially zealous in this matter. Roginsky's practice of work raises serious doubts about his political honesty <and reliability>.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Russian text online at <http://istmat.info/node/24582> English translation at [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/beria\\_andreev\\_malenkov012939eng.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/beria_andreev_malenkov012939eng.html)

<sup>3</sup> According to the editors, the text within angled brackets is handwritten in the original.

The report continues in this vein.

Reports and investigations of NKVD abuses continued rapidly. In April Mikhail Prinovskii, Ezhov's former deputy commissar, and Ezhov himself were arrested. They immediately began to confess.

We have put online all of Ezhov's confessions published so far in both the Russian original and in English translation.<sup>4</sup> These confessions revealed the broad outlines of Ezhov's conspiracy against and deception of the Soviet leadership and of Stalin. We will examine them in the next four chapters.

During the next few years, until to the beginning of the war and even beyond, further investigations and prosecutions of guilty NKVD men proceeded. According to the editors of the major document collection:

**...in 1939 the NKVD arrested more than 44 thousand persons, about one-fifteenth of the number arrested in 1938.** Most of these arrests were in Western Ukraine and Belorussia [as a result of the retaking of these territories from Poland in September 1939 and the arrests of Polish officials and settlers — GF]. **During the same year about 110,000 persons were freed after the review of cases of those arrested in 1937-1938.** (Lubianka 1939-1946, 564 n. 11)

"Memorial" society researchers Okhotin and Roginskii agree:

The investigation of cases of arrested persons continued after November 17, 1938 in a significantly gentler manner. **This was due ... to the renewal of prosecutorial supervision.** On November 27 Vyshinskii ordered the prosecutors on all levels to make the strict supervision of the NKVD of the proper procedures their primary duty and to report all violations to the Chief Procuracy of the USSR. ... **Along with the investigation of unfinished cases also went the review of sentences already handed down. ... [A]ccording to our present information, during the year 1939 around 100,000 persons who had earlier been convicted of counterrevolutionary crimes were freed.** (TSD 5, 2 517)

Michael Ellman, a scholar very hostile to Stalin, refers to the "reports of hundreds of thousands of sentences being overturned." Determined to say something negative Ellman continues:

On the other hand there are complaints about the unwillingness of the organs to disgorge prisoners and the slowness of the re-examination process. (Ellman, Trials 1317 n. 20)

A great many cases were reviewed and at least 110,000 prisoners freed. But the engine of repression was slow to turn around. On May 31, 1939 Vyshinskii sent Stalin and Molotov another note suggesting that more time be taken in reviewing cases so as to avoid mistakes.

Recently, large numbers of cases have passed through the Special Board of the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR, and at each session of the Special Commission [*osoboe soveshchanie*], from 200 to 300 cases are reviewed.

In such a situation, the possibility of making erroneous decisions cannot be excluded.

I presented my thoughts about this to c. Beria, along with a suggestion to establish an operating procedure of work of the Special Board in which its meetings are scheduled more often, and with fewer numbers of cases to be reviewed at each session.

I would consider it expedient if the Commissariat of Internal Affairs received special instructions from the TsK VKP(b) and the SNK USSR about this matter.

A. Vyshinskii (Lubianka 1939-1946 94-95 No. 50)

As late as October 28, 1939, a group of prosecutors (*prokurory*) wrote to Andrei Zhdanov to ask him to intercede with the Central Committee about the slowness of the NKVD to review cases of persons innocently imprisoned. They complained that the new Chief Prosecutor of the USSR, Mikhail Ivanovich Pankrat'ev, was weak and deferred too much to Commissar of the NKVD Beria, who was also a Politburo member.

They party's Central Committee decision of November 17, 1938, identified the grossest distortions of Soviet laws by NKVD organs and obligated those organs and the Procuracy **not only to stop these crimes but also to correct the gross violations of law that have resulted in mass sentencing of totally innocent, honest Soviet persons to various sorts of punishment, often even execution. These persons — not a few, but tens and hundreds of thousands — sit in camps and jails and wait for a just**

**decision; they are perplexed about why and for what they were arrested and by what right the bastards from Ezhov's band persecuted them, using medieval torture.**

It would seem that the party's Central Committee decision of November 17, 1938, should have mobilized all attention on **immediately rectifying the criminal policy of the bastard Ezhov and his criminal clique, which has literally terrorized Soviet persons, upright, dedicated citizens, old party members, and entire party organizations.** In reality, something else is happening.

Comrade Pankrat'ev, who has replaced Comrade Vyshinskii, cannot guarantee implementation of this critical decision of the party Central Committee because of his lack of authority in the Procuracy and particularly in the eyes of NKVD personnel. (Koenker & Bachman 26-27)<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Online at  
[https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/prosecutors\\_zhdanov\\_102839.pdf](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/prosecutors_zhdanov_102839.pdf)

The prosecutors end by asking for Pankrat'ev's recall since he did not have enough authority, and — for a raise in pay for themselves, the prosecutors. This last request imparts a somewhat subjective tone to their letter.

But there is no doubt that the review of cases was slow. Beria, after all, could not fire all the NKVD men who had worked under Ezhov and, before him, under Iagoda. And in every locality, the NKVD men must have been cautious about reversing verdicts based on investigations that their predecessors, colleagues, or even themselves, had performed.

The strongly anticommunist scholar Valerii Vasiliev admits that Beria's exonerations also took place in the Ukrainian SSR:

The absurd nature of the case [an alleged revel group in Poltava oblast'] was so evident that in 1939 the majority of those arrested were released and completely rehabilitated. (Vasiliev, *Terror* 157)

Vasiliev is in error in assuming that clearly "absurd" charges would prevent unjust convictions. Of course this is not true. Ezhov and his men repressed and executed a great many people without any evidence at all!

Beria, and Stalin and the Politburo, really were trying to undo those of Ezhov's injustices they could. Vasiliev simply does not wish to admit this. Meanwhile, on the same page Vasiliev concedes that A. Volkov, one of the authors of mass repressions in the Ukrainian SSR, has been arrested March 9, 1939, and was executed October 16, 1941 — that is, under Beria.

### **Ezhov's Confessions**

All ideologically anticommunist accounts suppress the evidence of Ezhov's conspiracy against the Soviet government. None of them refers to the confessions of Ezhov and his men, though these confessions have long been available to them.

The apparent reason for the failure to discuss Ezhov's conspiracy is the desire on the part of anticommunist researchers to falsely accuse Stalin of having ordered all the huge number of executions carried out by Ezhov. But Ezhov explicitly states many times that his repressions and executions were carried out in pursuit of his own private conspiratorial goals and that he had deceived the Soviet government.

Thus Ezhov's own confessions are evidence that Stalin and the central Soviet leadership were not responsible for his massive executions. There is no evidence that these confessions represent anything but what Ezhov chose to say — no evidence of torture, threats, or fabrication.

In his confession of August 4, 1939 Ezhov specifically states that he deceived the Soviet government about the extent and nature of espionage: "[W]e were deceiving the government in the most blatant manner." Ezhov's confessions that he deceived the government for his conspiratorial purposes are not contradicted by any other evidence.

The only conclusion supported by the evidence contradicts the "anti-Stalin" ideological aims of these anticommunist researchers. But it is important —

in fact, indispensable — to them that Stalin and the Soviet leadership be "guilty" of "mass murders." It is vital to them that Ezhov be nothing by "Stalin's loyal executioner." It is essential that Stalin be a "dictator" who could control everything with a word. So they omit evidence, such as Ezhov's confessions, that tends to disprove this preconceived, and erroneous, notion.

To concede that Ezhov was not acting under Stalin's order or fulfilling Stalin's wishes, but just the opposite, would mean conceding that Ezhov was *not* "Stalin's loyal executioner," "Stalin's nursling (*pitomets*)." It would dismantle the "anti-Stalin paradigm" of Soviet history. Acceptance of this paradigm is a requirement in mainstream Soviet history, and the evidence be damned!

Jansen and Petrov quote from an interrogation of Uspenskii, one of Ezhov's NKVD accomplices:

In Kiev, the group carried out large-scale arrests, with Ezhov, never sober, approving without looking into the matter. Uspenskii was astonished and alarmed by his drunken table talk. **During the trip, Ezhov drank uninterruptedly, boasting to Uspenskii that he had the Politburo "in his hands" and could do literally anything, arrest anyone, including Politburo members.** (Case of Uspenskii) (Jansen & Petrov, 133)

Some pages later they outline Ezhov's plan for a *putsch*, a violent seizure of power planned for November 7, 1938.

He [Ezhov] testified himself that after arrests began within the NKVD he, together with Frinovskii, Dagin, and Evdokimov, made **plans to commit a "putsch" on 7 November**, the October Revolution anniversary, during the demonstration in Red Square. The plan was to cause a commotion and then in the panic and confusion to "drop bombs and kill someone of the government members." (Jansen & Petrov, 155)

They continue with yet more evidence of Ezhov's plot to kill Stalin:

Evdokimov gave similar evidence. According to him, in September he discussed the threatening situation after Beria's appointment with Ezhov, Frinovskii, and Bel'skii. **Allegedly, they agreed to prepare an attempt on Stalin and Molotov. Ezhov was also said to have had plans to murder Beria....** According to Iu. K. Ivanov, an NKVD executive from Evdokimov's circle, as early as late July, after a visit to Ezhov, **Evdokimov had alluded to terrorism against the Party leadership.** (Jansen & Petrov, 156)

According to Konstantinov, sometime in mid-November Ezhov told him that his song was ended, thanks to Stalin and loyal Stalinists like his deputy Beria: "If they could be removed, all would be different." **He suggested that Konstantinov should kill Stalin,** but without giving any concrete form to his plans. (Jansen & Petrov, 156)

Yet Jansen and Petrov insist that Ezhov was "loyal" to Stalin. They insist on asserting the anti-Stalin paradigm, in defiance of the evidence they themselves provide.

The editors of one of the important document collections write the following:

I.Ia. Dagin was arrested on November 5 1938, before Ezhov's removal from the position of Commissar of Internal Affairs. Dagin was one of the workers in the central apparatus of the NKVD who was closest to Ezhov. In the confessions of all of the arrested leading workers in the NKVD he figures as one of the main participants in **the so-called conspiracy in the NKVD. At the beginning of 1939 Stalin regularly read the transcripts of the interrogations of the leadership of the NKVD and it is possible that he really believed that there was a conspiracy in the organs of state security.** ...Dagin's position as chief of the security section was considered one of the most important of those in the operative sections of the GUGB and Stalin read his confessions concerning the conspiracy. (Lubianka 1939-1946, 564)

Obviously Stalin did *not* think that Ezhov was his "loyal executioner." Yet the editors, writing 65 years later and with much less evidence than Stalin had, call this "the so-called conspiracy."

In the following chapter we will examine Ezhov's and Frinovskii's confessions at some length. Will also outline the method that should be used for evaluating these confessions.



## Chapter 11. Frinovskii's Statement to Beria April 11, 1939

In this chapter we examine the confession statement by Ezhov's deputy, Mikhail Frinovskii. This statement and the confessions and interrogations we will analyze in the following chapters are essential evidence for an accurate understanding of Soviet high politics of the 1930s. They are ignored by almost all professional students of Soviet history on ideological grounds alone.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ideology is not a category opposed to evidence. Rather, ideology shapes how evidence is interpreted. Ideology bereft of evidence is prejudice, not an attempt to discover the truth.

According to the "official version" of Soviet history of the Stalin period — what we call the "anti-Stalin paradigm":

- Stalin was a "dictator."
- The opposition conspiracies revealed in the Moscow Trials and Tukhachevskii Affair were frame-ups of innocent people. The bloc of oppositionists disclosed in all these trials never existed. And all such revelations and confessions were the result of torture and/or threats.

Once these positions are accepted *a priori* it follows that the mass repression of 1937-1938 must have been Stalin's plan. It would also follow — again, from this wrong *a priori* assumption — that Stalin could have stopped the mass repressions whenever he chose to do so. He could have done so earlier, or he could have chosen not to have mass repressions at all. It also follows that Stalin must have shifted the blame to Ezhov and his men, making them his scapegoats when all they had been doing was carrying out his orders as they understood them.

But all this is nonsense. It directly contradicts *all* the evidence we now have — and we have a great deal of it. But this preconceived conclusion is demanded by the prevailing mode of Soviet history, the "anti-Stalin paradigm."

In this chapter we will examine Frinovskii's confession statement addressed to Lavrentii P. Beria. as of this writing (June 2016) this is the only document from Frinovskii's investigation file that has been made public. We will cite quotations from this document. The full texts in both Russian and English are online for those who wish to study them more closely. (Frinovskii) Throughout this chapter quotations are from Frinovskii's statement unless otherwise noted.

### **Frinovskii's Statement of April 11, 1939**

Mikhail Petrovich Frinovskii had been replaced as Ezhov's deputy by Beria on April 22, 1938. He was arrested on April 6, 1938 and made a comprehensive statement five days later. Frinovskii's most significant revelations in it concern the different conspiracies against the Soviet government and the Stalin leadership and his own and Ezhov's involvement in them.

At that same time, 1934, I had several meetings with [Efim Georgievich] Evdokimov<sup>2</sup> when he came to Moscow. At these meetings he gradually disclosed to me his practical work and spoke about the work of the center of the Rights and around the USSR. In particular he told me that he had a number of people inside the apparatus of the GPU, and named Rud', Dagin, Raev, Kurskii, Dement'ev, Gorbach, and others. He said that he was beginning to have contacts in the national oblasts: in Dagestan, though Mamedbekov, in Chechnya — Corsheev or Gorshenin, and then said that the only person he had trouble with was Kalmykov, who had his own line of work, and Evdokimov couldn't cut him off in any way, but he characterized Kalmykov as a man wholly "ours," a Rightist, but evidently one who had his own line of work.

I asked him what was being done generally in the USSR? Evdokimov said that large-scale work was going on, a whole number of people who had important positions in a number of other oblasts of the USSR, had crossed over to the Rights. And here he stated: "You see how we must now conduct the struggle with the Central Committee: at one time we fought against the movement of uprisings, and now we

ourselves must seek out the threads, ties to this movement and, in order to organize it, we must go down to its base. This is very complicated and dangerous work but without the base — the secretaries of the region committees, the chairmen of the regional executive committees (RIKS) or men who have contacts with the countryside — we will not be able to lead the movement of uprisings, and that is one of the fundamental tasks that presents itself to us." (38)

<sup>2</sup> Wheatcroft's 2007 article gives biographical information about Evdokimov. He was active in the Cheka and GPU until 1934 when he went into Party work, serving as First Secretary of several different areas. Frinovskii notes that Evdokimov was close to Ezhov and to himself. Evdokimov was ultimately tried and executed at the same time as many other Ezhov men in the NKVD and Ezhov himself, in late January to early February 1940.

The above passage makes it clear that by 1934 the Rights had recruited many local Party leaders and were planning to recruit more of them. This constitutes important evidence that many Party leaders were in fact involved in the far-flung "bloc" of Rights, Trotskyists, and other oppositionists.

In his "Secret Speech" to the XX Party Congress in 1956 Nikita Khrushchev revealed that a great many delegates to the XVII Party Congress in January 1934 were executed within the next several years. Khrushchev falsely implied that they were all innocent victims of frame-ups. He arranged for many of them to be "rehabilitated" and others were later rehabilitated under Gorbachev.

Extracts from Evdokimov's case are given in a report dated February 9, 1956 in the document collection *Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo. Mart 1953 — Fevral' 1956*. (RKEB 1) The section of this report titled "On the 'conspiracies' in the Organs of the NKVD" (RKEB 1, 339 ff.) notes that "Beria arrested [many NKVD men] and stated that he was liquidating a conspiracy headed by Ezhov, Frinovskii, and Evdokimov." (340)

In *Khrushchev Lied* we analyzed a number of Khrushchev-era "rehabilitation" reports and showed that they are dishonest "white-washes"

that, moreover, do not in fact demonstrate the innocence of those "rehabilitated." Other like Matthew Lenoé have shown that Khrushchev and his men lied about the events of the 1930s.

Frinovskii continues:

At one of these meetings during horseback riding Lifshits said to me: "I heard about you from Evdokimov. Frankly, I did not suspect that you were also with us. Good for you!" I began to speak with Lifshits — and how about you? He answered: "**Evdokimov has already told you that I am doing work.**" I asked him again — are you doing important work? He said that he was doing important work, **he had contact with the conspiratorial center through Piatakov**, had a large number of people and was not break his contacts with the Ukrainians. (39)

Iakov Abramovich Lifshits, along with Iurii Piatakov, was to be a defendant in the January 1937 Moscow Trial of the "Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Center." Lifshits confessed his guilt, was convicted, and executed on February 1, 1937.

## **Deribas**

Frinovskii:

I had that conversation with **Deribas**, and Deribas was interested, in the main, in the names of the people who had already been repressed and the people who were mentioned in the [investigative] materials. **I told him about Lifshits and Piatakov who were on the point of being exposed.** (41)

Terentii Dmitrievich Deribas was head of the NKVD in the Far Eastern region. He was arrested by Genrikh S. Liushkov on Ezhov's orders, tried, convicted, and shot "for espionage, Trotskyism, and organizing a series of conspiracies in the NKVD and the Red Army."<sup>3</sup> Deribas was rehabilitated under Khrushchev in 1957.

<sup>3</sup> Russian Wikipedia page on Deribas at [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Дерибас,\\_Терентий\\_Дмитриевич](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Дерибас,_Терентий_Дмитриевич)

But Liushkov told his Japanese handlers that Deribas was in fact guilty.

According to Lyushkov, the interrogations of **Deribas**, Zapadni, and Barminski established that in the NKVD and the border guard forces, a plot centering on Gamarnik had been fomented. **For a long time Deribas had been in contact with Rykov and was the latter's 'hidden conspirator'**. In concert with Lavrenty Lavrentiev (former First Secretary of the Regional Committee of the Party until January 1937), with Grigory Krutov (shot in April 1938), and with the army plotters Sangurski, Aronshtam, and others, **Deribas supposedly intended to conduct a putsch in the Far East and to reach agreement with the Japanese for help and for combined operations against the Soviet Union.** (Coox, Lesser 1, 156)

Liushkov was in Japan. So we have good evidence from a source outside the Soviet Union that Deribas was in fact guilty! This is not only further evidence that Khrushchev's rehabilitations are dishonest — we know that already from many sources. More important for us here, it is evidence that confirms and is consistent with Frinovskii's statement.

## **Eikhe**

At one of my meetings in 1935 Evdokimov at his apartment told me about a number of men whom he had drawn into the work in Pyatigorsk. He named Pivovarov and a large group of Chekists: Boiar, Diatkin, and Shatskii. Here too he told me about his contacts with Khataevich, and also praised him in every way as a man who knew the countryside; **with Eikhe**, about part of the Leningrad group... (40)

Robert Indrikovich Eikhe was First Secretary of the Western Siberia region. As we have seen in an earlier chapter, it was Eikhe who first requested the extraordinary powers that, when given to other First Secretaries, became the "kulak operation" and then the *Ezhovshchina*.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Khrushchev famously quoted from a letter by Eikhe to Beria in 1939 in which Eikhe repeatedly declares his innocence and protests that he has been badly beaten by Ezhov's men. I have studied this letter and reprinted the whole text, including the parts omitted by Khrushchev, in Furr, Khrushchev.

According to documents available to Jansen and Petrov, many of which have since been reclassified by the Russian government and are no longer available to researchers, Eikhe interfered in NKVD matters, insisting on the arrest of persons against whom there was no evidence. Ezhov told his subordinates not to oppose Eikhe but to cooperate with him.

Consider the objections raised at the time of the July 1937 Moscow conference by the Western Siberian NKVD chief, Mironov, to Ezhov against the First Party secretary, Robert Eikhe. Mironov reported to Ezhov—according to his testimony after arrest—that Eikhe "interfered in NKVD affairs." **He had ordered the chiefs of the Kuzbass NKVD town branches to arrest Party members, although in most cases evidence was missing.** Mironov thought his position difficult: either he had to liberate part of the prisoners and clash with Eikhe, or the NKVD organs were forced to "create fictitious cases." When Mironov suggested to orally instruct the NKVD organs concerned only to carry out orders approved by him, **Ezhov answered: "Eikhe knows what he is doing.** He is responsible for the Party organization; it is useless to fight with him. You better report to me the moot points arising, and I will settle them.... **Comply with Eikhe's instructions,** and don't strain your relations with him." (Jansen & Petrov, 91)

This is consistent with Frinovskii's statement about the way Ezhov, and he himself, operated — beating and framing innocent persons in order to appear to be fighting a conspiracy while hiding their own conspiracy. Frinovsky's statement, together with the documents quoted by Jansen and Petrov, are strong evidence that Eikhe was indeed involved in a Rightist conspiracy.

## **The Conspiracy of the Rights**

Before the arrest of Bukharin and Rykov, speaking with me openly, started to talk about the plans for Chekist work in connection with the current situation and **the imminent arrests of Bukharin and Rykov. Ezhov said that this would be a great loss to the Rights**, after that regardless of our own wishes, upon the instructions of the Central Committee large-scale measures might be taken against the cadres of the Right, and that in connection with this **his and my main task must be to direct the investigation in such a way so that, as much as possible, to preserve the Rightist cadre.**

... In carrying out this suggestion of Ezhov's **we chose a firm course in preserving Yagoda's cadres in leading posts in the NKVD.** It is essential to mention that we only managed to do this with difficulty, since **in various local organs [of the NKVD] there were materials on the majority of these people about their participation in the conspiracy and in anti-Soviet work generally.** (42)

Here Frinovskii makes it clear that the Moscow Trials were not fabrications but genuine. He mentions Piatakov's guilt, and that of Zinoviev and Kamenev.

Evdokimov swore, spit, and said: "Can't you get me into the NKVD, I'll be able to help more than the rest." **Ezhov said:** "It would be good, but the Central Committee will scarcely agree to transfer you to the NKVD. I think that the situation is not altogether hopeless, but you need to have a talk with Dagin, you have influence on him, it's necessary for him to develop the work in the operations department, and **we need to be prepared to carry out terrorist acts.**" (43)

Ezhov's discussing the need for "terror" — meaning assassination — is consistent with Ezhov's own confessions that he attempted to assassinate Stalin and other Politburo members, in part at the urging of the Germans.

... here Evdokimov and Ezhov together talked about the possible limiting of the operations but, as this was considered impossible, **they agreed to deflect the blow from their own cadre and to try to direct it against honest cadres who were devoted to the Central Committee.** That was Ezhov's instruction. (44)

This is consistent with Ezhov's later confessions that an important part of his conspiracy was to kill a great many people loyal to the Soviet leadership, and many more who were simply innocent, in order to weaken the Soviet state and sow discontent with it among the population. The hope was that this would facilitate uprisings against the Soviet government in the event of a German or Japanese invasion, thus helping Ezhov and his accomplices to seize power.

In the autumn of 1935 at Lifshits' dacha a meeting between Evdokimov, myself, Dagin, and Lifshits took place, at which Evdokimov in an extremely irritated condition began to say that he did not have confidence at all in the success of the terrorist acts that were under preparation by Trotskyites and Rights against Stalin. Evdokimov then directly stated that a terrorist act against Stalin could only be realistically carried out by the forces of the security department of the NKVD. (44)

We have independent evidence of Trotsky's and Sedov's dedication to "terror" (assassination), and also that of the Rights. (Furr, Amalgams) Frinovskii's statement confirms that evidence. It also makes sense. Unlike the political activists and Party malcontents in the bloc of oppositionists, NKVD forces were trained in the use of violence.

### **Other Important Aspects of Frinovskii's Statement**

The following section of this chapter concerns the falsification of cases against innocent persons for the purposes of massive repression.

#### **The Falsification of Cases**

Frinovskii's discussion of massive falsification of cases against innocent persons, including the fabrication of false case files and the torture of prisoners, deserves quoting at length.

The investigative apparatus in all departments of the NKVD was divided into "investigator-bonebreakers," "bonebreakers," and "ordinary" investigators.



What did these groups represent and who were they?

**"Investigator-bonebreakers" were chosen basically from among the conspirators or persons who were compromised. They had unsupervised recourse to beating arrested persons and in a very short time obtained "confessions" and knew how to write up transcripts in a grammatical and elegant fashion.**

In this category belong: Nikolayev, Agas, Ushakov, Listengurt, Evgen'ev, Zhupakhin, Minaev, Davydov, Al'tman, Geiman, Litvin, Leplevskii, Karelin, Kerzon, Iamnitskii, and others.

Since the quantity of those under arrest who confessed due to such methods grew daily and there was a great need for investigators who knew how to compose interrogations, the so-called "investigator-bonebreakers" began, each on his own, to create groups of simple "bonebreakers."

**The group of "bonebreakers" consisted of technical workers. These men did not know the evidence concerning the suspect, but were sent to the Lefortovo [prison in Moscow], summoned the accused, and set to beating him. The beatings continued up to the moment that the accused agreed to give a confession.**

The remaining group of investigators took care of interrogations of those accused of less serious crimes and were left to themselves, without leadership from anyone.

The further process of investigation was as follows: the investigator conducted the interrogation and instead of a transcript put together notes. After several such interrogations a draft transcript was put together by the investigator. The draft went for "correction" to the chief of the appropriate department, and from him, still unsigned, for "review" to former People's Commissar Ezhov and in rare cases to myself. Ezhov looked through the transcript, made changes and additions. **In most cases those under arrest did not agree with the editing of the transcript and stated that they had not said that during the investigation and refused to sign it.**

**Then the investigators would remind the arrested party about the "bonebreakers," and the person under investigation would sign the transcript.** Ezhov produced the "correction" and "editing" of transcripts, in most cases, never having seen with his own eyes the person under arrest and if he did see him, then only during a momentary inspection of the cells or investigative rooms.

With such methods the investigations supplied the names.

**In my opinion I would speak the truth if I declared, in general, that very often the confessions were given by the investigators, and not by those under investigation.**

**Did the leadership of the People's Commissariat, that is I and Ezhov, know about this? We knew.**

**How did we react? Honestly speaking — not at all, and Ezhov even encouraged it.** No one bothered to find out which of the accused physical pressure was applied. And since the majority of the persons who were employing these methods were themselves enemies of the people and conspirators, then clearly false accusations took place, **we took false accusations and arrested and shot innocent people who had been slandered by enemies of the people from among those under arrest and by enemies of the people among the investigators. Real investigation was wiped out.** (45-46)

Since the end of the Soviet Union a large body of evidence has been published that alleges the torture of innocent persons to force them to confess. Here Frinovskii verifies that this practice was a policy of the Ezhov-led NKVD. It cannot be impugned because the fabrication of false cases against and torture of innocent persons is confirmed by so much independent evidence.

Frinovskii's testimony also confirms Ezhov's confessions, which we will examine in subsequent chapters. It is also strong evidence that Ezhov's NKVD acted not under Stalin's orders but against them.

## **Frinovskii Confirms the Guilt of Bukharin and Defendants at the Third Moscow Trial**

Frinovskii explicitly states that the Third Moscow Trial was **not** fabricated, that the defendants were **not** forced to confess to crimes they did not commit. This is very significant. In the following passage Frinovskii states that Ezhov did not force Bukharin and others to falsely confess. Instead he asked them not to name him as one of the Rightist conspirators — and Bukharin and the others did not.

The preparation of the trial of Rykov, Bukharin, Krestinskii, Yagoda and others

An active participant in investigations generally, **Ezhov kept himself aloof from the preparation of this trial. Before the trial the face-to-face confrontations of the suspects, interrogations, and refining, in which Ezhov did not participate.** He spoke for a long time with Yagoda, and that talk concerned, in the main, of assuring Yagoda that he would not be shot.

Ezhov had conversations several times with Bukharin and Rykov and also in order to calm them assured them that under no circumstances would they be shot.

Ezhov had one conversation with Bulanov, and began this conversation in the presence of the investigator and myself, and finished the conversation one on one, having asked us to leave.

At that moment Bulanov had begun talking about the poisoning of Ezhov. What the conversation was about Ezhov did not say. When he asked us to enter again he said: "Behave yourself well at the trial — I will ask that you not be shot." After the trial Ezhov always expressed regret about Bulanov. At the time of the executions Ezhov suggested shooting Bulanov first and he himself did not enter the building where the shootings took place.

**Here Ezhov unquestionably was ruled by the necessity of covering up his own ties with arrested leaders of the Right who were going**

**into the public trial. (47-48)**

We have a great deal of other evidence that Bukharin was guilty. This evidence also serves as confirmation of the genuine nature of Frinovksii's statement.

## Chapter 12. Ezhov's Interrogation of April 26, 1939

Ezhov was arrested on April 10, 1939. As in the case of Frinovskii we do not have his entire file with every interrogation and statement. We have excerpts from two earlier interrogations which we will touch upon briefly in a future chapter. The text of this specific interrogation appears to be complete. Like Frinovskii's, it is published in a semi-official collection of declassified documents from Soviet archives.

The central focus of this interrogation is Ezhov's collaboration with the German military in a conspiracy to overthrow the Stalin leadership.

Question: At the last interrogation you confessed that over the period of ten years you carried out espionage work for Poland. However, you hid a number of your espionage contacts. The investigation demands from you truthful and exhaustive confessions on this question.

Answer: I must admit that, **although I gave truthful confessions about my espionage work for Poland, I really did hide from the investigation my espionage ties with the Germans.**

Question: With what aims did you try to lead the investigation away from your espionage ties with the Germans.

Answer: I did not want to confess to the investigation about my direct espionage ties with the Germans, all the more since my collaboration with German intelligence is not limited only to espionage work assigned by German intelligence, **I organized an anti-Soviet conspiracy and was preparing a coup d'état by means of terrorist acts against the leaders of the party and government.** (Ezhov 04.26.1939, 52-53)

Ezhov explains how he was blackmailed by German intelligence, a claim that the interrogator finds difficult to believe.

Question: **The conditions of your recruitment by German intelligence that you have related do not inspire belief.**

It is incomprehensible and strange that you should have agreed to be recruited when all you had to fear was publicity in the foreign press about your intimate relationship with some woman.

Speak plainly: how did German intelligence get its claims into you?

This statement by the interrogator is good internal evidence that Ezhov's confession was not "scripted" in any way by the NKVD but represents what Ezhov himself wished to say. We should recall that Iakov Iakovlev stated that the Germans also used blackmail against him.

Answer: At that time I had only just been promoted to important political work. Publicity about this incident would have discredited me in the USSR and possibly led to the exposure of my personal depravity. Besides that, before this, as the investigation is aware, I had already been tied with Polish intelligence, so there was nothing for me to lose. (54)

Austrian Doctor Carl von Noorden's clinic in Vienna was indeed visited by many high-ranking Bolsheviks. Ezhov names some of these patients of von Noorden's:

Answer: At the beginning of 1936 upon the recommendation of the medical directorate of the Kremlin Noorden was invited to Moscow for consultation with a number of high-ranking workers. He stayed in the USSR for 10 - 15 days.

**Of the large number of persons whom Noorden consulted I specifically remember Gamarnik, Ikaïr, Chubar', Petrovsky, Kosior, Veinberg, and Metallikov. (57)**

Gavrill Veinberg was a Soviet Trade Union official. Mikhail Metallikov, a surgeon, was himself the director of Kremlin medical facilities. With the exception of Veinberg, all those named by Ezhov here were eventually arrested, tried, and executed for participation in anti-Soviet conspiracy.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> There is an article on von Noorden's Bolshevik patients in the Russian business newspaper *Kommersant* at <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/761081>

It does not mention the blackmail and recruitment of von Noorden's patients by German intelligence. Von Noorden's life and career are summarized on a German Wikipedia page at

[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl\\_von\\_Noorden\\_\(Mediziner\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_von_Noorden_(Mediziner))

Ezhov testifies in detail about his contacts with General Kurt von Hammerstein-Equord. Hammerstein was a partisan of an alliance with Russia but not with the Stalin leadership. At least two of his children were secret members of the German Communist Party. He was on friendly terms with the Soviet Generals who had visited Germany during the Soviet-German collaboration under the Treaty of Rapallo.

On the fifth or sixth day of my stay in Merano Kandelaki informed me that **the prominent German general Hammerstein had arrived** at our sanatorium in the company of the Polish minister of trade whose name I cannot now recall. (58)

Ezhov describes the different pro-German groups of high-ranking Red Army commanders that were conspiring against the Stalin leadership but were unable to unite.

At the beginning of our talk **Hammerstein declared: "We are very grateful for all the services you have rendered us."** He declared that he was satisfied with the information that the Germans had received from me. But, declared Hammerstein, it was all trivial stuff! **The position in the USSR that you occupy is such that we cannot be satisfied with the information that you are giving us. Before you stand other assignments of a political order."**

Question: What kind of "political" assignments?

Answer: Hammerstein, knowing that I had already been elected secretary of the Central Committee of the ACP(b), declared: **"You have the possibility not just to inform us but also to influence the policy of Soviet power."**

Further **Hammerstein made known to me the very serious, in his words, relations that the Germans had in the circles of the high**

**command of the Red Army, and informed me of the existence in the Soviet Union of several military-conspiratorial groups.**

Hammerstein told me that a number of high-ranking military workers were dissatisfied with the situation in the USSR and had set as their goal to change the internal and international policies of the Soviet Union. (59)

**Hammerstein answered: "We have relations with different circles among your military.** Their goal is the same but, evidently, their points of view are different, and they cannot reach any agreement amongst themselves even though we have categorically demanded it."

Question: What assignments did Hammerstein give you?

Answer: **Hammerstein proposed that I contact these military circles, and with Egorov first of all.** He declared that he knew Egorov very well as one of the most important and influential figures among **that part of the military conspirators who understood that without the German army, without a solid agreement with Germany it would not be possible to change the political order in the USSR in the desired direction.**

The view that any conspiracy had to have a prior agreement with Germany was also set forth by Trotsky to Radek and Piatakov. It made a lot of sense. The overthrow of the Stalin leadership or assassination of Stalin would certainly create profound disorder and disunity in the country. Some agreement with the most aggressive imperialist countries would be needed so they would recognize the new regime rather than invade and permanently occupy large parts of the USSR.

Hammerstein proposed to me that **through Egorov I should be current with all the conspiratorial matters and influence the conspiratorial groups that existed in the Red Army in the direction of bringing them close to Germany while at the same time taking**



every step towards their "unification." "Your position as secretary of the CC ACP(b) will help you in this," declared Hammerstein. (59)

Question: Did your further meetings with Hammerstein take place?

Answer: Yes, I had three more meetings with Hammerstein. At the second meeting **Hammerstein expressed interest in the details related to the murder of S.M. Kirov, and about how serious the influence of Trotskyites, Zinovievites and Rights in the ACP(b) was.**

I gave him exhaustive information, and specifically noted the fact that there was at that time a sense of despair among Chekists and that Iagoda's position in connection with Kirov's murder had been shaken. Then Hammerstein said: **"It would be very good if you managed to occupy Iagoda's post."** (59-60)

According to Ezhov's account, it seems as though Hammerstein was already considering what a useful role the NKVD could play in undermining the Soviet leadership if it were under the command of a German agent like Ezhov.

Answer: In the conversation with Hammerstein **it was agreed that I would maintain communications with him through Egorov and Kandelaki**, during the latter's trips to Moscow.

On a non-workday he [Egorov] came to my dacha and the first conversation took place in which **Egorov told me that he already knew about my meeting with Hammerstein, with whom he himself had long had ties.** ... Egorov further gave me the names of the participants of the conspiratorial group that he led: Budennyi, Dybenko, Shaposhnikov, Kashirin, Fed'ko, the commander of the Transbaikalian military commanders whose names I will remember and give in a supplement.

Further Egorov said that **in the RKKA there exist two more groups competing with each other: the Trotskyist groups competing with each other: the Trotskyist group of Gamarnik, Iakir and Uborevich, and the offier-Bondapartist group of Tukhachevsky.**

(61)

In his letter to Marshal Voroshilov after the Tukhachevskii trial and executions Marshal Semion Budennyi also noted that a distinction between the pro-Trotsky commanders and Tukhachevskii's group was expressed during the Tukhachevskii trial of June 11, 1937. This confirms the genuine nature of Ezhov's confession here.

Understandably, the Germans were unhappy with the diversions among the different groups of military conspirators. They demanded unity — in vain, as it turned out.

Then [German military attaché to the Soviet Union General Ernst] **Köstring** informed me that **my appointment as People's Commissar of Internal Affairs opened up the perspective "of uniting all those dissatisfied with the existing political leadership and that, at the head of this movement, I would be able to create a considerable force."**

Köstring said: "We military men think like this: for us the decisive factor is military strength. Therefore **the first task which, as it seems to us, presents itself is to unite the military forces in the interests of the common task.** We must strengthen in every way our influence in the Red Army, **so as to direct the Russian army at the decisive moment in a manner corresponding to the interests of Germany."**

### **How Ezhov's Mass Repression Originated**

According to Ezhov the idea of an NKVD conspiracy was first suggested to him by German military attaché General Ernst Köstring.

Köstring touched on the NKVD. He said: "In the general plan of the tasks we face, the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs must play a

determining role. Therefore **for the success of the group d'etat and our seizure of power you must create in the NKVK a broad organization of those who agree with you, and it must be united with the military men.**" Köstring declared that these organizations, in the army and in the NKVD, must be prepared in such a way as **to guarantee united actions at the outbreak of war towards the goal of seizing power.** (62)

After the Tukhachevsky Affair trial and executions, Egorov and the Germans reconsidered this original plan, which was oriented towards action upon an invasion of the USSR by Germany and/or allies. With the top figures in the military conspiracy now removed, the Germans suggested a *coup d'état* instead of the initial plan of coordinating Red Army actions with an invading German army.

Question: How did your espionage work proceed further?

Answer: In the summer of 1937, after the trial of Tukhachevsky, Egorov in the name of German intelligence set before me the question of **the necessity to build all the espionage work in the army and the NKVD in such a way as to organize, under certain conditions, the seizure of power without waiting for a war**, as we had agreed according to the preliminary plan.

Egorov said that **the Germans explained this alteration by the fear lest the destruction which had begun of the anti-Soviet formations in the army** reach us, i.e. me and Egorov.

According to Egorov the Germans proposed that we communicate to them our concrete ideas about this question as soon as possible.

We discussed this new situation with Egorov and arrived at the conclusion that **the Party and the popular masses were behind the leadership of the ACP(b) and that the soil for this *coup d'état* had not been prepared.** Therefore we decided that **it was necessary to get rid of Stalin or Molotov** under the flag of some other kind of anti-Soviet organization in order to create the conditions for my further advancement towards political power. After that, **once I occupied a**

**more leading position, the possibility would be created for further, more decisive, changes in the politics of the Party and the Soviet Union that corresponded to the interests of Germany.**

I asked Egorov to transmit to the Germans through Köstring our ideas and to request the opinion of governmental circles in Germany about this question.

Question: What answer did you receive?

Answer: Soon after that, according to the words of Köstring, Egorov informed me that **the government circles of Germany agreed with our proposal.**

According to Ezhov, it was at this time that his plan of an NKVD conspiracy was born.

Question: What measures did you undertake to realize your traitorous designs?

Answer: **I decided to organize a conspiracy within the NKVD and to attract to it people through whom I could carry out terrorist acts against the leaders of the Party and government. (64)**

The NKVD conspiracy was to include terrorist acts against the Stalin leadership. Ezhov goes on to name those in the NKVD, plus Evdokimov (not an NKVD man), who were already in his conspiratorial group, including a group of NKVD men who had been in Iagoda's conspiracy. In later confessions Ezhov goes into detail about how the mass repressions were planned and executed. We will discuss them in future chapters.

The final section of this confession details the plot to assassinate Stalin. Marshal Egorov was arrested on March 27, 1938. In one of the document collections which we have cited previously, we have a Politburo decision of January 25, 1938 detailing suspicious actions by Egorov. Marshal Budennyi had evidently testified that Egorov had tried to recruit him into an anti-party military conspiracy of his own. A number of persons already under arrest had testified that Egorov knew about the Rukhachevskii conspiracy but had

failed to denounce it to the Soviet leadership. (Lubianka 1937-1938 No. 281)

A decree of the Central Committee Plenum dated February 28 — March 2, 1938 reported that Egorov had had a face-to-face confrontation with four of his accusers and concluded that "com[rade]. Egorov has turned out to be politically more tarnished than one could have thought before the face-to-face confrontation." At this point Egorov was only removed as a candidate member of the Central Committee. (Lubianka 1937-1938 No. 297)

In a list dated July 26, 1938, of 139 persons for whom the NKVD recommended execution if convicted at trial, Egorov's was the only named crossed out entirely. (Lubianka 1937-1938 No. 331) Egorov was not tried and executed until February 22, 1939, long after Beria had taken charge of the NKVD from Ezhov and embarked on the task of reviewing the cases of tens of thousands of persons condemned under Ezhov.

Egorov's arrest caused a change in Ezhov's plans.

I informed Köstring about further arrests among military workers and declared to him that I did not have the power to prevent these arrests, and in particular **I reported about the arrest of Egorov, which had the possibility of causing the ruin of the whole conspiracy.**

Köstring was extremely upset by all these events. He sharply put to me the question that **either we immediately take some kind of measures to seize power, or we will be destroyed one at a time.**

Köstring again returned to our old plan of a so-called "short blow" and demanded that it be executed immediately.

According to Ezhov, the idea of assassinating Stalin and/or other Politburo members originated with the Germans.

Khoziainov has been made aware of that not only by me but by German intelligence, since during the first meeting after we had established contact between us **Khoziainov transmitted to me a**

**directive of the Germans: to speed up at all costs the carrying out of terrorist acts.**

Besides that Khoziainov transmitted to me the directives of German intelligence that in connection with my dismissal from work in the NKVD and the naming of Beria as People's Commissar for Internal Affairs **German intelligence considered it essential to assassinate someone among the Politburo members and by this means to provoke a new leadership in the NKVD.**

In this same period **in the NKVD itself there began arrests of the active members of the conspiracy which I headed**, and then we concluded that **it was essential to organize a mass action on November 7, 1938.** (67)

Ezhov again attributes the plan to assassinate Soviet leaders to the Germans.

Answer: In the last days of November 1938 I was dismissed from work in the NKVD. Then I finally understood that the Party did not trust me and the moment of my exposure was approaching. I started to seek a way out of the situation I had created and **decided not to stop anything in order to either carry out the assignment of German intelligence, to kill one of the members of the Politburo, or to flee abroad myself and save my skin.**

... I told Lazebny: "There is no way out for you, you are going to be destroyed in any case, but by sacrificing yourself you might save a large group of people." When Lazebny questioned me about this **I informed him that the murder of Stalin would save the situation in the country.** Lazebny. (69)

## **Boris Berman**

Pavliukov, who has had access to NKVD documents not cited by others, transmits this testimony concerning Ezhov's conspiracy from Boris D. Berman. It confirms what we know from the other sources we have.

...[T]he confessions made by B.D. Berman during the fourth week of January 1939, had dotted almost all the "i's" as concerns the political accusations against Ezhov. Berman, the former chief of the Transportation Directorate of the NKVD and, before that, Commissar of Internal Affairs of Belorussia, declared that unjustified mass arrests, as a result of which completely innocent persons died, were conducted by Ezhov and Frinovsky on the instructions of foreign intelligence services while at the same time actual spies, diversionists and terrorists remained at liberty. By this time Berman had already 'confessed' to contacts with German intelligence, so that such knowledge concerning Ezhov could not compromise himself in any way.

Pavliukov cites the following direct quotation from Berman's statement:

**It was important to both Ezhov and Frinovsky to create as much damage to the Party and in the country as possible to strive, through their hostile work in the NKVD, to ruin the authority of the Party, the authority of the Central Committee, as much as possible among the wide circles of the population.** This was Ezhov's and Frinovsky's principal assignment, and they acted in this direction, involving and corrupting the apparatus of the NKVD both in the periphery and, especially, in the center. **This was done upon the directive of foreign intelligence services of aggressor countries... with whom Ezhov and Frinovsky were tied and whose agents they were.** (Pavliukov, 516-517)

## Chapter 13. Ezhov's interrogation of August 4, 1939

Ezhov's interrogation confession of August 4, 1939 is a most important document for understanding the mass repressions. In it Ezhov explains how he carried out the mass repressions of innocent persons and duped Stalin and the Soviet leadership into believing that it was a battle against subversion. Ezhov also touches on this topic in other interrogations, of which only certain sections have been published. We consider them in the next chapter.

Mainstream Soviet historiography ignores this confession-interrogation of Ezhov's. No wonder! For it demonstrates how invalid the "anti-Stalin paradigm" of Soviet history is. We will give lengthy quotations from this document and comment on them. I have put an English translation of the whole text online.<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise specified, quotations are from this translation.

<sup>1</sup> English translation:

<https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhov080439eng.html>

Russian original:

<https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhov080439ru.html> Set Text Encoding to Cyrillic (Windows).

Ezhov begins by asserting that there was some validity to the charge that returned kulaks, criminals, and others were indeed causing disruption in the country. Therefore the repressions were initially welcomed by the Soviet population.

Question: Did you achieve your provocational, conspiratorial aims in carrying out these mass operations?

Answer: **The first results of the mass operation were completely unexpected by us conspirators. Not only did they not create dissatisfaction among the population with the punitive policy of Soviet power, but on the contrary they resulted in a large political upsurge, especially in the countryside. We observed a great many**



**cases in which the kolkhoz workers themselves came to the UNKVD and the regional sections of the UNKVD with the demand that we arrest one or another fugitive kulak, White Guardist, trader, and so on.**

In the towns the levels of robbery, knife-fighting, and hooliganism, from which working-class regions suffered especially, were sharply reduced.

It was completely obvious that the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik) was correct and timely in deciding to carry out these measures. **Despite the provocational measures with which we undertook to carry out the mass operation it met with friendly approval by the working people.** (Ezhov 04.26.1939, 367)

"Approval by the working people" was the opposite of what Ezhov and his men wanted. Ezhov continues by noting how they turned this situation around.

Question: How did you manage to use the working people's sympathy with repression against kulaks, counter-revolutionary clerics, and criminals, in order to attain the goals set by the conspiratorial organization?

Answer: In the provinces, when the so-called "limits" that had been set of the numbers of former kulaks, White Guards, counter-revolutionary clerics, and criminals to be repressed had been exhausted, **we the conspirators and I in particular again set before the government the question of the need to prolong the mass operations and increase the number of those to be repressed.**

As evidence of the need to prolong the mass operations **we alleged that the kolkhozes in the countryside and the factories in the towns had been heavily infested by these elements, and stressed the interest and sympathy of the working people of town and country for these measures.**

Question: **Did you succeed in obtaining a government decision to prolong the mass operation?**

Answer: Yes. **We did obtain the decision of the government to prolong the mass operation and to increase the number of those repressed. (367-368)**

Here is the reason for the increases in limits that have been widely publicized as showing how "bloodthirsty" Stalin was. Ezhov told him that the working people showed support for these actions. This also shows that disruptions by anti-Soviet forces were far from ended.

### **"We Were Deceiving the Government"**

The interrogator asks Ezhov to specify whether he had deceived the government or, on the contrary, was acting according to the government's wishes.

Question: What did you do, deceive the government?

Answer: **It was unquestionably essential for us to prolong the mass operation and increase the number of persons repressed.**

However, it was necessary to extend the time period for these measures and to set up a real and accurate account so that once we had prepared ourselves, we could strike our blow directly on the most dangerous part, the organizational leadership of the counterrevolutionary elements.

**The government, understandably, had no conception of our conspiratorial plans** and in the present case proceeded solely on the basis of the necessity to prolong the operation without going into the essence of how it was carried out.

**In this sense, of course, we were deceiving the government in the most blatant manner. (368)**

I cannot find any quotation of this passage by any mainstream historian of the Soviet Union. The reason should be clear: it directly contradicts the anti-Stalin paradigm, the false notion that all of Ezhov's repressions, mass murders, etc., were planned or at least desired by Stalin, and that Ezhov was just "Stalin's loyal execution."

As Ezhov explains, increases in repression eventually began to seriously alienate large parts of the Soviet population who could not understand what was happening, and how this repression elicited the kind of opposition and protest from the Soviet population that he, Ezhov, aimed at. He then explains how he and his men managed to stifle these protests, especially those from honest NKVD men.

Question: After you succeeded in prolonging the mass operations, did you achieve the set aims of the conspiratorial organization to cause dissatisfaction among the population with the punitive policy of Soviet power?

Answer: Yes, once we had prolonged the mass operations over many months **we finally succeeded, in a number of areas, in causing incomprehension and dissatisfaction with the punitive policy of Soviet power among specific sectors of the population.** (369)

Ezhov lists the areas where this policy of repression of innocent persons was successful, and says:

In all of these oblasts there were more gross anti-Soviet acts of repression against people who were basically innocent, which caused legitimate dissatisfaction among the working people. (369)

We won't quote or summarize everything Ezhov says about the repressions. Rather, we'll concentrate on emphasizing a few crucial points. Ezhov says that Leplevskii, in the Ukraine, repressed persons who were either not politically active or were in fact loyal to the Soviet government, while letting the dangerous elements go.

In carrying out the mass operation Leplevskii, like most of the other chiefs of the UNKVDs who were not conspirators,<sup>2</sup> spread them out

over a broad front while **leaving the most bitter and active of the organizers from among the kulaks, White Guardists, Petliurovists, counter-revolutionary clergy, etc., almost untouched.** At the same time **he concentrated the whole force of his blow against the less active elements and in part among that part of the population that was close to Soviet power** [i.e. loyal to the Soviet government]. (370)

<sup>2</sup> We will return to Ezhov's claim that Leplevskii was not a part of his conspiracy in a later chapter.

Under Uspenskii, who succeeded Leplevskii in the Ukraine, this same policy was accelerated.

**Uspenskii** was completely informed about our conspiratorial plans and I informed him about them personally. I personally also gave him concrete assignments concerning this matter. The result was that Uspenskii **not only continued Leplevskii's practice of sabotage but increased it significantly.**

Uspenskii received additional "limits" after my arrival in the Ukraine and, on my direction, he did not limit himself only to repression of former kulaks, clerics, and criminals, but broadened the category of those subject to repression to include nationalists, former prisoners of war, and others. (370)

Ezhov describes the negative reaction on the part of the Soviet population.

**All of this caused bewilderment and dissatisfaction among the working people in many regions of the Ukraine.** This dissatisfaction was especially strong in the regions near the border, where there remained families of those who were repressed.

The NKVD of the USSR and the Procuracy received many warnings about this from the oblasts of the Ukraine. However no one reacted to them in any way. (370)

Ezhov makes it clear that the central government — Stalin — did not learn of this negative reaction:

These warnings were hidden from the Central Committee of the Party and from the government.

The negative reaction to Ezhov's mass repression of innocent persons was considerable.

From what Uspenskii said I know that flights through the border posts into Poland increased as a result of the provocational conduct of the mass operations, especially in the border regions of the Ukraine. The families of those repressed began to be expelled from kolkhozes, and in connection with that, robberies, arson, and thefts began. There were even a few examples of terrorist acts against workers of the village soviets and kolkhozes. Not only families of the repressed, but rank-and-file kolkhoz members and even Party members began to write complaints.

... Such in general terms were the results of the provocational conduct of the mass operations in the Ukraine.

We were successful in achieving about the same results in Belorussia too. (370)

Ezhov gives more detail in his discussion of the mass repressions in Belorussia:

He [Boris Berman, NKVD chief in Belorussia and originally a Iagoda man] incessantly demanded an increase of "limits" and, following Uspenskii's example, put "nationalists" into the category of persons subject to repression, **carried out completely unfounded arrests, created exactly the same kind of dissatisfaction in the border regions of Belorussia**, and left the families of those repressed where they were.

**There were even more warnings sent to the NKVD and the Procuracy concerning dissatisfaction among the population** of the border regions of Belorussia than in the Ukraine. **We left all these too without investigating them and hid them from the Central Committee of the Party and the government.** ... In the other oblasts I enumerated in my confession we

achieved analogous results and also **succeeded in creating dissatisfaction among certain sectors of the population.** (371)

Ezhov discusses the operation in the Far Eastern Region (FER), the Donbass, and the Central Asian Republics. His discussion of Frinovskii's actions in the Far Eastern Region give some more detail about how the repression was conducted.

Q: But can it be that in June 1938 this operation had still not been completed in the FER?

A: It had already been completed in the FER. However, **we had arranged with Frinovskii that after he had arrived in the Far East he would send a telegram with the request to increase the "limits" of the numbers of persons to be repressed, giving as the reason for this measure that the FER was heavily infested with counter-revolutionary elements who remained almost untouched.**

Frinovskii did this. He arrived in the FER and after a few days asked that the limits be increased by 15,000 persons, for which he received permission. For the FER with its small population this was a significant figure.

Q: Why did you find it necessary to renew the mass operation in the FER?

A: **We considered it to be the most convenient and most effective form of sabotage, capable of very quickly evoking dissatisfaction among the population.** Since the situation in the FER at that time was rather tense we therefore decided to exacerbate it even further through the provocational prolongation of the mass operation. (373)

Ezhov summarizes Frinovskii's achievements in furthering their conspiracy by sparing the real counterrevolutionaries while repressing the innocent.

According to Frinovskii's words the mass operation prolonged by us came in very handy indeed. He created the impression that he had thoroughly routed the anti-Soviet elements in the FER and in fact was

successful in using the mass operating in order to preserve the more leading and active cadre of the counterrevolution and of the conspirators. Frinovskii concentrated the whole blow of the mass operation on those sectors of the population closest to us<sup>3</sup> and on passive, declassed elements and was able on the one hand to stir up legitimate dissatisfaction among the population of many areas of the FER, and on the other hand to preserve the organized and active cadre of the counterrevolution. (373-374)

<sup>3</sup> Evidently Ezhov means "closest to the Soviet government."

### **The "Foreign Operations"**

The interrogator asked about the so-called "foreign operations."

Q: Above you have touched on the question that you also utilized the mass operations concerned with the repression of persons of foreign origin from the capitalist countries neighboring with us (refugees, political emigrants, and others) in a provocational manner in the interests of realizing your conspiratorial plans.

Ezhov discusses how the "foreign operation" intended by the Stalin government to rid the country of spies, was turned by himself and his men into another massive repression of innocent Soviet citizens.

The mass operations concerning the repression of persons of foreign origin from neighboring capitalist countries had as their goal to destroy the base of foreign intelligence services within the USSR They took place at the same time as the mass operations against kulaks, criminals, et al.

**We conspirators naturally could not carry out these operations without trying to use them for our conspiratorial ends.**

**We conspirators decided to conduct these operations too on a broad front and strike as great a number of persons as possible, all the more so since there were no definite limits assigned to these**

operations and, accordingly, we were able to broaden them at will according to our judgment.

Q: What were your aims in carrying out these operations?

A: **The aims** that we pursued in the provocational conduct of these operations **also consisted in the causing dissatisfaction and ferment within the Soviet population who belonged to these nationalities.** Besides that we **hoped, by the provocational conduct of these operations, to create the public opinion in European states that people in the USSR are being repressed solely according to the criterion of nationality, and to stimulate protests by some of these states.**

I must say that all this also coincided with **our conspiratorial plans of orienting ourselves towards the seizure of power during wartime,** insofar as it created the prerequisite conditions for this. **These conditions in the present case were expressed in creating a condition of dissatisfaction not just with the punitive but also with the national policies of Soviet power.**

Asked whether this policy of massive repression of innocent persons on national pretexts was successful, Ezhov asserted that it was.

[W]e succeeded in achieving the result that among the Soviet population of nationalities under repression we created a great sense of alarm, incomprehension concerning the purpose of these repressions, dissatisfaction with Soviet power, talk about the approach of war, and a strong orientation towards emigration.

An important result for Ezhov's purposes were the protests of foreign countries and some well-known individuals.

... as a result of the provocational conduct of these operations there were many protests on the part of the government of Germany, Poland, Persia, Greece, and other states, and articles of protest appeared in a number of newspapers of European countries.



According to Ezhov, Iran, Greece, Finland, England, Germany, Poland, and France protested.

Besides that, as I have already said, **in the European press a number of articles of protest appeared, which succeeded in evoking incomprehension and protests even among friends of the Soviet Union.**

Question: And namely?

Answer: I have in mind in the first place **Romain Rolland**. He sent a special letter in which he asked that he be told whether it were true that repressions against foreigners had begun in the USSR that took place purely on the basis of nationality without regard to their attitude towards the Soviet Union. He explained this request by the fact that a number of protest articles had appeared in the foreign press, and then many prominent figures in Europe had turned to him to ask about this, knowing that he was a friend of the Soviet Union.

Besides that Romain Rolland had already asked about certain persons under arrest whom he knew personally and whom he recommended because of their sympathy with Soviet power.

Ezhov explained how the "national operations" were used to repress anybody he and his men wanted, not only spies or even just those of a given nationality.

As I have already said, we had decided to carry out these mass operations on a broad front and **to encompass in the repressions the greatest number of people possible.**

Our main pressure on the heads of the UNKVDs, whether they were conspirators or not, was precisely along these lines with the aim of **forcing them all the time to expand the operation.**

As a result of this pressure **the practice of repressions without any incriminating evidence whatsoever on the sole basis of one criterion alone, that the person repressed belonged to such-and-**

such a nationality (Pole, German, Latvian, Greek, etc.), was broadly expanded.

**However, that was not enough. The practice of including Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, et al. in the category of Poles, Finns, Germans, et al., became a rather mass phenomenon, especially in certain oblasts.**

Of those who especially distinguished themselves in this manner were the People's Commissars of Internal Affairs of such republics as: the Ukraine, Belorussia, Turkmenia, and the heads of the UNKVDs of such oblasts as the Sverdlovsk, Leningrad, and Moscow.

So for example **Dmitriev, former head of the NKVD of the Sverdlovsk oblast included a great many Ukrainians, Byelorussians, and even Russians under the category of repressed Polish refugees. In any case for every arrested Pole there were no fewer than ten Russians, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians.**

**There were many cases in which Russians, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians generally were made into Poles with falsified documents.**

The practice in Leningrad was the same. **Instead of Finns Zakovskii arrested many native inhabitants of the USSR — Karelians, and "transformed" them into Finns.**

**Uspenskii, under the appearance of Poles arrested many Ukrainian Uniates, that is, selected them not on the basis of national origin but according to their religion. I could multiply many times examples of this kind. They are characteristic for the majority of oblasts.**

Thereupon Ezhov outlines the impunity he and his henchmen enjoyed by virtue of the special powers of the judicial system.

Question: Was it only the simplified judicial procedure that permitted you to realize your provocational plans?

Answer: Basically, of course, **it permitted us to carry out sabotage with impunity.**

As a result of such an extremely simplified judicial procedure in the oblasts, for example, **the practice of falsifying investigative facts, forgery, and deception was widely developed.**

Ezhov claimed that the Procuracy, which was supposed to oversee police actions, did not do so.

The procurors of the oblasts, krais, and republics, and also the Procuracy of the USSR could not have been unaware of such a blatant criminal practice of mass provocational arrests and falsification of investigative facts, since they bore responsibility, together with the NKVD, for the review of such cases.

This inactivity of prosecutorial supervision can only be exemplified by the fact that **in charge of the Procuracy in many oblasts, krais, and republics were members of various anti-Soviet organizations who often practiced even more widespread provocational repressions among the population.**

Another part of the procurors, those who were not involved in participation in anti-Soviet grouping, simply feared to argue with the heads of the UNKVDs on these questions, all the more so since they did not have any directives on these matters from the center, where all the falsified investigative reports that had been mechanically signed by themselves, i.e. the procurors, went through without any kind of restraint or remarks.

...The Procuracy of the USSR could not, of course, have failed to notice all these perversions.

I explain the behavior of the Procuracy of the USSR and, in particular, of Procuror of the USSR Vyshinskii by that same fear of quarreling with the NKVD and by [the desire] to prove themselves no less "revolutionary" in the sense of conducting mass repressions.

I have come to this conclusion also because **Vyshinskii often spoke to me personally about the tens of thousands of complaints coming in to the Procuracy and to which he was paying no attention.**

Likewise, during the whole period of conduct of the operations I do not recall a single instance of protest by Vyshinskii concerning the mass operations, while there were instances when he insisted on more severe sentences in relation to some persons or other.

This is the only way I can explain the virtual absence of any procuratorial supervision at all during the mass operations and the absence of any protests from them to the government against the acts of the NKVD.

### **Ezhov's Use of the GULAG for his Conspiracy**

At the end of the interrogation the interrogator raises the question of the role played by the fact that the NKVD also controlled the GULAG, the labor camps where those not sentenced to execution were confined. Ezhov discusses this question briefly.

Question: It is well known that a large number of those persons repressed in all the mass operations were sentenced to terms of imprisonment in the camps.

How is it that you did not fear the exposure of your criminal practices, since you knew that many of these people were convicted on the basis of falsified materials?

Answer: We, and specifically I, had no fears that our criminal machinations might be exposed by those imprisoned in the camps. **All the camps were not only under the command of the NKVD but were also commanded from the GULAG by conspirators. Under these conditions we could always take the appropriate preventative measures.**

Most important, we had our own special consideration when we sent this contingent to the camps.

These considerations and plans were as follows: **when we sent repressed persons to the camps on the basis of materials that had no sufficient basis we planned to use their dissatisfaction during wartime and, in particular, upon our seizure of power.**

In the next chapter we will discuss Ezhov's testimony about the use of the GULAG camps as a component of his conspiracy.

## Chapter 14. Other Interrogations of Ezhov

We do not know how many transcripts of interrogations of Ezhov are in existence. The prosecution materials concerning virtually all the important matters of the later 1930s in the USSR are still top-secret, kept in the Presidential Archives of the Russian Federation.

Under Russian law materials are to be declassified after 75 years. If this law were followed, all of the documents concerning the repressions of the 1930s should have been declassified and should now be available to researchers.

However, as of the time of this writing (June 2016) all investigative materials of persons *not* subsequently "rehabilitated" are still being refused to researchers by the FSB, which is the successor to the KGB — MGB — MVD — NKVD. Ezhov has been denied "rehabilitation" so his file, which must be very large, is not open to researchers. We have to work with what is available. I have collected and translated those texts that have been published.

Certain other materials are also being withheld. One example is the transcript of the Tukhachevskii trial of June 11, 1937. All the military men convicted at it have long since been "rehabilitated." But as of early 2016 the FSB claims that the trial transcript is still at the Procuracy, meaning that it is still under investigation. We assume that this is a legal-sounding subterfuge to prevent the transcript of this trial from being made public. From other evidence we know that the trial transcript would provide the strongest possible proof that Tukhachevskii and the other military leaders were guilty and that the conspiracies alleged in the Moscow Trials were also genuine.

I have compiled and translated all the Ezhov interrogations now available from the following "semi-official" sources:

- Briukhanov, Boris Borisovich, and Shoshkov, Evgenii Nikolaevich. *Opravdaniiu ne podlezhit. Ezhovshchina 1936-1938 gg.* Sankt-Peterburg: OOO "Petrovskii Fond" 1998.
- Polianskii, Aleksei. *Ezhov. Istoriia «zheleznogo» stalinskogo narkoma.* Moscow: «Veche», «Aria-AiF», 2001.

- Pavliukov, Aleksei. *Ezhov. Biografiia*. Moscow: Zakharov, 2007.

A few remarks have been taken from Vassilii Soima, *Zapreshchennyi Stalin*, Chast' 1. Moscow: OLMA-PRESS, 2001.

I consider these sources to be "semi-official" since they are quoted unproblematically by all the anticommunist scholars. For the most part these scholars ignore these confessions and what they may imply concerning Ezhov's mass repressions. No one, however, has made any argument that the documents are false.

I have made available online the original Russian text and English translations of all the extant interrogation-confessions of Ezhov's. (Ezhov, Interrogations) Here I examine only those interrogation-confessions that bear directly on the question of the mass repressions and quote only selections from them.

In some cases we are told that we have direct quotations from Ezhov's interrogation-confessions. In other cases the authors have summarized parts of the texts of the interrogations. Usually they have done so without telling us why they have chosen some parts and what they have left out. However, the small part of Ezhov's investigative file now public is enough to give us vital evidence about Ezhov's mass repressions.

### **Ezhov interrogation of April 18 — 20, 1939**

According to Pavliukov this is the first confession in Ezhov's file. The quotations are from pp. 519-520 & n. 481 p. 564. The summary is on pp. 520.521.

Summary of other parts of Ezhov's statement.

Ezhov started the history of his "fall into sin" in 1921, when he worked in Tartaria and under the influence of anarcho-syndicalist ideas supposedly joined the local group of the 'Workers' Opposition.' In the following years, the period of inner-party discussions of the 1930s, he also supposedly expressed differences in his political views with the general line of the party. However, the investigators showed no interest

in digging so deeply into the garbage-heap of history, and they did not permit Ezhov to deviate long from the basic theme.

Quotation:

Question: What is the point of this expansive story about these or those 'political waverings' of yours? As a long-time agent of foreign intelligence services you must confess about your direct espionage work. Talk about that!

Answer: All right, I will do directly to the moment when my espionage ties were formed.

Pavliukov's summary continues:

Ezhov related that he was drawn into espionage work by his friend F.M. Konar\*, who had long been a Polish agent. Konar learned political news from Ezhov and gave them to his bosses in Poland and on one occasion told Ezhov about this and proposed that he volunteer to begin working for the Poles. **Since Ezhov had in fact already become an informant of Polish intelligence, since he had transmitted to them via Konar many significant party and state secrets, he supposedly had no other choice than to agree with this proposal.**

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\* F.M. Konar — An assistant Commissar of Agriculture, he was among those convicted and executed in March 1933 for sabotage in agriculture at the height of the serious famine. Konar had also been a friend of the poet Osip Mandel'shtam, according to Mandel'shtam's daughter Nadezhda (Memoirs).

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**The Poles supposedly shared a part of the intelligence received from Ezhov with their allies the Germans, and so after a time an offer of collaboration from the latter was also made.**



According to Ezhov Marshal A.I. Egorov, first assistant Commissar for Defense, acted as the middleman [between Ezhov and the Germans]. He met with Ezhov in the summer of 1937 and told him that **he knew about the matter's ties with the Poles, that he himself was a German spy who on orders from the German authorities had organized a group of conspirators in the Red Army, and that he had been given a directive to establish close working contact between his group and Ezhov.**

**Ezhov agreed with this proposal** and promised to protect Egorov's men from arrest."

### **Ezhov interrogation of April 30, 1939**

This Ezhov interrogation is taken from Pavliukov 525-6 & n. 489 p. 564. According to Pavliukov p. 526, Ezhov named 66 of his fellow conspirators in this one interrogation.

Summary:

The first stage of the investigation was completed on April 30, 1939. In the course of the interrogation that took place on that day Ezhov told about the method of recruiting his subordinates in the Cheka into the anti-Soviet conspiracy and about the **basic direction of the sabotage work in the NKVD. This sabotage consisted in massive arrests without any basis, falsification of investigative materials, forgeries, and reprisals against undesirable elements.**

Quotation (Pavliukov 525-6)

**All this was done in order to cause widespread dissatisfaction in the population with the leadership of the Party and the Soviet government and in that way to create the most favorable base for carrying out our conspiratorial plans.**

Here Ezhov informs the reason for his mass repressions and executions. This is good evidence that this — Ezhov's conspiracy — and not any initiative by Stalin, was the basic cause of the "Ezhovshchina."

## **Ezhov interrogation of May 5, 1939**

Pavliukov summarizes it on p. 526, with no quotations or notes.

Summary:

...at his interrogation of May 5 1939 Ezhov recounted the work of the "conspirators" in the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. Here at that same time took place the beginning of the large-scale purge (after the removal of M.M. Litvinov, the director of the division of foreign political affairs). Therefore the theme of subversive activity in the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs was especially timely in those days.

Ezhov stated that **the goal of this activity was the creation of conditions for the victory of Germany and Japan in the inevitable war with the USSR**. Specifically, they undertook attempts to create disagreements between the Chinese government of Chiang Kai-shek and the Soviet authorities, for the purpose, in the last analysis, of facilitating Japanese seizure of the Soviet Far East.

Here Ezhov confirmed that his general goal was the same as that of the Rightists and Trotskyists, as outlined in the Second and Third Moscow Trials.

## **Ezhov interrogation of June 21, 1939**

This is taken from Polianskii pp. 235-238. It is summarized by Pavliukov on p. 527.

Rodos: If you intend to lie again and make fun of the investigation, then we will not waste our time. I'd prefer to send you back to prison for a week or so to think it over.

These words suggest that Ezhov was not being tortured or indeed subjected to any physical abuse.

Ezhov confirms his espionage work for Germany.

Ezhov: I admit that **I was connected with Zhukovskii in espionage work for Germany since 1932**. The fact that I tried to conceal that circumstance from the investigation can be explained only by my cowardice, which I showed at the beginning of the investigation when I tried to minimize my personal guilt, and since my espionage link with Zhukovskii concealed **my even earlier ties with German intelligence**, it was hard for me to speak [about them] at the first interrogation.

In the direct quotation below taken from this interrogation Ezhov tells how he arranged for Zhukovskii to be recruited by the Germans on the strength of his (Zhukovskii's) obvious pro-Trotskyist views.

Not long before Zhukovskii's arrival there arrived at the office of foreign groups, which at that time was also a part of the Raspredotdel of the CC of the Party and was under my supervision, there had arrived materials that characterized Zhukovskii in an extremely negative way. From these materials it was obvious that Zhukovskii had carried out a number of trade operations that had been unprofitable for the Commissariat of Foreign Trade. **From these materials it was also obvious that in Berlin Zhukovskii was involved with the Trotskyists and spoke in their defense even at the official Party gatherings of the Soviet colony** [Soviet citizens residing in Berlin.]

Semion Borisovich Zhukovskii did not join the NKVD until October 15, 1936. Before that he was involved in foreign trade, which would have often taken him abroad.

Ezhov considered Zhukovskii's Trotskyist sympathies as qualifying him for recruitment as a spy. This is consistent with what we know about Trotsky's conspiracy with Germany, which Trotsky of course denied.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Furr, "Evidence of Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan. *Cultural Logic* 2009. At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2009/Furr.pdf> A fuller study of this subject, titled *Trotsky's Conspiracies*, will be published in late 2017.

## Ezhov interrogation by Rodos of July 2, 1939

This is taken from Pilianskii pp. 252-260.

In this passage Ezhov reveals that he was involved in anti-Party activities long before he was appointed to the NKVD in August 1936.

Ezhov: In my hands at that time was in fact all the work of reassigning of leading cadres. Choosing their activities, punishment, directing them for work abroad. **So I did everything that a saboteur could do in such positions. I directed to leading positions people who were weak in professional, political, and moral sense, people who could ruin production, undermine the fulfillment of the Five-Year Plan. To compromise the Party. In the Party Control Commission I managed things so as to cover up and not disclose elements hostile to the Party, and to deprive of Party membership and shut out in every way those who were loyal to the Party. Abroad I tried to send those who would probably become spies or non-returnees.**

...

Rodos: What tasks did Mnatsakanov<sup>2</sup> give you? Did you hand over to him secret NKVD information?

Ezhov: He was not interested in secret NKVD information. **In the leadership of the Commissariat on the level of heads of departments and their assistants were Gestapo agents.** Then many of them were exposed, as was Mnatsakanov himself. These agents knew more detailed information than I did. **So I told him about Politburo sessions, CC plenums, conversations with Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich and other leaders, related to him the contents of secret letters and telegrams of the Central Committee and the Council of People's Commissars.**

It has long been known that documents supposedly coming from the Soviet Politburo made their way during the 1930s to the German government. We don't know whether they came from Mnatsakanov, from one or more other

German agents, or whether they were forgeries foisted off on the Germans for profit.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Azarii Airapetovich Mnatsakanov was an employee of the Foreign Division of the NKVD.

<sup>3</sup> See Michal Reiman and Ingmar Sütterlin, "Sowjetische 'Politbüro-Beschlüsse' der Jahre 1931-1937 in staatlichen deutschen Archiven." *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 37 (1989) 196-216.

### **Ezhov interrogation by Rodos of July 9, 1939**

From Polianskii pp. 262-268

This interrogation concerns Ezhov's NKVD conspiracy, of which the mass repressions known as the "Ezhovshchina" or "Great Terror" form an important part.

Question: Tell us how and **when you recruited Uspenskii in the espionage-sabotage organization in the NKVD** that you had created.

Answer: I turned my attention to Uspenskii already at the beginning of 1936.

Question: That was when he was still the assistant commandant of the Moscow Kremlin for internal security?

Answer: Yes.

Q: Where did you find out about Uspenskii's hostile anti-Soviet views. Did he express them to you himself?

A: No. Veinshtok and Frinovskii told me about that. They knew him well and **believed that he'd be very suitable for espionage work.**

Q: Did you recruit Uspenskii personally?

A: Yes. That was right after my arrival in the Commissariat. He quickly agreed and I told him that we needed our own men in the provinces. That was why I sent him to Western Siberia.

Q: What kinds of assignments did you give him then?

A: **He was supposed to recruit agents into our organization from among the Chekist<sup>4</sup> cadre and to promote them to leading positions so that they could seize power in the event of war or a coup.**

Q: In November 1937 you sent Uspenskii a coded message with the following content: "If you think you are going to sit in Orenburg for five years, you are mistaken. Very soon, it seems, I will have to promote you to a more responsible post."

Q: What is the meaning of this message?

A: At that time the leadership of our organization decided to move to active measures. **There was a lot of evidence against Leplevskii and Zakovskii showing that they were spies and enemies of the people.** It was impossible to hide such matters, and we had to get rid of these people, we couldn't use them, they could cause everything to fail. We decided to replace them with Uspenskii and Litvin. I gave Uspenskii a coded message so that **he would find out about his forthcoming departure from Orenburg and would switch all the sabotage-espionage work over to other people whom he had been able to recruit there.**

...

In September of that year [1938] Litvin was in Moscow and used to come to my dacha. **He told me that the arrival of Beria at the NKVD<sup>5</sup> was the beginning of the end and soon we would all be arrested, since the Party was mostlikely aware about our plot.** And he also said that he would not give himself up alive and that if they unexpectedly recalled him to Moscow he would shoot himself. That's what happened.

Q: Did Shapiro carry out sabotage activity in the Commissariat of Agriculture on your instruction?

A: Yes, he did. But for a short time only. I decided to take him into the Central Committee, since there I needed people for subversive work.

Q: He knew that you were a German spy?

A: Yes, **I told him that together we would work for German intelligence, so as later to overthrow the government and come to power if there were a war with Germany.**

<sup>4</sup> "Chekist" means NKVD man. The original name for the police organization was "Cheka," an acronym for "Extraordinary Commission" for combating counterrevolution.

### **Ezhov and Liushkov**

When NKVD General Genrikh Samoilovich Liushkov, chief of the NKVD in the Far Eastern Region, defected to the Japanese in June 1938 few persons took his statements as anything more than propaganda. The *New York Times* reported with skepticism on his press conferences under Japanese military auspices. However, since Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" Liushkov's accusations against Stalin have fit into the "anti-Stalin paradigm" and so have been accepted as truthful by historians of the USSR.

Liushkov claimed that all the conspiracies alleged in the Moscow Trials and confessions by the defendants were fabrications by Stalin and that no such conspiracies existed. Liushkov also claimed that despite their confessions at the First Moscow Trial of August 1936 Zinoviev and Kamenev had nothing to do with the murder of Sergei Kirov. Indeed Matthew Lenoe, author of a mainstream study of the Kirov murder, accepts these statements by Liushkov as the most important evidence concerning the Kirov murder.

In 1999 American professor Alvin D. Coox published a two-part article in which he revealed that Liushkov had lied at his press conferences. Privately, he had told his Japanese military handlers that in fact there were

conspiracies among Party and military leaders in the Far Eastern Region and that the conspirators were linked with the Rights through Aleksei Rykov, one of the major defendants in the Third Moscow Trial of March 1938. Lenoë had simply failed to mention this fact, which disproves his whole thesis about the Kirov murder and, in fact, dismantles much of the anti-Stalin paradigm" by itself. We have examined Liushkov's statements to the Japanese in Chapter 17 of *The Murder of Sergei Kirov*.

Coox did not know that Liushkov himself was a conspirator who was guilty of the mass executions of innocent people. In his 2000 doctoral dissertation Steven E. Merritt discussed material from former Soviet archives that revealed something of Liushkov's bloody prints in the mass murders of the Far Eastern Region. (Merritt, *Purges*, Chapter 8) But that in itself did not suggest that Liushkov was any more than an agent of Stalin. Perhaps, as the anti-Stalin paradigm dictates, it was Stalin who was ordering the mass repressions and that Ezhov was, in the words of Jansen and Petrov, only his "loyal execution?"

In the present interrogation-confession of July 8, 1939 Ezhov discloses that Liushkov was a member of his, Ezhov's, NKVD conspiracy. Because of its importance we reproduce the whole of this section of Ezhov's statement, still from Polianskii.

A: **I recruited Liushkov** right after his return from Leningrad from the investigation of Kirov's murder. At that time I was already secretary of the Central Committee and Liushkov knew that I was beginning to oversee the NKVD. Therefore, when I called him to my office and hinted that I had information about his ties with the Petliurovists during the civil war in the Ukraine and other incriminating facts, he was frightened and immediately agreed to work for me as a German-Japanese intelligence man.

Q: Did you really have that kind of information?

A: No, I did not have. I made it all up in order to recruit Liushkov. But I guessed that he was a hostile element with a foul past, and turned out to be correct. **Liushkov agreed to become a spy.**



Q: How did you order Liushkov to flee to the Japanese?

A: Frinovskii often told me that he did not like Liushkov. He was cowardly and could betray us all at any moment. **Upon our orders he was carrying out important espionage tasks for Japanese intelligence and knew a great deal about our subversive and sabotage work.** Frinovskii said that he had to get rid of him, that means, kill him. And he told me that he would take care of that himself. I decided not to hinder him.

Q: Did Frinovskii say how he wanted to kill Liushkov?

A: No. But I think the he wanted to arrest him first, and then in the inner prison to poison him or put him to death somehow.

Q: What a gang! And who warned Liushkov anyway about the danger?

A: I don't know. But Frinovskii wanted to appoint Gorbach from Novosibirsk to Liushkov's place and recall the latter to Moscow, supposedly for a new job, but in reality to arrest him. Liushkov, most likely, found out that Gorbach was already on route to Khabarovsk, and fled across the border.

It has always been a mystery how Liushkov succeeded in walking unscathed across the heavily-guarded border between the USSR and Japanese-occupied Manchukuo. Logic alone suggests that Liushkov must have had some arrangement with the Japanese. Ezhov's confession confirms this: Liushkov was a Japanese spy and a part of Ezhov's conspiracy. His crossing of the border to the Japanese may have been prearranged with the Japanese border guard.

### **Ezhov interrogation by Rodos of July 24, 1939**

From Polianskiii pp. 272-275.

Ezhov: The use of poisons for the purpose of terror against the government was discussed by us, **when our original plan of a *coup d'état* and seizure of power fell apart.**

Q: Tell us about this in more detail.

A: Already in the summer of last year **our organization took the decision to organize a military coup on the 7th of November.**

Q: Who was present at this assembly and where did it take place?

A: It took place at my dacha. Present were Frinovskii, Evdokimov, Dagin, Zhurbenko, Zhukovskii, and Nikolaev-Zhurid. That was, so to speak, the general staff of our subversive organization. Oh, I forgot, Litvin was also there, he was coming to Moscow at that time on official business.

...

Q: What did you discuss there at the dacha?

A: We decided that the interior troops [of the NKVD — GF] that were in Moscow and were under the command of Frinovskii as first assistant to the Commissar would carry out **the coup. As for him, he should prepare a fighting group that would annihilate the members of the government in attendance at the parade.** Then we **decided to confirm a final plan for the coup in September or October and to send around directive to our people in the republics and oblasts' about what they should do on the seventh of November.**

Q: And this meeting took place, who was present at it?

A: There were only three of us. Frinovskii, Zhukovskii, and I. Either the end of September or the beginning of October we met in my office.

Q: And what did you discuss?

A: At that time the possibilities of our organization had been seriously disrupted by the arrival of Beria in the NKVD. He replaced Frinovskii, and we could no longer use the internal troops.

Q: But why, he must have had his agents there?

A: Yes, he did have his agents, but obviously Beria already had information about our conspiracy and arrested almost all of them in September. I could not prevent these arrests or I would have exposed myself. **Then Frinovskii proposed that we put off the coup and take power by means of poisoning the members of the government and in the first place Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov. Their deaths would have immediately caused confusion in the country and we would have taken advantage of this and seized power. We calculated that we could then arrest all the people in the government and the NKVD who were unsuitable for us, and to claim that they were conspirators guilty in the deaths of the leaders.**

...Frinovskii then said that Dagin would carry out the poisoning, and that Alekhin and Zhukovskii would give him the poisons, and we decided to carry out this terrorist act when the requisite poisons were collected. **We agreed to meet when Dagin had the poisons and to put together a detailed plan for the coup.** But Zhukovskii was unexpectedly arrested, a few days after this meeting, and after him Alekhin and Dagin, and I do not know whether or not Dagin received the poisons.

These three men were indeed all arrested during Ezhov's last months as head of the NKVD. Ezhov gets the order of their arrests wrong. According to the information now available Mikhail Sergeevich Alekhin was arrested on September 19, 1938; S.B. Zhukovskii on October 23; and Izrail' Iakovlevich Dagin on November 5, less than 48 hours before the conspirators had planned to strike at Stalin and the Politburo during the celebration of the twenty-first anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution on November 7.

## **Ezhov and the GULAG**

### **Ezhov interrogation 08.02.39 by Rodos**

Polianskii pp. 275-280; Briukhanov & Shoshkov 139-142. Some text is in both of them.

NKVD means "People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs." Its area of responsibility went far beyond that of police work and included labor camps. Ezhov discusses how he and his accomplices utilized the vast resources of the labor camps and the hundreds of thousands of prisoners in an attempt to further their conspiracy.

**Sabotage and mismanagement in the construction sites flourished with complete impunity.** We managed to go over completely to questions of defense construction, achieving practical control over a significant part of it. **This gave us the possibility in case of need in our conspiratorial goals to vary and carry out different subversive measures which could help accomplish the defeat of the USSR in wartime and our coming to power.**

...The greatest population of prisoners was in the border regions of the far Eastern borders. Here it was very easy for us to take over different economic tasks of a defense nature because of the lack of workers. However **the camps of the Far Eastern Region were situated not only near to the borders but we sent there mostly prisoners sentenced for espionage, diversion, terror and other more serious crimes,** and we sent almost no so-called "ordinary" prisoners.

**In this way along the borders of the FER, in the direct rear of the Red Army was prepared the most active and embittered counterrevolutionary force, which we planned to use in the widest possible manner in case of complication or of war with the Japanese...** A significant quantity of prisoners were concentrated on our western borders of Ukraine, Belorussia, the Leningrad oblast', and the Karelian ASSR, especially in road construction.

... **The whole conspiratorial plan of the regime we created for the prisoners consisted in that the most privileged conditions were created for the prisoners sentenced for the most serious crimes (espionage and terrorism), since that was the qualified force that would often be used for directing the administrative and economic work in the camps. In their hands was concentrated also all the cultural and educational work of the prisoners. It is clear in what spirit they were educated. Finally the regime created in the camps**

**often permitted the counterrevolutionary activity of the prisoners to continue with complete impunity.**

In the camps the work of the so-called 3rd sections was so badly organized and the camps were guarded so poorly, that **the prisoners had the possibility of creating their own counterrevolutionary groups in the camps and to associate with each other at will. Facts like this were many. The guard of the camps was extremely small, made up of unreliable people, the material situation of the soldiers and the command staff was very poor, and, finally, the prisoners themselves were used in many cases in the capacity of guards. As a result of a security organized like this there were many cases of mass escapes from the camps. We fought against this evil so poorly and did so consciously, in the hopes that the escapees from the camps would continue their counterrevolutionary activity and would become a force that would spread all kinds of anti-Soviet agitation and rumors.** (Briukhanov and Shoshkov 140. The final paragraph above is also in Polianskii 279).

At the beginning of 1937 Frinovskii and I conferred with each other and decided that **we had to have our own man in the Far East, through whom we could maintain contact with Japanese** intelligence. In the event of an attack by the Japanese he was to let the counterrevolutionaries out of the camps, seize with their help the stores of arms and military supplies, and then head terrorist-diversionist work in the rear of the Red Army. We thought about this **and chose Liushkov for these purposes**, whom I had already recruited for our organization in 1936. Then I transferred him from the Azovo-Chernomorskii region and made him the head of the NKVD in the Far Eastern Region.

Q: In which other areas did you create the same kind of espionage-diversionist centers?

A: We also did this **in the western borders of the USSR**. A significant quantity of prisoners were concentrated on our western borders of Ukraine, Belorussia, the Leningrad oblast', and the Karelian ASSR.

Q: In Leningrad oblast and Karelia Litvin was in charge for you, of course?

A: Yes. I sent him there specially at the beginning of 1938 instead of Zakovskii, whom I could not fully trust.

Q: And **in the Ukraine**?

A: **There Uspenskii carried out all the assignments, including contact with Polish and German intelligence.** That is why I made him Commissar of Internal Affairs of the Ukraine.

Ezhov also discussed his use of GULAG prisoners in a face-to-face confrontation (*ochnaia stavka*) with Zhukovskii on July 21, 1939. This is in Polianskii, pp. 269-272; in Briukhanov and Shoshkov, pp. 138-139.

We conspirators had special plans about the GULAG about which I have given detailed confessions, and I decided to bring Zhukovskii up to date. By this time the people who could have exposed **Zhukovskii along the lines of this Trotskyist and espionage connections** were already condemned and the danger of Zhukovskii's arrest had passed. I told Zhukovskii about **the existence of the conspiracy in the NKVD, that the conspiratorial organization is connected with government circles of Germany, Poland, and Japan.** I don't remember exactly now, but I think that I told him about our desire to get into contact with the English. Then I told him about the leading members of the conspiratorial organization and about our plans, **specifically about our terrorist plans...**

... The conspiratorial assignments concerning the GULAG that I gave to Zhukovskii consisted in this: **we sent to work the GULAG a very great quantity of compromised people. We could not leave them in the operational work, but we kept them in the GULAG for the**

**purpose of forming a sort of reserve for conspiracies in the case of a coup in the country.** I assigned Zhukovskii to maintain these people, but not to connect himself with them along conspiratorial lines, but to carry out all conspiratorial assignments that came to the GULAG through these people...

**There were two variants of our plans. The first variant: in the case of war, when we proposed to carry out the arrests of the members of the government and their physical removal. And the second variant: if there were no war in the immediate future, then to get rid of the leadership of the Party and the government, especially Stalin and Molotov, by carrying out our terrorist acts against them.**

The "two variants" outlined below by Ezhov are the same as those described by the defendants in the Second Moscow Trial and by the conspirators in the clandestine Zinovievist group that murdered Sergei Kirov on December 1, 1934.

### **Ezhov interrogation by Rodos of August 3, 1939**

Text from Polianskii pp. 280-284.

This is an extended explanation of how Ezhov and his men used the GULAG camps to sabotage the Soviet economy, in conjunction with German and Japanese intelligence.

Q: Name the concrete properties where sabotage was carried out according to your instructions.

A: The construction of the Ukhto-Pechersk road has a decisive meaning for the development of the extraction of coal, oil, and other valuable products, without which the economic development of the Northern region as a whole is impossible. Meanwhile **the construction of this road was retarded by us deliberately and in every way, under various pretexts and the resources allotted to it were spread over a large area of work and did not have any effect.** The retardation in the construction of the Ukhto-Pechersk railroad is

explained in the main by the lack of a satisfactory plan, which the Commissariat of Roads and Rails should present. **The saboteurs in the GULAG and in the Commissariat of Roads and Rails without our support organized a never-ending dispute about the choice of the direction of the roads, which has been going on for a long time now, and the planning and even the exploratory works in many sectors have not been begun to this day.**

Ezhov gives a detailed discussion, which we omit here, of sabotage activity in Kolyma.

Ezhov also discusses the use of GULAG prisoners as a part of their conspiracy. The text given here by Polianskii is also in Briukhanov and Shoshkov, where it is attributed to an August 2, 1939 interrogation of Ezhov.

Q: What subversive, espionage and sabotage activity did you carry out in the GULAG itself?

A: We understood, that the expansion of the economic functions of the NKVD must express themselves in the worsening of our basic operative work. **We proposed to widely use the system of camps so as to send there the compromised part of NKVD workers. There are not only drunkards, idlers and wastrels. Among them were people with a Trotskyist past, Rights who sympathized with Bukharin, and Iagoda's people.** De-facto they were all recruited by us since, in sending them to the GULAG, we were hinting to them that we had evidence against them that could be investigated at any moment. **In this manner we created a special reserve of people read to carry out any conspiratorial task.**

**But there were many anti-Soviet elements in the GULAG even without this. The conspiratorial leadership of the GULAG remained, for all practical purposes, unreplaced.** At the time of my arrival in the NKVD the GULAG was headed by the conspirator of Iagoda's group Matvei Berman, Boris Berman's older brother. **He had put together a large anti-Soviet group of people who occupied more or less responsible posts in the GULAG. Among these people**



**were a great many Trotskyists, Zinovievists, Rights, and it was easy to attract them to our side after Berman left when the GULAG was headed by Ryzhov, a participant of the conspiracy recruited by me, who was sent to this work on my initiative in order to carry out sabotage assignments. And after his departure for the Commissariat of Forests, the GULAG was headed by the conspirator and spy Zhukovskii, who was connected with me and who was at the same time my assistant.**

Accounts of the GULAG agree that conditions in the camps were bad during 1937-1938 and improved immediately upon Beria's taking over the NKVD from Ezhov. Ezhov's account here explains this. This fact also helps to exonerate the Stalin leadership, since it was they who replaced Ezhov with Beria.

Evgeniia Ginzberg, who was in Iaroslavl' Prison and who saw no newspapers, said that the prisoners could tell when Ezhov fell: The draconian regime in the prisons (frequent solitary confinement and deprivation of all privileges) was relaxed one day. The timing was confirmed a few days later when Beria's name began to appear on official prison notices. (Getty, Origins 189)

## Chapter 15: The Testimony of Stanislav Frantsevich Redens

In October 2016 my colleague Vladimir L. Bobrov of Moscow sent me some important materials from the NKVD investigative file of Stanislav F. Redens. From July 1934 to January 1938 Redens headed the directorate of the NKVD (UNKVD) of Moscow oblast'. In November 1935 he was promoted to the rank of Commissar of the State Security, 1<sup>st</sup> rank. From January 1938 until his arrest in September 1938 Redens was People's Commissar (= minister) of Internal Affairs of the Kazakh SSR.

Redens was one of Ezhov's main co-conspirators, a spy and a mass murderer. His file is available to us only by a historical fluke. As of 2016 the FSB archive in Moscow makes available only the files of persons who have been "rehabilitated." As we shall see Redens confessed to capital crimes. His confessions were confirmed by other of Ezhov's NKVD men, including by Ezhov himself.

But Redens was "rehabilitated" in 1961, on the appeal of his wife Anna S. Allilueva<sup>1</sup> and reportedly at the specific command of Nikita Khrushchev. The "rehabilitation" document, available in his NKVD file, states the following:

From the rehabilitation determination No. 4n-1304/61 of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR of 16 November 1961 concerning Redens S.F.

p. 373

As the case file establishes REDENS, while working as chief of the UNKVD of Moscow oblast' and Narkom [People's Commissar] of Internal Affairs of the Kazakh SSR, carried out baseless arrests of Soviet citizens, used illegal methods of interrogation against arrested persons, and falsified investigation materials, and his actions, as indicated in the conclusion, fall under the article of the Criminal Code concerning responsibility from crimes committed while in office.

**However, at the present time it is not expedient to decide this question concerning the classification of these actions of REDENS.**

In 1988 and 1989 Redens' rehabilitation was reviewed by the Procuracy of the USSR and his crimes were reaffirmed. But the legal period for withdrawing his rehabilitation had long elapsed, so Redens' rehabilitation remains in effect.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Anna Sergeevna Allilueva was the sister of Stalin's second wife Nadezhda S. Allilueva, so Redens was Stalin's brother-in-law.

<sup>2</sup> RKEB 3, 266-268. This document is available online at <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/67909>

At this present time, therefore, Redens' file is the only file, of all those of Ezhov's closest henchmen, including Ezhov himself, which is open to researchers. Moreover, it includes materials from the files of other NKVD men, including of Ezhov himself, that bear on Redens' case. For example, it contains the transcript of one face-to-face confrontation, or *ochnaia stavka*, between Redens and Ezhov. Here we only cite a few quotations from this file.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The archival identifiers are as follows: TsA FSB (= Tsentral'nyi Arkhiv FSB) R-24628, T (tom, = volume) 1 or 2 ([[cyrillic]]ЦА ФС:Б, Р-24628. Дело по обвинению Редеса С"Ф., Том 1 или Том 2), plus the page numbers (С. = stranitsa, page).

### **Ezhov's Conspiracy**

From the Transcript of the interrogation of the prisoner REDENS Stanislav Frantsevich of 28 May 1939:

...EVDOKIMOV beat the leader of the terrorist group "Promparty" PREDTECHENSKII and demanded that he withdraw his confessions of terror, and **from the group of military conspirators he demanded retraction of their confessions about TUKHACHEVSKII.** (1, 291)

EZHOV, with KOSAREV and AGRANOV were sent to Leningrad in 1934 to oversee the investigation of the murder of S.M. KIROV and see that it was done properly. He did not do this and instead of working he got drunk with ZAKOVSKII. **As a result of EZHOV'S inactivity LUR'E, ("Emil"), TROTSKY'S emissary to the Soviet Union who had been named in SAFAROV'S confessions, was not arrested in time. The arrest of LUR'E would have made possible the discovery of the role of German intelligence of TROTSKY'S and ZINOVIEV'S in the murder of S.M. KIROV.** (1, 300)

After that I helped EZHOV and FRINOVSKII to retain IAGODA'S men in leading positions in the NKVD despite that fact that IAGODA'S own confessions named many of them.

Although we had agent reports from our secret agent ZAFRAN I suppressed these signals and **did not expose the hostile (literally: "enemy") activities of the Trotskyist center in Moscow led by RADEK, I.N. SMIRNOV, KAMENEV and ZINOVIEV.** (1, 302)

Despite the fact that the arrested group of terrorist in the field of athletics **admitted their intention to carry out terrorist acts against leaders of the Party and government and confessed about STAROSTIN'S leadership role as an agent of the Gestapo,** he was not arrested. (1, 303)

For more of what we now know about Trotsky's real conspiratorial activities through his adherents in the USSR see *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*. We will deal with Trotsky's ties to Germany and Japan in the next volume, *Trotsky's Conspiracies*.

Volume 2. Concerning the Conspiracy in the NKVD Headed by Ezhov

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERROGATION

of the prisoner REDENS Stanislav Frantsevich

of 29 July 1939

Question: To what do you confess?

Answer: **I confess that I am guilty of being an active participant in the anti-Soviet conspiratorial organization that existed within the NKVD.**

EZHOV gave me the job of preserving all hostile (literally: "enemy") cadres. He specifically told me that in conducting the investigation not under any conditions to record for myself {*samomu realizovat*} all incriminating conspiratorial materials but to hand them to him personally. ... **EZHOV instructed me under no conditions was I to inform the Central Committee of the Party what was going on in the NKVD without his knowledge.**

Question: Was this the extent of your hostile (literally: "enemy") activity?

Answer: Of course not. I carried out hostile (literally: "enemy") work **by keeping safe the conspirators within the NKVD and the Right-Trotskyist underground** in Moscow and Moscow oblast'. (2, 88)

[Redens] EZHOV said to me: "The problem is not to seize power, that is not all, here is what troubles me: What will happen on the day after the *coup d'état*, what will the Party say? What will the Soviet people say? **For the Central Committee of the Party has enormous authority among the Soviet people. So we must patiently undermine the authority of the Politburo members.** We must prepare everything very well, so everything seem to happen naturally." (2, 93)

## **Mass repressions**

Redens' testimony fully confirms the account of the mass operations that we find in Ezhov's and Frinovskii's statements and interrogations. As Redens stated in the preceding quotation, Ezhov's plan was to undermine the confidence of large sectors of the Soviet population by carrying out massive, violent repression, including mass murder, against innocent Soviet

citizens and in the name of the State. This is in fact the phenomenon that anticommunists and Troskyists call "the great terror."

Question: What hostile (literally: "enemy") tasks did you carry out at EZHOV'S behest?

Answer: On EZHOV'S instructions I carried out hostile (literally: "enemy") work in distorting the punitive policy of Soviet power, specifically in the mass operations. **Among the 36 thousand persons condemned in Moscow oblast' were many who were completely innocent.** It was the same in Kazakhstan, where I demanded the intensification of the mass operations. **As a result about 4000 persons were arrested and convicted without sufficient evidence.** (1, 301)

Answer: EZHOV told me that the main task of the conspiratorial organization within the NKVD that he had set up was to use, in every possible way, the organs of the NKVD of the USSR, by means of the conspirators he had placed around the country, **to overthrow the Party leadership and the Soviet government so that EZHOV could come to power in the USSR.** To further this goal, he had set as one of the primary tasks **the fomenting of dissatisfaction of the population in the country** and in particular, through myself, in the capital of the USSR — Moscow and Moscow oblast'. (2, 87)

Question: How did you intend to foment the dissatisfaction of the population?

Answer: **By means of the so-called mass operations for carrying out a large number of baseless arrests of Party and Soviet cadres. According to EZHOV these measure would, on the one hand, be directed at the arrest of many completely innocent persons,** and on the other they would help create a great aura of authority for the organs of the NKVD and for EZHOV as its leader. (2, 88)

... EZHOV assigned me to continue in Kazakhstan **to use the mass operations to foment dissatisfaction against the leadership of the Party and the country.** ... in Kazakhstan I did not manage to fully develop my hostile (literally: "enemy") work, although even so **I**

**arrested around 4 thousand people, among whom many people, completely innocent, were shot. (2, 96)**

EZHOV: I told REDENS that it was essential to direct the work of the conspirators in the NKVD, like those in other organizations, in every way **so as to foment the dissatisfaction of the population in the country against the leadership of the Party and the government.** In other words, in the NKVD this meant to carry out **baseless arrests of completely innocent persons.** (2, 112)

The policy of the repression — arrest and shooting — of innocent persons in order to foment dissatisfaction among the Soviet population and direct against the Party and government, is repeated in many other passages in the Redens file. Redens' testimony confirms Ezhov's testimony as we have outlined it in previous chapters.

We conclude this section with one quotation from face-to-face confrontation, dated August 28, 1939 between Ezhov's assistant Frinovskii, whose confession statement we examined in an earlier chapter, and Aleksei A. Nasedkin, another of Ezhov's NKVD henchmen. Nasedkin was arrested under Beria in December, 1938, and was tried, convicted, and executed in late January, 1940, at the same time as Ezhov and many of his men, including Redens.<sup>4</sup> Apparently this document was inserted into the Redens file because the evidence of these two NKVD men was used in Redens' case. We do not have access to either Frinovskii's or Nasedkin's investigative files, as neither has been "rehabilitated."

[NASEDKIN]: FRINOVSKII told me that **the conspiratorial organization set as its goal the elimination of the existing leadership of the Party and government** but he failed to say only by what methods he intended to accomplish this. In giving me instructions on practical hostile (literally: "enemy") work FRINOVSKII told me to develop more widely the mass operations and **to compromise the current Party leadership by the arrests of innocent persons.**

<sup>4</sup> See Petrov, Kto 312 on Nasedkin. Online at <http://www.memo.ru/history/NKVD/kto/biogr/gb344.htm>

## ***coup d'état* and plot to seize power**

Question: When did you intend to carry out your evil plan of a *coup* in our country?

Answer: Please believe me that I was not informed about all the plans that EZHOV mentioned. For conspiratorial purposes there were many things he did not tell me. Still, **after my frequent questions about this EZHOV told me that he intended to carry out this *coup* in either 1938 or 1939.** (2, 89-90)

Question to REDENS: Did EZHOV tell you about the goals and tasks of the anti-Soviet conspiratorial organization?

Answer: After I had been recruited EZHOV informed me generally about the goals and tasks of the anti-Soviet conspiratorial organization. **EZHOV told me that the main task of the conspiratorial organization that he had created within the NKVD was the overthrow of the leadership of the Party and the Soviet government so EZHOV'S coming to power in the USSR.** To these goals, EZHOV said, was subordinated all the work of the conspirators whom he had spread around in the apparatus of the NKVD of the USSR. (2, 109)

Question to EZHOV: Do you confirm this?

EZHOV: During the period of my conspiratorial ties with REDENS I fully informed him of the course of the goals set before the conspiratorial organization. **I told REDENS that once a suitable time had been chosen and an essential pretext created for carrying out the *coup* in the country, it would be essential to replace the current leadership of the Party and government and to seize power in our own hands.**

I told REDENS about **the two plans for a possible seizure of power. The first was to schedule the seizure of power at the beginning of a war. The second did not exclude the possibility of seizing power in the country before war, if a suitable moment were to occur.** (2, 110)



[EZHOV]: It should be understood that in these conversations **the plan to seize power by means of terrorist acts** were always stressed, for without them no *coup* could be carried out. (2, 112)

[EZHOV]: Fifthly, in one of our talks I gave REDENS the assignment of **scrutinizing the people around him for the purpose of bringing them in to carry out terrorist acts against the leadership of the Party and government.** (2, 115)

[EZHOV]: ... I really did intend to use poisons in my terroristic goals against the members of the Politburo of the CC VKP(b). **Specifically, I assigned REDENS to take steps to poison STALIN since I knew that he would be able to carry this out.**<sup>5</sup> (2, 120)

<sup>5</sup> Presumably because Redens was related by marriage to Stalin and would be able to gain access to him.

## **German and Other Foreign Connections**

[REDENS]: To this EZHOV added: "As you see, both internal and foreign affairs are now in my hands and the capitalist states will render us full support at the necessary moment, i.e. at the time of the *coup* in the country."

Question: Which states?

Answer: EZHOV was referring to Germany and England. (1, 91)

[REDENS]: EZHOV told me something like this: "Class struggle continues, even though the Trotskyists, Zinovievists, and Rights have been crushed, and the crushing of the conspiratorial organizations in the Red Army is taking place.

None of this happened because the conspirators in the USSR wanted it to happen. In spite of our own will and wishes there is necessity, coercion. Whether this or that conspirator wishes it or not he must carry out the orders of his real "bosses," who are abroad.

You, REDENS, have one group of bosses and I another. Who these are you do not have to know now; you will know in time."

Question: Stop trying to wiggle out of it. You knew exactly about EZHOV'S "bosses." Why don't you talk directly about them?

Answer: Please believe me when I say that I do not know exactly who EZHOV'S "bosses" are. But I presume that he was connected with either German or English intelligence. (2, 91-92)

[EZHOV]: At last, as my fundamental resources I told REDENS about my ties to the government circles of Germany, Poland, England, and Japan. (2, 112)

[REDENS]: EZHOV told me: "If on the periphery I am more or less at ease, then here at the center it will be more difficult to carry out the *coup*, everything must be well prepared so as not to fail, as it is easy to lose one's head, if you do anything carelessly all will be lost. I have the experience of the failure of the others, I have studied all their mistakes and believe that I'll carry out the matter well to the end, I will not hurry, but I also cannot drag it out too long, because somebody is insisting on speeding up the *coup*."

Question to REDENS: Who, exactly, was insisting upon speeding up the *coup*?

Answer: EZHOV did not say, but it was clear that he was talking about his "bosses" — the leaders of foreign intelligence services.

In other passages Redens makes it clear that Genrikh S. Liushkov, a Iagoda man, was retained by Ezhov Iagoda had named Liushkov in his confessions but Ezhov refused to use these confessions, saying that "Liushkov is ours, " "we trust Liushkov completely," and "we will not let Iagoda compromise Liushkov." On the point of being identified and arrested, Liushkov deserted to the Japanese in June 1938. Liushkov proceeded to claim for propaganda purposes that all the Moscow Trials had been Stalin's fabrications. Meanwhile, he told his Japanese handlers that these conspiracies really did

exist. Now we know that Liushkov was an important figure in Ezhov's conspiracy.

## **Conclusion**

The testimony of Redens, Ezhov, and others contained in Redens' investigative file confirms the account of the *Ezhovshchina* documented in the earlier chapters of this book. It constitutes more evidence that the only framework of Soviet history considered "respectable" by mainstream Soviet historiography — what I have called "the anti-Stalin paradigm" — is completely false.

There is no basis to think that all this material was obtained falsely — forged, dictated to helpless prisoners, etc — and then inserted into various investigative files for some purpose. That is in fact the local stance of those who ignore all this evidence, though they do not have the courage to state it outright.

## **Chapter 16. Source Criticism of Interrogations and Confessions**

In the study of history it is always necessary to base one's conclusions upon primary source evidence. That primary source evidence must be studied and evaluated to assess it for reliability. This is true of all primary sources, including archival documents, memoirs, eyewitness accounts, and of course interrogations and confessions.

Any fact-claim — statement about an event that is presented as being truthful — can be deliberately false, false but not deliberately so (the person making the fact-claim aimed to give a truthful account but was mistaken), or true. This is not only the case with confessions and interrogations, but with fact-claims in all other sources as well, from archival documents to oral accounts that exist only as audio files. It is true about all fact-claims made by all persons at all times.

There is no way to prejudge the degree of truthfulness or falsehood of a fact-claim solely on the basis of what kind of source it is or who produced it. Specifically, it is not the case that fact-claims made by prisoners during interrogation are more likely to be false than fact-claims in other kinds of sources.

All sources must be carefully evaluated. An important method of evaluation is to determine whether the fact-claims made in a given primary source are consistent with fact-claims made in other independent primary sources. Often the degree to which different primary sources are independent of one another is easily determined, though sometimes it is not.

### **Interrogations and confessions**

Much of the evidence available to researchers concerning the causes of the Ezhov mass repressions is in the form of interrogations of persons who have been arrested and are in detention — we will call them "prisoners" — and fact-claims made by them of a confessional nature, or "confessions."

In mainstream historiography of the Stalin-era Soviet Union the accepted practice is to regard all such confessions as "fabrications" — deliberately false statements dictated in some way or other by the authorities: the NKVD investigators, their supervisors, the Commissar of the NKVD himself (Iagoda, Ezhov, Beria), or Stalin. This is done without any attempt to evaluate the fact-claims made by the defendant. That is, according to a convention widely practiced in mainstream historiography of the Stalin era, there is not attempt at source criticism of prisoners' confessions. The fact-claims they make are simply discounted, ignored.

However, this is not done uniformly, in all cases. Fact-claims made by prisoners in interrogations or confessions are not ignored when they can be made to fit smoothly into the anti-Stalin paradigm. An example is the confession statement made by Mikhail Frinovskii dated April 11, 1939, that we have examined in a previous chapter. When Frinovskii outlined how Ezhov's men fabricated false confessions, his statement is treated as credible. The following statement of Frinovskii's fits well into the anti-Stalin paradigm and so is accepted as truthful.

In my opinion I would speak the truth if I declared, in general, that very often the confessions were given by the investigators, and not by those under investigation. (46)

In the same confession statement Frinovskii testifies that the Moscow Trials defendants were guilty, that the conspiracies to which they confessed were not fabricated but were true. He testifies that Bukharin, Rykov, Iagoda, and Bulanov knew that Ezhov was part of the conspiratorial bloc and did not reveal this at trial. Frinovskii testified that "Ezhov kept himself aloof" from the preparation of the Third Moscow Trial — he did not falsify it. These statements by Frinovskii do not fit the anti-Stalin paradigm. On the contrary: they dismantle it entirely. These parts of Frinovskii's statement are routinely ignored.

For example, in the recent (2015) collection by Shearer and Khaustov only the first paragraph of Frinovskii's statement is reproduced — the part where he says that he is going to confess. Nothing at all of his dramatic confession itself is given. No doubt the editors "do not believe" it. (Shearer & Khaustov 236-237)

One of the very few scholars who does at least cite this confession statement of Frinovskii's as evidence is Stephen G. Wheatcroft. In his 2007 essay Wheatcroft, one of the best mainstream historians of the Stalin period, cites Frinovskii's statement in a way that tends to undermine its validity but with no evidence provided. On page 42 Wheatcroft writes:

According to **Frinovskii's forced statements** taken after his arrest, Yezhov went to pieces at this time.

Check to see whether Zakovskii and all Yagoda's people have been executed, because after Beria's arrival the investigation of these cases may be renewed and they may turn against us.

Of course there are grave doubts as to how we should treat **these forced depositions**, but they are interesting. Either they were what really happened, or if not, then they were something that Beria's investigators were imagining could have happened. (Wheatcroft, Agency 42)

Wheatcroft completely avoids the issue of source criticism. What does "forced" mean? Are all confessions "forced?" Once you have called the deposition "forced," does that make it invalid? Wheatcroft does not discuss this obviously very important question, as though there were no way to resolve it — that is, no way to attempt to test the usefulness of this document (Frinovskii's confession statement) as evidence.

Moreover, what Wheatcroft says here is vacuous with respect to the possibilities he names: that Frinovskii was telling the truth, or that Beria's investigators "imagined" that this "could have happened." That is, it was either true or false but, if false, made to appear other than absurd. That could be said about almost any deliberate lie, since lies are normally told in a way that "could be" true.

Wheatcroft concludes:

Is it possible that in this one instance they ["these forced depositions"] may be telling us something that really happened.

Wheatcroft avoids the issue again. What does "possible" mean here? Why "in this one instance"? Why not in many instances, or in no instance at all?

It appears that Wheatcroft does not realize that *in calling Frinovskii's confession "forced" he is not in fact making a statement about what Frinovskii said at all*. Rather, he is telling us something about *himself*, his own attitude. Wheatcroft is really saying: "*It is my opinion that Frinovskii's confession was 'forced'.*"

But the fact that Wheatcroft chooses to regard it as "forced" does not mean that it is *not* truthful, or is "less likely to be truthful." Likewise, the fact that some other person does *not* regard Frinovskii's confession as "forced" does not mean that it *is* truthful, or more likely to be truthful. In the absence of evidence, as here, statements such as "the confession was forced," "the confession was *not* forced," are statements about the person who is making the statement. They say nothing at all about the confession itself. They are not objective.

When Wheatcroft calls Frinovskii's confession "forced" he is committing the logical fallacy of *petito principii*, "begging the question." He is "assuming that which must be proven." What we must do is to assess Frinovskii's statement, and all historical sources, objectively.

### **Evaluating confessions made under interrogation**

Source criticism is always necessary. It is invalid to *assume* that a confession is a fabrication just as it is to assume it is what the person under interrogation wanted to say.

We can, and are obligated to, evaluate — verify — interrogations and confessions in the same way we verify any other evidence. We check to see if there are any fact-claims that are also made in other documents. If there are, we ask whether they could have been "coordinated" so as to look genuine when they were not, or whether such coordination can be ruled out. In the latter case, the fact-claim can be accepted as genuine, meaning: it represents what the speaker wished to say. Sometimes we can assess it as to truthfulness as well.

In all sources criticism the student must begin with studying the evidence by reading it carefully and repeatedly. We must attempt to determine the reliability of the testimony by trying to discover whether some of the fact-claims contained in it can be verified in other sources that are independent of it. When two or more independent sources agree on the same fact-claim, the likelihood that that fact-claim is true increases dramatically. If we can verify a number of fact-claims made in these interrogation confessions through independent sources, then we have established that the testimony under study should be considered to be legitimate evidence.

This is the process we have undertaken here. *Every time we can check a statement made in the testimony presented here against independent evidence, we find that the testimony under consideration is verified.* This means that we have no objective basis to reject these confessions.

We have devoted the first twelve chapters of *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*, more than 250 pages, to source criticism of the testimony given at the three Moscow Trials of August 1936, January 1937, and March 1938. We were able to check a great many fact-claims made by the defendants at those trials against independent evidence. Almost all of them proved to be true.

The few exceptions are especially interesting. In the few cases where we can determine today that defendant lied, we can prove that he was hiding facts from the prosecution that the defendant did not want the prosecution to know. The defendant lied not to falsely inculpate himself, but to falsely exculpate himself.

This itself is evidence that the confessions are genuine, for why would the NKVD or the prosecution "force" a defendant to lie and successfully hide some crime he had indeed committed?

We are able to prove that the testimony of the defendants at the Moscow Trials was truthful whenever it can be checked. that means that the interrogation-confessions at the Moscow Trials are what they appear to be. They represent what the defendants chose to say, not what they were "forced" to say. The interrogation-confessions of the Moscow Trials defendants are therefore judged to be valid evidence.



Frinovskii's statement of April 11, 1939

In an earlier chapter we studied this important confession statement by Mikhail Frinovskii. Frinovskii confirms what we know from much other, independent evidence: that the conspiracies alleged in the First Moscow Trial against Zinoviev and Kamenev, and in the Third Moscow Trial against Bukharin, Rykov, Iagoda, and others, did in fact exist.

Absent evidence to the contrary, we can accept Frinovskii's account in this statement as falling into one of the latter two categories: either true, or what Frinovskii believed to be true. But Frinovskii's fact-claims demolish the anti-Stalin paradigm! This is why this evidence is ignored by mainstream anticommunist historians: not on objective grounds, but because it does not fit the required, but radically invalid and false, paradigm of the Stalin-era Soviet history that dominates the academic study of this period.

### **Source criticism of Ezhov interrogation-confessions**

Ezhov's interrogation-confessions must be subjected to source criticism using the same method. We must try to check as many fact-claims made by Ezhov as we can against other sources. As in the case of Frinovskii's statement, there are not as many other sources with which to compare Ezhov's fact-claims as there are for the Moscow Trials testimony, a much larger amount of text. Nevertheless, some of Ezhov's fact-claims can be checked against other sources.

### **Mar'iasin**

Lev Efremovich Mar'iasin was Chairman of the directorate of the State Bank. Ezhov names him in his interrogation of June 16, 1939:

Question (Investigator Rodos): Were you friends with Piatakov?

Answer: (Ezhov): Never. Mar'iasin, the president of the Gosbank, introduced us. We would get together for a drinking bout sometimes at his place, sometimes at Piatakov's. And then I always got angry with Piatakov.

...

Q: ...When was this?

A: In 1930 or 1931: I can't remember now. (Polianskii, Ezhov 230-233)

Mar'iasin did not become Chairman of the Directorate of the State Bank until 1934. In 1930-1931 he was a member of the Directorate but not its chairman. By 1939, when this interrogation took place, Mar'iasin was dead. He was chairman from 1934 to 1938.

At his trial in February 1940 Ezhov repudiated his confessions and claimed they were all false. But he does confirm this specific fact-claim.

I have already told the investigation about my enmity with Piatakov. In 1931 Mar'iasin tried to make peace between us, but I refused to do it.

Here Ezhov asks the court to consult the text of one of his confessions in order to find out the truth about his attitude towards Piatakov. Here Ezhov himself verifies a fact-claim that he made in one of his confessions. Ezhov is telling the court: "This statement in that confession of mine is true." But Ezhov has just told the court that his confessions are false! Evidently he did not recognize the contradiction.

Ezhov also confirmed that Mar'iasin had been his friend:

With Mar'iasin I had personal, everyday ties for a long time.

According to Frinovskii Ezhov had ordered Mar'iasin to be beaten repeatedly.

Mar'iasin was arrested, the former chairman of the State Bank, with whom Ezhov had been in close relations before his arrest. Ezhov exhibited an exceptionally great interest in the investigation of his case. He led the investigation on his case personally and was often present at the interrogations. Mar'iasin was held the entire time in the Lefortovo prison. **He was beaten ferociously and continually. If**

**other persons under arrest were beaten only up to the moment they confessed, Mar'iasin was beaten even after the investigation had ended and no more confessions were being taken from him.**

Once, as I walked around the interrogation rooms with Ezhov (and Ezhov was drunk) we dropped in on an interrogation of Mar'iasin and Ezhov spoke for a long time with Mar'iasin, told him that he had still not said everything and, in particular, made a remark to Mar'iasin about terror in general and a terror act against himself, Ezhov, **and then stated that "we will beat, beat, beat you."** (Frinovskii, 46)

In his confession of November 15, 1938, I.N. Dagin, one of Ezhov's "investigator-bonebreakers," testified as follows:

One time, at the end of October or the beginning of November of this year, I stayed in the Kremlin on official business. Knowing that Ezhov was not sleeping (this was about 6 o'clock in the morning) I phoned Ezhov. From his voice I could clearly tell that Ezhov was in a seriously inebriated condition.

... Suddenly Ezhov glared at me and said, gritting his teeth and clenching his fist:

"What, you have all led me on? And this Nikolayev, the swine, is giving confessions against everyone... We'll cut him to pieces.

— I had this good friend, Mar'iasin — continued Ezhov, we worked together in the CC. Mar'iasin opposed our business **and for that he was beaten every day by my order...**

— Mar'iasin's case was long finished, it had been set to be heard, but **I arranged for it to be postponed each time in order to continue to beat Mar'iasin. I ordered them to cut off his ear, his nose, to poke out his eyes, to cut Mari'iasin into pieces.** And that's the way it's going to be with all those..." (Petrov & Iansen, 350)

Both Frinovskii and Dagin testify that Ezhov had Mar'iasin savagely beaten. In his final statement at trial and after having repudiated his confessions

Ezhov still admitted that he had had Mar'iasin beaten:

When he had been arrested, for a long time Mar'iasin did not confess about his espionage and provocations in relation to the members of the Politburo. **That is why I gave the order to "beat up" Mar'iasin.**

Frinovskii and Dagin agree that Ezhov had Mar'iasin badly beaten. Ezhov too agrees. This is another instance where Ezhov, having just declared his confessions to be false, then confirms that the confessions of others about some of his actions are true, and therefore a statement in one of his confessions is true as well.

### **Ezhov's birth**

In his interrogation of October 25, 1939, by NKVD investigator Esaulov, Ezhov claims to clarify the question of his birth.

Q: In official documents you lied that you were born in Petrograd. No information about your birth in that city has been found. Where were you born in reality?

...

A: I only know about the place I was born from my mother's words, from memories of my early childhood. Mother said that I was born in the city of Mariampol [today Marijampolė, Lithuania — GF], in the former Suval'sk guberniia of Lithuania. Afterwards I went to Petrograd. By means of the facts about my birth in Petrograd I wanted to portray myself in the guise of a deeply-rooted proletarian and old revolutionary.

In the confession already cited Dagin confirms Ezhov's confusion about his place of birth.

... Then we all began to review documents that Ezhov brought, and during this he made the following remark: "Here is everything almost from the day of my birth, although where I was born, I myself do not know, no one knows. I believe I was born in Leningrad, but according

to the way my mother told it, somewhere on the road, the devil knows where."

... I seem to remember that sometime earlier Ezhov had somehow mumbled to me that he had been born of Polish blood, his grandfather or someone else was of Polish descent.

Once again, Dagin's confession verifies a fact-claim from one of Ezhov's confessions.

### **Liushkov**

NKVD General Liushkov was sent to the Far East by Ezhov in 1937 and defected to the Japanese in June 1938. Under Japanese auspices Liushkov gave press conferences in which he claimed that all the allegations of conspiracies, beginning with the First Moscow Trial of August 1936 (the Zinoviev-Kamenev trial) were fabrications by Stalin. But this was purely for propaganda purposes. Privately, Liushkov gave his Japanese military handlers details about real conspiracies in the Far East among the military commanders and about their ties to the rights through Rykov. Liushkov confirmed that the conspiracies existed. His testimony, as uncovered by Alvin Coox, dismantles the anti-Stalin paradigm.

But Liushkov did not tell the Japanese, or of course admit at his press conferences, that he himself was part of Ezhov's conspiracy to overthrow Stalin, or that he himself was responsible for mass repressions, including the falsification of evidence. This was revealed by Stephen Merritt's dissertation in 2000. Merritt writes:

Material from both the testimonies of victims and the interrogations of the NKVD operatives themselves, taken when they were later arrested, bears out the claim that the arrival of Liushkov and his group signalled an increase in the use of physical torture and the wholesale fabrication of evidence. Typical of the statements made by NKVD operatives was that by Dimentman, who was to replace Vizel' as head of the Primorsk NKVD. Dimentman stated that illegal methods had begun in Khabarovsk in 1937, when he arrived with the brigade of Mironov, but

that the beating and torture of arrested persons began on a mass order with the arrival of Liushkov. (348)

A.S. Suturen's book on repression in the Soviet Far East, cited by Merritt here, contains testimony by NKVD men arrested and interrogated in 1939 under Beria that attests to the fact that, under Liushkov's leadership, they engaged in beating and fabricating confessions against completely innocent persons.

On May 31, 1939, Semenov said: "With Liushkov's arrival the investigative staff of the directorate, including I, Semenov, used measures of physical action [torture — GF] against those arrested.

"Chief of the investigative section Malakhov gave the order to the investigators of the Secret-Political Section to use measures of physical action against those arrested. Together with Liushkov there arrived in the region a brigade of operations workers (Malakhov, Rysenko). They brought handcuffs which they kept in the investigative section. Upon Malakhov's orders I, Semenov, put handcuffs on the arrested person Ovchinnokov (S.I. Ovchinnikov was the First Secretary of the Ussurii obkom of the VKP(b) and a delegate to the XVII Party Congress)."

Later Semenov stated: "The whole investigative staff of the directorate took part in the beating of prisoners after handcuffing them. He personally used measures of physical action at the interrogation of the chairman of the Ussurii province executive committee Mishin, and in the same way he compiled documents against the arrested Larin, Lukin, and Bragin..." (Suturen, Delo 249)

Frinovskii claimed that Liushkov was one of Ezhov's men for whom Ezhov lied and covered up from the Central Committee and Stalin.

A second fact about which I became aware after I left the NKVD. Ezhov hid from the CC and from Stalin confessions that were sent from the Georgian NKVD on Liushkov and other conspirators at the time of Liushkov's appointment as chief of the directorate of the NKVD in the DVK [Far Eastern Region].

Upon Ezhov's instructions I conducted a "verification" of these confessions against Liushkov by means of interrogating Yagoda. The interrogation was deliberately carried out in such a way that Yagoda did not confirm these confessions against Liushkov, at a time when Liushkov had been one of the men closest to him. Liushkov, as is well known, fled abroad. (49)

We have already quoted from Ezhov's interrogation of August 2, 1939, by NKVD Rodos, where Ezhov admits that:

Q: Did you send Liushkov there specially. What assignments did you give him?

A: At the beginning of 1937 Frinovskii and I conferred with each other and decided that we had to have our own man in the Far East, through whom we could maintain contact with Japanese intelligence. In the event of an attack by the Japanese he was to let the counterrevolutionaries out of the camps, seize with their help the stores of arms and military supplies, and then head terrorist-diversionist work in the rear of the Red Army. We thought about this and chose Liushkov for these purposes, whom I had already recruited to our organization in 1936. Then I transferred him from the Azovo-Chernomorskii region and made him the head of the NKVD in the Far Eastern Region.

The evidence cited by Meritt confirms Ezhov's claim that Liushkov was part of his conspiracy. Liushkov's intense hostility towards Stalin is evident from his press conferences.

Both Frinovskii's statement and Suturin's study confirm a fact-claim made by Ezhov in one of his confessions.

### **The Military Conspiracy**

In an earlier chapter we analyzed Ezhov's confession of April 26, 1939. There he outlines the military conspiracy and its close connections with the German General Staff. The existence of the military conspiracy is confirmed both in the confession by Marshal Tukhachevskii that was

published in the early 1990s and then re-classified, and by Marshal Budennyi' report to Marshal Voroshilov two weeks after the trial and executions of Tukhachevskii and his associates.

The military conspiracy is also confirmed at length in Genrikh Liushkov's remarks to his Japanese handlers as uncovered by Alvin Coox. We have outlined and analyzed Liushov's revelations in detail in *The Murder of Sergei Kirov* and won't repeat all this material here.

Both of these sources confirm Ezhov's testimony about the military conspiracy. Testimony at the Third Moscow Trial also confirms it.

### **Testimony of Zinaida Glikina**

During the interrogation of Ezhov on May 11, 1939 by NKVD man Bogdan Kobulov the investigator raised the question of Ezhov's knowledge of the adulterous affair between Ezhov's wife Elena Solomonovna and the famous Soviet novelist Mikhail Sholokhov.

Q: What can you tell us about her relations with the writer Sholokhov?

A: I seem to recall that, I think last spring, my wife told me that she had meet Sholokhov, who had come to Moscow and dropped in at the journal "SSSR na stroike." There was nothing surprising in this, Ezhova always tried to meet writers and never missed an opportunity to do so. I was very well informed about this.

Q: Good. And what did you do when you found out about the intimate relations between Ezhova and Sholokhov?

A: I did not know anything about such relations; this is the first time I have heard about the,

Q: Don't lie, Ezhov. In June and August of last year upon your instructions Alekhin arranged to monitor the letter "N" at the phone number of the Hotel "Nationale," where Sholokhov was staying.

Ezhov denied knowing about this affair and beating his wife for it:



Q: ...you did know that the intimate relations of Sholokhov with your wife were recorded. Here, take a look at the this.

[Here the investigator reads Kuz'min report report of Dec. 12 1938, according to Polianskii, 224-5]

Do you admit that a few days after you received the transcript you brought it home and showed the document to your wife, and then berated her for betraying you?

A: No such even happened. No one ever gave me this transcript of the intimate relations between Ezhova and Sholokhov, and in general I never showed my wife documents from my work and never told her what they contained.

Q: Of course you can deny this, Ezhov. But we have the confessions of Glikina, Ezhova's close friend and a German spy, who is now arrested and is under investigation. Glikina confesses that Ezhova was beaten by you and complained to her and told her about everything. Therefore let me remind you that lying will not help you!

By chance we have that part of Glikina's confession, which Shentalinskii claims fills an entire notebook, Glikina wrote:

After dinner Ezhov noticeably drunk and nervous, got up from the table, took some document a few pages long out of his briefcase, turned to Khaiutina-Ezhova [his wife] and asked: "Did you cohabit with Sholokhov?" She denied it, whereupon Ezhov with bitterness threw it in her face saying, "Take it, read!"

Ezhov told Glikina to read it too. She described it thus: "I understood that this document was a transcript of everything that had happened between Khaiutina-Ezhova and Sholokhov in his hotel room, and that this clandestine recording had been organized at Ezhov's order."

After this Ezhov finally lost control of himself, ran up to his wife who was standing by the divan and began beating her with his fists on the

face, in the chest, and in other parts of her body. Ezhov only stopped when I interfered... (Shentalinskii, Donos 421-422)

Therefore, this part of Glikina's confession confirms that genuineness of the May 11, 1938, interrogation of Ezhov by Kobulov. It is significant that Ezhov lied to Kobulov, whereupon the latter had the transcript of Glikina's testimony to confront him. Nothing of the kind would be necessary if the NKVD intended to beat, torture, or otherwise compel Ezhov to say what they wanted him to say.

Therefore these two passages are evidence that, although Ezhov lied for some reason, *the investigation was genuine*. Ezhov was not beaten into a false confession. Nor was he beaten in order to get him to tell the truth — in this case, about his knowledge of his wife's adultery with Sholokhov and his beating her.

On the contrary: the investigator utilized a conventional interrogation technique familiar to investigators everywhere: to try to get the prisoner to tell the truth by confronting him with the testimony of others who have already named him. This is strong evidence that the investigation of Ezhov did not proceed by beating him.

We note in passing that Glikina also confirms Ezhov's guilt in "anti-party activity." Glikina lived with the Ezhovs and spent a great deal of time with them. In the very short passage from her confession quoted by Shentalinskii she concedes:

... However, I do not intend to present myself as completely innocent. I admit that I am guilty in that, **though I knew all about Ezhov's anti-party activities I hid everything I knew** and did not report it to anyone because of my close relationship with his wife N.I. Ezhova and to him personally, and was completely devoted to them. (Shentalinskii, Donos 418)

## **Confessions of Izrail' Moiseevich Leplevskii**

In a passage we have already quoted in an earlier chapter Frinovskii identified Leplevskii as one of Ezhov's "investigator-bonebreakers":

"Investigator-bonebreakers" were chosen basically from among the conspirators or persons who were compromised. They had unsupervised recourse to beating arrested persons and in a very short time obtained "confessions" and knew how to write up transcripts in a grammatical and elegant fashion.

In this category belong: Nikolayev, Agas, Ushakov, Listengurt, Evgen'ev, Zhupakhin, Minaev, Davydov, Al'tman, Geiman, Litvin, **Leplevskii**, Karelin, Kerzon, Iamnitskii, and others. (45)

During his interrogation by NKVD man Rodos of July 8, 1939, Ezhov testified:

At that time the leadership of our organization decided to move to active measures. There was a lot of evidence against Leplevskii and Zakovskii showing that they were spies and enemies of the people. It was impossible to hide such matters, and we had to get rid of these people, we couldn't use them, they could cause everything to fail. We decided to replace them with Uspenskii and Litvin.

Leonid Naumov reproduces a summary report on Leplevskii made in June 1956. This was a period when, by Khrushchev's order, many files of those executed for treason during the 1930s were being reviewed. The report in question is a summary of Leplevskii's file. The report states in part:

**Leplevskii confesses that when he worked in the Ukraine he did not struggle against the organized counterrevolution but only exposed those whom, given the existing situation, it was impossible to hide any longer (Liubchenko, Khvyliia, Poraiko). At the same time in organizing the mass operations he would consciously arrest innocent, honest Soviet citizens so as to be able to show large number and a determined struggle against counterrevolution. (In the guise of liquidating the Polish underground more than 30 thousand persons were arrested, but the serious counterrevolutionary Polish formations remained untouched.)**

... From Kosior Leplevskii knew that despite the losses suffered by the conspiracy significant forces of the plot remained untouched, **but in order to carry out a *coup d'état* successfully it was essential to have an orientation abroad towards the Germans and Poles, who were ready to cooperate on this question.** (Naumov, Stalin 541-2)

Leplevskii does *not* mention Ezhov as a leader of the conspiracy. This is consistent with what Ezhov himself testified in his August 8, 1939, interrogation:

Question: Give more detailed information about each oblast separately, and report to the investigation those facts known to you about provocational methods of repression that were deliberately carried out.

Answer: I'll begin with the Ukraine. **The People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the UkSSR was headed at the beginning by Leplevskii, a member of the anti-Soviet organization of Rightists,** and then by Uspenskii, a conspirator whom I had recruited. The mass operation had been begun under Leplevskii, but Uspenskii's share of repressed persons was no smaller.

Question: **Was Leplevskii aware of your conspiratorial plans?**

Answer: **No, Leplevskii could hardly have known about our real conspiratorial plans.** In any case I myself did not recruit him to our conspiratorial organization and did not inform him of our plan to conduct the operation in a provocational manner. None of the leading conspirators told me that he was connected to Leplevskii in the conspiracy. (369)

Ezhov then describes Leplevskii's activity in suppressing honest Soviet citizens while leaving the real conspirators alone.

In carrying out the mass operation Leplevskii, like most of the other chiefs of the UNKVDs who were not conspirators, spread them out over a broad front **while leaving the most bitter and active of the organizers from among the kulaks, White Guardists, Petliurovists, counter-revolutionary clergy, etc., almost untouched.** At the same

**time he concentrated the whole force of his blow against the less active elements and in part among that part of the population that was close to Soviet power. (370)**

The 1956 review reports that Leplevskii fully confessed this guilt at trial. Let's consider this interesting question:

- If Leplevskii had said that he was part of Ezhov's conspiracy, then we could conclude that Ezhov was lying, as he lied about knowing about his wife's infidelity with Sholokhov.
- If Leplevskii had not confessed he might have done so because he thought his best tactic was to deny his crimes or because he was in fact innocent.

In fact the two Ezhov confessions and the 1956 report on Leplevskii mutually confirm each other.

### **Agnessa Mironova-Korol'**

In his book *Stalin i NKVD* historian Leonid Naumov writes:

Interestingly, in January 1939, S. Mironov-Korol' [S.N. Mironov's full name] was arrested, and almost immediately testified that **in July 1937 in a private conversation Frinovskii told him of Ezhov's intention to come to power on the basis of their group in the NKVD.** Of course, one might attribute this to the imagination of Beria's investigators. But here's an interesting detail. **Mironov's wife Agnes Mironov in her memoirs says almost the same thing: "We thought that Ezhov had risen even higher than Stalin."** These thoughts, according to the text of memoirs, are from sometime in mid-1938. But who is this "we" who were thinking such thoughts? Judging by the text of Mironova's memoirs, she was then talking only with the members of her family, with Mironov's brother, the intelligence official David Korol' and his family, and with the Frinovskii family. (263)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The autobiography of Agnessa Mironova-Korol' is available at the Russian online journal *Pseudology*. This passage is from Part 2, page 25.

See <http://www.pseudology.org/GULAG/Agnessa/06.htm> It is also at <http://www.memo.ru/history/agnessa/Chapt1h.htm>

Mironova-Korol' did not in fact know much of NKVD work apart from rumors. But this reflects what she thought, based on her personal contacts. She also reports that even the Politburo members were afraid of Ezhov, or at least wary around him, and that she witnessed this herself. Her testimony is consistent with her husband Mironov's account of what Frinovskii had said to him. And that is consistent with what Frinovskii testified in his statement of April 11, 1939, to Beria, which we studied in a previous chapter.

### **Ezhov's renunciation of his confessions and his final statement at his trial**

Pavliukov describes the conclusion of the investigation of Ezhov's case as follows.

The last interrogation took place on January 31 [1940], and on the very next day the assistant chief of the investigative section of the NKVD of the USSR A.A. Esaulov composed a protocol of the conclusion of the investigation. Ezhov was given for his perusal 12 volumes of his criminal case. He read through it and declared that he confirmed all the confessions given by him at the preliminary investigation, and that he had no additions to make. (529)

But the next day, according to Pavliukov, Ezhov received a visit from Lavrentii Beria during which he informed Beria that he would now deny everything, that all the charges against him were a complete invention.

What was going on here? Pavliukov makes the following surmise:

Evidently Ezhov, having understood that after the formal court procedure he would have no chance of remaining alive, had decided to delay the trial, hoping that they would not bring to trial a defendant who had renounced his confessions. And any delay in such an important case might attract the attention of Stalin who, having learned

what was happening, might send some representative to find out what was happening. And then at last there might be a chance to tell the Vozhd' [leader, i.e. Stalin] the truth about why and how his faithful pupil and comrade-in-arms had been forced to slander himself.

However, Ezhov's plans — if such they were — were not successful.  
(530)

A transcript of Ezhov's trial must still exist. Pavliukov evidently had privileged access to it or to a summary of it. Evidently it is still classified despite the expiration of more than 75 years.

Pavliukov describes the trial itself as follows:

Then the protocol concerning the conclusion of the investigation was announced, in which Ezhov had confirmed the truth of his confessions with his own signature. Ezhov stated that at that moment he had not retracted these confessions, but that he was retracting them now. He had no connections with any intelligence services, had not planned any terrorist act on Red Square on November 7, 1938, and had never taken part in any conspiratorial activity.

It was necessary for the court to set aside its preliminary intention to do without witnesses and to calling into the courtroom one of them, Ezhov's former assistant M. P. Frinovskii. That same day he too was supposed to appear in court and probably was somewhere nearby.

Frinovskii stated that soon after his appointment as Commissar of Internal Affairs **Ezhov had recruited him into the conspiratorial organization in the NKVD organized by himself**. At first they prevented the exposure of the participants of the Right-Trotskyite bloc as much as possible, and at the end of 1937 they set to the creation of a terrorist group within the NKVD.

Besides that Frinovskii discussed the falsification, in accordance with Ezhov's directives, of the s-called mercury poisoning, the murder on Ezhov's order of the chief of the Foreign Division of the GUGB of the

NKVD A. A. Slutskii, and of the poisoning by Ezhov of his own [Ezhov's] wife.

In answer to the questions of the chairman V.V. El-rikh Ezhov called everything Frinovskii said to be vicious slander. He did not poison his wife and did not send her luminal, and in relation to Slutskii had had a directive from "directive organs" not to arrest him but to get rid of him by another means, "as otherwise our whole foreign intelligence service would would have fled." The need to get rid of Slutskii was dictated, in Ezhov's words, by the fact that there were very weighty confessions of the former assistant commissar for internal affairs Ia. S. Agranov.

Ezhov continued that he did not take part in the anti-Soviet conspiracy together with Frinovskii. Evdokimov, Dagin, and the other persons whom he had named in his confessions as participants in the conspiracy were in fact not such, or in any case he did not know anything about that. (531-532)

A text has been published that purports to be Ezhov's final speech at his trial. I have translated it and put it online. (Ezhov, Last) Briukhanov and Shoshkov make the following comments on Ezhov's last words:

Reading "the Last Word" it is impossible not to notice that Ezhov said nothing about the essence of the accusations leveled against him. He rejected them all, but spoke mainly about his services in exposing "enemies and spies of various types and intelligence services" **while stating at the same time he had "such crimes for which I could be shot,"** promising to discuss them, but admitted guilt only in that he "did not purge enough" enemies.

Ezhov denied his participation in a secret organization directed against the Party and the government, saying that, on the contrary, he had taken all measures to expose the conspirators who had murdered S.M. Kirov. **But was there a conspiracy in the organs of the NKVD? Or did those 14 thousand NKVD men whom Ezhov purged act individually — each one on his own?**



Judging from the transcript [of Ezhov's trial] such a question was not raised at the trial: Everything was clear to the court as it was. The "sincere confessions" in his "Last word" did not ring true. Ezhov was careful to avoid any sharp corners. He even distorted the episode that had already figured in the trial of Bukharin, Rykov and the others, concerning the falsification of a terrorist act against himself. As it turned out the "terrorist act" was planned and executed — if we can even use that word in this case — by Ezhov and by the former chief of the counter-revolutionary section Nikolaev in order to increase the authority of the "iron commissar." Having consulted with specialists about the conditions for mercury poisoning Nikolaev had rubbed mercury into the upholstery of the soft furniture in Ezhov's office and submitted a piece of cloth for laboratory analysis. In the "terrorist act" they blamed NKVD man Savolainen, on whom a vial of mercury was planted. After the necessary "working over" Savolainen confessed to everything.

And Ezhov's attempt to deny the accusation about dissolution in his morals and private life, to convince the court that he was supposedly for his modesty and honesty, seems altogether senseless.

As a whole the "Last word" creates an impression of something not thought through, rambling, incomplete, and dishonest. And yet Ezhov, in essence, had nothing to lose. He could have spoken more frankly.  
(153)

The last two sentences suggest that Briukhanov and Shoshkov believe that Ezhov had only acted upon Stalin's orders. If that had been so then Ezhov would indeed have been a fool not to "speak more frankly."

But we know that it is not true. Ezhov could *renounce* his many confessions. But he could not *refute* them. For one thing the investigators had interrogated those whom Ezhov had named in his confessions, and compared and collated the confessions. Also, the court had the testimony of many others, and witnesses at hand to testify — not only Frinovsky but others, perhaps many others.

Pavliukov did not state the matter as plainly as he should have done. Given the voluminous confessions he had made, and the immense amount of testimony against him, the only thing Ezhov could possibly gain by renouncing his own confessions was to force the court to convict him on the testimony of witnesses. That is in fact what happened.

As Nikolai Bukharin stated at his own trial in March 1938:

The confession of the accused is not essential. (1938 Trial, 778)

This is indeed a feeble attempt at justifying oneself. Very few of the specific crimes to which Ezhov had confessed are mentioned. Nor does a last-minute retraction of confessions that the defendant has just finished affirming carry any conviction. Even a person totally unfamiliar with the facts of the case would ask: Was he lying then? Or is he lying now? On top of which Ezhov admits, cryptically, that he had committed "such crimes for which I should be shot." Such a statement, lacking almost all specifics, calls into question not so much the confessions but the credibility of the person who makes it.

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Pavliukov tells the story about how in the 1990s Ezhov's daughter Natalia Khaiutina petitioned to have her father "rehabilitated." In 1998 the office of the Main Military Procuracy determined that there was no evidence that Ezhov had been a traitor (had conspired with Germany or Poland). But it did conclude the following:

The evidence gathered in this case confirms the guilt of Ezhov N.I. in organizing political repression against innocent citizens, illegal arrests, using physical means of compulsion against those under investigation, falsification of materials in criminal cases, all of which had irreversible consequences, which materially furthered the weakening of the power of the State. That is, he was guilty of acts aimed at undermining and weakening the state and damage to its economic and military power.  
(545)

Without saying so in so many words the Procuracy declared that Ezhov was indeed guilty of mass repressions. However, it said nothing about *why* Ezhov did these things: nothing about any conspiracy. About treason — the charges of collaboration with the Germans and Japanese and conspiring to overthrow the government, lead revolts against it, and murder Stalin and other leaders — nothing at all was said.

## **Conclusion**

Whenever we are able to double-check a fact-claim made concerning Ezhov's interrogation-confessions or Frinovskii's statement, we find that those documents are true. This is so even in the case where Ezhov was evidently lying in saying that he had not known of his wife's affair with Sholokov. Therefore, we have no reason not to use Frinovskii's and Ezhov's statements and confessions as truthful.

## Chapter 17. What Really Happened

In the dominant model of Soviet history of the 1930s the conspiracies alleged by the Stalin government were all bogus. The conspiracy that led to Kirov's murder, the conspiracies to which the defendants in the three Moscow Trials confessed, the Tukhachevskii Affair military conspiracy — all these never existed. All were frame-ups of innocent persons, and all are attributed to Stalin. Naturally, Ezhov's conspiracy never existed either. Michael Ellman believes that the "Ezhovshchina" should be called the "Stalinshchina" since, he claims, Stalin planned it all, Ezhov having been merely a tool. Many conventional or "mainstream" anticommunist historians contend that the "Great Terror" began as early as 1936, or even 1934.

This is not history. Rather, it is deduction from firmly entrenched but demonstrably false premises. If one believes *a priori*, in thrall to the anti-Stalin paradigm, that none of the alleged conspiracies existed, it follows that all were fabrications by the Soviet NKVD and prosecution. If one believes *a priori* that Stalin was an all-powerful "dictator" it follows that everything that happened must have happened because Stalin wanted it to happen. Likewise, the mass repressions must have stopped only when Stalin decided they were no longer needed and it could possibly become dangerous for them to continue.

This whole line of thinking is based on a paradigm that flies in the face of an objective assessment of the available evidence. It represents the triumph of anticommunist ideology over objectivity and is contradicted by all the evidence. We have an immense amount of evidence about each of these conspiracies. We know that Stalin was not a dictator and frequently could not get what he wanted, contested elections to the soviets being the clearest example in our discussion.

In hewing to what we have called the "anti-Stalin paradigm" mainstream Soviet historiography follows political, anticommunist imperatives. Demonizing the Soviet Union serves the propaganda function which

remains the primary function of the field of Soviet history as it has always been.

Historians are supposed to be objective, to question their own preconceived ideas and the paradigms that inform those ideas, shape them into explanatory narratives; to give a more generous reading to evidence that contradicts their preconceived ideas and read with an especially skeptical attitude that evidence that seems to reinforce their own biases. If a historian does not begin his/her research with determination to be objective, to discover the truth according to the best evidence and logical induction from this evidence, then that historian has no chance of stumbling across the truth by accident and what he or she does "discover" will not be the truth.

This is why mainstream historians of the so-called "great terror" have failed to attain an account of these mass repressions that fits the evidence. Mainstream historiography has chosen not to do so.

### **What Did Happen?**

The evidence now available suggests that the repressions of the period 1934-1938 saw the following political developments in the Bolshevik Party.

1. The gradual discovering of a wide-ranging conspiracy among many leading Bolsheviks against the Stalin government. These conspiracies developed out of the factional disputes of the post-Revolution period and became particularly acute during the 1920s. After the defeat of the United Opposition in 1927, with the ensuing expulsion and then "capitulation" of most of its members, and Leon Trotsky's expulsion from the USSR in February 1929, the opposition factions, which already had a clandestine, underground existence, endured a period of disorganization.

They were regathered in 1931-1932 as a "bloc" of Zinovievists, Trotskyists, Rights, and other oppositionists. This bloc — all parties, including both its participants and the Soviet prosecution, used this term — first planned to come to power when the Soviet government collapsed under the strain of rapid industrialization and opposition to collectivization, or when the Stalin government failed to cope with an attack by capitalist powers.

During 1933 it became clear to the bloc leaders that the Stalin government had come through the crisis successfully and would not collapse, while capitalist powers failed to invade. The bloc then turned to the tactic of a *coup d'état* and assassination of the Stalin leadership as the only way to seize power. Contact was made, and agreements reached, with at least Germany and Japan, and also with England and France, to gain recognition once their *coup* had succeeded.

This plan began to be put into operation on December 1, 1934, with the murder of Sergei Mironovich Kirov, First Secretary of the Bolshevik Party in Leningrad, who was assassinated by a clandestine Zinovievist group. Other groups within the bloc such as the Rights and Trotskyists knew that this assassination attempt was being planned and were either planning their own attempt or had agreed not to interfere. The Zinovievist assassin Leonid Nikolaev was supposed to commit suicide immediately after killing Kirov. This suicide attempt failed and he was captured and interrogated.

Because he had no "cover story" prepared — he was not supposed to survive — his attempts to concoct a story on the spot were full of contradictions. The NKVD investigators kept Nikolaev talking. Within a few days, he had named a number of his associates, who were arrested and interrogated in turn. Very soon the investigators had enough testimony to convict the fourteen members of the Leningrad Zinovievist group, and to prove that Zinoviev, Kamenev, and a few of their associates, all in Moscow, were aware of the Leningrad group. The NKVD did not prove that Zinoviev and Kamenev were complicit in Kirov's murder, but only because Genrikh Iagoda, the chief of the NKVD, was himself involved in the conspiracy. However, they and some of their associates were convicted of failing to report the Leningrad group and merely sentenced to prison terms.

During 1935 a conspiracy within the Kremlin was uncovered. This led to additional suspicions against Zinoviev and Kamenev, since some of the latter's relatives were involved. It also led to suspicions against Avel' Enukidze, who was responsible for the library staff.

In early 1936 the investigation of the Kirov murder was resumed, resulting in more arrests and some confessions. By July there was enough information from these confessions to infer the existence of a much broader conspiracy involving Zinovievists and Trotskyists. In late July Zinoviev and Kamenev, confronted and accused by some of their followers, confessed to being directly involved in Kirov's murder. This resulted in the First Moscow Trial of August 1936. Defendants at that trial identified others who comprised a spare, or "parallel," leadership group, including Karl Radek, Iurii Piatakov, and Grigory Sokol'nikov. Bukharin and Rykov were also named. On September 26, 1936 Genrikh Iagoda was removed as chief of the NKVD and replaced by Nikolai Ezhov. The Second Moscow Trial of January 1937 led to the executions of most of the defendants, including Piatakov, and prison for others.

Meanwhile Bukharin and Rykov, as leaders of the Rights, were accused by many of their former supporters. The evidence against them was the first item of business at the February-March 1937 Central Committee Plenum. After three days of discussions and accusations Bukharin and Rykov were arrested and imprisoned.

Stalin had been planning a redraft of the Soviet Constitution since at least 1935. In March 1936 he gave an interview to US newspaper magnate Roy Howard in which Stalin — over-optimistically equating his view with the outcome of the CC vote — promised contested elections for the legislative bodies, the soviets. The Constitution was drafted and adopted in 1936. But at the February-March 1937 CC Plenum there was much opposition to it from the CC members. Most of those who spoke warned against hostility among the population and about anticommunist groups, including returned kulaks, religious figures, former White Guardists, and members of the new illegal Social-Revolutionary Party.

It was clear that most CC members did not want contested elections under these circumstances. Stalin and his supporters argued the case for contested elections but clearly did not convince many, if any. This is not to argue for either side of this debate, since both had valid reasons for their respective positions. Rather, it is to emphasize that Stalin's leadership was just that — leadership. Stalin did not possess dictatorial powers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Stephen G. Wheatcroft, "From Team-Stalin to Degenerate Tyranny." In E.A. Reez, ed., *The Nature of Stalin's Dictatorship. The Politburo, 1924-1953*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 79-107. Wheatcroft argues that Stalin was no dictator up to the early 1940s. Wheatcroft cites no evidence for his claim in the title that Stalin became a "tyrant" or dictator during his last years.

On March 1, 1937 Genrikh Iagoda was arrested. He had been implicated by testimony at the Second Moscow Trial and, evidently, by testimony of others under interrogation. By April 1937 Iagoda had begun to outline his own involvement in the Rightist conspiracy and his prior knowledge of the plan to murder Kirov.

In April and May 1937 NKVD investigators had gotten enough testimony from military men involved in the conspiracies already including Marshal Mikhail N. Tukhachevskii. When investigators came to interrogate Ian Gamarnik, head of the Political Directorate of the Red Army, he committed suicide. In late May and early June Tukhachevskii and others confessed to conspiring with the Rights, with the Troskyists and directly with Trotsky, and with the German General Staff in a plot to overthrow the Stalin government, seize power, and become an ally with Nazi Germany. On June 11-12 Tukhachevskii and seven others were tried, confessed at trial, were convicted, and executed.

During the first week of May 1937 the "May Days" revolt broke out in Barcelona, Spain. Among its leaders were longtime Trotskyists. At the Second Moscow Trial in January, 1937 Karl Radek had called up the Trotskyists in Spain to stop their plotting against the Spanish Republic or face the consequences. The NKVD had obtained intelligence that German and Francoist agents had been attempting to provoke just such a revolt. At a talk to military officers in early June Stalin said that the Tukhachevskii defendants wanted to make of the Soviet Union "another Spain" — to stab it in the back when it was attacked by fascist powers.

From April 1937 on we have a number of interrogations of high-ranking Bolshevik government and Party officials in which they confess to being a part of the Rightist conspiracy. On June 2, 1937, Bukharin broke his silence



and began to give very dramatic confessions of his own guilt in this same Rightist conspiracy.

During the June 1937 CC Plenum 15 members of the CC and 16 candidate members were removed from the CC. Earlier in 1937 5 members and 5 candidate members had been expelled, for a total of 20 members and 21 candidate members since the beginning of 1937. During the rest of 1938 18 more members and 15 more candidate members were expelled. In total, 38 members and 36 candidate members were expelled from the central Committee. As far as we call tell — little information has been released about some of them — all were expelled for being a part of the clandestine conspiracy of the Right-Trotskyist bloc.

By the time the June 1937 Plenum ended both the Right-Trotskyist conspiracy and the military conspiracy, which was linked to it, were on the defensive. Ten more CC members were removed from the CC in December 1937 and two more in early 1938 for a total of 50. The Third Moscow Trial of March 1937 Right-Trotskyist Trial of which Bukharin, Rykov, Iagoda, and Khristian Rakovskii are perhaps the best known defendants, was the culmination in the demolition of the conspiracy of the bloc.

## **Elections**

A day before the October 1937 CC Plenum began Stalin and the Politburo withdrew their efforts to force competitive elections, required under the new 1936 Constitution. It is possible that the remaining CC members along with the NKVD had been repressing prospective hostile voters, the *lishentsy*, up to this point. It's important to realize, however, that we have no evidence that this was so. After the October 1937 CC Plenum it would have made no sense to do this.

There is no question that the CC members in February-March and in June 1937 opposed competitive elections to the soviets. This opposition is firmly documented. But repression — meaning mass murder and mass imprisonment — of hostile prospective voters to prevent a hostile takeover of the soviets makes no sense after October 1937, for after that there would be no contested election.

In January 1938 Pavel Postyshev was sharply criticized, then removed from the Politburo, then in February from the CC, then arrested, and ultimately tried and convicted, for being a part of the Rightist conspiracy. According to the evidence now available Postyshev was indeed repressing Party members, especially Party officials. The main resolution of the January 1938 CC Plenum was aimed at unwarranted mass expulsion of Party members by higher Party officials.

Judging from the scanty documentation we have today, Postyshev was also terrorizing many others. According to one account of this evidence, between June 1937 and January 1938, when he was removed from office, Postyshev had 34,540 persons prosecuted for criminal offenses and about 5000 shot. Stalin said that Postyshev was shooting the whole Party leadership and destroying the Party on thin grounds or on no grounds at all.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See "The January 1938 CC Plenum," pp. 99 ff. above.

Postyshev's actions in Kuibyshev are consistent with his being both a part of the Rightist conspiracy and engaging in the kind of massive, illegal executions of innocent people on the flimsiest of grounds or on no grounds at all, that Frinovskii and Ezhov agreed were part of their NKVD conspiracy. Postyshev agreed to this charge to which he confessed in April 1938 and, evidently, was the reason Molotov and Voroshilov went to see him in prison to learn from his own lips that he was guilty.

Postyshev may have told the truth. Or he may have been forced by Ezhov to confess, after he was already exposed at the January 1938 CC Plenum.

Therefore it appears that at least some CC members were repressing Party members. It was after the failure of the Tukhachevskii conspiracy that, according to Ezhov, he began his massive repressions of innocent Soviet citizens, of whom Party members must have been a very small proportion.

## Chapter 18. Conclusion

The only conclusion supported by the evidence is that the mass murders of many tens of thousands of Soviet citizens was the result of a conspiracy by Nikolai Ezhov, People's Commissar of the NKVD.

In the introduction we stated the three principal questions about the "Ezhovshchina" or "Great Terror" as follows:

1. Did hundreds of thousands of innocent victims meet their deaths?
2. Was Stalin responsible for these murders, as is usually claimed?
3. If — as the evidence demands us to conclude — Stalin was innocent and was part of putting a stop to this crime against humanity, how could he and his colleagues have been oblivious to what was happening for so long?

The answers to the first two questions are yes, and no, respectively.

The answer to question three is more complex. The evidence shows that it took a long time for the Stalin leadership to realize what was going on, on a national level. In the meantime Ezhov was supplying Stalin and the leadership with voluminous documentation of conspiracies, many of which were falsified but some of which were genuine.

What happened was a kind of mirror image of the Big Lie technique. As Hitler explained in *Mein Kampf*, the "big lie" is a falsehood that is so big, so important, that most people will be unwilling to think anyone would try to get away with unless it were true. Paradoxically, it thereby becomes difficult to believe that it isn't true and is therefore accepted. There were at least three reasons that the Stalin leadership took so long to realize what was happening before they put a stop to it and executed those responsible.

- There were genuine conspiracies behind which Ezhov et al. were able to hide their unhidden trials and executions (out in the open and well reported to the CC), as justified attempts to end the conspiracies.
- The Stalin leadership was occupied with many very complex tasks at the time — including preparing for a coming war that they well

recognized was mainly designed to crush their revolution, conscious co-operators rather than the selfish individualists that capitalism had trained people to be for centuries, the need to organize and rule over a vast geographical area (the largest country in the world in area).

Because of these complex multiple tasks, all of which were absolute necessities, the Stalin leadership was forced to delegate tasks, around the immense country, to people they thought they could trust.

- The natural difficulty of believing the hints that came in, slowly at first, that something awful was actually occurring at the hands of their trusted delegates. This must have been particularly hard since such stories could have been inspired precisely by the very enemies they hoped to eliminate.

## **Terminology**

"Great Terror" is a misleading name, but not because no one was terrorized. Certainly many people were. It is misnamed because Robert Conquest invented the term "Great Terror" to mean "*Stalin's Purge of the '30s*," and it was no such thing. Ezhov picked a great many of his victims at random, a process that must have sparked great fear. But this was not the Soviet government, not "Stalin." The mass murders, the only events that could have spread "terror," were perpetrated not by the Soviet government but by the enemies of the Soviet government: Ezhov, his men, and some members of the political elite of the Party and state.

The Soviet population was not "ruled by terror," and the Soviet population generally was not "terrorized." The term "great terror" is false in the way in which Conquest used it and in the way it continues to be used in the biased field of Soviet history. The falsehood is located not in the assertion that there was terror but in the claim as to who the terrorists were.

Ezhov's mass repressions were a continuation of the conspiracies described at the three Moscow Trials and the Tukhachevskii Affair. Ezhov had long been a Rightist. He initiated his own NKVD conspiracy — the mass murders — after the military conspiracy had been discovered and, in the main, destroyed.

Ezhov acted together with at least one of the military conspirators, Marshal Egorov. He fooled Stalin and the Soviet leadership with false reports, many of which have survived.

When, finally, news of massive illegal repressions reached a certain level Stalin and Politburo reacted. First they removed Frinovskii as Ezhov's deputy and put Lavrentii Beria in his place. Later Ezhov was persuaded, or forced, to resign. The repressions immediately stopped. Investigation began to disclose the enormity of Ezhov's crimes.

During 1939 Ezhov and many of his men were arrested and made confessions. Ezhov and Frinovskii gave the general outlines, and much of the detail, of their massive crimes. The small number of these confessions that have been published constitute an important body of evidence. Source criticism shows that there are no objective grounds to dismiss them.

A great many innocent persons had been murdered. From 1939 into the war years Beria, as head of the NKVD, and the Soviet Procuracy reviewed hundreds of thousands of cases and released hundreds of thousands of persons whom they judged had been wrongly imprisoned.

At the same time they continued to investigate, uncover, and punish persons who really were involved in anti-Soviet conspiracies. Real conspiracies did exist. Ezhov's and Frinovskii's confessions make it clear that not everyone repressed under Iagoda and Ezhov was innocent. These investigations continued into the war years. Tokaev and Svetlanin testify to the fact that some conspirators were never identified.

This is the only version of the mass repressions that can be supported by the evidence. It is confirmed by the convergence of a great many individual pieces of evidence. The "mainstream" explanation for the Ezhovshchina is that Stalin intended and planned it. But there is not now, nor has there ever been, *any* evidence to support this conclusion. Rather, it flows from the *a priori* acceptance of the anti-Stalin paradigm.

It will be rejected by those who are incapable, or contemptuous, of objectivity. The false story that "Stalin the dictator" planned and carried out these massive repressions, just as he had fabricated all the alleged

conspiracies is the only account tolerated by mainstream Soviet historiography. But there is no evidence to support it and a great deal of evidence that it is wrong.

Leaders of the CPSU and their researchers have long known the truth about the repressions and conspiracies. Khrushchev and his men had to lie deliberately to put forward their false version that the repressions were Stalin's doing. Gorbachev's men continued in this vein. They kept the truth a secret while inventing falsehoods to blame Stalin.

The version set forth here absolves Stalin of *guilt* for the massive repressions. This is what is unacceptable to mainstream Soviet history. But it was certainly Stalin's *responsibility*, as the principle political leader of the country, to take decisive action to stop violations of justice, have them investigated, and make sure those responsible are punished. Stalin did this. Tragically, it took him many months to fully realize what was really going on, by which time Ezhov and his men had murdered hundreds of thousands of innocent Soviet citizens.

In a 1976 review Roger Pethybridge wrote the following about the fixation on the "evil Stalin" in the historiography of the Soviet Union:

If one considers all the well-known biographies of Stalin, a common feature emerges: the volumes are a quite accurate reflection of biographical method current at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, when historical biographies dwelt on so-called "good" and "bad" kings. The personality who reigned appeared to dominate not only the political but the social and economic life of his kingdom, so that by a sneeze or a yawn he could magically change the whole socioeconomic pattern of his reign. This method of historical biography has long been discounted in the treatment of authoritarian rule in earlier history. It has also been discarded with regard to the study of Nazi Germany. Unfortunately, it still remains as a specter from the past in the study of Soviet personalities in high politics.

The anti-Stalin paradigm resembles the "great man theory of history" that was already abandoned by serious historians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The

problem was not that the Soviet system put into power a paranoid or psychopathically murderous person as, following Khrushchev, so many anticommunist and Trotskyist historians claim. Rather, the problem — the failure — was systemic.

Most Bolsheviks, like most Soviet citizens, were honorable, hardworking, and devoted to the cause of socialism and communism. But a small number of them were not honorable and devoted, or began that way but were corrupted, so that immense injustices were perpetrated and enormous harm was done.

The Bolshevik Party promoted people to positions of power who used that power to commit massive crimes. German, Japanese, and other foreign intelligence services made use of some of these persons. But the basic corruption came from within: not only from intelligence agents of capitalist countries — though they certainly played a role — but from the retention, or insufficiently thorough rejection, of the ideas and values of exploitative, capitalist society.

### Unresolved Issues

There are some issues that are not clear. One of them is the question of the relationship between Stalin's push for contested elections and the Right-Trotskyist conspiracy involving First Secretaries and the NKVD. Stalin's push for competitive elections was defeated, and competitive elections taken off the table, just before the October, 1937 CC Plenum. Therefore mass repression cannot have been aimed at *lishentsy*, at least not after mid-October 1937.

One hypothesis is that Stalin wished to break up the "family groups" of leaders and their followers who dominated the Bolshevik Party local leaderships, and therefore had them killed on some pretext or other. It is certainly true that almost all of the First Secretaries elected at the XVII Party Congress in 1934 were convicted and executed as part of the Right-Trotskyist conspiracy.

But the evidence now available suggests that, on the contrary, it was these powerful local Party leaders, the "Soviet prefects," who wanted to get rid of

Stalin! Getting rid of Stalin and those loyal to him, and putting into power a leadership with a Rightist economic and political agenda, was the goal of the Rights in the bloc.

The other purported explanation of the mass repressions is that Stalin himself wanted to suppress — kill or imprison — any potential "Fifth Column" in a way with Germany or Japan. As it happens, this is true — but not in the way it has been understood by mainstream anticommunist historiography. This "fifth column explanation" is false in that the exaggerated application of death sentences to hundreds of thousands of innocent persons was not Stalin's doing. Rather, Ezhov did this under the guise of ridding the nation of its actual and undisputed "Fifth Column" of conspirators.

We know that these conspiracies existed and we know the mechanism by which Ezhov concealed from Stalin and the central leadership just what he was up to. There is no evidence whatever to support the version that Ezhov's mass murders were Stalin's doing. This version contradicts all the evidence we do have. It survives because it "saves" the anti-Stalin paradigm.

## **Resolution**

The evidence we now have supports two hypotheses. First, that many First Secretaries and other Party leaders were involved in Right-Trotskyist conspiracy. Second, that some of them were also directly involved with Ezhov's NKVD conspiracy. Jansen and Petrov cite evidence that Robert Eikhe was involved with Ezhov's conspiracy. Eikhe is also mentioned by Frinovskii in his statement to Beria of April 11, 1939.

Pavel Postyshev, who confessed to being a member of the Right-Trotskyist conspiracy, was involved in massive repressions against innocent people, both Party members and others, in Kuibyshev. Ezhov and Frinovskii did exactly this. It appears likely that Postyshev too was involved in both conspiracies.



Ezhov's conspiracy was a spinoff of the Right-Trotskyist conspiracy. Ezhov testified that he began his massive executions after the executions of Tukhachevskii and other leaders of the military conspiracy. This is consistent with what we know of Eikhe's and Postyshev's mass repressions. It was a very dangerous moment for the Soviet state and Ezhov took advantage of it.

From the beginning the Right-Trotskyist conspiracy was a bloc of different oppositional groups, originating as anti-Stalin factions, with somewhat different programs and different leaderships. The Trotskyists did not trust the Rights, nor did the Rights, like Iagoda and Bukharin, trust the Trotskyists or agree with Trotsky in some respects. Tukhachevskii was aligned with both but saw himself as the eventual leader of the state. Ezhov too aimed to be the next leader of the Soviet Union. Each faction in the bloc was willing to sacrifice the others to save themselves.

Defeatism and assassination were common threads in all the conspiracies. The former oppositionists, and many former Stalin supporters too, could not believe that the USSR would succeed. Either the pressures of crash industrialization and collectivization would cause the Stalin government to collapse, perhaps in widespread rebellion, or a combination of capitalist states would attack and defeat the Red Army. Such fears, admixed with personal ambition, sparked and fueled the conspiracies.

## **Objections**

The principal objection to this explanation is that it does not find Stalin guilty of them. It will be claimed that the confession statements on which it is based are false, fabrications. Rejection of this evidence is essential if the genuine nature of the anti-Soviet conspiracies is to be denied.

But this is wrong. We have tested the confessions in the Moscow Trials and those of Frinovskii and Ezhov by source criticism. There is not legitimate basis at all to reject them as fabrications. The real reason they are rejected or ignored is that they are incompatible with the anti-Stalin paradigm.

It is sometimes claimed that Ezhov was tortured.

It appears that the Right-Trotskyist conspirators had a kind of code of *omertà*: a practice of not identifying other members of the conspiracy whose identity was not yet known to the NKVD, even if it meant their own execution. Stalin drew this conclusion from Piatakov's behavior and expressed it at the December 1936 CC Plenum.

...we questioned about 50 people, at least. They really turned Piatakov inside out. It turns out that he's a monster of a person! So why did he agree to be the public prosecutor? Why did he agree to shoot his comrades himself? It turns out that they have a rule like this: If your fellow Trotskyist is arrested and has begun to give up the names of others, he must be destroyed. You can see what kind of hellish joke this comes to. Believe after this in the sincerity of former oppositionists! We can't take former oppositionists at their word even when they volunteer to shoot their friends with their own hands.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Extract from J.V. Stalin's presentation (Dec. 1936 CC Plenum). *Voprosy Istorii* 1, 1995, 9-11. At <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/stalinonoppsvi11995.html>

It appears that Stalin was correct. As Frinovskii points out, Bukharin, Radek, Iagoda and others did not identify Ezhov as part of the conspiracy even though they went to their deaths. Zinoviev and Kamenev did not identify Iagoda or Ezhov. At the January 1937 Moscow Trial Karl Radek swore that Tukhachevskii was a loyal Party man. He had to have known the truth: Bukharin did, and he and Radek were close.

This code did not function perfectly. Some conspirators did in fact name others. No doubt some falsely inculpated innocent persons while remaining silent about guilty ones. Others did "name names." Many conspirators were arrested and punished. But not all. Tokaev's and Svetlanin's accounts suggest that some conspirators remained unidentified. Nikita Khrushchev may have been among the conspirators who escaped detection. Such a hypothesis would help to account for his massive falsifications about Stalin and his insistence on "rehabilitating" and declaring innocent a great many persons whom we now know were in fact guilty.

## Denial

This explanation for the mass repressions offered here is the one that best fits the evidence we now have. It is also utterly incompatible with mainstream Soviet historiography, which demands that Stalin be the mass murderer and Ezhov his "loyal executioner." For this reason it will be rejected by mainstream, anticommunist Soviet historians and by Trotskyists. It does not fit the Procrustean bed of the anti-Stalin paradigm.

There are numerous other examples of mainstream Soviet historiography ignoring or rejecting the truth about Soviet history.

- Khrushchev's Secret Speech is virtually 100% false. This has been known for years but is never acknowledged. (Furr, *Khrushchev*)
- Sergei Kirov was indeed murdered by an underground Zinovievist gang linked through the bloc of oppositionists with Rightists, Trotskyists, and others. Since the mainstream interpretation is that no such conspiracies existed and were all fabricated by Stalin and the NKVD, the Kirov murder continues to be falsified in spite of the evidence. (Furr, *Kirov*)
- The Katyn Massacre could not possibly have occurred in the way described by mainstream anticommunist historiography. But this massacre is far too useful as a cudgel to beat Stalin and the Soviet Union with to be abandoned simply because it has been proven false. Therefore, the evidence is ignored. (Furr, *Katyn*)
- Timothy Snyder's book *Blood Lies* contains not a single true accusation against Stalin or the USSR. Yet this completely meretricious book won many prizes and continues to be widely quoted. (Furr, *Blood Lies*)
- Evidence from the Harvard Trotsky Archive proves that a political bloc of clandestine oppositionists including Rights, Trotskyists, Zinovievists, and others did in fact exist in the USSR. This proves that the Khrushchev- and Gorbachev-era "rehabilitations:" are false, since they claim no such bloc existed. This fact is ignored. (Furr, *Amalgams*)
- The testimony of the defendants in the three public Moscow "Show" trials of August 1936, January 1937, and March 1938 was not fabricated or forced on them by the NKVD, the Prosecution, or Stalin.

Rather, it represents what the defendants chose to say. The conspiracies alleged in the Trials really did exist. This is denied, the evidence that supports it ignored. (Furr, *Amalgams*)

A recent example of the falsification that is tolerated in the field of Soviet studies comes from the pen of the widely respected historian of Soviet science, Loren Graham. In the spring of 2016 Graham wrote in *Foreign Affairs*:

... thousands of biologists were sent to prison or killed for criticizing Stalin's favorite scientist [Trofim Lysenko] ...<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Loren Graham, "What the Reappraisal of Soviet Russia's Top Agricultural Mastermind Says About Putin's Russia." *Foreign Affairs*  
<http://tinyurl.com/fa-agriculture>

The truth is that not a single Soviet biologist was either killed or sent to prison for criticizing Lysenko. In his 1970 book on the Lysenko affair anticommunist scholar David Joravsky has a list of all the biologists he could find out about who were "repressed" (imprisoned or executed). Joravsky was unable to show that *any* of them were repressed because of opposition to Lysenko.<sup>3</sup> A non-Lysenko plant biologist even won the Stalin prize in 1950. (Elina, *Lysenko*)

### **Lies about Stalin not only tolerated but promoted**

In the academic field of Soviet history of the Stalin period false statements, so long as they are condemnatory of Stalin, are seldom criticized or refuted.

For example, Arch Getty continues to point out that "limits" are consistently mistranslated as "quotas." This is an obvious, deliberate falsification. But this flagrant mistranslation continues to be repeated by prominent scholars in the field such as Oleg Khlevniuk. Khlevniuk has consistently falsified Soviet history for decades. In another field of history — say, American history — he would have been exposed and both his credibility and his career cut short long ago.

Only in the field of Soviet history of the Stalin period is such blatant falsification virtually ignored and, in fact, rewarded, as long as it is anti-Stalin. The Soviet studies field will continue to spread falsehoods about the mass repressions of the 1930s.

### **Objectivity and the Truth**

What is badly needed in the field of Soviet history of the Stalin period is a devotion to discovering the truth. Objectivity can only be approached by a determination to question one's own preconceived ideas, to seriously entertain the possibility that they may be mistaken.

Like a detective working to solve a crime by finding the real culprit, the historian must go where the evidence leads, and not where he/she would prefer that it leads. And if the evidence can only be satisfied by a hypothesis that rejects the historical models that are popular — so be it.

In this study we have attempted to be objective. The truth is not at all to the liking of powerful people. It nonetheless remains the truth.

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# **Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan: Trotsky's Conspiracies of the 1930s, Volume Two**

By Grover Furr

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\*\*\*\*\*

This book is dedicated to Graciela Moreno — my firm supporter, my staunch friend, my inspiration.



Remarks regarding additional works by Grover Furr, originally on the back cover:

"Grover Furr's authoritative historical research in his major works, *Blood Lies* and *Khrushchev Lied* recaptures the historical narrative propagated by anti-communist historians on the soviet era from 1917-1956. Through systematic review and analysis of historical accounts, Furr interrogates this most crucial era, and demonstrates that Joseph Stalin was not responsible for alleged atrocities that were attributed to his actions: especially the Ukraine famine, Molotov-Ribbentrop, Katyn Forest, and the purges. Furr's heretical findings are corroborated through dispassionate meticulous archival research of Soviet archives and a keen knowledge of original accounts of the era."

— Immanuel Ness, Professor, City University of New York

"What is most remarkable and unique about Professor Furr's work is that besides being fluent in English, French, German and Russia — the latter two being the bare minimum to do accurate research on the Stalin era — he has a reading knowledge of over a half-dozen other languages, including Chinese and Polish. When he writes on Khrushchev (*Khrushchev Lied* 2011); the Kirov case (*The Murder of Sergei Kirov. History, Scholarship and the Anti-Stalin Paradigm* 2013); Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands. Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (*Blood Lies. The Evidence that Every Accusation Against Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union in Timothy Snyder's Bloodlands is False* 2014); and Trotsky (*Trotsky's Amalgams: Trotsky's Lies, The Moscow Trials as Evidence, The Dewey Commission, Trotsky's Conspiracies of the 1930's, vol. 1* 2015), one receives the primary source cited on one page and Professor Furr's translation on the opposite page. It is no wonder that his work has already been translated into over a dozen languages. His work is riveting and revolutionary in its assessments. It is up to those who disagree with him to present the same kind of meticulous research."

— Anthony Gronowicz, Borough of Manhattan Community College, City University of New York; Associate Editor, *The Journal of Labor and Society*; and author of *Race and Class in New York City Before the Civil War* (1998).

"Grover Furr is one of a kind. Lots of us try to slay the dragons of bourgeois ideology, but no one is more effective than Grover. We are all indebted to his work exposing the shoddy scholarship behind mainstream anti-Stalinism and anti-Communism. There is no better example of this than his book *Blood Lies: The Evidence that Every Accusation against Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union in Timothy Snyder's Bloodlands Is False*. We're looking forward to more from his relentless search for truth.

— Eugene E. Ruyle, Emeritus Professor of Anthropology, California State University, Long Beach

## Introduction

If an objective research project on the events of those years were to be done, free of ideological dogmas, then a great deal could change in our attitude towards those years and towards the personalities of that epoch. And so it would be a "bomb" that would cause some problems...

— Col. Viktor Alksnis, 2000.

...it is essential for historians to defend the foundation of their discipline: the supremacy of evidence. If their texts are fictions, as in some sense they are, being literary compositions, the raw material of these fictions is verifiable fact. Whether the Nazi gas ovens existed or not can be established by evidence. Because it has been so established, those who deny their existence are not writing history, whatever their narrative techniques.

— Eric Hobsbawm, 1994, p. 57.

...we can demolish a myth only insofar as it rests on propositions which can be shown to be mistaken.

— *ibid.* p. 60.

This chapter and those that follow constitute an inquiry into the evidence that Leon Trotsky collaborated with German and/or Japanese officials, whether governmental or military, during the 1930s.

Trotsky was charged with and convicted *in absentia* of such collaboration at the three Moscow "Show," or public, Trials of 1936, 1937 and 1938.<sup>1</sup>

Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov<sup>2</sup> were absent defendants and central figures in all these trials. Trotsky himself proclaimed the charges false but they were widely, though not universally, credited until 1956. On February 25th of that year Nikita Khrushchev delivered his famous "Secret Speech" to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Aside from much other matter that will not concern us here Khrushchev hinted, without expressly affirming, that at least some of the defendants in these trials were punished unjustly.

<sup>1</sup> These trials are often called the "Show Trials." Often too they are identified by the names of the one or two most famous defendants. Thus the trial of August 19-24, 1936, is often called the "Zinoviev-Kamenev Trial"; that of January 23-30, 1937, the "Piatakov-Radek Trial"; that of March 2-13, 1938, the "Bukharin-Rykov Trial." The formal names for these trials are as follows: August 1936: "The Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre"; January 1937: "The Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre"; March 1938: "The Case of the Anti-Soviet 'Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites.'"

<sup>2</sup> Leon Sedov died on February 16, 1938, shortly before the Third Moscow Trial. He continued to figure prominently in the confessions of some of the defendants, as did his father.

In succeeding years some of the defendants were "rehabilitated" in the Soviet Union and declared to have been innocent. Under Khrushchev's successors between 1965 and 1985 the wave of "rehabilitations" almost ceased. Subsequently, during Mikhail Gorbachev's tenure between 1985 and the end of the USSR in 1991, an even larger flood of "rehabilitations" took place. Later in the present essay we will discuss the essentially political, rather than juridical, nature of "rehabilitation."

By the late 1980s almost all the defendants at all the Moscow Trials, plus the defendants in the "Tukhachevsky Affair" of May-June 1937 and a great many others had been declared to have been innocent of all charges. The chief exceptions were figures like Genrikh Iagoda and Nikolai Ezhov, two heads of the NKVD<sup>3</sup> who were certainly responsible for massive repressions, and many of their subordinates. Trotsky and Sedov have also been "rehabilitated," though not for the crimes they were accused of at the

Moscow Trials since they were not among the defendants and so were not formally convicted.

<sup>3</sup> People's Commissariat (= Ministry) of Internal Affairs, which included national security and political police functions.

Meanwhile there is a scholarly consensus that the Moscow Trials were fabrications, the defendants all innocent victims of frame-ups, and all the conspiracies inventions either of the NKVD or of Stalin himself. This consensus is a constituent part of the model, or paradigm, of Soviet history that is dominant within Russia itself and beyond its borders and can usefully be termed the "anti-Stalin paradigm." However, no significant evidence that the trials were fabricated and the confessions faked has ever been published. In *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* (2016) I have provided ample evidence that the accusations and confessions were indeed genuine.

The Soviet Archives "Speak" During the existence of the USSR and especially since Khrushchev's accession to power in 1953 few if any documents concerning the Moscow Trials and repressions of the late 1930s were published in the USSR or made available in the archives to researchers. Khrushchev and authorized historians and writers made a great many assertions about this period of history but never gave anyone access to any evidence about it.

Here is one example. At an historians' conference in December 1962, after many presentations by speakers promoting the official Khrushchev position about questions of Soviet history, the convener, Presidium<sup>4</sup> member Piotr Pospelov, spoke the following words:

Students are asking whether Bukharin and the rest were spies for foreign governments, and what you advise us to read. I can declare that it is sufficient to study carefully the documents of the 22nd Congress of the CPSU to say that neither Bukharin, nor Rykov, of course, were spies or terrorists.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The Politburo of the Central Committee of the Party was renamed the Presidium in 1952, and again renamed the Politburo in 1966.

<sup>5</sup> *Vsesoiuznoe soveshchanie o merakh uluchshenia podgotovki nauchno-pedagogicheskikh kadrov po istoricheskim naukam*. 18-21 dekabria 1962 g. M: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka", 1964, 298.

Pospelov's words create a false impression. In the 1938 Trial Bukharin and Rykov were not convicted of carrying out espionage themselves, but of being leaders in the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" that did engage in espionage activities. Likewise both Bukharin and Rykov were convicted of recruiting others to engage in acts of violence against others — the best translation here of the Russian word for "terror," which means something quite different in English — but not of engaging in it themselves.

Therefore the implication of Pospelov's words is correct *in the sense most readers will understand* — that a "spy" is someone who himself spies, and a terrorist someone who himself commits acts of violence. But Pospelov is *incorrect* insofar as he wished his audience to understand that their confessions and the verdict against them were wrong. Furthermore, the question was about "Bukharin and the rest" — presumably, all the other defendants in the 1938 Trial, whereas Pospelov restricted his answer to Bukharin and Rykov only.

In the passage that immediately follows the quotation above Pospelov clearly told his audience that the only materials historians should read are the official speeches made at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Congress:

"Why is it not possible to create normal conditions for working in the Central Party archive? They do not give out materials concerning the activity of the CPSU." I have already given you the answer.

In effect Pospelov was saying: "We are not going to give you access to any primary sources."

That situation continued until the USSR was dissolved. Thanks to documents published since the dissolution of the USSR we can now see that some of the speeches at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Party Congress (October, 1961) also contained blatant lies about the oppositionists of the 1930s — a fact that fully explains Pospelov's refusal to let anyone see the evidence.

As one example of the degree of falsification at the 22nd Party Congress and under Khrushchev generally we cite Aleksandr Shelepin's<sup>6</sup> quotation from a letter to Stalin by Komandarm 1st rank (= Full General, the rank just below Marshal) Iona E. Iakir, accused of collaboration with Nazi Germany. In Shelepin's quotation from Iakir's letter to Stalin of June 9, 1937, the text read by Shelepin I put in **boldface**. The text in the original letter but *omitted* by Shelepin is in italics.

A series of cynical resolutions by Stalin, Kaganovich, Molotov, Malenkov and Voroshilov on the letters and declarations made by those imprisoned testifies to the cruel treatment of people, of leading comrades, who found themselves under investigation. For example when it was his turn Iakir — the former commander of a military region — appealed to Stalin in a letter in which he swore his own complete innocence.

Here is what he wrote:

*"Dear, close comrade Stalin. I dare address you in this manner because I have said everything, given everything up, and it seems to me that **I am a noble warrior, devoted to the Party, the state and the people, as I was for many years. My whole conscious life has been passed in selfless, honest work in the sight of the Party and of its leaders** — then the fall into the nightmare, into the irreparable horror of betrayal. And during that short period of my life there were always within me two persons: one who had worked much and honestly for the army, the soviets, the party, and another who thought up and was preparing vile acts hostile to the country. The investigation is completed. I have been formally accused of treason to the state, I have admitted my guilt, I have fully repented. I have unlimited faith in the justice and propriety of the decision of the court and the state. The investigation has been completed. I have been accused of treason to the state; I have admitted my guilt, I have fully repented. I have unlimited faith in the justice and appropriateness of the court and the government. I know that there can and must be only one sentence — death. I am prepared for this sentence. Nevertheless I appeal to you and to the government and beg you, beg you to believe in the possibility of my correction, to believe that I can still be of use to the state, to which I dedicate my whole being. Perhaps*

*you will consider and decide to allow me to go somewhere in the far North or East, in Kolyma, to work and on rare occasions to learn about the magnificent Land of the Soviets, mine again. I ask you to permit me, even though rarely, to take up "Pravda" and to see, by the amount of the sowing, the production, the transportation, the victories of the party, of the soviets, and of the people, whom I have betrayed.*

*I beg you and I understand that I do not have any right to do so. Now **I am honest in my every word, I will die with words of love for you, the Party, and the country, with an unlimited faith in the victory of communism.***"<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Shelepin's remarks, here in bold face type, are from his speech to the 22nd Party Congress of the CPSU, *Pravda*, October 27, 1961, p. 10, cols. 3-4. *XXII S"ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza. 17-31 oktiabria 1961 goda. Stenograficheskii Otchet* (Moscow, 1962). II, 403. The parts Shelepin omitted, here in italics, are from the original document. My thanks to my colleague Vladimir L. Bobrov, who obtained an image of it for me. A version containing some of Iakir's confession of guilt but still omitting much of the complete text is in the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Report of 1963-4 first published in *Voенно-Istoricheskii Arkhiv* 1 (1993), p. 194, now normally cited from the volume *Reabilitatsia. Kak Eto Bylo* ["Rehabilitation. How It Happened"] vol. 2 (2003), p. 688.

As Shelepin read it the letter is from an honest, loyal man protesting his innocence. In reality Iakir fully admitted his guilt. Iakir was one of the military figures involved both in collaboration with Germany and with Trotsky.

The falsification goes far beyond the speeches at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Party Congress. Archival evidence now available permits us to see that Khrushchev, then later Gorbachev, and the historians who wrote under their direction, lied consistently about the events of the Stalin years to an extent that would be scarcely imaginable if we did not have primary source evidence that proves beyond doubt the extent of their lies.



A large number of documents from formerly secret Soviet archives have been published since the end of the USSR. This is a very small proportion of what we know exists. Especially as regards the oppositions of the 1930s, the Moscow Trials, the military "purges," and the massive repressions of 1937-38, the vast majority of the documents are still top-secret, hidden away even from privileged, official researchers.

Yet no system of censorship is without its failures. Many documents have been published. Even this small number enables us to see that the contours of Soviet history in the 1930s are very different from the "official" version.

### **The Question of Trotsky and Collaboration with Germany and Japan**

During the past decade a lot of documentary evidence has emerged from the former Soviet archives to contradict the viewpoint, canonical since at least Khrushchev's time, that the defendants in the Moscow Trials and the "Tukhachevsky Affair" military conspiracy were innocent victims forced to make false confessions.

We have written a number of works, including a number of chapters in the present book and in volume one, *Trotsky's 'Amalgams,'* in which we point out that we now have strong evidence that the confessions were not false and Moscow Trial defendants appear to have been truthful in confessing to conspiracies against the Soviet government. That work has led us to the present question.

### **Hypothesis**

Leon Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov were indicted but absent defendants at each of the three Moscow Trials. If the charges against and the confessions of other defendants were basically accurate, as our research has suggested so far, that has implications for the charges voiced at those trials that Trotsky was in league with fascist Germany and militarist Japan.

Such considerations led us to form the hypothesis for the present study: that a thorough search of published documents from the former Soviet and other archives would turn up more evidence of Trotsky's collaboration with

Germany and Japan in addition to that given at the three Moscow Trials. In the first chapter of *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* we make reference to Stephen Jay Gould's essay "Dinosaur in a Haystack" in order to outline the concept of scientific paradigm and its parallel usage in historical investigation.

In particular, it is scientifically and historically justified to hold as proven *for the time being for all practical purposes* a conclusion of nonexistence (in this case nonexistence of Trotsky's guilt) of something for which evidence is lacking despite concerted effort to discover it. This was the state of affairs for many historians for a long time with regard to Trotsky. However, once such evidence is found — assuming the validity of that evidence — the conclusion of nonexistence (in this case of his guilt) ceases to be scientifically or historically valid, even though many historians illegitimately continue to advocate the validity of Trotsky's innocence and therefore to ignore the evidence.

We set out to see whether we could find still more evidence that Trotsky had collaborated with the Germans and Japanese. At a certain point in our research, when we had gathered a quantity of such evidence, we decided to study it and see what it amounted to. The present volume is the result.

If Trotsky did not collaborate with the Germans and/or Japanese there would be no evidence of his having done so. Of course, in the case of human history and even of science there arises the possibility of fabricated or faked evidence. We have devoted a lot of attention to this problem.

There exists a great deal of evidence concerning clandestine involvement on Trotsky's part with oppositional activities within the USSR during the 1930s quite aside from any collaboration with Germany and Japan. In addition to the testimony by defendants at the Moscow Trials, we also have archival evidence in the form of investigative interrogations to confirm such activity. The present work concentrates solely on evidence of Trotsky's collaboration with German or Japanese governmental or military officials. The charges of German and/or Japanese collaboration were the most shocking. They have always been regarded with skepticism.

For the most part we only cite and analyze *direct* evidence concerning Trotsky and the Germans or Japanese. This is a very narrow approach that

excludes a great deal of other, corroborating evidence which tends to add credence to the direct evidence of Trotsky's guilt in collaborating with the fascists. For example, Nikolai Bukharin heard details from Karl Radek about Trotsky's negotiations and agreements with Germany and Japan. Bukharin never directly communicated with Trotsky or Sedov about this. However, there is no reason whatever to doubt that Radek did tell him about Trotsky's collaboration.

By corroborating Radek's testimony on this point — Bukharin agrees that Radek did tell him this, as Radek himself had testified, so Bukharin attests to Radek's truthfulness *here* — Bukharin also tends to indirectly corroborate what Radek said about Trotsky and what Radek claimed to have gotten at first hand from Trotsky himself. That is, Bukharin's testimony confirms that Radek was telling the truth in one instance, and that increases the credibility of Radek's testimony on other matters, including of his contacts with Trotsky and what Trotsky communicated to him. But here we will examine only Radek's testimony, not Bukharin's. We refer the interested reader to our previous study of Bukharin (Furr and Bobrov 2007). In a few places we do cite some corroborating evidence, mainly for the sake of providing context for the direct evidence.

## **Objectivity and Persuasion**

Political prejudice still predominates in the study of Soviet history, particularly since opposition to what we call the "anti-Stalin paradigm" incurs risks to one's job security, possibilities of promotion, and publication opportunities, among other possible dangers. Conclusions that contradict the dominant model of Soviet history are routinely dismissed as being the result of bias or incompetence. Conclusions that cast doubt upon accusations against Stalin or whose implications tend to make him look either "good" or simply less "evil" than the predominant paradigm holds him to have been, are called "Stalinist." Any objective study of the evidence now available is bound to be called "Stalinist" simply because it reaches conclusions that are politically unacceptable to those who have a strong political bias, be it anticommunist generally or Trotskyist specifically.

The aim of the present study is to examine in the light of the evidence now available the allegations made in the USSR during the 1930s that Leon Trotsky collaborated with Germany and Japan against the USSR. This study is not a "prosecutor's brief" against Trotsky. It is not an attempt to prove Trotsky "guilty" of conspiring with the Germans and Japanese. Nor is it an attempt to "defend" Trotsky against such charges.

We have tried hard to do what an investigator does in the case of a crime in which he has no *parti pris* but only wishes to solve the crime. This is what historians who investigate the more distant past, or the history of countries other than the Soviet Union, do all the time.

We do wish to persuade the fair-minded, objective reader that we have carried out a competent, honest investigation: namely, that we have done the following:

- collected all the evidence we could find supporting the contention that Trotsky collaborated with the Germans and Japanese;
- collected all the "negative" evidence — any "alibi" Trotsky or his son and chief political aide Leon Sedov may have had. We have done this chiefly by paying serious attention to Trotsky's testimony at the Dewey Commission hearings in 1937, where he himself laid out his defense;
- studied all this evidence carefully and honestly; and
- drawn our conclusions logically on the basis of that evidence.

We wish to persuade the objective reader that we have reached our conclusions on the basis of evidence and its analysis and not on any other basis, such as that of political bias. We are not out to arraign or "convict" Trotsky. We remain ready to be convinced that Trotsky did not collaborate with Germany and Japan if, in the future, evidence comes to light—that those charges are false.

### **The Role of Appropriate Skepticism**

Throughout this essay we have tried to anticipate the objections of a skeptical critic. This is no more than any careful, objective researcher should do.

In the present chapter we have a lengthy discussion of evidence. In this and the following chapters we follow each presentation of evidence with a critical examination. In the final chapter of this section titled "Conclusion" the reader will find a review and refutation of the objections a sharp but fair-minded critic might have.

We are aware that there is a subset of readers for whom evidence is irrelevant, for whom this is not a matter of evidence but one of belief or loyalty. We discuss the arguments normally raised from this quarter in the subsection titled "Objectivity and Denial." In any historical inquiry as in any criminal case "belief" and "loyalty" are irrelevant to the truth or falsehood of the hypothesis. A belief that is not rationally founded on evidence cannot be dispelled by a sound argument and evidence.

However, those who cannot bring themselves to question their preconceived ideas may nevertheless be provoked by those same prejudices to look especially critically at the evidence and to find weaknesses in its interpretation that might escape other readers for whom there is less at stake. This sometimes makes objections from such quarters worthy of attention. We have tried hard both to anticipate and to deal with such objections in a satisfactory manner.

## **Evidence**

Before proceeding to cite and study the new archival documents we need to discuss the nature of evidence itself. Whereas "documents" are material objects — in our case, writing on paper — "evidence" is a relational concept. We are concerned with investigating an allegation: that Trotsky conspired with German and Japanese officials. We aim to gather and study the evidence that suggests Trotsky acted as alleged and find the flaws in any putative contrary evidence.

There is no such thing as "absolute" evidence. All evidence can be faked. Any statement — a confession of guilt, a denial of guilt, a claim one has been tortured, a claim one has not been coerced in any way — may be true or false, i.e., an attempt to state the truth as the speaker (or writer) remembers it or a deliberate lie. Documents can be forged and, in the case

of Soviet history, often have been. False documents have on occasion been inserted into archives in order to be "discovered." Or it may be alleged that a given document was found in an archive when it was not. Photographs can be faked. Eyewitnesses can lie, and in any case eyewitnesses are so often in error, even when honestly believing that their memories are accurate, that such evidence is among the least reliable kind.<sup>8</sup> In principle there is no such thing as a "smoking gun" — a single piece of evidence that is so clearly genuine and powerful that it cannot be denied.

<sup>8</sup> One famous study is Elizabeth Loftus, *Eyewitness Testimony*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979.

The problems of identifying, gathering, studying, and drawing correct conclusions from evidence are similar in criminal investigation and in historical research. This is especially true when, as in our case, the research is to determine whether a kind of crime took place in the past. But there are important differences, and it's vital to be clear about them.

In a criminal trial the accused has certain rights. The trial has to be finite in length, after which the accused is either convicted or acquitted for good. The defendant ought to enjoy the presumption of innocence and the benefit of any reasonable doubt. The defendant is entitled to a qualified defender whose sole job it is to interpret all evidence in a way so as to benefit his client. Meanwhile, the judge and even the prosecution are supposed to be concerned not only about securing a conviction but also about justice. Once they are reasonably convinced that the defendant is innocent their duty is to dismiss the charges and discharge the accused even though they might be able to sway the jury to convict. These practices, though often "honored more in the breach than in the observance," are intended to prevent an innocent defendant from an unjust verdict and penalty.

Historians are in quite a different situation. People long dead have no rights (or anything else) that need to be defended. Therefore the historian does not have to be concerned with any presumption of innocence, "reasonable doubt," and so on. Unlike a legal verdict no historical conclusion is ever final. The historical inquiry need never end. It can, and will, be taken up again and again as new evidence is discovered or as new interpretations of

old evidence are reached. This is in fact what we are doing in the present book. We are investigating the question of whether Trotsky collaborated with German and Japanese officials in the light of new evidence, while at the same time reconsidering evidence that has long been available.

## **Objectivity**

Identifying, locating, gathering, and even studying and interpreting evidence are skills that can be taught to anyone. The most difficult and unfortunately all-too-rare skill in historical research is the discipline of objectivity. In order to reach true conclusions — statements that are more truthful than other possible statements about a given matter — a researcher must first question and subject to doubt any preconceived ideas she may hold about the subject under investigation. It is one's own preconceived ideas and prejudices that are most likely to sway one into a subjective interpretation of the evidence. Therefore, the researcher must take special steps to make certain this does not happen.

This can be done. The techniques are known, and widely practiced in the physical and social sciences. They can be adapted to historical research as well. If such techniques are not practiced the historian will inevitably be seriously swayed from an objective understanding of the evidence by her own pre-existing preferences and biases. That will all but guarantee that her conclusions are false even if she is in possession of the best evidence and all the skills necessary to analyze it.

Nowhere is a devotion to objectivity more essential or less practiced than in the field of Soviet history of the Stalin period. As it is impossible to discover the truth absent a dedication to objectivity, this study strives to be objective. Its conclusions will displease, even outrage, a good many persons who are dedicated not to objectivity and the truth but to protecting the legend of Trotsky as an honorable revolutionary or to defending the Cold War, anticommunist paradigm of Soviet history.

Of course we don't claim to have found all the relevant evidence there is. It is overwhelmingly likely that there is a great deal more such evidence, since the vast majority of primary source documents dealing with the Oppositions

of the 1930s are still classified in Russia and the post-Soviet states today and are inaccessible to researchers. But what we have now is a lot. In our judgment there is more than sufficient evidence to validly conclude that Trotsky did indeed collaborate with Germany and Japan more or less as defendants in the second and third Moscow Trials testified. Why Trotsky may have done so is a question worthy of consideration.

### **The Crisis of May-June 1937**

The first document we want to present is one that illustrates both the promise and the problems of interpreting documentary evidence.

June 1937 was a time of great crisis for the Soviet leadership. In April Genrikh Iagoda, Commissar (head) of the NKVD until the previous September, and Avel' Enukidze, until recently both a Central Committee member and high-ranking member of the Soviet government, had begun to confess about their important roles in plans for a *coup d'état* against the government. The month of May had begun with an internal revolt against the Spanish Republican government in which anarchists and Trotskyists participated. The Soviet leadership knew this revolt had involved some kind of collaboration between pro-Trotsky forces there and both Francoist and German-Nazi intelligence.<sup>9</sup> By the beginning of June eight military officers of the highest ranks including Mikhail Tukhachevsky, one of only five Marshals of the Red Army, had been arrested and were making confessions of conspiracy with Trotsky and Trotskyists, with the Rights led by Bukharin, Iagoda and Rykov, and — most alarming of all — with Nazi Germany and Japan.

<sup>9</sup> We will examine this question in a chapter in volume three of this three-volume study of Trotsky in the '30s.

On June 2 Nikolai Bukharin suddenly reversed himself and confessed to having been one of the leaders of this same conspiracy.<sup>10</sup> That same day Lev M. Karakhan, a leading Soviet diplomat who at one time had been closely linked to Trotsky, also confessed.<sup>11</sup> Marshal Tukhachevsky and the other military leaders evidently continued to make further confessions right



up until June 9. At their trial on June 11 they confessed once again and were then convicted, sentenced, and executed.

<sup>10</sup> Grover Furr and Vladimir L. Bobrov, "Nikolai Bukharin's First Statement of Confession in the Lubianka." *Cultural Logic* 2007. At [https://web.archive.org/web/20120415095256/http://clogic.eserver.org/2007/Furr\\_Bobrov.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20120415095256/http://clogic.eserver.org/2007/Furr_Bobrov.pdf) This article was first published in the Russian historical journal *Klio* (St Petersburg) 1 (36), 2005, 38-52. I have put the Russian version online at [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/furrnbobrov\\_bukharin\\_klio07.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/furrnbobrov_bukharin_klio07.pdf) (Furr & Bobrov)

<sup>11</sup> Lubianka. Stalin i Glavnoe Upravlenie Gosbezopasnosti NKVD. 1937-1938 (M.: "Materik," 2004), No. 102, p. 225. Online at <http://istmat.info/node/31227> and at <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/61084>

Before and during the Central Committee Plenum which took place from June 23 to 29 twenty-four of its members and fourteen candidate members were expelled for conspiracy, espionage, and treasonable activities. In February and March Bukharin, Rykov, and Iagoda had been likewise expelled. Never before had there had been such wholesale expulsions from the Party's leading body.

Unquestionably, there was much else that has never been made public. But these events, particularly the military conspiracy, appeared to constitute the gravest threat to the security — indeed, the continued existence — of the Soviet Union since the darkest days of the 1917-1922 Civil War.

Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov had been charged *in absentia* at the first Moscow Trial in August 1936.<sup>12</sup> At the second Moscow Trial of January 1937 Karl Radek had explicitly identified Leon Trotsky as the leader of an important anti-Soviet conspiracy. He had specifically mentioned Spain as a place where Trotsky's adherents were dangerous and called on them to turn away from Trotsky. When the "May Days" revolt in Barcelona broke out on May 3 Radek's warning seemed prescient. For the communists, but also for many non-communists who supported the Spanish Republic, this rebellion

in the rear of the Republic appeared to be the same kind of thing the Rights, Trotskyists, and military figures were allegedly plotting for the USSR.

### **Trotsky's Telegram to the Soviet Leadership**

On the eve of the June Central Committee (CC) Plenum Trotsky chose to send a telegram from his Mexican exile not to Stalin or the Politburo but to the Central Executive Committee, the highest organ of the Soviet government. In it he directly challenged its members to reject Stalin's leadership and turn towards himself.

STALINS POLICY IS LEADING TO COMPLETE COLLAPSE  
INTERNAL AS WELL AS EXTERNAL STOP ONLY SALVATION  
IS RADICAL TURN TOWARD SOVIET DEMOCRACY  
BEGINNING WITH OPEN REVIEW OF THE LAST TRIALS STOP  
ALONG THIS ROAD I OFFER COMPLETE SUPPORT —  
TROTSKY<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> We have used the original English text of the telegram from a facsimile of the telegram itself in the Volkogonov Archive, Library of Congress, Washington DC. At this time international telegrams were normally sent in English; Trotsky sent it from Mexico. The comments of Stalin and his associates are not on the telegram itself but on the Russian translation provided to them along with it. The telegram was evidently first published in *Novoye Vremia* № 50 (1994) C. 37. We have put this facsimile and the Russian translation with the remarks of Stalin and his associates on the internet at

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrq/research/trotsky\\_telegram061837.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrq/research/trotsky_telegram061837.pdf)

A postscript to the original publication of this telegram reads as follows:

In June 1937 in Moscow, at the address of the Central Executive Committee (CEC) which was then formally the highest organ of state power in the USSR a telegram arrived from L.D. Trotsky in Mexico: [text of telegram]. Of course this telegram ended up not in the CEC but in the NKVD, whence it was directed to Stalin as a so-called "special communication." He wrote on it the following remark: "Ugly spy."<sup>14</sup>

Brazen spy of Hitler." Stalin not only signed his name under his "sentence," but gave it to V. Molotov, K. Voroshilov, A. Mikoian, and A. Zhdanov to sign.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Shpionskaia rozha*, literally "spy-face," Rogovin (see below) translates it as "mug of a spy."

<sup>15</sup> L.B., "Will there be no more 'Secrets of the Kremlin'?" *Novoe Vremia* No. 50, 1994, 37.

The late Trotskyist author Vadim Rogovin paraphrased this same article in a footnote:

Trotsky's telegram ended up not in the CEC but in the NKVD where it was translated from the English (the only way the Mexican telegraph could accept it for sending) and sent to Stalin as a so-called "special communication." Stalin read the telegram and wrote on it a remark that bears witness to the fact that he had clearly lost his self-control: "Mug of a spy. Brazen spy of Hitler!" His signature beneath these words was completed with the signatures of Molotov, Voroshilov, Mikoian and Zhdanov, which expressed their agreement with Stalin's evaluation.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Vadim Rogovin. *1937. Stalin's Year of Terror*. Translated by Frederick S. Choate. Oak Park MI: Mehring Books, 1998, p. 487. Chapter 50: The July Plenum of the Central Committee.

"L.B.", the anonymous author of the article in *Novoe Vremia* dismissed Trotsky's note as a fantasy on Trotsky's part.

How should we understand Trotsky's proposal? Could he have possibly supposed that they would accept his help? Or that in 1937 a turn towards "Soviet democracy" was possible? One can't call this irony; it's more like an illusion.

"L.B."s cynicism is unfounded. As a number of scholars have shown, a "turn towards Soviet democracy" was indeed a point of struggle in 1937.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> For the major sources and a summary of them in English see Grover Furr, *Yezhov vs Stalin* (2016) and "Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform", Parts One and Two, *Cultural Logic* 2005. At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2005/2005.html>

## **Piskun vs Rogovin**

In his critical 1997 study of Trotsky Evgenii Piskun wrote:

This strange document bears witness to the fact that the leader of the Fourth International hoped that the USSR was going to undergo immense changes in the near future and that he would return to power again.

But he was wrong this time too. When the June Plenum of the CC had ended the Party leadership had not changed.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Evgenil E. Piskun. *Termidor v SSSR. Idei L.D. Trotskogo i sovetskaia deistvitel'nost' 1920-1980*. Riazan': Russkoe slovo, 1997, 73.

Rogovin agreed that Trotsky must have believed he had a good chance of coming to power:

Trotsky was not a person given to taking senseless or impulsive steps. Despite the fact that the motives of his appeal remain unclear even today, it is natural to assume that Trotsky possessed information which showed that the true devotion to Stalin of the majority of Party and Soviet leaders was in inverse proportion to their official exclamations of this devotion, and that Stalin's position was extremely fragile and unstable. This might have been the source of Trotsky's hopes that, under conditions of the Great Terror which was tearing one member after another from the Party ranks, a consolidation of the leading figures in the country would be possible which would be aimed at overthrowing Stalin and his clique. (Rogovin 487)

Rogovin accepted unquestioningly the orthodox Trotskyist position that Trotsky was not involved in conspiracies with the Germans. But this

presented him with a problem: How to explain Stalin's handwritten comment on Trotsky's telegram? Even Rogovin had to admit that, since the note was addressed only to his closest, most trusted associates, it appeared to prove that Stalin and the rest of them did genuinely believe Trotsky was guilty of conspiring with the Germans.

Moreover, Rogovin's attempt at an explanation is factually incorrect. If the term "Great Terror" refers to anything, it refers to what is called in Russian the *Ezhovshchina* or "Ezhov's mass repression," the period of the illegal mass murders carried out by NKVD chief Nikolai I. Ezhov under the guise of combatting subversion. These did not begin until *after* the June 1937 Central Committee meeting. What's more, central aspects of the *Ezhovshchina* remained almost unknown outside a tiny circle of top Soviet leaders for many years.

All Rogovin could offer was the following formulation, which takes us to the heart of our matter:

The document, as well as many other documents of the Politburo, and even the personal correspondence of its members, show that Stalin and his "closest comrades-in-arms" expressed themselves in a conventional code which was designed to give the impression that they believed in the amalgams they were creating. Otherwise Stalin, who hardly believed in the existence of contacts between Trotsky and Hitler, would not have written such words in a document intended only for his most immediate circle. (Rogovin 487, note)

We now possess additional evidence that Stalin did indeed believe that Trotsky was plotting with the Germans. Rogovin offers no evidence to the contrary. In addition we now also have evidence that Trotsky, as well as many others, actually were conspiring with Germany and Japan. The evidence concerning Trotsky is the subject of this book. Trotsky's telegram of June 18, 1937<sup>19</sup> will serve as an introduction both to the new evidence that has come to light since the end of the USSR and to the problems of and barriers to understanding what it means.

<sup>19</sup> The original telegram seems to be dated June 18, as that date, "18 JUN 1937," is printed or stamped at the top of the last page. That appears to be

the date the telegram was sent. «06.20 ИЮНЬ 1937 Г.» is written in small print at the top of the first page of the telegram. That may be the date it was received and translated. Stalin's note, and the signatures of Molotov, Voroshilov, Mikoian, and Zhdanov appear on the translation of the telegram, to which the telegram itself is appended in the archive.

To our knowledge no one has bothered to put all this evidence together or to re-examine in light of this new evidence the question of Leon Trotsky's ties to Japan and Germany, ties alleged by defendants at the Moscow Trials and by the Soviet government. Why is this? The two very different comments by Piskun and Rogovin suggest an answer. Rather than being the object of careful study with an eye to questioning previous knowledge, the new evidence is being marshaled in defense of old historical paradigms.

Piskun's paradigm — that Trotsky was probably preparing for some kind of *coup* against the Soviet leadership — has only rarely been heard for many years. Nevertheless, Piskun reads Trotsky's telegram through the "lenses" of that paradigm, for the text of the telegram itself suggests nothing about any *expectation* of imminent change and return to power. The most that could be said is that the text is perhaps compatible with such an expectation. But we could never deduce such an expectation from the text alone. A sober reading of Trotsky's telegram might be that it is evidence that Trotsky was *hoping* for a return to power in the USSR but nothing more.

Rogovin's interpretation is even more strained. According to Rogovin Stalin could not possibly have believed Trotsky was a German spy even though (a) Stalin wrote this on the telegram; (b) only his closest associates would see it; and (c) Stalin referred to this alleged espionage by Trotsky on other occasions. Rogovin's paradigm demands that Stalin had invented the charge that Trotsky was collaborating with the Germans (and Japanese). If that paradigm is to be preserved, then Rogovin must maintain that Stalin must be faking here too.

But no objective reading of the text of Trotsky's telegram and Stalin's remarks upon it would arrive at Rogovin's conclusions. Furthermore, Rogovin has no evidence to support his position that Stalin invented the charges against Trotsky. He simply assumes this to be true.

Piskun and Rogovin represent antithetical poles in interpreting both this document itself and the question of Trotsky's relationship, or lack thereof, with Germany and Japan. But charges of collaborating with the intelligence services of the major Axis powers were alleged not just against Trotsky but also against many of the defendants at the second and third public Moscow trials of January 1937 and March 1938, as well as against the military commanders tried and condemned with Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky in June 1937.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Elsewhere we have set forth a small part of the evidence that Oppositionists did, in fact, have some kind of clandestine political relationship, aimed at the USSR, with Germany and Japan. Grover Furr and Vladimir L. Bobrov, "Nikolai Bukharin's First Statement of Confession in the Lubianka." *Cultural Logic* 2007. At [https://web.archive.org/web/20120415095256/http://clogic.eserver.org/2007/Furr\\_Bobrov.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20120415095256/http://clogic.eserver.org/2007/Furr_Bobrov.pdf). This is the English translation of an article and text first published in Russian in the St Petersburg journal *Klio* No. 36 (March 2007).

There is a great deal of such evidence. The present chapter and those that follow concentrate on evidence concerning Trotsky specifically.

In addition, the failure to find evidence that the Oppositionists did have such a relationship would not necessarily mean that no such relationship existed. Indeed, in the case of a deeply clandestine conspiracy we should expect that evidence should be rare and indirect. And, of course, we do have strong evidence of such a conspiracy in the testimony of some of the Moscow Trials defendants and of the "Tukhachevsky affair" conspirators.

The present study does conclude that the evidence now at our disposal strongly supports the existence of collaboration between Trotsky and the Germans and Japanese. This creates a peculiar problem for us as historians since an article or book based upon the evidence — the present book — directly challenges the prevailing consensus among anticommunist writers on the Moscow Trials and specifically on Trotsky.

## **What's At Stake?**

This prevailing consensus is a constituent part of the model, or paradigm, of Soviet history that is dominant within Russia itself and beyond its borders.

At the 1936 Moscow Trial Trotsky and his son Sedov were accused of involvement with the German Gestapo and of involvement with Germans and Japanese at both the 1937 and 1938 Moscow Trials. Numerous witnesses at each of these trials testified that they had direct knowledge of Trotsky's (Sedov's) collaboration. These charges constituted a central feature of the trials.

The allegation that these charges are false likewise constitutes a central feature of the dominant paradigm of Soviet history during the Stalin period. Confirmation of the guilt of Nikolai Bukharin in the crimes to which he confessed guilt has already seriously undermined what we may briefly term the "anti-Stalin paradigm" of Soviet history. Confirmation of Trotsky's involvement with the Germans and Japanese would corroborate the evidence we already have that the charges were true to which the Moscow trials defendants confessed themselves guilty.

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On the evidence we have, Trotsky did in fact collaborate with the Germans and Japanese. This is consistent with the charges made against Trotsky and his son at the Moscow trials. It is not for us to hazard a guess as to what may be the implications of this fact for Trotskyism itself. Insofar as Trotskyism may be considered as a variety of Marxist theory, a set of political principles that are detachable from Trotsky the politician, it may have few implications. But the implications will be more far-reaching for those varieties of Trotskyism that base themselves on a cult of respect for Trotsky the man and are unable to separate him from his ideas.

### **What Do You Mean "Evidence"?**

This statement focuses our attention on a central question: What kind of evidence would we accept? Unless objective criteria are established and then rigorously adhered to, the researcher will almost certainly "find" what his historical preconceptions, his favored paradigm, tells him to look for. In



doing so he will either ignore or misconstrue anything that does not fit his preconceived ideas. What a researcher agrees to *accept* as evidence, and to *exclude* as evidence, is too often a reflection of his historical paradigm. The problem of "acceptable evidence" is simply magnified in the case of a charge of secret conspiracy.

There are serious problems with any kind of evidence.

- Confessions in or out of court: They might be fabricated, for any of a number of motives, including currying favor with the prosecution or state; as evidence that one has "repented"; to shift the blame onto someone else; as a result of torture or the threat of torture, threats against one's family, and so on.
- Incrimination by associates: These are open to the same kinds of tampering as are confessions of the accused.
- Documentary evidence: Documents can be forged. Any state has the technical means to fabricate documents that will convince anyone except, possibly, an independent scientific expert who is allowed to use destructive methods of analysis to test the chemical composition of the ink, molecular analysis of paper, etc., in order to determine whether the document is genuine. As this is virtually never permitted in the case of archival documents deemed to be important, skillful forgery is a powerful tool of historical falsification.

Documentary evidence can also be destroyed. Russian researchers have told us that Khrushchev had a great many papers — perhaps amounting to thousands of pages — removed from archives during his leadership in the USSR.<sup>21</sup> Some documents have also been removed from the "closed" Trotsky Archive at Harvard University.<sup>22</sup> No archive is, or can be, completely secure from such manipulation.

Moreover, how likely is it that agreements of espionage and conspiracy would have been written down in the first place? Anything written down at some point would surely have been hidden securely or, more likely, destroyed as soon as read. As long as such written evidence remained it would pose a terrible threat to any conspirator. We can be certain of the existence of one such conspiracy in Soviet history — that among members

of the Presidium to get rid of Lavrentii Beria — because it succeeded on June 26, 1953. Yet no prior written record of that conspiracy has ever come to light, and no single, canonical account of it exists even today.

<sup>21</sup> E.g. M. lunge, R. Binner. Kak terror stal "Bol'shim." Sekretnyi prkaz No.004471 tekhnologiiia ego ispolneniia. Moscow: AIRO-XX, 2003, 16.

<sup>22</sup> We have discussed this question in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*.

These are just examples. In general, there is no kind of evidence that cannot be forged or faked. Neither is there any kind of evidence that can, by itself, provide conclusive proof of any act.

In this essay I assume that the larger the number of individual items of evidence that are all consistent with a single interpretation, the less is the chance that they and that interpretation are the result of some kind of "orchestration" or fabrication according to a preconceived plan. This should be especially so in the case of documents which were never intended to be public at all. When combined with evidence from documents that were never directly related to any prosecution, the likelihood of fabrication becomes very small indeed. This is similar to what is called "circumstantial evidence" in the legal system. When there is enough of it, circumstantial evidence is the most powerful evidence there is.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> "Circumstantial evidence can be, and often is much more powerful than direct evidence." — Robert Precht, a defense attorney in the World Trade Center bombing and director of the Office of Public Service at the University of Michigan Law School, quoted at <http://www.pub.umich.edu/daily/1997/jun/06-04-97/news/news3.html>.

Such is the case, I would argue, with Trotsky's telegram of June 18, 1937. As Rogovin recognized, the most significant thing about this telegram is what Stalin wrote upon it. But Rogovin's own conclusion lacks any convincing rationale. No one who was not already convinced that Trotsky was innocent of collaboration with Germany would ever suspect that Stalin did not believe the truth of what he wrote to an audience of his closest associates, remarks never intended to go any further. Rogovin would have us believe that Stalin, Molotov, Mikoian and Zhdanov were "pretending"

among themselves that Trotsky was working with the Germans even while knowing perfectly well that it was they themselves who had made this story up. No evidence supports such a conclusion.

If the words on this telegram were the *only* evidence we had that led us to suspect the accusations against Trotsky were not fabricated — not by Stalin or to his knowledge, at least — they would still be highly significant. Stalin saw all investigative materials, including huge quantities of evidence that is either still classified in Russia today or has been destroyed. What's more, we have no evidence that he ever talked in "code" with his associates. In fact, *pace* Trotsky, we have yet to find a single instance in which we can discover evidence that Stalin lied, while there are a great many examples of Trotsky's deliberately lying in his published works and speeches.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> We discuss many of them thoroughly in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*.

## **"Fabrication" Of Confessions**

In discussions such as these, where any questioning of the dominant paradigm is viewed with distrust and even horror, it is vital that the presentation of the evidence be accompanied by refutations of the anticipated objections to this evidence coming from that same paradigm. So below we will offer a summary rebuttal to paradigmatic objections to some of the evidence we present. The details will come later.

The "canonical view" or "dominant paradigm" of Soviet history is that all defendants in the Moscow Trials were innocent of the charges to which they confessed. But there is no "canonical view" about how the faking of those confessions might have been accomplished.

The transcripts of the three Moscow Trials have been available since the 1930s. According to the dominant paradigm of Soviet history these transcripts are dishonest and the confessions of the defendants recorded in them are fabrications.

But the term "fabrication" does not have any fixed meaning. No one has cited any evidence whatsoever that the confessions were not truthful, so no

one is in a position to say anything definite. The charges against the defendants are simply declared to be "fantastic" or "absurd" and the conclusion is drawn that the defendants must have been induced to lie by some means. "Fabrication" is a word that is broad enough in its meaning to cover any kind of falsification.

The allegation that the confessions were false, like any other assertion of fact, can and must be tested in the light of all the other available evidence. This is supposed to be done as a matter of course in criminal cases. Historians are under a similar obligation to verify the veracity of confessions as well as of other evidence.

We undertook to discharge this responsibility in the first part of *'Trotsky's Amalgams.'* At the outset we were prepared to find evidence that the confessions of the defendants and/or the other evidence against them were false. In fact, we found that the opposite is the case. The evidence now available strongly confirms the truth of the confessions and other evidence we cite here.

### **The Issue of Torture**

In the present book we devote serious attention to the hypothesis that the defendants in the Moscow Trials and others who directly or indirectly implicate Trotsky in collaboration with Germany or Japan may have been induced to make false accusations by one means or another. Most troubling is the allegation of real or threatened torture.

Specifically, we discuss the "torture" hypothesis in connection with Zinoviev, Ezhov, Uritsky, and Iakovlev (see below). We examine Col. Alksnis' belief that the Tukhachevsky trial defendants were not tortured. We have a great deal of evidence that the defendants in the Moscow Trials were not tortured or otherwise threatened into making false confessions.

All interpretations of the Trial testimony, like all interpretations of any evidence, are hypotheses. "Torture" is one hypothesis. Like any hypothesis, evidence is required before it becomes a reasonable theory of explanation. In this case there is no such evidence. We have adduced the appeals to the

Soviet Supreme Court by four of the defendants at the first Moscow Trial, two of the defendants from the second Moscow Trial, and all but one of those from the third Moscow Trial. All of them insist that they are guilty. These documents were never intended to be made public.

At the second Trial of January, 1937 Karl Radek, one of the chief defendants, directly addressed the suspicion that he had been threatened into testifying. Radek stated that it was not the investigators that tormented him, but he who tormented his investigators. (1937 Trial 549)

Nikolai Bukharin said that "incriminating evidence" (*uliki*) was what induced him to begin confessing after three months of silence.

I shall now speak of myself, of the reasons for my repentance. Of course, it must be admitted that incriminating evidence plays a very important part. (1938 Trial 777)

Stephen Cohen has stated that Bukharin was not tortured.

Unlike many other victims of repression, including the Red Army commanders, it seems that they did not use physical torture on him in prison.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Stephen Cohen (Koen), "Bukharin na Lubianke." *Svobodnaia Mysl'* 21, No. 3 (2003), 58-63, at 60-61.

We see no reason to repeat Cohen's reasoning here. Cohen is a world authority on Bukharin and continues to insist that he was entirely innocent while admitting that there is no evidence to support that conclusion. However, it is important to note that neither Cohen nor anyone else has ever found evidence that the Red Army commanders' confessions were obtained through torture.

In early 2006 a confession by Mikhail Frinovskii, second-in-command to Nikolai Ezhov at the NKVD, was published.<sup>26</sup> In it Frinovskii admitted that Ezhov and his co-conspirators, himself included, had tortured and fabricated false charges against a great many people. But Frinovskii explicitly said that this was not done in the case of the March 1938 Trial of

the "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites," the "Bukharin" trial. Frinovskii also makes it clear that Zinoviev and Kamenev, the principal defendants at the first Moscow Trial of August 1936, were guilty.

<sup>26</sup> "Spetssoobshchenie L.P. Berii I.V. Stalinu s Prilozheniem Zaiavleniia M.P. Frinovskogo. 13 aprelia 1939 g. In Lubyanka. Stalin i NKVD-NKGB-GUKR "Smersh" 1939 - mart 1946. Eds. V.N. Khaustov, V.P. Naumov, N.S. Plotnika. Moscow: "Materik," 2006. No. 33, pp. 33-50. I have put the original text online at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/Frinovskiiu.html> and an English translation (mine) at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/Frinovskiieng.html> .

In this same confession Frinovskii also explicitly states that Bukharin et al. were guilty, and that moreover he and Ezhov were part of this Rightist conspiracy too. Furthermore he states that Bukharin knew Ezhov was involved in this conspiracy and kept quiet about it at the trial, taking this secret to his death.

Frinovskii wrote:

The preparation of the trial of Rykov, Bukharin, Krestinsky, Iagoda and others.

An active participant in investigations generally, Ezhov kept himself aloof from the preparation of this trial. Before the trial there took place the face-to-face confrontations of the suspects, interrogations, and refining, in which Ezhov did not participate. He spoke for a long time with Iagoda, and that talk concerned, in the main, assuring Iagoda that he would not be shot.

Ezhov had conversations several times with Bukharin and Rykov and also in order to calm them assured them that under no circumstances would they be shot. Ezhov had one conversation with Bulanov, and began this conversation in the presence of the investigator and myself, and finished the conversation one on one, having asked us to leave.

At that moment Bulanov had begun talking about the poisoning of Ezhov. What the conversation was about Ezhov did not say. When he asked us to enter again he said: "Behave yourself well at the trial — I will ask that you not be shot." After the trial Ezhov always expressed regret about Bulanov. At the time of the executions Ezhov suggested shooting Bulanov first and he himself did not enter the building where the shootings took place. Here Ezhov unquestionably was ruled by the necessity of covering up his own ties with the arrested leaders of the Right who were going into the public trial.

In no way did Frinovskii deny torturing and fabricating false confessions against innocent people. Rather, he contrasted the way Ezhov handled the "Bukharin" trial defendants with the way he dealt with a great many innocent victims, whom he had tortured by his "bone-breakers" so that they would sign confessions drafted by Ezhov's NKVD men.

To sum up: Frinovskii confessed to widespread torture, but (a) specifically exempted the defendants in the 1938 Trial; (b) specifically stated that Bukharin and the other major defendants at the trial were, in fact, guilty; and (c) made passing reference to the principal defendants in the first Moscow Trial in which he claims that they too were guilty. Frinovskii's confirmation of the guilt of Bukharin and others corroborates all the other evidence we have concerning Bukharin.

Before its publication in 2006 Frinovskii's confession had been fraudulently quoted by historians and by the Soviet Supreme Court itself, suitably expurgated so that it seemed to prove the innocence, not the guilt, of the 1938 Trial defendants. This was done in the same manner as Shelepin's dishonest quotation of Iakir's letter, which we briefly examined above.

No hypothesis is worth anything unless it is supported by evidence. With respect to the Moscow Trials and Tukhachevsky Affair there is no evidence to support the "torture" hypothesis, and a great deal of evidence against it. Therefore the "torture" hypothesis must fall.

### **Other Possible Hypotheses to Account for Bukharin's Confession**

Bukharin's confessions are important for us both because they illustrate the issues involved in allegations of torture and because Bukharin explicitly implicates Trotsky. We'll discuss his testimony about Trotsky later in the present essay. Here we are concerned with the "torture" question.

In any trial there are a number of hypotheses aside from the "torture" hypothesis that may account for a false confession of guilt by a defendant:

- The defendant's family is threatened.
- The defendant wishes to "punish himself" to atone for past misdeeds.
- The "Rubashov" explanation made famous in Arthur Koestler's book *Darkness At Noon* — that "the Party demands it," the Party is history's instrument and so history demands it, and so on.
- The defendant has been promised favored treatment by the Prosecution in return for falsely accusing others.

In Bukharin's case there is no evidence to support any of these hypotheses.

The main reason defendants confess to crimes of which they are guilty is their calculation that the prosecution has sufficient evidence to convict them of the crime(s) in question, rendering further denial useless, indeed counterproductive. A defendant decides to cooperate with the prosecution in hopes of more lenient treatment by the court — of "getting the best deal he can." It now seems beyond doubt that this was the reason for Bukharin's confession of guilt. At the second Moscow Trial of January 1937 four defendants who appeared to have cooperated fully with the prosecution — Radek, Sokol'nikov, Arnol'd and Stroilov — were sentenced to prison instead of execution. Two of these, Grigory Sokol'nikov and Karl Radek, were among the principal defendants. This was a strong incentive to cooperate for any defendant for whom further denial seemed hopeless. Frinovskii's statement corroborates Bukharin's own testimony at trial. Bukharin himself said that "the incriminating evidence" was the primary factor motivating his confessions, which began with his first one on June 2, 1937. Frinovskii testified that Ezhov promised Bukharin and others that they would not be shot as long as they did not disclose Ezhov's own involvement with the conspiracy. Frinovskii does not claim that he actually heard Ezhov say this. But he does state that Ezhov did not organize any false confessions in this trial. Frinovskii himself stated that he knew that



Bukharin was guilty. And indeed Bukharin did not mention at his trial that Ezhov was a co-conspirator.

Frinovskii also confirms Bukharin's guilt as a conspirator known to Ezhov. This corroborates a great deal of other evidence we now possess, including some confessions of Iagoda published for the first time in 1997.

Towards the end of these chapters we return to the matter of torture in a different way: to consider the allegations of torture and how they have functioned in the historiography and mythology of Trotsky's role, the Moscow Trials, and the history of the Stalin period generally.

### **Why Did None of Trotsky's Supporters at the Moscow Trials Defend Trotsky?**

None of Trotsky's longtime and devoted supporters among the Moscow Trial defendants defended Trotsky or their actions in supporting him. Not only did they plead guilty to various crimes, including working with Trotsky; most of them recanted their former longtime allegiance to him (not all: Khristian Rakovsky, for one, did not). To anticipate one objection, it may be asked: how is this to be explained other than by the fabrication of false testimony through torture or some other means?

In a criminal case we should not think it strange if co-conspirators "fall out" and denounce one another, as the longtime Trotskyists did during their testimony at the public Moscow trials. Moreover, we should also consider the trial from the viewpoint of the prosecution, the Stalin government. What was the purpose of having these public trials in the first place?

Like any criminal prosecution, of course, the trial was to deter further criminal (in this case, treasonous) activity and encourage those who suspected such activity to report it to authorities. But larger motives were doubtless at play as well.

Given the political conjuncture of the mid-1930s it seems safe to assume that the trials were also aimed to demonstrate to the world that these high-level conspiracies had been nipped in the bud, that the Soviet government

was still in charge, and that, therefore, Soviet security was not adversely affected. The Soviets may have feared that, if the USSR were seen to have been weakened by serious conspiracies at the top, some combination of enemy states would attack them. They also feared that the Western powers, led by France and the U.K., would not agree to "collective security" mutual defense treaties with the USSR against Nazi Germany because of German penetration of the Soviet leadership including, especially, the military leadership.

That these fears were well founded is suggested by the facts that (a) Japan did indeed attack the USSR — twice, in 1938 and a larger assault in 1939; and (b) the Allies did refuse to make any mutual defense treaties with the USSR. Rather, they continued to encourage Hitler to attack the USSR. The late Alvin D. Coox, the leading expert on Soviet-Japanese relations during this time, concluded that the Japanese attack on the USSR at Lake Khasan in 1938 was directly motivated by the testimony of General Genrikh Liushkov, who defected to Japan in July 1938 and reported that the Red Army was seriously weakened.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Coox1, 92; Coox 2, 145.

If we assume that this was the purpose of the "Show Trials" it stands to reason that the only defendants who would appear in them would be those who would attack Trotsky and say they were wrong, the USSR was right, and so on.

### **Why Is There No German or Japanese Evidence of Trotsky's Collaboration?**

"Most conspiracy theorists don't understand this. But if there really were a C.I.A. plot, no documents would exist." (Shane 2009)<sup>28</sup>

Instructions on concrete organization questions regarding preparation for underground conditions must be given only verbally.... At the very least it should have been specified that these names and addresses be given strictly orally...<sup>29</sup>

In the course of this essay we will show that there is a large amount of mutually-corroborative evidence of Trotsky's German-Japanese collaboration from the Soviet side. In addition we have important evidence from German and Japanese sources of collaboration by members of the Soviet opposition, including by some who themselves claimed to have been working with Trotsky.

But no direct evidence of German or Japanese collaboration with Trotsky has been discovered outside the former USSR. There are a number of possible explanations:

- Trotsky never collaborated with the Germans or Japanese. All the Soviet evidence is fabricated.

If Trotsky did collaborate the following possibilities exist:

- Many of these archives were destroyed during the war.
- Nobody has looked for such evidence. At least, we are not aware anybody has done so, particularly in the unpublished papers of the German generals allegedly involved.
- These archives too might have been "purged."
- There never was any archival evidence of this collaboration because conspiratorial information of this kind is typically not written down at all.

We know that the Soviet archives have been purged by Khrushchev, and perhaps by others. Despite our limited experience working with other archives, we know of two cases in which archival materials have "disappeared." In addition most Soviet archives are not open to researchers. Given the evidence that we have discovered in the relatively few archival documents that have been published to date it seems likely that further evidence implicating Trotsky may be contained in archives that are still classified. Later in this essay we briefly discuss the "purging" of the Trotsky archive at Harvard of incriminating materials.

In many countries it is normal to keep intelligence archives secret indefinitely. This is certainly the case in the USA. We suggest it is logical to suspect the same thing in the case of Germany and Japan. There is a great

deal of evidence that the military commanders led by Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky did indeed collaborate with the German General Staff and with the Japanese. We have indirect confirmation of this from a German archive and more direct confirmation in one document from the Czech Archives. We discuss this evidence in more detail in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams.'*

In discussing their espionage for Germany several Soviet defendants said they had dealt directly with German General Kurt von Hammerstein-Equord. Rumor, at least, of this collaboration evidently survived in Hammerstein's family. Although to our knowledge no written record of that collaboration exists, it appears that no one has actually looked for such records.<sup>30</sup> Nor has anyone ever undertaken to survey the surviving papers of the German generals allegedly involved.

<sup>30</sup> Hans Magnus Enzensberger. *Hammerstein oder der Eigensinn. Eine deutsche Geschichte.* Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2008, pp. 234; 213-215.

We believe that the single most likely reason for the absence of such evidence is simply that no one should expect a conspiracy like this to be documented anywhere, ever, much less in archives. The demands of secrecy and security require that such information be exchanged only by word of mouth.

The lack of archival or in fact of any documentary evidence of the successful conspiracy against Lavrentii Beria has already been cited. This conspiracy must have involved at least half a dozen men. Accounts of it by its participants do not agree in details except in this: it was all planned and carried out through oral communication. There is no mention of any written communication. What does exist in the archives is the outline of a speech to be delivered by Malenkov at the Presidium meeting of June 26, 1953. It was at this meeting, we know, that Beria was either arrested or killed. Malenkov was certainly a party to whatever occurred. Yet according to the outline of Malenkov's speech Beria was to be removed as head of the MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs, including the internal police force) and made Minister of the Petroleum Industry.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> The outline of Malenkov's speech is in *Lavrentii Beria. 1953. Stenogramma iul'skogo plenuma TsK KPSS i drugie dokumenty*. Ed. V. Naumov, IU. Sigachev. Moscow: MDF, 1999, pp. 69-70.

### **Alleged Lack Of Non-Soviet Evidence**

The Trotsky archives at Harvard have been purged of evidence that Trotsky supporters with privileged access to this otherwise-closed archive found embarrassing to Trotsky's reputation, as we demonstrated in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams.'* The materials purged included, at the very least, further evidence about the existence of the "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" and Trotsky's correspondence with supporters within the USSR.

The late Pierre Broué, in his day the foremost Trotskyist historian in the world and a person who enjoyed widespread respect from anticommunist scholars, concluded that this evidence meant little since it only demonstrated the existence of a bloc in 1932. Broué assumed that because the only evidence that was not successfully purged from the archive happened to be from 1932 that must have been the only time the bloc existed. That is, Broué erroneously assumed in his article that there was no bloc after 1932 because there is no evidence in *Trotsky's archive* for the bloc after 1932.

This is an invalid assumption. It ignores the fact that the archive has been purged. Had those who purged Trotsky's archive done an even more thorough job we would not even have this evidence. Yet that would in no way imply that no evidence of the bloc ever existed. Much less would it imply that the bloc itself never existed. "Lack of evidence" — in this case, of the existence of the bloc after 1932 — "is not evidence of lack" — that such evidence never existed.

If those who purged the Harvard Trotsky archive of incriminating documents had been more thorough they would have also taken the certified mail receipts of Trotsky's letters to oppositionists in the USSR and Trotsky's and van Heijenoort's notes about the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites." Then what would we now have? We'd have the Gorbachev-era "rehabilitation" document denying that there ever was such a "bloc," and Trotsky's staunch

denial that there ever was such a "bloc." Plus we'd have the insistence of the Soviet Prosecutor, Vyshinskii, and the confessions of a number of Moscow Trial defendants, that there was indeed such a "bloc."

Getty's discovery in the Trotsky archive corroborates the testimony of the Moscow Trial defendants. It is evidence that they did not lie, since in the few instances where we can get independent evidence — as here — that evidence supports the trial defendants' confessions. Likewise it corroborates the statements of the Prosecutor — that is, of "Stalin," in the reductive language of anticommunist writers. The testimony of the trial defendants and the Soviet prosecutor about the bloc and about Trotsky's correspondence turns out to have been truthful, while Trotsky's testimony and that of the Gorbachev-era Soviet government is false.

This is not direct evidence of any Trotsky collaboration with Germany or Japan. But it is consistent with such allegations, since it corroborates the testimony of the same witnesses on a related matter. Trotsky denied collaborating with Axis representatives just as he denied existence of the bloc and contact with his Soviet supporters. Therefore the lack of evidence in Trotsky's archive of any contact with the Axis is not evidence that such evidence was never there.

We do have a little non-Soviet evidence of such collaboration. In February 1937 the Japanese Minister of War, General Hajime Sugiyama, revealed in a meeting that Japan was in touch with oppositionists within the USSR who were providing the Japanese with military intelligence.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> "Soviet Links Tokyo with 'Trotskyism.'" New York Times March 2, 1937, p. 5. My thanks to Sven-Eric Holmström, who obtained and has shared with me a copy of the original article from the Japanese newspaper Miyako Simbun of February 20, 1937.

Other examples of non-Soviet evidence attest to the real existence of the conspiracies alleged by the Stalin government. There is the Arao Document, still extant in 1962-63. We have direct testimony from the German ambassador to Czechoslovakia that Hitler knew that high-ranking military figures in the USSR were preparing a *coup d'état*. This document, in the Czech national archives, was only discovered in 1987. This document

is corroborated by correspondence found in captured German archives disclosed in 1974 but not recognized until 1988 (see the section on the Mastny-Benes note in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*).

On June 13, 1938 General of the NKVD Genrikh S. Liushkov defected to the Japanese. At a press conference prepared by the Japanese he claimed that the alleged conspiracies in the USSR were faked. But privately Liushkov told the Japanese that Stalin was convinced there were real conspiracies, including the military conspiracy. He also confirmed that the conspirators were linked with the Tukhachevsky group through Gamarnik. Liushkov confirmed that the conspirators wanted to join forces with the Japanese to inflict defeat upon the Soviet military, and that some of them had been conspiring directly with the Japanese military. We discuss Liushkov's testimony in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* and in Chapter 17 of *The Murder of Sergei Kirov*.

Even if we had no non-Soviet evidence of collaboration between Soviet oppositionists and Axis representatives that would not mean that no such evidence ever existed. Much less would it mean that no such collaboration took place, for such collaboration might well not leave any evidence. However, despite frequent allegations to the contrary, we do possess evidence of the anti-Soviet conspiracies that could not have been fabricated by the Soviets.

## **Soviet Evidence**

No researcher today, no matter how anti-Soviet, dismisses Soviet evidence just because it is Soviet. Evidence from Soviet archives is routinely regarded as valid. For example, later in this essay we examine pretrial testimony of Genrikh Iagoda, Ezhov's immediate predecessor as head of the NKVD and defendant at the 1938 Moscow Trial, and will show that it is cited unproblematically as genuine by extremely anticommunist scholars. It includes testimony about Trotsky. In collaboration with my colleague Vladimir L. Bobrov the present author has published and analyzed Bukharin's first confession of June 2, 1937. (Furr & Bobrov) This document is still top-secret in Russia. In it Bukharin directly implicates Trotsky.

## Lengthy Quotations

Much of the following chapters consists of direct quotations from primary sources. We understand that this increases the length of these chapters. However, in a study such as this one we cannot do without these quotations. The primary sources constitute the evidentiary basis for the analysis and conclusions. Some quotations are from sources that are not easy for most readers to obtain, such as the English versions of the Moscow Trial transcripts. Even more of them are from documents not available in English at all. Marshal Budennyi's letter to Marshal Voroshilov, which we have discussed in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams,'* is an archival document that had never been published in any language and whose contents are entirely new to the scholarly world.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> See Vladimir L. Bobrov and Grover Furr, "Marshal S.M. Budennyi's on the Tukhachevsky Trial. Impressions of an Eye-Witness." (in Russian). *Klio* (St. Petersburg) No. 2 (2012), pp. 8-24.

In the age of the Internet there is no reason why any scholar should ever cite archival or hard-to-obtain materials without making them available to the reader. We could have put the primary source quotations onto a separate file and inserted hyperlinks when appropriate, and considered doing so. Doing so, however, would force the reader either to ignore the evidence or to move back and forth between the document and the Internet. We feared such a procedure would be distracting to a careful reader and so decided against it.

We urge the reader to study carefully the quotations from the primary sources. Like any work of scholarship this book stands or falls on the evidence and its analysis.

In this book all boldface emphases are by me unless otherwise noted.

I have put the central documents discussed in this book online in both the Russian original and in English translation. See the URL cited at the beginning of the Bibliography.



## Chapter 1. *A Brief Overview of the Evidence*

Our aim in these chapters is to cite and analyze all of the evidence that directly ties Trotsky to collaboration with Germany or Japan. We follow each citation of evidence with an analysis of that evidence. Because all evidence may be interpreted in various ways, no evidence is left to "speak for itself." We have also striven to cite and study contextual and corroborative evidence, as all analysis of evidence requires.

There is no such thing as "absolute proof." This ought to go without saying. What gives the complex of existing evidence its power is its mutually corroborative or reinforcing character, the sheer quantity of it, and the fact that it comes from different sources.

Strictly speaking eye-witness evidence is not "circumstantial" in the same manner as other evidence. We pay special attention to the testimony of those who claim they were told by Trotsky himself of his ties with Germany and Japan. This testimony is mutually corroborative too. We will examine the extent to which the credibility of the eye-witnesses can be verified by cross-checking some of the statements they make with other evidence at our disposal.

In *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* we devote a great deal of attention to the job of verifying the Moscow Trials testimony. Aside from verbal denials there can be no absolute evidence that Trotsky did *not* collaborate with the Germans or Japanese. Therefore any investigation must search for evidence that he *did* collaborate.

We also tried hard to find evidence that supports the contrary hypothesis: that the confessions of all these people, whether at the Moscow Trials or otherwise, were "fabricated" and false. This would impugn the evidence that Trotsky did collaborate, and so represent "negative" evidence of a sort. But we have been unsuccessful. We feel confident in saying that, at this point at least, no such evidence has ever been discovered by anyone.

The introduction to the Report of the Dewey Commission, which was convened in 1937 to examine the charges against Trotsky, itself states:

If Leon Trotsky is guilty of the acts with which he is charged, no condemnation can be too severe.

On the evidence now available, the only objective conclusion must be that Trotsky did indeed collaborate with the Germans and Japanese. If evidence to the contrary should surface in the future we must be ready to review and, if necessary, change this conclusion.

### **Trotsky Lied**

Trotsky denied working with Germany or Japan, as charged in the 1937 and 1938 Moscow Trial by several of the defendants. But we now know he lied to the very friendly Dewey Commission in 1937 about other matters far less serious. We have documented many of these lies in the two sections of *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*.

On the basis of his research in the Trotsky papers at Houghton Library, Harvard University, J. Arch Getty pointed out in 1986 that Trotsky had been in written contact with his followers in the USSR at least in 1932. Either Trotsky himself or one of his secretaries took some pains to conceal these connections.

The noted French Trotskyist scholar Pierre Broué, who also studied these papers and acknowledged Trotsky's lies, explains them as an attempt to deny any plausibility to the "Stalinist" accusations against him at the Moscow Trials, as well as to protect any further Trotskyist supporters not yet uncovered in the USSR.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pierre Broué, "Trotsky et le bloc des oppositions de 1932." *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* 5 (Jan-Mar 1980), 29.

From Trotsky's point of view this made perfect sense. Why give Stalin and his colleagues additional ammunition in their war with him? But for the historian it means that Trotsky's denials, not only of the existence of the bloc, but of any charge, cannot simply be taken at face value. As Getty has pointed out elsewhere:

The point here is that Trotsky lied.... [H]e had good reasons to lie. But what he said was not the truth. It was not "objective."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Getty, post to H-RUSSIA list Nov. 24, 1998. See <http://tinyurl.com/getty-trotsky-lied> .

We cite this not to blame Trotsky for lying (although many would blame him for the conspiracies themselves). Lying is an essential part of any conspiracy. Trotsky had good reason to lie. But the fact that Trotsky lied means that we must set aside any denials on Trotsky's part.

It is to be expected that persons will lie when necessary to deflect punishment or blame from themselves. No one pays much attention to denials of guilt on the part of persons suspected of a crime. In many countries an accused person has the right to lie in his own defense, though of course at his own peril too. To any investigator and to any historian as well an accused's confession of guilt may be much more significant than a claim of innocence. So Trotsky's claim of innocence means little in itself.

However, Trotsky never did confess. He lied, and "got away with it" — and not merely insofar as the Dewey Commission members and its audience were concerned. To this day very few books about Trotsky even mention his many proven lies. I have never found a single book about Trotsky that attempts to explore the implications of Trotsky's many demonstrable falsehoods. Very few Trotskyists are even aware of them. What's more, on the evidence now available we can validly conclude that Trotsky lied about a great deal more.

It is no wonder that Trotsky lied in order to conceal his conspiratorial activities. Keeping such a thing secret would have been an elementary *sine qua non* of such a conspiracy. The German and Japanese participants, if asked about this, would also have denied it. In lying, they would have felt certain that they were being loyal to their countries and to their military oaths. General Ernst Köstring, German military attaché in Moscow, did deny the contact with the conspirators that he was charged with.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Herman Teske, ed., *Profile bedeutender Soldaten. Band I. General Ernst Köstring Der militärischer Mittler zwischen dem Deutschen Reich und der*

Sowjetunion. 1921-1941. (Frankfurt/M.: Mittler, 1965).

## **Trotsky's Archive Falsified**

In volume one of this study, *Trotsky's 'Amalgams,'* we examine the falsification of the Trotsky archive in more detail. What follows is a brief outline for the readers of volume two.

We know that there has been a practice of falsifying what Trotsky did that extended to the Trotsky papers themselves. Getty has pointed out that the correspondence between Trotsky and Oppositionists in the USSR had been removed from the Trotsky Papers at Harvard at some time before they were opened to researchers in January 1980.<sup>4</sup> Broué and Getty both note that Trotsky's secretary Jean van Heijenoort reminded Trotsky and his son Leon Sedov of his (Trotsky's) correspondence about the bloc at the time of the Dewey Commission hearings. Trotsky chose to lie about this. Van Heijenoort knew the Trotsky Papers better than anyone else. But he never revealed that he had personal knowledge that Trotsky (and Sedov) had deliberately lied to the Dewey Commission. Therefore van Heijenoort lied too — an issue we investigate in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams.'*

<sup>4</sup> Getty, 34 n.18.

Isaac Deutscher was also given special access to the Trotsky Papers by Trotsky's widow so he could write his famous three-volume biography of Trotsky. But Deutscher did not reveal the existence of the bloc of Rights and Trotskyites or of van Heijenoort's letter. Van Heijenoort, Deutscher, or conceivably some other defender of Trotsky's legacy with rare privileged access deliberately falsified his archive.

This makes one doubly curious as to exactly what was in those letters from Trotsky to the Oppositionists that have been removed and for which Getty found only the certified mail receipts. The question remains: What information in those letters to his followers in the USSR would have been so sensitive that persons loyal to Trotsky felt it necessary to remove them even while leaving sensitive *personal* materials alone? The logical answer is: sensitive *political* material.

But this could not have been mere evidence that Trotsky was in contact with his followers in the USSR. That evidence still remains in the Archive. Getty wrote:

Sedov's address book contained the exile addresses of Trotskyists in the USSR. *Trotsky Papers* 15741. The Exile Correspondence section of the *Trotsky Papers* contains copies of such letters. (Getty, Trotsky, 34 n. 16)

Those of Trotsky's followers who had access to the Trotsky Papers did not feel that this material was politically sensitive enough to remove. So what would have been? At the top of any such list would be: material that confirmed the accusations made against Trotsky at the Moscow Trials. Such evidence would have irreparably ruined Trotsky's reputation while justifying, in the eyes of many, the repressions of the late 1930s and, therefore, Stalin. Such evidence would have threatened to cut the foundation out of Trotskyism.

Trotsky's denial that he was involved in conspiring with the Germans and Japanese cannot be accepted as evidence, since, when accused of a crime, both the innocent and the guilty would tend to claim innocence. The path is now cleared for us to study the evidence that does exist.

### **Evidence from the Three Moscow Trials**

The testimony of the defendants at the three Moscow "Show" Trials is routinely dismissed as false. The defendants are said to have been threatened, or tortured, or in some other way induced to confess to absurd crimes which they could not have committed.

As we have exhaustively demonstrated in the twelve chapters that comprise the first part of *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* this is all wrong. There is no evidence worthy of the name that the defendants were threatened, or tortured, or induced to give false confessions by promises of some kind.

Under Khrushchev, again under Gorbachev and, in fact, right up to this day the official stance of both Soviet and Russian regimes has been that the

defendants' confessions are false. The investigative materials, all but a small fraction of which are still classified in Russia today, have been scoured by anticommunist historians for any evidence that would discredit the Trials and prove the defendants' confessions were false. But, despite their intense desire to find such evidence, none has been discovered. This failure can make us reasonably confident that no such evidence exists.

In 1992 during the short-lived "glasnost" period under Eltsin the appeals to the Soviet Supreme Court of ten of the Moscow Trials defendants were published in the newspaper *Izvestiia*. All the defendants in question had been sentenced to death on the basis of their own confessions and the accusations of other defendants.

This was their last chance to retract their confessions and proclaim their innocence. Not one of them did so. Every one of them reconfirmed his own guilt.

In 2013 the appeals of all but one of the defendants (Khristian Rakovsky) in the third Moscow Trial of March 1938 were published. Once again, all repeated that they were guilty of the crimes of which they had been convicted. We have discussed these appeals in more detail in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams.'*

Most people who disregard the confessions of the defendants at the Moscow Trials have never studied the transcripts of these trials. They dismiss them because they have been told that the defendants' confessions were fabricated. In *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* we demonstrated that the evidence given in those confessions that we can now check from independent sources is in fact corroborated.

A number of the defendants at the Moscow Trials testified that Trotsky was collaborating with Germany or Japan. Some testified that they had been told of Trotsky's collaboration personally by Trotsky, personally by Trotsky's son Leon Sedov, or in notes or letters from Trotsky or Sedov. Other defendants said that they had been told of Trotsky's collaboration at second hand.

In these chapters we will concentrate on this first-hand testimony of Trotsky's collaboration. At the end of the chapter we will say something about the indirect or second-hand evidence to note how it corroborates the first-hand evidence.

### **The August 1936 Trial: Valentin Ol'berg**

In the August 1936 trial of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others the only first-hand testimony to collaboration between Trotsky and the German government concerns collaboration with German intelligence. Defendant Valentin Ol'berg claimed that he obtained from the Gestapo a Honduran passport to get into the USSR with the help of his brother Paul, a German agent. He further testified that he was given the money to buy it from the German Trotskyite organization because Sedov had told them to provide it.

Ol'berg claimed that he had been in direct contact with Trotsky. We know that this latter statement is true because letters from Ol'berg remain in the Harvard Trotsky Archive. These letters are not incriminating. But this means nothing, since we know that the Trotsky Archive has been purged.

Getty discovered evidence in the Trotsky Archive that Trotsky had "safe contacts in Berlin, Prague, and Istanbul" (Getty 28). Insofar as German Trotskyists did exist, therefore, the contact Ol'berg alleged could have happened. The alleged contacts between Trotskyists and the Gestapo were for the joint purpose of organizing assassination attempts on Stalin and Voroshilov.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> There is no testimony at this trial about any Trotsky contacts with the Japanese.

Ol'berg claimed there was systematic collaboration between the Gestapo and German Trotskyists with Trotsky's consent. From Prosecutor Vyshinskii's Opening Statement:

As the investigation has established, V. Olberg arrived in the U.S.S.R. with the passport of a citizen of the Republic of Honduras obtained with the aid of the German Secret Police (Gestapo).

On this point V. Olberg, during examination in the office of the State Attorney of the U.S.S.R., testified

"... Sedov promised to help me to obtain a passport to return to the U.S.S.R. once more. But I succeeded in obtaining a passport with the help of my younger brother, Paul Olberg. Thanks to my connections with the German police and their agent in Prague, V. P. Tukalevsky, I, by means of a bribe, obtained the passport of a citizen of the Republic of Honduras. The money for the passport — 13,000 Czechoslovakian kronen — I obtained from Sedov, or rather, from the Trotskyite organization on Sedov's instructions." (Vol. XXI, p. 262)

Re-examined on the question of his connection with the Gestapo, V. Olberg on July 31 of this year testified:

"Confirming also my testimony of May 9 of this year, I emphasize that my connection with the Gestapo was not at all an exception, of which one could speak as of the fall of an individual Trotskyite. It was the line of the Trotskyites in conformity with the instructions of L. Trotsky given through Sedov. The connection with the Gestapo followed the line of organizing terrorism in the U.S.S.R. against the leaders of the C.P.S.U. and the Soviet Government." (1936 Trial, 25)

From the trial transcript:

Then, continues Olberg, I wrote a letter to Sedov in Paris telling him about the proposal made by the agent of the Gestapo, and asked him to inform me whether L. D. Trotsky would approve of an arrangement with such an agent. After some time I received a reply sanctioning my actions, that is to say, my understanding with Tukalevsky. Sedov wrote saying that the strictest secrecy was necessary, and that none of the other members of the Trotskyite organization was to be informed about this understanding. (1936 Trial, 89)

### **Interrogation of Pavel Ol'berg**



Volume two of the document collection *Politbiuro i Lev Trotskii* (PiLT2), published in 2013, contains a single interrogation of Pavel Ol'berg. It is dated May 5, 1936. Pavel Ol'berg confirms that his brother Valentin

...lived in Prague from the summer of 1933 to the end of 1934. During this time he obtained the Honduran passport and, as I have already testified in my previous confessions, traveled to the USSR in order to organize a terrorist act against Stalin as an assignment he had received from Lev Sedov. (274)

Pavel Ol'berg stated that his brother Valentin had contact "with the German secret police (Gestapo)." He continued:

During his first trip to the USSR in 1933 [Valentin] Ol'berg was not able to make contact with the Trotskyist organization and get himself established in the USSR. Then he returned to Prague, where he maintained his contact with the Gestapo. When he received his assignment from Sedov in 1934 to go to the USSR to prepare a terrorist act against Stalin he reported this to the Gestapo. Then he received the assignment from the Gestapo to accept this [Sedov's] assignment and to stop off in Berlin for instructions before his trip to the USSR ...

The Gestapo helped him obtain the passport. He received from Sedov the money to buy the passport, 13,000 Czech crowns. In addition, before his trip to the USSR he also received money from the Gestapo. What sum he received from the Gestapo, I do not know.

Valentin Ol'berg's wife Betty Ol'berg also knew about her husband's contact with the Gestapo. (275) In the one interrogation of Betty Ol'berg now available (PiLT2, 251 ff.) she admits to knowing that her husband had been assigned by Trotsky's son Sedov to murder Stalin and other Bolshevik leaders but does not mention the Gestapo. This interrogation is dated April 26, 1936, nine days before Pavel Ol'berg's.

**Conclusion: the 1936 Moscow Trial**

Ol'berg connected Trotsky or Sedov directly with the German Gestapo. Ol'berg repeated this charge in his direct testimony:

*Vyshinsky:* Connection between the German Trotskyites and the German police — was that systematic?

*Olberg:* Yes, it was systematic and it was done with Trotsky's consent.

*Vyshinsky:* How do you know that it was done with Trotsky's knowledge and consent?

*Olberg:* One of these lines of connection was maintained by myself. My connection was established with the sanction of Trotsky.

*Vyshinsky:* Your personal connection with whom?

*Olberg:* With the fascist secret police.

*Vyshinsky:* So it can be said that you yourself admit connection with the Gestapo?

*Olberg:* I do not deny this. In 1933 there began organized systematic connection between the German Trotskyites and the German fascist police. (1936 Trial, 87-88)

## **Gurevich**

Khatskel Geselevich Gurevich was a Latvian by birth who had been a member of the Communist Party of Germany until 1933 and had then moved to Leningrad. Gurevich's activities and those of his wife Frida Grebe show how Trotskyist activity was interconnected with that of the German Gestapo.

[Gurevich] Answer. I must also admit the following: In Leningrad Grebe told me that while she was under arrest in Leipzig she had been recruited by the Gestapo and she had agreed to work with the Gestapo.... Grebe received the assignment of conducting military espionage within the USSR for the Germans. (PiLT2, 288)

Frida Grebe knew that I was in contact with the Trotskyist organization in Berlin and Leipzig, knew about my contacts with Lev Sedov, and also knew that I and Mikhail Bykhovski had an assignment from the Trotskyist organization to prepare and carry out inside the Soviet Union terrorist acts against the leaders of the Party.

Yes, I have to admit that in connection with the confessions of my wife Frida Grebe in Leipzig, at the beginning of June one of the officials of the Gestapo interrogated me about my Trotskyist activity and contacts in Germany. During this interrogation I admitted that I was a member of a Trotskyist organization and was connected in my activity with Sedov, Ol'berg, Fridman, Bykhovski and others, and that I had been assigned by the organization to emigrate to the USSR to prepare terrorist acts against the leaders of the Party.

I also asked them to release me from custody so that I would be free to leave for the USSR. The Gestapo official said that my liberation might compromise me in the eyes of the Soviet colony and the CPG, and so I would be transferred to the USSR by convoy. On June 22, 1933, I was transferred to the USSR ...

I have already confessed about the persons with whom Grebe, by assignment of the Gestapo, was in contact.

Through Grebe in connection with the assignments I had received I also transmitted for the Gestapo information about the preparation by the Trotskyist organization in Leningrad of a terrorist act against Zhdanov.

Grebe's last meeting that I know of with Fridrich, a Gestapo courier, was in March 1936 ... (289)

Gurevich confessed that he had informed a known German spy about his Trotskyist activities so that they would work together.

I have to admit that Mikhail Sukhanov, who had been drawn into espionage for the Germans by Grebe in 1935, was informed in 1936 by me about the existence of the Trotskyist terrorist organization. I

considered that the risk of doing this for me was minimal since Sukhanov, as a spy, was completely in our hands and if he gave me up to the authorities it would be the inevitable end for him.

During one of Sukhanov's trips from Gatchina to me in Leningrad in January 1936 I, in Grebe's absence, told him that I was a member of a Trotskyist organization and had come to the USSR on assignment from Sedov. (290)

Gurevich worked with both the Gestapo and the clandestine Trotskyist organization within the USSR, He was also in direct touch with Sedov. In this interrogation he does not explicitly state that Sedov had approved his collaboration with the Gestapo. But we can infer it. Since Gurevich's loyalty was to Trotsky he would no doubt have informed Sedov, as well as his fellow Trotskyists, about his Gestapo collaboration.

### **The January 1937 Trial: Piatakov, Radek, Sokol'nikov, Shestov**

In the January 1937 Trial defendants Piatakov, Radek, and Shestov all testified to having been given explicit instructions by Trotsky himself concerning collaboration by either Germany or Japan. We'll briefly review that here.

#### **Piatakov**

The espionage activities of the Trotskyites on behalf of the German intelligence service were covered up in a number of cases by their connections with certain German firms.

The investigation in the present case has established that an agreement was concluded between *L. Trotsky* and certain German firms by virtue of which these firms financed the Trotskyites from a fund formed by raising the price of goods imported into the U.S.S.R. from Germany.

On this point the accused *Pyatakov*, referring to his conversation with *Trotsky's* son, *L. L. Sedov*, now in emigration, testified:

...*Sedov* conveyed to me Trotsky's instructions to try and place as many orders as possible with the firms Demag and Borsig, with whose representatives Trotsky has connections.

"You, added *Sedov*, will have to pay higher prices, but this money will go for our work." (Vol. I, p. 227) (1937 Trial, 15-16)

...

*Sedov* said that only one thing was required of me, namely, that I should place as many orders as possible with two German firms, Borsig and Demag, and that he, *Sedov*, would arrange to receive the necessary sums from them, bearing in mind that I would not be particularly exacting as to prices. If this were deciphered it was clear that the additions to prices that would be made on the Soviet orders would pass wholly or in part into Trotsky's hands for his counter-revolutionary purposes. There the second conversation ended. (26-27)

...I recall that Trotsky said in this directive that without the necessary support from foreign states, a government of the bloc could neither come to power nor hold power. It was therefore a question of arriving at the necessary preliminary agreement with the most aggressive foreign states, like Germany and Japan, and that he, Trotsky, on his part had already taken the necessary steps in establishing contacts both with the Japanese and the German governments. (53)

...In connection with the international question Trotsky very emphatically insisted on the necessity of preparing diversionist cadres. He rebuked us for not engaging energetically enough in diversive, wrecking<sup>6</sup> and terrorist activities. He told me that he had come to an absolutely definite agreement with the fascist German government and with the Japanese government that they would adopt a favourable attitude in the event of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite *bloc* coming to power. But, he added, it went without saying that such a favourable attitude was not due to any particular love these governments cherished for the Trotskyite-

Zinovievite *bloc*. It simply proceeded from the real interests of the fascist governments and from what we had promised to do for them if we came to power. (63-64)

...

*Pyatakov*: Here I must first make one explanation. Trotsky again said that from this standpoint, too, from the standpoint of the negotiations he was conducting and of what he had already achieved, it was extremely important to build up an active, concrete and real force. He then told me that he had conducted rather lengthy negotiations with the Vice-Chairman of the German National-Socialist Party — Hess. It is true I cannot say whether there is an agreement signed by him, or whether there is only an understanding, but Trotsky put it to me as though an agreement existed, one which it is true still had to be given definite shape by certain other persons, of whom I shall speak *in camera*. (64)

...

First, the German fascists promise to adopt a favourable attitude towards the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc and to support it if it comes to power, either in time of war, or before a war, should it succeed in doing so. But in return the fascists are to receive the following compensation: a general favourable attitude towards German interest and towards the German government on all questions of international policy; certain territorial concessions would have to be made, and these territorial concessions have been defined — in particular, mention was made of territorial concessions in a veiled form which were called "not resisting Ukrainian national-bourgeois forces in the event of their self-determination."

*Vyshinsky*: What does that mean?

*Pyatakov*: It means in a veiled form what Radek spoke about here: should the Germans set up their Ukrainian government,

ruling the Ukraine not through their German Governor-General but perhaps through a hetman — at any rate, should the Germans "self-determine" the Ukraine — the Trotskyist-Zinovievite bloc will not oppose it. Actually, this meant the beginning of the dismemberment of the Soviet Union. (64) ...

*Vyshinsky*: And what about diversive acts in case of war?

*Pyatakov*: That was the last point ... In the event of military attack the destructive forces of the Trotskyite organizations which would act within the country must be co-ordinated with the forces from without acting under the guidance of German fascism. The diversive and sabotage activity which is being conducted by the Trotskyite-Zinovievite organization within the Soviet Union must be carried out under the instructions of Trotsky, which are to be agreed upon with the German General Staff. (65)

<sup>6</sup> For the word "wrecking" it is best to substitute "sabotage." "Wrecking" is a clumsy translation that makes the original sound forced. The Russian word is вредительство, from "vred" = "harm."

This statement of Piatakov's is confirmed in Marshal Budennyi's letter to Marshal Voroshilov, and in Marshal Tukhachevsky's confession. We have studied both documents in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams.'*

*Radek*: ...The third point that emerged from Trotsky's conversation with Pyatakov was that Germany demanded complete freedom of action for the advance of Germany to the Balkan and Danube countries. This is also a very important fact.

*Vyshinsky* (To Pyatakov): Did you say that? Do you confirm that?

Pyatakov: Yes. Radek is relating it very exactly. It is all quite true. (445)

## **Assessing this Evidence**

Piatakov testified at length that he had personally spoken to Trotsky and received letters from him concerning the latter's agreements with both Germany and Japan. Likewise Radek said that Trotsky had discussed his (Trotsky's) agreements with both Germany and Japan in letters to him.

Getty discovered that Trotsky had sent letters to Radek, Sokol'nikov, Preobrazhensky, "and others" in 1932. Shestov said that he had received Trotsky's instructions through a face-to-face talk with Sedov.

Piatakov claimed Sedov had told him to order through German firms that would "kick back" funds to Trotsky. American engineer John Littlepage read this passage in the trial transcript and wrote that he found it credible. Littlepage claimed that in Berlin in 1931 he had learned of fraudulent orders for useless mining equipment being made by Russian émigrés acting for Soviet companies. He said that if Piatakov had made such orders the German companies would not have found it unusual, so Piatakov's story did not seem at all farfetched to him.<sup>7</sup>

7 John D. Littlepage with Demaree Bess, *In Search of Soviet Gold*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co, 1938, pp. 102-3. According to the late Prof. John N. Hazard of Columbia University, Littlepage was an anticommunist but basically apolitical engineer who had no reason to lie to make the Soviet charges "look good." As a student of Soviet law Hazard stayed with the Littlepage family in Moscow in the mid-1930s. (Interview of Professor John N. Hazard at Columbia University by Grover Furr, April 1981)

The passage below from Littlepage<sup>38</sup> is also quoted in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* Part One, Chapter Eight. There we cited it in verifying Moscow Trial testimony. We are citing it again here for the reader's convenience and to emphasize how Littlepage dramatically confirms Piatakov's testimony that Trotsky had conspired with German firms for the purposes of espionage and sabotage.

I was particularly interested in that part of Piatakoff's confession which concerned his actions in Berlin in 1931, when he headed the purchasing commission to which I was assigned as technical adviser. It then became clear to me why the Russians round Piatakoff had not



been pleased when I discovered that German concerns had substituted cast-iron for light steel in specifications for mine-hoists.

Piatakoff testified that anti-Stalin conspirators, headed by Leon Trotsky, the exiled former Commissar of War, needed foreign currency to build up a fund for their work abroad. Inside Russia, with so many conspirators occupying important positions, he said it was easy to get funds, but Soviet paper money was no good abroad. Trotsky's son, Sedoff, according to Piatakoff, therefore worked out a scheme to get foreign currency without rousing suspicion.

At his trial Piatakoff testified that he met Sedoff in Berlin in 1931, by previous arrangement, in a restaurant near the Zoo. He added, "Sedoff said that only one thing was required of me-namely, that I should place as many orders as possible with two German firms and that be, Sedoff, would arrange to receive the necessary sums from them, bearing in mind that I would not be particularly exacting as to prices."

Questioned by the prosecutor, Piatakoff added that he was not required to steal or divert Soviet money, but only to place as many orders as possible with the firms mentioned. He said that he made no personal contacts of any kind with these firms, but that the matter was arranged by others without any further action on his part than throwing business to them.

Piatakoff testified: "It was done very simply, particularly since I had very many opportunities and a fairly large number of orders went to those firms." He added at it was easy to act without rousing suspicion in the case of one firm because that firm itself had a fine reputation, and it was simply a question of paying slightly higher prices than were necessary.

The following testimony then was given at the trial:

PIATAKOFF: But as regards the other firm, it was necessary to persuade and exercise pressure in order to have purchases placed with this firm.

PROSECUTOR: Consequently you also paid this firm excessively at the expense of the Soviet Government?

PIATAKOFF: Yes.

Piatakoff then went on to say that Sedoff did not tell him exactly what the conditions were, what the technique was for this transfer of money, but assured him that if Piatakoff placed orders with these firms Sedoff would receive money for the special fund.

This passage in Piatakoff's confession is a plausible explanation, in my opinion, of what was going on in Berlin in 1931, when my suspicions were roused because the Russians working with Piatakoff tried to induce me to approve the purchase of mine-hoists which were not only too expensive, but would have been useless in the mines for which they were intended. I had found it hard to believe that these men were ordinary grafters, as they did not seem to be the kind interested in feathering their own nests. But they had been seasoned political conspirators before the Revolution, and had taken risks of the same degree for the sake of their so-called cause.

Of course, I have no way of knowing whether the political conspiracy mentioned in all confessions at this trial was organized as the prisoners said it was. I never attempted to follow the ins and outs of political disputes in Russia, and wouldn't have known what anti-Government conspirators were talking about if they had tried to drag me into their affairs, which none of them ever did.

But I am absolutely sure that something queer was taking place in Berlin in 1931 during the period mentioned by Piatakoff at his trial. I have already said that my experiences at that time puzzled me for years, and that I couldn't work out any sensible explanation until I read Piatakoff's testimony in the Moscow newspapers at the time of his trial.

Another part of this testimony that some Moscow journalists found it hard to believe was that German firms would give commissions to Sedoff. But I have already mentioned in an earlier chapter that Russian émigrés were in the habit of collecting commissions from German

firms for using their alleged influence to throw Soviet business in their direction. The managers of these German firms might consider that Sedoff was simply another Russian émigré, and would make the same kind of a deal with him that I know they had been making for years with other émigrés.

In such cases it was the usual procedure for German firms merely to work the promised commissions into their prices, and if the Russians accepted the prices nothing more was necessary. But in the case of these mine-hoists the commission must have been put so high that the firm had to juggle the specifications in order to clear its profit. When they did this my attention was attracted and the deal was blocked. Piatakoff testified that he had to exert pressure to have some orders passed, and I have told how pressure was put on me.

The testimony at this trial roused a great deal of scepticism abroad, and among foreign diplomats at Moscow. I talked with some Americans there who believed it was a frame-up from beginning to end. Well, I didn't attend the trial, but I did follow the evidence very closely, and it was printed verbatim in several languages. A great deal of the testimony about industrial sabotage sounded more probable to me than it did to some of the Moscow diplomats and correspondents. I know from my own experiences that a good deal of industrial sabotage was going on all the time in Soviet mines, and that some of it could hardly have occurred without the complicity of highly placed Communist managers.

My story is valuable, so far as this trial is concerned, only as regards the incident in Berlin. I have described what that was, and how, so far as I was concerned, Piatakoff's confession cleared up what had happened.

In *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* we discuss Littlepage's memoir and how it confirms the testimony of Piatakoff and other defendants at the second Moscow Trial of January 1937 concerning the special arrangements made by Trotsky and Sedov through Piatakoff with certain German firms.

## Radek

*Radek:* This was in May 1934. In the autumn of 1934, at a diplomatic reception, a diplomatic representative of a Central European country who was known to me, sat down beside me and started a conversation. He said (speaking German): "Our leaders" (he said that more explicitly) "know that Mr. Trotsky is striving for a rapprochement with Germany. Our leader wants to know, what does this idea of Mr. Trotsky's signify? Perhaps it is the idea of an émigré who sleeps badly? Who is behind these ideas?"

It was clear that I was being asked about the attitude of the *bloc*.... I told him that the realist politicians in the U.S.S.R. understand the significance of a German-Soviet rapprochement and are prepared to make the necessary concessions to achieve this rapprochement. This representative understood that since I was speaking about realist politicians it meant that there were **realist** politicians and **unrealist** politicians in the U.S.S.R.: the **realist** politicians were the Trotskyite-Zinovievite *bloc*. And he also understood that what I meant was: if the *bloc* comes into power it will make concessions in order to bring about a rapprochement with your government and the country which it represents. (108-109)

...

*Radek:* ... Several months later, approximately, November 1935, at one of the regular diplomatic receptions, the military representative of that country...

The President [Presiding officer of the court]: Do not mention his name or the country.

*Radek:* ...approached me and began to complain about the complete change of atmosphere between the two countries. After the first few words he said that during Mr. Trotsky's time the relations between the armies of the two countries were better.

He went on to say that Trotsky had remained true to his old opinion about the need for Soviet-German friendship. After speaking in this strain for a little while longer he began to press me hard as one who had formerly pursued the Rappalo<sup>8</sup> line. I replied to this by uttering the same formula which I had uttered when I was first sounded, namely, that the **realist** politicians of the U .S.S.R. appreciate the significance of Soviet-German friendship and are prepared to make the necessary concessions in order to ensure this friendship. To this he replied that we ought at last to get together somehow and jointly discuss the details, definitely, about ways of reaching a rapprochement. (444)

<sup>8</sup> In 1922 Soviet Russia and Germany signed a treaty at Rapallo that provided for economic and later agreed to secret military collaboration.

We have put the word "realist" in boldface because this same expression was used by a Japanese agent in conversation with Nikolai Ustrialov. Ustrialov recognized that it referred to the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites." We discuss this issue in more detail in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*.

Radek: As regards Japan, we were told she must not only be given Sakhalin oil but be guaranteed oil in the event of a war with the U.S.A. It was stated that no obstacles must be raised to the conquest of China by Japanese imperialism.

*Vyshinsky*: And as regards the Danube countries?

*Radek*: As regards the Danube and Balkan countries, Trotsky said in his letter that German fascism was expanding and we should do nothing to prevent this. The point was, of course, to sever any of our relations with Czechoslovakia which would have contributed to the defense of that country. (115-116)

...

And, finally, after receiving Trotsky's directives in 1934, I sent him the reply of the centre, and added in my own name that I agreed that the ground should be sounded, but that he should not bind himself, because the situation might change. I suggested that the negotiations

should be conducted by Putna,<sup>9</sup> who had connections with leading Japanese and German military circles. And Trotsky replied: "We shall not bind ourselves without your knowledge, we shall make no decisions." For a whole year he was silent. And at the end of that year he confronted us with the accomplished fact of his agreement. You will understand that it was not any virtue on my part that I rebelled against this. But it is a fact for you to understand. (545)

And, finally, when Pyatakov returned from abroad, he casually remarked when speaking of the conversation with Trotsky that Trotsky had told him that cadres of people were being formed who had not been corrupted by the Stalin leadership. But when I read about Olberg and asked others whether they had known of the existence of Olberg, and none of them had heard about him, it became clear to me that in addition to the cadres who had passed through his school, Trotsky was organizing agents who had passed through the school of German fascism. (548)

<sup>9</sup> Corps Commander Vitovt Kazimirovich Putna was the Soviet military attaché to Great Britain when he was named by one or more defendants at the August 1936 Moscow Trial, whereupon he was recalled and arrested. In 1937 he confessed to conspiring with other military leaders and was tried and executed in what has become known as the "Tukhachevsky Affair."

### **Evaluating This Evidence: Pavliukov's Book**

In 2007 Russian researcher Aleksei Pavliukov published the fullest account to date of Nikolai Ezhov's career.<sup>10</sup> This book, and Ezhov's career and conspiracies, are of great importance to any accurate understanding of the events of the late 1930s. For our present more limited purposes it is important because Pavliukov was accorded privileged access to certain unpublished materials relating to these conspiracies from the investigative files.

<sup>10</sup> Aleksei Pavliukov, *Ezhov. Biografia*. Moscow: Zakharov, 2007.

Among those materials were some dealing with the second Moscow Trial. Here is Pavliukov's discussion of the part of a confession by Radek dated October 20, 1936 in which Radek discusses Trotsky's relations with Germany and their significance:

Radek reported that Trotsky, who had supposedly established firm contacts with German authorities, let them know that after its coming to power the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc was ready to make significant concessions in relation to Germany. This would be expressed in profitable conditions for the export of German goods to the USSR, in a reduction of prices for Soviet goods exported to Germany, in the permission of German capital to exploit the natural riches of the country, and also in several territorial concessions. (Pavliukov 236)

This corresponds with what Radek testified during the January 1937 Moscow Trial. Had the pretrial investigation materials to which Pavliukov was made privy, but which were never intended to be made public, failed to confirm the trial testimony, we would have reason to doubt that testimony and suspect some "stage-managing" at the trial. But here the opposite is the case, as it confirms Radek's trial testimony. The existence of such pretrial investigative material, along with the confessions during trial, argues against any claim that the Trial was "stage-managed."

In the following passage Pavliukov quotes some words of Radek's directly:

In the event of war between Germany and the Soviet Union upon which, according to Radek's words, Trotsky laid great hopes, "the Trotskyist commanders could even use certain individual defeats in battle as proof of the supposedly incorrect policy of the Central Committee of the AUCP(b) and in general of the senselessness and ruinous nature of the given war ... Using such failures and the exhaustion of the Red Army soldiers, they might even call upon them to abandon the front and turn their weapons against the government. That might give the German Army the possibility of occupying the abandoned areas and create a real threat of a crushing defeat of the whole front." Under these conditions the conspirators, relying upon those parts of the Army commanded by the Trotskyist commanders,

might obtain a real chance to carry out a seizure of power in the country. (Pavliukov, 236-7)

This passage is congruent with the testimony of some of the military figures who asserted that they were in collaboration with both Trotsky and the Germans. We will examine that testimony below. It is also broadly consistent with what Piatakov testified at the January 1937 trial (see above).

Pavliukov also summarizes a confession of Radek's in the archives — dated two days later, December 22, 1936 — that concerns Trotsky:

The ultimate completion of the story with Trotsky's sellout of his former country occurred in Radek's confession of December 22, 1936. "As it turned out," the supposed meeting between Pyatakov and Trotsky in Norway was caused by the necessity to discuss a letter that had been received the evening before from Trotsky, in which the latter set forth his plans on the questions of the activity of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist bloc on foreign matters.

This letter, according to Radek, pointed out the desirability of the seizure of power even before the start of the impending war, and for this it would be essential to activate terrorist activity against the leaders of the Soviet government. For the normalization of relations with Germany it was considered expedient to agree to permit Germany to take part in the exploitation of areas of useful ores on the territory of the USSR and to guarantee the provision of foodstuffs and fats at less than world prices. As for Japan, the letter supposedly said that it would be necessary to give it access to Sakhalin oil, and to guarantee additional access to oil in the event of war with America, and also to permit it access to the exploitation of Soviet gold-producing areas. Besides that it followed that they ought not to hinder the German seizure of the Danubian and Balkan countries and not to interfere with Japan's seizure of China.

If they did not succeed in taking power before the war this goal might be attainable, in Trotsky's opinion (in Radek's exposition), as a result of a military defeat of the USSR, for which it was essential to energetically prepare. Active sabotage activities before and during the



war would, besides weakening the defensive potential of the Soviet Union, demonstrate the real strength of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist bloc and facilitate postwar negotiations with Germany, which was not of small importance, since in the event the conspirators came to power as a result of a crushing defeat of the USSR, it would not be possible to manage with the concessions of peacetime. In that case they would have to yield to the Germans obligations for the purchase of German goods for a long period of time, etc. In order that this scheme, attributed to the professional revolutionary Trotsky, would not look altogether too clumsy, Radek supplied it with arguments that Trotsky supposedly relied upon in developing all these defeatist plans. Afterwards, as a result of the strengthening of Germany and Japan (although at the expense of the USSR), would begin the unavoidable war between the imperialist powers, as it was supposedly set forth in Trotsky's letter, it could be possible to go once again on the counter-offensive, since the consequences of this war would facilitate the reappearance in the world of a new revolutionary situation.

This is the message supposedly received by Radek at the end of 1935 that stimulated Pyatakov to set out as soon as he could to consult with Trotsky in person. Radek confirmed Pyatakov's confessions about this meeting and filled them out with new details that Pyatakov had supposedly shared with him after his return to Moscow. It turned out that Trotsky had promised the Germans that during war between Germany and the USSR the Trotskyist commanders at the front would act according to the direct orders of the German General Staff, and after the war the new government would compensate Germany for part of its military expenses by paying with goods that were essential for its military industries.

Radek stated that Trotsky was also negotiating with Britain and France — still Pavliukov:

At the same time Trotsky strove to avoid too great a dependence on Germany and Japan and was supposedly carrying on negotiations with the English and French too. As a result of the meetings that had taken place with representatives of Germany, England and France an

agreement had been drafted that foresaw that, in the event the Trotskyists came to power, England and France would also not lose by it, to which Germany graciously acceded. The French were promised a benevolent regard to their attempts to obtain the return of their prerevolutionary debts to Russia and their pretensions to the metallurgical industry of the Donbas, and the English — consideration of their interests in the Caucasus.

In his one pretrial interrogation published in *Pilt2* Sokol'nikov gives details about his negotiations on the bloc's behalf with representatives of Britain and France. We will discuss this interrogation in volume three.

Radek concluded:

After the war, in accordance with the plans attributed to Trotsky, there would be established in the Soviet Union the same kind of social ... economic system as in the other countries of Europe and, of course, the Comintern would be disbanded. (Pavliukov 239-240)

This fully corresponds with some recently-declassified texts from the former NKVD archive in Moscow that confirm and give more detail about these matters.

### **Pavliukov and the 1937 Trial Transcript Compared**

This summary of Radek's confession of December 22, 1936, is consistent with Radek's testimony at the January 1937 trial. Vyshinskii read a brief quotation from this very confession in his opening statement at the trial:

For example, the accused Radek, confirming *Pyatakov's* testimony, testified during examination on December 22, 1936, that one of the points of the agreement reached between Trotsky and the representatives of the German National-Socialist Party was the obligation ...

" ... during Germany's war against the U.S.S.R .... to adopt a defeatist position, to intensify diversive activities, particularly in enterprises of military importance ... to act on Trotsky's

instructions agreed upon with the German General Staff." (Vol. V, p. 152) (1937 Trial, 10-11)

Pavliukov's summary of Radek's confession also contains some details that did not come out at the trial. For instance, according to the published trial transcript Radek did not accuse Trotsky during the Trial of planning to accommodate the powerful imperialist countries by dissolving or banishing the Comintern.

In this unpublished confession Radek stresses that "Trotskyist military commanders" would be working directly with the German general staff to take advantage of defeat in war with Germany. According to the transcript Radek said nothing about this at the trial. It is, however, confirmed in Marshal Budennyi's letter to Marshal Voroshilov concerning the trial of Tukhachevsky and other military commanders. We have studied this letter in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* and published the text in the documentary appendix to that book.

## **Shestov**

Aleksei Aleksandrovich Shestov was to be a major defendant in the second Moscow Trial of January 1937. Shestov was a mining engineer and former Party member who had been expelled as a Trotskyist.

The following passages are from Shestov's trial testimony:

During my meeting with Sedov I asked him what our leader, Trotsky, thought, what were the specific tasks he placed before us Trotskyites. Sedov began by saying that it was no use sitting and whistling for fair weather; we must proceed with all forces and means at our disposal to an active policy of discrediting Stalin's leadership and Stalin's policy.

Further, Sedov said that his father held that the only correct way, a difficult one but a sure one, was forcibly to remove Stalin and the leaders of the government by means of terrorism....

Seeing that I was being influenced by his words, he switched the conversation to a new subject. He asked me whether I knew any of the

directors of German firms, Dehlmann in particular. I told him that I remembered such a name, that he was a director of the firm of Fröhlich-Klüpfel-Dehlmann. This firm was rendering technical assistance, under a contract, in sinking mines in the Kuzbas. Sedov advised me to get in touch with that firm and make the acquaintance of Herr Dehlmann.

I asked him why I should get in touch with him. He said that this firm was of help in sending mail to the Soviet Union. I then said: "Are you advising me to make a deal with the firm?" He said: "What's terrible about that? You must understand that if they are doing us a favour why should not we do them a favour and furnish them with certain information."

...

I said: "You are simply proposing that I should become a spy." He shrugged his shoulders and said: "It is absurd to use words like that. In a fight it is unreasonable to be as squeamish as that...." I met Smirnov about the middle of July and he asked me bluntly: 'Well, how is your mood?' I told him that I had no personal mood, but I did as our leader Trotsky taught us — stand at attention and wait for orders....I detained him and asked: "But Ivan Nikitich, Sedov ordered me to establish connections with the firm of Fröhlich-Klüpfel-Dehlmann ... that was engaged in espionage and diversive work in the Kuzbas. In that case, I said, 'I will be a spy and a diversionist.'" To this he replied: "Stop slinging big words like 'spy' and 'diversionist' about...." He said: "What do you find terrible in enlisting German diversionists for this work? ... " He insisted that there was no other way. After this conversation I consented to establish connection with this firm. (235-236)

Here Shestov is very explicit that Sedov and I.N. Smirnov, who headed the clandestine Trotskyist organization within the USSR and was one of the major defendants at the first Moscow Trial of August 1936, wanted him to collaborate with German firms.

### **Pretrial Interrogation of Shestov**

We now have two pretrial interrogations of Shestov, from October 14 and October 16, 1936. (PiLT2 239-339; 339-349) In his pretrial confessions Shestov explained how Trotsky was connected to German firms through his son Leon Sedov.

Q: With which German firms did you deal?

A: "Siemens-Schuckert," "AEG," "Freilich-Klüpfel-Deilman," "Borsig."

Q: And with which firms did you have contact in your counterrevolutionary espionage work?

A: Only with the firm "Freilich-Klüpfel-Deilman." ... I categorically assert that I was in contact only with "Freilich-Klüpfel-Deilman" with which I was in contact, as I have already confessed, by direct orders from Sedov and Smirnov.

Q: ... L. Sedov and I. Smirnov explained to you the necessity of establishing contact in your work with German agents. You contacted the Deilman firm. You travelled to Essen especially for a meeting with them. Is that correct?

A: Right.

...

Q: Did this meeting take place already after you have spoken with Sedov and Smirnov?

A: Yes, I had already received Sedov's and Smirnov's assignment to contact this firm.

Q: What did you talk about with Deilman and Koch?

A: There were no talks about espionage work. We only arranged my meeting in Essen.

We agreed on the day I would fly in. On the advice of Deilman and Koch I was to stay at a hotel next to the building of the technical office of the firm.

Q: Give a detailed account of this meeting.

A: At the end of June or the beginning of July on the day we had agreed I arrived in Essen and checked in at the hotel indicated to me by Deilman.

On the second day, during the daytime, Deilman, Koch, and the director of the Essen technical office (I do not remember his name) came to see me. We had a business meeting, arranged that I would inspect 3-4 mines and a factory in Wuppertal, and in the evening I would go to see them in the technical office to familiarize myself with the plan of the Shcheglovsk mine that the firm had developed.

In the evening I went to the office. After I had been introduced to the plan for the Shcheglovsk mine I began a conversation concerning Sedov's assignment.

Q: How did you pose this question?

A: I asked them whether they knew Sedov and received an affirmative answer. I asked them whether there had been any instructions from him to discuss some questions with me. They answered in the affirmative and Deilman, smiling, stated: "To speak plainly, we know each other, and let's get straight to the business."

The essence of the conversation: the firm is interested in economic information, the perspectives and the factual plan for the development of coal, chemicals, and metallurgy in the Kuzbas. The firm has its own man, Stroilov, in Novosibirsk. He knows their men in the Kuzbas. According to the wishes of our organization we can use their men to organize sabotage (diversion-nykh aktov). The firm can increase the quality and quantity of its people as needed.

To my question about how the firm will repay our organization for the economic information Deilman said, and Koch translated, that:

1. Their people will work to carry out such tasks as our organization gives them. They know about the tasks of our organization from Mr. Lev Sedov, who is a great friend of theirs. Their people will act in the most determined manner.

2. The firm assumes the responsibility of maintaining the contact of our organization with our foreign bureau by the avenues we know about. We can maintain the same contact in Siberia; the means of contact through Stroilov and their people, when they travel on any occasion out of the USSR and back.

Here Deilman told me that any letter addressed to him with the note on it "for my boss" would be infallibly passed on to Sedov.

As a result of our exchange of views we arrived at the conclusion:

First: whenever necessary letters from Siberia to Sedov would be addressed to Deilman with the note "give to my boss."

Second: Stroilov would concentrate all diversionist (sabotage) and espionage work in his hands, since he would be working in the management of Kuzbasstroi. He knows the German language well and people from Germany will go to him.

Third: The Trotskyist organization will cooperate with the Germans in their diversionist (sabotage) work.

Fourth: There is no doubt that once the Trotskyist organization has attained power it will not forget Deilman and will give to it a new order for the planning of new mines and for carrying the plan out.  
(331-332)

...

I asked Deilman whether his people were reliable enough and whether they would give us up if they were caught. Deilman answered me: "We Germans are the kind of people that will die without saying a word about the fact that they are spies and are working with Trotskyists."

... I assured Deilman that when the Trotskyists came to power the interests of their firm will certainly not be forgotten.

Q: ... You have yourself confessed that the Trotskyist organization needed money.

A: I repeat that I personally did not take any money from the German firms, but I must admit that if Sedov and Smirnov had given me such an assignment I would have certainly carried it out.

Q: Did you interest yourself in the sources of money received by the Trotskyists abroad?

A: Unquestionably the Trotskyist organization abroad needed money. But it was not appropriate for me to ask Sedov, Smirnov, or Piatakov where the money was obtained. I can tell the investigation about one incident that may disclose one of the sources that the Trotskyist organization abroad used to obtain money.

From talks in Berlin with individual comrades: with Zubkov of Soiuzugol', Donbass; with Nedrasov of Soiuzzoloto, with an engineer from Solikamsk who was working under the command of the leadership of Glavkhim whose name I don't remember but whose face I recognize well, I found out that German firms such as "Borsig" and "Demag" for some reason enjoyed special protection by Piatakov...

Q: After the meeting in Essen did you meet with Deilman and Koch again in Germany?

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A: No, I didn't. I have already confessed that after returning from England, besides my meeting with Sedov in Berlin and receiving



letters from him for Piatakov and Muralov I had no more meetings with Deilman and the Trotskyists.

Q: When you gave to Piatakov in Moscow the letters from Sedov did you speak with him about the assignments of Deilman and Koch?

A: No, I didn't.

...

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Q: Have you confessed everything about the use of German specialists for counterrevolutionary work?

A: No, not everything. I used Floren for sending information of the Siberian center to Sedov and receiving instructions from him. This was in 1932 when Floren was working in Prokop'evsk.

Q: How did you do this?

A: During the winter, at the end of 1932, knowing about Floren's impending trip to Germany on holiday, I proposed to Muralov to use this occasion to send information to Lev Sedov .... He agreed to the sending of a letter to Sedov via Floren and offered to return in a few days with the letter.... In this same letter Muralov asked Sedov for instructions on our position during war with capitalist countries and in particular with Germany....

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Floren went to Germany during the winter at the end of 1932. He carried out my assignment and when he returned in the spring of the same year he brought a reply from Sedov to Muralov. I gave this letter to Muralov in the spring of 1933.

Q: Do you know the contents of this answer of Sedov's?

A: Muralov decoded the letter himself. He told me as follows: The center abroad is satisfied with the Siberian Trotskyist work. The Trotskyists abroad have had successes. Contacts with socialist groups are being established. There has been success in breaking off from foreign companies, especially French ones, separate groups that are now working under Trotsky's direction. We need to carry out work in the Kuzbass along the same lines as this. On the question of the position of the Trotskyist organization during the period of a war between the Soviet Union and Germany, Sedov instructed Muralov that we must unconditionally take a defeatist position.

### **Stroilov**

Mikhail Stepanovich Stroilov was a mining engineer who had been recruited by the Germans to do espionage work in the Kuzbass mining area. Stroilov was also a defendant in the January 1937 Moscow Trial. Stroilov was not a Trotskyist. Therefore in his testimony at trial Stroilov did not connect Trotsky or Sedov directly with Germans or Germany.

We do have two pretrial confessions of Stroilov's, dated October 16 and October 20, 1936. (PiLT2 349-360; 360-365) In them he relates how he worked with Trotskyists and Germans.

Q: Does that mean that the Trotskyists contacted you on their own initiative?

A: Not entirely on their own initiative. In the ensuing talks with the Trotskyists I discovered that they had a parallel line of contact directly with the Germans.

Q: Tell us how the Trotskyists established contact with you concerning subversive work.

A: Until my business trip abroad I had only a weak understanding of Trotskyists. From newspapers I knew of the existence of various opposition groups and knew about Trotsky's exile abroad, but I had no particular interest in these matters. Once I was abroad I understood

from talks with the Germans that the Trotskyists were carrying out counterrevolutionary work in the USSR and that the Germans regarded this work sympathetically.

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...Shestov informed me that the Trotskyist organization set itself the task of destruction in the Kuzbass in order to retard its development.

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... Sommeregger proposed that I put Shebesto in contact with the Trotskyist Shestov, who would be obliged to render practical assistance to the German saboteurs on the spot.

Stroilov's testimony corroborates Shestov's in confirming that the Trotskyists worked closely with the Germans.

### **Andreev**

Vladimir Mikhailovich Andreev was a young mining engineer who was recruited to a fascist organization while working in the Kuzbass. He was not a defendant in any of the Moscow Trials. We have two interrogations of him dated October 5 and 21, 1936. (PiLT2, 368-373; 373-380)

Andreev testified about the connection between the Trotskyists and the pro-German fascist group of which he was a member. He had been recruited to this group by a certain Peshekhonov (no first name or patronymic is given in this source). Peshekhonov had been involved in the Shakhty conspiracy some years earlier and was an avid fascist.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> An engineer named Peshekhonov is mentioned in the published materials of the Shakhty affair. See *Shakhtinskii protsess 1928 g. Podgotovka, provedenie, Itogi. Kn. 1*. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2011, 400, 407, 408.

Andreev testified about three members of the fascist group he was in, who turned out to be Trotskyists.

Q: What did Peshekhonov tell you about them?

A: He said that it would be harder now for us to do our work since our counterrevolutionary group had been dealt a serious blow. I asked: What blow? Peshekhonov replied that during my vacation Noskov and Shubin were no longer among the participants of our group, and Kurov had to temporarily stop any practical involvement in counterrevolutionary work since he was also under threat. **I was astonished at hearing these names: Noskov, Shubin, and Kurov I knew as members of the Party. I said to Peshekhonov: "But aren't they communists?" Peshekhonov answered me: "They are not communists, but Trotskyists. Communists and Trotskyists are as different from one another as day is from night."** I still did not really understand Peshekhonov and asked him to explain.

Then Peshekhonov told me that the Trotskyists in our organization play an especially active role. In their hostility and revenge against the Party they stop at nothing and are in contact with our organization through Stroilov and carry out together with us active work against the Party and construction in the country. Then he told me that during my vacation (I was on vacation from the beginning of June until the end of August) the Trotskyist activities of Noskov and Shubin had been discovered. Both had been expelled from the Party and removed from work. Kurov was also threatened and for self-protection had to temporarily withdraw from active counterrevolutionary work.

But Peshekhonov warned me that this was just a temporary interruption caused by the Moscow Trial of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist center. Now the Trotskyists, as Peshekhonov said, would come to us even more hostile and more actively. Therefore we had to hold to our course of relying on them especially for attracting to our work.

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Q: Do you admit that in carrying out your counterrevolutionary tasks in conjunction with the fascists and Trotskyists, in the method of carrying them out you stopped at nothing, including sending workers

to their deaths and putting whole mine shafts in danger of being blown up?

A: Yes, I am compelled to admit this.

Q: Was the explosion of September 23, as a result of which 9 miners were killed and 15 were seriously injured, the work of your fascist-Trotskyist group?

A: Yes, it's true, September 23 was the work of our fascist-Trotskyist group.

### **Archival Documents and the 1937 Trial Transcript:**

#### **Sokol'nikov and Radek Concerning Trotsky's Relations with Japan and Germany**

##### **Sokol'nikov**

In the course of his indictment at the start of the 1937 Trial Soviet Prosecutor Andrei Vyshinskii said that in pretrial confessions Sokol'nikov had testified that a foreign diplomat had informed him of Trotsky's contact with his country:

The accused *Sokolnikov* also admitted that, taking advantage of his position as Assistant People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, he, on L.D. Trotsky's instructions, carried on secret negotiations with representatives of a certain foreign state.

The accused *Sokolnikov* testified:

"At the conclusion of an official conversation held in my office, when Mr. \_\_\_ and the secretary of the embassy were about to leave, Mr. \_\_\_ stopped awhile.

"At that time both interpreters had already left my office. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Mr. \_\_\_, while I escorted him to

the door, exchanged a few sentences with me. Mr. \_\_\_ asked me: 'Are you aware that Mr. *Trotsky* has made certain proposals to my government?'

"I replied: 'Yes, I have been informed of this.'

"Mr. \_\_\_ asked: 'How do you appraise these proposals?'

"I replied: 'I think the proposals are quite serious.'

"Then Mr. \_\_\_ asked: 'Is this only your personal opinion?'

"I replied: 'No, this is also the opinion of my friends.'"

(Vol. VIII, pp. 235, 236)

(1937 Trial, 9)

To this day not one of the many volumes of the preliminary investigative materials of this, of the other two Moscow Trials, and of many other such proceedings, has ever been opened to researchers. But the investigative materials pertaining to this particular passage were published in 1989 and again in 1991 in a volume on the "rehabilitation" process.

Its content is important for our purposes. First, because it shows that these many volumes of preliminary investigation materials do exist (or did in 1989). Second, because this passage, quoted from those preliminary materials, show clearly that the country in question was Japan.

...to the file was associated a copy of notes of a talk between G. Ia. Sokol'nikov, who was at that time the vice-commissar of Foreign Affairs, with the Japanese ambassador Ota of April 13, 1935, on the question of the petroleum, fishing, and anthracite concessions on Sakhalin [Island]. At the preliminary investigation and at the trial G. Ia. Sokol'nikov confirmed the fact of this talk and stated that after the talk he supposedly had a short conversation with Ota on the subject of L.D. Trotsky's proposals to the Japanese government. The contents of

the conversation, as it is reflected in the transcript of the interrogation of G. Ia. Sokol'nikov of December 12, 1936, was as follows:

*Sokol'nikov:* ...when Ota and the secretary of the embassy were about to leave, Ota stopped awhile. At that time both interpreters had already left my office. Taking advantage of this opportunity Ota, while I escorted him to the door, exchanged a few sentences with me.

*Question:* Please reproduce your conversation with Ota word for word, as far as possible.

*Answer:* Ota asked me: "Are you aware that Mr. Trotsky has made certain proposals to my government?" I replied: "Yes, I have been informed of this." Ota asked: "How do you appraise these proposals?" I replied: "I think the proposals are quite serious." Then Ota asked: "Is this only your personal opinion?" I replied: "No, this is also the opinion of my friends." On this point our conversation ended.

*Question:* Did Ota return to the question of contact between the bloc and the Japanese government after that?

*Answer:* No. This conversation with Ota took place at the very end of my negotiations with him. Shortly after that I stopped working in the NKVD and did not meet with Ota again.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Reabilitatsiia. Politicheskie Protsessy 30-50-x godov.* Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Politicheskoi Literatury, 2001, pp. 228-9. Originally published in *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* No. 9 (1989), p. 45.

We will discuss Sokol'nikov's talk with Japanese ambassador Tamekichi Ota in the next chapter. If Sokol'nikov had been forced to fabricate his testimony here, including the details of person and country, it's difficult to conceive of any reason he would have then been admonished to omit these details at trial. It's precisely these details, confined only to his pretrial testimony, that strongly suggest the statement was not a fabrication. The details in this pretrial testimony were never intended by the prosecution to see the light of day. The text of this part of Sokol'nikov's confession is

strong corroborative evidence that both it and his testimony at the Moscow trial are truthful.

### **Confirmation of Trotsky's Contact with Japanese**

In his "Statement" to Ezhov of December 19-20, 1936, made public in 2015, Iurii Piatakov mentions Japanese ambassador Ota's contact with Sokol'nikov:

Also, Sokol'nikov told me that he had a talk with the Japanese, with Ota, I think, from which it was also clear that Trotsky was carrying on negotiations with representatives of the Japanese government. (LD 257)<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> I have put this document online. See the note at the head of the Bibliography.

Piatakov made this remark in passing, without any emphasis. Sokol'nikov must have told him about this incident. It confirms Sokol'nikov's claim that Trotsky had been conspiring with the Japanese. We will examine other evidence of Trotsky's conspiring with the Japanese when we study Serov's report to the Molotov Commission.

### **Radek**

The text of Radek's similar statement at a preliminary investigation has not been published, though it is briefly summarized on p. 229 in the *Reabilitatsia* volume, right after the quotation from Sokol'nikov we've just reviewed. But a version of that text was reprinted in a 2004 volume of NKVD materials sent to Stalin. It occurs in a part of the draft of Vyshinskii's opening statement at the 1937 Trial.<sup>14</sup> Though expurgated to remove the names of the German figures identified in the original interrogation (which is still secret) the name of the government — Germany, in this case — was left in the draft, while it was omitted in the Trial transcript (*1937 Trial*, 7-9).

<sup>14</sup> Lubianka 1937-1938, 11-12.



In the following section:

- the passages that are common to both versions of Vyshinsky's remarks are in normal type.
- those passages that are only in the pretrial draft of Vyshinsky's remarks published in 2004, but are not in the Trial transcript, are in *italics*.
- the passages that are only in the Trial transcript are in **bold**.

The most important result of this textual analysis is this: the draft version published in 2004 contains more specific references to Germany and Japan, to German individuals, and to an outline of Trotsky's purported agreements with them.

As testified by the accused Pyatakov, L. Trotsky, in his conversation with the accused in December 1935, informed him that as a result of these negotiations he had concluded an agreement with *the said leader of the National-Socialist Party* **HESS** on the following terms:

"1) to guarantee a generally favourable attitude to wards the German government and the necessary collaboration with it in the most important questions of an international character;

"2) to agree to territorial concessions;

"3) to permit German industrialists, in the form of concessions (or some other forms), to exploit enterprises in the U.S.S.R. which are essential as complements to German economy (iron ore, manganese, oil, gold, timber, etc., were meant);

"4) to create in the U.S.S.R. favourable conditions for the activities of German private enterprises;

"5) *in time of war to develop extensive diversive activities in enterprises of the war industry and at the front. These diversive activities are to be carried on under Trotsky's instructions, agreed upon with the German General Staff.*

These principles of the agreement, as Trotsky related, were finally elaborated and adopted during Trotsky's meeting with Hitler's deputy, Hess.

Likewise, said Trotsky, he had well-established connections with the *Japanese* government. (Vol. I, pp. 267, 268)

The nature of this agreement and the extent of the territorial concessions proposed were communicated by L. Trotsky in his letter to the accused Radek in December 1935.

On this point the accused Radek, during examination on December 4, 1936, testified:

"...Trotsky's assertion about his communication with the representatives of the \_\_\_ government was not idle talk. I was able to convince myself of this from conversations I had had at diplomatic receptions in 1935-35 with the military attaché *Mr.* German General K., the naval attaché, if I am not mistaken, Mr. B *and* finally with the press-attaché of the German embassy, Mr. B, a very well informed representative of Germany.

Both of them, in a cautious way, gave me to understand that the \_\_\_ government was in communication with Trotsky."

And further:

"I told Mr. K\_\_\_ that it was absolutely useless expecting any concessions from the present government, but that the German government could count upon receiving concessions from 'the realist politicians in the U.S.S.R.,' i.e. from the bloc, when the latter came to power." (Vol. V, pp. 119, 121)

We should note that even Vyshinsky's draft has been expurgated of some details. For example in the summary of Sokol'nikov's confession Ota's name is replaced by "O" in this draft, while in the Trial transcript itself even this letter is omitted and we read "Mr. \_\_\_."

Hess's name *is* mentioned in the Trial transcript. Presumably this is because Hess was an official of the Nazi Party, not a member of the German government. The Soviets insisted upon making a distinction between the policies of the Soviet *government* that wanted good relations with capitalist countries in diplomacy, trade, etc., and the policies of the Bolshevik *Party* that pursued communist ends. It is logical that they would make a similar distinction in the case of Germany.

By analogy with Sokol'nikov's interrogation we may assume that all the names were present in the still-secret transcript of Radek's interrogation. Explicit identification of German and Japanese individuals is more frequent in the draft of Vyshinsky's remarks, yet Hess's name does get into the Trial transcript, though the word "Japan" is excised, as are the ranks and initials of the German officials and, in the last quotation, the word "German" itself. This appears to show considerable uncertainty within the Soviet government as to how much to reveal publicly. Perhaps they did not want to "burn their bridges" to the government and military of any of the Western countries.

### **Assessing This Evidence**

We will have much more discussion of the testimony above, and of confirmatory testimony, in the chapter on Piatakov's Statement to Ezhov in volume three of this work.

As in the case of the Sokol'nikov passage, these differences between the various versions of the same testimony are hard to explain unless one assumes that the original testimony was genuine. It would be absurd to create multiple levels of *fake* confessions. But *real* confessions that were obtained in many interrogations over an extended time, then edited down in several versions of the indictment, and finally edited again in the final draft of the Trial transcript, would leave this kind of documentary trail.

Radek's and Sokol'nikov's interrogations were still in existence in 1989 when the excerpts from them were published. We have evidence that the texts of many other interrogations, as well as other vital investigative materials, still exist but are kept top secret in Russian archives. They

probably have a great deal more evidence to support the existence of the conspiracies, including those with Trotsky, Germany, and Japan. Since the archives have been scoured for any evidence that could support the "rehabilitations," and thus the supposed innocence, of the defendants, it seems safe to assume that the material that is still secret tends to support the defendants' guilt.

Until recently very few such pretrial confession transcripts had been published — Bukharin's first confession, plus Frinovskii's, Ezhov's, Iagoda's, Enukidze's, Fel'dman's, and a few by defendants at the 1936 trials like Zinoviev and Kamenev. Now we have more: the several interrogation-confessions in the volume *Politbiuro i Lev Trotskii, T. 2* (PiLT2); Piatakov's Statement of December 19-20, 1936; plus some quotations from investigative materials in Ivan Serov's report to the Molotov Commission of June, 1956. All of these materials confirm the impression that they contain primary evidence of outstanding importance. We devote a separate chapter to each of the last two in the present volume. We will study more of the materials in PiLT2 in volume three.

## **Evidence**

We have no evidence that the testimony in these confessions was extracted by threat or force — that is, was false. Why go to the trouble of having a suspect concoct a detailed confession, naming names, and then take out those names for the sake of a trial?

By far the most likely reason for omitting the names at trial is that they were genuine in the first place. Given the absence of any evidence that these confessions were false, and given the logical progression from more detail in the secret documents to the least detail in public ones, any objective student would conclude that we should consider these confessions genuine unless and until evidence to the contrary should be discovered.

But the practice among most scholars of this period of Soviet history is to do precisely the opposite. Any evidence that tends to support the theory that Trotsky or any of those accused of espionage, sabotage, conspiracy to overthrow the government, or treasonable contacts with foreign

governments did in fact so conspire, is routinely dismissed. The evidence itself is not evaluated.

Such a procedure is incorrect. There is never any reason to "dismiss" — to refuse to consider — any evidence. All evidence needs to be evaluated on its own merits and in conjunction with the rest of the evidence available, as we have done here. The evidence is strong that Radek testified truthfully both in his pretrial interrogations and at the trial. That means either that Trotsky was involved with Germany and Japan or, at the least, that Trotsky told Radek he was.

## **The March 1938 Trial**

### **Krestinskii**

In this trial Nikolai Krestinskii testified that in 1922 he began collaborating for factional Trotskyist aims with the German General von Seeckt at Trotsky's behest. Krestinskii said that the clandestine Trotskyite organization performed some kind of espionage or intelligence services for the German General Staff in return for a considerable sum of money to further their factional work within the Bolshevik Party.

KRESTINSKY: I began my illegal Trotskyite activities at the end of 1921, when on Trotsky's suggestion I consented to the formation of an illegal Trotskyite organization and to my joining its centre, which was to be made up of Trotsky, Pyatakov, Serebryakov, Preobrazhensky and myself, Krestinskii. Trotsky made this proposal to me immediately after the Tenth Congress....(1938 Trial, 262)

A year later I committed a crime — I refer to the one I spoke about during the examination of the accused Rosengoltz — the agreement I concluded on Trotsky's instructions with General Seeckt, with the Reichswehr in his person, about financing the Trotskyite organization in exchange for services of an espionage nature which we undertook in this connection to render the Reichswehr.... (262)

VYSHINSKY: Will you tell us how much money you received?

KRESTINSKY: Beginning with 1923 until 1930 we received annually 250,000 German marks in gold.

VYSHINSKY: This makes approximately two million gold marks altogether during these years?

KRESTINSKY: Yes, approximately two million gold marks. (265)

Krestinskii made a point of stressing that he had contacted von Seeckt as early as the previous year, 1921, but that his illegal, criminal contacts with von Seeckt dated only from 1922.

VYSHINSKY: Inasmuch as you are winding up the story of this period of your criminal activities, I want to get more precise information on one question. You said that in the winter of 1921-22 you evolved your calculations on the German Reichswehr.

KRESTINSKY: The plans to utilize the German Reichswehr for criminal Trotskyite purposes appeared in the spring of 1922.

VYSHINSKY: Did your Trotskyite organization maintain contact with Seeckt even before 1921?

KRESTINSKY: There was a contact with him of which I do not want to speak at an open session. It was a contact established by a member of our organization who at that time was not yet a member of our organization, and it was not a contact of a Trotskyite nature. (267-268)

...

VYSHINSKY: The question of money for Trotskyite purposes from the German Reichswehr — is that an official aspect or not?

KRESTINSKY: This was the secret Trotskyite aspect, a criminal thing.

VYSHINSKY: Which refers to 1921-22?

KRESTINSKY: To 1922. (269)

It is hard to understand why Krestinskii would have insisted upon such precision over an insubstantial matter — whether his illegal Trotskyist activity began in 1921 or in 1922 — unless he were telling the truth.

Krestinskii also claimed that he had met personally with Trotsky in Meran, Italy<sup>15</sup> in October 1933, where Trotsky told him that collaboration with Japan was also essential. Krestinskii said that Trotsky personally informed him that he was continuing to work personally with the Germans, and with the Japanese through Sokol'nikov.

He undertook to carry on the negotiations with the Germans. As for the Japanese, of whom he spoke as a force with which it was also necessary to come to terms, he said that, for the time being, it was difficult for him to establish direct connections with them, that it would be necessary to carry on conversations with them in Moscow, that it was necessary in this connection to use Sokolnikov, who was working in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and, as it happened, was in charge of eastern affairs. And inasmuch as this conversation would be held only with an official person, and the preliminary conversation would only be in the nature of soundings, it would be sufficient to confine ourselves at first to general statements to the effect that if a government of a bloc of the opposition groups assumed power in the Soviet Union, it would display a favourable attitude towards the Japanese and take into consideration the wishes of the Japanese during the discussion and settlement of the controversies existing between the Soviet government and the Japanese government. (277-278)

<sup>15</sup> The city is called "Meran" in German and Russian, and "Merano" in Italian. We use "Meran" here because this is the spelling in the English translation of the 1938 Trial transcript.

As we have seen, Sokol'nikov did outline his talk with Tamekichi Ota, the Japanese ambassador, who informed him about Trotsky's contact with the Japanese government.

**Rozengol'ts**

Rozengol'ts testified that he had contacted von Seeckt and Chief of the German General Staff Hasse in 1923 when ordered by Trotsky and for Trotskyist purposes.

My espionage activities began as far back as 1923, when, on TROTSKY'S instructions, I handed various secret information to the Commander-in-Chief of the Reichswehr, SEECKT, and to the Chief of the German General Staff, HASSE. Subsequently, direct connections with me were established by the \_\_\_ Ambassador in the U.S.S.R. Mr. N, to whom I periodically gave information of an espionage character. After Mr. N's departure I continued my espionage connections with the new Ambassador, Mr. N.<sup>16</sup> (Vol VI, p. 131 reverse) (9)

<sup>16</sup> Probably Rudolf Nadolny, German ambassador to the Soviet Union 1933-1934.

Krestinskii too had confessed to meeting with German generals von Seeckt and Hasse.

We came to an agreement with Generals SEECKT and HASSE to the effect that we would help the Reichswehr to create a number of espionage bases on the territory of the U.S.S.R. by permitting the unhindered entry of spies sent by the Reichswehr, and that we would supply the Reichswehr with espionage materials, i.e., to put it plainly, that we would be German spies. In return for this the Reichswehr undertook to pay us 250,000 marks per annum as a subsidy for counter-revolutionary Trotskyite work.... (1938 Trial, 9)

From March 1920 to October 1926 Hans von Seeckt was "Chef der Heeresleitung" — literally, "Chief of the Army Command" — in English terminology, Commander-in-Chief. General Otto Hasse was "Chef der Truppenamt" after 1922. During the period when Germany was pretending to adhere to the Treaty of Versailles "Truppenamt" was the code word for "Generalstab der Reichswehr" or German General Staff.<sup>17</sup> Both were strong proponents of German alliance with Russia.

<sup>17</sup> See <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truppenamt>



Rozengol'ts insisted that this is when his conspiratorial work began — that is, that this contact was not work for the USSR, which had trade and military agreements with Weimar Germany at the time.

VYSHINSKY: ...So you, Rosengoltz, established connections with the German intelligence service already in 1923?

ROSENGOLTZ: With Seeckt directly.

VYSHINSKY: Do you draw a line between the two?

ROSENGOLTZ: I am saying it merely for the sake of exactitude.

VYSHINSKY: So since 1923 you, accused Rosengoltz, began to supply espionage information to foreign states?

ROSENGOLTZ: That is right. (261)

Rozengol'ts' distinction here is correct: contact with the German General Staff is not the same as contact with German intelligence, even though espionage for both would be equally illegal. Here too it is hard to imagine why Rozengol'ts would have taken the trouble to be so precise unless he were telling the truth. Liars can feign precision, but in this case there seems to be no reason to fabricate this kind of distinction.

Rozengol'ts testified to working with both Germany and Japan on Trotsky's instructions.

In addition to instructions I received from TROTSKY through KRESTINSKY and SEDOV to carry on sabotage activities in the sphere of foreign trade with the object of rendering direct assistance to Germany and Japan, the character of my sabotage activities was also determined by instructions I received from the Ambassadors in the U.S.S.R., Mr. N and Mr. N, connections with whom played an important part in this matter, as I had to be guided in my work by their definite instructions.

After I had established contact with TUKHACHEVSKY and RYKOV, I informed the former through KRESTINSKY, and the latter I myself informed, of TROTSKY'S instructions regarding sabotage activities, and both approved of the work I had done.

As a result of all this, sabotage activities in foreign trade proceeded mainly along the following three lines: first — economic assistance to Germany and Japan at the expense of the U.S.S.R.; second — causing economic loss and damage to the U.S.S.R.; third — causing political damage to the U.S.S.R. (Vol. VI, p. 49) (15-16)

ROSENGOLTZ: I shall enumerate the main points. Sedov also conveyed directions from Trotsky about the organization of terrorism, stating that at that period these instructions about terrorism should have no direct practical bearing on Krestinskii and myself from motives of secrecy, since special instructions were being given on this score to the terrorist organization of Ivan Nikitich Smirnov. In 1933 directions and instructions were received with regard to sabotage in the sphere of foreign trade. As Sedov had told me that Trotsky had an agreement with certain German circles, from this standpoint sabotage was of very essential importance to Trotsky for the maintenance of his prestige and the preservation of the agreement. The principal line in sabotage was to further the interests of Germany and Japan in the sphere of foreign trade. (246)

Rozengol'ts said that he met personally with Sedov in both 1933 and 1934.

In so far as TROTSKY had an agreement with Germany and Japan, of which I had been informed (both during the negotiations — at my meeting with Sedov in 1933; and of the agreement that had been reached — at my meeting with him in 1934), I received corresponding instructions from TROTSKY, and my sabotage activities in the sphere of foreign trade served the same purpose. (Vol. VI, p. 48) (18)

**Bessonov**

Sergei Alekseevich Bessonov, a defendant at the third Moscow Trial, said that he had received a letter from Trotsky in 1934, and also met Trotsky in Paris in that year. Here Trotsky urged him to pressure the Germans to come to some official agreement with the Opposition, saying:

VYSHINSKY: What did you and Trotsky say about your underground Trotskyite tasks?

BESSONOV: He imposed on his followers working in the diplomatic field the task of adopting the line of sabotaging official agreements in order to stimulate the interest of the Germans in unofficial agreements with opposition groups. "They will come to us yet," said Trotsky, referring to Hess and Rosenberg. He said that we must not be squeamish in this matter, and that we might be ensured real and important help from Hess and Rosenberg. He said we must not stop short at consenting to big cessions of territory. (63)

## **Rakovsky**

We now have additional evidence concerning Khristian Georgievich Rakovsky's meeting with Japanese officials on Trotsky's behalf. We devote special study to this evidence in the chapter on Ivan Serov's report to the Molotov Commission. Here we will discuss Rakovsky's testimony at the March 1938 Moscow Trial.

Khristian Rakovsky testified that in September 1934 an important Japanese official had spoken to him directly concerning an agreement with the opposition.

RAKOVSKY: ...In September 1934 I was sent to Tokyo at the head of the Soviet Red Cross Delegation to an international conference of Red Cross Societies, which was to take place there in October. The day after I arrived in Tokyo, I was stopped in the corridor of the Japanese Red Cross building by a certain prominent public man of Japan. I can mention his name.

THE PRESIDENT: No, there is no need.

RAKOVSKY: Very well, I will name him at the session in camera. He invited me to tea. I made his acquaintance. He held a position which had some relation to my mission — I want to say, not my mission as one who belonged to the opposition, but my governmental mission. I accepted his amiable invitation. During the conversation this person (here I omit various compliments, commonplaces, flattering remarks) said that the interests of the political trend to which I belonged in the U.S.S.R. and the interests of a certain government fully coincided, and that he personally welcomed my arrival in Tokyo because it would give him the opportunity to discuss certain questions concerning both sides, ... (289-290)

Rakovsky then said that during 1935 and the first half of 1936 he had had five communications with Naida, a Japanese agent. Naida gave him to understand that the Japanese had relations with Trotsky. Rakovsky communicated with Trotsky about this.

During the second and third meeting with the public man who headed a big public organization in Japan we established the nature of the information which I promised to supply to the agents of the Japanese intelligence service in Moscow and also the technique of transmitting this information. While still in Tokyo, I drew into this work Dr. Naida, secretary of the Red Cross Delegation, of whom I already knew that he was a member of the underground counter-revolutionary terrorist organization. I sent Dr. Naida with my card to the public man and he arranged with him as to how and with whom Dr. Naida was to meet in Moscow; it was he who acted as liaison agent between me and the Japanese intelligence service. In Tokyo I had yet another meeting, with a third person .... I was introduced to this third person by the second high personage. He asked me to take coffee with him — this was after dinner; we sat down at a table and began to talk.

I shall not reproduce the whole conversation, and it is not necessary either; I shall give it to you in substance. He started the conversation by saying: "We are aware that you are a very close friend and adherent of Mr. Trotsky. I must ask you to write to him that a certain government is dissatisfied with his articles on the Chinese question

and also with the behaviour of the Chinese Trotskyites. We have a right to expect a different line of conduct on the part of Mr. Trotsky. Mr. Trotsky ought to understand what is necessary for the certain government. There is no need to go into details, but it is clear that an incident provoked in China would be a desirable pretext for intervening in China." I wrote to Trotsky about all this.... (1938 Trial, 293-294)

### **Summary: Evidence from the Moscow Trials**

In the first section of *Trotsky's 'Amalgams,'* volume one of this study, we carry out an exhaustive verification of the Moscow Trials testimony. On the basis of that study we concluded that the defendants' testimony at the Moscow Trials represents what the defendants themselves chose to say. This testimony is not the result of innocent men being forced to testify falsely against themselves and others according to some kind of script designed by the investigation or the prosecution. We refer the interested reader to that study.

Of the defendants at the three public Moscow Trials eight men claimed to have heard directly from either Trotsky or his son Sedov about contacts between Trotsky and German or Japanese officials: Ol'berg, Piatakov, Radek, Shestov, Rakovsky, Krestinskii, Bessonov, and Rozengol'ts. One man, Sokol'nikov, heard of Trotsky's collaboration with Japan from a Japanese diplomat.

We noted above that other defendants — Bukharin, for example — testified that they had heard about this at second or third hand and believed it. Bukharin said he had heard about it from Radek, whom he had every reason to believe. But if Radek had been lying Bukharin would not have known, so Bukharin's testimony on this point is evidence at second hand.

The Moscow Trial defendants provided very strong evidence of Trotsky's collaboration with Germany and Japan. This evidence has never been successfully impugned. But it has been *declared* false so many times — its falsity taken for granted without evidence — that its "falsehood" is constituent of the current mainstream paradigm of Soviet history.

## Chapter 2. *Iakov A. Iakovlev*

### **Dimitrov's Diary**

In 2003 the diary of Georgi Dimitrov, head of the Comintern after 1935 and close associate of Stalin, was published. Dimitrov met frequently with Stalin and other Bolshevik leaders, and his diary contains many important passages and statements by Stalin and others. On December 16, 1936, Dimitrov met in the Kremlin with Stalin and four of his closest associates, Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov, and Ordzhonikidze. During this meeting they received a report about an interrogation of Sokol'nikov of December 12, a few days before. Here is what Dimitrov wrote, with the phrases of special interest to our present investigation in boldface:

16 December 1936

— With "the Five" in the Kremlin

(Stal[in], Molot[ov], Kag[anovich], Vor[oshilov], Ordzhonikidze).

Exchange of opinions of Ch[inese] events....

— On the French question: ...

— From the investigation of Piatakov, Sokolnikov, Radek, and others:

Interrogation of Sokolnikov, 12 December 1936:

Question: Thus, the investigation concludes that Trotsky abroad and the center of the bloc within the USSR entered into negotiations with the Hitlerite and Japanese governments with the following aims:

First, to provoke a war by Germany and Japan against the USSR;

Second, to promote the defeat of the USSR in that war and to take advantage of that defeat to achieve the transfer of power in the USSR to [their] government bloc;

Third, on behalf of the future bloc government to guarantee territorial and economic concessions to the Hitlerite and Japanese governments.

Do you confirm this?

Reply: Yes, I confirm it.

Question: Do you admit that this activity by the bloc is tantamount to outright treason against the motherland?

Reply: Yes, I admit it.

(Dimitrov 42-43)

## **Analysis**

This meeting can be confirmed in the schedule of visitors to Stalin's office for December 16, 1936.<sup>1</sup> The four Politburo members named by Dimitrov are recorded as entering Stalin's office at 1905 hrs, fifteen minutes before Dimitrov entered along with Manuilsky, who was a Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Comintern and head of the Soviet delegation to it, while Dimitrov himself was General Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Dimitrov and Manuilsky stayed for fifty minutes. The two Comintern leaders were obviously there to discuss Comintern — international — matters. Sokol'nikov's testimony was relevant to their concerns.

<sup>1</sup> "Posetiteli kremlevskogo kabineta I.V. Stalina." *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* 4 (1995), 35.

Dimitrov heard this at a meeting of political leaders of the highest level, including Stalin himself. There is no indication that Stalin — he would be the only person who might be able to get away with such a thing — "staged" this meeting for Dimitrov's benefit. Dimitrov, a staunch supporter of Stalin and the Soviet Union, did not need reassurance or "shoring up." And Dimitrov wrote this in his private diary, only recently published because of the demise of the Soviet bloc.

Therefore this entry is similar to the signatures of Stalin et al. on the Trotsky telegram six months later. It is an excellent gauge of what Stalin and top Soviet leaders believed at the time. This is significant because they had access to all the evidence, including a huge amount that is still secret.

## **Was Stalin Lying?**

It is often asserted by Cold War historians that Stalin was a "liar" so that nothing he wrote should be "believed." Therefore — this logic might go — we should not "believe," in this case or in the case of the Trotsky telegram, the comments he wrote on statements and confessions — ever.

But this reasoning is all wrong. There is no reason to view Stalin as a liar any more than any other political figure. In the course of our research over the past decade we have found no examples of Stalin's "lying," even concerning the "Katyn massacre" question, for a recent discovery at a German mass murder site in Ukraine has shown that the "official version" of the "Katyn massacre" cannot possibly be correct. But in any case Katyn was a very different situation that allegedly involving lying to foreign powers, a common practice among all governments at all times.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> I will publish a book-length study of the Katyn Massacre issue in 2018. In the meantime see Grover Furr, "The 'Official Version' of the Katyn Massacre Disproven? Discoveries at a German Mass Murder Site in Ukraine." *Socialism and Democracy* 27, 2 (2013), 96-129. Online at [https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/furr\\_katyn\\_2013.pdf](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/furr_katyn_2013.pdf) Much more detail about the evidentiary questions of "Katyn" is on my "Katyn Forest Whodunnit" page, <http://tinyurl.com/katyn-the-truth>

Lying is a universal human trait. Everybody lies — but nobody lies all the time. Therefore, the fact that someone lied in one case or other is not evidence that they lied at another time. There's no reason to think that Stalin was lying here to Dimitrov and Manuilsky, in his words on Trotsky's telegram, or at any other time unless there is specific evidence that he was. This is, of course, true for anyone, not just for Stalin. There is no such thing as an historical figure "who can always be trusted," to tell the truth or one "who can never be trusted."



Finally, no single piece of evidence by itself is to be "believed" or "disbelieved" in any case. All evidence must be analyzed carefully, including in context with other evidence.

### **S.M. Uritsky**

Only a tiny proportion of all the investigative materials from the 1930s have been made available to researchers and only a small part of that has been published. Occasionally a privileged researcher is permitted to read and quote from some investigative files to which no one else has been given access. Normally these are researchers who promote the "official" Russian government position, which corresponds to the Khrushchev-Cold War-Gorbachev-Trotskyist positions the anti-Stalin paradigm that all those convicted in the Moscow Trials, the Military Purges, plus many others, were completely innocent.

Such a researcher is Col. Nikolai S. Cherushev, author of a number of books arguing that no military conspiracies ever existed and, by extension, no other anti-government conspiracies could have existed either. Cherushev has been permitted to see and to quote liberally from investigative files of many military men that no one else has seen — or, at least, that no one else has published about.

One of these files is that of Komkor<sup>3</sup> S.P. Uritsky. In Uritsky's indictment we read the following:

In the extremely exhaustive text of the sentence by the Military Collegium in the case of S.P. Uritsky of August 1, 1938, we read:

— on the order of Gamarnik, Pyatakov, Iakir, and Tukhachevsky Uritsky transmitted their letters to Sedov to be passed to Trotsky;

— was connected to the Trotskyist group of Souvarine in Paris, through which he passed espionage materials from Tukhachevsky for French intelligence.

<sup>3</sup> Corps Commander, equivalent to a two-star general in the US military. See Iurii Beremeev, *Anatomfia Armii*. Cited at <http://army.armor.kiev.ua/index.html>

<sup>4</sup> Cherushev, N.S. *1937 god. Byl li zagovor voennykh?* Moskva: Veche, 2007, 179. (Cherushev, 1937)

## **Analysis**

We know from other evidence that these men were involved directly with Trotsky. Since Gamarnik, Iakir, and Tukhachevsky were also involved in military collaboration with Germany it is safe to assume that Uritsky's contact with Trotsky had something to do with at least Germany as well. However, given Cherushev's wording here we can't be sure that Uritsky did confess to direct contact with Trotsky. We can only be certain that the court found him guilty of doing so.

In a short fragment below from one of Uritsky's statements to the NKVD he said that he would make a clean breast of everything. So it appears that this high-ranking military officer confessed to sending messages from Gamarnik, Piatakov, Iakir, and Tukhachevsky to Trotsky via Sedov.

All Cherushev's works are devoted to the predetermined conclusion that no military conspiracy existed at all. That might explain why he has the access he does to investigative files to which no one else has been admitted: he can be trusted not to question the "canonical" viewpoint. Nevertheless Cherushev cites the following direct quotation from Uritsky's pen. On April 14, 1938, after referring to their "long-standing friendship" — a phrase not further explained — Uritsky wrote to NKVD officer Veniamin S. Agas:

I have been feeling poorly in recent days, no bladder control, bloody vomiting, unable to think, if possible let me have a day's respite, [then] summon me, I will report to you, and then I will write everything completely. I wish to turn myself into the kind of arrestee who helps the authorities, I wish to earn the mercy of Soviet authority.  
(Cherushev 1937, 178)

As Cherushev notes, this confirms that Uritsky was ill. But it contains no accusation of torture or mistreatment. In any case, far from being a profession of innocence it is, on the contrary, an admission of guilt.

Personal contact with Trotsky or, as here, to claim that one had such personal contact, was highly unusual. The NKVD had no need to fabricate such a detail simply in order to frame an innocent man. On the contrary: it would have made Uritsky's confession stand out from most others, perhaps leading to an interview with a Politburo member or Stalin himself. That would put things out of Ezhov's control, because the arrestee might say that his testimony had been coerced. We know that Politburo members did interview some arrestees. So we can't just assume that Uritsky's confession was coerced. It may well have been genuine, and at this time we have no reason to doubt that it was.

Ezhov's second in command Mikhail Frinovskii identified Agas as one of Ezhov's "bone-breakers," skilled in beating defendants and in fabricating convincing confessions. But this does not mean that all defendants were beaten into false confessions either. It ought to remind us that no individual piece of evidence can by itself be decisive, because each piece of evidence taken by itself is subject to multiple possible explanations or interpretations. It is only when the whole complex of circumstantial evidence is consistent with one conclusion that that conclusion becomes highly probable, and for all practical purposes, until proven otherwise, can be taken to represent the truth.

### **Ia. A. Iakovlev's Confession of October 1937**

Among the documents from former Soviet archives that have been published since the end of the Soviet Union in 1991 one of the most significant for our purposes is the lengthy interrogation of Ia. A. Iakovlev. Iakovlev had been People's Commissar for Agriculture during the collectivization period of the early 1930s. In 1937 he was a prominent member of the Central Committee. Iakovlev also held a number of other very responsible posts: head of the agricultural section of the C.C., and first assistant to the chairman of the Party Control Commission but in reality its head since Ezhov, its formal head, was spending full time as Commissar of

the NKVD. Since August 11, 1936, Iakovlev had been a member of the secretariat for the first draft of the program of the VKP(b), the Bolshevik Party.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> I have consulted the following summaries of Iakovlev's life and career:  
<http://www.knowbysightinfo/YaYY/05215.asp> ;  
[http://www.hrono.info/biograf/yakovlev\\_ya.html](http://www.hrono.info/biograf/yakovlev_ya.html) ;  
[https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Яковлев,\\_Яков\\_Аркадьевич](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Яковлев,_Яков_Аркадьевич) For the date of August 11, 1936 and Iakovlev's place in the group to reform the Party program see Iurii N. Zhukov, *Inoi Stalin*. Moscow: Vagrius 2003, 268. (Zhukov)

Iakovlev had been very close to Stalin. He was one of those who worked most closely on the new Constitution that was announced in 1936, and that was supposed to bring free elections to the USSR. Along with Tal' and Stetskii, Iakovlev was, in reality, one of the authors of the Constitution. He had worked closely with Stalin on this, one of Stalin's pet projects. (Zhukov 308 ff.) In short, Iakovlev was one of the very highest members of the Soviet government and Bolshevik Party outside the ranks of the Politburo itself.

Iakovlev was arrested on October 12, 1937. On October 15-18 he confessed that in 1923 Trotsky had asked him to be a Trotskyist "sleeper" in the Party — to go underground, cease all contact with any Trotskyists, and climb into responsible Party positions.

Trotsky had already at that time posed the question in this context, that he should have his own agents in the Party leadership at the necessary time who could pass information to him and collaborate in his seizure of power. (Lubianka 1937-1938, 3886)

Here are the parts of Iakovlev's statement, dated October 15-18, 1937, that concern his ties to Trotsky and to German intelligence. In the first section Iakovlev outlines how he was recruited to a secret Trotskyist conspiracy against the Party even before Lenin had died.

Question: Explain how you managed to hide your Trotskyist anti-Soviet activity for so long, since 1923?

Answer: This can be explained by the fact that, since 1923, following TROTSKY'S personal directives, I retreated from open struggle with the Party. I maneuvered and immediately took up a conspiratorial position. Outwardly I broke with the Trotskyists and conducted all my further anti-Soviet work under the flag of duplicity.

Even in 1923 TROTSKY, foreseeing the possible failure of an open attack against the Party, considered it essential to make some part of his supporters very carefully concealed so that they, while remaining in the Party and doing Party work, could become fortified, trusted by the Party masses and leadership, and could move gradually into the leadership of the Party.

TROTSKY set this task at that time so as to have his agents in the Party leadership at the necessary moment, so they could keep him informed and cooperate in the seizure of power. Such tasks were given to me as well.

Question: That is, such tasks of betrayal, provocation, and espionage, in the fulfillment of which you had already had experience from your collaboration with the Okhranka [Tsarist secret police in pre-Revolutionary times].

Answer: Yes.

Question: Continue your confession. Where and when did you ally yourself with TROTSKY?

Answer: In 1923 SOSNOVSKY put me in touch with TROTSKY. The meeting took place at VORONSKY'S apartment in the 1<sup>st</sup> Palace of Soviets in the Hotel 'Natsional.' In attendance were TROTSKY, SOSNOVSKY, VORONSKY and myself. In speaking of the plan for the work of the Trotskyists, TROTSKY was pointing out that the possibility of the temporary — as he put it — victory of the CC'ists was not excluded; he further said that in politics, as in war, it is necessary to take into account the possibility of temporary defeat and for that reason it was essential to insure oneself in advance on enemy territory.

TROTSKY especially pointed out that the conditions of struggle prove that the Party apparatus has attained decisive importance. Proceeding from that, he set before us the task: to strive in our future work not only to penetrate the Party apparatus, but to strengthen ourselves there, to move forward, to select and recruit out of the Party apparatus cadres of supporters of TROTSKY'S line. Proceeding from that, TROTSKY proposed that I outwardly cease all contact with Trotskyists; in future, always and everywhere to proclaim myself a firm supporter of the Central Committee, a merciless enemy of Trotskyists, to use everything in order to increase my influence in the Party, but at the same time extremely carefully and conspiratorially, by second and third hand, to move forward the work of attracting very carefully selected people into the Trotskyist organization.

After that meeting and directions from TROTSKY I ceased open contact with VORONSKY and SOSNOVSKY, as with compromised persons; on my part I instructed those persons connected with me and who supported Trotskyism, in the spirit of the instructions I had received from TROTSKY. (Lubianka 1937-1938, 388-389)

A few pages further in his interrogation Iakovlev outlines how he was recruited by German intelligence in 1935 in Berlin. According to Iakovlev he had been recruited by a German agent named Shmuke.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Presumably "Schmucke" in German.

The German agent who, according to Iakovlev, recruited him into cooperation did so on two bases. Shmuke knew from Russian émigrés in Germany that Iakovlev had collaborated with the Russian Tsarist Okhranka, or secret police, towards the end of 1916 in Petrograd, and used this information to blackmail Iakovlev by threatening to expose it.

Once in the Bolshevik Party and after the Revolution a confession of collaboration, even at a vulnerable early age, would destroy one's Party career. *Hiding* such a connection could be much worse because it suggested that such a person was completely untrustworthy and might still be some kind of clandestine agent or other. A Party member was not supposed to have any secrets — certainly none of any political relevance — from the

Party. Moreover, it made one vulnerable to blackmail and so an additional security risk.

Shmuke also knew from Trotsky about Iakovlev's participation in the Trotskyist underground, and revealed this to him. This section of the document also constitutes strong evidence that Trotsky collaborated with German intelligence

Question: You speak about GAMARNIK'S and VAREIKIS' connections with foreign intelligence services. Did you yourself have such connections?

Answer: Yes, I had ties with German intelligence.

Question: Tell us concretely, when did you establish ties with German intelligence?

Answer: I was recruited by German intelligence when I was in Germany, in Berlin, in the autumn of 1935, and at that time and until my arrest I collaborated with this intelligence and maintained contact with it through a special representative in Moscow.

In Berlin I was in the hospital "Catholic Commune" for treatment. About a week after my arrival in Berlin a man in a suit, whom I did not know, came to me in the hospital, and introduced himself to me by the name SHMUKÉ, and said that "he had instructions to have discussions with me on a number of questions of interest to him and of urgency for me." He announced that he knew "from my political friends" about my membership in the underground organization that was struggling with the existing powers in the USSR and that, following orders of the German government, he wished to establish businesslike relations with me. SHMUKÉ further told me that in leading governmental spheres in Germany there were many friends of those tendencies in the USSR that were hostile to the current leadership, that these German spheres supported those tendencies in the USSR — therefore the German government considered it possible to send SHMUKÉ to me for negotiations.

Fearing a provocation, I naturally did not want to disclose myself to this unknown person and expressed my total confusion concerning what he had proposed to me. However, SHMUKE stubbornly continued that it was useless for me to deny facts that both he and I knew; that the German government was not turning to me alone, among leaders of underground organizations in the USSR, with such a proposal. At last he said to me emphatically: "Your chief leader L. TROTSKY is acting in full contact and on the basis of mutual benefit with the new Germany." I still attempted to end this conversation and made as though I wanted to stand up in order to say goodbye and force SHMUKE to leave. But SHMUKE did not budge from the spot and told me that I was too careful and, clearly, did not trust him; that this carefulness was a good sign in me, on the one hand, however, he had the full possibility of proving to me the "official nature" of his visit and had the full information of the German government about me. After that he told me that "in Germany they had been very interested in me personally even when I was the People's Commissar for Agriculture, and that it was not by chance" — said SHMUKE — "that one of our magazines in Berlin had been graced by your photograph and biography." In fact this did take place: my photograph had appeared in one of the fascist magazines. Then he said that in Germany live emigrants from Russia, including former members of the Russian police, who have informed the German authorities about certain episodes of my collaboration with the Russian police at the end of 1916 in Petrograd. Although they had the full ability to compromise me with the Soviet authorities at any moment they, said SHMUKE, did not wish to do that, since they hope to establish with me the same kind of contact as they have with TROTSKY.

I understood that I had fallen into a pitfall and there was no other way out. Faced with this fact, and realizing that the Germans were fully informed about me, I decided to agree with SHMUKE'S proposal, all the more since SHMUKE'S information about TROTSKY'S connections with Germany completely corresponded with what PIATAKOV had said to me and what TROTSKY had written.



I then asked what specifically he — SHMUKÉ — wanted from me, and what services I might render the German government, adding that by my work I was mainly involved in agricultural affairs and had no relation to military matters of defense. SHMUKÉ retorted that the German government was not interested only in defense work, but in the situation within the country, in the Bolshevik party, and especially in the situation within the government and the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party; he asked me to inform the German authorities about these matters from now on and, as he put it, he hoped that with this information I would also help my political friends who were working in full contact with Germany.

Besides that, SHMUKÉ stressed to me that he and his leaders would not object if I would inform the German government, within those limits I thought possible, about the affairs of the underground organizations to which I belonged. SHMUKÉ said that he assumed this would be to our mutual benefit.

Then I told SHMUKÉ that I accepted his proposal and agreed that in future, to the best of my abilities and strength, I would inform the German government on the matters of interest to the Germans.

Considering the matter more thoroughly, I decided that if possible I would sell my collaboration to the Germans more dearly, first of all to obtain from German intelligence corresponding possibilities for foreign connections for our organization and, in the first place, with TROTSKY, and also to increase my importance in the eyes of the German government. (Lubianka 1937-1938, 394-395)

### **Assessing Iakovlev's Confession**

This confession by Iakovlev is especially important because of Iakovlev's high position in the Soviet government and Bolshevik Party and his closeness to Stalin. He confirms that as early as 1923 Trotsky formed a factional underground movement within the Party. The years 1922 and 1923 pop up frequently in the transcript of the March 1938 Moscow Trial as the

year many of those who confessed to being in the Trotskyist underground began their activities.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See 1938 Moscow Trial 6, 9 (Rozengol'ts); 45 (Bessonov, about Reich).

Iakovlev admits direct ties with German intelligence. This confirms allegations by others that Trotsky's movement had such contacts. He also confirms German ties of Gamarnik — that is, the Military conspirators led by Tukhachevsky — and Vareikis, head of the Party in the Far East who was arrested for ties with the Japanese. NKVD General Genrikh S. Liushkov, who defected to the Japanese in June 1938, named both Gamarnik and Vareikis to his Japanese handlers as genuine conspirators in the Far East.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See Coox 1998 (1), 151, 152,157; Coox 1998 (2) 81 (Vareikis); Coox 1998 (1) 156; Coox 1998 (2) 85 (Gamarnik).

A dramatic revelation is Iakovlev's claim that he heard directly from a German agent that Trotsky was working with the Germans. He confirms that he had also heard this from Piatakov, and that he had also received this information in writing from Trotsky himself.

### **Stalin's Annotations**

The document immediately following Iakovlev's interrogation in the same volume is a copy of Stalin's handwritten questions on his copy of Iakovlev's interrogation:

- 1) Did he know about Vareikis' service with the Tsarist secret police (*okhranka*)?
- 2) His opinion about Mikhailov from Voronezh and his participation in the c.-r. org. [counter-revolutionary organization — GF].
- 3) His contact with Trotsky (did he see him personally in 1935 or in 1934).

4) How did he want to use MOPR? Whom in MOPR did he make use of? [MOPR = Mezhdunarodnoe Obschestvo Pomoshchi Revoliutsioneram, International Organization for Aid to Revolutionaries, the Soviets' organization to give help to revolutionaries in fascist countries where communist parties were illegal and subject to severe repression. — GF]

5) "Turn" Iakovlev's wife: he is a conspirator and she must tell us everything. Ask her about Stasova, Kirsanova,<sup>10</sup> and other friends — acquaintances of hers. (Lubianka 1937-1938 396)<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> In the following photograph of 1936 Kirsanova is second from left, Stasova third from left: <http://tinyurl.com/kirsanova-stasova>. Biographical sketches of both are included in *Zhenshchiny russkoi revoliutsii* ("Women of the Russian Revolution," Moscow: Politizdat, 1982) along with materials about Inessa Armand, Lenin's wife Krupskaya, Lenin's sisters, and others. Kirsanova died in 1947 as a lecturer in the Central Committee school ( [http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ярославский,\\_Емельян\\_Михайлович](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ярославский,_Емельян_Михайлович) ). Stasova continued to hold another high Comintern position until the Comintern's dissolution in 1943. She died in 1966 ( [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Стасова,\\_Елена\\_Дмитриевна](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Стасова,_Елена_Дмитриевна) ).

<sup>11</sup> Original text online at <http://istmat.info/node/32386> . Now also at <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/61209>

Stalin's handwritten comments on this confession show that he believed this confession of Iakovlev's was true and suggested further lines of investigation following from it. No reasonable reading of the evidence would suggest that Stalin had Iakovlev framed and then carried on a charade by annotating the confession and asking for Iakovlev's wife, also a Party member, to be brought in for questioning about his activities.

The "Stasova" referred to is Elena D. Stasova. She was one of the earliest Bolsheviks, having joined the Party in 1898, the same year as Stalin. She had long been working in the Comintern. Also an Old Bolshevik and participant in the Revolution of 1917, K.I. Kirsanova, wife of famous Old

Bolshevik Emelian Iaroslavskii, worked with Stasova and others in the Comintern. She published books on women under socialism.

The lists of those who met with Stalin in his office from the early 1930s until his death have been published. We now know that Iakovlev met in Stalin's office with members of Stalin's groups of supporters in the Politburo on the evening of October 11, 1937.<sup>12</sup> Thereafter he disappears from the political record. According to one source Iakovlev was arrested the next day, October 12.<sup>13</sup> According to the header of the interrogation transcript, dated October 15-18, 1937, Iakovlev had already made some kind of statement of confession on October 14.

<sup>12</sup> "Posetiteli kremlevskogo kabinetu I.V. Stalin," *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* 4 (1995), 66-67. A facsimile of the archival document itself may be viewed online at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/stalinvisitors101137.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> "Iakovlev (Epshtein) Iakov Arkad'evlch. Biograficheskii Ukazatel." *Hrono.ru*. At [http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/yakovlev\\_ya.html](http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/yakovlev_ya.html). The CC Plenum Decree on the removal of Iakovlev and others from CC membership (Lubianka 1937-1938, No. 262) is dated December 4-8 by the editors.

Stalin and his supporters wanted contested elections to the Soviet government. The Party First Secretaries opposed contested elections. Iurii Zhukov has followed the struggle over this issue through the archival evidence. This struggle for contested elections was finally lost during the October 1937 Central Committee Plenum.<sup>14</sup> We discuss this struggle in *Yezhov vs Stalin*.

<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of Stalin's struggle in favor of contested elections (as stipulated in the 1936 Constitution), Stalin's final defeat, and many specific references to the research of Iurii Zhukov and others, see Grover Furr, "Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform," Parts One and Two, in *Cultural Logic* 2005, <http://clogic.eserver.org/2005/2005.html>

**Assessing Iakovlev's Confession: The 1938 Moscow Trial**

In the note to Iakovlev's confession Stalin suggested that I. M. Vareikis had also been involved with the Tsarist secret police. Like Iakovlev (born 1896) Vareikis (born 1894) was a young man during the First World War. He had been arrested on October 10, just two days before Iakovlev. Perhaps it was Vareikis who named Iakovlev. Iakovlev did name Vareikis in his own confession.

Both Vareikis and Iakovlev were named as active underground Trotskyists by defendants in the March 1938 Moscow Trial. Defendant Grin'ko testified about Iakovlev's active role in the conspiracy. He evidently regarded Iakovlev as one of the leaders of the "terrorist" activity and suggested Iakovlev was in touch with Trotsky.

GRINKO: In the event of success the organization intended to set up a bourgeois Ukrainian state after the type of the fascist state.

About this character of the organization I told a prominent member of the Right and Trotskyite conspiracy, Yakovlev. In the Right and Trotskyite circles with whom I had occasion to speak, this tendency to transform our organization into a fascist type of organization undoubtedly existed. (*1938 Trial*, 71)

By "fascist" — earlier in his testimony he had called it "national-fascist" — Grin'ko meant that the Ukrainian Nationalist organizations outside the Soviet Union had become organized in a fascist manner and were under either German or Polish nationalist leadership. The fascist nature of Ukrainian nationalism during the interwar period has long been recognized.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See Alexander J. Motyl. *The Turn To The Right: The Ideological Origins And Development Of Ukrainian Nationalism, 1919-1929*. Boulder, CO / New York: East European Quarterly / Columbia University Press, 1980. There is a large and rapidly growing body of research on fascist Ukrainian Nationalism. See Grzegorz Rossolinski-Liebe, *Stepan Bandera: The Life and Afterlife of a Ukrainian Nationalist: Fascism, Genocide, and Cult*. New York: Ibidem Press, 2014.

GRINKO: Gradually extending my connections with the Right and Trotskyite centre, and having ascertained who belonged to it, I at the beginning of 1934 formed an opinion of what the "Right and Trotskyite centre" was.

From a number of conversations and connections, and the tasks I received from Rykov, Bukharin, Gamarnik, Rosengoltz, Yakovlev, Antipov, Rudzutak, Yagoda, Vareikis, and a number of other persons, it became clear to me that at that time the "Right and Trotskyite center" based itself mainly on the military aid of aggressors. (76)

...

VYSHINSKY: Tell us about the terrorist activities.

GRINKO: At that period terrorist activities were one of the main weapons in the common arsenal of struggle against the Soviet power.

VYSHINSKY: From whom did you learn this?

GRINKO: From Rykov, Yakovlev, Gamarnik and Pyatakov.

...

VYSHINSKY: Where did this terrorist link emanate from?

GRINKO: From Trotsky. I learned this from Gamarnik. (77)

...

In carrying out the sabotage measures and sabotage instructions in the financing of agriculture, no little assistance was rendered by Rudzutak, who was in charge of financial affairs in the Council of People's Commissars, and by Yakovlev. (80)

Grin'ko's confession corroborates that of Iakovlev. There would seem to be little point in "coordinating" confessions at the public March 1938 trial with a confession — Iakovlev's — that was secret and never intended to be published at all.

## Interrogations of Nikolai I. Vavilov

We have further evidence concerning Iakovlev from the investigative materials of Nikolai I. Vavilov, a prominent Soviet biologist who was arrested, tried and imprisoned in 1940 for his clandestine participation in an anti-Soviet conspiracy in the early 1930s. Best known for his feud with Trofim Lysenko and as a champion of Mendelian genetics, Vavilov's reputation as a scientist was high in his own day and has increased since. It was long assumed that his arrest and conviction was really a screen for repressing his scientific view. But according to archival evidence released since the end of the USSR this was not the case.

Like Iakovlev, Vavilov has long since been "rehabilitated." However, that does not mean that he was not guilty or that his confessions have been refuted. In them he implicated Iakovlev.

*Question:* You have been arrested as an active participant of an antisoviet organization and as an agent of foreign intelligence services. Do you admit your guilt to these charges?

*Answer:* I admit myself guilty in that since 1930 I have been a member of an antisoviet organization of Rightists that existed in the system of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture of the USSR. I do not confess myself guilty of espionage.

*Question:* Bear in mind that you will not succeed in keeping your espionage activity hidden and that the investigation will interrogate you about it, but for now confess with whom you have been connected in the antisoviet work.

*Answer:* In antisoviet work I have been connected with the following persons: Yakovlev, former People's Commissar for Agriculture, Chernov, former People's Commissar for Agriculture, Eikhe, former People's Commissar for Agriculture, Muralov, former vice-Commissar for Agriculture, Gaister, former vice-Commissar for Agriculture....<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Iakov Rokitianskif et al. *Sud palacha. Nikolai Vavilov v zastenkakh NKVD. Biograficheskii ocherk, dokumenty.* Moscow: Academia, 1999.

Transcript of the interrogation of the arrestee Nikolai Ivanovich Vavilov of August 24 1940, 269-70. (Vavilov)

Vavilov made a differentiated confession. Accused of having spied for foreign intelligence services, he refused to admit it. But he did admit participating in a Rightist anti-Soviet organization within the People's Commissariat of Agriculture throughout the tenures of five commissars. The fact that Vavilov confessed to one capital charge while refusing to confess to another makes his confession appear more reliable. A likely explanation for such a confession is the desire to tell the truth.

The commissars he names as Rightist conspirators include Iakovlev and Eikhe. Eikhe too was executed for massive illegal executions and repressions in collaboration with Ezhov.

*Question:* You have admitted your guilt in that from 1930 you have been a participant in an antisoviet organization of Rightists that has existed in the system of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture of the USSR.

Tell us by whom and under what circumstances you were recruited into the aforesaid organization.

*Answer:* I was recruited to the anti-Soviet organization by the former People's Commissar for Agriculture of the USSR YAKOVLEV Yakov Arkad'evich in 1930. The process of recruitment took place through my receiving, directly from YAKOVLEV, and also from him via GAISTER Aron Izrailovich — former vice-president of the agricultural academy and VOL'F Moisei Mikhailovich — second vice-president of the agricultural academic — obvious orders for sabotage, which I carried out in the agricultural academy and in the Institute of Plant Development.<sup>17</sup>

*Question:* It is not clear why YAKOVLEV recruited you to the antisoviet organization. What was his basis for doing this?

*Answer:* During the process of my carrying out YAKOVLEV's directives he became aware of my anti-soviet sentiments which, at the



beginning, were most clearly expressed in the high evaluation that I gave to American and Western European agricultural methods and my emphasizing their superiority in comparison with the development of agriculture in the Soviet Union. (Transcript of interrogation of August 27-28, 1940. Vavilov, 271-2)

Unquestionably it was also the fact that I carried out every assignment given me by YAKOVLEV that facilitated my being drawn into the antisoviet organization.

*Question:* And in what form was your conversation with YAKOVLEV concerning your participation in the antisoviet organization of Rightists?

*Answer:* There was no direct conversation about this. I understood him by the obvious assignments of sabotage that I received from YAKOVLEV.

*Question:* Why do you conclude that it was precisely YAKOVLEV who recruited you to the antisoviet organization of Rightists?

*Answer:* I conclude that because it was precisely from this period — my carrying out YAKOVLEV's directives — that my obvious work of sabotage begins in the organization of science and in that of plant culture in the sense of justifying plant culture projects.

*Question:* You have confessed that you were recruited to the antisoviet organization of Rightists by YAKOVLEV and at the same time declare that you never had any direct conversation with YAKOVLEV about this organization. You are either confusing or simply do not wish to say that even before your introduction into the organization of Rightists you were one of the ideologues and leaders of the antisoviet organization about which you are now remaining silent. (Transcript of interrogation of August 28-29, 1940. Vavilov, 273-4)

<sup>17</sup> Vavilov has long since been "rehabilitated" and this Institute, still in existence in Russia, is named in his honor.

In these passages Vavilov claims that he collaborated in Iakovlev's Rightist organization without having been specifically recruited to it. This confuses his interrogator, who does not understand how Iakovlev could have been a member without having been specifically recruited to it and also how he could state that he had been recruited (*zaverbovan*) by Iakovlev and yet never have spoken with Iakovlev about the organization.

The interrogator draws the obvious conclusion from this apparently contradictory assertion by Vavilov that the accused must be hiding something. Something is missing that if added would make sense of Vavilov's contradictory story. Vavilov gives fuller details in the following passage, stating that he and Iakovlev had a mutual understanding, and that Iakovlev spoke to him in hints and allusions rather than speaking directly of conspiracies and organizations.

*Question:* You confessed earlier that YAKOVLEV recruited you into the antisoviet organization, that, supposedly, he never had any direct conversations with you about this. We demand that you make your confession more precise.

*Answer:* I confirm the fact that I was recruited into the antisoviet organization of Rightists by YAKOVLEV Yakov Arkad'evich. However, YAKOVLEV never explicitly said that I should take part in an antisoviet organization, and there was no special need for him to do so, since YAKOVLEV knew my antisoviet views, about which I confessed in previous interrogations, and could confidently rely on me to carry out antisoviet work. In addition I enjoyed YAKOVLEV'S particular trust, and he himself told me many times: "We know you well — we trust you, and for that reason I demand you carry out my directives without objection." To my frequent declarations about my desire to leave my leading administrative work in the Agricultural Academy YAKOVLEV answered: "We will not let you go, we need you, we understand each other." (Transcript of interrogation of August 30-31, 1940. Vavilov, 278-84)

However, in the following passage Vavilov does give specific details about the sabotage of certain agricultural undertakings he was ordered to accomplish by Iakovlev.

*Answer:* One of the basic undertakings of sabotage carried out with my direct participation upon YAKOVLEV'S orders was the creation of a great superfluity of narrowly specialized scientific-research institutes that were of absolutely no vital importance...

The next sabotage action of significance that was carried out with my direct participation upon YAKOVLEV'S order and whose consequences may still be felt today was the collapse of the provincial [*oblast'*] network of experimental pasture-farming stations, the assignment of which under conditions of socialist reconstruction and the wide variation of climate conditions and soils in our country is of great importance, ...

Besides that I directly participated in the development of deliberately harmful plans of plant culture during the First and Second Five-Year Plans. I carried out this sabotage work according to the direct order of the former People's Commissar for Agriculture YAKOVLEV Y.A. and the former vice-presidents of the agricultural academy VOL'F M.M., GAISTER A.I. ...

Despite this I was given a directive by YAKOVLEV, through VOL'F, of expanding the compulsory plan of area to be sown in 1937 of 150 million hectares, which, it was clear, did not correspond to the possibilities at that time...

(Transcript of interrogation of September 5-7, 1940. Vavilov, 284-288)

### **Analysis of Vavilov's Confessions**

These confessions of Vavilov's, at least insofar as they implicate Iakovlev, appear completely credible. There is no reason that the NKVD investigators would have wanted Vavilov to fabricate testimony against Iakovlev, who by that time had long since been executed. By 1940, when Vavilov was interrogated, Ezhov and his men too had long since been arrested, tried, and executed for fabricating false cases against a very large number of people, and Beria was now in charge of the NKVD. During Beria's tenure the cases

against large numbers of people falsely accused under Ezhov were reviewed, and many of the victims released.

Here, as virtually everywhere in history, there is no such thing as "absolute proof" — all evidence can be interpreted in multiple ways — and therefore no "certainty." But the fact that there are many pieces of circumstantial evidence, all of which implicate Iakovlev, suggests that Iakovlev was not lying in his confession and neither was his wife. Furthermore, Iakovlev's testimony is broadly consistent with the confessions of many of the Moscow Trials defendants, of the Tukhachevsky Affair defendants, and the evidence we have cited above.

According to the volume we have been citing Vavilov's interrogators claimed in a report that they had carried out 240 interrogations of Vavilov that occupied 1000 hours. Vavilov himself claimed in a letter dated April 25, 1942, to Beria, who was head of the NKVD at the time, that he had been subjected to 400 interrogations that took 1700 hours! Such time-consuming and therefore expensive investigations bespeak a genuine attempt to find out the truth. No such titanic efforts are required either to fabricate an entirely false set of confessions or to compel a middle-aged academic to fabricate them himself. Moreover, when it was all completed and Vavilov had been convicted NKVD chief Lavrentii Beria acceded to Vavilov's request for clemency. The scientist was in the process of being moved to the East ahead of the German military advance when he died on January 26, 1943.

### **Confession of Iakovlev's Wife**

In 2004 a short excerpt from just one of the interrogation-confessions of Sokolovskaia, Iakovlev's wife, was published. This corresponds exactly to the time Iakovlev himself was under interrogation.

In his own confession Iakovlev said that he had collaborated with Ian Gamarnik, head of the Political Department of the Red Army who had committed suicide on May 30, 1937, when questioned about the Tukhachevsky conspiracy. Iakovlev named his wife as a friend of Gamarnik's family. She worked in the film studio Mosfilm.

According to a report to Stalin from Ezhov of April 30, 1938, Sokolovskaia headed a Trotskyist organization at her workplace that obtained weapons for a planned uprising.<sup>18</sup>

Stalin's remarks on Iakovlev's interrogation-confession, quoted above, are dated "no later than October 20, 1937" (Lubianka 1937-1938 No. 227, p. 396). Iakovlev's wife Elena Kirillovna Sokolovskaia was arrested on October 12, 1937. On October 17 she composed a "special communication" to NKVD head Nikolai Ezhov in which she confessed to knowledge of her husband's Trotskyist activities.

Iakovlev has been a Trotskyist since 1923. Already in 1923 he was taking part in the struggle against the Party on Trotsky's side. During this period he was connected with a group of active Trotskyists Voronsky, El'tsin, Popov N.N., Mikhailov, and took an active part in the fractional meetings of the group...

During the past five years Iakovlev has taken an active role in the underground anti-Soviet organization that stood on Trotskyist positions. He was in an especially conspiratorial position, acted with hypocrisy in order to strengthen his position in Party work while trying to move towards the leadership of the Party.

Along with Iakovlev, Vareikis and Bauman played an active role in this underground organization...

Iakovlev was in anti-Party contact with the leader of the military conspiracy, Gamarnik. Through Gamarnik he maintained contact with Piatakov, who headed the Trotskyist underground...

My guilt is even greater because after the exposure of Gamarnik, Iakir, Popov N.N., who were connected in counterrevolutionary work with Iakovlev, Bauman, and Vareikis, I did not have the courage to tear myself away from this counterrevolutionary filth, go to the Party, and expose this gang of enemies of the Party and the people. (Lubianka 1937-1938, 398-9).

18 Lubianka 1937-1938 No. 323, pp. 529-30. Now online at <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/61342>

But she was to face far more serious charges. By April 1938 at least one of her coworkers in Mosfilm had named her as the leader of a clandestine Trotskyist group in that organization.

SLIVKIN ... confessed that he took an active part in counterrevolutionary Trotskyist activity, and that one of the serious underground organizations under his leadership was established at the "Mosfilm" cinema studio.

SLIVKIN confessed that the organization's main leader was SOKOLOVSKAIA (wife of IAKOVLEV) and BABITSKY, the director of the studio.

SLIVKIN confessed that the organization was connected in counterrevolutionary work with GAMARNIK and EIDEMAN. Upon the directives of GAMARNIK and EIDEMAN the Trotskyist organization at the "Mosfilm" cinema studio, under the guise of working with Osoaviakhim, organized in 1935 a shooting range of a military type to prepare the leaders of the units that would be in the uprising. (Lubianka 1937-1938, 529)

Both Stasova and Kirsanova, both prominent Old Bolsheviks, must have been investigated. On November 11, 1937, Stalin privately told Dimitrov:

We shall probably arrest Stasova, too. Turned out she's scum. Kirsanova is very closely involved with Yakovlev. She's scum." (Dimitrov 69)

On November 16, 1937, Dimitrov noted "Resolution on the dismissals of Kirsanova and Stasova." In Stasova's case this meant dismissal from her post as Vice-Chairman of the Executive Committee of MOPR and Chair of the Central Committee of the Soviet MOPR.

Yet neither Stasova nor Kirsanova was arrested, much less repressed. This must mean that Stalin's serious suspicions against them were not borne out

by investigation. The investigation into their cases must have been an objective one, rather than a frame-up or one that simply aimed to invent "evidence" to sustain Stalin's suspicions. And that not only suggests that the investigations of at least some prominent Bolsheviks were carried out in a proper manner. It means that, whatever his suspicions, Stalin wanted to know the truth.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> We discuss this, with references, in a chapter in the third volume of this work.

Stalin's note complains that the interrogator did not ask the right questions of Sokolovskaia:

On the first page is a handwritten annotation: "Com. Ezhov: Which Mikhailov? They didn't even ask his name and patronymic ... what fine investigators! What's important is not Iakovlev's and Sokolovskaia's past activity but their sabotage and espionage work during the past year and the recent months of 1937. We also need to know why both of these scoundrels were going abroad almost every year. J. Stalin." (Lubianka 1937-1938, 399 n.)<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Online at <http://istmat.info/node/32388>. Also at <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/61211>. Stalin's remarks alone are in Vol. 18 of the new edition of Stalin's works; online at [http://grachev62.narod.ru/stalin/t18/t18\\_065.htm](http://grachev62.narod.ru/stalin/t18/t18_065.htm).

Here as in the case of Iakovlev's interrogation Stalin has annotated the interrogation in such a way as to rule out any suggestion that he had ordered it fabricated or faked. He was attempting to learn from the interrogation how deep the conspiracy ran. This is evidence that the interrogation was genuine. As such, it is also evidence that Iakovlev's interrogation was not faked, and therefore that Iakovlev's confession about Shmuke and Trotsky's contacts with the Nazis is also true.

What concerned Stalin was not the history of Iakovlev's disloyalty but recent matters. "The past year and the recent months of 1937" had seen the Tukhachevsky conspiracy of top military leaders spying for Germany, plus allegations of widespread conspiratorial activity on the side of Germany

and Japan. This too is consistent with the fact that Stalin genuinely believed that Iakovlev really did conspire with Germany.

### **Iakovlev's "Rehabilitation"**

Aside from the confession we cite here none of the investigative or court materials from Iakovlev's file have ever been made public. We do have the report (*zapiska*, or memorandum, shorter and/or less formal than a full report) recommending Iakovlev be posthumously "rehabilitated" dated December 27, 1956, and signed by Roman Rudenko, General Procuror (Prosecutor) of the USSR.<sup>21</sup> It declares Iakovlev innocent but without giving any evidence whatsoever that he was, in fact, innocent. It is similar to many other such published "rehabilitation" reports from the Khrushchev and Gorbachev eras. Elsewhere we have studied a number of these obviously fraudulent "reports."

<sup>21</sup> RKEB2 (2003) No. 30, pp. 215-216; note 41 on p. 808.

We have no evidence that Iakovlev was tortured, beaten, etc. Nor would it explain why Iakovlev confessed at trial. We know he did so because, among other evidence, even Rudenko's "zapiska" says he did — the full transcript of his trial has not been declassified:

Thus Iakovlev admitted his guilt in the commission of counterrevolutionary crimes, affirmed both during the preliminary investigation and at his trial that he, supposedly, had recruited to the counterrevolutionary organization of Rights Vareikis, Mikhailov, Gegechkori, Tsyl'ko, Tokarev, Polovinkin, Sidel'nikov, Iosifov, and Odintsov, and was also supposedly in contact in the anti-Soviet activity with Postyshev, Rudzutak, Bubnov, Gamarnik, Rukhimovich, Antipov, Sulimov, Komarov, Bauman, Popov, Goloded, and others, in all more than 100 persons.

However, all the testimony of these men against others was then dismissed as false on the grounds that they had previously been "rehabilitated," i.e., declared innocent. Since no affirmative evidence of Iakovlev's innocence was provided, this must mean that Rudenko's men could not find any, and



could only find evidence of his guilt. This is one sign of the fraudulent nature of this "rehabilitation."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> See Grover Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*, Chapter 11.

Probably another such sign is that this 1956 report, in order to support Iakovlev's "rehabilitation," said that Iakovlev was a member of the "Rights" rather than of the "Trotskyists." In 1956 Khrushchev and his men were looking with favor on the Rights but Trotskyists were still viewed with great hostility. Had Rudenko's report been truthful that Iakovlev had been a Trotskyist, they would not have been able to "rehabilitate" him.

The memorandum also declares that NKVD man "Kazakevich," who had taken part in the investigation of Iakovlev, had said — evidently in 1956 — that "methods of physical pressure" were used against Iakovlev. His testimony is not available. Even his name is not certain. No first name and patronymic are given. An NKVD man named Kozakevich is one of two investigators who signed the confession of Iakovlev that we have examined.

"Methods of physical pressure" can mean almost anything, from real torture — beatings, for example — to the "third degree," prolonged sleeplessness, and so on. But Iakovlev confessed within two days of his arrest, so there was no time for any prolonged pressure. Moreover, the fact that a suspect was subjected to some kind of "physical pressure" is not evidence of that suspect's innocence.

It is doubtful that Ezhov would have dared to fabricate a false case against someone as close to Stalin as Iakovlev, who most recently worked with Stalin on the new constitution. After all, Ezhov could not have known in advance that Stalin would not choose to interview Iakovlev himself, and that Iakovlev would not inform on Ezhov to Stalin if he had been forced to incriminate himself. And, as we've noted above, Stalin's comments on the interrogations of Iakovlev and his wife are not consistent with any theory that Stalin was involved with Ezhov, or at all, in "framing" Iakovlev for some reason.

## Chapter 3. *Tukhachevsky and Others*

### **Tukhachevsky and the Military Leaders**

Much of the evidence we present concerning Trotsky's collaboration with Germany and/or Japan comes from the investigative materials connected with the so-called "Tukhachevsky Affair." On June 11, 1937, Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky, one of only five marshals of the Red Army, and seven other very high-ranking military commanders were tried and convicted of collaboration with Trotsky, other oppositionists, Germany, and/or Japan to bring about the overthrow of the Stalin government, the assassination of its leading members, the facilitation of war between the USSR and its major enemies Germany, Japan, and Poland, seizure of power, reversion to capitalism, and an alliance with the Axis countries.

### **Budennyi's Letter to Voroshilov**

One of the judges at the special military court was Marshal Semion Budennyi. On June 26, 1937, Budennyi sent a letter to commissar for Defense Kliment Voroshilov in which he outlined his impressions of the trial and what it meant. As we studied it in more detail in volume one, *Trotsky's 'Amalgams,'* we will only consider it briefly here.

This letter has been dishonestly quoted out of context by several Russian writers, as will be seen. For example, among the lines that have been quoted is this sentence:

PRIMAKOV<sup>1</sup> very stubbornly denied that he led a terrorist group consisting of SHMIDT, KUZ'MICHEV and others, against com. VOROSHILOV.

<sup>1</sup> Vitalii Primakov was one of the eight officers tried and executed in June 1937 in the "Tukhachevsky Affair."

What has *always* been omitted are the following passages which follow immediately after the sentence above:

He denied this on the basis that, he said, **TROTSKY had entrusted him, PRIMAKOV, with a more serious task — to organize an armed uprising in Leningrad**, for which purpose he, PRIMAKOV, was obliged to remain strictly secret from all terrorist groups, to break his ties with all Trotskyists and Rights and at the same time to win for himself authority and the absolute trust of the Party and the Army command.

PRIMAKOV did not, however, deny that he had indeed earlier led a terrorist group and for that purpose had recommended SHMIDT to the post of commander of the mechanized corps.

By means of the omission of these paragraphs, a passage in which Primakov confessed to a somewhat different role in the same conspiracy is made to appear to be a claim of innocence that implies Primakov was "framed." This is the same technique that we have seen employed by Shelepin in misquoting Iakir's letter to the 22<sup>nd</sup> Party Congress in 1962, discussed in a previous chapter.

Another passage in Budennyi's letter reveals that Tukhachevsky had testified that the German *Luftwaffe* was prepared to come to the aid of the opposition uprising in Leningrad.

Tukhachevsky received an instruction from General RUMSHTET<sup>2</sup> that the plan for sabotaging the Red Army should take into account the most likely directions of the main blows of the German armies: one against the Ukraine — Lvov, Kiev — and the others, the seizure of Leningrad by the rebels, something that would be very beneficial to Germany as it could render help to the rebels with its rather significant air force, which ought to advertise itself as forces coming over to the rebels from the side of the Soviet forces.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably, from context, General Gerd von Rundstedt, later a Field Marshal. See <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rundstedt>

We know from another archival document, Marshal Voroshilov's address to the "Aktiv" (officers directly attached) of the Commissariat of Defense on June 9, 1937, that this information stems from Putna's confession.<sup>3</sup> It

concerns what he was told by German General Erhard Milch, one of the highest ranking commanders of the German *Luftwaffe*.<sup>4</sup> Reading from an undated confession by Putna, Voroshilov stated the following:

[German Air Force General] Milch directly states — I ask you to say this to Karakhan, also a spy since 1927 who carried out the negotiations on behalf of these swine — Milch directly states...: "If you can capture Leningrad, the Leningrad *oblast'*, you can count on serious help from our side and, mainly, on help from our air force, under the guise of forces that have gone over to you from the legal government. We will give you our air forces in significant quantities with our own crews.

"And," declared Milch, "we will be able to render you all this help in the Leningrad area because this area has a border with Finland with which we, he said, have excellent relations."

<sup>3</sup> Some years ago we obtained a partial transcript of this address of Voroshilov's from a fellow research in Moscow. It is now published: *Voennyi sovet pri Narodnom Komissare Oborony SSSR. 1-4 iyunia 1937 g. Dokumenty i Materialy*. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008, pp. 367-423. Voroshilov's quotation from an as yet unpublished confession by Putna concerning General Milch is on pp. 384-5 of this published edition.

<sup>4</sup> See the article on Milch at [http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erhard\\_Milch](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erhard_Milch) .

This ties Primakov's testimony about Trotsky's role in planning an uprising in Leningrad together with the projected German role in the same uprising. A number of other defendants, both military and civilian, confessed to discussions with German generals including von Rundstedt and Milch.

In a segment from an interrogation of May 21, 1937, Primakov said:

...The bloc of Trotskyists and Rights and the organization of the common traitorous anti-Soviet military conspiracy led tot the union of all the counterrevolutionary forces within the (Workers' and Peasants') Red Army... This anti-Soviet political bloc and military conspiracy, personally headed by the base fascist Trotsky, ...<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Iulia Kantor. *Voina i Mir Mikhaila Tukhachevskogo*. Moscow: Izdatel'skii Dom Ogoniok "Vremia", 2005, 374. (Kantor Voina)

Budennyi also reported, incidentally, that the military figures were not planning to accept the leadership of Trotsky or the Rights for very long.

...KORK confessed that he was aware that the leaders of the military-fascist counterrevolutionary organization regarded their ties to Trotsky and the Rights as a temporary situation. TUKHACHEVSKY had spoken to KORK to the effect that the Trotskyites, Rights et al. were only temporary fellow-travelers, and when the armed *coup* had been effected he, TUKHACHEVSKY would play the role of Bonaparte. And on November 29, 1934, according to KORK's confession, TUKHACHEVSKY, in KORK's apartment, had stated this unequivocally to all those present.

### **Colonel Viktor Alksnis and the Transcript of the Tukhachevsky Trial**

The transcript of the June 11, 1937, trial of Tukhachevsky and the seven other commanders has never been made public. Its text is still so top-secret in Russia that no researcher, no matter how trusted, is allowed to read it today. But in 1990, shortly before the end of the USSR General Viktor Alksnis, military leader, member of the Duma (Soviet Parliament), and grandson of one of the judges at this 1937 military trial, was given permission by the KGB (successor to the MVD — NKVD) to read the transcript.

Perhaps the KGB thought Alksnis would be sympathetic to the story that the military men had been framed. After all his own grandfather, Comandarm 2<sup>nd</sup> rank (= Lieutenant General) Iakov I. Alksnis had been arrested in November 1937 and then tried and executed as a conspirator in July 1938, only months after he had served as one of the judges in the military panel that judged Tukhachevsky and the rest.

Instead Alksnis, interviewed in a Russian journal in 2000 and again by researcher Vladimir L. Bobrov shortly afterwards, said that reading the trial transcript had forced him to reverse his opinion. He is now convinced that

the conspiracy had in fact taken place. From the interview in the journal *Elementy* in 2000:

My grandfather and Tukhachevsky were friends. And grandfather was on the judicial panel that judged both Tukhachevsky and Eideman. My interest in this case became even stronger after the well-known publications of [former] Procuror Viktorov, who wrote that Iakov Alksnis was very active at the trial, harassed the accused....

But in the trial transcript everything was just the opposite. Grandfather only asked two or three questions during the entire trial. But the strangest thing is the behavior of the accused. Newspaper accounts [of the Gorbachev-era — GF] claim that all the defendants denied their guilt completely. But according to the transcript they fully admitted their guilt. I realize that an admission of guilt itself can be the result of torture. But in the transcript it was something else entirely: a huge amount of detail, long dialogues, accusations of one another, and a mass of precision. It's simply impossible to stage-manage something like this.... I know nothing about the nature of the conspiracy. But of the fact that there really did exist a conspiracy within the Red Army and that Tukhachevsky participated in it I am completely convinced today.

...

It appears as though back there, in the 1930s, there stands some type of "cannon" that might be fired at us, at our times. And then everything could turn out completely differently. And in the meantime... in the meantime a certain conception of those events has been created, and everything is done to sustain that conception. (Alksnis)

Boris Alekseevich Viktorov was a military prosecutor who had been assigned to restudying the cases of military men convicted during the 1930s and of recommending "rehabilitations." His book of memoirs, *Bez grifa "sekretno." Zapiski voennogo prokurora* ("Stamp of Secrecy Removed: Notes of a Military Prosecutor") was a major work in Mikhail Gorbachev's campaign to "rehabilitate" almost everybody involved in the repressions of the 1930s. It was published in an edition of 200,000 copies, an enormous

printing for a non-fiction book. Viktorov also published an article in the collection *Krovavy Marshal. Mikhail Tukhachevsky 1893-1937* (St Petersburg: KORONO-print, 1997). It is in this article that Viktorov claimed that General Ian Alksnis "especially" asked the accused questions (16).

Viktorov's accounts are certainly fraudulent. For example, he claims that the transcript of the Tukhachevsky trial "consisted of only a few pages in all." (14) Col. Alksnis describes a very lengthy transcript. Many other such passages in Viktorov's writings confirm that it is dishonest.

On August 13, 2000 Vladimir L. Bobrov interviewed Col. Alksnis about his reading of the Tukhachevsky trial transcript and what about it forced him to change his mind and conclude that the military conspiracy really had existed. Here are some excerpts from this interview:

Alksnis: ...I turned the pages of the transcript and had more questions than answers. I came away with the impression that, obviously, there had really been a conspiracy.... But this is what struck me: in the transcript there are parts which attest to the sincerity of what the defendants said (no matter who claims that the trial was an organized show, that they worked on the defendants especially so that they would give the necessary confessions.)

Imagine this. Let's say, Tukhachevsky is telling about a meeting with the German military attaché in a dacha near Moscow... and at that moment Primakov interrupts him and says "Mikhail Nikolaevich, you are mistaken. This meeting did not take place in your office at the dacha, but was on the veranda." I think that it would have been impossible to "direct" things such that Tukhachevsky said precisely that and that Primakov would then make a correction like that.

Bobrov: Very well. But was there anything there that made you think that the trial had been scripted and directed anyway?

Alksnis: No, it would have been impossible to script and direct a trial such as is in the transcript.

Bobrov: That is, you wish to state that, having read the transcript, you did not find in it any traces of any kind of staging?

Alksnis: Yes, yes. On top of that all of them confessed, and when they all admitted guilt in their last words, stating that they had been participants in the conspiracy and knowing that after that execution awaited them, it is just impossible to imagine that they forced them all to make such admissions and declarations.

...

Bobrov: What was the main point of accusation of the "conspirators"?

Alksnis: Everything was there: espionage, preparation for a military *coup*, sabotage [wrecking]....

Bobrov: And what does "espionage" mean? You were talking about the meeting at the dacha....

Alksnis: Yes, yes, with the German military attaché. They were talking about arranging coordination with the German military, contacts were going on with them....

Bobrov: One last question. In your interview with "Elementy" you talked about some kind of "cannon" that might shoot at our own times from back in the 30s. What did you have in mind?

Alksnis: If an objective research project on the events of those years were to be done, free of ideological dogmas, then a great deal could change in our attitude towards those years and towards the personalities of that epoch. And so it would be a "bomb" that would cause some problems.... (Bobrov)<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Vladimir L. Bobrov, "Rasschifrovka audiozapisi besedy s deputatom V.I. Alksnisom." 13 avgusta 2000 g. Gosduma RF. 4 pp. My thanks to Vladimir Bobrov for providing me with this transcript.

## **Assessing This Evidence**



It is not surprising that the transcript of the Tukhachevsky trial is top-secret once again. As far as we can determine *no one* has been permitted to read it since Alksnis. But we do have the Budennyi letter. It is by far the most direct evidence of the testimony given at the trial that we have. Alksnis' two accounts confirm the accuracy of Budennyi's account of the trial. For example, Alksnis confirms that the defendants confessed to all the charges and in some detail, something that Budennyi's letter also states.

It would be hard to overestimate the significance of Budennyi's testimony. There is no evidence to suggest or reason to believe that eight battle-hardened military men could have been forced to falsely confess at trial to such devastating charges, in such detail, and in the manner in which they did. Nor is there any evidence that they were forced to falsely confess in the first place, even before the trial.

Like the trial transcript itself, the letter remains top-secret. We located it in a little-known and disorganized archive and have published it, along with an introductory article in a Russia history journal.<sup>7</sup> For Budennyi as for Col. Alksnis there is no question at all of the guilt of the generals, all of whom confessed it and gave details. This is also the case with the published commentary by General Belov, another of the judges. Belov's letter to Voroshilov was published in 1996, presumably because he makes very few substantive remarks about the specific charges. But Belov was also convinced of the generals' guilt. We do not examine it here because Belov says nothing specifically about Trotsky and the Germans or Japanese.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Bobrov and Furr, "Marshal S.M. Budennyi..."

<sup>8</sup> Belov, "Donesenie komanduiushchego voiskaml Belorusskogo voennogo okruga I.P. Belova K.E. Voroshilovu... Smolensk, 14 iulia 1937 g. Sovershenno sekretno Tol'ko lichno." In Antonella Christiani and Vera M. Mikhaileva, eds., *Repressii v Krasnoi Armii (30-e gody)*. Napoli, 1996, 192-198.

## **Significance of the Tukhachevsky Trial Evidence**

The Budennyi letter to Voroshilov and Col. Alksnis' account of his reading the transcript of the "Tukhachevsky Affair" trial together constitute one of the most important discoveries in the historiography of the Soviet Union. Thanks to them we now know as certainly as we will ever know that the military defendants in this trial were, in fact, guilty of what they confessed to.

This in itself completely dismantles the "anti-Stalin paradigm," the canonical interpretation of Soviet history. For example, it means that the testimony at the Third Moscow "show" trial, the March 1938 "Bukharin-Rykov" trial, was truthful insofar as it confirms the testimony given by Tukhachevsky and the other military men. It also confirms testimony about Trotsky's German and Japanese collaboration that was given by those defendants at the Second Moscow Trial of January 1937, the "Piatakov-Radek" trial, since that is also confirmed by the Tukhachevsky trial testimony.

If we had no corroborative evidence at all to this effect the testimony of the military figures would still be very strong. And we do have much other evidence. All of it is consistent with what we now know of the Tukhachevsky trial testimony. For our present purposes this is the strongest possible evidence that Trotsky was indeed conspiring with the Nazi government and German military.

## **Dreitser**

The NKVD investigators of the 1930s referred to the interlocking conspiracy cases as the "klubok," or "tangle." This metaphor referred to the fact that the various separate conspiracies were intertwined with each other, at least on the leadership level. It also serves to illustrate how the NKVD "unraveled" them. Once one minor conspiracy was discovered it led by persistent investigation to others.

Efim Dreitser had been chief of Trotsky's bodyguard during the 1920s. He was a defendant at the first Moscow Trial of 1936 and claimed to be in personal contact with Trotsky. Dreitser named Putna at the 1936 Trial as a Trotskyist conspirator who also had direct links to Trotsky.

At the end of the evening session of August 21, the accused Dreitzer, replying to questions put to him by Comrade Vyshinsky concerning certain details of the counter-revolutionary activities of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite centre, declares that one of the active participants in the terroristic work of the Trotskyites was Putna, an old and active Trotskyite. According to Dreitzer, Putna at one time ostensibly left the Trotskyites in pursuance of the line of double-dealing, but actually continued until quite recently to carry on strictly secret work for the Trotskyite centre. In particular, Dreitzer testifies that Putna had direct contact with Trotsky, met I. N. Smirnov, and in 1932 communicated to Smirnov, through Dreitzer, Trotsky's verbal instructions to organize terrorist groups. The accused Smirnov tries to deny the fact that Putna participated in the terroristic activity of the Trotskyites. However, in reply to questions put to them by Comrade Vyshinsky, the accused Pickel, Reingold and Bakayev corroborate Dreitzer's testimony. (1936 Trial, 116)

This was evidently just one of a number of bits of evidence that led to Putna's arrest, just as Kamenev's naming Radek, Sokol'nikov, Bukharin and others provided "threads" that led to the Second and Third Moscow Trials. Dreitser's investigation file confirms his confessions at trial and his close ties to Putna and Iakir, another of the later Tukhachevsky trial defendants. A close member of Dreitser's family and his only surviving relative has confirmed that her great-uncle Efim was indeed close to high-ranking Red Army men. Putna was well-known as a Trotskyist and was named by defendants in all three Moscow Trials, tried and executed as one of the eight military leaders in the Tukhachevsky Affair.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Personal communication from Svetlana M. Cervonnaya, daughter of Dreitser's niece. Ms. Chervonnaya, an Americanist and skilled researcher on Cold-War history and Dreitser's only surviving relative, has been permitted to study Dreitser's investigative file.

Dmitry Shmidt, a military commander who was also arrested and questioned in 1936, testified to Putna's close and conspiratorial connection with Trotsky.

In 1927 when I joined the Trotskyists I learned from DREITSER, OKHOTNIKOV and PUTNA that PUTNA was one of the members of the military center of the Trotskyist organization and was carrying out important organizational work in the Red Army. He was responsible for that work to Trotsky personally. In 1927 or 1928 PUTNA was assigned by the Revolutionary Military Council to be military attaché to Japan. At that time I had a meeting with PUTNA before his departure. He told me Trotsky used to come to his apartment to give him a whole series of instructions and tasks in connection with his going abroad.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> "N.6. Z protokolu dopity D.A Shmidta vid 31 serpnia 1936 r.," in Sergiy Kokin, Oleksandr Pshennikov, "Bez stroku davnosti," *Z Arkhiviv VUChK-GPU-NKVD-KGB* No. 1-2 (4/5), 1997 (In Ukrainian).

So the NKVD had other evidence, perhaps a lot of it, about Putna's activities. Concerning Shmidt's testimony specifically, it's difficult to imagine what foreign instructions, other than conspiratorial ones, Trotsky might have been giving Putna in 1927, since Trotsky had long since (January 1925) resigned from his military posts.

### **Kantor's Four Articles<sup>11</sup>**

<sup>11</sup> Kantor's four articles were published in *Istoriia Gosudarstva i Prava* (2006). This legal journal is very hard to obtain outside of Russia. I have reformatted and republished the text of all four articles at [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/kantor\\_4articles\\_igp06.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/kantor_4articles_igp06.pdf) (Kantor 2006)

In 2005 Iulia Kantor, a journalist and a graduate student in history, published a series of articles and a book<sup>12</sup> on Marshal Tukhachevsky. Kantor does not investigate whether Tukhachevsky was guilty or not but, like Cherushev, takes it for granted that Tukhachevsky was the innocent victim of a frame-up by Stalin. It's probably no coincidence, therefore, that like Cherushev Kantor was granted access to some documentary materials which others have not been permitted to see including, in Kantor's case, some of the Tukhachevsky investigative materials. Additionally she claims

that she was given permission by Tukhachevsky's family to see his investigative file — something that, until the 75-year period of declassification had expired, was strictly limited in Russia to next-of-kin and normally forbidden to all others, researchers included.

<sup>12</sup> Kantor, Julia. *Voina i mir Mikhaila Tukhachevskogo*. Moscow: Izdatel'skii Dom Ogoniok "Vremia," 2005.

Kantor used these materials in her doctoral dissertation as well as her books and some articles. Anyone who studies only the texts of the primary sources that Kantor quotes without regard to her tendentious commentary will see that these sources strongly support Tukhachevsky's guilt. Some of these quotations involve Tukhachevsky's allegations concerning Trotsky.

No complete interrogations of Vitovt Putna have been published. Only excerpts from them have been published. We will briefly examine them below. But according to what we have of Tukhachevsky's testimony Putna was in direct contact with Trotsky and passed on to Tukhachevsky the information that he, Trotsky, had direct contacts with the German government and General Staff. This is consistent with what we've seen of Radek's testimony both before and during the January 1937 trial.

Tukhachevsky claimed to have been in direct contact by letter with Sedov through Putna.

I inform the investigation that in 1935 Putna brought me a note from Sedov in which it said that Trotsky considers it very desirable that I establish closer ties with the Trotskyist commander cadres. Through Putna I orally answered with my agreement, and burned the note from Sedov. (Kantor 2006, 5; Kantor *Voina*, 378)

Tukhachevsky also said that in 1932 he received a "directive" from Trotsky to form a conspiratorial military organization, something he had been preparing to do in any case.

Long before the creation of the antisoviet military-Trotskyist plot I grouped around myself, over the course of a number of years, men who were hostile to Soviet authority, dissatisfied with their positions as

commanders, and conspired with them against the leadership of the Party and government. Therefore, when in 1932 I received a directive from Trotsky about the creation of an antisoviet organization in the army I already virtually had devoted cadres ready on whom I could rely in this work. (Kantor 2006, 5; Kantor *Voina*, 378-9)

According to Tukhachevsky Putna had direct contact with Trotsky concerning the latter's ties to the German government and General Staff and passed on news of this orally to Tukhachevsky.

Putna told me orally that Trotsky had set up direct contact with the German fascist government and General Staff. (Kantor 2006, 5; Kantor, *Voina*, 378-9)

Tukhachevsky said that Vladimir Romm had told him that Trotsky was relying on Hitler's help in his struggle against Soviet power. We know from Romm's testimony at the 1937 Trial that Romm claimed to have been in direct contact with Trotsky.

Romm told me that Trotsky is expecting Hitler to come to power and that he is counting on Hitler's aid in Trotsky's battle against Soviet authority. (Kantor 2006, 7; Kantor, *Voina*, 381)

Tukhachevsky reiterated that he had indeed had contact with Trotsky, and also that he himself had collaborated with German intelligence, though in the following passage he does not explicitly say that Trotsky had told him of his own German or Japanese connections.

The transcript of the interrogation of the accused Tukhachevsky of June 9, 1937:

I fully confirm my confessions given during the preliminary investigation concerning my leading participation in the military-Trotskyist plot, my ties to the Germans, and my past participation in anti-Soviet groupings. I admit my guilt in that I transmitted to German intelligence secret information and facts concerning the defense of the USSR. I also confirm my ties with Trotsky and Dombal'. (Kantor 2006, 15; Kantor, *Voina*, 406-7)

## Assessing the Evidence: Kantor

Kantor received the permission of the Tukhachevsky family and the Russian government to gain access to *some* of the investigative materials for her long biography of Tukhachevsky. Though she does not admit as much, it seems that she was not permitted to read everything. Specifically it appears that she was not allowed to read the transcript of the trial of Tukhachevsky and the rest.<sup>13</sup> If she had read it and yet completely omitted its contents from her articles and book Kantor would be guilty not just of being guided by her own preconceived ideas, but of gross deception. She is guilty of deceiving her readers in any case, since she never tells us what she was permitted to see and what was kept from her.

<sup>13</sup> The trial transcript might not be in the investigative file.

Kantor takes the official position that the Marshal and all the other military figures were innocent victims of a frame-up. Therefore she would surely have cited any evidence that this was so. But she is unable to cite any. This is very significant, since it strongly suggests that no such evidence exists in the materials to which she was permitted access. Since the whole thrust of Kantor's work is to try to demonstrate the innocence of Tukhachevsky (and, by extension, of all of his codefendants), it appears that she had no such evidence before her. Kantor also ignores some of the evidence that they were guilty — notably, some already well-known to researchers because it is in the Shvernik Report, which has been published (see below).

The passages Kantor quotes strongly support all the other evidence we have cited. We have only quoted the passages from Kantor's work that directly inculcate Trotsky with Germany. The reliability of their testimony concerning Trotsky's collaboration with the Germans is predicated upon the truthfulness of the rest of their testimony — that is, upon their guilt. Kantor is committed to asserting the innocence of all these men rather than to investigating whether they were guilty or not. But the evidence she quotes, as opposed to her tendentious commentary on it, gives strong evidence of their guilt. This is also strong evidence that they told the truth about their collaboration with Trotsky and his with Germany.

## Tukhachevsky's Confessions

In 1994 the texts of two of Tukhachevsky's confessions were published in Russia. In them Tukhachevsky repeats that Romm told him Trotsky was relying on Hitler. As we saw above Romm confessed to having been a courier between Trotsky and conspirators within the USSR.<sup>14</sup>

...Romm also passed on that it was Trotsky's hope that Hitler would come to power and would support him, Trotsky, in his struggle against Soviet power. (Main, 159; *Molodaia Gvardiia* (henceforth MG) 9 (1994), 133) (Evidently the same passage as above.)

<sup>14</sup> These confessions of Tukhachevsky's have been translated and published in Steven J. Main, "The Arrest and 'Testimony' of Marshal of the Soviet Union M.N. Tukhachevsky (May-June 1937)," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 10, No. 1 (March 1997), 151-195. All the passages dealing with Trotsky were published in *Molodaia Gvardiia* issues 9 and 10 of 1994. We have used Main's English text for the convenience of readers and made silent corrections in a few places where we disagreed with Main's translation, which we have compared with the originals.

Tukhachevsky repeats that he had told Kork (another of the eight defendants) that he had had contact with Trotsky and the Rights.

I told Kork that I had links both with Trotsky and the Rightists and tasked him to recruit new members in the Moscow military district....  
(Main, 160; MG 9, 134)

According to Tukhachevsky Putna, another of the eight defendants and, as we have already seen, a long-standing supporter of Trotsky's, admitted to him in 1933 that he was in touch with Trotsky as well as with I.N. Smirnov, the leaders of the clandestine Trotskyist underground within the USSR. Putna later received an appointment as military attaché (in 1934, as attaché to Great Britain) and so was assigned to be the contact person between Trotsky and the other conspirators.

Upon Putna's and Gorbachev's return from the Far East — I believe this was in 1933 — I spoke with each of them separately. Putna



quickly admitted that he was already in contact with Trotsky and with Smirnov. I suggested to him to join the ranks of the military-Trotskyite conspiracy, telling him that I had direct links with Trotsky. Putna immediately agreed [to join]. Later, following his appointment as military attaché, he was tasked to maintain the link between Trotsky and the center of the anti-Soviet military-Trotskyite conspiracy. (Main 160; MG 9, 134)

Tukhachevsky said that in 1933 or 1934 Romm had instructions from Trotsky that the "German fascists" would help the Trotskyists, and so the military conspirators should help both the German and the Japanese General Staffs in sabotage, diversions, and assassinations against members of the Soviet government. Tukhachevsky said he passed "Trotsky's instructions" to the conspiratorial leadership, implying that he himself accepted them.

Round about this time, 1933/1934, Romm visited me in Moscow and told me that he had to pass on Trotsky's new instructions. Trotsky pointed out that it was no longer feasible to restrict our activities to simply recruiting and organizing cadres, that it was necessary to adopt a more active program, that German Fascism would render the Trotskyists assistance in their struggle with Stalin's leadership and that therefore the military conspiracy must supply the German General Staff with intelligence data, as well as working hand in glove with the Japanese General Staff, carrying out disruptive activities in the army, prepare diversions and terrorist acts against members of the government. These instructions of Trotsky I communicated to the center of our conspiracy. (Main, 160-161; MG 9, 134)

In another part of this published confession Tukhachevsky asserts that he got other instructions from Trotsky via Piatakov, rather than through Romm, Putna, or directly to himself.

During the winter of 1935/1936, Pyatakov told me that Trotsky had now asked us to ensure the [future] defeat of the USSR in war, even if this meant giving the Ukraine to the Germans and the Primor'ye to the Japanese. In order to prepare the USSR's defeat, all forces, both within the USSR and outside the USSR would have to be made ready; in

particular, Pyatakov stated that Trotsky would carry out a decisive struggle to plant his people in the Comintern. Pyatakov stated that such conditions would mean the restoration of capitalism in the country.

As we received Trotsky's instructions on unleashing a campaign of sabotage activity, espionage, diversionary and terrorist activity, the center of the conspiracy, which included not only me, but also Feld'man, Eideman, Kamenev,<sup>15</sup> Primakov, Uborevich, Iakir and those closely associated with it, Gamarnik and Kork, issued various instructions to the members of the conspiracy, based on Trotsky's directives. (Main, 163; MG 10, 257)

<sup>15</sup> This means Army Commander, 1st rank (= General) Sergei Sergeevich Kamenev.

Tukhachevsky claims that he also received direct written instructions via Putna from Sedov, who was passing on Trotsky's instructions. Putna assured him that Trotsky had established direct ties to the German government and General Staff.

In the autumn of 1935, Putna came to my office and handed over a note from Sedov, in Trotsky's name, insisting that I more energetically attract Trotskyite cadres to the military conspiracy and more actively use them. I told Putna to say that this would be done. In addition, Putna told me that Trotsky had established direct links with Hitler's government and the General Staff, and that the center of the anti-Soviet military Trotskyite conspiracy should task itself to prepare defeats on those fronts where the German Army would operate.

During the winter of 1935/1936, as I have already mentioned, I had a talk with Pyatakov, during which the latter passed on another directive from Trotsky [to the effect] to ensure the unconditional defeat of the USSR in war with Hitler and Japan, as well as the break-up of the Ukraine and the Primor'ye from the USSR. These instructions meant that it was necessary to establish ties with the Germans in order to define where they intended to deploy their armies and where necessary to prepare the defeats of the Soviet armies. (Main, 166; MG 10, 261)

This passage in Tukhachevsky's published confession confirms what Budennyi reported to Voroshilov in his letter of June 26, 1937. Evidently Tukhachevsky restated this at the trial and inserted a comment that von Rundstedt must have known this information through Trotsky.

At the end of January 1936, I had to travel to London to attend the funeral of the British King. During the funeral procession, first by foot and then on the train, General Rundstedt — the head of the German government's military delegation — spoke to me. It was obvious that the German General Staff had already been informed by Trotsky. Rundstedt openly told me that the German General Staff was aware that I stood at the head of a military conspiracy in the Red Army and that he, Rundstedt, had been instructed to begin talks about matters of mutual interest. (Main, 166; MG 10, 261)

A few pages later Tukhachevsky puts Trotsky's and Rundstedt's instructions together.

Taking into account Trotsky's directive to prepare for defeat on that front where the Germans would attack, as well as General Rundstedt's instruction to prepare for defeat on the Ukrainian front, I proposed to Iakir to make the German task easier by diversionary-sabotage tactics leading to the fall of the Letichev fortified region, the commandant of which was a member of the conspiracy, Sablin. (Main, 185; MG 10, 264)

### **Assessing the Evidence: Tukhachevsky's Confessions**

Only a few of Tukhachevsky's confessions have been made public. We are fortunate to have any of them at all. They were published in the early 1990s when the promise of *glasnost* ("openness") was still in the air. In 2006 one confession of Nikolai Ezhov's was published. Ezhov confirmed the existence of several groups of military conspirators including that around Tukhachevsky. Ezhov also named some, at least, of the German military figures with whom they and he himself were jointly in touch.<sup>16</sup> To that extent Ezhov's and Tukhachevsky's confessions mutually confirm each other.

<sup>16</sup> English translation at  
<https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhov042639eng.html>  
Russian original online at  
<http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhovru.html>; also now at  
<http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/58654> .

Frinovskii strongly confirmed the guilt of the Rightists, including Bukharin, some of whom, like Grin'ko, claimed direct conspiratorial contact with Trotsky. Others, like Bukharin, claimed indirect knowledge of Trotsky's dealings with the Germans through Radek.

### **Other Documents of the "Tukhachevsky Affair": The "Shvernik Report"**

During the 22<sup>nd</sup> Party Congress in October 1961 Nikita Khrushchev and his supporters in the Soviet leadership leveled an even stronger attack against Stalin than Khrushchev's 1956 "Secret Speech" had been. After the Congress Stalin's body was removed from Lenin's tomb and a new wave of materials attacking Stalin and those closely associated with him was published. This anti-Stalin campaign — for so it may be called — ended shortly after Khrushchev was removed from office at the Central Committee meeting of October 1964 by Leonid Brezhnev and others.

In early 1962 the Presidium (formerly the Politburo, in effect Khrushchev himself) authorized a blue-ribbon commission to investigate the trials and executions of the 1930s and especially the so-called Tukhachevsky Affair.<sup>17</sup> This commission seems to have had total access to all the investigative and other materials concerning the repressions of the 1930s. Its purpose seems to have been to find further information for attacks on Stalin and his supporters, and justificatory materials for further "rehabilitations." In fact, it provided little if any exculpatory evidence but quite a bit of further evidence that the accused were guilty.

<sup>17</sup> There had been an earlier commission, called the "Molotov Commission." We discuss it later in the present chapter.

The report was issued in two parts. The *Zapiska* (memorandum) devoted mainly to the Military Purges and Tukhachevsky Affair was issued in 1963. A further part, the *Spravka* (= information, report), is dated 1964. Neither seems to have been used by Khrushchev or given to Soviet writers to promote Khrushchev's "line."

The Shvernik Reports were both published after the end of the USSR in *Voennyi Arkhivy Rossii*, a journal dated 1993 that never had another issue. Since that time the Reports have been published several more times and are readily available. It's fair to say that these reports constitute the largest single published collection of excerpts and quotations from investigative materials of the 1930s repressions.

We cite here all the passages from the Shvernik Commission reports that bear directly on the specific topic of this book: Trotsky's purported collaboration with Germany and Japan. There are a great many other passages, both in these reports and elsewhere in the available investigative materials, that bear on Trotsky's involvement in the general opposition conspiracies, for example to assassinate Stalin and others. Since these allegations are not the subject of our present study we will not consider them here.

From the "Zapiska:"<sup>18</sup>

On March 25, 1936, Iagoda informed Stalin that Trotsky was giving directives through agents of the Gestapo to Trotskyists inside the USSR about carrying out terrorist activity, and that even in prisons Trotskyists were trying to create militant terrorist groups and that the leader of the Trotskyists in the USSR was I.N. Smirnov. (*Zapiska*, 557)

...

The sentence of the court states that Tukhachevsky and the other defendants, "being leaders of an anti-Soviet military-fascist organization, have violated their military duty (oath), have betrayed their country, have established ties with military circles in Germany and with enemy of the people L. Trotsky and according to their directives have prepared the defeat of the Red Army in the event of an

attack on the USSR by foreign aggressors, specifically, of fascist Germany, and with the goal of destroying the defensive capability of the USSR have engaged in espionage and sabotage in the units of the Red Army and in enterprises of military significance, and also have been preparing terrorist acts against the leaders of the AUCP(b) and the Soviet government." (605)

In the indictment it is asserted that in April-May 1937 the organs of the NKVD discovered and liquidated in the city of Moscow a military-Trotskyist conspiracy, in the "center" of leadership of which were Gamarnik, Tukhachevsky, Iakir, Uborevich, Kork, Eideman and Fel'dman. The military-Trotskyist organization, of which all those accused in this case were members, was formed in 1932-1933 upon the direct instructions of the German general staff and of Trotsky. It was connected with the Trotskyist center and the Bukharin-Rykov group of Rightists, was involved in sabotage, diversions, terror, and was preparing the overthrow of the government and the seizure of power with the aim of restoring capitalism in the USSR. (688)

Iakir's address at the court trial in connection with the plots of the organizers, set the line for the other defendants also to expose the machinations of Trotsky and of the fascist governments against the USSR, and in addition emphasized the role of Tukhachevsky in the conspiracy in every way. (690)

Tukhachevsky was also forced to confirm ... in court:

"When in 1932 Romm brought me Trotsky's proposal to gather the Trotskyist cadres, I agreed to do this. Therefore I consider the beginning of the organization of our military conspiracy to have been 1932." (695)

Putna testified about Tukhachevsky's ties with Sedov and Trotsky. Specifically, he declared during the investigation that, finding himself in London in September 1935 and learning that he was being summoned to Moscow, he reported about this to Sedov, Trotsky's son, in Paris. From Sedov he received by special delivery a package in which were a note from Sedov to Putna and a "letter of

recommendation, written and signed personally by Trotsky" for Tikhachevsky.

Putna carried out Sedov's task and during the first days of October 1935 supposedly handed Tikhachevsky Trotsky's letter. Tikhachevsky familiarized himself with the letter and asked Putna to "transmit orally that Trotsky could count on him."

"Already in 1928 I [Tikhachevsky] was brought into the Rightist organization by Enukidze. In 1934 I personally made contact with Bukharin. I established espionage ties with the Germans in 1925, when I used to travel to Germany for study and maneuvers.... On my trip to London in 1936 Putna arranged for me a meeting with Sedov... I was connected in this conspiracy with Fel'dman, S.S. Kamenev, Iakir, Eideman, Enukidze, Bukharin, Karakhan, Pyatakov, I.N. Smirnov, Iagoda, Osepian and a number of others." (681-2)

...the investigation obtained their [Tikhachevsky's and Putna's] "admissions" of a personal meeting with Sedov, supposedly arranged for Tikhachevsky by Putna in 1936 in a café in Paris. Meanwhile detailed information about Tikhachevsky's stay in Paris from February 10 to 16, 1936, came from Ventsov, Soviet military attaché to France, and from the organs of the NKVD, but this information contained nothing about his meeting with Sedov. In the course of the present verification Afanas'ev, a former worker of the Foreign Section of the NKVD, member of the CPSU since 1923, expatiated upon this matter:

"Between 1932 and 1938 I was continuously in illegal work abroad. I headed the illegal resident bureau in Paris which mainly worked on the activities of Trotsky's son Sedov and his circle.... We were up to date on the most secret conspiratorial activity of Trotsky and Sedov. Therefore when you pose me the question of whether meetings between Sedov and Tikhachevsky, Putna, and other military figures of the Soviet Union could have taken place, I can assert that that could not be true... the agent reports and documentary materials we obtained in the process of our work on Trotsky, Sedov, Kleman and in part on the ROVS in Paris do not confirm either directly or indirectly the accusations that were

brought against the military figures of the Red Army in connection with the case of Tukhachevsky, Kork, Gamarnik, Putna, and others." (695-696)

<sup>18</sup> This long report has not previously been translated. We take it from RKEB 2 541-670. It is available for download at [http://perpetrator2004.narod.ru/documents/Great\\_Terror/Shvern timer\\_Report.rar](http://perpetrator2004.narod.ru/documents/Great_Terror/Shvern timer_Report.rar). The *Spravka* alone is also available online at the Russian language Wikisource resource in nine parts at <http://tinyurl.com/spravka>. It is in RKEB 2 671-788.

The language of the Shvern timer Report makes it clear that its authors proceeded on the preconceived assumption that no such conspiracy existed. It was designed to provide "evidence" — likely-looking materials — for citation in further "rehabilitations." Soviet historians and researchers, as we have seen, were not to be permitted access to the archives themselves.

In the case of Tukhachevsky's alleged meeting with Sedov in the Paris café in 1936 the Report cites Ventsov, Soviet military attaché to France, who reported nothing about it. Ventsov-Krants had been very close to Trotsky. According to an archival document cited by Cherushev he had helped Trotsky write the book *How the Revolution Armed Itself*.<sup>19</sup> The report also cites an undated "former worker of the Foreign division of the NKVD" named Afanas'ev — no first name or patronymic are given — who claimed that Soviet intelligence in France were closely following information about Sedov and Trotsky and knew nothing about any such meeting or any of the activities mentioned in the Tukhachevsky case.

<sup>19</sup> N.S. Cherushev. *1937 god. Elita Krasnoi Armii na golgofe*. Moscow: Veche, 2003, p. 208.

It's worth making several points here. First, the fact that Ventsov and Afanas'ev were told nothing about such a meeting cannot prove that such a meeting never took place. It only means that they claim they did not know of it. Afanas'ev's claim that Soviet intelligence knew about "the most secret conspiratorial activities of Trotsky and Sedov," and so knew that Sedov could not have met with Tukhachevsky, is empty for another reason. At or



shortly after the time of the alleged meeting — late January or early February 1936 — Soviet intelligence man Mark Zborowski became Leon Sedov's closest confidant. We have Zborowski's reports back to Moscow. But Zborowski himself was not privy to all of Sedov's secrets, and did not accompany him everywhere. Zborowski's handwritten notes and reports are in the archives and have been published, while we do not even know Afanas'ev's name. So the claim that Soviet intelligence knew about all Trotsky's and Sedov's "most secret conspiratorial activities" cannot be true.

### **Rudenko's Letter to Molotov**

On April 13, 1956, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU passed a decree establishing a commission to be chaired by V.M. Molotov to study the materials of the "public trials."<sup>20</sup> The commission proved unsatisfactory to all concerned. It was sharply divided between the three men who had been closest to Stalin and the majority, who were Khrushchev's people. On December 10, 1956, it issued a compromise report exonerating Tukhachevsky and the military men but refusing to consider rehabilitating any of the defendants in the public trials.<sup>21</sup> Since we know that Molotov continued to be firmly convinced of Tukhachevsky's guilt we can assume this was, indeed, a compromise. In 1957 Molotov, Malenkov and Kaganovich were dismissed from the Presidium for having attempted to remove Khrushchev from office.

<sup>20</sup> *Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo*. T. 2, No. 4, p. 70. Tukhachevsky was included even though his trial had not been public.

<sup>21</sup> *RKEB* 2, 204-207: available online at [http://perpetrator2004.narod.ru/documents/kirov/Molotov\\_Commission\\_Memo.doc](http://perpetrator2004.narod.ru/documents/kirov/Molotov_Commission_Memo.doc)

The Molotov Commission did study a lot of materials, but only some of their documents have been made public. We will quote below from a report dated June 10, 1956, to that commission from Rudenko, the General Prosecutor of the USSR. Rudenko was a staunch supporter of Khrushchev. It was his office that would have to issue recommendations to the Soviet

Supreme Court to get convictions reversed, the legal aspect of "rehabilitation."

Rudenko's report has not been published, although at some point it was obtained by *Krasnaia Zvezda* ("Red Star"), which is the military daily newspaper in Russia today as it was during Soviet times. Still not published, a copy of it was obtained from that source in 2002 by my Moscow colleague Vladimir L. Bobrov, and we reproduce portions of it here. Once again, we reproduce only quotations that deal with the question of Trotsky and Germany/Japan, ignoring other aspects of this important document.

Only on May 15, almost ten months after his arrest, after confessions about the military conspiracy had been obtained from Medvedev, were confessions also obtained from Putna about his counterrevolutionary ties with Tukhachevsky. **At this interrogation Putna confessed that in September 1935 he received Trotsky's directive concerning the attraction to the Trotskyist organization of high-ranking military men. Trotsky also declared that he was aware that Tukhachevsky and S.S. Kamenev were already carrying out counterrevolutionary work in the army, and that it was essential to contact them. With this Trotsky handed him a note for Tukhachevsky, in which he proposed that he [Tukhachevsky] unite with the Trotskyist center for mutual counterrevolutionary activity. In October 1935 he [Putna] handed this note to Tukhachevsky, who accepted this proposal of Trotsky's.**

**In January 1936 he informed Trotsky of the existence of a Trotskyist military organization** and its center consisting of Primakov, Putna, and Dreitser, about the connections of this organization and about recruitment.

...

At his interrogation of June 2, 1937, Putna had already confessed that in the spring of 1931 he had established espionage ties with the German G[eneral] S[taff] and at various times gave the Germans, through their generals Nedavmeister<sup>22</sup> (?), Adam, and Bokkel'berg,

information about the military staff of the Red army, its organizational structure and location of its forces, about armaments and the system of military readiness. It is not apparent from these interrogations precisely what information Putna transmitted.

Putna declared moreover that in 1936 at the time of his and Tukhachevsky's trip together to England Tukhachevsky compared the relationship of forces and proved to him that the defeat of the USSR in a war with Germany was inevitable. **And that he, Putna, agreed with Tukhachevsky and said to him that for the swiftest defeat of Soviet forces it was essential to act together on the side of the Trotskyist organization.** However Putna did not confess how Tukhachevsky reacted to this.

Fel'dman also confessed that from Tukhachevsky's words he [Fel'dman] was aware that he [Tukhachevsky] had an agreement with Pyatakov concerning a disruption in the supply of artillery, **and also maintained a connection with Trotsky, from whom he was receiving directives concerning counterrevolutionary activity.** From his [Tukhachevsky's] own words Fel'dman learned that Egorov, commander of the VTSIK School was preparing a "palace coup," but Tukhachevsky said that Egorov was an indecisive person and unsuitable for this purpose. In addition this School was being moved out of the Kremlin and therefore a more realistic plan for the seizure of power — as Tukhachevsky averred — was defeat of the Red army in the future war, and an armed uprising.

... But at this point Tukhachevsky declared that Putna and Primakov did not trust him politically very much, that during their trips to Moscow Primakov gave the military center information but avoided conversations with Tukhachevsky on this topic. **That Primakov and Putna had private ties through their Trotskyist centers and were maintaining contact with Trotsky. Tukhachevsky declared that he personally did not share Trotskyist views and further admitted that in 1936 he had received a note from Sedov in which the latter in Trotsky's name proposed [that Tukhachevsky] proceed to join**

**with the Trotskyist cadres in the Red army in order to prepare the seizure of power.**

... At the beginning of the interrogation Tukhachevsky confessed that he had not met in person with either Trotsky or Sedov after their exile from the Soviet Union. **But at the end of the interrogation he declared that in 1932, when he was at the maneuvers of the German army, he had established a personal connection with Trotsky and had reached an agreement about carrying on Trotskyist work in the Red Army.**

... On that same day, May 27, 1937, Tukhachevsky signed the transcript of an interrogation in which he admitted to his leading role in the military conspiracy, but these confessions differ significantly from those he had given earlier. In these confessions **Tukhachevsky said nothing about personal ties with Trotsky and affirmed that he maintained ties with Trotsky through Romm and Primakov. That it was through them that he received Trotsky's directive that it was essential to go over to terrorist methods of work,** about which Tukhachevsky had not confessed earlier.

<sup>22</sup> This is probably German General Oskar von Niedermayer, who worked for the Reichswehr (German military) in an intelligence capacity in Moscow in the early 1930s, having formally resigned from the military. He was a General again during World War II, was captured after the War by the Soviets, tried and sentenced to 25 years in prison, and died shortly thereafter in 1948.

Iona Iakir, another of the Tukhachevsky defendants:

In 1933 Tukhachevsky, who knew about my waverings on questions of the Party's policy in the village, and about my ties to former Trotskyists, after first feeling me out, **informed me that he was connected with Trotsky, according to whose directive he was organizing a military conspiracy and proposed that I take part in it.** I gave Tukhachevsky my agreement, after which he said to me that he was at the head of the conspiracy, that there was a military center whose staff he proposed that I join. I agreed to become part of the staff

of the center. In this conversation Tukhachevsky informed me that Uborevich, with whom he had recently had a conversation on this subject, was also in the center of the military conspiracy.

**Tukhachevsky spoke about a directive of Trotsky's that he had recently received and in which the following tasks were placed before the center of the military conspiracy:**

1. The organization of a coup in Moscow, in the Ukraine, and in a number of other places in the Soviet Union with the aim of seizing power.
2. In the event that the *coup d'état* was unsuccessful, to organize the defeat of the Red army in a war with the Polish-German bloc and to organize the theater of military operations and the armies accordingly.
3. To organize sabotage in the RKKA [Workers' and Peasants' Red Army] in both material-technical and military preparations.
4. **Independently of Trotsky's direct ties with the German General Staff and the fascist government**, it was important for the military center to organize these ties independently.

### **Analysis of Rudenko's Letter**

Rudenko summarized details from some interrogations of Putna, Tukhachevsky, and Iakir that have not been made public. These passages tie Trotsky to collaboration with Germany in several ways:

- Putna, the leading Trotskyist among the military men, claimed he had been in touch with Trotsky; was involved in a Trotskyist military organization; and was conspiring with the German General Staff.
- Tukhachevsky confirmed that Primakov and Putna were in touch with Trotsky, as he himself was, and that he and the Trotskyist cadres were working together.
- According to Iakir, Tukhachevsky had said that the military conspiracy was being organized in coordination with Trotsky and "according to his directive."
- Iakir confirmed that the military conspirators were to work for the defeat of the Red Army in a war with Germany and Poland.

- Iakir said that Trotsky had direct ties with the German General Staff.

The richness and consistency of this material suggests that there is yet more evidence in the investigation materials of the Tukhachevsky group of Trotsky's contacts with Germany.

### **Voroshilov's Talk at the Commissariat of Defense**

From the same source we have obtained a copy of the transcript (*stenogramma*) of a talk by Commissar of Defense Voroshilov to the top military personnel (*aktiv*) of the Commissariat (= Ministry) of Defense on June 9, 1937.<sup>23</sup> Voroshilov read out quotations from interrogations and court documents of the Tukhachevsky Affair.

<sup>23</sup> We have already cited a short passage from this document above in connection with the question of General Milch.

Some of those quotations are not given in the transcript, or are given only partially. We will use what we have, and will only cite those quotations that deal directly with Trotsky and his alleged ties to either Germany or Japan or that confirm the information in Rudenko's report.

#### **TRANSCRIPT OF THE ACTIV OF THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSARIAT OF DEFENSE USSR**

June 9, 1937

Both PUTNA and all the rest of them tell about how they linked their work with the principal scoundrel and main gunman of counterrevolution in our country who was driven out of this country — Trotsky.

Here is what PUTNA says:

"— When I found out (he was saying this to the investigator) that I was being recalled to Moscow in the last days of September 1935 I reported about this to Sedov." (reads PUTNA's confessions)

They [the investigators] asked him this question: "Was Trotsky's letter handed to Tukhachevsky, when and under what circumstances?"

Answer: "Trotsky's letter was handed to Tukhachevsky." (reads)

What Tukhachevsky says about this. They asked him this question: "When did you establish contact with Trotsky and what directives did you receive from him?"

Answer: "I established contact with Trotsky through Romm in 1932." The latter brought him a note in 1935 too. Obviously this was not the first note.

"In 1932..." (reads) Further he relates what Romm said to him. "Everything that he reported I approved, then I met with him in 1933 and 1934. When in fact the anti-Soviet work in the army had already been developed by me there took place my second meeting with Romm in Moscow ..." (reads)

That's what Tukhachevsky says about his contacts with Trotsky and about those tasks which the latter set before him.

Here you see it's not just a question of Trotsky's assigning tasks on his own account, but Trotsky at the same time has instructions also from the German General Staff. I have information that it is not only the German General Staff that has influence on Trotsky, but that the latter was connected to the Japanese General Staff as well, or in any case with its intelligence organs.

Primakov answers the question what tasks were set before him and what he did:

"Trotsky's basic directives ... were known to me too from the words of Dreitser and Putna; they came down to this, that Trotsky was demanding to reestablish a military organization, to strengthen it in the army as well, making use of the sharpening of the class struggle ... up to 1933."

...

Putna about his spying: "A few days later" (reads) ... Then while conversations went on: "about the desirability of changing the system, the leadership in the USSR.... " (reads)

That means that preparatory conversations were going on, and then further: "Shleikher expressed his unequivocal readiness...." (reads) He brought this to Trotsky's attention through this gentleman Sedov and Sedov reports that Trotsky proposes: (reads)<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Voennyi Sovet pri Narodnom Komissare Oborony SSSR 1-4 liunia 1937 g. Dokumenty i Materialy*. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008, 372-373; 384. (Voennyi Sovet).

The testimony here generally accords with what we have seen previously, no doubt because Voroshilov drew his information from the same interrogations. The "Shleikher" named here is no doubt General Kurt von Schleicher, Chancellor of Germany from June 1932 to January 1933 and previously Minister of Defense.

### **Colonel L.A. Shnitman**

Further evidence about contacts between the military conspirators and Trotsky keeps coming to light, even in sources that try to impugn its validity. In a 2009 book we read the following:

In September 1937 Ezhov sent Stalin a special communication containing an assessment of the activities of Colonel L.A. Shnitman, military attaché to Czechoslovakia. There was compromising material stating that he was aide to Komandarm 2<sup>nd</sup> rank A.I. Kork, military attaché to Germany. In January 1937 a group of Soviet pilots who had served in Spain had been detained in France, and Shnitman was also blamed for this. During his interrogation he had also told the investigators about his "meetings" upon Tukhachevsky's instructions in Paris with Sedov, Trotsky's son, concerning the transmission of secret information to foreign intelligence services.<sup>25</sup>



<sup>25</sup> Vladimir Khaustov and Lennart Samuel'son. *Stalin, NKVD, i Repressii 1936-1938* gg. "Istoriia Stalinizma" series. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2009 226. (Khaustov-Samuel'son)

That Khaustov and Samuel'son include this material at all is apparently part of their attempt to illustrate the unreliability of such reports. The scare quotes around the word "meetings" are an example of the dishonest "argument by scare quotes." Instead of citing evidence for their implied suspicion that Shnitman had not met with Sedov, Khaustov and Samuel'son put scare quotes around the word. This is a common tactic of proponents of the anti-Stalin paradigm when they have no evidence to support their preconceived ideas but rather are forced to contend with contrary evidence. An objective historian would cite evidence and, if there were no such evidence, conclude that the meetings might well have taken place. Since such an admission would contradict the anti-Stalin paradigm, Khaustov and Samuel'son use this subterfuge. We have discussed "argument by scare quotes" elsewhere.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Furr. *Kirov* Chapter 4, 87-92.

### **Evaluating This Evidence**

As with a great many other statements in this book the authors give no citation, not even an archival source, for this information. What are we to make of this?

Both authors are extremely anticommunist and very hostile to Stalin. They reject out of hand any possibility that any of the Opposition conspiracies actually existed. Their book contains many falsifications, significant omissions, and outright lies, all in an anticommunist direction. Moreover, Khaustov is associated with the "Memorial" organization. He is one of a few privileged researchers who have access to many archival documents.

Another "Memorial" society source reports that Shnitman was convicted of "espionage [and] participation in a military conspiracy in the Red Army."<sup>27</sup> This is what we would expect if Shnitman did confess as Khaustov and Samuel'son affirm. Yet another source confirms that Shnitman was aide to

the military attaché to Germany in 1926-1929 and again in 1934-35, was military attaché to Finland in 1929-30 and military attaché to Czechoslovakia 1936-1938.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> "Kommunarka. 1938. Avgust" At <http://www.memo.ru/memory/communarka/Chapt10.htm>; "Spiski zhertv" <http://lists.memo.ru/d37/f245.htm#n43> . These are both "Memorial Society" sources.

<sup>28</sup> <http://baza.vgd.ru/1/38052/>

The date of Ezhov's memorandum to Stalin as given by Khaustov and Samuel'son, September 1937, is curious. There's good evidence from other sources that Shnitman was arrested on January 14, 1938, and that his trial and execution took place on August 28, 1938.<sup>29</sup> One would expect that an interrogation in which Shnitman made such self-incriminating disclosures would almost certainly have taken place between these two dates rather than prior to Ezhov's September 1937 communication to Stalin. Surely no one who had confessed to such crimes would have been left at large for another four months. That deduction in turn suggests that Khaustov and Samuel'son saw not just Ezhov's note to Stalin but at least part of Shnitman's investigative file and are not being truthful about the content of Ezhov's note.

<sup>29</sup> O.F. Suvenirov. *Tragediia RKKA 1937-1938*. Institut Voennoi Istorii Ministerstva Oborony Rossiiskoi Federatsii. Moscow: "Terra," 1998, 441, No. 262.

The "foreign intelligence service" for which Sedov and, through Shnitman, Tukhachevsky were spying is not named. But it must have been Germany. Tukhachevsky had ties with the German General Staff about which he confessed at length, as we have seen, while Shnitman had had some connection to Germany but not to any other of the great European powers.

In a book of more than 400 pages the authors devote only this single paragraph to Shnitman's case. Indeed, there is no particular reason they should have inserted this paragraph at all other than to impugn internal communications among the Soviet leaders. But the implication nevertheless

is that there may be still more — perhaps much more — evidence of contact between Trotsky or Sedov and Germany or Japan, to say nothing of Trotsky's contacts with Soviet oppositionists.

### **Other Evidence from the Soviet Archives of Trotsky's Collaboration**

To this point we have confined our attention to documents from the former Soviet archives containing evidence of "first-hand" contact between Trotsky and Germany or Japan. The persons whose accounts we have examined claim that they knew of Trotsky's contact with Germany or Japan either from Trotsky himself or from German or Japanese diplomats.

Although the dividing line between first- and second-hand evidence is a clear one, the evidentiary value of second-hand evidence is not necessarily less. For example we now have Nikolai Bukharin's first confession of June 2, 1937, a document still top-secret in Russia today that turned up in an archive that was sent West sometime in the mid-1990s. We have examined this confession in detail in another study to which we refer the interested reader.<sup>30</sup>

30 Grover Furr and Vladimir L. Bobrov, "Nikolai Bukharin's First Statement of Confession in the Lubyanka." *Cultural Logic* 2007, at [http://clogic.eserver.org/2007/Furr\\_Bobrov.pdf](http://clogic.eserver.org/2007/Furr_Bobrov.pdf) This article was first published in the Russian historical journal *Klio* 1 (36), 2005, 38-52. I have put the Russian version online at [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/furrnbobrov\\_bukharin\\_klio07.pdf](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/furrnbobrov_bukharin_klio07.pdf)

It is significant because Bukharin confirms what we have already learned from Radek's testimony, since Bukharin's knowledge of Trotsky's collaboration with Germany came only through Radek. Radek had implicated Bukharin in pretrial statements and then again at the public January 1937 Moscow trial. Bukharin had denied over and over again what Radek said, but on June 2, 1937 he reversed himself and confessed.

Why did Bukharin decide to confess? It appears that one reason may have been that Bukharin had learned of Tukhachevsky's arrest, and figured "the

jig was up."<sup>31</sup> In his final statement at the March 1938 Moscow Trial Bukharin said that "of course, the incriminating evidence [*uliki*]" played a determining role. That must mean evidence *recently* obtained and shown to him, which would probably include the evidence of the military conspirators.

<sup>31</sup> See Grover Furr and Vladimir Bobrov, "Nikolai Bukharin's First Statement of Confession in the Lubyanka." *Cultural Logic* 2007, 17 and nn. 32 and 33. Bibliographic information of the Russian original of this article is given there.

If Bukharin's testimony contradicted Radek's we would be forced to conclude that, on the evidence, one or both were wrong. Since Bukharin's statement confirms Radek's, their statements mutually corroborate, or strengthen each other.

### **Iagoda's Confessions**

There exists a good deal more such "second-hand evidence" of Trotsky's collaboration with the Germans and Japanese in recently published Soviet archival documents.

Genrikh S. Iagoda was Commissar of the NKVD (= Minister of Internal Affairs), which included the political police, from 1934 till he was dismissed in September 1936. He was arrested in early March 1937. Subsequently he was one of the leading defendants in the third Moscow trial of March 1938.

In 1997 a number of materials from Genrikh Iagoda's investigative file were published in a very small edition of 200 copies in the provincial city of Kazan' by some researchers employed by the FSB, successor to the KGB. Since that time some of the documents published in this collection have been published elsewhere, evidently from copies held in different archives. In these interrogation transcripts Iagoda makes startling confessions. These confessions include details of his collaboration with German intelligence.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Genrikh Iagoda. Narkom vnutrennikh del SSSR, General'niy komtsar gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti. Sbornik dokumentov. Kazan', 1997.*  
(Genrikh Iagoda)

Avel' Enukidze was a high-ranking Party official and member of the Soviet government who had been arrested earlier. Only two interrogations of Enukidze's have been published: one in the 1997 collection of Iagoda materials, another in the second of the "Lubianka-Stalin" volumes in 2004. In neither does Enukidze speak much about Trotsky. In the volume of materials devoted to Iagoda, however, we find the following remark about Enukidze, Trotsky, and the Germans. We have **bolded** passages of special interest to our investigation.

In the first place, in 1935 the prospects of a war by a strengthened Germany against the Soviet Union were growing with each day. In that connection it was necessary to move ahead swiftly and make an agreement with them.

**Enukidze told me that Trotsky abroad had established full contact with German governmental circles**, and that Enukidze himself also had a line of contact with the Germans. (Genrikh Iagoda, 193)

Iagoda also testified about Lev Karakhan's ties to Trotsky and the Germans.

But I am aware that **in the orientation to and conspiracies with German governmental circles both the Trotskyists and Zinovievists, on the one side, and the Rights, on the other side, had their own separate lines [of contact].**

Question: How did they differ and where do you know this from?

Answer: Karakhan spoke to me about this in one of our talks with him in 1935.

The essence of these two lines in orientation to and contact with the Germans consists in the following: **the Trotskyist-Zinovievist part of our center was carrying out negotiations with German governmental circles through Trotsky**, who was in emigration,

isolated from the Soviet Union, ignorant of the internal processes of the country and ready to give away everything just in order to overthrow Soviet power and return to Russia as soon as possible.

We, the Rights, had a different attitude. **We were not supporters of a new partition of Russia, as Trotsky was doing....**

Karakhan's connection with the Germans had existed for a long time. And the center of the Rights used this line of contact, already established, as a real line, and offered to Karakhan to enter into official negotiations with the German governmental circles. I have already confessed that Karakhan was in Berlin after this and met there with Nadolny and Hess (or Goebbels) and, as he said to me, had already in 1936 achieved significant concessions from the Germans.

Question: What concessions?

Answer: Concessions of the servile conditions on the basis of which the agreement with Trotsky had been achieved. (Genrikh Iagoda, 194-195)

Karakhan apparently claimed to have had his own ties to the Germans through Nadolny (presumably Rudolf Nadolny, German diplomat)<sup>33</sup> and either Hess or Goebbels. Others of the Rights testified at the March 1938 Trial that Karakhan and Iagoda were very critical of Trotsky's dealings with the Germans, believing that Trotsky was cut off from the realities of life in the USSR and was yielding far too much to the Germans just in hopes of returning to power.

<sup>33</sup> See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf\\_Nadolny](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf_Nadolny) The German Wikipedia page article is much fuller.

### **Assessing the Evidence: Iagoda's Confessions**

Scholars with "impeccable" anticommunist credentials have cited these documents unproblematically. For example, Marc Jansen and Nikita Petrov cite this work as a primary source, without claiming that the interrogations

in it were, or even might have been, faked, obtained by compulsion, etc.<sup>34</sup> One of the documents has also been published in a semiofficial collection of documents from the Soviet archives, a fact that further attests to their genuine nature.<sup>35</sup> We may therefore conclude that the documents really do come from the Iagoda investigative file and are generally conceded to be genuine.

<sup>34</sup> E.g. Jansen & Petrov 220 n.23, 224 n. 110, 226 n. 9, 228 n.40. Petrov is a senior researcher with the highly anticommunist organization "Memorial"; Jansen is a major anticommunist researcher of the Soviet 1930s.

<sup>35</sup> The documents published as Nos. 40 and 41 in Genrikh Iagoda, 108-136, were also published as document No. 59, pp. 135-145 in the official collection *Lubianka. Stalin i glavnoe upravlenie gosbezopasnosti NKVD 1937-1938* (Moscow: "Materik," 2004).

These documents merit a detailed analysis in and of themselves. Their contents intersect with and confirm many other materials now available such as confession statements by other individuals arrested in connection with the investigations concerning espionage and conspiracy, and the transcript of the Third Moscow trial.

At the end of each of Iagoda's confessions printed in this 1997 volume is a disclaimer, variously worded. At the end of interrogation two, Iagoda's first confession, which took place on April 26, 1937, pp.109-137, we read:

Information about the conspirator-employees of the NKVD is falsified. Other aforementioned statements by Iagoda are not credible.

For more information about the repression of Chekists in the middle 1930s see Palchinsky A.A. "Represii v organakh NKVD v seredine 30-kh godov," in *Political persecution in Russia. Historical and contemporary*. St. Petersburg: 1997, pp. 284-294.

At the end of the second confession of May 4, 1937, (pp.137-143):

Information about the conspirator-employees of the NKVD is falsified.

At the end of the third (May 13, 1937, pp. 144-167):

All information in the transcript concerning acts of terror and conspiracies are falsified.

V.M. Primakov and the other military men were fully rehabilitated in 1937. *Izvestiia* TsK KPSS No. 4 (1989), 42-73. A.I. Rykov, N.I. Bukharin and others were rehabilitated in 1988. *Izvestiia* TsK KPSS No. 5 (1989), 69-92.

B.I. Nicolaevsky (1887-1966), in 1903-1906 a Bolshevik, then a Menshevik, political émigré. Nicolaevsky refuted the reports that he received any packets from Rykov. *Sotsialisticheskii Vestnik* No. 5 (1938), 12. For more detail on P.P. Ol'berg and Shemelev see V.Z. Rogovin, 1937. Moscow, 1996.

At the end of the fourth (May 19, 1937, pp. 167-184):

All information about conspiracies and acts of terror is falsified. The case of the murder of S.M. Kirov remains open to this day. A.E. Ehlukidze and the other persons named in the transcript were rehabilitated in the 1960s-1980s.

The fifth (May 26, 1937, pp.185-199):

All information in the transcript concerning conspiracy and accusations of "espionage" is falsified. L.M. Karakhan and the other persons named in the transcript have been rehabilitated.

At the end of a two-page statement by Iagoda to Ezhov concerning NKVD worker Mironov (June 4, 1937, pp. 200-202):

The information in the document is not credible.

At the end of the interrogation of December 28, 1937 (pp. 202-218):

The information is not credible. Professor L.G. Levin and other doctors were later rehabilitated because there is no evidence of any crime in their activities.



The end of the "face-to-face confrontation" (*ochnaia stavka*) between Iagoda and Dr. Levin of January 4, 1938, pp. 218-223:

The information cited in the transcript is not credible.

The end of the confrontation between Iagoda and Dr. Kriuchkov of January 5, 1938, pp. 223-227:

The answers are not credible. P.P. Kriuchkov was later rehabilitated because there is no evidence of any crime in his activities.

The end of the confrontation between Iagoda and Professor D.D. Pletnev of January 5, 1938, pp. 227-230:

The answers are not credible. Professor D.D. Pletnev was later rehabilitated because there is no evidence of any crime in his activities.

The end of the confrontation between Dr. Levin, also of January 5, 1938, pp. 231-233:

The "confessions" of L.G. Levin and P.P. Kriuchkov were later refuted as not credible.

At the end of the interrogation of Iagoda held on January 10, 1938, pp. 235-239:

Iagoda's answers are not credible.

There are similar remarks at the end of the interrogation-confession of Artuzov of June 15, 1937 (pp. 487-499). We will consider Artuzov's confession below.

The information given by Artuzov is not credible. Later it was all refuted in his rehabilitation.

The same kind of comments are made at the end of other interrogation-confessions which we do not consider here, such as those of Avel' Enukidze and of NKVD men Bulanov, Prokof'ev, Radzivilovskii, and Trilisser.

## Assessing These Documents: "Rehabilitations"

The comments cited above are of course not a critical analysis, or indeed *any* kind of analysis, of the confessions of Iagoda's that the volume reproduces. In fact, the book has no analysis of the assertions made in the interrogation-confessions at all.

Some of the comments allude to "rehabilitations." Most such "rehabilitations" have not been made public, so we can't evaluate them. However, we know a good deal about a number of "rehabilitations" of well-known figures — enough to know that they are political, not historically accurate, documents.

Specifically, we have a good deal of the material on Bukharin's "rehabilitation." We know that it does not prove him innocent in the slightest. On the contrary, in their decree "rehabilitating" Bukharin the Plenum of the Soviet Supreme Court falsified a key document — Frinovskii's confession of April 11, 1939, which was not public in February 1988 when Bukharin's case came before it, but has been published since. Far from proving Bukharin innocent, Frinovskii's confession in fact shows him to have been guilty. Earlier in the present volume we pointed out that the "rehabilitation" document of Zinoviev and his codefendants contains evidence of Zinoviev's guilt rather than his innocence.

So "rehabilitations" are not proof that the individuals "rehabilitated" were innocent, even though they are presented as though they were. Rather, they are official claims that the individuals "rehabilitated" will be *considered to be innocent*, and in future will be declared to have been "victims" of "Stalin's crimes."

"Rehabilitations" are *political* acts, not exercises in the reconsideration of evidence. Marc Junge, a German researcher on the repressions of the 1930s and a determined proponent of the "anti-Stalin" paradigm, put it this way:

In Übereinstimmung zu von Goudoever kann abschließend festgestellt werden, daß Rehabilitierung in der Sowjetunion ein politisch-administrativer Willkürakt blieb, der vor allem von der politischen

Zweckmäßigkeit der Maßnahmen bestimmt wurde, nicht aber von der strafrechtlichen Korrektheit.<sup>36</sup>

In agreement with von Goudeover it may be definitively established that rehabilitation in the Soviet Union remained an act of political-administrative caprice that was determined above all by political usefulness, not by juridical correctness.

<sup>36</sup> *Bucharins Rehabilitierung. Historisches Gedächtnis in der Sowjetunion 1953-1991*. Berlin: BasisDruck Vlg, 1999, 266. This is discussed in more detail in Furr and Bobrov, 5 ff.

It appears that the "disclaimers" quoted above and attached to the end of every confession-statement in this volume are the same kind of thing. They indirectly inform the reader something like this: "We, the editors of this volume, claim that the contents of these confession-statements are not true. We assert that they are 'not trustworthy' or 'falsified' but we cannot prove it and, in fact, have no evidence to that effect. If you want evidence, refer to the 'rehabilitations' of the individuals in question — to which, in fact, you cannot gain access."

The editors of the Iagoda volume are employees of the FSB, the successor to the KGB — that is, the Russian intelligence and security service. *Not* to state that these confessions are "false" or at least "not trustworthy" would be for them to take a position contradictory to what some important Russian (and Soviet) state institutions have taken in the past. It's not the job of the state security service to call some other state institution a liar. Whatever else it may mean this formula allows them to avoid doing so.

We can deduce something more from these brief phrases. *We may assume that if there were any other kind of evidence that the statements made in the confessions and interrogations were false, that evidence would be cited.* Since no such evidence is cited, in effect these notes constitute a kind of admission that the contents of the confessions *cannot* be shown to be false.

One could object that here too "lack of evidence is not evidence of the lack" of contradictory evidence, but this would be to ignore the fact that when concerted efforts to find evidence, made by those highly motivated to find

such evidence, turns out to be unsuccessful, there is important information content in this failure. It is one thing if those motivated *not* to find such evidence fail to find any, but quite different when highly motivated searchers fail. In reality, we know from the published volumes of rehabilitation documents that during Gorbachev's time very thorough searches of the archives were carried out with a view to finding evidence that the condemned Opposition defendants of the 1930s were falsely convicted. In the case of Iagoda, the Moscow Trials defendants, and the "Tukhachevsky Affair" we can conclude with relative confidence that no such evidence was found.

Even some Cold-War scholars who reject the validity of the Moscow Trials on principle accept these Iagoda documents at face value and have cited them as genuine without negative comment on the veracity of their contents. Evidence is not to be simply "believed" or "disbelieved" — much less rejected or disregarded — but rather must be considered in the context of all the other evidence. Even to say that Iagoda's confession *may* be false is also to say that it *may not* be false. That is, absent any information that they were false, there is no more basis for "disbelieving" than for "believing" them. In fact, not even the anticommunist scholars have rejected them as invalid.

If Iagoda's confessions were the only evidence we had of oppositionists conspiring with Germany or Japan, we would still have no grounds to discard them. On the contrary: testimony that such an illegal contact existed, while not conclusive, is far more compelling than any claims to the contrary. This is a principle of investigation so self-evident it is seldom discussed. In the case of a person accused of a crime one may expect denial in any case: by an innocent person, because he is innocent; by a guilty person because he wishes to escape the consequences of his crime. Therefore confessions of guilt are of greater interest than professions of innocence — unless there is evidence that such confessions were extracted by force, and no such evidence, in the present case, has been produced.

But Iagoda's confessions are far from the only evidence we have that the opposition was conspiring with Germany and/or Japan. They constitute just one group of documents within a large body of evidence that suggests such

conspiracy. As with any confession of guilt, the existence of this testimony is *prima facie* evidence that the confessions are true.

They are confirmed by Iagoda's appeal for clemency published in *Izvestiia* in 1992, which reads as follows:

My guilt before my country is great. It is impossible to redeem it to any extent. It is hard to die. Before the whole people and Party I stand on my knees and beg you to have mercy on me and let me live.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> "Rasskaz o desiati rasstrel'iannykh".

Every one of the ten persons whose confessions were reproduced along with Iagoda's insisted upon his own guilt in his appeal. Bukharin wrote that his guilt was so great he "should be shot ten times over." As we have already noted Dr. Natan Lur'e repeated his guilt:

I really did prepare the assassination of Voroshilov upon instruction from Franz Weitz, a Gestapo representative. I wished to accomplish these disgusting murders because I had been poisoned by the poison of Trotskyism during my long stay in Germany.

The appeals of many other Moscow Trials defendants have now been published including those of all but one (Rakovsky) the defendants at the Third Moscow Trial of March 1938. All the defendants, without exception, reaffirm their guilt. We have examined the them in Chapter Nine of *Trotsky's 'Amalgams.'*

No single piece of evidence is univocal, pointing towards a single conclusion only. One might perhaps imagine an example of an innocent person who nevertheless was persuaded to confess again and again in pretrial interrogations; to do so again at trial; to protest his innocence of certain capital crimes in vehement terms while at the same time confirming his guilt of other capital crimes; and then confessing his guilt again in his appeal. But we have to draw our historical conclusions not on imagination but evidence. There is no evidence to refute Iagoda's confessions, while they confirm and are consistent with a great deal of evidence we do have.

## **Chapter 4. *Rakovsky, Trotsky, and the Japanese***

In January 1937 the second Moscow Trial, the "Radek-Piatakov Trial," was under way. In an essay dated January 25, 1937, and titled simply "Rakovsky" Trotsky wrote the following:

In the present trial, the defendant Drobnis is playing the part of chief agent for the GPU in laying the basis for new indictments. Among others, Drobnis named Rakovsky as an accomplice in the alleged terrorist conspiracy. Rakovsky's fate is profoundly tragic. He and I were bound by ties of friendship for more than thirty years. Of all the defendants in both trials he stood the closest to me. After being sent to Siberian exile in 1928, Rakovsky held out longer and more firmly than all the others in spite of illness and age (he is now sixty). He even made an attempt to escape, was captured and wounded; in the end, he capitulated — in 1934, six years later than the rest.

At the trial of the sixteen it was "established" that I first issued instructions for terrorism in 1932. But it was altogether impossible to understand why I would have issued such instructions to capitulators, who had been waging war against me, rather than to Rakovsky, who at that time remained true to the banner of the Opposition. The very fact that Rakovsky was not named as a member of either the main center, or the "parallel" center, or the "reserve" center was in itself the most convincing proof to thoughtful people that none of these centers ever existed. The GPU has now decided to correct its original error. Drobnis has named Rakovsky. The old fighter, broken by life, goes inescapably to meet his fate. (WLT 1936-37 142)

One month later, on February 27, 1937, Trotsky returned to Rakovsky:

A few months after his capitulation, Rakovsky was sent to Japan as a representative of the USSR to the international conference of the Red Cross (which took place at the beginning of 1935, I believe, although it is very easy to find the exact date from the newspapers of the period). It is clear that while Rakovsky was sent to Japan, members of his

family were held in Moscow as hostages. Nevertheless, sending Rakovsky abroad so soon after his capitulation produced some surprise at the time. The "friends" of the USSR in England — inspired, of course, by the GPU — used Rakovsky's trip to prove the sincerity of his repentance. Now we can hypothesize with some certainty that the only reason Rakovsky was sent abroad was to better catch him in the toils of the amalgam in preparation. **It is quite certain that in the next trial, with Rakovsky participating as the accused, there will be charges of conspiratorial dealings between Rakovsky and the Japanese diplomats and military (under orders from Trotsky, of course).** (ibid. 213)

Seven weeks after that, during the "Dewey Commission" hearings on April 15, 1937, Trotsky again returned to the subject of Rakovsky's arrest:

I can say now what it is about. It is the preparation for a new trial. I don't know the concrete circumstances. I know only that Bukharin was sent abroad in 1936, the beginning of 1936, for the factories. He was their agent. He was in Prague, a tourist. Now, I ask myself if it was not with the purpose of preparing with him a new combination. He gave a lecture in Prague, totally in the official spirit. But it is possible they sent him in order to have the possibility to affirm that abroad he entered into communications with Trotskyites and German agents. I don't know, but it is quite possible. The same with Rakovsky. Immediately, he was sent to Japan. I was a bit astonished. What was the meaning of it? It was at the end of 1934, and the British friends of the Soviet Union — the friends of the Soviet Union are everywhere — they are directed by the agents of the GPU, without their knowing; the genuine direction is everywhere in the hands of the GPU. The friends in London declared: "You see, the repentance of Rakovsky is totally sincere. The Government sent him abroad." But his family remained in Moscow, the family of Rakovsky. At that time I was of the opinion that he was sent for demonstrative purposes in order to show the whole world that he was free, his repentance was sincere. **Now, I ask myself if it did not have a second purpose, to frame him afterwards — that he was connected with the Japanese military chiefs in the Government, and so forth.** (CLT 338-9, 9th session, April 15, 1937)

We can see now that Trotsky was lying in the first passage. In 1980 Trotskyist researcher Pierre Broué discovered that Trotsky was indeed in a bloc with Zinoviev and Kamenev. Trotsky disguised this fact behind vociferous claims that he despised them for their "capitulation" or abandonment of opposition to Stalin and had had nothing to do with them since his exile. The "centers," or leadership collectives for the bloc, existed as well.

Trotsky had made even stronger claims about Radek, a defendant in the second Moscow Trial. Trotsky claimed that he had not and would not have anything to do with Radek because the latter was a "capitulator." He and Radek had even exchanged insults — Radek in articles published in Soviet newspapers in which he attacked Trotsky, and Trotsky in his own articles. Yet we now know that Trotsky was indeed in contact with Radek. Once again, the proclamations of disdain and claims that he had had no contact with the "capitulator" were a smokescreen behind which their collaboration had continued.

In the second quotation written a month later Trotsky made a "prediction":

It is quite certain that in the next trial, with Rakovsky participating as the accused, there will be charges of conspiratorial dealings between Rakovsky and the Japanese diplomats and military (under orders from Trotsky, of course).

Rakovsky was one of the defendants in the third Moscow trial of March 2-15, 1938. As we shall see, Rakovsky did indeed claim exactly what Trotsky "predicted" — that he had been approached by "Japanese military chiefs in the government" "under orders from Trotsky," transmitted indirectly through the Soviet ambassador to Japan Konstantin Konstantinovich IUrenev<sup>1</sup>, who Rakovsky claimed had been a Trotskyist since the 1920s.

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<sup>1</sup> IUrenev, K.K. Ambassador to Japan January 29, 1933, to June 16, 1937; to Germany June 16, 1937 to October 11, 1937. Arrested September 23, 1937. Executed August 1, 1938. "Rehabilitated" December 22, 1956. Biographical information on IUrenev can be found at [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Юрeнeв,\\_Кoнcтaнтин\\_Кoнcтaнтинoвич](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Юрeнeв,_Кoнcтaнтин_Кoнcтaнтинoвич) ,



[http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio\\_yu/jurenev\\_kk.php](http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio_yu/jurenev_kk.php) , <http://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfcd/martirolog/?t=page&id=15808>

IUrenev was arrested the day after his "face-to-face confrontation" with Rakovsky, who had named him in one of his confession statements. It appears that the NKVD did not know about IUrenev's involvement prior to Rakovsky's naming him. This fact troubles Georgii Cherniavskii, coauthor of the recent (2014) biography of Rakovsky. We shall discuss this work below.

In contrast to Rakovsky, who got a prison sentence, IUrenev was sentenced to death and executed. This difference in treatment may well reflect that fact that Rakovsky confessed to things, and named people, about which the NKVD did not previously know. We discuss these issues later in the present essay.

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## Whose "Amalgam"?

In his essays about the Kirov murder Trotsky "predicted" that his name would soon appear in Soviet accounts of the investigation, and explained this prediction as follows:

There is only one way to forestall en route the amalgams that are in preparation: *Expose the scheme in advance*. (Emphasis in original.)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The Russian edition, which must be the original, reads: "разоблачить замысел заранее." See *Biulleten' Oppozitsii* No. 41, Section 12, at <http://web.mit.edu/fjk/www/FI/BO/BO-41.shtml>

Trotsky knew his name would soon appear because he and his Russian followers were in a political bloc with Zinoviev, Kamenev, and their followers. Therefore it was predictable that the Leningrad Zinovievites, arrested in December 1934 for the murder of Sergei Kirov, would name Trotsky, since they had already named their own leaders. So Trotsky's tactic was indeed to "expose the scheme in advance" — except that the "scheme" in question was not Stalin's but his own.

Trotsky claimed that he was being "framed" for complicity in the Kirov murder. In reality he was not being "framed." The Trotskyists, who were in a political bloc with the Zinovievites and Rightists, were thereby at least accessories to Kirov's murder whether or not they knew in advance that their partners in the bloc, the Zinovievites, were planning the assassination. By anticipating the charge against him Trotsky hoped to convince his readers that the charges were obvious lies — so obvious that they were "predictable."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See the sections "Expose the scheme in advance" in Chapters 13, 14, and 15 of *Trotsky's "Amalgams."*

We have some evidence that Trotsky, through his supporters in the bloc, approved of the plan to murder Kirov. According to Genrikh Iagoda, Avel' Enukidze told him that the Rights (of which he and Iagoda were members) reluctantly "sanctioned" the murder of Kirov by the Zinovievists at the insistence of "the Trotskyist-Zinovievist part of the center [of the conspiracy]." If that is so, then Trotsky knew about the plan for the murder. (Genrikh Iagoda 180; 193)

However, none of the defendants in the Kirov assassination trial or in the first Moscow trial of August 1936, the Zinoviev-Kamenev trial, claimed that the Trotskyists either had prior knowledge of or played any role in the murder. If these defendants' testimony was genuine, and if Trotskyists really had prior knowledge or played a role, the defendants would have had no reason to conceal this fact. If their testimony had been "fabricated" by the prosecution, there was no reason for the NKVD, Vyshinsky, or for that matter Stalin, to refrain from putting into the mouths of the 1936 trial defendants a story that Trotsky and/or his followers were at least accessories, if not outright accomplices, to Kirov's murder. But no such accusations occurred. That leaves this particular issue in doubt.

False capitulations — false declarations of loyalty to the Party in the future — were common among members of the Soviet opposition. In 1990 leading Trotskyist scholar Pierre Broué asserted that "everybody" knew this.

Lev Sedov called the Smirnov group either the "former capitulators" or the "Trotskiite capitulators." Everybody had known, from 1929 on,

that people in the Smirnov group had not really capitulated but were trying to fool the apparatus, and were capable of organizing themselves as an Opposition within the party: the fact was so universally known that Andres Nin, the Spaniard deported from the Soviet Union in August 1930, explained it openly to his German comrades of *Die permanente Revolution* who printed his declaration without apparent problem.<sup>4</sup>

4 Broué, Pierre. "Party Opposition to Stalin (1930-1932) and the First Moscow Trial." In John W. Strong, ed. *Essays on Revolutionary Culture and Stalinism*. Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1990, pp. 98-111, at p. 104. Broué had a lapse of memory here. In a later and more detailed article Broué says that Nin's article was published in "l'organe de l'Opposition de gauche allemande, *Der Kommunist*, du début novembre 1930." (Broué, "Ivan Nikitlch Smirnov. Une conscience communiste (1881-1936)." *CahLT* 60 (1997) 44.

Therefore the fact that Rakovsky had openly "capitulated" is no reason to believe that this "capitulation" was genuine. Rakovsky was probably telling the truth when he testified that he had remained a loyal Trotskyist all along, that his "capitulation" was dishonest.

... in February 1934, I sent a telegram to the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., saying that I had completely disarmed myself both ideologically and organizationally and asked to be reinstated in the Party. This telegram was insincere, I was lying.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" Heard Before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R.* Moscow, March 2-13, 1938. Verbatim Report. Moscow: People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R., 1938. (1938 Trial), 288.

We can be reasonably confident that this part of Rakovsky's testimony at the third Moscow trial was truthful: that he had lied when he claimed that he had capitulated and that he had "completely disarmed" himself. But we would like to know more.

Were Rakovsky's dramatic confessions of having been a Japanese spy on Trotsky's behalf true or not? Whose false story or "amalgam" is in play here? Did "Stalin" — really the Soviet prosecution — invent the story of Rakovsky's connivance with the Japanese, including Trotsky's own conspiring with them, and then force Rakovsky to mouth lies? Or was it Trotsky who was lying when he claimed that this story was an "amalgam," another of "Stalin's" fabrications? The evidentiary issues that face us when we address this question are the subject of the present chapter.

### **Moscow Trial Testimony**

In anticommunist and Trotskyist writing Moscow Trial testimony is routinely dismissed out of hand as worthless for evidentiary purposes. When a reason is given, it is normally that the testimony either was, or might have been, invented by the prosecution and the defendants were forced to repeat it.

The claim that the testimony "might have been" fabricated and therefore untruthful is an interesting one. It logically leaves open the possibility that it "might not" have been fabricated. And that suggests that the testimony ought to be evaluated in some way to determine whether it had been fabricated or not. However, in practice this is not done. The testimony is disregarded on the naive basis that if it "might" be fabricated then it is useless as historical evidence.

This reasoning is invalid. All testimony given by persons under arrest, or even by persons detained by police, anywhere, is in some sense given "under threat" or "under compulsion," since normally the persons giving this testimony would not be giving it if they had not been under police detention, which is itself a threat — of further detention or worse. Even testimony that is apparently voluntarily and freely given — say, by a person whom the police were not seeking and who had no reason to think the police might seek him or her in future — might have been fabricated by the witness him/herself for some reason, or simply misremembered.

Even the probability that evidence will be far from reliable does not normally disqualify its use in court. For example, many studies have

confirmed that eyewitness testimony is notoriously unreliable under any circumstances, even when offered completely voluntarily. But no court would simply disregard it.

Testimony given by persons under arrest, by persons detained by police, and by persons not detained but merely questioned by police, by persons who volunteer their testimony (for example, by walking into a police station and offering to make a statement), eyewitness testimony — all these forms of testimony are normally subjected to various tests in an attempt to assess their validity.

This means that it is incorrect to simply reject the testimony, either pre-trial or at trial, of defendants in the Moscow trials. Rather, we need to subject this testimony to verification or invalidation.

The most obvious method is that of independent verification. We can study the testimony carefully to see whether we have independent evidence, either from within the USSR or from beyond its borders that can corroborate or disprove it.

I have not found any scholarship that undertakes independent verification — proof or disproof — of Moscow trial testimony. This fact can't be explained by any lack of independent corroborating evidence — there is a lot of it. In previous essays, and in other chapters in this book, we have cited a good deal of such evidence. Examples include the following:

\* For decades Trotsky, Khrushchev-era, Gorbachev-era, Western academic scholarship, and Trotskyist writers, dismissed the allegation made at the Moscow trials that a "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" existed. The bloc was declared to be part of a "Stalinist" frame-up. But in 1980 evidence found by Trotskyist scholar Pierre Broué in the Trotsky archive at Harvard proved that this bloc did indeed exist and that it had been formed in 1932, the same year that testimony at several of the Moscow trials claimed.

\* A number of the statements made in their testimony by Moscow trial defendants about Trotsky and which Trotsky vehemently denied can also now be verified. For example, in another chapter of this book we discuss how we can now verify Karl Radek's claim that he received a letter from

Trotsky in late February or early March of 1932 by means of evidence from the Harvard Trotsky archive.

\* NKVD General Genrikh Samoilovich Liushkov, who defected to the Japanese in July 1938, privately told his Japanese military handlers that Aleksei Rykov, one of the chief defendants at the recent (March 1938) Moscow trial, really had been conspiring with military men against the Soviet regime.

\* Liushkov also privately told the Japanese about military conspiracies that really existed, and named a number of Party leaders who had been implicated in these conspiracies. Some of these Party figure and military men had been named by Moscow trials defendants.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See Grover Furr, *The Murder of Sergei Kirov. History, Scholarship and the Anti-Stalin Paradigm*. Kettering, OH: Erythros Press and Media, LLC, 2013, Chapter 17.

\* In February 1937 an official of the German Foreign Ministry told a Czech diplomat that Hitler was expecting a military seizure of power in the USSR which would result in a military dictatorship favorable to relations with Germany. This confirms testimony at the 1938 Moscow trial testimony, as well as the testimony by accused Soviet generals which they made under arrest in May and June 1937 and at their closed trial of June 11, 1937, that they had been secretly in league with the German military.

\* Jules Humbert-Droz, a close associate of Bukharin's, revealed in memoirs published in Switzerland in 1971 that in 1928 Bukharin had told him that he and his supporters were planning to assassinate Stalin.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See the discussion of and excerpt from Humbert-Droz's memoir in Grover Furr and Vladimir L. Bobrov. "Stephen Cohen's Biography of Bukharin: A Study in the Falsehood of Khrushchev-Era 'Revelations'." *Cultural Logic* 2010. At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2010/Furr.pdf>

We can also check some assertions made at the Moscow trials against information from within the Soviet Union in cases where it is highly

unlikely that the confirmation is the result of fabrication. Examples include the following:

\* Testimony by defendants before and at the trial of the eight military commanders accused of co-conspiracy with some of the defendants at the Moscow trials and of collaboration with Germany confirms Trotsky's collaboration with Germany as well. This testimony was made to a secret court and it remains secret in Russia today. We know about it only because it was sent out of Russia before his death by General Dmitrii Volkogonov, who had *carte blanche* access to secret Soviet archives.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See Furr and Bobrov, "Marshal S.M. Budiennyi on the Tukhachevsky Trial. Impressions of an Eye-Witness." (in Russian). *Klio* (St Petersburg) No. 2 (2012), pp. 8-24. At [https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/budennyi\\_klio12.pdf](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/budennyi_klio12.pdf)

There is no evidence of any scenario according to which even this top-secret testimony was fabricated so as to confirm accusations at the Moscow trials. Moreover, the guilt of these military commanders is confirmed in a general way by Liushkov's private statements to his Japanese handlers, where the Soviet NKVD general asserted that real conspiracies among Soviet military leaders did exist.

\* Grigory Zinoviev, under arrest and interrogation in July 1936, admitted continuing opposition to the Stalin regime but refused to admit to any criminal activity until finally confronted by one of his supporters in a confession that remains secret to this day but which American scholar J. Arch Getty was permitted to read.

Three days later [July 26, 1936] Zinoviev was confronted by one of his followers, [N.A.] Karev, who directly accused him. Zinoviev asked that the interrogation be stopped because he wanted to make a statement that, in the event, amounted to a full confession of organizing assassination and terror. (Getty, *Yezhov*, 191)

The confession mentioned by Getty came just two days before Zinoviev's confession of July 28, 1936, still secret in Russia but available in the Volkogonov Papers. We have obtained a copy of this confession.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See Furr, *The Murder of Sergei Kirov*, 228-235.

\* Zinoviev used the phrase "I am no longer an enemy" in a letter he sent before trial from prison, asking for leniency, and again in his appeal of his death sentence.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See "O Tak Nazyvaemom 'Antisovetskom Ob"edinennom Trotskistsko-Zinov'evskom Tsentre". *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* 8 (1989), p. 89 col. 2 (same text in RKEB 184); "Rasskaz o desiati rasstrel'nykh" ("A Story of Ten Who Were Shot"), *Izvestiia* September 2, 1992, p. 3 col. 1.

\* A number of high-profile defendants such as Nikolai Bukharin and Genrikh Iagoda vigorously rejected some of the charges made against them by Soviet prosecutor Vyshinskii at trial. Most of Bukharin's testimony is devoted to rejecting accusations against him.

At the same time Bukharin admitted to other serious crimes without any attempt to deny them.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For a detailed discussion of this point see Furr and Bobrov, "Stephen Cohen's Biography of Bukharin."

Iagoda refused repeatedly to admit to being an accomplice to the murder of Sergei Kirov while admitting to being what in Anglo-American jurisprudence is called an accessory to it. Iagoda insisted that he knew something was going to happen and took no steps to stop it, but was not informed in advance exactly what kind of attempt would be made to murder Kirov, when, or by whom. When the eventual assassin, Leonid Nikolaev, was detained near Kirov's home with a pistol and notes indicating he was shadowing Kirov, Iagoda's men followed his instructions and released Nikolaev. When informed of this Iagoda approved.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See the full discussion of this point in Furr, *Murder of Sergei Kirov*, Chapter 15.

This kind of vigorous, prolonged, emphatic rejection of one of the Prosecutor's central charges is inconsistent with any hypothesis that



Bukharin and Iagoda confessed out of fear of torture, to spare their families, or because they had been promised leniency for a false confession.

\* We now have appeals of death sentences from many of the defendants at all three Moscow trials. In every one of them the defendants insist that they are guilty. Some of these appeals were published under Gorbachev, who was in the middle of an intense campaign to blame Stalin and the Stalin-era Soviet leadership of frame-ups in all the trials. Many others were published in 2013 under the auspices of the intensely anti-Stalin "Memorial Society." If any of the defendants had appealed for clemency on grounds other than guilt and repentance — for example, on grounds that they had pled guilty in return for some promise or other (not to be executed, to spare their families, etc.) — Gorbachev and the "Memorial Society" would certainly have published them.<sup>13</sup>

\* On June 20, 1937, Stalin was handed a telegram that Trotsky had sent from Mexico to the Executive Committee of the Supreme Soviet concerning his willingness to return to the USSR under certain circumstances. On it Stalin wrote that Trotsky was a "spy of Hitler" and handed the telegram on to two of his associates, who concurred. This is evidence that Stalin believed Trotsky was guilty of conspiring with Germany. It is not compatible with a theory that Stalin, through the NKVD, had compelled any of those who, like the military commanders, had testified to this, to testify falsely. We have examined this document in an earlier chapter.

\* A confession date April 11, 1939, by Mikhail Frinovskii, former assistant commissar of the NKVD under Nikolai Ezhov, has been quoted as genuine many times by Soviet and Russian officials. When the full text of Frinovskii's confession was published in 2006 it turned out that sections of the confession that had always previously been omitted confirm the guilt of a number of the major defendants at the Moscow trials. Later in the present chapter we will return to Frinovskii's confession and its implications.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Frinovskii's confession statement is available in English translation at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/Frinovskiieng.html>; in the original Russian at

<https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/Frinovskiiru.html> (choose Character Encoding Cyrillic — Windows)

It would appear virtually impossible that all this mutually corroboratory circumstantial evidence and more like it was carefully scripted and coordinated by "Stalin" — really the NKVD and prosecution — in advance, and all the defendants, while innocent of any crimes, were forced to rehearse it until their "performances" were virtually seamless and convincing and that this massively coordinated forgery left no traces. A far more likely hypothesis, albeit one that sharply contradicts the mainstream anti-Stalin paradigm, is that the defendants really were guilty of at least those crimes to which they pleaded guilty though not necessarily to everything the prosecution accused them of.

In light of all this confirmation of statements made by Moscow trials defendants, the only hypothesis concerning the statements of both the defendants and the prosecution at the Moscow trials that is supported by evidence is that these statements are genuine — meaning that they originated from the persons who made them and from the events they described. At the same time, the prosecution's charges too are statements the prosecution believed to be truthful.

The confessions and other assertions made by the defendants either are statements that they believed were truthful or are falsehoods that the defendants chose to make, but are not fabrications by the prosecution. We do know that the defendants sometimes chose to make statements that were false in order to mislead the prosecution and the state.

Here are some examples:

\* At the January 1937 trial Karl Radek claimed that he knew Marshal Tukhachevsky to be completely loyal to the USSR. This was not true, and Nikolai Bukharin, who collaborated with Radek, knew that it was not true. Radek probably also knew about Tukhachevsky's participation in the Right-Trotskyist conspiracy but concealed it, no doubt in the hope that the military conspiracy would be successful.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See *Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre. Heard Before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R., Moscow, January 23-30, 1937 .... Verbatim Report*. Moscow: People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R., 1937. (1937 Trial), p. 146. This passage is not present in the shorter Russian language transcript.

\*At the August 1936 Moscow trial Zinoviev and Kamenev failed to identify Genrikh Iagoda, chief (People's Commissar) of the NKVD, as a member of the network of conspiracies. In 1937, in pretrial testimony that was never intended to be made public, Iagoda confessed that he had told Zinoviev and Kamenev that they would not be executed and then made certain that they were indeed executed so as to prevent them from "saying too much" — admitting his own participation in the conspiracy.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Genrikh Iagoda, 198-199.

\* Likewise, Frinovskii's statement makes it clear that Zinoviev and Kamenev knew at least about Iagoda's involvement in the Zinovievite-Right-Trotskyist conspiracy and did not reveal this during the trial.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Frinovskii, 40.

\* The statement of Mikhail Frinovskii reveals that Ezhov had induced Genrikh Iagoda to confess to attempting to poison Ezhov with mercury but that this confession was false. The fiction that he himself had been one of the targets of the network of conspiracies was useful to Ezhov in disguising the fact that he himself was a party to these conspiracies. Iagoda agreed to make this false confession in hopes that Ezhov would prevent his execution.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Frinovskii, 48.

\* Nikolai Bukharin repeatedly said that he had confessed to everything. Yet we know that he did not. He never confessed that he had been plotting to murder Stalin as early as 1928. We know this is true thanks to Humbert-Droz's memoirs.

\* Bukharin and other defendants at the March 1938 trial never revealed that Nikolai Ezhov, then chief (People's Commissar) of the NKVD, was also a part of the opposition conspiracy. Mikhail Frinovskii revealed this in his confession statement of April 11, 1939.<sup>19</sup> We will discuss this statement in more detail below. Ezhov too made extensive confessions about his conspiracy, some of which have been published.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Frinovskii, 47-48.

<sup>20</sup> See Furr, "The Moscow Trials and the 'Great Terror' of 1937-1938: What the Evidence Shows," at [https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/trials\\_ezhovshchina\\_update0710.html](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/trials_ezhovshchina_update0710.html) and the links to the confessions at the end of that article.

Thus there is a great deal of corroborative evidence both from within the USSR and from beyond Soviet influence that confirms the essential *reliability as evidence* of the defendants' confessions at the Moscow trials. We refer the interested reader to Part One of the first volume of this study, *Trotsky's 'Amalgams,'* which is an exhaustive verification of many of the accusations to which Moscow Trials defendants confessed.

Therefore it is more reasonable to proceed on the assumption that even confession statements that we cannot at present verify independently *represent what the defendants chose to say rather than lies concocted by the prosecution* — even if we hold such statements aside for future confirmation.

### **Another Method of Verification**

We have reviewed the results of verifying the statements of Moscow trials defendants by checking them against independent evidence from both outside and within the USSR. This is the more obvious and traditional method of verifying evidence and the most reliable one.

With the release of much documentation from former Soviet archives we now have another way to check the Moscow trials testimony. We can study the attempts made during Khrushchev's and Gorbachev's time to prove that

the trials were frame-ups and the defendants innocent of the charges against them. We will devote the rest of this essay to reviewing these attempts, with special attention to Rakovsky.

## **Khrushchev**

For reasons that he never disclosed Khrushchev organized a serious and long-term campaign to disparage Stalin. This effort was first announced in Khrushchev's infamous "Secret Speech" to the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress on February 25, 1956.

One aspect of this campaign was to attempt to prove that the defendants at the Moscow trials, along with many other defendants at non-public trials, were innocent, framed by Stalin and his subordinates. Evidence from former Soviet archives now reveals that Khrushchev's attempt to frame Stalin preceded the "Secret Speech" and continued until Khrushchev was removed from power in 1964. Such attempts then stopped until 1987, when they resumed under Mikhail Gorbachev. Judging from the considerable documentation now available Gorbachev's associates appear to have studied and mined what Khrushchev's associates had done and also to have done some research on their own.

The reports composed by Khrushchev's and Gorbachev's associates are important in that they represent an attempt to prove that the Moscow trials were frame-ups and the defendants forced to make false confessions. As far as we can tell these reports were all fraudulent. Neither Khrushchev's nor Gorbachev's associates were able to find any evidence that any of the Moscow trials defendants were "framed," forced to falsely confess to the charges against them.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Iagoda's false confession to an attempt to poison Ezhov is a special case, though not one in which he was coerced to lie by the prosecution. For one thing, there's no evidence that Iagoda was forced to confess to this. Furthermore, it seems he did so at Ezhov's suggestion, in the hope that this would save him (Iagoda) from execution, but Ezhov double-crossed him. Second, this fabrication was of course known to Ezhov's men at the time and was disclosed by Frinovskii in April 1939. It is not a discovery by

Khrushchev or Gorbachev and does not change our conclusion that the defendants testified as they chose — whether or not their testimony was the truth as they understood it.

The report that began this long trail of falsehoods, Khrushchev's "Secret Speech," was also entirely a fabrication. All of the charges that Khrushchev made in it against both Stalin and Beria have been proven to be false.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Furr, *Khrushchev Lied: The Evidence That Every "Revelation" of Stalin's (and Beria's) Crimes in Nikita Khrushchev's Infamous "Secret Speech" to the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on February 25, 1956, is Provably False*. Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press & Media LLC, 2011.

### **Serov's Report of July 7, 1956**

Western anticommunist scholars and Trotskyists routinely dismiss the defendants' testimony at the Moscow trials. But Soviet anti-Stalinists never did this. On the contrary, under Khrushchev and later under Gorbachev, Soviet leaders organized major research efforts to attempt to prove that the trials were frame-ups and the defendants innocent. These were substantial undertakings, for the Soviet leadership had everything at their disposal: all the investigation materials on all defendants. Teams of researchers were employed to comb the archives, collect, and study the materials and draft the reports. Most of the materials the Soviet investigators reviewed are still top secret in Russia today, unavailable to researchers.

The post-Soviet Russian government takes the same position that the Gorbachev government took that all the trial testimonies were fabrications and all of the defendants innocent. Consequently there is no reason to doubt that any evidence that can be used to support this preconceived notion has been made public.

This effort began with Khrushchev. On April 13, 1956, not long after the "Secret Speech" Khrushchev appointed a special commission to be chaired by Viacheslav M. Molotov. Although he had voted in favor of Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" Molotov was known to be a Stalin supporter. The

Commission's membership included the "Stalinists" Molotov, Voroshilov, and Kaganovich but the majority were Khrushchev supporters: Suslov, Furtseva, Shvernik, Aristov, Pospelov, and Rudenko.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> RKEB 2, 70.

The commission was charged to "study the materials of the public trials in the case of Bukharin, Rykov, Zinoviev, Tukhachevsky, and others." A number of the reports of this commission were published in 2003.

### **Serov's Reports**

The July 7, 1956, report of Ivan A. Serov, head of the KGB, was published in 2013. This report remains the most comprehensive attempt known to prove that the defendants in the March 1938 Moscow trial were innocent. We will review this report here in some detail.

In 2010 Matthew Lenoë revealed that Serov had lied to the Molotov Commission in another report. Lenoë concluded that Serov did so at Khrushchev's request, in order to support Khrushchev's contention that Kirov had not been murdered by a clandestine group of Zinovievites but either at Stalin's own orders or by a "lone gunman."

Here is my discussion in *The Murder of Sergei Kirov* of Lenoë's account of Serov's falsification (all holding and italics in my original):

Early in his book Lenoë explains how Khrushchev's men set out to "incriminate Stalin " (7) — in plain language, to frame him.

The 1960-1961 investigation run by the Party Control Committee (KPK) was aimed explicitly at inculpating Stalin in the Kirov murder. (8)<sup>24</sup>

...

To understand the positions that Serov and the USSR prosecutor's office took in their memoranda, it is necessary to see precisely what was at stake in the deliberations of the Molotov commission. The

commission was charged with investigating the show trials of the later 1930s and determining whether the charges were valid. The Kirov murder and the trials of the "Leningrad Center" and "Moscow Center" that immediately followed were just the starting point of the inquiry, but everything that followed depended on these events. **If the official charges in the first two trials — that former Zinoviev supporters / 592 / had conspired to murder Kirov — were entirely bogus, then the indictments in all of the succeeding show trials collapsed. The latter indictments were built on the earlier ones, albeit in a confused and illogical way. But if there was some truth to the charge that Zinovievites conspired to kill Kirov, then that preserved the possibility of arguing that the later charges were also valid, at least in part. Therefore Serov and Rudenko (or their subordinates who authored the memoranda) chose to make a clear-cut argument that Nikolaev had had no relationship at all with the ex-Zinoviev supporters convicted in the trial of the "Leningrad Center."**

It appears that Serov or his boss had thought through this strategy, to deny any connection at all between Nikolaev and the Zinovievites, even before the "Secret Speech." On January 27, 1956 the KGB destroyed central records on the case file "Svoiak," the all-union surveillance operation against the Zinovievites. It seems likely that "Svoiak" contained more evidence than Serov wanted Molotov to see, either of counterrevolutionary talk among former Zinovievites and/or of Nikolaev's connections with the accused in the "Leningrad Center." Serov concealed other evidence of connections between Nikolaev and the ex-Zinovievites Kotolynov, Antonov, and Shatsky. The excerpts from Nikolaev's diaries that he released to the Molotov commission in April 1956 contained no references to these men. But we know from later releases of data that Nikolaev did mention all three in his diaries. (Lenoe 591-2.)

I have put in **plain boldface** above the passage in which Lenoe outlines the importance of the Kirov case for anyone wanting to understand the rest of the Moscow "show trials." Obviously, Khrushchev and his men realized that by the evidence available in the archives, these trials and the conspiracies detailed at them did not



appear to have been faked. It was they themselves who would have to fake: falsify, withhold and destroy evidence, in order to build a case that these conspiracies did not take place. I have put in *italic boldface* the passages where Lenoe summarizes some of the falsifications that Serov, Khrushchev's man, accomplished in order to try to convince the Molotov Commission that Nikolaev was not linked to the clandestine Zinovievite conspirators. (164-5)

<sup>24</sup> Furr, Kirov 166.

Lenoe ignores, or is ignorant of, the fact that Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" was entirely falsified. But Lenoe did discover that Serov, undoubtedly acting on Khrushchev's orders, set about falsifying the reopening of the Kirov murder case by destroying evidence in January 1956, before Khrushchev's "Secret Speech." What's more, as Lenoe astutely remarks, the falsification of the Kirov murder was done in the service of falsifying the reviews of the later Moscow trials, all of which were linked to the Kirov murder.

Since Serov lied to the Molotov Commission about the Kirov murder in the service of trying to fraudulently argue that the defendants in the Moscow trials were innocent, we might suspect that Serov also lied about the March 1938 Moscow trial. In this chapter we will show that this is the case.

### **Serov's July 7, 1956, Report**

We will not cite every bit of evidence that Serov's report of July 7, 1956, is fraudulent. Instead, we'll give details on a few important instances of Serov's falsification. Then we will proceed to study in detail Serov's attempt to prove that Rakovsky was innocent. To make it easier for readers to follow our critique we'll go through Serov's report page by page rather than by grouping Serov's falsifications in categories. All translations from Serov's report are by the present author.

As can be seen from the materials of the case, before the arrests of BUKHARIN N. I., RYKOV A.I., KRESTINSKII N.N. and others, the organs of the NKVD and of the USSR Prosecutor's Office did not

possess any verified facts on organized activities of these individuals and on the existence of a so-called "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites." (833)

This is false. By February 27, 1937, the day Bukharin was arrested during the February-March 1937 Central Committee Plenum there was a great deal of evidence against him. There had been at least two face-to-face confrontations with accusers — Piatakov and Astrov.<sup>25</sup> A great many others had accused Bukharin — he received 20 such on one day alone, February 16, 1937, as he said himself at the Plenum:

On February 16 at 6:30 in the evening I received 20 different confessions...<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> With Astrov: "...Ni razu ne govorilos' otnositel'no terrora.' Stenogramma ochnoi stavki N.I. Bukharina s V.N. Astrovym v Politburo TsK VKP(b) 13 ianvaria 1937 g." *Istochnik* No. 2, 2001, 89-110. With Piatakov: "Stenogramma ochnykh stavokv TsK VKP(b). Dekabr' 1936 goda. No. 3. Stenogramma ochnoi stavki mezhdru Piatakovym i Bukharinym v Ts.K VKP(b) ot 7 dekabria 1936 goda." *Voprosy Istorii* 4 (2003), 3-12.

<sup>26</sup> *Voprosy Istorii*, 2-3 (1992), 30. This is Bukharin's opening statement at the February-March 1937 C.C. Plenum. Bukharin enumerates a large amount of the testimony against him at that point.

In this report Serov claims no fewer than 17 times that persons convicted and executed who had inculpated trial defendants in their confessions had already been "rehabilitated." Khrushchev referred to rehabilitations in the "Secret Speech." Few of these rehabilitation reports have been published. The present author studied the rehabilitation reports that had been published as of 2006 in Chapter 11 of *Khrushchev Lied*. All of them are dishonest "whitewash" jobs. Not a single one of them proves the innocence of anybody.

In Chapter 2 of our Russian-language book *1937. Pravosudie Stalina* (2010) my colleague Vladimir L. Bobrov and I published an analysis of the 1988 Rehabilitation report on Bukharin and the other defendants in the March 1938 Moscow trial, together with the evidence that this

"rehabilitation" by the Soviet Supreme Court is indeed deliberately fraudulent. We will refer to it here when we consider Mikhail Frinovskii's confession of April 11, 1939, which also figures in Serov's report.

None of the rehabilitation reports yet published disproves the guilt of the person "rehabilitated." Khrushchev and, later, Gorbachev had access to all the investigation and trial materials. The fact that their researchers could not cite any evidence to exculpate any of the defendants at any of the Moscow trials means that they could not find any such evidence. Therefore, they were forced to lie.

On page 836 of Serov's report we read:

All the accused convicted in the present case pleaded guilty to the charges against them.

This is an example of "weasel words" an equivocal statement intended to give a different impression than what the words literally mean. Bukharin did plead guilty of "the charges against him" (1938 Trial, 36). But the charges in the Indictment were not brought specifically against any individual. Instead they were brought against the bloc of Rights and Trotskyites as a group (34-35).

The accused, including Bukharin, pleaded guilty on the understanding that they were all guilty of all of the acts of the bloc whether they knew about all of them or not. However, during the trial Bukharin spent a great deal of time denying certain other specific accusations that the Prosecutor tried to convict him of.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> For much more detail on this question see Furr and Bobrov. "Stephen Cohen's Biography of Bukharin: A Study in the Falsehood of Khrushchev-Era 'Revelations'." *Cultural Logic* 2010. At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2010/Furr.pdf>

Serov claimed that an "agent" was kept in defendant S.A. Bessonov's cell where he heard Bessonov denounce the trial as a frame-up (838):

On May 6, 1939 / Agent "Blagin" /, who was confined with BESSONOV in Solovki prison, reported that BESSONOV responded about the trial of "anti-Soviet bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" as follows:

"The whole trial is a complete invention of the NKVD. In reality none of the accused committed any crimes ... " (arch. case number 101492, Vol. 1 l.d. 27)

...

On April 29, 1939 / agent "Grachev" / wrote about the same subject: "Describing the trial as a "farce," prisoner BESSONOV said that everything that the accused said at the trial was coerced testimony and in fact none of them had plotted anything against Soviet power." (ibid, vol. 1, l.d. 22)

This has to be a lie. How could Bessonov know about everything that all the other defendants had done? Bukharin accepted guilt for the activities of the bloc in which he participated but claimed that he did not know everything the bloc did. Bessonov could not have known either. So if Bessonov did say this, he was deliberately lying; if he did not say it, either Serov was lying or he credulously believed and repeated something he was told by alleged agents "Blagin" and "Grachev." No matter where the gap between truth and falsehood occurred, it had to have occurred somewhere.

Serov gives no explanation as to why "agents" — evidently two different agents within a few days of one another — were being kept in Bessonov's cell after the trial, while he was serving his sentence. We will see later on that Serov was demonstrably lying when he made a similar claim about Rakovsky.

Serov made the following claim (840-841):

Another prosecution witness, speaking at the trial in the case of the anti-Soviet bloc, former member of the Central Committee of the "Left" SRs KAMKOV B.D. according to the testimony of the arrested BRIUKHANOV, held together with him in the same cell, said to him:

"All three of the recent trials are the same kind of swindle as the previous ones. There is not a drop of truth in them. Neither ZINOVIEV nor BUKHARIN was involved in any counter-revolutionary conspiratorial work. Espionage, diversion, sabotage, terrorism, killing — this is all a complete sham, fabricated by the NKVD. Confessions were extracted from the accused by torture, blackmail, beatings, threats, threats against their families, the arrests of their wives etc. by means of physical and mental pressure. At the same time they used bribery, appeasing the defendants, promises not to execute them, etc... " (arch. case number 967389, separate packet).

This is false. Thanks to Pierre Broué's research in the Harvard Trotsky archive in 1980 we know that both Zinoviev and Bukharin were indeed involved in "counter-revolutionary conspiratorial work" the bloc of Zinovievists, Trotskyists, Rightists, and other oppositionists that was formed in 1932. From Jules Humbert-Droz's memoirs we know that Bukharin and some of his followers were plotting to murder Stalin as early as 1928.

What's more, Kamkov could not possibly know whether Zinoviev or Bukharin had been involved in a conspiracy or not, because no one ever claimed that Kamkov was a part of it, so he could not have known about it. Kamkov's only connection to the 1938 Moscow trial was that he had had some conspiratorial talks with Bukharin in 1918, twenty years earlier. So if Kamkov really said this, he was lying. Most likely, though, this another of Serov's fabrications.

Serov:

While BUKHARIN was in custody the prisoner ZARITSKII N.D. had been in the same cell and when questioned on July 3, 1956, testified:

"I spent 4-5 months with BUKHARIN before he was executed...

During the investigation, and especially during the trial, BUKHARIN expressed indignation at the injustice of the accusations against him.... He also told me that he had good personal relations with STALIN, that

in a number of instances STALIN had given him and his family assistance in domestic matters, and therefore he never could even think of murdering him. (841)

If Bukharin said this to Zaritskii he was lying. We know he was involved in a conspiracy to kill Stalin by 1928 at the latest, as he told Humbert-Droz. But given Serov's other proven lies (for more, see below) we have no reason to accept this Zaritskii quote as genuine. Serov claims several times that a defendant's guilt is not "confirmed" because the defendant did not confess. For example, about Karakhan:

According to RYKOV'S testimony KARAKHAN, allegedly a member of an organization of Rights, held talks on TOMSKII's instructions with representatives of fascist Germany, to whom he made it clear that in the event the bloc of Rights and Trotskyites came to power certain concessions would be made in favor of the capitalist countries.

These confessions of RYKOV'S too have not been confirmed since KARAKHAN, brought to trial in 1937, **refused to confess** to any of the charges. (842)

Serov is the one lying here. A confession of Karakhan's has been published.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, just as confession of guilt is not firm proof of guilt, so *a fortiori* failure to confess guilt would, if genuine, not be evidence of innocence. Normally we expect that both the innocent and the guilty will usually claim innocence.

<sup>28</sup> Lubianka 1937-38 No. 102; online at <http://istmat.info/node/31227>

It might be the case that Karakhan refused to confirm his confessions at his trial. If so, this would be good evidence that he was not "pressured" in the various ways Serov claimed that others were pressured. It would not be evidence of innocence, but an attempt to force the prosecution to prove its case with other evidence.

Serov is almost certainly lying again, as he does in the case of Piatakov (see below). Ovsianikov names both Karakhan and Krestinskii in his confession.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Lubianka* 1937-38 No. 228; online at <http://istmat.info/node/32387>

Concerning Dr. D.D. Pletnev, one of the defendants at the March 1938 Moscow trial who was sentenced to prison rather than to execution, Serov states the following:

PLETNEV, who during the investigation and at trial admitted his guilt in the organization of killing A.M. GOR'KII and V.V. KUIBYSHEV on the instruction of IAGODA, after the conviction on June 11, 1939 addressed the following statement to Comrade V.M. Molotov:

"I was sentenced in the Bukharin case. During the investigation I admitted the accusations against me, and at trial I did not renounce them. I was slandered...." (846)

This is false. At trial Pletnev pleaded guilty but did indeed renounce his guilty plea and claimed that he had not taken part in any of the murders. But under questioning by Vyshinskii Pletnev conceded that he had failed to inform the authorities once Iagoda had been removed from office even though he had a year to do so.

VYSHINSKY: Why did you not refuse to be implicated in this criminal plan?

PLETNEV: There were threats on the part of Yagoda directed against me.

VYSHINSKY: Why did you attach such serious importance to Yagoda's threats?

PLETNEV: After all, he was People's Commissar of Internal Affairs.

VYSHINSKY: Well, and when he was People's Commissar no longer, what restrained you then from coming to the appropriate bodies and performing your duty as a citizen?

PLETNEV: I considered the question finished, dead.

VYSHINSKY: Dead are your victims, but the question is still alive.

PLETNEV: Now I see that it is alive.

...

KOMMODOV: Would your anti-Soviet sentiments be sufficient in themselves to prompt you to commit a crime in connection with your work, if there had not been Yagoda's instructions?

PLETNEV: Under no circumstances. (1938 Trial, 594, 596)

In its sentence the court accepted his claim that he had agreed to help in the maltreatment of Gorky because he had been threatened by Iagoda, chief (People's Commissar) of the NKVD. The court agreed that Pletnev had not taken part in any killing but had been a part of the conspiracy and had not informed on it when he had had the chance to do so.

PLETNEV, Dmitry Dmitrievich, as not having directly taken an active part in the causing of death of Comrades V. V. Kuibyshev and A. M. Gorky, although he was an accessory... (1938 Trial, 799).

According to Serov, Pletnev claimed that he had always been loyal to the USSR:

All my life since October of 1917 I have been loyal to the Soviet regime and under the leadership of the party have given all my strength and knowledge to my homeland. (846)

Serov is lying again. At the trial Pletnev confessed that he had been a member of the Cadet Party (K-D — Constitutional Democratic Party), an intensely anticommunist party. This has been confirmed by V.D. Topolianskii, who has published a series of articles to "rehabilitate" Pletnev's reputation.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> "Firm democratic convictions characteristic of the Russian intelligentsia of the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, and an inexhaustible drive to serve their country brought ... D.D. Pletnev to the ...



Constitutional-Democratic Party." — "Doctor D.D. Pletnev." In *Repressirovannaiia nauka*. Spb.: 'Nauka" 1991, p. 307.

Pletnev's appeal for a more lenient sentence has now been published. Rather than claim innocence, in it he admits his guilt once again.

I have confessed my full guilt of the accusation against me. My deportment during the investigation and at the trial are testimony to this.

I ask the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet to mitigate the sentence imposed upon me. (Protsess Bukharina 2013, 749-50)

Serov wrote:

Questioned as a witness former NKVD man LERNER, who was involved in the investigation of this case, said the following in an interrogation in July 1956:

"I did not lead the investigation of the IAGODA case to its conclusion, the last 6-8 months I was doing other things and had no relationship with the investigation of the case. (856)

This is a lie, either by Lerner or Serov. Lerner signed the interrogation of Iagoda dated December 28, 1937, and the two face-to-face confrontations between Iagoda and Kriuchkov and between Iagoda and Pletnev, both dated January 5, 1938, less than two months before the trial began.<sup>31</sup> So if Lerner, in fact, made the statement, he was lying, and either Serov did not care that Lerner was lying, or he himself was lying. Either way, Molotov would never know.

<sup>31</sup> Genrikh Iagoda. *Narkom vnutrennikhdel SSSR, General'niy komisar gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti. Sbornik dokumentov. Kazan'*, 1997, 218, 227, 230.

It is easy to imagine that former NKVD man Lerner wanted to place himself as far away from the investigation as possible. We discuss this matter later.

Serov's report is dated July 7, 1956. Therefore Lerner had — supposedly — made this statement only a few days earlier. If so, he probably made it expressly for Serov's report. If so, Lerner must have been persuaded to lie so his testimony would be helpful to Serov's attempt to "prove" all the trial defendants were innocent. This provable lie attributed to Lerner is good circumstantial evidence that the other NKVD men and "agents" quoted by Serov were also lying.

At the end of his report Serov claimed to the Commission that the published transcript of the 1938 Moscow had been falsified.

During the interrogation of IAGODA at the trial the question of his guilt in the murder of KUIBYSHEV was not at all explained, as can be seen from the transcript.

However, the transcript was filled out as follows: "VYSHINSKII. Do you plead guilty in the organization of the murder of KUIBYSHEV?

IAGODA. I do." (857)

In fact, Iagoda had confessed to this in pretrial interrogations.

IAGODA: Yes, I have hidden things. But now there's no point in my hiding anything.

I admit that in addition to Max, V.R. Menzhinskii, V.V. Kuibyshev, and A.M. Gor'kii were also killed in the same manner by my order.

I ask that you record that, if I am the only person to blame in Menzhinskii's death, the deaths of V.V. Kuibyshev and A.M. Gor'kii were organized on the direct command of the unified center of the Right-Trotskyist organization, which (order) was given personally to me by A.S. Enukidze, a member of this center. (Genrikh Iagoda, 210)

In a good example of "bias by omission" Serov hid this fact from the Molotov Commission.

**Serov's Report and Frinovskii's Confession Statement of April 11, 1939**

Mikhail Frinovskii, Ezhov's second-in-command in the NKVD until removed in late 1938, made an important confession statement on April 11, 1939. It is not an interrogation but a letter to Lavrentii Beria, the head (People's Commissar) for Internal Affairs who had replaced Ezhov in November 1938. In August 1938 Beria had been appointed Ezhov's second-in-command. This was a signal that the Politburo knew something was wrong at the NKVD and no longer trusted Ezhov.

The difference between letters of confession and interrogations is an interesting one. Letters such as Frinovskii's appear to have been a suspect's attempt to "get out in front of" the investigation. The idea was evidently to volunteer information that the prosecution did not know, thus demonstrating one's sincerity. Confessions dragged out of a suspect through interrogations or face-to-face confrontations with other accusers merely demonstrated that the suspect in question had not yet "disarmed" and would only confess to crimes when further denial was useless.

Frinovskii's letter has been repeatedly and dishonestly quoted in various Soviet documents in attempts to prove that the Moscow trials defendants were innocent but forced to falsely confess. In this letter, the full text of which was not published until 2006, Frinovskii actually testifies to the guilt, not the innocence, of the Moscow trial defendants. Serov carefully omits those parts of Frinovskii's statement and edits the rest to make it appear as though the opposite was the case.

Clearly the Molotov Commission did not have the actual text of Frinovskii's confession. A glance at it would have refuted Serov's, and therefore Khrushchev's, whole case. In the following section we will quote the passages from Frinovskii's confession that Serov quotes, and then the passages Serov omits in which Frinovskii reveals that the defendants were in fact guilty.

Serov wrote:

The investigation of the case of the so-called "Anti-Soviet bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" and its consideration at trial, conducted between 1937 and early 1938, was characterized by massive repression of Soviet citizens, by the most serious violations of socialist legality,

by severe beatings of prisoners and by various and provocative techniques by means of which the investigating authorities extorted confessions from the prisoners and the courts handed down clearly unjustified sentences. (849)

Frinovskii did say this about Ezhov's practices in general. But he specifically excepted the March 1938 Trial. Moreover, he revealed that Ezhov himself was a part of the conspiracy, along with the 1938 Trial defendants.

Here is one part that Serov omitted:

The preparation of the trial of Rykov, Bukharin, Krestinskii, Yagoda and others

**An active participant in investigations generally, Ezhov kept himself aloof from the preparation of this trial.** Before the trial there took place the face-to-face confrontations of the suspects, interrogations, and refining, in which Ezhov did not participate. He spoke for a long time with Yagoda, and that talk concerned, in the main, of his assuring Yagoda that he would not be shot.

Ezhov had conversations several times with Bukharin and Rykov and also in order to calm them assured them that under no circumstances would they be shot.

Ezhov had one conversation with Bulanov, and began this conversation in the presence of the investigator and myself, and finished the conversation one on one, having asked us to leave.

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At that moment Bulanov had begun talking about the poisoning of Ezhov. What the conversation was about Ezhov did not say. When he asked us to enter again he said: "Behave yourself well at the trial — I will ask that you not be shot." After the trial Ezhov always expressed regret about Bulanov. At the time of the executions Ezhov suggested

shooting Bulanov first and he himself did not enter the building where the shootings took place.

Here Ezhov unquestionably was ruled by the necessity of covering up his own ties with the arrested leaders of the Right who were going into the public trial.

Frinovskii also confirmed the guilt of Zinoviev and Kamenev and of the Rightists, including Iagoda:

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During this conversation I confided in Evdokimov and told him that I had fallen in with the Rights in my work.

In the same year, 1933, Yagoda, after I had clashed with him on an official question, began once again to bring me closer to him with the help of Bulanov. Bulanov would often call me to his dacha in the guise of going fishing and playing billiards. During one of these trips to Bulanov's on a free day at his dacha Yagoda arrived, who after dinner and drinks had a conversation with me in a separate room.

Yagoda began the conversation by saying I was not correct in opposing him and that here, obviously, the hand of Evdokimov was in play, and then he said to me: "**Keep this in mind: I know that you remain a Rightist, that you are leading work, that I also know**, and would it not be better for you to come to terms with the situation that exists with us in the central apparatus, to get off your high horse and obey me." And then, continuing the conversation, Yagoda asked me: "How are things in the GUPVO, you have a lot of assistants there, wouldn't it be better to get rid of somebody? What do you think — who would it be best to keep, Kruchinkin or Lepin?"

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Without waiting for my answer Yagoda said that Kruchinkin was a reliable man. I understood that Kruchinkin was connected with him in some criminal activity.

At that same time, 1934, I had several meetings with Evdokimov when he came to Moscow. At these meetings he gradually disclosed to me his practical work and spoke about the work of the center of the Rights and around the USSR. In particular he told me that he had a number of people inside the apparatus of the GPU, and named Rud', Dagin, Raev, Kursky, Dement'ev, Gorbach, and others. He said that he was beginning to have contacts in the national oblasts: in Dagestan, though Mamedbekov, in Chechnya — Gorsheev or Gorshenin, and then said that the only person he had trouble with was Kalmykov, who had his own line of work, and Evdokimov couldn't cut him off in any way, but he characterized Kalmykov as a man wholly "ours", a Rightist, but evidently one who had his own line of work.

I asked him what was being done generally in the USSR? Evdokimov said that large-scale work was going on, a whole number of people who had important positions in a number of other oblasts of the USSR, had crossed over to the Rights. And here he stated: "You see how we must now conduct the struggle with the Central Committee: at one time we fought against the movement of uprisings, and now we ourselves must seek out the threads, ties to this movement and, in order to organize it, we must go down to its base. This is very complicated and dangerous work but without the base — the secretaries of the regional committees, the chairmen of the regional executive committees (RIKs) or men who have contacts with the countryside — we will not be able to lead the movement of uprisings, and that is one of the fundamental tasks that presents itself to us."

In 1935 **Evdokimov** began to ask me whether **Yagoda's** hand were in the assassination of Kirov and whether I had any facts about **this**? At the same time he indicated that if **Yagoda** had participated in this affair it was a bad move, not from the viewpoint of sympathy about the loss of Kirov, but from the viewpoint of complicating the position and of the repressions which began soon after Kirov's murder.

At the time of the trial of Zinoviev, Kamenev and others, when the testimony about Bukharin was published in the press, Evdokimov was in Moscow. He became very upset and in a conversation with me, said: "The devil only knows how he will be able to extract himself from this whole affair. I just don't understand Yagoda at all, what he is doing, why he is broadening the circle of persons for repression, or maybe the nerves of these people are weak — they will give out. But it could have been possible to direct the course of the investigation in such a manner as to leave oneself safe in any case."

Serov claimed that many trial defendants were "specially prepared" and sometimes told Ezhov that their confessions were false:

Those prisoners who were being made ready for the trial and for face-to-face confrontations to be carried out with participation by leaders of the Party and government were especially carefully prepared by the investigating authorities. Here everything was done strictly according to a developed plan and the prisoners repeatedly rehearsed "their" confessions.

As you know, some of the persons involved in the case of the Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites before their criminal prosecution were given face-to-face confrontations where prisoners previously arrested accused them of committing serious crimes against the state.

From the confessions, given after his arrest, of the former Deputy Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR FRINOVSKII it may be seen that specially instructed prisoners were brought forth at these face-to-face confrontations.

FRINOVSKII confessed about this:

At first the investigator, then the chief of the department, prepared the prisoners in a special way. The preparation consisted in the reading of the confessions that the prisoner had given against the person with whom the face-to-face confrontation was about to be conducted. They

explained how the face-to-face confrontation would be conducted, what unexpected questions might be presented to the prisoner and how he should answer.

In essence what happened was an agreement and a rehearsal for the upcoming face-to-face confrontation. After that EZHOV would call the prisoner to himself, or pretending that he had by chance dropped in to the investigator's room where the prisoner was sitting he would speak to him about the upcoming confrontation and would ask whether he felt himself strong, would he confirm his confessions, and by the way, would mention that members of the government would be present at the face-to-face confrontation.

Usually EZHOV was nervous before such face-to-face confrontations even after he had had a talk with the prisoner. There were cases when the prisoner

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would state, during the conversation with EZHOV, that his confessions were not true, that he had been falsely accused. (arch. case number 975181, Vol. 2, l.d. 37-38)

As we saw above, Frinovskii explicitly stated that Ezhov did *not* do this in the case of the 1938 Moscow Trial.

Serov also omitted what Frinovskii said immediately before this passage: one of many acknowledgements by Frinovskii that a conspiracy did in fact exist, and that he, Frinovskii, was a party to them:

In carrying out the investigation of the case of Yagoda and the Chekist conspirators, and also in those of other arrested persons, especially the Rights, the system of "correction" of the transcripts set up by Ezhov pursued the goal of preserving the cadres of conspirators and preventing any possibility of the failure of our participation in the anti-Soviet conspiracy.



I can cite dozens and hundreds of examples when the defendants under arrest did not give up the persons who were tied to them in anti-Soviet work.

The most glaring examples were the conspirators Yagoda, Bulanov, Zakovsky, Kruchinkin and others, who knew about my participation in the conspiracy and did not confess about it. (47)

Serov could not reveal these matters to the Molotov Commission. Serov's and Khrushchev's aim was to claim that there had been no conspiracies and all the defendants had been innocent. Frinovskii's statement proves the opposite.

### **More of Serov's Omissions from Frinovskii's Confession**

Throughout his report Serov sought to undermine the validity of the confessions of Moscow trials defendants and of other defendants — in fact, of all confessions obtained by the NKVD. In so doing Serov made heavy use of Frinovskii's confession statement of April 11, 1939, which had also been obtained by the NKVD.

However, Serov failed to cite the following dramatic passage from Frinovskii's confession:

I move now to the practical hostile work which was led by Ezhov, myself, and other conspirators in the NKVD.

Investigative work

The investigative apparatus in all departments of the NKVD was divided into "investigator-bonebreakers," "bonebreakers," and "ordinary" investigators.

What did these groups represent and who were they?

"Investigator-bonebreakers" were chosen basically from among the conspirators or persons who were compromised. They had unsupervised recourse to beating arrested persons and in a very short

time obtained "confessions" and knew how to write up transcripts in a grammatical and elegant fashion.

In this category belong: Nikolayev, Agas, Ushakov, Listengurt, Evgen'ev, Zhupakhin, Minaev, Davydov, Al'tman, Geiman, Litvin, Leplevsky, Karelin, Kerzon, Iamnitsky, and others.

Since the quantity of those under arrest who confessed due to such methods grew daily and there was a great need for investigators who knew how to compose interrogations, the so-called "investigator-bonebreakers" began, each on his own, to create groups of simple "bonebreakers."

The group of "bone breakers" consisted of technical workers. These men did not know the evidence concerning the suspect, but were sent to the Lefortovo [prison in Moscow], summoned the accused, and set to beating him. The beatings continued up to the moment that the accused agreed to give a confession.

The remaining group of investigators took care of interrogations of those accused of less serious crimes and were left to themselves, without leadership from anyone.

The further process of investigation was as follows: the investigator conducted the interrogation and instead of a transcript put together notes. After several such inter-

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rogations a draft transcript was put together by the investigator. The draft went for "correction" to the chief of the appropriate department, and from him, still unsigned, for "review" to former People's Commissar Ezhov and in rare cases to myself. Ezhov looked through the transcript, made changes and additions. In most cases those under arrest did not agree with the editing of the transcript and stated that they had not said that during the investigation and refused to sign it.

Then the investigators would remind the arrested party about the "bonebreakers," and the person under investigation would sign the transcript. Ezhov produced the "correction" and "editing" of transcripts, in most cases, never having seen with his own eyes the person under arrest and if he did see him, then only during a momentary inspection of the cells or investigative rooms.

With such methods the investigations supplied the names.

In my opinion I would speak the truth if I declared, in general, that very often the confessions were given by the investigators, and not by those under investigation.

Did the leadership of the People's Commissariat, that is I and Ezhov, know about this? We knew.

How did we react? Honestly speaking — not at all, and Ezhov even encouraged it. No one bothered to find out to which of the accused physical pressure was applied. **And since the majority of the persons who were employing these methods were themselves enemies of the people and conspirators**, then clearly false accusations took place, we took false accusations and arrested and shot innocent people who had been slandered by enemies of the people from among those under arrest and by enemies of the people among the investigators. Real investigation was wiped out.

It is obvious why Serov omitted the passages quoted earlier where Frinovskii made it clear that the Moscow trials defendants were guilty. But why did Serov omit this passage? At first glance this omission is hard to understand since the passage above makes a strong claim that many NKVD confessions were coerced, many defendants innocent.

A possible explanation is that it focused attention not on the Moscow trials defendants but on the criminal behavior of Ezhov and his men. Emphasis on them might lead to consideration of what had happened to them — their arrests, interrogations, trials, punishment, etc. This was done by Lavrentii Beria, who replaced Ezhov as head of the NKVD in November 1938. Khrushchev hated and demonized Beria even more than he did Stalin.

Under Beria a great many sentences handed down under Ezhov were reversed. Hundreds of thousands of wrongfully-convicted people were released from camps (the GULAG) and prisons. Hundreds of Ezhov's NKVD men, who had done the dirty work of framing hundreds of thousands of innocent Soviet citizens, were arrested, investigated, interrogated, tried, and convicted. Many were sentenced to death, including both Ezhov and Frinovskii. Many others were imprisoned.

Perhaps anything that seriously involved Beria was a taboo subject among all these people, Khrushchevites and non-Khrushchevites alike. Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich, and Voroshilov had been parties to the illegal arrest and murder of Beria, who had been a member of the Presidium (name of the Politburo after October 1952) and a government minister. This treatment of Beria in fact amounted to a kind of *coup d'état*. It was a cardinal event; nothing like this had ever happened before in Soviet history. And the charges against Beria were faked, trumped-up after the fact, as even Khrushchev later admitted. In the conspiracy to oust and then to kill Beria the "Stalinists" in the Presidium were just as guilty as Khrushchev and his supporters were.

Or perhaps Serov simply did not want his Report to be "top-heavy" with quotations from Frinovskii. That might stimulate the "Stalinists" on the Molotov Commission to request a copy of Frinovskii's confession statement. Then they would have seen that Frinovskii actually testified to the real existence of the various conspiracies. And Serov could not permit that because it would have made it clear that his report was dishonest. It would have exposed Khrushchev's scheme to rewrite, by means of lies and omissions, all Soviet history of the Stalin period.

### **Evaluating and Using NKVD Confessions**

A common practice today, even by historians who should know better, is to reject all Stalin-era Soviet political confessions. Serov could not do this, of course. All his counter-evidence against the Moscow Trials was also composed of confession materials:

- Reports by jailhouse snitches are at least as questionable evidence as confessions given to NKVD investigators. Serov relied very heavily on them in this Report. As we shall see, it appears that all of those cited as "evidence" by Serov were fabrications.
- Claims of innocence by convicted prisoners like Bessonov, Kamkov, and Pletnev, even if genuine, are highly questionable. What does a convicted prisoner have to lose by claiming innocence and compulsion? Especially when he knows that Ezhov has been ousted and charged with framing and executing a great many innocent people? Serov's report relies heavily on such claims as well. We have also shown on other grounds that these claims are faked.
- The statements by former NKVD men quoted by Serov are either proven lies or, at the very least, highly suspect. At least some of these men, like Lerner and Aronson, were questioned specifically for Serov's report. They had every reason to fear terrible retribution from Khrushchev and Serov if they did not do what was wanted of them.

Former NKVD colonel Boris V. Rodos had been arrested by Khrushchev in 1953, interrogated at length about his role in the repressions of the 1930s, and shot on April 20, 1956, less than two months before Serov questioned NKVD man Aronson. Other co-workers of Beria's were also arrested, charged with crimes, and either were shot (e.g. Solomon Mil'shtein) or had committed suicide in prison before they could be shot (e.g. Lavrentii F. Tsanova). Eight of Beria's chief assistants had been executed in December 1953 after a secret trial and on what appear to be phony charges. But Rodos, Mil'shtein, Tsanova, and others suffered their fates in 1955 or 1956, not long before Serov's report. All the materials in their cases are still top-secret in Russia today.

Pavel A. Sudoplatov, by 1953 a Lieutenant-General in the MVD (successor to the NKVD), was arrested in August 1953. By his own testimony he was asked by Roman Rudenko, Chief Prosecutor and a Khrushchev man, to make statements implicating Beria (either arrested or killed on June 26, 1953) in crimes that Sudoplatov either knew nothing about or knew were fictitious. When Sudoplatov refused he was arrested on the capital crime of treason. Sudoplatov succeeded in faking insanity, was sentenced to 15 years in prison, served his full sentence, and was released on time in 1968.

In his memoirs Sudoplatov states that he saw General Ivan I. Maslennikov, who had also worked under Beria in the armed forces of the NKVD. Sudoplatov heard that Rudenko had demanded that Maslennikov support the false story that Beria had planned to surround Moscow with MVD troops and stage a *coup d'état*. "Such a plan never existed in reality, and Maslennikov decided it was better to commit suicide than be arrested."<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Sudoplatov, *Spetsoperatsii*, Chapter 12: "The Plot Against Beria and His Downfall." Essentially the same version is in his book *Razvedka i Kreml'* (1996), 432-33.

Former NKVD men knew what had happened to Mil'shtein, Tsanova, Rodos, Sudoplatov, and many others. What's more, all this purported material from former NKVD men comes from Serov. We know that Serov was deliberately lying to the Molotov Commission by destroying inconvenient evidence, concealing the existence of other evidence (for example, Frinovskii's confession statement), and deliberately misinterpreting yet other testimony — for example by falsely claiming that Iagoda had retracted his confession at trial.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> See Furr, *Sergei Kirov*, Chapter 15.

Assuming that Serov really did question them, the former NKVD men would have had every reason to tell him whatever it was that Khrushchev wanted to hear.

### **Evaluating NKVD Confessions**

Serov would not have wanted to give the impression that NKVD confessions obtained under the reviled Beria, who had replaced Ezhov in late 1938 and was investigating Ezhov's falsifications, were more reliable than those obtained under Iagoda or Ezhov. That was, however, the implication of his using Frinovskii's statement.

If one is going to reject one set of confessions — in this case, those obtained under Iagoda and Ezhov — then why not reject those obtained under Beria as well? And that would mean rejecting Frinovskii's. After all,

could not Beria's men have threatened or tortured Frinovskii to claim that the confessions obtained under Ezhov were largely false except for those involving the Moscow trials defendants? Plus that Ezhov and his men, Frinovskii included, were all criminals who had now been found out and neutralized by the clever Beria? As we have just noted, this same logic could apply to the "jailhouse snitch" statements, claims of innocence by defendants already convicted, and even to the statements of the former NKVD men which were, after all, also obtained by Serov's KGB, the successor to the NKVD.

If all confessions are to be discounted as potentially faked then the only remaining category of evidence is material evidence, where any exists. But a moment's thought reveals that material evidence too can be faked. In fact it may be easier to forge false letters, maps, passports, to plant false weapons, etc., than to force lifelong revolutionaries to falsely incriminate themselves and others. Unscrupulous investigators who will stoop to anything — to torture, maltreatment, threats against family and friends — would not scruple at forgery, planting false material evidence, and the kind of deceptions that we know Serov practiced.

But such a chain of reasoning leads to an absurd conclusion: *all* evidence, anywhere, should be disregarded since it *might* have been faked! Nothing remains, so historical research is impossible. Of course historians in other fields do not reason like this. But this kind of "logic" is common in the field of Soviet history of the Stalin period.

What other historians commonly do, but historians of the Moscow trials and the opposition conspiracies in the USSR during the 1930s seldom do, is to follow some elementary rules for dealing with evidence that help to assure an objective assessment of that evidence. Such rules include the following:

\* No evidence should ever be rejected *a priori*. It is always invalid to say that some evidence should be disregarded because it "might" have been faked. Specific reasons are required for rejecting any evidence. We need "evidence that evidence has been faked" before it can be rejected. This includes Stalin-era Soviet confessions.

To put this another way: the statement "X *might* have been forced to confess falsely" is a hypothesis. All hypotheses require evidence to sustain them. That evidence must then be evaluated. That is what we are doing in the present essay. Serov claimed — i.e. stated the hypothesis — that the confessions of Rakovsky and others were untrue, obtained by threats of some kind. In the present essay we show that Serov's evidence to support his hypothesis was itself faked by Serov.

A hypothesis that is not supported by evidence does not have to be disproven — it "falls of its own weight." If there is no evidence that supports the hypothesis that "X was forced to confess" then that hypothesis must be discarded. We must accept the confession as valid unless and until evidence that tends to disprove it should come to light. Then we must study that evidence and if necessary amend or discard our original conclusion. This is the method we have employed in this essay by studying Serov's report.

\* Even when we do have evidence that a confession or other evidence is faked, it can often still provide important evidence for some other hypothesis. Serov's July 7, 1956, report is a good example. We can prove it is full of deliberately false statements. Yet important conclusions can be drawn from it. Serov's report does not do what Serov wanted it to do: it does not provide reliable evidence to support the hypothesis that Rakovsky and the other Moscow trials defendants were framed. But it does provide additional evidence for a different hypothesis: that Khrushchev and Serov were themselves trying to frame Ezhov and Stalin. (They also tried to frame Beria).

\* All evidence should be verified to the extent possible by comparison with other evidence. The likelihood that numerous pieces of evidence from different sources will all have been faked in some coordinated way, yet without leaving any trace of that faking process, becomes so remote that it can be disregarded.

Therefore confessions and statements made by prisoners under NKVD investigation and other Stalin-era documents must be studied in the same way as all other evidence. We have a great deal of evidence from different sources that corroborates the guilt of many of the Moscow trials defendants.



At the same time, we have no credible evidence that tends to prove they were framed. Serov and Khrushchev's aides, and later Gorbachev and his aides, tried to prove this. But we can now prove that it is they who were fabricating false evidence.

\* In the case of Stalin-era research we must guard against unexamined assumptions. This is what I have called "the anti-Stalin paradigm." We should not *assume* that Stalin deliberately framed innocent people, or lied, or fabricated evidence. Like any hypothesis, this has to be supported with evidence. In practice, I have yet to find a single instance where Stalin did any of these things.

By contrast, even a committed Trotskyist like Pierre Broué has found many examples of Trotsky's deliberate lying. Yet I have never yet encountered an example of any scholar rejecting something Trotsky said on the grounds that "he might be lying since we know he lied in other instances." The fact that a person — say, Trotsky — provably lied in some instances does not mean that he lied, or "probably lied," in other instances or that everything he said or wrote can be disregarded. This illogical logic is only applied to Stalin himself and to Stalin-era materials like NKVD interrogations, statements by prisoners, and Moscow Trial transcripts.

To lie is a human trait. Anyone, at any time, may be either lying or telling the truth (at least what the person believes is the truth). In particular, the fact that a person is under investigation, under arrest, in prison, etc., does not mean that they are lying. Nor does it necessarily mean that they are "more likely" to be lying. Likewise, people who are not under any kind of compulsion at all also might be either lying or telling the truth. There is no formula such as, for example, "People who are under arrest are X% more likely to lie than people who are at liberty."

A statement by someone who is at liberty and free from threat cannot be *assumed* to be true. Likewise a statement by someone under arrest cannot be *assumed* to be false. There is no justification for simply discounting NKVD interrogations, letters by prisoners, Moscow Trials transcripts, etc., and no rational reason for thinking them "more (or less) likely" to be false. The only basis for routinely discounting NKVD interrogations, letters by prisoners, Moscow Trials transcripts, etc., is an unsupported belief that

everything the NKVD did, at least in the Stalin era, was dishonest. But this is circular reasoning — assuming that which must have evidence to support it — or begging the question. All evidence from all persons, whether under arrest or at liberty, must be scrutinized with appropriate skepticism.

Pierre Broué found many instances where Trotsky was lying. These lies have serious implications for the study of Trotsky's works of the 1930s. Yet Trotsky's proven lies are either overlooked or given only cursory attention. By contrast it is hard to find examples where Stalin lied during this same period. And no one has yet found any evidence that Moscow Trials defendants were forced to lie either at trial or in those interrogations and letters that we have from them.

All this should be obvious. It needs to be emphasized only because so few researchers approach the subject of Soviet history of the 1930s with anything like objectivity. As regards Stalin and the Moscow Trials almost any claim that he was dishonest or that the evidence was fabricated, no matter how lacking in substance, is accepted.

### **Serov's Attempt to "Rehabilitate" Rakovsky**

Serov's report is the most sustained attempt yet discovered to prove that Rakovsky was innocent. We will examine each passage that deals with Rakovsky.

Rakovsky was arrested after many accusations against him.

In February 1937, after EZHOV'S report to the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b), BUKHARIN and RYKOV were arrested.

Somewhat earlier RAKOVSKY Kh. G. had been arrested on a criminal charge.

In a special communication to J.V. STALIN, asking for his consent to arrest RAKOVSKY, the NKVD of the USSR pointed out that he had been exposed as one of the active participants of the Trotsky-Zinoviev terrorist organization by the testimony of PIATAKOV, KASPAROVA,

NIKOLAEV, TER-VAGANIAN and others, as well as by material from undercover agents.<sup>34</sup>

In fact, there were no materials in the possession of the NKVD from agents concerning criminal activities by RAKOVSKY, while the confessions of the above-named persons were vague and uncertain in their reliability. (834)

<sup>34</sup> *Lubianka* 1937-1938, Doc. No.11.

Even if true — Serov, of course, cannot simply be believed — the fact that no NKVD agents had evidence against Rakovsky is not evidence that he was innocent. Nor does Serov explain what was "vague and doubtful" about the confessions.

Thus, TER-VAGANIAN, citing SMIRNOV I.N., confessed that in 1932 RAKOVSKY "wrote a new counterrevolutionary document." But there were no confessions by SMIRNOV along these lines.

Serov does not claim that Smirnov denied it, only that he did not mention it himself. If true — this comes from Serov so we can never be sure — this only means that no one asked Smirnov about Rakovsky's document. For if Smirnov had been asked about this document and had denied it, Serov would have said so.

The prisoner NIKOLAEV gave vague confessions that RAKOVSKY belonged to a reserve "especially secret center" consisting of PIATAKOV, SOKOL'NIKOV and RADEK, about which he supposedly learned from DREITSER. However, none of the individuals named by NIKOLAEV stated this in their testimony.

It appears that Serov is prevaricating here, playing with words. Piatakov testified many times about a "reserve center" of the bloc, which was then changed into a "parallel center." Nikolaev used the words "especially secret center" to refer to the same group. Piatakov, Sokol'nikov, and Radek were defendants at the second Moscow Trial of January 1937. It would be logical for them to keep quiet about any members of their leading group who had

not yet been arrested. Their pretrial investigative materials are all still top-secret in Russia today.

None of these men was completely honest in their confessions. We know that Sokol'nikov had received a letter from Trotsky because the return receipt remains in the Trotsky Papers at Houghton Library, Harvard University. But at trial Sokol'nikov denied receiving any letters from Trotsky. The prosecution did not challenge him on this point. Evidently it did not know about this. Also, Karl Radek concealed Tukhachevsky's role in the opposition conspiracies.

KASPAROVA confessed that RAKOVSKY hypocritically announced his departure from the opposition, but in reality did not break with it and in 1933, outlining his anti-Soviet views, informed her in his letters about the creation on a terrorist basis of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc.

We can be sure that this is true. As we have seen, Pierre Broué believed that all "capitulators" were lying and this accords with the more extensive evidence we have today. One has to wonder why Serov included these remarks in his report. He does not attempt to refute them.

Serov continued:

To RAKOVSKY's case was also attached an excerpt from the testimony of PIATAKOV in which it is stated that "RAKOVSKY has his own line of contact with TROTSKY." In reality PIATAKOV did not give any such testimony.

Serov is lying. In the "Document No. 11" which we quoted above there is such an excerpt from Piatakov's testimony. The passage in question reads as follows:

Concerning RAKOVSKY TROTSKY said that it was essential to talk with him and give him a push in his work along the lines of the Trotskyist organization. From this I deduced that RAKOVSKY had some personal line of contact with TROTSKY.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Special communication of N.I. Ezhov to J.V. Stalin Concerning Kh. G. Rakovsky with appendix of excerpts from confessions concerning his case. Jan. 25 1937 No. 55464. *Lubianka* 1937-1938, No. 11, p. 58.

If this is the same document Serov quoted from, then he was using "weasel words." Piatakov did not state for a fact that "Rakovsky had his own line of contact with Trotsky" — he "deduced" it.

Most of Piatakov's pretrial testimony remains unavailable to researchers. However, we now have one of Piatakov's pretrial statements in which he summarizes his conversation with Trotsky during his, Piatakov's, clandestine flight to Norway in December 1935. In this statement he makes the following references to Rakovsky:

I should add that among the specific persons whose names were tossed out by Trotsky during this conversation were mentioned: RADEK, SOKOL'NIKOV, SEREBRAKOV, MURALOV, BELOBORODOV, RAKOVSKY, Budu MDIVANI, V.M. SMIRNOV, SAPRONOV, BUKHARIN, RYKOV, TOMSKII, UGLANOV, PREOBRAZHENSKII, PUTNA, PRIMAKOV, KRESTINSKII.

Concerning these persons were had the following conversations. ... About RAKOVSKY and PREOBRAZHENSKII he said that it as essential to have a talk with them and spur them on in their work.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Piatakov, Statement to Ezhov December 19-20, 1936

Even this one document makes clear how Piatakov could have deduced that Rakovsky had "his own line of contact with Trotsky." Trotsky knew that Rakovsky was not working actively enough. This is exactly what he is quoted as having said in the document Serov quotes and in Document No. 11, above. The only thing lacking in this statement is Piatakov's deduction about Rakovsky's "own line of contact."

A lie as clearly proven as this one requires that we look with suspicion upon everything else that Serov wrote, not in order to dismiss out of hand, but rather to investigate more closely with a critical eye. So we will continue

our study of Serov's report. As it happens, Serov's falsifications will lead us to some valuable evidence about Rakovsky and Trotsky.

## **Rakovsky in Serov's Report**

Later in Serov's report we read:

All the accused convicted in the present case pleaded guilty to the charges against them. However, the verification process revealed that for the most part, these confessions had been made under compulsion and did not reflect the truth.

For example, RAKOVSKY Kb. G., who confessed his active participation in the "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" and his collaboration with Japanese and British intelligence / 837 / services, after the trial repeatedly protested his innocence and claimed that during the investigation he was forced to give confessions known to be false. / Agent "Anri" / who was held together with RAKOVSKY in the Orel prison, reported on March 17, 1940 that RAKOVSKY:

"completely denies his guilt and considers everything that took place at the trial and in the investigation was nothing but a farce. Sometimes he casually asserted that he gave all his testimony under pressure" (arch. case number 300956, v. 9, l.d.181 [ =archival 'delo' number, volume number, page number])

Another, / agent "Dima" /, who was also with RAKOVSKY in the same cell, reported on April 2, 1941 that in conversations with him RAKOVSKY had categorically denied any involvement in the Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites, said that his interrogation protocols had been falsified and then declared "I was indignant when ARONSON (investigator) wrote the protocol that stated that we wanted to restore capitalism. Listen — I said — that is illiterate. He threw the crumpled protocol in my face. Generally, when I did not write the way they wanted me to, they always did that.... " (ibid, l.d. 322)

Questioned on July 3, 1956 former employee of the NKVD ARONSON Ia.A. confirmed that the investigation against RAKOVSKY was indeed conducted in an atmosphere of serious violation of the norms of socialist legality.

After the trial RAKOVSKY, citing his advanced age and illness, repeatedly made applications in which he petitioned for clemency. However, RAKOVSKY's requests remained unsatisfied. (836-7)

Even if it were true that Rakovsky retracted his confession to his cellmates, who just happened to be "agents," that would not be good evidence that he was innocent. It is common for convicted prisoners to claim that they were innocent.

That said, there are some points of interest here:

\* What were "agents" doing in Rakovsky's cell long after his conviction? We'll return to this question below.

\* Rakovsky testified at trial that he was legally a participant in the bloc of Rights and Trotskyites, although he was not aware of all of activities:

I confessed to all my crimes. What would it matter for the substance of the case if I should attempt to establish here before you the fact that I learned many of the crimes, and of the most appalling crimes of the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites," here in Court, and that it was here that I first met some of the participants? It is of no import whatever. I am connected with the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites," of course within the limits defined by the Criminal Code, by that complicity, both political and juridical, which follows from the fact that I belonged to this bloc. (1938 Trial, 758)

Skilled conspirators do not inform all members of the conspiratorial network about all the activities of other members. They compartmentalize their information. It was natural that Rakovsky would not have been told about everything the bloc was doing, all the more so since he disagreed with the tactic of "terror," an important aspect of the bloc's activities.

\* Like former NKVD man Lerner, former NKVD man Aronson must have been interrogated specifically for Serov's report, four days before the report itself was dated (July 3 vs July 7, 1956). It is Aronson's testimony during this interrogation that was no doubt given "under pressure" and "in an atmosphere of serious violation of the norms of socialist legality."

This raises the question of the case file that Serov repeatedly cites: "Archival file No. 300956," either volume 7 or volume 9. Serov cites this file number nine times, always when "agent Dima," "agent Finn," or "cellmates" are quoted. All these supposed informants are themselves quoting alleged statements of Rakovsky's to them in 1940 or 1941 in Orlov prison.

Georgii Cherniavskii is a Russian Trotskyist researcher who has published many books and articles on Trotsky and Trotsky-related subjects from a fiercely partisan pro-Trotsky and anti-Stalin standpoint.<sup>37</sup> Cherniavskii was permitted to read Rakovsky's file from Orlov prison, where Rakovsky was confined. It contains letters from his wife, from one of which, dated March 26, 1940, he quotes some lines. Cherniavskii read Rakovsky's appeals to Kalinin, Beria, and Stalin asking that his case be reviewed. Cherniavskii says that there are a number of these. All of these appeals were made on grounds of health. All were denied. Serov confirms this:

After the trial RAKOVSKY, citing his advanced age and illness, repeatedly made applications in which he petitioned for clemency. However, RAKOVSKY's requests remained unsatisfied. (837)

<sup>37</sup> Georgii Cherniavskii, Mikhail Stanchev, Maria Tortika (Lobanova), *Zhiznennyi put' Khristiana Rakovskogo 1873-1941. Evropeizm I Bol'shevism: Neokonchennaia Duel'*. Moscow: Tsentropoligraf, 2014.

If Rakovsky had claimed he was innocent those documents would also be in his file. But none is. Evidently, therefore, Rakovsky never claimed he was innocent, only that he was elderly and unwell.

## **"Solitary Confinement"**



In January 1941 Rakovsky asked Beria for transfer from Orlov prison to a camp. The reasons he gave for his request were: "lack of fresh air, light, unsatisfactory food, and solitary confinement — 'odinochnoe zakliuchenie.'" (Cherniavskii, 540)

According to Rakovsky's prison file he had no cellmates! No wonder none of the "agent" or "cellmate" reports that Serov quotes are in Rakovsky's prison file. Much other material is: scraps of cigarette paper on which Rakovsky wrote what were evidently comments about politics, now unreadable (Cherniavskii, 541). Once more, Serov was lying.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Rakovsky must have had occasional contact with other prisoners and with the prison staff. A *tiuremnaia kharakteristicka* or note by prison authorities about Rakovsky's behavior from 1941 states: "The prisoner shows himself to be an embittered and irreconcilable enemy of Soviet authority. He systematically spreads counterrevolutionary slander." (540)

Serov claims that Rakovsky made the following threat:

In this regard, on May 17, 1941 RAKOVSKY said to / agent "Finn" /: "I have decided to change my tactics. So far I have only asked for pardon, but have not written about my own case. Now I will write a statement calling for review of my case, with a description of all the 'secrets of the Madrid court' — Soviet investigation. At least let the people through whose hands all statements pass know how *dutye* [either "inflated," i.e. exaggerated, or "phony"] cases and trials are concocted out of personal political revenge. Even though I may soon die, even if I am a corpse, remember ... sometimes even corpses will begin to speak." (arch. case number 300956, v. 9, l.d. 239-240)

This is the one statement about Rakovsky in prison that has been previously published: in the journal *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* 1, 1989, p. 119. This journal was begun under Gorbachev and was the venue for many "revelations" and rehabilitations concerning the Stalin years. But there it is attributed not to "agent Finn" but to Aronson: "Delo [case file] Aronson, vol. 9, pp. 239-40."<sup>39</sup> According to Serov, it is with the other "agent" materials in "archival file (*arkh. delo*) 300956," pp. 239-40.

<sup>39</sup> Also in *Reabilitatsiia. Politicheskie Protsessy 30-50-x godov.* (M. Izd. Polit Literatry, 1991), p. 240.

We do not know anything about this file. Serov never names the file from which he is quoting Aronson's statements of 1956. Were all the "agent materials" plus Aronson's testimony put into the same file? Perhaps Gorbachev's men did not really do any research of their own and just copied from Serov's report and, what's more, copied inaccurately. They had little incentive to copy correctly from these top-secret documents that no one else could see — if, indeed, this file exists at all.

Or are both sources correct and it was Aronson who was quoting "agent Finn" and, if so, no doubt "agent Dima" and Rakovsky's "cellmates" too? That would make the "agent" and "cellmate" accounts third-hand (Rakovsky to "agent/cellmate" — to Aronson — to Serov's researchers). In this scenario NKVD man Aronson was the person who "debriefed" Rakovsky's "agents/cellmates." But as we now know — *Rakovsky had no cellmates*: he was in solitary confinement.

Cherniavskii reproduces this "Aronson-Finn" passage from *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, 1989. Evidently Cherniavskii was unaware of Serov's July 7, 1956, report which had been published the year before his own book. It also suggests that Cherniavskii did not see case file 300956 or "Delo Aronson." But Cherniavskii was given access to Rakovsky's investigative file and the file on Rakovsky from Orlov prison. And this file would have provided him with all the testimony from "agent Dima," "agent Finn," and probably from Aronson himself. Had Cherniavskii asked for this file and been refused he would surely have said as much in his book.

Therefore, we can conclude that Rakovsky's investigation and Orlov prison files do not contain these "agent" and "cellmate" reports. That means that, if they exist at all, they were produced for Serov in 1956. Given Serov's proven dishonesty, plus the fact that Rakovsky was in solitary confinement, we cannot accept these supposed reports of Rakovsky's statements in prison as genuine. They are most likely yet more falsifications by Serov and his associates. Molotov would not have known this.

Serov continues:

RAKOVSKY's testimony about his alleged criminal activity is also refuted by the fact that the men he named in interrogations as his accomplices, GVAKHARIA, BABAYAN and SABANIN have now been rehabilitated and their cases closed. BOGOMOLOV, whom RAKOVSKY named as a member of a counterrevolutionary organization, pleaded not guilty at his trial. (837)

Even if these statements are true — as we have repeatedly shown, Serov cannot be trusted — rehabilitations are not evidence. Bogomolov's failure to confess would not mean he was innocent or that Rakovsky's testimony was false.

Serov claimed that Aronson testified about threats against Rakovsky:

It should be noted that prisoners were prodded into self-incrimination and slander against others not only by direct physical violence but also by mental violence. Threats of repression against relatives, threats of beatings, cries of prisoners being beaten the investigators used all these in order to obtain "confessions." Former investigator ARONSON testified about this:

"I personally did not use physical force against RAKOVSKY, obviously, because he did not confess to me about espionage (RAKOVSKY "confessed" himself guilty of espionage to other investigators). I admit that I might have applied other means of pressure — measures of a mental nature: threats against him personally, threats to arrest members of his family. I seem to remember, in particular, that RAKOVSKY was informed about the arrest of his wife and that her fate depended upon his confessions. Such was the system of interrogation of prisoners, introduced as mandatory methods by the leadership of the NKVD of that time."

As is evident from the report of agent "Dima" RAKOVSKY himself, in his cell at the Orlov prison, spoke about the situation of the investigation of his case as follows: "...when almost from the first day they make it clear that you have to lie about yourself and others, smear your own name and honor, then you are overcome with rage and indignation. You begin to fight, to resist, but then when they tell you,

as ARONSON told me: 'Old man, do not hold out, confess,' when they tell you that they will annihilate your family, that they will shoot you, you give up. **When I was told that my wife had been put into the Lefortovo, I screamed and grabbed my head — that meant she would die.** Fear for your family, the consciousness that you are sending them to their deaths, fear and the desire to live, complete hopelessness, **and then the party 'automatic,' the habit of obeying the party** — these things make you lie and do the devil knows what. All this is a lie, there is not a drop of truth in any of these cases." (arch. case number 300956, v. 9, l.d. 321)

This Aronson statement has to be a fabrication. Cherniavskii interviewed at least two relatives of Rakovsky's concerning this period. Neither said anything about an arrest of Rakovsky's wife who, as we have already seen, mailed letters and money to Rakovsky in Orlov prison.

Cherniavskii recounts the arrest of a niece of Rakovsky's who was a Bulgarian and had been staying with him. She was arrested shortly after Rakovsky while trying to return home and remained under arrest for some months — Cherniavskii does not say how long, but suggests that she was released in late 1937. The fact that this event was remembered and recorded in Rakovsky's family makes it all but certain that an arrest of Rakovsky's wife would also have been remembered — if it had occurred.

Moreover, it had been many years — if ever — since Rakovsky, a longtime oppositionist, had "automatically," i.e. reflexively, obeyed "the Party." So the statement about "the party automatic" is a fabrication too. We noted above that Aronson had reason to fear if he did not make a confession along the lines Khrushchev and his men wanted.

Serov continued:

Further, he [Rakovsky] also said:

"I was taken from the Butyrki [prison] to the Lefortovo, and from the Lefortovo to the Lubyanka. Every night I expected to be shot. In Lefortovo, in this horrible prison where you could hear the screams of people under torture, the moaning of women, shots

during times of execution and the constant noise of aircraft engines, they suddenly cut my fingernails — I realized that they wanted to torture me. Soon I was summoned at night. I appeared before NIKOLAEV, AGAS, and another type that does the torturing. When I walked in, I was told that I was a spy. 'Me, a spy?' 'Yes, you. And you yourself will tell us about your activities.' I realized that this was the end, that the only way to salvation was through admitting the most serious charges. This is the dialectic ... Everything went into it — the Japanese and the British. I myself sometimes became confused, I said so much." (ibid, l.d. 322)

Immediately after this Bessonov is quoted as saying the same thing.

Then we are told the following about Sokol'nikov, sentenced to prison rather than execution at the January 1937 Moscow Trial.

From materials in the archives of the KGB we know that SOKOL'NIKOV was brought to Moscow from prison in the fall of 1937 to be used as a witness at the upcoming trial of BUKHARIN, RYKOV and others, but because of his refusal to testify at trial he was sent back. (853)

Apparently Serov did not realize that statements like these contradict the whole tenor of his report. If Rakovsky or anyone else made false confessions in the investigation and at trial because of threats against their families, why would they contradict their testimony just because they had been convicted and were in prison? There would be no less danger to their families after trial than before.

How then could others refuse to plead guilty, as Serov said they did? How could Sokol'nikov have refused to testify? How could Bukharin have spent half of his lengthy testimony, plus all of his closing statement, staunchly denying the Prosecutor's most serious accusations? Evidently they were not afraid of torture, threats to family, etc., when they did so.

*There is not now, nor has there ever been, any evidence that any of the Moscow trials defendants were tortured. On the contrary: there is good*

evidence that they were not. Zinoviev stated in a pretrial letter that he was being well treated.<sup>40</sup> Even Steven Cohen, a world authority on Bukharin and staunchly anti-Stalin, concluded in 2003 that Bukharin was not tortured.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> R-PP 184; originally published in *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* 8 (1989), 89-90.

<sup>41</sup> Koen, Stiven (Cohen), "*Bukharin na Lubianke.*" *Svobodnaia Mysl'* 22 (3), 2003, 58-63, at pp. 60-61.

In 1956 Anastas Mikoian told American writer Louis Fischer that "Bukharin and the other Moscow trial defendants were not tortured."<sup>42</sup> Mikoian had no reason to lie about this. He claimed to believe that they were innocent, was a staunch Khrushchev man, and supported Khrushchev's attempt to "rehabilitate" them as "victims of Stalin."

<sup>42</sup> Louis Fischer. *Russia Revisited. A New Look at Russia and Her Satellites.* Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1957, p. 70.

We have the texts of the appeals of all the defendants who received death sentences, plus that of Dr. Pletnev. In every case the defendants reiterated their guilt. Bukharin wrote two such appeals. He stated that he "deserved to be shot ten times over."<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Bukharin's appeals were first published in *Izvestiia* September 2, 1993, p. 2. I have put a translation online at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/bukharinappeals.html>

How likely is it that the men who were sentenced to death reiterated their guilt, often in the strongest possible terms, and yet were innocent? Not "to protect their families" — Iagoda and, especially, Bukharin spent a lot of their testimony vigorously denying some of Prosecutor Vyshinskii's accusations against them. If there were ever a time to claim innocence it would have been in these appeals, which were never supposed to be made public. Moreover, if one surmises that they continued to insist upon their own guilt "in order to save their families," then why would the three who

did not received death sentences — Bessonov, Rakovsky, and Pletnev — not also continue to insist upon their own guilt for the same reason?

One more point in the lurid account above must be a falsification: "Every night I expected to be shot." There would have been no reason for Rakovsky to have "expected" that he might be shot without an investigation and trial. In all the cases we know about and that Rakovsky would have known about, arrested persons were imprisoned during investigation according to the Soviet (and, incidentally, the European) practice and then given a trial.

Serov, however, had every reason to depict all aspects of the investigation and trial of the 1938 Moscow trial defendants as outrageously improper. We have proven that he lied in many other instances in this report. This alleged statement by Rakovsky appears to be another of Serov's fabrications.

According to Cherniavskii, Rakovsky was given a copy of the indictment against him on April 9, 1937,

...in which it is asserted that against Rakovsky "there is sufficient evidence that he is a member in a counterrevolutionary Trotskyist organization." (499)

Thereafter Rakovsky was interrogated numerous times. This means that a normal judicial procedure was being followed. We'll look at Cherniavskii's account of them below.

More alleged testimony from Rakovsky's "cellmates":

The "processing" of prisoners in the case of the Right-Trotskyite center did not stop day or night. This was handled during the interrogations by the investigators and in the cells by specially placed people. Concerning one of these people RAKOVSKY, after his conviction, told his fellow inmates:

In Lefortovo they put Lieberman into my cell ... They let me write my confessions in my cell. When I presented them, if they did not like them, they / 853 / would tear them up and throw them in my

face. When I consulted with Lieberman my confessions always satisfied the investigators. He served as the transfer authority, he dictated to me what they wanted and through him I asked their advice

...

In the end, I did not care, because I lied. And he could not hurt me, on the contrary, he facilitated my work. (arch. case number 300956, v. 9, l.d. 324) (852-3)

Here Serov does not even bother to name the purported "fellow inmates" of Rakovsky's who supposedly heard Rakovsky say this. Serov recounts some other stories about Rakovsky that do not speak directly to the question of guilt or innocence. The story below is evidently an attempt to account for Krestinskii's decision, between the first and second days of the March 1938 trial, to change his plea from innocent to guilty.

Concerning the circumstances surrounding KRESTINSKII'S confessions at the trial, former employee of the NKVD ARONSON has testified:

"I, like many other NKVD men, attended the trial. At the first session KRESTINSKII retracted the confessions he had given earlier and pleaded not guilty. This statement caused confusion on the part of VYSHINSKII, who was in charge of the trial.

/ 855 /

"During the break we investigators discussed what had happened and talked about how to get out of this situation. NIKOLAEV (he was in charge of RAKOVSKY's case) then said that he would try to resolve the incident. When the accused were taken from the court they took KRESTINSKII together with RAKOVSKY. The next day KRESTINSKII pleaded guilty and confirmed all the confessions that he had given previously. **I think**, and the investigators said the same thing at the time, that KRESTINSKII had not been beaten, but RAKOVSKY had persuaded him. **They said** that RAKOVSKY, who



in general had great influence on KRESTINSKII, told him something like this: 'You ought to admit guilt, all the defendants are pleading guilty, and the court will consider anyone who does not admit guilt as an unrepentant enemy and will unquestionably shoot him, while in return for the admission of guilt they will preserve your life. The family of him who confessed guilt will not suffer, but in case of rejection of guilt the family will also be repressed.' This so affected KRESTINSKII that to the end of the trial he did not try any more to reject the confessions he had given during the investigation."

Also characteristic in this regard is the behavior at trial of the public prosecutor VYSHINSKII. When the court summoned KRESTINSKII for questioning VYSHINSKII did not permit his immediate interrogation and first asked a number of questions precisely to RAKOVSKY.

KRESTINSKII was interrogated only after RAKOVSKY had given him an example — he fully admitted his guilt and named KRESTINSKII as his accomplice. (854-5. Underlined emphasis in the original.)

Even if this were true — and even Serov only claims that it was Aronson's speculation — the fact that Rakovsky convinced Krestinskii to reaffirm his initial confessions and "set an example" does not say anything about Krestinskii's or Rakovsky's guilt or innocence.

Another alleged statement by Rakovsky is given with no specific source and to no discernable purpose:

During the trial the investigators never left me, encouraged me, talked about the impression that this revolting farce was making on me. (Arch. case number 300956, v. 7, l.d. 325) (856)

The final passage in Serov's report concerning Rakovsky is the following:

After his conviction RAKOVSKY **told his cellmates**: "I coordinated the main points of my speech at the trial, my last words with the

investigators... During this last period they were all at my service, right up to the olives [sic]." (arch. case number 300956, v. 7, l.d. 325)

This story of RAKOVSKY's is fully confirmed in archival documents of the NKVD. Moreover, they show that this situation occurred not only in relation to RAKOVSKY but also in relation to other defendants in the present case.

So, in archival files on RAKOVSKY and GRIN'KO we have found typewritten outlines of their future confessions at trial. By comparing these outlines with the confessions that RAKOVSKY and GRIN'KO gave at trial it was revealed that they are identical both structurally and in their meaning, and that some phrases in them are repeated almost word for word in the trial transcript.

Moreover, in these archival materials we have also discovered drafts of the "last words" of the accused RAKOVSKY, RYKOV and GRIN'KO, and in the materials on RAKOVSKY even two versions of "his" last words at the trial have turned up. (857)

We know the first paragraph is a lie because we know that Rakovsky had no cellmates. The other claims, even if true, do not speak to guilt or innocence. Even if genuine this paragraph can only refer to Rakovsky's longer statements, perhaps the opening and closing statements.

No prosecution anywhere would go to any serious trial, let alone a public trial, without a fairly precise idea of what the defendants will say. However, during the trial Rakovsky challenged Vyshinskii on several points. Much of his testimony was in the form of short question and answer passages. These could not have been written down for practice in advance.

### **Serov and the Bloc**

Throughout his report Serov appears to claim that the bloc of Rights and Trotskyites itself was a Stalin-NKVD invention and never really existed.

- Serov normally puts the words "anti-Soviet bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" in scare quotes. This is evidently a signal that he is

- attesting to the nonexistence of the bloc.
- He refers several times to "a so-called 'Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites.'" (833; 836; 849)
  - He quotes several defendants as supposedly stating that the whole trial was "a complete invention of the NKVD" (Bessonov 838; Kamkov, 840-1)

Serov's most unambiguous claim that no bloc existed is found at the very end of the Report:

... the accusation against them that in the following years they created a bloc of Rights and Trotskyites and conducted organized anti-Soviet activities, is falsified and in this regard they are subject to rehabilitation. (858)

After the 22<sup>nd</sup> Party Congress of October 1961 during which Khrushchev and his men attacked Stalin even more ferociously than he had done at the 20<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in 1956 there was a more extensive attempt to clear the 1938 Moscow trial defendants. The "Shvernik Commission" issued two reports, the "Zapiska" or "memorandum" and the "Spravka" or "inquiry." In the longer "Zapiska" written in 1962 or early 1963 and available to Gorbachev's aides but not published until the mid-1990s Khrushchev's aides concluded:

No "Anti-Soviet Right-Trotskyist Bloc" in reality ever existed, and those who were convicted in this case were not really guilty of counterrevolutionary activity.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> *Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo. Fevral' 1956 — nachalo 80-kh godov. T. 2.* Moskva: "Materik", 2003. (RKEB 2), p. 630.

Gorbachev's men adopted the same conclusion. This is interesting because Gorbachev's men made this statement *after* Pierre Broué's discovery that a bloc of Rights and Trotskyites, including Zinovievites and other oppositionists, had indeed existed.

In 1986 American scholar J. Arch Getty published an article in the journal *Soviet Studies* in which he discusses, among other things, Broué's discovery

of the bloc. Getty's article was published in Russian translation in one of the last issues of the Soviet Communist Party journal *Problems in the history of the CPSU*. In a special afterword Boris Starkov, an official CPSU historian, tried to explain away the significance of this embarrassing discovery. For it certainly proved that Khrushchev's and Gorbachev's aides had been lying — and this while the USSR and the CPSU were still in existence.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Dzh. Arch Getti (Getty), "Trotskii v Izgnanii: Osnovanie IV Internatsionala." *Voprosy Istorii KPSS* 5 (1991), 72-83.

There was, and remains, an immense amount of evidence in Soviet archives that this bloc really existed. Broué's discovery of documents by Trotsky and his son Sedov verified this Soviet documentation. So Serov was lying here too.

### **Cherniavskii's discoveries**

The Khrushchev and Gorbachev attempts to find evidence that the defendants in the 1938 Moscow trial were innocent have suffered total defeat. It is worth considering what this means.

The Soviets had access to everything, including vast amounts of documentary evidence that is unavailable to researchers today. They found no exculpatory evidence and so were obliged to falsify the results of their studies.

An objective, materialist approach to historical investigation demands that we draw the only conclusion permissible. The defendants in the Moscow trials — specifically, for our present purposes, the 1938 Moscow trial — were guilty. All the evidence points towards their guilt. Monumental efforts by those with strong motives to prove the opposite and all the resources at their command have failed. Truly objective students will have no problem with this conclusion. The only people who will reject it are those with powerful preconceived ideas.

We do not know all the evidence that the prosecution had against Rakovsky. Khrushchev-era, Gorbachev-era, and post-Soviet Russian leaders had and

have no incentive to release this information because of the threat it poses to their anticommunist and anti-Stalin historical paradigm. However, we now have more evidence about Rakovsky than we did a few years ago. The curtain of secrecy surrounding this evidence was lifted just a crack for Georgii Cherniavskii and his coauthors who in 2014 published a biography of Rakovsky.

Cherniavskii was permitted to read Rakovsky's NKVD file as well as his file from Orlov prison. He disclosed some of what he read in his recent biography of Rakovsky. But Cherniavskii chose not to act with the objectivity of an ethical scholar. He was already convinced that Rakovsky had been innocent. Rakovsky's interrogations do not support this conclusion, so Cherniavskii did not reproduce any of them.

All Cherniavskii gives us are a few quotations from these confessions and letters. Nevertheless, some of these quotations are of considerable interest.

Though he was arrested on January 27, 1937, Rakovsky only began to confess on June 1, 1937, when he wrote a statement addressed to Ezhov. In it he wrote:

After four months of obstinate silence at the investigation I have concluded that the only correct thing to do is a fundamental change of my position. In beginning to give full and sincere confessions I wish to declare that I remained a Trotskyist until the present and have been connected with the Trotskyist underground. I promise to be sincere and truthful to the end and consider that my confessions about the counterrevolutionary work of the Trotskyist underground will help the Party and the state apparatus to root out the Trotskyist underground.  
(500-501)

The first interrogation transcript in Rakovsky's file is dated June 8, 1937. Cherniavskii writes:

"Having admitted" in it his adherence to "counterrevolutionary Trotskyism" Rakovsky at the same time dissociates himself from any accusation of terrorist activity.

I personally did not believe in terrorist activity and have not carried out any work along those lines.

Rakovsky does not claim that he was unaware of terrorist activity by the Trotskyist underground, only that he did not believe in or participate in such activity. We know that such activity did exist.

On June 29 Rakovsky admitted that he "shared the terrorist assumptions of the underground Trotskyist organization." He also said "I have recounted everything in my confessions and have nothing else to say."

During the next two months "Rakovsky wrote lengthy 'confessions' under the title 'My underground c-r [counterrevolutionary] work during my exile'" between 1928 and 1934. In this document Rakovsky cited the names of many persons but Cherniavskii does not mention any of them.

He claimed that after Trotsky's exile and the capitulation of a number of other oppositionists he became the primary theoretician of the opposition, conducted a large amount of analytical work....

But finally he arrived at the conclusion that the general line of the Party had led to a crisis that was becoming a catastrophe, that a return to the "pre-NEP period" was unavoidable — that is, a rejection of market relationships and a return to extraordinary measures. Rakovsky concluded that a coup had taken place in the country, that

a complete transformation had taken place in the proletarian dictatorship and in the ideological structure of the Party itself; that, while remaining socialist at its base, insofar as the land and other implements and means of production remained socialized, the proletarian dictatorship had been transformed into a stratified society. The bureaucracy [*sluzhebnoe soslovie*] had replaced the proletariat and the working masses.

...

In the document now under consideration Rakovsky names two more important political works of that period [viz of his exile]: "Back to the

socialist constitution, back to the Party program", and "Memoir of a Bolshevik-Leninist."

In his "confessions" Rakovsky recounted his work on his memoirs:

I collected an enormous amount of historical materials both on the history of the revolutionary movement in Russia and the Western workers' movement, of which I was a member, and on the national rebirth of the Balkan countries, and began to gradually write my memoirs, in which both the persons and the events of the history of the revolutionary working class movement of a number of countries, including Russia, were to be depicted.

### **Rakovsky, Trotsky, and the Japanese**

Between June and August 1937 Rakovsky's testimony evidently concerned only his activities up to 1937. But on September 4, 1937, Rakovsky's statements began to change dramatically. On that day Rakovsky wrote the following:

At a time when the Soviet homeland could be facing international complications of every kind I consider it doubly my duty, both as a former member of the communist party and as a citizen of a socialist fatherland to relate honestly, fully and wholly everything that I did.  
(Cherniavskii 503)

According to Cherniavskii Rakovsky's confessions followed on September 8, 9, 10, 14, 16 and 17, and October 9, 10, and 12.

Rakovsky confessed that he had been recruited to Japanese intelligence by Prince Iyesato Tokugawa, chairman of the Japanese Red Cross between 1928 and 1938 and Chairman of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent from 1934 to 1938. Tokugawa's name was not mentioned at trial. But it is in the draft of Vyshinskii's opening remarks which is published in the 2013 edition of the original transcript of the March 1938 Moscow trial, the same edition that contains Serov's report and the appeals of those defendants who were sentenced to death. (30)

On September 22, 1937, a face-to-face confrontation was held between Rakovsky and Konstantin IUREnev, former Soviet ambassador to Japan. IUREnev was not arrested until September 23, 1937. The near coincidence of dates suggests that the Soviet investigation did not know of IUREnev's involvement in the Trotskyist conspiracy until Rakovsky disclosed it. IUREnev said that he did not recognize Rakovsky; evidently, as the following suggests, he had grown haggard and unkempt in prison. Cherniavskii quotes Rakovsky's reply:

You did not recognize me. The prison regimen is such as the diet is moderate and does not allow one to maintain one's weight. This affected my illness negatively, but later they began to give me certain privileges in nourishment. But that is not why I have confessed... At last I understood **that it was necessary to unmask myself [razoblachit' sebia] in order to unmask Trotsky and to give the Party the chance to strengthen its rear both against those who are striving for internal restoration and against external aggression.**  
(504)

According to Cherniavskii, during one interrogation Rakovsky stated that Karl Radek had told him about Piatakov's secret flight to Oslo at the end of 1935 and meeting with Trotsky. (505) In a statement he made to Ezhov dated December 19-20, 1936, Piatakov stated that during his secret visit to Trotsky in Norway in 1935 Trotsky had told him to get in touch with Rakovsky by all means and tell him to work more actively. Piatakov said that he intended to meet with Rakovsky and transmit Trotsky's instructions, but was not able to do so.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>46</sup> See Lubianka 1937-1938, Document No. 11, pp. 56-60; also at <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/60982>

Rakovsky also stated that after he had been recruited by Prince Tokugawa his recruitment was confirmed by Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Koki Hirota (Foreign Minister September 1933 — April 1936) and then by Japanese Prime Minister Keisuke Okada (Prime Minister July 1934 to March 1936). (506) These names are also mentioned in the note of



Gorbachev's Politburo Commission investigating the murder of Kirov, in their response to Iakovlev dated June 14, 1990.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>47</sup> RKEB 3, p. 487; also at <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/68180>

Convinced beforehand that Rakovsky and, for that matter, all defendants at all the Moscow trials were innocent, Cherniavskii considers it absurd that these high-ranking Japanese figures would have met with Rakovsky because such people do not meet with "spies." (506) Here Cherniavskii is grasping at a straw, for Rakovsky was no ordinary "spy." He was an agent who had once been a significant figure in the Bolshevik Party and who was closer to Trotsky than anyone else.

### **Rakovsky's Recruitment by the Japanese**

Cherniavskii's account suggests that Rakovsky volunteered these names and the statement that he had agreed to work for Japanese intelligence to the extent of being Trotsky's representative. No one else knew about these activities. If Rakovsky had not volunteered these confessions and names they would not have figured in the charges against him or at the trial at all.

At sentencing Rakovsky was spared the death penalty on the grounds of "not having taken a direct part in the organization of terrorist, diversive, and wrecking activities." (1938 Trial, 800) Rakovsky was not convicted of espionage for British and Japanese intelligence. Espionage was mentioned only in the preamble, not in the sentence itself.

Cherniavskii read Rakovsky's confessions. Unfortunately for us he chose not to reproduce them. But Cherniavskii would certainly have told us of any sign that the NKVD investigators had invented the accusation that Rakovsky had become a Japanese spy and forced Rakovsky to confess to it. Cherniavskii says nothing of the sort.

In fact Cherniavskii thinks that Rakovsky himself invented the charge of Japanese espionage in order to make the trial look ridiculous. *This means that according to Cherniavskii, the NKVD did not force Rakovsky to confess*

*to espionage for Japan but that Rakovsky volunteered this information on his own.*

## **Trotsky's Collaboration with the Japanese**

However, there was one person who did confirm Rakovsky's spying for Japan — Trotsky himself. On February 27, 1937, just one month after Rakovsky's arrest, months before Rakovsky confessed to spying for Japan, Trotsky "predicted" that Rakovsky would do precisely that.

We recall that on February 27, 1937, Trotsky wrote:

**It is quite certain** that in the next trial, with Rakovsky participating as the accused, there will be charges of conspiratorial dealings between Rakovsky and **the Japanese diplomats and military** (under orders from Trotsky, of course).

And again on April 15, 1937, Trotsky wrote:

Now, I ask myself if it did not have a second purpose, to frame him afterwards — that he was connected with **the Japanese military chiefs in the Government**, and so forth.

Trotsky "predicted" that Rakovsky would confess, not to contact with agents of Japanese intelligence, but to direct contact with persons of the highest rank, with "diplomats" and "Japanese military chiefs in the Government."

And sure enough, Rakovsky said he had met with Koki Hirota and Keisuke Okada. Hirota was Japanese minister of foreign affairs. Okada was Prime Minister of Japan and also an admiral in the Imperial Japanese navy. These men perfectly fit Trotsky's description of "Japanese diplomats and military," "Japanese military chiefs in the Government."

A few defendants in the first two Moscow trials had also confessed to espionage for foreign powers. But not one of them said that he had been in contact with any persons of high rank. Only "Gestapo" agents, German professors, persons whom no one had heard of, had been mentioned.

Trotsky did not write "Rakovsky *may* be charged with collaboration with the Japanese (under orders from Trotsky, of course)." He did not write "*Perhaps* this time a defendant will be forced to admit to contact with high-ranking persons (under orders...)." Trotsky said that "*It is quite certain that ... between Rakovsky and the Japanese diplomats and military.*" Six weeks later Trotsky was even more precise: "*with the Japanese military chiefs in the Government.*"

How could Trotsky have been both so precise about whom Rakovsky would admit to meeting with, and at the same time so completely accurate? There is only one hypothesis that offers an answer to this question and that is consistent with Trotsky's stated practice to "expose the scheme in advance": *Trotsky knew that Rakovsky had done these things.*

Moreover, we also know how Trotsky knew what Rakovsky would testify: Rakovsky himself had informed him. In his trial testimony Rakovsky stated:

**I wrote to Trotsky about all this — about my negotiations in Tokyo**, about my conversations with Yurenev, about my meetings, and, of course, about this last proposition. (1938 Trial, 294)

How did Rakovsky manage to write Trotsky from within the Soviet Union? According to the testimony of two defendants Rakovsky had a way of contacting Trotsky that was special to himself. We have already seen that, according to Ezhov's letter to Stalin of January 27, 1937, Piatakov testified:

Concerning RAKOVSKY TROTSKY said that it was essential to talk with him and give him a push in his work along the lines of the Trotskyist organization. From this I deduced that RAKOVSKY had some personal line of contact with TROTSKY. (Lubianka 1937-1938, Doc. No. 11)

We recall that Serov denied Piatakov had really said this in his testimony. What's more, in the same report Ezhov reported to Stalin that another Trotskyist, Pavel Mill' (Okun') also knew of this:

According to confessions of PIATAKOV and MILL' (Okun') he had an independent line of contact with TROTSKY (and has effected this contact through ROSMER).<sup>48</sup>

<sup>48</sup> According to a note in volume 5 of the series Arkhiv Trotskogo edited by IUrii G. Fel'shtinskii and Cherniavskii, Mill' was a pseudonym of Pavel Okun', a Soviet émigré and adherent of Trotsky's in Paris. He returned to the USSR in 1932. There are a number of letters from Trotsky to Okun' in the Trotsky Archive. See [http://www.lib.ru/TROCKIJ/Arhiv\\_Trotskogo\\_t5.txt](http://www.lib.ru/TROCKIJ/Arhiv_Trotskogo_t5.txt) and note 504.

Serov remained silent about the fact that Mill' (Okun') confirmed Rakovsky's "independent line of contact with Trotsky." In the early 1930s Mill' (Okun') had worked with the International Secretariat of Trotsky's movement in Paris and so could have been privy to this information.

Given all the evidence we now have, the best explanation both for Rakovsky's confession that he agreed to work for Japanese intelligence, and for Trotsky's uncannily specific and accurate "prediction" that Rakovsky would admit this, is that it was true. Trotsky knew about these contacts from the Japanese, or from Rakovsky himself, or from both.

### **The Alternative Hypothesis**

A tenet of good historiography is to "respect and welcome divergent points of view."<sup>49</sup> Though few anticommunist historians do so, and Cherniavskii certainly does not, it is an essential practice for anyone interested in discovering the truth. That means we are obligated to consider other possible hypotheses that might account for the evidence we have outlined here.

<sup>49</sup> American Historical Association. *Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct*. Washington, DC, 2011, 6.

In the present case, the only alternative hypothesis we can think of would be that the NKVD read Trotsky's remarks of February 27 and April 15, 1937, and, inspired by them, coerced Rakovsky to make a false confession

that he had done exactly what Trotsky had said — that he had been recruited by "Japanese diplomats and military," "Japanese military chiefs in the Government." We need to examine this hypothesis to determine whether there is any evidence to sustain it.

In addition to Rakovsky's testimony at the March 1938 Moscow trial there are two independent sources for the story of Rakovsky's recruitment. The first is a letter from a Gorbachev-era Politburo commission to Aleksandr Iakovlev, one of Gorbachev's closest advisers and the leading ideological anti-Stalinist in his circle. Iakovlev had asked that researchers be tasked to gather evidence to support his hypothesis that Stalin had been responsible for having Sergei Kirov murdered on December 1, 1934. The research team had reported that there was no evidence to support this hypothesis. (RKEB 3, 202 ff.) To this Iakovlev reacted with a lengthy communication in which he asked them to look again. (RKEB 3, 325 ff.) The result was an even longer and very detailed response of over 23,000 words that occupies 48 closely-spaced pages in its 2004 publication. (RKEB 3, 459 ff.) In it the Politburo researchers demonstrate in detail to their high-ranking boss that there is simply no evidence to tie Stalin to Kirov's murder.

In the course of examining all the evidence related to the Moscow trials the commission members touched upon the March 9, 1938, closed session of the third Moscow trial. Here certain of the defendants identified the citizens of foreign countries who had recruited them for espionage. This session is mentioned in the trial transcript but is not recorded in it. Nor is it reproduced in the 2013 edition of the uncorrected transcript of the 1938 trial.

Here is what the Politburo commission said about this session, as regards Rakovsky's testimony at it:

At the closed court session of the Military collegium of the Supreme court of the USSR that took place on March 9, 1938, state prosecutor Vyshinsky questioned the participants of the so-called "Anti-Soviet Right-Trotskyist Bloc" about their espionage work for foreign states.

Rozengol'ts stated that he had been recruited by German ambassadors Dirksen and Schulenburg and confirmed his ties to German

intelligence. Rakovsky confessed that when he was in Tokyo he had been recruited for espionage work for Japan by the Chairman of the Japanese delegation of the Red Cross, the Japanese prince Tokugawa, by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Hiroto, and also by the Prime-Minister of Japan admiral Okada. In addition Rakovsky confessed at this session about his ties with English intelligence to which he had been recruited by "Foreign Office" employees Lockhart and Armstrong with the knowledge of the Permanent Secretary of the English Ministry of Foreign Affairs "Sir William Tyrrell."<sup>50</sup>

After this Vyshinsky questioned Bukharin concerning his attempt to overthrow Soviet power in 1918 with Lockhart's help, which the latter [Bukharin] categorically denied.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> "Lockhart" must mean Robert Bruce Lockhart, the famous British intelligence agent. Sir William Tyrrell was Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs between 1925 and 1928. The Russian text reads Type — "Tireh," no doubt a stenographer's error.

<sup>51</sup> RKEB 3, 487. It appears that the Politburo Commission simply reproduced the summary of the Closed Session from the published version of the Russian-language trial transcript of 1938. Evidently they did not bother to obtain the original transcript of the Closed Session. Or perhaps this summary is the only record remaining.

The Politburo commission had all the Soviet archives at its disposal. There is no indication that Rakovsky was forced to name these names or that they were even suggested to him during the investigation. As we have already seen, Cherniavskii concluded that Rakovsky had volunteered this information of his own accord.

Cherniavskii is determined to defend his preconceived ideas that Rakovsky was innocent. Since he has no evidence at all to support this notion, he is forced to "channel" Rakovsky! Cherniavskii tries to explain Rakovsky's confessions to espionage for Japan and the persons Rakovsky named as part of a supposed "plan" to make statements so "absurd"<sup>52</sup> that he himself and

other supposedly "innocent victims" would be "rehabilitated" at some future time:

His main aim was to facilitate the future rehabilitation of innocent victims and, naturally, his own rehabilitation in the first place. (505)

<sup>52</sup> Scare quotes around the words "plan" and "absurd" represent Cherniavskii's subjective comments, not any demonstrable intent of Rakovsky's.

Cherniavskii suggests an alternative explanation for Rakovsky's confessions:

An educated person who was fascinated by history and knew it well, Rakovsky must have remembered different episodes from various epochs when deliberately false confessions during investigations and trials had been given especially in order to undermine the whole accusation. (505-6)

Straining to find at least one example of such "different episodes" Cherniavskii cites a book about Joan of Arc published in 1991 in which the author suggests that one of Joan's prosecutors *may* have acted in this way. It is highly unlikely that Rakovsky would have been aware of this notion. It is also clear that Cherniavskii could not think of any other examples.

Cherniavskii read Rakovsky's investigation file. Gorbachev's Politburo commission read everything. Serov and his colleagues, who also had total access, tried hard to show that Rakovsky was framed but were unable to do so. Serov was forced to invent "agents" who were Rakovsky's "cellmates." Thanks to Cherniavskii we know that Rakovsky did not have any cellmates. We have demonstrated that Serov had to falsify a great deal of other material as well.

To sustain the alternative hypothesis that the NKVD read Trotsky's "predictions" of February 27 and April 15, 1937, and then forced Rakovsky to make false confessions conforming to what Trotsky had "predicted," one would need evidence that the NKVD did so. But all the evidence we now have is from:

- Serov's report of July 7, 1956, \*the Gorbachev-era Politburo commission,
- the Gorbachev-era Rehabilitation report of the Soviet Supreme Court,
- Rakovsky's own investigation file as described by Cherniavskii,
- Rakovsky's statements in the public part of the March 1938 trial,
- and the text of the secret session of March 9, 1938.

All this evidence is consistent only with the hypothesis that Rakovsky volunteered his testimony. There is no indication here that Rakovsky was compelled in any way to confess his ties to the Japanese.

Rakovsky's words give the appearance of a person striving to be truthful. At one point he rejects an accusation by Vyshinsky:

VYSHINSKY: I want to put the question bluntly: I have a grave suspicion that your signature on the letter which Armstrong presented to you, a letter addressed to the German intelligence service, was not forged but was actually signed by you, because you were then already an agent of the German intelligence service. Is this right or wrong?

RAKOVSKY: Absolutely wrong. (1938 Trial, 302-303)

Rakovsky also stated outright that he made his confession voluntarily and why he did so.

RAKOVSKY: I must say that I have pleaded guilty to this from the moment when I decided to give complete, exhaustive and frank testimony. **For eight months I denied everything and refused to testify.**

VYSHINSKY: Following the instructions and tactics of the Trotskyites?

RAKOVSKY: I will tell you what prompted me ...

VYSHINSKY: I have no objection if you will deal briefly with this, without long historical digressions. No objections, on my part.



**RAKOVSKY: Very briefly. As I said, it was only in the eighth month that I began to make a clean breast of my main activities.**

VYSHINSKY: Criminal activities.

RAKOVSKY: My criminal activities, of course. But before this the thought frequently arose in my mind: was I doing right in denying? Nobody will deny that imprisonment, solitude in general, makes people undertake a revaluation of values. But I remember, and will never forget as long as I live, the circumstances which finally impelled me to give evidence. During one of the examinations, this was in the summer, I learnt, in the first place, that Japanese aggression had begun against China, against the Chinese people, I learnt of Germany's and Italy's undisguised aggression against the Spanish people....

I learnt of the feverish preparations which all the fascist states were making to unleash a world war. What a reader usually absorbs every day in small doses in telegrams, I received at once in a big dose. This had a stunning effect on me. All my past rose before me. Of course this past may be reduced to naught and will be obliterated by my disgraceful actions, but as an inner motive, nothing and nobody can do anything against it. All my past rose before me, my responsibilities, and it became clear to me that I myself was a party to this, that I was responsible, that I myself had helped the aggressors with my treasonable activities. I knew that I was not alone, that I was harbouring illusions about them. Former heads of the government, former People's Commissars, former Assistant People's Commissars, former Ambassadors had become entangled in this web. And then I became a judge over myself, I sat in judgment over myself. This is a court which no one will reproach with being biased. I sat in judgment over myself. I had given myself to the labour movement from my youth, and where had I got to? I had reached a stage when I facilitated the vilest work with my actions, I had facilitated the fascist aggressors' preparations to destroy culture, civilization, all the achievements of democracy, all the achievements of the working class.

That is what induced me to speak, that is what overcame my obstinacy, my false shame born of vanity, fear for my own fate, which was not

worthy of a man who had once taken part in the revolutionary movement. My rancour, which all of us harboured, some to a greater and some to a lesser extent, rancour against the leadership, rancour against particular individuals, had played a great part. Rancour and ambition fell from me. **I considered that from now on my duty was to help in this struggle against the aggressor, that I would go and expose myself fully and entirely, and I told the investigator that on the following day I would begin to give complete, exhaustive testimony.** I must say that the testimony which I gave here is absolutely complete, sincere and exhaustive.

Here Rakovsky states that "it was only in the eighth month that I began to make a clean breast of my main activities." This corresponds exactly with what Cherniavskii found in reading Rakovsky's investigation file. Rakovsky had already made some admissions about much earlier activity. But Cherniavskii states:

**Only after almost seven and a half months** from the time of his arrest did the prisoner again agree to make his confessions. (503)

Cherniavskii also outlines the reasons Rakovsky gave for finally revealing his Trotskyist activities on September 4, 1937.

On September 4 [1937] ... Rakovsky again wrote a statement to Ezhov, again permeated by "ambivalence" and internal contradictoriness, calculated so that his confessions could easily be considered false: **"At a time when the Soviet homeland may face all kinds of international complications, I consider it to be doubly my duty both as a former member of the Communist Party and as a citizen of the socialist fatherland to relate frankly, fully, and completely everything that I have done."** (503)

This quotation from Rakovsky's pretrial confession of September 4, 1937, recorded by Cherniavskii, is in complete accord with the following passage from Rakovsky's trial transcript:

**I considered that from now on my duty was to help in this struggle against the aggressor, that I would go and expose myself fully and**

**entirely, and I told the investigator that on the following day I would begin to give complete, exhaustive testimony. (1938 Trial, 314)**

Convinced from the outset that Rakovsky and all other defendants were innocent and intolerant of all evidence to the contrary, Cherniavskii himself claims, without any evidence whatever, that Rakovsky was "broken" and wanted his confessions to be recognized as false by some future reader.

Here as elsewhere Cherniavskii has no evidence whatever for such claims, which serve only to demonstrate his own utter lack of objectivity. But Cherniavskii does make it clear that *Rakovsky was not forced to confess by any maltreatment by the NKVD or by being exposed by other prisoners' testimony.*

## **Hypotheses and Evidence**

We have investigated two hypotheses to account for the evidence that Trotsky conspired with the Japanese. The first hypothesis is that Trotsky did indeed so conspire. This hypothesis accounts for all the evidence we have: Trotsky's very precise "predictions" on February 27 and April 15, 1937 that Rakovsky would be accused of conspiring on his — Trotsky's — behalf with Japanese diplomats and military men in the government; and Rakovsky's confession that he did indeed so conspire.

The alternative hypothesis is that the NKVD read Trotsky's "predictions" and, inspired by them, coerced Rakovsky to make confessions that conformed to Trotsky's statements. All the evidence in our possession refutes this hypothesis.

\* In his statements Rakovsky named three prominent Japanese figures, including two in the government. But these names were not used during the trial. We only learned of them in 2004. So it is unlikely that the NKVD provided them.

\* Because it is so clear that Rakovsky made his confession statements by himself, rather than prompted by anyone else, Cherniavskii was forced to

suppose that they are "absurd" and so do not need to be taken seriously. In reality there is nothing objectively "absurd" about Rakovsky's confessions. This is Cherniavskii's stance whenever he is faced with evidence that contradicts his preconceived idea that Rakovsky was innocent. It is the logical fallacy known as the "argument from incredulity."<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup> See, for example,  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argument\\_from\\_ignorance#Argument\\_from\\_incredulity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argument_from_ignorance#Argument_from_incredulity).<sup>2</sup> Lack\_of\_imagination

But it is also clear that Cherniavskii believes Rakovsky volunteered these statements, chose what to say and whom to name. *This means that, in February and April 1937, Trotsky could only have known about Rakovsky's contact with "Japanese diplomats and military," "Japanese military chiefs in the Government," from Rakovsky himself.*

\* Serov and Khrushchev's aides, and then Gorbachev's aides, were unable to find any evidence that Rakovsky was forced to confess. Serov constructed some fabrications about Rakovsky, since he had to present a report to Molotov and others who were unsympathetic to Khrushchev's idea that all the defendants in all the Moscow trials were innocent. Writing to Aleksandr Iakovlev, a person who wanted very badly to prove that Stalin had framed everybody, Gorbachev's aides were unable to cite any evidence that Rakovsky was innocent. Gorbachev's aides did not even bother to cite any of the purported statements by Rakovsky's supposed "cellmates" cited by Serov. This in itself is further reason to think that these statements are phony.

Both Serov and Gorbachev's aides had complete access to everything in the Soviet archives, including much material that is still top secret. We can assume that nothing in those still-secret archives suggests that Rakovsky was framed.

\* Gorbachev's Soviet Supreme Court was tasked with "rehabilitating" the remaining defendants of the third Moscow trial, including Rakovsky. But it lacked any evidence on which to base its conclusion that the defendants had been wrongfully convicted. In its Rehabilitation report of February 4, 1988, still top-secret in Russia, the Soviet Supreme Court dishonestly cited

Frinovskii's confession statement of April 11, 1939, which remained secret until 2006. As we have seen, Frinovskii's confession statement affirms the guilt of the defendants at the first and third Moscow trials as well as Frinovskii's and Ezhov's own guilt.

No evidence exists to support the hypothesis that the NKVD forced Rakovsky to structure his confessions in order to confirm Trotsky's "predictions" of February 27 and April 15, 1937. On the contrary, all the evidence we have suggests that Rakovsky confessed voluntarily without prompting from any source.

After recounting how one Japanese official told him that the Japanese government was dissatisfied with Trotsky's writings and with the activities of the Chinese Trotskyists Rakovsky said:

I wrote to Trotsky about all this — about my negotiations in Tokyo, about my conversations with Yurenev, about my meetings, and, of course, about this last proposition. (1938 Moscow Trial, 294)

That would account for Trotsky's knowing what Rakovsky might testify, and so for Trotsky's "prediction."

### **Trotsky Conspired with the Japanese**

The only hypothesis that can successfully account for the evidence now available is that Trotsky did indeed collaborate with the Japanese. Trotsky aimed to make the charge appear so absurd and yet so obvious that he could "predict" it in advance. But we know that Trotsky frequently did this before in hopes of blunting the sting of a charge that he knew might soon be made against him because it was true.

In *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* we examined the "name of Trotsky" issue in the Kirov murder case, the "restoration of capitalism," and the "armed intervention" charges. We also established that Trotsky lied a great deal. Trotsky had to lie, of course. Lying is essential in any conspiracy. But this fact means that we can never accept Trotsky's statements, including his denials, as truthful.

We have also seen how Trotsky used the stratagem of "exposing the scheme in advance" many times. We have discovered that he did this as a way to ward off, in advance, accusations that he could be reasonably certain would be forthcoming.<sup>54</sup> Trotsky could not prevent the Soviet prosecution — "Stalin" — from uncovering and exposing his, Trotsky's, conspiratorial activities. But he could claim that these accusations were so crude, so transparent, that he could even "predict" them in advance.

<sup>54</sup> See Furr, *Trotsky's 'Amalgams,'* Chapters 13 through 15, sections titled "Expose the scheme in advance."

In the present case Trotsky overstepped. He would have done much better to make a more general "prediction" — say, that Rakovsky would confess to some kind of clandestine contact with some Japanese figures. Instead, Trotsky stated exactly what Rakovsky would confess. This was a "prediction" so precise that the only way Trotsky could have made it is if he knew what Rakovsky would say — that is, if Rakovsky's confession was true.

Cherniavskii expresses concern that Rakovsky did not always name only persons who had already been convicted and whom therefore, his confessions could presumably not harm any further. He specifically mentions the diplomats K.K. IUREnev and D.V. Bogomolov. Rakovsky's face-to-face confrontation with IUREnev was on September 22, 1937, with Bogomolov on October 8. (507) This was before their arrests. Cherniavskii states that IUREnev and Bogomolov had already been arrested by the time Rakovsky named them, but this is not the case. IUREnev was arrested on September 23, 1937, Bogomolov on October 13, 1937.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Yurenev: The Sakharov Center: <http://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfcd/martirolog/?t=page&id=15808> Bogomolov: Memorial Society, "List of Victims of Political Repression": <http://lists.memo.ru/d4/f458.htm#nl>

It appears that Rakovsky was given credit for having freely confessed some things that would otherwise not have been known. One example was Rakovsky's confession of espionage for Japan. Rakovsky also seems to

have identified some persons about whose participation in the anti-Soviet conspiracy the NKVD did not know.

Rakovsky was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Another defendant in the same trial, Dr. D.D. Pletnev, was given a 25-year sentence on the grounds that he had known of the conspiracy to murder some of his famous patients and, although he had not contributed to their deaths, he had not voluntarily informed on the conspiracy even when Iagoda had been removed from office and he had the chance to do so. By contrast, Rakovsky had given important information voluntarily.

### **Rakovsky's Fraudulent Rehabilitation**

Rakovsky was rehabilitated by a decree of the Soviet Supreme Court on February 4, 1988. The text of the rehabilitation decree is still secret in Russia today. But in 1995 General Dmitrii Volkogonov authorized the shipment of his archive out of Russia to the West. A copy ended up in the Library of Congress. In 2000 the Volkogonov Archive became open to researchers. A careful perusal of this poorly-indexed archive turned up a copy of the rehabilitation decree. We can be sure it is the right document because a reproduction of the header of the first and footer of the last page of the original was reproduced in the 1991 book *Reabilitatsiia. Politicheskie protsessy 30-50-kh godov*, pp. 240-241.

This rehabilitation report is falsified. On page 7 we find the following statement:

According to the testimony of former NKVD worker Aronson, questioned in 1956, the convicted prisoner Kh.G. Rakovsky while in prison in May of 1941 also told him about the falsification of the materials of the criminal case and about his wrongful conviction.

We have already considered this alleged statement by "Aronson," also attributed by Serov to an "agent Finn." It is hearsay at best and most likely a fabrication solicited by Serov for his July 7, 1956, report. In any case, the mere claim of a defendant that the evidence against him was falsified and

that he is innocent, carries no weight as evidence unless it is firmly corroborated by other independent testimony or physical evidence.

Page 6 of the rehabilitation report summarizes parts of Frinovskii's confession statement of April 11, 1939, as follows:

Former Assistant People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR Frinovskii in his statement of April 11, 1939, admitted that workers of the NKVD USSR "prepared" the prisoners for the interrogations at face-to-face confrontations, alerting them to possible questions and answers to them. Ezhov frequently talked with those to be interrogated. If the prisoner recanted his confessions he gave the investigator the order to "restore" the prisoner, that is to obtain from him his previous false confessions. According to Frinovskii's confessions Ezhov often spoke with N.I. Bukharin, A.I. Rykov, P.P. Bulanov and other defendants and tried to convince each of them that the court would spare their lives if they admitted their guilt.

The rehabilitation report conceals Frinovskii's specific statement, in his confession statement, that Ezhov took a hands-off stance towards the 1938 Moscow trial.

An active participant in investigations generally, Ezhov kept himself aloof from the preparation of this trial...

It also falsifies through omission by concealing Frinovskii's explanation of what Ezhov told the defendants: not that their lives would be spared if they confessed, but if they did not mention Ezhov's participation in the conspiracy.

Here Ezhov unquestionably was ruled by the necessity of covering up his own ties with the arrested leaders of the Right who were going into the public trial.

It also omits all the parts of Frinovskii's statement in which he makes it clear Zinoviev, Kamenev, and the defendants in the March 1938 Moscow trial really were conspirators; that he and Ezhov were involved in this conspiracy; and much more.



The "rehabilitation" report contains this passage:

Former workers of the NKVD of the USSR Frinovskii, Agranov, Nikolaev, Dmitriev, Tserpento, Ushakov, Chistov, Passov, Kogan, Gerzon, Glebov, Lulov and others, who took a direct role in the investigation of this criminal case, were later convicted for illegal arrests, falsification of evidence, and other very serious violations of law.

We know that many of these men had in fact been involved in the investigation of the defendants in the March 1938 trial.<sup>56</sup> The most significant falsification here is by omission. Most of these men were Ezhov's accomplices in the massive frame-ups of innocent persons. After Ezhov's removal they were investigated, arrested, tried, and shot under Beria. Of the others who can be identified and about whom we have found reliable data, Nikolaev-Zhurid was arrested October 25, 1938, tried and convicted February 4, 1939; D.M. Dmitriev was arrested June 28, 1938, tried and convicted March 7, 1939; Z.I. Passov was arrested October 22, 1938, tried and convicted February 14, 1940.

<sup>56</sup> Iakov S. Agranov was expelled from the Party in July 1937 and arrested on July 20, 1937, almost seven months before the trial. The editors of *Genrikh Iagoda*, who had access to former NKVD files now in possession of the FSB (successor to the NKVD, MVD-MGB, KGB) revealed in 1997 that Agranov was convicted of involvement in Iagoda's conspiracy and in a conspiracy with the Socialist Revolutionaries. He admitted guilt in letters to Stalin and Ezhov. A partial transcript of an interrogation of former NKVD man Trilisser in January 1939 records that Trilisser named Agranov as one of Iagoda's co-conspirators. (*Genrikh Iagoda*, 39-40; 531).

All these men were tried and convicted, during Beria's investigation of Ezhov's crimes. It was Stalin and his close associates who appointed Beria to replace Ezhov and then to investigate and prosecute the crimes of Ezhov and his men.

There is no evidence that the March 1938 Moscow trial involving Rakovsky and others had anything to do with the convictions of these men. Frinovskii's statement makes it clear that the 1938 Moscow trial defendants

of whom he speaks, Bukharin, Iagoda, Rykov, and Bulanov, were guilty and also concealed Ezhov's participation in the conspiracy.

Rakovsky was rehabilitated as a part of the group of defendants in the March 1938 trial who had not been rehabilitated previously.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Those rehabilitated on February 4, 1988, those previously rehabilitated, and the one person, Iagoda, who was not rehabilitated, are listed in the transcript of the Politburo Commission of February 5, 1988:

Принято к сведению сообщение председателя Верховного Суда СССР о том, что Пленум Верховного Суда своим постановлением 4 февраля 1988 г. отменил приговор Военной Коллегии в отношении осужденных Н.И. Бухарина, А.И. Рыкова, А.П. Розенгольца, М.А. Чернова, П.П. Буланова, Л.Г. Левина, И.Н. Казакова, В.А. Максимова-Диковского, П.П. Крючкова и Х.Г. Раковского и дело прекратил за отсутствием в их действиях состава преступления.

Ранее Верховным Судом СССР по этому же делу и по тем же мотивам были полностью реабилитированы Н.Н. Крестинский, Г.Ф. Гринько, И.А. Зеленский, В.И. Иванов, С.А. Бессонов, А. Икрамов, Ф. Ходжаев, В.Ф. Шарангович, П.Т. Зубарев и Д.Д. Плетнев.

Протест в отношении Г.Г. Ягоды, проходившего по этому делу, Прокуратурой СССР не приносился.

— RKEB 3, p. 49. Also at <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/66068>

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Other than the statement from "Aronson" which we have examined above the Rehabilitation report contains no evidence consistent with Rakovsky's innocence.

## **Conclusion**

The main conclusion of this chapter is that Leon Trotsky did collaborate with the Japanese. This is the only hypothesis that accounts for the evidence we now have. Trotsky had a practice of anticipating charges that he surmised would probably be made against him because they were true and because persons who knew about his activities had been arrested. There is no other way Trotsky could have "predicted" long in advance that Rakovsky would claim at trial that he was mediating between Trotsky and Japanese military men in the government.

Cherniavskii read Rakovsky's file. He confirms that Rakovsky himself volunteered the information that he had agreed to what amounted to espionage for Japan — to carrying messages for Japanese intelligence to Trotsky who had some prior agreement with the Japanese. This means we can be certain that the NKVD did not learn about Trotsky's "prediction" of February 27, 1937, and then, inspired by it, force Rakovsky to confirm it and confess to espionage for Japan.

What's more, the court's verdict against Rakovsky did not even mention this espionage. Why would the NKVD — "Stalin" — fabricate a charge that Rakovsky had been Trotsky's emissary to the Japanese, supply the names of important Japanese political figures, force Rakovsky to confess to this charge and to name these names, and then insist that the names not appear in the trial testimony and Rakovsky not be convicted on the espionage charge? There is no shred of evidence to support such a vacuous and self-contradictory hypothesis.

The verdict most likely reflected the judges' determination that Rakovsky had cooperated with the prosecution by confessing to crimes that the prosecution did not know about from other sources. Rakovsky seems to have also done this when he named IUrenev and Bogomolov. IUrenev was arrested on September 23, 1937, the day after the face-to-face confrontation with Rakovsky. Bogomolov was arrested on October 13, 1937, five days after his October 8 face-to-face confrontation with Rakovsky. This implies that the NKVD did not have enough evidence against either man to arrest them until Rakovsky exposed them. Both IUrenev and Bogomolov were tried, convicted, and executed; Rakovsky was not executed.

Our conclusion that Trotsky did collaborate in some fashion with the Japanese is consistent with a great deal of other evidence of his collaboration with Germany and Japan. We study this evidence in other chapters of the present book. There is a striking lack of objectivity — in fact, a rejection of the concept of objectivity itself — in the historiography of the Stalin years, including that of the Moscow trials. Often this lack of objectivity takes the form of outright denial: "I don't believe it; therefore it is not true." This is the argument from incredulity, a specific form of "begging the question," assuming that which is to be proven, and a logical fallacy.

Lack of objectivity often takes the form of rejecting all NKVD evidence, all Moscow trial evidence, or even all Soviet evidence. To assume any evidence is invalid is once again to commit the fallacy of "begging the question." In order to argue, much less prove, that testimony is not true, that material evidence is forged, planted, etc., evidence is needed.

Lack of objectivity can also take the form of rejecting a hypothesis because evidence from some specific source or other is lacking. This too is a logical fallacy: "Lack of evidence is not necessarily evidence of lack." The fact that no documentary evidence from German or Japanese archives has been found that confirms Trotsky's collaboration is not evidence that Trotsky did not collaborate.

*In this as in all historical inquiry the proper question is not "What really happened?" Instead it is: "What conclusion best accounts for the evidence we have?"* All historical inquiry is in principle without time limits. We must regard all conclusions as provisional, to be amended upon the discovery either of new evidence or of a better interpretation of the existing evidence.

By the same token we must stand by the hypothesis that best accounts for the evidence we now have, even when — especially when — that conclusion contradicts or insults our strongly-held preferences, biases, or preconceived ideas. Only such an approach can be termed objective.

By these standards we are compelled to conclude that Leon Trotsky did collaborate with the Japanese and that Khristian Rakovsky was a party to this collaboration.

## Chapter 5. *Conclusion*

Based on the nature and amount of the evidence we have we must conclude that Leon Trotsky did indeed collaborate with the Germans and Japanese.

The evidence we have cited cannot be accounted for by any processes of fabrication:

- There is far too much of it.
- Much of it was never intended to be made public.
- It comes from different sources.
- It is all mutually corroborative. Evidence about Trotsky's German/Japanese collaboration is part of a complex of evidence about other conspiracies by other persons. Those conspiracies are well supported by evidence too. This corroborates the part of that evidence that inculcates Trotsky.
- Some of the evidence — that of the Tukhachevsky Affair interrogation testimony and trial confessions, and Iakovlev's confession — is so strong that it would be sufficient to establish the fact of Trotsky's collaboration in and of itself, even if we did not have any additional archival or trial evidence.
- There is no evidence counteracting it.

During Khrushchev's time, during Gorbachev's tenure as head of the CPSU and then of the USSR, during Eltsin's time, and in fact until today, an enormous amount of effort has been devoted by the Soviet government and Party leaders and subsequently by the Russian government to find evidence in the archives that proves the Moscow Trials and Tukhachevsky Affair defendants were framed. All such searches have been fruitless. In principle all claims to historical truth remain forever subject to revision in the light of new evidence which may be discovered in the future, or of new and better interpretations of the existing evidence. But in this case it seems there is nowhere for future contradictory evidence to come from. Even though they are still top-secret and only a tiny number of researchers can see them, we know that the Soviet archives have been thoroughly searched.

It is reasonable to surmise that no evidence that exculpates the Moscow Trials defendants, or Trotsky, will be discovered in future. In fact just the opposite is the case: we can be confident that much in the archives is still classified because it would confirm the guilt of the defendants of the 1930s and disconfirm the "anti-Stalin" paradigm. This would be the "cannon shot," in Col. Alksnis's words, that would destroy the anticommunist — and, of course, the Trotskyist — historiography of the Stalin era.

## **Objectivity and Denial**

There is only one conclusion consistent with an objective assessment of the evidence we now have. We have not reached this conclusion out of animosity against Trotsky or, for that matter, out of partisanship for Stalin. On the contrary: like other people, scholars have preconceived ideas and prejudices. In the search for historical truth as in science, scholars are obliged to form a hypothesis and put it to the test — which means they must be ready to find evidence contradictory to their hypothesis. In this case the evidence confirms our hypothesis that Trotsky did collaborate with Germany and Japan.

Some people will find this conclusion to be unacceptable to them. Few subjects during the past century have so engaged the passions of so many men and women as has the communist movement. Within that movement surely one of the most contentious issues has and continues to be the "Stalin vs Trotsky" debate. There are few "Stalinists"<sup>1</sup> around today though that situation may be changing somewhat, especially within Russia. There are many more supporters of Trotsky. Trotskyists are passionately devoted to a heroic version of Trotsky's life and legacy.

<sup>1</sup> I use scare quotes here because, unlike Trotskyists, supporters of Stalin have only rarely described themselves as "Stalinists," which is a term of disapproval employed by Trotskyists and anticommunists.

Anticommunists and Trotskyists are both loyal to a paradigm of Soviet history and especially of the 1930s that is utterly incompatible with the conclusions we have drawn in this essay. We predict that, regardless of the evidence, neither staunch anticommunists nor Trotskyists will ever accept

that Trotsky did in fact collaborate with Germany and Japan. The "Cold War paradigm" — or, as we have called it, the "anti-Stalin paradigm" of Soviet history during Stalin's time depends upon the construction of Stalin as an evil man who was killing innocent people, orchestrating judicial frame-ups, and — for Trotskyists — destroying the communist movement. If Trotsky and, by implication, the oppositionists who worked with him were guilty of the crimes with which they were charged and to which most, though not Trotsky, confessed, then this anti-Stalin paradigm of Soviet history is dismantled.

Trotsky's and Sedov's denials cannot be taken seriously. It is true generally that denials of guilt are of little interest to any investigator. The guilty as well as the innocent can be expected to proclaim their innocence. And while even confessions of guilt should not be automatically assumed to be truthful, the same is decidedly true of professions of innocence.

It is certain that there will be readers of this essay who will deny the conclusions of this analysis, and will do so by raising one or more of the objections we will now consider.

## **Torture**

The issue of torture is cited very often as, supposedly, an "explanation" for the confessions by all the persons whose testimony we have cited here. In fact this is a very weak explanation.

Is it possible that all the accounts by all the witnesses we have cited could have been obtained by torturing, or otherwise forcing, the witnesses to make these statements, and then carefully coordinating or "scripting" them? Is it possible that all the defendants memorized "scripted" confessions to make during the investigation, when the materials were all secret; then again at the public trial; and then again in the texts of their secret appeals for clemency to the Soviet Supreme Court — and all out of fear of "torture"?

The question of torture is an important one as it goes to the heart of our study and of historical methodology generally — namely, the question of

evidence. First: it is not easy to determine whether or not a given individual was, in fact, tortured.

\* It should be obvious that the mere fact that a defendant claims he was tortured does not mean that he was in fact tortured. The general principle is that no one should simply be assumed to be telling the truth, or assumed to be lying, without substantiating evidence. Falsely claiming one was tortured could be a way of explaining shameful behavior — naming others in one's confession, for example — while preserving some self-respect or dignity. During and after the Khrushchev period it became well known that defendants could often get their convictions vacated and rights restored by claiming they had been tortured.

\* We can't conclude that an arrestee was tortured simply because an NKVD investigator later said that he was. This is true *a fortiori* if the NKVD man (or someone else) claims to know it at second hand, from someone else, rather than confessing to torturing the prisoner himself.

\* We have to be skeptical of what NKVD men or other investigators wrote or testified during the Khrushchev years. During this time NKVD men were not simply threatened with serious penalties, including death, but some were actually executed on the grounds that they had beaten prisoners during the 1930s up to 1940-41, despite the fact that Khrushchev himself claimed this had been permitted by a Central Committee decision.

\* Even less can we accept the "fruit of the poisoned tree" argument: "A was, apparently, tortured, and he named B and C, so ALL were, in fact, innocent."

The "fruit of the poisoned tree" logic is a judicial — legal — principle. It means that evidence obtained in an unlawful manner should not be used in court *even when that evidence discloses a crime*. It does not speak to the question of guilt or innocence, and guilt or innocence is what we are interested in.

\*We can't conclude that an arrestee was innocent of the crimes he was charged with, or to which he confessed, on the sole grounds that he, or someone else, claims he was tortured. First, those claims may be false.



Second, the fact that someone has been tortured does not mean that they were innocent. Guilty persons can also be tortured and coerced into confessing actual crimes.

\* If there were repeated written complaints of torture, coupled with retractions of confessions during the investigation, at trial, or both, that would lend credence to such complaints. If and when they are also accompanied by confessions of torture by the torturer(s) and/or their superiors, the claims would become even more credible. But we have none of these things concerning the defendants at the Moscow Trials or the Tukhachevsky Affair.

Furthermore, even if we could be reasonably assured that a defendant was tortured, that does not mean that the defendant was innocent of all crimes he was charged with. A number of defendants who claimed they were tortured made differentiated confessions, withdrawing part of their confessions on the grounds that they were false, made under duress, but *not* withdrawing other parts. This is strong evidence that the part of the confession *not* withdrawn is truthful — otherwise, why not withdraw or deny all of it?

The fact that a confession could not be used in evidence against a defendant unless it had been confirmed at trial, and that many defendants did in fact retract their confessions at trial, means that we should be hesitant to discount confessions by persons who did *not* retract their confessions at trial when they could have done so.

Moreover, there were a number of reasons why a defendant might withdraw his confession at trial. One would be, of course, that he was really innocent and the confession was false. But another is that doing so would force the prosecution to produce at trial other evidence of the defendant's guilt — for example, the testimony of his accusers or material evidence. And that could delay matters, perhaps winning time for an appeal. According to Aleksei Pavliukov, a recent biographer of Ezhov, it seems that Nikolai Ezhov withdrew his numerous confessions at trial for exactly this reason. (Pavliukov 2007, 530)

We can be confident — at least, until good evidence to the contrary should be discovered — that the torture of many defendants, though not of those whose statements we examine in this article, did take place because the evidence for it comes from a number of different sources. The chances that all that evidence could have been "orchestrated" — fabricated into a coherent pattern — become negligible.

For the same reason we can be confident that Trotsky did conspire with the Germans and Japanese. There is so much evidence of it, from so many different sources, and it is so consistent with other information we have, that the chances it has all been fabricated is vanishingly small.

### **The Charge of "Torture" As Smokescreen**

Could torture have been going on "behind the scenes" so that we have no knowledge of it? Or, should we simply assume that a defendant was tortured if he confessed to serious crimes, even if we have no evidence that he was?

To this second question the response has to be: No. We must always demand evidence. Without evidence that some event occurred it is illegitimate to conclude that it did. It is not scientific to assume that something is going on unseen and leaving no trace. If in fact there is no material evidence that a given witness was lying, while evidence that corroborates some of his statements does exist, we must conclude that he was not lying. Likewise, absent evidence that a person was tortured it is illegitimate to assume that he was and legitimate to assume for all practical purposes and for the time being, that he was not.

We have no evidence that any of the defendants in the three Moscow Trials were tortured. In the best-documented case, that of Nikolai Bukharin, we know as certainly as we ever can that Bukharin was not tortured.<sup>2</sup> Stephen F. Cohen, author of the most famous and influential book about Bukharin, has concluded that Bukharin could not have been tortured. (Cohen 2003, 61) Cohen is still convinced Bukharin was innocent. But has no way of explaining why Bukharin confessed.

<sup>2</sup> Furr and Bobrov, 10 and note.

The issue of torture is separate from the issue of guilt or innocence. It should be obvious that guilty persons can be tortured too. "Means of physical pressure," the usual general term (and euphemism) in the USSR at this time, could be applied to defendants to induce them to confess to what they actually had done. Therefore, even if it can be proven somehow that a person actually has been tortured that does not mean he did not commit the acts he is charged with. It only means that, according at least to the rules of jurisprudence in some countries, his confession should not be used against him at trial.

In a court procedure evidence that a defendant has made statements because of mistreatment or threats is (or is supposed to be) sufficient to have the statements thrown out. This practice is necessary to protect the rights of the defendant. It's also necessary to guarantee that the investigators actually try to solve crimes instead of simply mistreating suspects until one of them confesses. That evidence of mistreatment does or does not come to the attention of the court, in many cases in many countries, is beside the present point. But we have no evidence that the Soviet courts violated this principle in the 1930s.

Historians are faced with a different situation. The question of guilt or innocence is not at all the same as that of whether a defendant received a fair trial. For instance, there is broad agreement among historians that the Haymarket defendants in Chicago in 1886 did not receive a fair trial, but there is debate about whether one of them, August Spies, may have fabricated the bomb and whether another, Louis Lingg, may have thrown it. Likewise there is a consensus that Sacco and Vanzetti did not receive a fair trial in Massachusetts in 1921, but there is some disagreement as to whether Sacco may in fact have committed the murder for which they were both executed.

A guilty person may confess guilt whether tortured or not. A guilty person may claim innocence even if tortured, or if not tortured. Likewise, an innocent person may confess guilt if tortured, but innocent persons have been known to falsely confess guilt without any compulsion at all. And an innocent person may persist in proclaiming her innocence under torture or

absent any mistreatment. Among the military figures, Putna and Fel'dman may have been beaten. We do not even know that for certain. It is stated in the Shvernik Report and in the "rehabilitation" document of 1989 that draws upon it. But many of these "rehabilitation" documents are falsified. As always, there is no certain evidence.

But even if they were beaten, that does not indicate whether they were guilty or innocent. The Shvernik Report contains much evidence of their guilt. So, whether they were tortured or not, we have a lot of evidence that they were guilty. And it is guilt or innocence — what happened — rather than whether proper judicial procedure was used, that concerns us here.

The idea that not only the military men in the Tukhachevsky Affair but *all* the defendants in all the Moscow Trials could have been made to confess to false charges by torture or the threat of it, despite the lack of evidence of either torture or threat, is as absurd as any statement we are likely to face. But that fact is never going to stop those who want and need to believe these men were innocent from believing it.

We have no evidence that any of the other defendants in the Tukhachevsky Affair were beaten or otherwise tortured. As we have seen above in our examination of the Budennyi letter<sup>3</sup> we have excellent evidence that these men confessed at their private trial. We know that Khrushchev-era and Gorbachev-era "rehabilitation" commissions lied and dissembled in a vain attempt to argue the innocence of these and many other defendants. We have discussed a number of examples of this in detail in an examination of Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" of 1956.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> We have studied Budennyi's letter to Voroshilov in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* Chapter 9, and in Furr, Grover, and Vladimir L. Bobrov. "Marshal S.M. Budiennyi on the Tukhachevsky Trial. Impressions of an Eye-Witness" (in Russian). *Klio* No. 2 (2012), pp. 8-24.

<sup>4</sup> See Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*.

The charge of "torture" serves the purpose of deflecting attention away from the evidence that we do have. As invoked in the historiography of the Moscow Trials and Tukhachevsky Affair it is a smokescreen, a rhetorical,

propaganda device to stop us from looking squarely at the large body of evidence we have. It is an attempt to make us disregard that evidence.

### **Lack of German or Japanese Evidence**

The objection will be heard: "If there had really been such a conspiracy then some documentation of it would have been found in captured German or Japanese archives."

The principle "lack of evidence is not necessarily evidence of a lack" applies here. The lack of evidence in German or Japanese archives would not destroy the other evidence we do have, and which we have analyzed above. It would not mean that no conspiracy existed.

However, any claim that no such documentation exists would be false. We do have evidence from both Czech and German archives that during the period roughly from the end of 1936 through the first quarter of 1937 Hitler and the German government were awaiting a military coup against the Stalin regime. Thanks to a slip of the tongue by a Japanese military commander in a talk with Japanese journalists in early 1937 we know that Opposition figures within the USSR were sending the Japanese military information — that, is, committing espionage. Genrikh Liushkov privately told the Japanese that real conspiracies existed among Soviet military leaders, even naming some of those against whom other evidence exists. We also have a great deal of other evidence concerning the defendants in the Moscow Trials and the Tukhachevsky Affair that points to the guilt of the defendants. This too is consistent with the results of our present investigation.

### **Lack of Documentary Proof**

As we discussed earlier, Getty discovered that the Trotsky Archive at Harvard had been imperfectly purged of evidence that Trotsky was in contact with his followers in the USSR. Meanwhile Trotsky and Sedov lied in denying such contact. Suppose the purging had been more competent and that all trace of this contact had been successfully removed. Would that mean that no such contact had taken place? Of course it would not. And as

this essay has demonstrated, there is no lack of such evidence in other locations. In fact, in the face of such a plethora of alternative evidence, the only partially successful removal of a portion of the evidence from the Trotsky Archive is itself evidence of someone's desire to cover up Trotsky's and Sedov's guilt.

Thanks to Getty we know that there used to be some kind of incriminating documentation of Trotsky's activities in his own archive. Was there other such documentation aside from that we know to have existed — letters to his major supporters inside the USSR? We don't know. We can't legitimately conclude that there wasn't, or for that matter that there was.

It is an error in logic and method to fetishize documentary evidence. *Any* kind of evidence, including documentary evidence, can be faked. In fact it would arguably have been easier to forge documents inculcating Trotsky in the alleged collaboration with Germany and Japan than to coordinate a large number of confessions, particularly public ones, and then coordinate a number of secret, written appeals for clemency, all testifying to events that never in fact happened.

In order to conclude that, despite the evidence cited in this article, Trotsky did not collaborate with Germany and Japan one would be forced to assume that the Soviet authorities orchestrated a vast network of false confessions by many individuals over many months, all of which inculcate Trotsky of German and/or Japanese collaboration, and in a more or less consistent manner. There is no evidence that this kind of orchestration actually took place.

It is tacitly supposed that it all happened "behind the scenes," out of sight of the public trials. Yet now that, thanks to archival documents, we have a glimpse "behind the scenes" we can discern no such fabrication. On the contrary: the investigative materials we now have only confirm the trial testimony.

The vast majority of the investigative materials remain top-secret in Russia today. We simply do not know what kind of evidence they may hold. Some of it is certainly documentary. We don't know whether any of it is documentary evidence of Trotsky's collaboration with Germany and Japan.

The fact that we do not know about any evidence in the secret Soviet archives inculcating Trotsky does not mean such evidence does not exist. It only means we do not know about any.

We know that there is other documentary evidence of some of the conspiracies. The Shvernik Report discusses the Arao Document, a communication from a Japanese military attaché to his superior in Japan testifying to secret contact with a representative of Marshal Tukhachevsky. The Report gives the text of this telegram. Therefore it must have still existed in 1962-64 when the report was being compiled. We discuss the Arao Document in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams.'*

Yet Iulia Kantor does not even mention it in her two supposedly authoritative books on Tukhachevsky, though of course she knew of it. Kantor wanted to support the theory that Tukhachevsky and the rest were innocent, and this document would not have been helpful. We don't know whether the physical document still exists or not. We can be thankful that the Shvernik Report compilers transcribed and discussed it.

What kind of written documentation of a clandestine conspiracy should we expect to have ever existed? Both Radek and Tukhachevsky claim that they had notes from Trotsky which they burned. It would have been foolish in the extreme for them not to have destroyed such incriminating evidence. The Bolsheviks were experienced in working conspiratorially. They had years of practice doing so under the Tsar. They knew better than to keep written lists of fellow conspirators, written plans, and in general anything in writing that would, if discovered by the police, cause disaster to the conspiracy.

## **Corroborative Evidence**

There are two kinds of evidence that corroborate the direct evidence of Trotsky's collaboration with Germany and Japan. The first is the testimony of those who like Nikolai Bukharin and Genrikh Iagoda admitted to participation in a bloc or alliance with others who had first-hand knowledge of Trotsky's collaboration with Germany and/or Japan but who claimed no ties with Germany or Japan themselves.

Iagoda testified that he learned of Trotsky's direct contact with the Germans from Avel' Enukidze and Lev Karakhan. We have examined Karakhan's testimony above. Most of Enukidze's investigative file is still secret. Neither of the two interrogations of Enukidze published to date mentions his contacts with Trotsky.

Concerning Nikolai Bukharin we have much more information than about any of the other defendants in the various Soviet trials. We have discovered, edited, and published his first confession of June 2, 1937. This is also the only pre-trial confession of Bukharin that we have; the Russian government continues to keep all the others secret.<sup>5</sup> We have also discovered and published the falsified decree of the Gorbachev-era Soviet Supreme Court "rehabilitating" Bukharin on February 4, 1988, together with a study of it.<sup>6</sup> Neither of these documents was ever made accessible to researchers, much less published, before or during Gorbachev's day; both are still top-secret in Russia today. The "rehabilitation" decree cites a quotation from a document — Mikhail Frinovskii's confession statement of April 11, 1939 — that was secret in 1988 but that has since been published. That document is cited as evidence that Bukharin was innocent. In fact it contains evidence that Bukharin was guilty.

<sup>5</sup> We have discovered one additional confession of Bukharin's of February 20, 1938. This confession is still secret in Russia. It does not deal with Trotsky.

<sup>6</sup> Grover Furr, Vladimir Bobrov, 1937. *Pravosudie Stalina. Obzhalovaniuu ne podlezhit!* Moscow: Algoritm, 2010, Ch. 2: "Reabilitatsionnoe moshenichestvo."

Bukharin's first confession implicates Trotsky, as does his Trial testimony. We have also examined Bukharin's appeal of his death sentence to the Soviet Supreme Court, in which he reiterates his guilt and claims that for his crimes he should be "shot ten times over."

There is no reason whatever to doubt that Bukharin was telling the truth in his pre-trial and trial confessions and in his post-trial appeal. Bukharin was



very clear and explicit that Radek had told him more than once about Trotsky's involvement with the Germans and Japanese.

This is corroborative evidence. Bukharin's first confession corroborates Radek's confession at the January 1937 Trial — Bukharin confirms what Radek said, meanwhile adding a bit more detail. Bukharin's first confession also corroborates the truthfulness of his own statements at his trial in March 1938. The most striking corroboration is Bukharin's two appeals after his trial, where he confirms his guilt in the strongest possible terms.

A second kind of corroborative evidence consists of evidence from persons who claimed first-hand or second-hand knowledge of Trotsky's collaboration and who themselves were working with either Germany or Japan. According to the evidence now available three of the eight figures in the Tukhachevsky Affair — Primakov, Putna, and Tukhachevsky himself — had direct contact with both Trotsky and the Germans. The other six defendants, all officers of the highest ranks, would almost certainly have known about Trotsky's involvement.

Very little of the investigative and judicial (trial) materials in the three Moscow Trials, the Tukhachevsky Affair, and the broader military conspiracy, has been made public. The rest remains top-secret in Russia today, probably for the reasons Col. Alksnis suggests. Still, enough has leaked out that we have a great deal of evidence, some of it documentary, of German and Japanese collaboration by oppositionists, including military figures.

We also have a number of transcripts of interrogation-confessions of Nikolai Ezhov, head of the NKVD between September 1936 and November 1938. In the earliest one that we have, an interrogation dated April 26, 1939, Ezhov testifies to his own direct collaboration with German military and intelligence figures. Ezhov stated he too was in contact with General Hammerstein.<sup>7</sup>

Hammerstein asked Ezhov specifically how much influence the Trotskyists had in the Bolshevik Party.

Question: Did your further meetings with Hammerstein take place?

Answer: Yes, I had three more meetings with Hammerstein. At the second meeting Hammerstein expressed interest in the details related to the murder of S.M. Kirov, and **about how serious the influence of Trotskyites, Zinovievites and Rights in the ACP(b) was.** (59-60)

*7 Lubianka. Stalin i NKVD — NKGB — GUKR «SMERSH». 1939 — mart 1946.* Moscow: "Materik", 2006. No. 37, 52-72. Russian original at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhovru.html> and at <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/58654> English translation by Grover Furr at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhov042639eng.html>

The German general's interest in this subject is consistent with the considerable evidence we have seen of Trotsky's collaboration with Germany.

What kinds of corroborative evidence might be admissible in a criminal trial is a legal question. It would be decided differently according to the time of the trial and the jurisdiction or country in which the trial took place. In some jurisdictions rules of evidence in cases of conspiracy might differ from rules in other criminal cases.

In a historical study we are interested in something else: consistency. The corroborative evidence is consistent with the direct evidence. The existence of such corroborative evidence reduces even further the possibility that all the direct evidence was fabricated — a negligible possibility by itself.

### **Trotsky's Possible Motives**

Our conclusions here are based not on any prejudice or animus for or against Trotsky but on the evidence. The late Pierre Broué, for decades a leading Trotskyist scholar, admitted on the basis of the evidence that Trotsky deliberately lied to the Dewey Commission. Yet Broué did not believe that to admit this constituted criticism of Trotsky. The present essay concludes on the basis of massive evidence that Trotsky did conspire with the Germans and Japanese. This conclusion is in itself not a criticism of

Trotsky. Whether one evaluates Trotsky's collaboration in a negative light or not depends upon one's political values.

Lenin conspired with the Imperial German government and military to go through the German lines to reach Petrograd in April 1917 on the famous "sealed train." That led to the Provisional Government's accusing Lenin (and the Bolsheviks) of being a "German spy," an accusation which is still occasionally voiced by anticommunists.

In 1918 Lenin insisted upon signing the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, an agreement which gave the Germans a lot of Russian territory and ended Germany's two-front war. Lenin was called a "German agent" by some for doing this too. It is the reason that the Socialist-Revolutionary Fanni Kaplan tried to kill Lenin and other Socialist-Revolutionaries did kill Soviet diplomat Moisei Uritskii and German diplomat Wilhelm Mirbach. They wished to sabotage this "pro-German" peace in order to promote a continuation of the war. It is the reason Bukharin and other Left Communists considered arresting Lenin, Stalin, and Sverdlov at that time.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Bukharin admitted this during the 1920s. At his trial in March 1938 Bukharin vehemently denied that this plot also encompassed the possibility of murdering Lenin, Stalin, and Sverdlov, as several former S-Rs asserted in testimony against him. Whatever his subjective intent may have been, many S-Rs were ferociously anti-Bolshevik and embraced assassination — "terror" in Russian — as a political tactic, so putting Lenin, Stalin, and Sverdlov at the S-Rs' mercy would certainly leave them vulnerable to possible murder.

Trotsky had a complicated view of the USSR in the mid-30s. At times he seemed to think that the leading stratum of the Bolshevik Party, or Stalin at the very least, had to be removed from power in order for the revolution to be saved both in the USSR and in the rest of the world. Given this outlook, he may have reasoned that what he was doing was similar to what Lenin had done: compromise with the capitalist powers in order to save the Revolution.

By the same token, the requirements of conspiracy would have prevented Trotsky from openly acknowledging such collaboration. The Germans and

Japanese would not have dealt with him openly. And to do so would have put anybody associated with him at great risk.

Additionally, most Trotskyists and sympathizers supported the Russian Revolution, were strongly anti-fascist, and had not necessarily decided that the only road to saving world communism was to change the leadership of the USSR at any cost. Knowledge of his collaboration with Germany and Japan would surely have cost Trotsky many of his relatively few adherents.

The evidence available to us today overwhelmingly supports the conclusion that Leon Trotsky collaborated with Germany and Japan in a conspiracy to overthrow the Soviet government and the Bolshevik Party leadership around Stalin, and to meet the demands of the fascists for partitioning the USSR, exiling the Comintern, opening the front to German and Japanese invaders, and making other economic and political concessions. Historians may alter these conclusions in future if more evidence comes to light. But these are facts that cannot be wished away.

### **Did Trotsky Lie Again?**

We have already noted that only a small number of men — eight of the defendants at the three Moscow Trials plus at least three and perhaps as many as six of the military figures — claimed that they were told of Trotsky's collaboration with Germany or Japan at first hand, either from Trotsky himself or from his son Leon Sedov. We believe that there are no grounds for dismissing this testimony.

But none of these men claimed to have personally witnessed any meetings between Trotsky (or Sedov) and German or Japanese representatives. Perhaps Trotsky was lying to them? Is it possible that Trotsky did not in fact have such contacts with the Germans and Japanese but was only claiming to have them — to raise the hopes of his followers and his own prestige among them, perhaps?

The evidence suggests this was not the case. Radek, Sokol'nikov, and Iakovlev testified that they were approached by German and Japanese officials who told them about Trotsky's collaboration with their countries.

This would seem to rule out any possibility that Trotsky was simply "bragging" to enhance his reputation among his followers and within the conspiracy generally. Nor is it just their word. From his very first confession Bukharin confirmed Radek's contact with German intelligence.

## **Leon Sedov**

Trotsky would not have conspired with either German or Japanese officials in writing. As we have discussed above, it was Bolshevik practice that such deeply secret matters should be communicated only orally. We cannot rule out the possibility that Trotsky himself could have met with German or Japanese representatives. But it seems most likely that he would have done so either chiefly or entirely through his son Leon Sedov. Sedov had the motive, means, and opportunity to be his father's main contact with German and Japanese representatives after 1929 when Trotsky left the USSR.

There is a good deal of suggestive evidence to support this hypothesis. Many of the men whose testimony about direct collaboration with Trotsky we have cited said they did so through Sedov. It was Sedov's address book containing the addresses of Trotskyists within the USSR that Getty found in the Harvard Trotsky archives (Getty Trotsky, 34 n.16). Twelve people — Gol'tsman, Ol'berg, Berman-Yurin, Piatakov, Shestov, Romm, Krestinsky, Rozengol'ts, Uritsky, Putna, Shnitman and Tukhachevsky — claimed that they were in contact with Trotsky entirely or mainly through Sedov.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Romm, Krestinsky, and Bessonov claim to have also met Trotsky personally. Some of these men also claimed contact with Trotsky by letter.

There is much evidence to suggest that in early 1937 Hitler was expecting a pro-German military coup in the USSR.<sup>10</sup> Powerful military figures would have represented the best chance of overthrowing the Soviet regime and bringing Trotsky back.

<sup>10</sup> See Grover Furr, "New Light on Old Stories about Marshal Tukhachevskii: Some Documents Reconsidered." *Russian History / Histoire Russe* 13, 2-3 (Summer-Fall 1986) 293-308; at

<http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/tukh.html>. We discuss the Mastny-Benes note in the Moscow Trials section of *Trotsky's 'Amalgams.'*

The "Tukhachevsky Affair" military men were tried and executed in June 1937. We have studied their confessions of collaboration with Trotsky above. It may have been the destruction of this last and best opportunity to return to the USSR that impelled Trotsky to send the telegram that we examined in an earlier chapter. Shortly after this, in July 1937 Zborowski noted Sedov's descent into drunkenness, gambling, and womanizing, and his declaration to Zborowski that all was lost. Such behavior is consistent with the hypothesis that Sedov's behavior reflected the final collapse of his and his father's hopes. Zborowski, who worked very closely with Sedov, had not reported any such behavior at any earlier date.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For this document see *Trotsky's 'Amalgams,'* 516-517. Trotsky's followers long believed that the NKVD caused Sedov's death on February 16, 1938, in a Paris clinic where he had undergone an appendectomy. But Zborowski's reports, confirmed by Costello and Tsarev and seconded by the memoirs of Pavel Sudoplatov who later oversaw the planning of Trotsky's assassination, all suggest that the NKVD had nothing to do with Sedov's death (Costello 1993, 283-4; Sudoplatov 1997, 95-6).

## **Evidence and Proof**

Many people believe — mistakenly — that in historical study there must be "proof beyond a reasonable doubt" for any conclusion to be justified. This is incorrect.

In historical study the job of an historian is to formulate hypotheses in order to account for the evidence that exists. The only scientific — in the sense of objective, rational, and intellectually defensible — way to determine the truth is to find the hypothesis that best accounts for all the evidence at hand and without cherry-picking it.

The conclusion will not be "certain." I use the scare quotes deliberately because there is seldom, if ever, "certainty" in any human endeavor. For

example, there is no "certainty" in criminal investigation and prosecution, with which historical research is often compared and confused.

In a criminal trial the jury is supposed to be instructed to find a defendant "not guilty" unless the evidence proves him guilty "beyond a reasonable doubt." This is an attempt to avoid depriving an innocent defendant of liberty, property, rights, or life, even though it risks exonerating a guilty defendant — something felt to be less odious.

We historians have a more pleasant job. None of the subjects of our investigations have their rights, life, or liberty at stake. All our subjects are dead, and dead people have none of the same kind of rights as the living, and certainly no life or liberty to lose. In historical investigation we can safely more closely approach the truth according to the hypothesis that best accounts for all the evidence we have. This is the only objective manner to most closely approximate the truth.

The historian must strive to be objective. This means, first and foremost, to act in a way so as to compensate for her or his own biases and preconceived ideas. Objectivity — the goal of all scientific investigation, including historical study — is an attitude of distrust of the self. Everyone has biases and preconceived ideas, and it is impossible to simply "shed" them. Instead, the historian must take active steps to subject her/his own biases and preconceived ideas to special doubt. He/she must "lean over backwards," as it were, to give an especially generous reading to evidence that appears to *contradict* his/her own preconceived ideas and biases. Likewise, he/she must subject to special doubt and suspicion any evidence that tends to *support* his/her own biases and preconceived ideas.

In the present investigation the only hypothesis that accounts for the evidence we now have is that Leon Trotsky really did collaborate with the Japanese. This will not disturb those readers who have no particular biases or preconceived ideas in play. Nor will it long trouble those historically-savvy readers who are accustomed to questioning their own preconceived ideas and are excited at the discovery of new results.

It will not trouble those students of history who welcome the fact that historical study is "disillusioning" — that it challenges one to shed one's

illusions, to question received viewpoints, to change one's mind, to grow intellectually by facing the implications of truths that they did not know before and may find unpleasant. This kind of excitement and satisfaction is well known to scholars in the physical and biological sciences, as well as to many historians, when new truths and new paradigms overturn old ones.

The present study poses an interesting challenge to the many readers who are committed to the position that the Moscow Trials were frame-ups. It poses a particular challenge to Trotskyists. As with any historical study, those who have strongly held preconceived ideas that clash with the results of this study will be tempted to question this study but not to question their own biases and commitments. This is a methodological error. It is a lack of objectivity. It is in contradiction to materialism itself. Materialists base their decisions about truth or falsehood upon evidence, not upon their own preferences what they "would like the truth to be."

A great many people do not know how to be objective, to question their own biases, to sincerely consider hypotheses and evidence that suggest that their own preconceived ideas are in error and should be abandoned. There is far too little commitment to objectivity. This is nowhere more obvious than on the Left, where ancient battles still rage while vast amounts of new primary source evidence go largely ignored.

Those who are committed not to an objective search for the truth but to their subjective preconceptions, either out of bias or from ignorance of proper historical methodology, will not be "convinced" by the results of this study. But "convincing" people is not the goal of historical study. Or, rather, the reader I aim to convince is the one whom I have described above: the reader who is excited by the search for new knowledge; who is not afraid to admit that she/he does not already know the truth; who does not fear to confront her/his own ignorance but wishes to shrink the boundaries of that ignorance; the one who wants to learn something that she/he did not know before and even thought was not possible — that reader will benefit from this study, as will the entire field of Soviet history.

## **Deciding On The Basis of the Evidence**



Given the evidence available today there is only one objective conclusion: that our hypothesis has been confirmed. The evidence forces us to conclude that Leon Trotsky did collaborate with German and Japanese officials to help him return to power in the Soviet Union. There is no basis to disregard this or to regard the evidence we have reviewed in this paper as faked, obtained by torture, or fraudulent in any other respect.

Deciding according to the evidence demands that we accept the permanently contingent nature of our conclusion. Any objective assessment of the evidence for this, or any other historical conclusion, must always be provisional. If and when new evidence is produced we must be prepared to adjust or even to abandon this conclusion if warranted by that new evidence. Historical study knows no such thing as "certainty."

By the same token the evidence compels us to conclude that Trotsky did conspire with the Hitler and Japanese militarist regimes to help him overthrow the Soviet government and Communist Party leaders in order to regain power in the Soviet Union.

## **Appendix of Primary Sources**

### **Confessions about Rakovsky**

( Lubyanka 1937-1938 No. 11 pp. 56-60. Russian text online at <http://istmat.info/node/29655> and at <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/60982> )

Special communication of N.I. Ezhov to J.V. Stalin Concerning Kh. G. Rakovsky with appendix of excerpts from confessions concerning his case.

Jan. 25 1937 No. 55464

Urgent – Top Secret

To Secretary of the CC VKP(b) comr. Stalin

According to materials from agents and investigations RAKOVSKY Kh. G. has remained until the present one of the active members of the counterrevolutionary Trotskyist-Zinovievist terrorist organization. According to confessions of PIATAKOV and MILL' (Okun') he had an independent line of contact with TROTSKY (and has effected this contact through ROSMER).

During exile in Barnaul until April 1934, having extremely hostile positions towards the VKP(b) and its leadership RAKOVSKY maintained counterrevolutionary organizational contact with the active members of the Trotskyist organization IUDKIS, PLISO, KASPAROVA, O. SMIRNOVA, et. al. RAKOVSKY knew of the existence of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist bloc, who was in it, and their terrorist activities (from the confessions of GAVEN, TER-VAGANIAN ESTERMAN). According to confessions by KASPAROVA, NIKOLAEV, and ESTERMAN, RAKOVSKY's renunciation of Trotskyism was insincere at Trotsky's instigation and he remained as before in a position of active struggle against the leadership of the VKP(b).

KASPAROVA confessed that "the bloc of the Trotskyist and Zinovievist organizations was based upon the recognition of terrorist methods of struggle against the leadership of the VKP(b)" – she was informed of this by RAKOVSKY.

In 1934-35 RAKOVSKY was in contact with the secret Trotskyist POLLIAKOV, who several In April 1935 RAKOVSKY gave to one of his agents the platform of the Trotskyists and two documents published illegally by the Trotskyists in 1928, for safekeeping.

According to materials from agents in the Main Directorate of State Security it is apparent that in May 1935 RAKOVSKY transmitted through KARMANENKO a directive "to remain tact until the moment of international complications which will inevitably occur in the near future."

In May of the same year, 1935, we know of a meeting between RAKOVSKY and a certain DAVIDSON who arrived from the USA and COUTS who came from London.

While in Moscow RAKOVSKY continuously maintained close ties with the Trotskyists PREOBRAZHENSKII, SOSNOVSKII, VINOGRADSKAIA, SOSNOVSKAIA, DANISHEVSKII and CHERNOBORODOV. The arrested terrorist NIKOLAEV – former worker of the Krestintern and member of the CC CP(b)U confessed that during a meeting with RAKOVSKY in Moscow in 1935, "RAKOVSKY surprised him (NIKOLAEV) with his hostility" against comr. STALIN. RAKOVSKY was glad to hear NIKOLAEV's report his meeting with I.N. SMIRNOV and asked for information about DROBNIS and RAFAEL.

"For his part RAKOVSKY promised his full support in any Trotskyist work. I considered it necessary to verify with RAKOVSKY the facts communicated to me by DREITSER about the work of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist center, who was on it, and also who was in the Moscow center. RAKOVSKY confirmed all of this to me, and also confirmed the membership of the especially clandestine center." (from NIKOLAEV's confession of December 30, 1936).

NIKOLAEV's second meeting with RAKOVSKY took place at the beginning of 1936.

"At this meeting RAKOVSKY very concretely and frankly gave me clear directions concerning the development of Trotskyist work in a warlike spirit, since 'each of STALIN's blows against the Trotskyists must be answered by a counterstroke.'" (From NIKOLAEV's confession of December 30, 1936).

At an interrogation December 20, 1936 PIATAKOV confessed that at his personal meeting with TROTSKY in Oslo in 1935 TROTSKY told PIATAKOV that it was essential to meet with RAKOVSKY and tell him that he had to become more active. Sai PIATAKOV, "I concluded from this that RAKOVSKY had some kind of special way of communicating with TROTSKY."

On January 25 of this year the accused DROBNIS confessed at trial that he was aware from the words of MURALOV that RAKOVSKY had his own direct Trotskyist lines of communication and definitely knew "about the new tactics, Trotsky's new directives concerning terror and diversion."

I consider that it is imperative that RAKOVSKY be arrested. I request your permission.

People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the USSR N. EZHOV

APPENDIX: Excerpts from confessions in 6 pages.

EXCERPT FROM TRANSCRIPT OF INTERROGATION OF  
KASPAROVA of 9/21, 10/27, and 11/5 1936

That the bloc of the Trotskyist and Zinovievist organizations had at its basis the mutual acceptance of terrorist methods of struggle against the leadership of the VKP(b) I learned from Kh. G. RAKOVSKY.

RAKOVSKY informed about this in a coded letter in Saratov in 1933 not long before my arrest.

I cannot relate the exact contents of Kh.G. RAKOVSKY's letter but I recall that in this letter, in a very few sentences, Kh.G. RAKOVSKY informed me that the basis of the bloc was the mutual terrorist activity of the Trotskyists and the Zinovievists against the leadership of the VKP(b) and, evidently knowing from I.N. SMIRNOV about my negative attitude towards terrorist methods of struggle, that there was no other way to change the leadership of the VKP(b) and, consequently, to change the regime. The letter ended with a communication of the members of the center of the bloc – ZINOVIEV, KAMENEV, SMIRNOV, and MRACHKOVSKII.

I am aware that during the whole period of his exile RAKOVSKY took a very hostile attitude in relation to the VKP(b) and its leadership.

The letters and directives that RAKOVSKY issued in rather large numbers were distinguished by their hostility to the Party's line, oriented Trotskyists towards denying that the USSR was dictatorship of the proletariat, gave the direct order to form a second party and led, as I have confessed, to directive concerning the transition to terror in the struggle against the Party leadership.

RAKOVSKY was considered by all of us as TROTSKY's "man in charge" in the USSR and since we knew about RAKOVSKY's contact with TROTSKY, which took place through I.N. SMIRNOV, we accepted all directives issued by him as TROTSKY's directives.

RAKOVSKY carried on a very intensive correspondence in code with the exiles and the political isolators. With the Saratov Trotskyist organization RAKOVSKY carried on this correspondence in the main through OL'GA SMIRNOVA. Documents were transmitted to him in the bindings of books.

I know that all the work of organizing a printing press and reproducing Trotskyist documents in the Kursk Trotskyist organization was carried out with RAKOVSKY's knowledge and permission. Active contact between him and Trotskyists who arrived in Barnaul was also conducted intensively.

I recall that in 1932 the Trotskyists PLIS used to come. He brought to us from RAKOVSKY an illegal document titled "Dictatorship is an Abstraction."

At the end of 1933 IUDKIS was coming to RAKOVSKY from the center of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist bloc.

RAKOVSKY's declaration of renunciation was a complete surprise to me...., his renunciation was a maneuver.

His renunciation of Trotskyism was effected by RAKOVSKY on the direct instructions of TROTSKY. The exiled Trotskyist MAKNIVEL'SON informed me about this in Alma-Ata.

Accurately [transcribed]

Authorized agent, 4<sup>th</sup> Section, Main Directorate of State Security

Jr. Lieutenant of State Security EFREMOV

EXCERPT FROM TRANSCRIPT OF INTERROGATION of PIATAKOV  
December 19-20 1936

"We arrived at an airport near Oslo and from there drove by automobile to a cottage where I met with Trotsky in a private apartment. The meeting lasted no more than two hours.

I should add that among the individual persons whose names TROTSKY mentioned during our talk RADEK, SOKOL'NIKOV, RAKOVSKY and others were mentioned.

Concerning RAKOVSKY TROTSKY said that it was essential to talk with him and give him a push in his work along the lines of the Trotskyist organization. From this I deduced that RAKOVSKY had some personal line of contact with TROTSKY.

After the meeting with TROTSKY I intended to meet with RAKOVSKY and pass TROTSKY'S instructions on to him, but this meeting never occurred."

Accurately [transcribed]

Authorized agent, 4<sup>th</sup> Section, Main Directorate of State Security

Jr. Lieutenant of State Security EFREMOV

EXCERPT FROM TRANSCRIPT OF INTERROGATION of NIKOLAEV  
from December 30, 1936

"After the return of I.N. SMIRNOV from abroad in 1932 he informed me that he had meetings with L. SEDOV and gave me a direct order about the necessity of restoring organizational contacts with the former active Trotskyists and developing activity.

Already then, in 1932, I. N. SMIRNOV had received a directive from TROTSKY through SEDOV concerning the development of terrorist activity against the leaders of the VKP(b).

In carrying out this directive I began to reestablish my contacts with the active Trotskyists RAKOVSKY, DROBNIS, BOGUSLAVSKII and others. Talks with all these persons on political subjects convinced me that they were all prepared and were all fully firm in their conviction for active work against the Party.

To my question about how to understand RAKOVSKY's renegade renunciation DREITSER informed me "that all this was done with TROTSKY'S agreement."

RAKOVSKY's renunciation was for strategic purposes while he maintained his old political convictions and he, RAKOVSKY, was even a member of the especially secret center. He [DREITSER] named as members, in addition to RAKOVSKY, PIATAKOV, SOKOL'NIKOV, and K. RADEK.

This center exists in the event of failure of the active center of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist center of the bloc. E. DREITSER suggested that I establish close organizational contact with it.

When AKIRTAVA asked me about things in Moscow and with whom in the Trotskyist leadership I was in contact I informed him about the situation in Moscow and that I maintained contact with RAKOVSKY.

I told AKIRTAVA that RAKOVSKY was a member of the especially secret center whose membership consists of, besides RAKOVSKY, PIATAKOV, K. RADEK and SOKOL'NIKOV, just as E. DREITSER had told me and as RAKOVSKY himself had at one time confirmed.

My meeting with RAKOVSKY took place during the summer of 1935 in Moscow, upon his return from Barnaul, near the post office. Having learned about my arrest in 1933 he was interested in who was in the political isolator, about their state of mind, and about my intentions about returning to the Party. To this I answered that I did not intend to return to the Party again.

I had always known RAKOVSKY to be a person hostile to STALIN and to the current Party leadership, but at our last meeting surprised even me with his hostility against STALIN. He specifically emphasized that they were hindering him in the People's Commissariat of Health and did not allow him to utilize his abilities. In a word the fellow almost stated directly that he had counted on something bigger when he wrote his false declaration that he had moved to the Party's political positions.

For this reason he was especially satisfied at my information my meeting with I.N. SMIRNOV during my exile. He asked about DROBNIS and whether I was in contact with RAFAIL.

On his part RAKOVSKY promised all his support in any Trotskyist work. He also informed me that he maintained regular contact with PIATAKOV.

I considered it necessary to verify through RAKOVSKY the facts about the work of Trotskyist-Zinovievist center told to me by DREITSER, about the members of the center, and also of the Moscow center. RAKOVSKY



confirmed all of this to me, and also confirmed the membership of the especially secret center.

At this meeting RAKOVSKY very concretely and frankly gave me clear directions concerning the development of Trotskyist work in a warlike spirit, since "each of STALIN's blows against the Trotskyists must be answered by a counterstroke." RAKOVSKY suggested that I maintain regular contact with him."

Accurately [transcribed]

Authorized agent, 4<sup>th</sup> Section, Main Directorate of State Security

Junior Lieutenant of State Security EFREMOV

AP RF. F. 3. Op. 24. D. 276. L. 15-73. Original. Typewritten

On the first page there is the handwritten note: "Arch. St."

### **Trotsky's 'Prediction' About Rakovsky**

Rakovsky's Testimony at Trial. [1938 Trial, pp. 289-295.]

We have examined all other evidence relating to Rakovsky's confession concerning the Japanese government and Trotsky. It remains to study Rakovsky's version as given in his trial testimony on March 4 and 5, 1938.

In September 1934 I was sent to Tokyo at the head of the Soviet Red Cross Delegation to an international conference of Red Cross Societies, which was to take place there October. The day after I arrived in Tokyo, I was stopped the corridor of the Japanese Red Cross building by a certain prominent public man of Japan. I can mention his name.

THE PRESIDENT: No, there is no need.

RAKOVSKY: Very well, I will name him at the session in camera. He invited me to tea. I made his acquaintance. He held a position which had some relation to my mission. I want to say, not my mission as one who belonged to the opposition, but my governmental mission. I accepted his amiable invitation. During the conversation this person (here I omit various compliments, commonplaces, flattering remarks) said that the interests of the political trend to which I belonged in the U.S.S.R. and the interests of a certain government fully coincided, and that he personally welcomed my arrival in Tokyo because it would give him the opportunity to discuss certain questions concerning both sides; and in particular, he declared that for a certain government and for himself my estimate of the political situation in the Soviet Union would be of extraordinary value.

I must say that I did not anticipate a conversation like this, it took me unawares. I said that, firstly, I was not, nor did I belong to or take any part in the leading circles of my country. I now occupied a very modest position, a modest post in the People's Commissariat of Public Health, and unfortunately, in this connection I could not be of any service to them. I evaded further conversation and left.

I am giving you the gist of it, of course, without vouching for every word. I wanted to ascertain the motives which prompted such a proposal. The same evening I had a talk with the Ambassador, Yurenev, whom I had known as a Trotskyite ever since 1926, when I spent a summer with him in the south of France at Saint-Jean-de-Luz. I told him of the rather strange words of the person I have mentioned. I am representing it in a somewhat more pointed form, because usually such things are wrapped up in a lot of verbiage without any pretext for protest being given. I told Yurenev that the idea here was to enlist me as a spy, as an informer for a certain government.

Then Yurenev drew a letter from his pocket and told me: "The question is decided, there is no need to hesitate." He even said: "The die is cast." He showed me Pyatakov's letter, which I myself had brought

him from Moscow. It was sent to me under such circumstances that I could not know its contents.

I must tell you that when I arrived in Moscow after sending my statement to the Party, I immediately went for a cure. Then I came back, started work, and in two months left for Tokyo. During this time I had the opportunity to see only Sosnovsky, and went twice on business to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, where I met Krestinsky, with whom I exchanged a few words. I will speak of this later. But on the whole this was the period when I was trying to get back into the Party and in general avoided any meetings with known oppositionists.

Just before my departure I received by messenger of the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry an envelope addressed to me in the People's Commissariat of Health. In this envelope there was a second envelope, addressed to Yurenev, and a note for me. The note was from Pyatakov. In this note he congratulated me on my return and asked me to take the letter to Yurenev and insist on Yurenev's compliance with his request. The letter was not coded. The contents of this letter related to the methods used in Japan for making alloys of non-ferrous metals; Pyatakov asked Yurenev to let him know what methods were used there and at the same time to send him literature on the subject available in Japan in English and German. But when after my conversation with the well-known public man I have mentioned Yurenev drew this letter from his pocket, besides the unencoded text there was another text which had been written in invisible ink. Then Yurenev read to me first of all what concerned me. Pyatakov had written to him: Rakovsky, apart from his ill health, has another reason for being cautious; this is his desire to get back into the Party; so that in this sense we must spare him, but as far as possible utilize his stay in Tokyo. Then came literally the following phrase: "It is likely that a certain government will itself take steps in this direction" (that is, in the direction of utilizing Rakovsky). Further Pyatakov wrote to Yurenev about Bogomol, the Ambassador in China, pointing out that a certain government was dissatisfied with his political line, that he was helping Great Britain more than he was the said government.

Further it was pointed out that Yurenev must try to make all possible use of Sabanin, the director of the legal department of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, while he was in Tokyo. Finally, Yurenev said, reading the letter: "But this is what I find difficult to do." The letter contained instructions that he must take advantage of the well-known negotiations concerning the sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway so that something might accrue to the benefit of the Trotskyites.

I have told you approximately the contents of Pyatakov's letter to Yurenev. Yurenev was connected with the Trotskyite underground in Moscow, with Pyatakov.

On the second or third day after my conversation with Yurenev, after a certain banquet to which all the delegates to the Red Cross Conference had been invited, at the end of the dinner somebody approached me and said that a certain personage of high standing, present at this dinner, wished to make my acquaintance.

The official personage stated that he was very pleased to make my acquaintance, etc. Then he went on to say that our interests coincided with the interests of a certain state, that an agreement had been reached between the Trotskyites in the U.S.S.R. and the representatives of a certain state, but that we did not know the exact terms of this agreement yet.

The prominent public man who had spoken to me did so, as I learnt, on the instructions of this high personage. After this I had two more meetings with the public man...

THE PRESIDENT: Excuse me, accused Rakovsky. Seeing that it is now ten o'clock and your evidence will last another hour at least, you will conclude tomorrow.

The Court is adjourned until 11 a.m.

MORNING SESSION, MARCH 5, 1938

COMMANDANT OF THE COURT: The Court is coming, please rise.

THE PRESIDENT: Please be seated. The session is resumed. Accused Rakovsky, you may conclude your evidence.

RAKOVSKY: Yesterday I concluded with the statement that, after my conversation with the high personage who was close to the Japanese government, I had three talks with the public man of whom I have spoken, the man at the head of a big public organization in Japan.

During the second and third meeting with the public man who headed a big public organization in Japan we established the nature of the information which I promised to supply to the agents of the Japanese intelligence service Moscow and also the technique of transmitting this information. While still in Tokyo, I drew into this work Dr. Naida, secretary of the Red Cross Delegation, of whom I already knew that he was a member of the underground counter-revolutionary terrorist organization. I sent Dr. Naida with my card to the public man and he arranged with him as to how and with whom Dr. Naida was to meet in Moscow; it was he who acted as liaison agent between me and the Japanese intelligence service. In Tokyo I had yet another meeting, with a third person. All such international conferences, as you probably know, are accompanied by all kinds of receptions, dinners, shows, meetings, which usually serve as a background for very serious conversations, quite legitimate, but sometimes not legitimate, I have in mind recruiting for various purposes. I was introduced to this third person by the second high personage. He asked me to take coffee with him — this was after dinner; we sat down at a table and began to talk.

I shall not reproduce the whole conversation, and it is not necessary either; I shall give it to you in substance. He started the conversation by saying: "We are aware that you are a very close friend and adherent of Mr. Trotsky. I must ask you to write to him that a certain government is dissatisfied with his articles on the Chinese question and also with the behaviour of the Chinese Trotskyites. We have a right to expect a different line of conduct on the part of Mr. Trotsky.

Mr. Trotsky ought to understand what is necessary for the certain government. There is no need to go into details, but it is clear that an incident provoked in China would be a desirable pretext for intervening in China." I wrote to Trotsky about all this—about my negotiations in Tokyo, about my conversations with Yurenev, about my meetings, and, of course, about this last proposition.

I also kept Yurenev informed of all my talks. During the last week I fell ill owing to an inflammation of the veins of my right leg, and I stayed in the Embassy. I am mentioning this because it gave me and Yurenev an opportunity to see more of each other. He would come to me—the other members of the delegation were, of course, away at such times—he would come to me and we would talk about our common Trotskyite affairs. Yurenev was very much worried by one circumstance. "We have gotten," he said, "into such a mess that sometimes one does not know how to behave. One is afraid that by satisfying one of our partners we may offend another. For instance, here at present, antagonism is arising between Great Britain and Japan in connection with the Chinese question, while we have to maintain connections both with the British and Japanese intelligence services" ...

VYSHINSKY: Who do you mean, "we"?

RAKOVSKY: The Trotskyites. "The Moscow centre, in this case Pyatakov, is complaining that Bogomolov is taking the side of the British. And here I have to find my bearings in all this."... I told him: you are exaggerating the difficulty of your position. What do we have to proceed from? We Trotskyites have to play three cards at the present moment: the German, Japanese and British. It was not quite clear to me, at that time at least, what the German card promised. Personally I thought that the possibility was not excluded that Hitler would seek a rapprochement with the government of the U.S.S.R. I cited the policy of Richelieu: in his own country he exterminated the Protestants, while in his foreign policy he concluded alliances with the Protestant German princes.

The relations between Germany and Poland were still in the stage of their inception at the time. Japan, on the other hand, was a potent

aggressor against the U.S.S.R. For us Trotskyites the Japanese card was extremely important, but, on the other hand, we should not overrate the importance of Japan as our ally against the Soviet government. Even if Japanese aggression could force its way into the territory of the U.S.S.R., it would be lost in the vast spaces, and in the taiga. As for Great Britain, the situation was rather more serious. At that moment Great Britain was antagonistic to Japan. I am telling you about our private conversations which ought to show why we pursued one line or another. At the moment there was antagonism between ourselves and Japan, but it should not be forgotten that England once headed a coalition against the French Revolution and fought on for twenty-five years.

THE PRESIDENT: You should dwell less on the past and speak more about the Trotskyite organization.

RAKOVSKY: Thus, the conclusion was that it was necessary to maintain the connection with the British Intelligence Service, but to pay attention to the Japanese intelligence service at the present time.

VYSHINSKY: I did not quite get you. You say: it was necessary to maintain the connection with the British Intelligence Service and to pay attention to the Japanese intelligence service.

RAKOVSKY: To pay the main attention.

VYSHINSKY: Hence, to serve both the Japanese and British intelligence services, and in addition also the German.

RAKOVSKY: According to my personal opinion at the time, this latter was a mere prospect.

VYSHINSKY: From Krestinsky's evidence you saw that it was not a mere prospect.

What intelligence services were you personally connected with?

RAKOVSKY: The British and the Japanese.

VYSHINSKY: And Krestinsky? Accused Krestinsky, what intelligence service were you connected with?

KRESTINSKY: The German.

VYSHINSKY: Prospectively or actually?

KRESTINSKY: Actually.

VYSHINSKY: Actually? Proceed, please.

RAKOVSKY: I returned from Tokyo with the credentials of a Japanese spy in my pocket. In my present state of mind I do not find it difficult to say so openly, to admit openly before the people's Court what formerly I would not bring myself to admit to my own conscience. It took me a short time, only a few months one might say, to consummate that evolution of Trotskyism which it took other Trotskyites several years to consummate. (1938 Trial, 289-295)

### **Serov's Letter concerning the Bukharin Trial**

( Russian text online at <http://istmat.info/node/46740> )

From *Protsess Bukharina 1938 g.* Ed. Zh. V. Artamonova, N.V. Petrov. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi Fond Demokratiia, Steven Cohen and Katrina Vanden Heuvel Fund, 2012, pp. 832-858.

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Report of I.A. Serov, Chairman of the Committee of State Security [KGB] attached to the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Concerning the Trial in the Case of the "Anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites."

July 7 1956

Top secret



To Comrade V.M. MOLOTOV.

I hereby present to you the report concerning the questions outlined in the protocol of the Commission of the CC of the CPSU of July 2 1956.

I. Serov

July 7 1956. No. 1687-C

Report Concerning the Materials in the Case of the Antisoviet "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites."

The origins of the case

In the case of the anti-Soviet "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" the following persons were brought to justice sentenced by the Military Collegium of the USSR Supreme Court:

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- 1) BUKHARIN Nikolai Ivanovich
- 2) RYKOV, Aleksei Ivanovich
- 3) IAGODA, Genrikh Grigor'evich
- 4) KRESTINSKII Nikolai Nikolaevich
- 5) ROZENGOL'TS Arkady Pavlovich
- 6) IVANOV Vladimir IVANOVich
- 7) CHERNOV Mikhail Aleksandrovich
- 8) GRIN'KO Grigorii Fedorovich
- 9) PESHKOV Isaac Abramovich
- 10) IKRAMOV Akmal'

- 11) KHODZHAEV Faizulla
  - 12) SHARANGOVICH Vassilii Fomich
  - 13) ZUBAREV Prokopii Timofeevich
  - 14) BULANOV Pavel Petrovich
  - 15) LEVIN Lev Grivor'evich
  - 16) KAZAKOV Ignatii Nikolaevich
  - 17) MAKSIMOV-DIKOVSKII Veniamin Adamovich (Abramovich)
  - 18) KRIUCHKOV Petr Petrovich
- to the supreme criminal punishment — execution by shooting;
- 19) PLETNEV Dmitrii Dmitrievich — to 25 years in prison;
  - 20) RAKOVSKY Khristian Georgievich — to 20 years in prison and
  - 21) BESSONOV Sergei Alekseevich — to 15 years in prison.

As can be seen from the materials of the case, before the arrests of BUKHARIN N. I., RYKOV A.I., KRESTINSKII N.N. and others, the organs of the NKVD and of the USSR Prosecutor's Office did not possess any verified facts on organized activities of these individuals and on the existence of a so-called "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites."

The confessions of ZINOVIEV, KAMENEV, SOKOL'NIKOV and REINGOL'D that was available at that time concerning the criminal activity of BUKHARIN and RYKOV were rejected by the USSR Prosecutor's Office as unreliable. A. Ia. Vyshinskii, Prosecutor of the USSR, conducted a special investigation and concluded that there was no evidence against BUKHARIN and RYKOV, and in this connection on 23 September 1936 he sent for approval to J.V. STALIN a draft resolution concerning the cessation of criminal proceedings against BUKHARIN and RYKOV that had arisen on the basis of materials in the trial of the "Trotskyite-Zinovievite Center."

However, after that the NKVD began a storm of activity to collect new "evidence" of the existence of organized anti-Soviet activity on the part of the Rights and, in particular, by BUKHARIN, RYKOV and TOMSKII. During December 1937 — February 1938 participants in the so-called BUKHARIN "school" were arrested and confessions by ASTROV, TSEITLIN, ALEXANDROV and others appeared. At the same time RADEK, already convicted in another case, began to testify against BUKHARIN, RYKOV and TOMSKII.

Once they had become acquainted with the materials brought against them, BUKHARIN and RYKOV categorically denied any guilt in the conduct of anti-Soviet activities. They acknowledged only that in 1928-1929 they had fought against the party's general line but insisted that in recent

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years they had sincerely supported the party leadership and had no fundamental differences with it. In denying his guilt BUKHARIN, in particular, pointed out serious contradictions and absurdities in the testimony of those arrested and requested that a special commission of inquiry be appointed to verify them.

In February 1937, after EZHOV'S report to the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b), BUKHARIN and RYKOV were arrested.

Somewhat earlier RAKOVSKY Kh. G. had been arrested on a criminal charge.

In a special communication to J.V. STALIN, asking for his consent to arrest RAKOVSKY, the NKVD of the USSR pointed out that he had been exposed as one of the active participants of the Trotsky-Zinoviev terrorist organization by the testimony of PIATAKOV, KASPAROVA, NIKOLAEV, TER-VAGANIAN and others, as well as by material from undercover agents.

In fact, there were no materials in the possession of the NKVD from agents concerning criminal activities by RAKOVSKY, while the confessions of the above-named persons were vague and uncertain in their reliability.

Thus, TER-VAGANIAN, citing SMIRNOV I.N., confessed that in 1932 RAKOVSKY "wrote a new counterrevolutionary document." But there were no confessions by SMIRNOV along these lines.

The prisoner NIKOLAEV gave vague confessions that RAKOVSKY belonged to a reserve "especially secret center" consisting of PIATAKOV, SOKOL'NIKOV and RADEK, about which he supposedly learned from DREITSER. However, none of the individuals named by NIKOLAEV stated this in their testimony.

KASPAROVA confessed that RAKOVSKY hypocritically announced his departure from the opposition, but in reality did not break with it and in 1933, outlining his anti-Soviet views, informed her in his letters about the creation on a terrorist basis of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc.

To RAKOVSKY's case was also attached an excerpt from the testimony of PIATAKOV in which it is stated that "RAKOVSKY has his own line of contact with TROTSKY." In reality PIATAKOV did not give any such testimony.

From March to May 1937 BESSONOV S.A., ZUBAREV P.T., IAGODA G.G., BULANOV P.P. and KRESTINSKII N.N. were arrested.

Concerning BESSONOV there were confessions by BUKHARTSEV that he had recruited BESSONOV in 1936 into the Trotskyist organization, as well as testimony by KUSHNER that had characterized BESSONOV as "unexposed enemy of the party", who had permitted slander against the leaders of the CPSU(b).

Against ZUBAREV before his arrest, according to the materials attached to the case, there were confessions by YULIN, MEDNIKOV and ELKOVICH. They named him as one of the leaders of the counterrevolutionary organization in the Urals.

It has not been possible to establish from the case file what materials served as the basis for the arrest of KRESTINSKII, BULANOV and IAGODA.

Between October and December 1937 on the testimony of IAGODA KRIUCHKOV and LEVIN were arrested on the basis of LEVIN'S testimony.

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PLETNEV, KAZAKOV and MAKSIMOV-DIKOVSKII were arrested at the same time. They were accused of the villainous murders of V.V. KUIBYSHEV, V.R MENZHINSKII, M. GOR'KII and his son, M.A. PESHKOV.

ZELENSKII I.A., SHARANGOVICH V.F., GRIN'KO G.F., IKRAMOV A. and KHODZHAEV F., who were also defendants in the case under review, were arrested between July and September 1937.

The grounds for the arrest of ZELINSKII were the confessions of the accused LOBOV and KOMAROV (both rehabilitated at the present time) that he had attended anti-Soviet gatherings of members of the organization of Rights.

With respect to SHARANGOVICH there were in fact only the confessions of RACHITSKII, who named him among the members of an anti-Soviet organization.

KHODZHAEV was arrested on the basis of confessions of RYSKULOV and RYKOV.

RYSKULOV testified that in 1930 he and KHODZHAEV joined the anti-Soviet pan-Turkic center, which later established contact with the organization of the Rights and endorsed their terrorist plans. But RYKOV said of KHODZHAEV that he "more or less" sympathized with the Rights.

At the time of IKRAMOV'S arrest there were confessions of ANTIPOV, RUMIANTSEV (both rehabilitated), BUKHARIN, IRMATOV and BALTABAEV that he was one of the leaders of the anti-Soviet nationalist organization in Uzbekistan.

In addition the prisoner APRESOV confessed that as an agent of British intelligence he learned in 1932 about the involvement of IKRAMOV with British intelligence.

In October and November 1937 ROZENGOL'TS A.P., CHERNOV M.A. and IVANOV V.I. were arrested

LOGANOVSKII and RAKOVSKY had confessed about ROZENGOL'TS before his arrest.

LOGANOVSKII asserted that ROZENGOL'TS, as People's Commissar of Foreign Trade, maintained suspicious contacts with representatives of the Polish Embassy in Moscow and conducted sabotage activities in the field of foreign trade.

According to RAKOVSKY's testimony ROZENGOL'TS serves as an agent of British intelligence.

CHERNOV'S arrest was made on the basis of the confessions of RADCHENKO that since 1931 he had been "organizationally linked with the center of the Rights" and had been conducting sabotage activities, and of statements by GALEVIUS and GAISTER that as Commissar of Agriculture CHERNOV had extended protection to participants of an organization of agricultural saboteurs.

Concerning IVANOV there were confessions of KAMINSKII and GOROKHOV, arrested in other cases, that they knew from the words of others about his belonging to the anti-Soviet organization of Rights, and the confession of SOBOLEV that in his presence IVANOV had made anti-Soviet statements.

## II. The essence of the charges

BUKHARIN N.I., RYKOV A.I., IAGODA G.G. and the others involved in the present case were convicted of the following offenses:

1. On the instructions of foreign intelligence services they ha organized a conspiratorial group called the "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" that set as its goal

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the overthrow of the existing Soviet socialist social and political system, the restoration in the USSR of capitalism and the power of the bourgeoisie, the dismemberment of the Soviet Union and the separation from it of the Ukraine , Belarus and the Central Asian republics, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Primorye in favor of foreign states;

2. Systematically engaged in espionage on behalf of foreign countries, providing their intelligence services with very important secret state information.

In particular, KRESTINSKII and CHERNOV were accused of belonging to the German intelligence services, ROZENGOL'TS to the German and British intelligence services, RAKOVSKY to the Brit and Japanese intelligence services, SHARANGOVICH to the Polish service and GRIN'KO to the Polish and German intelligence services;

3. Systematically organized and carried out acts of sabotage and diversion in various branches of industry, agriculture and transport;

4. Organized terrorist acts against S.M. KIROV, V.V.KUIBYSHEV, V.R MENZHINSKII, A.M. GOR'KII, his son, M.A. PESHKOV, and also attempted to accomplish the poisoning of EZHOV.

BUKHARIN, moreover, was found guilty in the fact that during the period of the conclusion of the Brest peace a group of so-called "Left" Communists headed by him, together with a group of TROTSKY's and "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries tried to disrupt the conclusion of the peace treaty, to arrest V.I. LENIN, Ia.M. SVERDLOV, and J.V. STALIN and form a new government of Bukharinists, Trotskyites and "Left" SRs.

During the preliminary investigation and the judicial proceedings in the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR all those arrested

pleaded guilty to the charges against them.

### III. / Analysis of investigative and intelligence materials /

In the course of the verification of the case against the members of the so-called "Anti-Soviet bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" the investigative materials relating to the case have been studied as have agents' materials stored at the KGB of the USSR. At the same time all the accused who were brought to trial in the present case have been verified in the state historical archives and special archives where are stored materials of the Tsarist secret police and captured archives from the German, Polish and French intelligence and counterintelligence agencies.

All the accused convicted in the present case pleaded guilty to the charges against them. However, the verification process revealed that for the most part, these confessions had been made under compulsion and did not reflect the truth.

For example, RAKOVSKY Kh. G., who confessed his active participation in the "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" and his collaboration with Japanese and British Intelligence

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services, after the trial repeatedly protested his innocence and claimed that during the investigation he was forced to give confessions known to be false. / Agent "Anri" / who was held together with RAKOVSKY in the Orel prison, reported on March 17, 1940 that RAKOVSKY:

"completely denies his guilt and considers everything that took place at the trial and in the investigation was nothing but a farce. Sometimes he casually asserted that he gave all his testimony under pressure "(Arch. case number 300956, v. 9, l.d.181 [=archival 'delo' number, volume number, page number])

Another, / agent "Dima" /, who was also with RAKOVSKY in the same cell, reported on April 2, 1941 that conversations with him RAKOVSKY had categorically denied any involvement in the Bloc of Rights and



Trotskyites, said that his interrogation protocols had been falsified and then declared "I was indignant when ARONSON (investigator) wrote the protocol that stated that we wanted to restore capitalism. "Listen, — I said — that is illiterate." He threw crumpled protocol in my face. Generally, when I did not write the way they wanted me to, they always did that... " (ibid, l.d. 322)

Questioned on July 3, 1956 former employee of the NKVD ARONSON Ia.A. confirmed that the investigation against RAKOVSKY was indeed conducted in an atmosphere of serious violation of the norms of socialist legality.

After the trial RAKOVSKY, citing his advanced age and illness, repeatedly made applications in which he petitioned for clemency. However, RAKOVSKY's requests remained unsatisfied.

In this regard, on May 17, 1941 RAKOVSKY said to / agent "Finn" /: "I have decided to change my tactics. So far I have only asked for pardon, but have not written about my own case. Now I will write a statement calling for review of my case, with a description of all "secrets of the Madrid court" — Soviet investigation. At least let the people through whose hands all statements pass know how exaggerated cases and trials are concocting out of personal political revenge. Even though I may soon die, even if I am a corpse, remember ... sometimes even corpses will begin to speak." (Arch. case number 300956, v. 9, l.d. 239-240)

RAKOVSKY's testimony about his alleged criminal activity is also refuted by the fact that the men he named in interrogations as his accomplices, GVAKHARIA, BABAYAN and SABANIN have now been rehabilitated and their cases closed. BOGOMOLOV, whom RAKOVSKY named as a member of a counterrevolutionary organization, pleaded not guilty at his trial.

During the investigation KRESTINSKII stated that he was an active participant in the "anti-Soviet bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" and in October 1933 while on holiday abroad, with the assistance BESSONOV had met with Leon TROTSKY and SEDOV in the city of Meran. During this meeting TROTSKY, according to KRESTINSKII, gave him a directive

on establishment in the Soviet Union of the combined forces of the Trotskyites-Rightists and military conspirators, the need to employ terror, sabotage, and subversion in the struggle, as well about the conclusion of agreements with foreign governments for the overthrow of the Soviet state system.

However, these confessions of KRESTINSKII'S are not supported by the operational materials of the Foreign Division of the NKVD, whose agents were monitoring TROTSKY abroad. In the archival documents of the Foreign Division of the NKVD there is no information about any visit by TROTSKY and SEDOV to Meran, nor is there any information about any meeting with KRESTINSKII at all.

After the publication of the materials of the trial TROTSKY declared to a correspondent of the newspaper "New York Herald Tribune" that he

"...had not had any relations KRESTINSKII since 1927, and had not met, nor corresponded with him either directly or through a third party.

... he had never been to Meran and until he obtained the information today from his secretary had not known where this place was ..." (Arch. case number 13005, vol. 3, l.d.285)

BESSONOV, who had confirmed during interrogations that KRESTINSKII had met with TROTSKY and SEDOV in 1933 in Meran, declared after the trial that all his statements were false.

On May 6, 1939 / Agent "Blagin" /, who was confined with BESSONOV in Solovki prison, reported that BESSONOV responded about the trial of "anti-Soviet bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" as follows:

"The whole trial is a complete invention of the NKVD. In reality none of the accused committed any crimes..." (Arch. case number 101492, Vol. 1 l.d. 27)

On September 29, 1939 another / agent "Nikitin" / reported:

"Concerning the trial of the center of Rights and Trotskyites (1938) BESSONOV said that it was all a complete swindle and a very crude falsification. That, for example, KRESTINSKII really did take money from the German government in 1922 and subsequent years and pass it on to TROTSKY, but that all this did not represent anything counter-revolutionary since, by the Treaty of Versailles, Germany was unable to train military officers on its territory so she conspired with the Soviet Union to organize several military schools in Kazan' and other cities of the USSR and paid money for this to KRESTINSKII, the envoy, for TROTSKY, who was Commissar for the Army and Navy. This was known among the circles of Party and Soviet leaders." (Arch. case number 101492, Vol. 2, l.d. 83-84)

On April 29, 1939 / agent "Grachev" / wrote about the same subject: "Describing the trial as a "farce," prisoner BESSONOV said that everything that the accused said at the trial was coerced testimony and in fact none of them had plotted anything against Soviet power. (ibid, vol. 1, l.d. 22)

During the process of verification other facts have also been obtained that give indisputable evidence that the testimony of KRESTINSKII and BESSONOV was false.

During the interrogation of October 28 1937 KRESTINSKII, for example, testified that participants in the bloc of Rights and Trotskyites, in preparing the overthrow of the Soviet

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regime, discussed the information of a new government in which they intended to include their accomplices: RUDZUTAK, ANTIPOV AKULOV, LOBOV, UNSHLIKHT, KAMINSKII, BOLOTIN, KALMANOVICH, UKHANOV and ANTONOV-OVSEENKO.

These individuals were arrested and prosecuted on charges of organizing anti-Soviet activities. During 1955-1956 the cases against RUDZUTAK, ANTIPOV and the other persons named above were verified and terminated by the Military Collegium of Supreme Court for lack of evidence of criminal activity by the accused.

At the present time GAMARNIK, KNORIN, RUMIANTSEV, VEGER, and others about whom KRESTINSKII testified as "enemies of the people" have been rehabilitated.

In light of these facts the confessions of RAKOVSKY, KRESTINSKII and BESSONOV about the crimes allegedly committed by them cannot be considered truthful.

Of BUKHARIN, in addition to participation in the anti-Soviet bloc of Rights and Trotskyites, it was charged that in 1918, acting in collusion with TROTSKY and the leaders of the Left SRs, he organized a conspiracy that aimed to disrupt the Brest-Litovsk Treaty, to overthrow the Soviet government, and to arrest and kill V. I. LENIN, J.V. STALIN and Ia. M. SVERDLOV. At the same time BUKHARIN was accused of guilt in the villainous assassination attempt against V.I. LENIN by the SR F. KAPLAN.

This accusation was based on the testimony of MANTSEV, KARELIN, KAMKOV, IAKOVLEV and OSINSKII, arrested in other cases.

During the preliminary investigation, as is stated in the indictment signed by Vyshinsky, BUKHARIN "under the weight of evidence" confessed:

"I must admit that we had direct contact with the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries which was based on a platform of the violent overthrow of the Soviet government, headed by LENIN, STALIN, to be followed by the arrests of LENIN, STALIN and SVERDLOV and the creation of a new government of the "Left" Communists and "Left" SRs."(Arch. case number 967582, vol. 5, l.d. 122)

The question of BUKHARIN's collusion with the "Left" SRs was under investigation even before the arrest of BUKHARIN, during which the latter categorically denied that he had ever had any criminal ties with the "Left" SRs. At the confrontation with arrested ASTROV which took place on January 13, 1937 at the Central Committee of the CPSU(b), BUKHARIN answered a question of J.V. STALIN's thus:

"What's the point of my lying about the Brest peace? Once the Left SRs came and said, "Let us form a cabinet. We will arrest of LENIN and form a

cabinet." Afterwards I told this to Ilyich. "Give me your word that you will not mention this to anyone," Ilyich said. Then, when I was fighting alongside you against TROTSKY, I cited this as an example: Look, this is what factional struggle leads to. At that time it was a bombshell."

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BUKHARIN changed his testimony significantly during the course of the preliminary investigation and admitted that in 1918 he had been in an agreement with the "Left" SRs. However, at the trial in his closing statement BUKHARIN made such corrections to his previous testimony that they essentially negated his admission about the intention, in a bloc with the "Left" SRs, to arrest and murder LENIN, STALIN and SVERDLOV. In particular BUKHARIN declared:

I admit that there was one conversation with KARELIN and KAMKOV in which the initiative with regard to the arrest of LENIN for twenty-four hours and a subsequent bloc with the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries proceeded from the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries. But in the first conversation the reply was negative. As regards the fact that negotiations were subsequently conducted through PIATAKOV with the "Left" Socialist-Revolutionaries and this may be considered, as Citizen Procurator, if I am not mistaken, formulated it, an attempt to overthrow the Soviet power by forcible means—this I admit; it was the case. As to plan of physical extermination, I categorically deny it, and here the logic to which the State Prosecutor referred, namely, that forcible arrest implied physical extermination, will not help in the least..." (Arch. case № 967582. Trial transcript p. 684)

The confessions of the arrested MANTSEV regarding BUKHARIN's collusion with the "Left" SRs for the overthrow of the Soviet regime and the arrest of LENIN, STALIN and SVERDLOV cannot be considered reliable because MANTSEV gave them after having been sentenced to death. According to the material in the file MANTSEV it is clear that he was arrested on October 22, 1937 on the charge of belonging to a Trotskyist terrorist organization. He pleaded guilty to this and confessed that his active anti-Soviet activity was preceded by the struggle against the party in a group of so-called "Left Communists" led by BUKHARIN. However

MANTSEV did not confess anything at that time about any connection between BUKHARIN and "Left" SRs in 1918.

On December 25, 1937 MANTSEV was sentenced to death by Military Collegium of the Supreme Court. In accordance with the law of December 1 1934 the sentence against MANTSEV was to be carried out immediately, as was specifically mentioned in the text of the sentence. Nevertheless, this sentence was not carried out for a long time, and on January 31, 1938 confessions were obtained from MANTSEV that in 1918 BUKHARIN had conspired with the "Left" SRs to overthrow the Soviet regime and to arrest LENIN STALIN and SVERDLOV. After MANTSEV had given such testimony, his sentence of execution was canceled by a protest of the President of the Supreme Court and his case was remanded for further investigation. Four months after the trial of the anti-Soviet bloc of Rights and Trotskyites, where MANTSEV had acted as a witness, he was again sentenced to the supreme penalty without further investigation and was shot on August 19, 1938.

Another prosecution witness, speaking at the trial in the case o anti-Soviet bloc, former member of the Central Committee of the "Left" SRs KAMKOV B.D. according to the testimony of the arrested BRIUKHANOV, held together with him in the same cell, said to him:

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"All three of the recent trials are the same kind of swindle as the previous ones. There is not a drop of truth in them. Neither ZINOVIEV nor BUKHARIN was involved in any counter-revolutionary conspiratorial work. Espionage, diversion, sabotage, terrorism, killing – this is all a complete sham, fabricated by the NKVD. Confessions were extracted from the accused by torture, blackmail, beatings, threats, threats against their families, the arrests of their wives etc. by means of physical and mental pressure. At the same time they used bribery, appeasing the defendants promises not to execute them, etc..."(Arch. case number 967389, separate packet).

After the trial of BUKHARIN et al. KAMKOV was put on trial on the charge that he belonged to an illegal terrorist organization in Arkhangel'sk

and was spreading "vile slander in connection with the trials of the Rights and Trotskyites" among those in prison."

On August 29, 1938 at the review of his case in the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court KAMKOV pleaded not guilty to all charges and was sentenced to death. While BUKHARIN was in custody the prisoner ZARITSKII N.D. had been in the same cell and when questioned on July 3, 1956, testified:

"I spent 4-5 months with BUKHARIN before he was executed..."

During the investigation, and especially during the trial, BUKHARIN expressed indignation at the injustice of the accusations against him. He told me that he was accused of plotting to commit terrorist acts against the leaders of the Party and the Government, in an attempt to commit a terrorist act against LENIN.

He tried to convince me that during his last years he had been very close to LENIN, was well received in his family, was essentially in the position of a son, and that he could not even think of committing any act directed against LENIN.

He also told me that he had good personal relations with STALIN, that in a number of instances STALIN had given him and his family assistance in domestic matters, and therefore he never could even think of murdering him.

BUKHARIN was indignant that he was being questioned about some kind of criminal ties with whom he had never known.

During the trial itself BUKHARIN told me that people were making fictitious confessions to the court, talking about the existence of a center in which he was allegedly included, although he had no idea that it even existed."

Before his arrest, and under investigation BUKHARIN for a long time did not admit guilt to anything. During this time he wrote a lot of letters and petitions addressed to J.V. STALIN in which he gave his alibis. This,

together with the facts cited above, suggests that we ought not to treat BUKHARIN'S subsequent confessions with confidence. Especially since the verification process has established that a significant part of his testimony has been refuted beyond doubt as false. Specifically, 15 Party and Soviet workers who appear in BUKHARIN'S confessions as his accomplices have been fully rehabilitated.

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During the investigation and at trial RYKOV acknowledged that he was a leading participant in the anti-Soviet bloc of Rights and Trotskyites and was carrying out hostile activity.

However, the verification has established that these confessions of RYKOV's are, in the overwhelming majority of cases, false.

On August 9, 1937 RYKOV, for example, stated:

"In previous interrogations I testified about the reserve cadres of our organization but I did not talk about the main issue, namely that acting on a directive of the center of the Rights and specifically, on a directive that I gave to ANTIPOV, a reserve center of the organization of Rights was created. The structure of the center included: ANTIPOV, SULIMOV, UKHANOV, SYRTSOV, and KHALATOV" (Arch. case number 967582, v. 1, l.d. 138)

These confessions of RYKOV's are entirely fictional, because, as the verification process has determined, ANTIPOV, SULIMOV, UKHANOV, SYRTSOV and KHALATOV had been arrested without basis on charges of belonging to a counterrevolutionary organization of the Rights, and therefore in 1955-1956 they were fully rehabilitated. During his interrogation of 23 June 1937 RYKOV confessed:

"... The central figure in the organization of the Rights in the Urals was KABAKOV, whom we carefully kept very secret. I personally brought KABAKOV into the organization of the Rights during a process of repeated



conversations... I kept KABAKOV, as a very important member of our organization, up to date with our conspiratorial plans. In particular, KABAKOV was informed by me of the plan of the so-called palace coup." (Arch. case number 967582, vol. 1, l.d. 97-99)

In 1937 KABAKOV was arrested on the basis of this evidence and sentenced to death. KABAKOV had now been rehabilitated.

During the investigation RYKOV also confirmed that a center of the organization of Rights which included ANTIPOV, LOBOV, KOMAROV, ZHUKOV, UGAROV, KODATSKII and CHUDOV had existed in Leningrad since 1928.

Upon verification it has turned out that these confessions of RYKOV'S too are untrue. All of the above persons have now been rehabilitated.

According to RYKOV'S testimony KARAKHAN, allegedly a member of an organization of Rights, held talks on TOMSKII'S instructions with representatives of fascist Germany, to whom he made it clear that in the event the bloc of Rights and Trotskyites came to power certain concessions would be made in favor of the capitalist countries.

These confessions of RYKOV'S too have not been confirmed since KARAKHAN, brought to trial in 1937, refused to confess to any of the charges.

In RYKOV'S confessions comrade P. Togliatti also figures as a person who shared the views of Rights and was sympathetic to their struggle against the CC CPSU(b). The falsehood of these confessions speaks for itself.

Of those among his associates who figure in RYKOV'S testimony more than 30 people have far been rehabilitated.

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Defendant SHARANGOVICH also gave unreliable confessions about criminal activity.

Thus, during the interrogation of August 13 1937 SHARANGOVICH said that he had been recruited to the organization of anti-Soviet activity in 1932 by Sulimov, and that in 1933 the former third secretary of the Communist Party of Belarus ZHEBROVSKII had recruited him to work for Polish intelligence.

Later SHARANGOVICH changed his testimony somewhat and began to claim that he had been drawn into collaboration with Polish intelligence by VNOROVSKII, an employee in the Soviet Embassy in Warsaw.

However, the verification has determined that SULIMOV and ZHEBROVSKII have now been rehabilitated as having been condemned although they were innocent. As for VNOROVSKII, no information about his links with the Polish intelligence service have been found among the archival materials of the intelligence agencies of bourgeois Poland.

In addition SHARANGOVICH claimed during the investigation that he was allegedly linked in espionage work to BOGUTSKI and SLAVINSKI. BOGUTSKI and SLAVINSKI, convicted in the past as traitors and spies, have now been rehabilitated.

Also terminated for lack of evidence of a crime are the cases of a number of individuals whom SHARANGOVICH named as members of the counterrevolutionary organization, including GOLODED, former chairman of the Council of People's Commissar's of the Byelorussian SSR.

During the investigation ROZENGOL'TS, GRIN'KO, CHERNOV, IKRAMOV, and KHODZHAEV also made confessions that do not inspire confidence.

In pleading guilty to belonging to the anti-Soviet bloc of Rights and Trotskyites ROZENGOL'TS confessed:

"After the arrest of RYKOV I maintained contact with the Rights through RUDZUTAK and partly through ANTIPOV and ZHUKOV...

I told RUDZUTAK about the sabotage that I was carrying out in foreign trade and about my ties with TROTSKY. At the end of 1936 (or early in

1937), I had a detailed conversation with RUDZUTAK about the last period of my relations with RYKOV and the blueprint of the future government agreed upon earlier." (Arch. case number 967582, vol. 6, l.d. 38-39)

As ROZENGOL'TS confessed further, RUDZUTAK proposed to include ANTIPOV, LOBOV, ZHUKOV, KODATSKII, and KOMAROV in the new government.

Those whom ROZENGOL'TS named— RUDZUTAK ANTIPOV, LOBOV, ZHUKOV, KODATSKII and KOMAROV, as already mentioned above, have now rehabilitated.

In 1955-1956 the cases against MURADYAN, ELIAVA Sh RABINOVICH, SHINDEL', BELEN'KII B.S., KANDELAKI, SUD'IN, VEITSER and others whom ROZENGOL'TS named during the investigation as his accomplices in enemy activity have been terminated for lack of evidence of a crime.

The same must be said about the confessions of GRIN'KO and CHERNOV. The latter, for example, asserted during the investigation that in the summer of 1936, at the direction of RYKOV, he got in touch with LIUBIMOV, a member of the reserve center of the Rights, and learned from him that BUBNOV and

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BAUMAN were part of this center... CHERNOV further confessed that in his enemy activity he contacted the Trotskyists through RUKHIMOVICH.

All these people have now been rehabilitated since it has been established that they were all convicted on the basis of false materials.

The verification established that GRIN'KO and CHERNOV signed fictional confessions concerning 46 persons were responsible Soviet and Party workers, the cases against whom have now been terminated for lack of evidence of a crime.

During the investigation IKRAMOV gave very confusing confessions. Initially IKRAMOV argued that, being one of the leaders of a nationalist organization, he had established communication with the center of the Rights in 1935 through ANTIPOV.

According to IKRAMOV, ANTIPOV then informed him that: "In struggle against the Soviet government the leadership center of the Rights considers it necessary to use all available ... means such as armed insurrection, sabotage in various sectors of the economy, diversion and terror against the leaders of the Party and the Soviet government." (Arch. case number 967582, v. 12, l.d. 94)

At the same time IKRAMOV admitted that according to his directives subversive activities on a large scale were carried out in Uzbekistan. However, attention should be paid to the fact that in some cases IKRAMOV'S confessions about specific sabotage activities were clearly far-fetched. Thus, at the interrogation October 10-12 1937 IKRAMOV said that he and his accomplices "...deliberately disrupted Party education at the expense of the Marxist-Leninist education of the masses; we advocated the need to study general subjects, or, as we said to each other, to raise the overall level without Marxism ...

We sold half of the political education book by Ingulov, published the Uzbek language, in other republics, despite the dire need it in Uzbekistan." (Arch. case number 967582, v. 12, l.d. 55)

During the interrogation of February 28 1938 IKRAMOV, without explaining why, substantially changed his testimony about the time and circumstances of the establishment of the bloc with the Rights, saying that he had established contact with the center of the Rights not in 1935 but in 1933, and not through ANTIPOV but through BUKHARIN. At the same time IKRAMOV testified that the center of the Rights was comprised of BUKHARIN, RYKOV, TOMSKII and UGLANOV.

It is well known that TOMSKII committed suicide in 1936. In his suicide letter addressed to J.V. STALIN TOMSKII stated that he had read the ruling of the court concerning including him in the investigation in connection with the testimony of those arrested in the case of the "United Trotskyite-

Zinovievite terrorist center" and rejected the accusations against him as defamatory. Without denying his past political mistakes TOMSKII at the same time wrote that he could not bear being put alongside fascists and therefore was committing suicide and wished the party new victories.

Named by IKRAMOV as a member of the center of the Rights UGLANOV was arrested and confessed at trial that he had opposition activities until 1933 but after that had not carried out any anti-party work.

Serious doubts have also arisen concerning the credibility of KHODZHAEV'S confessions about his criminal activities.

Specifically, KHODZHAEV asserted

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that in 1928 he had been drawn into criminal work concerning the separation of Uzbekistan from the USSR by the former chairman of the State Planning Committee of the Uzbek SSR BURNASHEV.

It has been established by the verification we have conducted that BURNASHEV, referred to in KHODZHAEV'S testimony, had been convicted though innocent, in connection with which the Chief Military Prosecutor has now raised the question of his rehabilitation.

Although ZELENSKII, IVANOV and ZUBAREV pleaded guilty to all counts of the indictment, their confessions about the conspiracy of the Rights do not inspire confidence. More than 30 of the Soviet and party activists about whom ZELENSKII, IVANOV and ZUBAREV confessed to being accomplices to criminal activities, have now been rehabilitated because their innocence has been completely proven.

ZELENSKII, IVANOV and ZUBAREV, in addition to participation in the anti-Soviet bloc of Rights and Trotskyites, were also accused of collaboration with the Tsarist secret police.

It has been established by the verification that the testimony of ZELENSKII, IVANOV and ZUBAREV about their collaboration with the

Tsarist secret police cannot be sufficiently confirmed by the materials in the State historical archives where the records of police and gendarme corps of tsarist Russia are kept.

According to the archival facts agent "Slepoi" — Isaiah Abramovich ZELENSKII — collaborated with the Samara provincial gendarmerie beginning in 1916. The defendant in the present case, Isaac Abramovich ZELENSKII, was exiled from Sormovo to three years under police surveillance in Irkutsk province in 1915 by order of the Special Session of the Minister of the Interior for belonging to the RSDLP.

From the documents of the State Historical Archives it may also be seen that ZELENSKII had a brother named Isaiah.

With respect to IVANOV and ZUBAREV no documents have been found in the archives that might even indirectly confirm their involvement in the tsarist secret police. However ZUBAREV was specifically accused at trial by the confessions of former police officer VASSILIEV, who testified that he had recruited ZUBAREV.

Given such materials we cannot give a definitive opinion concerning the involvement of ZELENSKII, ZUBAREV and IVANOV with the tsarist secret police at the present time. These circumstances are subject to additional verification.

In the practical criminal activity attributed to the defendants in the case of "anti-Soviet bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" the killings of A.M. GOR'KII, V.V.KUIBYSHEV, V.R. MENZHINSKII and GOR'KII's son M.A. PESHKOV, as well the attempt to poison EZHOV, occupy a very important place.

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This accusation was brought against the leaders of the Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites, including IAGODA, against the well-known doctors PLETNEV D.D., LEVIN L.G., KAZAKOV I.N., former secretary of the NKVD USSR BULANOV, KRIUCHKOV P.P., secretary to A.M. GOR'KII,

and MAKSIMOV-DIKOVSKII V.A., assistant to V.V.KUIBYSHEV, who were brought to justice in this case.

All the defendants named pleaded guilty to the charges. However, the available materials indicate that these confessions are invalid. PLETNEV, who during the investigation and at trial admitted his guilt in the organization of killing A.M. GOR'KII and V.V.KUIBYSHEV on the instruction of IAGODA, after the conviction on June 11, 1939 addressed the following statement to Comrade VM Molotov:

"I was sentenced in the Bukharin case. During the investigation I admitted the accusations against me, and at trial I did not renounce them. I was slandered. The indictment leveled against me is false. My mind was under compulsion. But I did not consider it possible to make this statement at trial like Krestinskii. I have been in prison since December 1937. I am suffering morally to the ultimate degree. My health has deteriorated sharply. I am already 66 years old. The point around which the indictment was built was my meeting with Iagoda, where he allegedly threatening me and my family and demanded my involvement in the killing of Gor'kii. This meeting never took place either in August or, according to the next version, in June. Altogether I saw Iagoda only once in my life during his attack of angina pectoris. I saw him only in medical consultation. I never had any conversations with IAGODA except about his illness. All my life since October of 1917 I have been loyal to the Soviet regime and under the leadership of the party have given all my strength and knowledge to my homeland. Now I am deprived of all this. I swear to my innocence by all that is holy to me. I ask for a review of my case. I ask to be interviewed for this purpose or that that I be given an opportunity to submit a detailed statement in a sealed envelope." (Supervisory production № 7343-9, l.d. 6)

This declaration was transmitted by the Secretariat of comrade MOLOTOV V.M. to Beria.

Subsequently PLETNEV repeatedly made similar statements. About one of them former USSR Prosecutor BOCHKOV informed the Secretariat of Comrade V.M. MOLOTOV:

"The arguments set out in the complaint of PLETNEV D.D. and, in particular, his retraction of his testimony, are a provocation and a continuation of his hostile work ... review of the case is denied, of which PLETNEV D.D. has been informed." (Supervisory production, № 7343-9, l.d. 26)

In confirmation of the charge of murder brought against IAGODA, PLETNEV, LEVIN, KAZAKOV, KRIUCHKOV, BULANOV and MAKSIMOV-DIKOVSKII, eminent medical practitioners V.N. VINOGRADOV, Professor N.A. SHERESHEVSKII and others were called as experts at the trial. They drew the conclusion that GOR'KII, MENZHINSKII, KUIBYSHEV and PESHKOV died as a result

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of the clearly wrong medical treatment applied to them by PLETNEV, LEVIN and KAZAKOV.

With regard to the attempted assassination of EZHOV the experts concluded: "...it must be taken as absolutely established that the poisoning of Comrade N. I. EZHOV by mercury absorbed through the respiratory tract, the most potent and dangerous method of chronic mercurial poisoning, was organized and put into execution." (Court proceedings, p. 547 (621))

Professor VINOGRADOV and Professor SHERESHEVSKII were interviewed in 1956 and stated that no documents were submitted to them confirming the incorrect treatment of KUIBYSHEV, GOR'KII, MENZHINSKII, and PESHKOV, that they reached their conclusion only on the testimony of the defendants, who admitted their guilt completely. Thus VINOGRADOV in particular pointed out:

"Conclusions were drawn by myself and the other experts on the basis of general questions without the presentation of any detailed documentation (medical history with detailed logs, analyses and pictures). Thus, our answers to these questions were of a purely theoretical nature. We could not assert the authenticity of this fact on the basis of the materials that were before us."



Concerning this matter SHERESHEVSKII said:

"... our conclusion was derived from the testimony of the accused and could not serve as additional proof of their guilt, inasmuch as there were no medical documents presented to us confirming fact that the patients had been treated in the way mentioned in the testimony of the accused."

At the same time SHERESHEVSKII and VINOGRADOV described PLETNEV as an outstanding scientist of world renown. And with regard to LEVIN, accused of killing GOR'KII, SHERESHEVSKII said:

"LEVIN was GOR'KII's attending physician and, as far as I know, loved him greatly. When he talked about him, he was simply transformed. And that is not at all compatible with the accusation against him of the deliberate murder of A.M. GOR'KII."

Upon verification it was also revealed that the materials on the so-called "poisoning" of EZHOV were completely falsified.

In an interrogation of April 16 1939 FRINOVSKII testified about this: "NIKOLAEV-ZHURID, with my participation and as directed by EZHOV, fabricated the case of the so-called mercury poisoning of EZHOV. NIKOLAEV personally directed the case. EZHOV gave out the idea that he was ill from poisoning, and NIKOLAEV seized on it, and under great pressure got confessions about this from BULANOV, then from IAGODA's courier ... and then from IAGODA himself.

From somewhere or other NIKOLAEV obtained a pharmacy jar with mercury, which he turned into material proof of the mercury poisoning of EZHOV. NIKOLAEV provided the corresponding expert opinion of the poisoning." (Arch. case number 975181, Vol. 2, l.d. 62)

EZHOV confirmed these confessions of FRINOVSKII'S.

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According to verification in the special State archive of the USSR no materials have been found indicating a connection of persons in this case

with foreign intelligence agencies.

Persons brought to trial in this case, as well as those in the precious public trials, were accused of carrying out their criminal activities on the instructions of TROTSKY. Concerning this, TROTSKY in his article "The outcome of the process," of March 12, 1938 wrote:

"According to the results which Vyshinsky must draw from the latest series of trials the Soviet state is revealed as a centralized apparatus for state treason.

The heads of the government and the majority of people's commissars (Rykov, Kamenev, Rudzutak, Smirnov, Iakovlev, Rosengolts, Chernov, Grin'ko, Ivanov, Osinsky, et al.); the most important Soviet diplomats (Rakovsky, Sokol' Nikov, Krestinskii, Karakhan, Bogomolov, Yurenev, et al.); all the leaders of the Communist International (Zinoviev, Bukharin, Radek); the best leaders of the economy (Pyatakov, Smirnov, Serebriakov, Lifshits, et al.); the best commanders and leaders of the army (Tukhachevsky, Gamarnik, Yakir, Uborevich, Kork, Muralov, Mrachkovsky, Alksnis, Admiral Orlov, et al.); the most outstanding worker-revolutionists produced by Bolshevism in thirty-five years (Tomskii, Yevdokimov, Smirnov, Bakaev, Serebriakov, Boguslavsky, Mrachkovsky); the heads and members of the governments of the Russian Soviet Republic (Sulimov, Varvara Iakovleva); all the heads without exception of the thirty Soviet Republics, i.e., the leaders developed by the movement of the liberated nationalities (Budu Mdivani, Okudzhava, Kavtaradze, Chervyakov, Goloded, Skrypnik, Lyubchenko, Nestor Lakoba, Faizul Khodzhaev, Ikramov, and dozens of others); the leaders of the GPU for the past ten years, Yagoda and his collaborators; finally, and this is most important, the members of the all-powerful Politburo, the de facto supreme power of the country, Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Tomskii, Rykov, Bukharin, Rudzutak—all of them participated in a conspiracy against the Soviet power in the years when it was in their hands!

All of them, as agents of foreign powers, strove to rip to shreds Soviet federation they had built and to enslave to fascism the peoples for whose liberation they had fought for dozens of years!

In this criminal activity premiers, ministers, marshals, and ambassadors invariably submitted to one person. Not to an official leader, no— to an exile! It was enough for Trotsky to move a finger and the veterans of the revolution became agents of Hitler and the Mikado.

Upon the "instructions" of Trotsky through an incidental TASS correspondent, the leaders of industry, transportation, and agriculture destroyed the productive forces of the country and its culture.

Upon an order from the "enemy of the people," sent from Norway or Mexico, railway workers of the Far East organized the wrecking of military trains, and venerable Kremlin physicians poisoned their patients. This is the astonishing picture of Soviet state that Vyshinskii is forced to present on the basis of the revelations of the latest trials.

But here a difficulty arises. A totalitarian regime is a dictatorship of the apparatus. If all the key positions of the apparatus were occupied by Trotskyists who submitted to me, why, in that case, is Stalin in the Kremlin and I am in exile? (Arch. case number 13005, Vol. 3, l.d. 308-309)

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#### IV. The situation concerning the investigation and the trial

The investigation of the case of the so-called "Anti-Soviet bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" and its consideration at trial, conducted between 1937 and early 1938, was characterized by massive repression of Soviet citizens, by the most serious violations of socialist legality, by severe beatings of prisoners and by various and provocative techniques by means of which the investigating authorities extorted confessions from the prisoners and the courts handed down clearly unjustified sentences.

Due to the fact that the vast majority of the NKVD workers who ha any relationship with the so-called anti-Soviet bloc of Rights and Trotskyites

were subsequently shot it is not possible at the present time to fully explore the conditions under which the investigation in this case was conducted.

Nevertheless, even those far from exhaustive materials which were obtained during the verification give evidence of the gross arbitrariness and provocation that resulted in the extraction of confessions from the prisoners.

A number of former employees of the NKVD, interrogated during course of the verification, testified to the existence in 1937-1938 of a situation whereby the mere fact that a prisoner under ion was put into the Lefortovo prison obliged the investigator to beat him. EZHOV went at night to the investigators' rooms along with other leading workers [of the NKVD – GF] and personally showed how to "obtain the necessary" confessions."

Questioned in 1956 ARONSON Ia.A., a former employee of the NKVD who took part in the investigation of the case of the anti-Soviet Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites, testified to this:

"... The period of late 1937 and early 1938, when the case in question was under investigation, was a period of mass beatings of prisoners. I remember that during that period EZHOV often came to the prison, usually at night, and made the rounds of the investigators' rooms. His whole conversation usually boiled down to this: "Whom are you interrogating? What's the result? Give it to him properly!" Vlodzimirsky and others accompanied EZHOV and sometimes immediately showed how to give it."

ROSENBLIUM A.A., who worked in 1937-1938 as chief of the medical unit of the Lefortovo prison was questioned in 1956 and stated:

"While working in the medical unit of the Lefortovo prison I saw many prisoners serious condition after the beatings inflicted on them during the investigation. In particular, I provided medical care to MAR'IASIN, who was severely beaten during the investigation.

Former NKVD worker BLAT was in serious condition in the infirmary. He had tried to commit suicide and had also been severely beaten...

... KRESTINSKII was brought from an interrogation to us in the medical unit in an unconscious state. He had been severely beaten, his whole back was one continuous wound, there was not a single unbruised place on it. As I recall, he lay in the medical unit for three days in very serious condition.

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I often dropped in to see IAGODA. Usually, he complained about his heart ... once I saw on his face a large bruise under his eye."

Other former NKVD workers also confessed about beatings of prisoners. Thus, witness LERNER N.M. who took part in the interrogations of IAGODA, stated on June 2, 1956:

"... IAGODA often complained that he was beaten during the interrogations. I did not believe him and told him so.

Once, this was in the Lefortovo prison, I questioned IAGODA. EZHOV, FRINOVSKII and KURSKII dropped in at my office and at EZHOV'S suggestion I left the office. When sometime later I was allowed to go back, I saw a black eye on IAGODA'S face. IAGODA, showing me the black eye, asked me: "Now do you believe that they are beating me?" In addition I have personally seen BULANOV with signs of beatings on his face." The above-mentioned ARONSON also confirmed that he was aware of the beating during the investigation of prisoners RYKOV, SHARANGOVICH and IAGODA, and testified:

"I myself personally heard a complaint about beating from RYKOV. There was to be a face-to-face confrontation between RYKOV and NIKOLAEVSKII. They brought RYKOV in first. He looked pitiful, depressed. Either I or LULOV, I do not remember exactly, asked him: "What's the matter, why do you look like that?" To this RYKOV replied, I remember it very well I feel demoralized," and to the next question — Why? — he replied: "They beat me.""

According to cell agent "Blagin" BESSONOV told his cellmates:

"He, BESSONOV, signed the accusations against him because otherwise he was threatened with fascist reprisal. In the Lefortovo he saw former members of the Central Committee who were beaten during the investigation, and named PTUKHA, a former member of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b), LAVRENT'EV, Central Committee member and others. KRESTINSKII was subjected to a severe beating; he wore a plaster cast during the trial." (Arch. case number 101492, vol. 1, l.d. 27) The above testimony about beatings of prisoners in the case of the anti-Soviet Right-Trotskyite center, of course, does not reveal the whole picture, for this period was characterized by the greatest orgy of violence in investigation and it was precisely at this time that beatings took on such a character at killings during interrogation occurred more than once. About this matter witness ROSENBLIUM A.A. testified:

"I worked as a doctor of the Lefortovo from December 1936 to January 31, 1938. During this period of time 49 people were recorded as having died in Lefortovo prison from beatings and exhaustion." (File on the indictment of Anvel't)

As has now been established, on October 14, 1937 chief of the Science section of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) BAUMAN K.L. was killed during the investigation; on December 1,

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1937, chief of the political directorate of the People's Commissariat of Soviet Farms the old Bolshevik SOMS K.; on December 11, 1937 Comintern worker Anvel't; on May 5, 1938 the deputy head of the UNKVD of the Leningrad oblast' SOSTE M.Ia.; on November 9, 1938 Marshal of the Soviet Union BLÜCHER and others.

It should be noted that prisoners were prodded into self-incrimination and slander against others not only by direct physical violence but also by mental violence. Threats of repression against relatives, threats of beatings, cries of prisoners being beaten — the investigators used all these in order to obtain "confessions." Former investigator ARONSON testified about this:

"I personally did not use physical force against RAKOVSKY, obviously, because he did not confess to me about espionage (RAKOVSKY "confessed" himself guilty of espionage to other investigators). I admit that I might have applied other means of pressure — measures of a mental nature: threats against him personally threats to arrest members of his family. I seem to remember, in particular, that RAKOVSKY was informed about the arrest of his wife and that her fate depended upon his confessions. Such was the system of interrogation of prisoners, introduced as mandatory methods by the leadership of the NKVD of that time. "

As is evident from the report of agent "Dima" RAKOVSKY himself, in his cell at the Orlov prison, spoke about the situation of the investigation of his case as follows: "... when almost from the first day they make it clear that you have to lie about yourself and others, smear your own name and honor, then you are overcome with rage and indignation. You begin to fight, to resist, but then when they tell you, as ARONSON told me: "Old man, do not hold out, confess," when they tell you that they will annihilate your family, that they will shoot you, you give up. When I was told that my wife had been put into the Lefortovo, I screamed and grabbed my head — that meant she would die. Fear for your family, the consciousness that you are sending them to their deaths, fear and the desire to live, complete hopelessness, and then the party "automatic", the habit of obeying the party — these things make you lie and do the devil knows what. All this is a lie, there is not a drop of truth in any of these cases." (Arch. case number 300956, v. 9, l.d. 321)

Further, he also said:

"I was taken from the Butyrki [prison] to the Lefortovo, and from the Lefortovo to the Lubyanka. Every night I expected to be shot. In Lefortovo, in this horrible prison where you could hear the scream people under torture, the moaning of women, shots during times of execution and the constant noise of aircraft engines, they suddenly cut my fingernails— I realized that they wanted to torture me. Soon I was summoned at night. I appeared before NIKOLAEV, AGAS, and another type that does the torturing. When I walked in, I was told that I was a spy. "Me, a spy?" "Yes, you. And you yourself will tell us about your activities." I realized that this

was the end, that the only way to salvation was through admitting the most serious charges. This is the dialectic ... Everything went into it—the Japanese and the British. I myself sometimes became confused, I said so much." (ibid, l.d. 322)

While serving his prison sentence BESSONOV categorically denied his guilt and said this about the reasons that prompted him to make false confessions:

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"At first a lieutenant interrogated me, and then a major of state security warned that if I did not give the necessary confessions they would make mincemeat out of me. And indeed a few days later I was called late in the evening to some room hitherto unknown to me. Five fellows were already there and on the table lay the necessary accessories—rubber club, gloves, stick and other things.

The major, wiping his hands, asked me about confessions and I, seeing all this, became a little cowardly, because I already knew about beatings to death ... I decided to lie. Well, and that's the way I became a counter-revolutionary. And the trial was a complete farce." (Ibid, vol. II, l.d. 61)

The convicted doctor PLETNEV reported vividly from prison on the system of beatings, threats, blackmail and provocations. In a statement of June 8, 1940 he wrote: "For three years I suffered from investigation to investigation, from court to court, from one prison into another, and yet I am completely innocent..."

... the case of the killing of GOR'KII and KUIBYSHEV. I spoke to you about it, but the investigative unit will not allow any talk about this, insisting several times that I withdraw my statements, which I did not do.

... the case arose on the testimony of IAGODA who, according to his own personal statement, called me in the middle of August 1934 and with threats demanded from me my complicity with doc LEVIN in the killing of GOR'KII. Upon my denial of this investigator GERSON hit me in the face. I pointed out that this fact could not have taken place, since from July 20



1934 to the beginning of October I had been on a business trip abroad. The next day my words were confirmed by a certificate from the Passport Office ... and the fact of my alibi in August 1934. Then the investigator told me: "If the top leadership assumes that you are guilty, then even if you were 100% right, you will still be 100% guilty." There followed threats against me and my wife and, finally, an alternative was suggested by chief of the Special Political Division LITVIN, chief of the investigative unit KAGAN, and investigator GERSON: either, I continued my stubbornness, life in prison and death in it, or if I "agreed" to give a "clarification" about the time of my meeting with IAGODA in June 1934 — and I only saw IAGODA for the first time in my life in 1935 — and then 2-3 months after the trial, complete freedom and scientific work — in a word, "a repetition of RAMZIN'S fate." This was indirectly confirmed by EZHOV. You know the result. I so trusted the government that the thought of such lies and blackmail on the part of anyone, especially a member of the Politburo, never could have entered my head... Help me, because I perish though innocent. I ask only that you take a personal interest, and not transfer the matter to the detention unit. There bias rules. If the NKVD has seized you, that means you are guilty. Put yourself for a moment in my position and you will see the full depth of my misery. Believe me. There is still much more I could say in my own defense ..." (private prison file l.d. 206-207)

The "processing" of prisoners in the case of the Right-Trotskyite center did not stop day or night. This was handled during the interrogations by the investigators and in the cells by specially placed people. Concerning one of these people RAKOVSKY, after his conviction, told fellow his fellow inmates:

"In Lefortovo they put Lieberman into my cell... They let me write my confessions in my cell. When I presented them, if they did not like them, they

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would tear them up and throw them in my face. When I consulted with Lieberman my confessions always satisfied the investigators. He served as the transfer authority, he dictated to me what they wanted and through him I asked their advice...

In the end, I did not care, because I lied. And he could not hurt me, on the contrary, he facilitated my work." (Arch. case number 300956, v. 9, l.d. 324)

In this respect the fate of the former head of the 5<sup>th</sup> department of the UNKVD of the Saratov oblast' ZARITSKII N.D. is of some interest.

ZARITSKII was arrested for crude falsification of investigative materials, fabricating fictitious confessions that allegedly confirmed the existence of the organization of Rights which in reality did not exist (that is, at that time!). In essence there was no interrogation on the charges against ZARITSKII, there was only the taking of a statement and he was sentenced to two years in prison, and then he was confined among other detainees. One after another he sat in the same cell with the former regional secretaries of party obkoms KABAKOV, RYNDIN, and KHATAYEVICH, and then for 4-5 months together with BUKHARIN.

After BUKHARIN was executed ZARITSKII's case was reviewed without further investigation. His sentence was set aside and ZARITSKII was restored in the party and to operational work in the NKVD. Such encouragement of prisoners for "services" in exposing the Rights were not uncommon.

Likewise discontinued was the case against ASTROV, who admitted to being an active participant in the counter-revolutionary terrorist organization of Rights, who was one of the first to expose BUKHARIN, including in face-to-face confrontations in the Politburo of the CPSU(b).

Likewise lives of RADEK and SOKOL'NIKOV were spared although they were formally no less guilty than their fellow defendants, who were witnesses for the prosecution against BUKHARIN and RYKOV even before they had been arrested.

From materials in the archives of the KGB we know that SOKOL'NIKOV was brought to Moscow from prison in the fall of 1937 to be used as a witness at the upcoming trial of BUKHARIN, RYKOV and others, but because of his refusal to testify at trial he was sent back.

When SOKOL'NIKOV and RADEK began in prison to expose the falsity of the previous trials they were killed.

For the same purpose was set aside the verdict against MANTSEV, who, having been condemned to death, began to give confessions about the involvement of BUKHARIN in 1918 in a conspiracy of Left SRs and about his intention to arrest LENIN, STALIN SVERDLOV. After the trial in the case of the bloc of Rights and Trotskyites, without any additional investigative actions, MANTSEV was again convicted and then executed. Now he is fully rehabilitated.

It is clear from the testimony of former employee of the NKVD TSERPENTO .P.I how prisoners gave confessions on order of the investigators.

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"In the summer of 1937 LITVIN personally interrogated ANTIPOV... In the transcript of this interrogation it was written that in September 1936 ANTIPOV received from RYKOV a directive to create a reserve center of the Rights. When these confessions were presented to RYKOV, RYKOV categorically denied meeting with ANTIPOV in September of 1936 and insisted that it was in 1932.

Then in my presence LULOV persuaded RYKOV to corroborate ANTIPOV's confession and say that it would be in his, RYKOV's, interest to make such a confession...

During the preparation of the trial of RYKOV, BUKHARIN and other (at the end of 1937) I learned from GLEBOV that now ANTIPOV writing completely new confessions in which, in particular, he was saying that the reserve center of the Rights was established in 1932.

Then GLEBOV proposed that I re-interrogate RYKOV in accordance with these new confessions.

When I expressed surprise that ANTIPOV managed to fool LITVIN, by giving him inappropriate, false confessions, GLEBOV told me that this was

nothing surprising, since ANTIPOV was the kind of prisoner who is ready to give any confessions and in any direction.

By GLEBOV'S arrangement before the trial I had to persuade RYKOV to affirm his first confessions, which spoke of the creation of the reserve center of the Rights in 1932, not 1936." (Arch. case number 982027, vol. 1, l.d. 222-223)

As TSERPENTO further confessed, RYKOV, signing one of the new versions of "his" confessions, said:

"One advises me not to confess against ANTIPOV, and the other (i.e. me) requires confessions against him. I do not know who to listen to." (Arch. case number 982027, vol. 1, l.d. 30-31)

As you know, at the very first meeting of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR on March 2, 1938 the prisoner KRESTINSKII pleaded not guilty and retracted the confessions that had been given by him during the investigation. At that time KRESTINSKII said bluntly that the confessions that he has given before were not voluntary, and that he had not retracted them during the investigation only out of concern that his statement would not reach the leadership of the party and government. (Case report, pp. 54, 58)

This failure caused confusion among members of the Military College, and the court adjourned. But the next day KRESTINSKII reaffirmed the confessions he had given during the investigation, and said that the day before he had mechanically pleaded not guilty under the influence of a sense of false shame. (ibid, p. 146)

The verification has determined that during the process of the investigation KRESTINSKII gave confessions because he had been subjected to brutal beatings, and hence his rejection of these confessions at the trial had a real basis.

Concerning the circumstances surrounding KRESTINSKII'S confessions at the trial, former employee of the NKVD ARONSON has testified:

"I, like many other NKVD men, attended the trial. At the first session KRESTINSKII retracted the confessions he had given earlier and pleaded not guilty. This statement caused confusion on the part of VYSHINKII, who was in charge of the trial.

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During the break we investigators discussed what had happened and talked about how to get out of this situation. NIKOLAEV (he was in charge of RAKOVSKY's case) then said that he would try to resolve the incident. When the accused were taken from the court they took KRESTINSKII together with RAKOVSKY. The next day KRESTINSKII pleaded guilty and confirmed all the confessions that he had given previously. I think, and the investigators said the same thing at the time, that KRESTINSKII had not been beaten, but RAKOVSKY had persuaded him. They said that RAKOVSKY, who in general had great influence on KRESTINSKII, told him something like this: "You ought to admit guilt, all the defendants are pleading guilty, and the court will consider anyone who does not admit guilt as an unrepentant enemy and will unquestionably shoot him, while in return for the admission of guilt they will preserve your life. The family of him who confessed guilt will not suffer, but in case of rejection of guilt the family will also be repressed." This so affected KRESTINSKII that to the end of the trial he did not try any more to reject the confessions he had given during the investigation."

Also characteristic in this regard is the behavior at trial of the public prosecutor VYSHINKII. When the court summoned KRESTINSKII for questioning VYSHINKII did not permit his immediate interrogation and first asked a number of questions precisely to RAKOVSKY.

KRESTINSKII was interrogated only after RAKOVSKY had given him an example — he fully admitted his guilt and named KRESTINSKII as his accomplice.

Those prisoners who were being made ready for the trial and for face-to-face confrontations to be carried out with participation by leaders of the Party and government were especially carefully prepared by the

investigating authorities. Here everything was done strictly according to a developed plan and the prisoners repeatedly rehearsed "their" confessions.

As you know, some of the persons involved in the case of the Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites before their criminal prosecution were given face-to-face confrontations where prisoners previously arrested accused them of committing serious crimes against the state.

From the confessions, given after his arrest, of the former Deputy Commissar of Internal Affairs of the USSR FRINOVSKII it may be seen that specially instructed prisoners were brought forth at these face-to-face confrontations.

FRINOVSKII confessed about this:

"At first the investigator, then the chief of the department, prepared the prisoners in a special way. The preparation consisted in reading of the confessions that the prisoner had given against the person with whom the face-to-face confrontation was about to be conducted. They explained how the face-to-face confrontation would be conducted, what unexpected questions might be presented to the prisoner and how he should answer.

In essence what happened was an agreement and a rehearsal for the upcoming face-to-face confrontation. After that EZHOV would call the prisoner to himself, or pretending that he had by chance dropped in to the investigator's room where the prisoner was sitting he would speak to him about the upcoming confrontation and would ask whether he felt himself strong, would he confirm his confessions, and by the way, would mention that members of the government would be present at the face-to-face confrontation.

Usually EZHOV was nervous before such face-to-face confrontations even after he had had a talk with the prisoner. There were cases when the prisoner

would state, during the conversation with EZHOV, that his confessions were not true, that he had been falsely accused." (Arch. case number 975181, Vol. 2, l.d. 37-38)

Before the trial, the preparation of the prisoners proceeded along two lines. On the one hand, by means of various promises (as a rule — the preservation of life), they urged them to stand firm on specific confessions. On the other hand they formulated the prisoners' answers in advance and the prisoners again rehearsed them.

The same FRINOVSKII confessed about this:

"He spoke for a long time with IAGODA, and that talk concerned, in the main, of assuring IAGODA that he would not be shot.

EZHOV had conversations several times with BUKHARIN and RYKOV and also in order to calm them assured them that under no circumstances would they be shot.

EZHOV had one conversation with BULANOV, and began this conversation in the presence of the investigator and myself, and finished the conversation one on one, having asked us to leave.

At that moment BULANOV had begun talking about the poisoning of EZHOV. What the conversation was about EZHOV did not say. When he asked us to enter again he said: "Behave yourself well at the trial – I will ask that you not be shot." (Arch. case number 975181, Vol. 2, l.d. 39)

RAKOVSKY talked about the same thing while in the Orel prison:

"During the trial the investigators never left me, encouraged me, talked about the impression that this revolting farce was making on me." (Arch. case number 300956, v. 7, l.d. 325)

Questioned as a witness former NKVD man LERNER, who was involved in the investigation of this case, said the following in an interrogation in

July 1956:

"I did not lead the investigation of the IAGODA case to its conclusion, the last 6-8 months I was doing other things and had no relationship with the investigation of the case.

However, when the trial began, obviously, considering that I had a good relationship with IAGODA, on the instructions of the leadership of the People's Commissariat I was present at all court proceedings and during the intervals played chess with IAGODA.

During the trial, or rather during breaks in the trial, IAGODA often asked me whether they would shoot him or not.

I am also aware that before the trial IAGODA was granted a visit with his wife Averbakh. And even earlier, as directed by the leadership of the People's Commissariat, I repeatedly told IAGODA that his wife was at liberty, when in reality she had been arrested.

Therefore, before the meeting, IAGODA'S wife was given a change of clothing and was made to look so that the impression was created that she had come to the visit not from prison but as though she were at liberty. For this camouflage a hairdresser was specially invited, who dressed her up, put matching outfits on her and returned to her wristwatch which had earlier been taken from her.

From the words of the former head of the Leningrad Region UNKVD LITVIN I know that IAGODA was shot last, and before that he and

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BUKHARIN were seated on chairs and forced to watch as the sentence was carried out on the other convicted prisoners."

After his conviction RAKOVSKY told his cellmates: "I coordinated the main points of my speech at the trial, my last words with the investigators... During this last period they were all at my service, right up to the olives."  
(Arch. case number 300956, v. 7, l.d. 325)



This story of RAKOVSKY's is fully confirmed in archival documents of the NKVD. Moreover, they show that this situation occurred not only in relation to RAKOVSKY but also in relation to other defendants in the present case.

So, in archival files on RAKOVSKY and GRIN'KO we have found typewritten outlines of their future confessions at trial. By comparing these outlines with the confessions that RAKOVSKY and GRIN'KO gave at trial it was revealed that they are identical both structurally and in their meaning, and that some phrases in them are repeated almost word for word in the trial transcript.

Moreover, in these archival materials we have also discovered drafts of the "last words" of the accused RAKOVSKY, RYKOV and GRIN'KO, and in the materials on RAKOVSKY even two versions of "his" last words at the trial have turned up.

As has been established by the verification, the falsification of documents of the investigation file was not limited to the investigation but continued at trial.

In the archives of the Committee of State Security [KGB] of the Council of Ministers of the USSR there has been found a deciphered transcript of the trial in the case of the anti-Soviet bloc of Rights and Trotskyites with various handwritten corrections and insertions.

The study of this transcript and comparison of it with the official text of the trial transcript shows that the testimony recorded in court was subsequently changed, in some cases, and that moreover these changes in some cases were in the nature of amplification and distortion of the testimony of the defendants.

Thus, the testimony of the defendant BESSONOV about his meeting with TROTSKY in 1934 when corrected was augmented by the following phrase: "TROTSKY said that he knew me very well by the letters of PIATAKOV and by what N.N. KRESTINSKII has said," by which not only was the substance of the testimony of BESSONOV changed, but it directly indicates on the part of TROTSKY contact with PIATAKOV and

KRESTINSKII about which in this instance BESSONOV did not even testify.

During the interrogation of IAGODA at the trial the question of his guilt in the murder of KUIBYSHEV was not at all explained, as can be seen from the transcript...

However, the transcript was filled out as follows: "VYSHINKII. Do you plead guilty in the organization of the murder of KUIBYSHEV?"

IAGODA. I do."

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In his last words the accused RYKOV said:

"...I had a conversation in 1935 with KOTOV, who headed terrorist organizations in Moscow."

As a result of adjustments that phrase in RYKOV'S last words was recorded as follows: "In 1935 I gave the job of to KOTOV, who led the terrorist organizations in Moscow."

These same editors removed from the transcript RYKOV'S statement that SHARANGOVICH became known to him as a member of counterrevolutionary organization only at the trial.

Changes of a similar character were also made in the testimony of others, and then this distorted transcript, endorsed by Deputy Prosecutor of the USSR Roginskii, was published as the official text of the transcript of the trial of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court.

Due to the established facts of the gross violation of law in the investigation of the case of the Right-Trotskyist center both during preliminary investigation and in court, it is worth noting that all the defendants who remained alive afterwards retracted their confessions and spoke about the trial as having been falsified by the investigation and the trial. All of them (RAKOVSKY, BESSONOV and PLETNEV) were shot on September 11,

1941 by verdict of the Military Collegium, which flagrantly violated the law and rendered this verdict not only without calling the accused into court but even without having any file on the charges against them.

Thus, as a result of the analysis of all the materials of the case and the additional verification it can be affirmed that the majority of the persons convicted in the present case did at one time take an active part in oppositional struggle but that, however, the accusation against them that in the following years they created a bloc of Rights and Trotskyites and conducted organized anti-Soviet activities, is falsified and in this regard they are subject to rehabilitation.

Some circumstances charged against individual defendants, for example, the involvement of ZUBAREV, ZELENSKII and IVANOV in the Tsarist secret police, and the nationalist activities of IKRAMOV and KHODZHAEV, etc., are subject to additional verification.

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# **The Mystery of the Katyn Massacre: The Evidence, The Solution**

By Grover Furr

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My deepest thanks to each one of you.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this book to my friend Bill Sacks. Bill has proofread this and several other books of mine with great care, and made excellent suggestions that have improved my work immeasurably. No one has been more encouraging, supportive, and helpful. Thank you, Bill!

Remarks about Grover Furr's previous books, originally on the back cover:

About *Trotsky's Amalgams*:

It is no wonder that his work has already been translated into over a dozen languages. His work is riveting and revolutionary in its assessments. It is up to those who disagree with him to present the same kind of meticulous research.

— Anthony Gronowicz, Borough of Manhattan Community College, City University of New York; Associate Editor, *The Journal of Labor and Society*.

About *The Murder of Sergei Kirov*

Grover Furr moves with perfect ease with the Russian language and Russian archives. Without being intimidated by political correctness his research and documentation is precise, patient, meticulous. He has already proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that, as the title of one of his previous books states, "Khrushchev Lied." Now he confronts the question of Kirov's murder. The Soviet tragedy begins with the "Kirov Affair". This is one more reason to reconsider it, in the light of the important novelties in the book by Grover Furr.

— Professor Domenico Losurdo, University of Urbino, Italy

Grover Furr analyzes in detail the interrogations of Nikolaev's associates, compares them with the testimony of a number of the arrested Zinovievites and the materials of the Moscow Trials in 1936-1938. He cites sources not accessible to the Russian reader: the Volkogonov Archive, letters of Trotsky from Harvard University, books and articles published in the West that are not available in Russian.... Furr's book is not an "easy read." In the authors

own words, it is "for those readers who seek critical examination and analysis.

— Igor Pykhalov, historian, St. Petersburg, Russia, author of more than a dozen books on Soviet history of the Stalin period.

*About Khrushchev Lied*

Grover Furr has made a worthy contribution to our understanding of post-Stalin politics and of Cold War historiography though not of the Stalin years themselves, as he is quick to point out. That is to say: Furr demolishes Khrushchev's false historical construct. But he makes it clear that much further research will be necessary to construct a new historical account to discover what really did happen. I hope we may look forward to more work by Professor Furr, and to the appearance in English of what he has already done.

— Sven-Erik Holmström, *Socialism & Democracy* 26:2 (2012)

Grover Furr has written an intriguing book that challenges much of the existing historiography of the Stalinist 1930s. His insights and the sources he brings to bear question many of the views held by historians for decades and deserve our consideration. This book raises issues and questions that most scholars in the West today would not and does so in a sober and penetrating manner. He reaches fascinating conclusions, debunking much of what we thought we knew about the Stalinist era.

— Jeff Jones, History Department, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

## Preface

Many a reader will wonder: "Why another book on the Katyn Massacre?" "And, particularly, why call it a "mystery"? For (they will think) the mystery — if there ever really was one — was solved long ago, in the early 1990s when the Soviet, then the Russian governments admitted guilt and produced the "smoking gun" documents of "Closed Packet No. 1", the primary source evidence of Soviet guilt in that atrocity.

I used to think the same thing. When I read in the *New York Times* that President Gorbachev of the USSR had admitted the guilt of the Stalin government at Katyn, I had no cause to doubt it. The revelation in the same newspaper a couple of years later that President Yeltsin of Russia had given these "smoking gun" documents to Lech Walesa, President of Poland, confirmed what I already thought.

I did not care very much. To me, the Katyn Massacre seemed long ago and far away. Meanwhile the number of mass murders committed by the Germans and Japanese, and the scale of mortality in the Second World War; were so great that Katyn hardly added to it. Nor were my sympathies engaged by the fates of the Polish POWs said to have been murdered at the places which, collectively, came to be known as the Katyn Massacre, or "Katyn." Why sympathize with them rather than with the tens of millions of others murdered in that war? It is simply impossible, overwhelming, even crippling, to try to truly feel for all those long-dead people.

But since the mid-1990s there has appeared research claiming that this is all wrong. That "Katyn" is a frame-up, anti-Soviet, anti-Russian and anticommunist. I was not convinced ... but thinking back, I realize today that I still did not care enough to be either truly convinced or truly unconvinced.

I did become intrigued, however. "Katyn" — a term I will use in this book without scare quotes from now on as shorthand for "the Katyn massacre" — was now a mystery. And I like mysteries! Especially historical ones.

There was more to my attraction to Katyn' than just liking a good mystery. Since my student days, when I became involved in the protest movement against the American war in Vietnam, I have been attracted to Marxism. I sympathized with the Vietnamese struggle for independence. I learned that anticommunism was not exactly a fraud — the United States government was genuinely anticommunist — but that anticommunism also served as camouflage for imperialism and for ordinary capitalist exploitation. France, then Japan, and then the United States, wanted to dominate Vietnam. In the cases of France and the United States anticommunism became the rationale for a war to preserve empire. In Vietnam and around the world it was the communists who were the major force organizing opposition to this imperialist war by the United States.

At a huge antiwar demonstration in Manhattan in 1967 an older person — an onlooker, not a participant — told me in a friendly manner that I should not be supporting the National Liberation Front of South Vietnam. Why not? I asked. Because the NLF was really led by the Vietnamese Communist Party, which was led by Ho Chi Minh. Ho had been trained by Joseph Stalin. And Stalin, he said, had murdered 40 million people.

I did not just "believe" what he said. But I did not disbelieve it either. I determined that I would look into this matter seriously once I had the time to do so, once I had my feet on the ground in teaching and my doctoral dissertation was well on the way to completion. I was confident that I possessed the tools to do this. I could read the Russian language well; it was one of my languages for my degree in Comparative Literature (Medieval English, German, Russian) at Princeton University.

I also knew that to do valid historical research the student must identify, locate, obtain, study, and draw the logical conclusions from, primary sources. I had learned this from a master teacher, D. W. Robertson, Jr. In the early 1960s his insistence on primary source research had shaken the staid field of medieval literary research to its foundations. Robertson — his students called him "Robby" — had been attacked as an enemy of scholarship, even of the Enlightenment itself, because he dared to question "received knowledge."



Robby's publications had changed the field in a definitive way. And, as he informed us, he had done it by insisting on the primacy of primary sources. He told us what that meant: to never be afraid to question, and in fact to challenge, the prevailing orthodoxy within the field, no matter how monolithic, how indestructible it appeared to be — if the primary source evidence demands it. I also embarked on the study of Soviet history as a project in self clarification. I had questions about the Stalin period in the Soviet Union that challenged my opposition to the Vietnam War, to American imperialism, and to the conventionally accepted Cold War paradigm of understanding history and politics. I had the tools. I had a little courage, learned from my participation in the antiwar movement. So I began to research the Stalin years in the USSR.

By 2006 I had read enough on Katyn to know that there was a critical mass of research that rejected what I call the "official" version of Katyn — that the Soviets were guilty. So I created a web page to which I gave the title "The Katyn Forest Whodunnit." At that time it was the only resource in the English language where one could learn about the research that challenged the "official" version. I did not endorse either version: the "official", Soviets-did-it, the "oppositional", Germans-did-it-Soviets-were-framed. I was agnostic.

I also determined that I myself would never write anything about Katyn. For almost seven years I concluded my Katyn web page with these words:

So here is my last thought, for now: SO WHAT?

I'm serious. I do not think it matters to very many people, and maybe to nobody.

"The Katyn Massacre" is not an historical question — it is a WEAPON, a CUDGEL. You use it to make war on "the other side", and that's it.

Those who say "the Soviets did it" are NEVER going to accept that they did not, no matter what the evidence.

Those who say and / or hope: "The Soviets did NOT do it" are NEVER going to shed their respect and admiration for the USSR, EVEN IF you managed to convince them that the Soviets did it. And I do not think that's going to happen either!

It's like convincing a Christian that Jesus never existed. That is, it's no longer history, it's religion.

Good luck!

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So it is interesting. But at this point I confine myself to (a) reading about it; and (b) reminding those who "know" (= are sure they know, and do not want to hear otherwise) of their bad faith.

You can imagine how popular THAT makes me! But being unpopular in this way is something I'm very content to be.

I hope this has been interesting, maybe even helpful. Believe me, there is so much more to say that you do not even want to know!

("The Katyn Forest Whodunnit" April 3, 2007)

In 2006 and 2007 my conclusions were sharply challenged by Sergei Romanov. Mr. Romanov proved to me that I had made some errors in my page. I corrected them, and thanked him explicitly on that page. He also put our exchange online on his own website.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Where it remains as of this writing (January 2017) — <http://holocaustcontroversies.blogspot.com/2007/03/and-now-for-something-not-completely.html>

Mr. Romanov also made a significant error in historical method. At the time I had not studied Katyn enough, or thought deeply enough about it, to be able to recognize his error. So I thanked him, but I refused to do what he demanded: acknowledge that the Soviets were indeed guilty.

I remained agnostic about Katyn. As it turns out, I was correct to do so. But I did not fully understand that then.

In January 2013 I learned about excavations by a joint Polish-Ukrainian archeological team of a mass murder site at Volodymyr-Volynskiy, Ukraine. I found the Polish archeologist's report on it online and studied it. I recognized the importance of the discoveries made there for any objective understanding of Katyn. Violating my own promise to myself never to write anything on Katyn (other than my web page) I set about doing some intensive study.

I found a journal willing to accept an article, which was published in August 2013. I also realized that, unless I did something to publicize it, this discovery and its importance for our understanding of Katyn would remain almost entirely unknown. So during the next eighteen months I printed up several hundred offprints of this article and mailed them around the world. After 18 months I put a link to that article on my Home Page.

The title of my article is:

"The 'Official' Version of the Katyn Massacre Disproven? Discoveries at a German Mass Murder Site in Ukraine."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> *Socialism and Democracy* 27(2) (August 2013): 96-129.

During the pre-publication process my very helpful editor asked me: "Why the question mark?" Once the article had been published a few other people asked me the same question. I did not have a good answer. In truth, I did not know why, except that "it felt right." Once the article was published I concentrated on mailing offprints and on researching and writing another book. When that book was published, I went on to research and write two more. It was a very busy time.

But that question mark nagged at me! Why had I put it there? At length I understood: I was still not fully convinced that the "official" version of Katyn had indeed been disproven. As much as I knew about Katyn — and I already knew more than most specialists in Soviet history — I realized that I still did not know enough.

When confronted with a mystery a detective sets out to solve it. If a crime is involved — Katyn is surely a massive crime — he, or she, doesn't care who is guilty. The detective approaches the task of solving the crime objectively, for the sake of the thing itself that is, for him, or herself. In "The Adventure of the Red Circle" we find the following exchange between Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson:

"It is art for art's sake. Watson, I suppose when you doctored you found yourself studying cases without a thought of a fee?"

"For my education, Holmes."

"Education never ends, Watson. It is a series of lessons with the greatest for the last. This is an instructive case. There is neither money nor credit in it, and yet one would wish to tidy it up."

Holmes' words — that is, Conan Doyle's — precisely express my deeper motive in researching and writing this book. For there is "neither money nor credit in it." On the contrary, I can be assured that I will be attacked and slandered by those who are horrified to look the truth in the face and discover that it is not at all what they want it to be. Yet "one would wish to tidy it up" or to solve the mystery.

To solve any mystery we must first identify the relevant evidence. And concerning Katyn, there is a mountain of material that is often taken to be evidence. Holmes can help here too:

It is one of those cases where the art of the reasoner should be used rather for the sifting of details than for the acquiring of fresh evidence. The tragedy has been so uncommon, so complete and of such personal importance to so many people, that we are suffering from a plethora of surmise, conjecture, and hypothesis. ("Silver Blaze")

Maria Konnikova explains:

In other words, there is too much information to begin with, too many details to be able to start making them into any sort of coherent whole, separating the crucial from the incidental. When so many facts are

piled together, the task becomes increasingly problematic. You have a vast quantity of your own observations and data but also an even vaster quantity of potentially incorrect information from individuals who may not have observed as mindfully as you have?<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Maria Konnikova, *Mastermind. How To Think Like Sherlock Holmes*. New York: Viking Penguin, 2013. "Learning to Tell the Crucial from the Incidental."

This is exactly the situation that faces us in the case of Katyn, Holmes concludes:

The difficulty is **to detach the framework of fact: — of absolute undeniable fact — from the embellishments** of theorists and reporters. Then, having established ourselves upon this sound basis, it is our duty to see what inferences may be drawn and **what are the special points upon which the whole mystery turns.**

As it happens, this is a good, succinct outline of the proper method of doing historical research too. In the case of Katyn there is "too much information," "too many details." A bigger problem is that very few of the persons involved in studying Katyn are objective. They have decided that the "official" version is correct; that the Soviets killed the Polish POWs and that there is no doubt remaining about this. Moreover, they have decided that it is perverse to even raise the question. That simply to approach Katyn as a mystery implies that the solution has not been definitively determined for all time, and is therefore a dishonest thing to do, since it implies the possibility that the Soviets *might not* have done it. This attitude has discouraged objective study of Katyn.

So I have undertaken to solve the Katyn mystery more for self-clarification than for any other reason. "For my education, Holmes." Can I apply my own principles? Am I capable of approaching this important topic with objectivity?

Can I look with especial suspicion on all evidence that tends to support my preconceived ideas while giving an especially generous reading to evidence that tends to contradict my own ideas? In my case, can I discover the truth,

even if the truth is that the Soviets — the communists, with whom I have been in sympathy ever since the Vietnam War — were indeed guilty? At a debate in October 2012 I said that I had researched alleged "crimes of Stalin" for many years and had yet to find one crime that Stalin committed. At that time I was still agnostic, undecided, about Katyn. But if the evidence demands it, am I capable of concluding that Stalin and the Soviet leadership did indeed kill the Polish POWs, as the "official" version states?

Yes, I am. I am much more interested in the mystery itself than in what the solution might be. Besides, it is more satisfying to demand objectivity of oneself than to take the coward's way out and either decide for the stronger side (and thus win a dishonest approbation) or to assert the unpopular side out of bias and prejudice, and thus know, in my own mind at least, that I am afraid to face the truth.

I agree with historian Geoffrey Roberts when he says:

In the last 15 years or so an enormous amount of new material on Stalin has become available from Russian archives. I should make clear that as a historian I have a strong orientation to telling the truth about the past, no matter how uncomfortable or unpalatable the conclusions may be. ... I don't think there is a dilemma: you just tell the truth as you see it.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> "Stalin's Wars," February 12, 2007, At <http://hnn.us/roundup/entries/35305.html>

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My research concludes that the Germans, not the Soviets, are guilty of the mass murders known as the Katyn massacre. This is the same conclusion as is drawn by a few Russian researchers, including the late Sergei Strygin, Vladislav Shved, Valentin Sakharov, Elena Prudnikova and Ivan Chigirin. But I have not followed the method that these researchers use. Instead I have used the method that a detective would employ. A detective who did not care who was guilty, but whose aim was solely to find out the truth and report that truth — and let the chips fall where they may!

To a person less familiar with the history of the scholarship on Katyn it might well appear that, in Konnikova's words, "there is too much information to begin with, too many details to be able to start making them into any sort of coherent whole, separating the crucial from the incidental." After all, just think about that library full of books and articles on the subject! But by that time I had been studying Katyn for years. I knew that there are only a few documents that constitute the primary source evidence in this case. Once I began to systematically sort, categorize, and study this evidence, I came to the realization that there is really very little evidence to support either the "official" Soviets-did-it version or the opposite, Germans-did-it version. Upon even closer scrutiny I realized that *there is even less evidence than that — in fact, only a few bits of evidence — that (for all practical purposes) cannot possibly have been fabricated or falsified in order to bias case in favour of one or the other version.*

Consequently, in this study I concentrate on these few bits of what I call "unimpeachable evidence" — meaning, evidence that it is impossible to discredit *as* evidence (the interpretation is something else again). You, the reader, will make up your own mind whether this evidence is as clear and unambiguous, and my interpretation of it as correct, as I believe it to be. This book is written for the student of history who wants to know the truth, even when that truth is "disillusioning" in that it forces her to set aside her own illusions — her preconceived ideas — and actually *change her mind*. Researching and writing this book has changed *my* mind. I am no longer agnostic on the subject of Katyn.

I predict that those who have built their professional careers around the "official" version of Katyn will, as a matter of course, reject the conclusions of this research. They will reject it not because my method or my analysis of the evidence is faulty, but for *a priori* reasons — they are biased, unalterably prejudiced in favor of the view that the Soviets are guilty. No amount of evidence will change their minds. Obviously, this book is not written for them.

Before a juror can be seated on a jury in a criminal trial in the United States that juror is instructed that he or she must decide the guilt or innocence of the accused strictly on the basis of the evidence, not according to any

preconceived idea, information learned outside of the courtroom, or bias. Historians too are professionally obliged to act in this way. Unfortunately, very few of those who have studied Katyn can honestly claim that they have adhered to this vital principle.

This book may not be pleasing to those students of history who are convinced that the Soviets were innocent of Katyn but think that this can be established by means that, in my judgment, are not valid — for example, by attempts to prove through internal analysis that the documents of Closed Packet No. 1 are forgeries. The defenders and detractors of Closed Packet No. 1 have argued back and forth for years. I think this is a sterile argument and explain my reasons for thinking so in these pages.

Another approach must be taken to solving the Katyn mystery. I believe it is the one I have taken here. This may seem arrogant to those historians and writers who have spent years following a quite different — and, to my way of thinking, incorrect — approach to the question.

In writing this book I do not expect praise from any side. I do expect sharper attacks from defenders of the "official" viewpoint. After all, they are not interested in the truth. In reality, they are not really interested in the Polish POWs who were killed at Katyn! If they were, they would welcome the discovery of who the real culprits, the real mass murderers, were. Instead, they are interested only in how the notion of Soviet guilt at Katyn can be used today to justify their own political, historical, and cultural projects. Despite the hundreds of millions of dollars spent on memorials, conferences, books, articles, educational materials, and indoctrination of all kinds, neither the Polish nor the Russian governments of today, nor their phalanxes of researchers, scholars, and politicians, really care about the Katyn victims. What they care about is their own political agendas.

I could claim that I do care about the men murdered at Katyn and that I demonstrate that in the only way it can be legitimately demonstrated: by solving the mystery and identifying the guilty party. But I do not make that claim. The mystery of Katyn has both intrigued and challenged me for years. That, and not concern for the victims as such, is the reason that I have done this research and written this book.



Of course, it does give appropriate respect to the victims of a murder to identify the guilty party after many years and "bring closure." However, in time the relatives and friends of the Katyn victims will pass from the scene, as all of us will. What will remain is the historical event. Now we know what happened, and what did not happen; who is guilty, and who is not. That will remain for posterity. It is that posterity, not the political purposes of yesterday or even of today, which will be served by discovering the truth about Katyn.

## Introduction

*The "official" version is the only version reflected in the Wikipedia article on Katyn, at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katyn\\_massacre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katyn_massacre). This page is relentlessly anticommunist and anti-Stalinist. It makes no attempt to be objective or neutral, in that it has no serious discussion of the scholarly controversy about this question. It's useful only as a short and accurate summary of the official version.*

In April 1943 Nazi German authorities claimed that they had discovered thousands of bodies of Polish officers shot by Soviet officials in 1940. These bodies were said to have been discovered near the Katyn forest near Smolensk (in Western Russia), which is why the whole affair — including executions and alleged executions of Polish POWs elsewhere in the USSR — came to be called "the Katyn Massacre."

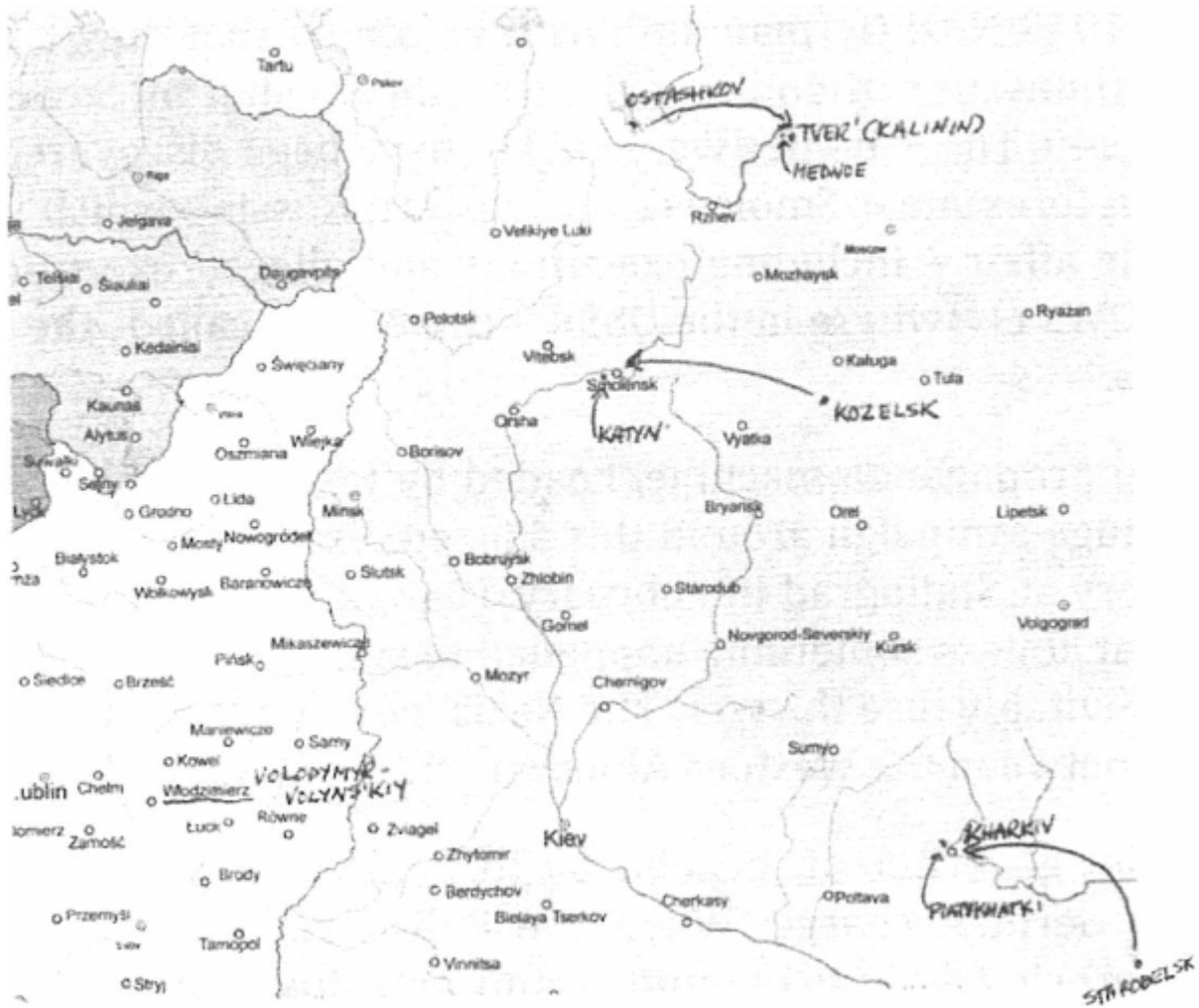
The Nazi propaganda machine, headed by Joseph Goebbels, organized a huge campaign around this alleged discovery. After the Soviet victory at Stalingrad in February 1943, it was obvious to everyone that, unless something happened to split the Allies, Germany would inevitably lose the war. The Nazis' obvious aim was to drive a wedge between the western Allies and the USSR.

The Soviet government, headed by Joseph Stalin, vigorously denied the German charge. When the Polish government-in-exile, always ferociously anticommunist and anti-Russian, collaborated with the Nazi propaganda effort, the Soviet government broke off diplomatic relations with it, eventually setting up a pro-Soviet Polish authority and Polish army.

In September 1943 the Red Army drove the Germans from the Katyn area. In 1944 the Soviet Burdenko Commission carried out a study and issued a report that blamed the Germans for the mass shootings.

During the Cold War the Western capitalist countries supported the Nazi version which had become the version promoted by the anticommunist Polish government-in-exile. The Soviet Union and its allies continued to blame the Germans for the murders. In 1990 and 1991 Mikhail Gorbachev,

General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and, after 1988, President of the USSR, stated that the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin had indeed shot the Poles. According to this "official" version the Polish prisoners had been confined in three camps: at Kozel'sk, Starobe'sk, and Ostashkov and from there transferred to Smolensk, Kharkiv (Russian: Khar'kov), and Kalinin (now Tver') where they were shot and buried at Katyn, Piatykhatty, and Mednoe respectively.



1939 map showing places mentioned in the "official" Katyn narrative. Arrows from the POW camps (Ostashkov, Starobel'sk, Kozel'sk) to cities (Kalinin/Tver', Kharkiv, Smolensk) show destinations on NKVD transit documents. Burial sites in the nearby countryside (Mednoe, Piatykhatty, Katyn) are also shown, as is Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy (Włodzimierz), which is about 700 miles (1200 Km) from Kalinin/Tver' - Mednoe.

In 1990, 1991, and 1992 three aged former NKVD men were identified and interviewed. They discussed what they claimed they knew of executions of Poles in April and May of 1940. None of these executions had taken place at the Katyn Forest, site of the German exhumations.

In 1992 the Russian government under Boris Yeltsin handed over to the Polish government documents supposedly signed by Stalin and other Politburo members which, if genuine, would put Soviet guilt beyond reasonable doubt. These documents are said to have been found in "Closed Packet No. 1," where "closed" meant the highest level of classification — secrecy. I call these the "smoking gun documents," since they are conventionally assumed to be "proof positive" of Soviet guilt. However, no evidence is ever univocal and definitive; all evidence, whether documentary or material can be interpreted in multiple ways.

By 1992, therefore, the Soviet, and then the Russian, governments had officially declared the Stalin-era Soviet leadership guilty of shooting somewhere between 14,800 and 22,000 Polish prisoners to death in April and May 1940.

### **The Soviet "Germans-did-it" Version**

On April 13, 1943, the Germans charged the Soviets with murdering the Polish POWs at Katyn. On April 16, 1943, the Soviet government responded in a press release by Sovinformburo which blamed the Germans. It explained the fate of the Poles:

The German-Fascist reports on this subject leave no doubt as to the tragic fate of the former Polish POWs who in 1941 were engaged in construction work in areas west of Smolensk and who, along with many Soviet people, residents of the Smolensk region, fell into the hands of the German-Fascist hangmen in the summer of 1941, after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the Smolensk area.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cienciala, Doc. 102 pp. 306.

In September 1943 Smolensk was retaken by the Red Army. On November 2, 1942 the "Extraordinary State Commission for Ascertaining and Investigating Crimes Perpetrated by the German-Fascist Invaders and their Accomplices" had been formed, of which Dr. Nikolai Burdenko was a member. On January 12, 1944, Burdenko was appointed chairman of the "Special Commission for Ascertaining and Investigating the Circumstances of the Shooting in the Katyn Forest by the German-Fascist Occupiers."

Known as the "Burdenko Commission" this group researched the Katyn massacres from October 5, 1943 until January 10, 1944. Its report, first published in *Pravda* on January 26, 1944, blamed the Germans. It claimed:

The Special Commission established that, before the capture of Smolensk by the Germans, Polish war prisoners, officers and men, worked in the western, district of the region, building and repairing roads. These war prisoners were quartered in three special camps named: Camp No. 1 O.N., Camp No. 2 O.N., and Camp No. 3 O.N. These camps were located 25 to 45 kilometers west of Smolensk.

The testimony of witnesses and documentary evidence establish that after the outbreak of hostilities, in view of the situation that arose, the camps could not be evacuated in time and all the Polish war prisoners, as well as some members of the guard and staffs of the camps, fell prisoner to the Germans.

The Burdenko Commission claimed that the Germans murdered the Poles. In the spring of 1943 the Germans:

...resolved to launch a provocation, using for this purpose the atrocities they had committed in the Katyn Forest, and ascribing them to the organs of the Soviet authorities. In this way they intended to set the Russians and Poles at loggerheads and to cover up the traces of their own crimes.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> I use the translation in volume 3 of the Madden Commission hearings, *The Katyn Forest Massacre Hearings before the Select Committee. "Part 3 (Chicago, IL) March 13 and 14, 1952* (US, Government Printing Office, 1952), 228-247. (Henceforth BU + page number is to this edition). This

translation is identical to the Soviet translation published as a Supplement to the "Soviet War News Weekly."

## **The Two Versions Compared**

Both the "official" version and the Soviet version agree that more than 10,000 Polish prisoners were held by the Soviets at three POW camps: Kozel'sk, in Eastern Russia; Starobelsk, in Ukraine; and Ostashkov, near Kalinin (now renamed Tver'). In April and May, 1940, the Polish prisoners were shipped out of these three camps to the Directorates of the NKVD in Smolensk, Kharkiv and Kalinin respectively.

According to the "official" version the prisoners were executed there or at the burial sites, and buried at Koz'i Gory, near Katyn' (which is near Smolensk), Piatykhatky, near Kharkiv, and Mednoe, near Kalinin, respectively.

According to the Soviet version the prisoners were sent from the three NKVD centers to camps 1-ON, 2-ON, and 3-ON near Smolensk, and others were sent to the western Ukraine. All were to do road work. All were captured by the Germans and their Ukrainian Nationalist allies in June 1941, and subsequently murdered.

Both versions agree that small numbers of Polish prisoners were sent to other camps and were not killed.

## **Crucial Points**

The Soviet NKVD lists of prisoners shipped from the three camps to the NKVD at the three towns have been preserved and published. Everyone agrees that these lists are genuine.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> They are published in Jędrzej Tucholski. *Mord w Katyniu: Kozielsk, Ostaszków, Starobielsk. Lista Ofiar*. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1991. This is still the official and only edition of all the Soviet NKVD transit lists and the Polish lists of victims. The Soviet lists are reprinted in the original Russian.

The "official" Soviets-did-it version relies on the assumption that the Polish prisoners were executed by the NKVD at the three towns named and then buried at the three burial places named. These shipments of prisoners are routinely stated to be "death transports."

The book *Katyn: A Crime Without Punishment* by Anna M. Cienciala, Natalia S. Lebedeva, and Wojciech Materski (Yale University Press 2007) is the definitive academic account of the "official" version. It refers to the shipments of prisoners this way (emphasis added):

The final death transport left Kozielsk....

The last death transport left Ostashkov for Kalinin (Tver) on 19 May...

...lists of those to be sent out of the camps to be shot (doc. 62)...

...and reporting on the number sent to their death (doc.65).

Cienciala, who did the writing in this volume, added all the language about execution. Likewise in her discussion of the documents — none of which mentions executions, shootings, killing, death, etc., at all — Cienciala continuously adds language to remind the readers that, *in her interpretation*, these prisoners were being transported to places where they would be executed. Here are a few examples (again, I have added the emphasis):

They were transferred to NKVD prisons... to be shot there. (154)

... the same as the order in the death transports. (156)

The first lists of victims to be dispatched to their death... (157)

The delivery of lists for dispatching prisoners to their deaths... (159)

Beria's directive of 4 April 1940 indicates the goal of extermination not only the officers and police... (160)

This is the first of many reports by the UNKVD head of Kalinin Oblast, Dmitry Tokarev, on the "implementation," that is, the murder... (162)

Soprunenko's instruction to Korolev of 6 April 1940 was, in fact, a death list... (163)

The dispatch of the prisoners of war to their deaths... (175)

This 11 April 1940 report from Kozelsk shows that 1,643 officers were murdered in nine days. (175)

... the moods of the prisoners as they were being dispatched unwittingly to their deaths. (176-177)

Most prisoners sent to Yukhnov camp... were exempted from the death lists for various reasons... (183)

By 3 May, the UPV together with the 1<sup>st</sup> Special Department NKVD and with the personal help of Merkulov, had processed the cases of 14,908 prisoners and sent out dispatch lists — death sentences — for 13,682. (187)

...it is likely that they simply signed or stamped the "Kobulov Forms" (doc. 51) with the death warrant already filled in. (187)

This report gives the number of lists of names received in the camp and the number of prisoners sent out from Kozelsk camp to their death for each date between 3 April and 11 May... (190)

A report to Soprunenko shows the number of people destined for execution to the lists received... (193)

One of the last executions of POWs from the Ostashkov camp took place on 22 May 1940. (200)

Ostashkov prisoners were still being executed that day... (200)

It is important to emphasize that not a single one of the transit documents themselves refers in any way to executions.

With very few exceptions, all the bodies identified — or supposedly identified — at Katyn' (Koz'i Gory) by both the Germans and the Soviets



were identified by documents said to have been found on the corpses. No bodies identifiable as those of Katyn victims have been found at Mednoe or Piatykhatky.

The "official" version *assumes* that the corpses exhumed at Katyn were all from the Kozel'sk camp, having been sent there from Smolensk. If any bodies at Katyn are those of POWs who, according to the Soviet transit lists, were sent to Kalinin or Kharkiv, the "official" version would be undermined or disproven. Likewise, any bodies of POWs from any of these three camps found at other places would also undermine the "official" version.

## Chapter 1. The Evidence That Can't Be Impugned

There is an enormous amount of writing about the Katyn massacre. The books about it would certainly fill a small library. At least one journal, „Zeszyty Katyńskie," is devoted entirely to Katyn.

There are thousands of articles in historical journals, newspapers, and other periodical publications. The four-volume Polish document collection "Katyn. Dokumenty Zbrodni" (KDZ, "Katyń. Documents of the Crime") is more than 2000 pages long.

However, once I undertook to study Katyn I soon discovered that only a tiny amount of this material is primary source evidence of who killed the Polish POWs. The vast number of documents published in KDZ and a few other collections, however useful they may be for other purposes, obscure those few documents that do constitute real primary sources — the sole valid evidence — concerning the question: Who killed the Poles? All the rest concern peripheral issues. These side issues are important only for those who believe that they already know the guilty party and just want to "round out the story."

So in reality there is not much evidence. What's more, most of the evidence that does exist *could* have been fabricated in order to support one version or the other, either the "official" Soviets-did-it version, or the Soviet the "Germans-did-it" version. Indeed, some of it *has* to be fabrication.

Both the Germans and the Soviets produced reports, each with its own exhumations, autopsies, expert testimony, and witnesses. The German report concluded that the Soviets had killed the Poles, while the later Soviet report concluded that the Germans had killed them. Clearly, they can't both be correct. Nor can they both be incorrect, for there was no third party aside from the Germans and the Soviets that could have killed the Poles.

In 1992 the Russian government produced documents which it claimed had been hidden in a top-secret Soviet archive and proved that the Soviets had murdered the Poles. The documents of "Closed Packet No. 1" — I call them the "smoking gun" documents — looked genuine. For a few years it seemed

that the question of "Who killed the Poles" had been solved for once and for all.

In 1995 Iurii Mukhin, a Russian metallurgist, published "The Katyn Mystery" (*Katynskii detektiv*). In it Mukhin argued that the "smoking gun" documents are fabrications. Mukhin's book soon gathered supporters, mainly in Russia, and started a movement. In 2003 Mukhin followed up his first book with a 750+ page work titled "Anti-Russian Villainy" (*Antirossiiskaia podlost'*).

Some persons in the "Soviets-did-it" camp founded a website <http://katyn.codis.ru/> — devoted to promoting that position and to critiquing the opposing viewpoint. A little later some researchers adhering to the "Germans-did-it" viewpoint set up another website <http://www.katyn.ru/>. The researchers around this website, along with others, are convinced that the "smoking gun" documents are forgeries.

To sum up:

- Despite the vast amount of documentation there is in fact a very limited amount of primary source evidence.
- The evidence is contradictory. Some of it indicates the guilt of the Soviets, while other evidence supports the guilt of the Germans.
- Some of this evidence has certainly been faked — forged, fabricated.

## **The Document Collections**

All the evidence relevant to establishing the guilty party is in one of the following four collections of documents:

A. The German Report, *Amtliches Material zum Massenmord von Katyn* (AM) of 1943 and related documents.

B. The Soviet Burdenko Commission Report (BU) of January 1944 and related documents.

C. "Closed Packet No. 1" (CP), the existence of which was announced in 1992.

D. The archeological report on excavations at the mass murder site in Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy, Ukraine (VV) of November 2011 and related documents of 2010 - 2013.

The vast majority of studies of Katyn assume the validity of AM and CP, thereby also assuming that the Soviets were the guilty party at Katyn. This is the "official" viewpoint. It is the only one tolerated in academia and in the mass and semi-popular media. In this version BU is assumed to be a fabrication and receives no serious consideration. This "official" version is so hegemonic, and the contrary version so marginalized, that even informed researchers often do not know that any other version exists, or simply assume that anyone who doubts the "official" version is willfully ignoring the evidence.

The contrary position, that BU is honest and AM and CP are fabrications, is held by a few Russian researchers. This position has received some limited attention in Russia. Outside Russia it is virtually ignored. The VV discoveries are either ignored or denied by everyone except by those few Russian researchers.

### **The Need for Objectivity**

The only way to arrive at the truth in any investigation is to proceed with objectivity. It is impermissible to allow one's own preferences or preconceived ideas to interfere with the search for the truth.

Therefore we must be determined from the start to treat Katyn like an unsolved mystery. We have to set aside our own preconceived ideas, preferences, and prejudices. More than that: we have to recognize our own preconceived ideas and prejudices, and then take definite steps to prevent them from biasing our investigation.

We have to work out a method of looking with particular skepticism upon evidence that tends to support our own prejudices and preconceived ideas. We also need to give especially generous consideration to any evidence that tends to contradict our own prejudices and preconceived ideas.

If we fail to do this, we will do the opposite — give an especially generous reading to evidence that tends to support our preconceived ideas, and be quick to reject any evidence that tends to disprove our preconceived ideas. We will inevitably fall prey to confirmation bias. Then we will have no chance at all of discovering the truth, for even if we stumble upon it we will not recognize it.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Confirmation bias, also called confirmatory bias or myside bias, is the tendency to search for, interpret, favor, and recall information in a way that confirms one's preexisting beliefs or hypotheses. It is a type of cognitive bias and a systematic error of inductive reasoning." (Wikipedia, accessed 11.25.17)

Virtually all the purported research on Katyn, including every one of the book-length academic studies in all languages, is guilty of exactly this failure. Their authors make no attempt to be objective. Instead, they misinterpret some evidence and ignore other evidence in an attempt to bolster their own preconceived idea: that the Soviets were the guilty party.

## **Method**

There are many fascinating aspects to each of the document collections A through O. To discuss them all would require yet another voluminous work. But that would sidestep the question of primary importance: Who was guilty? The present book focuses narrowly on that question. Therefore this book is not an attempt to review the history of the Katyn issue. We have set ourselves a more limited but much more important aim: to solve the Katyn mystery and to determine, on the basis of the evidence now available, who was the responsible party: the Soviets or the Germans.

What is the proper, objective method for approaching and, hopefully, solving the Katyn mystery — for determining which side, the Germans or the Soviets, murdered the Poles? As far as I can tell, up till now no one has asked this question.

Our first task must be to decide whether, in all of the materials that constitute document collections A through D, there exists *any primary*

*source evidence that cannot possibly have been fabricated, forged, or faked.*

The unique value of evidence that cannot have been fabricated should be obvious. Because we want to solve the mystery, to determine who murdered the Polish POWs, only evidence that cannot possibly have been faked is worthy of our attention. The rest of the mountain of Katyn information can be used only as a mine from which to extract that limited amount of evidence whose *bona fides* cannot be questioned, which is the only relevant evidence. If we focus on this evidence, and do not permit ourselves to be distracted by the enormous quantity of writing on Katyn, we should be able to solve the Katyn mystery and discover who murdered the Polish prisoners.

To determine whether any such evidence exists, all of the documents in collections A through D must be carefully studied. We must also study the voluminous scholarly works on Katyn in order to review the results of previous researchers.

Primary-source evidence that cannot have been faked does exist. This evidence is of two types:

- Evidence found in a source which the authors of that source would never have fabricated because the evidence appears to contradict their bias. Therefore, they must have included such evidence because they simply could not do otherwise.
- Evidence cited by a source before its authors recognized the significance of that evidence for its own position on the Katyn matter. In at least one case the authors never did recognize the significance of that bit of evidence and so never used it.

## **The Evidence**

What follows is the list of the evidence that almost certainly cannot have been faked<sup>2</sup> and which therefore enables us to solve the Katyn mystery. We list this evidence according to the four document collections A through D.

<sup>2</sup> I do not write "cannot possibly have been faked" because I believe absolute statements to be offputting and unwarranted. However, for all intents and purposes, the evidence here can be assumed to be genuine.

### **A. The German Report, *Amtliches Material zum Massenmord von Katyn* (AM) of 1943 and related documents.**

\* The spent shells found at Katyn were German.

The Germans would never have fabricated or invented this detail. In his diary Joseph Goebbels expressed dismay at the discovery of this fact. The Germans went to some trouble to argue that the Soviets could have used German bullets. We will study their argument closely.

\* A badge from the Ostashkov POW camp was discovered at Katyn.

The German report AM records this detail. It sets forth the explanation that it was associated with the remains of a Polish soldier who had received it from fellow prisoners who had been previously imprisoned at Ostashkov. AM presents no evidence that any such prisoners existed. As we will see, proponents of the "Soviets-did-it" camp have not succeeded in accounting for the presence of this badge in a way that supports their contention.

\* The Polish POWs whose bodies were buried at Katyn were presumed to have been in the Soviet POW camp at Kozel'sk, near Smolensk. But many POWs listed among the bodies which the Germans claimed they exhumed at Katyn had in fact been in the Starobel'sk or Ostashkov POW camps. The Germans did not remove these names. Perhaps, in a rush to complete and publish their report, they did not have time to do so. Or perhaps they could not do so because others, including the Polish observers, had already seen them; or because they did not recognize the significance of the fact that POWs from Starobel'sk and Ostashkov were found at Katyn; or because they did not know that these men had been in Ostashkov and Starobel'sk; or for some combination of these reasons.

The main point is this: the Germans would never have "faked" — invented — these names. Today both sides recognize that their presence at Katyn

undermines the "official" Soviets-did-it case.

**B. The Soviet Burdenko Report (BU) of January 1944 and related documents.**

Like the Germans the Soviets also exhumed bodies of murdered Poles and searched them for documents. Details concerning documents found on four bodies were published in BU. A list among the Burdenko Commission materials in a former Soviet archive gives details about materials found that were not included in the final report.

One document found among the bodies is from a prisoner who was shipped from the Ostashkov POW camp to Kalinin. The Soviet investigators were unable to identify him because the first part of his last name is illegible. Therefore they did not realize that he had been in Ostashkov. They did not recognize that his presence at Katyn undermines the German report and supports the Soviet case. So they made no use of this information. Therefore they would not have fabricated it.

**C. "Closed Packet No. 1" (CP), the existence of which was announced in 1992.**

This collection of documents contains one document that has been faked in a clumsy manner but for some reason not discarded. There is no plausible alternative explanation for it except that it was part of a broader forgery job.

**D. The archeological report on excavations at the mass murder site in Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy, Ukraine (VV) of November 2011 and related documents (VV) of 2010 — 2013.**

\* Badges of two Polish POWs were found in a mass grave in this town in Western Ukraine. These two men were from the Ostashkov POW camp. According to the "official" version they were shipped to Kalinin (now Tver'), Russia, where they were executed and buried at Mednoe. Their names are on memorial plaques in the Polish cemetery there.



No one, in particular the Polish-Ukrainian archeological team that uncovered these badges among the remains of many victims of execution, questions that the remains of these men must be among those murdered and buried at VV. (The Polish-Ukrainian team did not do DNA analysis of any remains.)

\* Between 96% and 98% of the shell casings found at this mass execution site are of German make and are dated "1941."

\* The execution method at VV was shown by the Polish archeologist to be characteristic of the *Einsatzkommando*, or German mass murder team, led by SS Obergruppenführer Friedrich Jeckeln, the so-called "Sardinenpackung."

\* Independent research by another scholar has confirmed that German troops, aided by Ukrainian nationalist auxiliaries, shot many Soviet citizens and Jews at this place soon after the invasion in June 1941.

\* Soon after the publication of the Polish archeologist's report of the findings at VV Polish and Ukrainian scholars recognized that the discoveries of these two badges endangers the "official" "the-Soviets-did-it" version of Katyn.

After the report on the discoveries at VV was published it was withdrawn. The excavation was closed and the mass murders are now attributed, without any evidence, to the NKVD.

### **Conclusion: The Germans Murdered the Poles**

All the evidence that is of undoubted authenticity, that cannot have been faked, supports the conclusion that the Germans, not the Soviets, are guilty of the mass murders of Polish POWs that are known as the Katyn massacre. All of the unimpeachable evidence either points directly to German guilt, or contradicts the "official" and only version of Soviet guilt. None of it is compatible with Soviet guilt, provides support for the "official" version, pretends to disprove German guilt.

Therefore we must conclude that it was the Germans who murdered the Poles, The evidence simply does not permit any other solution to this mystery.

I predict that this conclusion will be rejected regardless of the evidence. It directly contradicts the "official" version which is accepted by the Polish and Russian governments, by every scholarly study since at least 1992 (except for a few studies by Russian scholars that have been largely ignored), and by a host of of the influential bodies including the United States Congress and the International Court of Justice at The Hague.

The reader may wonder: "Doesn't the agreement of so many authorities carry some weight?" Indeed it does! The all-but-unanimous agreement that the Soviets were guilty at Katyn has served to make a "closed book" of the Katyn issue. The "official" version that the Soviets murdered the Poles dominates both expert and public opinion. Dissenting views are not tolerated. Such views, and their authors, are ostracized, ridiculed, and otherwise ignored in the sense of never being cited or referred to in further writings.

But consensus is irrelevant to the question before us. That question is: what is the truth? This question cannot be decided by appeals to authority no matter how respectable or how numerous those authorities may be. It can only be decided on the basis of primary source evidence.

The evidence is unequivocal. *None of the evidence that cannot have been faked supports the hypothesis that the Soviets shot the Poles. All of it supports the contrary hypothesis.*

In this book we will carefully scrutinize each of the document collections A through D. In the conclusion we will address the question of why the approach employed in the present book has not been applied to Katyn before this.

## Chapter 2. The German Report — *Amtliches Material* (AM)

The German Report *Amtliches Material zum Massenmord von Katyn* (AM) contains many contradictions. Several local resident witnesses whose testimony is included in it later repudiated their testimony. Its results were rejected by at least three members of the international scientific team which examined bodies at German request and who signed statements claiming Soviet guilt. Two of the separate team of Polish scientific experts also withdrew their support from it.

Each of these problems could be accounted for by assuming that the German report was faked. They might also be explained by other factors. Those local resident witnesses and scientific experts who later repudiated their statements might have done so in fear of Soviet reprisal. Or they might have made their initial statements to the Germans under threat from that side. The contradictions in the report might be due to haste and carelessness as the Germans rushed the report into print.

Various documents — diaries, calendars, notebooks, envelopes, letters, newspapers, inoculation certificates, and other kinds of documents — were found in the mass graves. According to AM none were dated after sometime in April 1940. Both the German and Polish teams falsely concluded that this meant the prisoners had been executed around this time. Of course, the Germans would not have reported, or allowed the Poles to see, any documents dated later than April or, at latest, early May 1940. The Germans, not the Polish observers, controlled this process.

And the German-Polish conclusion was false anyway. The latest date is only the *terminus post quem*, evidence that the victim in question was killed sometime *after* that date, perhaps long afterwards. Some, at least, of the Germans and Poles must have understood this elementary fact. Therefore, dishonesty was surely present from the beginning in the compiling of the report.

But the fact that AM was compiled tendentiously, with some lying, and in haste, does not in itself establish who shot the Poles. It does not establish

that the Soviets were not guilty and therefore that the Germans were. The fact that AM is provably dishonest on many counts proves only that the report cannot be trusted. In a later chapter we will outline some of the more important contradictions and falsehoods in the German report.

However, our purpose is not to show that AM is a highly flawed document. Our aim is to "solve the mystery," to answer the question: Who murdered the Poles? Showing that the German report is flawed and dishonest cannot do that.

We might surmise that the Germans would not have had recourse to falsification if the Soviets really had killed the Polish POWs and all the Germans had to do was to tell the truth. But this reasoning, however suggestive, is not evidence.

## **The Evidence in AM That Cannot Have Been Faked and Therefore Is Genuine**

### **1. The spent shells found at Katyn were German.**

This is stated multiple times in AM:

Außerhalb der Gräber wurden eine Anzahl beschossener Pistolenhälsen mit dem Bodenaufdruck „Geco DD 7.65“ gefunden; desgleichen vereinzelt in den Gräbern zwischen den Leichen. (35)

*Translated:*

Outside the graves were found a number of pistol shells with the headstamp "Geco DD 7.65." Individual examples were also found in the in the graves among the corpses.

Im Grab 2 war nämlich beim Bergen der Leichen noch eine Originalpatrone auffindbar gewesen, bei der es sich um Pistolenmunition mit der Hülsenbodenprägung „Geco DD 7,65 D“ handelte. (73)

*Translated:*

During the retrieval of the corpses there was found in grave 2 an original cartridge, pistol ammunition with the "Geco 7,65 D" headstamp.

Die Hülsenböden weisen übereinstimmend die Prägung „Geco 7,65 D" auf, entsprechen sonach dem an der aufgefundenen unversehrten Patrone erhobenen Befund. (74)

*Translated:*

The headstamps have the same stamp "Geco 7,65 D", which corresponds to that on the unused cartridge that was found.

Analoge äußere Befunde boten vier weitere Geco-Hülsen, die am südlichen Rande des Grabes 1 nahe an dessen Kniewinkel aus dem gewachsenen Erdreich leicht rechtsseitlich vor einer daselbst stehenden Kiefer freigelegt worden waren. (74)

*Translated:*

Analogous exterior findings were four more Geco shells which had been left on the southern edge of grave 1 near its knee angle to the undisturbed earth and slightly to the right of a jawbone.

Die in Katyn nachgewiesenermaßen benutzte Pistolenmunition Geco Kaliber 7,65 mm gleicht der Munition, wie sie seit vielen Jahren in der Munitionsfabrik Gustav Genschow & Co. in Durlach bei Karlsruhe (Baden) hergestellt wird. (75)

*Translated:*

The Geco caliber 7.65 mm pistol ammunition used at Katyn, is the same as the ammunition which has been manufactured for many years in the ammunition factory of Gustav Genschow & Co. in Durlach near Karlsruhe (Baden).

Hieraus ergibt sich in Verbindung mit den früheren Ausführungen über die Hülsenbodenprägung "Geco 7,65 D", daß die zu den Erschießungen im Walde von Katyn verwendete Pistolenmunition 1930 oder 1931 hergestellt worden sein muß. (79)

*Translated:*

It follows from this, in connection with the earlier remarks on the headstamp "Geco 7,65 D", that the pistol ammunition used for the executions by shooting in the Katyn wood was produced in 1930 or 1931.

Im gleichen Untersuchungsgang wurde daselbst unter einer Nachbarleiche der untersten Schicht auf der Grabsohle auch eine Geschosshülse (Geco 7,65 mm) aufgefunden. (87)

*Translated:*

In the course of the same investigation, a bullet shell (Geco 7.65 mm) was found on the floor of the grave under an adjacent corpse of the lowest layer.

The Germans claimed that only German "Geco" cartridge shells were found at Katyn. They found no other shells there. The Germans would never have freely invented this fact. Had any Soviet cartridge shells been found among the corpses, the Germans would surely have reported this. Therefore we can be confident that only German shells were found at Katyn, though not necessarily only the kind of shells identified in AM.

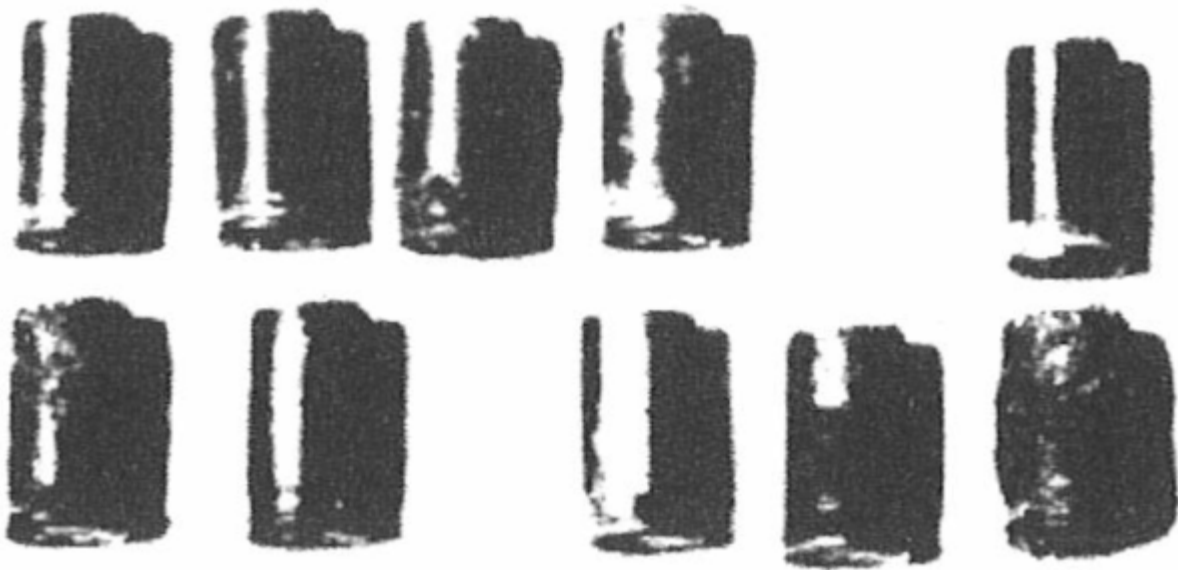
The Germans claimed that German cartridges were exported to the USSR in the 1920s and early 1930s. The Soviets did not deny this. But, absent countervailing evidence, German shells suggest German guilt.

Neither the Soviets nor the pro-Soviet researchers have remarked on the following two curious facts about the German report of these shell casings.

First, the Germans claimed that *all* the shell casings bore exactly the same "headstamp" — "Geco 7.65 D" or "Geco 7.65 DD." No matter who did the shooting it would be unusual for a team of at least a half-dozen shooters, shooting several thousand individuals during a period of about 6 weeks, to all use exactly the same shells, with the identical markings, and all at least nine years old.

At the German mass murder site at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy (VV) three different types of German shells were discovered. The two most common types of shells found there are dated 1941 on the headstamps. The number of victims at VV was about 1/10 of the number at Katyn.

Second, none of the photographs of the shell casings in AM are of the headstamps. The headstamps are the only way the shells can be identified. AM contains side photographs only, useless for identifying the shells.



*Image 2.1 AM p. 304 Bild 34, bottom.*

The Germans at Katyn knew this, of course. When they sent some shell casings to the Gustav Genschow firm, manufacturers of the "Geco" ammunition, for identification the Genschow firm replied with a note showing the different headstamps that identify the ammunition produced during different years.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This diagram raises another question. According to the Genschow firm — later, as we shall see, confirmed by Gustav Genschow himself to the U.S. Madden Commission — Genschow never manufactured any shells that said "Geco 7,65 D." Their shells either said "Geco 7.65 DD" (or "Geco DD 7.65", or "Geco D 7.65 D"). How could any German investigator have made this error if there were thousands of such shells lying in the graves?

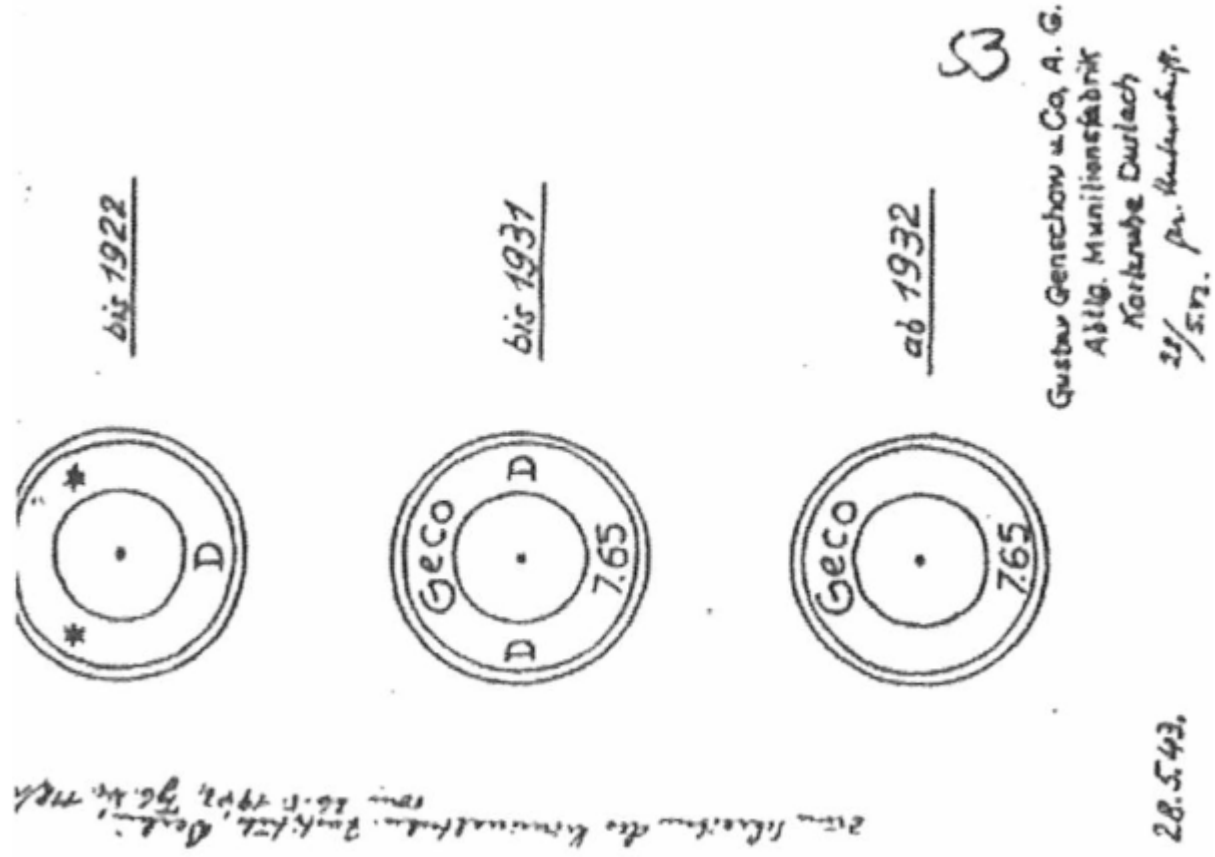


Image 2.2 Genschow firm drawing.

Only photographs of the headstamps could provide evidence that it was precisely these shells that the Germans found in the Katyn burial pits. The



Germans could have sent photographs of any shell casings they wanted and just claimed that they had been found at Katyn. But they did not. Instead the Germans took side views of the shells. They could easily have photographed the headstamps but they failed to do so.

The Germans were asking their readers to "believe" them. But then why bother with reproducing side views and views of bullets at all? It seems this can only be explained as an attempt to deceive the readers of the report.

Yet the Germans were right after all! Anticommunists have relied on the German report, which is the only evidence to support the "Soviets-did-it" version. And anticommunists have no incentive at all to be objective. To this day they have not questioned the fact that the Germans did not photograph the headstamps. We shall see that there are many more contradictions in the German report that have gone unremarked.

All accounts of Katyn accept the German claim that *only* these undated Geco shells were found at Katyn. This means that they accept the German AM as truthful — they *believe* the German report. This is an error, incompatible with a search for the truth, just as it would to "believe" the Soviet Burdenko Report (BU).

Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's minister of propaganda, clearly understood the problem that the finding of German shell casings *should* have posed for the German propaganda campaign around Katyn:

Unfortunately German munitions were found in the graves of Katyn. The question of how they got there needs clarification. It is either a case of munitions sold by us during the period of our friendly arrangement with the Soviet Russians, or of the Soviets themselves throwing these munitions into the graves. In any case it is essential that this incident be kept top secret. If it were to come to the knowledge of the enemy the whole Katyn affair would have to be dropped.

— *The Goebbels Diaries*, 1942-1943. Praeger, 1970, p.354.

Goebbels was correct. The use of German ammunition and *only* German ammunition at Katyn is *prama facie* evidence of German guilt. It is not

evidence of Soviet guilt at all.

## **2. A badge from the Ostashkov POW camp was discovered at Katyn.**

Bei einem weiteren Polen aus Grab 8 handelt es sich um Władisław Czernuszewicz, geb. am 21. 10. 1898 in Slonim, Zamkora 75, im Zivilleben Hilfsschreiber in der Kanzlei des Kreishauptmannes im Kreis Slonim....

Abgesehen von einer mit dem Monogramm „WC“ versehenen Geldbörse, 190 Zloty in banknoten und einem Tabaksbeutel aus Leinenstoff fand sich letztlich eine ovale Blechmarke unter den Asservaten vor, die folgende Angaben enthält:

T. K. UNKWD K. O.

9 4 2 4

Stadt Ostaschkow. (AM 46)

Another Pole from grave 8 is Wladislaw Czernuszewicz, born on 21.10.1898 in Slonim, Zamkora 75, in the civilian life an auxiliary clerk in the office of the district captain of the Slonim district....

In addition to a wallet with the monogram "WC", 190 zloty in bank notes and a tobacco pouch of linen cloth, an oval sheet-metal marker was found among the exhibits that contains the following information:

T. K. UNKWD K. O.

9 4 2 4

Ostashkov.

The finding of this badge caused some confusion in the German report. The report concludes that Czernuszewicz was brought from the Ostashkov POW

camp to Kozel'sk by the Soviets for some purpose and then shot.

However, no one named "Czernuszewicz," "Czarnuszewicz", "Czernyszewicz", etc. is on the list of more than 4000 bodies in AM.

- A "Władysław Czarnuszewicz" — [[cyrillic]]Чарнушевич Владислава Юльяновича — is on list 54/3 transported from the Kozel'sk POW camp on May 5, 1940 (Tucholski p. 716 #44).<sup>2</sup>
- A "Władysław Czernyszewicz" — [[cyrillic]]ЧЕРНЫШЕВИЧ Владислав Леонардович — is on the list at the Starobel'sk POW camp (Tucholski p. 980 #3668).

<sup>2</sup> Jędrzej Tucholski, *Mord w Katyniu: Kozielsk, Ostaszków, Starobielsk. Lista ofiar*. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1991. This is still the official and only edition of all the Soviet NKVD transit lists and the Polish lists of victims. The Soviet lists are reprinted in the original Russia.

The volume *Ubity w Katyni*, a recent attempt to shore up the official "Soviets-did-it" version, tries to solve this problem by claiming, *in brackets*, that "Czarnuszewicz" was first held at Ostashkov and then transferred to Kozel'sk in November 1939. (811) The brackets indicate that there is no evidence for this. "Ubity" assumes that the Russian "Charnushevich" was really "Chenushevich" ([[cyrillic]]Чарнушевич) (Czernuszewicz).

[[cyrillic]]Чарнушевич Владислав (Czarnuszewicz Władysław. Juliana i Antoniny)... Чарнышевич Владислав Юльянович; ДМ-(30-33) Czernuszewicz Wladislaw

Among the "Kozel'sk" POWs Tucholski (90 co 1. 2) names Chernyshevich:

Czernyszewicz Władysław Ur. 21.10.1898. Pchor. Pracownik Starostwa w Słonimiu.

This only confuses matters further since this is the spelling of the prisoner not in Kozel'sk or Ostashkov but in Starobel'sk. Here is an individual named in the text of AM but not in the AM lists and about whom Tucholski and Gur'ianov (author of "Ubity") are also confused. Any honest and objective researcher should simply recognize this contradiction. But typical

of dishonest scholarship those who support the "official" version, rather than seeking the truth, want that version to be "seamless," without contradictions.

In reality, no historical or criminal investigations are "seamless," without contradictions and unexplained details. Honest investigators recognize this fact. Falsifiers often strive to make their falsifications appear to be "perfect."

This is a problem for the "official," "Soviets-did-it" version. A badge at Katyn from Ostashkov suggests that Polish POWs were shipped out of Ostashkov to Kalinin not to execution but for some other purpose. For if they were to be executed, why not execute them at Kalinin where, according to the "official" version, the Ostashkov POWs were murdered?

Rather than acknowledge this difficulty "Ubity" glosses over it without resolving it. In fact one must look very carefully to notice this sleight-of-hand at all. It appears to be a clumsy contradiction, unresolved because impossible to resolve, in order to get rid of the embarrassing presence of that badge from Ostashkov.

Why did the Germans mention it at all? Possibly they would have cut it out if they had had more time to produce a carefully edited version of AM.

### **3. Many POWs listed among the bodies exhumed by the Germans had been in the Starobel'sk or Ostashkov POW**

Through careful study of the primary sources we have established that a number of the bodies exhumed by the Germans at Katyn were of Poles imprisoned at and transported from the Ostashkov camp to Kalinin and from the Starobel'sk camp to Khar'kov. The importance of the presence of these bodies at Katyn is well summarized by Andrei Pamiatnykh, a firm proponent of the "Soviets-did-it" version.

[[[cyrillic]]]"Посторонние" в Катыни очень важны для сторонников сталинской версии об ответственности немцев за катынское преступление. Их наличие означало бы, что в Катыни погребены

узники не только Козельского лагеря, но и узники других лагерей, а значит, закрадываются сомнения в результатах немецкого следствия 1943 года и советскороссийского следствия 1990-2004 годов - согласно этим результатам, в Катynie расстреляны и погребены узники Козельска, а узники Старобельска и Осташкова, по результатам советско-юго-российского расследования, погребены в Харькове и Медном, соответственно. Вот что пишут поборники сталинской версии Владислав Швед и Сергей Стрыгин в своей главной статье по Катynie:

Но в катынских могилах были также обнаружены трупы поляков, содержавшихся в Старобельском и Осташковском лагерях. Эти поляки могли попасть из Харькова и Калинина в Смоленскую область только в одном случае - если их в 1940 г. перевезли в лагеря особого назначения под Смоленск. Расстрелять их в этом случае могли только немцы.

*Translated:*

"Outsiders" at Katyn are very important for supporters of the Stalin version of the responsibility of the Germans for the crime of Katyn. Their presence would mean that at Katyn were burned not only prisoners from the Kozel'sk camp, but also prisoners of other camps, and that would mean that doubts about the results of the German investigation of 1943 and the Soviet-Russian investigation of 1990-2004 are creeping in. According to the results [of these investigations] prisoners of Kozel'sk were shot and were buried at Katyn, and prisoners of Starobel'sk and Ostashkov, according to the results of the Soviet-Russian investigation, were buried at Kharkov and Mednoe respectively. Here is what Vladislav Shved and Sergei Strygin, proponents of the Stalin version, write in their main article on Katyn:

But in the Katyn graves there were also found the corpses of Poles who had been held in the Starobel'sk and Ostashkov camps. These Poles could have arrived in Smolensk oblast' from Khar'kov and Kalinin only if in 1940 they were transported to the camps of special designation near Smolensk. In that case only the Germans could have shot them.

Pamiatnykh restates this a little later in the same article:

[[cyrillic]]Случай ШКУТЫ (или, в соответствии с моей гипотезой, ШКУТЫ-СЕКУ ЛЬ!) представляется очень важным для сторонников сталинской версии об ответственности немцев за катынское преступление. А именно, если бы это был Шкута, и Шкута именно из Старобельска, это бы означало, что в Катыни погребены узники не только Козельска, но и «посторонние», а значит, закрадываются сомнения в результатах немецкого следствия 1943 года и советскороссийского следствия 1990-2004 годов - согласно этим результатам, в Катыни расстреляны погребены узники Козельска, а узники Старобельска (по результатам советского следствия) расстреляны и погребены в Харькове. (Pamiatnykh, Problem)

*Translated:*

The case of SHKUTA (or, according to my hypothesis, SHKUT A-SEKULA) is very important for the defenders of the Stalin version that the Germans were responsible for the crime of Katyn. Namely, if this was Shkuta, and Shkuta was from Starobel'sk, that would mean that at Katyn there were buried prisoners not only from Kozel'sk but also "outsiders," and that that would mean that doubts were creeping in about the results of the German investigation of 1943 and the Soviet Russian investigations of 1990-2004. According to these results, at Katyn prisoners from Kozel'sk were shot and buried, and prisoners from Starobel'sk (according to the results of the soviet investigation) were shot and buried at Khar'kov.

## **The "Outsiders"**

We begin by examining Pamiatnykh's attempt to resolve the question of the identity of one of the POWs on the AM list. Number 2398 in that list reads:

2398. Szkuta, Stanislaw, Lt. Impfschein, Mitgliedskarte d. Res.- Offiz

No prisoner by that name is on any of the Soviet Kozel'sk (Smolensk — Katyn) transfer lists. The only Polish POW by that name in the Soviet transfer lists was a Starobel'sk (Kharkiv — Piatykhatky) prisoner.

#3729 - 3729. [[cyrillic]]ШКУТА Станислав Францевич 1913  
(Tucholski p. 981)

The basic assumption of the "official" version of Katyn is that these prisoners were shot at Kalinin and Khar'kov and buried outside those cities at Mednoe and Piatykhatky respectively. The presence of Starobel'sk (or Ostashkov) POWs at Katyn would disprove that assumption and thereby would undermine the "official" version.

Accordingly Pamiatnykh attempts to show that Szkuta was actually someone else — Sekula — whose name was spelled incorrectly by the Germans. His hypothesis is that the Soviets misread the Polish barred "l" (ł) for a "t", then the "e" for a "z" and so wrote «[[cyrillic]]Шкута» — Shkuta — for "Sekula". Pamiatnykh found a preliminary German list which appears to bear this out:

02993) S e k u l a , Stanislaw, Lt.n.

Impfschein, Mitgliedskarte d. Res.Offz.

A "Sekula Stanislaw" is named in Tucholski's Kozel'sk list:

\* Sekula Stanislaw

Ur. 2.1.1903, s. Szczepana i Antoniny.

Ppor. piech. rez., 72. pp. Kierownik szkoły

powszechnej w Sworzycach, pow. Radom,

instruktor LOPP. (Tucholski p. 210 co 1. 2)

A "Sekula Stanislaw" is #4 on Soviet transit list 040/3 dated April 20, 1940:

4. [[cyrillic]]СЭКУ ЛА Станислава Степановича, (Tucholski p. 700)

A "Szkuta Stanisław" is also named in Tucholski's Kozel'sk list:

Szkuta Stanisław Marian

Ur. 7.5.1913. Ppor. art., dowódca 9. bat.

65, pal od 7.9.1939 w III dyonie 21.

pal. PCK (AM) Nr 01398. (Tucholski p, 226 co l. 2)

Here Tucholski identifies this man as number 1398 in the AM list. But no such number exists in AM! The AM list skips directly from 1397 to 1399:

1397. Uniformierter.

1399. Leutnant.

Verschiedene Zettel, Impfschein 2869

Tucholski does not explain why he states that "Szkuta" is number 01398 in the AM list when there is no such number in that list.

"Szkuta" is a problem for the "official" version because the presence at Katyn of a Starobel'sk prisoner is incompatible with the "official" version, according to which prisoners shipped from Starobel'sk to Khar'kov must have been shot there and buried nearby at Piatykhatky.

Pamiatnykh, writing in 2011, could not account for the fact that the draft German list read "Sekula" (with no barred "1") but the print version reads "Szkuta." Perhaps we can do so today.

In a later chapter we will see that the Germans captured the Soviet transit lists of POWs shipped from Kozel'sk to Smolensk, near Katyn. A "Sekula" — in Russian, "[[cyrillic]]Сэкула" — is indeed on that list. The "Sekula" reading on the draft German list must have been the result of consulting the Soviet Kozel'sk transit lists. We discuss the fact that the Germans possessed these lists in a later chapter.



When the German list was revised the reading was changed to "Szkuta." The German editor must have thought that was a more accurate reading of the material before him than "Sekula." He did not realize that the only Polish POW named "Szkuta" on the Soviet transit lists was a Starobel'sk prisoner. The Germans had captured Soviet lists of POWs shipped from Kozel'sk to Smolensk but could not have known whether or not they were complete. They did not have the lists of POWs shipped from Ostashkov and Starobel'sk.

Tucholski's "Szkuta Stanislaw Marian" to whom he gives the non-existent number AM 01398 must be an attempt to avoid the inconvenient presence of a Starobel'sk prisoner at Katyn — a fact that contradicts the "official" version. But Tucholski's entry has to be wrong. The Soviets had no "Szkuta" in Kozel'sk so they could not have transferred any "Szkuta" to Smolensk. "Szkuta" was transferred from Starobel'sk to Khar'kov. But he was not shot there. Instead he was transferred further to Smolensk, where he was eventually shot and buried.

But the "official" version of Katyn is wedded to the notion that the POWs were shot once they had arrived at the city to whose UNKVD they were shipped: Smolensk, Kalinin, or Khar'kov. According to the "official" version a Starobel'sk prisoner transferred to Khar'kov, as Szkuta was, but killed at Katyn, cannot have been shot by the Soviets.

### **Other "Outsiders"**

In his article Pamiatnykh identifies two lists of "outsiders" — persons on the AM list who cannot be identified with a prisoner who, according to the Soviet transit lists, was at Kozel'sk. One list, that of IU. N. Zoria, is unpublished. The second list is the following:

Tarczyński Marek, "Glossa do Księgi Cmentarnej Polskiego Cmentarza Wojennego w Katyniu", in "Zbrodnia Katyńska po 60 latach. Polityka, nauka, moralność." *Zeszyty katyńskie* 12 (2000) pp. 191-198.

This article lists 231 "outsiders" or unidentified names in the German AM that are not on the Soviet Koz'elsk lists. I subtracted those that Pamiatnykh claims he has identified and searched for the rest in Tucholski. I succeeded in identifying 23 more Kozel'sk POWs who had not been identified by Tarczyński in 2000. These are not relevant to the present study.

I also identified four more POWs named in the AM list who are on the Soviet Starobel'sk lists and other who is on the Soviet Ostashkov lists.

Starobel'sk:

\* Tarczyński 116 ŁAPIŃSKI Stanislaw AM #741

= [[cyrillic]]ЛАПИНСКИЙ Станислав Томашевич Starobel'sk  
(Tucholski p. 949, #2008)

AM 0741: 741.

Hauptmann.

Visitenkarte auf den Namen Lapinski Stanislaw, Gesangslehrer,  
Fotos.

\* Tarczyński 120 MAKOWSKI Janusz WO — str. 3

= [[cyrillic]]МАКОВСКИЙ Ян Юзефович Starobel'sk (Tucholski, p.  
950, #2082)

There is no Makowski in "Ubity"<sup>3</sup>

\* Tarczyński 123 MICHALSKI Jan AM #1536

= [[cyrillic]]МИХАЛЬСКИЙ Ян Янович Starobel'sk (Tucholski p.  
951, #2114)

There is no Michalski in "Ubity." "Ubity" 512 reads "possibly"  
Michałowski Jan."

\* Tarczyński 218 WRÓBEL, M. AM 161

= [[cyrillic]]ВРУБЕЛЬ Марьян Войчехович Starobel'sk (Tucholski p. 923, #483)

"Ubity" p. 242 claims this is "probably" [[cyrillic]]Врубелъ ЗыгмунтМиколай (Wróbel Zygmunt Mikolaj s. Edwarda i Anny). (Tucholski p. 611, #38) There is no other [[cyrillic]]ВРУБЕЛЬ М. on the Soviet transit lists. Tucholski p. 252 col. 1, under Kozel'sk, reads as follows:

Wróbel Zygmunt

Ppor. Prawdop. jest to:

Wróbel Zygmunt Mikolaj

Ur. 19.11.1913. Ppor. piech. rez., baon

КОР .. Orany".

There was no prisoner named Wróbel M. at Kozel'sk.

<sup>3</sup> This important volume is identified and discussed later in this chapter.

### **Ostashkov:**

\* Tarczyński 211 WOJNOWSKI AM 1948

= [[cyrillic]]ВОЙНОВСКОГО Юзефа Францишека Ostashkov (Tucholski p. 856, #88)

"Ubity" p. 884, #47 lists this person as still not identified. There was no Wojnowski at Kozel'sk.

### **Ostashkov and Starobel'sk POWs at Katyn, from Gur'ianov**

2015 saw the publication of a book that is at present the definitive account of the Katyn victims from the "official" or "Soviets-did-it" perspective. This is:

Ubity v Katyni. Kniga pamiati pol'skikh voennoplennykh-uznikov kozel'skogo lageria NKVD, rasstrelennykh po resheniiu Politbiuro VKP(b) 5 marta 1940 goda. Moscow: Obshchestvo „Memorial” Izdatel'stvo „Zvenia” 2015. ISBN 978-5-78700-123-5

(Translation of book title: "Men murdered at Katyn. Memorial book of Polish POW prisoners of the Kozel'sk NKVD camp shot according to the decision of the Politburo of the VKP(b) of March 5, 1940.")

The academic discussion is signed by Aleksandr Gur'ianov, a "Memorial Society" researcher. "Memorial" is a strongly anticommunist organization. As one might expect, "Memorial" and this book support the "official", "Soviets-did-it" version of Katyn.

On pages 882-884 Gur'ianov names 41 persons in the AM list whom he says no one has as yet identified. I have studied all these names and have identified three POWs from the Ostashkov camp. One, Wojnowski, is identified above.

The other two Ostashkov prisoners exhumed by the Germans at Katyn are:

("Ubity" p. 882):

\* 6. Dudek ([[cyrillic]]Дуден:, имя не указано).

[[cyrillic]]Военнослужащий.

V-209-0778 Dudek, [[cyrillic]]имя не указано; AM-186-778 Dudek, [[cyrillic]]имя

[[cyrillic]]не указано (**в части тиража: Budek Karol**); РСК Dudek [[cyrillic]]имя не указано: APL3-22-0778, APL3-50-0778, APL3-77-0778, APL5-19-0778, MUZ2-26-0778, MUZ6-17-0778.

[м.б., это Дудек Мечислав Яковлевич (список-предписание № 025/1 от 09.04.1940)?

The boldface text says that in part of the press run of AM "Dudek" is listed as "Budek Karol."

AM p. 186 # 778 reads:

778. **Budek, Karol**, Uniformierter

Impfzettel, Zettel mit Namen des Obigen

This must be the following person:

38. [[cyrillic]]ЛАБУ ДЕК Кароль Яновича, 1895 г.р. 2568

Tucholski p. 896, #38 - Ostashkov

This is the only POW whose name contains "Budek." Moreover, his first name was "Karol." Nine Dudeks are listed in Tucholski. None of them have "Karol" as the first name.

\* 12. Jakowicz ([[cyrillic]]Якович, имя не указано). Военнослужащий, при останках найден членский билет Профсоюза работников умственного труда, выданный Главным управлением в г. Катовице. V-61-02857; AM-242-2857; РСК перед фамилией вопросительный знак в скобках: GARF-105-02857, APL7-18-02857, APL7-152-02857, MUZ8-17-02857.

AM p. 242 #2857 reads:

2857. Jakowicz, ?, Uniformierter. Mitgliedskarte.

Tucholski p. 121 col. 1:

Jakowicz (?) ...

Z Katowic. РСК (AM) Nr 02857

This must be:

64. [[cyrillic]]ДЯКОВИЧ Микалая Гжегожа, 1892 г.р. 3224

Tucholski p. 766, #64 - Ostashkov.

## **Yet More "Outsiders"**

The Burdenko Commission identified yet more corpses as belonging to Polish POWs from Ostashkov and Starobel'sk. Most are reported in BU. One, not used in the published report, is recorded only in a working list of materials recovered from the corpses by Burdenko Commission investigators. We will examine it in the next chapter.

The mass grave of German victims at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy, Ukraine, contains the bodies of at least two and probably more Polish POWs who had been Ostashkov prisoners who had been transferred to Kalinin. But they had not been shot there, as the "official" version requires, but instead were killed at least 15 months later and 700 miles distant from Kalinin. The "official" version cannot accommodate this, so they must have been shot by the Germans and their Ukrainian allies.

## **Another Piece of Unimpeachable Evidence**

In Chapter 8 we examine the information about another "outsider," a prisoner from Ostashkov whose corpse was tentatively identified by the Polish Red Cross at Katyn as that of "Krzysiński."

## **Conclusion**

The unimpeachable evidence from the German AM is:

- the German shell casings;
- the badge from Ostashkov;
- the presence of corpses of Ostashkov and Starobel'sk prisoners found at Katyn.

All this evidence points towards German, not Soviet, guilt.

## Chapter 3. The Burdenko Report

The Soviet Burdenko Report (BU) of January 1944 is the main document in which the Soviet version of Katyn is set forth. Proponents of the "official" version which blames the Soviets normally dismiss it without serious criticism.

BU contains one piece of evidence that cannot possibly have been faked and so is of prime importance for determining the guilty party. We will examine it here.

In 2007-2011 Andrei Pamiatnykh published an online article titled "From the unpublished materials of the Burdenko Commission."<sup>1</sup> In it Pamiatnykh, a firm adherent of the "official" Soviets-did-it version of Katyn, reproduces without comment 29 pages of a list or inventory of materials found by Burdenko Commission investigators among the bodies exhumed by the Soviet commission at Katyn in January 1944.

<sup>1</sup> At <http://katynfiles.com/content/pamyatnykh-burdenko-materials.html>

Among these materials are documents that the Soviet investigators found on the bodies. Some of those documents postdate the time that, according to the "official" version, the Polish POWs had been executed by the NKVD. They are "proof of life" later than the time that the "official" version insists the Polish POWs had been killed — in April and May, 1940. If they are valid, the "official" version of Katyn must be false, since the "official" version states that all the prisoners were shot by the NKVD during April and May, 1940.

But are these documents valid? Or are they fakes, forgeries created to exculpate the Soviets and planted on the bodies or in the graves by the NKVD or the Burdenko Commission? In this chapter we will:

A. summarize all the documents that purport to show that some of the prisoners whose bodies were found at Katyn lived until late 1940 and into 1941.

B. list the three identifiable Polish POWs who are associated with such documents.

C. identify and discuss the one primary source that cannot possibly have been faked.

### **A. Documents dated later than May 1940**

Numbers at the left are to the 29 pages of investigators' notes reproduced as digital photographs in Pamiatnykh's article,

5. Date of April 4, 1941. Prayer book with signature [[cyrillic]]ЯДВИНЯ (Jadwinia) and date "4.IV.41"

5. Dates of September and November, 1940. Tomasz Zigoń — dates 12.ix.40, 28.ix.40, 15.xi.40.

Zigoń's case is important. Tucholski p. 260 col 1 (Kozel'sk) reads:

Zygoń Tomasz

Ur. 7.3.1897, s. Tomasza i Urszuli. Podof. rez. Urzędnik Sekcji Prawnej Ubezpieczalni Społecznej w Warszawie, zam. Gołębki k. Waszawy. **Wymieniony w komunikacie komisji Burdenki. Kozielsk lub Starobielsk. Porównaj listę starobielską.**

(Translation of boldface text): Mentioned in the Burdenko commission report. Kozelsk Starobel'sk Compare the Starobe'lsk list.

On page 519 column 2 there is exactly the same entry, except the last sentence reads: "Porównaj listę kozielską" — "compare the Kozel'sk list."

Tucholski has no record of Zigoń in the Soviet transit lists. But Zigoń is on the "Ukrainian list"!

81. /1147/ ZIGOŃ Tomasz s. Tomasza ur. 1897



ZYGOŃ Tomasz s. Tomasza i Urszuli ur. 7.3.1897 w Soborzycach, podof. rez. zmobilizowany do Włodzimierza urzędnik sekcji prawnej Ubezpieczalni Społecznej w Warszawie, zam. Gołębki, wymieniony w komunikacie Komisji Burdenki.

- Ukraiński Ślad Katynia 130.

*Translated:*

ZYGOŃ Tomasz son of Tomasz and Urszula born 7.3.1897 in Soborzyce, reserve under-officer mobilized to Włodzimierz direction of legal section of the Social Insurance Office in Warsaw, resident of Gołębek, named in the report of the Burdenko Commission.

This means that Zigoń was arrested in the Ukraine — the list doesn't give us any more information than that. Logically, therefore, he would have been imprisoned in Starobel'sk camp. But he is not listed on the Soviet lists as one of those transferred out of Starobel'sk in April - May 1940.

Body #92 searched by the Burdenko Commission<sup>2</sup> must be Zigoń's because there is too much personal material on it to be anybody else's. Here is the complete entry from the Burdenko Commission's text:

Letter from Warsaw, addressed to the Red Cross at the central bureau of POWs in Moscow, 12 Kuibyshev Street. The letter is written in Russian, in which Sofia ZIGON' asks to be informed of the location of her husband Tomash ZIGON', sergeant (*vakhmistr*) of cavalry. On the letter is the date September 12, 1940 (12.IX-40). On the envelope is a German postage stamp from Warsaw. IX-40 and the [cancellation?] stamp "Moscow. Post office 9, sent 28.IX-40 and a determination in red ink in Russian: "Find out which camp and send it for delivery. 15.IX-40. (signature unreadable)." (BU 246)

<sup>2</sup> I use the translation in volume 3 of the Madden Commission hearings. *The Katyn Forest Massacre. Hearings before the Select Committee...Part 3 (Chicago, IL) March 13 and 14, 1952* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1952) 228-247. (Henceforth BU + page number is to this edition). This

translation is identical to the Soviet translation Published as a Supplement to the "Soviet War News Weekly."

Since this letter was found on Zigoń's body, he must have received it. By this time he must have been in another camp. Eventually he ended up in a camp near Smolensk, probably in one of the three camps 1-ON, 2-ON, or 3-ON.<sup>3</sup> As we shall see, the existence of these three camps is documented in other materials found by Burdenko Commission investigators on other bodies.

<sup>3</sup> "ON" is short for [[cyrillic]]особого назначения, "osobogo naznachenia", "Of Special Purpose."

So Zigoń was alive sometime after September 28, 1940, the latest date in Moscow. His body, along with many others, was exhumed at Katyn. *This means that these men were also alive at that time, or Zygoń could not have been buried among them. Therefore they were not shot by the Soviets in April-May 1940.*

That means that they were shot by the Germans and their Ukrainian Nationalist allies. This fact dismantles the "official" version of Katyn.

7. Date of June 29, 1940. Body #95 - 2 postcards dated 13.I.1940 and 29.VI. 1940.

18. Dates of April 6 and May 5, 194 1.

(See more discussion below of Vladimir Araszkievicz, under "identifiable Polish POWs.")

25. Date of November 1940. Postcard no. 0112 from Tarnopol' with postage cancellation 12.XI-40 [[cyrillic]]Тарнополь 12.XI-40 [[cyrillic]]года."

27. Dates of March 14, 1941 and May 18, 194 1. See discussion below of Eduard Levandowski.

**B. The three identifiable Polish POWS associated with documents placing them at other POW camps or dating from later than May 1940.**

9. Receipt from Starobel'sk camp dated 26.x i.1929 [this must be 1939] in the name of "[[cyrillic]]Дзевоньского Мечислава Якубовича."

Tucholski p. 896 #24: Ostashkov list 054/2 of May 5, 1940:

24. [[cyrillic]]ДЗЕВОНЬСКОГО Мечислава Якубовича, 1895 г.р.

On p. 285 col. 1, in his Ostashkov list, Tucholski lists the only person of this surname among the prisoners:

Dziewięcki ...

Funkcj. PP, posterunek Ząbkowice, pow.

Będzin

This must mean that Dziewięcki was in Starobel'sk before he went to Ostashkov. Tucholski does not mention the fact that this receipt was found at Katyn. Most of the four thousand or so bodies exhumed by the Germans at Katyn were identified by documents only. Only a few had names on clothing. None, of course, could be identified by appearance; the bodies were far too decomposed to permit facial identification.

18. Body #46 — [[cyrillic]]АРАШКЕВИЧА Владимира Рудольфовича / Araszkievicz, — note dated **25 March 1941**; receipt from camp 1-ON (1-ON) from **6 April 1941**.

Receipt from camp 1 — ON from **5 May 1941**.

Araszkievicz appears on Ostashkov transit list 062/2 of May 19, 1940 (Tucholski 908 #7):

7. [[cyrillic]]АРАШКЕВИЧ Владимира Рудольфовича, 1896 г.р.

Tucholski lists Araszkievicz under Kozel'sk:

Araszkievicz Włodzimierz Marian Jan Ur. 13.9.1896, s, Rudolfa. Por,  
łącz. rez., CWŁącz. Mgr prawa, adwokat, radca prawny w  
Chodakawskich Zakładach jedwabiu, zam. Łódź,

(Tucholski p, 68 col. 2)

Tucholski does not inform his readers that Araszkievicz was an Ostashkov prisoner shipped from there to Kalinin in May 1940 but obviously not killed there. Tucholski must have realized that this one fact would cast doubt upon the whole "official" version of Katyn.

27. Body #101 — [[cyrillic]]ЛЕВАНДОВСКОГО Эдуарда  
Адамовича [Lewandowski]

Receipt from Kozel'sk camp dated 19.XII. 1939. On reverse, date of **14 March 1941**;

Receipt from camp 1-ON dated **18 May 1941**.

On page 891 #35 Tucholski lists Lewandowski in Ostashkov list 051/2, of some date in April 1940:

35. [[cyrillic]]ЛЕВАНДОВСКОГО Эдуарда Адамовича 1893 г.р.

On page 317 col. 2 Tucholski lists him again as an Ostashkov prisoner:

Lewandowski Edward

Ur. 21.2.1893, s. Adama i Walerii.

Кпт. piech. sł. st., КОР.

Tucholski does not mention that BU lists his body as having been found at Katyn. That would cast doubt on the "official" Soviets-did-it version.

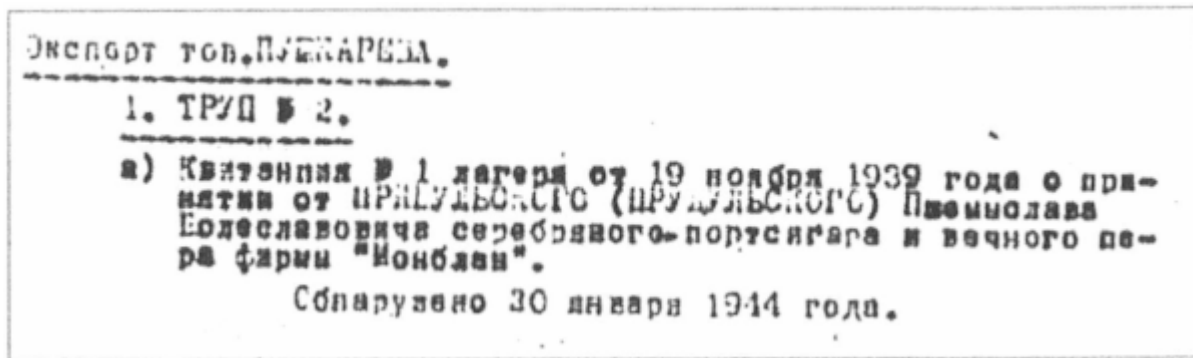
Despite the fact that the Burdenko Commission claims to have identified the bodies of Araszkievicz and Lewandowski at Katyn, both are listed in the official Polish Mednoe Cemetery book. That means that the official Polish story is that they were both shipped from Ostashkov to Kalinin —

true enough, as we have seen — and then were executed there. That means that Tucholski is tacitly claiming that the BU is a fabrication.

But we have good evidence that these findings of the BU are genuine, not fabrications.

### C. One Primary Source That Cannot Have Been Faked

On page 22 of the 29-page inventory of all materials found by the Burdenko Commission investigators at Katyn we read the following:



*Image 3.1* Burdenko Commission inventory report

Expert com. PUSHKAREVA.

1. Body #2.

a) Receipt of camp "1" of November 19 1939 for a silver cigar case and "Montblanc" ballpoint pen from PRIAPUL'SKOGO (PRUTSUL'SKOGO) Pshemyslava Boleslavovicha ([[cyrillic]]ПРЯПУЛЬСКОГО (ПРУЦУЛЬСКОГО) - Пшемислава Болеславовича)

The Burdenko investigator could not read the first part of the surname, He believed the surname ended in — [[cyrillic]]ПУЛЬСКИЙ / -pulski or — - [[cyrillic]]ЦУЛЬСКИЙ / -culski. The name and patronymic are clear: in Polish, Przemysław s. Bolesław — in Russian "[[cyrillic]]Пшемислав Болеславович."

No Katyn POW from any of the camps has a surname that ends in "-pulski."  
There is only one POW whose surname ends in "-ulski"

(Russian: -[[cyrillic]]УЛЬСКИЙ and whose name is Przemysław and whose father was named Bolesław. He is in Ostashkov list 050/3 of some time in April 1940 (Tucholski p. 886 #36):

36. [[cyrillic]]КОЗЕТУЛЬСКОГО Пшемислава Болеславича

In fact, no other Katyn POW in any of the POW camps had the Christian name Przemysław and a father named Bolesław. This is the only one. So this has to be the man.

Tucholski identifies the only "Kozietulski," a "Jan," at all three camps!

At Kozel'sk: Tucholski p. 143 col. 2 - 144 col. 1:

Kozietulski Jan

Ur. 22.10.1899. Por. art. st. sp., oficerska  
kadra OK 1. Porównaj listy ostaszkowską  
i starobielską,

At Ostashkov, Tucholski p. 310 col. 2:

Kozietulski Jan

Ur. 22.10.1899. Por. art. st. sp., oficerska  
kadra OK 1. Porównaj listy kozielską  
i starobielską

At Starobel'sk, Tucholski p. 435 col. 2:

Kozietulski Jan

Ur. 22.10.1899. Por. art. st. sp., oficerska

kadra OK I. Porównaj listy kozielską

i ostaszkowską.

Nevertheless, Volume 1, page 425 of the "Mednoe Cemetery Book" — *Miednoje. Księga Cmentarna Polskiego Cmentarza Wojennego*. (Warsaw: Rada Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa, 2005) — does have an entry (though no photograph) for Przemysław Koziętulski, son of Bolesław.

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Por. piech. **Przemysław Piotr KOZIETULSKI** s. Bolesława i Heleny, ur. 22 II 1911 w Żyrardowie. Ppor. Ze starszeństwem 15 VIII 1933, por. - 1 1 1936. W 1939 służył w baonie KOP "Stołpce"

L. 050/3 (36), 123.

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*Cemetery book entry recreated based upon original entry.*

The editors of this book probably took this entry from the Ostashkov transit list. But in reality Koziętulski is buried not at Mednoe but at Katyn.

Despite the fact that Tucholski mentions this Koziętulski three times Gur'ianov, in "Ubity," fails to mention anyone named Koziętulski. Tucholski himself does not mention Przemysław Koziętulski, son of Bolesław, at all, despite the fact that he is in the Soviet transit list and the Mednoe cemetery book.

Together with other prisoners from the Ostashkov camp Koziętulski was shipped to Kalinin. But he — and, no doubt many or even all of his fellow Ostashkov POWs — was not executed at Kalinin (or buried at Mednoe) but was sent on to Smolensk. This fact dismantles the "official" version.

**Interpretation**

The most important thing about the Koziatulski receipt is that BU fails to mention it. The Burdenko Commission investigator was unable to identify the person because the Burdenko Commission did not have the transit lists from the three POW camps.

Even if they had realized that this was an Ostashkov POW they probably would not have mentioned it in the report. Judging from what was included in BU the investigators were looking for documents dated later than May 1940. As we have seen, they found some. But this receipt is dated November 19, 1939. It would probably not have attracted their interest.

It is this lack of interest by the Burdenko Commission that makes it such a valuable piece of evidence.

\* It cannot have been fabricated. Therefore the Burdenko Commission "expert" (investigator) really found this receipt.

\* The fact that Koziatulski was in the Ostashkov POW camp and that the Burdenko Commission did not recognize this fact suggests that the other Ostashkov prisoners they identified — Dziewięcki, Araszkiwicz, and Lewandowski — are probably also genuine.

BU did not use Dziewięcki either. Once again, either they did not know that he was an Ostashkov prisoner, or they were looking only for documents dated after May 1940. This is good evidence that the Dziewięcki receipt is genuine too.

If the Koziatulski receipt were the only evidence we had of Ostashkov POWs killed and buried at Katyn we might strain for some exotic explanation to account for its presence. But in fact the opposite is the case. We have a lot of evidence, much of it independent of BU, that Ostashkov and Starobel'sk prisoners were killed and buried at Katyn.

The Koziatulski receipt supports the hypothesis that Polish prisoners from Ostashkov and Starobel'sk were killed at Katyn. They were indeed transferred to Kalinin and Kharkiv, as the Soviet transit lists show. But they were not shot there. Instead, they were further transferred to some camp or camps — again, probably the three camps 1-ON, 2-ON, or 3-ON named by



the Soviets where they did road work, were captured by the Germans, and shot.

Therefore, we have these results:

- We have a good deal of solid evidence that at least some prisoners lived after May 1940, the terminus ante quem that the "official" version states they must have been killed.
- We also have unimpeachable evidence that prisoners from Ostashkov and Starobel'sk camps were transferred in April and May 1940 to execution in Kalinin and Khar'kov but not to execution and burial at Mednoe and Piatykhatky. Instead, they were transferred onward to Smolensk.

There is no alternative "official" version that would allow the Polish prisoners to have been killed after May 1940 or as late as 1941. Accordingly, the Koziatulski receipt constitutes further the proof that the "official" version of Katyn is false.

## Chapter 4. Closed Packet No. 1

The documents in this folder or "packet" are said to have been given to President Mikhail Gorbachev of the USSR and then by him to Boris Yeltsin in December, 1991. On October 14, 1992 Yeltsin's representative gave them to Polish President Lech Walesa.

"Closed Packet No. 1" contains the following documents:

1. An NKVD memorandum dated March 5, 1940 and numbered No.794/E, signed by Lavrentii Beria, People's Commissar of the NKVD, and recommending that Polish prisoners be shot.
2. Excerpt from Protocol No. 13 of the Politburo session of March 5, 1940 titled "A Question of the NKVD of the USSR."
3. Pages excerpted from Protocol No. 13 of the Politburo session of March 5, 1940, point n. 144.
4. A handwritten letter No. 632-SH signed by Aleksandr Shelepin proposing to destroy all files on the operation carried out by the NKVD in connection with the Politburo resolution of March 5, 1940 with an attached draft of a resolution of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU. Shelepin was Chairman of the KGB between December 25, 1958 and November 13, 1961.

For a few years after their publication these documents were accepted as the "smoking gun," as close to definitive proof of Soviet guilt as one could wish for. Along with the German AM report they constitute the backbone of the "official" version of Katyn. Since 1995 there have been challenges to the authenticity of these documents. These challenges are either ignored or dismissed with derision by proponents of the "official" version.

We will take a closer look at the controversy over these documents in a later chapter. In this chapter we will discuss the one document in "Closed Packet No. 1" that has obviously been faked yet is usually ignored.

**The Two Versions of "Excerpt from Protocol No. 13 of the Politburo session of March 5, 1940 titled 'A Question of the NKVD of the USSR'"**

Excellent photographic copies of this document may be seen at the bottom of this page at the katyn.ru site:

<http://www.katyn.ru/index.php?go=Pages&in=view&id=26>

For ease of access I have created the following shortcut to this page:

<http://tinyurl.com/shelepin>

With the death of Sergei Strygin, this page may be removed from the Internet. If this happens the reader should copy and paste the original URL:

<http://www.katyn.ru/index.php?go=Pages&in=view&id=26>

...into the top search window, labeled "Wayback Machine," at the Internet Archive:

<https://archive.org/>

In fact it is already there, saved at multiple dates.<sup>1</sup> I will also put it on my Home Page.

For example, at

<https://web.archive.org/web/20160304112701/http://www.katyn.ru/index.php?go=Pages&in=view&id=26>

The first document is the "excerpt." It is addressed at the top to «[[cyrillic]]Тов. Берия.» — "Тов[arishch] Beria" or "To Tov[arishch] Beria."

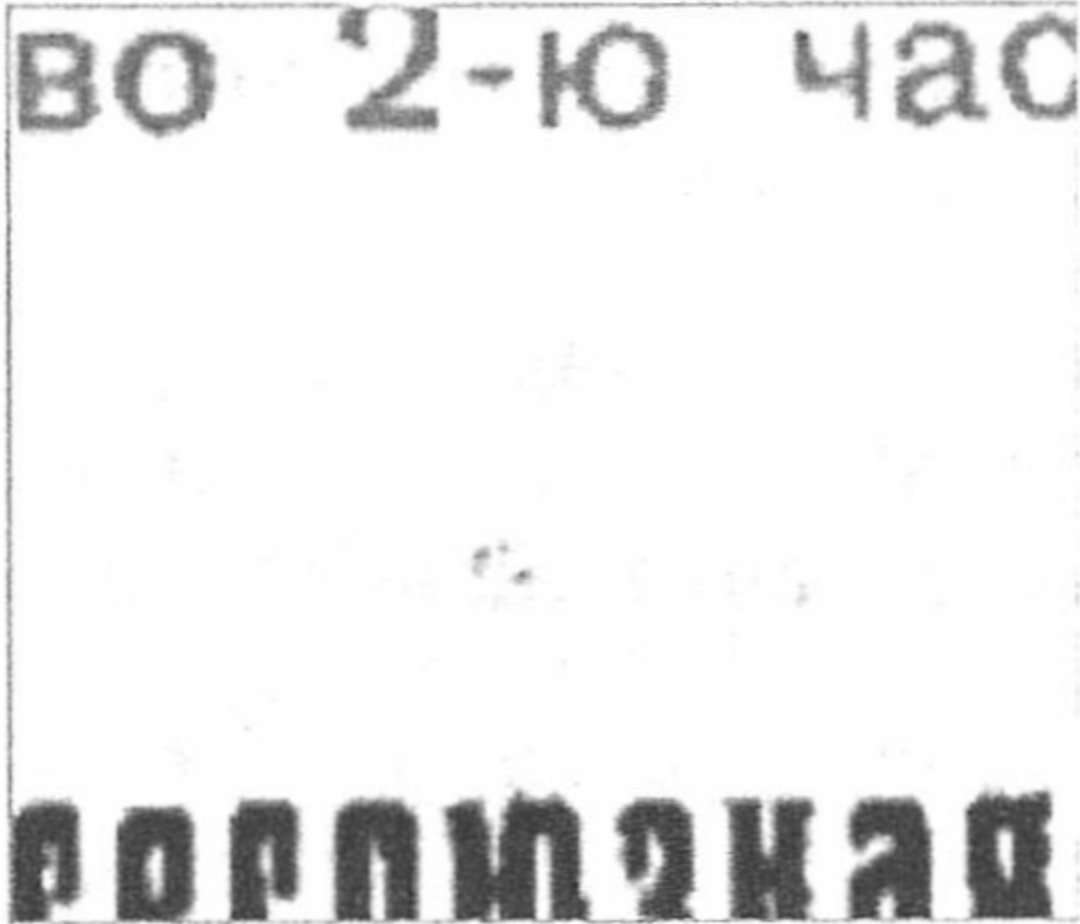
At the bottom are the typed words «[[cyrillic]]СЕКРЕТАРЬ ЦК» — "Secretary of the CC [Central Committee]."

It is the second document that interests us here. This appears to be a carbon copy of the first document on which a few changes have been made so crudely that anyone can notice them immediately.

- The words «[[cyrillic]]Тов. Берия.» have been removed and replaced by the words «[[cyrillic]]Тов. Шелепину» meaning "To Tov[arishch]

Shelepin."

- The date at the upper left has been changed from «5. [[cyrillic]]марта 1940 г.» (March 5, 1940) to «27. февраля 1959 г.» (February 27, 1959), without double spacing between the letters of the word «февраля» (of February).
- At the bottom of the document the words «[[cyrillic]]И. СТАЛИН» (= J. Stalin) have been typed in capital letters that stand clearly out from the much darker and heavier type of the carbon copy.
- At the bottom of the carbon copy but not of the original is the seal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The name of the Party was official changed from "All-Union Communist Party (bolshevik)" at the 19th Party Congress in October, 1952. The earlier name for the Party is on the letterhead. The form itself is from the 1930s, with "193" preprinted where the date should go.
- On the Shelepin document but not on the Beria document there is a faint stamp in the upper left corner, above the first word in the letterhead, «[[cyrillic]]Всесоюзная», in the middle of which are the words «[[cyrillic]]НЕ СЖИГАТЬ» - "Ne szhigat'," "Do not burn." See the figure below.



*Image 4.1 The Shelepin document (detail)*

No one has come up with a satisfactory explanation for this document.

- It is not mentioned at all by either Cienciala or Sanford. Sanford's book is an important study in English<sup>2</sup>, while Cienciala and Materski is the definitive one-volume study in any language.
- In the official Polish government publication *Katyn. Documents of Genocide. Documents and Materials from the Soviet archives turned over to Poland on October 14, 1992*. Edited by Wojciech Materski, introduction by Janusz I. Zawodny (institute of Political Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, 1992), it is published on pages 12-13 but without any comment whatever.

<sup>2</sup> George Sanford. *Katyn and the Soviet Massacre of 1940: Truth, Justice and Memory* (BASEES /Routledge Series on Russian and East European

Studies). London, UK: Routledge, 2009.

Despite the fact that the documents of "Closed Packet No. 1" are the only evidence that the Soviet government ever planned to shoot the Polish POWs, this document is passed over in silence by defenders of the "official" version of Katyn. It is easy to understand this as the silence of embarrassment. This document undermines the case for the bona fides of all the "Closed Packet No. 1" documents.

Shved (384) and Prudnikova and Chigirin (5 18) cite Shelepin's friend Valerii I. Kharazov as saying that Shelepin did in fact learn about the Katyn documents early in his tenure as head of the KGB. Document number 4 of "Closed Packet No. 1" contains a proposal from Shelepin that all the files relating to Katyn be destroyed. According to Kharazov Khrushchev did not agree with this proposal.

So either Kharazov was mistaken and the files were destroyed, or they were not destroyed at all. At any rate it appears that this destruction, actual or only contemplated, had something to do with the stamp "Do not burn" on the Shelepin version of Document 2.

It is hard to imagine archivists giving permission to alter archival documents in the way that the Shelepin version of Document 2 has been altered. But if the Beria version of Document 2 were a forgery and carbon copies were made, then the Shelepin version might be understood as an experiment to see what further forgery was possible. But whatever the motive, the "Shelepin" document has been falsified.

The addition of Stalin's name at the bottom also suggests an attempt at forgery. Khrushchev organized an attack on Stalin over a number of years. A genuine document of 1940 signed "Secretary of the C.C." would not need to carry Stalin's name. There were a number of secretaries, any one of whom could sign a document as "secretary." In 1940 there was no longer a post of General Secretary. But by Khrushchev's day the office of General Secretary had been revived for Khrushchev himself.

An attempt to implicate Stalin in the Katyn massacres might be less persuasive if Stalin's name were not on the letter.

## Conclusions

- The Shelepin version of Document 2 was certainly created during Khrushchev's time.
- The manipulation of the "Beria version" of Document 2 suggests that it may have been created at the same time and so may also be a forgery.
- The "do not burn" stamp on the Shelepin version suggests that there was a plan to burn at least some documents.
- The addition of Stalin's name suggests that this was an aborted attempt to produce false evidence in order to accuse Stalin of guilt in the Katyn massacre.

*That, in turn, suggests that such documents did not already exist.* For if the "Beria Letter" with Stalin's bold and readable signature had been available in 1959 there would have been no need to contemplate adding "J. STALIN" to Document 2, as the Shelepin letter does.

Kharazov's testimony, and remarks made by an aged Shelepin to investigators in the early 1990s, are good evidence that some kind of Katyn forgery was contemplated during Khrushchev's day. It is no wonder that Khrushchev did not go through with it. He himself was in the Politburo in March 1940. Khrushchev was in the Ukraine but visited Stalin's office during these months, for example on March 1, April 3, 4, and 5, and May 21 and 22, 1940.<sup>3</sup> If Khrushchev decided to blame Stalin for the Katyn massacre he would have also implicated himself.

<sup>3</sup> "Posetitlei kremlevskogo kabineta I.V. Stalin." *Istoricheskii Arkhiv* 2, 1996. ("Visitors to the Kremlin office of J .V. Stalin.")

We do not know what process led to the fabrication of the Shelepin version of Document 2 or why it was not destroyed. We are fortunate that it wasn't destroyed, since it provides solid evidence that the other documents in "Closed Packet No.1" may also have been forged. Therefore, at the very least, we cannot accept the CP documents at face value as primary source evidence.

There is a lot of other evidence that these documents are forgeries. We will examine some of the most important points of this evidence in a later chapter. But in my opinion none of the internal problems in these documents are in themselves conclusive evidence of forgery.

And — it is important to recognize this also — it is likewise impossible to prove from internal evidence that the documents in "Closed Packet No. 1" are genuine. They are of questionable validity. As such, they are useless as evidence.

On the basis of a study of the documents alone we cannot say that *all* the documents in "Closed Packet No. 1" are forgeries. But we *can* make that statement about the Shelepin version of Document 2. It is definitely a forgery. The presence of a glaring forgery in "Closed Packet No. 1" casts a shadow of suspicion over the other documents in that packet.



## Chapter 5. The Excavations at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy

In 2011 and 2012 a joint Polish-Ukrainian archeological team partially excavated a mass execution site at the town of Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy, Ukraine. Shell cases found in the burial pit prove that the executions there took place no earlier than 1941. In the burial pit were found the badges of two Polish policemen previously thought to have been murdered hundreds of miles away by the Soviets in April-May 1940 during the Katyn massacre.

### The Badges

#### 1. Józef Kuligowski

In May 2011 Polish news media reported that in the Western Ukrainian town of Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy a numbered metal badge had been unearthed which had been identified as that of a Polish policeman, Józef Kuligowski. According to the "official" or "the Soviets did it" version of Katyn it had been assumed that Kuligowski, along with thousands of other Polish POWs, had been executed by the Soviet NKVD at Kalinin (now Tver'), Russia, and buried with other such victims at Mednoe, outside of the town.<sup>1</sup>

Czy osoby z Listy Katynskiej mordowano również na Grodzisku we Włodzimierzu Wołyńskim?! Odnaleziona przez ukraińskich archeologów odznaka Policji Państwowej o numerze 1441 / II na to wskazuje. Jak nas poinformował pan Piotr Zawilski, dyrektor Archiwum Państwowego w todzi odznaka o tym numerze należała do posterunkowego Józefa Kuligowskiego z IV komisariatu w todzi. Informacja o przydziale i numerze służbowym pochodzi z maja 1939 roku. Nazwisko posterunkowego figuruje na jednej z list dyspozycyjnych dla obozu w Ostaszkowie. Dotychczas uważano, że został zamordowany w Kalininie i spoczywa w Miednoje. Jak wytłumaczyć fakt, że odznaka Józefa Kuligowskiego znaleziona we Włodzimierzu Wołyńskim? Czy zgincil w Kalininie, czy we Włodzimierzu?<sup>2</sup>

My translation:<sup>3</sup>

Were persons from the Katyn List also murdered at Grodzisk in Włodzimierz Wołyński?! This is indicated by the National Police badge number 1441 / II found by Ukrainian archaeologists. As Mr Piotr Zawilski, director of the National Archive in Łódź has informed us, the badge with this number belonged to constable Józef Kuligowski of the IV commissariat in Łódź. Information concerning the issuance and service number is from May 1939. The surname of the constable figures on one of the dispositional lists for the camp at Ostashkov. Up to now it was believed that he had been murdered in Kalinin and lies in Mednoe. How to explain the fact that Józef Kuligowski's badge has been found at Włodzimierz Wołyński? Was he killed at Kalinin or at Włodzimierz?

<sup>1</sup> A photograph of Kuligowski's badge may be viewed at <http://katyn.ru/images/news/2012-12-29-zheton-1441.jpg> and a somewhat lighter, more legible copy at [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/kuligowski\\_badge\\_1441.jpg](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/kuligowski_badge_1441.jpg) Most of the images and graphics mentioned in this book will be found on the "Images" page at <https://tinyurl/furr-katyn-images>

<sup>2</sup> "Osoby z Listy Katyńskiej mordowano we Włodzimierzu Wołyńskim?!" (Persons from the Katyn List murdered at Włodzimierzu Wołyńskim?!), ITVL May 25, 2011. At <http://www.itvl.pl/news/osoby-z-listy-katynskiej-mordowano-we-wlodzimierzu-wolynskim>

<sup>3</sup> All translations are mine.

This account continues by identifying Kuligowski as one of the men who, according to the "official" version, were killed as a part of the Katyn massacre.

The discovery occasioned considerable discussion in the Polish press about the relationship between the Katyn Massacre and this site near the Ukrainian town of Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy (Polish: Włodzimierz Wołyński; Russian: Vladimir-Volynskii).<sup>4</sup> At that time no one doubted that this was a site of Soviet NKVD killings.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The surrounding region of Volhynia was part of Austria-Hungary until the end of World War I; then part of Poland; then part of the Soviet Ukraine; then occupied by the Germans; then again part of Soviet Ukraine, and is now part of Ukraine.

<sup>5</sup> See "Tropen zbrodni NKWD pod Włodzimierzem Wołyńskim" (Trail of NKVD crime near Włodzimierzem Wołyńskim) at <http://wolyn.btx.pl/index.php/component/content/article/1-historia/168-tropem-zbrodni-nkwd-pod-wodzimierzem-woyskim.html> ; "Włodzimierz Wołyńskim — groby polskich ofiar NKWD" (graves of Polish victims of the NKVD) at <http://nawolyniu.pl/artykuly/ofiarynkwd> ; "Czyje mogiły odnaleziono we Włodzimierzem Wołyńskim?" (Whose graves found at Włodzimierzem Wołyńskim?) <http://wpolityce.pl/depesze/10407-czyje-mogily-odnaleziono-we-wlodzimierzem-woylnskim> This last article speaks of „ofiar pomordowanych przez NKWD w latach 1940-1941 w sowieckiej katowni na zamku we Włodzimierzem Wołyńskim" (victims murdered by the NKVD in 1940-1941 in the Soviet execution chamber in the castle at Włodzimierzem Wołyński). Many more similar articles could be cited.

The Ukrainian media also reported the excavations under the assumption that the Soviet NKVD was responsible for the killings, as in the following account in the Ukraine-wide online newspaper *Tyzhden.ua* of October 4 2011.<sup>6</sup>

[[cyrillic]]І хоча офіційно'ї версії щодо того, хто ці люди й чому були розстріляні, ще немає, науковці схиляються до думки що замордовані - жертви НКВС 1941 року. Польські піддані, військові й цивільні, заможний клас. Про це свідчать знайдені на місці страти артефакти.

Ось два жетони офіцерів польсько! поліції!, і оскільки на них є номери, то ми вже знаємо, кому вони належали: Йозефу Куліговському та Людвігу Малові. Обидва з Лодзя. За документами НКВС, одного з них розстріляно в Калініні (Твер), другого - в Осташкові біля Харкова.

*Translated:*

And although there is as yet no official version of who these people were and why they were shot, scientists are inclined to think that the murdered people were victims of the NKVD in 1941. Polish citizens, military and civilians, the wealthy class. This is what the artifacts found at the execution site suggest.

Here are two badges of officers of the Polish police, and since there are numbers on them we already know to whom they belonged: to Jósef Kuligovs'kiy and Liudvig Maloveis'kiy. Both were from Lodz. According to NKVD documents one of them was shot at Kalinin (Tver'), the other at Ostashkov [sic] near Kharkiv.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> "[[cyrillic]]Волинська Катинь. У Володимирі-Волинському знайдено масове поховання жертв НКВС 1939-1941 років." Tyzhden.ua October 4, 2011. At <http://tyzhden.ua/Society/31329>

<sup>7</sup> The journalist has made several errors here. No NKVD documents mention any shooting.

In November 2012 the Polish members of a joint Polish-Ukrainian archaeological group published a report on the excavation of this mass murder site. In mass grave No.1, 367 sets of human remains were exhumed and examined during 2011, and 232 more sets in 2012. The locations of more mass graves were also determined. Concerning the finding of Kuligowski's badge this report reads as follows:

Była to odznaka Polskiej Policji Państwowej z numerem 1441, która należała do: Post. PP Józef KULIGOWSKI s. Szczepana i Józefy z Sadurskich, ur. 12 III 1898 w m. Strych. WWP od 20 VI 1919. 10 pap. Uczestnik wojny 1920, szczególnie odznaczył się w bitwie pod Mariampolem 24 V 1920. W policji od 1921. Poczciwoko służbę pełnił w woj. tarnopolskim. Następnie od 1924 przez wiele lat w todzi — w 1939 w V Komis. W sierpniu 1939 zmobilizowany do 10 pal. Odzn. VM V kl. nr679.L. 026/1 ( 15), 35[.]6.; za: red. Z. Gajowniczek, B. Gronek „Księga cmentarna Miednoje,” t. 1, Warszawa 2005, s. 465. Odznaka została przekazana do miejscowego muzeum.<sup>8</sup>

It was a Polish National Police badge number 1441, which belonged to: Constable of the National Police Józef Kuligowski son of Stephen and of Josepha nee Sadurska, b. 12 March 1898 in the village of Strych. In the Polish army on 20 June 1919. 10 pap. Participant in the 1920 war, particularly distinguished himself at the Battle of Mariampol 24 May 1920. In the police from 1921. Initially served in the Tarnopol region. Then from 1924 for many years in Lodz — in 1939 in the V Komis. In August 1939 mobilized to 10 pal. as Nr679.L class V VM. [NKVD transfer list] 026 / 1 ([position]15), 35 [.] 6, according to: ed. Z. Gajowniczek, B. Groniek, "Mednoye Cemetery Book," Vol. 1, Warsaw 2005, p. 465. The badge has been transferred to the local museum.

<sup>8</sup> Sprawozdanie z Nadzoru Nad Badaniami Archeologiczno-Ekshumacyjnymi na Terenie Rezerwatu Historyczno-Kulturowego Miasta Włodzimierzu Wołyńskim (Ukraina). Opracowanie zespołowe pod kierunkiem dr Dominiki Siemińskiej. Rada Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa. (Report of the Supervision on the Archaeological-Exhumation Investigation in the Area of the Reservation of the Historical-Cultural Town of Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy (Ukraine). A Team Description under the Direction of Dr. Dominika Siemińska. Council for the Commemoration of Struggle and Martyrdom). Toruń, 2012, Note, pp. 1-2. At <http://www.kresykedzierzynkozle.home.pl/attachments/File/Rap.pdf>



*Image 5.1* Artist's rendering of badge of Constable Police Constable Józef Kuligowski unearthed at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy

Here is the entry for Kuligowski from Volume One of the "Mednoe Cemetery Book":<sup>9</sup>

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Post. PP **Józef KULIGOWSKI** s. Szczepana i Józefy z Sadurskich, ur. 12 III 1898 w. Strych. W WP od 20 VI 1919, 10 pap. Uczestnik wojny 1920, szczególnie odznaczył się w bitwie pod Mariampolem 24 V 1920. W policji od 1921. Początkowo służbę pełnił w woj. tarnopolskim. Następnie od 1924 przez wiele lat w Łodzi -w 1939 w V Komis. W sierpniu 1939 zmobilizowany do 10 pal. Odzn. VM V kl. nr 679.

L. 026/1 (15), 35[.]6.

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*Cemetery book entry recreated based upon original entry.*

<sup>9</sup> Miednoje. Księga Cmentarna Polskiego Cmentarza Wojennego. Warsaw: Rada Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczenństwa 2005. Tom 1, 465.

Kuligowski was taken prisoner by the Red Army sometime after September 17, 1939, when Soviet troops entered Eastern Poland to prevent the German Army from establishing itself hundreds of miles further east at the USSR's pre-September 1939 border. He was held in the Ostashkov prisoner-of-war camp in Kalinin oblast' (province), now renamed Tver' oblast'. In April 1940 along with other prisoners he was transferred from Ostashkov to the town of Kalinin (now Tver' ). After that there is no further information about him.

Kuligowski is counted as one of the victims of the "Katyn Massacre." What purports to be a record of his transfer, with the word "Mord" (Murder) added, is on one of the official Polish websites about Katyn.<sup>10</sup>

Nnzwisko: **Kuligowski**

Imię: **Józef**

Imię ojca: **Szczepann**

Data urodzenia: **1898**

LP	Opis losów	Początek			Koniec			Kraj	Woj/Oblast	Pow.	Miej.
		r	m	d	r	m	d				
1	<i>Mord</i>				1940	04		<i>Rosyjska FSRR</i>	<i>Kalinińska (Twerska)</i>		<i>Twer</i>
2	<i>Obóz</i>				1940	04		<i>Rosyjska FSRR</i>	<i>Kalinińska (Twerska)</i>		<i>Ostaszków</i>
LP	opis źródła										sygnatura
1.	Ankiety personalne wypełniana przez samych represjonowanych bądź ich rodziny, zbiory Ośrodka KARTA, sygnatura IR/numer ankiety.										<i>IR -/11707</i>
2.	<i>Listy wywozowe NKWD (kwiecień-maj 1940) z Ostaszkowa, kopia w zbiorach Ośradka KARTA - strona,</i>										<i>OST/-148-152/15</i>

As stated in the Polish media account of May 25, 2011, Kuligowski's name is on the transfer lists of Ostashkov prisoners reproduced in the official account by Jędrzej Tucholski published in 1991.<sup>11</sup> Kuligowski is also listed in other recent Polish lists of Katyn victims.<sup>12</sup> Naturally the original Russian record of prisoner transfer reprinted in Tucholski's *Mord w Katyniu* does not contain the word "Mord" (=murder).

<sup>11</sup> Jędrzej Tucholski. *Mord w Katyniu: Kozielsk, Ostaszków, Starobielsk. Lista ofiar*. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1991, p. 810. No. 15: NKVD list No. 026/1 of 13 April 1940, position 15. In spite of the presence of Kuligowski's name on this NKVD list, for some reason the alphabetical section of Tucholski (p. 314 col. 2) lists Kuligowski on its "victims list" (lista ofiar) as "probably Ostashkov" (Prawdop. Ostaszków).

<sup>12</sup> See "INDEKS NAZWISK - Katyń - zamordowani przez NKWD w 1940 r."

The Polish archaeologist in charge of the excavations and author of the report, Dr. Dominika Siemińska, has determined that the victims buried in the mass grave in which this badge was found were killed no earlier than 1941.<sup>13</sup>

Z pewnością stwierdzono, że zbrodnia została dokonana nie wcześniej niż w 1941 roku. (p. 4)

*Translated:*

It can be confirmed with certainty that the crime did not take place earlier than 1941.

<sup>13</sup> See above, note 14.

The time period of execution was determined from the shell casings found in the graves. All but a very few were of German manufacture and are datable to 1941.



Some of the bodies were arranged in the "sardine-packing" (*Sardinenpackung*) formation<sup>14</sup> favored by Obergruppenführer<sup>15</sup> Friedrich Jeckeln, commander of one of the *Einsatzgruppen*, extermination teams whose task it was to carry out mass executions. A photograph of the bodies in grave no. 1 shows this arrangement of bodies.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> A description of this method of execution may be found on the English-language Wikipedia page on Jeckeln at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich\\_Jeckeln#World\\_War\\_II\\_mass\\_murderer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_Jeckeln#World_War_II_mass_murderer)

<sup>15</sup> Equivalent to a full or four-star General, the highest SS rank aside from that of Heinrich Himmler, whose rank was Reichsführer-SS.

Also, a large percentage of the bodies in the mass graves are of children. There has never been any evidence that the Soviets executed children. There is a great deal of evidence that the Germans did. So the evidence is strong that this is a site of German, not Soviet, mass executions.

This conclusion is confirmed by the recent research of other Ukrainian scholars concerning this very burial site. Relying on evidence from German war crimes trials, eyewitness testimony of Jewish survivors, and research by Polish historians on the largescale massacres of Poles by Ukrainian Nationalists, Professor Ivan Katchanovski and Volodymyr Musychenko have established that the victims buried at this site were mainly Jews but also Poles and "Soviet activists."

Katchanovski concludes that Ukrainian authorities have tried to throw the blame onto the Soviet NKVD in order to conceal the guilt of the Ukrainian Nationalist forces who are celebrated as "heroes" in today's Ukraine, including in Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy itself.<sup>17</sup>



*Images 5.2 and 5.3* Jeckeln during the war (L.); in Soviet captivity (R.) He was tried and executed for war crimes in Riga, Latvian SSR, in 1946.

Kuligowski was indeed transported from Ostashkov POW camp to Kalinin in April 1940. But he was not shot until 1941 at the earliest. This means that the transportation lists, which the "official" Soviets-did-it version of Katyn assumes to be lists of victims being shipped off to be shot, are not that at all. Kuligowski was transported to Kalinin in April 1940 by the Soviets not in order to be shot but for some other reason. He remained alive, to be captured and executed by the Germans, most likely in the second half of 1941. Moreover, Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy is more than 700 miles (1200 km) from Kalinin (Tver').

This is the major deduction from this discovery that is relevant to our understanding of the Katyn Massacre case: The fact that a Polish POW's name is on one of the Soviet transportation lists can no longer be assumed to be evidence that he was on his way to execution, and therefore that he was executed by the Soviets.

## **2. Ludwik Małowiejski**

There is evidence that more Polish POWs are buried in these same mass graves, and therefore were executed at the same time, by the Germans in 1941 or 1942 . The epaulette of a Polish policeman's uniform and Polish military buttons were found in grave No. 2.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Photos available at [http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/polskie\\_guziki\\_pagon\\_VV2012.jpg](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/polskie_guziki_pagon_VV2012.jpg) from the Polish archaeological report.

In September 2011 Polish media reported that police badge number 1099 / II belonging to Senior Police Constable (*starszy posterunkowy*) Ludwik Małowiejski had been found in the Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy mass graves.<sup>19</sup> It had been claimed that, like Kuligowski, Małowiejski was a Katyn massacre victim whose body was buried in a mass grave at Mednoe near Kalinin, where, according to the "official" version, other Katyn victims shot by the NKVD in 1940 are buried.

<sup>19</sup> "Kolejny policjant z Listy Katynskiej odnaleziony we Włodzimierzu Wołyńskim." [Another policeman on the Katyn List is found in Volodymyr-Volynsky]. At <http://www.itvl.pl/news/kolejny-policjant-z-listy-katynskiej-odnaleziony-we-wlodziemierzu-wolynskim> I have not been able to find any photograph of Małowiejski's badge.

Małowiejski's name is also on the recent Polish lists of Katyn victims.<sup>20</sup> Like Kuligowski he is memorialized in the "Mednoe Cemetery Book" — in this case, Volume 2, page 541:

<sup>20</sup> "INDEKS NAZWISK - Katyń - zamordowani przez NKWD w 1940 r." At <http://www.ornatowski.com/index/katyn.htm>

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St. post. PP **Ludwik MALOWIEJSKI** s. Jakuba i Marinnny z Jagiełłów, ur. 22 VIII 1890 W Żychlinie. Żołnierz I Korpusu Polskiego, plut. W policji od 1919. Od 14 I 1930 przeniesiony do Rez. Konnej m. Łodzi i tam nadal pełnił służbę we wrześniu 1939. Do Ostaszkowa przniesiony ze szpitala w Szepietówce. Odzn. MN, MPzaW, MDzON.

L. 050/3 (76), 7783.

*Cemetery book entry recreated based upon original entry.*

His transfer record with the word "Mord" (murder) added, like Kuligowski's, is also on the same official Polish Katyn website:<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> The following text is from <http://www.indeks.karta.org/pl/szczegoly.jsp?id=11445>

Nazwisko: **Małowiejski**

Imię: **Ludwik**

Imię ojca: **Jakuba**

Data urodzenia: **1890**

LP	Opis losów	Początek			Koniec			Kraj	Woj/Oblast	Pow.	Miej.
		r	m	d	r	m	d				
1	<i>Obóz</i>				1940	04		<i>Rosyjska FSRR</i>	<i>Kalinińska (Twerska)</i>		<i>Ostaszków</i>
2	<i>Mord</i>				1940	04		<i>Rosyjska FSRR</i>	<i>Kalinińska (Twerska)</i>		<i>Twier</i>
LP	opis źródła										sygnatura
1.	Ankiety personalne wypełniana przez samych represjonowanych bądź ich rodziny, zbiory Ośrodka KARTA, sygnatura IR/numer ankiety.										<i>IR -/11591</i>
2.											<i>*OSTA -/290- 297/76</i>

*Table recreated based on original.*

Like Kuligowski's, Małowiejski's name is also on the Russian lists of prisoners shipped out of the Ostashkov camp.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Tucholski p. 887 No. 76. Małowiejski was in a transport of 100 Polish prisoners sent to the Kalinin NKVD on April 27, 1940. His name is also on Tucholski's alphabetical list (p. 322, col. 2) as is Kuligowski's, and on other official lists of Katyn victims.

In 2011 it was still claimed that the mass graves at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy were those of victims of the Soviet NKVD. Therefore this apparent discrepancy about the place of burial of one victim received little publicity. Since then the Polish archaeological team has definitively dated the site as 1941 at the earliest and argues that it is an SS *Einsatzgruppe* mass murder site. This in turn means that Kuligowski and Małowiejski were killed by the Germans in 1941, not by the Soviets in 1940. Other Polish POWs — perhaps many others — claimed to have been Katyn victims may well have been shot along with Kuligowski and Małowiejski, and be buried in the mass graves at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy or elsewhere in the Ukraine.

An article by Sergei Strygin contains photographs of the memorial tablets of both Kuligowski and Małowiejski at the special Polish memorial cemetery at Mednoe. These and the thousands of other memorial tablets at this site reflect the assumption that the "transit lists" were really "execution lists" — an assumption that the discoveries at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy prove is false.

It is clear today that neither man's body is buried at Mednoe. The question now is: Are any of the Polish POWs whose memorial tablets are at Mednoe alongside those of Kuligowski and Małowiejskie really buried there? At present there is no reason to think so.



*Images 5.4 and 5.5* The memorial plaques of Kuligowski and Małowiejski at Mednoe Cemetery. They are not buried there. (Thanks to Aleksandr Zenin of Tver' and his colleagues)

## The Cover-Up

Kuligowski's name, the discovery of his badge, and the information that ties him to Katyn, are only mentioned in a footnote in the Polish archeologist report. The Katyn information is cited in such an abbreviated manner that only those expert in the Katyn issue will even recognize the connection.

For example, this is how the footnote in the Polish archeologists' report refers to the entry for Kuligowski on the Soviet transit list in Tucholski's book:

026/1 ( 15), 35[.]6

Here is the actual citation of Kuligowski's name in Tucholski, p. 810:

15. [[cyrillic]]КУ ЛИГОВСКОГО Юзефа Степановича, 1898 г.р.  
35.6

The number of the transit list, 026/1, is at the top of Tucholski, page 810. Kuligowski's name is number 15 on this list. The entry "35[.6]" refers to the "delo" or case file in the NKVD list — information that is irrelevant since this file has not been found and was probably destroyed long ago.

One might assume that this, by far the most significant discovery of the whole Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy dig, would be highlighted. Instead it is "buried" in this footnote and virtually disguised with obscure words. There can be little doubt that this was done for fear that this discovery would undermine the claim that the Soviets committed the massacre at Katyn — a claim which Polish authorities want not only to keep alive, but to continue maintain is unquestionably true.

No doubt that is why, Małowiejski's name is omitted altogether from the Polish archeologist report. *This* important discovery is completely ignored!

These two facts: the "burying" of the reference to Kuligowski and the complete omission of the discovery of Małowiejski's badge, are good evidence that the Polish archeologists wanted to play down the Katyn connection at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy. But in the *Ukrainian* archeologists' report on the Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy dig neither man's name is even mentioned!

### **The Shell Casings**

Details of the shell casings, 150 in all, found in grave No. 1 are given in footnote 3, page 8 of the Polish report but are absent from the Ukrainian report:

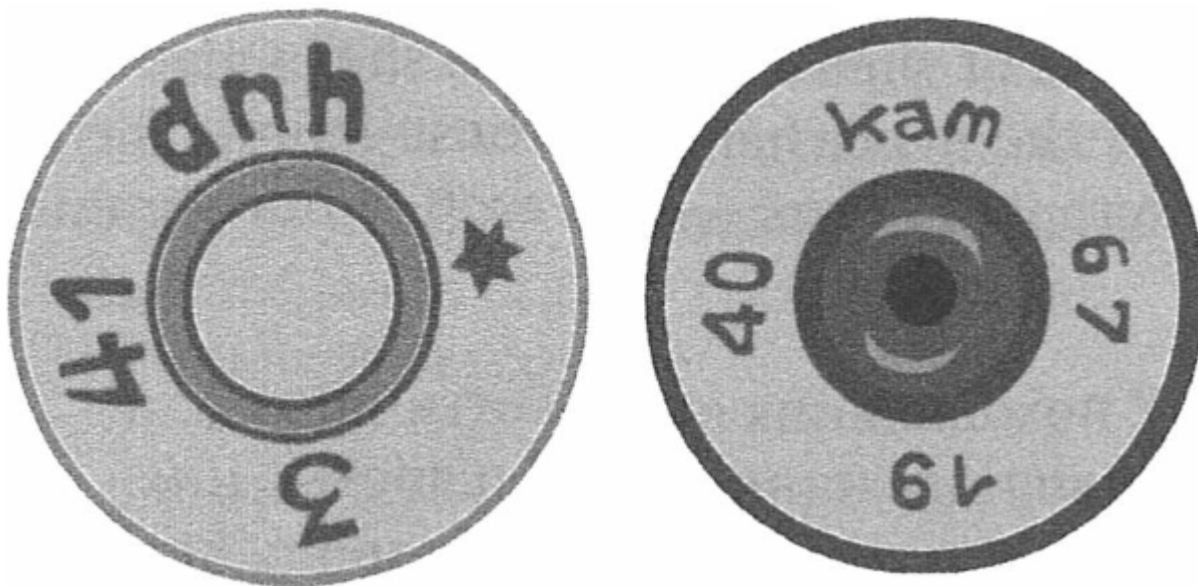
1. "kam, 67, 19, 41"- 137 szt;
2. "dnh, \*, 1, 41" - 7 szt;
3. Geco, 9 mm - 1 szt;
4. luski bez oznaczen, 7,62 x 25, wz. 30, produkcja ZSRR - 5 szt.

*Translated:*

1. "kam, 67, 19, 41" — 137 units;
2. "dnh, \*, 1, 41" — 7 units;
3. Geco, 9 mm. — 1 unit;
4. Shells without markings, 7.62 x 25 caliber, USSR production of 1930s type — 5 units.

One hundred forty-four, or 96% of the 150 shells found, were of German make and can be dated to 1941. These identifying marks on shell casings are known as "headstamps." According to the analysis by Sergei Strygin "kam, 67, 19, 41" signifies the Hasag factory in Skarzysko-Kamienna, "67"

the percentage of copper in the bullet, "19" the lot number, and "41" the year of production. "dnh \*, 1, 41" signifies the Dilrlach factory, "\*" means the shell was jacketed in brass; "1" is the lot number, and "41" the year of production.



*Images 5.6 and 5.7* Artist's rendering of shells of the type found in graves No. 1 and 2

(From Strygin)

The Polish report, but not the Ukrainian report, also specifies the shells found in grave No. 2:

1. "kam, 67. 19, 41" 205 szt; 2. „dnh,\*, 1, 41" - 17 szt; 3. lus ki bez oznaczeil. 7.62 x 25. wz. 30, produkcja ZSRR - 2 szt; 4. luska „8, 1906"

*Translated:*

1. "Kam, 6 7, 19, 41" - 205 units; 2. "dnh, \*, 1, 4 1" - 17 units; 3. Shells without markings, 7.62x25 caliber — US SR production of 1930s — 2 units; (one) shell "B, 1906 ."



Of 225 shells found in this grave, 205 are the German 1941 "Hasag" type, 17 are the German 1941 "Dürlach" type, 2 are of the unmarked 1930s Soviet type; and one is marked "B 1906."<sup>23</sup> Hence 98.67% of the shells are of 1941 German manufacture.

<sup>23</sup> "B 1906" appears to be Austrian rifle ordnance made for the Tsarist Army during the Russo-Japanese War. See the drawing at <http://7.62x54r.net/MosinID/MosinAmmoID02.htm#Austria> and the photograph obtained by Sergei Strygin at [http://katyn.ru/images/news/2012-12-29-gilza\\_B\\_1906.jpg](http://katyn.ru/images/news/2012-12-29-gilza_B_1906.jpg)

By contrast neither of the two Ukrainian reports cites the numbers of each type of shell or the fact that German shells made in 1941 constitute the overwhelming majority of those found. The following paragraph appears word-for-word in each of the Ukrainian reports:

[[cyrillic]]У поховальних ямах виявлено ідентичні гільзи, головним чином калібру 9 мм. Більшість з них мають позначки dnh (виробництво заводу Верк Дурлах в КарлсруЕ, Німеччина) та kam (виробництво фабрики І Насаг у Скаржиці Кам'яній, Польща) 1941 р. Проте виявлені і декілька гільз радянського зразка. Все це потребує додаткових досліджень, оскільки стверджувати про те, що розстріли проводилися гітлерівцями при наявності в поховальних ямах гільз радянського зразка не є об'єктивним. Відомі факти (**зокрема дані розстрілів польських військових у Катині**), що радянські органи НКВС використовували при розстрілах німецьку зброю.<sup>24</sup>

*Translated:*

In the burial pits were found identical shells, mainly of caliber 9 mm. Most of them have the mark "dnh" (Werk Dürlach production plant in Karlsruhe, Germany), and "kam" (production factory in Hasag Skarzysko Kamienna, Poland) in 1941. However, several shell casings of Soviet model were also found. All this requires more research inasmuch that it is not objective to assert that the shootings were carried out by the Hitlerites even though shells of Soviet model were

found in the burial pits. Examples are known (**including data of shootings of Polish soldiers in Katyn**<sup>25</sup>) that the Soviet organs of the NKVD used German weapons in executions.

There are some problems with the conclusion in the Ukrainian report. First, it is an example of circular reasoning. It assumes that the mass killings at Katyn, which even the Germans admitted were carried out with German ammunition, was a Soviet crime. But that is the very assumption that the discoveries at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy call into question.

Second, it assumes that even the overwhelming preponderance of German ordnance is not enough to establish that the killings were done by the Germans, since the Soviets could also use German ammunition. No doubt this is the reason the Ukrainian report does not give the numbers of shells or the percentage of them that are German and of 1941 manufacture. (The Ukrainian reports should have added that Germans could also use Soviet ammunition. The Germans captured immense amounts of Soviet arms and ammunition in 1941.)

The Ukrainian report does note that women clutching children to their breasts were also found in the mass graves.

[[cyrillic]]Відмічено також, що вбиті часто прикривали обличчя руками, або обіймали іншу жертву (жінки тулили до себе і прикривали дітей). (Dos lizhdennia; Zvit 15)

*Translated:*

It is also noted that those killed often covered their faces with their hands, or embraced another victim (women hugged to themselves and covered children).

There are no examples anywhere of the Soviet NKVD shooting children.

Ukrainian archaeologist Oleksei Zlatohors'kiy (Russian: Aleksei Zlatogorskii) has pointed out the political problems raised by the Polish archaeologist's identification of the Germans as the murderers:

Неосторожные высказывания польских археологов о принадлежности останков, найденных на территории замка Казимира Великого во Владимире-Волынском, могут поставить под сомнение уже известные преступления НКВД по отношению к польским офицерам, сообщил директор ГП "Волинские древности" Алексей Златогорский в комментарии Gazeta.ua.

*Translated:*

Incautious statements by Polish archaeologists about the belongings of the remains found on the land of the castle of Kazimir Velikii in Vladimir-Volynskii **could cast doubt upon the already known crimes of the NKVD in relation to Polish officers**, said the direction of the state enterprise "Volyn antiquities" Aleksei Zlatogorskii in a commentary to Gazeta.ua.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> [[cyrillic]]Скороход, Ольга. "Польские археологи нагнетают ситуацию вокруг жертв, расстрелянных в 1941-м." (Ol'ga Skorokhkod. Polish archeologists stir up the situation around the victims shot in 1941.) Gazeta.ru February 20, 2013, [http://gazeta.ua/ru/articles/history/\\_polskie-arheologi-nagnetayut-situaciyu-vokrug-zhertv-rasstrelyannyh-v-1941-m/483525](http://gazeta.ua/ru/articles/history/_polskie-arheologi-nagnetayut-situaciyu-vokrug-zhertv-rasstrelyannyh-v-1941-m/483525) Gazeta.ru is a Russian-language Ukrainian newspaper. Roughly half the population of today's Ukraine use Russian as their first language.

The only "already known crimes of the NKVD in relation to Polish officers" is the Katyn massacre — or, to be more precise, the "official" version of the Katyn Massacre. Prof. Zlatohors'kiy does not explain how the Polish report "casts doubt" upon the "official" version of Katyn.

The Ukrainian report cited above appears to be a shorter, perhaps Internet version of a longer report written by Zlatohors'kiy and two other Ukrainian archaeologists, S.D. Panishko and M.P. Vasheta. This report (Zvit) omits any mention of Kuligowski, Małowiejski, or their badges. Its appendix does include some photographs also found in the Polish report. Among them are a photo of the Polish policeman's epaulette and of the "sardine-packing" arrangement of bodies in Grave No. 2. (Zvit pp. 91, 92, 97).

The opening of an exhibition concerning this site at the Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy Historical Museum on March 5, 2013, was announced. The accompanying article states only that in 1997 researchers assumed that the victims buried there were Poles shot by the NKVD in 1939-1940, and suggests that this is still their conclusion.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> [[cyrillic]]Запрошуємо на відкриття Виставиш "Прихована історія: археологічні дослідження на городищі Володимира-Волинського 2010-2012 років" (We invite you to the opening of the exhibition: "Hidden history: archaeological investigations at a site in Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy in the years 2010-2012"), [http://volyn-museum.com.ua/news/zaproshuemo\\_na\\_vidkrittja\\_vistavki\\_prikhovana\\_istorija\\_arkheologichni\\_doslidzhennja\\_na\\_gorodishhi\\_volodimira\\_volinskogo\\_2010\\_2012\\_rokiv/2013-02-27-655](http://volyn-museum.com.ua/news/zaproshuemo_na_vidkrittja_vistavki_prikhovana_istorija_arkheologichni_doslidzhennja_na_gorodishhi_volodimira_volinskogo_2010_2012_rokiv/2013-02-27-655)

Katchanovski and Musychenko cited evidence that the Germans killed the victims at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy. More than 96% of the ammunition found in the mass graves is German and was manufactured in 1941. The "transit" or "shipment" lists from Kozel'sk, Ostashkov, and Starobel'sk are from April and May 1940. Kuligowski and Małowiejski could not have been killed earlier than 1941. No one has suggested that they were killed in Kalinin and Kharkiv in April-May 1940 and then their badges brought to a mass grave in Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy, hundreds of miles away, and there thrown into the burial pit.

Kuligowski and Małowiejski were indeed shipped out of their POW camps in April 1940, as recorded in the Soviet transit lists published by Tucholski in 1991. But neither of them was being sent to execution. They were killed in 1941 in Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy, Ukrainian SSR. According to the evidence now available they were killed by the Germans.

The badges and the shell casings are primary source evidence that cannot have been forged or faked in any way. The Polish archeologist would never have fabricated the badges or invented the identities of their owners. Nor would she have fabricated the fact that the shell casings found in the mass graves were not only German but were manufactured in 1941, long after the Katyn killings.

On the contrary: the Polish authorities are now denying the report of the Polish archaeologist. Funding has been withdrawn; the mass graves have been filled in. A small number of victims, unidentified, have been reburied and are now officially called "victims of the NKVD." We will discuss this in more detail in a later chapter and point out that this constitutes a tacit admission by Polish authorities that the "official" version of Katyn has been disproven.

The *material* evidence discovered at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy — the badges and the German shells dated 1941 — are the most important kind of evidence we could ask for. They could not have been "planted" or otherwise faked. In this they are unlike documentary evidence and personal testimony.

If we had no other unimpeachable primary evidence indicating that the "official" version of the Katyn massacre is false, these discoveries would be sufficient to establish that fact. On the basis of the badges and shell casings at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy alone we can conclude that the prisoners shipped out of the Soviet POW camps in April-May 1940 were not being sent to their deaths. This in itself disproves the "official" version of the Katyn massacre.

## Chapter 6. *What the Unimpeachable Evidence Shows*

In chapters 2 through 5 we have examined all of the unimpeachable evidence that we have been able to identify:

Document Collection A: The German Report (AM):

- The German spent shell casings;
- The badge from Ostashkov;
- A considerable number of bodies found at Katyn of POWs from the Ostashkov and Starobel'sk POW camps.

Document Collection B: The Soviet Burdenko Report (BU)

- The receipt from Przemyslaw Koziatulski, son of Boleslaw.

Document Collection C: "Closed Packet No.1" (CP)

- The "Excerpt from Protocol No. 13 of the Politburo" that has been altered, probably in 1959.

Document Collection D: The Archeological Report from Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy (VV).

- The badges of Jósef Kuligowski and Ludwik Małowiejski;
- The hundreds of German shell casings dated 1941.

According to the "official" version of Katyn the Polish POWs were transferred from Kozel'sk, Ostashkov, and Starobel'sk POW camps to the Smolensk, Kalinin, and Khar'kov NKVD, who oversaw their murder, and then buried them at Katyn (in fact Koz'i Gory near Katyn), Mednoe, and Piatykhatty respectively. The executions took place within a short period after the POWs arrived at the cities in question.

There has never been any *evidence* that the Polish POWs were shot in this way. Gur'ianov of "Memorial," a fervent defender of the "official" version, admits this in several places in his lengthy analysis in "Ubiety."

He admits that Soviet transfer lists are the only official source containing almost the full list of POWs from Kozel'sk, but that they say nothing about any shooting or Politburo decision:

[[cyrillic]]Исключительное значение списков-предписаний как доказательств обусловлено тем, что это единственный официальный источник, содержащий практически полный поименный список расстрелянных военнопленных Козельского лагеря<sup>20</sup>. **Одними списками предписания не содержат каких-либо упоминаний о том, что перечисленные в них лица подлежат расстрелу на основании решения Политбюро ЦК ВКП(б).** (66)

*Translated:*

The exceptional importance of the prescription lists as evidence is due to the fact that this is the only official source containing a practically complete list of names of the executed POWs of the Kozel'sk camp. **However, the prescription lists do not contain any reference to the fact that the persons listed in them are to be shot on the basis of a decision of the Politburo of the C[entral] C[ommittee] of the VKP (b).**

Therefore there is no formal connection between the (supposed) Politburo document of March 5 — the "Beria letter" — and the shooting of the POWs:

[[cyrillic]]Следовательно, если ограничиться только перечисленными советскими источниками, с формальной точки зрения связь между решением Политбюро от 5 марта 1940 г. о расстреле польских военнопленных и списками предписаниями НКВД установить невозможно. (66-7)

*Translated:*

Consequently, if we restrict ourselves to only the Soviet sources listed, from a formal point of view it is impossible to establish any connection between the decision of the Politburo of March 5, 1940 on

the shooting of Polish prisoners of war and the NKVD prescription lists.

Gur'ianov recognizes that the lack of evidence of life after spring 1940 is the "weakest link" in "official" version:

[[cyrillic]]Необходимость сослаться на отсутствие признаков жизни после весны 1940 г. и общность судьбы опознанных и неопознанных по результатам эксгумации для того, чтобы считать списки-предписания НКВД списками отправки на расстрел, - **самое тонкое звено** в нашей формально-юридической доказательной цепочке. (67)

*Translated:*

The need to refer to the absence of signs of life after the spring of 1940 and the commonality of the fate of the identified and the unidentified by the results of the exhumation, in order to consider the NKVD prescription lists as lists of dispatching for execution by shooting — this is **the weakest link** in our formal legal evidence chain.

This is a deceptive statement — in plain language, a lie. As we have seen, there is plenty of "evidence of life" for Polish POWs after May 1940. Gur'ianov is only able to claim there isn't by deliberately ignoring the Burdenko report, the exhumation records of the BU that were published by Pamiatnykh, and the Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy discoveries. He is busy "ignoring the elephant in the living room."

If Gur'ianov were an honest historian whose purpose was to discover the truth he would acknowledge these issues and present his readers with an examination of them. That is what we have done in the present book. But Gur'ianov is not an honest historian. What he is writing is not history but "propaganda with footnotes."

Gur'ianov *assumes* — or, more accurately, pretends to assume — that all the remains exhumed in 1943 at Katyn by the Germans, including the unidentified remains, are of POWs from Kozel'sk.



[[cyrillic]]Мы исходим из того, что все останки, эксгумированные в 1943 г. в Катынском лесу, включая перечисленные в списке «посторонних» в Приложении," это останки значащихся в документах НКВД военнопленных из Козельского лагеря. (77)

*Translated:*

We proceed from the premise that all the remains exhumed in 1943 in the Katyn forest, including those listed in the list of "outsiders" in the Appendix [Gur'ianov means the appendix to his own analysis], are the remains of prisoners of war from the Kozel'sk camp mentioned in the documents of the NKVD.

Gur'ianov points out that Aleksei Pamiatnykh makes the same assumption:

[[cyrillic]]Алексей Памятных еще в 2005 г. пришел к выводу, что «В польских могилах в Катыни находятся останки офицеров ТОЛЬКО из Козельского лагеря» (Pamiatnych A. O identyfikacji nazwisk ... S. 142).

Dlatego uwazam, ze w polskich mogilach w Katyniu znajdujci sie szczitki oficerów TYLKO z obozu Kozielski ego. **Hipoteza ta jest glownym wynikiem mojej pracy.**

*Translated:*

Already in 2005 Alexei Pamiatnykh came to the conclusion that "In the Polish graves in Katyn there are remains of officers ONLY from the Kozel'sk camp."

Therefore, I believe that in Polish graves at Katyn there are remains ONLY of officers from the Kozel'sk camp. **This hypothesis is the main result of my work.**

This "hypothesis" — really, a pretense — is false. I suspect that Gur'ianov and Pamiatnykh know it is false. Evidently, they hope that their readers will not know it. Their omission of these facts, which dismantle the "official"

version of Katyn, is essential if they wish to continue to uphold the "official" Soviets-did-it version.

Gur'ianov admits that no "shooting lists" have been discovered, though he insists that they did exist.

[[cyrillic]]Как показала Н.С. Лебедева, одновременно со списками-предписаниями, которые высылались в три лагеря начальником УПВ или его заместителем, списки с теми же фамилиями военнопленных, но подписанные зам. наркома НКВД Меркуловым и содержащие распоряжение привести в исполнение ВМН в отношении перечисленных в них лиц, должны были высылаться начальникам соответствующих областных УНКВД<sup>85</sup>. **Ни один из тайных списков (назовем их расстрельными) до сих пор не обнаружен". (80)**

*Translated:*

As N.S. Lebedeva has shown, along with the instruction list that were sent to the three camps by the head of the division of Polish POWs or his deputy, lists with the same names of prisoners of war, but signed by deputy People's Commissar of the NKVD Merkulov and containing an order to carry out the executions of the persons listed in them, were to be sent to the heads of the relevant regional NKVD Directorate. **Not a single one of these lists (let us call them execution lists) has yet been found...**

What Lebedeva and Gur'ianov really mean is that, *if the "official" version is to be saved*, such list *must* have existed. For Gur'ianov, "Memorial," and anticommunist researchers and writers generally, the "official" version is to be considered "true beyond any legitimate doubt" — meaning, questioned only by biased, pro-communist, and therefore "immoral" people.

This is not history. It is anticommunist ideology masquerading as history, disguised as history to fool the majority of people who rely on "experts" like these.

**The Conspiracy to Defend the "Official" Version of Katyn**

You, the reader, should be wondering: "If the solution to the Katyn murders is as obvious as this book makes it seem, why haven't I heard about it? What can account for the fact that the only version of Katyn that we ever hear about is the one that blames Stalin and the NKVD for murdering the Poles?"

The answer is that there is a worldwide *anticommunist* conspiracy to ignore the truth about Katyn, as about many other alleged "crimes of Stalin."

- The Russian researchers who have been critiquing the "official" version for more than two decades are completely ignored. None of their work is available in any language other than Russian. They are seldom mentioned even in the Russian media, and almost never mentioned outside Russia.
  - The recent 470-page book by German research Claudia Weber *Krieg der Täter: Die Massenerschießungen van Katyn*. Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, HIS Verlagsgesellschaft, 2015. ISBN 978-3868542868 does not mention any of them.
  - Neither does the authoritative English-language study by Wojciech Materski and Anna Cienciala, *Katyn: A Crime without Punishment* (Annals of Communism Series). Yale University Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0300195477
  - In *Katyn and the Soviet Massacre of 1940: Truth, Justice and Memory* (BASEES / Routledge Series on Russian and East European Studies). London, UK: Routledge, 2009) British professor George Sanford does devote a single paragraph to the Russian researchers who deny Soviet guilt. But he dismisses their arguments as "a method associated with Holocaust revisionist David Irving" and claims that to question Soviet guilt after Gorbachev's admission and Yeltsin's release of the NKVD evidence was a wholly perverse, and politically motivated, attempt to cloud and mitigate the issue of Stalinist guilt. (204)

Sanford is referring to Document Collection C, "Closed Packet No. 1".

It should be obvious to the reader that Sanford's position here is bankrupt and dishonest. In *principle* there cannot be anything wrong, much less "perverse," in subjecting any and all evidence to critical scrutiny. But the

"official" version of Katyn cannot withstand such scrutiny. Therefore it must be defended by lies, insults, and threats.

There is a policy of suppression, repression, and — when that proves inadequate — slander and dismissal, of any study of Katyn that questions the "official" version. This, and not any evidentiary considerations, is the reason that criticisms of the "official" version are excluded from public and even from academic discussion.

Since 1943 anticommunist Polish nationalism has been based on the claim that the Soviet Union committed the Katyn murders. So vital is Katyn to them that the Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy exhumations are now falsified by Polish authorities because the discoveries there disprove the "official" version of Katyn.

A few Russian researchers have been investigating Katyn, reassessing the evidence already available, and discovering new evidence. We will consider some of their research in the chapters that follow. Their work has been marginalized within Russia and, when not slandered, as Sanford does, has been ignored elsewhere. This is both "politically motivated" (to use Sanford's phrase) and intellectually irresponsible.

All *honest* scholars know that it is never legitimate to ridicule, dismiss, or ignore evidence (as opposed to mere unsupported opinion) that tends to call one's own preconceived ideas and prejudices into question. After all, why not just refute such evidence and arguments, as historians of the Jewish Holocaust have done to Holocaust deniers? These vituperative attacks suggest that the defenders of the "official" Soviets-did-it version are unable to refute the critiques of the "official" version.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the preceding chapters we have examined all the evidence that cannot have been fabricated. Consequently, this is the evidence that any honest researcher is duty bound to accept as evidence, and account for. As we have seen, the evidence permits only one conclusion: that the "official" version of Katyn is false. Therefore that version must be discarded by any honest, objective student.

Our analysis has not only proven that the "official" version of Katyn is false. It has also provided the evidence to prove German guilt in the Katyn murders.

- We have "evidence of life" of some of the Poles long after May 1940.
- Only German bullets were used at Katyn and at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy.
- Kuligowski, Małowiejski, and possibly many more Polish POWs were shot by the Germans in 1941.
- There was no other party besides the Soviets and the Germans that could have killed the Poles. If the evidence excludes the Soviets then the Germans were guilty.

In the following chapters we will examine the other evidence in Document Collections A through D.

- We will see that there are so many problems, contradictions, and inconsistencies in Document A, the German Report that all *objective* researchers, regardless of political viewpoint, must agree that it must be disqualified as evidence.
- We will examine the objections that have been raised against Document Collection B, the Burdenko Report. We shall see that those objections are not only groundless but dishonest.
- We will see that Document Collection C, "Closed Packet No. 1," is a fabrication — a forgery.
- We will see that Polish authorities now deny all the findings of the Polish archeologist report of the VV excavations. In fact they have tacitly withdrawn the report itself! Now they claim that the killings at VV were by the NKVD. We will show that the reason for this brazen denial lies in the implications that the VV report has for disproving the "official" version of Katyn.

### **The Unimpeachable Evidence Is Decisive**

Ours is the first study to identify the evidence which cannot have been faked and to point out that this unimpeachable evidence should be considered decisive in determining who murdered the Polish POWs. As far

as I can determine, it is also the very first study of Katyn to approach the question objectively and, therefore, as not solved prior to the present study.

Most researchers who are at all concerned with the Katyn issue make no attempt at all to be objective or to consider that their preconceived notions about Katyn might be incorrect. These persons have never approached Katyn through a study of all the available evidence. This is true of the major and supposedly "definitive" studies by Cienciala / Materski, by Sanford, and of many others as well.

In fact the situation with respect to research on Katyn is even worse than the paragraph above may suggest. For the proponents of Soviet guilt have tried their best to declare Katyn a subject that is "settled" forever. By this they mean, and sometimes explicitly state, as Sanford does, that any attempt to study Katyn objectively — an effort which necessarily means subjecting all conclusions about Katyn, including the "official" Soviets-did-it position, to doubt — is perverse and even immoral.

Because Katyn has seldom if ever been studied according to the evidence, and never by the method used in this book, I think it is inevitable that some partisans of the "official," Soviets-did-it version, will ask:

"Why should the unimpeachable evidence be decisive? After all, you cannot prove that the evidence supporting Soviet guilt is false. The most you can say is that it, like a great deal of other evidence, *might be* false.

But suppose that at least some of it is *not* false? Suppose, for example, that the other documents in CP, like the "Beria Letter," are genuine? Wouldn't the genuineness of the CP documents, once established, equal or even outweigh the so-called 'unimpeachable' evidence you have cited? Wouldn't it, at the very least, leave open the possibility that the Soviets shot the Polish POWs'?"

The answer to such questions is, briefly: No. In fact, the unimpeachable evidence is also additional evidence that CP and AM are invalid as evidence.

The "official" version of Katyn is a *narrative*, a hypothesis concerning a supposed sequence of events:

- First the three POW camps were emptied in April and May, 1940. No one contests this fact so we may take it as true.
- Then the Polish POWs were shot by the Soviets at Smolensk or at Katyn (Koz'i Gory) or at both places; at Kalinin (or there and also at Mednoe); and at Khar'kov (or there and at Piatykhatky). But the unimpeachable evidence shows that this did not happen. Therefore, AM and CP are false.

The evidence compels us to conclude that AM was a fabrication by the Germans. We shall study AM in more detail in the following chapters and show that the evidence it supposedly contains that the Soviets shot the Polish POWs is all specious and falls apart when scrutinized. As for CP, it is a complex of documents that cannot be genuine because it contradicts all the valid evidence we have. In addition, there is much other evidence that the CP documents are forgeries.

The unimpeachable evidence firmly establishes that the "official" version of Katyn could not have taken place. But there is no other version of Katyn compatible with Soviet guilt. The Polish POWs must have been killed either by the Soviets or by the Germans because there was no third force that could have committed these mass murders. We also have evidence of German guilt in AM, BU, and VV. Therefore, on the evidence we are forced to conclude that the Germans killed the Polish POWs.

If there are any readers of this book who only want to know the solution to the Katyn "Whodunnit" — Who really murdered the Polish POWS? — they can stop reading at this point. "Whodunnit" has been determined beyond the shadow of any reasonable doubt: the Germans "did it."

But I suspect and hope that most readers will want a more detailed examination of the evidence. The remaining chapters present that more detailed study.

## Chapter 7. The German Report

More research has been done on the German Report (AM) and on the documents of Closed Packet No. 1 than on the other two document collections. We'll begin with AM.

### Lies and Contradictions in the German Report

Unter den übrigen Opfern findet sich unter anderem eine ganze Reihe von Geistlichen. (AM 10)

*Translated:*

Among the other victims there is also a number of [lit. a whole series of] clergymen.

In reality, only one ecclesiastic is listed.

Unter den identifizierten Ermordeten befinden sich 2 Brigade-Generale, 12 Oberste, 50 Oberstleutnante, ... und 10 Veterinäre **sowie ein Feldgeistlicher**. (AM 47)

*Translated:*

Among the murder victims that have been identified there are two Brigadier Generals, 12 colonels, 50 lieutenant colonels ... and 10 veterinarians as well as one military clergyman.

2. Neben zwei Brigadegeneralen wurden unter den Mordopfern 2250 Offiziere verschiedenster Ränge, 156 Aerzte und Veterinäre, 406 Offiziere ohne erkennbaren Rang, Fähnriche und Mannschaften **sowie ein Feldgeistlicher** sofort an Ort und Stelle identifiziert. (AM 92)

*Translated:*



In addition to two brigadier generals, among the murder victims 2250 officers of various ranks, 156 doctors and veterinarians, 406 officers whose rank could not be determined, ensigns and personnel as well as one military clergyman were immediately identified on the spot.

Several witnesses testified that the woods around the mass graves were closed off by the NKVD in 1931.

Das Waldgelände Kasi-Gory durfte bis 1931, wenn nicht gerade Erschießungen stattfanden, von jedermann betreten werden. Kinder, welche dort Pilze such ten, erzählten immer von frischen Grabhilgeln. (AM 19, testimony of Kuzma Godonov)

*Translated:*

Until 1931 the forest area of Kozy Gory was accessible to anyone, as long as executions were not taking place. Children who were looking for mushrooms there always talk about fresh grave mounds.

Bis zum Jahre 1931 konnten wir, d. h die Dorfbewohner, in dieses Gelände gehen, um dort Pilze und Beeren zu sammeln, und auch ich habe als Junge in Kasi-Gory Pilze gesucht. ... Im Jahre 1931 wurde das Gelände von Kasi-Gory eingezäunt, das Betreten durch Warntafeln, die von der OGPU. unterschrieben waren, verboten. (AM 19, testimony of Ivan Krivozertsev)

*Translated:*

Until 1931 we, the villagers, were able to go to this area to gather mushrooms and berries, and I too, as a boy, collected mushrooms in Kozy-Gory. ... In 1931 the area of Kozy-Gory was fenced off and entry was prohibited by warning sign issued by the OGPU.

Seit ungefähr 10 Jahren wurde das Schloß im Wald als Sanatorium für höhere NKWD.-Beamte benutzt. Das ganze Waldgelände war durch einen 2 Meter hohen Stacheldraht eingezäunt. (AM 25, testimony of Parfeon Kisselev)

*Translated:*

For about 10 years, the castle in the forest has been used as a sanatorium for higher NKVD officials. The whole forest area was fenced off by barbed wire two meters in height.

This was contradicted by the testimony of witness Gregor Silvestrov.

Die einen behaupteten, es wären Polen; manche aber, es wären Finnen gewesen. Ebenfalls nur gerüchtweise hörte man, die Gefangenen seien zu dem etwa 4 km von hier entfernten sogenannten „Ruhehaus der Kollektiven“ geschafft und dort erschossen worden. Dies nahm auch ich an, da **zur Zeit dieser Transporte das in der Umgebung des Hauses übliche Pilzesammeln verboten war.** (AM 24)

*Translated:*

Some said it was Poles. But many said it had been Finns. It was also rumored that the prisoners had been taken to the so-called "rest house of the collectives," some 4 km from here, and shot there. I too assumed this, because at the time of these transports the usual mushroom gathering in the vicinity of the house was forbidden.

Kisselev testified that the local people thought there were about 10,000 Poles killed by the NKVD at Koz'i Gory.

Die Leute der Ortschaften erzählten, daß es sich um zirka 10 000 Polen gehandelt haben soil. (AM 25)

*Translated:*

The local people used to say that it was a matter of about 10,000 Poles.

This is the same wildly inaccurate figure that the German report (AM) gives.

Für die Gesamtzahl können die endgültigen Ergebnisse der schaurigen Untersuchung und Zählung abgewartet werden; eine vorsichtige Schätzung läßt aber mit mindestens 10 000—12 000 Opfern der bolschewistischen Mordgier rechnen. (AM 10)

*Translated:*

For the total number we must await the final results of the gruesome investigation and census. However, a cautious estimate would be that of at least 10,000-12,000 victims of Bolshevik murder.

The only place the local people could have gotten this figure is from the Germans.

Former Polish officer Glaeser told the Germans that the Kozel'sk transits began on March 20, 1940, and ended May 9, 1940. (AM 31) This is false. According to Tucholski's book, which prints all the Soviet transit lists, there is no list earlier than April 1.

The report claims that some Starobel'sk POWs were transferred to Katyn via Kozel'sk:

Bekannt ist, daß eine geringe Anzahl von Starobielsk über Kozielsk nach Katyn gebracht warden ist. (AM 34)

It is known that a small number of Starobel'sk prisoners were brought to Katyn via Kozel'sk.

This is an interesting remark! The Germans did not identify any bodies as being of men who had been transferred from Starobel'sk. Evidently the Germans must have known that some POWs had been in Starobel'sk. There is no evidence for any "small number" having been transported from Starobel'sk to Kozel'sk before April-May 1940. The Soviet NKVD transit lists, reproduced in Tucholski, record nothing like this.

As we have seen, a number of Starobel'sk and Ostashkov POWs were indeed killed at Katyn. But these men had first been transferred to Khar'kov and Kalihin and only then to Kozel'sk.

In einem Falle, und zwar am 4. 4. 1940, wurden 2402 Offiziere abtransportiert. (AM 34)

*Translated:*

In one case, on April 4, 1940, 2402 officers were shipped out.

Not all the Soviet transfer lists in Tucholski are dated. But it appears that there was never anything like 2400 prisoners sent on a single day.

### **The Insect Question**

The German Report, and proponents of the "official" version since then, have emphasized that the Germans found no insects in the mass graves "from the time of burial" (*aus der Zeit der Einscharrung*). They have used this fact to allege that the murders must have taken place in the spring — April and May — and so must have been committed by the Soviets. They assert that, had the murders taken place in the fall, and been committed by the Germans, there would have been insects.

Nirgends fanden sich an den Leichen oder deren Kleidung Spuren von Insektenfraß oder ihrer Ablagerung, die aus der Zeit der Einscharrung stammen konnten. Die nach der Auflegung der Leichen relativ häufig angetroffenen Lederlauhkäfer, die von Insektenmaden leben, sind erst nach der Bergung der Leichen, also sekundär, angewandert.

*Translated:*

Nowhere on the corpses or their garments were there any signs of insect-feeding or their deposits which might have come from the time of burial. The leather beetles, which are found frequently after the laying out of the corpses, and which live on maggots, have only arrived after the bodies have been salvaged, that is, secondarily.

Hieraus ergibt sich, daß die Erschießungen und die Einscharrungen in einer kalten, insektenfreien Jahreszeit stattgefunden haben müssen, ... (AM 52)

*Translated:*

From this it follows that the shootings and the burials must have taken place in a cold, insect-free season ...

Es fehlen gänzlich an den Leichen Insekten und Insektenreste, die aus der Zeit der Einscharrung stammen konnten. Hieraus ergibt sich, daß die Erschießungen und die Einscharrungen in einer kalten, insektenfreien Jahreszeit geschehen sein müssen. (AM 117)

*Translated:*

Insects and insect remains on the corpses that could have come from the time of burial are entirely lacking. From this it follows that the shootings and the burials must have taken place in a cold, insect-free season.

AM admits that beetles (Lederlaufkäfer) were found that live off maggots (Insektenmaden). Maggots hatch from eggs which are laid by flies. Dr. Orsós, the openly pro-German medical expert, wrote that he found no evidence of insects in one of the corpses he examined.

Insekten oder Insektenteile wie auch andere niedere Tiere ließen sich weder an der Leiche selbst noch an der Kleidung nachweisen. (AM 123)

*Translated:*

Insects, insect parts, and other lower animals, could not be detected either on the corpses themselves or on the clothing.

But Dr. Palmieri, an Italian member of the medical team brought to Katyn by the Germans, did find evidence of insects.

In der Kleidung eine ganze Menge toter Larven. (126)

Translated:

In the clothing a large number of dead larvae.

Die Zunge ist flach. Im Rachen eine große Menge toter Larven. (126)

Translated:

The tongue is flat. In the throat a large number of dead larvae.

Larvae develop from maggots, which hatch from eggs laid by flies. So there had been flies after all! During this testimony at Nuremberg Dr. Markov noted this contradiction in the AM:

As to the insects and their larvae, the assertion of the general report that none were discovered is in flagrant contradiction to the conclusions of Professor Palmieri, which are recorded in his personal minutes concerning the corpse which he himself dissected. In this protocol, which is published in the same German White Book<sup>1</sup>, it is said that there were traces of remains of insects and their larvae in the mouths of the corpses. (Nuremberg Trials Vol. XVII, 354)

<sup>1</sup> This is AM.

### **Failure to recognize the *terminus post quem***

Dr. Miloslavich, a member of the expert team called to Katyn by the Germans, wrote:

Der Tod des Obengenannten erfolgte im Frühjahr 1940, wie dies aus den an der Leiche und an vielen umliegenden Leichen vorgefundenen

Privat-Dokumenten ersichtlich ist. (133)

The death of the above-mentioned person occurred in the spring of 1940, as can be seen from the private documents found on the body and on many surrounding corpses.

The Polish Red Cross team made the same logical error in their telegram to the International Red Cross of April 21, 1943:

4. jugeant d'apres les papiers et documents trouves sur les cadavres, l'assassin at a du avoir lieu environ aux mois mars — avril 1940. (AM 137)

*Translated:*

4. judging from the papers and documents found on the corpses the murder must have taken place around the months March — April 1940.

In reality the latest date of documents found in the mass graves could only establish that the victims were shot *after* that date. This apparent error in logic — ignorance of the elementary concept of "terminus post quem" — is made multiple times in the German report. It defies credulity to believe that *all* the Germans, *all* the foreign experts, and *all* the Poles, could have made this error. Therefore this must be a deliberate effort to deceive — or, at least, to deceive those who *wanted* to be deceived, who wanted to believe that the Soviets shot the Poles.

### **Denial of Polish Collaboration with the Germans — While the Poles Were Collaborating**

The German Report quotes the Soviet charge that some of the Poles were working hand in glove with the Germans in this propaganda campaign. It also quotes the response of the Polish government-in-exile in London to the Soviet charges.

Jede Zusammenarbeit mit den Deutschen ist verschmaht worden. Im Lichte dieser in der gesamten Welt bekannten Tatsachen haben die

polnische Regierung und die polnische Nation es nicht nötig, sich gegen irgendeine Vermutung hinsichtlich einer Fühlungnahme oder einer Verständigung mit Hitler zu verteidigen. (AM 147)

Translated:

All collaboration with the Germans has been scorned. In the light of this fact, known throughout the world, the Polish government and the Polish nation have no need to defend themselves against any presumption regarding a meeting or an understanding with Hitler.

This statement was made while the Polish Red Cross team was in fact working as closely as possible with the Germans at Katyn!

In fact we know that, after Stalingrad made it obvious that Germany would almost certainly lose the war, the Polish Home Army began to collaborate with the Germans against their mutual enemy, the Soviet Union. One well-documented example of this collaboration is discussed in a recent German collection.<sup>2</sup> We will return briefly to this important point in the Conclusion.

<sup>2</sup> Bernhard Chiari, "Kriegslist oder Bündnis mit dem Feind? Deutsch-Polnische Kontakte 1943-44." In *Die Polnische Heimatarmee. Geschichte und Mythos der Armia Krajowa seit dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*. Munich: R. Oldenbourg Vlg, 2003, 497-527.



## **Chapter 8. The German Report, continued. Sakharov's Article 'Secrets of Katyn'**

### **The Research of Valentin A. Sakharov**

Since 2010 Professor Valentin Sakharov of Moscow State University has published several very important research articles on the subject of the German Report at Katyn. I have never seen any of them acknowledged, much less studied or critiqued, by any of the advocates of the "official" version of Katyn. The reason for this silence about Sakharov's research appears to be that it deals yet another serious blow to the credibility of AM.

We will examine two of his articles here:

- "Tainy Katyni." ("Secrets of Katyn") *Svobodnaia mysl'* 1 (2013), 133-146. Online: <http://svom.info/entry/319-tajny-katyni/>
- "Germanskije dokumenty ob eksgumatsii i identifikatsii zhertv Katyni (1943 g.)." ("German documents concerning the exhumation and identification of the victims of Katyn") Online at [https://kprf.ru/rus\\_law/79589.html](https://kprf.ru/rus_law/79589.html)

In this chapter we will examine Sakharov's first article. We will study his second article in the chapter that follows.

### **"Secrets of Katyn"**

In this article Sakharov examines some of the documents allegedly found in the mass graves by the Germans. He provides evidence that the Germans falsified some of these documents.

In a number of cases I do not agree with Sakharov's determination that a document was falsified. Here I will only discuss those cases where I believe that falsification can be reliably established.

#### **1. "Lemberg"**

Lemberg was the German name of the city of Lwów, in Russian L'vov, Ukrainian Lv'iv. L'vov was taken by Poland from Soviet Russia in the Polish-Soviet war of 1919-1921 and ceded to Poland in the Treaty of Riga of March 1921. It was occupied by the Red Army on September 22, 1939 and reverted to the Ukrainian SSR in October 1939 as a result of the Treaty of Nonaggression between Germany and the USSR, commonly called the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.

It was renamed "Lemberg" by the Germans after they captured it in June 1941 during their invasion of the Soviet Union. According to the "official" version and the German Report (AM) the Polish POWs were murdered by the Soviet NKVD more than a year earlier, in April and May 1940. Therefore there should not have been any documents found in the mass graves with the name "Lemberg" on them. But according to AM such documents were found.

Here we will examine some examples of these documents. The number represents the number assigned in AM to the corpse exhumed by the Germans in April-June 1943.

892. Uniformierter.

1 Foto mit Anschrift: Hanina Gajowska, Lemberg, Zyzyinska 24. (?) 1 Medaillon. (AM 189)

«Anschrift" — "inscription" — means that these were the actual words on the photo. If genuine, this proves that the body and document were from after June, 1941, and therefore that the victim was murdered by the Germans.

If the inscription really read "Lwów" and some German, in an excess of patriotism or political correctness, changed the name to "Lemberg," the name in use at the time of the exhumations in 1943, then that would mean that the Germans were altering the documents they found. And that would compromise the *bona fides* of the German AM.

One entry in AM does contain the word "Lwow."

1824. Gondek, Zdzislaw, Hptm., geb. 26. 9. 08, Lwow.

1 Offz.-Ausweis, 1 Rgt-Abzeichen, Postsparbuch, Postkarten. (AM 216)

If this one mention of "Lwow" was an oversight and the Germans were changing "Lwow" to "Lemberg" wherever they found it that would mean that the Germans were altering the documents whenever they saw fit to do. If that were the case it would mean that we cannot trust any of these documents in AM, because the Germans might have altered or even invented them.

At first glance it appears that the Germans did change "Lwow" to "Lemberg" in at least one case:

867. Terpiac, Josef, Hptm.

Diplom des Kadettenkorps Lemberg, 1 Offiziersausweis, 4 Postkarten, 1 Tagebuch. (AM 189)

This man could not have graduated from the Cadet Corps after the German occupation. But this example is different from the others. The German entry does not claim that these are the words on the diploma. Rather, they are a translation into German of the words on the diploma.

1776. Chmielewski, Kazimierz, Fliegerhptm. Offz.-Ausweis, Waffenschein, Gestellungsbefehl, versch. milit. Befehle,

2 Fliegerabzeichen, 2 Briefe a. Namen: Irena Schmidt, Lemberg, ul. Bulwarska 1, adressiert an: Edward [presumably this should be "Edward"] Schmidt, Kozielsk. (AM 215)

The letter could not have been sent from "Lemberg" before June 1941 at the earliest.

781. K....., Boleslaw, Sohn des Zygmunt.

1 Foto mit Anschrift: Deine sich sehrende Frau, Lemberg, den 13. 2. 1940, Impfschein, Brief, Briefumschlag. (AM 186)

Once again, "Anschrift" means "inscription," the actual words on the photo. But here the inscription is in German rather than Polish, the date given is February 13, 1940, and the name of the city is "Lemberg." This cannot be accurate. Therefore, the Germans translated — that is, lied about — the inscription on the photograph, which in 1940 would have either "L'vov", the Russian name, or "Lwów," the Polish name, or conceivably "L'viv," the Ukrainian name, but never "Lemberg." In addition, it would have been written in Polish.

### **Conclusion about "Lemberg"**

Either the documents cited above really read "Lwów", L'viv", or "L'vov" and the Germans altered them to read "Lemberg" even in those cases where they said these were the "Anschriften", the inscriptions on photographs; or the documents really did read "Lemberg" as stated in AM.

In the first case the *bona fides* of the German AM are destroyed because the Germans were making changes on the materials they found. Who knows what other changes, inventions, forgeries, etc., they may have been making that have gone undetected?

In the second case the Germans have provided "proof of life" for a number of Polish POWs who lived after the German occupation in June-July 1941, and also provided evidence that these men were murdered by the Germans, not by the Soviets. Since these men were buried among all the rest of the prisoners, this is also evidence that the Germans shot the other Polish POWs at Katyn too.

Whichever is the case, the appearance of the word "Lemberg" in AM proves that it cannot be considered any kind of honest report.

## **2. German-Language Materials**

3708. Pufahl, Roman, Kapitan, geb. 26.1. 1894, wohnh.: Warschau, Straße des 6. August 58 m 2.

Offiz.-Ausweis, Fuhrerschein, 3 Briefe, 1 Postkarte, 1 Taschenmesser, Bescheinigung über Militardienstzeit in deutscher Sprache. (AM 262)

Why would a Polish captain be carrying a certificate of military service written in the German language? According to the "Katyn Cemetery Book" (page 509) Pufahl had fought in the First World War. But he would have fought in the Russian army, since Poland was part of Tsarist Russia at that time. If by some chance he had served with the Austro-Hungarian or the German army in WW1 he might have had German-language papers. But why would he carry them when fighting against Germany in 1939?

It is possible that he was given this certificate in a German POW camp after the German occupation of 1941 (but see below).

4120. — — Josef, Hptm., Liebenau, Schloßstraße 6. 1 Lebenslauf in deutscher Sprache, 3 Briefe (AM 2 72)

There were a number of towns named Liebenau. None were in prewar Poland. One of them is in Lower Silesia, which between 1919 and 1945 was in Germany, not Poland. Why would a Polish captain, a resident of Germany, have a "curriculum vitae" in German on his person while fighting against Germany in the Polish army? Such documentation would leave him vulnerable to being charged with treason against Germany, where his residence was.

It seems likely that these papers were taken from a dead German. This may be the case with the certificate of military service under Pufahl's name too. In the next chapter we will see that the Germans mixed up a lot of documents, including many documents not found associated with any specific corpse.

### **"Krzysiński": Another Piece of Evidence That Cannot Be Impugned**

439. Leutnant.

Brief in deutscher Sprache an den Kommandanten des Lagers, Oat. vom 4. 2. 1940. (AM 177)

Tucholski says this is the following person:

Krzesiński ...

Ppor. z Warszawy. PCK (AM) Nr 0439. (Tucholski p. 148 col. 1)

"PCK" means the Polish Red Cross (Polski Czerwony Krzyż). Its members at Katyn made this identification. There is no other information about this person.

It is not credible that a Polish POW would write the commandant of a Soviet POW camp in German, or have in his possession a letter in German from another prisoner to the commandant of a Soviet POW camp.

So this prisoner must almost certainly have written to the commandant of a *German* POW camp. That means that this soldier was taken prisoner by the Germans. It would also mean that the Germans falsified the date on the letter. We have already shown that the Germans falsified documents in AM.

I have not found any evidence that the Soviets accepted prisoners captured by the Germans in 1939. Certainly there was no reason for the Soviets to accept from the Germans any POWs whose homes were in the part of Poland occupied by Germany, as Warsaw was. Therefore this soldier must have been captured by the Germans after the German invasion of the USSR in June 1941. And that means that he was shot by the Germans.

Another important and ignored fact: the only "Krzesiński" ([[cyrillic]]КРИЕСИНСКОГО) in the Soviet transit lists was an Ostashkov prisoner (Tucholski p. 889 # 43). This man is listed on volume 1 page 449 of the Polish Mednoe Cemetery Book (Księga Cmentarna Miednoje):

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Komis. PP Mieczysław **Justyn KRZESIŃSKI** s.Hieronima Justyny z Agopsowiczów, ur. 15 III 1878 w Czortkowie. Emerytowany (w 1934) Kmdt Pow. Kołomyja. W 1939 zamieszkały w Kołomyi.

*Cemetery book entry recreated based upon original entry.*

In the latest study of the Katyn victims, *Ubiti v katyni*, no prisoner named either "Krzysiński" or (Russian) [[cyrillic]]Кшесинский is mentioned at all. If the Polish Red Cross was correct in identifying this corpse he would be the sixteenth POW from either Ostashkov or Starobel'sk that we have identified.

I think that Entry No. 439 should be considered to be another piece of unimpeachable evidence. The Germans would hardly have fabricated a false claim that a Polish POW had written to the commander of a Soviet POW camp in German! As such, it would be evidence of life after May 1940 of another Katyn POW. However, I have thought it simpler to consider this evidence here, where it may be studied in the context of other doubtful statements in the German AM, rather than trying to deal with it in Chapters 1 and 2.

### **3. Litzmannstadt**

The Polish city of Lodz (Łódz) was renamed "Litzmannstadt" by the Germans on April 11, 1940.<sup>1</sup> "Lodz" — we will use the English spelling — occurs 19 times in the German Report, including the letter mentioned in this entry:

3294. Oberleutnant.

Brief aus Lodz v. 24. 1. 1940 „Lieber Jurku", 1 Kruzifix. (AM 253)

<sup>1</sup> The Germans named it after General Karl Litzmann, whose troops captured Lodz during the First World War and who later joined the Nazi party.

Here the salutation is translated into German but not the name of the city.

"Litzmannstadt" occurs three times in AM:

678. Schreer, Joachim, Ltn., Litzmannstadt, Narotowicza 48 m 2.

1 Ausweis, Mobilmachungskarte, Impfschein, 3 Briefe, Fotos. (AM 183)

1300. Frelkewicz, Jozef, Ltn.

2 Briefe, 1 Karte, Absender: Frelkewicz, Litzmannstadt, Adolf-Hitler-Str. 104a. (AM 201)

2870. Krochmalski, Jan, Uniformiert, wohnh. Litzmannstadt, Allee uni 18 m 32. Notizbuch, Medaillon. (AM 242)

Checking these names in Tucholski we find the following:

Schreer:

Tucholski p. 650 #100 - 100. [[cyrillic]]ШРЕЕРА Еахима ЮльЮшевича,

Tucholski p. 646 — List 025/ 19 April 1940

Tucholski p. 210 col. 1:

Schreer Joachim

Ur. 27.11.1913. Ppor. art. rez., 10. pal.

Zam. Łódź. PCK (AM) Nr 0678.

Schreer was transferred from Kozel'sk on April 9, 1940. Lodz, in the German-occupied area of Poland, was not renamed Litzmannstadt until April 11, 1940.

Schreer could only have had identification with the name "Litzmannstadt" on his person if he had been in German captivity after April 11, 1940. That means he was captured and killed by the Germans, not by the Soviets.



Krochmalski:

Tucholski p. 676 #67 - 67. [[cyrillic]]КРОХМАЛЬСКОГО Яна  
Александровича, 1900 г.р.

Tucholski p. 675: List 032/414 April 1940

Krochmalski was transferred from the Kozel'sk camp three days after Lodz was renamed Litzmannstadt. His place of residence ("Wohnhaft" ="residing in") would be listed as Litzmannstadt only if it had been issued by the Germans. Therefore he too was imprisoned and shot by the Germans in 1941.

### **The Germans Possessed the Soviet List of Kozel'sk Prisoners**

The third of the "Litzmannstadt" entries is the following:

1300. Frelkewicz, Józef, Ltn.

2 Briefe, 1 Karte, Absender: Frelkewicz, Litzmannstadt, Adolf-Hitler-Str. 104a. (AM 201)

Here are his entries in Tucholski:

Tucholski p. 677 #7 — [[cyrillic]]ФРЕЛЬКЕВИЧА Юзефа  
Феликсовича, 1915 г.р.

Tucholski p. 102 col. 2 — Frelkiewicz Józef;

When we examine Sakharov's second article we shall see that the Germans had captured the Soviet NKVD transit lists of Polish POWs shipped from Kozel'sk to Smolensk — the same lists that are reproduced in Tucholski. This soldier's name was spelled with —kie-. But the entry on AM 201 has "—ke." This could not have been on any postcard ("Karte") to him. No Pole would make this error.

Therefore the Germans must have transliterated this from the Russian list. The Russian letter "e" is a palatalized "ye" and corresponds to the Polish

"ie." In transliterating the name from Russian, the Germans got the soft "l" correct: the Russian "ль" makes the "l" soft (the Polish hard "l" is the "barred l", written Ł ł). But the Germans did not know that the correct Polish spelling was —kie-, not —ke-, because they had only the Russian transit list.

According to the Soviet transit list in Tucholski, Frelkiewicz was transferred in convoy 035/1 on April 16, 1940. (Tucholski 677) He could not have received a card from a sender in "Litzmannstadt" in the 4 days between the renaming of the town and the departure of his convoy.

In fact the Polish POWs had been forbidden to receive mail after sometime in March, 1940. Their mail privileges were not restored until sometime in September, 1940. Therefore Frelkiewicz could not have received a letter from a sender in "Litzmannstadt."

Therefore Frelkiewicz received the letters and card after the Polish POWs' mailing privileges had been restored sometime in September, 1940. Therefore, this document is "proof of life" of a Kozel'sk POW. Frelkiewicz was alive long after May 1940. He had not been shipped out of Kozel'sk on April 16, 1940 in order to be shot. Instead, he had been sent to some other camp where he received these letters and card in September 1940 or afterwards. That means he was murdered by the Germans, not by the Soviets.

But it is also possible that the Germans fabricated all of this information about Frelkiewicz. If genuine, the two letters and the one card would have used the —kie- Polish spelling. Since the Germans transliterated his name from the Soviet NKVD transit list, they may well have fabricated all the information under number 1300. And if they did so in this case they could have done likewise in many other cases as well. This would further undermine the validity of the German AM as evidence.

## **Conclusion**

We have studied Sakharov's article, looked a little more carefully into his results, and identified nine entries in the AM list that can demonstrate

were either partially falsified or entirely faked: AM numbers 892, 1776, 781, 4120, 439, 3294, 678, 1300, 2870.

Either we have here a lot of evidence in the German AM that these men were alive months after the "official" version claims they had been killed and buried by the Soviets — which would prove that the "official" Soviets-did-it version of Katyn is incorrect. Or we have a lot of evidence that the Germans were falsifying the documents that they were supposedly recording as they took them from the mass graves.

In either case the German report (AM) is dishonest and the "evidence" it supposedly contains is invalid and cannot not be used in any *honest* effort to prove that the Soviets murdered the Polish prisoners.

## Chapter 9. The German Report, continued: Sakharov's Article 'German Documents'

In the present chapter we review the results of Valentin A. Sakharov's second article "Germanskie dokumenty ob ekskumatsii i identifikatsii zhertv Katyni (1943 g.)."<sup>1</sup> In it Professor Sakharov makes and examines a number of important discoveries relevant to the Katyn issue and the German Report. Most of them are supported by archival documents, some of which Sakharov publishes here for the first time. We will take them up in turn. They are:

1. Reports of Soviet partisans giving details about German falsification of the Katyn exhumation site.
2. Evidence supporting the testimony of local residents that they were forced by the Germans to sign statements written in the German language that they did not understand.
3. Evidence that the Polish prisoners who were transferred from Kozel'sk to Smolensk were sentenced to various prison terms, not sentenced to execution.
4. The statement of the German tree expert that he did not personally collect the tree rings sent to him by the Germans at Katyn, but only reported on what had been sent to him.
5. Evidence that the Germans captured and possessed the Soviet transfer lists of POWs.
6. Unpublished documents which show that both the Poles and the Germans at Katyn acknowledge that the identifications made there were falsified because the documents were often not found associated with individual corpses.
7. Evidence that the names assigned to bodies in the German list are not based on real identifications but on the haphazard association of unidentified corpses with documents not necessarily found on those corpses.

<sup>1</sup> "German documents concerning the exhumation and identification of Katyn victims (1943)."

### 1. Reports of Soviet partisans giving details about German falsifications at the Katyn exhumation site.

Soviet partisans testified that the Germans had dug up bodies from the Smolensk civilian cemetery and bodies of Red Army officers and men killed during the 1941 defense of Smolensk against the German invasion, and transported them to Katyn.

Sakharov publishes excerpts from five such reports. We have obtained a copy of one of them from GANISO, the State Archive of Contemporary History of the Smolensk Oblast.<sup>2</sup>

[[cyrillic]]Информация Западного штаба партизанского движения в Центральный штаб партизанского движения начальнику.

27 июля 1943 г.

Раздел: «Как немцы сфабриковали Катынскую авантюру».

«Военнопленные, сбежавшие из Смоленского лагеря 20.7.1943 года, как очевидцы - рассказали:

Немцы, чтобы создать могилы в Катынском лесу, якобы, расстрелянных советской властью польских граждан, отрыли массу трупов на Смоленском гражданском кладбище и перевезли эти трупы в Катынский лес, чем очень возмущало местное население. Кроме того, были отрыты и перевезены в Катынский лес трупы красноармейцев и командиров, погибших при защите подступов гор. Смоленск от немецких захватчиков в 1941 году, и погибших при вероломном нападении фашистской авиации на Смоленск в первые дни Отечественной войны. Доказательством этому служат вырытые при раскопках комсоставские ремни, знаки отличия, плащи и другие виды обмундирования Красной Армии.

Эту провокационную стряпню фашистских жуликов не отрицают даже и сами фашистские врачи, входящие в состав этой комиссии по расследованию.

Врачи, входящие в состав экспертизы по исследованию трупов, говорили среди военнопленных, работающих при госпитале, что при любом их старании они, по существу, не могли установить времени похорон трупов, их принадлежности и национальности - вследствие их разложения».

English translation:

Information of the Western staff of the partisan movement to the Central staff of the partisan movement — to the chief.

July 27 1943

Section "How the Germans fabricated the Katyn escapade

"Prisoners of war who fled the Smolensk camp on July 20, 1943 recounted as eyewitnesses:

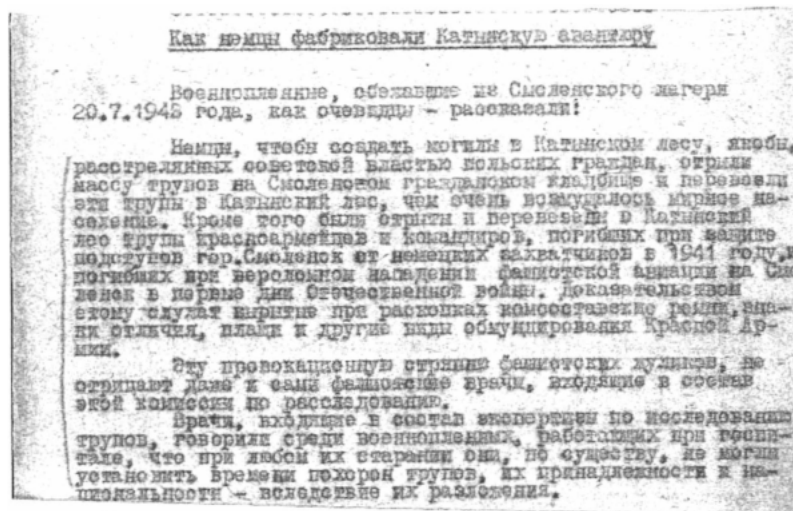
In order to create graves in the Katyn woods supposedly of Polish citizens shot by Soviet authorities the Germans disinterred a large number of bodies at the Smolensk civilian cemetery and transferred these bodies to the Katyn woods, which enraged the local population very much. In addition there were disinterred and transferred to the Katyn woods bodies of Red Army soldiers and commanders who had perished in defense of the approaches of the city against the German invaders in 1941, and of those who had been killed during the first days of the Patriotic war by the treacherous attack on Smolensk of the fascist aviation. The military belts, insignia, raincoats and other items of the uniform of the Red Army serve as evidence of this.

This provocative concoction of the fascist crooks is not denied even by the fascist doctors who are part of this commission of inquiry.

The doctors, who are part of the group of experts in the examination of the corpses, said in the presence of the prisoners of war who were working at the hospital that, despite all their efforts, they could not in fact determine the time of burial of the corpses, where they came from or their nationality — because of their decomposition.

<sup>2</sup> [[[cyrillic]]]Государственный архив новейшей истории Смоленской области (ГАНИСО).

Below we reproduce a photocopy of the original, obtained from this archive by my colleague Vladimir L. Bobrov.



Основание  
ГАНИСО  
Фонд 8 Оп. 2  
Дело 760 Лист 38  
Исп. Потапова

*Image 9.1 "How the Germans fabricated the Katyn escapade" photocopy.*

The other four documents from partisan reports tell a similar story.

These documents might be considered among the unimpeachable evidence. It seems to be almost impossible that they were fabricated in order to support the Soviet version. On July 20, 1943, the German Report (AM) had not yet been published. The partisans could not have known that the Soviet leadership would take the German allegations seriously enough to mount a full-scale Soviet investigation commission.

Moreover, the partisan documents about the Germans bringing other bodies to Katyn and so falsifying their whole investigation occur in the middle of much longer written reports about the partisans' activity. The Katyn materials, like the one above, are mentioned almost incidentally, rather than being featured as part of any effort to advocate Soviet innocence in the murders.

## **2. Evidence supporting the testimony of local residents that they were forced by the Germans to sign statements written in the German language that they did not understand.**

Sakharov reproduces photographic copies of longer statements from five local residents who gave testimony to the Germans that the Soviets had killed the Poles, and short affidavits from 11 other similar witnesses in which they certify that their statements previously given were truthful.

Ivanov, one of the witnesses testified to the Burdenko Commission that the Germans had forced him to sign a statement in German and would not give him that statement in Russian.

... I again refused to give false testimony to the German officer. He started shouting at me, threatened me with beating and shooting, and said I did not understand what was good for me. However, I stood my ground. **The interpreter then drew up a short protocol in German** on one page, and gave me a free translation of its contents. This protocol recorded, as the interpreter told me, only the fact of the arrival of the Polish war prisoners at Gnezdovo station. **When I asked that my testimony be recorded not only in German but also in Russian, the officer finally went beside himself with fury, beat me up with a rubber club and drove me off the premises ...** (BU 238)

Another witness, Savvateev, said something similar:

After threatening and cajoling me for a long time, the officer consulted with the interpreter about something in German, and then **the interpreter wrote a short protocol and gave it to me to sign. He explained that it was a record of my testimony. I asked the interpreter to let me read the protocol myself, but he interrupted me with abuse**, ordering me to sign it immediately and get out. I hesitated a minute. **The interpreter seized a rubber club hanging on the wall and made to strike me. After that I signed the protocol shoved at me.** The interpreter told me to get out and go home, and not to talk to anyone or I would be shot. (BU 238-9)

The documents published by Sakharov confirm that *all* the witnesses signed statements in German, which none of them could read.

Sakharov also notes that none of the witnesses in the German Report who testified that the Soviets had shot the Poles in April — May 1940 remarked on the smell. Sakharov logically suggests that there would have been a considerable odor of decaying flesh, as the graves would have been left open for many days. This argument is consistent with the contradictions in the witnesses' statements that we noted in a previous chapter. It is negative evidence, however. It confirms other evidence but it cannot stand as evidence by itself because it is indirect and therefore weak.

## **3. Evidence that the Polish prisoners that were transferred from Kozel'sk to Smolensk were sentenced not to execution but to various prison terms.**

In his 1991 book *Katynskii labirint* Vladimir K. Abarinov, a proponent of the "official" Soviets-did-it version, noted that he found records indicating that it was the 136th battalion that had convoyed the prisoners from Kozel'sk to Smolensk. (10-11, 27 ff.)

In the Russian State Military Archive — RGVA in Russian — Sakharov found the schedule of transfers carried out by convoy units of the NKVD for the second quarter of 1940. The document is titled:

[[Cyrillic]]Сведения о характере и сроках осуждения заключенных, отконвоированных эшелонными, сквозными и плановыми конвоями частей и соединений конвойных войск НКВД СССР за 2-й квартал 1940 г.

*Translated:*

Information on the nature and length of sentence of convicted prisoners transferred by escorted trains and by direct and planned convoy escort units and formations of convoy troops of the NKVD for the 2nd quarter of 1940.

This schedule includes the information about the 136<sup>th</sup> battalion of the 22<sup>th</sup> division of convoy troops, commanded by Major Mezhev. According to Sakharov and Abarinov this was the unit that transferred ("convoyed") the Polish officer POWs from the Kozel'sk camp to the Smolensk oblast' NKVD.

Here is the information from this schedule about this specific battalion's activity for the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 1940:

Наименование соединений и частей	Осуждено на сроки							Подследственных	Ссылных и спец переселенцев	Всего отконвоированных
	До 3-х лет	От 3-х до 5 лет	От 5-ти до 8 лет	От 8-ми до 10 лет	От 10-ти до 15 лет	Свыше 15 лет	Всего осужденных			
11-я Бригада В т.ч.	22456	10593	4720	1505	660	40	39974	7333	7785	55092
236 полк	14877	8712	3584	1079	523	36	28811	4382	6224	39417
127 Б-н	1972	577	408	48	72	-	3077	418	-	3495
134 Б-н	616	305	162	53	-	-	1136	150	1561	2847
147 Б-н	4991	999	566	325	65	4	6950	2383	-	9333
15 Бригада В т.ч.	9877	3431	2044	535	529	130	16546	16377	34314	67237
136 Б-н	4300	858	443	134	34	-	5769	2512	2635	10916

*Table recreated based on original.*

(hi-res available at: <https://tinyurl.com/furr-katyn-images>)

According to this schedule, in the second quarter of 1940 this battalion convoyed 10,916 persons. Of these, 5769 had been sentenced to various terms of imprisonment («[[Cyrillic]]Всего осужденных»): 1 — 3 year, 4300; 3 — 5 years, 858; 5 — 8 years, 443; 8 — 10 years, 134; 10 — 15 years, 34; more than 15 years, 0. In addition, this NKVD unit convoyed 2512 persons under investigation and 2635 persons sentenced to exile and special settlements. The whole schedule may be seen as Appendix No. 13 ("Prilozhenie No.13") at the end of Sakharov's article.

This evidence too is confirmatory only. It is not unimpeachable itself. It might be argued that the convoy troops had not been informed of the true fates of the prisoners they were transferring from Kozel'sk to Smolensk and

Gnezdovo. But it is consistent with the unimpeachable evidence we have analyzed previously.

#### **4. The statement of the German tree expert that he did not collect the treelings sent to him by the Germans at Katyn, but only reported on what had been sent to him.**

The German Report stated that small pine treelings had been planted over the mass graves.<sup>3</sup>

An der Bodenbewachung war ersichtlich, daß, diese Hügel van Menschenhand aufgeworfen und mit jungen Kiefern bepflanzt warden waren. (AM 15)

*Translated:*

It was evident from the ground cover that these hills had been raised by human hands and planted with young pines.

Diese Gräber befanden sich nahe beieinander in größeren, mit einem auffällig jungen Kiefernbestand bepflanzten, nach Südwesten zu abfallenden Waldlichtungen (s. Lageskizze). (AM 39)

*Translated:*

These graves were located near each other in larger forest clearings planted with a conspicuous young pine grove and falling away towards the southwest.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps in order to conceal them, in time.

The German Report states that the treelings were submitted to a master forester, von Herff, who concluded that they were at least 5 years old that had been transplanted to their present location three years previously — that is, in 1940, before the German invasion of the USSR.

Die Massengräber befinden sich in Waldlichtungen. Sie sind vollkommen geebnet und mit jungen Kiefernbaumchen bepflanzt. Nach dem eigenen Augenschein der Kommissionsmitglieder und der Aussage des als Sachverständigen zugezogenen Forstmeisters von Herff handelt es sich um wenigstens fünfjährige, im Schatten großer Bäume schlecht entwickelte Kiefernpflanzen, die vor drei Jahren an diese Stelle gepflanzt wurden. (AM 116)

*Translated:*

The mass graves are located in forest clearings. They are completely levelled and planted with young pine trees. According to the Commission members' own opinion and the statement by the forestry master von Herff, who had been brought as an expert, they were pine plantings poorly developed from the shade of larger trees that had been planted at this place three years earlier.

Sakharov located a transcription of von Herff's report in which he states that he did not collect the six treeling samples himself but received them from Dr. Birkle and Dr. Buhtz. This transcription is photographically reproduced as Appendix 14 of Sakharov's article.

This means that there is no chain of evidence here. The treelings could have been collected somewhere else before being given to von Herff. Unless we are going to simply "believe" the Germans, von Herff's conclusions concerning the treelings are no good as evidence.

In the fourth week of August 1943 Dr. Burdenko wrote a letter to Nikolai Shvernik, the Chairman of the Extraordinary State Commission on Establishing and Investigating the Crimes of the German and Fascist Occupiers.<sup>4</sup> In his letter Burdenko described something of what he had learned in investigating a number of German mass murder sites, most recently in Orel, Russia. Burdenko described a "German signature" in their practice of mass murder that included the planting of little trees:



[[cyrillic]]Но зато есть такое обстоятельство: в протоколе сказано: «На могиле с целью скрыть следы расстрела русские насадили деревца». Мое внимание было привлечено к следующему факту: у общей могилы в укромном углу — в застенке тюремного двора — место общей могилы тоже засажено «деревцами». Эти факты, начиная со способа расстрела и кончая засаживанием «деревцами», свидетельствуют о «немецкой системе». Из приводимых описаний является несомненным факт расстрела польских офицеров. Это — дело рук немецких фашистов, ...

*Translated:*

But consider this matter. In the German report [AM] it says: "On the grave the Russians planted treeplings with the aim of hiding the traces of the executions." My attention was drawn to the following fact: at a common grave in a secluded corner — in the wall of the courtyard of a prison — a site of a common grave is also planted with "treeplings." These facts, beginning with the method of shooting and ending with the planting of "treeplings," are evidence of a "German system." From the cited descriptions it appears as an unquestionable fact that the massacre of Polish officers is the work of the German fascists ... (Sorokina, at note 57; Lebedeva, at note 8)

In his July 1945 talk to the Czech Medical Society František Hájek, one of the medical team that the Germans had brought to Katyn to certify their claims that the bodies had been buried for about three years and thus had been killed by the Soviets, testified that the German forester had told him, Hájek, that the treeplings might not have been transplanted at all.

#### 6. Důkaz petiletými borovicami.

Jako důkaz uvádí Němci také mladé petileté borovicky, které byly nasázeny na nasypaných pahorcích. My jsme jich sami nevideli ... Zjištěno, že je nejméne petiletá a na rezu blíže středu bylo lze videti málo znatelný temnější pruh. Zavolaný lesmistr von Herff prohlásil, že takový pruh vzniká, když je rust borovicky necím zabrzděn, na pr. presazením a soudil, že borovická byla presazena před 3 lety. Sám však uznal, že borovicky jsou špatně vyvinuté, rostoucí ve stínu velkých stromů — mohl tedy býti tento pruh zavinen také vlivem jiným a ne jen presazením.

*Translated:*

#### 6. The Evidence of the Five-Year-Old Pines.

As evidence, the Germans also pointed to the five-year-old young pines that were planted on the mounds. We did not see them, because the graves were already opened, they showed us only one of the pines. ... It was established that it was at least five years old and that in the cut closer to the center there was visible a scarcely noticeable little dark band. The master forester von Herff said that such a dark stripe occurs when something stops the growth of the treepling, for example as a result of a transplant, and believed that the pine was transplanted 3 years ago. **However, he conceded that the little pine was poorly developed from growing in the shade of other trees, and this band could thus be the result of other influences, not only as a result of a transplant.**

Von Herff also stated that he was given the treeplings and did not collect them himself from the graves.

Mir wurden von der Delegation ausländischer Gerichtsme[dikern] 6 Kiefernpflanzen zur Untersuchung vorgelegt, die von Her[rn] Birkle aus Bukarest und Herrn Prof. Buhtz aus Breslau in [der] nächsten Umgebung der Massengraber von Katyn persönlich [ge] nommen warden sind.

*Translated:*

I was presented with 6 pine plants by the delegation of foreign forensic medical doctors for the purpose of examination. They had been taken from the area close to the mass graves at Katyn by Dr. Birkle of Bucharest and Dr. Buhtz of Breslau personally.

#### 5. Evidence that the Germans captured and possessed the Soviet transfer lists of POWs.

German possession of these lists explains the occasional agreement between the order of bodies listed as found and identified at Katyn and the Soviet transfer lists.

Defenders of the "official" version have assumed that this agreement — occasional, not consistent, but still striking when encountered — was evidence that the prisoners were shot en masse as they arrived from Kozel'sk. Vladislav Shved, among others, has set transfer lists side by side with the lists of disinterred bodies in AM, presumably given in the order in which they were exhumed. He has shown that, at least in the case that he examined, there is no consistent pattern of agreement between the two lists.

However, Sakharov's article has made this line of inquiry moot. He discovered documents that prove that the Germans had the lists of POWs sent from Kozel'sk to the Smolensk NKVD. These are the same lists that are reproduced in Tucholski's book. We have confirmed this by obtaining from the Russian State Military Archive the documents cited by Sakharov here and from which he quotes some passages in Russian translation. The original documents are, of course, in German. Facsimiles of these documents may be found on the "Images" web page of this volume. They are:

- [[cyrillic]]ГАРФ. Ф.7021. ОП.114. Д.23. Л.109. (GARF. Fond. 7021. Opis. 114. Delo. 23. List 109.)
- [[cyrillic]]ГАРФ. Ф.7021. ОП.114. Д.23. Л.108.
- [[cyrillic]]ГАРФ. Ф.7021. ОП.114. Д.23. Л.102.

We saw in Chapter 8 that Józef Frelkiewicz's name was copied from the Soviet list of Kozel'sk POWs. There is at least one more entry in AM that shows that the Germans were using the Soviet list rather than documents from the graves:

3733. Liachowski, Boleslaw, (Yater Antoni), Uniformierter.

Impfzettel, 1 Brief mit Stempel, New York, Brooklyn, 1 Zettel mit Notizen.

In Tucholski, p. 153 col. 1, we read: "Lakowski-Brzuszek". But on the Soviet transit list we read:

[[cyrillic]]ЛЯХОВСКОГО Болеслава Антоновича, 1909 г.р. (Tucholski p. 682 #19)

The Soviet list uses transliterates the name ЛЯ — "L + ya". But the name in Polish begins with "La", not "Lia." The Germans could not have obtained this name from any letter or other document on this body, or found in a grave or anywhere else. Therefore the Germans transliterated this name from the Russian-language Soviet list.

So we have the documentary evidence that the Germans had the Russian list of Kozel'sk prisoners. But if we did not have it, the examples of Frelkiewicz and Lachowski would be sufficient proof of it.

## **6. Unpublished documents show that both the Poles and the Germans at Katyn acknowledge that the identifications made there were falsified because the documents were often not found on individual bodies.**

Sakharov quotes from a meeting in Kraków of June 10, 1943 in which the main directorate of propaganda of the German *General-gouvernement* (the Government of German-occupied Poland during the war) stated that the identifications of bodies at Katyn that had been published in Polish newspapers were unreliable since they were accurate in only a few instances.

[[cyrillic]]Например, на совещании, проведенном 10 июня 1943 г. в Кракове главным управлением пропаганды правительства генералгубернаторства было констатировано: «До сих пор предоставленные и в польской прессе опубликованные списки трупов, идентифицированных в Катыши, недостоверны, так как только в немногих случаях соответствуют действительности»

[16 to ГАРФ. Ф.7021. Оп.114. Д.23. Л.118.]

For example, at a meeting that took place on July 10 1943 in Krakow it was affirmed by the main directorate of propaganda of the government of the General-gouvernement: "The lists of bodies identified at Katyn that

have been presented up to this point and published in the Polish press are unreliable, since they correspond to reality in only a few cases.

According to Sakharov representatives of the Polish Red Cross also participated in this meeting.

[[cyrillic]]В одном из писем ПКК, в частности, говорилось: «Из до сих пор поступавших списков мы лишь в немногих случаях можем считать данные достаточным основанием для информирования родных, так как при таком большом количестве имен отсутствуют личные данные, допускающие несомненное опознание умерших (выделено нами. - В.С.)» [17 to ГАРФ. Ф.7021. Оп.114. Д.38. Л.9.]

*Translated:*

In particular, one of the letters of the PRC states: "Of the lists available to this point we can only in a few cases consider the data a sufficient basis for informing relatives, since for a large number of names we lack personal data that would permit us to identify the dead with certainty."

### **7. Evidence that the names assigned to bodies in the German list are not based on real identifications but on the haphazard association of unidentified corpses with documents not necessarily found on those corpses.**

In a letter of July 27, 1943 to the German Red Cross the Propaganda Section of the German *Generalgouvernement* admitted that the documents from different bodies were often mixed up and the documents of a single person were scattered among 12 different envelopes.

Andererseits wurden durch die verschiedenen Beschichtungen der Dokumente die Papiere durcheinander gebracht und zudem die zu einer Leiche gehörigen Dokumente bei Verpacken auf verschiedene Umschläge verteilt. So fanden sich z.B. die Papiere eines Offiziers in 12 verschiedenen Umschlägen.

*Translated:*

Also through the different layerings of the documents the papers have been mixed up and in addition the documents belonging to one corpse have been divided in the packing-up process among different envelopes. So for example the papers of a single officer were located in 12 different envelopes.

Sakharov reproduces a photographic copy of this document as Appendix 16. It is also attached as an appendix to the present chapter. The documents were all mixed up, names either false or "entstellt geschrieben" — written in a disfigured, inaccurate manner.

The Polish Red Cross agreed. On October 12, 1943 the Technical Commission of the Polish Red Cross sent a lengthy letter to the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva in which they reported, among other things, the following:

Andererseits selbst wenn das PRK sämtliche Ergebnisse der Exhumation und Identifikationsarbeiten einschließen der Dokumente und Andenken besäße könnte es offiziell und in endgültiger Form nicht bescheinigen daß der betreffende Offiziere in Katyn gestorben ist. Der unerkennbare Zustand der Leichen, die Tatsache, daß in vielen Fällen bei 2 Leichen Dokumente vorgefunden worden sind, die zweifellos einer einziger Person angehörten, die minimale Zahl der Kennmarken, der einzig einwandfreien Beweisstücke, die auf den Leich en gefunden wurden, endlich der der Mordtat vorangegangene Zustand, das die in Katyn ermorderten Militärpersonen nicht auf dem Schlachtfelde, sondern nach einer Zeitraum fielen, in welcher der Wechsel der Uniform, das Verkleiden und die Fluchtversuche an der Tagesordnung waren, alle diese Urstände berechtigen das DRK nur bescheinigen zu können, daß die betreffenden Leichen, gewisse Dokumente getragen hat.

*Translated:*

On the other hand, even if the PRC were in possession of all the results of the exhumation and identification work of the documents and memorabilia, it could not officially and definitively certify that the officer in question died in Katyn. The unrecognizable state of the corpses, **the fact that, in many cases, documents**

**were found on two corpses that doubtless belonged to a single person**, the very few [literally, minimal number of] distinguishing marks, the only flawless evidence, found on the corpses, and finally the state of affairs preceding the murder, that the soldiers killed at Katyn did not fall on the battlefield, but after a period of time during which changes of uniform, dress, and attempts at escape were the order of the day, **all these circumstances entitle the PRC only to certify that the corpses in question carried certain documents.**

[[Cyrillic]]- ГАРФ. Ф.7021. ОП.114. Д.23. Л.31 — 38 at l. 38.

The entire document is also reproduced in the original German in the volume *Nemtsy v Katyni. Dokumenty o rasstrele pol'skikh voennoplennykh osen'iu 1941 goda.* (The Germans in Katyn. Documents concerning the shooting of Polish POWs in the Autumn of 1941.) Moscow: Izdatel'stvo ITRK, 2010, 106 — 117.

In a previous letter of August 16, 1943, to the International Committee of the Red Cross the leadership of the Polish Red Cross admitted that:

a part of the documents found which belonged to a single individual were found in the pockets of the uniform of one corpse, and others either in the sand of the grave or on other corpses.

Therefore, the PRC leadership considered that the list of names of Polish victims "should be regarded as provisional" subject to follow-up activity "in connection with the official results of the forensic medical expert examination under way in Cracow." (Sakharov, at note 27)

The report of the Technical Commission of the Polish Red Cross was published long ago. But it does not mention either of these letters at all. Nor are they mentioned in the four-volume official Polish collection *Katyn'. Dokumenty Zbrodni.* They are simply omitted.

This omission conceals the unreliable nature of the identification of bodies and of the documents in the German report (AM). But AM is the central evidentiary document that sustains the "official" version of Katyn, that the Soviet killed the Poles.

Sakharov draws the following conclusion:

[[Cyrillic]]На основании вышеизложенного мы можем утверждать, что находившиеся в руках германской полиции какие-то документы, бумаги и даже предметы, использовались ею, во-первых, в качестве заменителей реально не существующих трупов и, во-вторых, для «идентификации» трупов, изначально фигурировавших как «неопознанные».

*Translated:*

On the basis of the aforementioned evidence we can affirm that some documents, papers, and even objects in the hands of the German police were utilized in place of bodies that in reality did not exist and for the "identification" of bodies which had originally been classed as "unidentified."

This implies that some of the documents found on bodies may have really belonged to that person — but we have no idea which do and which do not.

We do not know how the Germans determined the nationality of bodies dressed in civilian clothes. Some are listed as "in uniform" without specifying *what* uniform. In light of the statements by Soviet partisans recorded in the summer of 1943 these could have been bodies not of Polish but of Soviet soldiers. Appendices 2 through 5 of Sakharov's article reproduce these accounts of partisans. All accuse the Germans of disinterring bodies of Soviet soldiers as well as of civilians. There is no basis to question the genuine nature of these documents. We have obtained one of these documents and reproduced it above.

## **Conclusion**

Sakharov concludes his article with the following remarks:

The manipulation cited above of the corpses and materials by the German authorities who had "researched" the "Katyn affair" exclude any "taking on faith" of any fact, taken by itself, of establishing a connection between them [the bodies and the materials].

Sakharov's research, the contradictions internal to AM, and the identification of many of the corpses found at Katyn (Koz'i Gory) as POWs who were shipped to Kalinin or Khar'kov but clearly not shot there — all these results deal a fatal blow to the bona fides of the German Report (AM) as an objective body of evidence. These results also mean that, because it relies heavily upon the German Report (AM), the "official" version of Katyn loses its evidentiary foundation.

## Chapter 10. The Burdenko Commission Report

In this chapter we begin to consider the accounts of the Katyn massacre that appeared between the German AM of 1943 and the emergence of CP in 1992, and in which new evidence was set forth. These are: the report of the Burdenko Commission (BU) of January, 1944; the Nuremberg trial of 1946; and the Madden Committee of 1952. We begin with the report of the Burdenko Commission.

### The Burdenko Report (BU)

The works that set forth the "official" version of Katyn say little about the Burdenko Commission and refer the reader to other critiques. In several cases they assert that these other critiques are "devastating" to the Burdenko Commission's findings.

Here we examine the two major studies by Cienciala and Sanford, and the critiques of BU to which they refer: an essay by M. IU. Sorokina; an essay by Natalia Lebedeva; a chapter in a book by Henri De Montfort; and the chapter on BU in the book *Katynskaia drama*.

We begin with a brief consideration of an essay by Sorokina. This essay has been put online by two prominent Russian supporters of the "official" Soviets-did-it version, Sergei Romanov and Aleksei Pamiatnykh. Presumably they have made it available because they believe it is worthy of consideration.

Sorokina:

M.IU. Sorokina. "Operatsia 'umelye ruki', ili chto uvidel akademik Burdenko v Orle." ("Operation 'Skillful Hands', or what Academician Burdenko Saw in Orel."), 2005<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Online at <http://katynfiles.com/content/sorokina-burdenko-orel.html>

Sorokina's 2005 essay is an attempt to discredit Burdenko's contention that the Germans were the guilty party at Katyn. Burdenko reached this opinion by comparing the German AM with his own experience investigating sites of German mass murders, including in Orel.

Sorokina accepts that the "official" version of Katyn is true without questioning it. She is sarcastic, even contemptuous, of Burdenko and his commission. But she is unable to present any evidence at all that Burdenko's analysis was at fault in any respect.

The whole essay is an exercise in logical fallacies: "begging the question" (accepting the "official" version without questioning it); argument by scare quotes instead of by evidence; *ad hominem* argument by attempting to find negative information about Burdenko and the other commission members — although she is finally unable to find any such material.

Her only real conclusion is that, based on his broad experience with German mass murder sites, Burdenko himself was indeed convinced that the Germans had shot the Poles. Burdenko wrote:

[[cyrillic]]Я в бытность мою в Орле, как член Правительственной комиссии, раскопал почти 1000 трупов и нашел, что 200 расстрелянных советских граждан имеют те же самые ранения, что и польские офицеры. Достаточно тщательно сопоставить описание немецких протоколов и протоколов наших вскрытий, чтобы убедиться в тождестве и обнаружить "умелую руку". Таким образом, установленное тождество "метода" убийств в Орле и Катынском лесу является знаменательным и дает несомненное доказательство, что "умелая рука" была одна и та же и обличает немцев как виновников катынской трагедии.

*Translated:*

When I was in Orel, as a member of the Government Commission, I unearthed almost 1000 corpses and found that 200 Soviet citizens shot to death have the same wounds as the Polish officers. It is enough to compare the description of the German protocols and protocols of our autopsies to make sure of identity and to discover the "skillful hand" ...

Thus, the established identity of the "method" of murders in the Orel and Katyn forest is significant and gives unquestionable evidence that the "skillful hand" was the very same and exposes the Germans as the perpetrators of the Katyn tragedy.

Sorokina fails to point out that Burdenko had the very experience — that of examining numerous sites of mass murder — that the members of the commission of medical experts brought to Katyn by the Germans lacked.

## **De Montfort**

Sanford writes as follows:

De Montfort, *Masakra w Katyniu*, pp. 109-19 unravels the inconsistencies and falsehoods in the Soviet report very convincingly. (Sanford, 153 n. 93)

Here Sanford cites the Polish translation of the book by Henri de Montfort, *Le massacre de Katyn: Crime Russe au Crime Allemand?* (Paris: Editions de la Table Ronde, 1966). For some reason Sanford cites the French edition, not the Polish translation, in his bibliography on page 240.

De Montfort discusses the Burdenko report in Chapter X, pages 117-130 of the original French book. This is also Chapter X (Rozdział X), pages 109-119, in the Polish translation. I have obtained the Polish translation of de Montfort's book and have verified that it is simply a translation of the French original, so here I will use the French text.

De Montfort did not study AM carefully. He says there were 4145 bodies. (109) In fact there are many gaps in the numbers assigned to corpses in AM.

De Montfort certainly did not read the BU carefully either. He states:

Elle prit donc le parti de soutenir que les documents recueillis par Jes enquêteurs d'avril et de mai 1941 étaient taus, sans exception, des documents falsifiés. (119)



*Translated:*

It [the Burdenko Commission] therefore decided to maintain that the documents collected by the [German] investigators of April and May 1941 [sic; de Montfort must mean 1943] were all, without exception, falsified documents.

As evidence for this statement he cites his own translation of BU:

...ils retirèrent des vêtements des officiers polonais, tués par eux, tous les documents portant une date postérieure à avril 1940, date à laquelle, selon la thèse provocatrice des Allemands, les Polonais auraient été tués par les Bolcheviks...

...they [the Germans] removed from the Polish officers' clothing, killed by them, all documents bearing a date after April 1940, the date on which, according to the provocative thesis of the Germans, the Poles were killed by the Bolsheviks...

Here, in de Montfort's own translation, we read that BU accuses the Germans of removing all documents dated after April 1940. But then de Montfort says this:

Comment les Allemands auraient-ils pu faire fabriquer à l'avance des documents aussi divers, aussi variés, que ceux trouvés sur les cadavres? (119)

*Translated:*

How could the Germans have produced in advance documents as diverse and varied as those found on corpses?

De Montfort repeats this accusation:

Si, par simple hypothèse, j'admettais momentanément la véracité de la thèse présentée par la Commission d'enquête soviétique, c'est-à-dire l'exécution, par les Allemands, des prisonniers de guerre polonais, entre septembre et décembre 1941, puis l'exhumation des cadavres de

ces prisonniers en mars 1943 pour substituer de faux papiers portant des dates antérieures à avril 1940 à leurs vrais papiers portant des dates postérieures à avril 1940... (123-124)

*Translated:*

If, by mere hypothesis, I were to admit for a moment the veracity of the thesis presented by the Soviet Commission of Inquiry, that is to say the execution by the Germans of the Polish prisoners of war between September and December 1941, then the exhumation of the corpses of these prisoners in March 1943 to substitute false papers bearing dates before April 1940 for their real papers bearing dates after April 1940...

...les Russes ont formellement accusé les Allemands d'avoir fabriqué ces documents ... (127)

*Translated:*

...the Russians formally accused the Germans of having fabricated these documents ...

De Montfort accuses BU of claiming that the Germans *falsified* in advance the documents found on the corpses. Chapter XI of his book is titled "Impossibilité d'introduire de faux documents sur les cadavres" ("impossibility of placing false documents on the corpses").

But BU never states any such thing. Even in de Montfort's own translation BU states that the Germans *removed* documents *later* than 1940 — "retirèrent des vêtements des officiers polonais ... tous les documents portant **une date postérieure à avril 1940.**"

De Montfort goes on to accept the claim in AM that no insects were found on the corpses:

l'absence sur un cadavre de ce que le Professeur Lacassagne appelle « Jes travailleurs de la mort » est « une indication aussi précieuse que leur présence et permet d'établir que la mort a eu lieu pendant l'hiver.»

On voudra bien se rappeler que la Commission des Représentants des Instituts de Médecine légale et de Criminologie a certifié dans son rapport qu'elle n'avait trouvé, sur les cadavres des fosses qu'elle avait visitées, aucune trace de ces insectes que le Professeur Lacassagne appelle « les travailleurs de la mort». (134-135)

*Translated:*

The absence on a corpse of what Professor Lacassagne calls "the workers of death" is "an indication as valuable as their presence and makes it possible to establish that death took place during the winter."

It will be remembered that the Commission of Representatives of the Institutes of Forensic Medicine and Criminology certified in its report that it had not found on the bodies of the graves which it had visited, any trace of these insects that Professor Lacassagne calls "the workers of death."

De Montfort is in error. In our discussion of AM we have seen that there was clear evidence of insects in the corpses examined by two of the doctors.

As a critique of BU de Montfort's chapter is both dishonest and incompetent. That Sanford believes it to be "very convincing" shows that he has been blinded by his own bias. Cienciala, to whose study we turn next, does not mention de Montfort's book at all.

### **Cienciala:**

Anna M Cienciala; N S Lebedeva; Wojciech Materski. *Katyn: a crime without punishment*. New Haven: Yale University Press, "Annals of Communism" series, 2007.

This book represents the most authoritative account of the "official" version. At 561 pages it is also the longest. Hence we devote more attention to it. We will refer to it as "Cienciala."

For the next forty-seven years successive Soviet governments claimed that the Germans were guilty of the Katyn massacre. They engaged in

a series of cover-ups, the most elaborate of which were the **fabricated** report of the Soviet Commission of Inquiry into the Katyn Massacre (the Burdenko Commission) in January 1944 and the **fabricated** Soviet case for German guilt at the International War Crimes Tribunal held at Nuremberg in 1945-1946. **Although the Soviet charge was disproved**, German guilt was proclaimed by all Soviet and other communist governments for almost half a century. (Cienciala 2)

This claim by Cienciala is false. Cienciala cites no evidence that anything in the BU was falsified in any way, that the Soviet case at Nuremberg was "fabricated," or that "the Soviet charge was disproved."

It is worth noting that most of the locals who gave testimony to the Germans and the IMC reversed themselves under NKVD pressure when they "testified" before the Soviet State (Burdenko) Commission in January 1944. (135)

Here Cienciala employs the propaganda technique of "argument by scare quotes." The scare quotes signal that Cienciala wishes to suggest that the witness testimony to the BU was deliberately false — fabricated by the Soviets or by the witnesses themselves, perhaps after being threatened. But Cienciala has no evidence that this was so. By implication Cienciala also assumes that that the witnesses' testimony to the Germans as true — another example of "begging the question" by *assuming* that which should be proven, not assumed.

Nor does Cienciala have any evidence that the BU witnesses were lying. So, rather than admitting this, she uses "scare quotes" in hopes that the reader will not notice that she has no evidence to support her accusation.

Cienciala's bias could hardly be more blatant. In Cienciala's account only the Soviets "pressured" the witnesses — though she has no evidence at all that they did so. Cienciala fails to inform her readers that the BU witnesses who also testified for the Germans said that they did so because the Germans threatened and beat them. She does not put the witness testimony on behalf of the Germans into scare quotes.

The details of this NKVD preparatory work became known in 1990, when the investigators of the Russian Federation Main Military Prosecutor's Office learned that the operational workers sent from Moscow **had prepared forged documents with dates later than May 1940** and placed them in the clothes of selected victims. (227)

Note 55 to this paragraph, which is on page 500 of Cienciala, reads: "On the NKVD preparation of documents and witnesses, see KD2, pp. 430-432." On p. xxiv Cienciala identifies "KD2" as the volume *Katyn: Mart 1940 g.- Sentiabr 2000 g.*

Here is the relevant part of that source:

[[[cyrillic]]]Следователи Глав ной военной прокуратуры (ГВП) Российской Федерации в начале 90-х гг. самым тщательным образом изучили методы проведения предварительного расследования, предшествовавшие работе Комиссии Н.Н. Бурденко. **Они доказали, что прибывшие из Москвы оператишш1ш изготовили поддельные документы с более поздними датами**, подложили их в извлеченные из могил останки, а также подготовили лжесвидетелей. (KD2 430)

*Translated:*

Investigators of the Main Military Prosecutor's Office (GVP) of the Russian Federation in the early 90's studied in the most painstaking manner the methods of conducting the preliminary investigation, which preceded the work of N .N. Burdenko. **They proved that operatives arriving from Moscow produced counterfeit documents with later dates**, put them in the remains of the graves, and prepared false witnesses.

This is an important conclusion! But KD2 gives no evidence for this statement. Cienciala, of course, knew this.

Furthermore, we know that this statement is false — a deliberate lie. Pamiatnykh has published the notes of the Burdenko investigators about the documents they found on the corpses. As we have seen one of them — that

of Kozetulski — is so fragmentary that the investigators read it incorrectly, failed to recognize its importance for the Soviet case and so never used it. It is one of the pieces of our "unimpeachable evidence." It cannot have been "planted" by the Soviets.

Therefore "KD2" is lying. Cienciala should have checked this, as we have done. It is the job of every responsible scholar to double-check her sources.

According to a Soviet decree of 19 April 1943, these people were liable to the death penalty for the crime of "cooperating with the enemy," so when interrogated by NKVD officers, they agreed to say whatever they were told. (227)

There was such a decree — naturally enough. Collaboration with the enemy was illegal in every country.<sup>2</sup> But Cienciala is dishonest here as well. There is no evidence that any of the Burdenko Commission witnesses were threatened with prosecution. Moreover, by the same logic she should have discounted the testimony of the witnesses who confirmed the German version.

<sup>2</sup> For an article in Russian discussing this decree see [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/\[\[cyrillic\]\]Указ\\_«О\\_мерах\\_наказания\\_для\\_немецко-фашистских\\_злодеев\\_...»](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/[[cyrillic]]Указ_«О_мерах_наказания_для_немецко-фашистских_злодеев_...») For the text of the decree see: [https://ru.wikisource.org/wiki/\[\[cyrillic\]\]Указ\\_президиума\\_ВС\\_СССР\\_от\\_19.04.1943\\_№\\_39](https://ru.wikisource.org/wiki/[[cyrillic]]Указ_президиума_ВС_СССР_от_19.04.1943_№_39)

There are contradictions in the testimony of the witnesses in the German AM. Witness testimony to the Burdenko Commission claimed German threats and beatings. Valentin Sakharov has published the signed witness statements prepared by the Germans. All are in German, not in Russian. This corroborates the testimony of one witness that he had to sign something he did not understand. We have discussed all this in a previous chapter.

Between 5 October 1943 and 10 January 1944, NKVD investigators interrogated ninety-five persons and "**verified**" (**that is, formulated**) seventeen statements later made before the special state commission.<sup>55</sup> (227)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Cienciala's note 55, pn p. 500, contains no evidence for this statement that the NKVD investigators "formulated" — composed, fabricated — the testimony of the witnesses they called.

More argument by scare quote! Moreover, this statement is a logical fallacy: it "begs the question" — assumes that which must be proven. Cienciala has no evidence that the witnesses' testimony was faked or the result of threats. Therefore, Cienciala is lying. Why not likewise *assume* the Germans threatened *their* witnesses?

It is not known how many of its members knew or suspected the truth at the time, but Burdenko may have done so. Shortly before his death in 1946, he reportedly admitted to a family friend—Boris Olshansky—that as a doctor, he knew the graves were four years old, which would have dated them to 1940. He also said he believed the NKVD comrades had made a "great blunder." Burdenko's daughter-in-law allegedly confirmed this statement to Yuri Zoria, son of the Soviet deputy prosecutor at the Nuremberg Trials, who died a mysterious death at Nuremberg in May 1946.<sup>56</sup> (228)

At note 56 (page 500) we read:

On Burdenko's admission to Boris Olshansky, Jr., see Zawodny, *Death in the Forest*, pp. 158 and 167 n. 57. Burdenko's daughter-in-law told Yuri Zoria that when Burdenko was very sick, he admitted that the NKVD had falsified documents, including the dates of the Katyn crime; see Inessa Jazborowska, Anatolij Jabłokow, and Jurij Zoria, *Katyn: Zbrodnia Chroniona Tajemnicą Państwową* [Katyn: The Crime Protected as a State Secret] (Warsaw, 1998), p. 299. This is a more popular, Polish version of the later Russian work by Inessa S. Yazhborovskaia, Anatolii Yu. Yablokov, Valentina S. Parsadanova, titled *Katynskii Sindrom*.

This tale is also noted by Sanford (139-140). Let's check this story.

*Katyn: Zbrodnia Chroniona...* p. 299:

Sam Burdenko, ciężko chory, wyznał pófoiej, że NKWD sfalszowało dokumenty, między innymi daty zbrodni katyńskiej. Potwierdziła to synowa Burdenki w rozmowie z Jurijem Zorią.

Burdenko himself, seriously ill, confessed later that the NKVD falsified documents, including the date of the Katyn massacre. This was confirmed by Burdenko's daughter-in-law in an interview with Yuri Zoria.

No source is cited for this rumor. Moreover, we know that it is false. As we have seen, Sorokina shows that Burdenko himself was firmly convinced of German guilt. Natalia Lebedeva too concludes that Burdenko believed the Germans were guilty:

[[cyrillic]]Первое заседание Комиссии открылось 13 января в 13 часов в здании Нейрохирургического института в Москве (ул. Ульяновского 1 д. 19). Председательствовал Николай Бурденко, который, по всей видимости, верил в то, что катынское преступление было совершено гитлеровцами.

*Translated:*

The first session of the Commission opened on January 13 [1944] at 1300 hours in the building of the Neurosurgical institute in Moscow (Ul'ianovskii Street, 19). It was chaired by Nikolai Burdenko who, from all appearances, believed that the crime of Katyn had been perpetrated by the Hitlerites. (Lebedeva, at note 39)

Burdenko himself said *none* of Burdenko Commission members had any doubts of German guilt:

[[cyrillic]]В тот же день Бурденко отправил Меркулову письмо, в котором разъяснял слова Колеснишва, сказанные тем несколькими днями ранее в разговоре с наркомом. Колесников тогда заявил, что «уже найденными документами от конца 1940 года полностью опровергнута версия немцев о том, что поляки убиты русскими весной 1940 года. ... Бурденко писал, что «поэтому он (Колесников - Н.Л.) и сказал, что очень важно, если



мы найдем документы более позднего периода. Такие к счастью и нашлись. Ни у одного из членов Комиссии не получилось ложного впечатления». Катынь 1940 - 2000. С. 512-513.

*Translated:*

The same day Burdenko sent a letter to Merkulov in which he explained Kolesnikov's words, spoken a few days before in conversation with the People's Commissar. Kolesnikov then stated that "the version of the Germans that the Poles were killed by the Russians in the spring of 1940 is fully refuted by the documents we have already found from the end of 1940." ... Burdenko wrote that "therefore he (Kolesnikov — N.L.) said to that it was very important to find documents dated from a later period. Fortunately, such documents have been found. Not a single one of the members of the Commission received a false impression." — *Katyn' 1940-2000*, pp. 512-513 (Lebedeva, note 78).

Cienciala cites Lebedeva's essay, so there is no excuse for her to have inserted this rumor that she had to know is contradicted by Lebedeva. One could hardly wish for a clearer example of the fundamental dishonesty of Cienciala's book.

### **The O'Malley Report**

Cienciala:

Sir Owen O'Malley, ambassador to the Polish government-in-exile, had made a convincing case of Soviet guilt three years earlier in his letter of 24 May 1943 to Foreign Secretary Sir Anthony Eden and wrote a **devastating critique** of the Burdenko Commission report in February 1944.<sup>66</sup> (232)

The note to this passage:

<sup>66</sup> Ambassador O'Malley's letters to Foreign Secretary Eden on Katyn in May 1943 and on the Burdenko Commission Report in February 1944 were first published in January 1972, in a pamphlet titled *Katyn —Dispatches of Sir Owen O'Malley to the British Government* (London, 1972), with a preface by Lord Barnby, a supporter of the Polish cause, and an introduction by the American journalist Louis FitzGibbon. FitzGibbon also published them in his three books, *The Katyn Cover-Up* (London, 1972), *Unpitied and Unknown* (London, 1975), and *The Katyn Massacre* (London, 1977). See also the British publications listed in the next note. (501)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The O'Malley report of May 24, 1943 is available online at <http://www.polandfirsttofight.besaba.com/malley1.html> and several other places. The O'Malley report of February 11, 1944 is online at <http://www.nspm.rs/files/Owen.pdf>

O'Malley was a fanatical anticommunist as witness, for example, the ferocity of his diatribe against Stalin in his May 1943 report.<sup>5</sup> In his February 1944 report, the one in which he briefly discusses BU, he states:

The Russian story gives no explanation of why in these circumstances not a single one of the Poles who were allegedly transferred from Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov to the labour camps Nos. 1 O.N., 2 O.N., and 3 O.N. has ever been seen or heard of alive again.

<sup>5</sup> See paragraph 17 of the May 1943 report.

O'Malley was the U.K. ambassador to the Polish Government-In-Exile (GIE). He accepts their version of events and repeats their reasons for rejecting the BU:

- that it was up to the USSR to explain why no Polish POWs escaped the German "round-ups" of Poles after the German capture of the camps;
- that nothing was heard from any of the Polish POWs after they were transferred out of the three POW camps;

- that the Soviet government said nothing about their transfer to Camps 1-ON, 2-ON, and 3-ON before the German announcement about Katyn in April 1943.

In reality we do not know that "nothing was heard from any of the Polish POWs after they were transferred out of the three POW camps." This is the position of the Polish Government In Exile (GIE). Did they check? If so, how? Where is the documentation of their checkup?

More important: how do we know they were telling the truth? After all, if we are going to "believe" the Polish GIE we have already abandoned objectivity and the search for the historical truth just as surely as if we had decided to "believe" the Soviet government.

Were the Germans even delivering mail from the USSR to German-occupied Poland after September 1940, when the Polish POW's mail privileges were restored? O'Malley did not know. Evidently he did not care. He simply took the word of the Polish GIE.

Far from presenting a "devastating critique" of the BU, as Cienciala claims, O'Malley made no valid criticisms at all of the BU. These are "arguments from silence." O'Malley ignores what the BU *did* say, and instead concentrates on what it did *not* say. This is precisely the argument of the Polish GIE.

### **"The Polish Historians' Expert Assessment"**

Cienciala writes:

At the suggestion of a member of the Soviet group, Professor Oleg Rzheshesky, who wanted to delay discussion of the Katyn question, the Polish historians analyzed the Burdenko report, and in May they unexpectedly delivered to their Soviet colleagues a devastating critique that deprived it of any credibility...<sup>111</sup> (247)

This statement is, quite simply, false. We discuss this critique fully below.

Here is Cienciala's note to the passage above:

<sup>111</sup> Maciszewski, *Wydrzeć Prawdę*, p. 97; the author gives the Polish side of the story, while the chairman of the Soviet group, Professor Georgy Lukich Smirnov, gives his in *Uroki Minuvshevo* [Lessons of the Past] (Moscow, 1997). For another account of the Soviet group and its problems, see Yazhborovskaia, Yablokov, and Parsadanova, *Katynskii Sindrom*, chap. 4; also Jazborowska, Jablokow, and Zoria, *Katyń: Zbrodnia Chroniona*, chap. 2. Yazhborovskaia was a member of the Soviet group. (p. 506)

Cienciala again (248-249):

The Polish media now increased their pressure for the truth about Katyn. The Polish Party historians' **devastating critique** of the Burdenko Commission report of 1944, handed to their Soviet colleagues in May 1988, was summarized in the 19 August 1989 issue of *Polityka*. Here, Polish historians related the known history of the Katyn crime, concluded that the Burdenko Commission findings were undoubtedly false, and claimed that the NKVD bore full responsibility for the extermination of the Kozelsk prisoners at Katyn, as well as the extermination of the prisoners of Starobel'sk and Ostashkov, even though their burial sites could not be established without access to Russian documents.<sup>113</sup>

The footnote to this passage:

<sup>113</sup> *Polityka*, 33/1685 (1989), pp. 13-14. For the full text of **the Polish historians' expert assessment** of the Burdenko Commission report, see Jarema Maciszewski, comp. and ed., *Zbrodnia Katyńska: Z Prac Polskiej Części Wspólnej Komisji Partyjnych Historyków Polski i ZSRR* [The Crime of Katyn: From the Work of the Polish Part of the Joint Commission of Soviet-Polish Party Historians] (Warsaw, 1990; offset); **see the Russian text in Yasnova, *Katynskaia Drama*, pp. 179-201.** (p. 506)

Sanford states the same thing (139):

The weaknesses and inconsistencies in the Burdenko Report were dissected in full in the April 1989 Report of the Polish members of the

Joint Polish-Soviet Historical Commission established to examine 'Blank Spots' in their relationship.<sup>96</sup>

n. 96 p. 153: 'Ekspertyza', *Polityka*, 19 August 1989, pp. 13-14.

Cienciala and Sanford cite the same issue article in *Polityka*. Cienciala says we can use the Russian text in *Katynskaia Drama*. Just to be certain, I have checked the Russian text both against the Maciszewski book *Zbrodnia Katyńska: Z Prac...* cited by Cienciala and against the Polish version in *Polityka* of August 19, 1989, which both Sanford and Cienciala cite.

**Maciszewski *Zbrodnia Katyńska: Z Prac...* 15-36 (= 'Ekspertyza', *Polityka*); *Katynskaia Drama* pages 179-201 (Maciszewski = M; *Katynskaia Drama*= KD)**

We saw above that Ciencala (248) also calls this a "devastating critique" of BU. This statement is false. As we shall demonstrate, what Cienciala calls "the Polish historians' expert assessment" offers no valid critique of BU at all.

It does make some interesting statements.

\* M 21 point 4; KO 184:

"4. Zwłoki z grobów I-VII ubrane były w odzież zimową."

"4. The Corpses from graves I-VII were dressed in winter clothing."

That means the Polish POWs had been provided with winter clothing by the Polish Army when captured in September 1939. They would also have had it whether they were shot in April — May 1940, as the Germans claimed, or in September — December 1941, as the Soviets concluded.

No one captured in Russia — or, for that matter, Western Ukraine or Western Belorussia — would ever abandon winter clothing, no matter what time of year it was. When they were transferred from any camp to any other camp or place — say, to execution at Koz'i Gory — they would have taken their winter clothing with them. If they had no baggage — no account,

German, Soviet, or Polish, says anything about baggage — they would have worn what they had.

\* M 22 point 8; KO 185:

W grobach katyńskich znalazły się dokumenty osobiste pozwalające zidentyfikować 2730 zwłok na ogólną liczbę 4151. Radziecka Komisja Specjalna, dokonując ponownej ekshumacji, **nie znalazła dalszych dokumentów osobistych.**

*Translated:*

In the graves at Katyn were personal documents which made it possible to identify 2730 of the remains out of a total of 4151. The Soviet Special commission, when it carried out a second exhumation, **did not find any other personal documents.**

That this statement is false is obvious to us today since we now have a list of documents found by Burdenko Commission investigators and published by Pamiatnykh. But it was recognizably false in 1989 too! The final section of BU is titled "Documents Found on the Bodies." This section refers to letters, postcards, a Catholic prayer book, and receipts found. These are "personal documents."

\* M 23 point 12; KD 186:

... fakt użycia w egzekucjach amunicji produkcji niemieckiej,  
co potem wyjaśniono masowym eksportem tej amunicji do ZSRR  
**(do roku 1932)** oraz do Polski i krajów nadbałtyckich.

*Translated:*

... the fact of the use in the executions of bullets of German manufacture, which was later explained by **a massive export of these bullets to the USSR (before 1932)** as well as to Poland and the Baltic countries.

This too is a false claim. What's more, the writers of this chapter had to know that it is false. At the Madden Commission Hearings in 1952 Gustav Genschow, president of the company that manufactured the "Geco" ammunition that the Germans found at Katyn, said that there had been **only very small sales of Geco ammunition to the USSR after 1928.**

Mr. Flood [of the Commission]. Do you know what caliber of ammunition was used and what kind of pistol was used by the NKVD or the GPU from the year 1933 until the end of the war?

Mr. Genschow. No; I do not know that also, because since 1928 we did not export large quantities of pistol ammunition to Soviet Russia;

Mr. Flood. Did you export any quantities of 7.65 pistol ammunition to Soviet Russia?

Mr. Genschow. Yes; before 1928, somewhat larger amounts. But I wish to point out that at that time the stamp on the bottom of the cartridge was different from the one I stated before, and **after 1928 the quantities which were exported were small.**

Mr. Flood. But there were some quantities shipped to Soviet Russia after 1928, of 7.65 ammunition bearing the "Geco" trade-mark?

Mr. Genschow. Yes.

I wish to point out that the trade-mark which was used before 1933-34, when the latest trade-mark was introduced, also had the word "Geco" in it and "7.65." There was only the addition of two D's slightly underneath the right and left end of the word "Geco." (Madden V 1578-9)

On page 35 of AM we read:

Außerhalb der Gräber wurden eine Anzahl beschossener Pistolenhälsen mit dem Bodenaufdruck „Geco DD 7.65" gefunden..."

*Translated:*

Outside the graves were found a number of used pistol shell casings with the headstamp "Geco DD 7.65 ... "

The shells mentioned in AM were the 1928-1931 type shown in the middle drawing. Genschow said that the larger exports to the USSR were before 1928, when the word "Geco" did not appear on the shells, and were small after that, when the "Geco DD 7.65" shells were made.

The authors of "the Polish historians' expert assessment" knew this. They also knew that very few, if indeed any, of those who read their work in 1988 would have had the ability to check the Madden Commission hearings, which were at that time available only in very large libraries in the United States and which must have been much scarcer than that in Eastern Europe.

### **The "Vetoshnikov" question**

A Major Vetoshnikov testified to the Burdenko Commission about the unsuccessful evacuation of Comp 1-ON in July 1941. "Drama" repeatedly suggests that there was no one named Vetoshnikov:

Wśród wymienianych przez nich urzędników nie było mjr. Wietosznikowa, przedstawionego jako komendanta Nr 1 — ON. (M 23; KD 187)

... z załogi ujawniony został tylko świadek mjr Wietosznikow, z którym żładen z internowanych polskich oficerów, który przeżył obozy, nie zetknął się. (M 24; KD 188)

Potwierdzeniem tego mają być zeznania bliżej nieznanego mjr Wietosznikowa, szęfa obozu Nr 1 - ON. (M 27; KD 1909)

*Translated:*

Among the men in authority named by them [former Polish POWs] the name of Major Vetoshnikov, presented [in the BU) as the commander of camp No. 1-ON, is not mentioned.



... of the personnel [at camp 1-ON) presented there was only the witness Major Vetoshnikov, with whom not a single of the Polish officers imprisoned in the camps, had ever come into contact.

As confirmation of this were to serve the statements of a Major Vetoshnikov, commander of camp No. 1-ON, who was not known to anyone.

Writing years later, Lebedeva also claims that Vetoshnikov never existed:

[[cyrillic]]Еще одним сфальсифицированным документом был рапорт якобы начальника лагеря № 1-ОН «майора государственной безопасности» В.М. Ветошникова от 12 августа 1941 г., направленный де начальнику УПВИ «майору госбезопасности» Сопруненко.

Сам Ветошников не фигурирует ни в одном из документов УПВИ или другого управления НКВД. Тем не менее, в сообщении Специальной комиссии имеется ссылка на показания этого мифического майора госбезопасности<sup>32</sup>.

*Translated:*

One more falsified document was the report supposedly by the commander of camps No. 1-ON "Major of State Security" V.M. Vetoshnikov of August 12, 1941, sent, so it was said, to the commander of the UPVI "Major of State Security" Soprunenko.

Vetoshnikov himself does not figure in a single one of the documents of the UPVI or of any other directorate of the NKVD. Nevertheless, in the report of the Special commission [the BU] there is a reference to the statements of this mythical major of State Security.<sup>32</sup>

But in footnote 32 Lebedeva says something different:

[[cyrillic]]В справке Меркулова и Кобулова он, правда, фигурирует как лейтенант госбезопасности (Военно-исторический архив. 1990. № 11. С. 29).

*Translated:*

In the report by Merkulov and Kobulov he [Vetoshnikov], it is true, figures as a lieutenant of State Security (*Voенно-istoricheskii Arkhiv* [sic!] 1990, No. 11, p. 29).

Here is that citation, from *Voенно-Istoricheskii Zhurnal* (not "Arkhiv") 11 (1990), p.29:

[[cyrillic]]Начальник лагеря № 1-ОН лейтенант госбезопасности Ветошников В. М., давая объяснения о судьбе порученного ему лагеря, в своём рапорте на имя началька Управления по делам военнопленных и интернированных НКВД СССР от 12 августа 1941 года пишет: «После того, как я получил от Вас указание подготовить лагерь к эвакуации, я принял к этому необходимые меры.

*Translated:*

The commander of camp No. 1-ON Lieutenant of State Security Vetoshnikov V.M., explaining the fate of the camp entrusted to him, in his report to the chief of the Directorate of POW and Internee Affairs (UDVI) of the NKVD of the USSR of August 12, 1941, writes: "After I received from you the order to prepare the camp for evacuation, I took the essential measures."

This is good evidence that Vetoshnikov did exist and was indeed the commander of Camp 1-ON in July 1941. It is not likely that, in this document marked "top secret" Merkulov and Kobulov would have fabricated the existence of this man, called him a lieutenant rather than a major, mentioned this fictional person once, and never again.

It is only necessary to assume that Vetoshnikov did not exist if one has previously also assumed that no camps 1-, 2-, and 3-ON existed. The Polish "official" version does make this assumption. But the existence of these camps is documented in the list of documents found on the corpses by the Burdenko Commission investigators and published on the Internet by

Aleksei Pamiatnykh, a fervent advocate of the "official" Soviets-did-it version:

в) Квитанция лагеря 1-ОН от 6 апреля 1941 года о приеме от АРАШКЕВИЧА денег в сумме ??? руб.;

г) Квитанция лагеря 1-ОН от 6 мая 1941 года о приеме от АРАШКЕВИЧА денег в сумме сто два рубля.

в) Квитанция лагеря 1-ОН от 18 мая 1941 года о приеме от ЛЕВАНДОВСКОГО Е. денег в сумме сто семьдесят пять рублей.

*Images 10.1 and 10.2 Burdenko Commission excerpts.*

b) Receipt from camp 1-ON of 6 April 1941 for accepting from ARASHKEVICH of money in the sum of ??? rub.;

c) Receipt from camp 1-ON of 6 May 1941 for accepting from ARASHKEVICH of money in the sum of one hundred two rubles.

...

b) Receipt from camp 1-ON of 18 May 1941 for accepting from LEVANDOVSKI E. money in the sum of one hundred seventy- five rubles.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Aleksei Pamiatnykh, "Katynskie materialy. Iz neopublikovannykh materialov Kommissii Burdenko" („Katyn materials. From the unpublished materials of the Burdenko Commission.") At <http://katynfiles.com/content/pamyatnykh-burdenko-materials.html> Pages 18 and 27 of the materials.

### **The Account of Boris Men'shagin**

Boris Men'shagin was a lawyer in Smolensk who was appointed Mayor by the Germans and served in that post until captured by the Soviets.

According to the BU Men'shagin's notebook (*bloknot*) was found after the Soviets liberated Smolensk in September 1943. Some strategic passages from it are reproduced in the BU.

At the end of this Merkulov-Kobulov document we read the following:

[[cyrillic]]Фотоснимки с записей Меньшагина из его блокнота при этом прилагаются.

*Translated:*

Photocopies with Men'shagin's notes from his notebook are attached herewith.<sup>7</sup>

Most of these notations deal with the persecution and impending murder of Jews. Only one concerns the Polish POWs:

[[cyrillic]]13. Ходят ли среди населения слухи о расстреле польских военнопленных в Коз[ьих] Гор[ах] (Умнову).

*Translated:*

13. Are there any rumors among the population concerning the shooting of Polish war prisoners in Kozy Gory (for Umnov).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> "Bibil Iar pod Katyniu? *Voенно-Istoricheskii Zhurnal* 11 (1990), p. 35 col. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. Also in BU 234.

Men'shagin did not write "shooting .... by the Germans." Perhaps someone could argue that Men'shagin might have been asking about shootings of Poles by the Soviets. The context — the rest of the note has to do with German actions — makes this very unlikely. But it speaks to the authenticity of this note by Men'shagin. If the Soviets had faked a note by Men'shagin, would they have made it so short and so laconic that it did not directly implicate the Germans? Why would the Soviets have fabricated a lengthy account of shooting of Jews by the Germans and left the question of

who shot the Polish POWs to a very brief and ambiguous mention at the end?

Concerning "Umnov" BU continues as follows:

Umnov, who is mentioned in the note, was the chief of the Russian police in Smolensk during the early months of its occupation. (BU 234)

After serving a 25-years sentence for collaboration Men'shagin was released from a Soviet prison and wrote his memoirs, which were published by the YMCA Press in Paris in 1988.

If Men'shagin had affirmed what his former assistant mayor Bazilevskii had testified at Nuremberg — that Men'shagin knew that the Germans had killed the Polish prisoners — there would be no "Katyn mystery." Instead Men'shagin says that Bazilevskii's remarks "completely do not correspond to reality." But Men'shagin does say that Bazilevskii's remarks about Men'shagin's wanting to get a friend of his released from the Russian camp were accurate.

BAZILEVSKY: In the camp for Russian prisoners of war known as "Dulag 126" there prevailed such a severe regime that prisoners of war were dying by the hundreds every day; for this reason I tried to free all those from this camp for whose release a reason could be given. I learned that in this camp there was also a very well-known pedagogue named Zhiglinski. I asked Menschagin to make representations to the German Kommandantur of Smolensk, and in particular to Von Schwetz, and to plead for the release of Zhiglinski from this camp.... Menschagin answered my request with, "What is the use? We can save one, but hundreds will die." However, I insisted; and Menschagin, after some hesitation, agreed to put this request to the German Kommandantur. (Nuremberg XVII 325).

Bazilevskii testified that Men'shagin told him that the Germans had told him that the Polish POWs would be killed. Two weeks later, at the end of September, Men'shagin told him that the Germans had now killed the Poles.

In his memoirs Men'shagin responded strangely.

[[cyrillic]]И этот Базилевский сказал, что об убийстве поляков он узнал от меня, что в 41-м году он узнал, что в плен попал и находится в немецком лагере в Смоленске его знакомый Кожуховский. И просил меня, не могу ли я похлопотать об его освобождении. Я, дескать, охотно согласился на это, написал ходатайство и сам понес в комендатуру. Вернувшись из комендатуры, я сказал: «Ничего не выйдет, потому что в комендатуре мне объявили, что все поляки будут расстреляны». Через несколько дней, придя оттуда, я снова ему сказал: «Уже расстреляны». Вот те данные, которыми располагал Базилевский.

Эти сведения, сообщенные Базилевским, совершенно не соответствуют действительности. Случай его ходатайства за Кожуховского действительно имел место в августе 1941 года. И я возбуждал ходатайство об его освобождении, и через дня три-четыре после этого ходатайства Кожуховский лично явился, освобожденный, и находился в Смоленске после этого, имея свою пекарню все время немецкой оккупации города, а впоследствии я его видел в Минске в 44-м году, где он точно так же имел кондитерскую. Кожуховского этого я лично знал, так как он проходил свидетелем по делу хлебозавода № 2, разбирававшемуся Смоленским областным судом в марте 1939 года. (131)

*Translated:*

And this Bazilevsky said that he learned about the murder of the Poles from me, that in 1941 he learned that his acquaintance Kozhukhovsky was taken prisoner and was in the German camp in Smolensk. And he asked me if I could request his release. He said that I willingly agreed to this, wrote a petition and took it myself to the commandant's office. Returning from the commandant's office, I said: "Nothing will come of it, because in the commandant's office I was told that all Poles would be shot." A few days later, having come from there, I again told him: "They have already been shot." These are the facts that Bazilevsky had.

This information, reported by Bazilevsky, is completely untrue. The case of his petition for Kozhukhovsky really did take place in August 1941. And I filed a petition for his release, and three or four days after this petition, Kozhukhovsky personally appeared, released, and was in Smolensk after that, running his bakery all during the time of the German occupation of the city, and subsequently I saw him in Minsk in '44, where he also had a confectionery. I knew this Kozhukhovsky personally, as he had been a witness in the case of Bakery No. 2, which the Smolensk Regional Court had examined in March 1939.

The editors of Men'shagin's memoirs note that there is no record of any Kozhukhovskii, whereas Zheglinskii (with an "e" instead of an "i"), the name cited by Bazilevskii, is known. Zheglinskii was released from the German camp "undoubtedly through the efforts of Men'shagin." Zheglinskii became involved in the pro-Soviet underground, was found out by the Germans, and killed in September 1942 (226-227). Either Men'shagin's memory about these events was not good or he was dissimulating for some reason.

As for our main interest, the deaths of the Polish POWs, Men'shagin claimed that, when he was interrogated by NKVD investigators during his imprisonment first in Smolensk and later in the Lubianka prison, he had told them that he did not know who had killed the Poles. (132) But the editors of his memoirs set forth evidence that this is not the full story either.

In 1970 Men'shagin, while still in a Soviet prison, was called as a witness in the case of a certain Sviatoslav Karavanskii, who was charged with anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda. Karavanskii had written a "testament" and "farewell" in Men'shagin's name but without telling Men'shagin about this. In them he had stated that the Soviets had murdered the Poles.

At Karavanskii's trial Men'shagin testified as follows:

[[cyrillic]]Свидетель Меньшагин Б.Г. Показал, что связи с заключенным Караванским он не поддерживал и писать от своего имени провокационные заявления по так называемому «Катынскому делу» Караванскому не поручал. Далее Меньшагин пояснил, что ему как бывшему бургомистру города Смоленска

обстоятельства уничтожения польских военнопленных офицеров в 1941 году не известны, однако он убежден, что польские военнопленные были расстреляны немецкими фашистами. (149-150)

*Translated:*

Witness Men'shagin B.G. testified that he had no connection to the prisoner Karavanskii and did not ask Karavanskii to write in his [Men'shagin's] name the provocational declarations about the so-called "Katyn affair." Men'shagin further explained that **he, the former mayor of the city of Smolensk, did not know the circumstances of the annihilation of the Polish officer POWs in 1941. However he was convinced that the Polish POWs had been shot by the German fascists.**

Men'shagin claimed that he did not know the circumstances of the murder of the Poles but was convinced that the Germans had done it. This statement is consistent with Men'shagin's statement in his memoir. It also does not contradict point 13 in his notebook that he was asked to report to Umnov whether there was "rumors among the population about the shootings of Polish POWs in Koz'i Gory."

**Back to "The Polish Historians' Expert Assessment"**

**Stanisław Kuczynski**

In criticism of BU's account of bodies with documents dated after May 1940 Maciszewski writes:

Jeden z tych dowodów to nie wysłana, kartka pocztowa, napisana z datą 20 czerwca 1941 r., a nadawcą miał być Stanisław Kuźnyski. W istocie rotmistrz tego imienia i nazwiska, wnuk emigranta polskiego, jednego z organizatorów armii tureckiej, przebywał wprawdzie w obozie starobielskim, ale już w listopadzie 1939 r. wywieziony został w nieznanym kierunku, zaginął o nim wszelki śluch. (33)



*Translated:*

One of these pieces of evidence is an unsent postcard dated June 20, 1941, the author [literally "sender"] of which was Stanislaw Kuczynski. In fact a colonel of cavalry ("rotmistr" in Russian, "rotmistrz" in Polish) with this first and last name, the nephew of a Polish emigrant, one of the organizers of the Turkish army really was in the Starobel'sk camp, but he had been sent out of it in November 1939 to an unknown destination, after which nothing is known about him.

This is another deliberate deception. For indeed there is another Stanislaw Kuczyński listed as killed in the Katyn murders. He was a prisoner at Ostashkov. In his Ostashkov list Tucholski records the following (314 col. 1)

Kuczyński Stanislaw

Ur. 31 .3.1908, s. Antoniego i Stanislawy.

Funkcj. PP, posterunek Pruszków,

pow. Warszawa. Prawdop. Ostaszków.

The Soviet transit lists record that Stanislaw Kuczyński was No. 87 in list 037 /3, transferred from Ostashkov on April 20, 1940. (Tucholski p. 851 #87):

[[cyrillic]]87. КУЛЖИНСКОГО Станислава Антоновича, 1908 г.р.

Maciszewski's book is early; perhaps he did not know this. But Cienciala had to be aware that this Stanislaw Kuczynski was a prisoner at Ostashkov and that the finding of this 1941 document of his at Katyn constitutes a serious blow to the "official" version, according to which all Ostashkov prisoners were shot at Kalinin and buried at Mednoe. No doubt this is the reason that she withholds this information from her readers.

Tucholski also records the "Turkish" Stanislaw Kuczynski mentioned in "drama" at Starobel'sk. (939) This was a different man.

[[cyrillic]]1414. КУЧИНСКИЙ-ИСКИНДЕР БЕЙ Станислав  
Стан.1903

It appears that like Cienciala the authors of "Drama" wanted to conceal the fact that the body of an Ostashkov prisoner was found at Katyn, and therefore had *not* been shot by the Soviets NKVD at Kalinin, as the "official" version demands.

### **Jan Zaluska**

Maciszewski writes:

Są w spisie ewidencyjnym pomyłki czy fałszerstwa; m.in. znalazł się na liście niemieckiej jeden dziś żyjący (Remigiusz Bierżanek) i kilku zamordowanych w okupowanym kraju (np. Płk Jan Załuska), ale nie podważa to wiarygodności podstawowego zestawu nazwisk ofiar. (M 34)

*Translated:*

In the said list there are errors or falsifications. In particular, in the German list there occur: one person living today (Remigiusz Bierżanek) **and several men killed in occupied Poland (for example, Colonel Jan Zaluska)**. However, this does not undermine the reliability of the basic list of victims' names.

For the sake of space we will not examine the case of Remigiusz Bierżanek. Everyone agrees that he was put on the list of Katyn victims when in fact he was alive and well in Poland.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See Witold Stankiewicz, "Jak żyjący Remigiusz Henryk Bierżanek znalazł się na liście ofiar katyńskich (Glosa do pracy Czesława Madajczyka, *Dramat katyński*, Warszawa 1989)." *Dzieje Najnowsze XXVIII*, No. 4 (1995), 127-130.

But we will consider the case of Jan Zaluska. The text mentions "several [POWs in the German list] killed in occupied Poland (for example, Colonel Jan Zaluska)." He is cited in Tucholski as a Kozel'sk prisoner (626 #82):

[[cyrillic]]82. ЗАЛУСКА Яна Александровича, 1889 г.р.

Załoska Jan Ur. 25.5.1889, s. Aleksandra. Płk piech. sł. st., dowódca obrony plot. DOK II, legionista. PCK (AM) Nr 03488. (Tuch. 255 col. 1-2)

He is in AM on p. 257:

3488. Załoska, Jan, Oberst, geb. 25. 6. 89, wohnh.: Lublin.

Postsparbuch, Visitenkarten, Orden „Virtuti-militari”.

The author of this 1988 document, Jarema Maciszewski, says that he knows not only about Bierzanek and Zaluska but about "several" men who are on the German list but were not killed at Katyn but, rather, in occupied Poland. Unfortunately he identifies only Zaluska.

After the publication of Maciszewski's book Zaluska goes unmentioned in the accounts of the "official" version of Katyn. He is listed in the official "Katyn Cemetery Book" (p. 723) without any indication that he was not shot at Katyn:

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Płk **Jan ZUŁUSKA** s. Aleksandra i Agnieszki Kawalków, ur. 25 V 1889 w majątku Rachodoszcze, pw. zamojski. Żołnierz I i III Brygady Leg. Uczestnik bitwy pod Kostiuchnowką. Od 1918 w sikonictwie wojskowym WP. Od 1927 zca dcy 82 pp i dca 8 pp Leg. Płk od 1 I 1933. W 1938 dca obrony plot. OK II. Odznaczony VM 5 ld, OOP 4 kl., KW czterokrotnie. Żonaty z Marią z Klimontowiczów, miał dzieci; Zofię, Tadeusza i Jerzego.

CAW. AP 6993, 9449, 9378, 74, VM 77-7458, OOP 1/211, KN 6 VI 1931; MiD WTN, L.W. 015/2 z 1940; AM 3488.

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*Cemetery book entry recreated based upon original entry.*

Col. Zaluska is also in Gur'ianov, *Ubity v Katyni* (2013) on p. 338:

[[cyrillic]]Залуска Ян (*Zaluska Jan s. Aleksandra I Agnieszki*) Род. в 1889 г . в имении Радохоще Замойского повята Лю-Блинского в-ва. Потквник, командующий ПВО II корпусного округа, жил в г. Люблин. Женат, имел троих Детей \_ По состоянию на 28.10.1939 содержался в Южском лагере военнопленных, [в ноябре или начале де кабря 1939 г. прибыл в Козельский лагерь.], 07 09.04.1940\* направлелі в распоряжение начальнюка УНКВД по Смоленской обл. (списокпр едписание № 015/2 от [05.04.1940]), [расстрелян в период 09.-11.1940\*]. \_ Эксгумация: германская суточная сводка от 28.05.1943, № 3488 в списке АМ. 111 N-415-82-1151 Залуска Ян Александрович, Ni-69-132 отч. Александрович, учитель [!], значится в списке военнопленных генералов и старших офицеров от 28.10.1939;V-99-03488; АМ-257-3488; РСК: GARF-127-03488. APL,-47-03488, APL,-184-03488,MUZ.,-46-03488;GK-177-3488;NKW-170- 03488;MOSZ-213;JT-255; M-1990/(3-4)-428; КС-723; РК розыск 1946. 1949 гг.; RK; R039-8, 512.

There is no mention here either of his being killed in occupied Poland, as stated in the text recommended by Cienciala.

Cienciala and Sanford certainly knew about this claim of Maciszewski's that Col. Zaluska and other men named in the German AM list were in fact not killed at Katyn but in occupied Poland. But they do not mention it. Why? Why, for example, don't they contest it? They could have claimed that Maciszewski was mistaken, and explained what they believed the real situation to be.

Certainly the Polish proponents of the "official" Soviets-did-it version must have discussed this potentially embarrassing statement by Maciszewski. But they pass over it in silence. This suggests that they do not want anyone to notice it. That is quite likely. An admission that Maciszewski was mistaken would require investigation into what the basis of his statement was. It is yet another admission that the German AM list is not correct.

But the whole "official" version rests upon the reliability of the German AM! Logically a reader would conclude that if Zaluska and "several others" on the German AM list, including Remigiusz Bierzanek, were not shot at Katyn, others on the German AM list might not have been shot there either. Such an admission would threaten to dismantle the "official" version of Katyn.

Alternatively, Cienciala and Sanford could suggest that Maciszewski's statement is incorrect. But that would call into question Cienciala's repeated claim that Maciszewski's document is a "devastating critique" of the BU.

In either case, Cienciala's and Sanford's silence about this statement by Maciszewski, which counters their claims, is intriguing. It is certainly a sign that they wish to hide something.

### **False charge of falsification**

Maciszewski states:

Czy dokumenty tysięcy ofiar mogły zostać generalnie sfalszowane, jak mogłoby wynikać z "Komunikatun Komisji Specjalnej?"

*Translated:*

Was it possible [for the Germans] to falsify the documents of thousands of victims, as that can be inferred from the Report of the Special commission [that is, BU]?

De Montfort made the same false accusation. As we have already shown, BU does not at all imply that the Germans "falsified documents of thousands of victims." Rather, BU implies that the Germans took from the corpses all the documents they could find that were dated after April-May 1940.

### **Moskovskaia's BU statement**

Burdenko Commission witness A. M. Moskovskaia stated that she hid an escaped Soviet POW named Nikolai Yegorov in her shed and fed him. Yegorov told Moskovskaia that he and other Soviet POWs were assigned to take all the documents out of the pockets of the corpses at Katyn and then replace them. Yegorov was captured by the Germans. When interrogated by them Moskovskaia told the Germans that she knew nothing of the Soviet POW's presence in her shed and was released.

"Drama" states the following about Moskovskaia's testimony:

Zeznanie A.M. Moskowskiej powtarzajcice relację M. Jegorowa, radzieckiego jeńca wykorzystanego rzekomo przy obróbce trupów, nie jest przekonywajcice i nie ma potwierdzenia w innych zeznaniach. (M 35)

*Translated:*

The testimony of A.M. Moskovskaia, which repeated the account of M. Egorov, a Soviet prisoner, who was allegedly employed in work with the corpses, is unconvincing and is not confirmed by other testimony.

It is true that Moskovskaia's story is not directly confirmed. But that does not mean it is false. Rather, it suggests an important question: Can anything in the Burdenko Commission testimony be independently confirmed? The answer is: Yes.

### **Testimony that the Germans Trucked In Bodies from Elsewhere**

Testimony that the Germans had trucked towards Katyn corpses from other sites is given in BU by three witnesses: P.F. Sukhachev, Vladimir Afanasievich Yegorov, and Frol Maximovich Yakovlev-Sokolov. (BU 241-242)

This is confirmed by four archival documents cited by Valentin Sakharov from Soviet partisan groups attesting to reports by escaped Red Army POWs that the Germans had dug up bodies from a Smolensk cemetery, including bodies of Red Army soldiers killed in the defense of Smolensk in

1941, and trucked them to Katyn. Three reports are dated late July 1943. All four documents report the same thing. In a previous chapter we examined a document that we independently verified by obtaining a photocopy directly from the State Library of the Smolensk Oblast'.

### **Evaluating this evidence**

The partisan reports do confirm the testimony of the three witnesses recorded in the BU. No objective student would conclude that the partisan reports are a fabrication, concocted by the Soviets in a far-sighted attempt to provide documentation for a future attempt to counter the German AM. The paragraphs cited occupy less than a page in a 10-page long report of partisan activities. In July 1943 the Germans were still in Smolensk and also in Katyn, which is about 25 miles to the west of Smolensk. The partisans were still engaged in fighting the German occupation. Smolensk was not liberated until September 25, 1943.

Yet if one does not take the position — unsupported by any evidence — that the partisan reports are fabrications, the genuineness of the German AM is destroyed. And this confirms other evidence that negates any claim to evidentiary validity of the German AM.

Therefore, the partisan reports are *confirmatory* evidence that the German AM has been seriously falsified and is not valid evidence for the "official" version of Katyn. At the same time, the partisan reports are confirmatory evidence in favor of the credibility of BU.

### **Conclusion about Maciszewski and "The Polish Historians' Expert Assessment"**

Cienciala calls this essay a "devastating critique of the Burdenko Commission report." (248; 337; n. 113 p. 506) Sanford (139) echoes this claim. But this claim is entirely without validity.

It is hard to believe that Cienciala and Sanford could really have believed that this document was any kind of critique of the BU, let alone a "devastating" one. But a powerful desire to believe and remain loyal to a

preconceived idea — in this case, the "official" version of Katyn — can cloud the reason of otherwise intelligent persons. If one's bias dictates that the "official" version *must* be true, *has* to be true, than it follows that the BU *must* be false.

It appears that Cienciala and Sanford were deliberately deceiving their readers, counting on the fact that not one in a thousand would study this essay, whether in Maciszewski's book, in *Polityka*, in *Dramat Katyński*, or in Russian in "Katynskaia drama" in order to check to see whether their statements about it were accurate. So one might conclude that Cienciala and Sanford are deliberately lying, deceiving their readers.

But I think it is also possible that, blinded by their bias, they saw what they wanted to see, like the onlookers in the story "The Emperor's New Clothes." Or, perhaps, both. Whatever the case may be, their works are a good negative example of how a lack of devotion to objectivity, to discovering the truth no matter whose preconceived ideas are shattered, ruins any possibility of good research.

### **Kathleen Harriman's Letter**

During the Burdenko Commission investigations Kathleen Harriman went to Katyn with her father Averell Harriman, U.S. ambassador to the USSR. On January 28, 1943, she wrote a long account of her trip in a letter to her sister Mary and to Pamela Churchill:

The Katyn Forest turned out to be a small measly pine tree woods. We were shown the works by a big Soviet doctor who looked like a chef in white peaked cap, white apron, and rubber gloves. With relish he showed us a sliced Polish brain carefully placed on a dinner plate for inspection purposes. And then we began a tour to each and every one of the seven graves. We must have seen a good many thousand corpses or parts of corpses, all in varying degrees of decomposition, but smelling about as bad. (Luckily I had a cold, so was less bothered by the stench than others.) Some of the corpses had been dug up by the Germans in the spring of '43 after they'd first launched their version of the story. These were laid in neat orderly rows, from six to eight bodies



deep. The bodies in the remaining graves had been tossed in every which way. All the time we were there, the regular work of exhuming continued by men in army uniform. Somehow I didn't envy them! The most interesting thing, and the most convincing bit of evidence, was that every Pole had been shot through the back of the head with a single bullet. Some of the bodies had their hands tied behind their backs, all of which is typically German. Next on the program we were taken into post mortem tents. These were hot and stuffy and smelt to high heaven. Numerous post mortems were going on, each and every body is given a thorough going over, and we witnessed several ... personally. I was amazed at how whole the corpses were. Most still had hair. Even I could recognize their internal organs and they still had a good quantity of red colored "firm" meat on their thighs ... You see, the Germans say that the Russians killed the Poles back in '40, whereas the Russians say the Poles weren't killed until the fall of '41, so there's quite a discrepancy in time. **Though the Germans had ripped open the Poles' pockets, they'd missed some written documents. While I was watching, they found one letter dated the summer of '41, which is damned good evidence.**<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Geoffrey Roberts, "The Wartime Correspondence of Kathleen Harriman." *Harriman Magazine*, Winter, 20015, p. 18.

She must be referring to the Stanislaw Kuczynski letter:

9. On body No. 53: An unmailed postcard in the polish [sic] language addressed Warsaw Bagatelia 15, apartment 47, to Irene Kuczinska, and dated June 20, 1941. The sender is Stanislaw Kuczinski. (BU 246-247)

Kathleen Harriman repeated this in the formal report she made after visiting Katyn:

Despite the thoroughness of the pocket ripping by the Germans, out of the seven hundred corpses the Commission have so far investigated 146 items have been found. The earliest date was found on a postcard—March 1940—and the latest—an unmailed postcard dated June 20, 1941. (Madden Vol. 7 p. 2138)

Averell Harriman confirmed this in his memoirs published in 1975.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> W. Averell Harriman and Elie Abel. *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin 1941-1946*. New York: Random House, 1975, p. 302.

At the Congressional Madden Commission hearings held in 1952 — a blatantly anticommunist affair that set out to prove the Soviets guilty — Kathleen Harriman (here called by her married name, Kathleen H. Mortimer) did not admit that she had personally seen the document in question removed from the corpse.

Mr. Machrowicz. But these exhibits that you referred to as having been found on the corpses, were not taken from the corpses in your presence, they were in a museum at the time?

Mrs. Mortimer. That is right—in Smolensk, which was some distance away.

(Madden Vol. 7 p. 2145).

There is no reason to think that Kathleen Harriman lied in the letter to her sister and to Pamela Churchill of January 1944. Rather, there is every reason to suppose that at the Madden Committee she bent her testimony to the winds of the Cold War, which were blowing hard in 1952. Her father does not mention his daughter's Madden Commission testimony in his memoir account.

Sanford states:

The silly Harriman girl, however, allowed herself to be used by Roosevelt and the State Department, subsequently, in support of the thesis of German guilt. (139)

To call Harriman's report "silly" is a dishonest attempt at an *ad hominem* argument. Kathleen Harriman's report of January 1944 is quite critical of the Soviet attempt to persuade the correspondents and others present, and rather skeptical of the Soviet performance in general. She was certainly no "dupe."

Neither Cienciala nor Sanford can explain the documents found on the corpses except to suggest that they were "planted." We have demonstrated that the Koziatulski documents could not have been planted, and that this fact strongly suggests that the rest of the documents found on the bodies by the Burdenko Commission investigators are also genuine.

### **Conclusion on the Burdenko Commission**

Both Cienciala and Sanford claim that the BU has been refuted. This is a false claim. There have been several attempts to refute it. All are incompetent, dishonest, or both, and can be shown to falsify and prevaricate, as we have done here.

In reality, BU has never been disproven on any essential points. It remains the single most accurate account to date of the mass murders of Polish prisoners at the Katyn (Koz'i Gory) site.

## Chapter 11. Nuremberg, the Madden Commission

### Nuremberg

Dr Marko Markov of Bulgaria had been one of the medical experts in the team assembled by the Germans to go to Katyn and endorse their version of events. He testified at the Nuremberg trials on July 1, 1946.

Cienciala:

...three witnesses were heard for the prosecution: the former deputy mayor of Smolensk, Boris Bazilevsky, a professor of astronomy; the Bulgarian forensic medicine expert Professor Anton Marko Markov, **who had testified in support of Soviet guilt in 1943** but now testified in support of German guilt; and Victor Prozorovsky, a Soviet professor of forensic medicine and a member of the Burdenko Commission.  
(232)

The statement in boldface above is false. Markov did not "testify in support of Soviet guilt in 1943." Here is everything that Markov stated in the German Report (AM):

Aus den Zeugenaussagen, den bei den Leichen aufgefundenen Briefschaften, Tagebüchern, Zeitungen usw. ergibt sich, daß die Erschießungen in den Monaten März und April 1940 stattgefunden haben. (118)

*Translated:*

From the witness testimony and the correspondence, diaries, newspapers, etc. found on the corpses, it follows that the shootings took place in the months of March and April 1940.

This is not testimony of any kind, let alone scientific testimony based on examination of any of the corpses. At Nuremberg Markov stated that he neither spoke to any of the witnesses nor read any of the documents. Here

he and the other scientists simply repeated what the Germans clearly demanded from them.

Here is Markov's only conclusion in the German Report based on his examination of a corpse:

Wegen der teilweisen Verseifung der Leiche muß man annehmen, daß der Tod um **mehr als 1 Jahr zurückliegt.** (128)

Translated:

Because of the partial saponification of the corpse, one must assume that death had occurred **more than one year earlier.**

"More than one year" could indicate either German or Soviet guilt. We shall see below that Markov really thought that the body could not have been buried for more than 18 months. He could hardly write this when he was at the mercy of the Germans. And even if, careless of his own safety, he had done so, the Germans certainly would not have printed it.

Cienciala had to know all this. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that she was deliberately lying here. She had studied the German report, so she knew that Markov had never "testified in support of Soviet guilt."

But Cienciala says nothing about the testimony of any of the three Nuremberg witnesses who *supported* German guilt at Katyn. In particular she has nothing to say about Markov's testimony, which is indeed devastating — but to the "official" version, not the Soviet, case.

### **Markov's Nuremberg Testimony<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Markov's testimony is in *Trial of the Major War Criminals Vol. XVII*. It is available online: <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/07-01-46.asp> (towards the end) and <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/07-02-46.asp>

In his Nuremberg testimony Markov dispelled any illusions about the supposedly scientific evidence given in the report by the medical experts called to Katyn by the Germans.

1. Only eight corpses in all were examined.

The only part of our activity which could be characterized as a scientific, medico-legal examination were the autopsies carried out by certain members of the commission who were themselves medico-legal experts; but there were only seven or eight of us who could lay claim to that qualification, and as far as I recall only eight corpses were opened. Each of us operated on one corpse, except Professor Hájek, who dissected two corpses. Our further activity during these 2 days consisted of a hasty inspection under the guidance of Germans. It was like a tourists' walk during which we saw the open graves; ...

2. The scientific team never examined any of the documents from the graves.

The documents which we saw in the glass cases had already been removed from the bodies before we arrived ... We did not carry out any scientific examination of these papers. As I have already told you, these papers were exhibited in glass cases and we did not even touch them.

3. Markov concluded that the bodies had been buried for no more than 12 - 18 months.

MR. COUNSELLOR SMIRNOV: I would like you to answer the following question. Did the medico-legal investigations testify to the fact that the corpses had been in the graves already for 3 years?

MARKOV: As to that question I could judge only from the corpse on which I myself had held a post mortem. The condition of this corpse, as I have already stated, was typical of the average condition of the Katyn corpses. These corpses were far removed from the stage of disintegration of the soft parts, since the fat was only beginning to turn into wax. In my opinion these corpses were buried for a shorter period of time than 3 years. I considered that the corpse which I dissected had been buried for not more than 1 year or 18 months.

... Yes, quite right. I had the impression that they had been buried for not more than a year and a half. (Trial 337-8)

4. Markov could not say this while at Katyn because it would have contradicted the German version.

MR. COUNSELLOR SMIRNOV: Was a deduction contained in the record you made regarding the autopsy?

MARKOV: My record of the autopsy contained only a description without any conclusion.

MR. COUNSELLOR SMIRNOV: Why?

MARKOV: Because from the papers which were given to us there I understood that they wanted us to say that the corpses had been in the ground for 3 years ... Inasmuch as the objective deduction regarding the autopsy I performed was in contradiction with this version, I did not make any deductions.

MR. COUNSELLOR SMIRNOV: Consequently you did not make any deduction because the objective data of the autopsy testified to the fact that the corpses had been in the ground, not 3 years, but only 18 months?

MARKOV: Yes, that is quite correct.

MARKOV: Most of the members of the delegation who performed the autopsies in the Katyn wood made their deductions without answering the essential question regarding the time the corpses had been buried ... The only one who gave a definite statement in regard to the time the corpses had been buried was Professor Miloslavich from Zagreb, and he said it was 3 years. However, when the German book regarding Katyn was published, I read the result of his impartial statement regarding the corpse on which he had performed the autopsy. I had the impression that the corpse on which he had performed the autopsy did not differ in its stage of decomposition from the other corpses. This led

me to think that his statement that the corpses had been in the ground for 3 years did not coincide with the facts of his description.

### **Dr. Ferenc Orsós and his Notion of "Pseudocallus"**

Dr Ferenc Orsós was the only medical expert whom the Germans called both to Katyn and to Vinnitsa, the Ukrainian city where the Germans staged a similar exhumation with expert witnesses and a report.

We noted above that Orsós was "pro-German." In fact he was a pro-Nazi fanatic. According to István Deák, himself a very anticommunist historian:

Orsós was not only a medical expert but also an outright fascist and an anti-Semite, who demanded that there be no Jewish doctors at all in a profession about one half of whose members were Jews. Nor was Professor Orsós satisfied with fighting the Jewish threat.

On July 18, 1941, during a debate in the Hungarian Upper House on the third anti-Jewish Law forbidding marriage as well as sexual intercourse between Jews and Christians, Orsós demanded that the ban be extended to marriage and intercourse between Gypsies and Hungarians. In presenting his case, Orsós used the typical National Socialist argument that while "pure" Gypsies were Aryans and therefore members of an acceptable race, Gypsies of mixed blood turned out to be the worst criminals, and therefore their procreation must be stopped. As we know, the SS deported and killed during the war mostly such Gypsies whom it judged to be of mixed racial heritage.

Unfortunately for Orsós, the largely aristocratic members of the Upper House made fun of his argument, and did not take action against Gypsy-Hungarian love affairs. Nor was the anti-Nazi Minister of Interior Ferenc Keresztes-Fischer amenable to Orsós's call that Jewish doctors be kept away from christian patients. Jewish doctors remained free to treat Christian patients until after the German occupation of Hungary on March 19, 1944. Orsós and the MONE then submitted to the Gestapo a list of Jewish doctors, many of whom died as a result.



As in Nazi Germany, the Hungarian medical profession was heavily Nazified, whereas the legal profession, for instance, remained considerably more independent throughout the war.

One might think that Professor Orsós deserved some punishment for his deeds, perhaps even the execution that, according to Professor Thuróczy, was his regrettable fate. In fact, however, Orsós was not executed. On December 6 1 1944, he left Budapest with the retreating German army and settled in Halle am Saale, from where he moved to the University of Mainz in West Germany in 1946. There he lived as a respected Professor of Artistic Anatomy until his retirement in 1955. Orsós died in Mainz on July 25, 1962.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Letter to the editor, *New York Review of Books*, March 24, 1994.

This criminal history did not prevent the Madden Commission from calling the Nazi Orsós as a witness.

Neither Cienciala, nor Sanford — nor, to my knowledge, any of the other works that set forth the "official" Soviets-did-it version of Katyn — even mention Orsós' Nazi collaboration. To do so would compromise the supposed "objectivity" of the conclusions of the medical commission, headed by Orsós, which was called by the Nazis to Katyn.

It is clear from AM that Orsós was summoned because of a single article he had published in a Hungarian medical journal in 1941. In it he concluded that the presence in the skull of a corpse of a hard substance he called "pseudocallus," formed from the decomposition of brain matter, proved that the skull had been buried for at least three years.<sup>3</sup> This fact, and even the word "pseudocallus" itself, was unknown to Markov and, Markov believed, to all the other scientists as well.

SMIRNOV: [Turning to the witness.] Were there many skulls with signs of so-called pseudocallus shown to the members of the commission? Will you please give an exact explanation of this term of Professor Orsós.

MARKOV: Professor Orsós spoke to us regarding pseudocallus at a general conference of the delegates. That took place on 30 April, in the afternoon, in the building where the field laboratory of Dr. Butz in Smolensk was located.

Professor Orsós described the term pseudocallus as meaning some sediment of indissoluble salt, of calcium, and other salts on the inside of the cranium. **Professor Orsós stated that, according to his observations in Hungary, this happened if the corpses have been in the ground for at least 3 years.** When Professor Orsós stated this at the scientific conference, none of the delegates said anything either for or against it. **I deduced from that that this term pseudocallus was as unknown to the other delegates as it was to me.**

MR. COUNSELLOR SMIRNOV: Tell me this, please. Did you notice any pseudocallus on the skulls of the corpses on which you and your colleagues performed autopsies?

MARKOV: On the skull of the corpse on which I performed an autopsy, there was some sort of pulpy substance in place of the brain, but I never noticed any sign of pseudocallus. The other delegates after the explanation of Professor Orsós likewise did not state that they had found any pseudocallus in the other skulls. **Even Butz<sup>4</sup> [<sup>4</sup> Correct spelling: Buhtz] and his co-workers, who had examined the corpses before our arrival, did not mention any sign of pseudocallus.**

Later on, in a book which was published by the Germans and which contained the report of Butz, I noticed that Butz referred to pseudocallus in order to give more weight to his statement that the corpses had been in the ground for 3 years.

MR. COUNSELLOR SMIRNOV: That is to say, that of the 11,000 corpses only one skull was submitted to you which had pseudocallus?

MARKOV: That is quite correct.

<sup>3</sup> Orsós Ferenc. "A halál utáni csontmésztelepedés, - szuvasodás és pseudocallus." *Orvosi hetilap*. - 85. (1941) 11., p. 140-141. ("Post mortem decalcification, callus, and pseudocallus on bones.") I obtained this article from George F. Smith Library of Rutgers University Medical School in Newark, NJ. My thanks to my friend Laszlo Berkowitz, who orally translated this article for me in 1988. Since then I have located and studied this article in its German translation from 1954: F. Orsós, "Postmortale Decalcination, Caries und Pseudocallusbildung." *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Gesamte Gerichtliche Medizin* 434 (1-2) 1954, pp. 47-53.

### **The Conditions under which Markov Signed the Report**

Markov stated that he felt he had no choice but to sign the report.

MR. COUNSELLOR SMIRNOV: Yes, Mr. President.

I would ask you, Witness, to interrupt the reply to this question and to answer the following one: At the time you signed this general report of the commission, was it quite clear to you that the murders were perpetrated in Katyn not earlier than the last quarter of 1941, and that 1940, in any case, was excluded.

MARKOV: **Yes, this was absolutely clear to me** and that is why I did not make any deductions in the minutes which I made on my findings in the Katyn wood.

MARKOV: Around noon we arrived at the airport which was called Bela. The airport was apparently a military airfield because of the temporary military barracks I saw there. We had dinner there and immediately after dinner, notwithstanding the fact that we were not told that the signing of the minutes would take place on the way to Berlin, we were submitted copies of the protocol for signature. During the signing a number of military persons were present, as there were no other people except military personnel on this airfield. **I was rather struck by the fact that on the one hand the records were already completed in Smolensk but were not submitted to us for signing there, and on the other hand that they did not wait till we arrived**

**in Berlin a few hours later. They were submitted to us for signing at this isolated military airfield. This was the reason why I signed the report, in spite of the conviction I had acquired during the autopsy which I had performed at Smolensk.**

MR. COUNSELLOR SMIRNOV: That is to say, the date and the locality which are shown in the protocol are incorrect?

MARKOV: Yes, that is so.

DR. STAHLER: Did you consider the task you had to carry out there a political one or a scientific one?

### **Markov Noted that the German Report Lied about Insect Remains**

We have already noted the issue of insect remains as one of the many contradictions in the German Report (AM). Markov noted this too.

MARKOV: As to the insects and their larvae, the assertion of the general report that none were discovered is in flagrant contradiction to the conclusions of Professor Palmieri, which are recorded in his personal minutes concerning the corpse which he himself dissected. In this protocol, which is published in the same German White Book, it is said that there were traces of remains of insects and their larvae in the mouths of the corpses.

### **Markov Testified He Had Signed the Report Under Duress**

DR. STAHLER: Witness, at the beginning of my examination you stated that you were fully aware of the political significance of your task. **Why, then, did you desist from protesting against this report which was not in accord with your scientific conviction?**

MARKOV: I have already said that I signed the protocol as I was convinced that the circumstances at this isolated military airfield offered no other possibility, and therefore I could not make any objections.

DR. STAHLER: Why did you not take steps later on?

MARKOV: My conduct after the signing of the protocol corresponds fully to what I am stating here, I repeat. I was not convinced of the truth of the German version... Because of the political situation in which we found ourselves at that moment, I could not make a public statement declaring the German version was wrong.

There is no evidence that Markov was "forced" to testify at Nuremberg. If he had wanted to do so he could have claimed political asylum while he was in West Germany. He did not, so there is no reason to think that his testimony at Nuremberg was compelled in any way. Markov states repeatedly that he felt compelled to sign the report in AM which concluded that the Katyn corpses had been buried three years earlier although this contradicted his own view.

Cienciala certainly knew that Markov's testimony was indeed devastating — but to the German and Polish anticommunist version that the Soviets were guilty. If Cienciala had been an objective, responsible historian she would have examined Markov's testimony, conceded that it contradicts the "official" version, and moved on. Instead, she dishonestly conceals this from her readers, who will not know it.

## **Hájek**

Cienciala does not mention Dr. František Hájek's testimony at all! His name does not even appear in her book. Yet Hájek, a member of the German Commission, published a book with his criticisms of the German Report:

František Hájek *Důkazy Katynské* [Katyn Evidence]. [Praha], [Spolek českých lékařů], [1946]<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> OCLC # 14747046 It can be downloaded in a dual-language Russian-Czech side by side version at [http://katynbooks.narod.ru/Hájek/Hájek\\_rus\\_cz.html](http://katynbooks.narod.ru/Hájek/Hájek_rus_cz.html)

Hájek repeated the main points of this 1945 book in shorter form in an interview of March 9, 1952 in the Czech newspaper *Lidova demokracie*, in which he criticized the US Congress's Madden Commission hearings. It was reprinted in the Soviet newspaper Pravda on March 12, 1952.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The Russian translation of this article was reprinted in the Soviet journal *Voенно-Istoricheskii Zhurnal* 8 (1991) pp. 68-69, now online at [http://www.katyn-books.ru/archive/vizh/1991-08\\_01.html](http://www.katyn-books.ru/archive/vizh/1991-08_01.html)

Hájek's criticism of the German AM could accurately be described as "devastating." Neither Cienciala nor Sanford discuss it or Markov's critiques of the German report. Neither Hájek's book nor his interview have been published in English translation.

Some sources claim that Hájek was arrested by Soviet authorities and forced to write the book in which he refutes the German report. I can find no evidence that this happened. Evidently, Hájek himself never made this claim, for surely the anticommunist Czech writers on Katyn would have mentioned it. But Hájek did claim that he acted out of fear of the Germans, both at Katyn and upon his return to German-occupied Czechoslovakia.

Here I reproduce a few quotations from Hájek's book and his 1952 article that show how damaging Hájek's testimony is to the "official" version of Katyn.

Snad nekdo namítne, že moje úvaha nemá také významu, ponevadž z vdecnosti k Rusum, kteri nás národ osvobodili, nemohu jinak mluvíti. Mne však jde o to, aby historik, který by chtel otazku katynskou resiti, mel podklad v duvodech, které uvedu. Kdybych mlcel, zdálo by se, že souhlasím s Nemci a že tedy trvam na svem podpisu, t. j. na tom, že popravy polskych dustojniku byly provedeny na jare 1940. (6)

*Translated:*

Perhaps some may argue that my idea is not important because, in gratitude to the Russians who liberated our nation, I cannot speak otherwise. But my point is that the historian who would like to solve the issue of Katyn, has a basis in evidence that I will cite. If I had

remained silent, it would seem that I agree with Germans and maintain with my signature [on the expert report in AM], i.e. the fact that executions of Polish officers were carried out in the spring of 1940.

Ve výpovedi tohoto svedka je plno rozporu. Jiní svedkové udávali, že lesík byl ohrazen 2 m vysokým drátem, že byl strážěn ozbrojenou stráží a nikdo nemel do neho prfstupu. Tento svedek tvrdí, že v okolí zámku se nesmely v ony dny sbíratí houby. Ostatne je těžko veriti, že by v dub nu nebo v kvetnu v tech místech rostly houby. Také je nepravdepodobne, že by ze vzdálenosti 50 m vecer nebo v noci mohl rozpoznati typicky židovské obliceje. (10)

*Translated:*

In the confessions of this witness there were many contradictions. Other witnesses testified that the little woods was secured by two-meter barbed wire, guarded by armed men, and that no one could enter it. This witness asserts that around the castle in those days one could gather mushrooms. Also, it is hard to believe that in April or May there were mushrooms growing there. It is also unlikely that a distance of 50 m in the evening or at night one could recognize a typically Jewish face.

Jest podivne, ze nemecka sprava, kdyz jiz si dala tolik prace, nevypatrala a nevyslechla onech 10 polskych delnfku, kterf v lete 1942 nalezli prvnf hroby a neptala se jich, od koho se od nich dovedeli a proc to tehdy neoznamili nemeckym uradum. Polstf delnfci nemeli prece duvodu vec zatajovati. (11)

*Translated:*

It is also strange that the German administration, despite the fact that they devoted so much work on this affair, did not seek out the 10 Polish workers who first found the graves in the summer of 1942, and

did not ask them from whom they found out about the graves and why they did not report their find to the German authorities at that time. The Polish workers had no reason to keep this affair secret.

#### 6. Důkaz petiletými borůvkami.

Jako důkaz uvádí Němci také malé petilete borůvky, které byly nasazeny na nasypaných pahorcích. My jsme jich sami neviděli, neboť hroby byly již otevřeny, nám byla jen jedna borůvka ukázána. Řez jedné borůvky byl vyšetřen vertikálním iluminátorem. Zjisteno, že je nejméně petileta a na řezu blízko středu bylo lze vidět málo znatelný tmavší pruh. Zavolaný lesmistr von Herff prohlásil, že takový pruh vzniká, když je růst borůvky nedm zastaven, na pr. přesazením a soudil, že borůvka byla přesazena před 3 lety. Sam však uznal, že borůvky jsou špatně vyvinuté, rostoucí ve stínu velkých stromů — mohl tedy být tento pruh způsoben také vlivem jiným a ne jen přesazením. (15)

*Translated:*

6. The evidence of the five-year-old small pine trees As evidence the Germans also refer to the small five-year-old pine trees that had been planted on heaped-up mounds. We did not see them ourselves because the graves were already opened, we were only shown one little pine. A section of the pine was examined with a vertical illuminator. It was determined that the treeing was at least five years old and in the section near to the center was a faint dark stripe. The forestry expert von Herff who had been summoned stated that a dark stripe like this arises when something stops the treeing's growth, for example, in the case of transplanting, and assumed that the little pine had been transplanted three years earlier. However, he also admitted that the treeings were poorly developed, were growing in the shade of other trees, and that the stripe in question could therefore arise from other causes and not only from transplantation.

[Concerning the diary of Adam Solski]



Tento deník jsem sám neviděl. Poslední jeho prave popsána stránka byla uveřejněna v Bílé knize. Jedosti podezřelý svým obsahem a v rozporu s výpověďmi svědka i jinými okolnostmi. 9/4. Mluví o tom, že přišli do lesa v 8.30 ráno, ač podle svědka Silvestrovova byli do lesa odvázeni večer a v noci. Podezřelý jest, že mohl být psán až takřka do posledního okamžiku před popra-[va]. Nema uveden rok, nýbrž jen den a měsíc. Ma dvakrát datum vou, nehlede ani k tomu, že deníky se psávají večer o událostech předcházejících. Take není podán důkaz, že byl psán vlastní rukou. (16)

*Translated:*

I did not see this diary myself. The last page of it, reproduced above, was published in the German Report [lit. "White Book."] Its contents are rather suspicious and are in contradiction to the testimony of witnesses and other circumstances. 9/4 states that they arrived in the woods at 8:30 a.m., although according to the confessions of the witness Sil'vestrov they were carried off into the woods in the evening and at night. It is also suspicious that the diary could have been written in, so to speak, until the last moments before execution. No year is given, only the day and month. One date is entered twice, despite the fact that diaries are normally written in the evening about the events of the past day. There is also no evidence that it was written in the hand of the [stated] author.

I když připustíme, že pro menší množství vzdušného kyslíku byl proces oxidace v katynských mrtvolách zpomalen, přece nelze připustit, že by byly ležely v hrobech 3 roky. Stav mrtvol by poukazoval, že tam ležely několik měsíců a vzhledem k menšímu množství vzdušného kyslíku a zleněnému procesu oxidace, že jím ležely nejvýše 1.5 roku. (18)

*Translated:*

While acknowledging that because of smaller amounts of atmospheric oxygen the oxidation process was slowed in the Katyn corpses, one

cannot concede that they were lying in the graves for three years. The condition of the corpses would suggest that they had lain there a few months and, due to the reduced amount of oxygen in the air and the slower process of oxidation, that they had lain there 1.5 years at most.

Rozsah adipociru rovněž svědčí, že mrtvoly ležely v hrobu asi 1.5 roku .... Nalez na satstvu a na kovových součástkách i cigaretach mluví rovněž proti tomu, že by mrtvoly byly bývaly ležely v zemi 3 leta. (31)

*Translated:*

The extent of adipocere also indicates that the corpses lay in the grave for about 1.5 years .... Analysis of the garment and of the metal parts and cigarettes also speak against the corpses having lain in the earth for three years.

Hájek too rejected Dr. Orsós' idea of "pseudocallus" as evidence that a corpse had been buried for at least three years:

Prof. Orsós z Budapešti upozorňoval na to, že v lebce jedné mrtvoly našel na povrchu mozkové kase tvrdou, jako vápenatou, vrstevnatou inkrustaci, která podle jeho zkušeností je pozorována teprve po 3 letech pobytu mrtvoly v hrobu.

*Translated:*

Prof. Orsós from Budapest pointed out that in the skull of one corpse he found on the surface a brain mush hard as a calcium deposit, which in his experience is observed only after the corpse has lain 3 years in the grave.

Tomu však nebývá až po 3 letech, nýbrž někdy i mnohem dříve, neboť záleží na množství a koncentraci kyselin, které způsobují odvápení a změknutí kostí a koncentrace ta je určite různá. Prof. Orsós prohledl

radu lebek a jen v jedne nalezl podobne zmeny v nepatrnem stupni, u jinych nikoliv.(20)

*Translated:*

But this happens not just after three years, but sometimes much earlier, since it depends on the amount and concentration of acids that cause decalcification and softening of the bones and this concentration varies. Prof. Orsós looked at a series of skulls and in only one of them found such changes in a slight degree, and not in others.

### **Hájek Testified that His Real Opinion Was Censored**

Kdyz jsem se vrátil a uredne byl uverejnen Katynsky protokol, dostavili se ke mne redaktori tehdejsich denfku „Polednf list" a „Vecernf Ceske slovo". Pravili, ze dostali pokyn, aby si u mne vyzadali rozhovor, ze me odpovedi budou uverejneny ve vsech dennfch listech. Z odpovedel jsem jim jejich otazky a rekl po pravde, co jsem v Katynu videl a slysel, ale nasledujf dho dne jsem byl velmi roztrpcen, kdyz jsem cetl neco zcela jineho a kdyz mi byly dany do (1st vyroky, jichZ jsem vubec neucinil a uciniti nemohl. (21)

*Translated:*

When I returned [from Katyn] and the Katyn protocol was officially published the editors of the dailies "Poledni list" and "Vecernf Ceske Slovo" came to me. They said they had been instructed to interview me and that my answers would be published in all daily papers. I answered their questions and told the truth about what I had seen and heard at Katyn, but the next day I was very embittered when I read something totally different and when remarks were put into my mouth which I had not made and could not make.

Za nekolik dnu jsem byl pozadan tiskovym sefem pro t. zv. protektorat, Wolframem von Wolmarem, abych o svych zkusenostech prednasel pred zastupci tisku v Presseklubu. Ucinil jsem tak, ale opet

jen objektivne a po prednasce vytkl jsem dosti ostre zmfnenym redaktorum jejich zpusob psanf, jak take nynf konstatovala ceska tiskova kancelar. (Viz „Prace“ ze dne 11. cervence 1945.) Zduraznoval jsem tehdy, fo lekar nema prava dotykati se viny nebo nevinu obvinenych, nybd podavati vecny posudek, spadajicf do lekarskeho oboru. Redaktori poukazovali na censuru. (21)

*Translated:*

Several days later I was asked by the press chief of the so-called Protectorate, Wolfram von Wolmar, to lecture about my experiences before the press in the Press club. I did so, but again only objectively, and after the lecture I criticized the editors rather sharply for their way of writing, as the Czech News Agency has recently confirmed. (See "Prace" of 11 July 1945). I pointed out then that a doctor has no right to judge the guilt or innocence of defendants but give an objective judgment within the medical field. The editors referred to the censorship.

### **Hájek Was Forced to Sign the German Report**

Na treti otazku, proc jsem podepsal katynsky protokol, jsem odpovedel:

„Kazdemu z nas bylo jasno, kdybychom protokol, ktery vypracovali prof. Buhtz z Vratislavi a prof. Orsós z Budapesti, nepodepsali, ze by se letadlo s nami urcite nebylo vratilo. (22)

*Translated:*

To the third question, why I had signed the Katyn protocol [the expert statement in AM] I answered:

"It was clear to all of us that if we did not sign the protocol composed by Prof. Buhtz of Bratislava and Prof. Orsós of Budapest, our airplane would certainly not return."

In his 1952 article Hájek added that when he tried to beg off the trip to Katyn on grounds of illness he was threatened by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the "Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia," the puppet state under German occupation, with being accused of "sabotage" and sent to a concentration camp.

Hájek also stated that a number of the medical experts called to Katyn by the Germans did not know German very well. Buhtz, the German professor, wrote the report, read it out loud, and the rest of the scientists signed it.

### **Polish Observers at Katyn Who Retracted Their Testimony**

Sanford claims in one sentence that Dr. Adam Szebista and Edmund Seyfried, who had been members of Polish delegations at Katyn, retracted their testimony after the war. (206)

Seyfried was imprisoned by the postwar pro-communist government for collaboration. The article concerning Seyfried by Stanislaw Jankowski, to which Cienciala refers, states that he had made some kind of statement at the request of the Germans:

Edmund Seyfried przyznaje, że przed opuszczeniem miejsca ekshumacji uczestnicy delegacji „na prośbę Niemców opowiedzieli swoje wrażenia”...<sup>7</sup>

*Translated:*

Edmund Seyfried admits that before leaving the place of exhumation the members of the delegation "stated their opinions at the request of the Germans... "

<sup>7</sup> Stanisław M. Jankowski, "Pod Specjalnym Nadzorem, przy Drzwiach Zamkniętych: Wyroki Sądowe w PRL za Ujawnienie Prawdy o Zbrodni Katyńskiej" [Under Special Surveillance, with Doors Closed: Sentences in People's Poland for Revealing the Truth about Katyn], in Marek Tarczyński, ed., *Zbrodnia Katyńska: Polskie Śledztwo* [The Crime of Katyn: The Polish Investigation], *Zeszyty Katyńskie*, no. 20 (Warsaw, 2005), 106 n. 44.

A document of the Polish underground reproduced in translation in volume 4 of the Madden Commission hearings states the following:

Seyfried, after inspecting the graves, with the permission of the Germans, made the following speech, whose contents were affirmed by another delegate: "I call upon you gentlemen to take off your hats, bow your heads, and pay tribute to these heroes who gave their lives that Poland might live." The Germans saluted. The entire proceedings were filmed, photographed, and sound-recorded. The participants have expressed \* \* \* a sound recording was also made. (Madden Vol. 4 p. 717; confirmed on p. 846. The three asterisks are in the original)

Neither Cienciala nor Sanford give any indication where Seyfried's retraction can be found. It would be interesting to read both what Seyfried said or reported in 1943 and what he said in his retraction, evidently in 1945.

Seyfried was apparently jailed in 1948. We do not know whether his role at Katyn was the only charge against him, or whether he was charged with other instances of collaboration with the Germans. We do know that the Polish delegations that visited Katyn at German invitation in April 1943 could not have had any more evidence of Soviet guilt than the Germans did. As we have seen, even months later, when the German Report was published, the Germans did not have any such evidence either.

Sanford helpfully identifies Dr. Szebesta's retraction (152 n. 56). Sanford claims that Szebesta was "forced to recant his wartime testimony." Sanford gives no evidence that this testimony was "forced." But he does identify an interview with Szebesta in the Polish communist newspaper *Trybuna Ludu* of March 20, 1952, which I have obtained. In this interview Szebesta said that the Germans had obviously demanded and staged the visit of the Polish officials as a propaganda stunt.

Szebesta claimed that he was sent by the German authorities straight to the airport, without being able even to say goodbye to his wife. He stated that they were always accompanied by some Germans, always under guard, and had no freedom of action at all. In fact, he said that they were at Katyn for only one hour! They were continually told by the Germans that only the

Soviets could have done such a terrible thing. Szebesta thought it particularly ironic that the Germans told him that Germans could never have committed such a massacre!

He says that the German doctor who accompanied them told him that the cartridge shells found at Katyn were of the caliber of weapons used by the Soviets.

Oprowadzajcicy nas lekarz niemiecki pokazywał różne przestrzelone czaszki tłumacząc, że kaliber broni odpowiada tej, jaka jest używana w ZSRR.

*Translated:*

The German doctor who accompanied us showed us various used shells and explained that the caliber of weapons corresponded to that used in the USSR.

This is evidence that the Germans had initially planned to claim that Soviet guns were used to shoot the Polish prisoners at Katyn. Szebesta and the other Polish delegates were at Katyn in early April. It was not until the end of the month that the Germans decided that they had to admit that German shells had been found at Katyn.

Goebbels thought that the presence of German shells in the Katyn graves should have been enough to convince the Allies that the Germans had shot the Poles at Katyn. But Goebbels was mistaken! The issue of the German shells has been blithely passed over by all those eager to blame the Soviets, beginning with the Polish GIE. Goebbels underestimated the Allies' anticommunist zeal.

Like other witnesses Szebesta was convinced that the corpses and the other materials in the graves were far too well preserved to have been buried three years earlier, in 1940. Szebesta's remarks about the corpses are similar to those of Markov and Hájek.

Cienciala and Sanford are bluffing — in plain language, lying — about Seyfried and Szebesta. Did the Germans, or the Soviets, or both, "force"

Seyfried and Szebesta to make whatever statements they made? Were their retractions compelled by the Nazis, or the communists? Or were made voluntarily and out of conviction? An objective study would identify and examine the circumstances surrounding them, in an attempt to determine which, if any, of their statements were valid, and if unsuccessful, would say as much. But neither Sanford nor Cienciala does.

### **The Phillimore Note**

Lt Col Harry Phillimore was Secretary of the British War Crimes Executive (BWCE) at Nuremberg. He reported to Patrick Dean, legal adviser to the Foreign Office. His report is available online.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> I have put the Phillimore report online at <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/phillimore.pdf> It was formerly available at <http://collection.europarchive.org/tna/20070206143611/http://fco.gov.uk/files/kfile/annexf.pdf> and is still available at the Internet Archive: <https://web.archive.org/web/20160913024024/http://collection.europarchive.org/tna/20070206143611/http://fco.gov.uk/files/kfile/annexf.pdf>

Neither Cienciala nor Sanford mention Phillimore's note of July 6, 1946. This omission is probably due to the fact that Phillimore concluded that the Soviet case set forth at Nuremberg was a convincing one, particularly as set forth by Professor Prozorovsky of the Burdenko Commission,

The third witness was the principal member of the Soviet investigation [Prozorovsky]. He was undoubtedly a most effective witness and testified to having personally exhumed some 5,000 bodies at Kiev, Kharkov, Smolensk and other places. He spoke in great detail of the condition of the bodies and of the very careful investigation made. His commission had made a most careful autopsy of 925 bodies, only 3 of which had apparently been perfunctorily examined previously. He explained the condition of the clothing, which had been searched and gave details of a few documents found. They included receipts dated April and May 1941 and a letter from a wife to the Soviet Red Cross, bearing a Warsaw and Moscow postmark in September 1940 as well as



postmark with the stamp of the Tarnopol Post Office dated 13 November 1940. He has personally discovered a letter dated 20 June. His mastery of the details of these documents was complete and his evidence delivered confidently and quickly, but obviously not parrot wise. He went on to deal with the bullet cases, which were found in the graves, which were those of a calibre which the German witnesses had admitted applied to the German pistols and which, he stated, bore the initials of a German firm GECO. This evidence was greatly fortified by a captured document produced by the Americans being a telegram dated May 1943 from an official of the Government General to the defendant Frank's office in Poland stating that members of the Polish Red Cross who had been visiting Katyn at the invitation of the Germans had been very much disturbed at finding bullet cases marked GECO, a well known German firm. The conjunction between this document showing German bullet cases found in the graves in May 1943 by the Poles and by the Soviet commission a year later in January 1944, was most convincing. He went on to give reasons why the bodies could not have been buried as early as 1940 and concluded by comparing the method of killing with that in the many other cases which he had personally investigated where German action was not disputed. **Altogether, although not of course conclusive the evidence emerged strongly in favour of the Soviet case and the German report was largely discredited and their evidence unimpressive.**

Sanford:

The most important Soviet witness, Dr Markov, the Bulgarian member of the International Commission, agreed to all Prosecutor Smirnov's leading questions.<sup>109</sup> His evidence that the International Commission had been presented with already exhumed bodies and had signed only under German pressure was to **be refuted later by Drs Naville and Tramsen.** (140)

This statement by Sanford is a lie. It is a reference to Naville's and Tramsen's testimony to the US Madden Commission in 1952 (neither testified at Nuremberg). There they did not refute anything that Markov said. We discuss their testimony below.

## The Madden Commission

Cienciala says little about the Madden Commission and nothing about the testimony given there. In particular, she does not point out the following testimony:

- Gustav Genschow, whose armaments firm manufactured the Geco 7.65 DD ammunition found at Katyn, testified that only small amounts of this ammunition were exported to the USSR — "only two to three thousand rounds" after 1928, a truly insignificant quantity. (Madden V, 1578-9)
- Dr. Francois Naville of Switzerland, the only medical expert at Katyn who was from a neutral country, discounted Dr. Ferenc Orsós's theory of "pseudocallus". (Madden V, 1612) This was the sole medical evidence set forth by the Germans that the bodies had been buried for three years, and even Orsós claimed to have found it in only one corpse.
- Kathleen Mortimer, Averill Harriman's daughter, had been at Katyn. As we have seen, she had attended the Burdenko Commission investigation and had written a private letter in which she stated that she had witnessed a document dated the summer of 1941 as it was taken from the pocket of a corpse.

It is notable that in her testimony to the Madden Commission she did not deny this. She was not directly asked about it because this detail was not in her 1944 report from Katyn. Nor did she volunteer it. She did insist that she had been present at post-mortems, and that the documents she saw at a museum in Smolensk "had been taken from bodies that had been buried a considerable length of time." (Madden VII, 2145) This partially corroborates what she wrote to her sister.

The importance of this, once again, is that the presence of documents dated in the second half of 1940 or any time in 1941 proves that the Soviets did not shoot the Poles, regardless of any other evidence. The "official" Soviets-did-it version assumes that all the Polish POWs were shot shortly after they were transferred from the three POW camps to the NKVD in Smolensk, Kalinin, and Khar'kov in April and May, 1940.

## Sanford

Dr Palmieri confirmed that all the signs indicated that the Poles had been killed between March and May 1940. (142-3)

Sanford is lying again. In reality Palmieri said he based his conclusion on Orsós's conclusion alone.

Mr. Machrowicz. Was Dr. Orsós' conclusion that the deaths occurred not later than April or May 1940?

Dr. Palmieri. Yes.

Mr. Machrowicz. Did you agree?

Dr. Palmieri. Yes, based on the researches that Dr. Orsós had made.

Palmieri specifically declined to reach any conclusion based on his own experience.

Mr. Machrowicz. From your own experiences and experiments at Katyn did you come to any conclusion as to the time of death of the persons found in these graves?

Dr. Palmieri. I can say no more than when a person is buried between 18 and 30 months to establish the exact time of burial is difficult. (Madden V 1619)

The Germans' claim — now the "official" version — is that the Poles POWs had been shot and buried in April and May, 1940, between 35 and 37 months prior to the April-June German excavation. That means that here Dr. Palmieri *explicitly refused to confirm* that, as Sanford claims, "all the signs indicated that the Poles had been killed between March and May 1940." On the contrary: Palmieri's statements support the Soviet account! But the Madden Commission members failed to mention this fact.

Sanford:

Dr Tramsen testified that the mummification of the bodies caused by the pressure of sand and of other bodies on them confirmed beyond all doubt that the Poles had been buried in the winter clothing in which they had been killed. (Sanford 143)

Tramsen did say that (Madden V 1455). But it proves nothing. The Poles had been captured in September, 1939. Therefore, they had their winter clothing with them at that time. Therefore they could have been wearing it in the fall — September to December 1941 — as well as in April or May 1940. The fact that some of the Poles whose corpses were disinterred at Katyn were dressed in winter clothes says nothing about the time of year they were murdered.

Of the Madden Committee report Sanford states:

The British FO deprecated the inconclusive, one-sided and contradictory evidence on which it was based. The committee had 'an obvious political bias and has not been drawn up in an exclusively judicial fashion'. ... The Republicans used Roosevelt's conspiracy of silence, and worse, over Katyn as part of their 1952 election campaign designed to win over East European ethnic voters away from the Democrats. (143-144)

Cienciala more or less agrees:

The Madden Committee failed to achieve its main goal, a trial of the Katyn case by the United Nations or some other international tribunal.... the Madden Committee was unpopular in Democratic circles not only because it seemed to align itself with McCarthy, but also because many prominent members of the Roosevelt and Truman administrations were charged with suppressing information on Katyn. The same circles also had a generally negative attitude toward the exiled Polish government in London, which was pushing for a trial of the Katyn case. For all these reasons, the hearings received wide publicity in Polish-American but not in mainstream American media. (239)

## **Conclusion**

BU has not been called into doubt in any way by the defenders of the "official" version of Katyn or in any of the critiques they have cited. Much less has it been refuted.

BU remains the most accurate account of the killings at Katyn. Cienciala and Sanford have been blinded by their anticommunist bias; are deliberately lying; or both. Despite their repeated claims, none of the documents they cite refute the BU or the Soviet case as it was set forth at Nuremberg.

## Chapter 12. The Excavations at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy

On August 27, 2014, the following story appeared in The Telegraph of London, UK:

"Stalin-era mass grave found in Ukrainian castle"

Polish and Ukrainian scientists have unearthed a mass grave containing up to a thousand victims of Stalinist terror in a castle once used as a secret police prison.

Among the victims found in the grave are Polish soldiers, and the Polish press has already called the find a "new Katyn" in reference to a massacre of thousands of Poles by Stalin in 1940. The Katyn massacre still clouds Polish-Russian relations.

The grave was found in the grounds of the Kazimierz the Great castle in the town of Volodymyr-Volynsky in western Ukraine, close to the Polish border.

Although the NKVD had a base on the remains of the 13th-Century castle from 1939-1956—except when it was occupied by the Germans—scientists say the victims were killed between 1940 and 1941.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/11059224/Stalin-era-mass-grave-found-in-Ukrainian-castle.html>

In the fall of 2013, a few months after my article in *Socialism and Democracy*<sup>1</sup> was published, the end of the excavations at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy was announced. According to newspaper reports the chief Polish archeologist, Dr. Dominika Siemińska, said that 57 bodies had been exhumed and reburied. In a video interview of Dr. Siemińska two additional badges of Polish policemen are shown. They are badges 1154/III and 639/VII. The first is from the Kiel police district, the second from the Pomorsk district. The Polish language video interview is here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPGFcvETG1Q>

<sup>1</sup> Grover Furr, "The 'Official' Version of the Katyn Massacre Disproven? Discoveries at a German Mass Murder Site in Ukraine." *Socialism and Democracy* 27(2) (August 2013): 96-129.

The important issues here are the following:

\* The Polish report by Dr. Siemińska has been taken off the Internet. The Report was originally online here:

<http://www.kresykedzierzynkozle.home.pl/attachments/File/Rap.pdf>

It is still available at the Internet Archive:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20130203224105/http://www.kresykedzierzynkozle.home.pl/attachments/File/Rap.pdf>

\* Polish and Ukrainian media accounts continue to identify this as a Soviet NKVD mass shooting. The fact that 96% - 98.67% of all the shell casings found there are German and manufactured in 1941 is no longer mentioned. Instead the claim is made that shell casings from the Soviet Tokarev pistol have been found, though no evidence or even numbers are given to substantiate this claim.

### **The Claim that Soviet Pistol Shells Were Found at V-V**

Dr. Siemińska:

Znalezione na miejscu luski z pistoletu TT wskazują, że zostali zabici przez NKWD w 1940 i 1941 roku.

*Translated:*

Shells from the TT<sup>2</sup> pistol found at this place show that they were killed by the NKVD in 1940 and 1941.

<sup>2</sup> „Śladami bestialstwa totalitaryzmu." Dziennik Kijowski No. 2 (January-February 2015), p. 5. At <http://kresy24.pl/wp->

content/uploads/2015/03/Dziennik\_Kijowski\_2\_2015.pdf (TT = Tokarev pistol. See Wikipedia entry at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TT\\_pistol](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TT_pistol) )

Both the Polish and the Ukrainian archeological reports from V-V state that the shells found in the mass graves were overwhelmingly from 9 mm. weapons.

In the video interview given as the excavations were being completed Dr. Siemińska stated that the ammunition found in Grave No. 4 is "smaller than 8 mm."

W przebadanych do tej pory... um, ponad dwustu czaszkach... eh, z mogily numer cztery... eh, jest okolo sto piecdziesieciu... eh, no, sladow, wlotow ... eh, um ... po pociskach... no, i swiadczą one o tym, ze amunicja, którą te osoby zostały rozstrzelane to jest kaliber mniej niz osiem milimetrów, bo te otwory mają okolo - wlotowe - okolo osmiu milimetrów, wiec zostały zrobione... eh, amunicja ponizej osmiu milimetrów.

*Translated:*

In the more than two hundred skulls examined up till this time ... eh, from grave number four ... eh, there are about one hundred fifty ... he, well, traces, entry holes ... eh, well, after missiles ... well, and they testify to the fact that the ammunition with which these people were shot is of a caliber less than eight millimeters, because these openings have entry holes of about eight millimeters, and so they were made by ammunition of less than eight millimeters.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPGFcvETG1Q>

The Tokarev TT pistol takes a 7.62 mm cartridge. This is clearly an attempt to place the blame on the Soviets. She says that "few shell casings were found" in this grave ("Również dość mała ilość łusek znalezionych"). But they are not identified. This too is a false statement. As we have already seen, the Polish archeologist's report counts several hundred shell casings, more than 96% of them German and dated 1941.



As late as September, 2013 Polish reports were still admitting that the victims were shot by Germans in 1941, although the archeologists were expecting to find NKVD victims:

Znaleziono wówczas szczątki 343 osób, a podczas prac w roku kolejnym - 512 osób. Byli to jak oceniamy w większości miejscowi Żydzi, prawdopodobnie zamordowani przez Niemców latem 1941 r. po wejściu do miasta. Generalnie poszukiwaliśmy w tym miejscu ofiar NKWD, jednak podczas oględzin szczątków okazało się, że sposób mordowania wskazuje na Niemców. Są tam pogrzebane całe rodziny, w większości kobiety i dzieci, czego NKWD jednak raczej nie robiło, wysyłając ich zwykle na Syberię. Szczątki były niemal pozbawione ubrań i przedmiotów osobistych. Wskazywałoby to na Niemców, którzy rozstrzelali ludzi wpedzonych do dołu śmierci. Sprawstwo hitlerowskie wydaje się też potwierdzać odnaleziona niemiecka amunicja z 1941 r. - opowiadał naczelnik wydziału zagranicznego Rady Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa Maciej Dancewicz.<sup>3</sup>

*Translated:*

They found at that time the remains of 343 people, and during the work in the next year — 512 people. They were as we believe, mostly local Jews, probably murdered by the Germans in the summer of 1941 when they entered the city. Generally we were looking for the victims of the NKVD at this site, but during the examination of the remains it turned out that the manner of killing points to the Germans. There are buried entire families, mostly women and children, what the NKVD did not do; they usually sent them to Siberia. The remains were almost devoid of clothes and personal items. This would point to the Germans, who shot down people whom they drove to the death pit. Nazi perpetration also seems to be confirmed by German ammunition from 1941 that has been found. — said the head of the foreign department of the Council for Protection of Memory of Combat and Martyrdom Maciej Dancewicz.

<sup>3</sup> „Ludzkie szczątki odkryte we Włodzimierzu Wołyńskim. 'Zamordowani strzałem w głowę'” At <http://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-z-kraju,3/ludzkie->

szczatki-odkryte-we-wlodzimierzu-wolynskim-zamordowani-strzałem-w-glowe,354815.html (Accessed June 16 2015)

In *Nasz Dziennik* of September 24, 2013 Dr. Siemińska is still talking about "the identification of a person on the Mednoe list" and that "most shell cases are also of German production":

Tu również udało s i ~ zidentyfikowac osobę, która była na liście z Miednoje — zaznacza dr Dominika Siemińska.

„Większość łusek również produkcji niemieckiej, z tej samej serii, co poprzednio, ...”

*Translated:*

Here we also managed to identify a person who is on the Mednoe list — says Dr. Dominika Siemińska.

"Most of the shells are also of German production, from the same series as before..."

- „Kim są ofiary z Włodzimierza?" - *Nasz Dziennik*- Sept. 24 2013.  
At <http://www.naszdziennik.pl/polska-kraj/54675>

Research published by Prof. Ivan Katchanovski that these victims were shot by the Germans and by their Ukrainian Nationalist allies is ignored.

"Katyn in Reverse in Ukraine: Nazi-led Massacres turned into Soviet Massacres." - <http://www.opednews.com/articles/Katyn-in-Reverse-in-Ukraine-by-Ivan-Katchanovski-121212-435.html>

"ОУН(б) и нацистские массовые убийства летом 1941 года на исторической Волинии." ("Mass murders by the OUN(b) and the Nazis in the summer of 1941 in historic Volhynia.") - [www1.ku-eichstaett.de/ZIMOS/forum/docs/forumruss22/15Kachanovskij.pdf](http://www1.ku-eichstaett.de/ZIMOS/forum/docs/forumruss22/15Kachanovskij.pdf)

"Owning a massacre; 'Ukraine' Katyn'. Open Democracy 10.26.2011. - <https://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/ivan-katchanovski/owning-massacre-ukraines-katyn>

The Polish archeologists' report, written and signed by Dr. Dominika Siemińska herself in November 2011 is simply not mentioned. That report concluded that the mass murders at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy were committed by the Germans, not by the Soviets,

\* Two more badges of Polish policemen were found before the excavations were shut down.

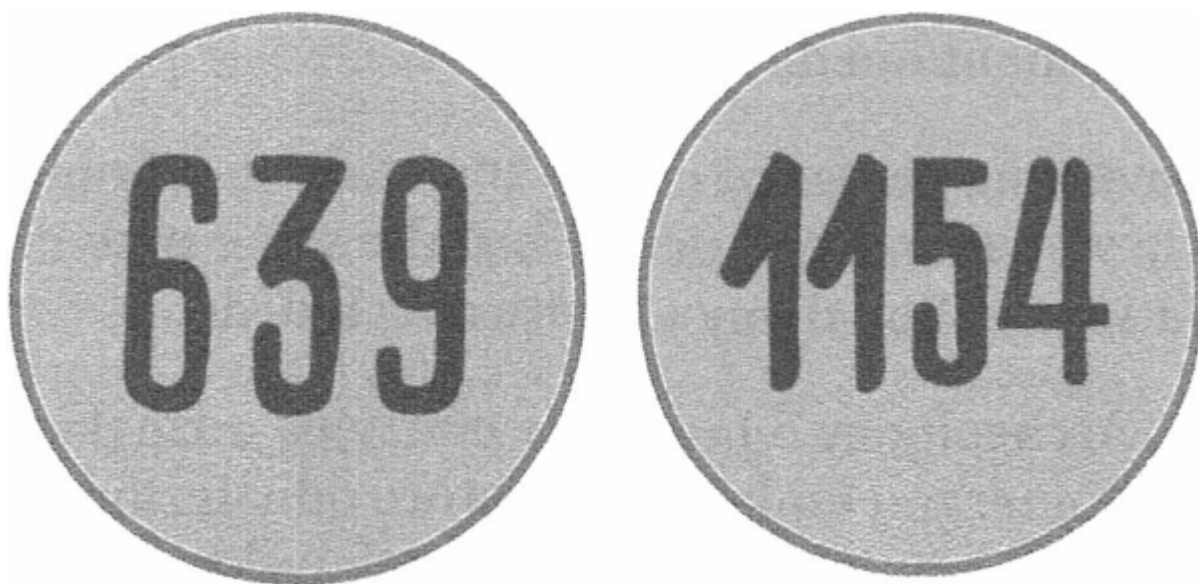
Znaleźliśmy polskie guziki wojskowe... znaleźliśmy fragmenty mundurów policyjnych... no, ale najważniejsze znaleziska to są... um, znaki ewidencyjne policjantów polskich. Dwa są zachowane w całości i wiemy, że jeden należał do... eh, funkcjonariusza z komen... z okręgu... eh, pomorskiego a drugi z okręgu... eh, kieleckiego. Trzeci — niestety! — zachował się tylko w fragmencie i jest... eh, ulamany w ten sposób, że zachował się tylko fragment numeru, więc nie możemy nawet powiedzieć z jakiego okręgu.

... Um, jeden to jest... um, ten z okręgu... um, pomorskiego: to jest sześćset trzydzieści dziewięć; ten z okręgu kieleckiego to jest tysiąc sto pięćdziesiąt cztery, a ten zachowany w kaw... w fragmencie numer to jest osiemset trzydzieści sześć.

*Translated:*

We have found Polish military buttons ... we found fragments of police uniforms ... but the most important finds are ... um, registration marks of Polish policemen. The two are preserved in their entirety, and we know that one belonged to ... eh, an officer of the Pomorsze [Pomeranian] district and the other from the district... eh, of Kielce. The third — alas! — is preserved only in a fragment and is ... eh, chipped in such a way that only a fragment of the number has been preserved, so we cannot even say from which district.

...Um, one is ... um, the one from the ... um, Pomorsze [Pomeranian] district: it is number six hundred thirty nine; the one from the Kielce district is one thousand one hundred fifty-four, and this preserved in fragments is eight hundred thirty six.



*Images 12.1 and 12.2* Artist's rendering of additional Polish policemen's badges unearthed at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy. Polish officials have refused to identify them.

But the owners of these badges have not been publicly identified by Polish authorities. Earlier, before the significance of the Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy excavations for the Katyn issue was fully recognized, Ludwik Małowiejski's and Jozef Kuligowski's badges were quickly associated with their owners.

We should remember that the badges of Kuligowski and Małowiejski were found in the same mass graves in 2010 and 2011. According to the "official" version these two Polish policemen were shot at Kalinin (now Tver') and buried nearby at Mednoe. Memorial plaques bearing their names are displayed at the memorial graveyard at Mednoe along with more than 6300 other such plaques. The discovery of their badges at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy, Ukraine, 700 miles (1200 km) away, led to some publicity. This in turn led to the initial article by Sergei Strygin, in Russian, and my own more detailed article in English, pointing out that this discovery undermines the "official" version of Katyn.

Today a "curtain of silence" has descended over these discoveries. There are many more than 57 bodies in these mass graves — hundreds, in fact. But the excavations have been ended. The evidence that the victims were

murdered by the Germans and Ukrainian fascists, not the Soviets, is hushed up. Soviet guilt is simply stated as a "fact" rather than investigated. The question of the shell casings is no longer mentioned.

This revealing sentence can be found in an article in a Lublin (Poland) newspaper dated October 21, 2013, at the same time that the excavations at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy were concluded:

Archeolodzy odnalezli pojedyncze policyjne odznaki z numerami funkcjonariuszy, ale te, które odnaleziono do tej pory, nalezaly do policjantów, którzy, jak wskazują zachowane dokumenty, zostali zabici przez Sowietów w zupełnie innym miejscu - w Twerze.

*Translated:*

Archeologists have found individual police badges with numbers of officers, but those that have been found so far belonged to policemen who, according to documents that have been preserved, had been killed by the Soviets in a completely different place — in Tver'.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> "Wojskowe guziki w masowej mogile. Odkrycie na Wołyniu." *Gazeta.pl* Lublin October 21, 2013. At [http://lublin.gazeta.pl/lublin/1,48724,14812213,Wojskowe\\_guziki\\_w\\_masowej\\_mogile\\_Odkrycie\\_na\\_Wolyniu.html](http://lublin.gazeta.pl/lublin/1,48724,14812213,Wojskowe_guziki_w_masowej_mogile_Odkrycie_na_Wolyniu.html)

This story appeared at the same time as the interview with Dr. Siemińska, the Polish archeologist — the same interview where the two additional Polish policemen's badges, numbers 1154/III and 639/VII are pictured (see above).

It is possible that these badges too belong to supposed "Katyn massacre" victims. If they are not, then why haven't the policemen to whom these badges belonged been publicly identified?

But this information has not been made public. The whole matter is being hushed up, kept quiet. This in itself is evidence, if not a virtual admission, that the Polish and Ukrainian governments know that the "official" Soviets-

did-it version has been seriously compromised by the discovery of these badges.

All the newspaper articles that report on the ending of the excavations at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy claim, without evidence of any kind, that the Poles who were shot there were shot by the Soviet NKVD while the Jews and other civilians were shot by the Germans. As we have seen, according to all the evidence the Poles too were murdered by the Germans and their Ukrainian allies. Most articles from the fall of 2013 ignore the Katyn connection completely.

A joint Polish-Ukrainian ceremony presented the bodies as victims of the NKVD, despite a multitude of evidence strongly indicating that these were victims of the Germans and their Ukrainian nationalist collaborators. These collaborators are celebrated as national heroes by today's Ukrainian state.

The YouTube interview of Dr. Siemińska carries the following paragraph:

Znalezione polskie odznaki policyjne w kolejnych mogilach we Włodzimierzu Wołyńskim mogą pomóc w ustaleniu nazwisk ofiar. Odznaka o numerze 1154 należała do policjanta z okręgu kieleckiego, natomiast o numerze 639 to policjanta z okręgu pomorskiego. Skala mordów, odkrywane nowe pochówki powodują, że badania polskich i ukraińskich archeologów muszą być kontynuowane w przyszłym roku. Tematem jest również zainteresowana Fundacja Niepodległości, która wspiera prace poszukiwawcze ofiar komunizmu w Polsce.

*Translated:*

The Polish police badges found in subsequent graves in Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy can help in establishing the names of the victims. The badge number 1154 belonged to a policeman from the Kieck district, while number 639 was a policeman from the Pomeranian district. The scale of murders and the new burials discovered mean that the research of Polish and Ukrainian archaeologists should be continued next year. This topic is also of interest to the Independence Foundation, which supports the search for victims of communism in Poland.

It appears that the Polish and Ukrainian governments do not want to find more "Katyn victims" where they are not supposed to be.

- \* The excavations and exhumations have been stopped.

- \*No DNA testing has been reported.

- \* The names of Kuligowski and Małowiejski are not mentioned any longer in connection with the Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy excavations. This despite the fact that the discovery of their badges is by far the most historically significant, as well as the most newsworthy, aspect of this excavation.

- \* It is now conceded that Jews shot by the Nazis were also buried in these mass graves. But the fact that the Polish materials, including the policemen's badges, were buried in the same mass graves, is now passed over in silence.

- \* The claim is now made that the Poles were shot by the NKVD as the German army was advancing. This claim, like any claim, requires demonstration — evidence, proof — not a simple assertion. But no evidence is given.

- \* The "Sardinenpackung" form of burial of the victims in one mass grave, characteristic of the Nazi Einsatzkommando group led by Jeckeln, identified by the Polish archeologist Dr. Dominika Siemińska in the now-suppressed Polish archeological report, and clearly evident in the photograph reproduced in that report, is no longer mentioned.

This cruel method of execution and burial, in which victims were forced to lie down in rows on top of other victims who had been executed before and were then shot, was characteristic of a German SS killing squad's methods.

- \*We noted in a previous chapter that Ukrainian archeologist Oleksei Zlatohors'kiy protested this finding because it cast doubt on the preconceived notion that the NKVD had murdered the Polish POWs at Katyn.

The vital point is that Kuligowski and Małowiejski were in Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy in 1941 at all. Their presence means that the Polish POWs named in the Soviet "transit" or "shipment" lists, published by Tucholski, of Poles shipped out of the three POW camps in April and May 1940 were not being shipped to execution.

The "official" version of the Katyn massacre rests on the assumption that the POWs were shipped to execution and were executed in April and May 1940. This is only an assumption. The corpses of those supposedly shot by the Soviets at Kalinin (Tver') and Kharkiv have never been found, much less counted or identified. Kuligowski's and Małowiejski's memorial tablets remain at Mednoe outside of Tver' even though they were in fact murdered more than a year later and more than 700 miles away in Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy and the Polish authorities, who know this, have not removed them. They are "pretending" that the discoveries at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy never happened.

The fact that their bodies are not there suggests that the bodies of the other Polish POWs are not there either. *There is no evidence that any of these men whose names are recorded on the thousands of memorial tables at Mednoe and Piatykhatky, were in fact executed there and are buried there.*

The fact that Kuligowski and Małowiejski were buried in a mass grave associated with German ammunition dated 1941 and in a location associated with German mass executions of Jews and others constitutes very strong evidence that they and others were shot by the Germans. But no matter who shot these Polish policemen in Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy in 1941, they were not shot at Kalinin (Tver') in April-May 1940. This alone fatally undermines the "official" Soviets-did-it version of the Katyn massacre.

We should understand this cover-up, this "conspiracy of silence," as an admission that the Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy excavations have dismantled the "official" version of the Katyn massacre. There is no other version involving Soviet guilt.

The only other version of the massacres of Polish POWs that is known as "Katyn" is that of the Burdenko Commission, which concluded that the Germans shot the Polish POWs at Katyn. At this point, the only hypothesis



supported by the evidence now available is that the Germans were guilty of the mass murders known as the "Katyn massacre."

As the "official" version of Katyn becomes more and more called into doubt there may be some attempt in the future to "reinterpret" the Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy discoveries to try to account for the presence of Kuligowski's and Małowiejski's badges. Documents may be fabricated and brought forward in a fraudulent attempt to "prove" that Kuligowski and Małowiejski were among a small number of "exceptions" who were not executed at Kalinin in 1940. Or some other attempt will be made to salvage the "official" version.

Whatever subterfuge may be invented in future, we can confidently predict that the truth will be denied. The "official" version is too valuable as a stick with which to beat Stalin, the Soviet Union and the communist movement, to let the truth get in the way.

## Chapter 13. The 'Ukrainian Trail of Katyn'

Cienciala introduces the "Ukrainian trail" as follows:

While much is known about the fate of the prisoners of war in the three special camps, the same does not apply to those held in the NKVD prisons of the western regions of Ukraine and Belorussia who were transferred to NKVD prisons in Kiev, Kharkov, Kherson, and Minsk following Beria's order of 22 March 1940 (**doc. 53**). According to Beria's resolution, approved by the Politburo on 5 March, these prisoners were also to be shot. Beria stated that out of a total of 18, 632 persons arrested and held in the NKVD prisons, 10,685 were Poles (**doc. 47**). However, in a document of March 1959, the number of those shot in the prisons was given as 7,305 (**doc. 110**). **The lists of victims shot in Ukraine have been found; the total number is 3,435, more than 2,000 of whom have been identified.** Their burial sites are unknown, but since Beria ordered them to be moved to NKVD jails in Kiev, Kharkov, and Kherson, presumably they were buried in or near each of these cities.<sup>27</sup> The lists must have included at least some of the prisoners whom Merkulov ordered on 22 February 1940 to be taken out of the three camps and transported to NKVD prisons (doc. 42). Most, however, seem to have been arrested and jailed in western Ukraine (East Galicia), which was part of interwar Poland. (Cienciala 136)

Note 27, page 481 to this passage reads:

27. See Zuzanna Gajowniczek, ed., *Ukraiński Ślad Katynia* [The Ukrainian Trail of Katyn] (Warsaw, 1995); the identifications were made by Gajowniczek. This publication, made possible by the cooperation of the Ukrainian and Polish Security Services, contains thirty-four lists of victims. The lists were sent with a cover letter dated 25 November 1940 by GB 1st Lieutenant Feodor A. Tsvetukhin to the head of the NKVD 1st Special Department, Moscow, GB Major Leonid F. Bashtakov. Tsvetukhin, head of the 1st Special Department, Ukraine, 1939-1940, wrote that he was enclosing 3,435 files in five

sacks (p. xxii). **The list numbers are from the same series as those for the three special camps** that Gorbachev gave to General Jaruzelski in Moscow on 13 April 1990, when the Soviet news agency TASS admitted Soviet guilt for the Katyn massacre (doc. 117).

Document 53 (Cienciala 154-156) is Beria's order of March 22, 1940, to transfer 3000 prisoners from prisons in the Western Ukraine to prisons in Central Ukraine. There is, of course, nothing said about murdering them. Nor does it even say that the prisoners are Poles. As we shall see, many of them were not.

Western Ukraine, part of Poland since 1921 when it was taken by the Polish army from a weakened Soviet Russia, was reunited with the Eastern Ukraine in October 1939. The population was made up of Ukrainians, Poles, Jews, and a smattering of other nationalities, with Poles being a minority.

Beria's order of March 22, 1940, unlike the "Beria Letter" (document 47), which is one of the forgeries in CP, is not concerned with the nationalities of the prisoners at all. It does contain this interesting passage:

6) USSR Deputy People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, Divisional Commander Com. Chernyshov, shall within ten days' time remove from their NKVD places of imprisonment in the Ukrainian SSR **and send to USSR NKVD correctional labor camps 8,000 convicted prisoners, including 3,000 from the Kiev, Kharkov, and Kherson prisons.**

Józef Kuligowski and Ludwik Małowiejski, Polish policemen who had been transferred out of Ostashkov POW camp to the NKVD in Kalinin, Russia, ended up in the Western Ukraine, where they were killed by the Germans and their Ukrainian Nationalist allies. They were probably in a correctional labor camp, along with other Polish POW, perhaps many of them, who are now fraudulently listed as "Katyn victims."

The "Beria Letter" in CP states:

In the prisons of the western oblasts of Ukraine and Belorussia a total of 18,632 arrested people (including 10,685 Poles) are being held...

However, the "Shelepin Letter" of March 1959 — also one of the CP documents — gives a different the number of persons shot in western Ukraine and western Belorussia:

On the basis of the decision by the special Troika of the NKVD USSR, a total of 21,857 persons were shot; of these ... 7,305 persons were shot in other camps and prisons of western Ukraine and western Belorussia. (Cienciala 332)

It is no wonder that 11,000 (or 10,685), the number of prisoners in W. Ukraine and W. Belorussia to be shot according to the "Beria Letter", and 7305, the number "shot" according to the "Shelepin Letter," are very different. All the evidence we have suggests that these two forgeries were done at very different times: the "Beria Letter" during the Gorbachev years, the "Shelepin Letter" during Khrushchev's time.

Cienciala states: "The lists of victims shot in Ukraine have been found." This is false. There is no indication in the book in question, Zuzanna Gajowniczek, ed., *Ukraiński Ślad Katynia*, that the prisoners on these lists were shot. These are simply lists of names, many of them recognizably Ukrainian.

The only thing that suggests any relation to what we know as "Katyn" is the fact that the NKVD list numbers are in the same sequence as the NKVD file numbers of the Polish POWs shipped out of Kozel'sk, Starobel'sk, and Ostashkov. But we know that the prisoners shipped to the Smolensk, Khar'kov, and Kalinin NKVD were not shot there, because many of the Starobel'sk and Ostashkov prisoners turned up dead at Katyn, and at least two Ostashkov POWs turned up dead in Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy.

The list numbers appear to be related to NKVD Convoy troops. Abarinov discovered that Convoy battalion No. 136 transported prisoners to Ukraine as well as to Smolensk. According to Abarinov:

[[cyrillic]]Изучая книгу приказов по 136-му батальону, я изумился числу конвоев, отправившихся в апреле-мае 1940 года по одному и тому же маршруту: Смоленск западные области Украины и Белоруссии.<sup>1</sup>

Translated:

Studying the book of orders of the 136<sup>th</sup> battalion I was struck by the number of convoys that set out in April-May 1940 on one and the same route: Smolensk to and from Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia.

<sup>1</sup> Vladimir Abarinov. *Katynskii labirint*. Moscow: Novosti, 1991, p. 75.

There are actually two editions of this "Ukrainian trail of Katyn." *Listy Katyńskiej Ciąg Dalszy* (Warsaw: Zeszyty Katynskie, 1994), and the Gajowniczek book mentioned above, *Ukraiński Ślad Katynia* (Warsaw, 1995). The first gives the names of the prisoners in alphabetical order, citing the list number in each case as well. The second orders them according to the list number.

### **The SBU List**

We are fortunate to have yet one more list, albeit a partial one. This is an original archival list from a branch state archive of the Ukrainian SBU, the Security Service of Ukraine, the equivalent of the Russian FSB. It contains a little more than 900 names. But it gives much more detail than the two published lists above. Sergei Romanov, who discovered this list, has helpfully scanned it and made it available online for downloading.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> At <http://katynfiles/content/gdasbu-1.html>

We can learn a lot about the nature of this "Ukrainian list" by comparing Romanov's archival SBU list with the two published lists we have. The SBU list has page numbers in the upper right-hand corner. We will refer here to these numbers for reference. For the Ukrainian list we will use

Gajowniczek, ed., Ukraiński Siad Katynia, abbreviated US, and *Listy Katyńskiej Ciąg Dalszy*, abbreviated LK.

Romanov notes that 4 of the 6 men mentioned as Trotskyists on SBU 17-18 "are on the Ukrainian list." In reality 5 are on the Ukrainian list: Stefan Bojko (#243, LK 8, US 174); Michal Jacuszko (#3453, LK 34, US 171); Włodzimierz Kuliniak (# 1593, LK 50 US 173); Iwan Jurkiw (#3378, LK 37 US 171). Iwan Kozar' is also on the list (#1459, LK 46 US 114).

Five of these six men are listed as "Ukrainian." All are identified as, and were no doubt arrested as, "active members of a Trotskyist organization in the Dorogobych raion."

So the so-called "Ukrainian list" contains names of persons who were not even Poles. There is also no evidence that they were shot. Only investigations and interrogations about their Trotskyist activities are mentioned.

Clearly, none of these men had anything to do with Katyn. This invalidates the whole idea of a "Ukrainian list." But we would never know this from the entries in LK and US. We know it only because Romanov found this later archival documentation.

In LK the published "Ukrainian list" is subtitled:

LISTA OBYWATELI POLSKICH ZAMORDOWANYCH NA  
UKRAINIE NA PODSTAWIE DECYZJI BIURA POLITYCZNEGO  
WKP (b) I NACZELNYCH WŁADZ PANSTWOWYCH ZSRR Z 5  
MARCA 1940 ROKU.

*Translated:*

List of Polish citizens murdered in Ukraine on the basis of the decision of the Politburo of the AUCP(b)<sup>3</sup> and the government of the USSR of 5 March 1940.

<sup>3</sup> All-Union Communist Party (bolshevik), the formal name of the Bolshevik party from December 1925 until October 1952.

This subtitle is yet another lie. There is no evidence that these men were killed. The Polish editors chose this name so that it would appear to confirm the "official" version.

The archival document (p. 18) states that on May 5 and 7, 1940, the six accused Trotskyists were transferred from the Ukrainian NKVD to the NKVD of the USSR. Thereafter, whatever happened to them happened outside the Ukraine.

Page 78 of the archival list concerns Vladimir Filaretovich Perventsev who, along with his case file, was transferred to the NKVD of the USSR — again, outside the Ukraine. He is in LK 72, US 203. He is described on the archival list, p. 197, #233, as a "leader of Russian nationalists." A two-part article online about Russian émigrés in Poland identifies Perventsev as a regional leader of an anti-Soviet Russian organization.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Sergiy Tkachov, "Rossiiskaia emigratsiia v mezhvoennom Pol'she." (The Russian emigration in Interwar Poland), at <http://www.mochola.org/russiaabroad/tkachref1.htm> and following. Perventsev is mentioned at <http://www.mochola.org/russiaabroad/tkachref4.htm> and <http://www.mochola.org/russiaabroad/tkachref5.htm>

Romanov says th at Perventsev was "shot as a Polish citizen. " This is a lie. There is no evidence that he was shot, or of what became of him. Whatever happened to him most likely happened because he had been a leading organizer of an anti-Soviet group of Russian émigrés, not "as a Polish citizen."

Page 100 of the archival document identifies two persons who were not shot: Boleslav Vladimirovich Turowskii and Vladimir Iosifovich Goninchak. Turowski, U k. Li st #2989 (LK 100 US 16) was not shot. A note on LK 100 states that Turowski was sentenced on March 8, 1941, to 5 years in a corrective labor camp and later released "for permanent residence."

Goninchak is, more accurately, Haninczak. He is also on the "Katyn" Starobel'sk list published by Tucholski: (p. 929 #929 [sic] and p. 415 col.

2):

[[cyrillic]]929: ГАНИНЧАК Владимир Юзефович

Haninczak Włodzimierz

Prezes lub wiceprezes Sądu Okręgowego

we Lwowie (President or Vice President of the District Court in Lwów.).

This entry from Tucholski is reproduced on page 159 of the "Khar'kov Cemetery Book," Księga Cmentarna Charkow (Warsaw, 2003).

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**Włodzimierz HANINZAK** s. Jósefa, ur. 1883. Prezes lub wiceprezes Sądu Okręgowego we Lwowie, bdd.

L.S. 929, J. Tucholski, Mord w Katyniu.

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So, according to the "official" version Haninczak was murdered at Khar'kov and buried at Piatykhatky. The Polish Wikipedia article on him also claims that he was killed "in the Spring of 1940"

([https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Włodzimierz\\_Haninczak](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Włodzimierz_Haninczak) ) This is another example of how dishonest the whole "official" version of Katyn is.

There is no evidence that Haninczak was executed at all! Quite the contrary: page 100 of the archival document states that there was an investigative file on Haninczak dated February 24, 1941, which has been destroyed. This suggests that Haninczak was still alive as of about that date. We know that Turowski, who is discussed on the same page, was not shot at all.

Moreover, there is no evidence that *any* of the persons on this list were executed! This is simply "assumed" by defenders of the "official" version.



## Persons on the Archival List Arrested Long After the "Beria Letter"

At least 9 prisoners on this archival list, and on the "Ukrainian list," were arrested in late 1940 or in 1941. They are:

- Uk. list #285 (LK 285 US 14) — Filimon BOJAR, this list p. 171 #312. Arrested October 20 1940 as a "Polish spy"
- Uk. list #286 (LK 9 US 31) — Wawrzyniec Brazuk, this list p. 202 #286 [sic]. Arrested December 21 1940 as a "former officer of the White Army."
- Uk. list #3089 (LK 12 US 50) — Wiktor CHAJES, this list p. 203 #295 — arrested November 15 1940 as a member of an organization of "Zionists" (quotation marks in original).
- Uk. List #2329 (LK 74 US 191) — Edward Podgórski, this list p. 205 #6. Arrested October 10 1940 as a (civilian) Polish policeman.
- Uk. list #3292 (LK 96 US 16) — Karol Szykowski, this list p. 206 #12. Arrested December 3 1940 as a former White émigré.
- Uk. List #2441 (LK 78 US 198) — Stanislaw Ratajczak, this list p. 223 #149. Arrested September 18 1940 as a (civilian) Polish policeman.
- Uk. List #2502 (LK 78 US 52) — Kazimierz Rodziewicz, this list p. 232 #224. Arrested September 26 1940 as "an agent of the Polish police."
- Uk. List #930 (LK 18 US 187) — Josef Dolbniak, this list p. 144 #37. Arrested April 21 1941 as a Polish policeman.
- Uk. List missing (not in LK or US) — Mechislaw Kulianda, this list p. 236 #258, Arrested November 30 1940 as a "large-scale merchant and member of the "OZN" party.

All the men listed above were arrested much later than March 5, 1940. One, Josef Dolbniak, was not even arrested until April 1941. Obviously none of them could have had nothing to do with any decision taken on March 5 1940 even if the "Beria letter" were genuine.

In addition, one prisoner, arrested in 1939, was charged with a criminal offense (Uk. list #3418; LK 38 US 197) — Bołestaw Janicki, this list p. 207 #19. Arrested on October 7 1939 "as a participant in a counterrevolutionary

Polish organization, a police agent, who committed a murder [of someone] for revolutionary activity, transferred to the NKVD of the USSR on May 28, 1940."

US does not mention the reason for Janicki's arrest. It just states that he was "a gymnasium teacher in Tarnopol" (Ukraine). This appears to be a cover-up — an attempt to make an accused murderer look like an innocent victim.

### **List Numbers**

Boleslaw Janicki is #46 in on list 64/1 (US 197). He was arrested on October 7, 1939. Stanislaw Ratajczak is #60 on the same list, 64/1. He was arrested on September 26, 1940, almost a year after Janicki.

Since these numbers are those of the NKVD convoys — the defenders of the "official" version say they are, and it is logical to assume this — that means that *all 100* of the men on this list were alive as of late September — early October 1940. (US 143-148)

Edward Podgórski is #98 on list 66/2. He was arrested on October 10, 1940. Josef Dolbniak is #20 in list 66/2. He was arrested on April 21 1941, more than six months later than Podgórski. They were both in the same convoy, therefore, and this convoy did not depart until May 1941 or later. That also means that *everyone on the list — 100 men —* was alive as of May, 1941. (US 186-191)

The same conclusion must be drawn for everyone whose name is on a list with one of the men above who was arrested long after March 1940. What's more, there is no evidence that any of these men were executed at any time.

Naturally, these lists of names could not have had any relation to the "Beria Letter," which complains about anti-Soviet sentiments among prisoners as of early March 1940. We know from other evidence that the "Beria Letter" is a fake.

### **Other Matters of Interest:**

\* Uk. List #29 (LK 2 US 44) — Edmund Ambicki, this list p. 202 #284. Arrested as a German spy. This detail is not mentioned in LK or US.

\* Uk. List #1016 (LK 36 US 26) — Wladislaw Jedrzejewski — this list p. 202 #287. Arrested in Lvov as "leader of a fascist military plot." US says "organizer of the civic guard in Lwów in September 1939."

The Polish Wikipedia page on him — [http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Władysław\\_Jędrzejewski\\_\(generał\)](http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Władysław_Jędrzejewski_(generał)) — claims he either died in Prison in Lwów in March 1940 or was shot in 1939. This is simply a lie. The Poles have no information about any of this. It is part of the fictional "official" version of Katyn.

\* Uk. List #2184 (LK 71 US 135) — Abrasim Pawelka — this list p. 208 #28 — Uk. Ślad p. 135 #3 — "former OUN organizer, took part in Jewish pogroms" Neither LK nor US say anything about him.

Not only viciously anti-Semitic, the OUN was murderously anti-Polish. In 1943 OUN forces murdered about 100,000 Polish civilians in Western Ukraine in order to "ethnically cleanse" it of non-Ukrainians.

This little-known mass murder — an instance of true genocide, as it was an attempt to wipe out the Polish population — is called the "Volhynia Massacre" (Polish: *rzeź wołyńska*). To this day the Ukrainian nationalists prefer to call this the "Volhynian Tragedy" ([[cyrillic]]Волинська трагедія), as though it were some unfortunate event other than Ukrainian nationalist mass murder. The forces that committed this genocide are officially declared "heroes" of the Ukrainian nation today.

\* Uk. List p. 73 #2311 (LK 73 US 193) — Stefan Piśmienny — this list p. 234 #249. Arrested as "chief of the military chancellery of the Petliura government, chief of a Polish counter-revolutionary organization." ([[cyrillic]]«начальника военной канцелярии правительства Петлюры, начальник польской к-р организацию».) US identifies him as "zam. wieś Żarzyna pow. Równe" — a resident of the village of Zarzyn in the county (powiat) of Równe. That is, just an ordinary citizen.

This appears to be another cover-up. Simon Petliura was leader of an anti-Bolshevik nationalist army during the Civil War. His forces organized a number of pogroms against Jews. He was assassinated by a Jewish man whose family had been killed in anti-Jewish pogroms and who considered Petliura responsible. Ukrainian nationalists consider him a hero. The Bolsheviks considered him a criminal. They would naturally have considered Pismienny a criminal too.

### **Who Are the People On This List?**

My study of the 900 or so entries on the archival list published online by Romanov shows that the following are the most common identifications of the persons arrested:

Policemen; Polish army officers or former army officers; members of Polish nationalist groups (OZON, Związek Strzelecki, Związek Walki Zbrojnej, ZWZ)<sup>5</sup>; members of Ukrainian nationalist groups (OUN, Petliurists); Polish General Staff; employees of the Polish judicial system (e.g. judges); jailers; border crossers; members of other "c-r [counterrevolutionary] groups"; business and factory owners; landowners; merchants; Polish intelligence; Polish government employees; former White officers; Zionists; people who were actively anti-Soviet; *osadniki*; Polish politicians.

Plus: one Russian nationalist; one German spy (Ambicki, above)

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<sup>5</sup> OZON — Obóz Zjednczenia Narodowego (English: Camp of National Unity) — was a fascist, militarist, anti-Semitic organization. (See [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obóz\\_Zjednoczenia\\_Narodowego](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Obóz_Zjednoczenia_Narodowego) ; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp\\_of\\_National\\_Unity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camp_of_National_Unity) )

For "Związek Strzelecki" see [https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Związek\\_Strzelecki](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Związek_Strzelecki) ; [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riflemen's\\_Association](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riflemen's_Association)

For Związek Walki Zbrojnej see  
[https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Związek\\_Walki\\_Zbrojnej](https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Związek_Walki_Zbrojnej) ;  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Union\\_of\\_Armed\\_Struggle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Union_of_Armed_Struggle)

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The *osadniki*, or "settlers," were persons, often military men, sent to "settle" Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine after they had been taken from Soviet Russia in the Polish-Soviet war of 1918-1921. These areas had a minority Polish population. These "settlers" constituted the imperialist infrastructure sent to "polonize" — "make more Polish" — these areas. They were in charge of the intense cultural and political oppression conducted by the prewar Polish government against the native Belorussian, Ukrainian, and Jewish populations. After the Soviets retook these areas in September 1939 and reunited Belorussia and Ukraine they deported the "settlers" and their families.

## **Conclusion**

This so-called "Ukrainian List of Katyn" list is a fraud. It has nothing to do with Katyn. It is not a list of persons executed or to be executed. It is just a list of persons who were convoyed from one place to another. It is not comprised only of Poles. There are many non-Poles — Ukrainians and Jews — on it, including anti-Polish persons (OUN members) and anti-Semites.

The occupations given on this list suggest that this is largely a partial list of the many Poles residents who were considered to be part of the Polish imperialist infrastructure within Western Ukraine. This is the kind of people the Soviets arrested and deported after they retook possession of the Western Ukraine in September 1939.

## **Forged "Ukrainian Documents of Katyn"**

In the summer of 2009 on the official internet site of the Ukrainian State Security (SBU) there appeared three documents that purport to be letters of high officials of the 1960s Ukrainian KGB. These were published by the "Memorial Society," a ferociously anticommunist organization whose officials have been involved in a number of falsifications.

[http://memorial.kiev.ua/images/stories/2009/06/05\\_001\\_arhivna\\_sprava.pdf](http://memorial.kiev.ua/images/stories/2009/06/05_001_arhivna_sprava.pdf)

[http://memorial.kiev.ua/images/stories/2009/06/05\\_002\\_harkiv\\_shelestu\\_1969.pdf](http://memorial.kiev.ua/images/stories/2009/06/05_002_harkiv_shelestu_1969.pdf)

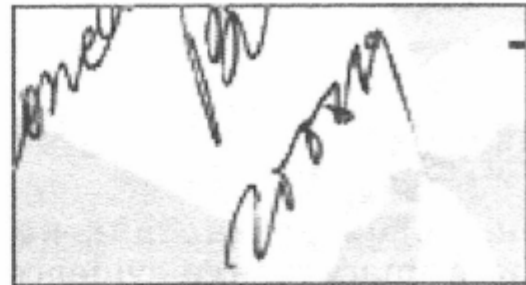
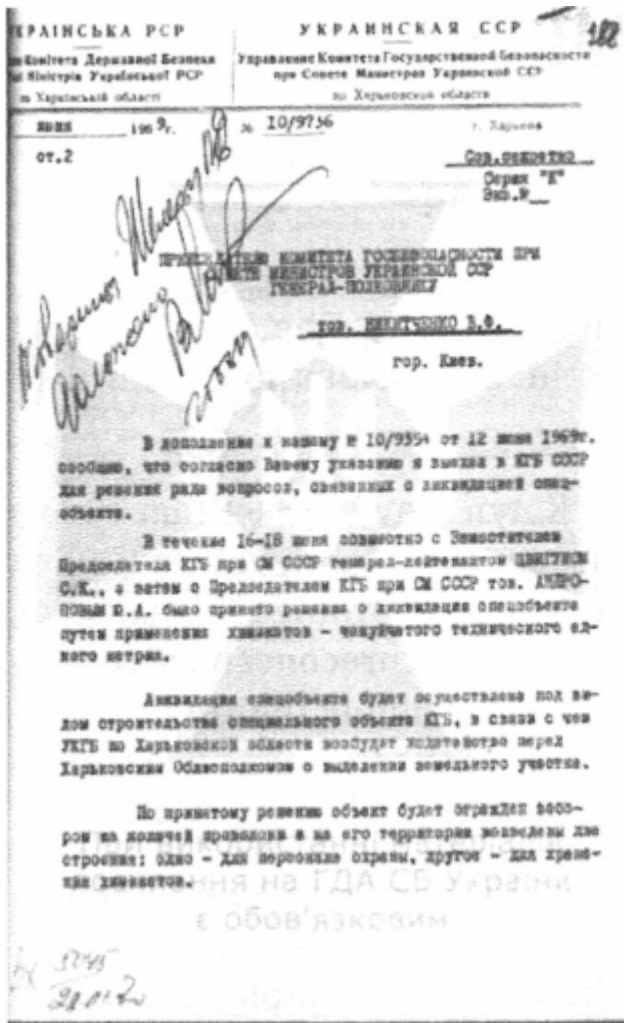
[http://memorial.kiev.ua/images/stories/2009/06/05\\_005\\_andropov\\_harkiv.pdf](http://memorial.kiev.ua/images/stories/2009/06/05_005_andropov_harkiv.pdf)

[http://memorial.kiev.ua/images/stories/2009/06/05\\_008\\_andropov\\_zny\\_schennia\\_slidiv.pdf](http://memorial.kiev.ua/images/stories/2009/06/05_008_andropov_zny_schennia_slidiv.pdf)

In two of the letters, under the stamp "Top Secret, Eyes Only" (*sovershenno sekretno, tol'lw lichno*) the Chairman of the KGB of the Ukrainian SSR V. Nikitchenko informs Petro Shelest, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine and the Chairman of the KGB of the USSR Iurii Andropov that in the woods near the village of Piatykhatky children had accidentally discovered "a mass grave." Nikitchenko also states that it had been "determined that in this place in 1940 the UNKVD of Khar'kov oblast' had buried a considerable number / several thousand / officers and generals of bourgeois Poland who had been shot..."

In the third letter, also marked "Top Secret" (*sov. sekretno*), dated June 1959, general-major P. Feshchenko, chief of the Directorate of State Security of Khar'kov oblast', informs Nikitchenko about the destruction of the graves at Piatykhatky by means of caustic soda (sodium hydroxide), capable of completely dissolving human remains, clothing, and documents. However, during exhumations in the 1990s at the special cemetery of the UNKVD at Piatykhatky Polish archeologists did not find any traces of caustic soda. Moreover, they remarked on the "amazingly good" preservation of the remains of uniforms and of paper documents found in the graves.

Nevertheless, supporters of the "official" version judged these letters to be evidence of traces of the Katyn killings in Ukraine. Evidently none of them noticed that in the left corner of Feshchenko's letter there is the following handwritten resolution of Nikitchenko's: "reported to Comrade Shelest P.E." and dated, in the same handwriting, 2008!



Images 13.1 and 13.2 "Ukrainian Documents of Katyn"

The date (enlargement, at right) reads "2008 gd" — "the year 2008." These documents are definitely a fraud. Perhaps one of the forgers had a guilty conscience over this fabrication and deliberately made an error to embarrass the falsifiers?

These letters are a good example of how easily a modern state, with all its resources, can falsify official documents. If it were not for this obviously bogus date these documents would still be cited by supporters of the "official" version as evidence of "the Ukrainian trace of Katyn."

## Chapter 14. Conclusion — The Katyn Forest Mystery Solved

The primary source evidence is unambiguous. The Germans, not the Soviets, shot the Polish POWs in the various mass murders known to history as "Katyn."

The reader who knows little about Katyn may suspect that I have biased this study "by omission." Bias by omission involves leaving out, remaining silent about, ignoring, not informing the reader of, evidence that does not support the writer's preconceived conclusion. That reader may suspect that I have simply omitted the evidence that the Soviets were guilty, or that the Germans were innocent.

To such a reader I say: Inform yourself! Start with the Wikipedia page on Katyn: Read the "mainstream" books on Katyn. Read Cienciala and Sanford! If you can find better, more complete, more recent studies that assert the "official" version — I don't know of any — read them. Only then you will be an informed reader. And only then will you know that I have not omitted any evidence that supports the "official" Soviets-did-it version.

Readers who come to this book with some knowledge of Katyn but yet — and this is essential — are able to question what they have heard and to be objective, what is often called "open-minded" — will see that I have discussed the evidence they have heard about, and a lot of material that they probably did not know existed.

But they will still wonder: How is it possible that so many people could have been so mistaken for so long?

Everybody knows that a murder mystery requires a careful, objective investigation during which the investigator gathers all the facts, identifies and collects all the evidence, studies it in a scientific manner, and draws conclusions based on the evidence. The "Katyn Forest Murder Mystery" is no different.

The first prerequisite for any investigator of this or any other mystery is *objectivity*. It is inevitable that anyone who seriously approaches the Katyn



mystery will not only have heard about it but will also have formed some idea about it. Almost inevitably, that idea will be that the Soviets are guilty, because that is the version of Katyn that has dominated scholarly, political, and public discourse about it since at least 1992.

Since there is no way to "erase" one's preconceived biases and ideas from one's brain, a serious investigator has to consciously adopt an attitude of objectivity. She must recognize that she inevitably has a bias. This can only be done by clearly articulating — stating — that bias, first of all, to herself.

Then she has to adopt an attitude of constant mindfulness. She has to employ a strategy of compensating for her bias by *giving an especially generous reading* to any evidence that seems to go counter to what she already believes about the case — for she does already believe something. Likewise, she must develop a strategy of *giving an especially skeptical reading* to evidence that tends to support her bias or preconceived idea.

Historian Michael Schudson has said: "Objectivity is an ideology of the distrust of the self." (Schudson 71) This is vital. It is no use to claim to be objective without operationalizing that determination to be objective in the way one identifies, gathers, studies, and draws logical conclusions from, the evidence.

If one is not determined to do everything in one's power to be objective, then one will not be objective. And then what you discover will not be the truth. The history of the "official" version of Katyn illustrates this clearly. Both the Germans and the Polish Government-In-Exile were interested only in a conclusion that indicted the Soviets. Neither made any effort to be objective, and neither were. The Nuremberg Trial produced some testimony that contra-dicted the German AM but little else. The Madden Committee hearings were never a serious attempt to be objective.

The Gorbachev regime believed that blaming the Stalin-era USSR would help to improve relations with a still-friendly Poland. Today's anticommunists embrace the notion of Soviet guilt at Katyn as good propaganda for their cause. For Polish nationalists, Katyn is one of the foundation stones for their reconstruction of a right-wing version of nationalism and a cover-up for atrocious actions of the prewar Polish

regimes, the wartime Home Army, and the post-war underground anticommunist terrorists.

## Why the "Official" Version of Katyn Is Wrong

Some readers will wonder how it can be that the "official" Soviets-did-it version is false. The scholarly world and the governments of all the countries involved assert just the opposite: that the Soviets, not the Germans, are the guilty party. In the spheres of scholarly, political, and public discourse, the "official" version of Katyn is a "closed case." Soviet guilt — "Stalin's" guilt — is accepted so universally that it is almost never questioned.

Our analysis of the definitive accounts of the "official" version, Cienciala / Materski and Sanford, reveals that they never attempted to "solve the mystery" — to determine just who it was who murdered the Polish prisoners. Instead, they committed the logical fallacy of *petitio principii* or "begging the question:" they *assumed that which they should have been attempting to prove*. In effect, they assumed that someone else had already done the job of examining all the evidence and, on that basis, proved Soviet guilt.

Having assumed — rather than demonstrated — that the German Report was truthful and that the Burdenko Commission report had been refuted, they and all other accounts that support the "official" version have simply *declared* the Soviet case to be false and the evidence supporting it to be fraudulent.

\* They ignored the contradictions in the German Report. Likewise they ignored or slandered, but never analyzed, all the evidence not contained in the German Report that proves how invalid it is.

\* They assumed that the Soviet citizens who testified for the Germans told the truth while those who testified for the Soviets had been forced to lie.

\* They dismissed or ignored altogether the testimony of Drs. Markov and Hájek, both of whom denounced the German Report after the war.

\* They ignored or distorted the testimony given at Nuremberg and at the Madden Committee that undermined the case for Soviet guilt.

\* They declared that the critiques of BU by defenders of the "official" version are "devastating." In reality these critiques are not only invalid but dishonest. There is still no evidence that BU investigation is faulty, let alone fraudulent in any way.

\* They ignored the fact that a number of Ostashkov and Starobel'sk POWs were killed at Katyn, including a number of those named in the German Report itself. They had all the evidence necessary to uncover this fact — all the evidence we have today. But they either never investigated this question at all, or they hushed it up.

\*They knew about the suspicious origins of "Closed Packet No. 1" and about the arguments of some researchers that these documents are forgeries. But they never seriously investigated the possibility of forgery. They failed to acknowledge the obvious fact that *although the documents cannot be proven false by analysis of the documents alone, neither can they be proven genuine*. Much less ought they be *assumed* to be genuine.

Cienciala and Sanford committed these offenses against responsible scholarly practice because they did not set out to discover who had murdered the Poles in the first place. They never made any attempt to be objective. From the outset they chose to "believe" the Polish anticommunist version—which means they believed the German Nazi version. Then they set out to collect all the arguments they could to support this preconceived idea and to ignore any and all evidence inconsistent with it. This is called "cherry-picking" or the fallacy of incomplete evidence, similar to confirmation bias<sup>1</sup> — and they did it with a vengeance.

<sup>1</sup> See the Wikipedia article at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherry\\_picking](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cherry_picking)

After that it was all downhill. They continued to look with special favor upon everything that seemed to be evidence supporting Soviet guilt. They distorted, belittled, dismissed, or ignored anything that appeared to be evidence pointing away from Soviet guilt.

Given their determination to abandon objectivity and their strong anti-Soviet and anticommunist bias it was impossible for Cienciala and Sanford to arrive at the truth in this mystery. They refused to understand that it *is* a mystery in the first place. Once a researcher commits the cardinal error of deciding the result of the investigation in advance, she is trapped.

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All recent books on Katyn, including all of those mentioned in this book, contain a great deal more information than is in the present book. In particular, the works by Shved, Prudenikova and Chigirin, and Mukhin, and the excellent website formerly maintained by the late Sergei Strygin, <http://www.katyn.ru/>, have detailed comparisons and criticisms of the documents in "Closed Packet No. 1".

I have argued that it is not possible through internal analysis alone to tell whether these documents are forgeries or are genuine. However, now that we know that the version of Katyn reflected in them is a false one, the contradictions in them that careful internal examination reveals confirm that which, without that external evidence, we could only suspect — that these documents are fabrications. This analysis is interesting, and some of it is brilliant.

For the person unable to read the Russian works I have cited a page from the "Mythcracker" website. I do not agree with all of the points made there. But it gives an idea of the kind of analysis that has been carried out. I have omitted this kind of analysis here because it is not essential to identifying the guilty party. This book is a "Whodunnit." The mystery had to be solved and the guilty party identified through the collection and study of other evidence.

This book does not offer a point-by-point examination and critique of every false assertion in Cienciala/Materski's and Sanford's books. I have included only the amount of criticism of these works that I think is necessary for the purpose of solving the mystery of Katyn. Both of these books contain a great many more false statements, lies, and fallacious conclusions than can be examined here. A detailed critique of either of these works would be of

some interest in itself since they enjoy a high reputation that is utterly undeserved. But such a detailed critique is beyond the limits of this book.

\* \* \*

I look forward to reading the reactions, positive and critical, from scholars who, like myself, have been fascinated by what I have irreverently called the "Katyn Forest Whodunnit." In future editions of this book I will include corrections, with my thanks to the readers who have pointed them out.

By the same token those who are interested not in the truth (though they will never admit it) but in arraigning Stalin and the Soviets will condemn and attack me. This is called "shooting the messenger," an all-too-common fallacy among those who do not wish their illusions shattered.

But shattering our illusions is what honest research is all about. For this reason I anticipate such attacks as indirect recognition of the research I have done and welcome criticism from all readers.

## **Appendix 1. Testimony of Soprunenko, Syromiatnikov, Tokarev**

During 1990 — 1992 the Soviet prosecutors' office located three aged and long-retired NKVD men who were involved in some way with the Polish POWs. They were:

- Petr Karpovich Soprunenko, in 1940 Chief of Office for Prisoners of War and Internees;
- Mitrofan Vasil'evich Syromiatnikov, in 1940 senior supervisor in the block of the inner prison of the Directorate of the NKVD of Khar'kov district with the rank of lieutenant;
- Dmitrii Stepanovich Tokarev, in 1940 Acting Chief of the Directorate of the NKVD of Kalin in region.

Before the publication of Closed Packet No. 1 these confessions were the only evidence that the Soviets had shot the Polish POWs, aside from the German Report (AM).

In 1990-1992 each of these men were questioned by representatives of the Soviet, and then of the Ukrainian, investigative services. In addition Syromiatnikov was interviewed by Polish writer Jerzy Morawski.

We do not have the former NKVD men's exact words. Although the interrogations were all conducted in Russian they are available only in Polish translation. The Russian originals have never been made public.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the Polish transcript was made from sound recordings. In the Polish text there are several lacunae where the sound recording was indecipherable to the persons who transcribed the interrogations.

<sup>1</sup> Except for the excerpts in Russian published by S.M. Zavorotnov in his book *Khar'kovskaia Katyn'* ("The Khar'kov Katyn") of the interrogations of Syromiatnikov of June 20, 1990, and March 6, 1992. However, there is no indication of the provenance of these excerpts in Russian. It is possible that they are simply partial retranslations into Russian of the Polish texts.

In Tokarev's case there was at least one interrogation that took place before the one we have. No transcript or any information about that interrogation has been published. We do not know whether there are, or were, unpublished interrogations of Soprunenko and Syromiatnikov. However, the sole interrogation we have of Soprunenko bears the subtitle "Pierwsze przesłuchanie" — "first interrogation." This suggests that other interrogations of Soprunenko did take place. But we do not have them.

These confessions are very contradictory in ways that often do not reinforce the "official" version. None of these men was at Katyn where the 4000+ bodies of Polish POWs were unearthed by the Germans in 1943, and none of them has anything to say about this, the most famous of the execution/burial sites subsumed under the rubric "the Katyn massacre."

All three men were threatened repeatedly with criminal prosecution if they failed to "tell the truth." In addition, they were told that Soviet guilt had already been established. In reality, this was a lie. In 1990 — 1991 there was no evidence other than the German AM Report alleging Soviet guilt. The documents from "Closed Packet No. 1" had not yet been published.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> There is at least one account by an alleged actual witness — that of Petr F. Klimov. It was published in the November 16, 1990 issue of the newspaper *Moskovskie Novosti*. Cienciala calls it an "alleged" account and Polish sources do not use it.

It is therefore possible that out of fear of prosecution the former NKVD men gave answers they believed their interrogators wanted. So it does appear that the confessions of these three old men were not entirely voluntary. Many of the interrogators' questions were "leading" questions. Of course this is common in criminal investigations. But it would have been obvious what answers the investigators wanted to hear. That kind of atmosphere is fatal to obtaining trustworthy testimony.

The Polish translations of the interrogations of Soprunenko, Syromiatnikov, and Tokarev were published in Polish journals and then republished in the official Polish government collections *Zeszyty Katyńskie and Katyń. Dokumenty Zbrodni* (KDZ) volume 2. One additional interrogation of Syromiatnikov was published by Jerzy Morawski, a director of

documentary films, in one of his books. These interrogations are seldom referred to any longer. Perhaps this is due to the problems that we identify in this chapter.

### **Soprunenko October 25, 1990**

Soprunenko, who was in overall charge of the Office of POWs and Internees, should certainly have been one of those who knew about the executions, if they had taken place. Many documents signed by him relating to the Polish POWs survive. They are reprinted in the Polish-language KDZ series and in a similar Russian-language collection. None of these documents mention anything about Poles being executed.

Soprunenko's testimony is very contradictory. On the one hand he claimed that he knew nothing about any NKVD orders to shoot the Poles (428) and knew nothing about any shootings. (430) In fact he claimed that he only heard about the Katyn shootings in April 1990, when Polish President General Jaruzelski visited Moscow. (429) On the other hand Soprunenko also said that in 1940 he had heard "rumors" (*śluchy* and *pogłoski*) about a Central Committee decision signed by Stalin that had been the basis for shooting the Poles.

The sole interrogation that we have of Soprunenko is titled „Pierwsze przesłuchanie”, "first interrogation." This suggests that there were more of them. But only this one, dated October 25, 1990, has been published.

### **Syromiatnikov**

There are six interrogations of Syromiatnikov. We use the five from KDZ volume 2, and the sixth from Jerzy Morawski's book *Ślad Kuli* (Warsaw and London, 1992). In the following, page numbers preceded by the letter M denote pages in Morawski's book; numbers alone denote pages in KDZ volume 2.

Syromiatnikov testified that he had just heard about the Katyn massacres from the mass media. (475, 476) He said that, when the Poles were brought down to the cellar of the NKVD building, there was always a prokuror



(prosecutor) present. (477; 484; M 113, 124) Syromiatnikov also said that the Polish prisoners whom he accompanied were interrogated. (M 124)

The prokuror and interrogations imply the charge of a criminal offense, an investigation, and an attempt to make sure that the individual being executed was the person against whom a sentence had been passed. It does not fit the notion of a mass killing of all POWs. Syromiatnikov stated several times that he was told that the Polish prisoners had been involved in a rebellion in a Soviet camp. (478; M 110, 120)

Syromiatnikov stated repeatedly that only about 200 (385) or 300 (487) prisoners were shot while he was working at the prison. Thereafter he fell sick and when he returned the Poles were no longer there. (M 117-9) When two of the Russian interrogators, Snezhko and Tretetskii, insisted that 4000 Poles were killed at Khar'kov Syromiatnikov said that he did not know how many Poles were involved in all but thought that neither the Khar'kov NKVD prison nor, more to the point, the burial site at Piatykhatky could hold 4000. (M 121-2)

In an interesting contradiction Syromiatnikov first testified that one woman was among the Polish prisoners and that she was certainly shot (480; 489) But in the later interview with Morawski Syromiatnikov retracted this statement and claimed that he did not know whether the woman was a Pole or a Russian (M 114)

Syromiatnikov's testimony is consistent with the idea that some Poles were tried and executed for some anti-Soviet crimes or other. He claimed to know about executions of only 200-300 Poles. In short, Syromiatnikov's testimony does not confirm the "official" version of the Katyn massacre.

### **Tokarev October 25, 1990**

Dmitriy S. Tokarev was Acting Chief of the Directorate of the NKVD of Kalinin region and directly in charge of the prison in Kalinin to which Polish POWs from Ostashkov camp were sent. Tokarev's interrogation is the longest and most interesting since Tokarev claims that he knew that the Soviets had shot the Polish prisoners. We'll briefly review what he says.

Problematic aspects and contradictions in his account include the following issues:

- Tokarev clearly refers to a previous interrogation (433, 446) that we do not have. Why don't we?
- In this previous interrogation Tokarev repeatedly says he was told about a Politburo decree, "postanovlenie Politbiuro." (433, 435, 447; 468) His Soviet interrogators agree with him.

This would appear to be impossible. The "Politburo decree" is in "Closed Packet No. 1" which was not even discovered until late in 1991 (according to Gorbachev). Yet here is Tokarev stating, and the Soviet interrogators agreeing, that he was told about it in a previous interrogation, i.e. previous to October 25, 1990, when the present interrogation took place.

There's no reason to believe that Tokarev is lying here, especially since the Russian interrogators agree with him. This means that somebody knew about the Politbiuro decree long before Gorbachev or his right-hand man Iakovlev supposedly knew about it. It appears that someone knew that the Politbiuro decree would be forthcoming.

How can this be? Unless the forgery was in the process of preparation and would be produced at some point, and that the Soviet investigators knew this. This is further evidence suggesting that "Closed Packet No. 1" is a forgery.

\* Tokarev claimed that he did know that 14,000 Polish POWs were to be shot. First he said that Bogdan Kobulov told him this. (435) A few pages later he claimed that Soprunenko told him. (447) But Soprunenko claimed that he did not know anything about any shootings.

\* Tokarev stated twice that he knew that 6000 Polish policemen were shot at Kalinin. (462, 471) He even argues with Iablokov, one of the Soviet interrogators. Iablokov claimed that 6287 Poles were shot at Kalinin but Tokarev said that he remembered the number 6295.

We know that many Ostashkov POWs who were shipped to the NKVD in Kalinin — that is, to Tokarev — were not shot there because their bodies

turned up in the German and Soviet exhumations at Katyn and at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy, Ukraine. Therefore Tokarev must have been lying to please his Soviet interrogators who insist that all the Ostashkov POWs were shot at Kalinin and are buried at Mednoe.

Why would Tokarev lie? Probably because he was warned of serious consequences — criminal prosecution — if he did not tell the truth, and because he had been informed that the Soviets were guilty. As we have seen, he was also told that a Politburo decree had ordered that the Poles be shot, even though no such decree was known when Tokarev was interrogated.

Therefore something else must have taken place before this interrogation as a result of which Tokarev had decided to say what his interrogators wanted him to say. We should recall that prior interrogation to which Tokarev refers but which has never been made public.

\* Tokarev testified (441-442) that NKVD executioner Blokhin arrived at Kalinin with a "suitcase full of Walthers [German automatic pistols]."

It is sometimes stated in books about Katyn that this meant Blokhin did not have confidence in the Soviet pistols, the Tokarev "TT" and Nagan (the latter is a revolver). In fact it means the opposite. A single pistol of average quality should be capable of shooting 6000 shots. The Tokarev automatic was famous for being very rugged.

In short, there was no reason for an NKVD man to use Walthers at all, much less many of them. However, only German ammunition was found in the mass graves at Katyn. Presumably it was useful to enhance the credibility of the "official" version that there be at least one more instance of the Soviet NKVD using German weapons. We already know that Tokarev lied about the number of Polish POWs shot at Kalinin. Evidently he lied about the "Walthers" as well.

\* Interrogator Iablokov did not seem to know that in 1940 the "Osoboe Soveshchanie" ("Special Commission") of the NKVD did not have the authority to sentence anyone to execution.

Jablokow: Dmitriju Stiepanowiczu, wyjasnijcie, kto kierowal sprawy sledcze przeciwko polskim jencom wojennym, glównie rozpatrywaj sprawy sledcze do decyzji Kolegium Specjalnego? Kto mógł to kierowac? (445)

Jablokow: Dmitriju Stiepanowiczu, znacie taki tryb wykonania wyroków, Se zwykle odczytywana jest decyzja. Wówczas byla decyzja uchwały Kolegium Specjalnego. Czy im odczytywano uchwałę Kolegium Specjalnego? (446)

Yablokov: Dmitriy Stepanovich, please explain who led the investigation of the case against the Polish prisoners of war, who chiefly dealt with the matter of investigation before the decision of the Special Commission? Who could it have been?

Yablokov: Dmitriy Stepanovich, you know the mode of execution of the judgments that usually is read the decision. Then there was a decision of a resolution of the Special Commission. Did they read the resolution of the Special Commission?

Is it possible that Iablokov, a military procurator and lieutenant colonel of Justice, did not know that in 1940 the "Osoboe Soveshchanie" could not sentence defendants to more than eight years of confinement?

\* Tokarev said that he saw no bodies of anyone who was shot. (458) This would be hard to believe if 6300 men had in fact been shot at his facility. He said that no officers were shot (448) *and that hardly any of the Poles were in uniform.* (451) By "officers" he *may* mean *military* officers, and this was true — the prisoners at Ostashkov were policemen, not military. However, Polish policemen wore uniforms too. All but a few bodies disinterred by the Germans at Katyn were in uniform, while shreds of Polish uniform were found in the mass graves at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy.

\* Tokarev was asked whether treelings were planted over the mass graves at Mednoe. (461) Iablokov asked him, presumably because, according to the Germans, treelings were planted over the mass graves at Katyn. Iablokov probably did not know that Burdenko wrote that the planting of treelings

over the mass graves of their victims was a feature of the German mass murders he had investigated (see chapter 9)

\* During the interrogation of Tokarev Col. Iablokov quoted from a number of case files of Polish POWs who were, according to Iablokov's remarks, charged with criminal offenses. These case files might be important, since they indicate an individualized approach to the Polish POWs that contradicts the notion that all of them were sentenced to death with either minimal or no investigation at all. But none of these criminal case files have been published.

## **Conclusion**

None of these interrogation-confessions can withstand careful scrutiny. The witnesses had been threatened, and either claimed to remember too much (Tokarev) or hardly anything (Soprunenko, Syromiatnikov) There are many unanswered questions about them: previous interrogations that are not published; whereabouts of the transcripts of the Russian originals; and the many contradictions and outright falsifications contained in them. They are seldom cited today. Certainly the "official" version of Katyn cannot be based on them alone.

## Appendix 2. Image Attribution

*Image 2.1* AM p. 304 Bild 34, bottom. (German Report)

*Image 2.2* Genshow firm drawing. (Pamiatnykh. Source: <http://katynfiles.com/content/pamyatnykh-genschow.html> Burdenko Commission files, GARF = State Archive of the Russian Federation f. 7021. op. 114.)

*Image 3.1* Burdenko Commission inventory excerpt (Pamiatnykh, At <http://katynfiles.com/content/pamyatnykh-burdenko-materials.html> )

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*Images 10.1 and 10.2* Burdenko Commission excerpts. (Pamiatnykh)

*Images 12. 1 and 12.2* Artist's rendering of additional Polish policemen's badges unearthed at Volodymyr-Volyns'kiy. Polish officials have refused to

identify them. Artwork by Hostile City Rejects, 2018. Based on source photos in interview of Dr. Dominika Siemińska.

*Image 13.1 and 13.2 "Ukrainian Documents of Katyn"* (Memorial Society, Kiev — Ukrainian government documents)

## **Bibliography, Photographs, Errata**

The **bibliography** may be found here:

<https://tinyurl.com/furr-katyn-biblio>

**Images** of the badges and headstamps, shown as drawings in the published book, may be viewed here:

<https://tinyurl.com/furr-katyn-images>

**Errata** are noted here:

<https://tinyurl.com/furr-katyn-errata>



**Stalin. Waiting For ... The Truth!  
Exposing the Falsehoods in  
Stephen Kotkin's 'Stalin. Waiting  
for Hitler, 1929-1941'**

By Grover Furr

Red Star Publishers

*Corrected Edition April 2019*

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My children, Derek and Karla, have always been supportive of my research and interested in the results. May they know by these words how important their consistent support has always been to their father!

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I dedicate this book to cogent critic, friend, and frequent publisher, Mike Bessler of Erythrós Press and Media, LLC. Mike has given me encouragement, inspiration, and help whenever I needed it, often at late night hours. His support is invaluable, and I am most grateful for it.

**About Grover Furr's research**, originally on the back cover:

It is no wonder that his work has already been translated into over a dozen languages. His work is riveting and revolutionary in its assessments. It is up to those who disagree with him to present the same kind of meticulous research.

— Professor Anthony Gronowicz, Borough of Manhattan Community College, City University of New York. Associate Editor, *The Journal of Labor and Society*

Grover Furr moves with perfect ease with the Russian language and Russian archives. Without being intimidated by political correctness his research and documentation are precise, patient, and meticulous.

— Professor Domenico Losurdo, University of Urbino, Italy

**About *The Mystery of the Katyn Massacre. The Evidence, The Solution***

For a long time academics believed the Nazi propaganda that the Soviets were the guilty ones. Not so, and the evidence from original documents is right here in Professor Grover Furr's book.

— Joseph Hancock, Los Angeles

**About *Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan***

In this extraordinary book, Professor Furr refutes many of the anti-communist lies about the Moscow trials in the Soviet Union in the late 1930s. In particular, he exposes the lies about the leaders of the Opposition. He shows that the defendants were indeed guilty of treason.

— William Podmore, author of *British Foreign Policy Since 1789 and The War Against the Working Class*

## Abbreviations

Furr, Grover. *Khrushchev Lied: The Evidence That Every "Revelation" of Stalin's (and Beria's) Crimes in Nikita Khrushchev's Infamous "Secret Speech" to the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on February 25, 1956, is Provably False*. Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press & Media LLC, 2011. (Furr, Khrushchev Lied)

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## Preface

### Read Me First

The present book is an exhaustive critique of Stephen Kotkin, *Stalin. Waiting For Hitler, 1929-1941* (New York: Penguin, 2017). This is the second volume of what Kotkin, a professor of history at Princeton University and a Fellow at the Hoover Institution, intends to be a three-volume work and the definitive biography of Joseph Stalin.

This book is written primarily for those who will never read Kotkin's book. It has to be — because very, very few people will in fact read this humongous tome (= a large book) — humongous in size, and also in dishonesty.

The reader will not learn the history of the Soviet Union during 1929 — 1941 from Kotkin's book. Kotkin's book is completely unreliable. It is filled with false statements and unsupported assumptions.

It is dedicated to convincing the reader that Joseph Stalin was a monster, a mass murderer and all-round evil person, and that the Soviet Union during his day was little short of a hell on earth. It is also devoted to trashing the idea of communism itself, partly through associating the communist movement with the monster Stalin, partly by smuggling in the notion that market capitalism is a far better form of political and social organization.

Kotkin has not attempted to write an accurate, objective account of Stalin's life during these years. Instead, he cherry-picks phony evidence to try to "prove" his very negative views about Stalin, the Soviet Union, and the communist movement.

Few readers will read this huge book. Of the very few readers who do manage to make it through the text, only a tiny fraction will read more than a small handful of the footnotes. And of those, how many will actually *check* the references in the footnotes, in order to see whether they do, in

fact, provide evidence for the statements Kotkin makes in the text alleging crimes by Stalin?

If you think "No one will," you are *almost* correct. For this is what I have done.

The book in your hands (or on your screen) contains the results of my careful check-up of Kotkin's claims of criminal and/or atrocious acts by Stalin and the Soviet leadership.

*I have written this book so that you don't have to read Kotkin's.* You can find out what Kotkin has to say about Stalin and the events of Soviet history from 1928 to 1941, and how Kotkin falsifies the history of this period. And you can do all this in fewer than 400 pages.

The chapters are organized according to the major historical events of the Soviet 1930s, as Kotkin deals with them. You can select the topics that interest you most. When you read a chapter in my book, you will learn what Kotkin has to say about the events in question; how he falsifies them; and get a brief account of what the real state of affairs is as demonstrated by the best evidence available today.

You should read this book *instead* of reading Kotkin's book. If you haven't bought his book, don't bother! If you have bought it, then you can consult it if you should ever doubt my analysis of this or that incident. Then you can use it for a doorstep.

You should read this book if you want to know how Soviet history of the Stalin period is distorted, falsified, mangled, by *mainstream* historiography. You can learn about the Anti-Stalin Paradigm — the false and dishonest model of Soviet history to which mainstream historians are expected to conform and to which almost all of them do in fact conform.

You can use this book as a kind of reference work. What does the best available evidence show about these events? How is the mainstream, "official," history wrong about them?

If you have suspected that this or that event of the Soviet 1930s may have been distorted by mainstream historians, you can read up on it here.

If you have trusted the mainstream historical portrait of Stalin and of the Soviet 1930s, you are in for a big shock!

I've written this book for those who will read Kotkin's book and for those who won't manage to get through it.

But I have written it especially for those who never intend to even try to read Kotkin's monstrosity.

If you have not yet decided to read Kotkin's book, take my advice: Don't waste your time! Read this book instead. You'll not just learn more — what you learn will be true. Read Kotkin, and what you learn will be all wrong and you will have to *unlearn* it — by reading *this* book.

## Introduction.

### "The Right To Lie In The Service Of Power"

The right to lie in the service of power is guarded with considerable vigor and passion. This becomes evident whenever anyone takes the trouble to demonstrate that charges against some official enemy are inaccurate or, sometimes, pure invention. The immediate reaction among the commissars is that the person is an apologist for the real crimes of official enemies.

— Noam Chomsky<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Interview" by James Peck. *The Chomsky Reader*. Pantheon: New York. 1987. 37.

The first volume of Stephen Kotkin's biography of Joseph Stalin is titled *Stalin. Volume One. Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928*. It was published in 2014. As the title suggests, in it Kotkin discusses Stalin's life up to late in the year 1928.

The last chapter of the book is titled "Coda: If Stalin Had Died." Much of this chapter is about the collectivization of agriculture in the Soviet Union. But this subject is not dealt with in Volume One!

It is reserved for the opening chapters of Volume Two, the volume that we examine and critique here.

If this "coda" was supposed to somehow argue that Stalin's life up to 1928 made the policy of agricultural collectivization inevitable, or possible, or something, it fails. In it Kotkin does make the claim that agricultural modernization would have been both possible and less costly under a market capitalist system. But he does not even try to demonstrate how that might be done. His depiction of collectivization as a brutal failure is not only not proven — it is unargued, simply assumed.

I did not read this "coda" until I had read volume one itself, almost a year after its publication. In November 2014, the same year as the book's publication, Kotkin published an abbreviated version of the "coda" in the *New York Review of Books*.<sup>2</sup> A friend sent me this essay as soon as he received the issue. Of course that magazine could contain no evidence for the assertions made in it, and I did not expect any. But I was puzzled by the fact that the essay started with an event not covered in the book — collectivization. Moreover, I also knew that his depiction of collectivization runs counter to the best research on the subject. It did not augur well for the yet-to-come Volume Two.

<sup>2</sup> "If Stalin Had Died ... " *NYRB* November 6, 2014, 34-35,

When, a few months later, I did read Volume One I was surprised again. After reading Kotkin's terribly inaccurate depiction of collectivization and his praise of capitalism and markets — *de rigueur* for a "fellow" of the right-wing anticommunist propaganda mill that is the Hoover Institution — I found that Kotkin's depiction of Stalin in Volume One was relatively objective, without any phony allegations of "crimes."

On several topics — for example, the question of the forgery of "Lenin's Testament" — Volume One breaks from the pattern of anti-Stalin polemics that normally passes for history in mainstream Soviet studies. Still, that "coda" was a clear sign that Volume Two would be very different, lacking in objectivity, gravid with unproven accusations of "crimes" of Stalin.

And so it is! Volume Two was published in October, 2017. Having spent many years researching Soviet history of the 1930s, I immediately saw that this second volume repeats a number of falsehoods about major political events, in conformity with the dominant and all-too-familiar model in mainstream Soviet historiography, the model that I call the "Anti-Stalin Paradigm." (ASP)

I saw too that there were many specific incidents discussed in Volume Two that I had not come across before. The first of these was a tale of minor importance: "Klim — There were no mistakes..." (See the first section of Chapter 11). Here Kotkin accuses Stalin of — what? A peccadillo, at most?

Perhaps this story was true, then? So I researched it. It was difficult to obtain the materials to do so (I suspect that Kotkin never bothered).

At length I was able to verify that, sure enough, it is a phony story, with no evidence behind it. At this point I thought: "What if the whole book is like this?" I was hooked! I realized that I had to know.

I have done similar research projects before.

\* Between 2005 and 2011 I researched and wrote a book proving that Nikita Khrushchev's famous "Secret Speech" is made up of lies from beginning to end. That speech to the XX Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on February 25, 1956, the speech in which Khrushchev depicted Stalin as a brutal dictator who had committed many murders and other crimes, had shocked the world and fatally undermined the international communist movement. Yet it is a tissue of falsehoods. (Furr, Khrushchev Lied)

\* Between 2010 and 2013 I checked all the references in Matthew Lenoe's massive 820+ pages) tome *The Kirov Murder and Soviet History* (Yale University Press, 2010). I did so because while studying it I noted many errors of reasoning and many logical fallacies in this work, which comes to the conventional, acceptable conclusion that Sergei Kirov, First Secretary of Leningrad, was killed by a "lone gunman." I spent years in checking Lenoe's evidence, and then in compiling much evidence that Lenoe and others had omitted. In the end I reached the conclusion — inevitable, given the evidence — that the Soviet courts had gotten it right: Kirov was indeed killed by a clandestine conspiratorial group of followers of Grigory Zinoviev. This important case led inexorably to the uncovering of the widespread anti-Soviet conspiracies uncovered in the later 1930s. (Furr, Kirov)

\* In 2011-2014 I checked every single allegation of wrongdoing of any kind by Stalin, the Soviet Union, and communists generally, in Yale professor Timothy Snyder's award-winning book *Bloodlands*. At the end of 30 months of research I concluded that Snyder's book too contains not a single accurate allegation of crime of any kind by Stalin. *Every one* of such allegations is false, a fabrication, either by Snyder himself or by the

intensely anticommunist scholars, mainly Polish and Ukrainian, whose works Snyder relied on. (Furr, Blood Lies)

So I set out to do likewise with Kotkin's Volume Two, with one difference. The book is too long, 1154 pages long: 909 pages of text; 160 pages of triple-columned footnotes in tiny type; and 51 pages of bibliography, also triple-columned in tiny type, plus an index. Therefore, unlike Khrushchev's speech and Snyder's much shorter book, it would not be possible to check every fact-claim in it. But not necessary, either.

## **Procedure**

- I have selected ten issues in the high politics of Soviet history during the 1930s, and thoroughly researched Kotkin's account of each of them.
- I have added another two chapters of various allegations of lesser importance where Kotkin alleged some kind of misdeed, criminal or moral, by Stalin.
- A Chapter on "strategies of misdirection in Kotkin's book" is an attempt to analyze the different techniques and also the errors of method and logic — perhaps intentional, perhaps due to incompetence — which Kotkin utilizes in order to create the wildly distorted portrait of Stalin and Soviet policies that he promotes in this meretricious book.
- I have also added two chapters on central problems concerning Kotkin's research: his lack of source criticism, and his use of bias by omission.

This book deals with all the alleged crimes and atrocities that Kotkin charges Stalin with. It includes all the passages where Kotkin alleges any kind of reprehensible behavior or even insensitivity on Stalin's part.

The "Klim — There were no mistakes..." story is an example of something we will see a great many times in this book: Kotkin cannot be trusted to use his sources accurately or honestly. When Kotkin makes an assertion of fact, or fact-claim, about some crime or misdeed involving Stalin, the sources for this fact-claim must be double-checked.

Upon checking Kotkin's source we normally find either (1) that his source does not support what Kotkin's text says or implies that it does; or (2) that the source does reflect what Kotkin says in his text but that source itself is dishonest, in that (a) it does not reflect what its own evidence states or (b) its source is yet another secondary source which, when it is examined in turn, does not support the fact-claims given; or (c) it cites no evidence at all.

## **Devoid of Integrity**

The present book presents a detailed, heavily documented critique of *Stalin, Vol. Two*. In it I document my conclusion: *Every one of Kotkin's charges of crimes or atrocities alleged by Kotkin against Stalin is false*. I demonstrate this by checking the evidence Kotkin cites; by including when appropriate the evidence which Kotkin's sources cite; and by citing other evidence that he omits.

Here is an important paragraph from the document "Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct (updated 2018)," by the American Historical Association.

Historians should practice their craft with integrity. They should honor the historical record. They should document their sources. They should acknowledge their debts to the work of other scholars. They should respect and welcome divergent points of view even as they argue and subject those views to critical scrutiny. They should remember that our collective enterprise depends on mutual trust. And they should never betray that trust.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Cited at <https://www.historians.org/jobs-and-professional-development/statements-standards-and-guidelines-of-the-discipline/statement-on-standards-of-professional-conduct>

It is the professional responsibility of historians to acknowledge disputes and disagreements in the fields they research. But Kotkin never informs his readers about the scholarly disputes that exist over many of these issues, whether it be the famine (except in the footnotles only), the *Ezhovshchina* or "Great Terror," the Katyn massacre, the Moscow Trials, the



Tukhachevsky Affair, the Spanish Civil War, or others. Every time Kotkin repeats an anti-Stalin position without any qualification.

It is an historian's responsibility to document her sources. Kotkin routinely violates this tenet of the historian's craft. A great many of his footnotes — the form his documentation of sources normally takes — are phony. They *appear* to be the evidence of careful research. But, as I prove in this book in sometimes painstaking detail, they do not give evidence for Kotkin's fact-claims about the crimes he attributes to Stalin.

It is not only that many statements in Kotkin's book are factually false. These false statements do not occur randomly. There is a systematic quality to all of these falsehoods: every one is tendentiously anticommunist. I realized that I would have to carefully check, one by one, every factual statement about the Soviet leadership or Soviet actions that had a negative tendency, every allegation of a crime or an atrocity.

My working hypothesis was as follows: I would find that many of Kotkin's anti-Stalin or anti-Soviet assertions or "fact-claims" were false, not supported by the evidence Kotkin cites or indeed by any evidence. My further hypothesis was that the secondary sources Kotkin cites in support of these statement would either not support Kotkin's fact-claims, or would themselves be fallacious, unsupported by the evidence (if any) that they cited.

My research has fully corroborated both of these hypotheses. In fact, I discovered that my initial hypothesis was too cautious. I have found not that many, but that *all* of Kotkin's fact-claims of an anti-Stalin tendency are false. In this book I present the results of that research.

## **Organization of This Book**

The chapters in this book adhere to the following method of presentation. After an introductory section I quote every passage in which Kotkin makes a fact-claim that accuses Stalin of some crime or that tends to reflect negatively upon Stalin. Then the evidence Kotkin cites to support his statement(s), normally found in a footnote, is identified and, where

possible, reproduced. Then each of the sources in that footnote, whether primary or secondary, is checked and verified in order to assess whether that source provides support for Kotkin's fact-claim.

In the case of secondary sources I have checked further for the primary sources that *these* secondary sources use. This is essential because the fact that one historian agrees with another does not constitute evidence. Only primary sources are evidence.

In each instance where Kotkin cites another secondary source in a footnote I have obtained and studied the primary source evidence upon which that secondary source relies. This procedure continues until we reach the primary sources upon which all the other secondary sources are based, or until we discover that, in reality, there is no primary source evidence supporting the series of fact-claims, which are thereby revealed to be falsifications. This method is essential in order to verify Kotkin's fact-claims concerning Stalin's "crimes" — or, as it turns out, in order to demonstrate that they are, without exception, false.

Whenever possible I have given a summary title or subheading to each of the passages from Kotkin's book. The purpose of this subheading is to aid the reader in deciding whether he or she wants to examine these fact-claims, or wishes to pick and choose, examining some and passing over others.

At the time of this writing (January, 2019) no one else has taken the trouble to do this. This would not be a bad thing if Kotkin's book were generally ignored. Historians of the USSR, like historians generally, should spend their time doing honest research and discovering the truth, rather than double-checking every fact-claim and allegation made by other historians. But Kotkin's book is very influential, as are his published articles in semi-popular journals and the Youtube videos of his talks. Kotkin's fact-claims about crimes of Stalin are normally *assumed* to be true, while the reality is that they are *always* false. Through books such as *Stalin, Vol. Two* falsehoods become accepted as truths, the current of historical understanding polluted.

## **The Anti-Stalin Paradigm**

In the present book I demonstrate, using Kotkin's own sources and other evidence, that not a single one of the accusations that Kotkin levels against Stalin is true. Such a conclusion demands explanation, and I outline my own views in the final chapter. One important element of that explanation is what I call the "Anti-Stalin Paradigm," (ASP) about which a little should be said here.

## **Khrushchev Lied**

In February, 1956, at the XX Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Party and leader of the Soviet state, gave a "secret speech" in which he accused Stalin (and Lavrentii Beria) of great crimes. At the XXII Party Congress in 1961 Khrushchev and other Party leaders under him went even further in their attacks on Stalin. After that and until Khrushchev's ouster in October 1964 a flood of pseudo-scholarly Soviet works were published in which accusations about Stalin's "crimes" multiplied wildly.

Since the Bolshevik Revolution itself the academic field of Soviet history has been dominated by anticommunist bias. Khrushchev's 1956 "Secret Speech," the anti-Stalin speeches at the XXII Party Congress and the ensuing torrent of Khrushchev-orchestrated fabrications, became the basis for the avalanche of anti-Stalin books that followed. Notable among them was, for example, Robert Conquest's tome *The Great Terror*, which drew heavily upon these Khrushchev-era materials (although Conquest also used, indiscriminately, any and all anti-Stalin works he could find, including many that preceded Khrushchev's speech).

In an earlier article Vladimir L. Bobrov and I examined the last chapter of Stephen F. Cohen's book *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution* (1973), one of the most influential anti-Stalin books based on Khrushchev-era materials. There we showed (a) that Cohen relied entirely upon Khrushchev-era "revelations" in this chapter on Bukharin's life between 1930 and 1938; and (b) that every single "revelation" Cohen makes in that long chapter is demonstrably false.<sup>4</sup>

## **Gorbachev Lied Too**

The Khrushchev-era Soviet works were not simply the result of bias. Rather, they were deliberate lies.<sup>5</sup> Khrushchev and his men had all the evidence of the Soviet archives everything we have today plus much, much more. The same is true of Mikhail Gorbachev's people, who churned out an even bigger avalanche of anti-Stalin falsehoods after 1987, an avalanche that continues to the present day.

<sup>4</sup> Furr, Grover and Vladimir L. Bobrov. "Stephen Cohen's Biography of Bukharin: A Study in the Falsehood of Khrushchev-Era 'Revelations'." *Cultural Logic*, 2010. At <https://web.archive.org/web/20130402191853/http://clogic.eserver.org/2010/Furr.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Solzhenitsyn was one writer who got his start, and considerable fame, thanks to Khrushchev. Michael Scammell, author of a recent biography, calls Solzhenitsyn "a truth-teller." Nothing could be more false! Solzhenitsyn's works, valuable as anticommunist propaganda during the Cold War, are worthless as history and are rightly ignored even by mainstream historians today.

The academic field of Soviet history of the Stalin period has been constructed around the more or less uncritical acceptance of, first, Khrushchev-era, and second, of Gorbachev-era and post-Soviet-era lies. These lies cannot be sustained in the face of the evidence now available from former Soviet archives. However, to admit this would imply that the works of dozens of historians of the USSR, during several generations, are poisoned at the root — as, indeed, they are.

Therefore the "Anti-Stalin Paradigm," as I call this model of Stalin-era Soviet history, goes unchallenged. As long as it continues to serve anticommunist ideological purposes, and as long as the truth can be ignored, buried, hidden, or otherwise disregarded, the demonization of Stalin, the Soviet leadership of his day, and the communist movement continues to perform its useful function in the economy of anticommunist propaganda, propped up by the prestige of academic experts in many countries. This is the tradition that has produced works like Kotkin's *Stalin, Vol. Two*.

The authors of such books do not have to fear that their falsehoods will be exposed by their peers in the field of Soviet history, because anti-Stalin lies are very seldom exposed as such. In such an atmosphere, where the historian can accuse Stalin and the USSR of almost any crime, can say virtually anything as long as it has an anti-Stalin bias, a kind of "Gresham's Law" comes into play. Bad research drives out the good or — at the very least — makes the honest researcher very cautious, very careful not to challenge the prevailing paradigm. This is the academic and political environment that makes fraudulent works like *Stalin, Vol. Two* possible.

Concerning the portrayal of Stalin by anticommunist historians like Kotkin, Professor Domenico Losurdo of the University of Urbino, Italy, writes:

Les philosophes aiment à s'interroger en évoquant non seulement les événements historiques mais aussi les catégories avec lesquelles nous interprétons ces événements. Aujourd'hui, quelle est donc la catégorie avec laquelle on interprète Staline? Celle de folie sanguinaire. Cette catégorie a été déjà utilisée contre Robespierre, contre la révolution de 1848, contre la Commune, mais jamais contre la guerre, ni contre Louis XVI, ni contre les Girondins ou Napoléon. Pour ce qui concerne le XXème siècle, nous avons des études psychopathologiques sur Lénine, Staline, Trotski, Mao, mais pas, par exemple contre Churchill. Or, tout le groupe dirigeant bolchevik se prononçait contre l'expansionnisme colonial, tandis que Churchill écrivait « la guerre est un jeu auquel il faut sourire. » Il y eut ensuite le carnage de la Première Guerre mondiale, le groupe dirigeant bolchevik, Staline compris, est contre ce carnage, mais Churchill déclare encore : « la guerre est le plus grand jeu de l'histoire universelle, nous jouons ici la mise la plus élevée, la guerre constitue l'unique sens aigu de notre vie ». Alors, pourquoi l'approche psychopathologique dans un cas et pas dans l'autre?<sup>6</sup>

Translation:

In their discussions philosophers like to evoke not only historical events but also the categories with which we interpret these events. Today, what is the category with which Stalin is interpreted? That of bloodthirsty madness. This category has already been used against

Robespierre, against the Revolution of 1848, against the Paris Commune, but never against war, or against Louis XVI, or against the Girondins or Napoleon. Regarding the twentieth century, we have psychopathological studies of Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky, Mao, but not, for example, of Churchill. However, all of the Bolshevik leaders spoke up against colonial expansionism, while Churchill wrote: "War is a game at which one should smile." Then there was the carnage of the First World War. The Bolshevik leadership group, including Stalin, was against this carnage, but Churchill said again: "War is the greatest game in world history, here I play with the highest stakes, war is the sole acute sensation of our lives." So why the psychopathological approach in the one case and not in the other?

<sup>6</sup> Domenico Losurdo, "Staline et le stalinisme dans l'histoire (2)." April 12, 2012. At <http://www.lafauteadiderotnet/Staline-et-le-stalinisme-dans-l,855>; also at <http://domicolosurdo.blogspotcom/2012/09/il-dibattito-suilo-stalinismo-alla.html> Losurdo's quotations from Churchill may be found in his book *Stalin. Storia e critica di una leggenda nera*. Rome: Caracci, 2008, p. 243.

### **Khrushchev, Gorbachev, and Phony History**

All historians of the Soviet Union know that Khrushchev and the "historians" whose works he sponsored, and Gorbachev and the "historians" *he* sponsored, were lying. If they do not know that, they are utterly incompetent to do Soviet history. The documents from former Soviet archives that have been published since the end of the USSR permit no other conclusion.

In the case of Khrushchev's and Gorbachev's men the word "lie" is completely justified — in fact, is essential — because these people had *all* the evidence: everything we now have that has been published from former Soviet archives, plus much, much more.

It is hard indeed to imagine that Kotkin is ignorant of these basic facts. But he never tells his readers about this. Of course, if he did so he would not be

able to use dishonest Khrushchev- and Gorbachev-era secondary sources as his "evidence."

### **Fabrications, Falsifications, and Lies**

It will shock many readers to learn that a major work by a prominent historian can be, at base, a chain of untruths, its scholarly trappings a demonstrable fraud, a trap intended to lure the unwary or the hopelessly biased into believing falsehoods. Rightly so — we *should* be shocked and outraged by this kind of historical fraudulence. Yet *Stalin, Vol. Two* is precisely such a book. That is the inevitable conclusion of my study.

It will appear to readers that many of Kotkin's fact-claims are almost certainly "lies" in the strict sense. That is, they must have been made with conscious decision to deceive rather than as the expression of bias coupled with ignorance. At the same time many readers will assume that the word "lie" should only be used when deliberate dishonesty by a writer can be clearly demonstrated.

For this reason I am reluctant to have recourse to the word "lie." In all cases where deliberate intent to deceive cannot be clearly demonstrated by the evidence I use another term such as "fabrication" or "falsification" that connotes something made up, not contained in any of the evidence cited. As I have written elsewhere,

[I]t is easy to underestimate the power of a well-established, privileged preconceived framework of analysis on the minds of any researcher who is himself seriously biased. The pressures, both psychological and academic, to reach a conclusion acceptable to leading figures in the field of Soviet history, as well as to officials in Russia who control access to archives, are considerable indeed. Consequently, the disadvantages, professionally and otherwise, of reaching a conclusion that, no matter how well demonstrated, will be displeasing to powerful forces in the archival, political, and academic communities, are clear to anyone who is familiar with the highly politicized nature of the field of Soviet and indeed of all of communist history. (Furr, Kirov 7)

Accordingly I consider the word "lie" to be appropriate only when the evidence clearly shows that Kotkin has made a statement in flagrant disregard for the truth, such as a statement that is not supported in the source Kotkin cites in support of it or is even contradicted by that source. Yet even in such cases we should not rule out the power of a preconceived framework plus a strong bias to "blind" a non-objective historian like Kotkin to evidence and conclusions that are incompatible with the ASP.

## **Objectivity and the Truth**

It is a commonplace today that Stalin committed mass murders and gross atrocities. This belief is like the notions, almost universal before the 20th century (and by no means dead even today) that women and non-whites are "intellectually inferior." Those notions were "common sense," taken for granted by almost every "white" male of European ancestry, including scientists. They were questioned by few, firmly rejected by fewer still. Yet they were never true. They were (and are) avidly promoted because they served (and, in some circles, still serve) definite political and economic interests.

An objective study of the evidence now available shows that, contrary to "what everybody knows" — what I call "the Anti-Stalin Paradigm" — *none* of the mass murders, atrocities, and other crimes alleged against Stalin can be verified by the evidence. Not one of them! On the contrary: the evidence now available proves that *Stalin was not guilty of even a single one of the crimes Kotkin is eager to arraign him for.*

Because this conclusion will shock many readers, the evidence supporting it must be more fully expounded than is normally the case in historical studies. After all, a major conclusion of this book is that, on any important matter, the fact-claims even of renowned historians should never be simply "believed" — accepted as true. Instead they must be verified. Why, then, should any reader accept the fact-claims in this book — namely, that some statement in *Stalin, Vol. Two* is false — when the same book cautions them not to believe Kotkin?



Accordingly, the footnotes, references, and — where necessary — the primary documents essential for any reader to check my conclusions, are reproduced here. This adds to the length of this study. But there is no other way to document such a travesty of historical scholarship as *Stalin, Vol. Two* presents us with.

The aim of the present study is to examine the allegations by Kotkin against Stalin. Although at many points *Stalin, Vol. Two* reads something like a "prosecutor's brief" against Stalin and the USSR, the present study is fundamentally different. My book is not a "defense attorney's brief." It is not an attempt to prove either guilt or innocence. Rather, it is an attempt to find the truth.

I have tried hard to do what an investigator does in the case of a crime in which he has no bias, no *parti pris*, but only wishes to solve the crime. This is what all historians are supposed to do, and what most historians who investigate the more distant past do all the time. I wish to persuade the fair-minded, objective reader that I have carried out a competent, honest investigation. Namely, that I have done the following:

- collected all the evidence that Kotkin has cited to prove his allegations against Stalin, and also any "negative" evidence that contests those allegations;
- studied all this evidence carefully and honestly;
- drawn my conclusions on the basis of that evidence.

Political prejudice predominates in the study of communism and in particular of Soviet history. Conclusions that contradict the dominant Anti-Stalin Paradigm are routinely ignored or dismissed.

Conclusions that cast doubt upon accusations against Stalin or whose implications tend to make him look either "good" or just less "evil" than the predominant paradigm holds him to have been, are called "Stalinist." Any objective study of the evidence now available is bound to be called "Stalinist" simply because it must reach conclusions that are politically unacceptable to those who have a strong anticommunist bias, those who are in thrall to the false "Anti-Stalin Paradigm."

I wish to persuade the objective reader that I have reached my conclusions on the basis of evidence and its analysis and not on any other basis such as political bias. My aim is neither to arraign or "convict" Kotkin nor to "defend" Stalin. I assure the reader that I remain ready to be convinced that Stalin et al. did commit the atrocities alleged by Kotkin if and when evidence is disclosed that supports that conclusion and that evidence can withstand the scholarly scrutiny to which all evidence should be subject.

## **Evidence**

Before proceeding to study the relevant evidence we must briefly consider the question of evidence itself. Whereas "documents" are material objects in our case, writing on paper "evidence" is a relational concept. In the present study we are concerned with investigating Kotkin's allegations in *Stalin, Vol. Two* of criminal, atrocious activity by Stalin.

There is no such thing as "absolute" evidence. *All* evidence can be faked. This point can hardly be overstressed since many people, including historians, believe that confessions of persons under arrest can be more readily faked than other kinds of evidence. But this is not so. Any statement — a confession of guilt, a denial of guilt, a claim that one has been tortured, a claim that one has not been coerced in any way — may be true or false, an attempt to state the truth as the speaker (or writer) remembers it or a deliberate lie. Documents can be forged and, in the case of Soviet history, often have been. False documents have on occasion been inserted into archives in order to be "discovered." Or it may be alleged that a given document was found in an archive when it was not. Photographs can be faked. Eyewitnesses can lie, and in any case eyewitnesses are so often in error that such evidence is among the least reliable kind.<sup>7</sup> In principle there can be no such thing as a "smoking gun" evidence that is so clearly genuine and powerful that it cannot be interpreted in more than one way.

<sup>7</sup> As I write these lines a New York Times article relates a striking example of flagrant inaccuracies in eyewitness accounts and cites one of the foremost experts on this subject, Professor Elizabeth Loftus. "Witness Accounts in Midtown Hammer Attack Show the Power of False Memory," at <https://nyti.ms/lbTghAm>

## **The Primary Importance of Objectivity**

Identifying, locating, gathering, studying, and interpreting evidence are skills that can be taught to anyone. The most difficult and rarest skill in historical research is the discipline of objectivity. In order to reach true conclusions statements that are more truthful than other possible statements about a given historical event a researcher must first question and subject to doubt any preconceived ideas she may hold about the event under investigation. It is one's own preconceived ideas and prejudices that are most likely to sway one into a subjective, inaccurate interpretation of the evidence. Therefore, the researcher must take special steps to make certain this does not happen.

This can be done. The techniques are known and widely practiced in the physical and social sciences. They can and must be adapted to historical research as well. If such techniques are not practiced the historian will inevitably be seriously swayed from an objective understanding of the evidence by her own pre-existing preferences and biases. That will all but guarantee that her conclusions are false even if she is in possession of the best evidence and all the skills necessary to analyze it.

Nowhere is a devotion to objectivity more essential or less in evidence than in the field of Soviet history of the Stalin period. As it is impossible to discover the truth absent a dedication to objectivity, the present study strives to be objective at all costs. Its conclusions will displease, even outrage, a good many persons who are dedicated not to objectivity and the truth but to promoting some anticommunist narrative or to defending the Cold War-anticommunist paradigm of Soviet and European history.

## **The Role of Appropriate Skepticism**

Throughout this essay I have tried to anticipate the objections of a skeptical critic. This is no more than any careful, objective researcher should do. In the body of the essay I follow each presentation of evidence with a critical examination.

## **"Propaganda With Footnotes"**

I have taught American history for 27 years at a university, and I open every class with a standard lecture that focuses on the three kinds of history: what actually happened, what we are told happened and what we come to believe happened. This is important because we live in a world in which what people believe happened is all that matters, and trying to get to the facts sadly appears less relevant.

— Professor Stephen D. Engle, historian, Florida International University<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Letter to the Editor, *The New York Times*. November 3, 2017, A30.

Scholarship is the attempt to ascertain the truth. Arguments that proceed not from an objective search for truth but from some other motive, such as an attempt to attack or defend some specific allegation or historical paradigm, may fairly be labeled "propaganda." When accompanied by the trappings of scholarship — references, bibliography, fraudulent assurances of objectivity — such writing in reality constitutes not scholarship but "propaganda with footnotes." It is the conclusion of the present study that *Stalin, Vol. Two* is precisely such a work.

### **Method of Presentation**

The present book takes upon itself the task of examining and checking every statement in *Stalin, Vol. Two* that has an anti-Stalin tendency, and reporting the results of this research of verification. It presents for the reader's consideration the proof that every fact-claim of an anti-Stalin tendency in Kotkin's book is false.

Most people rely upon the statements by supposedly "authoritative" figures such as Kotkin. They trust that scholars from respected institutions of learning, with renowned academic reputations, do not falsify important historical events. It is this trust that enables false scholarship to shape opinion on important historical questions.

It is no exaggeration to state that, as concerns Stalin and therefore, for the most part, Soviet history of the 1930s, Kotkin's *Stalin, Vol. Two* is a work of

falsification from beginning to end. I have established that this is so through an exhaustive process of checking every footnote, every reference that Kotkin cites in support of any fact-claim or statement of an anti-Stalin tendency.

## The "Big Lie" Technique

A normal practice for those who intend to deceive others is to mainly tell the truth, and smuggle in the falsehoods intermingled among the true statements. But on the historical issues studied and analyzed in the present book Kotkin employs a different method: that of "The Big Lie." Though it is ostensibly not a work of propaganda Kotkin's book follows the technique of propaganda recommended by Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, such as the following:

The function of propaganda is, for example, not to weigh and ponder the rights of different people, but exclusively to emphasize the one right which it has set out to argue for. **Its task is not to make an objective study of the truth, in so far as it favors the enemy, and then set it before the masses with academic fairness; its task is to serve our own right, always and unflinchingly.**<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf. Volume One: A Reckoning. Chapter VI: War Propaganda.* At [http://www.hitler.org/writings/Mein\\_Kampf/mkv1ch06.html](http://www.hitler.org/writings/Mein_Kampf/mkv1ch06.html)

The "Big Lie" was not original with Hitler. He learned of it by studying the anti-German propaganda put out by the Western Allies during the First World War. After that war a number of books were written, often by shocked and deceived journalists, exposing these Allied falsifications.<sup>10</sup> Thus there was no need for Kotkin to learn the "Big Lie" technique from Hitler. That Kotkin does utilize this technique is beyond question. The present book establishes this fact by carefully checking every one of the references Kotkin uses to support his anti-Stalin fact-claims.

Kotkin makes no attempt at objectivity. Indeed, his anti-Stalin hostility at times boils over in passages of heated rhetoric, fervent moralizing, and

moral condemnation that serve no analytical purpose. Yet objectivity is first among the requirements of any historian worthy of the name. If one does not strive for objectivity from the outset of one's study one will never discover the truth. The truth was never Kotkin's goal in the first place.

Hitler also succinctly explained why the "Big Lie" technique is so effective:

In this they [skilled liars — GF] proceeded on the sound principle that the magnitude of a lie always contains a certain factor of credibility, since the great masses of the people in the very bottom of their hearts tend to be corrupted rather than consciously and purposely evil, and that, therefore, in view of the primitive simplicity of their minds they more easily fall a victim to a big lie than to a little one, since they themselves lie in little things, but would be ashamed of lies that were too big. Such a falsehood will never enter their heads and they will not be able to believe in the possibility of such monstrous effrontery and infamous misrepresentation in others; yes, even when enlightened on the subject, they will long doubt and waver, and continue to accept at least one of these causes as true. Therefore, something of even the most insolent lie will always remain and stick a fact which all the great lie-virtuosi and lying-clubs in this world know only too well and also make the most treacherous use of.<sup>11</sup>

A full professor of history at Princeton University, publishing with a major American commercial publisher, can rely on "credibility" — the only coin in the propagandist's purse. The present study shows this coin to be counterfeit.

In this book all boldface emphases are by me, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, Chapter X: Causes of the Collapse. At [http://www.hitler.org/writings/Mein\\_Kampf/mkv1ch10.html](http://www.hitler.org/writings/Mein_Kampf/mkv1ch10.html)

## Chapter 1. *Collectivization and Famine*

Like other ideologically anticommunist writers Kotkin insists that the Soviet famine of 1932-33 was caused by Stalin in some manner that makes Stalin personally responsible for all the deaths and suffering that resulted. But Kotkin cites no *evidence* that Stalin's policies or actions caused the famine.

Researchers have given the following causes for the famine:

\* Ukrainian nationalists claim that Stalin deliberately caused the famine in order to punish Ukrainians for their nationalism. This explanation gained some notoriety in the west through Robert Conquest's 1986 book *Harvest of Sorrow*, and has since been revived by Anne Applebaum's *Red Famine*.<sup>1</sup> Like all other researchers Kotkin rejects this "deliberate famine" hypothesis. Even Conquest ultimately retracted it.<sup>2</sup>

\* The famine was caused by disruptions in agriculture caused by collectivization. Kotkin, who has no sympathy with collectivization, cites it as one cause of the famine.

\* The famine was caused by the program of rapid industrialization. Kotkin assumes that this was another cause.

\* The famine was due to environmental causes that peasants, local officials, and the Soviet government, including Stalin, were slow to recognize. This hypothesis has been set forth by Professor Mark Tauger of West Virginia University in many research articles and monographs. Kotkin barely mentions it, and then only in footnotes. Yet this explanation is the only one that is supported by evidence.

<sup>1</sup> See Mark Tauger's review of Applebaum's book on the History News Network, July 1, 2018, at <https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/169438>

<sup>2</sup> See the Conquest quotation and the sources for it in Furr, *Blood Lies* 47.

## "Stalin's Famine"?

Kotkin repeatedly blames Stalin for the famine:

**Stalin's Famine** (subtitle, 127)

**Stalin's famine**, involving extirpation of capitalism and denomadization, was incomparably worse. (127)

All of these actions were woefully insufficient for avoiding **the mass starvation in the countryside caused by his policies**, in the face of challenging natural conditions. (128-9)

**Once Stalin had caused the horror**, even complete termination of exports would not have been enough to prevent famine. (129)

**Stalin had caused a domestic calamity** and rendered the Soviet Union vulnerable in the face of Japan's expansionism ... (129)

**Marxist imperatives** of transcending capitalism—combined with inordinate willpower—brought apocalypse. (191)

Failing to cite any evidence that Stalin had caused the famine, Kotkin accuses Stalin of blaming the peasants for it.

Many contemporaries, such as the Italian ambassador, who traveled through Ukraine in summer 1933, deemed the famine deliberate.<sup>471</sup> Monstrously, Stalin himself made the same accusation accusing peasants of not wanting to work.<sup>472</sup> (128)

Kotkin's note 472 is to an article by Michael Ellman. But there Ellman only states that, according to a doctor in Kiev province, "leaders and rank-and-file workers" — not Stalin — were blaming peasants who did not want to work for their own starvation. Ellman notes that, in a letter to Soviet writer Mikhail Sholokhov, Stalin said that some peasants had refused to work, thereby threatening to starve urban workers and the Red Army.

In this same article Ellman states:



Stalin's idea that he had faced a peasant strike was not an absurd notion indicating paranoia. **It seems that there really were numerous collective refusals by collective farmers to work for the collective farms in 1932**; see Kondrashin & Penner, Golod, chapter 3. (Ellman, note 9, p. 837.)

Chapter 3 of the Kondrashin-Penner book is titled "They raised, but they did not harvest."

So Stalin's statement was not "monstrous" after all! Kotkin, who has read Ellman's article, knows this. But Kotkin's readers will not know it — and Kotkin does not tell them.

In dismissing the "deliberate famine" fiction Kotkin blames collectivization for the famine:

Nonetheless, the famine was not intentional.<sup>474</sup> It resulted from Stalin's policies of forced collectivization-dekulakization, as well as the pitiless and incompetent management of the sowing and procurement campaigns, all of which put the country on a knife-edge, highly susceptible to drought and sudden torrential rains.<sup>475</sup>

But in note 474 Kotkin quotes Davies and Wheatcroft, who write:

We regard the policy of rapid industrialisation as an underlying cause of the agricultural troubles of the early 1930s, and we do not believe that the Chinese or NEP versions of industrialisation were viable in Soviet national and international circumstances.

This quotation offers no support for Kotkin's claim that collectivization caused the famine. On the contrary, in ruling out the other paths towards industrialization, it appears to tacitly endorse the Soviet program.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> As we shall see, Tauger disagrees with Davies and Wheatcroft here.

Kotkin:

[Stalin] twice deluded himself — partly from false reporting by frightened statisticians<sup>4</sup>[my note, GF], partly from his own magical thinking—that the country was on the verge of a recovery harvest. (128)

<sup>4</sup> Kotkin cites no evidence of any "frightened statisticians." Evidently he has imagined them.

This is not just a "cheap shot"; it is false as well. A good harvest for 1932 was not a product of any "magical thinking" of Stalin's — it was what agricultural experts predicted.

Tauger writes:

The fact that rust was difficult for nonspecialists to detect helps to explain the numerous claims in memoirs and testimonies of a good 1932 harvest.

Soviet agronomic literature and other published and archival sources from the 1930s, however, which no previous scholarship on the famine has discussed, indicate that **in 1932 Soviet crops suffered from an extraordinarily severe combination of infestations from crop diseases and pests.**

During their travels in summer 1932, **Cairns and Schiller observed widespread rust infestations** and spoke with Soviet agronomists who confirmed these impressions in **Ukraine**, in the North Caucasus (including the large sovkhozy Verblud and Gigant), Belorussia, the Central Blackearth oblast', and the Volga region. The Soviet agricultural newspaper even acknowledged major rust infestations, though without explaining in any detail their extent and consequences.

The fact that rust was difficult for nonspecialists to detect helps to explain the numerous claims in memoirs and testimonies of a good 1932 harvest. Famine survivors in the Volga region whom the Russian historian Viktor Kondrashin interviewed, however, remembered that in the 1932 harvest the ears were somehow "empty," the characteristic one would expect from rusted grain.

Nonetheless agronomists and other personnel in central offices and local branches of NKZ detected the infestation and made efforts to survey it and combat it. Their investigations found that **rust had become the most widely distributed disease and caused the most harm to agriculture in Ukraine and in the Soviet Union generally.** One study found that brown rust of wheat seriously affected crops in the North Caucasus and Ukraine in 1932, where it destroyed up to 70 percent of the harvest in some regions, especially near rivers, reduced the weight of grain 40-47 percent and the number of seeds in ears by 20-29 percent. Wheat sowings had serious rust infestations in all the grain regions of the USSR in 1932, and rust reduced the wheat harvest in the North Caucasus by 50 percent. These losses help explain why the famine was so severe in that region.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Mark Tauger, *Natural Disaster and Human Action in the Soviet Famine of 1931-1933*, Carl Beck Papers No. 1506. Pittsburgh, PA., 2001, pp. 12-15.

Kotkin cites this very study in his bibliography (1111). So he knows his "magical thinking" statement is false. But he put it in anyway. How many of Kotkin's readers are going to be familiar with Tauger's study and realize that there were "numerous claims in memoirs and testimonies of a good 1932 harvest"?

Kotkin asserts:

**Once Stalin had caused the horror**, even complete termination of exports would not have been enough to prevent famine. (129)

Then Kotkin states:

The regime had no strategic grain reserves left, having released them.<sup>485</sup> (129)

Note 485 (942) is to Davies et al., "Stalin, Grain Stocks, and the Famine of 1932-33," 653. There we read:

Only more aggressive purchases of food abroad and open appeals for international assistance could have averted many (and perhaps most)

of the deaths.

But on pages 128-9 Kotkin had already written:

Always grudgingly, **Stalin approved, and in some cases initiated, reductions in grain exports**, beginning already in September 1931; in **1932 and 1933** he signed reduced grain collection quotas for Ukraine, the North Caucasus, the Volga valley, Crimea, the Urals, the Central Black Earth region, the Kazakh autonomous republic, and Eastern Siberia on nine occasions.<sup>476</sup> The 1933 grain procurement target fell from 24.3 to 19.6 million tons; the actual amount collected would be around 18.5 million tons.<sup>477, 478</sup> Altogether, the regime returned about 5.7 million tons of grain back to agriculture, including 2 million tons from reserves and 3.5 million from procurements.

So Kotkin admits that Stalin reduced grain exports and grain collection quotas! But why "always grudgingly"? For one thing, because the cities were starving too:

Stalin also approved clandestine purchase of grain and livestock abroad using scarce hard currency.<sup>479</sup> Just between February and July 1933, he signed or countenanced nearly three dozen small allocations of food aid to the countryside, primarily to the North Caucasus and Ukraine, as well as the Kazakh lands (which necessitated sharp reductions in the bread rations for city dwellers, many of whom were put on the brink of starvation). (128)

But what about Davies and Wheatcroft's claim that the Soviets "could have avoided many (and perhaps most) deaths" by "more aggressive purchases of food abroad and open appeals for international assistance"? A 2016 study argues that the importation of more foodstuffs was impossible by 1933:

[[cyrillic]]В отличие от 1931-1932 гг., когда у государства еще была возможность импортировать зерно, во втором квартале 1933 г. импорт был невозможен.

In contrast to 1931-1932, when the state still had the opportunity to import grain, in the second quarter of 1933, imports were impossible.

[[[cyrillic]]]Пик валютного кризиса в первой половине 1933 г. делал импорт продовольствия в СССР невозможным.

The peak of the economic crisis in the first half of 1933 made the import of food in[to] the USSR impossible.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Nazarenko N. N., Bashkin A. V. Cereal Crops Export in early 1930s in the Context of the Famine of 1932-1933, *Noveishaia Istoriiia Rossii*, no 3, 2016, 105-120; pp.115, 119. (In Russian)

Kotkin himself admits this — though his admission is buried in a long footnote on page 942:

Instead of an anticipated 5.426 billion gold rubles of revenue from all exports (grain, timber, oil) over the course of the Five-Year Plan, the Soviets managed to bring in 3.283 billion. Industry was short 1.873 million rubles, including 832 million just in 1932. **The Soviets ran out of convertible currency even for purchases of foreign military technology.**

Kotkin writes:

**Stalin had caused a domestic calamity** and rendered the Soviet Union vulnerable in the face of Japan's expansionism, while contributing significantly to the ascent in Germany of Hitler, who threatened expansionism, and provoking blistering internal critiques.<sup>486</sup> (129)

A serious accusation! But Kotkin gives no evidence that Stalin "caused" the famine, and cites no reference to crop failures or to any environmental causes. Note 486 reads (in part):

... Davies, rightly, discounts militarization and instead blames absurd plan targets. Davies, *Crisis and Progress*, 176ff; Davies, "Soviet Defence Industries," 266. (942)

This is simply false. Davies, *Crisis and Progress*, does not state anything like this, either on pp. 176 ff. or anywhere else.<sup>7</sup> Davies does state this, at pp. 146-7:

... we do not know whether Kuibyshev and Ordzhonikidze consistently advocated more realistic plans in the course of 1932. **And it is by no means certain that they were opposed by Stalin and Molotov; some evidence shows that Stalin and Molotov were also prepared to accept reductions in the plans** (see p. 124).

<sup>7</sup> Davies, "Soviet Defence Industries," is an "unpublished discussion paper" from 1987 (1078), far too old to be useful today. If Davies had kept to that view, he would have repeated it elsewhere.

Pages 123-4 relate that Stalin was willing to reduce the plan for pig-iron in the Second Five-Year Plan.

### **Stalin to Kaganovich in Sept. 1934, not Sept. 1933**

Kotkin:

Resolute in extremis, Stalin ordered the forced return of peasant escapees, **the blacklisting of entire counties (they would suffer the highest mortality)**, and the banning of fishing in state waters or even private charity—anything that would have made it possible to avoid the collectives.<sup>489</sup> The OGPU arrested 505,000 people in 1933, as compared with 410,000 the year before.<sup>490</sup> (130)

Note 489 (942) reads:

489. When Kaganovich demonstrated a bit of leniency toward procurements in Ukraine in **Sept. 1933**, Stalin rebuked him. Khlevniuk et al., *Stalin i Kaganovich*, 479 (RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 85, l. 44-5), 479-80 (f. 81, op. 3, d. 100, l. 76-82).

Kotkin is writing about 1933 here. But the Stalin to Kaganovich letter he cites here is dated a year later, in September, 1934! *Stalin i Kaganovich* 479

contains two letters dated in September 1934, not 1933. And the famine was basically over by September, 1933.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Document* (not page) No. 479 in the same book — just in case this is a mistake by Kotkin — is a letter dated August 21, 1934 about the reorganization of the People's Commissariat for Army and Navy.

Nor is there any evidence here about "the highest mortality" being in the "blacklisted counties." Kotkin has either fabricated this factoid himself or copied it from some other source that has made it up.<sup>9</sup>

Kotkin:

Stalin: Waiting for ... The Truth

The peasants, in their land hunger and separate revolution, had made possible the advent of a Bolshevik regime in 1917-18; now enslaved, the peasants saved Stalin's rule.<sup>495</sup> (130)

Kotkin does not cite any evidence to support his outrageous contention that peasants in collective farms were "slaves" — because, of course, they were not.

Here is his note 495 (942):

Famine conditions persisted into late fall 1933 and, in some places, would last through summer 1934. Ammende, *Human Life in Russia*, 80-4. In fall 1933, the regime was pressing for workers to cultivate gardens to grow their own food, on the example of Ukraine's Donetsk region. Pavlov, *Anastas Mikoian*, 71 (citing RGASPI, f. 84, op. 2, d. 19, l. 125-6). Kazakhstan would be given 18,000 tons of food aid by decree on Nov. 28, 1933. Antipova et al., *Golod v SSSR*, 507 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 15, l. 142, 145, 148)."

Ewald Ammende was a Baltic German who was in the USSR in 1934 and claimed — wrongly — that a new famine would kill millions in 1934-1936.

Pavlov, *Anastas Mikoian*, merely documents the fact that Soviet workers were encouraged to plant vegetable gardens.

Kotkin concludes:

**Marxist imperatives** of transcending capitalism—combined with inordinate willpower brought apocalypse. (131)

But he then tells us that the industrialization drive did **not**, in fact, withdraw resources from the countryside or peasantry:

During the first Five-Year Plan, the volume of investment quadrupled, to 44 percent of GDP by 1932 (measured in 1928 prices), but **none of the massive net increase in investment came from higher agricultural surpluses.**<sup>2</sup> Grain exports did not end up paying for imports of machinery.<sup>3</sup> **Soviet agriculture made no net contribution to industrialization; on the contrary, it was a net recipient of resources during the plan.** True, a key driver of the industrial spurt was new labor power from villages, but the statist system used those workers grossly inefficiently. Another key driver of the spurt was brutally suppressed consumption (reinforced by that thief called inflation). (131)

Other scholars agree: the peasants were not exploited to fund industrialization. But that means that "Marxist imperatives" did *not* cause the famine ("apocalypse"). As for "brutally suppressed consumption" — certainly: there was a serious famine! But the "suppressed consumption" was not caused by Stalin or the Soviet government.

Kotkin gives no evidence, nor even an argument, for his assertion that the labor of former peasants was used "grossly inefficiently." But it can't be true, for what is the basis of comparison? Surely the real "gross inefficiency" was the idle labor in traditional peasant agriculture. Collective farms (*kolkhozy*) and Soviet farms (*sovkhozy*) grew more crops with far less labor, and many peasants went to the cities to find work.<sup>10</sup> In other words, *increased* efficiency in the use of labor.



<sup>10</sup> Kotkin's notes 2 and 3 in the quotation above simply document these facts.

Kotkin makes this claim (n. 4. p. 943):

Robert Allen argues that per capita consumption, after falling in the early 1930s, increased significantly, being perhaps a fifth higher in 1937 than a decade earlier, but he has rightly been taken to task separately by Davies and Ellman. Allen, *Farm to Factory*, 147-50, 185-6; R. W. Davies ([http://eh.net/book\\_reviews/farm-to-factory-a-reinterpretation-of-the-soviet-industrial-revolution](http://eh.net/book_reviews/farm-to-factory-a-reinterpretation-of-the-soviet-industrial-revolution)); Ellman, "Soviet Industrialization."

This claim of Kotkin's is false as well. In the online review Kotkin cites, Davies says that the disagreement about consumption in the 1930s "needs further investigation," but concludes as follows:

But it is certain that, contrary to popular preconceptions, in the Stalinist period as a whole, between 1938 and the mid-1950s, consumption per head increased substantially in spite of the disastrous impact of the Second World War.

The feat that continues to astound the world is that the USSR became an industrialized nation in a decade *entirely without foreign capital*. During the same decade the Soviet Union modernized its agriculture to the point that the thousand-year cycle of devastating famine was eliminated forever. All this was accomplished simply through the labor of its own people, planned and organized by the Bolshevik Party. Naturally, this is a bone in the throat for Kotkin and for all anticommunists.

Kotkin admits that:

... [t]he industrialization and accompanying militarization began to revive the Soviet Union as a great power, **a necessity for survival in the international system** ...

Despite this admission Kotkin still insists that "collectivization was not 'necessary' to 'modernize' a peasant economy or industrialize." (131)

However, he does not outline any alternative.

### **The Thousand-Year Cycle of Famine Broken**

This brings us to the basic dishonesty of Kotkin's account of Soviet agriculture and the Soviet famine. Kotkin fails to confront — indeed, he completely ignores — the real reason for collectivization. This was the desperate need to put an end to the thousand-year cycle of devastating famines, recurring every few years.

According to Tauger:

Russia has a long history of famines, from its earliest history in the tenth century through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In virtually all cases these famines resulted from natural disasters that caused crop failures, shortages, and deaths from starvation and famine-related diseases. In addition to the environmental factors, grain traders, nobles, and others often exploited crop failures to take advantage of high prices, and thereby frequently worsened conditions for poor and vulnerable groups.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Tauger, "Famine in Russian History." *Supplement to the Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History*, vol. 10. Gulf Breeze Florida, Academic International Press, 2011, 79.

### **The Environmental Causes**

Tauger has spent his scholarly career in studying Russian and Soviet agriculture and famines. His research, drawing upon extensive Soviet-era primary sources and Soviet and Russian scholarship, argues that the famine of 1932-33 was caused by an environmental catastrophe.

Tauger's view is frequently attacked or ignored altogether by anticommunists simply because his research does not lend itself to blaming Stalin and the Bolsheviks for the famine. For example, Anne Applebaum and Polish researcher Robert Kuśnierz, both stridently anticommunist, repeat the outrageous lie that Tauger does not cite any evidence!<sup>12</sup> Their

obvious motive is to discourage their readers from ever looking at Tauger's heavily-documented research, which utterly refutes their own falsifications.

<sup>12</sup> Applebaum, *Red Famine. Stalin's War on Ukraine*. (New York: Doubleday, 2017), 419. For quotation in Polish and English from Kuśnierz's book see Furr, *Blood Lies* 102-103.

Kotkin takes a different approach to Tauger's research. During 2016-2017 Kotkin conferred with Tauger at Princeton University about the famine. But in the *text* of his mammoth book Kotkin does not even summarize, much less critically evaluate, Tauger's evidence and arguments. As we have seen above, Kotkin simply *asserts* that, somehow, Stalin "caused" the famine — though he can cite no evidence to support this claim.

In his footnotes, however, Kotkin's tone is different. There he sets forth important aspects of Tauger's research and conclusions.

Kotkin, text (75):

... in 1931, a cold spring followed by a summer drought—a fatal combination—struck the Kazakh steppes, Siberia, the Urals, the Volga, and Ukraine.<sup>48</sup>

In his note 48 (924), Kotkin does acknowledge the world-wide drought of 1930-1932:

Drought, in different ways, affected other world regions around this time. In the United States the "great southern drought" of 1930-31, which coincided with a price collapse and banking failures, inflicted hardship across twenty-three states from West Virginia to Texas; ... French West Africa suffered drought, locusts, and its worst famine ever; the French authorities did not relent on tax demands. **Mortality in French West Africa was disproportionately higher (in an immensely smaller area and overall population) than in the Soviet Union.** China in 1931-32 suffered the opposite problem: large snowmelt and tremendous rainfall that inundated an area equivalent in size to England and half of Scotland, flooding some 52 million people, and killing as many as 2 million from drowning and especially

starvation. Tauger, "Natural Disaster," 8, citing Woodruff, *Rare as Rain*.

Kotkin, text (86-7):

... the worsening terms of trade and tariffs did force the Soviets to curtail imports of consumer and even capital goods.<sup>131</sup> But the Soviets meticulously paid their debts. The pressure to do so partly explains the regime's continued export of grain despite fears for the harvest and low global prices.<sup>132</sup> Only state-imposed deprivation allowed the USSR to avoid external default.

Kotkin, note 131 (928):

... The year 1932 would turn out to be the worst in the history of Soviet foreign trade because of higher tariffs abroad and decreased credit availability.

Kotkin, note 132 (928):

... See also Tauger, "1932 Harvest," 88n52.

Here is the text of Tauger's important note:

According to the commercial counselor of the British Embassy in Moscow, writing in late 1931, "failure [by the Soviet government] to meet its obligations would certainly bring disaster in its train. Not only would further credits cease, but all future exports, all Soviet shipping entering foreign ports, all Soviet property already in foreign countries would be liable to seizure to cover sums due. Admission of insolvency would endanger the achievement of all aspirations based on the five-year plan and might indeed imperil the existence of the government itself" (PRO FO 371\5607 N7648/167/38, 6—7). German Chancellor Bruening told a British diplomat in Berlin in early 1932 that if the Soviets "did not meet their bills in some form or other, their credit would be destroyed for good and all" (PRO FO 371 16327 N456/158/38). Dohan notes that the country's major creditors began to

reduce their credit offerings to the Soviet Union in 1931-1932, despite Soviet efforts to pay, "Origins of Economic Autarky," 630...

This information is vital to any accurate understanding of the famine. Yet Kotkin hides it from his readers by omitting it entirely from his text and even from his footnotes. To find it one has to obtain this work of Tauger's and then read this footnote. Few, if any, of Kotkin's readers will do so.

Kotkin, text (100):

Tractive power, seed grain, and fodder were scarce. The spring sowing season had proved short, and wheat sown beginning in late May always produced lower yields and was more susceptible to August rains, which would descend torrentially as early as the beginning of the month. Rust epiphytotics damaged a significant part of the wheat harvest, to the surprise of officials who had failed to identify it.<sup>254</sup>

Kotkin, note 254 (933):

Peasants could not distinguish between rust and other diseases, a Soviet agronomist reported. But as Tauger has demonstrated, local officials, too, did not understand plant disease and, at harvest time, when they would discover that the crop had been rotted out, would wrongly blame social causes. Tauger, "Natural Disaster," 15 (citing *Nazaschitu urozhaia*, 1933, no. 10: 14-6; S. E. Grushevoi; and RGAE, f. 7486, op. 37, d. 237, l. 388), 40-5.

Kotkin, text (106):

In September 1932 ... [t]he 1932 harvest was coming in at fewer than 60 million tons, and possibly as low as 50 million, which was close to the horrific result in the famine year of 1921.<sup>293</sup>

Kotkin, note 293 (935):

**Tauger, who stresses the natural causes of the famine, carefully showed that the annual reports from the collective farms for 1932 implied an extremely low harvest, and that not only the official**

figure for the 1932 harvest but revised figures given by Davies and Wheatcroft were likely too high. Ultimately, the size of the 1932 harvest remains uncertain, but the annual report data from 40 percent of the collective farms which are the only actual harvest data so far discovered imply a harvest on the order of 50 million tons. Tauger, "1932 Harvest." Davies and Wheatcroft estimate the 1932 harvest at 58-60 million, but that is based on pre-harvest forecasts. It should be noted, however, that **Wheatcroft, who has rejected Tauger's views, often stridently, subsequently allowed 50 million as the lower band of the estimate without then citing Tauger.**

Kotkin, text (130):

Resolute in extremis, Stalin ordered the forced return of peasant escapees, the blacklisting of entire counties (they would suffer the highest mortality) ...

Tauger, in "Natural Disaster and Human Action" — a work we cited above and one that Kotkin cites elsewhere but not here — states:

The Ukrainian Central Committee found that **the "blacklisting" of villages** (closing down trade outlets for consumer goods) for failure to meet procurement quotas **had had little effect**, because the countryside was "saturated" with consumer goods. (62)

There's nothing here about "entire counties" being blacklisted — the source cited by Snyder says that the blacklist was confined to **six villages!**<sup>13</sup> And what did "blacklisting" mean? Kotkin doesn't tell us, but it "sounds bad," right? It simply meant withholding manufactured goods normally exchanged with the peasants for grain.

<sup>13</sup> See Furr, *Blood Lies* 81-85.

Consequently, there is no evidence whatsoever for the claim that "blacklisting" resulted in "higher mortality," as Kotkin asserts.

Kotkin, text (130):

Officials concluded that they had broken the peasants' will, indirectly suggesting the regime had partnered with famine to achieve subjugation.<sup>493</sup>

This statement is simply untrue. Here is the text of Kotkin's note 493 (942):

Stalin would later boast in a discussion of five historical turning points—1905, 1917, the Brest-Litovsk peace of 1918, the Russian civil war, "and especially collectivization"—that the latter entailed "a completely novel, historically unprecedented event." Banac, *Diary of Georgi Dimitrov*, 69 (Nov. 11, 1937).

Neither in this note nor anywhere else does Kotkin cite any evidence of "officials concluding that they had broken the peasants will."

Kotkin, text (130):

Indeed, it was the famished peasants who would lift the regime and the country out of starvation, producing between 70 and 77 million tons of grain in 1933, a bumper crop comparable to the miracle of 1930.<sup>494</sup>

Kotkin, note 494 (942):

The degree to which the regime contributed to the bumper harvest, by the distribution of tractors, seed aid, and food relief, remains a matter of intense controversy. ... **Tauger, seeking to place the Soviet story in a broader one of agricultural modernization, emphasizes how the collective farm system facilitated Soviet relief efforts and the peasants' ability to generate the harvest that saved them and the country.** Tauger, "Soviet Peasants"; Tauger, "Stalin, Soviet Agriculture, and Collectivization," 109-42.

Here at least we see the crux of the problem for Kotkin: Tauger's research shows that *the collective farm system worked!* It not only facilitated overcoming the famine of 1932-33. By putting an end to the medieval system whereby individual peasant families — at least, those who possessed any land at all (a large per centage of peasants had no land) — cultivated narrow strips of land, often far apart from each other,

collectivization made possible large-scale, mechanized farming modelled on large American Midwest farms.

And this meant that the famine of 1932-33 was the *last* Soviet famine. Weather conditions did not change — years of bad weather continued to occur every few years. Local food shortages and even limited starvation would sometimes happen.

But with one exception — the famine of 1946-7 — disastrous famines would never recur.<sup>14</sup> Four such widespread famines, with hundreds of thousands or millions of deaths, had occurred in just the previous fifteen years: in 1917-18, 1920-23, 1924-25, and 1927-28. Thanks to collectivization and the modern, large-scale, mechanized and scientific agriculture it permitted, there were no more famines.

<sup>14</sup> Stephen G. Wheatcroft, the latest student of this famine, concludes that it was caused by catastrophic weather conditions that affected much of the world, "the most serious global food shortage in modern history." In the Soviet Union, its effects were exacerbated by the huge destruction of the war. Wheatcroft is firm that the famine was not caused by Soviet policy. See Wheatcroft, "The Soviet Famine of 1946—1947, the Weather and Human Agency in Historical Perspective." *Europe-Asia Studies* 64 no. 6 (2012), 988-1005.

It is obvious from Kotkin's text that he strongly disagrees with this analysis. Kotkin consistently blames Stalin's policies, whether collectivization or industrialization, for causing the famine.

But he never engages the argument to environmental causation in his text. If his readers do not know about it already, they will never know that such an explanation exists. If his readers are already familiar with Tauger's research they will note that Kotkin pointedly ignores it. "Pointedly," because Kotkin acknowledges Tauger's research — but only in his footnotes. Tauger's research is cited fifteen times in Kotkin's *footnotes* (some of which we have quoted above). But Tauger's name does not occur even once in the *text* of Kotkin's book.



In conclusion: Kotkin never cites any evidence to support his often-stated contention that the famine was caused by Stalin.

## Chapter 2. *Kirov and the Kirov Murder*

### **GIGO!**

Kotkin argues that Stalin framed the men convicted and executed in the Kirov murder trial of December 28-29, 1934 and that Leonid Nikolaev, Kirov's murderer, acted alone. But it appears that Kotkin has not researched the question of the Kirov murder at all! He simply copies from books by Alla Kirilina and Matthew Lenoë. Neither of these two books is either competent or honest. In my own study of the Kirov murder I have devoted a great deal of attention to analyzing them and exposing their dishonesty. (Furr, Kirov)

But Kotkin does not even see what is of value in Lenoë's book. This is Lenoë's proof that Khrushchev's men were lying about the Kirov murder back in the 1950s — lies that Gorbachev's men simply picked up, dusted off, and recycled in the late 1980s, and that Kirilina, Lenoë, and others pass on to unsuspecting readers.

Why all the dishonesty? As usual, it is in service to the Anti-Stalin Paradigm. In the corrupt field of Soviet history it is considered unacceptable to find Stalin *not* guilty of some crime that he has been charged with. In the introduction to his own book (pp. 16-17) Lenoë apologizes profusely for his conclusion that Stalin did *not* have Kirov murdered. This despite the fact that Gorbachev's men had already reached this conclusion with equal reluctance more than 20 years earlier.

### **False Claim Of Tension Between Kirov And Stalin**

On February 10, 1934, Stalin and his inner circle met, apparently before the Central Committee plenum that evening, and he proposed that Kirov relocate to Moscow as a Central Committee secretary. "What are you talking about?!" Molotov later recalled of Kirov's response. "I'll be no good here. In Leningrad I can do as well as you, but what can I do here?" Some evidence suggests that Orjonikidze

supported Kirov's refusal, Stalin stalked out, and Kirov went to mollify him.<sup>220</sup> (161-2)

Note 220 (952): Chuev, *Sto sorok*, 307-8, 478; Chuev, *Molotov*, 375-6; Krasnikov, *Kirov v Leningrade*, 187-8; Rosliakov, *Ubiistvo*, 28-9.

There is some ambiguity as to whether the Kirov incident took place in a narrow circle or at the Central Committee plenum.

So Kotkin knows exactly what happened at this "meeting" and even the exact words spoken by Kirov, but doesn't know where the "meeting" took place? What nonsense! This is a phony footnote. Neither version of Chuev's conversations with Molotov (*Sto sorok besed s Molotovym and Molotov. Poludnerzhavnyi Vlastelin*) documents Stalin's "stalking out" or "Kirov going to mollify him."

Rosliakov claims this happened at a Politburo meeting. But he, a minor official in Leningrad, had no way of knowing what went on in the Politburo and is, at best, repeating a rumor — if he didn't invent it himself. So Rosliakov's account is useless as history and Kotkin has no business citing it. But how are Kotkin's readers to know that?

Krasnikov's account does not support, but rather contradicts, Kotkin's story that Kirov protested a transfer to Moscow. According to Krasnikov, Stalin urged Kirov to travel to Kazakhstan to help organize the harvest and then to move to Moscow.

[[cyrillic]]Предложение о поездке в Казахстан Киров воспринял как должное, а от перехода на работу непосредственно в аппарат ЦК ВКП(б) тактично уклонился, упросив оставить его в Ленинград до конца второй пятилетки и завершения реконструкции города. (187-188)

The proposal to travel to Kazakhstan Kirov accepted as a necessity, but he tactfully evaded the transfer to work directly in the apparatus of the Central Committee of the CPSU (b), requesting to remain in Leningrad until the end of the second five-year plan and the completion of the reconstruction of the city.

That's it! Nothing about any disagreement, argument with Stalin, "Stalin stalking out," etc. Yet another phony citation by Kotkin of a source that does not provide any evidence at all for a fact-claim in the text of his book.

### **What "Witnesses"?**

Concerning the December 28-29, 1934 trial of the Zinovievist group to which Nikolaev belonged, Kotkin states:

In Leningrad, Ulrich opened the closed trial on December 28 at 2:20 p.m., and read the guilty verdicts before dawn the next morning: death penalty. **Not a single Smolny witness had been summoned to the trial.** (213)

This is nonsense, and dishonest to boot. Neither Kotkin nor anyone else has seen the trial transcript — it is still secret. What's more, *there were no "Smolny witnesses" to call!* Kirov's bodyguard, Mikhail Borisov, was too far behind Kirov to see Nikolaev shoot him, and had been killed in an auto accident on December 4. Aside from the assassin Nikolaev himself, **no one** had witnessed the murder.

Kotkin's "Smolny witness" business is a dishonest blind. Does Kotkin want us to believe that there was no "due process," or something? The trial was not about whether Nikolaev had shot Kirov — he had been caught on the spot and never denied it. The question was whether Nikolaev's thirteen fellow members of the Zinovievist underground were co-conspirators in the murder. None of these men were present when Nikolaev killed Kirov. So "Smolny witnesses," — had there in fact been any — would have been irrelevant to this question.

Kotkin:

(Nearly fourscore of them—**every witness to the events that day** and many others—would soon be transferred to other work, expelled from the party, or exiled.) (213)

Kotkin cites no evidence to support this. Of course! There *were no* "witnesses to the event" at all!

## Khrushchev-Era GIGO Again

"Nikolaev shouted, 'Severe,'" according to one of Agranov's soft-pedaling telegrams to Stalin, which failed to report that Nikolaev and others recanted their testimony.<sup>144</sup>

Note 144 (963): 144. Vinogradov, *Genrikh Iagoda*, 396-404 (TsA FSB, f. 3, op. 2, d. 60, l. 48-56, 33); Lenoe, *Kirov Murder*, 358-77. Others have Nikolaev **supposedly** falling to the ground and shouting, "You cannot shoot me. Comrade Stalin promised..." Kirilina, *Rikoshet*, 67.

Lenoe states that in 1956, during Khrushchev's campaign of attacking Stalin, a number of the surviving participants in or witnesses to the trial claimed that Nikolaev first recanted, then reaffirmed, his testimony implicating others. All this is rumor and/or deliberate falsification. Kirilina, on whose book Lenoe relies heavily, does not contain this supposed claim of Nikolaev's. Lenoe notes that these Khrushchev-era accounts "may be embellished." (Lenoe 370)

Khrushchev's goal was to find evidence that Stalin had Kirov murdered. Unable to do this, his men fell back on the theory that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman." Aleksandr Iakovlev, Politburo member and Gorbachev's specialist in spreading anticommunist and anti-Stalin lies, twice demanded that Gorbachev's special commission come up with evidence to charge Stalin with Kirov's murder. But despite heroic efforts in scouring the archives they were unable to do so. So they fell back once again on the "lone gunman" theory.

Lenoe's book is highly dishonest in many respects, as we have demonstrated in great detail. (Furr, Kirov) But Lenoe shows convincingly that Khrushchev and his KGB (the former NKVD) chief, Ivan Serov, lied about the Kirov murder to try to blame Stalin. Twenty-five years later, Gorbachev's men dusted off these old Khrushchev-era lies and fabricated some new ones of their own.

Lenoe convincingly explains the reason why Khrushchev and Serov lied about the evidence that Nikolaev had indeed been a member of the

Zinovievist conspiracy.

The [Molotov] commission was charged with investigating the show trials of the later 1930s and determining whether the charges were valid. The Kirov murder and the trials of the "Leningrad Center" and "Moscow Center" that immediately followed were just the starting point of the inquiry, but everything that followed depended on these events. **If the official charges in the first two trials — that former Zinoviev supporters had conspired to murder Kirov — were entirely bogus, then the indictments in all of the succeeding show trials collapsed. The latter indictments were built on the earlier ones.... But if there was some truth to the charge that Zinovievites conspired to kill Kirov, then that preserved the possibility of arguing that the later charges were also valid, at least in part.** Therefore Serov and Rudenko (or their subordinates who authored the memoranda) chose to make a clear-cut argument that Nikolaev had had no relationship at all with the ex-Zinoviev supporters convicted in the trial of the "Leningrad Center."

It appears that Serov or his boss had thought through this strategy, to deny any connection at all between Nikolaev and the Zinovievites, even before the "Secret Speech." (Lenoe 591-2; cf. Furr, Kirov 164-5)

The evidence is overwhelming that the clandestine Zinovievist conspiratorial group who were tried, convicted, and executed along with Nikolaev, were guilty as charged. I demonstrate this in detail in my book. But Lenoe goes on to "believe" Gorbachev's men even though they were clearly lying just as Khrushchev's men had been doing.

As Lenoe points out in the passage quoted above, the Kirov murder leads inexorably to the three Moscow Trials. This threatens to dismantle the Anti-Stalin Paradigm of Soviet history. According to this paradigm, *all* the defendants in the three Moscow Trials of 1936, 1937, and 1938 *must* have been innocent, "framed" by Stalin for some reason or other. Therefore, the Kirov defendants must have been innocent too, and also "framed" by Stalin.

**Concocting A "Lone Gunman" Theory**

Kotkin:

The executions were carried out within an hour; ... Kotolynov was shot last. "This whole trial is rubbish," he had told Agranov and Vyshinsky. "People have been executed. Now I'll be executed, too. But all of us, with the exception of Nikolaev, are not guilty of anything."<sup>146</sup> (213)

Note 146 (963): Sedov et al., "Spravka"; Kirilina, *Neizvestnyi Kirov*, 302-3; Lenoë, *Kirov Murder*, 370-1 (RGANI, f. 6, p. 13, d. 24, l. 51-68).

Sedov et al. is the report sent by the Politburo special commission to Gorbachev's main expert on ideology, Aleksandr Iakovlev. Iakovlev had tasked this high-level commission to find evidence that Stalin had had Kirov murdered. When they reported to him that they were unable to do so, he sent them back to try again. This "Spravka" is their final response, in which they conclude that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman." But they give *no evidence* that this was the case! As for these supposed last words by Kotolynov, they do not even cite a source.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sedov et al., "Spravka," is also online at <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/68180> It will be far easier for those who read Russian to access it here than to obtain the volume it was published in, RKEB 3, 459-507.

In fact this is what Katsafa testified to Khrushchev's men on April 3, 1956. Even Lenoë doubts that it happened, saying: "If this conversation actually took place..." Why would Katsafa, an NKVD guard, have been present?

Kirilina cites Iurii Sedov, in *Trud* Nov. 25, 1990. Sedov, whom both Lenoë and Kotkin cite, is dishonest, though Lenoë calls him "a reliable researcher." My Kirov book contains a whole chapter on Sedov and his falsifications.

Katsafa's motive in fabricating such testimony is clear. His earlier testimony, that Nikolaev had implicated his fellow Zinovievists by talking in his sleep, had been important to the investigation. Khrushchev was busy

executing, after phony trials, NKVD men who failed to implicate Stalin and Beria in crimes.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> A well-known example is that of Boris Rodos, whose case we discuss briefly in a later chapter. For the case of Pavel Sudoplatov, see Chapter 15 of the present book.

Lenoe calls Katsafa's testimony about Nikolaev's sleep talk "a schoolboy lie." (Lenoe 283) But Lenoe is "bluffing" here — he has no evidence to support this. It is simply inconvenient for the Gorbachev-Lenoe notion that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman," so Lenoe wishes to dismiss it.

### **Iagoda's Collaboration Covered Up**

Kotkin writes:

Hundreds more would be shot, none of whom had any link to the murder. (Union-wide, as many as 6,500 people might have been arrested and charged under the December 1 anti terror law in the first month alone.)<sup>147</sup>

Note 147 (963): Maslov and Chistiakov, "Stalinskie repressii i sovetskaia iutsitsiia," 105

Maslov and Chistiakov, publishing in an official journal of the Gorbachev Communist Party, give no evidence whatever for this statement. They also use the term "repressed" (*repressirovany*) which can mean anything from demotion in one's job or being transferred to another post, to arrest.

However, it is an interesting and important fact — though Kotkin does not mention it — that some dozens of terrorists — mainly White Guardists, apparently — were shot during the first days after the Kirov murder, when Genrikh Iagoda, chief of the NKVD, and others were spreading the story that the murder was the work of these émigré groups.

After his arrest in March, 1937, Iagoda testified that he had tried to deflect attention away from the conspiratorial groups as much as possible, since he



was himself involved in the leadership of the Rightist conspiracy. Iagoda had opposed the assassination of Kirov but at length compromised and agreed not to hinder it. This testimony is in the Vinogradov book *Genrikh Iagoda*. Kotkin cites this book many times, but he does not inform his readers about this.

### **Phony Claim of "Phony Confessions"**

Kotkin:

The NKVD had been planning a second public trial of eight "Zinovievites" willing to incriminate themselves, with Draule testifying about their links to Nikolaev. In the event, she would be tried in camera, while several high-profile Zinovievites were added to the eight unknowns for a public trial, which took place January 15-16. The nineteen defendants, now headlined by Zinoviev himself, Kamenev, and Grigory Yevdokimov, were charged with fostering a "moral atmosphere" conducive to the terrorism that had resulted in Kirov's death. **They had been promised their lives if they fulfilled their party duty and publicly confessed.** (218-219)

The sentence in boldface is a fabrication. Not even Kirilina or Lenoë make this claim. No wonder Kotkin cites no evidence — not even, as he so often does, phony "evidence" — to support this statement. There is no evidence that any of these men had been "promised their lives" if they "fulfilled their party duty and publicly confessed."

Kotkin omits the unsupported rumor that Nikolaev killed Kirov because the latter was having an affair with Draule. But Kotkin can't resist accusing Kirov of "womanizing":

Kirov was also an infamous womanizer, whose carousing was a matter of citywide gossip. ... To what extent she knew of her husband's extramarital affairs ballerinas, young women in the apparatus— remains unclear, but they were certainly Medved's worry: he had to help conceal them, even as he was under severe pressure from Pauker in Moscow to strengthen Kirov's protection.<sup>46</sup> (194)

Note 46 (960): Tumshis and Papchinskii, 1937. *Bol'shaia chistka*, 37-8.

Tumshis and Papchinskii *claim* that Kirov had affairs but cite no evidence whatever, not even rumors (which of course are not evidence either). So Kotkin has no evidence whatever that Kirov had *any* extra-marital affairs. He does not even document the "city-wide gossip." We'll return to Kotkin's omissions about Draule in Chapter 14.

### **To Kotkin's Disappointment, Zinoviev And Kamenev Confessed**

Kotkin:

Zinoviev admitted that he'd had conversations with people whom the NKVD called the Leningrad Center, for example with Vladimir Levin back in 1932, during his work in livestock requisitions. Kamenev at first refused to go along with the canard that his private conversations signified participation in a so-called Moscow Center or had somehow inspired acts of terrorism.<sup>181</sup> (219)

Notes 181 (964): Iakovlev et al., *Reabilitatsiia: Politicheskie protsessy*, 162, 166. [In fact this statement of Kamenev's is on p. 164, not p. 166 — GF]

Just before the trial Zinoviev wrote a long, detailed confession in which he confirmed that there had indeed been a "Moscow Center," in contact with the "Leningrad Center" that had murdered Kirov. This confession is reprinted in *Reabilitatsiia — Politicheskie Protsessy* (1991), a book that Kotkin references here and several more times. But Kotkin conceals the existence of Zinoviev's confession from his readers.

In July and August, 1936, confronted with accusations from their own followers, Zinoviev and Kamenev finally conceded that they had indeed helped to plan Kirov's murder. We now have pretrial confessions from both of them, along with the extensive pretrial confessions by Iagoda, to confirm this. I quote some of these pretrial confessions in Chapter Twelve of *The Murder of Sergei Kirov*.

According to Arch Getty,

By 23 July (1936] Kamenev was admitting membership in a counterrevolutionary center that planned terror, but he denied being one of the organizers; he implicated Zinoviev as being closer to the matter. Three days later Zinoviev was confronted by one of this followers, Karev, who directly accused him. Zinoviev asked that the interrogation be stopped because he wanted to make a statement that, in the event, amounted to a full confession of organizing assassination and terror.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> J. Arch Getty, Oleg Naumov. *Yezhov. The Rise of Stalin's "Iron Fist."* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008, p. 191.

Zinoviev and Kamenev admitted their guilt again at the public First Moscow Trial in August, 1936, and yet again in their appeals clemency, which were not published until 1992.

### **False Claim Of "Falsification"**

Kotkin:

Yagoda had no issues with framing Zinoviev and "Zinovievites," a scenario that Stalin, in any case, did not come to immediately ... The fabrications, moreover, exacerbated the professional degradation of the secret police, which enraged Stalin, and for which he had recently abolished the OGPU in favor of the NKVD. The fabrications also hurt the USSR's reputation internationally, to which Stalin had become more sensitive.

There is no evidence whatever that Zinoviev and the Zinovievists were "framed" for the Kirov assassination. All the evidence we have supports the hypothesis that Zinoviev and Kamenev were guilty of planning Kirov's assassination. See Zinoviev's confession-interrogation of July 28, 1936, in the Volkogonov Papers, which Kotkin often cites. This has long been online:

- in Russian at <http://tinyurl.com/zinoviev28jul36> , and
- in English translation at <http://tinyurl.com/zinoviev072836>

We also have Zinoviev's appeal of his death sentence, in which he repeats his confession of guilt:

[[cyrillic]]В Президиум ЦИК СССР.

Заявление

О совершенных мною преступлениях против Партии и Советской  
Власти я сказал до конца пролетарскому суду.

Прошу мне верить, что **врагом я больше не являюсь** и остаток  
своих сил горячо желаю отдать социалистической родине.

Настоящим я прошу Президиум ЦИК СССР о помиловании меня.

Г. Зиновьев.

26 августа 36

4 часа 30 минут."

To the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR

Statement

I have told everything about the crimes I have committed against the  
Party and Soviet authority.

I ask you to believe me that **I am no longer an enemy** and that I wish  
to give the rest of my strength to the socialist motherland.

I hereby request the Presidium of the CEC of the USSR to pardon me.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> "Rasskaz o desiati rasstrelliannykh." ("Story of Ten Who Were Shot.")  
*Izvestiia*, September 2, 1992, p. 3

We have no evidence that the confessions of the defendants at the Kirov murder trial were in any way fabricated, faked, dictated to them, or made under compulsion, threats, or with promises of any kind. No one — not Kirilina, Lenoe, or Kotkin — has any such evidence either.

All the evidence now available — and there is a great deal of it — supports the hypothesis that Kirov was indeed murdered by a clandestine terrorist Zinovievist group which was allied with a similar secret terrorist group of Trotskyists, and that Zinoviev, Kamenev, and their Moscow-based group collaborated with the Leningrad-based Zinovievist group in planning the murder.

### **Chapter 3. *Ordzhonikidze's death***

Sergo Ordzhonikidze, an Old Bolshevik (Party member since before the Revolution) and longtime close associate of Stalin's, was People's Commissar (= Minister) of Heavy Industry from January 5, 1932, until his death during the night of February 17-18, 1937. Kotkin's account of Ordzhonikidze, his death, and his relations with Stalin and Beria, are false from beginning to end. In part, this is due to the fact that Kotkin has clearly never studied this question.

But why hasn't he studied it? Because he thinks he already knows the conclusion: "Stalin was responsible!" This has been the only officially acceptable explanation since Nikita Khrushchev's day. It makes a good anti-Stalin story, so why question it?

There is no way to make Ordzhonikidze's death appear the least sinister unless you falsify it. So, instead of studying it himself — the responsibility of all historians — he cherry-picks fact-claims from rumors, phony studies, and dishonest secondary sources from anticommunist writers.

Kotkin has chosen to believe these lies and foist them upon his readers. It's the "safe" thing to do. Not to do this might leave him open to being called "an apologist for Stalinist crimes," or something. Not Kotkin!

Kotkin has taken the general shape of his false account of Ordzhonikidze's death from Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" to the XX Party Congress of February 25, 1956. There, as part of his attack on Stalin and Lavrentii Beria, Khrushchev stated:

Beria also handled cruelly the family of comrade Ordzhonikidze. Why? Because Ordzhonikidze had tried to prevent Beria from realising his shameful plans. Beria had cleared from his way all persons who could possibly interfere with him. Ordzhonikidze was always an opponent of Beria, which he told to Stalin. Instead of examining this affair and taking appropriate steps, Stalin allowed the liquidation of Ordzhonikidze's brother and brought Ordzhonikidze himself to such a state that he was forced to shoot himself.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2007/apr/26/greatspeeches5>  
There are many translations of Khrushchev's infamous "Secret Speech."

We know today that Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" was a lie from beginning to end. Can Kotkin really be unaware of this?

### **Of Two Sources, Choose the Phony One**

Kotkin relies principally on two dishonest sources. The first is the 1963 biography of Ordzhonikidze by Ilia M. Dubinskii-Mukhadze, which outlines — without sources or evidence of any kind — the story that Stalin and Ordzhonikidze had a quarrel, after which Ordzhonikidze shot himself.

But Kotkin has to be aware that the 1967 edition of this same book omits all of this — simply leaves it out! If he doesn't know this, he is incompetent to write about Ordzhonikidze at all. Khrushchev was ousted in October 1964. Under Leonid Brezhnev the anti-Stalin lies promoted under Khrushchev (and by Khrushchev directly) were significantly toned down.

Kotkin's second dishonest source is the book *In Stalin's Shadow: The Career of "Sergo" Ordzhonikidze* by Oleg Khlevniuk. Khlevniuk is a shameless falsifier without any shred of objectivity, fanatically anti-Stalin and anticommunist. Khlevniuk too uses only the 1963 version of Dubinskii-Mukhadze's work. Khlevniuk also fabricates certain details himself.

Kotkin also ignores the 2008 article by Vladimir Bobrov.<sup>2</sup> In it Bobrov shows that there is no reason whatever to doubt that Ordzhonikidze died of a heart attack, as was announced at the time. Khrushchev and Mikoian, the two sources for the suicide version, each say that the other one told them about the suicide! They also contradict themselves. For example, Khrushchev said in 1961 that he learned of Ordzhonikidze's suicide "after the war" while later, in his memoirs, he claimed he learned it "during the war."

<sup>2</sup> "The Mystery of Ordzhonikidze's Death." (2008) English translation at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/bobrov-ordzhon08eng.html> ;

Russian original at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/bobrov-ordzhon08.html> (text encoding Windows-1251).

Bobrov shows that the suicide story, which may have originated as a Moscow rumor, was introduced by Khrushchev himself into his infamous "Secret Speech" at the XX Party Congress on February 25, 1956. Here I will treat this question briefly. I have discussed it more fully in my book *Khrushchev Lied*, section 48, pp. 114-116 and 387-388.

## No "Strained Relations"

Kotkin:

Relations with Orjonikidze had become strained ... (237)

Kotkin cites no evidence at all to support this claim. And for the best of reasons: there *is* no such evidence. But this lie is central to Oleg Khlevniuk's dishonest portrayal of Ordzhonikidze's death, which Kotkin adopts.

Kotkin:

In October 1936, **Stalin had Orjonikidze's elder brother Papuliya arrested**, a first for a relative of a sitting politburo member.

Orjonikidze demanded to see his brother, but Lavrenti Beria, the policeman turned party boss in Georgia, where Papuliya worked, said he could allow that only after concluding the investigation.<sup>224</sup>

Orjonikidze understood that it was not Beria but Stalin who was behind the incarceration.<sup>225</sup> On October 8, Stalin had Kaganovich's deputy Yakov Livshits removed as deputy commissar of railways and, six days later, arrested.<sup>226</sup> (348)

Note 224 (987): 224. *Izvestiia*, Nov. 22, 1963.

This is all false. This is a Khrushchev-era article that echoes the lies in the first edition, later withdrawn, of Dubinskii-Mukhadze's book. But how



could Kotkin's readers know this? And — wait a minute — who uses newspaper articles as primary source evidence for a historical event?

Note 225 (987): 225. Knight, *Beria*, 73-4; Vaksberg, *Neraskrytye tainy*, 123.

Knight, *Beria*, 73-4, says that this arrest did *not* disturb Beria's and Ordzhonikidze's friendship! And neither of these sources has anything about Sergo "knowing Stalin was behind the incarceration."

By Vaksberg's own admission, what he writes is only hearsay — rumor. In any case, there is nothing about this subject in Vaksberg, page 123. Moreover, Vaksberg states on page 124 that Papulia was arrested in November, not October.

Arkadii Vaksberg was a strongly anticommunist journalist and author of potboilers who had no way of knowing what Ordzhonikidze "knew" and doesn't claim to know here. No decent historian would ever Vaksberg as a source. But Vaksberg writes what Kotkin wants, so in it goes — GIGO!

### **More Phony References**

Kotkin prints a number of lies about Beria and Ordzhonikidze:

He [Pavlunovsky] was arrested on June 28, part of Orjonikidze's "clan" that Stalin was extirpating.<sup>73</sup> (511)

Note 73 (1010): 73. Already back on Oct. 21, 1933, Stalin had written to Kaganovich: "Pavlunovsky destroyed the artillery. Orjonikidze must be given a scolding for having trusted two or three of his favorites. He was ready to give state benefits to these imbeciles." Stalin to Kaganovich, RGASPI, f. 81, op. 3, d. 100, l. 38-9. Pavlunovsky would be shot on Oct. 30, 1937.

There's nothing here about Stalin "extirpating" Ordzhonikidze's "clan" (whatever that means).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> According to one of the reports Ezhov gave to Stalin, Pavlunovsky was involved in a conspiracy to murder Ordzhonikidze! Lubyanka-Golgofa, 116.

Another such lie is the following:

Gamsakhurdia ... shared **Beria's loathing of Orjonikidze** ... But Gamsakhurdia had been among those deported to Solovki in connection with the 1924 uprising, and after his release and return, Beria had had him rearrested for an affair with a young publishing executive arrested for Trotskyism. But then Beria pardoned him, observing that sexual intercourse with enemies of the people was permitted.<sup>82</sup> (513)

Note 82 (1010): 82. Rayfield, "Death of Paolo Iashvili," 636, 647; Rayfield, *Literature of Georgia*, 247. Countless others were executed, including Dimitri Shevardnadze, a painter who had established the country's national gallery in 1920 (and had co-designed the emblem of Georgia's Menshevik-dominated republic of 1918-1921); he had led opposition to a proposal by Beria to tear down Tbilisi's ancient Metekhi Church (which would survive).

There's nothing in the Rayfield article about any of Kotkin's statements, and nothing about Beria's "loathing of Ordzhonikidze." On the contrary, Sergo Beria writes that his father and Ordzhonikidze were best friends! Sergo says he was named after Ordzhonikidze, who was his godfather and "very close to my father his whole life."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> [[Cyrillic]] "Но кто знает, как дорогИт были всю жизнь и моему отцу, и всей нашей семье эти два человека. Серго Орджоникидзе - мой крестный отец. Меня ведь и называли в честь Серго." Sergo Beria, *Moi Otets* — Lavrentii Beria. Moscow: Sovremennik. 1994. Online at [lib.ru/MEMUARY/BERIA/sber.txt](http://lib.ru/MEMUARY/BERIA/sber.txt)

According to the Russian Wikipedia page on Gamsakhurdia, it was Beria who freed him from arrest for ties with Lidia Gasviani, "exposed as a Trotskyist." The story in Rayfield (page 249 in the 2013 edition) about Beria releasing Gamsakhurdia, who "slapped him on the back and told him

that sexual relations with enemies of the people were permitted" is undocumented — evidently, a rumor.

### ... And More Phony References

Kotkin:

Also on December 4, 1936, in a memo circulated to all politburo members, Stalin dressed down Orjonikidze for having hidden long-ago correspondence with Beso Lominadze, who had been pronounced a posthumous enemy after committing suicide, while party boss, in Magnitogorsk the year before. The accusation of having concealed information from "the Central Committee" was one of Stalin's most threatening. What also rankled was that Lominadze's suicide note had been read over the telephone to Orjonikidze by Lominadze's deputy in Magnitogorsk, and that Orjonikidze was providing a pension to Lominadze's widow and money to their son (named Sergo, in Orjonikidze's honor). **Stalin had reports** that Orjonikidze was bad-mouthing him behind his back to his cronies Mamiya Orakhelashvili and Shalva Eliava.<sup>281</sup> At the plenum, Orjonikidze joined in the vicious attacks against Bukharin. (358)

Note 281 (1006): 281. RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 132, l. 132; Khlevniuk, *Khoziain*, 277.

This is all dishonest. This "memo" is Stalin's letter to Politburo members of December 4, 1936 pointing out that Lominadze had told Ordzhonikidze in 1929 about his oppositional views and Ordzhonikidze had not informed the Central Committee.<sup>5</sup> As a result Lominadze was appointed First Secretary of the Trans-Caucasus committee of the party. Therefore, Stalin was indeed criticizing Ordzhonikidze here.

<sup>5</sup> I would like to thank my Moscow-based colleague Vladimir L'vovich Bobrov for obtaining for me a copy of this archival document.

But Kotkin omits the fact, known since 1980, that Lominadze was expected by Trotsky's son Leon Sedov, writing to Trotsky in 1932, to join the Bloc of

Rights, Trotskyists, and other oppositionists before long.<sup>6</sup> This is objective information, from Trotsky's own papers in the Harvard Trotsky Archive. It could not possibly have been fabricated to falsely implicate Lominadze. So Stalin was correct — Ordzhonikidze's keeping silent about Lominadze's anti-party sentiments was indeed a serious political error.

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Broué, "Trotsky et le bloc des oppositions de 1932." *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* 5 (Jan-Mar 1980), pp. 5-37. The Russian original, together with my translation, are in Furr, Trotsky's 'Amalgams', Appendix, Document 1, 504 ff.

Moreover, Lominadze lied even in his suicide note to Ordzhonikidze, which was read out to the latter in a telephone conversation by Lominadze's second-in-command. In it Lominadze continues to claim that he is being slandered. But now we know that he was lying, even here in his suicide note. Khlevniuk quotes this directly, in a book cited by Kotkin (1091). But Kotkin fails to inform his readers about it.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Khlevniuk, O.V. *Politbiuro. Mekhanizmy politicheskoi vlasti v 1930-e gody*. (1996), p. 171.

On pp. 271-2, not 277, Khlevniuk reports, from his own book, that in September 1937, long after Ordzhonikidze's death, Orakhelashvili admitted that Ordzhonikidze had listened to Lominadze attack Stalin. Khlevniuk's source is the 1991 work *Beria. Konets Kar'ery*, page 387.

*That* essay is by Popov and Oppokov, two Gorbachev-era writers who composed a long series of articles attacking Beria. P. and O. cite very few sources, all of them from secret and unpublished documents, so no one could check them. But *no* sources at all are given here. So this fact-claim is, at best, a rumor. Rumors are not evidence, nor are collections of rumors, history.

Kotkin's claim that "Stalin had reports" is an especially flagrant falsehood. For Khlevniuk states plainly that we do *not* have any reports:

[[cyrillic]]Пока мы не располагаем донесениями НКВД Сталину по поводу настроений его соратников. Но велика вероятность

того, что сигналы о встречах и разговорах закавказцев, собиравшихся у Орджоникидзе, докладывались Сталину. (272)

**While we do not have reports of the NKVD to Stalin about the mood of his comrades-in-arms**, there is a high probability that the signals about the meetings and conversations of the Transcaucasians who gathered at Ordzhonikidze were reported to Stalin.

Evidently, Kotkin has simply invented the "Stalin had reports" business. As for Shalva Eliava, Khlevniuk does not even mention him.

Kotkin's claim of "attacks against Bukharin" at the December 1936 Central Committee Plenum is false too. The materials we have from that Plenum contain *no* "vicious attacks" against Bukharin by anyone, and not a word by Ordzhonikidze on any subject.

### **Was Piatakov Literally A Skeleton?**

Kotkin:

On the evening of the 29th, Orjonikidze visited his former first deputy Pyatakov in prison for the last time and observed his utterly smashed face. (373)

There is no reference here for this statement. Presumably Kotkin has in mind Bukharin's alleged remark to his wife, Larina, that Kotkin quoted earlier in the text (370):

Meanwhile, Stalin had Bukharin summoned to a confrontation with Radek and Pyatakov, who were delivered from prison. Bukharin told his wife that Radek had denounced him as a spy and terrorist with whom he had plotted Stalin's murder, and that Pyatakov resembled a "skeleton with its teeth knocked out."<sup>345</sup>

Note. 345 (990): 345. Larina, *This I Cannot Forget*, 312

Kotkin's statement is absurd. Piatakov's face was certainly not literally "smashed." Larina doesn't even claim that it was, any more than she

claimed Piatakov was literally a "skeleton." Ordzhonikidze was present at the Bukharin-Piatakov confrontation, the text of which been published.<sup>8</sup> Nothing was mentioned there about any injury to Piatakov. A little more than a month later Piatakov was a defendant at the public Moscow Trial of January, 1937, where he testified at length. No one in the large audience, including many foreign observers, mentioned any injuries to Piatakov's face.

<sup>8</sup> [[cyrillic]]"Стенограммы очных ставок в ЦК ВКП(б) . Декабрь 1936 года." Вопросы истории 2002. №4. С.3-12.

What's more, it is quite possible that Bukharin never used these words. Larina claimed to be remembering what Bukharin had told her many years before. She first drafted her memoir during the Khrushchev years, when she was trying unsuccessfully to have Bukharin "rehabilitated." It contains other false statements.<sup>9</sup> It reflects the fact that under Khrushchev the best way to get someone "rehabilitated" was to slander Stalin and Beria as much as possible.

### **A Confrontation That Never Was**

Kotkin refers to a "confrontation with Radek and Piatakov." This too is false, for there was no such confrontation. Bukharin had a face-to-face confrontation with Piatakov on December 7, 1936. His confrontation with Radek was more than a month later, on January 13, 1937.

### **The Falsified Tale of Sergo's Death**

Kotkin:

On February 17, 1937, Orjonikidze arrived at his commissariat, across the way from Old Square, at 12:10 p.m., two hours later than usual; he seems to have gone over to talk to Stalin, being one of the few people who could enter the dictator's Kremlin apartment.<sup>50</sup> Upon returning to his own Kremlin apartment, in the same Amusement Palace,  
**Orjonikidze evidently had a shouting match over the telephone**

**with Stalin, with profanities in Russian and Georgian.**<sup>51</sup> The NKVD had been searching Orjonikidze's apartment, an obvious provocation.<sup>52</sup> The remainder of Orjonikidze's day was occupied with meetings, including a politburo meeting at 3:00 p.m. to go over the plenum reports. Stalin hand-corrected Orjonikidze's draft resolution on sabotage, inserting passages about "Trotskyite wreckers." In the early evening, Orjonikidze made his way back to the commissariat for more meetings, leaving for home at 12:20 a.m. (February 18). Later that morning, he did not emerge from his bedroom to take breakfast. When one of his subordinates came by in the afternoon, he refused to receive him. At around dusk, his wife, Zinaida, heard a gunshot in the bedroom. Orjonikidze was dead.<sup>53</sup> (384)

Notes 50-53 (992):

50. *Za industrializatsiiu*, Feb. 21, 1937: 6 (A. P. Zaveniagin); Orjonikidze bumped into Bukharin's wife, Anna, on Kremlin grounds returning to his apartment. Larina, *Nezabyvaemoe*, 333.

51. Dubinskii-Mukharadze [sic — GF], *Ordzhonikidze*, 6. Orjonikidze had lived in the so-called children's section of the Grand Kremlin Palace (Krestinsky lived here, too, as did Sverdlov's widow Klavdiya and her son Andrei, an NKVD operative), but when the palace was being reconstructed, Orjonikidze and others moved into the Amusement Palace, near the Trinity Gate, where Stalin had lived until the 1932 suicide of Nadya and where Bukharin lived.

52. *Izvestiia*, Nov. 22, 1963; Dubinskii—Mukhadze, *Ordzhonikidze*, 6. The evening before, Yezhov was received alone in the Little Corner. Na prieme, 202. Alternately, the apartment search may have occurred on Feb. 16, prompting Orjonikidze's tête-à-tête with Stalin on the morning of Feb. 17.

53. Khlevniuk, *In Stalin's Shadow*, 143-9; Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, 402-3. Around midnight, Orjonikidze had met with his deputy for the chemical industry to discuss Donbass coke plant sabotage.

After leaving the commissariat, Orjonikidze might have spoken again with Stalin. Dubinskii-Mukhadze, *Ordzhonikidze*, 6.

Sergo and Stalin "evidently" had a shouting match? So, where's the "evidence"? The fact is that not one of these statements of Kotkin's is true. A characteristic error is Kotkin's misreading of Larina's memoir, page 333, as saying that Ordzhonikidze was "returning to his apartment." (note 50) Actually, it was Larina who was returning home and Ordzhonikidze who was leaving.

[[cyrillic]]Подойдя к дому, я увидела, что из соседнего с нашим подъезда, ближе к Троицким воротам, вышел Серго Орджоникидзе и направился к машине. (333)

As I was approaching our home I saw that Sergo Ordzhonikidze came out of the entrance next to ours, closer to the Trinity Gate, and headed for the car.

They were already in the Kremlin. Heading for a car meant that Ordzhonikidze was leaving, not arriving. Khlevniuk has invented Ordzhonikidze's last evening of life. He has based his account on the dishonest *first edition* of Dubinsky-Mukhadze's book, which relates the completely undocumented tale about Ordzhonikidze's shouting match with Stalin, etc. As we pointed out above, the *second edition* of 1967 takes all this out.

There is no evidence that Ordzhonikidze's apartment was searched or that he had a "meeting ("tete-a-tete") with Stalin. Or, indeed, that he committed suicide at all.

### **Praise = "Ridicule": Kotkin**

Kotkin (about the February-March 1937 Central Committee Plenum):

On the morning of February 28, Molotov, in place of Orjonikidze, delivered the report on sabotage in industry, and ridiculed Orjonikidze's counterinvestigations that minimized wrecking. (368)



This is false. In fact, the truth is just the opposite. Molotov praised Ordzhonikidze's anti-sabotage ("wrecking") activities multiple times (e.g. *Voprosy Istorii* 8 (1993), p. 16). Nor did Molotov "ridicule" Ordzhonikidze's investigations. Molotov said that the Ginzburg-Pavlunovsky investigation begun at Ordzhonikidze's order was mistaken in finding that "sabotage at the site did not attain a significant development." Molotov said that he trusted them, but yet they had been unable to uncover sabotage ("wrecking").

Kotkin:

Orjonikidze had confided thoughts of suicide to Kaganovich and Mikoyan.<sup>61</sup> (386)

61. Mikoian, *Tak bylo*, 327-33. (992)

This is chapter 24 in Mikoian's autobiography. But Vladimir Bobrov has proven that Khrushchev and Mikoian lied big-time about Ordzhonikidze's death.

### **Kotkin Hopes You Don't Know What Kaganovich *Really* Thought**

Kotkin:

In published photographs taken near the body, Kaganovich was seen expressing visibly strong emotions: grief, anger. He had lost his soul mate, and he knew Stalin had been sadistically pressuring the infirm Orjonikidze. Kaganovich tough as nails, explosive was spiritually broken. (386)

This has to be false. Kotkin gives no evidence for anything like this about Kaganovich.

\* It is not in Mikoian's autobiography, the nearest footnote.

\* Kaganovich himself says nothing about this in his interviews with Felix Chuev. On the contrary, he says that Sergo was his closest friend (62); that *Sergo supported the attacks against enemies* (162); that Sergo never talked

about suicide: (162); and that *he, Kaganovich, never heard of any arguments between Stalin and Sergo, and calls such stories a lie* (163). Kotkin knows this work, which refutes his unsupported claim. But Kotkin hides it from his readers.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Feliks Chuev. *Tak govoril Kaganovich. Ispoved' stalinskogo apostola*. Moscow, "Otechestvo," 1992.

Mikoian's autobiography is itself unreliable. It was published years after his death by his son, and has some probable insertions, as Michael Ellman has suggested.<sup>11</sup> It was clearly written to support Khrushchev's "line" against Stalin. Mikoian had been the first Party leader to attack Stalin during the XX Party Congress, days before Khrushchev's "Secret Speech."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> "The Road from Il'ich to Il'ich: The Life and Times of Anastas Ivanovich Mikoian." *Slavic Review* 60, 1 (Spring, 2001), 141.

<sup>12</sup> XX S"ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza. *Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow, 1956), I, 302, 321, 323, 324, 326.

For more on Mikoian's dishonest autobiography, see Chapter 15.

### **Another Lie From Mikoian**

Kotkin:

Stalin went on to break Mikoyan, summoning him in 1937 to discuss the arrest of his subordinate in the food industry commissariat, Mark Belenky, then, after Mikoyan supposedly protested and Stalin called him blind in matters of personnel, summoning him again to show him protocols of Belenky's "confession." "Have a look: he confessed to wrecking," Stalin said. "You vouched for him. Go and read it!" Mikoyan called it "a blow against me."<sup>62</sup> (386)

Note 62 (992): 62. Mikoyan was in Stalin's office on Nov. 2 and 14, 1937, both times with Yezhov. Mikoian, *Tak bylo*, 318-9; *Na prieme*, 224.

Mikoian did write these words. But there's nothing here about "breaking" Mikoian.

Belenkii was arrested on November 9, 1937, so Stalin's informing him of Belenkii's confession could well have occurred on November 14. But Kotkin fails to inform us that Belenkii had been under suspicion since at least September 25, 1937. In a report of that date to Stalin from NKVD man Litvin, writing from Erevan, Armenia, we read the following:

[[cyrillic]]После, переходя на работу в Баку, АКОПОВ в 1934 году был привлечен к троцкистской работе БЕЛЕНЬКИМ и состоял в руководящем составе троцкистской организации в Баку. Как участников руководящего состава троцкистской организации, АКОПОВ называет следующих лиц: БЕЛЕНЬКОГО, АМАТУНИ, СЕФ, БОНДАРЕНКО, НАРИМАНОВА.

Then, turning to work in Baku, АКОПОВ in 1934 was involved in the Trotskyist work of BELEN'KII and was in the leadership of the Trotskyist organization in Baku. As members of the leadership of the Trotskyist organization, АКОПОВ names the following persons: BELEN'KII, AMATUNI, SEF, BONDARENKO, NARIMANOVA.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Lubianka 1937-1938, No. 215, p. 379. Online at <http://istmat.info/node/32304> and <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/61197>

There are more allegations of conspiratorial activities by Belenkii:

[[cyrillic]]По своей подрывной работе в Наркомпищепроме ДУКОР был связан с бывшим заместителем наркома пищевой промышленности БЕЛЕНЬКИМ (арестован).

ДУКОР показал, что организация правых и троцкистов в пищевой промышленности, в лице БЕЛЕНЬКОГО, была связана с контрреволюционной правотроцкистской организацией в Наркомвнуторге, в лице ВЕЙЦЕРА и ХЛОПЛЯНКИНА.

- Сводка важнейших показаний арестованных по ГУГБ НКВД СССР За 10 февраля 1938 г. 13 февраля 1938 г. № 100890.

In his subversive work in the People's Commissariat for Food, DUCOR was associated with the former deputy food addict Belenkii (arrested).

DUCOR showed that the organization of Rightists and Trotskyists in the food industry, represented by BELENKII, was associated with a counter-revolutionary right-wing Trotsky organization in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade, represented by Veitser and Khlopyankin.

- A summary of the most important testimonies of those arrested by the GUGB of the NKVD of the USSR for February 10, 1938. Dated February 13, 1938, No. 100890.

This is in the important document collection Lubyanka-Golgotha, 95. Belen'kii is also named in reports on pages 101 and 111. Kotkin never cites this important collection of investigative documents.

But the important thing is this: *these were reports to Stalin, not fabrications by Stalin in order to "break" Mikoian*. It would have been irresponsible for Stalin *not* to have informed Mikoian about serious charges against his subordinate.

Therefore, Stalin had sufficient reason to suppose that Belenkii *might* have been guilty. We have no evidence that he was "framed." We do not know whether Belenkii was guilty. We don't have his NKVD investigative file or the rehabilitation report on him, if there was one. In his autobiography Mikoian had ample opportunity to discuss the charges against Belenkii and refute them. But he never mentions Belenkii again after this passage.

**"Dictator"? "First Among Peers"? How About "Despot"?**

Kotkin:

Members of the inner circle were no longer comrades of the ruler. Stalin was no longer first among peers, but a despot.<sup>63</sup> (386)

Note 63:

As one scholar explained, "Up to 1936, the leading group was held together by shared convictions in a shared project, but after 1937 the nature of the group changed." Rees, "Stalin as Leader, 1937-1953," 207. (992)

What nonsense! Up to this date — February, 1937 — Stalin was not a "dictator" but only "first among peers"? Then why has Kotkin been calling him a "dictator" *before* this point in his book? Rees, as we shall see, is in error.

### **Documents Against Kalinin and Rudzutak?**

Kotkin:

Mikoyan and Beria, assigned to comb through Orjonikidze's personal archive, discovered two sealed folders (received back when he headed the Central Control Commission), which held compromising tsarist police materials on politburo members Kalinin and Rudzutaks.<sup>14</sup> Orjonikidze had marked the folders "Do not open without me." Kvashonkin, *Sovetskoe rukovodstvo*, 9-10 (RGASPI, f. 85, d. 2, l. 1-30). (992)

<sup>14</sup> For some reason Kotkin uses the Latvian spelling. In scholarship, however, the Russian spelling "Rudzutak" is used.

Here is the text from the introduction to Kvashonkin's book.

[[cyrillic]]После гибели в феврале 1937 г. Г. К. Орджоникидзе, А. И. Микоян и Л. П. Берия, разбиравшие по поручению Политбюро архив покойного, обнаружили два запечатанных сургучной печатью конверта с надписью рукой Орджоникидзе: «Без меня не вскрывать»б. В этих конвертах находились несколько документов

из архивов Департамента полиции, изъятых из следственных дел ряда большевистских деятелей. Так, 25 марта 1929 г. из Ленинградского обкома партии в Москву на имя Орджоникидзе прислали копию показаний М.И. Калинина, данных им на допросе в феврале 1900 г. Протокол допроса начинался со слов Калинина: «Будучи вызванным на допрос вследствие поданного мною прошения, желаю дать откровенное показание о своей преступной деятельности». Далее следовал подробный рассказ о контактах с пропагандистами и участии в работе нелегального кружка. Помимо копии протокола допроса, в конверте Орджоникидзе сохранились также подлинники этого протокола и прошения Калинина на имя министра юстиции, поданного из петербургского дома предварительного заключения. Эти документы, видимо, были изъяты из подлинных архивных дел и присланы в Москву чуть позже<sup>7</sup>

Вместе с документами Калинина в конверте хранилась архивная справка о Я. Э. Рудзутаке, осужденном в конце 1909 г. к 10 годам каторги по делу виндавской организации Латышской социал-демократической рабочей партии. Справка показывала, что во время следствия Рудзутак раскрыл группу членов организации и по названным им адресам были произведены обыски и изъято оружие и пропагандистская литература. Эта архивная справка была направлена из Центрального исторического архива в Ленинграде в адрес Центрального совета Всесоюзного общества политкаторжан в декабре 1928 г.<sup>8</sup>

After the death in February, 1937, of G.K. Ordzhonikidze, A.I. Mikoyan and L.P. Beria, who, on the instructions of the Politburo, were analyzing the archives of the deceased, discovered two envelopes sealed with wax seal with the inscription in Ordzhonikidze's hand: "Do not open without me."<sup>6</sup> In these envelopes were several documents from the archives of the Police Department, seized from the investigation cases of a number of Bolshevik figures. Thus, on March 25, 1929, a copy of the testimony of M.I. Kalinin, from an interrogation of February 1900, was sent from the Leningrad Regional Party Committee to Moscow in the name of Ordzhonikidze. The

interrogation protocol began with the words of Kalinin: "Being summoned for questioning as a result of my petition, I want to give frank testimony about my criminal activities." Then followed a detailed account of contacts with propagandists and participation in the work of the illegal circle. In addition to the copy of the interrogation protocol, the originals of this protocol and Kalinin's petition to the Minister of Justice, filed from the St. Petersburg pre-trial detention center, were also kept in the envelope of Ordzhonikidze. These documents, apparently, were removed from the original archive files and sent to Moscow a little later.<sup>7</sup>

Along with Kalinin's documents, an archival certificate was kept in the envelope about Ya. E. Rudzutak, convicted at the end of 1909 to 10 years of hard labor in the case of the Vindav organization of the Latvian Social-Democratic Labor Party. The inquiry showed that during the investigation Rudzutak disclosed a group of members of the organization and the police searched the addresses he had given and seized weapons and propaganda literature. This archival reference was sent from the Central Historical Archive in Leningrad to the Central Council of the All-Union Politkatorzhan [political prisoners] Society in December 1928.<sup>8</sup>

This is the text from Kvashonkin, *Sovetskoe rukovodstvo*, 9-10. (Notes 6-8 are to the archival document.) However, as so often with Kotkin's sources, there are problems.

There's nothing at all about this in Mikoian's autobiography *Tak Bylo*. Why not? What's more, Oleg Khlevniuk writes as follows:

[[cyrillic]]Благодаря новым документам мы знаем, что именно в 1928 г. в архивах департамента полиции были найдены, но не пущены в ход компрометирующие материалы на М. И. Калинина и Я. Э. Рудзутака. В протоколе полицейского допроса Калинина от февраля 1900 г. говорилось: «Будучи вызванным на допрос вследствие поданного мною прошения, желаю дать откровенное показание о своей преступной деятельности». Калинин, как следует из этого протокола, подробно рассказал полиции о работе

нелегального кружка. Из архивной справки по делу Рудзутака, осужденного к десяти годам каторги в 1909 г., следовало, что во время допросов он раскрыл группу членов организации. По названным им адресам были произведены обыски, изъято оружие и пропагандистская литература.<sup>1</sup>

Thanks to the new documents, we know that in 1928 in the archives of the police department compromising materials on M.I. Kalinin and Ya. E. Rudzutak were found. In the report of Kalinin's police interrogation of February 1900, it was said: "Being summoned for questioning as a result of my petition, I want to give frank testimony about my criminal activities." Kalinin, according to this protocol, told the police in detail about the work of the illegal circle. From the archival certificate in the case of Rudzutak, convicted of ten years of hard labor in 1909, it follows that during the interrogations he disclosed a group of members of the organization. At the addresses given to them, searches were carried out and weapons and propaganda literature were seized. (Khlevniuk, *Stalin. Zhizn' odnogo vozhdia*. Moscow, 2015, p. 155-6).

In his introduction Kvashonkin says that these documents were discovered in February, 1937, by Mikoian and Beria, in envelopes — not folders, as Kotkin states — in Ordzhonikidze's archives, with a message that clearly intended to keep them secret. Kvashonkin's book was published in 1999.

But in his 2015 book Khlevniuk states that the documents were discovered in 1928. Khlevniuk goes on to suggest — as usual, without evidence — that Stalin had used these documents to blackmail his supporters. (158) Kvashonkin (9-10) says that both the document about Kalinin and that about Rudzutak were sent in 1929 to Ordzhonikidze.

Both Kvashonkin and Khlevniuk cite the same archival identifiers, so they are talking about the same documents (RGASPI, F. 85 Novye postuplenia. D. 2. Ll. 1-11, 28-30). Why do they disagree so sharply about them?

\* If Stalin had known about them in 1928, why did they end up in Ordzhonikidze's archive?



\* If they did, would that not mean that Ordzhonikidze was very close to Stalin? Instead of fearful and hostile, as Kotkin, copying from Khlevniuk and Dubinskii-Mukhadze's 1963 edition, has it.

\* Why do both Kvashonkin and Khlevniuk quote only *one sentence* — the *same* sentence — from just one of the documents, when there are clearly 14 pages (1-11, 28-30)? This fact suggests that either Khlevniuk, Kvashonkin, or both, had not actually read the document in question but had only seen a selection from it. Or, perhaps, Kvashonkin read it and Khlevniuk just copied from Kvashonkin. One thing is clear: Kotkin has not read it.

\* Why haven't these documents been published? Kvashonkin claims to have seen them as early as 1999. Yet in 2015 Khlevniuk only quotes the same one sentence from them.

Do these documents exist at all? If they do exist, are they genuine, or forgeries? It is the job of scholarship to recognize problems like this and either to resolve through, through research, or at least to alert readers to them. Kotkin does neither.

## Chapter 4. *Trotsky and the Bloc*

I have published two books on Leon Trotsky's activities during the 1930s. *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* uncovers and examines the lies by Trotsky and his son, Leon Sedov, about the bloc of Trotskyists, Rights, and other oppositionists. Kotkin also touches on this important issue. It is the subject of the present chapter.

In the same book I also devote twelve chapters, more than half of the book, to examining the testimony at the Moscow Trials, in an attempt to determine whether that testimony should be accepted as what it appears to be — what the defendants chose to say — or whether the defendants' testimony was fabricated, "scripted" by the prosecution, forced from them by threats or promises, and therefore should not be considered to be valid evidence. This section is now published separately as *The Moscow Trials As Evidence*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Published in July, 2018. See <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1722842121/>

On the basis of the evidence now available to all researchers I prove that Trotsky lied consistently about virtually everything concerning his own activities and about events in the Soviet Union. I also show that, whenever we can check a fact-claim made by one of the trial defendants against evidence that is independently obtained, we find that the trial testimony is valid. Therefore, the testimony in the Moscow Trials is valid evidence, and should be used as such in historical study.

In my second book, *Evidence of Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan*, I gather and study the evidence now available about this important charge against Trotsky, which was featured in the Second and Third Moscow Trials of January, 1937, and March, 1938 respectively. I conclude, as any objective student must, that, on the basis of the evidence now available, we must affirm that Trotsky did indeed collaborate with Germany and Japan.

I cannot summarize these two book-length studies here, and refer the interested reader to them. Therefore, the present chapter will be short.

All the evidence available to me and which I study in these books is available to all researchers. But Kotkin either ignores it — bias by omission — or, as we shall see, falsifies it. To do otherwise — to recognize that Trotsky lied, and did indeed collaborate with the Axis, utterly dismantles the Anti-Stalin Paradigm of Soviet history that Kotkin bends all his efforts to uphold.

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In the First Moscow Trial of August, 1936, Trotsky was accused of forming a "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites." By "bloc" was meant a political alliance for concerted action between clandestine opposition groups operating illegally within the Soviet Union. The aim of the bloc was the overthrow of the Stalin leadership.

Trotsky always denied that any such bloc existed or that he would have ever considered forming such a bloc with what he called "capitulators" — those who had publicly renounced their support of the Trotskyist opposition and promised future support for the Bolshevik Party line. Since Khrushchev's day the existence of this bloc has been denied by the Soviet, then the Russian, governments, and by all scholars of Soviet history whether Soviet, Russian, Western anticommunist, or Trotskyist.

In January, 1980, the Trotsky Archive at Harvard University was opened to researchers. Almost immediately a research team directed by Pierre Broué, in his day the foremost Trotskyist historian in the world, discovered that a bloc of Rights, Trotskyists, and other oppositionists, had indeed existed and that Trotsky had approved it.

Shortly thereafter, American scholar Arch Getty discovered other documents in the Harvard Trotsky Archive that proved that Trotsky wrote to former oppositionists — "capitulators" — in 1932, undoubtedly to urge them to return to opposition. Trotsky swore that he had not contacted them and would never do so. Again, Trotsky lied. Throughout the '80s and '90s Broué went on to discover other lies by Trotsky.

Kotkin cites Broué's research. He must also know Getty's 1985 article on the Trotsky Archives, which was published in *Soviet Studies*, the foremost vehicle in the world for research in Soviet history. But Kotkin does not inform his readers what this research proves — that during the 1930s Trotsky lied consistently about his activities. Trotsky lied in his *Bulletin of the Opposition*; in all his articles and books; in his supposed "refutation" of the 1936 Moscow Trial, the *Red Book*. Trotsky lied to the 1937 Dewey Commission, and the Commission members believed him.<sup>2</sup> Kotkin conceals all this from his readers.

### Is This A "Lie"? If Not, What Is?

Note 19 (912): **Stalin had the OGPU blackmail or entice Trotsky supporters** internally exiled in the USSR to denounce him in the Soviet press. Radek signed a denunciation of Trotsky that was published in *Pravda* (July 13, 1929). See also Broué, "Bolshevik-Leninist Faction," 140; Deutscher, *Prophet Armed*, 390; Volkogonov, *Trotsky*, 281; Yaroslavskii, "Etot son knochen [this should be "konchen" — GF]," 2; RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 782, l. 9. Even Beloborodov and Ivan Smirnov would publicly break with Trotsky. *Pravda*, Nov. 3, 1929. Rakovski, in Astrakhan, nearly alone remained loyal; Trotsky kept a photograph of him on his desk.

Kotkin has fabricated this — literally made it up! There is no evidence that the OGPU compelled Trotskyists to "denounce him." Neither Deutscher, loc. cit., nor Broué, loc. cit., say anything about this.

Broué, "Bolshevik-Leninist Faction..." was published in 1988. It has nothing at all about the OGPU [after 1934 renamed NKVD] either "enticing" or "blackmailing" oppositionists to "capitulate," must less to denounce Trotsky. On the contrary: by 1990 Broué had concluded that the "capitulations" were false.

Lev Sedov called the Smirnov group either the "former capitulators" or the "Trotskiite capitulators." **Everybody had known, from 1929 on, that people in the Smirnov group had not really capitulated but were trying to fool the apparatus, and were capable of organizing**

**themselves as an Opposition within the party: the fact was so universally known that Andres Nin, the Spaniard deported from the Soviet Union in August 1930, explained it openly to his German comrades of *Die permanente Revolution* who printed his declaration without apparent problem.<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Broué. "Party Opposition to Stalin (1930-1932) and the First Moscow Trial." In John W. Strong, ed. *Essays on Revolutionary Culture and Stalinism*. Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1990, pp. 98-111., 104. (Broué, POS)

Kotkin cites this very article! So Kotkin knows that the supposed "capitulations" were phony. That means that Kotkin's claim that "Stalin had the OGPU blackmail or entice Trotsky supporters internally exiled in the USSR to denounce him in the Soviet press" constitutes deliberate deception of his readers — there is no other way to explain it. If this isn't a lie, what is?

Why would Kotkin, like Khrushchev's men and then Gorbachev's men, do this? No doubt because the existence of the clandestine "bloc of Rights and Trotskyists" was one of the central charges in the Moscow Trials, and Trotsky had consistently denied that any such bloc existed or could exist. Therefore, to acknowledge that it really did exist would dismantle the allegation, universal among Trotskyists and anticommunists, that the Moscow Trials were frame-ups fabricated by Stalin.

### **Antisemitism in Kotkin's Use of Names**

Kotkin, Note 22 (912): Deutscher, *Prophet Outcast*, 67. At Stalin's behest, the propagandist Miney Gubelman, who went by the name Yemelyan Yaroslavsky, answered with an essay, "Mr. Trotsky at the Service of the Bourgeoisie, or L. Trotsky's First Steps Abroad"—published in Russian in the Soviet press, essentially a salve for Stalin's ego. *Bol'shevik*, 1929, no. 5 and 9.

What's the point of using Yaroslavskii's birth, "Jewish" name? As recorded in the memoir of the well-known Soviet writer Konstantin Simonov, Stalin

himself said that doing so was anti-semitic:

A person has the right to write under a pseudonym he has chosen for himself. But, obviously, somebody wants to emphasize that this person has a double name, to emphasize that he is a Jew. Why emphasize that? Why do that? Why spread anti-Semitism? Who benefits from that?<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Konstantin Simonov. *Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniya*. Moscow: Novosti, 1988, p. 216. Also online at [http://www.hrono.info/Iibris/lib\\_s/simonov16.php](http://www.hrono.info/Iibris/lib_s/simonov16.php)

Kotkin does not call Grigorii Zinoviev by his birth, "Jewish" name Ovsei-Gersh Aronovich Radomysel'skii. He does not call Lev Kamenev by his birth, "Jewish" name Rozenfel'd. He does not refer to Karl Radek by his birth, "Jewish" name Sobel'son. And he doesn't refer to Leon Trotsky by his birth, "Jewish" name Leiba Bronshtein. Evidently Kotkin's antisemitism is restricted to people he does not like — supporters of Stalin.

Yaroslavskii's brother kept his birth name Gubel'man, was a lifelong Bolshevik and died full of honors in 1966. Yaroslavskii's son kept the name Yaroslavsky and became a Major-General, famous pilot, and hero of World War II.

## **Trotsky and the Bloc**

Kotkin:

Sedov wrote to his father—in invisible ink—that a "bloc" had formed inside the USSR of "Zinovievites, the Sten-Lominadze group, and Trotskyites," an apparent reference to the small Ryutin conspiracy. ...<sup>291</sup> (106)

Note 291 (935): Trotsky received the letter on Oct. 4, 1932: Trotsky archive, Harvard, T 4782; Davies, *Crisis and Progress*, 246-7, citing conversations with Pierre Broué, editor of Trotsky's notebooks in French.

This is another falsehood by Kotkin — in this case, "bias by omission." The text of Sedov's letter makes it clear that the bloc was *not* small. Davies, 246, notes that the bloc "consisting of 'Zinovievites, the Sten-Lominadze group and Trotskyists (former [capitulators])'." Moreover, it had nothing to do with Riutin. No "small Riutin conspiracy" existed. Riutin was simply one member of the Rightist conspiracy that entered the bloc in 1932.

Here is the relevant part of the letter ("Z" and "K" are Zinoviev and Kamenev):

[The bloc] has been organized. In it have entered the Zinovievists, the Sten-Lominadze group and the Trotskyists (former "capitulators"). The group of Safar. Tarkhan. has not formally entered yet — they stand on too extreme a position; they will enter in a very short time. — The declaration of Z. and K. concerning their enormous mistake in '27 was made during negotiations with our people concerning the bloc, immediately before the exile of Z and K. —<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Furr, Trotsky's 'Amalgams', 506 ff.; my translation.

This is the "bloc of Oppositionists" the same bloc referred to in the Moscow Trials. Broué admits this in his 1980 article, which Kotkin footnotes elsewhere, though not here. Kotkin is deliberately deceiving his readers by withholding this information from them.

### **Evidence of Trotsky's Conspiracy with Germany and Japan**

In the Second and Third Moscow Trials a number of defendants testified at length about Trotsky's conspiracy with Hitler's Germany and militarist-fascist Japan against the Soviet Union. Trotsky, of course, denied any such thing. But this means nothing since he would do so whether he were guilty or innocent.

We now have a lot of evidence that Trotsky did in fact collaborate with Germany and Japan. As we have seen, Kotkin has not simply denied that the bloc of Rights, Trotskyists, and other oppositionists really existed, but has also falsified the evidence. It should be no surprise that Kotkin ignores

entirely the evidence of Trotsky's collaboration with the Axis even though it is in document collections that he himself uses.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> For this evidence, see Furr, *Trotsky's Collaboration*.

We also have a great deal of evidence that Trotskyists within the USSR were doing just what the Trotskyists in the Second and Third Moscow Trials testified that they were doing: planning assassinations and sabotage and were working with German agents.<sup>7</sup> At present we have evidence in two forms: pretrial interrogations and confessions of people involved in Oppositional activities within the Soviet Union; and confessions, including now the actual trial transcript, of Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky and the seven other top-level military leaders arrested, tried, convicted, and executed.

<sup>7</sup> For this evidence, see Furr, *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*. Volume 3 of my Trotsky studies will have much more such evidence.



## Chapter 5. *First Moscow Trial*

Kotkin's principal methods of misdirection and falsification in this chapter are:

- Bias by omission — ignoring evidence that disproves Kotkin's fact-claims but which his readers will not know about.
- Argument by scare quote;
- The use of phony references that do not provide evidence for the statements Kotkin makes in his text.

It appears that Kotkin has not bothered to actually research any of these topics himself! At best he relies on secondary sources: works of research, or what appear to be research, although many of those whom he cites are phony researchers. Kotkin also relies on works that are not even secondary sources, works that contain fact-claims that are not supported by any evidence at all, not even phony evidence.

### **Fallacy #1: Begging The Question**

Kotkin prefaces his chapters on the trials of the 1930s this way:

Stalin instigated an epic version of the time-honored authoritarian device of trumped-up conspiracies linking internal with external "enemies," but the Soviet case differed in more than just scale.<sup>30</sup> (306)

Note 30 (982) 30. Rees, "Stalin as Leader, 1937-1953," 202-3.

Rees' pages contain no evidence whatever! Like Kotkin, Rees simply *assumes* that the conspiracies were fabrications — the logical fallacy of "begging the question."

Roy Medvedev, author of the other monumental work on the terror (1971, 1989), endeavored to separate Stalin from the sacred Lenin and depicted him as a traditional tyrant, but he similarly asserted that Stalin was motivated by "lust for power, boundless ambition," as if all tyrants

murdered their own elites not just on such a scale but also with forced confessions to fantastical crimes they had not committed.<sup>31</sup> (306-7)

Note 31 (982): 31. Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, 585. Volkgonov [sic] largely echoed Medvedev. Lars Lih argued that Stalin pursued an "anti-bureaucratic scenario," but also that Stalin recognized the necessity of the state, an unresolved paradox. Lib, *Introduction to Stalin's Letters to Molotov*, 1-63.

The phrase "lust for power, boundless ambition" is indeed on Medvedev, 585. But Kotkin either does not realize, or pretends not to realize, that Medvedev's book contains almost no evidence! It is mostly based on Khrushchev-era attacks on Stalin which have since been disproven with primary documents from the Soviet archives.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*.

## **Fallacy #2: The Argument From Incredulity**

Kotkin again:

... the conspiracies in the Soviet Union were invented. (313)

This is Kotkin's position throughout. He cites no evidence to support this claim. Naturally — because it is false.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> It is also logically invalid to say that "there were no conspiracies." The purpose of a conspiracy is to *not* leave evidence. A successful conspiracy goes undetected. Therefore, the most one can say is "There is no evidence of a conspiracy." But in this case there is an abundance of evidence.

His readers will not know of the mountains of evidence we now possess that the conspiracies did indeed exist and posed a grave threat. It is Kotkin's obligation, as a historian, to inform his readers about this evidence. But to do so would dismantle the whole purpose of his book!

## **Hiding The Evidence Against Valentin Ol'berg**

Kotkin:

"Trotskyites" had also seized attention. **Valentin Olberg**, a provincial teacher who happened to have just returned from Germany, was arrested by the NKVD (January 5, 1936), which extracted "testimony" from him that he had come back with a special task assigned to him by none other than Trotsky: a "terrorist act" against Stalin. Olberg named other "terrorists" he had "recruited"; arrests followed.<sup>245</sup> By spring the NKVD would arrest 508 "Trotskyites," one of whom was found in possession of Trotsky's personal archive for 1927. Stalin ordered the NKVD to furnish Yezhov with copies of all documents pertaining to Trotskyites and freed him from overseeing party organs, a task passed to Yezhov's deputy, Georgy Malenkov (b. 1902). Yezhov now oversaw the NKVD full time.<sup>246</sup> (279)

Note 245 (976):

It is not out of the question that the NKVD tasked the Swiss-born Olberg, who had been expelled from the German Communist party in 1932 for Trotskyism, with infiltrating Trotskyite circles in Europe, then decided he needed to serve another purpose. On Olberg, see Chase, *Enemies within the Gates?* 134 (citing RGASPI, f., 495, op. 175, d. 105, l. 9). Vyshinsky wrote to Stalin and Molotov (Jan. 8) of a separate case of a "Trotskyite group" just turned over to the courts with supposed plans for a "terrorist" act against the dictator Stalin on Red Square back during the Revolution Day parade, while Yagoda and Vyshinsky together wrote to him (Jan. 11, 1936) about the liquidation of a Zinovievite organization of thirty-four people, asking how should they be tried. Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i VChK*, 715-6 (APRF, f. 3, op. 58, d. 230, l. 65-65ob.), 716-20 (l. 68-76), 723 (l. 64).

Either Kotkin hasn't researched Ol'berg, or he is concealing the evidence from his readers.

Chase's fine book, published in 2001 and now seriously out of date, does document Ol'berg's Trotskyism and expulsion from the German CP. Direct correspondence of Ol'berg with Trotsky is preserved in the Harvard Trotsky Archive — a fact that Kotkin fails to mention.

Kotkin also omits any mention of the draft of a pamphlet on Ol'berg by Austrian Trotskyist Kurt Landau, also preserved in the Harvard Trotsky Archive. Landau confirmed that Ol'berg really was a Trotskyist. Moreover, Landau said that Ol'berg had given him the impression that "the technical work that the Russian comrades wanted him for was more important than [his work] for us."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Hans Schafranek, *Das kurze Leben des Kurt Landau* (1988), 387, 421.

There has never been any evidence to doubt Ol'berg's confession that he planned to murder Stalin. On the contrary: we now have much more evidence to confirm Ol'berg's guilt, including confessions by his wife Betty and his brother Pavel', both of whom knew about and abetted his conspiracy.<sup>4</sup> The collection of documents in which these confessions are printed was published in 2013, in plenty of time for Kotkin to have made use of it. But he ignores it. I will discuss this evidence in detail in volume three of my Trotsky studies.

<sup>4</sup> [[Czech text]] In *Politbi u ro i Lev Trots kii: (sbornik dokumentov)*, 1923-1940 gg. Prague (Czech Republic), Sociosféra-CZ, 2013, volume 2.

If the Anti-Stalin Paradigm (ASP) is to be upheld, the charges at the Moscow Trials must be deemed fabrications and all the defendants, like Ol'berg, victims of a frame-up. So Kotkin suppresses the evidence.

As for the Khaustov book, the documents in it are indeed very important! As usual, Kotkin says nothing about them. These investigators' documents discuss contacts between the Trotskyists and Zinovievists arrested in early January, 1936, and the underground Zinovievist group in Leningrad that murdered Kirov on December 1, 1934. These documents specifically discuss the contacts with Kotolynov, one of the leaders of the Zinovievite group that murdered Kirov. The document on page 723 of this book shows that some of these people were not executed but given prison sentences.

### **Fallacy #3: Argument By Scare Quote**

Note 246 (976): Jansen and Petrov, *Stalin's Loyal Executioner*, 46-8.

These pages — also full of scare quotes — contain no evidence that the defendants were innocent. Ol'berg is not even mentioned.

Note Kotkin's use of Argument by Scare Quote. Kotkin uses this dishonest rhetorical ploy when he wishes to conceal from his readers that he has zero evidence to support his anticommunist conclusions.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> I examine argument by scare quotes as a technique of deception in Furr, Kirov, 87 ff.

Kotkin:

Stalin pressed for wider arrests, using the unique instruments only he commanded: he dispatched a secret circular (July 29, 1936)—drafted by Yezhov and edited by the dictator—to party organizations, which was to be read aloud to all party members and which quoted the "testimony" of the various accused "Trotskyites." (325)

Argument by Scare Quote yet again! This circular of July 29, 1936, is largely made up of quotations from confessions of conspirators. There is a lot of evidence that they are genuine.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See Furr. Moscow Trials.

### **So Far "Behind The Scenes" That It Vanishes**

Kotkin:

The five-day trial of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite center commenced on August 19, in the October Hall of white Corinthian columns in the House of Trade Unions.<sup>104</sup> The spectacle followed an extended period of **behind-the-scenes torture, scripting, and rehearsing**, and this time it would result not in mere exile or imprisonment. The defendants, besides the five German Communists who "confessed" to Gestapo ties, were eleven prominent Bolsheviks of the 1926-27 opposition.<sup>105</sup> Ten of the sixteen happened to be Jewish (this received no special attention). Invited audience members numbered some 150

people, including 30 handpicked foreign journalists and diplomats, as well as many plainclothes NKVD operatives, but not the relatives of the accused. **Despite slipups that betrayed the fabrication**, the defendants, all Communists, publicly confessed to being wreckers, spies, terrorists.<sup>106</sup> (Kaganovich made sure to add himself and Orjonikidze to the list of targets.)<sup>107</sup> "I, Kamenev, together with Zinoviev and Trotsky, organized and guided this conspiracy," Stalin's former close associate stated. "I had become convinced that the party's —Stalin's—policy was successful and victorious. We, the opposition, had banked on a split in the party, but this hope proved groundless. We could no longer count on any serious domestic difficulties to allow us to overthrow Stalin's leadership." (331)

This is all false. In reality, there is no evidence whatsoever that any of the defendants were "tortured," nor of any "scripting" or "rehearsing" at all. So, naturally, Kotkin doesn't cite any evidence.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> For a study of the Moscow Trials testimony, see Trotsky's 'Amalgams' Chapters 1-12, now updated and published separately as *The Moscow Trials as Evidence*. New York: Red Star Publishers, 2018.

### **To H—L With Reality — Let's Quote Orlov Again!**

In giving his one example of "slipups that betrayed the fabrication" Kotkin shows his own incompetence. Kotkin's note 106 reads:

Testimony about a 1932 meeting that had allegedly taken place with Trotsky in Copenhagen's Hotel Bristol ignored that the building had been torn down in 1917 (the NKVD fabricators confused two sites). Orlov, *Tainaia istoriia*, 70. (985)

This too is all wrong. The Hotel Bristol was never "torn down." In fact, the building that was once the Hotel Bristol still stands in the center of Copenhagen.<sup>8</sup> Ironically, it is this "slipup" of Kotkin's that betrays his falsification. It would be hard to believe that Kotkin did not bother to find out that this story is false — except that there are so many other examples of his incompetence.

<sup>8</sup> See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hotel\\_Bristol\\_\(Copenhagen\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hotel_Bristol_(Copenhagen))

Gol'tsman's NKVD file has now been declassified.<sup>9</sup> It shows that the NKVD did not "fabricate" or "confuse" anything. Rather, the NKVD men checked up on Gol'tsman's statement about the Hotel Bristol, discovered his error, and suggested to Gol'tsman that he had gotten the name of the "Bristol" pastry shop confused with that of the hotel next door. Gol'tsman admitted that he might have been done this.

<sup>9</sup> TsA FSB R-33833 Delo No. 3257. My thanks to my colleague Vladimir Bobrov for providing me with these archival documents. I will publish it in connection with volume 3 of my Trotsky studies.

But the most important point is this: *Gol'tsman made the same error at the trial!* We know now that the prosecution knew he had made a mistake. Yet Vyshinsky did not correct him! The Prosecution permitted Gol'tsman to testify as he chose to do even though they knew he was in error. Therefore, *this "slip-up" — on Gol'tsman's part — is strong evidence that the trial was not fabricated in any way.*

Instead of researching this issue Kotkin relies upon Orlov's long-discredited book. More than thirty years ago American scholar Arch Getty exposed Orlov's book as untrustworthy on pages 211-212 of his classic study *Origins of the Great Purges*. John Costello and Oleg Tsarev also cite many demonstrable lies by Orlov.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> John Costello and Oleg Tsarev. *Deadly Illusions*. NY: Crown, 1993.

### **How Dare Kaganovich Tell The Truth!**

Kotkin writes:

(Kaganovich made sure to add himself and Orjonikidze to the list of targets.)<sup>107</sup>

Note 107 (985): Iakovlev et al., *Reabilitatsiia: politicheskie protsessy*, 187-8.

Another falsehood! The Iakovlev book (R-PP) states that Kaganovich inserted his and Ordzhonikidze's names into the **sentence**. But even R-PP does not claim that he or anyone had inserted them into the **confessions** of the accused.

Mrachkovsky, one of the defendants in the trial, had stated that Stalin, Voroshilov, and Kaganovich were to be assassinated (1936 Trial, 41). Reingol'd named these three plus Ordzhonikidze, Postyshev, Kosior, "and others." (55) Zinoviev admitted that his group planned to assassinate Stalin, Voroshilov, and Kaganovich. (153)

Therefore Kaganovich did not fabricate anything, but simply corrected the text of the sentence by inserting his own name. But how could Kotkin's readers know this, since he conceals it from them?

### "Begging The Question" Yet Again

Kotkin:

Bukharin, hiking the Pamirs in Central Asia, had hurried back to Moscow to find Stalin away on holiday, and would write the dictator a letter, which also found its way into the holiday mailbag, rabidly endorsing all **the fabricated charges** of the trial, except those about himself ("I embrace you, for I'm clean").<sup>111</sup> (332)

Note 111 (985): Stalin had afforded Bukharin an opportunity to defect: in Feb. 1936, he had appointed Bukharin to lead a commission to purchase a Marx-Engels archive in France, leaving the trip's duration up to Bukharin and permitting the pregnant Larina to join him. But his father, brother, first wife, second wife, and daughter lived in Moscow, and the trip to France had taken place before Zinoviev and Kamenev had been executed. Cohen, *Bukharin*, 4 72; Liebich, "I Am the Last." See also Dan, "Bukharin o Staline," 181-2; and Nicolaevsky, *Power and the Soviet Elite*.

This is a phony footnote. It contains no evidence that the charges were "fabricated." And for the best of reasons: there simply is no such evidence



anywhere!

What's more, it appears that Kotkin has simply copied this footnote from Cohen, *Bukharin*, 472, where Cohen cites the very same passages in Dan and Nicolaevsky. As for Nicolaevsky's book, Getty demolished it as being itself a fabrication — see *Origins* 214-216.

### **Ignore The Evidence and Any Problem Remains "Unanswerable."**

Kotkin:

On the eve of Kamenev's execution, Stalin wrote to Kaganovich that Kamenev, through his wife, had sounded out the French ambassador about supporting a possible Trotskyite-Zinovievite government. "I believe Kamenev also sounded out the English, German, and American ambassadors," Stalin added. "This means Kamenev was supposed to reveal to these foreigners the plans for the conspiracy and the murder of the leaders of the party. This also means Kamenev had already revealed the plans to them, for otherwise the foreigners would not have begun talking about the future Trotskyite-Zinovievite 'government' with him."<sup>117</sup> **Did Stalin believe this?** Was he straining to justify his political murders to Kaganovich? These questions remain unanswerable. (333)

Note 117 (985): Khlevniuk et al., *Stalin i Kaganovich*, 642-3 (RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 93, l. 77-80)<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> This letter of Stalin's to Kaganovich is also online at <http://istmat.info/node/36927>

This is a problem for anyone who, like Kotkin, assumes, *a priori* and contrary to all the evidence, that the trials were frame-ups. Rather than consider the evidence, Kotkin calls the trial "political murders" and says that the problem "remains unanswerable." Of course it is only "unanswerable" if one ignores the evidence and assumes *a priori* that Kamenev was innocent, as Kotkin does. Once again, Kotkin commits the

logical fallacy of "begging the question" — assuming that which must be proven, not assumed.

In reality, these remarks of Stalin's are good evidence that Stalin believed Kamenev's confessions, and therefore that those confessions were genuine. Stalin's remarks make it clear that he (Stalin) believed that Kamenev had really been guilty of the conspiracy of which he was charged and to which he had confessed.

### **Kotkin Overlooks Evidence That Kamenev Was Guilty**

Kotkin has also omitted an important section from this same letter to Kaganovich:

... Second. From Reingol'd's confessions it is clear that Kamenev, through his wife Glebova, was feeling out the French ambassador Al'fand concerning possible relations of the French government with / a future "government" of the Trotskyite-Zinov'evite bloc. ... Obviously, Glebova is well informed about all this sordid material. We must bring Glebova to Moscow and submit her to a series of meticulous interrogations. She might reveal many interesting things.

This passage is strong evidence that Stalin did not know in advance what Reingol'd was going to confess at the trial and was drawing conclusions based on those confessions at the time. In other words, Stalin was trying to figure out what was really going on. Once again, that means that Stalin had not stage-managed Kamenev's confession.

Oleg Khlevniuk, the Russian editor of this collection, an anticommunist historian to whom the practice of objectivity is completely foreign, appears to have realized this and tried to twist Stalin's words into an attempt at fabrication:

[[cyrillic]]Одна из шифровок (см. документ No 763) показывает, каким образом Сталин руководил фабрикацией таких дел. В этой телеграмме Сталин не только приказывает Кагановичу дополнительно допросить уже арестованную жену Каменева, но

прямо перечисляет какие показания должны быть у нее получены: о связях Каменева с послами западных стран в Москве и информированности западных дипломатов о планах «заговора и убийства вождей ВКП». (*Stalin i Kaganovich*, 620)

One of the ciphers (see document No. 763) shows how Stalin supervised the fabrication of such cases. In this telegram, Stalin not only orders Kaganovich to interrogate the already arrested wife of Kamenev, but directly lists what testimony should be extracted from her: about Kamenev's connections with Western ambassadors in Moscow and Western diplomats' awareness of plans for "plotting and killing the leaders of the CPSU."

Khlevniuk is lying — or, perhaps, deluding himself (and his readers). We know — and Khlevniuk and Kotkin must know too — that Glebova was not framed. Instead, she was let off (temporarily) with the help of NKVD conspirators. Here, quoted from a volume that Kotkin cites elsewhere, though not here, is NKVD man D.M. Dmitriev's confession concerning this event:

I remember the following cases:

1. The case of Tat'iana KAMENEVA. She was the wife of L.E. KAMENEV. We had information that Tat'iana KAMENEVA, on instructions from L.B. KAMENEV, went to the French ambassador in Moscow AL'FAND with a proposal to set up a meeting with L.B. KAMENEV for counterrevolutionary discussions concerning help by the French government to underground Trotskyites inside the USSR.

I and CHERTOK interrogated Tat'iana KAMENEVA and "steered away" from this accusation, making it possible for her to avoid testimony about this fact during the investigation.<sup>12</sup>

Rather than evidence that Stalin was fabricating confessions, this is strong evidence that he was not doing so! On the contrary, conspirators within the NKVD were deceiving Stalin in cooperation with the bloc, including Kamenev's wife.

Since this is good evidence that Stalin was not fabricating these trials, it is logical that Khlevniuk and Kotkin withhold it from their readers. But it is dishonest for them to do so.

### **Shame On Stalin For *Not* Violating Soviet Law!**

Kotkin:

Stalin supervised the trial from afar, sternly instructing Kaganovich that the sentences had to mention Trotsky and Sedov. ("This carries enormous significance for Europe, both for the bourgeoisie and for the workers.")<sup>118</sup> A few hours after the court had adjourned on August 24, Ulrich, at 2:30 a.m., pronounced the defendants guilty and condemned all but one to death. Later that day, the regime staged a grand aviation display at Moscow's Tushinsky Aerodrome ("Glory to Stalinist aviation and the Stalinist falcons"). Planes flew difficult maneuvers. Parachutists dropped from the sky. "The enemies' schemes," a teacher in the Institute of World Economy and International Relations recorded in his diary, "cannot stop our enormous successes."<sup>119</sup> Kamenev and the others wrote **appeals** for mercy in the predawn hours. (Only one defendant expressly refused to do so.) **Perhaps, as would be rumored, Stalin had promised them their lives in exchange for public "confessions" to crimes they had not committed.**<sup>120</sup> But well before the end of the seventy-two-hour period for appeals specified in Soviet law, Kamenev, Zinoviev, and the rest were executed in the cellars.<sup>121</sup> Yezhov retrieved the bullet casings as souvenirs. (333)

Note 118 (985): Stalin forbade mention of the fact that there would be no appeal ("these words are superfluous and would give a bad impression"). Khlevniuk et al., *Stalin i Kaganovich*, 642 (RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 93, l. 62-4)<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> This document is also online at <http://istmat.info/node/36926>

Stalin did write this concerning the appeals. But either he changed his mind, or he was overruled — according to Kotkin he was still only "first among equals" at this point! — because, as Kotkin's text recognizes, appeals were

in fact permitted. The appeals of Kamenev, Smirnov I.N., Zinoviev, and Lur'e, Natan L. have been published (*Izvestiia*, September 2, 1992, p. 3). All repeated their confessions of guilt in the strongest terms, while also asking for clemency.

Note 120 (985):

Eduard Gol'tsman wrote a note that he would not seek clemency. Volkogonov, *Lenin*, 276 (citing AMBRF, archive no. R-33833, t. 41, l. 256).

This passage in Volkogonov reads:

All of the sixteen condemned men, except one, wrote begging for mercy. The exception was Eduard Solomonovich Goltsman, eleventh on the list, who wrote a note declaring that he would positively not ask for mercy.<sup>95</sup>

This is true: a note about Gol'tsman's refusal to appeal is in the Volkogonov Papers. But Volkogonov fabricates as badly as Kotkin. On the same page Volkogonov wrote:

Both Kamenev and Zinoviev still cherished some hope; Stalin had indeed promised to spare their lives if they would make a full 'confession' and repent. They had not realized that everything had been predetermined.

Volkogonov is lying here. There is no evidence to support this claim that "Stalin had promised to spare their lives for a confession." As with Kotkin and all those who adhere to the Anti-Stalin Paradigm *a priori* and in defiance of all the evidence, Volkogonov has to try to explain why the accused confessed if, as the Anti-Stalin Paradigm demands, they were all innocent.

### **Never Trust Volkogonov**

Volkogonov's historical works are dishonest. Arch Getty has written:

We CAN judge them [Russian scholars], it seems to me, according to two criteria: how well were/are they able to communicate significant historical information and interpretation DESPITE prescribed controls, and how good is their research.

In this admittedly idiosyncratic definition, I think Volkogonov fails on both counts, First, his writing, both in the Soviet era and the post-Soviet time faithfully mimics, without nuance or Aesopian message, exactly what his employers want to hear. Others managed to do otherwise. Second, because of my interest in similar topics, I have had occasion to check and verify several of Volkogonov's more important archival footnotes in his *Triumf i tragediia*. I can report that a substantial number of them do not refer to the documents they purport to cite, even by the most generous paraphrase. Often, his notes cite documents wholly unrelated to the matter at hand. Some of this, of course, can be explained by innocent mistake or clerical accident, of which we are all guilty at one time or another. Some of it can be explained by the fact that Volkogonov himself almost never darkened the door of an archive; in good Soviet style, he headed a team of hungry but, to us, anonymous juniors who actually did the research, selected the documents, and presented them to the mandarin for approval. I have it, first hand, that he worked this way. But even with these caveats, there can be no excuse (to take only one example) for citing Stalin's order to torture prisoners to a stenogram of Zhdanov's speech on elections. Such examples are legion.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> H-Russia list, September 26, 1998.

This assessment of Volkogonov's scholarship is as accessible to Kotkin as it is to me or to anyone.

Note 121 (985): But **well before the end of the seventy-two-hour period for appeals specified in Soviet law**, Kamenev, Zinoviev, and the rest were executed in the cellars.

Yet another falsehood! The trial ended on the evening of August 23. Seventy-two hours were indeed permitted for appeals. But each of the four

appeals we now have is dated August 24, 1936. That means that the defendants had appealed *within* about 24 hours.

Therefore, far from being broken, the law was adhered to. But it is evidently important to Kotkin to claim that Stalin violated Soviet law, so he falsifies this issue.

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For some reason Kotkin claims that "Yezhov retrieved the bullet casings as souvenirs." This statement is not accurate; the reality was far more gruesome. Iagoda retrieved *the bullets themselves*, extracted from the skulls of the executed men! See the following article:

[[cyrillic]]Пули, которыми были убиты два видных большевика, в качестве своего рода сувениров хранил у себя шеф НКВД Генрих Ягода. Когда через полтора года пришел его черед идти к расстрельной стенке, пули перекочевали к его преемнику Николаю Ежову, расстрелянному, в свою очередь, еще два года спустя.<sup>15</sup>

**The bullets** which had killed the two prominent Bolsheviks, were kept as a kind of souvenir by the chief of the NKVD, Genrikh Iagoda. When, after a year and a half, his turn came to the firing squad, the bullets moved to his successor Nikolai Yezhov, who was shot, in turn, two years later.

One would think that this macabre bit of information would help Kotkin make the trial and execution "look bad." It seems that incompetence alone can explain this omission by Kotkin.

## Chapter 6. *Second Moscow Trial*

We now have overwhelming documentary evidence that the defendants in the Second Moscow Trial were guilty, and that Leon Trotsky did indeed conspire with the Nazis and the Japanese militarists against the USSR. Kotkin has this evidence too. But Kotkin's readers will not learn about it. Kotkin conceals it from them in order to argue, without evidence of any kind, that the Trial was a frame-up.

We have already examined this quotation of Larina's in Chapter Three:

... Stalin had Bukharin summoned to a confrontation [<sup>GFnote 1</sup>] with Radek and Pyatakov, who were delivered from prison. Bukharin told his wife that Radek had denounced him as a spy and terrorist with whom he had plotted Stalin's murder, and that Pyatakov resembled a "skeleton with its teeth knocked out."<sup>345</sup> (370)

Note 345 (990): Larina, *This I Cannot Forget*, 312.

<sup>1</sup> "Confrontation" is short for "face-to-face confrontation," a right accorded prisoners to confront and question their accusers. Kotkin does not inform his readers of this. There was no joint confrontation with both Radek and Piatakov — they were separate confrontations more than a month apart.

The transcript of the confrontation with Piatakov has been published. In it, Piatakov fully confessed his guilt at this confrontation. According to Larina, Bukharin told her that Ordzhonikidze wanted to hit Piatakov. Small wonder! Piatakov had been his trusted *zam*, second-in-command in the Commissariat of Heavy Industry.

There is a great deal of evidence against Piatakov! For a discussion of it, including non-Soviet evidence that is surely well-known to Kotkin see *Trotsky's 'Amalgams,'* especially Chapter 8.

We also have Sergo Ordzhonikidze's speech of February 5, 1937, to leading members of the Commissariat of Heavy Industry, where Piatakov had been



his assistant. It is clear from this speech that Ordzhonikidze believed Piatakov guilty. (Getty & Naumov 292-294)

[[cyrillic]]Вы думаете, что если я имел первого заместителя, человека вроде Пятакова, который в промышленности работал полтора десятка лет" имел огромные связи со всеми людьми, что этот человек не мог подбросить нам 1-2 людей? Конечно, мог и подбросил. Некоторых нашли, других не нашли. Вы же слышали о методах борьбы, которую они вели. Кто-либо поставил вопрос, чтобы проверить у себя главке, как у него дело обстоит? Ни один даже не ставил и мимо даже не проходил. Как же вы хотите [дело] делать? И сейчас, имейте в виду, при этих затруднениях будут хныкать и ничего не делать.

Вы думаете, что вредитель тот, кто ходит с револьвером в кармане и ждет, чтобы кого-нибудь застрелить? Ничего подобного. Кто-либо мог себе представить, что Пятаков может быть вредителем? А он оказался вредителем, и еще, краснобай, рассказывал, как он [это] делал.<sup>2</sup>

You think that if I had as my first deputy a man like Piatakov, who had worked in industry for the past 15 years, who had tremendous connections with all sorts of people, you think that this person couldn't possibly sneak one or two of his people in. But sneak them he did! Some of them were found out, others were not. You have, after all, heard of their tactics. Who among you has raised the question of finding out how things are going on in your chief directorate?

You think that a wrecker [*vreditel'*] is someone who walks around with a revolver in his pocket, someone who hides in some dark corner somewhere, waiting for his victim? Who could imagine that Piatakov could be a saboteur, and yet he turned out to be a saboteur, and, more still, a fine talker. He told how he did it.

<sup>2</sup> The Russian version of Ordzhonikidze's speech was not available when Getty and Naumov wrote in the late '90s. It was finally published in 2011 and is now online at <http://istmat.info/node/48634>

Ordzhonikidze went on to explain how he had Todorskii, someone whom Piatakov had named, expelled from the Party.<sup>3</sup> Ordzhonikidze further explained how the Party had reprimanded him for expelling Todorskii on these grounds — presumably, without a Party hearing or trial.

<sup>3</sup> In the published transcript of the January 1937 Moscow Trial Todorskii is named by Rataichak, another of the defendants, not by Piatakov. (1937 Trial 420) Piatakov must have named him in an interrogation not made public.

Bukharin confirmed that Piatakov had confessed his guilt to Ordzhonikidze. Bukharin did not tell Larina that he thought Piatakov was lying — if he had done so, Larina would certainly have said so.

### **"Begging The Question" Again: "Torture"**

Kotkin:

On January 23, 1937, a second trial in Moscow of a parallel "Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Center" opened, like the first, in the October Hall, **after Stalin had hand-edited the charges.**<sup>348</sup> Ten of the seventeen defendants worked in Orjonikidze's heavy industry commissariat.<sup>349</sup> "And here I stand before you in filth, crushed by my own crimes," Pyatakov publicly confessed, "bereft of everything through my own fault, a man who has lost his party, who has no friends, who has lost his family, who has lost his very self." Yezhov had personally forced his erstwhile drinking buddy, **in thirty-three days of torture**, to capitulate to accusations of Trotskyism and plotting with Germany.<sup>350</sup> (Yezhov was finally named to the highest rank, "general commissar of state security.")<sup>351</sup> Radek, in court, delivered a tour de force **fabricated** history of Trotskyism. His "features," an American correspondent observed, "seemed curiously out of focus, his teeth charred and uneven, his eyes very much alive behind thick glasses."<sup>352</sup> Soviet newspapers and radio afforded wire-to-wire coverage, accompanied by orchestrated meetings at factories and farms. "Why such a great fuss over the trial?" Feuchtwanger would ask Dimitrov. "Incomprehensible. An atmosphere has been created of extreme unrest

among the population, mutual suspicion, denunciations, and so forth. Trotskyism has been killed—why such a campaign?"<sup>353</sup> (373)

Note 348 (990): Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i glavnoe upravlenie*, 9-19 (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 269, l. 38-58, 80).

Stalin added literally only a few words to this draft indictment, reproduced on page 19 of the Khaustov volume.

Note: 350 (990): *Report of Court Proceedings*, 54; "O tak nazyvaemom 'parallel'nom antisovetskom trotskistom tsentre": 30-50.

This is a phony footnote that conceals another of Kotkin's falsification. It contains no evidence for any of the statements Kotkin makes here.

Specifically, it contains no evidence for Kotkin's claim that Piatakov, or anyone else, was tortured at all, much less for thirty-three days. No such evidence exists. Nor is there any evidence that Radek's story of Trotskyism was "fabricated" — indeed, Kotkin never bothers to tell us what he means by this.

In his testimony at the January 1937 Moscow Trial Karl Radek had ridiculed the notion of torture:

RADEK: When I found myself in the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, the chief examining official realized at once why I would not talk. He said to me: "You are not a baby. Here you have fifteen people testifying against you. You cannot get out of it, and as a sensible man you cannot think of doing so. If you do not want to testify it can only be because you want to gain time and look it over more closely. Very well, study it." For two and a half months I tormented the examining official. **The question has been raised here whether we were tormented while under investigation. I must say that it was not I who was tormented, but I who tormented the examining officials and compelled them to perform a lot of useless work.** (1937 Trial 549)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this question see *Trotsky's 'Amalgams* 450-451.

Anyone who reads the transcript of the Radek-Piatakov trial can see that it would be hard to imagine anyone cooler under pressure than Radek.

### **Better Hide It From the Kiddies**

The text that Kotkin cites, "O tak nazyvaemom ...," is the official Gorbachev-era attempt to discredit the trial. The only reference to "torture" in this document is this:

[[cyrillic]]Вся система допросов была рассчитана на морально-психологическое и физическое изматывание подследственных. Об этом свидетельствовал в 1938 г. и бывший заместитель наркома внутренних дел СССР М. П. Фриновский. Он, в частности, показал, что лица, проводившие следствие по делу так называемого «Параллельного антисоветского троцкистского центра», начинали допросы, как правило, с применения физических мер воздействия, которые продолжались до тех пор, пока подследственные не давали согласия на дачу навязывавшихся им показаний. (40)

The entire system of interrogations was designed for the moral, psychological and physical exhaustion of suspects. This was testified in 1938 by the former deputy People's Commissar of the USSR, M.P. Frinovsky. In particular, he showed that the persons who conducted the investigation in the case of the so-called "parallel anti-Soviet Trotskyite center" started interrogations, **as a rule**, with the use of physical measures of influence, which continued until the persons under investigation had agreed to give the confessions of those who were forcing them.

This is an admission that there is no evidence of torture in *this* case. But it is of interest to us anyway as it contains an instructive falsification — in this case, another example of "bias by omission" by Kotkin.

For in the confession — dated not in 1938, but in April, 1939, which shows how carelessly Gorbachev's "rehabilitation" materials were compiled — Frinovsky *confirmed* the guilt of Piatakov, Lifshits, and the other defendants in this trial.

At one of these meetings during horseback riding Lifshits said to me: I heard about you from Evdokimov. Frankly, I did not suspect that you were also with us. Good for you!" I began to speak with Lifshits — and how about you? He answered: "Evdokimov has already told you that I am doing work" I asked him again — are you doing important work? He said that he was doing important work, **he had contact with the conspiratorial center through Pyatakov**, had a large number of people ...

I had that conversation with Deribas, and Deribas was interested, in the main, in the names of the people who had already been repressed and the people who were mentioned in the [investigative] materials. **I told him about Lifshits and Pyatakov who were on the point of being exposed.**<sup>5</sup>

Frinovsky's confession-statement was not published until 2006. The Gorbachev-era text cited by Kotkin, "O tak nazyvaemom ...," was published in 1989, at a time when no one could compare the false claim in it with what Frinovsky actually said.

Here we have very strong evidence of Piatakov's guilt. Kotkin knows this. He cites texts from this volume many times. As we will see in future chapters Kotkin cites this very document — Frinovsky's confession statement many times. But Kotkin simply refuses to tell his readers what Frinovsky said!. Presumably because Frinovsky's confession demolishes Kotkin's notion that the Moscow Trials were frame-ups of innocent men.

We now have a great many interrogations and confessions by the defendants at this trial and by others who implicate them, in volume two of the 2013 collection *Politbiuro i Lev Trotskii*. We will examine them in a future volume of our ongoing Trotsky research.

Kotkin ignores all this evidence too. Of course! This evidence dismantles Kotkin's fable about the supposed "frame-up" of the Moscow Trials. Better hide this evidence!

Notes 351 and 352 contain no evidence relevant to the Trial.

<sup>5</sup> "To The People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the Union of Soviet Soc. Republics — Commissar of State Security 1st degree BERIA L.P. From the arrested suspect FRINOVSKY M.P. Statement. Lubianka 1939-1946, 33-50. Quotations are on page 39 and 41. English translation at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/frinovskyeng.html>

### "Arguing From Incredulity" — Again

Kotkin:

**Feuchtwanger found the allegations preposterous.** And yet the oppositionists *had* organized a conspiratorial meeting, in summer 1932, at Zinoviev's dacha, where expelled party members of the Leningrad opposition had discussed reviving their old links to Trotsky. A message from Trotsky to join forces had been carried into the Soviet Union. Stalin was also correct that the NKVD (then the OGPU) had missed these contacts, which was evidently part of the basis for his statement, in the September 1936 dismissal of Yagoda, that the NKVD was four years behind.<sup>354</sup> **Of course, this was a pathetic "bloc" incapable of consequential action (Smirnov, a supposed organizer of the conspiracy to murder Kirov in 1934, had been in prison since 1933).**<sup>355</sup> But the meeting was not an invention. The "terror" charges, too, contained the minutest kernel of truth. (371-2)

This paragraph contains some interesting falsehoods. For one thing, Feuchtwanger did not find the trial "preposterous" at all! He only thought that the charges of Trotsky's collaboration with Germany and Japan were weakly supported. Here is the passage from Dimitrov's diary, cited in Kotkin's note 353:

2 February 1937

— Feuchtwanger to see me (Comintern).

... On the trial:

1. Diversionary actions, espionage, terror proved.
2. Also proved: that Trotsky inspired and directed.
3. Trotsky's agreement with Hess<sup>124</sup> and the Japanese is based only on the confessions of the defendants.

— No evidence whatsoever!

**4. The fact that Radek and Sokolnikov were not sentenced to be shot will be exploited abroad as evidence that they furnished such testimony deliberately in order to save their lives.**

5. The abuse hurled at the defendants leaves a disturbing impression.

They are enemies, deserving of destruction. But they did not act out of personal interest, and they should not to have called them scoundrels, cowards, reptiles, etc.

6. Why such a great fuss over the trial. Incomprehensible. An atmosphere has been created of extreme unrest among the population, mutual suspicion, denunciations, and so forth. Trotskyism has been killed—why such a campaign? (Dimitrov, 51)

Feuchtwanger found the principal charges credible but complained that the only evidence of Trotsky's conspiracy with the Germans (Hess, Hitler's deputy in the Nazi Party) and the Japanese was based on confessions.

### **Trotsky's Conspiracy with Hitler's Germany**

But Feuchtwanger was in error. He did not ask himself *what other kind of evidence could possibly exist*. What did he expect — a letter about the conspiracy signed by Hess and Trotsky themselves?

There is a great deal of evidence, from various sources, that Trotsky was indeed in conspiracy with German and Japan to defeat the USSR in a war.<sup>6</sup> We will present a lot more evidence of Trotsky's conspiracy with Germany in the third volume of our study of Trotsky's activities.

<sup>6</sup> See Furr, *Trotsky's Collaboration*.

The fact that Feuchtwanger, or anyone else, does not believe the charges is not evidence that the charges were false. Such reasoning is called the argument from incredulity (sometimes called the "fallacy of personal incredulity").<sup>7</sup> It applies to Kotkin, too. Kotkin rejects — i.e., refuses to believe — the charges against the defendants in this and the other trials. But he has no evidence whatsoever that these charges were false. And it is evidence, not whatever Kotkin, or anybody else, "believes," that is decisive.

### **The Bloc Did Function**

Kotkin:

Of course, this was a pathetic "bloc" incapable of consequential action (Smirnov, a supposed organizer of the conspiracy to murder Kirov in 1934, had been in prison since 1933).

This is false. In *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* we have cited and discussed evidence that the bloc continued to function at the Suzdal' political "isolator" (prison with especially good conditions), where Smirnov was confined. (Furr, *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* 72, 74)

In 2017 yet more evidence of vigorous political activity by prisoners from the Opposition was discovered hidden at the political "isolator" at Verkhneural'sk.<sup>8</sup> Here we can just refer the reader to the confession-statement by Mikhail Frinovsky cited above, and its online English translation — which Kotkin ignores.

<sup>8</sup> See "Historic discovery of Left Opposition manuscripts from the early 1930s." August 27, 2018, at



<http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2018/08/27/left-a27.html> There are a number of articles about this discovery on the Russian-language internet.

Nor was Smirnov accused of organizing the conspiracy to murder Kirov in 1934, as Kotkin falsely claims. Smirnov was accused of being a leader of the bloc, and members of the bloc who were not in prison organized Kirov's murder. Smirnov specifically denied having had anything to do with "terrorist" (assassination) activities, though he admitted that he was an organizer of the bloc that did carry out such actions. He was, however, accused of a more active role by his admitted co-conspirators.

Vyshinsky: Was the centre organized on the basis of terrorism?

Smirnov: Yes.

Vyshinsky: Were you a member of that centre?

Smirnov: Yes, I was.

Vyshinsky: Consequently, those instructions were meant for you too?

Smirnov: Yes, they were communicated to me.

Vyshinsky: They were not only communicated through you but were also instructions for you?

Smirnov: They were forwarded as instructions.

Vyshinsky: Did you accept them?

Smirnov: Yes.

Vyshinsky: How can you maintain, then, that Trotsky, from whom these instructions originated, was not an authority for you? ...

Smirnov: I listened to those instructions and communicated them to the centre. The centre accepted them, but I took no part in its work. (First Moscow Trial, 83)

## "Remove Stalin!"

Kotkin:

After a decree had rescinded Trotsky's Soviet citizenship, he had written a spirited open letter to the central executive committee of the Soviet (which had nominal jurisdiction over citizenship) asserting that "Stalin has led us to a cul-de-sac .... It is necessary, at last, to carry out Lenin's last insistent advice: *remove Stalin*."<sup>356</sup> Trotsky had not written "remove by assassination," but how else could it be done?<sup>357</sup> (371-2)

Note 356 (990): Trotskii, "Otkrytoe pis'ma." [This should be "Otkryoe pis'mo" — GF]

Trotsky's words are: "*ubrat' Stalina*." ("Надо, наконец, выполнить последний настойчивый совет Ленина: убрать Сталина.") "Ubrat'" was the word used by all the conspirators.<sup>9</sup> Kotkin is correct to suggest that it meant "kill" because there was no other way. At the Second Moscow Trial of January, 1937, Radek said that he understood that Trotsky meant Stalin should be killed though Trotsky never used a word like "kill."

Note 357 (990): ... the NKVD agent Zborowski managed to report that, on Jan. 22, Trotsky's son Lev Sedov had told him apropos of the accusations, "now there is no longer vacillation, Stalin should be killed." Volkogonov, *Trotskii*, II: 197 (citing Arkhiv INO OGPU-NKVD, f. 31660, d. 9067, t. 1, l. 98). Although, in an article (Oct. 1933), Trotsky had written that "the only way to compel the bureaucracy to hand over power to the proletariat is by force," in a subsequent article on the Kirov murder he wrote that assassinating Stalin would accomplish nothing, because he would just be replaced by "one of those Kaganoviches." "Klassovaia priroda sovetskogo gosudarstva (problemy chetvertogo internatsionala)," *Biulleten' oppozitsii*, no. 36-7 (October 1933): 1-12 (at 9-10); Trotskii, "Stalinskaia biurokратиia i ubiistvo Kirova"; Volkogonov, *Triumfi tragediia*, 11/i: 270.

For a thorough discussion of Sedov's statement to Zborowski, see *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*, 292 ff., "Trotsky and Terror." There we demonstrate that this and other statements by Sedov constitute strong evidence that Trotsky and his son were lying when they were assuring the world that they opposed assassinating Stalin and others.

Of course they would deny it, whether or not they were actually planning assassination! Conspiracy necessarily involves lying. Therefore, their denials mean nothing. We have much evidence that Trotsky counted on using force against Stalin and his supporters. But Trotsky could not say so publicly.

## Chapter 7. *Spanish Civil War*

### Why Not Some *New Falsehoods*?

Has Kotkin actually researched this topic himself? If he has, why does he repeats old falsehoods, mainly from Cold War-era anticommunist research? The primary sources available today, many available for decades, prove that Kotkin's claims of nefarious actions by the Soviets in Spain are false down to the last one. Kotkin relates how Andreu Nin, formerly a secretary (political advisor) of Trotsky's, became a leader of the POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unification) in Spain, publicly broke with Trotsky and Trotsky, also publicly, with him, and that Trotsky's position was that there should be a "full-bore anti-capitalist revolution" in Spain. This latter position meant opposition to the Spanish Republic, a bourgeois-democratic regime, and with Soviet policy, which was to support such governments in order to gain as large a united front against fascism as possible.<sup>1</sup>

In Stalin's worldview, Nin's hoary link to Trotsky alone rendered the POUM "Trotskyite." (345)

<sup>1</sup> The Soviets wanted a Popular Front government willing to work with them. But they did not want to scare off the anticommunist capitalist powers France, the U.K., and the USA. The Soviets knew that, unless the blockade against the Spanish Republic by these powers was dropped, the Republic was doomed. Also, the Soviets and the Spanish communists were realistic. They realized that no Bolshevik-type communist revolution was possible with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy arrayed against the Republic.

As we saw in Chapter Four, we have good reason to think that Nin's and Trotsky's supposed "break" — scare quotes deliberate here — was a cover for continued collaboration just as Radek, Piatakov, and many other Trotskyists admitted. The Soviets certainly must have assumed that. Given the materials that he claims he has read, Kotkin must know it too.

There was also the POUM's independence, criticizing the Stalinist line while claiming the mantle of Marxism. Some members of the POUM,

moreover, openly admired Trotsky, and some of its officials discussed inviting him to take up residence in Barcelona. Sometimes fabricated nightmares have a way of coming true. (345)

Here Kotkin wants it both ways. On the one hand, Kotkin insists that the POUM was not really Trotskyist. This is evidently what he means by Stalin's "fabricated nightmare" and by ignoring Nin's, Erwin Wolfs, and Landau's ties to Trotsky. But on the other hand Kotkin concedes that POUM acted like a Trotskyist party would be expected to act.

Kotkin:

Throughout Europe, significant doubts reverberated among leftist intellectuals about the alleged treason of the executed Bolshevik revolutionaries, **but in Republic Spain, the POUM's *La Batalla* was almost the only newspaper to detail, let alone condemn, the Moscow showcase trial, labeling the Soviet Union a "bureaucratic regime of poisonous dictatorship."** Tit for tat, the lead editorial in the September 1936 issue of *The Communist International*, issued in multiple European languages, condemned the POUM as fascist agents masquerading as leftists, with ties to Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Franco, Mussolini, Hitler. 184 (343-344)

Here too Kotkin shows that POUM used Trotsky's own terminology to condemn the First Moscow Trial, thus tacitly conceding that POUM acted as though it were a Trotskyist party.

Note 184 (986) Dimitrov, "Zashchishchat' podlykh terroristov" (no. 14), 3-6, (no. 15), 17-8. In the same issue, Palmira Togliatti presented **Stalin's retrospective criminalization of long-ago factional activity** as "an act to defend democracy, peace, socialism, and the revolution." Ercoli, "Uroki protsessa," 37, 43. "The Moscow trial has had a catastrophic effect and has dreadfully compromised the policy of the Popular Front," the Austrian Marxist Rudolf Hilferding had lamented in Aug. 1936. McDermott and Agnew, *Comintern*, 156.

This is all wrong. What's more, Kotkin knows it. Mikhail Frinovsky, Yezhov's second-in-command, stated in April 1939 that the Moscow Trials

defendants really were guilty.

At the time of the trial of Zinoviev, Kamenev and others, when the testimony about Bukharin was published in the press, Evdokimov was in Moscow. He became very upset and in a conversation with me, said: "The devil only knows how he will be able to extract himself from this whole affair. I just don't understand Yagoda at all, what he is doing, why he is broadening the circle of persons for repression, or maybe the nerves of these people are weak — they will give out. But it could have been possible to direct the course of the investigation in such a manner as to leave oneself safe in any case." (Frinovsky, 40)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Frinovsky's statement to Beria is online in English translation at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/research/frinovskyeng.html> We return to it in a later chapter.

Today we have a great deal of evidence that Zinoviev, Kamenev, et al. were guilty. Their factional activity was not of "long ago" and had by no means ended. Kotkin knows about this evidence too.

There has *never* been *any* evidence that *any* of the Moscow Trials (only the first Moscow Trial is at question now) were frame-ups, the defendants innocent, tortured, threatened, or otherwise forced or cajoled to make false confessions.<sup>3</sup> This is the bottom-line reason that Kotkin has recourse to unsupported statements ("the defendants were tortured," etc.). Lies and unsupported fact-claims — as though "this is so obvious that no evidence is needed" — are his only resort.

<sup>3</sup> See Furr, Trotsky's 'Amalgams' Chapters 1-12; Furr, Moscow Trials.

Ironically enough, since all the evidence we now have supports the hypothesis that the Moscow Trials defendants were indeed guilty and Trotsky really was collaborating with the Nazis and Japanese, it turns out that Togliatti's statement that the First Moscow Trial was "an act to defend democracy, peace, socialism, and the revolution" was true. Anti-Trotskyism really was anti-Fascism — even though few Trotskyists outside the USSR knew it.

## Communist "Massacres"?

Kotkin discusses the Paracuellos massacre of Nationalist supporters in 1936 and then describes it as "the worst of **the many massacres in the Republic's zone perpetrated by leading Spanish Communists and their Soviet advisers**, Gorev, Orlov, and Koltsov.<sup>238</sup>" (351) Paul Preston, whose book Kotkin footnotes at this point, gives the figures of Nationalist victims as "somewhere between 2,200 and 2,500."

Note 238 (978): Preston, *Last Stalinist*, 70-88.

The men killed were in fact fascists. They were General Mala's — that is, Francisco Franco's — "Fifth Column."

But Kotkin is bluffing again. He does not identify a single one of what he calls the "many massacres." Preston says nothing about "many massacres" either, nor about any involvement in these or in any "massacres" by Gorev or Kol'tsov. In fact the Paracuellos massacre is the *only* such massacre by the Republicans.

### Kotkin's Utter Lack of Objectivity

If a historian were to claim that the 1967 My Lai Massacre of 500-600 Vietnamese civilians — a real atrocity that included rape-murder and the use of children for target practice — was just "the worst of many massacres" by America soldiers, many or most other historians and readers would cry "foul" and demand:

"Where's your evidence for these many other massacres?" And, obviously, they would be correct to do so!<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In fact there is reliable evidence for many other massacres by American soldiers in Vietnam. There is *no* such evidence for many massacres by communists in the SCW.

Same here! Kotkin should give evidence for this claim, instead of relying on his readers' anticommunism to let him skate by with the kind of utterly

unsupported allegation of "many massacres" that would never be tolerated if the charge had been made against American soldiers.

## **The Barcelona "May Days" Revolt**

Kotkin:

Koltsov also wrote how Trotsky was supposedly giving directives to the POUM and how the POUM "had restructured in the usual Trotskyite fashion" in order to engage in "terrorism" ("provocations, raids, and murders"). (364-5)

In reality we know that Trotsky was indeed "giving directives to the POUM" — and Kotkin has to know it too. Trotsky's secretary Erwin Wolf went to Spain as the emissary of the International Secretariat of the IV International, Trotsky's organization, and therefore as Trotsky's own emissary.

Other Trotskyists, like Andreu Nin and Kurt Landau, continued to act consistently with Trotsky's ideas. As we explained in Chapter Four, the Soviets would naturally have assumed that their "break" with Trotsky was phony, as both Piatakov and Radek, and later Khristian Rakovsky, testified that their public "breaks" with Trotsky had been, and as Andreu Nin himself had said that all such "retractions" were.

Erwin Wolf had not even pretended to "break" with Trotsky. He had come straight from Trotsky in Norway to Spain with only a brief stop-over in Belgium and France.<sup>5</sup> According to Trotskyist historian Pierre Broué, whose works Kotkin cites, *Trotsky's supporters reported to him in 1936 that most POUM "militants" in Barcelona were in fact Trotskyists.*<sup>6</sup> No wonder Trotsky dispatched an emissary — Wolf.

<sup>5</sup> There his partner, Hjørdis Knudsen, joined him. She was the daughter of Konrad Knudsen, the Norwegian politician at whose house Trotsky was staying.



<sup>6</sup> Broué, "La mission de Wolf en Espagne." *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* 10 (June, 1982), 77.

The Barcelona "May Days" uprising was an attempt at an anarchist-Trotskyist seizure of power in Catalonia in the midst of the war. On May 5 the insurgents even declared a provisional government. The Spanish communists and Soviet NKVD would certainly have understood the presence of leading Trotskyists like Wolf and Landau as additional evidence that the "May Days" uprising had been planned in advance. It is significant that neither Wolf nor Landau was arrested and "disappeared" until long after the "May Days" uprising.

### **What Kol'tsov Really Wrote**

Kotkin:

Koltsov ... accused the POUM "Trotskyites" of attracting only riffraff and scum.<sup>319</sup>

Tens of thousands of workers and people's militias who were sacrificing their lives to save the Republic were cowards and fascist hirelings. (364-5)

Note 319 (989): Kol'tsov, "Agentura trotskistov v Ispanii." See also "Ispanskii dnevnik," *Novyi mir*, no. 4 (1938): 5 (Jan. 21, 1937).

Yet another false statement by Kotkin, though you'd never know it unless you checked Kol'tsov's articles, all in Russian and how many of Kotkin's readers are going to do that? Kol'tsov wrote that all the scum flock to Trotsky, not that all of the POUM fighters were scum.

[[cyrillic]]Куда бы ни протянулась гнусная рука Троцкого, она сеет ложь, предательства и убийства ... Всё тёмное, зловещее, преступное, все подонки, вся мразь людская слетается на его зов для гнусных разбойничьих дел.

Wherever the vile hand of Trotsky is stretched it sows lies, betrayals and murder ... Everything sinister, criminal, all scum, all the human scum flies to his call for vile thuggish acts. (Kol'tsov, "Agentura trotkistov v Ispanii," *Pravda*, December 14, 1936)

In his January 21, 1937 article in "Ispanskii dnevnik" (Spanish diary) Kol'tsov draws a clear distinction between Nin and "a few other persons" in the POUM leadership, and everybody else.<sup>7</sup> Kol'tsov wrote this before Radek's dramatic disclosure, during the Second Moscow Trial of January, 1937, that Trotskyists were indeed active in Spain, and before the Barcelona "May Days" revolt, which was nothing if not a stab in the back against the Spanish Republic.

<sup>7</sup> [http://militera.lib.ru/db/koltsov\\_me/07.html](http://militera.lib.ru/db/koltsov_me/07.html)

## **POUM Was A Trotskyist Front**

Kotkin:

Meanwhile, the January 1937 editorial of *The Communist International*, written in Stalin's signature style of questions and answers, pointedly noted that "the Spanish Trotskyites conduct themselves like the advanced guard of the notorious 'fifth column' of Franco insurgents. Is it possible to support the heroic struggle of the Spanish popular masses without fighting against the traitorous Trotskyite band? No, it is impossible."<sup>334</sup> *La Batalla*, the POUM's organ, responded that "Stalin is destroying, without looking back, everything that opposes him....Stalin maintains his incontestable power with terror."<sup>335</sup> (368)

Note 335:

AVP RF, f. 05, op. 17, d. 49, p. 131, l. 59-60 (*La Batalla*, Jan. 21, 1937). Orlov seems to have pushed in Jan. 1937 for approval for an armed uprising in the Nationalist rear, in Spanish Morocco, but the Spanish Republican government did not support the idea, wary of overly antagonizing France given the proximity to French Morocco.

Costello and Tsarev, *Deadly Illusions*, 274, 467n21 (citing ASVRR file 17679, I: 54). Orlov finally became official NKVD station chief in Spain in late Feb. 1937.

Here the POUM paper "La Batalla" was writing about the Second Moscow Trial, the Trotskyist trial which began on January 21, 1937. Today we have much more evidence that the conspiracies to which the Trotskyists in this trial confessed were real conspiracies. Of course, this evidence is also available to Kotkin. But he never tells his readers about it.

Articles like this one and many others from the POUM newspaper would have been taken by the Soviets as proof that POUM was a Trotskyist front. And it turns out that the editors of the Comintern journal were correct! POUM leaders, including Kurt Landau, had tried to organize in Barcelona a conference of anti-Soviet forces to discuss the overthrow of the Spanish Republican government, culminating in the "May Days" revolt. Meanwhile in article after article the POUM newspaper echoed Trotsky's attacks on Stalin and the USSR; Nin was in the POUM leadership; Wolf was an advisor to POUM; and Landau was one of its activist-propagandists.

### **Fascists Prepared Barcelona Revolt**

Kotkin:

Later, Franco would boast that his agents had provoked the Barcelona anarchist uprising so as to disorganize the Republic's rear. No doubt his agents did try. (408)

But Kotkin fails to cite the *evidence* that the Fascists had provoked the uprising. According to General Wilhelm Faupel, Hitler's ambassador to Spain, Franco himself claimed that agents of his were also involved in instigating the Anarchists to revolt.

As for the disorders in Barcelona, Franco informed me that the street fighting had been started by his agents. As Nicolás Franco further told me, they had in all some 13 agents in Barcelona. One of these had given the information a considerable time ago that the tension between

the Anarchists and Communists was so great in Barcelona that he would guarantee to cause fighting to break out there. ... Actually the agent had succeeded, within a few days of receiving such instructions, in having street shooting started by three or four persons, and this had then produced the desired result.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> "The Ambassador in Spain to the Foreign Ministry." May 11, 1937. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945. Series D (1937-1945). Volume III. Germany and the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939.* London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1951, No. 254, 286.

Kotkin also never mentions the most important fact that the Nazis themselves were also involved in planning the "May Days" revolt. Here is a part of the 1942 accusation by a Nazi court against Harro Schulze-Boysen, a Soviet spy in the Nazi *Luftwaffe*:

At the beginning of 1938 [an error for 1937 — GF], during the Spanish Civil War, the accused learned in his official capacity that **a rebellion against the local red government in the territory of Barcelona was being prepared with the co-operation of the German Secret Service.** This information, together with that of Pöllnitz, was transmitted by him to the Soviet Russian embassy in Paris.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Norbert Haase, *Das Reichskriegsgericht und der Widerstand gegen die nationalsozialistische Herrschaft.* Berlin: Druckerei der Justizvollzugsanstalt Tegel, 1993, 105.

Either Kotkin knows about this evidence and hides it from his readers; or he does not know about it. In the first case, he is being dishonest — lying by omission. In the second case, he is incompetent to write about this topic at all.

## **The NKVD Did Not "Instigate"**

Kotkin:

The NKVD, too, had infiltrated the POUM to instigate an attempted "seizure of power" as a pretext to crush it.<sup>183</sup> (408)

Note 183 (995): Sharapov, *Naum Eitingon*, 57.

This is another phony citation by Kotkin, for Sharapov does *not* say that the NKVD were trying to "instigate" anything. Here is what he writes:

[[cyrillic]]С декабря 1936 года агенты резидентуры НКВД, внедренные в ПОУМ, **сообщали** о подготовке поумовцами и анархистами вооруженного выступления в Барселоне.

Since December 1936, NKVD agents introduced into the POUM had been **reporting** preparations by the POUMists and anarchists of an armed uprising in Barcelona.

"Reported" — *soobshchali* — not "instigated."

### **Nazi Agents Infiltrated Trotskyists**

Sharapov goes on to cite Schulze-Boysen's intelligence that German agents had penetrated "Trotskyist circles" in Barcelona in order to foment a putsch.

[[cyrillic]]В начале 1937 года берлинская резидентура ИНО НКВД получила анонимное сообщение (как впоследствии оказалось, от сотрудника министерства авиации Германии Харро Шульце-Бойзена, одного из будущих руководителей нелегальной резидентуры ИНО НКВД в Германии «Красная капелла») о том, что германские агенты проникли в троцкистские круги в Барселоне с намерением в ближайшее время организовать путч. Также поумовцами готовились теракты против активистов компартии и комсомола Испании. Так был убит известный каталонский коммунист Антонио Сессе. Позднее, в феврале 1938 года был убит капитан интербригад Леон Нарвич, агент Орлова в ПОУМ, выходец из России.

In the beginning of 1937, the Berlin residency of the Foreign (INO) Division of the NKVD received an anonymous message (as it later

turned out, from an employee of the German Ministry of Aviation, **Harro Schulze-Boysen**, one of the future leaders of the illegal residence of the INO NKVD in Germany, the "Red Orchestra") **that German agents had infiltrated the Trotskyite circles in Barcelona with the intention in the near future to organize a coup. Also terrorist attacks against activists of the Communist Party and the Young Communist League of Spain were being prepared by the POUMists.** In this way the well-known Catalan communist Antonio Sesse was killed. Later, in February 1938, Leon Narvich, a captain of the International Brigades, a communist, and Orlov's agent in the POUM, a native of Russia, was killed.

Kotkin knows about this — after all, he cites Sharapov's book. But he conceals it from his readers.

### **Grigulevich's Activities**

Kotkin:

He [Grigulevich] also liquidated "Trotskyites."<sup>193</sup> (409-10)

Note 193 (995): Andrew and Mitrokhin, *Mitrokhin Archive*, 114. (Later Grigulevich would be one of many tapped to assassinate Trotsky in Mexico.) Sudoplatov, *Special Tasks*, 193; "V Madrde ia rukovodil gruppoi" (Grigulevich interview); Primakov, *Ocherki*, III: 148-54.

More phony citations by Kotkin. There is nothing about this on page 114 of *Mitrokhin Archive*, which deals with World War II. On page 87 the book breezily claims that Grigulevich "had taken a leading role in liquidating Trotskyists during the Spanish Civil War." But it cites no evidence, or even names. It's not *evidence*. In the interview cited by Kotkin Grigulevich himself did not claim to have "liquidated Trotskyites." For the Primakov citation, see the next section.

### **What "Death Squad"?**

Kotkin:

Grigulevich had arrived in Barcelona with his death squad on May 3, 1937.<sup>194</sup> (409-10)

Note 194 (995): Primakov, *Ocherki*, III: 153. With Orlov, Grigulevich participated in the kidnapping and murder of Nin.

Yet another falsehood by Kotkin! Here is the text from Primakov III, 153:

[[cyrillic]]Важной вехой испанской биографии Макса явилось его участие в подавлении с оружием в руках мятежа в Барселоне в мае 1937 года. Партии анархистов и троцкистов (ПОУМ), располагавшие собственными воинскими формированиями, сняли свои части с фронта, ввели их в Барселону и **2 мая попытались захватить власть**. Уже 3 мая Макс в составе спецотряда из 10 сотрудников Сегуридад прибыл в Барселону. Перед ними стояли задачи: немедленно остановить кровопролитие, определить местонахождение и при возможности арестовать руководителей мятежа и командиров ~оставших воинских подразделений. Частично это удалось сделать в первый день, а окончательно на следующий, при поддержке прибывшего подкрепления.

An important milestone in the Spanish biography of Max [Grigulevich's code name] his the part in the suppression of the armed mutiny in Barcelona in May 1937. The parties of the anarchists and the Trotskyists (POUM), which had their own military formations, withdrew their units from the front, brought them to Barcelona, **and on May 2 tried to seize power**. Already on May 3, Max, as part of a special squad of 10 Seguridad workers, arrived in Barcelona. Before them were the following tasks: immediately stop the bloodshed, and locate and, if possible, arrest the rebel leaders and commanders of the rebel military units. In part, this was done on the first day, and finally on the next, with the support of the incoming reinforcements.

So this passage in Primakov, III, 153, concerns how Grigulevich helped to suppress the anarchist-Trotskyist (POUM) "May Days" uprising in

Barcelona. There is nothing here about any "death squad" and nothing about any involvement of Grigulevich in the kidnapping and murder of Nin.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> In fact there is some testimony that Grigulevich was involved in the Nin affair, but Kotkin doesn't cite it. See Boris Volodarsky, *Stalin's Agent. The life and Death of Alexander Orlov*. Oxford University Press, 2015, 285 ff.

## **Nin Not Tortured**

Kotkin:

After Nin was arrested, Orlov's thugs kidnapped him from Spanish prison and took him to a secret place of confinement maintained by the NKVD at Alcalá de Henares, the birthplace of Cervantes. There, **they tortured him** to get him to confess he was a "fascist agent." With much of the POUM leadership awaiting trial, such testimony was thought necessary to persuade the public to support death sentences. Nin refused to confess to treason, Trotskyism, or other crimes. He was executed in secret by Grigulevich's death squad on the Alcalá de Henares highway and buried there.<sup>196</sup> (410)

Note 196 (995): Sharapov, *Naum Eitingon*, 53. See also Costello and Tsarev, *Deadly Illusions*, 291-2.

That the NKVD kidnapped, interrogated, and then killed Nin is not in doubt. Their reasons were clear: Nin had been a leader of a "stab-in-the-back" revolt against the Republican government, in the midst of a war against the fascists.

Moreover, through Schulze-Boysen the NKVD knew that the Nazi secret service was involved in the revolt. The Soviets either knew or suspected that Nin was still an emissary of Trotsky's, as Erwin Wolf certainly was. They knew that Trotsky was in league with the Germans. The Soviets knew too that Landau and Wolf were working with the POUM leadership, which included Nin as a leading member.



What is in question here is whether Nin was "tortured" as Kotkin claimed. Here Kotkin is repeating fascist disinformation. He has no evidence that Nin was tortured because there is none. Paul Preston, the most objective historian of these matters and one cited by Kotkin, says that Nin was not tortured:

Before being transferred to Alcalá de Henares, Nin was questioned in Madrid four times by Jacinto Rosell as secretary of the Brigada Especial on 18, 19 (twice) and 21 June. **Nothing about Rosell's questions or Nin's answers in the transcript signed by Nin and published by the POUM itself suggests anything other than a legally conducted interrogation without torture. The often unreliable Jesús Hernández claimed that Nin was tortured and interrogated by Orlov and others for several days, in an effort to make him sign a 'confession' of his links with the fifth column. This is highly unlikely; a confession was needed as the basis for a trial and, for that, Nin would have to be seen to be in good physical shape and testify that he had not been tortured.**<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Preston, *Spanish Holocaust*, 411.

Neither Sharapov, *Naum Eitingon*, nor Costello and Tsarev mention "torture." Moreover, neither claim that Grigulevich had any role in Nin's kidnapping or in his murder. Costello and Tsarev do not mention Grigulevich's name at all! This is simply more disinformation foisted upon Kotkin's readers.

## Chapter 8. *Third Moscow Trial*

Kotkin butchers and falsifies his account of the Third Moscow Trial of March 2-15, 1938, much as he has the first two, by the omission of important evidence and outright fabrication. We begin with a flagrant and indicative example of omission, and then a blatant falsehood.

### **Bukharin and Jules Humbert-Droz: Kotkin's Bias By Omission**

In footnote 13 on page 912 Kotkin writes the following:

Jules Humbert-Droz, the Swiss Communist who met Bukharin in early 1929, later claimed that Bukharin mentioned **getting rid** of Stalin. Humbert-Droz, *Mémoires*, 356, 379-80.

Humbert-Droz's name does not appear in Kotkin's index. Presumably only names that occur in the text of the book, not in the footnotes, are indexed. So unless you carefully read every page of this monster book — 909 pages of text plus 159 page of *triple-column* footnotes in tiny type — you will never see this reference.

This gives Kotkin the scope for more dishonesty — not that he needs it. For Bukharin did not, as Kotkin delicately puts it, "mention getting rid of Stalin." What Bukharin told his friend Humbert-Droz is that he and his followers had decided to *murder* Stalin:

Boukharine me dit aussi qu'**ils avaient décidé d'utiliser la terreur individuelle** pour se débarrasser de Staline.<sup>1</sup>

Bukharin also told me that **they had decided to use individual terror** [= assassination] in order to rid themselves of Stalin.

<sup>1</sup> Jules Humbert-Droz. *De Lénine à Staline: dix ans au service de l'Internationale communiste, 1921-1931*. Neuchâtel: (Éditions de la Baconnière, 1971, p. 379. "Use individual terror" means "kill.")

Humbert-Droz published these memoirs in Switzerland in 1971. He was long out of the Comintern and under no pressure from the Soviets. Moreover, this passage occupies only a few lines in a memoir of more than 500 pages.

Bukharin's words to his friend Humbert-Droz expose as dishonest his letter to Stalin of December 10, 1937, his testimony during the Third Moscow Trial, and his two appeals for clemency. Although Bukharin claimed that he had completely "disarmed" — confessed and repented all his crimes — he still concealed the fact that he had been planning to kill Stalin as early as 1929.

We — the scholarly world — now possess a great deal of evidence not only about Bukharin's activities in the clandestine terrorist Opposition bloc, but about his specific crimes. These primary documents and this research are as available to Kotkin as they are to everyone else. One must assume that Kotkin knows about them and decided *not* to inform his readers about them. That would constitute deliberate deception.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Vladimir Bobrov and Grover Furr, "Nikolai Bukharin's First Statement of Confession in the Lubyanka." *Cultural Logic* 2007; [https://web.archive.org/web/20120415095256/http://clogic.eserver.org/2007/Furr\\_Bobrov.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20120415095256/http://clogic.eserver.org/2007/Furr_Bobrov.pdf); Grover Furr and Vladimir L. Bobrov. "Stephen Cohen's Biography of Bukharin: A Study in the Falsehood of Khrushchev-Era 'Revelations'." *Cultural Logic*, 2010, at <https://web.archive.org/web/20130325165833/http://clogic.eserver.org/2010/Furr.pdf>

Humbert-Droz's revelation makes nonsense of Kotkin's claim here:

... Stalin charged Bukharin and his allies with "deviation" from the party line. Thus did the dictator fashion for himself and the regime a new high-profile internal foe.<sup>10</sup> (11-12)

Note 10 (912) is to a very old book, Robert Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary*, a terrible "psycho-history." But Tucker was one of Kotkin's mentors, so Kotkin gives him a few undeserved citations.

As we've seen above, Kotkin is aware that Bukharin was plotting to murder Stalin as early as 1929 or even earlier but suppresses this, as he does on page 58: "Stalin's persecution of his friend Bukharin in 1929-30 revealed new depths of malice, as well as self-pity."<sup>361</sup>"<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Note 361 p. 922 records Trotsky's much-later claim that Kamenev had warned him in 1926 that Stalin might kill him. Kotkin concedes that Kamenev never confirmed that publicly and Trotsky had said nothing about it at the time.

### **The "Riutin Platform" Was Really The "Bukharin Platform"**

Kotkin:

Stalin constantly urged more public trials. ... That included Martemyan Ryutin, author of the devastating<sup>4</sup> internal condemnation of forced collectivization and Stalin's dictatorship. ... The Ryutin Platform had come up at the second Moscow trial in late January 1937, but it had not been a central aspect.<sup>253</sup> Whereas Ryutin had been the actual implacable opponent and Bukharin had never joined a party opposition, Bukharin was the preeminent symbol.<sup>254</sup> (477)

<sup>4</sup> I pass over Kotkin's description of this document as "devastating." In fact, the intellectual poverty of this long, rambling document, shown by its relentless personal attack on Stalin and the paucity of realistic political program, demonstrates the bankruptcy of the Opposition. For an English translation by an admirer of Riutin see Sobhanlal D. Gupta, ed., *The Ryutin Platform* (Kolkata: Seribaan, 2010).

Kotkin refers to the "Ryutin (or "Riutin") Platform" about a dozen times in this book. But he never informs the reader that — as has long been known — Riutin did *not* write this document at all! It was really written by Bukharin and Aleksei Rykov, the main defendants at the Third Moscow Trial, along with two others, Mikhail Tomskii and Nikolai Uglanov.

We can be sure that Kotkin knows this because he cites the *Lubianka 1937-1938* volume of documents numerous times. In it, in the interrogation of

Valentin Astrov, a student and follower of Bukharin's, we read:

[[cyrillic]]Рютинская платформа по существу явилась документом не РЮТИНА, а центра правых ... Слепков рассказал о содержании этой платформы и, в частности, сказал, что она содержит в себе требование применения всех средств борьбы против сталинского руководства, вплоть до террора.

Он также сказал, что главными авторами этой платформы являются Бухарин, Рыков, Томский и Угланов и что в организации условлено, в случае провала этой платформы, объявить ее частным делом отдельных групп правых, именно группы Рютина. (Lubianka 1937-1938, 36)

The Riutin Platform in essence was not a document by RIUTIN, but by the center of the Rights. ... Slepkov spoke about the content of this platform and, in particular, said that it contains the demand for the use of all means of struggle against Stalin's leadership, **including terror.**

**He also said that the main authors of this platform are Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsy and Uglanov, and that in the organization it is agreed, in the event of the failure of this platform, to declare it a private matter of separate right groups, namely the Ryutin group.**

In this same document Astrov also testifies about Bukharin's leadership of an opposition group.

Bukharin admitted this during the Third Moscow Trial:

BUKHARIN: ... Perfectly true is the assertion made by the accused Ivanov to the effect that I kept him informed of the stand of the Right centre, from the Ryutin platform to the latest stands, of which the Court is fairly well informed. (128)

BUKHARIN: The fixation of the question about insurrectionary organizations that was approved by the Right centre was first indicated in what is called the Ryutin platform. (132)

RYKOV: ... As regards lines of principle, the so-called Ryutin program was characteristic of the period 1930-33. This Ryutin program was discussed twice in 1932 at Tomsy's summer residence with my participation. In addition to myself, there were present at the first meeting Bukharin and Tomsy and a number of other persons, among them Vasily Schmidt and Uglanov.

VYSHINSKY: Was Bukharin there?

RYKOV: Bukharin was at the first meeting, when the original theses were drawn up. (162)

RYKOV: ... The platform was called after Ryutin, because it was published by supporters of the Rights, the Ryutin group, from Uglanov's Moscow organization. During the investigation instituted in connection with this platform, this group took the whole responsibility upon itself. This had been decided on beforehand, so that we ourselves should not be called to account for the platform. We managed to do this thanks to the fact that Yagoda was at the head of the O.G.P.U.

VYSHINSKY: So Yagoda shielded you?

RYKOV: And to make it easier to do this, the program itself contained a phrase which expressed a certain sense of aloofness from Bukharin, Tomsy and myself; it said something to the effect that these three were waste steam. This was done from motives of double-dealing. (163)

BUKHARIN: I reported to the Court in your presence that actually **the orientation on terrorism**, strictly speaking, **was already contained in the Ryutin platform.** (377)

This evidence makes clear the fact that there was no "small Riutin group" — the words Kotkin uses when describing Trotsky's agreement to form a "bloc" with the Rights and other Oppositionists (see Chapter Three, above). Kotkin certainly know this. But he hides it all from his readers. In doing so he falsifies the whole issue.

Kotkin quotes from the Riutin Platform on page 70 as well. As elsewhere he attributes it to Riutin, though he surely knows that it was not written by him but by Bukharin and others. Why? Apparently because Kotkin thinks it necessary to continue to claim that Bukharin had never been in any opposition group.

We can be sure about Astrov's testimony about Bukharin's leading role in the Right Opposition and co-authorship of the "Riutin Platform" because Astrov lived until 1993, and published two articles about these events, one of them published even after the end of the USSR. Astrov had the opportunity to retract his statements about Bukharin. But he never did so.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See the detailed discussion of Astrov and his testimony in Furr, *Moscow Trials* 41 ff., and Trotsky's 'Amalgams' 40, 64 ff.

## A Series Of Falsifications

Kotkin:

On March 2, 1938, the third Moscow trial finally commenced, like the first two, in the October Hall of the House of Trade Unions, in front of nearly 200 spectators, including the usual handpicked foreign journalists and diplomats. It lasted eighteen sittings. A total of twenty-one defendants, nine of whom had sat in the Central Committee, were in the dock. Three were doctors of the Kremlin medical staff. Stalin had edited chief procurator Vyshinsky's script. (Vyshinsky would also edit the transcript, removing remarks exculpating the accused and discussions of the law by the defense lawyers.) The accused had spent long hours memorizing their testimony. **Bukharin, Krestinsky, Rykov, Cristian Rakovski—staunch Bolsheviks—confessed that they had plotted to assassinate Lenin and Stalin *since 1918*; had murdered Kirov, Meżyński, Kuibyshev, Gorky, Gorky's son Maxim; had conspired with Nazi Germany, Japan, and Great Britain to partition the Soviet Union, hand over territory (Ukraine, Belorussia), and abolish collective farms.**<sup>255</sup> Yezhov had falsely promised at least some defendants their lives in exchange for self-incrimination.<sup>256</sup> **NKVD interrogators sat in the first row, a**

**reminder that "re-interrogation" could take place between sessions.**<sup>257</sup> Krestinsky had been "beaten horribly," according to the head of the Lefortovo prison's hygiene department. "His entire back was a wound."<sup>258</sup> Still, on the first day, Krestinsky repudiated his confession and pleaded not guilty, causing a sensation. That night he was re-interrogated—he had a wife and children—and on the second day he nodded his assent when asked if he was guilty.<sup>259</sup> "It is now clear why there are interruptions of supplies here and there, why, with our riches and abundance of products, there is a shortage first of one thing, then of another," Vyshinsky thundered. "It is these traitors who are responsible for it."<sup>260</sup> (478)

Kotkin squeezes a long series of falsifications into this one paragraph! We distinguish among them above by alternating underlining and boldface.

Falsehood #1: There is no evidence whatsoever that "the accused had spent long hours memorizing their testimony." This is a complete fabrication on Kotkin's part, invented out of thin air without even a phony footnote.

"Bukharin, Krestinsky, Rykov, Cristian Rakovski—staunch Bolsheviks confessed that they had plotted to assassinate Lenin and Stalin since 1918 ... "

Falsehood #2: Only Bukharin was accused of plotting to assassinate Lenin and Stalin. Even he was charged not "since 1918" but *in* 1918. (Trial, p. 29; See Bukharin's testimony on pp. 127 ff.; 377 ff.)

Some Left Socialist-Revolutionaries testified that his plot had been genuine. Bukharin denied that he had plotted to assassinate Lenin and Stalin, but he agreed that he had been part of two plans to arrest — but not kill — Lenin. Stephen Cohen, Bukharin's biographer, put it his way:

When opponents of the triumvirate pointedly compared current norms with the free discussions during the Brest controversy, Bukharin tried to discredit the earlier period by disclosing that **Lenin's arrest had been discussed by Left Communists and Left Socialist Revolutionaries in 1918** ... (Cohen, *Bukharin*, 156. n. 112, p. 420: "112. *Pravda*, January 3, 1924, p. 5.")



Kotkin:

... confessed that [they] ... had murdered Kirov, Męzyński, Kuibyshev, Gorky, Gorky's son Maxim; had conspired with Nazi Germany, Japan, and Great Britain to partition the Soviet Union, hand over territory (Ukraine, Belorussia), and abolish collective farms.

Falsehood #3: Only Iagoda confessed to being a party to these murders. Krestinsky confessed to working with Tukhachevsky and the other military commanders to help defeat the USSR in a war with Germany. Rakovsky confessed to spying for Britain and Japan. Rykov confessed to being part of the Right-Trotskyite bloc.

Moreover, by 1938 none of these men were "staunch Bolsheviks" any longer. Kotkin knows this, of course.

### **More False Claims**

Here are some details about Kotkin's phony documentation. All these notes are on page 1006 of Kotkin's text:

Note 255: The indictment was presented for an international audience by Yaroslavsky, *Meaning of the Soviet Trials*. The defendants' biographies had been rewritten to make them descendants of capitalists and priests.

Falsehood #4: Even this trivial factoid is a fabrication. *None* of the defendants are described this way either in the Trial transcript or in Yaroslavskii's booklet.

Note 256: On Yagoda's attempt to negotiate for his life, see the prison snitch's report: Vinogradov, *Genrikh Iagoda*, 233-5 (TsA FSB, f. 3, op. 5, d. 318, l. 113-4: V. Kirshon).

Lie #5: Vinogradov, *Genrikh Iagoda* 233-5 is V.M. Kirshon's report on Iagoda in prison. But there is *nothing* here about any "attempt to negotiate for his life." Nor does Iagoda claim that he was innocent. On the contrary, Iagoda affirms his guilt.

Note 257: Conquest, *Reassessment*, 341-98; Maclean, *Escape to Adventure*, 59-83; Hedeler, "Yezhov's Scenario," 34-55.

Falsehood #6: The Conquest and Maclean pages are simply their whole chapters on the 1938 Trial. Only Hedeler (48) claims that NKVD interrogators "sat in the first row of seats." But he cites no *evidence* that they did so.

Note 258: Sokolov, "N. N. Krestinsky," 120-42; *Trud*, May 26, 1988.

Falsehood #7: There is nothing in Sokolov, "N.N. Krestinsky," about any beating. Sokolov merely says: "*One may only guess* what kind of 'working up' he suffered, what physical and moral torments he had to endure ... " (142). "Trud" was the national trade union newspaper of the USSR.

As Sokolov's article is from 1989, I assume he would have cited the *Trud* 1988 article if it had contained any evidence that Krestinsky had been tortured. And since when is a trade union newspaper article "evidence"? See below for the proof that the story of Krestinsky's beating is a lie.

Note 259:

259. Conquest, *Reassessment*, 352; Popov, "Byl i ostaius' kommunistom," 244-51.

Falsehood #8: This lie is more interesting! Conquest is able to cite only rumors. Popov, however, says the following:

[[ Cyrillic ]] Методы «восстанавливания» подобных упрямец теперь уже достаточно известны. Вот показания бывшего начальника санчасти Лефортовской тюрьмы НКВД СССР Розенблюма, данные им в 1956 году:

«Крестинского с допроса доставили к нам в санчасть в бессознательном состоянии. Он был тяжело избит, вся спина представляла из себя сплошную рану, на ней не было ни одного живого места ...»

Нетрудно представить себе, как постарались палачи, выбивая из Крестинского (в буквальном смысле слова!) мучительное для него лжепризнание.

Translation:

The methods of "restoring" such stubborn people are now well known. Here is the testimony of the former head of the medical section of the Lefortovo Prison of the NKVD USSR Rosenblum, given to them in 1956:

"Krestinsky, from interrogation, was brought to our hospital in an unconscious state. He was severely beaten, the whole back was a complete wound, there was not a single uninjured place on it ...

"It is not difficult to imagine how the executioners tried, knocking out from Krestinsky (in the literal sense of the word!) a painful false confession.

This is reaffirmed, without quotation, on in RKEB 2, 463, the Khrushchev-era reinstatement of Krestinsky's party membership:

[[cyrillic]]Выяснилось, что показания о вражеской деятельности его получены были от Крестинского путем жестоких истязаний, что подтвердила врач Лефортовской тюрьмы т. Розенблум А.А.

It turned out that the testimony about his hostile activities was obtained from Krestinsky by cruel tortures, which was confirmed by the physician of the Lefortovo prison, Comrade Rozenblum A.A.

This is hearsay, without any documentation. Moreover, it cannot be true.

Between March, 1954, and December, 1958, Ivan Serov was Khrushchev's head of the KGB. Serov's letter about the Third Moscow Trial, dated July 7, 1956, knows nothing about any beating of Krestinsky after he had retracted his confession on the first day of the trial.<sup>6</sup> Serov quotes NKVD man Aronson who quoted NKVD man Nikolaev saying that they had put

*Rakovsky together with Krestinsky, and Rakovsky had convinced Krestinsky to confess. (855)*

<sup>6</sup> Serov's report is published in *Protsess Bukharina. 1938 g.: Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: MDF, 2013), 852-858. It is online at several sites, including at <http://istmat.info/node/46740>

Obviously, if Krestinsky had been beaten the NKVD men would know — they would have done it! Serov would have put this much more dramatic accusation in his report if he had known about it. But he knew nothing about it. And Serov *would* have known about it — if it had happened. Therefore, the story about the "beating" of Krestinsky is a fabrication. Kotkin knew, or should have known, about this too.

In conclusion: Kotkin's account of the Third Moscow Trial is false in every respect. We have a great deal of evidence today that the defendants in all three Moscow Trials were guilty of *at least* those crimes to which they confessed.

## Chapter 9. *Tukhachevsky Affair*

Today we have a great deal of evidence that Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky and the seven other high-ranking military commanders who were tried, convicted, and executed with him on June 11-12, 1937, were guilty, as charged, of conspiracy with the Nazis and Japanese, and with Leon Trotsky, to defeat the Soviet Union in a war.

Indeed, we have so much evidence that a single volume with appropriate commentary could not hold all of it. My Moscow colleague, Vladimir L. Bobrov, and I are planning such a volume of documents plus commentary to set forth this evidence.

But the "official" viewpoint — the only one acceptable in academic, political, and public discussion because the only one consistent with the Anti-Stalin Paradigm (ASP) — is that Tukhachevsky and all the rest were innocent, victims of a "frame up" by Stalin for reasons unknown. In order to sustain this viewpoint, all the evidence must be either dismissed as "faked" in some way or simply ignored. Kotkin chooses the latter strategy: he ignores the evidence.

In addition Kotkin has recourse to *argument by scare quote*. He puts scare quotes around words like "confession" when they contradict the ASP. But he has no evidence to refute them.

Let the reader not be fooled! Argument by scare quote is the refuge of those who refuse to question their own preconceived ideas and biases but have no evidence to support those biases. No honest, competent historian falls back on this tawdry, deceptive insult to the reader's intelligence.

Has Kotkin ever seriously researched the Tukhachevsky Affair and related military purges? I doubt it, because of the many erroneous references he makes. We will point out some of them below.

Kotkin:

Failing that, he [Artuzov] wrote to Yezhov on January 25 that NKVD foreign intelligence possessed information from foreign sources, dating back many years but never forwarded to higher-ups, revealing a "Trotskyite organization" in the Red Army. Sensationally, the documents linked Marshal Tukhachevsky to foreign powers.<sup>3</sup> (377)

Note 3 (991): Lebedev, "M. N. Tukhachevskii i 'voenno-fashistskii zagovor,'" 7-20, 255; *Voennye arkhivy Rossii*, 111; Khaustov, "Deiatel'nost' organov," 188-9.

Here and elsewhere "Lebedev" is the journal *Voенно-Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, vypusk (issue) 2, 1997. This is the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission. It has been published several times in a number of different places. We shall point out below that Kotkin cites this same text but in different printed editions, as though he were citing different sources, though in reality they are all the same source.

For example, *Voennye Arkhivy Rossii*, 111, is the same document and the same passage! Why quote them both? To give readers the false impression that they are different sources that confirm each other? Dishonest — but what other reason could there be?

There is nothing about any of this in Khaustov, "Deiatel'nost' organov," 188-9. This is Khaustov's doctoral dissertation, available at Yale. Pages 188-9 do not mention Tukhachevsky at all! This is a phony reference.

Kotkin:

Artuzov knew full well how such compromising materials had been planted in Europe in order to make their way back to Moscow: in the 1920s he had helped lead just such an operation ("The Trust").<sup>4</sup> (377)

Note 4 (991): Mlechin, KGB, 162-3.

Mlechin does *suggest* that Artuzov, who had directed the "Trust" disinformation operation in the 1920s, had framed Tukhachevsky. But Mlechin cites no evidence whatever! Naturally, Kotkin's readers will not know this.

So this is yet another phony footnote. It is dishonest of Kotkin to cite Mlechin's unsupported speculation as though it were evidence. The veracity of one person's unsupported opinion — Kotkin's, in this case — is not confirmed by the equally unsupported opinion of one, or of any number, of other persons — in this case, Mlechin.

## No Evidence of "Fabrication"

Kotkin:

Now, **to these fabricated documents** he appended a list of thirty-four "Trotskyites" in military intelligence. His cynical efforts at ingratiation and revenge would not save his own life, but Artuzov had guessed right about **Stalin's intentions**.<sup>5</sup>

Note 5 (991): Radek at his public trial on Jan. 24, 1937, had mentioned Tukhachevsky's name as a co-conspirator. Radek then tried to retract, but the deed had been done. *Report of Court Proceedings*, 105, 146. After the first Moscow trial, Werner von Tippleskirch, a German military attaché in Moscow, had reported to Berlin (Sept. 28, 1936) the speculation about a pending trial of Red Army commanders. Erickson, *Soviet High Command*, 427 (citing Serial 6487/E486016-120: Report A/2037).

Yet another phony footnote! There is nothing about "Stalin's intentions" in these works, nor could there be. Kotkin is "channeling" the spirit of the long-dead Stalin!

Nor is there any evidence that these documents were "fabricated," as Kotkin claims — not only none in the works he refers to, but there is no such evidence anywhere. Nor is there any evidence that Artuzov "planted" these documents.

As for the list of thirty-four Trotskyites — note the argument by scare quote — this is in all of the editions of the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission, since all are identical. In "Lebedev" (*Voenno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, 1997) it is on pages 11-12:

[[cyrillic]]Артузов направил Ежову 25 января 1937 года записку, в которой доложил ему об имевшихся ранее в ОГПУ агентурных донесениях < > о «военной партии.» К своей записке Артузов приложил «Список бывших сотрудников Разведупра, принимавших активное участие в троцкизме» (в списке 34 человека). На записке Артузова Ежов 26 января 1937 года написал:

«т. Курскому и Леплевскому. Надо учесть этот материал. Несомненно, в армии существует троцкистск[ая] организация. Это показывает, в частности, и недоследованное дело «Клубок». Может, и здесь найдется зацепка».

Artuzov sent a note to Yezhov on January 25, 1937, in which he reported to him about the agent's reports on the "military party" that had previously existed in the OGPU. To his note Artuzov appended "A list of former employees of the Razvedupr (Intelligence), who took an active part in Trotskyism" (34 people in the list). On a note by Artuzov Yezhov wrote on January 26, 1937:

"Comrades Kursky and Leplevsky. It is necessary to take into account this material. Undoubtedly, a Trotskyite [organization] exists in the army. This is also evident, in particular, from the "Tangle" case, not fully investigated. Maybe there's a clue here too."

## "Claptrap?" Look In The Mirror!

Kotkin:

Explanations for Stalin's rampage through his own officer corps have ranged from his unquenchable thirst for power to the existence of an actual conspiracy.<sup>6</sup> Nearly every dictator lusts for power, and **in this case there was no military conspiracy.** (377)

Note 6 (991): Wollenberg, *Red Army*, 224; Erickson, *Soviet High Command*, 465; Conquest, *Great Terror: Reassessment*, 201-35; Ulam, *Stalin*, 457-8; Tucker, *Stalin in Power*; Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph*



*and Tragedy*. Assertions of a real plot go back to the time and have persisted: Duranty, *USSR*, 222; Davies, *Mission to Moscow*, I: 111. The claptrap persists: Prudnikova and Kolpakidi, *Dvoinoi zagovor*.

This is true nonsense! By definition, there can be no evidence that "there was *no* military conspiracy," so Kotkin cannot possibly know this. Even if there were no evidence of a conspiracy, that would not prove that no conspiracy had existed, for the point of a conspiracy is to leave no evidence.

The most any historian could say is: "We have no evidence that such a conspiracy existed." But Kotkin can't say this! — not honestly, anyway. For in the case of the Tukhachevsky Affair there is an enormous amount of evidence that the conspiracy existed. Moreover, we have no evidence that *this* evidence was faked. Kotkin is no one to accuse others of "claptrap!"

Here is a passage from Davies, *Mission to Moscow* concerning what Davies learned from "the head of the Russian desk at the German Foreign Office":

Had an extended conference with the head of the "Russian desk" at the German Foreign Office. To my surprise he stated that my views as to the stability of internal Russian political conditions and the security of the Stalin regime would bear investigation. **My information, he thought, was all wrong: Stalin was not firmly entrenched. He stated that I probably would find that there was much revolutionary activity there which might shortly break out into the open.** (17)

There's much other evidence along these lines. Kotkin does not mention this passage. He does cite another one, from Davies' letter of June 28, 1937, to Sumner Wells:

... the best judgment seems to believe that in all probability there was a definite conspiracy in the making looking to a *coup d'état* by the army not necessarily anti-Stalin, but anti-political and anti-party, and that Stalin struck with characteristic speed, boldness, and strength.

Note that the passage Kotkin omits contains evidence that the Germans expected a revolt against the Stalin government, while the one he cites

contains no such evidence.

## Again, No Evidence

Kotkin:

... out of approximately 144,000 officers, some 33,000 were removed in 1937-38, and Stalin ordered or incited the irreversible arrest of around 9,500 and **the execution of perhaps 7,000 of them.**<sup>14</sup> (378)

Note 14 (991): Reese, *Stalin's Reluctant Soldiers*, 134-46. From 1937 to 1938, 34,501 Red Army officers, air force officers, and military political personnel were discharged, either because of expulsion from the party or arrest; 11,596 would be reinstated by 1940. As Voroshilov noted, some 47,000 officers had been discharged in the years following the civil war, almost half of them (22,000) in the years 1934-36; around 10,000 of these discharged were arrested. Few were higher-ups, however. Confusingly, sometimes the totals include the Red Air Force, and sometimes not. "Nakanune voiny (dokumenty 1935-1940 gg.)," 188; Suvenirov, *Tragediia RKKa*, 137. In 1939, when Stalin turned off the pandemonium, 73 Red Army personnel would be arrested.

The bottom line: Kotkin offers no evidence for his claim that "perhaps 7000" officers were executed. Reese's 1996 book is far too old for the flood of Soviet documents available since then. A well-known study by Gerasimov<sup>1</sup> published in 1999, states:

[[[cyrillic]]]В 1937 году было репрессировано<sup>3</sup> 11034 чел. или 8% списочном численности начальствующего состава, в 1938 году - 4523 чел. или 2,5%<sup>4</sup>. В это же время некомплект начсостава в эти годы достигал 34 тыс. и 39 тыс. соответственно<sup>5</sup>, т.е. доля репрессированных в некомплекте начсостава составляла 32% и 11%.

3. К репрессированным автор относит лиц командноначальствующего состава, уволенных из РККА за связь

"с заговорщиками," арестованных и не восстановленных впоследствии в армии.

4. РГВА.-Ф.4.-Оп.10.-Д. 141.Л.205.

5. См.: Мельтюхов М.И. Указ. Соч.- С. 114.

In 1937 11034 persons were subjected to repression or 8% of the listed size of the command staff [officers — GF]; in 1938 — 4,523 persons, or 2.5%. At the same time, a shortage of command staff in these years reached 34 thousand and 39 thousand, respectively, i.e. The proportion of repressed of the shortage in the command staff was 32% and 11%.

3. By "repressed persons" the author refers to command personnel dismissed from the Red Army for ties "with conspirators," arrested and not restored later to the army.

4. RGVA. F.4. Op. 10. D 141. L. 205. [This is an archival document. — GF]

5. Cf. Mel'tiukhov, M.I., p. 114.

Gerasimov states that a total of  $11034+4523=15,557$  officers were "repressed," not "executed."

<sup>1</sup> G.I. Gerasimov, "Deistvitel'noe vlianie represii 1937-1938 gg. na ofiterskii korpus RKKA." ("The actual influence of the repressions of 1937-1938 on the officer corps of the Workers and Peasants Red Army.") *Rossiiskii Istoricheskii Zhurnal* 1 (1999), This important article is online in several places, including at [http://www.hrono.ru/statii/2001/rkka\\_repr.html](http://www.hrono.ru/statii/2001/rkka_repr.html)

Gerasimov references Mel'tiukhov's article from *Otechestvennaia Istoriia* 5 (1997), 109-121. In that article Mel'tiukhov notes that *there is insufficient evidence for any definite conclusion*. That was also the situation three or more years earlier, when Reese researched his article.

[[cyrillic]]Углублению изучения этих вопросов препятствует недостаточно широкая источниковая база. Несмотря на довольно

бурное обсуждение этой проблематики в конце 80-х - начале 90-х гг., введение в научный оборот документов было не столь значительно, как можно было бы ожидать. Появившиеся документы, хотя и конкретизировали некоторые аспекты, но не позволили всесторонне рассмотреть данную проблему. В результате в литературе сохраняется разногласия по основным вопросам темы. (118)

An in-depth study of these issues is hindered by an insufficiently wide source base. Despite the rather stormy discussion of this problem in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the introduction of documents into scientific circulation was not as significant as one would expect. **The documents that did appear, although they specified certain issues, did not allow a comprehensive study of this problem.** As a result, disagreement over the main issues of this topic remains.

### **Did Stalin "Tutor" Yezhov?**

Kotkin:

In the Little Corner, the despot tutored Yezhov on portraying a conspiracy with a shadow government, ready to take over: Yagoda as head of the Council of People's Commissars, Tukhachevsky as defense commissar, Bukharin as general secretary of the party ... (397) [next note is 123]

Note 123: Khaustov, "Razvitie sovetskikh organov gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti," 362 (citing TsA FSB, f. 3, op. 45, d. 29, l. 246). Peterson would be shot on Aug. 21, 1937.

This is a phony footnote. There is nothing in Khaustov whatever about Stalin "tutoring" Yezhov. Evidently Kotkin invented this.

As for Peterson, he had been the commandant of the Kremlin guard, a crucial position for those plotting any coup d'état. There is a great deal of evidence available against Peterson. For example, N.S. Cherushev cites a lot of it in his book Komandanty Kremliia ("Commanders of the Kremlin").

Cherushev proceeds from the assumption that all the officers were innocent. However, as a military historian, Cherushev had access to a great many documents that no other scholar could see, and he often quotes extensively from them. He does so in Peterson's case, and the evidence he cites strongly supports Peterson's guilt.

Kotkin cites this very book by Cherushev. But he never mentions any of this evidence, and never returns to Peterson.

### **The Arao Telegram**

Kotkin:

Also in April 1937, the NKVD intercepted and photographed a communication from the Japanese military attaché in Warsaw to the general staff in Tokyo. NKVD foreign intelligence could not read the Japanese and had to go to Lefortovo prison for assistance from R. N. Kim, a Soviet counterintelligence agent on Japan who had been arrested as a foreign spy. The document was composed in the hand of the Japanese attaché's aide handwriting well known to Kim and conveyed that "contact had been established with an emissary of Marshal Tukhachevsky." This secret message for Tokyo had been sent not by ciphered telegram but by diplomatic pouch, which traveled from Poland to Japan through the Soviet Union. Japanese intelligence appears to have intended the "secret" document to be "intercepted."<sup>180</sup> (407)

Note 180:

Lebedev, "M. N. Tukhachevskii i 'voenno-fashistskii zagovor,'" 30-3. Stalin could have had the "information" delivered into the hands of the Japanese in Warsaw, in order to have it "leaked" back through foreign channels, perhaps to persuade Voroshilov.

Once again, "Lebedev" is *Voенно-Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, vypusk 2, 1997. This is a rare journal, available at only a few research libraries (I happen to have a copy). So, very few of Kotkin's readers will know that this is the same

"Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission, completed "not later than July 26, 1964."

The "Spravka" is available in RKEB 2, 753 ff. This volume is available at many more libraries, and therefore this, rather than previous versions in hard-to-find journals, is the usual source cited for this document.

\* The "Spravka" has long been available online at [http://perpetrator2004.narod.ru/documents/Tukhachevsky/Tukhachevsky\\_Report.rar](http://perpetrator2004.narod.ru/documents/Tukhachevsky/Tukhachevsky_Report.rar)

\* It was also long available online at the Russia "Wikisource" page, at

<http://ru.wikisource.org:80/wiki/>

**Справка\_комиссии\_Президиума\_ЦК\_КПСС**

\* As of 2017, it has been taken down. But it is still available in the Internet Archive, at

[https://web.archive.org/web/20131110035043/http://ru.wikisource.org:80/wiki/Справка\\_комиссии\\_президиума\\_ЦК\\_КПСС](https://web.archive.org/web/20131110035043/http://ru.wikisource.org:80/wiki/Справка_комиссии_президиума_ЦК_КПСС)

[https://web.archive.org/web/20100203061724/http://ru.wikisource.org:80/Справка\\_комиссии\\_президиума\\_ЦК\\_КПСС](https://web.archive.org/web/20100203061724/http://ru.wikisource.org:80/Справка_комиссии_президиума_ЦК_КПСС)

\* I have now put it online at

<http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/Spravka.pdf>

The "Spravka" has never been translated into English. For a number of years an edition of the Shvernik Report was said to be under preparation at the Yale University Press "Annals of Communism" page.

This project has apparently been abandoned. No wonder! The Report exposes the desperation Khrushchev's men felt when they were tasked to come up with evidence that the Tukhachevsky Affair defendants were innocent but failed to find any such evidence.

Not only were they unable to do what Khrushchev & Co. assigned them to do, but they came up with evidence, such as this "Arao Telegram," that the

"Tukhachevsky Affair" commanders were in fact guilty! No wonder the "Spravka" was never published under Khrushchev! A quarter-century later Gorbachev's men used it, without attribution. It was not published until the USSR was no more.

Kotkin's notion that Stalin "set up" the Arao Telegram simply shows how desperate he is to "explain away" any evidence that points to Tukhachevsky's guilt — in this case, guilt of conspiring with the Japanese. We have a good deal of additional evidence that Tukhachevsky conspired with both Japan and Germany, but Kotkin ignores all of it. Did he think that there was too much of it to "explain away"?

Concerning the Arao Telegram, I refer the reader to my own detailed study in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*, Chapter Ten, 218 ff. There I study and expose the lame, transparent Khrushchev-era attempt to argue that the Arao Telegram is a fake. I have done nothing clever here — anyone who takes the trouble to study these few pages from the "Spravka" could see the same things I saw. But Kotkin never bothered — or, if he did, he conceals that fact from his readers.

### **More Scare Quotes**

Kotkin:

Corps commander Primakov, nine months in Lefortovo, had refused to admit his "guilt," but finally on May 8, 1937, he "confessed" and implicated others.<sup>202</sup> (411)

Note all the scare quotes — a dead giveaway that *Kotkin has no evidence!*

Note 202 (995): "Delo o tak nazyvaemoi 'antisovetskoi trotskistskoi organizatsii' v Krasnoi armii," 47-8; Artizov et al., *Reabilitatsiia: kak eto bylo*, II: 678 (Aleksandr Avseevich, 1962); *Pravda*, April 29, 1988 (B. Viktorov). Primakov (a Bolshevik since 1914) had served as military attaché in Afghanistan (1927-29) and then Japan (1930); in 1928 he had been forced to declare a break with the Trotskyites. Zdanovich, *Organy*, 320 (citing TsA FSB, delo R-9000, t. 4, l. 53).

Kotkin is using argument by scare quotes in the hope of covering up the fact that *he has no evidence* that Primakov's confession is false. In reality, we have is no reason to doubt Primakov's confession. Here are Primakov's words, from the source cited by Kotkin, "Delo o tak nazyvaemoi ... " pages 47-8:

[[cyrillic]]«В течение 9 месяцев я заперся перед следствием по делу о троцкистской контрреволюционной организации. В этом заперательстве дошел до такой наглости, что даже на Политбюро перед тов. Сталиным продолжал заператься и всячески уменьшать свою вину. Тов. Сталин правильно сказал, что „Примаков — трус, заператься в таком деле это трусость." Действительно, с моей стороны это была трусость и ложный стыд за обман. Настоящим заявляю, что, вернувшись из Японии в 1930 г., я связался с Дрейцером и Шмидтом, а через Дрейцера и Путну с Мрачковским и начал троцкистскую работу, о которой дам следствию полные показания».

For 9 months I was in denial before the investigation in the case of the Trotskyist counterrevolutionary organization. In this denial I came to such impudence that even at the Politburo before Comrade Stalin I continued to deny and in every possible way to minimize my guilt. Comrade Stalin correctly said that "Primakov is a coward, to remain in denial about such a matter is cowardice." Indeed, for my part, it was cowardice and false shame over my deception. I hereby declare that when I returned from Japan in 1930, I contacted Dreitser and Schmidt, and through Dreitser and Putna, Mrachkovsky, and began Trotskyite work, about which I will give full testimony to the investigation.

Kotkin's citation of RKEB 2, 678, is another phony reference. It contains no evidence that Primakov's confession was not genuine. As for the passage in Zdanovich, *Organy*, 320, it states this:

[[cyrillic]]В августе 1933 г. в 8-м отделении СПО ОГПУ, занимавшемся исключительно борьбой с оппозицией внутри ВКП(б), был подготовлен меморандум по материалам на В. Примакова. Сотрудники СПО отметили, что он «В июне 1928 г. подал заявление о разрыве с оппозицией и двурушничества».



характера, продолжая фактически оставаться на своих троцкистских позициях».

In August 1933, in the 8th section of the OGPU's Special Political Division, which dealt exclusively with the struggle against the opposition within the CPSU(b), a memorandum was prepared on V. Primakov. **The SPD staff noted that "in June 1928, he filed an application for a break with the opposition of a double-dealing nature, in fact continuing to keep his Trotskyite positions."**

This does not confirm but *contradicts* what Kotkin has written. No doubt Kotkin believed that no one would check.

### **Viktorov the Swindler**

As for Viktorov's article in *Pravda*, which Kotkin cites here — since when is a newspaper article evidence? Newspapers are at best "the first rough draft of history," not historiography itself. And *Pravda*, the official paper of the Communist Party, never made any claims to objectivity or devotion to the truth, especially since Khrushchev's day. Once again, Garbage In, Garbage Out!

Viktorov was a former prosecutor who had been involved in Khrushchev-era "rehabilitations." He published many articles in historical journals and at least one book, *Bez grifa 'sekretno'* (1990). Kotkin cites Viktorov's book, though not here. In this book Viktorov repeats, normally without evidence of any kind, the Khrushchev-Gorbachev anti-Stalin version of events.

This specific article by Viktorov, from *Pravda* of April 29, 1988 — to be precise, from page three of that issue — illustrates Viktorov's dishonesty in a number of ways. Two examples will suffice. First, Viktorov states that the transcript of the June 11, 1937 trial of Tukhachevsky and the rest is only a few pages in length:

[[[cyrillic]]]Стенограмма состоялась всего из несколько страниц.

The transcript consisted of just a few pages in all.

(column two, middle of column)

On page 231 of Viktorov's 1990 book *Bez grifa 'sekretno'* ("Without the stamp 'secret'") we read:

[[cyrillic]]Стенограмма содержала всего несколько страниц ...

The transcript contained just a few pages ...

Viktorov was lying. The transcript was declassified in May, 2018. It is *172 pages* in length. So either Viktorov knew this, and lied about the number of pages to make the trial appear to be perfunctory; or Viktorov did *not* know how long the transcript was — was not allowed to see it himself — and just passed along this lie to the readership.

Viktorov also quotes from Frinovsky's confession statement of April 11, 1939. Therefore, he has been allowed to read it, though it was not published until 2006. But Viktorov omits Frinovsky's admissions that the defendants in the Moscow Trials, plus Yezhov and he himself, were indeed conspiring against the Soviet government.

So Viktorov deliberately suppressed these damning sections. Or, he was only given excerpts, but implied to his readers that he was fairly summarizing the document. But Kotkin has read the whole of Frinovsky's confession statement, and Kotkin is still concealing it from his readers!

So Viktorov's article *and* his book are fraudulent. They are useful examples of how Gorbachev and his assistants, building upon Khrushchev's falsifications, lied wholesale about Stalin and the events of the 1930s. Gorbachev's totally dishonest version is the Anti-Stalin Paradigm. It is still the "official version" of Soviet history of the Stalin period.

It's Kotkin's responsibility to know about this and to inform his readers. So why doesn't he do this? Because like Viktorov Kotkin is retailing the Anti-Stalin Paradigm, not trying to discover the truth and tell it. If Viktorov's book and article are a fraud — and they are — Kotkin's book is a fraud on a much bigger scale.

Kotkin:

Stalin received Tukhachevsky in the Little Corner on May 13, in the presence of Voroshilov, Molotov, Yezhov, and Kaganovich, and **reassured the marshal that everything would be sorted out**, mentioning a problem with Tukhachevsky's lover, Yulia Kuzmina, who supposedly was a foreign agent.<sup>204</sup> (411-2)

Note 204 (995): *Voennye arkhivy Rossii*, 41; Lebedev, "M. N. Tukhachevskii i 'voenno-fashistskii zagovor,'" 182; Na prieme, 209; Viktor A. Aleksandrov, *Delo Tukhachevskogo*.

VAR, 41 is — once again — the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission. So is Lebedev — the very same document. The passage noted by Kotkin here reads:

[[cyrillic]]13 мая 1937 г., как это установлено по книге регистрации, Сталин лично принял в Кремле маршала Тухачевского. **Никаких материалов о существовании разговора Сталина с Тухачевским обнаружить в архивах не удалось.**

May 13, 1937, as established by the book of registration, Stalin personally received Marshal Tukhachevsky in the Kremlin. **We have not been successful in finding in the archives any materials concerning the subject of Stalin's and Tukhachevsky's talk.**

Kotkin's own sources says that there is nothing about the subject of this talk. Yet Kotkin claims he can tell us what the talk was about!<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Curious readers can find out more about Iulia Kuz'mina, Tukhachevsky's lover, at [[cyrillic]][https://ru.openlistwiki/Кузьмина\\_Юлия\\_Ивановна\\_\(1903\)](https://ru.openlistwiki/Кузьмина_Юлия_Ивановна_(1903)) and in Julia Kantor, *Voina i mir Mikhaila Tukhachevskogo*, 315; 454 ff.

As for Victor Aleksandrov's book, it was published in Paris in 1959, then in several languages, including English (Prentice-Hall, 1964). The Russian edition is 1996. It has long been dismissed as a pot-boiler fabrication: see

Paul Blackstock, "'Books for Idiots': False Soviet 'Memoirs'," *Russian Review* 25, 3 (1966), 290 ff.

## Once Again, No Evidence Of Torture

Kotkin:

Around this time, August Kork, head of the Frunze Military Academy, was arrested and **beaten into testifying**. On May 15, Boris Feldman, head of the Red Army cadres department, was arrested, and, **under severe torture**, he incriminated Tukhachevsky (who the next day departed for his new posting in the rear, the city of Kuibyshev).<sup>205</sup> (411-12)

Note 205 (995): Khaustov and Samuelson, *Stalin*, NKVD, 115-6 (TsA FSB, ASD P-4615, l. 258-61; ASD N. 15301, tom 2: 37-8); Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i VChk*, 170-6.

This is another dishonest citation. Khaustov and Samuel'son, 114-15, has nothing about beatings and torture, as Kotkin surely knows. Khaustov and Samuel'son simply *claim, without any evidence*, that Kork and Fel'dman were beaten or threatened.

[[cyrillic]]От Путны и Примакова побоями были добыты дополнительные показания о военном заговоре, на их основании 14-15 мая были арестованы Корки Фельдман. Протокол допроса Фельдмана от 19 мая Ежов направил 20 мая Сталину, Молотову, Ворошилову и Кагановичу. Благодаря политике кнута и пряника Фельдман согласился показать, что в Красной Армии существовал военно-троцкистский заговор, возглавляемый Тухачевским. В течение последней недели мая с 22 по 29 число были арестованы Тухачевский, Эйдеман, Якир и Уборевич.

From Putna and Primakov, additional testimonies about the military conspiracy were obtained by beatings. On this basis on May 14-15 Kork and Feldman were arrested. On May 20 Yezhov sent the protocol of Feldman's interrogation of May 19 to Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov

and Kaganovich. **Thanks to the policy of carrot and stick**, Feldman agreed to confess that there was a military-Trotskyist conspiracy in the Red Army headed by Tukhachevsky. During the last week of May, from 22 to 29, Tukhachevsky, Eideman, Yakir and Uborevich were arrested.

Here Kotkin gets his references to Khaustov confused. He cites *Lubianka 1922-1936 (Lubianka. Stalin i VChK-GPU-OGPU-NKVD, ianvar' 1922-dekabr' 1936*. Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond Demokratiia, 2003). In reality, Boris Fel'dman's confession is in the next volume in the series edited by Khaustov, *Lubianka 1937-1938 (Lubianka. Stalin i glavnoe upravlenie gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti NKVD, 1937-1938*. Moscow: Materik, 2004), on pp. 170-176.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> It may be read in Russian at the excellent Istmat.info site:  
<http://istmat.info/node/31075>

It is interesting that Kotkin fails to mention that at note 25, p. 641, to this document, Khaustov et al. claim that Fel'dman and others were tortured. But they have no evidence to support that claim and Kotkin, of course, has none either. He has invented it, covering his own falsification with phony footnotes.

### **When In Doubt — Invent!**

As for Khaustov and Samuel'son's "carrot and stick" — do they think that police in the West do not act in this way? But the real point is this: they have no evidence even for this statement! They are lying, in the service of the Anti-Stalin Paradigm.

Note, too, that Kotkin escalates Khaustov and Samuel'son's "carrot and the stick" not just to "torture," but to "severe torture." When in doubt, be creative — just make it up! And Kotkin accuses Stalin of fabricating!

### **Artuzov's Important Confessions**

Kotkin:

On May 20, Artuzov was arrested in his office (no. 201) on the second floor of Lubyanka and accused of being a rightist alongside Yagoda, as well as concealing material implicating Tukhachevsky (the very material he had forwarded to Yezhov). His interrogation protocols, which he signed with his own blood, would also assert that Yagoda had told him of widespread NKVD dissatisfaction with the Soviet leadership, "whose despotism stands in crying contradiction to declarations of Soviet democracy."<sup>216</sup> (413)

Note 216 (996): *Rodina*, 1995, no. 2: 87; Pogonii, *Lubianka*, 2, 203; Tumshis and Papchinskii, *1937, bol'shaia chistka*, 404-6, 445-51. Artuzov would be executed on Aug. 21, 1937.

This is a classic example of Kotkin's "bias by omission." Tumshis and Papchinski, 445-451 give the text of a letter by Artuzov to Yezhov of March, 1937, long before his arrest in May. "*Rodina*, 1995, no. 2" is Boris Sopel'niak, "Chestneishii tovarishch? Rasstreliat!," *Rodina* 2, 1995, 83-88.

But, according to this article Artuzov confessed completely! *The article reproduces much of his confessions*. This means that the Sopel'niak article does, in fact, contain valuable evidence.

But it is evidence that supports the real existence of the Opposition conspiracy. So Kotkin neither uses it nor tells his readers that Artuzov's confessions are there. Artuzov also confessed at his trial, which guaranteed his conviction and execution.

### **Artuzov Signed What???**

Kotkin writes:

His interrogation protocols, which he signed with his own blood ...

Even this is false. According to Kotkin's own source, Sopel'niak's article, Artuzov left a *note* written in his own blood in which he denied being a German spy.

Pogonii, *Lubianka*, 2, 203, is not at all a work of scholarship. It is a coffee-table book by the FSB, the successor to the GPU-OGPU-NKVD-MVD-KGB. But it has great photographs and document reproductions! It even has a color photographic reproduction of this very note of Artuzov's. It is written on the back of some kind of "prison receipt" (*kvitantsiia*), as the accompanying note to Veinshtok, Chief of the tenth section of the GUGB of the NKVD, states.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> The note reads as follows: [[cyrillic]]«Гражданину следователю привожу доказательства, что я не шпион. Если бы я был немецкий шпион, то: 1. Я не послал бы в швейцарское консульство Маковского, получившего мои документы. Я сохранил бы документы для себя. 2. Я позаботился бы получить через немцев какой-либо транзитный документ для отъезда за границу. Арест Тылиса был бы к тому сигналом. Документ...» Translation: "Citizen investigator: I cite evidence that I am not a spy. If I were a German spy, then: 1. I would not have sent to the Swiss embassy Makovskii, who received my documents. I would have kept the documents for myself. 2. I would have arranged through the Germans to get some kind of transit document to travel abroad. The arrest of Tylis would have been a signal for that. The (or a) document ... " The note is unfinished. According to the accompanying note Artuzov got the blood from his nose.

How could Kotkin have gotten this wrong — a note on a receipt instead of a signature on an interrogation transcript (protocol)? Carelessness? Did he think that no one would ever bother to check? Did Kotkin even see this page? In any event, Artuzov also confessed to espionage for other foreign governments, and did not retract those confessions in this note.

*Artuzov's confessions are of great interest.* He confirms the conspiracies by Rykov, Bukharin, and Tomsy, and that of Tukhachevsky. Artuzov's second confession is partially reproduced by Sopol'niak here, and also partly reproduced in the volume *Genrikh Iagoda* 487-499. (This last is online at <http://istmat.info/node/36059>)

Artuzov's confessions present strong evidence that the conspiracies *did* exist. Kotkin does not mention this fact. Nor does he quote those parts of

Artuzov's confessions. It's a measure of Kotkin's contempt for his readers that he dared to cite this article at all, since anyone who reads it will immediately see Kotkin's dishonesty.

## Good Evidence of German Spies

Kotkin:

In an internal memorandum that day, addressed to Yezhov and Voroshilov, the despot ordered that all Soviet agents abroad and their handlers be rechecked, because "military intelligence and its apparatus have fallen into German hands." Stalin's memo noted that "from the point of view of intelligence, we cannot have friends; there are immediate enemies and potential enemies," and deemed the Czechoslovaks — with whom the Soviet Union had a mutual assistance pact — "the enemies of our enemies, nothing more." He ordered Soviet personnel not to share intelligence secrets with Czechoslovakia or any other country, and "to fully assimilate the lesson of the cooperation with the Germans," whereby "Rapallo, close ties, created the illusion of friendship. The Germans have remained our enemies, and they penetrated us and implanted their network." He added, "We have had enormous victories, we are stronger than all politically, we are stronger economically, but in intelligence we have been smashed. Understand, they smashed us in intelligence."<sup>219</sup> (413-4)

Note 219 (996): Stalin also underscored the need to portray Soviet spies as "genuine patriots, heroes, of their country," in order "to attract youth, talented people, girls, scientists" to intelligence work, but warned that "the enemy's strong intelligence and our weakness are a provocation to war." Petrov and Jansen, *Stalinskii pitomets*, 290-3 (TsA FSB, f. 6, op. 5, d. 25, l. 208-10). See also Vinogradov, "Tret'ia reform organov bezopasnosti," II: 76-96, esp. 93. One account has Stalin going in person, on May 22, 1937, to military intelligence HQ: Gorbunov, "Voennaia razvedka v 1934-1939 godakh" (no 3.), 57. On the consequences, see also Alekseev et al., *Entsiklopediia voennoi razvedki*, 508-9.



Although Kotkin gets the date wrong — it was on May 21, not May 22, 1937 — Gorbunov does reproduce the common quote from Stalin telling the foreign intelligence service that it had been penetrated by the Germans. Stalin again elaborated on this fact in his talk on June 2, 1937, before the expanded meeting of the Military Council.

This is good evidence that Stalin believed that German penetration had indeed occurred, and that he also believed the confessions of the military men when they admitted that they had spied for Germany. Stalin got to see *all* the evidence — much more than we have now, and we now have a lot! To any objective student this is further evidence that the military conspiracy was genuine.

### **Yet Again, No Evidence of Torture**

Kotkin:

Civil defense followed. Its head, the ethnic Latvian Roberts Eidemanis (shortened to Eideman), was arrested on May 22 and, under torture, "incriminated" twenty others. Yezhov had the interrogation protocols on Stalin's desk quickly. The despot wrote on them, "All those people named by Eideman in civil defense (center and periphery) immediately arrest"<sup>220</sup>—no verification of their specific spying activities and any damage caused. (414)

Note 220 (996): *Voennye arkhivy Rossii*, 44; Lebedev, "M. N. Tukhachevskii i 'voenno-fashistskii zagovor,'" 88. See also Pankov, *Komkor Eideman*, 103. Voroshilov had recommended promoting Eideman to head of antiaircraft, arguing that it needed someone of "major authority." Whitewood, *Red Army*, 212 (citing RGVA, f. 4, op. 19, d. 18, l. 176).

VAR, page 44, is the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission again! So is Lebedev, 188 (it should be 187-188) — yet again, the very same document.

Plus, this is yet another phony footnote! Kotkin cites this document as though it offered evidence that Eideman was tortured — but it doesn't.

Khrushchev's men interrogated — or claimed to have done — Karpeiskii, a former NKVD man, who testified that the Lefortovo prison was a terrifying place. *But Karpeiskii refused to state that Eideman had been beaten or tortured.* He could have done so, and Khrushchev's men would no doubt have liked him to do.

Pankov is a 1965, Khrushchev-era book with no evidence whatever. During Khrushchev's time books like this one were published about all the Tukhachevsky Affair defendants, as well as about others. None of them have any evidence. Kotkin does not seem to realize that their sole value is as witness to the fact that Khrushchev would not even allow his own "house" historians to have access to archival evidence<sup>5</sup>, and that they had no evidence that these men had been innocent victims of a frame-up.

<sup>5</sup> See the discussion and reference by Petr Pospelov to a conference of historians in 1962 in Furr, Khrushchev Lied 206 and note.

Bloodstains on a Tukhachevsky Confession?

Kotkin:

In the cellars on May 26, a mere four days after his arrest, **Tukhachevsky began to sign whatever interrogators put in front of him.** Zinovy Ushakov, who prided himself on obtaining confessions no other investigator could extract, **mercilessly beat Tukhachevsky, whose blood dripped onto the pages of a confession to crimes he did not commit.** By some accounts, Tukhachevsky's teenage daughter, Svetlana, was brought to the prison, where the interrogators told him they would rape her.<sup>223</sup> (414)

Note 223 (996): Kantor, *Voina i mir*, 386-7; Svetlana Tukhachevsky's statement in Yuliya Kantor, *Mikhail Nikolaevich Tukhachevsky*: [www.pseudology.org/colonels/Tukhachevsky.htm](http://www.pseudology.org/colonels/Tukhachevsky.htm). **The Central Committee, without a plenum, expelled Tukhachevsky as well as Rudzutaks from the party and handed them over to the NKVD.** Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i glavnoe upravlenie*, 190 (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 304, l. 112); Getty and Naumov, *Road to Terror*, 448. Ushakov would be executed in Jan. 1940.

Kotkin is — well, let us say, being less than truthful when he states that Tukhachevsky "began to sign whatever interrogators put in front of him." Here's how we know that.

The Kantor article he cites at the Pseudology site is the text, without the illustrations, of an article Kantor originally published in the Russian newspaper *Izvestiia* of February 21, 2004, pp. 10-11. One of the illustrations in the *Izvestiia* article is of a corner of a Tukhachevsky statement of May 26, 1937 in which he states that he headed the antisoviet conspiracy and which shows the so-called "bloodstains." Kantor also mentions the handwriting on this statement on page 377 of her book *Voina i mir Mikhaila Tukhachevskogo*, which Kotkin cites.

From the illustration we can tell that Tukhachevsky's handwriting, on the page with the supposed "blood drops," is very even. As for the supposed bloodstains — if that's what they are, and if they are Tukhachevsky's — Kantor reproduced a photograph of them in her *Izvestiia* article. I have put it online here:

[https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/tukh\\_confess\\_with\\_blood.jpg](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/tukh_confess_with_blood.jpg)

I have included my own examination of this so-called evidence, titled "Bloodstains on a Tukhachevsky Confession," as an Appendix to the present chapter.

### **No Evidence Of Alleged Rape Threat**

The same Pseudology article quotes an official of the central archive of the FSB (successor to the KGB - MGB/MVD - NKVD) that there is no documentary evidence to support the rumor about any threat to rape his daughter.

[[cyrillic]]- Дочь Тухачевского, Светлана, вспоминала, что во время следствия ее • тогда подростка - привели к арестованному отцу и угрожали изнасилованием, если он не подпишет признания ... Это правда?

И слышу безупречный по корректности ответ:

- Документальных данных, подтверждающих такой эпизод, нет.

- Tukhachevsky's daughter, Svetlana, recalled that during the investigation she — then a teenager — was brought to the arrested father and threatened with rape if he did not sign a confession ... Is this true?

And I hear the strictly correct answer:

- There is no documentary evidence supporting such an episode.

Kotkin is eager to include this rumor. But he is equally eager to hide from his readers the fact that there is no evidence to support it. There is no mention of any such thing in Elena Kantor's 600-page book *Voina i mir Mikhaila Tukhachevskogo* (2004), which Kotkin cites three times in his book and also in his bibliography (1090). Kantor had the cooperation of Tukhachevsky's family, photographs of some of whom appear in her book.

It's obvious why Kotkin includes this rumor. He is grasping at straws, looking for anything that might suggest that the confessions of Tukhachevsky and the other military leaders were false, made under torture, threats to family, etc. But he can't find any such evidence, so he has to hide the truth.

As for the following statement in note 223, it is yet another falsehood by Kotkin:

The Central Committee, without a plenum, expelled Tukhachevsky as well as Rudzutaks from the party and handed them over to the NKVD.

The source and page Kotkin cites contains two documents: the motion by the Politbiuro to expel Tukhachevsky and Rudzutak from Party membership and to submit their cases to the NKVD (for further investigation), dated May 24, 1937, and the corresponding text of the Central Committee Plenum resolution, dated May 25-26, 1937, of the resolution of the Plenum of the Central Committee confirming this. The text, only partially published, of the June 1937 C.C. Plenum states that this resolution was passed by "opros" — poll, either by telephone or by telegram.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Elena Prudnikova. *Khrushchev — Tvortsy terrora*. (Moscow: OLMA, 2007), 604-607; this citation is on p. 606.

## **Begging The Question Of Torture Again**

Kotkin:

Even as he had the Soviet military brass tortured for being agents of fascism ... (414)

False! Here again Kotkin commits the logical fallacy of "begging the question" — assuming that which must be proven, not assumed. As we have noted several times, there is no evidence that any of the Tukhachevsky Affair defendants were tortured.

## **Krivitsky As Evidence???**

Kotkin:

Germany's military attaché in Moscow, General Ernst Köstring, was sending constant updates to Berlin, as Stalin knew. In Berlin's diplomatic circles, German officials "**confidentially**" whispered how not all of their spies in the Soviet armed forces had yet been caught, egging Stalin on.<sup>225</sup> (414)

Note 225 (996): Krivitsky, *In Stalin's Secret Service*, 234.

Krivitsky's book was ghost-written by professional anticommunist liar Isaac Don Levine. According to the exceptionally thorough biography of Krivitsky by the anticommunist author Gary Kern<sup>7</sup> Krivitsky was upset at this. On this page, however, Krivitsky reveals that one of his superiors in the intelligence service had evidence that the Germans were indeed conspiring with Tukhachevsky. There is no evidence that this was false — that the Germans were "egging Stalin on," as Kotkin claims.

<sup>7</sup> Gary Kern, *A Death in Washington. Walter G. Krivitsky and the Stalin Terror*. Revised and enlarged edition. New York: Enigma Books, 2004.

By now it should be clear to the reader that *no* conceivable evidence would ever convince Kotkin that Tukhachevsky et al. were guilty. Kotkin is simply not interested in the truth.

## **Gamarnik's Suicide**

Kotkin:

On May 28-29, Yakir and Uborevičius were arrested. On May 30, eight days after Gamarnik had inscribed "in favor" on the post-facto arrest order for Tukhachevsky, he himself was dismissed. The next day he killed himself in his apartment on Bolshoi Rzhevsky Street.<sup>226</sup> (414-5)

Note 226 (996): Volkogonov, *Triumf i tragediia*, I/ii: 263; *Krasnaia zvezda*, June 4, Aug. 13, 1964. *Pravda* announced his suicide on June 1, 1937. There were nearly 800 suicides in the Red Army in 1937, and more than 800 the next year. Khlevniuk, 1937-i, 207. Gamarnik had been parroting the Stalin line, telling a party meeting in the military (March 13, 1937), for ex.: "Comrades, the Japanese-German Trotskyist agents, spies, and wreckers are in a full range of our army organization, in the staffs, the institutions, the academies, the military-training institutions." He repeated this in more speeches before his arrest for being the phenomenon he was warning against. Whitewood, "Purge of the Red Army," 296, citing RGVA, f. 9, op. 29, d. 319, l. 2.

Gamarnik certainly did commit suicide. But this is not evidence of innocence any more than it is of guilt.

Kotkin cites Khlevniuk, 1937-y, 207, who writes:

In the Red Army alone in 1937, according to O.F. Suvenirov, 782 cases of suicides were registered, and in 1938 (excluding the Navy) — 832 cases.

Khlevniuk's note 2 reads:

[[[cyrillic]]]2 См: Коммунист. 1990. № 17. С. 73.

The suicide figures are in Suvenirov, *Kommunist* No. 17 (1990). But Suvenirov says:

[[cyrillic]]В целом по РККА в 1937 году зарегистрировано 782 случая самоубийства и покушения на самоубийство, а в 1938 году (без ВМФ) — 832. (73)

In all, the Army registered 782 cases of suicide **and attempted suicide** in 1937, and in 1938 (excluding the Navy) — 832. (73)

So there were not "nearly 800 suicides in the Red Army in 1937, and more than 800 the next year, but suicides *and attempted* suicides. Khlevniuk lied about what Suvenirov wrote, and Kotkin followed Khlevniuk.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For some reason Suvenirov omits any totals for suicides and/or attempted suicides in his much longer 1998 book *Tragediia RKKA*.

Kotkin cites Cherushev, *Udar po svoim*, elsewhere and in his bibliography (1077, col. 1). But did he read it? For these figures are repeated in N.S. Cherushev, *Udar po svoim* (2003), p. 179, with reference to an archival document. While Kotkin gets it wrong, Cherushev gets it right — [[cyrillic]]"самоубийства и покушения на самоубийство" / "suicides and attempts at suicide."

## **Good Evidence That Conspiracies Existed**

Kotkin:

Stalin dictated, edited, and pored over the interrogation protocols, then circulated and **referred to them as if they were factual.**<sup>227</sup> (415)

Note 227 (996): Minakov, *Za otvorotom marshal'skoi shineli*, 249-358.

Either this is a bluff or there is no such thing as a bluff. Minakov's book contains no evidence for Kotkin's claim that "Stalin concocted false confessions" and "then circulated and referred to them as if they were factual." And if it did, it could hardly be spread over 110 pages! Moreover,

Minakov is the author of several books in which he claims, with much evidence, that the Military conspiracy did indeed exist!

The main point here is this: *the fact that Stalin carefully studied and annotated the transcripts of the interrogations and, in Kotkin's words, "referred to them as if they were factual," is strong evidence that Stalin believed they were, indeed, factual — that is, genuine.* How are Stalin's actions to be explained otherwise?

### **When You Don't Know, Assume!**

Kotkin:

And yet, in the end, he [Lion Feuchtwanger] ended up justifying **the trials he knew to be falsified**, on the basis of cultural snobbery (Russia was backward) and the political imperative to close ranks against fascism.<sup>240</sup> ( 418)

Note 240 (996) is simply to Feuchtwanger's book. There's nothing in it about "knowing the trials to be falsified" — because, of course, he could not possibly "know" this, since (a) he had no evidence that they were falsified, and (b) we know today that there is no such evidence exists — all the evidence suggests that the trials were *not* falsified. So how can Kotkin make such a statement? (We have already discussed another Kotkin falsehood about Feuchtwanger and the trials in Chapter 6.)

### **Argument From Incredulity**

Kotkin gives us a classic example of the Argument from Incredulity, a logical fallacy:

Instead, attendees were compelled to spend the first day reading interrogation protocols about a fantastic homegrown fascist military plot. (417)

By calling the conspiracy "fantastic" Kotkin is simply saying: "It is unbelievable" — that is, "I, Stephen Kotkin, cannot believe it."<sup>9</sup> So what?



Whether Kotkin or anyone else "believes" a statement is true or not is irrelevant to whether that statement is true or false.

<sup>9</sup> See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine\\_fallacy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_fallacy);  
<https://www.logicallyfallacious.com/tools/lp/Bo/LogicalFallacies/196/Argument-from-Incredulity>

## Tukhachevsky's Confessions

Kotkin:

**NKVD interrogator-torturers had compelled Tukhachevsky** to compose a post-facto war "plan of defeat," which amounted to a version of the sophisticated doctrines he had been advancing for years and the Soviets had been successfully practicing at maneuvers.<sup>273</sup>  
(423)

Note 273 (997): Volkogonov, *Triumf i tragediia*, I/ii: 264-5. A facsimile of Tukhachevsky's "confession" and a copy of the "plan of defeat" are in: "Pokazaniia marshala Tukhachevskogo."

Note the heavy reliance on Argument by Scare Quote! And this is another "bluff" — i.e. a tactic of deception. For there is no evidence here that "torturers had compelled Tukhachevsky," etc. There is no evidence that Tukhachevsky's confession — "plan of defeat" — published in *Molodaia Gvardiia* 10-11, 1994, was scripted or dictated by the NKVD, or is anything other than what Tukhachevsky himself chose to write.

As so often, Kotkin can cite no *evidence* that Tukhachevsky was tortured or in any way compelled to write a false "plan of defeat." So he simply *asserts* that Tukhachevsky was tortured. This is the logical fallacy of "begging the question" again.

Kotkin also conceals the important testimony in Tukhachevsky's article about the conspiracy and its ties to the Rights and to Trotsky. Here is one such passage:

In 1932, on more than one occasion, I talked to Fel'dman, criticizing the army's leadership and the policies of the Party. Feld'man expressed great misgivings about the policies of the Party in relation to the countryside. **I told him that this should warn us, military workers, to be on our guard and suggested to him to organize a military group, sharing the views of the Rightists, which would be able to discuss these matters and take the necessary steps. Feld'man agreed and thus was begun the creation of the anti-Soviet military Trotskyist conspiracy. I told Feld'man that I already had established links with Enukidze, who represented the leadership of the Rightists.**

There are many more such important passages. An English translation of Tukhachevsky's "Plan of defeat" (*plan porazheniia*) has in fact been published and is readily available. Kotkin fails to inform his readers about it.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Steven J. Main, "The Arrest and 'Testimony' of Marshal of the Soviet Union M.N. Tukhachevsky (May-June 1937)." *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 10, No. 1 (March 1997), 151-195.

### **Kotkin "Discusses" A Transcript He Never Read**

Kotkin:

**At the "trial,"** Yakir acknowledged the existence of the "center" but shifted blame onto Tukhachevsky. Feldman did the same. When Kork tried to absolve himself and attack the others, they incriminated him, calling him a liar and provocateur. Primakov had volunteered an additional handwritten denunciation of commanders not yet arrested. Dybenko pressed Tukhachevsky for details about his planned palace coup, and Blyukher pressed Yakir to elaborate on Gamarnik's counterrevolutionary Trotskyite plotting.<sup>279</sup> (424)

Note 279 (997): Zen'kovich, *Marshaly i genseki*, 510-1 (**citing the eleven-page trial transcript**). Five of the seven military men sitting as

judges with Ulrich would soon be executed themselves, except for Budyonny and Shaposhnikov.

First, the scare quotes: there was an actual trial, not a "trial." Second: as of May, 2018, the full transcript of the trial of Tukhachevsky et al. has been declassified and is available to scholars. It provides yet more compelling evidence that the military conspiracy was real and that Tukhachevsky and the rest were guilty of at least what they confessed to.

Also, Kotkin is, at best, in error here — yet again. Zen'kovich is quoting from Belov's letter to Voroshilov, not from the trial transcript. Kotkin has also misunderstood Zen'kovich's statement, not on page 510 but on page 508, where he says that *Fel'dman's statement* — not the whole trial transcript — occupied 12 pages!

How could Kotkin have made such an elementary error? Was he so eager to depict the trial as a very brief "kangaroo court" that he misread Zen'kovich? Or did Kotkin do this deliberately, knowing that almost no one would ever check the reference? Incompetence? Or deliberate fraud? As so often in Kotkin's book, either is possible.

### **Yakir's Letter to Stalin**

Kotkin:

**Everything had taken place behind the scenes.** On June 8, prison wardens had presented the eight defendants with their formal indictments, and the next day **Yakir had addressed a petition for mercy to "Our Own Close Comrade Stalin,"** who wrote on it, "He is a scoundrel and a whore." Other politburo members had to read it as well. ("A perfectly precise definition. K. Voroshilov." "A scumbag and a whore, deserves only one kind of punishment, death. L. Kaganovich." Molotov affixed his name without elaborating.) After collecting the signatures, Stalin wrote on the document, "My archive."<sup>269</sup>

"Behind the scenes?" What "scenes"? Is Kotkin complaining that there wasn't a public trial? Are military tribunals "public" in the "Free World"? Nonsense. This is just a cheap shot, one of many in Kotkin's book. But it is only the proverbial "tip of the iceberg" concerning Yakir's letter.

### **A World Record? Same Source Cited 3x In One Footnote**

Note 269 (997): *Voennye arkhivy Rossii*, 50; Lebedev, "M. N. Tukhachevskii i 'voenno-fashistskii zagovor,'" 194; Artizov et al., *Reabilitatsiia: kak eto bylo*, II: 688.

The attentive reader who actually peruses footnotes will think these are three different source. But they aren't. Once again these are all *the same source* — the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Report prepared for Khrushchev — cited in three different publications. The third, RKEB 2, is the citation universally used today, since this is a standard, important source book. The first two (VAR, Lebedev) are never cited any longer, since they are very hard to find. Moreover, this document is available online, so why not give *that* reference for the reader's convenience?

As for "Everything had taken place behind the scenes," ironically it is Kotkin who conceals the following important facts:

- That Iakir confesses to treason in this letter.
- That Marshal Zhukov in 1957, and then Khrushchev's KGB chief Aleksandr Shelepin in 1961, quoted this letter *but omitted Iakir's confession*. They did so in order to give the impression that Iakir was claiming that he was innocent.

The complete text of Iakir's letter has now been declassified. I reprint a translation below so that the reader can see the section that Kotkin is concealing, in boldface.

"Dear, close comrade Stalin. I dare address you in this manner because I have said everything, given everything up, and it seems to me that I am a noble warrior — devoted to the Party, the state and the people, as I was for many years. My whole conscious life has been passed in

selfless, honest work in the sight of the Party and of its leaders — **then the fall into the nightmare, into the irreparable horror of betrayal. And during that short period of my life there were always within me two persons: one who had worked much and honestly for the army, the soviets, the party, and another, who thought up and was preparing vile acts hostile to the country. The investigation is completed. I have been formally accused of treason to the state, I have admitted my guilt, I have fully repented. I have unlimited faith in the justice and propriety of the decision of the court and the state. The investigation has been completed. I have been accused of treason to the state; I have admitted my guilt, I have fully repented. I have unlimited faith in the justice and appropriateness of the court and the government. I know that there can and must be only one sentence — death.** I am prepared for this sentence. Nevertheless I appeal to you and to the government and beg you, beg you to believe in the possibility of my correction, to believe that I can still be of use to the state, to which I dedicate my whole being. Perhaps you will consider and decide to allow me to go somewhere in the far North or East, in Kolyma, to work and on rare occasions to learn about the magnificent Land of the Soviets, mine again. I ask you to permit me, even though rarely, to take up "Pravda" and to see, by the amount of the sowing, the production, the transportation, the victories of the party, of the soviets, and of the people, whom I have betrayed.

**I beg you and I understand that I do not have any right to do so.** Now I am honest in my every word, I will die with words of love for you, the Party, and the country, with an unlimited faith in the victory of communism."<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The whole text, with what Khrushchev, Zhukov, and Shelepin concealed, is in Furr, Trotsky's Collaboration 9-10.

## **A 'Cheap Shot' To Distract Readers**

Kotkin:

The single-day trial of the military men took place in camera, near the Kremlin, on the second floor of the three-story military collegium building (October 25 Street).<sup>275</sup> In the chamber, collegium members could avail themselves of sausages, black caviar, pastries, chocolates, fruit. Chief military judge Vasily Ulrich was known to enjoy a brandy.<sup>276</sup> (423-4)

Note 276 (997): Jansen and Petrov, "Mass Terror and the Court."

Yet more falsehoods! The "food and drink" business is from a Khrushchev-era statement of "a former orderly at Lefortovo [prison]" and a crude 1991 Gorbachev-era smear of V.V. Ul'rikh, the chief judge of the military tribunal. What's more, *neither is referring to this specific trial*. Jansen and Petrov take the "cognac" story from a 1991 article (by Chistiakov and Maslov) which contains no evidence whatever!

Kotkin has obviously cited this smear job in an attempt to poison his readers' minds, in order to deflect our attention away from the fact that *it is Kotkin himself who is concealing the evidence* that Tukhachevsky, Yakir and the rest were in fact guilty of conspiring with Germany and Japan.

### **Bias By Omission Again**

Kotkin:

Budyonny reported that day to Voroshilov ("only personally"), in a nineteen-page memorandum, that "from the testimony of Tukhachevsky, Kork, Yakir, and Uborevicius it is evident that they decided to work out first on their own initiative the plan for the defeat of the Red Army during the war and only after that to clear it with the German general staff ... [but] because of their arrest they did not finish." Still, Budyonny concluded, "I consider that nonetheless they passed it on to German intelligence" (parroting Stalin's closed-door speech of June 2).<sup>280</sup> (424)

Note 280: RGVA, f. 33 987, op. 3s, d. 828, Volkogonov papers, Hoover, container 17. In his account for Stalin (June 26), Budyonny

noted that although Tukhachevsky had shaken his head "no" during the reading of the charges and testimony, and denied passing any classified documents to the Germans, in the end he pronounced himself guilty.

*Voennye arkhivy Rossii*, 55-6; Lebedev, "M. N. Tukhachevskii i 'voenno-fashistskii zagovor,'" 199-200; APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 310, l. 170-83. See also the report of another "judge," I. P. Belov, in Cristiani and Mikhaleva, *Le repressioni*, 192-8. (997)

Budyonny's report was addressed to Voroshilov, not to Stalin. This looks like a careless error since the archival copy in the Volkogonov Papers is indeed 19 pages long and does have the archival identifier numbers cited by Kotkin. It has been published in Russia at least twice and is online in Russian.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> At <http://istmat.info/node/22536>

An English translation of Budyonny's letter is also available online.<sup>13</sup> The interested reader can consult it and see for herself what Kotkin omits. Like Yakir's letter, the text leaves no room for doubt that the military commanders, and Trotsky as well, were guilty of conspiring with the Nazis. Kotkin conceals all this from his readers.

<sup>13</sup> At <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/budiennyiltr.html>

It is no surprise, then, that Kotkin does not quote the relevant parts of these documents. Just as Kotkin ignores Frinovsky's statement of April, 1939; all of Yezhov's confession statements; the appeals of the Moscow Trials defendants; and all the rest of the primary source evidence that shows that these conspiracies were real, not fabrications by an "evil Stalin."

### **When You Don't Know Invent!**

Kotkin:

Just before midnight, Ulrich sentenced all eight to death; the men were led down to the cellar, where the NKVD's head executioner, Vasily

Blokhin, used German Walther pistols to execute the fascist hirelings.282 (424)

Note 282 (997): Blokhin was assisted by Ignatev. Lebedev, "M. N. Tukhachevskii i 'voenno-fashistskii zagovor,'" 199.

This is a falsification. There is nothing in "Lebedev" — really, the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Report, as we have seen — about who the executioner was. The "Spravka" (and Lebedev, on the same page 199) simply states that Vyshinsky, Ul'rikh, Tsesarskii, Ignat'ev, and "NKVD commandant Blokhin" were present at the execution and signed the document verifying that the executions had been carried out.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Kotkin does not tell us who "Ignatev" was. According to the "Spravka," this was a Captain Ignat'ev, commandant of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR.

Perhaps Kotkin says that Blokhin was the executioner, and that he used German Walthers, because in the "official" — and dishonest — version of the Katyn Massacre, which falsely blames the Soviets, it is claimed that Blokhin was the executioner and used German Walther pistols. As we have shown in *The Mystery of the Katyn Massacre: The Evidence, The Solution*,<sup>15</sup> the evidence is very clear: the Soviets cannot possibly have committed the Katyn massacres, so it follows that Blokhin did not shoot the Polish POWs. As for using German Walthers, the Germans did that.

<sup>15</sup> Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press and Media, LLC, 2018.

Why would Kotkin fabricate an insignificant detail like this one? To convince his readers that he is thorough? Whatever the reason, he did make it up — or, perhaps, copy from someone else who did.

### **Kotkin Cites A Letter Two Years Late**

Kotkin:



Incarcerated Red Army men inundated the defense commissar with desperate letters about their torture, begging—begging—for his help. "Kliment Yefremovich! You must check how the cases against the commanders of the Red Army are being handled," a group of civil war comrades wrote to him. **"You will find that materials are extracted from the arrested by means of force, threats, and turning men into limp rags."**<sup>298</sup> (303)

Note 298 (998): Afanas'ev, *Oni ne molchali*, 380'

In Afanas'ev — a dishonest book as we shall see — this quotation is dated May 15, 1939, *twenty-three months after* the Tukhachevsky trial and executions; six months after Yezhov had resigned and Stalin and the Politburo had ordered NKVD repressions to be stopped.

### **Argumentum E Silentio**

Kotkin:

In fact, evidence indicates that Voroshilov knew full well the charges were a lie.<sup>302</sup> (303)

Note 302 (998): Just one of many examples: between May 7 and 10, Voroshilov issued a plan for liquidating wrecking check all warehouses, all construction sites, all secret information storage holdings, all military units but he did so without naming a single example of actual wrecking in the army. Khaustov and Samuelson, *Stalin, NKVD*, 75 (APRF, f. 3, f. 401, 1. 107-9).

This passage is in Khaustov and Samuelson, page 75 — but it is not evidence that Voroshilov "knew the charges were a lie." This is "argument from silence," a logical fallacy. But see the following passage.

### **But He *Did* Believe ...**

Kotkin:

"The authority of the army in the country is shaken," Voroshilov wrote, again in notes to himself. "The authority of the commanding group has been shaken ... This means that the methods of our work, the whole system of governing the army, my work as commissar, has suffered a shattering crash."<sup>303</sup> (303)

Note 303 (998): Suvenirov, "Narkomat oborony," 29 (citing RGVA, f. 33987, op. 3, d. 1023, l. 22, 24, 26: June 1937). Notes to himself for his Nov. 1938 speech to the Main Military Council show how far Voroshilov had come. Suvenirov, *Tragediia RKKA*, 74-5 (citing RGVA, f. 33987, op. 3, d. 1137, l. 3, 5, 6).

The quotation in Kotkin's text at this footnote is indeed in Suvenirov, "Narkomat oborony," page 29. But in the *second* Suvenirov citation in Kotkin's note, *Tragediia RKKA* 74-5, *Suvenirov says that Voroshilov sincerely believed that the armed forces were full of spies, etc.,* (74) thus contradicting what Kotkin has just said! No wonder Kotkin omits this fact!

How could he cite a source that not only fails to support his fact-claim, but says *the direct opposite* of what Kotkin claims it says? Evidently because for Kotkin these citations are "window-dressing," a sham to fool the rubes — us, his readers. He is so sure that no one will check and find him out.

## **The Far Eastern Conspiracy Was Real**

Kotkin:

NKVD bigwig Vsevolod Balytsky had been transferred from Ukraine to fabricate a Trotskyite-fascist conspiracy in the Soviet Far Eastern Army, the country's critical line of defense against Japan ... (432)

This is a particularly flagrant falsification. Elsewhere in his book Kotkin cites the late professor Alvin D. Coox's two articles "The Lesser of Two Hells." (1078) Coox discovered that Genrikh S. Liushkov, the NKVD general who replaced Balytsky in the Far East and then defected to the Japanese, *told his Japanese handlers that there really was a conspiracy in*

*the Far Eastern Army*, naming names. This is evidence of this highest importance since it confirms the real existence of the military conspiracy.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> I have examined Coox's articles in Chapter 17 of Furr, Kirov.

What's more, this is *non-Soviet evidence*, since Liushkov was in Japanese hands when he said it. Kotkin conceals all this fascinating and important stuff from his readers this.

### **Another Series Of Falsehoods**

Kotkin:

Stalin's war preparations also bore the mark of his executions of thousands of loyal officers, especially top commanders like Vasily Blyukher, whose eye had been deposited in his hand before he died under torture, and the gifted Mikhail Tukhachevsky, whose blood had been splattered all over his "confession" to being a German agent just before Stalin signed the Pact.<sup>40</sup> (893)

Note 40 (1068): Stepanov, "O masshtabakh repressii."

This footnote is a fraud. No specific pages, or even the number of the issue, are cited. Do you wonder why? And this is a four-part article in *Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal*, 1993, Nos 1, 2, 3 and 5. What's more, the article in issue 1 is not by Stepanov, but by A. T. Ukolov and V.I. Ivkin.

But in his bibliography Kotkin lists them all as by Stepanov. *And those that are by Stepanov, Nos. 2, 3, and 5, are simply yet another publication of the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission*, which Kotkin has cited elsewhere, in at least *five* other different editions! Why cite the same document here again in yet another separate publication? To create the appearance of thorough scholarship?

The "Spravka" says that Bliukher died "in custody," not "under torture." As for Bliukher's eye, the "Spravka" just states: [[cyrillic]] "около глаза был огромный синяк" — "near his eye was a huge bruise." Where does the

"whose eye had been deposited in his hand" come from? Not from the sources Kotkin cites. Did Kotkin dream up this macabre bit of gory detail himself in order to make Stalin, et al. "look bad"?

Concerning the falsehood about "the gifted Mikhail Tukhachevsky, whose blood had been splattered all over his "confession" to being a German agent just before Stalin signed the Pact," see the Appendix to this chapter.

Here Kotkin adds yet another falsehood. Tukhachevsky et al. were executed on June 11, 1937. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed ("Stalin signed the Pact") on August 25, 1939 — 26 months later, not "just before."

## **Blyukher**

Kotkin:

On October 22, 1938, NKVD operatives appeared at Voroshilov's dacha, where the thirty-nine-year-old Blyukher and his twenty-three-year-old wife were staying. They arrested the couple and took them to Moscow.<sup>279</sup> Yezhov had signed the order, but Beria oversaw the interrogation in Lefortovo. Back in summer 1937, Stalin had said that Tukhachevsky and Gamarnik, on orders from the Japanese, had tried to remove Blyukher from command of the Soviet Far Eastern Army; now, in fall 1938, Stalin had Blyukher accused of being a spy for the Japanese since 1922. Under "interrogation," Beria's men reduced Blyukher's face to a bloody pulp—he lost an eye—yet the marshal refused to confess. Blyukher would die under torture. Beria telephoned Stalin with the news, after which the marshal was cremated.<sup>280</sup> (549-550)

Note 280 (1015): Blyukher died on Nov. 9, 1938. He would be convicted and sentenced to death posthumously, on March 10, 1939. Dushen'kin, *Ot soldata do marshala*. His wife received eight years in the Karaganda camp complex.

The Dushen'kin book was published in 1960 in an edition of 150,000 copies, and republished in 1964 in another 100,000 copies, as part of the

Khrushchev-era anti-Stalin campaign. It contains no evidence to support its conclusions and is useless for research. Under Khrushchev similar books were published about Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Primakov, Eideman, and others.

Kotkin fails to cite the 2008 book by Nikolai Velikanov, *Izmena Marshalov*, "Betrayal of the Marshals." No doubt this is because Velikanov's book contains evidence that Bliukher and others were guilty.

Kotkin does cite the two articles by Coox which contain similar important evidence. But he conceals that evidence from his readers. Coox relates that Liushkov told his Japanese military handlers that Bliukher had indeed been conspiring against the Soviet government.

### **Omitting The Evidence Of Bliukher's Guilt**

Bliukher also admitted being in touch with Rykov, who had offered him a position:

Blyukher told Gulin that before the removal of Rykov he was in connection with him and had often written that the 'right wing' wished to see him at the head of the armed forces of the country. (Coox 1, 158)

Publicly Liushkov was saying that all the conspiracies were fabrications by Stalin. But at the same time he was privately informing the Japanese that serious conspiracies did in fact exist. Moreover, what Liushkov told the Japanese is consistent with the charges at the January 1937 and March 1938 Moscow Trials (the guilt of Rykov) and with the charges against the military conspirators, both the Tukhachevsky Affair figures (Gamarnik) and those against military and Party officials in the Far East.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Furr Kirov, 348.

We also now have a few selections of interrogations of Bliukher in 1938. In one of them Bliukher explicitly mentions a letter from Rykov that stated exactly what, according to Coox's research, Liushkov told the Japanese:

The beginning of my contact with the Rights took place in 1930 ...  
These political waverings and unsteadiness of mine became known to Rykov and **permitted Rykov in 1930 to write to me an anti-Party and anti-Soviet letter, which I hid from the Party, and in which he spoke of his desire to see me at the head of the military ...**

This agrees with Coox's account of what his Japanese informants told him about Liushkov's words, already quoted above. Other snippets of interrogations of Bliukher implicate Deribas, Lavrent'ev, Pokus, Aronshtam, and other figures whom Liushkov identified as participants in the military conspiracy in the Far East. Liushkov's statements to the Japanese confirm them. By the same token, Liushkov's statements to the Japanese refute the notion that these statements were false, the result of torture, threat, or simple NKVD fabrication.

Excerpts from Bliukher's interrogations are contained in Velikanov's book on pages 342-344. Of the 26 pages of Bliukher's handwritten confession Velikanov reproduces a few paragraphs only. But in them Bliukher confirms that he joined the conspiracy of the Rights in 1930.

## **Conclusion**

This critique has established that Kotkin has extensively falsified the evidence about the Tukhachevsky Affair in order to create the false appearance that Stalin and his associates framed innocent men. We now possess far more evidence of the guilt of Tukhachevsky and the other military commanders executed with him than I outline above.

As of May, 2018, the transcript of the trial of Tukhachevsky et al. of June 11, 1937, has finally been declassified and made available on the Internet.<sup>18</sup> As of November, 2018, most of the NKVD investigation file on Tukhachevsky has been declassified as well. The testimony given there by the defendants will remove any doubt in the mind of the objective reader that these men were guilty of the crimes to which they confessed.

<sup>18</sup> At <http://istmat.info/node/59108>, with PDF file at [http://istmat.info/files/uploads/59108/rgaspi\\_17.171.392\\_process\\_tuhachev](http://istmat.info/files/uploads/59108/rgaspi_17.171.392_process_tuhachev)

skogo.pdf It is also available at a Ukrainian, Russian-language site:  
[http://lander.odessa.ua/doc/rgaspi\\_17.171.392\\_process\\_tuhachevskogo.pdf](http://lander.odessa.ua/doc/rgaspi_17.171.392_process_tuhachevskogo.pdf)

But Kotkin, in company with many or perhaps even most scholars of the Stalin era, is anything but objective. No conceivable evidence can change his mind, or theirs. Denial of the evidence is the rule, and objectivity is the exception, in the corrupt field of Soviet history of the Stalin era.

## Chapter 9a. Appendix: The "Bloodstain" Question

On page 414 Kotkin writes the following:

In the cellars on May 26, a mere four days after his arrest, Tukhachevsky began to sign whatever interrogators put in front of him. **Zinovy Ushakov, who prided himself on obtaining confessions no other investigator could extract, mercilessly beat Tukhachevsky, whose blood dripped onto the pages of a confession to crimes he did not commit.**

The claim that these bloodstains prove that Tukhachevsky was beaten into false confessions is repeated by many other writers.

For example:

... Yezhov's investigators tortured the officers mercilessly until they confessed. Analysis many years later showed that there were bloodstains on the confession signed by Tukhachevsky. (Getty, *Road to Terror*, 447-8)

Their reference is to *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* n. 4, 1989, p. 50. This is in fact the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission, prepared for Khrushchev in 1963 but not published until Gorbachev's anti-Stalin campaign. In the authoritative publication of the "Spravka" in the volume RKEB 2 it is on page 682.

Here is that passage:

[[[cyrillic]]]В процессе изучения дела М. Н. Тухачевского на отдельных листах его показаний обнаружены пятна бурокоричневого цвета. В заключении Центральной судебно-медицинской лаборатории Военно-медицинского управления Министерства обороны СССР от 28 июня 1956 г. говорится: «В пятнах и мазках на листках 165, 166 дела № 967581 обнаружена кровь ... Некоторые пятна крови имеют форму восклицательного знака. Такая форма пятен крови наблюдается обычно при



попадании крови с предмета, находящегося в движении, или при попадании крови на поверхность под углом ...».

In the process of studying the case of M.N. Tukhachevsky, spots of a brownish color were found on separate sheets of his testimony. In the conclusion of the Central Forensic Laboratory of the Military Medical Directorate of the Ministry of Defense of the USSR of June 28, 1956 it is stated: "Blood has been found on stains and smears on sheets 165, 166 of case No. 967581 ... Some bloodstains have the form of an exclamation mark. This form of bloodstains is usually observed when the blood falls from an object in motion, or when blood falls to a surface at an angle ... "

Khrushchev "rehabilitated" Tukhachevsky et al. in 1956-57. In the early 2000s Iulia Kantor was given permission by the Tukhachevsky family to view his interrogation file. She published two books about this, both cited by Kotkin. Kantor was utterly unable to find any evidence that Tukhachevsky was innocent, although she is certain that he was, and she covers up this fact with lots of assertions.

On February 21, 2004, Kantor published an article in *Izvestiia*, still a Russian newspaper. In that article she reproduced a photo of the place in one of Tukhachevsky's confessions that has the stains.

Years ago, I put this photograph online:

[https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/tukh\\_confess\\_with\\_blood.jpg](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/tukh_confess_with_blood.jpg)

It is important to note a few details here:

\* These are the same stains that are identified in the "Spravka" of 1963. The stain in "the form of an exclamation mark" is at the lower left corner.

\* This confession is a carbon copy. I thought it looked like this, and it has been confirmed by my Moscow colleague Vladimir Bobrov, who has been working in the FSB (formerly the KGB-NKVD archive).

\* Tukhachevsky's signature is visible. Normally, each page of a confession is signed. That was the custom with all interrogation transcripts.

This discovery was made by Khrushchev's men when Khrushchev was falsely "rehabilitating" lots of people and blaming Stalin, after his February 25, 1956 "Secret Speech." I have written about these false "rehabilitations" in *Khrushchev Lied*, Chapter 11. Later, Gorbachev's men often just copied the unpublished Khrushchev material stuff verbatim.

\*Why should we trust Khrushchev and his men? We shouldn't! In anything! They lied big-time. So, we don't know whether these stains are blood or not.

\* Assuming they are blood, are they Tukhachevsky's blood? Khrushchev's men may or may not have had the technology to determine that in 1962-3. But by 1989, and certainly today, the technology exists, and many Tukhachevsky family members are still around.

If it were Tukhachevsky's blood, wouldn't Khrushchev and Gorbachev tell us that? But they do not mention it. Maybe they "do not want to know," in case the test shows that it is *not* Tukhachevsky's blood?

Imagine a courtroom in which this is presented as evidence against somebody — say, Zinovy Ushakov, Tukhachevsky's interrogator. The defense attorney could make mincemeat of this so-called "evidence," get it excluded from consideration. That's because *it proves nothing*.

\* Even if these stains are blood — and even if they are Tukhachevsky's blood (let's remember, this has not been established) — they are on a carbon copy. That means that Tukhachevsky has already made the confession, and it has been typed up.

So why would they still beat him? To force him to sign each page? But look at the signature. It's a regular signature, nothing shaky or hesitant. It's like he is signing an order or a check.

\* Most important: Is this "blood spatter"? Read the Wikipedia page on this:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloodstain\\_pattern\\_analysis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloodstain_pattern_analysis)

This is *not* "blood spatter." There is no "spatter" at all. But if Tukhachevsky were being beaten, there would be "spatter." A blow produces spatter, not drops.

Let's assume these are bloodstains. What might have caused them? A nosebleed. A paper cut. Whose blood? It could be anybody's: the interrogator's; the secretary-typist's; from one of the archivists handling the document. Or, it could be Tukhachevsky's.

What it *cannot* be is the sign of a beating. A beating produces "blood splatter," which these stains are not.

There is nothing ingenious or obscure about either this evidence or the analysis of it here. Khrushchev's and Gorbachev's men could have done it. But they didn't. They had been tasked by their bosses to find evidence that Tukhachevsky was innocent. So they did not look too closely.

Kotkin could have done it too. But, like Khrushchev's and Gorbachev's men, Kotkin was not looking for the truth either. Like Khrushchev and his men, Kotkin was looking for a good anti-Stalin story. So he turned off his critical faculties and *fabricated* a beating. And not just any beating, but a "merciless beating."

Pure invention! And yet Kotkin is a renowned historian!

## Chapter 10. *Yezhov's Conspiracy*

Interestingly, in January 1939, S. Mironov-Korol' [S.N. Mironov's full name] was arrested, and almost immediately testified that **in July 1937 in a private conversation Frinovskii told him of Ezhov's intention to come to power on the basis of their group in the NKVD.**<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Leonid A. Naumov, *Stalin i NKVD*. Moscow: Novyi Khronograf, 2010, 263.

In conformity to the Anti-Stalin Paradigm Kotkin takes the familiar — indeed, the obligatory — position that the mass executions of 1937-1938 were planned by Stalin, and that Nikolai Yezhov, the chief of the NKVD, was only carrying out Stalin's orders. In the words of the title of a book by two leading anti-Stalin falsifiers (and therefore a book often cited by Kotkin) Yezhov was "Stalin's loyal executioner."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The updated Russian edition of this book is titled *Stalinskii pitomets*, "Stalin's nursling," or "pupil."

This is all wrong. No evidence supports it. Therefore, Kotkin can cite none. It is only possible to make this claim at all by ignoring the primary source evidence now available and relying heavily on secondary sources by anti-Stalin researchers who, of course, can give no evidence either. Long, detailed footnotes give Kotkin's account the superficial appearance of being well-documented. But this is a sham. As we shall see, many of Kotkin's footnotes do not provide evidence for the fact-claims he makes.

*Bias by omission* is perhaps the most powerful of the tools in the bag of the historical falsifier, because only a specialist who is familiar with the available sources will know what is omitted. Kotkin takes full advantage of this technique of falsification. We devote a full chapter to Kotkin's abuse of this tool of deception.

I have written a book-length study of Yezhov's conspiracy and mass murders: *Yezhov vs. Stalin. The Truth About Mass Repressions and the So-*

*Called 'Great Terror' in the USSR.* In it I examine the primary-source evidence. For brevity's sake I will refer to that book rather than reprint its contents here.

Kotkin completely ignores all the evidence of Yezhov's conspiracy against the Soviet government! Because he deals with Yezhov's mass murders in several different sections of his book, our discussion here has to jump around in Kotkin's text to follow him.

### **The Basic Falsehood Stated**

Kotkin:

Through it all, the NKVD never broke down, let alone rebelled. The ease with which Yagoda was destroyed proved that there was no threat whatsoever to Stalin's rule. The secret police, even under assault, remained an utterly reliable instrument of his will, a testament to both the limits of the feared yet despised Yagoda's authority and the strength of Stalin's as supreme leader. (394)

No evidence given for these outrageous statements. No wonder! We have a great deal of evidence that the NKVD leaders, both Iagoda and then Yezhov, were indeed conspiring against Stalin and the Soviet government and Party. My book, *Yezhov vs. Stalin*, reproduces a great deal of this evidence. Much of it is taken from Jansen and Petrov, and the revised Russian edition by Petrov and Jansen, as well as other sources that Kotkin cites — but not here. His readers will not know this.

Here is just one quotation from a book that Kotkin cites many times.

Evdokimov gave similar evidence. According to him, in September [1938 — GF] he discussed the threatening situation after Beria's appointment with Yezhov, Frinovskii, and Bel'skii. **Allegedly, they agreed to prepare an attempt on Stalin and Molotov. Yezhov was also said to have had plans to murder Beria.** ... According to Iu. K. Ivanov, an NKVD executive from Evdokimov's circle, as early as late July, after a visit to Yezhov, Evdokimov had alluded to terrorism

against the Party leadership. Involved in the conspiracy first of all were people originating from North Caucasia (Evdokimov's home base), Dagin, Nikolaev-Zhurid, and others. But the action, planned for 7 November [1938], did not take place because Dagin was arrested beforehand.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Mark Jansen and Nikita Petrov. *Stalin's Loyal Executioner. People's Commissar Nikolai Yezhov 1895-1940*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2002, 156. There is a great deal more evidence of "NKVD rebelling" against Stalin and the Party. Kotkin hides it from his readers.

### **Omitting The Evidence**

Kotkin:

Franco, therefore, had nothing to teach him, except that a military-led putsch, assisted externally by fascists, could try to seize a whole country, a scenario that Stalin was manipulating to justify his own savage domestic counterinsurgency against **an imaginary insurgency**. (401— no footnote)

Yezhov, some of his NKVD men, and some Party First Secretaries, claimed that there were serious insurgencies afoot. We have discussed this, and quoted the texts in English translation, in Chapter Five of *Yezhov vs. Stalin*. This primary-source evidence was, of course, available to Kotkin too. But he never tells his readers about it.

From the evidence we now have it seems that they were lying, at least in large part. But Stalin and the central leadership in Moscow were relying on the Party and NKVD leadership around the vast country to inform them.

There is no question that Stalin believed that these alleged insurgencies were real, as the editor of one of the document collections admits. That editor is V.N. Khaustov, one of the compilers of several important document collections and a very anti-Stalin researcher.

And the most frightening thing was that Stalin made his decisions on the basis of confessions that were the result of the inventions of certain employees of the organs of state security. **Stalin's reactions attest to the fact that he took these confessions completely seriously.**

(Lubianka Golgofa, 6)

What is important here?

- That Khaustov admits the existence of a major conspiracy by Yezhov.
- That Khaustov concedes that Stalin was deceived by Yezhov. Yezhov admits as much in the confessions of his that we now have.
- *That Khaustov admits that Stalin acted in good faith on the basis of evidence presented to him by Yezhov, much of which may, or must, have been false.*

Kotkin, who cites at least six books written or edited by Khaustov, does not cite or use this very important collection of documents.

It is important to ideologically anticommunist researchers that these mass murders be seen as Stalin's plan and intention. Khaustov is honest enough to admit that the evidence supports the opposite conclusion. Some of the confessional and investigative documents Yezhov sent on to Stalin and the Soviet leadership must have been falsified. But Khaustov himself has no idea which were fabrications and which were not. (Furr, Yezhov vs Stalin, 64)

## **The Falsehood About "Quotas"**

Kotkin:

In summer 1937, he vastly expanded the arrests and executions to nonelites [non-elites]. There was no "dynamic" forcing him to do so, no "factional" fighting, no heightened threat abroad. The terror was not spiraling out of his control. He just decided, himself, to approve quota-driven eradication of entire categories of people in a planned indiscriminate terror known as mass operations.<sup>3</sup> (433)

Note 3 (999) is to Solzhenitsyn and an even older book by Weissberg. Of course, neither could have any evidence to support Kotkin's claim. This is a falsification, and a particularly flagrant one at that. As American scholar Arch Getty has pointed out:<sup>4</sup>

Order No. 0044 7 established limits [*limity*] rather than quotas, maximums, not minimums ... The word's meaning was well known: it never meant 'quotas'. Reflecting Stalin's concern that locals might go out of control (or out of his control) Order No. 00447 twice warned that 'excesses' in local implementation of the operation were not permitted. (Getty, *Fever* 232-233)

<sup>4</sup> I discuss this issue in *Yezhov vs Stalin* 72-3.

Getty repeats this in a recent book:

One of the mysteries of the field [of Soviet history — GF] is **how *limity* is routinely translated as "quotas."** (Getty, *Practicing* 340 n. 109)

Kotkin knows this, of course. But his readers will not know it. Why not? Because he hides it from them.

Kotkin falsely attributes the Bolsheviks with a passion for "quotas" elsewhere too:

[On January 11, 1930] Yagoda asked his top subordinates how many people could be interned in existing labor camps and where new camps might be quickly established, encouraging them to "think creatively."<sup>156</sup> The upshot was that each territory would have a deportation **quota**.<sup>157</sup> (36)

Note 157 (916): 157. Ivnitiskii, *Kollektivizatsiia i raskulachivanie*, 108-9.

But there is *nothing* about quotas of any kind on these pages of Ivnitiskii's book.



## The Nonsense of "Psychohistory"

Kotkin:

There could have been no such terror without the Communist party and its ideology, but there would have been no such terror without Stalin, and his profoundly dark personality, immense strength of will, and political skill.<sup>321</sup> (490)

Let's pause for a moment to consider the first clause in this sentence. Can it really be that Kotkin is ignorant of the massive terror by capitalist countries in many parts of the world? Or does he just hope his readers will be ignorant of them? Conquest, quoted in note 321 (1007) by Kotkin, was an avid supporter of the immense terror, which included the massive use of torture, of the American war in Vietnam. What about American terror in Korea, the Philippines, Latin America, Iraq, Afghanistan? British atrocities in Kenya and India? The French massacre of African soldiers in Senegal?<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> For this last atrocity see

[https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massacre\\_de\\_Thiaroye](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massacre_de_Thiaroye).

As for Kotkin's psychologizing of Stalin here ("profoundly dark personality") — it is of course an error to try to explain historical events in this way, despite how often anticommunist writers have recourse to it.<sup>6</sup> It is also an example of the logical fallacy known as the nominal fallacy — giving something a name ("dark personality"), then assuming that you have explained it.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See the essay by Geoffrey Roberts, "Stalin, Trump, and the Politics of Narcissism: A Response to Rose McDermott's 'The Nature of Narcissism.'" H-Diplo, June 29, 2018. At <https://issforum.org/roundtables/policy/1-SBG-Stalin>

<sup>7</sup> For one discussion of this fallacy see

<http://www.indiana.edu/~p1013447/dictionary/nomfall.htm>

As we shall see, Kotkin has no evidence whatever to support his view that the massive executions of 1937-8 were planned by Stalin. But since he rejects the explanation that is supported by all the evidence we now have, cheap "psychologizing" is all Kotkin has left. Plus Robert Tucker, Kotkin's professor at Princeton, was an avid proponent of "psychohistory."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin as revolutionary, 1879-1929: a study in history and personality* (New York: Norton, 1973). The "personality" part is Tucker's phony psychohistory.

### **Frinovsky's Confession Statement**

Kotkin:

Yezhov's NKVD ... was riven with distrust. When informing Frinovsky that he wanted to appoint him first deputy commissar, Yezhov asked him to recite his accumulated sins. "You have so many sins, you ought to be arrested right now," Yezhov told him, adding, "Well, so what, you'll work, and you'll be my person 100 percent."<sup>233</sup> Frinovsky further testified that "Yezhov demanded that I find investigators who were utterly dependent on us or had sins on their records, and they knew they had sins, which could be held over them."<sup>234</sup> (415-6)

Note 233 (996):

[http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/193\\_dok/19390413beria.php](http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/193_dok/19390413beria.php) (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 373, l. 3-44: protocol of Frinovsky interrogation, Beria to Stalin April 11, 1939). Frinovsky and Yezhov were not close. "I had multiple clashes at work with him," Yezhov would later observe of Frinovsky. "I cursed him out, and called him a fool to his face, because no sooner would he arrest someone among the NKVD operatives than he would run to me and shout that it was all fabrication [*lipa*], that the person was wrongly arrested." "Poslednee slovo Nikolai Yezhova."

Note 234 (996):

[http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/193\\_dok/19390413beria.php](http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/193_dok/19390413beria.php) (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 373, l. 3-44: **protocol of Frinovsky interrogation**, sent by Beria to Stalin April 11, 1939); Afanas'ev, *Oni ne molchali*, 218.

There are a number of falsehoods here. For starters, Frinovsky's confession is a statement, not an interrogation.

But more important, *Frinovsky asserts that the Moscow Trials defendants were guilty*. Kotkin ignores this. I have put an English translation of Frinovsky's statement online so the reader may see for herself.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> At <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/frinovskyeng.html>

### ***Oni Ne Molchali Is A Fraud***

As for "Afanas'ev, *Oni ne molchali*, 218" — this is interesting! It is a very short excerpt from Frinovsky's statement. This book, published in 1991, was a part of Gorbachev's truly gigantic attack on Stalin that facilitated his turning the USSR towards capitalism, civil conflict, and dissolution. It was published in an edition of 75,000 — an enormous printing of what is a dry and, supposedly, scholarly book.

The full text of Frinovsky's statement was published in 2006 and is cited above by Kotkin. It shows how dishonest *Oni ne molchali* is, since that Gorbachev-era book does not mention the fact that *Frinovsky strongly and repeatedly attests to the guilt of the Moscow Trials defendants and the existence of Yezhov's conspiracy*.

The editors of this 1991 book, doing Gorbachev's bidding, concealed this from their readers. And now Kotkin is concealing it from *his* readers!

### **More Dishonest Use of Frinovsky's Confession Statement**

Kotkin cites Frinovsky's confession statement a number of times, and falsifies it every time.

Kotkin, note 278 (967) to page 234 of the text: In 1935, Yefim Yevdokimov evidently asked Frinovsky if he had any information about the hand of Yagoda in the murder of Kirov (**insinuating Stalin's involvement**). **Protocol of Frinovsky interrogation**, Beria to Stalin,

April 11, 1939 (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 373, l. 3-44),  
[http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/193\\_dok/19390413beria.php](http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/193_dok/19390413beria.php).

This is yet another of Kotkin's blatant falsehoods. Evdokimov's question about Yagoda did not "insinuate Stalin's involvement" at all. Quite the contrary! Evdokimov, Frinovsky, and Yagoda were all in the Rightist conspiracy. This is made clear in Frinovsky's statement, though Kotkin never informs the reader of this. For example:

Evdokimov also said that in a number of regions of the North Caucasus his people had succeeded in leading some groups of rebels, and that the purge of the party that was taking place at that time might help in the sense of recruitment of people.

At the time of the trial of Zinoviev, Kamenev and others, when the testimony about Bukharin was published in the press, Evdokimov was in Moscow. He became very upset and in a conversation with me, said: **"The devil only knows how he will be able to extract himself from this whole affair. I just don't understand Yagoda at all, what he is doing, why he is broadening the circle of persons for repression, or maybe the nerves of these people are weak — they will give out. But it could have been possible to direct the course of the investigation in such a manner as to leave oneself safe in any case."** (40)

For clarity we repeat Kotkin's note 233 (to page 416)

[http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/193\\_dok/19390413beria.php](http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/193_dok/19390413beria.php) (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 373, l. 3-44: protocol of Frinovsky interrogation, Beria to Stalin April 11, 1939). Frinovsky and Yezhov were not close. "I had multiple clashes at work with him," Yezhov would later observe of Frinovsky. "I cursed him out, and called him a fool to his face, because no sooner would he arrest someone among the NKVD operatives then he would run to me and shout that it was all fabrication [*lipa*], that the person was wrongly arrested." "Poslednee slovo Nikolai Yezhova." (996)

Frinovsky's confession statement shows that Frinovsky was indeed "close" to Yezhov, though Kotkin's readers will not know this, since he provides no

link to the English translation.

Frinovsky continued:

Soon after starting work in my new position as vice-commissar Yezhov began to bring me close to himself, to select me from among the remaining vice-commissars, to hold franker conversations with me in the evaluation of the other vice-commissars, to express some dissatisfaction with Agranov. Before the division of duties among the vice-commissars, besides the fact that I continued to be the chief of the GUPVO, Yezhov proposed that I become involved in operative questions also, and in 1937, after Yagoda's arrest, he began to hold talks with me in relation to my possible appointment as first vice-commissar. During one of these talks Yezhov told me: "I have decided this question, but I want to talk it over with you, only look — be honest, there are some sins on your account."

At first I was completely taken aback. I thought — I'm done for. When he saw my dismay Yezhov began to speak: "Don't be afraid, speak honestly." Then I told him about the story with the Sokol'nichesky affair, about my ties with Yagoda, ties with Evdokimov, and through him with Lifshits. Then Yezhov said: "There are so many sins to your name that we could throw you in prison right now, but never mind, you will keep working, you will be my man 100%." I looked at him in dismay and tried to refuse the appointment to the position of first vice-commissar, but he said: "Sit down, get to work, we'll work together and take the responsibility together." (41-42)

I have put a translation of Yezhov's last words ("Poslednee slovo Nikolaia Yezhova") online.<sup>10</sup>

## **Imaginary "Kremlin Bodyguards"**

Kotkin:

**Peasants had rebelled en masse against the violence of forced collectivization and dekulakization, and even some party officials**

had protested. But the terror? A group of Kremlin bodyguards had been carrying loaded pistols on Red Square during the 1937 May Day festivities, within shooting distance of Stalin and the entire leadership; within a few months, they went meekly to their deaths, liquidated as an alleged "assassin corps" working for foreign agents.<sup>243</sup> (543)

What about the story of the Kremlin bodyguards who went meekly to their deaths?

Note 243 (1014, to Kotkin passage above): Rybin, *Riadam so Stalinym*, 73. See also Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, 587.

Yet more phony references! The story of the "group of Kremlin bodyguards" is simply not in either of these sources. Or, perhaps Kotkin has misunderstood a passage in Rybin's memoir where he notes that, after the arrest of Yagoda (March 1, 1937) and some of the other conspirators, the four bodyguards who had been assigned to Red Square for May Day "disappeared." Rybin assumes they were part of the plot to kill Stalin, and says "No wonder that, when gathering in Red Square on May 1, they feverishly shoved four or five pistols each into their field coats."

### **Few Peasants Rebelled**

As for peasants, some did rebel — but what does "en masse" mean? Mark Tauger, a world expert on Russian and Soviet agriculture and famines, notes that there was relatively little peasant protest: According to an OGPU (police) report of March 1931, right in the midst of collectivization, about five per cent of the peasant population was involved in protests. This also means that the vast majority of peasants was not involved in such protests. Most of these protests were settled peacefully; the OGPU reported that they had recourse to force in fewer than 2% of them.

Tauger points out that many peasants actually supported collectivization. For them, it was not "forced." Many peasants actively *supported* collectivization. This number increased when local activists were experienced or sensitive enough to patiently explain the purpose of

collectivization to the peasants. Some peasants spontaneously form[ed] kolkhozy and consolidated their fields.

Finally, what about the other 90 per cent of peasants who did not rebel? **Some peasants did not reject collectivization and even supported it ...** An OGPU report quoted one middle peasant in Shilovskii raion (district), Riazan okrug, in November 1929 to the effect that 'the grain procurements are hard, but necessary; we cannot live like we lived before, it is necessary to build factories and plants, and for that grain is necessary' .... **In January 1930, during the campaign, some peasants said, 'the time has come to abandon our individual farm. It's about time to quit those, [we] need to transfer to collectivization.'** Another document from January reported several cases of **peasants spontaneously forming kolkhozy and consolidating their fields**, which was a basic part of collectivization

...<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Tauger "Soviet Peasants and Collectivization, 1930-1939. Resistance and Adaptation." *Journal of Peasant Studies* (4) 2004, 427-546. Reprinted in *Rural Adaptation in Russia*, ed. Stephen K. Wegren. London and New York: Routledge, 2005, 65-94, at p. 75.

## **End of Yezhov Era**

The day after Uspensky's flight, Stalin, receiving his minions in the Little Corner, had a decree approved disbanding **the assembly-line death sentence troikas.**<sup>143</sup> (578)

Note 143 (1020): RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 24, l. 62.

An archival source! What is a reader supposed to make of this kind of thing? Especially since Kotkin knows that this document has been published in several places, including *Tragediia sovietskoi derevni* vol. 5, part 2, 306-7, and Pavliukov, *Yezhov*, 473. Kotkin cites both of these works in his book. It is even online at the Istmat site (<http://istmat.info/node/36067>) It is partly translated in Getty and Naumov,

*The Road to Terror*, 531-2. Why didn't Kotkin help his readers by pointing this out?

For the falsehood of "assembly-line death sentences" see the section "Lies About The Lists" later in this chapter.

Here is my translation:

Directive of the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the VKP(b) concerning a halt to the review of cases sent for review of troikas, military tribunals, and the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, in the order of special instructions:

15 November 1938

To People's Commissars for Internal Affairs of the Union and Autonomous Republics, commanders of the oblast' and krai directorates of the NKVD, to prosecutors of the krajs, oblast', autonomous and union republics, prosecutors of the military regions, of railroad and water transportation, chairmen of the Supreme Court of the USSR, the supreme courts of the union and autonomous republics, the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, chairmen of the tribunals of the military districts:

It is ordered in the strongest possible terms:

1. To halt as of 16 November of this year pending further order examination by the troikas, military tribunals, and by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, of all cases sent to them for their review as special orders or in a different, simplified order ...
2. To require prosecutors of military districts, territories, regions, autonomous and union republics to monitor the exact and immediate fulfillment of this order. Report its fulfillment to the USSR NKVD and Prosecutor of the USSR Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars (SNK) V. Molotov,

Secretary of the CC of the VKP(b) J. Stalin.



Why does Kotkin cite only the archival location, which none of his readers can consult? This should serve us as a reminder that *Kotkin strives to hide, rather than disclose, the evidence.*

### **Tied The World Record!**

On November 17, he summoned Vyshinsky for a "report," after which the despot issued another decree in the politburo's name, justifying the terror but blaming the NKVD for "a host of major deficiencies and distortions."<sup>144</sup> (578)

Note 144 (1020): Kostrychenko [sic - should be "Kostyrchenko"] and Khazanov, "Konets Kar'ery Yezhova," 125-8 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1003, l. 85-86); Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i glavnoe upravlenie*, 607-11 (APRF, f. 3, op. 58, d. 6, l. 85- 7); Getty and Naumov, *Road to Terror*, 532-7. On Yezhov's anger at being accused of lawlessness, when he was following Stalin's instructions, with which Vyshinsky had colluded, see Ushakov and Stukalov, *Front voennykh prokurorov*, 70-2.

The first three are all the same document: "On Arrests, Supervision by the Procuracy and the Conduct of Investigations." Why cite Kostyrchenko and Khazanov, 1992, when the same document is published in the *Lubianka 1937-1938* volume that Kotkin cites so often?

Getty and Naumov is a partial translation of this document. I have translated the whole document into English and put it online.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> No. 362. Decree of the Politburo of the CC VKP(b ), "On Arrests, Supervision by the Procuracy and the Conduct of Investigations." November 17 1938. At <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/onarrestseng.html>

The book by Ushakov and Stukalov is an interesting example of falsification. It purports to be the memoirs, edited by Ushakov, of military prosecutor Nikolai P. Afanas'ev, who died in 1979.

This book is of more than dubious validity. In it the words of Yezhov's that Afanas'ev supposedly quotes echo documents published by the year 2000, when this book was published. On the very pages 70-72 cited by Kotkin here, Afanas'ev claims that Tukhachevsky denied his guilt. But we know that is a lie, because we now have Tukhachevsky's confessions, plus those of his associates who also accuse him, plus Tukhachevsky's own testimony at the June 11, 1937, trial.

In 2000, the year their book was published, Ushakov and Stukalov had some of these documents too. But — assuming that they really did reprint Afanas'ev's memoirs and did not simply fabricate them — they do not inform their readers that Afanas'ev was wrong.

### **Omitting The Struggle Against Yezhov**

Just like that, without public acknowledgment, with a few pieces of paper in the Little Corner, the mass terror was halted. Coincidence? The terror supposedly was aimed at rooting out enemies lying in wait for a war, but then, at what would appear to be maximum international war danger for the USSR, Stalin suddenly moved to end the mass arrests. Had he become less paranoid? Was it just that he had been waiting for completion of a Short Course? Or was he jolted by events portending actual danger?<sup>145</sup> We cannot definitively establish his motivations. (579)

Note 145 (1020): "The fear of war had spawned mass terror," wrote Ulam. "But terror in its turn increased Stalin's fear of war." This appears to be exactly backward: Stalin's fear of war seems to have ended the mass terror. Ulam, *Stalin*, 491-2. On Oct. 16, 1938, the politburo resolved to demobilize and return the forces called to the western borders: 330,000 troops, 27,500 horses, and 5,000 vehicles. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 24, l. 17.

The last sentence here is *copied word for word* from Oleg Khlevniuk's book *Stalin. Zhizn' odnogo vozhdia*, page 230, where the exact same archival reference is also given. Has Kotkin even looked at this archival source? There is no reason to think he has. But hey — archival references give the

appearance of serious scholarship, right? What's more, even Khlevniuk is not sure that this movement of forces was due to the Munich sellout of Czechoslovakia by Britain and France, since "these forces, while not small, were hardly decisive."

Presumably Kotkin wants us to think he is grasping for some explanation of the end of the "mass terror." As for Ulam's book, it was published in 1973, long before the flood of Soviet documents now available.

As for this gem:

Just like that, without public acknowledgment, with a few pieces of paper in the Little Corner, the mass terror was halted. **Coincidence?**

Kotkin doesn't even mention the *real* and provable reason for the end of the mass arrests and executions ("the terror") — the growing suspicion by Stalin and others that Yezhov was acting improperly, and Yezhov's resignation under pressure.

[[[cyrillic]]]И вот третий, последний акт этой долгой процедуры: 23 ноября Ежов опять вызван к Сталину, где уже находились Молотов и Ворошилов. Мне пришлось держать в руках документ, который Ежов писал явно под их диктовку. Написан он на трех страницах, все разных размеров, то есть хватали первые подвернувшиеся под руку бумажки и подсовывали их Ежову, лишь бы тот не прекратил писать. Формулировка его отстранения от должности меняется дважды: видимо, он сопротивлялся, возражал. А надото было вырвать от него решение уйти «по собственному желанию»! Тут же пишется проект постановления, который звучит как гарантия: «Сохранить за т. Ежовым должности секретаря ЦК ВКП(б), председателя Комиссии партийного контроля и наркома водного транспорта.» Наконец заявление написано и подписано: «Н. Ежов.» Вот с этого и началось устранение «ежовщины». Политбюро послало на места телеграммы с прямым текстом: немедленно прекратить репрессии и распустить «тройки.» Снова, перехватив инициативу, сталинская группа уже в конце 1938 года добилась проведения первых судебных процессов над работниками НКВД, обвиненных в

фальсификации и надуманности дел, по которым почти целый год судили, ссылали и казнили тысячи людей. Так удалось остановить большой террор.

And here is the third, final act of this long procedure: on November 23, Yezhov was again summoned to Stalin, where Molotov and Voroshilov were already present. **I have held in my hands the document that Yezhov wrote, obviously under their dictation. It is written on three pages, all of different sizes — that is, they grabbed the first pieces of paper that came into their hand and slipped them to Yezhov, if only to keep him writing. The formulation of his dismissal is changed twice: apparently, he resisted, objected. But it was necessary to wrest from him the decision to leave "at his own request"!** There and then the draft resolution was written, which sounds like a guarantee: "To retain the post of Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU (B.), Chairman of the Commission for Party Control and the People's Commissar for Water Transport, for Comrade Yezhov." Finally the statement was written and signed: "N. Yezhov." This is how the end of the "Yezhovshchina" began. The Politburo sent around telegrams with the text itself: immediately stop the repression and disband the "troikas." Once again, having seized the initiative, at the end of 1938 the Stalin group achieved the first trials of NKVD officers accused of falsifying and contrived cases, by which for almost a year they had tried, exiled and executed thousands of people. **This is how they succeeded in stopping the great terror.**<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Zhukov, "Zhupel Stalina." *Komsomolskaia Pravda* November 20, 2002.

Kotkin has read and cites Iurii Zhukov's work but ignores it here. No doubt he does so because *the evidence, and Zhukov's analysis of it, disprove the false allegation that Stalin "planned" Yezhov's mass murders*. Likewise, they prove that Stalin was not at all an all-powerful "dictator" scare quotes deliberate here that Kotkin, and the Anti-Stalin Paradigm, demand that he be. But these are obligatory elements of the ASP. So Kotkin keeps quiet about them.

Kotkin:

On November 19, 1938, the "politburo" summoned the NKVD commissar to the Little Corner, where, from 11:10 p.m. until 4:20 a.m., they discussed a denunciation of him that Beria had orchestrated from a provincial NKVD boss (Viktor Zhuravlyov).<sup>31</sup>

Note 31 (1021): Zhuravlyov's denunciation followed the formation of the commission on the NKVD. Beria had passed the letter to Stalin on Oct. 13, 1938. Khaustov and Samuelson, *Stalin, NKVD*, 249-50; *Naprieme*, 245-6. See also Shreider, *NKVD iznutri*, 237. Zhuravlyov briefly got a promotion to Moscow, but Beria would send him to run the Karaganda camps. Yezhov's response—accepting guilt, claiming poor health, confessing he "had taken badly the appointment of Beria as my deputy. I saw in this an element of lack of trust towards me," and requesting to resign—is misdated as Sept. (rather than Nov.) 23, 1938. Kostrychenko [sic — should be "Kostyrchenko"] and Khazanov, "Konets Kar'ery Yezhova," 129-30 (RGASPI 1 f. 17, op. 3, d. 1003, l. 82-4); Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i glavnoie upravlenie*, 552-4 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1003, l. 82-4); Petrov and Jansen, *Stalinski pitomets*, 355-9 (RGASPI, f. 671, op. 1, d. 265, l. 16-26ob.).

The fact-claims in the Khaustov and Samuel'son passage (249-50) cite *no evidence*. Instead, Khaustov and Samuel'son "channel" Stalin to tell us what he was "thinking." Plus they tell at least one glaring lie:

[[cyrillic]] Сталин, читая записку Журавлева, отметил некоторые факты, свидетельствующие о подозрительном поведении руководящего состава НКВД. В записке он оставил свои пометки, которые свидетельствовали о том, что Сталин, может быть, начинал открывать для себя некоторые теневые стороны деятельности руководства НКВД.

Stalin, reading Zhuravlev's note, noticed some facts indicating suspicious behavior by the NKVD leadership. He left some notes on Zhuravlev's letter, which showed that Stalin was perhaps beginning to discover for himself some shady aspects of the activities of the NKVD leadership.

Stalin briefly summarized the contents of Zhuravlev's letter (the letter itself has not been found) in a coded telegram of November 25, 1938 to Party leaders.<sup>14</sup> It is clear that this was not the "beginning" of Stalin's suspicions of Yezhov. In August, 1938, Lavrentii Beria had been made Yezhov's second-in-command, replacing Frinovsky. Yezhov recognized this as a sign of mistrust.

## **NEW World Record!**

Kostyrchenko and Khazanov, "Konets kar'ery Yezhova," 129-130, is a 1992 publication of Yezhov's letter of resignation. Why cite it here, in a hard-to-find journal, when it is published in the *Lubianka 1937-1938* volume that Kotkin cites so many times, as well as online? In fact, Kotkin may never have read the Kostyrchenko-Khazanov article, since it is footnoted on page 554 of the *Lubianka 1937-1938* volume.

Khaustov et al., *Lubianka 552-4* is another text of Yezhov's letter of November 23, 1938. So is Kotkin's Note 32, to Petrov & Jansen, *Stalinski pitomets* 355-9.

Three different citations of the same document! Actually, four — because Kotkin's note 32 to "Petrov and Jansen, *Stalinski pitomets*, 355-9, at 357," is simply a long quotation from *the very same document!* More phony scholarship. Shreider, 237, contains only Shreider's attacks on Zhuravlev because the latter had built a case against Shreider himself. It is irrelevant to the present discussion.

At the end of this long footnote Kotkin writes:

See also Sudoplatov and Sudoplatov, *Memoirs of an Unwanted Witness*, 59. This is another example where Sudoplatov's memoir comports with archival materials.

What "archival materials" is Kotkin talking about here? Viktor Zhuravlev is not even mentioned in Sudoplatov's memoir. But Kotkin is wrong anyway. Sudoplatov's memoir was published in 1995, long after the publication of Yezhov's resignation (1992), from which Sudoplatov may well have copied.

So much for "comporting with archival materials." Finally, we can't rely on Sudoplatov's memoir because it was altered after its first Russian-language edition, probably by its American editor, Jerrold Schechter.

## The "Edit" That Wasn't

Kotkin:

On November 23, Yezhov was again in Stalin's office, where he had logged nearly 900 hours over the previous two years, but these three and a half would be his last: **Stalin edited Yezhov's resignation.**<sup>33</sup> (587)

Note 33 (1021): Kostyrchenko and Khazanov, "Konets Kar'ery Yezhova," 131 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1003, l. 34-5); Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i glavnoe upravlenie*, 611 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1003, l. 34-5).

This is a phony reference. Kostyrchenko and Khazanov, 131, only note that this document, the Politburo decision to accept Yezhov's resignation, has a "facsimile" of Stalin's signature. Khaustov et al., *Lubianka* 611 is the text of Yezhov's note of resignation. This is the very same document, but here there is *no* claim that it bears a facsimile of Stalin's signature. Moreover, the latter text claims that it is the "original," while Kostyrchenko and Khazanov state that theirs, the one with the facsimile of Stalin's signature, is a "copy."

In *neither source* is there *any* indication that "Stalin edited it." Why does Kotkin falsify even this detail? To create the impression that Stalin was "in control," stage-managing everything?

On November 25, the despot sent a telegram to all regional party secretaries referring to Zhuravlyov's denunciation of NKVD errors and noting that "the Central Committee had granted Yezhov's request to resign."<sup>34</sup> *Pravda* printed a delayed announcement, on its back page (December 8). Executing the NKVD chief could throw into doubt the mass arrests and executions. For now, Stalin retained Yezhov as a

Central Committee secretary, chairman of the party Control Commission, and water transport commissar. (587)

Note 34 (1021): Petrov and Jansen, *Stalinski pitomets*, 354-5 (RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 58, l. 61-2); Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i glavnoe upravlenie*, 611-2; RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1003, l. 35 (appointment of Beria). Petrov & Jansen, and Khaustov et al., *Lubianka*, both reprint the same document: Stalin's telegram about the "unsatisfactory situation" in the NKVD and acceptance of Yezhov's request to resign.

## Lies About the Lists

Kotkin:

At least 383 execution lists signed by him have survived, containing the names of more than 43,000 "enemies of the people," mostly the highest-level officials and officers. The terror was centrally implemented by Nikolai Yezhov and Mikhail Frinovsky of the NKVD.<sup>322</sup> (490)

Note 322 (1007): Khlevniuk, *Politbiuro*, 291.

Note 34, above, continued (1021): The last of **the infamous execution lists** for 1938 was dated Sept 29: APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 409-19: <http://stalin.memo.ru/images/intro.htm>. But Volkogonov, citing military archives, claimed that Stalin, having received some 383 extended lists of names for execution in 1937-38, received yet another on Dec. 12, 1938, containing 3,167 names, albeit without even the charges or the results of any "investigation." Volkogonov, *Triumf i tragediia*, I/ii: 301 (citing TsAMO, f. 32, op. 701323, d. 38, l. 14-6).

The business about "execution lists," like Kotkin's statement about "quotas" (see above), is all false. For one thing, these lists are *not execution lists*. They were sent to the Secretariat "for review." Consequently, many persons on these lists were *not* executed. This is made clear on the very web page — <http://stalin.memo.ru/images/intro.htm> — that Kotkin cites here. The



word *rassmotrenie* — "review" — occurs over and over again. This same web page cites the first mention of the lists, in a note from Minister of the MVD Kruglov to Khrushchev of February 3, 1954, that makes it clear they were for "review":

[[cyrillic]] Докладываю Вам, что в архивах МВД СССР обнаружено 383 списка "лиц, подлежащих суду Военной Коллегии Верховного Суда СССР." Эти списки были составлены в 1937 и 1938 годах НКВД СССР и **тогда же представлены в ЦК ВКП(б) на рассмотрение.**

I report to you that 383 lists of "persons subject to the trial of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR" have been found in the archives of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs. These lists were compiled in 1937 and 1938 by the NKVD of the USSR and **at that time submitted to the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) for review.**

According to the editors of these lists many people whose names are on them were not in fact executed, and some were freed.

[[cyrillic]] Например, выборочное изучение списка по Куйбышевской области, подписанного 29 сентября 1938 г., показало, что ни один человек из этого списка не был осужден ВК ВС, а значительная часть дел была и вовсе прекращена.

For example, a selective study of the list for the Kuibyshev oblast' signed on September 29, 1938 has shown that not a single person on this list was convicted by the VK VS (the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court), and a significant number of the cases were dismissed altogether.

Kotkin cites this web page, so he knew that these are not "execution lists." For more about the lists see Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*, 70-73; Furr, *Yezhov vs Stalin*, Chapter 7, 67-72.

It appears that these lists were sent to Stalin and the Secretariat along with investigative reports by the NKVD about the supposed progress of the fight

against anti-Soviet forces. Many such reports have been published in the Lubyanka 1937-1938 volume, which Kotkin cites many times.

Many more such reports are published in the volume *Lubyanka Golgota*, the valuable collection of archival documents edited by Khaustov which Kotkin never mentions. Why? Did Kotkin omit this important volume because the existence of these reports makes it clear that Yezhov and his men were lying to Stalin, duping him into believing that they were successfully combatting dangerous anti-Soviet plots? This appears to be the most likely explanation for such an omission.

Volkogonov, *Triumfi Tragedii*, is in error. Volkogonov wrote before the lists had been published. A summary page gives the date of the 3167 names as November 12, 1938.<sup>15</sup>

### **Beria Purges Yezhov's NKVD**

Kotkin:

Beria, even as deputy NKVD chief, had arrested 332 NKVD leadership personnel between September and December 1938, including 140 in the central apparatus and 18 of the NKVD commissars in Union and autonomous republics. NKVD operatives still on the job became disoriented.<sup>35</sup> (588)

Note 35 (1021): Khaustov and Samuelson, *Stalin, NKVD*, 255-6. Of the 14,500 new NKVD employees in 1939, around 11,000 came from the party apparatus or Communist Youth League. Of the 3,460 newcomers in the central NKVD, 3,242 were party apparatchiks and Komsomol. Petrov and Skorkin, *Kto rukovodil NKVD*, 491-502.

Khaustov and Samuelson document real concern by NKVD men who, serving under Yezhov, had followed orders and committed crimes against defendants. This is important material! It is a shame that Khaustov and Samuelson did not publish the documents they refer to in their footnotes.

Petrov and Skorkin, 491-502, give a number of tables. I don't see how the figures 3460 and 3242 can be derived from them, but maybe they can be.

### **No "Societal Rebellion"?**

The next part of this footnote is interesting!

**There was no hint of societal rebellion.** In early 1939, the police discovered a self-styled "fascist organization" in Moscow. Evidently, its handful of youthful members had fashioned a flag and put up seventy posters on the eve of Red Army Day, drew some graffiti, and wrote poems. They also seem to have discussed Nazism, anti-Semitism, and Russian nationalism. Four arrests were made; three of them turned out to have been nineteen years old when they joined the group, and the organizer was seventeen. The NKVD produced five volumes on the case. Rittersporn, *Anguish*, 174 (citing GARF, f. 5446, op. 81a, d. 335, l. 109-14).

We can't be certain that there was "no societal rebellion." This was the reason that Yezhov and at least some First Secretaries gave Stalin at the June, 1937, Central Committee Plenum for requesting the awful "special powers" that they were granted in July and that inaugurated Yezhov's mass arrests and executions.

But take another look at the quotation from Khaustov and Samuel'son, pp. 249-50, that we have cited above (p. 218) As far as I can tell, this is the *only* place in Kotkin's entire book that he acknowledges — even though very partially here — that Stalin was misled, duped, lied to. It undercuts his whole thesis — that the "terror" was all Stalin's idea and that he was "in control" all the time.

Rittersporn discusses, albeit very briefly, this and another conspiracy of young people. Of course, the NKVD could not have known *in advance* that the conspiracies involved *only* young people. Judging from Rittersporn's brief account, these were real conspiracies.

Kotkin:

Regime officials who had once looked to Yezhov as someone who would clean up the antiparty actions and mistakes of his predecessor viewed Beria as someone who would do the same. Releases of some people arrested under Yezhov reinforced such illusions. Stalin got credit for correcting his mistaken trust in Yezhov, and for a new, vigorous, loyal top official.<sup>40</sup> (588-9)

Note 40: Simonov, *Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniia*, 58 (dated Feb. 27, 1979)."

This passage is actually on pp. 69-70. Simonov was a famous Soviet writer. His book on Stalin, in which Simonov puzzles over the anti-Stalin stuff he had been told since Khrushchev's day, and the much more positive opinion he had gotten during Stalin's life, was not published until the Gorbachev era.

Kotkin:

Beria's power came to exist on a completely different plane from Yezhov's or Yagoda's. Stalin, however, made sure to have non-Beriaites inserted into key positions (Sergei Kruglov, who had been on Malenkov's list of possible NKVD first deputy chiefs, got the critical post of head of NKVD personnel).<sup>41</sup> Stalin also directed Beria to turn in the documents regarding his role in the Musavat; Beria had Merkulov collect and deliver them.<sup>42</sup> (588-9)

Note 41 (1021): The Georgia NKVD was given to Avksenti Rapava, Beria's minion who had helped pulverize Abkhazia. Guruli and Tushurashvili, *Correspondence*, 89 (Beria to Stalin, Oct. 21, 1937).

This document is online (though not easy to find) and is completely irrelevant. It simply records Rapava's appointment. Nothing whatever is said about "pulverizing Abkhazia." Nor does Kotkin mention anything about "pulverizing Abkhazia" anywhere in this huge book. Rapava was executed under mysterious circumstances by Khrushchev in 1955.

Note 42 (1021): The transfer took place in Aug. 1938, with Beria's promotion. Merkulov: RGANI, f. 5, op. 30, d. 4, l. 76-7: letter, to

Malenkov, July 23, 1953; "'Khochetsia prokliast' den' i chas moego znakomstva s Beriia,'" 101 (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 465, l. 2-28); Tumshis, VChK, 211.

Merkulov's letter to Malenkov, originally published in *Istochnik* No. 4, 2002, has more recently been published in the collection *Politbiuro i Delo Beria. Sbornik dokumentov*. (M. Kuchkovo Pole, 2012), 139-151. The passage in question is on pp. 145-146. The letter is also online at the Istmat.info site: <http://istmat.info/node/22188>

Unless it too is a fabrication, like some other documents in this volume, Merkulov wrote it when he was trying to save his life by distancing himself from Beria, whom Khrushchev et al. had either murdered outright or had illegally arrested, and would try and execute in December, 1953 — along with Merkulov and others. Stalin never did anything like this judicial murder!

### **The Beria — Andreev — Malenkov Report**

Two days later, Stalin informed USSR procurator general Vyshinsky that he wanted a public trial of those arrested in the NKVD.<sup>79</sup> "The enemies of the people who penetrated the organs of the NKVD," the commission on the secret police internally reported to Stalin—as if the secret police rampage had somehow occurred without his directives —"consciously distorted the punitive policy of Soviet power, conducting a mass of baseless arrests of people guilty of nothing, and at the same time protecting the activities of enemies of the people.... They urged that prisoners offer testimony about their supposed espionage activity for foreign intelligence, explaining that such invented testimony was necessary for the party and the government in order to discredit foreign states." The despot circulated the report to the inner circle: they needed to know how to interpret the terror, as the result of the infiltration of "spies in literally every [NKVD] department."<sup>80</sup> (595)

Note 79 (1022): Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i NKVD*, 9 (APRF, f. 3, op. 57, d. 96, l. 110).

Kotkin is correct: Stalin demanded public trials for the guilty NKVD men, but the trials never took place. We don't know why. It is a great pity that such trials were not held. Yezhov's conspiracies, and his responsibility for the mass murders of the "terror," would not have become the mystery, and occasion for anti-Stalin falsification, that they are.

Note 80: Petrov and Jansen, *Stalinski pitomets*, 359-63 (TsA FSB, f. 3-os, op. 6, d. 1, l. 1-6); APRF, f. 3, op. 58, d. 409, l. 3-9). The commission concluded its work on Jan. 10, 1939; the report was dated Jan. 29. (1022)

The boldfaced clause in the quotation above is a false statement. The "secret police rampage" had indeed "occurred without his — Stalin's — directives," as Khaustov admitted (see quotation above).

This report by three Politburo members close to Stalin outlines their uncovering of the massive murder and torture campaign that was Yezhov's "great terror" — in Russian, the "Yezhovshchina." Petrov and Jansen, *Stalinski pitomets*, 359-363, is the text of the report in Russian. But who of his readers will be able to read it?

I discuss this important text fully in "The Yezhov Conspiracy," Chapter 10 of *Yezhov vs Stalin*. I have also translated the whole text of the report and put it online. The Russian text is also available online.<sup>16</sup> Kotkin could have put references to these online sources for his readers but did not do so. The text of the report refutes Kotkin's notion that the Yezhovshchina was Stalin's idea.

<sup>16</sup> English translation at:

[https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/beria\\_andreev\\_malenkov012939eng.html](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/beria_andreev_malenkov012939eng.html) Russian original at: <http://istmat.info/node/24582>

## **No Evidence Of Torture Again**

Kotkin:

The interrogator-torturers, who before had followed orders from Frinovsky, had set to beating out of him testimony against Yezhov, including how the latter had ordered that suspects be beaten to provide false testimony. Within a week Beria would send Stalin a forty-three-page confession written by Frinovsky; Stalin made notes on it 209 (618)

Note 209:

Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i NKVD*, 33-50 (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 373, l. 3-44); Petrov and Jansen, *Stalinski pitomets*, 204 (citing APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 374, l. 3-47); Stepanov, "O masshtabakh repressii" (no. 5), 61-2.

Once again Kotkin has invented this "fact" — made it up. None of these sources — or any other sources — even claim (much less contain evidence) that Frinovsky was beaten. Is Kotkin lying? Let the reader decide!

Khaustov et al. is the text of Frinovsky's statement to Beria of April 11, 1939, which we have discussed earlier in this chapter. Petrov and Jansen say nothing about any beatings or torture, only that Evdokimov, arrested in November, 1938, refrained from confessing until April 14, 1939. It's possible that, like Bukharin in his first confession of June 2, 1937, Evdokimov held out until the investigation had shown him so much evidence against him that he was convinced further resistance was futile.

The Stepanov article (*Voенно-Istoricheskii Zhurnal* 5, 61-62, is simply the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission, once again referred to in yet another published version. As we have already noted several times, it is dishonest of Kotkin to keep referring to the same document in different places, thus giving the impression that he is referring to different documents.

Here the "Spravka" briefly mentions Frinovsky's statement, while once again concealing the fact that Frinovsky reveals in this same statement that the conspiracies were genuine. Stepanov could get away with this dishonesty because his article was published in 1991, under Gorbachev, while Frinovsky's statement was not published until 2006.

Stepanov, and the "Spravka," also say nothing about any torture of Frinovsky. So this is yet another phony footnote by Kotkin. It is not just Stepanov who is covering up the fact that Frinovsky confirms that the conspiracies were real. Kotkin quotes him, and continues the cover-up of Frinovsky's revelations.

My own full translation of Frinovsky's statement has been available online since 2010.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> At <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/frinovskyeng.html>

Kotkin fails to refer to it. I urge readers to study it.

### **What "Massacre"?**

Kotkin:

Altogether, more than 100 of the highest-ranking Yezhovites were massacred all of his deputies, almost all department heads in the center, almost all NKVD heads in Union republics and provinces.<sup>214</sup> (619)

Note 214 (1025): Nikolai P. Afanasev, USSR deputy general procurator, recalls this as taking place at Lefortovo, but all other sources indicate Yezhov was held in Sukhanovka. Ushakov and Stukalov, *Front voennykh prokurorov*, 69.

No one was "massacred." All of those executed, were shot after investigation and trials. There is nothing in Afanas'ev about the numbers of Yezhov's NKVD men executed. As we have noted above, Afanas'ev's text lies about other matters too and is useless as a historical source.

### **NKVD File On Stalin**

Kotkin:



In the [Yezhov's] desk the NKVD investigator found four bullet casings, marked ZINOVIEV, KAMENEV, and SMIRNOV (two). Perhaps the greatest discovery was that in Yezhov's apartment and not in his Lubyanka safe he had kept a cache of documents from the tsarist-era Tiflis gendarmerie on "Koba." Whispers of a "file on Stalin" circulated throughout the upper ranks of the regime.<sup>215</sup> (619)

Note 215 (1025): Viktorov, *Bez grafa* [sic — should be 'grifa'] "*sekretnosti*," 326.

Another phony reference. There is nothing here about any "file on Stalin," talk about it, "bullet casings," etc.

Kotkin:

The nature of this file in Yezhov's possession remains unknown. For Beria, it was unclear which was more dangerous: to turn the material over to Stalin, and thus indicate that he had seen it, or to not turn it over.<sup>216</sup> (619)

Note 216 (1025): "Vospominaniia: memurary Nikity Sergeevicha Khrushcheva," 87; Piliatskin, "'Vrag naroda'"; Pavliukov, Yezhov, 513; Polianskii, *Yezhov*, 216-7. Others suggest these documents which disappeared need not have been compromising, but could have been flattering material Yezhov collected for a Stalin museum. Petrov and Jansen, *Stalinski pitomets*, 228.

Khrushchev does say that Stalin mentioned such information at a meeting. As for Piliatskin, there's nothing relevant in this long newspaper article, the subject of which is the attempt by Yezhov's relatives to have him "rehabilitated" in 2010.

Pavliukov mentions a file from the Tsarist secret police, or 'Okhranka," consisting of the search for "Koba" (Stalin's revolutionary code name) and other members of the Transcaucasian organization of the Bolshevik Party. Pavliukov admits that nothing is known about what was in the file. Polianskii, 216-7, concerns a report by NKVD man Shchepilov of the

contents of the search of Yezhov's apartment on April 11, 1938. It has nothing about any file on Stalin.

Petrov and Jansen, 228, suggest that Yezhov might have intended this file for a museum devoted to Stalin, rather than an attempt to find evidence that Stalin was an Okhranka informer. But Petrov and Jansen always insist that Yezhov was faithful and loyal to Stalin. This is necessary for their preconceived notion that Yezhov always did just what Stalin wanted him to do, and that therefore it was Stalin, not Yezhov, who was guilty of the mass murders.

Kotkin:

Stalin supposedly flashed the material Yezhov had gathered on him at a politburo meeting, as if Yezhov had been acting on his own in the terror's excesses.<sup>217</sup> (619)

Note 217 (1025): Briukhanov and Shoshkov, *Opravdaniiu ne podlezhit*, 132-3. Malenkov's son would assert that when his father had Yezhov's safe opened, they discovered dossiers on Malenkov as well as Stalin; the latter included the recollections of an old Bolshevik that Stalin had prerevolutionary links to the tsarist okhranka. Malenkov, *O moem otse Georgii Malenkove*, 34.

Briukhanov and Shoshkov, 312, has exactly the same contents as Polianskii, 216-7, already cited in the previous note. So what's the point in citing it from a different source? Malenkov, *O moem otse*, 34, mentions a note in a file in Yezhov's office "from an old Bolshevik" about suspicions of Stalin's ties to Tsarist Okhranka. Malenkov's son, the author of this book, was of course not present, so this is just a rumor at best.

### **No Evidence Of Torture — Again!**

Kotkin:

... Beria delivered still more pleasing news: on April 13, 1939, Merkulov, his first deputy, finally managed to produce testimony with

the signature of the stout Yefim Yevdokimov. Beria had personally gone to arrest him at his apartment on Grand Kisel Lane, 5, off Great Lubyanka, but Yevdokimov had held out for seven months, through broken legs and unceasing torture, which had continued in the prison hospital.<sup>219</sup> (619-20)

Note 219 (1025): Artizov et al., *Reabilitatsiia, kak eto bylo*, 330.

This is from the "rehabilitation report" on Evdokimov. It contains a claim — but no evidence — that he had been "tortured," which is typical of Khrushchev-era "rehabilitation" reports. But even in this report there is nothing about "broken legs and unceasing torture, which had continued in the prison hospital." Kotkin's falsifications just keep rollin' along!

Evdokimov features prominently as one of the leading conspirators in Frinovsky's statement of April, 1939. Wheatcroft, author of the most recent and most complete study of Evdokimov (2007), says nothing at all about his being tortured.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Wheatcroft, Stephen G. "Agency and Terror: Evdokimov and Mass Killing in Stalin's Great Terror." *Australian journal of Politics and History* 53:1 (2007) 20-43.

Kotkin:

Note 220: "Tumshis and Papchinskii, 1937, 68. The former colleague was Sergei Schwarz." (1026)

This book repeats exactly what is in the source in the previous note, 219. So why use it at all, if not to create a phony appearance of scholarship?

Kotkin:

Stalin's former NKVD chief confessed to working for a veritable world gazetteer of enemy intelligence services: Germany, Britain, France, Japan, Poland. (Yezhov had in fact liquidated the Polish Communist party, **on Stalin's orders.**) (620)

Kotkin does not bother to cite even phony evidence for this falsehood of his. Stalin did not "order" the dissolution of the Polish Communist Party. He agreed with the decision of the ECCI<sup>19</sup> of November 28, 1937. Stalin even complained that the decision was two years late, which suggests that he had not "ordered" it — additional evidence that Stalin was no "dictator." See Chase, *Enemies Within the Gates*, pp. 287-289 for more about this.

<sup>19</sup> Executive Committee of the Communist International.

### **Ignoring Yezhov's Confessions**

Kotkin:

On April 24, 1939, Yezhov "testified" about his "pederasty," meaning homosexual relations .... (620)

Of all Yezhov's detailed confessions about his conspiracy against Stalin and the Soviet government, collaboration with the Germans, and mass murders of innocent Soviet citizens, Kotkin cites only this one confession about his homosexuality! Talk about bias by omission!

In note 222 (page 1026) Kotkin does refer to Yezhov's interrogation of April 26, 1939, in this way:

For Yezhov's interrogation on April 26 (by Kobulov and others), see Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i NKVD*, 52-72 (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 375, l. 122-64).

But Kotkin doesn't bother to summarize what Yezhov says in this confession or in the many others whose texts we now have, and have had for years. Nor does Kotkin he inform his readers that the Russian text of this interrogation of Yezhov's is online at multiple sites.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Including the following:

<https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/Yezhov042639ru.html> ;  
<http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/58654> ;

<http://stalinism.ru/dokumenty/soobschenie-l-p-berii-i-v-stalinu-o-n-i-Yezhove-s-prilozheniem-protokola-doproso.html>

Nor does he refer his readers to my English translation of Yezhov's April 26, 1939, confession, available since 2010.<sup>21</sup> At the time of this writing (October, 2018) the only study of Yezhov's and Frinovsky's statements and confessions is my book *Yezhov vs. Stalin: The Truth About Mass Repressions and the So-Called 'Great Terror' in the USSR* (2016), in which I devote the whole of chapter twelve to this interrogation.

<sup>21</sup> At <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/Yezhov042639eng.html>

*Yezhov's confessions, like that of Frinovsky, are damning.* No wonder Kotkin hides them from his readers! Here is just one example, from Frinovsky's statement to Beria of April 11, 1939.

An active participant in investigations generally, Ezhov kept himself aloof from the preparation of this trial. Before the trial the face-to-face confrontations of the suspects, interrogations, and refining, in which Ezhov did not participate. He spoke for a long time with Yagoda, and that talk concerned, in the main, of assuring Yagoda that he would not be shot.

Ezhov had conversations several times with Bukharin and Rykov and also in order to calm them assured them that under no circumstances would they be shot.

Ezhov had one conversation with Bulanov, and began this conversation in the presence of the investigator and myself, and finished the conversation one on one, having asked us to leave.

At that moment Bulanov had begun talking about the poisoning of Ezhov. What the conversation was about Ezhov did not say. When he asked us to enter again he said: "Behave yourself well at the trial — I will ask that you not be shot." After the trial Ezhov always expressed regret about Bulanov. At the time of the executions Ezhov suggested shooting Bulanov first and he himself did not enter the building where the shootings took place.

Here Ezhov unquestionably was ruled by the necessity of covering up his own ties with the arrested leaders of the Right who were going into the public trial.<sup>22</sup>

Kotkin cites Frinovsky's statement many times. So he has deliberately withheld this and other such passages from his readers. No wonder! These confessions dismantle the Anti-Stalin Paradigm and the myth that Stalin was the architect of the Yezhovshchina and controlled it all the time.

### **Once Again, No Evidence Of Torture — Or Fabrication**

Kotkin:

Around this time, death sentences **based upon fabricated evidence** were implemented for cultural figures, as well as former NKVD first deputy Mikhail Frinovsky, former deputy foreign intelligence chief Spigelglas, former intelligence chief and Comintern operative Trilisser, Yefim Yevdokimov, and Redens, Stalin's ethnic Polish brother-in-law (part of a "Polish diversionary-espionage group") .... **Under interrogation-torture**, Redens had admitted his complicity in the annihilation of innocent people while working atop the NKVD in Ukraine, Moscow, and Kazakhstan. His wife—Anna Nadya's sister—and their two boys were not touched, and the family continued to live in the elite House on the Embankment and were allowed to visit Svetlana at Zubalovo (but not the Kremlin).<sup>204</sup> (742)

Note 204 (1041): Zhukovskii, *Lubianskaia imperia NKVD*, 214-5.

Another falsehood! Kotkin has no evidence that the evidence against Frinovsky was "fabricated," any more than he does that Frinovsky was "beaten."

These pages in Zhukovskii's book are about Evdokimov, another of Yezhov's killers. Kotkin must mean pages 217-8, which are about Redens. Zhukovskii, 214-5, contains what are evidently portions of Evdokimov's statement to the court retracting his confessions. But is a person "innocent"

if he retracts his confessions? Of course not! No more than a person is "guilty" because he confesses guilt.

What Evdokimov could *not* retract was the testimony of other witnesses against him. Both Yezhov and Frinovsky incriminated Evdokimov heavily and repeatedly.

Below we quote some of what Jansen and Petrov, two highly anticommunist and anti-Stalin authors, write in a book published by the anticommunist propaganda institute the Hoover Institution. Kotkin often quotes and cites this book. But he omits this passage:

He [Yezhov] testified himself that after arrests began within the NKVD he, together with Frinovskii, Dagin, and Evdokimov, made plans to commit a "putsch" on 7 November, the October Revolution anniversary, during the demonstration in Red Square. The plan was to cause a commotion and then in the panic and confusion to "drop bombs and kill someone of the government members."

Evdokimov gave similar evidence. According to him, in September he discussed the threatening situation after Beria's appointment with Yezhov, Frinovskii, and Bel'skii. Allegedly, **they agreed to prepare an attempt on Stalin and Molotov.** Yezhov was also said to have had plans to murder Beria. ... According to Ju. K. Ivanov, an NKVD executive from Evdokimov's circle, as early as late July, **after a visit to Yezhov, Evdokimov had alluded to terrorism against the Party leadership.** (Jansen and Petrov 155; 156)

If Kotkin had dared to cite the English translation of Frinovsky's statement to Beria of April 11, 1939, or even give its online location, his readers could see how thoroughly Frinovsky had implicated himself and many others, including Stanislav Redens, in mass murders.

## **The Redens File**

Thanks to the efforts of researcher Vladimir L. Bobrov of Moscow, we now have Redens file from FSB archive. He was certainly guilty. Redens was

"rehabilitated" in 1961 under Khrushchev and evidently at Khrushchev's command. In 1988-89, under Gorbachev, the Soviet Prosecutor's office *reaffirmed his guilt and crimes*. But the statute of limitations had long expired, so Redens' "rehabilitation" stands.

Redens' file has now been declassified and contains much useful evidence. See *Yezhov vs. Stalin*, Chapter 15: "The Testimony of Stanislav Frantsevich Redens." Redens testified at length and in detail about Yezhov's conspiracy against Stalin and the Soviet government. Redens also implicates Evdokimov. Kotkin does not mention any of this.

If Kotkin had quoted from, or even cited, the English translations of Yezhov's confessions, which have been available on the Internet since 2010, his readers would see some of the evidence that Yezhov, not Stalin, was responsible for the massive torture and executions of hundreds of thousands of innocent persons.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Grover Furr, "The Moscow Trials and the "Great Terror" of 1937-1938: What the Evidence Shows." At [https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/trials\\_Yezhovshchina\\_update0710.html](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/trials_Yezhovshchina_update0710.html)

Links to all of Yezhov's interrogations and confession statements that were available in 2010, in Russian and in English translation, are at the end of this article.

But Kotkin wants to hide these matters from his readers. No doubt this is because they dismantle the "Anti-Stalin Paradigm."

### **When You Don't Know — Invent!**

Kotkin:

The principal executioner was usually Vasily Blokhin (b. 1895). The son of a poor peasant from central Russia, he had risen to become the NKVD's head executioner already in the mid-1920s and was known to insiders by his signature brown leather cap, brown leather gauntlets above the elbow, and brown leather apron. He had survived the



transition from Yagoda to Yezhov, and then to Beria, although the latter had evidently tried to have him arrested as a Yezhovite, assembling the requisite compromising materials.<sup>205</sup> To Blokhin fell the honor of executing Yezhov.<sup>206</sup> (742)

Note 205 (1041): <http://alya-aleksej.narod.ru/index/0-181>; Voronov, "Palach v kozhanom fartuke"; Nikita Petrov, "Chelovek v kozhanom fartuke lichno rasstrelial bolee desyati tysiach chelovek" <http://discussiya.com/2010/08/26/blokhin-executioner>. Stalin signed the list, containing 457 names, including Yezhov's, on Jan. 17, 1940: APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 177, l. 116-36.

This note is all false. Kotkin has no evidence that Blokhin shot Yezhov. There is no evidence at all for Kotkin's fact-claims at the URL he cites here, which is just a brief biographical note on Blokhin. The Voronov article is just a narrative, without any evidence. The Petrov article of 2010 claims that Blokhin shot Yezhov, but Petrov has no evidence either. And in any case, what does it matter who the executioner was?

### **A Shameful Article Cited**

Note 206 (1041): Ushakov and Stukalov, *Front voennykh prokurorov*, 75 (USSR deputy military procurator Nikolai Afanasev, who was present). Among the many rumors that would circulate inside the NKVD about Yezhov's execution, one had Beria ordering that Yezhov undress and be beaten before being shot, just as Yezhov had done to humiliate his predecessor Yagoda. Kamov, "Smert' Nikolai Yezhova."

The liars had not coordinated their stories! In memoirs edited after his death — unreliable, if not simply fabricated, as we have seen earlier in this chapter, — Afanas'ev claimed that he was present at Yezhov's execution. But he says nothing about Kamov's claim that Yezhov being stripped and beaten. Kotkin does not seem to recognize — or, perhaps he hopes his readers will not recognize — the contradiction here.

Kamov does not even claim that his disgusting story about Yezhov being stripped naked and beaten is a rumor. It's just Kamov's own salacious

imagination. This article is a disgrace, full of crude insults and wrong in the few instances where Kamov makes a statement (Yezhov's term of service, lack of a trial for Yezhov — both wrong.)

Kotkin has no business using such nonsense in a scholarly work. More evidence that Kotkin does not bother with source criticism. If it's viciously anti-Stalin — in it goes!

## Chapter 11. *Miscellaneous Topics*

This chapter is concerned with Kotkin's falsifications about subjects that do not clearly fall among the topics that we have examined in previous chapters. Some of these issues, such as the Katyn Massacre, are of significant importance in themselves, while an examination of the other topics reveals that Kotkin falsifies even issues of lesser importance.

### "Klim — There were no mistakes ... "

Kotkin:

Now Stalin also became the organizer of the Red Army, an innovation canonized in Voroshilov's birthday pamphlet, "Stalin and the Red Army." ... Voroshilov's draft, meanwhile, had been sent to Stalin for prior approval. The defense commissar had written that Stalin made fewer mistakes than the others. Stalin wrote back, "Klim! There were no—mistakes cut that paragraph."<sup>144</sup> (33)

Note 144 (915): Voroshilov, "Stalin i krasnaia armiiia," *Izvestiia*, Dec. 21, 1929, reprinted in Stalin: sbornik statei, and in Voroshilov, *Lenin, Stalin, krasnaia armiiia*, 41-61. **Stalin himself crossed out the words that had offended him with red pencil: *Voennye arkhivy Rossii*, 77 (Voroshilov's adjutant Khmel'nitsky).**

Though it is not an important issue in itself, this claim (in boldface above) aroused my suspicions. So I decided to check it. *Voennye Arkhivy Rossii* is a rare and short-lived Soviet journal from the early 1990s. Here is the passage in *Voennye Arkhivy Rossii*, page 77:

[[cyrillic]]Еще в рукописи Сталин был ознакомлен со статьей и сделал некоторые замечания. **По утверждению Хмельницкого, бывшего адъютанта Ворошилова**, в этой рукописи, которую он читал в архиве Ворошилова, написано, что в период гражданской войны «имелись успехи и недочеты, у И. В. Сталина ошибок было меньше, чем у других.» Эта фраза, **как сообщает Хмельницкий**,

зачеркнута красным карандашом и рукою Сталина написано:  
«Клим! Ошибок не было, надо выбросить этот абзац. Ст.».

Stalin was acquainted with the article even in manuscript and made some comments. **According to Khmel'nitsky, Voroshilov's former adjutant**, in this manuscript, which he read in Voroshilov's archive, it is written that during the Civil War "there were successes and shortcomings, and Stalin had fewer errors than the others." This phrase, according to Khmel'nitsky, is crossed out with a red pencil and Stalin's hand says: "Klim! There were no mistakes. Cut this paragraph. St."

VAR cites no source so I searched the Russian-language Internet. This tale is cited in an article in the fanatically anticommunist and anti-Stalin newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*.<sup>1</sup> An article dated February 26, 2013 is titled: "'Klim! There were no mistakes. Cut this paragraph.' How Stalin Defeated Pilsudskii."<sup>2</sup> There we read:

[[cyrillic]]Слава богу, тов. Сталин при всей его загруженности нашел время просмотреть и лично отредактировать рукопись. «Клим! Ошибок не было. Надо выбросить этот абзац», терпеливо разъясняет он на полях ворошиловского текста (И. Сталин, Соч., т. 17. Тверь, «Северная Корона," 2004 г. С. 326).

Thank God that comrade Stalin, despite all his other duties, found time to read through and personally edit the MS. 'Klim! There were no mistakes. Cut this paragraph', — he patiently explained on the margins of Voroshilov's text. Q. Stalin. Works, vol. 17. "Severnaia Korona," 2004, p. 326)

<sup>1</sup> Of which Mikhail Gorbachev is a 10% owner.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2013/02/26/53691-171-klim-oshibok-ne-bylo-nado-vybrosit-etot-abzats-187-kak-stalin-pilsudskogo-pobedil>

This specific edition of Stalin's Collected Works is not easy to locate! But I managed to do so. Here is what is stated there:

[[cyrillic]]Надпись на черновике статьи К.Е. Ворошилова "Сталин и Красная Армия" (декабрь 1929 года):

Клим! Ошибок не было. Надо выбросить этот абзац. Ст.

Военно-исторический архив. 1997. Вып. 1. С. 221.

#### ПРИМЕЧАНИЕ

Речь идет об утверждении Ворошилова, что "у И.В. Сталина ошибок было меньше, чем у других."

Inscription on the draft of the article by K.E. Voroshilov, "Stalin and the Red Army (December 1929).

Klim! There were no mistakes. Cut this paragraph. St.

Voенno-istoricheskii Arkhiv. 1997. Issue 1, p. 221.

#### NOTE

The subject is Voroshilov's assertion that "Stalin had fewer errors than the others."

The contents of this issue of *Voенno-istoricheskii Arkhiv* are exactly the same as those of *Voennye Arkhivy Rossii!* Once again it's the "Spravka" (Report) of the Shvernik Commission. We have already seen that Kotkin cites this one document repeatedly in his footnotes in a half-dozen different publications, as though these were different sources.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> In the authoritative edition of this work, in RKEB 2, the passage is on page 709.

So this is a circular, and therefore dishonest, citation. There is no source, and therefore no verification — it is all hearsay, rumor. Hearsay does not become more "truthful" when repeated in various sources, and in this case it's all the *same* source.

Conclusion: There is no evidence that Stalin ever wrote these words on a draft of Voroshilov's article. Indeed, it seems likely that he did not, for if he did, why has the page that — allegedly — Khmelnitsky saw, not been reproduced, or its archival identifiers cited? Or, why are we not told when, where, and to whom Khmelnitsky allegedly made this remark?

And how can Kotkin accept this kind of stuff as evidence in a serious work of history?

### **Stalin Was No Dictator: Contested Elections**

With Stalin's primary aim accomplished, the plenum switched gears. Zhdanov had reported (February 26) on the upcoming elections by secret ballot to party posts (for May), a way to mobilize pressure from below against sitting officials, as well as elections to soviets. "We lack the habits of direct elections and secret ballots," he admitted. One plenum attendee, trying to convey the immensity of the organizational undertaking, reminded the plenum of the 1917 vote for the Constituent Assembly. Stalin pointed out that the class enemy could be elected, especially given that some collective farms had no Communist party members. "Keep in mind that our country has two million Communists and a 'bit more' non-party people," Zhdanov noted of the scores of millions of non-party adults.<sup>74</sup> He even alluded to the days when Bolshevism had had to survive in the underground.<sup>75</sup> It was a surreal discussion: no one was forcing the monopoly regime to stage competitive elections by secret ballot. (368)

Here is an interesting and important matter! Stalin and the Party leadership were promoting "competitive elections by secret ballot." The most obvious interpretation of this fact is that Stalin and the Party leadership did not want dictatorship. Rather, they wanted a form of representative democracy similar to that in many capitalist states.

Surely this is worthy of some comment. Yet Kotkin — who concedes the fact — makes none! This is *bias by omission*. For Stalin had in fact been promoting the desirability of contested elections by secret ballot to be guaranteed in the new Constitution. What's more, Stalin and his supporters

in the leadership had been campaigning for contested elections with the Central Committee.

This is the central point of discussion in Russian historian Yuri Zhukov's book *Inoi Stalin*, "A Different Stalin," (2002), which Kotkin cites a half-dozen times in his footnotes. Therefore, Kotkin knows that Stalin had been championing the principle of secret, contested elections for several years.

But Kotkin conceals this from his readers. No doubt he does so because this fact undermines the Anti-Stalin Paradigm, according to which Stalin must be a "dictator" or, in Kotkin's absurd term, a "despot." After all, what kind of dictator mounts a determined struggle for secret, contested elections — and then *loses* that struggle?

Kotkin:

In December 1937, the USSR held elections for the new bicameral Supreme Soviet, a permanent body to replace the Congress of Soviets. There were 569 seats in the soviet of the Union and 574 in the soviet of nationalities, both elected on the basis of universal suffrage.<sup>216</sup> **The provision for multiple candidates had been unceremoniously dropped.**<sup>217</sup> (471)

Note 216 (1005): The Soviet of Nationalities was to be filled by representatives of the union and the autonomous republics without regard to their size or population.

Note 217 (1005): Pavlova, "1937." As one soldier in the Soviet Far East aptly commented, according to an NKVD report, "So Stalin says that's the way it will be and then everything is democratic." Merritt, "Great Purges," 168.

Pavlova's long article concludes that the contested elections, even if held, could not have led to a change of power. But that, of course, is not the point. Elections in capitalist countries do not put the capitalist system "up for grabs." Pavlova does not mention this fact. Likewise, under the secret, contested elections that Stalin and his supporters envisaged, the socialist

system would not have been put at risk. The winners, even if non-communists, would certainly not have been allowed to restore capitalism.

"Merritt" is a Ph.D. dissertation done under Arch Getty's direction in 2000. It is a very interesting study! At this point Merritt is examining some documents concerning the nationwide discussion about the proposed Constitution which was encouraged and which actually took place throughout the whole USSR. However, the soldier's cynical remark, quoted by Merritt, was not at all "apt." For Stalin really did support secret, contested elections.

In *Inoi Stalin Zhukov* explains, using primary source evidence, how Stalin and his supporters in the central leadership, including Malenkov, Molotov, and Zhdanov, failed to persuade the Central Committee of the desirability of secret, contested elections. Zhukov identifies the exact time and place Stalin capitulated — in Stalin's office on the evening of October 11, 1937.

So why does Kotkin not inform his readers of this fact? Undoubtedly because it does not fit the "Anti-Stalin Paradigm" — it contradicts the false, but obligatory, image of Stalin as "dictator."

As does the fact that Stalin lost this struggle! What kind of "dictator" supports democracy? And what kind of "dictator" loses a political struggle on a point so important to him?<sup>4</sup> In fact, the form of representative democracy proposed by Stalin is both characteristic of that of Western capitalist societies, and yet more democratic than they.

<sup>4</sup> A fuller discussion of this issue can be found in Grover Furr, "Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform" (two parts) in *Cultural Logic* (2005). At <http://clogic.eserver.org/2005/furr.html> and <http://clogic.eserver.org/2005/furr2.html> See also Furr, *Yezhov vs. Stalin*, Chapters 1 and 8.

### **Kotkin Omits Yakov Yakovlev's Confession**

Yakov Yakovlev had been Commissar of Agriculture, and then played a very important role in drafting the 1936 Constitution, during which time he



worked very closely with Stalin. Upon seeing the subhead above readers of Kotkin's book may turn to their copy and look for Yakovlev's confession in the index. It's not there. Kotkin never breaths a word about it.

Yet this document is one of the most important documents in the Lubianka 1937-1938 volume that Kotkin cites so often. In it Yakovlev not only confesses to being a member of the clandestine bloc of Rights and Trotskyites. Yakovlev also confesses to having been a Trotskyist "sleeper" in the Party, appointed by Trotsky in 1923 to drop all ties to Trotskyists and "bore from within." *Yakovlev also confesses to having been recruited by German intelligence because — as the German agent told him — the Germans were already working with Trotsky, and demanded to work with Yakovlev on the same basis.*

The charge that Trotsky was collaborating with Hitler's German government had been one of the main accusations at the First and Second Moscow Trials of August, 1936, and January, 1937. In service to the ASP this charge has long been dismissed as false, a fabrication by Stalin and a slander on Trotsky. Yakovlev's confession statement, as well as Stalin's comments on it, also recorded in the Lubianka 1937-1938 volume, comprise an important item in the mass of evidence we now possess that this charge against Trotsky is true.

Why does Kotkin omit all mention of this dramatic document? No doubt because, once again, it contradicts the ASP: the notion, accepted by all "right-thinking" historians, that Stalin "fabricated" all the charges against the Moscow Trials defendants and surely must have also fabricated the charge that Trotsky was conspiring with Hitler's Germany.

On pages 86-90 of my book *Yezhov vs. Stalin* and on pages 112-124 of *Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan* I study Yakovlev's confession in some detail. I include a translation of all the important sections, an analysis of Stalin's remarks on it, and a study of the evidence of Trotsky's collaboration with Hitler's Germany and militarist Japan.

### **Incidents in the February-March 1937 Central Committee Plenum**

Kotkin devotes just a few pages to this very important, and very lengthy, Plenum. Those are worthy of study because of Kotkin's glaring falsifications and bias by omission.

Kotkin:

Turar Ryskulov, an ethnic Kazakh candidate member of the Central Committee and the long-standing deputy chairman of the Council of People's Commissars for the Russian republic, quietly tried to persuade some plenum attendees to come to the defense of Rykov and Bukharin, but he could not manage to do so.<sup>68</sup> (387)

Note 68 (992): Khaustov and Samuelson, *Stalin, NKVD*, 143.

Khaustov and Samuel'son do not have any evidence, not even an archival document, to support this statement. Kotkin just "takes their word for it" Kotkin also fails to inform his readers that a few pages earlier (135) Khaustov and Samuel'son reveal that Ryskulov was arrested in June, 1937, as a participant in the Rightist conspiracy. Ryskulov was named in a letter to Stalin of July 27, 1937, from L.I. Mirzoian, Secretary of the Kazakhstan Party, as a member of a "national-fascist organization. He was named in an interrogation-confession by P.T. Zubarev, who revealed some Socialist-Revolutionaries who were also in this conspiracy. Ryskulov features prominently in the confession of Khodzhaev, CC member and an official in the Uzbek SSR. O. IA. Nodev, head of the Turkmenistan NKVD, informed Stalin that Ryskulov was involved in a Trotskyist organization there.

All of this is in the volume *Lubianka 1937-1938*, which Kotkin often cites, though not about Ryskulov. (272; 283; 418; 463; 487) It explains Ryskulov's solicitousness for Rykov and Bukharin — they were leaders of the Rightist conspiracy of which he, Ryskulov, was a member. And once again, Kotkin fails to inform his readers about this.

### **Who Cares What You "Believe"?**

A reader may think: "But probably Kotkin does not believe these accusations against Ryskulov were honest, and that's why he keeps quiet

about them?" Once again, this is the *argument from incredulity*. What's "belief" got to do with it? A historian does not simply relate that information that s/he "believes." The historian's responsibility is to consider *all* the evidence in an objective manner, setting their own biases and preconceived ideas aside. Kotkin makes no attempt to do this, and it ruins his book.

## Rykov's Words Invented

Kotkin:

At the plenum (February 24), Rykov denied the scurrilous accusations and called the mockery of him "a savage thing," given that he was already effectively condemned to death (he pointed out that others had confessed and been shot anyway). (387)

This statement by Kotkin is completely false. Here is the passage in question:

[[cyrillic]]"Эта ответственность на мне есть, я ее не снимаю, ответственность огромная, ибо то, что произошло теперь в партии и в стране, оно свидетельствует отнюдь не о малом. И иметь больший позор, чем тот, что многие из этих людей делали эти отвратительные штуки, ориентируясь на меня, это ужасная вещь.<sup>5</sup>

"This responsibility is on me, I do not remove it. An enormous responsibility, because what has happened now in the party and in the country, is no small thing. And to have a greater shame than the fact that many of these people [who] were doing these hideous things, referring to me, is a terrible thing."

Kotkin actually purveys *two* falsehoods here.

\* It is the "shame," not the accusations, that is the "terrible thing" (Kotkin translates it as "savage" — a mistranslation; savage is "dikii," not "uzhasnyi.>").

\* There is nothing here about Rykov's "pointing out that others had confessed and been shot anyway"!

Apparently Kotkin has simply invented this — made it up! But how are his readers to know, unless they check the footnotes, find Rykov's statement in the voluminous records of the February-March, 1937, Central Committee Plenum, and then read them — in Russian? They won't!

So this is a real swindle — the readers expect the truth; Kotkin gives them falsehoods. Is it "lying"? Let the reader decide.

### **Concealing Stalin's Leniency Towards Bukharin**

Kotkin:

Stalin intervened at the plenum (February 27) to recommend a **seeming** middle ground whereby Bukharin and Rykov would not be immediately put on trial, but turned over to the NKVD for further "investigation." ... The pair spent the remainder of the proceedings at the Lubyanka inner prison while Stalin formed a special commission of the plenum to adjudicate their fate.<sup>71</sup> Bukharin's expulsion from the Central Committee and his disposition to the NKVD were duly upheld by the commission, whose members included Mikoyan (chairman), Maria Ulyanova, and Krupskaya.<sup>72</sup> (387)

Note 71 (992): Kosheleva et al., "Materialy fevral'-martovskogo plenuma TsKVKP (b) 1937 goda," (1994, no. 1): 12-3. Stalin's recommendation was fixed in a formal plenum resolution on March 3: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 2, d. 577, l. 4 (l. 30-3 draft with corrections).

Note 72 (992): "O partiinosti lits, prokhodivshikh po delu tak nazyvaemogo 'antisovetskogo pravotrotskitskogo bloka,'" 82-3; *Stranitsy istorii* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1990), 18; Galumov, *Neizvestnye "Izvestiia,"* 185.

More "bias by omission." Kotkin cites Getty & Naumov, *The Road to Terror*, many times. But not here, though it would be helpful for his readers,

since it is in English.

Getty and Naumov, 409-419, (and, in Russian, Pykhalov and Bobrov<sup>6</sup>) point out that Stalin did *not* "recommend a seeming middle ground," as Kotkin falsely claims. Rather, *Stalin supported the most lenient punishment* for Bukharin and Rykov: not even imprisonment but only "internal exile" to some small city. Others, including some later convicted as conspirators, were for a trial or even for execution!

In the initial polling of thirty-six members of the commission, six spoke for executing Bukharin and Rykov. Eight, including the particularly vituperative Postyshev and Shkiriakov, were for arresting and trying Bukharin and Rykov but for sentencing them to prison rather than to death. Sixteen members either expressed no opinion or their votes were not recorded.

It is the remaining group that is especially intriguing. As the first draft indicates, five members were "for the suggestion of Comrade Stalin." But what was that suggestion? **In the original document, Stalin spoke against the death penalty, a prison sentence, or even a trial, and for the relatively lenient punishment of internal exile.** In the final version, Stalin's modified "suggestion" had become the final decision not to send them to trial but to turn the matter of Bukharin and Rykov over to the NKVD for further investigation .... **This was the third time that Stalin had personally intervened to avoid unambiguously condemning Bukharin.** (Getty & Naumov, 416)

<sup>6</sup> Igor' Pykhalov, Vladimir L. Bobrov, 'Yakir i Bukharin: Spletni i Dokumenty' [Yakir and Bukharin: Rumors and Documents"], Chapter 6 in Pykhalov's book *Velikii obolgannyi vozhd'. Lozh' i pravda o Staline*. (Moscow: Yauza-Press, 2010), and online at multiple sites including <http://www.duel.ru/publish/new/lit/stalin/yak.htm> (For this site select Text Encoding Cyrillic-ISO; accessed 11.24.18).

Kotkin knows that it was Stalin who wanted the most lenient punishment for Bukharin and Rykov. Yet Kotkin follows the paragraph above with this sentence: "Perhaps Stalin might now be satiated?" What dishonesty!

Moreover, Stalin was out-voted and had to compromise. Some "dictator!"

What about the scholarly-looking archival identifier in note 71:

RGASPI, f. 17, op. 2, d. 577, l. 4 (l. 30-3 draft with corrections).

Did Kotkin really see it? Probably not. A facsimile of this document is in Getty and Naumov, 414-415, and the document identified in note 45 on p. 412. All Kotkin had to do was to copy it down. Then — but only if he were unusually careful — he could have checked it against other sources such as Pykhalov and Bobrov, (see previous footnote), where the same document is reproduced and the same archival identifiers given.

So why give archival identifiers at all, when Kotkin could have simply said: "See Getty and Naumov, 414-5." Because they make his book look "scholarly"?

Finally: why does Kotkin write "a seeming middle way"? What was "seeming" — i.e., specious, unreal — about Stalin's proposal, the mildest and most lenient of all the proposals? We are forced to conclude that this is just a dishonest "cheap shot" by Kotkin.

### **The "Torture Telegram"**

Kotkin:

Stalin had some second thoughts. "The Central Committee has learned," he wrote in a telegram to all locales (January 10, 1939), "that the secretaries of provinces and territories, checking on the work of the local NKVD, have charged them with using physical means of interrogation against those arrested as if it were a crime." He informed them that the "physical methods" had been approved by "the Central Committee" and agreed to by "the Communist parties of all the republics" (whose leaders had almost all been shot as foreign agents and wreckers). "It is known that all bourgeois intelligence services apply physical coercion with regard to representatives of the socialist proletariat, and in the ugliest forms," he stressed. "One might ask why

the socialist intelligence service must be more humane with regard to inveterate agents of the bourgeoisie."<sup>84</sup> (595)

Note 84 (1022): Khaustov et al., Lubyanka: Stalin i NKVD, 14-5 (APRF, f. 3, op. 58, d. 6, 1. 145-6); Volkogonov papers, Hoover Institution Archives, container 27; Iakovlev et al., *Reabilitatsiia: Politicheskie protsessy*, 40-1 (**a copy of the telegram found in the Dagestan regional party committee**: all such documents had to be returned to the Central Committee, so this one evidently survived thanks to negligence); *Sluzhba bezopasnosti*, 1993, no. 6: 2; Afanas'ev, *Inogo ne dano*, 561-2n2 (wrong date of Jan. 20, 1939). Kaganovich later testified (in 1957) that Stalin had written out the decree by hand. Kovaleva et al., "Posledniaia 'antipartiinaia' gruppa," 86-9.

This shows either real incompetence, or real dishonesty — or both! — on Kotkin's part. Years ago I put the archival copy of this document — this is the Volkogonov Papers reference — online.<sup>7</sup> You don't need to know Russian to notice a few things.

- In Khrushchev Lied, 330-331, I translate this document, with analysis showing that it cannot be from the "Dagestan regional party committee." Kotkin has misread the text and discussion in the book *Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich 1957*, 121-2, a book that he footnotes elsewhere, though not here. That suggests that *this* document may well have been a forgery. See the additional discussion in Khrushchev Lied 75-80 and 328-332, "28. 'Torture Telegram.'"
- Anyone can see that it is not signed by Stalin.
- There is a date on this supposed 1939 document of "8.II. 1956" — just prior to the XX Party Congress and Khrushchev's "Secret Speech," in which he attacked Stalin for this telegram.
- The document also carries a statement that "two additional copies were typed" on that date. That language suggests that this is also a copy. It looks like a copy. The typewriter type of the text and the date appear to be the same. Also what archivist would type directly on an archival copy of an important government document?
- The telegram is just mentioned, and one section of it quoted, in R-PP, 40-1. What's the point of citing this old, 1991 volume, published

before the documents became available? Afanas'ev, *Inogo ne dano* (1988), 561-2 note 2, merely summarizes this telegram while falsely stating that it supports Gorbachev's October, 1987, statement that Stalin "knew about the illegal acts of the NKVD."

Once again, Kotkin's deception here is through *bias by omission*. For, just as Khrushchev did in his infamous "Secret Speech" to the XX Party Congress on February 25, 1956, Kotkin omits the boldfaced passage (below) from the telegram, which occurs immediately after "approved by 'the Central Committee'":

At the same time it was stated that physical pressure is permitted as an exception and, in addition, only in relation to blatant enemies of the people who, taking advantage of the humane method of interrogation, stubbornly refuse to give up their co-conspirators; who refuse to confess for months; and who strive to slow down the discovery of conspirators who are still at large; and so continue their struggle against Soviet power even from prison. Experience has shown that this policy has produced results by greatly speeding up the exposure of enemies of the people. It is true that subsequently in practice the method of physical pressure was sullied by the scum Zakovsky, Litvin, Uspensky, and others, because they turned it from an exception into a rule and employed it against honest people who had been accidentally arrested. For these abuses, they have been duly punished. But this does not invalidate the method itself, insofar as it is employed correctly in practice. (*Khrushchev Lied*, 331)

Why did Khrushchev omit this passage? Because in it Stalin limits the application of "the use of physical pressure" *and* attacks Yezhov's NKVD men, identifying three of them by name, as "scum."

Khrushchev could get away with this — the full text of this "torture telegram" was not published until Gorbachev's day. We know Khrushchev was a liar and faker. What is to be said about Kotkin?

**Was Mention of Krupskaja Banned from the Soviet Press?**



Kotkin writes:

As a member of the Central Committee, Krupskaya had approved the expulsions and death sentences of Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Bukharin.<sup>119</sup> With her death, Stalin had a chocolate factory named after her. Orders went out to the Soviet press: "Do not print another word about Krupskaya."<sup>120</sup>

To the Soviet press? Here is Kotkin's source:

Note 120 (1023): 120. Zhukov, *Vsesoiuznoe soveshchanie*, 260.

This is a Khrushchev-era collection of essays intended to instruct Party historians how to discuss Soviet history in light of the attacks on Stalin and his former Politburo supporters Kaganovich, Molotov, Malenkov, and Voroshilov, at the XXII Party Congress in October, 1961.<sup>8</sup> In his "closing words" Petr Pospelov, a Khrushchev flunky, responded to a note from the audience:

The next note: "Why can't normal conditions for working in the Central Party Archive be arranged? They do not give out materials on the activities of the Party."

<sup>8</sup> *Vsesoiuznoe soveshchanie o merakh uluchshenia podgotovki nauchno-pedagogicheskikh kadrov po istoricheskim naukam*. 18-21 dekabria 1962 g. M: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1964.

Pospelov's response was: "I have already answered this question." (298) Here he meant his answer to the previous question, in which he had referred the questioner to the documents of the XXII Party Congress.

So even these official Party historians were not allowed into the Party Archive! And today we understand why. The release of a flood of documents since the end of the Soviet Union 1991 has shown that the primary source documents in the Party Archive prove that Khrushchev and his men were lying. For example, we know now that Aleksandr Shelepin, a high-ranking Party official and former Chair of the KGB under Khrushchev,

quoted Komandarm Iona Iakir's letter to Stalin white omitting the paragraphs in which Iakir admits to committing treason.

Is it true that, as Kotkin claims, "orders go out to the Soviet press" not to "print another word about Krupskaya"? Here is the passage from page 260, cited by Kotkin. This was spoken by Anna G. Kravchenko, who was editor of an adult-education magazine:

When Nadezhda Konstantinovna died, she was buried with honors. As you will probably remember, the urn with her ashes was even carried onto Red Square by Stalin. But then, the next day, the chief of the publishing house of the People's Commissariat of Education came to me (I was then editor of the magazine "School for Adults") and said: "Do not print another word more about Krupskaya." (260)

So what Kotkin writes *isn't* true. *No* "orders went out to the Soviet press" not to print anything about Krupskaya. At most, an order went out from a minor official to the editor of a minor journal of adult education.

Kotkin doesn't try to verify this statement — and he could have done so, because this journal, *Shkola vzroslykh*, is held by the University of Illinois at Urbana. But instead of checking it, Kotkin falsifies it, claiming that *the whole Soviet press* was ordered to keep silent about Krupskaya!

This is yet another of Kotkin's phony footnotes. His readers will not locate the Zhukov volume and check the reference, so they will never know. What's more, even Kotkin doesn't believe it, for in the very next footnote, number 121, we read:

Nonetheless, Stalin would permit remembrance of the first anniversary of Krupskaya's death: see the news chronicle, RGAFKFD film 1-3163. (1023)

## **"German Political Refugees" Handed Over To The Nazis?**

Kotkin writes:

Stalin also had Beria extradite 4,000 German political refugees sought by the Nazis. Many were Jewish, and at least 1,000 were Communists. They and their family members would be handed over in ceremonies at the frontier bridge at Brest-Litovsk. Let Hitler expend the bullets.

(695)

Kotkin's paragraph here is false in every detail.

Kotkin cites no evidence — not even phony evidence — for this claim. This anticommunist fairy-tale comes from Margarete Buber-Neumann, whose husband Hans Neumann had been arrested, convicted, and executed for participating in an anti-Soviet conspiracy. She survived World War II and wrote bitterly anticommunist books during the post-war period.

Buber-Neumann had quit the communist party before being extradited to Germany. So she was not a communist when the Soviets deported her.

One of those deported with Buber-Neumann was Betti Ol'berg, whose husband, Valentin Ol'berg, had been a defendant in the August 1936 First Moscow Trial, where he had admitted to plotting to assassinate Stalin. We now have much more evidence about him, and one confession by Betti Ol'berg herself, where she makes it clear that she knew what her husband had been planning.<sup>9</sup> It is interesting that she was not executed, possibly because she had cooperated with the investigation in 1936.

<sup>9</sup> "Transcript of interrogation of Betti Ottovna Ol'berg of April 26, 1936. In *Politbi u ro i Lev Trot s kii: (sbornik dokumentov) 1923-1940 gg.* Ed. Oleg Mozokhin. Prague: Sociosfera-CZ, 2013. Vol. 2, 239-40. This interrogation is *not* in the one-volume version of this collection, with the same title, published in Moscow by IstLit publishers in 2017.

<sup>10</sup> At <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furg/research/mensing.pdf>

Wilhelm Mensing, an anticommunist German historian, has thoroughly researched this issue. I have put his German-language article online.<sup>10</sup> Here are a few sentences from Mensing's conclusion (translation by me, GF):

"No '500 bitter opponents of Hitler' were deported to Germany ... a little over 300 [persons were deported]..."

"The Nazi regime did not punish most of those deported." "The deportations of 1939-1941 were not aimed at communists." "There is no indication that the [Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression] Pact was the motivation for the deportations."

"There is no evidence that those deported from the USSR to Germany in 1939-1941 were persecuted there. On the contrary, there is evidence that some of them, including former communists, were not molested."

Kotkin claims that 4000 "German political refugees" were deported. The real number? 300! All those checked by Mensing had been convicted of some crime or other. This was part of a prisoner exchange between the Soviet Union and Germany.

Mensing's article was published in 2011, in plenty of time for Kotkin to have read it. Did he read it, and just decide not to inform his readers? Or is he ignorant of the whole issue — in which case he should not have written about it at all? Who knows?

### **The Katyn Massacre**

Many of the falsehoods in Kotkin's book did not originate with him. Rather, Kotkin has simply lifted false accounts from other researchers. That is, Kotkin has not himself researched, or even verified, his accounts of many events in his book. Nevertheless, like any historian Kotkin is responsible for whatever he puts into his own book. He could, and should, have verified all the fact-claims and checked all references.

One such event is the Katyn Massacre, the killing of thousands of Polish officers. In 1943 the Germans, abetted by the anticommunist London Polish Government In Exile, blamed this on the Soviets. In January, 1944, the Soviets blamed the Germans. In the last years of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev and his cronies decided to go along with the anticommunist and

Polish nationalist line and blame Stalin and the Soviets. This is now the "official version."

Kotkin's version of "Katyn" is on pages 744-5. Kotkin repeats the "Soviets-did-it" version and cites only secondary sources. Kotkin cites no research of his own at all about Katyn, which has to mean that he has not done any. He simply ignores the research by Russian scholars who have been arguing for more than 20 years now that the "Soviets-did-it" version of Katyn is a fabrication.

One of the most prominent of these researchers is Professor Valentin Sakharov of Moscow University, author of a monumental study of "Testament of Lenin." In the first volume of his Stalin biography Kotkin relies heavily on Sakharov's study, checks many of Sakharov's references, and concludes that Sakharov is correct — the so-called "Testament of Lenin" is indeed a forgery.

But here Kotkin ignores Sakharov's research on Katyn, which goes far to demolish the "Soviets-did-it" version. Kotkin repeats the Polish nationalist story that when asked about the Polish POWs Merkulov and Beria told somebody — one person named is Zygmunt Berling — "we made a big mistake with them." (795) Kotkin fails to inform his readers that Merkulov derisively denied this remark when under interrogation in 1953 (*Politbiuro i delo Beria*, 130).

"Katyn" is one of the most heavily falsified anticommunist horror-stories, and also one of the most influential. After years of studying Katyn and becoming more aware of the contradictions in the "official" version, I published a short article about it in 2013; a short book about it in 2015; and a much fuller book-length study in 2018.<sup>11</sup> Examining all the accounts of Katyn, including all those Kotkin cites and a great many more, was a fascinating task! The result is unequivocal: The Soviets could not possibly have killed the Poles. Therefore, the Germans did it. I refer the reader to my 2018 book.

<sup>11</sup> "The 'Official' Version of the Katyn Massacre Disproven? Discoveries at a German Mass Murder Site in Ukraine!" *Socialism and Democracy* 27, 2 (2013), 96-129; *Le massacre de Katyn. Une refutation de la version*

*"officielle"?* Paris: Editions Delga, 2015; *The Mystery of the Katyn Massacre: The Evidence, the Solution*. Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press & Media LLC, 2018.

Kotkin, however, has clearly never studied the Katyn issue. He just repeats the falsified version supported by Polish nationalists and by Mikhail Gorbachev. It is the only version acceptable to the Anti-Stalin Paradigm.

### **The Suicide of Stalin's Wife**

Stalin's wife Nadezhda (Nadya) Allilueva committed suicide in 1932. This leads Kotkin, as it has other anticommunist falsifiers, to fabricate stories about supposed tensions between Stalin and his wife.

Kotkin:

The effects of her exposure to the student milieu—young women in the city selling themselves to make ends meet; students with ties to the famine-stricken countryside remain difficult to gauge. She kept an emotional distance.<sup>317</sup> (109)

Note 317 (936) has nothing remotely related to "young women selling themselves." So this remark is a "cheap shot." And weren't young women selling themselves in every city in the capitalist world in 1932? Only in note 321, on page 936, does Kotkin tell us that Nadya had "several times threatened to commit suicide." In this footnote Kotkin quotes from Vladimir Alliluev's book (see below) that her suicidal threats were caused by headaches, due to a disease of the cranial sutures, not from any tension with her husband.

Though Kotkin cites Vladimir Alliluev's book on Stalin's family, he does not mention the passage where Alliluev says that Stalin and Nadya "loved each other."

[[cyrillic]]В нашей"то семье знали, что Надежда и Сталин любили друг друга.

But in our family we knew that Nadezhda and Stalin loved each other.

Stalin and his wife raised Artem Sergeev, orphan of a Bolshevik hero, in his household as one of their own children. Sergeev wrote about Nadya's migraines and how, in his view, they caused her to commit suicide.<sup>12</sup> He says that Nadya had been looking forward to life after graduation. Kotkin cites Sergeev's book (1107) but ignores what Sergeev wrote about Stalin's wife and her death.

<sup>12</sup> Artem Sergeev, Ekaterina Glushik. *Besedy o Staline*. Moscow: Krymskii Most 9-D Forum, 2006, 38.

Kotkin gives no evidence at all for this statement:

Svetlana's subsequent account, **unreliable in most respects**, rightly surmised that her father "was too intelligent not to know that people always commit suicide to punish someone."<sup>348</sup> (112)

Svetlana Allilueva's memoirs are indeed not reliable on a number of topics that can be checked. But this statement is not even a fact-claim, only a subjective assessment. What's it doing here? Evidently, its purpose for Kotkin is to make it seem as though there was hostility between Stalin and his wife.

Kotkin does include the following anecdote that shows Stalin's strong love for his wife and attacks Svetlana Allilueva's credibility, though he buries it in a footnote:

One of his bodyguards recalled late in life that Stalin would sit for long periods at Nadya's grave at Moscow's Novodevichy Cemetery. Svetlana asserted that her father never visited the grave. Stalin (film by Thames Television, London, 1990); Alliluyeva, *Twenty Letters*, 113. (Note 348, page 937)<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Sergeev, 39, also testifies to Stalin's weeping and deep sadness at his wife's death.

But then Kotkin continues with another falsehood:

Some writers have asserted that a copy of Ryutin's appeal denouncing her husband was found in Nadya's room. Radzinsky, *Stalin*, 296 (quoting a Vlasik interview with N. Antipenko ); Rayfield, **Stalin and his Hangmen**, 239-40. (937)

There is no evidence for this at all in Rayfield, who just asserts it on page 240 of his book. Eduard Radzinsky, whose biography of Stalin (Russian edition, as used by Kotkin), has no evidence for this claim either:

[[cyrillic]]Начальник личной охраны Сталина генерал Власик в беседе с историком Н. Антипенко рассказал: «Надежда принесла домой из Промакадемии и показала Сталину подброшенное ей на занятиях рютинское обращение к партии, где Сталина именовали агентом, провокатором и прочее.»

Further, the commander of Stalin's bodyguard, N. Vlasik, told the historian Dr. N. Antipenko that Nadezhda once brought home and showed to Stalin a copy of Ryutin's appeal to the Party which had been slipped to her in a class at the Industrial Academy, and in which Stalin was called an "agent provocateur" and much else.

But Vladimir Alliluev, whose book, *Khronika odnoi sem'i* (Story of one family) Kotkin cites five times, wrote this:

[[cyrillic]]А вот версия о том, что на тумбочке в спальне Надежды лежал экземпляр "Платформы Рютина," который ей мог дать сам Сталин, вполне убедительна. (31)

But the story that on the nightstand in Nadezhda's bedroom there lay a copy of the "Riutin Platform," **which Stalin himself may well have given to her**, is fully convincing.

Kotkin ignores this statement, though it directly addresses the issue Kotkin himself has raised. Evidently Kotkin does not wish to portray Stalin as either a loving husband or a person who would give his wife Opposition literature that contained bitter attacks on himself.



## **Chapter 11a. Miscellaneous Falsehoods, Continued**

### **Trotsky Lied! Stalin Not So Much**

From remote Prinkipo, his [Leon Trotsky's] exposure of the Soviet regime's lies reverberated around the world-and inside Stalin's office.  
19 (13)

Kotkin has no evidence that there were such "lies" or that Trotsky "exposed" them. In reality it was Trotsky, not Stalin, who was lying.<sup>1</sup> Trotsky claimed that Stalin was lying but not a single one of his claims has been proven to be true. (We have discussed the contents of note 19 in Chapter Four).

<sup>1</sup> See Furr, Trotsky's 'Amalgams', and Furr, Trotsky's Collaboration.

### **Who "Violated the Versailles Treaty"?**

Secret military cooperation with Germany, in violation of the Versailles Treaty, had been under way for years. (21)

Germany did indeed violate the Versailles Treaty. But unlike Germany, Soviet Russia/ USSR was not a signatory to the Versailles Treaty and so was not bound by its provisions. Therefore, Soviet Russia did not violate it.

Most of Kotkin's readers will not know this. He should have explained it to them. Why didn't he? In order to give the (false) impression that Soviet Russia (after December 30, 1922, the USSR) had also violated it?

### **Was the Shakhty Trial A Frame-up?**

In conspiring with the dictator to manufacture the 1928 Shakhty trial, Yevdokimov had become an all-Union star (and in 1930 would receive his fourth Order of the Red Banner).<sup>81</sup> (23)

Note 18 (914): 81. Papchinskii and Tumshis, *Shchit, raskolotii mechom*, 208-9.

Even Papchinskii and Tumshis — the very source that Kotkin cites here — say that Stalin believed this was a real conspiracy:

[[cyrillic]]Изучив документы~ Сталин объявил: «Для меня ясно, что мы имеем дело с людьми, сознательно срывающими производство, но для меня не ясно, кто ими руководит.»<sup>2</sup>

After examining the documents, Stalin declared: "It's clear to me that we are dealing with people who deliberately disrupt production, but it's not clear to me who is leading them.

### ***How Many Specialists Sentenced?***

Thousands of specialists had been sentenced.<sup>254</sup> ... He [Stalin] had also written to Molotov "that two or three dozen wreckers from the [finance commissariat] must be executed." He wanted them linked to the rightists, adding that "a whole group of wreckers in the meat industry must definitely be shot and their names published in the press."<sup>256</sup> (50)

Note 254 (919): "254. An estimated 3,000 engineers had been arrested in the Donbass in 1928-29. "Over the last several years we liquidated counterrevolutionary organizations almost in every sphere of the economy," the OGPU reported in May 1930. Sevost'ianov et al., *Sovershenno sekretno*, VIII/ii: 1140 (TsA FSB, f. 2, op. 8, por. 435, l. 169-241)."

Kotkin writes two falsehoods here. First, the text says "sentenced" but the footnotes says "arrested." Not the same thing! Second, the last line of this document Kotkin cites from Sevost'ianov (which is online at <http://istmat.info/node/27045>) reads thus:

[[cyrillic]]За последние два года мы ликвидировали контрреволюционные организации почти во всех областях

народного хозяйства уголь, транспорт, тяжелая металлургия"  
золотая промышленность, военная промышленность и т.п.

Over the past two years we have eliminated counter-revolutionary organizations in almost all areas of the national economy coal, transport, heavy metallurgy, the gold industry, the military industry, and so on.

There is no mention of any "estimate" of "3,000 engineers." Evidently Kotkin invented this large number.

### **Begging the Question ... Again**

On October 2, 1930, Mężyński sent Stalin interrogation materials relating to a clandestine Industrial Party. "To the OGPU, comrade Mężyński. In person only. From Stalin," the dictator wrote back, specifying the exact content of the conspiracies and demanding corroborating testimony, which, if extracted, "will be a serious victory for the OGPU." **Stalin either believed or made it appear that he believed in the fabrications**, instructing Mężyński's interrogators to ascertain: "1) Why was the [foreign military] intervention in 1930 put off? 2) Is it because Poland was not ready? 3) Perhaps because Romania was not ready? 4) Perhaps because the Baltic states and Romania have not yet come to terms with Poland? 5) Why have they put off the attack to 1931? 6) Might they put it off to 1932?" Stalin added that the confessions would be made available to "the workers of the world. We shall launch as broad a campaign as possible against interventionists and thwart them in their attempts for the next one or two years, which is of great significance to us. (54)

Note 277 (920): "277. Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i VChK*, 256-7 (TsA FSB, f. 2, op. 9, d. 388, l. 270-1: Oct. 1930); *Kommunist*, 1990, no. 11: 99-100 (RGASPI, f. 558, op. 1, d. 5276); *Kosheleva, Pis'ma Stalina Molotovu*, 187-8; Lib et al., *Stalin's Letters to Molotov*, 195-6.

Kotkin cites *no* evidence that the Industrial Party trial was a "fabrication." No wonder — no such evidence exists. Kotkin simply *assumes* that —

when he should prove it. This is the logical fallacy known as "begging the question."

The fact that Stalin believed the charges is itself evidence, though not primary source evidence. An English translation of the trial transcript, including the final statements of those accused (157 ff.) is *Wreckers on Trial*. Ed. Andrew Rothstein (New York: Workers Library, Printed in England, 1931). The testimony in the trial *is* primary source evidence.

### **"30,000 Heads Of Households Executed"??**

All told, around 5 million people were "dekulakized"—by the police, by their fellow peasants, or by choosing to flee, with an untold number perishing during deportation or not long after. **Up to 30,000 heads of households were summarily executed.** (75)

The nearest footnote is note 42 (924):

42. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 9, 1. 138. On Feb. 25, 1931, the politburo resolved by telephone poll to recommend that during the course of six months the OGPU "prepare" kulak settlements for 200,000-300,000 families near Karaganda in northern Kazakhstan. Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i VChK*, 263 (APRF, f. 3, op. 30, d. 149, l. 51).

Kotkin's statement here is simply false. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 9, 1. 138 is a page from the February 25, 1931 Politburo meeting.<sup>3</sup> There is nothing in it, or in the document on page 263 of the Khaustov collection cited, about any executions at all — much less of 30,000 people, much less of heads of households. The document published in Khaustov, 263, is online here, together with explanatory notes: <http://istmat.info/node/45960>

<sup>3</sup> See <https://cyberleninka.ru/article/nflesnoy-eksport-sssr-v-kontse-1920-h-nachale-1930-h-gg-i-konkurenciya-na-evropeyskom-rynke>

**... And the Falsehoods Keep On Comin'**

... For a time, urgent requests for cheap "kulak" laborers skyrocketed, but sites that had large numbers of the deported often begged not to be sent any more: **the ones they had were just dying**. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 120, d. 26, l. 37 (Kuznetskstroj); Viola, *Unknown Gulag*, 4.

There is *nothing* in this document about *anyone* dying, either those already there or anybody else.

This document — RGASPI, f. 17, op. 120, d. 26, l. 37 — is online at <http://istmat.info/node/37271> It is a request from the chief at Kuznetskstroj not to send any more families of *spetsposelentsy* (exiles), since they do not have the means to house, feed, or clothe them. Kulaks and their families might be *spetsposelentsy*, but there's nothing here about "kulaks" or "laborers" here.

And — most significantly — it says nothing about anybody "dying." Kotkin evidently invented this too.

### "Charged"? Or Just Arrested?

[In 1930-31] More than 3,000 former tsarist officers in Kharkov, Kiev, Moscow, and Leningrad were **charged with conspiracy and espionage**.<sup>66</sup> (77)

n.66 (925)

66. Artizov et al., *Reabilitatsiia: kak eto bylo*, II: 671-788; *Z arkhiviv VUChK, GPU, NKVD, KGB*, no. 1, issue 18 (2002): 209; Khaustov, *Lubianka: Stalin i VChK*, 212-3 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 7, l. 188, 192); Zdanovich, *Organy*, 423-31. The main scholarly authority, who provides a list of names while admitting the impossibility of establishing exact figures, writes that as many as 10,000 officers might have been arrested and sentenced. Tynchenko, *Golgofa*, 242, 248-311. See also Berkhin, *Voennaia reforma*, 261.

Artizov et al. is the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission of 1963 — the entire text This is the text that Kotkin should have cited always, but which

he in fact seldom does. The number of 3000 *arrests* of former Tsarist officers is on page 729. It does not state that the officers were "charged," much less with what. Zdanovich, *Organy*, does not cite any figure for the number of officers arrested.

"Tynchenko" — really "Tinchenko" — lists several hundred officers who were arrested. In section 2 ("razdel II") he usefully reprints confession interrogations of a number of them. Confessions of guilt are *prima facie* evidence of guilt — they can never be evidence of innocence, though Kotkin implies that these officers were innocent. What government would not arrest officers who were plotting against it? Tinchenko claims that "no fewer than 10,000 persons" were repressed, but he lists only a few hundred. (Tinchenko, "Vmesto predislovia," p. 3).

Berkhin's book is titled *Military Reform in the USSR 1924-1925*. Naturally, it says nothing about the matter Kotkin is discussing here — the arrests of officers in 1930-1. So this is yet another phony reference.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Page 261 of Berkhin's book states briefly that, during 1924, 2201 officers and employees of the former White armies left military service and thousands of new officers were trained.

### **"10,000 Demonstrators"? Or "X Demonstrators"?**

Ten thousand demonstrators ransacked the party and police buildings ("Toss the Communists ... out the window"). Stalin dispatched Kaganovich, who mobilized local party agitators to speak with workers and himself heard out their grievances.<sup>205</sup> (95)

Note 205 (931): 205. Davies, *Crisis and Progress*, 188-91 (citing APRF, f. 3, op. 22, d. 39, l. 6-7).

This is a falsehood. Davies says nothing about any "ten thousand demonstrators" or *any* number of demonstrators. Nor does he cite the document from APRF. In fact, Kotkin appears to have simply copied this from Khlevniuk, *Khoziain*, page 93, which covers the same events and cites the same APRF document that Kotkin cites here. But Khlevniuk says

nothing about any ten thousand demonstrators either. Did Kotkin even read this archival document? Or did he just find it in Khlevniuk's book and cite it *as though* he had read it?

### **One-Third the Casualties — And Then There Was The Famine**

More than 126,000 forced laborers did the work [on the Belomor Canal], almost entirely without machines, and probably at least 12,000 died doing so, while orchestras played in the background. (134)

Kotkin gives no evidence for this figure of "at least 12,000 **died doing so.**" No wonder! To be sure, the main source gives the figure as 12,318 — 1438 in 1931, 2010 in 1932, 8870 in 1933. See A.I. Kokurin, IU. N Morukov, eds. *Stalinskie Stroiki GULAGA 1930 - 1953. Dokumenty.* (Stalinist GULAG Construction] Moscow: MDF - "Materik" 2005, 33-4.

However, 1932-33, the years with the higher casualties, were the years of the great famine throughout the USSR (not only, or even mainly, in the Ukraine, as Ukrainian nationalists claim). These years had the highest mortality rates throughout the USSR, including in the camps.

So the prisoners did not die "doing so" — that is, from poor or brutal conditions of work. They died from famine and from disease, as well as from other, natural causes.

The orchestras were part of the cultural and educational programs for prisoners. I have not found similar cultural activities for American prisoners during this period. In fact, a big issue in the USA at the time was the brutal conditions and high mortality in "chain gangs." And compare the horrendous — in fact, fascist — abuse and murder of black prisoners in the USA after the Civil War discussed by Douglas Blackmon.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Douglas Blackmon. *Slavery By Another Name. The Re-enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II.* New York: Anchor Books, Random House, 2008. See too the excellent web page at <http://www.slaverybyanothername.com/>

## **But Kamenev Didn't Say That ...**

From the rostrum they issued self-flagellating calls for "unity," with Kamenev defending Stalin's personal dictatorship (in contrast to his bold denunciation of it back at the 14th Party Congress).<sup>184</sup>

This is about Kamenev's speech to the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in January, 1934. But Kamenev said nothing about "Stalin's personal dictatorship," or anything like it, in this speech, which is online at [http://www.hrono.ru/vkpb\\_17/20\\_7.html](http://www.hrono.ru/vkpb_17/20_7.html)

## **Maybe There Should Have Been *No* Scrutiny?**

Local party head Eihe was empowered to approve executions on his own from September through November.<sup>17</sup> (190)

Note 17 (959): "17. Khaustov et al., Lubyanka: Stalin i VChK, 566 (APRF, f. 3, op. 58, d. 246, l. 1: Sept. 2, 1934); Khaustov and Samuelson, Stalin, NKVD, 70; RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 17, l. 31; Khlevniuk et al., *Stalinskoe politbiuro*, 19, 58-66."

Only the last citation, from *Stalinskoe politbiuro*, refers to this authority given to Eikhe. Here are the references. First, the authority is granted to the judicial troikas to use the death penalty against "armed banditism":

№ 53

[[cyrillic]]Постановление Политбюро по вопросу Ягоды

11 августа 1933 г.

116/102. - Вопрос т. Ягоды.

Временно разрешить по делам о вооруженном бандитизме предоставить право судебным тройкам ПП ОГПУ Украины, СКК, НКВ, Белоруссии, Казакстана, Урала и Зап. Сибирского края



применять к организаторам и бандитскому активу ВЫСШУЮ МЕРУ НАКАЗАНИЯ.

РЦХИДНИ. Ф. 17. Оп. 162. Д. 15. Л. 27.

Протокол № 143. (64)

Politburo Resolution on Yagoda's question

August 11, 1933

116/102. - Question of com. Yagoda.

In cases of armed banditry temporarily permit assignment to judicial troikas of the OGPU of Ukraine, the Northern Caucasus Region, the Lower Volga Region, Belorussia, Kazakhstan, the Urals and the Western Siberian region of the right to apply to the organizers and the gangster asset the HIGHEST MEASURE OF PUNISHMENT.

RTSKHIDNI. F. 17. Op. 162. D. 15. L. 27.

Protocol number 143.

Next, authority is given to Robert I. Eikhe, First Secretary of Western Siberia, to allow, or not to allow, the death penalty during September and October of 1934:

№ 55

[[sigillic]]Постановление Политбюро по телеграмме Молотова

19 сентября 1934 г.

51. - Телеграмма т. Молотова от 19.IX.

Принять предложение т. Молотова: предоставить т. Эйхе право давать санкцию на высшую меру наказания **в Западной Сибири в течение сентября и октября месяцев 1934 г.**

РЦХИДНИ. Ф.17. Оп.162.Д.17.Л. 43.

Протокол № 14. (65)

Resolution of the Politburo by Molotov's telegram September 19, 1934

51. - Telegram by com. Molotov from 19.IX.

Accept the proposal of com. Molotov: give com. Eikhe the right to permit the death penalty in Western Siberia **during September and October of 1934.**

RTSKHIDNI. F. 17. Op. 162. D. 17. L. 43.

Protocol № 14.

For some reason — carelessness? — Kotkin says that Eikhe's authority to approve executions (or, of course, to *disapprove* them — but Kotkin fails to point this out) ran "from September through November." But the document he cites, the second one above, clearly says "during September and October of 1934" (the boldfaced words).

### **Since When Does "Sabotage" Equal "Terrorism"?**

On the plenum's eve, resistance to Stakhanovism had been designated as terrorism.<sup>234</sup> (278)

Note 234 (978): 234. Damage of machinery while operating it as well as the production or supply of poor quality goods became crimes of sabotage too. Andreyev gave the main report, for which he had been copiously supplied with NKVD materials on "sabotage" of the Stakhanovite movement. Other speakers cited cases of anti-Stakhanovite "sabotage" in their regions. Davies et al., *Years of Progress*, 171-2 (citing RGASPI, f. 73, op.1, d. 141, l. 205; f. 17, op. 2, d. 561, l. 32: Ryndin); *Pravda*, December 29, 1935.

It is false — and a gross distortion of Davies' text — to claim, as Kotkin does, that "resistance to Stakhanovism" was "designated as terrorism." Here

is the passage from Davies that Kotkin cites:

Davies, *Years of Progress*, p. 171:

Andreev, a secretary of the party central committee and Politburo member, in preparing for the central committee plenum of December 21-25, at which he gave the keynote speech, was supplied with a considerable amount of NKVD material on the resistance of "conservative and counter-revolutionary elements" to the Stakhanov movement. The material indicates that by December hundreds of **cases of sabotage** had already been discovered or concocted. The NKVD used the following headings to describe resistance to Stakhanovism: deliberate damage of the equipment of Stakhanovites; creation of unfavourable conditions for their work (including supplying them with poor-quality tools and materials, and allocating inappropriate personnel to Stakhanovite work-teams); illegal reduction of rates for the job and increases of norms; "deception" by economic agencies (this obviously refers to inaccurate reports); "counterrevolutionary agitation against Stakhanovite methods"; terror against Stakhanovites.<sup>40</sup>

The main point is opposition to sabotage, not terrorism. Sabotage was not to be considered terrorism; terrorism — murdering Stakhanovites — is listed last.

### **If Only Kotkin Were As Truthful As Stalin!**

Stalin was a liar, a chameleon, who talked out of both sides of his mouth and often said what interlocutors wanted to hear. (309)

But Kotkin cites no evidence here. In fact, Kotkin has *no evidence anywhere* in this massive book even of *a single lie* of Stalin's, or of Stalin "talking out of both sides of his mouth," or of Stalin saying — even once — "what interlocutors wanted to hear"!

This remarkable fact can only be explained in one way: that *Kotkin could not find even a single example of a genuine lie by Stalin*. For if he had found even one, surely he would have included it in his book. Wouldn't he?

## A "Scuffle" Is Not The Same As "A Punch In The Face"

He [Stalin] had stressed the work of "checking up by punching people in the face" (September 2, 1930).<sup>48</sup> (441)

Note 48 (1000): 48. Lih et al., Stalin's Letters to Molotov, 210-1.

This is the English translation of the Stalin-Molotov letters. Why doesn't Kotkin quote from the original Russian edition, which he lists it in his bibliography? (p. 1092, col. 3)

Here, perhaps, is the reason. The English edition reads:

In my opinion, the leadership of Gosbank and Finance has to be replaced with people from the OGPU and the Worker-Peasant Inspection once these latter bodies have conducted some inspecting and **checking up by punching people in the face.** (Letter 63, 9 /2/1930).

But the Russian edition — the original — reads:

[[cyrillic]]Придется, по-моему, обновить верхушку Госбанка и Наркомфина за счет ОГПУ и РКИ после того, как эти последние органы проведут там **проверочно-мордобойную работу.**

... after these last bodies carry out **the work of a fight for verification** there.

The word *mordoboi* here clearly means a "fight," meaning a sharp struggle. What it does *not* mean, as used here by Stalin, is "punching people in the face," though this is the literal meaning.<sup>6</sup> The persons who were replaced were the heads of Gosbank, Briukhanov and Piatakov. Nobody was literally "punched in the face."

## Stalin's Grandson Evgenii

Stalin never recognized Yevgeny as his grandson.<sup>140</sup> (523)

Note 140 (1012): "140. Galina would later deny that this was her half-brother: V. Nechaev, "Vnuchka Stalina "o belykh piatniakh v istorii svoei sem'i," *Argumenty i fakty*, Nov. 3, 1999."

Kotkin's own source states that it was not Stalin but Galina Dzhugashvili, Yevgeny's step-sister, who refused to recognize Yevgeny as her father's son and therefore Stalin's grandson. This is what the source in Kotkin's footnote in *Argumenty i Fakty* — a rumor-mongering publication and a completely unreliable source — says.

According to the Russian Wikipedia page on Evgenii Dzhugashvili, Stalin was pleased with Ol'ga Golysheva, Yakov's partner.

[[cyrillic]]Ольге Сталин был вроде бы рад. Алексей Пиманов в своей книге «Сталин. Трагедия семьи» однозначно утверждает, что «На этот раз выбор сына одобрил и отец. Он распорядился даже выделить молодым небольшую квартиру в центре Москвы.»[5]

Stalin was, apparently, happy with Olga. Alexey Pimanov in his book "Stalin. The tragedy of a family" unequivocally asserts that "this time the father also approved the choice of the son. He even arranged for the young people to be given a small apartment in the center of Moscow."

So why does Kotkin say it was *Stalin* who refused to recognize his grandson, when in fact it was Evgenii's *step-sister* who refused to do so? Because it makes Stalin appear "mean"? Something like that, perhaps.

### **All Soviet Workers And Their Families Starved To Death!**

A Soviet worker needed to labor for sixty-two hours to purchase a loaf of bread, versus about seventeen minutes for an American ... (544)

Sometimes Kotkin's zeal to make the USSR during the 1930s look very bad goes off the rails completely. As here.

Kotkin cites no evidence for this statement. No wonder — it cannot possibly be true. It would mean that a Soviet worker could work six ten-hour days plus two hours more, and still only earn *one loaf of bread*. All the Soviet workers and their children would have starved to death very quickly!

### **Win The Battle Or Be Killed By The NKVD?**

To be sure, failure for Zhukov at the Halha River [against the Japanese] could have meant death in NKVD cellars.<sup>160</sup> But then again, that was true for every Soviet commander.

Note 160 (1032): "160. Erickson, *Soviet High Command*, 522."

But that is not what Erickson wrote.

Zhukov could have had no illusions about this assignment; failure was out of the question. To win and win decisively, even spectacularly, would alone suffice." (Erickson, 522)

Erickson says nothing about "death in NKVD cellars," "true for every Soviet commander," etc. In fact, there is not a single example in Soviet history of a commander being executed because he failed to win a battle.

### **Did Stalin Say That Nazi Germany Had Become "Objectively Progressive"?**

Stalin further stated in the Little Corner that "the division of capitalist states into fascist and democratic no longer makes sense." Such a division had never held much meaning for him even when, in 1935, he had allowed the Comintern to announce a popular front against fascism, which, in the form of Nazi Germany, had become objectively progressive: "Hitler, without understanding it or desiring it, is shaking and undermining the capitalist system."<sup>176</sup>

Note 178 (1033): 176. Banac, *Diary of Georgi Dimitrov*, 115-6 (Sept. 7, 1939).

This passage reads as follows:

- Before the war, opposing a democratic regime to fascism was entirely correct.
- During war between the imperialist powers that is now incorrect.
- The division of capitalist states into fascist and democratic no longer makes sense.
- The war has precipitated a radical change.
- Yesterday's United Popular Front served to ease the position of slaves under a capitalist regime.
- Under conditions of an imperialist war, the prospect of the annihilation of slavery arises!

Nothing in this passage says or implies the absurd notion that "fascism ... has become objectively progressive."

Moreover, Stalin was right in an important way. World War II so weakened the imperialist powers that, during the 1940s through the 1970s, every colony of every imperialist power got independence. Those who won it by fighting, such as the Chinese and Vietnamese, did so against repression so vicious from the "freedom-loving" Western imperialists that the violence far outdid anything that the Soviet bloc countries had even been accused of, much less actually done. Other colonies, like Algeria (France) and Kenya (Great Britain) endured massive torture campaigns and massacres of noncombatants by the "free world" imperialists. And they were outdone in violence, terror, and torture by the US war in Vietnam.

These anti-imperialist victories did not lead to the achievement of egalitarian communist societies. But they *did* mean an end of the domination by Eastern (Japan) and Western (US, Belgian, French, British, Dutch, Italian) imperialist powers. To that extent, at least, Stalin was correct.

## NKVD "Quotas" Again?

Despite people's evasions and self-misrepresentations, the NKVD—full of half-educated people—amassed a stunning amount of operational information, seizing local archives and personnel files, and using censuses and tax registers, to enumerate the entire population politically. The NKVD locked factory gates with the workers inside until registrations were complete, and put the onus on urban landlords, who would answer with their heads, to march whole apartment buildings to prearranged sites for "registration." **In villages, volunteer or conscripted facilitators were promised rewards for meeting "quotas" of farmers delivered to in-person registrations.**<sup>62</sup>

Note 62 (1046) contains no evidence to support the statements in this paragraph. Specifically, it says nothing about "quotas." Kotkin merely says that he saw very detailed NKVD materials in Khabarovsk (Siberia) concerning the preparations made for exiles.



## Chapter 12. *Strategies of Misdirection*

### **An Analysis of the Falsehoods in *Stalin, Vol. 2*.**

*Stalin, Vol. 2* is not an attempt to give a truthful account of the events it discusses. It is something else: an attempt to convince the reader that it is a truthful account. In other words: *Stalin, Vol. 2* is a fraud — a work of propaganda disguised as a work of historical research. *Stalin, Vol. 2* is a book that is designed to mislead its readers. Judging from the book reviews published as of January, 2019, it has been very successful in misleading them.

The main reason for its success is what I have called "the Anti-Stalin Paradigm" (ASP). *Stalin, Vol. 2* tells its readers what they, broadly speaking, already "knew" — that is, what they thought they knew: that Stalin and the Soviet leadership were evil people who deliberately murdered a great many innocent persons. *Stalin, Vol. 2* fills out the paradigm of "Stalin and the Soviets as evil" with scholarly-looking examples and documentation, much as hot air fills out a balloon.

In addition to the techniques of misrepresentation and misdirection, other factors are involved. Chief among them is the power of the ASP. This epidemic of self-imposed blindness exists because there is no powerful institution that is devoted to the pursuit of historical truth. The historical profession is supposed to be such an institution. But it is not, at least as regards Soviet history of the Stalin period. In this field falsehood is rewarded as long as it serves anticommunist purposes. Meanwhile the truth is discouraged or penalized when, as is usually the case, it does not serve those purposes.

The techniques of misdirection employed in *Stalin, Vol. 2* are not original or sophisticated. Once they have been pointed out they appear almost transparent. But they have fooled many reviewers. At the time I am writing this I have yet to find a single reviewer who has identified even one of the dozens of falsifications in Kotkin's book.

If someone were to write a book accusing the American government of atrocities on the scale of those Kotkin falsely attributes to Stalin and the Soviet leadership, we can be certain that many scholars would check every statement and examine all the evidence. The fact that up to now no one has done this is, no doubt, due in part to the fact that in *Stalin, Vol. 2* Kotkin is telling people that which they have assumed to be true all along.

What we have done in the present book is simply to apply to Kotkin's fact-claims, accusations, and allegations against Stalin and the Soviet leadership in *Stalin, Vol. 2* the critical, scholarly examination that any careful reviewer of a book alleging crimes by the United States government and leadership would adopt. The result is devastating to Kotkin's book.

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## **A Typology of Prevarication**

In an earlier work I termed the different kinds of falsification in Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" a "typology of prevarication." In that work I was able to show that what Khrushchev stated in this infamous speech was false. In most cases I did not have enough evidence to discover what really happened. I did find enough evidence to prove that more than 40 "revelations" made by Khrushchev in that speech are deliberate lies and that 20 more are also falsehoods — probably, but not provably, deliberate.

In *The Murder of Sergei Kirov* I discussed the studies by Matthew Lenoe, Åsmund Egge, and Alla Kirilina. I discovered that these scholars had tortured the available evidence in order to reach the only conclusion congruent with the ASP: that Kirov's assassin, Leonid Nikolaev, was a "lone gunman" and that Stalin fabricated the criminal cases against everyone else. In the case of Kirov's murder we do have enough evidence to prove that those persons convicted of the murder by the Soviet court in December 1934 were indeed guilty. But I did not give a theoretically-informed account of the errors and methods of misdirection that these prior scholars used.

In the case of *Stalin, Vol. 2* I think such an account is warranted. The fact-claims against Stalin and the Soviets are so universally false, and the failure of experienced reviewers to notice this so complete, that we are forced to admit that the techniques of falsification in *Stalin, Vol. 2* have been successful. If they have fooled the reviewers, including at the time of this writing a few scholarly reviewers, they will also fool the general reader. These techniques of falsification are simple in principle. But they are only *disclosed* as simple in practice if one studies them closely.

The widespread acceptance of the ASP discourages any attempt to verify fact-claims that are convenient to that paradigm, since the process of verification dismantles the paradigm itself. A review of the techniques of misdirection in *Stalin, Vol. 2* may prove helpful in warning the reader against naive acceptance of the ASP in other works too. Under its controlling influence every piece of evidence is bent to fit it, while everything that does not fit it is ignored, discarded, caricatured, or denied.

One conclusion stands out: no "authority," no "expert" regardless of his or her academic pedigree, should be simply "believed." *Given the ideologically-charged field that is Soviet history of the Stalin period, no accusation of wrongdoing against Stalin, the Soviet leadership, or pro-Soviet forces, no matter what its source, should ever be accepted as true unless it has been thoroughly verified first.* The sooner this fact is generally recognized, and the sooner the practice of verifying everything that "fits" the ASP is taken seriously, the better for those of us who wish to discover the truth.

## **Objectivity**

In any academic discipline it is essential that the researcher determine to be objective from the outset of her study. History is no different. The historian must make every effort to survey all the primary sources that bear upon her subject, and all the secondary sources that study this evidence, whether or not these secondary sources reflect the same biases, preconceived ideas, or values as her own.

Since objectivity is, among other things, an attitude of distrust of the self<sup>1</sup>, of one's own preconceived ideas and biases, the historian must compensate for her own limitations by trying especially hard to give a supportive reading to primary and secondary sources whose tendency is opposed to her own biases. At the same time she must determine to be especially suspicious of that evidence and those works of scholarship that tend to confirm or agree with her own biases. This practice is essential in order to counteract the natural tendency to "cherry-pick" the evidence, to look with special favor upon statements that reflect one's own views.

<sup>1</sup> Michael Schudson. *Discovering the News. A Social History of American Newspapers*. New York: Basic Books, 1978, 77.

In her historical practice the historian must observe the tenets of objective research from the outset. If the historian does not begin with a determination to find the truth "no matter whose ox is gored"; if she does not remain vigilant, ready at every moment to discover a truth that she finds disillusioning, her research is doomed. She will never stumble across the truth by accident along the way.

Moreover, if a historian does not begin from a determination to discover the truth, we must ask the question: What, then, is her purpose in writing the book? *If the historian is not out to discover the truth and report it to her readers, what is she doing?*

Kotkin ignores these tenets of historical objectivity. Therefore, no one should be surprised that his book is filled with historical falsehoods. It could not be otherwise.

### **Methods of Falsification in *Stalin*, Vol. 2**

Avoidance of objectivity takes many specific forms. There are many different ways to smuggle in fact-claims without evidence. Among these methods of falsification are logical fallacies.

One of them, the "argument from incredulity" or "fallacy of personal incredulity," in a sense represents the whole of Kotkin's book. For *Stalin*,

*Vol. 2* represents what Kotkin "believes" about Stalin and the events of the 1930s. Presumably, Kotkin "believes" his account — but who cares what he "believes"? The evidence just does not support what he believes. Instead of changing what he believes to conform to the evidence, Kotkin ignores or distorts the evidence that refutes what he believes.

<b>Technique of Deception</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Bias of Omission</b>	Perhaps the most important technique of deception because it is the most difficult to recognize.	
	Reliance on the reader's ignorance.	Yakir's letter to Stalin; Frinovsky's statement; Yakovlev's confession; Coox's discoveries; Khaustov's quotation (Ch. 10); Humbert-Droz (Ch. 8); Riutin (Ch. 8); Nazi instigation of the Barcelona May Days (Ch. 7); 2 different editions of Dubinsky-Mukhadze on Ordzhonikidze
<b>Phony Scholarship</b>		
* Fact-claims contradicted or disproven by the sources Kotkin cites in support of them.	Phony references that will fool all but the most attentive readers.	"Bloc letter," Ch. 4; Rosliakov, Ch. 2; Feuchtwanger.
* Fact-claims not supported by the sources Kotkin cites.	Sources that do not document the fact-claims Kotkin has made, though he cites them as though they did.	Krasnikov, Ch. 2; Primakov, Ch. 7; Yaroslavsky, Ch. 8.
* Citations to phony	Citing credentialed scholars who falsify	Oleg Khlevniuk on Ordzhonikidze, Ch. 3, 6.

scholarship that do the falsifying.	consistently lends a fraudulent air of legitimacy to one's own fact-claims.	
Reliance on dishonest fact-claims by others that do not pretend to be secondary sources.	Mainly "official" sources that are seldom questioned.	Khrushchev's Secret Speech and memoirs; Arao telegram, from the <i>Spravka</i> .
Phony appearance of scholarship.	Citation of same document from different publications as though they are different sources.	Five or six different editions of the same document, the <i>Spravka</i> of the Shvernik Commission.
Fact-claims unsupported by ANY evidence.	Assertions without even the fig-leaf of evidence.	Collective farmers "enslaved", Ch. 1 and 2; Blokhin, the executioner with Walther pistols; 1,000 German communists handed over to Hitler for execution, Ch. 11.
<b>Logical Fallacies</b>		
* Argument from Incredulity	Claim that because Kotkin "can't believe" something, it is not true.	Feuchtwanger (Ch. 6); "Fantastic" plot (Ch. 9)
* Fact-claims that Kotkin cannot possibly know.	Illogical assertions.	"No military conspiracy", Ch. 9; Artuzov "fabricated documents" (Ch. 9); Tukhachevsky convicted of "crimes he did not commit." (Ch. 9)
* "Begging the Question"	<i>Petitio Principii</i> : Assertion without	Stalin caused the famine (Ch. 1); Moscow Trials defendants

	evidence; Assuming that which is to be proven.	tortured, promised their lives for false confessions.
* Name-calling	Insulting words instead of evidence and logic.	Stalin a "dictator", then, a "despot": Ch. 3; Ch. 9.
* Argument by Scare Quote	Using scare quotes in lieu of evidence that a statement is false.	Ch. 5; Ch. 9.
* The Nominal Fallacy (here, "psychologizing") — giving something a name, then assuming that you have explained it.	Claiming that Stalin was "thinking" something or had some psychological condition.	"Channeling" Stalin, Ch. 9; Ch. 10; Stalin's "paranoia" ( <i>passim</i> ); Stalin's "profoundly dark spirit" (Ch. 10)
* Appeal to authority ("argument from authority"). Mere assertion, often from failure to research a topic at all.	Accepting some "mainstream" fact-claim or interpretation (or, inventing some explanation) without doing the research to verify or disprove it. Similar to the last category.	"Hotel Bristol" issue; Katyn Massacre; "Torture telegram", Ch. 11; "Klim — no mistakes...", Ch. 11.
<b>Other Strategies of Misdirection</b>		
Alternative theories relegated to footnotes only.	Historians are supposed to discuss theories alternative to their own.	The theory of environmental causes of the 1932-33 famine, Ch. 1.
Asserting	Few readers will	"Quotas" for repression (Ch. 10);

falsehoods long since disproven by other scholars.	know these fact-claims have been disproven.	"execution lists" (Ch. 10).
Lack of source criticism: use of long-discredited sources; other examples.	Use of sources that scholars know to avoid but readers will not know that.	Orlov, <i>Secret History</i> , Ch. 5; Boris Nicolaevsky, Ch. 5; Krivitsky, Ch. 9. Also, see separate chapter.

### Analysis of the Prevarications in *Stalin, Vol. 2*

The success of a work as corrupt as *Stalin, Vol. 2* requires explanation. How can a book that is largely composed of demonstrable, provable falsehoods have been published? Once published, how can it be praised by newspaper and magazine reviewers? How can a work utterly lacking in integrity be published in thousands of copies by a major publisher?

Part of the answer lies in the historical role of pseudo-scholarship as propaganda for anticommunist purposes. The demonization of Soviet history dates back to the Russian revolution itself. Already in 1920 Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz showed how the *New York Times*, "newspaper of record" then as today, "reported" the triumph of the Whites and the defeat of the Reds numerous times, always falsely. Lippmann and Merz concluded that the reporters had not deliberately lied. Rather they had reported not what they saw but what they and their bosses *wanted to see*.<sup>2</sup> The Times's reporters included Walter Duranty, who was later to be attacked for being insufficiently anticommunist when, during the 1930s, he insisted on reporting only what he saw or knew for a fact rather than what he had not witnessed.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> "A Test of the News." Supplement to the August 8, 1920 issue of *The New Republic*. At <https://archive.org/details/LippmannMerzATestoftheNews>

<sup>3</sup> See Furr, *Blood Lies*, 111-113. A few of the many dishonest books and articles attacking Duranty on these fraudulent grounds are listed in the Wikipedia page devoted to Duranty.



*Stalin, Vol. 2* was published by Penguin Random House, a commercial rather than an academic publisher. Academic presses require that manuscripts submitted for publication be vetted by academic specialists in the field. This does not guarantee that falsehoods will be caught and that standards of evidence routine in other areas of history will be observed. Far from it! Nevertheless, *some* of the more glaring falsifications in *Stalin, Vol. 2* might have been recognized as such by an academic review — unless the reviewers had been selected more for their anticommunist fervor than for excellence of research.

The praise *Stalin, Vol. 2* has garnered from newspapers and magazines are understandable. All mainstream publications from right-wing conservative to liberal-left and social-democratic are dogmatically anticommunist and anti-Stalin. When it comes to hostility to Stalin there is often little difference along the continuum from Trotskyist to anarchist to left-liberal to far right. And it is publicity and promotion from these publications that determine commercial success. The author and his publisher are making a lot of money! Not a careful search for the truth but profit is the goal of commercial publication. Anticommunist bias is not a *barrier* for mass commercial success rather, it is a positive *requirement*.

### **Anticommunist Scholarship**

Kotkin's determined flouting of objectivity would be of little consequence if it were an exception. *Stalin, Vol. 2* and similar works would be rejected during the vetting process and not be published. Those works that for whatever reason managed to evade the vetting process and be published anyway would be quickly critiqued, their errors, carelessness, and deliberate dishonesty identified and exposed. Negative reviews would warn potential readers away. This is how the system of scholarly and semi-popular reviewing is supposed to work.

But in the field of Soviet history it does not work this way. Scholarship on the Stalin period in the Soviet Union is constrained by an informal but strict code of "political correctness." Stalin must be depicted as a moral monster and the Soviet Union during his time as a place of government-sponsored

corruption, repression, and mass murder. No substantive deviation from this formula is tolerated. This is what I have termed the ASP.

Only rarely can one find a refutation of even the most absurd accusations of crimes by Stalin. In his 2010 study that concluded that Stalin did not have a hand in the murder of Sergei Kirov in Leningrad on December 1, 1934, Matthew Lenoe felt compelled to write a page-length profession of his anticommunist and anti-Stalin convictions. Lenoe begins by stating the credo: "Stalin was one of the deadliest tyrants of world history ..."  
Naturally, no evidence is cited. For Lenoe's academic audience, no evidence is needed. Who needs evidence, when "everybody knows it?"

Lenoe admits that he did so lest someone suspect him of "apologizing for Stalin" for rejecting the view that Stalin had had Kirov killed, even though that interpretation had been abandoned by Soviet and Russian experts two decades earlier and there had never been any evidence to support it in the first place.<sup>4</sup> In what other field, and about what other historical personage, would a scholar feel the need to apologize for discovering that his subject did *not* commit a crime? But Lenoe is correct: absolving Stalin of the accusation of some crime or other is just "not done."

<sup>4</sup> Matthew Lenoe, *The Kirov Murder and Soviet History* New Haven: Yale U.P. 2010, 16-17.

Even this is an exception. Claims that Stalin committed some crime, no matter how poorly supported by evidence, are typically passed over in silence if really absurd and otherwise are accepted and even repeated, as Kotkin does many times in *Stalin, Vol. 2*. As we have suggested in the Introduction, in history of the Stalin period a kind of Gresham's Law prevails where "bad scholarship drives out the good." When good scholarship is produced it is carefully written so as not to contradict any tenets of anti-Stalinism that the researcher thinks may be an inviolable part of the ASP.

Good research is being done in the field of Stalin-era Soviet history. But it is typically confined to the close examination of primary sources, especially when newly-available sources are used. Research that is narrowly focused on specific events, places, and time periods can be very revealing. Even

when marred by bias, research that reproduces new primary sources can be valuable because flawed interpretations can be critiqued and discarded and the texts of the primary sources themselves appropriated for more objective research.

An anticommunist scholarly environment or "industry" has been created where "scholars" churn out anticommunist falsehoods and then cite each other's falsehoods as evidence that the falsehoods are true. Primary sources are either distorted by misinterpretation or else ignored entirely. The "scholars" or academic practitioners in this "industry" assume in their writings that it is not primary source evidence and its interpretation, but the consensus of anticommunist researchers, that establishes a statement as "true." This is the logical fallacy of "appeal to authority."

Kotkin follows this practice with enthusiasm. *Stalin, Vol. 2* is an example of what that practice produces. When Kotkin cites primary sources at all, he often gets them wrong. Kotkin often cites secondary sources by "scholars" of the anticommunist "industry" (scare quotes deliberate here. This produces a body of anticommunist pseudo-scholarship based upon bias and falsehood alone.

In addition to falsehood this system produces and reproduces ignorance. Anti-communist scholars inevitably become lazy when no one criticizes their research because it has the "correct" anticommunist tendency or "line." Why worry about the truth if what matters is not objectivity and skillful analysis and interpretation of primary source evidence, but striking the right anticommunist tone? Why bother to do the hard, time-consuming work of genuine research, of discovering the truth, when the path to academic success is to repeat anti-communist assertions with little or, often enough, no regard for the evidence?

Our study of *Stalin, Vol. 2* has disclosed that Kotkin is not only biased. He is also ignorant about much of the history of which he poses as an expert. His readers should not assume that Kotkin has worked hard to discover the truth about the important issues discussed in this book, and then gone on to construct deliberate lies in order to disguise this truth.

The reverse is much more likely: that Kotkin has no idea what the truth is because he has never tried to find it. He has mastered the anticommunist position or "line" on these and, perhaps, on other issues, and this can be got from reading the works of a limited number of recognized anticommunist "scholars" without troubling oneself about primary sources or real research of any kind.

## Chapter 13. *Bias of Omission*

### Introduction: Why Believe Trotsky?

That same day, a politburo decree ordered the execution of the OGPU espionage operative Yakov Blyumkin. His fatal act had been to meet on Prinkipo with Trotsky, his former patron, who revealed that he had managed to carry out secret documents, which he intended to publish to expose Stalin, and predicted the regime's downfall, averring that the underground "Bolshevik-Leninists" needed to strengthen their opposition. Blyumkin evidently sensed that Trotsky was fantasizing, yet he had agreed to carry messages to Moscow from Trotsky, written inside books in invisible ink.<sup>109</sup> He became one of the first Communist party members executed by the Soviet regime for a political crime.  
(28)

Note 109 (915): "109. Blyumkin had served as Trotsky's adjutant, then was invited to rejoin the secret police, rising to pro-consul in the Soviet satellite of Mongolia and then to undercover OGPU station chief in Istanbul.... OGPU agents went around whispering that Radek had betrayed Blyumkin, a story that, as intended, reached Trotsky, damaging relations between him and Radek, conveniently for Stalin. Radek would not deny he had informed on Blyumkin. Trotsky **is said to have received** a letter detailing Radek's betrayal. "Kak i za chto Stalin rasstrelial Bliumkina" *Biulleten' oppozitsii*, no. 9 (Feb.-March 1930): 9-11 ...

More than thirty years ago Pierre Broué, the most prominent Trotskyist scholar in the world, concluded that Bliumkin, a Soviet intelligence agent, was secretly working for Trotsky. Trotsky lied in his article about Bliumkin's execution.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Broué, "Complements à un article sur les trotskystes en U.R.S.S" *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* 1985 (24), pp. 63-72.

Kotkin does not cite Broué's article, though he cites many other articles by Broué. If, somehow, Kotkin did not know about this article, then he did not research Trotsky and Bliumkin and so had no business writing about them.

Kotkin also fails to mention a major publication about Bliumkin by Oleg B. Mozokhin, "Confession of a Terrorist" in an important historical journal in 2002.<sup>2</sup> Kotkin cites three works by Mozokhin in his bibliography, but not this one. Bliumkin, while being a Soviet agent, was working for Trotsky.

<sup>2</sup> Oleg B. Mozokhin, "Ispoved' terrorista." *Voенно-Istoricheskii Arkhiv* 6 (2002), 25-59.

As a Left Socialist Revolutionary, Bliumkin had assassinated the German Ambassador, Count Mirbach on July 6, 1918, as part of the Left S-R attempt to sabotage the Brest-Litovsk peace with Germany and as a signal for the Left S-R revolt against the Bolshevik Revolution. Bliumkin was declared an outlaw by the Bolsheviks, fled, but then had joined the Bolsheviks and was reprieved. His betrayal to Trotsky was the last straw, and he was executed.

Trotsky blamed Radek for turning Bliumkin. But in his confession Bliumkin informed on Radek's Trotskyist activities! There's little doubt that Trotsky attacked Radek as a cover for his, Trotsky's, continued collaboration with Radek. According to Boris Bazhanov, a secretary of Stalin's in the 1920s who fled to the West, Bliumkin was actually betrayed by Liza (Elizaveta) Zarubina, another Soviet agent. (Mozokhin 59)

Either Kotkin did not know about this important article, and so had no business writing about Bliumkin at all, or he did know about it but hid it from his readers for the sake of a less complicated, anti-Stalin story.

### **A Crime, Not A Practice**

Kotkin cites the following crime committed during confiscation of a kulak family's property;

A favored trick was the "auction": one new village party secretary managed to obtain a four-room house, valued at 700 rubles, for 25.<sup>172</sup>  
(37)

Note 172 (917): 172. Hughes, "Capturing the Russian Peasantry," 99, citing GANO corpus 2, f. 2, op. 2-1, d. 3506, l. 2; op. 2, d. 366, l. 189-98.

In Hughes book<sup>3</sup> — but not his article, which Kotkin quotes here — Hughes points out that this abuse was punished.

For this litany of abuses only one person was punished, removed from office and expelled from the party — the okrug plenipotentiary responsible for the area, who happened to be the Okrug Deputy-Procurator.<sup>56</sup> (Hughes, Stalinism 110)

<sup>3</sup> *Stalinism in a Russian Province. A Study of Collectivization and Dekulakization in Siberia*. Palgrave Macmillan: London and New York, 1996.

Hughes writes:

One practice of the Biisk authorities was to refuse to accept monetary payments to the value of the grain delivery quotas; rather when there was a refusal to sell they auctioned off peasant property at cheap prices as an exemplary punishment,<sup>39</sup> (Hughes, Stalinism 103-4).

Kotkin fails to point out that this was exposed as an abuse in an official Party document.

Later in the year, in the autumn when the grain had been collected safely, party reports on the campaign became more circumspect and critical of abuses. The Rubtsovsk Procuracy condemned numerous 'illegal acts' in grain collection when plenipotentiaries enforced '*razverstka*'. (Hughes, Stalinism, 104)

Kotkin also fails to tell us that the numbers of peasants whose property was sold off was small.

By the end of April approximately **only half of one per cent** of farms in the okrugs of Barnaul, Biisk and Rubtsovsk, and even less in Slavgorod, had property sold for failure to pay a multiple fine. (Hughes, *Stalinism*, 104)

So the number sold off dishonestly, as in this case, was smaller still. But back to the village party secretary who bought "a four-room house, valued at 700 rubles, for 25." This specific act was probably punished, although only a study of the archival documents could tell and Kotkin fails to give them to us. In note 56 of his book (page 235) Hughes — but not Kotkin — tells us more about this abuse.

Concern about the numerous cases when property confiscated under Article 61 was auctioned off too cheaply was also raised at a meeting of Biisk Okrug Procuracy officials and OGPU representatives on 28 May 1929: GAAK, f. 917, Op. 1, d. 10,1. 244-5.

So abuses occurred. But they were not Soviet policy. Nor is there any evidence that such abuses were tacitly permitted. Moreover, Kotkin confuses these events. The document he cites is a complaint from a peasant woman in April 14, 1929, while the events Kotkin is discussing occurred from January-February, 1930 and thereafter.

### **Groman And Kondratiev What's The Evidence?**

A note to page 50 of Kotkin's book reads thus:

Note 256 (919: 256. Stalin singled out the tsarist-era economists Vladimir Groman and Nikolai Kondratiev (of "long wave" fame), insisted they were linked to Bukharin, Tomsy, and Rykov, and wrote that "Kondratiev, Groman and a few other scoundrels must definitely be shot." Kosheleva, *Pis'ma Stalina Molotovu*, 193-6; Lih et al., *Stalin's Letters to Molotov*, 200-1 (Aug. 6), 201n8 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 793, 1. 3).

Kotkin's readers will surely get the impression that Groman and Kondrat'ev were shot. But they were *not* shot. Kotkin omits the fact that Groman and



Kondrat'ev were prominent in the Menshevik Trial of 1931. Many of the materials of this trial have been published. Groman's lengthy confessions are in Volume 1, 311-384. Kondratiev's statements are not printed, but there is a lot of testimony from others about his activities.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Menshevistskii protsessy 1931 goda. Sbornik dokumentov v 2-kh knigakh.* Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1999.

There is no evidence that this was a frame-up. Groman was convicted and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment, which he served in the Verkhneural'sk and then the Suzdal'sk political isolators, equivalent to minimum-security prisons in the USA. Groman died there in 1940, age 66.

Kondrat'ev was convicted in the same trial and sentenced in 1932 to 8 years imprisonment. In 1938 he was tried, convicted, and executed for "continuing counter-revolutionary activity in the Suzdal' isolator."<sup>5</sup> Kotkin conceals this information from his readers.

<sup>5</sup> [[cyrillic]] "продолжении к.-р. деятельности в Суздальской тюрьме." This information is available on a "Memorial Society" page <http://lists.memo.ru/d17/f175.htm#n1>

## **Wife Of Kirov's Assassin Was Guilty**

Kotkin:

The Kirov and Kremlin Affair investigations were now running in parallel. In Leningrad on March 10, [Milda] Draule was tried and executed, along with her sister and brother-in-law; there was no public announcement.<sup>264</sup>

Note 264 (966): 264. Lenoë, *Kirov Murder*, 287-8 (RGANI, f. 6, op. 13, d. 33, l. 49-50: Ulrich to Stalin, March 11, 1934). [The note to Lenoë is in error: it should read 387-8. — GF]

Kotkin omits to mention that, even in this excerpt from a letter of Ulrich to Stalin, Ulrich states that Draule confessed her guilt:

To the question of what goal she was pursuing when she sought a ticket to the meeting of the party activists on December 1, [...] where Comrade Kirov was to deliver his report, Milda Draule answered that she "wanted to help Leonid Nikolaev." With what? "That should have been obvious from the circumstances." (Lenoe 388)

Lenoe also states that on January 10, 1935, Draule gave damning evidence against her husband:

Milda Draule signed testimony asserting that Nikolaev had visited [Latvian consul in Leningrad] Bissenieks to discuss "the question of detaching various national regions from the USSR." (Lenoe 387)

Kotkin knows this — he cites Lenoe's book more than fifty times. But he fails to inform his readers, and so gives them the impression that Draule was executed simply because she was Nikolaev's wife.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> I discuss this in more detail in *Sergei Kirov*, pages 180-181.

### **Kotkin Ignores Stalin's Struggle for Democracy, I**

On page 287 Kotkin discusses Stalin's interview with American newspaper publisher Roy Howard. But Kotkin makes no mention of the most remarkable, and most remarked-on, of Stalin's comments — his promise of a democratic constitution with contested seats. This is discussed in some detail in Iurii Zhukov, *Inoi Stalin*, pages 207-210 — a book that Kotkin cites, though not here — as well as in the Stalin-Howard interview. Kotkin clearly knows about it, but never informs his readers.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See *The Stalin-Howard Interview*. New York: International Publishers, (1936]. In Russian it is in volume 14 of Stalin's Collected Works.

Throughout this large book Kotkin avoids all mention of Stalin's energetic fight for democratic reform in the Soviet Union. See also my discussion in "Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform," Part I.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Cultural Logic* 2005. Now at <https://web.archive.org/web/20160423092500/http://clogic.eserver.org/2005/furr.html#ref7>

## **Kotkin Conceals Stalin's Opposition To Mass Repression**

Kotkin on the January, 1938, Central Committee Plenum:

On January 13, the Kiev provincial party committee was deemed "littered with an exceedingly great number of Trotskyites," and three days later Postyshev was replaced as Kiev province secretary by Sergei Kudryavtsev, while the Kharkov provincial party boss was replaced by Nikolai Gikalo. (370) [There is no note to this passage. — GF]

Kotkin omits the fact that Pavel Postyshev was removed for massive repressions of Party members. The long quotation below is from Furr, *Yezhov vs. Stalin*:

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### **The January 1938 CC Plenum**

It appears that this Plenum was called in a hurry to deal with a serious situation of mass expulsions and arrests of Party members, including many Party officials.

Sometime around the beginning of the year, Politburo member A. A. Andreev was assigned the task of gathering compromising material on Postyshev's party expulsions in Kuibyshev. These documents included documentation of mass party expulsions from the Kuibyshev soviet, from the ranks of party district committee secretaries, and from other organizations. One report from the Bazarno-Syzgansky district noted that large numbers had been expelled as enemies by order of Postyshev's men, though the NKVD subsequently found reason to arrest very few of them.

... based on the materials Andreev compiled, the Politburo decided only on 7 January to use the occasion of a Supreme

Soviet meeting to convene a plenum for 11 January, a lead time of only four days. (Getty & Naumov 498-499; 501)

This whole section, pp. 99-103, contains the evidence against Postyshev. Kotkin simply ignores it! He also omits it at page 475.

Here is a fuller discussion:

Postyshev was the harshest in mass expulsions, and was expelled for this at the January 1938 CC. Getty & Naumov discuss this at length on pp. 498-512. Getty quotes at length how Postyshev was raked over the coals at this Plenum for excessive repression.

Zhukov's analysis:

At the January 1938 Plenum the main report was done by Malenkov. He said that the first secretaries were brandishing not even lists of those condemned by the "troikas," but just two lines with an indication of the number of those condemned. He openly accused the first secretary of the Kuibyshev *obkom* of the party P.P. Postyshev: you have imprisoned the entire Party and Soviet apparatus of the *oblast'*! At which Postyshev replied in the same vein, that "I arrested, am arresting, and will arrest, until I annihilate all enemies and spies! But he was in a dangerous solitude: two hours after this polemic he was demonstratively dismissed from his post as candidate member of the Politburo, and none of the members of the Plenum stood up to defend him.

- Komsomolskaia *Pravda* Nov. 19, 2002.

The document confirming Postyshev's expulsion and arrest is reprinted in Getty & Naumov, pp. 514-6. Khrushchev was one of those who spoke up forcefully against Postyshev (G&N 512). For Khrushchev's appointment to replace Postyshev as candidate member of Politburo, *Stalinskoe Politbiuro...* p. 167.

Rogovin's excerpt from January 1938 CC Plenum on Postyshev:

On the character of Postyshev's speech, which was in fact converted into his interrogation, the following fragment of the transcript will give an idea:

Postyshev: The leadership there (in the Kuybyshev oblast), both that of the party and of the Soviets, was enemies, beginning from the oblast leadership and ending with that of the raions.

Mikoian: Everybody?

Postyshev: How can you be surprised? .... I added it up and it comes out that enemies have been sitting there for 12 years. On the Soviet side the same enemy leadership has been sitting there. There they sat and selected their cadres. For example, in our oblast executive committee we had the most obdurate enemies right down to the technical workers, enemies who confessed to their wrecking activity and behaved insolently, beginning with the chairman of the oblast executive committee, with his assistant, consultants, secretaries — all were enemies. Absolutely all the sections of the oblast executive committee were soiled with enemies. ... Now take the chairmen of the raion executive committees — all were enemies. Sixty chairmen of raiispolkoms — all enemies. The overwhelming majority of second secretaries — I'm not even speaking of first secretaries — are enemies, and not only enemies, but there were also many spies among them: Poles, Latvians, they selected all kinds of died-in-the-wool swine...

Bulganin: Were there at least some honest people there... It turned out that there was not a single honest person.

Postyshev: I am talking about the leadership, the heads. From the leading body, of the secretaries of the raion committees, the chairmen of the raiispolkoms, there was almost not a single honest man. And how can you be surprised?

Molotov: Aren't you exaggerating, comrade Postyshev?

Postyshev: No, I'm not exaggerating. Here, take the oblast executive committee. People are in prison. We have investigative materials, and

they confess, they themselves confess their enemy and espionage work.

Molotov: We must verify the materials.

Mikoian: It turns out that there are enemies below, in every raion committee.

Beria: Is it possible that all members of the plenums of the raion committees were enemies?

Kaganovich: There is no basis to say that they are all swindlers.

Stalin evaluated Postyshev's methods this way: "This is the massacre of the organization. They are very easy on themselves, but they're shooting everybody in the raion organizations.... This means stirring up the party masses against the CC, it can't be understood any other way." (Furr, Khrushchev Lied, 283-285).

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Kotkin conceals the fact that *Stalin was opposed to mass repressions of Party members!* That would ill comport with Kotkin's portrayal of Stalin as a bloodthirsty tyrant.

### **Kotkin Smears Voroshilov**

Voroshilov ... had never acquired genuine military training. **He had not served in the tsarist army, despite being the right age.** (395)

Kotkin gives his readers the impression that Voroshilov was a "draft dodger" or some other kind of shirker. But there is no reference to this passage. No wonder! Voroshilov had been exiled for his radical political activity, which went back to 1903 and involved many arrests and several sentences of exile, from which he escaped. He was amnestied, but was unable to find work.

Voroshilov was just the sort of person the Tsarist recruiters wanted to keep out of the army. Pursued by the police, he eventually got a job in an

armaments factory in Tsaritsyn after having been unable to find work in Lugansk, in the Donbass.

My source for this is the Russian Wikipedia page on Voroshilov.<sup>9</sup> The corresponding English language Wikipedia page does not have this information on Voroshilov.

<sup>9</sup> At [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ворошилов,\\_Климент\\_Ефремович](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ворошилов,_Климент_Ефремович)

### **Workers on the Moscow-Volga Canal**

On April 22, Stalin paid his third visit to a part of the eighty-mile canal linking the Moscow and Volga rivers ... The canal was built by Gulag laborers, more than 20,000 of whom **likely** perished. (404)

No evidence is given for this statement. Note the word "likely"! Kotkin doesn't know the number but puts one in anyway.

The primary source for this kind of information is A.I. Kokurin, IU. N Morukov, eds. *Stalinskie Stroiki GULAGA 1930 — 1953. Dokumenty.* [Stalinist GULAG Construction] Moscow: MDF — "Materik" 2005, 30-102. The mortality figures cited here are not for canal workers but for the "Dmitlag" camp as a whole. The total of deaths recorded in the camp between September 14, 1932, and January 31, 1938, is 22,842.

By far the highest number of deaths — 39% of the total — is recorded for 1933 — 8873. (77) This was the year of famine in much of the USSR, and also of serious typhus. There was a severely elevated death rate throughout the Soviet Union during these same years. Omitting this information gives the impression that these people were "worked to death" or died from poor conditions.

But that is not the case. According to the same source (63) the working day was 10 hours long. Breakfast lasted 45 minutes, dinner two hours, and three hours in the evening were devoted to cultural and educational activities. These were better conditions than existed for millions of workers in the

capitalist world, to say nothing of the colonies of the Western imperialist countries. And far better than for prisoners in the prisons of the West.

### **More Lies About Lavrentii Beria**

About the June, 1937 Central Committee Plenum, Kotkin writes:

Instead of allowing discussion of Beria's past, Stalin had Kaminsky arrested and expelled that very day.<sup>68</sup> (510)

Note 68 (1010): 68. Pavliukhhov [sic; should be "Pavliukov"], *Ezhov*, 296-7.

Kotkin suppresses the fact that Pavliukov takes this testimony from the Gorbachev-era anti-Beria slander book *Oni ne molchali*. Then Pavliukov refutes it — proves it wrong!

We have already shown that *Ont ne molchali* is no good as a source. Zhavoronkov and Pariiskii is also in *Oni ne molchali* (199-214). They cite Khrushchev (see above), and otherwise quotes unpublished memoirs — that is, rumors. Kotkin even notes that these people did not attend the Plenum.

Kaminsky got "ten years without the right of correspondence," which meant he was executed.<sup>71</sup> (511)

Note 71 (1010): 71. The sentence was carried out Feb. 10, 1938, at Yagoda's former dacha (Kommunarka).

This is false. According to the Russian Wikipedia page on Kaminsky and to the lists compiled by the "Memorial Society," he was sentenced on February 2, 1938, to execution for membership in a terrorist organization, not to "ten years, etc."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> [[cyrillic]]See <http://lists.memo.ru/d15/fl73.htm#n122>; [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Каминский,\\_Григорий\\_Наумович](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Каминский,_Григорий_Наумович)

Kaminsky was accused by a number of others, including Iakov Iakovlev and Krestinsky, and Kaminsky himself accused others of being part of the



Right-Trotskyist bloc (conspiracy). He is named a dozen times in the materials sent by Yezhov to Stalin and printed in "Golgofa."

So Kaminsky was not arrested, much less tried, sentenced, and executed, for anything he said about Beria. In fact, Beria was not yet in the NKVD yet — that did not happen until August, 1938.

### **Why Was Viktorov Imprisoned?**

Why Stalin let Yezhov remain at the helm for so long remains mysterious. By summer 1938, the insanity in the NKVD had gotten to the point that at least one newly appointed provincial NKVD chief released large numbers of prisoners and wrote to Lubyanka about the outrageous falsifications.<sup>225</sup> (540)

Note 225 (1014): "225. One example was Mikhail Viktorov (Novoselov), newly named as NKVD chief in Sverdlovsk, who turned up a shocking state of affairs, even by standards of the terror, in the work of his predecessor (Dmitriev). Viktorov freed a large number of prisoners and sent Lubyanka a long analysis of local falsifications of cases. Pavliukov, *Ezhov*, 444-5 (citing TsA FSB, sledstvennoe delo no. R-24334, t.1, l. 67-8). **Viktorov would be arrested on Jan. 22, 1939, and sentenced to fifteen years; he died in a camp in 1950.**"

Kotkin fails to say *why* Viktorov was arrested and imprisoned. But there is a report on Viktorov, in the so-called "Stalin shooting lists."<sup>11</sup> Viktorov was convicted of being a participant in Yezhov's conspiracy to overthrow the government. He was named by others in the conspiracy including Yezhov, Uspensky, Nasedkin, and Bel'sky.

<sup>11</sup> At <http://stalin.memo.ru/spravki/13-063.HTM>

In 1941 Viktorov was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. He is listed as "Category 1" in the "shooting lists," which means that the NKVD recommended that he be executed if found guilty. But he was *not* executed. Instead, he was sentenced to 15 years and died in a prison camp in 1950.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> [[cyrillic]]See

[https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Викторов,\\_Михаил\\_Петрович](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Викторов,_Михаил_Петрович)

This is yet another example that the so-called "Stalin shooting lists" were not "shooting lists" at all, but *recommendations* by the NKVD to the Procuracy (prosecutor) of sentences in the event the accused was convicted. (See "Lies About The Lists" in Chapter 10, above). Viktorov was one of many cases in which the recommendation was *not* followed by the court.

## **Kotkin Ignores Stalin's Struggle for Democracy, II**

On October 11-12, 1938, he [Stalin] convened a two-day expanded session of the politburo (an ersatz Central Committee plenum), (575)

Kotkin mentions nothing about the abandonment of contested elections, which is discussed in Zhukov, *Inoi Stalin*, 475-6. Stalin was outvoted even in the Politburo! Some "dictator"! Was Adolf Hitler ever "outvoted" by his own Party leadership? 'Nuff said!

Kotkin suppresses all this. Why? At least two reasons: (1) Stalin was struggling for a kind of representative system, with contested elections, that Kotkin's readers would recognize as democratic and sympathize with; (2) since Stalin was defeated by his own Politburo, it would be clear to Kotkin's readers that Stalin was *not a dictator*.

## **Was Gnedin Innocent?**

"Beria and Kobulov put me on a chair and sat on either side and punched me in the head, playing 'swings,'" recalled Yevgeny Gnedin, the press officer of the foreign affairs commissariat. "They beat me horribly, with the full force of their arms, demanding I give testimony against Litvinov."<sup>260</sup>

Note 260 (1027): "260. Gnedin, *Katastrofa i votoroe* [sic - should be *vtoroe*] *rozhdenie*, 128-52. Gnedin would be the only one to survive to old age from the Soviet embassy or trade mission to Berlin."

Kotkin either did not check, or chose to hide from his readers, the report (*Spravka*) on Gnedin from the Stalin lists.<sup>13</sup> The report, prepared by the NKVD, accuses Gnedin of espionage for Germany in some detail — the most serious charges conceivable.

<sup>13</sup> At <http://stalin.memo.ru/spravki/13-098.HTM>

Gnedin was named by other conspirators, including Mikhail Kol'tsov, in a face-to-face confrontation. Gnedin is also mentioned at least 52 [sic] times in Kol'tsov's confessions.

In the list itself Gnedin is "Category 1" — recommendation to execute if convicted. Yet Gnedin too was not executed (see Viktorov, above)!<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> At <http://stalin.memo.ru/names/p87.htm#n76>

Once again, we see that the so-called "Stalin shooting lists" were not "shooting lists" at all, not "death warrants" — whatever that is supposed to mean. In Gnedin's case, as in Viktorov's, the Prosecutor and judges must have found some mitigating circumstances, or at least that some of the accusations were unreliable.

In 1941, under Beria, he was sentenced to 10 years. His letter to the Presidium of July 16, 1953, was evidently used in the campaign against Beria by Khrushchev et al.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See <http://istmat.info/node/27469>

So was Gnedin telling the truth about being beaten by Beria and Kobulov? Maybe — or maybe he was just lying. July, 1953, was a good time to expect leniency if one gave the kind of evidence against Beria that Khrushchev wanted.

Kotkin ignores this (or perhaps he is ignorant of it). His account gives the impression that Gnedin was an innocent victim. Maybe he was. Maybe not. But the evidence at our, and at Kotkin's disposal today does not suggest innocence.

## Was Isaak Babel' Innocent?

Kotkin writes:

Babel suffered from his association with Yezhov, who, under interrogation, had named him as a spy. According to the interrogation protocols, Babel implicated Eisenstein ("The organizers of the Soviet film industry were preventing gifted individuals from revealing their talents to the full"), Solomon Mikhoels ("constantly dissatisfied that the Soviet repertoire gave him no chance to demonstrate his talents"), and Ehrenburg ("In Ehrenburg's view, the continued wave of arrests forced all Soviet citizens to break off any relations with foreigners").<sup>306</sup> Babel would also sign a bloodstained protocol confessing to membership in a Trotskyite espionage organization on behalf of France, linked to Malraux.<sup>307</sup> (635)

Note 306 (1028): 306. Shentalinsky, *KGB's Literary Archive*, 42, 47. See also Povarov, *Prichina smerti rasstrel*; Pirozhkova, *At His Side*, 115.

Note 307 (1028): 307. Shentalinskii, "Proshu menia vyslushat," 430-43.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> This is the second part of Shentalinskii's book *Raby svobody* (1999). It is far easier to obtain it there than in the format cited here by Kotkin, a 1991 article in the hard-to-obtain journal *Vozvrashchenie*.

A confirmed anticommunist, Vitalii Shentalinsky is strongly committed to the position that Babel' and other executed or imprisoned artists were innocent. But even Shentalinskii admits that there is a great deal of evidence against Babel'. He was certainly closely involved with both Yezhov and his wife.

None of the books Kotkin cites have any evidence that Babel was innocent. Moreover, Babel made long confessions of guilt, some of which are quoted at length in *Raby Svobody* and other books by Shentalinskii. *KGB's Literary Archive* quotes excerpts only at pages 42 and 47. All the authors whose

works Kotkin cites in note 306 *assume*, without evidence, that Babel was innocent.

On page 115 Babel's wife Pirozhkova simply writes that Meyerhold and Kol'tsov were arrested "at almost the same time as Babel." She fails to note that this was because they were all accused, and eventually convicted, of being involved in Nikolai Yezhov's plot to overthrow the Soviet government — a plot about which we have a lot of evidence, some of which I discuss in *Yezhov vs Stalin*.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Pirozhkova reveals that when she was called for Party work (she was a Party member) she reminded her superior that she was the wife of a man — Babel — arrested for a serious crime. She was told that this "had no bearing on your situation," and was assigned to Party work like any other member.

Babel subsequently retracted his confessions. But Yezhov and Kol'tsov accused Babel, and perhaps others did too. According to Soviet practice, Babel' would have been convicted by evidence other than his confessions, which could not be used at trial if retracted by the defendant.

To make an intelligent assessment of Babel's guilt or innocence we would need both Babel's entire investigative file, and the confessions against him by his accusers. Since Kotkin includes a discussion of Babel in his book, he should have pointed out these barriers to understanding Babel's conviction and execution. But he fails to do so.

### **What About Meyerhold?**

Vsevolod Meyerhold, the USSR's most renowned theater director, who had traveled to Leningrad to finalize the choreography of a mass spectacle of physical culture involving 30,000 young athletes moving in unison to glorify the regime, was rewarded by being arrested. At Moscow's infamous Butyrka prison, he would be tortured into confessing to espionage for Britain as well as Japan. "The investigators began to use force on me, a sick, 65-year-old man," he wrote in a letter to Molotov. "I was made to lie facedown and then beaten on the soles of my feet and my spine with a rubber strap.... When those parts of my

legs were covered with extensive internal hemorrhaging, they again began to beat the red-blue-yellow bruises with the strap, and the pain was so intense that it felt as if boiling hot water was being poured on those sensitive areas.... I began to incriminate myself in the hope that this, at least, would lead quickly to the scaffold." Meyerhold's interrogators had urinated into his mouth and smashed his right (writing) hand to bits.<sup>40</sup> (649)

Note 40 (1029): 40. Koliazin, "Vernite mne svobodu!," 220-40.

The documents in Koliazin 220-240 record Meyerhold's attempts to retract earlier confessions. But we do not have the text of those earlier confessions. Why not?

As in the case of Babel', Kotkin should have pointed out that the fact that an accused person first confesses guilt and subsequently retracts his confession does not establish whether the person was guilty or innocent. What it *does* is to force the prosecution to place more importance on testimony against the defendant by others who inculcate him. This is may be what occurred in Meyerhold's case.

Kotkin fails to inform his readers that Meyerhold was named as a Trotskyist and spy by Mikhail Kol'tsov and Isaak Babel', among others. (RKEB 1, 270-272) He named others in turn. We don't have the testimony against Meyerhold given by Kol'tsov and Babel'.

The claim that the interrogators urinated into his mouth and smashed his right hand is contradicted by documents Kotkin himself cites! The words in the quotation above are from his statement of January 13, 1940. There Meyerhold claims that **his NKVD interrogators told him they would leave his head and his right hand untouched.**" (Koliazin, 230)

There is nothing about interrogators "urinating into his mouth." Why did Kotkin feel obliged to compose these fabrications? Did he actually read Koliazin, pages 220-240?

The fact that a person retracts his confession of guilt raises the question: "Was he lying *then*? Or is he lying *now*?" After all, we normally expect that

both the innocent and the guilty will deny their guilt. But a person who has been beaten — tortured — into signing a false confession may well deny it later.

So we don't know. As in Babel's case Kotkin should have explained the difficulties in assessing Meyerhold's guilt or innocent.

### **Yezhov Named Both Meyerhold And Babel'**

On page 740 Kotkin states:

On January 17, 1940, Stalin approved a sentencing list containing 457 prominent people; 346 were to be shot, including Yezhov, as well as the writer Isaac Babel, the journalist-propagandist Koltsov, and the dramaturge Meyerhold, three of the country's long-standing brightest lights, **each of whom Yezhov had implicated as spies.**<sup>198</sup>

Note 198 (1041): 198. APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 177, l. 116-36.

This archival identifier will not help Kotkin's readers — it is an error for this one: "APRF. f. 3. Op. 24. D. 377. l. 116-136." This is the "Stalin shooting list" of January 16, 1940 where Babel' and Meyerhold are listed, along with many of Yezhov's torturer-interrogators who were complicit in his mass murders.

### **The Murder Of Zinaida Reich (Correctly: Raikh)**

Kotkin:

Right around the same time, his [Meyerhold's — GF] second wife and lead actress, the Russified ethnic German Zinaida Reich, was brutally stabbed to death, including through the eyes, in their home.<sup>41</sup> None of her valuables were taken.<sup>42</sup> (649)

Note 41(1029):41. Medvedeva, "Chornoye leto" 1939 goda," 318-66; Braun, "Vsevolod Meyerhold," 145-62; Morrison, People's Artist, 99-100 (citing RGALI f. 1929, op. 1, ed. khr. 655, l. 26ob.: Lina

Prokofyeva) [sic]; "Zagadka smerti Zinaidi Raikha," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, Nov. 14, 2005.

Zinaida Raikh's murderers were caught, tried, and executed. A report ("spravka") on the burglars and murderers is in the Stalin lists.<sup>18</sup> Why doesn't Kotkin tell us that? Is it because it seems more sinister — as if Stalin, or Beria, or someone, might have had her murdered?

<sup>18</sup> <http://stalin.memo.ru/spravki/13-059.HTM>

### **Kotkin's Omissions / Falsifications About September, 1939**

#### **September, 1939: The Soviet Seizure of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia from Poland**

**There was no Soviet declaration of war.** Potyomkin summoned Polish ambassador Grzybowski at 3:15 a.m. and read aloud a note, in the name of Molotov, unilaterally abrogating the Soviet-Polish nonaggression pact; the envoy refused to take the document.<sup>255</sup> ... On the radio, Molotov announced a Soviet military action supposedly necessitated by the disappearance of the Polish state and the possible ensuing chaos. "The Soviet government regards as its sacred duty to proffer help to its Ukrainian and Belorussian brothers in Poland," he stated.<sup>257</sup> **In fact, the Polish government continued to function, having relocated to Kutu, in the southeast, on the Polish side of the border with Romania.** (683-4)

The sentences above in boldface are misleading because Kotkin conceals from his readers many crucial facts. Here are some of them:

1. There was no declaration of war because the USSR was not at war with Poland.

The myth of the "joint invasion" is a fabrication by the anticommunist Polish Government In Exile. It was rejected by the Allies at the time but picked up once the Cold War began in the 1940s. All the Western Allies recognized Soviet neutrality.<sup>19</sup>



<sup>19</sup> For evidence that the Soviet Union was neutral in the German-Polish War, see "Soviet Neutrality" at:  
[https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/soviet\\_neutrality.html](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/soviet_neutrality.html)

Winston Churchill strongly supported the Soviet incursion into Eastern Poland. In his radio speech of October 1, 1939, printed in the *New York Times* on October 2, 1939, page 6, Churchill, at the time First Lord of the Admiralty, said:

Russia has pursued a cold policy of self-interest. We could have wished that the Russian Armies should be standing on their present line as the friends and allies of Poland. But that the Russian Armies should stand on this line was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace.

Churchill also agreed that it was in the interest of the Allies to have the Red Army occupying these territories:

... here these interests of Russia fall into the same channel as the interests of Britain and France.

2. The Polish state had indeed ceased to function. Neither the Polish Army nor Ambassador Grzybowski were able to contact it. Grzybowski did not even know where it was.

3. Later the same day, September 17, 1939, the Polish government crossed the border into Rumania, where it was interned and was no longer a government.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> See the evidence at  
[https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/polish\\_leaders\\_flee.html](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/polish_leaders_flee.html) and "Moscicki and His 'Resignation'" at  
[https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/moscicki\\_resignation.html](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/moscicki_resignation.html)

4. The Germans had told the Soviets that if they did not intervene a pro-fascist Ukrainian state would be formed next to the Soviet border.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> See the evidence at [https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/no\\_partition.html](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/no_partition.html)

5. No treaty was broken, since a "fundamental change in circumstances" had occurred.

### Rebus Sic Stantibus

[Latin, At this point of affairs; in these circumstances.] A tacit condition attached to all treaties to the effect that they will no longer be binding as soon as the state of facts and conditions upon which they were based changes to a substantial degree.<sup>22</sup>

### Clausula rebus sic stantibus

In public international law, *clausula rebus sic stantibus* (Latin for 1 'things thus standing') is the legal doctrine allowing for treaties to become inapplicable because of a fundamental change of circumstances. It is essentially an "escape clause" that makes an exception to the general rule of *pacta sunt servanda* (promises must be kept).<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *West's Encyclopedia of American Law*, edition 2. Copyright 2008 The Gale Group, Inc. — <https://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/rebus+sic+stantibus>

<sup>23</sup> At [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clausula\\_rebus\\_sic\\_stantibus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clausula_rebus_sic_stantibus)

The Polish Government had lost contact with its ambassador to the Soviet Union and with the Polish Army, which was in the process of fleeing to internment in Romania (some parts interned themselves in the Baltic states). The German Army would have come up to the Soviet border if the Red Army had not intervened.

Kotkin hides from his readers that during the 1950s American professor George Ginsburgs published two articles that vindicate the Soviet position. Ginsburgs<sup>24</sup> concluded:

For all these various reasons, it may safely be concluded that on this particular point the Soviet argument was successful, and that the "above considerations do not allow for any doubt that there did not exist a state of war between Poland and the U.S.S.R. in September, 1939." (72)

In spite of scattered protests to the contrary, the consensus heavily sides with the Soviet view that by September 17, 1939, the Polish Government was in panic and full flight, that it did not exercise any appreciable control over its armed forces or its remaining territory, and that the days of Poland were indeed numbered.

De facto, then, one may well accept the view that the Polish Government no longer functioned as an effective state power. In such a case the Soviet claim that Eastern Galicia was in fact a terra nullius may not be unjustified and could be sustained. (73)

<sup>24</sup> George Ginsburgs, "A Case Study in the Soviet Use of International Law: Eastern Poland in 1939." *The American journal of International Law*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (Jan., 1958), pp. 69-84.

### **The Lie Of The "Joint Military Parade"**

On the afternoon of September 23, **a ceremonial joint military parade** was held in Brest-Litovsk to mark the German handover of the town that morning to the Soviets. Presiding over the event, on an improvised low platform, were the respective tank commanders Heinz Guderian, who had been born just 300 miles away in Chelmno (Kulm), and Semyon Krivoshein. The two shook hands. But the Luftwaffe flew aggressively low passes, and the two sides tussled over the city's war booty.<sup>273</sup> (686)

Note 273 (1035): 273. Krivoshein, *Mezhdubur'e*, 234-9; Schmidt-Scheeder, *Reporter der Hölle*, 101; *Deutscher Allgemeine Zeitung*, Sept. 25, 1939.

This is a falsehood. There was no "joint victory parade." Brest, on the border between the German and Soviet spheres of influence, was handed over to the Soviet commander General Semion M. Krivoshein by the German commander, Heinz Guderian.

Both men wrote about this event in their memoirs. Krivoshein wrote that a parade had been stipulated in the agreement between the Soviet and German commands and therefore he was forced to agree to one, though unwillingly. But Krivoshein refused to have a joint parade since the German troops had been rested for a week while his own had just made a night march of 120 km and would not have the spit-and-polish appearance necessary for a parade. The two commanders agreed that the German troops would march by while the Soviet troops, upon entering Brest, would stand on the side of the road and salute the German troops while the two orchestras played military marches.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Krivoshein, *Mezhdubur'e. Voronezh-Belgorod*, 1964, p. 258.

Guderian called this a "farewell parade" and "ceremony of changing of flags," after which the German troops withdrew from Brest:

Eine Abschiedsparade und ein Flaggenwechsel in Gegenwart des Generals Kriwoschein beendete unsern Aufenthalt in Brest-Litowsk.<sup>26</sup>

A farewell parade and an exchange of flags in the presence of General Krivoshein ended our stop in Brest-Litovsk.

<sup>26</sup> Heinz Guderian, *Erinnerungen eines Soldaten* (1951) p. 74. The preceding passage about the Brest events is taken from my book *Blood Lies: The Evidence that Every Accusation against Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union in Timothy Snyder's Bloodlands Is False*. (New York: Red Star Publishers, 2013), 329-330.

Krivoshein and — surprisingly — Guderian too agree that the Soviet forces prevented the Germans from driving off with trucks of booty looted from Brest. There is an excellent article online, in Russian, that gives yet more evidence.<sup>27</sup> Oleg Vishliov's well-documented refutation of the "joint parade" fiction is strongly recommended.

<sup>27</sup> "Myth: The Joint Soviet-German Parade in Brest" - [[cyrillic]]«Миф: Совместный советскогерманский парад в Бресте» - [[cyrillic]][http://wiki.istmat.info./миф:совместный\\_парад\\_в\\_бресте](http://wiki.istmat.info./миф:совместный_парад_в_бресте)

<sup>28</sup> Oleg Vishliov, *Nakanune 22 iulia 1941 goda*. (Moscow 2001).108-110. The preceding passage about the Brest events is taken from my book *Blood Lies: The Evidence that Every Accusation against Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union in Timothy Snyder's Bloodlands Is False*. (New York: Red Star Publishers, 2013), 329-332.

### **The Soviet Union Was Not An Aggressor**

At least 70,000 Poles were killed and nearly 700,000 taken prisoner by the aggressors on both sides.<sup>276</sup>

There was no "aggression" on the Soviet side. Every country recognized Soviet neutrality. Kotkin has to know this. But his readers will not know it. Once again, Kotkin has falsified an important political-historical issue.

The following passage from my book *Blood Lies* gives the evidence that the Soviets were not guilty of aggression.

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The USSR did not invade Poland — and everybody knew it at the time.

When Poland had no government, Poland was no longer a state. That meant that Hitler had nobody with whom to negotiate a cease-fire, or treaty. Furthermore, the M-R Treaty's Secret Protocols were void, since they were an agreement about the state of Poland. But no state of Poland existed any longer.

Unless the Red Army came in to prevent it, there was nothing to prevent the Nazis from coming right up to the Soviet border. Or as we now know they were in fact preparing to do Hitler could have formed one or more pro-Nazi states in what had until recently been Eastern

Poland. That way Hitler could have had it both ways. He could claim to the Soviets that he was still adhering to the "spheres of influence" agreement of the M-R Pact while in fact setting up a pro-Nazi, highly militarized fascist Ukrainian nationalist state on the Soviet border.

Once the Germans had told the Soviets that they, the German leadership, had decided that the Polish state no longer existed, then it did not make any difference whether the Soviets, or some hypothetical body of international jurists, agreed with them or not. In effect the Nazis were telling the Soviets that they felt free to come right up to the Soviet border. Neither the USSR nor any state would have permitted such a thing. Nor did international law demand it.

At the end of September a new secret agreement was concluded. In it the Soviet line of interest was to the East of the "sphere of influence" line decided upon a month earlier in the Secret Protocol and published in *Izvestiia* and in the *New York Times* during September 1939.<sup>29</sup> In this territory Poles were a minority, even after the "polonization" (= making more "Polish") campaign of settling Poles in the area during the '20s and '30s.<sup>30</sup>

How do we know this interpretation of events is true?

How do we know the USSR did not commit aggression against, or "invade," Poland when it occupied Eastern Poland beginning on September 17, 1939 after the Polish Government had interned itself in Rumania? Here are nine pieces of evidence:

1. The Polish government did not declare war on USSR. The Polish government declared war on Germany when Germany invaded on September 1, 1939. It did not declare war on the USSR.
2. The Polish Supreme Commander Rydz-Smigly ordered Polish soldiers not to fight the Soviets, though he ordered Polish forces to continue to fight the Germans.<sup>31</sup>
3. The Polish President Ignaz Moscicki, interned in Rumania since Sept. 17, tacitly admitted that Poland no longer had a government.

4. The Rumanian government tacitly admitted that Poland no longer had a government.<sup>32</sup>

The Rumanian position recognized the fact that Moscicki was lying when he claimed he had legally resigned on September 30. So the Rumanian government fabricated a story according to which Moscicki had already resigned back on September 15, just before entering Rumania and being interned (*NYT* 10.04.1939, p.12). But even Moscicki himself did not make this claim!

Rumania needed this legal fiction to try to sidestep the following issue: once Moscicki had been interned in Rumania — that is, from September 17 1939 — on he could not function as President of Poland. Since resignation is an official act, Moscicki could not resign once he was in Rumania.

For our present purposes here is the significant point:

Both the Polish leaders and the Rumanian government recognized that Poland was bereft of a government once the Polish government crossed the border into Rumania and were interned there. Both Moscicki and Rumania wanted a legal basis — a fig-leaf — for such a government. *But they disagreed completely about this fig-leaf which exposes it as what it was — a fiction.*

5. Rumania had a military treaty with Poland aimed against the USSR. Yet Rumania did not declare war on the USSR.

The Polish government later claimed that it had "released" Rumania from its obligations under this military treaty in return for safe haven in Rumania. But there is no evidence for this statement. It is highly unlikely that Rumania would have ever promised "safe haven" for Poland, since that would have been an act of hostility against Nazi Germany. Rumania was neutral in the war and, as discussed below, insisted upon interning the Polish government and disarming the Polish forces once they had crossed the border into Rumania.

The real reason for Rumania's failure to declare war on the USSR is probably the one given in a *New York Times* article of September 19, 1939:

The Rumanian viewpoint concerning the Rumanian-Polish anti-Soviet agreement is that it would be operative only if a Russian attack came as an isolated event and not as a consequence of other wars.<sup>33</sup>

That means Rumania recognized that the Red Army was *not* allied with Germany in its war with Poland.

6. France did not declare war on the USSR, though it had a mutual defense treaty with Poland. See this page 34 for the reconstructed text of the "secret military protocol" of this treaty, which has been "lost" which probably means that the French government still keeps its text secret.

7. England never demanded that the USSR withdraw its troops from Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine, the parts of the former Polish state occupied by the Red Army after September 17, 1939. On the contrary, the British government concluded that these territories should not be a part of a future Polish state. Even the Polish government-in-exile agreed!<sup>35</sup>

8. The League of Nations did not determine the USSR had invaded a member state. Article 16 of the League of Nations Covenant required members to take trade and economic sanctions against any member who "resorted to war."<sup>36</sup>

But no country took any sanctions against the USSR. No country broke diplomatic relations with the USSR over this action.

However, when the USSR attacked Finland in 1939 the League did vote to expel the USSR, and several countries broke diplomatic relations with it. This very different response tells us that the League viewed the Soviet action in the case of Poland as qualitatively different, as not a "resort to war."<sup>37</sup>



9. All countries accepted the USSR's declaration of neutrality. All, including the belligerent Polish allies France and England, agreed that the USSR was not a belligerent power, was not participating in the war. In effect they accepted the USSR's claim that it was neutral in the conflict.

Here is President Franklin Roosevelt's "Proclamation 2374 on Neutrality," November 4, 1939:

... a state of war unhappily exists between Germany and France; Poland; and the United Kingdom, India, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa ...<sup>38</sup>

FDR's "Statement on Combat Areas" of November 4, 1939, defines belligerent ports, British, French, and German, in Europe or Africa ...<sup>39</sup>

The Soviet Union is not listed among the belligerent states. That means the United States government did not consider the USSR to be at war with Poland.

<sup>29</sup> See the map here:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/new\\_spheres\\_0939.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/new_spheres_0939.html)

<sup>30</sup> A map that shows ethnic and linguistic population is here:

<http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/curzonline.html>

<sup>31</sup> See the documents at this page:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/rydz\\_dont\\_fight.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/rydz_dont_fight.html)

<sup>32</sup> See the evidence at

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/moscicki\\_resignation.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/moscicki_resignation.html)

<sup>33</sup> "RumaniaAnxious; Watches Frontier." NYT 09.19.1939, p.8.

<sup>34</sup> <http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/m-rpacthtml>

<sup>35</sup> See the texts reproduced here:

[http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/maisky\\_101739\\_102739.html](http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/maisky_101739_102739.html)

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## More Phony Charges of Torture

Around this time, death sentences **based upon fabricated evidence** were implemented for cultural figures, as well as former NKVD first deputy Mikhail Frinovsky, former deputy foreign intelligence chief Spigelglas, former intelligence chief and Comintern operative Trilisser, Yefim Yevdokimov, and Redens, Stalin's ethnic Polish brother-in-law (part of a "Polish diversionary-espionage group"). ... **Under interrogation-torture**, Redens had admitted his complicity in the annihilation of innocent people while working atop the NKVD in Ukraine, Moscow, and Kazakhstan. His wife Anna Nadya's sister and their two boys were not touched, and the family continued to live in the elite House on the Embankment and were allowed to visit Svetlana at Zubalovo (but not the Kremlin).<sup>204</sup> (742)

Note 204 (1041): 204. Zhukovskii, *Lubianskaia imperia NKVD*, 214-5.

Pages 214-5 of Zhukovskii's book are about Efim Evdokimov, another of Yezhov's killers. Kotkin must mean pages 217-8, which are about Redens.

There is no evidence of "fabricated evidence" against any of the unidentified "cultural figures," or against Frinovsky, Shpigelglas, Evdokimov, or Redens. Kotkin has invented — indeed, fabricated! — the business about Frinovsky and Redens being "tortured."

During the Gorbachev era there was an attempt to *rescind* Redens' Khrushchev-era "rehabilitation" — that is, to "un-rehabilitate" Redens — because even Gorby's men, who were "rehabilitating" a very large number of people, thought Redens was guilty. But the statute of limitations — the time period during which his rehabilitation might have been withdrawn —

had long elapsed. So Redens remains "rehabilitated." And therefore we can have access to his NKVD investigative file, since as of 2018 the FSB is only permitting access to the files of those persons who have been "rehabilitated."

Redens' file, now declassified, contains much useful evidence: see *Yezhov vs. Stalin*, Chapter 15, "The Testimony of Stanislav Frantsevich Redens." Redens testified at length and in detail about Yezhov's conspiracy against Stalin and the Soviet government. Kotkin does not mention any of this. Incompetence? Dishonesty?

In another chapter of the present book we examine Frinovsky's statement of April 11, 1939. We point out that Frinovsky is very clear that the Moscow Trials defendants were guilty; that the Zinovievist, Rightist, Trotskyist, and Yezhov-NKVD conspiracies, did exist and were serious threats. We point out that Kotkin does not reveal *any* of this to his readers.

An English translation of Frinovsky's statement has been online since 2010.<sup>40</sup> Kotkin could have cited it. It would have helped his readers. Why didn't he?

<sup>40</sup> It may be read in English at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/frinovskyeng.html>

### **Finland, The Russo-Finnish War / Winter War, And The Nazis**

Just as the Winter War had definitively pushed Finland into the German camp, the seizure of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina consolidated Romania as a staunch German ally.<sup>78</sup>

Note 78 (1046): 78. Gafencu, *Last Days of Europe*, 390-2.

This is as phony a footnote as they come! In Kotkin's bibliography (1083 col. 2) the Gafencu book is by Yale University Press, 1948. As I write these lines I have that edition before me. There are no pages 390-2. The last page in it is numbered 239! What's more, the words "Bessarabia" and "Bukovina" do not occur in this book.

In the preceding footnote, number 77, Kotkin mentions that Romania had annexed Bessarabia. But *Kotkin does not reveal that Bessarabia had been taken by force from Soviet Russia*. Accordingly, Soviet Russia never recognized Romania's claim to Bessarabia. Britain, France, and Italy decided that Bessarabia should join Romania in the Treaty of Paris (1920). Japan did not ratify the treaty. The United States refused to do so as well, because Soviet Russia was not represented at the talks. Readers who do not study his footnotes, however, will not know this.

Since its founding in 1918 Finland had been extremely hostile to the Soviet Union. It had allowed foreign powers to use its territory to invade the fledgling Soviet Russia and had massacred communist and pro-communist rebels during the Finnish Civil War. It was no democracy — the very popular Finnish Communist Party was outlawed. Finland and Romania were already in the German camp and would have allied with Hitler in any case, since neutrality was impossible and they would never have sided with the Soviet Union.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> See N.I. Baryshnikov, "The Soviet-Finnish War of 1939-1940." *Soviet Studies in History* 3 (1990), 43-60.

According to German Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop, Finland was egged on in its hostility to the USSR by England.

England was behind Finland and according to intelligence received, England was also responsible for the failure of the Russo-Finnish negotiations last November.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941. Documents from the German Foreign Office. Ed. Raymond James Sontag and James Stuard Beddie. Washington, DC: Department of State, 1948, p. 130.

The Finnish political scientist and military historian Martti Turtola has written:

It simply cannot be overlooked that Finland pursued a dangerously aggressive, menacing foreign policy prior to the war.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Martti Turtola: 'Guilty or Innocent? Approaches to the Winter War in Research and Memoirs', in *Yearbook of Finnish Foreign Policy*. (Helsinki; 1990), 45. See the Finnish Wikipedia entry about Martti Turtola at [https://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martti\\_Turtola](https://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martti_Turtola)

Kotkin omits all this important contextual information.

## **Who Dismembered Whom?**

Cripps believed it was possible to go beyond even the latter and get Britain and the Soviet Union to join forces against Germany, notwithstanding the Hitler-Stalin nonaggression and trade pacts, **the dismemberment of Poland**, the aggression against Finland, and now the Soviet annexation of the Baltic states.<sup>85</sup> A lawyer rather than a diplomat, Cripps was capable of criticizing Soviet realities, but he had defended Stalin's arrests of British nationals as spies in **fabricated** trials, as well as **the Soviet Union's 1939 seizure of eastern Poland**. (776)

Note 85 (1046) is about Sir Stafford Cripps.

Cripps, not Kotkin, was correct. The trials were not "fabricated." In previous chapters we have shown that Kotkin can cite no evidence that they were. But "fabricated trials" is an essential component of the Anti-Stalin Paradigm. So the mere lack of evidence cannot stop Kotkin and others from *falsely claiming* that they were fabricated. (For the positive evidence that they were *not* fabricated, see *The Moscow Trials As Evidence*.)

Kotkin does not mention that *it was Poland that had "dismembered" Soviet Russia* in in the Polish-Soviet War of 1919-1921. In defeat, Russia was forced to give Poland Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia. In 1939 the USSR took back from Poland the areas that Poland had taken by force from Soviet Russia.

A discussion of the Curzon Line and the Treaty of Riga of 1921 is essential for any understanding of this issue. But the Curzon line is only mentioned once in this huge book (690) and is never explained.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>44</sup> For the Curzon Line, see "The Curzon Line" at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/curzonline.html> and the whole article, "Did the Soviet Union Invade Poland in September 1939? NO!" at [https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/page\\_of\\_links.html](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/mlg09/page_of_links.html) I also discuss it in Blood Lies (see the Index).

## Chapter 14. A Little Source Criticism by Kotkin! Why Doesn't He Do It All The Time?

Poland, a nasty regime sandwiched directly between two nastier ones, sought a middle way. Some members of Polish ruling circles latched on to the idea of throwing in their lot with Hitler to deflect him farther eastward, even at the high cost of territorial concessions, and a few high-placed Poles fantasized about a joint Polish-Nazi attack on the USSR, an aggression in which they imagined Poland could wrest Ukraine from the Soviets, a delusion that Nazi officials cynically encouraged.<sup>86</sup> (596)

Note 86 (1022): 86. DGFP, series D, DAP, V: 167-8 (Ribbentrop and Beck, Jan. 26, 1939); Gromyko et al., *SSSR v bor'be za mir nakanune*, 171-3 (AVP RF, f. 059, op. 1, pap. 300, d. 2075, l. 46-9; Surits, Jan. 27, 1939); *God krizisa, I*: 194-6; Mel'tiukhov, *Sovtesko-pol'skie voiny* (2001); Haslam, *Struggle for Collective Security*, 160-4. **Citing hearsay from Hans-Adolf von Moltke, Luftwaffe Lieutenant-General Alfred Gerstenberg, the German air force attaché in Poland in 1938 (who would fall into Soviet captivity and be interrogated on Aug. 17, 1945) would assert that Hermann Göring, while traveling to Poland on the pretext of hunting, bribed Beck to work on behalf of Nazi Germany. Gerstenberg knew how much the Soviets despised Beck. *Tainy diplomatii Tret'ego Reikka* [sic; should be "Reikha"], 581 (TsA FSB, d. N-21147, t. 1, l. 35-53).**

Gerstenberg's information about Beck is at fourth hand: Göring — von Moltke — Gerstenberg — interrogator. That does not mean it is false — but it does not mean that it is true either. Here is the text, from *Tainy diplomatii tret'ego reikha*, 581:

Question: It is well known that Goering often visited Poland. Was he really only interested in hunting in Poland?

Answer: Goering often went to Poland and other countries to hunt, but in reality he was not so much interested in hunting as in carrying out

political tasks under this guise. Before my departure for Poland Goering told me that he would be travelling to Poland for hunting and would facilitate my task.

And in fact in 1938 Goering arrived in Poland, where he went hunting together with Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs de Beck. During this hunting trip Goering gave Beck a check for 300,000 marks, after which Beck began to strongly champion friendship with Germany.

Question: How do you know that Goering bribed Beck?

Answer: I learned that Beck had been bribed by Goering from Moltke, German ambassador to Poland, who took part in the hunting trip. In this connection Moltke said that Beck would not escape from our clutches.

In today's Poland Beck is honored as a national hero. So Gerstenberg's testimony is threatening to the present Polish regime and its dishonest glorification of the racist and fascist Polish regime of the 1920s and 1930s. In 2013 the moderator of H-Poland, an academic mailing list hosted by Michigan State University, refused a post of mine about Gerstenberg's revelation. I was informed that the members of the board of the Polish Studies Association "have concurred that this is not a topic that we wish to pursue on H-Poland."<sup>1</sup> In other words, "If the Polish government and its propagandists find it uncomfortable, don't discuss it."

<sup>1</sup> Email to me from the H-Poland moderator, December 19, 2013.

Kotkin is correct to point out that Gerstenberg's testimony is hearsay. And *this* raises an interesting question: Why does Kotkin employ source criticism here, when the fact alleged makes anticommunists like Joseph Beck and the pre-war Polish leadership look bad, while failing to use source criticism when the facts alleged reflect badly upon Stalin and the Soviet leadership? Why does he "cherry-pick" when to use source criticism?

An objective historian, determined to discover the truth at all costs, even if it should contradict his own bias, is obliged to employ source criticism *all*



the time. But as the analysis in this book amply shows, Kotkin is simply not such a historian.

Moreover, Kotkin has "buried" this important fact at the end of a long footnote. Few of his readers will see it. It should have been promoted to the main text.

### **Did Stalin Praise Hitler For Murdering His Rivals?**

*Izvestiya* dedicated four columns on its front page to Hitler's Reichstag speech about the Night of the Long Knives.<sup>315</sup> "What a guy [molodets]," Stalin exclaimed to his inner circle, according to Mikoyan's later recollections. "Well done. Knows how to act!"<sup>316</sup> (175)

Note 316 (956): Nekrich, 1941, 19 (citing a personal conversation in the 1950s with Surits, the envoy in question).

In reality this story is *not* in the 1995 Russian edition of Nekrich's book, the one that Kotkin cites here (see his bibliography at page 1100, column 1), though Nekrich does claim that Stalin was sympathetic to Hitler's action.

This would be fourth-hand information: Stalin — Surits — Mikoyan — Nekrich. But let's pursue this story farther. Valentin Berezhkov, one of Stalin's translators, also claimed that Mikoyan told *him*!

[[cyrillic]]Когда в 1934 году Гитлер уничтожил своего соратника, руководителя штурмовых отрядов Эрнста Рема, и других командиров штурмовых отрядов СА, Сталин дал этой кровавой бойне высокую оценку. Микоян рассказывал мне, что на первом же после убийства Рема заседании политбюро Сталин сказал:

- Вы слышали, что произошло в Германии? Гитлер, какой молодец! Вот как надо поступать с политическими противниками!<sup>2</sup>

When Hitler annihilated his comrade-in-arms, the head of the SA (*Sturmabteilung*) Ernst Rohm and other commanders of the SA assault

detachments in 1934, Stalin gave this bloody massacre a high rating. Mikoyan told me that at the very first meeting of the politburo after Rohm's murder Stalin said:

- Have you heard what happened in Germany? Hitler, what a great fellow! That's how to deal with political opponents!

<sup>2</sup> [[cyrillic]]Бережков Валентин Михайлович. Как я стал переводчиком Сталина. At [https://royallib.com/read/beregkov\\_valentin/kak\\_ya\\_stal\\_perevodchikom\\_stalina.html#20480](https://royallib.com/read/beregkov_valentin/kak_ya_stal_perevodchikom_stalina.html#20480)

Berezhkov says nothing about Surits. He claims that Mikoian told him, Berezhkov, directly.

In his autobiography *Tak Bylo* ("Thus It Was") Mikoian tells a very similar story.

[[cyrillic]]... когда Гитлер, стремясь укрепить свою власть, послал своих соратников в казармы штурмовиков и учинил там расправу на месте без суда и следствия над верхушкой левых штурмовиков - Ремом и другими, это поразительное зверство вызвало всеобщее возмущение. И я был поражен, когда Сталин, возвращаясь несколько раз к этому факту, восхищался смелостью, упорством Гитлера, который пошел на такую меру, чтобы укрепить свою власть. "Вот молодец, вот здорово, - говорил Сталин. - Это надо уметь!" (374/446)

... when Hitler, striving to strengthen his power, sent his comrades-in-arms to the attack room barracks and carried out the massacre on the spot, without trial, of the leadership of the left-wing SA. Rohm and others, this amazing atrocity caused general outrage. And I was amazed when Stalin, returning several times to this fact, admired the boldness and persistence of Hitler, who took such measures to confirm his power. "There's a great fellow, that's great," said Stalin. "We must learn how to do this!"

We can't check this specific story by means of other sources. As far as we can tell, only Mikoian claimed to have heard Stalin say this.

What about the reliability of Mikoian's memoirs? Michael Ellman, a ferociously anti-Stalin scholar, has his doubts. At the very end, Mikoian — here we should write "Mikoian" — regrets the lack of democracy in the USSR. Ellman writes:

*Tak bylo* is lively and interesting, but in some cases one has the suspicion that what is written reflects the views of the editor [Mikoian's son] at least as much as those of his late father. Did A. I. Mikoian really dictate or write the final paragraph of the book or did the editor add it to make the book more palatable to modern readers? (141)

Ascertaining to what extent Mikoian's memoirs are accurate would require detailed checking of particular incidents against other sources. For example, neither Khrushchev nor Simonov remembers the bold speech Mikoian recalls giving at the October (1952) Plenum, and this speech differs substantially from Efremov's, Mukhitdinov's, and Shepilov's reports of what took place at that dramatic and sinister meeting ... It cannot be excluded that Mikoian here reports what in retrospect he thinks he should have said at the plenum rather than what he actually said. (148)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Slavic Review*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (Spring, 2001), 140-150.

We can go farther than Ellman. For example: we know that the defendants in the three Moscow Trials were guilty of at least the crimes to which they confessed. We also know that the Military conspirators, and specifically the commanders tried and executed with Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky in June, 1937, were also guilty. But Mikoian claims they were all innocent!

Mikoian tells the tale that Stalin was "prostrated" at the beginning of the war, was almost unable to act at all, and acted as though the others on the Politburo were going to arrest him. This is not only unconfirmed by anyone else in a position to know — it is clear that it is false. We have good evidence that Stalin was very active from the outset of the war.

Mikoian defends Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" of February 25, 1956, to the XX Party Congress. We know today that every accusation in that speech levelled against Stalin and Lavrentii Beria is provably false.<sup>4</sup> In his memoir Mikoian repeats a number of these false accusations of Khrushchev's, and upholds Khrushchev's speech.

<sup>4</sup> See Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*.

Gabriel Gorodetsky, whose book Kotkin cites *fifty times*, has this to say about Mikoian's credibility:

A. Mikoyan, the Politburo member and Commissar of Foreign Trade, whose memoirs have given rise to a number of false interpretations of Stalin's policies at the time, suggested that Schulenburg gave Dekanozov a clear-cut warning.

...Much as this revelation captures the imagination, it is not borne out at all by the actual records of the meeting.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion: Stalin and the German Invasion of Russia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1999, 212.

So it appears that Mikoian lied a great deal in his memoir! At the very least it is a highly unreliable source. The story about Stalin praising Hitler for killing his rivals in the Nazi Party comes only from Mikoian. Therefore, absent independent corroboration, it should not be accepted as true.

Of course Kotkin could and should have known all this. When including this incident in his book Kotkin should have informed his readers about Mikoian's bias and unreliability concerning Stalin. So why does he include this story? Evidently, to associate Stalin with Hitler — a propaganda move, beloved by anticommunists.

### **Kotkin Repeats Rumors By Beria's Murderers**

Kotkin:

Beria would now systematically annihilate Lakoba's kin and associates.<sup>47</sup> (507)

Note 47 (1010): 47. This started with Mgaloblishvili, whom Beria had chosen to lead the honor guard accompanying Lakoba's casket home from Tblisi and who was arrested for "ties." Popov and Oppokov, "Berievshchina" (1991, no. 1), 48-9. **The story goes that** Beria's men beat Saria to testify that Lakoba had wanted to sell Abkhazia to Turkey; she **evidently** refused, even when they beat her fourteen-year-old son Rauf in front of her. She **was said to have died** of torture in her cell. Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, 495-6.

"The story goes," "evidently," "was said to have died" — what kind of history is this? These are, what — rumors? From no source?

Popov and Oppokov (48) quote from an interrogation of Petr Afanas'evich Sharia by Khrushchev's men of August 15, 1953. Sharia states that Mgaloblishvili accompanied Lakoba's casket. But he says nothing about his arrest. This interrogation, or statement, or whatever, of Sharia's — if it exists — is not printed in the 1086-page volume *Politbiuro i delo Beria* published in 2013. But the same material is summarized in the Preface (*Predislovie*) to this book, pages 6-7, without any references.

Medvedev has no evidence whatsoever for the horrible story about torturing Lakoba's wife and son. The Russian language Wikipedia page about Saria Lakoba states that she died in a prison hospital, not in a cell. The only reference is to a book of memoirs, impossible to verify.<sup>6</sup> The references on the Russian Wikipedia page on Lakoba have no such evidence either.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> [[cyrillic]]At [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Лакоба,\\_Сария\\_Ахмедовна](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Лакоба,_Сария_Ахмедовна)

<sup>7</sup> In a book that Kotkin cites, though not here, Donald Rayfield tells the same story but cites no evidence whatsoever. Evidently, he had no evidence: *Stalin and His Hangmen: An Authoritative Portrait of a Tyrant and Those Who Served Him*. New York: Viking, 2004, 303.

This story is one of many attacks on Beria in Kotkin's book. Beria was murdered by Khrushchev, abetted by the other Presidium [formerly

Politburo] members. This was an unprecedented event in Soviet history. Moreover, Khrushchev and Molotov agree that there was no evidence against Beria when he was either arrested or — more likely — murdered, on June 26, 1953. Therefore, in order to justify this act and the violent repression of persons associated with Beria that followed, Khrushchev et al. proceeded to invent stories about various crimes of Beria.

Popov and Oppokov summarized Khrushchev-era NKVD and judicial materials from the period of Beria's arrest. Medvedev wrote his book to curry favor with Khrushchev, and uses Khrushchev-era attacks on Stalin and Beria as his evidence.

It is simply not possible that Kotkin, who has spent decades studying Soviet history of the Stalin period, does not know these things. But it is certain that very few of his readers will know about them.

This Khrushchev-era attack of slander against Beria and his associates means that it is irresponsible to simply take at face value all the crimes attributed to Beria during the Khrushchev period and repeated during the Gorbachev period. We know many of them are lies. We have already said something about the provable falsehoods in one of the most important and most influential anti-Beria books of the Gorbachev period, *Oni ne molchali*.

### **Don't Believe Rudenko**

Inside the Soviet police, first-class sadists were fewer than one might think. Boris Rodos, in that context, stood out, a "chopper" (kolun) who could reliably smash those under "interrogation" to near death. He would snap a whip across a prisoner's legs, continuing after he collapsed to the floor, pour freezing water over him, then force him to scoop his diarrhea with his tin cup and swallow, then shout, "sign! Sign!"<sup>272</sup> (548)

Note 272 (1015): 272. Petrov, "Rodos."

This is the article by Nikita Petrov, "Rodos: ostrov arhipelaga Gulaga," in *Novaia gazeta*, September 22, 2010 (1102).<sup>8</sup> In it, Petrov claims to be

quoting from the appeal to Stalin of February 20, 1940, of Belosudov, a Komsomol official, who stated:

[[cyrillic]]я попросил Родоса сводить меня в уборную помочиться, а он говорит: «Бери стакан и мочись». Я это сделал и спросил, куда девать стакан. Он схватил его и поднес мне ко рту и давай вливать в рот, а сам кричит: «Пей, говно в человеческой шкуре, или давай показания». Я, будучи вне себя, да что говорить, для меня было все безразлично, а он кричит: «Подпиши, подпиши!» и я сказал: «Давай, я все подпишу, мне теперь все равно.»

I asked Rodos to take me to the bathroom to urinate, and he said: "Take a glass and urinate." I did it and asked where to put the glass. He grabbed it and brought it to my mouth and wanted to pour into my mouth, while he himself shouted: "Drink, shit in human skin, or confess." I, being beside myself, what can I say, I didn't care any more, and he shouts: "Sign, sign!" — and I said: "All right, I will sign everything, I don't care now."

<sup>8</sup> "NG" is an ideologically anti-Stalin newspaper of which former Soviet President and Communist Party First Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev is part owner.

If this statement is genuine, Belosudov claimed that Rodos made him urinate into a cup, then *tried* to make him drink the urine or sign, whereupon Belosudov agreed to sign. It was *not* "diarrhea," and Belosudov did *not* drink the urine. Where does Kotkin get these disgusting lies from, anyway?

What's more, Petrov is *not* quoting from Belosudov's appeal to Stalin. He is quoting from Prosecutor Roman Rudenko's February, 1956, recommendation to Khrushchev's Supreme Court to deny Rodos' appeal for clemency of his death sentence. It is in the volume *Politbiuro i Delo Berta* (2013), 864-866. Kotkin makes no use of this important document collection. It is also online at the excellent Istmat.info site (<http://istmat.info/node/22351>)

This document is part of Khrushchev's attack on Beria, whom he and the other Presidium members murdered, whether judicially, in December, 1953, or in fact, on June 26, 1953. We know that Rudenko lied in defense of Khrushchev's falsifications. Matthew Lenoe points this out in his book on the Kirov assassination, and Lenoe is extremely anti-Stalin.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See Furr, Kirov 128-129 for further discussion, and citations to Lenoe's book.

For example: Rodos is charged with taking part in frame-ups against a number of high-ranking Party members, including Pavel Postyshev (*Politbiuro i delo Beria*, 864). **But we know that Postyshev was not innocent!** We now have the documentation that he was murdering Party members in the Ukraine, for which he was dismissed from the CC, then expelled from the Party, then tried and executed. (See the discussion in Chapter 14 for the evidence.)

So it is Rodos who is the victim of a frame-up here. We can't just "believe" Rudenko, who was busy doing Khrushchev's dirty work, either to frame Beria — if Beria were indeed still alive — or to justify Beria's murder. Why was Rodos prosecuted in the first place? If he had beaten prisoners at the order of the head of the NKVD, Beria, as charged, then he was just doing what he had been told to do — certainly not a capital crime. And we can't even establish that as a fact.

Perhaps Rodos refused to fabricate some anti-Beria stories, and so was executed. It seems that this is what almost happened to General Pavel Sudoplatov — except that Sudoplatov succeeded in convincing the prosecution that he was insane, and so spent two years in a hospital, and then fifteen years in prison (see the discussion later in this chapter).

Kotkin must know this. But whether he does know it and is lying, or does not know and is simply incompetent, the result is the same: his readers are deceived.

**Don't Believe Serov, Either**



Also on May 19, Beria had executed a confidential task: Radek had his head fatally smashed on the floor of the Verkhne-Uralsk prison, where he was serving a ten-year term. Rumors were loosed that Radek had been killed in a fight with a fellow inmate. In fact, the murder was instigated by a specially dispatched NKVD team—so much for the promise Stalin had made to not execute Radek, in exchange for testimony that Radek had duly delivered against Trotsky and Trotskyites.<sup>315</sup> (Sokolnikov, another defendant in the January 1937 Trotskyite trial who had been spared death in exchange for his testimony, would also be murdered in prison, in Tobolsk on May 21.) (637)

Note 315 (1028): 15. APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 455, l. 33-5 (June 1956 note from KGB chief Serov to the Central Committee); d. 448, l. 184, 189 (testimony by operatives Fedotov and Matusov). See also Petrov and Petrov, *Empire of Fear*, 69.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Petrov and Petrov, *Empire of Fear*, was published in 1956. It is useless as evidence for anything.

Kotkin has not done his homework! Serov's note is full of provable lies. My article "Nikita Petrov's 'Amalgam'" discusses this document thoroughly; it may be consulted at the URL in this note, together with an English translation of Serov's fabrication.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> At

[https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/furr\\_petrovs\\_amalgam.pdf](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/furr_petrovs_amalgam.pdf)  
PDF format reproduces both Cyrillic and Latin fonts.

### **Convicted Without Evidence, Or Did Stalin Kidnap and Murder General Kulik's Wife?**

Two days before, Stalin had colluded with Beria to have Kulik's beautiful Jewish second wife, Kira Simonich, kidnapped. The despot then pretended he had no idea where she might be, advising Kulik to remarry and forget the "nympho female spy." She was the daughter of the former okhranka chief in Helsinki who had been executed by the

Cheka in 1919; her first husband had been a NEPman with foreign connections; her two brothers, one of whom had been an officer for the Whites, were arrested for espionage; her mother left for Italy in 1934. Nonetheless, Kulik had refused Voroshilov's entreaties to divorce the fetching Kira.<sup>288</sup> (758)

Note 288 (1044): 288. Kira was **evidently** seized on May 5, 1940, by a squad overseen by Merkulov; she was executed by Blokhin without indictment or trial. "Beria protiv Kulika," in Bobrenev and Riazantsev, *Palachi i zhertvy*, 197-264 (esp. 195-201, 211-3); Sokolov, *Istreblennye marshaly*, 300-1; Leskov, *Stalin i zagovor Tukhachevskogo*, 53-5; Montefiore, *Court of the Red Tsar*, 293-4.

Kotkin must think that Stalin and the NKVD simply did not have anything else to do! What was the point of this supposed kidnapping and murder?

In *Stalin i zagovor Tukhachevskogo* Valentin Leskov *supports* the theory that Tukhachevsky and the other commanders were in fact guilty! Kotkin does not tell his readers that. In the same passage cited by Kotkin, Leskov says that Kira was the daughter of the former head of Tsarist intelligence in Helsingfors (today Helsinki), shot by the Soviets in 1919. Leskov also opines that Kira was probably not murdered but recruited as a counterintelligence agent in the West. (SS) Kotkin cites Leskov's book. Why doesn't Kotkin tell us what Leskov thinks? Because *that* story does not have an anti-Stalin tendency?

Bobrenev and Riazantsev was published in 1993. The updated edition, Zaika and Bobrenev, was published in 2011. It contains the same long chapter: "Beria protiv Kulika," pp. 528-618. The documents quoted in it in short excerpts are published in full in the volumes *Politbiuro i delo Beria* (Moscow: Kurchkovo Pole, 2012) and *Delo Beria. Prigovor. Obzhalovaniuu ne podlezhit.* (Moscow: MDF, 2012).

Boris Sokolov, author of *Istreblennye marshaly*, was expelled from the Free Historical Society for "an unacceptable attitude towards historical sources and incorrect citation of the work of others."<sup>12</sup> Gennadii Ospov, sociologist and member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, has called Sokolov "a

most indefatigable historical falsifier."<sup>13</sup> This kind of thing is very unusual, all the more so because Sokolov is fanatically anti-Stalin, a bias common among Russian academics.

<sup>12</sup> See the Society's statement of May 13, 2016, at <https://volistob.ru/statements/postanovlenie-soveta-volnogo-istoricheskogo-obshchestva-ob-isklyuchenii-bv-sokolova>

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in the article on Sokolov at <http://53kanal.in.ua/novosti-ukrainy/item/3649-1453405599>

*Here, indeed, is an issue that demands source criticism.* What is the status of these confession-interrogations? For example, those of Vlodzimirsky, who was tried and executed in December, 1953, as one of Beria's "gang" and who was trying to escape his fate, quite possibly by saying whatever his interrogators wanted him to say? But in his interrogation of August 4, 1953 — if it is genuine — Vlodzimirsky said only that he had indeed kidnapped Kulik's wife and brought her to prison commandant Blokhin. He denied knowing anything after that, even the reason that she was seized.

All the documents in these collections are Khrushchev-era stuff that blacken Beria's name. Beria's men were under great pressure to accuse him of crimes. Even so, a number of them were executed in December, 1953. Others, like Boris Rodos, were executed during the following years.

General Pavel Sudoplatov, arrested in 1953, survived, spent fifteen years in detention and then in prison for, supposedly, being an "accomplice of Beria" in planning to overthrow the Soviet government, experimentation on people, kidnappings and murders. There is no evidence that he did any of these things — any more than there is that Beria was guilty of any of them.

Sudoplatov wrote that he was arrested and imprisoned because he refused to fabricate lies about Beria's activities. It is reasonable to assume that other NKVD men like Vlodzimirsky limited what they said to the minimum. In Vlodzimirsky's case it was not enough. He was tried, convicted, and executed by Khrushchev & Co. in December, 1953.

Kotkin is quick to claim that the interrogations and confessions of the defendants at the three Moscow Trials, plus all those of the high-ranking officers in the Tukhachevsky Affair, should be regarded as fabrications due to "torture." He has no *evidence* that they were tortured — he simply assumes they were.

So why doesn't Kotkin make the same assumption here, in the case of Vlodzimirsky's interrogation-confessions? Presumably, because *these* confessions accuse Stalin, either indirectly or — as Kotkin claims here — directly.

Former NKVD man Gui'st, the partial text of whose interrogation is dated September 1, 1953, told a story quite different from Vlodzimirsky's. Vlodzimirsky had not mentioned Gul'st's participation. (PiDB 329) Former Prosecutor (*Prokuror*) of the USSR Viktor M. Bochkov who was interrogated on January 24, 1954, claimed that he remembered nothing about any kidnapping of Kira Kulik, (PiDB 572).

*None* of these versions claims that "Stalin colluded with Beria," as Kotkin states. Evidently Kotkin fabricated this falsehood himself.

### **How Many Poles Were Deported And From Where?**

In eastern Poland, the NKVD had deported more than 1 million of the 13.5 million residents to labor camps. (771)

There is no footnote, no evidence given, for this statement. Here are the two closest footnotes:

Note 60 (1045): 60. Gross observes that "the Polish Military underground organization, the ZWZ, which thrived under the Nazi occupation in spite of persistent Gestapo efforts to destroy it, never had a chance under the NKVD." Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*, 148.

Note 61 (1045-6): 61. Gross, "Nature of Soviet Totalitarianism." Because Poland underwent Nazi and Soviet occupations simultaneously, it would seem the ideal (if that is the word) place to make the case for "totalitarianism" as a concept encompassing both

regimes, yet Gross, a proponent of the term, also noted significant differences between the nature and consequences of Nazi and Soviet rule. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*, 230-1.

The "significant differences" between the Germans and the Soviets noted by Gross include the fact that, unlike the Nazis, the Soviets were anti-racist, and thus had great support from the Ukrainians, Belorussians, and especially the Jews in the newly-reclaimed territories of Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine. These lands had been taken by force by Poland from Soviet Russia in 1921. The Soviets liberated Jews hiding in the woods from the Nazis *and from the Polish Home Army*, a violently anti-Semitic organization praised as "heroes" in today's Poland because of their anticommunist terrorism. Communist partisans welcomed Jews into their units; the Home Army murdered them.

The Polish government severely repressed the languages and cultures of all non-Poles there, restricted their religious practices, and discriminated against them in other ways. Poland also sent many thousands of Polish "settlers," often military men, to "polonize" (make more Polish) these areas. These are the people — the Polish imperialist infrastructure — whom the Soviets deported.

Both works by Gross are from the 1980s, when the primary sources we have now were not available. They are worthless now. Gross himself, a ferocious anticommunist, is far from objective. The actual number of persons deported from Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine (formerly Eastern Poland) is 201,000.<sup>14</sup> Kotkin has to be aware of this important and well-known document collection. But he does not cite it. Perhaps this is because the number of deportees is 1/5 of Gross's figures which therefore make the Soviets "look worse."

<sup>14</sup> *Stalinskie deportatsii 1928-1953*, p. 791.

### **What Happened To Bronislava Metallikova-Poskrebysheva?**

Stalin had allowed Beria to imprison Poskryobyshev's beloved wife as a "Trotskyite" in 1939. (Beria had sent a large basket of fruit to their

two baby girls; he then executed their mother.)<sup>17</sup> (889)

Note 17 (1067): 17. Recollections of one of Poskryobyshev's two daughters, Natalya: <http://sloblib.narod.ru/slob/poskreb.htm>. Poskrebyshev's first wife, Jadwiga, a Pole, had died in 1929 of tuberculosis.

There are a number of important matters to note about Kotkin's statement:

1. Beria had no authority to imprison or execute anybody. The NKVD could not even arrest anyone without an order from a Prosecutor. The judicial organs conducted the trials and issued sentences, which were carried out by the NKVD. In the case of Aleksandr Poskrebyshev's wife, this would probably have been the Prosecutor of the Soviet Union. Poskrebyshev was Stalin's personal secretary, meaning, in charge of documentation. He worked very closely with Stalin.
2. The daughter to whose brief online memoir Kotkin refers did not remember her mother — she was only one year old at the time. Everything she wrote, including the "basket of fruit," is hearsay.
3. There is little information about Bronislava Metallikova-Poskrebysheva. Evidently, no documents about her purported trial, imprisonment, and execution have been located. One source says she was arrested on April 29, 1939.<sup>15</sup> Another states that she was arrested on September 8, 1940.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> At <http://lists.memo.ru/d22/f333.htm#n55>

<sup>16</sup> At <https://web.archive.org/web/20101027221834/http://russcience.euro.ru/repress/kom/1941/metallikova.htm>

4. The Russian Wikipedia page states that "her fate is unknown."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> [[cyrillic]]"Её дальнейшая судьба остаётся неизвестной."  
[[cyrillic]]At [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Металликова-Поскрёбышева,\\_Бронислава\\_Соломоновна](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Металликова-Поскрёбышева,_Бронислава_Соломоновна)

Kotkin, like all historians, has the obligation to inform his readers about these evidentiary matters. The simple fact is that We Don't Know — words that every honest historian must be ready to utter (or to write), instead of fabricating, or repeating, rumor as bogus "fact."

According to Volkogonov, who evidently interviewed Galina, Poskrebyshev's and Bronislava's daughter, Beria continued to "visit with our family" (*byvat' v nashei sem'e*), and Stalin knew the family well. Galina, naturally, believes that her mother was innocent. But that is not evidence.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Volkogonov, *Stalin. Politicheskii portret* (Moscow: Novosti, 1991), Chapter 3. There are many different editions both in print and online. This information is in Chapter 3, "Vybor i Bor'ba."

All sources agree that Bronislava Metallikova-Poskrebysheva was rehabilitated on October 10, 1957. That means that her NKVD investigation file should be available to researchers.<sup>19</sup> It should have long been available to her immediate family. But evidently no one has requested it — or, at least, no one has published anything about it. Kotkin should have pointed that out, too.

<sup>19</sup> As of this writing (late 2018) the FSB Archivists are only allowing access to files of "rehabilitated" persons.

## Chapter 15. *Conclusion*

In historical scholarship, falsification, plagiarism, and fabrication were devastating types of fraud. They might not be indictable in a court of law, but they undermined the very foundations of scholarly authority. What was more, they tested the profession's ability and willingness to police itself.

- Peter Charles Hoffer<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Peter Charles Hoffer. *Past Imperfect Facts, Fictions, Fraud: American History from Bancroft and Parkman to Ambrose, Bellesiles, Ellis, and Goodwin*. New York: Public Affairs, 2004, 139.

### **Implications**

The implications of Kotkin's virtual wholesale falsification of 1930s Soviet history go far beyond Kotkin himself, even beyond the field of Soviet history.

Certainly, one should never take Kotkin himself at his word. When, for example, the third volume of his Stalin biography is published, every reader should be aware that any and all negative statements about Stalin and those in the Soviet leadership who supported him — Malenkov, Kaganovich, Beria, Molotov — must be double-checked. That is what we have done, in great detail, in the present book.

Judging from other falsified works masquerading as scholarship such as Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands*, we might predict that in his third volume Kotkin will accuse Stalin of having Solomon M. Mikhoels, a well-known director of Jewish theater in the USSR, murdered in 1948. The documents purporting to prove this are crude forgeries. But one can only discover this by careful study. Unless Kotkin undertakes such a study he is destined to repeat this scholarly canard, one fashioned originally by Russian Zionist writers.



Perhaps Kotkin will repeat the claim that, driven by antisemitism, Stalin might have deported Soviet Jews to Siberia; that Stalin "framed" the medical doctors who had treated Politburo member Andrei Zhdanov in 1948; that he masterminded the frame-up of Soviet doctors in 1952-53; that he "framed" the military commanders arrested, tried, and executed for treason during World War II, such as General Dmitry Pavlov; that he "framed" the Leningrad Party leaders tried and convicted (and some of them executed) in the "Leningrad Affair" of 1947-1950; and so on. There is no evidence to support these claims, frequently made by anticommunists, and in some cases we have evidence to disprove them. But will Kotkin's readers know that?

Kotkin will use Khrushchev-era and Gorbachev-era sources. But Khrushchev and *his* men, and Gorbachev and his men, lied and fabricated about Stalin and the Stalin period, to an extent that can scarcely be overestimated.

One would think that professional historians of the Soviet Union would have figured this out! But these anti-Stalin lies were so useful in the anticommunist struggle, both during the Cold War and since, that they have never been seriously questioned. They are still not questioned! Kotkin does not question them in Volume Two. There is no reason to think that he will suddenly begin to do so in his final volume. Indeed, he can't do so, for if he did he would deconstruct, disprove, virtually the whole of Volume Two, as we have done in the present study.

Because of the power of bias by omission — simply not mentioning evidence that contradicts one's preconceived paradigm or idea — double-checking Kotkin's fact-claims on these matters is not going to be an easy task even for those who are familiar with the primary and secondary sources in the field. The 75-year period by which, in Russia, documents are to be declassified has given us some access, at least, to primary documents from the 1930s and before. But it will be a long time before this 75-year time period elapses for events of the post-war period. The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Stalin's death and the murder — judicial or otherwise — of Lavrentii Beria, will not occur until 2028. Even then, there is no guarantee that the

Russian government of that day will indeed declassify all the primary documents related to the events of this period.

For the vast majority of Kotkin's potential readers, those who are not familiar with the primary sources, it will be impossible to double-check Kotkin's fact-claims. And dishonest or lazy scholars have plenty of dishonest scholarship from which to cherry-pick any conclusion their bias suggests. So we can predict, sadly but with confidence, that Kotkin's falsifications in that future volume will be accepted at face value by reviewers and by most readers, just as his falsifications in this second volume have duped them.

Some of Kotkin's earlier work — specifically, volume one of his Stalin biography — has been better. But in this second volume Kotkin has permitted his anticommunist biases to ruin his research. As we have demonstrated in the present book, nothing Kotkin writes that is negative about Stalin and those closest to him is true. *Nothing!*

### **Readers Want Bread, Kotkin Gives Them A Stone.<sup>2</sup>**

Is Kotkin deliberately lying? This is a legitimate question in the light of all the falsifications, he has introduced into his book. I do not contend, however, that Kotkin is deliberately lying. It may well be the case that his anti-Stalin and anticommunist bias is so powerful that it has robbed him of all ability, as well as the desire, to look for the truth, to be objective. Kotkin *may* not be consciously lying. But he *is* deceiving his readers, because those readers expect a search for the truth.

However, Kotkin's subjective intention, even if we could determine what it is, is ultimately not important. We have firmly established in this book that Kotkin's research — the statements in his text, the citations in his footnotes — cannot be trusted, insofar as they concern Stalin. Since his book purports to be a biography of Stalin, this is a devastating discovery that utterly invalidates the book for any legitimate use. Unfortunately, Kotkin's book will continue to serve the purpose for which it is no doubt intended: as anticommunist "propaganda with footnotes."

## **Kotkin's Book Proves the Opposite of What It Is Intended to Prove**

Ironically, Kotkin's book proves the opposite of what its author intended: *it proves that Stalin committed no crimes during the 1930s!* For if there were any evidence that Stalin did commit crimes during this period, surely Kotkin would have found that evidence and included it, or references to it, in this book. Kotkin's references to evidence — perhaps scare quotes are appropriate here, so "evidence" — are very extensive. He has clearly done a lot of reading.

Strictly speaking a negative cannot be proven. We have pointed out places in his text where Kotkin is guilty of this very error. But Kotkin has been researching the Stalin era in the USSR all his professional life. The fact that he has found no evidence of any crime by Stalin, and that every allegation of such in this book turns out, on careful inspection, to be fraudulent, is perhaps the best evidence we have at present that Stalin committed no crime that can be documented by evidence.

This conclusion will strike many readers as shocking, even outrageous. But the truth is not established by consensus, much less by the consensus of anticommunists. Anyone who bases her judgment not on the consensus of experts but on the evidence will be forced to draw this conclusion. That is what we have done in the present book. Doing so reveals the bankruptcy of the field of Soviet history of the Stalin period.

## **The Anti-Stalin Paradigm Exposed**

This fact in turn exposes the bankruptcy — dishonesty and shallowness — of anticommunist and anti-Stalin scholarship. It is not a matter of Kotkin's unreliability only. There is no *evidence* that Stalin committed any crime in the '30s. Yet the flood of anti-Stalin and anticommunist falsehoods continues unabated. Evidently lies are necessary appears in order to make Stalin, the Soviet Union of his day, and the communist movement "look bad."

This level of dishonesty in the mainstream historiography of the Soviet Union means that little of the mainstream academic research on Soviet

history of the 1930s is helpful for those trying to understand what actually happened in the USSR during this period. But the 1930s are crucial in understanding not only the successes, but also the later failure, of the USSR.

The Stalin period led not only to the successful industrialization, the costly victory against the fascist invasion, and the post-war increase in living standards for the Soviet population. It led to a worldwide struggle for workers' rights and for liberation from Western and Japanese colonialism.

It also led, upon Stalin's death, to the *coup d'état* on March 5, 1953, the second *coup* against Lavrentii Beria of June 26, 1953, Khrushchev's accession to leadership and the beginning of official, wholesale falsification of Soviet history in the service of "reforms" that abandoned, piece by piece, the goal of transitioning to communism. These developments led eventually to the renewed falsification of Soviet history under Gorbachev, the breakup of the Soviet Union, and the restoration of predatory capitalism.

The historian's purpose and aim should be to study historical events with a view to understanding historical change. Understanding the history of the Soviet Union is essential for any accurate understanding of world history. The last book by the late Moshe Lewin, a famous, albeit conventionally anti-Stalin and anticommunist, historian of the USSR, is titled *The Soviet Century*. By "century" Lewin meant the 74 years between the 1917 revolution and the end of the USSR in 1991.

In reality, the term could be applied to *world* history during this same period. The Russian Revolution, the fight for socialism, the international communist movement, were determining forces in world history. This is not the place to list the major historical developments of the "Soviet century." But every one of them was shaped in a significant way by the international communist movement and the USSR.

One brief example must suffice here. An accurate understanding of World War 2 must include the fact that, by stopping the Tukhachevsky- and Trotsky-led military conspiracies that threatened to put the massive human and natural resources of the Soviet Union on the side of the fascist powers,

Stalin and the Soviet government saved the people of the world, including those of the West, from a far greater catastrophe than the one that did occur.

No account of world history that omits this fact has any claim to accuracy. Yet because of anti-Stalinism and anticommunism, this fact is not just unacknowledged — it is staunchly denied, as Kotkin does in *Stalin, Volume Two*.

Anti-Stalinists and anticommunists, including much or most of the Left, falsify Soviet history and deny the truth even when it is slowly, painstakingly uncovered. This denial and falsification stretches from the Left — Trotskyists and anarchists — to the mainstream and the Far Right fascists.

Do they believe their own falsifications? For the most part, they do. But why? Because of the dishonesty of mainstream historiography of the Stalin period. If the mainstream acknowledged and publicized the truth, instead of the flood of falsehood like that we find in books like Kotkin's, it would be far harder for people to ignore, or be uniformed about, the truth.

We cannot understand any aspect of the history of the past century without an accurate account of Soviet history of the Stalin period. This book aims to contribute, however modestly, to the aim of uncovering the truth about this era.

## Appendix

### Nikita Petrov's 'Amalgam' — The Prison Murders of Radek and Sokol'nikov

Grover Furr

#### Introduction

Nikita Vasil'evich Petrov is a Russian historian, the author of several influential books in the history of the USSR during the Stalin period. His articles appear frequently in the Russian mass media and he has been featured in television interviews.

Petrov is a prominent figure in public discourse about the Stalin years and about the USSR generally. The organization that employs him, the 'Memorial' society, has published or aided in the publication of a number of volumes of documents from former Soviet archives. Petrov's work (with German historian Mark Jansen) on the career of Nikolai Ezhov, People's Commissar of the NKVD during the bloody "Great Terror," or Ezhovshchina, of massive extralegal executions in the USSR in 1937-1938, is a valuable source of quotations from primary documents and, to some extent, as a chronology. The same should be said for Petrov's works on the GULAG and his two biographical dictionaries on NKVD employees.

In sum: Petrov's works are useful as sources of documents and dates. But Petrov's own interpretations of these documents, and his assertions generally, show such a profound and uninterrogated anticommunist bias as to be not merely useless but harmful. The same thing is true of the article under discussion here.

In early 2012 Petrov published a book titled [[cyrillic]]Палачи. Они выполняли заказы Сталина ("Executioners. They carried out Stalin's orders.") It was published by *Novaia Gazeta*, the thrice-weekly newspaper which has frequently featured Petrov's articles. The subject of the present study is one of the chapters of this book titled [[cyrillic]]«Сталинский

заказ. Как убивали Сокольников и Радека» ("Stalinist Order: How Sokol'nikov and Radek Were Murdered.") This chapter is the same as the text of an article in *Novaia Gazeta* on May 6, 2008 with two additional paragraphs and very brief biographical sketches of some of the NKVD men.

I have chosen to examine the specific article in question because it is one whose sources can be checked. In this case we are not left to either "believe" or "disbelieve" Petrov. Thanks to published documents from former Soviet archives it is possible for any careful reader to see that Petrov's article is grossly falsified.

Early in his article Petrov makes the following statement:

[[cyrillic]]Было неопровержимо доказано, что за убийством стоял лично Сталин.

It has been irrefutably proven that Stalin was personally behind the murder.

"Irrefutably proven" is a bold claim. It virtually challenges the reader to try to "refute" — disprove — Petrov's thesis that Stalin was personally responsible for Radek's and Sokol'nikov's murders. The present article does precisely that: it refutes Petrov's claim by checking the assertions Petrov makes in this article against primary sources that are now available. Doing so enables us to affirm that Petrov has deliberately misled — lied to — his readers. The claim "irrefutably proven," as Queen Gertrude remarks in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, "doth protest too much"; it exaggerates in order to cover up the truth and is itself a lie.

Petrov's article ends by reprinting a report of June 29, 1956 by General Ivan Serov, at the time the chief of the KGB. We begin our study by examining Serov's statements in the light of evidence now available. This section is followed by a close examination of Petrov's own claims.

At the end we draw some basic conclusions about Petrov, his employer the "Memorial" society, the politicized nature of the study of Soviet history, and historical objectivity.

## **Serov's Lies**

Serov's report dated June 29, 1956 is comprised of twelve paragraphs. We begin by discussing the assertions in each paragraph. Next we examine in depth those claims of Serov's concerning which we now have independent evidence. We conclude with the evidence that Serov himself, and one of those he names, Lobov, have previously been shown to have lied. In the text of this article we have reproduced quotations from Serov's report only when absolutely necessary. In other cases the reader should refer as needed to the attached translation of Serov's report.

### **Paragraph By Paragraph**

The assertions in Serov's first paragraph are all a bluff. He cites no evidence to support them. Serov claims that "[d]ocuments in the KGB archive suggest..." But Petrov had access to this archive. If Petrov he found any such documents he would have cited them. *Something* may well exist, for Serov doesn't claim that the "documents" *prove* anything, but merely "suggest." This constitutes an admission that he cannot prove Beria and Kobulov planned to murder Radek and Sokol'nikov.

Second paragraph: no evidence is given to support what Serov claims about Kubatkin and Sharok. Petrov gives none either.

Third paragraph: No evidence whatsoever is cited to support Serov's claims about Sokol'nikov's murder.

Fourth paragraph: According to this and the following paragraph Sokol'nikov was murdered by a fellow prisoner named P.M. Kotov. No evidence is given to support Serov's statement that Kotov was really Lobov.

The fifth paragraph is evidently a quotation from a real document, a transcript of an interrogation of Kotov, relating how he argued with and then killed Sokol'nikov.

Sixth paragraph: No evidence is cited of the involvement of Kubatkin, as Serov alleged.



Seventh paragraph: Once again we evidently have a quotation from a real document: the report of Radek's death at the hands of a Trotskyite named Varezchnikov. It says nothing about any "plan." It is of interest that Serov did not claim Varezchnikov was really "Stepanov. " This elaboration was added some years later. This is logical since, as time progressed, former NKVD men spun more and more elaborate falsehoods at the request of Khrushchev-era investigators, as we shall see.

The eight paragraph is comprised of falsehoods concerning the careers of Kubatkin and Sharok. We will examine it in detail below.

Paragraph nine contains no evidence that Arnol'd or Stroilov ever "renounced their confessions." Had they done so, why would "Beria and Kobulov" have waited until September 1941, when the Nazis were closing in rather than employing "a specially designed plan" to have them killed, as they allegedly had done to Radek and Sokol'nikov 28 months earlier? Conversely, if Arnol'd and Stroilov had "renounced their confessions" and could be safely left to live, why not act the same way with Radek and Sokol'nikov?

In this same paragraph Serov lies about the shootings at the Orlov prison in September, 1941. Evidence about this incident was published in 1990. We will examine it below.

## **Ovchinnikov**

The concluding paragraphs, ten through twelve, concern former NKVD man Ovchinnikov. We examine them in detail below in the light of primary sources now available.

Serov wrote:

[[cyrillic]]Определенный интерес в этом же плане представляет и судьба быв. начальника Прокопьевского горотдела НКВД Овчинникова, у которого на связи находился Арнольд.

Овчинников в декабре 1940 года был осужден Военным Трибуналом Западносибирского округа к 10 годам лишения

свободы. Находясь под стражей, он рассказывал своим сокамерникам о фальсификации дела по обвинению Арнольда и заявлял о своем намерении написать об этом заявление.

24 марта 1941 года без наличия каких-либо дополнительных материалов дело Овчинникова было пересмотрено и приговором Военного Трибунала он был осужден к расстрелу.

The fate of the former Head of the Prokop'evsky City Department of the NKVD Ovchinnikov is of particular interest in this same plan, with whom Arnol'd was in contact.

In December 1940, Ovchinnikov was convicted by the Military Tribunal of the West Siberian District to 10 years imprisonment. While in custody, he told his cellmates about the falsification of the case against Arnol'd and announced his intention to write a statement about it.

On March 24, 1941, without the presence of any additional materials, the case of Ovchinnikov was reviewed and by verdict of the Military Tribunal, he was sentenced to death.

We now have a number of primary source documents concerning Ovchinnikov. They permit us to determine that Serov is lying here.

- a. The report of trial and death sentence of Ovchinnikov, dated March 24, 1941.
- b. A brief review of his case dated December 19, 1955.
- c. A review of Ovchinnikov's case dated January 6, 1956. This appears to be the review available to Serov himself.

In addition, we have:

- d. A memoir about Ovchinnikov's crimes from one of his victims, L.I. Medvedeva, written down in May 1989 in Tomsk.

Finally, we have a statement about Ovchinnkov in the work of two highly anticommunist and anti-Stalin researchers, Junge and Binner, in their work *Kak Terror Stal 'Bol'shim'* ("How the Terror Became 'Great'"). Junge and Binner cite repression statistics from Tomsk, where Ovchinnikov was chief of the NKVD in 1937-1938, to demonstrate the massive illegal repression and murders of which Ovchinnikov was guilty and for which he was tried and executed after Beria took over as People's Commissar of the NKVD.

As Serov reported Ovchinnikov was tried and convicted on December 2, 1940 and sentenced to 10 years (Doc. b.). Serov may have taken them from this very document, as the date and sentence are not given in Doc. a.

Document a. gives the fullest details about Ovchinnkov. As chief of the Tomsk city NKVD he had been convicted of many instances of torture, forcing false confessions, false arrests, false imprisonment; and falsifying evidence leading to death sentences against innocent people. Document d. recounts one survivor's memories of Ovchinnikov's depredations more than fifty years after they took place.

Document a. relates the fact that Ovchinnikov was sentenced under article 193-17 b. of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR — "abuse of his official position under exceptionally aggravating circumstances"<sup>1</sup>, which permitted imposition of the death sentence. Ovchinnikov was sentenced to death on March 24, 1941 and shot on May 19, 1941.

<sup>1</sup> [[cyrillic]] "Злоупотребление служебным положением при особо отягчающих обстоятельствах."

The review of Ovchinnikov's case dated January 6, 1956 details his connection with Arnol'd and Shestov, and repeats the summary of his crimes. It adds that he engaged in "anti-Soviet agitation among the other prisoners" while awaiting trial. The review document states that Ovchinnikov had confessed his guilt "in part" but that the court also possessed witness and documentary evidence against him.

According to Document b., dated three weeks before Document c., Ovchinnikov was sentenced on December 2, 1940 to 10 years in a correctional camp and again on March 19-24, 1941, to death. This review

makes it clear why there were two trials. In the first Ovchinnikov was convicted under article 58-10 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR, while on March 19-24 1941 he was convicted under article 193-17 b. Article 58-10 dealt with "espionage," including giving or gathering state secrets to other governments, counterrevolutionary organizations, or private persons. Unless it entailed exceptionally serious consequences for the state, it required a sentence "not less than three years."<sup>2</sup>

[[[cyrillic]]]2 Article 58 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR 1926 version, at [http://ru.wikisource.org/wiki/Статья\\_58\\_Уголовного\\_Кодекса\\_РСФСР/вариант\\_1926\\_года](http://ru.wikisource.org/wiki/Статья_58_Уголовного_Кодекса_РСФСР/вариант_1926_года)

So Ovchinnikov was tried twice for different offenses and was executed after his second conviction. Documents a. and c. mention only the latter, death sentence. This disproves Serov's statement that

[[[cyrillic]]]24 марта 1941 года без на[Д]ічия каких-ЛШбо доп[о]м[о]ш[т]ельных материалов дело Овчинникова было пересмотрено и приговором Военного Трибунала он был осужден к расстрелу.

On March 24, 1941, **without the presence of any additional materials**, the case of Ovchinnikov was reviewed and by verdict of the Military Tribunal, he was sentenced to death. [Emphasis added, GF]

Serov claims that the second trial was not in fact a trial at all but simply a "review" to punish Ovchinnikov for threatening "to write a statement" about the fact that the case against Arnol'd was supposedly "a falsification." We've already seen that this is false. Documents b. and c. make it clear that the March 1941 court action was not a "review" but a new trial, and that "additional evidence" was indeed brought forward for the new charge.

The NKVD-KGB information about Ovchinnikov's atrocities is independently corroborated by Document d., Medvedeva's account of 1989 written during the Gorbachev years when the search was on for horrors carried out during Stalin's time, and published in Tomsk itself in 2004. No one at either time had any motive to disprove any Khrushchev-era attack on Stalin — quite the contrary.

We include Medvedeva's account here for the sake of completeness. By itself, without any corroboration, it might be considered unreliable given the passage of more than fifty years between the events described and the writing of the memoir account. But it is completely consistent with the information from the official documents we have about Ovchinnikov.

Junge and Binner have this to say about Ovchinnikov.

[[cyrillic]]В насколько высокой степени операция по приказу No 00447 маркирует собой грань в истории катастрофического 1937 года, показывает следующая статистика арестов и приговоров в Томске и его окрестностях (97) начальник НКВД которого И. В. Овчинников был одним из самых жестоких чекистов во время Большого Террора.<sup>3</sup>

The high degree to which the operation accord to order No. 00447 marks the boundary in the history of the disastrous year 1937 is shown by the following statistics of arrests and sentences in Tomsk and its environs (97) where the head of the NKVD, I.V. Ovchinnikov, was one of the most brutal security officers during the Great Terror.

<sup>3</sup> Mark IUnge, Rol'f Binner. *Kak terror stal 'bol'shim'. Sekretnyi prikaz No. 00447 i tekhnologia ego ispolnenii*. Moscow: AIR0-20, 2003, p. 36.

We have information about Ovchinnikov from several mutually independent sources. Is it credible that a person such as Ovchinnikov was would have threatened to write a report about a falsified case? And to whom would Ovchinnikov have written such a report? He himself had falsified many cases, causing the imprisonment and deaths of many innocent persons. This was the conclusion not only of the NKVD tribunal in 1941, but of the KGB review of January 1956.

The conclusion is inescapable: Serov was lying. Ovchinnikov was executed after a second trial on additional charges. It is simply not credible that he would have complained about false charges against Arnol'd.

Serov unquestionably had access to the 1941, 1955 and 1956 documents and more. Therefore, Serov deliberately lied about the Ovchinnikov-Arnol'd

situation. There is also no reason to believe Serov's claim that Arnol'd had retracted his confession. We will see this confirmed again when we discuss the Orlov Prison execution of September 1941, below.

### **Kubatkin's and Sharok's careers**

Neither Kubatkin nor Sharok "had worked up to this time as ordinary employees of the NKVD apparatus," as Serov claimed. We have our evidence for this from Nikita Petrov's own two books on the NKVD: *Who Led the NKVD 1934-1941. A Handbook*. (Moscow: "Memorial," 1999), and *Who Led the Organs of State Security 1941-1954. A Handbook*. (Moscow: "Memorial," 2010).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> [[сyrillic]]Кто руководИШ НКВД 1934-1941. Справочник. (М. «Мемориал» 1999); and Кто руководИШ органами госбезопасности 1941-1954. Справочник. (М.: «Мемориал» 2010

Kubatkin is listed in the earlier volume. According to the account in Petrov's own book, by 1939 Kubatkin was a rising star in the NKVD. He had not been a "riadovoi, " or rank-and-file officer of the NKVD, since 1930. In May 1939 he had already been assistant to the chief of the special division of the Odessa ob last' division of the GPU (1934-5); chief of the Frunze raion division of the NKVD (Odessa oblast'); chief of the UGB of the UNKVD of Odessa oblast' (1936 — March 1937); student at the central school of the NKVD of the USSR from March to August 15, 1937; chief of the 1st section of the 4th division of the GUGB NKVD USSR after August 15, 1937; chief of the section of the 4th division of the GUGP of the 1st directorate of the NKVD of the USSR 1938-1939; and secretary of the party committee of the GUGB of the NKVD of the USSR from 1939 until June 1939.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Kubatkin, Piotr Nikolaevich. In Petrov 1999, 255. At <http://www.memo.ru/history/NKVD/kto/biogr/gb261.htm>

A short career biography of Sharok is given in the second of Petrov's volumes on NKVD personnel. Sharok was not an "ordinary employee of the NKVD apparatus" either. At the time of Sokol'nikov's and Radek's murders

Sharok was assistant chief of the 1st division of the 2nd section of the GUGB of the NKVD of the USSR (November 1938 to October 5, 1939).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Sharok, Grigori Fiodorovich. In Petrov 2010, 919-920.

Both Kubatkin and Sharok did receive promotions during 1939: Kubatkin to chief of the directorate of the NKVD of Moscow oblast' in June 1939; Sharok to assistant commissar of the NKVD of the Kazakh SSR (Republic) on October 5, 1939. There is no indication that these promotions had anything to do with the murders of Sokol'nikov and Radek. Moreover, strictly speaking, Serov did not in fact claim that they had! Serov wrote only that "shortly after" the murders [[cyrillic]]("вскоре после этого") they were given new appointments. This is not true either. Sharok's promotion in October 1939 cannot be described as "shortly after" the murders. And if these promotions were related, why did Sharok's come four months after Kubatkin's?

We know Serov was lying when he described Kubatkin and Sharok as "ordinary employees of the NKVD." Serov's report presents no evidence for any of his other assertions about this supposed "plan."

### **The Orlov Prison Executions Of 1941**

In his report Serov wrote:

[[cyrillic]]Другие осужденные по этому делу Строилов и Арнольд, также отказавшиеся от своих показаний, до осени 1941 года содержались в Орловской тюрьме НКВД, а 11 сентября 1941 года по заочному приговору Военной Коллегии Верховного Суда СССР, вынесенному без каких-либо оснований, в числе других заключенных были расстреляны.

Other convicted in this case, Stroilov and Arnol'd, who also refused to testify, were kept in the Orel prison of the NKVD until the autumn of 1941, and on September 11, 1941, in absentia, by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, issued without any justification, were shot along with other prisoners.

Arnol'd and Stroilov were not singled out at all, much less for supposedly "renouncing their confessions." They were among 170 prisoners previously convicted of serious crimes who were shot at the Orlov prison as the German armies advanced on September 11, 1941, evidently for continuing anti-Soviet activity. We know this was the charge from the documents published in an official Gorbachev-era Communist Party journal in 1990.<sup>7</sup> Beria, commissar of the NKVD, had been informed by the heads of the directorate of prisons, Bashtakov and Nikol'skii, that at least 76 of the prisoners were carrying out anti-Soviet agitation and planning to escape, with the advance of German troops (Orlov was actually taken by the Germans on October 3, 1941). On September 8, 1941 the Plenum of the Soviet Supreme Court met, reconsidered Arnol'd's case in which he was charged under Article 58-10 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR (he had originally been convicted of violating Articles 58-8 and 58-11 and received a sentence often years), and resented him to be executed.

<sup>7</sup> "Tragediia v medvedevskom lesu. O rasstrele politzakliuchennykh Orlovskoi tiur'my." ("The tragedy in the Medvedevsk woods. The shooting of political prisoners of the Orlov prison.") *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* No. 11, 1990, pp. 124 - 131.

We can be reasonably certain that subversive activities were in fact going on because Dr. D.D. Pletnev, sentenced to 25 years imprisonment at the third Moscow Trial of March 1938, wrote about those activities in a letter, one portion of which has been published. On January 15, 1941, in a letter to , Pletnev complained about his prison conditions and stated:

[[cyrillic]]Я коченею от окружающей меня лжи и стужи среди пигмеев и червей, ведущих свою подрывную работу.<sup>8</sup>

I am numb from the lies and cold that surround me among the pygmies and worms that are carrying on their subversive work.

<sup>8</sup> *TsK KPSS* No. 1, 1989, p. 119, col. 2.

That means that Pletnev's final sentence in this letter fragment in part confirms Beria's allegation of later that same year — that some prisoners in



the Orlov Prison were in fact engaging in a repetition of the "subversive" activity for which they were imprisoned in the first place.

The 1990 article confirms that Arnol'd was convicted in absentia on September 8, 1941 along with the others. It proves that there was a "basis" for their re-sentencing to death — the alleged subversive activity — and that Arnol'd and Stroilov were not executed for "retracting their confessions" or, indeed, for anything related to their trial at all. Other Moscow Trial defendants were among those executed at the same time; no one has claimed that they retracted their confessions.

Serov cites no evidence that Arnol'd or Stroilov had renounced their trial confessions, and Petrov did not find any.

### **Serov's Lies During Khrushchev's Time**

Matthew Lenoe<sup>9</sup> gained access to many documents related to the investigation of the Kirov assassination and the Khrushchev-era attempt to blame it all on Stalin. According to Lenoe:

...the Khrushchev supporters in charge of the investigation, including KGB chief Ivan Serov, sought to collect as much material as possible incriminating Stalin. This is what Khrushchev wanted, so that he could discredit his political rivals...

The 1960-1961 investigation run by the Party Control Commission (KPK) was aimed explicitly at inculcating Stalin in the Kirov murder. (7-8)

<sup>9</sup> Matthew Lenoe, *The Kirov Murder and Soviet History* New Haven: Yale U.P. 2010. Page references to Lenoe are to this text.

Lenoe reveals that Serov destroyed some evidence and withheld other evidence in order to construct a false scenario of Kirov's murder (591-2):

If the official charges in the first two trials — that former Zinoviev supporters / 592 / had conspired to murder Kirov — were entirely

bogus, then the indictments in all of the succeeding show trials collapsed. ... But if there was some truth to the charge that Zinovievites conspired to kill Kirov, then that preserved the possibility of arguing that the latter charges were also valid, at least in part. Therefore Serov and Rudenko ... chose to make a clear-cut argument that Nikolaev had had no relationship at all with the ex-Zinoviev supporters convicted in the trial of the "Leningrad Center.

It appears that Serov or his boss had thought through this strategy, to deny any connection at all between Nikolaev and the Zinovievites, even before the "Secret Speech." On January 27, 1956 the KGB destroyed central records on the case file "Svoiak," the all-union surveillance operation against the Zinovievites. It seems likely that "Svoiak" contained more evidence than Serov wanted Molotov to see, either of counterrevolutionary talk among former Zinovievites and/or of Nikolaev's connections with the accused in the "Leningrad Center." Serov concealed other evidence of connections between Nikolaev and the ex-Zinovievites Kotolynov, Antonov, and Shatsky. The excerpts from Nikolaev's diaries that he released to the Molotov commission in April 1956 contained no references to these men. But we know from later releases of data that Nikolaev did mention all three in his diaries. Serov presumably feared that Molotov would construe such connections as evidence of criminal conspiracy.

At the same time the Molotov commission was debating these issues, Rudenko, Serov, and KPK officials were already taking actions based on the assumption that the charges in the show trials were false...

Serov's report<sup>10</sup> (595-599) is full of outright lies. We will cite only a few of them here. Serov:

On March 13, 1938 the Military Collegium ... found Bukharin, Rykov, Yagoda, and other accused ... guilty in carrying out the villainous murder of S .M. Kirov ....

<sup>10</sup> This report is in English translation in Leno 595-599. The original Russian text has not been released by Leno or by his publisher, Yale University Press.

This statement of Serov's is a lie. The court's verdict says nothing of the kind. Bukharin and Rykov were convicted of entirely different crimes. Iagoda was convicted only of "giving special instructions to his accomplices working in the Leningrad Administration of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs not to hinder the perpetration of the crime." (796-7)

Serov claimed:

Yagoda in essence recanted his earlier testimony with regard to the participation of the Rightists in the murder of Kirov ... Rykov and Bukharin, who supposedly made the decision to carry out this terrorist act ... categorically denied ... (598)

This is false, as Serov had to know. Iagoda did not deny but rather confirmed the role of the Rights in Kirov's murder. Anyone who reads the trial transcript can see that Iagoda only denied that he himself had played any active role in, or had specific prior knowledge of, the plot to kill Kirov. Iagoda did insist, however, that he had given instructions to his subordinates not to hinder any such attempt as might be made. That is, Iagoda denied he was an accomplice to the murder, but agreed that he was an accessory. During the trial Prosecutor Vyshinskii and Iagoda argued at some length over precisely this issue. As for Rykov and Bukharin, neither of them was charged with making the decision to kill Kirov.

### **Lobov Lied**

Serov's report on the Radek-Sokol'nikov murders states that P.M. Lobov was one of the participants. However, neither Serov nor Petrov offer any direct testimony by Lobov to this effect. Even if they had done so, however, that testimony could not be accepted, for Lenoë establishes that Lobov lied during the 1950s and 1960s — no doubt because Serov insisted he do so.

According to Lenoë, in 1956 Lobov's testimony was in accord with the conclusions of the March 1938 Moscow Trial. But by 1960 Lobov was giving false testimony that supported Party Control Commission member

Ol'ga Shatunovskaia's preconceived idea that Stalin had been behind Kirov's murder:

Another witness deployed by Klimov was P. M. Lobov, who had murdered Grigory Sokolnikov in 1939 for Beria.<sup>11</sup> Lobov's post-Stalin testimony showed extensive embellishment and grew more florid over time. Thus, in 1956 he testified that at the Kolyma labor camp Zaporozhets had told him that Nikolaev had been taken into custody once and that Yagoda had ordered him freed ... In 1960 Lobov went much farther, stating that he had personally interrogated Nikolaev, who intimated that he had high-level connections. He also claimed that at Kolyma Zaporozhets had told him that Stalin himself had ordered Nikolaev's release. This was precisely the smoking gun that Shatunovskaya and the other investigators needed to accuse Stalin of Kirov's murder. **Lobov delivered this evidence, which he had not mentioned in 1956, very conveniently for the KPK [Party Control Commission] in October 1960.** (622-3; evidence added, GF)

<sup>11</sup> Lenoë's "evidence" for Lobov's murder of Sokol'nikov is the same report by Serov that we are examining here.

Lenoë concludes that Lobov's testimony is unreliable:

Against this is the unanimous testimony of credible Leningrad NKVD officers who survived the Terror (credible meaning minus P.M. Lobov and P.P. Petrovsky)...

### **Serov's Report: Conclusion**

Serov's report is a falsification. We can confidently assert that because every statement in it that can be verified — cross-checked against other evidence we now have — is false.

The only primary source evidence quoted in Serov's report are statements from NKVD reports that Sokol'nikov was murdered by Kotov and Radek by the Trotskyist Varezhnikov. Neither Serov nor Petrov cites any evidence

that Kotov was really Lobov. Evidently even Serov did not claim that Varezchnikov was really an NKVD man named I.I. Stepanov, as Petrov does.

With the collapse of Serov's report as evidence that Stalin had Radek and Sokol'nikov murdered the main prop supporting Petrov's article has been destroyed as well. However, Petrov adds yet more details to the story, so we will proceed to study what Petrov wrote. Most of the assertions Petrov has added himself are falsehoods as well. We will examine them next.

### **Petrov's Lies**

Besides appending Serov's article to his chapter in his book Petrov also reprinted it in his own book on Serov in 2008. But Petrov makes additions of his own to the story. Most of them are also falsehoods, like Serov's. The rest of this article examines them.

### **Stalin's "Vengefulness"**

Petrov states:

[[cyrillic]]Но мог ли Сталин оставить в живых своих многолетних критиков и противников? Его мстительность вошла в легенду.

But could Stalin have left his perennial critics and opponents alive?  
His vengefulness has become legendary.

Petrov provides no evidence that Stalin was "vengeful" nor does he refer to anybody else's evidence. This appears to be an example of "weasel words," of implying something that is not actually stated, since the sentence "His vengefulness has become legendary" is not quite an assertion that Stalin was, in fact, vengeful — only that he is assumed to have been such.

A commission formed immediately after the 20th Party Congress...

Petrov states:

[[cyrillic]]Расследование обстоятельств убийства Радека и Сокольников началось сразу после XX съезда, когда создали комиссию по изучению материалов «Московских процессов» 1936-1938 гг. В архиве КГБ были подняты и изучены все материалы, связанные с процессами. Вывод комиссии однозначен — все показательные процессы 1936-1938 гг. сфальсифицированы.

The investigation into the circumstances of the murder of Radek and Sokolnikov began immediately after the XX Party Congress, when a commission was set up to study the materials of the Moscow Trials of 1936-1938., All materials in the KGB archives related to the Trials were taken up and studied. The conclusion of the commission was unambiguous — all the Show Trials of 1936-1938 were falsified.

This is completely false. The first such commission was the so-called "Molotov Commission." As we have seen, Lenoë discusses in some detail how Serov, Khrushchev's man, withheld evidence from and lied to Molotov.

Despite Serov's withholding of evidence the Molotov Commission did not conclude that "all the show trials of 1936-1938 were falsified" as Petrov claims. On the contrary, its report of December 10 1956 did not reject the verdicts of any of the Moscow trials! The report refused to review the cases of the major defendants in the Moscow Trials. Though the report accepted some of the criticisms that Khrushchev's men, aided by Serov, vigorously promoted, it explicitly refused to reconsider the three Moscow Trials of 1936, 1937 and 1938. The commission's report concluded as follows:

[[cyrillic]]Комиссия приходит к выводам, что оснований для пересмотра дел в отношении Бухарина, Рыкова [суд 1938-го], Зиновьева, Каменева, Евдокимова [суд 1936-го], Пятакова, Радека [суд 1937-го], Раковского, Ягоды, Крестинского [суд 1938-го], Сокольников, Серебрякова [суд 1937-го ], Залуцкого, Сафарова [осуждены в 1935-ом в связи с убийством Кирова], Бакаева и Смирнова И. Н.[суд 1936-го] не имеется, поскольку они на протяжении многих лет возглавляли антисоветскую борьбу, направленную против строительства социализма в СССР. В отношении же других осужденных по этим процессам Комиссия

считает возможным дела пересмотреть персонально в отношении каждого.<sup>12</sup>

The Commission concludes that there are no grounds for reviewing cases against Bukharin, Rykov [the trial of 1938], Zinoviev, Kamenev, Evdokimov [the trial of 1936], Pyatakov, Radek [the trial of 1937], Rakovsky, Yagoda, Krestinsky [trial of 1938], Sokolnikov, Serebryakov [trial of 1937], Zalutsky, Safarov [convicted in 1935 in connection with the murder of Kirov], Bakayev and Smimov I.N. [trial 1936], because for many years they headed the anti-Soviet struggle directed against the construction of socialism in the USSR. In relation to others convicted in these trials the Commission considers it possible to review cases individually for each.

It is not clear how Petrov thought he could get away with such an obvious falsehood. The Molotov Commission is well known, at least to historians of the period. Its final report is even available online.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo. Febral' 1956- nachalo 80-kh godov. T. 2. Moskva: "Materik", 2003. (RKEB 2) 207. Identifying information in square brackets is mine.*

<sup>13</sup> At

[http://www.perpetrator2004.narod.ru/documents/kirov/Molotov\\_Commission\\_Memo.doc](http://www.perpetrator2004.narod.ru/documents/kirov/Molotov_Commission_Memo.doc)

## **The Testimony Of Fedotov And Matusov**

Petrov writes:

[[cyrillic]]Как пояснили вызванные в ЦК КПСС в 1961-ом бывшие руководящие работники секретно-политического отдела ГУГБ НКВД П.В. Федотов и Я.Н. Матусов:

« ...Оперативно-чекистские отделения при политизоляторах свои донесения о поведении Радека и Сокольникова и им подобных лиц направляли непосредственно в адрес лично Берии, который

их посылал или докладывал Сталину, что было работникам отдела известно как со слов Кобулова, так и по смыслу, сколько помнится, его письменных указаний на донесениях политизоляторов.»

Причем оба, и Федотов и Матусов, утверждали, что «убийство Радека и Сокольникова было совершено по указанию Сталина.»

As the former leading officials of the secret-political department of the GUGB NKVD<sup>14</sup>, P.V. Fedotov and Ya.N. Matusov, summoned to the CPSU Central Committee in 1961, explained:

"... The operational-NKVD branches at political isolators<sup>15</sup> sent their reports on the behavior of Radek and Sokolnikov and similar persons directly to Beria personally, who sent or reported to Stalin what the department employees knew both from the words of Kobulov and from the sense, as far as I can remember, of his written instructions on the reports of the political isolators."

Moreover, both Fedotov and Matusov claimed that "the murder of Radek and Sokolnikov was committed under the orders of Stalin."

<sup>14</sup> Main Directorate of State Security of the NKVD (NKVD = People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs).

<sup>15</sup> Prisons for prisoners convicted of crimes against the State.

Perhaps Fedotov and Matusov did say something like this. But we know that Serov and the Shvernik Commission were not looking for the truth, but to support Khrushchev's preconceived position that everybody was innocent. (We discuss the Shvernik Commission briefly below).

Even if genuine, this is hearsay at best. In any case, no testimony should simply be "believed" even if it is not hearsay, as this is. Would Petrov advocate "believing" the testimony of the defendants at the Moscow Trials?

Furthermore, neither Fedotov nor Matusov was in a position to know what Beria did with any reports sent to him or what Stalin did or did not order.



Fedotov, Matusov, and other former NKVD-KGB employees had plenty of motive to say whatever Serov wanted them to. Khrushchev had overseen the trial and execution of a number of KGB men who had worked under Beria and had refused to tell Khrushchev's investigators what they wanted to hear.

### **Stalin's Inscription On A Drawing**

Petrov writes:

[[cyrillic]]Позднее, в 1940-е, Сталин сделал косвенное признание и даже указал мотивы убийства Радека.

Later, in the 1940s, Stalin indirectly confessed to and even indicated the motive for Radek's murder.

The inscription, apparently in Stalin's hand, says:

[[cyrillic]]«Рыжий паршивый Радек. Не ссал бы против ветра, не был бы злой, был бы живой. И. Сталин.»

"Radek, the lousy redhead. If he had not pissed against the wind, if he had not been unkind, he would be alive. J. Stalin"

Objectively speaking, Stalin's words here could never be interpreted as an admission of anything except, perhaps, some lingering affection for Radek. They could just as easily be evidence that Stalin regretted Radek's death! This inscription only demonstrates that Stalin knew Radek was dead and blamed it at least partly on Radek himself.

### **Radek's alleged denunciation of the Moscow Trials**

According to Petrov

[[cyrillic]]Конечно, Радек вел с сокамерниками разговоры о том, что все «московские процессы» — выдумка.

Of course, Radek talked with his cellmates about how all the "Moscow Trials" were fabrications.

Petrov cites no evidence, even of a hearsay nature, to support this statement. Even if he did, that would not mean that Radek really did so, much less that the Trials were actually a fiction.

Evidence from the Trotsky Archive and other sources make it clear that the trials were not a fabrication by the Stalin leadership at all. A few examples:

\* We know that the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" really did exist, because Trotsky and Sedov wrote to each other about it (Harvard Trotsky Archive).

Not incidentally, this also proves that the Gorbachev-era "rehabilitation" reports and related documents are false, since they deny the existence of the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" which we know did exist.

Moreover, the Gorbachev-era Soviet party leadership knew this too. We know this for certain because Arch Getty's article noting the proof of the bloc's existence was actually translated into Russian and published in the Communist Party journal *Voprosy Istorii KPSS* in 1991.

\* At the 1937 Moscow Trial Radek told the precise truth about the letter he claimed he had received from Trotsky in the early months of 1932. We know this because the return receipt of this letter to Radek noting the date of delivery is preserved in the Harvard Trotsky Archive. Getty's article notes this fact too.

It would be a great coincidence if the only true statements made by trial defendants were precisely those we can now verify independently. This suggests that other statements made during that trial by Radek, at least, may also be true as well.

\* Thanks to the work of the late American researcher Alvin Coox we have other non-Soviet evidence of the Right-Trotskyite and the military conspiracies. Coox interviewed former officers of the Japanese army who had been assigned to work with NKVD defector General Genrikh S.

Liushkov, who deserted to the Japanese army across the Manchurian border on June 13, 1938. In his published articles, written while he was working for the propaganda section of the Japanese army, Liushkov denied the existence of the conspiracies. But he confirmed the existence of these same conspiracies privately to his Japanese handlers. They in turn reported this to Coox, who was baffled by it.

It is possible that former NKVD men may have told Serov's men that Radek denounced the trials as fabrications. But that would only mean that they were telling Serov what he wanted to hear.

### **"A Document From The Archive Of The Shvernik Commission"**

This document basically only adds to Serov's report the detail that, supposedly, the Trotskyist Varezchnikov was really

[[cyrillic]]... Степанов И.И., бывший комендант НКВД Чечено-Ингушской АССР, арестованный в феврале 1939 года за серьезные должностные преступления. В ноябре того же года по указанию Берия Степанов освобожден из-под стражи. В постановлении о прекращении дела указано, что он выполнил «специальное задание," имеющее важное государственное значение."

... I.I. Stepanov, former commandant of the NKVD of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, arrested in February 1939 for serious misconduct in office. In November of the same year, at the direction of Beria, Stepanov was released from custody. The order to dismiss the case stated that he had fulfilled "special assignment of great importance to the State."

There is no evidence — not even hearsay evidence — to support any of the statements here.

The Shvernik Report itself contained false information designed to help Khrushchev blame Stalin for various crimes. For example, it states:

[[cyrillic]]Никакого «Антисоветского право-троцкистского блока» в действительности не существовало...

In reality, no "Anti-Soviet Right-Trotskyite Bloc" existed. ...

But thanks to the Trotsky-Sedov correspondence in the Harvard Trotsky Archive we know that such a bloc did indeed exist.<sup>16</sup> The Shvernik Commission does not mention Varezhnikov — Stepanov in its brief discussion of the Radek-Sokol'nikov murders but only refers to unnamed

[[cyrillic]]... специально подосланными лицами из числа бывших сотрудников НКВД, отбывавших наказания за политические и должностные преступления.<sup>17</sup>

... persons — former NKVD officials — specially sent, who had served sentences for political and official crimes.

Petrov states:

[[cyrillic]]Рядовым исполнителям — Степанову и Лобову — в награду даровали свободу.

The rank-and-file perpetrators, Stepanov and Lobov, were granted their freedom as a reward.

Once again Petrov gives no evidence to support this statement. According to a report by employees of the Soviet Procuracy dated June 14, 1990 Lobov was sentenced in 1939 to 3 years exile in Kazakhstan. This is a penal sentence, not "freedom."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> RKEB 2, 630.

<sup>17</sup> RKEB 2, 568.

<sup>18</sup> RKEB 3, 468.

There is no entry for either Lobov or Stepanov in either of Petrov's lengthy books on the personnel of the NKVD. According to Petrov Stepanov had been commandant of the NKVD of the Checheno-Ingush ASSR. This position was prominent enough to qualify him for an entry in these large volumes. Lobov's role in the Kirov case should have qualified him for an

entry too. Petrov also omitted Ovchinnikov from these works. Yet Ovchinnikov had been head of the Tomsk NKVD.

The very brief biographical note on Stepanov that Petrov gives on page 53 simply states that

[[cyrillic]]с февраля по ноябрю 1939 г. находился в заключении.

He was in custody from February to November 1939.

Petrov gives no source for this information. Nor does he give any reason for excluding Stepanov's biographical sketch from his two volumes.

As for Lobov, Petrov's short biography of him on the same page stops at his two-year sentence in 1935 and then skips to 1961:

[[cyrillic]]В 1961 г. Лобов был еще жив и вызывался в ЦК КПСС для дачи объяснений.

In 1961 Lobov was still alive and was summoned to the Central Committee of the CPSU in order to give his explanation.

A two-year sentence in January 1935 would mean that Lobov was free by 1937 and so could not have been "rewarded by his freedom" in 1939. In any case we already know that Lobov was not rewarded but exiled in 1939. Petrov's story falls apart at every turn.

Petrov obviously had some source for this biographical information on Stepanov and Lobov. So why did he not include them in one of his two books? We have already determined that the available information about Ovchinnikov disproves Serov's report. Therefore it cannot be an accident that Petrov omits Ovchinnikov, a significant figure in the NKVD, from his two bulky volumes while Petrov's short biographic note on Ovchinnikov (also on page 53) stops with 1938, the year before the murders of Radek and Sokol'nikov. Might it also be the case that the full details of Stepanov's and Lobov's biographies contradict Petrov's story, as in the case of Ovchinnikov?

## **Petrov's False Conclusion**

As we have seen, in both his Novaia Gazeta article and his more recent book Petrov makes the bold claim:

[[ Cyrillic ]] Было неопровержимо доказано, что за убийством стоял лично Сталин.

It has been irrefutably proven that Stalin was personally behind the murder.

The present article has established that Petrov's statement is false. In reality the opposite is true: there is no evidence whatever to support Petrov's claim. A statement that is unsupported by any evidence must be considered unproven. A statement that is based on falsified evidence must itself be considered false.

Our conclusion is therefore inevitable: Stalin was not guilty of the murders of Sokol'nikov and Radek. This tale is a fabrication by Khrushchev-era investigators, led by Serov, who were constructing this and many other false accusations against Stalin. This falsehood has been perpetuated by Petrov for the same purpose: to slander Stalin.

In this article we have exposed the falsehoods in Serov's report. Petrov could have done the same thing. Indeed, had he so chosen Petrov could have done it quicker and better, since he has much better access to archives and primary sources. But rather than perform the historian's function of verification Petrov chose to compound Serov's lies with yet more falsehoods of his own invention.

## **Conclusions — Nikita Petrov**

Petrov has knowingly falsified evidence to blame a person — in this case, Joseph Stalin — for two murders of which he was not guilty. It is ironic that Petrov, a leading representative and researcher for a self-styled "human rights" organization, is guilty of what he and other anticommunists accuse Stalin of doing.

The goal of historiography and historians is to discover the truth about the past, as established by the best evidence and reasoning. But some historians do not try to discover the truth. These dishonest historians begin with a preconceived conclusion and then search for anything that might pass as evidence in support of that preconceived conclusion. People who do this are not really historians at all. They are propagandists attempting to disguise themselves as historians so their readers will wrongly believe that what they are reading is an attempt to discover the truth.

Those who call themselves historians but do not strive to be objective: to question their own preconceived ideas; to remain devoted to discovering and reporting the truth even when that truth contradicts their own cherished ideas — they are not really historians at all. They are publicists for some cause who have adopted the disguise of a historian, the better to deceive their readers. What they write is not history but "propaganda with footnotes."

Petrov is one of these. This has important consequences for all of us who read what he writes.

\* Nothing Petrov writes can be accepted, even provisionally, as true. On the contrary: we must see his work for what it really is: a strained attempt to shore up his own preconceived ideas while disguising this attempt as historiography — that is, as an attempt to discover the truth — which it most definitely is not.

\* We should never assume that Petrov is using his evidence honestly. His work is useless as a source of reliable historical information. Everything Petrov writes, every statement and footnote, must be checked and verified, because he cannot be trusted to use them honestly. Since this is impossible for all but specialists, it means that there is no reason for most people to read Petrov's work at all.

### **The "Memorial" Society**

There are many so-called historians who falsely claims to be discovering the truth while in fact writing anticommunist propaganda. Often these

fraudulent historians are based at prestigious institutions such as Oxford University, Yale University, the Humboldt University (Berlin), the Hoover Institution (Stanford, CA), and many others. Petrov is a top official in the Russian Memorial Society and has been its vice-chair since 1990. It is his prominence as a leader of the Memorial Society that accounts for his frequent appearance in the news media and his columns in *Novaia Gazeta*, a newspaper jointly owned by Mikhail Gorbachev and billionaire "entrepreneur" Aleksandr Lebedev.

"Memorial" presents itself as "an international historical, educational, human rights, and charitable organization." This self-description is false. In reality "Memorial" is an organization devoted to the spread of anticommunist falsehoods. It is funded by organizations such as the Soros, Ford, Jackson, and Guggenheim Foundations. Explicitly ideological anticommunist organizations funding "Memorial" include the National Endowment for Democracy (USA) and the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation. It also receives funds from the Russian government through the Social Chamber of the Russian Federation (*Obshchestvennaia Palata R.F.*).

An example of "Memorial's" dishonesty is its long list "Victims of Political Terror in the USSR."<sup>19</sup> Here is one entry, found after only a minute or two of searching:

[[cyrillic]]Ваганов Александр Михайлович

Родился в 1886 г., Пермская губ.; русский; Проживал: г. Пермь.

Арестован 3 октября 1919 г.

Приговорен: 31 октября 1919 г.

Приговор: Дело прекращено за отсутствием улик

Источник: Книга памяти Пермской обл.

Vaganov Alexander Mikhailovich



Born in 1886, Petm Province; Russian; Resided in: Perm.

Arrested on October 3, 1919

Sentenced: October 31, 1919

Verdict: Case dismissed for lack of evidence

Source: Perm Region Memory Book.

<sup>19</sup> [[cyrillic]]«Жертвы политического террора в СССР, at <http://lists.memo.ru/>

Mr A. V. Vaganov was arrested during the bloody Civil War, held in jail for four weeks, and then acquitted. What makes him a "victim of political terror"? By this standard a huge number of people are "victims of American government political terror." Where is THAT list of "victims"?

What's more, the list of "victims" does not bother to ascertain whether or not the individual arrested was guilty of the charges against him (or her). Persons found guilty of a crime are not normally called "victims."

"Memorial's" list is useless as a source of information. It seems clear that it is intended to be as large a list as possible, enabling anticommunists to impress others by telling them of this huge list of "victims of communist terror."

### **"Memorial" Proposes An Anticommunist "Purge"**

In early 2011 "Memorial" posted a proposal on its website for a program to "de-Stalinize" Russia. In true Orwellian language the proposal is titled "A proposal for the establishment of a society-wide state-society program concerning the commemoration of victims of the totalitarian regime and national reconciliation."<sup>20</sup> This proposal is an attempt to take a far right-wing, anticommunist position on Soviet history— in some respects more extreme than that of the Cold War years in the United States — and make it into official state policy. It is an attempt to politicize history in an extreme

right-wing direction; to impose a far right-wing, anticommunist orthodoxy on the whole country of Russia.

<sup>20</sup> [[cyrillic]]ПредложеЮИЯ об учреждении общенациональной государственно-общественной программы «Об увековечении памяти жертв тоталитарного режима и о национальном примирении. At <http://www.memo.ru/2011/03/29/perpetuation.htm>

Here is one of the provisions in this proposal:

[[cyrillic]]«Приложение 8»

8.2. Принять официальное постановление о том, что публичные выступления государственных служащих любого ранга, содержащие отрицание или оправдание преступлений тоталитарного режима, несовместимы с пребыванием на государственной службе.

"Appendix 8"

8.2. Adopt a formal decree that public statements by civil servants of any rank, denying or justifying the crimes of the totalitarian regime, are incompatible with being in public service.

The Memorial Society "lovers of freedom" want all Russian civil servants to be "free" only to repeat Memorial's version of history! And they blame the USSR for "totalitarianism" while they demand that every public employee in Russia call the USSR "totalitarian" or lose their jobs!

The Memorial version of history is a falsification. The truth doesn't need this kind of imposition. Only falsehood requires the indoctrination and policing of opinions. "Memorial" is very far from the ideals stated in its inflated self-description. It's a right-wing anticommunist pro-capitalist group masquerading as a "human rights" group.

Their recent proposal to the Duma is useful insofar as it has exposed them for what they are. Few liberal capitalist organizations would propose the kind of restrictions on free speech that "Memorial" unblushingly proposes.

During the height of the Red Scare in the USA in the late '40s and '50s one had to take a loyalty oath . "Memorial's" proposed legislation goes far beyond "loyalty oaths" to police one's statements while off the job. What happened to "human rights"?

If "Memorial" were an honest organization it would not number persons arrested and then released for lack of evidence against them among the "victims of political terror." Nor would it propose that all government employees who made any public statement that disagreed with its, "Memorial's," view of the Soviet past, or anybody's view of history, be fired.

If "Memorial" were an honest organization it would not have a falsifier like Nikita Petrov as one of its officers and leading researchers.

"Memorial" is similar to other ideological anticommunist, pro-capitalist organizations, in that none of them are interested in the least in the truth, but rather in producing propaganda to falsely smear the communist movement. Nothing published by or under the auspices of the "Memorial" society should be believed in any way.

### **Why Do Anticommunists Lie?**

Why tell lies when the truth is on your side? If the "Memorial" society were truly interested in human rights, they would also be concerned with the rights of those who do not agree with their, "Memorial's," interpretation of the Soviet past, and would defend the rights of those persons rather than trying to silence them with the fear of losing their jobs.

If anticommunists — and, it must be said, some who consider themselves communists, like Trotskyists — had honorable goals they would not repeat Nazi lies like that of the "Katyn massacre" and the "Holodomor." They would not claim that the Moscow Trials and the Tukhachevsky Affair were all frame-ups against innocent men, when all the evidence we possess today points in precisely the opposite direction — that the defendants were guilty of at least those crimes to which they confessed.

Petrov wants Stalin to "look bad." But Petrov is unable to find evidence that Stalin was, in fact, "bad." We can state this with confidence because he had such evidence Petrov would not have to resort to the kind of lies and fabrications that we have exposed in the article under discussion here. This practice is the rule, not the exception, in the field of Soviet history.

## Notes

1. Nikita Petrov. Сталинский заказ. Как убивали Сокольников и Радека
2. Ivan Serov, «Из Справки Председателя КГБ при СМ СССР И.А. Серова»
3. Копия приговора в отношении И.В. Овчинникова (1941)
4. Справка Управления КГБ Томской области о бывших сотрудниках НКВД 19.12.1955
5. Обзорная Справка Управления КГБ Томской области по архивно-следственному делу И. В. Овчинникова 6 января 1956 г.
6. Ovchinnikov, I. V., in Junge, Binner. *Kak Terror Stal Bol'shim*, p. 36
7. Из Воспоминаний бывшей заключенной Л. И. Медведевой о начальнике Томского горотдела НКВД И. Овчинникове май 1989 г.
8. Kubatkin, biography from Petrov & Skorkin, *Kto rukovodil NKVD 1934-1941*.
9. Sharok, from N.V. Petrov, *Kto rukovodil organami gosbezopasnosti 1941-1954. Spravochnik*.
10. Fedotov and Matusov statements 1961 from Petrov.
11. Fedotov, P. V. biography from Petrov & Skorkin, *Kto rukovodil NKVD. 1934-1941*.

12. Shvernik Report materials on Radek-Sokol'nikov murder 1961, from Petrov.

[[cyrillic]]13. «Трагедия в медведевском лесу. О расстреле  
поли1Заклученных Орловской тюрьмы.» Известия ЦК КПСС № 11  
(1990) 124-131.

## Bibliography

In the original publication, the bibliography and important primary source documents are linked here rather than printed:

<http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/stalinwaitingbibl.html>

In Chapter 10, "Hammer," Kotkin falsely asserts that Stalin ordered Karl Radek and Grigorii Sokol'nikov to be murdered in prison. I have put a link to my article refuting this canard, which originated with Nikita Petrov, an official of the Russian "Memorial" Society, in Chapter 14 of the present book, and repeat that link here:

[https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/furr\\_petrovs\\_amalgam.pdf](https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/furr_petrovs_amalgam.pdf)

This documentation has been included by this editor. The index has been excluded from the EPUB.

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# **New Evidence of Trotsky's Conspiracy**

By Grover Furr

Erythrós Press and Media, LLC

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# New Evidence of Trotsky's Conspiracy

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## **Acknowledgements and Dedication**

I wish to express my gratitude to Kevin Prendergast, Arthur Hudson — Arthur, may you enjoy your well-deserved retirement! — and Siobhan McCarthy, the skilled and tireless Inter-Library Loan librarians at Harry S. Sprague Library, Montclair State University. Without their help, my research would simply not be possible. Without their continued help, I can persevere.

I am extend my heartfelt thanks to my skilled, wonderful Moscow colleague Vladimir L'vovich Bobrov, for all his tireless and brilliant help during the twenty-one years of our research together.

\*\*\*\*\*

I would like to recognize Montclair State University for giving me a sabbatical leave in the fall semester of 2015, and special research travel funds in 2017 and 2019, which have been invaluable in my research on this book.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this book to Ellen and John Murray, of Oakland, CA, and Raj Sahai, of Berkeley, CA.

You have been infallibly supportive of my work, in every way. Encouragement and help such as yours can never be repaid. But it can be acknowledged, and I gladly do so here, with thanks and humility.

From the back cover:

This book is a study of Soviet-era documents, recently declassified, that bear on Leon Trotsky and his conspiracies against the Soviet government and Party during the 1930s. These documents are: Yuri Piatakov's statement to Nikolai Ezhov, chief of the NKVD, of December 19-20, 1936; the transcript of the trial of Marshal N. Tukhachevsky and seven accomplices of June 11, 1937; and a collection of investigative materials from the former NKVD archive concerning the First and Second Moscow Trials of August, 1936, and January, 1937.

The third set of documents are from the two volume work *Politbiuro i Lev Trotskii (sbornik dokumentov), 1923-1940*, edited by Oleg V. Mozokin and published in 2013 in Prague, Czechoslovakia, by Sociosféra-CZ. This two-volume work is essentially unobtainable.

### **Remarks about the work of Grover Furr:**

"Using primary source documents from former Soviet archives and from the Harvard Trotsky Archive, and by studying the latest and best research in Russia, French and English, Professor Furr proves that the Dewey Commission was a fraud."

- William Podmore, on *The Fraud of the Dewey Commission*.

"Fantastic book with incredible insight and sourcing!"

- Justin Craig, on *Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan*.

## Introduction

This book is a study of Soviet-era documents, recently declassified, that bear on Leon Trotsky and his conspiracies against the Soviet government and Party during the 1930s. These documents are: Yuri Piatakov's statement to Nikolai Ezhov, chief of the NKVD, of December 19-20, 1936; the transcript of the trial of Marshal Mikhail N. Tukhachevsky and seven accomplices of June 11, 1937; and a collection of investigative materials from the former NKVD archive concerning the First and Second Moscow Trials of August, 1936, and January, 1937.

I obtained Piatakov's statement to Ezhov some years ago from my Moscow colleague and skilled historian Vladimir L. Bobrov, from the FSB (formerly NKVD) archive in Moscow. It has since been declassified and published online from the Russian State Archive of Social-Political History (RGASPI), also in Moscow. The texts are the same, though they were typed at different times and have different pagination.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have given the pagination for both versions in the text of Piatakov's statement printed in the Appendix to this book.

The 172-page text of the trial of the "Tukhachevsky Affair" defendants was silently declassified from the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History (RGASPI) in May, 2018, and posted on the Russian historical site [istmat.info](http://istmat.info). It is in printed form, perhaps to be circulated in a limited manner.

The third set of documents are from the two-volume work *Politbiuro i Lev Trotskii (sbornik dokumentov), 1923-1940*<sup>2</sup>, edited by Oleg V. Mozokhin and published in 2013 in Prague, Czechoslovakia, by Sociosféra-CZ. This two-volume work is essentially unobtainable. As of November, 2019, the Worldcat meta-database of world research libraries contains an entry for this work which states that "no libraries with the specified item were found."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> English translation: "The Politburo and Leon Trotsky (collection of documents), 1923-1940."

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.worldcat.org/title/politbiuro-i-lev-trotskii-sbornik-dokumentov-1923-1940/oclc/889406153> amp;referer=brief\_results

In 2017 a one-volume version of this work was published in Russia. But this volume omits some of the most interesting documents from the two-volume work.<sup>4</sup> My colleague Vladimir Bobrov obtained a copy of the two-volume, 2013 work at the FSB archive. I have used this copy for the present book.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.worldcat.org/title/politbiuro-i-lev-trotskii-1922-1940-sbornik-dokumentov/oclc/1050151524> amp;referer=brief\_results I have compared the Tables of Contents of the 2013 and the 2017 works.

Mozokhin is a historian employed by the FSB, the successor to the KGB and NKVD, and author of many books and articles on the "special services." The two-volume 2013 work is cited on his personal page. But there is no information about why it was published in Czechoslovakia rather than in Russia, or why it is unobtainable.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See <http://mozohin.ru/photos/image/Politbjuro-i-Lev-Trockij.html>

In the present book we will consider only the documents in volume 2 of the two-volume 2013 work (hereafter referred to as PiLT2). The first document in volume 2 dates from November 3, 1932. The latest is from August 24, 1940, and is an announcement of, and copy of the *Pravda* article on, Trotsky's assassination on August 20, 1940.

Our study of the documents published in PiLT2 yields some important results concerning Trotsky's conspiracies during the 1930s. The documents in this volume also touch on many other important issues with which we are not concerned here.

## **A. Introduction — Conclusion: The Results of This Study**

What follows is a brief summary of the conclusions to be drawn from the evidence under examination in this book:

**Trotsky Did Conspire with Germany and Japan against the USSR**

The information in these documents that are examined in the present book constitutes additional strong evidence that Leon Trotsky did indeed enter into conspiratorial relations against the Soviet Union with both Nazi Germany and fascist Japan. It corroborates a large body of other evidence of Trotsky's conspiracies with the fascist powers. We located, identified, and studied some of that evidence in a previous work.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan*. Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press amp; Media, LLC, (2017).

Much more evidence of Trotsky's German-Japanese collaboration is being disclosed as more documents from former Soviet archives are being released. We will collect and examine it in future studies.

**The Statements and Confessions of Moscow Trials Defendants Reflect What The Defendants Chose to Say**

All the documents under examination in the present book relate to the First and Second Moscow Trials of August, 1936, and January, 1937. Today we have a great deal of evidence that, in the cases of the three famous Moscow Trials of 1936-38, the NKVD did *not* force those under interrogation to confess to crimes they had not committed.

During his tenure as chief (People's Commissar) of Internal Affairs Nikolai Ezhov did frame, or simply murder, hundreds of thousands of innocent Soviet citizens. We have discussed this horror, the *Ezhovshchina*, in a separate study.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Yezhov Vs. Stalin: The Truth About Mass Repressions and the So-Called 'Great Terror' in the USSR*. Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press amp; Media, LLC, 2018 (2016).

In the first twelve chapters of *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* we checked many statements by Moscow Trials defendants against independent evidence now available. In *The Moscow Trials As Evidence* we published an updated version of this study. On the basis of this examination we concluded that the testimony in the Moscow Trials proves to be truthful in those instances where we can independently check it. The interrogations published in PiLT2 provide a great deal of additional corroborative evidence that the Moscow Trials testimony was genuine — meaning, that those under interrogation answered the way they chose to answer.

Documents from the Harvard Trotsky Archive help to show that many of those interrogated here told the truth. We can also independently check a number of statements made in these interrogations against other independent sources, such as Mark Zborowski's reports to his NKVD handlers; Anton Ciliga's memoirs about his years in the Verkhneural'sk political isolator along with Trotskyists and other oppositionists; and Valentin Astrov's testimony.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See Furr, *Amalgams*, *Moscow Trials*, and *Trotsky's Lies*, for studies of the evidence from Zborowski, Ciliga, and Astrov.

Our hypothesis that the prisoners' confessions in PiLT2 are genuine has been confirmed. Whenever we can check them by internal or external evidence they turn out to be genuine. There is no disconfirming evidence at all — no evidence that any of the confession statements were the result of compulsion of any kind. Therefore we must conclude that the statements made in the confessions contained in PiLT2 that we cannot now directly confirm are also genuine and, consequently, may be used as evidence.

The implications of this finding go far beyond the documents in PiLT2. The contents of these interrogation-confessions are consistent with those in the First and Second Moscow Trials. We have other evidence that confirms the genuineness of the testimony in these trials. Together with our analysis of the confession statements in PiLT2 we have even stronger evidence that the testimony of the defendants in the Moscow Trials is genuine — that is, not forced upon the defendants by the Prosecution or the OGPU-NKVD interrogators.

We should consider the contents of the confessions to be *truthful* unless we have evidence to the contrary. In a few cases, like that of I.N. Smirnov, we know that those under interrogation lied to the interrogators. We know Smirnov lied because we have evidence from Leon Sedov himself, found in the Harvard Trotsky Archive, that Smirnov was indeed the leader of the Soviet-based clandestine Trotskyist group.

The evidence is clear that the arrested oppositionists testified what they chose to say. In some cases they deliberately lied, or did not tell the whole truth, in order to deceive the prosecution. Swedish researcher Sven-Eric Holmström has discovered compelling evidence that at least one more prominent Soviet figure aided Piatakov in this Norway trip. If Holmström is correct, Piatakov remained silent about this person, no doubt to protect him.

Another example is Grigori Sokol'nikov's claim during the January, 1937, Moscow Trial that he had not received any communications from Trotsky. We know that in fact he did, because the Harvard Trotsky Archive preserves a return receipt from a letter Trotsky sent him. The NKVD evidently did not know about this, so Sokol'nikov's statement went unchallenged by the prosecution. It would be interesting to know what Trotsky said to Sokol'nikov in that letter. Probably it was similar to the letter he sent to Radek and whose contents Radek described at trial, since it was sent during the same period of time.

#### **Ivan Nikitich Smirnov, Leader of the Clandestine Trotskyists in the USSR, Lied**

The PiLT2 documents give us more information about the First Moscow Trial. We see I.N. Smirnov, who claimed at trial that he no longer "did any work" in the Trotsky conspiracy, lying to the investigators as soon as he is arrested. We know this now because many others testify to Smirnov's leading role in the conspiracy.

#### **The Trotskyists Conspired to Murder Sergei Kirov**

The PiLT2 documents give us important evidence that the Trotskyists, and therefore certainly Trotsky himself, were indirectly involved in the assassination of Sergei Kirov on December 1, 1934. The Trotskyists were

planning similar assassinations and were in touch with the Zinovievists who in fact murdered Kirov.

One Trotskyist told another that it was "their people" who had killed Kirov.<sup>9</sup> This was not in fact true — Kirov was murdered by a clandestine Zinovievist group — but it shows that the Trotskyists were aiming at the same thing.

<sup>9</sup> Interrogation of Ivan Aleksandrovich Maslennikov, April 26, 1936. PiLT2, 249.

### **Valentin Ol'berg Was Guilty of Collaborating with Trotsky and the Gestapo**

We learn a lot more about Valentin Ol'berg, one of the leading defendants in the First Moscow Trial of August, 1936. PiLT2 contains much more information about Ol'berg and his background, including testimony from his brother and his wife, and from others who knew and helped him. Ol'berg claimed to have been on a mission from Leon Sedov, coordinated with the Nazi Gestapo, to assassinate Stalin. We now have confirmation of his accusation from co-conspirators who knew about it.

Since the publication of PiLT2 in 2013, more evidence concerning Ol'berg and of those associated with him, including his wife, brother, and associates, has been declassified and made available to researchers. We will study this evidence in a future book.

### **Trotskyists Within the USSR Collaborated with Fascists, Ukrainian Nationalists, and Nazi Agents**

We have more details about the ties between the German secret police, the Gestapo, and the Trotskyist conspiracy. As far as the Trotskyist conspirators are concerned, it appears that some of them, at least, did not take the initiative to contact the Gestapo but instead were persuaded to work with the Gestapo as a result of being under arrest. Their trust in Leon Trotsky and their intense hostility towards Stalin and the Soviet government made their Gestapo collaboration voluntary.



We learn more about these contacts from the testimony related to the Second Moscow Trial. Once Trotsky had made it clear to his followers that he was instructing them to collaborate with all who opposed the Stalin regime, the Trotskyists formed alliances with other Soviet oppositionists and dissidents; with Soviet citizens who had joined fascist anti-Soviet groups; with Ukrainian nationalists; with German technicians who, while working the Soviet mining industry, were also German agents; and with the Gestapo.

We have corroborating evidence about Trotskyist and fascist sabotage in the Kuzbass mining region, a topic that is featured in the Second Moscow Trials.

#### **Trotsky Also Collaborated with Great Britain and France**

The single interrogation of Grigori Sokol'nikov in this volume corroborates his own confession at trial concerning his contacts on Trotsky's behalf with the Japanese and British. His contact with the French is also briefly mentioned. Other confessions by Sokol'nikov had recently become available. We will examine them in a future study.

#### **Piatakov Did Meet with Trotsky in Norway in December, 1935**

The testimony in PiLT2 corroborates Piatakov's testimony in his Statement to Ezhov of September 19-20, 1936. This is particularly important since Piatakov was more closely in touch with Trotsky than any other conspirator whose materials we now possess. The details in PiLT2 also confirm the genuineness of Piatakov's testimony concerning his secret visit to Trotsky in Norway in December 1935.

## **B. Evidence and Denial**

### **The "Anti-Stalin Paradigm"**

The bourgeoisie turns everything into a commodity, hence also the writing of history. It is part of its being, of its condition for existence, to falsify all goods: it falsified the writing of history. And the best-paid

historiography is that which is best falsified for the purposes of the bourgeoisie.

— Friedrich Engels, "Notes for the 'History of Ireland.'" (1870)

According to the only acceptable model of Soviet history of the Stalin period — we call it, for convenience, the Anti-Stalin Paradigm — Stalin was guilty of many horrific crimes, principally mass murder, and the fabrication of false charges against innocent persons followed by their punishment (often death). In mainstream historiography of the Soviet Union it is considered illegitimate to challenge any charge of a serious crime against Stalin. It is *a fortiori* considered taboo to conclude that Stalin did *not* commit any crime that he has been accused of.

Researchers of Soviet history of the Stalin period are constrained to adhere to the Anti-Stalin Paradigm regardless of the evidence. The ASP, therefore, is not a way of learning what really happened. Rather, it is a way of *not* learning what really happened. It is a way of telling historians: "Your task is to come to acceptable, anti-Stalin, anticommunist conclusions, and, where necessary, to back those conclusions up with phony evidence and fallacious reasoning." Or, at best, "your job is to confine yourself to drawing conclusions that do not challenge or threaten to disprove the ASP."

### **The Trotskyist Paradigm**

A similar paradigm controls Trotskyist writing, which must conclude that "Trotsky was right" and "Stalin was wrong," regardless of the evidence.

Today we have a great deal of evidence that corroborates the charges leveled against Trotsky in the Moscow Trials of conspiring to murder Soviet leaders, sabotage Soviet industry, undermine the Soviet military, and collude with Nazi Germany and fascist Japan for the defeat of the USSR in war. But no Trotskyist historian can deal objectively with this evidence, or they will no longer be welcome in the ranks of Trotskyists.

Likewise, no academic historian of the Soviet Union can approach the evidence objectively and conclude that Stalin was not guilty of this or that

crime of which he has been charged, or they will not be published, with serious consequences for their academic careers.

### **The Anti-Stalin Paradigm and the Issue of Denial**

Whatever the subject of research, it is always appropriate, and in fact essential, to discuss questions of evidence. In this larger sense, there is nothing special about the need for such discussion in the field of Soviet history of the Stalin period.

However, the role of bias — anticommunist, and specifically anti-Stalin bias — is so great that it poisons the entire field of Soviet history, and so it must be confronted. Likewise, the issue of denial and evasion — the refusal to objectively consider evidence that sharply contradicts the prevailing Anti-Stalin Paradigm<sup>10</sup>, is so pervasive that we must say something about it.

<sup>10</sup> Or the Trotskyist paradigm, which is, in effect, one variety of the Anti-Stalin Paradigm (ASP).

### **The Role of Denial and Evasion**

President Trump and many congressional Republicans now treat anything other than partisan hackery for their own side as partisan hackery for the other side.

— David Leonhardt, *New York Times*, November 18, 2019

We predict that the result of this research will be ignored by mainstream Soviet historians, and of course by Trotskyists. The reader should understand the reasons for this denial and evasion.

The fact is that the academic field of Soviet history of the Stalin period exists primarily to promote falsehoods about that history. The truth about Stalin and the history of the Soviet Union during Stalin's time, and about Trotsky and his conspiracies, including with the Nazis, is simply too threatening to be honestly confronted. The evidence supporting these conclusions is too strong, and there is too much of it, for it to be mentioned,

much less discussed. The only way to "save" the Anti-Stalin and Trotskyist paradigms of Soviet history is to ignore the evidence and to continue to repeat fact-claims that we can now prove false.

It would be excellent if some mainstream historians of Soviet history would subject the evidence in this book, and in my other books and articles, to scholarly critique. I would expect to learn that I had made some errors — after all, some degree of error is inevitable in all human endeavor. I would also hope to learn that I had overlooked some evidence and/or counter-evidence. That would be beneficial to me in my research. It would also contribute to the project of learning the truth about Soviet history of this Stalin era and about what Leon Trotsky was really up to, as opposed to what his acolytes *claim* he was doing.

I do not expect this to happen. Willful ignorance, and personal attacks on me for daring to contradict the prevailing "wisdom" — that is, falsehoods — about Stalin and Soviet history of this period, have been the only response to my research. I expect that "mainstream" historiography will continue to deny and evade the truth.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> For my extended analysis of one highly-praised study by a professional scholar of the Stalin period, see Grover Furr, *Stalin. Waiting for ... the Truth. Exposing the Falsehoods in Stephen Kotkin's Stalin. Waiting for Hitler, 1929-1941*. New York: Red Star Publishers, 2019.

*My goal is to discover the truth. I do not "defend" or "apologize for" Stalin. If Stalin committed crimes, I want to know what they were. The only way to know this is to do honest research. However, persons who perpetuate falsehoods in the service of a political agenda assume that everyone does as they are doing — that everyone, like they themselves, is bending, ignoring, or inventing evidence in the service of their own biases. Dishonest persons justify their own dishonesty by assuming that every else is also dishonest. This is why I am called a "defender of" or "apologist for" Stalin.*

## **Techniques of Evasion and Denial: Logical Fallacies**

### **Argument Ad Hominem**

### Example A: A Prominent Trotskyist

A prominent American American Trotskyist — I will refer to him as W.A. — has called me a conspiracy theorist. Readers should recognize this as a logical fallacy, the *argumentum ad hominem* — an attack on the person making an argument rather than on the matter at hand.

*Ad hominem* (Latin for "to the person"), short for *argumentum ad hominem*, typically refers to a fallacious argumentative strategy whereby genuine discussion of the topic at hand is avoided by instead attacking the character, motive, or other attribute of the person making the argument, or persons associated with the argument, rather than attacking the substance of the argument.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ad\\_hominem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ad_hominem)

W.A. did not explain what he means by this remark. This is "name-calling." In itself it is without substance and requires no refutation. But it is nonetheless telling in the present context.

Wikipedia has a useful definition of *Conspiracy theory*:

A conspiracy theory is an explanation of an event or situation that invokes a conspiracy by sinister and powerful actors, often political in motivation, when other explanations are more probable. The term has a pejorative connotation, implying that the appeal to a conspiracy is based on prejudice or insufficient evidence. Conspiracy theories resist falsification and are reinforced by circular reasoning: both evidence against the conspiracy and an absence of evidence for it, are re-interpreted as evidence of its truth, and the conspiracy becomes a matter of faith rather than proof.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conspiracy\\_theory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conspiracy_theory)

According to this definition, Leon Trotsky himself was a conspiracy theorist. Trotsky claimed that Stalin was conspiring — plotting — to wipe out personal enemies and any potential threat to his own power. There was

not then, nor is there now, any evidence at all to support Trotsky's notion that Stalin was conspiring to do away with personal rivals and enemies

Trotskyists and Cold-War anticommunists may claim that the Soviet — "Stalin's" — accusations against the oppositionists in the USSR — Zinovievists, Trotskyists, Rightists, and others — also constitute a conspiracy theory. But this is false. We now know that the Soviet investigators and prosecution did *not* base their conclusions on "prejudice or insufficient evidence." They had a great deal of evidence! More and more of such evidence continues to be made public. We also have significant *non-Soviet* evidence that could not possibly have been coerced or planted by "Stalin" — i.e., the Soviets.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See Furr, *The Moscow Trials as Evidence*.

W.A. adheres to the Trotsky cult — he "believes" Trotsky. If anyone were to simply "believe" whatever Stalin wrote or said, he would be ridiculed, and rightly so! "Belief" can never aid the search for truth. Karl Marx himself said that "Question everything!" (*De omnibus dubitandum*) was his favorite slogan. In this important sense, Trotskyists are not Marxists.

There is no evidence whatsoever to support the Trotskyist accusations. We have exposed and discussed a number of the lies that Trotsky concocted to create and sustain his anti-Stalin conspiracy theory. *None* of it is evidence. (Furr, *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'; Trotsky's Lies*).

This makes W.A. himself a conspiracy theorist in that, in defiance of the evidence and logic, he continues to uncritically believe Trotsky's charges against Stalin. It is a clever, though dishonest, rhetorical ploy to call someone you disagree with a "conspiracy theorist" when in reality the term applies to you yourself.

#### **Example B: Stephen Cohen**

Stephen Cohen, a senior scholar of the Stalin period and defender of the Anti-Stalin Paradigm, has called me "a Stalin terror denier or apologist;" "a pseudo-scholar who disregards or falsifies overwhelmingly evidence —

plan facts, to put the matter plainly," and "who has no standing ... among serious scholars here or in Russia."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Personal communication dated July 2, 2019 from a colleague with an email from Stephen Cohen dated May 25, 2019.

Cohen is "blowing smoke." *Neither he nor any of the "serious scholars" of Soviet history of the Stalin period have any evidence, much less "plain facts", that Stalin planned the "terror."* On the contrary: *all* the evidence supports the opposite conclusion. Cohen simply *asserts* that there is "evidence" that I am "disregarding" or "falsifying." But he cites no examples. No wonder: he *can't* do so, because no such evidence exists.

#### **Appeal to Authority**

When Cohen refers to "standing ... among serious scholars" he is committing the logical fallacy of "appeal to authority." The fact that others disagree with me is not evidence that I am wrong. Any more than the fact that *they* do not agree with *me* is evidence that *they* are wrong!

Only primary source evidence counts, not the "authority" of scholars who, instead of pursuing the truth "and letting the chips fall where they may," choose to uphold the Anti-Stalin Paradigm out of whatever motive — careerism, anticommunism or loyalty to Trotsky.

Cohen is loyal to Nikolai Bukharin. In 1973 Cohen published a biography, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution*, that was to become famous. In the tenth chapter — the chapter that takes Bukharin's life from 1930 to his trial and execution in 1938 — Cohen relies heavily on Khrushchev-era materials about Stalin. In 2010 my colleague Vladimir L. Bobrov and I published an article in which *we demonstrate that every anti-Stalin statement Cohen writes in that tenth chapter is provably, demonstrably false.*

We also prove that Cohen deliberately lied. In his book Cohen quotes the memoir of Jules Humbert-Droz, a former communist and friend of Bukharin's. Humbert-Droz reveals that Bukharin told him in 1927 or 1928 that he and his followers were already conspiring to murder Stalin. This was before collectivization, the first Five-Year Plan, the famine of 1932-33,

possibly even before Trotsky had been expelled from the Party (November 12, 1927) and, as far as we know today, before Trotsky himself was plotting to kill Stalin.

But Cohen *withholds* this information. He does not tell his readers that Humbert-Droz, whose memoir he cites in his Bukharin book, stated this. To do so would have undermined Cohen's desire to portray Bukharin as an innocent "victim of Stalin."<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See Grover Furr and Vladimir L. Bobrov, "Stephen Cohen's Biography of Bukharin: A Study in the Falsehood of Khrushchev-Era "Revelations". *Cultural Logic*, 2010. At <https://ojs.library.ubc.ca/index.php/clogic/article/view/191531>

Those who uphold the Anti-Stalin and Trotskyist paradigms do so in defiance of all the evidence we now have. What are they afraid of? We should be clear: they fear the overthrow of the Anti-Stalin Paradigm and the complete dismantling of the "Trotsky Paradigm," the Trotskyist cult which is structured around Leon Trotsky's lies and deceptions.

#### **Fallacy of Personal Incredulity**

The problems of logical fallacies and preconceived bias persist even among Marxists. Here is an example of fallacious thinking by the editors of *Science and Society*, a scholarly Marxist journal of worldwide reputation for eighty years. First, they announce in positive tones the publication of a commentary article of mine:

We are glad to be able to present Grover Grover Furr's critical commentary on Gerald Meyer's article, "Joseph Stalin: Revisionist Biography," ...

Then there follow these words:

**Furr is well known for his resolute defense of Stalin** and his rejection of the entire *corpus* of literature, from both the capitalist mainstream and the left, depicting Stalin as an authoritarian and



repressive figure, and one who was guilty of major crimes against humanity.

This is false. I do not "defend Stalin." I defend the truth, as demonstrated by the best primary source evidence. I work hard to be objective, to question and doubt my own biases and preconceived ideas, because failure to do so leads inevitably to Confirmation Bias and forfeits any chance of discovering the truth. If Stalin committed crimes I want to know about them. I want to find the truth, whatever it is and "let the chips fall where they may."

The *Science amp; Society* editor correctly state:

Furr argues, to the contrary, that almost all of these claims, from the Khrushchev "revelations" to the mountains of establishment scholarly works on the subject, are false.

That is true — though the editors neglect to say that I base my conclusions upon *evidence* and study of that evidence with firm *objectivity*. Then they state:

We need to be clear: the great majority of the S amp;S Editorial Board and Manuscript Collective do not accept Furr's position.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> "Editorial Perspective. In This Issue." *Science amp; Society* 82, No. 4 (October, 2018), p. 475.

This is an example of the *fallacy of personal incredulity*. *On what basis* do the editors say this? Not from studying the evidence, let alone studying it in a strictly objective manner. They just "do not accept" — that is, do not *believe* — it.

In reality, the *S amp;S* editors have no basis either to agree or to disagree with me. The "great majority" of the board is basing their "non-acceptance" of my "position" — by which they mean the results of my research — on bias and preconceived notions, no doubt bolstered by the "authority" of some person or persons unnamed.

This stance is not compatible with a materialist, scientific approach to history. Materialists decide questions of truth or falsehood on the basis of primary source evidence and solid, objective reasoning. Once again, this demonstrates the power of the Anti-Stalin Paradigm. Yet *S amp;S* is one of the foremost Marxist journals in the world today. How sad!

### **C. Objectivity — The *sine qua non* of discovering the truth**

But how *can* we learn the truth. How can we avoid being blinded by our own biases and preconceived ideas? It is a basic tenet of materialism that one's conclusions about reality, including historical reality, must be firmly based on *evidence*. This is the only way to discover the truth in history. The primary source evidence must be identified, located, collected, studied, and conclusions drawn from it that are based on the evidence alone, not on preconceived ideas, biases, prejudices, without faults in logic and reasoning.

The materialist researcher must work hard to be thoroughly *objective*. She must be aware and suspicious of her own biases and preconceived ideas. Everyone possesses biases, prejudices, and preconceived ideas. So the materialist researcher must adopt a method that is close similar to that used in the "hard" sciences like physics or chemistry.

The objective historian must be self-aware. It is her own preconceived ideas and biases, not those of anyone else, which are most likely to mislead her and to poison her research.

- She must take special pains to look with increased suspicion at any evidence or argument that tends to *confirm* her own preconceived ideas. This is the threat of Confirmation Bias.<sup>18</sup>
- She must also force herself to look with an additional dose of sympathy and interest at any evidence or argument that tends to *disconfirm* her own preconceived biases.

<sup>18</sup> "Confirmation bias is the tendency to search for, interpret, favor, and recall information in a way that affirms one's prior beliefs or hypothesis."  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation\\_bias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation_bias)

This is the only way to operationalize — to put into practical use — the ideal of objectivity. If a researcher fails to be objective, she will never discover the truth, or even recognize it if she sees it.

#### **D. Why Is There No German or Japanese Evidence of Trotsky's Collaboration?**

"Most conspiracy theorists don't understand this. But if there really were a C.I.A. plot, no documents would exist."<sup>19</sup>

Instructions on concrete organization questions regarding preparation for underground conditions must be given only verbally... At the very least it should have been specified that these names and addresses be given strictly orally...<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Gerald Posner, "author of an anti-conspiracy account of the Kennedy assassination, on efforts to obtain C.I.A. documents relating to the assassin." *The New York Times*' "Quotation of the Day" of October 17, 2009.

<sup>20</sup> O. Weber. "How Not to Prepare For Underground Conditions of Revolutionary Work." *The Communist International*. July 1, 1932, 417.

In the course of this study we will show that there is a large amount of mutually-corroborative evidence of Trotsky's German-Japanese collaboration from the Soviet side.

In addition we have important evidence from German and Japanese sources of collaboration by members of the Soviet opposition, including some who themselves claimed to have been working with Trotsky. Here are a few examples:

\* The late Alvin .D. Coox discovered and discussed the oral evidence he collected from former Japanese officers confirming that Genrikh S. Liushkov, an NKVD general who defected to the Japanese in June, 1938, told them rather detailed information about anti-Stalin military conspiracies in the Far Eastern Army and confirms that the Rightists — specifically,

Aleksei Rykov — were involved in the conspiracy. In turn, Rykov and others implicated Trotsky.

\* We also have evidence that Japanese General Hajime Sugiyama was in contact with Soviet oppositionists. This story was reported in Soviet newspapers and reprinted in the *New York Times*. We have confirmed it by obtaining the original Japanese newspaper article.

No evidence of German or Japanese collaboration with Trotsky has been discovered outside the former USSR. There are a number of possible explanations for this fact:

\* Trotsky never collaborated with the Germans or Japanese. All the Soviet evidence is fabricated.

If Trotsky did collaborate the following possibilities exist:

\* Many of these archives were destroyed during the war.

\* Nobody has looked for it. At least, we are not aware of anybody has done so.

\* These archives too might have been "purged," as the Harvard Trotsky Archive has certainly been.

But, as suggested in the quotations above, the most likely explanation is that conspiratorial information of this kind is never written down. Therefore, there never was any "archival evidence" of this collaboration.

We know that some purging of the Soviet archives was done by Nikita Khrushchev.<sup>21</sup> Elsewhere we have discussed the "purging" of the Trotsky archive at Harvard of incriminating materials.<sup>22</sup> We know of two cases in which archival materials have disappeared.

<sup>21</sup> See Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*, Chapter 12: "There is general agreement that after he took power Khrushchev had the archives searched and many documents removed and doubtless destroyed. The same scholars agree that

these documents probably had to do with Khrushchev's own role in the massive repressions of the late 1930s." See reference there.

<sup>22</sup> See Furr, *Amalgams*, Chapter 6, and *Moscow Trials*, Chapter 6: "Non-Soviet Evidence: — The Trotsky Archive Purged."

In addition, most Soviet archives are not open to researchers. Given the evidence that we have discovered in the relatively few archival documents that have been published to date it seems likely that further evidence implicating Trotsky may be contained in archives that are still classified.

We now have a great deal of evidence that the military commanders led by Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky did indeed collaborate with the German General Staff. We have indirect confirmation of this from German sources, and more direct confirmation in a document from the Czech National Archive. We have massive evidence from former Soviet archives of the guilt of Tukhachevsky and his co-defendants. The German and Czech evidence confirms the Soviet evidence.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> For the document from the Czech National Archive see Furr, *Amalgams*, and Furr, *Trials*, Chapter 7: "The Mastny-Benes Note of February 9, 1937."

In discussing their espionage for Germany several Soviet defendants said they had dealt directly with German General Kurt von Hammerstein-Equord. Rumor of this collaboration has survived in Hammerstein's family. Although to our knowledge no written record of that collaboration exists, it appears that no one has actually looked for such records.<sup>24</sup> Nor has anyone ever undertaken to survey the surviving papers of other German generals allegedly involved in this conspiracy and named by Soviet defendants.

<sup>24</sup> Hans Magnus Enzenberger. *Hammerstein oder der Eigensinn. Eine deutsche Geschichte*. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2008, pp. 234; 213-215.

But absence of evidence is only "evidence of absence" when evidence should indeed be present. We believe that the single most likely reason is simply that no one should expect a conspiracy like this to be documented anywhere, ever, much less in archives. The demands of secrecy and security require that such information be exchanged only by word of mouth.

## The Kremlin Affair: Conspiracy and Evidence of Conspiracies

In 2000 Russian historian IUrii N. Zhukov published the only serious study that has yet appeared devoted to the Kremlin Affair of 1935. His conclusion is that, on the evidence, the "Kremlin Affair" was not a fabrication, but the uncovering of a real conspiracy.

Therefore, at the present time — until there is a substantial widening of the evidentiary base, until the declassification of the materials in the Central Archive of the FSB, we consider the following to be beyond doubt. Of all the possible hypotheses that can be formulated to explain both the "Kremlin Affair" and the Ehlukidze case, the only one that can account for all the known facts without exception is that which assumes that the conspiracy against Stalin and his group really existed.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> IU. N. Zhukov, "Tainy 'Kremlevskogo dela' 1935 goda i sud'ba Avelia Ehlukidze" (The Secrets of the 'Kremlin Affair' of 1935 and the fate of Avel' Ehlukidze). *Voprosy Istorii* No. 9 (2000), 83-113, at p. 109.

Zhukov cites powerful evidence in support of his hypothesis. He has some important things to say about evidence generally that is relevant to our purposes.

It goes without saying that in this hypothesis the lack of evidence should us wary — either direct or indirect evidence, but indisputable. **And for this we must decide the question as to whether evidence is to be expected in general in such cases.** Could such evidence be found in the investigation of the "Kremlin Affair" and if so, what kind of evidence? Plans for the arrest of the members of the "narrow leadership"? A list of the future Politburo and government, or something similar. Or lists of conspirators, perhaps confirmed by their signatures? Or, perhaps, declarations, decrees, orders intended for publication immediately after the seizure of power and prepared in advance? **Hardly, because any normal conspirator who was also preparing a coup d'état would do everything possible to be certain that no evidence of this kind existed.**

It would be just as futile to hope to find while searching the homes of the conspirators, let us say, plans of the Kremlin, on which were noted the apartments and offices of Stalin, Molotov, and others, the routes of their usual walks. The conspirators — if they were indeed such — would not need them either. Both Peterson and Enukidze, who had lived and worked in the Kremlin, would have long known these things.

We could not expect to find evidence of any other kind that definitively reflected reflected the criminal plots that have been uncovered. **Unless the conspirators suffered from dementia, they would never commit their plans to paper. Everything, absolutely everything, would be only in their heads.** (Zhukov 110-111)

Zhukov cites an example of the kind of evidence that he finds convincing and reasonable to expect.

Now let us consider an alternative hypothesis, the most paradoxical one. Let us suppose that the conspiracy really existed. Are there any facts to confirm this? Yes, although they appeared only two years later, and also are of a very specific and unconvincing character — only confessions of suspects at interrogation. On the day of the arrests of Enukidze, February 11 [1937] in Khar'kov, and of Peterson, April 27 [1937] in Kiev they gave to different investigators confessions of guilt that are identical down to the details. They related how they were preparing a coup and the arrest or murder in the Kremlin of Stalin, Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov and Ordzhonikidze.<sup>26</sup> (108)

#### **The Conspiracy to Arrest Lavrentii Beria**

How likely is it that agreements of espionage and conspiracy would have been written down in the first place? Anything written down at some point would surely have been hidden securely or, more likely, destroyed as soon as read. As long as such written evidence remained it would pose a terrible threat to any conspirator.

We can be certain of the existence of one such conspiracy in Soviet history — that among members of the Presidium to get rid of Lavrentii Beria — because it succeeded on June 26, 1953. Yet no prior written record of that

conspiracy has ever come to light, and no single, reliable account of it exists even now. There are a few accounts by those who were involved (or claimed to have been involved). But these accounts do not agree. We know nothing certain about the conspiracy except that it succeeded. We also know nothing about Beria's fate — whether he survived to be tried and executed in December, 1953, as the official story runs, or whether he was killed, perhaps accidentally, on June 26.

This conspiracy must have involved at least half a dozen men. Accounts of it by its participants do not agree in details except in this: it was all planned and carried out through oral communication. There is no mention of it in writing. What does exist in the archives is the outline of a speech to be delivered by Georgii M. Malenkov at the Presidium meeting of June 26, 1953. It was at this meeting, we know, that Beria was either arrested or killed. Malenkov was certainly a party to whatever occurred. Yet Malenkov's archive contains only an outline of his speech, according to which Beria was to be removed as head of the MVD (Ministry of Internal Affairs, including the internal police force) and made Minister of the Petroleum Industry.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> The outline of Malenkov's speech is in *Lavrentii Beria. 1953. Stenogramma iul'skogo plenuma TsK KPSS i drugie dokumenty*. Ed. V. Naumov, IU. Sigachev. Moscow: MDF, 1999, pp. 69-70.

### **Rehabilitations**

It is often assumed that, if a person convicted of a crime during the Stalin period has been "rehabilitated," his or her innocence can be assumed to be established. But this is false.

A leading anticommunist researcher on Soviet history, Marc Junge, has written:

Mit der vorliegenden Arbeit wurde das Ergebnis der Studie des Utrechter Historikers van Goudoever bestätigt, daß Rehabilitierungen in der Sowjetunion grundsätzlich ein politisches und nicht juristisches oder gar ethisch-moralisches Phänomen darstellten.



With the present work the result of the study of the Utrecht historian van Goudoever was confirmed that rehabilitations in the Soviet Union in principle represented a political and not juristic or even ethical-moral phenomenon.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Marc Junge, *Bucharins Rehabilitierung. Historisches Gedächtnis in der Sowjetunion 1953-1991. Mit einem Dokumentenanhang*. Berlin: BasisDruck Verlag, 1999, p. 259.

In *Khrushchev Lied* we studied all the "rehabilitation" reports available in 2000, when a major collection of documents was published.<sup>29</sup> None of them provide any evidence of any convicted person's innocence. They are simply *declared* to be innocent.

<sup>29</sup> *Reabilitatsiia: Kak Eto Bylo. Mart 1953 — Fevral' 1956 gg. Dokumenty Prezidiuma TsK KPSS i Drugie Materialiy*. Moskva: Mezhdunarodniy Fond "Demokratiia", 2000.

In succeeding years we studied other "rehabilitation" reports. For example, in the case of the 1988 report on the remaining (as yet un-rehabilitated) defendants of the Third Moscow Trial of March 1938, the "Bukharin-Rykov" trial, we showed that the rehabilitation report lied about an important document that was published in 2006.

This 1988 report remains unpublished at the time of this writing (November, 2019).<sup>30</sup> To demonstrate that the Soviet Prosecutor and the Supreme Court were deliberately lying would cast doubt upon all the thousands of "rehabilitations" issued during the Gorbachev years. The so-called "revelations" of these years played, and continue to play, a huge ideological and legal role in the attacks on Stalin and on the Soviet government and Party during the Stalin years, and have been used uncritically by two generations of scholars of Soviet history since that time. There is a great deal at stake in perpetuating the falsehood that the Khrushchev-era and Gorbachev-era "rehabilitations" were honest and prove that the "rehabilitated" persons were innocent.

<sup>30</sup> In Russian only: Ferr (Furr), Grover, Vladimir L. Bobrov, *Pravosudie Stalina. Obzhalovaniu nt podlezhit!* Moscow: Eksmo, 2010, Chapter 2: "'Reabilitatsionnoe' moschenichesto," cc. 63-84.

It may well be that some persons "rehabilitated" during the Khrushchev and Gorbachev eras, and since the end of the Soviet Union, were in fact innocent of the crimes for which they were condemned. But, as Junge notes, the mere fact of "rehabilitation" cannot establish whether the "rehabilitated" persons were guilty or innocent.

### **Primary Sources**

Only primary source evidence is acceptable evidence. Secondary sources — normally, studies by scholars who themselves use primary sources — are *not* evidence, though they can be very useful for other purposes: for example, in identifying primary source evidence and in providing interpretations of primary source evidence that can help in one's own interpretation of them.

No primary source evidence is "proof positive" or "a smoking gun." In historical study all primary sources are created by human beings, who have biases, prejudices, and memories that change over time. All primary source evidence must be carefully examined in the context of other primary source evidence. This essential practice is called source criticism.

### **Soviet Primary Sources**

Cold-war anticommunists and Trotskyists sometimes claim that evidence originating from Soviet police, investigation, prosecution, or judicial sources should not be used because it *may* be false — obtained by threats to the arrestee, to his family or friends, or by promises, perhaps false ones, of lenient treatment.

However, all academic and Trotskyist researchers into Soviet history of this period, use Stalin-era sources all the time. It is in principle invalid to use Stalin-era Soviet sources when they appear to prove what the researcher wants to find but to reject them when they tend to dismantle the Anti-Stalin

Paradigm by providing evidence that Stalin did not commit some crime of which he has been accused.

Trotskyists often recommend the many volumes on Soviet history of the Stalin period by the late Vadim Rogovin, a committed Trotskyist historian who made no attempt to be objective. Rogovin's sources are almost exclusively Soviet documents from the Stalin period.

Many people believe that *any* statement — confession, accusation, whatever — obtained while in police custody is useless as evidence. Marxist historian Roger Keeran has written:

[Furr refers to] the well-known confessions and interrogations of the condemned .. Furr never acknowledges that confessions, particularly when given under duress, are pretty useless as historical evidence.

French Marxist economist Frédéric Boccara has said:

I do not believe evidence obtained from persons in police custody.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> "Khrushchev Lied But What Is The Truth?" (review of Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*). *Marxism-Leninism Today* November 23, 2011. At <https://mltoday.com/khrushchev-lied-but-what-is-the-truth/>

<sup>32</sup> Personal communication, November 2, 2019.

Many people are confused by, or even agree with, statements like these. .It is important to examine such statements in order to point out how and why they are incorrect.

Anyone, at any time, can either be telling the truth; attempting to tell the truth (i.e. as they remember it or believe it to be) but be mistaken; or be lying. This is the case whether or not a person is under arrest.

\* No evidence should ever be "believed.." "I don't believe it" is not a category of scholarly analysis. Rather, it is an admission that one does not

have any idea how to evaluate historical evidence.

\* It is essential to discard the false notion that persons under arrest are "more likely to be lying" than persons not under arrest. All statements, made under any circumstances, by all persons, must be critically studied and compared with other statements.

\* The fact that a person claims to be telling the truth at one time, and then at some later date claims that their first statement was false and that they are telling the truth now, is not evidence that either statement is true (or false). It is a basic error to accept the last statement a person made as true and all the previous statements as false, or vice versa.

### **Corroborating Evidence**

When we find statements — fact-claims — made by different persons, at different times, in different places, that agree with each other, it becomes more and more likely that the statements are either true or reflect what the persons making the statements believed to be true.

### **"Forced" Confessions?**

In 2007 Stephen G. Wheatcroft, a historian specializing in the Stalin period, wrote that a statement by Mikhail Frinovskii, one of Nikolai Ezhov's top lieutenants, was "forced":

According to Frinovskii's **forced statements** taken after his arrest...

Of course there are grave doubts as to how we should treat these **forced depositions** ...<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Wheatcroft, "Agency and Terror: Evdokimov and Mass Killing in Stalin's Great Terror," *Australian Journal of Politics and History*: Volume 53, Number 1, 2007, p. 42.

Wheatcroft does not explain why he thinks that Frinovskii's confession statements are "forced" or what he means by "forced." Nor does he explain why he thinks that there are "grave doubts" about how to deal with them,

what those "grave doubts" might be, or in fact *how* to "treat" them. He simply quotes them, and states that they may or may not be truthful.

In reality, there is no evidence that Frinovskii's statements were "forced" — assuming that this means false *and* obtained through torture, threats, promises, etc. Does Wheatcroft assume that persons under arrest do not make any statements that incriminate themselves unless they are "forced" to do so? That would be stupid. Persons under arrest may make truthful statements, including self-incriminating statements, for any number of reasons.

But why, then, does Wheatcroft call Frinovskii's confession statements "forced" in this case? I surmise he does this because Frinovskii's statement tends to exculpate Stalin of guilt for Ezhov's mass murders and repression in the so-called "Great Terror." This evidence threatens to dismantle the Anti-Stalin Paradigm, which controls research on Soviet history.

In this same confession statement Frinovskii admits that Ezhov and he himself, Ezhov's second-in-command, did indeed have NKVD men torture false confessions from defendants:

The investigative apparatus in all departments of the NKVD was divided into "investigator-bonebreakers", "bonebreakers", and "ordinary" investigators. ...

With such methods the investigations supplied the names.

In my opinion I would speak the truth if I declared, in general, that very often the confessions were given by the investigators, and not by those under investigation.

Did the leadership of the People's Commissariat, that is I and Ezhov, know about this? We knew.

How did we react? Honestly speaking — not at all, and Ezhov even encouraged it.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> "TO THE PEOPLE'S COMMISSAR FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE UNION OF SOVIET SOC. REPUBLICS — COMMISSAR OF STATE SECURITY 1ST DEGREE BERIA L.P. From the arrested suspect FRINOVSKY M.P. STATEMENT. *Lubianka. Stalin I NKVD — NKVD — GUKR "SMERSH". 1939 — mart 1946*. Moscow, 2006, p. 46. English translation at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/frinovskyeng.html> Russian original at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/frinovskyrus.html> Choose text encoding Cyrillic (Windows).

The confessions from Frinovskii's statement have often been quoted by mainstream researchers as evidence that many innocent defendants were tortured into signing false confessions. But the *rest* of Frinovskii's statement includes his confessions that the defendants in the Moscow Trials really were guilty. *These* parts are *never* quoted.

Like all evidence, the fact-claims in Frinovskii's statement must be carefully identified and, where possible, checked against other evidence we now possess. When that is done, it is clear that Frinovskii was not lying.

### **The Fallacy of "Torture"<sup>35</sup>**

The claim is sometimes made that someone was tortured into making a false confession. However, a claim unsubstantiated by evidence is not itself evidence. Even if we could verify that a person was tortured and subsequently confessed to a crime, that would not establish that the confession was false or that the person was innocent of that crime. Torture has historically been employed to extract truth as well as to elicit false testimony.

In theory, torture is outlawed in all legal systems so that the police and investigators will actually do some investigating, solve crimes, and catch criminals, instead of simply torturing innocent persons into confessing to the crimes they are supposed to solve. Torture of defendants is also outlawed to protect the individual suspect, so that he or she is not forced to falsely confess to crimes they did not commit.

But historians are not involved in a judicial process. No one's freedom is at stake. In the case of the history of the Stalin period in Soviet history, all the historical actors are dead. Dead persons have no rights that need defending. Works of historical research are not trials. Historians' conclusions are not verdicts.

<sup>35</sup> See also Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*, Chapter 10: "Torture and the Historical Problems Related To It."

#### **The Fallacy of "Everyone Knows It"**

Arch Getty, a prominent American scholar of Soviet history, has stated:

Had he [Oleg Khlevniuk] focused on the source base of Jansen and Petrov's book, for example, he would have noticed that their most sensational revelations, comprising more than one in seven of the footnotes, are from the NKVD interrogations of Ezhov and his henchmen. **As everyone knows, these stories were invented by the police and beaten out of the accused.**<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> J. Arch Getty, "To the Editors." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, 1 (Winter 2004), p. 233.

This statement is false. Getty does not "know" this. *No one* "knows" this. There is no evidence to support this statement, and a good deal of evidence to disprove it. Ezhov did renounce his confessions after the end of the investigation and at trial. But that does not prove he was lying first and telling the truth later, any more than it proves the reverse.

What researchers supposedly "know" — and, according to Getty, ought to say — is that Ezhov's confessions of guilt are false. Why? I think it is because in them Ezhov is very clear that he was deceiving Stalin and the Soviet leadership. For example, in a confession statement of August 4, 1939, Ezhov stated:

**The [Soviet] government, understandably, had no conception of our conspiratorial plans** and in the present case proceeded solely on

the basis of the necessity to prolong the operation without going into the essence of how it was carried out.

In this sense, of course, we were deceiving the government in the most blatant manner.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> "From the transcript of the interrogation of the accused Ezhov Nikolai Ivanovich. 4 August 1939." Nikita Petrov, Mark Jansen. *"Stalinskii pitomets" — Nikolai Ezhov*. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008, p. 368. English translation at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhov080439eng.html> Russian text at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhov080439ru.html> (choose Text Encoding Cyrillic (Windows)).

Getty's statement is an example of the logical fallacy of "argumentum ad populum."<sup>38</sup> This is the fallacy that because many people — in this case, presumably, historians of the Soviet Union — believe a statement is true, then the statement must be true, or at least is "more likely" to be true. (It might also be classified as an example of the fallacy of "argumentum ad lapidem," or "appeal to the stone"<sup>39</sup> — dismissing a claim as absurd without demonstrating proof of its absurdity.

#### **Argument by Scare Quotes**

Sometimes the denial of evidence that is inconvenient for the Anti-Stalin Paradigm is expressed in the use of scare quotes. A good example is Matthew Lenoe's book *The Kirov Murder and Soviet History* (Yale University Press, 2010). I examine and critique Lenoe's faulty use of evidence and incorrect conclusions in *The Murder of Sergei Kirov. History, Scholarship and the Anti-Stalin Paradigm*. A detailed examination of the fallacy of "argument by scare quotes" may be found there in Chapter 4, pages 87 ff.

In the edition of his translation of one of Marshal Mikhail N. Tukhachevsky's confession statements, Steven J. Main writes:



The large part of this article consists of a translation — to the best of this author's knowledge for the first time in English — of what is purported to be Tukhachevsky's '**testimony**', concerning his alleged role in the so-called anti-Soviet Trotskyite military organization, the '**existence**' of which allowed Stalin the excuse to launch his bloody purge ...

The '**evidence**' against the Red Army's top personnel began to accumulate ...

Using the recently gathered '**evidence**', Voroshilov ...

Tukhachevsky's alleged '**guilt**' ... Tukhachevsky's alleged '**confession**' ...

Regardless, however, of whether, or not, the '**confession**' was genuine, the '**plot**' had been unmasked ...

**'Testimony'** of M.N. Tukhachevsky<sup>41</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Steven J. Main, "The Arrest and 'Testimony' of Marshal of the Soviet Union M.N. Tukhachevsky (May-June 1937). *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (March 1997), pp. 151-155 and *passim*.

Apparently the scare quotes are supposed to alert us to the fact that he, Main, does not accept this testimony, evidence, existence, etc., as genuine. But Main makes no effort to try to verify his suspicions by studying Tukhachevsky's statement in the context of other evidence we now have. Like Wheatcroft, Main uses the confession while at the same time implying that it is not reliable. But in fact he has no idea at all how reliable (or unreliable) it is. He does not try to verify it or to disprove it.

The reader is left to wonder: *Why* does Main think Tukhachevsky's confession might be false? He does not claim outright that it is false, that the evidence it presents is phony. He only suggests, repeatedly, that it *might* be false. But to concede that the statement *might* be false, is also to concede that it *might not* be false — that it might be true. But to concede that would be a violation of the Anti-Stalin Paradigm — violation of a virtual taboo.

If Tukhachevsky's statement is true — and today we have a great deal of evidence to corroborate it — that would go a long way towards overturning the Anti-Stalin Paradigm. It would mean that, in arresting, trying, and executing Tukhachevsky and his high-ranking military accomplices, Stalin prevented the Soviet Union from militarily allying with Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and militarist-fascist Japan. Such an alliance would have completely changed the balance of power in the world in favor of the Axis powers and had an incalculable effect on world history.

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All text in **boldface** is the author's, unless otherwise specified.

## **Chapter 1. Documents published in *Politbiuro i Lev Trotskii*, Kniga 2 (Prague, 2013)**

This essay examines a collection of documents that has important implications for the study of Leon Trotsky's activities during the decade of the 1930s; for our understanding of the Moscow Trials of 1936-1938; and for the history of the Soviet Union during the period of Joseph Stalin's leadership.

*Politbiuro i Lev Trotskii* is a two-volume collection of documents from former Soviet archives. Almost all are published, and thus made available to researchers, for the first time. These volumes were published in a very small printing and are very hard to obtain. They are from the Central Archive of the FSB, the Russian successor to the NKVD, as the commissariat (= ministry) was called during most of the period in question.

There are no grounds to doubt that these documents are genuine. The editor, Oleg B. Mozokhin, is the chief researcher for the FSB. He has published a number of important collections and studies of documents from the former NKVD, including important studies of the repression and violence perpetrated during the 1930s by this agency of the Soviet government. We don't know why these specific documents were chosen for publication, out of the many thousands still in the archive.

The significance of these documents is as follows.

- The constitute yet more important evidence that the pretrial interrogations in the 1936 and 1937 Moscow Trials were not "fabricated" in any way by the NKVD, were not forced upon the defendants. Instead, all the evidence we now have supports the hypothesis that these trials were genuine, in that the Prosecution believed the charges they brought against the defendants, while the defendants testified what they wanted to testify.
- They are confirmed by evidence from outside the USSR, particularly evidence from Trotsky's own papers in the Harvard Trotsky Archive.

- They confirm, and are confirmed by, other evidence from former Soviet archives.

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate the truth of these conclusions, and to draw further conclusions from them that allow us to understand certain historical questions related to Trotsky's conspiratorial activities.

### **Direct Evidence that Defendants' confessions Were Not Coerced**

I.N. Smirnov was the leader of the Trotskyists within the USSR. This is confirmed by Sedov's letter to Trotsky of sometime in 1932 (hereafter referred to as "Sedov's 'bloc' letter") discovered by Pierre Broué in the Harvard Trotsky Archive in 1980.

La lettre à l'encre sympathique de Léon Sedov fait apparaitre l'esitence des groupes suivants : le groupe trotskyste d'U.R.S.S. (« notre fraction »), les « zinoviévistes », le groupe d'I. N. Smirnov, le groupe Sten-Lominadzé, le groupe « Safar(ov)-Tarkhan(ov) », « les droitiers » et « les libéraux ». (Broué 1980 p.7)<sup>1</sup>

The letter in invisible ink of Leon Sedov's revealed the existence of the following groups: the Trotskyist group in the USSR ("our fraction"), the "Zinovievites," the group of I.N. Smirnov, the group of Sten-Lominadze, the group "Safar(ov)-Tarkhan(ov)," "the Rights" and "the liberals."

<sup>1</sup> I.N. Smirnov is identified as the source of the information in the Sedov to Trotsky bloc letter in Documents Nos 1 and 2, reprinted in Broué 1980, pp. 34-36 from the Harvard Trotsky Archive.

In the following statement, apparently the first he made after his arrest, Smirnov denies any oppositional activity whatever. He claims that he only retained doubts about the success of collectivization and industrialization and spoke about these doubts with a few "former" Trotskyists now reinstated in the Party, as Smirnov himself had been, and with a few others who had not been reinstated. When asked about the large archive of Trotskyist materials found at his home Smirnov replied that he had kept

them only because they contained some letters from Trotsky and from other "former Trotskyists" and that he had intended to burn them. (20)

Thanks to Sedov's "bloc" letter we know that Smirnov was lying to conceal his clandestine Trotskyist activities. Therefore it is clear that this statement was not coerced — Smirnov made it voluntarily. At the August 1936 1936 Moscow trial Smirnov claimed that he "did no work" in the Trotskyist underground.

*Smirnov*: I listened to those instructions and communicated them to the centre. The centre accepted them but I did not take part in its work.

... I did not officially resign from the *bloc*, but actually I did not work. (Report 1936, 81, 85)

Smirnov's trial testimony is what he chose to say. It was not forced upon him. We shall cite much more evidence that the defendants testified *as they chose to do*.<sup>2</sup> This is evidence that the confessions at the First Moscow Trial were not fabrications, faked or otherwise forced upon the defendants by the prosecution. There would be no reason for the prosecution to "force" Smirnov to *deny* that he had continued to lead the underground Trotskyists. If the prosecution were "forcing" confessions at all, they would have forced Smirnov to say that he had indeed continued to lead the Trotskyist underground.

<sup>2</sup> For an extended study of this question see Furr, *Moscow Trials*.

This collection of documents, together with the testimony at the First Moscow Trial, does provide much evidence that Smirnov remained in the leadership of the underground Trotskyists in the USSR, and thus that his claim that he "did no work" was false. It follows from this that Smirnov's testimony at that trial represented what he wanted to say.

## **More Evidence That Confessions Were Not "Forced"**

### **A. Konstantinov**

According to a report to the Politburo dated January 20, 1933 by Genrikh Iagoda, Assistant Chairman of the OGPU (predecessor to the police function of the NKVD), A.A. Konstantinov, a member of Smirnov's underground Trotskyist group, opposed forming a bloc with the Rights because he and others felt that the Rights could not be trusted.

(Iagoda) Recently we received information that not long before the liquidation of the "Union of Marxist-Leninists" a question stood before the Smirnov group about a bloc with the Rights. On December 2 of this year Konstantinov ... stated that

"The question of a bloc with the Rights did stand before us, but we, of course, were decisively against a bloc with the Rights. On the one hand, the Rights are not a resolute group, they are cowardly and will not stuck it out to the end, and on the other hand, they only have a temporary need of us as a group that would be able to help them in underground work. And generally, in the event of victory they will crush us...." (38)

We know that Trotsky approved of such a group at exactly this time, 1932 (Sedov's "bloc" letter). The OGPU<sup>3</sup> would have no reason to invent a *lack* of willingness by Trotskyists to bloc with the Rights. This confession, therefore, reflected what Konstantinov wanted to say. It was not forced on him nor fabricated.

<sup>3</sup> In July, 1934, the OGPU became part of the new NKVD, or People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs.

#### **B. Aleksandr Ivanovich Shemelev**

Trotskyist Aleksandr Ivanovich Shemelev confessed on April 5, 1936 that his group had heard from Sedov, through Gorovich (who had met with Sedov in Berlin) that Trotsky wished to "*ustranit*" or "*ubrat*" — "remove" — Stalin. We know that this discussion did take place because it occurs in the Sedov-Trotsky correspondence in the Harvard Trotsky Archive. But Shemelev said the exact words might have been "liquidate" rather than "*ustranit*" or "*ubrat*'."

It is significant that Shemelev refused to claim that Sedov's order was to forcibly remove (i.e. to kill) Stalin. Shemelev states only that he understood Sedov's order in that way. (221) This would make no sense if the NKVD had been trying to "frame" — generate false accusations against — either Shemelev or Sedov. Had the NKVD been "framing" the Trotskyists they would have tried to force Shemelev to claim that Sedov had ordered Stalin killed. So the NKVD did not force Shemelev to make this statement. Therefore, this interrogation reflects what Shemelev wanted to say.

### **C. Nikolai Issakovich Gordon**

In an interrogation of October 20, 1936 Trotskyist Nikolai Isaakovich Gordon said that he had been told by Aleksandr Georgievich Beloborodov, a leading Trotskyist in Smirnov's group, that Smirnov was the person who had direct contact with Trotsky on behalf of the group. (321) This is confirmed by the Sedov "bloc" letter.

Gordon also revealed the following:

... The Trotskyists and Zinovievists in Rostov were united into one organization which, upon the instruction of the united Trotskyist-Zinovievist center, were preparing terrorist acts against the leadership of the VKP(b) and the Soviet government. (320)

Thanks to the Sedov bloc letter and the other letters from the Harvard Trotsky Archive that were published by Broué in 1980, we know that Gordon's testimony here is accurate. Smirnov did lead the Trotskyists, and the bloc consisted of Trotskyists, Zinovievists, and some other oppositionists that were not firmly in either of these two camps.

This, in turn, suggests that his further statement about its terrorist aims is also accurate. We will explore the issue of Trotskyism and terrorism before.

### **D. The Verification of Mikhail Sergeevich Ivanov**

Document No. 291 (385-386) is a request dated December 19, 1938 of a certain Sobol'ev, a political officer of the border guards of the NKVD concerning one of his men named Mikhail Sergeevich Ivanov. According to

Sobol'ev, Ivanov had expressed Trotskyist ideas in 1923-24 and was now being investigated for having signed the joint oppositionist "Platform of 83" in 1927. Ivanov claimed that he was not the "Mikhail Sergeevich Ivanov" — a common Russian name — who had signed this opposition statement. In Document No. 292 dated December 22, 1938, Aleksandr N. Poskrebyshev, head of Stalin's chancery, certified that NKVD man Ivanov was correct: the "M. Ivanov" who had signed the "Platform of 83" was a different person.

### **Serious Investigation, Not a Rush to Judgment**

This is evidence that a serious investigation had taken place. A person accused of being a hidden Trotskyist was not simply fired from his job, much less arrested or imprisoned. Rather, the allegation was investigated and, in this case, disproven.

This was important, for by this time Trotskyism had been outlawed within the USSR as a terrorist and espionage organization rather than a political tendency. Documents in this volume contain plenty of evidence to confirm this charge. We will examine some of them below.

### **Confirmation by Evidence from Outside the USSR**

Many statements made in the interrogations and defendants' statements in this volume can be confirmed by other evidence we now possess. The NKVD could not have fabricated this evidence because it originated from outside the USSR.

### **Statements Confirmed by Documents in the Harvard Trotsky Archive**

#### **A. "Remove Stalin" — *ubrat', ustranit', ustranenie***

Towards the end of 1932 Sedov and Trotsky discussed the slogan "remove Stalin." Broué discusses this in his 1980 article, in the subsection titled "Trotsky et le mot d'ordre 'Chasser Staline'" (20-22), and Broué identifies



the relevant documents in the Trotsky Archive.<sup>4</sup> Broué's convenient summary notes that Trotsky rejected this demand at that time.

<sup>4</sup> 10248. These are excerpts from letters sent to Sedov. The author possesses copies, obtained from the Trotsky Archive at the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

The documents in PiLT2 show that discussion and disagreement over this slogan — in Russian, *ubrat'*, *ustranit'*, *ustranenie* — took place in Opposition circles in the Soviet Union at the same time. Party member Vasili Ivanovich Dzhoev's statement of ca' January 2, 1933 says that Gassiev, another Trotskyist, declared that "this leadership must be removed ("*ubrat'*") (25).

#### **Iagoda's Report**

In a report to Stalin dated January 20, 1933 OGPU chief Genrikh Iagoda reported, *inter alia*, that a new letter from Trotsky had been received by Smirnov's group in mid-October (either October 17 or October 15). In it — unexpectedly for Iagoda — Trotsky said "The slogan '*ubrat'* Stalina' is not our slogan. 'Down with the personal regime' — that is not right." (37)

This statement in Iagoda's report agrees completely with the documents found by Broué in the Harvard Trotsky Archive (TA). We have discussed this in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*.<sup>5</sup>

At the January 1937 trial Karl Radek testified that, in his letter of the Spring of 1932, Trotsky had said that once "union" with the Zinovievists had been achieved "the question of removing the leadership" would have to be raised. This term — "remove Stalin" — can be partially traced in both the Trotsky-Sedov correspondence of late 1932 and in Astrov's confession and confrontation with Bukharin of January 1937.

We say "partially traced" because, in reality, only excerpts — called "vyderzhki" or "vypiski" at the top of each document — from the correspondence on this subject remains in the Trotsky-Sedov correspondence in the Harvard Trotsky Archive. Evidently these

excerpts — all have been retyped in a uniform manner — were prepared by a secretary, probably Jean van Heijenoort, for possible use at the Dewey Commission hearings in Paris, which took place later than those in Mexico.

The full texts of these letters is not in the Archive. They have been removed at some time. This is further evidence of what Getty called the "purge" of the Trotsky Archive, involving incriminating materials.

Broué outlines the discussion between Trotsky and Sedov concerning the use of this slogan in several of his published works. In the documents we have, Sedov appears to have been the more ardent partisan of the slogan "remove Stalin" Trotsky agreed with the concept but **in October 1932** told Sedov that they should not adopt it as yet, in order not to alienate other potential allies.<sup>6</sup> Broué concedes that "we do not know which one convinced the other" (Léon Sedov 81). Writing in Russian Rogovin puts quotation marks around the phrase: "*ubrat' Stalina.*"<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See the sections in Chapter Five, "The Slogan 'Remove Stalin'," 131-135, and "The Slogan 'Remove Stalin' in the Trotsky Archive," 135-141; also see Furr, *Moscow Trials*, 108-118.

<sup>6</sup> Broué, *Trotsky et le bloc* 20-22; Broué, "Liova le 'fiston'" 15.

<sup>7</sup> Rogovin, *1937*. Ch. 44.

#### **Rozenfel'd**

Many other passages confirm that the same slogan was later interpreted to mean "kill Stalin." Boris Rozenfel'd, Kamenev's nephew (the son of his brother) said that his father and Kamenev had told him that the only way the opposition could come to power was by the "removal (*ustranenie*) of Stalin." (185) This sounds like a reference to the same interrogation of the young Rozenfel'd.<sup>8</sup> In this previously published interrogation Rozenfel'd uses the term *ustranenie* and also the word "terror" (*terror*) to describe his own convictions and those of his father and others about Stalin.

<sup>8</sup> Published in the collection *Lubianka 1922-1936*, pp. 628-631.

#### **Dmitriev**

On April 5, 1936, F.M. Dmitriev, a Trotskyist, confessed that Shemelev, a fellow Trotskyist, had said to him "at the beginning of 1935" that "one of the leaders" of the Trotskyist organization had recently told him that "the leadership of the [Trotskyist] organization considered essential the forcible removal ("*ustranenie*") of Stalin. (225) Shemelev also testified that the direction to use "terrorist" methods to "remove" (*ustranenie*) Stalin came from Smirnov as well. (281, 282).

#### **Birkengof**

We find yet more striking confirmation of the truthfulness of the interrogations contained in this volume in an interrogation of clandestine Trotskyist Aleksandr Il'ich Birkengof of May 23-25, 1936. Birkengof testified that he had been in direct touch with Yuri Gaven, who had himself met with Trotsky personally. Birkengof testified that in December 1932 Gaven communicated the following to him:

Gaven informed me that he had established contact with I.N. Smirnov, leader of the Trotskyist organization in the USSR, that the situation in the organization was tense since Smirnov had reason to think that arrests were imminent, and Gaven specifically told me that Smirnov himself expected to be arrested. ... By the way, I.N. Smirnov really was arrested soon thereafter. (298)

This corresponds exactly to what Sedov reported about Smirnov and his group to Trotsky in his "bloc" letter. Sedov referred to Gaven with a pseudonym. Broué discovered that Trotsky had lied when he denied that he had no contact with Gaven.

Gaven est « Sorokine », comme Holzman est « Orlov », et Smirnov « Kolokoltsev », dans la correspondance de Sedov et de son père.<sup>9</sup>

Gaven is "Sorokin", as Holzman is "Orlov", and Smirnov is "Kolokoltsev", in the correspondence between Sedov and his father.

<sup>9</sup> Broué, "Compléments à un article sur les trotskystes en U.R.S.S." CahLT 24 (1985). Here, Broué concludes that Sedov had met with Gaven.

We discuss Gaven and his testimony in more detail below.

#### **No Fabrication**

The NKVD interrogator tried to get Birkengof to admit that by "removal" Birkengof meant "terror," i.e. assassination. But Birkengof refused to admit this and this refusal was reported in the interrogation transcript. (300) This is good evidence that Birkengof was not forced to confess. Nor did the NKVD forge or fabricate a false interrogation.

#### **B. The Bloc of Trotskyists and other Oppositionists**

We know about the bloc of Trotskyists, Zinovievists, Rightists, and other oppositionists from the Sedov "bloc" letter and the Sedov-Trotsky correspondence in the Harvard Trotsky Archive. Pierre Broué dates this exchange to 1932. The Sedov "bloc" letter refers to the bloc as something that had been in the planning for some time.

This bloc is mentioned in numerous documents published in PiLT2. in late 1932 or very early January 1933 Vasilii Ivanovich Dzhoev informed the GPU of a conversation he had had with childhood friend and current Trotskyist Ilia K. Gassiev. Gassiev informed Dzhoev about the Trotskyists' desire to "remove" (*ubrat'*) the Party leadership.

Dzhoev stated that Lominadze, one of the "other" oppositionists, was also a member of the group and that Zinoviev and Kamenev were leading the "Trotskyist" (sic) group. Each of these details is confirmed in the Sedov-Trotsky correspondence in the TA originally identified by Broué in the Sedov "bloc" letter:

Le [ ... ] (15) est organisé. Il comprend les zinoviévistes, le groupe Sten-Lominadzé et les trotskystes (anciens « ... ») ... La déclaration de Z. et K. (18) sur la faute très grave qu'ils ont commise en 27 a été faite lors de pourparlers avec les nôtres sur le bloc, juste avant la déportation de Z. et de K. (Broué 1980, p.36)

[The bloc] has been organized. In it have entered the Zinovievites, the Sten-Lominadze group and the Trotskyists (former "[capitulators]".... The declaration of Z. and K. concerning their enormous mistake in '27 was made during negotiations with our people concerning the bloc, immediately before the exile of Z and K.

Dzhoev added that Rykov had been "partly" drawn into it, but Bukharin had "not yet" been drawn in. He also stated that the bloc was working in the military, and that their goal was a coup d'état. Dzhoev repeated many of these claims in an interrogation of January 7, 1933, also included in this volume. (25-28)

When arrested and interrogated Gassiev admitted the existence of the underground organization, Lominadze's participation, Rykov's participation in its leadership along with "perhaps" that of Zinoviev and Kamenev (30-31). As we saw above, Lominadze is named in the Sedov-Trotsky correspondence. In his 1980 article Broué speculates that the "droiters" (= Rightists) would probably be Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Broué, 1980, pp. 12-13. In document No. 2 in his Appendix Broué quotes a letter from Trotsky to Sedov that refers to the "droiters." (35-6)

In the light of the much later "Tukhachevsky Affair" it is noteworthy that Gassiev testified that Simion Mikhailovich Budyonny and Mikhail Nikolaevich Tukhachevsky, both later promoted to marshal of the Soviet Union, were "close to us" in their sentiments. (30) When arrested and interrogated in May-June 1937 Tukhachevsky testified at great length about his conspiracy with Trotsky and his followers. We have a great deal of other evidence of his, and the military conspiracy's, ties to the Rights. Thus Gassiev's testimony is confirmed in part by Sedov and Trotsky, while Tukhachevsky's later admissions are confirmed in part by Gassiev. In another chapter in the present book we examine the role of Trotsky in some of the confessions and statements by Tukhachevsky and his co-defendants.

Iagoda's introductory letter to Stalin of January 20, 1933, in which Iagoda revealed that Trotsky had at that time rejected the slogan "*ubrat' Stalina*" (see above) also stated that "Smirnov's group" — that is, the underground

Trotskyists — had also been discussing a "bloc with the Rights." (38) The Sedov-Trotsky "bloc" correspondence confirms this.

#### **Naumov-Lekakh**

In an interrogation dated October 4, 1934 David Borisovich Naumov-Lekakh, a Trotskyist, said that the Trotskyists were trying to unite all oppositionists of whatever stripe who were disillusioned with the Party's political line. (144) He revealed that the bloc with the Rights had been discussed since 1930. The "bloc" exchange between Trotsky and Sedov in the Trotsky Archive confirms that by 1932 the bloc had been under discussion for some time.

Naumov-Lekakh also discussed the Trotskyists' cooperation with Ukrainian Nationalists, who he said were strong in Ukraine than were the Trotskyists. Collaboration of underground Trotskyists with Ukrainian nationalists is also discussed in Ivan Serov's 1956 report to the Molotov Commission, a document we study closely in Furr, *Collaboration*, Chapter 4.

In a subsequent interrogation of December 26, 1934 Naumov-Lekakh mentioned among other matters that the Trotskyists in Moscow were working with the organization of Rights, specifically with Riutin. (141-145)

#### **Bervitskii-Varfolomeev**

Trotskyist Aleksandr Arsen'evich Bervitskii-Varfolomeev, interrogated on October 26, 1934, revealed that during the first half of 1932 he and an associate had discussed the need for "representatives of the Right-Left bloc to establish concrete contacts with Syrtsov." (159)

#### **Lominadze**

Lominadze, also mentioned in Sedov's "bloc" letter, is named many times in these documents. His associate oppositionist Ian Sten's name crops up once, in an interrogation of the Trotskyist Aleksandr Gavrilovich Kolodin of March 8, 1936. Kolodin identifies Sten as a "close acquaintance" of G.F. Dmitriev, leader of Kolodin's Trotskyist group. Dmitriev told Kolodin that

Sten, a former Comintern worker, was in agreement with them. (214) Sedov also names Sten in his "bloc" letter to Trotsky.

Le [ ... ] est organisé. Il comprend les zinoviévistes, le groupe Sten-Lominadzé et les trotskystes (anciens « ... »)

[The bloc] has been organized. In it have entered the Zinovievites, the Sten-Lominadze group and the Trotskyists (former "[capitulators]"). (Broué 1980, p.36)

### **Terror**

On February 28, 1936 Trotskyist Ivan K. Fedotov testified that "terror" — assassination — was the tactic chosen by the Trotskyist underground in the USSR. Fedotov said that he had heard from fellow Trotskyist Kurt Miuller about Trotsky's directive for the use of "terror" against the Party leadership (206). The goal of assassinating Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, and Kirov was to clear the path for the return of Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev to leadership of the country. According to Fedotov, Furtichev had informed him in early 1934 that the bloc was to act in Leningrad, where the bloc was the strongest. Fedotov understood that this meant an attempt to kill Kirov. (207) Kirov was indeed murdered on December 1, 1934.

Interrogated on April 26, 1936 Trotskyist Efrem Mikhailovich Bocharov testified about the activities of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist group. In 1930 the Zinovievist Bakaev told him that the goal of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist group was to take power "and bring Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev to the leadership of the country." (253)

On October 17, 1936 Dmitri Ignat'evich Matveev, a Rightist, testified that in the Spring of 1932 Uglanov, one of the leaders of the Rights, had been carrying on discussions with Kamenev about forming a bloc between the Rights and the "Trotskyist-Zinovievist organization" for "join struggle against the leadership of the VKP(b)." This confirms the Sedov-Trotsky correspondence which Broué dated to 1932. In the "bloc" letter Sedov reported that the bloc with the Zinovievists was confirmed but that the Rights had not yet entered it. (315)

## **Sokol'nikov**

This volume includes one interrogation of Grigorii Iakovlevich Sokol'nikov, who was to be one of the two major defendants in the January 1937 Moscow Trial. There is much of interest in this document, which mainly concerns Sokol'nikov's contacts with British representatives on behalf of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist-Rightist conspiracy. In it Sokol'nikov confirms that this organization planned to bring to power a government consisting of Rykov and Bukharin, (Rightists; Kamenev and Zinoviev (Zinovievists); and Piatakov and himself, Sokol'nikov (Trotskyists). Trotsky would take charge of the Party, though possibly not immediately after the seizure of power since Trotsky was "politically compromised in the eyes of the broad masses," but that Trotsky would assume the Party leadership "as soon as the situation is solidified." (325)

Sokol'nikov's description of the existence and leadership of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist-Rightist conspiracy is confirmed in general terms by the Sedov-Trotsky correspondence about the "bloc" as well as by other evidence. It is yet another example of the general truth that we have no evidentiary reason to believe that the statements made by defendants in the Moscow Trials were fabricated and every reason to conclude the opposite — that they represent what the defendants wanted to say.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> We discuss the important question of Moscow Trial testimony in more detail in Furr, *Amalgams*.

These are the kinds of statements that have been widely dismissed as fabrications by those who contend that the Moscow Trials were frame-ups. In reality, all the evidence we now have tends to confirm that the interrogations and statements made by arrested suspects are genuine and represent what the persons making them wanted to state.

## **Political Activity Continued in Political Isolators**

In his 1980 article announcing the existence of the bloc of Trotskyists, Zinovievists, and other oppositionists, the Sedov "bloc" letter and Sedov's correspondence with Trotsky about the bloc, Pierre Broué claimed that the bloc was "ephemeral" and came to an end early in 1933 when the leaders of



the Trotskyist movement were arrested to be imprisoned in the Verkhneural'sk political isolator. But Broué had *no evidence* that the bloc had come to an end, not that political activity was not possible in the political isolators.

We know that Broué was incorrect. In fact, years later Broué himself admitted that political activity continued in this political isolator. In his obituary of Ante Ciliga, published in 1993 in his own journal *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* Broué wrote:

Arrested in 1930 he was imprisoned in the isolator at Verkhneuralsk where he participated in the life of the 'Bolshevik-Leninist collective.'<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Broué, "Ante Ciliga (1898-1992), *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* no. 50, 1993, 121-122.

A number of Rights and Trotskyites, I.N. Smirnov among them, were imprisoned in this same isolator at the same time as Ciliga. Ciliga was imprisoned at Verkhneural'sk from November 1930 to July 1933. Chapters 4 through 11 of his memoir *The Russian Enigma* testify to the very lively political life there and the privileges the prisoners enjoyed. As Broué himself noted, Ciliga testifies that the factions among the prisoners, including the Trotskyists, continued their activities there.

The documents in PiLT2 show evidence of this political activity. In a report to Stalin dated January 1-3, 1933, Genrikh Iagoda, at the time Vice-Chairman of the OGPU, quotes Trotskyist M. Novikov testifying to the political activity at Verkhneural'sk even before the arrival there of I.N. Smirnov and the Trotskyists arrested and imprisoned at the same time. (32) This corresponds with what Ciliga writes.

In an interrogation dated December 17, 1934, Trotskyist Isai Davidovich Fal'kevich testified about the words of a certain Rappoport, who had recruited him to the Trotskyist organization at the end of 1931:

He also told me that in the political isolator itself the Trotskyists were always fully informed on questions about new instructions from Trotsky and about the activities of Trotskyists in various places. (124)

Interrogated on April 29, 1936, Trotskyist Mikhail Georgievich Safianov testified that at the end of 1935 he and other had been told by Shemelev, who had recruited him in 1933, that "terror" was now necessary against Stalin:

Shemelev set before us in the most frank manner the question of the transition to terrorist forms of struggle against the leadership of the VKP(b) and in the first place against Stalin... He said that this directive came from I.N. Smirnov, who was a supporter of terrorist means of removing [*ustraneniia*] Stalin. (281)

Smirnov had been in the Verkhneural'sk political isolator since early 1933. At the August, 1936, First Moscow Trial Smirnov claimed that he had "done no work," not participated in, the activities of the Trotskyist bloc while in prison.

Therefore we now have a good deal of evidence that Broué was wrong to assume that the bloc of Trotskyists, Zinovievists, and other Oppositionists ended when many of its members were arrested at the beginning of 1933. In fact, there never was any evidence at all to support Broué's contention. Why, then, did he insist upon on?

It appears that Broué's assertion was a "tell." A loyal, lifelong Trotskyist, Broué showed considerable courage in revealing the existence in the Trotsky Archive of the Sedov-Trotsky correspondence that proved that the "bloc" of Trotskyists, Zinovievists, and other oppositionists, had indeed existed, and that therefore Trotsky and Sedov had lied, over and over again, by denying that there was or could have been any such bloc with "capitulators."

Broué could have stolen or destroyed the evidence that Trotsky had lied, and especially the very damning evidence that the "bloc" of Oppositionists had really existed. It was Arch Getty who discovered the evidence that someone had "purged" the Harvard Trotsky Archive of material that incriminated Trotsky. Since then, we have identified more evidence of the "purging" of the archive.

On the basis of the evidence now available, we concluded in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* that the person who did the "purging" was probably Jean van Heijenoort.<sup>13</sup> Broué and van Heijenoort were close friends. In publishing the documentary evidence that the "bloc" had existed despite Trotsky's and Sedov's repeated and fervent denials Broué was not only calling and Sedov liars, but also his friend van Heijenoort.

<sup>13</sup> Furr, Trotsky's 'Amalgams', Chapter Six, pp. 149-156.

Broué certainly knew, and must have feared, the serious implications of this discovery for his commitment to Trotskyism. If "Stalin" — the Soviet prosecution in the Moscow Trials — had been telling the truth about the bloc while Trotsky was lying, anyone might wonder: What else was Trotsky lying about? What other charges made by the Soviet prosecution were true? Did the Soviet prosecution perhaps tell the truth about the bloc's terrorist conspiracies and fascist ties? If Trotsky and Sedov had been lying about the bloc, could they have been lying about these charges too?

For a historian to make a definitive assertion of fact about an historical question of vital importance to himself without any evidence to base it on is a sign that he is facing some critical issue. We assume that Broué asserted that the bloc came to an end with the arrest of I.N. Smirnov and a number of other underground Trotskyists in early January 1933 because he wished to salvage his image of Trotsky and the Soviet Trotskyists as the innocent victims of a frame-up.

### **Phony Capitulations**

Pierre Broué accepted the Soviet contention that I.N. Smirnov and other Trotskyist oppositionists had falsely renounced their oppositionist views and had falsely vowed that they would support the Party's positions — a process that Trotsky and others called "capitulation." Broué even wrote that "everybody" knew that these capitulations were fraudulent, a tactic to continue oppositional activity from a position within the Party itself. (POS 104)

In this instance too Broué failed to trace the implications of his position. For one thing, it means that there is no reason to doubt the admissions by Zinoviev, Kamenev, and many others that they had falsely capitulated. Statements and interrogations in PiLT2 confirm many more false capitulations.

Prior to arresting I.N. Smirnov, leader of the Trotskyist underground in the USSR, and a number of other Trotskyists, Iagoda sent a report to Stalin that includes the following:

According to facts uncovered by our agents, among the former Trotskyists who declared their break with the Opposition at one time or another the group headed by Ivan Nikitich Smirnov, comprising about 200 former active Trotskyists, merits special attention.

This group is essentially the ideological and organizational center of those who supposedly abandoned the Trotskyist opposition and, upon their return from exile and political isolators renewed their counterrevolutionary activity.

The group of Smirnov began its formation at the moment of his declaration of break with the Opposition which he signed together with M. Boguslavskii. This document, despite the fact that it was changed twice by Smirnov after discussion with the Party Control Commission, still remained a convenient cover for Trotskyist hypocrites [literally, "two-faced persons"] ... [T]his document does not contain any qualification of all previous activity of the Trotskyists as counterrevolutionary and contains a number of "rubber" formulations by which a Trotskyist-hypocrite can easily include his disagreements with the Party.

M. Novikov, a former active worker of the underground technique of the Moscow Trotskyist center (exposed as a hypocrite) in his confessions given to the OGPU on April 19, 1930 explained the massive exodus from the Opposition of those Trotskyists imprisoned in the Verkhneural'sk political isolator in this way:

"In arguments with a group of supporters of the Radek-Smilga declaration we were strong ideologically. After that group was freed, there was complete unanimity in the isolator.

The draft of I.N. Smirnov's declaration that we received made a great impression. We thought that Ivan Nikitich was following this political line with L.D.'s (Trotsky's) agreement and we were all eager to take the same line.

I.N. Smirnov organized the exiled Trotskyists to renounce [the opposition] by means of signing this declaration, and openly agitated for a hypocritical capitulation.

In one of his documents Smirnov directly advocated the necessity of making a declaration of renunciation [of the opposition] on the grounds that the longer it was postponed, the more difficult it would be to do.

'We must sign this delcaration. This is the most correct document; there are no others. When people start to write individually, who knows that they will write. .For example, Grinchenko (former member of the Moscow Trotskyist center) wrote that the social composition of the opposition was non-proletarian. By doing this he slandered the whole movement as petty-bourgeois. Undoubtedly, it wasn't..." (32)

Novikov went on to explain that the Smirnov statement did not admit that its own views were anti-Party, but that the Party had begun to carry out the program of the Trotskyists. (32-33)

Instead of composing individual letters of their own, dozens of Trotskyists signed the Smirnov letter. Novikov's — that is, Smirnov's — explanation of this curious fact makes sense. If each Trotskyist had been required to compose a convincing letter to explain his or her political views and how they had changed, to explain why they had joined the Trotskyist opposition and then give their reasons for renouncing it, the Party Control Commission (PCC) — "Stalin" — would have obtained a great deal of information about the Trotskyist movement. They would have been able to compare these many accounts with one another. They would probably have learned many

things, including names that the leaders of the Trotskyist movement preferred to keep secret and other details.

So it appears that Stalin and the Party leadership showed considerable leniency in accepting a collective document instead of insisting upon individual statements and individual decisions about reinstatement to Party membership. With the benefit of hindsight, we can now see that this was a serious error on their part. It greatly facilitated false capitulations, renewed Party membership, and an easy continuation in conspiracy for the Trotskyist underground.

In an interrogation of February 11, 1934, Trotskyist Anna Pavlovna Lifshits admitted that she had given a statement of breaking with the opposition to the PCC in 1931 and said: "This break of mine was not sincere." She met with two others who also knew that her break with the opposition had been hypocritical. (102) Later in the same interrogation Lifshits again mentions her fraudulent renunciation of Trotskyism. (111)

Evidently some Trotskyists did make individual dishonest "breaks" with Trotskyism, perhaps unknown to other Trotskyists. At an interrogation of November 27, 1934, Trotskyist Boris Samoilovich Rappoport-Dar'in stated:

My break with the Trotskyists in the isolator in 1930 was hypocritical, with the goal of continuing counterrevolutionary Trotskyist activity.  
(177)

This tactic may have been designed to create another, more secret level of Trotskyists — those believed by other phony capitulators to have really capitulated.

On March 8, 1936 Aleksandr Gavrilovich Kolodin, a Trotskyist formerly exiled and then allowed to return, stated the following:

Question: After your release from exile did you continue to carry out your Trotskyist activity?

Answer: Yes, even after my exile was over I continued to remain a convinced enemy of the NKP(b) and of Soviet power and remained

with my Trotskyist convictions. I hated the leaders of the NKP(b) and the Soviet government and conducted active Trotskyist work. I rejoined the Party for hypocritical purposes. (212)

All this evidence of false capitulations, which even Broué agreed did take place, discloses a lie or "amalgam" by Trotsky himself. Throughout the 1930s Trotsky continued to proclaim that those who had "capitulated" were his enemies and that he refused to have anything to do with them. Therefore, Trotsky claimed, the Soviet prosecution, press, and representatives generally were lying when they claimed that many of his followers had capitulated dishonestly.

To explain their claims of false capitulation Trotsky resorted to asserting that they had been either tortured or threatened into saying these things. In fact we see that these statements fits the facts, and its was Trotsky, not the Trotskyist defendants at the Moscow Trials, who was lying. Trotsky's lies fooled the Dewey Commission and many others, and still do.

#### **Yuri P. Gaven**

In 1985 Broué announced the discovery in the Harvard Trotsky Archive of evidence that in late September or October 1932 Sedov had indeed met with Yuri Gaven.<sup>14</sup> Broué had discovered evidence in the TA that Trotsky, who had denied any contact with Gaven, had in fact met secretly with him and had probably given him a message for the Trotskyists within the USSR. (POS 105) This was one of the accusations made during the First Moscow Trial. Trotsky and Sedov always firmly denied this and claimed that the Soviet prosecution was lying about this.

<sup>14</sup> Broué, "Compléments à un article sur les trotskystes en U.R.S.S." *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* 24 (1985), 63-72.

PiLT2 contains one interrogation of Gaven dated April 23, 1936. In it Gaven admits to meeting with Sedov in Berlin at the end of 1932, to receiving a letter from him signed by Trotsky, and to handing this letter on to I.N. Smirnov. In this interrogation the NKVD investigators did not ask Gaven about the contents of the letter, only to whom he distributed it. But

the NKVD did not fail to do this. As of October, 2019, we have one further interrogation of Gaven in which he describes this letter to Smirnov as containing only instructions for Trotskyists within the USSR to rejoin the Party, in order to obtain influence in it. We will examine it in a future study.

In an interrogation of May 25, 1936, A.I. Birkengof had quite a lot to say about his contacts with Gaven in Trotskyist work. It was evidently from Gaven that Birkengof had learned about the arrests of I.N. Smirnov and many other underground Trotskyists in early 1933. Birkengof admitted that Gaven had told him that the only way out of the current situation was the "removal" (*ustranenie*) of Stalin. He refused to speculate about what "removal" meant.

We would like to know the contents of Trotsky's letter which was given to Gaven by Sedov and which Gaven then handed on to I.N. Smirnov. In an interrogation of April 29, 1936 Mikhail Georgievich Saf-ianov, a Trotskyist, stated that Gaven had transmitted Trotsky's directives to carry out the "forcible removal" of Stalin.

Question: Did you receive instructions of a terrorist nature from anyone else, other than Shemelev?

Answer: In 1934 Gidlevisky informed me about his visit to Gaven and informed me that Gaven considered the "forcible removal" of Stalin to be absolutely essential, as the most expedient means of struggle under current conditions. Gidlevisky told me that these instructions were received by Gaven from abroad and came from Trotsky. (282)

This does not necessarily mean that the letter Gaven carried to Smirnov in 1932 advocated Stalin's "forcible removal." We have seen that in 1932 Trotsky was hesitant to advocate this. It does appear to mean that by 1934 Gaven, on instructions from Trotsky, was advocating terror against Stalin.

In a report to Stalin of September 9, 1936, Iagoda told Stalin that Trotskyist Gidlevisky had told another Trotskyist (Saf-ianov) that instructions had been received from Trotsky through Yuri Gaven that Stalin must be "removed by force" (*nasil'stvennogo ustraneniia*) (278; 282)



If Gaven or Birkengof had been tortured or forced to falsely confess, why would the text of their interrogations not say that they were advocating terror? This is yet more evidence that the NKVD was not forcing false confessions on the arrested oppositionists.

### **Matveev's Interrogation**

PiLT2 includes one interrogation of Dmitrii Ignat'evich Mateev of October 17, 1936. Matveev was not a Trotskyist but a Rightist. In it, after initially denying everything, Matveev admits that in the fall of 1932, at the Moscow apartment of Uglanov, another Rightist, a meeting was held where Uglanov and others stated that they could no longer rely on economic difficulties to bring the Stalin regime down and therefore had decided to resort to terror. Throughout the interrogation Matveev stoutly denied that he himself agreed with terror, claiming that he left the meeting because he rejected it. The interrogator did not believe Matveev's disavowal of terror but Matveev persisted in his refusal to confess that he supported terror.

We can check this confession in at least two ways. Matveev does affirm that he heard in the spring of 1932 about the negotiations "between the Rightists and the Trotskyist-Zinovievist organization for joint struggle against the Party leadership." He then said that he knew when the bloc had been formed:

Question: From whom did you learn about the bloc of the Rights with the Trotskyist-Zinovievist organization?

Answer: Uglanov told me about the meeting with Kamenev and about the establishment of contact with the Trotskyist-Zinovievist organization during the same spring of 1932. (315)

This is confirmed by the contents of the Sedov "bloc" letter and to Broué's analysis of the Sedov-Trotsky correspondence during 1932. (Broué, 1980)

We can also check the accuracy of Matveev's interrogation by comparing it to the statement by fellow Rightists, a resident not of Moscow but of Leningrad, Valentin N. Astrov. In an important interrogation of January 11,

1937, Astrov said that, together with other young Rightists, Matveev had advocated terrorist methods against the Party leadership since 1931.

MATVEEV said that the main task was to remove (*ubrat'*) Stalin by any means, including terror. (Lubianka 1937-1938 20)

We have studied this statement of Astrov's in some detail in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* and in *Trotsky's Lies*. Astrov lived into the post-Soviet period, until the summer of 1993. Astrov twice wrote that he was treated respectfully by the NKVD and that they had not forced him to invent anything. Moreover, the only statement in his interrogation that he retracted was his assertion that Bukharin had *explicitly* called for the murder of Stalin.

Astrov's retraction of this accusation may well have been false. It was certainly unpopular in the late 1980s, during the "Bukharin boom" when Gorbachev was using Bukharin to portray Stalin as a murderer of innocents, to claim that it was really Bukharin who had been advocating terror. Yet thanks to the memoirs of Jules Humbert-Droz, a Swiss communist and close associate of Bukharin's in the 1920s, we know that Bukharin and some of his supporters were conspiring to murder Stalin as early as 1928.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> See Furr, *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*, Chapter 8, or Furr, *Moscow Trials*, Chapter 8, for a detailed discussion of Humbert-Droz's remarks.

To sum up: In October, 1936, Matveev agreed that in 1932 the Rightists were talking about killing Stalin. But Matveev denied that he himself advocated or agreed with this tactic. On the basis of accusations by his fellow Rightists the NKVD believed Matveev was lying and really had been advocating terror. Matveev stuck to his denial in this interrogation, and the NKVD went on to another subject. Matveev was not compelled in any way to confess to advocating terror. This is yet more evidence that the suspects testified as they chose (whether truthfully or not) and were not forced to make false statements to incriminate themselves and/or others.

Yet Astrov claimed that Matveev had been explicitly advocating terror as early as 1931. And when he had the chance, Astrov refused to recant his

statements to the NKVD, with the exception of his statement that Bukharin had explicitly advocated terror.

### **Trotsky and Terror**

In the early 1990s, not long after the demise of the USSR, Oleg Tsarev and John Costello obtained access to the NKVD file of Alexander Orlov, who had been the resident head of the Soviet NKVD in Republican Spain during the Spanish Civil War, and to certain other NKVD materials. Among those other materials were at least some of the reports sent back to his NKVD handlers by Mark Zborowski, a young NKVD agent who had managed to become a close confidant and coworker of Leon Sedov. In reports from 1937-1938 Zborowski reported that Sedov had urged the assassination of Stalin even while he and Trotsky were publicly denouncing "terror" as a political strategy that Trotsky had never and would never countenance.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Zborowski's reports on Sedov are studied in Furr Amalgams, chapter 13, and Furr, Trotsky's Lies, Chapter 2.

The reports and confessions in PiLT2 contain many references to Trotskyists' plans for "terror" — assassination — against Stalin and Bolshevik leaders. In this section we will examine the claim that instructions to carry out terror came from Trotsky himself.

The February 28, 1936, interrogation of Trotskyist Ivan Kuz'mich Fedotov is important in this connection. Fedotov's is the first mention of the tactic of "terror" of all the confessions and statements of Trotskyists in this collection. He said that in 1935 he had been in touch with Valentin Ol'berg before the latter's arrest and knew about Ol'berg's intention to kill Stalin. Ol'berg was one of the defendants in the first Moscow Trial of August 1936.

Valentin Ol'berg told me that one of his tasks was to get in touch with the Trotskyist organization [in the USSR] and to really [*real'no*] prepare and carry out the murder of Stalin upon Trotsky's order. (205)

But Fedotov said that the Trotskyists had been making terrorist plans before this. He testified that he had worked from November 1933 to the end of January 1934 with a certain Miuller. Miuller was a Trotskyist who was

demoted from leading work in the German Communist Party because of his Trotskyist views but had somehow managed to come to the USSR and was working in an automobile factory in Gorky, where Fedotov met him.

Miuller said that he was in touch with the leadership of the Trotskyist movement in Berlin and was leading Trotskyist work within the USSR. Then Fedotov said:

Miuller told me that the removal (*ustranenie*) of the leadership of the NKP(b) could only be accomplished through terror, and that the transition to terrorist struggle against the Party leadership was being carried out **according to a directive that came straight from Trotsky.**

Fedotov continued:

I in turn told Miuller that there was a Trotskyist terrorist organization in Gorky comprised of reliable persons. (206)

Previous defendants had testified, and even Broué agreed, that Trotsky and Sedov advocated the "removal" (*ustranienie*) of Stalin and the Party and government leadership. But they had refused to state that this meant *forcible* removal. That admission is made for the first time in these documents. Since Edotov said that he had told Miuller that a Trotskyist terrorist organization already existed in Gorky we know that the "turn to terror" had taken place some time earlier than November 1933 — January 1934.

Fedotov said that Furtichev, a prominent Trotskyist with whom he had had talks during February-March 1934, had seconded Miuller's views about the necessity of terror against the Party leaders in order to bring Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev to the leadership of the country. (208)

Later in the same interrogation Fedotov returned to the subject of Valentin Ol'berg's role, which he said he learned of from Ol'berg himself in August 1935.

Ol'berg put before me his the plan of action.

He said that Trotsky considers that our people in the USSR are very busy with propaganda of Trotskyist views. That this will not decide the outcome of our struggle with the Party leadership.

The most basic and most important thing to do is to carefully organize and carry out the murder of Stalin. This will be the alarm that will raise the masses to decide all the other questions and will permit us to concretely decide the question of the return of Trotsky to the leadership of the country. (209)

Miuller's name comes up again in the interrogation of Iakov Abramovich Furtichev dated May 4, 1936. When asked about his discussions with Fedotov concerning terrorist activity Furtichev replied:

For Fedotov terrorist plans were not new. He told me that when was still working at the automobile factory he had met a certain Kurt Miuller, who had at one time been a leader of the German Komsomol but had been removed from this work because of his Trotskyist views. According to Fedotov Miuller gave Fedotov a directive of Trotsky's concerning the necessity of preparing terrorist acts against the Party leaders and in the first place against Stalin. (271)

Kurt Miuller features in a number of additional interrogations of Trotskyists that have been made public recently.

#### **Shemelev**

In his interrogation of April 5, 1936, arrested Trotskyist Aleksandr Ivanovich Shemelev mentioned Trotsky's instructions for terror several times.

I wish to inform the investigation that during previous interrogations I concealed some substantive matters concerning the instructions which I received from Sedov (through Gorovich) and from I.N. Smirnov and A. Safonova (through Adish) ... When I gave my previous confessions about the instructions that Gorovich received in Berlin from Sedov I concealed from the investigation the following: When he returned from Berlin in 1932 Gorovich told me that in Sedov's opinion, along

with diligent work to gather our cadre, it was essential to set and to carry out the main task, which consisted of the removal (*ustranenie*) of Stalin, and that this was Trotsky's directive.

Shemelev was careful to qualify exactly what he heard:

Let me say that I will not guarantee that the word "remove" (*ustranit'*) was used. It is possible that he used the word "liquidate," "remove" (*ustranit'*) or "get rid of" (*ubrat'*). But I remember very well: that the meaning was the necessity of the forcible removal (*nasil'stvennogo ustraneniia*) of Stalin. (221)

This testimony of Shemelev's confirms the report of Mark Zborowski that Sedov was privately advocating terror against Stalin at the same time that he and Trotsky were denying, repeatedly and in the strongest terms, that they would ever consider adopting the tactics of terror. He Shemelev claims that Sedov was advocating violence as early as 1932, though perhaps without being completely explicit. If this is true, it would be another issue about which Sedov and Trotsky were lying, to be added to those that Broué, Getty, and I have discovered.

It is significant that Shemelev did not insist that he had heard any specific word, much less that "terror" or assassination was explicitly mentioned. Instead, he insisted that these were to incriminate Trotsky or Smirnov, why would they not have forced him to be more direct? This is yet more evidence that, in this case, Shemelev's testimony was what he wanted to say, rather than some lie that the investigators were forcing upon him

Shemelev testified that in February or March, 1933, he had had a talk with another Trotskyist, Dmitriev, in the latter's apartment.

Dmitriev of course understood about whom "abroad" we were talking, although I did not explicitly tell him that I meant the contact with Trotsky. He was very interested in my declaration about "occasions" abroad, got quite excited, and asked: "What do they think abroad?" I reply to him more or less as follows: "Abroad they think that the main thing is to liquidate Stalin." Dmitriev very openly answered that he thought the same thing and that he and his group (*ego*

*edinomyshlenniki*, those who agreed with him) had arrived at an analogous conclusion. It was completely obvious for us both that we were talking about the forcible removal (*nasil'stvennogo ustraneniia*) of Stalin. (222)

Shemelev also talked about his contact with the Trotskyist Adish:

Adish was the contact man for the members of our organization of [I.] N. Smirnov and A. Safonova. ... But I concealed from the investigation that Adish transmitted to me Smirnov's and Safonova's evaluation of the situation in the Party and country, and peaking about the perspectives of illegal work told me that Sofonova assigned me to transmit the view of I.N. Smirnov that if we could find a man (or group of men) prepared to deal with Stalin, then under the present circumstances that would be the best outcome, and an act both politically and historically justified. (222-223)

Shemelev then said that he went to meet with Dmitriev again "with the knowledge that Dmitriev and his group were precisely what we needed in order to carry out Sedov's and Smirnov's directive."

From my talks with Dmitriev, especially from the last one, it was completely clear to me that he correctly understood the essence of the directives of Sedov and Smirnov in relation to the liquidation of Stalin. (223)

#### Gurevich

On May 18, 1936 Trotskyist Khaskel' Gesselvich was interrogated. According to the accompanying report to Stalin by Iagoda Gurevich had been named by Valentin Ol'berg.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> This interrogation of Gurevich has recently been published in facsimile

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[http://istmat.info/files/uploads/60578/rgaspi.\\_f.17.\\_op.171.\\_d.224\\_protokol\\_y\\_doprosov\\_gurevicha.pdf](http://istmat.info/files/uploads/60578/rgaspi._f.17._op.171._d.224_protokol_y_doprosov_gurevicha.pdf)

Gurevich's story is an interesting one. He had been arrested in Berlin by the Gestapo, whom Gurevich told that he was a Trotskyist and was going to the

USSR to plan terrorist acts against the Party leadership. Hearing this the Gestapo released him on the condition that he inform them about developments in the Trotskyist organization's terrorist plans. This made Gurevich an agent of the Gestapo and, in the eyes of Soviet authorities, a German spy.

Some writers have dismissed the possibility that any Jew could have been a Gestapo agent, either because no Jew would agree to be one or because the Gestapo would never recruit a Jew. Gurevich's story demonstrates how this kind of thing could happen: blackmail, plus a mutual interest in opposing the Stalin regime, could produce this kind of alliance. Karl Radek, though of Jewish background and a professed internationalist, was so enamored of Germany that, in the words of Nazi diplomat Gustav Hilger, "We could always count on him to help us when it was a question of dealing with difficult situations in our dealings with the Soviet regime."<sup>18</sup> Radek even famously told the violent Nazi Gauleiter Erich Koch, "There are some fine lads in the SA and SS."<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> "... konnten wir immer auf ihn rechnen, wenn es darum ging, uns in schwierigen Situationen bei unseren Verhandlungen mit der Sowjetregierung zu helfen." Gustav Hilger, *Wir und der Kreml: Deutsch-Sowjetische Beziehungen 1918-1941 : Erinnerungen eines deutschen Diplomaten*. Berlin: Athenäum, 1955, 80.

<sup>19</sup> Gerhard Reitlinger, "Last of the War Criminals." *Commentary* 27, 1 (January, 1959), 33.

Gurevich claimed that he had received instructions directly from Leon Sedov in Berlin:

Frida Grebe<sup>20</sup> knew that I was in contact with the Trotskyist organization in Berlin and in Leipzig, and knew about **my contact with Leon Sedov**, and also knew that Mikhail Bykhovskii and I had an assignment from the Trotskyist organization to prepare and to carry out in the Soviet Union terrorist acts against the Party leaders.



... Yes, I must admit that ... at the beginning of June [1933] **one of the Gestapo workers** questioned me concerning the question of my Trotskyist activities and contacts in Germany. I admitted at this interrogation that **I was a member of the Trotsky organization and was in contact in my activity with Sedov, Ol'berg, Fridman, Bykhovskii, and others**, and that **I was assigned by the organization to go to the USSR in order to prepare terrorist acts against the leaders of the Party.** (289)

<sup>20</sup> Gurevich's wife.

In the same interrogation of October 20, 1936 N.I. Gordon stated that in 1933 he had heard directly from Beloborodov, one of the leaders of the Trotskyist group in the USSR whose senior leader was I.N. Smirnov, that Trotsky had urged a "transition" to terrorist acts against Stalin and those associated with him:

According to Beloborodov, Smirnov, Mrachkovskii, and Ter-Vaganian formed the Trotskyist center and were in direct contact with Trotsky. **Smirnov maintained the contact with Trotsky.** Beloborodov said that Trotsky firmly insisted upon the transition to decisive actions in the struggle against Stalin. I asked Beloborodov what that means — that is, how should these active measures find expression? Beloborodov answered: "I means the transition to terrorist acts, first of all against Stalin, and then also against his closest associates." At the same time Beloborodov said that although this really is the most extreme form of struggle, we had no other way out, because **we could not rely on the masses**, and any further delay would mean the strengthening of Stalin's position. (321)

Smirnov was arrested during the first few days of January, 1933. This means that Trotsky had begun to advocate the murder of Stalin by sometime in 1933 at the latest.

This corresponds with what Gaven had told Birkengof in early 1933. It also corresponds with what Radek testified at the January, 1937, Moscow Trial about the letter he received from Trotsky in February to early March, 1932. Birkengof refused to say that Gaven had specifically recommended

"removing" Stalin by violence. Radek testified that in his letter Trotsky did not explicitly mention violence, but that he, Radek, understood that violence was what was meant since there was no other way of getting rid of the Party leadership.

### **Trotskyist Involvement in the Murder of Sergei Kirov**

When Sergei Mironovich Kirov, the First Secretary of the Leningrad city and oblast' Party, was murdered on December 1, 1934, the crime was soon traced to an underground Zinovievist group. These men were quickly arrested, interrogated, tried, convicted, and shot. In January, 1935, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others in Moscow were tried and convicted of knowing about the existence of this Leningrad Zinovievist group and not informing the authorities. They were sentenced to prison.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> See Furr, *The Murder of Sergei Kirov*, for a thorough discussion of this and related conspiracies.

At the end of December 1934 Trotsky published some articles in which he claimed that his name had come up because the Stalin regime was trying to pin the blame on him since he, Trotsky, was the more important figure. We have studied Trotsky's writings about the Kirov murder in detail in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* and *Trotsky's Lies*.

We know Trotsky lied in these writings because we know from Sedov's "bloc" letter that he was already in a bloc with the Zinovievists, among others. Yet Trotsky always publicly denied it. At that time (1934-1935) the Soviet authorities did not accuse Trotsky of direct complicity in the murder of Kirov. Nor did they yet know about the bloc that had been formed in 1932. The Zinovievists did not reveal that they were in a bloc with the Trotskyists.

The question arises whether the Trotskyists, and Trotsky himself, were involved in the planning of Kirov's murder and if so, to what extent. This was one of the charges at the first Moscow Trial, the "Zinoviev-Kamenev" trial, of August, 1936. Until the publication of this collection we did not

have other evidence that the Trotskyists and Trotsky himself were accomplices to Kirov's murder.

Trotskyist Ivan Aleksandrovich Maslennikov, interrogated on April 26, 1936, testified that he knew from another Trotskyist that the Trotskyists in Leningrad were in touch with the Zinovievists who murdered Kirov and that the Trotskyists had been planning similar acts.

I did not know about any plans to carry out terrorist acts. I knew only that the Trotskyist organization had set for its goal the murders of members of the Politburo and of Stalin above all ... As soon as December 1934, just two or three days after the murder of S.M. Kirov, in the room of the Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Nilender told me that Kirov's murder had been organized by "our people" (i.e. the Trotskyists).

... [F]rom my talk with Nilender I understood that the preparation of the terrorist act against S.M. Kirov had been known to Nilender.

Question: What specifically did Nilender tell you about the contact of your Trotskyist counterrevolutionary organization with the participants in the murder of S.M. Kirov?

Answer: Nilender did not tell me anything about this directly, but from his words I very clearly understood that our terrorist organization was in contact with the Leningrad group. (249-250)

In his interrogation of May 4, 1936, Furtichev testified about the connection between the Trotskyists and Zinovievists in the murder of Kirov:

... In the spring of 1934 Bocharov told me that he had heard from Bakaev that the Trotskyist-Zinovievist organization was planning to murder Stalin in Moscow and Kirov in Leningrad, and were forming special terrorist groups for this purpose. (272)

On May 27, 1936, Moisei Naumovich Iakovlev, a Zinovievist, confessed that the Zinovievists had ties with the Trotskyists. In June 1934 (305),

Kamenev had told him that the Zinovievist and Trotskyist groups were united.

Kamenev said that the union of the Zinovievist organization, headed by me, with the Trotskyist group of Zaidel' fully corresponded with the plans of the Moscow Zinovievist organization. At the same time Zinoviev told me that on this same basis, terrorist struggle against the Party leadership, the Zinovievist center had long since united with the Trotskyist organization of I.N. Smirnov — Mrachkovskii.

Question: Did Kamenev tell who personally was in the united Zinovievist-Trotskyist center?

Answer: Kamenev said that in the united center of the Zinovievist-Trotskyist organization were Zinoviev, himself — Kamenev, Bakaev, Smirnov, Ter-Vaganian and Mrachkovskii. (306-307)

In the interrogation cited above (October 20, 1936) Gordon said the following:

In 1934 I met twice with Glebov-Avilov ... In an outburst of anger Glebov-Avilov told me that the Stalin regime could not be removed (*ustranit'*) by democratic means, some other determined measures were necessary. And then Glebov told me that direct orders had been received from the Trotskyist-Zinovievist center in Moscow to prepare terrorist acts against the Party leaders and that we should start with Stalin. (322)

Thus we now have a good deal of testimony that the Trotskyists were accessories to the murder of Kirov. This confirms the testimony at the First Moscow Trial of August 1936, where it is one of the main charges against the defendants. It was also a major charge against some of the defendants in the Second Moscow Trial or Trotskyist trial of January, 1937.

### **Trotskyists and Terror**

We have already noted that the first confession in these documents in which a Trotskyist acknowledges that the goal of the Trotskyists in the USSR was "terror" — the assassination of Soviet leaders — is that of Ivan K. Fedotov

of February 28, 1936. However, these must be earlier confessions by Trotskyists, for Nikolai Ezhov's draft report to the Central Committee plenum of June 1935, "On the CEC Apparatus and Comrade Enukidze"<sup>22</sup> had already stated that this was the Trotskyists' goal.

<sup>22</sup> An earlier draft of this report with the same title dated April 3, 1935 was printed in 2003 in a volume of documents. (Lubianka 1922-1936 No. 518) This document was not called a "report" but rather a communication to all members and candidate members of the Party, and bore the names of Stalin, Molotov, and Kaganovich as well as that of Ezhov. It concerned only the terrorist groups, including Trotskyist groups but also Zinovievists, in the Kremlin, the "Kremlin Affair" of 1935. None of the quotations cited above are in this earlier version, which is therefore really a different document despite its identical title.

Concerning the direct participation of the Trotskyist center abroad in the organization of terrorist work in the USSR speak the confessions of the leader of the Trotskyist terrorist group of military workers Cherniavskii. Cherniavskii who, as we stated above, during his trip abroad established contact with active Trotskyists, confessed during the investigation about the task which he received from the Trotskyist Raskin:

"...Raskin stated that in the USSR the Trotskyists have valuable cadre and that inside the country there is a favorable situation for the development of Trotskyist work.

In 1933 Raskin told me that for Russia the Trotskyists had the task of the largest possible development of separate groups of sympathizers.

Together with that work it was necessary to create cadres of persons capable of the most determined and extreme forms of struggle with the Party. He explained to me that he considered that it was essential to create terrorist groups for the murder of Stalin and other leaders of the Party, that this activity could be the most practical means for the return of Trotsky to the helm of state (*k kormilu pravlenia*)." (185)

Ezhov quotes another Trotskyist, Novozhilov, who also quoted Cherniavskii on the necessity of murdering Stalin. (187)

Ezhov quotes other excerpts in this draft report from confessions of arrested Trotskyists about the goal of terror.

... [T]he Trotskyist Azbel' described the ideological plan of his organization in this way:

"All the dissatisfied elements in the country are tightened. It is possible to stimulate the dissatisfied elements to active struggle against the leadership of the Party only by means of terror. We saw all the evil was in Stalin and therefore we believed that by means of his murder, that of the most influential and deciding person in the country, we could cause confusion among the current leadership of the Party and stir up to the struggle all those elements dissatisfied with the existing regime." (186)

This report of Ezhov's is called a "draft" (*proekt*). We don't know whether a final draft based upon it was presented to the June 1935 CC Plenum. It does show that by June 1935 the NKVD had been told of terrorist plans by Trotskyist groups.

**Valentin Ol'berg**

According to Arch Getty

Sometime in the first days of 1936, Ezhov had received a mandate from Stalin to reopen the Kirov assassination investigation. He [Ezhov] later said that for Stalin something "did not seem right" about that investigation, and Ezhov was charged with taking a new look.

... His [Ezhov's] train of investigations began with the arrest on 5 January 1936 of V.P. Ol'berg, who within a month confessed to being a Trotskyist agent dispatched to the USSR by Trotsky to organize the assassination of Stalin. (189-90)

Here Getty is following the account in the Gorbachev-era journal *Izvestia TsK KPSS*, a journal devoted to Gorbachev's dishonest attempt to attack

Stalin by declaring that no conspiracies ever existed.

Thanks to the publication of PiLT2 we now have additional information about Ol'berg and his activities that generally corroborates what Getty wrote. The first mention of Ol'berg and his conspiracy in this volume comes not from Ezhov but from Iagoda, at that time still the commissar of Internal Affairs (= head of the NKVD). These documents are from the NKVD archive, where materials gathered by Ezhov, who was not yet head of the NKVD, might not have been filed.

On February 28, 1936, Iagoda sent to Stalin an interrogation of Ivan Kuz'mich Fedotov, a Party member, clandestine Trotskyist, and head of the Gorky Pedagogical Institute. Fedotov confessed that he had hired Ol'berg as a teacher after Ol'berg had approached him in mid-August, 1935, and had made it clear to him that he had been sent by "the old man" (*starik*), the name Trotskyists called Trotsky, and had told Fedotov about the latter's ties with other Trotskyists.

Fedotov continued:

When I asked him who he was this unknown person said his name was Valentin Ol'berg and told me that he had arrived in the USSR illegally on a false Honduran passport with **assignments from Trotsky, whose emissary he was.**

To my question whether he had any contacts in Gorky V. Ol'berg told me that he had first sent his brother Pavel Ol'berg, an engineer and a Trotskyist, to Gorky at the end of 1934, in case he needed to explain his arrival in Gorky by the desire to visit his brother.

Valentin Ol'berg told me that among his assignments was to contact the Trotskyist organization and **really** prepare and carry out the murder of Stalin as ordered by Trotsky. (205)

As we stated above, aside from Ezhov's report of June 1935 this is the first mention of terrorist goals in this collection of documents. It is also confirmation of Ol'berg's own confessions which apparently began "a month after his arrest."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> See Izv. TsK KPSS No. 8, 1989, p. 82.

As we have already seen, Fedotov testified that he had learned in 1933 from Kurt Miuller that Trotsky had given the order to murder Stalin (206). We also saw above that Fedotov said that in 1933 he had told Miuller that there was a "Trotskyist terrorist organization" in Gorky. The word "really" (*real'no*) which Fedotov said that Ol'berg had used probably reflects the fact that this organization had not yet done anything to fulfill its task of killing Stalin.

Getty continued:

His [Olberg's] wife testified that Ol'berg had received money and false passports from Trotsky's son Sedov and other Trotskyists in Paris ad Prague. (190)

Getty must have seen this in an archival document as it is not in the issue of *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* he cites in the same note. The present volume, PiLT2, contains a single interrogation of Ol'berg's wife Betti, dated April 26, 1936. It contains a number of important matters.

For one thing it states that Betti Ol'berg was a Honduran citizen. In fact she was a German citizen. Further interrogations of Betti Ol'berg and of other Trotskyists, revealed that she and her husband bought the false Honduran passports with the combined help of the Nazi Gestapo and of Trotsky's son Leon Sedov. Clearly the investigation had not discovered this fact at the time of this interrogation. We now have more interrogations of Valentin Ol'berg, Betti Ol'berg, and other Trotskyists, and will examine them in a future study.

Here are some excerpts from the interrogation of Betti Ol'berg in the volume. It is clearly not the one seen by Getty since it does not discuss the obtaining of false passports and money.

In reality Kurt Rovel, whom I knew to be a Trotskyist, was also connected in Trotskyist work while still in Berlin with my husband Valentin Ol'berg, and had come to the USSR at the beginning of October, 1935, with Trotskyist assignments.



Kurt Rovel was in contact at that time with me and with the Trotskyist Fella Slomowitz. Fella Slomowitz was in turn in contact with Sedov.

Fella Slomowitz was assigned by Sedov to send Kurt Rovel to the Soviet Union with instructions to contact my husband Valentin Ol'berg in Gorky, Karl Boshtedt in Moscow, and Gurevich in Leningrad. Kurt Rovel was supposed to alert all three men in Sedov's name to the necessity of carefully organizing and carrying out terrorist acts against Stalin in Moscow and Zhdanov in Leningrad.

The terrorist act against Stalin was to be prepared, according to Sedov's instructions, by the terrorist group in Gorky headed by Valentin Ol'berg and by persons connected to Karl Boshtedt in Moscow.

Gurevich and the terrorists connected to him in Leningrad were to prepare the terrorist act against Zhdanov.

The murders of Stalin and Zhdanov were intended for the May Day demonstrations of 1935. Kurt Rovel was supposed to alert Ol'berg, Boshtedt and Gurevich about this. (251)

In a confession of April 25, 1935, Mark L'vovich Elin, Party Secretary of the town of Dzerzhinsk in the Gorky region, admitted to obtaining a job for Ol'berg. Evidently this means that Fedotov had to get Party approval for Ol'berg since the latter was to teach the history of the revolutionary movement.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Russian Wikipedia page on Ol'berg at [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ольберг,\\_Валентин\\_Павлович](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ольберг,_Валентин_Павлович)

This volume also contains one interrogation of Pavel Ol'berg dated My 5, 1936. He was Valentin Ol'berg's brother and a chemist also employed in Gorky.

Question: When did Valentin Ol'berg join the German Communist Party?

Answer: In about 1928.

Question: And the Trotskyist organization?

Answer: From 1929 to 1931-32, that is until he was expelled from the Party, he carefully concealed his contact with Trotsky and Sedov. He was expelled after it was discovered that he was a Trotskyist. ...

Question: What were Valentin Ol'berg's political views before joining the Communist Party, that is before he finished gymnasium in Brunswick (*Braunshweig*)?

Answer: He was a confirmed monarchist...

Question: How long did Ol'berg live in Prague?

Answer: He lived in Prague from the summer of 1933 to the end of 1934. About that time he obtained a Honduran passport and, as I have stated in my earlier confessions, he went to the USSR in order to organize a terrorist act against Stalin, upon the instructions that he had received from Leon Sedov.

Question: Did he go directly to the USSR from Prague?

Answer: No, at first he went to Berlin, where he remained for 2-3 months, and then from Berlin he went to the USSR ...

Question: According to your confession, first, V. Ol'berg did not return to Germany in 1933 because he feared repression. Second, he lived in Prague as a political emigrant from Germany. Why did he then go from Prague to Berlin again? We ask you to tell the truth.

Answer: I admit that my confessions were untruthful. I concealed from the investigation the fact that I knew that **Valentin Ol'berg had contact with the German secret police (Gestapo).**

Question: Who told you about this?

Answer: Valentin Ol'berg informed me.

Question: Why did he tell you?

Answer: When Valentin Ol'berg arrived in the USSR in March, 1935, I asked him repeatedly in conversations with him why he was not fearful of returning to Berlin from Prague. At first he was silent about this, answered me with empty phrases such as "you will know everything in time." At that time, as I have said in previous confessions, I was actively helping V. Ol'berg to prepare a terrorist act, bringing him a weapon from Gorky to Moscow, and Valentin Ol'berg treated me with great trust. One time when I asked V. Ol'berg again how it was that he risked to go to Berlin and was not afraid for his wife Betti who was even then in Berlin, **he told me that he had ties to the Gestapo ...**

Question: Relate in detail everything that Valentin Ol'berg told you.

Answer: He told me the following: Soon after the fascists came to power in 1933 he was called to the Gestapo. During the fairly length interrogation and after threats of a severe beating and of then being sent to a concentration camp Valentin Ol'berg confessed in detail about how Trotsky and Sedov were sending him to the USSR for underground work, they offered him to collaborate with the Gestapo, and he agreed.

Question: What assignment did Valentin Ol'berg receive from the Gestapo?

Answer: The Gestapo confirmed Leon Sedov's assignment about the necessity of travelling to the USSR to make contact with the Trotskyist underground. After he had completed this assignment Valentin Ol'berg was to receive further instructions from the Gestapo ...

Question: What else?

Answer: During his first trip to the USSR in 1933 Valentin Ol'berg was not able to contact the Trotskyist organization and get himself settled in the USSR. **Then he went to Prague, from where he confirmed his contact with the Gestapo. When he received the assignment from Sedov in 1934 to go to the USSR in order to prepare a terrorist act**

**against Stalin, he informed the Gestapo about it.** Then he received an assignment from the Gestapo to accept this assignment [from Sedov] and before he went to the USSR to go to Berlin for instructions.

Question: Who helped V. Ol'berg obtain a Honduran passport in Berlin?

Answer: The Gestapo helped him get the passport. He received the money to buy the passport, the sum of 13,000 Czech crowns, from Leon Sedov. Besides that, before his trip to the USSR he also obtained money from the Gestapo. He did not tell me how much he received from the Gestapo. (274-5)

In his interrogation of May 18, 1936 already referred to above Gurevich admitted that he had told the Gestapo that he was a member of the Trotskyist organization and was in contact with Sedov, Ol'berg, and others. When the Gestapo questioned him about their plan to organize terror Gurevich told him that Ol'berg had already entered the USSR and that others were to follow. Then the Gestapo proposed that he also collaborate with them. (289)

Gurevich revealed that the underground Trotskyist group also planned to assassinate Andrei Zhdanov, who had replaced the murdered Sergei Kirov as First Secretary of the Leningrad Party.

I was cautioned by the Gestapo employee that as someone directly connected with the terrorist plot I must not have direct contact with the couriers who arrived in the USSR. This contact would be maintained through Frida Grebe. ... Through Grebe, and in connection with my assignment, I also gave to the Gestapo information about the preparation of the Trotskyist organization in Leningrad for a terrorist act against Zhdanov. (290)

## **Trotskyist Terror**

During 1936 the number of underground oppositionists uncovered and arrested by the NKVD increased dramatically as more and more of those

arrested named others. Many of these arrested oppositionists admitted that they were involved in terrorist — assassination — conspiracies. We will cite some examples here.

As we have seen, it was in late May, 1936, that Birkengof confessed that in February, 1933, Gaven had told him that the "forcible *ustranenie*" (removal) of Stalin was the only possible course of action. In the confession of May 27, 1936,<sup>25</sup> cited above Moisei N. Iakovlev admitted that the Trotskyist and Zinovievist underground were united in Leningrad. He further admitted involvement in terror plots:

Kamenev came to Leningrad in June, 1934. Kamenev and I were connected by our mutual counterrevolutionary activity in the Zinovievist organization and I went to him to tell him about the situation in the Leningrad organization and to get from Kamenev directives for future work.

Kamenev listened to me and discussed with me the situation in the Leningrad organization and then gave me the decision of the center about organizing struggle against the Party and government leaders by means of terror.

He asked me what I thought about this and when he had received my positive reply he made a direct proposal about the necessity of preparing a terrorist act against Kirov in Leningrad and told me that at the same time the Moscow organization was preparing an attempt on Stalin ...

Kamenev told me that under the present circumstances the only possible method of struggle against Stalin was terror. Any other avenue of struggle, Kamenev said, would inevitably mean that they would smash us. The only chance for success lay in terror. For this reason, while we still had the forces, we had to use this last remaining means. (304)

<sup>25</sup> This interrogation is also printed in Lubyanka 1922-1936, pp. 759-763.

Iakovlev went on to discuss the plan to kill Kirov, saying that Kamenev had asked him directly whether he was in touch with the underground Zinovievist group of Kotolynov-Rumiantsev in Leningrad. This was the group that did carry out the murder of Kirov on December 1, 1934. (305)

On June 23, 1936, Efim A. Dreitser, later a defendant in the August, 1936, "Zinoviev-Kamenev" Moscow Trial, confessed that in 1934 Mrachkovskii, one of the Trotskyist leaders and also a defendant in the same trial, had directed him to organize "battle groups" (*boevikh grupp*) to prepare terrorist acts against Party leaders. The trial transcript states that this happened in the spring of 1933, not in 1934, but otherwise has all this information (August 19, 1936, evening session). This may be the reason these confessions are not included in the present volume.

We have cited a number of other terror confessions by Trotskyists in other chapters in the present book.

## Chapter 2. Trotsky and the Nazis, Fascists, and Ukrainian Nationalists

### Introduction

We have seen that there is a lot of evidence that the documents in PiLT2 are not the result of fabrication but represent what those under interrogation chose to testify. Soviet authorities did not attempt to force these prisoners to lie.

In *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* and *The Moscow Trials as Evidence* we have devoted a lot of attention to verifying the Moscow Trials testimony. We found that the Moscow Trials testimony is "genuine" — a shorthand way of saying that whenever we can check a statement made by a defendant in the Moscow Trials against independent evidence, it turns out that the defendant's statement represents what he chose to say. Usually they stated the truth. Where we can show that defendants lied, in each case they did so in order to make themselves appear *less* guilty, not more.

In the previous chapter we studied the materials in PiLT2 with a view to checking and verifying the statements made there whenever possible. The result was the same: these materials are "genuine" in that they reflect what those who made them wished to say. We have excellent evidence that the NKVD was not fabricating them in any way.

Therefore, to the extent that Piatakov's testimony in his Statement to Ezhov agrees with statements in PiLT2 we can conclude that Piatakov's statements in that document are also genuine — that they represent what Piatakov chose to testify. We analyze Piatakov's Statement separately in another chapter of the present book.

### "Against Stalin All Means Are Good"

In his confession of October 17, 1936 D.I. Mateev said that at a meeting of the Rights in the fall of 1932 (314) Chesnokov, a fellow Rightist, had

stated "against Stalin all means are good." (315) This is what Trotsky told Piatakov during their meeting in Norway:

"Remember, **in this struggle all means are good** and every ally is useful. Here we must not stand on ceremony and live by old memories." (LD 270)

The Rights were in the political bloc with the Trotskyists.

### **Opposition Ties with German Firms by Trotsky's Order**

In his confession of October 14, 1936 Aleksei Aleksandr Shestov, later a defendant at the Second Moscow Trial, the "Piatakov-Radek" trial, of January 1937) stated that he worked with only one German firm, Deilmann (Frölich-Klüpfel-Deilmann) "on director orders from Sedov and Smirnov." (331). Deilmann was to maintain contact between the Trotskyists in the Kuzbass, where Shestov worked as an engineer, and the Trotskyists abroad.

This was confirmed by the interrogation of Mikhail Stepanovich Stroilov of October 16, 1936, who had been told that the Deilmann firm "helped the Trotskyists abroad in their work." (350; 353) He had learned in Moscow that Iurii Piatakov favored the German firms "Borsig" and "Demag" even though their products were much more expensive than those of other firms.

From talks in Berlin with different comrades: Zubkov of Soiuzugol' in the Donbass; Nekrasov of Soiuzzoloto; with an engineer from Solikamsk who was working under the direction of a commission from Glavkhim—I can't recall his name but I know him very well by his face—I learned that such German firms as "Borzig" and "Demag" for some reason enjoyed Piatakov's special favor. These firms received large orders for the delivery to the Soviet Union of compressors, cranes, compacting machinery, pumps, etc., at prices no less than 25% above the bids of other, no less solid firms. The compressors of the "Borzig" firm were 20% more expensive than those of other German firms. The seemed very strange to many people, and some were even indignant.



In one official meeting in Piatakov's office in Berlin one of the officials said that "Borzig" and "Demag" were very expensive firms and couldn't we avoid them. Piatakov nervously interrupted him and with malice threw out the following phrase: "You do not understand a thing. You forget that the most important thing is quality."

I remember that one engineer from Solikamsk complained to me that the orders for lifting machines were given exclusively to the "Demag" firm by Piatakov's directive and that he very much regretted throwing the 20%-25% of the cost of the lifting machines out the window, and said: "I don't understand why Piatakov has this inexplicable and strange love for the "Demag" firm. (333)

This corresponds to what Piatakov revealed about the origins of this arrangement.

Also in 1931 about 3 weeks after my first meeting with Sedov I.N. Smirnov told me that despite the fact that we had agreed not to meet, Sedov wanted me to meet with him again and that he, Sedov, would await me the following day at the same place and time.

The next day I went to the same café. This time our talk was brief. Sedov immediately raised the question of money. At first he said, "You understand, Yuri Leonidovich, that for this work we need money. Can you get money?" I answered that I had no possibility at that time. Then Sedov said that he had such possibilities but that it would be hard to do it without my help. He wanted me to give as many orders as possible to the firms "Demag" and "Borsig" and not to fuss over prices; he himself would arrange with the firms about these conditions.

**"Obviously you will have to pay too much, but the money will go for our work,** since we have some kind of agreement with representatives of these firms." I did this. (LD 245)

In *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* and in *The Moscow Trials As Evidence* we quoted from American mining engineer John D. Littlepage's writings in his articles in the *Saturday Evening Post* and his book *In Search of Soviet Gold*. Littlepage refers to and thereby confirms Piatakov's confession. For example, Littlepage, wrote:

Among other things, the commission in Berlin was buying several dozen mine hoists, ranging from 100 to 1,000 horse-power. . . . The commission asked for quotations on the basis of pfennigs per kilogram. After some discussion, the German concerns later mentioned in Pyatakov's confession reduced their prices between 5 and 6 pfennigs per kilogram. When I studied these proposals, I discovered that the firms had substituted cast-iron bases weighing several tons for the light steel provided in the specifications, which would reduce the cost of production per kilogram, but increase the weight, and therefore the cost to purchaser.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John D. Littlepage with Demaree Bess, "Red Wreckers in Russia," *SEP* January 1, 1938, p. 53 col. 4.

Littlepage confirms Piatakov's "sweetheart deals" with the German firms. His account is the strongest kind of confirmation of Piatakov's testimony.

### **Trotsky and the Germans**

Piatakov made it clear that Trotsky felt it was essential to make agreements with Germany and Japan if the Opposition was to have any chance either of retain power, if it managed to seize power through its own efforts, or of taking power of its own efforts proved insufficient to seize power.

Trotsky said that in the struggle with Stalin we can in no way ignore relations between governments. Once we understand that Stalin's scheme of building socialism in one country is an empty and dangerous scheme, then we too in our struggle with Stalin must not slide to the position of "one country."

This struggle inevitably is interconnected with our relations with capitalist states. It would be stupid to think that it is possible to assume power without securing a benevolent attitude of the most important capitalist governments, especially of the most aggressive ones, such as the present governments of Germany and Japan. It is completely essential even now to have contact and agreements with these governments. He, Trotsky, has taken the necessary steps in this regard.

He demanded from Radek and Sokol'nikov, who had the requisite possibilities, to put out feelers for the essential contact along these lines with the official representatives of these powers, and to support whatever he, Trotsky, was carrying out in practice.

In this connection, as I seem to remember, Radek told me about some kind of conversations of his with Germans (I cannot recall the names of these Germans), from whom it was clear that Trotsky had made some arrangements with the German government. (LD 258)

Of course, to reach agreements with Germany alone would be risky, since without a corresponding English and French counterweight Germany would put feet on the table and it would be very tough for us. Therefore in his practical steps he, Trotsky, is carrying out simultaneous preparatory work in different directions.

Concerning Germany, these matters are essentially settled:

He, Trotsky, had secured a favorable attitude of the German fascist government in case the bloc comes to power.

Of course this favorable attitude was not due to any special sympathy towards the bloc but to real interests.

At the basis of the agreement lies an appeal to the German government to help the bloc come to power. On his part Trotsky promised in the event of coming to power to make very concrete concessions, stipulated in advance, to Germany. (LD 267)

In his October 16, 1936 interrogation Stroilov testified that he had worked with German agents since 1932. This work was coordinated with Shestov, for the Trotskyists.

Sommeregger suggested that I put Shebesto in contact with the Trotskyist Shestov, who was supposed to give practical help to German diversionist agents on the spot... I did not personally tell Sommeregger and Fless about my talks with Shestov. It was Sommeregger who told me Shestov was a Trotskyist. (353)

On October 21, 1936, Vladimir Mikhailovich Andreev was interrogated by NKVD investigators. A former Tsarist officer and mining engineer, Andreev was a member of a fascist organization that worked with Trotskyists. He had been recruited into this fascist organization by a certain Peshekhonov, an engineer whom Andreev identified as having been involved in the Shakhty affair. A certain Peshekhonov is indeed mentioned three times in the published materials on the Shakhty trial of 1928.<sup>2</sup> Andreev described Peshekhonov as a fervent admirer of Hitler.

<sup>2</sup> *Shakhtinskii protsess 1928 g. Podgotovka, provedenie, Itogi. Kniga 1*. M.: ROSSPEN, 2011, pp. 400, 407, 408.

He told me that our organization was founded by the Germans and that all our subversive work was carried out under direct orders that came from Germany. Then he told me that the Germans did not only organize and direct our work by participated in it themselves actively and practically. "We are working for the Germans," said Peshekhonov, "for today Germany is the only country we can rely on as a force opposing the communist dictatorship. We must do whatever we can to help turn this opposition into active invasion." (375)

In September, 1936, Peshekhonov told him about a setback suffered by his fascist organization:

In our counterrevolutionary group were, in addition, the following persons: the director of the "Central" mine Noskov, the chief of the 6<sup>th</sup> section of the mine Shubin, and the chief of the 4<sup>th</sup> section, Kurov. ...

Question: What did Peshekhonov tell you about them?

Answer: He said that it would now be harder for me to do my work since a very hard blow had been dealt against our c-r group. I asked: What blow? Peshekhonov answered that while I had been on leave Noskov and Shubin were no longer in our group and Kurov had to temporarily stop all c-r work because he was also under suspicion. I was very surprised since, hearing the names Noskov, Shubin, and Kurov, I recognized them as members of the Party. **I said to Peshekhonov: "They are communists, aren't they?" Peshekhonov**

**answered me: "They are not communists, but Trotskyists, and communists and Trotskyists are as different from one another as day from night."** I still did not understand Peshekhonov and asked him to explain.

Then Peshekhonov told me that the Trotskyists played an especially active role in our organization. In their hostility and vengeance against the Party they would stop at nothing and were connected with our organization through Stroilov and together with s were carrying out an active role against the Party and against construction in the country. Then he told me that during my leave (I had been on leave between the beginning of June and the end of August) the Trotskyist activity of Noskov and Shubin had been exposed and both had been expelled from the Party and removed from work. Kurov was also in danger and in the interest of self-preservation he had to temporarily remove himself from c-r work. (377)

Andreev went on to describe some of the sabotage carried out by this join fascist-Trotskyist group, including the following:

Question: The explosion of September 23, as a result of which 9 miners were killed and 15 injured — was that committed by your fascist-Trotskyist group?

Answer: Yes, it's true, the explosion of September 23 was the act of our fascist-Trotskyist group. (379)

This is consistent with Piatakov's testimony about the Trotskyist activities in the Kuzbass:

3/ To Shestov, whom I did not know personally but had heard that he was a reliable person, I told Trotsky's policies, although I knew that he already knew everything from I.N. Smirnov.

To Shestov I entrusted the resurrection of the organization in the Kuzbass. I brought to Shestov's attention that there was one of Trotsky's loyal men — N.I. Muralov, that Vladimir Kossior was also there somewhere, and that he should, while observing the necessary

caution, see who of the Trotskyists in Siberia could be drawn into the organization. I told Shestov that the basic thrust of his work in the Kuzbass was sabotage and that for this work he would have to attract not only Trotskyists but also persons of anti-Soviet orientation from the engineering and technical personnel. (LD 244)

### **The Trotskyists' Bloc with Ukrainian Nationalists**

On November 15, 1934 Pavel Postyshev, first secretary of the Communist Party of Khar'kov city and oblast' (province) committee and second secretary of the C.P. of the Ukraine, and Vsevolod Balitskii, Commissar of Internal Affairs of the Ukrainian SSR, sent a letter to Stalin concerning Iurii Mikhailovich Kotsiubinskii, former official of the Council of People's Commissars, former Commissar of Agriculture, former Chair of the State Planning Agency of the Ukrainian SSR and — important in this context — supposedly a former Trotskyist. Kotsiubinskii was again under arrest and charged with still being a Trotskyist.

In this letter Postyshev and Balitskii quote from the interrogation of the Trotskyist David Borisovich Naumov-Lekakh, who stated that

[T]he bloc of the Trotskyist organization in the Ukraine with the Ukrainian nationalist-deviationist elements meant that, in practice, from the very beginning of the Trotskyist organization, that the Trotskyists waged no struggle against the Ukrainian nationalist-deviationist elements, but rather supported and defended them as far as they could... (120)

This information is repeated in more detail by the Trotskyist Boris Samoilovich Rappoport-Dar'in, in an interrogation of December 21, 1934. What follows is a short passage from this lengthy testimony:

In its practical work during the period 1931-1934, the counterrevolutionary Trotskyist organization was in a bloc with the Ukrainian-nationalist elements, with Right antiparty groups, and also used however it could the remnants of the Menshevist organization. (135)

Naumov went on to say that Kotsiubinskii had told him that collaboration between the Ukrainian nationalists in the Party and the Trotskyists had gone on since 1926-27. (136) The text of the interrogation of Naumov, attached to the letter, gives much more detail about this Trotskyist-Ukrainian nationalist bloc. (143-146) The Trotskyist bloc with the Ukrainian nationalists is also briefly discussed in the interrogation of Elia Aronovich Shteinberg of November 26, 1934. (165)

In his interrogation of February 28, 1936, Trotskyist Ivan Kuz'mich Fedotov said that in the Ukraine he had been in contact with a certain Mukhin, a member of a Trotskyist group in Kiev. According to Fedotov:

Mukhin told me that he was a member in Kiev of a Trotskyist terrorist group that carried out work together with Ukrainian Nationalists. (209)

On May 3, 1936 Nikander Emel'ianovich Mil'gevskii, a Trotskyist, testified that he maintained contact with the Trotskyist group in Khar'kov through a certain Gofman.

Question: What concretely did Gofman tell you about the work of the Trotskyist organization in the Ukraine?

Answer: When I met with Gofman in the spring of 1935 he told me that between the Trotskyist organization and the Ukrainian nationalist organization headed by Nyrchuk there was an agreement on a platform of joint struggle against Soviet power. (277)

Piatakov testified that in 1931, after meeting with Sedov in Berlin and agreeing to return to clandestine Trotskyist activity, he had returned to the USSR and taken "concrete steps to resurrect a Trotskyist organization in the Ukraine," forming a Trotskyist center, of which Kotsiubinskii was a member. (LD 243-4)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Passages marked "LD" plus a number indicate the page ("list dela", page of the file) of the copy of Piatakov's statement in the Central Archive of the FSB (= Federal Security Service), where NKVD materials are stored. Complete details at the beginning of the text of Piatakov's Statement to Ezhov in the Appendix.)

During this secret visit to Trotsky in Norway in December, 1935, Trotsky had outlined to Piatakov the concessions that he, Trotsky, had been obliged to make in return for German support, one of which was as follows:

In the event that the "nationalist forces" of the Ukraine should want to separate from the U.S.S.R. — not to oppose this. (LD 268)

In 1939 and 1940 Trotsky published three essays defending Ukrainian independence. We note them in the chapter in the present volume on Piatakov's Statement to Ezhov. Since at that time no left or socialist Ukrainian independence movement existed, it is obvious that Trotsky's essays were a signal to Germany, who sponsored the only Ukrainian nationalist movements of any kind — far-right, violently pro-Nazi organizations that committed atrocities on an enormous scale during and after World War 2 — that he, Trotsky, could be counted on to preserve his pro-German stance on this issue.

### **Opposition Plans to Take Advantage of Economic Difficulties**

On December 26, 1936, Naumov told investigators:

At the end of 1931, Kotsiubinskii told me that he and the leading Trotskyists in Moscow with whom he was talking, believed that the economic difficulties which at that time were appearing in the areas of industrialization and agriculture ... confirmed the erroneousness of the Party's policy and the necessity of organizing the Trotskyist forces for struggle against the Party, and there must be no delay in forming a Trotskyist organization. (143)

Naumov repeated this reliance of the Trotskyists and Ukrainian nationalists on economic difficulties several more times (145-6).

In an April 26, 1936, confession Zinovievist and member of the Zinovievist-Trotskyist bloc Efrem Mikhailovich Bocharov said that the bloc had counted on the USSR's economic difficulties in the early 1930s to cause the Stalin regime to fall and return its leaders to power.



While Bakaev was in Gorky the activists of the organization regularly met in his apartment — Furtichev, me, Bocharov, Ol'khovskii, Gorokhov, and others. At these get-togethers we discussed, in a Trotskyist spirit, the politics and actions of the Party and Soviet government. We paid much attention to collectivization. We counted upon the failure of the Party's policies in the first place on this front. Bakaev put before the organization as the main task the unification and preparation of cadres of Trotskyists and Zinovievists who, after the failure of the Party's policies, could take power into its own hands in an organized manner and bring Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev to the leadership of the country. (253)

Bocharov went on to say that by 1934 the success of the Party's economic program led the Zinovievist-Trotskyist bloc not to drop its opposition but instead to turn towards violence — "terror."

In January 1934, when I was at Bakaev's he told me that the situation in the country had changed dramatically. Through a slanderous evaluation of the means by which the Party and Soviet government had achieved the realization of the line it had laid out, Bakaev conceded that the basic difficulties had been overcome by the Soviet government and that now we cannot any longer hope for the failure of the Party and the Soviet government. Bakaev emphasized that the new situation did not mean that our organization should stop its activity. He said only that the methods of struggle against the Party must be changed. He said that the Zinovievists and Trotskyists could count on success only if the Party leadership was removed (*ustraneno*) by force. In this connection he proposed as the basic task of the Zinovievist-Trotskyist organization a terrorist struggle against the Party leadership. (254)

In his confession of October 20, 1936, D.I. Mateev echoed these views:

Until 1932, we, the leadership of the organization of Rightists (both the nationwide [*soiuznyi*] and Moscow centers) relied principally on the difficulties that the country was experiencing. We hoped that the leadership of the Party would not overcome these difficulties and on this basis we considered that our main task was to preserve our cadres

through duplicity [i.e. false capitulation] so that we could then step forward when the right time came.

I must admit, however, that even during this period certain members of our organization manifested putschist attitudes.

... At the end of 1932, when the Rightists were convinced that reliance on difficulties was no good, that the Party had dealt brilliantly with all the difficulties, Uglanov, in the name of the central group, directly set before us, the members of the Moscow center of Rightists, the question of the necessity to turn towards terrorist methods of struggle against the Party leadership and against Stalin in the first place. (314)

This is the same reason cited by defendants at the First Moscow Trial of August 1936. For example, Reingol'd, one of the defendants, testified as follows:

Reingold: In 1932, Zinoviev, at Kamenev's apartment, in the presence of a number of members of the united Trotskyite-Zinovievite centre argued in favor of resorting to terror as follows: although terror is incompatible with Marxism, at the present moment these considerations must be abandoned. There are no other methods available of fighting the leaders of the Party and the Government at the present time. Stalin combines in himself all the strength and firmness of the present Party leadership. Therefore Stalin must be put out of the way in the first place. Kamenev enlarged on this theory and said that the former methods of fighting, namely, attempts to win the masses, combinations with the leaders of the Rightists, **and banking on economic difficulties, have failed. That is why the only method of struggle available is terroristic acts** against Stalin and his closest comrades-in-arms, Kirov, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Orjonikidze, Postyshev, Kossior and the others. (Report 1936, 55).

To judge from the confessions quoted above it was sometime in early 1932 that the Oppositionists realized that the Stalin regime's economic program of collectivization and industrialization was not going to lead to collapse, the discrediting of the leadership, and the demand to return the former Opposition leaders to power.

In his statement to Ezhov of September 19-20, 1936, Piatakov stated that Trotsky had already come to this same conclusion by the summer of 1931, when his son Leon Sedov met with Piatakov. Trotsky had concluded that the Opposition would not have to rely upon other strategies such as terror and the help of foreign capitalist states.

After that Sedov went on to outline what he called "the new methods of struggle."

Trotsky rules out any possibility at the present stage of any mass anti-Stalin movement. Stalin has succeeded in surviving the difficulties and we must frankly admit that we have missed the time.

"If we waste time now we will definitively lose all our cadres, and that will be the death of us.

For that reason now at the tip of the needle must be put

**1) the terrorist struggle of tacitly conspiratorial groups against the main leaders of the party and government** 2) active opposition against all the practical work of the party and government and 3) the discrediting in every possible way of Stalin's undertakings, especially on the economic front ... Just as Smirnov had done, Sedov again mentioned briefly one fundamental position of Trotsky's ... "We cannot," Sedov transmitted Trotsky's views, "regard our struggle in an isolated manner. To keep our struggle in one country is just as absurd as Stalin's desire to build socialism in one country. Therefore we cannot swear off questions of relations between states and relations with capitalist states."

... At that time Sedov did not go into more detail about this question. It is possible that Trotsky specially instructed Sedov to only mention this but not to go into any details. (LD 241-2. Emphasis added.)

### **Nikolai Ivanovich Muralov**

A leading Trotskyist in the 1920s, Muralov had been expelled from the Party in December, 1927, presumably in connection with his participation

in the Opposition demonstration on the tenth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution, and a letter to the Congress, which he cosigned with Khristian Rakovsky and with which Karl Radek associated himself, in which the signatories both renounced factionalism and insisted that they would continue to argue for their views within the Party. (XV s"ezd 1247, 1317, 1338)

According to the biographical information now available Muralov wrote Stalin twice, in December, 1935, and January, 1936, renouncing Trotskyism and asking for reinstatement in the Party. Documents in PiLT2 show that by February, 1936, Muralov was already named as a leading Trotskyist in the Kuzbass. On February 21, 1936, Vasili Nikolaevich Rakov, a Trotskyist, stated in a confession that after his release from a political isolator he had spoken with Muralov in August, 1935, to get further instructions in Trotskyist activity. (234) As we have seen, the Opposition's political activity continued unabated in the political isolators.

In an interrogation of March 15, 1936, another Trotskyist, Viktor Ignat'evich Demchenko, also said that from August, 1935, he had been actively recruited by Muralov, whom he had previously known to be still a Trotskyist. (236-7) On the strength of these and perhaps other accusations Muralov was arrested on April 17, 1936.<sup>4</sup> Thereafter Muralov was named as one of the Trotskyist leaders in the Kuzbass area by Shestov.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See the Russian Wikipedia page on Muralov at [https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Муралов,\\_Николай\\_Иванович](https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Муралов,_Николай_Иванович) and the biographical page at the online biographical dictionary at [http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio\\_m/muralov\\_ni.php](http://www.hrono.ru/biograf/bio_m/muralov_ni.php)

<sup>5</sup> Interrogations of Shestov of October 14, 1936 and October 16, 1936, PiLT2 329 and 339.

In his statement of December 19-20, 1936, Piatakov identified Muralov several times as one of the leading Trotskyists in the Kuzbass.

3/ To Shestov, whom I did not know personally but had heard that he was a reliable person, I told Trotsky's policies, although I knew that he already knew everything from I.N. Smirnov.

To Shestov I entrusted the resurrection of the organization in the Kuzbass. I brought to Shestov's attention that there was one of Trotsky's loyal men — N.I. Muralov ... (LD 244)

I said that I did not have detailed information about the work of the Trotskyist center (Smirnov-Mrachkovskii) outside Moscow, but that in carrying out Trotsky's directive we have formed a center of the Trotskyist organization in the Ukraine, which was in contact with me personally. This center already had peripheral groups and was setting about preparing terrorist acts. I also reported that work on the creation of a Western Siberian center had begun, where Muralov led the active work ... (LD 248)

According to Piatakov, during his meeting with Trotsky in Norway in December, 1935, Trotsky spoke highly of Muralov:

About Muralov Trotsky expressed his satisfaction, that he was one of the few who had never yielded his position and was actively working. (LD 270)

Muralov was one of the defendants in the Second Moscow Trial, the "Piatakov-Radek" trial, of January, 1937. At trial he testified that I.N. Smirnov had informed him in 1931 about Trotsky's turn to terror. (1937 Trial 216-7)

## **Conclusion**

In the present chapter we have shown that the materials in PiLT2 can be employed as a check by which we can verify Piatakov's Statement to Ezhov of December 19-20, 1936. The PiLT2 materials do indeed confirm many of Piatakov's affirmations in his Statement.

This constitutes the best evidence we know of that confirms that Piatakov really did fly secretly to confer with Trotsky in December, 1935, as he testified during the second Moscow Trial of January, 1937.

### **Chapter 3. Defeatism, Terrorism, Assassination, Collaboration**

On December 21, 1934 Trotskyist Rappoport-Dar'in testified that the leadership of the Trotskyist group supported Trotsky's "Clemenceau" position:

Among the members of the leading center of the question of the tactics of the Trotskyist organization in the event of war was also discussed. All members of the leading center stood on the position of the well-known slogan of Trotsky's about the Clemenceau tactic, i.e. of not stopping the struggle against the leadership of the Party in the event of war, but of sharpening the struggle and using the war to overthrow the Party leadership. (136)

Trotsky had used the example of Clemenceau to justify continuing to attack the Soviet leadership during wartime as Clemenceau had criticized the French government in wartime because of France's poor leadership in the conduct of the war.<sup>1</sup> Clemenceau had taken the helm of the French state in November 1917 — had become both Prime Minister and Minister of War — in the face of defeatism and conducted the war against the enemy with renewed vigor. These underground Trotskyists wanted the ouster of the Party and government leadership and their replacement by Trotsky and other oppositionists.

<sup>1</sup> See Trotsky's essay of September, 1927 titled "The Clémenceau Thesis' and the Party Regime"

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1927/09/clemenceau.htm> A draft of the Russian original is at <https://www.you-books.com/Yu-G-Felshtinskij/Kommunisticheskaya-Oppozicziya-V-Sssr-19231927-Tom> It was formerly at <http://web.mit.edu/fjk/www/Trotsky/sochineniia/1927/19270924.html> but appears to be there no longer.

But Trotsky's analogy was flawed. For Clemenceau the primary goal was not at all to gain office for himself, but to win the war. In the case of Trotsky and his supporters, it was the other way around. For Trotsky and his

followers, anticipated war was to be welcomed as an opportunity to get rid of the Stalin leadership and take power for Trotsky and the Opposition.

A number of oppositionists testified that they welcomed the defeat of the USSR in a war with capitalist states. On January 13, 1933, Illarion Konstantinovich Gassiev, a Trotskyist, said:

In a conversation with Dzhoev I said that if in the near future

1) "The Soviet Union is in a war, then the organization should take a defeatist position and organize support within the country for the side that invades the Soviet Union." (31)

Trotsky argued that this "Clemenceau thesis" was not really defeatism since its goal was not the defeat of the USSR but the replacement of its leadership in order to win a war that appeared in 1927 to be on the horizon. Presumably the Stalin leadership would have proven itself unable to defeat one or more invaders.

Thus the Zinovievist Vinogradov, as quoted by Ezhov in his report of June 1935 to the Central Committee Plenum, had testified:

We proceeded from the position that war with the imperialist states, a war that would come sooner or later, and the situation within the country which would give rise to the war, will create favorable conditions for broad demonstrations with the demand of returning to the leadership of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others of the Zinovievist movement. (186)

Piatakov testified that, in November, 1931, after his meetings with Sedov in Berlin and his return to the USSR, he had received through Shestov a letter from Trotsky himself. Among Trotsky's other instructions was one about defeatism:

4/ We must take the coming war into account and **occupy in relation to the war and unconditionally defeatist position**, and by means of preliminary negotiations with governments of capitalist powers (also making use of the contradictions between them) guarantee for

ourselves favorable relations in case of our coming to power as a result of the war. (LD 247)

Piatakov said that he had visited Trotsky in Norway in December, 1935. In January, 1936, Radek received a letter from Trotsky and shared its contents with Piatakov. According to Piatakov Trotsky repeated his insistence on defeatism:

As regards the war, L. D. Trotsky spoke of this very explicitly. From his point of view, war is inevitable in the near future. In this war the defeat of the "Stalin government" was inevitable. **He, Trotsky, considered it completely essential to take a markedly defeatist position in this war.**

Defeat in war would mean the downfall of the Stalin regime and for this very reason Trotsky insisted upon the creation of cells in the army, in the broadening of contacts among the command staff. He proceeded from the position that defeat in war would create a favorable opportunity in the army as well for the return of himself, Trotsky, to power. He considers that the bloc's coming into power can certainly be hastened by the defeat of the U.S.S.R. in war.

Trotsky pointed out in this regard that especially, counting upon defeat in war, it was necessarily in advance to reach agreements with the appropriate bourgeois governments (I do not recall whether precisely only the governments of German and Japan were mentioned in this regard). It seemed to him that he would be able to reach agreements at the same time with opposing groups of bourgeois governments and maneuver upon their contradictions. Trotsky understood that we must not rely in a naked and open way upon agreement with Germany and Japan, and therefore he gave a plan of playing upon contradictions. (LD 258-9)

We may doubt whether, as Trotsky claimed, Stalin and the Soviet leadership had maliciously misconstrued his remarks about Clemenceau. After all, Clemenceau had *not* been a defeatist, but the opposite. He had assumed power to *replace* leadership that he viewed as defeatist. For Clemenceau it was French victory, not his own coming to power, that was primary.



But Trotsky's position was not the same as Clemenceau's had been. Trotsky and the Trotskyists meant the "Clemenceau thesis" as a means by which Trotsky and the Opposition could return to power, rather than primarily as a tactic to snatch victory from defeat in wartime. On the contrary, Trotsky and the Trotskyists welcomed Soviet defeat. But this meant that Trotsky's position was no different from the "Stalin" interpretation of it — a form of collaboration with an invader — treason.

## Plans for a Coup

There are two references in PiLT2 to plans by Soviet Trotskyists for a *coup d'état* against the Stalin regime. One is in the statement by Sailii Ivanovich Dzhoev of January 2, 1933, which he made to the Secret Political Section of the OGPU in disclosing his knowledge of Trotskyist activities. Dzhoev summarized what his friend Gassiev had told him in 1931, including the following:

Kozhennikov also takes part in the activities of our organization, therefore, and there is also corresponding work going on. We think that our seizure of power will be carried out **without resort to armed force** — there in the center they are isolating the leadership and in general the whole POLITBURO. (26)

Assuming Dzhoev was telling the truth, Trotsky's plans must have evolved over time. Three years later, on March 9, 1936, Trotskyist Aleksandr Gavrilovich Kolodin confessed about plans for an armed *coup d'état* against the Soviet regime:

The members of our counterrevolutionary group also discussed the question of the preparation of **an armed uprising** against the Soviet government. (216)

This last reference to plans for a *coup d'état* echo Trotsky's plans as related by Piatakov. During their December, 1935, meeting in Norway Trotsky insisted that a *coup d'état* was the only way the Opposition could come to power in the USSR. By late 1935, Trotsky was insisting on the maximum use of violence.

Trotsky also expressed the same extreme degree of dissatisfaction during my report about the terrorist acts that were under preparation. "These are all preparations, just preparations! You are not dealing with this question seriously enough. Remember that **without a whole series of terrorist acts**, which must be carried out as soon as possible, the Stalin government cannot be overthrown. For this is a question of a *coup d'état*. A mass uprising, he said, is one thing, for which, evidently, there is no basis now, and a *coup d'état* is something else."

"This is the difference, I note, that many do not understand. They are unaware that the methods of a *coup d'état* differ fundamentally from the methods of organizing a mass uprising. I stand now precisely on the position of a *coup d'état*... (LD 263)

Trotsky continued:

"... It is clear that if in the very near future we are not successful by one means or another in carrying out a *coup d'état*, then a prolonged period will set in, years of the monstrous existence of the Stalin state, supported by its economic successes, by new politically inexperienced young cadre, who will consider this regime natural, to be taken for granted ... That means the first and main thing is the implacable struggle with Stalin and his state. In this struggle we must employ everything, the sharpest methods of preparation for a *coup d'état* and, in the first place, terror, diversions, and sabotage. On this basis we must educate our cadre, and not on the basis of rotten conciliation and compromise, the tendencies to which I discern in my supporters who live in the Stalin state." (LD 264, 266)

### **Trotsky's Collaboration with Britain and France: Sokol'nikov's confession**

We have already seen that on December 12, 1936, Sokol'nikov confessed that on April 13, 1934, he had been approached by Japanese Ambassador Tamekichi Ota, who told him about Trotsky's agreement with the Japanese government.<sup>2</sup> Ota was not named at the Second Moscow (Trotskyist Center) trial of January, 1937. The corresponding passage in Sokol'nikov's trial

testimony was disguised in such a way that the country in question could not be identified.

Sokolnikov: I had a conversation with Kamenev in the beginning of 1934. During this conversation Kamenev informed me about the defeatist position taken by Trotsky and about his own defeatist views. Incidentally, one definite result of this conversation was that Kamenev warned me that someone might approach me with inquiries.

Vyshinsky: Who might do this?

Sokolnikov: The diplomatic representative of a certain country.

Vyshinsky: Kamenev warned you about this?

Sokolnikov: Yes, Kamenev warned me about this.

Vyshinsky: Did Kamenev tell you what inquiries would be addressed to you?

Sokolnikov: Yes, he told me that I would be asked for confirmation of the fact that the negotiations which were being carried on by Trotsky abroad were not being carried on by him in his own name, but that behind Trotsky there really was an organization of which he was the representative.

Vyshinsky: You were to confirm this if inquiries in this sense were addressed to you?

Sokolnikov: Yes.

Vyshinsky: Such a question was addressed to you?

Sokolnikov: Yes, in the middle of April after one of my official talks with the representative of a certain country with whom I had frequent meetings in connection with my official duties. The conversation took place after the official talk was over, when the interpreters had withdrawn to the neighboring room. While I was showing my visitor to the door he asked me whether I knew that Trotsky had addressed

certain proposals to his government. I confirmed that this fact was known to me. He asked further whether these proposals were serious. I confirmed this too. He asked whether this was my own personal opinion. I said that this was not only my opinion but that of my friends as well. I understood this question of his as a confirmation of the fact that the government of that country had really received Trotsky's proposal and wanted to make sure that Trotsky's proposals were really known to these organization and that Trotsky's right to conduct these negotiations was not disputed. (1937 Trial 148-9)

<sup>2</sup> The passage in which Ota is named was first published in *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* 9 (1989), p. 45. It was reprinted in *Reabilitatsia. Politicheskie protessy 30-50 kh godov* (Moscow, 1991), 228-9.

Sokol'nikov also told Piatakov about Ambassador Ota's approach to him. Piatakov only mentions Ota's name in the briefest manner, in passing, in his December 29-30, 1936, statement to Ezhov.

Also, Sokol'nikov told me that **he had a talk with the Japanese, with Ota, I think**, from which it was also clear that Trotsky was carrying on negotiations with representatives of the Japanese government. (LD 257)

As we have pointed out, Trotsky had informed Sokol'nikov about his, Trotsky's, agreement with Hess, second only to Hitler in the Nazi Party. We have no testimony that any official of the German government confirmed this. Here, however, we have testimony that a representative of the Japanese government confirmed Trotsky's collaboration with Japan.

There is no reason to think that Piatakov said this out of any force or compulsion. It is excellent evidence that Sokol'nikov really told him this.

This, in turn, constitutes strong evidence that Trotsky had not simply lied about having contacts with the Japanese (perhaps to impress his followers) but that Trotsky really had collaborated with the Japanese. In a future work we will publish and study Khristian Rakovsky's detailed account of his negotiation with Japanese officials on Trotsky's behalf.

Sokol'nikov's testimony here is also confirmed by a brief quotation from an earlier interrogation dated December 12, 1936, eight days earlier than this one, which is reproduced in Georgi Dimitrov's diary:

Interrogation of Sokolnikov, 12 December 1936:

Question: Thus, the investigation concludes that Trotsky abroad and the center of the bloc within the USSR entered into negotiations with the Hitlerite and Japanese governments with the following aims:

First, to provoke a war by Germany and Japan against the USSR;

Second, to promote the defeat of the USSR in that war and to take advantage of that defeat to achieve the transfer of power in the USSR to [their] government bloc;

Third, on behalf of the future bloc government to guarantee territorial and economic concessions to the Hitlerite and Japanese governments.

Do you confirm this?

Reply: Yes, I confirm it.

Question: Do you admit that this activity by the bloc is tantamount to outright treason against the motherland?

Reply: Yes, I admit it.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov 1933-1949. Introduced and edited by Ivo Banac* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 43.

However, the interrogation of Sokol'nikov of October 20, 1936 published in PiLT2 provides testimony that did not arise during the January 1937 trial.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> We have reproduced an English translation of this interrogation in the Appendix.

Sokol'nikov's testimony concerning discussions with the British Prime Minister through the intermediation of a journalist, Talbot, and a Member of Parliament, Boothby, is not alluded to in the trial. The two men concerned are no doubt:

\* Stafford C. Talbot, former professor of Russian and editor of the journal *British-Russian Gazette and Trade Outlook*. Talbot was named as a clandestine contact for the "bloc" by Arkadii P. Rozengol'ts, a defendant at the Third Moscow Trial of March 1938:

VYSHINSKY: So since 1923 you, accused Rosengoltz, began to supply espionage information to foreign states?

ROSENGOLTZ: That is right.

VYSHINSKY: Proceed.

ROSENGOLTZ: I must also state, although I said it in my testimony during the preliminary investigation, that in 1926 I gave information to Farbman, an English journalist<sup>5</sup>, who at the same time was a Trotskyite. This was information concerning the foreign policy of the U.S.S.R. After that, during 1932-35, I gave information about orders placed abroad to the editor of the "British-Russian Gazette," Talbot, who came to me on his behalf.

Now as regards wrecking activities. I wanted to state that in these wrecking activities our aim was to help mainly Germany, and partly Japan.

<sup>5</sup> Probably Michael Farbman, a British journalist who covered Russia. See, for example, Farbman's interview with Lenin of October, 1922, printed in *Pravda* on November 10, 1922. Online at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1922/oct/27.htm>

Since Talbot was also the "founder and first President of the Association of British Creditors of Russia"<sup>6</sup> he had a special interest in settling the Russian debt left over from Tsarist times. This is reflected in Sokol'nikov's description of his 1934 meeting with Talbot.

Then Talbot asked me whether I could tell him something about the possibility of recognizing the prerevolutionary debts. I told him that on this question the government of the bloc would also be ready to make significant concessions and to make proposals acceptable to the English government ... Summing up our talk Talbot said that he considered the question of the debts to be very important and I again reaffirmed to him the readiness of the government of the bloc to make serious concessions on this question. (326; see p. 190-1)

<sup>6</sup> See "Debt Payment Plan Proposed to Soviet." *The New York Times* Dec. 8, 1927 p. 6.

"Boothby" must be Robert Boothby, MP. He had been Parliamentary Private Secretary to Winston Churchill when Churchill was Chancellor of the Exchequer. Conservative Stanley Baldwin was British Prime Minister after June 7, 1935.

There is no reason that the NKVD would have compelled Sokol'nikov to testify falsely to this material, which was never used. Nor is there any evidence at all to suggest that Sokol'nikov's testimony here or elsewhere, or in fact that any of the Moscow Trials defendants, was forced upon them. This is additional evidence that Sokol'nikov's testimony is genuine — that Sokol'nikov really had undertaken these talks, and that Trotsky really had been negotiating with the British.

This testimony is consistent with other evidence. Piatakov testified that at their meeting in Norway in December, 1935, Trotsky had told him that he had established contact not only with Germany (Hess) and "with the Japanese government" but also "with some conservative circles" in English.

In France the contact was with the "Comité de Forges" and with banking circles. In England, with some conservative circles. (LD 268)

According to Piatakov Trotsky had stressed that it was essential to reach agreements with England and France as well, in order to balance them off against Germany and Japan, not to become too dependent on the latter.

Trotsky further wrote that we must not limit ourselves only to the German and Japanese. We must secure benevolent relations with other governments too (like the English and French), especially from the perspective of the possibility of extremely strong pressure from the German and Japanese quarters... (LD 258)

Of course, to reach agreements with Germany alone would be risky, since without a corresponding English and French counterweight Germany would put their feet on the table and it would be very touch for us. Therefore in his practical steps he, Trotsky, is carrying out simultaneous preparatory work in different directions. (LD 267)

Sokol'nikov's testimony about his negotiation with the British is consistent with what Piatakov testified about what Trotsky told him.

The countries that posted the most imminent military threat to the USSR were Germany and Japan. Agreements with English, as here, and France, were necessary in order to balance against agreements with Germany and Japan. Therefore, this interrogation of Sokol'nikov also offers additional indirect evidence of Trotsky's negotiations with Germany and Japan.

Sokol'nikov's testimony about the projected economic and political program of the bloc in power is also consistent with Piatakov's testimony in his statement to Ezhov. Piatakov wrote that both Kamenev and Trotsky had told him that "retreat" to capitalism would be necessary if agreements with powerful foreign powers were to be concluded, while such agreements were themselves essential either to help the bloc come to power or, if it came to power by its own efforts, to consolidate its power in the country. According to Piatakov, Kamenev told him in 1932:

Yesterday's disagreements cannot be an obstacle to our agreement today, if today we have a common goal. And this common goal is:

- 1/ The overthrow of Stalin and the liquidation of the Stalin regime;
- 2/ The rejection of the building of socialism in one country and, consequently, the appropriate change of economic policy. On these two points we reached agreement with the Rights very easily."



To my question what "change of economic policy" mean Kamenev, with his characteristic aplomb, answered: "Well, you know, we will concretize it when we are in power. Only one thing is clear: we will have to **retreat**, in order to weaken the internal situation and equalize the external."

"Yes, yes, Yuri Leonidovich, I know that you concern yourself little with questions of international politics. But inasmuch as you may possibly have to continue the business that we are now doing, it is necessary that we be informed."

"Keep in mind that, without the essential agreement with the government of the capitalist powers against the Stalin government, will not come to power. It is essential for us to secure a favorable attitude towards us, and that means **we will have to make concessions to them**. But about that we must have already in advance had confidential talks with the governments of these states, and that is happening now. Radek and Sokol'nikov will inform you in more detail." (LD 248-9)

Trotsky's had used similar language in his talk with Piatakov in Norway in December 1935:

"This means that **we must retreat**. This must be firmly understood. Retreat to capitalism. How far, on what a scale, it is hard to say now — it will only be possible to be more concrete after we come to power."

"You see, — Trotsky continued — on this point **about a retreat** we have agreed with the Rights and my directive about the bloc with the Rights was not just tactically necessary, but correct in principle, all the more since **they have fully admitted the necessity of terrorist, diversionist, and sabotage means of struggle against Stalin**." (LD 269)

At the January, 1937, Moscow Trial, Piatakov, Sokol'nikov, and Karl Radek all testified about Trotsky's commitment to a "retreat" towards the restoration of capitalism.

As for the **retreat**, Trotsky wrote that Radek and I were mistaken in thinking that the **retreat** would be inconsiderable — we would have to **retreat** very far, and on this was based the bloc, not only with the Zinovievites, but also with the Rights, (1937 Trial 38-39)

... In this connection also it would be necessary, for considerations of home policy, to effect a fairly big **retreat**, in addition to concessions to foreigners. Radek quite justly mentioned this **retreat** in town and country, such as permitting capitalist trade and so forth. To put it simply, Trotsky explained that it would be a very serious **retreat**. This is exactly what he said: you and Radek are still under the sway of the old ideas of 1925-26 and you are unable to see that in essence our coming to power will mean that we will have to **retreat very far in the direction of capitalism**. (1937 Trial 65)

Karl Radek outlined how Trotsky's views changed between 1934 and 1934:

VYSHINSKY: Three facts: the April letter of 1934, the December letter of 1935 and Pyatakov's meeting with Trotsky in December 1935. How was the question put in Trotsky's letter in 1934? War, working for defeat?

RADEK: Yes.

VYSHINSKY: A return to capitalism in substance?

RADEK: No, a return to capitalism is not raised in the letter.

VYSHINSKY: No? What then?

RADEK: A **retreat** which we then thought....

VYSHINSKY: To where?

RADEK: To the positions of the NEP, with industry strengthened in comparison with what it had been before 1928.

VYSHINSKY: A **retreat** towards strengthening what elements?

RADEK: A **retreat** which was to restore a part of the capitalist elements as well, but this **retreat**, if compared with the state of things in 1927 — there would be a possibility during this **retreat**, on the one hand, of admitting capitalist restoration, but at the same time of strengthening industry, thanks to the First Five-Year Plan, the state farms and part of the collective farms — that is to say, we would have an economic base on which in my opinion a proletarian government could have maintained itself.

VYSHINSKY: So a proletarian government could still have maintained itself? But if the tendency was to go backward?

RADEK: The tendency was to go backward.

VYSHINSKY: In 1935 this stood out more clearly in comparison with 1934?

RADEK: In 1935 the question was raised **of going back to capitalism**.

RADEK: What Trotsky proposed was without any limits. To such limits as the enemy might require. (1937 Trial, 122)

According to Sokol'nikov the Trotskyists understood that they had no choice; it was retreat or be crushed:

SOKOLNIKOV: ... We considered that fascism was the most organized form of capitalism, that it would triumph, would seize Europe and stifle us. It was therefore better to come to terms with it, it was better to consent to a compromise in the sense of **retreating from socialism to capitalism**. (1937 Trial, 151)

The hypothesis that Trotsky did advocate the "restoration of capitalism" as Radek, Piatakov, and others asserted, is also consistent with much other evidence we now possess.

## **Chapter 4. Piatakov's Statement to Ezhov, December 19-20, 1936**

This lengthy statement was obtained from the FSB Archive in mid-2015. As of September, 2019, it is also available in an identical copy, retyped, from RGASPI.<sup>1</sup> We will study it carefully as it contains much information about Trotsky's conspiratorial activities.

<sup>1</sup> TsA FSB. R-33835. (Delo No. 3257 on the arrested Piatakov Iurii Leonidovich and others); RGASPI. f.17. op.171. d. 263. ll. 43-76. See the full text, in English translation, in the Appendix.

Trotsky, then Khrushchev, then Gorbachev, and researchers under their direction, have claimed that the defendants' statements and confessions were false. But there has never been any evidence that the pretrial or trial statements of Piatakov or of any of the defendants at the three Moscow trials were lies — that the defendants were forced by torture or threats to mouth statements they and the prosecution knew were untrue.

In volume one of this study, *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*, and again, in a revised version in *The Moscow Trials As Evidence*, we have verified that the Moscow Trials testimony is reliable by checking against independent evidence many of the assertions that the defendants made in their testimony. In the light of this verification, allegations that the defendants' statements and confessions were false are simply wrong. They should not be accepted and should never pass unchallenged. Such claims are not evidence. They are examples of the logical fallacy of "argument by authority."

It has been convenient to both ideological anticommunists and Trotskyists to "believe" — accept as true — the claim that the defendants were forced to repeat falsehoods concocted by the prosecution. For this reason we will begin our examination of Piatakov's statement with some considerations which ought to lead and objective researcher to accept that this document represents what Piatakov himself wished to say.

**Gol'tsman and the "Hotel Bristol"**

During the first Moscow Trial of August, 1936, defendants Eduard Gol'tsman claimed that he had travelled by train from Berlin to Copenhagen in November, 1932, and that he had met Leon Sedov, Trotsky's son, in the lobby of the "Hotel Bristol," after which he and Sedov had proceeded to visit Trotsky. A number of people, including Trotsky himself, pointed out almost immediately that there was no "Hotel Bristol" in Copenhagen in 1932. This fact led Trotsky, then the Dewey Commission, to conclude that Gol'tsman had been lying.

In 2009 Swedish researcher Sven-Eric Holmström published "New Evidence Concerning the 'Hotel Bristol' Question in the First Moscow Trial of 1936."<sup>2</sup> On the basis of meticulous researcher Holmström concluded that Gol'tsman must have mistaken the name of the adjacent café "Bristol" for that of the hotel.

<sup>2</sup> At <https://ojs.library.ubc.ca/index.php/clogic/article/view/191568/188679>

Holmström's conclusions have now received striking verification. Documents from Gol'tsman's NKVD investigation file released in 2015 reveal that the NKVD checked up on this question before the trial. The NKVD investigators determined that not hotel named "Bristol" existed in Copenhagen, but that it was easy to mistake the name of the café for that of the hotel.

On August 2, 1936 the Foreign Division of the Main Directorate for State Security (GUGB) reported as follows to the Chief of the Secret Political Division of the NKVD:

According to the official references works / guides to the city of Copenhagen / telephone directories in the Foreign Division of the GUGB NKVD no hotel "Bristol" existed either in 1932 or exists in 1936.

However, in Copenhagen there is a small café "Bristol" above which is located the hotel "Grand Hotel Copenhagen." Since the "Grand Hotel" has a sign that is not very noticeable and the café "Bristol" has a sign in large gold letters on a black background many casual observers take the hotel "Grand Hotel" as the "Bristol."

The café "Bristol" and the hotel "Grand Hotel" are located very close to the Copenhagen train station and existed in 1932 as they do today.

Gol'tsman was asked whether he could have made this error and admitted that it was possible. Gol'tsman also accurately described the café's sign and said that it was right outside the hotel entrance and that the café and hotel lobby communicated with each other.

As SEDOV and I had arranged in advance in Berlin I went directly from the station to the hotel "Bristol."

This hotel is situated near the station, above a five-minute walk away. My meeting with SEDOV took place in the vestibule of the hotel, from which we went to the café situated on the first floor of this same hotel.

Now I remember precisely that at the entrance to the café there was a black sign on which in large gold letters it said "Bristol."

Question: Was this perhaps the name of the café, not of the hotel?

Answer: Perhaps, but I remember well the sign "Bristol" above the café, and this café is situated next to the vestibule of the hotel.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Gol'tsman file TsA FSB R-33833 Delo No. 3257. See Appendix for the full text.

This is exactly what Holmström concluded on the basis of a careful study of the evidence he had gathered. It proves that Gol'tsman was not lying about the "Hotel Bristol." He had simply made an understandable error, one that, according to the Copenhagen-based NKVD men, "many casual observers" made.

For our present purposes, this set of documents proves that the NKVD did not "force" Gol'tsman to mouth phony confessions. Rather, the NKVD men did what investigators are supposed to do. They took Gol'tsman's testimony and tried to verify it. When they discovered the discrepancy in Gol'tsman's testimony, they asked him about it and recorded his comment.

In *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* and in *The Moscow Trials As Evidence* we show that, whenever we can independently check statements made by defendants in the Moscow Trials, we find that the statements are genuine — that is, the defendants testified what they wanted to testify. The Gol'tsman — "Hotel Bristol" documents constitute yet more evidence of this.

There is a great deal of other evidence that corroborates the confessions and statements by Moscow Trials defendants. We will discuss some of it in this chapter; more such evidence is examined in other chapters. By contrast, we have no evidence at all that Moscow Trial defendants were compelled to make false statements.

### **Corroboration of Piatakov's Testimony**

We possess other corroboration of the genuineness of Piatakov's testimony before and at trial. In 2002 the transcript of the December 7, 1936 *ochnaia stavka*, or face-to-face confrontation, between Piatakov and Nikolai Bukharin was published. There Piatakov named Bukharin as a participant in the Zinovievist-Trotskyist-Rightist network of conspiracies, as he also did in the statement of December 19-20, 1936, which we examine here.

Present at this *ochnaia stavka* were Kliment E. Voroshilov, People's Commissar for Defense; Sergo Ordzhonikidze, People's Commissar for Heavy Industry and Piatakov's immediate superior; Nikolai Ezhov, Commissar for Internal Affairs and, as such, head of the NKVD; Stalin; and Bukharin himself. Bukharin insisted that Piatakov was lying only in regard to his own, Bukharin's, guilt but not otherwise. According to his wife, Anna Larina, Bukharin told her about this *ochnaia stavka*. Decades later, Larina in turn related in her memoir a version of what she remembered of what he husband had told her. From her account it is clear that Bukharin did *not* convey to his wife that the rest of Piatakov's testimony was false.

[[cyrillic]]пятакoв гoвoрил, oпyстив гoлoвy, стараясь лaд( )нью прикpыть глaзa. В eгo тoнe чyствoвaлoсь oзлoблeниe, o- злoблeниe, кaк считaл Н.И., прoтив тeх ктo eгo слyшaл нe прeрывaя абсyрдный спeктaкль, нe oстaнoвливaя нeслыханный прoизвoл.

- Юрий Леонидович, объясните, спросил Бухарин, - что вас заставляет оговаривать самого себя?

Наступила пауза. В это время Серго Орджоникидзе, сосредоточенно и изумленно смотревший на Пятакова, потрясенный изгненным видом и показаниями своего деятельного помощника, приложив ладонь к уху (Серго был глуховат), спросил:

- Неужто ваши показания добровольны?

- Мои показания добровольны, — ответил Пятаков.

- Абсолютно добровольны? - еще с большим удивлением спросил Орджоникидзе, но на повторный вопрос ответа не последовало. Только лишь на процессе в своем последнем слове Пятаков сумел сказать: "Всякое показание, какое вы в принятии будет легче, чем самый фальшивый признания", чем и дал понять, что его показания — вынужденные. Почему же в ту минуту) перед всеми членами и политбюро, Пятаков не решился сказать правду и рассказать, что с ним происходили, чем довели его до такого состояния, что он едва держался на ногах? До конца этого процесса невозможно. Но, очевидно Пятаков понимал, что после очной ставки ему придется вернуться не к себе домой и снова начнутся адские муки в стенах НКВД. Возможно) медицинские средства парализовали его выдающуюся волю.

[[[cyrillic]]]4

Piatakov spoke, his head lowered, trying to cover his eyes with his palm. In his tone one could feel hostility, hostility, as N.I. [Bukharin] believed, against those who were listening to him without interrupting the absurd spectacle, not stopping the unheard-of caprice.

— Iurii Leonidovich, explain, — asked Bukharin, — what has compelled you to slander yourself?

A pause ensued. During this time Sergo Ordzhonikidze, who was looking at Piatakov with concentration and amazement, shaken by the



haggard appearance and the confessions of his assistant, put his hand to his ear (Sergo was rather deaf) and asked:

— Are your confessions really voluntary?

— My confessions are voluntary, — answered Piatakov.

— Absolutely voluntary? — Ordzhonikidze asked with even great astonishment, but no answer followed the repeated question. Only at the trial, in his last words, did Piatakov dare to say: "Any punishment you could inflict will be easier than the fact itself of admitting guilt," by which he made it clear that his confessions were made through compulsion.

But why, in that moment, in front of all the members of the Politburo, did Piatakov not dare to tell the truth and tell what happened to him were doing, what drove him to such a state that he could hardly stand? It is impossible to comprehend this completely. But, obviously, Pyatakov knew that after the confrontation, he would not return to his home and the hellish torments would begin again in the dungeons of the NKVD. Perhaps medication paralyzed his extraordinary will.

<sup>4</sup> Anna Larina, *Nezabyvaemoe*. Moscow: APN, 1989, 328.

Larina was convinced that not just Piatakov, but all the defendants at all the Moscow trials were innocent. But she had no *evidence* to that effect. She *assumed* it, evidently because Piatakov accused her husband Bukharin of involvement in the bloc of conspirators. Today we possess a great deal of evidence that Bukharin was indeed one of the leaders of the bloc of oppositionists that included Zinovievists, Trotskyist, and Rights.

Piatakov testified about the activities of the bloc. He does not mention the participation of the Zinovievists, perhaps because it was not relevant to his testimony against Bukharin, perhaps for some other reason. We can be sure that Ordzhonikidze believed Piatakov's testimony because we have the partial text of a talk he gave to the heads of the chief directorates of the Commissariat of Heavy Industry on February 5, 1937 in which he complains bitterly about Piatakov's deceitfulness.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> English translation in Getty amp; Naumov, 292-294. The Russian version of Ordzhonikidze's speech was not available when Getty and Naumov wrote in the late '90s. It was finally published in 2011 and is now online at <http://istmat.info/node/48634>

### **Piatakov's Statement of December 19-20, 1936**

This is the longest pretrial text of material from Piatakov's investigation file that we now possess. It is not an interrogation but a statement, *zaiavlenie*. Further evidence that it was made voluntarily comes from the beginning of what appears to have been the next interrogation of Piatakov, that of December 23, 1936.

Question: You have submitted a statement in the name of the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs com. EZHOV, in which you outline your criminal activities in a more detailed and systematic manner and, in particular, tell about your personal meeting with Trotsky.

May the investigation consider this statement of yours as an official investigative document?

**Answer: Yes**, in writing this statement in the name of People's Commissar EZHOV I intended that it be included among the investigative materials.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> "Protokol doprosa Piatakova, Iuria Leonidovicha — ot 23 dekabria 1936 goda." LD 272.

No objective student could conclude from this text, or from the evidence cited above, that Piatakov's testimony had been put into his mouth, or that he had been forced to lie according to a narrative composed by somebody else. Piatakov's testimony represented what he chose to say.

### **Confirmation of Piatakov's statement**

Much of what Piatakov says in this Statement can be confirmed by other documents we now possess.

## **The Bloc of Trotskyists, Zinovievists, Rightists, and other Oppositionists**

We know this bloc existed because evidence of it was discovered in 1980 in the Harvard Trotsky Archive by Pierre Broué. Piatakov's statements about it agree with what we know from the Trotsky Archive documents written by Trotsky and Sedov. Piatakov's Statement is yet more evidence that Broué was wrong in claiming, without any evidence, that the bloc was "ephemeral." Piatakov insists that the bloc aimed at error — political assassination — from the outset and continued this aim, along with that of sabotage, until its members were arrested.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> We have studied this discovery, the "Sedov bloc letter," in Furr, Amalgams, and Moscow Trials.

### Confirmation of Trotsky's Policy of Terror

Piatakov's Statement confirms the claims made by Mark Zborowski, whom Sedov tried to recruit to kill Stalin and who expressed the view that the assassination of Stalin was all that was necessary for the Stalin regime to collapse. We have studied Zborowski's report in previous books.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Furr, Amalgams, Chapters 3 and 13; Trotsky's Lies, Chapter 2; Moscow Trials, Chapter 3.

In his first confession statement, made on June 2, 1937, Nikolai Bukharin affirmed that Trotsky was "always urging assassination":

RADEK informed me that TROTSKY was always urging the use of terror..."<sup>9</sup>

Piatakov's testimony that Trotsky was urging sabotage. This confirms Bukharin's claim in his first confession:

I remember yet another important conversation in which RADEK vaguely related that some kind of new directives on both internal and external politics had been received from Trotsky. I remember that I was angered by this way of generally treating any commands by Trotsky, to whom ~~ich~~ the Trotskyites related as almost to the military

commands of a unitary command center. RADEK hinted to me that this was a question of some sort of new negotiations of Trotsky's with Germany or with England, but limited himself to this, having told me about Trotsky's directive concerning sabotage.

## **Trotsky and the Germans and Japanese**

Piatakov's testimony about Trotsky's claim that he had made deals with Nazi Germany and Fascist Japan corroborates the substantial testimony from Soviet sources that we have studied elsewhere.<sup>10</sup> It is also confirmed by our analysis of Ivan Serov's report.<sup>11</sup> There we demonstrate that Rakovsky must have been telling the truth when, in his statement to the prosecution, he said that he had met with high-ranking Japanese officials and agreed to be a go-between for Trotsky.<sup>12</sup>

It is confirmed by Rakovsky in confession statements published in 2005 in a Bulgarian historical journal.<sup>13</sup> And it is also confirmed by the recently printed investigation materials in *Politbiuro i Lev Trotskii t. 2*. We examine those documents in the present volume.

<sup>10</sup> Furr, *Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan* (hereafter TV).

<sup>11</sup> See TC, Chapter Four.

<sup>12</sup> See the extensive discussion in TC Chapter 4.

<sup>13</sup> We will study these statements in a future book. Rakovsky was Bulgarian.

## **Trotsky and the Trotskyist Conspiracy in the Army**

Piatakov wrote that Trotsky put special emphasis on recruiting in the Red Army (LD 266) and considered Vitovt K. Putna and Vitalii M. Primakov as "a very valuable contact and it must be strengthened and developed in every way." (LD 270) Both men were co-defendants in the "Tukhachevsky Affair" trial of June 11, 1937 and were executed together with Tukhachevsky and

the others. Both Putna and Primakov described their commitment to Trotsky and their activities on behalf of Trotsky's conspiracy. The sections of Marshal Semion Budyonny's letter to Marshal Klement Voroshilov that deal with Trotsky are examined in Chapter Nine of *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*. We now have many of Tukhachevsky's own confessions. Moreover, we now possess the transcript of the trial of the trial of Tukhachevsky and others of June 11, 1937, which was declassified in May, 2018.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> As of this writing, December 29, 2018, these are <http://istmat.info/node/59108> and [http://lander.odessa.ua/doc/rgaspi\\_17.171.392\\_process\\_tuhachevskogo.pdf](http://lander.odessa.ua/doc/rgaspi_17.171.392_process_tuhachevskogo.pdf) It is not yet available in text format, much less published in book form, and has not been translated.

## **Trotsky and the United Front**

In his journal of exile, *Biulleten' Oppozitsii* (Bulletin of the Opposition) No. 32 of December 1932 Trotsky seemed to be calling for a "united front" with the Social-Democrats. But Trotsky's attitude towards the "united front" was an equivocal one. Fel'shtinskii and Cherniavskii, Trotsky's sympathetic Russian biographers, conclude that he wanted a "united front" only with the rank-and-file, not with the S-D leaders, though he did not call them "social-fascists" like the Comintern was doing. (120) This is also the tenor of Trotsky's essay "In What Does the Error of the German Communist Party's Current Political Line Reside?"<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> B.O. No. 27, March 1932. The English translation, "For a Workers' United Front Against Fascism," is misleading. Trotsky is very careful not to call for unity with the Social-Democratic Party itself — the leadership.

In other articles Trotsky was clearer about his call for a United Front with the Social-Democrats:

I proposed to the German Communists to carry out the policy of a united front. The Communists ought to propose to the Social Democrats and to the trade unions led by them a program of cooperative, practical struggle against the attack of the fascists. The

Social Democratic masses quite sincerely desire to wage such a struggle. If the leaders refuse, they will compromise themselves in the eyes of their own supporters. If the leaders agree, the masses, in practical action, will go beyond their leaders and support the Communists. ("Answers to Questions by the New York Times," February 13, 1932. WLT 1932, p. 49)

Trotsky never advocated a "united front" in the formation of a government, as the Comintern did in France and Republican Spain.

According to Piatakov, Trotsky's view, as communicated through Radek, was hostile to the the "united front":

Besides this there were also directives about the Comintern. I did not remember them well and now recall them vaguely. I seem to remember that it was a question of a very "left" formulation against the united front in France. Unfortunately this part of Trotsky's directives did not stick in my memory. (LD 259)

Piatakov admits his memory was faulty on this point. But Piatakov also said that, of course, Trotsky could not publicly reveal his conspiracies with the capitalist powers. Trotsky had said that he, Piatakov, should not be troubled by the fact that

much of what he was about to say must not only not be made public (and therefore I should not be surprised that much of it will contradict what is said in his "Bulletins"), but also must not be made known to wider circles of his supporters in the USSR. (LD 264; emphasis added)

We know from examination of the Trotsky Archive that Trotsky lied in his public writings when he thought it expedient to do so.<sup>16</sup> In fact Trotsky vigorously denied in public the very policies that he was pursuing in private, such as his continued contact with "capitulators," his approval of the bloc with other Oppositionists, and the use of "terror" or violence and assassination.

<sup>16</sup> For details see the discussion in Furr Amalgams and Furr, Trotsky's Lies.

Trotsky's policy of a conspiracy of assassination and sabotage against the Soviet Union in alliance with Germany, Japan, France and Great Britain, and of agreements to help the German General Staff to defeat the Red Army in wartime, was not compatible with a "united front" against Germany. No doubt this accounts for his seemingly "very 'left'" position against a United Front against Germany: the Germans naturally opposed it, so Trotsky did as well.

### **Soviet Economic Successes Necessitated Terror, Sabotage and Defeatism**

This was the position of the Zinovievist assassins of Sergei Kirov. As we have shown<sup>17</sup>, there is no basis at all to think that they were "forced" to say this by the NKVD. The Trotskyist and other arrestees whose statements and interrogations are published in PiLT2 also repeatedly refer to this.

<sup>17</sup> See Furr, *The Murder of Sergei Kirov*.

Trotsky and the clandestine Oppositionists were relying upon the social stresses of collectivization and industrialization to somehow cause the Stalin regime's collapse. When this did not occur they fell back upon force: plans for a *coup d'état* with attendant murder of Stalin and his highest associates, coupled with defeatism and sabotage in favor of the invader in the war with one or more capitalist states which they were sure would break our sooner rather than later.

The fact that no collapse occurred and that collectivization and rapid industrialization appeared to have been successful enough caused disruptions among the participants in the bloc of oppositionists. Evidently some of them were motivated more by fear that Stalin's policies were leading the USSR to ruin than either by the conviction that Trotsky's theory of "permanent revolution" was correct, or by hatred of Stalin himself. Piatakov, Radek, and Rakovsky were among those who were no friends of Stalin or his concept of how to build socialism in one country. But they were ultimately unwilling to unite with Nazi Germany and fascist Japan, bring about the defeat of the USSR in war, see the USSR split into smaller parts, and end up united with the fascist powers.

## Trotsky's Theory of "Permanent Revolution"

Trotsky himself stuck to his theory that it was impossible build socialism in a single country. At first he believed that Soviet society would either collapse under the economic and social strain of simultaneous collectivization, famine, and industrialization, or would become ungovernable due to rebellions and the disaffection of the Army. This proved not to be so, as Sedov told Piatakov:

Trotsky rules out any possibility at the present stage of any mass anti-Stalin movement. Stalin has succeeded in surviving the difficulties and we must frankly admit that we have missed the time. (LD 241)<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Also see the discussion of this passage in Chapter Two, above.

Trotsky concluded that the struggle against Stalin's project of socialism in one country should also be international. From that he drew the further conclusion that the Trotskyists and their Opposition allies would have to make arrangement with Germany and Japan, the capitalist states most likely to attack the USSR and, to counteract the Germans and Japanese, with Britain and France. First Smirnov, then Kamenev told Piatakov about this.

But neither Piatakov nor Radek were able to fully grasp the implications of this policy as Trotsky saw them. So they decided that Piatakov should meet with Trotsky. He asked Trotsky again at their meeting in Norway in December, 1935, and Trotsky expatiated upon his ideas in greater detail. (Smirnov, LD 238; Kamenev, LD 250; Radek, LD 259; Trotsky LD 267)

The main points of Trotsky's lecture to Piatakov are quoted in the transcript of the January 1937 Moscow Trial.<sup>19</sup> Sometimes Piatakov's statement provides the source of quotations in the trial transcript that are otherwise not identified. For example, Vyshinsky said the following:

Incidentally, in regard to this *Bulletin* of the Trotskyite opposition, Pyatakov told us that Trotsky had said to him: "Do not take everything we say in the *Bulletin* at its face value. Bear in mind that we cannot say in the *Bulletin* all that we say to you, and demand of you.



Understand that sometimes, perhaps, in this *Bulletin* we shall say things which are the opposite of what we demand of you. (1937 Trial 508-509)

<sup>19</sup> The page numbers to this statement of Piatakov's as cited by Prosecutor Vyshinsky in the transcript of the January 1937 trial are the same as in the text we have obtained. They are included in the English translation.

The parallel passage in Piatakov's Statement is as follows:

He mentioned once again the difference between the preparation of a *coup d'état* and a mass uprising and in this connection much of what he was about to say must not only not be made public (and therefore I should not be surprised that much of it will contradict what is said in his "Bulletins"), but also must not be made known to wider circles of his supporters in the USSR. (LD 264)

In *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* and *Trotsky's Lies* we have established that Trotsky lied in his writings, including in his *Bulletin*, when he considered it expedient to do so. Piatakov's Statement, and his claim as quoted by Vyshinsky here, are consistent with that.

### Ukrainian Independence

According to Piatakov, Trotsky said that the Germans demanded that a new government led by the Oppositionists should allow the Ukraine to separate from the U.S.S.R.:

3. In the event that the "nationalist "forces" of the Ukraine should want to separate from the U.S.S.R. — not to oppose this. (LD 268)

Piatakov testified to this during the trial:

But in return the fascists are to receive the following compensation: a general favourable attitude towards German interests and towards the German government on all questions of international policy; certain territorial concessions would have to be made, and these territorial concessions have been defined—in particular, mention was made of

territorial concessions in a veiled form which were called "not resisting Ukrainian national-bourgeois forces in the event of their self-determination."

Vyshinsky: What does that mean?

Pyatakov: It means in a veiled form what Radek spoke about here: should the Germans set up their Ukrainian government, ruling the Ukraine not through their German Governor-General but perhaps through a hetman—at any rate, should the Germans "self-determine" the Ukraine—the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc will not oppose it. Actually, this meant the beginning of the dismemberment of the Soviet Union. (1937 Trial 64)

In 1939, Trotsky published four articles in which he advocated independence for the Ukraine. The first, "The Ukrainian Question," is dated April 22, 1939, published first (in English) on May 9, 1939, and in the July, 1939, issue of the B.O.<sup>20</sup> "Independence of the Ukraine and Sectarian Muddleheads," is dated July 30, 1939, but apparently first published in mid-September, 1939, in English and in the B.O. issue of October, 1939.<sup>21</sup> "Democratic Feudalists and the independence of the Ukraine," is dated August 5, 1939, but was first published on October 31, 1939, in English and also in the October issue of the B.O.<sup>22</sup> The last article, "Stalin — Temporary Holder of the Ukraine," is dated September 18, 1939, published on October 24, 1939, and not in the B.O.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> WLT 1938-1939, p. 413, n. 296; <http://web.mit.edu/fjk/www/FI/BO/BO-77.shtml>

<sup>21</sup> WLT 1939-1940, p. 426 n. 48; <http://web.mit.edu/fjk/www/FI/BO/BO-79.shtml>

<sup>22</sup> WLT 1939-40, p. 429 n. 71; *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> WLT 1939-40, p. 431 n. 88.

In the light of Piatakov's Statement and the 1937 Trial testimony Trotsky's articles in support of Ukrainian independence may be interpreted in two ways:

- Trotsky presents these articles as a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the national question from his own strongly anti-Stalin, anti-Soviet perspective.
- However that may be, the call to separate the Ukraine from the Soviet Union is consistent with what Piatakov and others describe as Trotsky's recognition of the necessity to permit Ukrainian nationalist forces friendly to Germany to secede from the U.S.S.R.

Which of these interpretations best fits the facts as we know them? They are not mutually compatible because of the complete lack of any left, working-class based Ukrainian nationalist movement. Trotsky's appeals to Ukrainian revolutionaries sound unrealistic if not deliberately misleading, for all the Ukrainian nationalist organizations were far-Right, pro-German and Nazi-like.

Any independence for the Ukraine would mean a pro-Nazi, intensely anticommunist and anti-working class state, a base for Hitler. Therefore it seems likely that these articles constituted a covert message to the Germans that, despite the setbacks suffered by his Soviet-based supporters, Trotsky remained ready to concede Ukraine to Germany in case of war.

"By Any Means"

According to Piatakov's account Trotsky emphasized that in the struggle to unseat Stalin "all means were good."

In relation to this we must ruthlessly cast aside prejudices of any kind.  
(LD 241)

1/ The central task is not the resurrection of an organization for the sake of organization, but its resurrection for the purpose of liquidating Stalin and his closest supporters (in the letter it was said "'S' und Konsorten mit allen Mitteln aus dem Weg rauemen)..."

**"Remember, in this struggle all means are good and every ally is useful..." (LD 270)**

This concept was widely spread among Trotsky's firmest supporters in the Soviet Union. It is mentioned repeatedly in the interrogations and statements printed in PiLT2

### **Sokol'nikov and the Japanese**

One pre-trial interrogation of Sokol'nikov has been published in PiLT2. We have put its text in the "Appendix" section and will consider it in the present volume. Other pre-trial materials from Sokol'nikov have now been made available online.

In a section that has been published from another interrogation Sokol'nikov identifies the Japanese diplomat who contacted him about Japan's contacts with Trotsky as "Ota."

... to the file was associated a copy of notes of a talk between G. Ia. Sokol'nikov, who was at that time the vice-commissar of Foreign Affairs, with the Japanese ambassador Ota of April 13, 1935 on the question of the petroleum, fishing, and anthracite concessions on Sakhalin [Island]. At the preliminary investigation and at the trial G. Ia. Sokol'nikov confirmed the fact of this talk and stated that after the talk he supposedly had a short conversation with Ota on the subject of L.D. Trotsky's proposals to the Japanese government. The contents of the conversation, as it is reflected in the transcript of the interrogation of G. Ia. Sokol'nikov of December 12, 1936, was as follows:

Sokol'nikov: . . . when Ota and the secretary of the embassy were about to leave, Ota stopped a while. At that time both interpreters had already left my office. Taking advantage of this opportunity Ota, while I escorted him to the door, exchanged a few sentences with me.

Question: Please reproduce your conversation with Ota word for word, as far as possible.

Answer: Ota asked me: "Are you aware that Mr. Trotsky has made certain proposals to my government?" I replied: "Yes, I have been informed of this." Ota asked: "How do you appraise these proposals?" I replied: "I think the proposals are quite serious." Then Ota asked: "Is this only your personal opinion?" I replied: "No, this is also the opinion of my friends." On this point our conversation ended.

Question: Did Ota return to the question of contact between the bloc and the Japanese government after that?

Answer: No. This conversation with Ota took place at the very end of my negotiations with him. Shortly after that I stopped working in the NKVD and did not meet with Ota again. (R-PP 228-229)

In another fragment of a pretrial interrogation quoted by Dimitrov in his diary Sokol'nikov confirms Trotsky's conspiracy with Germany and Japan. We have reproduced this passage in Chapter Two, above.

### **Piatakov Confirms Sokol'nikov's Claim**

As we have already noted,<sup>24</sup> Piatakov's statement to Ezhov contains an important addition to the evidence of Trotsky's collaboration with the Japanese. Piatakov confirmed that Sokol'nikov had told him about this meeting.

Also, Sokol'nikov told me that he had a talk with the Japanese, with Ota, I think, from which it was also clear that Trotsky was carrying on negotiations with representatives of the Japanese government. (LD 257)

<sup>24</sup> See Chapter Two, above.

Piatakov's confirmation here is very significant. Piatakov made it in passing, without any emphasis, in an almost offhand manner. There is no indication that it was "forced" from him or "scripted" by the NKVD.

Therefore, there is no room for doubt that Ota approached Sokol'nikov. And that means that there can be no doubt Trotsky was conspiring with the Japanese. Elsewhere we discuss other evidence of Trotsky's contact with the Japanese.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> See Furr, *Trotsky's Collaboration*, Chapter 4, and a later chapter in the present volume.

### **Trotsky's Explanation of the Need for Sabotage**

According to Piatakov, during his December 1935 meeting with Trotsky in Norway he informed Trotsky that the latter's directive to engage in the sabotage of the burgeoning Soviet economy had not met with a sympathetic response by Trotskyists within the Soviet Union and that he, Piatakov, and Radek did not really understand the reasons for it either. After heaping a mountain of abuse upon Piatakov Trotsky explained that the real reason for convincing his supporters to engage in economic sabotage was not to damage the economy:

I understand very well — said Trotsky, for example — that small groups of Trotskyists cannot at this moment substantively change the course of economic development. But that is, in fact, not necessary.  
(LD 262)

He then explained that it was necessary to train Trotskyists to hate everything Stalin was doing no matter how positive it might appear, or those cadre would "degenerate" — be won over to the Stalin policy of industrializing the U.S.S.R.

Unless we carry out this directive the degeneration of the Trotskyist cadre is inevitable, their assimilation by the Stalin regime is inevitable, and that means our collapse together with the collapse of the Stalin state. (LD 263)

Between these two statements Trotsky evoked a comparison or parallel between what he, Trotsky was advocating and the position of the Bolshevik Party during the late Tsarist period. Trotsky cited Petr Struve and Mikhail

Tugan-Baranovskii, who were advocating the industrialization of Russia about the time that Lenin was concerned with the same questions, roughly 1895-1900. According to Piatakov, Trotsky said the following:

You recall the attitude of Marxists towards the development of capitalism in Russia. We all considered that a progressive fact. But the positions of Struve and Tugan-Baranovskii, called to the service of capitalism, are one thing, while the positions of Lenin and the revolutionary part of social-democracy, which were organizing the future gravedigger of capitalism, are another. We must be the gravediggers of the Stalin state. (LD 262-263)

Trotsky said that, like the Bolsheviks of the Tsarist period, he too considered the industrialization being carried out by Stalin to be a positive thing:

It will not deny that from the point of view of the country's development it is good that new factories are being built. (LD 263)

It is hard to understand why Trotsky used this comparison. Trotsky was trying to draw a parallel between his own aims and those of Lenin, whom both he and Piatakov admired. But Lenin and the Bolsheviks opposed terrorism and sabotage in the struggle against capitalism in Russia, while Trotsky was advocating both terrorism and sabotage. Trotsky's analogy appears not to support his policies but, on the contrary, to refute them.

Then Trotsky drew a conclusion completely at odds from that of the Bolsheviks:

But the task of Trotskyists does not consist in building factories, but in organizing forces against Stalin and his regime, whose collapse is inevitable. For this, cadre are needed. These cadre will inevitably degenerate if all they do is participate in positive work. That is the essence of my directive, and you cannot seem to understand it at all. (LD 263)

Evidently Piatakov did not understand how this example was supposed to help him convince the Trotskyist cadre to engage in sabotage and terror.

## **Not Mass Action and Revolution, but Conspiracy and coup d'état**

According to Piatakov Sedov, and then Trotsky, repeatedly stressed that the opposition could not hope to organize mass action — that is, revolution — against the Stalin regime. At one of their 1931 meetings in Berlin Sedov spoke to Piatakov as follows:

After that Sedov went on to outline what he called "the new methods of struggle."

Trotsky rules out any possibility at the present stage of any mass anti-Stalin movement. Stalin has succeeded in surviving the difficulties and we must frankly admit that we have missed the time.

"If we waste time now we will definitively lose all our cadre, and that will be the death of us.

For that reason now at the tip of the needle must be put

1) there terrorist struggle of tacitly conspiratorial groups against the main leaders of the party and government 2) active opposition against all the practical work of the party and government and 3) the discrediting in every possible way of Stalin's undertakings, especially on the economic front. (LD 241)

At their December 1935 meeting in Norway Trotsky told Piatakov:

'...Remember that without a whole series of terrorist acts, which must be carried out as soon as possible, the Stalin government cannot be overthrown. For this is a question of a *coup d'état*. A mass uprising, he said, is one thing, for which, evidently, there is no basis now, and a *coup d'état* is something else."

"This is the difference, I note, that many do not understand. They are unaware that the methods of a *coup d'état* differ fundamentally from the methods of organizing a mass uprising. I stand now precisely on the position of a *coup d'état* and therefore, in the deciding of questions



of tactics, I have rejected formulaic instructions, developed under other conditions, applied to other tasks." (LD 263)

He mentioned once again the difference between the preparation of a *coup d'état* and a mass uprising and in this connection much of what he was about to say must not only not be made public (and therefore I should not be surprised that much of it will contradict what is said in his "Bulletins"), but also must not be made known to wider circles of his supporters in the U.S.S.R. (LD 264)

Piatakov said that the Soviet masses had been won to the task of construction and so would be hostile to sabotage:

"The sharpest possible line of demarcation must be drawn between us and all those who are tied to Stalin and his state."

"However, we must do this not by means of public statements, propaganda, and explanations. Such statements at the present moment would not meet with sympathy from the masses. On the contrary, we would be compromised and destroyed before we could do anything at all. The organizing cannot be built on this basis. That would mean to doom it in advance. For in fact the masses are under a psychosis of construction, which they falsely accept as the construction of socialism. To come out openly now against this construction means to doom our efforts." (LD 265)

Here Trotsky clarified the difference between Lenin's and the Bolsheviks' strategy during the Tsarist period, and Trotsky's strategy in the 1930s. The former relied on a mass revolution and the overthrow of capitalism. Trotsky, however, realized that he could not do that, since the masses were basically won to constructing socialism (or, as Trotsky said, what they believed was socialism) through industrialization.

### **Return to Capitalism**

With no possibility of relying on the Soviet masses, the only means remaining to the bloc and to Trotsky were terror and sabotage.

Moreover, Trotsky realized that before seizing power the opposition would have to make agreements with the major capitalist countries so that, if they managed to overthrow the Stalin regime, the capitalist countries would not simply throw them out and divide up the Soviet Union amongst themselves.

"We cannot," Sedov transmitted Trotsky's views, "regard our struggle in an isolated manner. To keep our struggle in one country is just as absurd as Stalin's desire to build socialism in one country. Therefore we cannot swear off questions of relations between states and relations with capitalist states."

— Sedov to Piatakov in 1931 (LD 242)

4/ We must take the coming war into account and occupy in relation to the war an unconditionally defeatist position, and by means of preliminary negotiations with governments of capitalist powers (also making use of the contradictions between them) guarantee for ourselves favorable relations in case of our coming to power as a result of the war."

— Trotsky's letter to Piatakov of November 1931 (LD 247)

"Keep in mind that, without the essential agreement with the government of the capitalist powers against the Stalin government, we will not come to power. It is essential for us to secure a favorable attitude towards us, and that means we will have to make concessions to them. But about that we must have already in advance had confidential talks with the governments of these states, and that is happening now."

— Kamenev to Piatakov, end of 1932 (LD 251)

"Military conflict with capitalist states is inevitable. I do not doubt that the result of such conflict will be unpleasant for the Stalin state. We must be prepared at this moment to take power into your hands."  
"Of course, — emphasized Trotsky — we must understand that the seizure of power under these conditions means agreements with the corresponding capitalist states (for example with Germany, Japan and

others) on the basis of substantial concessions to them, including territorial concessions."

— Trotsky to Piatakov at their meeting in Norway in December 1935 (LD 267)

"This means, it will be necessary to retreat. This must be firmly understood. Retreat to capitalism. How far and to what degree, it is difficult to say now — this can be made concrete only after we come into power."

— Trotsky to Piatakov, Norway December 1935 (LD 269)

The capitalist powers that were capable of invading the Soviet Union, and therefore those with which Trotsky must make agreements, were clearly Germany, Japan, Britain, and France. Concerning Germany:

Trotsky said that in the struggle with Stalin we can in no way ignore relations between governments. Once we understand that Stalin's scheme of building socialism in one country is an empty and dangerous scheme, then we too in our struggle with Stalin must not slide to the position of "one country."

This struggle inevitably is interconnected with our relations with capitalist states. It would be stupid to think that it is possible to assume power without securing a benevolent attitude of the most important capitalist governments, especially of the most aggressive ones, such as the present governments of Germany and Japan. It is completely essential even now to have contact and agreements with these governments. He, Trotsky, has taken the necessary steps in this regard. He demanded from Radek and Sokol'nikov, who had the requisite possibilities, to put out feelers for the essential contact along these lines with the official representatives of these powers, and to support whatever he, Trotsky, was carrying out in practice.

In this connection, as I seem to remember, Radek told me about some kind of conversations of his with Germans (I cannot recall the names of these Germans), from whom it was clear that Trotsky had made

some arrangements with the German government. (LD 257. Emphasis added.)

He, Trotsky, had secured a favorable attitude of the German fascist government in case the bloc came to power.

Of course this favorable attitude was not due to any special sympathy towards the bloc but to real interests.

At the basis of the agreement lies an appeal to the German government to help the bloc come to power. On his part Trotsky promised in the event of coming to power to make very concrete concessions, stipulated in advance, to Germany. (LD 267)

### **Trotsky's Conspiracies with Germany, Japan, Britain, France**

Specific concessions to Hitler's Germany were then enumerated (LD 267-268. Trotsky assured Piatakov:

These principles of the agreement, as Trotsky related, were finally elaborated and adopted during Trotsky's meeting with Hitler's deputy — Hess. (LD 268)

During the Second Moscow Trial of January, 1937, Radek stated that he had learned about Trotsky's negotiations with Hess. (1937 Trial 132) It is not clear from this passage in the trial transcript whether Radek had heard about these negotiations only from Piatakov or whether Trotsky's letter that Radek said he had received in early January, 1937, had also mentioned them.

Sokol'nikov made it clear that he heard about Trotsky's negotiations with Hess from Piatakov:

Vyshinsky: You spoke to Pyatakov after he had returned from abroad?

Sokolnikov: Yes. That was in January 1936. Pyatakov told me that Trotsky had been negotiation with Hess. In these negotiations Hess was empowered to put forward **demands which concerned not only German interests but also the interests of another country.**

Pyatakov told me that he had understood Trotsky to say that these were negotiations on a number of questions, and that agreement had been reached on them. (1937 Trial 152)

The "other country" was certainly Japan. Concerning Japan:

... Sokol'nikov told me that he had a talk with the Japanese, with Ota, I think, from which it was also clear that Trotsky was carrying on negotiations with representatives of the Japanese government. (LD 257)

In just the same manner he had fully established contact with the Japanese government. (LD 268)

Tamekichi Ota was Japanese Ambassador to the USSR between 1932 and 1936. Unlike the previous case, where Hess and his putative agreement with Trotsky was mentioned during the trial, Ota's name never came up during the trial.

Sokol'nikov's claim that Ota had contacted him concerning Trotsky's agreement with the Japanese government was made public only in 1989.<sup>26</sup> Therefore Piatakov had heard about Ota from Sokol'nikov before the latter's arrest on July 26, 1936 (Piatakov himself was arrested on September 12, 1936).

<sup>26</sup> See Izv TsK KPSS 9 (1989) p. 45; reprinted in R-PP 228-9.

There is no basis to think that Sokol'nikov would have lied to Piatakov about Ota's words to him. *Therefore this passage presents good additional evidence that Trotsky really had conspired with the Japanese.*

Concerning Britain and France:

Of course, to reach agreements with Germany alone would be risky, since without a corresponding English and French counterweight Germany would put feet on the table and it would be very touch for us. Therefore in his practical steps he, Trotsky, is carrying out simultaneous preparatory work in different directions. (LD 267)

Furthermore Trotsky informed me that at the same time he had succeeded in establishing businesslike contacts with leading persons of Great Britain and France.... Trotsky also mentioned that the latest negotiations with the Germans were conducted in the presence of the English and the French.

In France the contact was with the "Comité de Forges"<sup>27</sup> and with banking circles. In England, with some conservative circles. (LD 268)<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> On the Comité de Forges see the article at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comité\\_des\\_forges](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comité_des_forges) and at the corresponding French Wikipedia page.

<sup>28</sup> A longer passage from this same quotation is in Chapter Two, above.

Given Trotsky's premises and his goals, his logic here, as described by Piatakov, appears sound. Once he had ruled out the possibility of a mass uprising or revolution against the Stalin regime, there remained only assassination (*terror*) and a *coup d'état*. War with powerful capitalist states would result either in social disorder following a *coup* or through military action by the capitalist states themselves.

If no *coup* took place, then defeatism in war would remain as a tactic. Under any of these circumstances prior agreements with the major capitalist countries were all necessary either for seizing power (with the help of the invading capitalist powers) or for retaining it (if a *coup* were successful).

This outline of Trotsky's plan for wartime is confirmed by a number of other sources including Marshal Tukhachevsky's confession statement, Marshal Budyonny's report to Marshal Voroshilov about the trial of the "Tukhachevsky Affair" defendants, the transcript of the trial of Tukhachevsky and his co-defendants, and Ezhov's interrogation of April 26, 1939. We have discussed Budyonny's report and Tukhachevsky's confession in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* and *Trotsky's Lies*.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Furr, *Amalgams*, Chapter 9; TL Chapter 9.

In his interrogation Ezhov said:

Koestring touched on the NKVD. He said: "In the general plan of the tasks we face, the People's Commissar for Internal Affairs must play a determining role. Therefore for the success of the coup d'état and our seizure of power you must create in the NKVD a broad organization of those who agree with you, and it must be united with the military men." Koestring declared that these organizations, in the army and in the NKVD, must be prepared in such a way as to guarantee united actions at the outbreak of war towards the goal of seizing power.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Transcript of the Interrogation of the Prisoner (lit. 'Arrested Person') Ezhov Nikolai Ivanovich of April 26 1939." Lubianka 1939-1946, 62. At <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhov042639eng.html> The Russian text is online at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/ezhovru.html>

### **Persons Incriminated by Piatakov**

In addition to the well-known Moscow Trials defendants Piatakov named a number of persons (all men) whom he said were mentioned to him by Trotsky in the course of their talk in Norway in December 1935.

I just add that among the individual persons mentioned in the course of this talk by Trotsky were: Radek, Sokol'nikov, Serebriakov, Muralov, Beloborodov, Rakovsky, Budu Mdivani, V.M. Smirnov, Sapronov, Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsy, Uglanov, Preobrazhensky, Putna, Primakov, Krestinsky. (LD 270)

Of these a number had not yet been arrested by the date of Piatakov's Statement. Rakovsky was arrested on January 27, 1937; Bukharin and Rykov on February 27, 1937. Evgeniy A. Preobrazhensky was arrested on December 20, 1936. This was possibly a direct result of Piatakov's naming him. But the investigation had to have additional testimony against him, so perhaps the date is just a coincidence. Nikolai N. Krestinsky was not arrested until May 29, 1937. In December 1936 Timofei V. Sapronov had been confined in the Verkhneuralsk political isolator on a previous charge.

He was not rearrested in connection with the Trotsky's conspiracy until August 10, 1937.

### **Piatakov's Motive**

It should be noted that in his Statement Piatakov does not praise Stalin or his policies. Nor did he do so at trial, even in his final statement, or in his post-sentence appeal. Nowhere did Piatakov claim that he now agreed that socialism in one country was possible, or that under Stalin the Soviet Union had followed the correct path to socialism and that now, at last, he realized that.

Neither Radek nor Sokol'nikov, of whom we have only their trial testimony said that they now realized that Stalin's course was the correct one. All of them claimed that they regretted following Trotsky onto the path of terror and sabotage. All were in accord that the greatest crime was abetting Trotsky's alliance with the fascists.

The same is true of Rakovsky, and we have more evidence about him. We have some of his pretrial testimony. We also possess some documentary evidence about his post-trial imprisonment, information that we do not have about Radek and Sokol'nikov (Piatakov was executed on February 1, 1937.<sup>31</sup>) It is evident that Rakovsky remained hostile to the Stalin regime and continued to protest against it while in prison.<sup>32</sup> We will also devote a separate chapter to them in a future book.

<sup>31</sup> <http://lists.memo.ru/d27/f408.htm#n86>

<sup>32</sup> We discuss these issues in TV, Chapter Four.

This failure to claim that Stalin's policy was correct is not consistent with any hypothesis that these men were forced to make false confession, or that they were trying to say what would be most pleasing to their captors in return for some kind of leniency for them, their families, etc. Other defendants, like Kamenev, did praise Stalin. Shestov, who asked to be executed, in his final words to the court praised Stalin "who holds an carries



the banner of Marx, Engels and Lenin in his strong, firm hands." (1937 Trial 562) But most of the defendants did not.

Moreover, we know that some of them did not confess all that they could. Radek, for example, praised Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky (1937 Trial). Yet he must have been aware that Tukhachevsky was part of the bloc of conspiracies against the Soviet state and was in contact with Trotsky. Radek named Vitovt Putna, who had previously been exposed by others. But he said nothing about Vitaly Primakov. We know that Piatakov, trying to convince the Politburo of his innocence, had offered to shoot the defendants at the 1936 Moscow Trial with his own hand including, if guilty, his own wife.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> "Extract from J.V. Stalin's presentation (Dec. 1936 CC Plenum)." *Voprosy Istorii* 1, 1995, 9-11. In English translation at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrgr/research/stalinonoppsvi11995.html> Online, in Russian, at [http://www.memo.ru/history/1937/VI9501.htm#\\_VPID\\_9](http://www.memo.ru/history/1937/VI9501.htm#_VPID_9)

Bukharin and Iagoda, at least, knew about Ezhov's participation in the network of conspiracies. Neither one exposed him, at a time when doing so could have stopped the huge mass murders of the "Ezhovshchina" and saved perhaps hundreds of thousands of lives.

## **Conclusion**

Piatakov's statement offers an account of the Trotskyist conspiracy, including important facts about Trotsky's personal leadership that has not been available before.

- As we have shown here, it simply cannot have been "scripted" by the NKVD or prosecution, It represents what Piatakov chose to say.
- It confirms Piatakov's and Radek's accounts in their testimony at the second Moscow Trial of January 1937.
- It confirms that Piatakov did indeed make a secret visit to Trotsky in Norway in December 1935.
- It confirms Trotsky's collaboration with both Germany and Japan.

## **Chapter 5. Trotsky in the Transcript of the Tukhachevsky Affair Trial of June 11, 1937**

In May and June, 1937, eight high ranking military commanders of the Soviet Union were arrested. The most famous among them was Mikhail Nikolaevich Tukhachevsky, one of the five marshals of the Soviet Union. The case is often called the "Tukhachevsky Affair" after him. The others were Iona E. Iakir, Ieronim P. Uborevich, Avgust I. Kork, Robert P. Eideman, Boris M. Fel'dman, Vitalii M. Primakov, and Vitovt K. Putna.

All of these officers confessed very quickly to various charges amounting to treason. They were put on trial on June 11, 1937, sentenced to death, and executed immediately.

On February 25, 1956, Nikita Khrushchev delivered his infamous "Secret Speech"<sup>1</sup> to the XX Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In it he accused Joseph Stalin and, secondarily, Lavrentii Beria, of serious crimes, principally of the frame-up and execution of leading Party members. Khrushchev specifically stated that the Party leaders whom he named in his Speech and who had been executed during the 1930s had in fact been innocent, falsely framed on Stalin's orders.

<sup>1</sup> In Russian: "Zakrytyi Doklad," or "Closed Report," in that guests at the XX Party Conference were not invited to hear Khrushchev read it.

Later in 1956 Khrushchev convened a high-level commission, the "Molotov Commission," to study this issue. Balanced between former long-time associates of Stalin and supporters of Khrushchev, the Molotov Commission did not agree to "rehabilitate"<sup>2</sup> — declare innocent — most of the defendants in the three public Moscow Trials of 1936, 1937, and 1938.

<sup>2</sup> "Rehabilitation" meant the declaration that a person had been improperly convicted (and, usually, executed). Rehabilitations were rare, if ever, based on evidence. See the quotation from the fervently anticommunist scholar Marc Junge, in the Introduction.

The commission members did agree to declare innocent Mikhail Tukhachevsky and the seven other military commanders tried and executed with him.

Комиссия также считает, что обвинения, выдвинутые против Тухачевского, Якира и других осужденных по делу «Военно-фашистского заговора» в июне 1937 года, являются необоснованными и должны быть с них сняты.<sup>3</sup>

The commission also considers that the charges against Tukhachevsky, Iakir and other convicts in the case of the "Military Fascist Conspiracy" in June 1937 are unfounded and should be removed from them.

This appears to have been a compromise. Khrushchev's men wanted the rehabilitation of all the accused, while the former Stalin associates probably wanted no rehabilitations at all.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> "Zapiska Komissii TSK KPSS pod Predsedatel'stvom V. M. Molotova v TSK KPSS o Predstavlenii Vyvodov po Rassmotrennym Materialam." ("Note of the Commission of the CPSU Central Committee under the Chairmanship of V. M. Molotov to the CPSU Central Committee on the Presentation of Conclusions on the Materials Considered") December 10, 1956. RKEB 2, 207.

<sup>4</sup> We know that Ivan Serov, Khrushchev's man as Chair of the KGB, withheld documents from the Commission. See Furr, *The Murder of Sergei Kirov*, pp. 128 ff. Even Matthew Lenoe, whose work on the Kirov murder is incompetent and dishonest in many respects, recognizes that Serov — meaning, of course, Khrushchev too — deliberately deceived the Molotov Commission. On May 21, 1974, Molotov told Feliks Chuev that Tukhachevsky had indeed been a loathsome and very dangerous traitor. *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym*. Moscow: "Terra", 1991, 30.

At the XXII Party Congress in October, 1961, where Khrushchev's people attacked Stalin with even more venom (and also attacked his principal supporters Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich, and even Voroshilov. Afterwards, from 1962 until he was deposed in October, 1964, Khrushchev

authorized a large number of books and articles praising the Tukhachevsky Affair defendants and a great many others who had been executed during the late 1930s.

Under Brezhnev, Andropov, and Chernenko, few rehabilitations took place, virtually all of these unpublicized. A year or so after Mikhail Gorbachev became First Secretary of the CPSU (March, 1985) he began to sponsor a flood of "rehabilitations" and also a large number of books and articles concerning the Tukhachevsky Affair defendants.

Since Khrushchev the innocence of Tukhachevsky and his co-defendants, along with a great many other military, Party, and other figures executed during the 1930s, has been taken for granted.<sup>5</sup> However, neither under Khrushchev nor under Gorbachev, nor since then, has any *evidence* been discovered that might support the contention that the Tukhachevsky defendants were innocent.

<sup>5</sup> To give a recent example: in his 2017 book *Stalin. Waiting for Hitler, 1929-1941*, Stephen Kotkin simply claims: "in this case there was no military conspiracy." (377) For a critical study of Kotkin's dishonest and incompetent book, see Furr, SW.

A great many documents from former Soviet archives have been published since the end of the USSR in 1991. These documents permit us to see that many — even, quite possibly, all — of the Khrushchev-era and Gorbachev-era accusations against Stalin are lies. A large amount of primary source evidence has been published that points to the guilt of Tukhachevsky and his co-defendants. But the central documents — the investigation files, including interrogations and confessions of Tukhachevsky et al., and especially the transcript of the trial of June 11, 1937, remained top-secret, inaccessible to all researchers.

### **The Tukhachevsky File Is Declassified**

In 2017 Tukhachevsky's investigative file was quietly made available to researchers, in that it is available to be studied at the FSB Archive in Moscow. In May, 2018, the transcript of the Tukhachevsky trial was

published, again without any announcement, on one Ukrainian and one Russian internet site.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> For links see the footnote in Chapter Four.

A study of Tukhachevsky's investigative file and the trial transcript will be sufficient to prove to any objective student that Tukhachevsky and the commanders convicted and executed with him were guilty beyond doubt. They all confessed their guilt and gave detailed, and interestingly differentiated, confessions.

### **Trotsky in the Tukhachevsky Trial Transcript**

Our specific interest in this article is the trial transcript and the additional evidence it contains that Leon Trotsky did indeed collaborate and conspire with the Germans and Japanese against the Soviet government. I have discussed much important evidence of Trotsky's collaboration with the fascists in my 2017 book *Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan: Trotsky's Conspiracies of the 1930s, Volume Two*. Since that book was published, much additional evidence of Trotsky's Nazi and Japanese collaboration has come to light. Other chapters in the present study examine some of this extensive evidence.

Numbers in parentheses in this chapter are to the pages of the 172-page Russian-language transcript of the trial of Tukhachevsky et al. of June 11, 1937. I have translated into English only those passages from the transcript that concern Trotsky specifically.

A translation of the whole transcript is beyond the scope of this specific study. I do not think it would add much to the discussion of Trotsky's fascist collaboration. Objective students will understand that the testimony of the accused in this trial, coupled with the vast amount of evidence from other sources that confirms it, cannot have been faked in any way by "Stalin," i.e. the Soviet government.

### **Denial of the Evidence**

In the case of Tukhachevsky, and in the case of Leon Trotsky, there is a great deal of outright denial. Some people, primarily anticommunists and Trotskyists, will insist that all this evidence *must* have been faked and "planted" by the Stalin regime, on the grounds that "Stalin was evil, so he must have been falsely accusing these people and Trotsky too," and/or "Trotsky was a true, principled revolutionary who would never have done the terrible things the defendants accuse him of." Such persons are not interested in the truth and will not be more convinced by a translation of the complete transcript than by the selections I provide here.

Indeed, *no* conceivable evidence would convince them. To such persons, evidence is irrelevant; all that counts is "faith" and "political correctness." This is the "argument from incredulity," a well-known and flagrant logical fallacy which, however, is ubiquitous among anticommunists, including well-known scholars, and among Trotskyists. It is common because it is *essential* to the retention of what I call the "Anti-Stalin Paradigm: — a false historical framework that can only be maintained through denial, prevarication, and fallacious reasoning.

### **Thematic Approach**

The analysis below focuses on the most important themes concerning Trotsky's activities that are to be found in the Tukhachevsky Affair trial transcript. I have chosen to study the trial transcript here rather than the Tukhachevsky investigation file in part because of its inherent interest.

An additional and important consideration is the nature of the circumstances in which these defendants gave their testimony. These men knew that this trial was their last chance to assert that they had been falsely accused, "framed," tortured or threatened into making false confessions. If they had really been innocent, they surely would have made this known in some way at this trial.

It is futile to claim that persons accused of capital crimes and who, moreover, have confessed their guilt during interrogations, would restate their guilt in the strongest terms at trial and in their last words to the court — and yet be innocent victims of a frame-up. This is, of course, what the

proponents of what I have called the Anti-Stalin Paradigm, anticommunists and Trotskyists, will in fact claim.

But they will do so in defiance of all reason and logic. Confessions of guilt may, under certain circumstances, be wrung by force or threat from innocent persons. But confessions of guilt themselves can never be evidence of innocence.

A claim of innocence is not conclusive evidence of innocence, since we expect that, in most cases, both the innocent and the guilty will progress their innocence. But these defendants did not claim that they were innocent. On the contrary: they admitted their guilt in the firmest and most convincing terms. Under these circumstances, their confessions at trial must be considered to be the strongest possible evidence of their guilt.

### **Defeatism and Fear of Defeat**

We have a great deal of evidence from other sources that Trotsky was pushing for the defeat of the USSR in war against Germany, Poland, Japan, or a combination of these powers. Trotsky's advocacy of defeat and defeatism is mentioned by at least five of the defendants:

Iakir:

Tukhachevsky first, more or less definitively, told me the current weakness of our abilities, the unity of the **fascist** activities of **Germany** and **Japan** with Poland, were leading to a situation when we needed to destroy the existing order, and he told me then and there that he had contact with **Trotsky** and with the **German General Staff**. In either my first talk with Tukhachevsky or the second, but in one of those talks Tukhachevsky, without going into details, told me that **Trotsky** had set forth the essential assignment of strengthening the work of the counterrevolutionary and anti-Soviet elements in the army, and that he, Tukhachevsky, took upon himself the assignment of organizing and uniting these anti-Soviet and counterrevolutionary elements. Further, Tukhachevsky laid out for me **Trotsky's** directive,

agreed upon with the **German General Staff** and detailed to some extent by himself personally. (11)

Tukhachevsky:

In accordance with **Trotsky's** instructions that it was necessary to establish contact with the **German General Staff**, in London in 1936 I had a talk with General Rundstedt of the **German General Staff**. He told me that he knew I was leading a conspiracy and that he had instructions to talk with me. I said that the conspiracy indeed existed and that it was led by me. **I asked Rundstedt where the main forces of the German army would attack, and I referred to Trotsky's directive that we should organize defeat where the German army would be in action.** (47)

Kork:

... the Red Army would suffer such losses that would permit the Right-**Trotskyists** to come to power and take power out of the hands of the Stalin government. (86)

Fel'dman:

I must return to **Trotsky's** directives. Later, when from **Trotsky's** first directives, about which Mikhail Nikolaevich [Tukhachevsky] informed me, he went on to discuss the preparation for the defeat of the Red Army, he said to me that he was doing this according to a new directive from **Trotsky**, adding that all means are good in the struggle to achieve our aims, in the struggle against Soviet power. (142)

[[???

When contact with Trotsky had been set up through Putna, who had been transferred to London, there began talks about defeatism ... (146)

## **Trotsky's Collaboration with the German General Staff**

Iakir:



Tukhachevsky laid out for me **Trotsky's** directive, agreed upon with the **German General Staff** and detailed to some extent by himself personally. (7)

Fel'dman:

When contact with **Trotsky** had been set up through Putna, who had been transferred to London, there began talks about defeatism, and methods of terror and espionage appeared — all this in order to overthrow Soviet power and guarantee **Trotsky's** coming to power. **Trotsky** did not have real forces numbering in the thousands besides those that you see here and **therefore whatever Trotsky dictated to us, the German General Staff was dictating.** That's the way I see it and that's the way we should put it. (156)

Uborevich:

The trial has freed me from the nightmares of conspiracy and the diabolical directives of Tukhachevsky, — that is to say, of **Trotsky**, and the **German General Staff.** (155)

Putna:

Many people know that I was a different person, and for me now there is no other solace except that I was once a different person. And now, in a very short time, in my own internal feelings, I have returned to my former self. I believe that in a sick organism, one that is decaying, struck down as though by poisonous gases, in an organism rotted by **Trotsky**, who led me into service to the **German General Staff ...** (163)

### **Trotsky and the "Palace Coup" or *Coup d'État***

Iakir:

... **Trotsky's** directive ... came down to the following. The first point of the program laid out by **Trotsky** was a **coup d'état**, prepared by the "Muscovites," the participants in the counterrevolutionary anti-Soviet

Right-**Trotskyist** organization, who had succeeded in feeling out and entering into contact with a number of Kremlin-based Chekists and with the immediate military guard of the Kremlin in the person of the chief of the Kremlin military school Egorov. (7)

Fel'dman:

There were talks, as I have explained, about a **palace coup**. When contact with **Trotsky** had been set up through Putna, who had been transferred to London, there began talks about defeatism, and methods of terror and espionage appeared — all this in order to overthrow Soviet power and guarantee **Trotsky's** coming to power. (146)

### **IUrii Piatakov, Trotsky's Representative in the USSR**

Iakir:

The next assignment Tukhachevsky told me about was that he would maintain direct relations with **Trotsky** and with the **German General Staff**. With the first, through **Piatakov**, and with the second through Putna. (11-12)

In particular, Tukhachevsky told me twice that he had received information from **Piatakov** and spoke about his talks with the Rights, with Enukidze, and about one talk with Bukharin. (13)

Tukhachevsky:

I mentioned Primakov. He told me that he was in contact with **Piatakov**, who was the leader of the **Trotskyist** center in Moscow. After that I got into personal contact with Piatakov.

Ul'rikh: Personal contact?

Tukhachevsky: Yes. Then in 1934-35 **Piatakov** told me of the plan of determined aggression by the **German** army, which would be linked with the loss by the USSR of Ukraine and the Primor'ye. He confirmed **Trotsky's** directive of 1934 that was set forth in a letter from **Sedov**

and in oral form by Putna. **Trotsky** then gave me the assignment of activating the work as much as possible. Finally Putna arranged a meeting for me with **Sedov** in 1936. (46)

Bliukher: Through whom, and how, were the talks concerning concessions to German fascism of the Ukraine and of Primor'ye to Japan?

Tukhachevsky: It was **Piatakov** who told me, so really it was **Trotsky**, through Piatakov, but it was **Piatakov** who personally told me this. (66)

Primakov:

In 1936 I spoke with Fel'dman, and, when I arrived in Leningrad, with Gar'kavy, and then retained my Trotskyist contact with **Piatakov**, with whom I met in the spring.

Chairman: Did you systematically maintain contact with the leadership of the military center and the parallel Trotskyist center?

Primakov: Basically I maintained contact with **Piatakov**. (129)

[I asked] Tukhachevsky several times about his contacts with civilian counterrevolutionary organizations. Only in 1933 or the beginning of 1934 did he tell me that he was in contact with **Piatakov**.

Contact with **Piatakov** helped carry out sabotage in the area of artillery armament from the viewpoint of lowering our orders. (138)

## **Break Ties, Cut Off All Contact with Other Trotskyists**

Iakir:

Despite the fact that Tukhachevsky repeatedly spoke to me about the necessity of the very greatest secrecy (**Trotsky** was repeatedly telling him this, saying that **the military conspiracy and its participants**

**must not in any case be connected with other ways and lines** [of the conspiracy]), contact took place all the same. (13)

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Ul'rikh: Personal contact?

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Tukhachevsky:

I regard my entry into the organization as of 1932. ... By the way, **I always and at every occasion have spoken out against Trotsky during discussions, just as I have against the Rights**. (37)

Primakov:

In 1934 I received the directive from **Piatakov** to break ties with the Dreitser group and with the old Trotskyists .... (125)

Tukhachevsky added that **Trotsky's** directive stated that the work of the military organization must be led extremely independently, not by any means to be in contact with the anti-Soviet groupings that exist in our country among civilian organizations. (137)

### **Unity of the Rights and Trotskyists**

Uborevich:

... [Tukhachevsky] began by showing the inevitability of our defeat in war against Japan, Germany, and Poland, and our internal difficulty. He began to tell me that he was heading an organization, that **he had contact with the Rights and Trotskyists.** (73)

Kork:

In 1931, when I began my talk with Tukhachevsky, he explained the situation like this: we must unquestionably go with Rykov. It was not expedient at that time to defend **Trotsky** since he had lost authority in the country [the USSR]. But soon thereafter, in 1932, **Trotsky** was mentioned more and more often. And then in 1933, when the **fascist** coup took place in **Germany**, among those leaders under whose flag we were supposed to go were **Rykov, Bukharin, and Trotsky**. Later Tukhachevsky began to state, not by hinting but openly, that in the end the political group that would come out on top was hard to predict, whether **Rykov** or **Trotsky**, ... (92)

... I was shot through with doubts and gave in to the vile slander of the Rights and the even viler activities of the Trotskyists, **when the Rights and Trotskyists fused into one whole** and plotted the most criminal acts that can come into a person's head. (157)

Primakov:

Tukhachevsky also said that there was also contact with the Rights. To my doubtful question — how with the Rights? From where? I knew that **Trotsky** was leading the conspiracy. Tukhachevsky answered that now **the separation between the Rights and Trotskyists has been wiped away**, and since this is useful for our general business, why not have contact with the Rights also? (138)

## **Trotsky's Collaboration with the Japanese**

Iakir:

... in one of the letters of **Trotsky** to Tukhachevsky **Trotsky had pressed us to develop work in the Far East with the goal of contact**

**with the Japanese** for carrying out joint activity of the Germans. (27)

Fel'dman:

Speaking of **Trotskyist cadres in the Far Eastern Region**, there were many of them, but I did not know any members of the conspiracy.  
(147)

Tukhachevsky:

... the road of the group, that put me on the road of foul Right opportunism and of three-times cursed **Trotskyism, that led to contact with German fascism and the Japanese general staff ...**  
(154)

### **Romm and the Contact between Trotsky and Tukhachevsky**

Tukhachevsky:

... when in 1932 **Romm** brought me **Trotsky's** proposal to gather together the **Trotskyist** cadres, I agreed. (37)

Then in 1932 **Romm was sent from Trotsky**. This was approximately in August or September.

Chairman: What did he say to you?

Tukhachevsky: **Romm gave me, in Trotsky's name**, the assignment of organizing and bringing together the Trotskyist cadre in the army.  
(37)

### **Trotsky Relied on Hitler's Coming to Power**

Tukhachevsky:

Later, in 1933-34 ... **Romm gave me an instruction of Trotsky's that we should evaluate Hitler's coming to power as a favorable factor**

and we needed to take every measure to strengthen fascist power in Germany.

I should add that already in 1932 **Romm** had told me that **Trotsky was counting on Hitler's coming to power and was sure that Hitler would support him, Trotsky**, thanks to which we could count upon the overthrow of Soviet power. Then in 1933-34 **Romm confirmed to me that fascism supported Trotsky ... (37-38)**

Primakov:

When in 1933-34 Hitler came to power, we were given an official directive to stress our coolness towards the Germans at banquets. Tukhachevsky told me that **on Trotsky's directive, it was essential to let the Germans know that his attitude towards the Reichswehr remained just as good as earlier. (138)**

### **Trotsky's Son Leon Sedov**

Tukhachevsky:

[Piatakov] confirmed Trotsky's directive of 1934 that was set forth in a letter from Sedov and in oral form by Putna. **Trotsky** then gave me the assignment of activating the work as much as possible. Finally Putna arranged a meeting for me with Sedov in 1936. (46)

Putna:

After the first discussions with generals Adam and Schleifer, **when I reported to Sedov** what I had achieved, I received a second **directive from Trotsky via Sedov** that this first success was not enough ... (109)

On my way to London I met with **Sedov** ... Through **Sedov** I received parallel instructions from **Trotsky**, which came down to this: I should resurrect my German contacts ... (112)

Ul'rikh: Did you organize a meeting with **Sedov**?



Putna: Yes, at the request of Tukhachevsky I organized a meeting with **Sedov**. (115)

### **I.N. Smirnov, Leader of the Trotskyist Conspirators in the USSR**

Putna:

... I stated that in 1931 in Berlin Ivan Nikitich **Smirnov**, in a talk with me in the embassy building, told me that **in order to show the Germans serious decisiveness of the Trotskyists towards collaborating with them**, we needed negotiations with them. (108)

Question: From whom did you have the authority to conduct **talks with the German command**?

Putna: From the Trotskyist organization.

Ul'rikh: In the person of whom?

Putna: I received it as a directive from **Trotsky**, through **Sedov** and **Smirnov**. (109)

Trotsky Agreed to Give Ukraine to Germany<sup>7</sup>, the Primor'e to Japan

Tukhachevsky:

I mentioned Primakov. He told me that he was in contact with **Piatakov, who was the leader of the Trotskyist center in Moscow**. After that I got into personal contact with **Piatakov**.

Ul'rikh: Personal contact?

Tukhachevsky: Yes. Then in 1934-35 **Piatakov** told me of the plan of determined aggression by the German army, which would be linked with the loss by the USSR of Ukraine and the Primor'ye. (46)

Bliukher: Through whom, and how, were the talks concerning concessions to German fascism of the Ukraine and of Primor'ye to

Japan?

Tukhachevsky: It was Piatakov who told me, so really it was **Trotsky, through Piatakov**, but it was Piatakov who personally told me this.  
(66)

Putna:

After the first discussions with generals Adam and Schleifer, when I reported to Sedov what I had achieved, I received **a second directive from Trotsky via Sedov ...** Along with this it was proposed that I specify **what we promised generally in the way of compensation.**

Chairman: Who is "we"?

Putna: The Trotskyist organization. **The Trotskyist organization promises, first, territorial compensation ...**

Chairman: What did you promise in exchange for help?

Putna: The territory of the Ukraine. (109)

## **Trotsky and the German General Staff**

Tukhachevsky:

**In accordance with Trotsky's instructions that it was necessary to establish contact with the German General Staff**, in London in 1936 I had a talk with General Rundstedt of the German General Staff. [See under subhead "Defeatism amp; Fear of Defeat", above.]

Kork:

Ul'rikh: You confessed that during 6-7 years you carried out sabotage, counterrevolutionary work. One thing I don't understand is: Who was the boss? **You mentioned the Trotskyist center, the center of the Rights, you have mentioned German circles. But who in fact was**

**the boss**, who gave the basic directives up to the present time: Rykov, Trotsky, or German military circles?

Kork: Under the circumstances that have been created most recently, **the boss is the German General Staff**.

Ul'rikh: That means that your main boss was the German General Staff?

Kork: **Yes**.

Ul'rikh: The German General Staff — that is a concise answer. (101)

Putna:

**At Trotsky's direction** I conducted such negotiations with general Schleifer and Adam, who had established contact with us through Hoffmeister. (108-109)

Ul'rikh: With whom personally of the representatives of the German command did you carry on negotiations?

Putna: With major Hoffmeister, General Schleicher, and General Adam. (111)

In 1935, when I returned to London from the USSR, **Tukhachevsky** informed me about the successes in the Kiev and Belorussian military districts concerning the strengthening of aviation and of tank formations and **gave me instructions to pass this information however I could to the German General Staff**. On my way to London **I met with Sedov ...**

Ul'rikh: I did not understand — did you carry out your instructions and then return?

Putna: No, before carrying out my instructions. **Sedov gave me similar instructions from Trotsky**.

Ul'rikh: You had instructions to pass information. Did you meet **Sedov** and give information to him?

Putna: I tried to pass them **to the German General Staff**. (112)

Tukhachevsky:

I wish to draw a conclusion for myself from this vile work that has been done. I wish to draw the conclusion that under the conditions of the victory of socialism in our country every grouping becomes an anti-Soviet group and **every anti-Soviet group becomes one with the vilest Trotskyism**, with the vilest current of the Rights. And since there is no base for these forces within our country, then whether they wish it or not, these groups slide further, **into contact with fascism, into contact with the German General Staff**. (153)

### **Trotsky Advocated the Restoration of Capitalism**

Tukhachevsky:

... since there is no base for these forces within our country, then whether they wish it or not, these groups slide further, into contact with fascism, into contact with the German General Staff. This is the downfall of this counterrevolutionary work that was in its essence directed towards **the re-establishment of capitalism in our country**. (153)

Primakov:

... whom did **the fascist flag of Trotsky** join together? It joined together all the counterrevolutionary elements that we had. All of them, from the rags of the old officers' groups, to the Trotskyist group, with its vile terrorist directives, with its practice of struggle against the Party, though the remains of the Zinovievists, everything that was counterrevolutionary in the Red Army — all were gathered into one place, under one flag, **under the fascist flag in the hands of Trotsky**.

What means did this conspiracy choose that are unequaled in history? All means, from the blackest betrayal, from treason, from the preparation of the defeat of one's own country through sabotage, through espionage, through terror, directed against the brain and heart of our country. These are the means that the conspiracy chose. **For what goal? For the restoration of capitalism.** (165)

Uborevich:

Chairman: For whose benefit was all this done, for what state, for which classes did you carry out your anti-Soviet struggle?

Uborevich: For the purpose of **restoring capitalism.** (77)

### **Trotsky urged Sabotage and Terror**

Primakov:

Contact with **Piatakov** helped carry out **sabotage** in the area of artillery armament from the viewpoint of lowering our orders. (138)

What means did this conspiracy choose that are unequaled in history? All means, from the blackest betrayal, from treason, **from the preparation of the defeat of one's own country through sabotage, through espionage, through terror**, directed against the brain and heart of our country. (165)

Fel'dman:

When contact with **Trotsky** had been set up through Putna, who had been transferred to London, there began talks about defeatism, and **methods of terror and espionage** appeared — all this in order to overthrow Soviet power and guarantee **Trotsky's** coming to power. (146)

Tukhachevsky told me in 1936 that in carrying out **Trotsky's directive about having recourse to terror**, and in particular in relation to Voroshilov, he gave such a directive to Primakov in 1936. (142)

Tukhachevsky:

Then in 1933-34 **Romm** confirmed to me that fascism supported **Trotsky**, and therefore the latter demanded the activation of our work, especially in the area of **organizing sabotage and terrorist activity** in the army. (46)

Putna:

Ul'rikh: How, then, did the Germans consider that the **Trotskyist** organization ought to show its strengths? In what way?

Putna: This we thought would be **activities of a sabotage and terrorist nature**. (142)

### **Trotsky Plotted an Armed Uprising within the USSR**

Primakov:

Chairman [Ul'rikh]: Specifically, do you confirm your confessions about the preparation of a terrorist act by Trotskyist activists?

Primakov: I did not give any such confessions. I confessed about **the preparation of an armed uprising**. (123)

Primakov: **I had the following basic instruction: Until 1934 I worked for the most part, as an organizer, in gathering Trotskyist cadre.** In 1934 I received the instruction from **Piatakov** to break off ties with the group of Dreitser and old Trotskyists, who were assigned to prepare terrorist acts, and I myself was to prepare, in the military district where I worked, **to foment an armed uprising that would be called forth either by a terrorist act or by military action.** This was the assignment I was given. The military Trotskyist organizational center considered this assignment to be very important and its importance was stressed to me. I was told to break any personal acquaintance with old Trotskyists, with whom I was in contact. (125-126)

Primakov: I was instructed to seize Leningrad for the Trotskyists.

Ul'rikh: But if Germany had made war on the USSR, **for whom would you have seized Leningrad?**

Primakov: **For Germany.** (132)

Fel'dman:

I remember that we talked in more detail on the eve of the trip to Germany (Tukhachevsky was the head of the delegation.) **We spoke about overthrowing Soviet power by means of an armed uprising** and if this was not successful in peacetime, then to hope for problems at the front that might lead to armed demonstrations inside the country. Our method of work would be **supporting Trotskyist cadres**, support for those commanders who had earlier belonged to the Trotskyist or Zinovievist opposition, from among whom it would be easier to recruit people; ... (136)

### **Trotsky, an Agent of Fascism**

Tukhachevsky:

... in 1933-34 **Romm** confirmed to me that **fascism supported Trotsky** ... (46)

Putna:

Ul'rikh: How did he [German captain Salzman] repay you for this information?

Putna: He did not repay me. I asked him, as an intermediary, to help me establish contact and to speak with Ribbentrop, because **I had an assignment from Trotsky to establish contact with the Germans.** (114)

Fel'dman

In this way, summing up, I must say that everything we did were actions that served the interests of **the fascists and their agent Trotsky**, whose will we were carrying out ...

**Trotsky** did not have real forces numbering in the thousands besides those that you see here and therefore **whatever Trotsky dictated to us, the German General Staff was dictating**. That's the way I see it and that's the way we should put it. (146)

Iakir:

I have already said that I had a long, good, honorable life before that moment when I fell into the abyss, fell into the hands of the enemy, fell into the hands of the vilest of vile enemies that progressive humanity has, into the hands of **that murderer, that agent of German fascism, Trotsky**. (152)

Eideman:

I can now say without hesitation that I accept this harsh verdict so that with the last bit, the last minutes of my life, the last hours of my life to cover with curses **that vile enemy of the people, Trotsky, agent of German fascism, because of whom I too became an agent of German fascism**. (161)

Primakov:

All of them, from the rags of the old officers' groups, to the Trotskyist group, with its vile terrorist directives, with its practice of struggle against the Party, through the remains of the Zinovievists, **everything that was counterrevolutionary in the Red Army — all were gathered into one place, under one flag, under the fascist flag in the hands of Trotsky**. (165)

The second group to which I belong is the Trotskyist group. ... the most cursed group in the conspiracy because it has travelled the most vile path, has the most vile school and has as **its leader Trotsky, who demanded the fascist banner**. (167)



## Conclusion

The testimony of the Tukhachevsky Affair defendants is consistent with a great deal of other evidence which we now possess that Leon Trotsky did indeed conspire with Hitler's Germany and fascist Japan to encompass his return to power in the USSR through assassination — the common Russian term is "terror" — sabotage, a *coup d'état* against the Stalin leadership, and/or the organized defeat of the Red Army in a war against invading fascist powers coupled with an armed insurrection, evidently in Leningrad.

This testimony is consistent with the evidence we have collected and studied in the books *Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan* (2017), *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*, and *Trotsky's Lies*.

It is also consistent with the testimony of the defendants in the three Moscow Trials. In *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* and *The Moscow Trials As Evidence* we have shown that many of the fact-claims made by defendants in their testimony at the Moscow Trials can be checked against other evidence. We also showed that in a few cases Moscow Trials defendants testified falsely, but in order to conceal crimes they had committed that the prosecution did not discover. Thus we concluded that the Moscow Trials testimony, far from having been "fabricated" by the prosecution, is valid evidence.

Trotsky denied the accusations that he had collaborated with fascist German and Japanese leaders. But Trotsky would have denied the accusations whether he were guilty of them or not. So his denials mean nothing — they are not evidence.

In addition, we know that Trotsky lied. Unquestionably, he did so in order to conceal his conspiracies. Trotsky denied that a "bloc" of Rights and Trotskyists existed. Yet in 1980 Pierre Broué, the most famous Trotskyist historian of his day, discovered documents in the Harvard Trotsky Archive that prove that such a bloc existed and that Trotsky had approved it. Trotsky swore that he had cut off all ties to those who "capitulated" to Stalin, yet American historian Arch Getty discovered evidence in the same archive that Trotsky did in fact contact some of these men. Getty also discovered

that the Harvard Trotsky Archive had been "purged," undoubtedly of incriminating materials. We refer the interested reader to our detailed study of these matters in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* and *Trotsky's Lies*.

We have good non-Soviet evidence that military conspiracies did threaten the Soviet leadership. American researcher Alvin D. Coox revealed that NKVD General Genrikh S. Liushkov, who defected to the Japanese in June, 1938, privately told his Japanese military handlers that there was indeed a conspiracy among the military leaders in the Soviet Far Eastern Army.<sup>8</sup> Such a conspiracy is alluded to in the Tukhachevsky trial transcripts and in Tukhachevsky's own confessions.

<sup>8</sup> For a fuller discussion, see Furr, *The Murder of Sergei Kirov*, Chapter 17. See also *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*, Chapter 7, and *The Moscow Trials as Evidence*, Chapter 7.

We have the Arao document, and the confession of Nikolai Ustrialov, both of which implicate Tukhachevsky in conspiracy with the Japanese.<sup>9</sup> Ustrialov's confession ties the Soviet-based Trotskyists to this collaboration as well. All these matters are thoroughly examined in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* and *The Moscow Trials as Evidence*. We have the large amount of testimony in PiLT2 that we explore in other chapters of the present book.

<sup>9</sup> For the Arao Document see Furr, *Moscow Trials*, Chapter 10; Furr, *Amalgams*, Chapter 10; *Stalin. Waiting For ... the Truth*, Chapter 9. For Ustrialov's confession, see Furr, *Amalgams*, Chapter 11, and Furr, *Trotsky's Lies*, Chapter 11.

We know that in early 1937 Hitler's regime was expecting a military coup against the Stalin government. On page seventeen of his book *Mission to Moscow* (1940) Joseph E. Davies noted that he was warned of such an event by a German official in 1937.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in *Stalin. Waiting ...*, 153-4.

We have the Mastny-Benes note of February, 1937, from the Czech national archives, in which Czech diplomat Mastny informs the Czech president that

a German diplomat had told him that Hitler was no longer interested in an agreement with Czechoslovakia, since he expected a military coup in the USSR shortly.<sup>11</sup> We know that, in 1944, Heinrich Himmler asked Russian defector General Andrei Vlasov why Tukhachevsky's conspiracy had failed.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See Furr, *Amalgams*, Chapter 7, and *Moscow Trials*, Chapter 7.

<sup>12</sup> See the quotations by Himmler, Vlasov, and Goebbels in Grover Furr, "New Light On Old Stories About Marshal Tukhachevskii: Some Documents Reconsidered." *Russian history/Histoire Russe* 13, nos. 2-3 (Summer-Fall, 1986), 303. This article can be retrieved in facsimile at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/tukhpdf.pdf> and in html format at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/tukh.html>

## Conclusion

### President Putin's Remarks about the Start of World War II

On December 20, 2019, Russian President Vladimir Putin gave a talk to representatives of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In that talk he refuted the often-repeated falsehood that the Soviet Union shared with Hitler's Germany the responsibility for starting World War II.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Russian text of Putin's talk is at <https://rg.ru/2019/12/20/stenogramma-vystupleniia-vladimira-putina-na-neformalnom-sammite-sng.html> The English version is at <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/62376>

Putin cited more than thirty primary source documents. None of them are secret. All of them have long been known to specialists in the history of this period. These documents show that it was Poland and the Western imperialist countries that made the war inevitable by catering to Hitler and by rejecting all the Soviet Union's honest attempts to build collective security against Hitler.

Responses from Polish and Western sources were quick in coming.<sup>2</sup> In *The Atlantic*, anticommunist commentator Anne Applebaum called it "Putin's Big Lie."<sup>3</sup> But what Putin said is not a lie: it is the truth. *None* of these responses confronted, or even mentioned, the primary source evidence that Putin cited. The reason is clear: the documents do indeed prove the guilt of the governments of Poland, the U.K., France, and even the USA, in mollifying Hitler and refusing collective security.

<sup>2</sup> The response of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <https://www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja/stanowisko-msz-rp-wobec-falszywych-narracji-historycznych-prezentowanych-przez-federacje-rosyjska> The English translation: <https://www.gov.pl/web/diplomacy/statement-of-polish-mfa-on-false-narratives-presented-by-the-russian-federation>

<sup>3</sup> At <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/01/putin-blames-poland-world-war-ii/604426>

Instead of dealing forthrightly with the evidence the Polish and Western responses called his remarks "Stalinist propaganda." This is true — Putin's remarks echoed the position of the Soviet government of the late 1930s and the post-war period.

In the dishonest world of anticommunist propaganda, to term a statement "Stalinist" means that *it does not need to be refuted*. Any statement called "Stalinist" is *assumed* to be false, even when it is true.

Anyone who reads the text of Putin's remarks would notice this trick. But few people will do so. Many more will read the dishonest attacks by the Polish government and anticommunist writers.

### **The Academic History of the Stalin Period is Dishonest**

The mass media do not deal with research. They must publish too quickly. Writers for the mass media rely upon legitimated authorities such as academic experts. Writers of popular and semi-popular works, and authors of textbooks for use in schools and colleges, rely on academic historians too.

The media and the public assume that academic authorities base what they write and say upon evidence. But in the field of Soviet history of the Stalin period, this assumption is not valid. Certain fundamental falsehoods about Soviet history of this period cannot be questioned, regardless of the evidence. To question, much less refute, them is forbidden. Evidence that contradicts this taboo is ignored, while false evidence is invented. This is how the Anti-Stalin Paradigm works.

The conclusions to be drawn from the primary source evidence are as firmly establish as they are unacceptable — unacceptable to "mainstream" anticommunist scholarship and to Trotskyists, and thereby, unacceptable in public discourse. Briefly, the conclusions are as follows:

- The defendants in the three Moscow Trials of August, 1936, January, 1937, and March, 1938, were provably guilty of at least those crimes to which they admitted guilt.
- The "Tukhachevsky Affair" commanders arrested in May, 1937, tried and executed in June, 1937, did indeed conspire to join forces with Nazi Germany to seize control over the USSR.
- Leon Trotsky was indeed provably guilty of plotting to murder Sergei Kirov, Stalin, and other Soviet leaders; of conspiring with the German General Staff and the Nazi leadership to overthrow the Soviet government and Party leadership, either by a *coup d'état* or by aiding a German and/or Japanese invasion; and of conspiring with German agents, Russian fascists, Ukrainian nationalists, plus his own followers, to sabotage various economic enterprises in the USSR in order to weaken Soviet defense.

These are the same charges that were leveled by the Stalin government against Trotsky during the 1930s. They are the same as those that were summarized very well in the famous book by Michael Sayers and Albert E. Kahn, *The Great Conspiracy. The Secret War Against Soviet Russia*, first published in 1946, translated into dozens of languages and republished until Khrushchev's "Secret Speech."

### **What If Trotsky Had Succeeded?**

Counterfactual history, also sometimes referred to as virtual history, is a form of historiography that attempts to answer "what if" questions known as counterfactuals. Black and MacRaid provide this definition: "It is, at the very root, the idea of conjecturing on what did not happen, or what might have happened, in order to understand what did happen." (Wikipedia)<sup>4</sup>

The Wikipedia entry continues:

One goal is to estimate the relative importance of a specific event, incident or person.

<sup>4</sup> At [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counterfactual\\_history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counterfactual_history) (accessed January 25, 2020)

Below I briefly outline two aspects of counterfactual history. They help to clarify the issues at stake in any objective, truthful study of Soviet history of the Stalin period.

- What would the world have looked like if Trotsky's conspiracies had in fact succeeded?
- What would world history look like if historians recognized the truth and rewrote their histories accordingly?

### **If Trotsky's Conspiracies Had Succeeded**

Trotsky's goal was to take control of the Soviet Union. This goal dictated the nature of his conspiracies, including his cooperation with the fascist powers.

If Trotsky and his allies, the fascist powers, had overthrown the Stalin and the Soviet leadership, and seized control over the Soviet Union, there would have been many drastic changes. We will cite only this one: Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese fascist militarists, the Axis powers, would have been immeasurably stronger.

- Hitler and, in the East, the Japanese would have had the immense natural and human resources of the USSR to use in their wars against the Western imperialist powers, especially the U.K., France, and the United States.
- The Western imperialist powers might well have chosen to compromise with Hitler and the Japanese, rather than risk an all-out war against a very much stronger fascist enemy. After all, Britain and France were eager to go to war against the USSR in early 1940, in alliance with pro-German Finland, than they were to send their armies against Hitler.

Either scenario would have left fascism secure and in control of a great part of the world. Much, if not most, of the world would resemble Francisco

Franco's Spain — a murderous, viciously exploitative police state, maintained by fascist terror against everyone who opposed fascist aims.

The antiracist and anti-imperialist struggles for national liberation from imperialism would have been dealt a tremendous blow. The consequences for the fates of hundreds of millions of non-white people in the world can hardly be overestimated.

Hitler's stated goal in "General Plan East" was to murder most of the Slavic peoples — tens of millions — and keep the rest for cheap labor. The Nazis and their fascist allies like the Vichy French and Ukrainian nationalists killed almost half the world's Jews. Had Hitler prevailed, that number would have been 90 percent or more.

All around the world, the labor movement would have suffered much more intense repression. In a world much of which was directly ruled by fascists, while the rulers of the rest of the world temporized and collaborated with the fascists, the standard of living of working people would have fallen drastically, while their mortality would have skyrocketed.

Human progress would have suffered an enormous setback in every area of life. A great many persons alive today would never have been born at all. Most other people would be suffering far more exploitation and oppression.

Trotsky, his supporters, and his co-conspirators like Tukhachevsky, Bukharin and Rykov, now at the mercy of their "allies" the German, Japanese, British, and French ruling classes, would never have been successful in retaining power in a weakened, shrunken USSR. Tukhachevsky saw himself as the eventual "Napoleon." At the Third Moscow Trial of April, 1938, Bukharin admitted that he and his fellow conspirators had no reason to believe that Hitler would remain faithful to any deal they made with him.

**If Historians Recognized that Trotsky and the Moscow Trials Defendants Were Guilty**



The Soviet Union was able to defeat the fascist invasion *because* the chain of conspiracies, with Trotsky at the center and with the fascists providing the military might, while the Western imperialists facilitated both, was smashed by the Stalin regime. The Soviet Union — "Stalin" — saved the world from fascism not just once, by defeating the Nazi juggernaut, but *twice*: the first time, by smashing the Trotskyist-Nazi-fascist-capitalist conspiracies to turn the Soviet Union into Hitler's ally. Understanding of this fact was widespread after World War II, when *The Great Conspiracy* became a worldwide best-seller.

### **The Effects of Khrushchev's Lies**

The force that overthrew this understanding of history did not come from anticommunist historians, but from within. Nikita Khrushchev's infamous "Secret Speech" to the XX Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union began the process of denying the truth about the anti-Soviet conspiracies and Trotsky's role in them.<sup>5</sup> Khrushchev accelerated his attack on the truth at the XXII Party Congress in 1961.

<sup>5</sup> For the evidence that Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" was virtually nothing but lies see Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*.

The lies of Khrushchev and his historical propagandists were avidly taken up by anticommunist historians around the world. Millions of communists, workers, students, and other anti-capitalist forces and *potential* pro-communist activists also believed Khrushchev. They would never have believed any overtly capitalist propaganda, no matter how "scholarly" it appeared. But they accepted the word of Khrushchev, leader of the Soviet Communist Party and the world communist movement.

Inspired by Khrushchev's slander of Stalin, anticommunist propagandists got to work. But their lies would never have been so widely accepted, if Khrushchev had not loosed an army of pseudo-scholars, phony historians, to add false details to his attack on Stalin.

With a few years Khrushchev's propagandists had accused Stalin of dozens of crimes and atrocities. Some, such as the "Katyn Massacre," were real

atrocities that had been committed by others — in the case of Katyn, by the German invaders and their Ukrainian nationalist allies. Others, like the great famine of 1932-33, were natural events that were falsely blamed on "Stalin's" — the Soviet government's — policies.

*None* of these accusations were supported by primary source evidence. In 1962 Petr Pospelov, one of Khrushchev's top officials, told a convention of historians that they would *not* be permitted to go to the Party archives to search for evidence, but had to rely on the statements of top Party officials.<sup>6</sup> Today, with the partial opening of former Soviet archives, we know why Pospelov did this. No evidence for the accusations against Stalin exists! On the contrary: all the evidence shows that Khrushchev and his men were lying.

<sup>6</sup> See Politbiuro member Petr Pospelov's remarks to Party historians in *Vsesoiuznoe soveshchanie o merakh uluchshenia podgotovki nauchno-pedagogicheskikh kadrov po istoricheskim naukam. 18-21 dekabria 1962 g.* M: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka", 1964, 298, quoted in English translation in Furr, *Collaboration*, 8.

Within a decade of Khrushchev's speech the Moscow Trials defendants were widely believed to have been innocent. Many people started to consider Trotsky a lone, courageous voice for true communism against the monster Stalin. This remains the historical orthodoxy to this day.

## **Leon Trotsky's Guilt**

Though he never admitted it, Khrushchev copied some of his flagrant lies about Stalin from Trotsky's writing. Anticommunist writers chose to believe Trotsky's lies, just as they chose to believe the lies of Khrushchevites.

In 1956, Trotskyism was a tiny movement with little influence. Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" and subsequent avalanche of lies about Stalin changed that. To some people Trotsky now appeared to be the "prophet" that British historian and Trotsky admirer Isaac Deutscher had called him. Anticommunist writers now accepted — believed — Trotsky's version of events, just as they "believed" the lies of Khrushchev and his men. For

anticommunists and Trotskyists, this torrent of filth that the "communist" leaders were pouring over their own heritage was too good not to make full use of.

Trotskyist groups soared in membership, as they claimed to be the "good" communists. But they paid a price. Trotskyism became parasitical on overtly anticommunist scholarship. Trotskyists constructed a "cult of personality" around their hero. For them, Trotsky's writings became the source of all political wisdom.

Today, with the flood of primary source documents coming out of former Soviet archives, we have the evidence to prove that Trotsky lied, flagrantly and frequently. As this and my previous books have demonstrated, we also have the evidence to prove that Trotsky was involved in serious conspiracies of sabotage, assassination, and fascist collaboration.

The Trotskyist movement had wedded itself to the professional anticommunist "scholars" more firmly than ever. Trotskyist writers cite these scholars frequently, in defense of their own or Trotsky's assertions. It is clearer than ever that Trotskyism functions as the "left wing" of conventional, pro-capitalist anticommunism.

Regardless of the evidence, Trotskyists — at least the leadership of Trotskyist groups — are never going to admit the truth. In this too they resemble the professional anticommunist "scholars."

### **Not a "Political Line" But the Truth**

Anticommunists and Trotskyists will reject the research in this book, but not because of any fault in that research. They will reject it because they cannot honestly confront the evidence, and the conclusions that follow from it. They are not interested in the truth. Rather, they are promoting a political "line" — the Anti-Stalin Paradigm.

People who push a political "line" instead of the truth tend to assume that everyone is acting in the same dishonest manner and is promoting *their*

political "line." So they will call this book "pro-Stalin," "Stalinist," etc. as though I too am pushing some political "line."

But they are wrong. I am not promoting any political line or position. I am interested in the truth. I strive for objectivity as much as any scientist. I try hard to question by own biases and prejudices (everybody has them) and to give an especially generous reading to any evidence that tends to cast doubt on those prejudices or that tends to disprove the hypotheses I have chosen to test in my research.

For many year I have been diligently searching for evidence of crimes that Stalin committed. I have searched for them in the only legitimate way — by identifying, locating, obtaining, and studying primary source evidence, and then by drawing logical conclusions from that evidence. Likewise, I have given Trotsky every benefit of the doubt in my research.

No one asks what Sherlock Holmes' politics are. We just want him to solve the mystery! Int he same way, my own political proclivities are irrelevant. Nevertheless, the results of my research in this book, as in my other works, will be rejected by those who are unable or unwilling to consider the possibility that their own preconceived ideas are mistaken.

Too all other readers — the vast majority — I submit this research, and the conclusions based upon it. I welcome your comments and especially your criticisms. My email is easy to find on the Internet.

Grover Furr

February, 2020

## **Appendix: Documents**

### **Sokol'nikov Transcript of Interrogation of October 20, 1936**

Transcript of Interrogation of Sokol'nikov Grigorii Iakovlevich, of October 20, 1936

Sokol'nikov G.Ia. born 1888, born in city of Romny (former Poltava oblast'), until arrest the Vice-Commissar of the Forest Industry, former Candidate Member of the CC VKP(b) and former member of the VKP(b) since 1905.

Question: In the transcript of your interrogation of October 4, 1936 you stated that you established contact with Baldwin. Through the English journalist Talbot you told him about the existence and plans of the bloc and asked Baldwin to give support to the government of the bloc after its coming to power.

Did you inform Talbot of the composition of the government that the bloc intended to form after its accession to power?

Answer: When I met with Talbot in 1934 he asked me to tell him the composition of the government planned by the bloc. I answered him that the bloc had not yet determined the full composition of the government as we considered this premature.

However, as concerns the basic group of persons who would enter the government, there was complete unanimity.

In this basic group would be included: Rykov, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin, Piatakov and I — Sokol'nikov.

Talbot asked what distribution of functions was planned for the members of the government group. I answered that no final and firm distribution of functions could be determined at the present moment, but for all of us it was without question that Rykov would be proposed as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom), Kamenev — Chairman of the

Council and Defense, and possibly also People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Piatakov — People's Commissar of Heavy Industry, I — Sokol'nikov — People's Commissar of Finance.

To Talbot's question about who was planned as head of the Party leadership I answered that by general agreement of all the groups in the bloc Trotsky would be at the head of the Party leadership. Here I cautioned Talbot that it was possible that Trotsky would not be put at the head of the Party leadership immediately after the coup since he was politically compromised in the eyes of the broad masses. However, as soon as the situation had become strong enough, Trotsky would be at the head of the Party leadership.

Question: Did you tell Talbot how the bloc intended to effect the coup and seize power in the USSR?

Answer: Talbot himself asked me this question. I understood that he wanted to clarify the extent to which the bloc was a real power.

I explained to Talbot that the bloc represented a serious political factor since it was the result of a political agreement between the Trotskyists, the Zinovievists, and the Rights, and thus it united all the oppositional forces. Thanks to this unity the bloc had very broad contacts in the country.

To Talbot's question about what plan for seizing power the bloc had, I told him that I could not tell him these kinds of details. However, I told Talbot that the bloc was relying on the forces of its supporters in the country, on the one hand, and on the other hand was counting on the possibility of disorganization and weakness of the Party leadership.

I did not consider it possible to inform Talbot about the bloc's plans more concretely.

Question: What did you tell Talbot about the program of activity of the government of the bloc?

Answer: In my previous confession I have already said that I informed Talbot about the bloc's program, consisting in the rejection of the currently

policy of industrialization and collectivization. I explained that this meant permitting capitalist elements in the country's economy alongside the socialist elements. I stressed to Talbot that since the current government has completely liquidated the capitalist elements in the country, the government of the bloc would be forced to carry out its measures gradually at first, developing its program more broadly as it becomes strong in the country.

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I told Talbot that it was essential to warn Baldwin about this so that during this first period there should be no misunderstanding abroad of the program of the bloc and, as a result of this, a hostile attitude towards the government of the bloc.

Question: What concretely did you tell Talbot about the further relations between the government of the bloc and the English government?

Answer: Talbot asked me how the coming to power in the USSR of the government of the bloc would affect Anglo-Soviet relations. I answered that the foreign policy of the bloc would unquestionably permit the removal of the friction that now exists between the English and Soviet governments by means of important concessions that would go far to meet the demands of conservative English circles in the areas of economic and political relations.

I said that large orders would be given to English industry, that together with this the government of the bloc would agree to grant broad concessions to English capital in the USSR. I brought to Talbot's attention the positive attitude of Trotsky, Kamenev, and Rykov to the broad development of concessions in the USSR — these have long been well known. Then Talbot asked me whether I could tell him something about the possibility of recognizing the prerevolutionary debts. I told him that on this question the government of the bloc would also be ready to make significant concessions and to make proposals acceptable to the English government.

I also told him that on the question of the Comintern the government of the bloc would be ready to give all the necessary guarantees that it would completely refuse any help to the Comintern.

Summing up our talk Talbot said that he considered the question of the debts to be very important and I again reaffirmed to him the readiness of the government of the bloc to make serious concessions on this question.

On this point my talk with Talbot of the end of the summer of 1934 ended.

Question: Did you return again to these questions during your meeting with Talbot in the summer of 1935?

Answer: As I have already confessed in the transcript of my previous interrogation, when I met with Talbot in 1935 our talk consisted, in the main, of his giving me Baldwin's answer. Talbot told me that through Boothby, a Conservative Member of Parliament who was very close to Baldwin, he had transmitted to Baldwin Talbot's talk with me in all its details. Both Boothby and Baldwin tasked Talbot to inform me that he would guarantee friendly relations with the government of the bloc from the side of the governing conservative circles and expressed satisfaction with the course of internal and external policies that would be carried out by the government of the bloc.

At that same time Talbot told me that Baldwin considered it quite possible to guarantee the government of the bloc a loan and credits from England under the condition that the government of the bloc carried out the political and economic program that had been indicated.

As I have already confessed, Talbot and I agreed to maintain contact during Talbot's trips to the USSR. But after this talk Talbot did not contact me any more.

Question: You say that you did not meet with Talbot any more. Did you try to contact him/

Answer: I made no attempt to contact Talbot since I expected that Talbot would come to the USSR in the spring or summer of 1936. He had expressed such a proposal during our talks.

Written down accurately from my words, read through by me. (Signed: Sokol'nikov)



Interrogator: Ass't Chief of the EKO\* of the GUGB\*\* of the NKVD of the USSR Major of State Security (Signed: Chertok)

RGASPI, F. 17. Op. 171. D. 246. L. 151-158. Copy. Typewritten.

*Handwritten note on the first page: Distribute to the members of the CC VKP(b) J. Stalin*

\* Economic Division \*\* Main Directorate of State Security

Note: Talbot is probably Stafford Talbot, former editor of the British-Russian Gazette and Trade Outlook. Boothby is probably Robert Boothby, later Baron Boothby, Baldwin is Stanley Baldwin, British Prime Minister.

## **Piatakov Statement to Ezhov December 19-20, 1936**

[[cyrillic]] (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History, fond 17, opis 171, delo 263, pages 43-76. This archive is in Moscow). Page numbers here marked // //

[[cyrillic]]. (Central Archive of the Federal Security Service. R-33835 (Case No. 3257 concerning the accusation against Piatakov, Iurii Leonidovich and others. This archive is also in Moscow.)

[[cyrillic]] (Volume 1, list of the file (= LD) 237)

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To the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the U.S.S.R.

Com. N.I. Ezhov

My previous confessions in the course of interrogations about our criminal counter-revolutionary activity were fragmentary and incomplete. It is hard to pile all the filth upon oneself at one time.

I have considered the entire course of my own and my co-participants' struggle against the party and the soviet state and I have decided that I must finally and as completely as possible tell the whole truth about our treasonous work which can only be called betrayal of our country. I was one of the leaders of that vase and detestable work that we actively carried out during the last 4-5 years against the party and the working class.

I have only one wish now — to tell everything I know as fully as possible.

Therefore please permit me to return in this statement to a few substantive incidents in our counter-revolutionary activity that I touched upon earlier, so that I may tell about them more systematically and specifically.

1 / Resumption of contact with Trotsky and renewal of my criminal work

My active Trotskyist work began again in 1931.

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I have already confessed about my frame of mind before 1931 and will not return to this.

In 1931 I happened to be in Berlin for purposes of my work. At that same time I.N. Smirnov also arrived in Berlin for work during that summer. I.N. Smirnov visited me at my room in Berlin and told me that he had a meeting with Trotsky's son L. Sedov and that Sedov had communicated to him a series of very serious directives of Trotsky's. //44//

Sedov briefly informed me about "Trotsky's new orders," as he put it. In particular he told me that Trotsky thinks that the main task is the overthrow of Stalin and his closest associates by any means possible, and also the active opposition to all practical undertaking of the government, especially in the economic sphere.

Trotsky considers that the reconstruction on this basis of the Trotskyist-Zinovievist organization in the U.S.S.R. and the unification in one form or another of all force that can help to overthrow the "Stalinist regime" is the most essential task.

At the same time I.N. Smirnov uttered a phrase whose meaning became clear to me only much later: "Lev Davidovich believes that one of the basic causes of our previous defeat is that in our struggle we remained within the limits of the state alone and did not seek help from outside it."

The renewed struggle will inevitably pose international questions and we will decide these questions in the manner that is favorable to us."

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This Smirnov informed me that Sedov had been assigned by Trotsky to meet and talk with me and that he would bring the two of us together if I did not object. Smirnov himself urged me to meet with Sedov.

I agreed. Smirnov said that Sedov would first contact me by telephone. Soon after that Sedov did in fact phone me. Our phone conversation was quite short; we agreed on a meeting place. That same day I went to the "Café am Zoo" (where we had agreed to meet) and there I found Sedov, whom I had known very well before.

Sedov immediately told me that he was speaking to me not on his own //45// account but on behalf of his father L.D. Trotsky. When Trotsky found out that I was in Berlin he had given him the most strict instruction to meet with me at any cost and give me his, Trotsky's, instructions.

Sedov proceeded to expound what he had been instructed to say. Of course I cannot repeated word for word what he said, but I give the essence precisely.

"The struggle against Stalin is being renewed with new force. It must be understood that Trotsky had not abandoned this struggle for an instant. A temporary lull had been unavoidable, caused by Trotsky's geographical movements. Now the period of lull had ended. Contacts are being renewed. Within the country a new center was being formed, with which he, Trotsky, was already in contact. A bloc with the Zinovievists was being considered."

"Trotsky considers it essential to form a unified organization, regardless of his concerns about Zinoviev and Kamenev, who will undoubtedly attempt to

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occupy the leading role in this bloc. This danger of course cannot be excluded if Trotsky's supporters play only an observer's role instead of the active work that the present situation demands."

"Trotsky knows that the Rights — Bukharin, Tomsy, and Rykov, had also not laid down their weapons, and have only been silent. They have cadre, contacts, whole groups, sometimes very militant ones. It is not a problem that we had sharp disagreements only recently. These disagreements are nothing in comparison with our common anti-Stalin policy. Indeed it was on the eve of the bloc with Zinoviev-Kamenev that we had very sharp

battles with the "Leningradists," with whom soon afterwards we //46// went shoulder to shoulder against Stalin."

"As far as he, Trotsky, was aware, there were also other elements who were dissatisfied with the Stalin regime. We must draw them to us. We must understand that a very sharp struggle is beginning, not a discussion and not an exchange over principles, but a struggle for power. Therefore we must mobilize directly or indirectly all those forces that can collaborate in resolving the basic, the root task of the day — the task of overthrowing Stalin whatever it takes and at no matter what cost."

"We must discard old prejudices. Today's policy is: 'Everything that is against Stalin is for us and must be mobilized.'"

"Trotsky demands and is convinced that I, Piatakov, will not decline active participation in this struggle."

"He knows your tendency to bury yourself in the practical business of the moment. This is completely impermissible now. This intolerable passivity must end

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— you understand that it is not I, but Lev Davidovich, who demands it."

I answered that I understood Trotsky's demand and was ready to carry out his directive."

Sedov expressed his great happiness and declared with feeling:

"Lev Davidovich has always had confidence in you. He has not doubted for a second that, if we act decisively and do not hesitate at extraordinary methods of struggle, then our success is assured."

After that Sedov went on to outline what he called "the new methods of struggle."

Trotsky rules out any possibility at the present stage of any mass //47// anti-Stalin movement. Stalin has succeeded in surviving the difficulties and we

must frankly admit that we have missed the time.

"If we waste time now we will definitely lose all our cadre, and that will be the death of us.

For that reason now at the cornerstone [of our work — GF] should be laid the following:

1) the terrorist struggle of tacitly conspiratorial groups against the main leaders of the party and government; 2) active opposition against all the practical work of the party and government; and 3) the discrediting in every possible way of Stalin's undertakings, especially on the economic front.

In relation to this we must ruthlessly cast aside prejudices of any kind. At the same time it is most essential to establish contacts in the army as broadly as possible.

Just as Smirnov had done, Sedov again mentioned briefly one fundamental position of Trotsky's.

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"We cannot," Sedov transmitted Trotsky's views, "regard our struggle in an isolated manner. To keep our struggle in one country is just as absurd as Stalin's desire to build socialism in one country. Therefore we cannot swear off questions of relations between states and relations with capitalist states."

To fear these questions means to issue a certificate of one's own poverty."

At that time Sedov did not go into more detail about this question. It is possible that Trotsky specially instructed Sedov to only mention this but not to go into any details.

I charged Sedov to give to Trotsky my request to concretize his directives "about opposing practical work" and "discrediting all of Stalin's initiatives." I formed Sedov //48// that there were several Trotskyists in Berlin and that in case I departed Sedov could transmit these essential explanations of

Trotsky's through one of the,. And I named them (besides I.N. Smirnov): Loginov, Shestov, Bitker, Moskalev.

We agreed not to meet any more since meetings with me were a very risky affair. Sedov agreed.

With this my first talk with Sedov ended.

About my meeting with Sedov and the directives of Trotsky that he gave me I told at various times the Trotskyists who were then in Berlin: Loginov, Shestov, and Bitker. Separately, as I have already confessed, I had a substantive discussion about this question with Smirnov.

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We both agreed then that upon his arrival in Moscow he would introduce all these directives of Trotsky's officially through the Trotskyist center.

And concerning me Smirnov then expressed the opinion that it was not worthwhile to draw me into the center which the Trotskyist-Zinovievist bloc would create.

"For we must have reserves," said Smirnov. Re-establish your contacts and guard them. They will come in handy. Later we shall see what we shall do with them."

At that time the question of a "reserve" and "parallel" center had not yet been raised and the idea about it had only begun to be formed in a foggy way.

Here I would like to lay out more fully my talks with Bitker, Loginov, and Shestov.

1/ To Bitker I told everything in detail. //49//

I had to consolidate Bitker behind me, since he in the past had been a person very close to Trotsky, was closely tied to me personally, and in the future could undoubtedly play an important role in the Trotskyist organization.

Bitker agreed fully with Trotsky's policies and he and I arranged to discuss the practical implementation of Trotsky's directives in Moscow.

2/ With Loginov, whom I had known very well for a long time, besides outlining Trotsky's policies (during which I did not say anything about the "international" affairs) I agreed with him about concrete steps to resurrect a Trotskyist organization in the Ukraine.

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First of all we outlined a center consisting of himself, Loginov, N. Golubenko, IA. Lifshits, and IU. Kotsiubinskii. Then we outlined the way of resurrecting the organization. We agreed that Trotsky's policies would be the basis and about these policies Loginov would tell Golubenko, Lifshits and Kotsiubinskii, that they would begin to make contacts, but that there was no need to tell all of them about Trotsky's policies. We would have to test people for a long time and only after that, having been fully tested, so that there would not be any surprises, make the corresponding Trotskyists aware of Trotsky's real views.

3/ To Shestov, whom I did not know personally but had heard that he was a reliable person, I told Trotsky's policies, although I knew that he already knew everything from I.N. Smirnov.

To Shestov I entrusted the resurrection of the organization in the Kuzbass. I brought to Shestov's attention that there was one of Trotsky's loyal men — N.I. Muralov — was there, that Vladimir Kossior was also there somewhere, and that he should, while observing the necessary caution, see who of the Trotskyists in Siberia could //50// be drawn into the organization. I told Shestov that the basic thrust of his work in the Kuzbass was sabotage, and that for this work he would have to attract not only Trotskyists but also persons of anti-Soviet orientation from the engineering and technical personnel.

Moreover I told Shestov that it was possible that Sedov would assign him to transmit something to me, and that in that case he should pass it all to me without delay.



Shestov promised to do this.

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Also in 1931 about 3 weeks after my first meeting with Sedov I.N Smirnov told me that, despite the fact that we had agreed not to meet, Sedov wanted me to meet with him again and that he, Sedov, would await me the following day at the same place and time.

The next day I went to the same café. This time our talk was brief. Sedov immediately raised the question of money. At first he said, "You understand, Yuri Leonidovich, that for this work we need money. Can you get money?" I answered that I had no possibility at that time. Then Sedov said that he had such possibilities but that it would be hard to do it without my help. He wanted me to give as many orders as possible to the firms "Demag" and "Borsig" and not to fuss over prices; he himself would arrange with the firms about these conditions. "Obviously you will have to pay too much, but the money will go for our work, since we have some kind of agreement with representatives of these firms." I did this.

How Sedov conducted these operations with the firms I do not know.

In conclusion, Sedov informed me that he had told Trotsky about our first talk, and while he did so alerted //51// Trotsky to my hesitation on the question of sabotage. "I am expecting a letter from my father. If I receive it before your departure I will immediately give it personally to you or, if more convenient for you, through one of the Trotskyists you named to me earlier."

I asked Sedov if an answer from Lev Davidovich came, to transmit it to me through Shestov.

I think that is everything about my meetings in Berlin in 1931.

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In the fall of 1931 I finished my duties in Berlin and returned to Moscow.

After my return to the U.S.S.R. I think in November, 1931, Shestov came to me at Vesenkha.<sup>7</sup> He was returning from Berlin to the Kuzbass and had a letter from Sedov for me. How he had brought this letter I did not ask him. The letter was in a sealed envelope and on the envelope were only my initials: "IU. L."

<sup>7</sup> The Supreme Soviet of the National Economy.

Shestov handed me the letter and said he had met with Sedov and was going to the Kuzbass. When I had unsealed the letter I was very surprised: I had expected a note from Sedov but it turned out to be a letter from Trotsky himself. The letter was written in German and marked "L.T." I know Trotsky's handwriting well and even without this mark I would have known that he had personally written it. The letter was not in code. (Trotsky and I had no code.)

In this letter Trotsky expressed his satisfaction that I had "discerned his insistence" — *Dass Sie meinen Forderungen nachgefolgt haben*<sup>8</sup> — and formulated his position.

<sup>8</sup> That you have followed my demands.

Trotsky wrote:

1/ The central task is not the resurrection of an organization //52// for the sake of organization, but its resurrection for the purpose of liquidating Stalin and his closest supporters (in the letter it was said "'S' und Konsorten mit allen Mitteln aus dem Weg rauemen")<sup>9</sup> ...

<sup>9</sup> To get 'S' and his men out of the way by any means.

2/ Positive collaboration with the regime is impermissible. It is essential to struggle against the regime, stopping at nothing, to discredit in every way measures undertaken

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by Stalin, and that means also to ruin the measures he has undertaken (in the first place along economic lines);

3/ We must unconditionally strengthen the bloc with the Zinovievists, who fully shared his, Trotsky's, policy. We must establish contact with the Rights, and feel out and unify all anti-Stalin elements both inside and outside the party;

4/ We must take the coming war into account and occupy in relation to the war an unconditionally defeatist position, and by means of preliminary negotiations with governments of capitalist powers (also making use of the contradictions between them) guarantee for ourselves favorable relations in case of our coming to power as a result of the war.

About these directives of Trotsky's at various times I told Loginov, Kotsiubinskii, Golubenko, Drobnis, Norkin, Rataichak, Iulin, Bitker, and Boguslavskii.

I will tell about that separately.

In the middle of 1932 I was again in Berlin. This time Sedov, having found out through the firm "Demag" that I was in Berlin, contacted me himself, on his own initiative, and asked for a meeting, for the reason that it was very necessary. We arranged by telephone to meet "at the same place" — that is, in the "Café am Zoo."

Sedov asked me whether I had received Trotsky's letter through //53// Shestov. I answered that I had, but that this letter was unsatisfactory. Although Trotsky stated the questions very concretely, he had said nothing substantive about perspectives and goals. I asked him to pass this on to Trotsky and say that his supporters in the U.S.S.R. insistently demand an answer to the question about

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the perspectives and goals of the struggle. This was especially important because of the unusual nature of the means of struggle that Trotsky was setting into motion.

Sedov promised to pass this on to Trotsky and, for his part, asked to give him information about the situation of the Trotskyist organization in the U.S.S.R.

I told him that Trotsky's directives were being put into effect, that in Moscow negotiations were taking place about the creation of a united Trotskyist-Zinovievist center and that terrorist groups were being formed.

"I know about that," said Sedov. "I regularly receive news about the work in Moscow. I need to know what is being done in other centers of the U.S.S.R."

I said that I did not have detailed information about the work of the Trotskyist center (Smirnov-Mratchkovskii) outside of Moscow, but that in carrying out Trotsky's directive we had formed a center of the Trotskyist organization in the Ukraine, which was in contact with me personally. This center already had peripheral groups and was setting about preparing terrorist acts. I also reported that work on the creation of a Western Siberian center had begun, where Muralov led the active work, and that Boguslavskii and Shestov led work there too. However, I proposed to strengthen this center and planned to transfer there, under one pretext or another, Drobnis, whom Trotsky knows very well and who is a very energetic, implacable Trotskyist. //54// Sedov reported that Trotsky was expressing the greatest degree of dissatisfaction because the work was going sluggishly and was not developing with the necessary speed. "We are losing time. And

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this is extremely harmful. It is necessary to force the development of the work. It is especially necessary to force the preparation of terrorist acts and actively develop measures of diversion, including acts of sabotage." "For you know Lev Davidovich — said Sedov — he is burning with impatience and is consistently demanding activity, especially in the direction of terror."

Besides this, in this same conversation I raised the question of one of Trotsky's articles, about which I confessed on December 13.

The Formation of Counter-Revolutionary Trotskyist "Reserve" Center

At the end of 1932, after my last meeting with Sedov, I had a conversation with Kamenev.

On his own initiative Kamenev came to me at the Commissariat on some work-related pretext.

I understood that this arrival of Kamenev was the establishment of contact with me according to Trotsky's directive, although Kamenev did not mention this and did not make reference to I.N. Smirnov. But from the nature of our conversation it was clear that Kamenev knew about everything.

Kamenev informed me that the center had been formed and it consisted of him, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Mrachkovskii, and I.N. Smirnov. Trotsky's directives about terror and sabotage were the basis of the creation of the bloc.

The center had decided not to bring into its membership me, Sokol'nikov, Radek, and Serebriakov. They had discussed this question and decided to hold us "in reserve." //55//

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In the event the center failed we would be required to lead the work ahead. He said that the question had already been discussed with Sokol'nikov, Radek, and Serebriakov, and decided positively.

Kamenev further told me that the center had established contact with the Rights, (Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsy). "It would be good, — said Kamenev, — if you now had the necessary contact with Bukharin, with whom you have good relations."

Wishing to be clear about how far Kamenev would accept Trotsky's directives, I put the question to Kamenev: ""How does the center conceive of the contact with the Rights? After all, only recently we had very sharp disagreements with them."

Kamenev answered me: "IU. L., when will you finally grow out of your schoolboy years and become a politician? Yesterday's disagreements cannot be an obstacle to our agreement today, if today we have a common goal. And this common goal is:

1/ the overthrow of Stalin and the liquidation of the Stalin regime;

2/ the rejection of the building of socialism in one country and, consequently, the appropriate change of economic policy. On these two points we reached agreement with the Rights very easily."

To my question what "change of economic policy" meant Kamenev, with his characteristic aplomb, answered: "Well, you know, we will concretize it when we are in power. Only one thing is clear: we will have to retreat, in order to weaken the internal situation and equalize the external."

"Yes, yes, Yuri Leonidovich, I know that you concern yourself little with questions of international politics. But inasmuch as you may possibly have to continue the business

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that we are now doing, it is necessary that we be informed." //56//

"Keep in mind that, without the essential agreement with the governments of the capitalist powers against the Stalin government, we will not come to power. It is essential for us to secure a favorable attitude towards us, and that means we will have to make concessions to them. But about that we must have already in advance had confidential talks with the governments of these states, and that is happening now. Radek and Sokol'nikov will inform you in more detail."

In this way the "reserve center" was formed, which we later transformed into the "parallel" center, about which I will say more.

Somewhat later (as far as I recall it was at the beginning of 1933) I also met with Radek. At that time I explained that Radek knew about the decision of

the Trotskyist-Zinovievist center concerning the creation of the "reserve center" consisting of me, Piatakov, Radek, Sokol'nikov, and Serebriakov.

At that time Radek told me that Mrachkovskii was dissatisfied with the great overrepresentation of Zinovievists in the center and posed the question of supplementing the center — it was a question of me, Radek and Serebriakov on one side, and Sokol'nikov on the other. He, Radek, also thought that we had to correct this matter in some way.

We, that is Radek and I, discussed this question and arrived at a different conclusion. Inasmuch as the decision about the "reserve center" had been taken, it was not worthwhile to disturb it. If we were to insist on a revision of the decision and on supplementing the center with us, that naturally would elicit reactions from the Zinovievists' side, and in the underground there might arise dangerous divisions and unnecessary arguments.

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Therefore thoughts of entering the center were set aside. All the more since from considerations of conspiracy a "reserve center" was expedient in case of the failure of the basic center. //57// And since in the "reserve center" the predominant influence was with the Trotskyists, the thought arose of turning this "reserve center" into a "parallel center."

We decided to consult Trotsky on these questions. Radek took it upon himself to communicate our question to Trotsky and did this, as far as I know, through Romm.

Trotsky responded.

According to Radek Trotsky's answer came down to this: we should not under any circumstances create a conflict with the Zinovievists, that the bloc with them was an extraordinarily important event in the whole struggle against Stalin, and that this bloc must be maintained at all costs.

However, Trotsky considered our proposal to be expedient and proposed that the "reserve center" should immediately set to work.

In this way the vague idea about a parallel center came down, in the main, to organization and preparation measures: to be more precise, to the creation of Trotskyist organizations where that was possible.

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In connection with this, and also for reasons of caution, the parallel center did not meet even once in its full membership.

Proceeding from these guidelines sanctioned by Trotsky I had, as I confessed earlier, a meeting with Serebriakov in Gagry at the end of 1933. During this meeting I established that Serebriakov knew about the "reserve //58// center" and its membership, and that he fully shared the thought of turning the "reserve center" into a parallel center. I informed Serebriakov in detail about Trotsky's policies, about which he was already partly aware. Serebriakov said that his contacts remained and he, in accordance with the common decision, would undertake to activate them.

About that time I also established a series of firm organizational contacts. Radek and Sokol'nikov had a series of contacts. In this manner by the beginning of 1934 there had been set up not only a parallel center but a parallel organization.

Of course this organization in its concrete forms was built on a basis of personal ties. In this way for example Radek's or Serebriakov's contacts were not transmitted to me, as I did not transmit my contacts to Radek or Serebriakov. We did this by mutual agreement.

In this way also contact between members of the "parallel center" was maintained by means of personal and very rare social get-togethers between them, and not by means of joint meetings. All the more, since the basic principal policies were given by Trotsky. it need not be said that all Trotsky's directives, whether or not any of us had large or small disagreements with one or another directive, were accepted by all of us to be carried out.

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During the first period after the arrest of the basic center we out of caution undertook no activity. From the beginning of 1935 we, that is the "parallel" center, began to work more actively, carrying out the decision of the basic center that had been taken by them in 1932 concerning the formation of the "reserve center."

Here I mean not that peripheral activity that we undertook earlier as I have already confessed, but //59// activity of the center itself. In this respect the substantive movements were:

1/ meetings of members of the center amongst themselves; 2/ attempts to convene a meeting of the center; 3/ Trotsky's directives.

During the first period of time we supposed it possible to limit ourselves to arranging a system of separate meetings of members of the center among themselves. Thus, I met during 1935 twice with Sokol'nikov, two or three times with Radek, also with Serebriakov. Moreover, I met with Tomsy who formally, though he was not a member of the center, but in essence it turned out that the center was put geother with participation of the Rights. I knew that Sokol'nikov was in contact with Radek and also met with Tomsy. It appears that there were meetings between Radek and Serebriakov (and with Bukharin, of the Rights).

The thought arose of convening a meeting of the center together with Tomsy in order to work out a common line of tactical actions.

This meeting, as I have already confessed, did not take place.

In view of this the sole and basic leading material were those directives that came from Trotsky.

It was these directives that were, I repeat, the only leading materials, because the center did not have any worked-out positions of its own.

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About Trotsky's directives of 1931-1932 I have already testified.

After that, right up until my personal meeting with Trotsky in December 1935, his directions (except for those that went to the basic Trotskyist-Zinovievist center) came through Radek. About these directives Radek told me in 1934, 1935 and the beginning of 1936. //60//

Trotsky's directives to the "parallel" center.

The line of contact with Trotsky was in Radek's hands. He would send written information to Trotsky and personally received directives from him. True, in December 1935 I had a personal meeting with Trotsky, but I will tell about that below.

It is hard for me to remember during which conversations with Radek the latter informed me about the corresponding directives of Trotsky's. I remember the essence of these directives, but I cannot precisely separate the reporting about these directives according to the separate conversations with Radek.

Concerning terror there were, strictly speaking, no further directives. There were only demands for the quickest carrying-out of directives given earlier. Trotsky expressed impatience about slowness and insufficient activity.

Further, there were repeated orders concerning the necessity of the active carrying-out of sabotage. Trotsky explained that it was necessary to educate people in implacable hatred towards everything that Stalin initiated. Since concerning this question both Radek and I had hesitations, and since in our talks with Trotskyists we often met with doubts and even more,

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with disapproval, then we decided to question Trotsky especially on the specific question.

Radek sent such a question and at the beginning of 1936 the answer was received.

In this answer Trotsky stated the question very sharply: he who does not understand that practical opposition (as far as I can recall the word

"sabotage" was not mentioned, but in essence, of course, the subject was precisely sabotage) to all //61// Stalin's undertakings is the essential and basic component of the whole struggle with Stalin in these new conditions, he does not understand the first thing about his, Trotsky's, politics.

He pointed out that this was not only a question of the quantity of the harm we caused, but of the education of cadre and of preparing them for a more serious clash, at the appropriate moment, with the "regime of Stalin."

On this question — wrote Trotsky — there must be now wavering. This is especially important in view of the fact that, as he was aware, the practical work of construction distracted, attracted, and drew many people to itself. This shows that people often do not see farther than their own nose, do not see tomorrow, live only by the interests of today, are under the pressures of today's situation. He, Trotsky, draws our attention to the fact that he views practical opposition to Stalin's undertakings not as one of the less important methods of struggle, which one could simply reject, but as the most essential component part of the whole struggle against the "Stalin regime."

On this question there must be neither wavering nor doubts.

Before this there were directives on the question of the impending war and of relations between states.

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These directives showed that those fragmentary instructions that had been transmitted to me in 1931 by Smirnov and Sedov and about which Kamenev spoke to me in 1932 had much greater meaning than I realized at that time.

Trotsky said that in the struggle with Stalin we can in no way ignore relations between governments. Once we understand that Stalin's scheme of building socialism in one //62// country is an empty and dangerous scheme, then we too in our struggle with Stalin must not slide to the position of "one country."

This struggle inevitably is interconnected with our relations with capitalist states. It would be stupid to think that it is possible to assume power without securing a benevolent attitude of the most important capitalist governments, especially of the most aggressive ones, such as the present governments of Germany and Japan. It is completely essential even now to have contact and agreements with these governments. He, Trotsky, has taken the necessary steps in this regard. He demanded from Radek and Sokol'nikov, who had the requisite possibilities, to put out feelers for the essential contact along these lines with the official representatives of these powers, and to support whatever he, Trotsky, was carrying out in practice.

In this connection, as I seem to remember, Radek told me about some kind of conversations of his with Germans (I cannot recall the names of these Germans), from whom it was clear that Trotsky had made some arrangements with the German government.

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Trotsky further wrote that we must not limit ourselves only to the German and Japanese. We must secure benevolent relations with other governments too (like the English and French), especially from the perspective of the possibility of extremely strong pressure from the German and Japanese quarters. //63// Of course we must take into account that in relation to this we must make concessions, both territorial and of an economic nature.

As regards the war, L. D. Trotsky spoke of this very explicitly. From his point of view, war is inevitable in the near future. In this war the defeat of the "Stalin government" was inevitable. He, Trotsky, considered it completely essential to take a markedly defeatist position in this war.

Defeat in war would mean the downfall of the Stalin regime and for this very reason Trotsky insisted upon the creation of cells in the army, in the broadening of contacts among the command staff. He proceeded from the position that defeat in war would create a favorable opportunity in the army as well for the return of himself, Trotsky, to power. He considers that the bloc's coming into power can certainly be hastened by the defeat of the U.S.S.R. in war.

Trotsky pointed out in this regard that especially, counting upon defeat in war, it was necessarily in advance to reach agreements with the appropriate bourgeois governments (I do not recall whether precisely only the governments of Germany and Japan were mentioned in this regard). It seemed to him that he would be able to reach agreements at the same time with opposing groups of bourgeois governments and maneuver upon their contradictions. Trotsky understood that we must not rely in a naked and open

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way upon agreement with Germany and Japan, and therefore he gave a plan of playing upon contradictions.

If we add up all these directives it becomes completely obvious that this could be nothing else than yielding to the mercy of the victor, that is complete capitulation before advancing fascism in the supposition that these plans of Trotsky would be realized, of course. //64//

Besides this there were also directives about the Comintern. I did not remember them well and now recall them vaguely. I seem to remember that it was a question of a very "left" formulation against the united front in France. Unfortunately this part of Trotsky's directives did not stick in my memory.

All the directives about relations between governments were received from Trotsky during the period of 1934-1935. I have expounded them as they have remained in my memory from Radek's words.

I just say that these directives of Trotsky's produced in me a feeling of oppression. I felt the desire to meet with Trotsky and to clarify his views more precisely. I did not allow myself to think that he might be mistaken and believed that there was something that I was failing to take into account. And during my meetings with Radek both he and I expressed ourselves in the same sense, that it was completely essential to see Trotsky and that I had to find some opportunity or other for this.

As I recall, Radek especially emphasized the strange position that Trotsky took on international questions and said that it was necessary to somehow discuss these questions with Trotsky.

What's more, we both considered it impossible to take the responsibility upon ourselves and said that perhaps we should discuss these questions in meetings with the more prominent and trusted Trotskyists.

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In any case, we both considered a meeting with Trotsky by one of us to be completely essential.

That is why, as soon as the chance presented itself I, despite all its risks, willingly took advantage of it in order to meet with Trotsky and have a discussion with him.

Concerning my Personal Meeting with Trotsky

The situation was like this:

In December 1935 I had to urgently go //65// to Berlin on business.

There in our embassy I met with Dm. Bukhartsev, about whom I had known earlier from Radek that he, Bukhartsev, was in contact with Trotsky.

I assumed that Bukhartsev would help me to have a meeting with Trotsky.

However, from my conversation with Bukhartsev it became apparent that he had known earlier about my forthcoming arrival in Berlin (this was known at the embassy) and had informed Trotsky about it. The latter requested a personal meeting with me.

Thus although by agreement with Radek I myself had intended to meet with Trotsky, the latter, after Bukhartsev's communication about my arrival, anticipated my concrete steps in that direction and organized this meeting himself.

A few days after my talk with Bukhartsev an emissary from Trotsky arrived, with whom the same Bukhartsev put me in touch

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(I don't know the name of this emissary. If I am not mistaken his name is either Gustav or Heinrich), with a short note from Trotsky. In it there were just a few words that I could trust this person completely and the address on it was "Yu. L."

The note was not signed, but I know Trotsky's handwriting well enough.

This emissary took on himself all the technical problems in sending me to Norway and I did not involve myself in his activities.

On the following day early in the morning I took off with him in an airplane. With him he had an extra passport on which I traveled. We arrived at an airport near Oslo. From there we went by car to a place with houses, where I met with Trotsky in a private //66// apartment. The meeting lasted no more than two hours, and then together with this Heinrich (or Gustav) I returned to the airport and from there on the same day and in the same airplane I flew back to Berlin.

The talk with Trotsky began with my information about the situation in the U.S.S.R. and in the Trotskyist organization. Already in this part [of our talk] I had to listen to a whole series of indignant retorts about "cowardice," "conciliation," "failure to understand the essence of the questions," etc. They were caused by the fact that in my information I strove to tell Trotsky objectively what was happening in reality, because it seemed to me that insufficient and incomplete information had led him to certain incorrect deductions. However, as our further conversation showed, it was not a question of insufficient information.

Especially sharp replies were elicited by those parts of my information in which I expounded the undeniable, sizable successes of the U.S.S.R. in the matter of industrial construction and collective agriculture. We must not fail to take

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these facts into account, I said. We must not dismiss them, but accept them as the facts we should begin with. "You are exaggerating," "bureaucratic distractions," "you have always suffered from the inclination towards 'positive work' independently of the regime." "You are turning away from politics," etc. With these replies Trotsky would constantly interrupt my communication of information.

Further, I told him that his directive about sabotage and diversion had for the most part not met with sympathy in Trotskyist circles and that I in particular, like Radek, did not understand it well enough, although for understandable reasons — inasmuch as the directive came from Trotsky — we were following it. Here Trotsky exploded in a whole torrent of the most vicious and scalding remarks. //67// He said that we were not able to tear ourselves from Stalin's umbilical cord, we were looking at things in a near-sighted manner, we were stuck by the psychosis of construction and could not see further than our own noses. We needed to remember that the question was not whether this or that factory would or would not be built, whether this or that collective farm would come to be, etc., but it was a question of the indoctrination of cadre of Trotskyists, even a small number of them, in hatred towards everything that was now being done in the U.S.S.R.

"I understand very well — said Trotsky, for example — that small groups of Trotskyists cannot at this moment substantively change the course of economic development. But that is, in fact, not necessary.

You recall the attitude of Marxists towards the development of capitalism in Russia. We all considered that a progressive fact. But the positions of Struve and Tugan-Baranovskii, called to the service of capitalism, are one thing, while the positions of Lenin and the revolutionary part of social-democracy, which were organizing the future gravedigger of capitalism,

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are another. We must be the gravediggers of the Stalin state.



I will not deny that from the point of view of the country's development it is good that new factories are being built. But the task of Trotskyists does not consist in building factories, but in organizing forces against Stalin and his regime, whose collapse is inevitable. For this, cadre are needed. These cadre will inevitably degenerate if all they do is participate in positive work. That is the essence of my directive, and you cannot seem to understand it at all.

Unless we carry out this directive the degeneration of the Trotskyist cadre is inevitable, their assimilation by the Stalin //68// regime is inevitable, and that means our collapse together with the collapse of the state."

Trotsky also expressed the same extreme degree of dissatisfaction during my report about the terrorist acts that were under preparation. "These are all preparations, just preparations! You are not dealing with this question seriously enough. Remember that without a whole series of terrorist acts, which must be carried out as soon as possible, the Stalin government cannot be overthrown. For this is a question of a *coup d'état*. A mass uprising, he said, is one thing, for which, evidently, there is no basis now, and a *coup d'état* is something else."

"This is the difference, I note, that many do not understand. They are unaware that the methods of a *coup d'état* differ fundamentally from the methods of organizing a mass uprising. I stand now precisely on the position of a *coup d'état* and therefore, in the deciding of questions of tactics, I have rejected formulaic instructions, developed under other conditions, applied to other tasks. And you there in the U.S.S.R. are often throw off balance, find yourselves in thrall

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to a formula, a scheme, ideas, that were developed to apply to other conditions."

After I finished my report I asked Trotsky how he assessed the situation and how he imagined future developments. "Is it possible that you do not understand? Strange, strange! It appears that I have given enough instructions. I don't see any basis to change anything at all in my policies.

Your information only confirms that I am right. And if it is necessary to draw my conclusions, then there is only one: we must sharpen the struggle even more, broaden it even more, we must literally stop at //69// nothing to overthrow Stalin, overthrow this regime. It is clear that if in the very near future we are not successful by one means or another in carrying out a *coup d'état*, then a prolonged period will set in, years of the monstrous existence of the Stalin state, supported by its economic successes, by new politically inexperienced young cadre, who will consider this regime natural, to be taken for granted."

I insisted on the necessity of a short exposition by him, Trotsky, of his views. Trotsky thought a bit and warned that 1) he could not, in such a short time (I had very little time at my disposal) fully set forth all of his ideas and 2) that not everything that he was going to say should be reported to his followers in the U.S.S.R. He mentioned once again the difference between the preparation of a *coup d'état* and a mass uprising and in this connection much of what he was about to say must not only not be made public (and therefore I should not be surprised that much of it will contradict what is said in his "Bulletins"), but also must not be made known to wider circles of his supporters in the U.S.S.R.

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From the rest of the exposition of our talk it is evident that, apparently, even to me, Trotsky did not state all the fundamental deductions he had made in proceeding from the viewpoint of the so-called "*coup d'état*."

"The root of the question comes down to the fact — said Trotsky — that socialism in one country cannot be built. All the efforts of the Stalin state (by the way, Trotsky avoids saying "U.S.S.R.," "Soviet Union," "the Soviet state," and says "the Stalin state") are doomed to collapse. This collapse is inevitable //70// unless we maneuver in time. The downfall of the Stalin state, if it occurs naturally, under the pressure of the unbearable economic burden of industrialization and collectivization, on the one hand, and military clash with a capitalism that is once again growing in strength, on the other hand, will inevitably bury us too, if we allow ourselves to become identified, even in the smallest way, with this state. The sharpest possible

line of demarcation must be drawn between us and all those who are tied to Stalin and his state."

"However, we must do this not by means of public statements, propaganda, and explanations. Such statements at the present movement would not meet with sympathy from the masses. On the contrary, we would be compromised and destroyed before we could do anything at all. The organization cannot be built on this basis. That would mean to doom it in advance. For in fact the masses are under a psychosis of construction, which they falsely accept as the construction of socialism. To come out openly now against this construction means to doom our efforts."

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"We must look to tomorrow. The line of demarcation must be drawn, therefore, in secret struggle against the Stalin regime, so that at the appropriate time we can — when it is necessary — step forward openly and say that we are not this Stalin state, we have been waging struggle against it with all means available to us, including terror, diversion, and sabotage."

"In this — Trotsky returned several times to this theme — is the essence of my policy. That is why I have always and consistently, in the sharpest possible manner, rejected any positive //71// participation by my supporters in the U.S.S.R. in practical work, that is why I have always expressed dissatisfaction when it has been reported to me that you, nevertheless, continue to collaborate with the Stalin government. That is absolutely intolerable."

"That means the first and main thing is the implacable struggle with Stalin and his state. In this struggle we must employ everything, the sharpest methods of preparation for a *coup d'état* and, in the first place, terror, diversions, and sabotage. On this basis we must educate our cadre, and not on the basis of rotten conciliation and compromise, the tendencies to which I discern in my supporters who live in the Stalin state."

"It is especially important, stressed Trotsky, to have contacts in the Red Army. Military conflict with capitalist states is inevitable. I do not doubt that the result of such conflict

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will be unpleasant for the Stalin state. We must be prepared at this moment to take power into our hands." Of course, — emphasized Trotsky — we must understand that the seizure of power under these conditions means agreements with the corresponding capitalist states (for example with Germany, Japan, and others) on the basis of substantial concessions to them, including territorial concessions.

Of course, to reach agreements with Germany alone would be risky, since without a corresponding English and French //72// counterweight Germany would put feet on the table and it would be very tough for us. Therefore in his practical steps he, Trotsky, is carrying out simultaneous preparatory work in different directions.

Concerning Germany, these matters are essentially settled:

He, Trotsky, had secured a favorable attitude of the German fascist government in case the bloc came to power.

Of course this favorable attitude was not due to any special sympathy towards the bloc but to real interests.

At the basis of the agreement lies an appeal to the German government to help the bloc come to power. On his part Trotsky promised in the event of coming to power to make very concrete concessions, stipulated in advance, to Germany.

According to Trotsky (I will not undertake to confess that he told me everything) he was obliged to make the following concessions:

1. To guarantee a generally favorable attitude towards the German government and the necessary collaboration with it in the most important questions of an international character.

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2. To agree to territorial concessions.

3. In the event that the "nationalist forces" of the Ukraine should want to separate from the U.S.S.R. — not to oppose this.

4. To permit German industrialists, in the form of concessions (or some other forms), to exploit enterprises in the U.S.S.R. which are essential as complements to German economy (iron ore, manganese, oil, gold, timber, etc., were meant). //73//

5. To create in the U.S.S.R. favorable conditions for the activities of German private enterprises.

In return the Germans would not object to the admission under certain conditions of concessions of English and French enterprises.

6. In time of war to develop extensive sabotage activities in enterprises of the war industry and at the front. These diversive activities are to be carried on under Trotsky's instructions, agreed upon with the German General Staff.

These principles of agreement, as Trotsky related, were finally elaborated and adopted during Trotsky's meeting with Hitler's deputy — Hess.

Furthermore Trotsky informed me that at the same time he had succeeded in establishing businesslike contacts with leading persons of Great Britain and France.

In just the same manner he had fully established contact with the Japanese government.

Trotsky also mentioned that the latest negotiations with the Germans were conducted in the presence of the English and the French.

In France the contact was with the "Comité de Forges" and with banking circles. In England, with some conservative circles.

"If, — said Trotsky, diversionist, sabotage, and terrorist activity attains such a scale that the Stalin leadership is disorganized before the military clash, so much the better, we will come to power and adjust our policy so that,

LD 269

utilizing our agreements with the capitalist states, we will severely reduce the economic stress within the country.

"This means, it will be necessary to retreat. This must be firmly understood. Retreat to capitalism. How far and to what degree, it is difficult to say now — this can be made concrete only after we come into power."

"You see, — Trotsky continued — on this point about a retreat we have agreed with the Rights and my directive about the bloc with the Rights //74// was not just tactically necessary, but correct in principle, all the more since they have fully admitted the necessity of terrorist, diversionist, and sabotage means of struggle against Stalin."

"And I am aware that some of you have started to discuss the question of how far this unity might go."

"Let this be 'contact' at first — for we started in 1926 with contact with the Zinovievists and came to a unified organization (although with fractional subdivisions) — I think that in the future our unity will be closer. For me it is completely obvious that in the future government not only my supporters and the Zinovievists but the Rights will have to take a most active role."

In conclusion, Trotsky once again showered those of us who are working the "Stalin state" will a hail of reproaches for insufficient activity, empty talk, absence of concrete terrorist acts, etc. He stressed that the arrests of Zinoviev, Kamenev, et al. not only must not weaken the work, but on the contrary must — as he said — "increase your energy a hundredfold."

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"Remember, in this struggle all means are good and every ally is useful. Here we must not stand on ceremony and live by old memories."

I just add that among the individual persons mentioned in the course of this talk by Trotsky were: Radek, Sokol'nikov, Serebriakov, Muralov, Beloborodov, Rakovsky, Dudu Mdivani, V.M. Smirnov, Sapronov,

Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsy, Uglanov, Preobrazhensky, Putna, Primakov, Krestinsky. //75//

Concerning these persons there were the following conversations. About the first three there is nothing to say. About Muralov Trotsky expressed his satisfaction, that he was one of the few who had never yielded his position and was actively working.. With Beloborodov Trotsky firmly insisted we maintain close contact. About Rakovsky and Preobrazhensky he said that it was essential that we talk with them and spur them on to work.

About B. Mdivani he said that he knew he was developing the work in the Transcaucasus.

Concerning V. Smirnov and Saprnov Trotsky spoke with the highest degree of praise and expressed the thought that it was essential to arrange an escape for them, "because they are firm and determined people."

About Putna and Primakov Trotsky said that this was a very valuable contact and it must be strengthened and developed in every way.

Trotsky asked me to explain to what extent we could rely on Krestinsky.

With Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsy he demanded that we not weaken our close organizational ties and regretted that Uglanov was not in Moscow because he was "distinguished by practicality and great organizational talents."

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With this my meeting with Trotsky ended.

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Upon my arrival in Moscow I soon met with Radek and told him in detail about my talk with Trotsky. This was in January, 1936. About that time Radek received an answer from Trotsky that had evidently been written before my meeting with Trotsky. //76//

X X

X

I have tried to write down everything that I remember about the shameful and criminal activity of the Trotskyist parallel center. It is possible that not everything that I have laid out here is sufficiently clear.

Needless to say, if any questions occur to you concerning this declaration, I will give all the necessary explanations to the investigation.

Piatakov

<signature>

19-20 December 1936



**Concerning the accusation against Gol'tsman E.S. Vol. 1**

[ЦА ФСБ Р.-33833 Дело № 3257 по обвинению Гольцман. Э.С. Т. 1]

L.D. 116

Copy

31 July 1936

To: Chief, INO (= Foreign Division), GUGB (= Main Directorate of State Security)

Commissar of State Security, 2<sup>nd</sup> rank

TO COM. SLUTSKY

I urgently request that you report to me whether in Copenhagen in 1932 and told in 1936 there has existed/exists a hotel "Bristol."

I also request that you report to me at what distance from the train station the hotel "Bristol" is located.

Chief of the Secret Political Division of the GUGB

Commissar of State Security, 2<sup>nd</sup> rank

(G. MOLCHANOV)

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L.D. 16a

TOP SECRET

To the Chief of the Secret Political Division of the NKVD Commissar of  
State Security 2<sup>nd</sup> rank com. Molchanov

In answer to your request of 31 July of this year I report:

According to the official references works / guides to the city Copenhagen /  
telephone directories in the Foreign Division of the GUGB NKVD no hotel  
"Bristol" existed either in 1932 or exists in 1936.

However, in Copenhagen there is a small café "Bristol" above which is  
located the hotel "Grand Hotel Copenhagen." Since the "Grand Hotel" has a  
sign that is not very noticeable and the café "Bristol" has a sign in large  
gold letters on a black background many casual observers take the hotel  
"Grand Hotel" as the "Bristol."

The café "Bristol" and the hotel "Grand Hotel" are located very close to the  
Copenhagen train station and existed in 1932 as they do today.

Yesterday we received a telegram from Copenhagen that confirms the  
accuracy of the above report.

Chief of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Section of the Foreign Division of the GUGB

Major of State Security / Sili /

<signature>

2 August 1936

No. 250728

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L.D. 117

Transcript of Interrogation

GOL'TSMAN Edward Solomonovich

of August 1936

GOL'TSMAN, E.S., born 1882, place of birth Krasnovitsy / Poland /, former member of the VKP(b) since 1903, expelled in 1936 in connection with his arrest in the present case.

Question: In interrogations of July 5 and 25 of this year you confessed that your meeting with L. SEDOV in Copenhagen in 1932 took place in the hotel "Bristol." Do you recall precisely the name of the hotel in which you met with L. SEDOV in Copenhagen?

Answer: If my memory does not deceive me the name of the hotel in Copenhagen where I met with L. SEDOV in 1932 was "Bristol."

Question: Describe the circumstances in which your meeting with L. SEDOV took place.

Answer: As I confessed earlier, I left Berlin from the Stettin station by an evening train that has a direct connection to Copenhagen. The train arrives in Copenhagen at 8 or 9 a.m.

As SEDOV and I had arranged in advance in Berlin I went directly from the station to the hotel "Bristol."

This hotel is situated near the station, about a five-minute walk away. My meeting with SEDOV took place in the vestibule of the hotel, from which we went to the café situated on the first floor of this same hotel.

Now I remember precisely that at the entrance to the café there was a black sign on which in large gold letters it said "Bristol."

Question: Was this perhaps the name of the café, not of the hotel?

Answer: Perhaps, but I remember well the sign "Bristol" above the café, and this café is situated next to the vestibule of the hotel. I seem to recall also that on the other side of the café in a location on the first floor of the hotel there was a newspaper kiosk.

Question: How soon did you go to TROTSKY?

Answer: SEDOV and I spent about an hour in the café, had breakfast, and then called a taxi and went to TROTSKY. I do not remember the address of the building where I met with TROTSKY.

Written down accurately from my words, read through by me.

GOL'TSMAN

Chief of the first section of the Secret-Political Division of the GUGB

Major of State Security: <signature> / SHTEIN /

Interrogators:

Assistant Chief of the 7<sup>th</sup> section of the Secret Political Division of the GUGB

Chapter of State Security: <signature> / KOGAN /

## Passages about Trotsky in the Transcript of the Tukhachevsky Trial

Source:

Стенограмма судебного заседания Специального Судебного Присутствия Верховного Суда. СССР от 11 ИЮНЯ 1.937 года по делу Тухачевского м,н., Якира и.э. и др.

РГАСПИ Ф.17, Оп.171, Д.392 Л.1-172

<http://istmat.info/node/59108>

Transcript of the judicial hearing of the Special Judicial Session of the Supreme Court of the USSR in the case of Tukhachevsky, M.N., Iakir, I.E., etc.

RGASPI fond 17, opis, delo 392, listy 1 - 172.

\*\*\*\*\*

Iakir:

7

In this way I approached the moment when after a very serious illness of the liver in 1934, Tukhachevsky first, more or less definitely, told me the current weakness of our abilities, the unity of the **fascist** activities of **Germany** and **Japan** with Poland, were leading to a situation when we needed to destroy the existing order, and he told me then and there that he had contact with **Trotsky** and with the **German General Staff**. In either my first talk with Tukhachevsky or the second, but in one of those talks Tukhachevsky, without going into details, told me that **Trotsky** had set forth the essential assignment of strengthening the work of the counterrevolutionary and anti-Soviet elements in the army, and that he, Tukhachevsky, took upon himself the assignment of organizing and uniting these anti-Soviet and counterrevolutionary elements. Further, Tukhachevsky laid out for me **Trotsky's** directive, agreed upon with the **German General**

**Staff** and detailed to some extent by himself personally. [It is not clear to whom or what this pronoun refers: to Tukhachevsky, to **Trotsky**, or to the **German General Staff**.] This directive came down to the following. The first point of the program laid out by **Trotsky** was a coup d'état, prepared by the "Muscovites," the participants in the counterrevolutionary anti-Soviet Right-**Trotskyist** organization, who had succeeded in feeling out and entering into contact with a number of Kremlin-based Chekists and with the immediate military guard of the Kremlin in the person of the chief of the Kremlin military school Egorov.

11

Iakir:

I had information and knew that Lifshits and his organization, and also Appoga and the military men he was in contact with, had worked out a plan for a whole series of traffic jams at intersecting and major stations that would cause delays for the troops when they were being concentrated at the border ...

This assignment was given to us, and the people of Lifshit's **Trotskyist** organization, and of Appoga's military contacts, were prepared for it.

The next assignment Tukhachevsky told me about was that he would maintain direct relations with **Trotsky** and with the **German General Staff**. With the first, through Piatakov, and with the

12

second through Putna.

...

At our next talk Tukhachevsky told me that he had received from **Trotsky** a series of clarifications to his directive and his [**Trotsky's**] agreement with the measures planned by our anti-Soviet organization.

13.

Despite the fact that Tukhachevsky repeatedly spoke to me about the necessity of the very greatest secrecy (**Trotsky** was repeatedly telling him this, saying that the military conspiracy and its participants must not in any case be connected with other ways and lines [of the conspiracy]), contact took place all the same. True, it was episodic, rather unspecified, for the most part, about mutual information. In particular, Tukhachevsky told me twice that he had received information from Piatakov and spoke about his talks with the Rights, with Enukidze, and about one talk with Bukharin.

27.

Iakir:

I have told you about Tukhachevsky's directives about how [conspiratorial] work should be developed in the Far East. **I said that during our talks about this we considered it essential to develop work in the Far East because in one of the letters of Trotsky to Tukhachevsky Trotsky had pressed us to develop work in the Far East with the goal of contact with the Japanese for carrying out joint activity of the Germans. This is very important.**

31

Dybenko: Did you know that Gamarnik had been a **Trotskyist** since 1921?

37.

Tukhachevsky

I regard my entry into the organization as of 1932. ... By the way, I always and at every occasion have spoken out against **Trotsky** during discussions, just as I have against the Rights.

...

Finally, when in 1932 Romm brought me **Trotsky's** proposal to gather the **Trotskyist** cadres, I agreed. Therefore I consider the beginning of the organization of our military conspiracy to be 1932.

45

Tukhachevsky

Then in 1932 Romm was sent from **Trotsky**. This was approximately in August or September.

Chairman: What did he say to you?

Tukhachevsky: Romm gave me, in **Trotsky's** name, the assignment of organizing and bringing together the **Trotskyist** cadre in the army. Since I had already begun to do this, I agreed. I thought that it would be possible to attract a significant number of military commanders and to carry out **Trotsky's** directive. Later, in 1933-34 (I am not certain

46

of the exact date) Romm gave me an instruction of **Trotsky's** that we should evaluate **Hitler's** coming to power as a favorable factor and we needed to take every measure to strengthen **fascist** power in **Germany**.

I should add that already in 1932 Romm had told me that **Trotsky** was counting on **Hitler's** coming to power and was sure that **Hitler** would support him, **Trotsky**, thanks to which we could count upon the overthrow of Soviet power. Then in 1933-34 Romm confirmed to me that **fascism** supported **Trotsky**, and therefore the latter demanded the activation of our work, especially in the area of organizing sabotage and terrorist activity in the army.

...

I mentioned Primakov. He told me that he was in contact with Piatakov, who was the leader of the **Trotskyist** center in Moscow. After that I got into personal contact with Piatakov.

Ul'rikh: Personal contact?

Tukhachevsky: Yes. Then in 1934 Piatakov told me of the plan of determined aggression by the **German** army, which would be linked with



the loss by the USSR of Ukraine and the Primor'ye. He confirmed **Trotsky's** directive of 1934 that was set forth in a letter from **Sedov** and in oral form by Putna. **Trotsky** then gave me the assignment of activating the work as much as possible. Finally Putna arranged a meeting for me with **Sedov** in 1936.

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In accordance with **Trotsky's** instruction that it was necessary to establish contact with the **German General Staff**, in London in 1936 I had a talk with General Rundstedt of the **German General Staff**. He told me that he knew I was leading a conspiracy and that he had instruction to talk with me. I said that the conspiracy indeed existed and that it was led by me. **I asked Rundstedt where the main forces of the German army would attack, and I referred to Trotsky's directive that we should organize defeat where the German army would be in action.** I also asked Rundstedt when we could expect this intervention. He said that he did not know where the main **German** forces would be, but he knew that we should organize defeat in the Ukraine. Concerning the beginning of the intervention Rundstedt told me that this was a question that was difficult to answer. It had been proposed to begin war in 1937, but the difficulties of forming the Reichswehr were too great to begin a **German** intervention in 1937. In the development of this assignment of **Trotsky's** and Rundstedt's after the war games in April 1936 an important discussion about planning the defeat took place between Iakir, Uborevich, and me.

66

**Blyukher: Through whom, and how, were the talks concerning concessions to German fascism of the Ukraine and of Primor'ye to Japan?**

**Tukhachevsky: It was Piatakov who told me, so really it was Trotsky, through Piatakov, but it was Piatakov who personally told me this.**

70

Dybenko: According to Kork's testimony it is obvious that the **Trotskyist** organization and the traitor Rykov were the ancillary organs in order to bring out the dictatorship of Tukhachevsky.

Tukhachevsky: No, I think the real relationship of forces was that our organization, our center, coordinated its activities with the organization of Rights and **Trotskyists**.

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Uborevich: At the beginning of 1934 I did not have anti-Soviet ideas and, not know that Tukhachevsky was leading that kind of work, I spoke up against his harmful [sabotage] plan to organize brigades instead of infantry divisions in the army. I remember well that in March 1935 he, in essence, set before me his whole plan of political and military activities, his first variant. Then he began by showing the inevitability of our defeat in war against **Japan, Germany**, and Poland, and our internal difficulty. He began to tell me that he was heading an organization, that he had contact with the Rights and **Trotskyists**.

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Chairman: For whose benefit was all this done, for what state, for which classes did you carry out your anti-Soviet struggle?

Uborevich: **For the purpose of restoring capitalism.**

81

Kork:

I personally was drawn into the counterrevolutionary Right-**Trotskyist** military organization in June, 1931. Enukidze recruited me to this organization. From Enukidze I received the assignment of contacting Tukhachevsky, Gorbachev, and Egorov...

86

... the Red Army would suffer such losses that would permit the Right-**Trotskyists** to come to power and take power out of the hands of the Stalin government.

92

Kork:

In 1931, when I began my talk with Tukhachevsky, he explained the situation like this: we must unquestionably go with Rykov. It was not expedient at that time to defend **Trotsky** since he had lost authority in the country [the USSR]. But soon thereafter, in 1932, **Trotsky** was mentioned more and more often. And then in 1933, when the **fascist** coup took place in **Germany**, among those leaders under whose flag we were supposed to go were Rykov, Bukharin, and **Trotsky**. Later Tukhachevsky began to state, not by hinting but openly, that in the end the political group that would come out on top was hard to predict, whether Rykov or **Trotsky**, and that we military men must consider ourselves not as playthings in the hands of the politicians, but must have the strong hand of the military man, and he began to lead the talks in the direction of Bonapartism.

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Ul'rikh: You confessed that during 6-7 years you carried out sabotage, counterrevolutionary work. One thing I don't understand is: Who was the boss? You mentioned the **Trotskyist** center, the center of the Rights, you have mentioned **German** circles. But who in fact was the boss, who gave the basic directives up to the present time: Rykov, **Trotsky**, or **German** military circles?

Kork: Under the circumstances that have been created most recently, the boss is the **German General Staff**.

U'rikh: That means that your main boss was the **German General Staff**?

Kork: Yes.

Ul'rikh: The **German General Staff** — that is a concise answer.

Putna:

**... I stated that in 1931 in Berlin Ivan Nikitich Smirnov, in a talk with me in the embassy building, told me that in order to show the Germans serious decisiveness of the Trotskyists towards collaborating with them, we needed negotiations with the,**

**At Trotsky's direction I conducted such negotiations with generals Schleifer and Adam, who had established contact with us**

**through Hoffmeister. After the first discussions with generals Adam and Schleifer, when I reported to Sedov what I had achieved, I received a second directive from Trotsky via Sedov that this first success was not enough, that it was necessary to agree with Adam and Schleifer more precisely about the extent to which Germany itself would take steps against the Soviet Union. In addition it was essential to clarify what help Germany could render to the Trotskyist organization in the way of obtaining weapons, supplies, and technical means essential for arming Trotskyist cadres who were not in the army. Along with this it was proposed that I specify what we promised generally in the way of compensation.**

**Chairman: Who is "we"?**

**Putna: The Trotskyist organization. The Trotskyist organization promises, first, territorial compensation.**

Chairman: In the name of what institution, country, or state?

Putna: In the name of the **Trotskyist** organization.

Chairman: Did they really have such great influence [lit. great weight]?

Putna: Judging from Schleifer and Adam, they did not believe in any great power of this organization. The organization itself wanted to describe its

specific weight as rather significant, and therefore I received this instruction, which I carried out.

Chairman: What did you promise in exchange for help?

Putna: The territory of the Ukraine.

Chairman: Perhaps something else as well?

Putna: I was not authorized to promise anything else.

Ul'rikh: You were authorized to promise the **German General Staff** only the Ukraine?

Putna: At that time there were no talks about the Far East.

**Question: From whom did you have the authority to conduct talks with the German command?**

**Putna: From the Trotskyist organization.**

**Ul'rikh: In the person of whom?**

**Putna: I received it as a directive from Trotsky, through Sedov and Smirnov.**

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Ul'rikh: You promised at first to give information, and then the Ukraine? Advance by the Ukraine — do I understand correctly? You said that you had promised to give the **Germans** the Ukraine. Were the **Germans** satisfied with this?

Putna: The **Germans** were not satisfied. They did not specify their promises, saying that this was premature and that the **Trotskyist** organization must demonstrate its strengths and possibilities through its activity inside the country.

Ul'rikh: How, then, did the **Germans** consider that the **Trotskyist** organization ought to show its strengths? In what way?

Putna: This we thought would be activities of a sabotage and terrorist nature.

Ul'rikh: With whom personally of the representatives of the **German** command did you carry on negotiations?

Putna: With major Hoffmeister, General Schleicher, and General Adam.

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**Ul'rikh: On behalf of whom did you carry on these diplomatic negotiations with the Germans?**

**Putna: On behalf of Trotsky.**

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Ul'rikh: With whom were you in contact directly from the leadership of the military **Trotskyist** organization?

Putna: With Tukhachevsky.

Ul'rikh: What assignments did you receive in 1935 and 1936?

Putna: In 1935, when I returned to London from the USSR, Tukhachevsky informed me about the successes in the Kiev and Belorussian military districts concerning the strengthening of aviation and of tank formations and gave me instructions to pass this information however I could to the **German General Staff**. On my way to London I met with **Sedov** ...

Ul'rikh: I did not understand — did you carry out your instructions and then return?

Putna: No, before carrying out my instructions. **Sedov** gave me similar instructions from **Trotsky**.

Ul'rikh: You had instructions to pass information. Did you meet **Sedov** and give information to him?

Putna: I tried to pass them to the **German General Staff**. I did not give anything to **Sedov**. Through **Sedov** I received parallel instructions from **Trotsky**, which came down to this: I should resurrect my **German** contacts and pay less attention to making contact with England and America, that I did not have to bother with these matters, that there were persons who were negotiating with England ...

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**Ul'rikh: How did he [German captain Salzman] repay you for this information?**

**Putna: He did not repay me. I asked him, as an intermediary, to help me establish contact and to speak with Ribbentrop, because I had an assignment from Trotsky to establish contact with the Germans.**

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**Ul'rikh: Did you organize a meeting with Sedov?**

**Putna: Yes, at the request of Tukhachevsky I organized a meeting with Sedov.**

120

Bliukher: With what **Trotskyists** in the regional center were you in contact? Were you a member of the regional center?

Putna: I knew that Mrachkovskii worked in the regional center. I knew that he was also in the general **Trotskyist** center, but I never had the occasion to meet with him.

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Chairman: Accused Primakov, do you confirm the confessions that you gave to the organs of the NKVD in May and June of this year? Do you

confirm your Trotskyist anti-Soviet work?

Primakov: Yes.

**Chairman: Specifically, do you confirm your confessions about the preparation of a terrorist act by Trotskyist activists?**

**Primakov: I did not give any such confessions. I confessed about the preparation of an armed uprising.**

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Chairman: Did you hear Tukhachevsky's confessions?

Primakov: Nothing was proposed to me except to organize an armed uprising.

**Chairman: We are interested in what assignments you had from the Trotskyist military organization in relation to the organization of this uprising in Leningrad and in connection with this assignment of preparing a terrorist act.**

**Primakov: I had the following basic instruction:** Until 1934 I worked for the most part, as an organizer, in gathering Trotskyist cadre. In 1934 I received the instruction from Piatakov to break off ties with the group Dreitser and old Trotskyists, who were assigned to prepare terrorist acts, **and I myself was to prepare, in the military district where I worked, to foment an armed uprising that would be called forth either by a terrorist act or by military action. This was the assignment I was given. The military Trotskyist organizational center considered this assignment to be very important and its importance was stressed to me. I was told to break any personal acquaintance**

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**with old Trotskyists, with whom I was in contact. This is the reason that I moved away from Dreitser's group, this is why I worked at the assignment that had been given me.**



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Primakov

In 1935 and 1936 I met with Tukhachevsky. In 1936 Kork arrived in Moscow. We met. In 1936 I spoke with Fel'dman, and, when I arrived in Leningrad, with Gar'kavy, and then retained my **Trotskyist** contact with Piatakov, with whom I met in the spring.

Chairman: Did you systematically maintain contact with the leadership of the military center and the parallel **Trotskyist** center?

Primakov: Basically I maintained contact with Piatakov.

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Ul'rikh: With whom did you propose to fight in Leningrad?

Primakov: This was a traitorous armed uprising against the motherland and the government.

Ul'rikh: [Repeats the question] With whom did you propose to fight in Leningrad?

Primakov: I proposed to fight against those infantry units that remained loyal to the government, against the OGPU forces and against the OGPU itself, against the militia [police], against all forces that remained loyal to the government.

Ul'rikh: On whose behalf were you preparing to fight? Who was your boss?

Primakov: For **Trotsky** and the **Trotskyist** center.

Ul'rikh: Who was your boss, the **Germans**?

Primakov: I did not know about the **Germans** until the trial.

Ul'rikh: How did you propose

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to act in the event **Germany** declared war on the USSR?

Primakov: I was instructed to seize Leningrad for the **Trotskyists**.

Ul'rikh: But if **Germany** had made war on the USSR, for whom would you have seized Leningrad?

Primakov: For **Germany**.

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Fel'dman: I was recruited to the center of the conspiratorial military **Trotskyist** organization in the summer of 1932 by Tukhachevsky.

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Fel'dman: ... I remember that we talked in more detail on the eve of the trip to **Germany** (Tukhachevsky was the head of the delegation). We spoke about overthrowing Soviet power by means of an armed uprising and if this was not successful in peacetime, then to hope for problems at the front that might lead to armed demonstrations inside the country. Our method of work would be supporting **Trotskyist** cadres, support for those commanders who had earlier belonged to the **Trotskyist** or Zinovievist opposition, from among whom it would be easier to recruit people; ...

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Primakov ... At my question [to Tukhachevsky], who is your leader? Are you the leader, are you the boss, or does someone direct your work? He answered me that it was **Trotsky** who led his work, with whom he maintained contact, but he did not yet tell me the source of this contact. Tukhachevsky added that **Trotsky's** directive stated that the work of the military organization must be led extremely independently, not by any means to be in contact with the anti-Soviet groupings that exist in our country among civilian organizations.

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Primakov: ... I was also interested (I considered myself not the least spoke in the wheel and had responsibilities, so I wanted to know everything) [and asked] Tukhachevsky several times about his contacts with civilian counterrevolutionary organizations. Only in 1933 or the beginning of 1934 did he tell me that he was in contact with Piatakov.

Contact with Piatakov helped carry out sabotage in the area of artillery armament from the viewpoint of lowering our orders. Tukhachevsky also said that there was also contact with the Rights. To my doubtful question — how with the Rights? From where? I knew that **Trotsky** was leading the conspiracy. Tukhachevsky answered that now the separation between the Rights and **Trotskyists** has been wiped away, and since this is useful for our general business, why not have contact with the Rights also?

I will talk later about my practical work, and for now will remain on these facts:

When in 1933-34 **Hitler** came to power, we were given an official directive to stress our coolness towards the **Germans** at banquets. Tukhachevsky told me that on **Trotsky's** directive, it was essential to let the **Germans** know that his attitude towards the Reichswehr remained just as good as good as earlier.

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Fel'dman: ... I must return to **Trotsky's** directives. Later, when from **Trotsky's** first directives, about which Mikhail Nikolaevich [Tukhachevsky] informed me, he went to discuss the preparation for the defeat of the Red Army, he said to me that he was doing this according to a new directive from **Trotsky**, adding that all means are good in the struggle to achieve our aims, in the struggle against Soviet power.

Here I must tell the court that my collaborators, my former colleagues, if I may express myself in this way, are very squeamish in their confessions about terror and espionage.

Citizen Primakov, here you are claiming that aside from the armed uprising in Leningrad you did not undertake anything. It's strange that you do not

mind speaking about an armed uprising and drowning in blood many thousands of workers, peasants, and collective farmers, but you cannot speak frankly about terror. Tukhachevsky told me in 1936 that in carrying out **Trotsky's** directive about having recourse to terror, and in particular in relation to Voroshilov, he gave such a directive to Primakov in 1936.

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Fel'dman... In this way, summing up, I must say that everything we did were actions that served the interests of the **fascists** and their agent **Trotsky**, whose will we were carrying out.

There were talks, as I have explained, about a palace coup. When contact with **Trotsky** had been set up through Putna, who had been transferred to London, there began talks about defeatism, and methods of terror and espionage appeared — all this in order to overthrow Soviet power and guarantee **Trotsky's** coming to power. **Trotsky** did not have real forces numbering in the thousands besides those that you see here and therefore whatever **Trotsky** dictated to us, the **German General Staff** was dictating. That's the way I see it and that's the way we should put it.

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Primakov: ... Whether **Trotsky** would come to power together with Rykov or Enukidze, we did not discuss this question and it played no role for us. What was important was to overthrow Soviet power.

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Fel'dman: ... Speaking of **Trotskyist** cadres in the Far Eastern Region, there were many of them, but I did not know any members of the conspiracy. As for Lapin and the others who have been mentioned here, they were assigned to the Far East without my knowledge.

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Putna: I did not have any direct contact with civilians concerning the conspiracy. I know only one person whom I knew to be a member of the

general **Trotskyist** center — Mrachkovskii. I thought that I could meet with him if the occasion required it, but we never did meet. I did not have any direct talks concerning civilian matters.

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Iakir, last words: ... I have already said that I had a long, good, honorable life before that moment when I fell into the abyss, fell into the hands of the enemy, fell into the hands of the vilest of vile enemies that progressive humanity has, into the hands of that murderer, that agent of **German fascism, Trotsky**.

I want you to believe that I, if I am not left with my physical forces, will die in complete tranquility and in the understanding that I die with the most legal justification, than I have committed more [crimes] that I could redeem with my death, and that you believe me in this, that I die with a curse against **Trotsky, German fascism**, and with my last word of love toward the army, towards you, towards my Party, towards Stalin, and towards my motherland.

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Tukhachevsky, last words:

I wish to draw a conclusion for myself from this vile work that has been done.. I wish to draw the conclusion that under the conditions of the victory of socialism in our country every grouping becomes an anti-Soviet group and every anti-Soviet group becomes one with the vilest **Trotskyism**, with the vilest current of the Rights. And since there is no vase for these forces within our country, then whether they wish it or not, these groups slide further, into contact with **fascism**, into contact with the **German General Staff**. This is the downfall of this counterrevolutionary work that was in its essence directed **towards the re-establishment of capitalism in our country**.

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I want to say that I went through the civil war as an honest Soviet citizen, as an honorable Red Army soldier, as an honorable commander of the Red Army, that I fought for Soviet power without sparing any effort, and after the civil war I did likewise. But the road of the group, that put me on the road of foul Right opportunism and of three-times cursed **Trotskyism**, that led to contact with **German fascism** and the **Japanese** general staff, all this had not killed in me the love for our army, love for our Soviet country, and while doing this foul counterrevolutionary business, I was also two persons.

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Uborevich, last words:

... in 1935 I committed a military crime when I accepted the defeatist instructions of Tukhachevsky and for that I, as a soldier, if I had a thousand lives, would not be able to redeem my guilt with them. I beg the Party, the Soviet people, and the army forgiveness for my last and greatest crimes.

The trial has freed me from the nightmares of conspiracy and the diabolical directives of Tukhachevsky, — that is to say, of **Trotsky**, and the **German General Staff**. I die now with my previous faith in the victory of the Red Army. The y will prepare the Red Army strongly towards these victories. That is all!

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Kork, last words:

I wish to say that, while I took the path of treason, of vile betrayal, the path of committing crimes for which there is no name, yet within me the whole time there continued to live something else. I gradually became convinced of the profound delusion in which I found myself since 1931. I did not

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believe in the correctness of the Party's general line, did not believe in the correctness of Stalin's line, I was shot through with doubts and gave in to the vile slander of the Rights and the even viler activities of the **Trotskyists**,

when the Rights and **Trotskyists** fused into one whole and plotted the most criminal acts that can come into a person's head.

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Eideman, last words:

I ask the court to believe one thing, that before I joined this organization I honorably, without any hesitation, gave all my strength to my native country. I lived together with the Party, I lived together with the whole country. I began to slide downwards, to become corrupted, during the years of hardship, during the years of the transitional period of 1930 and 1932. I did not go to the Party with these doubts and waverings. I kept everything to myself. I began to become corrupted. Keeping within myself these waverings and the corruption, I fell into the hands of the most damned implacable enemy of the people — **Trotsky**.

I feel now that I have returned back onto Soviet land, I can now say without hesitation that I accept this harsh verdict so that with the last bit, the last minutes of my life, the last hours of my life to cover with curses that vile enemy of the people, **Trotsky**, agent of **German fascism**, because of whom I too became an agent of **German fascism**.

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Putna, last words:

The seed of corrupting **Trotskyism** was sown in me by those people who drew me to **Trotskyism** comparatively early. I followed gradually and steadily almost the whole path of **Trotskyism** from the beginning of the factionalism against the Party leadership through the transition to illegal methods of struggle against the Party, through the transition to instruction more shameful, more vile, and arrived in the camp of the enemies of the Party, the state, the Red Army, and the country as a whole in 1931.

...

This process was at first also rather painful for me, but I became stuck so far in the vile rut of **Trotskyist** decay, in my struggle against our country and leadership, so deeply, and so consistently, that my normal human courage, human bravery were not enough to tear me out of this rut.

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Many people know that I was a different person, and for me now there is no other solace except that I was once a different person. And now, in a very short time, in my own internal feelings, I have returned to my former self. I believe that in a sick organism, one that is decaying, struck down as though by poisonous gases, in an organism rotted by **Trotsky**, who led me into service to the **German General Staff** and to that coalition, in this organism, evidently, there remain still some pockets that have not completely died, that have given me the physical and moral strength to tell the investigation and the court everything that I know about this criminal activity.

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Primakov, last words:

In my last words, citizen judges, I must tell the final truth about our conspiracy, and the final truth consists in this, that in the history of our revolution, and in the history of other revolutions, there has not been such a vile conspiracy

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as ours, neither in its goals, not in its membership, not in the means that the conspiracy chose for itself. Of whom does the conspiracy consist, whom did the **fascist** flag of **Trotsky** join together? It joined together all the counterrevolutionary elements that we had. All of them, from the rags of the old officers' groups, to the **Trotskyist** group, with its vile terrorist directives, with its practice of struggle against the Party, through the remains of the Zinovievists, everything that was counterrevolutionary in the Red Army — all were gathered into one place, under one flag, under the **fascist** flag in the hands of **Trotsky**. That is the main thing.



What means did this conspiracy choose that are unequalled in history? All means, from the blackest betrayal, from treason, from the preparation of the defeat of one's own country through sabotage, through espionage, through terror, directed against the brain and heart of our country. These are the means that the conspiracy chose. For what goal? **For the restoration of capitalism.** What does the achievement of this goal mean, and by what path can this goal be reached, acting as our conspirators acted? There was one path: it was necessary to shatter the dictatorship of the proletariat, but only a fascist dictatorship could shatter it. But this **fascist** dictatorship would be created in the form of a half-dozen Napoleons, but only that one Napoleon would become the boss who was beneficial to the **German General Staff.** Because if the Red Army were defeated and bled to death, the country would be deprived of force. So who then would be boss if not **Hitler's** staff? And who would establish power in the country besides **Hitler's** general staff? That was the goal to which our conspiracy was moving. It was moving towards a **fascist** dictatorship, since from the half-dozen Napoleons would be chosen one who was chosen by the path of treasonous defeatism, the path of its vile preparation for the enemy.

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The second group to which I belong is the **Trotskyist** group. If the first group acted by means of betrayal, the second, **Trotskyist** group is the most cursed group in the conspiracy because it has travelled the most vile path, has the most vile school and has as its leader **Trotsky**, who demanded the **fascist** banner.

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Two more words about myself. I must say directly that I, a former communist and former soldier of the revolution, thanks to the fact that I was made into a **Trotskyist**, that I travelled the whole path with them since 1932, I arrived in the **fascist** camp and I in despair see that I have arrived at a place than which there is nothing worse in the world.

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# **Article: Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform**

By Grover Furr, 2005

# Part One

## Introduction

1. This article outlines Joseph Stalin's attempts, from the 1930s until his death, to democratize the government of the Soviet Union.

2. This statement, and the article, will astonish many, and outrage some. In fact, my own amazement at the results of the research I'm reporting on led me to write this article. I had suspected for a long time that the Cold War version of Soviet history had serious flaws. Still, I was unprepared for the extent of the falsehoods I had been taught as fact.

3. This story is well known in Russia, where respect for, and even admiration of, Stalin is common. Yuri Zhukov, the main Russian historian who sets forth the paradigm of 'Stalin as Democrat' and whose works are the most important single source, though far from the only one, for this article, is a mainstream figure associated with the Academy of Sciences. His works are widely read.

4. However, this story and the facts that sustain it are virtually unknown outside Russia, where the Cold War paradigm of 'Stalin as Villain' so controls what is published that the works cited here are still scarcely noted. Therefore, many of the secondary sources used in this article, as well as all the primary sources of course, are only available in Russian.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Leon Trotsky's version of Soviet history preceded Khrushchev's, and has dovetailed into it as a kind of "left" version of the latter, though little credited outside Trotskyist circles. Both Khrushchevite and Trotskyist accounts portray Stalin in an extremely negative light; the word "demonize" would scarcely be an exaggeration. On Trotsky, see McNeal.

5. This article does not simply inform readers of new facts about, and interpretations of, the history of the USSR. Rather, it is an attempt to bring to a non-Russian readership the results of new research, based on Soviet archives, on the Stalin period and Stalin himself. The facts discussed herein

are compatible with a range of paradigms of Soviet history, just as they help to disprove a number of other interpretations. They will be utterly unacceptable — in fact, outrageous — to those whose political and historical perspectives have been based upon erroneous and ideologically motivated "Cold-War" notions of Soviet "totalitarianism" and "Stalinist terror."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The widespread use of the term "terror" to characterize the period of Soviet history from roughly mid-1937 to 1939-40 can be attributed to an uncritical acceptance of Robert Conquest's highly tendentious and unreliable 1973 work *The Great Terror*. The term is both inaccurate and polemical. See Robert W. Thurston, "Fear and Belief in the USSR's 'Great Terror': Response To Arrest, 1935-1939." *Slavic Review* 45 (1986), 213-234. Thurston responded to, and critiqued, Conquest's attempt to defend the term in "On Desk-Bound Parochialism, Commonsense Perspectives, and Lousy Evidence: A Reply to Robert Conquest." *Slavic Review* 45 (1986), 238-244. See also Thurston, "Social Dimensions of Stalinist Rule: Humor and Terror in the USSR, 1935-1941." *Journal of Social History* 24, No. 3 (1991) 541-562; *Life and Terror* Ch. 5, 137-163.

6. The Khrushchevite interpretation of Stalin as power-hungry dictator, betrayer of Lenin's legacy, was created to fit the needs of the Communist Party's nomenklatura in the 1950s. But it shows close similarities, and shares many assumptions, with the canonical discourse on Stalin inherited from the Cold War, which served the desire of capitalist elites to argue that communist struggles, or indeed any struggles for working-class power, must inevitably lead to some kind of horror.

7. It also suits the Trotskyists' need to argue that the defeat of Trotsky, the "true revolutionary," could only have come at the hands of a dictator who, it is assumed, violated every principle for which the revolution had been fought. Khrushchevite, Cold-War anti-communist, and Trotskyist paradigms of Soviet history are similar in their dependence on a virtual demonization of Stalin, his leadership, and the USSR during his time.

8. The view of Stalin outlined in this essay is compatible with a number of otherwise contradictory historical paradigms. Anti-revisionist and post-

Maoist communist interpretations of Soviet history see Stalin as a creative and logical, if in some respects flawed, heir to Lenin's legacy. Meanwhile, many Russian nationalists, while hardly approving of Stalin's achievements as a Communist, respect Stalin as the figure most responsible for the establishment of Russia as a major industrial and military world power. Stalin is a foundational figure for both, albeit in very different ways.

9. This article is no attempt to "rehabilitate" Stalin. I agree with Yuri Zhukov when he writes: "I can honestly tell you that I oppose the rehabilitation of Stalin, because I oppose rehabilitations in general. Nothing and no one in history should be rehabilitated — but we must uncover the truth and speak the truth. However, since Khrushchev's time the only victims of Stalin's repressions you hear from are those who took part in them themselves, or who facilitated them or who failed to oppose them." (Zhukov, KP Nov. 21 02) Nor do I wish to suggest that, if only Stalin had had his way, the manifold problems of building socialism or communism in the USSR would have been solved.

10. During the period with which this essay is concerned, the Stalin leadership was concerned not only to promote democracy in the governance of the state, but to foster inner-party democracy as well. This important and related topic requires a separate study, and this essay does not centrally address it. However, where the concept of 'democracy' is concerned, it would have to have a different meaning in the context of a democratic-centralist party of voluntary members than in a huge state of citizens where no basis of political agreement can be presupposed.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Marxist-Leninist political thought rejects capitalist "representative democracy" as essentially a smokescreen for elite control. Many non-Marxist political thinkers agree. For one example, see Lewis H. Lapham (editor of Harper's Magazine), "Lights, Camera, Democracy! On the conventions of a make-believe republic," Harper's Magazine, August 1996, 33-38.

11. This article draws upon primary sources whenever possible. But it relies most heavily upon scholarly works by Russian historians who have access to unpublished or recently published documents from Soviet archives.

Many Soviet documents of great importance are available only to scholars with privileged access. A great many others remain completely sequestered and "classified," including much of Stalin's personal archive, the pre-trial, investigative materials in the Moscow Trials of 1936-38, the investigative materials relating to the military purges or "Tukhachevsky Affair" of 1937, and many others.

12. Yuri Zhukov describes the archival situation this way:

"With the beginning of perestroika, one of the slogans of which was 'glasnost' . . . the Kremlin archive, formerly closed to researchers, was liquidated. Its holdings began to be relocated in [various public archives — GF]. This process began but was not completed. Without any publicity or explanation of any kind in 1996 the most important, pivotal materials were again reclassified, hidden away in the archive of the President of the Russian Federation. Soon the reasons for this secretive operation became clear; it permitted the resurrection of one of the two old and very shabby myths." (6)

By these myths Zhukov means 'Stalin the Villain' and 'Stalin the Great Leader'. Only the first of these myths is familiar to readers of Western and anti-communist historiography. But both schools are well represented in Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

13. One of Zhukov's books, and the basis of much of this article, is titled *Inoy Stalin – A Different Stalin*, 'different' from either myth, closer to the truth, based upon recently declassified archival documents. Its cover shows a photograph of Stalin and, facing it, the same photograph in negative: its opposite. Only rarely does Zhukov use secondary sources. For the most part he cites unpublished archival material, or archival documents only recently declassified and published. The picture he draws of Politburo politics from 1934 to 1938 is very different from anything consistent with either of the myths he rejects.

14. Zhukov ends his Introduction with these words: "I make no claim to finality or incontrovertibility. I attempt only one task: to avoid both preconceived points of view, both myths; to try to reconstruct the past, once well known, but now intentionally forgotten, deliberately unmentionable,

ignored by all." Following Zhukov, this article also attempts to steer clear of both myths.

15. Under such conditions all conclusions must remain tentative. I've tried to use all materials judiciously, whether primary or secondary. In order to avoid interrupting the text I have put source references at the end of each paragraph. I have employed traditional numbered footnotes only where I think longer, more explanatory notes are needed.

16. The research this article summarizes has important consequences for those of us concerned to carry forward a class analysis of history, including the history of the Soviet Union.

17. One of the very best American researchers of the Stalin period in the USSR, J. Arch Getty, has called the historical research done during the period of the Cold War "products of propaganda" — "research" which it makes no sense to criticize or try to correct in its individual parts, but which must be done all over again from the beginning.<sup>4</sup> I agree with Getty, but would add that this tendentious, politically-charged, and dishonest "research" is still being produced today.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Yuri Zhukov, "Zhupel Stalina," Komsomolskaia Pravda Nov. 5 2002. Prof. Getty confirmed this in an email to me.

18. The Cold War-Khrushchevite paradigm has been the prevailing view of the history of the "Stalin years." The research reported on here can contribute towards a "clearing of the ground," a "beginning all over again from the beginning." The truth that finally emerges will also have great meaning for the Marxist project of understanding the world in order to change it, of building a classless society of social and economic justice.

19. In the concluding section of the essay I have outlined some areas for further research that are suggested by the results of this article.

## **A New Constitution**

20. In December 1936 the Extraordinary 8th Congress of Soviets approved the draft of the new Soviet Constitution. It called for secret ballot and contested elections. (Zhukov, Inoy 307-9)

21. Candidates were to be allowed not only from the Bolshevik Party — called the All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik) at that time<sup>5</sup> — but from other citizens' groups as well, based on residence, affiliation (such as religious groups), or workplace organizations. This last provision was never put into effect. Contested elections were never held.

<sup>5</sup> The Party's name was changed to Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1952.

22. The democratic aspects of the Constitution were inserted at the express insistence of Joseph Stalin. Together with his closest supporters in the Politburo of the Bolshevik Party, Stalin fought tenaciously to keep these provisions. (Getty, "State") He, and they, yielded only when confronted by the complete refusal by the Party's Central Committee, and by the panic surrounding the discovery of serious conspiracies, in collaboration with Japanese and German fascism, to overthrow the Soviet government.

23. In January 1935, the Politburo assigned the task of outlining the contents of a new Constitution to Avel' Yenukidze<sup>6</sup> who, some months later, returned with a suggestion for open, uncontested elections. Almost immediately, on January 25, 1935, Stalin expressed his disagreement with Yenukidze's proposal, insisting upon secret elections. (Zhukov, Inoy 116-21)

<sup>6</sup> Yenukidze, an old revolutionary, fellow Georgian, and friend of Stalin's, had long occupied a high position in the Soviet government and never been associated with any of the Opposition groups of the '20s. At this time he was also in charge of the Kremlin Guard. Within a few months he was one of the first to be exposed as a member of the plan for a "palace coup" against the Stalin leadership. Zhukov (KP 14 Nov. 02) notes that this must have been especially upsetting to Stalin.

24. Stalin made this disagreement public in a dramatic manner in a March 1936 interview with American newspaper magnate Roy Howard. Stalin



declared that the Soviet constitution would guarantee that all voting would be by secret ballot. Voting would be on an equal basis, with a peasant vote counting as much as that of a worker;<sup>7</sup> on a territorial basis, as in the West, rather than according to status (as during Czarist times) or place of employment; and direct — all Soviets would be elected by the citizens themselves, not indirectly by representatives. (Stalin-Howard Interview; Zhukov, "Repressii" 5-6) Stalin: "We shall probably adopt our new constitution at the end of this year. The commission appointed to draw up the constitution is working and should finish its labors soon. As has been announced already, according to the new constitution, the suffrage will be universal, equal, direct, and secret." (Stalin-Howard Interview 13)

<sup>7</sup> Part II, Chapter 3, Article 9 of The Soviet Constitution of 1924, the one in force at this time, gave urban dwellers a far greater influence in society — one Soviet delegate to 25,000 city and town voters, and one delegate to 125,000 country voters. This was in conformity to the far greater degree of support for socialism among workers, and with the Marxist concept of the state as the dictatorship of the proletariat.

25. Most important, Stalin declared that all elections would be contested:

"You are puzzled by the fact that only one party will come forward at elections. You cannot see how election contests can take place under these conditions. Evidently, candidates will be put forward not only by the Communist Party, but by all sorts of public, non-Party organizations. And we have hundreds of them. We have no contending parties any more than we have a capitalist class contending against a working class which is exploited by the capitalists. Our society consists exclusively of free toilers of town and country — workers, peasants, intellectuals. Each of these strata may have its special interests and express them by means of the numerous public organizations that exist." (13-14)

Different citizens' organizations would be able to set forth candidates to run against the Communist Party's candidates. Stalin told Howard that citizens would cross off the names of all candidates except those they wished to vote for.

26. He also stressed the importance of contested elections in fighting bureaucracy.

"You think that there will be no election contests. But there will be, and I foresee very lively election campaigns. There are not a few institutions in our country which work badly. Cases occur when this or that local government body fails to satisfy certain of the multifarious and growing requirements of the toilers of town and country. Have you built a good school or not? Have you improved housing conditions? Are you a bureaucrat? Have you helped to make our labor more effective and our lives more cultured? Such will be the criteria with which millions of electors will measure the fitness of candidates, reject the unsuitable, expunge their names from candidates' lists, and promote and nominate the best. Yes, election campaigns will be lively, they will be conducted around numerous, very acute problems, principally of a practical nature, of first-class importance for the people. Our new electoral system will tighten up all institutions and organizations and compel them to improve their work. Universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage in the U.S.S.R. will be a whip in the hands of the population against the organs of government which work badly. In my opinion our new Soviet constitution will be the most democratic constitution in the world." (15)

27. From this point on, Stalin and his closest Politburo associates Vyacheslav Molotov and Andrei Zhdanov spoke up for secret, contested elections in all discussions within the Party leadership. (Zhukov, Inoy 207-10; Stalin-Howard Interview)

28. Stalin also insisted that many Soviet citizens who had been deprived of the franchise have it restored. These included members of former exploiting classes such as former landlords, and those who had fought against the Bolsheviks during the Civil War of 1918-1921, known as "White Guardists", as well as those convicted of certain crimes (as in the USA today). Most important, and probably most numerous, among the lishentsy ("deprived") were two groups: "kulaks," the main targets during the Collectivization movement of a few years before; and those who had violated the 1932 "law of three ears"<sup>8</sup> — who had stolen state property, often grain, sometimes simply to avoid starvation. (Zhukov, Inoy 187)

<sup>8</sup> This is actually not a law but a "decision of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars" — i.e. of the legislative and executive branches of government. The fact that it is commonly called a "law" even in scholarship simply shows that most of those who refer to it have not actually read it at all. It is printed in *Tragediia Sovetskoy Derevni. Kollektivizatsiia i Raskulachivanie. Documenty i Materialy. 1927-1939. Tom 3. Konets 1930-1933* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001), No. 160, pp. 453-4, and in *Sobranie zakonov i rasporiazhenii Raboche-Krest'ianskogo Pravitel'stva SSSR, chast' I, 1932*, pp. 583-584. My thanks to Dr. Gábor T. Rittersporn for this last citation.

29. These electoral reforms would have been unnecessary unless the Stalin leadership wanted to change the way the Soviet Union was governed. They wanted to get the Communist Party out of the business of directly running the Soviet Union.

30. During the Russian Revolution and the critical years that followed, the USSR had been legally governed by an elected hierarchy of soviets (= "councils"), from local to national level, with the Supreme Soviet as the national legislative body, the Council (= soviet) of People's Commissars as the executive body, and the Chairman of this Council as the head of state. But in reality, at every level, choice of these officials had always been in the hands of the Bolshevik Party. Elections were held, but direct nomination by Party leaders, called "cooptation," was also common. Even the elections were controlled by the Party, since no one could run for office unless Party leaders agreed.

31. To the Bolsheviks, this had made sense. It was the form that the dictatorship of the proletariat took in the specific historical conditions of the revolutionary and post-revolutionary Soviet Union. Under the New Economic Policy, or NEP,<sup>9</sup> the labor and skills of former and current exploiters were needed. But they had to be used only in service to the working-class dictatorship — to socialism. They were not to be permitted to rebuild capitalist relationships beyond certain limits, nor to regain political power.

<sup>9</sup> To build up the economy as quickly as possible after the devastation of the Civil War and subsequent famine, the Bolsheviks permitted capitalism to flourish and encouraged profit-seeking businessmen, though under government scrutiny. This was called the New Economic Policy.

32. Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s the Bolshevik Party recruited aggressively among the working class. By the end of the 1920s most Party members were workers and a high percentage of workers were in the Party. This massive recruitment and huge attempts at political education took place at the same time as the tremendous upheavals of the first Five-Year Plan, crash industrialization, and largely forced collectivization of individual farms into collective (kolkhoz) or soviet farms (sovkhoz). The Bolshevik leadership was both sincere in its attempt to "proletarianize" their Party, and successful in the result. (Rigby, 167-8; 184; 199)

33. Stalin and his supporters on the Politburo gave a number of reasons for wanting to democratize the Soviet Union. These reasons reflected the Stalin leadership's belief that a new state of socialism had been reached.

34. Most peasants were in collective farms. With fewer individual peasant farms every month, the Stalin leadership believed that, objectively, the peasants no longer constituted a separate socio-economic class. Peasants were more like workers than different from them.

35. Stalin argued that, with the rapid growth of Soviet industry, and especially with the working class holding political power through the Bolshevik Party, the word "proletariat" was no longer accurate. "Proletariat," Stalin averred, referred to the working class under capitalist exploitation, or working under capitalist-type relations of production, such as existed during the first dozen years of the Soviet Union, especially under the NEP. But with direct exploitation of workers by capitalists for profit now abolished, the working class should no longer be called the "proletariat."

36. According to this view, exploiters of labor no longer existed. Workers, now running the country in their own interest through the Bolshevik Party, were no longer like the classic "proletariat." Therefore, the "dictatorship of the proletariat" was no longer an adequate concept. These new conditions

called for a new kind of state. (Zhukov, Inoy 231; 292; Stalin, "Draft" 800-1)

### **The Anti-Bureaucracy Struggle**

37. The Stalin leadership was also concerned about the Party's role in this new stage of socialism. Stalin himself raised the fight against "bureaucratism" with great vigor as early as his Report to the 17th Party Congress in January 1934.<sup>10</sup> Stalin, Molotov and others called the new electoral system a "weapon against bureaucratization."

<sup>10</sup> Stalin, "Report to 17th P.C.," 704, 705, 706, 716, 728, 733, 752, 753, 754, 756, 758.

38. Party leaders controlled the government both by determining who entered the Soviets and by exercising various forms of oversight or review over what the government ministries did. Speaking at the 7th Congress of Soviets on February 6, 1935, Molotov said that secret elections "will strike with great force against bureaucratic elements and provide them a useful shock." Yenukidze's report had not recommended, or even mentioned, secret elections and the widening of the franchise. (Stalin, Report to 17th P.C.; Zhukov, Inoy 124)

39. Government ministers and their staffs had to know something about the affairs over which they were in charge, if they were to be effective in production. This meant education, usually technical education, in their fields. But Party leaders often made their careers by advancement through Party positions alone. No technical expertise was needed for this kind of advancement. Rather, political criteria were required. These Party officials exercised control, but they themselves often lacked the technical knowledge that could in theory make them skilled at supervision. (Stalin-Howard Interview; Zhukov, Inoy 305; Zhukov, "Repressii" 6)

40. This is, apparently, what the Stalin leadership meant by the term "bureaucratism." Though they viewed it as a danger — as, indeed, all Marxists did — they believed it was not inevitable. Rather, they thought

that it could be overcome by changing the role of the Party in socialist society.

41. The concept of democracy that Stalin and his supporters in the Party leadership wished to inaugurate in the Soviet Union would necessarily involve a qualitative change in the societal role of the Bolshevik Party: "Those documents that were accessible to researchers did allow us to understand . . . that already by the end of the 1930s determined attempts were being undertaken to separate the Party from the state and to limit in a substantive manner the Party's role in the life of the country." (Zhukov, Tayny 8) Stalin and supporters continued this struggle against opposition from other elements in the Bolshevik Party, resolutely but with diminishing chances for success, until Stalin died in March 1953. Lavrenty Beria's determination to continue this same struggle seems to be the real reason Khrushchev and others murdered him, either judicially, by trial on trumped-up charges in December 1953, or — as much evidence suggests — through literal murder, the previous June.

42. Article 3 of the 1936 Constitution reads, "In the U.S.S.R. all power belongs to the working people of town and country as represented by the Soviets of Working People's Deputies." The Communist Party is mentioned in Article 126 as "the vanguard of the working people in their struggle to strengthen and develop the socialist system and is the leading core of all organizations of the working people, both public and state." That is, the Party was to lead organizations, but not the legislative or executive organs of the state. (1936 Constitution; Zhukov, Tayny 29-30)

43. Stalin seems to have believed that, once the Party was out of direct control over society, its role should be confined to agitation and propaganda, and participation in the selection of cadres. What would this have meant? Perhaps something like this:

- The Party would revert to its essential function of winning people to the ideals of communism as they understood it.
- This would mean the end of cushy sinecure-type jobs, and a reversion to the style of hard work and selfless dedication that characterized the Bolsheviks during the Tsarist period, the Revolution and Civil War, the period of NEP, and the very hard period of crash industrialization and

collectivization. During these periods Party membership, for most, meant hard work and sacrifice, often among non-Party members, many of whom were hostile to the Bolsheviks. It meant the need for a real base among the masses. (Zhukov, KP Nov. 13 02; Mukhin, Ubiystvo)

44. Stalin insisted that Communists should be hard-working, educated people, able to make a real contribution to production and to the creation of a communist society. Stalin himself was an indefatigable student.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> This is not widely known, nor its significance understood. Our view of Stalin has been largely shaped by those who hated him (McNeal 87). Stalin had been an excellent student at the seminary in Tblisi, Georgia, to which his mother had sent him. Devoting his life from his teenage years to the working-class revolutionary movement, he had never had the opportunity for higher education. But he was highly intelligent, and a voracious reader whose learning ranged from philosophy to technical subjects like metallurgy. Contemporary records attest to his attention to details and thorough knowledge of many technical areas. A Russian scholar who has studied Stalin's library gives impressive figures: 20,000 volumes at Stalin's dacha after the war; many of the 5,500 taken to the Institute of Marxism-Leninism after his death are annotated and underlined. (Ilizarov). Roy Medvedev, who hates Stalin, grudgingly admits Stalin's considerable reading. (Medvedev, "Lichnaia")

Many of the people whom he picked as his closest associates reflected this same dedication to self-improvement. Sergei Kirov, Leningrad Party leader and close ally of Stalin's who was assassinated in 1934, was noted for his wide reading in literature. (Kirilina 175). "When Kirov was killed, experts from the investigation photographed everything that could aid the investigation including the top of Kirov's work desk. To the right lay Hütte's engineering manual, on the left a pile of scientific and technical journals, the top title of which was 'Combustible Shale.' Wide indeed was the sphere of interests of this party worker — as Stalin's was." (Mukhin Ubiystvo 625)

In 1924 Lavrenty Beria, fresh from several years of very dangerous underground revolutionary work, some of it as a Bolshevik infiltrator in

violent anti-communist Caucasian nationalist groups, wrote his Party autobiography. His purpose in listing his deeds — he had been awarded the rank of general at the age of 20 — was to plead, not for a cushy job, as most "Old Bolsheviks" demanded and usually got, but to be allowed to return to his engineering studies, so he could make a contribution to the building of a communist society. (Beria: Konets Kar'ery, 320-325)

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45. To summarize, the evidence suggests that Stalin intended the new electoral system to accomplish the following goals:

- Make sure that only technically trained people led, in production and in Soviet society at large;
- Stop the degeneration of the Bolshevik Party, and return Party members, especially leaders, to their primary function: giving political and moral leadership, by example and persuasion, to the rest of society;
- Strengthen the Party's mass work;
- Win the support of the country's citizens behind the government;
- Create the basis for a classless, communist society.

### **Stalin's Defeat**

46. During 1935, under the aegis of Andrei Vyshinsky, Chief Prosecutor of the USSR, many citizens who had been exiled, imprisoned, and — most significantly for our present purposes — deprived of the franchise, were restored. Hundreds of thousands of former kulaks, richer farmers who were the main target of collectivization, and of those who had been imprisoned or exiled for resisting collectivization in some way, were freed. Vyshinsky severely criticized the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, including internal security) for "a series of the crudest errors and miscalculations" in deporting almost 12,000 people from Leningrad after the December 1934 assassination of Kirov. He declared that from then on, the NKVD could not arrest anyone without prior consent of the prosecutor. The enfranchised population was expanded by at least hundreds of thousands of people who had reason to feel that State and Party had treated



them unfairly. (Thurston 6-9; Zhukov, KP Nov. 14 & Nov. 19 02; Zhukov, Inoy 187; Zhukov, "Repressii" 7)

47. Stalin's original proposal for the new constitution had not included contested elections. He first announced it in his interview with Roy Howard on March 1, 1936. At the June 1937 Central Committee Plenum, Yakovlev — one of the CC members who, together with Stalin, worked most closely on the draft of the new constitution (cf. Zhukov, Inoy 223) — said that the suggestion for contested elections was made by Stalin himself. This suggestion seems to have met with widespread, albeit tacit, opposition from the regional Party leaders, the First Secretaries, or "partocracy," as Zhukov calls them. After the Howard interview there was not even the nominal praise or support for Stalin's statement about contested elections in the central newspapers — those most under the direct control of the Politburo. Pravda carried one article only, on March 10, and it did not mention contested elections.

48. From this Zhukov concludes:

"This could mean only one thing. Not only the 'broad leadership' [the regional First Secretaries], but at least a part of the Central Committee apparatus, Agitprop under Stetsky and Tal', did not accept Stalin's innovation, did not want to approve, even in a purely formal manner, contested elections, dangerous to many, which, as followed from those of Stalin's words that Pravda did underscore, directly threatened the positions and real power of the First Secretaries — the Central Committees of the national communist parties, the regional, oblast, city, and area committees." (Inoy 211)

49. The Party First Secretaries held Party offices, from which they could not be removed by defeat in any elections to the Soviets they might enter. But the immense local power they held stemmed mainly from the Party's control over every aspect of the economy and state apparatus — kolkhoz, factory, education, military. The new electoral system would deprive the First Secretaries of their automatic positions as delegates to the Soviets, and of their ability to simply choose the other delegates. Defeat of themselves or of "their" candidates (the Party candidates) in elections to the soviets would be, in effect, a referendum on their work. A First Secretary whose

candidates were defeated at the polls by non-Party candidates would be exposed as someone with weak ties to the masses. During the campaigns, opposition candidates were sure to make campaign issues out of any corruption, authoritarianism, or incompetence they observed among Party officials. Defeated candidates would be shown up to have serious weaknesses as communists, and this would probably lead to their being replaced. (Zhukov KPNov. 13 02; Inoy 226; cf. Getty, "Excesses" 122-3)

50. Senior Party leaders were usually Party members of many years' standing, veterans of the really dangerous days of Tsarist times, the Revolution, the Civil War, and collectivization, when to be a communist was fraught with peril and difficulty. Many had little formal education. Unlike Stalin, Kirov or Beria, it seems that most of them were unwilling or unable to "remake themselves" through self-education. (Mukhin, Ubiystvo 37; Dimitrov 33-4; Stalin, Zastol'nye 235-6).

51. All these men were long-time supporters of Stalin's policies. They had implemented the harsh collectivization of the peasantry, during which hundreds of thousands had been deported. During 1932-33 many people, perhaps as many as three million, had died by a famine that had been real rather than "man-made," but one made more severe for the peasantry by collectivization and expropriation of grain to feed the workers in the cities, or in armed peasant rebellions (which had also killed many Bolsheviks). These Party leaders had overseen crash industrialization, again under harsh conditions of poor housing, insufficient food and medical care, low pay and few goods to buy with it. (Tauger; Anderson & Silver; Zhukov, KP Nov. 13 02).

52. Now they faced elections in which those formerly deprived of the franchise because they had been on the wrong side of these Soviet policies would suddenly have the right to vote restored. It's likely that they feared many would vote against their candidates, or against any Bolshevik candidate. If so, they stood to be demoted, or worse. They would still get some Party position, or — at worst — some kind of job. The new "Stalin" Constitution guaranteed every Soviet citizen a job as a right, along with medical care, pensions, education, etc. But these men (virtually all were men) were used to power and privilege, all of which was threatened by

defeat of their candidates at the polls. (Zhukov, KP Nov. 13 02; 1936 Const., Ch. X; cf. Getty, "Excesses" 125, on the importance of religious feeling in the country).

### **Trials, Conspiracies, Repression**

53. Plans for the new constitution and elections had been outlined during the June 1936 Plenum of the Central Committee. The delegates unanimously approved the draft Constitution. But none of them spoke up in favor of it. This failure to give at least lip service to a Stalin proposal certainly indicated "latent opposition from the broad leadership," a demonstrative lack of concern." (Zhukov, Inoy 232, 236; "Repressii" 10-11)

54. During the 8th All-Russian Congress of Soviets meeting in November-December 1936 Stalin and Molotov again stressed the value of widening the franchise and of secret and contested elections. In the spirit of Stalin's interview with Howard, Molotov again stressed the beneficial effect, for the Party, of permitting non-communist candidates for the Soviets:

"This system... cannot but strike against those who have become bureaucratized, alienated from the masses... will facilitate the promotion of new forces... that must come forth to replace backward or bureaucratized [ochinovnivshimsya] elements. Under the new form of elections, the election of enemy elements is possible. But even this danger, in the last analysis, must serve to help us, insofar as it will serve as a lash to those organizations that need it, and to [Party] workers who have fallen asleep. (Zhukov, "Repressii" 15).

55. Stalin himself put it even more strongly:

"Some say that this is dangerous, since elements hostile to Soviet power could sneak into the highest offices, some of the former White Guardists, kulaks, priests, and so on. But really, what is there to fear? 'If you're afraid of wolves, don't walk in the forest.' For one thing, not all former kulaks, White Guardists, and priests are hostile to Soviet power. For another, if the people here and there elected hostile forces, this will mean that our

agitational work is poorly organized, and that we have fully deserved this disgrace." (Zhukov, Inoy 293; Stalin, "Draft").

56. Once again the First Secretaries showed tacit hostility. The December 1936 Central Committee Plenum, whose session overlapped with the Congress, met on December 4th. But there was virtually no discussion of the first agenda item, the draft Constitution. Yezhov's report, "On Trotskyite and Right Anti-Soviet Organizations," was far more central to the C.C. members' concerns. ("Fragmenty" 4-5; Zhukov, Inoy 310-11).

57. On December 5, 1936, the Congress approved the draft of the new Constitution. But there had been little real discussion. Instead, the delegates — Party leaders — had emphasized the threats from enemies foreign and domestic. Rather than giving speeches of approval for the Constitution, which was the main topic reported on by Stalin, Molotov, Zhdanov, Litvinov, and Vyshinsky, the delegates virtually ignored it. A Commission was set up for further study of the draft Constitution, with nothing fixed about contested elections. (Zhukov, Inoy 294; 298; 309)

58. The international situation was indeed tense. Victory for fascism in the Spanish Civil War was only a question of time. The Soviet Union was surrounded by hostile powers. By the second half of the 1930s, all these countries were fiercely authoritarian, militaristic, anti-communist and anti-Soviet regimes. In October 1936 Finland had fired across the Soviet frontier. That same month the "Berlin-Rome Axis" was formed by Hitler and Mussolini. A month later, Japan joined Nazi Germany and fascist Italy to form the "Anti-Comintern Pact." Soviet efforts at military alliances against Nazi Germany met with rejection in the capitals of the West. (Zhukov, Inoy 285-309).

59. While the Congress was attending to the new Constitution, the Soviet leadership was between the first two large-scale Moscow Trials. Zinoviev and Kamenev had gone on trial along with some others in August 1936. The second trial, in January 1937, involved some of the major followers of Trotsky, led by Yuri Piatakov, until recently the deputy Commissar of Heavy Industry.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Thurston, Chapters 2 through 4, is the best single summary, as of the early '90s, of the evidence concerning the Moscow Trials. This article will not deal directly with these trials, the trial and execution of Marshal Tukhachevsky and other top-ranking military leaders in June 1937, or the interrelationship among all the anti-Soviet conspiracies alleged in them. As documents from the Soviet archives make clear, Stalin and other top Soviet leaders were convinced that the conspiracies existed, and the charges at the Moscow Trials, plus those against the military leaders, were, at least in large part, accurate.

60. The February-March 1937 Central Committee Plenum dramatized the contradiction within the Party leadership: the struggle against internal enemies, and the need to prepare for secret, contested elections under the new Constitution by year's end. The gradual discovery of more and more groups conspiring to overthrow the Soviet government demanded police action. But preparing for truly democratic elections to the government, and to improve inner-party democracy — a theme stressed over and over by those closest to Stalin in the Politburo — required the opposite: openness to criticism and self-criticism, secret elections of leaders by rank-and-file Party members, and an end to "cooptation" by First Secretaries.

61. This Plenum, the longest ever held in the history of the USSR, dragged on for two weeks. Yet almost nothing was known about it until 1992, when the Plenum's huge transcript began to be published in *Voprosy Istorii* — a process that took the journal almost four years to complete.

62. Yezhov's report about the continuing investigations into conspiracies within the country was overshadowed by Nikolai Bukharin, who, in loquacious attempts to confess past misdeeds, distance himself from onetime associates, and assure every one of his current loyalty, managed only to incriminate himself further. (Thurston, 40-42; Getty and Naumov agree, 563)

63. After three whole days of this, Zhdanov spoke about the need for greater democracy both in the country and in the Party, invoking the struggle against bureaucracy and the need for closer ties to the masses, both party and non-party:

"The new electoral system will give a powerful push towards the improvement of the work of Soviet bodies, the liquidation of bureaucratic bodies, the liquidation of bureaucratic shortcomings, and deformations in the work of our Soviet organizations. And these shortcomings, as you know, are very substantial. Our Party bodies must be ready for the electoral struggle. In the elections we will have to deal with hostile agitation and hostile candidates." (Zhukov, Inoy 343)

64. There can be no doubt that Zhdanov, speaking for the Stalin leadership, foresaw real electoral contests with non-party candidates that seriously opposed developments in the Soviet Union. This fact alone is utterly incompatible with Cold-War and Khrushchevite accounts.

65. Zhdanov also emphasized, at length, the need to develop democratic norms within the Bolshevik Party itself: "If we want to win the respect of our Soviet and Party workers to our laws, and the masses — to the Soviet constitution, then we must guarantee the restructuring [perestroika] of Party work on the basis of an indubitable and full implementation of the bases of inner-party democracy, which is outlined in the bylaws of our Party." And he enumerated the essential measures, already contained in the draft resolution to his report: the elimination of co-optation; a ban on voting by slates; a guarantee "of the unlimited right for members of the Party to set aside the nominated candidates and of the unlimited right to criticize these candidates." (Zhukov, Inoy 345)

66. But Zhdanov's report was drowned in the discussions of other agenda items, mainly discussions about "enemies." A number of First Secretaries responded with alarm that those who were, or might be expected to be, preparing most assiduously for the Soviet elections were opponents of Soviet power: Social-Revolutionaries, the priesthood, and other "enemies."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Getty notes that CC members pointedly refused to respond to Zhdanov's speech, putting the Chair, Andreev, into confusion ("Excesses" 124). Zhukov places less emphasis on this, as Eikhe and other First Secretaries did reply at the next session, while emphasizing the struggle against "enemies." (Inoy 345)

67. Molotov replied with a report stressing, once again, "the development and strengthening of self-criticism," and directly opposed the search for "enemies":

"There's no point in searching for people to blame, comrades. If you prefer, all of us here are to blame, beginning with the Party's central institutions and ending with the lowest Party organizations." (Zhukov, Inoy 349)

68. But those who followed Molotov to the podium ignored his report and continued to harp on the necessity of "searching out 'enemies,' of exposing 'wreckers,' and the struggle against 'wrecking.'" (352) When he spoke again, Molotov marveled that there had been almost no attention paid to the substance of his report, which he repeated, after first summarizing what was being done against internal enemies.

69. Stalin's speech of March 3 was likewise divided, returning at the end to the need for improving Party work and of weeding out incapable Party members and replacing them with new ones. Like Molotov's, Stalin's report was virtually ignored.

"From the beginning of the discussions Stalin's fears were understandable. It seemed he had run into a deaf wall of incomprehension, of the unwillingness of the CC members, who heard in the report just what they wanted to hear, to discuss what he wanted them to discuss. Of the 24 persons who took part in the discussions, 15 spoke mainly about "enemies of the people," that is, Trotskyists. They spoke with conviction, aggressively, just as they had after the reports by Zhdanov and Molotov. They reduced all the problems to one — the necessity of searching out "enemies". And practically none of them recalled Stalin's main point — about the shortcomings in the work of Party organizations, about preparation for the elections to the Supreme Soviet." (Zhukov, Inoy 357)

70. The Stalin leadership stepped up the attack on the First Secretaries. Yakovlev criticized Moscow Party leader Khrushchev, among others, for unjustified expulsions of Party members; Malenkov seconded his criticism of Party secretaries for their indifference to rank-and-file members. This seems to have stimulated the C.C. members to stop speaking temporarily

about enemies, but only in order to begin defending themselves. There was still no response to Stalin's report. (Zhukov, Inoy 358-60)

71. In his final speech on March 5, the concluding day of the Plenum, Stalin minimized the need to hunt enemies, even Trotskyists, many of whom, he said, had turned towards the Party. His main theme was the need to remove Party officials from running every aspect of the economy, to fight bureaucracy, and to raise the political level of Party officials. In other words, Stalin upped the ante in the criticism of the First Secretaries.

"Some comrades among us think that, if they are a Narkom (=People's Commissar), then they know everything. They believe that rank, in and of itself, grants very great, almost inexhaustible knowledge. Or they think: If I am a Central Committee member, then I am not one by accident, then I must know everything. This is not the case." (Stalin, Zakliuchitel'noe; Zhukov, Inoy 360-1)

72. Most ominously for all Party officials, including First Secretaries, Stalin stated that each of them should choose two cadre to take their places while they attended six-month political education courses that would soon be established. With replacement officials in their stead, Party secretaries might well have feared that they could easily be reassigned during this period, breaking the back of their "families" (officials subservient to them), a major cause of bureaucracy. (Zhukov, Inoy 362)

73. Thurston characterizes Stalin's speech as "considerably milder," stressing "the need to learn from the masses and pay attention to criticism from below." Even the resolution passed based on Stalin's report touched on "enemies" only briefly, and dealt mainly with failings in party organizations and their leaderships. According to Zhukov, who quotes from this unpublished resolution, not even one of its 25 points was mainly concerned with "enemies." (Thurston, 48-9; Zhukov, Inoy 362-4)<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> For the Resolution, see Zhukov, Inoy 362-3; Stalin, Zakliuchitel'noe. Like the resolution (which remains unpublished), Stalin's speech touches only very briefly on the subject of "enemies," and even then to warn the CC against "beating" everyone who had once been a Trotskyist. Stalin insists



that there are "remarkable people" among former Trotskyists, specifically naming Feliks Dzerzhinsky.

74. After the Plenum the First Secretaries staged a virtual rebellion. First Stalin, and then the Politburo, sent out messages re-emphasizing the need to conduct secret Party elections, opposition to co-optation rather than election, and the need for inner-Party democracy generally. The First Secretaries were doing things in the old way, regardless of the resolutions of the Plenum.

75. During the next few months Stalin and his closest associates tried to turn the focus away from a hunt for internal enemies — the largest concern of the CC members — and back towards fighting bureaucracy in the Party, and preparing for the Soviet elections. Meanwhile, "local party leaders did everything they could within the limits of party discipline (and sometimes outside it) to stall or change the elections." (Getty, "Excesses" 126; Zhukov, Inoy 367-71)

76. The sudden uncovering in April, May and early June 1937 of what appeared to be a broadly-based military and police conspiracy caused the Stalin government to react in a panic. Genrikh Yagoda, head of the security police and Minister of Internal Affairs, was arrested in late March 1937, and began to confess in April. In May and early June 1937 high-ranking military commanders confessed to conspiring with the German General Staff to defeat the Red Army in the case of an invasion by Germany and its allies, and also to being linked to conspiracies by political figures, including many who still occupied high positions. (Getty, "Excesses" 115, 135; Thurston, 70, 90, 101-2; Genrikh Yagoda)<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> This volume (Genrikh Yagoda) consists mainly of investigators' interrogations of Yagoda and a few of his associates, and Yagoda's confessions of involvement in the conspiracy to carry out a coup against the Soviet government; Trotsky's leadership of the conspiracy; and, in general, all that Yagoda confessed to in the 1938 Trial. There is no indication that these confessions were other than genuine. The volume's editors deny that any of the facts cited in the interrogations are accurate, and declare the interrogations themselves "falsified." But they do not give any evidence that

this is the case. Jansen and Petrov, p. 226 n. 9, though very anti-Stalin, cite this volume as evidence and without comment. Furthermore, there is good evidence that this was so in fact — that these conspiracies did exist, that the confessions given at the public trials were genuine rather than coerced, and that the major charges against the defendants were true. Another large volume of primary documents published in 2004 contains a great many NKVD reports of conspiracies and texts of interrogations (see Lubianka B). The most plausible explanation for the existence of all this evidence is that some of it, at least, is true.

77. This situation was far more serious than any the Soviet government had faced before. In the case of the 1936 and 1937 Moscow Trials, the government took its time to prepare the case and organize a public trial for maximum publicity. But the Military conspiracy was handled far differently. A little more than three weeks passed from the date of Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky's arrest in late May to the trial and execution of Tukhachevsky and seven other high-ranking military commanders on June 11-12. During that time hundreds of high-ranking military commanders were recalled to Moscow to read the evidence against their colleagues — for most of them, their superiors — and to listen to alarmed analyses by Stalin and Marshal Voroshilov, People's Commissar for Defense and the highest ranking military figure in the country.

78. At the time of the February-March Plenum, neither Yagoda nor Tukhachevsky had yet been arrested. Stalin and the Politburo intended that the Constitution be the main agenda item and were set on the defensive by the fact that most of the CC members ignored this topic, preferring to stress the battle against "enemies." The Politburo planned that the Constitutional reforms be the central agenda item at the upcoming June 1937 Plenum also. But by June the situation was different. The discovery of plots by the head of the NKVD and most prominent military leaders to overthrow the government and kill its leading members, entirely changed the political atmosphere.

79. Stalin was on the defensive. In his June 2 speech to the expanded session of the Military Soviet (which met June 1-4) he portrayed the series of recently uncovered<sup>16</sup> conspiracies as limited, and largely successfully

dealt with. At the February-March Plenum too, he and his Politburo supporters had minimized the First Secretaries' overriding concern with internal enemies. But, as Zhukov notes, the situation was "slowly, but decisively, getting out of his [Stalin's] control." (Stalin, "Vystuplenie"; Zhukov, Inoy Ch. 16, passim; 411).

<sup>16</sup> Called the klubok, or "tangle," by the NKVD investigators at the time and by Russian historians today.

80. The June 1937 Central Committee Plenum<sup>17</sup> began with proposals to exclude, first, seven sitting C.C. members and candidates for "lack of political trustworthiness," then a further 19 members and candidates for "treason and active counterrevolutionary activity." These last 19 were to be arrested by the NKVD. Including the ten members expelled on similar charges before the Plenum by a poll of the C.C. members (including those military commanders already tried, convicted, and executed), this meant that 36 of the 120 C.C. members and candidates as of May 1 had been removed.

<sup>17</sup> No transcript of the June 1937 Plenum has ever been published. Some authors have claimed that no transcript was kept. However, Zhukov quotes extensively from some archival transcript unavailable to others.

81. Yakovlev and Molotov criticized the failure of Party leaders to organize for independent Soviet elections. Molotov stressed the need to move even honored revolutionaries out of the way if they were unprepared for the tasks of the day. He emphasized that Soviet officials were not "second-class workers." Evidently Party leaders were treating them as such.

82. Yakovlev exposed and criticized the failure of First Secretaries to hold secret elections for Party posts, relying instead on appointment ("cooptation"). He emphasized that Party members who were elected delegates to the Soviets were not to be placed under the discipline of Party groups outside the Soviets and told how to vote. They were not to be told how to vote by their Party superiors, such as the First Secretaries. They were to be independent of them. And Yakovlev referred in the strongest terms to the need to "recruit from the very rich reserve of new cadre to

replace those who had become rotten or bureaucratized." All these statements constituted an explicit attack on the First Secretaries. (Zhukov, Inoy 424-7; Tayny, 39-40, quoting from archival documents)

83. The Constitution was finally outlined and the date of the first elections was set for December 12, 1937. The Stalin leadership again urged the benefits of fighting bureaucracy and building ties to the masses. However — to repeat — all this followed the equally unprecedented, summary expulsion from the C.C. of 26 members, nineteen of whom were directly charged with treason and counter-revolutionary activity. (Zhukov, Inoy 430)

84. Perhaps most revealing is the following remark by Stalin, as quoted by Zhukov:

"At the end of the discussion, when the subject was the search for a more dispassionate method of counting ballots, [Stalin] remarked that in the West, thanks to a multiparty system, this problem did not exist. Immediately thereafter he suddenly uttered a phrase that sounded very strange in a meeting of this kind: "We do not have different political parties. Fortunately, or unfortunately, we have only one party." [Zhukov's emphasis] And then he proposed, but only as a temporary measure, to use for the purpose of dispassionate supervision of elections representatives of all existing societal organizations except for the Bolshevik Party... The challenge to the Party autocracy had been issued." (Zhukov, Inoy 430-1; emphasis added; Tayny 38)

85. The Bolshevik Party was in severe crisis, and it was impossible to expect that events would unroll smoothly. It was the worst possible atmosphere during which to prepare for the adoption of democratic — secret, universal and contested — elections. Stalin's plan to reform the Soviet government and the role within it of the Bolshevik Party was doomed.

86. At the end of the Plenum Robert Eikhe, First Secretary of the West Siberian Krai (region of the Russian republic) met privately with Stalin. Then several other First Secretaries met with him. They probably demanded the awful powers that they were granted shortly afterward: the authority to form "troikas," or groups of three officials, to combat widespread

conspiracies against the Soviet government in their area.<sup>18</sup> These troikas were given the power of execution without appeal. Numerical limits for those to be shot and others to be imprisoned on the sole power of these troikas were demanded and given. When those were exhausted, the First Secretaries asked for, and received, higher limits. Zhukov thinks that Eikhe may have been acting on behalf of an informal group of First Secretaries. (Getty, "Excesses" 129; Zhukov, Inoy 435)

<sup>18</sup> The order for setting up a "troika" in Eikhe's Western Siberian region exists. Eikhe's request has not been found, but he must have made such a request, either in writing or orally. See Zhukov, "Repressii" 23, n. 60; Getty, "Excesses" 127, n. 64.

87. Who were the targets of these draconian trials-by-troika? Zhukov believes they must have been the *lishentsy*, the very people whose citizenship rights, including franchise, had recently been restored and whose votes potentially posed the greatest danger to the First Secretaries' continuance in power. Zhukov largely discounts the existence of real conspiracies. But archival documents recently published in Russia make it clear that, at the very least, the central leadership was constantly receiving very credible police accounts of conspiracies, including transcripts of confessions. Certainly, Stalin and others in Moscow believed these conspiracies existed. My guess at this point, *pace* Zhukov, is that some, at least, of the conspiracies alleged actually existed, and that the First Secretaries believed in them. (Zhukov, KP Nov. 13 02; Inoy, Ch. 18; "Repressii" 23; Lubyanka B)

88. A further hypothesis is that anyone who was currently, or had ever been, involved in any kind of opposition movement was likely to be viewed as an "enemy," and subject to arrest and interrogation by the NKVD, one of whose members always made up part of the troika. Another group were those who openly expressed distrust or hatred towards the Soviet system as a whole. Thurston cites evidence that such people were often arrested immediately. However, those who simply expressed criticisms of local Party leaders, especially at criticism meetings called for this purpose, were not arrested, while those whom they criticized, including Party leaders, sometimes were. (Thurston, 94-5)

89. Contrary, then, to those who argue that the conspiracies were phantoms of Stalin's paranoid mind — or worse still, lies concocted to strengthen Stalin's megalomaniac hold on power — there is a lot of evidence that real conspiracies existed. Accounts of conspirators who were later able to get out of the USSR agree. The sheer volume of police documentation concerning such conspiracies, only a little of which has yet been published, argues strongly against any notion that all of it could have been fabricated. Furthermore, Stalin's annotations on these documents make it clear that he believed they were accurate. (Getty, "Excesses" 131-4; Lubyanka B)

90. Getty summarizes the hopeless contradiction in this way:

"Stalin was not yet willing to retreat from contested elections, and on 2 July 1937 Pravda no doubt disappointed the regional secretaries by publishing the first installment of the new electoral rules, enacting and enforcing contested, universal, secret ballot elections. But Stalin offered a compromise. The very same day the electoral law was published, the Politburo approved the launching of a mass operation against precisely the elements the local leaders had complained about, and hours later Stalin sent his telegram to provincial party leaders ordering the kulak operation [vs. the lishentsy — GF]. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that in return for forcing the local party leaders to conduct an election, Stalin chose to help them win it by giving them license to kill or deport hundreds or thousands of "dangerous elements."" ("Excesses" 126)

91. Whatever the history of these purges, extra-judicial executions, and deportations, Stalin appears to have believed that they were creating preconditions for contested elections. Yet all this activity really sabotaged any possibility for such elections.

92. The Politburo at first tried to limit the campaign of repression by ordering that it be completed within five days. Something convinced, or compelled, them to permit the NKVD to extend the period for four months — August 5-15 to December 5-15. Was it the large numbers of those arrested? The conviction that the Party faced a widespread set of conspiracies and a huge internal threat? We don't know the details of how, and why, this mass repression unfolded as it did.

93. This was exactly the period during which the electoral campaign was to take place. Even though the Politburo continued preparation for the contested elections, with rules about how voters were to indicate their choices, and how officials should handle runoff elections, local officials actually controlled the repression. They could determine what opposition, if any, to the Party — which meant, in great part, to themselves — would be considered "loyal," and what would lead to repression and imprisonment or death (Getty, "Excesses," passim.; Zhukov, Inoy 435)

94. Primary documents show that Stalin and the central Politburo leadership were convinced that anti-Soviet conspirators were active and had to be dealt with. This is what the regional Party leaders had asserted during the February-March Plenum. At that time the Stalin leadership had minimized this danger and had kept focusing attention back to the Constitution, and the need to prepare for new elections and the replacement of "bureaucratized" and old leadership with new.

95. By the June Plenum, the First Secretaries were in a position to say, in effect: "We told you so. We were right, and you were wrong. Furthermore, we are still right — dangerous conspirators are still active, ready to use the electoral campaign in their attempt to raise revolt against the Soviet government." Was this how it happened? It seems plausible. But we can't be certain.

96. Stalin and the central leadership had no idea how deep these conspiracies extended. They did not know what Nazi Germany or fascist Japan would do. On June 2 Stalin had told the expanded Military Soviet meeting that the Tukhachevsky group had given the Red Army's operational plan to the German General Staff. This meant that the Japanese, who were bound in a military alliance (the "Axis") and an anti-communist political alliance (the "Anti-Comintern Pact" — really, an anti-Soviet pact) with fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, would no doubt have it too.

97. Stalin had told the military leaders that the plotters wanted to make the USSR into "another Spain" — meaning, a Fifth Column within coordinated with an invading fascist army. Given this horrendous danger, the Soviet leadership was determined to react with brutal decisiveness. (Stalin, "Vystuplenie")

98. At the same time much evidence suggests that the central (Stalin) leadership wanted both to restrain the "troika" repressions demanded by the First Secretaries, and to continue to implement the new Constitution's secret and contested elections. From July 5 to 11 most First Secretaries followed Eikhe's lead in sending in precise figures of those whom they wanted to suppress — by execution (category 1) or imprisonment (category 2). Then, suddenly on 12 July, Deputy NKVD Commissar M.P. Frinovsky sent an urgent telegram to all local police agencies: "Do not begin the operation to repress former kulaks. I repeat, do not begin." (Getty, "Excesses" 127-8)

99. Local NKVD chiefs were recalled to Moscow for conferences, after which was issued Order No. 00447. This very long and detailed instruction both expanded the kinds of people subject to repression (basically including priests, those who had previously opposed Soviet power, and criminals), and — usually — lowered the "limits" or numbers requested by the provincial secretaries.<sup>19</sup> All this vacillation suggested disagreements and struggles between the "center" — Stalin and the central Politburo leadership — and the First Secretaries in the provincial areas. Stalin was clearly not in charge. (Order No. 00447; Getty, "Excesses" 126-9).

<sup>19</sup> Getty, Excesses 131-134 discusses some statistics about this. See Order No.00447.

100. The Central Committee Plenum of October 1937 saw the final cancellation of the plan for contested elections. A sample ballot, showing several candidates, had already been drawn up; several of them have survived in various archives.<sup>20</sup> Instead, the Soviet elections of December 1937 were implemented on the basis that the Party candidates would run on slates with 20-25% of nonparty candidates — in other words, an "alliance" of sorts, but without a contest. Originally the elections were planned without slates; voting was to be only for individuals — a far more democratic method. Zhukov has managed to locate in the archives the very document that Molotov signed, on October 11 at 6 p.m., canceling contested elections. This represented a huge but inevitable retreat for Stalin and his supporters in the Politburo. (Zhukov, KP 19 Nov. 02; Zhukov, Tayny. 41; Inoy 443)



<sup>20</sup> The sample ballot is reproduced in Zhukov; Inoy, 6th illustration.

101. It was also at the October C.C. Plenum that the first protest against the mass repressions was uttered by Kursk First Secretary Peskarov:

"They [the NKVD? The troika? — GF] condemned people for petty stuff... illegally, and when we... put the question to the C.C., comrades Stalin and Molotov strongly supported us and sent a brigade of workers from the Supreme Court and Prosecutor's office to review these cases... And it turned out that for three weeks' work of this brigade, 56% of the sentences in 16 *raiony* were set aside by the brigade as illegal. What's more, in 45% of the sentences there was no evidence that a crime had been committed." (Zhukov, Tayny, 43; emphasis added)

102. At the January 1938 Plenum, Malenkov delivered a blistering criticism of the huge numbers of Party members expelled and citizens sentenced, often without even submitting a list of names, but only of the numbers sentenced! Postyshev, First Secretary of Kuybyshev, was removed as candidate member of the Politburo for insisting that there was "scarcely a single honest man" among all the Party officials.

103. It seems that the NKVD was out of control, at least in many local areas. No doubt the First Secretaries were too. (Zhukov, KP 19 Nov. 02; Tayny, pp. 47-51; Thurston 101-2; 112) However, the Politburo leadership was still concerned that there were real conspirators that had to be dealt with. The full extent of NKVD abuses was not recognized. As Zhukov notes, Malenkov's report, blaming careerists within the Party for massive expulsions and arrests, was followed by Kaganovich and Zhdanov, who stressed the struggle against enemies and gave only slight attention to "naiveté and ignorance" in the work of "honest Bolsheviks."

104. Pravda, under the direct control of the Stalin leadership, was still calling for removing the Party from direct control over economic affairs and for the need to promote non-party people into leading roles. (Zhukov, Tayny 51-2) Meanwhile Nikita Khrushchev, who had in 1937 called for power to execute 20,000 unnamed people when Party head in Moscow, was transferred to the Ukraine from where, within a month, he asked for authority to repress 30,000 people. (Zhukov, Tayny 64, and see n. 23 below)

105. Nikolai Yezhov, who had taken over the NKVD from Genrikh Yagoda in 1936, seems to have been in close alliance with the First Secretaries.<sup>21</sup> The mass repression of 1937-38 has become so associated with his name that it is still called the "Yezhovshchina." Yezhov was talked into resigning on September 23, 1938<sup>22</sup> and in November 1938 was succeeded by Lavrenty Beria.

<sup>21</sup> As late as February 1, 1956, less than four weeks before his "Secret Speech" to the XX Party Congress, Khrushchev was still referring to Yezhov as "undoubtedly not to blame, an honest man." Reabilitatsia: Kak Eto Bylo. Mart 1953-Febral' 1956 (Moscow, 2000), p. 308.

<sup>22</sup> His resignation was not formally accepted until November 25, 1938; see Lubyanka B Nos. 344 and 364.

106. Under Beria, many of the NKVD officers and First Secretaries responsible for thousands of executions and deportations were tried and often executed themselves for executing innocent people and using torture against those arrested. Transcripts of the trials of some of these policemen who used torture have been published. Many people convicted and either imprisoned, deported, or sent to the camps were freed. Beria reportedly said later that he had been called on to "liquidate the Yezhovshchina." Stalin told aircraft designer Yakovlev that Yezhov had been executed for killing many innocent people. (Lubyanka B, Nos. 344; 363; 375; Mukhin, Ubiystvo 637; Yakovlev)

107. Incalculable damage had been done to Soviet society, the Soviet government, and the Bolshevik Party. This, of course, has been long known. What has not been understood until now is that the setting up of the troikas, and large quotas for executions and deportations, was initiated at the insistence of the First Secretaries, not of Stalin. Zhukov believes that the close connection between this and the threat of secret, contested elections, and the fact that the Central Committee succeeded in forcing the Stalin leadership to cancel contested elections, suggests that getting rid of the "threat" of contested elections may have been a major reason for the mass arrests and executions of the "Yezhovshchina."<sup>23</sup> (Zhukov, KP)

<sup>23</sup> Khrushchev requested "to execute 20,000 people", Zhukov, KP 3 Dec. 02. Yakovlev's criticism of Khrushchev's massive expulsions is quoted above. Eikhe was arrested in October 1938, tried, convicted, and executed in February 1940. According to Khrushchev, Eikhe repudiated his confession, saying he had given it after being beaten (i.e. tortured). Zhukov's analysis suggests that the real reason for Eikhe's fate may have been his leading role in the mass executions of 1937-38. See Jansen and Petrov, 91-2. The Politburo and January 1938 Plenum began to attack party secretaries who victimized rank-and-file members (Getty, Origins 187-8). The full record of Eikhe's investigation and trial is still classified. A desire to deflect attention and blame away from himself and his fellow First Secretaries of the time is one of the bases of Khrushchev's lies in his "secret speech."

108. Nothing can absolve Stalin and his supporters of a large measure of responsibility for the executions — evidently, several hundred thousand<sup>24</sup> — that ensued. If these people had been imprisoned rather than executed, almost all would have lived. Many would have had their cases reviewed and been released. For our purposes here, however, the key question is: Why did Stalin give in to the First Secretaries' demands that they be given the life-and-death "troika" powers? Though there are no excuses, there were certainly reasons.

<sup>24</sup> Getty ("Excesses" 132) cites evidence that 236,000 executions were authorized by "Moscow," meaning the Stalin leadership, but that over 160% of that number, or 387,000 people, were in fact executed by local authorities.

109. No government can ever be prepared against simultaneous treason by the highest-ranking military commanders, high-ranking figures in both the national and important regional governments, and the head of the secret and border police.

110. A serious set of conspiracies, involving both current and former high-level party leaders who had ties all over the vast country, had just been uncovered. Most ominous was the involvement of military figures at the very highest levels, with the disclosure of secret military plans to the fascist

enemy. The military conspirators had had contacts all over the USSR. The conspiracy also involved the very highest levels of the NKVD, including Genrikh Yagoda, who had headed it from 1934 till 1936 and had been second-in-command for some years before 1934. It simply could not be known how widespread the conspiracy was, and how many people were involved. The prudent course was to suspect the worst.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> At the 1938 Moscow Trial Yagoda confessed to involvement in the plot for a coup d'État against the Soviet government, to the murders of Maxim Gorky and his son, and other heinous crimes, but vigorously rejected the prosecution's accusation that he was guilty of espionage. The fact that the charge of espionage was still raised over a year after Yagoda had been arrested shows, at least, that the Soviet government thought he might have given such information to a foreign enemy (Germany, Japan, Poland). As the head of the Ministry of the Interior, including the secret police and border police, Yagoda would have been able to do incalculable harm to Soviet security if he had given information to foreign governments.

111. The Politburo and Stalin himself were at the apex of two large hierarchies, of both the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet government. What they knew about the state of affairs in the country reflected what their subordinates told them. Over the course of the next twelve months they repressed many of the First Secretaries, over half of whom were arrested. For the most part, the precise charges against most of these men, and the dossiers of their interrogations and trials, have yet to be declassified, even in post-Soviet, anti-communist Russia. But we now have enough of the investigative evidence that reached Stalin and the Politburo to get some idea of the alarming situation they faced. (Lubianka B)

112. The Bolshevik Party was set up in a democratic centralist fashion. Despite his status and popularity in the country, Stalin (like any Party leader) could be voted out by a majority of the Central Committee. He was in no position to ignore urgent appeals by a large number of C.C. members.

113. To illustrate Stalin's inability to stop the First Secretaries from flouting the principles of democratic election Zhukov quotes one incident from the still unpublished transcript of the October 1937 C.C. Plenum.

"I.A. Kravtsov, First Secretary of the Krasnodar kraikom [regional committee — GF] was the only one to acknowledge, and in detail, what his colleagues had been doing on the sly for some weeks already. He outlined the selection of only those candidates for deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR who suited the interests of the 'broad leadership'. "We put forth our candidates to the Supreme Soviet," Kravtsov stated frankly. "Who are these comrades? Eight are members of the Party; two are non-Party members or members of the Komsomol [Communist Youth Organization]. That way we held to the per centage of non-Party members indicated in the draft decision of the CC. By occupation these comrades are divided in this way: four Party employees, two Soviet employees, one kolkhoz chairman, one combine driver, one tractor driver, one oil worker..."

Stalin: Who else, aside from the combine drivers?

Kravtsov: Among the ten is Yakovlev, the First Secretary of the kraikom, [and] the chairman of the krai executive committee.

Stalin: Who advised you to do this?

Kravtsov: I must say, comrade Stalin, that they advised me here, in the CC apparatus.

Stalin: Who?

Kravtsov: We in the C.C. assigned our krai executive committee chairman, comrade Simochkin, and he got the approval in the C.C. apparatus.

Stalin: Who?

Kravtsov: I can't say, I don't know.

Stalin: A pity that you don't say, you were told wrong." (Zhukov, Inoy 486-7)

114. Evidently all the First Secretaries were doing what only Kravtsov openly stated — ignoring the principle of secret Soviet elections, a principle they themselves had voted for at previous Plenums, but clearly never agreed

to. This marks Stalin's final defeat on this issue, the Constitutional and electoral system reforms he and his central leadership had been championing for over two years.

115. Democratic reform was defeated. The old political system remained in place. Stalin's plan for contested elections was gone for good. "Thus the attempt of Stalin and his group to reform the political system of the Soviet Union ended in total failure." (Zhukov, Inoy 491)

116. Zhukov believes that, if Stalin had refused the appeals of the First Secretaries for the extraordinary "troika" powers, he — Stalin — would have most likely been voted out, arrested as a counter-revolutionary and executed. "... [T]oday Stalin might be numbered among the victims of the repression of 1937 and 'Memorial' and the commission of A.N. Yakovlev would have long since been petitioning for his rehabilitation." (Zhukov, KP 16 Nov. 02)

117. In November 1938 Lavrenty Beria effectively replaced Yezhov as head of the NKVD. The "troikas" were abolished. Extra-judicial executions stopped, and those responsible for many of the terrible excesses were themselves tried and executed or imprisoned.<sup>26</sup> But war was approaching. The French government refused to continue even the very weak version of the Franco-Soviet alliance they had agreed to (the Soviet Union wanted a much stronger one). The Allies yielded Czechoslovakia to Hitler and the Polish fascists piecemeal, without a struggle. Nazi Germany had a military alliance with fascist Poland aimed at an invasion of the USSR. The Spanish Civil War, which the Soviets had done so much to support, was lost. Italy invaded Ethiopia, and the League of Nations did nothing. France and Britain were clearly encouraging Hitler, with most of Eastern Europe behind him, to invade the USSR. (Lubianka B, No. 365; Leibowitz)

<sup>26</sup> Thurston has the best discussion in English of this in *Life and Terror* 128 ff.

118. Japan, Italy and Germany had a mutual defense treaty and an "Anti-Comintern" pact, both directed expressly against the USSR. All the European border countries — Poland, Rumania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania — were fascist-style military

dictatorships. A 1938 Japanese attack at Lake Khasan cost the Red Army about 1,000 dead. The next year a far more serious Japanese assault was repelled by the Red Army at Khalkin-Gol. Soviet casualties were about 17,000, including almost 5,500 killed — no small war. As it turned out, this war was decisive, and the Japanese never messed with the Soviets again. But the Soviet government could not know this in advance. (Rossiia I SSSR v Voynakh)

119. After 1938 the Stalin government did not try again to implement the democratic electoral system of the 1936 Constitution. Did this failure reflect a continued stalemate between the Stalin leadership and the First Secretaries on the Central Committee? Or an estimate that, with war rapidly approaching, further efforts towards democracy would have to await more peaceful times? The evidence available so far does not permit a firm conclusion.

120. However, once Beria had replaced Yezhov as head of the NKVD (formally, in December 1938; in practice, perhaps a few weeks earlier) a continuous stream of rehabilitations took place. Beria liberated over 100,000 prisoners from camps and prisons. Trials followed of NKVD men accused of torture and extra-judicial executions. (Thurston 128-9)

## Part Two

### During the War

1. Toward the end of the Second World War, Stalin and his supporters on the Politburo made one more attempt to get the Bolshevik Party out of direct control over the Soviet government. Here is how Yuri Zhukov describes this incident:

"In January 1944 . . . for the first time during the war there was a joint convocation of both the [Central Committee] Plenum and a session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Molotov and Malenkov prepared a draft of a Central Committee decree according to which the Party would be legally distanced from power. It would retain only agitation and propaganda; no one would deprive it of these normal party matters, and participation in the selection of cadres, which was also completely natural. But it simply forbade the Party from interfering in economics and the working of the organs of the state. Stalin read the draft, changed six words in it, and wrote "Agreed" on it. What happened next remains a mystery. . . . This was a new attempt to lead the Party into the State stable, retaining for it only those functions it really fulfilled during the war. The draft has five signatures: Molotov, Malenkov, Stalin, Khrushchev, Andreev. There was no stenographic record, and we can only guess how others voted. Alas, even the all-powerful State Committee for Defense, with all four members in the Politburo of the Central Committee, could not shatter the old order of things. This proves yet one more time that Stalin never had the power that both anti-Stalinists and Stalinists attribute to him." (Zhukov, *Kul'tovaia*; emphasis added)<sup>27</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Full text of the resolution is in Zhukov, *Stalin*. See also Zhukov's earlier treatment in *Tayny* 270-276, where the text is also reproduced.

2. We do not know how this "distancing" of the Party from economics and the state was to have been effected. Presumably, though, some other method of staffing the state organs would have been envisaged. Would this have meant a return to elections as specified in the 1936 Constitution?



3. Whatever the answers to these questions, it seems likely that the Central Committee, made up largely of Party First Secretaries, once again rebuffed the Stalin leadership's plans for fundamental change in the Soviet system. In his "Secret Speech", Khrushchev denied that any such Plenum had taken place at all! Since most of the C.C. members in the audience had to have known this was a lie, it may be that the purpose of this lie was to tacitly signal them that this dangerous move against their power was now formally "buried."

### **After the War**

4. As we've seen, Stalin believed an important problem for both the USSR and the Bolshevik Party was the situation of "dual power." The Party, not the government, really ruled society. Increasingly, the Party officials exercised control by oversight, or supervision, rather than as managers of production.

5. Getting the party out of direct control of the state would serve a number of purposes:

- It would institute the 1936 Constitution and strengthen the ties of the Soviet population to the Soviet state.
- It would return the running of state institutions to those who were really qualified.
- It would save the Party from degenerating — in its upper levels — into a caste of parasitical and corrupt careerists.

6. Until the war, the Politburo had met at least twice a week. In May 1941 Stalin became the official head of the Soviet state, replacing Molotov as Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, or Sovnarkom, the official executive body of the government of the USSR.

7. But during the war the USSR was, in reality, run neither by this body nor by the Party, but by the State Committee for Defense composed of Stalin and three of his closest associates. During the war the Central Committee held only one Plenum, while not only during the war, but also after it, the Politburo met rarely. According to Pyzhikov, "the Politburo, for all practical

purposes, did not function." Soviet dissident Zhores Medvedev believes that the Politburo met only 6 times in 1950, 5 times in 1951, and 4 times in 1952.<sup>28</sup> That is, Stalin took the Politburo out of the running of the state (Pyzhikov, 100; Medvedev, *Sekretnyi*).

<sup>28</sup> Another reading of the archives suggests the numbers might be 6, 6 and 5. See Khlevniuk O., et al. eds, *Politburo TsK VKP(b) i Sovet Ministrov SSSR 1945-1953*. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002, 428-431.

8. Stalin seems to have neglected his role as head of the Party. CC Plenums became rare. No Party Congress was held for the thirteen years between 1939 and 1952. After the war Stalin signed joint decisions of the Party and government simply as Chairman of the Council of Ministers (the renamed Council of Peoples' Commissars), leaving one of the other Party secretaries, Zhdanov or Malenkov, to sign on behalf of the Party (Pyzhikov 100)

9. The Party's authority remained high. But perhaps this was so only because Stalin was still General Secretary of the Party. He was the only Allied leader to remain in office after the war: Roosevelt had died, and Churchill was voted out of office in 1945. It is no exaggeration to say that, among working people, Stalin was the most famous, and most respected, person in the world. The communist movement he headed was the hope of hundreds of millions of people. It had expanded tremendously as a result of the victory over fascism. Stalin's great prestige as head of state gave authority to the Party apparatus (Mukhin, *Ubiystvo* 622; Ch. 13 *passim*).

10. Stalin's actions suggest that he was still trying to remove the Party from direct rule over the state. However, if this was so he went about it cautiously. Perhaps we can infer some reasons for this caution:

- Showing an unwarranted lack of trust in the Party would be a bad example to the other countries of the world, where the Communist Parties had not seized power yet.
- The Central Committee and nomenklatura would oppose it, as they had before the war. Therefore, this would have to be done quietly, with as little disruption as possible. (Mukhin, *Ubyistvo* 611)

## The 1947 Draft of the Party Program

11. There is probably more to the Stalin leadership's plans for democratization than we know about today. Aleksandr Pyzhikov, a very anti-communist and anti-Stalin historian, has quoted tantalizing selections of a 1947 draft of a Party program to promote further democracy and egalitarianism in the USSR. This fascinating and hitherto utterly unknown plan has never been published and is, evidently, not yet available to other researchers.

12. Here is the section quoted verbatim by Pyzhikov:

"The development of socialist democracy on the basis of the completion of the construction of a classless socialist society will increasingly convert the dictatorship of the proletariat into the dictatorship of the Soviet people. As each member of the whole population is gradually drawn into the day to day management of state affairs, the growth of the population's communist consciousness and culture, and the development of socialist democracy will lead to the progressive dying out of forms of compulsion in the dictatorship of the Soviet people, and to a progressive replacement of measures of compulsion by the influence of public opinion, to a progressive narrowing of the political functions of the state, and to the conversion of the state into, in the main, an organ of the management of the economic life of society."

Pyzhikov summarizes other sections of this unpublished document as follows:

"In particular [the draft] concerned the development of the democratization of the Soviet order. This plan recognized as essential a universal process of drawing workers into the running of the state, into daily active state and social activity on the basis of a steady development of the cultural level of the masses and a maximal simplification of the functions of state management. It proposed in practice to proceed to the unification of productive work with participation in the management of state affairs, with the transition to the successive carrying out of the functions of [state] management by all working people. It also expatiated upon the idea of the

introduction of direct legislative activity by the people, for which the following were considered essential:

a) to implement universal voting and decision-making on the majority of the most important questions of governmental life in both the social and economic spheres, as well as in questions of living conditions and cultural development;

b) to widely develop legislative initiative from below, by means of granting to social organizations the rights to submit to the Supreme Soviet proposals for new legislation;

c) to confirm the right of citizens and social organizations to directly submit proposals to the Supreme Soviet on the most important questions of international and internal policy.

Nor was the principle of election of managers ignored. The plan of the Party program raised the issue of the realization, according to the degree of development towards communism, of the selection of all responsible members of the state apparatus by election, of changes in the functioning of a series of state organs in the direction of converting them increasingly into institutions in charge of accounting and supervision of the economy as a whole. For this the maximum possible development of independent voluntary organizations was seen as important. Attention was paid to the strengthening of the significance of social opinion in the realization of the communist transformation of the population's consciousness, of the development, on the basis of socialist democracy among the broad popular masses, of "socialist citizenship," "the heroism of work," and "valor of the Red Army." [emphasis added, GF]

13. Again according to Pyzhikov, Zhdanov reported on the work of the planning commission at the February 1947 Central Committee Plenum. He proposed convening the 19th Party Congress at the end of 1947 or 1948. He also set forth a plan for a simplified order of convocations of party conferences once a year, with "compulsory renewal" of not less than one-sixth of the membership of the Central Committee per year. If put into effect, and if "renewal" actually resulted in more turnover of C.C. members, this would have meant that First Secretaries and other Party leaders in the

C.C. would have been less entrenched in their positions, making room for new blood in the Party's leading body, facilitating rank-and-file criticism of Party leaders (Pyzhikov 96).

14. This bold plan echoes many of the ideas of the "withering away of the state" envisaged in Lenin's seminal work *The State and Revolution*, which in its turn develops ideas Lenin found in Marx and Engels. In proposing direct democratic participation in all vital state decisions by the Soviet people and their popular organizations, and "renewal" — with at least the possibility of replacement — of no less than 1/6 of the Central Committee every year through a Party Conference, this Party plan envisaged the development of democracy from below in both the state and in the Party itself.

15. But this plan came to nothing. As with the previous proposals for democratization of the Soviet state and Party outlined previously, we don't know the details of how this happened. Probably it was rejected at the Central Committee Plenum. The 19th Party Congress was postponed until 1952. Again, we do not know why. The nature of the draft Party plan suggests that opposition from the Central Committee — the First Secretaries — may have been responsible.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Pyzhikov attributes this democratic strain to Leningraders, especially to Voznesensky. (See also his article "N.A. Voznesenski" at <http://www.akdi.ru/id/new/ek5.htm>). This would imply Zhdanov's support for it too, although Zhdanov's sponsorship would not "fit" Pyzhikov's theory about the most pro-capitalist forces — Voznesenskii and his fellow "Leningraders" — being the most "democratic." Nor, since the "Leningraders" remained strong through 1947, does it explain why the draft was not adopted. Nor does it indicate, much less prove, any necessary connection between the pro-capitalist and "consumer-goods" orientation Voznesensky was famous for, and political democracy. Finally, it certainly does not indicate that Stalin did not support it.

### **The Nineteenth Party Congress**

16. It appears that the Stalin leadership made one last effort at separating the Party from direct control over the State at the 19th Party Congress in 1952 and the Central Committee Plenum immediately following it. Beginning with Khrushchev, the Party nomenklatura tried to destroy any memory of this Congress and moved immediately to eradicate what was done at it. Under Brezhnev, the transcripts of all the Party Congresses up through the 18th were published. That of the 19th Congress has never been published to this day. Stalin gave only a short speech at the Congress — which was published. But he gave a 90-minute speech at the Central Committee Plenum that followed it immediately. That speech has never been published, except for very short extracts, and neither has the transcript of this Plenum.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> According to Zhores Medvedev, Stalin's personal archive was destroyed immediately after his death (Medvedev, *Sekretnyi*). If so, it's reasonable to assume, as Mukhin does (*Ubiystvo* 612) that some of his ideas must have been thought very dangerous, and among them, the ideas expressed at these two meetings. My analysis here and below mainly follows Mukhin, Ch. 13 and Medvedev, *op. cit.*

17. Stalin called the Congress to change the status of the Party and its organizational structure. Among those changes:

- The Party's name was officially changed from "All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik) to "Communist Party of the Soviet Union." This mirrored the names of most other communist parties in the world, tying the Party to the state.<sup>31</sup>
- A "Presidium" replaced the Politburo of the Central Committee. This name denoted the representatives of another representative organ (the C.C.) — like, for example, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. It also got the "political" out of the name — after all, the whole Party was political, not just the leading body.

<sup>31</sup> It was surely meant as a unifying measure. Each of the constituent Republics in the USSR retained its own Party: the Communist Party of the Ukraine, of Georgia, etc. This had led some Party leaders to think that Russia, the largest of the Republics but the one that had no Party "of its

own," was at a disadvantage. Apparently one of the most serious charges against the Party leaders tried and executed in the postwar "Leningrad Affair" was that they were planning to set up a Russian Party and moving the capital of the Russian Republic (not the USSR itself) to Leningrad. Arguably this might have made Russia even more powerful and exacerbated Great Russian chauvinism, when what was needed was to cement the various Soviet nationalities closer together. See David Brandenberger, "Stalin, the Leningrad Affair, and the Limits of Postwar Russocentrism," *Russian Review* 63 (2004), 241-255.

18. No doubt it also better suggested a body that rules the Party only, not party and state. The Politburo had been a body of mixed membership. It had included the Chairman of the Council of Ministers (the head of the executive body of the state — that is, head of state); the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet (head of the legislative body); the General Secretary of the Party (Stalin); one or two more Party secretaries; and one or two government ministers. Decisions of the Politburo were effective for both government and party.

19. Therefore, in comparison to the Politburo's virtually supreme position in the country, the role of the Presidium was greatly reduced. Since the head of state and head of the Supreme Soviet did not have reserved seats in it, the Presidium was to be the leading body of the Communist Party only.

20. Other changes were made:

- The post of General Secretary — Stalin's own post — was abolished. Now Stalin was only one of 10 Party secretaries,<sup>32</sup> all of whom were in the new Presidium, which now contained 25 members and 11 candidate-members. This was much larger than 9-11 members of the former Politburo. Its large size would make it more of a deliberative, interim body, rather than one in which many executive decisions could be routinely and swiftly made.
- Most of these Presidium members seem to have been government officials, not top Party leaders. Khrushchev and Malenkov later wondered how Stalin could even have heard of the people whom he suggested for the first Presidium, since they were not well-known Party leaders (i.e. not First Secretaries). Presumably, Stalin nominated

them because of their positions in the State — as opposed to the Party — leadership.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> The post of "First Secretary" was only created after Stalin's death, for Khrushchev.

<sup>33</sup> Cited in Mukhin, *Ubiystvo* 617.

21. Stalin followed up his resignation as General Secretary of the Party, which took place at the 19th Congress, with his proposal, at the CC Plenum right after it, to resign from the Central Committee altogether, remaining only as Head of State (Chairman of the Council of Ministers).

22. If Stalin were not in the Central Committee, but were only Head of State, government officials would no longer feel they had to report to the Presidium, the Party's highest body. Stalin's act would remove authority from the Party's officials, whose "oversight" role in the State was unnecessary, in terms of production. Without Stalin as the head of the Party the Party leadership, the nomenklatura, would have less prestige. Rank-and-file Party members would no longer feel compelled to "elect" — that is, to merely confirm — the candidates recommended by the First Secretaries and the Central Committee.

23. Viewed in this light, Stalin's resignation from the Central Committee might be a disaster for the nomenklatura. They might have felt that they were protected from merciless criticism by rank-and-file communists only by "Stalin's shadow." It would mean that, in future, only intelligent and capable people would survive in the Party nomenklatura, as in the State apparatus (Mukhin, *Ubiystvo* 618-23).

24. The lack of a published transcript suggests that things occurred at this Plenum, and Stalin said things in his speech, that the nomenklatura did not wish to make public. It also indicates — and it's important to stress this — that Stalin was not "all-powerful. For example, Stalin's serious criticism of Molotov and Mikoian at this Plenum was not published till long after his death.<sup>34</sup>



34 The earliest publication I have found is in the leftwing newspaper Sovetskaia Rossiia of January 13, 2000, at <<http://www.kprf.ru/analytics/10828.shtml>>; in English, at <<http://www.northstarcompass.org/nsc0004/stal1952.htm>>.

25. The famous Soviet writer Konstantin Simonov was present as a C.C. member. He recorded Malenkov's shocked and panicked reaction when Stalin proposed a vote on freeing him from the post of secretary of the Central Committee. (Simonov, 244-5) Faced with vociferous opposition, Stalin didn't insist.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Mukhin believes this was a fatal mistake. He argues that it was in the interest of the Party nomenklatura that Stalin die while still both a secretary of the Central Committee (though he was no longer "General Secretary") and Head of State — in other words, while he still united, in one person, head of the Party and head of the whole country. Then his successor as secretary of the C.C. would most likely be accepted by the country and the government as head of state as well. If that happened, the movement to get the Party nomenklatura out of running the country would be at an end (Mukhin, Ubiystvo, 604 & Ch. 13 passim].

26. As soon as they possibly could do so, the Party leadership took steps to annul the decisions of the 19th Party Congress. At its meeting of March 2, with Stalin still alive though unconscious, an abbreviated Presidium — essentially, the old Politburo members — met at Stalin's dacha. There they made the decision to reduce the Presidium back to 10 members, instead of 25. This was, basically, the old Politburo again. The number of Party secretaries was reduced once again to five. Khrushchev was made the "coordinator" of the secretariat, and then, five months later, "first secretary." Finally, in 1966, the name 'Presidium' was changed back to 'Politburo'.

27. During the rest of the history of the USSR, the Party continued to rule Soviet society, its upper ranks becoming a corrupt, self-selected, self-aggrandizing stratum of privileged elitists. Under Gorbachev, this ruling group abolished the USSR, giving itself the economic wealth and political leadership of the new capitalist society. At the same time, it destroyed the savings of, and stole the social benefits from, the Soviet working class and

peasants, whose labor had built everything, while it appropriated the immense publicly created wealth of the USSR. This same former nomenklatura continues to run the post-Soviet states today.

## **Lavrenty Beria<sup>36</sup>**

<sup>36</sup> I have drawn on the longer treatments of Beria's reforms, both those effected and those he proposed, in Kokurin and Pozhalov, Starkov, Knight, and Mukhin, *Ubiystvo*. All the recent books on Beria cited in the Bibliography discuss them as well.

28. Beria is the most calumniated figure in Soviet history. Therefore, the reversal of historical judgment about Beria's career that began abruptly after the end of the Soviet Union has been even more dramatic than the scholarly re-evaluation of Stalin's role that is the main subject of these articles.

29. Beria's "Hundred Days" — really, 112 days, from Stalin's death on March 5, 1953 to Beria's removal on June 26 — witnessed the inception of a large number of dramatic reforms. Had the Soviet leadership permitted these reforms to fully develop, the history of the Soviet Union, the international communist movement, the Cold War — in short, of the last half of the 20th century — would have been dramatically different.

30. Beria's reform initiatives included at least the following, all of which merit, and some of which are now receiving, special study even while the Russian government keeps most vital primary sources about them closed even to trusted researchers:

- The reunification of Germany as a non-socialist, neutralist state, a step that would have been wildly popular among Germans, and one distinctly unwelcome to the NATO allies, including the USA.
- Normalization of relations with Yugoslavia, which promised to pull it back from its tacit alliance with the West towards the Cominform.
- A nationalities policy that opposed "russification" in the recently-annexed areas of Western Ukraine and the Baltic states, together with the goal of reaching out to some, at least, of the nationalist émigré

groups. A reformed nationalities policy in other non-Russian areas including Georgia and Belorussia.

- Rehabilitations and compensation for those unjustly convicted by special judicial bodies (troikas and the NKVD "Special Commissions") during the 1930s and 1940s. Under Beria this process would have been done very differently from the way it was later carried out under Khrushchev, who "rehabilitated" many who were unquestionably guilty.

31. Some of Beria's other reforms were largely carried out, including

- Amnesty for a million of those imprisoned for crimes against the state.
- An end to the investigation of the "Doctors' Plot" together with admission that the accusations had been unjust and punishment of the NKVD officials involved, including the removal of Kruglov, former NKVD head, from the Central Committee altogether.<sup>37</sup>
- Curbing the authority of the "Special Commission" of the NKVD to sentence people to death or long prison terms.
- In a move not only against the Stalin "cult" but against "cults" of leaders generally, forbidding the display of portraits of leaders at holiday rallies. This was rescinded by the Party leadership shortly after Beria's removal.

<sup>37</sup> In his "Secret Speech" Khrushchev also denounced the "Doctors' Plot" as a frameup. But he had the effrontery to put the blame on — Beria, who had in fact liquidated the investigation, while praising Kruglov, the NKVD head in charge of this frameup, whom Khrushchev restored to C.C. membership and who was seated in the audience as Khrushchev spoke.

### **Beria's Moves towards Democratic Reform**

32. Officially, Beria was arrested by his fellow Politburo members plus some generals on June 26, 1953. But the details of this supposed arrest are murky, and contradictory versions exist.<sup>38</sup> In any event, during the July 1953 CC Plenum devoted to accusing Beria of various crimes, Mikoyan said:

"When he [Beria] made his presentation on Red Square over the grave of Comrade Stalin, after his speech I said: 'In your speech there is a place in which you guarantee each citizen the rights and freedoms foreseen in the Constitution. Even in the speech of a simple orator that is no empty phrase, and in the speech of a minister of internal affairs — that is a program of action, you must fulfill it.' He answered me: 'And I will fulfill it.'" (Beria 308-9; Mukhin 178)

<sup>38</sup> There is much evidence to suggest that Beria was in fact murdered on the day of his arrest. His son Sergo Beria, in his own memoirs, states he was told by officials at the "trial" that his father was not present. Mukhin says that Baybakov, the last living C.C. member from 1953, told him Beria was already dead at the time of the July 1953 Plenum, but the members did not know it at the time (Sergo Beria; Mukhin, *Ubiystvo* 375). Amy Knight, p. 220, reports that Khrushchev himself twice stated Beria had been killed on June 26, 1953, but later changed his story. Meanwhile, the Beria trial documents are said to have been "stolen" from their archive, so even their existence cannot be verified (Khinshtein 2003). However, some researchers, like Andrei Sukhomlinov (pp. 61-2), continue to find the evidence for Beria's murder unconvincing.

33. Beria had said something that had alarmed Mikoyan. Apparently, it was the fact that, at this crucial place in his Red Square speech and with reference to the Constitution, Beria omitted any reference to the Communist Party, and spoke only about the Soviet government. Beria spoke second after Malenkov, a public sign that he was now the second-ranking person in the Soviet state. He had said:

"The workers, the kolkhoz peasants, the intelligentsia of our country can work peacefully and with confidence, knowing that the Soviet Government will diligently and untiringly guarantee their rights as written in the Stalin Constitution... And henceforth the foreign policy of the Soviet Government will be that of the Leninist-Stalinist policy of the retention and strengthening of peace..." (Beria, Speech).

34. Mukhin suggests the following plausible understanding of this passage:

"The simple people hardly understood the meaning of what Beria said, but for the Party nomenklatura this was a sharp blow. Beria intended to lead the country ahead without the Party, i.e. without them; he promised the people to guard their rights, which were not given them by the Party, but by some Constitution!" (Mukhin, 179)

35. At this same June 1953 Plenum, Khrushchev said:

"Remember, then Rakosi [Hungarian Communist leader] said: "I'd like to know what is decided in the Council of Ministers and what in the Central Committee, what kind of division there should be..." Beria then carelessly said: "What Central Committee? Let the Council of Ministers decide, and let the Central Committee concern itself with cadre and propaganda." (Beria 91)

36. Later at this same Plenum, Lazar Kaganovich expanded on Khrushchev's point:

"The Party for us is the highest thing. No one is permitted to speak as that scoundrel [Beria] said: "The Central Committee [for] cadres and propaganda, not political leadership, not the leadership of all life as we, Bolsheviks, understand it."" (Beria 138)

37. These men seem to have believed that Beria intended to get the Party out of the process of directly running the country. This was very similar to what Stalin and his associates had struggled for during the Constitutional discussions of 1935-37. One can discern it again in the 1947 draft Party program and in Stalin's restructuring of the Bolshevik Party during the 19th Party Congress and succeeding Central Committee Plenum only a few months before.

38. Beria's son Sergo asserts that his father and Stalin agreed about the need to get the Party out of direct management of Soviet society.

"My father's relations with the Party organs were complicated... [H]e never hid his relations with the Party apparatus. For example, he told Khrushchev and Malenkov directly that the Party apparatus corrupts people. It was all appropriate for earlier times, when the Soviet state had just been formed.

But, my father asked them, who needs these controllers today? He had the same kind of frank talks with directors of industries and factories who, naturally, did not care at all for the do-nothings from the Central Committee. Father was just as frank to Stalin too. Joseph Vissarionovich agreed that the Party apparatus had removed itself from responsibility for concrete matters and had nothing to do but talk. I know that a year before his death, when Stalin presented the new makeup of the Presidium of the Central Committee, he gave a speech in which the main point was that it was necessary to find new forms of running the country, that the old ways were not the best. A serious discussion took place at that time about the Party's activity." (Sergo Beria, Moy Otets Lavrentii Beria)

39. Beria's planned restructuring of the State-Party relationship would have probably been very popular with rank-and-file communists, to say nothing of the majority of non-party Soviet citizens. But to the nomenklatura it was very threatening.

40. Mukhin puts it this way:

"Beria did not hold back in putting into people's minds the idea that the country ought to be ruled, in the center and in the localities, by the Soviets, as the Constitution provided, and the party ought to be an ideological organ that would, through propaganda, guarantee that by its aid the deputies of the Soviets at all levels would be communists. Beria proposed to resurrect the functioning of the Constitution in its full sense, its slogan — "All Power to the Soviets!" While Beria was operating exclusively in the sphere of ideas, this might have been unpleasant for the nomenklatura, but hardly frightening. Since they had power, they would have selected delegates to the Supreme Soviet and instruct them in such a way that Beria's ideas could not be put into effect. But, if Beria did not permit the secretaries and the Central Committee to direct the elections and the session of the Supreme Soviet, then what kind of decisions would the deputies reach?" (Ubiystvo 363-4)

41. Logically this would have seriously alienated Beria from most of the Party nomenklatura. (Ubiystvo 380) Khrushchev led, and represented the interests of, this group or, at the very least, of a large and activist part of it. And Khrushchev had quite a different concept of "democracy." Famous film

director Mikhail Romm recorded Khrushchev's words at a meeting with intellectuals: "Of course all of us here have listened to you, spoken with you. But who will decide? In our country the people must decide. And the people — who is that? That is the Party. And who is the Party? That is us. We are the Party. That means that we will decide. I will decide. Understand?" (Alikhanov)

42. As Mukhin puts it: "The Party, as an organization of millions of communists, was at an end. The group of people at its summit became the Party." (Mukhin, Ubiystvo 494)

### **Deaths of Stalin and Beria... and Others?**

43. In addition to the mysterious circumstances of Beria's death there is considerable evidence that Stalin was either left to die on the floor of the office in his dacha after suffering a stroke or, perhaps, even poisoned. We don't have time or space to summarize this question here.

44. However, for our present purposes it is not necessary. The wide circulation and credence given to these stories among Russians of all political camps show that many Russians believe Stalin's and Beria's deaths were all too convenient for the nomenklatura. The evidence that Beria, like Stalin, wanted a communist perestroika — a "restructuring," albeit of political, not economic, power, instead of the capitalist super-exploitation and fleecing of the country that has gone under that name since the late 1980s — is quite independent of any evidence that they may have been murdered.

45. The immediate result of Stalin's and Beria's failures at democratization was to leave the USSR in the hands of the Party leadership. No workers' democracy came to pass in the Soviet Union. Top Party leaders continued to monopolize all important positions, including those in the state and the economy, and developed into a fully parasitical, exploitative stratum with strong similarities to their counterparts in frankly capitalist countries.

46. In a real sense this stratum is still in power today. Gorbachev, Yeltsin, Putin, and the rest of the leaders of Russia and of the post-Soviet states are

all former members of the Party leadership. They long milked the Soviet Union's citizens as super-privileged functionaries. Then, under Gorbachev's leadership, they presided over the privatization of all the collectively-produced property that belonged to the working class of the USSR, impoverishing not only the workers, but the large middle class in the process. This has been called the greatest expropriation in the history of the world.<sup>39</sup> The Party nomenklatura destroyed the Soviet Union. (Bivens & Bernstein; O'Meara; Williamson)

<sup>39</sup> This term, "the greatest theft in history," is widely used to describe the "privatization" of the collectively-created and, formerly, collectively-owned, state property of the USSR. For a few examples only, see "The Russian Oligarchy: Welcome to the Real World," The Russian Journal March 17 2003, at <<http://www.russiajournal.com/news/cnews-article.shtml?nd=36013>>; Raymond Baker, Centre for International Policy, "A Clear and Present Danger," Australian Broadcasting Corp, 2003, at <<http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/s296563.htm>>.

47. To cover up their own roles in the massive executions of the 1930s, their successes in frustrating Stalin's attempts at democratization, their refusals to implement Stalin's and Beria's reforms — in short, to cover up their refusal to democratize the Soviet Union — Khrushchev and the top party leaders blamed Stalin for everything, lying about the existence of serious conspiracies in the USSR in the 1930s, and covering up their own roles in the mass executions that ensued.

48. Khrushchev's "secret speech" of 1956 was the single greatest blow to the world communist movement in history. It gave encouragement to anti-communists everywhere, who decided that for once here was a communist leader they could believe. Documents released since the end of the USSR make it clear that virtually every accusation Khrushchev leveled at Stalin in this speech was a lie. This realization, in turn, compels us to inquire into Khrushchev's real reasons for attacking Stalin the way he did.<sup>40</sup> Russian researchers have already shown that the "official" charges against Beria cited by Khrushchev and his cohorts in the Soviet leadership are either false, or wholly lacking in evidence. Beria was judicially murdered for reasons that his murderers never revealed. The "bodyguard of lies"



surrounding both of these events compel us to ask: What was really going on? The present essay suggests one answer.

<sup>40</sup> As of November 2005 I am preparing an article documenting Khrushchev's lies in the "Secret Speech," with publication planned for February 2006, the 50th anniversary of Khrushchev's speech.

### **Conclusions and Future Research**

49. Given that Stalin explicitly ruled out competing political parties in his plan for contested elections, it is fair to ask: How "democratic" would the result have been, if Stalin had had his way? Answers to questions about democracy have to begin with another question: "What do you mean by 'democracy'?"

50. In the industrial capitalist world, it means a system where political parties compete in elections, but in which all the political parties are controlled by elite, extremely wealthy, and highly authoritarian, people and groups. Nor does "democracy" mean that capitalism itself could ever be "voted out" of power. This "democracy" is a form and a technique of capitalist class rule — in short, of "lack of democracy."

51. Could contested elections among citizens and citizen groups, within the limits of acceptance of working-class rule, have worked in the USSR? Could they work in some future socialist society? What is the role of "representative democracy," that is, of elections, in a society that aims at classlessness? Because these provisions of the 1936 Constitution were never put into effect in the USSR, we can never know what the strengths and weaknesses of this proposal would have been. Marx and Engels made important deductions about the nature of proletarian democracy based upon their study of the practice of the Paris Commune. It is a tragedy that we do not have a parallel experience of contested elections in the Soviet Union in Stalin's time. No doubt there would have been both strengths and weaknesses, from which we could have learned much.

52. Scholars motivated by political anti-communism will continue to breathe life into the old and false, but not yet sufficiently discredited,

Khrushchev / Cold War "anti-Stalin" paradigm. But the process of re-interpreting the history of the Soviet Union in the light of the flood of formerly secret Soviet documents has long since begun in Russia. It will soon take hold elsewhere. A primary purpose of this essay is to introduce others to this development.

53. One point will strike almost every reader right away. According to the "cult of personality" of adulation that surrounded Stalin, we have been conditioned to think of Stalin as an "all-powerful dictator." This foundational falsehood of the Cold War / Khrushchevite historical paradigm, exploded by the research reported here, has fatally distorted our understanding of Soviet history. In fact, Stalin was never "all-powerful." He was stymied by the combined efforts of other Party leaders. He was never able to attain his goal of constitutional reforms. Nor was he able to control the First Secretaries and the local NKVD.

54. The "cult" disguised these political struggles. Transcripts of Central Committee Plena show that, though at times Bolshevnik leaders did directly disagree with Stalin, this occurred rarely. Political disputes could not be brought out into the open and resolved. Instead they were dealt with in other venues. Some of these venues were informal, as evidently in the case of the First Secretaries in July 1937. Some were dealt with by police methods, political disagreement being interpreted as hostile opposition.

55. Whatever the mechanism, the effect of the "cult" was authoritarian, and deeply anti-democratic. Stalin seems to be one of the few Soviet leaders to have understood this to a degree. Throughout his life he condemned the "cult" many times.<sup>41</sup> Clearly, though, he never fully recognized how harmful it would inevitably be.

<sup>41</sup> Roy Medvedev, *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism*, quotes a number of passages in which Stalin does this. See pp. 150, 507, 512, 538, 547 of the 1971 Knopf edition. Still others have come to light since the end of the USSR. For an example, see *The Diary of Georgi Dimitrov 1933-1949*, ed. & intro. Ivo Banac (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 66-67.

56. The conclusions reached here, almost entirely on the basis of others' research, suggest a few important areas for further exploration.

- What form can "democracy" take in a socialist society with a goal of developing towards a classless society? Would the implementation of the 1936 Constitution as envisaged by Stalin have worked, both to democratize the Soviet Union, and to restore the Bolshevik Party to its original role, as an organization of dedicated revolutionaries whose primary job was to lead the country towards communism? Or did this model already incorporate so many aspects of bourgeois capitalist concepts of democracy that it might have hastened, rather than impeded, the evolution of the USSR towards capitalism?
- What is the proper role of a communist party in such a society? What are the specific forms of political leadership that are compatible with democratic empowerment of the working class? What forms of political (and economic) leadership are in contradiction with these goals?

57. Once we question the idea that elections and "representative" government are sufficient to make the state express the interests of the workers and peasants, it follows that the 1936 Constitution, even if implemented, would not have accomplished this either. This might suggest that the "solution" is not to make the state stronger and the Party weaker — as it appears Stalin and Beria thought. Marxists believe that the state will be run by some class or other, so if a new ruling class arises from the top stratum of the Party, or from any other part of society, it will rule, and will change the state to make that rule more effective. This in turn suggests that the Party — State distinction is artificial and deceptive and should be done away with. The term "bureaucratism" / "bureaucracy," while it points to one kind of problem, conceals others. I suggest that the two questions above — democracy and the role of the party — indicate more fruitful, and more materialist, ways of thinking about the problem of the relationship between the organized, politically conscious part of the population of a socialist or communist society, and the less organized and politically conscious, but still economically productive majority. The Bolsheviks generally and Stalin specifically made a big distinction between politics and technical skill or education. But they never dealt adequately with the contradiction between

"Red" and "expert," as this dilemma was termed during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. The idea shared by virtually all socialists that political "oversight" or "supervision" could be separated from technical knowledge and production reflected, in part, the mistaken notion that "technique" — science — was politically neutral, and that if done efficiently, economic production itself was politically "left" or "communist." The dilemma of the State — Party contradiction followed from this. What does "inner-party democracy" mean in the context of a communist party? In the USSR, many of the oppositional forces whose views were defeated at the Party Conferences and Congresses of the 1920s developed into conspiracies, ultimately aiming at assassination of the Party leadership, a coup d'état, and collaboration with and espionage for hostile capitalist powers. At the same time, local Party leaders developed dictatorial habits, which alienated them from the Party rank-and-file (and of course from the much more numerous non-communist population as well), while guaranteeing them material privileges.

58. The material benefits of high Party office must have played an important, even a decisive, role in the development of the stratum called the nomenklatura. Likewise, Stalin's evident goal of removing the Party from direct rule and returning it to "agitation and propaganda" might suggest some awareness of this contradiction by Stalin himself, and perhaps by others too. To what extent were large pay differentials essential to stimulate industrialization in the USSR? If they were essential, was it an error to permit Party members access to material privileges — high pay, better housing, special stores, etc.? The political context in which these decisions were made, in the late '20s and early '30s, needs to be more fully explored. The discussions, now unavailable, around ending the "Party Maximum" wage sometime in the early '30s, need to be discovered and studied.

59. Zhukov and Mukhin seem to believe that the tactic they perceive, and attribute to Stalin and Beria — that of getting the party leaders out of the business of running the state — was indeed the best chance of preventing the Party from degenerating. As I suggest above, perhaps the real cause of degeneration is the defense of their own privileges, rather than the "Red vs expert" contradiction in itself.

60. Of course, material incentives had been thought necessary, first, to recruit skilled but bourgeois, anti-communist and anti-working-class intellectuals into helping build the USSR's industrial base. From there it could be argued that higher pay was necessary to encourage technically-skilled people (including skilled workers) to join the Bolshevik Party; or, to work hard under adverse living and working conditions, often at danger to one's health and at the cost of sacrificing one's family life. From there the whole panoply of capitalist-like inequalities could be, and were, justified.

61. Maybe Stalin and Beria believed that returning the Party alone to a "purely political" function could have prevented its degeneration. Since this plan — if it was theirs — was never put into effect, we can't really know. But I suspect that the issue of "material incentives," i.e. economic inequality, is the fundamental one. In conversations with Felix Chuev the aged Molotov mused about the need for more and more "equalization," and worried about the future of socialism in the USSR as he saw inequality increasing. Molotov did not trace the roots of this development back into Stalin's or Lenin's day. In fact Molotov, like Stalin, was unable to look at Lenin's legacy critically, though the need to preserve and expand inequalities in order to stimulate production can be traced at least to Lenin, if not to the Marx of the Critique of the Gotha Program.

62. The questions one asks inevitably reflect and expose one's own political concerns, and mine are no exception. I believe that the history of the Bolshevik Party during Stalin's years — a history obfuscated by anti-communist lies and as yet to be written — has a lot to teach future generations. Political activists who look to the past for guidance, and politically-conscious scholars who believe their greatest contributions towards a better world can be made through study of such struggles in the past, have a great deal to learn from the legacy of the Soviet Union.

63. Like medieval mariners whose maps were more imagination than fact, we have been misled by canonical histories of the USSR that are mainly false. The process of discovering the real history of the world's first socialist experiment has scarcely begun. As any reader of this essay will realize, I believe this is of immense importance for our future.

## Additional Notes

### **Note on Yuri Zhukov's work:**

To date there has been one extended scholarly attack on Zhukov's thesis — that by Prof. Irina V. Pavlova, "1937: Vybory kak mistifikatsiia, terror kak real'nost'," *Voprosy Istorii* 10, 2003 19-36. Pavlova is a strident anti-communist of the "totalitarianism" school whose ideological hostility to communism undermines her historical research. For example, she has lied about Getty's research in order to try to discredit him. Pavlova is writing propaganda, not history.

Pavlova refers only to Zhukov's articles in KP; she wrote it before the publication of Inoy Stalin. Pavlova's criticism relies on the assumption that the Moscow Trials and that of Tukhachevskii et al. were frame-ups, and the whole constitutional and electoral campaigns a deliberate "cover" for this repression.

Pavlova also asserts that, because the Supreme Soviet did not have real political power in 1936, contested elections for it would not have given it any power either. If by "power" Pavlova means the ability to unseat the Bolshevik Party from its dominant position in the USSR and to undo socialism, she is undoubtedly right: surely Stalin had no intention of allowing a counter-revolution through constitutional means. Nor is this permitted in any bourgeois democratic country. But if she means "power" to influence state policies and exert pressure, within limits, on the specific social policies and on the Bolshevik Party itself — that is, the kind of powers determined by elections in bourgeois democracies — then she cannot possibly be right.

### **Note on Iuri Mukhin, *Ubiystvo Stalina i Beriia*:**

This book of Mukhin's is often dismissed by those unsympathetic to his conclusions on the grounds that he has made remarks that can be construed as anti-semitic. It should be noted that Mukhin makes remarks opposing anti-semitism in this same book. This paper does not draw upon any of the passages in which anti-semitic statements can be alleged.

Mukhin has also taken eccentric positions on some subjects not dealt with in this book. I do not draw upon any of those works either.

The same thing could, and should, be said when anti-communist scholars are cited — the fact of their anti-communist prejudices does not mean that they cannot, on occasion, have some valuable insights. And, of course, anti-communism is normally closely aligned with anti-semitism. Neither a communist nor Jewish, Mukhin shows some hostility to both, but is neither a conventional anti-communist nor a conventional anti-semite.

Mukhin's analysis of primary and secondary sources is often very sharp, and I use, and cite, it where I find it helpful. Naturally, citation of those of Mukhin's analyses that the author thinks are useful does not imply agreement to parts of his analysis which are not cited. Nor is Mukhin responsible for any use I have made of his research. I have checked every reference made by Mukhin and all other scholars cited here, except in the case of primary sources available only to those who work in the archives.

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