

STALIN
WAITING FOR ... THE TRUTH

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

GROVER FURR

Stalin

Waiting For ... The Truth

By Grover Furr

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STALIN. Waiting For ... The Truth! Exposing the Falsehoods in Stephen Kotkin's *Stalin. Waiting for Hitler, 1929-1941*

About * Collectivization * The Famine * The Kirov Murder * Leon Trotsky's Lies * The Moscow Trials * The Spanish Civil War * The Military Purges * Yezhov's Conspiracy * plus many other falsehoods.

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to cogent critic, friend, and frequent publisher, Mike Bessler of Erythros Press and Media, LLC. Mike has given me encouragement, inspiration, and help whenever I needed it, often at late night hours. His support is invaluable, and I am most grateful for it.

Abbreviations

Furr, Grover. *Khrushchev Lied: The Evidence That Every "Revelation" of Stalin's (and Beria's) Crimes in Nikita Khrushchev's Infamous "Secret Speech" to the 20th Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on February 25, 1956, is Provably False.* Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press & Media LLC, 2011. (Furr, Khrushchev Lied)

Grover Furr. *The Murder of Sergei Kirov. History, Scholarship and the Anti-Stalin Paradigm.* Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press and Media, LLC, 2013. (Furr Kirov)

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Furr, Grover. *Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan:*

Trotsky's Conspiracies of the 1930s, Volume Two. Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press & Media, LLC, 2017. (Furr, Trotsky's Collaboration)

Furr, Grover. *The Mystery of the Katyn Massacre. The Evidence, The Solution.* Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press & Media, LLC, 2018. ISBN-13: 978-0692134252 (Furr, Katyn)

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Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo. Febral' 1956 – nachalo 80-kh godov. T. 2. Moskva: "Materik", 2003. (RKEB 2)

Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo. Seredina 80-kh godov – 1991. Dokumenty. T. 3. Moskva: "Materik", 2004. (RKEB 3)

Preface

Read Me First

The present book is an exhaustive critique of Stephen Kotkin, *Stalin. Waiting For Hitler, 1929 – 1941* (New York: Penguin, 2017). This is the second volume of what Kotkin, a professor of history at Princeton University and a Fellow at the Hoover Institution, intends to be a three-volume work and the definitive biography of Joseph Stalin.

This book is written primarily for those who will never read Kotkin's book. It has to be – because very, very few people will in fact read this humongous tome (= a large book) – humongous in size, and also in dishonesty.

The reader will not learn the history of the Soviet Union during 1929 – 1941 from Kotkin's book. Kotkin's book is completely unreliable. It is filled with false statements and unsupported assumptions.

It is dedicated to convincing the reader that Joseph Stalin was a monster, a mass murderer and all-round evil person, and that the Soviet Union during his day was little short of a hell on earth. It is also devoted to trashing the idea of communism itself, partly through associating the communist movement with the monster Stalin, partly by smuggling in the notion that market capitalism is a far better form of political and social organization.

Kotkin has not attempted to write an accurate, objective account of Stalin's life during these years. Instead, he cherry-picks phony evidence to try to "prove" his very negative views about Stalin, the Soviet Union, and the communist movement.

Few readers will read this huge book. Of the very few readers who do manage to make it through the text, only a tiny fraction will read more than a small handful of the footnotes. And of those, how

many will actually *check* the references in the footnotes, in order to see whether they do, in fact, provide evidence for the statements Kotkin makes in the text alleging crimes by Stalin?

If you think "No one will," you are *almost* correct. For this is what I have done.

The book in your hands (or on your screen) contains the results of my careful check-up of Kotkin's claims of criminal and/or atrocious acts by Stalin and the Soviet leadership.

I have written this book so that you don't have to read Kotkin's. You can find out what Kotkin has to say about Stalin and the events of Soviet history from 1928 to 1941, and how Kotkin falsifies the history of this period. And you can do all this in fewer than 400 pages.

The chapters are organized according to the major historical events of the Soviet 1930s, as Kotkin deals with them. You can select the topics that interest you most. When you read a chapter in my book, you will learn what Kotkin has to say about the events in question; how he falsifies them; and get a brief account of what the real state of affairs is as demonstrated by the best evidence available today.

You should read this book *instead* of reading Kotkin's book. If you haven't bought his book, don't bother! If you have bought it, then you can consult it if you should ever doubt my analysis of this or that incident. Then you can use it for a doorstop.

You should read this book if you want to know how Soviet history of the Stalin period is distorted, falsified, mangled, by *mainstream* historiography. You can learn about the Anti-Stalin Paradigm – the false and dishonest model of Soviet history to which mainstream historians are expected to conform and to which almost all of them do in fact conform.

You can use this book as a kind of reference work. What does the best available evidence show about these events? How is the mainstream, "official," history wrong about them?

If you have suspected that this or that event of the Soviet 1930s may have been distorted by mainstream historians, you can read up on it here.

If you have trusted the mainstream historical portrait of Stalin and of the Soviet 1930s, you are in for a big shock!

I've written this book for those who will read Kotkin's book and for those who won't manage to get through it.

But I have written it especially for those who never intend to even try to read Kotkin's monstrosity.

If you have not yet decided to read Kotkin's book, take my advice: Don't waste your time! Read this book instead. You'll not just learn more – what you learn will be true. Read Kotkin, and what you learn will be all wrong and you will have to *un*learn it – by reading *this* book.

Introduction.

"The Right To Lie In The Service Of Power"

> The right to lie in the service of power is guarded with considerable vigor and passion. This becomes evident whenever anyone takes the trouble to demonstrate that charges against some official enemy are inaccurate or, sometimes, pure invention. The immediate reaction among the commissars is that the person is an apologist for the real crimes of official enemies.
>
> - Noam Chomsky[1]

The first volume of Stephen Kotkin's biography of Joseph Stalin is titled *Stalin. Volume One. Paradoxes of Power, 1878-1928.* It was published in 2014. As the title suggests, in it Kotkin discusses Stalin's life up to late in the year 1928.

The last chapter of the book is titled "Coda: If Stalin Had Died." Much of this chapter is about the collectivization of agriculture in the Soviet Union. But this subject is not dealt with in Volume One! It is reserved for the opening chapters of Volume Two, the volume that we examine and critique here.

If this "coda" was supposed to somehow argue that Stalin's life up to 1928 made the policy of agricultural collectivization inevitable, or possible, or something, it fails. In it Kotkin does make the claim that agricultural modernization would have been both possible and less costly under a market capitalist system. But he does not even try to demonstrate how that might be done. His depiction of collectivization as a brutal failure is not only not proven — it is unargued, simply assumed.

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[1] "Interview" by James Peck. *The Chomsky Reader.* Pantheon: New York, 1987. 37.

I did not read this "coda" until I had read volume one itself, almost a year after its publication. In November 2014, the same year as the book's publication, Kotkin published an abbreviated version of the "coda" in the *New York Review of Books*.[2] A friend sent me this essay as soon as he received the issue. Of course that magazine could contain no evidence for the assertions made in it, and I did not expect any. But I was puzzled by the fact that the essay started with an event not covered in the book -- collectivization. Moreover, I also knew that his depiction of collectivization runs counter to the best research on the subject. It did not augur well for the yet-to-come Volume Two.

When, a few months later, I did read Volume One I was surprised again. After reading Kotkin's terribly inaccurate depiction of collectivization and his praise of capitalism and markets – *de rigueur* for a "fellow" of the right-wing anticommunist propaganda mill that is the Hoover Institution – I found that Kotkin's depiction of Stalin in Volume One was relatively objective, without any phony allegations of "crimes."

On several topics – for example, the question of the forgery of "Lenin's Testament" – Volume One breaks from the pattern of anti-Stalin polemics that normally passes for history in mainstream Soviet studies. Still, that "coda" was a clear sign that Volume Two would be very different, lacking in objectivity, gravid with unproven accusations of "crimes" of Stalin.

And so it is! Volume Two was published in October, 2017. Having spent many years researching Soviet history of the 1930s, I immediately saw that this second volume repeats a number of falsehoods about major political events, in conformity with the dominant and all-too-familiar model in mainstream Soviet historiography, the model that I call the "Anti-Stalin Paradigm." (ASP)

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[2] "If Stalin Had Died ..." *NYRB* November 6, 2014, 34-35.

I saw too that there were many specific incidents discussed in Volume Two that I had not come across before. The first of these was a tale of minor importance: "Klim – There were no mistakes..." (See the first section of Chapter 11). Here Kotkin accuses Stalin of – what? A peccadillo, at most? Perhaps *this* story was true, then? So I researched it. It was difficult to obtain the materials to do so (I suspect that Kotkin never bothered).

At length I was able to verify that, sure enough, it is a phony story, with no evidence behind it. At this point I thought: "What if the whole book is like this?" I was hooked! I realized that I had to know.

I have done similar research projects before.

* Between 2005 and 2011 I researched and wrote a book proving that Nikita Khrushchev's famous "Secret Speech" is made up of lies from beginning to end. That speech to the XX Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on February 25, 1956, the speech in which Khrushchev depicted Stalin as a brutal dictator who had committed many murders and other crimes, had shocked the world and fatally undermined the international communist movement. Yet it is a tissue of falsehoods. (Furr, Khrushchev Lied)

* Between 2010 and 2013 I checked all the references in Matthew Lenoe's massive 820+ pages) tome *The Kirov Murder and Soviet History* (Yale University Press, 2010). I did so because while studying it I noted many errors of reasoning and many logical fallacies in this work, which comes to the conventional, acceptable conclusion that Sergei Kirov, First Secretary of Leningrad, was killed by a "lone gunman." I spent years in checking Lenoe's evidence, and then in compiling much evidence that Lenoe and others had omitted. In the end I reached the conclusion – inevitable, given the evidence – that the Soviet courts had gotten it right: Kirov was indeed killed by a clandestine conspiratorial group of followers of Grigory Zinoviev. This important case led inexorably to the uncovering of the widespread anti-Soviet conspiracies uncovered in the later 1930s. (Furr, Kirov)

* In 2011-2014 I checked every single allegation of wrongdoing of any kind by Stalin, the Soviet Union, and communists generally, in Yale professor Timothy Snyder's award-winning book *Bloodlands.* At the end of 30 months of research I concluded that Snyder's book too contains not a single accurate allegation of crime of any kind by Stalin. *Every one* of such allegations is false, a fabrication, either by Snyder himself or by the intensely anticommunist scholars, mainly Polish and Ukrainian, whose works Snyder relied on. (Furr, Blood Lies)

So I set out to do likewise with Kotkin's Volume Two, with one difference. The book is too long, 1154 pages long: 909 pages of text; 160 pages of triple-columned footnotes in tiny type; and 51 pages of bibliography, also triple-columned in tiny type, plus an index. Therefore, unlike Khrushchev's speech and Snyder's much shorter book, it would not be possible to check *every* fact-claim in. But not necessary, either.

Procedure

* I have selected ten issues in the high politics of Soviet history during the 1930s, and thoroughly researched Kotkin's account of each of them.

* I have added another two chapters of various allegations of lesser importance where Kotkin alleged some kind of misdeed, criminal or moral, by Stalin.

* A Chapter on "strategies of misdirection in Kotkin's book" is an attempt to analyze the different techniques and also the errors of method and logic – perhaps intentional, perhaps due to incompetence – which Kotkin utilizes in order to create the wildly distorted portrait of Stalin and Soviet policies that he promotes in this meretricious book.

* I have also added two chapters on central problems concerning Kotkin's research: his lack of source criticism, and his use of bias by omission.

This book deals with *all* the alleged crimes and atrocities that Kotkin charges Stalin with. It includes all the passages where Kotkin alleges any kind of reprehensible behavior or even insensitivity on Stalin's part.

The "Klim – There were no mistakes..." story is an example of something we will see a great many times in this book: Kotkin cannot be trusted to use his sources accurately or honestly. When Kotkin makes an assertion of fact, or fact-claim, about some crime or misdeed involving Stalin, the sources for this fact-claim must be double-checked.

Upon checking Kotkin's source we normally find either (1) that his source does not support what Kotkin's text says or implies that it does; or (2) that the source does reflect what Kotkin says in his text but that source itself is dishonest, in that (a) it does not reflect what its own evidence states or (b) its source is yet another secondary source which, when it is examined in turn, does not support the fact-claims given; or (c) it cites no evidence at all.

Devoid of Integrity

The present book presents a detailed, heavily documented critique of *Stalin, Vol. Two*. In it I document my conclusion: *Every one of Kotkin's charges of crimes or atrocities alleged by Kotkin against Stalin is false.* I demonstrate this by checking the evidence Kotkin cites; by including when appropriate the evidence which Kotkin's sources cite; and by citing other evidence that he omits.

Here is an important paragraph from the document "Statement on Standards of Professional Conduct (updated 2018)," by the American Historical Association.

> Historians should practice their craft with integrity. They should honor the historical record. They should document their sources. They should acknowledge their debts to the work of other scholars. They should respect and welcome divergent points of view even as they argue and subject those views to critical scrutiny.

> They should remember that our collective enterprise depends on mutual trust. And they should never betray that trust.[3]

It is the professional responsibility of historians to acknowledge disputes and disagreements in the fields they research. But Kotkin never informs his readers about the scholarly disputes that exist over many of these issues, whether it be the famine (except in the footnot1es only), the *Ezhovshchina* or "Great Terror," the Katyn massacre, the Moscow Trials, the Tukhachevsky Affair, the Spanish Civil War, or others. Every time Kotkin repeats an anti-Stalin position without any qualification.

It is an historian's responsibility to document her sources. Kotkin routinely violates this tenet of the historian's craft. A great many of his footnotes – the form his documentation of sources normally takes – are phony. They *appear* to be the evidence of careful research. But, as I prove in this book in sometimes painstaking detail, they do not give evidence for Kotkin's fact-claims about the crimes he attributes to Stalin.

It is not only that many statements in Kotkin's book are factually false. These false statements do not occur randomly. There is a systematic quality to all of these falsehoods: every one is tendentiously anticommunist. I realized that I would have to carefully check, one by one, every factual statement about the Soviet leadership or Soviet actions that had a negative tendency, every allegation of a crime or an atrocity.

My working hypothesis was as follows: I would find that many of Kotkin's anti-Stalin or anti-Soviet assertions or "fact-claims" were false, not supported by the evidence Kotkin cites or indeed by any evidence. My further hypothesis was that the secondary sources Kotkin cites in support of these statement would either not

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[3] Cited at https://www.historians.org/jobs-and-professional-development/statements-standards-and-guidelines-of-the-discipline/statement-on-standards-of-professional-conduct

support Kotkin's fact-claims, or would themselves be fallacious, unsupported by the evidence (if any) that they cited.

My research has fully corroborated both of these hypotheses. In fact, I discovered that my initial hypothesis was too cautious. I have found not that many, but that *all* of Kotkin's fact-claims of an anti-Stalin tendency are false. In this book I present the results of that research.

Organization of This Book

The chapters in this book adhere to the following method of presentation. After an introductory section I quote every passage in which Kotkin makes a fact-claim that accuses Stalin of some crime or that tends to reflect negatively upon Stalin. Then the evidence Kotkin cites to support his statement(s), normally found in a footnote, is identified and, where possible, reproduced. Then each of the sources in that footnote, whether primary or secondary, is checked and verified in order to assess whether that source provides support for Kotkin's fact-claim.

In the case of secondary sources I have checked further for the primary sources that *these* secondary sources use. This is essential because the fact that one historian agrees with another does not constitute evidence. Only primary sources are evidence.

In each instance where Kotkin cites another secondary source in a footnote I have obtained and studied the primary source evidence upon which that secondary source relies. This procedure continues until we reach the primary sources upon which all the other secondary sources are based, or until we discover that, in reality, there is no primary source evidence supporting the series of fact-claims, which are thereby revealed to be falsifications. This method is essential in order to verify Kotkin's fact-claims concerning Stalin's "crimes" — or, as it turns out, in order to demonstrate that they are, without exception, false.

Whenever possible I have given a summary title or subheading to each of the passages from Kotkin's book. The purpose of this

subheading is to aid the reader in deciding whether he or she wants to examine these fact-claims, or wishes to pick and choose, examining some and passing over others.

At the time of this writing (January, 2019) no one else has taken the trouble to do this. This would not be a bad thing if Kotkin's book were generally ignored. Historians of the USSR, like historians generally, should spend their time doing honest research and discovering the truth, rather than double-checking every fact-claim and allegation made by other historians. But Kotkin's book is very influential, as are his published articles in semi-popular journals and the Youtube videos of his talks. Kotkin's fact-claims about crimes of Stalin are normally *assumed* to be true, while the reality is that they are *always* false. Through books such as *Stalin, Vol. Two* falsehoods become accepted as truths, the current of historical understanding polluted.

The Anti-Stalin Paradigm

In the present book I demonstrate, using Kotkin's own sources and other evidence, that not a single one of the accusations that Kotkin levels against Stalin is true. Such a conclusion demands explanation, and I outline my own views in the final chapter. One important element of that explanation is what I call the "Anti-Stalin Paradigm," (ASP) about which a little should be said here.

Khrushchev Lied

In February, 1956, at the XX Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Party and leader of the Soviet state, gave a "secret speech" in which he accused Stalin (and Lavrentii Beria) of great crimes. At the XXII Party Congress in 1961 Khrushchev and other Party leaders under him went even further in their attacks on Stalin. After that and until Khrushchev's ouster in October 1964 a flood of pseudo-scholarly Soviet works were published in which accusations about Stalin's "crimes" multiplied wildly.

Since the Bolshevik Revolution itself the academic field of Soviet history has been dominated by anticommunist bias. Khrushchev's 1956 "Secret Speech," the anti-Stalin speeches at the XXII Party Congress and the ensuing torrent of Khrushchev-orchestrated fabrications, became the basis for the avalanche of anti-Stalin books that followed. Notable among them was, for example, Robert Conquest's tome *The Great Terror*, which drew heavily upon these Khrushchev-era materials (although Conquest also used, indiscriminately, any and all anti-Stalin works he could find, including many that preceded Khrushchev's speech).

In an earlier article Vladimir L. Bobrov and I examined the last chapter of Stephen F. Cohen's book *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution* (1973), one of the most influential anti-Stalin books based on Khrushchev-era materials. There we showed (a) that Cohen relied entirely upon Khrushchev-era "revelations" in this chapter on Bukharin's life between 1930 and 1938; and (b) that every single "revelation" Cohen makes in that long chapter is demonstrably false.[4]

Gorbachev Lied Too

The Khrushchev-era Soviet works were not simply the result of bias. Rather, they were deliberate lies.[5] Khrushchev and his men had all the evidence of the Soviet archives — everything we have today plus much, much more. The same is true of Mikhail Gorbachev's people, who churned out an even bigger avalanche of anti-Stalin falsehoods after 1987, an avalanche that continues to the present day.

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[4] Furr, Grover and Vladimir L. Bobrov. "Stephen Cohen's Biography of Bukharin: A Study in the Falsehood of Khrushchev-Era 'Revelations'." *Cultural Logic*, 2010. At https://web.archive.org/web/20130402191853/http://clogic.eserver.org/2010/Furr.pdf

[5] Alexander Solzhenitsyn was one writer who got his start, and considerable fame, thanks to Khrushchev. Michael Scammell, author of a recent biography, calls Solzhenitsyn "a truth-teller." Nothing could be more false! Solzhenitsyn's works, valuable as anticommunist propaganda during the Cold War, are worthless as history and are rightly ignored even by mainstream historians today.

The academic field of Soviet history of the Stalin period has been constructed around the more or less uncritical acceptance of, first, Khrushchev-era, and second, of Gorbachev-era and post-Soviet-era lies. These lies cannot be sustained in the face of the evidence now available from former Soviet archives. However, to admit this would imply that the works of dozens of historians of the USSR, during several generations, are poisoned at the root – as, indeed, they are.

Therefore the "Anti-Stalin Paradigm," as I call this model of Stalin-era Soviet history, goes unchallenged. As long as it continues to serve anticommunist ideological purposes, and as long as the truth can be ignored, buried, hidden, or otherwise disregarded, the demonization of Stalin, the Soviet leadership of his day, and the communist movement continues to perform its useful function in the economy of anticommunist propaganda, propped up by the prestige of academic experts in many countries. This is the tradition that has produced works like Kotkin's *Stalin, Vol. Two*.

The authors of such books do not have to fear that their falsehoods will be exposed by their peers in the field of Soviet history, because anti-Stalin lies are very seldom exposed as such. In such an atmosphere, where the historian can accuse Stalin and the USSR of almost any crime, can say virtually anything as long as it has an anti-Stalin bias, a kind of "Gresham's Law" comes into play. Bad research drives out the good or — at the very least — makes the honest researcher very cautious, very careful not to challenge the prevailing paradigm. This is the academic and political environment that makes fraudulent works like *Stalin, Vol. Two* possible.

Concerning the portrayal of Stalin by anticommunist historians like Kotkin, Professor Domenico Losurdo of the University of Urbino, Italy, writes:

> Les philosophes aiment à s'interroger en évoquant non seulement les événements historiques mais aussi les catégories avec lesquelles nous interprétons ces événements. Aujourd'hui, quelle est donc la catégorie

avec laquelle on interprète Staline ? Celle de folie sanguinaire. Cette catégorie a été déjà utilisée contre Robespierre, contre la révolution de 1848, contre la Commune, mais jamais contre la guerre, ni contre Louis XVI, ni contre les Girondins ou Napoléon. Pour ce qui concerne le XXème siècle, nous avons des études psychopathologiques sur Lénine, Staline, Trotski, Mao, mais pas, par exemple contre Churchill. Or, tout le groupe dirigeant bolchevik se prononçait contre l'expansionnisme colonial, tandis que Churchill écrivait « la guerre est un jeu auquel il faut sourire. » Il y eut ensuite le carnage de la Première Guerre mondiale, le groupe dirigeant bolchevik, Staline compris, est contre ce carnage, mais Churchill déclare encore : « la guerre est le plus grand jeu de l'histoire universelle, nous jouons ici la mise la plus élevée, la guerre constitue l'unique sens aigu de notre vie ». Alors, pourquoi l'approche psychopathologique dans un cas et pas dans l'autre?[6]

Translation:

> In their discussions philosophers like to evoke not only historical events but also the categories with which we interpret these events. Today, what is the category with which Stalin is interpreted? That of bloodthirsty madness. This category has already been used against Robespierre, against the Revolution of 1848, against the Paris Commune, but never against war, or against Louis XVI, or against the Girondins or Napoleon. Regarding the twentieth century, we have psychopathological studies of Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky,

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[6] Domenico Losurdo, "Staline et le stalinisme dans l'histoire (2)." April 12, 2012. At http://www.lafauteadiderot.net/Staline-et-le-stalinisme-dans-l,855; also at http://domenicolosurdo.blogspot.com/2012/09/il-dibattito-sullo-stalinismo-alla.html Losurdo's quotations from Churchill may be found in his book *Stalin. Storia e critica di una leggenda nera*. Rome: Carocci, 2008, p. 243.

> Mao, but not, for example, of Churchill. However, all of the Bolshevik leaders spoke up against colonial expansionism, while Churchill wrote: "War is a game at which one should smile." Then there was the carnage of the First World War. The Bolshevik leadership group, including Stalin, was against this carnage, but Churchill said again: "War is the greatest game in world history, here I play with the highest stakes, war is the sole acute sensation of our lives." So why the psychopathological approach in the one case and not in the other?

Khrushchev, Gorbachev, and Phony History

All historians of the Soviet Union know that Khrushchev and the "historians" whose works he sponsored, and Gorbachev and the "historians" *he* sponsored, were lying. If they do not know that, they are utterly incompetent to do Soviet history. The documents from former Soviet archives that have been published since the end of the USSR permit no other conclusion.

In the case of Khrushchev's and Gorbachev's men the word "lie" is completely justified – in fact, is essential – because these people had *all* the evidence: everything we now have that has been published from former Soviet archives, plus much, much more.

It is hard indeed to imagine that Kotkin is ignorant of these basic facts. But he never tells his readers about this. Of course, if he did so he would not be able to use dishonest Khrushchev- and Gorbachev-era secondary sources as his "evidence."

Fabrications, Falsifications, and Lies

It will shock many readers to learn that a major work by a prominent historian can be, at base, a chain of untruths, its scholarly trappings a demonstrable fraud, a trap intended to lure the unwary or the hopelessly biased into believing falsehoods. Rightly so – we *should* be shocked and outraged by this kind of

historical fraudulence. Yet *Stalin, Vol. Two* is precisely such a book. That is the inevitable conclusion of my study.

It will appear to readers that many of Kotkin's fact-claims are almost certainly "lies" in the strict sense. That is, they must have been made with conscious decision to deceive rather than as the expression of bias coupled with ignorance. At the same time many readers will assume that the word "lie" should only be used when deliberate dishonesty by a writer can be clearly demonstrated.

For this reason I am reluctant to have recourse to the word "lie." In all cases where deliberate intent to deceive cannot be clearly demonstrated by the evidence I use another term such as "fabrication" or "falsification" that connotes something made up, not contained in any of the evidence cited. As I have written elsewhere,

> [I]t is easy to underestimate the power of a well-established, privileged preconceived framework of analysis on the minds of any researcher who is himself seriously biased. The pressures, both psychological and academic, to reach a conclusion acceptable to leading figures in the field of Soviet history, as well as to officials in Russia who control access to archives, are considerable indeed. Consequently, the disadvantages, professionally and otherwise, of reaching a conclusion that, no matter how well demonstrated, will be displeasing to powerful forces in the archival, political, and academic communities, are clear to anyone who is familiar with the highly politicized nature of the field of Soviet and indeed of all of communist history. (Furr, Kirov 7)

Accordingly I consider the word "lie" to be appropriate only when the evidence clearly shows that Kotkin has made a statement in flagrant disregard for the truth, such as a statement that is not supported in the source Kotkin cites in support of it or is even contradicted by that source. Yet even in such cases we should not

rule out the power of a preconceived framework plus a strong bias to "blind" a non-objective historian like Kotkin to evidence and conclusions that are incompatible with the ASP.

Objectivity and the Truth

It is a commonplace today that Stalin committed mass murders and gross atrocities. This belief is like the notions, almost universal before the 20th century (and by no means dead even today) that women and non-whites are "intellectually inferior." Those notions were "common sense," taken for granted by almost every "white" male of European ancestry, including scientists. They were questioned by few, firmly rejected by fewer still. Yet they were never true. They were (and are) avidly promoted because they served (and, in some circles, still serve) definite political and economic interests.

An objective study of the evidence now available shows that, contrary to "what everybody knows" — what I call "the Anti-Stalin Paradigm" — *none* of the mass murders, atrocities, and other crimes alleged against Stalin can be verified by the evidence. Not one of them! On the contrary: the evidence now available proves that *Stalin was not guilty of even a single one of the crimes Kotkin is eager to arraign him for.*

Because this conclusion will shock many readers, the evidence supporting it must be more fully expounded than is normally the case in historical studies. After all, a major conclusion of this book is that, on any important matter, the fact-claims even of renowned historians should never be simply "believed" — accepted as true. Instead they must be verified. Why, then, should any reader accept the fact-claims in this book — namely, that some statement in *Stalin, Vol. Two* is false — when the same book cautions them not to believe Kotkin?

Accordingly, the footnotes, references, and — where necessary — the primary documents essential for any reader to check my conclusions, are reproduced here. This adds to the length of this

study. But there is no other way to document such a travesty of historical scholarship as *Stalin, Vol. Two* presents us with.

The aim of the present study is to examine the allegations by Kotkin against Stalin. Although at many points *Stalin, Vol. Two* reads something like a "prosecutor's brief" against Stalin and the USSR, the present study is fundamentally different. My book is not a "defense attorney's brief." It is not an attempt to prove either guilt or innocence. Rather, it is an attempt to find the truth.

I have tried hard to do what an investigator does in the case of a crime in which he has no bias, no *parti pris*, but only wishes to solve the crime. This is what all historians are supposed to do, and what most historians who investigate the more distant past do all the time. I wish to persuade the fair-minded, objective reader that I have carried out a competent, honest investigation. Namely, that I have done the following:

* collected all the evidence that Kotkin has cited to prove his allegations against Stalin, and also any "negative" evidence that contests those allegations;

* studied all this evidence carefully and honestly;

* drawn my conclusions on the basis of that evidence.

Political prejudice predominates in the study of communism and in particular of Soviet history. Conclusions that contradict the dominant Anti-Stalin Paradigm are routinely ignored or dismissed. Conclusions that cast doubt upon accusations against Stalin or whose implications tend to make him look either "good" or just less "evil" than the predominant paradigm holds him to have been, are called "Stalinist." Any objective study of the evidence now available is bound to be called "Stalinist" simply because it must reach conclusions that are politically unacceptable to those who have a strong anticommunist bias, those who are in thrall to the false "Anti-Stalin Paradigm."

I wish to persuade the objective reader that I have reached my conclusions on the basis of evidence and its analysis and not on any other basis such as political bias. My aim is neither to arraign or "convict" Kotkin nor to "defend" Stalin. I assure the reader that I remain ready to be convinced that Stalin et al. did commit the atrocities alleged by Kotkin if and when evidence is disclosed that supports that conclusion and that evidence can withstand the scholarly scrutiny to which all evidence should be subject.

Evidence

Before proceeding to study the relevant evidence we must briefly consider the question of evidence itself. Whereas "documents" are material objects — in our case, writing on paper — "evidence" is a relational concept. In the present study we are concerned with investigating Kotkin's allegations in *Stalin, Vol. Two* of criminal, atrocious activity by Stalin.

There is no such thing as "absolute" evidence. *All* evidence can be faked. This point can hardly be overstressed since many people, including historians, believe that confessions of persons under arrest can be more readily faked than other kinds of evidence. But this is not so. Any statement — a confession of guilt, a denial of guilt, a claim that one has been tortured, a claim that one has not been coerced in any way — may be true or false, an attempt to state the truth as the speaker (or writer) remembers it or a deliberate lie. Documents can be forged and, in the case of Soviet history, often have been. False documents have on occasion been inserted into archives in order to be "discovered." Or it may be alleged that a given document was found in an archive when it was not. Photographs can be faked. Eyewitnesses can lie, and in any case eyewitnesses are so often in error that such evidence is among the least reliable kind.[7] In principle there can be no such

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[7] As I write these lines a New York Times article relates a striking example of flagrant inaccuracies in eyewitness accounts and cites one of the foremost experts on this subject, Professor Elizabeth Loftus. "Witness Accounts in Midtown Hammer Attack Show the Power of False Memory," at https://nyti.ms/1bTghAm

thing as a "smoking gun" — evidence that is so clearly genuine and powerful that it cannot be interpreted in more than one way.

The Primary Importance of Objectivity

Identifying, locating, gathering, studying, and interpreting evidence are skills that can be taught to anyone. The most difficult and rarest skill in historical research is the discipline of objectivity. In order to reach true conclusions — statements that are more truthful than other possible statements about a given historical event — a researcher must first question and subject to doubt any preconceived ideas she may hold about the event under investigation. It is one's own preconceived ideas and prejudices that are most likely to sway one into a subjective, inaccurate interpretation of the evidence. Therefore, the researcher must take special steps to make certain this does not happen.

This can be done. The techniques are known and widely practiced in the physical and social sciences. They can and must be adapted to historical research as well. If such techniques are not practiced the historian will inevitably be seriously swayed from an objective understanding of the evidence by her own pre-existing preferences and biases. That will all but guarantee that her conclusions are false even if she is in possession of the best evidence and all the skills necessary to analyze it.

Nowhere is a devotion to objectivity more essential or less in evidence than in the field of Soviet history of the Stalin period. As it is impossible to discover the truth absent a dedication to objectivity, the present study strives to be objective at all costs. Its conclusions will displease, even outrage, a good many persons who are dedicated not to objectivity and the truth but to promoting some anticommunist narrative or to defending the Cold War-anticommunist paradigm of Soviet and European history.

The Role of Appropriate Skepticism

Throughout this essay I have tried to anticipate the objections of a skeptical critic. This is no more than any careful, objective

researcher should do. In the body of the essay I follow each presentation of evidence with a critical examination.

"Propaganda With Footnotes"

> I have taught American history for 27 years at a university, and I open every class with a standard lecture that focuses on the three kinds of history: what actually happened, what we are told happened and what we come to believe happened. This is important because we live in a world in which what people believe happened is all that matters, and trying to get to the facts sadly appears less relevant.
>
> - Professor Stephen D. Engle, historian, Florida International University[8]

Scholarship is the attempt to ascertain the truth. Arguments that proceed not from an objective search for truth but from some other motive, such as an attempt to attack or defend some specific allegation or historical paradigm, may fairly be labeled "propaganda." When accompanied by the trappings of scholarship — references, bibliography, fraudulent assurances of objectivity— such writing in reality constitutes not scholarship but "propaganda with footnotes." It is the conclusion of the present study that *Stalin, Vol. Two* is precisely such a work.

Method of Presentation

The present book takes upon itself the task of examining and checking every statement in *Stalin, Vol. Two* that has an anti-Stalin tendency, and reporting the results of this research of verification. It presents for the reader's consideration the proof that every fact-claim of an anti-Stalin tendency in Kotkin's book is false.

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[8] Letter to the Editor, *The New York Times.* November 3, 2017, A30.

Most people rely upon the statements by supposedly "authoritative" figures such as Kotkin. They trust that scholars from respected institutions of learning, with renowned academic reputations, do not falsify important historical events. It is this trust that enables false scholarship to shape opinion on important historical questions.

The "Big Lie" Technique

A normal practice for those who intend to deceive others is to mainly tell the truth, and smuggle in the falsehoods intermingled among the true statements. But on the historical issues studied and analyzed in the present book Kotkin employs a different method: that of "The Big Lie." Though it is ostensibly not a work of propaganda Kotkin's book follows the technique of propaganda recommended by Adolf Hitler in *Mein Kampf*, such as the following:

> The function of propaganda is, for example, not to weigh and ponder the rights of different people, but exclusively to emphasize the one right which it has set out to argue for. **Its task is not to make an objective study of the truth, in so far as it favors the enemy, and then set it before the masses with academic fairness; its task is to serve our own right, always and unflinchingly.**[9]

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[9] Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf. Volume One: A Reckoning. Chapter VI: War Propaganda.* At http://www.hitler.org/writings/Mein_Kampf/mkv1ch06.html

The "Big Lie" was not original with Hitler. He learned of it by studying the anti-German propaganda put out by the Western Allies during the First World War. After that war a number of books were written, often by shocked and deceived journalists, exposing these Allied falsifications.[10] Thus there was no need for Kotkin to learn the "Big Lie" technique from Hitler. That Kotkin does utilize this technique is beyond question. The present book establishes this fact by carefully checking every one of the references Kotkin uses to support his anti-Stalin fact-claims.

Kotkin makes no attempt at objectivity. Indeed, his anti-Stalin hostility at times boils over in passages of heated rhetoric, fervent moralizing, and moral condemnation that serve no analytical purpose. Yet objectivity is first among the requirements of any historian worthy of the name. If one does not strive for objectivity from the outset of one's study one will never discover the truth. The truth was never Kotkin's goal in the first place.

Hitler also succinctly explained why the "Big Lie" technique is so effective:

> In this they [skilled liars – GF] proceeded on the sound principle that the magnitude of a lie always contains a certain factor of credibility, since the great masses of the people in the very bottom of their hearts tend to be corrupted rather than consciously and purposely evil, and that, therefore, in view of the primitive simplicity of their minds they more easily fall a victim to a big lie than to a little one, since they themselves lie in little things, but would be ashamed of lies that were too big. Such a falsehood will never enter their heads and they will not be able to believe in the possibility of such monstrous effrontery and infamous misrepresentation in others; yes, even when enlightened on the subject, they will long doubt and

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[10] One famous example is Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in War-Time* (1929). It is available online. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falsehood_in_War-Time

> waver, and continue to accept at least one of these causes as true. Therefore, something of even the most insolent lie will always remain and stick — a fact which all the great lie-virtuosi and lying-clubs in this world know only too well and also make the most treacherous use of.[11]

A full professor of history at Princeton University, publishing with a major American commercial publisher, can rely on "credibility" — the only coin in the propagandist's purse. The present study shows this coin to be counterfeit.

In this book all boldface emphases are by me, unless otherwise noted.

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[11] *Ibid,* Chapter X: Causes of the Collapse. At http://www.hitler.org/writings/Mein_Kampf/mkv1ch10.html

Chapter 1. Collectivization and Famine

Like other ideologically anticommunist writers Kotkin insists that the Soviet famine of 1932-33 was caused by Stalin in some manner that makes Stalin personally responsible for all the deaths and suffering that resulted. But Kotkin cites no *evidence* that Stalin's policies or actions caused the famine.

Researchers have given the following causes for the famine:

* Ukrainian nationalists claim that Stalin deliberately caused the famine in order to punish Ukrainians for their nationalism. This explanation gained some notoriety in the west through Robert Conquest's 1986 book *Harvest of Sorrow*, and has since been revived by Anne Applebaum's *Red Famine*.[1] Like all other researchers Kotkin rejects this "deliberate famine" hypothesis. Even Conquest ultimately retracted it.[2]

* The famine was caused by disruptions in agriculture caused by collectivization. Kotkin, who has no sympathy with collectivization, cites it as one cause of the famine.

* The famine was caused by the program of rapid industrialization. Kotkin assumes that this was another cause.

* The famine was due to environmental causes that peasants, local officials, and the Soviet government, including Stalin, were slow to recognize. This hypothesis has been set forth by Professor Mark Tauger of West Virginia University in many research articles and monographs. Kotkin barely mentions it, and then only in footnotes. Yet this explanation is the only one that is supported by evidence.

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[1] See Mark Tauger's review of Applebaum's book on the History News Network, July 1, 2018, at https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/169438

[2] See the Conquest quotation and the sources for it in Furr, Blood Lies 47.

"Stalin's Famine"?

Kotkin repeatedly blames Stalin for the famine:

> **Stalin's Famine** (subtitle, 127)
>
> **Stalin's famine**, involving extirpation of capitalism and denomadization, was incomparably worse. (127)
>
> All of these actions were woefully insufficient for avoiding **the mass starvation in the countryside caused by his policies**, in the face of challenging natural conditions. (128-9)
>
> **Once Stalin had caused the horror**, even complete termination of exports would not have been enough to prevent famine. (129)
>
> **Stalin had caused a domestic calamity** and rendered the Soviet Union vulnerable in the face of Japan's expansionism ... (129)
>
> **Marxist imperatives** of transcending capitalism—combined with inordinate willpower—brought apocalypse. (191)

Failing to cite any evidence that Stalin had caused the famine, Kotkin accuses Stalin of blaming the peasants for it.

> Many contemporaries, such as the Italian ambassador, who traveled through Ukraine in summer 1933, deemed the famine deliberate.[471] Monstrously, Stalin himself made the same accusation—accusing peasants of not wanting to work.[472] (128)

Kotkin's note 472 is to an article by Michael Ellman. But there Ellman only states that, according to a doctor in Kiev province, "leaders and rank-and-file workers" – not Stalin -- were blaming peasants who did not want to work for their own starvation. Ellman notes that, in a letter to Soviet writer Mikhail Sholokhov,

Stalin said that some peasants had refused to work, thereby threatening to starve urban workers and the Red Army.

In this same article Ellman states:

> Stalin's idea that he had faced a peasant strike was not an absurd notion indicating paranoia. **It seems that there really were numerous collective refusals by collective farmers to work for the collective farms in 1932**; see Kondrashin & Penner, Golod, chapter 3. (Ellman, note 9, p. 837.)

Chapter 3 of the Kondrashin-Penner book is titled "They raised, but they did not harvest."

So Stalin's statement was not "monstrous" after all! Kotkin, who has read Ellman's article, knows this. But Kotkin's readers will not know it – and Kotkin does not tell them.

In dismissing the "deliberate famine" fiction Kotkin blames collectivization for the famine:

> Nonetheless, the famine was not intentional.[474] It resulted from Stalin's policies of forced collectivization-dekulakization, as well as the pitiless and incompetent management of the sowing and procurement campaigns, all of which put the country on a knife-edge, highly susceptible to drought and sudden torrential rains.[475]

But in note 474 Kotkin quotes Davies and Wheatcroft, who write:

> We regard the policy of rapid industrialisation as an underlying cause of the agricultural troubles of the early 1930s, and we do not believe that the Chinese or NEP versions of industrialisation were viable in Soviet national and international circumstances.

This quotation offers no support for Kotkin's claim that collectivization caused the famine. On the contrary, in ruling out

the other paths towards industrialization, it appears to tacitly endorse the Soviet program.[3]

Kotkin:

> [Stalin] twice deluded himself—partly from false reporting by frightened statisticians[4 [my note, GF]], partly from his own magical thinking—that the country was on the verge of a recovery harvest. (128)

This is not just a "cheap shot"; it is false as well. A good harvest for 1932 was not a product of any "magical thinking" of Stalin's – it was what agricultural experts predicted.

Tauger writes:

> The fact that rust was difficult for nonspecialists to detect helps to explain the numerous claims in memoirs and testimonies of a good 1932 harvest. Soviet agronomic literature and other published and archival sources from the 1930s, however, which no previous scholarship on the famine has discussed, indicate that **in 1932 Soviet crops suffered from an extraordinarily severe combination of infestations from crop diseases and pests.**
>
> During their travels in summer 1932, **Cairns and Schiller observed widespread rust infestations** and spoke with Soviet agronomists who confirmed these impressions in **Ukraine**, in the North Caucasus (including the large sovkhozy Verblud and Gigant), Belorussia, the Central Blackearth oblast', and the Volga region. The Soviet agricultural newspaper even acknowledged major rust infestations, though without

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[3] As we shall see, Tauger disagrees with Davies and Wheatcroft here.
[4] Kotkin cites no evidence of any "frightened statisticians." Evidently he has imagined them.

explaining in any detail their extent and consequences.

The fact that rust was difficult for nonspecialists to detect helps to explain the numerous claims in memoirs and testimonies of a good 1932 harvest. Famine survivors in the Volga region whom the Russian historian Viktor Kondrashin interviewed, however, remembered that in the 1932 harvest the ears were somehow "empty," the characteristic one would expect from rusted grain.

Nonetheless agronomists and other personnel in central offices and local branches of NKZ detected the infestation and made efforts to survey it and combat it. Their investigations found that **rust had become the most widely distributed disease and caused the most harm to agriculture in Ukraine and in the Soviet Union generally.** One study found that brown rust of wheat seriously affected crops in the North Caucasus and Ukraine in 1932, where it destroyed up to 70 percent of the harvest in some regions, especially near rivers, reduced the weight of grain 40-47 percent and the number of seeds in ears by 20-29 percent. Wheat sowings had serious rust infestations in all the grain regions of the USSR in 1932, and rust reduced the wheat harvest in the North Caucasus by 50 percent. These losses help explain why the famine was so severe in that region.[5]

Kotkin cites this very study in his bibliography (1111). So he *knows* his "magical thinking" statement is false. But he put it in anyway. How many of Kotkin's readers are going to be familiar with Tauger's study and realize that there were "numerous claims in memoirs and testimonies of a good 1932 harvest"?

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[5] Mark Tauger, *Natural Disaster and Human Action in the Soviet Famine of 1931-1933*, Carl Beck Papers No. 1506. Pittsburgh, PA., 2001, pp. 12-15.

Kotkin asserts:

> **Once Stalin had caused the horror,** even complete termination of exports would not have been enough to prevent famine. (129)

Then Kotkin states:

> The regime had no strategic grain reserves left, having released them.[485] (129)

Note 485 (942) is to Davies et al., "Stalin, Grain Stocks, and the Famine of 1932–33," 653. There we read:

> Only more aggressive purchases of food abroad and open appeals for international assistance could have averted many (and perhaps most) of the deaths.

But on pages 128-9 Kotkin had already written:

> Always grudgingly, **Stalin approved, and in some cases initiated, reductions in grain exports,** beginning already in September 1931; in **1932 and 1933** he signed reduced grain collection quotas for Ukraine, the North Caucasus, the Volga valley, Crimea, the Urals, the Central Black Earth region, the Kazakh autonomous republic, and Eastern Siberia on nine occasions.[476] The 1933 grain procurement target fell from 24.3 to 19.6 million tons; the actual amount collected would be around 18.5 million tons.[477, 478] **Altogether, the regime returned about 5.7 million tons of grain back to agriculture,** including 2 million tons from reserves and 3.5 million from procurements.

So Kotkin admits that Stalin reduced grain exports and grain collection quotas! But why "always grudgingly"? For one thing, because the cities were starving too:

> Stalin also approved clandestine purchase of grain and livestock abroad using scarce hard currency.[479] Just between February and July 1933, he signed or countenanced nearly three dozen small allocations of food aid to the countryside, primarily to the North Caucasus and Ukraine, as well as the Kazakh lands (which necessitated sharp reductions in the bread rations for city dwellers, many of whom were put on the brink of starvation). (128)

But what about Davies and Wheatcroft's claim that the Soviets "could have avoided many (and perhaps most) deaths" by "more aggressive purchases of food abroad and open appeals for international assistance"? A 2016 study argues that the importation of more foodstuffs was impossible by 1933:

> В отличие от 1931–1932 гг., когда у государства еще была возможность импортировать зерно, во втором квартале 1933 г. импорт был невозможен.
>
> In contrast to 1931-1932, when the state still had the opportunity to import grain, in the second quarter of 1933, imports were impossible.
>
> Пик валютного кризиса в первой половине 1933 г. делал импорт продовольствия в СССР невозможным.
>
> The peak of the economic crisis in the first half of 1933 made the import of food in[to] the USSR impossible.[6]

Kotkin himself admits this – though his admission is buried in a long footnote on page 942:

> Instead of an anticipated 5.426 billion gold rubles of revenue from all exports (grain, timber, oil) over the

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[6] Nazarenko N. N., Bashkin A. V. Cereal Crops Export in early 1930s in the Context of the Famine of 1932–1933, *Noveishaia Istoriia Rossii*, no 3, 2016, 105–120; pp. 115, 119. (In Russian)

> course of the Five-Year Plan, the Soviets managed to bring in 3.283 billion. Industry was short 1.873 million rubles, including 832 million just in 1932. **The Soviets ran out of convertible currency even for purchases of foreign military technology.**

Kotkin writes:

> **Stalin had caused a domestic calamity** and rendered the Soviet Union vulnerable in the face of Japan's expansionism, while contributing significantly to the ascent in Germany of Hitler, who threatened expansionism, and provoking blistering internal critiques.[486] (129)

A serious accusation! But Kotkin gives no evidence that Stalin "caused" the famine, and cites no reference to crop failures or to any environmental causes. Note 486 reads (in part):

> ... Davies, rightly, discounts militarization and instead **blames absurd plan targets.** Davies, Crisis and Progress, 176ff; Davies, "Soviet Defence Industries," 266. (942)

This is simply false. Davies, *Crisis and Progress*, does not state anything like this, either on pp. 176 ff. or anywhere else.[7] Davies does state this, at pp. 146-7:

> ... we do not know whether Kuibyshev and Ordzhonikidze consistently advocated more realistic plans in the course of 1932. **And it is by no means certain that they were opposed by Stalin and Molotov; some evidence shows that Stalin and Molotov were also prepared to accept reductions in the plans** (see p. 124).

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[7] Davies, "Soviet Defence Industries," is an "unpublished discussion paper" from 1987 (1078), far too old to be useful today. If Davies had kept to that view, he would have repeated it elsewhere.

Pages 123-4 relate that Stalin was willing to reduce the plan for pig-iron in the Second Five-Year Plan.

Stalin to Kaganovich in Sept. 1934, not Sept. 1933

Kotkin:

> Resolute in extremis, Stalin ordered the forced return of peasant escapees, **the blacklisting of entire counties (they would suffer the highest mortality),** and the banning of fishing in state waters or even private charity—anything that would have made it possible to avoid the collectives.[489] The OGPU arrested 505,000 people in 1933, as compared with 410,000 the year before.[490] (130)

Note 489 (942) reads:

> 489. When Kaganovich demonstrated a bit of leniency toward procurements in Ukraine in **Sept. 1933**, Stalin rebuked him. Khlevniuk et al., *Stalin i Kaganovich*, 479 (RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 85, l. 44–5), 479–80 (f. 81, op. 3, d. 100, l. 76–82).

Kotkin is writing about 1933 here. But the Stalin to Kaganovich letter he cites here is dated *a year later,* in September, 1934! *Stalin i Kaganovich* 479 contains two letters dated in September 1934, not 1933. And the famine was basically over by September, 1933.[8]

Nor is there any evidence here about "the highest mortality" being in the "blacklisted counties." Kotkin has either fabricated this factoid himself or copied it from some other source that has made it up.[9]

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[8] *Document* (not page) No. 479 in the same book – just in case this is a mistake by Kotkin – is a letter dated August 21, 1934 about the reorganization of the People's Commissariat for Army and Navy.

Kotkin:

> The peasants, in their land hunger and separate revolution, had made possible the advent of a Bolshevik regime in 1917–18; **now enslaved**, the peasants saved Stalin's rule.[495] (130)

Kotkin does not cite any evidence to support his outrageous contention that peasants in collective farms were "slaves" – because, of course, they were not.

Here is his note 495 (942):

> Famine conditions persisted into late fall 1933 and, in some places, would last through summer 1934. Ammende, *Human Life in Russia*, 80–4. In fall 1933, the regime was pressing for workers to cultivate gardens to grow their own food, on the example of Ukraine's Donetsk region. Pavlov, *Anastas Mikoian*, 71 (citing RGASPI, f. 84, op. 2, d. 19, l. 125–6). Kazakhstan would be given 18,000 tons of food aid by decree on Nov. 28, 1933. Antipova et al., *Golod v SSSR*, 507 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 15, l. 142, 145, 148)."

Ewald Ammende was a Baltic German who was in the USSR in 1934 and claimed – wrongly -- that a new famine would kill millions in 1934-1936. Pavlov, *Anastas Mikoian*, merely documents the fact that Soviet workers were encouraged to plant vegetable gardens.

Kotkin concludes:

> **Marxist imperatives** of transcending capitalism—combined with inordinate willpower—brought apocalypse. (131)

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[9] See Furr, Blood Lies 82-6 for documentation that there is no evidence of this at all: "This decree is restricted to *six villages*."

But he then tells us that the industrialization drive did **not**, in fact, withdraw resources from the countryside or peasantry:

> During the first Five-Year Plan, the volume of investment quadrupled, to 44 percent of GDP by 1932 (measured in 1928 prices), but **none of the massive net increase in investment came from higher agricultural surpluses.**[2] Grain exports did not end up paying for imports of machinery.[3] **Soviet agriculture made no net contribution to industrialization; on the contrary, it was a net recipient of resources during the plan.** True, a key driver of the industrial spurt was new labor power from villages, but the statist system used those workers grossly inefficiently. Another key driver of the spurt was brutally suppressed consumption (reinforced by that thief called inflation). (131)

Other scholars agree: the peasants were not exploited to fund industrialization. But that means that "Marxist imperatives" did *not* cause the famine ("apocalypse"). As for "brutally suppressed consumption" – certainly: there was a serious famine! But the "suppressed consumption" was not caused by Stalin or the Soviet government.

Kotkin gives no evidence, nor even an argument, for his assertion that the labor of former peasants was used "grossly inefficiently." But it can't be true, for what is the basis of comparison? Surely the real "gross inefficiency" was the idle labor in traditional peasant agriculture. Collective farms (*kolkhozy*) and Soviet farms (*sovkhozy*) grew more crops with far less labor, and many peasants went to the cities to find work.[10] In other words, *increased* efficiency in the use of labor.

Kotkin makes this claim (n. 4. p. 943):

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[10] Kotkin's notes 2 and 3 in the quotation above simply document these facts.

Robert Allen argues that per capita consumption, after falling in the early 1930s, increased significantly, being perhaps a fifth higher in 1937 than a decade earlier, but he has rightly been taken to task separately by Davies and Ellman. Allen, Farm to Factory, 147–50, 185–6; R. W. Davies (http://eh.net/book_reviews/farm-to-factory-a-reinterpretation-of-the-soviet-industrial-revolution); Ellman, "Soviet Industrialization."

This claim of Kotkin's is false as well. In the online review Kotkin cites, Davies says that the disagreement about consumption in the 1930s "needs further investigation," but concludes as follows:

> But it is certain that, contrary to popular preconceptions, in the Stalinist period as a whole, between 1938 and the mid-1950s, consumption per head increased substantially in spite of the disastrous impact of the Second World War.

The feat that continues to astound the world is that the USSR became an industrialized nation in a decade *entirely without foreign capital.* During the same decade the Soviet Union modernized its agriculture to the point that the thousand-year cycle of devastating famine was eliminated forever. All this was accomplished simply through the labor of its own people, planned and organized by the Bolshevik Party. Naturally, this is a bone in the throat for Kotkin and for all anticommunists.

Kotkin admits that:

> ... [t]he industrialization and accompanying militarization began to revive the Soviet Union as a great power, **a necessity for survival in the international system...**

Despite this admission Kotkin still insists that "collectivization was not 'necessary' to 'modernize' a peasant economy or industrialize." (131) However, he does not outline any alternative.

The Thousand-Year Cycle of Famine Broken

This brings us to the basic dishonesty of Kotkin's account of Soviet agriculture and the Soviet famine. Kotkin fails to confront – indeed, he completely ignores -- the real reason for collectivization. This was the desperate need to put an end to the thousand-year cycle of devastating famines, recurring every few years.

According to Tauger:

> Russia has a long history of famines, from its earliest history in the tenth century through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In virtually all cases these famines resulted from natural disasters that caused crop failures, shortages, and deaths from starvation and famine-related diseases. In addition to the environmental factors, grain traders, nobles, and others often exploited crop failures to take advantage of high prices, and thereby frequently worsened conditions for poor and vulnerable groups.[11]

The Environmental Causes

Tauger has spent his scholarly career in studying Russian and Soviet agriculture and famines. His research, drawing upon extensive Soviet-era primary sources and Soviet and Russian scholarship, argues that the famine of 1932-33 was caused by an environmental catastrophe.

Tauger's view is frequently attacked or ignored altogether by anticommunists simply because his research does not lend itself to blaming Stalin and the Bolsheviks for the famine. For example, Anne Applebaum and Polish researcher Robert Kuśnierz, both stridently anticommunist, repeat the outrageous lie that Tauger does not cite any evidence![12] Their obvious motive is to discourage

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[11] Tauger, "Famine in Russian History." *Supplement to the Modern Encyclopedia of Russian and Soviet History*, vol. 10. Gulf Breeze Florida, Academic International Press, 2011, 79.
[12] Applebaum, *Red Famine. Stalin's War on Ukraine.* (New York: Doubleday, 2017), 419. For

their readers from ever looking at Tauger's heavily-documented research, which utterly refutes their own falsifications.

Kotkin takes a different approach to Tauger's research. During 2016-2017 Kotkin conferred with Tauger at Princeton University about the famine. But in the *text* of his mammoth book Kotkin does not even summarize, much less critically evaluate, Tauger's evidence and arguments. As we have seen above, Kotkin simply *asserts* that, somehow, Stalin "caused" the famine – though he can cite no evidence to support this claim.

In his *footnotes*, however, Kotkin's tone is different. There he sets forth important aspects of Tauger's research and conclusions.

Kotkin, text (75):

> ...in 1931, a cold spring followed by a summer drought—a fatal combination—struck the Kazakh steppes, Siberia, the Urals, the Volga, and Ukraine.[48]

In his note 48 (924), Kotkin does acknowledge the world-wide drought of 1930-1932:

> Drought, in different ways, affected other world regions around this time. In the United States the "great southern drought" of 1930–31, which coincided with a price collapse and banking failures, inflicted hardship across twenty-three states from West Virginia to Texas; ... French West Africa suffered drought, locusts, and its worst famine ever; the French authorities did not relent on tax demands. **Mortality in French West Africa was disproportionately higher (in an immensely smaller area and overall population) than in the Soviet Union.** China in 1931–32 suffered the opposite problem: large snowmelt and tremendous rainfall that inundated an area equivalent in size to England and half of Scotland,

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quotation in Polish and English from Kuśnierz's book see Furr, Blood Lies 102-103.

> flooding some 52 million people, and killing as many as 2 million from drowning and especially starvation. Tauger, "Natural Disaster," 8, citing Woodruff, *Rare as Rain*.

Kotkin, text (86-7):

> ... the worsening terms of trade and tariffs did force the Soviets to curtail imports of consumer and even capital goods.[131] But the Soviets meticulously paid their debts. The pressure to do so partly explains the regime's continued export of grain despite fears for the harvest and low global prices.[132] Only state-imposed deprivation allowed the USSR to avoid external default.

Kotkin, note 131 (928):

> ... The year 1932 would turn out to be the worst in the history of Soviet foreign trade because of higher tariffs abroad and decreased credit availability.

Kotkin, note 132 (928):

> ... See also Tauger, "1932 Harvest," 88n52.

Here is the text of Tauger's important note:

> According to the commercial counselor of the British Embassy in Moscow, writing in late 1931, "failure [by the Soviet government] to meet its obligations would certainly bring disaster in its train. Not only would further credits cease, but all future exports, all Soviet shipping entering foreign ports, all Soviet property already in foreign countries would be liable to seizure to cover sums due. Admission of insolvency would endanger the achievement of all aspirations based on the five-year plan and might indeed imperil the

existence of the government itself" (PRO FO 371 \5607 N7648/167/38, 6--7). German Chancellor Bruening told a British diplomat in Berlin in early 1932 that if the Soviets "did not meet their bills in some form or other, their credit would be destroyed for good and all" (PRO FO 371 16327 N456/158/38). Dohan notes that the country's major creditors began to reduce their credit offerings to the Soviet Union in 1931-1932, despite Soviet efforts to pay, "Origins of Economic Autarky," 630...

This information is vital to any accurate understanding of the famine. Yet Kotkin hides it from his readers by omitting it entirely from his text and even from his footnotes. To find it one has to obtain this work of Tauger's and then read this footnote. Few, if any, of Kotkin's readers will do so.

Kotkin, text (100):

> Tractive power, seed grain, and fodder were scarce. The spring sowing season had proved short, and wheat sown beginning in late May always produced lower yields and was more susceptible to August rains, which would descend torrentially as early as the beginning of the month. Rust epiphytotics damaged a significant part of the wheat harvest, to the surprise of officials who had failed to identify it.[254]

Kotkin, note 254 (933):

> Peasants could not distinguish between rust and other diseases, a Soviet agronomist reported. But as Tauger has demonstrated, local officials, too, did not understand plant disease and, at harvest time, when they would discover that the crop had been rotted out, would wrongly blame social causes. Tauger, "Natural Disaster," 15 (citing *Na zaschitu urozhaia*, 1933, no. 10: 14–6: S. E. Grushevoi; and RGAE, f. 7486, op. 37, d. 237, l. 388), 40–5.

Kotkin, text (106):

> In September 1932 ... [t]he 1932 harvest was coming in at fewer than 60 million tons, and possibly as low as 50 million, which was close to the horrific result in the famine year of 1921.[293]

Kotkin, note 293 (935):

> **Tauger, who stresses the natural causes of the famine, carefully showed that the annual reports from the collective farms for 1932 implied an extremely low harvest,** and that not only the official figure for the 1932 harvest but revised figures given by Davies and Wheatcroft were likely too high. Ultimately, the size of the 1932 harvest remains uncertain, but the annual report data from 40 percent of the collective farms—which are the only actual harvest data so far discovered—imply a harvest on the order of 50 million tons. Tauger, "1932 Harvest." Davies and Wheatcroft estimate the 1932 harvest at 58–60 million, but that is based on pre-harvest forecasts. It should be noted, however, that **Wheatcroft, who has rejected Tauger's views, often stridently, subsequently allowed 50 million as the lower band of the estimate without then citing Tauger.**

Kotkin, text (130):

> Resolute in extremis, Stalin ordered the forced return of peasant escapees, the blacklisting of entire counties (they would suffer the highest mortality) ...

Tauger, in "Natural Disaster and Human Action" — a work we cited above and one that Kotkin cites elsewhere but not here — states:

> The Ukrainian Central Committee found that **the "blacklisting" of villages** (closing down trade outlets for consumer goods) for failure to meet procurement

> quotas **had had little effect**, because the countryside was "saturated" with consumer goods. (62)

There's nothing here about "entire counties" being blacklisted -- the source cited by Snyder says that the blacklist was confined to **six villages**![13] And what did "blacklisting" mean? Kotkin doesn't tell us, but it "sounds bad," right? It simply meant withholding manufactured goods normally exchanged with the peasants for grain.

Consequently, there is no evidence whatsoever for the claim that "blacklisting" resulted in "higher mortality," as Kotkin asserts.

Kotkin, text (130):

> Officials concluded that they had broken the peasants' will, indirectly suggesting the regime had partnered with famine to achieve subjugation.[493]

This statement is simply untrue. Here is the text of Kotkin's note 493 (942):

> Stalin would later boast in a discussion of five historical turning points—1905, 1917, the Brest-Litovsk peace of 1918, the Russian civil war, "and especially collectivization"—that the latter entailed "a completely novel, historically unprecedented event." Banac, *Diary of Georgi Dimitrov*, 69 (Nov. 11, 1937).

Neither in this note nor anywhere else does Kotkin cite any evidence of "officials concluding that they had broken the peasants will."

Kotkin, text (130):

> Indeed, it was the famished peasants who would lift the regime and the country out of starvation,

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[13] See Furr, Blood Lies 81-85.

> producing between 70 and 77 million tons of grain in 1933, a bumper crop comparable to the miracle of 1930.[494]

Kotkin, note 494 (942):

> The degree to which the regime contributed to the bumper harvest, by the distribution of tractors, seed aid, and food relief, remains a matter of intense controversy. ... **Tauger, seeking to place the Soviet story in a broader one of agricultural modernization, emphasizes how the collective farm system facilitated Soviet relief efforts and the peasants' ability to generate the harvest that saved them and the country.** Tauger, "Soviet Peasants"; Tauger, "Stalin, Soviet Agriculture, and Collectivization," 109–42.

Here at least we see the crux of the problem for Kotkin: Tauger's research shows that *the collective farm system worked!* It not only facilitated overcoming the famine of 1932-33. By putting an end to the medieval system whereby individual peasant families – at least, those who possessed any land at all (a large per centage of peasants had no land) – cultivated narrow strips of land, often far apart from each other, collectivization made possible large-scale, mechanized farming modelled on large American Midwest farms.

And this meant that the famine of 1932-33 was the *last* Soviet famine. Weather conditions did not change – years of bad weather continued to occur every few years. Local food shortages and even limited starvation would sometimes happen.

But with one exception – the famine of 1946-7 -- disastrous famines would never recur.[14] Four such widespread famines, with

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[14] Stephen G. Wheatcroft, the latest student of this famine, concludes that it was caused by catastrophic weather conditions that affected much of the world, "the most serious global food shortage in modern history." In the Soviet Union, its effects were exacerbated by the huge destruction of the war. Wheatcroft is firm that the famine was not caused by Soviet

hundreds of thousands or millions of deaths, had occurred in just the previous fifteen years: in 1917-18, 1920-23, 1924-25, and 1927-28. Thanks to collectivization and the modern, large-scale, mechanized and scientific agriculture it permitted, there were no more famines.

It is obvious from Kotkin's text that he strongly disagrees with this analysis. Kotkin consistently blames Stalin's policies, whether collectivization or industrialization, for causing the famine.

But he never engages the argument to environmental causation in his text. If his readers do not know about it already, they will never know that such an explanation exists. If his readers are already familiar with Tauger's research they will note that Kotkin pointedly ignores it. "Pointedly," because Kotkin acknowledges Tauger's research – but only in his footnotes. Tauger's research is cited fifteen times in Kotkin's *footnotes* (some of which we have quoted above). But Tauger's name does not occur even once in the *text* of Kotkin's book.

In conclusion: Kotkin never cites any evidence to support his often-stated contention that the famine was caused by Stalin.

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policy. See Wheatcroft, "The Soviet Famine of 1946—1947, the Weather and Human Agency in Historical Perspective." *Europe-Asia Studies* 64 no. 6 (2012), 988-1005.

Chapter 2. Kirov and the Kirov Murder

GIGO!

Kotkin argues that Stalin framed the men convicted and executed in the Kirov murder trial of December 28-29, 1934 and that Leonid Nikolaev, Kirov's murderer, acted alone. But it appears that Kotkin has not researched the question of the Kirov murder at all! He simply copies from books by Alla Kirilina and Matthew Lenoe. Neither of these two books is either competent or honest. In my own study of the Kirov murder I have devoted a great deal of attention to analyzing them and exposing their dishonesty. (Furr, Kirov)

But Kotkin does not even see what *is* of value in Lenoe's book. This is Lenoe's proof that Khrushchev's men were lying about the Kirov murder back in the 1950s -- lies that Gorbachev's men simply picked up, dusted off, and recycled in the late 1980s, and that Kirilina, Lenoe, and others pass on to unsuspecting readers.

Why all the dishonesty? As usual, it is in service to the Anti-Stalin Paradigm. In the corrupt field of Soviet history it is considered unacceptable to find Stalin *not* guilty of some crime that he has been charged with. In the introduction to his own book (pp. 16-17) Lenoe apologizes profusely for his conclusion that Stalin did *not* have Kirov murdered. This despite the fact that Gorbachev's men had already reached this conclusion with equal reluctance more than 20 years earlier.

False Claim Of Tension Between Kirov And Stalin

> On February 10, 1934, Stalin and his inner circle met, apparently before the Central Committee plenum that evening, and he proposed that Kirov relocate to Moscow as a Central Committee secretary. "What are you talking about?!" Molotov later recalled of Kirov's response. "I'll be no good here. In Leningrad I can do

as well as you, but what can I do here?" Some evidence suggests that Orjonikidze supported Kirov's refusal, Stalin stalked out, and Kirov went to mollify him.[220] (161-2)

Note 220 (952): Chuev, *Sto sorok*, 307–8, 478; Chuev, *Molotov*, 375–6; Krasnikov, *Kirov v Leningrade*, 187–8; Rosliakov, *Ubiistvo*, 28–9. There is some ambiguity as to whether the Kirov incident took place in a narrow circle or at the Central Committee plenum.

So Kotkin knows exactly what happened at this "meeting" and even the exact words spoken by Kirov, but doesn't know where the "meeting" took place? What nonsense! This is a phony footnote. Neither version of Chuev's conversations with Molotov (*Sto sorok besed s Molotovym* and *Molotov. Poluderzhavnyi Vlastelin*) documents Stalin's "stalking out" or "Kirov going to mollify him."

Rosliakov claims this happened at a Politburo meeting. But he, a minor official in Leningrad, had no way of knowing what went on in the Politburo and is, at best, repeating a rumor – if he didn't invent it himself. So Rosliakov's account is useless as history and Kotkin has no business citing it. But how are Kotkin's readers to know that?

Krasnikov's account does not support, but rather contradicts, Kotkin's story that Kirov protested a transfer to Moscow. According to Krasnikov, Stalin urged Kirov to travel to Kazakhstan to help organize the harvest and then to move to Moscow.

Предложение о поездки в Казахстан Киров воспринял как должное, а от перехода на работу непосредственно в аппарат ЦК ВКП(б) тактично уклонился, упросив оставать его в Ленинград до конца второй пятилетки и завершени реконструкции города. (187-188)

The proposal to travel to Kazakhstan Kirov accepted as a necessity, but he tactfully evaded the transfer to work directly in the apparatus of the Central Committee of the CPSU (b), requesting to remain in

> Leningrad until the end of the second five-year plan and the completion of the reconstruction of the city.

That's it! Nothing about any disagreement, argument with Stalin, "Stalin stalking out," etc. Yet another phony citation by Kotkin of a source that does not provide any evidence at all for a fact-claim in the text of his book.

What "Witnesses"?

Concerning the December 28-29, 1934 trial of the Zinovievist group to which Nikolaev belonged, Kotkin states:

> In Leningrad, Ulrich opened the closed trial on December 28 at 2:20 p.m., and read the guilty verdicts before dawn the next morning: death penalty. **Not a single Smolny witness had been summoned to the trial.** (213)

This is nonsense, and dishonest to boot. Neither Kotkin nor anyone else has seen the trial transcript – it is still secret. What's more, *there were no "Smolny witnesses" to call!* Kirov's bodyguard, Mikhail Borisov, was too far behind Kirov to see Nikolaev shoot him, and had been killed in an auto accident on December 4. Aside from the assassin Nikolaev himself, **no one** had witnessed the murder.

Kotkin's "Smolny witness" business is a dishonest blind. Does Kotkin want us to believe that there was no "due process," or something? The trial was not about whether Nikolaev had shot Kirov – he had been caught on the spot and never denied it. The question was whether Nikolaev's thirteen fellow members of the Zinovievist underground were co-conspirators in the murder. None of these men were present when Nikolaev killed Kirov. So "Smolny witnesses," – had there in fact been any – would have been irrelevant to this question.

Kotkin:

> (Nearly fourscore of them—**every witness to the events that day** and many others—would soon be transferred to other work, expelled from the party, or exiled.) (213)

Kotkin cites no evidence to support this. Of course! There *were no* "witnesses to the event" at all!

Khrushchev-Era GIGO Again

> "Nikolaev shouted, 'Severe,'" according to one of Agranov's soft-pedaling telegrams to Stalin, which failed to report that Nikolaev and others recanted their testimony.[144]
>
> Note 144 (963): 144. Vinogradov, *Genrikh Iagoda,* 396–404 (TsA FSB, f. 3, op. 2, d. 60, l. 48–56, 33); Lenoe, *Kirov Murder*, 358–77. Others have Nikolaev **supposedly** falling to the ground and shouting, "You cannot shoot me. Comrade Stalin promised . . ." Kirilina, *Rikoshet*, 67.

Lenoe states that in 1956, during Khrushchev's campaign of attacking Stalin, a number of the surviving participants in or witnesses to the trial claimed that Nikolaev first recanted, then reaffirmed, his testimony implicating others. All this is rumor and/or deliberate falsification. Kirilina, on whose book Lenoe relies heavily, does not contain this supposed claim of Nikolaev's. Lenoe notes that these Khrushchev-era accounts "may be embellished." (Lenoe 370)

Khrushchev's goal was to find evidence that Stalin had Kirov murdered. Unable to do this, his men fell back on the theory that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman." Aleksandr Iakovlev, Politburo member and Gorbachev's specialist in spreading anticommunist and anti-Stalin lies, twice demanded that Gorbachev's special commission come up with evidence to charge Stalin with Kirov's murder. But despite heroic efforts in scouring the archives they

were unable to do so. So they fell back once again on the "lone gunman" theory.

Lenoe's book is highly dishonest in many respects, as we have demonstrated in great detail. (Furr, Kirov) But Lenoe shows convincingly that Khrushchev and his KGB (the former NKVD) chief, Ivan Serov, lied about the Kirov murder to try to blame Stalin. Twenty-five years later, Gorbachev's men dusted off these old Khrushchev-era lies and fabricated some new ones of their own.

Lenoe convincingly explains the reason why Khrushchev and Serov lied about the evidence that Nikolaev had indeed been a member of the Zinovievist conspiracy.

> The [Molotov] commission was charged with investigating the show trials of the later 1930s and determining whether the charges were valid. The Kirov murder and the trials of the "Leningrad Center" and "Moscow Center" that immediately followed were just the starting point of the inquiry, but everything that followed depended on these events. **If the official charges in the first two trials – that former Zinoviev supporters had conspired to murder Kirov – were entirely bogus, then the indictments in all of the succeeding show trials collapsed. The latter indictments were built on the earlier ones .... But if there was some truth to the charge that Zinovievites conspired to kill Kirov, then that preserved the possibility of arguing that the later charges were also valid, at least in part.** Therefore Serov and Rudenko (or their subordinates who authored the memoranda) chose to make a clear-cut argument that Nikolaev had had no relationship at all with the ex-Zinoviev supporters convicted in the trial of the "Leningrad Center."

It appears that Serov or his boss had thought through this strategy, to deny any connection at all between

> Nikolaev and the Zinovievites, even before the "Secret Speech." (Lenoe 591-2; cf. Furr, Kirov 164-5)

The evidence is overwhelming that the clandestine Zinovievist conspiratorial group who were tried, convicted, and executed along with Nikolaev, were guilty as charged. I demonstrate this in detail in my book. But Lenoe goes on to "believe" Gorbachev's men even though they were clearly lying just as Khrushchev's men had been doing.

As Lenoe points out in the passage quoted above, the Kirov murder leads inexorably to the three Moscow Trials. This threatens to dismantle the Anti-Stalin Paradigm of Soviet history. According to this paradigm, *all* the defendants in the three Moscow Trials of 1936, 1937, and 1938 *must* have been innocent, "framed" by Stalin for some reason or other. Therefore, the Kirov defendants must have been innocent too, and also "framed" by Stalin.

Concocting A "Lone Gunman" Theory

Kotkin:

> The executions were carried out within an hour; ... Kotolynov was shot last. "This whole trial is rubbish," he had told Agranov and Vyshinsky. "People have been executed. Now I'll be executed, too. But all of us, with the exception of Nikolaev, are not guilty of anything."[146] (213)
>
> Note 146 (963): Sedov et al., "Spravka"; Kirilina, *Neizvestnyi Kirov*, 302–3; Lenoe, *Kirov Murder*, 370–1 (RGANI, f. 6, p. 13, d. 24, l. 51–68).

Sedov et al. is the report sent by the Politburo special commission to Gorbachev's main expert on ideology, Aleksandr Iakovlev. Iakovlev had tasked this high-level commission to find evidence that Stalin had had Kirov murdered. When they reported to him that they were unable to do so, he sent them back to try again. This "Spravka" is their final response, in which they conclude that

Nikolaev was a "lone gunman." But they give *no evidence* that this was the case! As for these supposed last words by Kotolynov, they do not even cite a source.[1]

In fact this is what Katsafa testified to Khrushchev's men on April 3, 1956. Even Lenoe doubts that it happened, saying: "If this conversation actually took place..." Why would Katsafa, an NKVD guard, have been present?

Kirilina cites Iurii Sedov, in *Trud* Nov. 25, 1990. Sedov, whom both Lenoe and Kotkin cite, is dishonest, though Lenoe calls him "a reliable researcher." My Kirov book contains a whole chapter on Sedov and his falsifications.

Katsafa's motive in fabricating such testimony is clear. His earlier testimony, that Nikolaev had implicated his fellow Zinovievists by talking in his sleep, had been important to the investigation. Khrushchev was busy executing, after phony trials, NKVD men who failed to implicate Stalin and Beria in crimes.[2]

Lenoe calls Katsafa's testimony about Nikolaev's sleep talk "a schoolboy lie." (Lenoe 283) But Lenoe is "bluffing" here — he has no evidence to support this. It is simply inconvenient for the Gorbachev-Lenoe notion that Nikolaev was a "lone gunman," so Lenoe wishes to dismiss it.

Iagoda's Collaboration Covered Up

Kotkin writes:

> Hundreds more would be shot, none of whom had any link to the murder. (Union-wide, as many as 6,500 people might have been arrested and charged under

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[1] Sedov et al., "Spravka," is also online at http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/68180 It will be far easier for those who read Russian to access it here than to obtain the volume it was published in, RKEB 3, 459-507.

[2] A well-known example is that of Boris Rodos, whose case we discuss briefly in a later chapter. For the case of Pavel Sudoplatov, see Chapter 15 of the present book.

the December 1 antiterror law in the first month alone.)[147]

Note 147 (963): Maslov and Chistiakov, "Stalinskie repressii i sovetskaia iutsitsiia," 105

Maslov and Chistiakov, publishing in an official journal of the Gorbachev Communist Party, give no evidence whatever for this statement. They also use the term "repressed" (*repressirovany*) which can mean anything from demotion in one's job or being transferred to another post, to arrest.

However, it is an interesting and important fact – though Kotkin does not mention it – that some dozens of terrorists – mainly White Guardists, apparently – were shot during the first days after the Kirov murder, when Genrikh Iagoda, chief of the NKVD, and others were spreading the story that the murder was the work of these émigré groups.

After his arrest in March, 1937, Iagoda testified that he had tried to deflect attention away from the conspiratorial groups as much as possible, since he was himself involved in the leadership of the Rightist conspiracy. Iagoda had opposed the assassination of Kirov but at length compromised and agreed not to hinder it. This testimony is in the Vinogradov book *Genrikh Iagoda*. Kotkin cites this book many times, but he does not inform his readers about this.

Phony Claim of "Phony Confessions"

Kotkin:

The NKVD had been planning a second public trial of eight "Zinovievites" willing to incriminate themselves, with Draule testifying about their links to Nikolaev. In the event, she would be tried in camera, while several high-profile Zinovievites were added to the eight unknowns for a public trial, which took place January 15–16. The nineteen defendants, now headlined by Zinoviev himself, Kamenev, and Grigory Yevdokimov,

> were charged with fostering a "moral atmosphere" conducive to the terrorism that had resulted in Kirov's death. **They had been promised their lives if they fulfilled their party duty and publicly confessed.** (218-219)

The sentence in boldface is a fabrication. Not even Kirilina or Lenoe make this claim. No wonder Kotkin cites no evidence – not even, as he so often does, phony "evidence" – to support this statement. There is no evidence that any of these men had been "promised their lives" if they "fulfilled their party duty and publicly confessed."

Kotkin omits the unsupported rumor that Nikolaev killed Kirov because the latter was having an affair with Draule. But Kotkin can't resist accusing Kirov of "womanizing":

> Kirov was also an infamous womanizer, whose carousing was a matter of citywide gossip. ... To what extent she knew of her husband's extramarital affairs—ballerinas, young women in the apparatus—remains unclear, but they were certainly Medved's worry: he had to help conceal them, even as he was under severe pressure from Pauker in Moscow to strengthen Kirov's protection.[46] (194)

> Note 46 (960): Tumshis and Papchinskii, *1937. Bol'shaia chistka*, 37-8.

Tumshis and Papchinskii *claim* that Kirov had affairs but cite no evidence whatever, not even rumors (which of course are not evidence either). So Kotkin has no evidence whatever that Kirov had *any* extra-marital affairs. He does not even document the "city-wide gossip." We'll return to Kotkin's omissions about Draule in Chapter 14.

To Kotkin's Disappointment, Zinoviev And Kamenev Confessed

Kotkin:

> Zinoviev admitted that he'd had conversations with people whom the NKVD called the Leningrad Center, for example with Vladimir Levin back in 1932, during his work in livestock requisitions. Kamenev at first refused to go along with the canard that his private conversations signified participation in a so-called Moscow Center or had somehow inspired acts of terrorism.[181] (219)

Notes 181 (964): Iakovlev et al., *Reabilitatsiia: Politicheskie protsessy*, 162, 166. [In fact this statement of Kamenev's is on p. 164, not p. 166. - GF]

Just before the trial Zinoviev wrote a long, detailed confession in which he confirmed that there had indeed been a "Moscow Center," in contact with the "Leningrad Center" that had murdered Kirov. This confession is reprinted in *Reabilitatsiia – Politicheskie Protsessy* (1991), a book that Kotkin references here and several more times. But Kotkin conceals the existence of Zinoviev's confession from his readers.

In July and August, 1936, confronted with accusations from their own followers, Zinoviev and Kamenev finally conceded that they had indeed helped to plan Kirov's murder. We now have pretrial confessions from both of them, along with the extensive pretrial confessions by Iagoda, to confirm this. I quote some of these pretrial confessions in Chapter Twelve of *The Murder of Sergei Kirov.*

According to Arch Getty,

> By 23 July [1936] Kamenev was admitting membership in a counterrevolutionary center that

planned terror, but he denied being one of the organizers; he implicated Zinoviev as being closer to the matter. Three days later Zinoviev was confronted by one of this followers, Karev, who directly accused him. Zinoviev asked that the interrogation be stopped because he wanted to make a statement that, in the event, amounted to a full confession of organizing assassination and terror.[3]

Zinoviev and Kamenev admitted their guilt again at the public First Moscow Trial in August, 1936, and yet again in their appeals clemency, which were not published until 1992.

False Claim Of "Falsification"

Kotkin:

> Yagoda had no issues with framing Zinoviev and "Zinovievites," a scenario that Stalin, in any case, did not come to immediately ... The fabrications, moreover, exacerbated the professional degradation of the secret police, which enraged Stalin, and for which he had recently abolished the OGPU in favor of the NKVD. The fabrications also hurt the USSR's reputation internationally, to which Stalin had become more sensitive.

There is no evidence whatever that Zinoviev and the Zinovievists were "framed" for the Kirov assassination. All the evidence we have supports the hypothesis that Zinoviev and Kamenev were guilty of planning Kirov's assassination. See Zinoviev's confession-interrogation of July 28, 1936, in the Volkogonov Papers, which Kotkin often cites. This has long been online:

* in Russian at http://tinyurl.com/zinoviev28jul36 , and

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[3] J. Arch Getty, Oleg Naumov. *Yezhov. The Rise of Stalin's "Iron Fist."* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008, p. 191.

* in English translation at http://tinyurl.com/zinoviev072836

We also have Zinoviev's appeal of his death sentence, in which he repeats his confession of guilt:

В Президиум ЦИК СССР.

Заявление

О совершенных мною преступлениях против Партии и Советской Власти я сказал до конца пролетарскому суду.

Прошу мне верить, что **врагом я больше не являюсь** и остаток своих сил горячо желаю отдать социалистической родине.

Настоящим я прошу Президиум ЦИК СССР о помиловании меня.

Г. Зиновьев.

26 августа 36

4 часа 30 минут."

To the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR

Statement

I have told everything about the crimes I have committed against the Party and Soviet authority.

I ask you to believe me that **I am no longer an enemy** and that I wish to give the rest of my strength to the socialist motherland.

I hereby request the Presidium of the CEC of the USSR to pardon me.[4]

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[4] "Rasskaz o desiati rasstrelliannykh." ("Story of Ten Who Were Shot.") *Izvestiia*, September

We have no evidence that the confessions of the defendants at the Kirov murder trial were in any way fabricated, faked, dictated to them, or made under compulsion, threats, or with promises of any kind. No one – not Kirilina, Lenoe, or Kotkin – has any such evidence either.

All the evidence now available – and there is a great deal of it – supports the hypothesis that Kirov was indeed murdered by a clandestine terrorist Zinovievist group which was allied with a similar secret terrorist group of Trotskyists, and that Zinoviev, Kamenev, and their Moscow-based group collaborated with the Leningrad-based Zinovievist group in planning the murder.

2, 1992, p. 3

Chapter 3. Ordzhonikidze's death

Sergo Ordzhonikidze, an Old Bolshevik (Party member since before the Revolution) and longtime close associate of Stalin's, was People's Commissar (= Minister) of Heavy Industry from January 5, 1932, until his death during the night of February 17-18, 1937. Kotkin's account of Ordzhonikidze, his death, and his relations with Stalin and Beria, are false from beginning to end. In part, this is due to the fact that Kotkin has clearly never studied this question.

But why hasn't he studied it? Because he thinks he already knows the conclusion: "Stalin was responsible!" This has been the only officially acceptable explanation since Nikita Khrushchev's day. It makes a good anti-Stalin story, so why question it?

There is no way to make Ordzhonikidze's death appear the least sinister unless you falsify it So, instead of studying it himself – the responsibility of all historians – he cherry-picks fact-claims from rumors, phony studies, and dishonest secondary sources from anticommunist writers.

Kotkin has chosen to believe these lies and foist them upon his readers. It's the "safe" thing to do. Not to do this might leave him open to being called "an apologist for Stalinist crimes," or something. Not Kotkin!

Kotkin has taken the general shape of his false account of Ordzhonikidze's death from Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" to the XX Party Congress of February 25, 1956. There, as part of his attack on Stalin and Lavrentii Beria, Khrushchev stated:

> Beria also handled cruelly the family of comrade Ordzhonikidze. Why? Because Ordzhonikidze had tried to prevent Beria from realising his shameful plans. Beria had cleared from his way all persons who could possibly interfere with him. Ordzhonikidze was

always an opponent of Beria, which he told to Stalin. Instead of examining this affair and taking appropriate steps, Stalin allowed the liquidation of Ordzhonikidze's brother and brought Ordzhonikidze himself to such a state that he was forced to shoot himself.[1]

We know today that Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" was a lie from beginning to end. Can Kotkin really be unaware of this?

Of Two Sources, Choose the Phony One

Kotkin relies principally on two dishonest sources. The first is the 1963 biography of Ordzhonikidze by Ilia M. Dubinskii-Mukhadze, which outlines – without sources or evidence of any kind – the story that Stalin and Ordzhonikidze had a quarrel, after which Ordzhonikidze shot himself.

But Kotkin has to be aware that the 1967 edition of this same book omits all of this – simply leaves it out! If he doesn't know this, he is incompetent to write about Ordzhonikidze at all. Khrushchev was ousted in October 1964. Under Leonid Brezhnev the anti-Stalin lies promoted under Khrushchev (and by Khrushchev directly) were significantly toned down.

Kotkin's second dishonest source is the book *In Stalin's Shadow: The Career of "Sergo" Ordzhonikidze* by Oleg Khlevniuk. Khlevniuk is a shameless falsifier without any shred of objectivity, fanatically anti-Stalin and anticommunist. Khlevniuk too uses only the 1963 version of Dubinskii-Mukhadze's work. Khlevniuk also fabricates certain details himself.

Kotkin also ignores the 2008 article by Vladimir Bobrov.[2] In it Bobrov shows that there is no reason whatever to doubt that

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[1] At https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2007/apr/26/greatspeeches5 There are many translations of Khrushchev's infamous "Secret Speech."

[2] "The Mystery of Ordzhonikidze's Death." (2008) English translation at

Ordzhonikidze died of a heart attack, as was announced at the time. Khrushchev and Mikoian, the two sources for the suicide version, each say that the other one told them about the suicide! They also contradict themselves. For example, Khrushchev said in 1961 that he learned of Ordzhonikidze's suicide "after the war" while later, in his memoirs, he claimed he learned it "during the war."

Bobrov shows that the suicide story, which may have originated as a Moscow rumor, was introduced by Khrushchev himself into his infamous "Secret Speech" at the XX Party Congress on February 25, 1956. Here I will treat this question briefly. I have discussed it more fully in my book *Khrushchev Lied*, section 48, pp. 114-116 and 387-388.

No "Strained Relations"

Kotkin:

> Relations with Orjonikidze had become strained ... (237)

Kotkin cites no evidence at all to support this claim, And for the best of reasons: there *is* no such evidence. But this lie is central to Oleg Khlevniuk's dishonest portrayal of Ordzhonikidze's death, which Kotkin adopts.

Kotkin:

> In October 1936, **Stalin had Orjonikidze's elder brother Papuliya arrested,** a first for a relative of a sitting politburo member. Orjonikidze demanded to see his brother, but Lavrenti Beria, the policeman turned party boss in Georgia, where Papuliya worked, said he could allow that only after concluding the

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https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/bobrov-ordzhon08eng.html ; Russian original at https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/bobrov-ordzhon08.html (text encoding Windows-1251).

investigation.[224] **Orjonikidze understood that it was not Beria but Stalin who was behind the incarceration.**[225] On October 8, Stalin had Kaganovich's deputy Yakov Livshits removed as deputy commissar of railways and, six days later, arrested.[226] (348)

Note 224 (987): 224. *Izvestiia*, Nov. 22, 1963.

This is all false. This is a Khrushchev-era article that echoes the lies in the first edition, later withdrawn, of Dubinskii-Mukhadze's book. But how could Kotkin's readers know this? And – wait a minute – who uses newspaper articles as primary source evidence for a historical event?

Note 225 (987): 225. Knight, *Beria*, 73–4; Vaksberg, *Neraskrytye tainy*, 123.

Knight, *Beria*, 73-4, says that this arrest did *not* disturb Beria's and Ordzhonikidze's friendship! And neither of these sources has anything about Sergo "knowing Stalin was behind the incarceration."

By Vaksberg's own admission, what he writes is only hearsay – rumor. In any case, there is nothing about this subject in Vaksberg, page 123. Moreover, Vaksberg states on page 124 that Papulia was arrested in November, not October.

Arkadii Vaksberg was a strongly anticommunist journalist and author of potboilers who had no way of knowing what Ordzhonikidze "knew" and doesn't claim to know here. No decent historian would ever Vaksberg as a source. But Vaksberg writes what Kotkin wants, so in it goes – GIGO!

More Phony References

Kotkin prints a number of lies about Beria and Ordzhonikidze:

> He [Pavlunovsky] was arrested on June 28, part of Orjonikidze's "clan" that Stalin was extirpating.[73] (511)
>
> Note 73 (1010): 73. Already back on Oct. 21, 1933, Stalin had written to Kaganovich: "Pavlunovsky destroyed the artillery. Orjonikidze must be given a scolding for having trusted two or three of his favorites. He was ready to give state benefits to these imbeciles." Stalin to Kaganovich, RGASPI, f. 81, op. 3, d. 100, l. 38–9. Pavlunovsky would be shot on Oct. 30, 1937.

There's nothing here about Stalin "extirpating" Ordzhonikidze's "clan" (whatever that means).[3]

Another such lie is the following:

> Gamsakhurdia ... shared **Beria's loathing of Orjonikidze** ... But Gamsakhurdia had been among those deported to Solovki in connection with the 1924 uprising, and after his release and return, Beria had had him rearrested for an affair with a young publishing executive arrested for Trotskyism. But then Beria pardoned him, observing that sexual intercourse with enemies of the people was permitted.[82] (513)
>
> Note 82 (1010): 82. Rayfield, "Death of Paolo Iashvili," 636, 647; Rayfield, Literature of Georgia, 247. Countless others were executed, including Dimitri Shevardnadze, a painter who had established the country's national gallery in 1920 (and had co-designed the emblem of Georgia's Menshevik-dominated republic of 1918–1921); he had led opposition to a proposal by Beria to tear down

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[3] According to one of the reports Ezhov gave to Stalin, Pavlunovsky was involved in a conspiracy to murder Ordzhonikidze! Lubianka-Golgofa, 116.

> Tbilisi's ancient Metekhi Church (which would survive).

There's nothing in the Rayfield article about any of Kotkin's statements, and nothing about Beria's "loathing of Ordzhonikidze." On the contrary, Sergo Beria writes that his father and Ordzhonikidze were best friends! Sergo says he was named after Ordzhonikidze, who was his godfather and "very close to my father his whole life."[4]

According to the Russian Wikipedia page on Gamsakhurdia, it was Beria who freed him from arrest for ties with Lidia Gasviani, "exposed as a Trotskyist." The story in Rayfield (page 249 in the 2013 edition) about Beria releasing Gamsakhurdia, who "slapped him on the back and told him that sexual relations with enemies of the people were permitted" is undocumented – evidently, a rumor.

... And More Phony References

Kotkin:

> Also on December 4, 1936, in a memo circulated to all politburo members, Stalin dressed down Orjonikidze for having hidden long-ago correspondence with Beso Lominadze, who had been pronounced a posthumous enemy after committing suicide, while party boss, in Magnitogorsk the year before. The accusation of having concealed information from "the Central Committee" was one of Stalin's most threatening. What also rankled was that Lominadze's suicide note had been read over the telephone to Orjonikidze by Lominadze's deputy in Magnitogorsk, and that Orjonikidze was providing a pension to Lominadze's widow and money to their son (named Sergo, in

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[4] "Но кто знает, как дороги были всю жизнь и моему отцу, и всей нашей семье эти два человека. Серго Орджоникидзе - мой крестный отец. Меня ведь и назвали в честь Серго." Sergo Beria, *Moi Otets – Lavrentii Beria.* Moscow: Sovremennik, 1994. Online at lib.ru/MEMUARY/BERIA/sber.txt

Orjonikidze's honor). **Stalin had reports** that Orjonikidze was bad-mouthing him behind his back to his cronies Mamiya Orakhelashvili and Shalva Eliava.[281] At the plenum, Orjonikidze joined in the vicious attacks against Bukharin. (358)

Note 281 (1006): 281. RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 132, l. 132; Khlevniuk, *Khoziain*, 277.

This is all dishonest. This "memo" is Stalin's letter to Politburo members of December 4, 1936 pointing out that Lominadze had told Ordzhonikidze in 1929 about his oppositional views and Ordzhonikidze had not informed the Central Committee.[5] As a result Lominadze was appointed First Secretary of the Trans-Caucasus committee of the party. Therefore, Stalin was indeed criticizing Ordzhonikidze here.

But Kotkin omits the fact, known since 1980, that Lominadze was expected by Trotsky's son Leon Sedov, writing to Trotsky in 1932, to join the Bloc of Rights, Trotskyists, and other oppositionists before long.[6] This is objective information, from Trotsky's own papers in the Harvard Trotsky Archive. It could not possibly have been fabricated to falsely implicate Lominadze. So Stalin was correct – Ordzhonikidze's keeping silent about Lominadze's anti-party sentiments was indeed a serious political error.

Moreover, Lominadze lied even in his suicide note to Ordzhonikidze, which was read out to the latter in a telephone conversation by Lominadze's second-in-command. In it Lominadze continues to claim that he is being slandered. But now we know that he was lying, even here in his suicide note. Khlevniuk quotes this directly, in a book cited by Kotkin (1091). But Kotkin fails to inform his readers about it.[7]

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[5] I would like to thank my Moscow-based colleague Vladimir L'vovich Bobrov for obtaining for me a copy of this archival document.

[6] Pierre Broué, "Trotsky et le bloc des oppositions de 1932." *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* 5 (Jan-Mar 1980), pp. 5-37. The Russian original, together with my translation, are in Furr, Trotsky's 'Amalgams', Appendix, Document 1, 504 ff.

On pp. 271-2, not 277, Khlevniuk reports, from his own book, that in September 1937, long after Ordzhonikidze's death, Orakhelashvili admitted that Ordzhonikidze had listened to Lominadze attack Stalin. Khlevniuk's source is the 1991 work *Beria. Konets Kar'ery*, page 387.

That essay is by Popov and Oppokov, two Gorbachev-era writers who composed a long series of articles attacking Beria. P. and O. cite very few sources, all of them from secret and unpublished documents, so no one could check them. But *no* sources at all are given here. So this fact-claim is, at best, a rumor. Rumors are not evidence, nor are collections of rumors, history.

Kotkin's claim that "Stalin had reports" is an especially flagrant falsehood. For Khlevniuk states plainly that we do *not* have any reports:

> Пока мы не располагаем донесениями НКВД Сталину по поводу настроений его соратников. Но велика вероятность того, что сигналы о встречах и разговорах закавказцев, собиравшихся у Орджоникидзе, докладывались Сталину. (272)
>
> **While we do not have reports of the NKVD to Stalin about the mood of his comrades-in-arms**, there is a high probability that the signals about the meetings and conversations of the Transcaucasians who gathered at Ordzhonikidze were reported to Stalin.

Evidently, Kotkin has simply invented the "Stalin had reports" business. As for Shalva Eliava, Khlevniuk does not even mention him.

Kotkin's claim of "attacks against Bukharin" at the December 1936 Central Committee Plenum is false too. The materials we have from that Plenum contain *no* "vicious attacks" against Bukharin by anyone, and not a word by Ordzhonikidze on any subject.

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[7] Khlevniuk, O.V. *Politbiuro. Mekhanizmy politicheskoi vlasti v 1930-e gody*. (1996), p. 171.

Was Piatakov Literally A Skeleton?

Kotkin:

> On the evening of the 29th, Orjonikidze visited his former first deputy Pyatakov in prison for the last time and observed his utterly smashed face. (373)

There is no reference here for this statement. Presumably Kotkin has in mind Bukharin's alleged remark to his wife, Larina, that Kotkin quoted earlier in the text (370):

> Meanwhile, Stalin had Bukharin summoned to a confrontation with Radek and Pyatakov, who were delivered from prison. Bukharin told his wife that Radek had denounced him as a spy and terrorist with whom he had plotted Stalin's murder, and that Pyatakov resembled a "skeleton with its teeth knocked out."[345]

Note. 345 (990): 345. Larina, *This I Cannot Forget*, 312

Kotkin's statement is absurd. Piatakov's face was certainly not literally "smashed." Larina doesn't even claim that it was, any more than she claimed Piatakov was literally a "skeleton." Ordzhonikidze was present at the Bukharin-Piatakov confrontation, the text of which been published.[8] Nothing was mentioned there about any injury to Piatakov. A little more than a month later Piatakov was a defendant at the public Moscow Trial of January, 1937, where he testified at length. No one in the large audience, including many foreign observers, mentioned any injuries to Piatakov's face.

What's more, it is quite possible that Bukharin never used these words. Larina claimed to be remembering what Bukharin had told her many years before. She first drafted her memoir during the

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[8] "Стенограммы очных ставок в ЦК ВКП(б). Декабрь 1936 года." *Вопросы истории.* 2002. №4. С.3-12.

Khrushchev years, when she was trying unsuccessfully to have Bukharin "rehabilitated." It contains other false statements.[9] It reflects the fact that under Khrushchev the best way to get someone "rehabilitated" was to slander Stalin and Beria as much as possible.

A Confrontation That Never Was

Kotkin refers to a "confrontation with Radek and Piatakov." This too is false, for there was no such confrontation. Bukharin had a face-to-face confrontation with Piatakov on December 7, 1936. His confrontation with Radek was more than a month later, on January 13, 1937.

The Falsified Tale of Sergo's Death

Kotkin:

> On February 17, 1937, Orjonikidze arrived at his commissariat, across the way from Old Square, at 12:10 p.m., two hours later than usual; he seems to have gone over to talk to Stalin, being one of the few people who could enter the dictator's Kremlin apartment.[50] Upon returning to his own Kremlin apartment, in the same Amusement Palace, **Orjonikidze *evidently* had a shouting match over the telephone with Stalin, with profanities in Russian and Georgian.**[51] The NKVD had been searching Orjonikidze's apartment, an obvious provocation.[52] The remainder of Orjonikidze's day was occupied with meetings, including a politburo meeting at 3:00 p.m. to go over the plenum reports. Stalin hand-corrected Orjonikidze's draft resolution on sabotage, inserting passages about "Trotskyite

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[9] Igor' Pykhalov and Vladimir L. Bobrov have analyzed one in "Iakir i Bukharin: spletni i dokumenty." *Rossiiskii Kolokol*, 2005; also Chapter 7 of Pykhalov's book *Velikii Obolganniy Vozhd'* (2010).

wreckers." In the early evening, Orjonikidze made his way back to the commissariat for more meetings, leaving for home at 12:20 a.m. (February 18). Later that morning, he did not emerge from his bedroom to take breakfast. When one of his subordinates came by in the afternoon, he refused to receive him. **At around dusk, his wife, Zinaida, heard a gunshot in the bedroom. Orjonikidze was dead.**[53] (384)

Notes 50-53 (992):

50. *Za industrializatsiiu,* Feb. 21, 1937: 6 (A. P. Zaveniagin); Orjonikidze bumped into Bukharin's wife, Anna, on Kremlin grounds returning to his apartment. Larina, *Nezabyvaemoe,* 333.

51. Dubinskii-Mukharadze [sic – GF], *Ordzhonikidze,* 6. Orjonikidze had lived in the so-called children's section of the Grand Kremlin Palace (Krestinsky lived here, too, as did Sverdlov's widow Klavdiya and her son Andrei, an NKVD operative), but when the palace was being reconstructed, Orjonikidze and others moved into the Amusement Palace, near the Trinity Gate, where Stalin had lived until the 1932 suicide of Nadya and where Bukharin lived.

52. *Izvestiia,* Nov. 22, 1963; Dubinskii-Mukhadze, *Ordzhonikidze,* 6. The evening before, Yezhov was received alone in the Little Corner. *Na prieme,* 202. Alternately, the apartment search may have occurred on Feb. 16, prompting Orjonikidze's tête-à-tête with Stalin on the morning of Feb. 17.

53. Khlevniuk, *In Stalin's Shadow,* 143–9; Medvedev, *Let History Judge,* 402–3. Around midnight, Orjonikidze had met with his deputy for the chemical industry to discuss Donbass coke plant sabotage. After leaving the commissariat, Orjonikidze might have

> spoken again with Stalin. Dubinskii-Mukhadze, *Ordzhonikidze,* 6.

Sergo and Stalin "evidently" had a shouting match? So, where's the "evidence"? The fact is that not one of these statements of Kotkin's is true. A characteristic error is Kotkin's misreading of Larina's memoir, page 333, as saying that Ordzhonikidze was "returning to his apartment." (note 50) Actually, it was Larina who was returning home and Ordzhonikidze who was leaving.

> Подойдя к дому, я увидела, что из соседнего с нашим подъезда, ближе к Троицким воротам, вышел Серго Орджоникидзе и направился к машине. (333)
>
> As I was approaching our home I saw that Sergo Ordzhonikidze came out of the entrance next to ours, closer to the Trinity Gate, and headed for the car.

They were already in the Kremlin. Heading for a car meant that Ordzhonikidze was leaving, not arriving.

Khlevniuk has invented Ordzhonikidze's last evening of life. He has based his account on the dishonest *first edition* of Dubinsky-Mukhadze's book, which relates the completely undocumented tale about Ordzhonikidze's shouting match with Stalin, etc. As we pointed out above, the *second edition* of 1967 takes all this out. There is no evidence that Ordzhonikidze's apartment was searched or that he had a "meeting ("tête-à-tête") with Stalin. Or, indeed, that he committed suicide at all.

Praise = "Ridicule": Kotkin

Kotkin (about the February-March 1937 Central Committee Plenum):

> On the morning of February 28, Molotov, in place of Orjonikidze, delivered the report on sabotage in industry, and ridiculed Orjonikidze's counterinvestigations that minimized wrecking. (368)

This is false. In fact, the truth is just the opposite. Molotov *praised* Ordzhonikidze's anti-sabotage ("wrecking") activities multiple times (e.g. *Voprosy Istorii* 8 (1993), p. 16). Nor did Molotov "ridicule" Ordzhonikidze's investigations. Molotov said that the Ginzburg-Pavlunovsky investigation begun at Ordzhonikidze's order was mistaken in finding that "sabotage at the site did not attain a significant development." Molotov said that he trusted them, but yet they had been unable to uncover sabotage ("wrecking").

Kotkin:

> Orjonikidze had confided thoughts of suicide to Kaganovich and Mikoyan.[61] (386)
>
> 61. Mikoian, *Tak bylo,* 327–33. (992)

This is chapter 24 in Mikoian's autobiography. But Vladimir Bobrov has proven that Khrushchev and Mikoian lied big-time about Ordzhonikidze's death.

Kotkin Hopes You Don't Know What Kaganovich *Really* Thought

Kotkin:

> In published photographs taken near the body, Kaganovich was seen expressing visibly strong emotions: grief, anger. He had lost his soul mate, and he knew Stalin had been sadistically pressuring the infirm Orjonikidze. Kaganovich—tough as nails, explosive—was spiritually broken. (386)

This has to be false. Kotkin gives no evidence for anything like this about Kaganovich.

* It is not in Mikoian's autobiography, the nearest footnote.

* Kaganovich himself says nothing about this in his interviews with Felix Chuev. On the contrary, he says that Sergo was his

closest friend (62); that *Sergo supported the attacks against enemies* (162); that Sergo never talked about suicide: (162); and that *he, Kaganovich, never heard of any arguments between Stalin and Sergo, and calls such stories a lie* (163). Kotkin knows this work, which refutes his unsupported claim. But Kotkin hides it from his readers.[10]

Mikoian's autobiography is itself unreliable. It was published years after his death by his son, and has some probable insertions, as Michael Ellman has suggested.[11] It was clearly written to support Khrushchev's "line" against Stalin. Mikoian had been the first Party leader to attack Stalin during the XX Party Congress, days before Khrushchev's "Secret Speech."[12]

For more on Mikoian's dishonest autobiography, see Chapter 15.

Another Lie From Mikoian

Kotkin:

> Stalin went on to break Mikoyan, summoning him in 1937 to discuss the arrest of his subordinate in the food industry commissariat, Mark Belenky, then, after Mikoyan supposedly protested and Stalin called him blind in matters of personnel, summoning him again to show him protocols of Belenky's "confession." "Have a look: he confessed to wrecking," Stalin said. "You vouched for him. Go and read it!" Mikoyan called it "a blow against me."[62] (386)
>
> Note 62 (992): 62. Mikoyan was in Stalin's office on Nov. 2 and 14, 1937, both times with Yezhov. Mikoian, *Tak bylo*, 318–9; *Na prieme*, 224.

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[10] Feliks Chuev. *Tak govoril Kaganovich. Ispoved' stalinskogo apostola*. Moscow, "Otechestvo," 1992.
[11] "The Road from Il'ich to Il'ich: The Life and Times of Anastas Ivanovich Mikoian." *Slavic Review* 60, 1 (Spring, 2001), 141.
[12] *XX S"ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza . Stenograficheskii otchet.* (Moscow, 1956), I, 302, 321, 323, 324, 326.

Mikoian did write these words. But there's nothing here about "breaking" Mikoian.

Belenkii was arrested on November 9, 1937, so Stalin's informing him of Belenkii's confession could well have occurred on November 14. But Kotkin fails to inform us that Belenkii had been under suspicion since at least September 25, 1937. In a report of that date to Stalin from NKVD man Litvin, writing from Erevan, Armenia, we read the following:

> После, переходя на работу в Баку, АКОПОВ в 1934 году был привлечен к троцкистской работе БЕЛЕНЬКИМ и состоял в руководящем составе троцкистской организации в Баку. Как участников руководящего состава троцкистской организации, АКОПОВ называет следующих лиц: БЕЛЕНЬКОГО, АМАТУНИ, СЕФ, БОНДАРЕНКО, НАРИМАНОВА.
>
> Then, turning to work in Baku, AKOPOV in 1934 was involved in the Trotskyist work of BELEN'KII and was in the leadership of the Trotskyist organization in Baku. As members of the leadership of the Trotskyist organization, AKOPOV names the following persons: BELEN'KII, AMATUNI, SEF, BONDARENKO, NARIMANOVA.[13]

There are more allegations of conspiratorial activities by Belenkii:

> По своей подрывной работе в Наркомпищепроме ДУКОР был связан с бывшим заместителем наркома пищевой промышленности БЕЛЕНЬКИМ (арестован).
>
> ДУКОР показал, что организация правых и троцкистов в пищевой промышленности, в лице БЕЛЕНЬКОГО, была связана с контрреволюционной

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[13] Lubianka 1937-1938, No. 215, p. 379. Online at http://istmat.info/node/32304 and http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/61197

правотроцкистской организацией в Наркомвнуторге, в лице ВЕЙЦЕРА и ХЛОПЛЯНКИНА.

- Сводка важейших показаний арестованных по ГУГБ НКВД СССР За 10 февраля 1938 г. 13 февраля 1938 г. № 100890.

In his subversive work in the People's Commissariat for Food, DUCOR was associated with the former deputy food addict Belenkii (arrested).

DUCOR showed that the organization of Rightists and Trotskyists in the food industry, represented by BELENKII, was associated with a counter-revolutionary right-wing Trotsky organization in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Trade, represented by Veitser and Khloplyankin.

- A summary of the most important testimonies of those arrested by the GUGB of the NKVD of the USSR for February 10, 1938. Dated February 13, 1938, No. 100890.

This is in the important document collection Lubianka-Golgofa, 95. Belen'kii is also named in reports on pages 101 and 111. Kotkin never cites this important collection of investigative documents.

But the important thing is this: *these were reports <u>to</u> Stalin, not fabrications <u>by</u> Stalin in order to "break" Mikoian.* It would have been irresponsible for Stalin *not* to have informed Mikoian about serious charges against his subordinate.

Therefore, Stalin had sufficient reason to suppose that Belenkii *might* have been guilty. We have no evidence that he was "framed." We do not know whether Belenkii was guilty. We don't have his NKVD investigative file or the rehabilitation report on him, if there was one. In his autobiography Mikoian had ample opportunity to discuss the charges against Belenkii and refute them. But he never mentions Belenkii again after this passage.

"Dictator"? "First Among Peers"? How About "Despot"?

Kotkin:

> Members of the inner circle were no longer comrades of the ruler. Stalin was no longer first among peers, but a despot.[63] (386)

Note 63:

> As one scholar explained, "Up to 1936, the leading group was held together by shared convictions in a shared project, but after 1937 the nature of the group changed." Rees, "Stalin as Leader, 1937–1953," 207. (992)

What nonsense! Up to this date — February, 1937 — Stalin was not a "dictator" but only "first among peers"? Then why has Kotkin been calling him a "dictator" *before* this point in his book? Rees, as we shall see, is in error.

Documents Against Kalinin and Rudzutak?

Kotkin:

> Mikoyan and Beria, assigned to comb through Orjonikidze's personal archive, discovered two sealed folders (received back when he headed the Central Control Commission), which held compromising tsarist police materials on politburo members Kalinin and Rudzutaks.[14] Orjonikidze had marked the folders "Do not open without me." Kvashonkin, *Sovetskoe rukovodstvo,* 9–10 (RGASPI, f. 85, d. 2, l. 1–30). (992)

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[14] For some reason Kotkin uses the Latvian spelling. In scholarship, however, the Russian spelling "Rudzutak" is used.

Here is the text from the introduction to Kvashonkin's book.

> После гибели в феврале 1937 г. Г. К. Орджоникидзе, А. И. Микоян и Л. П. Берия, разбиравшие по поручению Политбюро архив покойного, обнаружили два запечатанных сургучной печатью конверта с надписью рукой Орджоникидзе: «Без меня не вскрывать»6 . В этих конвертах находились несколько документов из архивов Департамента полиции, изъятых из следственных дел ряда большевистских деятелей. Так, 25 марта 1929 г. из Ленинградского обкома партии в Москву на имя Орджоникидзе прислали копию показаний М.И. Калинина, данных им на допросе в феврале 1900 г. Протокол допроса начинался со слов Калинина: «Будучи вызванным на допрос вследствие поданного мною прошения, желаю дать откровенное показание о своей преступной деятельности». Далее следовал подробный рассказ о контактах с пропагандистами и участии в работе нелегального кружка. Помимо копии протокола допроса, в конверте Орджоникидзе сохранились также подлинники этого протокола и прошения Калинина на имя министра юстиции, поданного из петербургского дома предварительного заключения. Эти документы, видимо, были изъяты из подлинных архивных дел и присланы в Москву чуть позже[7].
>
> Вместе с документами Калинина в конверте хранилась архивная справка о Я. Э. Рудзутаке, осужденном в конце 1909 г. к 10 годам каторги по делу виндавской организации Латышской социал-демократической рабочей партии. Справка показывала, что во время следствия Рудзутак раскрыл группу членов организации и по названным им адресам были произведены обыски и изъято оружие и пропагандистская литература. Эта архивная справка была направлена из Центрального исторического архива в Ленинграде в адрес Центрального совета Всесоюзного общества политкаторжан в декабре 1928 г.[8]

After the death in February, 1937, of G.K. Ordzhonikidze, A.I. Mikoyan and L.P. Beria, who, on the instructions of the Politburo, were analyzing the archives of the deceased, discovered two envelopes sealed with wax seal with the inscription in Ordzhonikidze's hand: "Do not open without me."[6] In these envelopes were several documents from the archives of the Police Department, seized from the investigation cases of a number of Bolshevik figures. Thus, on March 25, 1929, a copy of the testimony of M.I. Kalinin, from an interrogation of February 1900, was sent from the Leningrad Regional Party Committee to Moscow in the name of Ordzhonikidze. The interrogation protocol began with the words of Kalinin: "Being summoned for questioning as a result of my petition, I want to give frank testimony about my criminal activities." Then followed a detailed account of contacts with propagandists and participation in the work of the illegal circle. In addition to the copy of the interrogation protocol, the originals of this protocol and Kalinin's petition to the Minister of Justice, filed from the St. Petersburg pre-trial detention center, were also kept in the envelope of Ordzhonikidze. These documents, apparently, were removed from the original archive files and sent to Moscow a little later.[7]

Along with Kalinin's documents, an archival certificate was kept in the envelope about Ya. E. Rudzutak, convicted at the end of 1909 to 10 years of hard labor in the case of the Vindav organization of the Latvian Social-Democratic Labor Party. The inquiry showed that during the investigation Rudzutak disclosed a group of members of the organization and the police searched the addresses he had given and seized weapons and propaganda literature. This archival reference was sent from the Central Historical Archive in Leningrad to the Central Council of the All-Union

> Politkatorzhan [political prisoners] Society in December 1928.[8]

This is the text from Kvashonkin, *Sovetskoe rukovodstvo*, 9-10. (Notes 6-8 are to the archival document.) However, as so often with Kotkin's sources, there are problems.

There's nothing at all about this in Mikoian's autobiography *Tak Bylo*. Why not? What's more, Oleg Khlevniuk writes as follows:

> Благодаря новым документам мы знаем, что именно в 1928 г. в архивах департамента полиции были найдены, но не пущены в ход компрометирующие материалы на М. И. Калинина и Я. Э. Рудзутака. В протоколе полицейского допроса Калинина от февраля 1900 г. говорилось: "Будучи вызванным на допрос вследствие поданного мною прошения, желаю дать откровенное показание о своей преступной деятельности». Калинин, как следует из этого протокола, подробно рассказал полиции о работе нелегального кружка. Из архивной справки по делу Рудзутака, осужденного к десяти годам каторги в 1909 г., следовало, что во время допросов он раскрыл группу членов организации. По названным им адресам были произведены обыски, изъято оружие и пропагандистская литература[1].

> Thanks to the new documents, we know that in 1928 in the archives of the police department compromising materials on M.I. Kalinin and Ya. E. Rudzutak were found. In the report of Kalinin's police interrogation of February 1900, it was said: "Being summoned for questioning as a result of my petition, I want to give frank testimony about my criminal activities." Kalinin, according to this protocol, told the police in detail about the work of the illegal circle. From the archival certificate in the case of Rudzutak, convicted of ten years of hard labor in 1909, it follows that during the interrogations he disclosed a group of members of the organization. At the addresses given to them, searches were carried out and weapons and

> propaganda literature were seized. (Khlevniuk, *Stalin. Zhizn' odnogo vozhdia*. Moscow, 2015, p. 155-6).

In his introduction Kvashonkin says that these documents were discovered in February, 1937, by Mikoian and Beria, in envelopes – not folders, as Kotkin states – in Ordzhonikidze's archives, with a message that clearly intended to keep them secret. Kvashonkin's book was published in 1999.

But in his 2015 book Khlevniuk states that the documents were discovered in 1928. Khlevniuk goes on to suggest – as usual, without evidence – that Stalin had used these documents to blackmail his supporters. (158) Kvashonkin (9-10) says that both the document about Kalinin and that about Rudzutak were sent in 1929 to Ordzhonikidze.

Both Kvashonkin and Khlevniuk cite the same archival identifiers, so they are talking about the same documents (RGASPI, F. 85 Novye postuplenia. D. 2. Ll. 1-11, 28-30). Why do they disagree so sharply about them?

* If Stalin had known about them in 1928, why did they end up in Ordzhonikidze's archive?

* If they did, would that not mean that Ordzhonikidze was very close to Stalin? Instead of fearful and hostile, as Kotkin, copying from Khlevniuk and Dubinskii-Mukhadze's 1963 edition, has it.

* Why do both Kvashonkin and Khlevniuk quote only *one sentence* – the *same* sentence -- from just one of the documents, when there are clearly 14 pages (1-11, 28-30)? This fact suggests that either Khlevniuk, Kvashonkin, or both, had not actually read the document in question but had only seen a selection from it. Or, perhaps, Kvashonkin read it and Khlevniuk just copied from Kvashonkin. One thing is clear: Kotkin has not read it.

* Why haven't these documents been published? Kvashonkin claims to have seen them as early as 1999. Yet in 2015 Khlevniuk only quotes the same one sentence from them.

Do these documents exist at all? If they do exist, are they genuine, or forgeries? It is the job of scholarship to recognize problems like this and either to resolve through, through research, or at least to alert readers to them. Kotkin does neither.

Chapter 4. Trotsky and the Bloc

I have published two books on Leon Trotsky's activities during the 1930s. *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* uncovers and examines the lies by Trotsky and his son, Leon Sedov, about the bloc of Trotskyists, Rights, and other oppositionists. Kotkin also touches on this important issue. It is the subject of the present chapter.

In the same book I also devote twelve chapters, more than half of the book, to examining the testimony at the Moscow Trials, in an attempt to determine whether that testimony should be accepted as what it appears to be – what the defendants chose to say – or whether the defendants' testimony was fabricated, "scripted" by the prosecution, forced from them by threats or promises, and therefore should not be considered to be valid evidence. This section is now published separately as *The Moscow Trials As Evidence.*[1]

On the basis of the evidence now available to all researchers I prove that Trotsky lied consistently about virtually everything concerning his own activities and about events in the Soviet Union. I also show that, whenever we can check a fact-claim made by one of the trial defendants against evidence that is independently obtained, we find that the trial testimony is valid. Therefore, the testimony in the Moscow Trials is valid evidence, and should be used as such in historical study.

In my second book, *Evidence of Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan,* I gather and study the evidence now available about this important charge against Trotsky, which was featured in the Second and Third Moscow Trials of January, 1937, and March, 1938 respectively. I conclude, as any objective student must, that, on the basis of the evidence now available, we must

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[1] Published in July, 2018. See https://www.amazon.com/dp/1722842121/

affirm that Trotsky did indeed collaborate with Germany and Japan.

I cannot summarize these two book-length studies here, and refer the interested reader to them. Therefore, the present chapter will be short.

All the evidence available to me and which I study in these books is available to all researchers. But Kotkin either ignores it – bias by omission – or, as we shall see, falsifies it. To do otherwise – to recognize that Trotsky lied, and did indeed collaborate with the Axis, utterly dismantles the Anti-Stalin Paradigm of Soviet history that Kotkin bends all his efforts to uphold.

* * * * *

In the First Moscow Trial of August, 1936, Trotsky was accused of forming a "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites." By "bloc" was meant a political alliance for concerted action between clandestine opposition groups operating illegally within the Soviet Union. The aim of the bloc was the overthrow of the Stalin leadership.

Trotsky always denied that any such bloc existed or that he would have ever considered forming such a bloc with what he called "capitulators" – those who had publicly renounced their support of the Trotskyist opposition and promised future support for the Bolshevik Party line. Since Khrushchev's day the existence of this bloc has been denied by the Soviet, then the Russian, governments, and by all scholars of Soviet history whether Soviet, Russian, Western anticommunist, or Trotskyist.

In January, 1980, the Trotsky Archive at Harvard University was opened to researchers. Almost immediately a research team directed by Pierre Broué, in his day the foremost Trotskyist historian in the world, discovered that a bloc of Rights, Trotskyists, and other oppositionists, had indeed existed and that Trotsky had approved it.

Shortly thereafter, American scholar Arch Getty discovered other documents in the Harvard Trotsky Archive that proved that Trotsky wrote to former oppositionists – "capitulators" -- in 1932, undoubtedly to urge them to return to opposition. Trotsky swore that he had not contacted them and would never do so. Again, Trotsky lied. Throughout the '80s and '90s Broué went on to discover other lies by Trotsky.

Kotkin cites Broué's research. He must also know Getty's 1985 article on the Trotsky Archives, which was published in *Soviet Studies*, the foremost vehicle in the world for research in Soviet history. But Kotkin does not inform his readers what this research proves – that during the 1930s Trotsky lied consistently about his activities. Trotsky lied in his *Bulletin of the Opposition;* in all his articles and books; in his supposed "refutation" of the 1936 Moscow Trial, the *Red Book*. Trotsky lied to the 1937 Dewey Commission, and the Commission members believed him.[2] Kotkin conceals all this from his readers.

Is This A "Lie"? If Not, What Is?

> Note 19 (912): **Stalin had the OGPU blackmail or entice Trotsky supporters** internally exiled in the USSR to denounce him in the Soviet press. Radek signed a denunciation of Trotsky that was published in *Pravd*a (July 13, 1929). See also Broué, "Bolshevik-Leninist Faction," 140; Deutscher, *Prophet Armed*, 390; Volkogonov, *Trotsky*, 281; Yaroslavskii, "Etot son knochen [this should be "konchen" – GF]," 2; RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 782, l. 9. Even Beloborodov and Ivan Smirnov would publicly break with Trotsky. *Pravda*, Nov. 3, 1929. Rakovski, in Astrakhan, nearly alone remained loyal; Trotsky kept a photograph of him on his desk.

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[2] For a detailed study of Trotsky's lies at the Dewey Commission hearings of 1937 see Furr, Trotsky's 'Amalgams', Chapters 17 and 18; Furr, Dewey Commission.

Kotkin has fabricated this — literally made it up! There is no evidence that the OGPU compelled Trotskyists to "denounce him." Neither Deutscher, loc. cit., nor Broué, loc. cit, say anything about this.

Broué, "Bolshevik-Leninist Faction..." was published in 1988. It has nothing at all about the OGPU [after 1934 renamed NKVD] either "enticing" or "blackmailing" oppositionists to "capitulate," must less to denounce Trotsky. On the contrary: by 1990 Broué had concluded that the "capitulations" were false.

> Lev Sedov called the Smirnov group either the "former capitulators" or the "Trotskiite capitulators."
> **Everybody had known, from 1929 on, that people in the Smirnov group had not really capitulated but were trying to fool the apparatus, and were capable of organizing themselves as an Opposition within the party: the fact was so universally known that Andres Nin, the Spaniard deported from the Soviet Union in August 1930, explained it openly to his German comrades of *Die permanente Revolution* who printed his declaration without apparent problem.[3]**

Kotkin cites this very article! So Kotkin knows that the supposed "capitulations" were phony. That means that Kotkin's claim that "Stalin had the OGPU blackmail or entice Trotsky supporters internally exiled in the USSR to denounce him in the Soviet press" constitutes deliberate deception of his readers – there is no other way to explain it. If this isn't a lie, what is?

Why would Kotkin, like Khrushchev's men and then Gorbachev's men, do this? No doubt because the existence of the clandestine "bloc of Rights and Trotskyists" was one of the central charges in

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[3] Pierre Broué. "Party Opposition to Stalin (1930-1932) and the First Moscow Trial." In John W. Strong, ed. *Essays on Revolutionary Culture and Stalinism.* Columbus, OH: Slavica Publishers, 1990, pp. 98-111., 104. (Broué, POS)

the Moscow Trials, and Trotsky had consistently denied that any such bloc existed or could exist. Therefore, to acknowledge that it really did exist would dismantle the allegation, universal among Trotskyists and anticommunists, that the Moscow Trials were frame-ups fabricated by Stalin.

Antisemitism in Kotkin's Use of Names

> Kotkin, Note 22 (912): Deutscher, Prophet Outcast, 67. At Stalin's behest, the propagandist Miney Gubelman, who went by the name Yemelyan Yaroslavsky, answered with an essay, "Mr. Trotsky at the Service of the Bourgeoisie, or L. Trotsky's First Steps Abroad"—published in Russian in the Soviet press, essentially a salve for Stalin's ego. *Bol'shevik*, 1929, no. 5 and 9.

What's the point of using Yaroslavskii's birth, "Jewish" name? As recorded in the memoir of the well-known Soviet writer Konstantin Simonov, Stalin himself said that doing so was anti-Semitic:

> A person has the right to write under a pseudonym he has chosen for himself. But, obviously, somebody wants to emphasize that this person has a double name, to emphasize that he is a Jew. Why emphasize that? Why do that? Why spread anti-Semitism? Who benefits from that?[4]

Kotkin does not call Grigorii Zinoviev by his birth, "Jewish" name Ovsei-Gersh Aronovich Radomysel'skii. He does not call Lev Kamenev by his birth, "Jewish" name Rozenfel'd. He does not refer to Karl Radek by his birth, "Jewish" name Sobel'son. And he doesn't refer to Leon Trotsky by his birth, "Jewish" name Leiba Bronshtein. Evidently Kotkin's antisemitism is restricted to people he does not like – supporters of Stalin.

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[4] Konstantin Simonov. *Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniya*. Moscow: Novosti, 1988, p. 216. Also online at http://www.hrono.info/libris/lib_s/simonov16.php

Yaroslavskii's brother kept his birth name Gubel'man, was a lifelong Bolshevik and died full of honors in 1966. Yaroslavskii's son kept the name Yaroslavsky and became a Major-General, famous pilot, and hero of World War II.

Trotsky and the Bloc

Kotkin:

> Sedov wrote to his father—in invisible ink—that a "bloc" had formed inside the USSR of "Zinovievites, the Sten-Lominadze group, and Trotskyites," **an apparent reference to the small Ryutin conspiracy. ..."**[291] (106)
>
> Note 291 (935): Trotsky received the letter on Oct. 4, 1932: Trotsky archive, Harvard, T 4782; Davies, *Crisis and Progress*, 246–7, citing conversations with Pierre Broué, editor of Trotsky's notebooks in French.

This is another falsehood by Kotkin – in this case, "bias by omission." The text of Sedov's letter makes it clear that the bloc was *not* small. Davies, 246, notes that the bloc "consisting of 'Zinovievites, the Sten-Lominadze group and Trotskyists (former [capitulators])'." Moreover, it had nothing to do with Riutin. No "small Riutin conspiracy" existed. Riutin was simply one member of the Rightist conspiracy that entered the bloc in 1932.

Here is the relevant part of the letter ("Z" and "K" are Zinoviev and Kamenev):

> [The bloc] has been organized. In it have entered the Zinovievists,
>
> the Sten-Lominadze group and the Trotskyists
>
> (former "capitulators"). The group of Safar.
>
> Tarkhan. has not formally entered yet – they
>
> stand on too extreme a position; they will enter

in a very short time. – The declaration of Z. and K. concerning their

enormous mistake in '27 was made during

negotiations with our people concerning the bloc, immediately before the exile of Z and K. – [5]

This is the "bloc of Oppositionists" — the same bloc referred to in the Moscow Trials. Broué admits this in his 1980 article, which Kotkin footnotes elsewhere, though not here. Kotkin is deliberately deceiving his readers by withholding this information from them.

Evidence of Trotsky's Conspiracy with Germany and Japan

In the Second and Third Moscow Trials a number of defendants testified at length about Trotsky's conspiracy with Hitler's Germany and militarist-fascist Japan against the Soviet Union. Trotsky, of course, denied any such thing. But this means nothing since he would do so whether he were guilty or innocent.

We now have a lot of evidence that Trotsky did in fact collaborate with Germany and Japan. As we have seen, Kotkin has not simply denied that the bloc of Rights, Trotskyists, and other oppositionists really existed, but has also falsified the evidence. It should be no surprise that Kotkin ignores entirely the evidence of Trotsky's collaboration with the Axis even though it is in document collections that he himself uses.[6]

We also have a great deal of evidence that Trotskyists within the USSR were doing just what the Trotskyists in the Second and Third Moscow Trials testified that they were doing: planning assassinations and sabotage and were working with German agents.[7] At present we have evidence in two forms: pretrial

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[5] Furr, Trotsky's 'Amalgams', 506 ff.; my translation.
[6] For this evidence, see Furr, Trotsky's Collaboration.

interrogations and confessions of people involved in Oppositional activities within the Soviet Union; and confessions, including now the actual trial transcript, of Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky and the seven other top-level military leaders arrested, tried, convicted, and executed.

[7] For this evidence, see Furr, Trotsky's 'Amalgams'. Volume 3 of my Trotsky studies will have much more such evidence.

Chapter 5. First Moscow Trial

Kotkin's principal methods of misdirection and falsification in this chapter are:

* Bias by omission – ignoring evidence that disproves Kotkin's fact-claims but which his readers will not know about.

* Argument by scare quote;

* The use of phony references that do not provide evidence for the statements Kotkin makes in his text.

It appears that Kotkin has not bothered to actually research any of these topics himself! At best he relies on secondary sources: works of research, or what appear to be research, although many of those whom he cites are phony researchers. Kotkin also relies on works that are not even secondary sources, works that contain fact-claims that are not supported by any evidence at all, not even phony evidence.

Fallacy #1: Begging The Question

Kotkin prefaces his chapters on the trials of the 1930s this way:

> Stalin instigated an epic version of the time-honored authoritarian device of trumped-up conspiracies linking internal with external "enemies," but the Soviet case differed in more than just scale.[30] (306)
>
> Note 30 (982) 30. Rees, "Stalin as Leader, 1937–1953," 202–3.

Rees' pages contain no evidence whatever! Like Kotkin, Rees simply *assumes* that the conspiracies were fabrications – the logical fallacy of "begging the question."

> Roy Medvedev, author of the other monumental work on the terror (1971, 1989), endeavored to separate

> Stalin from the sacred Lenin and depicted him as a traditional tyrant, but he similarly asserted that Stalin was motivated by "lust for power, boundless ambition," as if all tyrants murdered their own elites not just on such a scale but also with forced confessions to fantastical crimes they had not committed.[31] (306-7)

Note 31 (982): 31. Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, 585. Volkgonov [sic] largely echoed Medvedev. Lars Lih argued that Stalin pursued an "anti-bureaucratic scenario," but also that Stalin recognized the necessity of the state, an unresolved paradox. Lih, Introduction to *Stalin's Letters to Molotov*, 1–63.

The phrase "lust for power, boundless ambition" is indeed on Medvedev, 585. But Kotkin either does not realize, or pretends not to realize, that Medvedev's book contains almost no evidence! It is mostly based on Khrushchev-era attacks on Stalin which have since been disproven with primary documents from the Soviet archives.[1]

Fallacy #2: The Argument From Incredulity

Kotkin again:

> ... the conspiracies in the Soviet Union were invented. (313)

This is Kotkin's position throughout. He cites no evidence to support this claim. Naturally – because it is false.[2]

His readers will not know of the mountains of evidence we now possess that the conspiracies did indeed exist and posed a grave

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[1] See Furr, Khrushchev Lied.

[2] It is also logically invalid to say that "there were no conspiracies." The purpose of a conspiracy is to *not* leave evidence. A successful conspiracy goes undetected. Therefore, the most one can say is "There is no evidence of a conspiracy." But in this case there is an abundance of evidence.

threat. It is Kotkin's obligation, as a historian, to inform his readers about this evidence. But to do so would dismantle the whole purpose of his book!

Hiding The Evidence Against Valentin Ol'berg

Kotkin:

> "Trotskyites" had also seized attention. **Valentin Olberg**, a provincial teacher who happened to have just returned from Germany, was arrested by the NKVD (January 5, 1936), which extracted "testimony" from him that he had come back with a special task assigned to him by none other than Trotsky: a "terrorist act" against Stalin. Olberg named other "terrorists" he had "recruited"; arrests followed.[245] By spring the NKVD would arrest 508 "Trotskyites," one of whom was found in possession of Trotsky's personal archive for 1927. Stalin ordered the NKVD to furnish Yezhov with copies of all documents pertaining to Trotskyites and freed him from overseeing party organs, a task passed to Yezhov's deputy, Georgy Malenkov (b. 1902). Yezhov now oversaw the NKVD full time.[246] (279)

Note 245 (976):

> It is not out of the question that the NKVD tasked the Swiss-born Olberg, who had been expelled from the German Communist party in 1932 for Trotskyism, with infiltrating Trotskyite circles in Europe, then decided he needed to serve another purpose. On Olberg, see Chase, Enemies within the Gates? 134 (citing RGASPI, f., 495, op. 175, d. 105, l. 9). Vyshinsky wrote to Stalin and Molotov (Jan. 8) of a separate case of a "Trotskyite group" just turned over to the courts with supposed plans for a "terrorist" act against the dictator Stalin on Red Square back during the Revolution Day parade, while Yagoda and Vyshinsky

together wrote to him (Jan. 11, 1936) about the liquidation of a Zinovievite organization of thirty-four people, asking how should they be tried. Khaustov et al., Lubianka: Stalin i VChK, 715–6 (APRF, f. 3, op. 58, d. 230, l. 65–65ob.), 716–20 (l. 68–76), 723 (l. 64).

Either Kotkin hasn't researched Ol'berg, or he is concealing the evidence from his readers.

Chase's fine book, published in 2001 and now seriously out of date, does document Ol'berg's Trotskyism and expulsion from the German CP. Direct correspondence of Ol'berg with Trotsky is preserved in the Harvard Trotsky Archive – a fact that Kotkin fails to mention.

Kotkin also omits any mention of the draft of a pamphlet on Ol'berg by Austrian Trotskyist Kurt Landau, also preserved in the Harvard Trotsky Archive. Landau confirmed that Ol'berg really was a Trotskyist. Moreover, Landau said that Ol'berg had given him the impression that "the technical work that the Russian comrades wanted him for was more important than [his work] for us."[3]

There has never been any evidence to doubt Ol'berg's confession that he planned to murder Stalin. On the contrary: we now have much more evidence to confirm Ol'berg's guilt, including confessions by his wife Betty and his brother Pavel', both of whom knew about and abetted his conspiracy.[4] The collection of documents in which these confessions are printed was published in 2013, in plenty of time for Kotkin to have made use of it. But he ignores it. I will discuss this evidence in detail in volume three of my Trotsky studies.

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[3] Hans Schafranek, *Das kurze Leben des Kurt Landau* (1988), 387, 421.

[4] In *Politbi ͡u ͡ro i Lev Trot ͡s ͡kiĭ : (sbornik dokumentov), 1923-1940 gg.* Prague (Czech Republic), Sociosféra-CZ, 2013, volume 2.

If the Anti-Stalin Paradigm (ASP) is to be upheld, the charges at the Moscow Trials must be deemed fabrications and all the defendants, like Ol'berg, victims of a frame-up. So Kotkin suppresses the evidence.

As for the Khaustov book, the documents in it are indeed very important! As usual, Kotkin says nothing about them. These investigators' documents discuss contacts between the Trotskyists and Zinovievists arrested in early January, 1936, and the underground Zinovievist group in Leningrad that murdered Kirov on December 1, 1934. These documents specifically discuss the contacts with Kotolynov, one of the leaders of the Zinovievite group that murdered Kirov. The document on page 723 of this book shows that some of these people were not executed but given prison sentences.

Fallacy #3: Argument By Scare Quote

> Note 246 (976): Jansen and Petrov, *Stalin's Loyal Executione*r, 46–8.

These pages – also full of scare quotes -- contain no evidence that the defendants were innocent. Ol'berg is not even mentioned.

Note Kotkin's use of Argument by Scare Quote. Kotkin uses this dishonest rhetorical ploy when he wishes to conceal from his readers that he has zero evidence to support his anticommunist conclusions.[5]

Kotkin:

> Stalin pressed for wider arrests, using the unique instruments only he commanded: he dispatched a secret circular (July 29, 1936)—drafted by Yezhov and edited by the dictator—to party organizations, which was to be read aloud to all party members and which

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[5] I examine argument by scare quotes as a technique of deception in Furr, Kirov, 87 ff.

> quoted the "testimony" of the various accused "Trotskyites." (325)

Argument by Scare Quote yet again! This circular of July 29, 1936, is largely made up of quotations from confessions of conspirators. There is a lot of evidence that they are genuine.[6]

So Far "Behind The Scenes" That It Vanishes

Kotkin:

> The five-day trial of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite center commenced on August 19, in the October Hall of white Corinthian columns in the House of Trade Unions.[104] The spectacle followed an extended period of **behind-the-scenes torture, scripting, and rehearsing**, and this time it would result not in mere exile or imprisonment. The defendants, besides the five German Communists who "confessed" to Gestapo ties, were eleven prominent Bolsheviks of the 1926–27 opposition.[105] Ten of the sixteen happened to be Jewish (this received no special attention). Invited audience members numbered some 150 people, including 30 handpicked foreign journalists and diplomats, as well as many plainclothes NKVD operatives, but not the relatives of the accused. **Despite slipups that betrayed the fabrication**, the defendants, all Communists, publicly confessed to being wreckers, spies, terrorists.[106] (Kaganovich made sure to add himself and Orjonikidze to the list of targets.)[107] "I, Kamenev, together with Zinoviev and Trotsky, organized and guided this conspiracy," Stalin's former close associate stated. "I had become convinced that the party's—Stalin's—policy was successful and victorious. We, the opposition, had banked on a split in the party, but this hope proved

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[6] See Furr, Moscow Trials.

> groundless. We could no longer count on any serious domestic difficulties to allow us to overthrow Stalin's leadership." (331)

This is all false. In reality, there is no evidence whatsoever that any of the defendants were "tortured," nor of any "scripting" or "rehearsing" at all. So, naturally, Kotkin doesn't cite any evidence.[7]

To H—L With Reality – Let's Quote Orlov Again!

In giving his one example of "slipups that betrayed the fabrication" Kotkin shows his own incompetence. Kotkin's note 106 reads:

> Testimony about a 1932 meeting that had allegedly taken place with Trotsky in Copenhagen's Hotel Bristol ignored that the building had been torn down in 1917 (the NKVD fabricators confused two sites). Orlov, *Tainaia istoriia*, 70. (985)

This too is all wrong. The Hotel Bristol was never "torn down." In fact, the building that was once the Hotel Bristol still stands in the center of Copenhagen.[8] Ironically, it is this "slipup" of Kotkin's that betrays his falsification. It would be hard to believe that Kotkin did not bother to find out that this story is false -- except that there are so many other examples of his incompetence.

Gol'tsman's NKVD file has now been declassified.[9] It shows that the NKVD did not "fabricate" or "confuse" anything. Rather, the NKVD men checked up on Gol'tsman's statement about the Hotel Bristol, discovered his error, and suggested to Gol'tsman that he had gotten the name of the "Bristol" pastry shop confused with that of

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[7] For a study of the Moscow Trials testimony, see Trotsky's 'Amalgams' Chapters 1-12, now updated and published separately as *The Moscow Trials as Evidence*. New York: Red Star Publishers, 2018.

[8] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hotel_Bristol_(Copenhagen)

[9] TsA FSB R-33833 Delo No. 3257. My thanks to my colleague Vladimir Bobrov for providing me with these archival documents. I will publish it in connection with volume 3 of my Trotsky studies.

the hotel next door. Gol'tsman admitted that he might have been done this.

But the most important point is this: *Gol'tsman made the same error at the trial*! We know now that the prosecution knew he had made a mistake. Yet Vyshinsky did not correct him! The Prosecution permitted Gol'tsman to testify as he chose to do even though they knew he was in error. Therefore, *this "slip-up" – on Gol'tsman's part – is strong evidence that the trial was <u>not</u> fabricated in any way.*

Instead of researching this issue Kotkin relies upon Orlov's long-discredited book. More than thirty years ago American scholar Arch Getty exposed Orlov's book as untrustworthy on pages 211-212 of his classic study *Origins of the Great Purges*. John Costello and Oleg Tsarev also cite many demonstrable lies by Orlov.[10]

How Dare Kaganovich Tell The Truth!

Kotkin writes:

> (Kaganovich made sure to add himself and Orjonikidze to the list of targets.)[107]
>
> Note 107 (985): Iakovlev et al., *Reabilitatsiia: politicheskie protsessy*, 187–8.

Another falsehood! The Iakovlev book (R-PP) states that Kaganovich inserted his and Ordzhonikidze's names into the **sentence**. But even R-PP does not claim that he or anyone had inserted them into the **confessions** of the accused.

Mrachkovsky, one of the defendants in the trial, had stated that Stalin, Voroshilov, and Kaganovich were to be assassinated (1936 Trial, 41). Reingol'd named these three plus Ordzhonikidze, Postyshev, Kosior, "and others." (55) Zinoviev admitted that his

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[10] John Costello and Oleg Tsarev. *Deadly Illusions*. NY: Crown, 1993.

group planned to assassinate Stalin, Voroshilov, and Kaganovich. (153)

Therefore Kaganovich did not fabricate anything, but simply corrected the text of the sentence by inserting his own name. But how could Kotkin's readers know this, since he conceals it from them?

"Begging The Question" Yet Again

Kotkin:

> Bukharin, hiking the Pamirs in Central Asia, had hurried back to Moscow to find Stalin away on holiday, and would write the dictator a letter, which also found its way into the holiday mailbag, rabidly endorsing all **the fabricated charges** of the trial, except those about himself ("I embrace you, for I'm clean").[111] (332)

> Note 111 (985): Stalin had afforded Bukharin an opportunity to defect: in Feb. 1936, he had appointed Bukharin to lead a commission to purchase a Marx-Engels archive in France, leaving the trip's duration up to Bukharin and permitting the pregnant Larina to join him. But his father, brother, first wife, second wife, and daughter lived in Moscow, and the trip to France had taken place before Zinoviev and Kamenev had been executed. Cohen, *Bukharin,* 472; Liebich, "I Am the Last." See also Dan, "Bukharin o Staline," 181–2; and Nicolaevsky, *Power and the Soviet Elite.*

This is a phony footnote. It contains no evidence that the charges were "fabricated." And for the best of reasons: there simply is no such evidence anywhere!

What's more, it appears that Kotkin has simply copied this footnote from Cohen, *Bukharin*, 472, where Cohen cites the very same passages in Dan and Nicolaevsky. As for Nicolaevsky's book,

Getty demolished it as being itself a fabrication – see *Origins* 214-216.

Ignore The Evidence and Any Problem Remains "Unanswerable."

Kotkin:

> On the eve of Kamenev's execution, Stalin wrote to Kaganovich that Kamenev, through his wife, had sounded out the French ambassador about supporting a possible Trotskyite-Zinovievite government. "I believe Kamenev also sounded out the English, German, and American ambassadors," Stalin added. "This means Kamenev was supposed to reveal to these foreigners the plans for the conspiracy and the murder of the leaders of the party. This also means Kamenev had already revealed the plans to them, for otherwise the foreigners would not have begun talking about the future Trotskyite-Zinovievite 'government' with him."[117] **Did Stalin believe this?** Was he straining to justify his political murders to Kaganovich? These questions remain unanswerable. (333)
>
> Note 117 (985): Khlevniuk et al., *Stalin i Kaganovich*, 642–3 (RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 93, l. 77–80)[11]

This is a problem for anyone who, like Kotkin, assumes, *a priori* and contrary to all the evidence, that the trials were frame-ups. Rather than consider the evidence, Kotkin calls the trial "political murders" and says that the problem "remains unanswerable." Of course it is only "unanswerable" if one ignores the evidence and assumes *a priori* that Kamenev was innocent, as Kotkin does. Once again, Kotkin commits the logical fallacy of "begging the question" – assuming that which must be proven, not assumed.

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[11] This letter of Stalin's to Kaganovich is also online at http://istmat.info/node/36927

In reality, these remarks of Stalin's are good evidence that Stalin believed Kamenev's confessions, and therefore that those confessions were genuine. Stalin's remarks make it clear that he (Stalin) believed that Kamenev had really been guilty of the conspiracy of which he was charged and to which he had confessed.

Kotkin Overlooks Evidence That Kamenev Was Guilty

Kotkin has also omitted an important section from this same letter to Kaganovich:

> ... Second. From Reingol'd's confessions it is clear that Kamenev, through his wife Glebova, was feeling out the French ambassador Al'fand concerning possible relations of the French government with / a future "government" of the Trotskyite-Zinov'evite bloc. ... Obviously, Glebova is well informed about all this sordid material. We must bring Glebova to Moscow and submit her to a series of meticulous interrogations. She might reveal many interesting things.

This passage is strong evidence that Stalin did not know in advance what Reingol'd was going to confess at the trial and was drawing conclusions based on those confessions at the time. In other words, Stalin was trying to figure out what was really going on. Once again, that means that Stalin had not stage-managed Kamenev's confession.

Oleg Khlevniuk, the Russian editor of this collection, an anticommunist historian to whom the practice of objectivity is completely foreign, appears to have realized this and tried to twist Stalin's words into an attempt at fabrication:

> Одна из шифровок (см. документ № 763) показывает, каким образом Сталин руководил фабрикацией таких дел. В этой телеграмме Сталин не только приказывает

Кагановичу дополнительно допросить уже арестованную жену Каменева, но прямо перечисляет какие показания должны быть у нее получены: о связях Каменева с послами западных стран в Москве и информированности западных дипломатов о планах «заговора и убийства вождей ВКП». (*Stalin i Kaganovich*, 620)

One of the ciphers (see document No. 763) shows how Stalin supervised the fabrication of such cases. In this telegram, Stalin not only orders Kaganovich to interrogate the already arrested wife of Kamenev, but directly lists what testimony should be extracted from her: about Kamenev's connections with Western ambassadors in Moscow and Western diplomats' awareness of plans for "plotting and killing the leaders of the CPSU."

Khlevniuk is lying – or, perhaps, deluding himself (and his readers). We know – and Khlevniuk and Kotkin must know too – that Glebova was *not* framed. Instead, she was let off (temporarily) with the help of NKVD conspirators. Here, quoted from a volume that Kotkin cites elsewhere, though not here, is NKVD man D.M. Dmitriev's confession concerning this event:

> I remember the following cases:
>
> 1. The case of Tat'iana KAMENEVA. She was the wife of L.E. KAMENEV. We had information that Tat'iana KAMENEVA, on instructions from L.B. KAMENEV, went to the French ambassador in Moscow AL'FAND with a proposal to set up a meeting with L.B. KAMENEV for counterrevolutionary discussions concerning help by the French government to underground Trotskyites inside the USSR.
>
> I and CHERTOK interrogated Tat'iana KAMENEVA and "steered away" from this accusation, making it possible for her to avoid testimony about this fact during the investigation.[12]

Rather than evidence that Stalin was fabricating confessions, this is strong evidence that he was *not* doing so! On the contrary, conspirators within the NKVD were deceiving Stalin in cooperation with the bloc, including Kamenev's wife.

Since this is good evidence that Stalin was *not* fabricating these trials, it is logical that Khlevniuk and Kotkin withhold it from their readers. But it is dishonest for them to do so.

Shame On Stalin For *Not* Violating Soviet Law!

Kotkin:

> Stalin supervised the trial from afar, sternly instructing Kaganovich that the sentences had to mention Trotsky and Sedov. ("This carries enormous significance for Europe, both for the bourgeoisie and for the workers.")[118] A few hours after the court had adjourned on August 24, Ulrich, at 2:30 a.m., pronounced the defendants guilty and condemned all but one to death. Later that day, the regime staged a grand aviation display at Moscow's Tushinsky Aerodrome ("Glory to Stalinist aviation and the Stalinist falcons"). Planes flew difficult maneuvers. Parachutists dropped from the sky. "The enemies' schemes," a teacher in the Institute of World Economy and International Relations recorded in his diary, "cannot stop our enormous successes."[119] Kamenev and the others wrote **appeals** for mercy in the predawn hours. (Only one defendant expressly refused to do so.) **Perhaps, as would be rumored, Stalin had promised them their lives in exchange for public "confessions" to crimes they had not committed.**[120] But **well before the end of the**

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[12] Lubianka 1937-1938 Doc. 356, p. 586. "L.E. Kamenev" is a typographical error for L.B. Kamenev. The Kameneva referred to here is the same person as the Glebova of the previous quotation.

> **seventy-two-hour period for appeals specified in Soviet law**, Kamenev, Zinoviev, and the rest were executed in the cellars.[121] Yezhov retrieved the bullet casings as souvenirs. (333)

Note 118 (985): Stalin forbade mention of the fact that there would be no appeal ("these words are superfluous and would give a bad impression").

> Khlevniuk et al., *Stalin i Kaganovich*, 642 (RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 93, l. 62–4)[13]

Stalin did write this concerning the appeals. But either he changed his mind, or he was overruled – according to Kotkin he was still only "first among equals" at this point! – because, as Kotkin's text recognizes, appeals were in fact permitted. The appeals of Kamenev, Smirnov I.N., Zinoviev, and Lur'e, Natan L. have been published (*Izvestiia*, September 2, 1992, p. 3). All repeated their confessions of guilt in the strongest terms, while also asking for clemency.

Note 120 (985):

> Eduard Gol'tsman wrote a note that he would not seek clemency. Volkogonov, *Lenin*, 276 (citing AMBRF, archive no. R-33833, t. 41, l. 256).

This passage in Volkogonov reads:

> All of the sixteen condemned men, except one, wrote begging for mercy. The exception was Eduard Solomonovich Goltsman, eleventh on the list, who wrote a note declaring that he would positively not ask for mercy.[95]

This is true: a note about Gol'tsman's refusal to appeal is in the Volkogonov Papers. But Volkogonov fabricates as badly as Kotkin. On the same page Volkogonov wrote:

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[13] This document is also online at http://istmat.info/node/36926

> Both Kamenev and Zinoviev still cherished some hope; **Stalin had indeed promised to spare their lives if they would make a full 'confession' and repent.** They had not realized that everything had been predetermined.

Volkogonov is lying here. There is no evidence to support this claim that "Stalin had promised to spare their lives for a confession." As with Kotkin and all those who adhere to the Anti-Stalin Paradigm *a priori* and in defiance of all the evidence, Volkogonov has to try to explain why the accused confessed if, as the Anti-Stalin Paradigm demands, they were all innocent.

Never Trust Volkogonov

Volkogonov's historical works are dishonest. Arch Getty has written:

> We CAN judge them [Russian scholars], it seems to me, according to two criteria: how well were/are they able to communicate significant historical information and interpretation DESPITE prescribed controls, and how good is their research.
>
> In this admittedly idiosyncratic definition, I think Volkogonov fails on both counts. First, his writing, both in the Soviet era and the post-Soviet time faithfully mimics, without nuance or Aesopian message, exactly what his employers want to hear. Others managed to do otherwise. Second, because of my interest in similar topics, I have had occasion to check and verify several of Volkogonov's more important archival footnotes in his *Triumf i tragediia*. I can report that a substantial number of them do not refer to the documents they purport to cite, even by the most generous paraphrase. Often, his notes cite documents wholly unrelated to the matter at hand. Some of this, of course, can be explained by innocent mistake or clerical accident, of which we are all guilty

> at one time or another. Some of it can be explained by the fact that Volkogonov himself almost never darkened the door of an archive; in good Soviet style, he headed a team of hungry but, to us, anonymous juniors who actually did the research, selected the documents, and presented them to the mandarin for approval. I have it, first hand, that he worked this way. But even with these caveats, there can be no excuse (to take only one example) for citing Stalin's order to torture prisoners to a stenogram of Zhdanov's speech on elections. Such examples are legion.[14]

This assessment of Volkogonov's scholarship is as accessible to Kotkin as it is to me or to anyone.

> Note 121 (985): But **well before the end of the seventy-two-hour period for appeals specified in Soviet law**, Kamenev, Zinoviev, and the rest were executed in the cellars.

Yet another falsehood! The trial ended on the evening of August 23. Seventy-two hours were indeed permitted for appeals. But each of the four appeals we now have is dated August 24, 1936. That means that the defendants had appealed *within* about 24 hours.

Therefore, far from being broken, the law was adhered to. But it is evidently important to Kotkin to claim that Stalin violated Soviet law, so he falsifies this issue.

* * *

For some reason Kotkin claims that "Yezhov retrieved the bullet casings as souvenirs." This statement is not accurate; the reality was far more gruesome. Iagoda retrieved *the bullets themselves,* extracted from the skulls of the executed men! See the following article:

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[14] H-Russia list, September 26, 1998.

Пули, которыми были убиты два видных большевика, в качестве своего рода сувениров хранил у себя шеф НКВД Генрих Ягода. Когда через полтора года пришел его черед идти к расстрельной стенке, пули перекочевали к его преемнику Николаю Ежову, расстрелянному, в свою очередь, еще два года спустя. [15]

The bullets which had killed the two prominent Bolsheviks, were kept as a kind of souvenir by the chief of the NKVD, Genrikh Iagoda. When, after a year and a half, his turn came to the firing squad, the bullets moved to his successor Nikolai Yezhov, who was shot, in turn, two years later

One would think that this macabre bit of information would help Kotkin make the trial and execution "look bad." It seems that incompetence alone can explain this omission by Kotkin.

[15] Iaroslav Shimov, "Dve puli na pamiat'." "Radio Svoboda," August 24, 2016. At https://www.svoboda.org/a/27943084.html

Chapter 6. Second Moscow Trial

We now have overwhelming documentary evidence that the defendants in the Second Moscow Trial were guilty, and that Leon Trotsky did indeed conspire with the Nazis and the Japanese militarists against the USSR. Kotkin has this evidence too. But Kotkin's readers will not learn about it. Kotkin conceals it from them in order to argue, without evidence of any kind, that the Trial was a frame-up.

We have already examined this quotation of Larina's in Chapter Three:

> ... Stalin had Bukharin summoned to a confrontation [GF note 1] with Radek and Pyatakov, who were delivered from prison. Bukharin told his wife that Radek had denounced him as a spy and terrorist with whom he had plotted Stalin's murder, and that Pyatakov resembled a "skeleton with its teeth knocked out."[345] (370)
>
> Note 345 (990): Larina, *This I Cannot Forget,* 312.

The transcript of the confrontation with Piatakov has been published. In it, Piatakov fully confessed his guilt at this confrontation. According to Larina, Bukharin told her that Ordzhonikidze wanted to hit Piatakov. Small wonder! Piatakov had been his trusted *zam*, second-in-command in the Commissariat of Heavy Industry.

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[1] "Confrontation" is short for "face-to-face confrontation," a right accorded prisoners to confront and question their accusers. Kotkin does not inform his readers of this. There was no joint confrontation with both Radek and Piatakov – they were separate confrontations more than a month apart.

There is a great deal of evidence against Piatakov! For a discussion of it, including non-Soviet evidence that is surely well-known to Kotkin see *Trotsky's 'Amalgams,'* especially Chapter 8.

We also have Sergo Ordzhonikidze's speech of February 5, 1937, to leading members of the Commissariat of Heavy Industry, where Piatakov had been his assistant. It is clear from this speech that Ordzhonikidze believed Piatakov guilty. (Getty & Naumov 292-294)

Вы думаете, что если я имел первого заместителя, человека вроде Пятакова, который в промышленности работал полтора десятка лет, имел огромные связи со всеми людьми, что этот человек не мог подбросить нам 1-2 людей? Конечно, мог и подбросил. Некоторых нашли, других не нашли. Вы же слышали о методах борьбы, которую они вели. Кто-либо поставил вопрос, чтобы проверить у себя главке, как у него дело обстоит? Ни один даже не ставил и мимо даже не проходил. Как же вы хотите [дело] делать? И сейчас, имейте в виду, при этих затруднениях — будут хныкать и ничего не делать.

Вы думаете, что вредитель тот, кто ходит с револьвером в кармане и ждет, чтобы кого-нибудь застрелить? Ничего подобного. Кто-либо мог себе представить, что Пятаков может быть вредителем? А он оказался вредителем, и еще, краснобай, рассказывал, как он [это] делал.[2]

You think that if I had as my first deputy a man like Piatakov, who had worked in industry for the past 15 years, who had tremendous connections with all sorts of people, you think that this person couldn't possibly sneak one or two of his people in. But sneak them he did! Some of them were found out, others were not.

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[2] The Russian version of Ordzhonikidze's speech was not available when Getty and Naumov wrote in the late '90s. It was finally published in 2011 and is now online at http://istmat.info/node/48634

> You have, after all, heard of their tactics. Who among you has raised the question of finding out how things are going on in your chief directorate?
>
> You think that a wrecker [*vreditel'*] is someone who walks around with a revolver in his pocket, someone who hides in some dark corner somewhere, waiting for his victim? Who could imagine that Piatakov could be a saboteur, and yet he turned out to be a saboteur, and, more still, a fine talker. He told how he did it.

Ordzhonikidze went on to explain how he had Todorskii, someone whom Piatakov had named, expelled from the Party.[3] Ordzhonikidze further explained how the Party had reprimanded him for expelling Todorskii on these grounds – presumably, without a Party hearing or trial.

Bukharin confirmed that Piatakov had confessed his guilt to Ordzhonikidze. Bukharin did not tell Larina that he thought Piatakov was lying – if he had done so, Larina would certainly have said so.

"Begging The Question" Again: "Torture"

Kotkin:

> On January 23, 1937, a second trial in Moscow of a parallel "Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Center" opened, like the first, in the October Hall, **after Stalin had hand-edited the charges.**[348] Ten of the seventeen defendants worked in Orjonikidze's heavy industry commissariat.[349] "And here I stand before you in filth, crushed by my own crimes," Pyatakov publicly confessed, "bereft of everything through my own fault, a man who has lost his party, who has no friends, who

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[3] In the published transcript of the January 1937 Moscow Trial Todorskii is named by Rataichak, another of the defendants, not by Piatakov. (1937 Trial 420) Piatakov must have named him in an interrogation not made public.

has lost his family, who has lost his very self." Yezhov had personally forced his erstwhile drinking buddy, **in thirty-three days of torture**, to capitulate to accusations of Trotskyism and plotting with Germany.[350] (Yezhov was finally named to the highest rank, "general commissar of state security.")[351] Radek, in court, delivered a tour de force **fabricated** history of Trotskyism. His "features," an American correspondent observed, "seemed curiously out of focus, his teeth charred and uneven, his eyes very much alive behind thick glasses."[352] Soviet newspapers and radio afforded wire-to-wire coverage, accompanied by orchestrated meetings at factories and farms. "Why such a great fuss over the trial?" Feuchtwanger would ask Dimitrov.

"Incomprehensible. An atmosphere has been created of extreme unrest among the population, mutual suspicion, denunciations, and so forth. Trotskyism has been killed—why such a campaign?"[353] (373)

Note 348 (990): Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i glavnoe upravlenie*, 9–19 (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 269, l. 38–58, 80).

Stalin added literally only a few words to this draft indictment, reproduced on page 19 of the Khaustov volume.

Note: 350 (990): *Report of Court Proceedings*, 54; "O tak nazyvaemom 'parallel'nom antisovetskom trotskistom tsentre'": 30–50.

This is a phony footnote that conceals another of Kotkin's falsification. It contains no evidence for any of the statements Kotkin makes here.

Specifically, it contains no evidence for Kotkin's claim that Piatakov, or anyone else, was tortured at all, much less for thirty-three days. No such evidence exists. Nor is there any evidence that

Radek's story of Trotskyism was "fabricated" – indeed, Kotkin never bothers to tell us what he means by this.

In his testimony at the January 1937 Moscow Trial Karl Radek had ridiculed the notion of torture:

> RADEK: When I found myself in the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, the chief examining official realized at once why I would not talk. He said to me: "You are not a baby. Here you have fifteen people testifying against you. You cannot get out of it, and as a sensible man you cannot think of doing so. If you do not want to testify it can only be because you want to gain time and look it over more closely. Very well, study it." For two and a half months I tormented the examining official. **The question has been raised here whether we were tormented while under investigation. I must say that it was not I who was tormented, but I who tormented the examining officials and compelled them to perform a lot of useless work.** (*1937 Trial* 549)[4].

Anyone who reads the transcript of the Radek-Piatakov trial can see that it would be hard to imagine anyone cooler under pressure than Radek.

Better Hide It From the Kiddies

The text that Kotkin cites, "O tak nazyvaemom ...," is the official Gorbachev-era attempt to discredit the trial. The only reference to "torture" in this document is this:

> Вся система допросов была рассчитана на морально-психологическое и физическое
>
> изматывание подследственных. Об этом свидетельствовал в 1938 г. и бывший заместитель

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[4] For a more detailed discussion of this question see *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* 450-451.

наркома внутренних дел СССР М. П. Фриновский. Он, в частности, показал, что лица, проводившие следствие по делу так называемого «параллельного антисоветского троцкистского центра », начинали допросы, как правило, с применения физических мер воздействия, которые продолжались до тех пор, пока подследственные не давали согласия на дачу навязывавшихся им показаний. (40)

The entire system of interrogations was designed for the moral, psychological and physical exhaustion of suspects. This was testified in 1938 by the former deputy People's Commissar of the USSR, M.P. Frinovsky. In particular, he showed that the persons who conducted the investigation in the case of the so-called "parallel anti-Soviet Trotskyite center" started interrogations, **as a rule**, with the use of physical measures of influence, which continued until the persons under investigation had agreed to give the confessions of those who were forcing them.

This is an admission that there is no evidence of torture in *this* case. But it is of interest to us anyway as it contains an instructive falsification – in this case, another example of "bias by omission" by Kotkin.

For in the confession – dated not in 1938, but in April, 1939, which shows how carelessly Gorbachev's "rehabilitation" materials were compiled – Frinovsky *confirmed* the guilt of Piatakov, Lifshits, and the other defendants in this trial.

At one of these meetings during horseback riding Lifshits said to me: I heard about you from Evdokimov. Frankly, I did not suspect that you were also with us. Good for you!" I began to speak with Lifshits – and how about you? He answered: "Evdokimov has already told you that I am doing work." I asked him again – are you doing important work? He said that he was doing important work, **he**

> **had contact with the conspiratorial center through Pyatakov**, had a large number of people ...
>
> I had that conversation with Deribas, and Deribas was interested, in the main, in the names of the people who had already been repressed and the people who were mentioned in the [investigative] materials. **I told him about Lifshits and Pyatakov who were on the point of being exposed.**[5]

Frinovsky's confession-statement was not published until 2006. The Gorbachev-era text cited by Kotkin, "O tak nazyvaemom ...," was published in 1989, at a time when no one could compare the false claim in it with what Frinovsky actually said.

Here we have very strong evidence of Piatakov's guilt. Kotkin knows this. He cites texts from this volume many times. As we will see in future chapters Kotkin cites this very document — Frinovsky's confession statement — many times. But Kotkin simply *refuses to tell his readers what Frinovsky said!.* Presumably because Frinovsky's confession demolishes Kotkin's notion that the Moscow Trials were frame-ups of innocent men.

We now have a great many interrogations and confessions by the defendants at this trial and by others who implicate them, in volume two of the 2013 collection *Politbiuro i Lev Trotskii.* We will examine them in a future volume of our ongoing Trotsky research.

Kotkin ignores all this evidence too. Of course! This evidence dismantles Kotkin's fable about the supposed "frame-up" of the Moscow Trials. Better hide this evidence!

Notes 351 and 352 contain no evidence relevant to the Trial.

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[5] "To The People's Commissar for Internal Affairs of the Union of Soviet Soc. Republics – Commissar of State Security1st degree BERIA L.P. From the arrested suspect FRINOVSKY M.P. Statement. Lubianka 1939-1946, 33-50. Quotations are on page 39 and 41. English translation at https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/frinovskyeng.html

"Arguing From Incredulity" — Again

Kotkin:

> **Feuchtwanger found the allegations preposterous.** And yet the oppositionists *had* organized a conspiratorial meeting, in summer 1932, at Zinoviev's dacha, where expelled party members of the Leningrad opposition had discussed reviving their old links to Trotsky. A message from Trotsky to join forces *had* been carried into the Soviet Union. Stalin was also correct that the NKVD (then the OGPU) had missed these contacts, which was evidently part of the basis for his statement, in the September 1936 dismissal of Yagoda, that the NKVD was four years behind.[354] **Of course, this was a pathetic "bloc" incapable of consequential action (Smirnov, a supposed organizer of the conspiracy to murder Kirov in 1934, had been in prison since 1933).**[355] But the meeting was not an invention. The "terror" charges, too, contained the minutest kernel of truth. (371-2)

This paragraph contains some interesting falsehoods. For one thing, Feuchtwanger did *not* find the trial "preposterous" at all! He only thought that the charges of Trotsky's collaboration with Germany and Japan were weakly supported. Here is the passage from Dimitrov's diary, cited in Kotkin's note 353:

> 2 February 1937
>
> —Feuchtwanger to see me (Comintern).
>
> ... On the trial:
>
> 1. Diversionary actions, espionage, terror—proved.
>
> 2. Also proved: that Trotsky inspired and directed.
>
> 3. Trotsky's agreement with Hess[124] and the Japanese is based only on the confessions of the defendants.

—No evidence whatsoever!

4. The fact that Radek and Sokolnikov were not sentenced to be shot will be exploited abroad as evidence that they furnished such testimony deliberately in order to save their lives.

5. The abuse hurled at the defendants leaves a disturbing impression.

They are enemies, deserving of destruction. But they did not act out of personal interest, and they should not to have called them scoundrels, cowards, reptiles, etc.

6. Why such a great fuss over the trial. Incomprehensible. An atmosphere has been created of extreme unrest among the population, mutual suspicion, denunciations, and so forth. Trotskyism has been killed—why such a campaign?. (Dimitrov, 51)

Feuchtwanger found the principal charges credible but complained that the only evidence of Trotsky's conspiracy with the Germans (Hess, Hitler's deputy in the Nazi Party) and the Japanese was based on confessions.

Trotsky's Conspiracy with Hitler's Germany

But Feuchtwanger was in error. He did not ask himself *what other kind of evidence could possibly exist.* What did he expect – a letter about the conspiracy signed by Hess and Trotsky themselves?

There is a great deal of evidence, from various sources, that Trotsky was indeed in conspiracy with German and Japan to defeat the USSR in a war.[6] We will present a lot more evidence of Trotsky's conspiracy with Germany in the third volume of our study of Trotsky's activities.

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[6] See Furr, Trotsky's Collaboration.

The fact that Feuchtwanger, or anyone else, does not believe the charges is not evidence that the charges were false. Such reasoning is called the argument from incredulity (sometimes called the "fallacy of personal incredulity").[7] It applies to Kotkin, too. Kotkin rejects – i.e., refuses to believe -- the charges against the defendants in this and the other trials. But he has no evidence whatsoever that these charges were false. And it is evidence, not whatever Kotkin, or anybody else, "believes," that is decisive.

The Bloc Did Function

Kotkin:

> Of course, this was a pathetic "bloc" incapable of consequential action (Smirnov, a supposed organizer of the conspiracy to murder Kirov in 1934, had been in prison since 1933).

This is false. In *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* we have cited and discussed evidence that the bloc continued to function at the Suzdal' political "isolator" (prison with especially good conditions), where Smirnov was confined. (Furr, Trotsky's 'Amalgams' 72, 74)

In 2017 yet more evidence of vigorous political activity by prisoners from the Opposition was discovered hidden at the political "isolator" at Verkhneural'sk.[8] Here we can just refer the reader to the confession-statement by Mikhail Frinovsky cited above, and its online English translation — which Kotkin ignores.

Nor was Smirnov accused of organizing the conspiracy to murder Kirov in 1934, as Kotkin falsely claims. Smirnov was accused of being a leader of the bloc, and members of the bloc who were *not* in prison organized Kirov's murder. Smirnov specifically denied having had anything to do with "terrorist" (assassination)

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[7] See, for example, https://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Argument_from_incredulity

[8] See "Historic discovery of Left Opposition manuscripts from the early 1930s." August 27, 2018, at http://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2018/08/27/left-a27.html There are a number of articles about this discovery on the Russian-language internet.

activities, though he admitted that he was an organizer of the bloc that did carry out such actions. He was, however, accused of a more active role by his admitted co-conspirators.

> Vyshinsky: Was the centre organized on the basis of terrorism?
>
> Smirnov: Yes.
>
> Vyshinsky: Were you a member of that centre?
>
> Smirnov: Yes, I was.
>
> Vyshinsky: Consequently, those instructions were meant for you too?
>
> Smirnov: Yes, they were communicated to me.
>
> Vyshinsky: They were not only communicated through you but were also instructions for you?
>
> Smirnov: They were forwarded as instructions.
>
> Vyshinsky: Did you accept them?
>
> Smirnov: Yes
>
> Vyshinsky: How can you maintain, then, that Trotsky, from whom these instructions originated, was not an authority for you? ...
>
> Smirnov: I listened to those instructions and communicated them to the centre. The centre accepted them, but I took no part in its work. (First Moscow Trial, 83)

"Remove Stalin!"

Kotkin:

> After a decree had rescinded Trotsky's Soviet citizenship, he had written a spirited open letter to the

central executive committee of the Soviet (which had nominal jurisdiction over citizenship) asserting that "Stalin has led us to a cul-de-sac. . . . It is necessary, at last, to carry out Lenin's last insistent advice: *remove Stalin.*"[356] Trotsky had not written "remove by assassination," but how else could it be done?[357] (371-2)

Note 356 (990): Trotskii, "Otkrytoe pis'ma." [This should be "Otkryoe pis'mo" – GF]

Trotsky's words are: *"ubrat' Stalina."* ("Надо, наконец, выполнить последний настойчивый совет Ленина: убрать Сталина.") "Ubrat'" was the word used by all the conspirators.[9] Kotkin is correct to suggest that it meant "kill" because there was no other way. At the Second Moscow Trial of January, 1937, Radek said that he understood that Trotsky meant Stalin should be killed though Trotsky never used a word like "kill."

Note 357 (990): ... the NKVD agent Zborowski managed to report that, on Jan. 22, Trotsky's son Lev Sedov had told him apropos of the accusations, "now there is no longer vacillation, Stalin should be killed." Volkogonov, *Trotskii*, II: 197 (citing Arkhiv INO OGPU-NKVD, f. 31660, d. 9067, t. 1, l. 98). Although, in an article (Oct. 1933), Trotsky had written that "the only way to compel the bureaucracy to hand over power to the proletariat is by force," in a subsequent article on the Kirov murder he wrote that assassinating Stalin would accomplish nothing, because he would just be replaced by "one of those Kaganoviches." "Klassovaia priroda sovetskogo gosudarstva (problemy chetvertogo internatsionala)," *Biulleten' oppozitsii*, no.

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[9] Trotsky knew that the word used in the "Addition" (*dobavlenie*) to Lenin's 'Letter to the Congress" is "replacement" (*peremeshchenie*), not the verb "ubrat'." This document, attributed to Lenin, is probably a forgery, according to Russian historian Valentin Sakharov, whose research Kotkin accepts in volume one of his Stalin biography

36–7 (October 1933): 1–12 (at 9–10); Trotskii, "Stalinskaia biurokratiia i ubiistvo Kirova"; Volkogonov, *Triumf i tragediia*, II/i: 270.

For a thorough discussion of Sedov's statement to Zborowski, see *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*, 292 ff., "Trotsky and Terror." There we demonstrate that this and other statements by Sedov constitute strong evidence that Trotsky and his son were lying when they were assuring the world that they opposed assassinating Stalin and others.

Of course they would deny it, whether or not they were actually planning assassination! Conspiracy necessarily involves lying. Therefore, their denials mean nothing. We have much evidence that Trotsky counted on using force against Stalin and his supporters. But Trotsky could not say so publicly.

Chapter 7. Spanish Civil War

Why Not Some *New* Falsehoods?

Has Kotkin actually researched this topic himself? If he has, why does he repeats old falsehoods, mainly from Cold War-era anticommunist research? The primary sources available today, many available for decades, prove that Kotkin's claims of nefarious actions by the Soviets in Spain are false down to the last one.

Kotkin relates how Andreu Nin, formerly a secretary (political advisor) of Trotsky's, became a leader of the POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unification) in Spain, publicly broke with Trotsky and Trotsky, also publicly, with him, and that Trotsky's position was that there should be a "full-bore anti-capitalist revolution" in Spain. This latter position meant opposition to the Spanish Republic, a bourgeois-democratic regime, and with Soviet policy, which was to support such governments in order to gain as large a united front against fascism as possible.[1]

> In Stalin's worldview, Nin's hoary link to Trotsky alone rendered the POUM "Trotskyite." (345)

As we saw in Chapter Four, we have good reason to think that Nin's and Trotsky's supposed "break" – scare quotes deliberate here – was a cover for continued collaboration just as Radek, Piatakov, and many other Trotskyists admitted. The Soviets certainly must have assumed that. Given the materials that he claims he has read, Kotkin must know it too.

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[1] The Soviets wanted a Popular Front government willing to work with them. But they did not want to scare off the anticommunist capitalist powers France, the U.K., and the USA. The Soviets knew that, unless the blockade against the Spanish Republic by these powers was dropped, the Republic was doomed. Also, the Soviets and the Spanish communists were realistic. They realized that no Bolshevik-type communist revolution was possible with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy arrayed against the Republic.

> There was also the POUM's independence, criticizing the Stalinist line while claiming the mantle of Marxism. Some members of the POUM, moreover, openly admired Trotsky, and some of its officials discussed inviting him to take up residence in Barcelona. Sometimes fabricated nightmares have a way of coming true. (345)

Here Kotkin wants it both ways. On the one hand, Kotkin insists that the POUM was not really Trotskyist. This is evidently what he means by Stalin's "fabricated nightmare" and by ignoring Nin's, Erwin Wolf's, and Landau's ties to Trotsky. But on the other hand Kotkin concedes that POUM acted like a Trotskyist party would be expected to act.

Kotkin:

> Throughout Europe, significant doubts reverberated among leftist intellectuals about the alleged treason of the executed Bolshevik revolutionaries, but **in Republic Spain, the POUM's *La Batalla* was almost the only newspaper to detail, let alone condemn, the Moscow showcase trial, labeling the Soviet Union a "bureaucratic regime of poisonous dictatorship."** Tit for tat, the lead editorial in the September 1936 issue of *The Communist International,* issued in multiple European languages, condemned the POUM as fascist agents masquerading as leftists, with ties to Trotsky, Kamenev, Zinoviev, Franco, Mussolini, Hitler.[184] (343-344)

Here too Kotkin shows that POUM used Trotsky's own terminology to condemn the First Moscow Trial, thus tacitly conceding that POUM acted as though it were a Trotskyist party.

> Note 184 (986) Dimitrov, "Zashchishchat' podlykh terroristov" (no. 14), 3–6, (no. 15), 17–8. In the same issue, Palmiro Togliatti presented **Stalin's retrospective criminalization of long-ago factional**

activity as "an act to defend democracy, peace, socialism, and the revolution." Ercoli, "Uroki protsessa," 37, 43. "The Moscow trial has had a catastrophic effect and has dreadfully compromised the policy of the Popular Front," the Austrian Marxist Rudolf Hilferding had lamented in Aug. 1936. McDermott and Agnew, *Comintern,* 156.

This is all wrong. What's more, Kotkin knows it. Mikhail Frinovsky, Yezhov's second-in-command, stated in April 1939 that the Moscow Trials defendants really were guilty.

> At the time of the trial of Zinoviev, Kamenev and others, when the testimony about Bukharin was published in the press, Evdokimov was in Moscow. He became very upset and in a conversation with me, said: "The devil only knows how he will be able to extract himself from this whole affair. I just don't understand Yagoda at all, what he is doing, why he is broadening the circle of persons for repression, or maybe the nerves of these people are weak – they will give out. But it could have been possible to direct the course of the investigation in such a manner as to leave oneself safe in any case." (Frinovsky, 40)[2]

Today we have a great deal of evidence that Zinoviev, Kamenev, et al. were guilty. Their factional activity was not of "long ago" and had by no means ended. Kotkin knows about this evidence too.

There has *never* been *any* evidence that *any* of the Moscow Trials (only the first Moscow Trial is at question now) were frame-ups, the defendants innocent, tortured, threatened, or otherwise forced or cajoled to make false confessions.[3] This is the bottom-line reason that Kotkin has recourse to unsupported statements ("the

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[2] Frinovsky's statement to Beria is on line in English translation at https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/frinovskyeng.html We return to it in a later chapter.

[3] See Furr, Trotsky's 'Amalgams' Chapters 1-12; Furr, Moscow Trials.

defendants were tortured," etc.). Lies and unsupported fact-claims – as though "this is so obvious that no evidence is needed" – are his only resort.

Ironically enough, since all the evidence we now have supports the hypothesis that the Moscow Trials defendants were indeed guilty and Trotsky really was collaborating with the Nazis and Japanese, it turns out that Togliatti's statement that the First Moscow Trial was "an act to defend democracy, peace, socialism, and the revolution" was true. Anti-Trotskyism really *was* anti-Fascism — even though few Trotskyists outside the USSR knew it.

Communist "Massacres"?

Kotkin discusses the Paracuellos massacre of Nationalist supporters in 1936 and then describes it as "the worst of **the many massacres in the Republic's zone perpetrated by leading Spanish Communists and their Soviet advisers**, Gorev, Orlov, and Koltsov.[238]" (351) Paul Preston, whose book Kotkin footnotes at this point, gives the figures of Nationalist victims as "somewhere between 2,200 and 2,500."

Note 238 (978): Preston, *Last Stalinist,* 70–88.

The men killed were in fact fascists. They were General Mola's – that is, Francisco Franco's -- "Fifth Column."

But Kotkin is bluffing again. He does not identify a single one of what he calls the "many massacres." Preston says nothing about "many massacres" either, nor about any involvement in these or in any "massacres" by Gorev or Kol'tsov. In fact the Paracuellos massacre is the *only* such massacre by the Republicans.

Kotkin's Utter Lack of Objectivity

If a historian were to claim that the 1967 My Lai Massacre of 500 – 600 Vietnamese civilians — a real atrocity that included rape-murder and the use of children for target practice — was just "the worst of many massacres" by America soldiers, many or most other historians and readers would cry "foul" and demand:

"Where's your evidence for these many *other* massacres?" And, obviously, they would be correct to do so![4]

Same here! Kotkin should give evidence for this claim, instead of relying on his readers' anticommunism to let him skate by with the kind of utterly unsupported allegation of "many massacres" that would never be tolerated if the charge had been made against American soldiers.

The Barcelona "May Days' Revolt

Kotkin:

> Koltsov also wrote how Trotsky was supposedly giving directives to the POUM and how the POUM "had restructured in the usual Trotskyite fashion" in order to engage in "terrorism" ("provocations, raids, and murders"). (364-5)

In reality we know that Trotsky was indeed "giving directives to the POUM" — and Kotkin has to know it too. Trotsky's secretary Erwin Wolf went to Spain as the emissary of the International Secretariat of the IV International, Trotsky's organization, and therefore as Trotsky's own emissary.

Other Trotskyists, like Andreu Nin and Kurt Landau, continued to act consistently with Trotsky's ideas. As we explained in Chapter Four, the Soviets would naturally have assumed that their "break" with Trotsky was phony, as both Piatakov and Radek, and later Khristian Rakovsky, testified that their public "breaks" with Trotsky had been, and as Andreu Nin himself had said that *all* such "retractions" were.

Erwin Wolf had not even pretended to "break" with Trotsky. He had come straight from Trotsky in Norway to Spain with only a brief stop-over in Belgium and France.[5] According to Trotskyist

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[4] In fact there is reliable evidence for many other massacres by American soldiers in Vietnam. There is *no* such evidence for many massacres by communists in the SCW.

historian Pierre Broué, whose works Kotkin cites, *Trotsky's supporters reported to him in 1936 that most POUM "militants" in Barcelona were in fact Trotskyists.*[6] No wonder Trotsky dispatched an emissary – Wolf.

The Barcelona "May Days" uprising was an attempt at an anarchist-Trotskyist seizure of power in Catalonia in the midst of the war. On May 5 the insurgents even declared a provisional government. The Spanish communists and Soviet NKVD would certainly have understood the presence of leading Trotskyists like Wolf and Landau as additional evidence that the "May Days" uprising had been planned in advance. It is significant that neither Wolf nor Landau was arrested and "disappeared" until long after the "May Days" uprising.

What Kol'tsov Really Wrote

Kotkin:

Koltsov ... accused the POUM "Trotskyites" of attracting only riffraff and scum.[319]

> Tens of thousands of workers and people's militias who were sacrificing their lives to save the Republic were cowards and fascist hirelings. (364-5)
>
> Note 319 (989): Kol'tsov, "Agentura trotskistov v Ispanii." See also "Ispanskii dnevnik," *Novyi mir*, no. 4 (1938): 5 (Jan. 21, 1937).

Yet another false statement by Kotkin, though you'd never know it unless you checked Kol'tsov's articles, all in Russian — and how many of Kotkin's readers are going to do that? Kol'tsov wrote that all the scum flock to Trotsky, not that all of the POUM fighters were scum.

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[5] There his partner, Hjørdis Knudsen, joined him. She was the daughter of Konrad Knudsen, the Norwegian politician at whose house Trotsky was staying.
[6] Broué, "La mission de Wolf en Espagne." *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* 10 (June, 1982), 77.

> Куда бы ни протянулась гнусная рука Троцкого, она сеет ложь, предательства и убийства ... Всё тёмное, зловещее, преступное, все подонки, вся мразь людская слетается на его зов для гнусных разбойничьих дел.
>
> Wherever the vile hand of Trotsky is stretched it sows lies, betrayals and murder ... Everything sinister, criminal, all scum, all the human scum flies to his call for vile thuggish acts. (Kol'tsov, "Agentura trotkistov v Ispanii," *Pravda*, December 14, 1936)

In his January 21, 1937 article in "Ispanskii dnevnik" (Spanish diary) Kol'tsov draws a clear distinction between Nin and "a few other persons" in the POUM leadership, and everybody else.[7] Kol'tsov wrote this *before* Radek's dramatic disclosure, during the Second Moscow Trial of January, 1937, that Trotskyists were indeed active in Spain, and before the Barcelona "May Days" revolt, which was nothing if not a stab in the back against the Spanish Republic.

POUM *Was* A Trotskyist Front

Kotkin:

> Meanwhile, the January 1937 editorial of *The Communist International,* written in Stalin's signature style of questions and answers, pointedly noted that "the Spanish Trotskyites conduct themselves like the advanced guard of the notorious 'fifth column' of Franco insurgents. Is it possible to support the heroic struggle of the Spanish popular masses without fighting against the traitorous Trotskyite band? No, it is impossible."[334] *La Batalla,* the POUM's organ, responded that "Stalin is destroying, without looking back, everything that opposes him. . . . Stalin maintains his incontestable power with terror."[335] (368)

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[7] http://militera.lib.ru/db/koltsov_me/07.html

Note 335:

> AVP RF, f. 05, op. 17, d. 49, p. 131, l. 59–60 (*La Batalla*, Jan. 21, 1937). Orlov seems to have pushed in Jan. 1937 for approval for an armed uprising in the Nationalist rear, in Spanish Morocco, but the Spanish Republican government did not support the idea, wary of overly antagonizing France given the proximity to French Morocco. Costello and Tsarev, *Deadly Illusions*, 274, 467n21 (citing ASVRR file 17679, I: 54). Orlov finally became official NKVD station chief in Spain in late Feb. 1937.

Here the POUM paper "La Batalla" was writing about the Second Moscow Trial, the Trotskyist trial which began on January 21, 1937. Today we have much more evidence that the conspiracies to which the Trotskyists in this trial confessed were real conspiracies. Of course, this evidence is also available to Kotkin. But he never tells his readers about it.

Articles like this one and many others from the POUM newspaper would have been taken by the Soviets as proof that POUM was a Trotskyist front. And it turns out that the editors of the Comintern journal were correct! POUM leaders, including Kurt Landau, had tried to organize in Barcelona a conference of anti-Soviet forces to discuss the overthrow of the Spanish Republican government, culminating in the "May Days" revolt. Meanwhile in article after article the POUM newspaper echoed Trotsky's attacks on Stalin and the USSR; Nin was in the POUM leadership; Wolf was an advisor to POUM; and Landau was one of its activist-propagandists.

Fascists Prepared Barcelona Revolt

Kotkin:

> Later, Franco would boast that his agents had provoked the Barcelona anarchist uprising so as to disorganize the Republic's rear. No doubt his agents did try. (408)

But Kotkin fails to cite the *evidence* that the Fascists had provoked the uprising. According to General Wilhelm Faupel, Hitler's ambassador to Spain, Franco himself claimed that agents of his were also involved in instigating the Anarchists to revolt.

> As for the disorders in Barcelona, Franco informed me that the street fighting had been started by his agents. As Nicolás Franco further told me, they had in all some 13 agents in Barcelona. One of these had given the information a considerable time ago that the tension between the Anarchists and Communists was so great in Barcelona that he would guarantee to cause fighting to break out there. ... Actually the agent had succeeded, within a few days of receiving such instructions, in having street shooting started by three or four persons, and this had then produced the desired result.[8]

Kotkin also never mentions the most important fact— that the Nazis themselves were also involved in planning the "May Days' revolt. Here is a part of the 1942 accusation by a Nazi court against Harro Schulze-Boysen, a Soviet spy in the Nazi *Luftwaffe*:

> At the beginning of 1938 [an error for 1937 – GF], during the Spanish Civil War, the accused learned in his official capacity that **a rebellion against the local red government in the territory of Barcelona was being prepared with the co-operation of the German Secret Service.** This information, together with that of Pöllnitz, was transmitted by him to the Soviet Russian embassy in Paris.[9]

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[8] "The Ambassador in Spain to the Foreign Ministry." May 11, 1937. *Documents on German Foreign Policy 1918-1945. Series D (1937-1945). Volume III. Germany and the Spanish Civil War 1936-1939*. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1951, No. 254, 286.

[9] Norbert Haase, *Das Reichskriegsgericht und der Widerstand gegen die nationalsozialistische Herrschaft*. Berlin: Druckerei der Justizvollzugsanstalt Tegel, 1993, 105.

Either Kotkin knows about this evidence and hides it from his readers; or he does not know about it. In the first case, he is being dishonest – lying by omission. In the second case, he is incompetent to write about this topic at all.

The NKVD Did Not "Instigate"

Kotkin:

> The NKVD, too, had infiltrated the POUM to instigate an attempted "seizure of power"—as a pretext to crush it.[183] (408)
>
> Note 183 (995): Sharapov, *Naum Eitingon,* 57.

This is another phony citation by Kotkin, for Sharapov does *not* say that the NKVD were trying to "instigate" anything. Here is what he writes:

> С декабря 1936 года агенты резидентуры НКВД, внедренные в ПОУМ, **сообщали** о подготовке поумовцами и анархистами вооруженного выступления в Барселоне.
>
> Since December 1936, NKVD agents introduced into the POUM had been reporting preparations by the POUMists and anarchists of an armed uprising in Barcelona.

"Reported" – *soobshchali* – not "instigated."

Nazi Agents Infiltrated Trotskyists

Sharapov goes on to cite Schulze-Boysen's intelligence that German agents had penetrated "Trotskyist circles" in Barcelona in order to foment a putsch.

> В начале 1937 года берлинская резидентура ИНО НКВД получила анонимное сообщение (как впоследствии оказалось, от сотрудника министерства авиации Германии Харро Шульце-

Бойзена, одного из будущих руководителей нелегальной резидентуры ИНО НКВД в Германии «Красная капелла») о том, что германские агенты проникли в троцкистские круги в Барселоне с намерением в ближайшее время организовать путч. Также поумовцами готовились теракты против активистов компартии и комсомола Испании. Так был убит известный каталонский коммунист Антонио Сессе. Позднее, в феврале 1938 года был убит капитан интербригад Леон Нарвич, агент Орлова в ПОУМ, выходец из России.

In the beginning of 1937, the Berlin residency of the Foreign (INO) Division of the NKVD received an anonymous message (as it later turned out, from an employee of the German Ministry of Aviation, **Harro Schulze-Boysen**, one of the future leaders of the illegal residence of the INO NKVD in Germany, the "Red Orchestra") **that German agents had infiltrated the Trotskyite circles in Barcelona with the intention in the near future to organize a coup. Also terrorist attacks against activists of the Communist Party and the Young Communist League of Spain were being prepared by the POUMists.** In this way the well-known Catalan communist Antonio Sesse was killed. Later, in February 1938, Leon Narvich, a captain of the International Brigades, a communist, and Orlov's agent in the POUM, a native of Russia, was killed.

Kotkin knows about this — after all, he cites Sharapov's book. But he conceals it from his readers.

Grigulevich's Activities

Kotkin:

> He [Grigulevich] also liquidated "Trotskyites."[193] (409-10)

Note 193 (995): Andrew and Mitrokhin, *Mitrokhin Archive,* 114. (Later Grigulevich would be one of many tapped to assassinate Trotsky in Mexico.) Sudoplatov, *Special Tasks,* 193; "V Madride ia rukovodil gruppoi" (Grigulevich interview); Primakov, *Ocherki,* III: 148–54.

More phony citations by Kotkin. There is nothing about this on page 114 of *Mitrokhin Archive,* which deals with World War II. On page 87 the book breezily claims that Grigulevich "had taken a leading role in liquidating Trotskyists during the Spanish Civil War." But it cites no evidence, or even names. It's not *evidence.* In the interview cited by Kotkin Grigulevich himself did not claim to have "liquidated Trotskyites." For the Primakov citation, see the next section.

What "Death Squad"?

Kotkin:

> Grigulevich had arrived in Barcelona with his death squad on May 3, 1937.[194] (409-10)
>
> Note 194 (995): Primakov, *Ocherki,* III: 153. With Orlov, Grigulevich participated in the kidnapping and murder of Nin.

Yet another falsehood by Kotkin! Here is the text from Primakov III, 153:

> Важной вехой испанской биографии Макса явилось его участие в подавлении с оружием в руках мятежа в Барселоне в мае 1937 года. Партии анархистов и троцкистов (ПОУМ), располагавшие собственными воинскими формированиями, сняли свои части с фронта, ввели их в Барселону **и 2 мая попытались захватить власть.** Уже 3 мая Макс в составе спецотряда из 10 сотрудников Сегуридад прибыл в Барселону. Перед ними стояли задачи: немедленно остановить

кровопролитие, определить местонахождение и при возможности арестовать руководителей мятежа и командиров восставших воинских подразделений. Частично это удалось сделать в первый день, а окончательно на следующий, при поддержке прибывшего подкрепления.

An important milestone in the Spanish biography of Max [Grigulevich's code name] his the part in the suppression of the armed mutiny in Barcelona in May 1937. The parties of the anarchists and the Trotskyists (POUM), which had their own military formations, withdrew their units from the front, brought them to Barcelona, **and on May 2 tried to seize power.** Already on May 3, Max, as part of a special squad of 10 Seguridad workers, arrived in Barcelona. Before them were the following tasks: immediately stop the bloodshed, and locate and, if possible, arrest the rebel leaders and commanders of the rebel military units. In part, this was done on the first day, and finally on the next, with the support of the incoming reinforcements.

So this passage in Primakov, III, 153, concerns how Grigulevich helped to suppress the anarchist-Trotskyist (POUM) "May Days" uprising in Barcelona. There is nothing here about any "death squad" and nothing about any involvement of Grigulevich in the kidnapping and murder of Nin.[10]

Nin Not Tortured

Kotkin:

> After Nin was arrested, Orlov's thugs kidnapped him from Spanish prison and took him to a secret place of confinement maintained by the NKVD at Alcalá de

---

[10] In fact there is some testimony that Grigulevich was involved in the Nin affair, but Kotkin doesn't cite it. See Boris Volodarsky, *Stalin's Agent. The Life and Death of Alexander Orlov*. Oxford University Press, 2015, 285 ff.

> Henares, the birthplace of Cervantes. There, **they tortured him** to get him to confess he was a "fascist agent." With much of the POUM leadership awaiting trial, such testimony was thought necessary to persuade the public to support death sentences. Nin refused to confess to treason, Trotskyism, or other crimes. He was executed in secret by Grigulevich's death squad on the Alcalá de Henares highway and buried there.[196] (410)
>
> Note 196 (995): Sharapov, *Naum Eitingo*n, 53. See also Costello and Tsarev, *Deadly Illusions,* 291–2.

That the NKVD kidnapped, interrogated, and then killed Nin is not in doubt. Their reasons were clear: Nin had been a leader of a "stab-in-the-back" revolt against the Republican government, in the midst of a war against the fascists.

Moreover, through Schulze-Boysen the NKVD knew that the Nazi secret service was involved in the revolt. The Soviets either knew or suspected that Nin was still an emissary of Trotsky's, as Erwin Wolf certainly was. They knew that Trotsky was in league with the Germans. The Soviets knew too that Landau and Wolf were working with the POUM leadership, which included Nin as a leading member.

What is in question here is whether Nin was "tortured" as Kotkin claimed. Here Kotkin is repeating fascist disinformation. He has no evidence that Nin was tortured—because there is none. Paul Preston, the most objective historian of these matters and one cited by Kotkin, says that Nin was not tortured:

> Before being transferred to Alcalá de Henares, Nin was questioned in Madrid four times by Jacinto Rosell as secretary of the Brigada Especial on 18, 19 (twice) and 21 June. **Nothing about Rosell's questions or Nin's answers in the transcript signed by Nin and published by the POUM itself suggests anything other than a legally conducted interrogation**

without torture. The often unreliable Jesús Hernández claimed that Nin was tortured and interrogated by Orlov and others for several days, in an effort to make him sign a 'confession' of his links with the fifth column. **This is highly unlikely; a confession was needed as the basis for a trial and, for that, Nin would have to be seen to be in good physical shape and testify that he had not been tortured.**[11]

Neither Sharapov, *Naum Eitingon,* nor Costello and Tsarev mention "torture." Moreover, neither claim that Grigulevich had any role in Nin's kidnapping or in his murder. Costello and Tsarev do not mention Grigulevich's name at all! This is simply more disinformation foisted upon Kotkin's readers.

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[11] Preston, *Spanish Holocaust,* 411:

Chapter 8. Third Moscow Trial

Kotkin butchers and falsifies his account of the Third Moscow Trial of March 2-15, 1938, much as he has the first two, by the omission of important evidence and outright fabrication. We begin with a flagrant and indicative example of omission, and then a blatant falsehood.

Bukharin and Jules Humbert-Droz: Kotkin's Bias By Omission

In footnote 13 on page 912 Kotkin writes the following:

> Jules Humbert-Droz, the Swiss Communist who met Bukharin in early 1929, later claimed that Bukharin mentioned **getting rid** of Stalin. Humbert-Droz, Mémoirs, 356, 379–80.

Humbert-Droz's name does not appear in Kotkin's index. Presumably only names that occur in the text of the book, not in the footnotes, are indexed. So unless you carefully read every page of this monster book – 909 pages of text plus 159 page of *triple-column* footnotes in tiny type – you will never see this reference.

This gives Kotkin the scope for more dishonesty -- not that he needs it. For Bukharin did not, as Kotkin delicately puts it, "mention getting rid of Stalin." What Bukharin told his friend Humbert-Droz is that he and his followers had decided to *murder* Stalin:

> Boukharine me dit aussi qu'**ils avaient décidé d'utiliser la terreur individuelle** pour se débarrasser de Staline.[1]

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[1] Jules Humbert-Droz. *De Lénine à Staline : dix ans au service de l'Internationale communiste, 1921-1931*. Neuchâtel: (Éditions de la Baconnière, 1971, p. 379."Use individual terror" means "kill."

> Bukharin also told me that **they had decided to use individual terror** [= assassination] in order to rid themselves of Stalin.

Humbert-Droz published these memoirs in Switzerland in 1971. He was long out of the Comintern and under no pressure from the Soviets. Moreover, this passage occupies only a few lines in a memoir of more than 500 pages.

Bukharin's words to his friend Humbert-Droz expose as dishonest his letter to Stalin of December 10, 1937, his testimony during the Third Moscow Trial, and his two appeals for clemency. Although Bukharin claimed that he had completely "disarmed" – confessed and repented all his crimes -- he still concealed the fact that he had been planning to kill Stalin as early as 1929.

We – the scholarly world – now possess a great deal of evidence not only about Bukharin's activities in the clandestine terrorist Opposition bloc, but about his specific crimes. These primary documents and this research are as available to Kotkin as they are to everyone else. One must assume that Kotkin knows about them and decided *not* to inform his readers about them. That would constitute deliberate deception.[2]

Humbert-Droz's revelation make nonsense of Kotkin's claim here:

> ...Stalin charged Bukharin and his allies with "deviation" from the party line. Thus did the dictator fashion for himself and the regime a new high-profile internal foe.[10] (11-12)

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[2] E.g. Vladimir Bobrov and Grover Furr, "Nikolai Bukharin's First Statement of Confession in the Lubianka." *Cultural Logic* 2007; https://web.archive.org/web/20120415095256/http://clogic.eserver.org/2007/Furr_Bobrov.pdf ; Grover Furr and Vladimir L. Bobrov. "Stephen Cohen's Biography of Bukharin: A Study in the Falsehood of Khrushchev-Era 'Revelations'." *Cultural Logic*, 2010, at https://web.archive.org/web/20130325165833/http://clogic.eserver.org/2010/Furr.pdf

Note 10 (912) is to a very old book, Robert Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary*, a terrible "psycho-history." But Tucker was one of Kotkin's mentors, so Kotkin gives him a few undeserved citations.

As we've seen above, Kotkin is aware that Bukharin was plotting to murder Stalin as early as 1929 or even earlier but suppresses this, as he does on page 58: "Stalin's persecution of his friend Bukharin in 1929–30 revealed new depths of malice, as well as self-pity.[361]"[3]

The "Riutin Platform" Was Really The "Bukharin Platform"

Kotkin:

> Stalin constantly urged more public trials. ... That included Martemyan Ryutin, author of the devastating[4] internal condemnation of forced collectivization and Stalin's dictatorship. ... The Ryutin Platform had come up at the second Moscow trial in late January 1937, but it had not been a central aspect.[253] Whereas Ryutin had been the actual implacable opponent and Bukharin had never joined a party opposition, Bukharin was the preeminent symbol.[254] (477)

Kotkin refers to the "Ryutin (or "Riutin") Platform" about a dozen times in this book. But he never informs the reader that – as has long been known – Riutin did *not* write this document at all! It was really written by Bukharin and Aleksei Rykov, the main defendants at the Third Moscow Trial, along with two others, Mikhail Tomskii and Nikolai Uglanov.

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[3] Note 361 p. 922 records Trotsky's much-later claim that Kamenev had warned him in 1926 that Stalin might kill him. Kotkin concedes that Kamenev never confirmed that publicly and Trotsky had said nothing about it at the time.

[4] I pass over Kotkin's description of this document as "devastating." In fact, the intellectual poverty of this long, rambling document, shown by its relentless personal attack on Stalin and the paucity of realistic political program, demonstrates the bankruptcy of the Opposition. For an English translation by an admirer of Riutin see Sobhanlal D. Gupta, ed., *The Ryutin Platform* (Kolkata: Seribaan, 2010).

We can be sure that Kotkin knows this because he cites the *Lubianka 1937-1938* volume of documents numerous times. In it, in the interrogation of Valentin Astrov, a student and follower of Bukharin's, we read:

> Рютинская платформа по существу явилась документом не РЮТИНА, а центра правых ... Слепков рассказал о содержании этой платформы и, в частности, сказал, что она содержит в себе требование применения всех средств борьбы против сталинского руководства, вплоть до террора.
>
> Он также сказал, что главными авторами этой платформы являются Бухарин, Рыков, Томский и Угланов и что в организации условлено, в случае провала этой платформы, объявить ее частным делом отдельных групп правых, именно группы Рютина. (Lubianka 1937-1938, 36)

> The Riutin Platform in essence was not a document by RIUTIN, but by the center of the Rights. ... Slepkov spoke about the content of this platform and, in particular, said that it contains the demand for the use of all means of struggle against Stalin's leadership, **including terror.**
>
> **He also said that the main authors of this platform are Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsky and Uglanov, and that in the organization it is agreed, in the event of the failure of this platform, to declare it a private matter of separate right groups, namely the Ryutin group.**

In this same document Astrov also testifies about Bukharin's leadership of an opposition group.

Bukharin admitted this during the Third Moscow Trial:

> BUKHARIN: ... Perfectly true is the assertion made by the accused Ivanov

to the effect that I kept him informed of the stand of the Right centre, from the Ryutin platform to the latest stands, of which the Court is fairly well informed. 128)

BUKHARIN: The fixation of the question about insurrectionary organizations that was approved by the Right centre was first indicated in what is called the Ryutin platform. (132)

RYKOV: ... As regards lines of principle, the so-called Ryutin program was characteristic of the period 1930-33. This Ryutin program was discussed twice in

1932 at Tomsky's summer residence with my participation. In addition to myself, there were present at the first meeting Bukharin and Tomsky and a number of other persons, among them Vasily Schmidt and Uglanov.

VYSHINSKY: Was Bukharin there?

RYKOV: Bukharin was at the first meeting, when the original

theses were drawn up. (162)

RYKOV: ... The platform was called after Ryutin, because it was published by supporters of the Rights, the Ryutin group, from Uglanov's Moscow organization. During the investigation instituted in connection with this platform, this group took the whole responsibility upon itself. This had been decided on beforehand, so that we ourselves should not be called to account for the platform. We managed to do this thanks to the fact that Yagoda was at the head of the O.G.P.U.

VYSHINSKY: So Yagoda shielded you?

RYKOV: And to make it easier to do this, the program itself contained a phrase which expressed a certain

> sense of aloofness from Bukharin, Tomsky and myself; it said something to the effect that these three were waste steam. This was done from motives of double-dealing. (163)
>
> BUKHARIN: I reported to the Court in your presence that actually **the orientation on terrorism**, strictly speaking, **was already contained in the Ryutin platform**. (377)

This evidence makes clear the fact that there was no "small Riutin group" — the words Kotkin uses when describing Trotsky's agreement to form a "bloc" with the Rights and other Oppositionists (see Chapter Three, above). Kotkin certainly know this. But he hides it all from his readers. In doing so he falsifies the whole issue.

Kotkin quotes from the Riutin Platform on page 70 as well. As elsewhere he attributes it to Riutin, though he surely knows that it was not written by him but by Bukharin and others. Why? Apparently because Kotkin thinks it necessary to continue to claim that Bukharin had never been in any opposition group.

We can be sure about Astrov's testimony about Bukharin's leading role in the Right Opposition and co-authorship of the "Riutin Platform" because Astrov lived until 1993, and published two articles about these events, one of them published even after the end of the USSR. Astrov had the opportunity to retract his statements about Bukharin. But he never did so.[5]

A Series Of Falsifications

Kotkin:

> On March 2, 1938, the third Moscow trial finally commenced, like the first two, in the October Hall of

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[5] See the detailed discussion of Astrov and his testimony in Furr, Moscow Trials 41 ff., and Trotsky's 'Amalgams' 40, 64 ff.

the House of Trade Unions, in front of nearly 200 spectators, including the usual handpicked foreign journalists and diplomats. It lasted eighteen sittings. A total of twenty-one defendants, nine of whom had sat in the Central Committee, were in the dock. Three were doctors of the Kremlin medical staff. Stalin had edited chief procurator Vyshinsky's script. (Vyshinsky would also edit the transcript, removing remarks exculpating the accused and discussions of the law by the defense lawyers.) The accused had spent long hours memorizing their testimony. **Bukharin, Krestinsky, Rykov, Cristian Rakovski—staunch Bolsheviks—confessed that they had plotted to assassinate Lenin and Stalin *since 1918;* had murdered Kirov, Mężyński, Kuibyshev, Gorky, Gorky's son Maxim; had conspired with Nazi Germany, Japan, and Great Britain to partition the Soviet Union, hand over territory (Ukraine, Belorussia), and abolish collective farms.**[255] Yezhov had falsely promised at least some defendants their lives in exchange for self-incrimination.[256] **NKVD interrogators sat in the first row, a reminder that "re-interrogation" could take place between sessions.**[257] Krestinsky had been "beaten horribly," according to the head of the Lefortovo prison's hygiene department. "His entire back was a wound."[258] Still, on the first day, Krestinsky repudiated his confession and pleaded not guilty, causing a sensation. That night he was re-interrogated—he had a wife and children—and on the second day he nodded his assent when asked if he was guilty.[259] "It is now clear why there are interruptions of supplies here and there, why, with our riches and abundance of products, there is a shortage first of one thing, then of another," Vyshinsky thundered. "It is these traitors who are responsible for it."[260] (478)

Kotkin squeezes a long series of falsifications into this one paragraph! We distinguish among them above by alternating underlining and boldface.

Falsehood #1: There is no evidence whatsoever that "the accused had spent long hours memorizing their testimony." This is a complete fabrication on Kotkin's part, invented out of thin air without even a phony footnote.

> "Bukharin, Krestinsky, Rykov, Cristian Rakovski—staunch Bolsheviks—confessed that they had plotted to assassinate Lenin and Stalin since 1918 ..."

Falsehood #2: Only Bukharin was accused of plotting to assassinate Lenin and Stalin. Even he was charged not "since 1918" but *in* 1918. (Trial, p. 29; See Bukharin's testimony on pp. 127 ff.; 377 ff.)

Some Left Socialist-Revolutionaries testified that his plot had been genuine. Bukharin denied that he had plotted to assassinate Lenin and Stalin, but he agreed that he had been part of two plans to arrest – but not kill – Lenin. Stephen Cohen, Bukharin's biographer, put it his way:

> When opponents of the triumvirate pointedly compared current norms with the free discussions during the Brest controversy, Bukharin tried to discredit the earlier period by disclosing that **Lenin's arrest had been discussed by Left Communists and Left Socialist Revolutionaries in 1918** ... (Cohen, *Bukharin*, 156. n. 112, p. 420: "112. *Pravda*, January 3, 1924, p. 5.")

Kotkin:

> ...confessed that [they] ...had murdered Kirov, Mężyński, Kuibyshev, Gorky, Gorky's son Maxim; had conspired with Nazi Germany, Japan, and Great Britain to partition the Soviet Union, hand over territory (Ukraine, Belorussia), and abolish collective farms.

Falsehood #3: Only Iagoda confessed to being a party to these murders. Krestinsky confessed to working with Tukhachevsky and the other military commanders to help defeat the USSR in a war with Germany. Rakovsky confessed to spying for Britain and Japan. Rykov confessed to being part of the Right-Trotskyite bloc.

Moreover, by 1938 none of these men were "staunch Bolsheviks" any longer. Kotkin knows this, of course.

More False Claims

Here are some details about Kotkin's phony documentation. All these notes are on page 1006 of Kotkin's text:

> Note 255: The indictment was presented for an international audience by Yaroslavsky, *Meaning of the Soviet Trials*. The defendants' biographies had been rewritten to make them descendants of capitalists and priests.

Falsehood #4: Even this trivial factoid is a fabrication. *None* of the defendants are described this way either in the Trial transcript or in Yaroslavskii's booklet.

> Note 256: On Yagoda's attempt to negotiate for his life, see the prison snitch's report: Vinogradov, *Genrikh Iagoda*, 233–5 (TsA FSB, f. 3, op. 5, d. 318, l. 113–4: V. Kirshon).

Lie #5: Vinogradov, *Genrikh Iagoda* 233-5 is V.M. Kirshon's report on Iagoda in prison. But there is *nothing* here about any "attempt to negotiate for his life." Nor does Iagoda claim that he was innocent. On the contrary, Iagoda affirms his guilt.

> Note 257: Conquest, *Reassessment*, 341–98; Maclean, *Escape to Adventure*, 59–83; Hedeler, "Yezhov's Scenario," 34–55.

Falsehood #6: The Conquest and Maclean pages are simply their whole chapters on the 1938 Trial. Only Hedeler (48) claims that

NKVD interrogators "sat in the first row of seats." But he cites *no evidence* that they did so.

> Note 258: Sokolov, "N. N. Krestinsky," 120–42; *Trud*, May 26, 1988.

Falsehood #7: There is nothing in Sokolov, "N.N. Krestinsky," about any beating. Sokolov merely says: "*One may only guess* what kind of 'working up' he suffered, what physical and moral torments he had to endure..." (142). "Trud" was the national trade union newspaper of the USSR.

As Sokolov's article is from 1989, I assume he would have cited the *Trud* 1988 article if it had contained any evidence that Krestinsky had been tortured. And since when is a trade union newspaper article "evidence"? See below for the proof that the story of Krestinsky's beating is a lie.

Note 259:

> 259. Conquest, *Reassessment*, 352; Popov, "Byl i ostaius' kommunistom," 244–51.

Falsehood #8: This lie is more interesting! Conquest is able to cite only rumors. Popov, however, says the following:

> Методы «восстанавливания» подобных упрямцев теперь уже достаточно известны. Вот показания бывшего начальника санчасти Лефортовской тюрьмы НКВД СССР Розенблюма, данные им в 1956 году:
>
> «Крестинского с допроса доставили к нам в санчасть в бессознательном состоянии. Он был тяжело избит, вся спина представляла из себя сплошную рану, на ней не было ни одного живого места ...»
>
> Нетрудно представить себе, как постарались палачи, выбивая из Крестинского (в буквальном

смысле слова!) мучительное для него лжепризнание.

Translation:

The methods of "restoring" such stubborn people are now well known. Here is the testimony of the former head of the medical section of the Lefortovo Prison of the NKVD USSR Rosenblum, given to them in 1956:

"Krestinsky, from interrogation, was brought to our hospital in an unconscious state. He was severely beaten, the whole back was a complete wound, there was not a single uninjured place on it ..."

It is not difficult to imagine how the executioners tried, knocking out from Krestinsky (in the literal sense of the word!) a painful false confession.

This is reaffirmed, without quotation, on in RKEB 2, 463, the Khrushchev-era reinstatement of Krestinsky's party membership:

Выяснилось, что показания о вражеской деятельности его получены выли от Крестинского путем жестоких истязаний, что подтвердила врач Лефортовской тюрьмы т. Розенблюм А.А.

It turned out that the testimony about his hostile activities was obtained from Krestinsky by cruel tortures, which was confirmed by the physician of the Lefortovo prison, Comrade Rozenblum A.A.

This is hearsay, without any documentation. Moreover, it cannot be true.

Between March, 1954, and December, 1958, Ivan Serov was Khrushchev's head of the KGB. Serov's letter about the Third Moscow Trial, dated July 7, 1956, knows nothing about any beating of Krestinsky after he had retracted his confession on the first day of the trial.[6] Serov quotes NKVD man Aronson who

quoted NKVD man Nikolaev saying that they had put Rakovsky together with Krestinsky, and *Rakovsky had convinced Krestinsky to confess.* (855)

Obviously, if Krestinsky had been beaten the NKVD men would know – they would have done it! Serov would have put this much more dramatic accusation in his report if he had known about it. But he knew nothing about it. And Serov *would* have known about it – if it had happened. Therefore, the story about the "beating" of Krestinsky is a fabrication. Kotkin knew, or should have known, about this too.

In conclusion: Kotkin's account of the Third Moscow Trial is false in every respect. We have a great deal of evidence today that the defendants in all three Moscow Trials were guilty of *at least* those crimes to which they confessed.

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[6] Serov's report is published in *Protsess Bukharina. 1938 g.: Sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow: MDF, 2013), 852-858. It is online at several sites, including at http://istmat.info/node/46740

Chapter 9. Tukhachevsky Affair

Today we have a great deal of evidence that Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky and the seven other high-ranking military commanders who were tried, convicted, and executed with him on June 11-12, 1937, were guilty, as charged, of conspiracy with the Nazis and Japanese, and with Leon Trotsky, to defeat the Soviet Union in a war.

Indeed, we have so much evidence that a single volume with appropriate commentary could not hold all of it. My Moscow colleague, Vladimir L. Bobrov, and I are planning such a volume of documents plus commentary to set forth this evidence.

But the "official" viewpoint -- the only one acceptable in academic, political, and public discussion because the only one consistent with the Anti-Stalin Paradigm (ASP) -- is that Tukhachevsky and all the rest were innocent, victims of a "frame up" by Stalin for reasons unknown. In order to sustain this viewpoint, all the evidence must be either dismissed as "faked" in some way or simply ignored. Kotkin chooses the latter strategy: he ignores the evidence.

In addition Kotkin has recourse to *argument by scare quote*. He puts scare quotes around words like "confession" when they contradict the ASP. But he has no evidence to refute them.

Let the reader not be fooled! Argument by scare quote is the refuge of those who refuse to question their own preconceived ideas and biases but have no evidence to support those biases. No honest, competent historian falls back on this tawdry, deceptive insult to the reader's intelligence.

Has Kotkin ever seriously researched the Tukhachevsky Affair and related military purges? I doubt it, because of the many erroneous references he makes. We will point out some of them below.

Kotkin:

> Failing that, he [Artuzov] wrote to Yezhov on January 25 that NKVD foreign intelligence possessed information from foreign sources, dating back many years but never forwarded to higher-ups, revealing a "Trotskyite organization" in the Red Army. Sensationally, the documents linked Marshal Tukhachevsky to foreign powers.[3] (377)
>
> Note 3 (991): Lebedev, "M. N. Tukhachevskii i 'voenno-fashistskii zagovor,'" 7–20, 255; *Voennye arkhivy Rossii*, 111; Khaustov, "Deiatel'nost' organov," 188–9.

Here and elsewhere "Lebedev" is the journal *Voenno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, vypusk (issue) 2, 1997. This is the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission. It has been published several times in a number of different places. We shall point out below that Kotkin cites this same text but in different printed editions, as though he were citing different sources, though in reality they are all the same source.

For example, *Voennye Arkhivy Rossii*, 111, is the same document and the same passage! Why quote them both? To give readers the false impression that they are different sources that confirm each other? Dishonest – but what other reason could there be?

There is nothing about any of this in Khaustov, "Deiatel'nost' organov," 188-9. This is Khaustov's doctoral dissertation, available at Yale. Pages 188-9 do not mention Tukhachevsky at all! This is a phony reference.

Kotkin:

> Artuzov knew full well how such compromising materials had been planted in Europe in order to make their way back to Moscow: in the 1920s he had helped lead just such an operation ("The Trust").[4] (377)

Note 4 (991): Mlechin, *KGB*, 162–3.

Mlechin does *suggest* that Artuzov, who had directed the "Trust" disinformation operation in the 1920s, had framed Tukhachevsky. But Mlechin cites no evidence whatever! Naturally, Kotkin's readers will not know this.

So this is yet another phony footnote. It is dishonest of Kotkin to cite Mlechin's unsupported speculation as though it were evidence. The veracity of one person's unsupported opinion – Kotkin's, in this case – is not confirmed by the equally unsupported opinion of one, or of any number, of other persons -- in this case, Mlechin.

No Evidence of "Fabrication"

Kotkin:

> Now, **to these fabricated documents** he appended a list of thirty-four "Trotskyites" in military intelligence. His cynical efforts at ingratiation and revenge would not save his own life, but Artuzov had guessed right about **Stalin's intentions.**[5]

Note 5 (991): Radek at his public trial on Jan. 24, 1937, had mentioned Tukhachevsky's name as a co-conspirator. Radek then tried to retract, but the deed had been done. *Report of Court Proceedings*, 105, 146. After the first Moscow trial, Werner von Tippelskirch, a German military attaché in Moscow, had reported to Berlin (Sept. 28, 1936) the speculation about a pending trial of Red Army commanders. Erickson, *Soviet High Command*, 427 (citing Serial 6487/E486016–120: Report A/2037).

Yet another phony footnote! There is nothing about "Stalin's intentions" in these works, nor could there be. Kotkin is "channeling" the spirit of the long-dead Stalin!

Nor is there any evidence that these documents were "fabricated," as Kotkin claims -- not only none in the works he refers to, but there is no such evidence anywhere. Nor is there any evidence that Artuzov "planted" these documents.

As for the list of thirty-four Trotskyites – note the argument by scare quote – this is in all of the editions of the *"Spravka"* of the Shvernik Commission, since all are identical. In "Lebedev" (*Voenno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, 1997) it is on pages 11-12:

> Артузов направил Ежову 25 января 1937 года записку, в которой доложил ему об имевшихся ранее в ОГПУ агентурных донесениях < > о «военной партии." К своей записке Артузов приложил «Список бывших сотрудников Разведупра, принимавших активное участие в троцкизме» (в списке 34 человека). На записке Артузова Ежов 26 января 1937 года написал:
>
> «тт. Курскому и Леплевскому. Надо учесть этот материал. Несомненно, в армии существует] троцкистск[ая] организация. Это показывает, в частности, и недоследованное дело «Клубок». Может, и здесь найдется зацепка».

Artuzov sent a note to Yezhov on January 25, 1937, in which he reported to him about the agent's reports on the "military party" that had previously existed in the OGPU. To his note Artuzov appended "A list of former employees of the Razvedupr (Intelligence), who took an active part in Trotskyism" (34 people in the list). On a note by Artuzov Yezhov wrote on January 26, 1937:

> "Comrades Kursky and Leplevsky. It is necessary to take into account this material. Undoubtedly, a Trotskyite [organization] exists in the army. This is also evident, in particular, from the "Tangle" case, not fully investigated. Maybe there's a clue here too."

"Claptrap?" Look In The Mirror!

Kotkin:

> Explanations for Stalin's rampage through his own officer corps have ranged from his unquenchable thirst for power to the existence of an actual conspiracy.[6] Nearly every dictator lusts for power, and **in this case there was no military conspiracy.** (377)
>
> Note 6 (991): Wollenberg, *Red Army*, 224; Erickson, *Soviet High Command*, 465; Conquest, *Great Terror: Reassessment*, 201–35; Ulam, *Stalin*, 457–8; Tucker, *Stalin in Power*; Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy*. Assertions of a real plot go back to the time and have persisted: Duranty, *USSR*, 222; Davies, *Mission to Moscow*, I: 111. The claptrap persists: Prudnikova and Kolpakidi, *Dvoinoi zagovor*.

This is true nonsense! By definition, there can be no evidence that "there was *no* military conspiracy," so Kotkin cannot possibly know this. Even if there were no evidence of a conspiracy, that would not prove that no conspiracy had existed, for the point of a conspiracy is to leave no evidence.

The most any historian could say is: "We have no evidence that such a conspiracy existed." But Kotkin can't say this! – not honestly, anyway. For in the case of the Tukhachevsky Affair there is an enormous amount of evidence that the conspiracy existed. Moreover, we have no evidence that *this* evidence was faked. Kotkin is no one to accuse others of "claptrap!"

Here is a passage from Davies, *Mission to Moscow* concerning what Davies learned from "the head of the Russian desk at the German Foreign Office":

> Had an extended conference with the head of the "Russian desk" at the German Foreign Office. To my surprise he stated that my views as to the stability of internal Russian political conditions and the security of the Stalin regime would bear investigation. **My information, he thought, was all wrong: Stalin was not firmly entrenched. He stated that I probably**

> **would find that there was much revolutionary activity there which might shortly break out into the open.** (17)

There's much other evidence along these lines. Kotkin does not mention this passage. He does cite another one, from Davies' letter of June 28, 1937, to Sumner Wells:

> ... the best judgment seems to believe that in all probability there was a definite conspiracy in the making looking to a coup d'état by the army not necessarily anti-Stalin, but anti-political and anti-party, and that Stalin struck with characteristic speed, boldness, and strength.

Note that the passage Kotkin omits contains evidence that the Germans expected a revolt against the Stalin government, while the one he cites contains no such evidence.

Again, No Evidence

Kotkin:

> ... out of approximately 144,000 officers, some 33,000 were removed in 1937–38, and Stalin ordered or incited the irreversible arrest of around 9,500 and **the execution of perhaps 7,000 of them.**[14] (378)

Note 14 (991): Reese, *Stalin's Reluctant Soldiers*, 134–46. From 1937 to 1938, 34,501 Red Army officers, air force officers, and military political personnel were discharged, either because of expulsion from the party or arrest; 11,596 would be reinstated by 1940. As Voroshilov noted, some 47,000 officers had been discharged in the years following the civil war, almost half of them (22,000) in the years 1934–36; around 10,000 of these discharged were arrested. Few were higher-ups, however. Confusingly, sometimes the totals include the Red Air Force, and sometimes not. "Nakanune voiny (dokumenty 1935–1940 gg.)," 188;

> Suvenirov, *Tragediia RKKA*, 137. In 1939, when Stalin turned off the pandemonium, 73 Red Army personnel would be arrested.

The bottom line: Kotkin offers no evidence for his claim that "perhaps 7000" officers were executed. Reese's 1996 book is far too old for the flood of Soviet documents available since then. A well-known study by Gerasimov[1] published in 1999, states:

> В 1937 году было репрессировано[3] 11034 чел. или 8% списочной численности начальствующего состава, в 1938 году - 4523 чел. или 2,5%[4]. В это же время некомплект начсостава в эти годы достигал 34 тыс. и 39 тыс. соответственно[5], т.е. доля репрессированных в некомплекте начсостава составляла 32% и 11%.
>
> 3. К репрессированным автор относит лиц командно-начальствующего состава, уволенных из РККА за связь "с заговорщиками," арестованных и не восстановленных впоследствии в армии.
>
> 4. РГВА.-Ф.4.-Оп.10.-Д. 141.Л.205.
>
> 5. См.: Мельтюхов М.И. Указ. Соч.- С. 114.

> In 1937 11034 persons were subjected to repression or 8% of the listed size of the command staff [officers – GF]; in 1938 - 4,523 persons, or 2.5%. At the same time, a shortage of command staff in these years reached 34 thousand and 39 thousand, respectively, i.e. The proportion of repressed of the shortage in the command staff was 32% and 11%.
>
> 3. By "repressed persons" the author refers to command personnel dismissed from the Red Army for

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[1] G.I. Gerasimov, "Deistvitel'noe vlianie represii 1937-1938 gg. na ofitserskii korpus RKKA." ("The actual influence of the repressions of 1937-1938 on the officer corps of the Workers and Peasants Red Army.") *Rossiiskii Istoricheskii Zhurnal* 1 (1999), This important article is online in several places, including at http://www.hrono.ru/statii/2001/rkka_repr.html

ties "with conspirators," arrested and not restored later to the army.

4. RGVA. F.4. Op. 10. D 141. L. 205. [This is an archival document. – GF]

5. Cf. Mel'tiukhov, M.I., p. 114.

Gerasimov states that a total of 11034+4523= 15,557 officers were "repressed," not "executed."

Gerasimov references Mel'tiukhov's article from *Otechestvennaia Istoriia* 5 (1997), 109-121. In that article Mel'tiukhov notes that *there is insufficient evidence for any definite conclusion.* That was also the situation three or more years earlier, when Reese researched his article.

Углублению изучения этих вопросов препятствует недостаточно широкая источниковая база. Несмотря на довольно бурное обсуждение этой проблематики в конце 80-х - начале 90-х гг., введение в научный оборот документов было не столь значительно, как можно было бы ожидать. Появившиеся документы, хотя и конкретизировали некоторые аспекты, но не позволили всесторонне рассмотреть данную проблему. В результате в литературе сохраняется разноголосица по основным вопросам темы. (118)

An in-depth study of these issues is hindered by an insufficiently wide source base. Despite the rather stormy discussion of this problem in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the introduction of documents into scientific circulation was not as significant as one would expect. **The documents that did appear, although they specified certain issues, did not allow a comprehensive study of this problem.** As a result, disagreement over the main issues of this topic remains.

Did Stalin "Tutor" Yezhov?

Kotkin:

> In the Little Corner, the despot tutored Yezhov on portraying a conspiracy with a shadow government, ready to take over: Yagoda as head of the Council of People's Commissars, Tukhachevsky as defense commissar, Bukharin as general secretary of the party ... (397) [next note is 123]
>
> Note 123: Khaustov, "Razvitie sovetskikh organov gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti," 362 (citing TsA FSB, f. 3, op. 45, d. 29, l. 246). Peterson would be shot on Aug. 21, 1937.

This is a phony footnote. There is nothing in Khaustov whatever about Stalin "tutoring" Yezhov. Evidently Kotkin invented this.

As for Peterson, he had been the commandant of the Kremlin guard, a crucial position for those plotting any *coup d'état*. Three is a great deal of evidence available against Peterson. For example, N.S. Cherushev cites a lot of it in his book *Komandanty Kremlia* ("Commanders of the Kremlin'). Cherushev proceeds from the assumption that all the officers were innocent. However, as a military historian, Cherushev had access to a great many documents that no other scholar could see, and he often quotes extensively from them. He does so in Peterson's case, and the evidence he cites strongly supports Peterson's guilt.

Kotkin cites this very book by Cherushev. But he never mentions any of this evidence, and never returns to Peterson.

The Arao Telegram

Kotkin:

> Also in April 1937, the NKVD intercepted and photographed a communication from the Japanese military attaché in Warsaw to the general staff in

> Tokyo. NKVD foreign intelligence could not read the Japanese and had to go to Lefortovo prison for assistance from R. N. Kim, a Soviet counterintelligence agent on Japan who had been arrested as a foreign spy. The document was composed in the hand of the Japanese attaché's aide—handwriting well known to Kim—and conveyed that "contact had been established with an emissary of Marshal Tukhachevsky." This secret message for Tokyo had been sent not by ciphered telegram but by diplomatic pouch, which traveled from Poland to Japan through the Soviet Union. Japanese intelligence appears to have intended the "secret" document to be "intercepted."[180] (407)

Note 180:

> Lebedev, "M. N. Tukhachevskii i 'voenno-fashistskii zagovor,'" 30–3. Stalin could have had the "information" delivered into the hands of the Japanese in Warsaw, in order to have it "leaked" back through foreign channels, perhaps to persuade Voroshilov.

Once again, "Lebedev" is *Voenno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, vypusk 2, 1997. This is a rare journal, available at only a few research libraries (I happen to have a copy). So, very few of Kotkin's readers will know that this is the same "Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission, completed "not later than July 26, 1964."

The "Spravka" is available in RKEB 2, 753 ff. This volume is available at many more libraries, and therefore this, rather than previous versions in hard-to-find journals, is the usual source cited for this document.

* The "Spravka" has long been available online at

> http://perpetrator2004.narod.ru/documents/Tukhachevsky/Tukhachevsky_Report.rar

* It was also long available online at the Russia "Wikisource" page, at

http://ru.wikisource.org:80/wiki/Справка_комиссии_президиума_ЦК_КПСС

* As of 2017, it has been taken down. But it is still available in the Internet Archive, at

https://web.archive.org/web/20131110035043/http://ru.wikisource.org:80/wiki/Справка_комиссии_президиума_ЦК_КПСС and at

https://web.archive.org/web/20100203061724/http://ru.wikisource.org:80/Справка_комиссии_президиума_ЦК_КПСС

* I have now put it online at

http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/Spravka.pdf

The "Spravka" has never been translated into English. For a number of years an edition of the Shvernik Report was said to be under preparation at the Yale University Press "Annals of Communism" page.

This project has apparently been abandoned. No wonder! The Report exposes the desperation Khrushchev's men felt when they were tasked to come up with evidence that the Tukhachevsky Affair defendants were innocent but failed to find any such evidence.

Not only were they unable to do what Khrushchev & Co. assigned them to do, but they came up with evidence, such as this "Arao Telegram," that the "Tukhachevsky Affair" commanders were in fact guilty! No wonder the "Spravka" was never published under Khrushchev! A quarter-century later Gorbachev's men used it, without attribution. It was not published until the USSR was no more.

Kotkin's notion that Stalin "set up" the Arao Telegram simply shows how desperate he is to "explain away" any evidence that points to Tukhachevsky's guilt – in this case, guilt of conspiring with the Japanese. We have a good deal of additional evidence that Tukhachevsky conspired with both Japan and Germany, but Kotkin ignores all of it. Did he think that there was too much of it to "explain away"?

Concerning the Arao Telegram, I refer the reader to my own detailed study in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*, Chapter Ten, 218 ff. There I study and expose the lame, transparent Khrushchev-era attempt to argue that the Arao Telegram is a fake. I have done nothing clever here — anyone who takes the trouble to study these few pages from the "Spravka" could see the same things I saw. But Kotkin never bothered — or, if he did, he conceals that fact from his readers.

More Scare Quotes

Kotkin:

> Corps commander Primakov, nine months in Lefortovo, had refused to admit his "guilt," but finally on May 8, 1937, he "confessed" and implicated others.[202] (411)

Note all the scare quotes – a dead giveaway that *Kotkin has no evidence*!

Note 202 (995): "Delo o tak nazyvaemoi 'antisovetskoi trotskistskoi organizatsii' v Krasnoi armii," 47–8; Artizov et al., *Reabilitatsiia: kak eto bylo,* II: 678 (Aleksandr Avseevich, 1962); *Pravda,* April 29, 1988 (B. Viktorov). Primakov (a Bolshevik since 1914) had served as military attaché in Afghanistan (1927–29) and then Japan (1930); in 1928 he had been forced to declare a break with the Trotskyites. Zdanovich, *Organy,* 320 (citing TsA FSB, delo R-9000, t. 4, l. 53).

Kotkin is using argument by scare quotes in the hope of covering up the fact that *he has no evidence* that Primakov's confession is false. In reality, we have is no reason to doubt Primakov's confession. Here are Primakov's words, from the source cited by Kotkin, "Delo o tak nazyvaemoi ..." pages 47-8:

> «В течение 9 месяцев я запирался перед следствием по делу о троцкистской контрреволюционной организации. В этом запирательстве дошел до такой наглости, что даже на Политбюро перед тов. Сталиным продолжал запираться и всячески уменьшать свою вину. Тов. Сталин правильно сказал, что „Примаков — трус, запираться в таком деле — это трусость." Действительно, с моей стороны это была трусость и ложный стыд за обман. Настоящим заявляю, что, вернувшись из Японии в 1930 г., я связался с Дрейцером и Шмидтом, а через Дрейцера и Путну — с Мрачковским и начал троцкистскую работу, о которой дам следствию полные показания».

> For 9 months I was in denial before the investigation in the case of the Trotskyist counterrevolutionary organization. In this denial I came to such impudence that even at the Politburo before Comrade Stalin I continued to deny and in every possible way to minimize my guilt. Comrade Stalin correctly said that "Primakov is a coward, to remain in denial about such a matter is cowardice." Indeed, for my part, it was cowardice and false shame over my deception. I hereby declare that when I returned from Japan in 1930, I contacted Dreitser and Schmidt, and through Dreitser and Putna, Mrachkovsky, and began Trotskyite work, about which I will give full testimony to the investigation.

Kotkin's citation of RKEB 2, 678, is another phony reference. It contains no evidence that Primakov's confession was not genuine. As for the passage in Zdanovich, *Organy*, 320, it states this:

В августе 1933 г. в 8-м отделении СПО ОГПУ, занимавшемся исключительно борьбой с оппозицией внутри ВКП(б), был подготовлен меморандум по материалам на В. Примакова. Сотрудники СПО отметили, что он «в июне 1928 г. подал заявление о разрыве с оппозицией двурушнического характера, продолжая фактически оставаться на своих троцкистских позициях» .

In August 1933, in the 8th section of the OGPU's Special Political Division, which dealt exclusively with the struggle against the opposition within the CPSU(b), a memorandum was prepared on V. Primakov. **The SPD staff noted that "in June 1928, he filed an application for a break with the opposition of a double-dealing nature, in fact continuing to keep his Trotskyite positions."**

This does not confirm but *contradicts* what Kotkin has written. No doubt Kotkin believed that no one would check.

Viktorov the Swindler

As for Viktorov's article in *Pravda,* which Kotkin cites here – since when is a newspaper article evidence? Newspapers are at best "the first rough draft of history," not historiography itself. And *Pravda,* the official paper of the Communist Party, never made any claims to objectivity or devotion to the truth, especially since Khrushchev's day. Once again, Garbage In, Garbage Out!

Viktorov was a former prosecutor who had been involved in Khrushchev-era "rehabilitations." He published many articles in historical journals and at least one book, *Bez grifa 'sekretno'* (1990). Kotkin cites Viktorov's book, though not here. In this book Viktorov repeats, normally without evidence of any kind, the Khrushchev-Gorbachev anti-Stalin version of events.

This specific article by Viktorov, from *Pravda* of April 29, 1988 – to be precise, from page three of that issue – illustrates Viktorov's dishonesty in a number of ways. Two examples will suffice. First,

Viktorov states that the transcript of the June 11, 1937 trial of Tukhachevsky and the rest is only a few pages in length:

> Стенограмма состоялась всего из несколько страниц.
>
> The transcript consisted of just a few pages in all.
>
> (column two, middle of column)

On page 231 of Viktorov's 1990 book *Bez grifa 'sekretno'* ("Without the stamp 'secret'") we read:

> Стенограмма содержала всего несколько страниц ...
>
> The transcript contained just a few pages ...

Viktorov was lying. The transcript was declassified in May, 2018. It is *172 pages* in length. So either Viktorov knew this, and lied about the number of pages to make the trial appear to be perfunctory; or Viktorov did *not* know how long the transcript was – was not allowed to see it himself – and just passed along this lie to the readership.

Viktorov also quotes from Frinovsky's confession statement of April 11, 1939. Therefore, he has been allowed to read it, though it was not published until 2006. But Viktorov omits Frinovsky's admissions that the defendants in the Moscow Trials, plus Yezhov and he himself, were indeed conspiring against the Soviet government.

So Viktorov deliberately suppressed these damning sections. Or, he was only given excerpts, but implied to his readers that he was fairly summarizing the document. But Kotkin has read the whole of Frinovsky's confession statement, and Kotkin is *still* concealing it from his readers!

So Viktorov's article *and* his book are fraudulent. They are useful examples of how Gorbachev and his assistants, building upon Khrushchev's falsifications, lied wholesale about Stalin and the events of the 1930s. Gorbachev's totally dishonest version is the

Anti-Stalin Paradigm. It is still the "official version" of Soviet history of the Stalin period.

It's Kotkin's responsibility to know about this and to inform his readers. So why doesn't he do this? Because like Viktorov Kotkin is retailing the Anti-Stalin Paradigm, not trying to discover the truth and tell it. If Viktorov's book and article are a fraud – and they are – Kotkin's book is a fraud on a much bigger scale.

Kotkin:

> Stalin received Tukhachevsky in the Little Corner on May 13, in the presence of Voroshilov, Molotov, Yezhov, and Kaganovich, and **reassured the marshal that everything would be sorted out**, mentioning a problem with Tukhachevsky's lover, Yulia Kuzmina, who supposedly was a foreign agent.[204] (411-2)
>
> Note 204 (995): *Voennye arkhivy Rossii,* 41; Lebedev, "M. N. Tukhachevskii i 'voenno-fashistskii zagovor,'" 182; *Na prieme,* 209; Viktor A. Aleksandrov, *Delo Tukhachevskogo.*

VAR, 41 is — once again — the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission. So is Lebedev – the very same document. The passage noted by Kotkin here reads:

> 13 мая 1937 г., как это установлено по книге регистрации, Сталин лично принял в Кремле маршала Тухачевского. **Никаких материалов о существе разговора Сталина с Тухачевским обнаружить в архивах не удалось.**

May 13, 1937, as established by the book of registration, Stalin personally received Marshal Tukhachevsky in the Kremlin. **We have not been successful in finding in the archives any materials concerning the subject of Stalin's and Tukhachevsky's talk.**

Kotkin's own sources says that there is nothing about the subject of this talk. Yet Kotkin claims he can tell us what the talk was about![2]

As for Victor Aleksandrov's book, it was published in Paris in 1959, then in several languages, including English (Prentice-Hall, 1964). The Russian edition is 1996. It has long been dismissed as a pot-boiler fabrication: see Paul Blackstock, "'Books for Idiots': False Soviet 'Memoirs'," *Russian Review* 25, 3 (1966), 290 ff.

Once Again, No Evidence Of Torture

Kotkin:

> Around this time, August Kork, head of the Frunze Military Academy, was arrested and **beaten into testifying**. On May 15, Boris Feldman, head of the Red Army cadres department, was arrested, and, **under severe torture**, he incriminated Tukhachevsky (who the next day departed for his new posting in the rear, the city of Kuibyshev).[205] (411-12)
>
> Note 205 (995): Khaustov and Samuelson, *Stalin, NKVD*, 115–6 (TsA FSB, ASD P-4615, l. 258–61; ASD N. 15301, tom 2: 37–8); Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i VChk*, 170–6.

This is another dishonest citation. Khaustov and Samuel'son, 114-15, has nothing about beatings and torture, as Kotkin surely knows. Khaustov and Samuel'son simply *claim, without any evidence,* that Kork and Fel'dman were beaten or threatened.

> От Путны и Примакова побоями были добыты дополнительные показания о военном заговоре, на их основании 14-15 мая были арестованы Корк и

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[2] Curious readers can find out more about Iulia Kuz'mina, Tukhachevsky's lover, at https://ru.openlist.wiki/Кузьмина_Юлия_Ивановна_(1903) and in Iulia Kantor, *Voina i mir Mikhaila Tukhachevskogo*, 315; 454 ff.

Фельдман. Протокол допроса Фельдмана от 19 мая Ежов направил 20 мая Сталину, Молотову, Ворошилову и Кагановичу. **Благодаря политике кнута и пряника** Фельдман согласился показать, что в Красной Армии существовал военно-троцкистский заговор, возглавляемый Тухачевским. В течение последней недели мая с 22 по 29 число были арестованы Тухачевский, Эйдеман, Якир и Уборевич.

From Putna and Primakov, additional testimonies about the military conspiracy were obtained by beatings. On this basis on May 14-15 Kork and Feldman were arrested. On May 20 Yezhov sent the protocol of Feldman's interrogation of May 19 to Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov and Kaganovich. **Thanks to the policy of carrot and stick**, Feldman agreed to confess that there was a military-Trotskyist conspiracy in the Red Army headed by Tukhachevsky. During the last week of May, from 22 to 29, Tukhachevsky, Eideman, Yakir and Uborevich were arrested.

Here Kotkin gets his references to Khaustov confused. He cites Lubianka 1922-1936 (*Lubianka. Stalin i VChK-GPU-OGPU-NKVD, ianvar' 1922–dekabr' 1936.* Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi fond Demokratiia, 2003). In reality, Boris Fel'dman's confession is in the next volume in the series edited by Khaustov, Lubianka 1937-1938 (*Lubianka. Stalin i glavnoe upravlenie gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti NKVD, 1937–1938.* Moscow: Materik, 2004), on pp. 170-176.[3]

It is interesting that Kotkin fails to mention that at note 25, p. 641, to this document, Khaustov et al. claim that Fel'dman and others were tortured. But they have no evidence to support that claim

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[3] It may be read in Russian at the excellent Istmat.info site: http://istmat.info/node/31075

and Kotkin, of course, has none either. He has invented it, covering his own falsification with phony footnotes.

When In Doubt – Invent!

As for Khaustov and Samuel'son's "carrot and stick" – do they think that police in the West do not act in this way? But the real point is this: they have no evidence even for this statement! They are lying, in the service of the Anti-Stalin Paradigm.

Note, too, that Kotkin escalates Khaustov and Samuel'son's "carrot and the stick" not just to "torture," but to "severe torture." When in doubt, be creative – just make it up! And Kotkin accuses Stalin of fabricating!

Artuzov's Important Confessions

Kotkin:

> On May 20, Artuzov was arrested in his office (no. 201) on the second floor of Lubyanka and accused of being a rightist alongside Yagoda, as well as concealing material implicating Tukhachevsky (the very material he had *forwarded* to Yezhov). His interrogation protocols, which he signed with his own blood, would also assert that Yagoda had told him of widespread NKVD dissatisfaction with the Soviet leadership, "whose despotism stands in crying contradiction to declarations of Soviet democracy."[216] (413)
>
> Note 216 (996): *Rodina,* 1995, no. 2: 87; Pogonii, *Lubianka, 2,* 203; Tumshis and Papchinskii, *1937, bol'shaia chistka,* 404–6, 445–51. Artuzov would be executed on Aug. 21, 1937.

This is a classic example of Kotkin's "bias by omission." Tumshis and Papchinski, 445-451 give the text of a letter by Artuzov to Yezhov of March, 1937, long before his arrest in May. *"Rodina,*

1995, no. 2" is Boris Sopel'niak, "'Chestneishii tovarishch? Rasstreliat'!'," *Rodina* 2, 1995, 83-88.

But, according to this article Artuzov confessed completely! *The article reproduces much of his confessions.* This means that the Sopel'niak article does, in fact, contain valuable evidence.

But it is evidence that supports the *real existence* of the Opposition conspiracy. So Kotkin neither uses it nor tells his readers that Artuzov's confessions are there. Artuzov also *confessed at his trial,* which guaranteed his conviction and execution.

Artuzov Signed What???

Kotkin writes:

> His interrogation protocols, which he signed with his own blood ...

Even this is false. According to Kotkin's own source, Sopel'niak's article, Artuzov left a *note* written in his own blood in which he denied being a German spy.

Pogonii, *Lubianka, 2,* 203, is not at all a work of scholarship. It is a coffee-table book by the FSB, the successor to the GPU-OGPU-NKVD-MVD-KGB. But it has great photographs and document reproductions! It even has a color photographic reproduction of this very note of Artuzov's. It is written on the back of some kind of "prison receipt" (*kvitantsiia*), as the accompanying note to Veinshtok, Chief of the tenth section of the GUGB of the NKVD, states.[4]

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[4] The note reads as follows: «Гражданину следователю привожу доказательства, что я не шпион. Если бы я был немецкий шпион, то: 1. Я не послал бы в швейцарское консульство Маковского, получившего мои документы. Я сохранил бы документы для себя. 2. Я позаботился бы получить через немцев какой–либо транзитный документ для отъезда за границу. Арест Тылиса был бы к тому сигналом. Документ ...» Translation: "Citizen investigator: I cite evidence that I am not a spy. If I were a German spy, then: 1. I would not have sent to the Swiss embassy Makovskii, who received my documents. I would have kept the documents for myself. 2. I would have arranged through the Germans to get some kind of transit document to travel abroad. The arrest of Tylis

How could Kotkin have gotten this wrong – a note on a receipt instead of a signature on an interrogation transcript (protocol)? Carelessness? Did he think that no one would ever bother to check? Did Kotkin even *see* this page? In any event, Artuzov also confessed to espionage for other foreign governments, and did not retract *those* confessions in this note.

Artuzov's confessions are of great interest. He confirms the conspiracies by Rykov, Bukharin, and Tomsky, and that of Tukhachevsky. Artuzov's second confession is partially reproduced by Sopel'niak here, and also partly reproduced in the volume *Genrikh Iagoda* 487-499. (This last is online at http://istmat.info/node/36059)

Artuzov's confessions present strong evidence that the conspiracies *did* exist. Kotkin does not mention this fact. Nor does he quote those parts of Artuzov's confessions. It's a measure of Kotkin's contempt for his readers that he dared to cite this article at all, since anyone who reads it will immediately see Kotkin's dishonesty.

Good Evidence of German Spies

Kotkin:

> In an internal memorandum that day, addressed to Yezhov and Voroshilov, the despot ordered that all Soviet agents abroad and their handlers be rechecked, because "military intelligence and its apparatus have fallen into German hands." Stalin's memo noted that "from the point of view of intelligence, we cannot have friends; there are immediate enemies and potential enemies," and deemed the Czechoslovaks—with whom the Soviet Union had a mutual assistance pact—"the enemies of our enemies, nothing more." He

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would have been a signal for that. The (or a) document ..." The note is unfinished. According to the accompanying note Artuzov got the blood from his nose.

ordered Soviet personnel not to share intelligence secrets with Czechoslovakia or any other country, and "to fully assimilate the lesson of the cooperation with the Germans," whereby "Rapallo, close ties, created the illusion of friendship. The Germans have remained our enemies, and they penetrated us and implanted their network." He added, "We have had enormous victories, we are stronger than all politically, we are stronger economically, but in intelligence we have been smashed. Understand, they smashed us in intelligence."[219] (413-4)

Note 219 (996): Stalin also underscored the need to portray Soviet spies as "genuine patriots, heroes, of their country," in order "to attract youth, talented people, girls, scientists" to intelligence work, but warned that "the enemy's strong intelligence and our weakness are a provocation to war." Petrov and Jansen, *Stalinskii pitomets,* 290–3 (TsA FSB, f. 6, op. 5, d, 25, l. 208–10). See also Vinogradov, "Tret'ia reform organov bezopasnosti," II: 76–96, esp. 93. One account has Stalin going in person, on May 22, 1937, to military intelligence HQ: Gorbunov, "Voennaia razvedka v 1934–1939 godakh" (no 3.), 57. On the consequences, see also Alekseev et al., *Entsiklopediia voennoi razvedki,* 508–9.

Although Kotkin gets the date wrong – it was on May 21, not May 22, 1937 -- Gorbunov does reproduce the common quote from Stalin telling the foreign intelligence service that it had been penetrated by the Germans. Stalin again elaborated on this fact in his talk on June 2, 1937, before the expanded meeting of the Military Council.

This is good evidence that Stalin believed that German penetration had indeed occurred, and that he also believed the confessions of the military men when they admitted that they had spied for Germany. Stalin got to see *all* the evidence — much more than we

have now, and we now have a lot! To any objective student this is further evidence that the military conspiracy was genuine.

Yet Again, No Evidence of Torture

Kotkin:

> Civil defense followed. Its head, the ethnic Latvian Roberts Eidemanis (shortened to Eideman), was arrested on May 22 and, **under torture,** "incriminated" twenty others. Yezhov had the interrogation protocols on Stalin's desk quickly. The despot wrote on them, "All those people named by Eideman in civil defense (center and periphery) immediately arrest"[220]—no verification of their specific spying activities and any damage caused. (414)
>
> Note 220 (996): *Voennye arkhivy Rossii,* 44; Lebedev, "M. N. Tukhachevskii i 'voenno-fashistskii zagovor,'" 188. See also Pankov, *Komkor Eideman,* 103. Voroshilov had recommended promoting Eideman to head of antiaircraft, arguing that it needed someone of "major authority." Whitewood, *Red Army,* 212 (citing RGVA, f. 4, op. 19, d. 18, l. 176).

VAR, page 44, is the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission again! So is Lebedev, 188 (it should be 187-188) – yet again, the very same document.

Plus, this is yet another phony footnote! Kotkin cites this document as though it offered evidence that Eideman was tortured -- but it doesn't. Khrushchev's men interrogated – or claimed to have done – Karpeiskii, a former NKVD man, who testified that the Lefortovo prison was a terrifying place. *But Karpeiskii refused to state that Eideman had been beaten or tortured.* He could have done so, and Khrushchev's men would no doubt have liked him to do.

Pankov is a 1965, Khrushchev-era book with no evidence whatever. During Khrushchev's time books like this one were published about all the Tukhachevsky Affair defendants, as well as about others. None of them have any evidence. Kotkin does not seem to realize that their sole value is as witness to the fact that Khrushchev would not even allow his own "house" historians to have access to archival evidence[5], and that they had no evidence that these men had been innocent victims of a frame-up.

Bloodstains on a Tukhachevsky Confession?

Kotkin:

> In the cellars on May 26, a mere four days after his arrest, **Tukhachevsky began to sign whatever interrogators put in front of him.** Zinovy Ushakov, who prided himself on obtaining confessions no other investigator could extract, **mercilessly beat Tukhachevsky, whose blood dripped onto the pages of a confession to crimes he did not commit.** By some accounts, Tukhachevsky's teenage daughter, Svetlana, was brought to the prison, where the interrogators told him they would rape her.[223] (414)
>
> Note 223 (996): Kantor, Voina i mir, 386–7; Svetlana Tukhachevsky's statement in Yuliya Kantor, *Mikhail Nikolaevich Tukhachevsky*: www.pseudology.org/colonels/Tukhachevsky.htm. **The Central Committee, without a plenum, expelled Tukhachevsky as well as Rudzutaks from the party and handed them over to the NKVD.** Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i glavnoe upravlenie*, 190 (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 304, l. 112); Getty and Naumov, *Road to Terror*, 448. Ushakov would be executed in Jan. 1940.

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[5] See the discussion and reference by Petr Pospelov to a conference of historians in 1962 in Furr, Khrushchev Lied 206 and note.

Kotkin is – well, let us say, being less than truthful when he states that Tukhachevsky "began to sign whatever interrogators put in front of him." Here's how we know that.

The Kantor article he cites at the Pseudology site is the text, without the illustrations, of an article Kantor originally published in the Russian newspaper *Izvestiia* of February 21, 2004, pp. 10-11. One of the illustrations in the *Izvestiia* article is of a corner of a Tukhachevsky statement of May 26, 1937 in which he states that he headed the antisoviet conspiracy — and which shows the so-called "bloodstains." Kantor also mentions the handwriting on this statement on page 377 of her book *Voina i mir Mikhaila Tukhachevskogo*, which Kotkin cites.

From the illustration we can tell that Tukhachevsky's handwriting, on the page with the supposed "blood drops," is very even. As for the supposed bloodstains – if that's what they are, and if they are Tukhachevsky's – Kantor reproduced a photograph of them in her *Izvestiia* article. I have put it online here:

https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/tukh_confess_with_blood.jpg

I have included my own examination of this so-called evidence, titled "Bloodstains on a Tukhachevsky Confession," as an Appendix to the present chapter.

No Evidence Of Alleged Rape Threat

The same Pseudology article quotes an official of the central archive of the FSB (successor to the KGB – MGB/MVD – NKVD) that there is no documentary evidence to support the rumor about any threat to rape his daughter.

> - Дочь Тухачевского, Светлана, вспоминала, что во время следствия ее - тогда подростка - привели к арестованному отцу и угрожали изнасилованием, если он не подпишет признания ... Это правда?
>
> И слышу безупречный по корректности ответ:

- Документальных данных, подтверждающих такой эпизод, нет.

- Tukhachevsky's daughter, Svetlana, recalled that during the investigation she - then a teenager - was brought to the arrested father and threatened with rape if he did not sign a confession ... Is this true?

And I hear the strictly correct answer:

- There is no documentary evidence supporting such an episode.

Kotkin is eager to include this rumor. But he is equally eager to hide from his readers the fact that there is no evidence to support it. There is no mention of any such thing in Elena Kantor's 600-page book *Voina i mir Mikhaila Tukhachevskogo* (2004), which Kotkin cites three times in his book and also in his bibliography (1090). Kantor had the cooperation of Tukhachevsky's family, photographs of some of whom appear in her book.

It's obvious why Kotkin includes this rumor. He is grasping at straws, looking for anything that might suggest that the confessions of Tukhachevsky and the other military leaders were false, made under torture, threats to family, etc. But he can't find any such evidence, so he has to hide the truth.

As for the following statement in note 223, it is yet another falsehood by Kotkin:

The Central Committee, without a plenum, expelled Tukhachevsky as well as Rudzutaks from the party and handed them over to the NKVD.

The source and page Kotkin cites contains two documents: the motion by the Politbiuro to expel Tukhachevsky and Rudzutak from Party membership and to submit their cases to the NKVD (for further investigation), dated May 24, 1937, and the corresponding text of the Central Committee Plenum resolution, dated May 25-26, 1937, of the resolution of the Plenum of the Central Committee

confirming this. The text, only partially published, of the June 1937 C.C. Plenum states that this resolution was passed by "opros" – poll, either by telephone or by telegram.[6]

Begging The Question Of Torture – Again

Kotkin:

> Even as he had the Soviet military brass tortured for being agents of fascism ... (414)

False! Here again Kotkin commits the logical fallacy of "begging the question" – assuming that which must be proven, not assumed. As we have noted several times, there is no evidence that any of the Tukhachevsky Affair defendants were tortured.

Krivitsky As Evidence???

Kotkin:

> Germany's military attaché in Moscow, General Ernst Köstring, was sending constant updates to Berlin, as Stalin knew. In Berlin's diplomatic circles, German officials **"confidentially"** whispered how not all of their spies in the Soviet armed forces had yet been caught, egging Stalin on.[225] (414)

Note 225 (996): Krivitsky, *In Stalin's Secret Service,* 234.

Krivitsky's book was ghost-written by professional anticommunist liar Isaac Don Levine. According to the exceptionally thorough biography of Krivitsky by the anticommunist author Gary Kern[7] Krivitsky was upset at this. On this page, however, Krivitsky

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[6] Elena Prudnikova. *Khrushchev – Tvortsy terrora.* (Moscow: OLMA, 2007), 604-607; this citation is on p. 606.

[7] Gary Kern, *A Death in Washington. Walter G. Krivitsky and the Stalin Terror.* Revised and enlarged edition. New York: Enigma Books, 2004.

reveals that one of his superiors in the intelligence service had evidence that the Germans were indeed conspiring with Tukhachevsky. There is no evidence that this was false – that the Germans were "egging Stalin on," as Kotkin claims.

By now it should be clear to the reader that *no* conceivable evidence would ever convince Kotkin that Tukhachevsky et al. were guilty. Kotkin is simply not interested in the truth.

Gamarnik's Suicide

Kotkin:

> On May 28–29, Yakir and Uborevičius were arrested. On May 30, eight days after Gamarnik had inscribed "in favor" on the post-facto arrest order for Tukhachevsky, he himself was dismissed. The next day he killed himself in his apartment on Bolshoi Rzhevsky Street.[226] (414-5)

Note 226 (996): Volkogonov, *Triumf i tragediia,* I/ii: 263; *Krasnaia zvezda,* June 4, Aug. 13, 1964. *Pravda* announced his suicide on June 1, 1937. There were nearly 800 suicides in the Red Army in 1937, and more than 800 the next year. Khlevniuk, *1937–i,* 207. Gamarnik had been parroting the Stalin line, telling a party meeting in the military (March 13, 1937), for ex.: "Comrades, the Japanese-German Trotskyist agents, spies, and wreckers are in a full range of our army organization, in the staffs, the institutions, the academies, the military-training institutions." He repeated this in more speeches before his arrest for being the phenomenon he was warning against. Whitewood, "Purge of the Red Army," 296, citing RGVA, f. 9, op. 29, d. 319, l. 2.

Gamarnik certainly did commit suicide. But this is not evidence of innocence any more than it is of guilt.

Kotkin cites Khlevniuk, *1937-y*, 207, who writes:

> Только в Красной Армии в 1937 г., по данным О. Ф. Сувенирова, было зарегистрировано 782 случая самоубийств, а в 1938 г. (без Военно-Морского Флота) - 832 случая.[2]

> In the Red Army alone in 1937, according to O.F. Suvenirov, 782 cases of suicides were registered, and in 1938 (excluding the Navy) - 832 cases.

Khlevniuk's note 2 reads:

> 2 См: Коммунист. 1990. № 17. С. 73.

The suicide figures are in Suvenirov, *Kommunist* No. 17 (1990). But Suvenirov says:

> В целом по РККА в 1937 году зарегистрировано 782 случая самоубийства и покушения на самоубийство, а в 1938 году (без ВМФ) -- 832. (73)

> In all, the Army registered 782 cases of suicide **and attempted suicide** in 1937, and in 1938 (excluding the Navy) -- 832. (73)

So there were not "nearly 800 suicides in the Red Army in 1937, and more than 800 the next year, but suicides *and attempted suicides*. Khlevniuk lied about what Suvenirov wrote, and Kotkin followed Khlevniuk.[8]

Kotkin cites Cherushev, *Udar po svoim*, elsewhere and in his bibliography (1077, col. 1). But did he read it? For these figures are repeated in N.S. Cherushev, *Udar po svoim* (2003), p. 179, with reference to an archival document. While Kotkin gets it wrong, Cherushev gets it right – "самоубийства и покушения на самоубийство" / "suicides and attempts at suicide."

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[8] For some reason Suvenirov omits any totals for suicides and/or attempted suicides in his much longer 1998 book *Tragediia RKKA*.

Good Evidence That Conspiracies Existed

Kotkin:

> Stalin dictated, edited, and pored over the interrogation protocols, then circulated and **referred to them as if they were factual.**[227] (415)
>
> Note 227 (996): Minakov, *Za otvorotom marshal'skoi shineli*, 249–358.

Either this is a bluff or there is no such thing as a bluff. Minakov's book contains no evidence for Kotkin's claim that "Stalin concocted false confessions" and "then circulated and referred to them as if they were factual." And if it did, it could hardly be spread over 110 pages! Moreover, Minakov is the author of several books in which he claims, with much evidence, that the Military conspiracy did indeed exist!

The main point here is this: *the fact that Stalin carefully studied and annotated the transcripts of the interrogations and, in Kotkin's words, "referred to them as if they were factual," is strong evidence that Stalin believed they were, indeed, factual – that is, genuine.* How are Stalin's actions to be explained otherwise?

When You Don't Know, Assume!

Kotkin:

> And yet, in the end, he [Lion Feuchtwanger] ended up justifying **the trials he knew to be falsified**, on the basis of cultural snobbery (Russia was backward) and the political imperative to close ranks against fascism.[240] (418)

Note 240 (996) is simply to Feuchtwanger's book. There's nothing in it about "knowing the trials to be falsified" – because, of course, he could not possibly "know" this, since (a) he had no evidence that they were falsified, and (b) we know today that there is no such evidence exists — all the evidence suggests that the trials

were *not* falsified. So how can Kotkin make such a statement? (We have already discussed another Kotkin falsehood about Feutchtwanger and the trials in Chapter 6.)

Argument From Incredulity

Kotkin gives us a classic example of the Argument from Incredulity, a logical fallacy:

> Instead, attendees were compelled to spend the first day reading interrogation protocols about a fantastic homegrown fascist military plot. (417)

By calling the conspiracy "fantastic" Kotkin is simply saying: "It is unbelievable" — that is, "I, Stephen Kotkin, cannot believe it."[9] So what? Whether Kotkin or anyone else "believes" a statement is true or not is irrelevant to whether that statement is true or false.

Tukhachevsky's Confessions

Kotkin:

> **NKVD interrogator-torturers had compelled Tukhachevsky** to compose a post-facto war "plan of defeat," which amounted to a version of the sophisticated doctrines he had been advancing for years and the Soviets had been successfully practicing at maneuvers.[273] (423)

Note 273 (997): Volkogonov, *Triumf i tragediia*, I/ii: 264–5. A facsimile of Tukhachevsky's "confession" and a copy of the "plan of defeat" are in: "Pokazaniia marshala Tukhachevskogo."

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[9] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Divine_fallacy; https://www.logicallyfallacious.com/tools/lp/Bo/LogicalFallacies/196/Argument-from-Incredulity

Note the heavy reliance on Argument by Scare Quote! And this is another "bluff" — i.e. a tactic of deception. For there is no evidence here that "torturers had compelled Tukhachevsky," etc. There is no evidence that Tukhachevsky's confession – "plan of defeat" – published in *Molodaia Gvardiia* 10-11, 1994, was scripted or dictated by the NKVD, or is anything other than what Tukhachevsky himself chose to write.

As so often, Kotkin can cite no *evidence* that Tukhachevsky was tortured or in any way compelled to write a false "plan of defeat." So he simply *asserts* that Tukhachevsky was tortured. This is the logical fallacy of "begging the question" again.

Kotkin also conceals the important testimony in Tukhachevsky's article about the conspiracy and its ties to the Rights and to Trotsky. Here is one such passage:

> In 1932, on more than one occasion, I talked to Fel'dman, criticizing the army's leadership and the policies of the Party. Feld'man expressed great misgivings about the policies of the Party in relation to the countryside. **I told him that this should warn us, military workers, to be on our guard and suggested to him to organize a military group, sharing the views of the Rightists, which would be able to discuss these matters and take the necessary steps. Feld'man agreed and thus was begun the creation of the anti-Soviet military Trotskyist conspiracy. I told Feld'man that I a1ready had established links with Enukidze, who represented the leadership of the Rightists.**

There are many more such important passages. An English translation of Tukhachevsky's "Plan of defeat" (*plan porazheniia*) has in fact been published and is readily available. Kotkin fails to inform his readers about it.[10]

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[10] Steven J. Main, "The Arrest and 'Testimony' of Marshal of the Soviet Union M.N.

Kotkin "Discusses" A Transcript He Never Read

Kotkin:

> **At the "trial,"** Yakir acknowledged the existence of the "center" but shifted blame onto Tukhachevsky. Feldman did the same. When Kork tried to absolve himself and attack the others, they incriminated him, calling him a liar and provocateur. Primakov had volunteered an additional handwritten denunciation of commanders not yet arrested. Dybenko pressed Tukhachevsky for details about his planned palace coup, and Blyukher pressed Yakir to elaborate on Gamarnik's counterrevolutionary Trotskyite plotting.[279] (424)
>
> Note 279 (997): Zen'kovich, *Marshaly i genseki*, 510–1 **(citing the eleven-page trial transcript).** Five of the seven military men sitting as judges with Ulrich would soon be executed themselves, except for Budyonny and Shaposhnikov.

First, the scare quotes: there was an actual trial, not a "trial." Second: as of May, 2018, the full transcript of the trial of Tukhachevsky et al. has been declassified and is available to scholars. It provides yet more compelling evidence that the military conspiracy was real and that Tukhachevsky and the rest were guilty of at least what they confessed to.

Also, Kotkin is, at best, in error here – yet again. Zen'kovich is quoting from Belov's letter to Voroshilov, not from the trial transcript. Kotkin has also misunderstood Zen'kovich's statement, not on page 510 but on page 508, where he says that *Fel'dman's statement* -- not the whole trial transcript -- occupied 12 pages!

Tukhachevsky (May-June 1937)." *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 10, No. 1 (March 1997), 151-195.

How could Kotkin have made such an elementary error? Was he so eager to depict the trial as a very brief "kangaroo court" that he misread Zen'kovich? Or did Kotkin do this deliberately, knowing that almost no one would ever check the reference? Incompetence? Or deliberate fraud? As so often in Kotkin's book, either is possible.

Yakir's Letter to Stalin

Kotkin:

> **Everything had taken place behind the scenes.** On June 8, prison wardens had presented the eight defendants with their formal indictments, and the next day **Yakir had addressed a petition for mercy to "Our Own Close Comrade Stalin,"** who wrote on it, "He is a scoundrel and a whore." Other politburo members had to read it as well. ("A perfectly precise definition. K. Voroshilov." "A scumbag and a whore, deserves only one kind of punishment, death. L. Kaganovich." Molotov affixed his name without elaborating.) After collecting the signatures, Stalin wrote on the document, "My archive."[269]

"Behind the scenes?" What "scenes"? Is Kotkin complaining that there wasn't a public trial? Are military tribunals "public" in the "Free World"? Nonsense. This is just a cheap shot, one of many in Kotkin's book. But it is only the proverbial "tip of the iceberg" concerning Yakir's letter.

A World Record? Same Source Cited 3x In One Footnote

> Note 269 (997): *Voennye arkhivy Rossii*, 50; Lebedev, "M. N. Tukhachevskii i 'voenno-fashistskii zagovor,'" 194; Artizov et al., *Reabilitatsiia: kak eto bylo*, II: 688.

The attentive reader who actually peruses footnotes will think these are three different source. But they aren't. Once again these

are all *the same source* — the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Report prepared for Khrushchev — cited in *three different publications.* The third, RKEB 2, is the citation universally used today, since this is a standard, important source book. The first two (VAR, Lebedev) are never cited any longer, since they are very hard to find. Moreover, this document is available on line, so why not give *that* reference for the reader's convenience?

As for "Everything had taken place behind the scenes," ironically it is Kotkin who conceals the following important facts:

* That Iakir confesses to treason in this letter.

* That Marshal Zhukov in 1957, and then Khrushchev's KGB chief Aleksandr Shelepin in 1961, quoted this letter *but omitted Iakir's confession.* They did so in order to give the impression that Iakir was claiming that he was innocent.

The complete text of Iakir's letter has now been declassified. I reprint a translation below so that the reader can see the section that Kotkin is concealing, in boldface.

> "Dear, close comrade Stalin. I dare address you in this manner because I have said everything, given everything up, and it seems to me that I am a noble warrior, devoted to the Party, the state and the people, as I was for many years. My whole conscious life has been passed in selfless, honest work in the sight of the Party and of its leaders – **then the fall into the nightmare, into the irreparable horror of betrayal. And during that short period of my life there were always within me two persons: one who had worked much and honestly for the army, the soviets, the party, and another, who thought up and was preparing vile acts hostile to the country. The investigation is completed. I have been formally accused of treason to the state, I have admitted my guilt, I have fully repented. I have unlimited faith in the justice and propriety of the**

decision of the court and the state. The investigation has been completed. I have been accused of treason to the state; I have admitted my guilt, I have fully repented. I have unlimited faith in the justice and appropriateness of the court and the government. I know that there can and must be only one sentence – death. I am prepared for this sentence. Nevertheless I appeal to you and to the government and beg you, beg you to believe in the possibility of my correction, to believe that I can still be of use to the state, to which I dedicate my whole being. Perhaps you will consider and decide to allow me to go somewhere in the far North or East, in Kolyma, to work and on rare occasions to learn about the magnificent Land of the Soviets, mine again. I ask you to permit me, even though rarely, to take up "Pravda" and to see, by the amount of the sowing, the production, the transportation, the victories of the party, of the soviets, and of the people, whom I have betrayed.

I beg you and I understand that I do not have any right to do so. Now I am honest in my every word, I will die with words of love for you, the Party, and the country, with an unlimited faith in the victory of communism."[11]

A 'Cheap Shot' To Distract Readers

Kotkin:

> The single-day trial of the military men took place in camera, near the Kremlin, on the second floor of the three-story military collegium building (October 25 Street).[275] In the chamber, collegium members could

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[11] The whole text, with what Khrushchev, Zhukov, and Shelepin concealed, is in Furr, Trotsky's Collaboration 9-10.

> avail themselves of sausages, black caviar, pastries, chocolates, fruit. Chief military judge Vasily Ulrich was known to enjoy a brandy.[276] (423-4)

Note 276 (997): Jansen and Petrov, "Mass Terror and the Court."

Yet more falsehoods! The "food and drink" business is from a Khrushchev-era statement of "a former orderly at Lefortovo [prison]" and a crude 1991 Gorbachev –era smear of V.V. Ul'rikh, the chief judge of the military tribunal. What's more, *neither is referring to this specific trial.* Jansen and Petrov take the "cognac" story from a 1991 article (by Chistiakov and Maslov) which contains no evidence whatever!

Kotkin has obviously cited this smear job in an attempt to poison his readers' minds, in order to deflect our attention away from the fact that *it is Kotkin himself who is concealing the evidence* that Tukhachevsky, Yakir and the rest were in fact guilty of conspiring with Germany and Japan.

Bias By Omission Again

Kotkin:

> Budyonny reported that day to Voroshilov ("only personally"), in a nineteen-page memorandum, that "from the testimony of Tukhachevsky, Kork, Yakir, and Uborevičius it is evident that they decided to work out first on their own initiative the plan for the defeat of the Red Army during the war and only after that to clear it with the German general staff . . . [but] because of their arrest they did not finish." Still, Budyonny concluded, "I consider that nonetheless they passed it on to German intelligence" (parroting Stalin's closed-door speech of June 2).[280] (424)

Note 280: RGVA, f. 33 987, op. 3s, d. 828, Volkogonov papers, Hoover, container 17. In his account for Stalin (June 26), Budyonny noted that although Tukhachevsky

had shaken his head "no" during the reading of the charges and testimony, and denied passing any classified documents to the Germans, in the end he pronounced himself guilty. *Voennye arkhivy Rossii,* 55–6; Lebedev, "M. N. Tukhachevskii i 'voenno-fashistskii zagovor,'" 199–200; APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 310, l. 170–83. See also the report of another "judge," I. P. Belov, in Cristiani and Mikhaleva, *Le repressioni,* 192–8. (997)

Budyonny's report was addressed to Voroshilov, not to Stalin. This looks like a careless error since the archival copy in the Volkogonov Papers is indeed 19 pages long and does have the archival identifier numbers cited by Kotkin. It has been published in Russia at least twice and is online in Russian.[12]

An English translation of Budyonny's letter is also available online.[13] The interested reader can consult it and see for herself what Kotkin omits. Like Yakir's letter, the text leaves no room for doubt that the military commanders, and Trotsky as well, were guilty of conspiring with the Nazis. Kotkin conceals all this from his readers.

It is no surprise, then, that Kotkin does not quote the relevant parts of these documents. Just as Kotkin ignores Frinovsky's statement of April, 1939; all of Yezhov's confession statements; the appeals of the Moscow Trials defendants; and all the rest of the primary source evidence that shows that these conspiracies were real, not fabrications by an "evil Stalin."

When You Don't Know – Invent!

Kotkin:

> Just before midnight, Ulrich sentenced all eight to death; the men were led down to the cellar, where the NKVD's head executioner, Vasily Blokhin, used

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[12] At http://istmat.info/node/22536

[13] At https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/budiennyiltr.html

> German Walther pistols to execute the fascist hirelings.[282] (424)
>
> Note 282 (997): Blokhin was assisted by Ignatev. Lebedev, "M. N. Tukhachevskii i 'voenno-fashistskii zagovor,'" 199.

This is a falsification. There is nothing in "Lebedev" – really, the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Report, as we have seen – about who the executioner was. The "Spravka" (and Lebedev, on the same page 199) simply states that Vyshinsky, Ul'rikh, Tsesarskii, Ignat'ev, and "NKVD commandant Blokhin" were present at the execution and signed the document verifying that the executions had been carried out.[14]

Perhaps Kotkin says that Blokhin was the executioner, and that he used German Walthers, because in the "official" – and dishonest -- version of the Katyn Massacre, which falsely blames the Soviets, it is claimed that Blokhin was the executioner and used German Walther pistols. As we have shown in *The Mystery of the Katyn Massacre: The Evidence, The Solution,*[15] the evidence is very clear: the Soviets cannot possibly have committed the Katyn massacres, so it follows that Blokhin did not shoot the Polish POWs. As for using German Walthers, the Germans did that.

Why would Kotkin fabricate an insignificant detail like this one? To convince his readers that he is thorough? Whatever the reason, he did make it up – or, perhaps, copy from someone else who did.

Kotkin Cites A Letter Two Years Late

Kotkin:

> Incarcerated Red Army men inundated the defense commissar with desperate letters about their torture,

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[14] Kotkin does not tell us who "Ignatev" was. According to the "Spravka," this was a Captain Ignat'ev, commandant of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR.
[15] Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press and Media, LLC, 2018.

begging—*begging*—for his help. "Kliment Yefremovich! You must check how the cases against the commanders of the Red Army are being handled," a group of civil war comrades wrote to him. **"You will find that materials are extracted from the arrested by means of force, threats, and turning men into limp rags."**[298] (303)

Note 298 (998): Afanas'ev, *Oni ne molchali*, 380'

In Afanas'ev – a dishonest book as we shall see -- this quotation is dated May 15, 1939, *twenty-three months after* the Tukhachevsky trial and executions; six months after Yezhov had resigned and Stalin and the Politburo had ordered NKVD repressions to be stopped.

Argumentum E Silentio

Kotkin:

In fact, evidence indicates that Voroshilov knew full well the charges were a lie.[302] (303)

Note 302 (998): Just one of many examples: between May 7 and 10, Voroshilov issued a plan for liquidating wrecking—check all warehouses, all construction sites, all secret information storage holdings, all military units—but he did so without naming a single example of actual wrecking in the army. Khaustov and Samuelson, *Stalin, NKVD*, 75 (APRF, f. 3, f. 401, l. 107–9).

This passage is in Khaustov and Samuelson, page 75 – but it is not evidence that Voroshilov "knew the charges were a lie." This is "argument from silence," a logical fallacy. But see the following passage.

But He *Did* Believe …

Kotkin:

> "The authority of the army in the country is shaken," Voroshilov wrote, again in notes to himself. "The authority of the commanding group has been shaken ... This means that the methods of our work, the whole system of governing the army, my work as commissar, has suffered a shattering crash."[303] (303)
>
> Note 303 (998): Suvenirov, "Narkomat oborony," 29 (citing RGVA, f. 33987, op. 3, d. 1023, l. 22, 24, 26: June 1937). Notes to himself for his Nov. 1938 speech to the Main Military Council show how far Voroshilov had come. Suvenirov, *Tragediia RKKA*, 74–5 (citing RGVA, f. 33987, op. 3, d. 1137, l. 3, 5, 6).

The quotation in Kotkin's text at this footnote is indeed in Suvenirov, "Narkomat oborony," page 29. But in the *second* Suvenirov citation in Kotkin's note, *Tragediia RKKA* 74-5, *Suvenirov says that Voroshilov sincerely believed that the armed forces were full of spies*, etc., (74) thus contradicting what Kotkin has just said! No wonder Kotkin omits this fact!

How could he cite a source that not only fails to support his fact-claim, but *says the direct opposite* of what Kotkin claims it says? Evidently because for Kotkin these citations are "window-dressing," a sham to fool the rubes – us, his readers. He is so sure that no one will check and find him out.

The Far Eastern Conspiracy Was Real

Kotkin:

> NKVD bigwig Vsevolod Balytsky had been transferred from Ukraine to fabricate a Trotskyite-fascist conspiracy in the Soviet Far Eastern Army, the country's critical line of defense against Japan ... (432)

This is a particularly flagrant falsification. Elsewhere in his book Kotkin cites the late professor Alvin D. Coox's two articles "The Lesser of Two Hells." (1078) Coox discovered that Genrikh S. Liushkov, the NKVD general who replaced Baltysky in the Far East

and then defected to the Japanese, *told his Japanese handlers that there really was a conspiracy in the Far Eastern Army,* naming names. This is evidence of this highest importance since it confirms the real existence of the military conspiracy.[16]

What's more, this is *non-Soviet evidence*, since Liushkov was in Japanese hands when he said it. Kotkin conceals all this fascinating and important stuff from his readers this.

Another Series Of Falsehoods

Kotkin:

> Stalin's war preparations also bore the mark of his executions of thousands of loyal officers, especially top commanders like Vasily Blyukher, whose eye had been deposited in his hand before he died under torture, and the gifted Mikhail Tukhachevsky, whose blood had been splattered all over his "confession" to being a German agent just before Stalin signed the Pact.[40] (893)
>
> Note 40 (1068): Stepanov, "O masshtabakh repressii."

This footnote is a fraud. No specific pages, or even the number of the issue, are cited. Do you wonder why? And this is a four-part article in *Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal*, 1993, Nos 1, 2, 3 and 5. What's more, the article in issue 1 is not by Stepanov, but by A. T. Ukolov and V.I. Ivkin.

But in his bibliography Kotkin lists them all as by Stepanov. *And those that are by Stepanov, Nos. 2, 3, and 5, are simply yet another publication of the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission,* which Kotkin has cited elsewhere, in at least *five* other different editions! Why cite the same document here again in yet another separate publication? To create the appearance of thorough scholarship?

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[16] I have examined Coox's articles in Chapter 17 of Furr, *Kirov.*

The "Spravka" says that Bliukher died "in custody," not "under torture." As for Bliukher's eye, the "Spravka" just states: "около глаза был огромный синяк" – "near his eye was a huge bruise." Where does the "whose eye had been deposited in his hand" come from? Not from the sources Kotkin cites. Did Kotkin dream up this macabre bit of gory detail himself in order to make Stalin, et al. "look bad"?

Concerning the falsehood about "the gifted Mikhail Tukhachevsky, whose blood had been splattered all over his "confession" to being a German agent just before Stalin signed the Pact," see the Appendix to this chapter.

Here Kotkin adds yet another falsehood. Tukhachevsky et al. were executed on June 11, 1937. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed ("Stalin signed the Pact') on August 25, 1939 – 26 months later, not "just before."

Bliukher

Kotkin:

> On October 22, 1938, NKVD operatives appeared at Voroshilov's dacha, where the thirty-nine-year-old Blyukher and his twenty-three-year-old wife were staying. They arrested the couple and took them to Moscow.[279] Yezhov had signed the order, but Beria oversaw the interrogation in Lefortovo. Back in summer 1937, Stalin had said that Tukhachevsky and Gamarnik, on orders from the Japanese, had tried to remove Blyukher from command of the Soviet Far Eastern Army; now, in fall 1938, Stalin had Blyukher accused of being a spy for the Japanese since 1922. Under "interrogation," Beria's men reduced Blyukher's face to a bloody pulp—he lost an eye—yet the marshal refused to confess. Blyukher would die under torture. Beria telephoned Stalin with the news, after which the marshal was cremated.[280] (549-550)

Note 280 (1015): Blyukher died on Nov. 9, 1938. He would be convicted and sentenced to death posthumously, on March 10, 1939. Dushen'kin, *Ot soldata do marshala*. His wife received eight years in the Karaganda camp complex.

The Dushen'kin book was published in 1960 in an edition of 150,000 copies, and republished in 1964 in another 100,000 copies, as part of the Khrushchev-era anti-Stalin campaign. It contains no evidence to support its conclusions and is useless for research. Under Khrushchev similar books were published about Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Primakov, Eideman, and others.

Kotkin fails to cite the 2008 book by Nikolai Velikanov, *Izmena Marshalov*, "Betrayal of the Marshals." No doubt this is because Velikanov's book contains evidence that Bliukher and others were guilty.

Kotkin does cite the two articles by Coox which contain similar important evidence. But he conceals that evidence from his readers. Coox relates that Liushkov told his Japanese military handlers that Bliukher had indeed been conspiring against the Soviet government.

Omitting The Evidence Of Bliukher's Guilt

Bliukher also admitted being in touch with Rykov, who had offered him a position:

> Blyukher told Gulin that before the removal of Rykov he was in connection with him and had often written that the 'right wing' wished to see him at the head of the armed forces of the country. (Coox 1, 158)

Publicly Liushkov was saying that all the conspiracies were fabrications by Stalin. But at the same time he was privately informing the Japanese that serious conspiracies did in fact exist. Moreover, what Liushkov told the Japanese is consistent with the charges at the January 1937 and March 1938 Moscow

> Trials (the guilt of Rykov) and with the charges against the military conspirators, both the Tukhachevsky Affair figures (Gamarnik) and those against military and Party officials in the Far East.[17]

We also now have a few selections of interrogations of Bliukher in 1938. In one of them Bliukher explicitly mentions a letter from Rykov that stated exactly what, according to Coox's research, Liushkov told the Japanese:

> The beginning of my contact with the Rights took place in 1930... These political waverings and unsteadiness of mine became known to Rykov and **permitted Rykov in 1930 to write to me an anti-Party and anti-Soviet letter, which I hid from the Party, and in which he spoke of his desire to see me at the head of the military...**

This agrees with Coox's account of what his Japanese informants told him about Liushkov's words, already quoted above. Other snippets of interrogations of Bliukher implicate Deribas, Lavrent'ev, Pokus, Aronshtam, and other figures whom Liushkov identified as participants in the military conspiracy in the Far East. Liushkov's statements to the Japanese confirm them. By the same token, Liushkov's statements to the Japanese refute the notion that these statements were false, the result of torture, threat, or simple NKVD fabrication.

Excerpts from Bliukher's interrogations are contained in Velikanov's book on pages 342-344. Of the 26 pages of Bliukher's handwritten confession Velikanov reproduces a few paragraphs only. But in them Bliukher confirms that he joined the conspiracy of the Rights in 1930.

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[17] Quoted in Furr Kirov, 348.

Conclusion

This critique has established that Kotkin has extensively falsified the evidence about the Tukhachevsky Affair in order to create the false appearance that Stalin and his associates framed innocent men. We now possess far more evidence of the guilt of Tukhachevsky and the other military commanders executed with him than I outline above.

As of May, 2018, he transcript of the trial of Tukhachevsky et al. of June 11, 1937, has finally been declassified and made available on the Internet.[18] As of November, 2018, most of the NKVD investigation file on Tukhachevsky has been declassified as well. The testimony given there by the defendants will remove any doubt in the mind of the objective reader that these men were guilty of the crimes to which they confessed.

But Kotkin, in company with many or perhaps even most scholars of the Stalin era, is anything but objective. No conceivable evidence can change his mind, or theirs. Denial of the evidence is the rule, and objectivity is the exception, in the corrupt field of Soviet history of the Stalin era.

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[18] At http://istmat.info/node/59108, with PDF file at http://istmat.info/files/uploads/59108/rgaspi_17.171.392_process_tuhachevskogo.pdf It is also available at a Ukrainian, Russian-language site: http://lander.odessa.ua/doc/rgaspi_17.171.392_process_tuhachevskogo.pdf

Chapter 9a. Appendix: The "Bloodstain" Question

On page 414 Kotkin writes the following:

> In the cellars on May 26, a mere four days after his arrest, Tukhachevsky began to sign whatever interrogators put in front of him. **Zinovy Ushakov, who prided himself on obtaining confessions no other investigator could extract, mercilessly beat Tukhachevsky, whose blood dripped onto the pages of a confession to crimes he did not commit.**

The claim that these bloodstains prove that Tukhachevsky was beaten into false confessions is repeated by many other writers. For example:

> ... Yezhov's investigators tortured the officers mercilessly until they confessed. Analysis many years later showed that there were bloodstains on the confession signed by Tukhachevsky. (Getty, *Road to Terror*, 447-8)

Their reference is to *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* n. 4, 1989, p. 50. This is in fact the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission, prepared for Khrushchev in 1963 but not published until Gorbachev's anti-Stalin campaign. In the authoritative publication of the "Spravka" in the volume RKEB 2 it is on page 682.

Here is that passage:

> В процессе изучения дела М. Н. Тухачевского на отдельных листах его показаний обнаружены пятна буро-коричневого цвета. В заключении Центральной судебно-медицинской лаборатории Военно-медицинского управления Министерства обороны

СССР от 28 июня 1956 г. говорится: «В пятнах и мазках на листках 165, 166 дела № 967581 обнаружена кровь ... Некоторые пятна крови имеют форму восклицательного знака. Такая форма пятен крови наблюдается обычно при попадании крови с предмета, находящегося в движении, или при попадании крови на поверхность под углом ...».

In the process of studying the case of M.N. Tukhachevsky, spots of a brownish color were found on separate sheets of his testimony. In the conclusion of the Central Forensic Laboratory of the Military Medical Directorate of the Ministry of Defense of the USSR of June 28, 1956 it is stated: "Blood has been found on stains and smears on sheets 165, 166 of case No. 967581 ... Some bloodstains have the form of an exclamation mark. This form of bloodstains is usually observed when the blood falls from an object in motion, or when blood falls to a surface at an angle ..."

Khrushchev "rehabilitated" Tukhachevsky et al. in 1956-57.

In the early 2000s IUlia Kantor was given permission by the Tukhachevsky family to view his interrogation file. She published two books about this, both cited by Kotkin. Kantor was utterly unable to find any evidence that Tukhachevsky was innocent, although she is certain that he was, and she covers up this fact with lots of assertions.

On February 21, 2004, Kantor published an article in *Izvestiia*, still a Russian newspaper. In that article she reproduced a photo of the place in one of Tukhachevsky's confessions that has the stains. Years ago, I put this photograph on line:

https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/tukh_confess_with_blood.jpg

It is important to note a few details here:

* These are the same stains that are identified in the "Spravka" of 1963. The stain in "the form of an exclamation mark" is at the lower left corner.

* This confession is a carbon copy. I thought it looked like this, and it has been confirmed by my Moscow colleague Vladimir Bobrov, who has been working in the FSB (formerly the KGB-NKVD) archive.

* Tukhachevsky's signature is visible. Normally, each page of a confession is signed. That was the custom with all interrogation transcripts.

This discovery was made by Khrushchev's men when Khrushchev was falsely "rehabilitating" lots of people and blaming Stalin, after his February 25, 1956 "Secret Speech." I have written about these false "rehabilitations" in *Khrushchev Lied,* Chapter 11. Later, Gorbachev's men often just copied the unpublished Khrushchev material stuff verbatim.

* Why should we trust Khrushchev and his men? We shouldn't! In anything! They lied big-time. So, we don't know whether these stains are blood or not.

* Assuming they are blood, are they Tukhachevsky's blood? Khrushchev's men may or may not have had the technology to determine that in 1962-3. But by 1989, and certainly today, the technology exists, and many Tukhachevsky family members are still around.

If it were Tukhachevsky's blood, wouldn't Khrushchev and Gorbachev tell us that? But they do not mention it. Maybe they "do not want to know," in case the test shows that it is *not* Tukhachevsky's blood?

Imagine a courtroom in which this is presented as evidence against somebody — say, Zinovy Ushakov, Tukhachevsky's interrogator. The defense attorney could make mincemeat of this so-called "evidence," get it excluded from consideration. That's because *it proves nothing.*

* Even if these stains are blood -- and even if they are Tukhachevsky's blood (let's remember, this has not been established) -- they are on a carbon copy. That means that Tukhachevsky has already made the confession, and it has been typed up.

So why would they still beat him? To force him to sign each page? But look at the signature. It's a regular signature, nothing shaky or hesitant. It's like he is signing an order or a check.

* Most important: Is this "blood spatter"? Read the Wikipedia page on this:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloodstain_pattern_analysis

This is *not* "blood spatter." There is no "spatter" at all. But if Tukhachevsky were being beaten, there would be "spatter." A blow produces spatter, not drops.

Let's assume these are bloodstains. What might have caused them? A nosebleed. A paper cut. Whose blood? It could be anybody's: the interrogator's; the secretary-typist's; from one of the archivists handling the document. Or, it could be Tukhachevsky's.

What it *cannot* be is the sign of a beating. A beating produces "blood splatter," which these stains are not.

There is nothing ingenious or obscure about either this evidence or the analysis of it here. Khrushchev's and Gorbachev's men could have done it. But they didn't. They had been tasked by their bosses to find evidence that Tukhachevsky was innocent. So they did not look too closely.

Kotkin could have done it too. But, like Khrushchev's and Gorbachev's men, Kotkin was not looking for the truth either. Like Khrushchev and his men, Kotkin was looking for a good anti-Stalin story. So he turned off his critical faculties and *fabricated* a beating. And not just any beating, but a "merciless beating."

Pure invention! And yet Kotkin is a renowned historian!

Chapter 10. Yezhov's Conspiracy

> Interestingly, in January 1939, S. Mironov-Korol' [S.N. Mironov's full name] was arrested, and almost immediately testified that **in July 1937 in a private conversation Frinovskii told him of Ezhov's intention to come to power on the basis of their group in the NKVD.**[1]

In conformity to the Anti-Stalin Paradigm Kotkin takes the familiar – indeed, the obligatory – position that the mass executions of 1937-1938 were planned by Stalin, and that Nikolai Yezhov, the chief of the NKVD, was only carrying out Stalin's orders. In the words of the title of a book by two leading anti-Stalin falsifiers (and therefore a book often cited by Kotkin) Yezhov was "Stalin's loyal executioner."[2]

This is all wrong. No evidence supports it. Therefore, Kotkin can cite none. It is only possible to make this claim at all by ignoring the primary source evidence now available and relying heavily on secondary sources by anti-Stalin researchers who, of course, can give no evidence either. Long, detailed footnotes give Kotkin's account the superficial appearance of being well-documented. But this is a sham. As we shall see, many of Kotkin's footnotes do not provide evidence for the fact-claims he makes.

Bias by omission is perhaps the most powerful of the tools in the bag of the historical falsifier, because only a specialist who is familiar with the available sources will know what is omitted. Kotkin takes full advantage of this technique of falsification. We devote a full chapter to Kotkin's abuse of this tool of deception.

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[1] Leonid A. Naumov, *Stalin i NKVD.* Moscow: Novyi Khronograf, 2010, 263.

[2] The updated Russian edition of this book is titled *Stalinskii pitomets,* "Stalin's nursling," or "pupil."

I have written a book-length study of Yezhov's conspiracy and mass murders: *Yezhov vs. Stalin. The Truth About Mass Repressions and the So-Called 'Great Terror' in the USSR*. In it I examine the primary-source evidence. For brevity's sake I will refer to that book rather than reprint its contents here.

Kotkin completely ignores all the evidence of Yezhov's conspiracy against the Soviet government! Because he deals with Yezhov's mass murders in several different sections of his book, our discussion here has to jump around in Kotkin's text to follow him.

The Basic Falsehood Stated

Kotkin:

> Through it all, the NKVD never broke down, let alone rebelled. The ease with which Yagoda was destroyed proved that there was no threat whatsoever to Stalin's rule. The secret police, even under assault, remained an utterly reliable instrument of his will, a testament to both the limits of the feared yet despised Yagoda's authority and the strength of Stalin's as supreme leader. (394)

No evidence given for these outrageous statements. No wonder! We have a great deal of evidence that the NKVD leaders, both Iagoda and then Yezhov, were indeed conspiring against Stalin and the Soviet government and Party. My book, *Yezhov vs. Stalin*, reproduces a great deal of this evidence. Much of it is taken from Jansen and Petrov, and the revised Russian edition by Petrov and Jansen, as well as other sources that Kotkin cites – but not here. His readers will not know this.

Here is just one quotation from a book that Kotkin cites many times.

> Evdokimov gave similar evidence. According to him, in September [1938 – GF] he discussed the threatening situation after Beriia's appointment with Yezhov, Frinovskii, and Bel'skii. **Allegedly, they agreed to**

> **prepare an attempt on Stalin and Molotov. Yezhov was also said to have had plans to murder Beriia.** ... According to Iu. K. Ivanov, an NKVD executive from Evdokimov's circle, as early as late July, after a visit to Yezhov, Evdokimov had alluded to terrorism against the Party leadership. Involved in the conspiracy first of all were people originating from North Caucasia (Evdokimov's home base), Dagin, Nikolaev-Zhurid, and others. But the action, planned for 7 November [1938], did not take place because Dagin was arrested beforehand.[3]

There is a great deal more evidence of "NKVD rebelling" against Stalin and the Party. Kotkin hides it from his readers.

Omitting The Evidence

Kotkin:

> Franco, therefore, had nothing to teach him, except that a military-led putsch, assisted externally by fascists, could try to seize a whole country, a scenario that Stalin was manipulating to justify his own savage domestic counterinsurgency against **an imaginary insurgency**. (401- no footnote)

Yezhov, some of his NKVD men, and some Party First Secretaries, claimed that there were serious insurgencies afoot. We have discussed this, and quoted the texts in English translation, in Chapter Five of *Yezhov vs. Stalin*. This primary-source evidence was, of course, available to Kotkin too. But he never tells his readers about it.

From the evidence we now have it seems that they were lying, at least in large part. But Stalin and the central leadership in Moscow

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[3] Mark Jansen and Nikita Petrov. *Stalin's Loyal Executioner. People's Commissar Nikolai Yezhov 1895-1940*. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2002, 156.

were relying on the Party and NKVD leadership around the vast country to inform them.

There is no question that Stalin believed that these alleged insurgencies were real, as the editor of one of the document collections admits. That editor is V.N. Khaustov, one of the compilers of several important document collections and a very anti-Stalin researcher.

> And the most frightening thing was that Stalin made his decisions on the basis of confessions that were the result of the inventions of certain employees of the organs of state security. **Stalin's reactions attest to the fact that he took these confessions completely seriously.** (Lubianka Golgofa, 6)

What is important here?

* That Khaustov admits the existence of a major conspiracy by Yezhov.

* That Khaustov concedes that Stalin was deceived by Yezhov. Yezhov admits as much in the confessions of his that we now have.

* *That Khaustov admits that Stalin acted in good faith on the basis of evidence presented to him by Yezhov*, much of which may, or must, have been false.

Kotkin, who cites at least six books written or edited by Khaustov, does not cite or use this very important collection of documents.

It is important to ideologically anticommunist researchers that these mass murders be seen as Stalin's plan and intention. Khaustov is honest enough to admit that the evidence supports the opposite conclusion. Some of the confessional and investigative documents Yezhov sent on to Stalin and the Soviet leadership must have been falsified. But Khaustov himself has no idea which were fabrications and which were not. (Furr, Yezhov vs Stalin, 64)

The Falsehood About "Quotas"

Kotkin:

> In summer 1937, he vastly expanded the arrests and executions to nonelites [non-elites]. There was no "dynamic" forcing him to do so, no "factional" fighting, no heightened threat abroad. The terror was not spiraling out of his control. He just decided, himself, to approve **quota-driven** eradication of entire categories of people in a planned indiscriminate terror known as mass operations.[3] (433)

Note 3 (999) is to Solzhenitsyn and an even older book by Weissberg. Of course, neither could have any evidence to support Kotkin's claim. This is a falsification, and a particularly flagrant one at that. As American scholar Arch Getty has pointed out:[4]

> Order No. 00447 established limits [*limity*] rather than quotas, maximums, not minimums ... The word's meaning was well known: it never meant 'quotas'. Reflecting Stalin's concern that locals might go out of control (or out of his control) Order No. 00447 twice warned that 'excesses' in local implementation of the operation were not permitted. (Getty, *Fever* 232-233)

Getty repeats this in a recent book:

> One of the mysteries of the field [of Soviet history — GF] is **how *limity* is routinely translated as "quotas."** (Getty, *Practicing* 340 n. 109)

Kotkin knows this, of course. But his readers will not know it. Why not? Because he hides it from them.

Kotkin falsely attributes the Bolsheviks with a passion for "quotas" elsewhere too:

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[4] I discuss this issue in *Yezhov vs Stalin* 72-3.

> [On January 11, 1930] Yagoda asked his top subordinates how many people could be interned in existing labor camps and where new camps might be quickly established, encouraging them to "think creatively."[156] The upshot was that each territory would have a deportation **quota**.[157] (36)
>
> Note 157 (916): 157. Ivnitskii, *Kollektivizatsiia i raskulachivanie*, 108–9.

But there is *nothing* about quotas of any kind on these pages of Ivnitskii's book.

The Nonsense of "Psychohistory"

Kotkin:

> There *could* have been no such terror without the Communist party and its ideology, but there *would* have been no such terror without Stalin, and his profoundly dark personality, immense strength of will, and political skill.[321] (490)

Let's pause for a moment to consider the first clause in this sentence. Can it really be that Kotkin is ignorant of the massive terror by capitalist countries in many parts of the world? Or does he just hope his readers will be ignorant of them? Conquest, quoted in note 321 (1007) by Kotkin, was an avid supporter of the immense terror, which included the massive use of torture, of the American war in Vietnam. What about American terror in Korea, the Philippines, Latin America, Iraq, Afghanistan? British atrocities in Kenya and India? The French massacre of African soldiers in Senegal?[5]

As for Kotkin's psychologizing of Stalin here ("profoundly dark personality") – it is of course an error to try to explain historical events in this way, despite how often anticommunist writers have

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[5] For this last atrocity see https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massacre_de_Thiaroye.

recourse to it.[6] It is also an example of the logical fallacy known as the nominal fallacy – giving something a name ("dark personality"), then assuming that you have explained it.[7]

As we shall see, Kotkin has *no evidence whatever* to support his view that the massive executions of 1937-8 were planned by Stalin. But since he rejects the explanation that is supported by all the evidence we now have, cheap "psychologizing" is all Kotkin has left. Plus Robert Tucker, Kotkin's professor at Princeton, was an avid proponent of t "psychohistory."[8]

Frinovsky's Confession Statement

Kotkin:

> Yezhov's NKVD ... was riven with distrust. When informing Frinovsky that he wanted to appoint him first deputy commissar, Yezhov asked him to recite his accumulated sins. "You have so many sins, you ought to be arrested right now," Yezhov told him, adding, "Well, so what, you'll work, and you'll be my person 100 percent."[233] Frinovsky further testified that "Yezhov demanded that I find investigators who were utterly dependent on us or had sins on their records, and they knew they had sins, which could be held over them."[234] (415-6)

Note 233 (996):
http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/193_dok/19390413beria.php (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 373, l. 3–44: **protocol of Frinovsky interrogation**, Beria to Stalin April 11,

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[6] See the essay by Geoffrey Roberts, "Stalin, Trump, and the Politics of Narcissism: A Response to Rose McDermott's 'The Nature of Narcissism." H-Diplo, June 29, 2018. At https://issforum.org/roundtables/policy/1-5BG-Stalin

[7] For one discussion of this fallacy see http://www.indiana.edu/~p1013447/dictionary/nomfall.htm

[8] See Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin as revolutionary, 1879-1929 : a study in history and personality* (New York: Norton, 1973). The "personality" part is Tucker's phony psychohistory.

1939). Frinovsky and Yezhov were not close. "I had multiple clashes at work with him," Yezhov would later observe of Frinovsky. "I cursed him out, and called him a fool to his face, because no sooner would he arrest someone among the NKVD operatives then he would run to me and shout that it was all fabrication [*lipa*], that the person was wrongly arrested." "Poslednee slovo Nikolai Yezhova."

Note 234 (996): http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/193_dok/19390413beria.php (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 373, l. 3–44: **protocol of Frinovsky interrogation**, sent by Beria to Stalin April 11, 1939); Afanas'ev, *Oni ne molchali*, 218.

There are a number of falsehoods here. For starters, Frinovsky's confession is a statement, not an interrogation.

But more important, *Frinovsky asserts that the Moscow Trials defendants were guilty.* Kotkin ignores this. I have put an English translation of Frinovsky's statement on line so the reader may see for herself.[9]

Oni Ne Molchali Is A Fraud

As for "Afanas'ev, *Oni ne molchali,* 218" – this is interesting! It is a very short excerpt from Frinovsky's statement. This book, published in 1991, was a part of Gorbachev's truly gigantic attack on Stalin that facilitated his turning the USSR towards capitalism, civil conflict, and dissolution. It was published in an edition of 75,000 – an enormous printing of what is a dry and, supposedly, scholarly book.

The full text of Frinovsky's statement was published in 2006 and is cited above by Kotkin. It shows how dishonest *Oni ne molchali* is, since that Gorbachev-era book does not mention the fact that

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[9] At https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/frinovskyeng.html

Frinovsky strongly and repeatedly attests to the guilt of the Moscow Trials defendants and the existence of Yezhov's conspiracy.

The editors of this 1991 book, doing Gorbachev's bidding, concealed this from their readers. And now Kotkin is concealing it from *his* readers!

More Dishonest Use of Frinovsky's Confession Statement

Kotkin cites Frinovsky's confession statement a number of times, and falsifies it every time.

> Kotkin, note 278 (967) to page 234 of the text: In 1935, Yefim Yevdokimov evidently asked Frinovsky if he had any information about the hand of Yagoda in the murder of Kirov (**insinuating Stalin's involvement**). **Protocol of Frinovsky interrogation**, Beria to Stalin, April 11, 1939 (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 373, l. 3–44), http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/193_dok/19390413beria.php.

This is yet another of Kotkin's blatant falsehoods. Evdokimov's question about Yagoda did not "insinuate Stalin's involvement" at all. Quite the contrary! Evdokimov, Frinovsky, and Yagoda were all in the Rightist conspiracy. This is made clear in Frinovsky's statement, though Kotkin never informs the reader of this. For example:

> Evdokimov also said that in a number of regions of the North Caucasus his people had succeeded in leading some groups of rebels, and that the purge of the party that was taking place at that time might help in the sense of recruitment of people.
>
> At the time of the trial of Zinoviev, Kamenev and others, when the testimony about Bukharin was published in the press, Evdokimov was in Moscow. He became very upset and in a conversation with me,

said: **"The devil only knows how he will be able to extract himself from this whole affair. I just don't understand Yagoda at all, what he is doing, why he is broadening the circle of persons for repression,** or maybe the nerves of these people are weak – they will give out. **But it could have been possible to direct the course of the investigation in such a manner as to leave oneself safe in any case."** (40)

For clarity we repeat Kotkin's note 233 (to page 416)

> http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/193_dok/19390413beria.php (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 373, l. 3–44**: protocol of Frinovsky interrogation**, Beria to Stalin April 11, 1939). Frinovsky and Yezhov were not close. "I had multiple clashes at work with him," Yezhov would later observe of Frinovsky. "I cursed him out, and called him a fool to his face, because no sooner would he arrest someone among the NKVD operatives then he would run to me and shout that it was all fabrication [*lipa*], that the person was wrongly arrested." "Poslednee slovo Nikolai Yezhova." (996)

Frinovsky's confession statement shows that Frinovsky was indeed "close" to Yezhov, though Kotkin's readers will not know this, since he provides no link to the English translation.

Frinovsky continued:

> Soon after starting work in my new position as vice-commissar Yezhov began to bring me close to himself, to select me from among the remaining vice-commissars, to hold franker conversations with me in the evaluation of the other vice-commissars, to express some dissatisfaction with Agranov. Before the division of duties among the vice-commissars, besides the fact that I continued to be the chief of the GUPVO, Yezhov proposed that I become involved in operative questions also, and in 1937, after Yagoda's arrest, he

began to hold talks with me in relation to my possible appointment as first vice-commissar. During one of these talks Yezhov told me: "I have decided this question, but I want to talk it over with you, only look – be honest, there are some sins on your account."

At first I was completely taken aback. I thought – I'm done for. When he saw my dismay Yezhov began to speak: "Don't be afraid, speak honestly." Then I told him about the story with the Sokol'nichesky affair, about my ties with Yagoda, ties with Evdokimov, and through him with Lifshits. Then Yezhov said: "There are so many sins to your name that we could throw you in prison right now, but never mind, you will keep working, you will be my man 100%." I looked at him in dismay and tried to refuse the appointment to the position of first vice-commissar, but he said: "Sit down, get to work, we'll work together and take the responsibility together." (41-42)

I have put a translation of Yezhov's last words ("Poslednee slovo Nikolaia Yezhova") online.[10]

Imaginary "Kremlin Bodyguards"

Kotkin:

> **Peasants had rebelled en masse against the violence of forced collectivization and dekulakization**, and even some party officials had protested. But the terror? A group of Kremlin bodyguards had been carrying loaded pistols on Red Square during the 1937 May Day festivities, within shooting distance of Stalin and the entire leadership; within a few months, they went meekly to their

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[10] At https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/Yezhovlastwords.html

> deaths, liquidated as an alleged "assassin corps" working for foreign agents.[243] (543)

What about the story of the Kremlin bodyguards who went meekly to their deaths?

> Note 243 (1014, to Kotkin passage above): Rybin, *Riadom so Stalinym*, 73. See also Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, 587.

Yet more phony references! The story of the "group of Kremlin bodyguards" is simply not in either of these sources. Or, perhaps Kotkin has misunderstood a passage in Rybin's memoir where he notes that, after the arrest of Yagoda (March 1, 1937) and some of the other conspirators, the four bodyguards who had been assigned to Red Square for May Day "disappeared." Rybin assumes they were part of the plot to kill Stalin, and says "No wonder that, when gathering in Red Square on May 1, they feverishly shoved four or five pistols each into their field coats."

Few Peasants Rebelled

As for peasants, some did rebel – but what does "en masse" mean? Mark Tauger, a world expert on Russian and Soviet agriculture and famines, notes that there was relatively little peasant protest: According to an OGPU (police) report of March 1931, right in the midst of collectivization, about five per cent of the peasant population was involved in protests. This also means that the vast majority of peasants was not involved in such protests. Most of these protests were settled peacefully; the OGPU reported that they had recourse to force in fewer than 2% of them.

Tauger points out that many peasants actually *supported* collectivization. For them, it was not "forced." Many peasants actively supported collectivization. This number increased when local activists were experienced or sensitive enough to patiently explain the purpose of collectivization to the peasants. Some peasants spontaneously form[ed] kolkhozy and consolidated their fields.

> Finally, what about the other 90 per cent of peasants who did not rebel? **Some peasants did not reject collectivization and even supported it** ... An OGPU report quoted one middle peasant in Shilovskii raion (district), Riazan okrug, in November 1929 to the effect that 'the grain procurements are hard, but necessary; we cannot live like we lived before, it is necessary to build factories and plants, and for that grain is necessary' .... **In January 1930, during the campaign, some peasants said, 'the time has come to abandon our individual farm. It's about time to quit those, [we] need to transfer to collectivization.'** Another document from January reported several cases of **peasants spontaneously forming kolkhozy and consolidating their fields,** which was a basic part of collectivization ...[11]

End of Yezhov Era

> The day after Uspensky's flight, Stalin, receiving his minions in the Little Corner, had a decree approved disbanding **the assembly-line death sentence troikas.**[143] 578)
>
> Note 143 (1020): RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 24, l. 62.

An archival source! What is a reader supposed to make of this kind of thing? Especially since Kotkin knows that this document has been published in several places, including *Tragediia sovietskoi derevni* vol. 5, part 2, 306-7, and Pavliukov, *Yezhov*, 473. Kotkin cites both of these works in his book. It is even online at the Istmat site (http://istmat.info/node/36067) It is partly translated in Getty and Naumov, *The Road to Terror*, 531-2. Why didn't Kotkin help his readers by pointing this out?

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[11] Tauger "Soviet Peasants and Collectivization, 1930-1939. Resistance and Adaptation." *Journal of Peasant Studies* (4) 2004, 427-546. Reprinted in *Rural Adaptation in Russia*, ed. Stephen K. Wegren. London and New York: Routledge, 2005, 65-94, at p. 75.

For the falsehood of "assembly-line death sentences" see the section "Lies About The Lists" later in this chapter.

Here is my translation:

> Directive of the Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the VKP(b) concerning a halt to the review of cases sent for review of troikas, military tribunals, and the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, in the order of special instructions:
>
> 15 November 1938
>
> To People's Commissars for Internal Affairs of the Union and Autonomous Republics, commanders of the oblast' and krai directorates of the NKVD, to prosecutors of the krais, oblast', autonomous and union republics, prosecutors of the military regions, of railroad and water transportation, chairmen of the Supreme Court of the USSR, the supreme courts of the union and autonomous republics, the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, chairmen of the tribunals of the military districts:
>
> It is ordered in the strongest possible terms:
>
> 1. To halt as of 16 November of this year pending further order examination by the troikas, military tribunals, and by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, of all cases sent to them for their review as special orders or in a different, simplified order ...
>
> 2. To require prosecutors of military districts, territories, regions, autonomous and union republics to monitor the exact and immediate fulfillment of this order. Report its fulfillment to the USSR NKVD and Prosecutor of the USSR

> Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars (SNK) V. Molotov,
>
> Secretary of the CC of the VKP(b) J. Stalin.

Why does Kotkin cite only the archival location, which none of his readers can consult? This should serve us as a reminder that *Kotkin strives to hide, rather than disclose, the evidence.*

Tied The World Record!

> On November 17, he summoned Vyshinsky for a "report," after which the despot issued another decree in the politburo's name, justifying the terror but blaming the NKVD for "a host of major deficiencies and distortions."[144] (578)
>
> Note 144 (1020): Kostrychenko [sic – should be "Kostyrchenko"] and Khazanov, "Konets Kar'ery Yezhova," 125–8 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1003, l. 85–86); Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i glavnoe upravlenie*, 607–11 (APRF, f. 3, op. 58, d. 6, l. 85–7); Getty and Naumov, *Road to Terror*, 532–7. On Yezhov's anger at being accused of lawlessness, when he was following Stalin's instructions, with which Vyshinsky had colluded, see Ushakov and Stukalov, *Front voennykh prokurorov*, 70–2.

The first three are all the same document: "On Arrests, Supervision by the Procuracy and the Conduct of Investigations." Why cite Kostyrchenko and Khazanov, 1992, when the same document is published in the Lubianka 1937-1938 volume that Kotkin cites so often?

Getty and Naumov is a partial translation of this document. I have translated the whole document into English and put it on line.[12]

The book by Ushakov and Stukalov is an interesting example of falsification. It purports to be the memoirs, edited by Ushakov, of military prosecutor Nikolai P. Afanas'ev, who died in 1979.

This book is of more than dubious validity. In it the words of Yezhov's that Afanas'ev supposedly quotes echo documents published by the year 2000, when this book was published. On the very pages 70-72 cited by Kotkin here, Afanas'ev claims that Tukhachevsky denied his guilt. But we know that is a lie, because we now have Tukhachevsky's confessions, plus those of his associates who also accuse him, plus Tukhachevsky's own testimony at the June 11, 1937, trial.

In 2000, the year their book was published, Ushakov and Stukalov had some of these documents too. But – assuming that they really did reprint Afanas'ev's memoirs and did not simply fabricate them – they do not inform their readers that Afanas'ev was wrong.

Omitting The Struggle Against Yezhov

Just like that, without public acknowledgment, with a few pieces of paper in the Little Corner, the mass terror was halted. **Coincidence?** The terror supposedly was aimed at rooting out enemies lying in wait for a war, but then, at what would appear to be maximum international war danger for the USSR, Stalin suddenly moved to end the mass arrests. Had he become less paranoid? Was it just that he had been waiting for completion of a Short Course? Or was he jolted by events portending actual danger?[145] We cannot definitively establish his motivations. (579)

Note 145 (1020): "The fear of war had spawned mass terror," wrote Ulam. "But terror in its turn increased

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[12] No. 362. Decree of the Politburo of the CC VKP(b), "On Arrests, Supervision by the Procuracy and the Conduct of Investigations." November 17 1938. At https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/onarrestseng.html

> Stalin's fear of war." This appears to be exactly backward: Stalin's fear of war seems to have ended the mass terror. Ulam, *Stalin*, 491–2. On Oct. 16, 1938, the politburo resolved to demobilize and return the forces called to the western borders: 330,000 troops, 27,500 horses, and 5,000 vehicles. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 24, l. 17.

The last sentence here is *copied word for word* from Oleg Khlevniuk's book *Stalin. Zhizn' odnogo vozhdia,* page 230, where the exact same archival reference is also given. Has Kotkin even looked at this archival source? There is no reason to think he has. But hey – archival references give the appearance of serious scholarship, right? What's more, even Khlevniuk is not sure that this movement of forces was due to the Munich sellout of Czechoslovakia by Britain and France, since "these forces, while not small, were hardly decisive."

Presumably Kotkin wants us to think he is grasping for some explanation of the end of the "mass terror." As for Ulam's book, it was published in 1973, long before the flood of Soviet documents now available.

As for this gem:

> Just like that, without public acknowledgment, with a few pieces of paper in the Little Corner, the mass terror was halted. **Coincidence?**

Kotkin doesn't even mention the *real* and provable reason for the end of the mass arrests and executions ("the terror") -- the growing suspicion by Stalin and others that Yezhov was acting improperly, and Yezhov's resignation under pressure.

> И вот третий, последний акт этой долгой процедуры: 23 ноября Ежов опять вызван к Сталину, где уже находились Молотов и Ворошилов. Мне пришлось держать в руках документ, который Ежов писал явно под их диктовку. Написан он на трех страницах, все разных размеров, то есть хватали первые

подвернувшиеся под руку бумажки и подсовывали их Ежову, лишь бы тот не прекратил писать. Формулировка его отстранения от должности меняется дважды: видимо, он сопротивлялся, возражал. А надо-то было вырвать от него решение уйти «по собственному желанию»! Тут же пишется проект постановления, который звучит как гарантия: «Сохранить за т. Ежовым должности секретаря ЦК ВКП(б), председателя Комиссии партийного контроля и наркома водного транспорта." Наконец заявление написано и подписано: «Н. Ежов." Вот с этого и началось устранение «ежовщины». Политбюро послало на места телеграммы с прямым текстом: немедленно прекратить репрессии и распустить «тройки." Снова, перехватив инициативу, сталинская группа уже в конце 1938 года добилась проведения первых судебных процессов над работниками НКВД, обвиненных в фальсификации и надуманности дел, по которым почти целый год судили, ссылали и казнили тысячи людей. Так удалось остановить большой террор.

And here is the third, final act of this long procedure: on November 23, Yezhov was again summoned to Stalin, where Molotov and Voroshilov were already present. **I have held in my hands the document that Yezhov wrote, obviously under their dictation. It is written on three pages, all of different sizes -- that is, they grabbed the first pieces of paper that came into their hand and slipped them to Yezhov, if only to keep him writing. The formulation of his dismissal is changed twice: apparently, he resisted, objected. But it was necessary to wrest from him the decision to leave "at his own request"!** There and then the draft resolution was written, which sounds like a guarantee: "To retain the post of Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU (B.), Chairman of the Commission for Party Control and the People's Commissar for Water Transport, for Comrade Yezhov." Finally the statement was written and signed: "N. Yezhov." This is how the end of the

> "Yezhovshchina" began. The Politburo sent around telegrams with the text itself: immediately stop the repression and disband the "troikas." Once again, having seized the initiative, at the end of 1938 the Stalin group achieved the first trials of NKVD officers accused of falsifying and contrived cases, by which for almost a year they had tried, exiled and executed thousands of people. **This is how they succeeded in stopping the great terror.**[13]

Kotkin has read and cites Iurii Zhukov's work but ignores it here. No doubt he does so because *the evidence, and Zhukov's analysis of it, disprove the false allegation that Stalin "planned" Yezhov's mass murders.* Likewise, they prove that Stalin was not at all an all-powerful "dictator"— scare quotes deliberate here — that Kotkin, and the Anti-Stalin Paradigm, demand that he be. But these are obligatory elements of the ASP. So Kotkin keeps quiet about them.

Kotkin:

> On November 19, 1938, the "politburo" summoned the NKVD commissar to the Little Corner, where, from 11:10 p.m. until 4:20 a.m., they discussed a denunciation of him **that Beria had orchestrated** from a provincial NKVD boss (Viktor Zhuravlyov).[31]
>
> Note 31 (1021): Zhuravlyov's denunciation followed the formation of the commission on the NKVD. Beria had passed the letter to Stalin on Oct. 13, 1938. Khaustov and Samuelson, *Stalin, NKVD,* 249–50; *Na prieme,* 245–6. See also Shreider, *NKVD iznutri,* 237. Zhuravlyov briefly got a promotion to Moscow, but Beria would send him to run the Karaganda camps. Yezhov's response—accepting guilt, claiming poor health, confessing he "had taken badly the appointment of Beria as my deputy. I saw in this an

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[13] Zhukov, "Zhupel Stalina." *Komsomolskaia Pravda* November 20, 2002.

element of lack of trust towards me," and requesting to resign—is misdated as Sept. (rather than Nov.) 23, 1938. Kostrychenko [sic – should be "Kostyrchenko"] and Khazanov, "Konets Kar'ery Yezhova," 129–30 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1003, l. 82–4); Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i glavnoie upravlenie,* 552–4 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1003, l. 82–4); Petrov and Jansen, *Stalinski pitomets,* 355–9 (RGASPI, f. 671, op. 1, d. 265, l. 16–26ob.).

The fact-claims in the Khaustov and Samuel'son passage (249-50) cite *no evidence.* Instead, Khaustov and Samuel'son "channel" Stalin to tell us what he was "thinking." Plus they tell at least one glaring lie:

> Сталин, читая записку Журавлева, отметил некоторые факты, свидетельствующие о подозрительном поведении руководящего состава НКВД. В записке он оставил свои пометки, которые свидетельствовали о том, что Сталин, может быть, начинал открывать для себя некоторые теневые стороны деятельности руководства НКВД.
>
> Stalin, reading Zhuravlev's note, noticed some facts indicating suspicious behavior by the NKVD leadership. He left some notes on Zhuravlev's letter, **which showed that Stalin was perhaps beginning to discover for himself some shady aspects of the activities of the NKVD leadership.**

Stalin briefly summarized the contents of Zhuravlev's letter (the letter itself has not been found) in a coded telegram of November 25, 1938 to Party leaders.[14] It is clear that this was not the "beginning" of Stalin's suspicions of Yezhov. In August, 1938,

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[14] Lubianka 1937-1938 No. 364 pp. 611-2.

Lavrentii Beria had been made Yezhov's second-in-command, replacing Frinovsky. Yezhov recognized this as a sign of mistrust.

NEW World Record!

Kostyrchenko and Khazanov, "Konets kar'ery Yezhova," 129-130, is a 1992 publication of Yezhov's letter of resignation. Why cite it here, in a hard-to-find journal, when it is published in the Lubianka 1937-1938 volume that Kotkin cites so many times, as well as on line? In fact, Kotkin may never have read the Kostyrchenko-Khazanov article, since it is footnoted on page 554 of the Lubianka 1937-1938 volume.

Khaustov et al., *Lubianka* 552-4 is another text of Yezhov's letter of November 23, 1938. So is Kotkin's Note 32, to Petrov & Jansen, *Stalinski pitomets* 355-9.

Three different citations of the same document! Actually, four — because Kotkin's note 32 to "Petrov and Jansen, *Stalinski pitomets*, 355–9, at 357," is simply a long quotation from *the very same document!* More phony scholarship. Shreider, 237, contains only Shreider's attacks on Zhuravlev because the latter had built a case against Shreider himself. It is irrelevant to the present discussion.

At the end of this long footnote Kotkin writes:

> See also Sudoplatov and Sudoplatov, *Memoirs of an Unwanted Witness,* 59. This is another example where Sudoplatov's memoir comports with archival materials.

What "archival materials" is Kotkin talking about here? Viktor Zhuravlev is not even mentioned in Sudoplatov's memoir. But Kotkin is wrong anyway. Sudoplatov's memoir was published in 1995, long after the publication of Yezhov's resignation (1992), from which Sudoplatov may well have copied. So much for "comporting with archival materials." Finally, we can't rely on Sudoplatov's memoir because it was altered after its first Russian-language edition, probably by its American editor, Jerrold Schechter.

The "Edit" That Wasn't

Kotkin:

> On November 23, Yezhov was again in Stalin's office, where he had logged nearly 900 hours over the previous two years, but these three and a half would be his last: **Stalin edited Yezhov's resignation.**[33] (587)
>
> Note 33 (1021): Kostrychenko and Khazanov, "Konets Kar'ery Yezhova," 131 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1003, l. 34–5); Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i glavnoe upravlenie,* 611 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1003, l. 34–5).

This is a phony reference. Kostyrchenko and Khazanov, 131, only note that this document, the Politburo decision to accept Yezhov's resignation, has a "facsimile" of Stalin's signature. Khaustov et al., *Lubianka* 611 is the text of Yezhov's note of resignation. This is the very same document, but here there is *no* claim that it bears a facsimile of Stalin's signature. Moreover, the latter text claims that it is the "original," while Kostyrchenko and Khazanov state that theirs, the one with the facsimile of Stalin's signature, is a "copy."

In *neither source* is there *any* indication that "Stalin edited it." Why does Kotkin falsify even this detail? To create the impression that Stalin was "in control," stage-managing everything?

> On November 25, the despot sent a telegram to all regional party secretaries referring to Zhuravlyov's denunciation of NKVD errors and noting that "the Central Committee had granted Yezhov's request to resign."[34] *Pravda* printed a delayed announcement, on its back page (December 8). Executing the NKVD chief could throw into doubt the mass arrests and executions. For now, Stalin retained Yezhov as a Central Committee secretary, chairman of the party Control Commission, and water transport commissar. (587)

Note 34 (1021): Petrov and Jansen, *Stalinski pitomets,* 354–5 (RGASPI, f. 558, op. 11, d. 58, l. 61–2); Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i glavnoe upravlenie,* 611–2; RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 1003, l. 35 (appointment of Beria).

Petrov & Jansen, and Khaustov et al., *Lubianka,* both reprint the same document: Stalin's telegram about the "unsatisfactory situation" in the NKVD and acceptance of Yezhov's request to resign.

Lies About the Lists

Kotkin:

> At least **383 execution lists** signed by him have survived, containing the names of more than 43,000 "enemies of the people," mostly the highest-level officials and officers. The terror was centrally implemented by Nikolai Yezhov and Mikhail Frinovsky of the NKVD.[322] (490)

Note 322 (1007): Khlevniuk, Politbiuro, 291.

> Note 34, above, continued (1021): The last of **the infamous execution lists** for 1938 was dated Sept. 29: APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 409–19: http://stalin.memo.ru/images/intro.htm. But Volkogonov, citing military archives, claimed that Stalin, having received some 383 extended lists of names for execution in 1937–38, received yet another on Dec. 12, 1938, containing 3,167 names, albeit without even the charges or the results of any "investigation." Volkogonov, *Triumf i tragediia,* I/ii: 301 (citing TsAMO, f. 32, op. 701323, d. 38, l. 14–6).

The business about "execution lists," like Kotkin's statement about "quotas" (see above), is all false. For one thing, these lists are *not execution lists.* They were sent to the Secretariat "for review." Consequently, many persons on these lists were *not* executed. This

is made clear on the very web page -- http://stalin.memo.ru/images/intro.htm -- that Kotkin cites here. The word *rassmotrenie* – "review" – occurs over and over again. This same web page cites the first mention of the lists, in a note from Minister of the MVD Kruglov to Khrushchev of February 3, 1954, that makes it clear they were for "review":

> Докладываю Вам, что в архивах МВД СССР обнаружено 383 списка "лиц, подлежащих суду Военной Коллегии Верховного Суда СССР." Эти списки были составлены в 1937 и 1938 годах НКВД СССР и **тогда же представлены в ЦК ВКП(б) на рассмотрение.**
>
> I report to you that 383 lists of "persons subject to the trial of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR" have been found in the archives of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs. These lists were compiled in 1937 and 1938 by the NKVD of the USSR and **at that time submitted to the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) for review.**

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

> Например, выборочное изучение списка по Куйбышевской области, подписанного 29 сентября 1938 г., показало, что ни один человек из этого списка не был осужден ВК ВС, а значительная часть дел была и вовсе прекращена.
>
> For example, a selective study of the list for the Kuibyshev oblast' signed on September 29, 1938 has shown that not a single person on this list was convicted by the VK VS (the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court), and a significant number of the cases were dismissed altogether.

Kotkin cites this web page, so he knew that these are not "execution lists." For more about the lists see Furr, Khrushchev Lied, 70-73; Furr, Yezhov vs Stalin, Chapter 7, 67-72.

It appears that these lists were sent to Stalin and the Secretariat along with investigative reports by the NKVD about the supposed progress of the fight against anti-Soviet forces. Many such reports have been published in the Lubianka 1937-1938 volume, which Kotkin cites many times.

Many more such reports are published in the volume Lubianka Golgofa, the valuable collection of archival documents edited by Khaustov which Kotkin never mentions. Why? Did Kotkin omit this important volume because the existence of these reports makes it clear that Yezhov and his men were lying to Stalin, duping him into believing that they were successfully combatting dangerous anti-Soviet plots? This appears to be the most likely explanation for such an omission.

Volkogonov, *Triumf i Tragediia,* is in error. Volkogonov wrote before the lists had been published. A summary page gives the date of the 3167 names as *November* 12, 1938.[15]

Beria Purges Yezhov's NKVD

Kotkin:

> Beria, even as deputy NKVD chief, had arrested 332 NKVD leadership personnel between September and December 1938, including 140 in the central apparatus and 18 of the NKVD commissars in Union and autonomous republics. NKVD operatives still on the job became disoriented.[35] (588)
>
> Note 35 (1021): Khaustov and Samuelson, *Stalin, NKVD,* 255–6. Of the 14,500 new NKVD employees in 1939, around 11,000 came from the party apparatus or Communist Youth League. Of the 3,460 newcomers in the central NKVD, 3,242 were party apparatchiks

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[15] http://stalin.memo.ru/images/note1957.htm

> and Komsomol. Petrov and Skorkin, *Kto rukovodil NKVD,* 491–502.

Khaustov and Samuel'son document real concern by NKVD men who, serving under Yezhov, had followed orders and committed crimes against defendants. This is important material! It is a shame that Khaustov and Samuel'son did not publish the documents they refer to in their footnotes.

Petrov and Skorkin, 491-502, give a number of tables. I don't see how the figures 3460 and 3242 can be derived from them, but maybe they can be.

No "Societal Rebellion"?

The next part of this footnote is interesting!

> **There was no hint of societal rebellion.** In early 1939, the police discovered a self-styled "fascist organization" in Moscow. Evidently, its handful of youthful members had fashioned a flag and put up seventy posters on the eve of Red Army Day, drew some graffiti, and wrote poems. They also seem to have discussed Nazism, anti-Semitism, and Russian nationalism. Four arrests were made; three of them turned out to have been nineteen years old when they joined the group, and the organizer was seventeen. The NKVD produced five volumes on the case. Rittersporn, *Anguish,* 174 (citing GARF, f. 5446, op. 81a, d. 335, l. 109–14).

We can't be certain that there was "no societal rebellion." This was the reason that Yezhov and at least some First Secretaries gave Stalin at the June, 1937, Central Committee Plenum for requesting the awful "special powers" that they were granted in July and that inaugurated Yezhov's mass arrests and executions.

But take another look at the quotation from Khaustov and Samuel'son, pp. 249-50, that we have cited above (p. 218) As far as I can tell, this is the *only* place in Kotkin's entire book that he

acknowledges – even though very partially here – that Stalin was misled, duped, lied to. It undercuts his whole thesis – that the "terror" was all Stalin's idea and that he was "in control" all the time.

Rittersporn discusses, albeit very briefly, this and another conspiracy of young people. Of course, the NKVD could not have known *in advance* that the conspiracies involved *only* young people. Judging from Rittersporn's brief account, these were real conspiracies.

Kotkin:

> Regime officials who had once looked to Yezhov as someone who would clean up the antiparty actions and mistakes of his predecessor viewed Beria as someone who would do the same. Releases of some people arrested under Yezhov reinforced such illusions. Stalin got credit for correcting his mistaken trust in Yezhov, and for a new, vigorous, loyal top official.[40] (588-9)
>
> Note 40: Simonov, *Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniia,* 58 (dated Feb. 27, 1979)."

This passage is actually on pp. 69-70. Simonov was a famous Soviet writer. His book on Stalin, in which Simonov puzzles over the anti-Stalin stuff he had been told since Khrushchev's day, and the much more positive opinion he had gotten during Stalin's life, was not published until the Gorbachev era.

Kotkin:

> Beria's power came to exist on a completely different plane from Yezhov's or Yagoda's. Stalin, however, made sure to have non-Beriaites inserted into key positions (Sergei Kruglov, who had been on Malenkov's list of possible NKVD first deputy chiefs, got the critical post of head of NKVD personnel).[41] Stalin also directed Beria to turn in the documents

regarding his role in the Musavat; Beria had Merkulov collect and deliver them.[42] (588-9)

Note 41 (1021): The Georgia NKVD was given to Avksenti Rapava, Beria's minion who had helped pulverize Abkhazia. Guruli and Tushurashvili, *Correspondence,* 89 (Beria to Stalin, Oct. 21, 1937).

This document is online (though not easy to find) and is completely irrelevant. It simply records Rapava's appointment. Nothing whatever is said about "pulverizing Abkhazia." Nor does Kotkin mention anything about "pulverizing Abkhazia" anywhere in this huge book. Rapava was executed under mysterious circumstances by Khrushchev in 1955.

Note 42 (1021): The transfer took place in Aug. 1938, with Beria's promotion. Merkulov: RGANI, f. 5, op. 30, d. 4, l. 76–7: letter, to Malenkov, July 23, 1953; "'Khochetsia prokliast' den' i chas moego znakomstva s Beriia,'" 101 (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 465, l. 2–28); Tumshis, *VChK,* 211.

Merkulov's letter to Malenkov, originally published in *Istochnik* No. 4, 2002, has more recently been published in the collection *Politbiuro i Delo Beria. Sbornik dokumentov.* (M. Kuchkovo Pole, 2012), 139-151. The passage in question is on pp. 145-146. The letter is also online at the Istmat.info site: http://istmat.info/node/22188

Unless it too is a fabrication, like some other documents in this volume, Merkulov wrote it when he was trying to save his life by distancing himself from Beria, whom Khrushchev et al. had either murdered outright or had illegally arrested, and would try and execute in December, 1953 – along with Merkulov and others. Stalin never did anything like this judicial murder!

The Beria – Andreev – Malenkov Report

Two days later, Stalin informed USSR procurator general Vyshinsky that **he wanted a public trial of**

those arrested in the NKVD.[79] "The enemies of the people who penetrated the organs of the NKVD," the commission on the secret police internally reported to Stalin—**as if the secret police rampage had somehow occurred without his directives**—"consciously distorted the punitive policy of Soviet power, conducting a mass of baseless arrests of people guilty of nothing, and at the same time protecting the activities of enemies of the people. . . . They urged that prisoners offer testimony about their supposed espionage activity for foreign intelligence, explaining that such invented testimony was necessary for the party and the government in order to discredit foreign states." The despot circulated the report to the inner circle: they needed to know how to interpret the terror, as the result of the infiltration of "spies in literally every [NKVD] department."[80] (595)

Note 79 (1022): Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i NKVD*, 9 (APRF, f. 3, op. 57, d. 96, l. 110).

Kotkin is correct: Stalin demanded public trials for the guilty NKVD men, but the trials never took place. We don't know why. It is a great pity that such trials were not held. Yezhov's conspiracies, and his responsibility for the mass murders of the "terror," would not have become the mystery, and occasion for anti-Stalin falsification, that they are.

Note 80: Petrov and Jansen, Stalinski pitomets, 359–63 (TsA FSB, f. 3–os, op. 6, d. 1, l. 1–6); APRF, f. 3, op. 58, d. 409, l. 3–9). The commission concluded its work on Jan. 10, 1939; the report was dated Jan. 29. (1022)

The boldfaced clause in the quotation above is a false statement. The "secret police rampage" had indeed "occurred without his – Stalin's – directives," as Khaustov admitted (see quotation above).

This report by three Politburo members close to Stalin outlines their uncovering of the massive murder and torture campaign that

was Yezhov's "great terror" – in Russian, the "Yezhovshchina." Petrov and Jansen, *Stalinski pitomets*, 359-363, is the text of the report in Russian. But who of his readers will be able to read it?

I discuss this important text fully in "The Yezhov Conspiracy," Chapter 10 of *Yezhov vs Stalin*. *I have also translated the whole text of the report and put it online.* The Russian text is also available online.[16] Kotkin could have put references to these online sources for his readers but did not do so. The text of the report refutes Kotkin's notion that the *Yezhovshchina* was Stalin's idea.

No Evidence Of Torture – Again

Kotkin:

> The interrogator-torturers, who before had followed orders from Frinovsky, **had set to beating out of him testimony against Yezhov**, including how the latter had ordered that suspects be beaten to provide false testimony. Within a week Beria would send Stalin a forty-three-page confession written by Frinovsky; Stalin made notes on it.[209] (618)

Note 209:

> Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i NKVD*, 33–50 (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 373, l. 3–44); Petrov and Jansen, *Stalinski pitomets*, 204 (citing APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 374, l. 3–47); Stepanov, "O masshtabakh repressii" (no. 5), 61–2.

Once again Kotkin has invented this "fact" – made it up. *None* of these sources – or any other sources – even claim (much less contain evidence) that Frinovsky was beaten. Is Kotkin lying? Let the reader decide!

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[16] English translation at: https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/beria_andreev_malenkov012939eng.html Russian original at: http://istmat.info/node/24582

Khaustov et al. is the text of Frinovsky's statement to Beria of April 11, 1939, which we have discussed earlier in this chapter. Petrov and Jansen say nothing about any beatings or torture, only that Evdokimov, arrested in November, 1938, refrained from confessing until April 14, 1939. It's possible that, like Bukharin in his first confession of June 2, 1937, Evdokimov held out until the investigation had shown him so much evidence against him that he was convinced further resistance was futile.

The Stepanov article (*Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal* 5, 61-62, is simply the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission, once again referred to in yet another published version. As we have already noted several times, it is dishonest of Kotkin to keep referring to the same document in different places, thus giving the impression that he is referring to different documents.

Here the "Spravka" briefly mentions Frinovsky's statement, while once again concealing the fact that Frinovsky reveals in this same statement that the conspiracies were genuine. Stepanov could get away with this dishonesty because his article was published in 1991, under Gorbachev, while Frinovsky's statement was not published until 2006.

Stepanov, and the "Spravka," also say nothing about any torture of Frinovsky. So this is yet another phony footnote by Kotkin. It is not just Stepanov who is covering up the fact that Frinovsky confirms that the conspiracies were real. Kotkin quotes him, and continues the cover-up of Frinovsky's revelations.

My own full translation of Frinovsky's statement has been available online since 2010.[17] Kotkin fails to refer to it. I urge readers to study it.

What "Massacre"?

Kotkin:

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[17] At https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/frinovskyeng.html

> Altogether, more than 100 of the highest-ranking Yezhovites were massacred—all of his deputies, almost all department heads in the center, almost all NKVD heads in Union republics and provinces.[214] (619)
>
> Note 214 (1025): Nikolai P. Afanasev, USSR deputy general procurator, recalls this as taking place at Lefortovo, but all other sources indicate Yezhov was held in Sukhanovka. Ushakov and Stukalov, *Front voennykh prokurorov*, 69.

No one was "massacred." All of those executed, were shot after investigation and trials. There is nothing in Afanas'ev about the numbers of Yezhov's NKVD men executed. As we have noted above, Afanas'ev's text lies about other matters too and is useless as a historical source.

NKVD File On Stalin

Kotkin:

> In the [Yezhov's] desk the NKVD investigator found four **bullet casings**, marked ZINOVIEV, KAMENEV, and SMIRNOV (two). Perhaps the greatest discovery was that in Yezhov's apartment—and not in his Lubyanka safe—he had kept a cache of documents from the tsarist-era Tiflis gendarmerie on "Koba." Whispers of a "file on Stalin" circulated throughout the upper ranks of the regime.[215] (619)
>
> Note 215 (1025): Viktorov, *Bez grafa* [sic – should be 'grifa'] *"sekretnosti,"* 326.

Another phony reference. There is nothing here about any "file on Stalin," talk about it, "bullet casings," etc.

Kotkin:

> The nature of this file in Yezhov's possession remains unknown. For Beria, it was unclear which was more dangerous: to turn the material over to Stalin, and thus indicate that he had seen it, or to not turn it over.[216] (619)
>
> Note 216 (1025): "Vospominaniia: memurary Nikity Sergeevicha Khrushcheva," 87; Piliatskin, "'Vrag naroda'"; Pavliukov, *Yezhov*, 513; Polianskii, *Yezhov*, 216–7. Others suggest these documents—which disappeared—need not have been compromising, but could have been flattering material Yezhov collected for a Stalin museum. Petrov and Jansen, *Stalinski pitomets*, 228.

Khrushchev does say that Stalin mentioned such information at a meeting. As for Piliatskin, there's nothing relevant in this long newspaper article, the subject of which is the attempt by Yezhov's relatives to have him "rehabilitated" in 2010.

Pavliukov mentions a file from the Tsarist secret police, or 'Okhranka," consisting of the search for "Koba" (Stalin's revolutionary code name) and other members of the Transcaucasian organization of the Bolshevik Party. Pavliukov admits that nothing is known about what was in the file. Polianskii, 216-7, concerns a report by NKVD man Shchepilov of the contents of the search of Yezhov's apartment on April 11, 1938. It has nothing about any file on Stalin.

Petrov and Jansen, 228, suggest that Yezhov might have intended this file for a museum devoted to Stalin, rather than an attempt to find evidence that Stalin was an Okhranka informer. But Petrov and Jansen always insist that Yezhov was faithful and loyal to Stalin. This is necessary for their preconceived notion that Yezhov always did just what Stalin wanted him to do, and that therefore it was Stalin, not Yezhov, who was guilty of the mass murders.

Kotkin:

> Stalin supposedly flashed the material Yezhov had gathered on him at a politburo meeting, as if Yezhov had been acting on his own in the terror's excesses.[217] (619)

Note 217 (1025): Briukhanov and Shoshkov, *Opravdaniiu ne podlezhit*, 132–3. Malenkov's son would assert that when his father had Yezhov's safe opened, they discovered dossiers on Malenkov as well as Stalin; the latter included the recollections of an old Bolshevik that Stalin had prerevolutionary links to the tsarist okhranka. Malenkov, *O moem otse Georgii Malenkove*, 34.

Briukhanov and Shoshkov, 312, has exactly the same contents as Polianskii, 216-7, already cited in the previous note. So what's the point in citing it from a different source? Malenkov, *O moem otse*, 34, mentions a note in a file in Yezhov's office "from an old Bolshevik" about suspicions of Stalin's ties to Tsarist Okhranka. Malenkov's son, the author of this book, was of course not present, so this is just a rumor at best.

No Evidence Of Torture – Again!

Kotkin:

> ... Beria delivered still more pleasing news: on April 13, 1939, Merkulov, his first deputy, finally managed to produce testimony with the signature of the stout Yefim Yevdokimov. Beria had personally gone to arrest him at his apartment on Grand Kisel Lane, 5, off Great Lubyanka, but Yevdokimov had held out for seven months, through broken legs and unceasing torture, which had continued in the prison hospital.[219] (619-20)

Note 219 (1025): Artizov et al., *Reabilitatsiia, kak eto bylo*, 330.

This is from the "rehabilitation report" on Evdokimov. It contains a claim -- but no evidence -- that he had been "tortured," which is typical of Khrushchev-era "rehabilitation" reports. But even in this report there is nothing about "broken legs and unceasing torture, which had continued in the prison hospital." Kotkin's falsifications just keep rollin' along!

Evdokimov features prominently as one of the leading conspirators in Frinovsky's statement of April, 1939. Wheatcroft, author of the most recent and most complete study of Evdokimov (2007), says nothing at all about his being tortured.[18]

Kotkin:

> Note 220: "Tumshis and Papchinskii, 1937, 68. The former colleague was Sergei Schwarz." (1026)

This book repeats exactly what is in the source in the previous note, 219. So why use it at all, if not to create a phony appearance of scholarship?

Kotkin:

> Stalin's former NKVD chief confessed to working for a veritable world gazetteer of enemy intelligence services: Germany, Britain, France, Japan, Poland. (Yezhov had in fact liquidated the Polish Communist party, **on Stalin's orders**.) (620)

Kotkin does not bother to cite even phony evidence for this falsehood of his. Stalin did not "order" the dissolution of the Polish Communist Party. He agreed with the decision of the ECCI[19] of November 28, 1937. Stalin even complained that the decision was two years late, which suggests that he had not "ordered" it —

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[18] Wheatcroft, Stephen G. "Agency and Terror: Evdokimov and Mass Killing in Stalin's Great Terror." *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 53:1 (2007) 20-43.

[19] Executive Committee of the Communist International.

additional evidence that Stalin was no "dictator." See Chase, *Enemies Within the Gates*, pp. 287-289 for more about this.

Ignoring Yezhov's Confessions

Kotkin:

> On April 24, 1939, Yezhov "testified" about his "pederasty," meaning homosexual relations. ... (620)

Of all Yezhov's detailed confessions about his conspiracy against Stalin and the Soviet government, collaboration with the Germans, and mass murders of innocent Soviet citizens, Kotkin cites only this one confession about his homosexuality! Talk about bias by omission!

In note 222 (page 1026) Kotkin does refer to Yezhov's interrogation of April 26, 1939, in this way:

> For Yezhov's interrogation on April 26 (by Kobulov and others), see Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i NKVD*, 52–72 (APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 375, l. 122–64).

But Kotkin doesn't bother to summarize what Yezhov says in this confession or in the many others whose texts we now have, and have had for years. Nor does Kotkin he inform his readers that the Russian text of this interrogation of Yezhov's is online at multiple sites.[20]

Nor does he refer his readers to my English translation of Yezhov's April 26, 1939, confession, available since 2010.[21] At the time of this writing (October, 2018) the only study of Yezhov's and Frinovsky's statements and confessions is my book *Yezhov vs.*

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[20] Including the following:
https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/Yezhov042639ru.html ;
http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/58654 ;
http://stalinism.ru/dokumentyi/soobschenie-l-p-berii-i-v-stalinu-o-n-i-Yezhove-s-prilozheniem-protokola-doprosa.html

[21] At https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/Yezhov042639eng.html

Stalin: The Truth About Mass Repressions and the So-Called 'Great Terror' in the USSR (2016), in which I devote the whole of chapter twelve to this interrogation.

Yezhov's confessions, like that of Frinovsky, are damning. No wonder Kotkin hides them from his readers! Here is just one example, from Frinovsky's statement to Beria of April 11, 1939.

> An active participant in investigations generally, Ezhov kept himself aloof from the preparation of this trial. Before the trial the face-to-face confrontations of the suspects, interrogations, and refining, in which Ezhov did not participate. He spoke for a long time with Yagoda, and that talk concerned, in the main, of assuring Yagoda that he would not be shot.
>
> Ezhov had conversations several times with Bukharin and Rykov and also in order to calm them assured them that under no circumstances would they be shot.
>
> Ezhov had one conversation with Bulanov, and began this conversation in the presence of the investigator and myself, and finished the conversation one on one, having asked us to leave.
>
> At that moment Bulanov had begun talking about the poisoning of Ezhov. What the conversation was about Ezhov did not say. When he asked us to enter again he said: "Behave yourself well at the trial – I will ask that you not be shot." After the trial Ezhov always expressed regret about Bulanov. At the time of the executions Ezhov suggested shooting Bulanov first and he himself did not enter the building where the shootings took place.
>
> Here Ezhov unquestionably was ruled by the necessity of covering up his own ties with the arrested leaders of the Right who were going into the public trial.[22]

Kotkin cites Frinovsky's statement many times. So he has deliberately withheld this and other such passages from his readers. No wonder! These confessions dismantle the Anti-Stalin Paradigm and the myth that Stalin was the architect of the Yezhovshchina and controlled it all the time.

Once Again, No Evidence Of Torture -- Or Fabrication

Kotkin:

> Around this time, death sentences **based upon fabricated evidence** were implemented for cultural figures, as well as former NKVD first deputy Mikhail Frinovsky, former deputy foreign intelligence chief Spigelglas, former intelligence chief and Comintern operative Trilisser, Yefim Yevdokimov, and Redens, Stalin's ethnic Polish brother-in-law (part of a "Polish diversionary-espionage group"). ... **Under interrogation-torture**, Redens had admitted his complicity in the annihilation of innocent people while working atop the NKVD in Ukraine, Moscow, and Kazakhstan. His wife Anna—Nadya's sister—and their two boys were not touched, and the family continued to live in the elite House on the Embankment and were allowed to visit Svetlana at Zubalovo (but not the Kremlin).[204] (742)
>
> Note 204 (1041): Zhukovskii, *Lubianskaia imperiia NKVD*, 214–5.

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[22] Lubianka 1939-1946, 47-8; also online at https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/frinovskyru.html Use Text Encoding Cyrillic (Windows). English translation at https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/frinovskyeng.html

Another falsehood! Kotkin has no evidence that the evidence against Frinovsky was "fabricated," any more than he does that Frinovsky was "beaten."

These pages in Zhukovskii's book are about Evdokimov, another of Yezhov's killers. Kotkin must mean pages 217-8, which are about Redens. Zhukovskii, 214-5, contains what are evidently portions of Evdokimov's statement to the court retracting his confessions. But is a person "innocent" if he retracts his confessions? Of course not! No more than a person is "guilty" because he confesses guilt.

What Evdokimov could *not* retract was the testimony of other witnesses against him. Both Yezhov and Frinovsky incriminated Evdokimov heavily and repeatedly.

Below we quote some of what Jansen and Petrov, two highly anticommunist and anti-Stalin authors, write in a book published by the anticommunist propaganda institute the Hoover Institution. Kotkin often quotes and cites this book. But he omits this passage:

> He [Yezhov] testified himself that after arrests began within the NKVD he, together with Frinovskii, Dagin, and Evdokimov, made plans to commit a "putsch" on 7 November, the October Revolution anniversary, during the demonstration in Red Square. The plan was to cause a commotion and then in the panic and confusion to "drop bombs and kill someone of the government members."
>
> Evdokimov gave similar evidence. According to him, in September he discussed the threatening situation after Beriia's appointment with Yezhov, Frinovskii, and Bel'skii. Allegedly, **they agreed to prepare an attempt on Stalin and Molotov.** Yezhov was also said to have had plans to murder Beriia. ... According to Iu. K. Ivanov, an NKVD executive from Evdokimov's circle, as early as late July, **after a visit to Yezhov, Evdokimov had alluded to terrorism against the Party leadership.** (Jansen and Petrov 155; 156)

If Kotkin had dared to cite the English translation of Frinovsky's statement to Beria of April 11, 1939, or even give its online location, his readers could see how thoroughly Frinovsky had implicated himself and many others, including Stanislav Redens, in mass murders.

The Redens File

Thanks to the efforts of researcher Vladimir L. Bobrov of Moscow, we now have Redens file from FSB archive. He was certainly guilty. Redens was "rehabilitated" in 1961 under Khrushchev and evidently at Khrushchev's command. In 1988-89, under Gorbachev, the Soviet Prosecutor's office *reaffirmed his guilt and crimes*. But the statute of limitations had long expired, so Redens' "rehabilitation" stands.

Redens' file has now been declassified and contains much useful evidence. See *Yezhov vs. Stalin*, Chapter 15: "The Testimony of Stanislav Frantsevich Redens." Redens testified at length and in detail about Yezhov's conspiracy against Stalin and the Soviet government. Redens also implicates Evdokimov. Kotkin does not mention any of this.

If Kotkin had quoted from, or even cited, the English translations of Yezhov's confessions, which have been available on the Internet since 2010, his readers would see some of the evidence that Yezhov, not Stalin, was responsible for the massive torture and executions of hundreds of thousands of innocent persons.[23]

But Kotkin wants to hide these matters from his readers. No doubt this is because they dismantle the "Anti-Stalin Paradigm."

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[23] Grover Furr, "The Moscow Trials and the "Great Terror" of 1937-1938: What the Evidence Shows." At https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/trials_Yezhovshchina_update0710.html Links to *all* of Yezhov's interrogations and confession statements that were available in 2010, in Russian and in English translation, are at the end of this article.

When You Don't Know – Invent!

Kotkin:

> The principal executioner was usually Vasily Blokhin (b. 1895). The son of a poor peasant from central Russia, he had risen to become the NKVD's head executioner already in the mid-1920s and was known to insiders by his signature brown leather cap, brown leather gauntlets above the elbow, and brown leather apron. He had survived the transition from Yagoda to Yezhov, and then to Beria, although the latter had evidently tried to have him arrested as a Yezhovite, assembling the requisite compromising materials.[205] To Blokhin fell the honor of executing Yezhov.[206] (742)

Note 205 (1041): http://alya-aleksej.narod.ru/index/0-181; Voronov, "Palach v kozhanom fartuke"; Nikita Petrov, "Chelovek v kozhanom fartuke lichno rasstrelial bolee desiati tysiach chelovek" http://discussiya.com/2010/08/26/blokhin-executioner. Stalin signed the list, containing 457 names, including Yezhov's, on Jan. 17, 1940: APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 177, l. 116–36.

This note is all false. Kotkin has *no* evidence that Blokhin shot Yezhov. There is no evidence at all for Kotkin's fact-claims at the URL he cites here, which is just a brief biographical note on Blokhin. The Voronov article is just a narrative, without any evidence. The Petrov article of 2010 claims that Blokhin shot Yezhov, but Petrov has no evidence either. And in any case, what does it matter who the executioner was?

A Shameful Article Cited

> Note 206 (1041): Ushakov and Stukalov, *Front voennykh prokurorov*, 75 (USSR deputy military procurator Nikolai Afanasev, who was present).

> Among the many rumors that would circulate inside the NKVD about Yezhov's execution, one had Beria ordering that Yezhov undress and be beaten before being shot, just as Yezhov had done to humiliate his predecessor Yagoda. Kamov, "Smert' Nikolai Yezhova."

The liars had not coordinated their stories! In memoirs edited after his death – unreliable, if not simply fabricated, as we have seen earlier in this chapter, -- Afanas'ev claimed that he was present at Yezhov's execution. But he says nothing about Kamov's claim that Yezhov being stripped and beaten. Kotkin does not seem to recognize – or, perhaps he hopes his readers will not recognize – the contradiction here.

Kamov does not even claim that his disgusting story about Yezhov being stripped naked and beaten is a rumor. It's just Kamov's own salacious imagination. This article is a disgrace, full of crude insults and wrong in the few instances where Kamov makes a statement (Yezhov's term of service, lack of a trial for Yezhov – both wrong.)

Kotkin has no business using such nonsense in a scholarly work. More evidence that Kotkin does not bother with source criticism. If it's viciously anti-Stalin – in it goes!

Chapter 11. Miscellaneous Topics

This chapter is concerned with Kotkin's falsifications about subjects that do not clearly fall among the topics that we have examined in previous chapters. Some of these issues, such as the Katyn Massacre, are of significant importance in themselves, while an examination of the other topics reveals that Kotkin falsifies even issues of lesser importance.

"Klim – There were no mistakes…"

Kotkin:

> Now Stalin also became the organizer of the Red Army, an innovation canonized in Voroshilov's birthday pamphlet, "Stalin and the Red Army." ... Voroshilov's draft, meanwhile, had been sent to Stalin for prior approval. The defense commissar had written that Stalin made fewer mistakes than the others. Stalin wrote back, "Klim! There were no mistakes—cut that paragraph."[144] (33)

Note 144 (915): Voroshilov, "Stalin i krasnaia armiia," Izvestiia, Dec. 21, 1929, reprinted in Stalin: sbornik statei, and in Voroshilov, *Lenin, Stalin, i krasnaia armiia*, 41–61. **Stalin himself crossed out the words that had offended him with red pencil: *Voennye arkhivy Rossii*, 77 (Voroshilov's adjutant Khmelnitsky).**

Though it is not an important issue in itself, this claim (in boldface above) aroused my suspicions. So I decided to check it. *Voennye Arkhivy Rossii* is a rare and short-lived Soviet journal from the early 1990s. Here is the passage in *Voennye Arkhivy Rossii*, page 77:

> Еще в рукописи Сталин был ознакомлен со статьей и сделал некоторые замечания. **По утверждению**

Хмельницкого, бывшего адъютанта Ворошилова, в этой рукописи, которую он читал в архиве Ворошилова, написано, что в период гражданской войны «имелись успехи и недочеты, у И. В. Сталина ошибок было меньше, чем у других." Эта фраза, **как сообщает Хмельницкий**, зачеркнута красным карандашом и рукою Сталина написано: «Клим! Ошибок не было, надо выбросить этот абзац. Ст.».

Stalin was acquainted with the article even in manuscript and made some comments. **According to Khmelnitsky, Voroshilov's former adjutant,** in this manuscript, which he read in Voroshilov's archive, it is written that during the Civil War "there were successes and shortcomings, and Stalin had fewer errors than the others." This phrase, **according to Khmelnitsky**, is crossed out with a red pencil and Stalin's hand says: "Klim! There were no mistakes. Cut this paragraph. St."

VAR cites no source so I searched the Russian-language Internet. This tale is cited in an article in the fanatically anticommunist and anti-Stalin newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*.[1] An article dated February 26, 2013 is titled: "'Klim! There were no mistakes. Cut this paragraph.' How Stalin Defeated Pilsudskii."[2] There we read:

> Слава богу, тов. Сталин при всей его загруженности нашел время просмотреть и лично отредактировать рукопись. «Клим! Ошибок не было. Надо выбросить этот абзац», — терпеливо разъясняет он на полях ворошиловского текста (И. Сталин, Соч., т. 17. Тверь, «Северная Корона," 2004 г. С. 326).

> Thank God that comrade Stalin, despite all his other duties, found time to read through and personally edit the MS. 'Klim! There were no mistakes. Cut this

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[1] Of which Mikhail Gorbachev is a 10% owner.

[2] https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2013/02/26/53691-171-klim-oshibok-ne-bylo-nado-vybrosit-etot-abzats-187-kak-stalin-pilsudskogo-pobedil

> paragraph', -- he patiently explained on the margins of Voroshilov's text. (J. Stalin. Works, vol. 17. "Severnaia Korona," 2004, p. 326)

This specific edition of Stalin's Collected Works is not easy to locate! But I managed to do so. Here is what is stated there:

> Надпись на черновике статьи К.Е. Ворошилова "Сталин и Красная Армия" (декабрь 1929 года):
>
> Клим! Ошибок не было. Надо выбросить этот абзац. Ст.
>
> Военно-исторический архив. 1997. Вып. 1. С. 221.
>
> ПРИМЕЧАНИЕ
>
> Речь идет об утверждении Ворошилова, что "у И.В. Сталина ошибок было меньше, чем у других."
>
> Inscription on the draft of the article by K.E. Voroshilov, "Stalin and the Red Army (December 1929).
>
> Klim! There were no mistakes. Cut this paragraph. St.
>
> Voenno-istoricheskii Arkhiv. 1997. Issue 1, p. 221.
>
> NOTE
>
> The subject is Voroshilov's assertion that "Stalin had fewer errors than the others."

The contents of this issue of *Voenno-istoricheskii Arkhiv* are exactly the same as those of *Voennye Arkhivy Rossii*! Once again it's the "Spravka" (Report) of the Shvernik Commission. We have already seen that Kotkin cites this one document repeatedly in his footnotes in a half-dozen different publications, as though these were different sources.[3]

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[3] In the authoritative edition of this work, in RKEB 2, the passage is on page 709.

So this is a circular, and therefore dishonest, citation. There is no source, and therefore no verification – it is all hearsay, rumor. Hearsay does not become more "truthful" when repeated in various sources, and in this case it's all the *same* source.

Conclusion: There is no evidence that Stalin ever wrote these words on a draft of Voroshilov's article. Indeed, it seems likely that he did not, for if he did, why has the page that – allegedly – Khmelnitsky saw, not been reproduced, or its archival identifiers cited? Or, why are we not told when, where, and to whom Khmelnitsky allegedly made this remark?

And how can Kotkin accept this kind of stuff as evidence in a serious work of history?

Stalin Was No Dictator: Contested Elections

> With Stalin's primary aim accomplished, the plenum switched gears. Zhdanov had reported (February 26) on the upcoming elections by secret ballot to party posts (for May), a way to mobilize pressure from below against sitting officials, as well as elections to soviets. "We lack the habits of direct elections and secret ballots," he admitted. One plenum attendee, trying to convey the immensity of the organizational undertaking, reminded the plenum of the 1917 vote for the Constituent Assembly. Stalin pointed out that the class enemy could be elected, especially given that some collective farms had no Communist party members. "Keep in mind that our country has two million Communists and a 'bit more' non-party people," Zhdanov noted of the scores of millions of non-party adults.[74] He even alluded to the days when Bolshevism had had to survive in the underground.[75] **It was a surreal discussion: no one was forcing the monopoly regime to stage competitive elections by secret ballot.** (368)

Here is an interesting and important matter! Stalin and the Party leadership were promoting "competitive elections by secret ballot." The most obvious interpretation of this fact is that Stalin and the Party leadership did *not* want dictatorship. Rather, they wanted a form of representative democracy similar to that in many capitalist states.

Surely this is worthy of some comment. Yet Kotkin – who concedes the fact – makes none! This is *bias by omission*. For Stalin had in fact been promoting the desirability of contested elections by secret ballot to be guaranteed in the new Constitution. What's more, Stalin and his supporters in the leadership had been campaigning for contested elections with the Central Committee.

This is the central point of discussion in Russian historian Yuri Zhukov's book *Inoi Stalin*, "A Different Stalin," (2002), which Kotkin cites a half-dozen times in his footnotes. Therefore, Kotkin knows that Stalin had been championing the principle of secret, contested elections for several years.

But Kotkin conceals this from his readers. No doubt he does so because this fact undermines the Anti-Stalin Paradigm, according to which Stalin must be a "dictator" or, in Kotkin's absurd term, a "despot." After all, what kind of dictator mounts a determined struggle for secret, contested elections – and then *loses* that struggle?

Kotkin:

> In December 1937, the USSR held elections for the new bicameral Supreme Soviet, a permanent body to replace the Congress of Soviets. There were 569 seats in the soviet of the Union and 574 in the soviet of nationalities, both elected on the basis of universal suffrage.[216] **The provision for multiple candidates had been unceremoniously dropped.**[217] (471)

Note 216 (1005): The Soviet of Nationalities was to be filled by representatives of the union and the

autonomous republics without regard to their size or population.

Note 217 (1005): Pavlova, "1937." As one soldier in the Soviet Far East aptly commented, according to an NKVD report, "So Stalin says that's the way it will be and then everything is democratic." Merritt, "Great Purges," 168.

Pavlova's long article concludes that the contested elections, even if held, could not have led to a change of power. But that, of course, is not the point. Elections in capitalist countries do not put the capitalist system "up for grabs." Pavlova does not mention this fact. Likewise, under the secret, contested elections that Stalin and his supporters envisaged, the socialist system would not have been put at risk. The winners, even if non-communists, would certainly not have been allowed to restore capitalism.

"Merritt" is a Ph.D. dissertation done under Arch Getty's direction in 2000. It is a very interesting study! At this point Merritt is examining some documents concerning the nationwide discussion about the proposed Constitution which was encouraged and which actually took place throughout the whole USSR. However, the soldier's cynical remark, quoted by Merritt, was not at all "apt." For Stalin really did support secret, contested elections.

In *Inoi Stalin* Zhukov explains, using primary source evidence, how Stalin and his supporters in the central leadership, including Malenkov, Molotov, and Zhdanov, failed to persuade the Central Committee of the desirability of secret, contested elections. *Zhukov identifies the exact time and place Stalin capitulated* – in Stalin's office on the evening of October 11, 1937.

So why does Kotkin not inform his readers of this fact? Undoubtedly because it does not fit the "Anti-Stalin Paradigm" – it contradicts the false, but obligatory, image of Stalin as "dictator."

As does the fact that *Stalin lost this struggle!* What kind of "dictator" supports democracy? And what kind of "dictator" loses a political struggle on a point so important to him?[4] In fact, the form

of representative democracy proposed by Stalin is both characteristic of that of Western capitalist societies, and yet *more* democratic than they.

Kotkin Omits Yakov Yakovlev's Confession

Yakov Yakovlev had been Commissar of Agriculture, and then played a very important role in drafting the 1936 Constitution, during which time he worked very closely with Stalin. Upon seeing the subhead above readers of Kotkin's book may turn to their copy and look for Yakovlev's confession in the index. It's not there. Kotkin never breaths a word about it.

Yet this document is one of the most important documents in the Lubianka 1937-1938 volume that Kotkin cites so often. In it Yakovlev not only confesses to being a member of the clandestine bloc of Rights and Trotskyites. Yakovlev also confesses to having been a Trotskyist "sleeper" in the Party, appointed by Trotsky in 1923 to drop all ties to Trotskyists and "bore from within." *Yakovlev also confesses to having been recruited by German intelligence because – as the German agent told him – the Germans were already working with Trotsky, and demanded to work with Yakovlev on the same basis.*

The charge that Trotsky was collaborating with Hitler's German government had been one of the main accusations at the First and Second Moscow Trials of August, 1936, and January, 1937. In service to the ASP this charge has long been dismissed as false, a fabrication by Stalin and a slander on Trotsky. Yakovlev's confession statement, as well as Stalin's comments on it, also recorded in the Lubianka 1937-1938 volume, comprise an important item in the mass of evidence we now possess that this charge against Trotsky is true.

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[4] A fuller discussion of this issue can be found in Grover Furr, "Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform" (two parts) in *Cultural Logic* (2005). At http://clogic.eserver.org/2005/furr.html and http://clogic.eserver.org/2005/furr2.html See also Furr, Yezhov vs. Stalin, Chapters 1 and 8.

Why does Kotkin omit all mention of this dramatic document? No doubt because, once again, it contradicts the ASP: the notion, accepted by all "right-thinking" historians, that Stalin "fabricated" all the charges against the Moscow Trials defendants and surely must have also fabricated the charge that Trotsky was conspiring with Hitler's Germany.

On pages 86-90 of my book *Yezhov vs. Stalin* and on pages 112-124 of *Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan* I study Yakovlev's confession in some detail. I include a translation of all the important sections, an analysis of Stalin's remarks on it, and a study of the evidence of Trotsky's collaboration with Hitler's Germany and militarist Japan.

Incidents in the February-March 1937 Central Committee Plenum

Kotkin devotes just a few pages to this very important, and very lengthy, Plenum. Those are worthy of study because of Kotkin's glaring falsifications and bias by omission.

Kotkin:

> Turar Ryskulov, an ethnic Kazakh candidate member of the Central Committee and the long-standing deputy chairman of the Council of People's Commissars for the Russian republic, quietly tried to persuade some plenum attendees to come to the defense of Rykov and Bukharin, but he could not manage to do so.[68] (387)
>
> Note 68 (992): Khaustov and Samuelson, *Stalin, NKVD*, 143.

Khaustov and Samuel'son do not have any evidence, not even an archival document, to support this statement. Kotkin just "takes their word for it."

Kotkin also fails to inform his readers that a few pages earlier (135) Khaustov and Samuel'son reveal that Ryskulov was arrested

in June, 1937, as a participant in the Rightist conspiracy. Ryskulov was named in a letter to Stalin of July 27, 1937, from L.I. Mirzoian, Secretary of the Kazakhstan Party, as a member of a "national-fascist organization. He was named in an interrogation-confession by P.T. Zubarev, who revealed some Socialist-Revolutionaries who were also in this conspiracy. Ryskulov features prominently in the confession of Khodzhaev, CC member and an official in the Uzbek SSR. O. IA. Nodev, head of the Turkmenistan NKVD, informed Stalin that Ryskulov was involved in a Trotskyist organization there.

All of this is in the volume Lubianka 1937-1938, which Kotkin often cites, though not about Ryskulov. (272; 283; 418; 463; 487) It explains Ryskulov's solicitousness for Rykov and Bukharin — they were leaders of the Rightist conspiracy of which he, Ryskulov, was a member. And once again, Kotkin fails to inform his readers about this.

Who Cares What You "Believe"?

A reader may think: "But probably Kotkin does not believe these accusations against Ryskulov were honest, and that's why he keeps quiet about them?" Once again, this is the *argument from incredulity*. What's "belief" got to do with it? A historian does not simply relate that information that s/he "believes." The historian's responsibility is to consider *all* the evidence in an objective manner, setting their own biases and preconceived ideas aside. Kotkin makes no attempt to do this, and it ruins his book.

Rykov's Words Invented

Kotkin:

> At the plenum (February 24), Rykov denied the scurrilous accusations and called the mockery of him "a savage thing," given that he was already effectively condemned to death (he pointed out that others had confessed and been shot anyway). (387)

This statement by Kotkin is completely false. Here is the passage in question:

> "Эта ответственность на мне есть, я ее не снимаю, ответственность огромная, ибо то, что произошло теперь в партии и в стране, оно свидетельствует отнюдь не о малом. И иметь больший позор, чем тот, что многие из этих людей делали эти отвратительные штуки, ориентируясь на меня, — это ужасная вещь.[5]
>
> "This responsibility is on me, I do not remove it. An enormous responsibility, because what has happened now in the party and in the country, is no small thing. And to have a greater shame than the fact that many of these people [who] were doing these hideous things, referring to me, is a terrible thing."

Kotkin actually purveys *two* falsehoods here.

* It is the "shame," not the accusations, that is the "terrible thing" (Kotkin translates it as "savage" – a mistranslation; savage is "dikii," not "uzhasnyi.").

* There is nothing here about Rykov's "pointing out that others had confessed and been shot anyway"!

Apparently Kotkin has simply invented this – made it up! But how are his readers to know, unless they check the footnotes, find Rykov's statement in the voluminous records of the February-March, 1937, Central Committee Plenum, and then read them – in Russian? They won't!

So this is a real swindle – the readers expect the truth; Kotkin gives them falsehoods. Is it "lying"? Let the reader decide.

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[5] *Voprosy Istorii*, 6-7 (1992) p. 17.

Concealing Stalin's Leniency Towards Bukharin

Kotkin:

> Stalin intervened at the plenum (February 27) to recommend a **seeming** middle ground whereby Bukharin and Rykov would not be immediately put on trial, but turned over to the NKVD for further "investigation." ...The pair spent the remainder of the proceedings at the Lubyanka inner prison while Stalin formed a special commission of the plenum to adjudicate their fate.[71] Bukharin's expulsion from the Central Committee and his disposition to the NKVD were duly upheld by the commission, whose members included Mikoyan (chairman), Maria Ulyanova, and Krupskaya.[72] (387)
>
> Note 71 (992): Kosheleva et al., "Materialy fevral'-martovskogo plenuma TsK VKP (b) 1937 goda," (1994, no. 1): 12–3. Stalin's recommendation was fixed in a formal plenum resolution on March 3: RGASPI, f. 17, op. 2, d. 577, l. 4 (l. 30–3 draft with corrections).
>
> Note 72 (992): "O partiinosti lits, prokhodivshikh po delu tak nazyvaemogo 'antisovetskogo pravotrotskitskogo bloka,'" 82–3; *Stranitsy istorii* (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1990), 18; Galumov, *Neizvestnye "Izvestiia,"* 185.

More "bias by omission." Kotkin cites Getty & Naumov, *The Road to Terror*, many times. But not here, though it would be helpful for his readers, since it is in English.

Getty and Naumov, 409-419, (and, in Russian, Pykhalov and Bobrov[6]) point out that Stalin did *not* "recommend a seeming

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[6] Igor' Pykhalov, Vladimir L. Bobrov, Íakir i Bukharin: Spletni i Dokumenty" [Yakir and

middle ground," as Kotkin falsely claims. Rather, *Stalin supported the most lenient punishment* for Bukharin and Rykov: not even imprisonment but only "internal exile" to some small city. Others, including some later convicted as conspirators, were for a trial or even for execution!

> In the initial polling of thirty-six members of the commission, six spoke for executing Bukharin and Rykov. Eight, including the particularly vituperative Postyshev and Shkiriatov, were for arresting and trying Bukharin and Rykov but for sentencing them to prison rather than to death. Sixteen members either expressed no opinion or their votes were not recorded.
>
> It is the remaining group that is especially intriguing. As the first draft indicates, five members were "for the suggestion of Comrade Stalin." But what was that suggestion? **In the original document, Stalin spoke against the death penalty, a prison sentence, or even a trial, and for the relatively lenient punishment of internal exile.** In the final version, Stalin's modified "suggestion" had become the final decision not to send them to trial but to turn the matter of Bukharin and Rykov over to the NKVD for further investigation. ... **This was the third time that Stalin had personally intervened to avoid unambiguously condemning Bukharin.** (Getty & Naumov, 416)

Kotkin *knows* that it was Stalin who wanted the most lenient punishment for Bukharin and Rykov. Yet Kotkin follows the paragraph above with this sentence: "Perhaps Stalin might now be satiated?" What dishonesty!

Bukharin: Rumors and Documents"], Chapter 6 in Pykhalov's book *Velikii obolgannyi vozhd'. Lozh' i pravda o Staline.* (Moscow: Yauza-Press, 2010), and online at multiple sites including http://www.duel.ru/publish/new/lit/stalin/yak.htm (For this site select Text Encoding Cyrillic-ISO; accessed 11.24.18).

Moreover, Stalin was out-voted and had to compromise. Some "dictator!"

What about the scholarly-looking archival identifier in note 71:

> RGASPI, f. 17, op. 2, d. 577, l. 4 (l. 30–3 draft with corrections).

Did Kotkin really see it? Probably not. A facsimile of this document is in Getty and Naumov, 414-415, and the document identified in note 45 on p. 412. All Kotkin had to do was to copy it down. Then – but only if he were unusually careful – he could have checked it against other sources such as Pykhalov and Bobrov, (see previous footnote), where the same document is reproduced and the same archival identifiers given.

So why give archival identifiers at all, when Kotkin could have simply said: "See Getty and Naumov, 414-5." Because they make his book look "scholarly"?

Finally: why does Kotkin write "a *seeming* middle way"? What was "seeming" – i.e., specious, unreal – about Stalin's proposal, the mildest and most lenient of all the proposals? We are forced to conclude that this is just a dishonest "cheap shot" by Kotkin.

The "Torture Telegram"

Kotkin:

> Stalin had some second thoughts. "The Central Committee has learned," he wrote in a telegram to all locales (January 10, 1939), "that the secretaries of provinces and territories, checking on the work of the local NKVD, have charged them with using physical means of interrogation against those arrested as if it were a crime." He informed them that the "physical methods" had been approved by "the Central Committee" and agreed to by "the Communist parties of all the republics" (whose leaders had almost all been shot as foreign agents and wreckers). "It is

known that all bourgeois intelligence services apply physical coercion with regard to representatives of the socialist proletariat, and in the ugliest forms," he stressed. "One might ask why the socialist intelligence service must be more humane with regard to inveterate agents of the bourgeoisie."[84] (595)

Note 84 (1022): Khaustov et al., Lubianka: Stalin i NKVD, 14–5 (APRF, f. 3, op. 58, d. 6, l. 145–6); Volkogonov papers, Hoover Institution Archives, container 27; Iakovlev et al., *Reabilitatsiia: Politicheskie protsessy*, 40–1 (**a copy of the telegram found in the Dagestan regional party committee**: all such documents had to be returned to the Central Committee, so this one evidently survived thanks to negligence); *Sluzhba bezopasnosti*, 1993, no. 6: 2; Afanas'ev, *Inogo ne dano*, 561–2n2 (wrong date of Jan. 20, 1939). Kaganovich later testified (in 1957) that Stalin had written out the decree by hand. Kovaleva et al., "Posledniaia 'antipartiinaia' gruppa," 86–9.

This shows either real incompetence, or real dishonesty – or both! -- on Kotkin's part. Years ago I put the archival copy of this document – this is the Volkogonov Papers reference – online.[7] You don't need to know Russian to notice a few things.

* In *Khrushchev Lied*, 330-331, I translate this document, with analysis showing that it *cannot* be from the "Dagestan regional party committee." Kotkin has misread the text and discussion in the book *Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich 1957*, 121-2, a book that he footnotes elsewhere, though not here. That suggests that *this* document may well have been a forgery. See the additional discussion in *Khrushchev Lied* 75-80 and 328-332, "28. 'Torture Telegram.'"

* Anyone can see that it is not signed by Stalin.

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[7] At https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/ShT_10_01_39.pdf

* There is a date on this supposed 1939 document of "8.II. 1956" – just prior to the XX Party Congress and Khrushchev's "Secret Speech," in which he attacked Stalin for this telegram.

* The document also carries a statement that "two additional copies were typed" on that date. That language suggests that this is also a copy. It looks like a copy. The typewriter type of the text and the date appear to be the same. Also what archivist would type directly on an archival copy of an important government document?

* The telegram is just mentioned, and one section of it quoted, in R-PP, 40-1. What's the point of citing this old, 1991 volume, published before the documents became available? Afanas'ev, *Inogo ne dano* (1988), 561-2 note 2, merely summarizes this telegram while falsely stating that it supports Gorbachev's October, 1987, statement that Stalin "knew about the illegal acts of the NKVD."

Once again, Kotkin's deception here is through *bias by omission*. For, just as Khrushchev did in his infamous "Secret Speech" to the XX Party Congress on February 25, 1956, Kotkin omits the boldfaced passage (below) from the telegram, which occurs immediately after "approved by 'the Central Committee'":

> At the same time it was stated that physical pressure is permitted as an exception and, in addition, only in relation to blatant enemies of the people who, taking advantage of the humane method of interrogation, stubbornly refuse to give up their co-conspirators; who refuse to confess for months; and who strive to slow down the discovery of conspirators who are still at large; and so continue their struggle against Soviet power even from prison. Experience has shown that this policy has produced results by greatly speeding up the exposure of enemies of the people. It is true that subsequently in practice the method of physical pressure was sullied by the scum Zakovsky, Litvin, Uspensky, and others, because they turned it from an

> exception into a rule and employed it against honest people who had been accidentally arrested. For these abuses, they have been duly punished. But this does not invalidate the method itself, insofar as it is employed correctly in practice. (*Khrushchev Lied*, 331)

Why did Khrushchev omit this passage? Because in it Stalin *limits the application* of "the use of physical pressure" *and* attacks Yezhov's NKVD men, identifying three of them by name, as "scum."

Khrushchev could get away with this — the full text of this "torture telegram" was not published until Gorbachev's day. We know Khrushchev was a liar and faker. What is to be said about Kotkin?

Was Mention of Krupskaia Banned from the Soviet Press?

Kotkin writes:

> As a member of the Central Committee, Krupskaya had approved the expulsions and death sentences of Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Bukharin.[119] With her death, Stalin had a chocolate factory named after her. Orders went out to the Soviet press: "Do not print another word about Krupskaya."[120]

To the Soviet press? Here is Kotkin's source:

> Note 120 (1023): 120. Zhukov, *Vsesoiuznoe soveshchanie*, 260.

This is a Khrushchev-era collection of essays intended to instruct Party historians how to discuss Soviet history in light of the attacks on Stalin and his former Politburo supporters Kaganovich, Molotov, Malenkov, and Voroshilov, at the XXII Party Congress in October, 1961.[8] In his "closing words" Petr Pospelov, a Khrushchev flunky, responded to a note from the audience:

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[8] *Vsesoiuznoe soveshchanie o merakh uluchshenia podgotovki nauchno-pedagogichesikh*

> The next note: "Why can't normal conditions for working in the Central Party Archive be arranged? They do not give out materials on the activities of the Party."

Pospelov's response was: "I have already answered this question." (298) Here he meant his answer to the previous question, in which he had referred the questioner to the documents of the XXII Party Congress.

So even these official Party historians were not allowed into the Party Archive! And today we understand why. The release of a flood of documents since the end of the Soviet Union 1991 has shown that the primary source documents in the Party Archive prove that Khrushchev and his men were lying. For example, we know now that Aleksandr Shelepin, a high-ranking Party official and former Chair of the KGB under Khrushchev, quoted Komandarm Iona Iakir's letter to Stalin white omitting the paragraphs in which Iakir admits to committing treason.

Is it true that, as Kotkin claims, "orders go out to the Soviet press" not to "print another word about Krupskaia"? Here is the passage from page 260, cited by Kotkin. This was spoken by Anna G. Kravchenko, who was editor of an adult-education magazine:

> When Nadezhda Konstantinovna died, she was buried with honors. As you will probably remember, the urn with her ashes was even carried onto Red Square by Stalin. But then, the next day, the chief of the publishing house of the People's Commissariat of Education came to me (I was then editor of the magazine "School for Adults") and said: "Do not print another word more about Krupskaia." (260)

So what Kotkin writes *isn't* true. *No* "orders went out to the Soviet press" not to print anything about Krupskaia. At most, an order

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kadrov po istoricheskim naukam. 18-21 dekabria 1962 g. M: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1964.

went out from a minor official to the editor of a minor journal of adult education.

Kotkin doesn't try to verify this statement – and he could have done so, because this journal, *Shkola vzroslykh*, is held by the University of Illinois at Urbana. But instead of checking it, Kotkin falsifies it, claiming that *the whole Soviet press* was ordered to keep silent about Krupskaia!

This is yet another of Kotkin's phony footnotes. His readers will not locate the Zhukov volume and check the reference, so they will never know. What's more, even Kotkin doesn't believe it, for in the very next footnote, number 121, we read:

> Nonetheless, Stalin would permit remembrance of the first anniversary of Krupskaya's death: see the news chronicle, RGAFKFD film 1–3163. (1023)

"German Political Refugees" Handed Over To The Nazis?

Kotkin writes:

> Stalin also had Beria extradite 4,000 German political refugees sought by the Nazis. Many were Jewish, and at least 1,000 were Communists. They and their family members would be handed over in ceremonies at the frontier bridge at Brest-Litovsk. Let Hitler expend the bullets. (695)

Kotkin's paragraph here is false in every detail.

Kotkin cites no evidence – not even phony evidence – for this claim. This anticommunist fairy-tale comes from Margarete Buber-Neumann, whose husband Hans Neumann had been arrested, convicted, and executed for participating in an anti-Soviet conspiracy. She survived World War II and wrote bitterly anticommunist books during the post-war period.

Buber-Neumann had quit the communist party before being extradited to Germany. So she was not a communist when the Soviets deported her.

One of those deported with Buber-Neumann was Betti Ol'berg, whose husband, Valentin Ol'berg, had been a defendant in the August 1936 First Moscow Trial, where he had admitted to plotting to assassinate Stalin. We now have much more evidence about him, and one confession by Betti Ol'berg herself, where she makes it clear that she knew what her husband had been planning.[9] It is interesting that she was not executed, possibly because she had cooperated with the investigation in 1936.

Wilhelm Mensing, an anticommunist German historian, has thoroughly researched this issue. I have put his German-language article online.[10] Here are a few sentences from Mensing's conclusion (translation by me, GF):

> "No '500 bitter opponents of Hitler' were deported to Germany ... a little over 300 [persons were deported] ..."
>
> "The Nazi regime did not punish most of those deported." "The deportations of 1939-1941 were not aimed at communists." "There is no indication that the [Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression] Pact was the motivation for the deportations."
>
> "There is no evidence that those deported from the USSR to Germany in 1939-1941 were persecuted there. On the contrary, there is evidence that some of them, including former communists, were not molested."

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[9] "Transcript of interrogation of Betti Ottovna Ol'berg of April 26, 1936. In *Politbi ͡u ͡ro i Lev Trot ͡s ͡kiĭ : (sbornik dokumentov), 1923-1940 gg*. Ed. Oleg Mozokhin. Prague: Sociosféra-CZ, 2013. Vol. 2, 239-40. This interrogation is *not* in the one-volume version of this collection, with the same title, published in Moscow by IstLit publishers in 2017.

[10] At https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/mensing.pdf

Kotkin claims that 4000 "German political refugees" were deported. The real number? 300! All those checked by Mensing had been convicted of some crime or other. This was part of a prisoner exchange between the Soviet Union and Germany.

Mensing's article was published in 2011, in plenty of time for Kotkin to have read it. Did he read it, and just decide not to inform his readers? Or is he ignorant of the whole issue – in which case he should not have written about it at all? Who knows?

The Katyn Massacre

Many of the falsehoods in Kotkin's book did not originate with him. Rather, Kotkin has simply lifted false accounts from other researchers. That is, Kotkin has not himself researched, or even verified, his accounts of many events in his book. Nevertheless, like any historian Kotkin is responsible for whatever he puts into his own book. He could, and should, have verified all the fact-claims nd checked all references.

One such event is the Katyn Massacre, the killing of thousands of Polish officers. In 1943 the Germans, abetted by the anticommunist London Polish Government In Exile, blamed this on the Soviets. In January, 1944, the Soviets blamed the Germans. In the last years of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev and his cronies decided to go along with the anticommunist and Polish nationalist line and blame Stalin and the Soviets. This is now the "official version."

Kotkin's version of "Katyn" is on pages 744-5. Kotkin repeats the "Soviets-did-it" version and cites only secondary sources. Kotkin cites no research of his own at all about Katyn, which has to mean that he has not done any. He simply ignores the research by Russian scholars who have been arguing for more than 20 years now that the "Soviets-did-it" version of Katyn is a fabrication.

One of the most prominent of these researchers is Professor Valentin Sakharov of Moscow University, author of a monumental study of "Testament of Lenin." In the first volume of his Stalin

biography Kotkin relies heavily on Sakharov's study, checks many of Sakharov's references, and concludes that Sakharov is correct – the so-called "Testament of Lenin" is indeed a forgery.

But here Kotkin ignores Sakharov's research on Katyn, which goes far to demolish the "Soviets-did-it" version. Kotkin repeats the Polish nationalist story that when asked about the Polish POWs Merkulov and Beria told somebody – one person named is Zygmunt Berling – "we made a big mistake with them." (795) Kotkin fails to inform his readers that Merkulov derisively denied this remark when under interrogation in 1953 (*Politbiuro i delo Beria*, 130).

"Katyn" is one of the most heavily falsified anticommunist horror-stories, and also one of the most influential. After years of studying Katyn and becoming more aware of the contradictions in the "official" version, I published a short article about it in 2013; a short book about it in 2015; and a much fuller book-length study in 2018.[11] Examining all the accounts of Katyn, including all those Kotkin cites and a great many more, was a fascinating task! The result is unequivocal: The Soviets could not possibly have killed the Poles. Therefore, the Germans did it. I refer the reader to my 2018 book.

Kotkin, however, has clearly never studied the Katyn issue. He just repeats the falsified version supported by Polish nationalists and by Mikhail Gorbachev. It is the only version acceptable to the Anti-Stalin Paradigm.

The Suicide of Stalin's Wife

Stalin's wife Nadezhda (Nadya) Allilueva committed suicide in 1932. This leads Kotkin, as it has other anticommunist falsifiers, to

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[11] "The 'Official' Version of the Katyn Massacre Disproven? Discoveries at a German Mass Murder Site in Ukraine." *Socialism and Democracy* 27, 2 (2013), 96-129; *Le massacre de Katyn. Une refutation de la version "officielle"?* Paris: Editions Delga, 2015; *The Mystery of the Katyn Massacre: The Evidence, the Solution.* Kettering, OH: Erythrós Press & Media LLC, 2018.

fabricate stories about supposed tensions between Stalin and his wife.

Kotkin:

> The effects of her exposure to the student milieu—**young women in the city selling themselves to make ends meet;** students with ties to the famine-stricken countryside—remain difficult to gauge. She kept an emotional distance.[317] (109)

Note 317 (936) has nothing remotely related to "young women selling themselves." So this remark is a "cheap shot." And weren't young women selling themselves in every city in the capitalist world in 1932? Only in note 321, on page 936, does Kotkin tell us that Nadya had "several times threatened to commit suicide." In this footnote Kotkin quotes from Vladimir Alliluev's book (see below) that her suicidal threats were caused by headaches, due to a disease of the cranial sutures, not from any tension with her husband.

Though Kotkin cites Vladimir Alliluev's book on Stalin's family, he does not mention the passage where Alliluev says that Stalin and Nadya "loved each other."

> В нашей-то семье знали, что Надежда и Сталин любили друг друга.
>
> But in our family we knew that Nadezhda and Stalin loved each other.

Stalin and his wife raised Artem Sergeev, orphan of a Bolshevik hero, in his household as one of their own children. Sergeev wrote about Nadya's migraines and how, in his view, they caused her to commit suicide.[12] He says that Nadya had been looking forward to

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[12] Artem Sergeev, Ekaterina Glushik. *Besedy o Staline.* Moscow: Krymskii Most 9-D Forum, 2006, 38.

life after graduation. Kotkin cites Sergeev's book (1107) but ignores what Sergeev wrote about Stalin's wife and her death.

Kotkin gives no evidence at all for this statement:

> Svetlana's subsequent account, **unreliable in most respects**, rightly surmised that her father "was too intelligent not to know that people always commit suicide to punish someone." [348] (112)

Svetlana Allilueva's memoirs are indeed not reliable on a number of topics that can be checked. But this statement is not even a fact-claim, only a subjective assessment. What's it doing here? Evidently, its purpose for Kotkin is to make it seem as though there was hostility between Stalin and his wife.

Kotkin does include the following anecdote that shows Stalin's strong love for his wife and attacks Svetlana Allilueva's credibility, though he buries it in a footnote:

> One of his bodyguards recalled late in life that Stalin would sit for long periods at Nadya's grave at Moscow's Novodevichy Cemetery. Svetlana asserted that her father never visited the grave. Stalin (film by Thames Television, London, 1990); Alliluyeva, *Twenty Letters*, 113. (Note 348, page 937)[13]

But then Kotkin continues with another falsehood:

> Some writers have asserted that a copy of Ryutin's appeal denouncing her husband was found in Nadya's room. Radzinsky, *Stalin*, 296 (quoting a Vlasik interview with N. Antipenko); Rayfield, *Stalin and his Hangmen*, 239–40. (937)

There is no evidence for this at all in Rayfield, who just asserts it on page 240 of his book. Eduard Radzinsky, whose biography of

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[13] Sergeev, 39, also testifies to Stalin's weeping and deep sadness at his wife's death.

Stalin (Russian edition, as used by Kotkin), has no evidence for this claim either:

> Начальник личной охраны Сталина генерал Власик в беседе с историком Н. Антипенко рассказал: «Надежда принесла домой из Промакадемии и показала Сталину подброшенное ей на занятиях рютинское обращение к партии, где Сталина именовали агентом, провокатором и прочее."

> Further, the commander of Stalin's bodyguard, N. Vlasik, told the historian Dr. N. Antipenko that Nadezhda once brought home and showed to Stalin a copy of Ryutin's appeal to the Party which had been slipped to her in a class at the Industrial Academy, and in which Stalin was called an "agent provocateur" and much else.

But Vladimir Alliluev, whose book, *Khronika odnoi sem'i* (Story of one family) Kotkin cites five times, wrote this:

> А вот версия о том, что на тумбочке в спальне Надежды лежал экземпляр "Платформы Рютина," который ей мог дать сам Сталин, вполне убедительна. (31)

> But the story that on the nightstand in Nadezhda's bedroom there lay a copy of the "Riutin Platform," **which Stalin himself may well have given to her**, is fully convincing.

Kotkin ignores this statement, though it directly addresses the issue Kotkin himself has raised. Evidently Kotkin does not wish to portray Stalin as either a loving husband or a person who would give his wife Opposition literature that contained bitter attacks on himself.

Chapter 11a. Miscellaneous Falsehoods, Continued

Trotsky Lied! Stalin – Not So Much

> From remote Prinkipo, his [Leon Trotsky's] exposure of the Soviet regime's lies reverberated around the world—and inside Stalin's office.[19] (13)

Kotkin has no evidence that there were such "lies" or that Trotsky "exposed" them. In reality it was Trotsky, not Stalin, who was lying. [1]Trotsky claimed that Stalin was lying but not a single one of his claims has been proven to be true. (We have discussed the contents of note 19 in Chapter Four).

Who "Violated the Versailles Treaty"?

> Secret military cooperation with Germany, in violation of the Versailles Treaty, had been under way for years. (21)

Germany did indeed violate the Versailles Treaty. But unlike Germany, Soviet Russia / USSR was not a signatory to the Versailles Treaty and so was not bound by its provisions. Therefore, Soviet Russia did not violate it.

Most of Kotkin's readers will not know this. He should have explained it to them. Why didn't he? In order to give the (false) impression that Soviet Russia (after December 30, 1922, the USSR) had also violated it?

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[1] See Furr, Trotsky's 'Amalgams', and Furr, Trotsky's Collaboration.

Was the Shakhty Trial A Frame-up?

> In conspiring with the dictator to manufacture the 1928 Shakhty trial, Yevdokimov had become an all-Union star (and in 1930 would receive his fourth Order of the Red Banner).[81] (23)
>
> Note 18 (914): 81. Papchinskii and Tumshis, *Shchit, raskolotii mechom*, 208–9.

Even Papchinskii and Tumshis – the very source that Kotkin cites here -- say that Stalin believed this was a real conspiracy:

> Изучив документы, Сталин объявил: «Для меня ясно, что мы имеем дело с людьми, сознательно срывающими производство, но для меня не ясно, кто ими руководит.[2]
>
> After examining the documents, Stalin declared: "It's clear to me that we are dealing with people who deliberately disrupt production, but it's not clear to me who is leading them.

How Many Specialists Sentenced?

> Thousands of specialists had been sentenced.[254] ... He [Stalin] had also written to Molotov "that two or three dozen wreckers from the [finance commissariat] must be executed." He wanted them linked to the rightists, adding that "a whole group of wreckers in the meat industry must definitely be shot and their names published in the press."[256] (50)
>
> Note 254 (919): "254. **An estimated 3,000 engineers** had been **arrested** in the Donbass in 1928–29. "Over the last several years we liquidated counterrevolutionary

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[2] Tumshis, Papchinskii. *1937 – Bol'shaia chistka. NKVD protiv ChK.* (M: Yauza, 2009), 195. This is the updated version of the book *Shchit, rakolotii mechom* (2001). Kotkin cites this book on page 1112, col. 3.

> organizations almost in every sphere of the economy," the OGPU reported in May 1930. Sevost'ianov et al., *Sovershenno sekretno*, VIII/ii: 1140 (TsA FSB, f. 2, op. 8, por. 435, l. 169–241)."

Kotkin writes two falsehoods here. First, the text says "sentenced" but the footnotes says "arrested." Not the same thing! Second, the last line of this document Kotkin cites from Sevost'ianov (which is online at http://istmat.info/node/27045) reads thus:

> За последние два года мы ликвидировали контрреволюционные организации почти во всех областях народного хозяйства — уголь, транспорт, тяжелая металлургия, золотая промышленность, военная промышленность и т.п.
>
> Over the past two years we have eliminated counter-revolutionary organizations in almost all areas of the national economy — coal, transport, heavy metallurgy, the gold industry, the military industry, and so on.

There is no mention of any "estimate" of "3,000 engineers." Evidently Kotkin invented this large number.

Begging the Question … Again

> On October 2, 1930, Mężyński sent Stalin interrogation materials relating to a clandestine Industrial Party. "To the OGPU, comrade Mężyński. In person only. From Stalin," the dictator wrote back, specifying the exact content of the conspiracies and demanding corroborating testimony, which, if extracted, "will be a serious victory for the OGPU." **Stalin either believed or made it appear that he believed in the fabrications**, instructing Mężyński's interrogators to ascertain: "1) Why was the [foreign military] intervention in 1930 put off? 2) Is it because Poland was not ready? 3) Perhaps because Romania was not ready? 4) Perhaps because the Baltic states and Romania have not yet come to terms with Poland? 5) Why have they put off the attack to 1931? 6)

> Might they put it off to 1932?" Stalin added that the confessions would be made available to "the workers of the world. We shall launch as broad a campaign as possible against interventionists and thwart them in their attempts for the next one or two years, which is of great significance to us. (54)
>
> Note 277 (920): "277. Khaustov et al., *Lubianka: Stalin i VChK*, 256–7 (TsA FSB, f. 2, op. 9, d. 388, l. 270–1: Oct. 1930); *Kommunist*, 1990, no. 11: 99–100 (RGASPI, f. 558, op. 1, d. 5276); Kosheleva, *Pis'ma Stalina Molotovu*, 187–8; Lih et al., *Stalin's Letters to Molotov*, 195–6.

Kotkin cites *no* evidence that the Industrial Party trial was a "fabrication." No wonder – no such evidence exists. Kotkin simply *assumes* that – when he should prove it. This is the logical fallacy known as "begging the question."

The fact that Stalin believed the charges is itself evidence, though not primary source evidence. An English translation of the trial transcript, including the final statements of those accused (157 ff.) is *Wreckers on Trial.* Ed. Andrew Rothstein (New York: Workers Library, Printed in England, 1931). The testimony in the trial *is* primary source evidence.

"30,000 Heads Of Households Executed"??

> All told, around 5 million people were "dekulakized"—by the police, by their fellow peasants, or by choosing to flee, with an untold number perishing during deportation or not long after. **Up to 30,000 heads of households were summarily executed.** (75)

The nearest footnote is note 42 (924):

> 42. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 9, l. 138. On Feb. 25, 1931, the politburo resolved by telephone poll to recommend that during the course of six months the OGPU "prepare" kulak settlements for 200,000–300,000 families near Karaganda in northern Kazakhstan. Khaustov et al.,

> *Lubianka: Stalin i VChK,* 263 (APRF, f. 3, op. 30, d. 149, l. 51).

Kotkin's statement here is simply false. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 9, l. 138 is a page from the February 25, 1931 Politburo meeting.[3] There is *nothing* in it, or in the document on page 263 of the Khaustov collection cited, *about any executions at all* -- much less of 30,000 people, much less of heads of households. The document published in Khaustov, 263, is online here, together with explanatory notes: http://istmat.info/node/45960

… And the Falsehoods Keep On Comin'

> … For a time, urgent requests for cheap "kulak" laborers skyrocketed, but sites that had large numbers of the deported often begged not to be sent any more: **the ones they had were just dying**. RGASPI, f. 17, op. 120, d. 26, l. 37 (Kuznetskstroi); Viola, *Unknown Gulag,* 4.

There is *nothing* in this document about *anyone* dying, either those already there or anybody else.

This document - RGASPI, f. 17, op. 120, d. 26, l. 37 – is online at http://istmat.info/node/37271 It is a request from the chief at Kuznetskstroi not to send any more families of *spetsposelentsy* (exiles), since they do not have the means to house, feed, or clothe them. Kulaks and their families might be *spetsposelentsy,* but there's nothing here about "kulaks" or "laborers" here.

And – most significantly – it says nothing about anybody "dying." Kotkin evidently invented this too.

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[3] See https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/lesnoy-eksport-sssr-v-kontse-1920-h-nachale-1930-h-gg-i-konkurentsiya-na-evropeyskom-rynke

"Charged"? Or Just Arrested?

> [In 1930-31] More than 3,000 former tsarist officers in Kharkov, Kiev, Moscow, and Leningrad were **charged with conspiracy and espionage.**[66] (77)

n.66 (925)

66. Artizov et al., *Reabilitatsiia: kak eto bylo*, II: 671–788; *Z arkhiviv VUChK, GPU, NKVD, KGB*, no. 1, issue 18 (2002): 209; Khaustov, *Lubianka: Stalin i VChK*, 212–3 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 7, l. 188, 192); Zdanovich, *Organy*, 423–31. The main scholarly authority, who provides a list of names while admitting the impossibility of establishing exact figures, writes that as many as 10,000 officers might have been arrested and sentenced. Tynchenko, *Golgofa*, 242, 248–311. See also Berkhin, *Voennaia reforma*, 261.

Artizov et al. is the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission of 1963 – the entire text. This is the text that Kotkin should have cited always, but which he in fact seldom does. The number of 3000 *arrests* of former Tsarist officers is on page 729. It does not state that the officers were "charged," much less with what. Zdanovich, *Organy*, does not cite *any* figure for the number of officers arrested.

"Tynchenko" — really "Tinchenko" — lists several hundred officers who were arrested. In section 2 ("razdel II") he usefully reprints confession interrogations of a number of them. Confessions of guilt are *prima facie* evidence of guilt – they can never be evidence of innocence, though Kotkin implies that these officers were innocent. What government would not arrest officers who were plotting against it? Tinchenko claims that "no fewer than 10,000 persons" were repressed, but he lists only a few hundred. (Tinchenko, "Vmesto predislovia," p. 3).

Berkhin's book is titled *Military Reform in the USSR 1924-1925*. Naturally, it says nothing about the matter Kotkin is discussing here –

the arrests of officers in 1930-1. So this is yet another phony reference.[4]

"10,000 Demonstrators"? Or "X Demonstrators"?

> Ten thousand demonstrators ransacked the party and police buildings ("Toss the Communists . . . out the window"). Stalin dispatched Kaganovich, who mobilized local party agitators to speak with workers and himself heard out their grievances.[205] (95)
>
> Note 205 (931): 205. Davies, *Crisis and Progress*, 188–91 (citing APRF, f. 3, op. 22, d. 39, l. 6–7).

This is a falsehood. Davies says nothing about any "ten thousand demonstrators" or *any* number of demonstrators. Nor does he cite the document from APRF. In fact, Kotkin appears to have simply copied this from Khlevniuk, *Khoziain*, page 93, which covers the same events and cites the same APRF document that Kotkin cites here. But Khlevniuk says nothing about any ten thousand demonstrators either. Did Kotkin even read this archival document? Or did he just find it in Khlevniuk's book and cite it *as though* he had read it?

One-Third the Casualties – And Then There Was The Famine

> More than 126,000 forced laborers did the work [on the Belomor Canal], almost entirely without machines, and **probably at least 12,000 died doing so,** while orchestras played in the background. (134)

Kotkin gives no evidence for this figure of "at least 12,000 **died doing so.**" No wonder! To be sure, the main source gives the figure as 12,318 – 1438 in 1931, 2010 in 1932, 8870 in 1933. See A.I. Kokurin, IU. N Morukov, eds. *Stalinskie Stroiki GULAGA 1930 – 1953.*

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[4] Page 261 of Berkhin's book states briefly that, during 1924, 2201 officers and employees of the former White armies left military service and thousands of new officers were trained.

Dokumenty. [Stalinist GULAG Construction] Moscow: MDF – "Materik" 2005, 33-4.

However, 1932-33, the years with the higher casualties, were the years of the great famine throughout the USSR (not only, or even mainly, in the Ukraine, as Ukrainian nationalists claim). These years had the highest mortality rates throughout the USSR, including in the camps.

So the prisoners did *not* die "doing so" – that is, from poor or brutal conditions of work. They died from famine and from disease, as well as from other, natural causes.

The orchestras were part of the cultural and educational programs for prisoners. I have not found similar cultural activities for American prisoners during this period. In fact, a big issue in the USA at the time was the brutal conditions and high mortality in "chain gangs." And compare the horrendous – in fact, fascist – abuse and murder of black prisoners in the USA after the Civil War discussed by Douglas Blackmon.[5]

But Kamenev Didn't Say That ...

> From the rostrum they issued self-flagellating calls for "unity," with Kamenev defending Stalin's personal dictatorship (in contrast to his bold denunciation of it back at the 14th Party Congress).[184]

This is about Kamenev's speech to the 17th Party Congress in January, 1934. But Kamenev said nothing about "Stalin's personal dictatorship," or anything like it, in this speech, which is on line at http://www.hrono.ru/vkpb_17/20_7.html

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[5] Douglas Blackmon. *Slavery By Another Name. The Re-enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II.* New York: Anchor Books, Random House, 2008. See too the excellent web page at http:// http://www.slaverybyanothername.com/

Maybe There Should Have Been *No* Scrutiny?

> Local party head Eihe was empowered to approve executions on his own from September through November.[17] (190)
>
> Note 17 (959): "17. Khaustov et al., Lubianka: Stalin i VChK, 566 (APRF, f. 3, op. 58, d. 246, l. 1: Sept. 2, 1934); Khaustov and Samuelson, Stalin, NKVD, 70; RGASPI, f. 17, op. 162, d. 17, l. 31; Khlevniuk et al., Stalinskoe politbiuro, 19, 58–66."

Only the last citation, from *Stalinskoe politbiuro*, refers to this authority given to Eikhe. Here are the references. First, the authority is granted to the judicial troikas to use the death penalty against "armed banditism":

> № 53
>
> Постановление Политбюро по вопросу Ягоды
>
> 11 августа 1933 г.
>
> 116/102. - Вопрос т. Ягоды.
>
> Временно разрешить по делам о вооруженном бандитизме предоставить право судебным тройкам ПП ОГПУ Украины, СКК, НВК, Белоруссии, Казакстана, Урала и Зап. Сибирского края применять к организаторам и бандитскому активу ВЫСШУЮ МЕРУ НАКАЗАНИЯ.
>
> РЦХИДНИ. Ф. 17. Оп. 162. Д. 15. Л. 27.
>
> Протокол № 143. (64)
>
> Politburo Resolution on Yagoda's question
>
> August 11, 1933
>
> 116/102. - Question of com. Yagoda.
>
> In cases of armed banditry temporarily permit assignment to judicial troikas of the OGPU of Ukraine, the

Northern Caucasus Region, the Lower Volga Region,Belorussia, Kazakhstan, the Urals and the Western Siberian region of the right to apply to the organizers and the gangster asset the HIGHEST MEASURE OF PUNISHMENT.

RTSKHIDNI. F. 17. Op. 162. D. 15. L. 27.

Protocol number 143.

Next, authority is given to Robert I. Eikhe, First Secretary of Western Siberia, to allow, or not to allow, the death penalty during September and October of 1934:

№ 55

Постановление Политбюро по телеграмме Молотова

19 сентября 1934 г.

51. - Телеграмма т. Молотова от 19.IX.

Принять предложение т. Молотова: предоставить т. Эйхе право давать санкцию на высшую меру наказания в Западной Сибири **в течение сентября и октября месяцев 1934 г.**

РЦХИДНИ. Ф. 17. Оп. 162. Д. 17. Л. 43.

Протокол № 14.(65)

Resolution of the Politburo by Molotov's telegram

September 19, 1934

51. - Telegram by com. Molotov from 19.IX.

Accept the proposal of com. Molotov: give com. Eikhe the right to permit the death penalty in Western Siberia **during September and October of 1934.**

RTSKHIDNI. F. 17. Op. 162. D. 17. L. 43.

Protocol number 14.

For some reason – carelessness? – Kotkin says that Eikhe's authority to approve executions (or, of course, to *dis*approve them -- but Kotkin fails to point this out) ran "from September through November." But the document he cites, the second one above, clearly says "during September and October of 1934" (the boldfaced words).

Since When Does "Sabotage" Equal "Terrorism"?

On the plenum's eve, resistance to Stakhanovism had been designated as terrorism.[234] (278)

Note 234 (978): 234. Damage of machinery while operating it as well as the production or supply of poor quality goods became crimes of sabotage too. Andreyev gave the main report, for which he had been copiously supplied with NKVD materials on 'sabotage" of the Stakhanovite movement. Other speakers cited cases of anti-Stakhanovite 'sabotage" in their regions. Davies et al., Years of Progress, 171–2 (citing RGASPI, f. 73, op. 1, d. 141, l. 205; f. 17, op. 2, d. 561, l. 32: Ryndin); Pravda, December 29, 1935.

It is false – and a gross distortion of Davies' text – to claim, as Kotkin does, that "resistance to Stakhanovism" was "designated as terrorism." Here is the passage from Davies that Kotkin cites:

Davies, *Years of Progress*, p. 171:

> Andreev, a secretary of the party central committee and Politburo member, in preparing for the central committee plenum of December 21–25, at which he gave the keynote speech, was supplied with a considerable amount of NKVD material on the resistance of "conservative and counter-revolutionary elements" to the Stakhanov movement. The material indicates that by December hundreds of **cases of sabotage** had already been discovered or concocted. The NKVD used the following headings to describe resistance to Stakhanovism: deliberate damage of the equipment of

> Stakhanovites; creation of unfavourable conditions for their work (including supplying them with poor-quality tools and materials, and allocating inappropriate personnel to Stakhanovite work-teams); illegal reduction of rates for the job and increases of norms; "deception" by economic agencies (this obviously refers to inaccurate reports); "counterrevolutionary agitation against Stakhanovite methods"; **terror against Stakhanovites.**[40]

The main point is opposition to sabotage, not terrorism. Sabotage was *not* to be considered terrorism; terrorism – murdering Stakhanovites – is listed last.

If Only Kotkin Were As Truthful As Stalin!

> Stalin was a liar, a chameleon, who talked out of both sides of his mouth and often said what interlocutors wanted to hear. (309)

But Kotkin cites no evidence here. In fact, Kotkin has *no evidence anywhere* in this massive book even of *a single lie* of Stalin's, *or* of Stalin "talking out of both sides of his mouth," *or* of Stalin saying – even once – "what interlocutors wanted to hear"!

This remarkable fact can only be explained in one way: that *Kotkin could not find even a single example of a genuine lie by Stalin.* For it he had found even one, surely he would have included it in his book. Wouldn't he?

A "Scuffle" Is Not The Same As "A Punch In The Face"

> He [Stalin] had stressed the work of "checking up by punching people in the face" (September 2, 1930).[48] (441)
>
> Note 48 (1000): 48. Lih et al., *Stalin's Letters to Molotov*, 210–1.

This is the English translation of the Stalin-Molotov letters. Why doesn't Kotkin quote from the original Russian edition, which he lists it in his bibliography? (p. 1092, col. 3)

Here, perhaps, is the reason. The English edition reads:

> In my opinion, the leadership of Gosbank and Finance has to be replaced with people from the OGPU and the Worker-Peasant Inspection once these latter bodies have conducted some inspecting and **checking up by punching people in the face.** (Letter 63, 9/2/1930).

But the Russian edition – the original -- reads:

> Придется, по-моему, обновить верхушку Госбанка и Наркомфина за счет ОГПУ и РКИ после того, как эти последние органы проведут там **проверочно-мордобойную работу.**
>
> ... after these last bodies carry out **the work of a fight for verification** there.

The word *mordoboi* here clearly means a "fight," meaning a sharp struggle. What it does *not* mean, as used here by Stalin, is "punching people in the face," though this is the literal meaning.[6] The persons who were replaced were the heads of Gosbank, Briukhanov and Piatakov. Nobody was literally "punched in the face."

Stalin's Grandson Evgenii

> Stalin never recognized Yevgeny as his grandson.[140] (523)
>
> Note 140 (1012): "140. Galina would later deny that this was her half-brother: V. Nechaev, "Vnuchka Stalina "o belykh piatniakh v istorii svoei sem'i," *Argumenty i fakty*, Nov. 3, 1999."

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[6] See the definitions in the "Dictionary of Synonyms" at https://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/dic_synonims/81034/мордобой

Kotkin's own source states that it was not Stalin but Galina Dzhugashvili, Yevgeny's step-sister, who refused to recognize Yevgeny as her father's son and therefore Stalin's grandson. This is what the source in Kotkin's footnote in *Argumenty i Fakty* – a rumor-mongering publication and a completely unreliable source – says.

According to the Russian Wikipedia page on Evgenii Dzhugashvili, Stalin was pleased with Ol'ga Golysheva, Yakov's partner.

> Ольге Сталин был вроде бы рад. Алексей Пиманов в своей книге «Сталин. Трагедия семьи» однозначно утверждает, что «на этот раз выбор сына одобрил и отец. Он распорядился даже выделить молодым небольшую квартиру в центре Москвы."[5]

Stalin was, apparently, happy with Olga. Alexey Pimanov in his book "Stalin. The tragedy of a family" unequivocally asserts that "this time the father also approved the choice of the son. He even arranged for the young people to be given a small apartment in the center of Moscow."

So why does Kotkin say it was *Stalin* who refused to recognize his grandson, when in fact it was Evgenii's *step-sister* who refused to do so? Because it makes Stalin appear "mean"? Something like that, perhaps.

All Soviet Workers And Their Families Starved To Death!

> A Soviet worker needed to labor for sixty-two hours to purchase a loaf of bread, versus about seventeen minutes for an American ... (544)

Sometimes Kotkin's zeal to make the USSR during the 1930s look very bad goes off the rails completely. As here.

Kotkin cites no evidence for this statement. No wonder – it cannot possibly be true. It would mean that a Soviet worker could work six ten-hour days plus two hours more, and still only earn *one loaf of*

bread. All the Soviet workers and their children would have starved to death very quickly!

Win The Battle Or Be Killed By The NKVD?

> To be sure, failure for Zhukov at the Halha River[against the Japanese] could have meant death in NKVD cellars.[160] But then again, that was true for every Soviet commander.
>
> Note 160 (1032): "160. Erickson, *Soviet High Command*, 522."

But that is not what Erickson wrote.

> Zhukov could have had no illusions about this assignment; failure was out of the question. To win and win decisively, even spectacularly, would alone suffice." (Erickson, 522)

Erickson says nothing about "death in NKVD cellars," "true for every Soviet commander," etc. In fact, there is not a single example in Soviet history of a commander being executed because he failed to win a battle.

Did Stalin Say That Nazi Germany Had Become "Objectively Progressive"?

> Stalin further stated in the Little Corner that "the division of capitalist states into fascist and democratic no longer makes sense." Such a division had never held much meaning for him even when, in 1935, he had allowed the Comintern to announce a popular front against **fascism, which, in the form of Nazi Germany, had become objectively progressive**: "Hitler, without understanding it or desiring it, is shaking and undermining the capitalist system."[176]
>
> Note 178 (1033): 176. Banac, *Diary of Georgi Dimitrov*, 115–6 (Sept. 7, 1939).

This passage reads as follows:

> —Before the war, opposing a democratic regime to fascism was entirely correct.
>
> —During war between the imperialist powers that is now incorrect.
>
> —The division of capitalist states into fascist and democratic no longer makes sense.
>
> —The war has precipitated a radical change.
>
> —Yesterday's United Popular Front served to ease the position of slaves under a capitalist regime.
>
> —Under conditions of an imperialist war, the prospect of the annihilation of slavery arises!

Nothing in this passage says or implies the absurd notion that "fascism ... has become objectively progressive."

Moreover, Stalin was right in an important way. World War II so weakened the imperialist powers that, during the 1940s through the 1970s, every colony of every imperialist power got independence. Those who won it by fighting, such as the Chinese and Vietnamese, did so against repression so vicious from the "freedom-loving" Western imperialists that the violence far outdid anything that the Soviet bloc countries had even been accused of, much less actually done. Other colonies, like Algeria (France) and Kenya (Great Britain) endured massive torture campaigns and massacres of noncombatants by the "free world" imperialists. And they were outdone in violence, terror, and torture by the US war in Vietnam.

These anti-imperialist victories did not lead to the achievement of egalitarian communist societies. But they *did* mean an end of the domination by Eastern (Japan) and Western (US, Belgian, French, British, Dutch, Italian) imperialist powers. To that extent, at least, Stalin was correct.

NKVD "Quotas" Again?

> Despite people's evasions and self-misrepresentations, the NKVD—full of half-educated people—amassed a stunning amount of operational information, seizing local archives and personnel files, and using censuses and tax registers, to enumerate the entire population politically. The NKVD locked factory gates with the workers inside until registrations were complete, and put the onus on urban landlords, who would answer with their heads, to march whole apartment buildings to prearranged sites for "registration." **In villages, volunteer or conscripted facilitators were promised rewards for meeting "quotas" of farmers delivered to in-person registrations.**[62]

Note 62 (1046) contains no evidence to support the statements in this paragraph. Specifically, it says nothing about "quotas." Kotkin merely says that he saw very detailed NKVD materials in Khabarovsk (Siberia) concerning the preparations made for exiles.

Chapter 12. Strategies of Misdirection

An Analysis of the Falsehoods in *Stalin, Vol. 2.*

Stalin, Vol. 2 is not an attempt to give a truthful account of the events it discusses. It is something else: an *attempt to convince the reader* that it is a truthful account. In other words: *Stalin, Vol. 2* is a fraud – a work of propaganda disguised as a work of historical research. *Stalin, Vol. 2* is a book that is designed to mislead its readers. Judging from the book reviews published as of January, 2019, it has been very successful in misleading them.

The main reason for its success is what I have called "the Anti-Stalin Paradigm" (ASP). *Stalin, Vol. 2* tells its readers what they, broadly speaking, already "knew" – that is, what they *thought* they knew: that Stalin and the Soviet leadership were evil people who deliberately murdered a great many innocent persons. *Stalin, Vol. 2* fills out the paradigm of "Stalin and the Soviets as evil" with scholarly-looking examples and documentation, much as hot air fills out a balloon.

In addition to the techniques of misrepresentation and misdirection, other factors are involved. Chief among them is the power of the ASP. This epidemic of self-imposed blindness exists because there is no powerful institution that is devoted to the pursuit of historical truth. The historical profession is supposed to be such an institution. But it is not, at least as regards Soviet history of the Stalin period. In this field falsehood is rewarded as long as it serves anticommunist purposes. Meanwhile the truth is discouraged or penalized when, as is usually the case, it does not serve those purposes.

The techniques of misdirection employed in *Stalin, Vol. 2* are not original or sophisticated. Once they have been pointed out they appear almost transparent. But they have fooled many reviewers. At the time I am writing this I have yet to find a single reviewer who has identified even one of the dozens of falsifications in Kotkin's book.

If someone were to write a book accusing the American government of atrocities on the scale of those Kotkin falsely attributes to Stalin and the Soviet leadership, we can be certain that many scholars would check every statement and examine all the evidence. The fact that up to now no one has done this is, no doubt, due in part to the fact that in *Stalin, Vol. 2* Kotkin is telling people that which they have assumed to be true all along.

What we have done in the present book is simply to apply to Kotkin's fact-claims, accusations, and allegations against Stalin and the Soviet leadership in *Stalin, Vol. 2* the critical, scholarly examination that any careful reviewer of a book alleging crimes by the United States government and leadership would adopt. The result is devastating to Kotkin's book.

* * *

A Typology of Prevarication

In an earlier work I termed the different kinds of falsification in Nikita Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" a "typology of prevarication." In that work I was able to show that what Khrushchev stated in this infamous speech was false. In most cases I did not have enough evidence to discover what really happened. I did find enough evidence to prove that more than 40 "revelations" made by Khrushchev in that speech are deliberate lies and that 20 more are also falsehoods — probably, but not provably, deliberate.

In *The Murder of Sergei Kirov* I discussed the studies by Matthew Lenoe, Åsmund Egge, and Alla Kirilina. I discovered that these scholars had tortured the available evidence in order to reach the only conclusion congruent with the ASP: that Kirov's assassin, Leonid Nikolaev, was a "lone gunman" and that Stalin fabricated the criminal cases against everyone else. In the case of Kirov's murder we do have enough evidence to prove that those persons convicted of the murder by the Soviet court in December 1934 were indeed guilty. But I did not give a theoretically-informed account of the errors and methods of misdirection that these prior scholars used.

In the case of *Stalin, Vol. 2* I think such an account is warranted. The fact-claims against Stalin and the Soviets are so universally false, and the failure of experienced reviewers to notice this so complete, that we are forced to admit that the techniques of falsification in *Stalin, Vol. 2* have been successful. If they have fooled the reviewers, including at the time of this writing a few scholarly reviewers, they will also fool the general reader. These techniques of falsification are simple in principle. But they are only *disclosed* as simple in practice if one studies them closely.

The widespread acceptance of the ASP discourages any attempt to verify fact-claims that are convenient to that paradigm, since the process of verification dismantles the paradigm itself. A review of the techniques of misdirection in *Stalin, Vol. 2* may prove helpful in warning the reader against naive acceptance of the ASP in other works too. Under its controlling influence every piece of evidence is bent to fit it, while everything that does not fit it is ignored, discarded, caricatured, or denied.

One conclusion stands out: no "authority," no "expert" regardless of his or her academic pedigree, should be simply "believed." *Given the ideologically-charged field that is Soviet history of the Stalin period, no accusation of wrongdoing against Stalin, the Soviet leadership, or pro-Soviet forces, no matter what its source, should ever be accepted as true unless it has been thoroughly verified first.* The sooner this fact is generally recognized, and the sooner the practice of verifying everything that "fits" the ASP is taken seriously, the better for those of us who wish to discover the truth.

Objectivity

In any academic discipline it is essential that the researcher determine to be objective from the outset of her study. History is no different. The historian must make every effort to survey all the primary sources that bear upon her subject, and all the secondary sources that study this evidence, whether or not these secondary sources reflect the same biases, preconceived ideas, or values as her own.

Since objectivity is, among other things, an attitude of distrust of the self[1], of one's own preconceived ideas and biases, the historian must compensate for her own limitations by trying especially hard to give a supportive reading to primary and secondary sources whose tendency is opposed to her own biases. At the same time she must determine to be especially suspicious of that evidence and those works of scholarship that tend to confirm or agree with her own biases. This practice is essential in order to counteract the natural tendency to "cherry-pick" the evidence, to look with special favor upon statements that reflect one's own views.

In her historical practice the historian must observe the tenets of objective research from the outset. If the historian does not *begin* with a determination to find the truth "no matter whose ox is gored"; if she does not remain vigilant, ready at every moment to discover a truth that she finds disillusioning, her research is doomed. She will never stumble across the truth by accident along the way.

Moreover, if a historian does not begin from a determination to discover the truth, we must ask the question: What, then, is her purpose in writing the book? *If the historian is not out to discover the truth and report it to her readers, what is she doing?*

Kotkin ignores these tenets of historical objectivity. Therefore, no one should be surprised that his book is filled with historical falsehoods. It could not be otherwise.

Methods of Falsification in *Stalin, Vol. 2*

Avoidance of objectivity takes many specific forms. There are many different ways to smuggle in fact-claims without evidence. Among these methods of falsification are logical fallacies.

One of them, the "argument from incredulity" or "fallacy of personal incredulity," in a sense represents the whole of Kotkin's book. For

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[1] Michael Schudson. *Discovering the News. A Social History of American Newspapers.* New York: Basic Books, 1978, 77.

Stalin, Vol. 2 represents what Kotkin "believes" about Stalin and the events of the 1930s. Presumably, Kotkin "believes" his account – but who cares what he "believes"? The evidence just does not support what he believes. *Instead of changing what he believes to conform to the evidence, Kotkin ignores or distorts the evidence that refutes what he believes.*

Technique of Deception	Characteristics	Examples
Bias of Omission	Perhaps the most important technique of deception because hardest to recognize. See examples below, plus separate chapter.	
	Reliance on the reader's ignorance.	Yakir's letter to Stalin; Frinovsky's statement; Yakovlev's confession; Coox's discoveries; Khaustov's quotation (Ch. 10); Humbert-Droz (Ch. 8); Riutin (Ch. 8); Nazi instigation of the Barcelona May Days (Ch. 7); 2 different editions of Dubinsky-Mukhadze on Ordzhonikidze
Phony Scholarship		
* Fact-claims contradicted or disproven by the	Phony references that will fool all but the most attentive readers.	"Bloc letter," Ch. 4; Rosliakov, Ch. 2;

sources Kotkin cites in support of them.		Feuchtwanger.
* Fact-claims not supported by the sources Kotkin cites.	Sources that do not document the fact-claims Kotkin has made, though he cites them as though they did.	Krasnikov, Ch. 2; Primakov, Ch. 7; Yaroslavsky, Ch. 8.
* Citations to phony scholarship that do the falsifying.	Citing credentialed scholars who falsify consistently lends a fraudulent air of legitimacy to one's own fact-claims.	Oleg Khlevniuk on Ordzhonikidze, Ch. 3, 6.
* Reliance on dishonest fact-claims by others that do not pretend to be secondary sources.	Mainly "official" sources that are seldom questioned.	Khrushchev's Secret Speech and memoirs; Arao telegram, from the *Spravka*.
* Phony appearance of scholarship.	Citation of same document from different publications as though they are different sources.	Five or six different editions of the same document, the *Spravka* of the Shvernik Commission.
* Fact-claims unsupported by ANY evidence.	Assertions without even the fig-leaf of evidence.	Collective farmers "enslaved", Ch. 1 and 2; Blokhin, the executioner with Walther pistols; 1,000 German communists handed over to Hitler for execution, Ch. 11;

Logical Fallacies		
* Argument from Incredulity	Claim that because Kotkin "can't believe" something, it is not true.	Feuchtwanger (Ch. 6); "Fantastic" plot (Ch. 9)
* Fact-claims that Kotkin cannot possibly know.	Illogical assertions.	"No military conspiracy", Ch. 9; Artuzov "fabricated documents" (Ch. 9); Tukhachevsky convicted of "crimes he did not commit." (Ch. 9)
* "Begging the Question"	*Petitio Principii*: Assertion without evidence; Assuming that which is to be proven.	Stalin caused the famine (Ch.1); Moscow Trials defendants tortured, promised their lives for false confessions.
* Name-calling	Insulting words instead of evidence and logic.	Stalin a "dictator", then, a "despot": Ch. 3; Ch. 9.
* Argument by Scare Quote	Using scare quotes in lieu of evidence that a statement is false.	Chapter 5; Chapter 9.
* The Nominal Fallacy (here, "psychologizing") –giving something a name, then assuming that you have explained it.	Claiming that Stalin was "thinking" something or had some psychological condition.	"Channeling" Stalin, Ch. 9; Ch. 10; Stalin's "paranoia" (*passim*); Stalin's "profoundly dark spirit" (Ch. 10)
* Appeal to authority	Accepting some	"Hotel Bristol" issue;

("argument from authority"). Mere Assertion, often from failure to research a topic at all.	"mainstream" fact-claim or interpretation (or, inventing some explanation) without doing the research to verify or disprove it. Similar to the last category.	Katyn Massacre; "Torture telegram", Ch. 11; "Klim – no mistakes...", Ch. 11;
Other Strategies of Misdirection		
Alternative theories relegated to footnotes only.	Historians are supposed to discuss theories alternative to their own.	The theory of environmental causes of the 1932-33 famine, Ch. 1.
Asserting falsehoods long since disproven by other scholars.	Few readers will know these fact-claims have been disproven.	"Quotas" for repression (Ch. 10); "execution lists" (Ch. 10);
Lack of source criticism: use of long-discredited sources; other examples.	Use of sources that scholars know to avoid but readers will not know that.	Orlov, Secret History, Ch. 5; Boris Nicolaevsky, Ch. 5; Krivitsky, Ch. 9. Also, see separate chapter.

Analysis of the Prevarications in *Stalin, Vol. 2*

The success of a work as corrupt as *Stalin, Vol. 2* requires explanation. How can a book that is largely composed of demonstrable, provable falsehoods have been published? Once published, how can it be praised by newspaper and magazine reviewers? How can a work

utterly lacking in integrity be published in thousands of copies by a major publisher?

Part of the answer lies in the historical role of pseudo-scholarship as propaganda for anticommunist purposes. The demonization of Soviet history dates back to the Russian revolution itself. Already in 1920 Walter Lippmann and Charles Merz showed how the *New York Times,* "newspaper of record" then as today, "reported" the triumph of the Whites and the defeat of the Reds numerous times, always falsely. Lippmann and Merz concluded that the reporters had not deliberately lied. Rather they had reported not what they *saw* but what they and their bosses *wanted to see.*[2] The Times's reporters included Walter Duranty, who was later to be attacked for being insufficiently anticommunist when, during the 1930s, he insisted on reporting only what he saw or knew for a fact rather than what he had not witnessed.[3]

Stalin, Vol. 2 was published by Penguin Random House, a commercial rather than an academic publisher. Academic presses require that manuscripts submitted for publication be vetted by academic specialists in the field. This does not guarantee that falsehoods will be caught and that standards of evidence routine in other areas of history will be observed. Far fom it! Nevertheless, *some* of the more glaring falsifications in *Stalin, Vol. 2 might* have been recognized as such by an academic review—unless the reviewers had been selected more for their anticommunist fervor than for excellence of research.

The praise *Stalin, Vol. 2* has garnered from newspapers and magazines are understandable. All mainstream publications from right-wing conservative to liberal-left and social-democratic are dogmatically anticommunist and anti-Stalin. When it comes to hostility to Stalin there is often little difference along the continuum from Trotskyist to anarchist to left-liberal to far right. And it is

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[2] "A Test of the News." Supplement to the August 8, 1920 issue of *The New Republic.* At https://archive.org/details/LippmannMerzATestoftheNews

[3] See Furr, Blood Lies, 111-113. A few of the many dishonest books and articles attacking Duranty on these fraudulent grounds are listed in the Wikipedia page devoted to Duranty.

publicity and promotion from these publications that determine commercial success. The author and his publisher are making a lot of money! Not a careful search for the truth but profit is the goal of commercial publication. Anticommunist bias is not a *barrier* for mass commercial success — rather, it is a positive *requirement.*

Anticommunist Scholarship

Kotkin's determined flouting of objectivity would be of little consequence if it were an exception. *Stalin, Vol. 2* and similar works would be rejected during the vetting process and not be published. Those works that for whatever reason managed to evade the vetting process and be published anyway would be quickly critiqued, their errors, carelessness, and deliberate dishonesty identified and exposed. Negative reviews would warn potential readers away. This is how the system of scholarly and semi-popular reviewing is supposed to work.

But in the field of Soviet history it does not work this way. Scholarship on the Stalin period in the Soviet Union is constrained by an informal but strict code of "political correctness." Stalin must be depicted as a moral monster and the Soviet Union during his time as a place of government-sponsored corruption, repression, and mass murder. No substantive deviation from this formula is tolerated. This is what I have termed the ASP.

Only rarely can one find a refutation of even the most absurd accusations of crimes by Stalin. In his 2010 study that concluded that Stalin did not have a hand in the murder of Sergei Kirov in Leningrad on December 1, 1934, Matthew Lenoe felt compelled to write a page-length profession of his anticommunist and anti-Stalin convictions. Lenoe begins by stating the credo: "Stalin was one of the deadliest tyrants of world history ..." Naturally, no evidence is cited. For Lenoe's academic audience, no evidence is needed. Who needs evidence, when "everybody knows it?"

Lenoe admits that he did so lest someone suspect him of "apologizing for Stalin" for rejecting the view that Stalin had had Kirov killed, even though that interpretation had been abandoned by Soviet and

Russian experts two decades earlier and there had never been any evidence to support it in the first place.[4] In what other field, and about what other historical personage, would a scholar feel the need to apologize for discovering that his subject did *not* commit a crime? But Lenoe is correct: absolving Stalin of the accusation of some crime or other is just "not done."

Even this is an exception. Claims that Stalin committed some crime, no matter how poorly supported by evidence, are typically passed over in silence if really absurd and otherwise are accepted and even repeated, as Kotkin does many times in *Stalin, Vol. 2*.

As we have suggested in the Introduction, in history of the Stalin period a kind of Gresham's Law prevails where "bad scholarship drives out the good." When good scholarship is produced it is carefully written so as not to contradict any tenets of anti-Stalinism that the researcher thinks may be an inviolable part of the ASP.

Good research is being done in the field of Stalin-era Soviet history. But it is typically confined to the close examination of primary sources, especially when newly-available sources are used. Research that is narrowly focused on specific events, places, and time periods can be very revealing. Even when marred by bias, research that reproduces new primary sources can be valuable because flawed interpretations can be critiqued and discarded and the texts of the primary sources themselves appropriated for more objective research.

An anticommunist scholarly environment or "industry" has been created where "scholars" churn out anticommunist falsehoods and then cite each other's falsehoods as evidence that the falsehoods are true. Primary sources are either distorted by misinterpretation or else ignored entirely. The "scholars" or academic practitioners in this "industry" assume in their writings that it is not primary source evidence and its interpretation, but the consensus of anticommunist

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[4] Matthew Lenoe, *The Kirov Murder and Soviet History* New Haven: Yale U.P. 2010, 16-17.

researchers, that establishes a statement as "true." This is the logical fallacy of "appeal to authority."

Kotkin follows this practice with enthusiasm. *Stalin, Vol. 2* is an example of what that practice produces. When Kotkin cites primary sources at all, he often gets them wrong. Kotkin often cites secondary sources by "scholars" of the anticommunist "industry" (scare quotes deliberate here. This produces a body of anticommunist pseudo-scholarship based upon bias and falsehood alone.

In addition to falsehood this system produces and reproduces ignorance. Anti-communist scholars inevitably become lazy when no one criticizes their research because it has the "correct" anticommunist tendency or "line." Why worry about the truth if what matters is not objectivity and skillful analysis and interpretation of primary source evidence, but striking the right anticommunist tone? Why bother to do the hard, time-consuming work of genuine research, of discovering the truth, when the path to academic success is to repeat anti-communist assertions with little or, often enough, no regard for the evidence?

Our study of *Stalin, Vol. 2* has disclosed that Kotkin is not only biased. He is also ignorant about much of the history of which he poses as an expert. His readers should not assume that Kotkin has worked hard to discover the truth about the important issues discussed in this book, and then gone on to construct deliberate lies in order to disguise this truth.

The reverse is much more likely: that Kotkin has no idea what the truth is because he has never tried to find it. He has mastered the anticommunist position or "line" on these and, perhaps, on other issues, and this can be got from reading the works of a limited number of recognized anticommunist "scholars" without troubling oneself about primary sources or real research of any kind.

Chapter 13. Bias of Omission

Introduction: Why Believe Trotsky?

> That same day, a politburo decree ordered the execution of the OGPU espionage operative Yakov Blyumkin. His fatal act had been to meet on Prinkipo with Trotsky, his former patron, who revealed that he had managed to carry out secret documents, which he intended to publish to expose Stalin, and predicted the regime's downfall, averring that the underground "Bolshevik-Leninists" needed to strengthen their opposition. Blyumkin evidently sensed that Trotsky was fantasizing, yet he had agreed to carry messages to Moscow from Trotsky, written inside books in invisible ink.[109] He became one of the first Communist party members executed by the Soviet regime for a political crime. (28)

Note 109 (915): "109. Blyumkin had served as Trotsky's adjutant, then was invited to rejoin the secret police, rising to pro-consul in the Soviet satellite of Mongolia and then to undercover OGPU station chief in Istanbul.... OGPU agents went around whispering that Radek had betrayed Blyumkin, a story that, as intended, reached Trotsky, damaging relations between him and Radek, conveniently for Stalin. Radek would not deny he had informed on Blyumkin. Trotsky **is said to have received** a letter detailing Radek's betrayal. "Kak i za chto Stalin rasstrelial Bliumkina" *Biulleten' oppozitsii*, no. 9 (Feb.–March 1930): 9–11 ...

More than thirty years ago Pierre Broué, the most prominent Trotskyist scholar in the world, concluded that Bliumkin, a Soviet intelligence agent, was secretly working for Trotsky. Trotsky lied in his article about Bliumkin's execution.[1]

Kotkin does not cite Broué's article, though he cites many other articles by Broué. If, somehow, Kotkin did not know about this article, then he did not research Trotsky and Bliumkin and so had no business writing about them.

Kotkin also fails to mention a major publication about Bliumkin by Oleg B. Mozokhin, "Confession of a Terrorist" in an important historical journal in 2002.[2] Kotkin cites three works by Mozokhin in his bibliography, but not this one. Bliumkin, while being a Soviet agent, was working for Trotsky.

As a Left Socialist Revolutionary, Bliumkin had assassinated the German Ambassador, Count Mirbach on July 6, 1918, as part of the Left S-R attempt to sabotage the Brest-Litovsk peace with Germany and as a signal for the Left S-R revolt against the Bolshevik Revolution. Bliumkin was declared an outlaw by the Bolsheviks, fled, but then had joined the Bolsheviks and was reprieved. His betrayal to Trotsky was the last straw, and he was executed.

Trotsky blamed Radek for turning Bliumkin. But in his confession Bliumkin informed on Radek's Trotskyist activities! There's little doubt that Trotsky attacked Radek as a cover for his, Trotsky's, continued collaboration with Radek. According to Boris Bazhanov, a secretary of Stalin's in the 1920s who fled to the West, Bliumkin was actually betrayed by Liza (Elizaveta) Zarubina, another Soviet agent. (Mozokhin 59)

Either Kotkin did not know about this important article, and so had no business writing about Bliumkin at all, or he did know about it but hid it from his readers for the sake of a less complicated, anti-Stalin story.

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[1] See Broué, "Compléments à un article sur les trotskystes en U.R.S.S" *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* 1985 (24), pp. 63-72.

[2] Oleg B. Mozokhin, "Ispoved' terrorista." *Voenno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv* 6 (2002), 25-59.

A Crime, Not A Practice

Kotkin cites the following crime committed during confiscation of a kulak family's property:

> A favored trick was the "auction": one new village party secretary managed to obtain a four-room house, valued at 700 rubles, for 25.[172] (37)
>
> Note 172 (917): 172. Hughes, "Capturing the Russian Peasantry," 99, citing GANO corpus 2, f. 2, op. 2–1, d. 3506, l. 2; op. 2, d. 366, l. 189–98.

In Hughes book[3] – but not his article, which Kotkin quotes here – Hughes points out that this abuse was punished.

> For this litany of abuses only one person was punished, removed from office and expelled from the party - the okrug plenipotentiary responsible for the area, who happened to be the Okrug Deputy-Procurator.[56] (Hughes, Stalinism 110)

Hughes writes:

> One practice of the Biisk authorities was to refuse to accept monetary payments to the value of the grain delivery quotas; rather when there was a refusal to sell they auctioned off peasant property at cheap prices as an exemplary punishment,[39] (Hughes, Stalinism 103-4).

Kotkin fails to point out that this was exposed as an abuse in an official Party document.

> Later in the year, in the autumn when the grain had been collected safely, party reports on the campaign

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[3] *Stalinism in a Russian Province. A Study of Collectivization and Dekulakization in Siberia.* Palgrave Macmillan: London and New York, 1996.

> became more circumspect and critical of abuses. The Rubtsovsk Procuracy condemned numerous 'illegal acts' in grain collection when plenipotentiaries enforced *'razverstka'*. (Hughes, Stalinism, 104)

Kotkin also fails to tell us that the numbers of peasants whose property was sold off was small.

> By the end of April approximately **only half of one per cent** of farms in the okrugs of Bamaul, Biisk and Rubtsovsk, and even less in Slavgorod, had property sold for failure to pay a multiple fine. (Hughes, Stalinism, 104)

So the number sold off dishonestly, as in this case, was smaller still. But back to the village party secretary who bought "a four-room house, valued at 700 rubles, for 25." This specific act was probably punished, although only a study of the archival documents could tell and Kotkin fails to give them to us. In note 56 of his book (page 235) Hughes – but not Kotkin – tells us more about this abuse.

> Concern about the numerous cases when property confiscated under Article 61 was auctioned of too cheaply was also raised at a meeting of Biisk Okrug Procuracy officials and OGPU representatives on 28 May 1929: GAAK, f. 917, Op. 1, d. 10,1. 244-5.

So abuses occurred. But they were not Soviet policy. Nor is there any evidence that such abuses were tacitly permitted. Moreover, Kotkin confuses these events. The document he cites is a complaint from a peasant woman in April 14, 1929, while the events Kotkin is discussing occurred from January-February, 1930 and thereafter.

Groman And Kondratiev – What's The Evidence?

A note to page 50 of Kotkin's book reads thus:

Note 256 (919: 256. Stalin singled out the tsarist-era economists Vladimir Groman and Nikolai Kondratiev (of "long wave" fame), insisted they were linked to Bukharin, Tomsky, and Rykov, and wrote that "Kondratiev, Groman and a few other scoundrels must definitely be shot." Kosheleva, *Pis'ma Stalina Molotovu*, 193–6; Lih et al., *Stalin's Letters to Molotov*, 200–1 (Aug. 6), 201n8 (RGASPI, f. 17, op. 3, d. 793, l. 3).

Kotkin's readers will surely get the impression that Groman and Kondrat'ev were shot. But they were *not* shot. Kotkin omits the fact that Groman and Kondrat'ev were prominent in the Menshevik Trial of 1931. Many of the materials of this trial have been published. Groman's lengthy confessions are in Volume 1, 311-384. Kondratiev's statements are not printed, but there is a lot of testimony from others about his activities.[4]

There is no evidence that this was a frame-up. Groman was convicted and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment, which he served in the Verkhneural'sk and then the Suzdal'sk political isolators, equivalent to minimum-security prisons in the USA. Groman died there in 1940, age 66.

Kondrat'ev was convicted in the same trial and sentenced in 1932 to 8 years imprisonment. In 1938 he was tried, convicted, and executed for "continuing counter-revolutionary activity in the Suzdal' isolator."[5] Kotkin conceals this information from his readers.

Wife Of Kirov's Assassin Was Guilty

Kotkin:

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[4] *Menshevistskii protsessy 1931 goda. Sbornik dokumentov v 2-kh knigakh.* Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1999.

[5] "продолжении к.-р. деятельности в Суздальской тюрьме." This information is available on a "Memorial Society" page - http://lists.memo.ru/d17/f175.htm#n1

> The Kirov and Kremlin Affair investigations were now running in parallel. In Leningrad on March 10, [Milda] Draule was tried and executed, along with her sister and brother-in-law; there was no public announcement.[264]
>
> Note 264 (966): 264. Lenoe, *Kirov Murder*, 287–8 (RGANI, f. 6, op. 13, d. 33, l. 49–50: Ulrich to Stalin, March 11, 1934).[The note to Lenoe is in error: it should read 387-8. – GF]

Kotkin omits to mention that, even in this excerpt from a letter of Ulrich to Stalin, Ulrich states that Draule confessed her guilt:

> To the question of what goal she was pursuing when she sought a ticket to the meeting of the party activists on December 1, [...] where Comrade Kirov was to deliver his report, Milda Draule answered that she "wanted to help Leonid Nikolaev." With what? "That should have been obvious from the circumstances." (Lenoe 388)

Lenoe also states that on January 10, 1935, Draule gave damning evidence against her husband:

> Milda Draule signed testimony asserting that Nikolaev had visited [Latvian consul in Leningrad] Bissenieks to discuss "the question of detaching various national regions from the USSR." (Lenoe 387)

Kotkin knows this – he cites Lenoe's book more than fifty times. But he fails to inform his readers, and so gives them the impression that Draule was executed simply because she was Nikolaev's wife. [6]

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[6] I discuss this in more detail in Sergei Kirov, pages 180-181.

Kotkin Ignores Stalin's Struggle for Democracy, I

On page 287 Kotkin discusses Stalin's interview with American newspaper publisher Roy Howard. But Kotkin makes no mention of the most remarkable, and most remarked-on, of Stalin's comments – his promise of a democratic constitution with contested seats. This is discussed in some detail in Iurii Zhukov, *Inoi Stalin*, pages 207-210 -- a book that Kotkin cites, though not here -- as well as in the Stalin-Howard interview. Kotkin clearly knows about it, but never informs his readers.[7]

Throughout this large book Kotkin avoids all mention of Stalin's energetic fight for democratic reform in the Soviet Union. See also my discussion in "Stalin and the Struggle for Democratic Reform," Part I.[8]

Kotkin Conceals Stalin's Opposition To Mass Repression

Kotkin on the January, 1938, Central Committee Plenum:

> On January 13, the Kiev provincial party committee was deemed "littered with an exceedingly great number of Trotskyites," and three days later Postyshev was replaced as Kiev province secretary by Sergei Kudryavtsev, while the Kharkov provincial party boss was replaced by Nikolai Gikalo. (370) [There is no note to this passage. – GF]

Kotkin omits the fact that Pavel Postyshev was removed for massive repressions of Party members. The long quotation below is from Furr, *Yezhov vs. Stalin*:

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[7] See *The Stalin-Howard Interview*. New York: International Publishers, [1936]. In Russian it is in volume 14 of Stalin's Collected Works.

[8] *Cultural Logic* 2005. Now at https://web.archive.org/web/20160423092500/http://clogic.eserver.org/2005/furr.html#ref7

The January 1938 CC Plenum

It appears that this Plenum was called in a hurry to deal with a serious situation of mass expulsions and arrests of Party members, including many Party officials.

> Sometime around the beginning of the year, Politburo member A. A. Andreev was assigned the task of gathering compromising material on Postyshev's party expulsions in Kuibyshev. These documents included documentation of mass party expulsions from the Kuibyshev soviet, from the ranks of party district committee secretaries, and from other organizations. One report from the Bazarno-Syzgansky district noted that large numbers had been expelled as enemies by order of Postyshev's men, though the NKVD subsequently found reason to arrest very few of them.

> ... based on the materials Andreev compiled, the Politburo decided only on 7 January to use the occasion of a Supreme Soviet meeting to convene a plenum for 11 January, a lead time of only four days. (Getty & Naumov 498-499; 501

This whole section, pp. 99-103, contains the evidence against Postyshev. Kotkin simply ignores it! He also omits it at page 475.

Here is a fuller discussion:

> Postyshev was the harshest in mass expulsions, and was expelled for this at the January 1938 CC. Getty & Naumov discuss this at length on pp. 498-512. Getty quotes at length how Postyshev was raked over the coals at this Plenum for excessive repression.
>
> Zhukov's analysis:
>
> At the January 1938 Plenum the main report was done by Malenkov. He said that the first secretaries were

> brandishing not even lists of those condemned by the "troikas," but just two lines with an indication of the number of those condemned. He openly accused the first secretary of the Kuibyshev *obkom* of the party P.P. Postyshev: you have imprisoned the entire Party and Soviet apparatus of the *oblast'*! At which Postyshev replied in the same vein, that "I arrested, am arresting, and will arrest, until I annihilate all enemies and spies! But he was in a dangerous solitude: two hours after this polemic he was demonstratively dismissed from his post as candidate member of the Politburo, and none of the members of the Plenum stood up to defend him.
>
> - Komsomolskaia Pravda Nov. 19, 2002.

The document confirming Postyshev's expulsion and arrest is reprinted in Getty & Naumov, pp. 514-6. Khrushchev was one of those who spoke up forcefully against Postyshev (G&N 512). For Khrushchev's appointment to replace Postyshev as candidate member of Politburo, *Stalinskoe Politbiuro*...p. 167.

Rogovin's excerpt from January 1938 CC Plenum on Postyshev:

> On the character of Postyshev's speech, which was in fact converted into his interrogation, the following fragment of the transcript will give an idea:
>
> Postyshev: The leadership there (in the Kuybyshev oblast), both that of the party and of the Soviets, was enemies, beginning from the oblast leadership and ending with that of the raions.
>
> Mikoian: Everybody?
>
> Postyshev: How can you be surprised? .... I added it up and it comes out that enemies have been sitting there for 12 years. On the Soviet side the same enemy leadership has been sitting there. There they sat and selected their cadres. For example, in our oblast

executive committee we had the most obdurate enemies right down to the technical workers, enemies who confessed to their wrecking activity and behaved insolently, beginning with the chairman of the oblast executive committee, with his assistant, consultants, secretaries – all were enemies. Absolutely all the sections of the oblast executive committee were soiled with enemies. ... Now take the chairmen of the raion executive committees – all were enemies. Sixty chairmen of raiispolkoms – all enemies. The overwhelming majority of second secretaries – I'm not even speaking of first secretaries – are enemies, and not only enemies, but there were also many spies among them: Poles, Latvians, they selected all kinds of died-in-the-wool swine...

Bulganin: Were there at least some honest people there... It turned out that there was not a single honest person.

Postyshev: I am talking about the leadership, the heads. From the leading body, of the secretaries of the raion committees, the chairmen of the raiispolkoms, there was almost not a single honest man. And how can you be surprised?

Molotov: Aren't you exaggerating, comrade Postyshev?

Postyshev: No, I'm not exaggerating. Here, take the oblast executive committee. People are in prison. We have investigative materials, and they confess, they themselves confess their enemy and espionage work.

Molotov: We must verify the materials.

Mikoian: It turns out that there are enemies below, in every raion committee.

Beria: Is it possible that all members of the plenums of

> the raion committees were enemies?
>
> Kaganovich: There is no basis to say that they are all swindlers.
>
> Stalin evaluated Postyshev's methods this way: "This is the massacre of the organization. They are very easy on themselves, but they're shooting everybody in the raion organizations.... This means stirring up the party masses against the CC, it can't be understood any other way." (Furr, Khrushchev Lied, 283-285).

Kotkin conceals the fact that *Stalin was opposed to mass repressions of Party members*! That would ill comport with Kotkin's portrayal of Stalin as a bloodthirsty tyrant.

Kotkin Smears Voroshilov

> Voroshilov ... had never acquired genuine military training. **He had not served in the tsarist army, despite being the right age.** (395)

Kotkin gives his readers the impression that Voroshilov was a "draft dodger" or some other kind of shirker. But there is no reference to this passage. No wonder! Voroshilov had been exiled for his radical political activity, which went back to 1903 and involved many arrests and several sentences of exile, from which he escaped. He was amnestied, but was unable to find work.

Voroshilov was just the sort of person the Tsarist recruiters wanted to keep out of the army. Pursued by the police, he eventually got a job in an armaments factory in Tsaritsyn after having been unable to find work in Lugansk, in the Donbass.

My source for this is the Russian Wikipedia page on Voroshilov.[9] The corresponding English language Wikipedia page does not have this information on Voroshilov.

Workers on the Moscow-Volga Canal

> On April 22, Stalin paid his third visit to a part of the eighty-mile canal linking the Moscow and Volga rivers ... The canal was built by Gulag laborers, more than 20,000 of whom **likely** perished. (404)

No evidence is given for this statement. Note the word "likely"! Kotkin doesn't know the number but puts one in anyway.

The primary source for this kind of information is A.I. Kokurin, IU. N Morukov, eds. *Stalinskie Stroiki GULAGA 1930 – 1953. Dokumenty.* [Stalinist GULAG Construction] Moscow: MDF – "Materik" 2005, 30-102. The mortality figures cited here are not for canal workers but for the "Dmitlag" camp as a whole. The total of deaths recorded in the camp between September 14, 1932, and January 31, 1938, is 22,842.

By far the highest number of deaths – 39% of the total -- is recorded for 1933 – 8873. (77) This was the year of famine in much of the USSR, and also of serious typhus. There was a severely elevated death rate throughout the Soviet Union during these same years. Omitting this information gives the impression that these people were "worked to death" or died from poor conditions.

But that is not the case. According to the same source (63) the working day was 10 hours long. Breakfast lasted 45 minutes, dinner two hours, and three hours in the evening were devoted to cultural and educational activities. These were better conditions than existed for millions of workers in the capitalist world, to say nothing of the colonies of the Western imperialist countries. And far better than for prisoners in the prisons of the West.

More Lies About Lavrentii Beria

About the June, 1937 Central Committee Plenum, Kotkin writes:

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[9] At https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ворошилов,_Климент_Ефремович

> Instead of allowing discussion of Beria's past, Stalin had Kaminsky arrested and expelled that very day.[68] (510)
>
> Note 68 (1010): 68. Pavliukhhov [sic; should be "Pavliukov"], *Ezhov*, 296–7.

Kotkin suppresses the fact that Pavliukov takes this testimony from the Gorbachev-era anti-Beria slander book *Oni ne molchali*. Then Pavliukov refutes it -- proves it wrong!

We have already shown that *Oni ne molchali* is no good as a source. Zhavoronkov and Pariiskii is also in *Oni ne molchali* (199-214). They cite Khrushchev (see above), and otherwise quote unpublished memoirs – that is, rumors. Kotkin even notes that these people did not attend the Plenum.

> Kaminsky got "ten years without the right of correspondence," which meant he was executed.[71] (511)
>
> Note 71 (1010): 71. The sentence was carried out Feb. 10, 1938, at Yagoda's former dacha (Kommunarka).

This is false. According to the Russian Wikipedia page on Kaminsky and to the lists compiled by the "Memorial Society," he was sentenced on February 2, 1938, to execution for membership in a terrorist organization, not to "ten years, etc."[10]

Kaminsky was accused by a number of others, including Iakov Iakovlev and Krestinsky, and Kaminsky himself accused others of being part of the Right-Trotskyist bloc (conspiracy). He is named a dozen times in the materials sent by Yezhov to Stalin and printed in "Golgofa."

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[10] See http://lists.memo.ru/d15/f173.htm#n122 ; https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Каминский,_Григорий_Наумович

So Kaminsky was not arrested, much less tried, sentenced, and executed, for anything he said about Beria. In fact, Beria was not yet in the NKVD yet – that did not happen until August, 1938.

Why Was Viktorov Imprisoned?

> Why Stalin let Yezhov remain at the helm for so long remains mysterious. By summer 1938, the insanity in the NKVD had gotten to the point that at least one newly appointed provincial NKVD chief released large numbers of prisoners and wrote to Lubyanka about the outrageous falsifications.[225] (540)
>
> Note 225 (1014): "225. One example was Mikhail Viktorov (Novoselov), newly named as NKVD chief in Sverdlovsk, who turned up a shocking state of affairs, even by standards of the terror, in the work of his predecessor (Dmitriev). Viktorov freed a large number of prisoners and sent Lubyanka a long analysis of local falsifications of cases. Pavliukov, *Ezhov*, 444–5 (citing TsA FSB, sledstvennoe delo no. R-24334, t. 1, l. 67–8). **Viktorov would be arrested on Jan. 22, 1939, and sentenced to fifteen years; he died in a camp in 1950.**"

Kotkin fails to say *why* Viktorov was arrested and imprisoned. But there is a report on Viktorov, in the so-called "Stalin shooting lists."[11] Viktorov was convicted of being a participant in Yezhov's conspiracy to overthrow the government. He was named by others in the conspiracy including Yezhov, Uspensky, Nasedkin, and Bel'sky.

In 1941 Viktorov was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. He is listed as "Category 1" in the 'shooting lists," which means that the NKVD recommended that he be executed if found guilty. But he

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[11] At http://stalin.memo.ru/spravki/13-063.HTM

was *not* executed. Instead, he was sentenced to 15 years and died in a prison camp in 1950.[12]

This is yet another example that the so-called "Stalin shooting lists" were not 'shooting lists" at all, but *recommendations* by the NKVD to the Procuracy (prosecutor) of sentences in the event the accused was convicted. (See "Lies About The Lists" in Chapter 10, above). Viktorov was one of many cases in which the recommendation was *not* followed by the court.

Kotkin Ignores Stalin's Struggle for Democracy, II

> On October 11–12, 1938, he [Stalin] convened a two-day expanded session of the politburo (an ersatz Central Committee plenum), (575)

Kotkin mentions nothing about the abandonment of contested elections, which is discussed in Zhukov, *Inoi Stalin*, 475-6. Stalin was outvoted even in the Politburo! Some "dictator"! Was Adolf Hitler ever "outvoted" by his own Party leadership? 'Nuff said!

Kotkin suppresses all this. Why? At least two reasons: (1) Stalin was struggling for a kind of representative system, with contested elections, that Kotkin's readers would recognize as democratic and sympathize with; (2) since Stalin was defeated by his own Politburo, it would be clear to Kotkin's readers that Stalin was *not a dictator.*

Was Gnedin Innocent?

> "Beria and Kobulov put me on a chair and sat on either side and punched me in the head, playing 'swings," recalled Yevgeny Gnedin, the press officer of the foreign affairs commissariat. "They beat me horribly, with the full force of their arms, demanding I give testimony against Litvinov."[260]

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[12] See https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Викторов,_Михаил_Петрович

> Note 260 (1027): "260. Gnedin, *Katastrofa i votoroe* [sic – should be *vtoroe*] *rozhdenie*, 128–52. Gnedin would be the only one to survive to old age from the Soviet embassy or trade mission to Berlin."

Kotkin either did not check, or chose to hide from his readers, the report (*Spravka*) on Gnedin from the Stalin lists.[13] The report, prepared by the NKVD, accuses Gnedin of espionage for Germany in some detail – the most serious charges conceivable.

Gnedin was named by other conspirators, including Mikhail Kol'tsov, in a face-to-face confrontation. Gnedin is also mentioned at least 52 [sic] times in Kol'tsov's confessions.

In the list itself Gnedin is "Category 1" – recommendation to execute if convicted. Yet Gnedin too was *not* executed (see Viktorov, above)![14] Once again, we see that the so-called "Stalin shooting lists" were not "shooting lists" at all, not "death warrants" — whatever that is supposed to mean. In Gnedin's case, as in Viktorov's, the Prosecutor and judges must have found some mitigating circumstances, or at least that some of the accusations were unreliable.

In 1941, under Beria, he was sentenced to 10 years. His letter to the Presidium of July 16, 1953, was evidently used in the campaign against Beria by Khrushchev et al.[15]

So was Gnedin telling the truth about being beaten by Beria and Kobulov? Maybe – or maybe he was just lying. July, 1953, was a good time to expect leniency if one gave the kind of evidence against Beria that Khrushchev wanted.

Kotkin ignores this (or perhaps he is ignorant of it). His account gives the impression that Gnedin was an innocent victim. Maybe

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[13] At http://stalin.memo.ru/spravki/13-098.HTM
[14] At http://stalin.memo.ru/names/p87.htm#n76
[15] See http://istmat.info/node/27469

he was. Maybe not. But the evidence at our, and at Kotkin's, disposal today does not suggest innocence.

Was Isaak Babel' Innocent?

Kotkin writes:

> Babel suffered from his association with Yezhov, who, under interrogation, had named him as a spy. According to the interrogation protocols, Babel implicated Eisenstein ("The organizers of the Soviet film industry were preventing gifted individuals from revealing their talents to the full"), Solomon Mikhoels ("constantly dissatisfied that the Soviet repertoire gave him no chance to demonstrate his talents"), and Ehrenburg ("In Ehrenburg's view, the continued wave of arrests forced all Soviet citizens to break off any relations with foreigners").[306] Babel would also sign a bloodstained protocol confessing to membership in a Trotskyite espionage organization on behalf of France, linked to Malraux.[307] (635)

Note 306 (1028): 306. Shentalinsky, *KGB's Literary Archive*, 42, 47. See also Povarov, *Prichina smerti rasstrel*; Pirozhkova, *At His Side*, 115.

Note 307 (1028): 307. Shentalinskii, "Proshu menia vyslushat,"" 430–43.[16]

A confirmed anticommunist, Vitalii Shentalinsky is strongly committed to the position that Babel' and other executed or imprisoned artists were innocent. But even Shentalinskii admits that there is a great deal of evidence against Babel' He was certainly closely involved with both Yezhov and his wife.

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[16] This is the second part of Shentalinskii's book *Raby svobody* (1999). It is far easier to obtain it there than in the format cited here by Kotkin, a 1991 article in the hard-to-obtain journal *Vozvrashchenie*.

None of the books Kotkin cites have any evidence that Babel was innocent. Moreover, Babel made long confessions of guilt, some of which are quoted at length in *Raby Svobody* and other books by Shentalinskii. *KGB's Literary Archive* quotes excerpts only at pages 42 and 47. All the authors whose works Kotkin cites in note 306 *assume*, without evidence, that Babel was innocent.

On page 115 Babel's wife Pirozhkova simply writes that Meyerhold and Kol'tsov were arrested "at almost the same time as Babel." She fails to note that this was because they were all accused, and eventually convicted, of being involved in Nikolai Yezhov's plot to overthrow the Soviet government – a plot about which we have a lot of evidence, some of which I discuss in *Yezhov vs Stalin*.[17]

Babel subsequently retracted his confessions. But Yezhov and Kol'tsov accused Babel, and perhaps others did too. According to Soviet practice, Babel' would have been convicted by evidence other than his confessions, which could not be used at trial if retracted by the defendant.

To make an intelligent assessment of Babel's guilt or innocence we would need both Babel's entire investigative file, and the confessions against him by his accusers. Since Kotkin includes a discussion of Babel in his book, he should have pointed out these barriers to understanding Babel's conviction and execution. But he fails to do so.

What About Meyerhold?

> Vsevolod Meyerhold, the USSR's most renowned theater director, who had traveled to Leningrad to finalize the choreography of a mass spectacle of physical culture involving 30,000 young athletes

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[17] Pirozhkova reveals that when she was called for Party work (she was a Party member) she reminded her superior that she was the wife of a man – Babel – arrested for a serious crime. She was told that this "had no bearing on your situation," and was assigned to Party work like any other member.

> moving in unison to glorify the regime, was rewarded by being arrested. At Moscow's infamous Butyrka prison, he would be tortured into confessing to espionage for Britain as well as Japan. "The investigators began to use force on me, a sick, 65-year-old man," he wrote in a letter to Molotov. "I was made to lie facedown and then beaten on the soles of my feet and my spine with a rubber strap. . . . When those parts of my legs were covered with extensive internal hemorrhaging, they again began to beat the red-blue-yellow bruises with the strap, and the pain was so intense that it felt as if boiling hot water was being poured on those sensitive areas. . . . I began to incriminate myself in the hope that this, at least, would lead quickly to the scaffold." Meyerhold's interrogators had urinated into his mouth and smashed his right (writing) hand to bits.[40] (649)
>
> Note 40 (1029): 40. Koliazin, "Vernite mne svobodu!," 220–40.

The documents in Koliazin 220-240 record Meyerhold's attempts to retract earlier confessions. But we do not have the *text* of those earlier confessions. Why not?

As in the case of Babel', Kotkin should have pointed out that the fact that an accused person first confesses guilt and subsequently retracts his confession does not establish whether the person was guilty or innocent. What it *does* is to force the prosecution to place more importance on testimony against the defendant by others who inculpate him. This is may be what occurred in Meyerhold's case.

Kotkin fails to inform his readers that Meyerhold was named as a Trotskyist and spy by Mikhail Kol'tsov and Isaak Babel', among others. (RKEB 1, 270-272) He named others in turn. We don't have the testimony against Meyerhold given by Kol'tsov and Babel'.

The claim that the interrogators urinated into his mouth and smashed his right hand is contradicted by documents Kotkin himself cites! The words in the quotation above are from his statement of January 13, 1940. There Meyerhold claims that **his NKVD interrogators told him they would leave his head and his right hand untouched.**" (Koliazin, 230)

There is nothing about interrogators "urinating into his mouth." Why did Kotkin feel obliged to compose these fabrications? Did he actually read Koliazin, pages 220-240?

The fact that a person retracts his confession of guilt raises the question: "Was he lying *then*? Or is he lying *now*?" After all, we normally expect that both the innocent and the guilty will deny their guilt. But a person who has been beaten – tortured – into signing a false confession may well deny it later.

So we don't know. As in Babel's case Kotkin should have explained the difficulties in assessing Meyerhold's guilt or innocent.

Yezhov Named Both Meyerhold And Babel'

On page 740 Kotkin states:

> On January 17, 1940, Stalin approved a sentencing list containing 457 prominent people; 346 were to be shot, including Yezhov, as well as the writer Isaac Babel, the journalist-propagandist Koltsov, and the dramaturge Meyerhold, three of the country's long-standing brightest lights, **each of whom Yezhov had implicated as spies.**[198]
>
> Note 198 (1041): 198. APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 177, l. 116–36.

This archival identifier will not help Kotkin's readers -- it is an error for this one: "APRF. f. 3. Op. 24. D. 377. l. 116-136." This is the "Stalin shooting list" of January 16, 1940 where Babel' and Meyerhold are listed, along with many of Yezhov's torturer-interrogators who were complicit in his mass murders.

The Murder Of Zinaida Reich (Correctly: Raikh)

Kotkin:

> Right around the same time, his [Meyerhold's – GF] second wife and lead actress, the Russified ethnic German Zinaida Reich, was brutally stabbed to death, including through the eyes, in their home.[41] None of her valuables were taken.[42] (649)
>
> Note 41 (1029): 41. Medvedeva, "Chornoye leto" 1939 goda," 318–66; Braun, "Vsevolod Meyerhold," 145–62; Morrison, *People's Artist*, 99–100 (citing RGALI f. 1929, op. 1, ed. khr. 655, l. 26ob.: Lina Prokofyeva) [sic]; "Zagadka smerti Zinaidi Raikha," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, Nov. 14, 2005.

Zinaida Raikh's murderers were caught, tried, and executed, A report ("spravka") on the burglars and murderers is in the Stalin lists.[18] Why doesn't Kotkin tell us that? Is it because it seems more sinister – as if Stalin, or Beria, or someone, might have had her murdered?

Kotkin's Omissions / Falsifications About September, 1939

September, 1939: The Soviet Seizure of Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia from Poland

> **There was no Soviet declaration of war.** Potyomkin summoned Polish ambassador Grzybowski at 3:15 a.m. and read aloud a note, in the name of Molotov, unilaterally abrogating the Soviet-Polish nonaggression pact; the envoy refused to take the document.[255] ... On the radio, Molotov announced a Soviet military action supposedly necessitated by the

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[18] http://stalin.memo.ru/spravki/13-059.HTM

> disappearance of the Polish state and the possible ensuing chaos. "The Soviet government regards as its sacred duty to proffer help to its Ukrainian and Belorussian brothers in Poland," he stated.[257] **In fact, the Polish government continued to function, having relocated to Kuty, in the southeast, on the Polish side of the border with Romania.** (683-4)

The sentences above in boldface are misleading because Kotkin conceals from his readers many crucial facts. Here are some of them:

1. There was no declaration of war because the USSR was not at war with Poland.

The myth of the "joint invasion" is a fabrication by the anticommunist Polish Government In Exile. It was rejected by the Allies at the time but picked up once the Cold War began in the 1940s. All the Western Allies recognized Soviet neutrality.[19]

Winston Churchill strongly supported the Soviet incursion into Eastern Poland. In his radio speech of October 1, 1939, printed in the *New York Times* on October 2, 1939, page 6, Churchill, at the time First Lord of the Admiralty, said:

> Russia has pursued a cold policy of self-interest. We could have wished that the Russian Armies should be standing on their present line as the friends and allies of Poland. But that the Russian Armies should stand on this line was clearly necessary for the safety of Russia against the Nazi menace.

Churchill also agreed that it was in the interest of the Allies to have the Red Army occupying these territories:

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[19] For evidence that the Soviet Union was neutral in the German-Polish War, see "Soviet Neutrality" at:
https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/mlg09/soviet_neutrality.html

> ... here these interests of Russia fall into the same channel as the interests of Britain and France.

2. The Polish state had indeed ceased to function. Neither the Polish Army nor Ambassador Grzybowski were able to contact it. Grzybowski did not even know where it was.

3. Later *the same day*, September 17, 1939, the Polish government crossed the border into Rumania, where it was interned and was no longer a government.[20]

4. The Germans had told the Soviets that if they did not intervene a pro-fascist Ukrainian state would be formed next to the Soviet border.[21]

5. No treaty was broken, since a "fundamental change in circumstances" had occurred.

> Rebus Sic Stantibus
>
> [Latin, At this point of affairs; in these circumstances.] A tacit condition attached to all treaties to the effect that they will no longer be binding as soon as the state of facts and conditions upon which they were based changes to a substantial degree.[22]
>
> Clausula rebus sic stantibus
>
> In public international law, *clausula rebus sic stantibus* (Latin for "things thus standing") is the legal doctrine allowing for treaties to become inapplicable because of a fundamental change of circumstances. It is

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[20] See the evidence at https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/mlg09/polish_leaders_flee.html and "Moscicki and His 'Resignation'" at https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/mlg09/moscicki_resignation.html

[21] See the evidence at https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/mlg09/no_partition.html

[22] *West's Encyclopedia of American Law*, edition 2. Copyright 2008 The Gale Group, Inc. - https://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/rebus+sic+stantibus

> essentially an "escape clause" that makes an exception to the general rule of *pacta sunt servanda* (promises must be kept).[23]

The Polish Government had lost contact with its ambassador to the Soviet Union and with the Polish Army, which was in the process of fleeing to internment in Romania (some parts interned themselves in the Baltic states). The German Army would have come up to the Soviet border if the Red Army had not intervened.

Kotkin hides from his readers that during the 1950s American professor George Ginsburgs published two articles that vindicate the Soviet position. Ginsburgs[24] concluded:

> For all these various reasons, it may safely be concluded that on this particular point the Soviet argument was successful, and that the "above considerations do not allow for any doubt that there did not exist a state of war between Poland and the U.S.S.R. in September, 1939." (72)

> In spite of scattered protests to the contrary, the consensus heavily sides with the Soviet view that by September 17, 1939, the Polish Government was in panic and full flight, that it did not exercise any appreciable control over its armed forces or its remaining territory, and that the days of Poland were indeed numbered.

> De facto, then, one may well accept the view that the Polish Government no longer functioned as an effective state power. In such a case the Soviet claim that Eastern Galicia was in fact a terra nullius may not be unjustified and could be sustained. (73)

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[23] At https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clausula_rebus_sic_stantibus

[24] George Ginsburgs, "A Case Study in the Soviet Use of International Law: Eastern Poland in 1939." *The American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (Jan., 1958), pp. 69-84.

The Lie Of The "Joint Military Parade"

> On the afternoon of September 23, **a ceremonial joint military parade** was held in Brest-Litovsk to mark the German handover of the town that morning to the Soviets. Presiding over the event, on an improvised low platform, were the respective tank commanders Heinz Guderian, who had been born just 300 miles away in Chełmno (Kulm), and Semyon Krivoshein. The two shook hands. But the Luftwaffe flew aggressively low passes, and the two sides tussled over the city's war booty.[273] (686)
>
> Note 273 (1035): 273. Krivoshein, *Mezhdubur'e*, 234–9; Schmidt-Scheeder, *Reporter der Hölle*, 101; *Deutscher Allgemeine Zeitung*, Sept. 25, 1939.

This is a falsehood. There was no "joint victory parade." Brest, on the border between the German and Soviet spheres of influence, was handed over to the Soviet commander General Semion M. Krivoshein by the German commander, Heinz Guderian.

Both men wrote about this event in their memoirs. Krivoshein wrote that a parade had been stipulated in the agreement between the Soviet and German commands and therefore he was forced to agree to one, though unwillingly. But Krivoshein refused to have a joint parade since the German troops had been rested for a week while his own had just made a night march of 120 km and would not have the spit-and-polish appearance necessary for a parade. The two commanders agreed that the German troops would march by while the Soviet troops, upon entering Brest, would stand on the side of the road and salute the German troops while the two orchestras played military marches.[25]

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[25] Krivoshein, *Mezhdubur'e*. Voronezh-Belgorod, 1964, p. 258.

Guderian called this a "farewell parade" and "ceremony of changing of flags," after which the German troops withdrew from Brest:

> Eine Abschiedsparade und ein Flaggenwechsel in Gegenwart des Generals Kriwoschein beendete unsern Aufenthalt in Brest-Litowsk.[26]
>
> A farewell parade and an exchange of flags in the presence of General Krivoshein ended our stop in Brest-Litovsk.

Krivoshein and — surprisingly — Guderian too agree that the Soviet forces prevented the Germans from driving off with trucks of booty looted from Brest. There is an excellent article online, in Russian, that gives yet more evidence.[27] Oleg Vishliov's well-documented refutation of the "joint parade" fiction is strongly recommended.[28]

The Soviet Union Was Not An Aggressor

> At least 70,000 Poles were killed and nearly 700,000 taken prisoner by the aggressors on both sides.[276]

There was no "aggression" on the Soviet side. Every country recognized Soviet neutrality. Kotkin has to know this. But his readers will *not* know it. Once again, Kotkin has falsified an important political-historical issue.

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[26] Heinz Guderian, *Erinnerungen eines Soldaten* (1951) p. 74. The preceding passage about the Brest events is taken from my book *Blood Lies: The Evidence that Every Accusation against Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union in Timothy Snyder's Bloodlands Is False.* (New York: Red Star Publishers, 2013), 329-330.

[27] "Myth: The Joint Soviet-German Parade in Brest" - «Миф: Совместный советско-германский парад в Бресте» -http://wiki.istmat.info./миф:совместный_парад_в_бресте

[28] Oleg Vishliov, *Nakanune 22 iiulia 1941 goda.* (Moscow 2001).108-110. The preceding passage about the Brest events is taken from my book *Blood Lies: The Evidence that Every Accusation against Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union in Timothy Snyder's Bloodlands Is False.* (New York: Red Star Publishers, 2013), 329-332.

The following passage from my book *Blood Lies* gives the evidence that the Soviets were not guilty of aggression.

* * * * *

The USSR did not invade Poland - and everybody knew it at the time

When Poland had no government, Poland was no longer a state. That meant that Hitler had nobody with whom to negotiate a cease-fire, or treaty.
Furthermore, the M-R Treaty's Secret Protocols were void, since they were an agreement about the state of Poland. But no state of Poland existed any longer.

Unless the Red Army came in to prevent it, there was nothing to prevent the Nazis from coming right up to the Soviet border. Or — as we now know they were in fact preparing to do — Hitler could have formed one or more pro-Nazi states in what had until recently been Eastern Poland. That way Hitler could have had it both ways. He could claim to the Soviets that he was still adhering to the "spheres of influence" agreement of the M-R Pact while in fact setting up a pro-Nazi, highly militarized fascist Ukrainian nationalist state on the Soviet border.

Once the Germans had told the Soviets that they, the German leadership, had decided that the Polish state no longer existed, then it did not make any difference whether the Soviets, or some hypothetical body of international jurists, agreed with them or not. In effect the Nazis were telling the Soviets that they felt free to come right up to the Soviet border. Neither the USSR nor any state would have permitted such a thing. Nor did international law demand it.

At the end of September a new secret agreement was concluded. In it the Soviet line of interest was to the East of the "sphere of influence" line decided upon a

month earlier in the Secret Protocol and published in *Izvestiia* and in the *New York Times* during September 1939.[29] In this territory Poles were a minority, even after the "polonization" (= making more "Polish") campaign of settling Poles in the area during the '20s and '30s.[30]

How do we know this interpretation of events is true?

How do we know the USSR did not commit aggression against, or "invade," Poland when it occupied Eastern Poland beginning on September 17, 1939 after the Polish Government had interned itself in Rumania? Here are nine pieces of evidence:

1. The Polish government did *not* declare war on USSR. The Polish government declared war on Germany when Germany invaded on September 1, 1939. It did not declare war on the USSR.

2. The Polish Supreme Commander Rydz-Smigly ordered Polish soldiers not to fight the Soviets, though he ordered Polish forces to continue to fight the Germans.[31]

3. The Polish President Ignaz Moscicki, interned in Rumania since Sept. 17, tacitly admitted that Poland no longer had a government.

4. The Rumanian government tacitly admitted that Poland no longer had a government.[32]

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[29] See the map here:
http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/mlg09/new_spheres_0939.html
[30] A map that shows ethnic and linguistic population is here:
http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/mlg09/curzonline.html
[31] See the documents at this page:
http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/mlg09/rydz_dont_fight.html
[32] See the evidence at
http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/mlg09/moscicki_resignation.html

The Rumanian position recognized the fact that Moscicki was lying when he claimed he had legally resigned on September 30. So the Rumanian government fabricated a story according to which Moscicki had already resigned back on September 15, just before entering Rumania and being interned (*NYT* 10.04.1939, p.12). But even Moscicki himself did not make this claim!

Rumania needed this legal fiction to try to sidestep the following issue: once Moscicki had been interned in Rumania — that is, from September 17 1939 on — he could not function as President of Poland. Since resignation is an official act, Moscicki could not resign once he was in Rumania.

For our present purposes here is the significant point: Both the Polish leaders and the Rumanian government recognized that Poland was bereft of a government once the Polish government crossed the border into Rumania and were interned there. Both Moscicki and Rumania wanted a legal basis — a fig-leaf — for such a government. *But they disagreed completely about this fig-leaf, which exposes it as what it was — a fiction.*

5. Rumania had a military treaty with Poland aimed against the USSR. Yet Rumania did not declare war on the USSR.

The Polish government later claimed that it had "released" Rumania from its obligations under this military treaty in return for safe haven in Rumania. But there is no evidence for this statement. It is highly unlikely that Rumania would have ever promised "safe haven" for Poland, since that would have been an act of hostility against Nazi Germany. Rumania was neutral in the war and, as discussed below, insisted upon interning the Polish government and disarming

the Polish forced once they had crossed the border into Rumania.

The real reason for Rumania's failure to declare war on the USSR is probably the one given in a *New York Times* article of September 19, 1939:

The Rumanian viewpoint concerning the Rumanian-Polish anti-Soviet agreement is that it would be operative only if a Russian attack came as an isolated event and not as a consequence of other wars.[33]

That means Rumania recognized that the Red Army was *not* allied with Germany in its war with Poland.

6. France did not declare war on the USSR, though it had a mutual defense treaty with Poland. See this page[34] for the reconstructed text of the "secret military protocol" of this treaty, which has been "lost" — which probably means that the French government still keeps its text secret.

7. England never demanded that the USSR withdraw its troops from Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine, the parts of the former Polish state occupied by the Red Army after September 17, 1939. On the contrary, the British government concluded that these territories should not be a part of a future Polish state. Even the Polish government-in-exile agreed![35]

8. The League of Nations did not determine the USSR had invaded a member state. Article 16 of the League of Nations Covenant required members to take trade and economic sanctions against any member who "resorted to war."[36] But no country took any sanctions

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[33] "Rumania Anxious; Watches Frontier." NYT 09.19.1939, p.8.
[34] http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/mlg09/m-rpact.html
[35] See the texts reproduced here:
http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/mlg09/maisky_101739_102739.html

against the USSR. No country broke diplomatic relations with the USSR over this action.

However, when the USSR attacked Finland in 1939 the League did vote to expel the USSR, and several countries broke diplomatic relations with it. This very different response tells us that the League viewed the Soviet action in the case of Poland as qualitatively different, as not a "resort to war."[37]

9. All countries accepted the USSR's declaration of neutrality. All, including the belligerent Polish allies France and England, agreed that the USSR was *not* a belligerent power, was *not* participating in the war. In effect they accepted the USSR's claim that it was neutral in the conflict.

Here is President Franklin Roosevelt's "Proclamation 2374 on Neutrality," November 4, 1939:

... a state of war unhappily exists between Germany and France; Poland; and the United Kingdom, India, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa ...[38]

FDR's "Statement on Combat Areas" of November 4, 1939, defines belligerent ports, British, French, and German, in Europe or Africa ...[39]

The Soviet Union is not listed among the belligerent states. That means the United States government did not consider the USSR to be at war with Poland.

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[36] See http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp#art16
[37] The League of Nations Resolution is reproduced here: http://www.ibiblio.org/pha/policy/1939/391214a.html
[38] At http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=15831&st=&st1=
[39] At http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=15833&st=&st1=

More Phony Charges of Torture

> Around this time, death sentences **based upon fabricated evidence** were implemented for cultural figures, as well as former NKVD first deputy Mikhail Frinovsky, former deputy foreign intelligence chief Spigelglas, former intelligence chief and Comintern operative Trilisser, Yefim Yevdokimov, and Redens, Stalin's ethnic Polish brother-in-law (part of a "Polish diversionary-espionage group"). ... **Under interrogation-torture**, Redens had admitted his complicity in the annihilation of innocent people while working atop the NKVD in Ukraine, Moscow, and Kazakhstan. His wife Anna—Nadya's sister—and their two boys were not touched, and the family continued to live in the elite House on the Embankment and were allowed to visit Svetlana at Zubalovo (but not the Kremlin).[204] (742)
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> Note 204 (1041): 204. Zhukovskii, *Lubianskaia imperiia NKVD*, 214–5.

Pages 214-5 of Zhukovskii's book are about Efim Evdokimov, another of Yezhov's killers. Kotkin must mean pages 217-8, which are about Redens.

There is no evidence of "fabricated evidence" against any of the unidentified "cultural figures," or against Frinovsky, Shpigelglas, Evdokimov, or Redens. Kotkin has invented – indeed, fabricated! – the business about Frinovsky and Redens being "tortured."

During the Gorbachev era there was an attempt to *rescind* Redens' Khrushchev-era "rehabilitation" – that is, to "un-rehabilitate" Redens -- because even Gorby's men, who were "rehabilitating" a very large number of people, thought Redens was guilty. But the statute of limitations – the time period during which his rehabilitation might have been withdrawn -- had long elapsed. So Redens remains "rehabilitated." And therefore we can have access to his NKVD investigative file, since as of 2018 the FSB is only

permitting access to the files of those persons who have been "rehabilitated."

Redens' file, now declassified, contains much useful evidence: see *Yezhov vs. Stalin*, Chapter 15, "The Testimony of Stanislav Frantsevich Redens." Redens testified at length and in detail about Yezhov's conspiracy against Stalin and the Soviet government. Kotkin does not mention any of this. Incompetence? Dishonesty?

In another chapter of the present book we examine Frinovsky's statement of April 11, 1939. We point out that Frinovsky is very clear that the Moscow Trials defendants were guilty; that the Zinovievist, Rightist, Trotskyist, and Yezhov-NKVD conspiracies, did exist and were serious threats. We point out that Kotkin does not reveal *any* of this to his readers.

An English translation of Frinovsky's statement has been on line since 2010.[40] Kotkin could have cited it. It would have helped his readers. Why didn't he?

Finland, The Russo-Finnish War / Winter War, And The Nazis

> Just as the Winter War had definitively pushed Finland into the German camp, the seizure of Bessarabia and northern Bukovina consolidated Romania as a staunch German ally.[78]
>
> Note 78 (1046): 78. Gafencu, *Last Days of Europe*, 390–2.

This is as phony a footnote as they come! In Kotkin's bibliography (1083 col. 2) the Gafencu book is by Yale University Press, 1948. As I write these lines I have that edition before me. There are no pages 390-2. The last page in it is numbered 239! What's more, the words "Bessarabia" and "Bukovina" do not occur in this book.

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[40] It may be read in English at https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/frinovskyeng.html

In the preceding footnote, number 77, Kotkin mentions that Romania had annexed Bessarabia. But *Kotkin does not reveal that Bessarabia had been taken by force from Soviet Russia.* Accordingly, Soviet Russia never recognized Romania's claim to Bessarabia. Britain, France, and Italy decided that Bessarabia should join Romania in the Treaty of Paris (1920). Japan did not ratify the treaty. The United States refused to do so as well, because Soviet Russia was not represented at the talks. Readers who do not study his footnotes, however, will not know this.

Since its founding in 1918 Finland had been extremely hostile to the Soviet Union. It had allowed foreign powers to use its territory to invade the fledgling Soviet Russia and had massacred communist and pro-communist rebels during the Finnish Civil War. It was no democracy – the very popular Finnish Communist Party was outlawed. Finland and Romania were already in the German camp and would have allied with Hitler in any case, since neutrality was impossible and they would never have sided with the Soviet Union.[41]

According to German Foreign Minister von Ribbentropp, Finland was egged on in its hostility to the USSR by England.

> England was behind Finland and according to intelligence received, England was also responsible for the failure of the Russo-Finnish negotiations last November.[42]

The Finnish political scientist and military historian Martti Turtola has written:

> It simply cannot be overlooked that Finland pursued a dangerously aggressive, menacing foreign policy prior to the war.[43]

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[41] See N.I.Baryshnikov, "The Soviet-Finnish War of 1939-1940." *Soviet Studies in History* 3 (1990), 43-60.

[42] *Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941. Documents from the German Foreign Office.* Ed. Raymond James Sontag and James Stuard Beddie. Washington, DC: Department of State, 1948, p. 130.

Kotkin omits all this important contextual information.

Who Dismembered Whom?

> Cripps believed it was possible to go beyond even the latter and get Britain and the Soviet Union to join forces against Germany, notwithstanding the Hitler-Stalin nonaggression and trade pacts, **the dismemberment of Poland**, the aggression against Finland, and now the Soviet annexation of the Baltic states.[85] A lawyer rather than a diplomat, Cripps was capable of criticizing Soviet realities, but he had defended Stalin's arrests of British nationals as spies in **fabricated** trials, as well as **the Soviet Union's 1939 seizure of eastern Poland**. (776)
>
> Note 85 (1046) is about Sir Stafford Cripps.

Cripps, not Kotkin, was correct. The trials were not "fabricated." In previous chapters we have shown that Kotkin can cite no evidence that they were. But "fabricated trials" is an essential component of the Anti-Stalin Paradigm. So the mere lack of evidence cannot stop Kotkin and others from *falsely claimin*g that they were fabricated. (For the positive evidence that they were *not* fabricated, see *The Moscow Trials As Evidence*.)

Kotkin does not mention that *it was Poland that had "dismembered" Soviet Russia* in in the Polish-Soviet War of 1919-1921. In defeat, Russia was forced to give Poland Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia. In 1939 the USSR took back from Poland the areas that Poland had taken by force from Soviet Russia.

A discussion of the Curzon Line and the Treaty of Riga of 1921 is essential for any understanding of this issue. But the Curzon line is

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[43] Martti Turtola: 'Guilty or Innocent? Approaches to the Winter War in Research and Memoirs', in *Yearbook of Finnish Foreign Policy*. (Helsinki; 1990), 45. See the Finnish Wikipedia entry about Martti Turtola at https://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martti_Turtola

only mentioned once in this huge book (690) and is never explained.[44]

[44] For the Curzon Line, see "The Curzon Line" at https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/mlg09/curzonline.html and the whole article, "Did the Soviet Union Invade Poland in September 1939? NO!" at https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/mlg09/page_of_links.html I also discuss it in Blood Lies (see the Index).

Chapter 14. A Little Source Criticism by Kotkin! Why Doesn't He Do It All The Time?

Poland, a nasty regime sandwiched directly between two nastier ones, sought a middle way. Some members of Polish ruling circles latched on to the idea of throwing in their lot with Hitler to deflect him farther eastward, even at the high cost of territorial concessions, and a few high-placed Poles fantasized about a joint Polish-Nazi attack on the USSR, an aggression in which they imagined Poland could wrest Ukraine from the Soviets, a delusion that Nazi officials cynically encouraged.[86] (596)

Note 86 (1022): 86. DGFP, series D, DAP, V: 167–8 (Ribbentrop and Beck, Jan. 26, 1939); Gromyko et al., *SSSR v bor'be za mir nakanune,* 171–3 (AVP RF, f. 059, op. 1, pap. 300, d. 2075, l. 46–9: Surits, Jan. 27, 1939); *God krizisa, I*: 194–6; Mel'tiukhov, *Sovtesko-pol'skie voiny* (2001); Haslam, *Struggle for Collective Security,* 160–4. **Citing hearsay from Hans-Adolf von Moltke, Luftwaffe Lieutenant-General Alfred Gerstenberg, the German air force attaché in Poland in 1938 (who would fall into Soviet captivity and be interrogated on Aug. 17, 1945) would assert that Hermann Göring, while traveling to Poland on the pretext of hunting, bribed Beck to work on behalf of Nazi Germany. Gerstenberg knew how much the Soviets despised Beck.** *Tainy diplomatii Tret'ego Reikka* [sic; should be "Reikha"], 581 (TsA FSB, d. N-21147, t. 1, l. 35–53).

Gerstenberg's information about Beck is at fourth hand: Göring – von Moltke – Gerstenberg – interrogator. That does not mean it is false – but it does not mean that it is true either. Here is the text, from *Tainy diplomatii tret'ego reikha,* 581:

> Question: It is well known that Goering often visited Poland. Was he really only interested in hunting in Poland?
>
> Answer: Goering often went to Poland and other countries to hunt, but in reality he was not so much interested in hunting as in carrying out political tasks under this guise. Before my departure for Poland Goering told me that he would be travelling to Poland for hunting and would facilitate my task.
>
> And in fact in 1938 Goering arrived in Poland, where he went hunting together with Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs de Beck. During this hunting trip Goering gave Beck a check for 300,000 marks, after which Beck began to strongly champion friendship with Germany.
>
> Question: How do you know that Goering bribed Beck?
>
> Answer: I learned that Beck had been bribed by Goering from Moltke, German ambassador to Poland, who took part in the hunting trip. In this connection Moltke said that Beck would not escape from our clutches.

In today's Poland Beck is honored as a national hero. So Gerstenberg's testimony is threatening to the present Polish regime and its dishonest glorification of the racist and fascist Polish regime of the 1920s and 1930s. In 2013 the moderator of H-Poland, an academic mailing list hosted by Michigan State University, refused a post of mine about Gerstenberg's revelation. I was informed that the members of the board of the Polish Studies Association "have concurred that this is not a topic that we wish to

pursue on H-Poland."[1] In other words, "If the Polish government and its propagandists find it uncomfortable, don't discuss it."

Kotkin is correct to point out that Gerstenberg's testimony is hearsay. And *this* raises an interesting question: Why does Kotkin employ source criticism here, when the fact alleged makes anticommunists like Joseph Beck and the pre-war Polish leadership look bad, while failing to use source criticism when the facts alleged reflect badly upon Stalin and the Soviet leadership? Why does he "cherry-pick" when to use source criticism?

An objective historian, determined to discover the truth at all costs, even if it should contradict his own bias, is obliged to employ source criticism *all* the time. But as the analysis in this book amply shows, Kotkin is simply not such a historian.

Moreover, Kotkin has "buried" this important fact at the end of a long footnote. Few of his readers will see it. It should have been promoted to the main text.

Did Stalin Praise Hitler For Murdering His Rivals?

> *Izvestiya* dedicated four columns on its front page to Hitler's Reichstag speech about the Night of the Long Knives.[315] "What a guy [molodets]," Stalin exclaimed to his inner circle, according to Mikoyan's later recollections. "Well done. Knows how to act!"[316] (175)
>
> Note 316 (956): Nekrich, 1941, 19 (citing a personal conversation in the 1950s with Surits, the envoy in question).

In reality this story is *not* in the 1995 Russian edition of Nekrich's book, the one that Kotkin cites here (see his bibliography at page 1100, column 1), though Nekrich does claim that Stalin was sympathetic to Hitler's action.

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[1] Email to me from the H-Poland moderator, December 19, 2013.

This would be fourth-hand information: Stalin – Surits – Mikoyan – Nekrich. But let's pursue this story farther. Valentin Berezhkov, one of Stalin's translators, also claimed that Mikoyan told *him*!

> Когда в 1934 году Гитлер уничтожил своего соратника, руководителя штурмовых отрядов Эрнста Рема, и других командиров штурмовых отрядов СА, Сталин дал этой кровавой бойне высокую оценку. Микоян рассказывал мне, что на первом же после убийства Рема заседании политбюро Сталин сказал:
>
> - Вы слыхали, что произошло в Германии? Гитлер, какой молодец! Вот как надо поступать с политическими противниками![2]

When Hitler annihilated his comrade-in-arms, the head of the SA (*Sturmabteilung*) Ernst Röhm and other commanders of the SA assault detachments in 1934, Stalin gave this bloody massacre a high rating.

> Mikoyan told me that at the very first meeting of the politburo after Röhm's murder Stalin said:
>
> - Have you heard what happened in Germany? Hitler, what a great fellow! That's how to deal with political opponents!

Berezhkov says nothing about Surits. He claims that Mikoian told him, Berezhkov, directly.

In his autobiography *Tak Bylo* ("Thus It Was") Mikoian tells a very similar story.

> ... когда Гитлер, стремясь укрепить свою власть, послал своих соратников в казармы штурмовиков и учинил там расправу на месте без суда и следствия над верхушкой левых штурмовиков -

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[2] Бережков Валентин Михайлович. Как я стал переводчиком Сталина. At https://royallib.com/read/beregkov_valentin/kak_ya_stal_perevodchikom_stalina.html#20480

Ремом и другими, это поразительное зверство вызвало всеобщее возмущение. И я был поражен, когда Сталин, возвращаясь несколько раз к этому факту, восхищался смелостью, упорством Гитлера, который пошел на такую меру, чтобы укрепить свою власть. "Вот молодец, вот здорово, - говорил Сталин. - Это надо уметь!" (374/446)

... when Hitler, striving to strengthen his power, sent his comrades-in-arms to the attack room barracks and carried out the massacre on the spot, without trial, of the leadership of the left-wing SA. Röhm and others, this amazing atrocity caused general outrage. And I was amazed when Stalin, returning several times to this fact, admired the boldness and persistence of Hitler, who took such measures to confirm his power. "There's a great fellow, that's great," said Stalin. "We must learn how to do this!"

We can't check this specific story by means of other sources. As far as we can tell, only Mikoian claimed to have heard Stalin say this.

What about the reliability of Mikoian's memoirs? Michael Ellman, a ferociously anti-Stalin scholar, has his doubts. At the very end, Mikoian – here we should write "Mikoian" – regrets the lack of democracy in the USSR. Ellman writes:

> *Tak bylo* is lively and interesting, but in some cases one has the suspicion that what is written reflects the views of the editor [Mikoian's son] at least as much as those of his late father. Did A. I. Mikoian really dictate or write the final paragraph of the book or did the editor add it to make the book more palatable to modern readers? (141)

Ascertaining to what extent Mikoian's memoirs are accurate would require detailed checking of particular incidents against other sources. For example, neither Khrushchev nor Simonov remembers the bold speech

> Mikoian recalls giving at the October (1952) Plenum, and this speech differs substantially from Efremov's, Mukhitdinov's, and Shepilov's reports of what took place at that dramatic and sinister meeting ... It cannot be excluded that Mikoian here reports what in retrospect he thinks he should have said at the plenum rather than what he actually said. (148)[3]

We can go farther than Ellman. For example: we know that the defendants in the three Moscow Trials were guilty of at least the crimes to which they confessed. We also know that the Military conspirators, and specifically the commanders tried and executed with Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky in June, 1937, were also guilty. But Mikoian claims they were all innocent!

Mikoian tells the tale that Stalin was "prostrated" at the beginning of the war, was almost unable to act at all, and acted as though the others on the Politburo were going to arrest him. This is not only unconfirmed by anyone else in a position to know – it is clear that it is false. We have good evidence that Stalin was very active from the outset of the war.

Mikoian defends Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" of February 25, 1956, to the XX Party Congress. We know today that every accusation in that speech levelled against Stalin and Lavrentii Beria is provably false.[4] In his memoir Mikoian repeats a number of these false accusations of Khrushchev's, and upholds Khrushchev's speech.

Gabriel Gorodetsky, whose book Kotkin cites *fifty times*, has this to say about Mikoian's credibility:

> A. Mikoyan, the Politburo member and Commissar of Foreign Trade, whose memoirs have given rise to a number of false interpretations of Stalin's policies at

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[3] *Slavic Review*, Vol. 60, No. 1 (Spring, 2001), 140-150.
[4] See Furr, Khrushchev Lied.

> the time, suggested that Schulenburg gave Dekanozov a clear-cut warning.
>
> ...Much as this revelation captures the imagination, it is not borne out at all by the actual records of the meeting.[5]

So it appears that Mikoian lied a great deal in his memoir! At the very least it is a highly unreliable source. The story about Stalin praising Hitler for killing his rivals in the Nazi Party comes only from Mikoian. Therefore, absent independent corroboration, it should not be accepted as true.

Of course Kotkin could and should have known all this. When including this incident in his book Kotkin should have informed his readers about Mikoian's bias and unreliability concerning Stalin. So why does he include this story? Evidently, to associate Stalin with Hitler – a propaganda move, beloved by anticommunists.

Kotkin Repeats Rumors By Beria's Murderers

Kotkin:

> Beria would now systematically annihilate Lakoba's kin and associates.[47] (507)
>
> Note 47 (1010): 47. This started with Mgaloblishvili, whom Beria had chosen to lead the honor guard accompanying Lakoba's casket home from Tblisi and who was arrested for "ties." Popov and Oppokov, "Berievshchina" (1991, no. 1), 48–9. **The story goes that** Beria's men beat Sarie to testify that Lakoba had wanted to sell Abkhazia to Turkey; she **evidently** refused, even when they beat her fourteen-year-old son Rauf in front of her. She **was said to have died** of torture in her cell. Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, 495–6.

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[5] Gorodetsky, *Grand Delusion: Stalin and the German Invasion of Russia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1999, 212.

"The story goes," "evidently," "was said to have died" – what kind of history is this? These are, what – rumors? From no source?

Popov and Oppokov (48) quote from an interrogation of Petr Afanas'evich Sharia by Khrushchev's men of August 15, 1953. Sharia states that Mgaloblishvili accompanied Lakoba's casket. But he says nothing about his arrest. This interrogation, or statement, or whatever, of Sharia's – if it exists – is not printed in the 1086-page volume *Politbiuro i delo Beria* published in 2013. But the same material is summarized in the Preface (*Predislovie*) to this book, pages 6-7, without any references.

Medvedev has no evidence whatsoever for the horrible story about torturing Lakoba's wife and son. The Russian language Wikipedia page about Saria Lakoba states that she died in a prison hospital, not in a cell. The only reference is to a book of memoirs, impossible to verify.[6] The references on the Russian Wikipedia page on Lakoba have no such evidence either.[7]

This story is one of many attacks on Beria in Kotkin's book. Beria was murdered by Khrushchev, abetted by the other Presidium [formerly Politburo] members. This was an unprecedented event in Soviet history. Moreover, Khrushchev and Molotov agree that there was no evidence against Beria when he was either arrested or – more likely – murdered, on June 26, 1953. Therefore, in order to justify this act and the violent repression of persons associated with Beria that followed, Khrushchev et al. proceeded to invent stories about various crimes of Beria.

Popov and Oppokov summarized Khrushchev-era NKVD and judicial materials from the period of Beria's arrest. Medvedev wrote his book to curry favor with Khrushchev, and uses Khrushchev-era attacks on Stalin and Beria as his evidence.

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[6] At https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Лакоба,_Сария_Ахмедовна

[7] In a book that Kotkin cites, though not here, Donald Rayfield tells the same story but cites no evidence whatsoever. Evidently, he had no evidence: *Stalin and His Hangmen: An Authoritative Portrait of a Tyrant and Those Who Served Him*. New York: Viking, 2004, 303.

It is simply not possible that Kotkin, who has spent decades studying Soviet history of the Stalin period, does not know these things. But it is certain that very few of his readers will know about them.

This Khrushchev-era attack of slander against Beria and his associates means that it is irresponsible to simply take at face value all the crimes attributed to Beria during the Khrushchev period and repeated during the Gorbachev period. We know many of them are lies. We have already said something about the provable falsehoods in one of the most important and most influential anti-Beria books of the Gorbachev period, *Oni ne molchali*.

Don't Believe Rudenko

> Inside the Soviet police, first-class sadists were fewer than one might think. Boris Rodos, in that context, stood out, a "chopper" (kolun) who could reliably smash those under "interrogation" to near death. He would snap a whip across a prisoner's legs, continuing after he collapsed to the floor, pour freezing water over him, then force him to scoop his diarrhea with his tin cup and swallow, then shout, 'sign! Sign!"[272] (548)
>
> Note 272 (1015): 272. Petrov, "Rodos."

This is the article by Nikita Petrov, "Rodos: ostrov arkhipelaga Gulaga," in *Novaia gazeta*, September 22, 2010 (1102).[8] In it, Petrov claims to be quoting from the appeal to Stalin of February 20, 1940, of Belosudov, a Komsomol official, who stated:

> я попросил Родоса сводить меня в уборную помочиться, а он говорит: «Бери стакан и мочись». Я это сделал и спросил, куда девать стакан. Он схватил его и поднес мне ко рту и давай вливать в рот, а сам кричит: «Пей,

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[8] "NG" is an ideologically anti-Stalin newspaper of which former Soviet President and Communist Party First Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev is part owner.

говно в человечьей шкуре, или давай показания». Я, будучи вне себя, да что говорить, для меня было все безразлично, а он кричит: «Подпиши, подпиши!» — и я сказал: «Давай, я все подпишу, мне теперь все равно.»

I asked Rodos to take me to the bathroom to urinate, and he said: "Take a glass and urinate." I did it and asked where to put the glass. He grabbed it and brought it to my mouth and wanted to pour into my mouth, while he himself shouted: "Drink, shit in human skin, or confess." I, being beside myself, what can I say, I didn't care any more, and he shouts: "Sign, sign!" - and I said: "All right, I will sign everything, I don't care now."

If this statement is genuine, Belosudov claimed that Rodos made him urinate into a cup, then *tried* to make him drink the urine or sign, whereupon Belosudov agreed to sign. It was *not* "diarrhea," and Belosudov did *not* drink the urine. Where does Kotkin get these disgusting lies from, anyway?

What's more, Petrov is *not* quoting from Belosudov's appeal to Stalin. He is quoting from Prosecutor Roman Rudenko's February, 1956, recommendation to Khrushchev's Supreme Court to deny Rodos' appeal for clemency of his death sentence. It is in the volume *Politbiuro i Delo Beria* (2013), 864-866. Kotkin makes no use of this important document collection. It is also online at the excellent Istmat.info site (http://istmat.info/node/22351)

This document is part of Khrushchev's attack on Beria, whom he and the other Presidium members murdered, whether judicially, in December, 1953, or in fact, on June 26, 1953. We know that Rudenko lied in defense of Khrushchev's falsifications. Matthew Lenoe points this out in his book on the Kirov assassination, and Lenoe is extremely anti-Stalin.[9]

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[9] See Furr, Kirov 128-129 for further discussion, and citations to Lenoe's book.

For example: Rodos is charged with taking part in frame-ups against a number of high-ranking Party members, including Pavel Postyshev (*Politbiuro i delo Beria*, 864). **But we know that Postyshev was not innocent**! We now have the documentation that he was murdering Party members in the Ukraine, for which he was dismissed from the CC, then expelled from the Party, then tried and executed. (See the discussion in Chapter 14 for the evidence.)

So it is Rodos who is the victim of a frame-up here. We can't just "believe" Rudenko, who was busy doing Khrushchev's dirty work, either to frame Beria – if Beria were indeed still alive – or to justify Beria's murder.

Why was Rodos prosecuted in the first place? If he had beaten prisoners at the order of the head of the NKVD, Beria, as charged, then he was just doing what he had been told to do – certainly not a capital crime. And we can't even establish that as a fact.

Perhaps Rodos refused to fabricate some anti-Beria stories, and so was executed. It seems that this is what almost happened to General Pavel Sudoplatov – except that Sudoplatov succeeded in convincing the prosecution that he was insane, and so spent two years in a hospital, and then fifteen years in prison (see the discussion later in this chapter).

Kotkin must know this. But whether he does know it and is lying, or does not know and is simply incompetent, the result is the same: his readers are deceived.

Don't Believe Serov, Either

> Also on May 19, Beria had executed a confidential task: Radek had his head fatally smashed on the floor of the Verkhne-Uralsk prison, where he was serving a ten-year term. Rumors were loosed that Radek had been killed in a fight with a fellow inmate. In fact, the murder was instigated by a specially dispatched NKVD team—so much for the promise Stalin had made to

> not execute Radek, in exchange for testimony that Radek had duly delivered against Trotsky and Trotskyites.[315] (Sokolnikov, another defendant in the January 1937 Trotskyite trial who had been spared death in exchange for his testimony, would also be murdered in prison, in Tobolsk on May 21.) (637)
>
> Note 315 (1028): 15. APRF, f. 3, op. 24, d. 455, l. 33–5 (June 1956 note from KGB chief Serov to the Central Committee); d. 448, l. 184, 189 (testimony by operatives Fedotov and Matusov). See also Petrov and Petrov, *Empire of Fear*, 69.[10]

Kotkin has not done his homework! Serov's note is full of provable lies. My article "Nikita Petrov's 'Amalgam'" discusses this document thoroughly; it may be consulted at the URL in this note, together with an English translation of Serov's fabrication.[11]

Convicted Without Evidence, Or Did Stalin Kidnap and Murder General Kulik's Wife?

> Two days before, Stalin had colluded with Beria to have Kulik's beautiful Jewish second wife, Kira Simonich, kidnapped. The despot then pretended he had no idea where she might be, advising Kulik to remarry and forget the "nympho female spy." She was the daughter of the former okhranka chief in Helsinki who had been executed by the Cheka in 1919; her first husband had been a NEPman with foreign connections; her two brothers, one of whom had been an officer for the Whites, were arrested for espionage; her mother left for Italy in 1934. Nonetheless, Kulik

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[10] Petrov and Petrov, *Empire of Fear*, was published in 1956. It is useless as evidence for anything.

[11] At https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/furr_petrovs_amalgam.pdf PDF format reproduces both Cyrillic and Latin fonts.

had refused Voroshilov's entreaties to divorce the fetching Kira.[288] (758)

Note 288 (1044): 288. Kira was **evidently** seized on May 5, 1940, by a squad overseen by Merkulov; she was executed by Blokhin without indictment or trial. "Beria protiv Kulika," in Bobrenev and Riazantsev, *Palachi i zhertvy*, 197–264 (esp. 195–201, 211–3); Sokolov, *Istreblennye marshaly*, 300–1; Leskov, *Stalin i zagovor Tukhachevskogo*, 53–5; Montefiore, *Court of the Red Tsar*, 293–4.

Kotkin must think that Stalin and the NKVD simply did not have anything else to do! What was the point of this supposed kidnapping and murder?

In *Stalin i zagovor Tukhachevskogo* Valentin Leskov *supports* the theory that Tukhachevsky and the other commanders were in fact guilty! Kotkin does not tell his readers that. In the same passage cited by Kotkin, Leskov says that Kira was the daughter of the former head of Tsarist intelligence in Helsingfors (today Helsinki), shot by the Soviets in 1919. Leskov also opines that Kira was probably not murdered but recruited as a counterintelligence agent in the West. (55) Kotkin cites Leskov's book. Why doesn't Kotkin tell us what Leskov thinks? Because *that* story does not have an anti-Stalin tendency?

Bobrenev and Riazantsev was published in 1993. The updated edition, Zaika and Bobrenev, was published in 2011. It contains the same long chapter: "Beria protiv Kulika," pp. 528-618. The documents quoted in it in short excerpts are published in full in the volumes *Politbiuro i delo Beria* (Moscow: Kurchkovo Pole, 2012) and *Delo Beria. Prigovor. Obzhalovaniiu ne podlezhit.* (Moscow: MDF, 2012).

Boris Sokolov, author of *Istreblennye marshaly*, was expelled from the Free Historical Society for "an unacceptable attitude towards historical sources and incorrect citation of the work of others."[12]

Gennadii Ospov, sociologist and member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, has called Sokolov "a most indefatigable historical falsifier."[13] This kind of thing is very unusual, all the more so because Sokolov is fanatically anti-Stalin, a bias common Russian academics.

Here, indeed, is an issue that demands source criticism. What is the status of these confession-interrogations? For example, those of Vlodzimirsky, who was tried and executed in December, 1953, as one of Beria's "gang" and who was trying to escape his fate, quite possibly by saying whatever his interrogators wanted him to say? But in his interrogation of August 4, 1953 – if it is genuine -- Vlodzimirsky said only that he had indeed kidnapped Kulik's wife and brought her to prison commandant Blokhin. He denied knowing anything after that, even the reason that she was seized.

All the documents in these collections are Khrushchev-era stuff that blacken Beria's name. Beria's men were under great pressure to accuse him of crimes. Even so, a number of them were executed in December, 1953. Others, like Boris Rodos, were executed during the following years.

General Pavel Sudoplatov, arrested in 1953, survived, spent fifteen years in detention and then in prison for, supposedly, being an "accomplice of Beria" in planning to overthrow the Soviet government, experimentation on people, kidnappings and murders. There is no evidence that he did any of these things – any more than there is that Beria was guilty of any of them.

Sudoplatov wrote that he was arrested and imprisoned because he refused to fabricate lies about Beria's activities. It is reasonable to assume that other NKVD men like Vlodzimirsky limited what they said to the minimum. In Vlodzimirsky's case it was not enough. He

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[12] See the Society's statement of May 13, 2016, at https://volistob.ru/statements/postanovlenie-soveta-volnogo-istoricheskogo-obshchestva-ob-isklyuchenii-bv-sokolova

[13] Quoted in the article on Sokolov at http://53kanal.in.ua/novosti-ukrainy/item/3649-1453405599

was tried, convicted, and executed by Khrushchev & Co. in December, 1953.

Kotkin is quick to claim that the interrogations and confessions of the defendants at the three Moscow Trials, plus all those of the high-ranking officers in the Tukhachevsky Affair, should be regarded as fabrications due to "torture." He has no *evidence* that they were tortured – he simply assumes they were.

So why doesn't Kotkin make the same assumption here, in the case of Vlodzimirsky's interrogation-confessions? Presumably, because *these* confessions accuse Stalin, either indirectly or – as Kotkin claims here – directly.

Former NKVD man Gul'st, the partial text of whose interrogation is dated September 1, 1953, told a story quite different from Vlodzimirsky's. Vlodzimirsky had not mentioned Gul'st's participation. (PiDB 329) Former Prosecutor (*Prokuror*) of the USSR Viktor M. Bochkov who was interrogated on January 24, 1954, claimed that he remembered nothing about any kidnapping of Kira Kulik, (PiDB 572).

None of these versions claims that "Stalin colluded with Beria," as Kotkin states. Evidently Kotkin fabricated this falsehood himself.

How Many Poles Were Deported And From Where?

> In eastern Poland, the NKVD had deported more than 1 million of the 13.5 million residents to labor camps. (771)

There is no footnote, no evidence given, for this statement. Here are the two closest footnotes:

> Note 60 (1045): 60. Gross observes that "the Polish Military underground organization, the ZWZ, which thrived under the Nazi occupation in spite of persistent Gestapo efforts to destroy it, never had a

> chance under the NKVD." Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*, 148.
>
> Note 61 (1045-6): 61. Gross, "Nature of Soviet Totalitarianism." Because Poland underwent Nazi and Soviet occupations simultaneously, it would seem the ideal (if that is the word) place to make the case for "totalitarianism" as a concept encompassing both regimes, yet Gross, a proponent of the term, also noted significant differences between the nature and consequences of Nazi and Soviet rule. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad*, 230–1.

The "significant differences" between the Germans and the Soviets noted by Gross include the fact that, unlike the Nazis, the Soviets were anti-racist, and thus had great support from the Ukrainians, Belorussians, and especially the Jews in the newly-reclaimed territories of Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine. These lands had been taken by force by Poland from Soviet Russia in 1921. The Soviets liberated Jews hiding in the woods from the Nazis *and from the Polish Home Army,* a violently anti-Semitic organization praised as "heroes" in today's Poland because of their anticommunist terrorism. Communist partisans welcomed Jews into their units; the Home Army murdered them.

The Polish government severely repressed the languages and cultures of all non-Poles there, restricted their religious practices, and discriminated against them in other ways. Poland also sent many thousands of Polish "settlers," often military men, to "polonize" (make more Polish) these areas. These are the people – the Polish imperialist infrastructure – whom the Soviets deported.

Both works by Gross are from the 1980s, when the primary sources we have now were not available. They are worthless now. Gross himself, a ferocious anticommunist, is far from objective. The actual number of persons deported from Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine (formerly Eastern Poland) is 201,000.[14]

Kotkin has to be aware of this important and well-known document collection. But he does not cite it. Perhaps this is because the number of deportees is 1/5 of Gross's figures which therefore make the Soviets "look worse."

What Happened To Bronislava Metallikova-Poskrebysheva?

Stalin had allowed Beria to imprison Poskryobyshev's beloved wife as a "Trotskyite" in 1939. (Beria had sent a large basket of fruit to their two baby girls; he then executed their mother.)[17] (889)

Note 17 (1067): 17. Recollections of one of Poskryobyshev's two daughters, Natalya: http://sloblib.narod.ru/slob/poskreb.htm. Poskrebyshev's first wife, Jadwiga, a Pole, had died in 1929 of tuberculosis.

There are a number of important matters to note about Kotkin's statement:

1. Beria had no authority to imprison or execute anybody. The NKVD could not even arrest anyone without an order from a Prosecutor. The judicial organs conducted the trials and issued sentences, which were carried out by the NKVD. In the case of Aleksandr Poskrebyshev's wife, this would probably have been the Prosecutor of the Soviet Union. Poskrebyshev was Stalin's personal secretary, meaning, in charge of documentation. He worked very closely with Stalin.

2. The daughter to whose brief online memoir Kotkin refers did not remember her mother – she was only one year old at the time. Everything she wrote, including the "basket of fruit," is hearsay.

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[14] *Stalinskie deportatsii 1928-1953*, p. 791.

3. There is little information about Bronislava Metallikova-Poskrebysheva. Evidently, no documents about her purported trial, imprisonment, and execution have been located. One source says she was arrested on April 29, 1939 [15]. Another states that she was arrested on September 8, 1940.[16]

4. The Russian Wikipedia page states that "her fate is unknown."[17]

Kotkin, like all historians, has the obligation to inform his readers about these evidentiary matters. The simple fact is that We Don't Know – words that every honest historian must be ready to utter (or to write), instead of fabricating, or repeating, rumor as bogus "fact.".

According to Volkogonov, who evidently interviewed Galina, Poskrebyshev's and Bronislava's daughter, Beria continued to "visit with our family" (*byvat' v nashei sem'e*), and Stalin knew the family well. Galina, naturally, believes that her mother was innocent. But that is not evidence.[18]

All sources agree that Bronislava Metallikova-Poskrebysheva was rehabilitated on October 10, 1957. That means that her NKVD investigation file should be available to researchers.[19] It should have long been available to her immediate family. But evidently no one has requested it – or, at least, no one has published anything about it. Kotkin should have pointed that out, too.

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[15] At http://lists.memo.ru/d22/f333.htm#n55

[16] At https://web.archive.org/web/20101027221834/http://russcience.euro.ru/repress/kom/1941/metallikova.htm

[17] "Её дальнейшая судьба остаётся неизвестной." At https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Металликова-Поскрёбышева,_Бронислава_Соломоновна

[18] Volkogonov, *Stalin. Politicheskii portret* (Moscow: Novosti, 1992), Chapter 3. There are many different editions both in print and online. This information is in Chapter 3, "Vybor i Bor'ba."

[19] As of this writing (late 2018) the FSB Archivists are only allowing access to files of "rehabilitated" person.

Chapter 15. Conclusion

In historical scholarship, falsification, plagiarism, and fabrication were devastating types of fraud. They might not be indictable in a court of law, but they undermined the very foundations of scholarly authority. What was more, they tested the profession's ability and willingness to police itself.

- Peter Charles Hoffer[1]

Implications

The implications of Kotkin's virtual wholesale falsification of 1930s Soviet history go far beyond Kotkin himself, even beyond the field of Soviet history.

Certainly, one should never take Kotkin himself at his word. When, for example, the third volume of his Stalin biography is published, every reader should be aware that any and all negative statements about Stalin and those in the Soviet leadership who supported him – Malenkov, Kaganovich, Beria, Molotov – must be double-checked. That is what we have done, in great detail, in the present book.

Judging from other falsified works masquerading as scholarship such as Timothy Snyder's *Bloodlands*, we might predict that in his third volume Kotkin will accuse Stalin of having Solomon M. Mikhoels, a well-known director of Jewish theater in the USSR, murdered in 1948. The documents purporting to prove this are crude forgeries. But one can only discover this by careful study. Unless Kotkin undertakes such a study he is destined to repeat this scholarly canard, one fashioned originally by Russian Zionist writers.

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[1] Peter Charles Hoffer. *Past Imperfect. Facts, Fictions, Fraud: American History from Bancroft and Parkman to Ambrose, Bellesiles, Ellis, and Goodwin*. New York: Public Affairs, 2004, 139.

Perhaps Kotkin will repeat the claim that, driven by antisemitism, Stalin might have deported Soviet Jews to Siberia; that Stalin "framed" the medical doctors who had treated Politburo member Andrei Zhdanov in 1948; that he masterminded the frame-up of Soviet doctors in 1952-53; that he "framed" the military commanders arrested, tried, and executed for treason during World War II, such as General Dmitry Pavlov; that he "framed" the Leningrad Party leaders tried and convicted (and some of them executed) in the "Leningrad Affair" of 1947-1950; and so on. There is no evidence to support these claims, frequently made by anticommunists, and in some cases we have evidence to *dis*prove them. But will Kotkin's readers know that?

Kotkin will use Khrushchev-era and Gorbachev-era sources. But Khrushchev and his men, and Gorbachev and *his* men, lied and fabricated about Stalin and the Stalin period, to an extent that can scarcely be overestimated.

One would think that professional historians of the Soviet Union would have figured this out! But these anti-Stalin lies were so useful in the anticommunist struggle, both during the Cold War and since, that they have never been seriously questioned. They are still not questioned! Kotkin does not question them in Volume Two. There is no reason to think that he will suddenly begin to do so in his final volume. Indeed, he can't do so, for if he did he would deconstruct, disprove, virtually the whole of Volume Two, as we have done in the present study.

Because of the power of bias by omission – simply not mentioning evidence that contradicts one's preconceived paradigm or idea – double-checking Kotkin's fact-claims on these matters is not going to be an easy task even for those who are familiar with the primary and secondary sources in the field. The 75-year period by which, in Russia, documents are to be declassified has given us some access, at least, to primary documents from the 1930s and before. But it will be a long time before this 75-year time period elapses for events of the post-war period. The 75th anniversary of Stalin's death and the murder – judicial or otherwise – of Lavrentii Beria, will not occur until 2028. Even then, there is no guarantee

that the Russian government of that day will indeed declassify all the primary documents related to the events of this period.

For the vast majority of Kotkin's potential readers, those who are not familiar with the primary sources, it will be impossible to double-check Kotkin's fact-claims. And dishonest or lazy scholars have plenty of dishonest scholarship from which to cherry-pick any conclusion their bias suggests. So we can predict, sadly but with confidence, that Kotkin's falsifications in that future volume will be accepted at face value by reviewers and by most readers, just as his falsifications in this second volume have duped them.

Some of Kotkin's earlier work – specifically, volume one of his Stalin biography – has been better. But in this second volume Kotkin has permitted his anticommunist biases to ruin his research. As we have demonstrated in the present book, nothing Kotkin writes that is negative about Stalin and those closest to him is true. *Nothing!*

Readers Want Bread, Kotkin Gives Them A Stone.[2]

Is Kotkin deliberately lying? This is a legitimate question in the light of all the falsifications, he has introduced into his book. I do not contend, however, that Kotkin is deliberately lying. It may well be the case that his anti-Stalin and anticommunist bias is so powerful that it has robbed him of all ability, as well as the desire, to look for the truth, to be objective. Kotkin *may* not be consciously lying. But he *is* deceiving his readers, because those readers expect a search for the truth.

However, Kotkin's subjective intention, even if we could determine what it is, is ultimately not important. We have firmly established in this book that Kotkin's research – the statements in his text, the citations in his footnotes – cannot be trusted, insofar as they concern Stalin. Since his book purports to be a biography of Stalin,

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[2] Matthew 7:9.

this is a devastating discovery that utterly invalidates the book for any legitimate use. Unfortunately, Kotkin's book will continue to serve the purpose for which it is no doubt intended: as anticommunist "propaganda with footnotes."

Kotkin's Book Proves the Opposite of What It Is Intended to Prove

Ironically, Kotkin's book proves the opposite of what its author intended: *it proves that Stalin committed no crimes during the 1930s!* For if there were any evidence that Stalin did commit crimes during this period, surely Kotkin would have found that evidence and included it, or references to it, in this book. Kotkin's references to evidence – perhaps scare quotes are appropriate here, so "evidence" – are very extensive. He has clearly done a lot of reading.

Strictly speaking a negative cannot be proven. We have pointed out places in his text where Kotkin is guilty of this very error. But Kotkin has been researching the Stalin era in the USSR all his professional life. The fact that he has found no evidence of any crime by Stalin, and that every allegation of such in this book turns out, on careful inspection, to be fraudulent, is perhaps the best evidence we have at present that Stalin committed no crime that can be documented by evidence.

This conclusion will strike many readers as shocking, even outrageous. But the truth is not established by consensus, much less by the consensus of anticommunists. Anyone who bases her judgment not on the consensus of experts but on the evidence will be forced to draw this conclusion. That is what we have done in the present book. Doing so reveals the bankruptcy of the field of Soviet history of the Stalin period.

The Anti-Stalin Paradigm Exposed

This fact in turn exposes the bankruptcy – dishonesty and shallowness – of anticommunist and anti-Stalin scholarship. It is not a matter of Kotkin's unreliability only. There is no *evidence*

that Stalin committed any crime in the '30s. Yet the flood of anti-Stalin and anticommunist falsehoods continues unabated. Evidently lies are necessary appears in order to make Stalin, the Soviet Union of his day, and the communist movement "look bad."

This level of dishonesty in the mainstream historiography of the Soviet Union means that little of the mainstream academic research on Soviet history of the 1930s is helpful for those trying to understand what actually happened in the USSR during this period. But the 1930s are crucial in understanding not only the successes, but also the later failure, of the USSR.

The Stalin period led not only to the successful industrialization, the costly victory against the fascist invasion, and the post-war increase in living standards for the Soviet population. It led to a worldwide struggle for workers' rights and for liberation from Western and Japanese colonialism.

It also led, upon Stalin's death, to the *coup d'état* on March 5, 1953, the second *coup* against Lavrentii Beria of June 26, 1953, Khrushchev's accession to leadership and the beginning of official, wholesale falsification of Soviet history in the service of "reforms" that abandoned, piece by piece, the goal of transitioning to communism. These developments led eventually to the renewed falsification of Soviet history under Gorbachev, the breakup of the Soviet Union, and the restoration of predatory capitalism.

The historian's purpose and aim should be to study historical events with a view to understanding historical *change*. Understanding the history of the Soviet Union is essential for any accurate understanding of world history. The last book by the late Moshe Lewin, a famous, albeit conventionally anti-Stalin and anticommunist, historian of the USSR, is titled *The Soviet Century*. By "century" Lewin meant the 74 years between the 1917 revolution and the end of the USSR in 1991.

In reality, the term could be applied to *world* history during this same period. The Russian Revolution, the fight for socialism, the international communist movement, were determining forces in

world history. This is not the place to list the major historical developments of the "Soviet century." But every one of them was shaped in a significant way by the international communist movement and the USSR.

One brief example must suffice here. An accurate understanding of World War 2 must include the fact that, by stopping the Tukhachevsky- and Trotsky-led military conspiracies that threatened to put the massive human and natural resources of the Soviet Union on the side of the fascist powers, Stalin and the Soviet government saved the people of the world, including those of the West, from a far greater catastrophe than the one that did occur.

No account of world history that omits this fact has any claim to accuracy. Yet because of anti-Stalinism and anticommunism, this fact is not just unacknowledged – it is staunchly denied, as Kotkin does in *Stalin, Volume Two*.

Anti-Stalinists and anticommunists, including much or most of the Left, falsify Soviet history and deny the truth even when it is slowly, painstakingly uncovered. This denial and falsification stretches from the Left –Trotskyists and anarchists – to the mainstream and the Far Right fascists.

Do they believe their own falsifications? For the most part, they do. But why? Because of the dishonesty of mainstream historiography of the Stalin period. If the mainstream acknowledged and publicized the truth, instead of the flood of falsehood like that we find in books like Kotkin's, it would be far harder for people to ignore, or be uniformed about, the truth.

We cannot understand any aspect of the history of the past century without an accurate account of Soviet history of the Stalin period. This book aims to contribute, however modestly, to the aim of uncovering the truth about this era.

Bibliography, Appendices, Additional Links, Errata

Bibliography

To include a complete bibliography and the important primary source documents in this book would make it approximately seventy pages longer.

Therefore, I have put both of these resources on line at the following URL

http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/stalinwaitingbibl.html

Appendices

In Chapter 10, "Hammer," Kotkin falsely asserts that Stalin ordered Karl Radek and Grigorii Sokol'nikov to be murdered in prison. I have put a link to my article refuting this canard, which originated with Nikita Petrov, an official of the Russian "Memorial" Society, in Chapter 14 of the present book, and repeat that link here:

Grover Furr. "Nikita Petrov's 'Amalgam' - The Prison Murders of Radek and Sokol'nikov."

https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/furr_petrovs_amalgam.pdf

PDF format accurately reproduces both Cyrillic and Latin fonts.

Errata

Please report any errors to me at furrg@mail.montclair.edu All errata will be posted on this page:

http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/stalinwaitingerrata.html

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Nikita Petrov's 'Amalgam' - The Prison Murders of Radek and Sokol'nikov

Grover Furr
November 2018

Introduction

Nikita Vasil'evich Petrov is a Russian historian, the author of several influential books in the history of the USSR during the Stalin period. His articles appear frequently in the Russian mass media and he has been featured in television interviews.

Petrov is a prominent figure in public discourse about the Stalin years and about the USSR generally. The organization that employs him, the "Memorial" society, has published or aided in the publication of a number of volumes of documents from former Soviet archives. Petrov's work (with German historian Mark Jansen) on the career of Nikolai Ezhov, People's Commissar of the NKVD during the bloody "Great Terror," or Ezhovshchina, of massive extralegal executions in the USSR in 1937-1938, is a valuable source of quotations from primary documents and, to some extent, as a chronology. The same should be said for Petrov's works on the GULAG and his two biographical dictionaries on NKVD employees.

In sum: Petrov's works are useful as sources of documents and dates. But Petrov's own interpretations of these documents, and his assertions generally, show such a profound and uninterrogated anticommunist bias as to be not merely useless but harmful. The same thing is true of the article under discussion here.

In early 2012 Petrov published a book titled *Палачи. Они выполняли заказы Сталина* («Executioners. They carried out Stalin's orders.") It was published by *Novaia Gazeta*, the thrice-weekly newspaper which has frequently featured Petrov's articles. The subject of the present study is one of the chapters of this book titled «Сталинский заказ. Как убивали Сокольникова и Радека» ("Stalinist Order: How Sokol'nikov and Radek Were Murdered.") This chapter is the same as the text of an article in *Novaia Gazeta* on May 6, 2008 with two additional paragraphs and very brief biographical sketches of some of the NKVD men.

I have chosen to examine the specific article in question because it is one whose sources can be checked. In this case we are not left to either "believe" or "disbelieve" Petrov. Thanks to published documents from former Soviet archives it is possible for any careful reader to see that Petrov's article is grossly falsified.

Early in his article Petrov makes the following statement:

> Было неопровержимо доказано, что за убийством стоял лично Сталин.
>
> It has been irrefutably proven that Stalin was personally behind the murder.

"Irrefutably proven" is a bold claim. It virtually challenges the reader to try to "refute" – disprove – Petrov's thesis that Stalin was personally responsible for Radek's and Sokol'nikov's

murders. The present article does precisely that: it refutes Petrov's claim by checking the assertions Petrov makes in this article against primary sources that are now available. Doing so enables us to affirm that Petrov has deliberately misled – lied to – his readers. The claim "irrefutably proven," as Queen Gertrude remarks in Shakespeare's Hamlet, "doth protest too much"; it exaggerates in order to cover up the truth and is itself a lie.

Petrov's article ends by reprinting a report of June 29, 1956 by General Ivan Serov, at the time the chief of the KGB. We begin our study by examining Serov's statements in the light of evidence now available. This section is followed by a close examination of Petrov's own claims. At the end we draw some basic conclusions about Petrov, his employer the "Memorial" society, the politicized nature of the study of Soviet history, and historical objectivity.

Serov's Lies

Serov's report dated June 29, 1956 is comprised of twelve paragraphs. We begin by discussing the assertions in each paragraph. Next we examine in depth those claims of Serov's concerning which we now have independent evidence. We conclude with the evidence that Serov himself, and one of those he names, Lobov, have previously been shown to have lied. In the text of this article we have reproduced quotations from Serov's report only when absolutely necessary. In other cases the reader should refer as needed to the attached translation of Serov's report.

Paragraph By Paragraph

The assertions in Serov's first paragraph are all a bluff. He cites no evidence to support them. Serov claims that "[d]ocuments in the KGB archive suggest…" But Petrov had access to this archive. If Petrov he found any such documents he would have cited them. *Something* may well exist, for Serov doesn't claim that the "documents" *prove* anything, but merely "suggest." This constitutes an admission that he cannot prove Beria and Kobulov planned to murder Radek and Sokol'nikov.

Second paragraph: no evidence is given to support what Serov claims about Kubatkin and Sharok. Petrov gives none either.

Third paragraph: No evidence whatsoever is cited to support Serov's claims about Sokol'nikov's murder.

Fourth paragraph: According to this and the following paragraph Sokol'nikov was murdered by a fellow prisoner named P.M. Kotov. No evidence is given to support Serov's statement that Kotov was really Lobov.

The fifth paragraph is evidently a quotation from a real document, a transcript of an interrogation of Kotov, relating how he argued with and then killed Sokol'nikov.

Sixth paragraph: No evidence is cited of the involvement of Kubatkin, as Serov alleged.

Seventh paragraph: Once again we evidently have a quotation from a real document: the report of Radek's death at the hands of a Trotskyite named Varezhnikov. It says nothing about any "plan." It is of interest that Serov did not claim Varezhnikov was really "Stepanov." This elaboration was added some years later. This is logical since, as time progressed, former NKVD men spun more and more elaborate falsehoods at the request of Khrushchev-era investigators, as we shall see.

The eight paragraph is comprised of falsehoods concerning the careers of Kubatkin and Sharok. We will examine it in detail below.

Paragraph nine contains no evidence that Arnol'd or Stroilov ever "renounced their confessions." Had they done so, why would "Beria and Kobulov" have waited until September 1941, when the Nazis were closing in rather than employing "a specially designed plan" to have them killed, as they allegedly had done to Radek and Sokol'nikov 28 months earlier? Conversely, if Arnol'd and Stroilov had "renounced their confessions" and could be safely left to live, why not act the same way with Radek and Sokol'nikov?

In this same paragraph Serov lies about the shootings at the Orlov prison in September, 1941. Evidence about this incident was published in 1990. We will examine it below.

Ovchinnikov

The concluding paragraphs, ten through twelve, concern former NKVD man Ovchinnikov. We examine them in detail below in the light of primary sources now available.

Serov wrote:

> Определенный интерес в этом же плане представляет и судьба быв. начальника Прокопьевского горотдела НКВД Овчинникова, у которого на связи находился Арнольд.
> Овчинников в декабре 1940 года был осужден Военным Трибуналом Западно-Сибирского округа к 10 годам лишения свободы. Находясь под стражей, он рассказывал своим сокамерникам о фальсификации дела по обвинению Арнольда и заявлял о своем намерении написать об этом заявление.
> 24 марта 1941 года без наличия каких-либо дополнительных материалов дело Овчинникова было пересмотрено и приговором Военного Трибунала он был осужден к расстрелу.

The fate of the former Head of the Prokop'evsky City Department of the NKVD Ovchinnikov is of particular interest in this same plan, with whom Arnol'd was in contact.
In December 1940, Ovchinnikov was convicted by the Military Tribunal of the West Siberian District to 10 years imprisonment. While in custody, he told his cellmates about the falsification of the case against Arnol'd and announced his intention to write a statement about it.

> On March 24, 1941, without the presence of any additional materials, the case of Ovchinnikov was reviewed and by verdict of the Military Tribunal, he was sentenced to death.

We now have a number of primary source documents concerning Ovchinnikov. They permit us to determine that Serov is lying here.

a. The report of trial and death sentence of Ovchinnikov, dated March 24, 1941.
b. A brief review of his case dated December 19, 1955.
c. A review of Ovchinnikov's case dated January 6, 1956. This appears to be the review available to Serov himself.

In addition, we have:

d. A memoir about Ovchinnkov's crimes from one of his victims, L.I. Medvedeva, written down in May 1989 in Tomsk.

Finally, we have a statement about Ovchinnkov in the work of two highly anticommunist and anti-Stalin researchers, Junge and Binner, in their work *Kak Terror Stal 'Bol'shim'* ("How the Terror Became 'Great'"). Junge and Binner cite repression statistics from Tomsk, where Ovchinnikov was chief of the NKVD in 1937-1938, to demonstrate the massive illegal repression and murders of which Ovchinnikov was guilty and for which he was tried and executed after Beria took over as People's Commissar of the NKVD.

As Serov reported Ovchinnikov was tried and convicted on December 2, 1940 and sentenced to 10 years (Doc. b.). Serov may have taken them from this very document, as the date and sentence are not given in Doc. a

Document a. gives the fullest details about Ovchinnkov. As chief of the Tomsk city NKVD he had been convicted of many instances of torture, forcing false confessions, false arrests, false imprisonment; and falsifying evidence leading to death sentences against innocent people. Document d. recounts one survivor's memories of Ovchinnikov's depredations more than fifty years after they took place.

Document a. relates the fact that Ovchinnikov was sentenced under article 193-17 b. of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR – "abuse of his official position under exceptionally aggravating circumstances"[1], which permitted imposition of the death sentence. Ovchinnikov was sentenced to death on March 24, 1941 and shot on May 19, 1941.

The review of Ovchinnikov's case dated January 6, 1956 details his connection with Arnol'd and Shestov, and repeats the summary of his crimes. It adds that he engaged in "anti-Soviet agitation among the other prisoners" while awaiting trial. The review document states that Ovchinnikov had confessed his guilt "in part" but that the court also possessed witness and documentary evidence against him.

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[1] "Злоупотребление служебным положением при особо отягчающих обстоятельствах."

According to Document b., dated three weeks before Document c., Ovchinnkov was sentenced on December 2, 1940 to 10 years in a correctional camp and again on March 19-24, 1941, to death. This review makes it clear why there were two trials. In the first Ovchinnikov was convicted under article 58-10 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR, while on March 19-24 1941 he was convicted under article 193-17 b. Article 58-10 dealt with "espionage," including giving or gathering state secrets to other governments, counterrevolutionary organizations, or private persons. Unless it entailed exceptionally serious consequences for the state, it required a sentence "not less than three years."[2]

So Ovchinnikov was tried twice for different offenses and was executed after his second conviction. Documents a. and c. mention only the latter, death sentence. This disproves Serov's statement that

> 24 марта 1941 года **без наличия каких-либо дополнительных материалов** дело Овчинникова было пересмотрено и приговором Военного Трибунала он был осужден к расстрелу.
>
> On March 24, 1941, **without the presence of any additional materials,** the case of Ovchinnikov was reviewed and by verdict of the Military Tribunal, he was sentenced to death.
> [Emphasis added, GF]

Serov claims that the second trial was not in fact a trial at all but simply a "review" to punish Ovchinnikov for threatening "to write a statement" about the fact that the case against Arnol'd was supposedly "a falsification." We've already seen that this is false. Documents b. and c. make it clear that the March 1941 court action was not a "review" but a new trial, and that "additional evidence" was indeed brought forward for the new charge.

The NKVD-KGB information about Ovchinnikov's atrocities is independently corroborated by Document d., Medvedeva's account of 1989 written during the Gorbachev years when the search was on for horrors carried out during Stalin's time, and published in Tomsk itself in 2004. No one at either time had any motive to disprove any Khrushchev-era attack on Stalin – quite the contrary.

We include Medvedeva's account here for the sake of completeness. By itself, without any corroboration, it might be considered unreliable given the passage of more than fifty years between the events described and the writing of the memoir account. But it is completely consistent with the information from the official documents we have about Ovchinnikov.

Junge and Binner have this to say about Ovchinnikov.

> В насколько высокой степени операция по приказу № 00447 маркирует собой грань в истории катастрофического 1937 года, показывает следующая статистика арестов

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[2] Article 58 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR, 1926 version, at http://ru.wikisource.org/wiki/Статья_58_Уголовного_Кодекса_РСФСР/вариант_1926_года

и приговоров в Томске и его окрестностях (97) начальник НКВД которого И. В. Овчинников был одним из самых жестоких чекистов во время Большого Террора.[3]

The high degree to which the operation accord to order No. 00447 marks the boundary in the history of the disastrous year 1937 is shown by the following statistics of arrests and sentences in Tomsk and its environs (97) where the head of the NKVD, I.V. Ovchinnikov, was one of the most brutal security officers during the Great Terror.

We have information about Ovchinnikov from several mutually independent sources. Is it credible that a person such as Ovchinnikov was would have threatened to write a report about a falsified case? And to whom would Ovchinnikov have written such a report? He himself had falsified many cases, causing the imprisonment and deaths of many innocent persons. This was the conclusion not only of the NKVD tribunal in 1941, but of the KGB review of January 1956.

The conclusion is inescapable: Serov was lying. Ovchinnikov was executed after a second trial on additional charges. It is simply not credible that he would have complained about false charges against Arnol'd.

Serov unquestionably had access to the 1941, 1955 and 1956 documents and more. Therefore, Serov deliberately lied about the Ochinnikov – Arnol'd situation. There is also no reason to believe Serov's claim that Arnol'd had retracted his confession. We will see this confirmed again when we discuss the Orlov Prison execution of September 1941, below.

Kubatkin's and Sharok's careers

Neither Kubatkin nor Sharok "had worked up to this time as ordinary employees of the NKVD apparatus," as Serov claimed. We have our evidence for this from Nikita Petrov's own two books on the NKVD: *Who Led the NKVD 1934-1941. A Handbook.* (Moscow: "Memorial," 1999), and *Who Led the Organs of State Security 1941-1954. A Handbook.* (Moscow: "Memorial," 2010). [4]

Kubatkin is listed in the earlier volume. According to the account in Petrov's own book, by 1939 Kubatkin was a rising star in the NKVD. He had not been a "riadovoi," or rank-and-file officer of the NKVD, since 1930. In May 1939 he had already been assistant to the chief of the special division of the Odessa oblast' division of the GPU (1934-5); chief of the Frunze raion division of the NKVD (Odessa oblast'); chief of the UGB of the UNKVD of Odessa oblast' (1936 - March 1937); student at the central school of the NKVD of the USSR from March to August 15, 1937; chief of the 1st section of the 4th division of the GUGB NKVD USSR after August 15, 1937; chief of the section of the 4th division of the GUGP of the 1st directorate of the NKVD of the USSR 1938-1939; and secretary of the party committee of the GUGB of the NKVD of the USSR from 1939 until June 1939.[5]

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[3] Mark IUnge, Rol' f Binner. *Kak terror stal 'bol'shim'.. Sekretnyi prikaz No. 00447 i tekhnologia ego ispolnenii.* Moscow: AIRO-20, 2003, p. 36.

[4] Кто руководил НКВД 1934-1941. Справочник. (М. «Мемориал» 1999); and Кто руководил органами госбезопасности 1941-1954. Справочник. (М.: «Мемориал» 2010).

[5] Kubatkin, Piotr Nikolaevich. In Petrov 1999, 255. At http://www.memo.ru/history/NKVD/kto/biogr/gb261.htm

A short career biography of Sharok is given in the second of Petrov's volumes on NKVD personnel. Sharok was not an "ordinary employee of the NKVD apparatus" either. At the time of Sokol'nikov's and Radek's murders Sharok was assistant chief of the 1st division of the 2nd section of the GUGB of the NKVD of the USSR (November 1938 to October 5, 1939).[6]

Both Kubatkin and Sharok did receive promotions during 1939: Kubatkin to chief of the directorate of the NKVD of Moscow oblast' in June 1939; Sharok to assistant commissar of the NKVD of the Kazakh SSR (Republic) on October 5, 1939. There is no indication that these promotions had anything to do with the murders of Sokol'nikov and Radek. Moreover, strictly speaking, Serov did not in fact claim that they had! Serov wrote only that "shortly after" the murders ("вскоре после этого") they were given new appointments. This is not true either. Sharok's promotion in October 1939 cannot be described as "shortly after" the murders. And if these promotions were related, why did Sharok's come four months after Kubatkin's?

We know Serov was lying when he described Kubatkin and Sharok as "ordinary employees of the NKVD." Serov's report presents no evidence for any of his other assertions about this supposed "plan."

The Orlov Prison Executions Of 1941

In his report Serov wrote:

> Другие осужденные по этому делу — Строилов и Арнольд, также отказавшиеся от своих показаний, до осени 1941 года содержались в Орловской тюрьме НКВД, а 11 сентября 1941 года по заочному приговору Военной Коллегии Верховного Суда СССР, вынесенному без каких-либо оснований, в числе других заключенных были расстреляны.
>
> Other convicted in this case, Stroilov and Arnol'd, who also refused to testify, were kept in the Orel prison of the NKVD until the autumn of 1941, and on September 11, 1941, in absentia, by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR, issued without any justification, were shot along with other prisoners.

Arnol'd and Stroilov were not singled out at all, much less for supposedly "renouncing their confessions." They were among 170 prisoners previously convicted of serious crimes who were shot at the Orlov prison as the German armies advanced on September 11, 1941, evidently for continuing anti-Soviet activity. We know this was the charge from the documents published in an official Gorbachev-era Communist Party journal in 1990.[7] Beria, commissar of the NKVD, had been informed by the heads of the directorate of prisons, Bashtakov and Nikol'skii, that at least 76 of the prisoners were carrying out anti-Soviet agitation and planning to escape, with the advance of German troops (Orlov was actually taken by the Germans on October 3, 1941). On

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[6] Sharok, Grigori Fiodorovich. In Petrov 2010, 919-920.

[7] "Tragediia v medvedevskom lesu. O rasstrele politzakliuchennykh Orlovskoi tiur'my." ("The tragedy in the Medvedevsk woods. The shooting of political prisoners of the Orlov prison.") *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* No. 11, 1990, pp. 124 – 131.

September 8, 1941 the Plenum of the Soviet Supreme Court met, reconsidered Arnol'd's case in which he was charged under Article 58-10 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR (he had originally been convicted of violating Articles 58-8 and 58-11 and received a sentence of ten years), and resentenced him to be executed.

We can be reasonably certain that subversive activities were in fact going on because Dr. D.D. Pletnev, sentenced to 25 years imprisonment at the third Moscow Trial of March 1938, wrote about those activities in a letter, one portion of which has been published. On January 15, 1941, in a letter to Voroshilov, Pletnev complained about his prison conditions and stated:

> Я коченею от окружающей меня лжи и стужи среди пигмеев и червей, ведущих свою подрывную работу.[8]
>
> I am numb from the lies and cold that surround me among the pygmies and worms that are carrying on their subversive work

That means that Pletnev's final sentence in this letter fragment in part confirms Beria's allegation of later that same year – that some prisoners in the Orlov Prison were in fact engaging in a repetition of the "subversive" activity for which they were imprisoned in the first place.

The 1990 article confirms that Arnol'd was convicted in absentia on September 8, 1941 along with the others. It proves that there was a "basis" for their re-sentencing to death – the alleged subversive activity – and that Arnol'd and Stroilov were not executed for "retracting their confessions" or, indeed, for anything related to their trial at all. Other Moscow Trial defendants were among those executed at the same time; no one has claimed that they retracted their confessions.

Serov cites no evidence that Arnol'd or Stroilov had renounced their trial confessions, and Petrov did not find any.

Serov's Lies During Khrushchev's Time

Matthew Lenoe[9] gained access to many documents related to the investigation of the Kirov assassination and the Khrushchev-era attempt to blame it all on Stalin. According to Lenoe:

> …the Khrushchev supporters in charge of the investigation, including KGB chief Ivan Serov, sought to collect as much material as possible incriminating Stalin. This is what Khrushchev wanted, so that he could discredit his political rivals…
>
> The 1960-1961 investigation run by the Party Control Commission (KPK) was aimed explicitly at inculpating Stalin in the Kirov murder. (7-8)

Lenoe reveals that Serov destroyed some evidence and withheld other evidence in order to construct a false scenario of Kirov's murder (591-2):

---

[8] *TsK KPSS* No. 1, 1989, p. 119, col. 2.

[9] Matthew Lenoe, *The Kirov Murder and Soviet History* New Haven: Yale U.P. 2010. Page references to Lenoe are to this text.

If the official charges in the first two trials – that former Zinoviev supporters / 592 / had conspired to murder Kirov – were entirely bogus, then the indictments in all of the succeeding show trials collapsed. … But if there was some truth to the charge that Zinovievites conspired to kill Kirov, then that preserved the possibility of arguing that the latter charges were also valid, at least in part. Therefore Serov and Rudenko … chose to make a clear-cut argument that Nikolaev had had no relationship at all with the ex-Zinoviev supporters convicted in the trial of the "Leningrad Center.

It appears that Serov or his boss had thought through this strategy, to deny any connection at all between Nikolaev and the Zinovievites, even before the "Secret Speech." On January 27, 1956 the KGB destroyed central records on the case file "Svoiak," the all-union surveillance operation against the Zinovievites. It seems likely that "Svoiak" contained more evidence than Serov wanted Molotov to see, either of counterrevolutionary talk among former Zinovievites and/or of Nikolaev's connections with the accused in the "Leningrad Center." Serov concealed other evidence of connections between Nikolaev and the ex-Zinovievites Kotolynov, Antonov, and Shatsky. The excerpts from Nikolaev's diaries that he released to the Molotov commission in April 1956 contained no references to these men. But we know from later releases of data that Nikolaev did mention all three in his diaries. Serov presumably feared that Molotov would construe such connections as evidence of criminal conspiracy.

> At the same time the Molotov commission was debating these issues, Rudenko, Serov, and KPK officials were already taking actions based on the assumption that the charges in the show trials were false…

Serov's report[10] (595-599) is full of outright lies. We will cite only a few of them here. Serov:

> On March 13, 1938 the Military Collegium… found Bukharin, Rykov, Yagoda, and other accused… guilty in carrying out the villainous murder of S.M. Kirov….

This statement of Serov's is a lie. The court's verdict says nothing of the kind. Bukharin and Rykov were convicted of entirely different crimes. Iagoda was convicted only of "giving special instructions to his accomplices working in the Leningrad Administration of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs not to hinder the perpetration of the crime." (796-7)

Serov claimed:

> Yagoda in essence recanted his earlier testimony with regard to the participation of the Rightists in the murder of Kirov… Rykov and Bukharin, who supposedly made the decision to carry out this terrorist act … categorically denied… (598)

This is false, as Serov had to know. Iagoda did not deny but rather confirmed the role of the Rights in Kirov's murder. Anyone who reads the trial transcript can see that Iagoda only denied

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[10] This report is in English translation in Lenoe 595-599. The original Russian text has not been released by Lenoe or by his publisher, Yale University Press.

that he himself had played any active role in, or had specific prior knowledge of, the plot to kill Kirov. Iagoda did insist, however, that he had given instructions to his subordinates not to hinder any such attempt as might be made That is, Iagoda denied he was an accomplice to the murder, but agreed that he was an accessory. During the trial Prosecutor Vyshinskii and Iagoda argued at some length over precisely this issue. As for Rykov and Bukharin, neither of them was charged with making the decision to kill Kirov.

Lobov Lied

Serov's report on the Radek-Sokol'nikov murders states that P.M. Lobov was one of the participants. However, neither Serov nor Petrov offer any direct testimony by Lobov to this effect. Even if they had done so, however, that testimony could not be accepted, for Lenoe establishes that Lobov lied during the 1950s and 1960s – no doubt because Serov insisted he do so.

According to Lenoe, in 1956 Lobov's testimony was in accord with the conclusions of the March 1938 Moscow Trial. But by 1960 Lobov was giving false testimony that supported Party Control Commission member Ol'ga Shatunovskaia's preconceived idea that Stalin had been behind Kirov's murder:

> Another witness deployed by Klimov was P. M. Lobov, who had murdered Grigory Sokolnikov in 1939 for Beria.[11] Lobov's post-Stalin testimony showed extensive embellishment and grew more florid over time. Thus, in 1956 he testified that at the Kolyma labor camp Zaporozhets had told him that Nikolaev had been taken into custody once and that Yagoda had ordered him freed… In 1960 Lobov went much farther, stating that he had personally interrogated Nikolaev, who intimated that he had high-level connections. He also claimed that at Kolyma Zaporozhets had told him that Stalin himself had ordered Nikolaev's release. This was precisely the smoking gun that Shatunovskaya and the other investigators needed to accuse Stalin of Kirov's murder. **Lobov delivered this evidence, which he had not mentioned in 1956, very conveniently for the KPK** [Party Control Commission] in October 1960. (622-3; evidence added, GF)

Lenoe concludes that Lobov's testimony is unreliable:

> Against this is the unanimous testimony of credible Leningrad NKVD officers who survived the Terror (credible meaning minus P.M. Lobov and P.P. Petrovsky)…

Serov's Report: Conclusion

Serov's report is a falsification. We can confidently assert that because every statement in it that can be verified – cross-checked against other evidence we now have – is false.

The only primary source evidence quoted in Serov's report are statements from NKVD reports that Sokol'nikov was murdered by Kotov and Radek by the Trotskyist Varezhnikov. Neither

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[11] Lenoe's "evidence" for Lobov's murder of Sokol'nikov is the same report by Serov that we are examining here.

Serov nor Petrov cites any evidence that Kotov was really Lobov. Evidently even Serov did not claim that Varezhnikov was really an NKVD man named I.I. Stepanov, as Petrov does.

With the collapse of Serov's report as evidence that Stalin had Radek and Sokol'nikov murdered the main prop supporting Petrov's article has been destroyed as well. However, Petrov adds yet more details to the story, so we will proceed to study what Petrov wrote. Most of the assertions Petrov has added himself are falsehoods as well. We will examine them next.

Petrov's Lies

Besides appending Serov's article to his chapter in his book Petrov also reprinted it in his own book on Serov in 2008. But Petrov makes additions of his own to the story. Most of them are also falsehoods, like Serov's. The rest of this article examines them.

Stalin's "Vengefulness"

Petrov states:

> Но мог ли Сталин оставить в живых своих многолетних критиков и противников? Его мстительность вошла в легенду.
>
> But could Stalin have left his perennial critics and opponents alive? His vengefulness has become legendary.

Petrov provides no evidence that Stalin was "vengeful" nor does he refer to anybody else's evidence. This appears to be an example of "weasel words," of implying something that is not actually stated, since the sentence "His vengefulness has become legendary" is not quite an assertion that Stalin was, in fact, vengeful – only that he is assumed to have been such.

A commission formed immediately after the 20th Party Congress…

Petrov states:

Расследование обстоятельств убийства Радека и Сокольникова началось сразу после XX съезда, когда создали комиссию по изучению материалов «Московских процессов» 1936–1938 гг. В архиве КГБ были подняты и изучены все материалы, связанные с процессами. Вывод комиссии однозначен — все показательные процессы 1936–1938 гг. сфальсифицированы.

The investigation into the circumstances of the murder of Radek and Sokolnikov began immediately after the XX Party Congress, when a commission was set up to study the materials of the Moscow Trials of 1936–1938., All materials in the KGB archives related to the Trials were taken up and studied. The conclusion of the commission was unambiguous - all the Show Trials of 1936–1938 were falsified.

This is completely false. The first such commission was the so-called "Molotov Commission." As we have seen, Lenoe discusses in some detail how Serov, Khrushchev's man, withheld evidence from and lied to Molotov.

Despite Serov's withholding of evidence the Molotov Commission did not conclude that "all the show trials of 1936-1938 were falsified" as Petrov claims. On the contrary, its report of December 10 1956 did not reject the verdicts of any of the Moscow trials! The report refused to review the cases of the major defendants in the Moscow Trials. Though the report accepted some of the criticisms that Khrushchev's men, aided by Serov, vigorously promoted, it explicitly refused to reconsider the three Moscow Trials of 1936, 1937 and 1938. The commission's report concluded as follows:

> Комиссия приходит к выводам, что оснований для пересмотра дел в отношении Бухарина, Рыкова [суд 1938-го], Зиновьева, Каменева, Евдокимова [суд 1936-го], Пятакова, Радека [суд 1937-го], Раковского, Ягоды, Крестинского [суд 1938-го], Сокольникова, Серебрякова [суд 1937-го], Залуцкого, Сафарова [осуждены в 1935-ом в связи с убийством Кирова], Бакаева и Смирнова И. Н.[суд 1936-го] не имеется, поскольку они на протяжении многих лет возглавляли антисоветскую борьбу, направленную против строительства социализма в СССР. В отношении же других осужденных по этим процессам Комиссия считает возможным дела пересмотреть персонально в отношении каждого.[12]
>
> The Commission concludes that there are no grounds for reviewing cases against Bukharin, Rykov [the trial of 1938], Zinoviev, Kamenev, Evdokimov [the trial of 1936], Pyatakov, Radek [the trial of 1937], Rakovsky, Yagoda, Krestinsky [trial of 1938], Sokolnikov, Serebryakov [trial of 1937], Zalutsky, Safarov [convicted in 1935 in connection with the murder of Kirov], Bakayev and Smirnov I.N. [trial 1936], because for many years they headed the anti-Soviet struggle directed against the construction of socialism in the USSR. In relation to others convicted in these trials the Commission considers it possible to review cases individually for each.

It is not clear how Petrov thought he could get away with such an obvious falsehood. The Molotov Commission is well known, at least to historians of the period. Its final report is even available online.[13]

The Testimony Of Fedotov And Matusov

Petrov writes:

> Как пояснили вызванные в ЦК КПСС в 1961-ом бывшие руководящие работники секретно-политического отдела ГУГБ НКВД П.В. Федотов и Я.Н. Матусов:

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[12] *Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo. Febral' 1956 – nachalo 80-kh godov. T. 2. Moskva: "Materik", 2003.* (RKEB 2) 207. Identifying information in square brackets is mine.

[13] At http://www.perpetrator2004.narod.ru/documents/kirov/Molotov_Commission_Memo.doc

> «…Оперативно-чекистские отделения при политизоляторах свои донесения о поведении Радека и Сокольникова и им подобных лиц направляли непосредственно в адрес лично Берии, который их посылал или докладывал Сталину, что было работникам отдела известно как со слов Кобулова, так и по смыслу, сколько помнится, его письменных указаний на донесениях политизоляторов."

Причем оба, и Федотов и Матусов, утверждали, что «убийство Радека и Сокольникова было совершено по указанию Сталина."

As the former leading officials of the secret-political department of the GUGB NKVD[14], P.V. Fedotov and Ya.N. Matusov, summoned to the CPSU Central Committee in 1961, explained:

> "... The operational-NKVD branches at political isolators[15] sent their reports on the behavior of Radek and Sokolnikov and similar persons directly to Beria personally, who sent or reported to Stalin what the department employees knew both from the words of Kobulov and from the sense, as far as I can remember, of his written instructions on the reports of the political isolators."
> Moreover, both Fedotov and Matusov claimed that "the murder of Radek and Sokolnikov was committed under the orders of Stalin."

Perhaps Fedotov and Matusov did say something like this. But we know that Serov and the Shvernik Commission were not looking for the truth, but to support Khrushchev's preconceived position that everybody was innocent. (We discuss the Shvernik Commission briefly below).

Even if genuine, this is hearsay at best. In any case, no testimony should simply be "believed" even if it is not hearsay, as this is. Would Petrov advocate 'believing" the testimony of the defendants at the Moscow Trials?

Furthermore, neither Fedotov nor Matusov was in a position to know what Beria did with any reports sent to him or what Stalin did or did not order.

Fedotov, Matusov, and other former NKVD-KGB employees had plenty of motive to say whatever Serov wanted them to. Khrushchev had overseen the trial and execution of a number of KGB men who had worked under Beria and had refused to tell Khrushchev's investigators what they wanted to hear.

Stalin's Inscription On A Drawing

Petrov writes:

> Позднее, в 1940-е, Сталин сделал косвенное признание и даже указал мотивы убийства Радека.

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[14] Main Directorate of State Security of the NKVD (NKVD = People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs).
[15] Prisons for prisoners convicted of crimes against the State.

> Later, in the 1940s, Stalin indirectly confessed to and even indicated the motive for Radek's murder.

The inscription, apparently in Stalin's hand, says:

> «Рыжий паршивый Радек. Не сцал бы против ветра, не был бы злой, был бы живой. И. Сталин.»
>
> "Radek, the lousy redhead. If he had not pissed against the wind, if he had not been unkind, he would be alive. J. Stalin"

Objectively speaking, Stalin's words here could never be interpreted as an admission of anything except, perhaps, some lingering affection for Radek. They could just as easily be evidence that Stalin regretted Radek's death! This inscription only demonstrates that Stalin knew Radek was dead and blamed it at least partly on Radek himself.

Radek's alleged denunciation of the Moscow Trials

According to Petrov

> Конечно, Радек вел с сокамерниками разговоры о том, что все «московские процессы» -- выдумка.
>
> Of course, Radek talked with his cellmates about how all the "Moscow Trials" were fabrications.

Petrov cites no evidence, even of a hearsay nature, to support this statement. Even if he did, that would not mean that Radek really did so, much less that the Trials were actually a fiction.

Evidence from the Trotsky Archive and other sources make it clear that the trials were not a fabrication by the Stalin leadership at all. A few examples:

* We know that the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" really did exist, because Trotsky and Sedov wrote to each other about it (Harvard Trotsky Archive).

Not incidentally, this also proves that the Gorbachev-era "rehabilitation" reports and related documents are false, since they deny the existence of the "bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" which we know did exist.

Moreover, the Gorbachev-era Soviet party leadership knew this too. We know this for certain because Arch Getty's article noting the proof of the bloc's existence was actually translated into Russian and published in the Communist Party journal *Voprosy Istorii KPSS* in 1991.

* At the 1937 Moscow Trial Radek told the precise truth about the letter he claimed he had received from Trotsky in the early months of 1932. We know this because the return receipt of

this letter to Radek noting the date of delivery is preserved in the Harvard Trotsky Archive. Getty's article notes this fact too.

It would be a great coincidence if the only true statements made by trial defendants were precisely those we can now verify independently. This suggests that other statements made during that trial by Radek, at least, may also be true as well.

* Thanks to the work of the late American researcher Alvin Coox we have other non-Soviet evidence of the Right-Trotskyite and the military conspiracies. Coox interviewed former officers of the Japanese army who had been assigned to work with NKVD defector General Genrikh S. Liushkov, who deserted to the Japanese army across the Manchurian border on June 13, 1938. In his published articles, written while he was working for the propaganda section of the Japanese army, Liushkov denied the existence of the conspiracies. But he confirmed the existence of these same conspiracies privately to his Japanese handlers. They in turn reported this to Coox, who was baffled by it.

It is possible that former NKVD men may have told Serov's men that Radek denounced the trials as fabrications. But that would only mean that they were telling Serov what he wanted to hear.

"A Document From The Archive Of The Shvernik Commission"

This document basically only adds to Serov's report the detail that, supposedly, the Trotskyist Varezhnikov was really

> ... Степанов И.И., бывший комендант НКВД Чечено-Ингушской АССР, арестованный в феврале 1939 года за серьезные должностные преступления. В ноябре того же года по указанию Берия Степанов освобожден из-под стражи. В постановлении о прекращении дела указано, что он выполнил «специальное задание," имеющее важное государственное значение."
>
> ... I.I. Stepanov, former commandant of the NKVD of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, arrested in February 1939 for serious misconduct in office. In November of the same year, at the direction of Beria, Stepanov was released from custody. The order to dismiss the case stated that he had fulfilled "special assignment of great importance to the State."

There is no evidence – not even hearsay evidence -- to support any of the statements here.

The Shvernik Report itself contained false information designed to help Khrushchev blame Stalin for various crimes. For example, it states:

> Никакого «Антисоветского право-троцкистского блока» в действительности не существовало...
>
> In reality, no "Anti-Soviet Right-Trotskyite Bloc" existed. …

But thanks to the Trotsky-Sedov correspondence in the Harvard Trotsky Archive we know that such a bloc did indeed exist.[16] The Shvernik Commission does not mention Varezhnikov – Stepanov in its brief discussion of the Radek-Sokol'nikov murders but only refers to unnamed

> ... специально подосланными лицами из числа бывших сотрудников НКВД, отбывавших наказания за политические и должностные преступления.[17]
>
> ... persons -- former NKVD officials -- specially sent, who had served sentences for political and official crimes.

Petrov states:

> Рядовым исполнителям — Степанову и Лобову — в награду даровали свободу.
>
> The rank-and-file perpetrators, Stepanov and Lobov, were granted their freedom as a reward.

Once again Petrov gives no evidence to support this statement. According to a report by employees of the Soviet Procuracy dated June 14, 1990 Lobov was sentenced in 1939 to 3 years exile in Kazakhstan. This is a penal sentence, not "freedom."[18]

There is no entry for either Lobov or Stepanov in either of Petrov's lengthy books on the personnel of the NKVD. According to Petrov Stepanov had been commandant of the NKVD of the Checheno-Ingush ASSR. This position was prominent enough to qualify him for an entry in these large volumes. Lobov's role in the Kirov case should have qualified him for an entry too. Petrov also omitted Ovchinnikov from these works. Yet Ovchinnikov had been head of the Tomsk NKVD.

The very brief biographical note on Stepanov that Petrov gives on page 53 simply states that

> с февраля по ноября 1939 г. ноходился в заключении.
>
> He was in custody from February to November 1939.

Petrov gives no source for this information. Nor does he give any reason for excluding Stepanov's biographical sketch from his two volumes.

As for Lobov, Petrov's short biography of him on the same page stops at his two-year sentence in 1935 and then skips to 1961:

> В 1961 г. Лобов был еще жив и вызывался в ЦК КПСС для дачи объяснений.

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[16] RKEB 2, 630.
[17] RKEB 2, 568.
[18] RKEB 3, 468.

> In 1961 Lobov was still alive and was summoned to the Central Committee of the CPSU in order to give his explanation.

A two-year sentence in January 1935 would mean that Lobov was free by 1937 and so could not have been "rewarded by his freedom" in 1939. In any case we already know that Lobov was not rewarded but exiled in 1939. Petrov's story falls apart at every turn.

Petrov obviously had some source for this biographical information on Stepanov and Lobov. So why did he not include them in one of his two books? We have already determined that the available information about Ovchinnikov disproves Serov's report. Therefore it cannot be an accident that Petrov omits Ovchinnikov, a significant figure in the NKVD, from his two bulky volumes while Petrov's short biographic note on Ovchinnikov (also on page 53) stops with 1938, the year before the murders of Radek and Sokol'nikov. Might it also be the case that the full details of Stepanov's and Lobov's biographies contradict Petrov's story, as in the case of Ovchinnikov?

Petrov's False Conclusion

As we have seen, in both his Novaia Gazeta article and his more recent book Petrov makes the bold claim:

> Было неопровержимо доказано, что за убийством стоял лично Сталин.
>
> It has been irrefutably proven that Stalin was personally behind the murder.

The present article has established that Petrov's statement is false. In reality the opposite is true: there is no evidence whatever to support Petrov's claim. A statement that is unsupported by any evidence must be considered unproven. A statement that is based on falsified evidence must itself be considered false.

Our conclusion is therefore inevitable: Stalin was *not* guilty of the murders of Sokol'nikov and Radek. This tale is a fabrication by Khrushchev-era investigators, led by Serov, who were constructing this and many other false accusations against Stalin. This falsehood has been perpetuated by Petrov for the same purpose: to slander Stalin.

In this article we have exposed the falsehoods in Serov's report. Petrov could have done the same thing. Indeed, had he so chosen Petrov could have done it quicker and better, since he has much better access to archives and primary sources. But rather than perform the historian's function of verification Petrov chose to compound Serov's lies with yet more falsehoods of his own invention.

Conclusions – Nikita Petrov

Petrov has knowingly falsified evidence to blame a person – in this case, Joseph Stalin – for two murders of which he was not guilty. It is ironic that Petrov, a leading representative and

researcher for a self-styled "human rights" organization, is guilty of what he and other anticommunists accuse Stalin of doing.

The goal of historiography and historians is to discover the truth about the past, as established by the best evidence and reasoning. But some historians do not try to discover the truth. These dishonest historians begin with a preconceived conclusion and then search for anything that might pass as evidence in support of that preconceived conclusion. People who do this are not really historians at all. They are propagandists attempting to disguise themselves as historians so their readers will wrongly believe that what they are reading is an attempt to discover the truth.

Those who call themselves historians but do not strive to be objective: to question their own preconceived ideas; to remain devoted to discovering and reporting the truth even when that truth contradicts their own cherished ideas -- they are not really historians at all. They are publicists for some cause who have adopted the disguise of a historian, the better to deceive their readers. What they write is not history but "propaganda with footnotes."

Petrov is one of these. This has important consequences for all of us who read what he writes.

* Nothing Petrov writes can be accepted, even provisionally, as true. On the contrary: we must see his work for what it really is: a strained attempt to shore up his own preconceived ideas while disguising this attempt as historiography – that is, as an attempt to discover the truth -- which it most definitely is not.

* We should never assume that Petrov is using his evidence honestly. His work is useless as a source of reliable historical information. Everything Petrov writes, every statement and footnote, must be checked and verified, because he cannot be trusted to use them honestly. Since this is impossible for all but specialists, it means that there is no reason for most people to read Petrov's work at all.

The "Memorial" Society

There are many so-called historians who falsely claims to be discovering the truth while in fact writing anticommunist propaganda. Often these fraudulent historians are based at prestigious institutions such as Oxford University, Yale University, the Humboldt University (Berlin), the Hoover Institution (Stanford, CA), and many others. Petrov is a top official in the Russian Memorial Society and has been its vice-chair since 1990. It is his prominence as a leader of the Memorial Society that accounts for his frequent appearance in the news media and his columns in Novaia Gazeta, a newspaper jointly owned by Mikhail Gorbachev and billionaire "entrepreneur" Aleksandr Lebedev.

"Memorial" presents itself as "an international historical, educational, human rights, and charitable organization." This self-description is false. In reality "Memorial" is an organization devoted to the spread of anticommunist falsehoods. It is funded by organizations such as the Soros, Ford, Jackson, and Guggenheim Foundations. Explicitly ideological anticommunist organizations funding "Memorial" include the National Endowment for Democracy (USA) and

the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation. It also receives funds from the Russian government through the Social Chamber of the Russian Federation (*Obshchestvennaia Palata R.F.*).

An example of "Memorial's" dishonesty is its long list "Victims of Political Terror in the USSR."[19] Here is one entry, found after only a minute or two of searching:

> Ваганов Александр Михайлович
> Родился в 1886 г., Пермская губ.; русский; Проживал: г. Пермь.
> Арестован 3 октября 1919 г.
> Приговорен: 31 октября 1919 г.
> Приговор: Дело прекращено за отсутствием улик
> Источник: Книга памяти Пермской обл.
>
> Vaganov Alexander Mikhailovich
> Born in 1886, Perm Province; Russian; Resided in: Perm.
> Arrested on October 3, 1919
> Sentenced: October 31, 1919
> Verdict: Case dismissed for lack of evidence
> Source: Perm Region Memory Book.

Mr A.V. Vaganov was arrested during the bloody Civil War, held in jail for four weeks, and then acquitted. What makes him a "victim of political terror"? By this standard a huge number of people are "victims of American government political terror." Where is THAT list of "victims"?

What's more, the list of "victims" does not bother to ascertain whether or not the individual arrested was guilty of the charges against him (or her). Persons found guilty of a crime are not normally called "victims."

"Memorial's" list is useless as a source of information. It seems clear that it is intended to be as large a list as possible, enabling anticommunists to impress others by telling them of this huge list of "victims of communist terror."

"Memorial" Proposes An Anticommunist "Purge"

In early 2011 "Memorial" posted a proposal on its website for a program to "de-Stalinize" Russia. In true Orwellian language the proposal is titled "A proposal for the establishment of a society-wide state-society program 'Concerning the commemoration of victims of the totalitarian regime and national reconciliation.'"[20] This proposal is an attempt to take a far right-wing, anticommunist position on Soviet history -- in some respects more extreme than that of the Cold War years in the United States -- and make it into official state policy. It is an attempt to politicize history in an extreme right-wing direction; to impose a far right-wing, anticommunist orthodoxy on the whole country of Russia.

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[19] «Жертвы политического террора в СССР," at http://lists.memo.ru/

[20] Предложения об учреждении общенациональной государственно-общественной программы «Об увековечении памяти жертв тоталитарного режима и о национальном примирении." At http://www.memo.ru/2011/03/29/perpetuation.htm

Here is one of the provisions in this proposal:

«Приложение 8»

8.2. Принять официальное постановление о том, что публичные выступления государственных служащих любого ранга, содержащие отрицание или оправдание преступлений тоталитарного режима, несовместимы с пребыванием на государственной службе.

"Appendix 8"

8.2. Adopt a formal decree that public statements by civil servants of any rank, denying or justifying the crimes of the totalitarian regime, are incompatible with being in public service.

The Memorial Society "lovers of freedom" want all Russian civil servants to be "free" only to repeat Memorial's version of history! And they blame the USSR for "totalitarianism" while they demand that every public employee in Russia call the USSR "totalitarian" or lose their jobs!

The Memorial version of history is a falsification. The truth doesn't need this kind of imposition. Only falsehood requires the indoctrination and policing of opinions. "Memorial" is very far from the ideals stated in its inflated self-description. It's a right-wing anticommunist pro-capitalist group masquerading as a "human rights" group.

Their recent proposal to the Duma is useful insofar as it has exposed them for what they are. Few liberal capitalist organizations would propose the kind of restrictions on free speech that "Memorial" unblushingly proposes. During the height of the Red Scare in the USA in the late '40s and '50s one had to take a loyalty oath. "Memorial's" proposed legislation goes far beyond "loyalty oaths" to police one's statements while off the job. What happened to "human rights"?

If "Memorial" were an honest organization it would not number persons arrested and then released for lack of evidence against them among the "victims of political terror." Nor would it propose that all government employees who made any public statement that disagreed with its, "Memorial's," view of the Soviet past, or anybody's view of history, be fired.

If "Memorial" were an honest organization it would not have a falsifier like Nikita Petrov as one of its officers and leading researchers.

"Memorial" is similar to other ideological anticommunist, pro-capitalist organizations, in that none of them are interested in the least in the truth, but rather in producing propaganda to falsely smear the communist movement. Nothing published by or under the auspices of the "Memorial" society should be believed in any way.

Why Do Anticommunists Lie?

Why tell lies when the truth is on your side? If the "Memorial" society were truly interested in human rights, they would also be concerned with the rights of those who do not agree with their, "Memorial's," interpretation of the Soviet past, and would defend the rights of those persons rather than trying to silence them with the fear of losing their jobs.

If anticommunists – and, it must be said, some who consider themselves communists, like Trotskyists – had honorable goals they would not repeat Nazi lies like that of the "Katyn massacre" and the "Holodomor." They would not claim that the Moscow Trials and the Tukhachevsky Affair were all frame-ups against innocent men, when all the evidence we possess today points in precisely the opposite direction – that the defendants were guilty of at least those crimes to which they confessed.

Petrov wants Stalin to "look bad." But Petrov is unable to find evidence that Stalin was, in fact, "bad." We can state this with confidence because he had such evidence Petrov would not have to resort to the kind of lies and fabrications that we have exposed in the article under discussion here. This practice is the rule, not the exception, in the field of Soviet history.

Notes

1. Nikita Petrov. Сталинский заказ. Как убивали Сокольникова и Радека

2. Ivan Serov, «Из Справки Председателя КГБ при СМ СССР И.А. Серова»

3. Копия приговора в отношении И.В. Овчинникова (1941)

4. Справка Управления КГБ Томской области о бывших сотрудниках НКВД … 19.12.1955

5. Обзорная Справка Управления КГБ Томской области по архивно-следственному делу И. В. Овчинникова 6 января 1956 г.

6. Ovchinnikov, I.V., in Junge, Binner. *Kak Terror Stal Bol'shim*, p. 36

7. Из Воспоминаний бывшей заключенной Л. И. Медведевой о начальнике Томского горотдела НКВД И. Овчинникове май 1989 г.

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