TROTSKY AND THE MILITARY CONSPIRACY

SOVIET AND NON-SOVIET EVIDENCE WITH THE COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT OF THE "TUKHACHEVSKY AFFAIR" TRIAL

By Grover Furr with Vladimir L. Bobrov and Sven-Eric Holmström







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Soviet and Non-Soviet Evidence with the Complete Transcript of the "Tukhachevsky Affair" Trial

GROVER FURR WITH VLADIMIR L. BOBROV AND SVEN-ERIC HOLMSTRÖM

The principal document presented here is the complete translation of the transcript of the trial of the defendants in the "Tukhachevsky Affair" — Marshal of the Soviet Union Mikhail N. Tukhachevsky and his seven co-defendants, all top-ranking Red Army officers. It provides yet more convincing primary-source evidence that the military conspiracy collaborated with Nazi Germany in coordination with Leon Trotsky and his supporters.

Properly understood, this document, and this book, overturn the mainstream history of the Soviet Union, of World War II, and in important respects, the mainstream history of the world, in the twentieth century.

The other chapters contain confirmatory evidence, with careful and appropriate analysis. They are important, because dishonest historians will claim that Tukhachevsky et al. were not guilty; rather that they were "framed." They will further claim that Leon Trotsky, who is deeply implicated in the Military Conspiracy, was also "framed." These claims are demonstrably false.

This book presents the evidence.

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Acknowledgements and Dedication

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I would like to recognize Montclair State University for giving me a sabbatical leave in the fall semester of 2015, and special research travel funds in 2017, 2019, and 2020, which have been invaluable in my research on this book.

This book is dedicated to

Ушкалов Вячеслав Николаевич Vyacheslav Nikolaevich Ushkalov

The Authorship of This Book

This book is the result of a collective effort. The research has been done primarily by Vladimir L. Bobrov, of Moscow, and secondarily by me, Grover Furr.

Since before he first contacted me in March, 1999, Vladimir Bobrov has been diligently scouring published materials in order to identify and collect primary source evidence and scholarship on the Tukhachevsky Affair. During the past decade, he and a colleague have spent countless hours in the archive of the Federal Security Service, where the records of the former NKVD are stored, locating, reading, and transcribing by hand a great many primary source documents concerning the military conspiracy.

Vladimir has also carefully read and critiqued drafts of this book. I have included most, if not all, of his suggestions in the final text. Without his work, the present book would not have been possible.

Sven-Eric Holmström has ably translated the entire transcript of the trial of the defendants in the "Tukhachevsky Affair." I have carefully studied this translation and made a small number of changes.

I have written the text of the book and am responsible for the final draft.

Grover Furr Montclair, NJ USA November 25, 2020

Foreword: How To Read This Book

The principal document presented here is the complete translation of the transcript of the trial of the defendants in the "Tukhachevsky Affair" – Marshal of the Soviet Union Mikhail N. Tukhachevsky and his seven co-defendants, all top-ranking Red Army officers.

Read this text carefully and - preferably - several times.

Properly understood, this document, and this book, overturn the mainstream history of the Soviet Union, of World War II, and also, in a number of important respects, of the world in the twentieth century.

The other chapters contain confirmatory evidence, with careful and appropriate analysis. They are important, because dishonest historians will claim that Tukhachevsky et al. were not guilty; rather that they were "framed." They will further claim that Leon Trotsky, who is deeply implicated in the Military Conspiracy, was also "framed." These claims are demonstrably false. This book presents the evidence. So these chapters are important.

But read the text carefully. Objective, discerning readers will see for themselves.

Introduction - The Tukhachevsky Affair

On June 10, 1937, the front page of the New York Times broke the story with the following headline:

	RGE OF RED ARMY HINTED IN REMOVAL OF FOUR NERALS
	re Commands Are Changed, Causing Belief Momentous ents Are Occurring
TU	KHACHEVSKY IS OUSTED
	rmer Marshal Is Thought to Be Under Arrest With her High Officers
Fri	LK OF COUP DISCOUNTED Marshal Budyonny, Close lend of Stalin, Is Appointed Head of Moscow Military strict
Subheac	ls in the body of the article gave more of the shocking

Rumors of Arrests Reinforced

All Distinguished Officers

details:

PURGE OF RED ARMY HINTED IN OUSTINGS

Purges Baffle Diplomats

From the beginning, the guilt of the arrested commanders was widely doubted. On June 12, Leon Trotsky, living in exile in Mexico, once again predicted Stalin's doom:

TROTSKY SEES STALIN NEAR END OF REIGN

Says Interests of Defense Have Yielded to Attempts to Save 'the Ruling Clique'

Trotsky was lying. He himself and his supporters outside and especially inside the Soviet Union, were deeply implicated in this conspiracy which, as we shall see, was a joint military-civilian affair. Indeed, Trotsky himself was one of its leaders.

What Happened

During May, 1937, an undetermined number of officers of the Red Army (formal name: Workers and Peasants Red Army, Russian initials RKKA) were arrested in connection with the investigation of a conspiracy involving high-ranking military officers, together with civilian co-conspirators, to sabotage the Red Army and Soviet defenses; open the front in the event of war with hostile powers; and to arrest and/or assassinate Soviet leaders, including Stalin and Marshal Kliment E. Voroshilov, People's Commissar for Defense.

The officers of the highest rank who were ultimately tried, convicted, and executed on June 11-12, 1937, were:

Mikhail Nikolaevich Tukhachevsky, one of the five Marshals¹ of the Soviet Union. Tukhachevsky was arrested on May 22, 1937.

Yona Emmanuilovich Yakir, Komandarm 1st rank², arrested on May 28, 1937;

 $^{^{\}rm 1}$ "Marshal" was the highest rank It was established in 1935. Roughly equivalent to full General in the U.S. army.

 $^{^2}$ "Komandarm 1st rank" was the rank just below Marshal. Roughly equivalent to Lieutenant General in the U.S. army.

Yeronim Petrovich Uborevich, Komandarm 1^{st} rank, arrested on May 29, 1937.

Avgust Ivanovich Kork, Komandarm 2nd rank,³ arrested on May 12, 1937.

Robert Petrovich Eideman, Komkor,⁴ arrested on May 22, 1937.

Vitovt Kasimirovich Putna, Komkor, arrested on August 20, 1936.

Boris Mironovich Fel'dman, Komkor, arrested on May 15, 1937.

Vitalii Markovich Primakov, Komkor, arrested on August 14, 1936.

Putna had been named by defendants in the second Moscow Trial of January, 1937, as a secret Trotskyist conspirator within the army.⁵ Putna had also been mentioned in the first Moscow Trial of August, 1936.⁶

On May 20, 1937, Yan Borisovich Gamarnik, Army Commissar 1st rank, was removed from his post as Chief of the Political Directorate of the Army. On May 30, 1937, the Politburo dismissed him from his military positions because of his "close group ties with Yakir, now expelled from the Party for participation in a military-fascist conspiracy." On May 31, 1937, two officers, acting under Voroshilov's orders, visited Gamarnik at his apartment to inform him that he was being dismissed from the army. When they left, Gamarnik committed suicide by gunshot.

 $^{^3}$ "Komandarm 2nd rank" was the rank just below Komandarm 1st rank. Roughly equivalent to Major General in the U.S. army.

^{4 &}quot;Komkor" (corps commander) was the rank just below Komandarm 2nd rank. Roughly equivalent to Brigadier General in the U.S. Army, but higher than "Kombrig," which also means Brigadier General.

⁵ Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre. Heard Before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. Moscow, January 23-30, 1937....Verbatim Report. Moscow: People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R., 1937. For Putna, see Karl Radek's remarks at pp. 105, 146, and 545, and Vladimir Romm's, pp. 138, and 145.

⁶ See Report of Court Proceedings. The Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Center. Moscow: People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R., 1936, p. 116.

Interrogations of the eight accused continued throughout the last part of May until the trial, which took place on June 11, 1937.

Meanwhile, between June 1 and June 4, 1937, an enlarged session of the Military Soviet (Council) with the People's Commissar for Defense was held in Moscow. The transcript of the discussions was published in 2008. Its purpose was to explain to high-ranking military officers the evidence against the eight commanders in what would come to be known as the "Tukhachevsky Affair;" to present them with that evidence in written form; and to hear what they had to say about it.

The documents presented, evidently in multiple copies, to the officers who attended the Military Soviet, are listed in the transcript of the enlarged session of the Military Soviet. On June 1, 1937, the first day of the meeting, the officers in attendance, 173 of them, were given copies of the confession statements of Tukhachevsky, Kork, Fel'dman, and Yefimov. Other materials may have been distributed after June 1 -- an excerpt from a June 2, 1937 confession by Putna is included in the published transcript of the session of the Military Soviet. As of 2020, most of the investigative materials are now available to researchers at the FSB archive in Moscow.

Interrogations of and confessions by these eight men evidentlycontinued right up until June 10, 1937, the day before the trial. On June 11 the eight former commanders were put on trial by a military court consisting of high-ranking officers. The accused and the judges were all well acquainted with one another. The presiding judge was Vasilii Vasil'evich Ul'rikh, an Old Bolshevik⁸ and a trained and experienced jurist.

⁷ This is Komkor Nikolai Alekseevich Yefimov, arrested on May 22, 1937, but not put on trial until August 14, 1937, when he was convicted and executed. Yefimov must have confessed immediately he was arrested – the date of his confession that was distributed to the 173 officers is also May 22.

 $^{^{\}rm 8}$ One who had joined the party of Lenin before the Revolution of 1917 – in Ulrikh's case, in 1910.

The trial took place on June 11, 1937. All eight defendants confessed, were convicted, and sentenced to execution. They were shot on June 12, 1937. The transcript of this trial is the primary document presented in the present book.

Soviet Archival Documents

Since the end of the Soviet Union in late December, 1991, a great many documents from former Soviet archives have been published. Beginning as a relative trickle, a decade later the total number of former Soviet documents published had become a flood, one that continues until the present day. These documents demand a complete revision of the history of the Soviet Union during the time when Joseph Stalin was in the leadership, roughly 1929 to 1953.

In Russia today there is a law according to which secret documents are to be made public after the passage of 75 years. ⁹ 2012 marked seventy-five years since the Tukhachevsky Affair. By 2012, many interrogations, statements, and confessions of military men accused of involvement in the military-civilian conspiracy had indeed been declassified.

In 2015 historian Vladimir L. Bobrov, together with a colleague, applied to the archive of the FSB, the agency that is the direct descendant of the OGPU-NKVD-KGB, to request that the transcript of the Tukhachevsky trial be declassified and made available for study. The FSB archive refused, stating that the case was still under investigation by the prosecutor's office.

The Trial Transcript Declassified

In May, 2018, a copy of the trial transcript held in a different archive, RGASPI, the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political

⁹ See section 1.10 of the law at https://zakonbase.ru/content/part/85809 In reality, however, the investigation materials of persons not "rehabilitated" is still forbidden, though this exception is not specified in the law. [Information from Vladimir L. Bobrov July 29, 2020.]

History, was silently published by being placed on two web pages, one in Ukraine, the other in Russia.¹⁰ This is the text we present here, in English translation. We still do not have access to the copy held in the FSB archive.

The trial transcript is contained in several different archival volumes. Volume 16 ("tom 16") is the first typewritten transcript of the handwritten transcripts recorded by stenographers. It contains only light editing. Volume 17 ("tom 17"), also a typescript of the transcript, contains copious revision in blue, red, green ink and pencil. The version from the RGASPI archive, which we translate here, is a retyped version of volume 17.

Other Arrests and Trials of Military Men

The trial transcript makes it clear that many other officers were involved in this conspiracy. Today there is a massive amount of evidence to this effect – so much, indeed, that a multi-volume set would be needed to contain it all. We will cover a very small part of this evidence in some of the chapters in this book.

A great many officers were either charged with serious crimes or dismissed from the military under a cloud of suspicion. A significant number were put on trial and either executed or sentenced to terms in a labor camp. Some were acquitted. Others were arrested, held during an investigation, and ultimately released.

A great deal of material has now been declassified and is available to researchers. It is likely that all, or almost all, of the investigative materials on thousands of officers who were under investigation, is still extant and could be accessed and studied by researchers.

But it appears that there is very little research being conducted on these men, or on the subject of the military conspiracy generally.

¹⁰ As of July 21, 2020, these are:

http://lander.odessa.ua/doc/rgaspi_17.171.392_process_tuhachevskogo.pdf and http://istmat.info/node/59108

The main reason for this neglect is the fact that the question of the military conspiracy is widely considered a "closed book." Tukhachevsky and his seven co-defendants have long since been declared to have been innocent victims of a frame-up by Stalin. There is no indication that the mainstream historical profession in Russia or elsewhere is willing to revisit these events, regardless of how much evidence of their guilt we now have.

The Anti-Stalin Paradigm

Refusal to be objective – to consider the possibility that not just the Tukhachevsky Affair defendants, but many other military officers, may have indeed been guilty, to decide the matter of guilt or innocent on the basis of evidence rather than of preconceived ideas, outright bias, or political expediency – is a product of the anticommunism, in the form of anti-Stalinism.

Leon Trotsky did his best to demonize Stalin – to accuse him of every conceivable crime, always without any evidence – in order to further his, Trotsky's, own anti-Soviet conspiracies and his collaboration with Nazi Germany and militarist Japan, and with fascists, German spies, and his own followers within the Soviet Union. After Stalin's death Nikita Khrushchev falsely accused Stalin of many crimes in his famous "Secret Speech" to the XX Party Congress on February 25, 1956. Thanks to evidence from former Soviet archives we now know that *all* of Khrushchev's accusations against Stalin in that speech are false, most of them deliberate lies. 11

At the XXII Party Congress in October, 1961, Khrushchev sponsored further accusations against Stalin, some of them citing evidence that we can now show was false. After the XXII Congress,

¹¹ For the evidence see Grover Furr. 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

Khrushchev sponsored a virtual avalanche of dishonest writings, disguised as history but devoid of evidence, in which Stalin was accused of yet more crimes. This wave of anti-Stalin fabrications ceased shortly after Khrushchev was ousted in October, 1964.

Beginning in 1987 Mikhail Gorbachev, the final leader of the Soviet Union, launched an even more fierce attack on Stalin, again with the aid of phony historians and with either falsified evidence or no evidence at all. This last anti-Stalin onslaught has continued to the present day.

The unwritten rules of this Anti-Stalin Paradigm (ASP) include the following: It is considered illegitimate to question Stalin's guilt in any crime he has been charged with in the past, regardless of the evidence now available. Confirmation bias, "the tendency to search for, interpret, favor, and recall information that confirms or supports one's prior beliefs or values," 12 trumps evidence, trumps the truth, trumps everything.

In 1956, shortly after his "Secret Speech," Khrushchev assigned a commission under the chairmanship of Vyacheslav Molotov, a long-time close associate of Stalin's, to investigate some of the crimes that Khrushchev had accused Stalin of. The Molotov Commission included a few other longtime Stalin supporters, but also some Khrushchev loyalists. The result was that the commission could not agree that the defendants in the three Moscow Trials had been innocent. But it did "rehabilitate" the principal defendants in the Tukhachevsky Affair, although it cited no evidence in doing so.¹³

Just prior to the XXII Party Congress Khrushchev appointed another commission under the chairmanship of another Old Bolshevik, Nikolai Shvernik, and composed solely of Khrushchev

¹² See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation_bias

¹³ For the documents of the Molotov Commission that have been published so far, see pages 150-274 of *Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo. Febral'* 1956 – nachalo 80-kh godov. T. 2. Moskva: "Materik". 2003

loyalists and Stalin-haters. This commission investigated the Tukhachevsky Affair again, and again found the defendants innocent. Once again, they were unable to find any evidence of innocence, and were forced to falsify the evidence that they did cite. We examine some of the falsifications of the Shvernik Commission in the present book.

My Road to the Tukhachevsky Affair

I first became interested in the Tukhachevsky Affair in the 1970s. At a huge demonstration in Manhattan in 1967 against the U.S. invasion of Vietnam, I was told by a friendly but clearly anticommunist onlooker that I should not oppose the American war in Vietnam. Why not? I asked. Because – came the answer -- the Vietnamese nationalists were led by the Communist Party, the Communist Party was led by Ho Chi Minh, Ho had been trained by Joseph Stalin, and "Stalin had murdered 20 million people."

I did not believe this – but neither did I disbelieve or dismiss it. In 1968 Robert Conquest published *The Great Terror. Stalin's Purge of the 'Thirties.* I was still curious about that claim that Stalin was a mass murderer, so in the early 1970s I read Conquest's book very carefully. From my study of medieval literature, I knew not to take the fact-claims of "experts" on trust, but to always scrutinize the primary-source evidence. So I paid particularly close attention to Conquest's footnotes – where the evidence is. Or, rather, where it is supposed to be.

I had a contradictory reaction to Conquest's book. On the one hand, I was shocked and troubled by the enormous number of accusations of terrible crimes that Conquest leveled at Stalin. On the other hand, I noted that Conquest cited little -- if indeed any -- primary-source evidence to support his sweeping allegations against Stalin and the Soviets.

Once I was securely situated in my new college teaching job and had completed most of the research for my doctoral dissertation, I set about checking Conquest's book further with the resources of the New York Public Library. I created a 3x5 file card for every citation that Conquest used in *The Great Terror* and I systematically checked all of them. What I discovered was enlightening. Conquest had *no* primary source evidence. *All* of the materials he cited as "evidence" were *assertions* by Soviet or Western anticommunist writers. I noted especially the fact that the Soviet references also had no evidence.

When I completed my doctoral dissertation in 1978, I determined that I would do some serious research on the "Great Terror." I decided to concentrate on the Tukhachevsky Affair because it seemed to me that there was more information available about it than about the other alleged "crimes of Stalin" in Conquest's book. I began to collect articles and books, and to make notes.

In 1980 I obtained a copy of J. Arch Getty's doctoral dissertation, which he had completed at Boston College the previous year. I read it with enthusiasm. Here was a younger scholar who really knew how to use evidence, and who saw through many of the falsifications that were spread around as "truth" by mainstream scholars like Conquest.

I met Getty, and he suggested that I draft an article for a journal, *Russian History / Histoire Russe*, for which he was one of the editors. I did this, and after many rewrites, Getty recommended it for publication. But the publisher of the journal, Charles Schlacks, rejected my article on the grounds that "it made Stalin look good." Of course, my article did not do that at all. But it did conclude that the accepted version of Tukhachevsky's innocence was not supported by any evidence, and that in fact we did not know whether Tukhachevsky was innocent or not. The publisher found such responsible, scholarly caution to be unacceptable.

But Getty stood up for my article. He told the publisher that it must be published, because it had gone through a very careful vetting by himself and some colleagues. The publisher backed down. But

when the article was published, in 1988 (the issue is dated 1986), the prefatory essay to the issue contained an introductory paragraph discussing every article – except mine! This was my first exposure to what I now call the Anti-Stalin Paradigm.

In 1996 I learned how to create a simple web page. On it I put retyped versions of all the articles I had published by that time, including the 1986/88 article on Tukhachevsky. In March 1999 I received an email from Vladimir L'vovich Bobrov in Moscow about my article. He told me that the article was good but that it should be updated by the study of some of the many documents from former Soviet archives that had begun to appear in Russia.

Vladimir had been collecting and retyping documents related to the Tukhachevsky Affair and generously shared them with me. He wanted us to write an article or a book about it. I agreed, and for a while I did some work on it. But then I stumbled across evidence that Nikita Khrushchev had lied – indeed, had virtually done nothing but lie -- in his famous "Secret Speech." So I stopped working on Tukhachevsky and began years of researching and writing on other important questions of Soviet history of the Stalin period, beginning with *Khrushchev Lied*.

In 2007-8 I undertook a systematic review all the documents in the Volkogonov Archive ¹⁴ pertaining to the Stalin years, I discovered a report by Marshal Semyon Budyonny to Marshal Voroshilov in which Budyonny, a member of the judicial panel, describes the Tukhachevsky trial. This document was classified – secret, unavailable to researchers – in Russia at that time. In 2012 Vladimir and I published this document in the St. Petersburg historical journal *Klio*. Our article, including our analysis of Budyonny's letter and how it has been dishonestly described over the years, is also available online, though only in Russian. ¹⁵

¹⁴ Available on microfilm for Inter-Library Loan from the Library of Congress.

¹⁵ For the document alone, see http://istmat.info/node/22536 Our article, with document and analysis, "Marshal S.M. Budiennyi on the Tukhachevsky Trial.

Now that the transcript of the trial has been made public, along with a great many other documents relating to the military conspiracy, it is time to return to the Tukhachevsky Affair.

— *Grover Furr, 2020*

The Trial Transcript

The main feature of this book is the presentation of a complete English translation of the transcript of the trial of Tukhachevsky and his seven co-conspirators. This translation was expertly done by my Swedish colleague and fine historian Sven-Eric Holmström. I take responsibility for its accuracy, since I have gone over it and corrected it on some minor points.

Annotations to the Transcript

Within the transcript itself I have included footnotes to clarify some issues. In addition, there ia one chapter on the "Spravka" (report) of the Shvernik Commission, set up by Khrushchev to whitewash Tukhachevsky et al. This chapteris not an exhaustive study of the Spravka – it is far too long, and there are far too many lies and fabrications in it. Rather, this chapter only covers the parts of the Spravka that deal directly with the trial transcript.

There are two chapters on books that lie about the Tukhachevsky Affair. These chapters are very far from exhaustive – *all* books by mainstream historians that mention the trial lie about it. I have chosen these specific books as exemplary.

Impressions of an Eye-Witness" (in Russian). Klio No. 2 (2012), pp. 8-24, is online at https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/budennyi_klio12.pdf Budyonny's report is also available online now at the very important http://istmat.info history site. An English translation of Budyonny's letter to Voroshilov is at https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/budiennyiltr.html

Confirmatory Evidence

There follow six chapters on Soviet evidence and three chapters on non-Soviet evidence that confirms the existence of the military conspiracy. I have selected only evidence that I regard as unimpeachable – that cannot have been fabricated or faked. Much of this evidence has been available for years.

In fact, there has never been any evidentiary reason to doubt the existence of this conspiracy. Neither Khrushchev's nor Gorbachev's writers, nor any scholars or writers outside the Soviet Union, have ever presented any *evidence* that Tukhachevsky & Co. were innocent or that the conspiracy did not really exist.

But the combined impact of decades of assertions from supposedly authoritative persons, plus the effects of anticommunism, which incline even scholars who ought to know better towards confirmation bias – believing what they *want* to believe, i.e. that Stalin framed everybody – has done its work. It has convinced most people who were concerned about the Tukhachevsky Affair at all, to believe the claims that the defendants were innocent.

The Anti-Stalin Paradigm: Lies and Denial

In the professional field of Soviet history it is considered not just inappropriate, but unthinkable, "taboo," to conclude that Stalin did *not* commit some crime of which he has been previously charged. It doesn't matter how flimsy the evidence – or if, indeed, there ever were *any* evidence – of Stalin's guilt is. Nor does it matter how good the evidence is that Stalin did *not* commit the alleged crime. Evidence, literally, does not matter. What matters is "political correctness" – the imperative to condemn Stalin, to find him guilty of the crime alleged. Therefore, this book will be ignored by professionals in the field of Soviet history.

It will also be ignored by adherents of the cult around Leon Trotsky. Trotskyists (as they prefer to be called) uncritically repeat not only all the lies and fabrications that Trotsky himself produced – and we have shown in previous books that Trotsky produced a great many demonstrable lies.

Trotskyists also publicize, as loudly and as widely as they are able, any and all lies and fabrications produced by professional researchers in the field of Soviet history. It does not matter how overtly anticommunist, or even how anti-Trotsky, these researchers may be. As long as they blame Stalin for crimes -- any crimes -- their fictions are repeated as truths by the Trotsky cult.

Likewise, there are many people who self-identify as socialists and/or as Marxists who will reject the evidence and analysis in this book. Such socialists, sometimes known as social democrats, are ideologically committed to anticommunism and especially to hostility towards Joseph Stalin, about whom they know nothing except falsehoods. Like the Trotskyists, these socialists have been drinking from the poisoned well of mainstream anticommunist scholarship for so long that they have become incapable of thinking rationally and objectively.

But there are far more people who want to know the truth about the first socialist state in world history. Many tens of millions of people around the world respect the role the USSR played, especially during the Stalin period, in organizing the fight against the murderous, exploitative imperialism of the so-called "democratic" countries.

They know that the USSR went in little more than a decade from being a backward agricultural society to an industrial power that was able to defeat the fascist invasion that was led by the German Wehrmacht, the most powerful military machine the world had ever known.

They know that the Soviet Union gave unprecedented benefits to working people – cheap rent, transportation, free medical care, guaranteed vacations, maternity leave, sick leave, old age pensions – benefits that, for example, few citizens of the United States of America enjoy. They remember when the Soviet Union, during

Stalin's time, promised to push ever forward from socialism toward a classless society of justice – communism.

These people are the crucial force that will bring a better world into being. This book is for them.

Chapter 1. The Shvernik Report –

Khrushchev-era Falsifications

At the XXII Party Congress of October 17 – 31, 1961, Nikita Khrushchev oversaw a large-scale attack on Joseph Stalin and his main supporters in the Party leadership. The accusations directed against Stalin were fraudulent – accusations of crimes that Stalin did not commit and, in many cases, that were not crimes at all.

The attacks against Stalin descended to the absurd when Dora Abramovna Lazurkina, an Old Bolshevik who had spent 18 years in the GULAG. told the Congress that she had "spoken" with the long-dead Lenin.

Товарищи! Мы приедем на места, нам надо будет рассказать по-честному, как учил нас Ленин, правду рабочим, правду народу о том, что было на съезде, о чем говорилось. И было бы непонятно, почему после того, что было сказано, что было вскрыто, рядом с Ильичей остается Сталин.

Я всегда в сердце ношу Ильича и всегда, товарищи, в самые трудные минуты, только потому и выжила, что у меня в сердце был Ильич и я с ним советовалась, как быть. (Аплодисменты). Вчера я советовалась с Ильичем, будто бы он передо мной как живой стоял и сказал: мне неприятно быть рядом со Сталиным, который столько бед принес партии. (Бурные, продолжительные аплодисменты).

Comrades. We have arrived at the place where we must tell honestly, as Lenin taught us to do, the truth to the workers, the truth to the people about what has happened and what we have discussed at the Congress. And it would be incredible if, after everything that has been said and disclosed here, Stalin remained beside Lenin. I always carry llich in my heart and always, comrades, in my most difficult moments, the only reason I survived is that llich was in my heart and I could consult with him what to do. (Applause) Yesterday I consulted with llich, as though were alive and stood before me and he said: It is unpleasant to be next to Stalin, who brought so many disasters to the Party. (Stormy, prolonged applause).¹

The Congress voted, and Stalin's body was removed from the Lenin Mausoleum on Red Square.

The Shvernik Report is composed of two parts: the "Spravka", or Report, and the "Zapiska," or Memorandum. They were submitted to Khrushchev at different times. We are concerned with the Spravka which, according to the editors" note accompanying it, was completed not later than June 26, 1964. The Spravka is devoted to the rehabilitation of the defendants in the Tukhachevsky Affair; the Zapiska, to many other Party members who had been repressed during the Stalin period.

Neither the Spravka nor the Zapiska was published while the Soviet Union existed. Beginning about 1993, they were published in a number of different journals. Some of these early editions are still cited by historians today. At length they were published in the second volume of the semi-official series of volumes titled *Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo*² – "Rehabilitation. How It Happened." The Spravka is on pages 671-788 of this volume. This is by far the

¹ XXII s'ezd Kommunistichesoi Partii Sovetsokogo Soiuza . 17-31 oktiabria 1961 goda. Stenograficheskii otchiot. (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1962), III, 121.

² Reabilitatsiia. Kak Eto Bylo. Fevral' 1956 – Nachalo 80-kh godov. Moscow: mezhdunarodniy Fond 'Demokratiia'; Izdatel'stov 'Materik', 2003. Hereafter 'RKEB 2'. But this version of the "Spravka" does not contain the code names of some Soviet agents (A-256, etc.), which are in the earlier edition, Voenno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv. Vypusk 1 i 2 (Moscow, 1997-8).

most accessible print version of the Shvernik Report and we will use it here. A transcription of the Spravka is also available online.³

Both parts of the Shvernik Report are blatant falsifications. At the time the Shvernik Report was first published, in the 1990s, relatively few documents from former Soviet archives had yet been published. So when the Report first appeared, it was widely accepted as truthful. Today we can identify many of these deliberate lies, thanks to the publication of a great many documents from former Soviet archives since the end of the USSR in 1991.

Here we will focus on lies of omission in the Spravka about the Tukhachevsky Trial transcript. The Spravka reproduces sentences taken out of context in order to argue that the defendants were innocent.

First passage: Blyukher and Yakir

... when Blucher, trying to specify the preparations for the defeat of the Red Army aviation in a future war, asked a question about this, Yakir answered: "I really can't tell you anything, apart from what I wrote to the investigation."

When asked by the chairman of the court how the sabotage of combat training expressed itself, Yakir evasively stated: "I wrote about this issue in a special letter."

(RKEB 2, 690)

From these two short passages it appears that Yakir simply refused to answer. In reality, this was not at all the case. Here are the passages in the text of the trial transcript:

³ I have put it online at:

http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/Spravka.pdf

Blyukher: Accused Yakir, what exactly were your preparations for the defeat of the Red Army aviation in a future war?

Yakir: I really can't tell you anything, apart from what I wrote to the investigation. I said that, firstly, I imagine in such a way that in parallel with our wrecking work, which only slightly related to aviation, some central organization carried out very large wrecking cases in aviation, both in matters of materiel (about which I testified in detail), and in a whole series of other staffing, logistics, etc. .. Firstly, questions: Shepetovsky airdrome was built in a wrecking manner. which was done by an air force engineer named Kikachi, despite the fact that Veingauz was present there and did not notice anything. Secondly, they surely sabotaged in the construction of other airfields. They sabotaged the organization of the airfield network, which in the vast majority, would either not allow, or would complicate the work of high-speed aviation. Aviation moves at high speeds, needing large take-off spaces, and airfield sites are not growing enough and can put aviation in a difficult position. In addition, much wrecking work was carried out on the material and technical areas, on material and technical supply and personnel. Thirdly, there was a lack of haste and lack of encouragement of the aviation units which were absolutely necessary and without which it was impossible to work during night flights, especially in high-speed aviation. (16-17)

The President: How did the sabotage of combat training manifest itself, aside from limiting aviation night flights?

Yakir: I spoke about this issue in a special letter. I think that there was no need to apply special sabotage, since there were many disorders in this matter. We slowed down work in field high-speed night flight and relied on a similar line coming from Moscow, which did not give us anything. This business was simple, since

everything was being rebuilt in our country, and therefore it did not present any difficulties. (19-20)

Second passage: Dybenko and Yakir

The Spravka reads:

T. DYBENKO: - When exactly did you personally begin to conduct espionage work in favor of the German General Staff?

Yakir: I did not personally and directly begin this work. (RKEB 2, 700)

But in Yakir's confessions we find the following passages:

I heard about espionage twice about the Tukhachevsky about the Red Army, once through Colonel Koestring and the second time through General Runstedt.. (π.д.21οб)

I understand that I, as a member of the Central Committee, bear more responsibility than all other participants of the conspiracy. With access to all the most secret party and government documents I was aware of all matters and could inform the center about them. $(\pi.д.31)$

In addition, I informed at different times members of the Center of the Military Conspiracy on the relations in the Ukrainian leadership. For my testimony, this question does not matter for this is a well-known business. (π . π .7806)

That is, Yakir did not transmit information directly to the General Staff of Germany, but passed it to the members of the conspiratorial center.

We should bear in mind that, in accordance with Soviet law, the crime of espionage is not considered committed when the fact of recruitment is established or when espionage information is transferred to a representative of a foreign state. A crime is considered to have been committed when actions are taken to collect information for the purpose of transferring it. It does not matter to whom it was directly planned to transfer such information - foreign states, counter-revolutionary organizations or private individuals. Therefore, the accusations of espionage against Yakir were true.

Third passage: Dybenko and Uborevich

Dybenko: Did you directly conduct espionage work with the German General Staff?

Uborevich: I never did that. (RKEB 2, 700)

This gives the impression that Uborevich was innocent of any crime. The passage in the trial transcript tells a different story.

Dybenko: Did you directly conduct espionage work with the German General Staff?

Uborevich: I never did that.

Dybenko: Do you consider your work to be espionage and sabotage?

Uborevich: Since 1935, I have been a saboteur [lit. wrecker], a traitor, and an enemy. (78)

Uborevich did refuse to plead guilty to espionage, but he fully confirmed the commission of crimes of treason - something directly opposite to what is suggested in the Spravka.

Fourth passage

Feldman, like Kork, was the "hope" of the investigating authorities ... Feldman's speech occupied 12 pages of the transcript. (RKEB 2, 690)

In reality, the interrogation of Tukhachevsky occupies 35 pages of the transcript; of Yakir, 33 pages; of Kork, 28 pages, and of Fel'dman, 14 pages (not 12). Tukhachevsky and Yakir confessed at much greater length during the trial than the rest of the defendants.

Chapter 2. Evidence that the Defendants' Testimony was Genuine

An important episode in the trial occurs when Tukhachevsky addresses Ul'rikh with a request to give additional details to his confession about sabotage. Ul'rikh agrees.

The President: Have you met with a representative of Polish intelligence in recent years?

Tukhachevsky: No. May I supplement my confession?

The President: Please do.

Tukhachevsky: I would like to add concerning some basic questions of wrecking. (54)

Shortly thereafter Ul'rikh interrupts Tukhachevsky with a leading question.

The President: I have another question. Who, handed over to Polish intelligence some data of the Letichev district, and who issued this assignment?

Tukhachevsky: I personally.

The President: Please add what you wanted. (55)

Tukhachevsky then tries to briefly summarize some of the facts that he had described in detail in his note dated June 1, 1937. Ulrich loses patience with these theoretical remarks:

The President: Please stick more closely to the question that you wanted to talk about. (56)

But Tukhachevsky continues to speak in the same manner. Ul'rikh interrupts him again:

The President: Stick closer to the subject. (56)

Tukhachevsky continues to go on and on. At last, Ul'rikh loses patience:

The President: You are not giving a lecture or a report. You are making a confession. (62)

Tukhachevsky: I am talking about those wrecking cases that we did. These are the main points of wrecking, espionage and sabotage, which I can tell you about.

I want to assure you that I said all that I know on the basic questions. (62-3)

This fragment of the transcript clearly proves that the trial was not staged. Moreover, for whom could it have been staged? Who could have been a spectator of such a production? The trial took place behind closed doors. The transcript was in secret storage for 75 years. Even after this period it remained inaccessible to researchers for several more years.

The Absence of Any Prepared Scenario for the Trial

Dialogues about who became a participant in the conspiracy and when they did are clear evidence of an absence of any scenario prepared by the investigators and/or by preliminary collusion between the defendants. The judges listen to the parties in order to clarify and correct discrepancies in the testimony.

Dybenko: In 1929, when you were sent to Germany, were you not connected with the German Reichswehr?

Kork: Not yet at that time. Communication was established only in 1931, when I stepped down from the position of an honest Soviet citizen to the position of betrayer and traitor to the motherland, and together with me on the road to struggle against the party followed Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uborevich and others.

Dybenko: So it can be stated that Uborevich and Yakir, giving confession to the court, falsely stated that they were involved in a counterrevolutionary organization in 1934?

Kork: Yes, I insist on my confession. I know that they were not involved in the organization in 1934, but in 1931 simultaneously with me. (101-2)

Judge Ul'rikh then breaks in to check to see what Uborevich has to say about this.

The President: Accused Uborevich, from what year did you consider yourself a member of a military organization when you joined the fascist military organization?

Uborevich: Defeatist assignments were set before me in March, 1935, and conversations were conducted from the end of 1934. Prior to this, I did not engage in counterrevolution.

The President: So, the confession of Kork that you entered the organization in 1931 is wrong? How to explain these confessions of Kork?

Uborevich: I do not know.

Failing to get satisfactory clarification from Uborevich, Ul'rikh turns to Tukhachevsky:

The President: Tell me, Tukhachevsky, how to explain the difference between your confession and Kork's?

Tukhachevsky: I involved Kork in the organization during the advanced manoeuvers. That was in 1933, and not in 1931, as he claims.

The President: Could it have been conversations of an anti-Soviet character, that was not related to specific actions?

Tukhachevsky: I said that Kork was recruited in 1933. There were conversations of discontent against Voroshilov, against our leadership. There was no concrete talk of a conspiracy until 1933.

The President: Did Kork tell you about the negotiations with Yenukidze concerning the capture of the Kremlin?

Tukhachevsky: Quite right, I informed Yenukidze about this situation after having had a conversation with Gorbachev, and then I informed Kork.

The President: When did you have a conversation about the capture of the Kremlin?

Tukhachevsky: In 1933-1934, when Gorbachev returned. Here, Kork confuses dates. (102-3)

As can be seen, the disagreements are never really cleared up.

Moreover, it is not important for the ultimate outcome of the trial – for the guilt or innocence of any of the defendants – that the defendants agree with one another. Rather, Judge Ul'rikh's purpose is to find out more about the conspiracy. The investigation into the conspiracy, the arrests, interrogations, and trials of more suspects would follow.

We will see below that not all of the military men named by these defendants would be sentenced either to death or to imprisonment. Some would only be cashiered from the service. This is further evidence that the investigation, far from being a frame-up of innocent men, was in reality a serious attempt to uncover a dangerous plot and to save the Red Army and, by doing so, save the Soviet Union.

More about Contradictions in the Defendants' Confessions

In addition to Kork the investigation found that there are some inconsistencies between the testimony of Tukhachevsky and that of Primakov. Such passages indicate the veracity of the testimony.

The President: Accused Tukhachevsky, what do you know about preparing a terrorist attack against Voroshilov?

Tukhachevsky: In a conversation with Primakov I learned that Turovsky and Shmidt were organizing a terrorist group against Voroshilov in the Ukraine. In 1936, from conversations with Primakov, I realized that he was organizing a similar group in Leningrad.

The President: Did you hear Tukhachevsky's confessions?

Primakov: Nothing was proposed to me except to organize an armed uprising. (124-5)

Primakov goes on to give more details about his important assignment, in order to explain why Tukhachevsky's statements about him must be incorrect.

Primakov: I had the following basic instruction: Until 1934 I worked for the most part as an organizer, in gathering Trotskyite cadres. In 1934, I received an order from Piatakov to break off with the group of Dreitser and old Trotskyites, who were assigned to prepare terrorist acts, and I myself was to prepare, in the military district where I worked, to foment an armed uprising that would be called forth either by a terrorist act or by military action. This was the assignment I was given. The military Trotskyite organizational center considered this assignment to be very important and its importance was stressed to me. I was told to break any

personal acquaintance with old Trotskyites with whom I was in contact. This is the reason why I moved away from Dreitser's group, this is why I worked at the assignment that had been given to me. (125-6)

It is important to note that the contradictions in the testimony of the trial defendants prove that they did not tailor their testimony according to a prepared scenario. Equally important, it is clear that the prosecution did not falsify the record of the trial – the transcript – in order to eliminate inconsistencies.

During the preliminary investigation, in order to find out the reasons for the contradictions in the testimony of Kork and Tukhachevsky, the investigators drew on the testimony of Yenukidze, Gorbachev, and Primakov. The investigators approached the study of such contradictions more thoroughly than the future authors of the Shvernik Report, which passes as certification of "rehabilitation."

If all the testimonies of Tukhachevsky and others had been imposed on them by a team of investigators, where did these contradictions come from? How could they survive before the trial?

The presence of these contradictions, the attempts of investigators and judges to understand them, constitutes the strongest evidence that the persons under investigation and the defendants testified as they chose to testify – that is, gave mainly truthful testimonies. At the same time, everyone described the events as they remembered them, and not in the way that the investigators and judges would have liked.

The Trial Exposed Zybin and Tkachev

On June 11, 1937 – that is, the very day of the Tukhachevsky trial – I.M. Leplevsky, Chief of the Special Department of the Main Directorate for State Security of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Soviet Union, appealed to Kliment E. Voroshilov:

According to the testimony of the arrested member of the anti-Soviet military conspiracy Primakov V.M., Zybin, commander of the 26th cavalry division, is a participant in this conspiracy. I ask your permission to arrest Zybin.

Two days later, a resolution appears on this memorandum: "Arrest him. KV. 13 / VI.37."

The passage above is quoted from O.F. Suvenirov, *Tragediia RKKA* 1937-1938 (Moscow: Terra, 1993), page 93. Suvenirov's book takes for granted the Khrushchev – Gorbachev contention that there was no military conspiracy (or, for that matter, any other conspiracies) at all, that *all* of the arrested and repressed military men were innocent, and that all those repressed were "innocent victims of Stalin." Suvenirov makes no attempt to *prove* this contention; he simply assumes it. But the factual information in this book appears to be accurate, which makes it a valuable resource if used for this purpose only.

The President: Did you manage to recruit people in Leningrad from the leadership of the units?

Primakov: I recruited some people in Leningrad, got contact with some people, transferred some people from Leningrad to other places. I had to appoint the commander of the Shmidt corps as commander of the 7th corps, I achieved the transfer of Tkachev. I talked to Zybin in Pskov and could count on him during the uprising. I almost finished preparing the commander of the 19th corps, Dobrovolsky, with whom we only failed to agree organizationally, and as such he shared our attitude.

Dybenko: And what about the district chief of staff?

Primakov: I didn't directly reach an agreement with Fedotov, but I submitted a statement to the investigator that all the signs that I had about him showed that he was a member of the Tukhachevsky organization. (128-9)

According to N.S. Cherushev, Viktor Petrovich Dobrovolsky was arrested – but not until either October 9 or October 15, 1937. He was relieved of his command in June, 1937 – no doubt as a result of this trial. On September 20, 1938, he was tried and convicted of participation in the military conspiracy, and executed the same day. He was "rehabilitated" under Khrushchev.¹

Anatolii Vasil'evich Fedotov was relieved of his command in July, 1937. He was arrested on October 22, 1937, tried, convicted, and executed on September 20, 1938, for participation in the military conspiracy. He was "rehabilitated" on October 17, 1957, under Khrushchev.²

Mark L'vovich Tkachev was arrested on June 4, 1937. He was tried, convicted, and executed on September 1, 1937, for participation in the military conspiracy. According to Cherushev, he was "rehabilitated," but no date is given.³

Sergei Petrovich Zybin was commander of the 25th cavalry division, located in Pskov. He was "under investigation" – which means in detention – from June, 1937, which is the correct time if he is the Zybin named by Primakov. But he was released in April, 1940, the investigation was ended and he was reinstated in the Red Army.

Vladimir Bobrov has obtained Primakov's interrogation of May 11, 1937, in which Zybin is mentioned five times. In it Primakov talks about the plan to bring Trotsky to Leningrad during the course of the armed insurrection, which Primakov was in charge of.

QUESTION: - From whom did you receive the instruction on the development of a plan for the preparation and support of Trotsky's crossing in the USSR?

¹ http://1937god.info/node/183

² http://1937god.info/node/869

³ http://1937god.info/node/1492

ANSWER: - I did not receive such instructions from the Trotskyist center. I independently developed a plan for ensuring Trotsky's crossing in the USSR, which I intended to propose to the Trotskyist military center in the fall of 1936 when developing this plan. I proceeded from the premise that at the moment of the acute struggle for the seizure of power by the Trotskyists, Trotsky should appear not just anywnere, but among the troops that are prepared for this. My calculations included Trotsky's crossing from abroad or from the Estonian side, and in this case ensures the crossing and meeting of Trotsky ZYBIN, or from Finland on the border with which there are units of the XIX rifle corps of DOBROVOLSKY, which in this case ensures the crossing and meeting Trotsky.

In his interrogation of May 14, 1937, Primakov states that he did not tell Zybin or Dobrovolsky about his plan for an armed insurrection, but believed that he could count on them when the time came. Evidently the prosecution believed that Zybin had been guilty of nothing more than what Primakov called "anti-Soviet words and attitude"

During World War II, on August 5, 1941, Kombrig⁴ Zybin was killed as he led his surrounded division to break out of encirclement near Uman' in the Ukraine.⁵

⁴ Brigade Commander, equivalent to Brigadier General but one rank lower than "Komkor"

⁵ Suvenirov, 414; https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Зыбин<u>,</u>Семён_Петрович

Chapter 3. Soviet and Russian Books That Lie About the Tukhachevsky Affair

Boris A. Viktorov (1916-1993) was a lieutenant-general of Justice. From 1967 to his retirement in 1978 he was Assistant Minister of Internal Affairs. From 1955 throughout the Khrushchev period, Viktorov was Assistant to the Chief Military Procurator Artyom G. Gorniy. There Viktorov worked in a special group evaluating appeals for rehabilitations of persons imprisoned or executed during the Stalin period.

During the late Gorbachev period Viktorov wrote several articles about supposedly unjust repression of persons whose cases he had studied. In 1990 he published a book, *Without the "Secret" Stamp (Bez grifa 'sekretno'*). This book, published during Gorbachev's attack on Stalin and massive dishonest rehabilitations of persons falsely claimed to have been unjustly repressed, was published in 200,000 copies – an enormous press run for what is basically an academic-style study of alleged unjust repressions.

The fact-claims in Viktorov's book could not be vetted – checked for accuracy – when it was published. Gorbachev's USSR was still in existence. The flood of documents from former Soviet archives had not yet begun.

Now, however, we can check many of the assertions that Viktorov made. Those that we have checked turn out to be false. The book is not an objective study of unjust repressions, but a cover-up of the evidence that many "rehabilitated" persons were actually guilty.

This is the case with Tukhachevsky. The example below gives an idea about the extent of the dishonesty in Viktorov's book.

p. 224:

Александр Чехлов в рассказе «Расстрелянные звезды» так охарактеризовал облик следователя М. Н. Тухачевского:

Alexander Chekhlov, in the story "The Stars that were Shot", described the appearance of M. N. Tukhachevsky's investigator as follows:

Short stories are, of course, not evidence!

p. 231:

Перед нами стенограмма протокола заседания Специального судебного присутствия Верховного Суда СССР, состоявшегося 11 июня 1937 г. Председательствовал армвоенюрист В. В. Ульрих ...

Стенограмма содержала всего несколько страниц, свидетельствовавших о примитивности разбирательства со столь тяжкими и многочисленными обвинениями.

Before us is the transcript of the minutes of the meeting of the Special Judicial Presence of the Supreme Court of the USSR, held on June 11, 1937. Military jurist V.V. Ulrich presided

The transcript contained only a few pages, which testifies to the primitiveness of the proceedings with such grave and numerous charges.

Page 232:

Аналогичные показания об отношении к Родине дали Уборевич, Корк, Фельдман, Якир, Путна. Якир сообщил, что учился в 1929 году в академии генерального штаба Германии, читал там лекции о Красной Армии, а Корк некоторое время исполнял обязанности военного атташе в Германии.

Uborevich, Kork, Feldman, Yakir, Putna gave similar testimonies about their attitude to the Motherland. Yakir said that he studied at the Academy of the General Staff of Germany in 1929, read lectures about the Red Army there, and Kork for some time served as a military attaché in Germany.

So what? In 1929 these men had not yet joined the conspiracy.

Page 233:

Каким мог быть приговор? Его содержание было предрешено приказом наркома обороны СССР К. Е. Ворошилова N2 96 от 12 июня 1937 г.

What else could the verdict be? Its content was predetermined by order of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR K.E. Voroshilov No. 96 of June 12, 1937.

Again, either dishonest or incompetent. The verdict was *not* "predetermined." The court rendered its verdict on June 11. It was signed by Voroshilov on June 12.

In reality, the transcript is 172 pages long. Viktorov may have been deliberately lying. Or, it may be that he himself had not been permitted to see the transcript. It may even be the case that Viktorov did not write this book, but allowed some ghostwriters to do it for him.

Whatever the case, Viktorov's book is a good example of the utter dishonesty of Gorbachev's "rehabilitations" of people supposedly repressed unjustly.

S. Yu. Ushakov and A.A. Stukalov, *The Front of the Military Procurators* ("Front voetnnykh prokurorov"). Vyatka, 2000. This widely-cited book is in two parts. The first claims to be the memoir of Nikolai Porfir'evich Afanas'ev, who was active in the office of the military prosecutor in Moscow during the 1930s.

Afanas'ev supposedly wrote his memoir during the 1950s. Ushakov claims that Afanas'ev was afraid to publish them during the Khrushchev "thaw" and afterwards – a claim that sounds doubtful on the face of it, since the contents of this book would fit in perfectly with the falsifications that Khrushchev sponsored by the bushel. According to Ushakov, Afanas'ev's granddaughter asked him to publish them.

We are not concerned here with the question of whether the memoir is genuine – that is, whether it represents what Afanas'ev actually wrote. In the light of documents from former Soviet archives published after the end of the USSR, and particularly after the publication of this book in 2000, we can tell that many statements in it are simply false.

Тухачевский упорно отрицал ка кую-либо свою вину в измене или каком-либо другом преступлении. Не дали результатов и длительные допросы, Тухачевский все время твердил одно - он ни в чем не виновен.

- ... Пришлось доложить, что Тухачевский категорически отрицает какую-либо свою вину.
- ... Тухачевский, по словам Ежова, так ни в чем и не признался, хотя к нему и применялись «санкции», как он выразился.

Tukhachevsky stubbornly denied any guilt of treason or any other crime. Long interrogations did not produce results either, Tukhachevsky kept saying one thing - he was not guilty of anything.

- ... He had to report that Tukhachevsky categorically denied any guilt on his part.
- ... Tukhachevsky, according to Ezhov, admitted no guilt, even though they applied "sanctions" to him, as he expressed it. (70, 71)

This is entirely false. Two of Tukhachevsky's confessions were published in 1991. In those he did confess guilt. Today we have several hundred pages of Tukhachevsky's investigation file, with a great many confessions of guilt in considerable detail, plus the trial transcript, with many more confession by Tukhachevsky.

Iulia Kantor

Iulia Zorakhovna Kantor is a Russian journalist and historian who in the 1990s obtained permission from the Tukhachevsky family

to gain access to the still-classified Tukhachevsky investigation material. She has written several articles and three books dealing with Tukhachevsky.

Kantor has clearly read the transcript of the Tukhachevsky trial. Yet she still insists that Tukhachevsky was innocent! See her very dishonest but nevertheless revealing article in the Russian newspaper *Izvestiia* of February 21, 2004, page 10-11. It is no longer on line at the *Izvestiia* site so I have put it on line here:

http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/kantor_izvestiia_022104.pdf

On the first page (numbered page 10), upper right corner, can be seen the cover of the trial transcript. It is exactly the same as the one made public in May 2018, and which we have translated here.

On the second page (page 11), upper left corner: the famous "blood spots" appear. But see Tukhahevsky's very regular signature right beside them. In fact, no one knows what they are or, if they are blood, whose blood it may be. We examine these "blood spots" in a separate chapter of this book.

Vladimir Bobrov, has studied the Tukhachevsky investigative file and informs me that there are *no spots*, whether "blood" or otherwise, on this file. There are holes that appear to have been cut out by a sharp instrument, perhaps a razor blade. It appears as though Kantor *claimed* that she saw the "blood spots" that are mentioned in the "Spravka" in order to facilitate the myth that Tukhachevsky had been beaten.

In 2006, Kantor wrote four articles for the journal *Istoriia* gosudarstva i prava (History of the state and the law) titled "Hitherto unknown documents from the 'Tukhachevsky Affair'" ("Neizvestnye dokumenty o 'dele voennykh"). I have put these texts online, though they are not translated into English. In them

are many confessions of guilt by Tukhachevsky and the other defendants.¹

Iulia Kantor, The War and Peace of Mikhail Tukhachevsky (Voina i mir Mikhaila Tukhachevskogo) Moscow: Dialog, 2005).

According to Russian law, documents are declassified after 75 years. When Kantor researched and wrote this book that period had not yet been reached. But since the Gorbachev period direct relatives of any person have been able to obtain access to investigative and judicial records. Kantor obtained permission from the Tukhachevsky family to use family documents and to interview relatives. As can be seen in the reproduction of her 2004 *Izvestiia* article, she also received access to the trial transcript.

Kantor's book is a continuation of the Khrushchev – Gorbachev cover-up about Tukhachevsky. Presumably, she would not have obtained from the Marshal's descendants access to still-classified documents if she had not agreed from the outset to "prove" Tukhachevsky innocent. Writing at a time before researchers could gain access to classified documents from 1937, Kantor ran no risk that anyone would be able to compare what she wrote with the primary sources that only she had permission to read.

The principal dishonesty in Kantor's book is that she pretends to her readers that the investigative materials of Tukhachevsky prove his innocence and confirm the point of view of the Khrushchev-era rehabilitation. Kantor claims that in these documents she did not find even a single bit of evidence of the slightest wrongdoing by Tukhachevsky.

Kantor has recourse to the pseudo-science of graphology – handwriting analysis – in order to argue that Tukhachevsky was under "stress" when he wrote some of his handwritten confessions. My colleague, Vladimir Bobrov, who has accessed and transcribed many documents from the NKVD files of Tukhachevsky and others

¹ At https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/kantor_4articles_igp06.pdf

in the military conspiracy, says that this is untrue, that Tukhachevsky's handwriting is very even and regular.

В рукописных текстах показаний пляшут буквы, смазываются строчки. (Kantor, 387)

In his handwritten testimony the letters dance, lines are blurred.

Vladimir Bobrov comments:

Это утверждение лживо: наоборот, рукописные показания Тухачевского отличаются строгостью соблюдения высоты строчек, границ полей, размером букв, разборчивостью почерка. Множество вставок, замечаний, уточнений свидетельствует о том, что текст писался не под диктовку, а самим подследственным, т.е. факты и формулировки принадлежат Тухачевскому.²

This statement is false. On the contrary, Tukhachevsky's handwritten confessions are distinguished by strict observance of the height of lines, margin boundaries, letter size, and legibility of handwriting. The many inserts, remarks, and clarifications indicate that the text was written not under dictation, but by the person under investigation, i.e. the facts and language belong to Tukhachevsky.

I have put three samples of Tukhachevsky's handwriting in his confession file (P-9000) on the Internet. These samples prove that Bobrov's remarks are correct. They may be seen here:

https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/tukh_handwriting_kantor.html

² File: Кантор.docx. Received May 26, 2020.

Chapter 4. Western books that lie about the

Tukhachevsky affair - Stephen Kotkin

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.

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. Stephen Kotkin chooses the latter strategy: he ignores the evidence.

Stephen Kotkin is a full professor of history at Princeton University. He is also a fellow of the super-anticommunist Hoover Institution, which never sponsors any publication or any scholar that is not intensely anticommunist. Kotkin has spent his entire academic career since graduate school on the Stalin period of Soviet history.

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 'voennofashistskii zagovor," 7–20, 255; Voennye arkhivy Rossii, 111; Khaustov, "Deiatel'nost' organov," 188–9.

Here and elsewhere in Kotkin's mammoth book – more than 900 pages of text, 5200+ footnotes and 47 pages of bibliography in tiny print – "Lebedev" is the journal *Voenno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, vypusk (issue) 2, 1997. This is our old friend, the "Spravka" of the Shvernik Commission. It has been published several times in a number of different places. 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.

Here is what Lieutenant General of the Russian FSB Alekandr Zdanovich, who worked in the FSB (former NKVD) archive for many years, says about this apocryphal story:

In this "Report" (the "Spravka"), I am sorry to say, as a historian of the special services, a lot was written that the Chekist authorities themselves had a hand in ensuring that this process took place and the accumulation of materials went on for many years even before the trial. And [the writers of the "Spravka"] involved all our well-known operations carried out by the GPU. The GPU-OGPU in the 1920s and early 30s was both foreign intelligence and counterintelligence, which were actively working. It was allegedly in the "Trust" case that information was brought abroad that Tukhachevsky was the head of a military group that opposed Soviet power, the Bolsheviks, and Stalin specifically. I can say with conviction that I have not seen a single document, not a single line to confirm this. Moreover, there is a directive of Dzerzhinsky's, which is recorded in the documents, that under no circumstances should the name and surname of Tukhachevsky be used in this matter 1

¹ "Zagovor Tukhachevskogo sushchestvoval" ["The Tukhachevsky Conspiracy Did Exist"], interview with Zdanovich, Komsomol'skaya Pravda May 22, 2017. At

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 coconspirator. 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."

What Kotkin fails to reveal to his readers is that Artuzov's note to Yezhov was well motivated. On the previous day, January 24, 1937, Karl Radek had named Putna at the second Moscow Trial. Radek also mentioned Tukhachevsky, then tried to retract what he said, but it was too late.

"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!"

Note that Kotkin cites the book *The Red Army* by Erich Wollenberg as though the author agreed with Kotkin that there was no military conspiracy. But here is what Wollenberg actually wrote that the military conspiracy did in fact exist!

I therefore owe a debt of gratitude to my English publisher, for although my book was just about to appear he has kindly permitted me to include this addendum, which is based on the latest official Russian statements and certain private information. A portion of the latter has been supplied to me by officers belonging to the Tuchachevsky group. (233)

According to reliable sources of information, there was actually a plan for a "palace revolution" and the overthrow of Stalin's dictatorship by forcible means. It is also true that the Red Army was allowed a decisive role in the execution of this plan, which was to be carried out under the leadership of Tuchchevsky and Gamarnik. The Moscow Proletarian Rifle Division, led by General Petrovsky, a son of the President of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, was to occupy the Kremlin and break the resistance of the G.P.U. troops, which were commanded by Yagoda until the autumn of 1936, when Yeshov took his place. The conspirators reckoned on the support of the workers and the benevolent neutrality of the peasants: in the event of stiffening resistance from th motorized and excellently armed G.P.U. Army, Ukrainian troops commanded by General Dubovoi were to be rushed into Moscow. (241-2)2.

Here is a passage from Joseph Davies, *Mission to Moscow* concerning what Davies learned on January 16, 1937, 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**

² Erich Wollenberg, *The Red Army* Translated by Claud W. Sykes. London: Secker & Warburg, 1938. Wollenberg was a member of the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) until 1933. Thereafter, he was an independent journalist.

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 published in 1999, states:

В 1937 году было репрессировано³ 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. соответственно⁵, т.е. доля репрессированных в некомплекте начсостава составляла 32% и 11%.

- 3. К репрессированным автор относит лиц командноначальствующего 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 11,034 persons were subjected to repression or 8% of the listed size of the officer corps; in 1938 - 4,523 persons, or 2.5%. At the same time, a shortage of officers in these years reached 34 thousand and 39 thousand, respectively, i.e. The proportion of repressed of the shortage in the officer corps was 32% and 11%.

- 3. By "repressed persons" the author refers to command personnel dismissed from the Red Army for 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 11,034+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.

Chapter 5. Soviet evidence - Yakir letter to

Stalin

Thanks to documents published since the dissolution of the USSR we can now see that some of the speeches at the XXII Party Congress (October, 1961) also contained blatant lies about the oppositionists of the 1930s.

As one example of the degree of falsification at the XXII Party Congress and under Khrushchev generally we cite Marshal Georgii Zhukov's remarks at the June, 1957, Central Committee Plenum at which Khrushchev and his supporters expelled the "Stalinists" Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich for having plotted to have Khrushchev removed as First Secretary. Zhukov read from a falsified letter from Komandarm (General) Iona Yakir who had been tried and executed together with Marshal Tukhachevskii.

Marshal Zhukov quoted Yakir's letter as follows:

On June 29 1937 on the eve of his own death he [Yakir – GF] wrote a letter to Stalin in which he says:

'Dear, close comrade Stalin! I dare address you in this way because I have told everything and it seems to me that I am that honorable warrior, devoted to Party, state and people, that I was for many years. All my conscious life has been passed in selfless, honorable work in the sight of the Party and its leaders. I die with words of love to you, the Party, the country, with a fervent belief in the victory of communism.'

On this declaration we find the following resolution: "Into my archive. St. A scoundrel and prostitute. Stalin. A precisely accurate description. Molotov. For a villain,

swine, and b***, there is only one punishment – the death penalty. Kaganovich.¹

Aside from relatively inconsequential errors in Zhukov's account – Yakir's letter was written on June 9, 1937, not June 29 – there are important falsifications. In this letter Yakir repeatedly **confirmed** his guilt. Voroshilov, as well as Stalin, Molotov, and Kaganovich wrote on the letter, a detail Zhukov omitted. In 1957 Voroshilov had backed away from the plot to remove Khrushchev. The latter, though criticizing the old Marshal severely, spared him the punishment meted out to the others.

At the XXII Party Congress in October 1961, Aleksandr Shelepin also quoted Yakir's letter dishonestly, but somewhat differently. In Shelepin's quotation from Yakir's letter to Stalin of June 9, 1937, I put the text read by Shelepin in **boldface**. The text in the original letter but omitted by Shelepin is in *italics*.²

A series of cynical resolutions by Stalin, Kaganovich, Molotov, Malenkov and Voroshilov on the letters and declarations made by those imprisoned testifies to the cruel treatment of people, of leading comrades, who found themselves under investigation. For example when it was his turn Yakir – the former commander of a military region – appealed to Stalin in a letter in which he swore his own complete innocence.

Here is what Yakir actually wrote:

"Dear, close comrade Stalin. I dare address you in this manner because I have said everything, given everything

¹ Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich. 1957. Moscow, 1998, p. 39.

² Shelepin's remarks, here in bold face type, are from his speech to the XXII Party Congress of the CPSU, Pravda, October 27, 1961, p. 10, cols. 3-4. XXII S"ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza. 17-31 oktiabria 1961 goda. Stenograficheskii Otchet (Moscow, 1962). II, 403. The parts Shelepin omitted, here in italics, are from the original document. My thanks to my colleague Vladimir L. Bobrov, who obtained an image of it for me.

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 quilt, I have fully repented. I have unlimited faith in the justice and propriety of the decision of the court and the state. 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 betraved.

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."

As Shelepin read it, the letter is from an honest, loyal man protesting his innocence. In reality Yakir fully admitted his guilt. Yakir was one of the military figures involved both in collaboration with Germany and with Trotsky.

Here is the text from the "Shvernik Report" on the Tukhachevskii case given to Khrushchev in 1964, shortly before his ouster, but not published until 1994.

Dear, close com. Stalin. I dare address you in this way because I have told everything and and it seems to me that I am once more that honorable warrior, devoted to Party, state and people, that I was for many years. My entire conscious life has been passed in selfless, honest work in the sight of the Party and its leaders. – then I fell into a nightmare, into the irreparable horror of treason... The investigation is finished. The indictment of treason to the state has been presented to me, I have admitted my guilt, I have repented completely. I have unlimited faith in the justice and appropriateness of the decision of the court and the government. Now each of my words is honest, I die with words of love to you, the Party, the country, with a fervent belief in the victory of communism ³

The falsification goes far beyond these three examples. Now that the archival, original text of Yakir's letter is available, we can see that Zhukov, Shelepin, the "Shvernik Report" writers, then later Gorbachev, and the historians who wrote under their direction, lied consistently about the events of the Stalin years to an extent that would be scarcely imaginable if we did not have primary source evidence that proves beyond doubt the extent of their lies.

A large number of documents from formerly secret Soviet archives have been published since the end of the USSR. This is a very small proportion of what we know exists. Especially as regards the oppositions of the 1930s, the Moscow Trials, the military "purges,"

³ RKEB 2 (2003), 688; *Voenno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, Vypusk 1. Moscow, 1997, p. 194. Also in *Voennye Arkhivy Rossii* No. 1, 1993, p. 50. This was the first publication of the "Shvernik Report." But this journal is very hard to find. There was evidently never another issue, and this one, while dated 1993, may not have actually been published until the following year.

and the massive repressions of 1937-38, the vast majority of the documents are still top-secret, hidden away even from privileged, official researchers.

Yet no system of censorship is without its failures. Many documents have been published. Even this small number enables us to see that the contours of Soviet history in the 1930s are very different from the "official" version.

On the following pages we reproduce the archival copy of Yakir's letter. This is actually two copies, the original, in Yakir's own handwriting, and a typed copy, with Stalin's famous comment on it: "Scoundrel and prostitute. J. St." Molotov signed his name in agreement. Voroshilov, as important a target for the military conspirators as Stalin, wrote: "A completely accurate description." Kaganovich wrote: "for a traitor, a swine, and *bliad'* [roughly, "foul whore"] there is only one punishment – the death penalty."

The handwritten copy shows a very regular handwriting, with no sign of nervousness, much less of torture.

To my knowledge, this is the first time this letter has been published anywhere.

ABYBURADD DY DYD (6)

B. CIRBBES.

9 коня 1937 года Внутренняя тюрьма НКВ, от В. Я. К. И. Р. А.

все сказал, все отдал и мне какется, что я снова чествий, анний партии, государству, народу боец каким я оня многие Вся моя сознательная жизнь прошла в самоотверженной чест пой работе на виду партии ее руководителей, - потом провал в колмар, в непоправимый укас предательства. И в этот короткий период моей жизни всегда во мне было два ченовека: один много, честно работанний на армир, на совети, на партию и другой придумивавший и подготовлявший гнусние враждебние стране дела. Следствие закончено. Мне пред'явлено обвинение в государственной измене,я призная свою вину,я полностью раскаямся. Я верю безгранично в правоту и целесообразность решения суда и правительства. Я знав, что приговор может и должен быть один - смерть. К этому приговору я готов. И все же я обращаюсь к Вам и к Правительству и прому,прому поверить в возможность моего исправления,поверить в то, что смогу еще принести пользу государству, всего себя отдавая. Может быть Вы обсудите, может быть Вы решите позволить мне где нибудь на Дальнем Севере или Востоке, на Колиме работать и коть изредка узнавать о прекрасной, снова моей, Совет-

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2.

ской стране. И прошу Вас разрешить мне коть изредка браться за "Правду" и по цифрам сева,производства,перевозок видеть победи партии, советов и обманутого мною народа.

Я прому и понимаю, что не имер на это никакого права. Теперь я честен каждым своим словом, я умру со сдовами прови к Вам,партии и стране с безграничной верой в победу коммунизма.

якир и.

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Chapter 6. Soviet evidence – Hitler reacted to Tukhachevsky Affair, August

1937

During the past several years many documents that relate to the Tukhachevsky Affair have been declassified without any public announcement, let along any explanation. The most striking of these is, of course, the transcript of the trial, which is the main document discussed in the present book.

Another is a report from "Razvedupr," the Intelligence Directorate of the Red Army, dated August 21, 1937, a little more than two months after the trial and execution of Tukhachevsky and the other seven high-ranking officers. It was made public on the site of the Archive of the President of the Russian Republic. We learned of it from an article in the newspaper *Komsomol'skaia Pravda* of June 22, 2020.

The report quotes Hitler as criticizing the German military leadership because they had been counting on Tukhachevsky's conspiracy and it had failed.

Hitler is currently mocking the leadership of the army and says roughly the following:

"You see how these gentlemen know how to brilliantly conduct foreign policy. If I followed their advice, where would I be now? Where is Tukhachevsky's group, this imaginary "Russian trump card", this "second leg" on which German foreign policy should stand? It is under the ground!"

The report concludes:

In Hitler's eyes the Tukhachevsky affair is the last big, decisive blow that was inflicted on the competence of the army in foreign political affairs.

This intelligence testimony is consistent with other evidence we cite in the present book that Nazi leaders knew about the Tukhachevsky Affair. A translation of the document follows.

[Note: On letterhead of the Intelligence Directorate (RU) of the army. Dated August 21, 1937. Stamped "Declassified" over typed note "Top Secret."

Handwritten initials "KV" for Kliment Voroshilov. Handwritten note: "Copy to comrades S-n and M-v" for "to Stalin" and "to Molotov"]

TO PEOPLE'S COMMISSAR FOR DEFENSE OF THE USSR

MARSHAL OF THE SOVIET UNION

Com. VOROSHILOV

REPORT

(About the loss of influence of the command of the German army on German foreign policy)

I present a copy of the intelligence report received by us from our source close to German political and naval circles.

Worthy of attention:

- 1. Hitler's opinion about the failure of foreign policy pursued by the German military command, especially in connection with the Tukhachevsky case.
- 2. Disagreements between Hitler and the German military command over the sending of German troops and navy to Spain.

ATTACHMENT: Copy of the report in "2" pages.

Head of the 1st Section

RU RKKA [= Razvedupr, or Intelligence Directorate] Workers and Peasants Red Army

DIVISION COMMANDER (Stigga)

REPORT

In German diplomatic circles, it is said that **since the time of the Tukhachevsky case** the alleged influence of the army on German foreign policy has ceased.

Hitler is currently mocking the leadership of the army and says roughly the following:

"You see how these gentlemen know how to brilliantly conduct foreign policy. If I followed their advice, where would I be now? Where is Tukhachevsky's group, this imaginary "Russian trump card", this "second leg" on which German foreign policy should stand? It is under the ground!"

Disagreements between Hitler and the leadership of the army escalated in May 1937.

Around the middle of May, Hitler and the leadership of the National Socialist Party decided to undertake an open intervention in Spain and send 60,000 men together with the German navy for this purpose.

Ostensibly, Admiral Raeder objected to this. He said: "If a guarantee is given that the navy will not be needed off the German coast during its absence, then I agree that it can go to Spain.

But if we have to reckon with the possibility that it will be needed at home, then I am against. The fact is that in the event of a conflict it will not be possible to bring the fleet back to our homeland. England and France could prevent its return at any time. General Fritsch has joined this opinion. He said, "If I get a guarantee that during the absence of these 60,000 men on the borders of Spain there will be no conflicts, then I can do without these people at home. Otherwise, I will be forced to refuse to give my consent." Blomberg, who initially agreed with Hitler, ultimately supported Raeder and Fritsch. After this, Hitler decided to abandon the project. Two weeks later he scolded the generals and said that it was still possible and correct to send the fleet and 60,000 men to Spain, but he let himself be misled by military specialists. Military experts have failed in every external political situation: this was the case with Spain. In Hitler's eyes the Tukhachevsky affair is the last big, decisive blow that was inflicted on the competence of the army in foreign political affairs. Since that time, supposedly, no one can say anymore that the army is an influential factor in foreign policy in Germany.

Accurate:

Deputy Head of Division I

RU RKKA

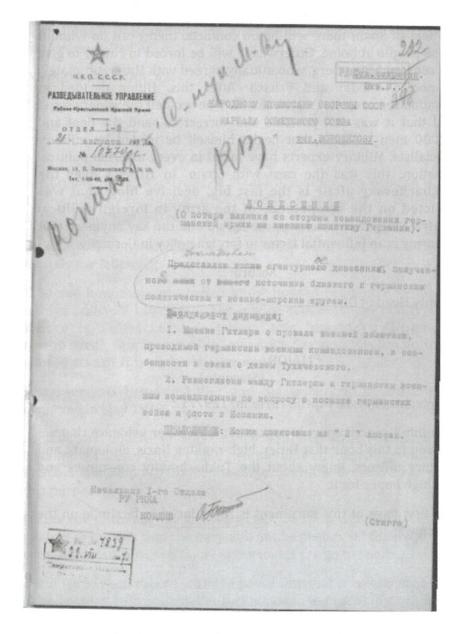
MAJOR

(Starunin)

Source: https://www.prlib.ru/item/1297712

This intelligence report is consistent with other evidence that we present in this book that Hitler, high-ranking Nazis, diplomats, and military officers, knew about the Tukhachevsky conspiracy and had high hopes for it.

The first page of this document is reproduced in facsimile on the next page.



First page of Razvedupr report to Voroshilov

Chapter 7. Soviet evidence – Ustrialov's testimony

Ustrialov on Tukhachevsky's Contacts with the Japanese

Consideration of Nikolai Ustrialov's confession requires some explanation. Ustrialov's is a Soviet – NKVD confession-interrogation. This will raise in the minds of some readers the possibility that Ustrialov might have been "forced" to falsely confess, that these confessions might be fabrications, and so on.

In reality, there is no evidence that this is the case and much evidence against it. Therefore, it may be useful to examine this issue here.

Ustrialov's confession cannot have been an attempt to "frame" Tukhachevsky or even to get additional evidence against him, since by the date it was given – July 14, 1937 – Tukhachevsky, executed on June 12, 1937, had been dead for more than a month.

Might it be an attempt to "frame," or at least get more evidence against, Bukharin and the Rights? As we shall see, they are in fact mentioned in the confession. But this is impossible for a number of reasons:

- * The allusions to Bukharin and the Rights are all hearsay. Ustrialov simply reported what one Japanese journalist-spy who called himself Nakamura had told him. Nakamura had no direct knowledge about the Rights. He just repeated what he had been told by still other parties. Such testimony would have been useless in any criminal trial, including in the USSR in the 1930s.
- * Why would the NKVD or prosecution fabricate material that could not be used? When, during the Yezhovshchina or "Great

Terror" the NKVD, under the leadership of Nikolai Yezhov, fabricated confessions, they did so to falsely incriminate innocent people. In this case they would have fabricated direct testimony, forced Ustrialov to say that he had direct knowledge of the Rights' desires to overthrow the Soviet government, make deals with Japan and Germany, and so on. But they did not do that.

- * Liudmila A. Bystriantseva, the expert on Ustrialov's life and thought who edited and introduced this confession, is convinced that it is genuine, despite the fact that it contradicts the reigning historical paradigm according to which Tukhachevsky et al. were innocent, "framed" by Stalin, Yezhov, or both. At the end of this chapter we will review what she says.
- * The confession might well be useful to the NKVD for further investigation. But that would mean that the investigators were in fact trying to discover the truth. That, in turn, would mean that they did not fabricate Ustrialov's confession.
- * Ustrialov's confession is consistent with the Soviet charges against Tukhachevsky and against the Rights. We now have good corroborative evidence, including non-Soviet evidence, that these charges were accurate. The prevailing paradigm of the Moscow Trials and the Tukhachevsky Affair cannot account for this evidence. Therefore, the prevailing paradigm must be discarded.

All this suggests that the confession is genuine. We have no grounds to think that it might be a fabrication by the investigators or the prosecution, and every reason to think it was not. And the confession itself is very interesting – in fact, a bombshell. Not surprisingly, it has been virtually ignored by those who are committed not to discovering the truth but to what I have elsewhere called the "Anti-Stalin Paradigm" of Soviet history.

These are our grounds for including this somewhat lengthy discussion of Ustrialov's confession here.

Nikolai Vasil'evich Ustrialov was a Russian philosopher who had taught law at Moscow University during World War I. He had been a member of the Kadet (Constitutional Democratic) Party, the leading party of businessmen and intellectuals. During the Civil War he supported the White generals Kolchak and Denikin against the Bolsheviks.

Eventually he settled in Harbin, China, and worked for the China East Railroad, jointly owned by China and the USSR. During his years of exile he visited Japan several times and met with Japanese government figures. When the railroad was sold to Japan in 1935 Ustrialov returned voluntarily to the USSR with other Russian nationals

Once back in the USSR Ustrialov was hired to teach as a professor of economic geography at two universities in Moscow. Soviet authorities believed that he had become reconciled with the Bolshevik Revolution and accepted his stated desire to support the USSR for nationalist reasons.

Ustrialov was arrested on June 6, 1937.

In the USSR he worked as a professor of Economic Geography at the Moscow Institute of Transport Engineers and for a time at Moscow State University. But on June 6, 1937, he was arrested by the NKVD of the USSR, and on September 14, 1937, he was sentenced to be shot by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR for "espionage, counterrevolutionary activity and anti-Soviet agitation" (articles 58-1, 58-8 and 58-11 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Republic). The sentence was carried out on the same day in Moscow.¹

From another source we learn that Ustrialov pled guilty at trial to espionage for Japan.

¹ Ustrialov, Nikolai Vasil'evich (Biographical article). At http://www.hrono.info/biograf/ustryalov.html

Ustrialov was declared guilty by the court in that "since 1928 he has been an agent of Japanese intelligence and has carried out espionage. In 1935 he established counterrevolutionary contact with Tukhachevsky, from whom he learned about the preparation of terrorist acts against the leaders of the VKP(b) and the Soviet government and about contact with the anti-Soviet terrorist organization of the Rights. In addition Ustrialov conducted active counterrevolutionary propaganda and slandered the leadership of the VKP(b)" (from the sentence, p. 52). "The sentence against Ustrialov N.V. was carried out the same day (p. 53)." ... The accusation of espionage and other counterrevolutionary activity was based solely on Ustrialov's confessions, which he gave during the preliminary investigation and confirmed at trial 2

Ustrialov was himself convicted of espionage for Japan. This constitutes our main interest in him here. It is important to note, however, that Ustrialov did *not* confess to everything his interrogator accused him of. Specifically, he rejected the accusation that he had returned to the USSR at the instruction of the Japanese.

QUESTION: It is useless for you to reduce your activity only to counterrevolutionary propaganda. The investigation is aware that you arrived in the USSR upon the direct proposal of Japanese intelligence with special assignments – do you admit this?

ANSWER: I do not admit this.3

² Bystriantseva, L.A. "Arkhivnye materialy po N.V. Ustrialovu (1890-1937)." At http://lib.irismedia.org/sait/lib_ru/lib.ru/politolog/ustryalov/documentation.tx t.htm

³ Bystriantseva, L.A. "Ustremlenie k istine. Protokol doprosa N.V. Ustrialova." *Kilo* St. Petersburg) 1, 1999, 246-256.

This kind of differentiated confession – confession of guilt to some charges while rejecting other charges – suggests an effort on the part of the defendant to be truthful at least about the charges to which the defendant has confessed guilt.

Bystriantseva argues convincingly that Ustrialov did not "spy" in the ordinary sense of the word, and in the sense that the NKVD interrogator at first accused him of. But she fails to point out the obvious: that Ustrialov's discussion with the Japanese agent Nakamura (see below) itself constituted a form of espionage – secret collaboration with a hostile foreign power – if not reported to the authorities.

The transcript of one of his interrogations, that of July 14, 1937, was published in 1999. Here we quote only those sections of the interview that are directly relevant to the question of Japanese collaboration.

In this interrogation Ustrialov outlined the contents of a conversation he had with Tukhachevsky at Tukhachevsky's own home sometime in the autumn, probably September, of 1936. He then summarizes a ninety-minute discussion he had in late December 1936 with a Japanese agent, one Nakamura, who was traveling under journalistic cover.

We will comment on these two sections of Ustrialov's confession separately. After that, we will consider issues of authenticity.

Part One. Autumn 1936: Ustrialov discusses his talk with Marshal Tukhachevsky

QUESTION: Describe the contents of this conversation.

ANSWER: I will try to present our conversation word for word insofar as I am able to remember it. Tukhachevsky first touched upon the main problems of our politics and expressed interest in my point of view. I told him that, in my opinion, in the current historic situation, Soviet foreign policy is being conducted upon the only possible line, if we bear in mind the orientation toward peace. I

felt that my companion did not share this point of view. In very careful, laconic, roundabout terms, he began to say that the orientation towards peace would require some mitigation of our relations with Germany, which now poison the whole international atmosphere.

I immediately remarked that we are not to blame for the tensions in these relations; that I firmly believed that as long as fascism is in power in Germany no improvement of our relations is possible.

Expansion to the East is the cornerstone of Hitler's foreign policy. "Yes, but to the East of Germany is Poland – replied Tukhachevsky. - Territorial questions allow for a variety of solutions." From his further, although cautious, statements it turned out that he had a very different picture of the European equilibrium than the one that now exists. In his words the well-known concept of the so-called "German orientation" was revived, about which so much was said and written at one time.

It was clear at whose expense in such a case the settlement of the disputed territorial problems was conceived. "Not every Polish campaign ended in a Treaty of Riga. History also knows the Congress of Vienna.

This aphorism by my interlocutor was a more than clear hint.

I - "But our contradictions with Germany are not limited to territorial problems. We cannot lose sight of the profound opposition of our social and political regimes."

Tukhachevsky - "Yes, of course, but regimes develop, they evolve. ⁴ In politics we need flexibility. Every conflict is the beginning of an agreement.»

<p.253>

I - "However, there are basic, fundamental conditions which constitute the essence of the political system. With us these conditions are defined by the program of the ruling party."

Tukhachevsky - "Yes, but besides the program there are people. The party is people. In the Party there are **realist politicians**⁵, and the future belongs to them."

From his further remarks it was clear that he was not only "theorizing," but already felt a certain amount of ground under his feet. The "realist politicians" in the Party were not a fiction but a reality. Not fiction either were the words about a new course towards Germany

From these words, somewhat disjointed but still quite clear, it was not hard for me to understand the basic political aspirations of my interlocutor. It only remained for me to ask him one question about the specific domestic program of those "realist politicians" in the Party that he had mentioned. To this question Tukhachevsky replied that their internal political program was based on the need to smooth the acuteness of the contradictions between the Soviet state and the

⁴ Ustrialov was a central figure in the "Smenovekhist" movement. He believed that the USSR would "evolve" towards a more bourgeois capitalist form of state. This fact may explain Tukhachevsky's interest in him. According to Bystriantseva, Ustrialov had abandoned these views by the mid-1930s, but he was – and is – still famous for them

⁵ I have put the phrase "realist politicians" in boldface here in order to draw the reader's attention to it.

outside world, even at the cost of a certain **retreat** from the political line currently being carried out by the Party. Since this lessening of contradictions is dictated by the situation – it was necessary to take this path.

After this response I finally realized that under the nickname of "**realist politicians**" Tukhachevsky had in mind the Right opposition in the party, the Bukharin-Rykov group.

Analysis

A significant point for our purposes is that the main subject of Ustrialov's interrogation was Marshal Tukhachevsky. At the date of the interrogation, July 14, 1937, Tukhachevsky and the seven other high-ranking military leaders who had been arrested with him had all been tried and executed. What would have been the purpose of fabricating an interrogation that implicated a person already dead and other minor figures some of whom, as we shall see, were never repressed?

Ustrialov had been arrested on June 6, 1937, a few days before the trial and execution of Tukhachevsky and the rest and during the continuing investigation of the military conspiracy. We don't know what led to Ustrialov's arrest.

As an attempt to investigate networks of Japanese espionage the interrogation makes perfect sense. The NKVD was also gathering further information on the Rights, on their connection to the military conspirators and others. Bukharin had already begun to confess about this in his first confession of June 2, 1937.6 So had

⁶ See Furr and Bobrov, "Nikolai Bukharin's First Statement of Confession in the Lubianka." *Cultural Logic* 2007. At

https://ojs.library.ubc.ca/index.php/clogic/article/view/191745/188745 This is an English translation of the Russian original, "Lichnye pokazaniia N. Bukharina." *Klio* (St. Petersburg), 2007. At

https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/furrnbobrov_bukharin_klio07.pdf

lagoda, Krestinsky, and others who would eventually figure in the March 1938 Moscow Trial.

Ustrialov knew that Bukharin and Rykov had been arrested – their arrests had taken place on February 27, 1937, during the February-March 1937 Central Committee Plenum. But he could not have known how closely the confessions they had already made were consistent with what he, Ustrialov, reported about Tukhachevsky's views.

As Ustrialov described his conversation with Tukhachevsky, it began by his professing his loyalty to the Soviet "orientation to peace" – no doubt the attempted rapprochement with the Western capitalists, entry into the League of Nations, the new Constitution, and other reforms. Tukhachevsky immediately began to question this policy, which was also predicated on an attempt to build "collective security" – a set of alliances – against Hitler's Germany.

The Marshal said that "some degree of softening" (nekotorogo smiagcheniia) of Soviet opposition to Nazi Germany was needed. He said that the hostile relations between the USSR and Nazi Germany were "poisoning the whole international atmosphere." That is, Tukhachevsky was telling Ustrialov that he thought the whole policy of anti-Fascism and collective security against Nazi Germany was wrong.

In Ustrialov's words Tukhachevsky was "resurrecting" the notion of a "German orientation." The two "losers" of the Versailles peace after World War I, the USSR and Weimar Germany, had collaborated secretly under the provisions of the Treaty of Rapallo. Tukhachevsky and many other Soviet officers, including most of those executed along with him, had trained in Germany. Such ties had been terminated at Hitler's rise to power.

When Ustrialov referred to Hitler's *Drang nach Osten*, the cornerstone of his foreign policy since the beginning and enshrined in his credo *Mein Kampf*, Tukhachevsky replied that Poland, not the USSR, could satisfy Hitler's territorial ambitions. He referred to the Treaty of Riga (March 1921) in which Poland

had acquired much of Ukraine and Belorussia at the expense of the newly socialist Russian Republic.

To that treaty Tukhachevsky counterposed the Congress of Vienna at which in 1815 Russian imperial control over Poland had been established with a fig leaf of Polish independence which was snuffed out by the Tsar in 1832. In effect Tukhachevsky seemed to be hinting that under a new political leadership the USSR could be a German ally once again and help to put an end to the Polish state.

To this Ustrialov objected in surprise that the socio-political differences between Germany and the USSR were "deeply contradictory to one another." Tukhachevsky's response was that "regimes develop and evolve." But the only "evolution" he spoke of was of a change in the Soviet regime and Party, guided by "realist politicians" (real'nye politiki). According to Ustrialov, Tukhachevsky said nothing about Nazi Germany's "evolving."

Tukhachevsky then said that the "internal political program" of these "realist politicians" would flow from the "necessity to remove the sharpness of the contradictions between the Soviet state and the outside world." Given what he had already said, however, it is clear Tukhachevsky meant the contradictions between Nazi Germany and the USSR, on the one hand, and the existence of the Comintern on the other. By the autumn of 1936 there were already serious and deepening contradictions between France and Germany. But all the capitalist countries were in agreement in their hostility to the Comintern.

The exact same term "realist politicians" (real'nye politiki) was used by Karl Radek in the Second Moscow Trial of January 23-30, 1937, in the same way that, in Ustrialov's account Tukhachevsky used it in speaking to Ustrialov in the autumn of 1936.

Radek:

"I told Mr. K. that it was absolutely useless expecting any concessions from the present government, but that the ... government could count upon receiving concessions from the **realist politicians** in the U.S.S.R., i.e., from the bloc, when the latter came to power.

(1937 Trial 9)

Radek:

RADEK: This was in May 1934. In the autumn of 1934, at a diplomatic reception, a diplomatic representative of a Central European country who was known to me, sat down beside me and started a conversation. Well, he started this conversation in a manner that was not very stylish. He said (speaking German): "I feel I want to spew. . . . Every day I get German newspapers and they go for you tooth and nail; and I get Soviet newspapers and you throw mud at Germany. What can one do under these circumstances?" He said: "Our leaders" (he said that more explicitly) "know that Mr. Trotsky is striving for a rapprochement with Germany. Our leader wants to know, what does this idea of Mr. Trotsky's signify? Perhaps it is the idea of an émigré who sleeps badly? Who is behind these ideas?"

It was clear that I was being asked about the attitude of the bloc. I could not suppose that this was an echo of any of Trotsky's articles, because I read everything that was written by Trotsky, watched what he wrote both in the American and in the French press; I was fully informed about what Trotsky wrote, and I knew that Trotsky had never advocated the idea of a rapprochement with Germany in the press. If this representative said that he Trotsky's views. that meant representative, while not, by virtue of his position, a man leader treated confidentially. whom his consequently representative who had a heen commissioned to ask me. Of course, his talk with me lasted only a couple of minutes; the atmosphere of a diplomatic reception is not suited for lengthy perorations. I had to make my decision literally in one

second and give him an answer, and I told him that altercation between two countries, even if they represent [diametrically opposite social systems] is a fruitless matter, but that sole attention must not be paid to these newspaper altercations. I told him that realist politicians in the U.S.S.R. understand the significance of a German-Soviet rapprochement and are prepared to make the necessary concessions to achieve rapprochement. This representative understood that since I was speaking about realist politicians it meant that there were realist politicians and unrealist politicians in the U.S.S.R.: the unrealist politicians were the Soviet government, while the realist politicians were the Trotskvite-Zinovievite bloc. And he also understood that what I meant was: if the bloc comes into power it will make concessions in order to bring about a rapprochement with your government and the country which it represents, (1937 Trial 108-109)⁷

Radek:

RADEK: Several months later, approximately, November 1935, at one of the regular diplomatic receptions, the military representative of that country...

THE PRESIDENT: Do not mention his name or the country.

RADEK: ... approached me and began to complain about the complete change of atmosphere between the two countries. After the first few words he said that during Mr. Trotsky's time the relations between the armies of the two countries were better.

⁷ The English transcript of the January 1937 Second Moscow Trial is much longer than the Russian transcript.

He went on to say that Trotsky had remained true to his old opinion about the need for Soviet-German friendship. After speaking in this strain for a little while longer he began to press me hard as one who had formerly pursued the Rapallo line. I replied to this by uttering the same formula which I had uttered when I was first sounded, namely, that the realist politicians of the U.S.S.R. appreciate the significance of Soviet-German friendship and are prepared to make the necessary concessions in order to ensure this friendship. To this he replied that we ought at last to get together somehow and jointly discuss the details, definitely, about ways of reaching a rapprochement.

I told him that when the circumstances permitted I would be glad to spend an evening with him. This second conversation revealed to me that there was an attempt on the part of military circles to take over the connections which Trotsky had established with certain circles in Germany, or that it was an attempt to verify the real content of the negotiations that were being conducted. Perhaps, also, it was an attempt to ascertain whether we knew definitely what Trotsky had proposed. (1937 Trial 444-445)

In his summing-up statement to the court Prosecutor Vyshinsky referred repeatedly and sarcastically to Radek's use of the term "realist politicians." (1937 Trial 480).

Ustrialov concludes this part of the interrogation with the remark that he realized this was the plan of the "Rightist Party opposition, the Bukharin-Rykov group." Evidently enough information about the political program of the Rights had been published by this time, or at least bruited about in conversations, perhaps at *Izvestiia* of which Bukharin was the editor and where Ustrialov himself was to publish an article in December 1936. The program of the bloc was shared by both the Trotskyists and the Rights. Ustrialov would have naturally been drawn more to the Rights.

If there were any reason to think that Ustrialov's confession were an NKVD fabrication we might attribute the use of the term "realist politicians" to an NKVD attempt to falsely link the confession, and thereby the Rights, with the Trotskyists of the Second Moscow Trial of January 1937, which had taken place only a few months earlier. But, as we have seen, there is no reason to think that Ustrialov's confession is a fabrication.

Therefore the recurrence of the term "realist politicians" represents what Radek meant by it: a coded reference to the bloc of Trotskyists, Zinovievists, Rights, and other oppositionists that, in collaboration with the Tukhachevsky group and Germany, planned to overthrow the Stalin leadership.

Part Two. Late December 1936: Ustrialov Meets with a Japanese Agent

Ustrialov:

[USTRIALOV]: However, soon I learned much more concrete things that forced me to think about possible cardinal changes in the leadership of the VKP(b) and of the whole political line of the Soviet government, and learned about the direct connection between the Bukharin-Rykov group and Tukhachevsky.

QUESTION: From whom did you learn this?

ANSWER: A Japanese man told me about this when I met him at the end of 1936.

QUESTION: What Japanese man? Where did you meet with him?

ANSWER: Soon after my article "The Self-Awareness of Socialism" appeared in the December issue (1936) of *Izvestia* a person unknown to me called me on the telephone and asked for a meeting, giving me greetings from "Harbin acquaintances." When I asked to whom I had the honor of speaking the latter answered: "You do

not know me, so my name is irrelevant, but it is essential for me that I meet personally with you and transmit to you greetings from 'Harbin friends.'"

After some hesitation I consented to a meeting and we agreed to meet each other the same day around ten o'clock in the evening in the Losinka. Not far from the Institute of the People's Commissariat of Transportation. At the agreed-upon time I arrived at that place. Soon after 10 p.m. an automobile approached the Institute. Out of it stepped a man, Japanese in appearance, wrapped in a fur coat. The Japanese man approached me, called me by my name, said his name was Nakamura, and stated that he was a correspondent of one of the Tokyo newspapers and that he was in transit from Japan to Europe and was staying for several days in Moscow.

Nakamura gave me greetings from Tanaka and expressed the desire to exchange views with me about a few questions that interested him.

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Our whole conversation was carried on in French.

QUESTION: The circumstances of your meeting with Nakamura, as you describe them, unquestionably show that this meeting had been arranged by the two of you when you left Harbin for the USSR. Otherwise the motives that prompted you to meet in Moscow with a Japanese man completely unknown to you are incomprehensible. Do you admit this?

ANSWER: You are quite correct, I do not at all intend to conceal the fact that at the end of 1934 Tanaka, during a conversation with me in Harbin, warned me that if it

⁸ Probably the park now known as Babushkinskii Park, in the Losinkoostrov district of Moscow; possibly the Losiny Ostrov National Park, also in Moscow.

became essential to receive a consultation from me about one or another question connected with the so-called Russian problem, the Japanese would try to seek the possibility of establishing contact with me in Moscow. I assert, however, that no final agreement about the circumstances of this meeting between us had been agreed upon.

QUESTION: Let us return to the circumstances of your meeting with Nakamura. Where and about what did you talk with him?

ANSWER: Nakamura invited me to sit in his automobile and for about an hour and a half we drove between Moscow and the Losinka, talking all the while. At the outset he spoke about my article in "Izvestiia," asked whether I had worked at this newspaper long and whether I was acquainted with Bukharin and his friends. To this I answered in the negative. He was further interested to learn what circles I frequented, and again spoke of the milieu of the Bukharin-Rykov group. which he called the group of realist politicians, much more far-sighted and possessing more support than the Zinoviev-Kamenev group that had recently failed. To my reply that now it was scarcely possible to speak seriously about any role for the Bukharin-Rykov group, he noted that this group, in his opinion, was not at all as weak as it seemed, and that it had many overt and secret supporters in the different links of the Soviet apparatus. Then he asked me about the mood of the Soviet intelligentsia and about my own evaluation of the political situation. I briefly informed him about my point of view.

QUESTION: What did you tell Nakamura?

ANSWER: I set forth to Nakamura my evaluation of the situation in the country from the viewpoint of my theory of "Bonapartism." I said that the revolution was steadily

moving along a Bonapartist road, that this Bonapartism of a certain sort was developing – above all as the principle of the limitless personal power of the leader.

Then I turned Nakamura's attention to such measures of the government as the establishment of titles, awards. the institution of the rank αf Marshal. reestablishment of the Cossacks, etc. ... The emergence of "notable people" as it were emphasized the creation of a new aristocracy, that is, it once again reminded one of the analogy to the Bonaparte epoch. I said that the execution of the Zinovievites was the first example in the history of the Russian Revolution of the acceptance of methods of the Jacobins in struggle with revolutionaries: the "wet" guillotine instead of the "drv." In this spirit I gave him my evaluation about other events of the internal life of the country.

QUESTION: How did Nakamura react to the questions you laid out?

ANSWER: As though in answer to these "Bonapartist notes" of my remarks my interlocutor, unexpectedly for me, began to speak on the topic of the Red Army and mentioned that, according to his information, the Rights had supports in its ranks also, more precisely in the milieu of its high command. That the Rights were not as powerless as I believed. The Japanese had reliable information about this, not only their own, but also that obtained from an allied source, just as interested as they were in the struggle against the Comintern. There were reasons to affirm that the hopes and plans of the Rights were not at all baseless. And, so as not to be too vague, he could even name one name that was, in relation to this, rather weighty. According to his information "Mister

⁹ Presumably Germany.

Tukhachevsky" was connected by close political sympathies with the group of the Right communists. And Tukhachevsky was an impressive name, well known to political circles of all foreign governments, and that even the Russian emigration predicted that he was a "Russian Napoleon." Moreover, as one of the marshals, he was popular in the USSR.

To my question how he imagined the political program of such a Right-Military bloc he developed to me a series of conceptions that reminded me of the judgments expressed by Tanaka in 1934.

In the event of political success, the government of the Bukharin-Rykov group would fundamentally change the course of Soviet politics towards the side of coming closer to the desires of foreign states. In particular, Japan expected that this government would stop the work of the Comintern in China and would give Japan full freedom of action in China. At the same time Japan was expecting the significant expansion of various concessions in the Soviet Far East, possibly even an amicable agreement about the sale to it on acceptable terms of the northern part of Sakhalin. All this would radically lessen the current tense relations between Japan and the USSR.

To my question about the position of such a government in the sphere of European foreign policy Nakamura answered that a sharp improvement in Soviet-German relations would take place. A change in the system of the monopoly of foreign trade would reinvigorate commercial ties between both countries and German commercial expansion in the USSR. Territorial-political difficulties could be decided, to a significant extent, at the expense of Poland. The decommissioning of the activities of the Comintern would meet Hitler's basic conditions. In a word, here we could expect a decisive turn in the whole contemporary

international situation and the establishment of a peaceful equilibrium on a new basis. The Soviet Union would firmly enter the society of "normal" states that carry out the politics of healthy national egoism.

. . .

As he said goodbye to me the Japanese man gave me to understand that he would be very interested to hear more detailed and concrete thoughts from me about the questions touched upon in our talk. He expressed the hope that on the basis of my collaboration on "Izvestiia" I would succeed in seeing Bukharin or some other Right communists, and also with their help meet with Tukhachevsky. He added that in a few months on his way back from Europe to Japan he would like to meet with me again. On this note our conversation, which had lasted about one and a half hours, ended.

QUESTION: After your talk with Nakamura did you try to get in touch with Bukhari and his circle?

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ANSWER: No, I did not. The meeting with Nakamura took place at the end of December [1936], and in the middle of January 1937 we already knew about the upcoming trial of the parallel center [the Second Moscow Trial of January 23-30, 1937], and a month after that there came the rumor of the arrests of Bukharin and Rykov. All these events impelled me to take a position of waiting, and during this period came my arrest.

Ustrialov believed there was a connection between his publication of a philosophical article in *Izvestiia* in December 1936 and his being contacted by a Japanese agent and subsequently meeting with him at the end of that month. At this time Bukharin was editor of *Izvestiia* and was publishing articles by well-known former oppositionists. Ustrialov was a former leading member of

the Kadet (Constitutional Democrat) Party, the main capitalist party at the time of the Revolution, and former minister in the White Russian government of Admiral Kolchak. He had returned to the USSR when the Soviet share in the Chinese-Eastern Railway had been sold to Japan in 1935.

Though by this time he had "accepted" the Soviet regime as a Russian patriot he was also known as a right-winger in politics, founder of the *Smenovekhist* movement of exile Russian intellectuals who believed that the Soviet regime would "evolve" into something less radical. In essence this was a political perspective that counted on the Russian Revolution's evolving along similar lines to the French Revolution. Ustrialov saw in Stalin the "new Napoleon," or "Caesarism," as he put it.

Harbin, the city in Heilongjiang Province occupied by the Japanese from February 1932 was the largest settlement of White Russians in the world and teemed with agents and spies from all over the world. Ustrialov lived there between 1920, when it was still an outpost of the White Russian military resistance to the Bolshevik Revolution, and 1935, when Russian employees of the railroad were permitted to repatriate to the USSR if they wished, as Ustrialov chose to do.

In the course of this second part of his interrogation Ustrialov admitted that he had been contacted by Tanaka, whom Bystriantseva identifies as a member of the Upper House of the Japanese Diet (Parliament), an expert on Russian affairs, and as such, an agent of the Japanese government. Ustrialov had met Tanaka as early as 1926.

Tanaka had told Ustrialov in 1934 in Harbin that the Japanese government would try to reestablish contact with him in Moscow

¹⁰ "Harbin was a nest of the world's intelligence services and secret operations of the 1930s." («Харбин — это гнездо мировых разведок и тайных операций 30-х годов.») Mikhail Vishliakov, "Faces of the Transbaikal." Михаил Вишняков, «Лики Забайкалья». Сибирьские Огни: Литературно-Художественный Журнал. № 2 (2004). http://www.hrono.ru/text/2004/vish_0204.html

in order to ask his advice "on the so-called Russian problem." Nakamura, the Japanese correspondent and, obviously, intelligence agent who contacted Ustrialov and met with him in late December 1936, gave an introduction – "greetings" – from "Harbin friends" and, when they met in person, from Tanaka. "Harbin friends" would have either been anti-Soviet Russian émigrés who had refused to repatriate or, more likely, the Japanese themselves.

Ustrialov agreed to meet him in a clandestine manner. Ustrialov also did not volunteer this information, but only divulged it when his interrogator suggested that he knew this already. In the eyes of the NKVD and prosecution this would have been another mark against him. Citizens were supposed to report to the proper authorities any attempts by suspected agents of foreign powers to meet with them. The ninety-minute talk also took place in Tanaka's automobile. This was obviously an attempt at secrecy too.

Failure to contact the Soviet government at this point to inform them of the attempt by an obvious Japanese agent to contact him would certainly have put Ustrialov outside the law. The Soviet government would have regarded this as an agreement by Ustrialov to be a Japanese spy. Ustrialov did not notify the government, but was evidently found out anyway. He was in fact convicted and executed in September 1937 for espionage for Japan.

Nakamura asked about Bukharin "and his friends," showed much interest in them, and called them "realist politicians, much more far-sighted and having more social support than the Zinoviev-Kamenev group that had recently failed." He called them "not at all as weak as it seemed" and said they had much open and secret support within different areas of the Soviet Party and apparatus.

Nakamura then revealed that support for the Right opposition existed in the highest echelons of the Red Army, saying that the Japanese knew this not only from their own information but from "another anti-Comintern ally." This was certainly

Germany. The "anti-Comintern pact" between Germany and Japan had been formed in November 1936 and no other countries had joined it by July 1937 (Mussolini's Italy did not join it until November 1937).

The Program of the Rights

Nakamura named Tukhachevsky as one of those who were very sympathetic to the Rights. He outlined the political program of the Rights in the same way Tanaka had done in 1934. According to Nakamura the Bukharin-Rykov group would, if they came to power, sharply change Soviet policy in the following ways.

- * Halt Comintern work in China. That would mean stopping all support for the Chinese Communist Party of Mao Zedong.
- * Let Japan have "a free hand" in China that is, to make it a Japanese colony.
- * Give Japan "significant concessions" in the Soviet Far East, including perhaps selling back to Japan the northern part of Sakhalin Island.
- * Effect a sharp improvement in Soviet-German relations.
- * Expand trade with Germany and German markets in the USSR.
- * Stop supporting the Comintern. This presumably meant in Axis and pro-German countries at least, unless it meant shutting down the Comintern entirely.
- * Enter into some kind of alliance with Germany against Poland.

This outline of the program of the Rights corresponds closely to that given briefly by Bukharin in his first confession of June 2, 1937, and that emerges from the testimony of Bukharin, Rykov, and the other defendants at the March 1938 Moscow Trial. It would mean that the USSR would then, in Ustrialov's words, "enter the society of 'normal' states," promoting national, rather than internationalist and class, interests.

Nakamura expressed the wish that Ustrialov should meet with Bukharin or other Rightists and hopefully, with their help, with Tukhachevsky again. This confirms that the Japanese government believed the possibilities for a Rightist–Military seizure of power was still very much alive in December 1936. And this is consistent with the information surrounding the Trauttmansdorff-Mastny talks only a few weeks later in early 1937. We discuss these talks in another chapter of the present book.

In short, we have much evidence that at this time Hitler was still hoping the Rights and military could still take power.

Bystriantseva's Analysis

In her introduction to the text of this interrogation Bystriantseva, an expert on Ustrialov's life and works, admits that she is unable to establish that the remarks in it were forced upon Ustrialov by the interrogators. Despite whatever doubts she has, she goes on to take the interview seriously anyway and, in her other remarks, assumes it does indeed express Ustrialov's own views.

She states:

I wish to emphasize a rule that it seems, should be generally understood but is frequently broken: the analysis of this document presupposes the obligatory knowledge not only of all of the activity of N.V. Ustrialov but also of his world-view as a whole

٠.,

It can be said that his transcript represents the final conversation, by Ustrialov with the generation of the future.

This argues strongly for the genuineness of Ustrialov's confessions in two ways. For one thing, how would an NKVD interrogator know Ustrialov's views so well that he could forge or "script" the transcript of an interrogation that sounded genuine to an expert like Bystriantseva? For another, Bystriantseva herself is expert in

Ustrialov's works and worldview. Yet she admits that she is unable to conclude the transcript of the interview with Tukhachevsky was faked.

Bystriantseva herself obviously believes that the interrogation was not falsified. She writes that she considers this interrogation Ustrialov's "last thoughts, his hopes, his words to the future." Her words are further evidence that the interrogation is genuine, and that the remarks attributed to Ustrialov in it were, in fact, his own.

But if the interrogation was not falsified in those parts of it where Ustrialov expresses his political and philosophical views, then this is additional strong evidence that the rest of the interrogation is genuine as well, including the sections that interest us.

Elsewhere in the article Bystriantseva notes that in the transcript Ustrialov's friend, the jurist Nikolai Pavlovich Sheremet'evskii, is called Nikolai Borisovich – an error that the real Ustrialov could not possibly make in the case of a friend. She is undoubtedly right that Ustrialov would not have made such a mistake. But this is an error that a typist working from a shorthand transcript could easily make. It proves nothing in itself.

Ustrialov's cousin Ekaterina Grigor'evna Shaposhnikova did in fact tutor Tukhachevsky's daughter in the Russian language, as Ustrialov states elsewhere in the transcript. Bystriantseva notes that Shaposhnikova's son's denial that the meeting took place has no significance.

Ustrialov states that his cousin Shaposhnikova was "an elderly woman of about fifty" and completely apolitical. As Bystriantseva suggests, Ustrialov undoubtedly said this to keep suspicion away from her. In fact Shaposhnikova was born in 1896 and would have been no more than forty-one at the time of the meeting with Tukhachevsky. She did in fact escape arrest and lived until 1983. In any event, this detail seems to be genuine.

Bystriantseva also published notes on the "rehabilitation hearings" held in Ustrialov's case in 1988. This was a time when rehabilitations of the "victims of Stalinism" were proceeding at a

high rate and in large numbers. But the military prosecutor failed to recommend Ustrialov's rehabilitation based on the evidence he had. The documents reveal that a previous rehabilitation investigation in 1955-56 also failed to reach any conclusive results, and left a number of unanswered questions. This earlier study confirmed that Ustrialov had been a leading member of the Kadet Party and had been personally singled out by Lenin as an enemy of the Soviet regime. During this period, Ustrialov had certainly been an outspoken opponent of the Soviet regime.

Ustrialov confessed as well to long contact with Japanese intelligence. In effect this made him a Japanese agent. The Khrushchev- and early Gorbachev-era rehabilitation commissions must have considered this in their decisions not to rehabilitate him. Although Ustrialov was at length rehabilitated on October 17, 1989, the materials Bystriantseva cites suggest that these points were not cleared up even at that time. By the late Gorbachev period almost every application for rehabilitation was being accepted.

The earlier rehabilitation study of Ustrialov's criminal case file reveals that Ustrialov confirmed his guilt at his trial, while it states that no other inculpatory materials were presented at the trial other than his own confessions in the preliminary investigation and again at his trial on September 14, 1937. We would expect that the indictment would state the grounds on which the suspicion of "counterrevolutionary activity" was based – that is, what circumstances had excited the interest of the NKVD and led to Ustrialov's arrest.

Ustrialov named a number of his friends among whom, he said, he had "set forth his counterrevolutionary views." Some of them were repressed between 1937 and 1940. But others were evidently not repressed in any way and lived into the '50s, '60s, '70s and even '80s.

The names named by Ustrialov – if it was he – were no secret to the "organs" (and we consider it essential to specially emphasize the fact that most of these persons

not only were not repressed, but even continued to work and received awards from the Soviet government.)

This suggests that the names were not suggested by the interrogators in order to find a pretext to arrest and repress these people. The only logical conclusion that remains is that Ustrialov did in fact name them himself.

Ustrialov's statement is consistent with Tukhachevsky's confessions; with the pre-trial confessions we have from Bukharin and Krestinsky; and with the testimony at the March 1938 Moscow trial. Both Tukhachevsky and Nakamura referred to the Rights, or Bukharin-Rykov group, as the "realist politicians." Radek said that he used the same term for the bloc of Rights and Trotskyists in his discussions with the German military attaché General K. (evidently German military attaché General Ernst Koestring).

In this context there seems little reason to doubt the genuineness of the Arao document, since it is obviously compatible with Nakamura's knowledge of Tukhachevsky's political orientation against the Soviet government and towards the Axis. ¹¹ Ustrialov's confession also argues in favor of its being genuine.

The Ustrialov Evidence and the Tukhachevsky Affair

The relevance of Ustrialov's confession to our evaluation of the Tukhachevsky Affair, including the accusations made by the defendants of Trotsky's collaboration with the Germans and Japanese, are very clear. The bloc of Rights and Trotskyites was accused of working with Tukhachevsky and his military coconspirators and confessed to doing that.

¹¹ We discuss the Arao document in another chapter of this work.

In *The Moscow Trials As Evidence* we reproduced passages from the testimony of Rozengol'ts, Rykov, Grinko, Krestinsky, and Bukharin concerning the Tukhachevsky conspiracy. In them the defendants at the Third Moscow Trial admit collaboration with Tukhachevsky and his group of military men, and indicate that Trotsky was involved in this collaboration also.

Ustrialov's confession is thus strong evidence in support of the essentially reliable nature of Moscow Trials confessions as evidence, as well as of Trotsky's involvement in the conspiracy of the bloc – something we know from the Trotsky Archive is true in any case.

* * *

During the Khrushchev and Gorbachev years "rehabilitations" were often justified by the statement that the only evidence against the defendant presented at trial was the defendant's own confessions. Works by anticommunist scholars repeat this charge as though it represented some kind of tyrannical practice.

This is deliberately misleading. In the American criminal justice system the prosecution does not go to the expense and trouble of presenting a case, calling witnesses, and presenting evidence, if the defendant has pled guilty. A defendant's guilty plea does not imply that the prosecution did not have evidence and witnesses in case the defendant pled innocent. In the Soviet criminal justice system in the 1930s a defendant had to confirm his confessions of guilt (if he had made any) at trial. Many defendants confessed before trial, confirmed their confessions to the investigation before trial, and then refused to confirm them at trial. In those cases the prosecution had to present the evidence it possessed. This happened in the case of Nikolai Yezhov in February 1940. Despite the fact that he refused to confirm his many confessions at trial Yezhov was convicted on the testimony of others who testified against him.

Chapter 8. Soviet evidence – Bloodstains Issue

On page 414 of his book *Stalin Waiting for Hitler 1929-1941*, Stephen 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.

It might be hard to cram more utter falsehoods into two sentences than Kotkin does here! Naturally, Kotkin has no evidence whatsoever for any of these statements, and all are demonstrably false.

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 1964 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 (I quote this passage in Russian as well, so that the readers who can read Russian can see exactly what claim the writers of the Spravka made.)

В процессе изучения дела Тухачевского на отдельных листах его показаний обнаружены пятна бурокоричневого цвета. В связи с этим было проведено судебномедицинское исследование отдельных листов дела. В заключении Центральной судебно-медицинской лаборатории Военно-медицинского управления Министерства обороны СССР от 28 июня 1956 г. говорится:

«В пятнах и мазках на листах 165-166 дела № 967581 обнаружена кровь... Некоторые пятна крови имеют форму восклицательных знаков. Такая форма пятен крови наблюдается обычно при попадании крови с предмета, находящегося в движении, или при попадании крови на поверхность под углом...»

- RKEB 2, 682.

Translation:

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. But he was evidently unsatisfied with the Molotov Commission, so he set the Shvernik Commission to collect evidence that Tukhachevsky et al. were innocent. They found none.

In the early 2000s journalist 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*.¹² 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. This has been confirmed by 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.

Let's sum up:

* 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.

¹² In the post-Soviet period today, *Izvestiia* is still a Russian newspapaer.

- * 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 spatter," which these stains are not.

Even if these stains are blood; even if they are Tukhachevsky's blood; and even if they were "blood spatter" – they still would not prove anything at all. Blood spatter analysis is very far indeed from a science.

There is very little empirical evidence to support the use of blood spatter analysis in court or any other aspect of the legal system.[4] Like many other forms of forensic science, bloodstain analysis rests on the analyst interpreting ambiguity. This ambiguity can contribute to various forms of bias. For example, confirmation bias is the tendency to search for or interpret information in a way that confirms one's preconceptions or favored theory and to steer clear of the information that may disagree with those preconceptions. When analysts have theories or preconceptions entering a crime scene, it may unintentionally influence how they interpret the blood stain. In addition, there are often no guidelines when analysts interpret a crime scene, and discretion is often involved. Compounding the matter is the fact not human blood characteristics are alike across populations, and differences can make generalisations based on a single experiment difficult. For these reasons. the validity of bloodstain analysis is likely not as high as iuries may believe.13

¹³See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bloodstain_pattern_analysis#Criticism A number of cases are analyzed on this page.

This dubious science has contributed to the wrongful conviction of many persons in the United States alone. It is worthless as evidence.

There is nothing ingenious or obscure about this evidence, or this analysis of it. 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 perhaps the foremost historian of the Stalin period in the world today.

Are These "Bloodstains" Fakes?

Here is a link to the article in *Izvestiia* of February 21, 2004, pages 10 and 11.

https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/kantor_izvestiia_022104.pdf

It contains many interesting details, all of which attest not to Tukhachevsky's innocence – which Kantor insists upon – but on his guilt. For example, in the second column of page 11 we can see the even, unhurried handwriting of Tukhachevsky's first confession of guilt dated May 26, 1937.

But we are interested in the photograph at the upper left-hand corner of page 11. This is the part of one of Tukhachevsky's confessions – in fact, a carbon copy, typed up, with his signature, as we mentioned above. At the lower left are the supposed stains and purported bloodstains.

Here is the part of this photo with the stains:

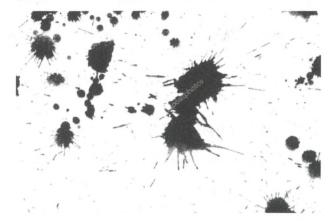
https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/Tukh_confess_with_blood.jpg

Notice the stain at the right of the "exclamation point." Its border is made up of lines that are virtually straight.

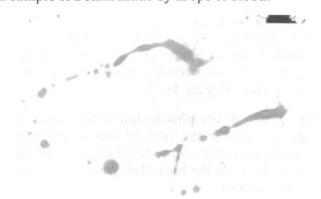
Notice the stain above the "exclamation point." It too has a left border that is almost a straight line.

No liquid dropped on a surface has straight lines.

Here is a sample of ink dropped onto paper:



Here is a sample of a stain made by drops of blood:



There is nothing like a straight line in any of these stains.

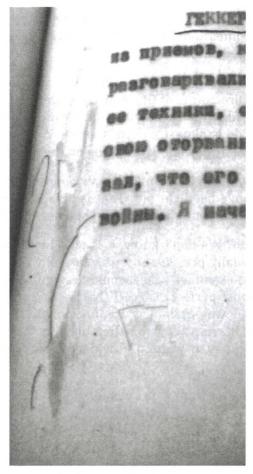
This means that the stains on the carbon copy of one of Tukhachevsky's confessions were not made by blood or any other liquid being dropped on the page.

Look at the stain that the "Central Forensic Laboratory of the Military Medical Directorate of the Ministry of Defense of the USSR of June 28, 1956" identified as having "the form of an exclamation mark." The left side is almost a perfect curve. We know that this stain was not made by *any* liquid dropping on the paper.

It *looks* like it may be an incision with a sharp instrument. That is, something may have been cut out. That is also what the stain to the right, the one with four virtually straight sides, looks like.

So, what happened? We don't know. It is possible that some kind of stain was originally present, and was carefully cut out so that the stain could be examined. That would account for the straight lines and the almost perfect curve. If that is the case, we can be sure that whatever was examined was not blood, or the forensic laboratory would have so stated. After all, this is exactly what Khrushchev and his men wanted – evidence that Tukhachevsky had been beaten.

Here is an image of the "stains" in question magnified 4 times:



It shows that to the left of this stained area someone has drawn an elongated question mark! The photographs in Kantor's 2004 article were carefully cropped to omit this question mark.

The photo editor has drawn lines to emphasize the almost straight lines and almost regular curves.

Whatever these marks are, they are not bloodstains. Nor are they stains from any other liquid having been dropped on the corner of this document. They *may* be evidence of cutting with an instrument with a sharp blade. We can't be sure without

examining the actual document. But researchers are not permitted to directly examine or photograph this file, though presumably Kantor had such permission.

Conclusion: There are no bloodstains on Tukhachevsky's confession. This claim has been fraudulent since it was first made in 1956, and then in the Shvernik Report in 1963.

Chapter 9. Soviet evidence – The Arao Telegram

The Arao Document

Nikita Khrushchev had Marshal Tukhachevsky "rehabilitated" in 1957. According to the information now public the sentence passed by the Military Collegium of the Soviet Supreme Court on June 11, 1937 was set aside on January 31, 1957. All the executed military leaders were reinstated in their Party memberships by the Party Control Commission on February 27, 1957. (Viktorov 234)

Normally there was some kind of study or report prepared beforehand – usually an appeal, or "Protest" by the Soviet Prosecutor, and a following report by the Supreme Court. Normally too, he Soviet Prosecutor's "Protest" was based on some kind of investigation. Viktorov gives a very general idea of what kind of investigation took place in 1956. But we can't tell much about it.

It's clear that there had been a decision to exculpate the military leaders beforehand, and that the decision was a political one. We have the decree of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the CPSU posthumously reinstating Tukhachevsky and the others tried with him to their Party membership. The "Molotov Commission" set up in 1956 by Khrushchev evidently in order to officially rehabilitate the Tukhachevsky defendants among others, was sharply divided. Within weeks after it ceased its operation

Molotov, Malenkov, and Kaganovich tried to oust Khrushchev but failed and were ousted themselves instead.¹

For reasons never made clear, in the months before the XXII Party Congress in 1961 Khrushchev decided to sponsor another investigative report on the Tukhachevsky case. A commission was established under the chairmanship of Nikolai M. Shvernik, an Old Bolshevik of working-class origins who had spent most of his Party career as a trade union bureaucrat and was at the time the Chairman of the Party Control Commission. It is possible that Khrushchev was hoping that Shvernik's researchers would discover some "smoking gun" evidence of, perhaps, a frame-up of the military men. If so, he was disappointed. The commission found nothing of the kind. This may account for the fact that the report was not published during either Khrushchev's or Gorbachev's tenure.

Shvernik's Commission issued a report addressed to Khrushchev, to which Shvernik added the following note:

To Comrade N.S. Khrushchev. I am sending to you a report concerning the verification of the accusations presented in 1937 by judicial and party organs against comrades Tukhachevsky M.N., Iakir I.E., Uborevich I.P. and other military figures, of treason to the motherland, terror, and military conspiracy.

The materials about the causes and conditions in which the case against com. Tukhachevsky M.N. and other prominent military figures arose, have been studied by a Commission created by the Presidium of the CC CPSU by decisions of January 5, 1961, and May 6, 1961. N. Shvernik, June 26, 1964.

- RKEB 2, 671

 $^{^1{}m The}$ documents available related to the "Molotov Commission" are published in Razdel III (Section 3) of RKEB 2, 150-274.

The Arao Document

It is reasonable to suppose that the purpose of the Shvernik commission was to uncover evidence that would justify the rehabilitation of the Party members convicted in the three public Moscow trials and the Military purges. The mere fact of such a study implies that whatever reports had been prepared in 1956 for the official "rehabilitations" had been lacking in such evidence. No doubt the commission had the additional goals of further blackening Stalin's name and, especially, the names of his leading supporters who were still alive – people like Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich, and Voroshilov.

The Commission duly reached the predetermined conclusion that Tukhachevsky and those tried and executed with him were innocent. But rather than proving their innocence, the report contained evidence that contradicted it.

One bit of such evidence is the "Arao document." Here is what we know of it, from the 1964 "Shvernik" report to Khrushchev, first published in 1993. I include this important text in the Russian original.

г) Действия разведки Японии и ее роль в «деле» Тухачевского

В ходе проверки «дела» Тухачевского был обнаружен в Центральном государственном архиве Советской Армии важный документ, спецсообщение 3-го отдела ГУГБ НКВД СССР, которое было направлено Ежовым наркому обороны Ворошилову с пометкой «лично» 20 апреля 1937 г., то есть в момент, непосредственно предшествовавший арестам крупных советских военачальников. На этом документе, кроме личной подписи Ежова, есть резолюция Ворошилова, датированная 21 апреля 1937 г.: «Доложено. Решения приняты, проследить. К. В.». Судя по важности документа, следует предположить, что доложен он был Сталину. Ниже приводится это спецсообщение в том виде, в каком оно поступило к Ворошилову:

3-м отделом ГУГБ сфотографирован документ на японском языке, идущий транзитом из Польши в Японию диппочтой и исходящий от японского военного атташе в Польше - Савада Сигеру, в адрес лично начальника Главного управления Генерального штаба Японии Накадзима Тецудзо. Письмо написано почерком помощника военного атташе в Польше Арао.

Текст документа следующий:

«Об установлении связи с видным советским деятелем.

12 апреля 1937 года.

Военный атташе в Польше Саваду Сигеру.

По вопросу, указанному в заголовке, удалось установить связь с тайным посланцем маршала Красной Армии Тухачевского.

Суть беседы заключалась в том, чтобы обсудить (2 иероглифа и один знак непонятны) относительно известного Вам тайного посланца от Красной Армии № 304.»

Спецсообщение подписано заместителем начальника 3-го отдела ГУГВ НКВД СССР комиссаром государственной безопасности 3-го ранга Минаевым. Фотопленки с этим документом и подлинник перевода в архиве НКВД не обнаружены.²

Translated:

(c) Actions of Japanese intelligence and its role in the Tukhachevsky "case"

² Telegram of April 12 1937 concerning Tukhachevsky's contacts with Japanese. "Tragediia RKKA," Spravka of Shvernik report, *Voenno-Istoricheskii Arkhiv*, No. 2 (1997), 29-31. Also in RKEB 2, 753.

In the course of verifying the "case" of Tukhachevsky an important document was discovered in the Central State Archive of the Soviet Army, a special communication of the 3rd department of the GUGB [Main Directorate for State Security] of the NKVD [People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs] of the USSR, which had been sent by Yezhov to Voroshilov, the People's Commissar of Defense, with the annotation "personal," on April 20, 1937, that is at the time immediately before the arrests of the major Soviet military commanders ... We reproduce here this special communication in the form in which it reached Voroshilov:

SPECIAL COMMUNICATION

The 3rd department of the GUGB has photographed a document in the Japanese language that was in transit from Poland to Japan by diplomatic pouch and that originated with the Japanese military attaché to Poland, Savada Sigeru, addressed personally to the director of the Main department of the Japanese General Staff Nakazima Tetsudzo. The letter is written in the hand of Arao, aide to the military attaché in Poland.

The text of the document is as follows:

"Concerning the establishment of ties with a prominent Soviet figure.

12 April 1937

The Military Attaché in Poland Savada Sigeru.

On the matter mentioned in the title, we have been successful in establishing contact with a secret emissary of Marshal of the Red Army Tukhachevsky.

The essence of the conversation concluded that there should be a discussion (2 characters and one

sign indecipherable) concerning the secret emissary from the Red Army No. 304 who is known to you."

The special communication is signed by the assistant head of the 3rd section of the GUGB NKVD USSR, Commissar of State Security 3rd class Minaev. Neither the photograph that accompanied this document nor the original of the translation have been discovered in the archive of the NKVD.

The authors of the Shvernik report went on to claim that they believed this document was a "provocation," faked to incriminate Tukhachevsky.

This disinformation was passed by one means or another to the Soviet organs [of security – GF] by Japanese intelligence, perhaps in cooperation with Polish intelligence, or perhaps with the Germans.

The Arao Document evidently presented the researchers on Shvernik's Commission with a considerable problem. Here was documentary evidence that Tukhachevsky was in contact with Japanese intelligence – was, in fact, a Japanese spy!

The Commission attempted damage control to try to discredit their discovery. They claimed that in 1937 the document had been turned over to a prisoner, a certain R.N. Kim, an NKVD "worker" – his former job was not specified – who had himself been arrested as a Japanese spy. The whole sequence of events merits a careful look.

Since the quality of the photographic copy of the document was poor and the Foreign Section of the NKVD, where it had been sent for the decoding of the document, could not accomplish this work, the Assistant Chief of the 3rd Office of the GUGB Minaev-Tsikanovskii

proposed to M.E. Sokolov³, who during that period worked as the chief of the 7th section of this Office, to take the document to the Lefortovo prison to R.N. Kim, an arrested employee of the Foreign Section of the NKVD who was imprisoned there, and to assign him, as a qualified expert in the Japanese language, to decode the document. Kim had been arrested on April 2, 1937, under suspicion of espionage for Japan and the investigation of his case was led by the staff of the section headed by Sokolov.

Sokolov has now informed the CC of the CPSU that Kim succeeded in decoding this poorly photographed document after two or three visits. Kim was very excited when he informed Sokolov that in the document Marshal Tukhachevsky is mentioned as a foreign spy. Sokolov confirms that the contents of the special communication that was sent to Voroshilov agrees with the contents of the translation done by Kim. Moreover, at that time Sokolov and other coworkers who knew the document's contents were convinced that it was genuine. Now, however, Sokolov considers that they were then deeply mistaken and that the document was obviously disinformation by Polish or Japanese intelligence who counted upon our seizing upon this forgery.

There are some issues to consider here.

³ Mikhail Efremovich Sokolov was indeed an officer in the GUGB at this time. See https://nkvd.memo.ru/index.php/Соколов,_Михаил_Ефремович Likewise, Aleksandr Matveevich Minaev-Tsikanovsky:

https://nkvd.memo.ru/index.php/Минаев-

Цикановский, Александр Матвеевич and

https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Минаев-

Цикановский, Александр Матвеевич

* Why would a document of this importance be turned over to a suspected Japanese spy for a reliable translation? If Kim had in fact been a Japanese agent, the possibilities this presented to him for creating a havoc of distrust within the Soviet leadership would have been immense. And were there in truth no experts in the Japanese language who were at liberty, and *not* under suspicion of being Japanese agents, to whom the NKVD could have turned?

In his explanation to the CC of the CPSU Kim, who is now living in Moscow, confirms that in reality in April 1937 Sokolov, referring to an order by People's Commissar Yezhov, assigned him to translate from the Japanese a document that none of the employees of the GUGB, because their knowledge of the Japanese language was weak, could read because of the defective nature of the photograph. Kim was promised that if he decoded the document, that would have a positive effect on his fate.

* The Commission claims that it located and questioned Kim, living in Moscow in the early 1960s. Kim supposedly told them that he had been given the document at the instruction of Yezhov along with an unspecific promise that it would "affect his fate in a positive manner."

The Kim of 1962, however, did not testify that he had been pressured to concoct a false reading of the document. Instead he claimed that he had doubted the genuineness of the document from the first, and had written a note suggesting that this was Japanese disinformation.

Kim asserts that after he had translated the document he also wrote a conclusion in which he deduced that the document had been passed to us by the Japanese. This conclusion cannot be found in the archives. The document that Kim dealt with was composed, in his own words, of one page and was written on the official form of the military attaché in the handwriting of the Assistant Military Attaché in Poland Arao (Kim knew this handwriting well since he had previously read a series of

documents written by Arao). The document stated that a document had been sent to the General Staff concerning the fact that contact had been established with Marshal Tukhachevsky. Kim reported all these facts to the CC of the CPSU before the text of the special report had been presented to him.

This story provides a possible avenue of refutation of the "Arao document." Kim, the Japanese language expert, wrote that it was a fake, disinformation (though not a forgery – see below), but the NKVD did not pass this on.

That created an opportunity for placing the blame on Yezhov, who had supposedly directed that it be given to a person who might be amenable to concluding whatever Yezhov wanted. Blaming Yezhov would have allowed for blaming Stalin, Khrushchev's main target, since Khrushchev had claimed that Yezhov did nothing without checking with Stalin first. But Kim instead wrote a note exculpating Tukhachevsky. In this scenario Yezhov did not pass Kim's note along to the Politburo, but also failed to punish Kim for coming to the "wrong" conclusion.

A further difficulty in the Shvernik Commission's discussion of the document is that GUGB officer Sokolov, who had brought the Arao document to Kim, knew nothing about Kim's "note" in the early 1960s. For if he had known, he would never have given the testimony that he did give to the Commission.

Sokolov confirms that the contents of the special communication that was sent to Voroshilov agrees with the contents of the translation done by Kim. Moreover, at that time Sokolov and other coworkers who knew the document's contents were convinced that it was genuine.

Sokolov, who had supposedly dealt with Kim directly, could not have believed the document was genuine in 1937 if Kim really had written a note saying that he suspected the document was phony, disinformation. Obviously Sokolov's view about the document

bona fides would have come from Kim. But Sokolov and his coworkers did believe in April 1937 that it was genuine. Therefore, at that time Kim believed that too.

Moreover, how could Kim, a man imprisoned for suspected espionage for Japan, have gotten out of prison to "communicate these matters to the Central Committee" – much less "before he had been presented with the text"? If he had done this, how could Sokolov and his coworkers not have known about all this?

The Shvernik Commission report states that Kim was able to identify the handwriting of the document as that of Arao because "he had previously read a series of documents written by Arao." The Assistant Military Attaché of Japan to Poland would not have been writing to the Soviets at all, much less in handwritten Japanese. So we can conclude that Soviet intelligence had intercepted other handwritten documents by Arao, intended for delivery to Japan, before this, and had given them to the same R.N. Kim to translate. This specific Arao Document was indeed a bombshell, or so it appears to us today. But it must have been far from the first document by Arao that Soviet intelligence had received.

This means that Kim's story of the early '60s about his "note" was itself a lie. Everyone concerned – Kim, Sokolov, and no doubt Yezhov and Voroshilov – had believed the note was genuine.

The Commission chose not to confront these problems, and dismissed the Arao Document as follows:

After evaluation of the available Japanese materials it is possible to make the following deductions.

First: we must consider the Arao Document that Yezhov sent to Voroshilov as a provocation. This disinformation was passed by one means or another to the Soviet organs by Japanese intelligence, perhaps in cooperation with Polish intelligence, and possibly also with German intelligence.

The possibility cannot be excluded that the document was fabricated by the NKVD with a directly provocational purpose or that the secret sender, if he called himself that in Warsaw, was in reality an NKVD agent.

Second, despite the dubious value as evidence against Tukhachevsky the Arao Document that reached Yezhov, Voroshilov, and probably Stalin also, could have been taken under consideration by them and in April – May 1937 could have played a certain role in the formation of accusations against Tukhachevsky.

At the same time, the fact that during the investigation the question about the "secret representative of Tukhachevsky" and about his ties with Japanese intelligence played no role in the interrogations could be explained precisely by the implausibility of this document. In the [Tukhachevsky Affair] case file there is neither the document itself nor a copy of it. No operational work was developed concerning this seized Japanese document; it was used against Tukhachevsky in the same form in which it existed in the hands of the NKVD worker.

According to the Commission's analysis, the Document was some kind of provocation by either Japanese, Polish, or German intelligence, or some combination of them, or possibly even an NKVD forgery – despite Kim's attestation that he recognized Arao's handwriting.

The Commission then contradicted itself by claiming that the fact the document was not used in the investigation and prosecution of Tukhachevsky at all and that this could be explained by "precisely the improbability of this document" – and *then* claims that "it was used against Tukhachevsky." But if the case against Tukhachevsky was intentionally fabricated from the beginning, the "improbability" of the document – assuming that it was

"improbable" – would not have been an issue. Furthermore, NKVD man Sokolov, who dealt with Kim, thought it was genuine.

We can best make sense of all the contradictions in the Shvernik Commission's report about the Arao Document by recognizing that its editors were trying to find a reason to dismiss this document, since they had been tasked to find evidence to exonerate Tukhachevsky and the rest. One hypothesis would be that those who compiled the report did not wish to conceal from their powerful superiors this document that their researchers had uncovered, so they supplied an explanation that would permit their superiors to disregard it, if they so wished.

Since the Commission's report informs us that Voroshilov had seen the document and, therefore, that Stalin knew about it too, the most likely reason it was not used in the prosecution of Tukhachevsky is that it was not needed – other evidence was available. We can't know for certain, since the Tukhachevsky case file (*delo*), like those of all the other military defendants, has only been declassified in part, and only in 2017-2018. As yet very few researchers have been able to see even parts of it. The fact that the Arao document was not used in the case against Tukhachevsky does not imply anything about whether it was genuine or not.

We do not know whether the actual Arao Document is still extant somewhere. We know about it only from the Shvernik Report. Either it is among the Tukhachevsky investigation materials that are still top-secret in Russia today, or it has been destroyed. It is not mentioned by Iulia Kantor, author of three books on Tukhachevsky, who was given special permission by the Marshal's family to see his investigative file and in whose works a great deal of evidence pointing not towards Tukhachevsky's innocence, but towards his guilt, may be found. Kantor herself, with no pretense of objectivity, firmly takes the position that all the military commanders were innocent victims of a frame-up.

But we now have some more information, if not about the document, at least about some of the persons involved. "Arao"'s name was evidently really "Arai." Vitalii Grigor'evich Pavlov, who worked for Soviet intelligence for fifty years, describes how they opened Japanese diplomatic pouches in the 1930s:

The Japanese Foreign Ministry delivered its diplomatic mail, packed in bags, to Vladivostok, where they were sent by Japanese couriers with a mail train unaccompanied, and in Moscow, employees of the Japanese embassy accepted the diplomatic mail directly from the mail car. Thus, an opportunity was created to get acquainted with Japanese bags on the way from Vladivostok to Moscow, which at that time lasted from 6 to 8 days.

The plan of the special department was to organize a small laboratory right in the mail car, in which to open the bags, photograph their contents and re-seal them so that no traces of the opening [lit. "autopsy"] would remain on the diplomatic bag.⁵

The Arao Document represents good evidence that Tukhachevsky was in direct contact with the Japanese military figures in Poland. The attempted refutation of the Document contained in that report is filled with contradictions and should be discarded.

⁴ A. Kulanov, *Roman Kim*. Molodaya Gvardia: Zhizn' zamechatel'nykh lyudei, 2016, p. 238. My thanks to Vladimir Bobrov for this citation.

⁵ V.G. Pavlov, 'Sezam, otkroysia!' Tainye razvedyvatel'nye operatsii. Iz vospominanii veteran vneshnei raszedki. (Moscow, 1999), Online text edition, Chapter 3: "Glazami proshlogo," p. 49 of 434. I was directed to this citation by Aleksandr Kolpakidi and Elena Prudnikova, *Dvoinoiz zagovor/Tainy stalinskikh represii*. Moscow: OLMA-mediagrupp, 2006. Online edition. My thanks again to Vladimir Bobrov for this citation.

Chapter 10. Soviet evidence – The

Romanov Letter of 1938

The arrests of Tukhachevsky and other military commanders in the conspiracy continued throughout the month of May. On June 1 – 4, 1937, there was held in Moscow an Expanded Session of the Military Soviet (Soviet = Council). The purpose was to tell high-ranking military officers about the conspiracy, to present the evidence to them, and to explain the political situation. The proceedings were published in 2008.

In the morning session of the closing day, June 4, Marshal Kliment Voroshilov made a presentation. The passage below is excerpted from it.¹

Voroshilov. I have one document that I showed to comrades Stalin and Yezhov, a very original document. The document that one aircraft mechanic of the Vitebsk brigade in 1935, in the month of March, demanded that he be fired from the Red Army. To the question: "Why do not you want to serve?" - he said: "I do not want to, I don't believe," he says, "in all that is being done here. Please release me. " They worked on him a long time, persuading him, asking him questions. "No," he says, "I do not want to serve." They take him to Uborevich. Uborevich talks with him for a long time, then says: "Go to the brigade and tell them that a new Korolyov² is here." Korolyov arrives at the air brigade and again says:

http://istmat.info/node/28262 Text of full book at

 $^{^1}$ Voenniy sovet pri narodnom komissare oborony SSSR 1-4 iiunia 1937 g. 1 Dokumenty i materialy. Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008, pp. 343-344. Online at

http://militera.lib.ru/docs/da/sb_voensovet1937/index.html Documents at http://istmat.info/node/27340

² Evidently a play on words: "korolyov" can mean "belonging to the king."

"Please dismiss me immediately" - "Why?" - "I don't believe". They consider him crazy, they write about this to Troyanker. Comrade Troyanker must have forgotten. Troyanker reports to Gamarnik, and they decided to remove Korolyov ... No, first examine him. They examine him and assert that he fell ill with schizophrenia - a slight craziness. They find his diary, page through it and read (written with his own hand): "I am trying to get myself dismissed from the army, because a new party has been formed in the army, that is, there are members of a new party, which dates back to [19] 25–26. This party sets as its task treason against the motherland and country. The Vitebsk brigade has already been sold to the Poles."

Stalin. The air brigade.

Voroshilov. Sold to the Poles – the Vitebsk air brigade. "This group," he says, "is led by people like Gamarnik, Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Yagoda, Uborevich, and a couple more people I don't want to name now." This was in 1935 - in March, 1935, 1936, half 1937, two and a half years ago. This document was passed around the office and was with com. Troyanker. Comrade Troyanker sent it to different places. The matter is very serious.

Budyonny. Political.

Voroshilov. Politically serious.

Stalin. In March, 1935!

Voroshilov. This is consistent with what we have now. The characteristic of this person – what kind of person is he? The chief of the Vitebsk political department writes: "A very smart, intelligent, thinking person." After some time in the hospital, he was released for lack of any reason (laughter) to keep him in the hospital, his schizophrenia was weak. There it is!

Stalin. They called him a counter-revolutionary.

Voroshilov. Yes, a counter-revolutionary, and he was dismissed from the army. Now you need to find and ask this Korolyov - he is an educated, knowledgeable and reasonable person, judging by the remarks about him ...

A voice. Someone told him.

Voroshilov. I don't remember everything. There is an indication that many people campaigned against him, they say: you're finished, you had better come to us. otherwise you will fall into the clutches of those who come tomorrow, in the clutches of the new owners. Therefore, he sought to leave the army. Here's the kind of signal. Comrade Trovanker, but Tukhachevsky and Gamarnik. and Yagoda. Uborevich, and Yakir were mentioned — that means that only a madman can talk like that, obviously they decided that, and this was the end of the matter.

Voroshilov revealed that his office was given evidence of the conspiracy as early as March, 1935. But the conspirators were clever enough to classify the technician, Korolyov, as insane, have him hospitalized, and then cashiered from the army.

In 2008 I discovered striking confirmation of this story in a two-page document in the Volkogonov Archive in the Library of Congress. The document was copied carelessly, and some letters on the left margin were not reproduced, but the date is sometime after May, 1938.

According to this document, the technician's last name was Romanov, not Korolyov. But all the other details are the same. Romanov was probably the soldier's real name, since the document below is by an officer in a unit close to the one in question.

DEP. CHIEF OF THE POLITICAL DIRECTORATE OF THE WORKERS AND PEASANTS RED ARMY ³ TO THE DIVISION COMMISSIONER

COM. KUZNETSOV

In June 1937, in the personnel department of the Air Forces of the Red Army during a review of old cases, in 1935 a copy of the diary of aviation technician Romanov of the Bobruisk Aviation Brigade was discovered.

In this diary at the end was recorded, roughly, the following: the commander of the brigade (whose last name I don't remember now) suggested to him, Romanov, "to work together with them in their organization." For more "weight", Romanov was told that their military-fascist organization consists of: commander and VK brigade, XXX Special. Departments Uborevich, Smirnov, Alksnis, Troyanker, Tukhachevsky, Gamarnik, Yagoda, and others.

Despite persuasion, and then threats, technician Romanov remained committed to the cause of the Party of Lenin-Stalin and refused to join their organization. After that, they began to persecute Romanov. He was declared crazy and dismissed from the Red Army "because of illness." When member of the All-Union Party (Bolsheviks) XX Communist Ikononostsev informed me that this document had been found. I wrote down all these facts and decided to report it to the Special Department (since there was anarchy in Political Directorate of the Army at that time). I went to the party bureau of the People's Commissariat of Defense to warn them, informed Yakovsky about this, and together with him went to the Special Department and explained it all.

³ In the original: "the PU of the RKKA."

The next day I received a call from the Special Department and was asked [whose] material this was. When I explained, it turned out that Gaydukevich, now an enemy of the people, had phoned the Secretariat of the People's Commissar (Comrade Petukhov, it seems) and transferred the whole matter to the Secretariat for report to comrade Voroshilov — which I reported to the Special Division.

This document was found at the moment when the expanded plenary session of the Military Council was held in the second half of June 1937 and where, I was told, Comrade Voroshilov in his closing remarks cited the example of the Romanov case as example of how enemies of rhe people got out of the way an honest person, devoted to the cause of the Lenin-Stalin party, so that they were not disturbed.

After that, Comrade Voroshilov allegedly said: "Stop talking about this case."

When I heard about the latter, I understood that in this document there were names such as Alksnis, Troyanker, Smirnov, which had not yet been exposed, held responsible posts in the Red Army, and that all this had to be checked.

Now of all the persons I mentioned above, only Comrade Smirnov (Commissar of the Navy) still remains at work.

I am writing all this because at the beginning of May, 1938, I learn from Comrade Ikonopistsev (Airborne Division of Human Resources) that he could not find the file in which Romanov's diary was located and which, supposedly, was referred to the Secretariat of the People's Commissariat of Defense. I questioned whether they did report it to Comrade Voroshilov and whether its content had been fully reported? Maybe the enemies of the people (like the same Gaidukevich) destroyed it?

In mid-May, 1938, I went to the Secretary of the Party Commission of the People's Commissariat of Defense Comrade Nikolaev and outlined my doubts to him. Comrade Nikolaev promised to check it, but I still don't know the results.

XX p.p. Regimental Commissioner - P. Moskvichev.

XX 38 g.

Correct

Instructor of the personnel department of the PU [Political Directorate] of the Red Army – Belyaev

We can assume that the technician's correct last name was Romanov, not Korolyov. We do not know how Voroshilov came to make this error.

Was he deliberately misinformed somewhere along the paper trail of reports? That is quite likely. Voroshilov says:

They consider him crazy, they write about this to Troyanker. Comrade Troyanker must have forgotten. Troyanker reports to Gamarnik, and they decided to remove Korolyov ...

Both Troyanker and Gamarnik turned out to be part of the conspiracy. Naturally, they were eager to get Romanov out of the way.

If Voroshilov had received the report on Romanov and his diary in a timely fashion, he might have arranged to have the former technician interviewed. The whole military conspiracy might have been nipped in the bud more than two years earlier

The Men Named in Moskvichev's Report

Genrikh Grigor'evich Yagoda, former Commissar of Internal Affairs, had been arrested on March 31, 1937, and had already been giving confessions. Yagoda was a major defendant at the third Moscow

trial of March, 1938, at which he confessed to serious crimes, was found guilty, and was executed. His appeal for clemency has been published. In it, Yagoda reiterates his guilt.

We have seen above that at the June 1-4, 1937 Expanded Session of the Military Council, Corps Commissar Benedikt Ustinovich Troyanker was addressed by name by Voroshilov. Troyanker also spoke at the Expanded Session of the Military Council. He was arrested on November 21, 1937, put on trial, and condemned to execution on July 28, 1938, and executed.

Yakov Ivanovich Alksnis also attended the Expanded Session of the Military Council and spoke at it. He had been made Deputy Commissar of Defense for aviation in January, 1937. On June 11, 1937, he had been a member of the special judicial panel of the Supreme Court that tried and convicted Tukhachevsky and the rest. Alksnis was arrested on November 23, 1937, tried and executed on July 28, 1938.

Brigade Commissar Leontii Filippovich Gaidukevich had attended the Expanded Session of the Military Council. He too also spoke at it. By the time Moskvichev wrote his letter, Gaidukevich had already been arrested, on November 28, 1937. He was tried and executed on May 7, 1938.⁴

Petr Aleksandrovich Smirnov was made People's Commissar of the Navy on December 30, 1937. Smirnov attended the Expanded Session of the Military Council and spoke at it, like Troyanker. In his letter Moskvichev says that at the time of his writing, which we have estimated to be sometime in June, 1938, Smirnov was the only one of the conspirators named by Romanov in 1935 who had not been arrested. Smirnov was arrested on June 30, 1938, tried and convicted not under Yezhov but under Beria, on February 22, 1939, and executed the same day.

⁴ Oleg Fiodorovich Suvenirov, *Tragediia RKKA*. Mosckw: Terra, 1998, p. 415, no. 22.

The "official story" about the men above and a great many others is that they were innocent victims of Stalin, who for some reason wanted to kill them. Thus, according to this version of Soviet history, which I have termed the "Anti-Stalin Paradigm," there were no conspiracies. Therefore, all those who were tried and executed for conspiracy, whether they confessed to their guilt or not, were innocent victims of a diabolical frame-up.

But this is all wrong. There has never been any evidence that the men listed above, the defendants of the "Tukhachevsky Affair" trial, the Moscow Trials, or a great many others who were executed during the 1930s, were innocent. The theory that "everybody was innocent," "everybody was framed," "there were no conspiracies," was vigorously promoted during the 1930s by Leon Trotsky. Following Trotsky's assassination in August, 1940, the followers of Trotsky were just about the only people who continued to promote this notion.

After Khrushchev began wholesale "rehabilitations" of persons tried, convicted, and executed for conspiracy during the Stalin period, and especially after Mikhail Gorbachev continued and even intensified this practice, "mainstream" Soviet historians have assumed that no conspiracies existed and thus that all those tried, convicted, and executed for conspiracy were innocent victims.

Today, thanks to the partial but significant opening of Soviet archives and the publication of a great many (though only a small proportion of the whole) documents from the 1930s, it is clear that the men above, the defendants at all the public trials of the 1930s, of the "Tukhachevsky Affair" trial of June 11, 1937, and a great many other persons arrested, tried, convicted, and executed or imprisoned, were in fact guilty.

It should not be surprising that neither under Khrushchev nor under Gorbachev – nor since the end of the Soviet Union – was any *evidence* published to support the claims that these persons were innocent victims of frame-ups.

виз.

ЗАМ. НАЧАЛЬНИКА ПУ РККА ДИВИЗИСЕНОМУ КОМИССАРУ

TOB . KY JEELIOBY .

В ирне месяце 1907 года в отделе кадров УВВС РАКА при вазборе старых дел, в деле за 1925 год была обнаружена копия невника авиатехника Бобруйской авиабригади тов. Романова.

В этом дневнике последним было записано, примерно, слеурщее: ему. Романову. командование бригады (кто по фамилии бичас не помнт) предложило "работать за одно с ними в их орнизации". Для большего веса Романову заявили, что в их ренно-фашистской организации состоят: командир и ВК бригады, Стособ. отдела Уборевич, Смирнов, Алкснис, Троянкер, Тухачевий, Гамарник, Ягода и др.

Несмотря на уговори, а потом и угрози, техник Романов зался преданним делу партии Ленина-Сталина и отказался всту
ть в их организацию. После этого на Романова начались гоне
его сделали сумасшедшим и "по болезни" уволили из РККА.

Когда мне об этом найденном документе сообщил член ВКП(б)

иконописцев, я записал все эти факти и решил сообщить в обий отдел (т.к. в Пурче в это время было безвластие). Пред
тельно зашел в парторро НКО, сообщил об этом Яновскому и ответ с ним ношли в Особно отдел и там все изложили.

На второй день мне позвонили из Особого отдела и спросили от материал. Когда я вняснил, то оказалось, что Гайдуке
тельно враг дарода, соевонился с Секретариатом Наркома (ка
тов Летуковим) и все дело передал в Секретариат для

товарину ворошилов; — о чем я и сообщил в Особно отдел

Документ этет найден в тот момент, когда во второй полошине июня 1937 года проходия расширенний иленум Военного Совета и где, яксои, тонариш Ворошилов в заключительной слове понвпример с делом Роканова как враги народа честник, поеданных делу партии Ленина-Сталина убирали с дороги, чтобы им не мещал После этого товарищ Верошилов, яксои, сказал: "Прекратить разговори вокруг этого дела".

Когда я услышал о последнем, я понял так, что в этом мокументе значились фамилии таких, как Алкснис, Троянкер, нирнов, которые не были еще разоблачени, занимали ответственше посты в РККА и что все это нужно проверить.

нарком вим).

Нишу я все это потому, что в начале мая месяца 1938 года узнаю от тов. Иконописцева (отдел кадров УВВС), что он нигде найдет того дела, в котором находился дневник Романова и торое, якобы, передавалось в Секретариат Наркома. У меня возслю сомнение, а докладывали-ли о нем товарищу Ворошилову, ностью ли доложено его содержание? Может быть враги народа та гайдукевич) уничтожили его?

Я в середине мая м-ца 1938 года пошел к секретаро парт-Ссии ЕКО тов. Никслаеву и изложил егу возникшие у меня совия. Тов. Николаев обещал это проверить, но результати я до времени не знаю.

т. Полковой комиссар - П. Москвичев.

.38r.

Верво

MECTOTATO OTHER RELICES IN PARA - DURAGE

Chapter 11. Non-Soviet evidence –

Lyushkov to the Japanese

Genrikh Samoilovich Lyushkov was an NKVD general who defected to the Japanese on June 13, 1938, from the Far Eastern Region, where he had been sent to root out opposition conspiracies among the military command and the Party.

The late Professor Alvin D. Coox of San Diego University spent many years studying Japanese-Soviet relations. In 1968 he published a preliminary survey of what he could discover about Lyushkov's defection from the Japanese side. Thirty years later in 1998 he published two long articles with many more details. Coox managed to locate Lyushkov papers long believed lost. He also studied the surviving report on Lyushkov made by Soviet spy Richard Sorge.

Most important, he was able to conduct extensive interviews with some of the Japanese military men who were in charge of Lyushkov, worked with him, and spent much time with him. What follows here is a summary of those parts of Coox's study that are most relevant to our present purposes.¹

In part one of his two-part article Coox identified one of his Japanese informants as Kohtani Etsuo.²

Section draws particularly on author's interviews with Yabe Chula and Kohtani Etsuo ...

¹ Coox, Alvin D. "The Lesser of Two Hells: NKVD General G.S. Lyushkov's Defection to Japan, 1938-1945." *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 11, 3 (1998) 145-186 (Part One) (Coox 1); 11, 4 (1998) 72-110 (Part Two). We will refer to these articles in the text as Coox 1 and Coox 2 respectively.

² Part One, p. 183 note 10.

This is evidently the same Kohtani who, in July 1937, sent a report to his superiors via the Japanese diplomatic pouch stating that there was no military conspiracy, and that Tukhachevsky and the others had been executed for reasons that he could not understand. Like the "Arao document" this report was captured and copied by Soviet intelligence, translated into Russian, and sent to Stalin by Yezhov in December, 1937. It was published in an important collection of Soviet documents in 2004, and has been cited as evidence that Tukhachevsky et al. were not in touch with the Japanese. ³ Obviously,Lyushkov's testimony changed Kohtani/Kootani's opinion, as he reported decades later to Coox.

For our purposes Coox's most important discovery is this: Lyushkov confirmed to the Japanese that real military and Rightist conspiracies did indeed exist in the USSR. Before being sent to the Far East Lyushkov had a private meeting with Stalin during which Stalin made it clear that he believed that a military plot did exist. According to Lyushkov Stalin informed him:

War with Japan is inevitable; the Far East is undoubtedly a theater of war. It is necessary to clean up the army and its rear in the most determined manner from hostile spy and pro-Japanese elements. The plot of Tukhachevsky, Gamarnik, and others, and also the arrest of Sangurski, Aronshtam, and Kashcheev show that all is not well with the army, that there are plotters with the leaders of the NKVD in the Far East. Deribas, Zapadni, and Barminski are Japanese spies, and Japan has a large base for spying and insurrection work by means of Koreans and Chinese. (Coox 1, 151)

Sent to the Far East to deal with these conspiracies Lyushkov reported to the Japanese that they did indeed exist. By mentioning

³ "No. 264. Spetssoobshchenie N.I. Ezhova I.V. Stalinu s prelozheniem doklada byvshego pomoshchnika iaponsokogo voennogo attashe." *Lubianka. Stalin i Glavnoe Upravlenie Gosbezopasnosti NKVD. 1937-1938*.M.: "Materik", 2004. (Lubianka 1937-1938), 440-454.

Gamarnik, who committed suicide after NKVD men went to inform him that he had been dismissed from the army, Lyushkov indirectly confirmed the genuineness of the charges against Tukhachevsky and the other seven high-ranking officers tried and executed together with him, as Gamarnik was one of them.

According to Lyushkov, the interrogations of Deribas, Zapadni, and Barminski established that in the NKVD and the border guard forces, a plot centering on Gamarnik had been fomented.

Lyushkov also confirmed the connection of the Rights, convicted in the March 1938 Moscow Trial, with the military conspirators. For example, Lyushkov told the Japanese:

For a long time Deribas had been in contact with Rykov and was the latter's 'hidden conspirator.'

Lyushkov mentioned Rykov elsewhere as well (see below). He also revealed that the charges against Lavrent'ev (Kartvelishvili), arrested in July 1937 but not tried and executed until August 1938, were true. Khrushchev's man Aleksei V. Snegov later charged Beria with framing and then killing Lavrent'ev; Lyushkov's testimony here proves that Snegov was wrong.

Lyushkov also confirmed at least the intention of these Party and military conspirators to conspire with the Japanese.

In concert with Lavrenty Lavrentiev (former First Secretary of the Regional Committee of the Party until January 1937), with Grigory Krutov (shot in April 1938), and with the army plotters Sangurski, Aronshtam, and others, Deribas supposedly intended to conduct a putsch in the Far East and to reach agreement with the Japanese for help and for combined operations against the Soviet Union. In the NKVD the plotters had recruited Transtok, Chief of the 2nd Section, and many others. Lyushkov gave the names of about 20 officials, mostly NKVD types, and of ten border guards, all of whom he asserted were involved in the plots. (Coox 1, 156)

Coox emphasizes that Lyushkov outlined this information to the Japanese in a manner that convinced them that he believed they were genuine:

About this murderous period as a whole, Lyushkov said little to the Japanese, but his enumeration of the suspects was straightforward, without any admission of NKVD-fabricated evidence, such as he said had occurred at Leningrad in the era of the Kirov assassination. (Coox 1, 156).

It is important to note that Coox's account of what Lyushkov had to say about the Kirov murder is taken exclusively from an interview in *Asahi Shimbun* of July 2, 1938. (Coox 1, 149) Though we have not been able to obtain that specific newspaper, we assume the Lyushkov interview reported in it must be the same interview printed in *Yomiuri Shimbun* on July 3, 1938, which is a report of the same news conference. We will discuss the importance of this fact in some detail below.

Briefly, however, it is this: Lyushkov said one thing in public, but contradicted his public statements in private. For example, in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* article Lyushkov said:

At the trial that took place in August 1936 the accusations that the Trotskyites through Ol'berg 1) had contact with the German Gestapo, the accusations of espionage against Zinoviev and Kamenev, the accusations that Zinoviev and Kamenev were connected with the so-called "Right center" through Tomskii, 2) **Rykov** and Bukharin – are complete fabrications. Zinoviev, Kamenev, Tomskii, Rykov, Bukharin and many others were executed as enemies of Stalin who acted to oppose his destructive policies.

Stalin used the convenient possibility which the Kirov case presented to him in order to rid himself of these people by fabricating broad anti-Stalin conspiracies,

espionage trials, and terrorist organizations.⁴ [Emphasis added, GF]

But in private conversations to Japanese officers and others with whom he interacted Lyushkov incriminated Rykov along with Marshal Blyukher and others:

[One] group of traitors belonging to the staff of the Far Eastern Army, people near to Blyukher himself, such as [Yan] Pokus, Gulin, Vasenov, Kropachev and others, tried to get round Blyukher and to draw him into politically dangerous conversations. Blyukhershowed them the secret confessions of arrested plotters [without] the authority to do so. After his arrest Gulin told me that after the recall of Pokus to Moscow, Blyukher, when drinking with them, cursed the NKVD and the arrests recently carried out, and also Voroshilov, [Lazar] Kaganovich and others. 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 Lyushkov was saying that all the conspiracies were fabrications by Stalin. But at the same time he was privately informing the Japanese that these same serious conspiracies did in fact exist. Moreover, what Lyushkov 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.

⁴ Only the second of these two paragraphs is translated by Matthew Lenoe, *The Kirov Murder and Soviet History* (Yale, 2010), 681; I have taken the other from the text at the Russian-language Wikipedia page, which is the same as that in the biographical encyclopedia at Hrono.ru. See

http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Люшков,_Генрих_Самойлович and http://hrono.ru/biograf/bio_l/ljushkov_gs.php

This is important for our purposes because Lyushkov spoke about the Kirov assassination in published articles only. Coox did not know of any such remarks made privately to the Japanese. Since Lyushkov lied in his published materials – writings that were first and foremost anti-Soviet propaganda – and since it was only in those published materials that Lyushkov discussed the Kirov assassination, then it follows that, at a minimum, we can't put any store at all in what Lyushkov wrote about the Kirov affair.

What's more, Lyushkov wrote in his public article in *Kaizo* that "no conspiracy did or could exist" while at the same time he confirmed to the Japanese that a number of serious conspiracies had indeed existed. That is, we know that the existence of conspiracies is one of the things that Lyushkov deliberately lied about in his public statements.

At a news conference on July 13, 1938 called by the Japanese to give the press a chance to ask Lyushkov questions, Lyushkov said the following, as summarized by Coox:

... though Lyushkov doubted that there was any basis for it, Gamarnik had been charged with conspiring with elements in the Soviet Far East. In particular, Stalin fabricated allegations that the party secretaries in Siberia – Y.M. Vareikis, Karlenev, and L.Y. Lavrentiev – plotted with Gamarnik and other important individuals to wreck military preparations in the Far East. (Coox 1, 175)

Here Lyushkov directly contradicted what he was saying privately to the Japanese, to whom he affirmed the existence of a conspiracy or conspiracies involving Gamarnik, Lavrent'ev, and others (see quotations from Coox 1, 156 above and Coox 2, 85 below). Head of the Political Directorate of the Red Army Ian Gamarnik was questioned by NKVD men in connection with the arrests of Marshal Tukhachevsky and others, after which he committed suicide.

Lyushkov's Kaizo Article As Propaganda

Coox discovered that during August 1938, only two months after his defection, Lyushkov was transferred from the 5th, or Russia Section of the 2nd Bureau of the Japanese Army to "the 11th (Propaganda and Subversion) Subsection of the 8th (Psychological Warfare and Sabotage) Section." According to Coox's informants the Japanese felt that Lyushkov's military knowledge had been exhausted. He was, after all, NKVD, not regular Soviet army.

Yabe's successor Asada agrees that Lyushkov came to be viewed as possessing no further intelligence value for the 5^{th} Section, which is why he was moved to the 8^{th} Section to work in the area of propaganda and subversion, in anticipation of an ultimate outbreak of hostilities between Japan and the Soviet Union. (Coox 1, 179)

In addition to writing articles and an introduction to at least one anti-Soviet book Lyushkov recorded "anti-Stalin speeches addressed to the Russian people in case of war" and wrote leaflets.

Lyushkov related other facts to the Japanese that confirm Soviet accusations made at the time. For example, he cited many instances of genuine acts of sabotage. (Coox 2, 80, 81, 82, 83) Coox also recounts more of Lyushkov's information about real military conspiracies in the Far East:

Lyushkov's opinion that, with respect to the situation of the Red Army in Siberia, the influence of the 'anti'-group was great and discontent was pent up in the military. (Coox 2, 73)

Perhaps of most interest to historians of the USSR generally, as well as to our present study, is Lyushkov's outline of the various conspiracies that existed within the Soviet military.

Within the Soviet armed forces, elements hostile to the regime existed, universally hostile to Stalin but nurturing differing objectives. One group of commanders had been sincerely loval to Trotsky: for example, V. K. Putna, V. M. Primakov, and others working in his favor. Another group of Soviet commanders of German. Lettish. and similar backgrounds were disappointed with the course of communism and had resurrected historic feelings: for example, A. I. Kork and R. P. Eideman. Still another grouping of commanders had served in the Tsarist Army, favored a military putsch, and had been prepared to cooperate with any other groups; e.g. Tukhachevsky, I. P. Uborevich, N. D. Kashirin, V. M. Orlov, etc. Others who were hostile to the regime and ready to work in opposition had included Gamarnik, I.Y. Yakir, Sangurski, Aronshtam, P.E. Dybenko, N. V. Kuibvshev, I. P. Belov. and M. K. Levandovsky. (Coox 2, 85)

This account shows some similarities to the description of the different groups of military conspirators that Yezhov gave after his arrest at his interrogation of April 26, 1939:

After three or four days Yegorov came to my place again and this time told me in detail about the existence in the WPRA ⁵ of a group of conspirators consisting of important military men and headed by himself, Yegorov.

Yegorov further gave me the names of the participants of the conspiratorial group that he led: Budyonny, Dybenko, Shaposhnikov, Kashirin, Fed'ko, the commander of the Transbaikal military district, and a number of other important commanders whose names I will remember and give in a supplement.

Further Yegorov said that in the WPRA there exist two more groups competing with each other: the Trotskyist

⁵ Raboche-Krest'ianskaia Krasnaia Armia, "Workers and Peasants Red Army."

group of Gamarnik, Yakir and Uborevich, and the officer-Bonapartist group of Tukhachevsky. ⁶

Yezhov called the Gamarnik-Yakir group "Trotskyist." Putna and Primakov had been closely connected to Trotsky in the 1920s. Yezhov's "Bonapartist" group headed by Tukhachevsky corresponds to Lyushkov's group that had been Tsarist officers and "favored a military putsch."

To the Japanese, Lyushkov named Budyonny, Dybenko, Kashirin, and Blyukher as conspirators. Romanov named Alksnis. All were members of the court that tried Tukhachevsky and the others. Vladimir Bobrov, together with a colleague, have studied the confessions of Belov, Blyukher, Dybenko, Kashirin, and Yegorov, and have told me that each of these men confessed that they were afraid that the defendants would expose them as co-conspirators. But they did not. 8

Of interest as well is that both Lyushkov and Yezhov described Marshal Semion Budyonny as a conspirator. Lyushkov informed the Japanese as follows:

What was happening to Blyukher was happening to others at the top of the army. Thus Marshal S. M. Budyonny's difficulties were caused by his playing with various plotters. (Coox 2, 85)

In this second article Coox confirms that Lyushkov was working "on anti-Stalinist strategy and propaganda" in late 1938. (Coox 2, 92)

⁶ I have put an English translation of the complete text of Yezhov's confession of April 26, 1939 online at

http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/Yezhov042639eng.html The Russian original is also online at my site at

http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/Yezhovru.html

⁷ For the first three, see Coox 2, 85; for Blyukher, Coox 1, passim. ⁸ Email of July 29, 2020. See Chapter 14, "The Judges Judged."

The Importance of Lyushkov's Testimony

Lenoe correctly notes that Lyushkov had inside knowledge of the investigation of the Kirov assassination. He could have added: of the investigation of Zinoviev and Kamenev, and of the Far Eastern Region as well. Lenoe also writes:

Moreover, Lyushkov gave his evidence outside the Soviet Union, free from the dictates of the party line, and under the protection of the Japanese military police (after World War II Japanese officers who worked with Lyushkov testified that he did fear a Soviet assassination attempt. (687)

Lenoe also draws upon Coox's important articles, to which he refers repeatedly (687 and 808 nn. 11, 13, 16, 17 and 18). Lenoe correctly points out that Lyushkov's testimony about NKVD operations is consistent with other sources; that he told the truth about his private meeting with Stalin that Lyushkov's estimate of the numbers of arrests and executions is in line with what recent research has disclosed. (687-688)

But Lenoe neglects to mention the important information in Coox's article outlined above, although he obviously knows about it. Lyushkov's confirmation to the Japanese of the existence of a number of important conspiracies, plus the knowledge that he deliberately concealed their existence in his public writings, undermines Lenoe's hypothesis about the Kirov case and the other conspiracies and trials of the 1930s. This is the ASP (Anti-Stalin Paradigm) at work – Lenoe does not wish to admit that the conspiracies existed, since it is "taboo" in mainstream Soviet history to fail to blame Stalin for "framing" the defendants.

To summarize:

* Coox showed that there is a big contradiction between what Lyushkov said in his news conference and published articles, and what he privately told the Japanese.

- * Lyushkov informed the Japanese that real conspiracies did exist and were widespread in the USSR.
- * Coox pointed out that Lyushkov was explicitly working for Japanese military propaganda.
- * Lyushkov inculpated many of the military figures tried and executed as conspirators.
- * Lyushkov explicitly implicated Rykov. He told the Japanese:

For a long time Deribas had been in contact with Rykov and was the latter's 'hidden conspirator.' (Coox 1, 156)

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)

These statements are broadly consistent with testimony at the March 1938 Moscow Trial, at which Rykov was a defendant. Rykov, Bukharin and others testified there about their contacts with conspirators in Siberia.

We also now have a few selections of interrogations of Blyukher in 1938. In one of them Blyukher explicitly mentions a letter from Rykov that stated exactly what Lyushkov said.

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...9

This agrees with Coox's account of what his Japanese informants told him about Lyushkov's words, already quoted above:

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)

Other snippets of interrogations of Blyukher implicate Deribas, Lavrent'ev, Pokus, Aronshtam, and other figures whom Lyushkov identified as participants in the military conspiracy in the Far East. Lyushkov's statements to the Japanese confirm them. By the same token, Lyushkov's statements to the Japanese refute the notion that these statements were false, the result of torture, threat, or simple NKVD fabrication.

Lenoe's Hypothesis Refuted

Lenoe wrote that Lyushkov's testimony "is in fact the most important in the [Kirov murder] case." (687) We can now see that Lenoe's statement, in the form he meant it, is false – as referring to Lyushkov's statements at the July 1938 press conference and his March 1939 *Kaizo* article.

Ironically, however, Lenoe's statement is true – but in a sense *opposite* to that which Lenoe intended. For the information Lyushkov gave privately about the conspiracies to the Japanese military was indeed given "outside the Soviet Union, free from the dictates of the party line, and under the protection of the Japanese military police," as Lenoe stated.

Someone might object to this conclusion on the following grounds:

⁹ Nikolai Velikanov. *Izmena Marshalov*. M.: Algoritm, 2008. Interrogation of Blyukher of November 6, 1938, p. 343. Emphasis added, GF.

"Thanks to Coox we know that Lyushkov lied when he stated in pages 118-119 of his *Kaizo* article, quoted above, that "no conspiracy did or could exist." We know that because he privately informed the Japanese that serious conspiracies did indeed exist. So we know Lyushkov lied about those conspiracies about which he told the Japanese.

But Coox does not cite any evidence that Lyushkov spoke to the Japanese privately about the Kirov assassination. Coox only records what Lyushkov said publicly about the Kirov assassination, and publicly he said it was a frameup and that only Nikolaev was guilty (and, in an accessory capacity, perhaps Shatsky).

No liar lies all the time. Any skilled liar must interweave his real lies with some truth, in order for the lies to be credible.

Therefore it is possible that Lyushkov, while lying about the other conspiracies, was telling the truth about the Kirov assassination in asserting that it was a frameup, though the other conspiracies which he also called frameups really were not."

To such an objection I would reply as follows: it is a principle of logic and of historiography that one can draw no conclusion *e silentio* – in this case, from Lyushkov's silence. The fact that, as far as Coox (and we) know, Lyushkov *did not* tell the Japanese privately that the Kirov defendants (except for Nikolaev and Shatsky) were falsely accused or "framed" does not permit us to say anything about what he *might have* told them.

It's easy to imagine why Lyushkov might well not have discussed this subject with the Japanese. These were military men, not historians. They were vitally interested in opposition movements

¹⁰ See, for example, the Wikipedia page:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argumentum_e_silentio

against the Stalin regime and especially within the military. They would have had little interest in purely civilian conspiracies that had taken place years before. So either Lyushkov did not tell them privately about the Kirov assassination, or they did not pay much attention and did not remember it when they spoke with Coox many years later.

But Lyushkov confirmed to the Japanese that Rykov was a participant in the anti-Soviet conspiracy. One of Lyushkov's two statements about Rykov agrees very closely with a statement in Marshal Blyukher's confession. Therefore, Lyushkov's statements about Rykov partially corroborate not only Blyukher's confession but some of the testimony at the March 1938 Moscow trial. Lenoe hid this very important information from his readers.

In his remarks about the military purge and particularly about Tukhachevsky's involvement in it, and about Rykov's role in the Right-Trotskyite conspiracy Lyushkov provides us with something very rare. He gives us evidence from outside the Soviet Union that confirms the existence of real anti-Stalin and anti-Soviet conspiracies and the guilt of Rykov and Tukhachevsky.

But Rykov and Tukhachevsky implicated all the other major figures in the network of interlocking conspiracies alleged in the three public Moscow Trials and the Tukhachevsky Affair. In this way Lyushkov's statements to the Japanese constitute strong evidence not only that the 1938 Moscow Trial was not a fabrication but that the previous Moscow Trials were not fabrications either.

Chapter 12. Non-Soviet evidence –

Himmler, Vlasov, Hitler, Goebbels,

Davies

In 1974 a newly-discovered document from the German Foreign Office files that were captured and microfilmed by the Allies after World War 2 was examined by British historian Frederick L. Carsten. It is a report concerning high-level rumors current in Munich in early 1937, which ended up in the Vienna Bureau of the Austrian Chancellor.

Among other matters it deals with relations between the German and Soviet military commanders, about which it makes four points:

- 1) It claims that the top men in the German General Staff, including Generaloberst Freiherr Werner von Fritsch, Chief of Staff of the German Army (*Chef der Heeresleitung*)¹, were at that time involved in trying to form an alliance with the Soviet military.
- 2) It claims that Marshal Tukhachevsky had been present at the German army's autumn maneuvers in the past year (den vorjährigen deutschen Herbstmanoevern).
- 3) At that time Tukhachevsky is said to have proposed a toast to the German Army "as the champion (*Vorkämpferin*) against world Jewry," and to Goering.

 $^{^{1}}$ In reality Fritsch's rank was *Oberkommando des Heeres*, Commander-in-Chief of the Army.

4) It claims that the German military was closely following the "power struggle presently taking place in Russia," in hopes that Stalin would be overthrown in favor of a military dictatorship.

The relevant part of this document is as follows:

Nach wie vor sind innerhalb der Wehrmacht Bestrebungen im Gange, die auf die Moglichkeit eines Bijndnisses mit der russischen Armee abzielen. Die Argumentation ist einfach: mit Gewalt ist die russische Armee nicht zu erledigen, also soll es in Freundschaft geschehen. Sowohl Fritsch wie Admiral Raeder, aber auch General von Reichenau gelten als Verfechter dieses Planes. Blomberg wird immer als blosser Figurant angesehen. Diese Bestrebungen finden aber vornehmlich in der jungen Schule des Generalstabes ihre Verfechter. Bei seiner Anwesenheit in Berlin hat sich der bei den vorjährigen deutschen Herbstmanövern Marschall Tuchatschewski für den Toast Generaloberst Fritsch auf die russische Armee in Wurzburg mit einem Trinkspruch auf die deutsche Armee als Vorkämpferin gegen das Weltjudentum und auf General Göring revanchiert. Der gegenwärtig in Russland sich abspielende Machtkampf. moglicherweise mit dem Sturze Stalins und Errichtung einer Militardiktatur enden konnte, wird von der Wehrmacht auf das aufmerksamste und mit unverhohlener Sympathie fur eine derartige Losung verfolgt ...2

Now as always there are efforts under way within the Wehrmacht which aim at the possibility of an alliance with the Russian army. The argument is simple: the Russian army cannot be taken care of by force; therefore

² National Archives. Series T-120, Roll No. 1448, page D 567 777. Quoted by F.L. Carsten, "New 'Evidence' against Marshal Tukhachevsky." *Slavonic and East European Review* 52 (1974), 272.

it should happen in friendship. Fritsch, Admiral Raeder, and even General von Reichenau are rumored to be proponents of this plan. Blomberg is seen as a mere accessory (Figurant). But the proponents of these efforts are found chiefly among the younger school of the General Staff. When he was in Berlin on the occasion of last vear"s German autumn maneuvers. Marshal Tukhachevsky offered, in return for Colonel-General Fritsch"s toast to the Russian army in Würzberg, a toast to the German army as the champion against world lewry, and to General Göring. The power struggle presently taking place in Russia, which might possibly end with Stalin's fall and the establishment of a military dictatorship, is being followed by the Wehrmacht with closest attention. and with unconcealed sympathy for a solution of that kind.

Himmler is reported to have discussed the Tukhachevsky Affair in a conversation with the renegade Soviet General A. A. Vlasov on September 16, 1944, at Himmler's HQ in Rastenburg (East Prussia; now Kętrzyn, Poland) in a manner which makes it clear he believed Tukhachevsky had been guilty of some plotting:

Himmler fragte Wlassow nach der Tuchatschewski-Affäre. Warum diese schief gegangen sei. Wlassow gab eine unverhohlene Antwort: "Tuchatschewski machte denselben Fehler, den Ihre Leute am 20. Juli machten. Er kannte das Gesetz der Masse nicht."

Himmler asked Vlasov about the Tukhachevsky Affair. Why this had gone awry. Vlasov gave a frank answer: "Tukhachevsky made the same mistake that your people made on 20 July. He did not know the law of masses." 3

³ Archiv des Instituts für Zeitgeschichte (Munich), Signatur ZS 2, Bd I., page 55. This document contains the notes of conversations between

In an important speech in Posen on October 4, 1943, Himmler stated:

When – I believe it was in 1937 or 1938 – the great show trials took place in Moscow, and the former czarist military cadet, later Bolshevik general, Tukhachevsky, and other generals were executed, all of us in Europe, including us in the [Nazi] Party and in the SS, were of the opinion that here the Bolshevik system and Stalin had committed one of their greatest mistakes. In making this judgment of the situation we greatly deceived ourselves. We can truthfully and confidently state that. I believe that Russia would never have lasted through these two years of war – and she is now in the third year of war – if she had retained the former czarist generals.⁴

This probably reflected Hitler's assessment as well, for, according to Goebbels (diary entry of May 8, 1943):

The conference of the Reichsleiters and Gauleiters followed.... The Führer recalled the case of Tukhachevsky and expressed the opinion that we were entirely wrong then in believing that Stalin would ruin the Red Army by the way he handled it. The opposite was true: Stalin got rid of all opposition in the Red Army and thereby brought an end to defeatism."⁵

Günter d'Alquen, an SS officer present at the Himmler-Vlasov interview, and a co-worker of Jürgen Thorwald, the German author. The ambiguous (perhaps deliberately so) phrase "das Gesetz der Masse" could refer either to the law of inertia or to the behavior of the masses. In either case it means about the same thing. Thorwald cited the phrase in *Wen Sie Verderben Wollen* (Stuttgart: Steingrüben-Verlag, 1952), p. 394,

⁴ Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal (Nuremberg, 1949), Vol. 29, p. 111 (Document 1919-PS)

⁵ Joseph Goebbels, *The Goebbels Diaries*: 1942-1943, ed. & tr. Louis P. Lochner (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1948), p. 355.

Joseph Davies

Davies was American ambassador to the Soviet Union from November 1936 until June 1938. He was also a very experienced lawyer. In his memoir *Mission to Moscow* (1941) Davies accepted the Soviet version of the Moscow Trials and the Tukhachevsky Affair. He has been sharply criticized for doing so for decades, although – as we can now prove from primary source evidence – he was correct! But this part of his book is not evidence, of course. It simply reflects Davies' belief that the official Soviet version of these events – the "Stalin" version – was correct.

But early in his memoir there is a passage that is usually overlooked, and that does constitute evidence – confirmatory evidence – of the Tukhachevsky conspiracy. Davies describes a stop-over in Berlin and a talk with an unnamed official at the German Foreign Office.

DIARY 1937 Berlin January 16,

We stopped off here for a few days' rest. Ambassador and Mrs. Dodd gave us a very pleasant luncheon. Dr. Schacht and his wife, the former German Ambassador to Washington, Von Gaffron-Prittwitz, the Polish Ambassador Lipski and the Russian Ambassador and Madame Suretz, along with my old University of Wisconsin classmate and friend, Louis Lochner, made it a very pleasant occasion.

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.

Davies was told this at the same time that (a) von Trauttmansdorff was negotiating with Mastny and on the point of being informed by the same German Foreign Office, if not by Hitler himself, that Hitler was expecting a pro-German – that is, a pro-Nazi – military coup in the USSR⁶; (b) von Neurath was writing to Hjalmar Schacht about the possibility of a pro-German military coup in the Soviet Union; (c) the German military were calling up their folder on Tukhachevsky's career in the First World War; (d) the Austrian Bundeskanzleramt report discussed by Carsten was outlining the German desire for Stalin's overthrow and a turn towards Germany in the USSR.

All of this information is mutually confirming, and would be even if we did not have the great deal of more direct evidence that we do in fact possess today to prove that the Tukhachevsky conspiracy did indeed exist

⁶ Discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 13. Non-Soviet Evidence – The Mastny-Benes Report

The Trauttmansdorff-Mastny Talks

Further confirmation that Hitler himself knew of the conspiracy by Soviet military leaders is also contained in a document from the archive of a Czechoslovak diplomat. In this chapter we will examine that document and put it into context with other documents from German or Austrian sources.

Between August 1936 and January 1937 secret discussions took place between representatives of Germany and Czechoslovakia about a possible nonaggression pact. The government of Czech President Benes was eager for such a treaty. Drafts of an agreement to be proposed to both governments were being discussed between German diplomat Maximilian Karl Graf zu Trauttmansdorff and Vojtech Mastny, Czech ambassador to Germany.

In 1960 American research Gerhard Weinberg studied the documentary evidence concerning these German-Czech negotiations. From the published and archival information available at the time Weinberg realized that Hitler had called off these negotiations sometime in January 1937. But he could not tell why Hitler had done that. Weinberg concluded that Hitler "was never seriously interested in an agreement with the Czech government." (374) Of course that did not explain why Hitler permitted the negotiations to take place until he suddenly called them off sometime in January 1937.

¹ Gerhard L. Weinberg, "Secret Hitler-Benes Negotiations in 1936-37." *Journal of Central European Affairs*, January, 1960, 366-374.

In 1987, writing in the German scholarly journal *Vierteljahreshefte* für Zeitgeschichte Czech researcher Ivan Pfaff revealed that he had discovered in the Czech government archives a document that explained why Hitler had halted these negotiations with Czechoslovakia.² The document, a private memorandum from Mastny to Czech President Edvard Benes, was a record of Mastny's confidential discussion with diplomat Graf zu Trauttmansdorff who was representing Germany.

The memorandum proves that Hitler was in touch with secret circles within the USSR. According to Mastny's report of what Trauttmansdorff had confidentially told him, Soviet contacts whom Trauttmansdorff did not name had given Hitler the expectation that the Stalin government would soon be overthrown from within by a military coup.

This coup would be one in a direction more compatible with German interests. Therefore it would change Germany's political orientation towards the USSR and towards Czechoslovakia. Such a cardinal development in relations with the USSR would transform the balance of forces in Europe. This appeared to Hitler to be likely enough so that he called off any attempt to reach an agreement with Czechoslovakia.

The Russian Translation of Pfaff's Article

The importance of Pfaff's 1987 discovery was not lost in Mikhail Gorbachev's Moscow. In the following year Pfaff's article was reprinted in Russian translation in three successive issues of the official journal *Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal*.³ It is worth our while to take a look at this translation to see what was added to it and what was omitted from it.

² Ivan Pfaff, "Prag und der Fall Tuchatschewski." VfZ 35 (1987) 95-134.

³ I. Pfaff, "Praga i delo o voennom zagovore." *Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal* 10-12 (1988).

The Soviet editors made some changes – additions and deletions – to Pfaff's article when it was published. The main material added was an unsigned editorial preface printed at the top of the first article in the series. These alterations reflect the Gorbachev-era Soviet desire to keep denying the truth that the Tukhachevsky conspiracy really existed. We'll comment here on its most important assertions.

The preface says that Tukhachevsky was arrested on Stalin's order, "po prikazaniiu Stalina", and then that Tukhachevsky's wife and two brothers were "annihilated" ("unichtozheny"), his three sisters sent to a camp, his daughter, still a child, also arrested, "on Stalin's order." The implication is that there was no pretrial investigation, no recommendation from the NKVD — that everything was done simply because Stalin ordered it.

This is false. The Gorbachev-era fabricators had all the Soviet archives at their disposal, but they cite no evidence to prove these claims. Now, of course, we know why: they were lying. We know there was a full-scale investigation in the case of Tukhachevsky and of the other military men arrested and put on trial with him. Transcripts of many interrogations involving Tukhachevsky and the other military men have been declassified. Even more such documents certainly exist in various archives. There was a trial, of which we now have the full transcript. If the rest of Tukhachevsky's family were arrested by Stalin's order alone neither the Soviet nor the Russian government has released the evidence to show that

The readers were then told the following:

People continue to ask questions: how could it happen that during the period of the threat of fascist aggression our best military personnel were destroyed?

We remind the reader how at the XXII Congress of the CPSU N.S. Khrushchev said that the leadership of Nazi Germany, through its intelligence service, planted Stalin's fabricated documents - "evidence" of the

conspiracy led by Marshal Tukhachevsky and other prominent military leaders, as well as their of cooperation with the Wehrmacht. The highest representatives of Nazi Germany participated in the preparation of the dossier with the "genuine" documents. Hitler and Heydrich, knowing the cruelty of Stalin, his suspiciousness and suspicion, believed that they had the opportunity to decapitate the Red Army. Their calculation was simple: if Stalin suspects senior officers of the conspiracy, then he must look for evidence of their betrayal. And if this evidence does not exist, then it must be created.

This "evidence" - supposedly secret documents - came to the President of Czechoslovakia Benes, and he, apparently guided by good wishes, sent them to Stalin.⁴

There's more to the preface, but we will pause to examine the passage above. It is a study in deliberate misdirection. The deception starts with the first sentence, which assumes two things that ought, on the contrary, to be proven or at least argued. What evidence do we have that these military leaders were "the best"? Moreover, whether they were "the best" or not, what about the charge that they were in treasonable collaboration with the Germans and Japanese? These charges are simply not considered, as though no consideration were necessary.

The next paragraph begins with an outright lie. Khrushchev did not "declare" that the Germans had forged documents and passed them to Stalin. Here are Khrushchev's actual words at the XXII Party Congress:

Somehow, a rather **curious message** flashed in the foreign press, **as though** Hitler, preparing an attack on our country, created a fabricated document through his

⁴ "Tochki zreniia, suzhdeniia, versii" (points of view, assessments, versions). *Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal* 10 (1988), p. 44..

intelligence that comrades Yakir, Tukhachevsky and others were agents of the German General Staff. This "document", **supposedly** a secret one, came to the President of Czechoslovakia Benes, and he, in turn, guided, **apparently**, with good intentions, sent it to Stalin. Yakir, Tukhachevsky and other comrades were arrested, and after that destroyed." ⁵ (Emphasis added, GF)

The 1988 Soviet preface to the Pfaff series states that Khrushchev *asserts* the German forgery plot was a fact. But in reality Khrushchev did nothing of the kind. Instead he carefully qualified his statement, referring to accounts of this forgery story in the foreign press that had made these claims.

That the journal editors made this false statement deliberately is obvious from the fact that their words in 1988 closely followed Khrushchev's wording in his 1961 speech. We reproduce the Russian originals here and italicize the words that were repeated by the Soviet journal in 1988 from Khrushchev's 1961 speech.

Khrushchev, 1961:

Этот "документ", якобы секретный, попал к президенту Чехословакии Бенешу, и тот, в свою очередь, руководствуясь, видимо, добрыми намерениями, переслал его Сталину.

Voenno-Istoricheskii Zhurnal editors, 1988:

Эти «доказательства» - якобы секретные документы - попали к президенту Чехословакии Бенешу, и тот, руководствуясь, видимо, добрыми пожеланиями, переслал их Сталину.

⁵ XXII s"ezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza. Stenograficheskii otchet. Zakliuchitel'noe slovo Pervogo sekretaria TsK KPSS N.S. Khrushcheva. Mowcow, 1962, t. 2, pp. 585-6. [October 27, 1961].

The fact that the 1988 editors had Khrushchev's Speech in front of them proves that they deliberately lied about what Khrushchev had said. There can be no doubt that they *intended* to deceive their readers, for few persons, if indeed anyone, would trouble to find the bulky transcript of the XXII Party Congress in a library and compare the two.

Their purpose in deceiving their readers in this way is clear. Pfaff's article sets forth the "German SD forgery plot" theory as *fact*. In reality, not only did no such German forgery plot ever exist, but this fact was known to Party leaders in Khrushchev's day.

We will argue that the ideological purpose of the Pfaff series as reprinted in the Soviet journal was to provide a convincing story for Soviet readers, while accounting for the document which was Pfaff's premier discovery – the Mastny – Benes note of February 9, 1937. That was important because the Mastny – Benes note provides good evidence to support the theory – official in Stalin's day but hotly denied since Khrushchev – that Tukhachevsky and the other military commanders really were in collusion with the top Nazi leadership, including Hitler. The only way to try to explain Mastny-Benes note away was through the assertion that the information it contains was false, planted on the Czechs as a part of the "German SD forgery plot".

The Shvernik Commission

After the XXII Party Congress Khrushchev set up a commission charged with investigating the Moscow Trials and the "Tukhachevsky Affair" of the 1930s. We have examined evidence from this "Shvernik Commission" in *The Murder of Sergei Kirov*. Here Vladimir L. Bobrov takes a look at what it says about the "German forgery story."

But less than three years after the XXII Congress, the "Khrushchev version" was sharply criticized by the Rehabilitation Commission under the Central Committee of the CPSU. The top secret "Information", sent to the First Secretary shortly before his removal from office in

October 1964, stated that the story of Nazi "fakes" was untrue and that, aside from the "literary works of the Nazis themselves, there was no other evidence regarding this operation of Hitler's intelligence "

of The version Hevdrich's fabrication documents against Tukhachevsky as presented in the publications of former Hitler's agents (Höttl, Schellenberg and others) does not confirmation on the basis of archival or other documentary sources. First of all, the most important evidence has not yet been found - the "documents" themselves. All attempts to find these "documents" in the archives of the Central Committee of the CPSU, the archives of the Soviet Army, the OGPU-NKVD, as well as in the judicial investigations of Tukhachevsky and other Soviet military leaders did not lead to anything. There is evidence that these "documents" were presented to the group members during the investigation. These "documents" did not appear Nobody even mentioned these "documents" during the investigation or at the hearing. No convincing indirect evidence came to light, to some extent reflecting the real existence of these "documents."

... At the various operational-service and party meetings and meetings in the NKVD of the USSR that followed Tukhachevsky's conviction, no one ever mentioned any German "documents" that supposedly formed the basis for evidence of the betrayal of Soviet military leaders.

... In the West to this day, not a single attempt has been made to publish or a detailed description of these "documents", according to some versions, Hitler's intelligence handed over to the Soviet representatives only photocopies, not the original documents. It would seem that the originals of the fakes should have remained in the archives of the SD or other German archives. However, there are no indications in the published sources that the German archives contained any documentary data about the operation that was allegedly carried out by Heydrich. There is no such data in the German archives captured during the war by the Soviet services. Finally, it should be emphasized that the authors of various published books are far from united in the list of documents allegedly fabricated by the Germans. On the contrary, their options are very different from each other.⁶

The section of the "Report" cited contrasts with all the rest of its content. There was no room for either crude anti-Stalinist rhetoric or charges of the OGPU-NKVD deliberately fabricating evidence against an executed marshal. Evidently the criticism of the Commission on the rehabilitation of baseless assertions at the XXII Congress of the CPSU carried clear signs of political struggle within the Soviet leadership: three of the six signatories of the "Inquiry" on the "Tukhachevsky case" -Shelepin, Mironov, and Semichastny - became the main organizers of the October conspiracy against Khrushchev in 1964.

Since one part of the "Report" was written in line with the Khrushchev-era rehabilitation, while the other contained criticism of Khrushchev's statements, this, of course, does not give us the right to classify this document as an objective source. On the contrary, instead of one untenable version - the story of "SD fabrication" - another, equally dubious, was put forward. Nevertheless, the publication of the "Spravka" even in

⁶ RKEB 2. 738.

this form could have already in the 1960s put an end to the dissemination of fabrications about the role of "fake SD" in the "case" of Tukhachevsky and other high-ranking military personnel. But it happened differently: the explanations of the rehabilitation Commission did not receive any publicity until the declassification and publication of the "Spravka" in the 1990s.

So Party leaders had known at least since Khrushchev's day that the "German forgery plot" story was a fraud. In fact, of course, they knew much more than this. They knew – or could have known but, perhaps, did not want to know – that Tukhachevsky & Co. were guilty as charged.

They knew, or could have known, the truth because they had access to the original investigative materials and the trial transcript of Tukhachevsky and the rest. But, like Khrushchev, the top CPSU Party leaders decided to go along with Khrushchev's falsehoods about Stalin, including the Tukhachevsky Affair.

Iulia Kantor, author of two recent books on Tukhachevsky, a person who claims to have had privileged access to Tukhachevsky investigative materials. consistently takes the position of the Shvernik Commission: that there is no evidence of any "German forgeries" and probably never was any such forgery.

On the basis of archival materials, the course of the "Military affair," its forerunners and consequences, is analyzed in detail ... In the German archives there are no materials confirming the existence of such a dossier. In addition, in secondary German sources (in particular, V. Schellenberg's memoirs, the transmission time is indicated as spring 1937, while some significant persons involved in the process - Putna, Primakov and others were arrested much earlier). In the case file there are no

signs of a "German trace", nor is there any general argumentative evidence base.

But Kantor omits any mention of the Mastny-Benes note, though Pfaff's article announcing its discovery was published more than 20 years before Kantor's book! The most obvious reason for Kantor's striking omission is that, absent any German forgery plot, there is no way to account for what Trautmannsdorf told Mastny except by conceding that the military conspiracy had been real and that Tukhachevsky & Co. were guilty.

In another chapter of this work we analyze the "Arao Telegram", a document attesting to Tukhachevsky's illicit contacts with the Japanese, and examine the attempt by the Shvernik Report compilers to explain it away. But the "Arao Telegram" had been found by Shvernik Report researchers in a Soviet archive. A hypothesis that it had been fabricated to "frame" Tukhachevsky could always be concocted and, once mentioned, assumed to have been proven.

But the Masty-Benes note is not subject to any easy dismissal. In fact there is no way to account for it, even hypothetically, within what we call the reigning "Anti-Stalin Paradigm." Any honest, objective, and competent investigator who was sincerely trying to solve this mystery would never simply ignore a vital piece of evidence like this.

Instead, an honest investigator would question her hypothesis of the crime and look for alternative, even contradictory, explanations. Kantor does not do this. Rather she simply omits any mention of the Mastny-Benes note. This marks her as a politicallymotivated ideologue rather than a historian.

⁷ Iuliia Kantor, *Zakliataya Druzhba. Sekretnye sotrudnichestva SSSR i Germanii v* 1920 – 1930-e gody. St Petersburg: Piter, 2009, p. 295. See also p. 197.

Omissions

A minor but suggestive omission from the Russian version of the Pfaff article is that of two sentences – seven lines – from the top of page 103 of Pfaff's original German language article. In these lines Pfaff declares that there is no way Benes could have informed the Soviets immediately upon learning, in February 1937, that Hitler was expecting a military coup in the USSR. But this was what Khrushchev had suggested in 1961, and what, in their dishonest summary of his remarks, the Soviet editors had claimed in 1988. Perhaps the editors felt that would confuse the falsification they were attempting to put over on their Soviet readership.

The main omissions are even more significant. Two false documents – documents that Pfaff either believed to be genuine or wanted his readers to think were genuine – are omitted from the Soviet translation. They are

- 1. A false Politburo decision of May 24, 1937 (Pfaff No. 3, pp. 122-125);
- 2. A false Politburo decision of December 10, 1937 (Pfaff No. 7, pp. 130).

One document reprinted by Pfaff and included in the Soviet version purports to be a letter from German Minister Franz von Papen to Hitler in which both of the documents above are mentioned. We do not know whether this document too is false, or whether the false documents date from the 1930s and had actually been sent by Papen to Hitler. False Soviet documents, the "Informazioni Stojko", had been purchased by the Germans and taken seriously earlier in the 1930s. In either case the attentive Soviet reader would be puzzled by its inclusion, for he would have no way of knowing what the two documents were. Perhaps the Soviet editors hoped their readers would not notice.

That these Politburo documents are fakes has been established by other scholars. They may have been fraudulent documents pawned off on the Germans by some clever forger. If so, that would explain von Papen's letter to Hitler. Or, they may not exist at all. Michal Reiman and Ingmar Sütterlin could not find them in the archive where Pfaff said they were to be found.⁸ Pfaff may have fabricated them out of whole cloth.

A third document published by Pfaff (No. 10, pp. 132-134) was also omitted. We don't know why, but a good guess might be that this letter makes those in France who believed war was inevitable and a military treaty with the USSR desirable, appear both virtuous (on the right side) and prophetic. This included the communists as well as certain bourgeois politicians, notably Paul Reynaud. It does not attribute France's failure to make such a treaty with the USSR to the Tukhachevsky Affair, putative Soviet military weakness, or anything that would tend to support the argument that the Stalin government had done anything wrong.

Quite the contrary! That is, the document tends to vindicate the Stalin government's position. After all, the French communists were unlikely to take any position that was not approved by the Soviets – that is, by "Stalin." Therefore, to suggest that the French communists were correct would be to suggest that Stalin was correct too. The Gorbachev-era Soviet editors would not have wanted to do this.

As Igor Lukes and others have shown, Pfaff's version of the "German forgery" story is based on phony documents and is therefore incorrect. Lukes himself offered yet another version of the forgery story. But as we have seen there was, and is, no set of

⁸ For a discussion of the "Stojko Information" forgeries of Soviet documents purchased by the Germans in the earlier 1930s see Michal Reiman, "Per una Storia della Politica Sovietica negli Anni 1932-1933: Le "Informazioni Stojko"", *Studi storici* 3 (1985), 581-609. For the false Politburo resolution referencing Benes and Tukachevsky, see Pfaff, "Prag und der Fall Tuchatschewski" p. 122 – 125; Michal Reiman und Ingmar Sütterlin, "Sowjetische "Politbüro-Beschlüsse" der Jahre 1931-1937 in staatlichen deutschen Archiven", *Jahrbücher für das Geschichte Osteuropas* 37 (1989), p. 202 and note 26; Igor Lukes, *Czechoslovakia between Stalin and Hitler: The Diplomacy of Edvard Benes in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) pp. 95-6 and pp. 20-21 nn. 20-21.

documents forged by the Germans or anyone else, and Soviet authorities have known this at least since the Shvernik Commission report in 1964.

We are led to the conclusion that the reprinting of Pfaff's article was an attempt to deceive Soviet readers – to give new life to the story that Tukhachevsky and the others convicted with him, and by extension all the defendants at the Moscow Trials, were innocent of conspiracy to overthrow the Stalin government and of collaborating with the Germans against their country.

But the Mastny-Benes note of February 9, 1937 is genuine. We have obtained a photocopy of the Czech original from the archives in the National Museum in Prague, and reproduce the first at the end of this chapter, together with an English translation of the entire document.

A brief summary of the context that produced this document is necessary here. Here is Igor Lukes' account:

... As he [Mastny] returned to Berlin on 8 January 1937, the diplomat had reason to feel satisfied. He had determined post assumed his to improve Czechoslovakia's relations with Germany, and at last, after long years of tension and propaganda wars, he seemed to be near the end of the tunnel. Three days after Mastny had returned from Prague, zu Trauttmansdorff sent Haushofer [an adviser to von Ribbentrop, Hitler's Foreign Minister] a report on his last solo trip and also a draft of the proposed treaty, which he had apparently received from Benes. Haushofer passed the text to Hitler on 14 January 1937. The Fuehrer, however, told the two German negotiators to drop the whole project. It would never be resurrected.

President Benes did not want to appear too eager, but soon the silence from Berlin became deafening. At long last, Mastny was instructed to approach zu Trauttmansdorff and inquire about the status of the Prague demanded an explanation unexpected breakdown, and Mastny did his best to get to bottom of the mystery. He met with February 1937 Trauttmansdorff on 9 and then immediately summed up their conversation in a top secret message exclusively for the president. According to Mastny's record, the German aristocrat suggested diplomatically that in the Führer's opinion the time was not right for Berlin and Prague to proceed any further. Then, as if searching for a plausible explanation, zu Trauttmansdorff made a statement that linked the failure of the secret negotiations with the Tukhachevsky affair. Swearing the Czechoslovak minister to secrecy, he told him that

... the real reason behind the Chancellor's [i.e. Hitler's] hesitation is his assumption, based on certain information which he received from Russia, that in the near future there may be a possibility for an imminent reversal in Moscow, the fall of Stalin and Litvinov and the imposition of a military dictatorship. Should that happen the Chancellor would substantially change his Russian policy; he would be ready to deal simultaneously with both east and west-albeit only by means of bilateral agreements.

... Mastny's reply of 21 March 1937 further underlined Prague's awareness of the allegations regarding a coup d'etat in Moscow. He reminded Benes that

the Reich Chancellor was said to have accepted the possibility of a sudden reversal in Russia in the near future, of the fall of Stalin and Litvinov, and [the imposition of] a military dictatorship in Moscow. This could result in a fundamental reversal of German policy toward Russia for which, as is well known, there is still much

sympathy in the German army even under the present circumstances.⁹

Lukes himself wrote under the influence of the viewpoint, predominant since the Khrushchev era, that the Soviet generals had been framed either by Stalin or by the Germans themselves using forged documents. At the time Lukes did his research there was still no confirmation of the existence of the military conspiracies and German collaboration from the former Soviet archives.

Perhaps this is why Lukes added the words in boldface above: "Then, as if searching for a plausible explanation." Whatever Lukes' reason for adding this clause, however, it was dishonest of him to do so. There is no language in Mastny's note to Benes that even remotely suggests this meaning.

Lukes took it for granted that what Trauttmansdorff told Mastny was disinformation intended to make the supposed "forged German documents" more believable. As we argued in 1986, the tales of German forgery plots were never credible in the first place. ¹⁰ In this case as in so many others anticommunist scholars were misled by Khrushchev and abetted here by dishonest, self-aggrandizing memoirs of former Nazis.

Mastny's record of his talks with Trauttmansdorff confirm Hitler's knowledge of a military conspiracy in the USSR. This fact was also reflected, though somewhat darkly, in documents from German

⁹ Igor Lukes, *Czechoslovakia Between Stalin and Hitler. The Diplomacy of Eduard Benes in the 1930s.* London and NY: Oxford U.P., 1996, pp. 96-98. The crucial quotations here are from the personal archives of Vojtech Mastny, Czech Minister in Berlin, and have not been published.

¹⁰ See Grover C Furr, "New Light On Old Stories About Marshal Tukhachevskii: Some Documents Reconsidered." Russian History / Histoire Russe 13, Nos 2-3 (Summer-Fall 1986), 293-308. At

http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/tukh.html

The document re-examined here was first published by Frederick Ludwig Carsten, "New 'Evidence' against Marshal Tukhachevskii," *Slavonic and East European Review*, 52 (1974), 272-73

Foreign Office documents published as far back as 1974. As these have been studied in detail already we will only allude to them briefly here.

In 1986 we described one of those documents as follows:

In 1974 a newly-discovered document from these files was examined by British historian Frederick L. Carsten. It is a report concerning high-level rumors current in Munich in early 1937, which ended up in the Vienna Bureau of the Austrian Chancellor, Among other matters it deals with relations between the German and Soviet military commanders, about which it makes four points: 1) It claims that the top men in the German General Staff, including Generaloberst Freiherr Werner von Fritsch, Chief of Staff of the German Army (Chef der Heeresleitung), were at that time involved in trying to form an alliance with the Soviet military. 2) It claims that Marshal Tukhachevskii had been present at the German army's autumn maneuvers in the past year (den vorjährigan detuschen Herbstmanoevern). 3) At that time Tukhachevskii is said to have proposed a toast to the German Army "as the champion (Vorkämpferin) against world Jewry." and to Goëring. 4) It claims that the German military was closely following the "power struggle presently taking place in Russia," in hopes that Stalin would be overthrown in favor of a military dictatorship.11

At that time we demonstrated that this was entirely consistent with other documents from outside the USSR that had come to light. One of these, also from the German archives, is a letter from

encoding Cyrillic (Windows).

¹¹ Furr 1986, p. 294. See also the Russian translation by Vladimir L. Bobrov, «Старые Истории о Маршале Тухачевском в Новом Свете: Некоторые Документы Пересмотрены». At https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/tukh rus.html Choose character

German Foreign Minister Constantine von Neurath to Reichsbank head Dr. Hjalmar Schacht. Schacht was the person with whom David Kandelaki, Soviet trade negotiator, had been in contact with.

This is a letter to Dr. Hjalmar Schacht (head of the Reichsbank and the person whom Kandelaki had approached concerning the Soviet Government's desire for formal secret talks) from the German Foreign Minister, Baron Constantine von Neurath.14 In this letter Neurath summarizes Hitler's view, with which Neurath also declares his agreement. This is expressed as follows:

As concerning the eventual acceptance of talks with the Russian government, I am, in agreement with the Führer, of the view that they could not lead to any result at this time, would rather be made great use of by the Russians to achieve the goal they seek of a closer military alliance with France and, if possible, to achieve as well a further rapprochement with England. A declaration by the Russian government that it dissociates itself from Comintern agitation, after the experience with these declarations in England and France, would be of no practical use whatever and therefore be unsatisfactory.

Neurath adds a qualification. We put it in boldface here to emphasize its importance for our study.

It would be another thing if matters in Russia should develop in the direction of an absolute despotism propped up by the military. In this event we should not let the opportunity pass us by to involve ourselves in Russia again.

The Neurath-Schacht letter is dated 11 February, 1937, while the cover letter to the Austrian BKA document, on BKA stationery, is dated four days later, and the report itself deals with the previous month. Thus the letter proves that the rumor set down in the report does, in fact, reflect the real views of the Nazi hierarchy at

precisely the time it claims. The Neurath-Schacht letter strikingly verifies point four of the Austrian BKA report.¹²

Neurath's meaning is clear. By late January 1937 Hitler himself had spoken in Neurath's presence about the possibility that a military dictatorship would soon come to power in the USSR. Hitler took it for granted that such an eventuality would be advantageous to Germany.

Meanwhile, according to rumors that reached the desk of the Chancellor of Austria, the German High Command were trying to form an alliance with the Soviet military hoping Stalin would be overthrown in favor of a military dictatorship. Tukhachevskii had given a strongly pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic toast at German military maneuvers in either 1936 or 1935, one that reflected views he had expressed years before.

Both of these documents, but especially the letter from Neurath to Schacht, strikingly confirm what Trauttmansdorff told Mastny and at almost exactly the same point in time. But the Mastny note says something more. According to Trauttmansdorff, Hitler had learned about the "imminent" overthrow, "in the near future", of Stalin by the Soviet military from a source within the USSR.

He also made it clear that this would lead to a "reversal in Moscow." He said that Hitler "would substantially change his Russian policy." That could only mean that Hitler expected a "military dictatorship" would be friendlier to Nazi Germany than the current Stalin government. And that is the way the Czechs understood it. As Lukes put it,

For Benes, the prospect of a military *coup d'état* in Moscow that would turn Russia into an ally of Nazi Germany was a nightmare. (98)

¹² *Ibid.* The Neurath-Schacht letter is reprinted as an appendix to the English language version of my 1988 article in *Russian History / Histoire Russe*.

This is what Tukhachevsky and the other generals confessed to planning. It is also exactly what Bukharin, Rykov, Iagoda, Krestinsky et al., the defendants in the 1938 Moscow Trial, confessed that they were counting on. Now we see that, four months before Tukhachevsky's arrest and trial and over a year before the March 1938 trial Hitler was expecting precisely the same thing to occur "in the near future."

Is all this merely a coincidence? Neither Pfaff nor Lukes thought so. They assumed it was part of a disinformation scheme surrounding the "German forgery plot" documents. But we know there was no such forgery plot.

Some may object that this does not constitute absolute proof that a military conspiracy existed and that the conspirators were in touch with Germany. That is true only in the sense that no such thing as "absolute proof" exists. But it is also the case that the Mastny-Benes memorandum of February 9, 1937 does constitute:

- * important circumstantial evidence for the existence of such a conspiracy;
- * important corroboration of the other evidence we have that such a conspiracy existed.

We contend that this document constitutes the kind of evidence we might reasonably expect to find. We would expect that very few people in Germany would know about such a conspiracy, and that those persons would not speak of it. In this context it is important to note that Trauttmansdorff explicitly denied having told Mastny the contents of this note – which we know he did tell him. As Lukes points out, Trauttmansdorff's denials are simply not credible (101-2). We believe that such denials are to be expected in a case like this. After all, even though Nazi Germany was long gone, Trauttmansdorff was still a German diplomat, and Hitler's state was the predecessor state to the West German government. So, what the head of state had told him in confidence was something that Trauttmansdorff was not prepared to reveal.

We should keep Trauttmansdorff's denial firmly in mind when we consider the similar denials by General Ernst Koestring and General Oskar Ritter von Niedermayer, both of whom were named by Russian defendants. So far as we know there has been no attempt to comb the unpublished papers of the other German political and military figures named by the alleged Soviet conspirators. But Trauttmansdorff's example shows that, even if this kind of search took place, we should expect *not* to find anything.

Both Pfaff and Lukes attempted to cram the Mastny-Benes note and the other documents into the Procrustean bed of the "German forgery plot." Each of them tries to reconstruct the details of this "plot" by weaving a thick web of scholarly citations. But there was no such plot, and there never was any serious evidence of one. Why, then, did they believe so firmly that the "forgery plot" story, in one version or another, was truthful?

Possibly they did so for the same reason as, we suspect, Khrushchev and the Soviet Party leadership did – because the alternative was *ideologically* unacceptable. To concede that the Moscow Trial and Tukhachevsky Affair defendants had really been trying to build an alliance with Nazi Germany would have been utterly incompatible with the Khrushchev – Cold War version of Soviet history during the Stalin years.

It would have meant, for example, that Stalin and the Bolsheviks had saved Europe from Hitler not once – by defeating the Nazis in the war – but *twice*, by defeating the Opposition and the military conspiracy, all of whom wanted an alliance with Nazi Germany. It would have meant calling not only Khrushchev himself, but all the Khrushchev-inspired historical reconstructions and "rehabilitations" into question. This they were unwilling to do.

On August 5, 1937, Edvard Benes, President of Czechoslovakia, gave an interview to a Yugoslav journalist in Prague, during which he recounted a version of his "foreknowledge" of the Tukhachevsky Affair. After a short excursus into history Benes turned to the theme of German-Soviet cooperation, of which, he

remarked, there still remained influential proponents in both Germany and the USSR.

Pay attention to what I am telling you: In Russia there are many Germanophiles who are ready to negotiate with Berlin at any moment, just as in Berlin there is a very strong current that is ready to negotiate with Moscow, and thus it could very easily to get to the realization of the Bismarck covenant. Stalin was not for this agreement, but due to the fact that Russia was not discussing, but ordering, Stalin eliminated those who were in favor of cooperation with Germany and who had already discussed the details of political cooperation with her. If Tukhachevsky had won, he would have definitely eliminated Stalin and Stalin's friends, and thus. today in Europe, Germany and Russia would act together. "When the Yugoslav journalist spoke out that all this seemed somehow obscure and rather doubtful to him. Benesh answered with conviction: "I saw the acts and documents, I held in my hands evidence that I am telling you now, but I tell you this is in all seriousness, trying to convince you and show you that I'm not keeping up with Russia not because you think that I'm not a Bolshevik, and that Czechoslovakia is not a Bolshevik country, as they often write and say abroad, but because I have before my eyes a much wider and larger plan. 13

Benes repeated substantially the same thing to the U.S. ambassador as well

The second testimony was recorded by the American envoy Carr, to whom Benes said in September 1937 that

¹³ Václav Král. *Spojenectví československo-sovětské v europské politice, 1935-1939*. Praha, 1970. Cited from the Russian translation, Чехословацко-Советские Отношения на Рубеже 1936-1937 Годов. Сс. 176-221. Král cites documents from the Czech archives.

he knew for sure that Tukhachevsky was in contact with Germany; in the summer, they say, in Berlin a plan was prepared for an agreement with the USSR, on the basis that a military dictatorship would have won in Moscow; an agreement with the USSR, Germany would have free hands, which would be a disaster, including for Czechoslovakia.

In his memoirs written some years later Benes later claimed that he had alerted the Soviets to Trautmannsdorf's warning. 14 This is false. There is no evidence that the Soviet ambassador or any other Soviet official received any explicit information of this kind from Benes before the arrests, trial and execution of Tukhachevsky et al.

Benes understood clearly that by stopping Tukhachevsky Stalin had saved Europe. This fact is a bone in the throat of those who are loyal not to historical truth but to the "Anti-Stalin Paradigm." But all the evidence supports it.

Schacht and Kandelaki named by Yezhov

The letter from Neurath that we cited above was addressed to Hjalmar Schacht, the man with whom David Kandelaki had been negotiating on behalf of the Soviet government. According to a confession of April 27, 1939 by Yezhov published for the first time in early 2006 Kandelaki was a party to the pro-German conspiracy among Soviet oppositionists.

Question: What did Kandelaki say to you concretely about his contacts with Goering?

Answer: At one of his meetings with me, at the end of 1936 or the beginning of 1937, Kandelaki informed me

¹⁴ Memoirs of Dr Eduard Benes. From Munich to New War and New Victory. Translated by Godfrew Lias. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1954, p. 47, note. The Czech language original is Dr. Edvard Benes. Pameti. Cast II., svazek 1. Od Mnichova k nove valce a k novemu vitezsvi. Praha, 1947, pp. 33-34, note.

that he had made contact with Goering through Hammerstein.

Goering had directed Kandelaki upon his arrival in the Soviet Union to inform the Soviet government that he, Kandelaki, had succeeded in pressuring the German government in the sense of offering the USSR a loan and that Economic Minister Schacht, under pressure from German business circles, was ready to make several concessions and offer the Soviet Union credit.

Kandelaki said further that Goering had informed Hammerstein about my [Yezhov's] collaboration with German intelligence and asked me to work in concert with the conclusion of a credit agreement between the USSR and Germany.¹⁵

The letter from Neurath to Schacht is dated February 11, 1937. Only two days earlier, on February 9, the conversation between Trauttmansdorff and Mastny had taken place in which the former informed the Czech minister that Hitler was awaiting "the possibility of a sudden reversal in Russia in the near future, of the fall of Stalin and Litvinov, and a military dictatorship in Moscow." This was also about the same time – "the end of 1936 or the beginning of 1937" – that Yezhov said Kandelaki had told him he was in touch with Herman Göring.

Since the 1950s scholars have asserted that there was no confirmation of any "treasonable contact with the Germans" on the part of the executed Soviet generals. The Mastny archives, stemming from talks with a German diplomat, together with the allusions in the documents from the German Foreign Office files cited above, show that such confirmation does in fact exist.

¹⁵ Lubianka. Stalin i NKVD-NKGB-GUKR "Smersh". 1939 – mart 1946. Moscow: MDF, 2006, 63. Online

https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/ezhov042639eng.html (English) https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/ezhov042639ru.html (Russian).

It is an astounding stroke of fortune that such confirmation from the German side, completely independently of Soviet sources, exists at all. We should note that Trauttmansdorff did not give anything in writing to Mastny, and nothing explicit has been found in German archives. Evidently it was on his sole initiative that the German diplomat told Mastny of the military conspiracy. Had he not done so, we would not have this striking evidence of German knowledge of the conspiracy.

If the Mastny document was all that we had, we might conclude that German agents in the USSR had simply learned of the conspiracy through its intelligence activities. But it is also consistent with the evidence of Soviet oppositional involvement directly with German intelligence, and so confirms it.

The Mastny-Benes Note

[Translation from Czech] SECRET.

MINUTES

of a conversation with Count Tr. on February 9, 1937

Today, Count Tr. visited me with news that the pourparlers regarding the agreement were somewhat delayed; that the Reich Chancellor was upset about the case of Šeba's book about Russia and the Little Entente which reveals how strongly Czechoslovakia was engaged with Russia; that this was the reason why the Reich Chancellor wanted to postpone further negotiations with Czechoslovakia for 10-14 days, until the Šeba affair cleared up; that this didn't mean that Hitler had changed his mind but that now was not the appropriate time. I said that I had difficulty understanding that Šeba's book, from which the propaganda fabricated things against us that were not there, could have had such an effect on the Reich Chancellor - after statements were given by our side, by the president himself, about the character of our political agreement with Russia - but that we were left with no

other choice but only to duly note the fact. I see, I said, that actually during the period of preliminary talks, when we sincerely stressed our interest in an agreement-settlement with Germany, the situation changed so that we had very clearly indicated good will on our part to solve the economic relations as per German demands, which we answered with our readiness to concessions already during the talks that were under way in Prague and that, according to the reports that I received, were progressing satisfactorily, mainly because the president of the republic himself emphasized that he had a special interest in meeting the German demands as much as possible - assuming of course that the German side would do the same. [I said] that I didn't doubt it, after speaking with Dr. Schacht on January 25th who assured me that he had given similar instructions to the German delegation. [I said] that in this state of promising development of economic relations, and with regards to apparent serious progress in the question of minority policy in our country, I couldn't understand that the campaign against Czechoslovakia not only did not cease, but just yesterday we were newly surprised by an exhibition at a technical school [??] which under the slogan "Kampf der Sudetendeutschen" presented outrageously offensive material against the republic and the head of state; that tomorrow, I would submit a strong protest to the state secretary Diechhofr, and that I was concerned that this exhibition could jeopardize the economic talks in Prague. Finally [I said] that I absolutely didn't understand that, after my extensive discussions with Goebbels, Funke and Rosenberg, the campaign could still continue, especially during the pourparlers, when one directive from the Reich Chancellor would be sufficient to stop things; that after the Chancellor's own initiative to personally meet with the president of the republic we couldn't have expected such an "accompaniment" to our pourparlers. Count Tr. agreed, with utmost politeness, with my complaints and arguments. Most importantly, with regards to the current delays, he considered the possibility, requesting absolute secrecy, that the real reason behind the Chancellor's hesitation was his assumption that, according to certain reports which he received from Russia, there was a growing probability of a sudden turn of events very soon, the fall of **Stalin and Litvinov, and the imposition of a military dictatorship.** Should that happen, the Reich Chancellor would supposedly change the entire position towards Russia and would be ready to settle simultaneously with both, the west and the east – although again only by way of bilateral agreements.

I gave Count Tr. an explanation about Russia, how we see it, together with my serious doubts about the imminence of a coup towards a military dictatorship and fall of Stalin – but I said that I didn't know if and what information Prague had in the last few days.

With regards to the campaign against Czechoslovakia, Count Tr. condemns the entire tactic of Goebbels (N.B. – Count Tr. strongly despises Goebbels under whom he served for 2 years at the Ministry of Propaganda.) He thinks that the reason why the campaign still continues is because Goebbels is not well informed about what is going on. And at the same time, the Reich Chancellor himself, leaving the press totally in Goebbels's hands, is not informed about details of such propaganda, especially lately when, as it sometimes happens, he is not accessible and isolates himself. [He said] that anyhow there is no need to give the campaign too much importance; that it could change with the turn of a hand.

With regards to the exhibition at the technical school [??], Count Tr. took care of it briskly. He phoned Dr. Haushofer right from my room and promised that together with him he would make sure that everything that was inaccurate and offensive would be removed from the exhibition, [and] eventually that the exhibition would be closed. However, I didn't agree to his request for not submitting my protest. Leaving after a two-hour talk, Count Tr. assured me that the Reich Chancellor had not reversed his view on the need for an agreement, and that this was just a short delay.

Dr. V. Mastny m.p. [manu propria]

In Berlin, February 9, 1937

Addendum: Count Tr. informed me on the morning of February 10th that he had personally arranged for removal of the offensive

exhibits and that he did so after an approval and at the direct order of the Reich Chancellor, and that he hoped that in a few days the exhibition would be closed. That happened the same week.

I submitted my protest to the foreign office on February 10th, at time when, de facto, the most inaccurate exhibits had been already removed.

ADDENDUM

Certified translation of the Mastny-Benes report by Suzanna Halsey, Czech and Slovak Language Services, Brooklyn, NY June 2008

TAJNE

2 A 2 N A M

oo rozmluvê e br. Tr. doe 9.2.37.

mes navštívil mě hr-fir. s tím, že v pourparlers stran selouvy nastalo jistó prodlení. Ríšský kanolář že je rozmrzed případem Sebovy knihy o Rusku a Malé Bohodě, z níž jde na jevo, jak Československo je silno angažovino s Rusken. Z důvadu toho že říšský kanoléž choe další jednání a Československem poodložiti, zž se aféra žebova vyjasní, na dobu 10-14 dni. To že nemnači, že by Hitler byl změnil názor, ale že chvile není vhodna. Rekl jser, že sotva mohu shápati, že by mniha Sebova, ze které propaganda proti nám uměle konstruovala věci, které tam nejsou, mobia působiti do tá míry na říšského kaneléře An prohlášeních, jež s naší strany samotným presidentem republiky dány byly o povaze naší politická smlouvy s Ruskem; že však arcit nesbývá než abychom to vzali na vědomí: Vidím, řekl jsam, že vlestně za doby přípravných konversani, v nichž zdiraznili jese postive zájem na saluvní úpravé s sincecken, v posôrech nastaly zněny potud, že se strany naší velmi sřetelně dán byl výraz ochotě vyřešiti hospodáľské vztany ve smyslu přání německýchi, na něž jame reagovali oblistovestí ke koncessím v zahájených již pražských jednáních, které dle došlých mae zpráv mají průběh velmi uspokojivý, v prve rade proto, že sam president republiky zdoraznil mimořádný sájem, aby se přáním mězeckým vyšlo co nejvíce vstříc arcit v předpokladu, že stejně se stane se strany ličnecka. o tom že nemím podnybností po rozmluvů, kterou jsem dne 25.led-

Chapter 14. The Judges Judged

At the June 11, 1937 trial of Tukhachevsky and the other commanders, the President (presiding officer) was Colonel-General of Justice Vasilii Vasil'evich Ul'rikh. The judges were: Komandarm 2nd rank Yakov Ivanovich Alksnis, Marshal of the Soviet Union Vasilii Konstantinovich Blyukher, Marshal Semion Mikhailovich Budyonny, Komandarm 1st rank Boris Mikhilovich Shaposhnikov, Komandarm 1st rank Ivan Panfilovich Belov, Komandarm 2nd rank Pavel Efimovich Dybenko, Komandarm 2nd rank Nikolai Dmitrievich Kashirin, and Komkor Elisei Ivanovich Goryachev.

Five of these judges – Alksnis, Belov, Blyukher, Dybenko, and Kashirin – were to be arrested and charged with participating in the military conspiracy. Blyukher died in detention of a heart attack while under investigation. Alksnis, Belov, Dybenko, and Kashirin were tried, convicted, and executed, all during 1938.¹

"Rehabilitations"

Khrushchev-era rehabilitation reports on some of these men have been published. These reports are dishonest. None of them contains any evidence that the accused were innocent. Tukhachevsky and the other seven commanders whose trial we investigate here were also "rehabilitated" without any evidence.

Mark Junge, a strongly anti-Stalin scholar, has described post-Stalin Soviet "rehabilitations" in this way:

¹ It is possible that Goryachev was also a party to the conspiracy. He died on December 12, 1938, possibly by suicide, possibly fearing arrest. As usual in the historiography of the USSR during the Stalin period, no one has done the research on Goryachev. See https://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Горячев, Елисей_Иванович

Mit der vorliegenden Arbeit wurde das Ergebnis der Studie des Utrechter Historikers van Goudoever bestätigt, daß Rehabilitierungen in der Sowjetunion grundsätzlich ein politisches und nicht juristisches oder gar ethisch-moralisches Phänomen darstellten.²

The present work confirms the result of the study by the Utrecht historian van Goudoever that rehabilitations in the Soviet Union were fundamentally a political and not a legal or even ethical-moral phenomenon.

It is vital to understand that "rehabilitation" was determined by politics, not by evidence ("legal") criteria. The fact that someone has been "rehabilitated" whether during Khrushchev's time or later, is *not* evidence that that person was innocent. But certainly, one of the central purposes of the "rehabilitation" process was to convey the false impression that the individual "rehabilitated" had been proven innocent.

In 2011 I devoted Chapter 11 of my book *Khrushchev Lied* to an examination of the fraudulent "rehabilitations" of some of the men who Khrushchev claimed Stalin had falsely executed. In a separate study, Vladimir Bobrov and I have demonstrated that in 1988 the Soviet Supreme Court falsified an important document in order to justify the rehabilitation of Nikolai Bukharin.³ That document is the April 1939 confession statement by Mikhail Frinovsky.⁴ It was published only in 2006. In 1988, no one could consult it to see that the Soviet Supreme Court had quoted it dishonestly. And just to

² Bucharins Rehabilitierung. Historisches Gedächtnis in der Sowjetunion 1953-1991. Berlin: BasisDruck Vlg, 1999, p. 259.

³ Grover Ferr [Furr], Vladimir Bobrov, 1937. Pravosudie Stalina. (M. Yauza-Eksmo, 2010), Gl. 2: "Reabilitatsionnoe moshenichestvo," 64-84.

⁴ Frinovsky's statement was published first in *Lubianka*. *Stalin I NKVD – NKGB – GUKR "SMERSH"*. 1939 – mart 1946. Moscow, 2006, pp. 33-50. It is online in English translation at

https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/frinovskyeng.html and in Russian at .../frinovskyru.html {choose encoding Cyrllic Windows}

make sure no one did, Bukharin's "rehabilitation" document is still secret to this day in Russia.⁵

Erenburg on Belov (and Meyerhold)

The famous Soviet writer Il'ya Erenburg was on good terms with Stalin during the latter's lifetime. But Erenburg completely accepted Nikita Khrushchev's accusations against Stalin. This is reflected in his voluminous memoirs.

In them Erenburg records the following incident concerning Belov.

I remember a terrible day at Meyerhold's. We were sitting peacefully looking at through an illustrated monograph on Renoir, when a friend of Meyerhold, the Corps Commander Belov, arrived. He was very worked up and, without paying any attention to our presence, began to describe the trial of Tukhachevsky and other high-ranking officers. Belov was a member of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court. 'They were sitting like that, facing us. Uborevich looked me in the eyes ...' I remember another phrase of Belov's: 'And tomorrow they will put me in their place.'6

Erenburg mistakenly interpreted this remark to mean that Tukhachevsky et al. had been innocent and that Belov was too. By the time Erenburg wrote all the Tukhachevsky defendants, plus Belov and the other judges had been "rehabilitated" – declared to be innocent.

It may also shed some light on the subsequent arrest, trial, and execution of Vsevolod Meyerhold, a famous producer of plays for the stage. Meyerhold was arrested on June 26, 1939, long after Lavrentii Beria had taken over as commissar of the NKVD from

⁵ I found a copy in the Volkogonov Archive.

⁶ ll'ia Erenburg, *Memoirs: 1921-1941*. Translated by Tatania Shebunina. Cleveland, OH: World Publishing Company, 1964 (1963), p. 427.

Yezhov, and after the arrests of Yezhov and many of his henchmen. Meyerhold was arrested at the time Yezhov's men were being rounded up, and was tried and executed together with them, in February, 1940. Meyerhold was named in confessions by Mikhail Kol'tsov and Isaak Babel', among others. He has been "rehabilitated" – but again, this is not evidence that he was innocent. It may be significant that Belov was a friend of his.

Belov was arrested on January 7, 1938. He confessed immediately, at the preliminary investigation.

Belov pleaded guilty at the preliminary investigation. At the same time, he confessed that he had personally recruited more than 20 people into the counter-revolutionary organization.

According to his "rehabilitation" report, Belov submitted evidence against other conspirators, but this was hidden from the authorities by Yezhov, who is here called "enemy of the people"

... The trial record states that Belov also pleaded guilty at the trial, but submitted a written request that he had additional evidence that he would like to give in the presence of J.V. Stalin. This petition from the court was withdrawn by the enemy of the people Yezhov and hidden from the Central Committee of the CPSU. (RKEB 1, 253)

This is interesting in that Yezhov, not Stalin, is specifically blamed. That must be due to the early date of this "rehabilitation" report, August 20, 1955.

On February 1, 1956, in a meeting of the Presidium called to discuss criticism of the "cult of personality" around Stalin planned for the forthcoming XX Party Congress, Khrushchev called Yezhov an "honest person" and said that "Stalin is guilty." (RKEB 1, 308) After that, accusations against Yezhov – who was, indeed, the real culprit – became hard to find. Even today, the Anti-Stalin Paradigm dictates that Yezhov must be called "Stalin's faithful executioner,"

"Stalin's child," or otherwise treated as though he simply did what Stalin told him. This is completely false, as we can prove today.

Yezhov was not "rehabilitated." But neither were many of the other NKVD men who were tried and punished, often by execution, for the *Yezhovshchina*.⁸ Even Khrushchev, despite calling Yezhov "honest," evidently did not want to go that far.

Blyukher was declared innocent on February 9, 1956, (RKEB 1, 333), but strong evidence of his guilt has been published since then. Dybenko was declared innocent in the Spravka of the Shvernik Commission (RKEB 2, 771). Kashirin was accused by Primakov in a confession statement of June 10, 1937 and arrested on August 19, 1937. He too was declared innocent in the Spravka (RKEB 2, 689; 741). That is, in the cases of Dybenko, Blyukher, and Kashirin, it appears that there was not even a *pro forma* procedure for a phony study of their cases and predetermined finding of their "innocence"

The Judges Confess

The following are excerpts from the confessions of some of the judges at the Tukhachevsky trial, taken from their investigative files at the FSB Archive in Moscow by Vladimir L. Bobrov.

From the confessions of KASHIRIN Nikolai Dmitrievich

of 9-11 November 1937

LD 211-212

⁷ These are titles of dishonest books by "Memorial" official Nikita Petrov. For details of Yezhov's anti-Stalin conspiracy see Grover Furr, *Yezhov Vs. Stalin: The Truth About Mass Repressions and the So-Called 'Great Terror' in the USSR*. Kettering OH: Erythrós Press & Media LLC, 2016.

⁸ With the exception of Stanislav Frantsevich Redens. For Redens, see Furr, Yezhov vs Stalin, Chapter 15. Materials from other of Yezhov's men who were rehabilitated have now been published by Aleksandr N. Dugin, *Tainy arkhivov NKVD SSSR:* 1937-1938. *Vzgliad Iznutri.* Moscow-Berlin: DirectMedia, 2020.

In May 1937, I was again in Moscow. I was summoned to the plenum of the Military Soviet, which also took place under the Central Committee. At this time, the entire center of the military conspiracy - TUKHACHEVSKY and others were arrested, and GAMARNIK shot himself.

It was with horror and trepidation that I familiarized myself with the testimonies of those arrested, fearing that they had named me. However, this did not happen. But even then a terrible fear attacked me for the heinous treacherous deed we had committed ...

At the trial, although I was a member of the court, I felt like a defendant ...

I was afraid that in their speeches TUKHACHEVSKY, YAKIR, UBOREVICH, PRIMAKOV and FEL'DMAN would name me and accuse me. **However, this did not happen** - they did not name me.

I understood this behavior at the trial of the leaders of the conspiracy and the suicide of GAMARNIK as a signal for further anti-Soviet struggle for all participants in the conspiracy and for me.

LD 215

... As you know, I was a member of the Extraordinary Session of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court in the case of TUKHACHEVSKY, YAKIR and other conspirators. In the course of the trial, I not only found out that the conspirators - TUKHACHEVSKY, YAKIR, UBOREVICH, FELDMAN and PRIMAKOV, with whom I was involved in the conspiracy, did not betray me, but from their behavior during the investigation and at trial I realized that we must continue to fight against Soviet power, in no case should we betray our accomplices and their plans.

From the confessions of KASHIRIN Nikolai Dmitrievich

of 29 November 1937

... I was appointed one of the judges in the case of TUKHACHEVSKY and others, but I must say that from this fact I did not have any illusions for myself - at the trial I felt more like a defendant than a judge. It all seemed to me during the trial that TUKHACHEVSKY, YAKIR, UBOREVICH, PRIMAKOV and FELDMAN, with whom I was directly involved in the conspiracy, were about to name me as their accomplice. But that didn't happen.

This behavior at the trial of the arrested leaders of the conspiracy, like the suicide of GAMARNIK, I understood as a signal for further conspiratorial work.

From the transcript of the interrogation of BELOV Ivan Panfilovich

of January 18, 1936

LD 112, 114

I must say frankly that after the liquidation of the leadership of the anti-Soviet conspiracy at the beginning of 1937, I had a mixed feeling - fear for my fate, fears that they would get to me, - fear that they would crush the large number of our cadres, the lower ranks of the organization - and then, at the same time, the well-known *Schadenfreude* about the elimination of their rival enemies from among the leaders.

From the case file of V.K. Blyukher

From the transcript of the interrogation of KHAKHAN'IAN Grigorii Davydovich

of 25 October 1938

... I learned that BLYUKHER was a member of a military conspiratorial organization from GAMARNIK in 1936.

LD 109-110

QUESTION: - In June 1937 BLYUKHER was in Moscow, did you also come with him?

ANSWER: - Yes, in June 1937 I came to Moscow together with BLYUKHER to the plenum of the Military Council. I'll tell you about this now. From the words of BLYUKHER, I know that he was connected from the center of the military conspiratorial organization with GAMARNIK, TUKHACHEVSKY, YAKIR and EGOROV.

QUESTION: - How do you know this?

ANSWER: - BLYUKHER himself told me about this.

QUESTION: - He also named Egorov?

ANSWER: - Yes.

From the transcript of an interrogation of BLYUKHER Paul Konstantinovich⁹

of 28 October 1938

LD 159-160

In May 1937, my brother was summoned to Moscow, where he took part in the trial as a member of the trial over the participants in the anti-Soviet military conspiracy TUKHACHEVSKY, YAKIR, UBOREVICH, FELDMAN and others.

⁹ The brother of Marshal Vasilii K. Blyukher.

After the trial, he was pleased that none of them named him – he was afraid of that.

He himself was personally somewhat pleased with the outcome of the trial. He believed that in the absence of competition from TUKHACHEVSKY, YAKIR and UBOREVICH, after a possible coup, he - BLYUKHER - would certainly advance to the front ranks.

From the confessions of Yegorov Aleksandr Il'ich

of 28.III - 8.IV 1938

LD 317-318

... I repeat, Budyonny basically knew everything and, for the sake of disguise and double-dealing, behaved the same way as we do.

He played this role easily and only once did I see him extremely confused and depressed. This was after his participation in the trial of Tukhachevsky. I remember that I had to reassure Budyonny when after the trial we gathered at his dacha to discuss our tactics in connection with the failure of the conspiracy.

QUESTION: - Tell us about it.

before ANSWER: Even the arrest TUKHACHEVSKY, when the arrests of the military began, I, having met with TUKHACHEVSKY, asked him, what should we do? He replied: "What to do, we must continue to act. but carefully." I told him look. Mikhail Nikolaevich, if that - mind you, don't betray each other.

TUKHACHEVSKY flushed all over and replied: "Alexander Ilyich, you and I are officers and we know what honor is."

After a while, he was arrested. DYBENKO was in Moscow and together with Budyonny was a member of the court. Immediately after the trial, we gathered at Budyonny's dacha to discuss our tasks after the disclosure of the conspiracy and exchange impressions of the trial.

QUESTION: - Tell us in detail about this meeting of yours.

ANSWER: - BUDYONNY with great excitement told us how he looked into Tukhachevsky's eyes, literally drilled him, fearing that he would give us away.

We don't know why Budyonny was not arrested, tried, and executed. Personal friendship with Stalin is unlikely to be the explanation since Yegorov was also a friend of Stalin's from Civil War days, and Stalin held him in high regard. It is possible that Budyonny took advantage of Voroshilov's Order No. 082 and informed on the conspiracy.¹⁰

The Tukhachevsky Defendants Were Lying to the End

From their last words in the trial transcript we can see that every one of the Tukhachevsky defendants claimed that they were no longer conspirators, no longer enemies, but had returned to being loyal Soviet citizens.

In his letter to Stalin Yona Yakir swore that he was now reformed:

¹⁰ This order, jointly issued by the People's Commissariat for Defense and the NKVD on June 21, 1937, stated that participants in counterrevolutionary and sabotage fascist organizations who confessed, told about their crimes and surrendered all their accomplices, were not subject to arrest and criminal prosecution. *Prikazy Narodnogo Komissara Oborony SSSR 1937 – 21 iiunia 1941 g.* M. Terra, 1994, p. 18.

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 ... I have admitted my guilt, I have fully repented ... 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.

In his last words at trial Yakir stated:

... I have nothing to hide from my people, from my court. That I have returned in the last minute of my life completely, without any restrictions, to my people, to my party, to the Soviet power, to what I have lived for throughout the vast part of my conscious life.

Tukhachevsky:

I want to assure the court that I have completely broken with everything vile and counterrevolutionary, and with the vile, counterrevolutionary work that I entered ... I ask the Court to believe me that I have completely revealed everything and that I have no secrets before the Soviet government, no secrets before the party ... I want to assure the court that I have completely broken with everything vile and counterrevolutionary ...I completely repented.

Uborevich:

I beg the party, the Soviet people, and the army forgiveness for my last and greatest crimes.

Kork:

I ask you to believe me now, that I sincerely have repented. I have honestly confessed to the investigation

... why it would be absurd, it would be crazy for me to hide something for you, citizens judges ...

Putna:

... now, in a very short time, in my own internal feelings, I have returned to my former self ... there remain still some pockets that have not completely died, that have given me the physical and moral strength to tell the investigation and the court everything that I know about this criminal activity ...

Primakov:

In my last words, citizen judges, I must tell the final truth about our conspiracy ...

Feldman:

... finally, put on the scales that I have nothing left hidden in my breast. I have scrapped everything from my scraper, I have been sincere, I have repented, I did not wait for confessions or face-to-face confrontations, but gave everything that there was to the court and the investigation.

From the documents we know have, we can't be certain that all of the defendants knew about the participation of Alksnis, Blyukher, Budyonny, Belov, Dybenko, and Kashirin in the conspiracy. Tukhachevsky surely knew. Since the release at least some of the investigative files on the judges, we know that Blyukher, Budyonny, and Kashirin feared being exposed by the defendants at trial. Kashirin interpreted the fact that Tukhachevsky and the rest did not expose him as a signal to continue the conspiracy.

But it is probable that all the defendants knew that six of their judges were their co-conspirators. So Tukhachevsky, at least, was lying when he claimed that he had "completely revealed everything." Probably *all* of them knew about the participation of their judges in the conspiracy, and were *all* lying.

That was probably what Stalin thought. He had been through this before. What follows is an excerpt from the transcript of the December 1936 Central Committee Plenum, at which Nikolai Bukharin was accused of being a part of an opposition conspiracy. Bukharin hotly denied this accusation, and pleaded with the Plenum to believe him. Stalin explained why they could not simply "believe" accused oppositionists' oaths of loyalty any longer.

Stalin. I want to say a few words about the fact that Bukharin has completely failed to understand what is going on here. He has not understood. And he does not understand the kind of position he finds himself in, and why we have put him as a question at this plenum. He does not understand this at all. He keeps talking about his sincerity, he demands our trust. All right, let's talk about sincerity and about trust.

When Kamenev and Zinoviev declared in 1932 that they had renounced their mistakes and declare that the Party's position was correct, we believed them. We believed them because we supposed that a communist – former or current – is accustomed to ideological struggle, that this ideological communist, former or current, is struggling for his idea. If a person has openly said that he adheres to the Party's line then, according to traditions confirmed in the Party of Lenin and known to everyone, the Party considers that this means that person values the Party's positions and that he has really renounced his mistakes and now stands on the Party's positions.

We believed them and we were mistaken. We were mistaken, com. Bukharin. Yes, yes, they declared this openly in the press and we believed them. They had also proceeded from their position, their ideas, they do not hide them, they fight for them. We believed them; we gave them the Order of Lenin, we promoted them – and we were mistaken. Is that true, com. Bukharin? (Bukharin. True, true, I said the same thing.)

When Sosnovsky made a declaration that he was renouncing his mistakes, he explained the reasons for this, and explained well from a Marxist point of view, we believed him and really did say to Bukharin: "You want to take him on at *Izvestiia*, good, he writes well, take him, we shall see what comes of it." We were mistaken.

Believe in the sincerity of people after that! We have drawn a conclusion: Do not take former oppositionists at their word. (Excitement in the hall. Voices from the floor: Right, Right!) We must not be naïve, and Il'ich taught that to be naïve in politics is to commit a crime. We don't want to be criminals. For this reason we have drawn a conclusion: Don't believe the word of a single former oppositionist.

A few facts. When we arrested Piatakov's wife we wrote him a telegram, he was somewhere in the South, maybe Kislovodsk. From there he briefly replied that he can't find any arguments against his wife but since we in Moscow considered it necessary to arrest her, that means it's necessary. He arrived. We gave him all the confessions to read. He said that Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Mrachkovsky were slandering him in their confessions. That's what others also said, when they had just been arrested or taken to trial. He came to us and said: "Well, what can I say against these people, how can I justify myself? They are lying, they want to ruin me".

We tried to talk to him: "All right, but you were the public prosecutor against the SRs. Agree to be the public prosecutor against them". – "Good, with pleasure." He started to prepare for this. But we thought about it further and decided that that would not be good. Still, this attempt started to convince us for a minute that maybe this man is right. What would it look like to put him up as the public prosecutor? He would say one thing, and then the accused would object, they would say: "Look where you are, the prosecutor. And you were

working with us?!" And what would result from all this? It would turn the trial into a comedy and ruin the trial.

Therefore we said to Piatakov: "No, even though it was we who suggested that you be the public prosecutor, this won't work." He became sad: "Then how can I prove that I am right? Let me shoot with my own hand all those whom you sentence to death, all this filth, all these swine. What other proof do you need? Publish in the press both after the sentence and after the sentence has been carried out that it was com. Piatakov who carried out the sentence."

This also made us hesitate somewhat. But on the other hand we have never made public who carries out the sentences. And we decided that if we did that, no one would believe that we had not forced him to do it. We said that that won't work either, it's awkward, no one would believe that you had volunteered to do this, that you were not forced. And on top of that we have never released the names of those who carry out the sentences. "Then what am I to do? Give me a solution. Let me write an article against the Trotskyites." "Good, write it." He wrote an article, he really smashed Trotsky and the Trotskyites.

But as for how things have turned out, you can see yourself! After that we questioned about 50 people, at least. They really turned Piatakov inside out. It turns out that he's a monster of a person!

So why did he agree to be the public prosecutor? Why did he agree to shoot his comrades himself? It turns out that they have a rule like this: If your fellow Trotskyist is arrested and has begun to give up the names of others, he must be destroyed. You can see what kind of hellish joke this comes to. Believe after this in the sincerity of former oppositionists! We can't take former oppositionists at their word even

when they volunteer to shoot their friends with their own hands.

Radek, until most recently, until yesterday, was writing me letters. We held back his arrest, although there were as many denunciations of him as you want, and from different sides. Everybody, from above, from below, is denouncing Radek. We held back his arrest, and then we arrested him. Yesterday and the day before yesterday I received long letters from him in which he writes: A terrible crime is being committed. They want to bring him down, him, a sincere person, devoted to the party, one who loves the Party, who loves the CC, and so on and so forth. This is wrong. You can shoot me or not, that's your affair. But he did not want his honor to be shamed.

And what did he confess today? That, com. Bukharin is what has happened. (Bukharin. But I have nothing to confess, not today, not tomorrow, not the day after tomorrow. Noise in the hall.) I am not saying anything about you personally. Maybe you're right, maybe not. But you just can't stand up and say that we don't trust you, we don't believe in my, Bukharin's, sincerity. That's old stuff now. And the events of the last two years had obviously proven this to us, because what has been proven in fact, that sincerity is a relative thing. And as for trusting in former oppositionists, we have shown them so much trust... (Noise in the hall. Voices from the floor. That's right!) We should be flogged for that maximum trust, that boundless trust that we showed to them.

There is your sincerity and there is your trust! That is why we have put this question before the plenum of the CC. But because Bukharin might take offense and get upset, we are supposed to cover this up? No, in order not to cover it up we must put this question to the plenum.

... And you, com. Bukharin, want us to believe you at your word? (<u>Bukharin</u>. No, I don't want that.) Never, by no means. (<u>Bukharin</u>. No, I don't want that).

But if you don't want that, then do not be upset that we have put this question to the plenum of the CC. It's possible that you are right, this is difficult for you, but after all these facts that I've told you about, and there are a great many of them, we have to look carefully into things We have to look carefully, objectively, quietly. We do not want anything except the truth, we do not want, we will not permit anyone to be ruined by anybody. We want to seek out and find the whole truth objectively, honestly, with courage.¹¹

Bukharin continued to insist upon his innocence. And evidently, despite his own words, Stalin continued to believe him, at least in part. At the next Central Committee Plenum of February-March, 1937, a subcommittee was formed to consider what to do with Bukahrin and Aleksei Rykov, against whom there were by that time dozens of accusations by their associates in the opposition conspiracy. Stalin was a member of this subcommittee.

The document recording the votes of this subcommittee has survived and is reproduced in Getty and Naumov, pages 415-416. Here is how Getty summarizes what this document shows:

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 ... In the original document, Stalin spoke out against the death penalty, a prison

¹¹ Voprosy Istorii 1, 1995, 9-11

sentence, or even a trial, and for the relatively lenient punishment of internal exile.¹²

Much later, after several more letters to Stalin in which he fervently denied his guilt, Bukharin finally confessed, on June 2, 1937. In 2007 Vladimir Bobrov and I published Bukharin's confession for the first time and examined it.¹³

Bukharin had proven that it was foolish to believe anything he said! It is no surprise that Bukharin's appeals for clemency were denied and he was executed after the March, 1937, Moscow trial. He had proven himself to be as dishonest as can be imagined.

It should not surprise us that the oaths of repentance and loyalty voiced by the Tukhachevsky defendants in their last words did not dissuade the court from sentencing them to execution. Surely the court, and the Stalin leadership, knew that the words of these conspirators must not be taken at face value. As we know now, they were correct. The defendants were not being truthful. They were trying to hide what was left of the conspiracy so that it still might have a chance for success after they themselves were no more.

¹² J. Arch Getty and Oleg V. Naumov, *The Road to Terror. Stalin and the Self-Destruction of the Bolsheviks, 1932-1939*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999, 416. The document itself is translated on pages 412-3, and a facsimile of the original document is on pp. 414-5.

¹³ Vladimir L. Bobrov and Grover Furr, "Nikolai Bukharin's First Statement of Confession in the Lubianka." *Cultural Logic* 2007. At https://ojs.library.ubc.ca/index.php/clogic/article/view/191745/188745 The original, Russian-language article and text were published in March 2007 in the St Petersburg historical journal *Klio*, No. 1 (2007). It is online at https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/furrnbobrov_bukharin_klio07.pdf

Chapter 15. Trotsky in the Transcript of the Tukhachevsky Affair Trial of June 11, 1937¹

In May and June 1937, eight high-ranking military commanders of the Soviet Union were arrested. The most famous among them was Mikhail Nikolaevich Tukhachevsky, one of the five marshals of the Soviet Union. The case is often called the "Tukhachevsky Affair" after him. The others were Yona E. Yakir, Yeronim P. Uborevich, Avgust I. Kork, Robert P. Eideman, Boris M. Fel'dman, Vitalii M. Primakov, and Vitovt K. Putna.

All of these officers confessed very quickly to various charges amounting to treason. They were put on trial on June 11, 1937, sentenced to death, and executed immediately.

On February 25, 1956, Nikita Khrushchev delivered his infamous "Secret Speech" (in Russian: "Zakrytyi Doklad" – "Closed Report") to the XX Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In it, he accused Joseph Stalin and, secondarily, Lavrentii Beria, of serious crimes, principally of the frame-up and execution of leading Party members. Khrushchev specifically stated that the Party leaders whom he named in his Speech and who had been executed during the 1930s had in fact been innocent, falsely framed on Stalin's orders.

Later in 1956, Khrushchev convened a high-level commission, the "Molotov Commission," to study this issue. Balanced between former long-time associates of Stalin and supporters of Khrushchev, the Molotov Commission did not agree to

¹ An earlier version of this chapter appeared as Chapter Five in Grover Furr, *New Evidence of Trotsky's Conspiracy* (Kettering OH: Erythrós Press & Media, LLC, 2019)

"rehabilitate"² – declare innocent – most of the defendants in the three public Moscow Trials of 1936, 1937, and 1938.

The commission members did agree to declare innocent Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky and the seven other military commanders tried and executed with him.

Комиссия также считает. ОТР обвинения. выдвинутые против Тухачевского, Якира и других делу «Военно-фашистского осужденных по 1937 заговора» R июне года. являются необоснованными и должны быть с них сняты.3

The commission also considers that the charges against Tukhachevsky, Yakir and other convicts in the case of the "Military Fascist Conspiracy" in June 1937 are unfounded and should be removed from them.

This appears to have been a compromise. Khrushchev's men wanted the rehabilitation of all the accused, while the former Stalin associates probably wanted no rehabilitations at all.⁴ After

² "Rehabilitation" meant the declaration that a person had been improperly convicted (and, usually, executed). Rehabilitations were rarely, if ever, based on evidence. Even fervent anticommunist researcher Marc Junge has stated: "... Rehabilitierung in der Sowjetunion ein politisch-administrativer Willkürakt blieb, der vor allem von der politischen Zweckmäßigkeit der Maßnahmen bestimmt wurde, nicht aber von der strafrechtlichen Korrektheit." – "... rehabilitation in the Soviet Union remained an act of political-administrative arbitrariness, which was determined mainly by the political expediency of the measures, rather than by correctness in a legal-criminal sense." Bucharins Rehabilitierung. Historisches Gedächtnis in der Sowjetunion 1953-1991. Berlin: BasisDruck Vlg. 1999, 266.

³ "Zapiska Komissii TSK KPSS pod Predsedatel'stvom V. M. Molotova v TSK KPSS o Predstavlenii Vyvodov po Rassmotrennym Materialam." ("Note of the Commission of the CPSU Central Committee under the Chairmanship of V. M. Molotov to the CPSU Central Committee on the Presentation of Conclusions on the Materials Considered") December 10, 1956. RKEB 2, 207.

⁴ We know that Ivan Serov, Khrushchev's man as Chair of the KGB, withheld documents from the Commission. On May 21, 1974, Molotov told Feliks Chuev

the XXII Party Congress in October 1961, Khrushchev authorized a large number of books and articles praising the Tukhachevsky Affair defendants and a great many others who had been executed during the late 1930s.

Under Brezhnev, Andropov, and Chernenko, few rehabilitations took place, virtually all of these being unpublicized. A year or so after Mikhail Gorbachev became First Secretary of the CPSU (March 1985) he began to sponsor a flood of "rehabilitations" and a large number of books and articles concerning the Tukhachevsky Affair defendants.

Since Khrushchev, the innocence of Tukhachevsky and his codefendants, along with a great many other military, Party, and other figures executed during the 1930s, has been taken for granted. ⁵ However, neither under Khrushchev nor under Gorbachev, nor since then, has any *evidence* been discovered that might support the contention that the Tukhachevsky defendants were innocent.

Since the end of the USSR in 1991 a great many documents from former Soviet archives have been published. These documents permit us to see that many – even, quite possibly, all – of the Khrushchev-era and Gorbachev-era accusations against Stalin are lies. A large amount of primary source evidence has been published that points to the guilt of Tukhachevsky and his codefendants. However, the central documents – the investigation files, including interrogations and confessions of Tukhachevsky et al., and especially the transcript of the trial of June 11, 1937, remained top-secret, inaccessible to all researchers.

that Tukhachevsky had indeed been a loathsome and very dangerous traitor. *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym*. Moscow: "Terra",1991, 30.

⁵ To give a recent example: in his 2017 book *Stalin. Waiting for Hitler, 1929-1941,* Stephen Kotkin simply states: "in this case there was no military conspiracy." (377)

The Tukhachevsky File Is Declassified

In 2017, Tukhachevsky's investigative file was quietly made available to researchers, in that it is available to be studied at the FSB Archive in Moscow. In May 2018, the transcript of the Tukhachevsky trial was published, again without any announcement, on one Ukrainian and one Russian internet site.⁶

A study of Tukhachevsky's investigative file and the trial transcript will be sufficient to prove to any objective student that Tukhachevsky and the commanders convicted and executed with him were guilty beyond doubt. They all confessed their guilt and give detailed, and interestingly differentiated, confessions.

Trotsky in the Tukhachevsky Trial Transcript

Our specific interest in this chapter is the trial transcript, and the additional evidence it contains that Leon Trotsky did indeed collaborate and conspire with the Germans and Japanese against the Soviet government. I have discussed much important evidence of Trotsky's collaboration with the fascists in my 2017 book *Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan: Trotsky's Conspiracies of the 1930s, Volume 2*, and my 2020 book, *New Evidence of Trotsky's Conspiracy.*

I have included in this chapter a translation of all those sections of the trial transcript in which Leon Trotsky and his conspiracy are mentioned. The present chapter presents an analysis of those passages in the Tukhachevsky Trial transcript that directly concern Leon Trotsky, his son Leon Sedov, and the main Soviet-based leaders of the clandestine Trotskyist movement, Ivan Nikitich Smirnov and Yuri Piatakov. As with the transcript itself, the numbers in parentheses in this chapter are to the pages of the

⁶ As of this writing, December 29, 2018, these are http://istmat.info/node/59108 and http://lander.odessa.ua/doc/rgaspi_17.171.392_process_tuhachevskogo.pdf It is not yet available in text format, much less published in book form. It is translated, for the first time into any language, in the present volume.

172-page Russian-language transcript of the trial of Tukhachevsky et al. of June 11, 1937, in the English translation by Sven-Eric Holmström included in the present book.

Denial of the Evidence

In the case of Tukhachevsky, as in that of Leon Trotsky, there is a great deal of outright denial. Some people, primarily anticommunists and Trotskyites, will insist that all this evidence *must* have been faked and "planted" by the Stalin regime, on the grounds that "Stalin was evil, so he must have been falsely accusing these people and Trotsky too," and/or "Trotsky was a true, principled revolutionary who would never have done the terrible things the defendants accuse him of." Persons beset with bias so powerful as to override rational thought will not be more convinced by the documents we present here.

Indeed, *no* conceivable evidence would convince them. To such persons, evidence is irrelevant; all that counts is "faith" and "political correctness." This is the "argument from incredulity," a well-known and flagrant logical fallacy which, however, is ubiquitous among anticommunists, including well-known scholars, and among Trotskyites. It is common because it is *essential* to the retention of what I call the "Anti-Stalin Paradigm" – a false historical framework that can only be maintained through denial, prevarication, and fallacious reasoning.

Thematic Approach

The analysis below focuses on the most important themes concerning Trotsky's activities that are to be found in the Tukhachevsky Affair trial transcript. I have chosen to study the trial transcript here rather than the Tukhachevsky investigation file in part because of its inherent interest.

An additional and important consideration is the nature of the circumstances in which these defendants gave their testimony. These men knew that this trial was their last chance to claim that they had been falsely accused, "framed," tortured or threatened

into making false confessions. If they had really been innocent, they surely would have made this known in some way at this trial.

It is futile to claim that persons who have been accused of capital crimes and who have confessed their guilt during interrogations could have restated their guilt in the strongest terms at trial and in their last words to the court – and yet be innocent victims of a frame-up. This is, of course, what the proponents of what I have called the Anti-Stalin Paradigm, anticommunists and Trotskyites will in fact claim.

However, they will do so in defiance of all reason and logic. Confessions of guilt may, under certain circumstances, be wrung by force or threat from innocent persons. But confessions of guilt can never be evidence of innocence.

A claim of innocence is not conclusive evidence of innocence, since we expect that, in most cases, both the innocent and the guilty will profess their innocence. However, these defendants did not claim that they were innocent. On the contrary, they admitted their guilt in the firmest and most convincing terms. Under these circumstances, their confessions at trial must be considered the strongest possible evidence of their guilt.

Defeatism & Fear of Defeat

We have a great deal of evidence from other sources that Trotsky was pushing for the defeat of the USSR in war against Germany, Poland, Japan, or a combination of these powers. At least four of the defendants mentions Trotsky's advocacy of defeat and defeatism.

Yakir:

Tukhachevsky first, more or less definitively, told me the current weakness of our abilities, the unity of the **fascist** activities of **Germany** and **Japan** with Poland, were leading to a situation when we needed to destroy the

existing order, and he told me then and there that he had contact with Trotsky and with the German General Staff. In either my first talk with Tukhachevsky or the second, but in one of those talks Tukhachevsky, without going into details, told me that Trotsky had set forth the essential assignment of strengthening the work of the counterrevolutionary and anti-Soviet elements in the army, and that he. Tukhachevsky, took upon himself the assignment of organizing and uniting these anti-Soviet counterrevolutionary and elements. Further. Tukhachevsky laid out for me Trotsky's directive. agreed upon with the German General Staff and detailed to some extent by himself personally. (7)

Tukhachevsky:

In accordance with **Trotsky's** instructions that it was necessary to establish contact with the **German General Staff**, in London in 1936 I had a talk with General Rundstedt of the **German General Staff**. He told me that he knew I was leading a conspiracy and that he had instructions to talk with me. I said that the conspiracy indeed existed and that it was led by me. I asked Rundstedt where the main forces of the German army would attack, and I referred to Trotsky's directive that we should organize defeat where the German army would be in action. (47)

Kork:

... the Red Army would suffer such losses that would permit the Right-**Trotskyites** to come to power and take power out of the hands of the Stalin government. (86)

Fel'dman:

I must return to **Trotsky's** directives. Later, when from **Trotsky's** first directives, about which Mikhail Nikolaevich [Tukhachevsky] informed me, he went on to the preparation for the defeat of the Red Army, he said

to me that he was doing this according to a new directive from **Trotsky**, adding that all means are good in the struggle to achieve our aims, in the struggle against Soviet power. (142)

Trotsky's Collaboration with the German General Staff

Yakir:

... Tukhachevsky laid out for me **Trotsky's** directive, agreed upon with the **German General Staff** and detailed to some extent by himself personally. (7)

Fel'dman:

When contact with **Trotsky** had been set up through Putna, who had been transferred to London, there began talks about defeatism, and methods of terror and espionage appeared, all this in order to overthrow Soviet power and guarantee **Trotsky's** coming to power. **Trotsky** did not have real forces numbering in the thousands besides those that you see here and therefore whatever **Trotsky** dictated to us, the **German General Staff** was dictating. That is the way I see it and that's the way we should put it. (146)

Uborevich:

The trial has freed me from the nightmares of conspiracy and the diabolical directives of Tukhachevsky, -- that is to say, of **Trotsky**, and the **German General Staff**. (155)

Putna:

Many people know that I was a different person, and for me now there is no other solace except that I was once a different person. And now, in a very short time, in my own internal feelings, I have returned to my former self. I believe that in a sick organism, one that is decaying, struck down as though by poisonous gases, in an organism rotted by **Trotsky**, who led me into service to the **German General Staff** ... (163)

Trotsky and the "Palace Coup" or Coup d'État

Yakir:

... **Trotsky's** directive ... came down to the following. The first point of the program laid out by **Trotsky** was **a coup d'état**, prepared by the "Muscovites," the participants in the counterrevolutionary anti-Soviet Right-**Trotskyite** organization, who had succeeded in feeling out and entering into contact with a number of Kremlin-based Chekists and with the immediate military guard of the Kremlin in the person of the chief of the Kremlin military guard, Yegorov ... (7)

Fel'dman:

There were talks, as I have explained, about a palace coup. When contact with Trotsky had been set up through Putna, who had been transferred to London, there began talks about defeatism, and methods of terror and espionage appeared – all this in order to overthrow Soviet power and guarantee Trotsky's coming to power. (146)

lUri Piatakov, Trotsky's Representative in the USSR

Yakir:

The next assignment Tukhachevsky told me about was that he would maintain direct relations with **Trotsky** and with the **German General Staff**. With the first,

through **Piatakov**, and with the second through Putna ... (11-12)

In particular, Tukhachevsky told me twice that he had received information from **Piatakov** and spoke about his talks with the Rights, with Yenukidze, and about one talk with **Bukharin**. (13).

Tukhachevsky:

... I am speaking of Primakov... He told me that he was in contact with **Piatakov**, who was the leader of the **Trotskyite** center in Moscow. After that I got into personal contact with **Piatakov**.

Ul'rikh: Personal contact?

Tukhachevsky: Yes. Then in 1934-35, **Piatakov** told me of the plan of determined aggression by the **German** army, which would be linked with the loss by the USSR of Ukraine and the Primor'ye. He confirmed **Trotsky's** directive of 1934 that was set forth in a letter from **Sedov** and in oral form [by] Putna. **Trotsky** then gave me the assignment of activating the work as much as possible. Finally, Putna arranged a meeting for me with **Sedov** in 1936. (46)

Blyukher: Through whom, and how, were the talks concerning concessions to German fascism of the Ukraine and of Primor'ye to Japan?

Tukhachevsky: It was **Piatakov** who told me, so really it was **Trotsky**, through Piatakov, but it was **Piatakov** who personally told me this. (66)

Primakov:

In 1935, I spoke with Fel'dman, and, when I arrived in Leningrad, with Gar'kavy, and then retained my Trotskyite contact with **Piatakov**, with whom I met in the spring.

The President: Did you systematically maintain contact with the leadership of the military center and the parallel Trotskyite center?

Primakov: Basically I maintained contact with **Piatakov**. (129)

I was also interested in Tukhachevsky's contacts with civilian counterrevolutionary organizations. Only in 1933 or the beginning of 1934 did he tell me that he was in contact with **Piatakov**.

Contact with **Piatakov** helped carry out sabotage in the area of artillery armament from the viewpoint of lowering our orders. (138)

Break Ties, Cut Off All Contract with Other Trotskyites

Yakir:

Despite the fact that Tukhachevsky repeatedly spoke to me about the necessity of the very greatest secrecy (Trotsky was repeatedly telling him this, saying that the military conspiracy and its participants must not in any case be connected with other circles and other lines of work, contact ... took place all the same. (13)

Tukhachevsky:

I regard my entry into the organization as of 1932. ... By the way, I always and at every occasion have spoken out against Trotsky during discussions, just as I have against the Rights. (37)

Primakov:

In 1934 I received the directive from Piatakov to break ties with the group of Dreitser and with the old Trotskyites (125)

Tukhachevsky added that Trotsky's directive stated that the work of the military organization must be led extremely independently, not by any means to be in contact with the anti-Soviet groupings that exist in our country among civilian organizations. (137)

Unity of the Rights and Trotskyites

Uborevich:

... [Tukhachevsky] began by showing the inevitability of our defeat in war against Japan, Germany, and Poland, and our internal difficulties. He began to tell me that he was heading an organization, that **he had contact with the Rights and with the Trotskyites**. (73)

Kork:

In 1931, when I began my talk with Tukhachevsky, he explained the situation this: like unquestionably go with Rykov. It was not expedient at that time to defend Trotsky since he had lost authority in the country [the USSR]. But soon thereafter, in 1932, Trotsky was mentioned more and more often. And then in 1933, when the fascist coup took place in Germany, among those leaders under whose flag we were supposed to go were Rykov, Bukharin, and Trotsky. Later Tukhachevsky began to state, not by hinting but openly, that in the end the political group that would come out on top was hard to predict, whether Rykov or Trotsky, ... (92)

... I was shot through with doubts and gave in to the vile slander of the Rights and the even viler activities of the **Trotskyites, when the Rights and Trotskyites fused** **into one** and plotted the most criminal acts that can come into a person's head. (157)

Primakov:

Tukhachevsky also said that there was also contact with the Rights. To my doubtful question, how with the Rights? From where? I knew that **Trotsky** was leading the conspiracy. Tukhachevsky answered that now **the separation between the Rights and Trotskyites has been wiped away**, and since this is useful for our general business, why not also have contact with the Rights also? (138)

Trotsky's Collaboration with the Japanese

Yakir:

... in one of **Trotsky**'s letters to Tukhachevsky **Trotsky** pressed us to develop work in the Far East with the goal of contact when the Germans and **Japanese** should carry out joint activity. This was very important. (27)

Fel'dman:

Speaking of **Trotskyite cadres in the Far Eastern Region**, there were many of them, but I did not know any members of the conspiracy. (147)

Tukhachevsky:

... the road of the group, that dragged me onto the road of the foul Right opportunism and of thrice accursed **Trotskyism**, that led to contact with German fascism and the Japanese General Staff ... (154)

Romm, the Contact between Trotsky and Tukhachevsky

Tukhachevsky:

... when in 1932 **Romm** brought me **Trotsky's** proposal to gather together the **Trotskyite** cadres, I agreed. (38)

Then in 1932 **Romm was sent from Trotsky**. This was approximately in August or September.

Chairman: What did he say to you?

Tukhachevsky: **Romm gave me, in Trotsky's name**, the assignment of organizing and bringing together the Trotskyite cadres in the army. (45)

Trotsky Relied on Hitler's Coming to Power

Tukhachevsky:

Later, in 1933-34 ... Romm gave me an instruction of Trotsky's that we should evaluate Hitler's coming to power as a favorable factor and we needed to take every measure to strengthen fascist power in Germany.

I should add that already in 1932 Romm had told me that Trotsky was counting on Hitler's coming to power and was sure that Hitler would support him, Trotsky, thanks to which we could count upon the overthrow of Soviet power. Then in 1933-34 Romm confirmed to me that fascism supported Trotsky ... (45-6)

Primakov:

When in 1933-34 Hitler came to power, we were given an official directive to stress our coolness towards the Germans at banquets. Tukhachevsky told me that on Trotsky's directive, it was essential to let the Germans know that his attitude towards the Reichswehr remained just as good as earlier. (138)

Trotsky's Son Leon Sedov

Tukhachevsky:

[Piatakov] confirmed **Trotsky's directive of 1934 that** was set forth in a letter from Sedov and in oral form [by] Putna. **Trotsky** then gave me the assignment of activating the work as much as possible. Finally **Putna** arranged a meeting for me with Sedov in 1936. (46)

Putna:

After the first negotiations with generals Adam and Schleifer, when I reported to Sedov what I had achieved, I received a second directive from Trotsky via Sedov that this first success was not enough ... (109)

On my way to London I met with Sedov ...Through Sedov I received parallel instructions from Trotsky, which came down to this: I should resurrect my German contacts ... (113)

The President: Did you organize a meeting with **Sedov**?

Putna: Yes, at the request of Tukhachevsky I organized a meeting with Sedov. (115)

I.N. Smirnov, Leader of the Trotskyite Conspirators in the USSR

Putna:

... I stated that in 1931 in Berlin Ivan Nikitich **Smirnov**, in a talk with me in the embassy building, told me that **in order to show the Germans serious determination of the Trotskyites towards collaborating with the**m, we needed negotiations with them. (108)

The President: From whom did you have the authority to conduct talks with the German command?

Putna: From the Trotskyite organization.

The President: In the person of whom?

Putna: I received it as a directive from Trotsky, through Sedov and Smirnov. (110)

Trotsky Agreed to Give Ukraine to Germany, the Primor'ye⁷ to Japan

Tukhachevsky:

I am speaking of Primakov. He told me that he was in contact with **Piatakov**, who was the leader of the **Trotskyite center in Moscow**. After that I got into personal contact with Piatakov.

The President: Personal contact?

Tukhachevsky: Yes. Then in 1935-36, Piatakov told me of the plan of determined aggression by the German army, which would be linked with the loss by the USSR of Ukraine and Primor'ye. (46)

Blyukher: Through whom, and how, were the talks concerning the concession to German fascism of the Ukraine and of Primor'ye to Japan?

Tukhachevsky: **It was Piatakov who told me, so really it was Trotsky, through Piatakov,** but it was Piatakov who personally told me this. (66)

Putna:

After the first negotiations with generals Adam and Schleifer, when I reported to Sedov what I had achieved, I received a second directive from Trotsky via Sedov

⁷ "Primor'ye" refers to the Amur-Sakhalin region with its large petroleum deposits.

... Along with this it was proposed that I specify what we promised generally in the way of compensation.

The President: Who is "we"?

Putna: The Trotskyites organization. The Trotskyite organization promised, first, territorial compensation. ...

Chairman: What did you promise in exchange for help?

Putna: The territory of the Ukraine. (109-10)

Trotsky and the German General Staff

Tukhachevsky:

In accordance with Trotsky's instructions that it was necessary to establish contact with the German General Staff, in London in 1936 I had a talk with General Rundstedt of the German General Staff. [47; See under subhead "Defeatism & Fear of Defeat", above.]

Kork:

The President: You confessed that during 6-7 years you carried out sabotage, counterrevolutionary work. One thing I don't understand is: Who was the boss? You mentioned the Trotskyite center, the center of the Rights, you have mentioned German circles. But who in fact was the boss, who gave the basic directives up to the present time: Rykov, Trotsky, or German military circles?

Kork: Under the circumstances that have been created most recently, **the boss is the German General Staff.**

The President: That means that your main boss was the German General Staff?

Kork: Yes.

The President: The German General Staff – that is a concise answer. (101)

Putna:

At Trotsky's direction I conducted such negotiations with generals Schleifer and Adam, who had established contact with us through Hoffmeister. (108-109)

The President: With whom personally of the representatives of the German command did you carry on negotiations?

Putna: With Major Hoffmeister, General Schleicher, and General Adam. (111)

In 1935, when I returned to London from the USSR, **Tukhachevsky** informed me about the successes in the Kiev and Belorussian military districts concerning the strengthening of aviation and of tank formations and **gave me instructions to pass this information however I could to the German General Staff**. On my way to London I met with Sedov ...

The President: I did not understand did you carry out your instructions and then return?

Putna: No, before carrying out my instructions. **Sedov** gave me similar instructions from Trotsky.

The President: You had instructions to pass information. Did you meet **Sedov** and give information to him?

Putna: I tried to pass them to the German General Staff. I did not give them to Sedov. Through Sedov I received parallel instructions from Trotsky, which came down to this: I should resurrect my German contacts (112-3)

Tukhachevsky:

I wish to draw a conclusion for myself from this vile work that has been done. I wish to draw the conclusion that under the conditions of the victory of socialism in our country every grouping becomes an anti-Soviet group and every anti-Soviet groups becomes one with the vilest Trotskyism, with the vilest current of the Rights. And since there is no base for these forces within our country, then whether they wish it or not, these groups slide further, into contact with fascism, into contact with the German General Staff. (153)

Trotsky Advocated the Restoration of Capitalism

Tukhachevsky:

... since there is no base for these forces within our country, then whether they wish it or not, these groups slide further, into contact with fascism, into contact with the **German General Staff**. This is the downfall of this counterrevolutionary work that was in its essence directed towards the re-establishment of capitalism in our country. (153)

Primakov:

... whom did the fascist flag of Trotsky join together? It joined together all the counterrevolutionary elements that we had. All of them, from the rags of the old officers' groups, to the Trotskyite group, with its vile terrorist directives, with its practice of struggle against the Party, though the remains of the Zinovievists, everything that was counterrevolutionary in the Red Army – all were gathered into one place, under one flag, under the fascist flag in the hands of Trotsky.

What means did this conspiracy choose that are unequaled in history? All means, from the blackest betrayal, from treason, from the preparation of the defeat of one's own country through sabotage, through espionage, through terror, directed against the brain and heart of our country. These are the means that the conspiracy chose. For what goal? For the restoration of capitalism. (165)

Uborevich:

The President: For whose benefit was all this done, for what state, for which classes did you carry out your anti-Soviet struggle?

Uborevich: For the purpose of restoring capitalism. (77)

Trotsky Urged Sabotage and Terror

Primakov:

Contact with **Piatakov** helped carry out **sabotage** in the area of artillery armament from the viewpoint of lowering our orders. (138)

What means did this conspiracy choose that are unequaled in history? All means, from the blackest betrayal, from treason, from the preparation of the defeat of one's own country through sabotage, through espionage, through terror, directed against the brain and heart of our country. (165)

Fel'dman:

When contact with **Trotsky** had been set up through Putna, who had been transferred to London, there began talks about defeatism, and **methods of terror and espionage** appeared, all this in order to overthrow Soviet power and guarantee **Trotsky's** coming to power. (146)

Tukhachevsky told me in 1936 that in carrying out Trotsky's directive about having recourse to terror, and in particular in relation to Voroshilov, he gave such a directive to Primakov in 1935. (142)

Tukhachevsky:

Then in 1933-34 **Romm** confirmed to me that fascism supported **Trotsky**, and therefore the latter demanded the activation of our work, especially in the area of **organizing sabotage and terrorist activity** in the army. (46)

Putna:

The President: How, then, did the Germans consider that the **Trotskyite** organization ought to show its strengths? In what way?

Putna: This we thought would be activities of a sabotage and terrorist nature. (111)

Trotsky Plotted an Armed Uprising Within the USSR

Primakov:

The President: Specifically, do you confirm your confessions about the preparation of a terrorist act by Trotskyite activists?

Primakov: I did not give any such confessions. I confessed about the preparation of an armed uprising. (123)

Primakov: I had the following basic directive: Until 1934 I worked for the most part, as an organizer, in gathering Trotskyite cadre. In 1934 I received the instruction from Piatakov to break off ties with the group of Dreitser and old Trotskyites, who were assigned to prepare terrorist acts, and I myself was to prepare, in the military district where I worked, to

foment an armed uprising that would be called forth either by a terrorist act or by military action. This was the assignment I was given. The military Trotskyite organizational center considered this assignment to be very important and its importance was stressed to me. I was told to break any personal acquaintance with old Trotskyites, with whom I was in contact. (125-126)

Primakov: I was instructed to seize Leningrad for the Trotskyites.

The President: But if Germany had made war on the USSR, for whom would you have seized Leningrad?

Primakov: For Germany. (132)

Fel'dman:

I remember that we talked in more detail on the eve of the trip to Germany (Tukhachevsky was the head of the delegation). We spoke about overthrowing Soviet power by means of an armed uprising and if this was not successful in peacetime, then to hope for problems at the front that might lead to armed demonstrations inside the country. Our method of work would be supporting Trotskyite cadres, support for those commanders who had earlier belonged to the Trotskyite or Zinovievist opposition, from among whom it would be easier to recruit people; ... (136)

Trotsky, An Agent of Fascism

Tukhachevsky:

... in 1933-34 Romm confirmed to me that **fascism supported Trotsky** ... (46)

Putna:

The President: How did he [German captain Salzman] thank you for this information?

Putna: He did not thank me, and I asked him, as an intermediary, to help me establish contact and to speak with Ribbentrop, because I had an assignment from Trotsky to establish contact with the Germans. (114)

Fel'dman:

In this way, summing up, I must say that everything we did were actions that served the interests of **the fascists and their agent Trotsky**, whose will we were carrying out. ...

Trotsky did not have real forces numbering in the thousands besides those that you see here and therefore whatever Trotsky dictated to us, the German General Staff was dictating. That's the way I see it and that's the way we should put it. (146)

Yakir:

I have already said that I had a long, good, honorable life before that moment when I fell into the abyss, fell into the hands of the enemy, fell into the hands of the vilest of vile enemies that progressive humanity has, into the hands of that murderer, that agent of German fascism, Trotsky. (152)

Eideman:

I can now say without hesitation that I accept this harsh verdict so that with the last bit, the last minutes of my life, the last hours of my life to cover with curses that vile enemy of the people, Trotsky, agent of German fascism, because of whom I too became an agent of German fascism. (161)

Primakov:

All of them, from the rags of the old officers' groups, to the Trotskyite group, with its vile terrorist directives, with its practice of struggle against the Party, though the remains of the Zinovievists, everything that was counterrevolutionary in the Red Army – all were gathered into one place, under one flag, under the fascist flag in the hands of Trotsky. (165)

The second group to which I belong is the **Trotskyite** group. ...the most cursed group in the conspiracy because it has travelled the vilest path, has the vilest school and has as **its leader Trotsky**, who demanded the fascist banner. (167)

Conclusion

The testimony of the Tukhachevsky Affair defendants is consistent with a great deal of other evidence which we now possess that Leon Trotsky did indeed conspire with Hitler's Germany and fascist Japan to encompass his return to power in the USSR through assassination – the common Russian term is "terror" – sabotage, a coup d'état against the Stalin leadership, and/or the organized defeat of the Red Army in a war against invading fascist powers coupled with an armed insurrection, evidently in Leningrad. This testimony is consistent with the evidence we have collected and studied in the books *Leon Trotsky's Collaboration with Germany and Japan* (2017), *Trotsky's "Amalgams"*, *Trotsky's Lies*, and *New Evidence of Trotsky's Conspiracy*.

It is also consistent with the testimony of the defendants in the three Moscow Trials. In *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* and *Trotsky's Lies* we have shown that many of the fact-claims made by defendants in their testimony at the Moscow Trials can be checked against other evidence. We also showed that in a few cases Moscow Trials defendants testified falsely, but did so only in order to conceal crimes they had committed that the prosecution did not discover. Thus, we concluded that the Moscow Trials testimony, far from having been "fabricated" by the prosecution, is valid evidence. This discussion is now published separately as *The Moscow Trials As Evidence* (2018).

Trotsky denied the accusations that he had collaborated with fascist German and Japanese leaders. However, Trotsky would have denied the accusations whether he were guilty of them or not. Therefore, his denials mean nothing – they are not evidence.

In addition, we know that Trotsky lied. Unquestionably, he did so in order to conceal his conspiracies. Trotsky denied that a "bloc" of Rights and Trotskyites existed. Yet in 1980 Pierre Broué, the most famous Trotskyite historian of his day, discovered documents in the Harvard Trotsky Archive that prove that such a bloc existed and that Trotsky had approved it.

Trotsky swore that he had cut off all ties to those who "capitulated" to Stalin, yet American historian Arch Getty discovered evidence in the same archive that Trotsky did in fact contact some of these men. Getty also discovered that the Harvard Trotsky Archive had been "purged," undoubtedly of incriminating materials. We refer the interested reader to our detailed study of these matters in *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'* and *Trotsky's Lies*.

We now possess a great deal of evidence that Tukhachevsky and the other defendants were guilty. Likewise, we now have voluminous evidence that Trotsky was indeed conspiring with Germany and Japan. In addition, in the trial transcript, we have the testimony that Tukhachevsky and the other military men were collaborating with Trotsky and with Germany and Japan. There is no plausible scenario that could account for all this evidence except that Trotsky, along with the Soviet military commanders, was indeed collaborating with Hitler's government and the Japanese militarists.

Conclusion.

Tukhachevsky Was Guilty

We have overwhelming evidence that the Tukhachevsky Affair defendants were guilty of the crimes to which they confessed. We have:

- * the pretrial confessions of the defendants;
- * their confessions at trial;
- * their disagreements with one another during the trial, which could not have been "scripted" by the prosecution.

We know that they did not confess fully. Vladimir Bobrov, who has worked for years in the FSB Archive, discovered documents indicating that several of the judges at the Tukhachevsky trial were also conspirators whose guilt was not uncovered until later. According to documents that have recently been "published" – that is, not printed or put on the Internet but made available at the archive for interested researchers – these judges sat through the trial in fear, lest the accused mention their names.

But the accused went to execution without revealing these conspirators. Therefore, the defendants at the Tukhachevsky trial had not, in fact, stopped their conspiracy. Yakir, and the others who swore that they were now "clean" Soviet citizens again were lying, right up to the end.

Yona Yakir's letter to Stalin is reproduced in this book. We have both Yakir's handwritten version and the typed version, with the comments of Stalin, Kaganovich, and Voroshilov on it. It is obvious that Stalin and his associates believed it to be genuine, and Yakir guilty. In fact, they *knew* he was guilty.

We also have a great many confessions of other participants in the military conspiracy. There is no room to publish them in this short

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book – it would take at least one large volume just to contain those we now have. There are, of course, a great many more in various former Soviet archives.

We have other Soviet evidence. Some of that evidence is included in this volume. There is a great deal more, including confession testimony from other participants in the extended Right-Trotskyist-military conspiracy.

Over the decades, a large amount of evidence from non-Soviet sources has also come to light. We have discussed the most important of that evidence in this book. There is no way that the Soviets or anyone else could have "planted" or otherwise fabricated this evidence.

The Fraudulent History of the Stalin Period

Under any other circumstances, the primary source evidence we have presented here would convince interested readers. But in the upside-down world of anticommunist Soviet history, primary source evidence is ignored when the obvious conclusions that follow from that evidence are completely unacceptable, on ideological grounds, to anticommunists and of course to Trotskyists.

We have exposed the dishonesty of Soviet, Russian (post-Soviet), and Western anticommunist scholars in ignoring, distorting, and lying about the evidence in their desire to deny the guilt of Tukhachevsky et al., and the existence of the opposition conspiracies altogether. They do this in defense of a demonized version of Soviet history – that is, of anticommunist bias and propaganda.

Some readers may think it incredible that a whole field of academic research – that of the history of the Soviet Union during the years when Joseph Stalin was in its leadership – could possibly be so dishonest. But in the light of the evidence that we have presented here and in other books on the Stalin period, there is no other explanation.

The mass media do not deal with research. They must publish too quickly. Writers for the mass media rely upon "legitimated" authorities such as academic experts. Writers of popular and semi-popular works, and authors of textbooks for use in schools and colleges, rely on these experts too. And the most "legitimated" experts are those at top Western universities.

The media and the public assume that these same experts, like authorities in other academic fields, base what they write and say upon evidence. But this assumption is not valid in the field of Soviet history of the Stalin period. Certain fundamental falsehoods about Soviet history of this period cannot be questioned, regardless of the evidence. To question them, much less to refute them, is forbidden. Evidence that contradicts this taboo is ignored, while false evidence is invented. This is how the Anti-Stalin Paradigm works. I have cited dozens of examples of this dishonesty in my books. The Tukhachevsky Affair is yet one more example.

The conclusions to be drawn from the primary source evidence are as firmly established as they are unacceptable – unacceptable to "mainstream" anticommunist scholarship and to Trotskyists, and thereby unacceptable in public discourse. Briefly, these conclusions are as follows:

- * The "Tukhachevsky Affair" commanders arrested in May, 1937, tried and executed in June, 1937, did indeed conspire to join forces with Nazi Germany, militarist Japan, and domestic fascists and conspirators, to seize control over the USSR.
- * The defendants in the three Moscow Trials of August, 1936, January, 1937, and March, 1938, were provably guilty of at least those crimes to which they admitted guilt.
- * Leon Trotsky was indeed provably guilty of plotting to murder Stalin, and other Soviet leaders; of conspiring with the German General Staff and the Nazi leadership to overthrow the Soviet government and Party leadership, either by a *coup d'état* or by aiding a German and/or Japanese invasion; and of collaborating

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with German agents, Russian fascists, Ukrainian nationalists, and his own followers, to sabotage various economic enterprises in the USSR in order to weaken Soviet defense.

These are the same charges that were leveled by the Stalin government during the 1930s. They are the same as those that were summarized very well in the famous book by Michael Sayers and Albert E. Kahn, *The Great Conspiracy. The Secret War against Soviet Russia*, first published in 1946, translated into dozens of languages and republished until Khrushchev's "Secret Speech."

We need to follow the logic of these facts, now thoroughly established through primary source evidence, in order to briefly draw out some of their implications.

What If These Conspiracies Had Succeeded?

Counterfactual history, also sometimes referred to as virtual history, is a form of historiography that attempts to answer "what if" questions known as counterfactuals. Black and MacRaild provide this definition: "It is, at the very root, the idea of conjecturing on what did not happen, or what might have happened, in order to understand what did happen." ¹

The Wikipedia entry continues:

One goal is to estimate the relative importance of a specific event, incident or person.

Below I briefly outline two aspects of counterfactual history. They help to clarify the issues at stake in any objective, truthful study of Soviet history of the Stalin period.

* What would the world have looked like if the network of conspiracies involving Leon Trotsky, Tukhachevsky and the military commanders, the Rights, Nikolai Yezhov, and others, had in fact succeeded?

¹ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counterfactual_history

* What would world history look like if, rather than persisting in denial and falsification, historians recognized the truth and rewrote their histories accordingly?

If The Opposition's Conspiracies Had Succeeded

The goal of Tukhachevsky, Leon Trotsky, the Rights, and other opposition conspirators, was to take control of the Soviet Union. This goal dictated the nature of their domestic conspiracies and their collusion with the fascists.

If the conspirators and their allies, the fascist powers, had overthrown Stalin and the Soviet leadership, and seized control over the Soviet Union, there would have been many dramatic changes. Let's begin with the fact that Hitler, Mussolini, and the Japanese fascist militarists, the Axis powers, would have been immeasurably stronger.

- * Hitler and, in the East, the Japanese would have had the immense natural and human resources of the USSR to use in their wars against the Western imperialist powers, especially the U.K., France, and the United States.
- * Hitler probably would have carried out his plan to invade the British Isles. Whatever the ultimate outcome, a great many Britons would have died as a result.
- * France would have remained under German occupation or under pro-Nazi Vichy rule indefinitely.
- * The other countries of German-occupied Europe would also have remained indefinitely under the Nazi boot.
- * Japan would have been far stronger in its war against the United States, as it would have received access to the petroleum reserves of far eastern Russia. The American war with Japan would have been significantly prolonged, with far more American (as well as Japanese) casualties.

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Or the Western imperialist powers might have chosen to compromise with Hitler and the Japanese, rather than risk an allout war against a very much stronger fascist enemy. After all, Britain and France were far more eager to go to war against the USSR in early 1940, in alliance with pro-German Finland, than they were to send their armies against Hitler. At the same time that the Allies were planning to attack the Soviet Union, they were engaged in the "phoney war" – a refusal to fight a land war against Hitler despite their declaration of war against him.²

Either scenario would have left fascism secure and in control of a great part of the world. Much, if not most, of the world would have resembled Francisco Franco's Spain – a murderous, viciously exploitative police state, maintained by terror against everyone who opposed fascist aims.

The antiracist and anti-imperialist struggles for national liberation from imperialism would have been dealt a tremendous blow. The consequences for the fates of hundreds of millions of the non-white people in the world can hardly be overestimated.

Since World War II, such progress as there has been in capitalist countries in fighting racism against non-white people and in fighting sexism, demanding full rights for women, is due to the dedication of the communist movement around the world to these struggles. In a world dominated by fascists and fascist appeares these gains would never have happened.

Hitler's stated goal in "General Plan East" was to murder most of the Slavic peoples – tens of millions – and keep the rest for cheap labor. The Nazis and their fascist allies like the Vichy French and Ukrainian nationalists killed almost half the world's Jews. Had Hitler prevailed, that number would have been 90 per cent or more.

² For an introduction to these important but little-known aspects of the early years of World War II, see the Wikipedia articles "Franco-British plans for intervention in the Winter War" and "Phoney War."

Worldwide, the labor movement would have suffered much more intense repression. In a world much of which was directly ruled by fascists, while the rulers of the rest of the world temporized and collaborated with the fascists, the standard of living of working people would have fallen drastically, while their mortality would have skyrocketed.

Human progress would have suffered an enormous setback in every area of life. A great many persons alive today would never have been born at all. Most other people would be suffering far more exploitation and oppression.

Trotsky, his supporters, and his co-conspirators like Tukhachevsky, Bukharin and Rykov, now at the mercy of their "allies" the German, Japanese, British, and French ruling classes, would never have been successful in retaining power in a weakened, shrunken USSR. Tukhachevsky may have seen himself as the eventual "Napoleon." But the Third Moscow Trial of March, 1938, Bukharin admitted that he and his fellow conspirators had no reason to believe that Hitler would remain faithful to any deal they made with him.³

If Historians Recognized that the Conspirators Were Guilty

The Soviet Union was able to defeat the fascist invasion because the chain of conspiracies - with Trotsky, Tukhachevsky and the military commanders, and the Right oppositionists at the center, and with the fascists providing the military might, while the Western imperialists facilitated both - was smashed by the Soviet government.

³ See Report of Court Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet "Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites" Heard Before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R. Moscow, March 2-13, 1938...Verbatim Report. Moscow: People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R., 1938, 431.

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The Soviet Union – "Stalin", in the simplistic language of the anticommunists – saved the world from fascism not just once, by defeating the Nazi juggernaut, but *twice*, by smashing the Trotskyist-Nazi-fascist-capitalist conspiracies that aimed to turn the Soviet Union into Hitler's ally. Understanding of this fact was widespread after World War II, when *The Great Conspiracy* became a worldwide best-seller. But its authors, communist party members, were forced to withdraw the book from publication after Khrushchev gave his "Secret Speech."

The Effects of Khrushchev's Lies

The force that overthrew this understanding of history did not come from the capitalists, or from anticommunist historians, but from within. Nikita Khrushchev's infamous "Secret Speech" to the XX Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union began the process of denying the truth about the anti-Soviet conspiracies. Khrushchev accelerated his attack on the truth at the XXII Party Congress in 1961.

The lies of Khrushchev and his historical propagandists were avidly taken up by anticommunist historians around the world. Millions of communists, workers, students, and other anticapitalist forces and potential pro-communist activists believed Khrushchev. They would never have believed any overtly capitalist propaganda, no matter how "scholarly" it appeared. But they accepted the world of Khrushchev, leader of the Soviet Communist Party and the world communist movement.

Inspired by Khrushchev's slander of Stalin, anticommunist propagandists got to work. But their lies would never have been so widely accepted if Khrushchev had not loosed an army of pseudoscholars, phony historians, to add false details to his attack on Stalin.

Within a few years Khrushchev's propagandists had accused Stalin of dozens of crimes and atrocities. Under Gorbachev, yet more phony "crimes of Stalin" were fabricated. Some, such as the Katyn Massacre, were real atrocities that had been committed by others

– in the case of Katyn, by the German invaders and their Ukrainian nationalist allies. Others, like the great famine of 1932-33, were natural events that were falsely blamed on "Stalin's" – the Soviet government's – policies.

Soviet Leaders Knew the Truth

None of the Khrushchev- and Gorbachev-era accusations against Stalin were supported by primary source evidence. In 1962 Pyotr Pospelov, one of Khrushchev's top officials, told a convention of historians that they would not be permitted to go to the Party archives to search for evidence, but had to rely on the statements of top Party officials.⁴ Today, with the partial opening of former Soviet archives, we know why Pospelov did this. No evidence for the accusations against Stalin exists! On the contrary: all the evidence shows that Khrushchev and his men were lying.

From the Khrushchev period on, Soviet leaders knew the truth. Their researchers, those who were sent into the archives with the task of finding phony "evidence" to support the anti-Stalin lies their masters demanded, saw the evidence that we now have. But they deliberately withheld it or lied about it and, as far as we know, never revealed it.

We do not even know the names of the researchers of the Khrushchev era, the Shvernik Report, and the falsifications of Gorbachev's years. Surely – we may think – they told someone? Or wrote diaries, or some record of the immense gap between what they actually discovered in the archives, and what they had to report.

But no one has ever researched these people. Why not? Most likely because to do so would be to admit the possibility that the truth

⁴ See Pospelov's remarks in *Vsesoiuznoe soveshchanie o merakh uluchshenia* podgotovki nauchno-pedagogichesikh kadrov po istoricheskim naukam. 18-21 dekabria 1962 g. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka", 1964, 298.

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was other than what they reported. That is, to concede that the Anti-Stalin Paradigm is false.

This lack of interest in "researching the researchers," in uncovering who knew the truth about the Stalin years that Khrushchev lied about on a tremendous scale, that was then was ignored – neither affirmed completely, but certainly not denied, under Brezhnev, Andropov, and Chernenko, that was then lied about on an even grander scale under Gorbachev – this lack of interest is probably due to the peculiar position of Russia among the former Soviet states.

Unlike the Eastern European countries, Russians made their revolution themselves. The Soviet Union was supported by the majority of the population. Recent polls state that most Russians still support the now-dead Soviet Union. Today Stalin remains one of the two or three most popular figures in Russian history, despite decades of attacks on him in academia, politics, education, and the mass media. Aspects of the Soviet heritage, especially the memory of the Soviet victory in World War II and the liberation of Eastern Europe from the Nazis and fascists, constitutes a vital part of Russian nationalism today.

So Russian leaders cannot reject the Stalin period completely. On the contrary, they are forced acknowledge important parts of Soviet history, including of the Stalin period, not only as positive but as an important part of the Russian historical tradition. But to "dig too deep," to acknowledge the truth about the Stalin era, to expose the fact that present-day Russia is constructed on an enormous lie about Soviet history, would threaten the legitimacy of the political and economic leadership in Russia.

The Guilt of the Conspirators

Though he never admitted it, Khrushchev copied some of his flagrant lies about Stalin from Trotsky's writing. Anticommunist writers *chose* – and still choose –to believe Trotsky's lies, just as they chose to believe the lies of Khrushchevites.

Within a decade of Khrushchev's speech the Moscow Trials defendants were widely believed to have been innocent. Many people started to consider Trotsky a lone, courageous voice for true communism against the monster Stalin, that Bukharin was the "real Leninist," that Tukhachevsky and the other commanders would have defended the USSR against the Nazi onslaught better. This remains the historical orthodoxy to this day.

In 1956 Trotskyism was a tiny movement with little influence. Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" and subsequent avalanche of lies about Stalin changed that. To some people Trotsky now appeared to be the "prophet" that British historian and Trotsky admirer Isaac Deutscher had called him. Anticommunist writers now accepted Trotsky's version of events, just as they believed the lies of Khrushchev and his men. For anticommunists and Trotskyists, this torrent of filth that the "communist" leaders were pouring over their own heritage was too good not to make full use of.

Trotskyist groups soared in membership, as they claimed to be the "good" communists. But they paid a price. Trotskyism became parasitical on overtly anticommunist scholarship. Trotskyists constructed a "cult of personality" around their hero. For them, Trotsky's writings became the source of all political wisdom.

Today, with the flood of primary source documents coming out of former Soviet archives, we have the evidence to prove that Trotsky lied, frequently and flagrantly. As this and my previous books have demonstrated, we also have the evidence to prove that Trotsky was involved in serious conspiracies of sabotage, assassination, and fascist collaboration.

The Trotskyist movement had wedded itself to the professional anticommunist "scholars" more firmly than ever. Trotskyist writers cite these scholars frequently, in defense of their own or Trotsky's assertions. It is clearer than ever that Trotskyism functions as the "left wing" of conventional, pro-capitalist anticommunism.

Regardless of the evidence, Trotskyists, or at least the leadership of Trotskyist groups, are never going to admit the truth. In this too they resemble the dishonest professional anticommunists. It may seem harsh to some to be calling famous scholars at renowned universities, people like Stephen Kotkin of Princeton or Timothy Snyder of Yale, dishonest scholars. But that is precisely what they are, as I have demonstrated in great detail.⁵

Not a "Political Line" But the Truth

Anticommunists and Trotskyists will reject the research in this book, but not because of any fault in that research. They will reject it because they cannot honestly confront the evidence and the conclusions that follow from it. They are not interested in the truth. Rather, they are promoting a political "line" – the Anti-Stalin Paradigm.

People who push a political "line" instead of the truth tend to assume that everybody else is also acting in the same dishonest manner and is promoting *their* political "line." So they reject the search for historical truth in pursuit of "politically correct" anti-Stalinism. Such people will call this book "pro-Stalin," "Stalinist," etc., as though I too am pushing some political "line."

But they are wrong. I am not promoting any political line or position. I am interested in the truth. I strive for objectivity as much as any scientist.

I try hard to question my own biases and prejudices (everybody has them). I work hard to give an especially generous reading to

⁵ See Grover Furr. 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 Publications, 2014; Stalin. Waiting for ... the Truth. Exposing the Falsehoods in Stephen Kotkin's Stalin. Waiting for Hitler, 1929-1941. New York: Red Star Publishers, 2019.

any evidence that tends to cast doubt on those prejudices or that tends to disprove the hypotheses I have chosen to test in my research. The dishonest scholars in the field of Soviet history of the Stalin period cannot honestly make this claim.

For many years I have been diligently searching for evidence of crimes that Stalin committed. I have searched for them in the only legitimate way – by identifying, locating, obtaining, and studying primary source evidence, and then by drawing logical conclusions from that evidence. I have given anti-communist writers, including Leon Trotsky every benefit of the doubt in my research.

No one asks what Sherlock Holmes' politics are. We just want him to solve the mystery! In the same way, my own political proclivities are irrelevant. Nevertheless, the results of my research in this book, as in my other works, will be rejected by those who are unable or unwilling to consider the possibility that their own preconceived ideas are mistaken.

To all other readers – the vast majority – I submit this research, and the conclusions based upon it. I welcome your comments and especially your criticisms. My email address is easy to find on the Internet.

TOP SECRET

Ex. No

VERBATIM REPORT

COURT PROCEEDINGS OF THE SPECIAL JUDICIAL SESSION OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNION OF THE SSR of June 11, 1937

in the case of M.N. Tukhachevsky, I.E. Yakir, I.P. Uborevich, A.I. Kork, R.P. Eideman, B.M. Feldman, V.M. Primakov and V.K. Putna on charges of crimes under Articles 58^{1b}, 58³ and 58¹¹ of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR

Moscow 1937

[Pagination as in printed original. Note that there is no page 159 due to original typists' error. – GF]

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VERBATIM REPORT

OF THE COURT PROCEEDINGS OF THE SPECIAL JUDICIAL SESSION

OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNION OF THE SSR

<u>Iune 11, 1937</u>

The President of the Court, Army Jurist, Comrade V.V. ULRIKH:

I declare the Special Judicial Session of the Supreme Court of the USSR open.

The case is being heard on charges of treason, espionage and preparation of terrorist acts, brought against M.N. Tukhachevsky, I.E.Yakir, I.P. Uborevich, A.I. Kork, R.P. Eideman, V.M. Primakov, B.M. Feldman and V.K. Putna.

Comrade Commandant, are the accused present?

Court commandant: All of them are present and under guard.

The President: Accused Tukhachevsky, have you received a copy of the indictment?

Tukhachevsky: Yes, I have.

The President: Accused Yakir, have you received a copy of the indictment?

Yakir: Yes.

The President: Accused Uborevich, have you received a copy of the indictment?

Uborevich: Yes, I got it.

The President: Accused Kork, have you received a copy of the indictment?

Kork: I got it.

The President: Accused Eideman, have you received a copy of the indictment?

Eideman: Yes, I have.

The President: Accused Primakov, have you received a copy of the indictment?

Primakov: Yes, I have.

The President: Accused Feldman, have you received a copy of the indictment?

Feldman: Yes, I have.

The President: Accused Putna, have you received a copy of the indictment?

Putna: Yes, I have.

The President: I announce the composition of the Court in this case:

President: The Chairman of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR – Army Jurist Comrade V.V. Ulrikh;

Members of the court: Deputy Commissar of Defense of the USSR, Commander of the 2nd rank¹ – Comrade Y.I. Alksnis; Commander of the Special Red Banner Far Eastern Army, Marshal of the Soviet Union – Comrade V.K. Blyukher; Commander of the Moscow Military District, Marshal of the Soviet Union – Comrade S.M. Budyonny; Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, Commander of the 1st rank – Comrade B.M. Shaposhnikov; Commander of the

¹ Komandarm

Byelorussian Military District, Commander of the 1st rank – Comrade I.P. Belov;

/3/

Commander of the Leningrad Military District, Commander of the 2nd rank – Comrade P.E. Dybenko; Commander of the North Caucasus Military District, Commander of the 2nd rank – Comrade N.D. Kashirin and Commander of the 6th Cossack Cavalry Corps named after Comrade Stalin, Divisional commander² – Comrade, E.I. Goryachev; Secretary – Comrade I.M. Zaryanov.

Are there any objections to the composition of the court?

The Accused: None.

The President: Do the accused have any intention to call witnesses or request any new documents? No.

Comrade Secretary, read the indictment.

(The secretary reads the indictment).

The President: Accused Tukhachevsky, do you plead guilty to the charges brought against you?

Tukhachevsky: Yes.

The President: Accused Kork, do you plead guilty to the charges brought against you?

Kork: Yes.

The President: Accused Yakir, do you plead guilty to the charges brought against you?

Yakir: I plead guilty.

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The President: Accused Uborevich, do you plead guilty to the charges brought against you?

Uborevich: I do.

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The President: Accused Putna, do you plead guilty to the charges brought against you?

Putna: Yes, I do.

The President: Accused Eideman, do you plead guilty to the charges brought against you?

Eideman: Yes, I do.

The President: Accused Primakov, do you plead guilty to the charges brought against you?

Primakov: Yes.

The President: Accused Feldman, do you plead guilty to the charges brought against you?

Feldman: I plead guilty.

The President: We proceed to the interrogation of the accused.

Accused Yakir, do you confirm the confessions that you gave at the preliminary investigation in May of this year, as well as the statement that you addressed to the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, Comrade Yezhov?

Yakir: Yes, I confirm them.

The President: I have one question for you. Tell the court, when you joined the anti-Soviet Trotskyite organization, what goals did this organization set, what was the work of this anti-Soviet organization and what was your personal participation in it?

Yakir: If you permit me, I will say a few words as an introduction to the answer of your question.

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For many years, I was an honest, devoted and selfless soldier of the country, the army and the party. However, at the same time a wormhole of rotten conciliatory liberalism was part of my life. Even in past years 1923 and 1927, when I stood on the correct Leninist positions, I both fought the opposition and, as a rule, I pitied them at the same time. I pitied them and maintained ties, including personal ties, with them, and, what's more, I helped and supported a very large number of Trotskyites. This relates to contacts with counterrevolutionary people such as Golubenko, Lifshits and Loginov, as well as with a group of military Trotskyites like Primakov, the hidden Trotskyite Kuzmichev, Okhotnikov and a number of other Trotskyites whom I supported and for whom I put in a good word; saying that the man was correcting himself, repented when in fact, these Trotskyites continued their work with my support.

However, I repeat, this was not yet the period when I embarked on the path of betrayal, on the path of struggle against the country and the party. In the years 1931-1932 I was seriously influenced by the results of collective farm construction. The large number of materials, letters and village representatives who came from the village to the barracks had an influence on me, and here my serious political vacillations began.

My drawing closer to and the improvement of my personal relations with Uborevich and Tukhachevsky dates back to this time.

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I personally also had contacts with them earlier, for a very long time. The rapprochement between me and them began immediately after 1932. It began with the fact that I, as a person who did not have a special military education, was told to "devote more study to military matters." I considered Tukhachevsky and

Uborevich to be great authorities in military matters, and based on this we began to become closer. By this time, my conversations with Gamarnik had begun, who, having come to the Political Administration of the Red Army, worked honestly conscientiously. However, by this period, around the end of 1932-1933, he, in conversations with me, began to express a whole series of critical, and their anti-Soviet views. My drawing closer to Tukhachevsky and Uborevich first led to an unprincipled grouping directed against the leadership of the Red Army and to criticism of the existing disorder in the department of the General Staff, then it went from this to anti-Soviet conversations, to exchanging information about anti-Soviet sentiments, about, allegedly, existing concerning collectivization, primarily countryside, etc. At the same time, I had a number of similar conversations with Golubenko and Lifshits, to whom I did not give any positive answer, but to whom I listened silently, and made it clear that I knew and sympathize with the counter-revolutionary work being carried on by them and other Trotskyites.

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In this way I approached the moment when after a very serious illness of the liver in 1934, Tukhachevsky first, more or less definitively, told me the current weakness of our abilities and the unity of the fascist activities of Germany and Japan with Poland, were leading to a situation when we needed to destroy the existing order, and he told me then and there that he had contact with Trotsky and with the German General Staff. In either my first talk with Tukhachevsky or the second, but in one of those talks Tukhachevsky, without going into details, told me that Trotsky had set forth as essential the assignment of strengthening the work of the counterrevolutionary and anti-Soviet elements in the army, and that he, Tukhachevsky, took upon himself the assignment of organizing and uniting these anti-Soviet and counterrevolutionary elements.

Further, Tukhachevsky laid out for me Trotsky's directive, agreed upon with the German General Staff and detailed to some extent by himself personally. This directive came down to the following.

The first point of the program laid out by Trotsky was a coup d'état, prepared by the "Muscovites", the participants in the counterrevolutionary anti-Soviet Right-Trotskyite organization, who had succeeded in feeling out and entering into contact with a number of Kremlin-based Chekists and with the immediate military guard of the Kremlin in the person of the chief of the Kremlin military guard, Yegorov, and a certain group of command and cadet staff of this school.

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I must add that, when speaking of the coup, Tukhachevsky subsequently informed me that similar preparations should be carried out on the ground so that it would be possible to simultaneously seize a number of very important points on the periphery.

The second paragraph of the program was as follows: if the first option did not succeed, it was necessary to prepare the defeat of the Red Army. In exchanging opinions with Tukhachevsky and Uborevich, we very often focused on the issue of such an order, that regardless of our wrecking, hostile, counterrevolutionary anti-Soviet work, it seemed to us that the strength available in the first echelon at the western theater, was insufficient in the first place, and that this in itself determined very great difficulties in the event of a collision with the Polish-German side. We did not have complete and sufficient knowledge of the entry into the anti-Soviet bloc of a new, very large and rapidly forged force, such as fascist Germany. But since it was not enough, Tukhachevsky, therefore, at first vaguely, then more specifically set before me and Uborevich, and, apparently, before the other participants of the conspiracy in Leningrad, the assignment of thinking through a defeatist plan such that would facilitate the invasion of our country by Polish-German fascist forces.

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I forgot to say that during the first or second conversation with Tukhachevsky, in response to his proposal of my entry into the

center, or the leadership of the conspiracies, I gave him my consent.

The President: In what year and month did this conversation with Tukhachevsky take place?

Yakir: The first conversation took place in the fall of 1934, but I cannot say whether it was before my illness in the summer of 1934 or after, i.e. in the fall of that year.

The President: In general, in the second half of the year?

Yakir: Yes. The second conversation with Tukhachevsky took place in the spring of 1935.

We took upon ourselves the preparations for the defeat of the Red Army, and, as I said, it was thought out on the ground, and Tukhachevsky turned my attention to the Letichev fortified area. Afterwards I reported to him that it was correct that one of the main points in facilitating the invasion of the Polish-German forces and the defeat of the Red Army in the Ukrainian theater was the most important and responsible section between the Dniester and Shepetovka. To do this, we must bring the Letichev fortified area into a not fully combat-ready state, because the terrain of southwestern Ukraine is the most favorable and accessible for the actions of the Polish-German forces.

The third moment of preparation for the defeat of the Red Army,

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Tukhachevsky pointed out to me, was a question about organizing wrecking both in combat training and in the material and technical armament of the Red Army. Moreover, both at that time and a little later Tukhachevsky said that the main work on the organization of wrecking in the central material and armament departments of the Red Army would be carried out by people in the conspiracy from the central apparatus, who later became known to me: Yefimov, and a number of others that I named during the preliminary investigation. On the ground, Tukhachevsky suggested to consider

this question, though with some now quite obvious and ridiculous consideration of the order, that in general this business should be conducted in such a way that in case of serious conversations with the Germans, it would be possible to have our own significant strength. I must state that our position as troop commanders and the complete trust we enjoyed both from above, from the party leadership, government and army; and from below, from our commanders, helped us to complete our assignment in full, without any serious violation of the combat effectiveness of the military units, by a number of special orders, i.e. it was not necessary to make one or another division non-combat capable (which could have a negative effect on the preservation of our forces in the future) – when it was possible, without any difficulty, to give the commander's order by telegraph to move not in the necessary direction, but the opposite, entailing

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a difficult position of military unity.

In accordance with Tukhachevsky's instructions and plan, wrecking work was carried out, in particular, in the Letichev fortified area (especially on its right flank), where I withheld a number of pieces of equipment through Sablin, Zhukov and Zinovievite military engineers.

A number of firing positions were set so low and improperly set that their field of fire was limited. They were not of full value until significant earthworks were carried out. This was done by the Zinovievites a little earlier before the receipt of my directive.

Secondly, I was aware of and knew that Lifshits and his organization, and, on the other hand, Appoga and his military associates worked out a plan for organizing a number of traffic jams at nodal and large stations, which were supposed to delay the forces concentrating towards the border at a time when confused by our orders, the border units would face a significantly difficult situation under pressure from the Polish forces. This assignment was outlined by us and the people of the Trotskyite organization

among Lifshits' men and among Appoga's military associates were prepared for this.

The next assignment Tukhachevsky told me about was that he would maintain direct relations with Trotsky and the German General Staff. With the first, through Piatakov, and with

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the second through Putna, as well as through personal contacts, when he would be abroad. He would keep in touch with the German General Staff directly through Colonel, later General, Koestring, the German military attaché in Moscow, and use a number of his trips abroad and meetings at diplomatic receptions.

Subsequently, Tukhachevsky at various times told me that he had received from Trotsky a number of clarifications to his directives and his agreement regarding the activities outlined by our anti-Soviet organization.

These are the main points of the program that were set before us less specifically at the first meeting and more specifically at the meetings of us three: Tukhachevsky, Yakir and Uborevich, and which were consistently and gradually concretized and formed into a big plan of a coup.

Tukhachevsky always told us from the words of Kork and the "Muscovites" (once he mentioned the name Yenukidze on this subject), that measures for organizing the coup were also developing successfully.

I must state directly that we (Tukhachevsky, Yakir and Uborevich) never had a collective discussion with Gamarnik about the plans for our conspiracy. I had conversations with Gamarnik separately. I knew about the plan of defeat of the Red Army in the Far East (the second part of the general plan of defeat), but not in detail. At various times

Gamarnik informed me about the work conducted by the members of the conspiracy in the Far East. This work was a number of sabotage activities carried out by Sangursky, Aronshtam, Lapin and a number of other people, against fortified areas under construction, against the food and the supply of forces in wartime, about contacts with the Japanese, and the systematic work to discredit the authority of Blyukher, which all these people carried out with Gamarnik's support.

Despite the fact that Tukhachevsky repeatedly spoke to me about the necessity of the very greatest secrecy (Trotsky repeatedly told him this, saying that the military conspiracy and its participants must not in any way be connected with other circles and other lines of work), contact, though episodic and non-specific, took place all the same along through mutual information. In particular, Tukhachevsky told me twice that he had received information from Piatakov and spoke about his talks with the Rights, with Yenukidze, and about one talk with Bukharin. I also had contact with Golubenko and Lifshits, who told me about the existence and work of the Ukrainian Trotskyite organization.

I would like to add a few words concerning the implementation of the instructions of the head of our organization, Tukhachevsky, regarding the gathering of all anti-Soviet groups and elements that could be useful in case of need.

Tukhachevsky drew our attention, mine and Uborevich's, to the fact that we should be seriously taking an interest in the nationalists

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in the Ukraine and Byelorussia; that we, being people with secret materials and having the ability to use CC and Chekist materials, could find out what nationalist, counterrevolutionary organizations existed and try to contact them. I assigned that task to some members of our anti-Soviet conspiracy, but I must say bluntly that in connection with the defeat of the nationalist underground in

1935, I could not achieve concrete results great enough to be able to talk about any organizations and individuals. It seems to me that Uborevich in Byelorussia achieved the same results. We had in mind to rely on these organizations and, if necessary, use them. We also hoped to rely on the embittered anti-Soviet elements, of which there were quite a few in the army. In this category of people, we included, for example, people expelled from the party, of which there were 1 500 in the Kiev district. There could also be no great results here, since these cadres were in the field of view of the control bodies, but we could rely on them in case of need. That is, in schematic fashion, the main and most important thing, which I think I said [in my confessions]. I have listed all the names of people personally involved in the conspiracy and known to me from the words of others in my confessions. I have not yet stopped at the fact that I had two joint meetings with Tukhachevsky, Uborevich and Kork. Both times Kork talked about

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"Muscovites", about his deputy, and about preparation for the coup in Moscow. In my confessions, I said that this took place at Tukhachevsky's apartment. The name Gorbachev was not mentioned by Kork, but he said that my deputy managed to contact the Kremlin security officers and prepare a group of military people who would be given such an assignment. The second time Kork told us that Gorbachev had the assignment of making a significant replacement in the command staff in the Moscow proletarian division. He named, it seems, a figure of 120 people, trained graduates, in order to then have a formation in his hands, which would be the Moscow proletarian division. The third conversation with Kork was upon his arrival in Kiev in May of this year. He went to choose a place for the camps, and this was a short conversation, because I had already been removed from the district and was completely confused. Due to the arrests of

military men that had begun, there was a directive from Tukhachevsky to stop temporarily so as not to reveal ourselves.

Kork told me about a series of failures in Moscow and asked if I would continue the conospiracy in the event that Tukhachevsky were arrested. In order to get rid of him, I said that I would, although it was clear to me that the whole business had failed and had been disclosed, and asked Kork to inform me about new arrests and further disclosure of the conspiracy upon his arrival in Moscow. I had the same conversation with

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Gamarnik, who was completely perplexed and said that the circle around us was tightening.

The President: When did you have the conversation with Gamarnik?

Yakir: Quite recently, 15 days before my arrest. This was during a meeting that took place in the Central Committee about 20 days ago. I continue. Gamarnik said that the circle was tightening, obviously, arrest was unavoidable, and even then, despite the fact that it was a conversation of perplexed people, I told Gamarnik that with the attitude that the party and army leaders had towards us, it was unlikely that we would be arrested. Thus, it turned out that I (I have hardly any right to do so, as a person who has returned to his nation or his country before the end of his life, after having foully deceived and betrayed it, especially during the last period) can see on one hand, the enormous destructive work that has been done by our Right-Trotskyite military organization. On the other hand, is the abyss into which, thanks to my past wavering, I was drawn into by the vile of the vile - Trotsky through his snares, through different paths, through different approaches. For me, a person (if you can still believe me), who has completely repented and wants only one thing: to help the country to eliminate in the shortest possible time the huge

damage caused by our organization. It remains, in fact, only one thing, to ask you people to confirm ...

The President: This is not your last plea. The last plea of the accused will be given to you.

Yakir: I am saying that I appeal to you, who have known me for many years before I embarked on a betrayal, you, the Court, I ask you to believe that I am now telling the truth and only the truth and, as I believe, the whole truth.

The President: One of your confessions contains the following; "I plead guilty ... " (an excerpt from the confession of Yakir at the preliminary investigation is read out).³

Blyukher: Accused Yakir, what exactly were your preparations for the defeat of the aviation of the Red Army in a future war?

Yakir: I really can't tell you anything, apart from what I wrote to the investigation. I said that, firstly, I imagine in such a way that in parallel with our wrecking work, which only slightly related to aviation, some central organization carried out very large scale wrecking work in aviation, both in matters of materiel (about which I testified in detail), and in a whole series of other questions: staffing, logistics, etc. .. Firstly, the Shepetovsky

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airdrome was built in a wrecking manner, which was done by an air force engineer named Kikachi, despite the fact that Veingauz⁴

³³³ This is from the Tukhachevsky case investigative file: R-9000. T. 12. Sledstvennoe delo Yakira Y.E., l.d. 155ob (P-9000, т.12. Следственное дело Якира И.Э., Л.д.155oб): "I plead guilty to being a member of the Trotskyist conspiracy and its governing nucleus, which included Tukhachevsky, Uborevich and myself. The conspiracy set itself the task of overthrowing the Soviet power and the leadership of the Central Committee of the party, in particular, preparing for the defeat of the USSR in the war with Germany."

⁴ Veingauz is identified as a Trotskyist in the engineering division of the airforce at https://work-way.com/blog/2018/06/06/na-podstupah-k-bolshoj-vojne-chast-8-m-n-tuhachevskij/

was present there and did not notice anything. Secondly, the wrecking organization in the construction of other airfields. Then unquestionably they sabotaged the organization of the airfield network, which in the vast majority of cases would either not allow, or would complicate the work of high-speed aviation. Aviation moves at high speeds, needing large take-off spaces, and airfield sites are not growing enough and can put aviation in a difficult position. In addition, much wrecking work was carried out on the material and technical areas, on material and technical supply and personnel. Thirdly, there was a lack of haste and lack of encouragement of the aviation units which were absolutely necessary and without which it was impossible to work during night flights, especially in high-speed aviation.

Blyukher: Who personally among the top commanders known to you was involved in this counterrevolutionary organization?

Yakir: In the Kiev military district, in addition to the said Rosenblat; the deputy chief of staff of the Kiev brigade, the commissar of one of the assault squadrons, one engineer of the Konotop brigade, who later transferred to the Belotserkov brigade (I listed all at the preliminary investigation). I can't name the others.

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Alksnis: How did you plan, or did you plan, to use the aircraft of the Kiev Military District to support the Moscow rebel uprising, if it were to take place?

Yakir: There was no plan about this. There was one conversation with Tukhachevsky, or rather, he told us that someone, Yenukidze, I believe, told him that it would be good to count on some help and Tukhachevsky answered: "No, please, develop the work, because you can't count on it."

The President: How did the sabotage of combat preparations manifest itself, aside from limiting aviation night flights?

Yakir: I spoke about this issue in a special letter. I think that there was no need to apply special sabotage, since there were many disorders in this matter. We slowed down work in night-time field high-speed flight and relied on a similar line coming from Moscow, which did not give us anything. This business was simple,

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since everything was being rebuilt, and therefore it did not present any difficulties.

Budyonny: Accused Yakir, in your confessions you very vaguely mentioned many cavalry commanders who were in close relations with you, but did not name anyone by name. Did you have a connection with people like Demin, Grishin, Markov, Fedorov, Markevich, Provatorov and others?

Were these people recruited into the organization, or did you only have close relations with them, as you vaguely said?

Yakir: I omitted to report that I, as commander of the district's forces, had to be very careful in recruitment. Firstly, in my confession I did not report in detail what I did. I did not talk about my relationships with people, generally in the district, in particular with those with whom I worked for more than twelve years and with whom I had established, and had, exceptionally close relations. The people I knew were, in quotation marks, my people.

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If I had recruited these people, I would have mentioned it.

I cannot place Provatorov to this category of individuals.

I counted on Demidov, Grigoriev and a number of others, but did not recruit them, except Nikulin. I knew their devotion to me as the district commander and attitude towards you and imagined that I could use them. However, there wasn't such a

situation that I directly said that, here, there is a center, an organization, a conspiracy that I am involving you in. There were no such conversations with Demidov. There was a conversation with Grigoriev, but I did not have time to repeat it, because I was arrested.

Budyonny: You confessed that in 1935, according to Tukhachevsky, in his office, you became aware that Kork did a lot of recruiting and wrecking work in the Moscow Military District, and he also informed you that Eideman had deployed the same kind of job in Osoviakhim.

How exactly was this wrecking work expressed, what kind of people were recruited, and where was this wrecking work carried out?

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Yakir: This information was general. As a rule, we informed each other very generally for a number of reasons, but when he talked about people, he talked about Yegorov, about a group of Chekists led by Yenukidze and that this recruitment work was moved into the military academy, as well as into the district, but no people were named. When he talked about wrecking, he talked about a significant decrease in the combat effectiveness of the Moscow units, taking advantage of the fact that Moscow is a reservoir supplying the Far East, sending new units there.

He managed to plant in Moscow an anti-Soviet commanding staff, which made it possible to dramatically weaken the state of the forces' combat preparation.

Budyonny: Accused Yakir, for what purpose did you insist on the inclusion of a motorcycle regiment in the cavalry division?

Yakir: I insisted, and now, in my letter to the People's Commissar, I insist that this should be done, and I say this for

the most honest reasons. When I spoke here, I did not consider it necessary to report it to the court, but I will say that there were two persons in Yakir, two Yakirs. One Yakir taught and conducted classes, and the other Yakir was a bastard who sold out and did dangerous hostile things. I say that I suggested this as an honest person and now, repenting, I categorically insist that this experiment should be done, combining the motorcycle regiment with the cavalry division.

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Budyonny: You went on to reduce the horse-mounted nucleus, which is not a technically armed force, and you think that this makes good sense in the cavalry?

Another question: Who, precisely, of the Moscow wreckers thwarted the organization of air defense in the districts? Concretely, who exactly?

Yakir: I didn't give the last name, because I heard about Kamenev⁵ after his death. I can't say for sure who did this directly from the apparatus. In the district, this was done by the head of the air defense, Shvachko.

Budyonny: In your confession you mention Comrade Lukin, the commandant of Moscow. Was he recruited by you?

Yakir: No, I listed him among people who just responded well to me and worked for a long time under my leadership, but not among those recruited by me or other conspirators.

I pointed out in my confession that, along with a significant number of people recruited by us, there were a very large

⁵ Yakir means Sergei Sergeevich Kamenev, Tsarist officer who attained the rank of Komandarm, 1st rank, in the Red Army before his death in August, 1936. Kamenev was also a member of the military conspiracy.

number of people with whom I had very good, close relations.

I could, if necessary, count on some of them, but not on others. That is why I told the investigator several times that we needed to sort it out.

I spoke about Lukin in the light of the fact that he always came running to me whining (I asked the People's Commissar about Lukin), but he was not recruited by me.

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Budyonny: One more question. In your confession you say that you had in mind to rely on the 8th mechanized brigade, which was commanded by Shmidt, in order to carry out a coup in Kiev. On the other hand, in the same confession, where you talk about your wrecking work, you indicate that "we literally ruined this brigade with the help of Shmidt and myself." How could you then count on it as a combat-ready force during a coup?

Yakir: I counted only on 2 000 people, not on the whole brigade. I believed that in case of receiving a message about the coup in Moscow, under the false deceitful slogan that in Moscow there was an uprising against the government, I would call the brigade supposedly for defense and then, with the help of some of the people recruited by Shmidt, and with the help of those whom we had deceived, stage a coup in the Ukraine.

Blyukher: I have a question for the accused Yakir. Here in his confession he did not talk very distinctly about Gamarnik.

I know your personal relationship with him, and it seems to me that you are not saying everything here. Can you not tell the Court more about the role of Gamarnik in the counterrevolutionary Trotskyite conspiracy? I believe you know more than you are saying.

Yakir: You see, I testified about all the main and most important things here. I said that I had little idea of the Far East, and therefore I couldn't say specifically where, what could be and what should be disrupted or sabotaged.

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I have written in detail about my conversations with Gamarnik. I said that in 1934 he began to hesitate, that in this year his attitude became clearly anti-Soviet, that, returning from the Far East in 1934, he talked quite clearly about this. In the meantime, the Japanese had extended an enormous amount of roads up to the strategic points.

Blyukher: You are talking about the role of Gamarnik and his work in the Far East. I'm interested in his work in the center. Was he subordinate to Tukhachevsky?

Yakir: It cannot be said that he was subordinate to Tukhachevsky.

Blyukher: Can you say more?

Yakir: I spoke with Gamarnik in great detail about the wrecking c.-r. work, i.e. I informed him without giving any names, besides the fact that he knew about us and our work. He informed the center through me. In addition to what I talked about here in the Far East, I cannot add anything about Gamarnik's work in this sector. I can only say that we had a certain contact with Gamarnik. I think that the wording in this document about the center does not correspond to the essence. He had his own political line. You understand that he could hardly have entered into an open relationship with Tukhachevsky, Kork, and others, because it would have been too obvious. I testified that I was the person who informed him and the one who was informed by him. I named in my confessions the people whom I heard about.

Blyukher: In your last confession, you indicated how you talked with Tukhachevsky about creating a backup center in case your organization might fail.

Yakir: In my confession, I did not speak of a backup center. I said that Tukhachevsky, when the arrests began, said that "you, as a very responsible person, as a member of the center, you need to take up this matter yourself. And if something happens, then it will be dealt with by Uborevich."

Blyukher: Now tell us a little more about Gamarnik's role in the defeatist work in the Far East.

Yakir: I have already mentioned a number of lines of defeatist work: the first about fortified areas, the second about roads, the third about questions of food supply in wartime, i.e. regarding interruptions in the transportation of a whole series of goods of material supply even in peacetime and their storage - third, and the fourth the question of people. Moreover, I did not hear any names, except for Sangursky, Lapin and Aronshtam. I personally imagined that this whole group, led by Lapin, was doing the same work and that these people were doing particular jobs.

Blyukher: Did you not know about the organized center that Gamarnik would have left in the Far East?

Yakir: Judging by how our business was in all other regions of the Soviet Union (we were still representatives of the Red Army and we had one-man

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leadership) I think that one or two people were supposed to conduct this work there also, but I can't say exactly. I assumed that they were Sangursky, Lapin and Aronshtam. In any case, all three were definitely involved in this matter. This was quite clear to me, but I can't say specifically how they had arranged the work there.

Blyukher: Did assignments along this line go only through Gamarnik?

Yakir: I conveyed at one time Tukhachevky's instructions that work should be developed in the Far East. I said that in our conversations on this subject, we considered it essential to deploy work in the Far East, because in one of the letters of Trotsky to Tukhachevsky Trotsky pressed us to develop work in the Far East with the goal of contact when the Germans and Japanese should carry out joint activity. This was very important.

Blyukher: Were you aware of the contact of this Far Eastern conspiratorial group with representatives of the Japanese General Staff?

Yakir: Not precisely.

Blyukher: Did you not know that the Japanese General Staff was given some information about the Far Eastern Army?

Yakir: I was aware that Tukhachevsky through some section of Military Intellitence, evidently through the department of external relations, first of all, organized and planned to establish contact. He talked somehow about this with Karakhan. He asked, for example, Karakhan whether he

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could use his diplomatic relations on this issue.

Blyukher: About the Far East?

Yakir: About both. Tukhachevsky explored whether it was possible to contact the German ambassador in Turkey, if it would not be possible to establish contact with the Japanese attaché or another person through Karakhan's diplomatic contacts. I know quite definitely from Tukhachevsky's words that such information must be transmitted and, evidently, it was.

Blyukher: Do you know the nature of the information

transmitted?

Yakir: No, I don't.

Blyukher: And you do not know if it was in Moscow or on the

spot?

Yakir: I told you about what was transmitted in Moscow.

Blyukher: Gamarnik did not tell you anything about the

eastern line [of work]?

Yakir: No.

Blyukher: In all matters related to the defense of the Far East, the Ural Military District is of great importance. A person close to you personally sat in the Ural Military District. What assignments did you give the Ural Military District to weaken its defense capability and what did the Ural Military District do?

Yakir: I said that all the common assignments of the rear districts, including the Ural, consisted primarily of a very serious slowdown in the preparation of specialties that were in short supply, without which second-line reserves, units and reinforcements would not have been combat-ready.

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I know that this work was carried out. In addition to this, work was also carried out in major bases and other storage areas. Here I cannot say exactly what was done in the Urals and Siberia, except for what I stated in my confession about the Chelyabinsk airdrome.

Blyukher: You also do not know what has been done in the Urals?

Yakir: There was a slowdown in the preparation of several shortages.

Blyukher: Was Garkavy reporting on his work or not?

Yakir: He did not report to me. I have already talked about the violation of preparation of reserves and the rear, in way of special shortages.

Blyukher: What do you know about the Siberian Military District, Transbaikalia? What were the special assignments of the counterrevolutionary organization on the railroads of the Far Eastern Territory? Were there special assignments on roads in peacetime and in wartime?

Yakir: In wartime, it was necessary to create difficulties in the food supply and material equipment and to disrupt the railways.

Blyukher: What wrecking work was carried out in the direction of Mongolia?

Yakir: I know nothing about this work.

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Dybenko: When exactly did you personally begin to conduct espionage work in favor of the German General Staff?

Yakir: I did not personally and directly begin this work.

Dybenko: Did you have an assignment when you visited Germany?

Yakir: I visited Germany in 1929 when I was studying. At that time, the relations between the USSR and Germany were completely different and I had no assignments then. I knew exactly all the subsequent contacts, but I personally had no contacts.

Dybenko: In case of failure, did you not establish that in addition to espionage wrecking work, you should also engage in provocation?

Yakir: I do not understand the question.

Dybenko: For example, to frame an honest commander.

Yakir: No, there were no such conversations. And, as can be seen from my confession, to which I draw the attention of the Court, I am, as repentant, afraid of other mistakes.

Dybenko: In the case of the transfer of a commander recruited into your spying wrecking organization from one district to another, was a report transmitted about him, did you give him a contact? Let's say such a commander from Uborevich was transferred to you, were you informed that he was recruited into the organization?

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Yakir: There was no need for this, because we informed each other. In particular, nobody was transferred from Uborevich to me. If a new person appeared, it was believed that he was sent additionally.

Dybenko: For example, you were not told that Timoshenko was specially sent. You did not have such information?

Yakir: No, I didn't. On the contrary, I considered him to be an absolutely honest person.

Dybenko: Did you know that Gamarnik had been a Trotskyite since 1921?

Yakir: I knew that Gamarnik had been a Trotskyite since 1921.

Dybenko: In 1923, Mikhail Vasilyevich Frunze came to Kiev to make a report at a party conference. Who did the abstract for him, you or Gamarnik?

Yakir, Golubenko and the Kiev Trotskyites arranged the abstract for Frunze and me. Check the historical materials

and the transcripts, and you will see that I had nothing to do with it.

Dybenko: Were you a Trotskyite in 1923?

Yakir: No.

Shaposhnikov: Yakir, please tell me, the area of Lvov and the South from causes difficulties for a concentrate on the opposite side. Why did you choose the Letichev district to weaken it?

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Yakir: Because it is on the routes most open and accessible for large forces and because the city of Novograd-Volynsk, on the other side is the corridor along which the Polish-German forces will certainly go, because they will encounter on the other side a huge number of rivers in a wooded area. Therefore, the most dangerous, most threatened area is the Letichev direction, because fewer pairs of trains would be served in the Lvov-Rovno region, since this is the most intense direction. Lvov leads directly to Proskurov, and Proskurov to Letichev.

Belov: When, where and by whom was Garkavy recruited?

Yakir: I could hardly tell you exactly even if I wanted to. I had the first conversation with him of a definitely counterrevolutionary nature, most likely at the very beginning of the spring of 1935. From this conversation I got the impression that he was aware of it, and I did not have to drawn him in and recruit him, i.e. he developed the course of my thoughts. I cannot precisely say for sure that my first conversation with him was about recruiting him.

Belov: Was there an attempt to recruit Fesenko?

Yakir: I did not made any attempts to recruit Fesenko.

Belov: Was Veklichev recruited or not?

Yakir: He was recruited, I had a definite conversation with him. Apparently he was recruited by Gamarnik. In any case, I had a conversation with him of a counterrevolutionary nature and stated this in my confession.

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The President: Did you transmit any information about the fortified areas of the Kiev district to the German General Staff?

Yakir: No. It was said that some part of the Letichev fortified area was transferred by Sablin.

The President: Were you an enemy, when you planned the restructuring of fortified areas?

Yakir: No, I outlined it in the most conscientious manner. I reported that there may be mistakes, but the strengthening of the regions in general from the north to the south was done within the framework of the greatest tactical comprehension.

The President: How, specifically, was the sabotage expressed at military airfields?

Yakir: By limitation. We deliberately did not expand military airfields.

The President: You did this deliberately?

Yakir: No, we didn't decide this deliberately, but we built airfields of differing sizes, and then we deliberately delayed their construction and did not enlarge them.

The President: You testified about Uritsky. You wrote in your confessions that ht told you the approximately the following:

(reads an excerpt from Yakir's confessions)⁶. In the same confessions you wrote that Uritsky was on good terms with you.

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Yakir: I mentioned that Uborevich and I visited him several times. I do not call him a participant in the conspiracy, I'm just telling you how it was. He cultivated us, and not just us. We had conversations in which he sometimes described the state of things in the German army very thickly, i.e. he overestimated it somewhat, except for the question of the air force, which he underestimated. We talked in his presence and the conversations were of such a nature that it would seem that he should see and feel and understand their anti-Soviet character. At the same time, I said that I did not recruit him and I can't say whether he is a member of the organization.

Kashirin: Accused Yakir, in December 1936 there was a war game in the Kiev military district. The command staff of three districts -- Kiev, Kharkov and North Caucasus, were invited to this game. An extremely difficult situation was created there for the army; there advanced and threatened on the left flank, let's say, Romania, and on the remaining front of the army a difficult situation was created. I decided to withdraw the army from this position, and I had the opportunity to do so. You wrote me a note that if were a real war, then such a decision would be correct, but since we were at a game, we need to accustom the commanding staff to other situations.

⁶ This is from R-9000, tom 12. Sledstvennoe delo Yakira I.E, l.d.87 (P-9000, т.12. Следственное дело Якира И.Э., Л.д. 87): "Being arrested on May 22, when I arrived in Moscow on the 24th, I was questioned for the first time on the 25th, and today on May 26 I declare that I acknowledge the existence of an anti-Soviet military-Trotskyist conspiracy and that I was in the leadership of it."

Now I have a question, was such a conduct of the game of a certain form

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to consciously educate the top command of our army for a future defeat. Wasn't there wrecking here?

Yakir: No, I recommended to create very difficult situations in the game. As for the note (which I don't remember), apparently, it concerned a conversation about education. In this game, in my opinion, everything was thought out and done as it should.

Kashirin: During the analysis, you put forward two individuals, Tsvetkov and Iordanov, as people who had performed well. They later turned out to be enemies of the people. Was this business accidental, or did you consciously put forward them, as counterrevolutionaries known to you and participants in the conspiracy?

Yakir: I knew nothing about their counterrevolutionary work. I put them forward thanks to your good recommendation. Moreover, these were new people, guests, and it was necessary to speak well of them. Only for these reasons did I give a good evaluation of the work of the staff and these people.

Kashirin: Was Berezkin, Comrade Alksnis' former political assistant, recruited by you?

Yakir: No.

Budyonny: What do you know about the Byelorussian military district, in which fortified areas is there wrecking, like in Letichev?

Yakir: I can't say exactly. We had information that similar work was underway

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in the Minsk district, but in the form of the phrase that similar work would be carried out in the Minsk region. In my confessions I mentioned Minsk and Polotsk as fortified areas, but the main focus was on the Minsk direction.

Budyonny: Another question on the Far East: Who was going to replace Blyukher and what measures and when were they taken by Gamarnik to have Blyukher removed?

Yakir: There is absolutely definite evidence and in the protocol I showed that for the entire period of my being in hostile positions, I did not support any slander against Blyukher, to which Blyukher himself and a number of other persons can witness. But when the question was that, supposedly, the Far East had more trouble, that criticism of Blyukher was brought to such a state that a bad situation was created, Uborevich came to the People's Commissar and asked him to be sent to the Far East. I know that he did this for two reasons: Uborevich did not want to leave the Byelorussian district. When he was appointed to Moscow as the chief of one of the central administrations, he decided that if he left, then he would go to a crucial theater, where it was possible to carry on the work. He told me and Tukhachevsky that such an initiative was shown on his part and he posed such a question to the People's Commissar.

(The President announces a break of 15 minutes)

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The President: The session continues.

Accused Tukhachevsky, do you confirm the confessions you gave during the preliminary investigation?

Tukhachevsky: Yes.

The President: Tell us in which year and in what connection with what you joined the anti-Soviet organization and subsequently became the head of this organization?

Tukhachevsky: I regard my entry into the organization as of 1932. Until that time, I had separate ties with anti-Party and anti-Soviet elements, but I was not a member of an anti-Soviet organization.

From the time of the Civil War I considered it my duty to work for the benefit of the Soviet state. I was a faithful member of the party, but I had certain, I would not say political vacillations, but vacillations of a personal order related to my official position.

By the way, I always and at every occasion have spoken out against Trotsky during discussions, just as I have against the Rights. I was the chief of staff of the Red Army, during the time of the Rykov commission. In this commission I always defended the maximum investment in the cause of the military industry, etc. So I did not take the positions of the Rights.

And later on, while in the Leningrad Military District, I always upheld the maximum development of the Red Army, its technical development, its reconstruction, the development of its units, and all this is connected with the development of industry

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etc. But at the same time, dissatisfaction with the leadership of the army at a later time pushed me into unprincipled ties and later also to ties with anti-Soviet elements.

I had a conversation with Yenukidze in 1928. He said that the policy of the Rights was correct, and the general line of the party was wrong. In 1930, Yenukidze told me that the victory of the party's general line had not been decided, that the

Rights had gone underground and would fight illegally for their positions.

At the same time, as the commander of the forces of the Leningrad Military District, I contacted a number of participants of the so-called Tolmachev opposition, although in my mind I did not share the point of view of the Tolmachevites.

Finally, when in 1932 Romm brought me Trotsky's proposal to gather together the Trotskyite cadres, I agreed. Thus, I consider the beginning of our military conspiracy organization to be in 1932.

The President: You claim that you joined the anti-Soviet activity in 1932. And your espionage activity, you do not consider it anti-Soviet? It started much earlier.

Tukhachevsky: I do not know whether it could be considered espionage. I informed von Züller about data on the organization of our division, on the organization of forces, on the deployment of forces in the border districts. All these are secret questions, which I did not have the right to report. However, at the same time, these data are not strictly secret.

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For example, information about the deployment of forces abroad can be bought in a store. I repeat, I divulged military secrets and therefore it can be qualified as espionage activity, but in essence that began in 1932.

The President: In the confession given by you during the preliminary investigation, the following is recorded: (Testimony is read)

Thus, it turns out that back in 1925-26 you were associated with agents of German and Polish intelligence, i.e. when you were not yet the head of the organization.

Tukhachevsky: This activity of mine must be qualified as actions in favor of intelligence of the German and Polish military headquarters. I repeat, this does not minimize my guilt in anti-state actions, but I just want to clarify here the development of this matter.

The President: I want clarify everything about your anti-Soviet counterrevolutionary activities. Back in 1925, you were associated with Züller and Dombal and were an agent of both Polish and German intelligence. After all, you knew that you were dealing not just with a curious man, but with a foreign intelligence officer.

Tukhachevsky: Absolutely. I repeat that I do not want to minimize my confessions. I just want to clarify that at that time we had close relations with the Germans.

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We had one common adversary – Poland. In this sense, as I have already said, there were further conversations with General Adam. With General Adam we talked about our common assignments in war against Poland, while the German officers recalled the experience of 1920, it was established that the German government then did not oppose Poland.

I repeat again that this can be qualified and should qualify as espionage activity.

The President: Your statement that you had one opponent, Poland, is refuted by your statement that you were simultaneously connected with German officers and with the Polish spy officer Dombal.

Tukhachevsky: I did not know that Dombal was a Polish spy. Dombal was admitted to the Soviet Union as a member of parliament who advocated the defeat of the Polish army and the draft in the Red Army upon its entry into Warsaw. My

acquaintance and meetings with him was from this angle. I knew him as a member of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party. I did not know about his espionage activities, but anyway, I still had no right to tell him this secret information. Since he turned out to be a Polish spy, I bear full responsibility as participating in espionage in favor of Poland

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The President: It was back in 1926, but weren't you connected with individual officers of the German army in the period 1926-1932?

Tukhachevsky: In 1931, when General Adam arrived in Moscow, he was accompanied by officer Nickelberg. At the banquet, which was arranged in honor of General Adam, I had a conversation with Nickelberg (later General Adam joined us) that we had close relations with the General Staff, that Poland was our common adversary and that it was necessary to establish closer relations. I agreed with that.

In 1932, when I was in Germany on maneuvers, General Adam resumed conversation on these topics. He said that we need to thoroughly prepare for a war with Poland, that Poland is a serious adversary. I said that we are preparing seriously, that 150 divisions have been deployed, and from this he could see how serious our preparation was.

The President: And during the visit to the USSR by General Bokerberg,⁷ did you give him any information?

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 $^{^{7}}$ Probably Alfred von Vollard-Bockelberg, General of Artillery and Chief of the army weapons office.

Tukhachevsky: In 1933, General Bokerberg was allowed to visit a number of our artillery and aircraft factories. As far as I remember, these were the 8th Aviation Plant, the Tula Arms Plant and the 1st Artillery Plant. Although I had no right, I informed general Bokerberg, when he visited these factories, about their productivity.

The President: And from 1926 to 1930, did you transmit the relevant information to the German staff?

Tukhachevsky: After I was on maneuvers, I did not meet with anyone.

The President: Consequently, the first time you transmitted information to the German General Staff was in 1925-1926?

Tukhachevsky: Yes.

The President: Then communication was restored with General Adam, the Chief of the General Staff in 1930-1931-1932?

Tukhachevsky: In 1931, on the day of the arrival of General Adam in Moscow and in 1932 during maneuvers in Germany.

The President: In this period of time, until 1932, i.e. before organizing the center, which is now the subject of our discussion, were you connected with the German General Staff and, through Dombal, with Polish intelligence?

Tukhachevsky: This was in the manner of personal

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meetings.

The President: What goals did you pursue by informing German officers about the activities of the Red Army?

Tukhachevsky: This stemmed from our conversations about the joint assignments of defeating Poland. Before Hitler came to power, we had close relations with the German General Staff.

The President: You say that you have been an agent of German intelligence since 1925. If you communicated the information to the German General Staff in close relations between the headquarters of the Soviet Army and Germany, you should have received the appropriate permission from the highest government bodies. It's something different than you are showing now.

Tukhachevsky: In my confession it is indicated that I gave secret information to von Tsulov, whom I had no right to tell him. I did not inform anyone about this.

The President: How was the center of the military organization organized, by whose directive and what assignments did the center set?

Tukhachevsky: The center was formed and developed at different times. Apart from me, the center included Gamarnik, S.S. Kamenev, Uborevich, Yakir, Feldman, Eideman, and then Primakov and Kork. The center was not elected, but the named group met most frequently.

The President: Since what year has Gamarnik taken part in this center?

Tukhachevsky: Since 1934.

Question: How do you explain that in your confessions

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the surname Gamarnik was not mentioned at first?

Tukhachevsky: At first I didn't tell everything to the investigation, as I said. Later, I told everything.

The President: So at different times the center included Gamarnik and Kamenev. Since what year?

Tukhachevsky: S.S. Kamenev since 1933, Feldman since 1932, Eideman from 1932-1933, Kork from about the same time, Yakir since 1934, Uborevich and Gamarnik also since 1934.

The President: What was the relationship within the center between you and Gamarnik? Were you considered the leader?

Tukhachevsky: I was for Western affairs and Gamarnik for Eastern affairs.

The President: So you were the leader of the organization for the Western theater of operations. But who recognized whose authority? Were you Gamarnik's authority or were Gamarnik yours?

Tukhachevsky: I would say that there was a kind of double center here.

The President: Do you consider yourself the head of the center? This runs as a red thread in all confessions.

Tukhachevsky: Gamarnik entered the center later, but his authority was higher than mine. Then, when Yakir and Uborevich joined the organization, Yakir was closely associated with Gamarnik and Gamarnik's role grew. The situation was this way: I would not say that Gamarnik was only for Eastern affairs, he was also in charge of financial issues and construction. When S.S. Kamenev was appointed head of the air defense, he was in charge of the entire economy and carried out work on these lines. In particular, the harmful work of Gamarnik in terms of finance, I would describe in such a way that under the flag of carrying out

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a policy of financial discipline Gamarnik conducted policy so that each time by the end of the year we had hundreds of millions of rubles left on unused orders. This was done intentionally, of course. Naturally, it was necessary to raise the question of allowing the permutation of pay items and paragraphs of expenditure. Gamarnik never allowed this, and thus we had huge unused credits (in the line of approving estimates, approving projects and setting up the sanitary-technical part for barracks construction, building materials, etc.).

The President: What assignments did the center set for itself during the period 1932-33, what directives did the center receive, and from whom exactly?

Tukhachevsky: First of all, before the creation of the conspiracy center, I had established relations with Yenukidze, who said that the right-wingers would go underground, that the military should keep in touch with him, who would be a connecting element between the Rights and me. Then in 1932, Romm was sent from Trotsky. This was approximately in August or September.

The President: What did he say to you?

Tukhachevsky: Romm gave me, in Trotsky's name, the assignment of organizing and bringing together the Trotskyite cadres in the army. Since the beginning had already been established by me, I gave my consent. I believed that a significant number of military commanders could be recruited and comply with Trotsky's directive. Later, in 1933-34 (I'm not sure

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about the date) Romm gave me a directive from Trotsky that we should re-evaluate Hitler's coming to power as a favorable factor and all measures should be taken to strengthen fascist power in Germany.

I should add that back in 1932, Romm had told me that Trotsky was counting on Hitler's coming to power and was sure that Hitler would support him, Trotsky, thanks to which we could count upon the overthrow of Soviet power. Then in 1933-34 Romm confirmed to me that fascism supported Trotsky, and therefore the latter demanded the activation of our work, especially in the area of organizing sabotage and terrorist activity in the army.

Around this time in 1933-34, I drew Primakov into the conspiracy ...

The President: ... not just him, but with his whole group.

Tukhachevsky: ... I am speaking of Primakov. He told me that he was in contact with Piatakov, who was the leader of the Trotskyite center in Moscow. After that I got into personal contact with Piatakov.

The President: Personal contact?

Tukhachevsky: Yes. Then, in 1935-36, Piatakov told me of the plan of a determined aggression by the German army, which would be linked with the loss by the USSR of the Ukraine and Primorye. He confirmed Trotsky's directives of 1935, which were set forth in a letter from Sedov and in oral form [by] Putna. Trotsky then gave me the assignment of activating the work as much as possible. Finally, Putna arranged for me a meeting with Sedov in 1936.

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In accordance with Trotsky's instructions that it was necessary to establish contact with the German General Staff, in London in 1936 I had a talk with General Rundstedt of the German General Staff. He told me that he knew that I was leading a conspiracy and that he had instructions to talk with me. I said that the conspiracy indeed existed and that it was led by me. I asked Rundstedt where the main forces of the

German army would attack, and I referred to Trotsky's directive that we should organize defeat where the German army would be in action. Then I asked Rundstedt when we should expect the intervention. He said that he did not know where the main German forces will be, but defeat must be prepared in the Ukraine. Regarding the beginning of the intervention, Rundstedt told me that this was a question that was difficult to answer: the war was supposed to start in 1937, but the difficulties of forming the Reichswehr were too great to start the German attack in 1937. In the development of this assignment of Trotsky and Rundstedt, after the military games in April 1936, a thorough discussion of the plan of defeat took place between Yakir, Uborevich and myself. It is true that, even before that, in 1935, there was talk between the three of us about operational wrecking, but in the final form they were worked out precisely in that period, i.e. in the spring of 1936. Yakir and Uborevich were instructed by me to work out this question concretely, since I had to inform General Koestring, the military attaché in Moscow, for final approval.

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In connection with the arrests in the month of July 1936, the center decided to temporarily curtail work and, therefore, operational developments were not actually completed, and my conversation with General Koestring did not take place.

Will you allow me to confess or only to reply to your questions?

The President: You have reached 1936. Tell me, what was your relationship with the Rights, with the anti-Soviet Bukharin-Rykov group, did you have an agreement with them?

Tukhachevsky: Through Gorbachev I learned that the "palace coup" was being prepared. This was when he returned from the Far East, hence, in 1933, at a session of the Central Executive Committee. After that, I went to Yenukidze and asked what this conspiracy meant. He said that he had already given instructions to inform me about this matter, i.e. that military workers, in particular Kork, Gorbachev and Peterson, were preparing a coup against the government in the Kremlin. After that, I talked in detail about this case with Kork. In 1935, when the question of the exclusion of Yenukidze from the party was being considered, Yenukidze told me that his case would probably greatly affect the preparation of the "palace coup", but the preparation would continue because it was connected with the leadership of the GPU. After that, I didn't speak with Yenukidze again.

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I spoke to Bukharin in 1933, when he was sick. At that time he was in charge of the department for scientific institutions of the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry. I went to Bukharin's apartment with an engineer named Popov.

After Bukharin had ended the conversation with Popov and said goodbye to him, he held my hand and began to say that Stalin's policy was reckless, that it was necessary to organize the work of the Rights and, in particular, work in the Red Army which he knew about. This conversation was short, because Popov stopped at the door. Then there was a conversation between us in the Central Committee building in 1934. Bukharin told me that things were going well in the Kremlin and that the army needed to be ready for this as well. I said that we would take measures to complete this assignment.

I didn't have any conversations with Rykov.

The President: Bukharin spoke with you as head of a military organization?

Tukhachevsky: Yes.

The President: Which ones of the accused in this case were personally associated with the organization and planning of the conspiracy in the Kremlin?

Tukhachevsky: Gorbachev and Kork.

The President: Were you aware of the case and approved it? Was a concrete plan developed in your presence?

Tukhachevsky: No, Kork only reported to me,

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moreover, Kork believes that he informed me about this before 1934, but in all probability I didn't catch it then. I understood this only from a conversation with Gorbachev at the end of 1933.

The President: What has been undertaken by your center, by you personally or by persons associated with you, to prepare terrorist acts?

Tukhachevsky: Primakov in 1933-34, when I involved him in the organization, told me that Turovsky together with Shmidt was preparing a terrorist act against Voroshilov in the Ukraine. In 1935, Primakov said that in Leningrad he was preparing a terrorist group against party and government members, primarily against Voroshilov. Finally, the "palace coup" can also be considered a terrorist organization.

The President: Your relationship with the Germans continued until very recently. With whom personally was the defeat plan of the Red Army agreed?

Tukhachevsky: With Rundstedt. He set this assignment.

The President: Rundstedt talked with you, as with the leader of a military conspiracy. Were there no conditions between you for the conversation?

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Tukhachevsky: He spoke to me as the head of a military conspiracy. This happened in London, where Rundstedt told me that further work should be in contact with General Koestring. But I did not finish this assignment, as arrests began, and the conversation with Koestring did not take place, though I should have talked with him.

All members of the center knew about all this.

The President: Which ones of the members of the center named by you were directly involved in the conspiracy until May, besides yourself?

Tukhachevsky: In my opinion, everyone except the arrested Primakov and Putna. The second half of 1936 and the first half of 1937 took place under the sign of hiding our plans, with the exception of the Far East, to which Gamarnik was traveling during the fall of 1936, where Lapin and Aronshtam were.

The President: Who was the direct representative of your organization in the Far East and who headed the group there, Aronshtam, Lapin or Sangursky?

Tukhachevsky: Frankly, I did not know about Sangursky. I even had the impression that Sangursky

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was a supporter of Blyukher. At least, in conversations with me, Sangursky very intensely fought against those directives that were set forth by Lapin, Putna, and others. The fact is that Lapin developed the theory that since this theater of war is a mountain taiga area, then ...

The President: ... This is not what interests me. I'm interested in who was in charge in the Far East?

Tukhachevsky: Gamarnik.

The President: Did you talk directly about these matters with Gamarnik before 1937?

Tukhachevsky: Yes, the fact is that I personally don't know this theater of war because I was not an active person in this sense. Gamarnik knew the Far East very well. In addition, he was associated with Lapin.

I don't know anything about Sangursky. I got the impression that he, on the contrary, was leading a line against Lapin. But maybe I'm wrong.

The President: The accused Kork in his confession said that during your trip abroad you had a meeting with Goering.

Tukhachevsky: No, this is not true. I have not met Goering. Kork must be confused.

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The President: Accused Kork, are your confessions about Tukhachevsky's personal meeting with Goering based on the words of Tukhachevsky?

Kork: On the words of Tukhachevsky. Maybe I really did confuse the last name. But I remember well that the meeting took place and that Tukhachevsky talked about the actions of our organizations with German generals.

The President: (turning to the accused Tukhachevsky) Do you confirm the essence of this conversation?

Tukhachevsky: Yes.

The President: Another clarifying question: during the existence of this center, from 1932 to 1937, until the day of your arrest, in addition to the names you listed, with whom else did you meet and speak with about anti-Soviet topics?

Tukhachevsky: Who among the Germans (?)

The President: Who among foreign intelligence or military officers.

Tukhachevsky: Only with Koestring. Koestring told me at one of the receptions in Moscow that he was very glad that Putna maintained good relations with the Germans. I told him that this was being done on my instructions. Besides this conversation, there was no contact.

The center transmitted the main espionage data at official meetings.

The President: But did you transmit through Putna?

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Tukhachevsky: Yes, Putna was abroad and had the opportunity.

The President: Do you know that Putna was transmitting information to officers of the German General Staff?

Tukhachevsky: Yes.

The President: Accused Putna, do you confirm this claim?

Putna: I confirm my confession in this part. This was done by direct order from Tukhachevsky.

The President: With which one of the officers of the German headquarters did you have contacts on this issue?

Putna: This officer was officially a journalist in London.

The President: I ask, what is his last name?

Putna: Captain Saltzman [Zal'tsman].

The President: To which year does this refer?

Putna: 1936.

The President: Be seated.

The President: Have you met with a representative of Polish

intelligence in recent years?

Tukhachevsky: No. May I supplement my confession?

The President: Please do.

Tukhachevsky: I would like add concerning some basic questions of wrecking.

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The President: I have another question. Who, handed over to Polish intelligence some data of the Letichev district, and who issued this assignment,?

Tukhachevsky: I personally.

The President: Please add what you wanted.

Tukhachevsky: I would like to draw attention to the fact that the question of the defeat of the army arose from those, or rather, adapted to the difficulties that arose on the Western border. The fact is that our operational plan does not sufficiently assess the forces of Germany and Poland. Previously, we were using the very forces that, until recently, in our operational plan, were going to finish the Polish army on Polish territory, by setting out to hit the enemy on its territory and that these forces of ours were sufficient. However, from the moment Hitler came to power, the situation changed. It was truly hard to believe that the Germans would enter Poland. In the war games held by the

German [General] Staff in 1936-37, the Germans participated actively in Polish territory.

Under these conditions, if we calculate the strength of the Germans on the basis of the deployment of mobilization of not 35 divisions, then their preparation will undoubtedly be completed this year and they will be able to put into the Polish theatre a large force of at least 60-61 divisions.

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The Polish-German block has more strength than we [must] have in order to break this block. I think therefore (the president interrupts).

The President: Please stick more closely to the question that you wanted to talk about.

Tukhachevsky: This implies the fact that our Byelorussian front, which must overcome a very narrow corridor between Latvia and Lithuania from the north and purely swampy Polesia from the south and have forces (the president interrupts).

The President: Stick closer to the subject.

Tukhachevsky: The Byelorussian front becomes a very difficult situation when it approaches the ethnographic border with Poland. Therefore, we can certainly say that we do not have enough forces to defeat the enemy. Therefore, under these conditions, a situation is created when even individual acts of sabotage, say, by individual commanders, can upset the whole thing. If in this case there was organized wrecking, then the damage could be extremely serious. In particular, let's say, during the movement of the Byelorussian Front, if insufficient forces had been put in the direction of Prussia, it would suffer a dangerous blow to the flanks in the rear. If we add to this that the Byelorussian Front stretches into a very narrow strip, that

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it is difficult to use air power, then the superiority in organizing the rear and air power is, under such conditions, on the side of the enemy. Thus, the situation of the Byelorussian Front can be very serious. To this we must add the fact that we planned wrecking activities in the form of preparation and demolition of railway bridges over the Berezina and the Dnieper and where, according to the situation, it would prove more important. These assignments in the Byelorussian district were assigned to Appoga and Uborevich.

The Ukrainian front: if the Germans captured the Letichev fortified area, and then advanced to the rear, they could capture the Zhmerinsky and Volynsky fortified areas, occupy the right bank, and send part of their forces to Zhlobin and the deep rear of the Byelorussian Front.

These questions was supposed to be developed by Uborevich and Yakir at their headquarters. What they have done on this issue, I can't say, because we have slowed down this work.

I must say that the lack of armed forces, the lack of infantry divisions, which I spoke about, is not an accidental matter.

The center raised this question with Alafuzo, who brought Satin into our organizational work. The center assigned them of delaying the development of the number of infantry divisions of the Red Army. The need for infantry

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divisions, at least 200 of them, were very great. Under the guise of difficulties, with the accumulation of material parts, construction, etc., the organization delayed the development of the number of divisions and this put the Red Army in a difficult position.

This I consider one of the biggest acts of sabotage that our organization has done.

In addition, we held back the development of artillery reserves and tank reserves of the high command. All tanks were included in the division, but the tanks that could be moved immediately were not enough at the main command.

Concerning artillery a similar assignment was given to Olshevsky and Zhelezhnyakov. They carried out work in the field of fire protection system. For example, the storage depots were not fire-resistant, and this is extremely important, because experience has shown that shells explode from frequent fires. The mechanization of loading and unloading operations and the construction of the approaches to the fire storage facilities were delayed.

Yefimov, instructed so by the center, reduced the norms of fire supplies that were needed for the training of artillerists. I must say that our artillery men are young, they need to shoot a lot and a lot of shells are required. We have a large number of shells for this, but Appoga always found reasons to delay the release of shells

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for this very important purpose.

We have slowed down the work on remote detonators. Then, in contact with the mobilization workers Ermakov and Krazhevsky, Yefimov worked to slow down the preparation of industrial mobilization.

The fact is that the mobilization of industry can be carried out quickly only if a lot of work is carried out in peacetime, and this requires a lot of time and a lot of money.

This work is included in the preparation of designs.

A number of other wrecking activities were conducted along the artillery line. In addition, Yefimov and Olshevsky were given the assignment of preparing sabotage acts in the largest artillery storages at the time of outbreak of war.

In the area of chemical management, the work was carried out by Rokhinson and Gendler, recruited by him, then Yanel. By agreement with Rataichak, they carried out a slowdown in the development of arsenic, etc. Then they delayed the production of high-quality activated carbon, high-quality chemical absorbers, and did not complete work conerning long-term storage of chemical substances. Further, through the military communications, Appoga instructed to carry out work on creating confusion in operative transportation, on preparing sabotage acts. Work was done to slow down the reconstruction of railway nodes on the front line and to slow down the auto-blocking of railways

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leading to the border theaters. Appoga carried out this work together with employees from the People's Commissariat of Transportation.

In addition, Appoga with my consent reported data on the strategic transportation of the Red Army to the German and Japanese General Staffs. This is known to me from Appoga's own words. Then Feldman informed the Germans about the command structure of the army. Eideman informed them about the training of pilots at Osoviakhim. Yefimov also handed over to Koestring data on the number of firing ranges in the Red Army.

Concerning wrecking work in engineering, this was carried out by Maksimov in the central office.

Mechanization was delayed in military engineer units. I recruited Naumov, a former Deputy of Alksnis, and Lapin,

through the air force. They prepared materials for the flight training plan in a way that eliminated the necessary sequencing, which led to unnecessary accidents and disasters.

In the Far East, Lapin slowed down the implementation of replacement crews on airplanes. In the Far Eastern Region, airfields are close to the borders and daily tours of duty are required.

Khrustalev, a member of the organization in the management of the air force, slowed down the work of parachute assault in the field of material preparation of this question.

In combat training, a lot of wrecking work was carried out by a former inspector of infantry named Vasilenko.

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He headed not for combat rifle training, but on target practice, and the system he built was such that it was possible to beat 100%. The desire for such shooting brought a stir to the combat situation. Because of the instructions issued by Yefimov. A lot of rifle stocks had to be thrown out and replaced with new ones, rifles were ruined until the Party Control Commission took up the case. In addition to this, Alafuzo and Vasilenko conducted the organization of regimental schools in such a way that they existed in the territorial units, but they were not in the cadre units, so the military training of the commanders was at a very low level. The schools have a very high educational standard, but now the staffs were built in such a way that a young commander was the direct teacher, and even long-time soldiers but with a very low level of training. The combat training was set very low and the quality was far from what it should be and what we want to instill in our commanders.

Due to the fact that Volpe in the Administrative Mobilization Department carried out wrecking work in mobilization training, and that there is no registration of specialists in our country, and in certain specialties this registration is of great importance, because the number of specialists is very limited.

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During a test mobilization, the conscripts are from one unit to another and vice versa. There is a great deal of intricate work that requires revision and district and military commissariat work in the field. In addition, it is necessary to specify how to point out wrecking work in the military callup and in dismissal. Recruitment and dismissal are carried out very slowly. For the European part it takes 2 months, and for the Special Red Banner Far Eastern Army much longer. and the instruction plan is calculated as a result of this not for 12 months, but for 10 or even 9. These terms can be significantly reduced. Thus, I repeat, wrecking work was organized along all lines, from which I return to the most dangerous one, requiring a fundamental change -- the wrecking work to reduce the number of infantry divisions. Without this, the position of the Red Army is extremely difficult. There are not enough artillery reserves for the command. If we pushed a little and gave additional funds, and I think there would be no problem in doing so, then our position would benefit greatly, and the Polish-German bloc could be defeated by the Red Army.

The President: You are not giving a lecture or a report, but making a confession.

Tukhachevsky: I am talking about the wrecking cases that we carried out. These are the main points of wrecking, espionage and sabotage, which I can tell you about.

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I want to assure you that I said all that I know on the basic questions.

The President: Do you remember the statement that you submitted to the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs, Comrade Yezhov, and one phrase: "I headed the counterrevolutionary military" .. (reads) ... Is this right?8

Tukhachevsky: That's right.

The President: You sent a greeting after the fascist coup to Goering and Hitler on the occasion of them coming to power?

Tukhachevsky: I instructed Eideman to convey greetings to Colonel Hartman.

The President: Accused Eideman, do you confirm this?

Eideman: Yes, I was instructed by Tukhachevsky to convey greetings to Colonel Hartman personally, in connection with the victory of the fascists.

Dybenko: You and the accused Uborevich were negotiating with the French General Schweisguth whether after the arrival of the "Napoleonic" dictatorship of Tukhachevsky this power would be supported by the French government.

⁸ Three are two possible sources for this statement in the Tukhachevsky investigative files. First: R-9000. T. 12. Sledstvennoe delo Tukhachevskogo M.N., l.d.9 (P-9000, т.12. Следственное дело Тухачевского М.Н., Л.д. 9: "Being arrested on May 22, when I arrived in Moscow on the 24th, I was questioned for the first time on the 25th, and today on May 26 I declare that I acknowledge the existence of an anti-Soviet military-Trotskyist conspiracy and that I was at the head of it." Second: R-9000. T. 12. Sledstvennoe delo Tukhachevskogo M.N., l.d.22 (P-9000, т.12. Следственное дело Тухачевского М.Н., л.д.22): "I was exposed as the leader of the anti-Soviet military-Trotskyite conspiracy; and so I had no choice but to admit my guilt to the Soviet government, which I did on May 26."

Tukhachevsky: I know that Uborevich confesses that he had such talks with General Schweisguth.

I personally spoke with General Gamelin, and therefore there was no need to resort to the mediation of Uborevich.

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Dybenko: Have you ever considered yourself a member of our party?

Tukhachevsky: Yes.

Dybenko: You pursued the defeat of our army. In 1921, you summoned the saboteur Putna to intensify the uprising near Kronstadt. In 1923 you refused to sign a statement against Trotsky. In 1918, as you say, you came to Russia, having escaped from captivity. It seems to me that you did not escape from captivity, but came as a German spy.

Tukhachevsky: I escaped from Germany before the October Revolution. Therefore, I couldn't have received such an assignment as the decomposition of the Soviet army. As for my speech against Trotsky in 1923, I personally wrote a report on this subject and sent it to the Central Committee. Ilyinsky knew about this, he also sent a report, and he and I wrote it for him. I myself wrote a report on the impossible confusion that had developed in the army, on the worthlessness of the leadership, etc.

Dybenko: You yourself write in your confession that since 1925 you carried out espionage work in favor of Poland and Germany. Your espionage activity was known to your leadership center, Uborevich, who invited you to go to Napoleon's grave in Paris, and was known to Yakir. Do you think that Yakir was

not only a wrecker, but also a spy directly connected with the German general staff?65

Tukhachevsky: Yes, every member of the center bears that responsibility.

Dybenko: What do you mean, bears responsibility?

Tukhachevsky: Is a spy.

Alksnis: Accused Tukhachevsky, in addition to Naumov, Lapin and Khrustalev, whom you have named, did you give anyone else any wrecking assignments in the air force?

Tukhachevsky: No.

Alksnis: And in the central apparatus?

Tukhachevsky: No. Alksnis: Or locally?

Tukhachevsky: No.

Budyonny: You said that Appoga passed the information to the General Staffs of Japan and Germany. On whose instruction?

Tukhachevsky: On the instruction of the center.

Budyonny: On yours?

Tukhachevsky: Yes.

Budyonny: Where did this transfer of information take place, on the spot or in Moscow?

Tukhachevsky: I cannot say anything about the technique or individuals. When I was looking at the railway center in Gorokhovtsi, Appoga informed me that

the assignment of the center for the transfer to the Japanese and German General Staffs was carried out by him together with employees in the People's Commissariat of Transportation.

Blyukher: What other information was transferred about the state of our affairs?

Tukhachevsky: I have no facts, but I repeat that work on the Far East was carried out directly by Gamarnik, who had a central apparatus here. All materials on the Far East were sent to him and they were in his possession. I know only the individual facts that I have confessed about. I consider it very important that Gamarnik deliberately delayed the construction of the Ulan Bator railway, which is a very important issue for the Red Army.

Blyukher: Through whom, and how, were the talks conducted concerning concession to German fascism of the Ukraine and of Primorye to Japan?

Tukhachevsky: It was Piatakov who told me, so really it was Trotsky through Piatakov, but it was Piatakov who personally told me this.

Blyukher: You agreed with this?

Tukhachevsky: How can you disagree if you are in the organization. This is a question, which it is very difficult to agree with, especially with the Far East and the Japanese, but here the logic of the way things developed prompted everything.

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Blyukher: Did the Center know about this, and conduct its work in this direction?

Tukhachevsky: Yes.

Blyukher: You said that General Rundstedt was interested, or rather, you were interested in where the main German forces would advance and you asked him to name this direction, but he refused. Tell me, was Rundstedt interested in where the main forces of the Red Army would advance, were there any such conversations?

Tukhachevsky: There was a conversation that the center of our conspiracy would discuss this directive of Rundstedt's, and I had to give an answer to him through General Koestring.

Blyukher: Did you give any information about the Red Army?

Tukhachevsky: No.

Dybenko: It is not clear how your business was organized in relation to the palace coup. You say that Gorbachev informed you that preparations were underway, but they did not report the plan to you? It cannot be that you, as the head of the center, was not interested in the plan for the palace coup.

Tukhachevsky: I was told about this, what was being prepared there with the help of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee [military] school and the NKVD employees: turning off the telephone line, etc., but I didn't know the details, since the conditions of the conspiracy did not allow me to get all the details.

Dybenko: Did Yakir know about this?

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Tukhachevsky: He knew. In general, we did not have meetings of the center at all but discussions were held on important, decisive issues.

Dybenko: How and by whom was the transfer of Gorbachev to Moscow prepared?

Tukhachevsky: From the Far East? I can't know that. I can add, if you allow me, one point that I forgot to mention at the investigation.

In general, with the movement of the commanding staff, a complete bacchanalia happened. This movement was reminiscent of what Trotsky had in 1923 with the staff: the staff changed every day. And every day we signed orders for the current staff ...

The President: ... We know that!

Member of the court: Accused Tukhachevsky, in your confession of May 27 you say that in 1935 information about the air force was transmitted by you to the German headquarters through Putna. Do you confirm this?

Tukhachevsky: Yes.

Member of the court: Where did you get this information?

Tukhachevsky: From Alafuzo.

Goryachev: Accused Tukhachevsky, did you set the assignment before Uborevich to destroy the cavalry in the Baranovsky direction? How exactly should this be expressed?

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Tukhachevsky: There was no such instruction, as you have stated it. The assignment was to create the most difficult conditions for the invading army, but designed in such a way that the cavalry was left without plenty of forage, in short, all this concerns the general question of the invasion army.

I had a separate exchange of opinions on this matter with Uborevich, but I have no knowledge of a comprehensive plan.

Goryachev: The confession of Uborevich says that he had an assignment from you to "in the Baranovsky district ..." (cites an excerpt from the confession)⁹.

Tukhachevsky: Basically, I can't argue. Since such an operation was given as a whole, the details followed from it.

Dybenko: Accused Tukhachevsky, how can you combine this treason, betrayal and espionage since 1929 with the fact that you carried a party ticket? And how could you answer positively to my question whether you considered yourself a party member?

Tukhachevsky: I repeat that this work began with Uborevich and Yakir not in 1929,

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but much later, in 1932. Of course, there is a bifurcation: on the one hand I had a passionate love for the Red Army, a passionate love for the fatherland, which I defended from the Civil War, but at the same time, the logic of the struggle dragged me into these most profound crimes, in which I plead myself guilty.

Dybenko: How can you combine a passionate love for the homeland with treason and betrayal?

Tukhachevsky: I repeat that the logic of the struggle, when you take the wrong path, leads to betrayal and treason.

⁹ This is from Uborevich's investigative file, R-9000, tom 13. Sledstvennoe delo Uborevicha I.Pl, l.d. 52ob (P-9000, т.13. Следственное дело Уборевича И.П., л.д. 52o6): "I participated in the development of a plan for the defeat of the Red Army and the USSR in the war with Germany, and as commander of the Belorussian Military District, I had to ensure defeat in this direction. In particular, I was aware of Tukhachevsky's plans on the Baranovichi sector, where it was supposed to let our cavalry to strengthen the Poles, where it was supposed to be destroyed."

Dybenko: According to the confession of Kork, it is clear that the Trotskyite organization and the traitor Rykov are auxiliary organs in order to implement the dictatorship of Tukhachevsky.

Tukhachevsky: No, I believe that the real relation of forces was such that our organization, our center, coordinated its actions with the organization of the Rights and Trotskyites. That's how it all

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worked out, but we did not have organized discussions about how power should develop.

Dybenko: Accused Kork, it is precisely stated in your confession that Tukhachevsky considered you a soldier, that you think he was building a coup based on Napoleon's plans.

Kork: Yes, I confirm that since 1936, when Tukhachevsky no longer veiled his personal dictatorial intentions in any way, it was clear to me.

Tukhachevsky: I had some kind of conversation with Kork at a party at his home after a plentiful dinner, but I can't tell you what I talked about there. In any case, we did not have organized conversations then at the party.

Shaposhnikov: If General Rundstedt discussed with you the direction of the German army, what specific instructions did he give concerning the Letichev district?

Tukhachevsky: No, he did not give any. We drew conclusions from the situation that might happen during wartime and considered it important to betray the Letichev fortified area to the Germans.

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Shaposhnikov: That is, leave these directions open?

Blyukher: That means that you yourselves prepared a plan for German fascism?

Tukhachevsky: Yes.

The President: The following is written in your confession: "The assignments of a military conspiracy ..." (read the confession). Do you confirm this?

Tukhachevsky: Yes, I confirm it.

The President: That means it must be added that you have been connected with German intelligence practically since 1925. Sit down please.

Accused Uborevich, do you confirm your confession at the preliminary investigation?

Uborevich: I confirm it.

The President: To what time does your entry into the anti-Soviet military organization relate?

Uborevich: Tukhachevsky involved me in an anti-Soviet military conspiracy. He tentatively probed me at the end of 1934, but in fact, I remember it well, set the assignments, and I took up their implementation in March 1935. This was preceded by some circumstances. If you allow me, I'll talk about them.

The President: Please do.

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Uborevich: From the end of 1933, Tukhachevsky and Yakir drew close to me and we began to wage an unprincipled struggle against the unity of the army leadership, against Voroshilov. This began my degeneration and put me on the brink to go further and carry out the assignments of the center. At the beginning of 1934, I did not have anti-Soviet ideas and, not knowing that Tukhachevsky was leading that

kind of work, I spoke up against his harmful plan to organize brigades instead of infantry divisions in the army. I remember well that in March 1935 he, in essence, set before me his whole plan of political and military activities, his first variant. Then he began by showing the inevitability of our defeat in the war against Japan, Germany and Poland, and our internal difficulties. He began to tell me that he was heading an organization, that he had contact with the Rights and with the Trotskyites. He did not return to the question at any later time. I realized that he pursued a policy at his own Thermidorian risk and therefore posed these questions and I began to implement both these ideas and practical questions of defeatism.

The first question he raised before me was the question of the enemy armies of invasion. This was not

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in 1936, after the war game, but I remember precisely that it was in March, or maybe in April 1935. In the beginning, not understanding what was happening, I argued that cavalry, without artillery, without a rearguard, with a small number of tanks deployed in fortified areas, would be defeated on the second day.

There were two strategic options for the Germans. The first option, was that the Red Army can be defeated ...

The President: Accused Uborevich, you are not giving a lecture here and you are not issuing a report. You, as a member of a conspiratorial organization, must tell us about your counterrevolutionary activity.

Uborevich: As a member of a conspiratorial organization, I accepted these instructions of Tukhachevsky's, was given the assignment of especially carefully selecting people for wrecking and conducting some questions of wrecking. These

are the questions of wrecking about which I will attempt to report, if the court permits.

The President: Tell us specifically what was done, on whose assignment, by you or other members of the centers and for what purpose you did it?

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Uborevich: The first question was the wrecking construction of artillery depots at the front line. He said that it would be a target easily accessible to the aircraft of the enemy and the destruction of these depots would deprive the units of combat equipment, so I gave the assignment to the District Construction Department, and then to Martynov and Abramov, to build warehouses at the front line, accessible to enemy aircraft.

The second question was the construction of gasoline bases open and accessible aircraft operations. On this issue, the assignment came from Moscow (I don't know through whom), but it arrived in the district and it was clearly wrecking, and I did not protest it..

The third question was about construction institutions. In general, there were a lot of separate wrecking assignments in the field of construction, the construction of hangars and outlets in Shaikovka went on in a wrecking manner, the base for repairing cars and tanks, etc. was not developed, and all this led to a weakening of the army.

Wrecking was carried out in fortified areas.

So, for example, as a result of such wrecking on the first day of the war, about 50% of the concrete machine-gun points would remain without machine-gunners

For railroad issues. I knew that this work was carried out by Appoga. As the troop commander I clearly saw Appoga's obvious wrecking work and took part in it,

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helping so that the progress of a number of substantive and important issues were significantly slowed. I recruited people, gradually working on them, preparing them for defeatist work during wartime. In my confession I indicated exactly which people and what they were recruited for. In 1935, I learned from Tukhachevsky about the "palace coup", but without any particular details.

While in Paris with Tukhachevsky, I was instructed by him to speak with General Schweisguth, the representative of the French General Staff, and to probe his attitude to our business. According to Tukhachevsky, Schweisguth is a major political figure in the French General Staff and leads all foreign and domestic policy. This conversation with Tukhachevsky took place in a car.

It was clear to me what was going on. For the first time, it was not pleasant for me to speak openly with the general about the conspiracy in our country. I approached cautiously and, in the end, brought the conversation around to how he related to Tukhachevsky coming to power. Schweisguth spoke very positively of him and, in the fall of 1934, at maneuvers, on his own initiative, said that the General Staff would certainly welcome it. He also said in Paris that he had similarly felt out Cooper, who supposedly said that he welcomed the strengthening of Russia.

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Working as a double-dealer and traitor and carrying out the assignments of Tukhachevsky, I prepared mainly defeat operations for the period of war.

I would like to talk here about the members of the center, in particular about Gamarnik. There is no doubt that he was a member of the center. Tukhachevsky praised him highly. Gamarnik clearly revealed himself when we went to the government to raise the question of Voroshilov, to attack Voroshilov, essentially we agreed with Gamarnik, who said that he would strongly speak out against Voroshilov. The meetings of the members of the center were 2 to 3 people at the most and very conspiratorial.

I did not receive sabotage assignments from Tukhachevsky, I do not remember such assignments, I can say this completely honestly here.

The President: For whose benefit was all this done, for what state, for which classes did you carry out your anti-Soviet struggle?

Uborevich: For the purpose of restoring capitalism.

The President: You were part of the conspiracy's leadership core. Your confession says: "I participated¹⁰

(The confession of Uborevich is read).

Uborevich: That's right, I received that assignment in the spring of 1935.

Dybenko: You say that you entered the center around 1934 and the fortified area began to be built in 1935. How it was coordinated. Did you give wrecking

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directives for the construction of a fortified area?

Uborevich: I have never given such an assignment.

 $^{^{\}rm 10}$ This is also from also Uborevich's investigative file, l.d. 52 ob. (See previous note).

Dybenko: Did you strive to put Yakir as chief of staff, acting as a united front since 1925?

Uborevich: This is not true, because in 1931 I was removed from the central apparatus by Gamarnik and Tukhachevsky took my place and for a long time I had no connections with him.

Dybenko: Did your wrecking work begin when you were appointed chief of armament?

Uborevich: On the contrary, I uncovered the wrecking work of the old officer corps.

Dybenko: In order to mask your own wrecking work?

Uborevich: No.

Belov: What sabotage work did you do in the Byelorussian Military District?

Uborevich: I did not do any sabotage work.

Dybenko: Did you directly conduct espionage work with the German General Staff?

Uborevich: I never did that.

Dybenko: Do you consider your work to be espionage and sabotage?

Uborevich: Since 1935, I have been a wrecker, a traitor, and an enemy.

(1 hour break)

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EVENING SESSION

The President: The session continues.

Accused Kork, do you confirm the confessions that you gave during the preliminary investigation, in particular, the confessions of May 26 and June 9?

Kork: I confirm them.

The President: You pleaded guilty to being a member of the military counterrevolutionary Right-Trotskyite organization: "I am guilty of ... " (reading the confession of Kork).¹¹ Is that right?

Kork: I confirm everything.

The President: Tell us in more detail about the attempted coup and to what extent did you inform the center about this?

Kork: Perhaps you will allow me to talk about myself, about how I got into the organization.

The President: Please do.

Kork: I was personally drawn into the counterrevolutionary Right-Trotskyite military organization in July 1931. I got involved in this organization through Yenukidze. From Yenukidze I was given the assignment of contacting Tukhachevsky, Gorbachev and Yegorov ...

The President: The head of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee school?

¹¹ This is from Kork's investigative file R-9000, tom 13. Sledstvennoe delo Korka A.I., l.d. 53 (P-9000, т.13. Следственное дело Корка А.И., л.д.53): " I am in that I conducted subversive work for counter-revolutionary purposes in the Red Army and participated in the development of a plan for the defeat of the Red Army and the USSR in the war against fascist states. I was aware of the espionage activities of Tukhachevsky. Since 1933, we have adopted a defeatist attitude, and since the beginning of 1935, a concrete plan for organizing the defeat has been developed. I also plead guilty to the preparation together with Enukidze, Peterson and Gorbachev of a violent coup. I admit that in the totality of my actions I am guilty of treason."

Kork: Yes. And already in July, Yenukidze said to me, at the same time, that the first stage of work

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in the counterrevolutionary organization of the Right-Trotskyites was a coup in the Kremlin in order to seize power by the Rights, because by all indications Rykov and Bukharin would not be able to come to power by any peaceful means and that I needed to talk about these matters to those people whom he listed, i.e. Tukhachevsky, Gorbachev, Peterson and Yegorov. In mid-August I was at Tukhachevsky's place. I told him that Yenukidze sent me to him, that I was recruited into the counterrevolutionary organization. Tukhachevsky approved my move, admitted that in the political situation of that time I did the right thing. At the same time, he also suggested that I, in turn, should talk with Peterson and Gorbachev on the use of the school of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.

In mid-August, I conducted an inspection at the Oktyabrsky shooting range at the All-Russian Central Executive Committee School. After the shooting was over, I, Gorbachev, Peterson and Yegorov stayed at the shooting range and began to discuss about what the instructions of Rykov, Bukharin and Yenukidze were concerning the coup in the Kremlin, which had already been decided, and what needed to be done next. It was clear to all of us that the assignment could only be completed if, or rather, the assignment must be completed when the corresponding signal from Yenukidze was given. Gorbachev and Peterson told me the following: this question

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had already been considered, how it would be more expedient to arrest the government (according to Yenukidze,

obviously by the directive of Rykov or Bukharin) during some night government meeting, that the appropriate people should be prepared for this. Gorbachev said that he was already selecting people for it. There were various groups of cadets and commanders, but it made no sense for everyone to talk with these people, that for conspiratorial reasons it was necessary to have less talk, that he knew people, that it could not fail, and when it came to the point of carrying it out, the corresponding group would be put in place to participate in this coup.

At that same time Peterson informed me that, according to Yenukidze, when the moment came for the coup to take place in the Kremlin, the Rykovites and the Right-Trotskyites would form a government, which would appear at the right moment in the Kremlin, take part in the arrest of the government and begin to publish relevant government messages or decrees.

I do not know what decrees they meant.

Later, when I met with Yenukidze, he stated that he already knew that I, together with

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Gorbachev, Peterson and Yegorov discussed the plan that I needed; first, it was especially important to carefully monitor the selection of people, and second, as for the Moscow garrison, I, as its chief, needed to take measures to ensure that this operation would go unnoticed because, obviously, the right-wingers would take such measures that this coup would happen without a lot of noise. Further, Yenukidze told me that the commanders of the districts were aware of all this and when the coup took place, their forces would swear an oath to the new government; that all this was known to the head of the military conspiracy Tukhachevsky and that

there was no need to doubt any further, it was necessary only to wait for the signal.

A year passed, then another and there was no signal from Yenukidze. At the same time, new plans and new considerations had already emerged.

First of all, I must say that with Tukhachevsky, as with the head of the organization, I repeat once again, I had direct contact beginning with mid-August 1931.

Moreover, in October 1931, on instruction from Tukhachevsky, I established a direct contact with a member of the center, Uborevich. By then I became

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aware that the center included: Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uborevich, Eideman and myself. Tukhachevsky did not tell me about other persons, in particular Gamarnik, and did not name him later.

Since the fall of 1931, when I began my work in this counterrevolutionary organization, my first assignment was to lower the combat effectiveness of the army and the second was to begin wrecking activity to undermine the combat power of the Red Army. This work stemmed from the assignments that were given to me by Tukhachevsky. Firstly, to create an organizational structure in the army that would not meet the level of combat readiness, but rather, the organizational structure should lower combat readiness. The army's technical equipment had to be such that there was a large accumulation of armaments, but with major shortcomings. In the field of combat training, it was necessary to work so that the external effect would be vivid, but the actual combat training in its content would suffer.

In what specifically did my work consist?

On organizational matters, I supported Tukhachevsky in the structure of the infantry division.

He raised the question that in the Moscow region there should be an experienced division of 7,500 people.

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This was done, and, according to the directive of Tukhachevsky, I was obliged to popularize in every way this structure as the most expedient under our conditions in the Red Army, while for me the whole non-viability of such a scanty – yes, scanty – organization of an infantry division was absolutely clear.

Further, based on Tukhachevsky's directives, I had to, in my practical work, and despite the fact that I personally did not participate in the question of equipping the Red Army with artillery, carry out a line in the district that, due to tank weapons, artillery was moving to the background; that tanks can perform many serious assignments, which were previously carried out by artillery pieces. And as an example it may be said that if the question of artillery preparation was raised before ...

The President: ... I must interrupt you! You are speaking in great detail. You have described this in detail in your confession.

Kork: Next. In relation to general combat. I carried out exactly the same instructions that were given by Tukhachevsky. In particular, in order to "raise" the combat training of the entire district, I carried out a large number of various kinds of assemblies for the higher ranks. The corps and division commanders were detached from work in

the armies, precisely when their presence was needed in the units. In turn, I suggested that the commanders of the corps and divisions also hold such gatherings. Based on the guidelines that Tukhachevsky gave me, I conducted a number of negative measures in preparing the staffs. Extremely complex documentation was created that complicated the work of the commander and limited his initiative. Outwardly, the work seemed to be in full swing, but there was little sense in it.

This continued until 1934, when the People's Commissar drew attention to this in the Volga Military District during exercises and categorically forbade it. After that, I was not able to conduct this type of wrecking activity.

The question of the rear in military games was, in all sorts of studies the highest commanding staff, developed completely incorrectly. The rear was extremely cluttered. Supply stations had such a huge amount of all kinds of military equipment that they could clog the rear of a troop and even of an army.

Questions of operational training. Here I have to move to the field of a different kind of activity by me and by our entire organization as a whole. This was a question of a defeatist plan. I, as a worker in the central district, was not

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involved in the re-development of operational plans, but participated in the military games of the General Staff. At the same time, a number of meetings took place in Tukhachevsky's office at which were present: Tukhachevsky, Uborevich, Yakir, and sometimes Eideman, and where since the fall of 1933 questions of defeatism began to be taken up. I must inform the Court that today Tukhachevsky has deviated from the very different assessment of defeatism that was

given to us at these meetings. It was completely clear to us that already in the fall of 1931, when we were summing up the results of General Adam's trip (about which I will continue to testify about to the court), that Poland and Germany would jointly attack us, that our plan did not include any negotiations with the German command over a joint attack on Poland. This question was never raised like that in our center. We examined our plan in the context of defeatism in such a way as to put the army of all fronts in the West in such conditions that when the Red Army were defeated by external enemies (Germany, Poland and other countries), the Red Army would suffer such losses that would permit the Right-Trotskyites to come to power and rip the power out of the hands of the Stalin government. Therefore, our defeatist plans were also considered in such a way that German forces were deployed on the territory of Poland, and at the very beginning I must say that Tukhachevsky gave an

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instruction that it was necessary to outline a certain direction poorly secured by the Red Army, which would be known to the enemy so that he could more easily strike us. More than once did we return to this question in the discussion in Tukhachevsky's office, but a more specific discussion was conducted on this topic in the beginning of 1935 in Tukhachevsky's office, where the following were present: I, Uborevich and Yakir. Tukhachevsky then told us this: "Here I've been talking separately to each of you about the defeatist plans for a considerable period of time. It's time to summarize and clarify those basic decisions on the basis of which we will carry out our defeatism in the event of the opening of military operations. Already for a specific period of time, we in the districts adjacent to our Western border, in the districts of the European part of the Union, have created such a tone that the Baltic theater can become a passive

theater for us, that Germany will not deploy its forces there and that in this regard it would be possible to ignore this front. Then the Germans will deploy their forces there and go on the offensive, and it will end with the fact that Leningrad will be surrendered very quickly to the enemy, which, of course, will cause enormous damage to the country's defenses. This will be an extremely sensitive blow to the defense of the USSR in connection with the presence in Leningrad of a huge number of factories

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that serve the military industry. Likewise, it is necessary to think over the issue with regard to the Byelorussian and Ukrainian fronts, and there to outline certain operational areas which, in the event of war, would be poorly occupied."

It is quite natural that, having raised this question, we were by no means going to revise the written operational plans that were drawn up in the districts and which were located at the General Staff. It was perfectly clear for us that if the commanders of the border districts and in the general headquarters had, on the instructions of Tukhachevsky, begun to introduce harmful destructive factors into their peacetime plans, this could very quickly lead to detection, and our organization, of course might be exposed. Therefore, it was quite natural that all these conversations about defeatism in the context of general operational decisions were set up in such a way that it was necessary to be ready for it, but each front commander and army commander who were part of our organization, upon the announcement of mobilization would act on the basis of common directives.

When Tukhachevsky asked me how I imagined the implementation of the defeatist plan, I declared

that I didn't know which army I would command. Would I be on the western front (and I knew that I would be on the western front), command the army, which will be deployed in the Polotsk region, or would I be in the Slutsk direction? It's hard for me now to say anything specific. Depending on my place in case of war, this issue would be resolved. Uborevich replied to this: "Well, it's clear that you will command the army on the right flank of the western front, you will advance on Riga and, quite naturally, with rapid advancement (and it was assumed that there would be no major enemy forces in that direction) the army, which I would lead would expose its flank or rear to the enemy, who could strike from Vilno."

This was in 1935, at the beginning of the discussion of this issue.

In 1936, when the military game of the General Staff was held, I, under the leadership of Uborevich, was indeed in command of the army on the western front. There, at the very beginning of the development of the operation, such a decision was made by Uborevich, although at the face-to-face confrontation¹² he did not want to admit that we had a conversation about it at the beginning of 1935. So, at a military game in 1936 he made a decision that the army that I was commanding,

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regardless of the fact that it was not the center, had to get the assignment of advancing on Riga. This does not mean that I would have reached Riga. I might have reached Gelovo or Novo-Aleksandrovsk or Ovintsovskaya, but in any case I

¹² Russian, *ochnaya stafka*, where an accused is permitted to confront his accuser(s). A normal part of Soviet investigation.

would have been in such a position that, leading the offensive, I could be defeated.

It is quite natural that at this meeting it was by no means possible to make any final defeatist decision. Here only the general directives, given by Tukhachevsky, were decided.

At the same meeting, from among the questions concerning defeatism, the question was raised that in the event of war there would be significant difficulties if we carry out the directives that are now accepted as harmful in organizing the army and military rear and, most likely, we will have a huge clogging of the rear.

In this context, there was talk at the meeting which I attended. Since I did not participate in a series of discussions that Tukhachevsky conducted with the commanders of the forces or their deputies, many of whom worked in the border districts and were part of the counterrevolutionary organization, the details that I heard today from the speeches of Yakir and Uborevich,

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were not known to me, just like I did not know about the central apparatus, because our activities included a large degree of conspiracy. It is completely clear to me that the whole series of questions that were set forth today by Tukhachevsky, Yakir, and Uborevich were apparently not brought to my attention for reasons of conspiracy. Until the fall of 1931 Tukhachevsky kept me informed about matters to the extent, as it seemed to me, of what was necessary for my work in the Moscow district. Regarding the Moscow district, I regularly informed him how the work was progressing. I can say the following with regard to those who were in the Moscow district: I personally recruited Germanovich, who later went to work in the Byelorussian

military district and continued to work in the same direction in the Byelorussian district.

Further, Kosich, who had been recruited by Uborevich, worked with me. I personally established this in October of that year when I was at Uborevich's apartment on Tukhachevsky's instruction. I met Kosich there, and the three of us discussed the question of what was the situation with the most important assignments at the moment before the Moscow district.

Uborevich confirmed that for the Moscow District, as for the inner district, the main issue was the selection of cadres for the army apparatus, which should be allocated to the Western Front, and that we must work with Kosich on this issue.

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I can also note that Veklichev, who, according to his own words, was recruited by Yakir, together with me, had been carrying out sabotage work together with me since the fall of 1931. Gorbachev, after he returned from the Far East, worked as my deputy and was my assistant in the wrecking work. After my departure to the Military Academy, he served as Commander of the Moscow District for about 7-8 months and continued the work that he and I carried out until September 1936.

I must focus more on general political principles, on the ultimate goals and prospects, as they were described to me personally. In 1931, when I began my talk with Tukhachevsky, he explained the situation like this: we must unquestionably go with Rykov. It was not advisable at that time to defend Trotsky, since he had lost authority in the country. But soon thereafter, in 1932, Trotsky was mentioned more and more often. And then in 1933 when the

fascist coup took place in Germany, among those leaders under whose flag we were supposed to go were: Rykov, Bukharin and Trotsky. Later, Tukhachevsky began to state, not by hinting but openly, that in the end the political group that would come out on top was hard to predict, whether Rykov or Trotsky, and that we military men must consider ourselves not as playthings in the hands of the politicians, but must have the strong hand of a military man, and he began to lead the talks in the direction of Bonapartism.

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This was from about the second half of 1934. In particular, Tukhachevsky expressed his thoughts most clearly and visible in this respect (something that he decided to refuse to admit today for some reason) on November 29, 1934 when Tukhachevsky and Putna were visiting me. In addition to them, Kosich and Gorbachev were present. Then I met alone with Tukhachevsky and Putna and talked about political prospects. Then it became clear that it was necessary to consider Tukhachevsky as the future dictator. Whether Tukhachevsky talked so frankly to the whole organization I can't say for sure, but from the conversations with Uborevich I got the impression that Uborevich quite clearly knew the position taken by Tukhachevsky in our organization. Next I have to say something regarding espionage. On June 9, when I was interrogated by the prosecutor of the USSR, Vyshinsky, he asked me whether I consider myself a German agent. I replied to the prosecutor that I did not consider myself a German agent. Now I must amend my confession and, first of all, note that our entire organization as a whole should be considered as fascist-German espionage agents. Our organization could not be considered differently, and although at that moment, if I personally did not transfer secret documents, whether to Blomberg, Adam, or Koestring, this does not in any way reduce my guilt.

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I take back the statement that I made to Vyshinsky because of my personal mood. I must plead guilty in this part as well as other members of our organization. How were contacts established with the German Reichswehr? The establishment of communication, as noted by Tukhachevsky, began with the fact that in 1925 he traveled to Germany. Then in 1926, when I commanded the Byelorussian military district, Tukhachevsky invited a group of Germans to a maneuver, which he organized for Germany.

When I was appointed to Germany as a military attaché, Tukhachevsky gave me the precise assignment to try to find out if the Germans remembered Tukhachevsky and what they thought about the maneuvers that Tukhachevsky carried out showing the forces to the Germans. My assistant in Berlin, Shnitman, and I sent to the Red Army Intelligence Directorate for Tukhachevsky the answer that the Germans remembered Tukhachevsky, remembered the maneuvers very well and remember the friendly attitude that they met on the part of Tukhachevsky in 1936. In 1928-29, when I was in Germany, the main group of people who later became part of our organization managed to pass through the German Reichswehr (one year or six months for equal persons in different ways), was Yakir, Uborevich, Eideman, and other individuals.

It was quite natural that from that time we can confirm that, for our organization, which

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emerged later in 1931, a good soil was set up for further ties with the German command. As it was noted here, this business was called "collaboration." But if it was collaboration to a certain extent in the sense that persons

from us went there and persons from the German Reichswehr came to us, then at the same time with this cooperation there also developed espionage activity.

The matter took a completely different turn in 1931, when General Adam came to Moscow. He was with me and with Tukhachevsky. Even before the arrival Tukhachevsky warned me that General Adam was expected. that we needed to speak with him and find out how Blomberg looked at our situation and what the future prospects were in general. When Adam was with me, he told me that he and Blomberg were quite satisfied that we had plans to carry out a coup with the help of a military organization, that in the near future, obviously in Germany, the same thing would happen (he hinted at the Hitler coup). My meeting with Adam did not last long. Later I learned from Tukhachevsky that Adam talked to Tukhachevsky in more detail, and one of the main points that was solved by Tukhachevsky and Adam was the question that the communication between Tukhachevsky and Adam would

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go through the military attaché in Moscow, Koestring, that even if a fascist coup did take place in Germany, Koestring would remain in Moscow regardless of this coup, and that he was a reliable person. Blomberg trusted him, I could rely on him and transmit information through him.

Somehow it turned out that the five of us were assembled, and Tukhachevsky told us that we would keep in touch through Koestring, that he did not mind that each of us individually would have meetings with Koestring, but it was necessary that Tukhachevsky be aware in advance if Koestring needed to be given any secret materials or documents and that he wanted to keep this issue in his own hands.

Over the years, a number of members of our organization, and I personally, had meetings with Koestring at diplomatic receptions. At these receptions, the situation sometimes did not go smoothly, in the sense of being able to talk to Koestring, especially after the fascist coup, when it was necessary to show, on the surface, isolation from representatives of the German army.

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Nevertheless, since the meetings were private, it was possible at these receptions for either myself, or Tukhachevsky, or Eideman, or other persons who came to the diplomatic reception to have conversations.

What kind of conversations did Koestring have with me? First of all, I remember that the conversation was about maneuvers that were attended by the Germans in the Moscow district in 1931-32. I must say that then everything was openly and frankly shown to the Germans. They were put in a better position than representatives of other armies. Since the materials were given to them on maneuvers, my main question revolved around those exercises or maneuvers that were attended by representatives of the German army, including Koestring.

Further, Koestring began to raise questions to me on a broader scale. He began to be interested in the situation of the Byelorussian and Leningrad districts. Moreover, I sometimes found myself in such a situation when I was presented with an awkward picture: since I, to some extent, had lost contact with the Byelorussian District, it turned out that Koestring had even more accurate information than me on specific garrisons.

I attended several conversations, when the three of us, I, Tukhachevsky and Koestring talked about the western border districts.

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I also remember one conversation about the Far East in the presence of Eideman, when Koestring was interested in the issue of railway construction in the Far East and stated that he was expecting information, but he did not have this information yet. Tukhachevsky promised to provide him with this information.

The President: In what year was this conversation?

Kork: If I am not mistaken, this conversation took place in 1934 or in 1935. I can't remember the exact date. This was soon after the former German ambassador Dirksen left Moscow for Japan. Koestring said that he needed this information to transmit to Dirksen, who would coordinate it with the Japanese General Staff.

At that time I did not know that very important materials were being transmitted about mobilization plans and the development of industry. I learned about some facts from the indictment, I learned about others today. However, at the same time I had full clarity on the basis of those conversations that were at these receptions in my presence about three times with the participation of Tukhachevsky, that materials were being transmitted. I had no precise information concerning these materials.

Regarding my work during the last period, I must say that recently I worked at the

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Frunze academy until the spring of 1936. There, work proceeded without any introduction of wrecking in the instructional plan. When the instructional plan for 1936-37 began to be developed, then, based on the Tukhachevsky directive, I was also supposed to supervise the wrecking work of other people at the Frunze Academy, Pavlov, Sergeev

and Yermolin. They were entrusted with a huge job. Pavlov, as the person engaged in correspondence training, had to complicate the training of correspondence students in every way, and this was done by him in such a way that work with students of the military academy was carried out in a wrecking manner..

A member of our organization, Sergeev, although he had the mission of working in the operational field and, therefore, of introducing elements of wrecking in his department, was transferred from the Frunze Academy and his activity ceased.

The subversive work of Yermolin continued until recently. It continued in the sense that he created confusion in two departments. Yermolin, on the instructions that he had from Tukhachevsky and me, maliciously planned the work extremely successfully.

From recent meetings with the organization's members, I should note that the last meeting Tukhachev-

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sky and I had with Yakir and Uborevich were in April 1937, when we discussed a number of issues, artillery in particular, and came to the conclusion that what was planned at the time regarding wrecking activities on artillery issues in connection with the meeting that was carried out on the initiative of Stalin, all this must be curtailed and our subversive work on artillery should be done differently, since the directives of wrecking introduced by our organization had already lost the ground for practical work.

Next, we had the question that, since the arrests had begun, we had to be especially careful and conduct our work even more conspiratorially. After that, I saw Yakir again on May 11 in Kiev. In both his confessions, Yakir did not go beyond

that meeting. I received from Yakir the assignment that, since the center will have to be transferred from Moscow to Leningrad, I will have to talk in Moscow with Tukhachevsky, Uborevich and Eideman whether they, as members of the center, agree that the leadership of our organization should be transferred from Moscow to Leningrad and to Yakir.

I could not conduct these negotiations in Moscow, because on the night of May 13-14, I was arrested. That is all.

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The President: You confessed that for the past 6-7 years you carried out sabotage, counterrevolutionary work. One thing I don't understand is: Who was the boss? You mentioned the Trotskyite center, the center of the Rights, you have mentioned German circles. But who in fact was the boss, who gave the basic directives up to the present time: Rykov, Trotsky or German military circles?

Kork: Under the circumstances that have been created most recently, the boss is the German General Staff.

The President: That means that your main boss was the German General Staff?

Kork: Yes.

The President: The German General Staff – that is a concise answer.

Dybenko: Were you a scout in the old tsarist army or did you carry out espionage work?

Kork: Neither one nor the other. I then fought for Russia against Germany.

Dybenko: In 1929, when you were sent to Germany, were you not connected with the German Reichswehr?

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Kork: Not yet at that time. Communication was established only in 1931, when I stepped down from the position of an honest Soviet citizen to that of betrayer and traitor to the motherland, and together with me on the road to struggle against the party followed Tukhachevsky, Yakir, Uborevich and others.

Dybenko: So it can be stated that Uborevich and Yakir, when they gave confessions to the court, falsely stated that they were involved in a counterrevolutionary organization in 1934?

Kork: Yes, I insist on my confession. I know that they were not involved in the organization in 1934, but in 1931 simultaneously with me.

The President: Accused Uborevich, from what year did you consider yourself a member of a military organization when you joined the fascist military organization?

Uborevich: Defeatist assignments were set before me in March, 1935, and conversations were conducted from the end of 1934. Prior to this, I did not engage in counterrevolution.

The President: So, the confession of Kork that you entered the organization in 1931 is wrong? How to explain these confessions of Kork?

Uborevich: I do not know.

The President: Tell me, Tukhachevsky, how to explain the difference between your confession and Kork's?

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Tukhachevsky: I involved Kork in the organization during the advanced manoeuvers. That was in 1933, and not in 1931, as he claims.

The President: Could it have been conversations of an anti-Soviet character, that was not related to specific actions?

Tukhachevsky: I said that Kork was recruited in 1933. There were conversations of discontent against Voroshilov, against our leadership. There was no concrete talk of a conspiracy until 1933.

The President: Did Kork tell you about the negotiations with Yenukidze concerning the capture of the Kremlin?

Tukhachevsky: Quite right, I got information from Yenukidze about this situation after having had a conversation with Gorbachev, and then I informed Kork.

The President: When did you have a conversation about the capture of the Kremlin?

Tukhachevsky: In 1933-1934, when Gorbachev returned. Here, Kork confuses dates.

Alksnis: The accused Tukhachevsky indicates that in 1930, Turovsky and Zyuk were also involved by him in anti-Soviet activities. "In 1931", confesses Tukhachevsky, "I

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came to Moscow, during this period I created an anti-Soviet group ... (reads)." Do you confirm this?¹³

¹³ This is from Tukhachevsky's investigative file: R-9000. T. 12. Sledstvennoe delo Tukhachevskogo M.N., l.d.43 (P-9000, т.12. Следственное дело Тухачевского М.Н., л.д.43): " In 1930, I was not able to carry out significant work. I involved in anti-Soviet activities - besides MARGOLIN and TUROVSKY - ZYUK, who commanded one of the regiments of the 11th Infantry Division, teachers of the Tolmachev Academy NIZHECHEC and others whose names I don't remember and teachers of the military academy KAKURIN and TROITSKY. Subsequently, KAKURIN and TROITSKY were arrested This created a threat to the disclosure of the anti-Soviet work that I was carrying out and alarmed me greatly." A little further on we find the precise passage cited by Alksnis: " In 1931, I moved to

Tukhachevsky: The involvement of Turovsky and Zyuk dates back to 1928-1929, but this was not an anti-Soviet organization, it was probing and selecting people, and an anti-Soviet organization was formed in 1932.

Alksnis: You yourself show that in 1931 you created an anti-Soviet group with the participation of Alafuzo, Eideman, Smolin and others.

Tukhachevsky: That was in 1932.

Alksnis: I am using your original confession.

Tukhachevsky: In my confession I said that it was in 1932.

Alksnis: So you deny this information?

Tukhachevsky: I do not deny it, but that was in 1932.

Belov: Accused Kork, when you were recruited to the organization, were you told that Gorbachev was already recruited?

Kork: Yes, Gorbachev and Peterson were recruited before me. Yenukidze told me about this and proposed

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that I contact Peterson and Gorbachev and find out everything in detail from them.

Belov: And concerning Veklichev?

Kork: Tukhachevsky told me about Veklichev in the fall of 1931. He then began to list which people I could lean on and indicated in particular Kosich, but said that since I knew him not very well, that I should not try to recruit him myself, but let Uborevich, who knows him well, do it. As for Veklichev,

Tukhachevsky said to me that he would be recruited by Yakir. After some time, I began to conduct a discreet conversation with Veklichev, in order to feel whether he knew about the organization, and I found out that he knew everything.

Belov: In what year did you establish that Veklichev was recruited into the organization?

Kork: In the fall of 1931.

The President: Are there any other questions to the accused Kork?

Alksnis: Accused Kork, in your explanations you said that you met Koestring more than once at diplomatic receptions, and you furnished him with a series of data. You say "we" here. Who are "we"?

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Kork: "We" are the members of the center: Tukhachevsky, Yakir and Eideman. I also took part in these conversations, but I didn't have any documents or any instructions from Koestring and I didn't transmit any documents. There were conversations in general, and it's quite natural that when I touched on the question of organizing forces and combat training, I, of course, inevitably informed them of the preparation of the forces of the Moscow Military District.

The President: So you confirm that you, Kork, have orally informed the German military attaché Koestring about the condition of the forces of the Moscow District?

Kork: Yes, but at the same time I must add that I had a certain directive that I had the right to give information to Koestring with the knowledge of Tukhachevsky, after having previously reported to him. I had no secret information

about which I would have to first inform Tukhachevsky before passing them on.

Alksnis: We are not interested in the issue with or without the knowledge of Tukhachevsky. You transmitted information. We are interested in the question: did you provide, at least orally, information about the condition of the forces of the Moscow Military District to Koestring?

Kork: Yes, I reported this information.

Alksnis: You spoke about the combat training of the forces of the Moscow District?

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Kork: Yes, I did.

Alksnis: So you told Koestring about the state of our Workers-Peasants Red Army in the Moscow District? Answer concretely, did you provide this information?

Kork: Yes, I did.

Alksnis: So you personally, individually, participated in espionage? Since you passed on secret information, you participated in espionage.

The President: Accused Eideman, do you confirm the confession that you gave during interrogations by the NKVD and at the interrogation of June 9 by the Procurator of the USSR?

Eideman: Yes, absolutely.

The President: In these confessions, you admitted guilt in being a participant in a military conspiracy, you were completely informed about the nature of this conspiracy, carried out work in Osoviakhim, recruited cadres for wrecking work in Osoviakhim to ensure the defeat of the Red

Army in the war. (Reads an excerpt from Eideman's confession)¹⁴.

Eideman: Yes, that's right.

The President: In favor of which state was this work carried out by your center and by you in particular?

Eideman: It is perfectly clear that this work resulted in work in favor of the German General Staff, in favor of German fascism.

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The President: Accused Putna, the confessions you gave recently in the month of June, in particular the confession you gave to the Prosecutor of the USSR on June 9, do you confirm them?

Putna: I fully confirm them.

The President: At the interrogation on June 9, you testified (reads the confession) – do you confirm this confession?

Putna: I confirm it.

The President: There is nothing in this confession¹⁵ about the espionage activity that you have been conducting for a

¹⁴ This passage is in the another volume of the Tukhachevsky investigation file, R-9000, tom 14. Sledstvennoe delo Tukhachevskyogo M.N., l.d. 41 ob. (P-9000, т.14. Следственное дело Тухачевского М.Н., л.д.41 об.) ."I plead guilty that I was a member of the Trotskyist conspiracy, was fully devoted to the nature of this conspiracy, and played a leading role in it along my line, that is, through Osoaviahim, recruited in Osoaviahima cadres of a plot for wrecking work in order to ensure the defeat of the USSR and the Red Army in the war. This conspiracy set as its task the coup d'etat and the restoration of capitalism. I was informed by Tukhachevsky about the relationship of the conspiracy with the Trotskyist center outside the army and about the alliance with the Right."

¹⁵ This is from Putna's investigate file, R-9000, tom 8. Sledstvennoe delo Putna V.K., l.d. 90 ob.(P-9000, т.8. Следственное дело Путна В.К., л.д. 90 oб.): "I plead guilty to participating in the Trotskyist conspiracy, which set itself the task of

number of years. You have been passing some kind of secret information to someone. Tell us what you remember.

Putna: I gave such evidence to the investigation.

The President: Please repeat them in this section, since they were not reflected in the interrogation on June 9.

Putna: This should be there because I stated that in 1931 in Berlin Ivan Nikitich Smirnov, in a talk with me in the embassy building, told me that, in order to show the Germans the serious determination of the Trotskyites towards collaborating with them, we needed negotiations with them.

At Trotsky's direction I conducted such negotiations with the generals Schleifer¹⁶ and Adam, who had established contact with us

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through Hoffmeister. After the first negotiations with the generals Adam and Schleifer, when I reported to Sedov what I had achieved, I received a second directive from Trotsky via Sedov that this first success was not enough, that it was necessary to agree with Adam or Schleifer more precisely about the extent to which Germany itself would take steps against the Soviet Union. In addition it was essential to clarify what help Germany could render to the Trotskyite organization in the way of obtaining weapons, supplies, and technical means essential for arming Trotskyite cadres who were not in the army. Along with this it was proposed that I

overthrowing Soviet power and restoring capitalism in the country. I plead guilty to high treason and preparing for the defeat of the Red Army and the USSR in the war against Nazi Germany. I confirm my testimony that in 1936 I facilitated a personal meeting between Tukhachevsky and L. Sedov, which took place in Paris in a café in the Latin Quarter. I personally was at this meeting in the same café."

16 Evidently General, later Reichs Chancellor, Kurt von Schleicher.

specify what we promised generally in the way of compensation.

The President: Who is "we"?

Putna: The Trotskyite organization. The Trotskyite organization promised, first, territorial compensation.

The President: In the name of what institution, country or state?

Putna: In the name of the Trotskyite organization.

The President: Did they really have such great influence?

Putna: Judging from Schleifer and Adam, they did not believe in any great power of this organization. The organization itself wanted to describe its specific weight as

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rather significant, and therefore I received this instruction, which I carried out.

The President: What did you promise in exchange for help?

Putna: The territory of the Ukraine.

The President: Perhaps something else as well?

Putna: I was not authorized to promise anything else.

The President: You were authorized to promise the German General Staff only the Ukraine?

Putna: At that time, there were no talks about the Far East.

The President: From whom did you have the authority to conduct talks with the German command?

Putna: From the Trotskyite organization.

The President: In the person of whom?

Putna: I received it as a directive from Trotsky, through Sedov and Smirnov.

The President: In the subsequent period ...

Putna: Please allow me to finish my confession. At the same time, it was stated that it was necessary to advance them with information about the Red Army.

The President: What does it mean to advance, i.e. to be a spy?

Putna: Of course. I am talking about that terminology ...

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The President: You promised at first to give information, and then the Ukraine? An advance by the Ukraine – do I understand correctly? You said that you had promised the Germans the Ukraine. Were the Germans satisfied with this?

Putna: The Germans were not satisfied. They did not specify their promises, saying that this was premature and that the Trotskyite organization must demonstrate its strength and possibilities through its activity inside the country.

The President: How, then, did the Germans consider that the Trotskyite organization ought to show its strengths? In what way?

Putna: This we thought would be activities of a sabotage and terrorist nature.

The President: With whom personally of the representatives of the German command did you carry on negotiations?

Putna: With Major Hoffmeister, General Schleicher, and General Adam.

The President: In what year did these negotiations end?

Putna: In the spring of 1931.

The President: This is the first period. When did the second period begin in a different environment?

Putna: In 1936, when I was in London.

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I received the order in the fall at the end of 1935, but for a variety of reasons I could only carry it out in 1936.

The President: On behalf of whom did you carry on these diplomatic negotiations with the Germans?

Putna: On behalf of Trotsky.

The President: Was the military counterrevolutionary organization related to these negotiations?

Putna: Not directly.

The President: Then how?

Putna: I was not informed about the extent of the center's existence.

The President: Did you have anything to do with the organization?

Putna: Yes, I did.

The President: When you negotiated with German intelligence, were you connected to the center?

Putna: Yes, I was.

The President: With whom were you in contact directly from the leadership of the military Trotskyite organization?

Putna: With Tukhachevsky.

The President: What assignments did you receive in 1935 and 1936?

Putna: In 1935, when I returned

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to London from the USSR, Tukhachevsky informed me about the successes in the Kiev and Byelorussian military districts concerning the strengthening of aviation and of tank formations and gave me instructions to pass this information however I could to the German General Staff. On my way to London I met with Sedov ...

The President: I do not understand, did you carry out your instructions and then return?

Putna: No, before carrying out my instructions, Sedov gave me similar instructions from Trotsky.

The President: You had instructions to pass information. Did you meet Sedov and give information to him?

Putna: I tried to pass them to the German General Staff. I did not give them to Sedov. Through Sedov I received parallel instructions from Trotsky, which came down to this: I should resurrect my German contacts and pay less attention to making contacts with England and America, that I did not have to bother with these matters, that there were persons who were negotiating in England ...

The President: You had to restore your ties with German intelligence. What year was that?

Putna: I was returning to London at the end of March and began to get closer to the German E^{17} ... with the military attaché in England, General Maier, and then with the German

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 $^{^{17}}$ Leopold von Hoesch, German ambassador to the U.K. 1932-1936. The secretary who was transcribing the transcript did not understand the name.

agent Captain Zaltsman, whom I have already named here. I found out the sentiment of the military attaché Maier, and I had conversations with Zaltsman, as with an intermediary for the transfer of information.

The President: You gave some information to Zaltsman. What was this information: about aviation in the Ukraine, or rather, in the Kiev military district?

Putna: Yes.

The President: How did he thank you for this information?

Putna: He did not thank me, and I asked him, as an intermediary, to help me establish contacts and to speak with Ribbentrop because I had an assignment from Trotsky to establish contact with the Germans.

I thought that the most useful German could be Ribbentrop. Zaltsman promised me to arrange this meeting. I was supposed to have a meeting with Ribbentrop in mid-1934, but when he arrived, I was not there, since I was leaving on a trip to the British Army Air Force, then Ribbentrop was sent to London and I intended to establish ...

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a connection with him upon his arrival there.

The President: Did the meeting with Ribbentrop take place?

Putna: No.

¹⁸ This is probably Werner von Blomberg, German Minister of Defense.

The President: And how did your negotiations with Zaltsman end?

Putna: Zaltsman prepared for me the communication and interacting with Ribbentrop.

The President: What other intelligence assignments of Tukhachevsky's did you carry out?

Putna: I had no other instructions from Tukhachevsky for the transfer of information.

The President: What other instructions connected with Tukhachevsky's anti-Soviet activities did you carry out.

Putna: There were no other instructions.

The President: Did you organize a meeting with Sedov?

Putna: Yes, at the request of Tukhachevsky I organized a meeting with Sedov.

The President: What were your connections with Japanese intelligence?

Putna: Although I had such an assignment, I was not able to do so. The position of the commander of the Primorsky group did not allow me to do this in an unnoticeable way, and I did not have an intermediary who could do it.

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The President: You didn't do it just because you didn't find people?

Putna: Yes.

Blyukher: I have two questions for the accused Putna. You had an assignment to contact the Japanese General Staff. You could have fulfilled this assignment in 1933 when you met a passing Japanese ambassador. Do you remember this assignment?

Second: The court knows that there were people in Primorye through whom you could easily contact the Japanese command. It is not clear why you are hiding this.

Putna: The opportunity that Blyukher speaks about here was available to me in 1932, but then I did not have a straightforward directive about defeatism. This meeting with the Japanese ambassador was in 1932, and not in 1933, with General Matsui in the Chita 2nd section. The contents of this meeting I reported to you (Blyukher) and also reported to Moscow, but in this situation, in the presence of two persons, I did not talk about anything with Matsui.

If I had received in 1932 the defeatist directive that I received in July 1933, I would have taken advantage of this meeting with Matsui. But since I did not have a direct assignment, I did not know how to take advantage of this meeting.

Blyukher: Exactly when did you meet with Matsui?

Putna: That was in the early days of August 1932.

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Dybenko: Has Hoffmeister been close to you since 1929?

Putna: No, since 1930.

Dybenko: Can you recall the conversation about how Hoffmeister was a very close person to the accused Uborevich?

Putna: Hoffmeister occupied such a place that he maintained official relations with the Red Army. Therefore, he very often communicated with the commanders of the Red Army, who had been in Germany for a long time.

Dybenko: No, you particularly emphasized that Hoffmeister and General Adam *were* especially fond of Uborevich. Do you think it was just fondness or some kind of link?

Putna: In the current situation, I can suspect that this was a mutual understanding on the basis of joint cooperation as spies.

Dybenko: On the instructions of the German General Staff, did you certify the commanders who arrived in Germany?

Putna: I provided the certification that the German command requested for the commanders staying in Germany for a long period of time.

Dybenko: And you didn't think it was necessary to show them in a negative light?

Putna: Until 1933, I had no such instruction.

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Dybenko: So, we can assume that Uborevich began his espionage activities from 1929-30?

Putna: I don't know the concrete facts. I know only brilliant references of him from Colonel Kiullet and Major ...

The President: Do you confirm your confession of May 29 about your contact with the participant of the parallel center, Radek, and others?

Putna: I confirm it.

The President: Do you confirm your conversations with Dreitser and Radek?

Putna: I confirm it.

Dybenko: Tell me, accused Putna, for what purpose did you create a provocation against Beloy?

Putna: I did not create this.

I must tell the Court that this one fact does not in any way diminish my guilt, for I have so much of it that this separate episode would not in any way alter my responsibility. But there was no provocation on my part in the incident with Belov.

Budyonny: In what way and from where did you get weapons for arming terrorist groups of the Trotskyite organization?

Putna: The military organization arranged the organizational and technical side of this matter in such a way that individual commanders who had weapons would commit terrorist acts.

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Budyonny: Were arms delivered from abroad?

Putna: I didn't get any small batches of arms.

Blyukher: When you were commander of the Primorsky Group, did you organize a Trotskyite military organization in the armed forces or not?

Putna: Let me answer in detail.

The President: Answer briefly, and from there it will depend on the answer.

Putna: I went there as a representative of the Trotskyite center. Then I did not know about the existence of the unified center. Due to the fact that in Moscow I could not get any directives through Dreitser, then having talked to him, I made the decision that I, being a commander, could not take the risk of recruiting individual members. I only involved individuals in whom I already had confidence. That is why I involved Lapin in this activity. As for the other part of the command staff, my instructions were based on the fact that it was necessary to gain confidence through good relations

with the command staff, in order to have the best chance to be able to rely on them. But the real recruiter was Lapin.

Blyukher: And no one else?

Putna: I had conversations with Grodzensky.

Blyukher: Of military men, with anyone else except Lapin?

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Putna: I involved Grodzensky and Klisheyko and instructed Lapin to specifically set assignments for them.

Blyukher: When did this happen?

Putna: This happened in the spring of 1934.

Blyukher: With what Trotskyites in the regional center were you in contact? Were you a member of the regional center?

Putna: I knew that Mrachkovsky was working in the regional center. I knew that he was also in the general Trotskyite center, but I never had the occasion to meet with him. When I arrived in Moscow in 1933, he was not in Moscow. When I drove back, again he was not there, so I could not establish contact with him.

<u>Blyukher:</u> Were you in contact with other Trotskyites from civilian organizations?

Putna: I did not know who was there and could not find out.

Blyukher: To whom did you transfer the leading role in the organization when you left the Far East?

Putna: Even before leaving the Far East, as you well know, in the tensions that I have developed against you, I felt unexpected support from Sangursky, whom I had known for a long time and I declared expressly that his support was unexpected for me. Since I had known Sangursky for a long time, I considered it possible to clarify to him for what purpose I was acting, trying to discredit you. This didn't surprise him at all. I told him that I acted for defeatist purposes, that concentrating operational power in the Far East in few hands made my actions difficult as a member of the organization, and that from this point of view it would be beneficial to divide this power, to break up the OKDVA into at least into 2 or 3 districts.

Initially, I felt support from Sangursky, and then I reported these questions to Gamarnik. I did not allow Gamarnik to participate in the Trotskyite organization, but he supported me and in 1934, when he came to the Far East, he said that he would deliver my report on the need to divide up the OKDVA in Moscow.

My discovery about Sangursky revealed that he was a valuable person to us. He was a close and trustworthy person to you and we did not want to lose this place, so he was quite two-faced.

At times it seemed that he was protecting you, and at other times he opposed you.

Since Lapin is an intelligent person, I considered him able to lead an organization in the Far East. Having, however, no authority to do so, when I left the Far East I told Lapin that as I was leaving, I was entrusting him with this matter, but because

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I thought that Sangursky was already involved with us, then I recommended Lapin to decid questions so to speak collegially, i.e. together with Sangursky.

This was the situation with Trotskyite defeatist activity in the Far East at the time of my departure.

Blyukher: Did you not express in a number of operational documents submitted to the OKDVA command your wishes for defeat? This was on the issue of the Groboviki (fortified district) and the "Pig Squeak", all this already had the nature of defeatist Trotskyite work.

Putna: All operational documents that I submitted did not reflect defeatist attitudes. I believed that this would be very primitive and to a competent person would have disclosed defeatist directives..

In my confession I myself gave an assessment of the situation, which consisted in the fact that the balance of power, the preparation of the theater, especially the preparation of roads and transport, all favored the Japanese. When fortified areas were being built, I saw a number of defects in the instructions taken as the basis for construction. Let us say, too ubiquitous linearity, flatness of the fortifications, etc. In the course of my service, I had to pay attention to this and try to correct

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these defects, and I delayed the readiness of these fortified areas. The defeatist trend was reflected in the slowing down of the elimination of shortcomings, of which there were a lot. I believed that the defeat in the Far East was ensured mainly in the Primorye. Therefore, in a conversation with Tukhachevsky in London, when he developed a picture of defeatist plans in the West, I, in contrast to him, said that in the Far East, defeat would be ensured if the defects were not eliminated. I can list them if necessary.

The President: Accused Primakov, do you confirm the confessions that you gave to the organs of the NKVD in May and June of this year? Do you confirm your Trotskyite anti-Soviet work?

Primakov: Yes.

The President: Specifically, do you confirm your confessions about the preparation of a terrorist act by Trotskyite activists?

Primakov: I did not give any such confessions. I confessed about the preparation of an armed uprising.

The President: Do you know anything about the preparation of a terrorist attack against Voroshilov?

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Primakov: I know the general assignment given to the Dreitser group on the preparation of the attack.

The President: Did you not know who was entrusted with the preparation of the attack?

Primakov: I did not know who was entrusted with the preparation and what kind of terrorist group the Dreitser group would be, because when I found out about this deployment, I got the directive to switch to another job of preparing an armed uprising and to keep my work secret from the old Trotskyite cadres and from the Dreitser group.

The President: You knew that the organization's center, of which you were a member, was preparing acts of terrorism against the party and government leaders.

Did you share this directive?

Primakov: I knew about this directive. I had an argument with Piatakov about it, but I accepted this directive and did not tell anyone about it.

The President: Did you know that individual participants were preparing terrorist acts?

Primakov: No, I did not.

The President: Did you know about Shmidt and Kuzmichev?

Primakov: No.

The President: Accused Tukhachevsky, what do you know about preparing a terrorist attack against Voroshilov?

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Tukhachevsky: In a conversation with Primakov I learned that Turovsky and Shmidt were organizing a terrorist group against Voroshilov in the Ukraine. In 1936, from conversations with Primakov, I realized that he was organizing a similar group in Leningrad.

The President: Did you hear Tukhachevsky's confessions?

Primakov: I was not conducting anything except the organization of an armed uprising.

The President: We are interested in what assignments you had from the Trotskyite military organization in relation to the organization of this uprising in Leningrad and in connection with this assignment of preparing a terrorist attack.

Primakov: I had the following basic directive: Until 1934 I worked for the most part, as an organizer, in gathering Trotskyite cadres. In 1934, I received an order from Piatakov to break off with the group of Dreitser and with the old Trotskyites, who were assigned to prepare terrorist acts, and I myself was to prepare, in the military district where I worked, to foment an armed uprising that would be called forth either by a terrorist act or by military action. This was the assignment I was given. The military Trotskyite organizational center considered this assignment to be very important and its importance was stressed to me. I was told to break any personal

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acquaintance with old Trotskyites, with whom I was in contact. This is the reason I withdrew from Dreitser's group, this is why I worked at the assignment that had been given to me.

The President: Which group did you create in order to carry out terrorist attacks or for an armed uprising? In your confession there is the following phrase? "... The purpose of creating a terrorist group ... in Moscow ..." ¹⁹ What groups are you talking about?

Primakov: This was a group of commanders about which I knew that each of them had the assignment to raise an armed uprising.

The President: What were these groups for? Who was supposed to be involved in the preparation of these acts?

Primakov: The terrorist attacks were prepared by the Dreitser group. The members of the Dreitser group were named by me.

If you want me, I can repeat them. The following persons associated with Dreitser remained in the Dreitser group: Turovsky, Zyuk, Kuzmichev, Shmidt, later Mrachkovsky and Putna, then from "Vystrela", Lionov and from the former military, Broido, Bulatov and Okhotnikov. These were the people closely associated with Dreitser. Also, in addition, Grodzensky and Esterman was a group that was supposed to participate in terrorist work. I was told that I would cease all relations with this group ...²⁰

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¹⁹ This is a passage from Primakov's investigative file, R-9000. Т. 5. Sledstvennoe delo Primakova V.M.., l.d.72 (P-9000, т.5. Следственное дело Примакова В.М., л.д. 72). "The goal of the creation of conspiratorial groups was an armed demonstration at a decisive moment for the struggle for power. The speech was to happen either after a series of terrorist acts against the leaders of the party and government, or at the beginning of the war. The groups were created for this: my group, the GARKAVY-VASILENKO group in the Urals; TUROVSKY and ZYUK in Ukraine; SMOLIN, OLSHANSKY, KAZANSKY - in Moscow; I do not know if anyone was matched for Byelorussia."

²⁰ Primakov is trying to explain to the court that, on the one hand, there were groups preparing acts of terror, and on the other, there were other groups ("conspiratorial groups," as Primakov refers to them) that were oriented toward a coup.

The President: For the purpose of conspiracy?

Primakov: In order to work all the more energetically and maliciously to prepare an armed uprising in Leningrad.

The President: So you moved away from the Dreitser group, not because you were against terror, but because you had to be conspiratorial.

Primakov: I do not consider myself to have the right, in court, to make excuses in this matter. I moved away from the Dreitser group because I was given instructions to prepare an armed uprising.

The President: And not because you did not agree with the methods of action of this group?

Primakov: This was not the main reason. The main thing was that I was given another assignment.

The President: From whom did you receive this assignment?

Primakov: From Piatakov.

The President: In what year did you receive this assignment?

Primakov: I received a general directive when I worked in the North Caucasus.

The President: I don't care where you worked, what year was it?

Primakov: In 1934, during the party congress.

The President: What does the party congress have to do with it?

Primakov: During the party congress,

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there were conversations in the corridors.

The President: With whom were you in contact in Leningrad?

Primakov: I worked in the North Caucasus, and then in Moscow. In the North Caucasus, I contacted Kilveyn and then recruited

Smolin. After being transferred to Moscow, I again contacted Smolin, Olshansky and Kazansky. Then, through Feldman, I established contact with the Tukhachevsky organization, found out the composition of the organization, and worked with this organization in the winter. With the appointment to Leningrad, I took up the assignment of organizing an uprising in Leningrad, relying mainly on the 7th mechanized corps in Leningrad, the anti-aircraft division in Leningrad and the 25th artillery division in Pskov. These are the parts that I focused on during these years.

The President: Did you manage to recruit people in Leningrad from the leadership of the units?

Primakov: I recruited some people in Leningrad, got contact with some people, transfered some people from Leningrad to other places. I had to appoint the commander of the Shmidt corps as commander of the 7th corps, I achieved the transfer of Tkachev. I talked to Zybin in Pskov and could count on him during the uprising. I almost finished preparing the commander of the 19th corps, Dobrovolsky, with whom we only

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failed to agree organizationally, and so he shared our attitude.

Dybenko: And what about the district chief of staff?

Primakov: I didn't directly reached an agreement with Fedotov, but I submitted a statement to the investigator that all the signs that I had about him showed that he was a member of the Tukhachevsky organization. But I didn't directly reach an agreement with him, since he was very cautious.

The President: In 1935-36, who were you associated with?

Primakov: In 1935 and 1936 I met with Tukhachevsky. In 1936 Kork arrived in Leningrad. We met. In 1935 I spoke with Feldman, and, when I arrived in Leningrad, with Garkavy, and

then retained my Trotskyite contact with Piatakov, with whom I had met in the spring.

The President: Did you systematically maintain contact with the leadership of the military center and the parallel Trotskyite center?

Primakov: Basically I mainly maintained contact with Piatakov. The remaining contacts, the contact with Tukhachevsky was for me a contact that was neither basic nor developed.

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Tukhachevsky and I very seldom spoke directly, but I talked directly with Piatakov.

The President: What were you talking about with Tukhachevsky concerning anti-Soviet activity?

Primakov: We spoke directly as members of the organization. The conversation was mainly about cadres that needed to be established in the general staff, in particular in my staff at the academy, and secondly, when I was in Leningrad, I needed cadres for preparing an armed uprising. Moreover, he knew that I needed to transfer the necessary cadres to the Leningrad Military District, mainly mechanized forces.

There was also a conversation with Tukhachevsky when I said that I got a new appointment in Leningrad as commander of the invasion army, and now my main work was to gain authority in the new group of forces, so that they would follow me in case of an uprising. I retained the new directive to prepare forces in Pskov at the border.

The President: How did you propose to carry out an uprising in Leningrad?

Primakov: I intended to carry out an uprising in Leningrad as follows: I believed that in Leningrad I could have the 7th mechanized corps. If it were not possible to transport there a certain part of people to Shmidt, in order to capture Smolny

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and the government, then to bring up part of the naval antiaircraft forces and part of the airborne assault brigades, led by Kokhinsky. This was the force with which I could capture Leningrad.

The President: With whom did you propose to fight in Leningrad?

Primakov: This was a traitorous armed uprising against the motherland and the government.

The President: With whom did you propose to fight in Leningrad?

Primakov: I proposed to fight against those infantry units that remained loyal to the government, against the OGPU forces and against the OGPU itself, against the militia, against all forces that remained loyal to the government.

The President: On whose behalf were you preparing to fight? Who was your boss?

Primakov: For Trotsky and the Trotskyite center.

The President: Who was your boss, the Germans?

Primakov: I did not know about the Germans until the trial.

The President: How did you propose

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to act in the event Germany declared war on the USSR?

Primakov: I was instructed to seize Leningrad for the Trotskyites.

The President: But if Germany had made war on the USSR, for whom would you seize Leningrad?

Primakov: For Germany.

Belov: Accused Primakov, what was the contact in Leningrad with civilian workers?

Primakov: I deliberately did not get in touch with civilian workers because I needed to gain authority and trust, and I could easily fail if I got in touch with civilians, and for my purpose, I could not get any benefit from them.

Belov: If you are trying to tell the truth, then you must tell us why you were instantly surrounded by certain sympathizers in Leningrad?

Primakov: I am telling the absolute truth and it is true that I had no contacts in the civilian circles in Leningrad. I was completely isolated from them. This was done for the purpose of conspiracy, since I had to conspire to prepare for an uprising and not allow any unnecessary ties.

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Belov: What contacts did Gavryushenko pass on to you?

Primakov: No civilian contacts.

The military contacts were Bakhaysky in the mechanized corps. Kokhansky. Gavryushenko fled in great haste. He spoke very definitely about Bakshi, but from Moscow I had no information about him. Shmidt was supposed to replace him. Therefore, I blamed all sorts of mistakes on Bakshi in order to expose him so that Shmidt could come in his place.

Belov: Which of the political workers were you associated with in Leningrad?

Primakov: I had no contact with political workers. During the investigation, I named almost 70 command cadres with whom I was generally associated with in my Trotskyite work. There were no political workers among them, because I had no contact with this category of people.

Belov: Did you recruit commander Karpov?

Primakov: No, Karpov was not recruited by me. At one time I thought that Karpov could be recruited. I tried to do this in the Urals, where he worked, but I did not succeed. I repeated the recruitment work with him in Pskov. Just in the midst of my conversations with him, he had a problem concerning his party card that frightened him so much that he

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did not want talk about any party affairs whatsoever. It was impossible to talk about politics with him.

Belov: And when did you recruit Zybin?

Primakov: It was in 1936, in winter or spring.

Kashirin: Accused Primakov, did you carry out preparations for a rebel movement among the Don Cossacks while you were in the North Caucasus?

Primakov: No, I did the following work in the North Caucasus: I was looking for contacts among the command staff through which I could rely on the Kuban Cossacks. I found that the commanders Kileveyn and Kovalev had contacts among the Kuban Cossacks. I recruited Kileveyn, but I did not have time to do the same with Kovalev, but from conversations with him I was convinced that he was a counterrevolutionary and was closely connected with the Cossacks.

The president comrade Ulrikh announces a break for 15 minutes.

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The President: The meeting will continue. Accused Feldman, do you confirm all your confessions that you gave on May 19, 21, 23 and at the beginning of June?

Feldman: Yes, I confirm them all. I would ask, Mr. President, to be permitted to tell you briefly (I will not hold your attention for long) what I know and, as a member of the center, what I did.

I think it will be useful, not only to the court, but to all those commanders who are present here.

The President: Please do, just make it short.

Feldman: I was recruited to the center of the conspiratorial military Trotskyite organization in the summer of 1932 by Tukhachevsky. My work in the center in Leningrad began when Tukhachevsky commanded the district. Tukhachevsky then founded a "school" in Leningrad where people came to study tactics. Tukhachevsky talked with me repeatedly about his dissatisfaction with Voroshilov, how he was neglected, that he had been removed from his post as chief of staff of the Red Army and sent to Leningrad. When I arrived in Moscow as the head of the Main Directorate, Tukhachevsky continued these conversations with me. Meeting when on duty, he said that, despite the fact that he had become Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, he was not treated well, that he was kept away from a number of questions, that he was dissatisfied with his position. Then he talked about political topics, instilling me disbelief in collective farm construction

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and pointing out the great difficulties that our country was experiencing.

Since I had not taken him by the collar at once, I became "his man." In the summer of 1932, Tukhachevsky told me about the existence of a counterrevolutionary organization, which was still in the process of formation, gathering forces and entrusted me with a great assignment: to gather these forces, to form these cadres to expand the network of this counterrevolutionary conspiracy. That was in 1932. I remember we talked in more detail on the eve of the trip to Germany (Tukhachevsky was the head of the delegation). We spoke about overthrowing Soviet power by means of an

armed uprising and if this was not successful in peacetime, then to rely upon problems at the front that might lead to armed actions within the country. Our method of work would be to support Trotskyite cadres, support those commanders who had earlier belonged to the Trotskyite or Zinovievite opposition, from among whom it would be easier to recruit people; to place people in appropriate posts in order to gain high command posts in the districts; a directive to reduce the rate of combat training through those commanders who work in our organization; wrecking in the field of weapons development of the Red Army.

This was what the head of the Tukhachevsky conspiracy told me in general terms in 1932.

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When I later asked Tukhachevsky if he had any cadres, he replied that there were already people who had finally come to our side, on whom one could fully rely, naming: Putna, Primakov, Turovsky, Zyuk, Vasilenko and Potapov (from the engineering management) and that he had already established full contact with commander A.U. Yefimov.

I asked him some questions. Who is your leader? Are you the leader, are you the boss, or does someone direct your work? He answered me that it was Trotsky who led his work, with whom he maintained contact, but he did not yet tell me the source of this contact. Tukhachevsky added that Trotsky's directive stated that the work of the military organization must be led extremely independently, not by any means to be in contact with the anti-Soviet groupings that exist in our country among civilian organizations.

In 1933, Mikhail Nikolaevich and I often met on official business and talked about the affairs of our center. I informed him that I was already starting to do specific work,

noticing and studying people in order to recruit them. When I gave him two names; Savitsky, whom I had high hopes for, as the head of the Directorate; and Maksimov, and a number of others, he answered me that this was very good, but that they were still not important enough individuals. I told him that it's hard for me to deal with more highly placed individuals, to which he replied that he was planning on involving Yakir, Eideman and Uborevich in the organization, and that he had already recruited Kork.

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I was also interested (I considered myself not the last spoke in the wheel and had responsibilities, so I wanted to know everything) in Tukhachevsky's contacts with civilian counterrevolutionary organizations. Only in 1933 or the beginning of 1934 did he tell me that he was in contact with Piatakov.

Contact with Piatakov helped carry out sabotage in the area of artillery armament from the viewpoint of lowering our orders. Tukhachevsky also said that there was also contact with the Rights. To my asking him in surprise, how with the Rights? From where? I knew that Trotsky was leading the conspiracy. Tukhachevsky answered that now the separation between the Rights and the Trotskyites had been wiped away, and since this is useful for our general business, why not also have contact with the Rights?

I will talk later about my practical work, and for now will speak about the follwing facts:

When in 1933-34 Hitler came to power, we were given an official directive to stress our coolness towards the Germans at banquets. However, Tukhachevsky told me that on Trotsky's directive, it was essential to let the Germans know that his attitude towards the Reichswehr remained just as

good as earlier. Tukhachevsky instructed me to take on this mission, but I replied that I wasn't suitable for a "diplomatic" role. Then he entrusted it to Eideman, saying that

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the latter was quite suitable, because he knew German well, had been to Germany, was a representative of a large public organization, and his assertion would be of great weight for the Germans.

A second interesting fact. In the process of reporting to Tukhachevsky about the people whom I managed to recruit (I will list them later) I reported to him that I had recruited the head of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee school, Yegorov. He told me that it was very good, asking me if Yegorov was strong-willed and decisive. I said, that when it comes to these attributes, then God had [not] aggrieved Yegorov, and asked why he had become so interested in Yegorov? Tukhachevsky explained to me that Yegorov, as the head of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee school located in the Kremlin, would be able to pick a real group of people and, thus, the question of changing Soviet power then could be decided by a "palace coup". Next, I want to move on to the following fact. In 1934, in one of my conversations with Mikhail Nikolaevich, he said that it was necessary to revive the work, that it was moving very slowly, mainly in terms of recruitment. Mikhail Nikolaevich said that if Primakov, an active person, could be transferred to Moscow, that would be very good for us. In May or June 1934, Primakov managed to get transferred to Moscow. He and I met several times, went to Tukhachevsky's place, informed him about the work and received instructions from him. In particular, Primakov received the instruction to launch counterrevolutionary

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work at the academy.

Having looked carefully at people and having probed some of them, I recruited Savitsky, the Head of the Command Department. In 1934, I recruited Appoga, the Head of the 3rd Division of the Office of the Headquarters of the Red Army. I recruited Maksimov from the engineering department, Olshevsky, who was destined for the armored directorate. recruited Yegorov, Smolin and a number of others, about whom I have confessed. In 1935, in connection with the division and formation of new districts, with my support and with the support of other participants in the conspiracy, Garkavy lept up to the post of commander of forces, and Turovsky to the post of deputy commander of the Kharkov Military District, Primakov to the post of deputy commander of the Leningrad forces and Kutyakov to deputy commander of the forces of the Volga region. Tukhachevsky was pleased with this matter, saying: "Now this is reinforcement!" In one district we had our own commander, in three districts the deputy commanders were ours, and in the Moscow District we had our own man, Kork. Then, Mikhail Nikolaevich (I don't remember if Primakov was involved) outlined the organizational structure of the conspiracy, since it was no longer possible to do without an organizational system. Tukhachevsky sketched the following organizational structure.

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In Moscow: Tukhachevsky, Feldman, Primakov, Yakir and Eideman. This was the center. On the ground: a pair or a troika. Also in divisions and regiments.

Tukhachevsky has already spoken about the question of lowering the rate of combat training, and you know everything about this. Our accomplices, who were sitting in districts, divisions, and units, slowed down combat training in every possible way, and in the center, inspector of infantry

Vasilenko did a great job, working under the leadership of our leader Tukhachevsky and carried out a system of "looking the other way" in the army.

On the issue of weapons. Mikhail Nikolaevich carried out work on armaments to lower our orders – that's one. He had contact on this issue with Piatakov, second, about the divisional cannons, where wrecking was committed.

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On the subject of chemistry. When Mikhail Nikolaevich gave me instructions on the recruitment of people, he especially emphasized the need to recruit two people: Fishman, the Head of the Chemistry Directorate and Levichev. I did not recruit Levichev because he became very ill and went abroad, and I did not manage to recruit Fishman, but I believe that Mikhail Nikolaevich directly recruited him.

I must return to Trotsky's directives. Later, when from Trotsky's first directives, about which Mikhail Nikolaevich informed me, he went on to the preparation for the defeat of the Red Army, he said to me that he was doing this according to a new directive from Trotsky, adding that all means are good in the struggle to achieve our aims, in the struggle against Soviet power.

Here I must tell the court that my collaborators, my former colleagues, if I may express myself in this way, are very squeamish in their confessions about terror and espionage.

Citizen Primakov, here you are claiming that, aside from the armed uprising in Leningrad, you did not undertake anything. It is strange that you do not mind speaking about an armed uprising and drowning in blood many thousands of workers, peasants and collective farmers, but you cannot speak frankly about terror. Tukhachevsky told me in 1936 that in carrying out Trotsky's directive about having

recourse to terror, ²¹ and in particular in relation to Voroshilov, he gave such a directive to Primakov in 1935.

Tukhachevsky knew that in Kiev there would be big maneuvers in the fall

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of 1935 and he gave the assignment to Primakov to go to Kiev and prepare a terrorist act during maneuvers. Primakov went to Kiev and prepared Shmidt. And this fact remains on our conscience. If the terrorist attack against Voroshilov at the Kiev maneuvers did not work out, then it was necessary to turn over to Leningrad, because Klement Efremovich often goes there. And so, Primakov began to drag Shmidt and Kushakov, a very embittered man, there, but failed to get them transferred to Leningrad -- although the proper documents had already been signed, the People's Commissar [Voroshilov] did not sign them.

In 1935, at one of the diplomatic receptions, I met Koestring. He had just replaced Hartman and had arranged a small soirée. During this period there was a re-certification of the command staff and he asked me a number of questions related to this.

The next day I told Tukhachevsky that Hartman was quite ambiguously asking me questions, and I understood that this was necessary for the German headquarters. Tukhachevsky answered me this: "Hartman is interested in data on the reserve preparation system and on it assignment to the division, and you can tell him this, because it's nothing compared to the data that we are reporting. I told Bokelberg such information, gave such and such information through Appoga, and you need to give Hartman the data he is

²¹ Terror in Russian generally and here means violence, assassination.

interested in, when you meet him." Then, at the next meeting with the German military attaché, who again spoke on the issue of certification, I communicated to him information

about our registry system.

Of course, my data, compared with those that which Tukhachevsky and others transmitted to the Germans, the Japanese and the Poles, were not particularly valuable. Nevertheless I must admit that I was engaged in espionage, because this information was secret.

Further, I will focus on the fact that Mikhail Nikolaevich was very interested in three questions:

He was very interested in involving political workers in the conspiracy and several times told me that political workers must be involved, and necessarily more important ones. I involved Vinokurov, Larionov and Kuzmin. When I informed Tukhachevsky about this, he said that it was necessary to recruit more important people and asked me about Osepyan. I told him that Osepyan, in my opinion, could not be recruited. To this he replied that he himself would deal with this issue.

Mikhail Nikolaevich paid great attention to the aviation business, and he took on the assignment of involving a large number of people from there. You know, Yakov Ivanovich, that the authority of Tukhachevsky was great ...

The President: ... accused Feldman, can't you do without such speeches!

Feldman: Tukhachevsky involved Lavrov with whom he worked, and Lavrov informed him about Bazenkov, who had been recruited by him. He instructed them to cover up the accident

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rate of the air force, and through Yefimov, while artillery weapons were still in the hands of the AU [artillery directorate], carried out wrecking activities to lower the supply to aviation of small arms and machine guns. In this matter Tukhachevsky was assisted by Lavrov and Bazyukov.

About the naval forces. Kurkov was involved with me back then, when he was supposed to leave for the Black Sea Fleet, when he left the work of the Office of the Naval Forces. Mikhail Nikolaevich involved Ludry, with whom he kept in touch, and Ludry recruited Pantserzhansky to the conspiracy. The instructions for the navy were as follows: weaken the interaction between the surface and the underwater fleet and weaken the readiness of the Baltic theatre.

On the issue of the people I have involved, I set out everything in my confession. I must emphasize that the court take into account that Tukhachevsky was hiding something from individual members of the center. This was done, in my opinion, so that, firstly, not very many would know, and, secondly, in case of failure, so that there would nevertheless be an opportunity to preserve cadres, to preserve people. It was like this: if Primakov fails, let's say, Feldman remains; if Putna fails, Yakir remains.

After the arrests began, Tukhachevsky gave us instructions / 146 /

to temporarily curtail the work, for the sake of conspiracy, demanding at all costs to preserve people. There was the instructions of Tukhachevsky -- if possible, reassign people so as to help them cover their tracks. I showed that I was able to reassign a group of participants in the organization

with the help of the commanders from one place to another in order to save these people for the future.

In this way, to sum up, I must say that everything we did were actions that served the interests of the fascists and their agent Trotsky, whose will we were carrying out.

There were talks, as I have explained, about a palace coup. When contact with Trotsky had been set up through Putna, who had been transferred to London, there began talks about defeatism, and methods of terror and espionage appeared, all this in order to overthrow Soviet power and guarantee Trotsky's coming to power. Trotsky did not have real forces numbering in the thousands besides those that you see here and therefore whatever Trotsky dictated to us, the German General Staff was dictating. That's the way I see it and that's the way we should put it.

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Whether Trotsky would come to power together with Rykov or Yenukidze, we did not discuss this question and it played no role for us. What was important was to overthrow Soviet power.

Blyukher: How hard did you work to plant your conspirators in those huge organizational deployments that took place in the Far East and, in particular, to what extent has your work affected the collective farm corps?

Feldman: In the Far East, I did not specifically plant people, because middle and senior levels, as you know, were usually distinguished by the order of the districts. For the OKDVA²² specifically, I did not select a single person. You must remember that most candidates have always been agreed

²² OKDVA = Special Red-banner Far Eastern Army, until 1938 the equivalent of a military district in the Far Eastern Region.

upon with you [Blyukher], your consent has always been requested by telegraph. The only person I sent to the Far East was Zyuk, but you soon kicked him out of there.

Speaking about Trotskyite cadres in the Far Eastern Region, there were many of them, but I did not personally know any members of the conspiracy. As for Lapin and the others who have been mentioned here, they were assigned to the Far East without my participation.

The President: You have said very little about your contact with Gamarnik.

Feldman: As for the contact with Gamarnik, I personally did not hear a word and did not know that Gamarnik

was a member of the center.

Gamarnik maintained such a line in the central apparatus that I could not guess that he was my accomplice.

Gamarnik, when he came from the Far East, always spoke poorly about Far Eastern affairs and praised Sangursky a lot.

Kashirin: Accused Feldman, in your interrogations you showed that Tukhachevsky informed you that such workers as Shiffris, Kozhevnikov and Lapin stood close to the conspiratorial work.

Feldman: I asked Tukhachevsky whom he knew and could recruit from among the political workers. He replied that he had very good relations with Shiffris, Kozhevnikov and Lapin, but he didn't tell me about the fact that they belong to the organization and it is not in my confession. He only told me that he could involve them in the organization, because they were very close to him.

The President: Are there any other questions for the accused Feldman? No?

Alksnis: Accused Tukhachevsky, Feldman named two people in the central office of the Air Force whom you recruited: Lavrov and Bazenkov. Do you confirm this?

Tukhachevsky: No, I do not confirm this. I did not recruit these persons. We calculated that Yakir would come, that he

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would be the head of the air force and, thus, the apparatus would be in our hands. I did not recruit Lavrov personally.

Alksnis: Accused Feldman, do you confirm that Tukhachevsky told you that he had recruited Lavrov, who in turn recruited Bazenkov?

Feldman: Yes.

Alksnis: Accused Uborevich, in your words you discussed the recruitment of cadres for the work that you carried out on the instructions of your center, but neither in your confessions nor at court have you mentioned a single aviation commander that you recruited.

Uborevich: I did not recruit a single aviation commander to conspiratorial wrecking work.

Blyukher: Accused Putna, with whom among the civilians among the regional leaders of the Trotskyists in the Far East did you keep in touch with?

Putna: I did not have any direct contact with civilians for reasons of conspiracy. I know only one person, whom I knew to be a member of the general Trotskyite center, namely Mrachkovsky. I thought that I could meet with him if the occasion required it, but we never did meet. I did not have any direct talks concerning civilian matters.

Budyonny: Accused Kork, you have confessed that you carried out wrecking of heavy bomber aircraft (low ceiling, low speed, etc.). Through whom did you carry out this wrecking? With whom

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have you been connected?

Kork: In my confession, I said that with the technical equipment of the Red Army, Tukhachevsky insisted on and achieved appropriate results in the quickest deployment of aircraft construction, the quantitative increase in heavy aircraft, regardless of the fact that the combat quality of these heavy aircraft was low (low speed, low ceiling, etc.). In other words, airplanes that could quickly become obsolete were introduced into the arsenal of the Red Army in large numbers, which actually happened, like TB-1 and TB-3. I did not take part personally in this matter. Apart from Tukhachevsky, I can't name anyone here. I know that he initiated the speedy mass production of these aircraft, without any certainty that these aircraft would find combat use in the upcoming war.

Belov: Accused Uborevich, what sabotage was carried out in the Byelorussian military district in the construction of roads, in fortified areas and in the construction of airfields?

Uborevich: I did not carry out any wrecking work on the construction of airfields. I did not do anything about the construction of roads either, and in the fortified areas, except for the transition to a new organization, I did not do anything and did not give any instructions to anyone.

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Dybenko: Do you think that the roads built under your direct guidance in Byelorussia with a load limit of 8 tons and 10

tons and which allow only 4 to pass in a row are suitable and built for strategic reasons?

Uborevich: Roads were built according to technical plans from Moscow, not from the districts. There were roads that were built with a width of 5,5 meters as the narrowest, and then they began to be built wider, and this construction went on until the last 2 years and I didn't give any instructions for wrecking myself, because at that time I did not hold this position and I do not know who was doing the wrecking. This is completely unknown to me.

Dybenko: Do you acknowledge that these are absolutely worthless roads that serve as traffic jams?

Uborevich: They were built according to the previous technical conditions, as the cheapest. The authority of the commander in this regard was insufficient. I could not influence this matter.

Comrade Ulrikh announces a break of 10 minutes.

The President: The examination of the accused is over. I'm declaring the investigation completed. We turn to the last pleas of the accused. Yakir, would you like to use the right of the last plea?

The last words of the accused Yakir

If I may, I can only say two words. Any sentence, the most severe sentence, will not only

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be correct, but it will be small in the sum of those enormous crimes against the motherland, against the party, against the people that I have committed.

I have already said that I had a long, good, honorable life before that moment when I fell into the abyss, fell into the hands of the enemy, fell into the hands of the vilest of vile enemies that

progressive humanity has, into the hands of that murderer, that agent of German fascism, Trotsky. I only want one thing, that at the end, by passing this harsh sentence, citizens judges, with the vast majority of whom I worked for many years and who could not help but see the truth in that, that I speak about my past, devoted to the Soviets, to the party, to the army and to the people for a lifetime. They have a very clear idea that I have nothing to hide from my people, from my court. That I have returned in the last minute of my life completely, without any restrictions, to my people, to my party, to the Soviet power, to what I have lived for throughout the vast part of my conscious life. I want you to believe that I, if I am not left with physical forces, will die in complete tranquility and in the understanding that I die with the most legal justification, that I have committed more than I could redeem with my death, and that you believe me in this, that I die with a curse against Trotsky, against German fascism and with my last word of love towards the army, towards you, towards my party, towards Stalin, and towards my homeland. This is the only thing I want from you, from whom, as from commanders and once my comrades, I can expect nothing more than an irreconcilable struggle, as against an enemy of the party.

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The last words of the accused Tukhachevsky

I wish to draw a conclusion for myself from this vile work that has been done. I wish to draw the conclusion that under the conditions of the victory of socialism in our country every grouping becomes an anti-Soviet group and every anti-Soviet groups becomes one with the vilest Trotskyism, with the vilest current of the Rights. And since there is no base for these forces within our country, then whether they wish it or not, these groups slide further, into contact with fascism, into contact with the German General Staff. This is the downfall of this counterrevolutionary work that was its essence directed towards the re-establishment of capitalism in our country.

I believe that in such an atmosphere as now, when the Soviet country faces gigantic challenges to protect its borders, when it will face a big, serious and exhausting war, in these conditions there should be no mercy for the enemy.

I believe that our army should be united, rallied and united around its People's Commissar, Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov, around great Stalin, around the people and around our great party.

I want to assure the court that I have completely broken with everything vile and counterrevolutionary, and with the vile, counterrevolutionary work that I entered.

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I believe that in my confessions I showed both the investigation and the Court with the maximum, I would say, magnitude of everything that threatens the Red Army, in connection with the wrecking work and those well-known instructions of the fascist states of which I spoke. I deliberately did not spare myself and the rest of the participants in the conspiracy and completely repented, I have stood up completely and want to stand fully for the defense of our Red Army and our country. I have outlined to the limit all these dangers, all these aspects of the serious crimes, which, if I had not been a participant in them, I could not even have believed that they could actually exist.

I want to say that I went through the civil war as an honest Soviet citizen, as an honest Red Army soldier, as an honorable commander of the Red Army, that I fought for Soviet power without sparing any effort, and after the civil war I did likewise. But the road of the group, that dragged me onto the road of the foul Right opportunism and of thrice accursed Trotskyism, that led to contact with German fascism and the Japanese General Staff, all this had not killed in me the love for our army, love for our Soviet country, and while doing this foul counterrevolutionary business, I was also two persons. You

yourself know that despite all this, I did a useful job in the field of armaments, in the field of combat training and in the field of other aspects of the life of the Red Army.

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The crime is so hard that it's difficult to talk about mercy, but I ask the Court to believe me that I have completely revealed everything and that I have no secrets before the Soviet government, no secrets before the party and if I am destined to die, I will die with a feeling of deep love for our country, for our party, for Commissar Voroshilov and great Stalin.

The last words of the accused Uborevich

I worked honestly until 1934; I did not know Trotsky, Zinoviev or the Rights. I was not contact them. The secret of all these matters has just been revealed to me here.

But in 1935 I committed a military crime by accepting the defeatist instructions of Tukhachevsky and for that I, as a soldier, if I had a thousand lives, would not be able to redeem my guilt with them. I beg the party, the Soviet people, and the army forgiveness for my last and greatest crimes.

The trial has freed me from the nightmares of conspiracy and the diabolical directives of Tukhachevsky – that is to say, of Trotsky, and the German General Staff. I die now with my previous faith in the victory of the Red Army. They will prepare the Red Army strongly towards these victories. That is all!

The last words of the accused Kork

For the very vile crimes that I have committed, there is no corresponding punishment in the Criminal Code by which I could redeem for my guilt. Execution

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for all this set of crimes, obviously, is very little.

I am fully prepared to take the death penalty for my crimes. But at the same time, I must say that, being ready for death, my last thought will be the thought that I have opened up; I will die with the thought that under the leadership of great Stalin, under the leadership of Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov, victories will be won over those enemies in whose favor I, together with the rest of the members of our counterrevolutionary organization, planned the vilest deeds.

So, I am ready to take my well-deserved punishment – the death penalty [lit. the supreme measure of punishment]. But at the same time, I ask the court to consider the following:

First: For 13 years I worked honestly and conscientiously, both at the fronts and during the years of peace. During the war years, I also participated and won victories along with other soldiers over our enemies. During the years of peace, I participated in building our armed forces. The fateful year, 1931, turned out to be the year for me, when physically being one person, two creatures appeared in me.

What do I mean by that?

I wish to say that, while I took the path of treason, of vile betrayal, the path of committing crimes for which there is no name, yet within me the whole time there continued to live something else. I gradually became convinced of the profound delusion in which I found myself since 1931. I did not

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believe in the correctness of the Party's general line, did not believe in the correctness of Stalin's line, I was shot through with doubts and gave in to the vile slander of the Rights and the even viler activities of the Trotskyites, when the Rights and Trotskyites fused into one and plotted the most criminal act that can come into a person's head.

I ask you to take into account that over the years, I internally experienced the most difficult tragedy when I became convinced of the erroneousness of what I had made at the time of joining the counterrevolutionary organization. But there was no longer any return for me. I was connected with other people, with leaders, and the worst thing was that I did not have the courage to openly come and tell the authorities, openly tell the Bolshevik party what I was up to, which crimes were committed and what others were foreseen.

I ask you to believe me now, that I sincerely have repented. I have honestly confessed to the investigation. Of course, it can be said that this is too late, but I ask that this, as a mitigating circumstance, be taken into account when pronouncing the court sentence. Maybe this should sound monstrous in my last word, but I still want to express hope, my last hope to the fact that if my life is spared, then this life, or rather the rest of it, will be used by me in such a way as to really show at every step my deepest devotion to the Bolshevik party, readiness to

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the last breath to devote myself to the construction of socialism. And if I could meet the enemies of the Soviet country, then I certainly would be able to show my deepest devotion to the country, the party, great Stalin, the leader of the Red Army, Voroshilov, in those battles for which, if the party, if the government recognizes this is possible, I could be allowed in the future.

I am petitioning the court for leniency, for relief of that heavy fate that I have earned for my crimes.

The last plea of the accused Eideman

There are no words to speak once more about my enormous, unlimited guilt, about my crime against the state, before my homeland, before the party, before the government and before the Soviet people. The depth of my fall is limitless. I found

myself in the camp of the most sworn enemies of the people of my country. As one of the active participants, I deceived my homeland, I deceived it not only as a citizen of my country, but also as a soldier, which immeasurably aggravates my guilt, the guilt of a man called to the Red Army to protect his homeland. Therefore, it is clear to me that there is no such verdict, no matter how severe it is, which would correspond to the limits of my guilt. I deceived my country and violated the oath. There are wonderful words in this oath that anyone

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who deviates from it should be treated with national contempt. I understand that there can be no limit for the public contempt for me and for my accomplices in this vile, treacherous and treasonous work.

I ask the court to believe one thing, that before I joined this organization, I honorably, without any hesitation, gave all my strength to my native country. I lived together with the Party, I lived together with the whole country. I began to slide downwards, to become corrupted, during the years of hardship, during the years of the transitional period of 1930 and 1932.

I did not go to the Party with these doubts and waverings. I kept everything to myself. I began to become corrupted. Keeping within myself these waverings and the corruption, I fell into the hands of the most damned implacable enemy of the people – Trotsky.

I can't say (I would be lying otherwise) that I did all this vile work without experiencing deeply, internally all the horror that we created, that we were preparing for our country. I was not so blind that I could not see how our country was flourishing. I was not so blind as not to see how the policy of building socialism triumphed. I was not so blind as not to see how the powerful Soviet people walked uphill under the leadership of the Party and the Government. I was divided into two persons. I

experienced this internal split heavily and painfully. but I am not saying all this to try to justify myself before the court, which can and must have

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but one approach to people like me and my accomplices, a stern without hesitation. It is hard to find punishment corresponding to our crimes. I ask only one to believe that all that I said, I said completely honestly, without hiding anything, without taking anything away. I feel better. I began to breathe deeply only after this heavy burden of my crimes that I had been carrying all these last years, fell off me. That is why it would be absurd, it would be crazy for me to hide anything for you, citizens judges, who are obliged to deal with not only us, but also those roots that we intended, to the great misfortune of our country, to put into the ranks of the army. It is clear to me that there can only be one sentence, no matter how severe. I feel now that I have returned back onto Soviet land, I can now say without hesitation that I accept this harsh verdict so that with the last bit, the last minutes of my life, the last hours of my life to cover with curses that vile enemy of the people, Trotsky, agent of German fascism, because of whom I too became an agent of German fascism. Let our country bloom, let it go forward all the way to new, increasingly brighter, more beautiful victories, may the lessons of our serious crime strengthen our glorious workerpeasant army, which defends the sacred borders of the land of socialism. May the Soviet people unite even more tightly around the tried and tested leader of the party, great Stalin, around the party,. Let

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the Soviet people and the peoples of the whole world see once again who the defenders of world peace are and who now bear the threat of a new war.

The last words of the accused Putna

The seed of corrupting Trotskyism in me was sown in me by those people who drew me to Trotskyism comparatively early. I followed gradually and steadily almost the whole path of Trotskyism from the beginning of factionalism against the Party leadership through the transition to illegal methods of struggle against the Party, through the transition to policies more shameful, more vile, and arrived in the camp of the enemies of the Party, the state, the Red Army and the country as a whole in 1931. As a result of the process of corruption that took place within me I ended up completely under those treacherous policies that in the arsenal of methods of struggle against the party leadership, against the party and against the Soviet government chose as its method terror, espionage, sabotage and calling in foreign armed forces to our territory.

This process was at first also rather painful for me, but I became stuck in the vile rut of Trotskyite decay, in my struggle against our country and leadership, so far, so deeply, and so consistently, that my normal human courage and human bravery were not enough to tear me out of this rut.

For the period of time that I have spent in custody, I comprehensively and repeatedly thought over everything I

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had done, and now, before the court, in the same measure as the accomplices with whom I committed this crime, I declare that there is no action that could to any extent resemble the equivalent impact of the amount of crimes that we have committed and done. There is only one measure that may not fully exhaust my criminal negative merits, but which naturally needs to be applied. And I believe that as a result of remorse, my confession to the investigation and the court, I acquired only a small right for myself, and that is to die as a Soviet person.

Many people know that I was a different person, and for me now there is no other solace except that I was once a different person.

And now, in a very short time, in my own internal feelings, I have returned to my former self. I believe that in a sick organism, one that is decaying, struck down as though by poisonous gases, in an organism rotted by Trotsky, who led me into service to the German General Staff and to the service of that coalition, in this organism, evidently, there remain still some pockets that have not completely died, that have given me the physical and moral strength to tell the investigation and the court everything that I know about this criminal activity. It is difficult for me to judge whether these not dead, but decomposed tissues in

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me are sufficient enough, so that I may still be able to say that I could to some degree in the future expiate my guilt. Perhaps it could be mitigated, but it's not for me to judge. I said that there is one penalty, which, to some extent, cannot pay me back what it should, but serves as an example for others. I accept this measure as necessary and just. I will die a Soviet man, realizing that it is good that our plans, all our undertakings have still not succeeded as much as we expected, and since our criminal activity was suppressed, to some extent our exposure will serve as a starting point in order to continue to eliminate all this. I think that the progressive movement of socialist construction in our country will go even further and more progressively. Our country will grow and flourish even more than it is at the present time. And in my final hour this will be to some extent a consolation to me.

The President: Accused Primakov. You have the last word.

The last words of the accused Primakov

In my last words, citizen judges, I must tell the final truth about our conspiracy, and the final truth consists in this, that neither in the history of our revolution, nor in the history of other revolutions, has there been such a vile

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conspiracy as ours, neither its goals, nor in its membership, nor in the means that the conspiracy chose as its own. Of whom does the conspiracy consist? Whom did the fascist flag of Trotsky join together? It joined together all the counterrevolutionary elements that we had. All of them, from the rags from the old officers' groups, to the Trotskyite group, with its vile terrorist directives, with its practice of struggle against the Party, though the Zinovievites, everything remnants ofthe that counterrevolutionary in the Red Army - all were gathered into one place, under one flag, under the fascist flag in the hands of Trotsky. This is the main thing.

What means did this conspiracy, unequaled in history, choose? All means, from the blackest betrayal, from treason, from the preparation of the defeat of one's own country through sabotage, through espionage, through terror, directed against the brain and heart of our country. These are the means that the conspiracy chose. For what goal? For the restoration of capitalism. What does the achievement of this goal mean, and by what path can this goal be reached, acting as our conspirators acted? There was one path: it was necessary to shatter the dictatorship of the proletariat. But only a fascist dictatorship could shatter it. But this fascist dictatorship would be created in the form of a half-dozen Napoleons, but only that one Napoleon would become the boss, who was beneficial to the German General Staff. Because if the Red Army were defeated and bled to death, the country deprived of strength, who else

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then would the boss if not Hitler's staff? And who would establish power in the country besides Hitler's General Staff? That was where our conspiracy was going. It was moving towards a fascist dictatorship, since from among the half-dozen Napoleons would be chosen one who was chosen by the path of treasonous defeatism, the path of its vile preparation for the

enemy. There would be no power other than the one brought with them by the fascists. And what does this mean for our country? This means that the Soviet Union would become a White China, from which the best provinces would be taken, and we now know that it would have been taken and we have known this for a long time, and not only here in court.

Every Young Pioneer knows the plan of Germany, which wants to take the Ukraine, the plan of Japan, which wants to take Primorye and turn our country into a White China.

That's why I say that history knows no conspiracy equal either in goals, or in means, or in its composition, or baseness.

What forces did the conspiracy gather in order to fulfill this plan? I named to the investigators more than 70 conspirators whom I recruited myself or came to know in the course of the conspiracy. I made my own assessment about the social face of the conspiracy. What groups does our conspiracy consists of, what does the leadership of the conspiracy consists of, what does the center of the conspiracy consists of? The composition of the conspiracy consists of people who have no deep roots in our Soviet country because each of them has their own second homeland. Each of them personally has family abroad. Yakir has relatives in Bessarabia; Putna and Uborevich, in Lithuania. Feldman

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is connected with South America no less than with Odessa; Eideman and Kork are connected with the Baltic states no less than with our country.

This is a group of leaders, for whom betrayal is facilitated by the fact that they have no strong roots in the Soviet country.

The second group to which I belong is the Trotskyite group. If the first group acted by means of betrayal, the second, Trotskyite group is the most cursed group in the conspiracy because it has travelled the vilest path, has the vilest school and has as its leader Trotsky, who demanded the fascist flag.

That is why this group is the worst in this conspiracy, and it is naturally the largest in the same conspiracy.

What is the rank and file of the conspiracy comprised of? It consists of the petty bourgeoisie, of the kulaks, who at one time formed the basis of army ensigns.

I know the whole composition of the conspiracy, or at least half of it. There are no workers among them; there are no proletarians in our conspiracy; there is a petty bourgeoisie, there are kulaks.

There are the Garkavies and Savitskies, but you will not find a real worker who would participate in this conspiracy.

This is the social face of our conspiracy, about which the court must be told so that the court knows that there is no one here to pity.

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One more thing that I want to say, is that it was a real salvation for the country that the military conspiracy was exposed, because everything was prepared, fortified areas were betrayed, the uprisings in Leningrad, Moscow and other large cities were prepared; terrorist groups were prepared to strike against the brain and heart of our country.

It is a salvation that the conspiracy was exposed in time.

This all refers to the last truth that the court needs to know. We need to say it straight.

Two more words about myself. I must say directly that I, a former communist and former soldier of the revolution, thanks to the fact that I was made into a Trotskyite, that I travelled the whole path with them since 1923, I arrived in the fascist camp and I see with despair that I have arrived at a place than which there is nothing worse in the world.

And therefore it is necessary to judge us so that it is for the good of the country, and not so as to think about us.

The last words of the accused Feldman

My crime, compared with the crimes of the other participants, is increased many times.

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It is increased because before the revolution I did not have any homeland. Tsarist Russia was not my homeland. And I ended up in South America because I was forced to flee from Tsarist Russia, which could not be my homeland.

I ended the World War as a soldier; after that I was given rank of corporal.

The Soviet government turned me from a private soldier into a Soviet general – a corps commander [komkor], taught me, nourished me, raised me. Kliment Efremovich Voroshilov himself taught and raised me, and some of those who are sitting here.

And I, a soldier who became a Soviet corps commander, a Soviet general, betrayed myself and betrayed my homeland.

I want to say a few words so that those commanders who are sitting here understand how a slippery slope can be dangerous. Until 1932, I was a decent citizen, commander, and communist. I worked very hard on my own growth, and walked along the straight path of the party's general line. But I made just a little deviation, only a few degrees and I just kept moving further.

The commanders sitting here must understand how sometimes an innocent conversation, an innocent involvement in a conversation against the leaders of the country, hints against the leadership, against the party's line, can turn a person off the right path and push him on the path that led me to betrayal and treason.

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I don't want to say, citizens judges, that compared to other accomplices, my guilt is less. Indeed, when a gangster is judged, they do not count the number of wounds that he inflicted on his victim: whether he killed him with one blow, or maybe, as an amateur, he hit him several times. Despite the fact that I did not participate in such a matter as the development of all kinds of defeatist plans, what I did was still quite enough to resolve the question about me in this way: the enemy must be destroyed.

But all the same, when you look at the composition of the judges and understand that it is commanders who are doing the judging, the idea suggests itself that is still not the way Primakov said, that we should not be reckoned with.

Soviet power is not like that. And where is the Stalin Constitution and the generosity of Soviet power? ... I want to draw the attention of the citizens judges that the enemy must be punished, he must be destroyed, but if the enemy has surrendered, if the enemy has disarmed, if he scrapped everything from himself, then one cannot help but think about correcting this enemy.

Therefore, when I appeal to you, citizens judges, with my last word, I want to ask you, when you decide the question, to weigh, put onto the scales my gravest crimes which drag me down, and on the second scale the fact that my downfall began in 1932, that until 1932 I worked well, as an honest commander should do, that during these difficult

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years of betrayal, when a person divides into two persons, I still sometimes did a useful thing and, finally, put on the scales that I have nothing left hidden in my breast. I have scrapped everything from my scraper, I have been sincere, I have repented, I did not wait for confessions or face-to-face

confrontations, but gave everything that there was to the court and the investigation.

I can, although in the least, ask the court to take this into account, and decide your case. None of us merits any indulgence.

If it could happen that the Soviet government and the Communist Party in their generosity would take into account everything that I have been talking about, I would give the last years of my life in any area of work, so that what I removed and dropped from myself, scraped with a scraper, I could wash the blood off myself in battle against the German fascism for which I worked in recent years.

The President: The court withdraws for deliberations (at 21.15).

At 23.35 Presiding Comrade Ulrikh announces the verdict of the Special Judicial Session of the Supreme Court of the USSR.

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A complete bibliography is available on Grover Furr's website at this URL:

http://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/research/tukhbibl.pdf

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