

THE SECRET ROAD TO WORLD WAR TWO: SOVIET VERSUS WESTERN INTELLIGENCE, 1921-1939. By *Paul W. Blackstock*. (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969. 384 pp.)

This book has grave defects. For the most part they result from two of the author's characteristics. The first of these is that he is insufficiently grounded in intelligence, or insufficiently critical, to make discriminating judgments about his sources. The second is that he artificially equates the USSR and the democratic West in comparing their governments and their intelligence services.

*The Secret Road to World War Two* is really an amalgam of what might better have been two books, one dealing with clever and sinister deception and penetration operations conducted by Soviet intelligence against anti-Soviet Russian emigrés abroad, the other with the inept policies and miscalculations of the great powers, the blunders that led to the tragedy of the Second World War. The contrived joining of these two subjects contribute neither to lucidity nor to unity. This reader was left with the impression that Blackstock tried to make these dramatic spy stories more impressive through his references to the political and

historical dynamics of the time. His views as an historian are those of Robert Tucker, of John Erickson, and in part George F. Kennan.

Both the title and the sub-title are misleading. The word *road* implies that the contest between the secret services of East and West led to war; yet the author fails to produce any evidence supporting this view. As for the sub-title, "Moscow's Allegations about Soviet versus Western Intelligence" would have been more accurate. And the title itself might more appropriately have suggested Soviet ingenuity in such operational specialities as disinformation, provocation, and liquidation. The real struggle, moreover, was not a contest of equals, a hidden conflict between intelligence antagonists, but a ruthless campaign by the Soviet services to destroy the Russian emigré groups abroad, viewed by the Stalinists as a nuisance and potential threat, as well as the internal enemies, real and imaginary, of the Communist regime.

The work is divided into four major sections, each of which includes a string of episodes attributed by the author to a Soviet-Western war of wits between their services of intelligence and counterintelligence during the 1920's and 1930's. In each of the four parts Blackstock tries to bolster his thesis by data drawn from other Western writers and from official Soviet interpretations, with only an occasional note of skepticism about the latter. (This approach to the subject reminded this reader of the grossly disinformational book by Sayers and Kahn, *The Great Conspiracy*, Little Brown and Co., Boston, 1946, in which the putative authors chose from a mass of Western documentation those accounts best suited to support and "prove" the Soviet version and justification of their operations.)

Blackstock has carried out extensive research, in the course of which he examined all the materials available in libraries of several countries and in the archives of anti-Soviet organizations that plotted indefatigably but ineptly the overthrow of the Bolshevik regime. He personally interviewed some of the last surviving emigrés who participated in the confused, tumultuous events of the era, and he discovered hidden papers and diaries left behind by participants long since dead. But digging up facts is less important than understanding them and interpreting them correctly. Here Blackstock falls short. He does not know enough of the history of revolutionary Russia or of the realities of power in the USSR. He does not understand Russian psychology. He accepts uncritically both authorized Soviet versions of events and the opinions of emigrés who were completely disoriented by the crushing defeats inflicted on them.

The book also contains occasional distortions and half-truths that seem to have originated with the author, not his sources. For instance, Blackstock alleges that most of the roughly one million Russian refugees and emigrés bowed to the reality of the Bolshevik regime and began in their adopted lands the process of assimilation. A minority even joined the Communist Party. He finds that 75 per cent of the Party's membership in Chicago, for example, was of Russian origin, and creates an impression that these members were refugees from Bolshevism, whereas in fact they were predominantly pre-1917 Jewish immigrants from Russia, people who had never lived under Communist power.

Other less obvious inaccuracies result from the author's tendency to generalize and oversimplify. He says, for example, that after 1925 the "European world" (meaning the West) was polarized spiritually and politically into a Communist, anti-fascist left and a pro-fascist right that was ready to appease Hitler at almost any price in the hope that he could be turned against the Soviet state (p. 195). He argues that the free-floating political violence of right-wing and left-wing European mobs was matched in the United States by the cold-blooded violence of organized crime under gangster overlords (p. 196). He asserts that bloody purges in the Soviet Union in 1937 were paralleled by the epidemic of denunciations in the United States during the McCarthy period (p. 225).

This kind of recurring generalization awakens an impression that the writer wants to disarm any reader who may be skeptical of Soviet explanations of their secret operations and their excesses. After all, he argues, America had its corresponding hysteria. And the British reactionaries, responsible for the Arcos raid and the break in diplomatic relations, precipitated the war scare in the Soviet Union. The threat of war—whether in fact it was real or merely invented by the Kremlin for purposes of propaganda—was the basis for an abrupt increase in OGPU arrests of Western intelligence agents inside the USSR in the summer of 1927, as shown in Blackstock's table (p. 166). Of 192 spies arrested in that year, 167 were seized in May and June. Soviet propaganda denounced almost all of them as agents controlled by the British SIS (p. 166). Blackstock's conclusion is that the traumatic events of that year made the Soviets realize the urgency of doing battle with the Western intelligence services.

The author's failure to distinguish among the various Soviet services pitted against the West is a defect that is not uncommon among nonprofessional writers on the subject. David Dallin's *Soviet Espionage* (Yale University Press, 1955) talks almost exclusively about the GB

(*Gossudarstvennaia Bezopasnost*, or State Security), for example, whether in fact he meant the Cheka and its many successors, together with their branches and subdivisions, or the GRU and its military and positive intelligence subgroups and affiliates. Such lack of precision about the identities and structural positions of the Soviet agencies is disconcerting to a reader interested in counterintelligence. Blackstock either has nothing to tell such readers or he confuses the issues.

Much of Blackstock's account concerns aggressive Soviet operations against counterrevolutionary groups of emigrés abroad as well as real and imaginary traitors at home. Such activities were predominantly, if not exclusively, the responsibility of the Cheka, OGPU, and NKVD. But Blackstock does not clarify or even suggest the role that the GRU or any other military intelligence element played in the contest or in the cooperation with the German military and the rapprochement with Hitler that Stalin avidly sought. Thus it is far from clear who the principals were and what units were engaged in the numerous operations. When the Trust operation collapsed in 1927, the OGPU foreign section speedily rebuilt networks of agents in all the capitals of Europe (p. 195). Walter Krivitsky, according to Blackstock, was among the OGPU professionals who directed the work. Yet it is known from Krivitsky's own depositions as well as other accounts that he was a GRU officer and had no dealings with OGPU until 1935. In one passage Blackstock expresses annoyance with writers who lump together the various Nazi intelligence services, labelling all of them as Gestapo. Here he commits the same offense.

The author quotes the dictum of Boris Nikolaevsky, by now almost a cliché, that to understand the real motives behind foreign policy one must study the battle of the secret services, a war waged constantly beneath the surface of history. In the prewar era of Stalin, however, the activities of the OGPU and the NKVD, at home and abroad, reflected Soviet domestic concerns rather than foreign policy, i.e., they were designed to support the conspiracy at the top that guaranteed the absolutism of Stalin's rule. Blackstock's entire book, despite its inaccurate title, is proof of the point.

The first of the four sections of the book takes up one hundred pages. It is the story of the Trust; the monumental exercise in deception and provocation contrived by the chiefs of OGPU counterintelligence and directed against the emigration abroad from 1922 to 1927. The legend contrived by the Soviet specialists was the story of a secret monarchist organization which, they claimed, had come into being in Petrograd by

1921. This network had supposedly succeeded in banding together the patriotic elements of the old capital into units determined to liberate Mother Russia from Bolshevism. The OGPU ensured that the electrifying news reached the ears of the leaders of the White Russian emigration, which consisted of monarchists, former high officials of the Tsar, expropriated industrialists, and tens of thousands of exasperated tsarist officers. Most of these people lived in poverty and longed for the day when they, together with the armies of the great powers, would march into Russia, overthrow the regime and resume their rightful posts in a liberated homeland.

Alexander Yakushev had been a high official of the Tsar's Civil Service. An unprincipled and promiscuous man, he agreed to play the OGPU's game. He went to Germany and reported to the High Monarchist Council in Berlin about the development of the conspiracy by the Monarchist Organization of Central Russia, MOCR. He was well received by the leading emigrés and by the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevich, the pretender to the Russian throne. Later two more "conspirators" were sent abroad with the same tale. Both were well-known tsarist generals who had thrown in their lot with the red regime. Through Russian emigré channels, the Polish, French, and English services soon began to receive disinformation, fabricated by the OGPU. With the "help" of the Trust, the anti-Soviet organizations abroad began to send spies and terrorists into the USSR. Some were executed, but others were allowed to survive and leave the country for the purpose of maintaining the confidence of the emigrés and the Western services in the MOCR.

Blackstock is right when he says that the Trust was one of the OGPU's most successful foreign ventures, although he is by no means the first to recognize this fact. He disagrees with Richard Wraga and others who have maintained, correctly, that the MOCR was an OGPU hoax from the outset. Blackstock supports instead the official Soviet version, which maintains that the OGPU penetrated the MOCR, the Trust, after its establishment, and that the OGPU recruited key monarchists abroad, such as Yakushev and General Zayonchkovskiy. Blackstock admits that the official Soviet chronicler, Lev Nikulin (*Mertvaia Zyb*, Moscow, 1965, *The Deadly Swell*, usually translated in English as *The Swell of the Sea*) had to make radical revisions in each of his three consecutive editions, but he follows the Nikulin line nevertheless. The result is that the smell of provocation and deception is obliterated by the less acrid odor of penetration.

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The ideology of the Soviet-controlled Trust operatives was tailored to please Western tastes. They were anti-interventionists. They propagated the deception that the Bolshevik regime was becoming more and more like the capitalistic West and added that it would soon collapse anyway. They opposed terror as an unproductive tactic potentially harmful to the Trust, which needed only moral and financial support to remain a steady and good source of intelligence, i.e., disinformation.

Blackstock's account tells us of the famous revolutionary Boris Savinkov, who before the revolution had organized the assassination of the Grand Duke Sergei, the uncle of the Tsar, and of Minister of the Interior Plehve, and who later, fighting against the Bolshevik revolution, seized three cities on the Volga in 1918. Savinkov was duped by the Trust and was persuaded in 1924 to cross into Russia illegally in the expectation of leading the secret army, which had never existed, against the Kremlin. Despite his entrapment and death, his co-conspirator, the British intelligence officer Sidney Reilly, who had been under a death sentence in the Soviet Union since 1918, let himself be lured in 1925 to Moscow, where he was executed.

Blackstock recognizes that neither Savinkov nor Reilly represented a serious threat to Soviet security and that their liquidation first cast doubt upon the Trust. The author expresses the opinion that the OGPU became overconfident because of its initial successes. "They thought they could deceive the Western intelligence agencies indefinitely." He appears unaware, however, of the study put out by the Soviets in 1967.<sup>1</sup>

The author maintains that in 1927 the combined Western intelligence agencies conducted a major offensive against the USSR. To support this unconvincing assertion, he quotes largely from the Moscow press and reproduces its statistics on the arrests of Western spies. He provides practically no details about the alleged offensive except for the story of what he describes as "vest-pocket terrorist raids" conducted by the Combat Corps of General Kutyepov. The general was supposedly suspicious of the Trust from the very beginning. In 1927, acting without the Trust's knowledge, he sponsored a few (and for the most part unsuccessful) teams that entered Russia for purposes of espionage and terrorism. By then, however, the Trust had collapsed, mainly because of the apparent defection of one of the principal OGPU agents, "Opperput," whose real name was Edward Ottovich Staunits.

<sup>1</sup>Vasilij Ardamatsky, *Vozmezdiye* (Retribution), *Neva* Nos. 8-11 (August-November 1967). This material emerged later as a book. Extensive, accurate, and in many instances hitherto unpublished OGPU documentation is appended to each chapter.

While the Trust still inspired faith, it duped one Vassily Shulgin, who had been a conservative member of the Tsarist Duma. He was led to believe that his son, who had disappeared in tumultuous Russia, had been confined in an insane asylum in the Ukraine. Desperately eager to find the boy, Shulgin was helped by the men of the Trust to enter Russia secretly. They then told him that they had not been able to locate his son after all, but they enabled him to travel extensively. He "secretly" visited Kiev, Leningrad, and Moscow, each of which had been the nation's capital during one epoch or another. The OGPU also arranged for his untroubled exit. The Trust even helped Shulgin to publish in the West his famous book, *Three Capital Cities*. His experience in the USSR and the story of his meetings with the leaders of the internal "conspiracy" convinced most of the emigrés who had begun to doubt the Trust that its integrity had been vindicated.

Nikulin's novel, *The Swell of the Sea*, is a better source than many Soviet works; the author was given access to the OGPU files on the Trust case. Thus Blackstock, who, as indicated above, leans heavily on Nikulin, is closer to the mark in his treatment of the Trust than in other parts of his book. But there are distortions in Nikulin's story, and Blackstock seems to be unaware of them. As is well known, the Soviet intelligence services bitterly resent defections from their ranks, try to conceal them whenever possible, and attempt to distort them through disinformation when they cannot be concealed. Edward "Opperput" had been one of the most effective OGPU operatives inside the Trust. In 1927 he broke with the Trust and fled to Finland with Maria Zakharchenko. His sensational revelations appeared in the Latvian and Finnish press. He was interrogated by Finnish authorities by intelligence officers from other countries. The Trust lay in shambles. But the OGPU decided not to admit defeat. It portrayed Opperput as a "white guardist," an enemy, and did not admit that before his defection he had been used by them as a hatchet man against the Russian emigrés.

Lev Nikulin and the KGB have similarly concealed the true role of Maria Zakharchenko, the Joan of Arc of the Trust. The OGPU became interested in her because she was the niece of the anti-Soviet General Kutypov. (Blackstock says that Zakharchenko and Kutypov were not related (p. 49). Nikulin says (pp. 107 and 206) that they were cousins.) With the help of Zakharchenko's lover, a former cavalry officer, the OGPU recruited her in Yugoslavia. When she and Opperput broke with Soviet intelligence and fled to Finland, General Kutypov and the other anti-Soviet emigrés assembled in Helsinki demanded that Opperput prove his sincerity by returning to the Soviet Union and carrying out a

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series of anti-Communist and terrorist operations there. Maria rebelled; but when the decision was not reversed, she joined Opperput on his fatal mission. The OGPU mobilized whole districts against the handful of men and the one woman who crossed from Finland into Russia with guns, bombs, and explosives. Opperput was killed near Smolensk. Maria ran into a cavalry squadron farther west, shot it out with them to the last bullet, and died of her wounds.

Blackstock also whitewashes another woman by following Nikulin too closely and uncritically. She was Liubov' Dehrental, the extremely beautiful young wife of the aide of Boris Savinkov. So great was the husband's devotion that he yielded her charms to his chief. Soviet sources try to conceal the fact, but Dehrental, like Zakharchenko, was a secret informer of the OGPU. While Savinkov vacillated about answering the call of the rebels and returning to Russia to lead the phantom army invented by the Trust, Liubov' Dehrental followed OGPU orders and exhorted him to accept his destiny as the savior of the motherland. When he agreed, she and her husband accompanied him. In Moscow she stayed with Savinkov in his beautifully furnished quarters in prison. Some months later he committed suicide. She was rewarded with a position on the *Woman's Journal*. Neither she nor her husband was prosecuted. Dikhoff Dehrental was given a responsible position on the VOKS (All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries).

Although he accepts the Soviet-sponsored charge that the War Scare of 1927 was the result of the alleged intelligence offensive of the Western powers, Blackstock admits that Stalin used the issue for his primary purpose of expelling Trotsky and the old Bolsheviks and of destroying his internal enemies. By the end of the year Stalin had crushed the opposition, and the War Scare ended abruptly.

Quoting heavily from Soviet sources, Blackstock discusses at length the Kutypov offensive and Melgunov operations, which are described as integral parts of the operations of "combined Western intelligence." He says that Kutypov was too short of funds to mount forays into the USSR; yet he also frequently implies that he enjoyed bountiful Western financing. The author draws upon Melgunov's archive to assert that in 1928 Melgunov had a budget of \$1,705,000 for anti-Soviet activities and had the sum of \$250,000 to finance terrorism. Blackstock bases these calculations on Melgunov's figures in francs and an exchange rate of four francs to the dollar, a rate that never existed. (In 1928 the rate of exchange was more like eighteen to one.)

The book also suffers because the writer has accepted at face value the fantasies and, at times, the mass hysteria of the emigrés. For instance, he

reproduces verbatim a "plan to kill Stalin" written by one "N.M.," and winds up his comments on its feasibility by saying that he does not know whether it was ever tried or not. He seems not to grasp that the emigrés were completely disoriented by the bewildering defeat that the Trust had dealt them. Not even the wisest of them understood what had hit them. Seeking an explanation for Savinkov's ideological defection to Bolshevism at the time of his trial in Moscow, they began to invent absurd theories. One of these had it that Savinkov received from Trotsky and Kamenev an invitation to return to Russia and the promise that after undergoing a mock trial, he would be pardoned and given an important governmental post. In another version, also spun from moonlight, the OGPU investigators admitted to the arrested Savinkov that the Communist experiment was a dismal failure, yet appealed to him to help them fight the monarchists, claiming that they threatened the very existence of the Soviet regime. They were supposed to have promised Savinkov that if he embraced Sovietism at a public trial, his sentence would be quashed and his talents used in the struggle of the Communist Party against Zinoviev and the left opposition.

Such rumors spread among stunned and frustrated people. Between 1927 and the publication of Blackstock's book in 1969 more than forty years have passed, an interval long enough to permit historical perspective. But the author has not moved with the times. He concludes that "Savinkov, either before or after his return, had made some sort of deal with a *faction of the OGPU* and believed that he could continue his struggle inside the Soviet government as he had from without. The OGPU was a very large organization, and the experience of General Kutyepov and his agents indicates that *there were factions* that could have been played against each other within the larger framework of the struggle for Lenin's succession, which was then going on behind the scenes. . . ." (p. 87) This quotation plainly shows that Blackstock does not understand the realities of the Soviet system and of power within that system. The OGPU was always subordinated to the dictator, the Secretary General of the party, and to him alone. Within it there never were (and never could have been) factions fighting for rival candidates for supreme power. When Savinkov fell into the OGPU's trap, he was totally bankrupt, a pitiful and totally discredited politician whom foreign services had stopped financing. When he collaborated with the White Russians and the Poles his guerrillas left behind them in Belorussia and the Ukraine a train of destruction and executions. It makes no sense to hold that Savinkov's hard-headed captors would plan, or even pretend to plan, to use this wreck in an intra-party struggle for Lenin's successor.

Part Three of this book comes closest to accuracy. In it Blackstock describes in detail the OGPU's preparations for the kidnapping of General Kutyepov. The explanation of the roles of General Nikolai Skoblin and his wife, the singer Nadezhda Plevitskaya, is perhaps the best analysis to date of this precious pair, who worked among the tsarist emigrés while simultaneously serving the Soviets and the Nazis. The "Golden Age of Organized Mayhem," as the author calls this period, includes also an account of the kidnapping of General Miller. The chapters in this part of the book contain much that has been told by other writers (Orlov, Krivitsky, Besedovsky, Dewar, *et al*). But Blackstock has keenly noted the failure of the White Guards in exile to set up effective security measures against the OGPU or to weed out such suspected traitors as Skoblin and Plevitskaya, despite scores of warning signs, their notoriously suspect finances and associations, their past records, and their personalities.

Part Four, the last in the book, is the worst. Perhaps it would be too much to expect that an author who is not a Russian and who has no firsthand knowledge of Soviet bureaucracy could find his way through the maze of falsification that has been constructed around Marshal Tukhachevsky and other generals of the Red Army after their execution in June 1937.

This part of the book opens with a pro-Stalin version of events. Blackstock has it that Stalin began to make secret approaches to Hitler only after he had been unable to win French and English support for an alliance designed to put an end to the Nazi dictator's plans for expansion. Only after this failure did Stalin's policy of appeasement and his ambition for a working partnership with the Führer take form. A whole chapter is devoted to the Soviet relations with Germany and Hitler as a prelude to the story of the long and laborious preparations for the purge of the leadership of the Red Army.

Blackstock agrees with the view that the "Tukhachevsky plot" originated with Stalin himself, on whose behalf the NKVD launched an array of disinformation operations, first through gossip, then through documentary "evidence" channeled back to Stalin from reliable Western sources. The gossip was first spread in Paris in December 1936 by General Skoblin, who at that time was reporting to the chief of the *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD), Reinhard Heydrich. When it reached Hitler, he supposedly developed with Heydrich and Himmler the idea of forging papers that would "prove" treasonable contacts between certain Soviet generals and their German counterparts. When the German intelligence officer Otto Jahnke warned that Skoblin's report was disinformation, he

was arrested; and Heydrich went ahead with the forgeries. Rumors about the alleged conspiracy against Stalin were then leaked so that they could be picked up by Czech intelligence and delivered to President Benes. He in turn passed the story to Leon Blum. Still another report supposedly reached Benes by the end of January 1937 from his ambassador in Berlin. This dispatch spoke of an "anti-Stalin plot in the USSR, Marshal Tukhachevsky, Rykov, and others." Benes is supposed to have passed to Stalin this deliberate leak from a high Nazi official. At the same time photocopies of the collection of the documents forged by the SD were transmitted through NKVD channels to Moscow, where the case against the generals was in preparation.

The proceedings of their trial have never been published. The general consensus at the time was that no trial of any kind was ever held. But nine months after the execution of the generals, some of the leading defendants in the third Moscow trial (Bukharin, Rykov, Krestinsky, Yagoda, Rosenholtz, and Grinko), who had confessed to treason, testified at the prompting of the state prosecutor that Marshal Tukhachevsky and his associates had been their accomplices. Stalin knew that the executioners were also waiting for Bukharin *et al*; he could feel reasonably sure that they could never recall their false testimony. In fact, had it not been for the dramatic revelations of Khrushchev in February 1956, history might have described the Red Generals as the traitors that Stalin wanted them to seem. His favorite security measure was the well-executed judicial frame-up, followed by the liquidation of witnesses.

Thus Blackstock is right in attributing to Stalin himself the first layer of falsification in this famous case. The second layer, however, was added after Tukhachevsky and his associates had been killed. This lie was the invention of petty and irresponsible minds seeking sensationalism. These writers of detective thrillers saw their chance when certain unscrupulous Nazis decided to grab the credit for a great coup by claiming that they had turned the generals into German spies. According to the legend that then emerged, Stalin feared that the world would not believe his charges. Therefore he decided to obtain documentary proof of espionage and treason from the SD itself. So he permitted the NKVD to instruct Skoblin to tell Heydrich that the Soviets had discovered a plot. Heydrich reported to Hitler, whose choices were to do nothing, help Tukhachevsky overthrow Stalin, or betray the general to the dictator.

The story is patently implausible. Would Stalin, contemplating the destruction of the leadership of the Red Army, direct that Hitler be told of the concocted plot in the nebulous hope that for some reason the Nazis would provide him with forged proof?

The legend has a number of variants. The documents are supposed to have reached the Soviets through Skoblin, through Benes, through a friend of Benes, etc. One version has it that the Russians paid 50,000 marks for them. Another says, "Stalin asked what price we had set on the material. Neither Hitler nor Heydrich had considered that there would be any financial prospects in the affair. However, to preserve appearances, Heydrich asked for three million gold rubles—which Stalin's emissary, after no more than a cursory examination of the documents, paid at once."<sup>2</sup>

The fable of the forged documents first appeared in a book<sup>3</sup> by Walter Krivitsky, an NKVD officer who defected to the West. The fact is that forgeries are vulnerable to scientific analysis, and Stalin understood that they can become liabilities. Certainly not a single forged document was introduced by Stalin and his aides into the voluminous files of the three famous Moscow trials of 1936-1938. And no German originals or copies were, or have been, found in the voluminous archives of the Reich by the Allies entering Berlin. But Blackstock buys the legend completely. "The charges," he writes, "were supported by evidence from two sources, the internally prepared NKVD dossiers and the forged German documents. . . . The accused angrily denied the charges, but the documentary evidence was so convincing that Stalin never lost the confidence of those officers who survived the military purge which followed." (p. 338). And in summarizing the event, he says, "Viewed as a disinformation operation or provocation, the Tikhachevsky affair was certainly one of the most successful in modern history. It represented a major NKVD achievement, far exceeding reasonable results in comparable operations. Nevertheless, Artuzov,<sup>4</sup> the brilliant head of the foreign department and his aides soon perished in the purge themselves." (p. 339).

<sup>2</sup>*The Labyrinth*, Walter Schellenberg, New York, 1957, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup>*In Stalin's Secret Service*, 1939, pp. 239-240.

<sup>4</sup>In fact, Artuzov had nothing to do with the Tikhachevsky affair. At the end of 1933 he had been transferred from the Foreign Department of the NKVD as a special aide (*Osobopolnomochenny*) to Yagoda, then Chief of the Commissariat. In 1935 he was removed from the NKVD altogether and appointed deputy to Ian Berzin, Chief of the Fourth Department of the Red Army. Blackstock compounded this error by mistakenly assuming that Arthur Artuzov and Abram Slutsky were identical. He writes, "Under the talented direction of Artuzov (Abram Slutsky)" (p. 195) and ". . . suddenly a courier arrived from Spain with an urgent message on microfilm from A. A. Slutsky (Artuzov). . ." (p. 239). Actually Slutsky succeeded Artuzov in the NKVD's Foreign Department in 1935 and headed it until February 1938. That the names are those of two different men is documentable even from data in the public domain. Either Blackstock was duped by his sources or he sought to strengthen his erroneous view of the Tikhachevsky case. Blackstock is similarly confused when he writes (p. 94) that ". . . Starov was in fact OGPU Commissar Pillar." He was not; the two were different people.

There are some other mistakes and distortions that merit brief mention. On page 221 the author discusses a sensational article by V. Burtsev, an article allegedly based on information obtained by him from one Fekhner, the OGPU Resident in Europe. Fekhner allegedly admitted that he had taken part in the kidnapping of General Kutypov. To the best of our knowledge, however, there never was a Soviet Resident named Fekhner. On page 224 and at other points Blackstock says that Lev Helfand, the Second Secretary of the Soviet Embassy in Paris, was the OGPU Resident in France and that his assistant was Yanovich. It was in fact Yanovich who was the Resident. Helfand never had anything to do with the OGPU.<sup>5</sup> To illustrate how much Stalin wanted to impress Hitler with the quality of the Soviet Air Force, Blackstock asserts (p. 297) that "... during the Spanish Civil War the latest Soviet fighter planes were permitted to fall by 'mistake' into German hands." The author sources this statement to Alexander Orlov's *Handbook of Intelligence and Guerrilla Warfare*.<sup>6</sup> A check has shown, however, that Orlov did not make such a statement. He simply mentions that two Soviet fighter planes landed on an enemy air strip behind the Madrid sector as a result of an error in navigation. (p. 22). In fact, Soviet disinformation was employed in an action designed to impress the Germans with the quality of the air force of the USSR, but not as Blackstock says it was. On page 298 the author says that Kandelaki, the head of a Soviet Trade Delegation, "... left for Moscow accompanied by Friedrichson of the NKVD to report to Stalin." Again he is wrong. We know that Friedrichson served in the Soviet Trade Delegation in Berlin for some eight years, but he had nothing to do with the NKVD.

Through the years a body of literature, both articles and books about Soviet intelligence in general and the Tukhachevsky case in particular, has mushroomed. Soviet publications are slanted as part of the Communists' endless rewriting of history. Western authors like Blackstock tend to pile up and adopt uncritically as much as possible from what has been published before, in the East and the West. A characteristic example is *The Soviet High Command* by John Erickson, from which Blackstock has borrowed as profusely and recklessly as Erickson borrowed from others.

By now it will have been recognized that *The Secret Road to World War II* covers the same ground as that traversed by the pseudonymous

<sup>5</sup>Helfand, a regular Soviet Foreign service employec, defected to the US in Rome, in 1940.

<sup>6</sup>The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1963.

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Geoffrey Bailey in *The Conspirators*.<sup>7</sup> But Blackstock has not written an authoritative or even an accurate book. His undiscerning eclecticism has resulted not in a factual record of Soviet disinformation but in its perpetuation. Our understanding of the philosophy and methods of Soviet deception is confused, not enhanced, by an account which depicts the Cheka-OGPU-NKVD as ten feet tall, the Western services as pygmies, and the anti-Soviet emigration as the victim of both.

<sup>7</sup>Harpers, New York, 1960.

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