

Chapter 14. Snyder's Accusations of Soviet Anti-Semitism in *Bloodlands*

Chapter 11

What is the Truth?

И вдруг на этом обсуждении премий Сталин, обращаясь к членам Политбюро и говорит:

- У нас в ЦК антисемиты завелись. Это безобразие!

- *Так это было. Тихон Хренников о времени и о себе.* М.: «Музыка» 1994, с. 179.

Translated:

And suddenly during this discussion of the prizes Stalin turned towards the members of the Politburo and said:

- Antisemites have turned up in our Central Committee. It is a disgrace!

- *Thus It Was. Tikhon Khrennikov about His Times and Himself.* Moscow: "Muzyka" 1994, p. 179.

The Lie That Stalin Was Anti-Semitic

Snyder's book is subtitled "Europe Between Hitler and Stalin." He speaks of "twelve years, between 1933 and 1945, while both Hitler and Stalin were in power." (vii) Hitler committed suicide in April 1945.

So why does Snyder have a chapter that deals with events in the USSR from 1948 to 1952, when Hitler was long dead? The reason, presumably, is that Snyder cannot find any anti-Semitism by Stalin, the Soviet government, or pro-Soviet forces like the Polish communist-led People's Army (Armia Ludowa, AL). On the contrary: all

the anti-Semitism between 1933 and 1945, aside from the Nazis, was by anticommunist forces like the Polish government-in-exile, its underground Home Army and Ukrainian nationalists. And their anti-Semitism was immense!

Snyder supports, and is supported by, the political forces in present-day Poland and Ukraine that are fiercely anticommunist — Snyder approves of that — but are also anti-Semitic in their unguarded moments. They revere and honor the anticommunist forces of the war and post-war period — but these forces too were violently anti-Semitic. Snyder obviously cannot document any Soviet anti-Semitism before 1945 or he would have done it. So Snyder tries hard to find anti-Semitic acts by Stalin and the Soviet leadership after 1945, even though this violates the parameters Snyder himself has chosen for his book.

The final chapter in Snyder's book is titled "Stalinist Antisemitism." If one is going to sustain a comparison between Hitler and Stalin, as Snyder wishes to do, then it's important to claim, somehow or other, that Stalin was anti-Semitic. This is not easy to do, as the quotation from composer Tikhon Khrennikov's memoirs above shows. There is much evidence that Stalin vigorously opposed anti-Semitism. There is no evidence that Stalin was anti-Semitic and, consequently, no reason to think that he was. But Snyder tries to "square the circle" anyway. We examine his logical contortions and falsifications in the present chapter.

Did Stalin Murder Solomon Mikhoels?

Snyder introduces the chapter as follows:

In January 1948, Stalin was killing a Jew. Solomon Mikhoels, the chairman of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee and the director of the Moscow Yiddish Theater, had been sent to Minsk to judge a play for the Stalin Prize. Once arrived, he was invited to the country house of the head of the Soviet Belarusian state police, Lavrenty Tsanava, who had him murdered, along with an inconvenient witness. Mikhoels's body, crushed by a truck, was left on a quiet street. (339)

This is false. Stalin did not order Mikhoels to be murdered. The documents purporting to “prove” this are crude forgeries. This forgery has been discussed in Russia for over a decade. IUrii Mukhin discussed the evidence of a forgery in *Ubiystvo Stalina i Beria* (2002). Mukhin has written some absurdities in his day, but his discussion of the “Mikhoels murder documents” is very cogent. Zhores Medvedev, a Soviet dissident with strong anti-Stalin and anticommunist credentials, wrote that he does not believe the story to be true either.¹ Snyder shows no familiarity with this issue whatsoever.²

Did Stalin’s Daughter Overhear Stalin “Covering Up” Mikhoels’ Murder?

Svetlana Allilueva, Stalin’s daughter, overheard her father arranging the cover story for the murder with Tsanava: “car accident.” (340)

Here Snyder is misleading his readers by significant omission. In 1966 Svetlana Allilueva, Joseph Stalin’s only daughter, emigrated from the USSR to the West. In her first book of memoirs, *Twenty Letters To A Friend*, published in 1967, a year after her arrival in the West, she wrote:

A new wave of arrests got under way at the end of 1948... Lozovsky was arrested, and Mikhoels was killed. (196)³

A footnote to this passage in the English edition (p. 245) states that Mikhoels “died in mysterious circumstances” in 1948.

About a year later Allilueva published a second volume of memoirs, *Only One Year* (1969). Here she tells a very different story:

One day, in father’s dacha, during one of my rare meetings with him, I entered his room when he was

¹ *Stalin i Evreiskaia Problema*. Moscow: Izdatel'stvo 'Prava cheloveka', 2003, pp. 10-26.

² My Moscow-based colleague Vladimir L. Bobrov and I have an article pending publication that proves conclusively that the documents purporting to prove Stalin’s murder of Mikhoels are crude forgeries.

³ Svetlana’s chronology is confused here. There was no such clear connection among the events she cites, for Mikhoels was killed on January 13, 1948, not at the end of the year.

speaking to someone on the telephone. Something was being reported to him and he was listening. Then, as a summary of the conversation, he said, "Well, it's an automobile accident." I remember so well the way he said it: not a question but an answer, an assertion. He wasn't asking; he was suggesting: "an automobile accident." When he got through, he greeted me; and a little later he said: "Mikhoels was killed in an automobile accident." (p. 154)

Had Stalin's daughter somehow "forgotten" to mention this detail in her earlier account? That can hardly be the case. People do not forget details like the involvement of their father in a murder. Nor can people who hear only one side of a phone conversation tell whether a person making a statement is instructing someone else, or repeating a fact just heard from the other party.

One thing is clear: in 1967 Allilueva did not yet "know" that Mikhoels had been murdered at all, much less that it was her father who had murdered him. Most likely she had been "coached" during the year between the two books. Her second volume was written after moving to the US and befriending several virulent anti-communists, some of whom she thanks in the book. No doubt it was they who "convinced" her to put a different interpretation on what she had heard her father say in 1948.

Despite its obvious lack of validity as evidence some writers⁴, Snyder among them, still cite Allilueva's statement from *Only One Year* while omitting any mention of her earlier statement in *Twenty Letters To A Friend*. To do so is dishonesty of a high order: propaganda, not scholarship.

Did Stalin Say Russians Had Been the War's Greatest Victims?

Given the centrality of the Second World War to the experience of all east Europeans, in the USSR and in

⁴ E.g Joshua Rubenstein and Vladimir P. Naumov, *Stalin's Secret Pogrom. The Postwar Inquisition of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee*. (New Haven CT: Yale University Press, 2001), 39.

the new satellite states, everyone in the new communist Europe would have to understand that the Russian nation had struggled and suffered like no other. Russians would have to be the greatest victors and the greatest victims, now and forever. (347)

Snyder does not even bother to cite any evidence to support this false statement.

Was The Number of Soviet Jews Killed by the Germans a “State Secret”?

The number of Jews killed by the Germans in the Soviet Union was a state secret. (342)

This statement is also false, and again Snyder does not cite any evidence to support it. (Snyder’s footnote to the paragraph that begins with this statement is also false — he vastly understates the number of Soviet citizens killed in the war. We omit this here).

Did the Soviets Try to Hide the Fact of Collaboration with the Germans?

It was unmentionable that Soviet citizens had staffed Treblinka, Sobibór, and Bełżec. That the Germans needed collaborators, and found them, is not surprising. But collaboration undermined the myth of a united Soviet population defending the honor of the fatherland by resisting the hated fascist invader. (342-3)

Another false statement, and again Snyder cites no evidence. There was no “myth of a united Soviet population...” Trials of collaborators continued throughout the Soviet period, as did prosecutions of, and public attacks upon, Ukrainian and other nationalists who aided the Nazis and who found safe haven in the West.

“Some” Nationalist Partisans Were Antisemitic?

In the Baltics and Ukraine and Poland, some partisans were openly anti-Semitic, and continued to use

the Nazi tactic of associating Soviet power with Jewry.

(344; no reference given.)

This is a vast understatement: Baltic and Ukrainian nationalists were *uniformly* anti-Semitic. During the German occupation they participated in, and often initiated, mass murders of Jewish civilians, often outdoing the Germans in gruesome sadism. The same was true of most Polish nationalists, including the Home Army.

Polish Anti-Semitism

Prewar Polish society was perhaps the most anti-Semitic society in the world. Polish Jews were not considered “Poles” and were subject to many kinds of discrimination. The Polish Catholic church urged discrimination against Jews, the boycott of Jewish businesses, etc.

During the war Polish civilians carried out many murderous pogroms against Jews. Often the Germans had nothing to do with these attacks. Jewish memoirs repeatedly record that Polish Jews who left the ghettos were more afraid of Poles than they were of Germans. Polish civilians robbed, beat, and murdered Jews, and turned them in to the Germans. This last was very important as Germans were not familiar with the clues of Jewish identity and often could not tell Polish Jews from Polish non-Jews. Poles were much more sensitive to these differences and could use their ability to blackmail Jews. *Szmalcownictwo*⁵, the blackmailing by Polish civilians of Jews who managed to get outside the ghetto, took place everywhere.

Polish civilians killed Jews to gain favor with the Germans, but also to steal their victims' possessions — homes, lands, belongings, money, clothes — or simply because they were Jews. Sometimes refined forms of torture were used. Jews were burned to death; Jewish women and girls were often raped before being killed, and so on.

Polish nationalists are fond of pointing out the fact that Israel has named more Poles as “Righteous Among the Nations” — persons

⁵ *Szmalc* means “lard, grease” — that is, money.

who helped Jews during the war — than people of any other nationality. But many Poles who saved Jews during the war were hounded and persecuted by their Polish neighbors and other Poles who learned that they had helped to save Jews. Nationalist historians avoid this issue. Dariusz Libionka, a researcher at the Polish Center for Holocaust Research (Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów) whose work Snyder cites in *Bloodlands*, writes:

Jak wspomina Michał Borwicz, dyrektor Żydowskiej Komisji Historycznej w Krakowie, po wojnie ukrywający Żydów robili wszystko, aby ich “zbrodnia” nie została ujawniona:

Zaraz po ukazaniu się pierwszego ŻKH (Dokumenty i zbrodnie męczeństwa) zaczęły się wizyty paradoksalne. Ludzie cytowani po nazwisku (i to właśnie dobroczyńcy!) przychodzili przygnębieni, z wyrzutami: że publikując ich “zbrodnię,” [...] wydajemy ich na pastwę zemsty sąsiadów. ... i nie tylko sąsiadów. Z kolei z podobnymi pretensjami zaczęli się zjawiać niektórzy uratowani Żydzi, wysłani do nas przez swoich dobroczyńców. Inni jeszcze (autorzy zeznań spisanych już, lecz na razie jeszcze nie ogłoszonych) przychodzili przewencyjnie, by zabronić ich ogłaszania w przyszłości [...]. Stanęliśmy, ja i moi współpracownicy, przed kwadraturą koła.

Translated:

Michael Borwicz, director of the Jewish Historical Commission in Krakow, said that after the war those who had hidden Jews did everything they could to prevent their “crime” from being disclosed:

Immediately after the release of the first ZKH (Documents and crimes of martyrdom) there began to occur paradoxical visits. People quoted by name (and mainly the benefactors [those who had rescued Jews]!) arrived depressed, with reproaches: that by publishing their

"crime," [...] we were delivering them to the mercy of the revenge of their neighbors. ...and not only of their neighbors. In turn, with similar claims there began to unexpectedly appear some rescued Jews, sent to us by their benefactors. Still others (authors of written testimony but at that time as yet not published) came preventively, to prohibit their publication in the future [...] I and my colleagues were faced with the problem of squaring the circle [i.e. of publishing the names of those who had saved Jews, and so exposing them to danger from other Poles, or of not publishing their names, and so leaving their benevolence unrecognized].⁶

A Polish woman who saved Jews, Marysia Michalska, told one of those she was hiding, that she had a "guilty conscience" for helping her Jewish wards:

Byli też i tacy, którzy z powodów religijnych uważali, że nam, Żydom, wstyd pomagać. Na przykład Marysia Michalska, osoba dosyć kulturalna, lecz przesadnie pobożna, zawsze miała wyrzuty sumienia, że nam udzieliła pomocy ... w rozmowie ze mną niejednokrotnie zaznaczała, że modli się, by Bóg jej nie ukarał za to, że nam pomaga.

Translated:

There were also those who, for religious reasons thought that it was shameful to help us Jews. For example, Mary Michalska, a quite cultured person but overly pious, always had a guilty conscience that she had provided assistance to us ... in conversation with me she repeatedly stressed that she was praying that God would not punish her for having helped us.

⁶ Dariusz Libionka, "Polskie piśmiennictwo na temat zorganizowanej i indywidualnej pomocy Żydom (1945-2008)," *Zagłada Żydów* 4 (2008), 23.

- Leokadia Schmidt, *Cudem przeżyliśmy czas zagłady* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1983), 160.

Michalska evidently got the idea that helping Jews was sinful from the anti-Semitic Polish Roman Catholic Church, whose influence intensified the ideological anti-Semitism of the Polish elites. After the war many Jews who returned to their homes, shops, and businesses found them occupied by Poles who refused to leave. Many were murdered by their Polish neighbors.

The anticommunist Polish underground that carried out terrorist activity for years after the war also targeted Jews as well as Soviet soldiers and officials, Polish communists, and anyone whom they deemed unpatriotic. Jewish survivors record Home Army units after the war stopping trains, taking the Jewish passengers off and shooting them.

The Center for Holocaust Research (Centrum Badań nad Zagładą Żydów) in Warsaw has published many books and journal articles detailing horrific acts of anti-Semitic violence by Polish civilians and by the Home Army. Polish-American professor Jan Tomasz Gross, a highly anticommunist author, has published a number of books in English detailing Polish anti-Semitism during and after the war that have brought this question to the attention of persons who are not specialists in Polish history.

A recent and very useful account drawn from the works of the Centrum, of Gross, of memoirs of Polish Jews, and other sources, is by Stefan Zgliczyński, *Jak Polacy Niemcom Żydów Mordować Pomagali* - "How Poles Helped Germans Murder Jews." The title is misleading, however, as most of the accounts in the book deal with Poles, both partisans and civilians, murdering Jews on their own initiative without any encouragement or assistance, much less orders, from Germans. Zgliczyński, who is the editor of the Polish edition of the French journal *Le monde diplomatique*, concludes his book with this damning statement:

Dlatego też logika każe zadać pytanie: z kim przede wszystkim walczyli Polacy podczas ostatniej wojny - z

okupantem, czy też ze swoimi żydowskimi sąsiadami i współobywatelami?

Translated:

Therefore, logic forces us to ask the question: against whom, above all, did Poles fight during the last war — against the occupier or also against their Jewish neighbors and fellow citizens? (265)

Zgliczyński's book serves as an accessible introduction to the large body of research by scholars from the Centrum and of other works such as memoir literature that is available only in Polish. Someone really should translate it.

Most Jews in the former "Kresy," as Western Belorussia and Western Ukraine were called by the Polish imperialists, welcomed the Red Army enthusiastically. There were many Jews in the Red Army, the NKVD (Soviet political police) and the Soviet administrative organs. Likewise, Jewish escapees from the ghettos and Jewish partisans joined the Soviet-backed People's Army (AL), while the Home Army rejected them at best and often murdered them. After the war the communist administration arrested, tried, and punished Poles who participated in pogroms against Jews.

Polish nationalists today do their best to minimize Polish anti-Semitism by ignoring it; by falsely claiming that the Germans "instigated" pogroms by Polish civilians; or by blaming the Jews themselves for being "disloyal" to Poland. Polish nationalists never discuss the official racism against Jews by the prewar Polish government; the role of the Polish schools and Roman Catholic church leadership in actively promoting anti-Semitic ideas; or the admiration of many in the Polish elite for Adolf Hitler's anti-Jewish campaigns. Why *any* Polish Jews should have been loyal to the racist Polish state is the real question, never explained.

Discussion of the official anti-Semitism under the Second Polish Republic, in the Home Army and other Polish formations during and after the war, and of the phenomenal level of anti-Semitism among the Polish population makes the Soviet Union and communist Poles look very good by comparison.

Who Was Harmed By Soviet “Occupation”?

No Soviet account of the war could note one of its central facts: German and Soviet occupation together was worse than German occupation alone.
(344)

This has to be one of the most cynical statements in this highly dishonest book. Snyder makes no argument and cites no evidence to support it. The reality is just the opposite: German and Soviet occupation together was far, far **better** than German occupation alone. Had the Soviets not driven the Germans out, the Germans would have killed not just the millions of Poles and Soviet citizens they did kill, but almost all of them. That was Hitler’s expressed aim.

The Soviet retaking of areas formerly occupied by the Germans was certainly far better for Jews, communists, and all those who were fighting or resisting the German occupation. The Red Army saved the majority of Poles, Belorussians, Ukrainians, Russians, and Jews from annihilation or at best slave labor.⁷ For example, most of the members of the anticommunist Home Army surrendered in early 1945 when ordered to do so by the London Polish government, and either lived peacefully in postwar Poland or chose to emigrate. Had the Red Army not liberated Poland the Germans would eventually have captured and killed them.

In the article cited previously Grzegorz Motyka, an anticommunist and a researcher whose work Snyder recommends, says that it was the Red Army that stopped the pro-Nazi Ukrainian Nationalists from slaughtering even more Polish civilians and that thousands of Poles joined the pro-Soviet partisan movement as a result.

Of course, the Soviet occupation was indeed “worse” for some people. For Poles who were prosecuted for anti-Semitic and/or anti-communist crimes. For those who had collaborated with the Germans — though it is not clear how many of even these Poles would have survived if Germany had won the war. For those who fought in

⁷ See the Nazi “Generalplan Ost,” now online at <http://gplanost.x-berg.de/gplanost.html> In Russian translation at http://vk.com/doc-37298103_133818250?dl=a63272a28cd2d43eb8 (accessed February 10, 2014)

or supported the underground anticommunist terrorist movements.

In short, the Soviet occupation was worse for fascists, anti-Semites, and those who fought for the restoration of capitalism. The political tendency of *Bloodlands* is aimed to please these very forces, who are honored as "freedom fighters" by today's nationalists in Poland, the Baltics, Ukraine, and to a lesser extent in Belarus.

"The Big Lie" Yet Again: "Soviet Invasion of Poland," "Soviet Alliance with Germany"

The whole Soviet idea of the Great Patriotic War was premised on the view that the war began in 1941, when Germany invaded the USSR, not in 1939, when Germany and the Soviet Union together invaded Poland. In other words, in the official story, the territories absorbed as a result of Soviet aggression in 1939 had to be considered as somehow always having been Soviet, rather than as the booty of a war that Stalin had helped Hitler to begin. Otherwise the Soviet Union would figure as one of the two powers that started the war, as one of the aggressors, which was obviously unacceptable. (344; no reference given)

And:

The Soviet citizens who suffered most in the war had been brought by force under Soviet rule right before the Germans came—as a result of a Soviet alliance with Nazi Germany.

"Also to be forgotten was that the Soviet Union had been allied to Nazi Germany when the war began in 1939... (345)

This falsehood is crucial to Snyder's thesis. We have thoroughly discussed it earlier in the present book. We have shown exhaustively in previous chapters that there was no "alliance" with Nazi Germany and no "Soviet aggression." Apparently Snyder thinks that his readers will believe this falsehood if he repeats it often enough. This is the technique of mind-numbing repetition called "the Big Lie" that Adolf Hitler advocated in *Mein Kampf*.

The following sentence begs for a little more comment:

...in the official story, the territories absorbed as a result of Soviet aggression in 1939 had to be considered as somehow always having been Soviet, rather than as the booty of a war that Stalin had helped Hitler to begin.

Snyder is referring to Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia, which had been “the booty of a war” all right — the booty of the Polish imperialist invasion of Russia in 1919-1921. Poland had taken these lands by force then, and lost them again in 1939. Evidently Snyder hopes that his readers will be ignorant of this history.

And of course it was not Stalin who had “helped Hitler to begin” the war. The British, French, and Polish governments did that. They encouraged Hitler’s aggression with the Munich Accord. Then they torpedoed collective security against Hitler despite the Soviets’ struggle to convince them of its necessity. We have discussed this, with evidence, in previous chapters.

Was There Official Anti-Semitism in the USSR After World War II?

In late 1948 and early 1949, public life in the Soviet Union veered toward anti-Semitism. The new line was set, indirectly but discernibly, by Pravda on 28 January 1949. An article on “unpatriotic theater critics,” who were “bearers of stateless cosmopolitanism,” began a campaign of denunciation of Jews in every sphere of professional life. Pravda purged itself of Jews in early March. Jewish officers were cashiered from the Red Army and Jewish activists removed from leadership positions in the communist party. ...Jewish writers who had taken an interest in Yiddish culture or in the German murder of Jews found themselves under arrest. As Grossman recalled, “Throughout the whole of the USSR it seemed that only Jews thieved and took bribes, only

Jews were criminally indifferent towards the sufferings of the sick, and only Jews published vicious or badly written books."¹² (348)

Sources (n. 12 p. 502):

* "On the *Pravda* article, see Kostyrchenko, *Shadows*, 152."

* "On the decreased number of Jews in high party positions (thirteen percent to four percent from 1945 to 1952), see Kostyrchenko, *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitizm*, 352."

* "The Grossman quotation is from Chandler's translation of *Everything Flows*.

The *Pravda* editorial discussed by **Kostyrchenko** was written by Aleksandr A. Fadeev, General Secretary of the Writers Union, and David I. Zaslavskii, a longtime editor of *Pravda* and of Jewish background himself. The article is available online at a number of places.⁸ Many, though not all, of the theatre critics who are criticized in it do have recognizably Jewish names. But that in itself does not make the article anti-Semitic, despite the claims of Kostyrchenko and others. It's impossible to criticize anyone without mentioning that person's name. It is not anti-Semitic to criticize a Jewish writer. And the criticism in the *Pravda* editorial is not anti-Semitic at all. Rather, it is directed against criticism that belittled Soviet culture in comparison to Western European culture.

By 1952 the percentage of persons "of Jewish origin" in Party organizations had indeed declined to approximately the percentage of Jews in the Soviet population (the correct reference is to the table in **Kostyrchenko**, *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitizm* pp. 353-355). But this is not evidence of anti-Semitism either. Previously the percentage of Jews in high positions in the Party and cultural spheres had been two or more times their proportion in the population. The large-scale *overrepresentation* of Jews in these fields was only possible if other nationalities were seriously *underrepresented*. Reducing the percentage of Jews was inevitable as the percentage of other nationalities was increased.

⁸ At <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/69512> and <http://www.ihst.ru/projects/sohist/books/cosmopolit/100.htm>

It was also inevitable that there would be an increase in anti-Semitism in the USSR after the war. Tens of millions of Soviet citizens had lived for several years under German occupation and been subject to an unprecedented barrage of Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda. Nationalists among the Baltic, Belorussian, and Ukrainian population had promoted anti-Semitism too, often more vehemently than the Germans did. This was bound to leave its mark on postwar Soviet society. But Snyder is not discussing *this* anti-Semitism.

Stalin Opposed Anti-Semitism

In the paragraph cited above, Snyder writes:

A few dozen Jewish poets and novelists who used Russian literary pseudonyms found their real or prior names published in parentheses. (348)

This is true — and it was Stalin himself who reacted vehemently against it. Stalin opposed the publication of Jewish names after the “pen” names of authors. Noted Soviet author, war correspondent, and editor of literary journals Konstantin Simonov records the following:

- Почему Мальцев, а в скобках стоит Ровинский?
В чем дело? До каких пор это будет
продолжаться? В прошлом году уже говорили
на эту тему, запретили представлять на
премию, указывая двойные фамилии. Зачем это
делается? Зачем пишется двойная фамилия?
Если человек избрал себе литературный
псевдоним - это его право, не будем уже
говорить ни о чем другом, просто об
элементарном приличии. Человек имеет право
писать под тем псевдонимом, который он себе
избрал. Но, видимо, кому-то приятно
подчеркнуть, что у этого человека двойная
фамилия, подчеркнуть, что это еврей. Зачем это
подчеркивать? Зачем это делать? Зачем
насаждать антисемитизм? Кому это надо?
Человека надо писать под той фамилией, под
которой он себя пишет сам. Человек хочет

иметь псевдоним. Он себя ощущает так, как это для него самого естественно. Зачем же его тянуть, тащить назад? ⁹

Translated:

Why 'Mal'tsev', and then 'Rovinskii' in parentheses? What's going on here? How long is this going to continue? ... Why is this being done? We already spoke about this last year, forbidding double last names in works presented for the [Stalin] prize. Why write a double last name? If a person has chosen a literary pseudonym — that's his right. We're not speaking of anything other than elementary decency. A person has the right to write under a pseudonym he has chosen for himself. But, obviously, somebody wants to emphasize that this person has a double name, to emphasize that he is a Jew. Why emphasize that? Why do that? Why spread anti-Semitism? Who benefits from that? We must write down a person with the surname that the person himself has chosen. A person wishes to have a pseudonym; he himself feels that this is natural for him. So why pull him, drag him back?

Simonov's book and this quotation are well known to students of Soviet history. If Snyder is ignorant of it he is unqualified to write about the subject. If he does know about it but kept it from his readers he is being deliberately dishonest. Stalin made other remarks after the war showing that he personally opposed anti-Semitism.

Snyder cites no evidence that "Jewish officers were dismissed from the Red Army" because they were Jewish or that "Jewish writers... found themselves under arrest." These are serious allegations. If they were made against, say, the American government we would demand evidence. Perhaps Snyder is counting on reflexive, "knee-jerk" anti-Stalinism among his readers to blind them to the absence of any evidence?

⁹ Konstantin Simonov. *Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniya*. Moscow: Novosti, 1988, p. 216. Also online at http://www.hrono.info/libris/lib_s/simonov16.php

The Grossman quotation is from a novel written years after Stalin's death. A quotation from a novel is not documentation of an historical fact. Grossman himself was a tragic case of the consequences of Khrushchev's lies about Stalin and the Stalin years. And the reader should be clear on this point: Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" was deliberately falsified from beginning to end.¹⁰ Grossman believed these slanders and incorporated Khrushchev's false history of the USSR into the book Snyder cites, *Everything Flows* (*Vsio techiot*). In it the protagonist accepts Khrushchev's false "revelations" about the Stalin years at face value and decides that all the years of communism have been a cruel hoax, the defendants in the Moscow Trials innocent, and so forth.

Grossman's translator, Robert Chandler, believes this false history himself and has said that Grossman's novels are important "as history."¹¹ Quite the opposite is the case. Grossman believed Khrushchev's lies and built his novel around them. Many people would conclude that this ruins Grossman's novel, for the novel is constructed entirely around Khrushchev's politics. If he had known Khrushchev's "revelations" were lies Grossman would never have written this novel in the first place! But many more people than just Grossman were duped and disillusioned by Khrushchev's lies.

Snyder writes:

Jews across the Soviet Union were in a state of distress. The MGB reported the anxieties of the Jews in Soviet Ukraine, who understood that the policy must come from the top, and worried that "no one can say what form this is going to take." Only five

¹⁰ See Furr, *Khrushchev Lied*. The English version of this book was not published until 2011, after *Bloodlands*. But the Russian version was published in 2007, long before *Bloodlands*. Гровер Ферр. Антисталинская подлость. М.: Алгоритм. 2007. Republished as Тени XX-го съезда, или антисталинская подлость. М.: Эксмо-Алгоритм, 2010. Snyder should have known about it.

¹¹ See Chandler's remarks in the following interview at BookSerf: "BS... Does it matter what we call different sections of *Everything Flows*, history or fiction? RC: No, I don't think it matters." At <http://thebookserf.blogspot.com/2010/01/everything-flows-by-vasily-grossman.html> Also, email of Robert Chandler of March 4, 2010.

years had passed since the end of the German occupation. For that matter, only eleven years had passed since the end of the Great Terror.¹³ (348)

Source (n. 13 p. 502): "... For the MGB report, see Kostyrchenko, *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitizm*, 327."

The letter in question¹² does indeed show that some Jewish nationalists in the Western Ukrainian city of Chernovtsy reacted negatively to the line on Soviet patriotism of the anti-cosmopolitan campaign. However, according to the letter, not all the Jewish figures quoted considered it anti-Semitic. Some of them simply thought it was anti-Marxist. Benjamin Pinkus, Professor of Jewish History at the Ben-Gurion University in Israel, states that: "It is important to emphasise that in these attacks [the anti-cosmopolitanism campaign] there was no anti-Jewish tone, either explicitly or implicitly."¹³

The "Berlin Blockade"

Snyder gives the following brief account of the "Berlin Blockade":

The western Allies had announced that they would introduce a new German currency, the Deutschmark, in the zones they controlled. The Soviets blockaded West Berlin, with the evident goal of forcing West Berliners to accept supplies from the Soviets, and thus accept Soviet control of their society. The Americans then undertook to supply the isolated city by air, which Moscow claimed could never work. In May 1949, the Soviets had to give up the blockade. The Americans, along with the British, proved capable of supplying thousands of tons of

¹² Online at <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/68642>

¹³ *The Jews of the Soviet Union: The History of a National Minority*. Cambridge University Press, 1989, p 152. Pinkus shows that some Jews "took an active part in the anti-cosmopolitanism campaign." (157) Pinkus also argues that Jewish writers were attacked more frequently and perhaps more intensely. So the anti-cosmopolitan campaign may not have been entirely free of anti-Semitism. But it was not *official* anti-Semitism.

supplies by air every day. In this one action, goodwill, prosperity, and power were all on display.
(349)

This is false. “Soviet control of their society” was not at all the Soviet “goal.” Even Snyder does not claim he can demonstrate this, calling it “the evident goal.” Snyder has distorted what the Berlin crisis was all about. Historian Geoffrey Roberts describes it as follows:

Although termed a “blockade” by the West, the Soviet action consisted of a limited set of restrictions on land access to the Western sectors of Berlin from West Germany. It did not preclude supplies to West Berlin from the Soviet zone of occupation, which continued to trickle into the city, nor was air access prohibited — hence the famous airlift.

The goal of Stalin’s pressure tactics was to force the Western allies to rescind their London communiqué and return to the CFM [Council of Foreign Ministers] negotiating forum. Stalin was quite frank about his aim in two conversations he held with the British, French, and American ambassadors in August 1948. In January 1949 Stalin made this position public when he agreed with a Western interviewer that the blockade would be lifted if the West agreed to convene another CFM session devoted to the German question. In May 1949 the blockade was lifted when the Western powers agreed to reconvene the CFM in Paris.¹⁴

Snyder does not mention the fact that it was the Soviet Union that offered to reunite Germany — something all Germans wanted — but the Western Allies refused.

¹⁴ Roberts, *Molotov. Stalin’s Cold Warrior* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2012), 118-9.

Snyder Falsifies — Again — About Litvinov's Dismissal

He [Molotov] had been appointed to the job [Soviet Foreign Minister] in 1939, in part because he (unlike his predecessor Litvinov) was not Jewish, and Stalin had then needed someone with whom Hitler would negotiate. (351)

We have exposed this falsehood in a previous chapter. There is no evidence to support it. It seems that Molotov was appointed because Stalin wanted desperately to conclude a treaty for mutual defense not with Hitler but with the West, and Molotov was the person closest to him.

It was very dangerous to be a Jew in postwar Poland—though no more so than to be a Ukrainian or a German or a Pole in the anti-communist underground. (352)

This is a striking admission by Snyder, though he appears to be unaware he has made it. Snyder is comparing the situation of Jewish civilians, who he admits were subject to murderous anti-Semitic pogroms by Poles in Poland, to armed terrorists who were of course being hunted by the police.

Many of these terrorists had collaborated with the Germans — some Home Army men had done this, as had virtually all the Ukrainians and Germans in what Snyder calls “the anti-communist underground.” Many of them had participated in the Holocaust and/or themselves taken part in the murder of Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian civilians. It was right that it be “dangerous” for them, just as it was wrong that there was so much Polish anti-Semitism that it was dangerous for Jews in Poland.

In this passage and in fact throughout *Bloodlands* Snyder is clearly doing propaganda work for — “rehabilitating” — pro-Nazi, anti-Semitic forces in Eastern Europe who are considered “heroes” by today's right-wing Eastern European nationalists. Of course these forces were also anti-Soviet, which is the reason Snyder minimizes their crimes.

In 2013 Poland declared a holiday in honor of the “Doomed Soldiers” (in Polish, “Żołnierze wyklęci”) of the Polish anticommunist underground, proclaiming them to be “heroes.” A Ukrainian newspaper has this to say about them:

“Прокляті солдати”: настав час бачити героїв
такими, якими вони були

Парламент Польщі підтримав надання статусу
національного свята дню пам'яті т.зв.

“проклятих солдатів” - учасників
антирадянського збройного підпілля в 1940-
1950-ті рр. Серед них є і ті, хто відверто
співпрацював з нацистами, і ті, хто по-звірячому
вбивав мирних українців.¹⁵

Translated:

“Doomed Soldiers” [more accurately, “damned soldiers”] — The Time Has Come to See These Heroes
As They Really Were

The Parliament of Poland had supported the proposal for the status of a national holiday to the day of memory of the so-called “Doomed Soldiers” — the participants in the anti-Soviet armed underground of the 1940s and 1950s. Among them are those who openly collaborated with the Nazis and those who viciously killed peaceful Ukrainians.

Snyder does not mention the fact that the Soviets and pro-Soviet Poles actively persecuted anti-Semites. For example, the perpetrators of the murderous pogrom of Jews in Kielce, Poland, in July 1946 were captured, tried, convicted, and executed within a month of their crime.

¹⁵ <http://www.istpravda.com.ua/digest/2011/03/7/29916/> The reader will recall that anticommunist historian Motyka states that Ukrainian partisans murdered 100,000 or more peaceful Poles in the Volhynian Massacres.

Did the Polish Communists Claim that Only Communists Led the Warsaw Ghetto Revolt?

All resistance to fascism was by definition led by communists; if it was not led by communists, then it was not resistance. The history of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943 had to be rewritten such that communists could be seen as leading Polish Jews—just as they were supposedly leading the Polish anti-Nazi resistance generally. In the politically acceptable history of the Second World War, the resistance in the ghetto had little to do with the mass murder of Jews, and much to do with the courage of communists. This fundamental shift of emphasis obscured the Jewish experience of the war, as the Holocaust became nothing more than an instance of fascism. It was precisely Jewish communists who had to develop and communicate these misrepresentations, so that they could not be charged with attending to Jewish rather than Polish goals. In order to seem like plausible Polish communist leaders, Jewish communists had to delete from history the single most important example of Jews resisting Nazis from Jewish motivations. The bait in Stalin's political trap was left by Hitler.²² (322)

Source (n. 22 p. 502): Shore, "Język," 60.

This is contradicted by Snyder's own source. According to Marci Shore Jewish historians did not "delete" the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising from history but continued to celebrate it every year while downplaying the role of the Zionists and exaggerating that of the Communists.

Shore, "Język," 60:

W ten sposób zakończyła się pewna epoka. Co roku komuniści - z Zachariaszem na czele - obchodzili rocznicę powstania. Nie było już żadnej wzmianki o syjonistach. Generalnie chodziło tu o proces, w

którym komuniści żydowscy zdradzali
syjonistyczną lewicę, swoich byłych towarzyszy.

Translated:

Thus ended an era. Every year the communists, with Zacharias in charge, celebrated the anniversary. There was no longer any mention of Zionists. Generally, this meant a process in which Jewish Communists betrayed the Zionist left, their former comrades.

Po wyjedzie Hermana i innych syjonistów, Ber Mark stał się autorem oficjalnej historii powstania w getcie warszawskim. Według cenzora: "Tow. Markowi udało się przeprowadzić w swej pracy słuszną polityczno-ideologiczną linię ... Tow. Mark przeprowadza w swej pracy tę linię zasadniczą, że jedyną siłę, która rzuciła hasło walki, że jedynym czynnikiem, który zorganizował i kierował ruchem oporu w getcie — była PPR i GL."

Translated:

After the departure of Herman and other Zionists, Ber Mark was the author of the official history of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. According to the censor: "Comrade Mark carried out in his work the legitimate political and ideological line ... Comrade Mark carries out in his work in this line of principle that the only force which threw the signal for the fight that the only factor that organized and directed resistance in the Ghetto, was the PPR and the GL [the Polish Workers Party and the Gardia Ludowa, communist groups]."

But there is reason to doubt the truth of Shore's statement here. Ber Mark's official history, *Powstanie w getcie warszawskim*, published in Polish in 1959, was published in English translation in 1975. Here are two short passages from the early pages of that book, *Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto*:

Its [the Anti-Fascist Bloc's] member bodies were the Polish Workers Party (P.P.R.), Hashomer Hatzair, Left and Right Labor Zionists, and Hechalutz. (5)

Commander-in-chief [of the Jewish Fighting Organization] was [Mordechai] Anielewicz, a twenty-four-year-old Hashomer Hatzair activist. Other members were Hersz Berlinski (Left Labor Zionist), Marek Edelman (Jewish Labor Bund), Itzhak Cukierman (Hechalutz), and Michal Roisenfeld (Polish Workers Party). (6)

Here is one final passage to show that Mark did not neglect the Zionists in the rest of the book:

In brief, here [at Mila 18] were the mind and heart of the Uprising: the leaderships of the Jewish Fighting Organization, Hashomer Hatzair, and the Communists; plus activists and commanders in D'ror (a Zionist group), the Jewish Labor Bund, and Akiva. (72)

The issue here is not how historically accurate Mark's depiction is. Snyder claims that the postwar communist version of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising portrayed communists as in the lead. Snyder's source Shore claims that Ber Mark wrote that "the only factor that organized and directed resistance in the Ghetto was the PPR and GL." These quotations from Ber Mark's book prove that this is not true. Mark mentions the communists prominently but often mentions Zionist and other non-communist Jewish forces first. Moreover, Mark does not show communists as the leaders of the Uprising, as Shore claims.

Snyder then again claims, without evidence, that Stalin was anti-Semitic:

This was Polish-Jewish Stalinist self-defense from Stalin's own anti-Semitism. (356)

Another blatant falsehood by Snyder. As we have seen and will see again, Stalin was not in the least "anti-Semitic" and Snyder has no evidence that he was.

According to Zhores Medvedev,

Антисемитизм Сталина, о котором можно прочесть почти во всех его биографиях, не был ни религиозным, ни этническим, ни бытовым. Он был политическим и проявлялся в форме антисионизма, а не юдофобии.

Translated:

Stalin's anti-Semitism, about which one reads in almost all of his biographies, was not based on religion, or race, or culture. It was political and expressed itself in the form of anti-Zionism, and not of racial anti-Semitism [*iudofobii*].¹⁶

Here Medvedev takes the position that opposition to Zionism is "anti-Semitic." Of course this is wrong. Many Jews, including Israeli Jews, are strongly anti-Zionist. Aside from this issue Medvedev states that there is no evidence that Stalin was anti-Semitic. Anti-communist writers routinely claim that he was. Snyder is one of these.

Again Snyder Claims Stalin "Slandered the Home Army and the Warsaw Uprising"

The associated slander of the Home Army and the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 was an easy labor. Since it had not been led by communists, it could not have been an uprising. Since the Home Army soldiers were not communists, they were reactionaries, acting against the interests of the toiling masses. The Polish patriots who died seeking to liberate their capital were fascists, little better than Hitler. The Home Army, which had fought the Germans with much greater determination than the Polish communists, was a "bespittled dwarf of reaction."²³ (356)

¹⁶ *Stalin i evreiskaia problema*, p. 92.

n. 23: This was part of the slogan of one of the more striking propaganda posters, executed by Włodzimierz Zakrzewski.¹⁷

This is false. The communists never called the fighters of the Warsaw Uprising "fascists" and Snyder cannot cite any evidence that they did so. Furthermore, many communists also fought in the Warsaw Uprising.

As we have discussed in an earlier chapter, it was not only Stalin and the communists but General Anders, Jan Ciechanowski, and many other anticommunist Poles thought the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 was a "crime." The criminals were the Home Army leadership, not the ordinary fighters. Many other non-communist Poles came to think the same thing, since the Uprising predictably led only to disaster.

There is no question that the Home Army fought to restore prewar Poland, a violent, imperialist regime, racist against Jews, Ukrainians, and Belorussians, and hostile even to the Polish trade union movement. Snyder cites no evidence at all for his claim that the Home Army fought the Germans "with much greater determination than the Polish communists" of the People's Army. Moreover, here Snyder seems to forget that he has already claimed that the activity of pro-Soviet partisans against the Germans simply brought down German violence upon the local population. To the extent the Home Army fought the Germans their actions would have the same effect. Snyder omits to inform his readers that the Home Army was conspiring with the German military against the communist forces. Nor does he mention that the Home Army hunted down and killed Jews, including Jews who escaped from the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, and collaborated with the Nazis against the Red Army.

¹⁷ The Zakrzewski poster, "The giant and the bespittled dwarf of reaction," may be viewed here: <http://artyzm.com/obraz.php?id=5569> The "giant" in the poster is either a People's Army (Armia Ludowa) fighter or a Polish Army (Wojsko Polskie) man, and the "bespittled dwarf of reaction" is the AK. The AK attacked and killed pro-Soviet partisans and Jews generally, and had collaborated with the Nazis, so it is neither surprising or unjust that the communists attacked it as "reactionary."

Should Stalin Have Left Terrorists Alone Because A Few Of Them Had Once Tried to Save Jews?

Berman, a very intelligent man, understood all of this as well as anyone could, and he brought these premises to their logical conclusions. He presided over a security apparatus that arrested members of the Home Army who had accepted the special assignment of saving Jews. (357)

This is a dishonest statement. Snyder apparently wishes to imply that Polish communist security arrested some Home Army men *because* they had been assigned to save Jews. Snyder does not say this in plain language, because it is untrue. Does he then wish to imply that “accepting the special assignment of saving Jews” should have exempted them from arrest no matter what else they did?

Snyder gives no note or citation of evidence for this statement. He does not tell us the names of any of these Home Army men. But one of them — if not the only one — was Witold Pilecki. Pilecki did indeed struggle to save Jews. But he also remained in post-war Poland as a leader of the violent underground terrorist Home Army which murdered thousands of Poles, Jews, and Soviet citizens.

This is what he was tried and executed for in 1948. No country, capitalist or communist, permits underground terrorists to roam and murder freely. Zgliczyński’s book gives many examples of wartime and, especially, of post-war murders of Jews, communists, Soviet citizens, and others by underground terrorists of the Home Army, the NSZ (Narodowe Siły Zbrojne, “National Armed Forces”). There is at least one book that gives names and details about more than one thousand members and veterans of the pro-communist People’s Army (Armia Ludowa, AL) murdered by these underground anticommunist “nationalist” groups *after* the war’s end.¹⁸

¹⁸ *Żołnierze Armii Ludowej polegli i zamordowani przez podziemie zbrojne po wyzwoleniu kraju*. Warsaw: Wydawca Rada Krajowa Żołnierzy Armii Krajowej przy ZG Związku Kombatanatów RP i b. Więźniów Politycznych, 1997. Some excerpts from this book, very hard to find outside Poland, are online at <http://poczanski-wieslaw.blog.pl/2013/09/05/w-trosce-o-dobre-imie-prezydenta-iii-rp/> and a few other sites (accessed March 22 2014).

Snyder Lies About Purge of the Polish Communist Party

Polish communists who were in power in the late 1940s usually knew, from personal experience, just what had happened to their comrades in the 1930s. Back then, Stalin had sent a signal; Polish communists had duly denounced each other, which led to mass murder, and the end of the party itself....³⁰ (359)

Source (n. 30 p. 503): "This explanation of the absence of a communist blood purge in Poland can be found inter alia in Luks, "Brüche," 47. One Polish communist leader apparently murdered another during the war; this too might have bred caution."

Evidently Snyder has invented this falsehood. There has never been any evidence that Stalin gave such a "signal." Luks, "Brüche," — the correct page reference to it is p. 43, not p. 47 — says nothing about a "signal" from Stalin, about "Polish communists duly denouncing each other," "mass murder," or anything of the kind.

The "Doctors' Plot"

Snyder spends more space on this event than on any other in this chapter. He gets virtually everything wrong, as he has so many times before. It is hard to believe that Snyder has studied the Doctors' Plot himself. He appears to rely instead on the extremely anti-communist and incompetent secondary accounts by Brent and Naumov, and by Arno Lustiger. But Snyder, not they, is responsible for what goes into his book.

Shcherbakov had died the day after he had insisted, against doctors' orders, on taking part in a Victory Day parade. (363)

Source (n. 39 p. 503): "On the Victory Day parade, see Brandenberger, "Last Crime," 193."

Brandenberger simply repeats what Brent/Naumov say: that Shcherbakov ignored the doctors' advice to remain in bed — he had suffered a heart attack on December 1944 — and instead went out

to view the Victory Day celebrations and died of another heart attack the next day, May 10, 1945. But neither Branderberger nor Brent/Naumov cite any evidence for their contention that Shcherbakov ignored the doctors' advice.

A.N. Ponomarev, author of the only full-length biography of Shcherbakov, had access to evidence from the Moscow Party archive and from the Shcherbakov family. Ponomarev states that Shcherbakov went to the celebration *with his doctors' permission*:

Вечером (**врачи не возражали**) Александр Сергеевич в сопровождении жены приехал с дачи в столицу, побывал на улицах и площадях, порадовался вместе с москвичами долгожданной победе.¹⁹

Translated:

In the evening (**the doctors did not object**) Aleksandr Sergeevich together with his wife drove from his dacha to the capital, spent a while on the streets and in the squares, rejoicing together with the Muscovites over the long-awaited victory. (Emphasis added.)

Ponomarev is honest enough to admit that he is not certain about this, since the testimony came years a few years later during the investigation of the Doctors' Plot. How, then, can Brandenberger, Brent/Naumov, and Snyder claim *without qualification* that Shcherbakov's doctors *did* object?

In the case of Zhdanov things are clearer, and again Snyder gets them wrong:

Zhdanov, too, had ignored doctors' orders to rest.
(363)

This can only be a deliberate falsehood either by Snyder or by his source. Snyder cites the Brent/Naumov book so he must know that even this dishonest book discusses how the doctors in charge of

¹⁹ A.N. Ponomarev. *Aleksandr Shcherbakov. Stranitsy biografii*. M: Izd. Glavarkhiva Moskvyy, 2004, p. 275.

treating Zhdanov allowed him to leave his bed and walk around despite the fact that the consulting cardiologist, Dr. Lidia Timashuk, determined that Zhdanov had suffered a recent heart attack and recommended strict bed rest.

There Really Was a "Doctors' Plot" Against Zhdanov

In fact there was indeed a conspiracy among Zhdanov's doctors to mistreat Zhdanov: to deny that he had suffered not just one heart attack but two recent ones and possibly a third the month before; to ignore the diagnosis of Dr. Timashuk, the cardiologist, and therefore to allow Zhdanov to get out of bed. The direct result of this was Zhdanov's death. Gennady Kostyrchenko quotes from Dr. Vinogradov's note to Beria on March 27, 1953:

Все же необходимо признать, что у А.А. Жданова имелся инфаркт, и отрицание его мною, профессорами Василенко, Егоровым, докторами Майоровым и Карпай было с нашей стороны ошибкой. При этом злого умысла в постановке диагноза и метода лечения у нас не было."²⁰

Translated:

All the same, it must be admitted that A.A. Zhdanov did have a heart attack and the denial of this fact by myself, professor Vasilenko and Egorov, and doctors Maiorov and Karpai was a mistake on our part. We had no evil intention in making our diagnosis and our treatment.

Brent and Naumov claim to have had access to an even earlier document in which Vinogradov makes the same admission:

On November 18, 1952, Vinogradov was still able to deny a premeditated plot to kill Zhdanov: "I allowed a mistake in the diagnosis that led to grave consequences and then to [Zhdanov's] death. There was no evil plan in my action ... I want only to repeat

²⁰ *Tainaia politika Stalina. Vlast' i antisemitizm* (2003), 642.

that at the basis of this crime, its original source, was medical error that I allowed as a consultant, leading the treatment of A.A. Zhdanov.
(Brent/Naumov, 231)

A semi-official collection of documents cites the following original:

Я признаю, что по моей вине жизнь А.А. Жданова была сокращена. При лечении я допустил ошибку в диагностике, приведшую к тяжелым последствиям, а затем к его смерти. Злого умысла в моих действиях не было.²¹

Translated:

I admit that it was my fault that A.A. Zhdanov's life was shortened. In the course of treating him I made a mistake in diagnosis which led to serious consequences and then to his death. There was no evil intent in my actions.

Therefore there really was a "doctors' plot" against Zhdanov in 1948! Vinogradov admitted that the consulting doctors ignored the findings and recommendation of the cardiologist, Dr. Timashuk. The only question is whether Vinogradov and the others did this, as Vinogradov claimed, to "hide my mistake in order to protect myself and those who had taken part in Zhdanov's treatment,"²² or whether they had deliberately killed Zhdanov.

Understandably, the Soviet investigators had to investigate the latter possibility. The job of policemen is to be suspicious. If medical doctors in the United States today were to make such an admission they would face the threat of loss of medical license and civil litigation.

Snyder must have known this since both Brent/Naumov and Kostyrchenko relate it. Moreover, many of the primary sources, including this document, have been publicly available for years. But

²¹ At <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/69180>

²² "„чтобы скрыть свою ошибку, выгородить себя и принимавших участие в лечении А.А. Жданова...» ; see document at previous footnote.

Snyder failed to tell his readers the facts about this important question.

Did Stalin Order the Doctors To Be Beaten in 1952?

Snyder: In autumn 1952 several more Soviet doctors were under investigation. None of them had anything to do with Zhdanov or Shcherbakov, but they had treated other Soviet and foreign communist dignitaries before their deaths. One of them was Stalin's personal doctor, who had advised him to retire in early 1952. At Stalin's express and repeated orders, these people were beaten terribly...⁴⁶ (365)

Source (n. 46 p. 503): "Quotation: Brent, *Plot*, 250."

Snyder gives no evidence for the claim that Stalin ordered the doctors to be beaten. Neither do Brent and Naumov, who state that "the doctors were 'beaten to a pulp'" but give no reference.

This opens up an interesting mystery. On August 22, 2011, a purported letter to Beria from Sergei A. Goglidze, Deputy head of the MGB at the time and dated March 26, 1953, was published by "Memorial Society" official and researcher Nikita Petrov in *Novaia Gazeta*.²³ This is an ideologically anticommunist newspaper of which Mikhail Gorbachev is part owner along with a Russian billionaire, while "Memorial" is a highly anticommunist research institution. Neither has any reputation for historical objectivity. In this letter Goglidze supposedly claimed that Stalin himself had told him to beat suspects "with deadly beatings."

Is this document genuine? Petrov claims that he found it "in the 1990s" but does not explain why he waited until 2011 to publish it. It is not mentioned in the "Memorial"-sponsored volume *Lavrentii*

²³ Nikita Petrov. "Zavety Stalina: 'Bit', bit', smertnym boem bit'!" - Никита Петров. Заветы Сталина: «Бить, бить, смертным боем бить!» <http://www.novayagazeta.ru/gulag/48143.html> For some reason Petrov published only excerpts from this letter. The whole text is available at <http://perpetrator2004.narod.ru/documents/DoctorsPlot/Stalin-DocsDP.doc>

Beria, Part I, published in 1991, where Documents 5 and 6 deal with the “Doctors Plot.” Nor is it in the 1085-page volume of Beria-related documents published in 2012.²⁴ Petrov quoted from it in an earlier article in *Novaia Gazeta* of October 16, 2008, but did not publish it at that time. Instead, he published an often-reprinted reproduction the so-called “torture telegram” of January 10, 1939, along with a handwritten facsimile of a letter from Semion Ignat’ev to Stalin of November 15, 1952 that does not mention beatings.

All this raises suspicion about whether this document is genuine. Even if it is, the further question is: was Goglidze telling the truth? The truth is: it is impossible to say. Anti-Stalinists have every reason to fabricate documents to make Stalin look bad, and have done so. Goglidze, if he did write this letter, had every reason to pass the blame for mistreatment of the doctor-prisoners onto the dead Stalin, since doing so might help him avoid punishment (Goglidze was one of six MGB officers shot in December 1953 for their association with Lavrentii Beria). The historian’s dictum “Testis unus — testis nullus” applies here too; one “witness” is never enough to establish a fact. Source criticism, an obligation for every responsible historian, is essential here — and once again Snyder fails to give us any. Snyder also fails to inform his readers of this passage in the memoir of Stalin’s daughter Svetlana Allilueva:

The “case of the Kremlin doctors” was under way that last winter. My father’s housekeeper told me not long ago that my father was exceedingly distressed at the turn events took. She heard it discussed at the dinner table. She was waiting on the table, as usual, when **my father remarked that he didn’t believe the doctors were “dishonest”** and that the only evidence against them, after all, was the “reports” of Dr. Timashuk.²⁵ (Emphasis added)

Snyder quotes Svetlana Allilueva’s memoirs elsewhere, so why not here? Obviously because *this* quotation would cast doubt on Stalin’s

²⁴ *Politiuro i delo Beria. Sbornik dokumentov*. Moscow: Kuchkovo Pole, 2012.

²⁵ *Twenty Letters to a Friend*, p. 207.

guilt in the "Doctors' Plot" case. Brent/Naumov also fail to cite this passage, no doubt for the same reason.

We have seen above that Snyder quotes from Svetlana Allilueva's writings — but only when they have an anti-Stalin tendency. When they do not or, as here, when they contradict an anti-communist story, Snyder ignores them. This is not the way a historian is supposed to act. Snyder is writing not history but "anticommunist propaganda with footnotes."

Snyder Falsifies Stalin's Words

Snyder states:

Stalin, a sick man of seventy-three, listening to no counsel but his own, pushed forward. In December 1952 he said that "every Jew is a nationalist and an agent of American intelligence," a paranoid formulation even by his standards.⁴⁹ (366)

Source (n. 49 p. 503): "For "every Jew...," see Rubenstein, *Pogrom*, 62."

Rubenstein does have this quotation — but it is a lie. Rubenstein refers to the source, the memoirs of Minister Malyshev about a December 1 1952 meeting during which Stalin said:

Любой еврей-националист, это агент америк[анской] разведки. Еврей-нац[ионалисты] считают, что их нацию спасли США (там можно стать богачом, буржа и т.д.)

Translated:

Every Jewish nationalist is an agent of American intelligence. Jewish nationalists consider that their nation was saved by the USA (there one can become rich, a bourgeois, etc.)

- *Istochnik* 5 (1997), 140-1.

By "Jewish nationalist" Stalin clearly means "Zionist." Since April 2008 there has even been an Internet page exposing this misquotation, which it attributes to Brent and Naumov. But as recently as

April 2012 Snyder was repeating this false quotation in the standard talk he was giving about *Bloodlands*.²⁶

Snyder is either deliberately lying or never bothered to check the source of this quotation. Whatever is the case, it does him no credit as a historian.

Anything To Make Stalin Appear Anti-Semitic? Snyder Falsifies the Draft Letter

Snyder writes:

In February 1953, the Soviet leadership was drafting and redrafting a collective Jewish self-denunciation, including phrases that might have come straight from Nazi propaganda. It was to be signed by prominent Soviet Jews and published in *Pravda*. Vasily Grossman was among those intimidated into signing the letter....⁵² (367)

Sources (n. 52 p. 504):

- * "On the drafting and redrafting, see Kostyrchenko, *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitizm*, 470-478."
- * "On Grossman, see Brandenberger, "Last Crime," 196.
- * "See also Luks, "Brüche," 47."

In an article published in 2009, when *Bloodlands* must have been nearing completion, Snyder wrote:

In early 1953, the Soviet leadership was circulating a petition among prominent Soviet Jews, who were to apologize to Russians for claiming that Jews had suffered, and thank Russians for saving them."
(note to Kostyrchenko, *Gosudarstvennyi antisemitizm*... 470-478.) (2009-4)

Snyder's characterization of the unpublished letter is false. The letter in question says nothing whatsoever about any apology, to Russians or to anyone else. It says nothing about "claiming that Jews

²⁶See <http://holocaustcontroversies.blogspot.com/2006/04/correction-corner-1-every-jew-is.html> When Snyder repeated this lie during his talk on April 17, 2012 at Kean University I called from the floor: "That's not true!" Snyder's reply was "Yeah, sure!"

had suffered." It says nothing about "thanking Russians" — or anybody — "for saving them." It does not contain any "Jewish self-denunciation," whatever that might mean. It contains no "phrases that might have come straight from Nazi propaganda."

Of course, Snyder's readers will have no idea that he is lying — and here I say "lying" advisedly, because it is not credible that Snyder has simply failed to read the letter himself. But Snyder's readers will not have read the letter. What's more, Snyder has failed to inform them where they might read it. The first draft of the letter in question is translated into English in Brent/Naumov (300-305). Snyder cites this book. But Snyder does not inform his readers that they can read this letter there. Could that be because anyone who does read the letter would see that Snyder is not being truthful about it?

Nor was it "the Soviet leadership" that was circulating this letter. Dmitrii Shepilov, one of the Secretaries of the CPSU, and N.A. Mikhailov, head of the Agitprop section of the Party, sent it to Malenkov, who was in the leadership of the Party, the Politburo. Neither Shepilov nor Mikhailov was in the "Soviet leadership." After criticism by Il'ia Erenburg a second draft was sent to Mikhailov by Shepilov but never circulated farther, much less printed.

Here is what Lazar Kaganovich told Feliks Chuev about this letter:

Когда Михайлов принес мне бумагу для публикации против этих врачей - я вам рассказываю кое-что личное - по еврейскому вопросу, и там были подписи Рейзена и многих других еврейских деятелей. Михайлов был секретарем ЦК, потом министром культуры. Я ему сказал: «Я не подпишу».

- А что, там осуждали их?

- Да, да. Он говорит: «Как? Мне товарищ Сталин поручил.»- Скажите товарищу Сталину, что я не подпишу. Я ему сам объясню.

Когда я пришел, Сталин меня спрашивает:

«Почему вы не подписали?» Я говорю: «Я член Политбюро ЦК КПСС, а не еврейский общественный деятель, и буду подписывать

бумагу как член Политбюро. Давайте такую бумагу я напишу, а как еврейский общественный деятель не буду подписывать. Я не еврейский общественный деятель!»

Сталин внимательно на меня посмотрел: «Ладно, хорошо».

Я говорю: «Если нужно, я напишу, статью, от себя».

«Посмотрим, может, надо будет и статью написать»²⁷

Translated:

When Mikhailov brought me the paper for publication against these doctors — I am telling you something personal — concerning the Jewish question, there were the signatures of Reizen and of many other Jewish figures. Mikhailov was a secretary of the Central Committee, and then Minister of Culture. I told him: “I will not sign it.”

- What? Are you condemning them?

- Yes, yes. He said: “What? Comrade Stalin gave me this.” — Tell comrade Stalin that I will not sign it. I will explain it to him myself.

When I arrived, Stalin asked me. “Why didn’t you sign?” I said: “I am a member of the Politburo of the CC of the CPSU, and not a Jewish public figure, and I will sign papers as a member of the Politburo. Give me a paper like this and I will sign it, but I will not sign as a Jewish public figure. I am not a Jewish public figure.”

Stalin looked attentively at me. “OK, that’s fine.”

I said: “If necessary, I will write an article of my own.”

“Let’s see, maybe we’ll need you to write an article.”

²⁷ Feliks Chuev, *Tak govoril Kaganovich*. Moscow: Otechestvo, 1992, p. 174.

There is no evidence that Vasili Grossman was "intimidated into signing the letter." His signature simply appears alongside those of many others. **Brandenberger** cites no evidence that Grossman was "coerced." Nor does it seem likely. Judging from his novels, at this time Grossman was making great efforts to be a loyal communist.

In vicious press attacks, it suddenly emerged that his [Grossman's] recently published novel of the war, *For a Just Cause*, was not patriotic enough. *For a Just Cause* was a vast novel of the Battle of Stalin-grad, mostly within Stalinist conventions. (367)

Several of these criticisms are available online. None of them are "vicious," though some are sharp. Their main point is that Grossman's novel is not Marxist enough for a Party member.²⁸

Snyder: Rumors Are History — Almost

Snyder writes:

Judging **by the rumors circulating at the time**, Soviet citizens had no trouble imagining the possible outcomes: doctors would have been show-tried with Soviet leaders who were their supposed allies; remaining Jews would have been purged from the state police and the armed forces; the thirty-five thousand Soviet Jewish doctors (and perhaps scientists as well) might have been deported to camps; and perhaps even the Jewish people as such would have been subject to forced removal or even mass shootings.⁵⁴ (368, emphasis added)

It is true that rumors like this circulated at the time in the USSR. Today in the USA rumors are circulating that Israel had advance warning of the 9/11 terrorist attack; that the attack was permitted, maybe even planned, by the Bush Administration itself; that the Twin Towers were demolished not by the jetliners' impacts but by explosive charges carefully placed in advance, etc.

²⁸ At http://www.hrono.ru/dokum/195_dok/19530324gross.html

In other words, rumor is not history — far from it! There are plenty of rumors in Russia today that reflect very positively on Stalin. Of course, Snyder ignores them. For Snyder, rumor only belongs in an historical work when that rumor conforms to his own prejudices.

Snyder has to know, but does not tell his readers, that Gennady Kostyrchenko, anticommunist, Zionist, and hater of Stalin, has long since disproved the stories about a “planned deportation of Jews.” Kostyrchenko’s article is titled “Deportatsiia — Mistifikatsiia,” and one does not need to know Russian to understand its meaning.²⁹ Snyder also fails to inform his readers that in his book *Stalin i evreiskaia problema* (“Stalin and the Jewish Problem,” 2003) Zhores Medvedev writes:

Можно предположить, что Сталин позвонил в «Правду» либо вечером 27 февраля, либо утром 28 февраля и распорядился прекратить публикацию антиеврейских материалов и всех других статей, связанных с «делом врачей....”

В Советском Союзе в это время был только один человек, который мог простым телефонным звонком редактору «Правды» или в Агитпроп ЦК КПСС изменить официальную политику. Это мог сделать только Сталин. (216-7)

Translated:

We can assume that Stalin called Pravda either on the evening of February 27 or in the morning of February 28 and arranged for the cessation of publication of anti-Jewish materials and of all other articles dealing with the “Doctors’ Plot.” ...

In the Soviet Union at that time there was only one person who was able, with a single telephone call to

²⁹ See his articles “Депортация - мистификация,” Лехаим, 9/ 2002, at <http://www.lechaim.ru/ARHIV/125/kost.htm> ; also in Вопросы Истории 1 (2003), 92-113.

the editor of Pravda or to the Department of Agit-prop of the CC CPSU to change official policy. Only Stalin could do that...

In their collection of essays *The Unknown Stalin* Zhores and his brother Roi Medvedev come to a similar conclusion:

We still have no way of knowing exactly how the anti-Semitic campaign was stopped on 1 March or who was ultimately responsible. ... It is clear, however, that the end of the propaganda campaign was associated with a decision to abandon preparations for the trial of the doctors. The actual order could only have come from Ignatiev. It is also conceivable, however, that Stalin had given the instruction himself on 27 or 28 February.³⁰

It appears more than unlikely that Ignatiev would have sent such an order without at least obtaining Stalin's approval. The Medvedev volumes are very well known but Snyder does not mention these passages. Incompetence? Or deliberate deceit?

Snyder Still Believes Khrushchev's "Secret Speech"

Snyder:

He [Nikita Khrushchev] even revealed some of Stalin's crimes in a speech to a party congress in February 1956... (371)

No, he did not. The evidence proving Khrushchev's famous "Secret Speech" was falsified from beginning to the end was published in Russian in late 2007, long before Snyder's book was completed.³¹ If Snyder did not know about this he is incompetent to write about the matter.

³⁰ Woodstock and New York: Overlook Press, 2004, p. 32

³¹ Г. Фепп, *Антисталинская подлость* (2007). In English since 2011 as *Khrushchev Lied*.