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“Cleansing” the Soviet Far East, 1937-1938:¹

John J. Stephan

“I have a bright, buoyant feeling when recalling the summer of 1937 in the Far East.” Valentina Khetagurova²

“Life in the Far East is joyful!” proclaimed *Dal’kraikom*³ secretary Lavrentii Lavrentiev in 1936.⁴ During the next three years, life in *Dal’krai* was indeed emblazoned with symbols of joyous renewal. Catchwords such as “*perestroika*” and “inner party democracy” greeted the eye and ear. Far Easterners hailed the “Stalin Constitution,” welcomed nubile Khetagurovites,⁵ applauded quota-busting Stakhanovites, and swelled with pride at “*stalinskiye sokoly*” (“Stalin falcons”) soaring across the North Pole. They flocked to vote unanimously for the “unbreakable bloc” of party and non-party candidates for the Supreme Soviet. They thronged to glimpse the surviving half of “Ilf and Petrov.”⁶ They basked in the praise of a prominent French communist.⁷ They savored the USSR’s international prestige when a squadron of the United States Navy called at Vladivostok.⁸

Private terror lurked behind public euphoria. Death stalked party secretaries, chairmen of city and rural soviets, OKDVA⁹ and Pacific Fleet officers, chekists, railway officials, factory managers, collective farm chairmen, engineers, journalists, agronomists, scientists, writers, and teachers. Tens of thousands of peasants, including the bulk of the Chinese and Korean communities, were forcibly relocated. A half century later, physical losses were still being tabulated. The moral costs of massive complicity in these events cannot be measured.

The origins of the “Great Terror” that peaked during the *yezhevshchina* (1936-1938) are complex and controversial. Much eludes illumination and will probably continue to do so despite growing accessibility of archives. Insights into the *process* of terror in the Soviet Far East, however, can be gleaned from a variety of documents, memoirs, and studies published in the former USSR since the advent of *glasnost*, as well as from Japanese archival sources, including records of the South Manchurian Railway Company (*Mantetsu*) deposited in at the Library of Congress in Washington, D. C.

Repression hit the Far East especially hard. Proximity to Japan, together with the cohesiveness and durability of regional elites, led the central party and security organs to “cleanse” (“*ochistit*” in the contemporary vernacular) *Dal’krai* with exceptional thoroughness. Unable to establish tight control over *Dal’krai* by political-administrative means during 1928-1936, and obsessed by the specter of conspiratorial separatism, Stalin and his associates annihilated the Far Eastern cohort¹⁰ and balkanized the Far East, effectively making these vast and richly endowed territories politically and economically

dependent upon the Center while severing their historically-based ties with Asia-Pacific neighbors.

Fall of Gamarnik, September 1936 - May, 1937

Yan Gamarnik, who simultaneously held the posts of Special Plenipotentiary to the Far East, Deputy Defense Commissar, and Head of the Army's Main Political Administration, made his last trip to *Dal'krai* in September 1936. Accompanied by OKDVA commander Vasilii Blücher and OKDVA political commissar Lazar Aronshtam, he reviewed Transbaikalian units at Chita, consulted with *Dal'kraikom* secretary Lavrentiev at Khabarovsk, attended OKDVA maneuvers at Voroshilov (Ussuriisk), and called upon Pacific Fleet commander Mikhail Viktorov at Vladivostok.¹¹ He seemed to be under considerable strain and just before leaving warned Blücher that the latter's young wife was an NKVD "plant."¹²

When Gamarnik returned from the Far East to Moscow in October, he found himself engulfed in a rising tide of sycophancy and fear attending newly appointed NKVD commissar Yezhov's orchestrated trial and execution of Kemerovo engineers. The media reverberated with uncommonly strident Stalinist hyperbole. *Pravda* carried florid panegyrics from *Dal'kraikom* secretary Lavrentiev, Pacific Fleet Commander Viktorov and Kamchatka *obkom* secretary Orlov.¹³ Gamarnik made himself conspicuous by voting at a Central Committee Plenum against opening an investigation of Bukharin and Rykov and by interceding with Stalin on behalf of former Commissar of Heavy Industry Piatakov on the eve of the latter's trial.¹⁴

Stalin started to move against Gamarnik inferentially toward the end of 1936 when Yezhov opened an investigation and began picking up people with whom the special plenipotentiary to the Far East and deputy defense commissar had worked.¹⁵ On 15 January 1937, Lavrentiev was removed as *Dal'kraikom* secretary and replaced by a Latvian Old Bolshevik, Yosif Vareikis, who had met Gamarnik in Khabarovsk in 1925.¹⁶

During the first four months of 1937, Stalin and Yezhov gradually closed in on Gamarnik. At his trial in January, Radek implicated Gamarnik's friend Vitovt Putna as a Japanese agent. At the February-March Central Committee Plenum, Stalin said that Piatakov, on whose behalf Gamarnik had interceded barely a month earlier, had plotted with Japan to detach the Primorye from the USSR.¹⁷ Following the plenum, associates of Gamarnik in the OKDVA were dismissed,¹⁸ and the NKVD arrested civil war veterans with whom he had ties since the 1920s.¹⁹ While Yezhov unravelled Gamarnik's Far Eastern networks, the press launched a vilification campaign against the Army Political Administration which Gamarnik headed. By the end of April, *Pravda* was describing the Far East as full of spies and warning soldiers to beware of hidden enemies who lurked within the Red Army.²⁰

Gamarnik was doomed when, after the NKVD had "exposed" an anti-Stalin conspiracy within the Red Army on 8 May,²¹ he refused to sit in

judgment of Marshal Tukhachevskii, Uborevich, and five other senior commanders.²² Gamarnik was thereupon dismissed as deputy defense commissar and his closest Far Eastern associates (Aronshtam, Mezis, Sangurskii, Lapin, Pshenitsyn) were arrested.²³ On the afternoon of 31 May, Blücher and former *Dal'kraikom* secretary Lavrentiev visited Gamarnik (convalescing from diabetes) in his apartment and told him that he'd been dismissed that morning as head of the Army Political Administration. As the visitors left, Blücher noticed Yezhov's operatives waiting outside.²⁴ When the chekists moved in, Gamarnik committed suicide or was murdered.²⁵

The following day, 1 June, *Pravda's* back page carried a five-line item sandwiched between notices of a football match and the opening of a swimming pool:

Former CC VKP(b) member Ya. B. Gamarnik, caught up in ties with anti-Soviet elements and evidently fearing exposure, committed suicide on 31 May.

Before the week was out, Gamarnik was being denounced as a traitor, a coward, a Trotskyist lackey, and fascist spy.²⁶ One of two leaders of the Far Eastern cohort had been removed, constituting the first step in the “cleansing” of *Dal'krai*.

“A State of Semi-War,” March - June 1937

In March 1937, as Vareikis set off to take up his post as secretary of the Far Eastern party organization, Stalin told him that *Dal'krai* was in a “state of semi-war.”²⁷ Vareikis took the words literally. Once in Khabarovsk, he attacked regional officials for “lack of vigilance,” among them *Dal'kraiispolkom* chairman Grigorii Krutov, a close associate of Gamarnik. Vareikis warned that Krutov's “tolerance of internal enemies” had allowed “Trotskyist-Japanese agents” to sabotage the regional economy.²⁸

While Vareikis undermined Krutov, a special NKVD mission from Moscow arrived in Khabarovsk and demanded why Far Eastern NKVD chief Terentii Deribas had not organized political trials of the 200 railroad officials arrested in late 1936. Deribas complied (trials were held at Svobodnyi, Khabarovsk, and Vladivostok during May, yielding 200 death sentences), but he had already been tainted with “lack of vigilance.”

News of Gamarnik's “treason,” reaching Khabarovsk in the midst of the 12th Far Eastern Party Conference on 1 June, traumatized *Dal'kraikom*. Gamarnik's erstwhile comrades desperately tried to distance themselves while others, scenting blood, pointed accusingly at Krutov, who was summarily dismissed as *Dal'kraiispolkom* chairman and expelled from the party.²⁹

The Tukhachevskii affair convinced Stalin and Yezhov that *Dal'krai* was in the grip of a “Far Eastern Parallel Rightist-Trotskyist Center” embracing the region's military, political, economic, and cultural elite.³⁰ Trusting

neither Vareikis nor Deribas, Stalin dispatched NKVD commissar Vsevolod Balitskii³¹ and party enforcer Matvei Shkiriakov³² to initiate a more vigorous prosecution of hidden enemies in regional party and state organs. Both arrived in Khabarovsk before the end of June. Balitskii arrested Krutov,³³ some district party secretaries, and former Chinese Eastern Railroad employees³⁴ but left Deribas alone.³⁵

During June, the vigilance campaign acquired its own momentum “from below,” putting local party and state leaders on the defensive. At meetings and mass rallies, crowds roared their approval of the execution of senior Red Army commanders.³⁶ Resolutions were passed reviling Gamarnik and Tukhachevsky as “vile creatures” (*gady*) and “abject jerks” (*zhalkiye merzavtsy*) and sent “militant greetings” to that “tireless sentinel of socialism, Stalinist Comrade Yezhov.”³⁷

Chekists who did not keep pace with the witch hunt incurred suspicion. Deribas fell victim to an enterprising colleague who gained access to the imprisoned Krutov and persuaded him to implicate thirty “co-conspirators” of Gamarnik.³⁸ When Deribas objected, the informant sent the accusations directly to Moscow. In the meantime, Balitskii was recalled to Moscow after less than twenty days in the Far East.³⁹

Enter Liushkov, July - August 1937

In July 1937 the Far East presented Moscow with a spectacle of external and internal threats to state security. Border porosity belied rhetoric about “frontier under lock and key.”⁴⁰ On 2 July, five days before the outbreak of a Sino-Japanese undeclared war, Japanese and Manchukuoan units sank an NKVD patrol boat on the Amur.⁴¹ Meanwhile, after Yezhov’s operatives in Moscow had extracted names of Gamarnik’s Far Eastern “co-conspirators,”⁴² Stalin and Yezhov also moved at this time to replace Deribas with a Yezhov protégé Genrikh Liushkov.⁴³

According to his own testimony, Liushkov received instructions directly from Stalin on the eve of his departure for the Far East in July. The general-secretary told him that *Dal’krai* needed a thorough “cleansing” of Gamarnik’s connections in the OKDVA, party, and collective farms. Liushkov should find out to what extent Far Eastern chekists had become involved in Gamarnik’s treason. Dangerous elements should be neutralized. Blücher was to be placed under surveillance.⁴⁴

During the late summer and autumn of 1937, Liushkov and his chekists from Rostov cut a broad swathe through *Dal’krai*. He arrested and extracted confessions from Deribas and his assistants Zapadni-Kessel’man and Barminskii.⁴⁵ He prepared lists of “enemies of the people” in each walk of life.⁴⁶ Repression worked its way through *obkom*, *gorkom*, and *raikom* secretaries,⁴⁷ Komsomol secretaries,⁴⁸ *kolkhoz* chairmen, agronomists, and engineers, and former Mensheviks.⁴⁹ Far Eastern Railroad party committee member Anna Lebedeva, the only woman to storm White positions at the

Battle of Volochayevka in 1922, was arrested in September and shot the following year.⁵⁰ Dozens of repatriated Chinese Eastern Railroad employees were shot in Khabarovsk on 21 January 1938.⁵¹

Stalin had warned Liushkov that Vareikis was “not reliable,”⁵² thereby marking the recently appointed *Dal’krai* party secretary as a candidate for repression. Desperate to prove his loyalty, Vareikis wrote Stalin on 8 September that he had uncovered a “regional Trotskyist-Rightist-Japanese spy center” and that “over 500 spies have been shot.”⁵³ Such zeal did not prevent Vareikis from being ordered to Moscow on 30 September. He was arrested at a small station outside the capital on 9 October.⁵⁴

Expulsion of East Asians

Moscow’s support of China’s war of resistance against Japan did not exempt *Dal’krai* Chinese from deportations and forced relocation. Of about 35,000 Chinese in *Dal’krai* at the beginning of 1937,⁵⁵ Liushkov arrested 11,000 and deported 8,000 between August 1937 and May 1938.⁵⁶ All Chinese domiciled in Vladivostok or within 60 miles of the frontier were forcibly relocated. An ethnic group associated for over a thousand years with the region, constituting 13% of its population in 1911, made up less than 1% of its inhabitants in 1939.

Dal’krai’s approximately 200,000 Koreans, many of whom were refugees from Japanese rule, had every reason to be loyal to the Soviet regime, yet their ethnicity and concentration around the Posyet frontier zone had from the 1920s made them suspect as cat’s-paws for a Japanese takeover of the Primorye.⁵⁷ Moreover, there is evidence that the Kwantung Army did infiltrate Koreans into *Dal’krai*.⁵⁸ Koreans had been relocated earlier⁵⁹ but never before on such a large scale (an estimated 160,000) or with such brutality (2,500 were arrested and hundreds were shot or died in transit). In September 1937, each community was given six days to pack portable property and to choose between resettlement within the USSR and deportation to Manchukuo. The vast majority opted for the former and were put in boxcars bound for Central Asia. On 20 December, *Pravda* announced that the Central Committee had expressed gratitude to Liushkov for fulfilling an important assignment “in the field of transport.”

Of those Koreans who remained, some were enlisted to help the NKVD detect Japanese spies.⁶⁰ During 1940 and 1941, Communist Korean partisans were allowed to enter the Primorye to avoid a Japanese anti-bandit campaign in Manchukuo. Among the refugees were Kim Il-sung and his wife Kim Chong-suk, who on 16 February 1942 gave birth to Kim Jong-il on Soviet soil.

Isolating Blücher, July 1937 - June 1938

Blücher continued to enjoy both official prestige and genuine popularity through 1937 and into 1938.⁶¹ In December 1937, he led the Far Eastern

delegation to the Supreme Soviet and was elected to the Supreme Soviet presidium.⁶² On 23 February (Red Army Day), he was awarded an Order of Lenin.⁶³ A laudatory article on him by Konstantin Paustovskii appeared that month in *Novyi mir*.⁶⁴ In May, he was nominated as a candidate for the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, and he continued to appear in public in Khabarovsk during June.

Beneath a veneer of public honors, Blücher was gradually isolated. From the middle of 1937 until the summer of 1938, 4,000 OKDVA officers and military commissars were arrested, among them virtually all of his closest associates.⁶⁵ The OKDVA itself ceased to exist on 1 July, being renamed the "Far Eastern Front" (DVF).

Stalin waited until after the Bukharin-Rykov trial (March 1938) before moving directly against Blücher. In April, an assassination attempt on the Navy Commissar in Vladivostok⁶⁶ gave Stalin grounds to dispatch Army Political Administration head Lev Mekhlis⁶⁷ and NKVD Border Guard chief Mikhail Frinovskii to the Far East. They arrived in Khabarovsk in mid-June, each on a special train filled with their own armed cadres. Liushkov was not at the station to greet them, for he had decided to remove himself from harm's way by ordering an "inspection" of the frontier near Posyet and, on the night of 12-13 June, walking into Manchukuo.⁶⁸ Aside from dooming two dozen chekists who were charged with complicity, Liushkov's defection indirectly hastened Blücher's destruction.

Destruction of Blücher, August - November 1938

Blücher's last month in the Far East (mid-July to mid-August 1938) coincided with a complex interaction of domestic and external forces. As Mekhlis and Frinovsky "cleansed" regional cadres, Soviet-Japanese forces clashed where the borders of Manchukuo, Korea, and the USSR met. If Stalin and Voroshilov had been waiting for a chance to settle accounts with Blücher, they found it in the interstices of bureaucratic and border conflicts.

Without consulting Blücher, Frinovskii had NKVD troops occupy a ridge of hills running between the Tumen River and Lake Khasan during the second week of July. The *pogranichniki* dug in along the crest of which Changkufeng formed a high point. Alerted to the NKVD deployment, Blücher sent a commission to the area and on 24 July remonstrated with Frinovsky for violating the Manchukuo frontier.⁶⁹

The NKVD occupation of Changkufeng had not escaped the attention of the commander of a unit of the Korean Army deployed across the Tumen. Although the ridge lay (according to Japanese maps) within Manchukuo, the Korean Army bore responsibility for defending this narrow wedge of territory along the left bank of the lower Tumen. After making several protests to the NKVD troops dug in on the ridge, the local Japanese commander concluded that the intruders would have to be dislodged by force. Korean Army headquarters in Keijō (Seoul) and Tokyo neither permitted nor prohibited the

use of force but ruled out air and artillery. In the early hours of 31 July, three battalions crossed the Tumen River, drove off NKVD forces, and dug in. Any counterattack could come only along exposed corridors north and south of Lake Khasan.⁷⁰

Blücher found himself confronted with a military (how to expel the Japanese) and a political (how to deal with Mekhlis and Frinovskii) dilemma. Recapturing the ridge overlooking Lake Khasan would have to be carried out by OKDVA (DVF since 1 July) and NKVD troops acting in concert, an unpromising exercise. Frinovskii showed no inclination to put chekists under Blücher’s command. To make matters worse, Stalin and Voroshilov telephoned Blücher on 1 August and ordered him to liquidate without delay enemy positions above Lake Khasan. Ominously, Stalin asked the Far Eastern marshal whether he really wanted to fight the Japanese.⁷¹ Blücher thereupon instructed his new chief of staff Grigory Shtern⁷² to attack immediately. Shtern’s assault on 2-3 August was repulsed with heavy losses, whereupon Blücher joined Shtern at Posyet and on 6 August launched a massive air and ground assault that left both Soviet and Japanese troops on the ridge. On the same day (6 August), Blücher’s portrait and name were absent from an anti-Japanese mass demonstration in Khabarovsk.⁷³

Summoned to Moscow by Voroshilov on 16 August to give an account of the Lake Khasan fighting, Blücher appeared before Stalin, Voroshilov, Molotov, and Frinovskii on 31 August.⁷⁴ Voroshilov and Frinovskii charged him with gross incompetence “bordering on conscious defeatism.”⁷⁵ As Stalin remained silent, someone said that “enemies of the people” had hidden behind him while subverting the Far Eastern armed forces. Ordered by Voroshilov to Sochi to await “work fit for a marshal,” Blücher cabled his wife and brother (a captain in the Far East air force) to join him on the Black Sea. “Work fit for a marshal” turned up on 22 October when NKVD operatives arrested Blücher and his wife at Sochi and took them to Moscow. At Lefortovo Prison, in an interrogation personally supervised by Beria, Blücher was accused of being a Japanese agent since 1921. Savagely tortured, he expired on 9 November.⁷⁶

Blücher became a non-person rather than an object of public vilification such as Gamarnik. Young weathercock Yury Zhukov⁷⁷ praised the Far Eastern marshal in a book printed on 15 July 1938, then removed all references to him in a revised version appearing two and a half months later.⁷⁸ Following Blücher’s disappearance, rumors circulated that he had been sent back to China to help Chiang Kai-shek against Japan. Chiang inquired about his former military advisor and was informed by Stalin that Blücher had been executed “for succumbing to the charms of a Japanese woman spy.”⁷⁹

Balkanization and Beneficiaries

Far Eastern administrative unity underlay institutions such as the OKDVA and *Dal’kraikom* as well as for the emergence of Gamarnik and

Blücher. Stalin carved up *Dal'krai* to exorcize the specter of separatism.⁸⁰ On 4 September 1938, the Far Eastern Front (DVF) was divided into three separate armies each directly subordinate to Defense Commissar Voroshilov. On 20 October, *Dal'krai* was dissolved and reconstituted as two administrative districts each reporting directly to Moscow: Khabarovsk *krai* and *Primorskii krai*, each with its own party organization and state organs at Khabarovsk and Vladivostok respectively.⁸¹ Into the Far East came a new generation of Stalinist functionaries, exemplified by the late Nikolai Pegov.

In September 1938 Pegov, then a 33-year-old student at the Moscow Industrial Academy, was summoned to the Central Committee and informed that he had been appointed first secretary for the Far Eastern region and should immediately proceed to Khabarovsk after collecting 500 communists from the Moscow party organization. When he asked how he'd finish his studies, Pegov was told: "Your work will be your diploma."⁸² During the next few days, Pegov managed to recruit a few dozen communists, including his brother. All were young and exhilarated by their new responsibilities. "Our whole life then," he recalled in 1982, "was illuminated by sunshine, joy, and happiness."⁸³

Pegov's experience was replicated by thousands of *komsomoltsy*, army and navy personnel, engineers, and geologists who flocked to the Far East during 1938-1939, drawn by ideals, romance, and careers. A new generation took over from purged incumbents. Locals as well as newcomers found ample scope for ambition while Beria's cadres "cleansed" Yezhovian holdovers in the regional NKVD. As Valentina Khetagurova nostalgically recalled a half-century later: "Oh, life just percolated in the Far East in '37!"⁸⁴

One eloquent symptom of opportunity was Far Eastern party ranks, which swelled from 24,885 on 1 January 1938 to⁸⁵ 56,776 on 1 January 1941.⁸⁶ By 1939, the Far East had the highest percentage of party members in the population of any region in the USSR,⁸⁷ a circumstance attributable not only to the concentration of troops, sailors, frontier guards and labor camp personnel but to the massive influx of party cadres from the Center.

Ideological *perestroika* in the Far East centered around a history of the party popularly known as the *Short Course* and commonly ascribed to Stalin.⁸⁸ Fully 70% of Far Eastern party members claimed to have read the *Short Course* during 1938-1941.⁸⁹ It formed the core of the curriculum at Khabarovsk's Pedagogical Institute and Higher Party School, established in 1938 and 1939 respectively on the ruins of local higher education. By relieving readers of the burden of thought (and of personal responsibility for collective acts), the *Short Course* promoted what Anastas Mikoyan hailed as the "Stalinist style of work."⁹⁰

The 18th Party Congress (10-21 March 1939), attended by forty-three Far Eastern beneficiaries of "cleansing,"⁹¹ celebrated the "Stalinist style of work" under a freshly constituted Central Committee including Mekhlis, Pegov, Mikhail Gvishiani (Beria's man in the Primorye), and Shtern.⁹² Speeches by Far Easterners exuded exhilaration. Pegov praised liquidation of "the

Trotskyist-Bukharinite band [that] sought to give the Primorye to fascist employers."⁹³ Shtern thanked Comrade Stalin for ridding the Red Army of "black traitors of the motherland, foreign spies, Trotskyist-Bukharinite beasts" who had "crawled into responsible posts even in the Far Eastern Army, in contact with their Japanese and other foreign patrons. You and I destroyed this heap of filth – Tukhachevskii, Gamarnik, Uborevich and swine like them."⁹⁴

Shortly before his own arrest in 1941, Shtern told his wife that had it not been for the civil war he would have become a historian.⁹⁵

Costs

In the spring of 1939, Andrei Zhdanov⁹⁶ toured Khabarovsk, Vladivostok, and Nakhodka to assess the results of "cleansing." What he saw was not encouraging. The Far East had met none of its five-year plan targets.⁹⁷ Production indices for industry, fisheries, and forestry in 1938 were below 1935 levels.⁹⁸ Construction of the Baikal-Amur Railroad (BAM) ground to a halt.⁹⁹ Far Eastern agriculture suffered irreparable losses. Repression of rural party secretaries, soviet chairmen, agronomists, and Machine-Tractor Station personnel compounded the damage wrought by forced collectivization. The expulsion of Chinese and Koreans removed the region's most productive cultivators.

The magnitude of the human toll in the Far East during 1937-1938 is unlikely ever to be known.¹⁰⁰ According to Liushkov, from 200,000 to 250,000 people were repressed (of whom 7,000 were shot) during his ten-month sojourn in *Dal'krai* (August 1937-June 1938).¹⁰¹ His estimates did not include deaths in the Northeastern labor camps. Nor do his figures include the victims of his predecessors (Deribas, Balitskii) and successors (Mekhlis, Frinovskii) who were active during the first half of 1937 and the last half of 1938 respectively. On the basis of a recent estimate that 30,000 people were shot in Far Eastern prisons "in the time of Stalin" (i. e. 1929-1953),¹⁰² one can hypothesize that about 15,000 of these perished during 1937-1938.¹⁰³ Assuming that about 200,000 were repressed in the Far East during 1937-1938, that would constitute 8% of *Dal'krai's* population (2,338,095 in 1938), a significantly higher percentage than for the USSR as a whole.¹⁰⁴

The disproportionately high mortality of Far Easterners is suggested by party statistics. Of 1,956 voting delegates to the Seventeenth Party Congress in 1934 from all parts of the USSR, 1,108 were arrested.¹⁰⁵ Of thirty-two Far Eastern delegates to Seventeenth Party Congress, *none* appeared at the 18th Party Congress in 1939.¹⁰⁶ Of 139 candidate and full members of the Central Committee in 1934, ninety-eight were shot. *All* Far Eastern members and candidate members of the Central Committee in 1934 were shot or committed suicide. Far Eastern party membership, 44,909 on 1 January 1933, fell to 27,730 by 1 January 1937 and to 24,885 in 1938.¹⁰⁷ According to a Japanese source, more than one quarter of Far Eastern communists were purged during

1936-1939.¹⁰⁸ Of 28 members of the *Dal'kraikom* bureau in 1935, only four were alive in 1940.¹⁰⁹ All delegates to the Twelfth Far Eastern party conference (May-June 1937) were eventually repressed.¹¹⁰ No Far Eastern region first secretary between 1923 and 1938 escaped the juggernaut. The fates of *obkom*, *gorkom*, and *raikom* secretaries remain to be illuminated, but *obkom* turnover rates in 1937-1938 are ominously high.¹¹¹

Repression gutted the Far Eastern armed forces. According to Liushkov, 1,200 officers and political commissars and 3,000 junior officers were arrested between July 1937 and May 1938.¹¹² In 1938 alone, the OKDVA lost 40% of its regimental officers, 70% of its division and corps officers, and over 80% of its staff and department heads.¹¹³

Virtually all members of Far Eastern cohort formed during and after the civil war were liquidated.¹¹⁴ These included Blücher's associates during his leadership of the People's Revolutionary Army (NRA) in 1921-1922 (Lapin, Pokus, Postyshev); partisan leaders Mel'nikov and Zverev; party leaders Trilisser, Shishlyannikov, Pshenitsyn, and Volskii; and *Dal'kraikom* first secretaries Kubiak, Perepechko, and Lavrentiev.¹¹⁵ Former *Dal'sovnarkom*¹¹⁶ chairman and president of the Far Eastern Republic Krasnoshchekov was shot on 26 November 1937,¹¹⁷ a fate shared by other Far Eastern Republic officials such as Boris Shumiatskii, Vladimir ("Bill") Shatov, Boris Skvirskii, and Yakov Yanson.

In 1989, a Khabarovsk woman asked why everyone was wailing about party and government big shots and saying nothing about ordinary victims of repression.¹¹⁸ Terror cut down thousands of nameless "little people." Old timers in Vladivostok recall how the NKVD hauled corpses at night to dump in mass graves near Eggersheld Cemetery.¹¹⁹ Reports have surfaced about a Far Eastern Katyn between Khabarovsk and Vladivostok.¹²⁰

Fate of the Far Eastern Intelligentsia

Although it was recently announced that Osip Mandelshtam expired in the suburbs of Vladivostok,¹²¹ little is known about Far Eastern writers, editors, journalists, scholars, and poets who succumbed in the 1930s. Who has heard of Leonid Reshetov, the "Far Eastern Radek?"¹²² Or of Vasily Kim and Kharim Tsoi? Or *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda* editors Shatskii and Shver?¹²³ Or the eight founding editors of the region's leading literary journal?¹²⁴

Intellectuals who had sojourned in the Far East during the civil war and intervention were especially vulnerable to "Bolshevik vigilance," contact with foreigners in 1918-1922 marked them as potential spies and traitors in 1937-1938. Abstention from politics did not save Sergei Tretiakov, founder of the Vladivostok literary group *Tvorchestvo*. Nor did service in the Far Eastern party underground spare the popular writer Viktor Surovkin or composer of the Far Eastern partisan anthem, Pyotr Parfyonov.

"Cleansing" gutted higher education and science. All twelve Far Eastern party schools and the Communist Agricultural School in Khabarovsk ceased

to exist in 1937.¹²⁵ In Vladivostok, the Far Eastern State University and the Far Eastern Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences closed in 1939. In Birobidzhan, the Pedagogical Institute shut down. A projected encyclopedia of the Soviet Far East was scuttled. Cosmopolitan ties, whether of a Birobidzhan immigrant-scholar or the director of Vladivostok’s *Interklub* proved fatal.¹²⁶ Fluency in Chinese or Japanese constituted *prima facie* evidence of espionage. Had Vladivostok Japanologist Evgenii Spalvin not succumbed to a twisted intestine in Harbin in 1933, he would likely have shared the fate of fellow Orientalists such as Konstantin Kharnskii and Oskar Tarkhanov.¹²⁷ Zotik Matveev, librarian of the Far Eastern State University and of the Far Eastern Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences, was arrested in November 1938 and died in custody six months later.¹²⁸ When the Far Eastern State University was closed in 1939, priceless orientalia in the Vostochnyi Institut¹²⁹ were consigned to a basement, from where they were dispersed to collections in Moscow, Leningrad, Kazan, and Alma Ata, carried off for personal use, or burned.¹³⁰ The personal archives of the celebrated naturalist, explorer, and director of the Khabarovsk Museum of Regional Studies, Vladimir Arseniev, did not escape depredation.¹³¹

Complicity and Memory

“Cleansing” of *Dal’krai* could not have taken place without massive complicity. Citizens from all walks of life publicly repudiated and privately betrayed neighbors, colleagues, and relatives. There was no shortage of role models. Newspapers bristled with letters and resolutions from factory and collective farm workers, miners, teachers, mariners, soldiers, famous writers, scientists, and explorers vilifying whomever had just been exposed as a “wrecker,” “traitor,” or “Trotskyist swine.”¹³² Motives for such behavior varied from person to person but included patriotism, ambition, envy, spite, and fear with fear predominating. No one was immune, for good behavior was no guarantee of innocence. Hadn’t Comrade Stalin himself said: “the true wrecker from time to time works well in order to win trust of those around him so that he can continue his wrecking?”¹³³

Some Far Easterners refused to become either victims or accomplices. One openly declared that the authorities should shoot Kaganovich rather than innocent people.¹³⁴ Scientists on Chukotka raised their hunting rifles when NKVD operatives came to arrest one of them, and the chekists retired to fill their quotas elsewhere.¹³⁵ Thousands made themselves scarce, losing themselves in larger cities or working in mines and logging camps where authorities didn’t inquire closely about antecedents.

The opening of party, army, and KGB archives will permit historians to illuminate bureaucratic mechanics and individual fates.¹³⁶ Whether new documentation exacerbates or exorcizes the unaired question of mass complicity remains to be seen.

Notes

- 1 This essay, a chapter in "The Russian Far East: A History" (forthcoming), is a revised, updated, and abridged version of "Cleansing *Dal'krai*: 1937-1938," written during 1989-1990. The author is grateful to Professor John Erickson and to Robert Conquest for their helpful comments upon the original draft and would also like to thank Dr. Nikolai Aleksandrovich Bilim of the Khabarovsk Pedagogical Institute and S. Nikolaev for their criticisms of the same draft, a Russian translation (by Valery Slyusarev) of which was serialized in the Khabarovsk newspaper *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda* from 23 November to 2 December 1990 under the title "Chistka *Dal'kraia*, 1937-1938."
- 2 Valentina Khetagurova, "Veriu v derzost' molodykh," *Dal'nii Vostok*, No. 2 (1987), p. 127.
- 3 Far Eastern Region Party Committee. *Dal'krai* is an acronym for *Dal'nevostochnyi krai*, official appellation for the Soviet Far East from 1926 until 1938. *Dal'krai* boundaries roughly followed those of the Priamur governor-generalship (1884-1917) and the Far Eastern Republic (1920-1922) with some exceptions, including: 1) the Chita and Sretensk districts of Transbaikalia were detached from *Dal'krai* in 1930, 2) the Far Northern Construction Trust or *Dal'stroi*, founded in 1931 to develop the Kolyma River Basin, extended *Dal'kraikom* jurisdiction from the Okhotsk seaboard into Yakutia.
- 4 *Na rubezhe*, No. 4 (1936), p. 6.
- 5 Young women flocking to the Far East in response to an exhortation by Valentina Khetagurova, who had come from Leningrad as an 18-year-old *komsomolka* in 1932 and married an upwardly mobile army officer. Khetagurov's "Girls! Come to the Far East!" was published in *Komsomol'skaia pravda* on 5 February 1937 and attracted 70,000 respondents, 27,000 of whom made their way to woman-scarce *Dal'krai* during the next four years.
- 6 Well-known satirists. Ilya Ilf died on 13 April 1937. Petrov toured Khabarovsk, Vladivostok, Komsomolsk, Birobidzhan, and Magadan in August and September, 1937.
- 7 Paul Vaillant-Couturier, editor of *L'Humanité*. Khabarovsk literary critic Ilya Lerman dates this visit as October 1938. Il'ia Naumovich Lerman, *Po serdtsu blizkie druz'ia* (Khabarovsk: Khabarovskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1980), pp. 36-38. Vaillant-Couturier died on 10 October 1937.
- 8 The battleship *Augusta* and four destroyers led by Asiatic Fleet Commander Harry E. Yarnell called at Vladivostok from 28 July to 1 August 1937. Kemp Tolley, *Caviar and Commissars* (Annapolis: U. S. Naval Institute, 1983), pp. 253-256; Andrei Kalachinskii, "Amerikanskaia eskadra v sovetskom Zolotom Roge," *Vechernii Vladivostok*, 29 April 1990; Mantetsu, Hokuman keizai chôsajo,

- “Kyokutô Soren jûyô jikô kishi,” (1938), p. 17, typescript in South Manchurian Railroad Records, Library of Congress (hereafter SMR/DLC).
- 9 Acronym for Special Red-Bannered Far Eastern Army (1930-1938). Known as ODVA (1929-1930).
 - 10 Veterans of the revolution and civil war in Siberia and the Far East, who under the leadership of OKDVA commander Vasilii Blücher and Special Politburo Plenipotentiary to the Far East Yan Gamarnik (former *Dal'kraikom* secretary) formed the nucleus of Far Eastern political, economic, and intellectual leadership.
 - 11 *Ian Gamarnik - Komandarm Shtern*. Vladivostok: Dal'nevostochnoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1985), pp. 19-20; *Krasnoznamennyi Dal'nevostochnyi* (Khabarovsk: Khabarovskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1979), p. 103.
 - 12 Memoirs of Glafira Bliukher, *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 1 (1990), p. 79.
 - 13 *Pravda*, 11 November 1936.
 - 14 Erich Wollenberg, *The Red Army* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1938), p. 215; John Erickson, *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History, 1918-1941* (London: St. Martin's, 1962), p. 466.
 - 15 “Interrogation of General Liushkov,” in United States Army, U. S. Military Intelligence Reports: The Soviet Union, 1919-1941 (Frederick, Maryland, University Publications of America, Inc. 1984) Microfilm, reel No. 4, frames 0977-0978 (henceforth “Interrogation of General Liushkov”).
 - 16 Yosif Vareikis (1894-1938). Vareikis was no toady. In 1930, he had openly resisted Kaganovich's call for harsh measures against peasants resisting collectivization, and at the Seventeenth Party Congress he had led a group of regional party secretaries supporting Kirov against Stalin. A. Suturin, “Delo kraevogo masshtaba,” *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda*, 25 March 1989; D. D. Lappo, “Stranitsy zhizni i deiatel'nosti I. M. Vareikisa,” *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No. 11 (1963), p. 102; Mikhail Sergeevich Kuznetsov, *Bor'ba partiinykh organizatsii Dal'nego Vostoka za stanovlenie sovetskoi kul'tury, 1922-1927 gg.* (Tomsk: Izdat. Tomskogo univ., 1978), p. 168.
 - 17 “O nedostatkakh partiinoi raboty,” in I. V. Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 1 (XIV) (Stanford: Hoover Institution, 1967), p. 200.
 - 18 Political commissar Aronshtam, chief of staff Mikhail Sangurskii, Far East Air Force commander Al'bert Lapin. “Interrogation of General Liushkov,” frames 0979-0980
 - 19 Suturin, “Delo kraevogo masshtaba,” *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda*, 26 March 1989; S. Nikolaev, “Tsena istiny,” *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda*, 25 September 1989.
 - 20 “Inostrannyi shpionazh na sovetskom Dal'nem Vostoke,” *Pravda*, 23 April 1937. On hidden enemies: *Pravda*, 28 April 1937.

- 21 On 8 May, a Red Army officer named Mikhail Medvedev “confessed” to NKVD interrogators to having known of a plot by Tukhachevsky and Putna to overthrow Stalin. Aleksei Khorev, “Marshal Tukhachevskii,” *Krasnaia zvezda*, 4 June 1988.
- 22 Walter Krivitsky, *I Was Stalin’s Agent* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1939), p. 254; Dmitrii Antonovich Volkogonov, *Triumf i tragediia*, vol. 1, part 2 (Moscow: Novosti, 1989), p. 263.
- 23 “Interrogation of General Liushkov,” frames 0976, 0979; *Krasnaia zvezda*, 4 June, 13 August 1988; Bliukher (1990), p. 79.
- 24 Bliukher (1990), p. 79.
- 25 For various versions, see Volkogonov, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, part 2 (1989), p. 264; Nikolai Ivanovich Salekhov, *Ian Borisovich Gamarnik* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1964), p. 79; Yamauchi Hôsuke, “Sekigun hasshôgun inbô jiken to sono eikyô” in Naikaku kikakuchô, *Sorenpo jijô*, vol. 24, 5 October 1937, deposited in B Collection, Japan Section, Washington Documents Center, Library of Congress.
- 26 *Krasnaia zvezda*, 6 June 1937; Volkogonov, vol. 1, part 2 (1989), p. 264.
- 27 Nina Ivanovna Dubinina, “Tragediia lichnosti,” *Dal’nii Vostok*, No. 7 (1989), p. 130.
- 28 Japan, Naikaku, Kikakuchô “Soren kyokutôno saikin no jôsei,” *Sorenpo jijô*, vol. 13, 10 July 1937, pp. 16-37.
- 29 Dubinina, “Tragediia lichnosti” (1989), p. 129; A. Suturin, “Delo kraevogo masshtaba,” *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda*, 26 March 1989; Japan, Naikaku, Kikakuchô “Soren kyokutô no saikin no jôsei,” *Sorenpo jijô*, vol. 13, 10 July 1937, p. 37.
- 30 “Interrogation of General Liushkov,” Reel #4, frame 0976.
- 31 Balitskii had been working in the Ukraine since 1933.
- 32 Matvei Shkiriakov (1883-1954). Worked in VKP(b) central control commission from 1922. Served as Yezhov’s deputy (1937-1938) supervising prophylactic operations in the provinces.
- 33 A. Suturin, “Delo kraevogo masshtaba,” *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda*, 26 March 1989. In a speech to the Twenty-second Party Congress in 1961, KGB chairman Aleksandr Shelepin asserted that Molotov had insisted upon Krutov’s immediate arrest. USSR, KPSS, *XXII s’ezd KPSS: Stenograficheskii otchet*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1962), p. 404.
- 34 Mantetsu, Hokuman keizai chôsajo, “Kyokutô Soren jûyô jikô” (1937), p. 10, in SMR/DLC; A. Suturin, “Kharbintsy,” *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda*, 4 May 1990.
- 35 S. Nikolaev, “Tsena istiny,” *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda*, 26 September 1989.
- 36 *Pravda*, 28 June 1937.
- 37 *Pravda*, 13 June, 14 June 1937.
- 38 S. Nikolaev, “Vystrely v spinu,” *Dal’nii Vostok*, No. 2 (1991), p. 141.
- 39 Arrested upon arrival, Balitskii was shot on 27 November 1937. *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, No. 12 (1989), p. 88; S. Nikolaev, “Byla li taina?” *Granitsa*, 28 May 1990.

- 40 On 30 May 1937, *Pravda* carried a report on Far Eastern frontiers by writer Nikolai Pogodin who quoted a border guard as saying: "They write 'frontier under lock and key' but here it's wide open. You can walk in or out."
- 41 On 29 June, border guards had occupied two disputed islands about 70 miles downstream from Blagoveshchensk: Senui (Kanchatzu) and Bolshoi (Kinabokko). On 30 June three Soviet patrol boats opened fire on the Manchukuo shoreline. During 3-5 July, on orders from Moscow, both islands were evacuated. Hayashi Saburô, *Kantôgun to kyokutô Sorengun* (Tokyo: Fûsô shobô, 1974), pp. 106-109.
- 42 One of the involuntary "informants" appears to have been Far Eastern Air Force chief Al'bert Lapin. Arrested while resting in Kislovodsk on 11 May 1937, Lapin was taken to Moscow where under torture he incriminated a number of OKDVA officers. Transferred to a Khabarovsk prison, Lapin committed suicide on 21 September. Letter to author from Aleksandr Al'bertovich Lapin, 5 March 1991.
- 43 Liushkov had served as a political commissar in the civil war and entered the Cheka in 1920, serving in Germany and in Moscow. After Kirov's assassination, he handled the investigation of Zinoviev for the former oppositionist's trial in January 1935. By 1936, he was deputy chief of a secret political department within the NKVD. At the beginning of 1937, he was working in Rostov. On 3 July 1937, Liushkov was awarded an Order of Lenin and shortly thereafter was appointed chief of the NKVD in the Far East. Alvin D. Coox, "L'Affaire Lyushkov: Anatomy of a Defector," *Soviet Studies*, vol. 19, No. 3 (January 1968), pp. 407-408. Robert Conquest, *Inside Stalin's Secret Police: NKVD Politics 1936-39* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1985), p. 24.
- 44 "Interrogation of General Liushkov," frames 0976-0977. Another protocol of the Liushkov interrogation, deposited in the Public Record Office (PRO), London, also describes this meeting. Dirk Kunert, *General Ljuschkovs Geheimbericht* (Bern: Schweizerischen Ost-Institute, n. d.), pp. 21-22. For a somewhat different account of Stalin's instructions, based on Japanese sources, see Coox (1968), p. 408.
- 45 "Interrogation of General Liushkov," frames 0977-0979. According to the PRO copy of Liushkov's interrogation, Liushkov extracted incriminating information from Zapadnyi on Deribas. Kunert (n. d.), p. 23; Nikolaev, "Vystrely v spinu" (1991), p. 142. Transported back to Moscow, Deribas was shot on 27 July 1938. *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, No. 12 (1989), p. 105.
- 46 Documents showing Far Eastern quotas in 1937 were seen by Major General V. G. Provotorov of the Main Military Procurator's Office. Interview in *Sovetskaia kul'tura*, 25 February 1989, p. 8, translated in FBIS, USSR, 89-046 (10 March 1989), p. 81. See also Mantetsu, Hokuman keizai chôsajo, "Kyokutô Soren jûyô jikô 1937" (1938), pp. 13-14, 16, in SMR/DLC.

- 47 For the *yezhevshchina* on Sakhalin, see Aleksandr Ivanovich Kostanov, ed. *Istoriia bez 'belykh piaten'* (Iuzhno-Sakhalinsk: Ispolkom sakhalinskogo oblastnogo soveta narodnykh deputatov, 1989). For the Jewish Autonomous Oblast, see *Organizatsiia KPSS Evreiskoi Avtonomnoi oblasti, 1934-1985* (1986), p. 29.
- 48 Pyotr Listovskii, *Dal'krai* Komsomol secretary was arrested and shot in 1937. Suturin in *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda*, 4 April 1989. His successor Cherniavskii met a similar fate.
- 49 Such as Vasily Anisimov (1878-1938), member of the Far Eastern Republic's Constituent Assembly (1920-1922).
- 50 A. Suturin, "Delo kraevogo masshtaba," *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda*, 26 March, 30 March 1989.
- 51 A. Suturin, "Kharbintsy," *ibid*, 4 May 1990.
- 52 "Interrogation of General Liushkov," frame 0976.
- 53 Dubinina, "Tragediia lichnosti" (1989), p. 132.
- 54 Vareikis was shot on 29 July 1938. *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, No. 12 (1989), p. 89; A. Suturin, "Delo kraevogo masshtaba," *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda*, 27 March 1989.
- 55 *Kyokutô Shiberiya yôran* (Dairen: Mantetsu Chôsabû, 1941), p. 345.
- 56 Coox, "L'Affaire Lyushkov" (1968), p. 416; Wada Haruki, "Koreans in the Soviet Far East, 1917-1937," in Dae-Sook Suh, *Koreans in the Soviet Union* (Honolulu: Center for Korean Studies/Center for SUPAR, 1987), p. 51.
- 57 Vasilii Georgievich Boldyrev, "Iaponiia i Sovetskii D. Vostok," *Sibirskie ogni*, No. 1 (1925), pp. 193-194.
- 58 According to an Indian working with the Kwantung Army in Xinjing during 1937-1938, his employers set up a school at Xinjing in 1936 to train Koreans for espionage and political agitation within the Posyet Korean National District. A. M. Nair, *An Indian Freedom Fighter in Japan* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1985), pp. 141-146.
- 59 In 1928 hundreds of Primorye Koreans were resettled to Kazakhstan. In 1933-1935 all Koreans were removed from Vladivostok. *Sibirskaia sovetskaia entsiklopediia*, vol. 2 (Novosibirsk: Sibirskoe kraevoe izdatel'stvo, 1931), p. 950; G. E. Petrov, ed., *Ukrepim sovety DVK* (Khabarovsk: Dal'giza, 1934), p. 97; *Vladivostok*, 22 May 1991.
- 60 Kunert, *General Ljuschkovs Geheimbericht* (n. d.), p. 39; Ruvim Fraerman, "Shpion," in *Povesti o Dal'nem Vostoke* (Moscow: Detskoi literatury, 1938), pp. 235-318.
- 61 According to Liushkov, Blücher enjoyed more popularity in the Red Army than did Defense Commissar Voroshilov. Kunert, *General Ljuschkovs Geheimbericht* (n. d.), p. 29.
- 62 *Pravda*, 15 December 1937.
- 63 *Ibid*, 24 February 1938. Zakir Sharifovich Ianguzov, *Zabven'ia net: Stranitsy zhizni i polkovodcheskoi deiatel'nosti Marshala Sovetskogo*

- Soiuza V. K. Bliukhera* (Khabarovsk: Khabarovskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1990), p. 287.
- 64 "Marshal Bliukher," *Novyi mir*, No. 2 (1938), pp. 211-223.
- 65 Kunert, *General Ljuschkows Geheimbericht* (n. d.), p. 29; Timothy J. Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority: The Structure of Soviet Military Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 144; Glafira Bliukher, "Vospominaniia o lichnom," *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 1 (1990), p. 80.
- 66 Hayashi, *Kantôgun to Kyokutô Sorengun* (1974), p. 115; Hiratake Denzô, *Shin Tôa no kensetsu: Soren, Shina, Manshû hokuyômondai* (Tokyo: Keibundô, 1939), p. 262. For background on Navy Commissar Pyotr Smirnov's visit to the Far East, see Nikolai Aleksandrovich Bilim and Mikhail Ivanovich Svetachev, "Predosterezhenie agressoram," *Dal'nii Vostok*, No. 7 (1988), p. 144.
- 67 Former *Pravda* editor who replaced Pyotr Smirnov (Gamarnik's successor) as head of the Red Army Political Administration in December 1937.
- 68 After surrendering to a Manchukuoan police patrol, Liushkov was transferred to Tokyo. He served Japanese Army Intelligence until 20 August 1945 when he was shot by a Japanese officer in Dairen. Coox, "L'Affaire Lyushkov" (1968), pp. 405-410; Nishino Tatsukichi, *Nazo no bômeisha Ryushikofu* (Tokyo: San'ichi shobô, 1979); Takeoka Yutaka, "Watashi ga Lyushukofu o utta!" *Bungei shunjû*, vol. 56, No. 8 (August 1978), pp. 348-355; S. Nikolaev, "Byla li taina?" *Granitsa*, 28 May 1990.
- 69 *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 1 (1990), p. 86.
- 70 For details, see Alvin D. Coox, *The Anatomy of a Small War: The Soviet-Japanese Struggle for Changkufeng/Khasan, 1938* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1977), pp. 128-186.
- 71 For the text of the exchange, Volkogonov, vol. 1, part 2 (1989), pp. 272-273.
- 72 Shtern had arrived in Khabarovsk wearing an Order of Lenin awarded him a few days earlier by Voroshilov.
- 73 Glafira Bliukher memoirs in *Voenno istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 1 (1990), p. 81.
- 74 Nikolai Dmitrievich Kondrat'ev, *Marshal Bliukher* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1965), p. 289; V. Vial'tsev, "Istoriia menia opravdaet," *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda*, 12 October 1988; Ianguzov (1990), p. 326.
- 75 "Prikaz narodnogo komissara oborony Soiuza SSR No. 0040," *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, No. 1 (1990), pp. 84-85.
- 76 For a summary of versions of Blücher's death, see Ianguzov (1990), pp. 328-329. His first wife Galina Aleksandrovna Kol'chugina and brother Pavel perished in camps. His second wife Glafira Lukinichna survived to publish her memoirs. *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal*, nos. 3-5 (1989), No. 1 (1990).

- 77 Zhukov became an editor of *Pravda* in 1946 and a member of the CPSU central committee in 1976. From 1982 to 1987 he headed the Soviet Committee for the Defense of Peace.
- 78 Iurii Zhukov, *Granitsa* (Moscow: Khudozhlit, 1938), and Zhukov, *Kak my bili iaponskikh samuraev* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 1938).
- 79 Chiang Kai-shek, *Soviet Russia in China* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Cudahy, 1957), pp. 51-52.
- 80 For a discussion of Far Eastern regionalism and the specter of separatism, see John J. Stephan, "Far Eastern Conspiracies? Russian Separatism on the Pacific," *Australian Slavonic and East European Studies*, vol. 4, nos. 1-2 (1990), pp. 135-152.
- 81 *Ocherki istorii Dal'nevostochnykh partiinykh organizatsii* (Khabarovsk: Khabarovskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1987), pp. 10, 33; *Ocherk istorii Khabarovskoi kraevoi organizatsii KPSS* (Khabarovsk: Khabarovskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1979), p. 478.
- 82 Nikolai Mikhailovich Pegov (1905-1991), Far Eastern and then Primorye party secretary (1938-1947).
- 83 N. M. Pegov, *Dalekoe-blizkoe: Vospominaniia* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1982), p. 104.
- 84 Khetagurova (1987), p. 132.
- 85 *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe razvitie dal'nevostochnoi derevni: Sovetskii period* (Vladivostok: Institut istorii, arkheologii i etnografii narodov Dal'nego Vostoka, 1984), p. 40.
- 86 The total from 22,550 in Primorskii *krai* and 34,226 in Khabarovsk *krai*, includes candidate members. *Ocherki istorii Dal'nevostochnykh partiinykh organizatsii KPSS* (1987), pp. 35, 176. The South Manchurian Railway Research Department put the number of party members in the Far East at the end of 1939 as 67,480. *Kyokutō Shiberiya yōran* (1941), p. 88.
- 87 T. H. Rigby, *Communist Party Membership in the USSR, 1917-1967* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 503. The membership ratio was particularly high in the Primorskii *krai*: 24 per 1,000 compared to 9 per 1,000 for the USSR as a whole. *Nichi-Ro nenkan 1942* (Tokyo: O'a tsūshinsha, 1942), p. 560; *Kyokutō Shiberiya yōran* (1941), p. 88.
- 88 *Istoriia vsesoiuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (Bol'shevikov): Kratkii kurs* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1938). Authored by a team led by Pyotr Pospelov (1898-1979).
- 89 M. E. Ogurtsova, "Deiatel'nost' partiinykh organizatsii Dal'nego Vostoka po perestroike ideologicheskoi raboty (1938-1941)," *Iz istorii revoliutsionnogo dvizheniia, deiatel'nosti partiinykh i komsomol'skikh organizatsii Dal'nego Vostoka*, Edited by N. G. Efimenko (Vladivostok: Dal'nevostochnoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1973), p. 62.
- 90 Mikoyan speech on the twentieth anniversary of the state security organs, quoted in *Dvadtsat' let VChK-OGPU-NKVD* (Moscow: Ogiz, 1938), p. 37.

- 91 The names of Far Eastern delegates are listed in Appendix I of Stephan, "The Russian Far East: A History."
- 92 USSR, KPSS, *XVIII s"ezd VKP(b): Stenograficheskii otchet* (1939), pp. 642 ff; *Pravda*, 11 March 1939; *Ocherki istorii Dal'nevostochnykh partiinykh organizatsii KPSS* (1987), p. 8.
- 93 *XVIII s"ezd VKP(b): Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1939), pp. 225-226.
- 94 *Pravda*, 16 March 1939. Shtern's speech, without the last sentence quoted above, appears in *XVIII s"ezd VKP(b): Stenograficheskii otchet* (1939), pp. 231-236.
- 95 Shtern was arrested on 7 June and executed on 28 October 1941. *Krasnaia zvezda*, 6 August 1988.
- 96 Andrei Zhdanov (1896-1948). Central Committee and Leningrad secretary since 1934.
- 97 *Dal'krai* plan targets for 1937 and actual levels reached (in parentheses): population: 2.8 million (2 million); land under cultivation: 2.3 million hectares (1 million); electric power: 400,000 kilowatts (150,000); steel: 500,000 tons (none); fish: 800,000 tons (350,000); oil: 800,000 tons (460,000); coal: 6.5 million tons (4.75 million). *Kyokutō Shiberiya yōran* (1941), p. 9.
- 98 Naikaku chōsa kyoku, Chōsashitsu, "Shukusei kōsaku no shinten to sono eikyō," typescript in B Collection, Washington Documents Center, Japan Section, Library of Congress; A. V. Bol'bukh, "Razvitie stakhanovskogo dvizheniia v promyshlennosti Dal'nevostochnogo kraia v 1936-1937 gg.," *Iz istorii rabocheho klassa Dal'nego Vostoka*, (Vladivostok: DVGU, 1971), pp. 70-71.
- 99 Vladimir Aleksandrovich Lamin, *Kliuchi k dvum okeanam* (Khabarovsk: Khabarovskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1981), p. 145.
- 100 The subject of unnatural deaths in the USSR from 1928 until 1953 has generated a voluminous and disputatious literature. For details, see *Slavic Review*, vol. 44, No. 3 (Fall 1985), pp. 517-536; vol. 45, No. 2 (Summer 1986), pp. 213-244; 300-313; *Soviet Studies*, vol. 42, No. 2 (April 1990), pp. 355-373; Vera Tolz, "Archives Yield New Statistics on the Stalin Terror," *Report on the USSR*, vol. 2, No. 36 (7 September 1990), pp. 1-4.
- 101 The figures included 190,000 deportations (mainly Koreans and Chinese) and 60,000 arrests (35,000 Russians, 11,000 Koreans and Chinese, and significant numbers of Ukrainians, Jews, Hungarians, Germans, Latvians, and Lithuanians. Hayashi Saburō cites Liushkov as giving the figure 200,000 repressed, including 7,000 shot. Hayashi (1974), pp. 116-117.
- 102 V. Kulikov, chairman, Khabarovsk branch of "Memorial," *Ogonek*, No. 10 (March 1990), p. 3.
- 103 This ratio is derived from that given by KGB Major-General Aleksandr Karbainov in an interview in *Sankei shimbun*, 25 April 1990, cited in

- Report on the USSR*, vol. 2, No. 18 (4 May 1990), p. 38. According to Karbainov, of 3.5 million executions under Stalin, half took place in 1937-1938.
- 104 Using the figure of 4-5 million victims for 1936-1939 advanced by Roy Medvedev (*Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism*. Revised and expanded edition edited and translated by George Shriver. New York: Columbia University Press, 1989, p. 455), the percentage would be just over 2% for the USSR as a whole.
- 105 N. S. Khrushchev, *Doklad na zakrytom zasedanii XX s"ezda KPSS* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1959), pp. 17, 18.
- 106 Appendix I of Stephan, "The Russian Far East: A History" lists Far Eastern delegates to the 17th (1934) and 18th (1939) party congresses.
- 107 *Istoriia Sibiri*, vol. 4 (Leningrad: Nauka, 1968), p. 395; *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe razvitie dal'nevostochnoi derevni: Sovetskii period* (Vladivostok: Institut istorii, arkheologii i etnografii narodov Dal'nego Vostoka, 1984), p. 40; Mantetsu, Hokuman keizai chôsaïo, "Kyô santô no gekigen" (15 July 1938), in SMR/DLC.
- 108 *Kyokutô Shiberiya yôran* (1941), p. 79.
- 109 *Dal'kraikom* bureau members were Lavrentiev (first secretary), Samoilev (second secretary), Vernyi (third secretary), Rychev, Vol'skii, Yolk, Kaplan, A. Kim, Kossior, Krutov, Meretskov, Blücher, Aronshtam, Sangurskii, Tairov, Tarkhanov, Fedko, Petrov, Putna, Pshenitsyn, Pashkovskii, Rozenblitt, Slinkin, Smolin, Firsov, Flegontov, Khavkin, and Shabalkin. Mantetsu, Harbin jimusho, "Kyokutô chihô chûô tô kikan no soshiki," 23 April 1935, in SMR/DLC. Meretskov, Petrov, Flegontov, and Shabalkin were alive in 1940.
- 110 Dubinina, "Tragediia lichnosti," *Dal'nii Vostok*, No. 7 (1989), p. 135.
- 111 Appendix E of Stephan, "The Russian Far East: A History" lists party secretaries in each Far Eastern *oblast*.
- 112 "Interrogation of General Liushkov," frame 0982.
- 113 John Erickson, *The Soviet High Command: A Military-Political History, 1918-1941* (London: St. Martin's, 1962), p. 493. Another estimate puts losses as 50% of regimental and virtually all divisional and corps commanders. Bilim and Svetachev in *Dal'nii Vostok*, No. 7 (1988), p. 143.
- 114 Appendix C of Stephan, "The Russian Far East: A History" contains biographical data on 64 leading members of the cohort, none of whom survived.
- 115 After his removal as *Dal'kraikom* first secretary on 15 January 1937, Lavrentiev was transferred to Sevastopol and then to Tbilisi, where Lavrentii Beria had him arrested, tortured, and on 22 August 1938, shot. Conquest (1985), pp. 54-55, 76, 90, 99, 136. Nina Dubinina, "Protivostoianie," *Dal'nii Vostok*, 1990, No. 8, pp. 138-140.
- 116 Organ of Soviet rule in the Far East from December 1917 until August 1918.

- 117 Luella Krasnoshchekova, "Iz vospominanii ob otse i sem'e," *Dal'nii Vostok*, No. 4 (1990), p. 149; Boris Ivanovich Mukhachev, "Prezident respubliki," *ibid*, p. 136.
- 118 A. Suturin in *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda*, 30 March 1989.
- 119 A. Dinov [Amir Khisamutdinov], "Zotik," *Krasnoe znamia*, 2 November 1989.
- 120 Lev Razgon, "The Executioner's Song," *Moscow News*, No. 48 (1988). Robert Conquest estimates that about 50,000 were shot at Glukhaya Hill during 1937-1938. Letter to author, 24 September 1990.
- 121 In a hospital at Vtoraya Rechka Transit Camp on 27 December 1938. *Iunost'*, No. 8 (1988), p. 34; *Vladivostok*, 14 November 1990.
- 122 A. Suturin in *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda*, 8 April 1989.
- 123 *Pravda*, 30 September, 6 October 1937; A. Suturin in *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda*, 25 March 1989.
- 124 *Na rubezhe* founding editors were I. Shatskii (editor-in-chief), E. Brui, V. Kim, P. Kulygin, O. Erdberg, I. Shabanov, G. Petrov, and N. Potapov, the last two of whom survived. Te Men Khi, head of *Na rubezhe's* Korean section was shot in 1938. *Priamurskie vedomosti*, 12 February 1991.
- 125 V. E. Voishnis, "Iz istorii formirovaniia sovetskoi intelligentsii na Dal'nem Vostoke (1933-1937 gg.)," *Kul'turnoe stroitel'stvo na Dal'nem Vostoke SSSR* (Khabarovsk: Khab. Gospedinstitut, 1980), pp. 90, 105-110.
- 126 Bondarenko (1990), pp. 141-147.
- 127 Among Tarkhanov's many pseudonyms was "O. Tanin," widely known among American and European students of modern Japan as co-author of *Military and Fascism in Japan* (New York: International Publishers, 1934), with an introduction by Karl Radek.
- 128 Letter to the author from Tatiana Matveeva, 31 October 1989.
- 129 Established in 1899 and absorbed into the Far Eastern University in 1920.
- 130 A. Dinov [Amir Khisamutdinov], "Zotik," *Krasnoe znamia*, 2 November 1989, p. 4.
- 131 After Arseniev's widow was arrested in 1937, his daughter handed over 270 files to authorities. Eighty-one survived and are kept in the Primorye Branch of the USSR Geographical Society (from 1990 restored to its original name – Society for Study of the Amur Region). Anna Ivanovna Tarasova, *Vladimir Klavdievich Arsen'ev* (Moscow: Nauka, 1985), pp. 72-73, 306; Tatiana Matveeva, interviewed by Afanasy Serdyuk in *Dal'nevostochnyi uchenyi*, No. 50 (14-20 December 1989).
- 132 Letters and telegrams denouncing Tukhachevskii and Gamarnik were signed by among others well-known "Far Eastern" writers such as Aleksandr Fadeyev and Pyotr Pavlenko, by USSR Academy of Sciences President Vladimir Komarov (former head of its Far Eastern Branch), and by the polar explorer Dmitrii Papanin. *Pravda*, 12, 16 June 1937; *Izvestiia*, 12 June 1937; *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 15 June 1937.

- 133 Quoted in *Shpiony i diversanty za rabotoi* (Moscow: Gos. sots-ekon. izdat, 1937), p. 13.
- 134 A. Suturen in *Tikhookeanskaia zvezda*, 25 March 1989. Ironically, Kaganovich outlived all members of the 1934 Central Committee, dying of natural causes on 26 July 1991 at the age of 97. *New York Times*, 27 July 1991; *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, No. 12 (1989), p. 82.
- 135 Raisa Berg, *Sukhovei* (New York: Chalidze, 1983), p. 161.
- 136 Amir Khisamutdinov's forthcoming study of repression of the Far Eastern intelligentsia in 1937-1939 is based on archival materials.