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Stalin's Role in the Coming of World War II

THE INTERNATIONAL DEBATE GOES ON

By R. C. RAACK

C'est un monstre," French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault said of Stalin following an overlong session of negotiation and enforced civility, lasting almost until dawn, in the Kremlin in December 1944. The social exchange centered around a buffet and film seance commanded by Stalin. In the course of the evening with Charles DeGaulle and his advisers, Stalin had volunteered several times to speed negotiations to a conclusion by shutting up "boring" diplomats with a machine gun—never making wholly clear whether he intended to include the Frenchmen present in his proposed massacre.¹

Perhaps Bidault was rendered excessively judgmental by what may have appeared to him as a close encounter with *le faucheur soviétique*. But he then expressed a view of Stalin now almost universally accepted, except by his most fanatical devotees—at least when the issue becomes the Soviet boss's appalling aesthetic misdeeds. Yet it was a view that, at the time, obviously eluded more naive Westerners, like Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt, though each spent many more hours than DeGaulle's group in wartime negotiation and diplomatic society with the Soviet boss.

Better informed anglophone observers of the time were not misled. One was George F. Kennan, then influential in the U. S. Embassy in Moscow, if largely ignored in Roosevelt's White House. He wrote to his Washington colleague, Charles Bohlen, in January 1945, before the Yalta conference had finished: "Soviet political aims in Europe are not . . . consistent with the happiness, prosperity or stability of international life on the rest of the Continent." To attain Europe's weakness and disunity, "There is no misery, and no evil, I am afraid, which they would not be prepared to inflict, if they could, on the European peoples."² This

view of Stalin and his aims—he was most certainly their author—fit exceptionally well the larger picture of Stalin's personality now being rounded out by contemporary Russian writers Edvard Radzinsky and Arkady Vaksberg. In books first published in Russian but placed recently before Western readers in translation (Radzinsky, *Stalin*; Vaksberg, *Stalin and the Jews*, *Hotel Lûx*, and *Die Verfolgten Stalins*)³ both writers have taken the historical measure of the long-time Soviet leader whom only the French, among his executive-level wartime Western visitors, caught. Radzinsky and Vaksberg fix in their pages the figure of evil that must inform any assessment of Stalin's wartime, pre-war, and Cold War plans beyond the borders of the Soviet Union.

The breakout this year of the discussion of Stalin's war goals on a second national front, part of the newly lively international discussion on the effects of the opening of many former East Bloc archives to independent researchers, may signal a turning point in the history of the debate. The fact that for several years Stalin's adventurous foreign goals have been mainline historical discussion in Russia suggests the vast amount of new historical information on Stalin and his successors now emerging from the formerly closed archives. The multiform layers of concealment the Soviet boss created are gradually unfolding—but without the help of, indeed in the face of, apparently deliberate stonewalling by many Western editors and history writers, not to mention the current Russian government. Among the Westerners, there appears to be a clear unwillingness to accept, or even to publicize, what is known. Someone among the former Soviets clearly just doesn't want us to know. The Russian government has closed the most important political archive to independent researchers.⁴ One can only imagine the racks of skeletons desiccating in that closet.

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Only last February the intensive international debate over Stalin's aggressive war plans broke through the odd indifference in which most of the Western popular media, and the overwhelming mass of academic media, had heretofore clothed it. This occurred directly on the German-language front—Austrians, Swiss, and Germans, eighty or so million comparatively well educated Europeans—where the debate had earlier been conducted at considerably less than front-page level.

To put this key bit of publishing history in context, one need only recall the vehement objections of some of those who have opposed the controversial Suvorov "thesis"—the argument of the Russian exile author, Viktor Suvorov, first produced in book form as *The Icebreaker* in 1989. He argued that Stalin planned an attack to the west against Nazi Germany and German-occupied Europe in July 1941. The Soviet drive was planned to anticipate Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union, which the Kremlin master had no doubt was in the works. The Red army was not, however, to march in a preventive strike, but to carry out a full-fledged assault to the west.⁵ Those reporters and historians on an international front who did not originally wholly ignore Suvorov's astonishing thesis (and they made up the vast majority) epitomized in their responses to his book both outrage and hostility.⁶ Yet by now his history, some of it originally rather speculative, has been taken up in significant measure by other historians and also considerably enhanced, amplified, and further documented.⁷ A whole new set of centrally important sources have been found, in spite of the archival blockade erected in Moscow, to underpin much of what he wrote. Some will be reported below for the first time to English-language readers.

The reader of my earlier article on this subject will remember some of the responses to Suvorov. After his book appeared in English, two professors from different sides of the globe jumped in to call the argument that Stalin planned a war of assault against Nazi Germany, Suvorov's story, "absurd." Not long after that, Suvorov and a number of others who had written on the subject (including, by implication, the writer of this article) were cast beyond the pale of professional respectability, characterized as "crass outsiders" for suggesting that Stalin had

aggressive plans in Europe in 1941. Recently, the Suvorov thesis was gratuitously described by a Swiss academic as an "unspeakably (*unsäglich*) pseudo-revisionist argument. . . [that] receives the treatment it deserves"—in a book of over a thousand pages by an American historian. That book the reviewer lauds as "more than just a future standard work on the history of the Second World War."⁸

Some of these comments obviously go far beyond the usual cautious razor cuts employed by academic reviewers, I think the reader will agree. But they clearly are comments redolent of strongly held passions, as well as of convictions that are far more widespread than those few examples can convey. Three well-known German public figures on the Left—one quite far, to be sure—told visiting Russian television interviewers in an off-camera discussion that even if the Suvorov thesis were correct, his story should not be told since it disencumbered Hitler (and, by implication, the Germans who followed him) of some of the guilt for bringing on the war. Years back, Dr. Goebbels shocked the civilized world by publicly burning books on the *Opernplatz* in Berlin. Now there are distinguished members of the German Left who, if not obviously as rabid as some professors, propose to ban history books for political purposes—and not a genuine Bolshevik, nor, I'm sure, a sincere devotee of Stalin, among them!⁹

Günter Gillessen was one German writer who had skeptically, but not negatively, reviewed Viktor Suvorov's first book, *The Icebreaker*, in 1989 (in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*).¹⁰ The German edition had just appeared. Other reviewers had drawn similar skeptical conclusions. But, a year later, the English-language editions went almost unnoticed in both popular journals of opinion and professional journals.¹¹ By 1995—long after the discussion of Suvorov's argument that Stalin had planned to attack Hitler, had Hitler not attacked the Soviet Union first, had become a first-page story in Russia and Suvorov's readers had climbed into the millions—several other German writers had taken up the argument. They relied for their proof mainly on Suvorov and the late Aleksandr Nekrich. Nekrich, a Russian emigré scholar attached to the Harvard Russian Research Institute, had early found his way into the newly opened Soviet archives. There he found convincing evidence, from the mouths of Stalin's closest cronies, of a general plan to unleash the Red army westward, first against its immediate western neighbors,

Hitler's Germany and its subjected peoples.¹² Suvorov, the reader may recall, had actually set the date for that attack as early July 1941.

Then, last February, the former editor of the influential German news magazine *Der Spiegel*, Rudolf Augstein, let fly a broadside at those who had indicted Stalin for conniving to bring on the war by making the infamous pact with Hitler and later planning to attack him. Augstein's denunciation was directed at Suvorov and Gillessen (who had kept up on the discussion of Stalin's war plans in Germany and reported it circumspcctly in Germany's leading national newspaper) and a few other German history writers relying largely on Suvorov and Nekrich for their evidence of Stalin's war plan. Augstein's denunciation was important enough in the minds of the *Spiegel*'s current editors to command the cover of the journal. "Aggressor Hitler, Aggressor Stalin?" read the title page in five colors. Oddly flattering close-ups of each director faced off across the cover.¹³

But there was no real historical contest and regrettably little up-to-date information on the subject of Stalin's war aims inside the *Spiegel*. Augstein made certain that Hitler won indictment as the guilty war party, and the history writers, all of whom had done a great deal more research and reading than journalist Augstein, were verbally leveled. All of them were Germans with the exception of Suvorov. The rest of the non-Germans who had written on the subject went unmentioned and, at least technically, unscathed. The *Spiegel* editors, following what seems to be modern custom in journalistic responsibility, then made certain that no serious criticism of Augstein's essay cropped up in subsequent letters to the editor.¹⁴

Though Augstein commanded the front cover of *Der Spiegel*, his reading and research on this subject was at least as far behind as 1989. But his zeal, committed effectively in defense of the history supplied first by Stalin and his propagandists and still so dear to many hearts, was impressive. And, whether he wanted to or not, he suddenly and effectively pushed the discussion at last out of the closet as far as the Germans are concerned. He made it open, if not quite *salonfähig*. Yet, as the reader will have noted, by aiming only at German writers and Suvorov, the lone foreigner published on the subject in German, he managed to make the discussion seem only national—and provincial. In other words, Augstein reduced the debate to a German *Federkrieg*, local swordplay with quills.

In fact, the discussion is international. But Augstein perhaps calculated that if he made that point he would likely only strengthen his opponents' case. For if germanophone readers had learned that Suvorov sold editions of a million or more in Russia, they would know that another people was coping with key historical issues that could bring them further into painful confrontation with, rather than away from, their intractable history. And the German readers would see that the intractable history being

Stalin was as much a racist as Hitler, but one who went about his elimination of those peoples that obscured his domestic panorama of a greater Russia with far more stealth.

reconsidered abroad also bears directly on the Germans' own intractable past—not quite so clear-cut a story as Augstein would have them believe. He also failed to note that English-language writers, Nekrich and this writer, had also entered the book and academic journal market bearing new materials on the topic generally supporting Suvorov.

In addition, if the international dimensions of the controversy had been revealed, the German writers might have looked less like gentlemanly historical rationalizers for the behavior of would-be neo-Nazis (as Augstein seemed pleased to have them portrayed), the skinhead teenagers whose current antics so embarrass, properly so, civilized Germans. In any event, Augstein cleansed the palette and removed the foreign matter—and correspondingly censored the discussion and impoverished his readers. Or perhaps he had no choice. Perhaps he suffers from "linguistic isolationism," to use Gerhard Weinberg's deft characterization of history writers limited in their intake of vital professional information because they lack foreign language skills.

Augstein's criticism of the arguments in favor of Stalin's aggressive designs to the west was rather mild compared with the vehemence of those members of the academic fraternity quoted earlier. Yet his headline treatment assault has yet to inspire the more popular organs of political commentary and review on the west side of the Atlantic to take up the sub-

ject—six years after the appearance of Suvorov's book in English, to repeat, a best-seller abroad.

At least one cause behind Stalin's oddly persisting reputation as a mainstay of international peace and a victim of heinous aggression in World War II, in spite of his obvious collaboration with Hitler in the military destruction of much of east central Europe, does not wholly derive from genuine historical unawareness. As an alleged socialist experimenter, Stalin and his state for years garnered many positive sentiments from some of the world's certifiable socialists and other leftist well-wishers whatever he and it did. Indeed, the long-prevailing textbook myth of Stalin's willingness to collaborate with the Western democracies in 1938, to save Czechoslovakia from Hitler and thus maintain European peace, has only recently been professionally demolished, once and for all, it appears.¹⁶ Stalin's historical reputation has for years been enhanced by his alleged support for the hapless Czechs in their vain efforts to save themselves from Hitler at the time of Munich—that, we now know, just another among many other historical illusions carefully cultivated by Soviet propaganda mills.

His sometime ally and rival Hitler, by contrast, was obsessively, and publicly, dedicated to his religio-racialist spatial and purification policies, even then a menacing and unsavory nationalist mix. He seemed oblivious to the political need for craft and compromise, even to the point that his mistreatment of potentially friendly "inferior" peoples, like the Ukrainians and Balts, enemies, real or potential, of some of his enemies, and his madly systematic approach to the elimination of "non-Aryans" actually interfered with the successful conduct of his war. Ethnic obsession rather than either geopolitics or *realpolitik* was the great driving force behind his actions. His propaganda was necessarily directed domestically, for its racially exclusionary doctrine, whether played high or low for the occasion, had little appeal beyond members of his chosen people. His wildly expansionist plans, publicly articulated, quickly raised the level of energy abroad among his enemies to fevered hostility. The primitiveness of his doctrines only mirrored favorably by contrast intellectualized "scientific" socialism's international appeal.

Stalin was manifestly far more clever, if just as mad. Following Vaksberg and Radzinsky, Stalin was as much a racist, but one who went about his elimination of those peoples that

obscured his domestic panorama of a greater Russia with far more stealth. He simply had those groups he disliked removed to the vast reaches of Siberia and central Asia to perish or ultimately dissolve in a sea of peoples, while dealing with individual members of their groups, like the entire panoply of his imagined enemies, via public and secret trials. They quickly passed through his kangaroo courts and on to banishment, or were despatched to the Gulag, or to death. Meanwhile, he eliminated other presumed rivals and "socially dangerous elements" by means of staged accidents, poisonings, and pre-arranged medical "errors." All of the atrocities occurred while his propaganda organs proclaimed support for international peace and amity. Countless Western "useful idiots," and deluded and self-deluding journalists, naive or corrupted, who wrote from, or returned from Stalin's paradise to witness the wonder of society remade there, covered for his dreadful works. Today they are well, but still insufficiently, remembered—if, in some circles, it appears, only painfully.¹⁷

Since Suvorov's first book appeared in Russian in 1992, he has written two more volumes, *Den' "M"* (Day "M"), which appeared in 1994, and *Poslednaia respublika* (The Last [or Final] Republic¹⁸), which has just appeared in Russia. Each adds substantial proof and additional details to the arguments he made for Stalin's determination to bolshevize Europe, beginning with an attack on Germany in the summer of 1941, an attack he imagined would move with lightning speed, supported behind enemy lines by uprisings of the local proletariat egged on by local Communist parties, all the way to the channel. Georgii Zhukov, later the famous Marshal Zhukov, one of the most successful Soviet commandants of the victorious Red Army in World War II, was the commander he selected for his anticipated thrust to the west.

Meanwhile other Russian historians, in spite of the current Russian government's portentous archival closing, have not been idle. For if the current Russian government has done as much as possible to block the central presidential repository from releasing its facts, ancillary archives have been opened and remain so. And the details of an enterprise as grand in its dimension, and as macabre in its destructive prospects as that drive to bolshevize Europe to the west that Stalin planned, had to have left a paper trail way beyond the Kremlin offices and apartments and the suburban dachas of Stalin and his *intimes*. A number of those Russian

writers have now been conveniently drawn together by Russian editors in a paperback edition (in Russian), *Did Stalin Plan a War of Aggression against Hitler?*¹⁹ Moreover, the editors of the independent Russian professional journal, *Fatherland History* (formerly *History of the USSR*), brought together an editorial panel to discuss a then-controversial article they would soon publish suggesting yet more factual underpinning for the Suvorov thesis. The editors subsequently have published a number of articles on the same subject, including one by this writer.²⁰

Most important of all, recently a copy of Stalin's speech to the Soviet Politburo of 19 August 1939 has been published in the Soviet press. Suvorov lacked in his first books just this kind of archival testimony to Stalin's aims. But I myself had meanwhile—piqued by his arguments and hopeful of closing gaps in my own knowledge—discovered three documents proving Stalin's secret plan to use the war Hitler brought on for the sovietization of all Europe. One came from the once Soviet-friendly Lithuanian foreign minister, who reported what he heard from Molotov and his Foreign Affairs Commissariat subaltern (actually a representative of the NKVD) V. G. Dekanosov. Another proof, also from 1940, and contemporary with that of the Lithuanian, came from J. Edgar Hoover, who likely got it from a paid Soviet informer he termed a "high Russian source." And another derived from the Presidium of the Comintern, where Stalin was a member, though he was usually represented in its meetings by one of his henchmen.²¹ Meanwhile, Alexander Nekrich, mentioned above, had also, for some years unbeknownst to me, been at work in the former Soviet archives unearthing further evidence. These are strong and persuasive, so-far-unchallenged testimonies to Stalin's war plans in the words of his own Kremlin band.

But the new source from Stalin's own mouth is of overriding importance. It is his speech outlining to the Politburo of the party his general scheme for the sovietization of Europe from Germany to the channel. It was evidently given to justify his apparent sudden and total reversal of diplomatic course, and to supply the grounds for his choice to join Hitler in the Nazi-Soviet Pact in August 1939.²² This heretofore unpublished speech is surely the most important document to appear from out of the Soviet archives since they were opened half a decade or so ago.

What Stalin told the Politburo on 19 August 1939, four days before German Foreign Minis-

ter Ribbentrop arrived to join Stalin and Molotov in signing the Nazi-Soviet Pact and its secret protocol dividing large parts of east central Europe between the two rapacious dictators, should convince even the most firm doubters of the nature of Stalin's war plans.

"If," Stalin said, "we accept the German proposal to conclude a non-aggression pact, [Germany] will attack Poland, and the intervention of France and England in this war becomes inevitable. Western Europe will be subjected to serious unrest and disorder [from social unrest caused by the harsh wartime conditions]. In such circumstances, there will be more of a chance for us to stay out of the conflict, and we may hope [later] to be able to find our way advantageously into the war. [Our] experience of twenty years shows that, in time of peace, it is not possible to have a communist movement in Europe powerful enough [in any one nation] for the Bolshevik party to take power. A dictatorship of this party becomes possible only as the result of a great war. . . . For the realization of these plans [creating the situation of domestic unrest and disorder he referred to above] it is unavoidable that the war should last as long as possible." That advantageous Soviet entry into the war, once it had been dragged out as long as possible, Stalin also made clear, was meant to secure the bolshevization of both Germany and France using the power of the Red Army.²³

There is yet more new evidence. Historians have recently produced a more complete text of Stalin's speech and supplementary commentaries of 5 May 1941 at the Soviet War Academy. It is a speech long known in various versions, but in the new, more complete version he announced his determination to go to war, justifying moving from a posture of defense to a posture of assault in the near future. He also spoke of the vast amount of modern equipment the vastly expanded Red Army and other forces had recently acquired. "A modern army," Stalin said, "must be an offensive army."²⁴ This speech was made approximately two months and a few weeks before the July days the most plausible accounts give for the Red Army's march west.

Suvorov was right about the most important parts of the story from the start. Almost all the other writers, including this writer, utterly skeptical of Suvorov's "thesis" for a time, have been wrong. Most remain so. Moreover, to pick up the appropriate comparison with the clearly demonic Hitler once more, who can be certain whether he, faced directly with the issue at the

outset of the war, would have begun a war calculatedly determined to stretch it out, whatever the cost—for Stalin said nothing of costs—for the longest possible time. Obsessed as Hitler clearly was, he never thought in terms of Marxist-Leninist long-term timetables, but only in terms of lightning victories. He thought only of acting quickly before his imagined mission to save the German people was aborted by what he thought would be his early death. But his war became Stalin's war; and Germany's disaster flowed from both.

One senses that a long repressed public spirit questing for truth and justice in Russia struggles to master the evil legacies Stalin left. Thanks to Russian researchers, we now have Stalin's scheme for an attack on Germany, starting that war to the west, right from his own mouth. All of the remaining evidence of his purposes is reciprocally supporting and likewise suggests the authenticity of this document. Those arguing to the contrary, here and abroad—and they are many—can only contend, and they do vigorously still contend, that the supportive information is still insufficient—although some deny that there is any evidence. But somewhere in the great, ineffable subconscious of the former Soviet peoples the longing for an honest history, telling the past as it actually happened, has clearly persisted through all those agonizing Soviet years, persisted, for sure, more strongly than the quest for historical truth among Suvorov's Western opponents. Suvorov may at first only have guessed correctly much of the time in joining the parts of his tale where he had little or no persuasive evidence, but somehow he was on the trail of this amazing story from the outset.

Stalin brought almost every possible disaster to the door of the Soviet peoples as a result of his plan to sovietize Europe. It was "humanity's greatest genius" himself, imagining that he could get off the mark before the Germans, who brought the Nazi *Wehrmacht* to the Soviet border. Even his "Great Patriotic war," which the Germans began with a giant first leap, finished with a hollow Soviet victory. At war's end, the western Soviet lands were ugly scenes of the sheer devastation of the past barbaric conflicts. The remaining vast countryside had been ruthlessly and heedlessly scavenged to support years of pell-mell industrialization and war production for Stalin's war.

The Soviet Union ended the war with countless millions dead or in work camps, with a corrupt domestic tyranny as vicious as the pre-war

tyranny that had preceded it firmly in place. The popular victor, Marshal Zhukov, a potential rival in Stalin's view, was banished to the provinces and even banished from filmed "histories" celebrating the military triumph. In them, Stalin took over retrospectively as the victorious strategist and supreme commander. Zhukov's double removal was one immediately visible aspect of the vast purges Stalin was soon to recommence, as well as an external sign of the otherwise invisible dementia in the Kremlin.

A Cold War with sometime allies had suddenly quickened in the aftermath of the military victory over Germany. The Cold War's conflicts first developed as Western attitudes toward their former ally hardened when they met his looting and raping Red Army and barbarous *NKVD* in the middle of Europe. Those attitudes were further solidified when the Westerners contemplated the sovietization Stalin pushed, if sometimes temporarily concealed behind the façade of creating anti-fascist democracy, wherever the Red Army was in control. Along with that new war came another exhausting armaments program—in part dominated by an accelerated push to match the American atomic bomb—reimposed on the tired Soviet peoples.

Outside of Russia, with the exception of the recent publicity given the subject in Germany, the mass of Western scholars and writers writing on the war and on the Stalinist period have simply kept silence on the historical issues Suvorov raised. The stillness of reviewers in the face of his once shocking thesis tells part of the frightening story of apparently voluntary vows of silence making up an ineffable, but effective, censorship. Where have the *New Yorker*, *The New York Review of Books*, *The New York Times*, journals that dote on war stories and recapitulations and reviews on the subject, been? Where *Time*, where *Newsweek*? Indeed, one approach of no doubt carefully selected reviewers, when the subject of Stalin's aggressive war plans was noticed, has been to scald the authors who have argued for their existence with doubt, unsupported to be sure, or to ignore books and articles directly on the subject.²⁵ The very fact that Stalin's speech of 19 August 1939, which has been available in Russia for over a year, has until now, as I write in the summer of 1996, gone unreported in the United States and perhaps elsewhere in the West suggests that something has indeed gone wrong.

Many history writers in the West, those who for years have written their accounts of the war in one way or the other in line with the original Soviet propaganda story of how the war came about, have been often naively unaware of what they were doing. For years the crucial East Bloc archives were closed to independent researchers. But when they did open, many writers with impressive bibliographies were simply unprepared to take advantage of the grand new research opportunities. Some were functionally illiterate in the languages they needed to undertake acute research in the vital, newly available sources. Others perhaps felt trapped by professional publication histories, the keys to impressive academic careers, they would be loath to repudiate. Yet by long supporting in print, explicitly or implicitly, the Stalinist line that the dictator's purposes were regularly defensive, many historians suddenly have much to lose, both in money—from best selling textbooks and other editions—and in reputation, if Suvorov's thesis were ever generally accepted as correct. As the archival documents now emerge, some must now sit increasingly uneasy in their professorial chairs. Hence, perhaps, one cause of the conspicuous silence.

Hitler was the "icebreaker," as Suvorov argued from the virtual beginning of the debate. Suvorov's chapters and proofs, one by one as they appear, now get headline copy and provide Sunday supplement material in Russia's leading independent newspapers. But a search through the current, 1995-1996 version of *Books in Print* will show the reader that none of his books is currently available in English. That editorial *chistka* on this side of the Atlantic, and on much of the Continent, as of this writing remains almost total.

But the genie of truth is now out of the bottle, at least in Europe, thanks to former editor Augstein, who sought but failed to bury his persistent historian-opponents with a recapitulation of antiquated Stalinist and post-Stalinist propaganda, and to industrious Russian historians and journal editors who have recently found key supportive documents in the campaign to identify Stalin's ghastly war game. How long will it be before the battle to broadcast the debate over Stalin's bloody wartime adventure is joined on behalf of the broad reading and viewing public on the west side of the Atlantic?

NOTES

1. Jean Laloy, "À Moscou: entre Stalin et De Gaulle. Décembre 1944," *Revue des études slaves*, 54 (1982): 151.

2. Kennan to Bohlen, 26 January 1945, United States National Archives, Records of Charles Bohlen, 1942-1952, Bohlen correspondence, Box 3.

3. Vaksberg: *Stalin and the Jews* (New York, 1994); *Hotel Lûx* (Paris, 1993); *Die Verfolgten Stalins. Aus den Verliesen des KGB* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1993). Radzinsky, *Stalin* (New York, 1996).

4. Serge Schmemmann, in *The International Herald-Tribune*, 27 April 1995, 2.

5. Viktor Suvorov, *The Icebreaker. Who Started The Second World War?* (London, 1990), and under a slightly different subtitle, New York, 1990.

6. R. C. Raack, "Stalin's Role in the Coming of World War II: Opening the Closet Door on a Key Chapter of Recent History," *World Affairs*, 158 (1996): 198-211.

7. Joachim Hoffmann, *Stalins Vernichtungskrieg 1941-1945* (Munich, 1995); Walter Post, *Unternehmen Barbarossa: Deutsche und Sowjetische Angriffspläne 1940/41* (second ed., Hamburg, 1996), Werner Maser, *Der Wortbruch: Hitler, Stalin und der Zweite Weltkrieg* (Munich, 1994). Of the three books, Maser's has much less new than the other two to offer. See also Raack, *Stalin's Drive to the West*, in note 9, below. This writer, however, was originally skeptical of the time Suvorov set for the Soviet attack, early July 1941, and remains partially so, though more and more convinced that the summer of 1941, perhaps even later in July, is correct. The summer of 1941 is the time now held to by Hoffmann and Post, and it seems increasingly plausibly supported by their arguments and those of others.

8. Raack, "Stalin's Role," 206-07, and notes 20, 34-36; Bernd Bonwetsch, in a review of Maser, *Osteuropa*, 3 (1995): 286; Stig Forster, in a review of Gerhard Weinberg's *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge, 1994), in *Das Historisch-politische Buch*, 1/2, (1996). Weinberg writes, "certainly there were no plans for a Soviet preventative attack into the German buildup; the Germans never considered such Soviet action likely; they found no evidence of such a project after the invasion; and they were assured by their own military adviser in the Soviet Union before June 22 that there were no signs of aggressive intentions" (204). He cites as proof for the statement, the wartime diaries of two German generals, a report of the German military attaché in Moscow, and an unprinted conference paper from 1991. But the documents printed by Walter Post, *Unternehmen Barbarossa*, 353-65, from a number of German generals and others certainly testify to Hitler's and other German chieftains' awareness and fear of a possible Soviet attack on Germany. (In fact, Weinberg somewhat misstates the issue: Stalin was not planning a "preventative attack," he was planning a war of assault to bolshevize, or help bolshevize Germany.)

9. The Russians went on to tell the story to Dr. Joachim Hoffmann, who has also written on Stalin's war and who was one of the chief victims of *Spiegel* editor Augstein's farrago of Soviet disinformation, misinformation, and lack of information. The three current German notables may be able to count on an American associate in realizing their wish for historical suppression. That associate is professor, Beveridge Prize-winner, etc., and endowed chair-holder, Melvyn Leffler. He compiled a review for *Foreign*

Affairs (July/August 1996) of books on the cold war from English-language books mainly published recently. But he failed to review, or even mention, my recent book, *Stalin's Drive to the West, 1938-1945: The Origins of the Cold War* (Stanford, 1995), which is published by the same press as his book on the immediate post-war period. No other historical study focusing on the close connection of the wartime origins of what was later called the cold war with Stalin's pre-war and wartime plans has yet been published in English, nor in any other language. In addition, the book is securely based on revelations from a number of the recently opened former "enemy archives," perhaps on more of the latter than most other recent books on the cold war. So it undeniably fell directly into the context of Leffler's review, dramatically titled "Inside Enemy Archives: The Cold War Reopened." I cannot imagine that Professor Leffler's *Foreign Affairs* editors would not want to clear up the matter of the odd gap in his cold war reportage.

10. 27 April 1989.

11. See note 6.

12. Aleksandr Nekrich, "A Wise Design," *Perspective* (Boston), I, number 2, 2-3, 7.

13. *Der Spiegel* 6/96, 100-25; The American reader must try to imagine a bookish historical debate on a matter of such relatively antique provenance—fifty-seven years—and yet central historical importance making the covers of *Time* or *Newsweek*. The recent "Enola Gay" fracas comes to mind—yet that was about a museum exhibition suddenly to be unveiled for popular consumption in a national and publicly supported center. In that case, no debate based on a sudden outpouring of vital new insights in books and articles based on new historical materials directed to a stunning new historical argument had occurred. Germany, of course, lies unmercifully entwined in its past, and is not the United States of America, and history, and historians, are regularly taken seriously over there.

14. In the experience of this writer, journalistic style today appears to be to print one letter one for, one against, the original writer—unless the writer is an outside authority for whom readers strongly take sides, for or against. In this case, this historian sent a letter, in German, to the editors pointing out the antiquity of former editor Augstein's information, much of which was simply a repetition of the claims of Stalin and his foreign ministers. I also noted that the only writers on the subject of Stalin's intended march west were not solely native germanophones plus Suvorov. The argument for Stalin's war plan could, therefore, not be easily put aside as the sinister fantasies of right-wing German extremists. Of course, my letter, a serious professional criticism of Augstein's account, went unprinted. Perhaps other professional critics got the same treatment, for none was offered to *Spiegel* readers (see 8/1996). Stalin's reputation is still tenderly guarded in the *Spiegel's* Hamburg, as well as, it appears, in a number of New York editorial offices. Two books harshly critical of

Western journalists' failures to point out Soviet realities to readers at the time of the Stalinist *Reich*, both especially hard on *The New York Times*, went unnoticed and unreviewed (according to *Book Review Digest* and *Books in Print*) by any of the major newspapers in the States. I refer to James William Crowl's *Angels in Stalin's Paradise: Western Reporters in Stalin's Russia, 1917-1937* (Washington, D.C., 1982), and Sally Taylor's *Stalin's Apologist. Walter Duranty* (Oxford, 1990). See also, for contrast with our domestic journalistic silence on past error, an honest and reflective journalist's report on reportorial conditions in Stalin's Russia, Paul Winterton's *Report on Russia* (London, 1945).

15. See Markus Wehner, "Der letzte Sowjet-mythos," in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10 April 1996.

16. Igor Lukes, *Czechoslovakia between Stalin and Hitler* (New York, 1996).

17. See Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims* (New York, 1981); and note 14.

18. The first printed in Kiev; the second in Moscow, 1996.

19. Gennady Bordiugov, ed., *Gotovil li Stalin nastupatel'nuu voynu protiv Gitlera?* (Moscow, 1995).

20. "S zasedaniia redkollegii," *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, number 4/5, 1994. As of this writing, I am aware of no discussion—to print or not to print—of the subject at such an editorial level reported in an English-language journal. See also Bordiugov, 6-63, and the citations in my previous article on this subject in *World Affairs*, 158 (1996): 211, note 39. The Russian translation of this writer's article, "Stalin's Plans for World War Two Told by a High Comintern Source," first published in *The Historical Journal*, 38 (1995): 1031-36, appeared in *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, 3 (1996). As of this writing, I have not seen a copy of it.

21. Raack, *Stalin's Drive to the West*, 21-28, and supporting footnotes, especially notes 19-22 to chapter one. See also, Raack, "Stalin's Plans for World War II Told to a High Comintern Source," *passim*.

22. For the background of the reversal of alliances, please see the citations in note 21, above.

23. From the copy found by T. S. Bushuevaia in the "Secret Booty Funds of the Special USSR Archive" (Tsentr khraneniia istoriko-dokumental'nykh kollektsii, byvshii Osobyi arkhiv SSSR), f. 7, op. 1, d. 1223, first published in the journal *Novyi Mir* in 1995.

24. See Post, 274-78 and V. A. Nevezhin, "Vystuplenie Stalina 5 maia 1941 g. i povорот v propagande. Analiz direktivnykh materialov," in Bordiugov, 147-67.

25. See, for example, Steven M. Miner's review of Radzinsky's *Stalin*, in the *New York Times Book Review*, 5 May 1996, 14-15, for expressed, but unsubstantiated doubts, and no suggestion of the overwhelming documentary evidence establishing Stalin's war scheme. See also note 9, above.