

of a sacramental significance that transcended their material components and mere provenance.

Throughout the 1920s, disputes concerning the proper meaning and subsequent fate of particular buildings—and of the crosses, chalices, artwork, and iconostases within—resulted in prolonged, often painful, conflicts between rival constituencies and stakeholders from inside and outside the state apparatus. The Stalin Revolution brought with it an escalation of the assault on religious architecture in the name of economic necessity and the reclamation of precious urban space, one that was halted only by the coming of the Second World War. Though the Khrushchev era witnessed a brief revival of antireligious activism, the pendulum would shift toward preservation once more. By the mid-1960s, those select churches still standing in Leningrad had been safely appropriated into a new, dechristianized urban setting and, by the end of the 1980s, recoded as cultural heritage sites and treasured markers of local pride and national identity. As Kelly reminds us, though, the “Petersburg text” is an ever-evolving one (139). Her conclusion peeks forward to the present, as new market-driven pressures threaten to alter the city’s face once again, and with perhaps even more pitiless force than before.

Kelly’s interdisciplinary approach complicates and enriches our understanding of Soviet secularization and pushes beyond the familiar narrative of Bolsheviks-versus-Believers. The microhistorical lens, applied to the street-level view, destabilizes the image of a monolithic regime imposing godlessness from above, revealing instead a “thickly peopled and often confused territory of fallible individuals reactively making haphazard and contradictory decisions” (263). While the project of spatial secularization was unflinchingly “totalizing” in its ambitions and radical in scope, the decades-long process itself was “non-linear, multi-faceted, and embraced the shifting values and beliefs of secularizers themselves as well as the modifications to religious beliefs and practices” (16). Focusing on the secularization of city space as a process and not simply as a set of outcomes, Kelly invites us to rethink secularization itself, at the most quotidian level, as an ongoing series of negotiations, feints, and improvisations as variegated and muddled as the rich and vibrant way of life its architects sought ultimately to supplant. The comparisons and contrasts Kelly draws with similar, if less overtly ideological, efforts to reconfigure religious space in modern, secularizing societies are instructive, and reflect a widening interest among historians of twentieth-century Russia to situate their subjects in comparative, global perspective. This beautifully written book offers fresh insights throughout. It will be read with great interest and benefit by Russianists from all disciplines.

ROBERT H. GREENE
University of Montana

Agents of Terror: Ordinary Men and Extraordinary Violence in Stalin’s Secret Police. By Alexander Vatlin. Ed. and Trans. Seth Bernstein. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2016. xxxiv, 170 pp. Notes. Index. Photographs. \$64.95, hard bound.

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Alexander Vatlin’s original and complex work examines the Kuntsevo district NKVD office to reveal how Stalin’s Great Terror unfolded on the ground. Located southwest of Moscow, the Kuntsevo district had a population of about 200,000 in 1937. Roughly one thousand people were arrested there during the purges, with the peak of arrests

taking place in March 1938. About one-third of those arrested were executed, per central NKVD quota. The author had access to a large number of individual case files from 1937–38, which were declassified in 1992–2006, but are now closed to historians and available only to family members. This outstanding book looks not only at ordinary people who were victimized, but at the bosses of the Kuntsevo district NKVD, Aleksandr Kuznetsov and Viktor Karetnikov, who went from perpetrators to victims (after their arrest in the summer of 1938).

Vatlin's microhistory of the terror is important in several ways. First, it reveals the centrality of informal networks and client-patron relationships among NKVD workers. The book shows that the Kuntsevo NKVD was effectively a bureaucratic clan. Stalin accused such clans of constituting counterrevolutionary groups and spy rings. Second, it sheds valuable light on the perpetrators—their fears and motivations. Kuznetsov, for example, tried to prove himself because he came from a wealthy peasant family that opposed Bolshevik taxes during the civil war. His right-hand man, Karetnikov, was of petit-bourgeois origins. Each man tried to overcome these dark spots in their past by demonstrating their loyalty to the Moscow NKVD bosses. They worked closely with the Kuntsevo district's party organization and felt pressure to fulfill arrest quotas. They took part in mass arrests not only out of fear. They responded to pressures because they feared being unmasked due to their socially alien background. People like Karetnikov and Kuznetsov “knew better than most how thin the line between prison and freedom was and their fear was appropriate” (75). This fear caused some to develop anxiety and mental illness and led others to suicide.

Stalin's perpetrators also used the terror for personal enrichment, appropriating the belongings and apartments of their victims. Vatlin maintains that provincial NKVD operatives were not mainly sadists who believed that their victims were really spies and saboteurs. Rather, they were largely people who had to fulfill quotas for arrests. They used torture, beatings, threats, humiliation, and nighttime interrogations to extract confessions, and did not think too much about their victims' actual culpability. They shut themselves down emotionally in order to faithfully execute orders from above.

Third, the author illustrates the fact that non-elites constituted the primary victims of the Great Terror. The most mundane acts were politicized and criminalized. People were arrested for attending church or synagogue (counterrevolutionary agitation), possessing a gun (terrorist intent), getting packages from relatives abroad (foreign spy ring), or telling a joke (anti-Soviet agitation). People denounced their in-laws, co-workers and neighbors. Stalinist collective punishment meant that one arrest resulted in the arrest of entire families. The author found forty families on the list of victims. Husbands, wives, siblings, parents, and children were typically condemned together as members of spy rings or conspiracies. High-ranking workers and officials were arrested as saboteurs and spies, but so were peasants, schoolteachers, and others who had “suspicious contacts with foreigners,” including two unemployed Greek women who were homemakers and minor traders. Some were sent to labor camps, others were executed. Many of the Kuntsevo district's victims were buried at Butovo, the site of mass graves of over 20,000 victims of the Great Terror. On the last day in February 1938, for example, roughly 562 people were executed at Butovo, as authorities rushed to meet their monthly quota (128).

Finally, the book closely examines how Stalin's perpetrators became victims at the end of the terror, when Lavrentii Beria replaced Nikolai Ezhov as head of the NKVD, and the leadership needed scapegoats for the violence. Kuznetsov and Karetnikov were arrested and executed, and they brought many others down with them. According to Vatlin: “The Great Terror marked a major transformation in the

country as Stalin broke clans from the district to the national level, making fear the principle motive for productivity” (77). This is a fascinating book and Seth Bernstein’s translation and introduction are excellent.

GOLFO ALEXOPOULOS

University of South Florida, Tampa

From Victory to Stalemate: The Western Front, Summer 1944. By C.J. Dick. Modern War Studies. Decisive and Indecisive Military Operations, vol. 1. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2016. xiv, 465 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Maps. \$39.95, hard bound.

From Defeat to Victory: The Eastern Front, Summer 1944. By C.J. Dick. Modern War Studies. Decisive and Indecisive Military Operations, vol. 2. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2016. xiii, 354 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Glossary. Index. Maps. \$39.95, hard bound.

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These books bear the unmistakable stamp of the milieu from which they emerged. The author, C.J. Dick, is a former officer in the British army as well as a historian who was, from 1989 to 2004, director of the Soviet Studies Research Center. As a soldier-scholar, Dick has led numerous staff rides in Europe, which are essentially battlefield tours for professional military officers in which the events of a given battle are retraced and the decisions made by commanders are scrutinized. The express purpose of these ventures is the distillation of lessons about the conduct of war, lessons that are explicitly meant to be drawn on and put to use by the ride’s students. *From Victory to Stalemate* and *From Defeat to Victory* are based on rides that Dick lead, and he says that they are “in essence, a written staff ride” (1). In keeping with this, Dick’s tone is didactic and his audience is primarily military officers, who will no doubt find much to discuss in these volumes. Outside of those circles, however, their appeal will probably be limited.

Dick employs a highly schematic theoretical framework for his analysis, one which will be familiar to readers of this sort of history and those with professional military education, but less so for those new to the field. For the benefit of the latter, Dick carefully spells this framework out, dividing war into three neatly defined “interrelated and interdependent levels” (11): the tactical, the operational, and the strategic. Broadly speaking, the strategic level consists of the establishment of large-scale goals in a given war, the tactical level the movement of units smaller than an army or army group on a battlefield. Linking them, in this schema, is the operational level, in which generals deploy large military formations in mutually reinforcing operations that build momentum towards victory. Command at this level, which Dick and like-minded theorists refer to as “operational art,” is the focus of his scrutiny; his goal in these books is to analyze the behavior of senior western and Soviet commanders in 1944 in order to cast judgment and seek lessons.

The main thrust of Dick’s argument is as follows: in the summer of 1944, both the western Allies and the Soviets stood on the brink of a crushing victory over the German forces they faced. In the west, this chance at victory was squandered as a result of squabbling among commanders and a lack of vigorous attacks, with the result that the war went on. Dick repeatedly assures the reader that the war “could have” ended much earlier than it did: “The crushing defeat inflicted on the Wehrmacht in August,” he writes, for example, in the introduction, “could (perhaps should) have been a prelude to decisive operations that would have ended the war in the west in 1944” (6). The Soviets, on the other hand, built on their momentum to deliver a series of shattering