The Tsar’s Other Lieutenant: The Antisemitic Activities of Boris L’vovich Brasol, 1910-1960
Part II: White Russians, Nazis, and the Blue Lamoo

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As introduced in Part I, Boris Brasol was a one-time Imperial Russian judicial official and military officer who spent much of his life as a tireless promoter of anti-Jewish hatred and inveterate intriguer. In 1916, he came to the United States, which remained the base for his activities in the following decades. The initial installment largely focused on Brasol’s background in Russia, his connection to the translation and dissemination of the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion in America, and his resulting association with persons and activities linked to auto maker Henry Ford. This installment, Part II, delves further into Brasol’s tangled and sometimes bewildering dealings with an array of fellow White Russians, assorted American antisemites, official (and unofficial) agents of the Third Reich, and, for good measure, Soviet operatives.

In his book Who Financed Hitler, James Pool proposes Brasol as a bagman between Henry Ford and a then struggling, minor German political figure, Adolf Hitler. Another figure in this scenario is Kurt Georg Wilhelm Luedcke, a globe-trotting German adventurer of dubious character and later the author of I Knew Hitler. There is much in Luedcke’s early doings
that smack of an intelligence operative, though just whose is an open question. Pool's story is basically this: in 1921, Luedecke, "one of Hitler's lieutenants," came to the United States, where he met Boris Brasol, who was "then the Grand Duke Cyril's representative in the United States [who gave] me a letter of Introduction to Cyril and other Russians." Letter in hand, Luedecke sped back to Europe to hit up the Grand Duke for money to aid the budding National Socialists. Once a New Order was established in Berlin, the logic goes, Hitler would repay the debt by crushing bolshevism and restoring the Romanovs to their rightful place. Luedecke quickly concluded that Cyril and his grand duchess had scant money to give. Nevertheless, during 1922-23 Cyril somehow managed to come up with no less than half a million gold marks to "support nationalist German-Russian undertakings" via Gen. Erich Ludendorff, then a close collaborator of Hitler. So where could it have come from? Pool supposes that the money was really Ford's carried to Europe by Brasol and "laundered" through Cyril. The key to this arrangement, Pool explains, was Brasol's many trips to Europe, which afforded him "plenty of opportunity to convey substantial sums of Ford's money to Hitler."

But Pool is off the mark when it comes to basic chronology. Luedecke was neither Hitler's lieutenant nor even a Nazi in 1921; they wouldn't even meet until the summer of 1922. Nor did Cyril proclaim himself Protector of the Russian Throne nor Brasol become his representative until that year as well. Moreover, Luedecke's account says nothing about approaching Ford for any money until early 1924, at Hitler's request—and Henry said no. The letter from Brasol also seems placed in 1924, in any case certainly not '21.

Nevertheless, Pool's basic supposition may not be wrong. Luedecke did come to America in 1921 and mentions a visit to the Detroit offices of the Dearborn Independent, where he met its editor, William Cameron, and eagerly sought copies of some of the International Jew articles. Brasol, of course, supplied material for those articles and knew Cameron as well as Ford's staunchly pro-German secretary, Ernest Liebold, the person who was instrumental in acquiring the Brasol material and getting it published. Luedecke remained in the United States through early 1922, allegedly supporting himself as a private investigator in the employ of Ford's chief detective

in New York, C. C. Daniels. As journalist Norman Hapgood documented in his 1922 expose of Ford’s “Jew-Mania,” Brasol was likewise linked to Daniels’ outfit. Thus it seems possible, even probable, that Brasol and Luedecke first got acquainted at this time; it even may be that Brasol was the man Luedecke had actually first come to see in America.

Although not yet a Nazi, Kurt Luedecke was already ensconced in the ranks of the nationalist antisemites. One such outfit, also based in Munich, was the so-called Aufbau Vereinigung (Reconstruction Organization), a conspiratorial group that included Hitler associates such as Max Amann (the Nazis’ business manager), Alfred Rosenberg, Max von Scheubner-Richter, and Gen. Ludendorff, along with reactionary White Russians like General Vasili Biskupsky and Feodor Vinberg, both old acquaintances of Brasol.

Another member, Aufbau’s American representative no less, was Boris Brasol.⁴ Scheubner-Richter lauded him as “one of the leading personalities in the Russian émigré circles of America.”⁵ In November 1921, Brasol sent the US State Department a translated copy of the protocols of the Aufbau-sponsored “All-Russian Monarchial Convention” held at Bad Reichenhall, near Munich, earlier that year.⁶ So, one must wonder, did Luedecke initially come to the United States not to raise money for the Nazis, but for Aufbau?

In his articles, Hapgood recounts a meeting in New York with some Russian émigrés in December 1921 where one, identified as “Mr. A.” (in fact, Nikolai Avksentiev), former head of the “Constitutional Government at Omsk,” swore that “I have seen the documentary proof that Boris Brasol has received money from Henry Ford.”⁷ Avksentiev had just come over from Paris. There was no indication, however, of just for what or for whom the supposed money was intended, and Hapgood never really found the proof.

If this were the only thing linking Brasol to Ford’s secret funding, we could forget the matter. But it isn’t. On December 20, 1922, The New York Times ran an article about rumors making the rounds in Berlin that claimed “Henry Ford . . . is financing Adolph Hitler’s nationalist and anti-Semitic movement in Munich.”⁸ A local paper, the Berliner Tageblatt, appealed to the American Embassy for an immediate investigation. The article went on

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⁴ Kellogg, 130-131.
⁵ Ibid., 131.
⁶ “Brasol, Boris,” November 12, 1921, US National Archives, Records of the Department of State (USDS), 861.01.1031.
to note that Hitler and his associates lately had been spending money "lavishly" and that adorning the wall of Hitler’s "spacious" and "splendidly furnished" office was a portrait of the American auto-maker. Henry was held in high esteem among the National Socialists, but rumors are not facts. The only response from the Ford camp was issued by Brasol’s sometime collaborator Ernest Liebold, who insisted that Ford “knows nothing about the reports concerning him current in Berlin.”

This brings us back to Brasol’s trips to Europe. On September 2, 1922, he sailed from New York to Southampton and returned to the United States on October 22. Where he went in the interim is unknown, but he had ample time to visit Paris, Munich, Berlin, or just about any other city on the continent. Passenger records reveal that among Brasol’s shipmates to England was his old boss for War Trade Intelligence, and still bosom friend, George H. Bodman. Bodman had reverted to his civilian job, that of Wall Street investment banker. His expertise might have come in quite handy in the delicate matter of laundering funds, say, through a convenient London bank. Coincidentally or not, it was also in October 1922 that Kurt Luedecke finally joined the Nazi Party.

So what did Brasol do in London—or wherever he ended up? In later questioning of Brasol, he dropped what may be a relevant clue. Asked about Cyril’s son, the future Grand Duke Vladimir Kirilovich, Brasol noted that he had only met the boy once, when he was 5 or 6 years old, at Cyril’s home in France. This would put the visit in 1922 or at the latest 1923, with the former more likely as it was when Brasol first signed on as the grand duke’s representative.

All the above is very curious, yet still little more than coincidence and speculation. But there is more. In September 1923, Brasol made another trip to Europe, and again returned to New York in late October. This was shortly before Hitler’s “Beer Hall Putsch” of November 9, when he, along with Scheubner-Richter and Ludendorff, would try and ignominiously fail to overthrow the Bavarian government.

Brasol did not travel abroad in 1924, a year which Hitler mostly spent cooling his heels in prison. It was in the aftermath of his arrest that Hitler dispatched his now-trusted agent Luedecke back to America, where he arrived on New Year’s Day, 1924. It’s at this time that Luedecke later recorded his unsuccessful appeal to Ford for money—or was it more money?—and a like string of rejections from other wealthy Americans. Little wonder, really; Hitler seemed to have shot his bolt and was yesterday’s news. But it is also at this time that Luedecke seems to have received his introduction to Grand Duke Cyril, courtesy of Brasol. In December 1924, another “Weird Tale Regarding Henry Ford” appeared in the American
According to this report, which had first appeared in the *Berliner Zeitung am Mittag* (December 13), Ford and other unnamed Americans were promising financial support for Grand Duke Cyril in exchange for Siberian railway and gold-mining concessions once the Bolsheviks were sent packing. Cyril allegedly received money from the Auto King to raise a new White Army. The intermediary for all this financial intrigue was said to be the “banking house of Brasol & Co. of New York.” The article noted that a quick check showed no such firm in the city, but that the address given did correspond to a Russian bookstore run by one Boris Brasol. When approached, Brasol deferred making any statement, while a Ford spokesman curtly dismissed the story as a “lie.”

Maybe it was, but it is surely curious that the story surfaced just as Cyril’s wife, Grand Duchess Victoria Melita, was in New York and being feted by a bevy of rich, adoring Americans—and Boris Brasol. One of the few things Brasol readily admitted under later questioning was that he had been Grand Duke Cyril’s representative in America from 1922 to 1924. On the other hand, he never offered any details on what duties the post entailed. According to reports reaching the German Foreign Office, Brasol “managed to gather large sums of money for [Cyril] in 1924 when Viktoria visited America.” He certainly was in the right company. The adoring Americans were part of the self-proclaimed “500” and members of the Monday Opera Club organized by the socialite Mrs. Henry P. Loomis, who identified its defining characteristic as “fastidious taste.” Brasol would have taken satisfaction in the claim that “no Jew has ever attended a meeting of the club.” One news report identified Brasol as a kind of master of ceremonies for the Grand Duchess’s appearance at the Plaza Hotel. When she at last appeared to her admirers crowding the lobby, he ostentatiously “flung himself on one knee before kissing her hand.” At Victoria Melita’s farewell dinner, a reporter buttonholed Brasol, who took the opportunity to denounce the “discredited” report that he had been involved in some deal between Ford and Cyril. Perhaps to spare his well-heeled friends any...
embarrassment, he went on to deny that he was an antisemite and even denied that he was the same Brasol who had been connected to the Beilis case—Beilis, a Ukrainian Jew, had been accused, then acquitted, of the ritual murder of a Christian boy—and anything involving the Protocols. That, he insisted, was the work of another officer, also named Brasol or Brasul. He was, of course, lying.

There may have been more to the Monday Opera Club than first meets the eye. According to a history of the Sovereign Order of St. John (basically, the Knights of Malta), the club was a “society program” of the SOSJ and a part of its bigger effort to aid Russian exiles and their cause. Brasol, in this account, was a member of the order’s Russian Priory, along with his antisemitic brother-in-arms Count Arthur Ivanovich Cherep-Spiridovich, a Serbian and Russian intelligence officer, through which they supposedly battled the “globalist’s agenda.” As for Grand Duke Cyril, the same history identifies him as the “Protector of the Order” and, as of 1922, the “financier of the Order’s field operations.” Also counted among the SOSJ’s members were many in prominent positions in American business, finance, and government.

Whether or not the order was anywhere as powerful as claimed, or that Brasol was part of it, there is no question that he was linked to numerous persons associated with it, among them an American physician, Dr. William Sohier Bryant. To no great surprise, Dr. Bryant was well known to Mrs. Loomis, to George Bodman, Brasol’s banker buddy from War Trade Intelligence, and to Brasol’s old comrade in Protocols-peddling, Dr. Harris Houghton, who had collaborated with Brasol in the production of the 1918 Protocols. Like Bodman and Houghton, Bryant also had a wartime connection to intelligence. Beyond this, Bryant served Brasol for years as a front for obtaining subscriptions to various publications, notably Jewish ones such as the Forward and Jewish Examiner. (Some years down the road, Bryant would become a prominent member of the America First Committee). What all this boils down to is that when Brasol implied that he had friends in high places, or at least influential ones, he wasn’t joking. Boris

17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
Brasol was a man who networked thoughtfully and effectively, and his connections provided opportunities, cover, and protection.

While he was far from universally admired, there is also no question that Brasol exercised significant influence among right-wing Russian émigrés in the United States and elsewhere. In the fall of 1922, he compiled a report on Russian monarchist organizations and activities in the United States and sent a copy to Baron Peter Vrangel, former commander of the White Army in the Crimea and one of the main émigré leaders in Europe. In this report, Brasol admitted that Russian monarchists faced an uphill battle in America, in part because of the millions spent by the “Jew Schiff” in spreading anti-tsarist propaganda. The only real support could be found in some conservative Christian circles and, more important, in the person of Henry Ford, who had committed himself to the battle against “Jewish intrigue.” Brasol bemoaned that fact that pitted against the 500,000-600,000 Russians in the States were millions of Jews. Moreover, only a small portion of these Russians could be counted partisans of the monarchist cause. Still, he could take some satisfaction that his own organization, the Association Unity of Russia, at 700 members, was larger than the 400 belonging to the rival Socialist Revolutionary group. He also boasted of having friends in the US State Department—a claim, as we will see, not without some validity.

A 1923 confidential memorandum from State’s Division of Russian Affairs labeled Brasol “the brains of the Russian Monarchial Group in the United States” and a “very clever and astute politician.” But it also warned that however “able and brilliant,” he also was “not entirely trustworthy.” This opinion was at least partly inspired by the steady stream of letters and unsolicited reports that Brasol sent to State decrying any moves to recognize the Soviet regime and revealing fresh, nefarious plots by the ruthless Judaeo-Bolsheviks.

One revealing example is a January 1922 letter addressed to secretary of state Charles Evans Hughes. Writing on behalf of the so-called Russian Monarchial Delegation, Brasol lambasted the upcoming economic conference in Genoa as a scheme to “ruin Russia, converting her into a mere colony of Judo-British and German-Jewish finance.” This conspiracy, he argued, was the work of the “Hugo Stinnes-Mendelsohn Group in Ger-
many, and the Sassoon interests in England.” In essence, he asserted, the conference was nothing but an opportunity for Jewish interests in London and Berlin to “reach an understanding” with the Jewish masters of the Kremlin for the division and despoiling of Russia.

Yet, whatever their misgivings, some persons at State were willing to seek Brasol’s advice when the need arose. One such instance involved a libel suit brought in Paris by Princess Nina Zizianov against Donald Bigelow, an American consular official. The princess, describing herself as “dramatic artist,” had come to the United States at the end of 1924, right on the heels of the departing Grand Duchess Victoria. She garnered some press with tales of persecution by the Bolsheviks and then returned to France in the latter part of 1925. When she tried to return to New York later that year, Bigelow turned down her visa request, ostensibly on immigration grounds. Zizianov insisted that she was the “victim of Bolshevik propaganda.” In January 1926, the State Department’s special agent in New York, Robert S. Sharp, turned to Brasol for information about Zizianov.

Sharp was doubtless one of the supporters in the State Department mentioned above. Like Brasol, he was a convinced antisemite, or at the very least a dedicated consumer and purveyor of anti-Jewish conspiracy theories. Brasol placed Zizianov (née Johanna Kriebel) firmly in that context by branding her a tool of Soviet intrigue. This information made its way to Paris and Bigelow, who in September 1926 passed it on to a local reporter for the Boston Sunday Post. This resulted in an article accusing Zizianov of being an “international spy,” a German agent in Russian during the World War, and most recently Grigory Zinoviev’s personal agent in America, sent to spy upon and disinform “patriotic organizations.” Princess Zizianov promptly sued for libel and won, precipitating a legal and diplomatic wrangle that dragged on for years.

Brasol was willing to cultivate allies wherever he could find them, and, as with Sharp, antisemitism often proved the common denominator. One case was a White Russian refugee from the Far East, Gen. Konstantin Sakharov. The former chief of staff for deceased Siberian ruler Adm. A. V. Kolchak, Sakharov was another true believer in the Judaic character of the Bolshevik regime. Brasol and he met, or met again, in New York in 1920.

26. See, for example, Sharp to Robert C. Bannerman, December 18, 1924, and attachments, USDS, CSA file 215.
According to the history of the SOSJ, Sakharov was the “head of the military division of the Russian Grand Priory” of the order.\(^29\) Whatever the case, Sakharov soon after departed for Munich, where he joined Aufbau. He also became an intimate of budding Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, who would later compliment Sakharov’s work “as perfectly suitable to convince simple-minded people of the role of Jewry in Bolshevism”;\(^30\) twenty years later, Brasol’s own relations with Rosenberg were reported to be “very close.”\(^31\) Sakharov also served as Grand Duke Cyril’s director of intelligence, and in that capacity it would be reasonable to assume that Brasol acted as one of his key agents.\(^32\)

It was with Sakharov in New York that Brasol made the acquaintance of another man, an American, William Rutledge McGarry.\(^33\) A sometime publicist, general wheeler-dealer, and occasional spy, McGarry was the author of a bizarre book, *Rescuing the Czar*, which purported to reveal how Nicholas II and the rest of his family escaped death with the assistance of brave Anglo-American agents. Brasol was no fan of Romanov survival theories, since they drastically undercut the Imperial Family’s value as martyrs to a murderous Jewish conspiracy, but he may have felt that McGarry’s work had propaganda value nonetheless. At one point in the book, a desperate Nicholas rails against Jews and their propaganda and laments that “there is hardly a Yiddish banker in the world who didn’t blame ME personally for inspiring Shcheglovitov [Russian minister of justice] to have the Jews executed for ritual murder” and that nefarious Jewish influence would doubtless be used to destroy Russia just as “poor Nilus [Russian religious writer and self-described mystic] predicted.”\(^34\) It’s hard not to suspect that these references to the Beilis case and the *Protocols* were suggested or inspired by Brasol.

Brasol also soon came into contact with another Russian fleeing the Far East, Ataman (Chieftan) Grigori Semenov. A part-Mongol Cossack officer, during the Russian civil war Semenov made himself overlord of the Siberian Transbaikal region and waged a ruthless struggle against bolshevism and anyone he suspected of sympathy toward it. The excesses committed by him or under his name earned Semenov a reputation as a pillager,

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29. SOSJ.
32. Kellogg, 158.
33. Gretchen Haskin, “Rescuing the Czar: A Story of Two Revolutions,” HIA, 143-144.
a mass murder, and a pogromist. Among his many enemies were former officers of the American Expeditionary Force in Siberia, who held him responsible for the killing of US soldiers and citizens. Semenov was probably guilty of most of the crimes of which he stood accused, though his status as a true antisemite is debatable, or at least contradictory. On the one hand, there is no question that officers under his command harbored such sentiments and robbed and murdered Jews with relish and impunity. His forces allegedly distributed copies of the *Protocols* among Japanese forces in Siberia. On the other hand, Semenov did issue an order against pogroms and maintained some security for Jews in his stronghold of Chita, at least for a time. In these measures, he likely was influenced by his Jewish mistress, Mashka Sharaban, whom antisemites in his entourage eventually forced him to exile. When things started to fall apart for him, Semenov’s command proclaimed that “Jews have ruined Russia and must be killed.”

In late 1921, Ataman Semenov decided to head for Europe via America. In November of that year and again in January 1922, Brasol lobbied the US State Department to grant him a visa. Brasol’s effort succeeded, and Semenov disembarked in Seattle on March 14. His arrival did not go unnoticed, however, and from the moment he set foot on American soil he was the target of protests and legal actions, the biggest coming from the assignees of the defunct Youraveta Home and Foreign Trading Company of New York. They charged that Semenov had looted $500,000 in goods and supplies belonging to the company, thus forcing it into bankruptcy. Soon after Semenov arrived in Manhattan in April, police, apparently much to his surprise and chagrin, arrested him, and held him at the Ludlow Street jail. As news of this spread, “angry Russian Jews” protesting against Semenov gathered around the lockup. Brasol, who became involved in the case, later told Army interrogators that he was acting only in a legal capacity and at the insistence of Semenov’s young wife, specifically, he raised Semenov’s bail. As usual, though, with Brasol, this was not quite all there was to it. In 1922, he told Baron Vrangel that Semenov had given his backing to Unity of Russia, backing that may have included finan-

37. Ibid.
38. Ibid., 292.
40. Brasol hearing, 74, FBI, File 100-15704.
cial support. None of this really helped Semenov. He avoided prosecution, but faced a deportation hearing before the US Senate and ended up back in the Far East.

From Brasol’s perspective, the Jews demonstrating outside the jailhouse were but a minor manifestation of the conspiracy against Semenov. He did not fail to notice that the firm at the root of Semenov’s troubles, Youraveta, was the very same outfit Brasol had described as “practically taken over” by his bête noire, Jacob Schiff, in a 1919 report to the Military Intelligence Division. The fact that the opposing attorneys questioning Semenov were David Kahn and E. S. Greenbaum must have added to Brasol’s suspicions of semitic intrigue.

Brasol also did not miss the fact that a leading proponent of Semenov’s deportation was US senator William E. Borah. A maverick Republican and chairman of the influential Foreign Relations Committee, Borah was an outspoken champion of Soviet recognition and an associate, knowingly or not, of pro-Soviet individuals and front organizations. To Brasol, Borah was a dangerous enemy and, possibly, a secret Jew (he wasn’t). Little wonder, then, that Brasol’s name should pop up in intrigues aimed at discrediting him.

Rumors that Senator Borah was in the pay of the Soviets circulated as early as 1925, but it wasn’t until 1929 that the whole matter exploded in a Berlin courtroom. There, two White Russian émigrés, Vladimir Orlov and Mikhail Pavlunovsky, stood trial on charges of having sold faked documents to an American journalist, Hubert Knickerbocker; the documents purported to prove that Borah had taken money from Red agents. At the trial, a “German secret service agent” named Harald Siewert testified that in 1925 Boris Brasol came to Berlin to negotiate with Orlov’s partner Pavlunovsky about obtaining documents that could be used in Ford’s legal battle with a New York Herald reporter Herman Bernstein (discussed in Part I). According to Siewert, Brasol ultimately paid Pavlunovsky $17,000 for a mishmash of authentic and fake papers supplied by Orlov. Pavlunovsky testified that Orlov more recently had been busy preparing some sort of forgeries and had been “in conference with a man who described himself as Mr.

42. Report #16, January 2, 1919, Military Intelligence Division (MID), File 10111-920/108.
43. “Move to Deport Semenoff Begins,” NYT, April 1, 1922, 13.
Brasol, an American attorney from New York. On the Communist side of the equation, veteran Soviet agent and propagandist Ernst Henri (Semen Rostovsky) fingered Brasol as the key intermediary between Orlov and a clique of American reactionaries determined to impeach Borah. Brasol indeed visited Germany in the fall of 1925, and again in late 1928. The first documents incriminating Borah surfaced immediately after.

The truth was that Brasol and Orlov had a long personal history going back to their days as prosecutors for the tsar, when they had worked on some of the same cases. While the fortunes of war had taken Brasol to America, they left Orlov in Russia, where he initially adapted by serving the Bolsheviks. Although he later went over to the Whites, there were many in that camp who always suspected him of being a Red agent, or at least a double one. And they were undoubtedly correct. Orlov’s partner, Pavlunovsky, alias Sumarokov, was himself a long-time OGPU (Soviet secret police) officer who had “defected” in Berlin, and another of Orlov’s closest collaborators, Nikolai Kroshko, was later revealed to be an undercover Soviet agent. Researcher Natalie Grant compiled a survey of Orlov’s career that makes a convincing, if largely circumstantial, case that Vladimir Orlov was a conscious Soviet agent from 1918 on.

Orlov’s allegiances are important because they touch upon those of others with whom he and Brasol were connected and, ultimately, Brasol’s own. One such mutual associate was an even more dubious and devious character best known as Sidney George Reilly, sometimes dubbed the “Ace of Spies” and, quite unjustifiably, a prototype for James Bond. For some years during and following WWI, Reilly was connected to the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6), and briefly managed to convince the British to engage Orlov as an asset. The relationship between Brasol and Reilly is less obvious, perhaps because Reilly, whose original name (as best as can be determined) was Rosenblum, was a Russian Jew. He was not only an almost perfect stereotype of the rootless, scheming Jew antisemites so feared and detested, but was also an example of something else they found irresistible: a Jew who agreed with them, or pretended to. While many of

48. Most notably, the wartime prosecution of ex-minister of war Gen. Sukhomlinov.
49. Orlov trial transcript, 5th Session 2, 5, USDS, File 811.44—Borah, William E.
his numerous business and espionage associates were also Jewish, Reilly openly complained about Jews’ dominance of American banking and commerce, the pro-Bolshevik sympathizers of many Jewish immigrants, and the foolish American immigration laws that had let such people in.51

An association between Brasol and Reilly almost certainly goes back to 1916-17, when Reilly was a war contractor doing business with the Russian Supply Committee in New York and Brasol was in charge of vetting those contractors. Later, they were connected through the so-called Anti-Bolshevik League, which also included Count Cherep-Spiridovich and other rightist White Russians such as Peter Afanasieff and Nikolai Rybakoff, all associates of Brasol.52 The Anti-Bolshevik League suddenly appeared at the end of 1924, right after Reilly returned to New York from Europe and almost exactly at the same time as Grand Duchess Victoria Melita’s visit. Jew or no Jew, the history of the SOSJ claims Reilly as another member of the order, and makes the Anti-Bolshevik League one more gambit of the order’s secretive intelligence-propaganda activities, activity that also included dissemination of the Protocols.53

Perhaps, however, the most intriguing detail about Reilly is that, like Orlov, he was widely suspected of being a Soviet double agent.54 Having spent almost twenty years digging into his convoluted career, this author has to agree that those suspicions were correct. A year after the formation of the Anti-Bolshevik League, Reilly abruptly and inexplicably returned to Russia. Whether he ended up dead or whether it was a disguised defection remains uncertain.

With all the above in mind, it should not come as any great surprise that the following is found in Brasol’s FBI file:

In 1925 BRASOL was called to Washington with reference to the controversy about money left here by the Imperial Russian Government, at which time he gave an opinion favorable to the Soviet, and in that way made a good contact with the Soviet. In the following eight or nine years, he was an agent of Amtorg [the Soviet trade bureau in New York] and

53. SOSJ.
The same charge, almost verbatim, occurs in an Anti-Defamation League report on Brasol compiled in 1941. This could be because Brasol’s old antagonist, Casimir Pilenas (discussed in Part I), who had renamed himself Palmer, was the common source. But the ADL report also mentions that a Russian émigré, a Mrs. Epanchine of Columbus, Ohio, “has documentary evidence substantiating this fact.” The same ADL report also notes Brasol’s association, through the Pushkin Society, with Gen. Viktor Yakhontoff, a former Imperial officer who was an active pro-Soviet propagandist in the United States. And an FBI report from 1942 records that among New York’s Russian community there were those who believed Brasol to be “an informant for the present [Soviet] government” who sought to ferret out Moscow’s enemies by posing as one.

While it is hard to imagine Brasol as some sort of secret Bolshevik, it’s not hard to suppose that he would hedge his bets and, as always, seek allies where he could find them. After all, by the mid-20s it was evident to anyone with common sense that the Romanov restoration movement was going nowhere. In 1925, the same year he supposedly made his Soviet contacts, Brasol appears to have terminated his role as Cyril’s representative in America, something that neither he nor anyone else ever sought to explain. As early as 1923, a Munich police report indicated that among Cyril’s supporters in Aufbau was a faction that favored tactical collaboration with the Bolsheviks; Brasol may have been part of it. It also may be significant that 1925 saw a major shift in Soviet politics. In the wake of Lenin’s death, a struggle for power was clearly underway between Trotsky, a Jew, and Stalin. Over the next few years, Stalin would drive Trotsky from the USSR and cast other prominent Jewish Bolsheviks, like Lev Kamenev and Grigory Zinoviev, into political oblivion. Brasol must have relished that, and it could have been a means for Soviet agents to induce his cooperation.

But there have been a more personal factor involved. In his testimony at a later exclusion hearing, Brasol dropped the fact that his mother had been living in Minsk. At the time, the city was under German occupation, but from 1920 through 1941, it lay within the territory of the USSR. The

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56. ADL, Report of December 5, 1941, 2.
58. Kellogg, 163-164.
59. Brasol hearing, 3, FBI, File 100-15704.
diligent Soviet secret police hardly would have overlooked the fact that the elderly mother of a virulent émigré enemy lay under their thumb. It was leverage of the most brutal and basic kind, leverage that Brasol would have had no problem understanding.

In the late 1920s, Brasol’s overt political activity dropped off and he devoted more time to criminological and business affairs. In 1925, he wrote an article, “Institute of Scientific Criminology,” which advocated the creation of forensic labs in major police departments, an example of some of his more forward-thinking ideas. This, in turn, led to his 1929 book, *The Elements of Crime*, and that to his association with the Criminological Survey Committee of Columbia University Law School. Brasol used these crime-fighter credentials to make an overture to the country’s top lawman, J. Edgar Hoover. In 1930, Brasol wrote Hoover inquiring about the Bureau’s fingerprint files, and, naturally, advertising his own expertise. In response, he received a long, if entirely formal, reply from Hoover. That, so far as can be told, was the full extent of their dealings, though ever after Brasol would boast that “I know Mr. Hoover.”

From 1926, Brasol served as Russian legal adviser to numerous New York banks, law firms, and insurance companies, including National City Bank, Guaranty Trust, New York Life, Equitable Life, and the Cravath and Coudert Brothers law firms. His association with the Coudert firm, especially its leading light, Frederic Rene Coudert, Jr., is of particular note. Coudert had been the Russian imperial government’s legal representatives in the United States, which is how Brasol first forged the connection. From the 20s to the 40s, F. R. Coudert was a tireless champion of right-wing, anti-Communist, and, according to some, antisemitic causes, which made him a natural patron for Brasol. In 1941, as a representative in the New York State legislature, Coudert presided over an inquisition into Red influence in the New York public schools, the notorious Rapp-Coudert Committee. According to investigative journalist George Seldes, among the committee’s special advisers was Boris Brasol. Indeed, Seldes claimed to be “authoritatively informed” that Brasol had been “retained by Coudert Brothers” and, in fact, worked out of their offices. FBI informant Walter

60. Brasol to J. Edgar Hoover, December 18, 1930, FBI, File 100-22487.
61. Brasol hearing, 51, FBI, File 100-15704.
Winchell reported that “to contact Boris Brasol, all you have to do is call the Coudert firm’s phone number!”

Brasol’s connections in American business and politics paid off in many ways, and it is not hard to see how his business and legal affairs might have been useful to new friends at Amtorg. In 1926, Brasol also took the step of becoming an American citizen. On his application, he described himself as “legal adviser and writer,” but perhaps the most interesting detail is the two who witnessed it. His old banker buddy from War Trade Intelligence, George Bodman, was one, and the other was William E. Sims, a prominent Wall Street attorney. In addition, Bodman and his wife repeatedly rendered Brasol financial assistance in the form of unsecured personal loans.

In 1923 or 1924, US attorney general Harry Daugherty tapped Brasol as a Russian adviser on legal affairs, a position Brasol quietly maintained for several years. In 1931, for example, he accompanied assistant attorney general Charles B. Rugg to Paris on an assignment that resulted in controversy over Brasol’s expenditure of official funds. In early 1933, his connection to the Department of Justice resulted in an unwelcome public exposure and embarrassment both for him and the government. He appeared as the department’s expert witness in a case involving the Russian Volunteer Fleet, vessels originally contracted by the tsarist regime, then seized by the US government, for which the Soviets claimed compensation. Moscow’s case was put forth by Charles Recht, a long-time advocate for Soviet interests in the United States. Recht’s tactic was to put Brasol, or at least his credibility, on trial. In cross-examination, Recht attacked Brasol’s legal credentials, but mostly he argued that the former tsarist prosecutor was so prejudiced in his view of the Soviet regime that he could not render an honest opinion. “He labors under the belief or affects to believe [that] to be a Bolshevist is to be a Jew,” Recht insisted, “and that accordingly, all of his views of Soviet issues are colored by this anti-Jewish phobia.” Brasol denied it all, but was stunned when Recht brought forward a witness of his own—Casimir Pilenas, a once trusted associate of Brasol’s who testified to

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64. Winchell to J. Edgar Hoover, October 31, 1942, FBI, File 100-22487, Section 2.
65. Memorandum for the director re: Boris Brasol, March 14, 1944, 2, FBI, File 100-22487, Section 2.
66. Harvey H. Bundle to the attorney general, September 28, 1931, USDS, 411.61R92/76.
Brasol’s long association with antisemitic propaganda. It was only now, it seems, that Brasol finally realized Pilenas’s true colors.

The courtroom revelations prompted several Jewish periodicals and organizations to demand that attorney general William D. Mitchell dismiss Brasol from Justice’s employ. The American Hebrew Association charged that the Russian was “a public enemy” and “a professional fomenter of religious strife and group hatred in the United States.” What action, if any, Mitchell took is unclear.

During the 1930s, Brasol maintained a wide array of contacts among right-wing Russians in the United States, as well as home-grown “nativists,” antisemites, and pro-fascists. Among them was “Count” Anastase Vonsiatsky, a White Russian refugee who landed a rich, older American wife and used her fortune to fund his grandly titled Russian National Revolutionary Labor and Workers Peasant Party of Fascists. Of course, Brasol later insisted to his American inquisitors that he was “bitterly opposed to Fascism,” and Vonsiatsky evidenced rather lukewarm enthusiasm for either monarchism or antisemitism. He definitely was chummy, however, with Brasol’s old friends Biskupsky and Sakharov in Berlin and Semenov in Manchuria. Under later questioning, Brasol took his usual stance of denying any association. “I never saw him in my life,” he insisted, though he admitted to knowing Vonsiatsky. The only contact between them, Brasol claimed, had occurred in 1927, when he wrote Vonsiatsky concerning financial help for a mutual Russian friend. That friend, as it turns out, was the above-mentioned Col. Nikolai Rybakoff, who had come to San Francisco in 1923 and landed a job at the Ford Motor Company in Detroit with Brasol’s helping hand. In 1933, Rybakoff had relocated to New York, where he somehow found the resources to launch a newspaper, Rossiya, which ran a steady stream of monarchist, anti-Bolshevik, and antisemitic articles, some from Brasol’s own hand. It surely wasn’t mere coincidence that Rybakoff also published Vonsiatsky’s periodical, Fashist.

In any case, Vonsiatsky identified Brasol as an associate at his trial, and at Vonsiatsky’s grand jury Brasol swore, contrary to his above statement, that in 1930 Vonsiatsky had tried to get him to take over leadership of the American branch of the Brotherhood of Russian Truth (Bratsvo Russkoi

68. Pilenas/Palmer to Isaacs, March 25, 1933, Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives, Nathan Isaacs Papers (NIP), Box 2, File 12.
70. Brasol hearing, 46, FBI, File 100-15704.
Pravdy), another rightist, Berlin-based émigré outfit. Interestingly, the brotherhood not only included Vladimir Orlov as a prominent member, but also its nominal chief, Orlov’s pal Alexander Kolberg, was one more White who would reveal himself to be a Red.

Vonsiatsky also was very close to the German-American Bund and its leader, Fritz Kuhn, someone else Brasol denied ever meeting, and another organization he claimed to have nothing to do with. As usual, there was information to the contrary. According to an FBI source inside the bund, in 1941, Brasol had asked his help in getting bund operatives to investigate a man named Bardolli, whom Brasol believed to be a dangerous Soviet against and, furthermore, the same Jurowsky who had been involved in the murder of the Romanovs. Brasol argued that bund members would be less obvious in this activity and promised to return the favor “anytime the Bund would need anything.”

It was Vonsiatsky’s dealings with the bund that mostly led to his arrest and conviction for violating the Espionage Act in June 1942. Army investigators were angling to lay the same sort of charge on Brasol—and he was just as determined to do everything he could to avoid it. American investigation connected Brasol to the following, by no means exhaustive, array of anti-Communist and anti-Jewish crusaders.

- James True: From 1933 the author of the anti-New Deal and antisemitic newsletter Industrial Control Reports and purveyor of the patented Kike Killer billy club. In 1942, Brasol described True and his wife as “very charming people” and judged True’s reports to be “about 90% correct.”
- Colonel Eugene Sanctuary: Author of The Talmud Unmasked and leader of the American Christian Defenders; collaborated with Gerald Winrod and the KKK.
- Allen Zoll: Founder of the American Patriots and close associate of Father Charles Coughlin’s Christian Front; accused “racketeer and blackmailer.”

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73. Grant, 34-35.
74. Subject: Boris Brasol, November 13, 1942, FBI, File 100-15704.
75. Brasol hearing, FBI, File 100-15704, 31-32.
76. ADL, report of December 5, 1941; informant information dated January 21, 1940.
77. Brasol hearing, 32, FBI, File 100-15704.
Laura Ingalls: Aviator, friend of Charles Lindbergh, and member of the America First Committee; later convicted of being an agent of the Nazi regime.

William Dudley Pelley: One-time screenwriter, occult philosopher, and leader of the Silver Shirts movement, who claimed that “Christianity and anti-Semitism are synonymous.”

Elizabeth Dilling: Author of *The Red Network* (1935), and another firm believer in the principle that Jews and Communism were synonymous.

Leslie Fry (Paquita de Shishmareff, née Louise Chandor): The American widow of a Russian officer, she published *Waters Flowing Eastward* (1931), yet another take on the Protocols.

Father Charles Coughlin: Sometimes dubbed the “Fascist Radio Priest,” Coughlin trumpeted the Depression as the work of “international Jewish bankers” and published *Social Justice*, for which Brasol allegedly wrote under the name “Ben Marcin.”

Under questioning, Brasol’s response in almost every case was to first deny any connection, but under further probing to admit some innocent casual contact. For instance, he first insisted he had “never” had any dealings with Pelley, then admitted knowing of him, next to having seen him, and finally to having spoken with him, albeit years ago. Brasol regarded Pelley as a kind of religious poseur, and this apparently had caused them to part company even though, supposedly, there really was never any company to part. It was much the same story with Leslie Fry. She liked to claim that she was the first to put a copy of the Protocols in Henry Ford’s hands, which may have rankled Brasol. In 1942 he described her as “a personal enemy.”

As for Colonel Sanctuary, Brasol first claimed to have no association with him whatsoever, but then admitted that, yes, he knew him and then that Sanctuary used to stop by his house once or twice a year for no particular reason. James True he met “once in Washington;” Allen Zoll he met several times but was “not at all in love with [him].” He also admitted

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80. Brasol hearing, 68, FBI, File 100-15704.
81. Ibid., 81-82.
82. Ibid., 72-73.
83. Ibid., 73
84. Ibid.
knowing Elizabeth Dilling, though he could not remember just where or
when he last saw her and denied having any “relations” beyond brief social
interaction.85 As for Laura Ingalls, he had seen her but once, when she
came by his office to beg some pamphlets.86 Brasol certainly wasn’t being
forthright about these associations, but extremely cautious. By 1943, Ingalls
stood convicted, and Dilling, Fry, Pelley, Sanctuary, and True faced indict-
ment, and eventual trial, for sedition.

Coughlin was a more complicated matter. He ties in, perhaps, to
Brasol’s most bizarre association. Brasol, typically, later declared his con-
nections to Coughlin to be “none whatsoever” and claimed he rarely lis-
tened to his broadcasts or read Social Justice. He also pointedly denied
being Ben Marcin or writing anything for the paper.87 Brasol did concede,
however, indirect contact with Coughlin through a friend, “Father Duffy.”88
The man in question was actually Father Peter Baptiste Duffee, who in
early 1939 was interviewed by none other than Casimir Pilenas-Palmer,
then acting as an investigator for the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League. In
Pilenas’s report, Duffee linked Brasol to a peculiar body called the Ancient
and Noble Order of the Blue Lamoo.89 According to an FBI source, Brasol
was “a power” in Blue Lamoo.90 Headquartered in Black Hills, South
Dakota, the Blue Lamoo advertised itself as an Aryan spiritual and chivalric
society based on the mystical wisdom of ancient Atlantis.91 This hocus-
pocus, Duffee insisted, disguised the order’s true function as a “Nazi propa-
ganda organization”—somehow linking up with another, better known Ger-
man propaganda front, the Fichte Bund, of which Brasol was allegedly a
representative. To add to the strangeness, the whole thing was tied up with a
rogue branch of the Knights of Malta headquartered in Pennsylvania and
the ubiquitous Sovereign Order of St. John.

Another rightist whose name cropped up in Brasol’s questioning was
George Paganelli. Brasol admitted knowing him, and little more. Unknown
to Brasol at the time—and probably unknown to his interrogators—
Paganelli wasn’t who he claimed to be. In fact, he was Arthur (Avedis)
Derounian, an Armenian-American investigator for the anti-fascist Friends

85. Ibid., 29.
86. Ibid., 28.
87. Ibid., 49.
88. Ibid., 49-50.
89. Kevin Coogan, Dreamer of the Day: Francis Parker Yockey and the Post-
war Fascist International (Brooklyn, NY: Autonomedia, 1999), 606, quoting
Pilenas’ report of January 27, 1939.
90. Boris Brasol, May 17, 1943, 2, FBI, File 100-22487, Section 2.
380658/name/Blue.
of Democracy. Writing in 1943 as John Roy Carlson, he published the book *Under Cover*, in which he revealed his ruse and encounters with Brasol and others. Derounian found Brasol an “elusive” figure, hard to track down, who preferred to “work in semi-darkness.” By reputation, Derounian knew him to be an intimate of the “Park Avenue Patriots”; “in political cunning and craft,” Derounian avowed, “Brasol towered above the average America Firster.” Brasol avoided attention, and censure, by declining virtually all requests for interviews. Derounian finally chased down his quarry at the Manhattan headquarters of the Russian-American National Committee.

Derounian was immediately struck by Brasol’s resemblance to Goebbels. Assuming he was speaking to a sympathetic ear, Brasol boasted: “I know them all in the Movement except Lindbergh. I’ve never met him. I’d like to have a long conversation with him some day.” He admitted to knowing Elizabeth Dilling “very well,” as he did Colonel Sanctuary and many others. He regarded Father Coughlin as “a great man,” but again denied having written for *Social Justice*. In parting, Brasol directed “Paganelli” to two other simpaticos, Baron Charles von Wrangell, “head of the Investigation Unit of the America First Committee,” and a minor Midwestern Jew-baiter named Carl Mote. But perhaps Brasol was not taken in as thoroughly as Derounian thought. “During the hour I spent with the man,” Derounian recalled, “he did not utter one anti-Semitic remark.”

Charles Lindbergh was the “elephant in the room” when it came to Brasol’s American associates; even his interrogators seemed unwilling to broach the subject. As noted above, Brasol denied any direct connection or simply refused to say anything where Lindy was concerned. That may have reflected the truth of the situation, or it may have been Brasol exercising great discretion. What is certain is that they shared some of the same friends and associates. While Lindbergh openly condemned Nazi persecution of German Jews, he also had great admiration for the country and publicly criticized what he saw as the negative influence of Jews on American politics and economic life. The closest one can get to putting Brasol and Lindbergh in the same room appears in an ADL report in which the informant claims that “[Brasol] was on the platform at the Lindbergh rally in Madison Square Garden, October 30 [1940]. He is one of the

93. Ibid.
94. Memorandum re: Further Information Needed on Boris Brasol, November 11, 1942, 6, FBI, File 100-22487, Section 2.
95. Carlson, 207.
principal advisers, or members of the ‘brain trust’ of the America First Committee . . .”

Brasol’s most obvious links to Lindbergh were two Russian émigré aviators, Igor Sikorsky and Boris Sergievsky, both of whom shared Brasol’s monarchist and anti-Red convictions, and both of whom were close friends with Lindy. Back in 1925, Sikorsky had served as vice chairman of Brasol’s Association Unity of Russia. As recently as June 1941, Brasol helped persuade Sergievsky to join him in signing a letter to President Roosevelt condemning American aid to Stalin. An ADL informant described how Vonsiatsky tried and failed to bring Col. Sergievsky “over to the German side” but that Brasol had finally succeeded.97 In September 1941, another ADL source reported that a link between Brasol and Lindbergh was Lawrence Dennis, “‘America’s No. 1 intellectual Fascist.’”98 According to the source, “Dennis has done a good job getting the alleged Jewish viewpoint from Brasol which he naturally twisted, and then gave to Lindbergh to fit his own design.”99 Finally, another common thread between Brasol and Lindbergh was the above-mentioned Charles von Wrangell, and probably there were others.

Lindbergh’s name, of course, is also indelibly linked to the tragic abduction and murder of his young son in March 1932. Of the myriad rumors and theories swirling around this case, arguably the most sinister was that the child’s death was a Jewish ritual murder or a killing designed to look like one. It’s not hard to see how Brasol’s fertile mind could have spun it as such. According to an ADL source, dated 1940, Brasol was “responsible for the French stories of the Lindbergh child ritual murder.”100 The identical accusation appeared in an FBI report.101

Brasol clearly had ample association with Nazi sympathizers in America as well as with White Russian Nazi collaborators in the United States and Europe. Indeed, as we’ve seen, those links went all the way back to the early 20s with Luedecke, Cyril, and Aufbau. But did such connections continue in the 30s and did Brasol have any direct dealings with Nazi officials in America and Germany? He did. A hint of this was offered by his nemesis Casimir Pilenas right after Hitler came to power. In March 1933, Pilenas wrote his long-time confidant, professor Nathan Isaacs:

97. ADL, report of December 5, 1941, 2.
99. ADL, report of December 5, 1941, 5.
100. Ibid., 4.
101. Memorandum re: Further Information Needed on Boris Brasol, November 11, 1942, 7, FBI, 100-22487, Section 2.
I know that most of the German patriots know nothing against the Jews, and they could not prove no subversive acts against them. It is for this reason the Hitlerites and other anti-semites worship Boris Brasol as their benefactor. It was Boris Brasol who contributed much to their “knowledge.” All the Hitlerite intelligence is based on Brasol’s and other documents gathered through the medium of Mr. Ernest G. Liebold, Henry Ford’s General Secretary.102

US Army investigators subsequently found it more than a little suspicious that Brasol had visited Germany almost every year between Hitler’s rise to power and the outbreak of the war; he justified these visits as necessary for his legal business or for the treatment of a heart condition. His inquisitors were especially curious about his trips there in ’38 and ’39. In the first instance, Brasol confessed he had actually seen Hitler, though merely in a passing car. In the second, which coincided with the German invasion of Poland and the outbreak of the war, he admitted to having been taken aside by Gestapo agents and subjected to “a real inquisition,” though his American interrogators doubtless smelled something else in the episode.103 A Maj. Rich, quoted by the ADL, claimed that while in Europe in 1939, Brasol had “furnished political leaders with information.”104

Brasol admitted to having had contact with two representatives of the Nazi regime in the United States, but only, he insisted, in a very limited and entirely harmless context. The first of these men was Dr. Richard Sallet, who first came to the United States in the early twenties, attended Harvard, taught at Northwestern, and in 1931 published a still well-regarded book on Russian Germans in America. Brasol claimed that he first encountered Sallet in Washington, DC, in a purely social context.105 Although he did not get around to joining the Nazi Party until 1936, two years earlier the Hitler regime tapped Sallet as an “expert on American affairs” and dispatched him back to the States as the special attaché of Joseph Goebbels’ new Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda. In that role, he reported to Berlin on Russian émigré and Jewish activities in America and was “instrumental in launching an anti-Semitic campaign.”106 Thus, it seems a safe bet that his and Brasol’s interaction was something more than casual. For good measure, Sallet also handled the affairs of the Fichte Bund, to which Duffee linked Brasol.

102. Palmer-Pilenas to Isaacs, March 29, 1933, NIP.
103. Brasol hearing, 57, FBI, File 100-15704.
104. ADL, December 5, 1941 Report, 4.
105. Brasol hearing, FBI, File 100-15704.
Brasol admitted meeting Sallet again, in Berlin, just before the outbreak of the war. He described Sallet as then a “minor official” in the German Foreign Ministry who had invited him to his home. Brasol insisted that his 1939 trip to Germany was purely business related and his visit with Sallet a just a private gesture. As usual, though, he concealed more than he admitted. According to Ulrich Freiherr von Gienanth, Sallet’s replacement in Washington, Sallet was in ’39 chief of the American desk of the Foreign Ministry’s press department—i.e., still deeply involved in propaganda work.

It was von Gienanth himself, however, who probably was Brasol’s most significant Nazi contact in America. Not incidentally, he was the very German official who would enlist Laura Ingalls, thus setting the stage for her indictment as Nazi agent in 1941. A self-described “ardent Nazi,” von Gienanth joined the SS in 1931, the same year he first came to the United States as a “student.” He must have done something right, because after Hitler’s rise to power, he was hand picked by Himmler’s office for an assignment in New York, and in April 1935 landed there to head up the German Library of Information. In due course, von Gienanth found himself the chief agent of the SD (Sicherheitsdienst—the intelligence/security arm of the SS) in America and, in 1937, Sallet’s replacement as propaganda attaché. Contrary to rumors in and outside the German Embassy, von Gienanth denied that he had any association with the Gestapo. He was, however, the resident eyes and ears of the party and personal representative of the Reichsführer der SS. As for his role as attaché, he admitted in his postwar interrogation that its number-one priority was “political propaganda.”

His investigators grilled von Gienanth about his association with many Americans, but Brasol’s name never came up.

To his own interrogators, Brasol typically characterized his association with von Gienanth as casual and innocent. They first met, he recalled, in 1935 or 1936 (that is, soon after the German’s arrival) at a cocktail party hosted by mutual acquaintances. They bumped into each other again, a year or two later, at a New York hotel. Soon after the war began, Brasol recalled, he went to von Gienanth for help in locating his wife’s brother, who had been living in Poland but with whom they had lost contact as a result of the fighting. Von Gienanth readily gave his assistance and even offered to cable...
Berlin, generous help indeed for a presumably casual acquaintance. Relating to the same matter, Brasol claimed, von Gienanth twice visited Brasol’s office and a third meeting took place at another hotel. Whether the missing brother-in-law was ever located, he did not say.

Brasol’s interrogators were unconvinced that he was being complete or honest about von Gienanth, and they were almost certainly correct. In their summary, they offered that “there may have been a deeper association between the subject and [von Gienanth], concerning which the information before the board is insufficient for the purposes of determining the true relationship.”

The decision to bring Brasol before an Army Exclusion Hearing Board came down in September 1942, and he received a notice appear on December 21. The hearing took place two days later in a room at 50 Broadway. The examining officers were Lt. Col. Aaron Melniker, Lt. Col. Eugene Prince, and Maj. Elwood Saxer. Brasol appeared without counsel.

The overall conclusions of the board were unanimous and damning. Despite Brasol’s often “plausible and disarming explanations,” the officers believed that in many cases his testimony had been “willfully false,” especially when it came to his associations with suspect individuals. Among his many denials and rationalizations, none was more unbelievable that his assertion “as to my anti-Semitism, I wish to deny that emphatically.” He had only ever, he insisted, attacked those Jews he knew to be supporters of communism—like Jacob Schiff.

The investigating officers were unconvinced by his argument in this instance and others. They saw overwhelming evidence that Boris Brasol had given support to “organizations of questionable, if not outright subversive character,” that he was a “bitter, implacable, unrelenting and fanatical foe of the present Russian regime,” and “obsessed with a passion for revenge.” All this “indelibly stamped him as a particularly dangerous threat to the security and war effort of the United States” and justified his immediate exclusion from any “vital defense area.” Specifically, the board argued that he should be banned from the “entire Eastern Military Area.”

Brasol’s immediate fate would seem to have been sealed, and the inconsistencies in his testimonies left him open to charges of perjury. But

111. Brasol hearing, FBI, 24-35, File 100-15704.
113. Ibid., 30-32.
114. Ibid., 10.
115. E. E. Conroy, special agent in charge to Col. S. V. Constant, director of the Intelligence HQ, Governors Island, July 6, 1943, ibid.
the exclusion board only made a recommendation; the decision to act upon it rested with the US attorney general for Southern District of New York. When more than four months later no apparent action had been taken, an inquiry from the New York FBI office discovered that the US attorney, on March 13, 1943, had “advised that he did not concur in the exclusion recommendation” and that the case “had been abandoned.” The US attorney in question was Mathias F. Correa, an FDR appointee who had held the post since 1941. He was an experienced and active prosecutor in many cases such as Brasol’s, so his inaction here is a bit puzzling. It may have been as simple as Correa’s deciding that Brasol was not important enough to consume the limited resources of his office, or that the evidence was insufficient, but maybe, just maybe, there was something else.

Simply put, did Brasol cut some sort of deal, agreeing to act as an informant, in exchange for dropping his case? Or, was the whole exclusion hearing a sideshow to obscure the fact that he already was one? In his interrogation, Brasol made a point of mentioning that soon after Pearl Harbor he had offered his services to the Military Intelligence Division. Not long after, he added, he went to see “Mr. Hoover” (though he failed to see him personally) and offered his full cooperation to the FBI. There is absolutely nothing to suggest that either the FBI or the MID took him up on these offers, but someone else may have. In that supposition, Correa’s subsequent career could offer a clue. In addition to being a lawyer, he became an important figure in US intelligence. In June 1943, Correa left his prosecutor’s job and joined the OSS, later running counterintelligence operations in Italy. After the war, he would be connected to the National Security Council and the newborn CIA.

Brasol wasn’t completely out of the woods, though. The notion of prosecuting him as an unregistered foreign agent had first surfaced back in 1942, and with the collapse of the exclusion case, the FBI took renewed interest. Brasol got wind of this, and on March 4, 1944, presented himself at the bureau’s New York office. He lamented that he was being “subjected to discrimination and persecution by the Jewish race” on account of his “past record as an anti-semite” and most recently because of Carlson’s book. He claimed that his employers and potential employers had been threatened

117. Brasol hearing, 51, FBI, File 100-15704.
with boycotts and that a Jewish concern had taken over his office building and was forcing him to vacate. The agent in charge explained to Brasol that the FBI had no jurisdiction in such matters, but Brasol adamantly insisted that he knew Director Hoover “personally” and was going to Washington to put his plight before him. This caused some consternation at the DC headquarters, where immediate steps were taken to prevent the dubious Russian from getting anywhere near Hoover. In any event, Brasol’s threat proved to be an empty one, but so did the registration investigation, which was abandoned in August 1944.120

For several years following the war, Brasol kept a low profile, but with the advent of the Cold War and especially McCarthyism, he saw a chance to renew activity and created the All-Russian Monarchist Front Executive Bureau, of which he, of course, was the head. Its activities largely involved denouncing “communist” groups and individuals, most of which, to no surprise, were Jewish. In July 1951, Brasol resurfaced in the FBI’s files when he appeared at its New York office to make a complaint concerning the Russian school of Middlebury College in Vermont. According to a source “whose identity he was not at liberty to expose,” Brasol alleged that the school did not employ a single real Russian and that it was headed by Aaron Pressman, born in Odessa, whom Brasol accused of being an “active, pro-communist propagandist,” and the same for Pressman’s wife and others associated with the school.121 Brasol offered to try to put his source in touch with the bureau if they were interested; at the same time, he contacted the Indianapolis office of the FBI to denounce Michael Ginsburg, head of another Russian school at the University of Indiana, as an “avowed pro-communist.”122

Brasol, not surprisingly, became a fervent fan of Sen. McCarthy. In 1954, he dispatched an angry letter to Sen. Ralph Flanders, attacking his “relentless and baseless vituperations against Senator McCarthy,” and included a list of persons “lending their support to pink and red sympathizers,” including Herbert Lehman, Arthur Hayes Sulzberger, Anna Rosenberg, and Dorothy Schiff.123 In 1958, Brasol once more tried to curry favor with director Hoover by sending a letter heaping praise on Hoover’s recent book Masters of Deceit, though taking exception to Hoover’s reference therein to “czarist tyranny.”124 The FBI’s response was that “in view of his

120. Assistant attorney general Clark to J. Edgar Hoover, September 22, 1944, FBI, File 100-22487, Section 2.
122. SAC Indianapolis to SAC New York, July 2, 1951, FBI, File 100-15704.
123. Brasol to Ralph Flanders, July 29, 1954, FBI, File 100-22487, Section 2.
unsavory background, it is felt that his letter should not be acknowledged.”

Brasol’s last communication with the bureau, another letter addressed to Hoover, arrived in September 1960. Its contents were an anti-Khrushchev flyer put out by the Monarchist Front and an anti-communist broadside reprinted from a Russian paper in Buenos Aires. This, too, elicited no comment. On March 19, 1963, Boris Brasol’s angry voice and busy hands were stilled forever.

So, what is one to make of Boris Brasol and his almost half century of resourceful, unrepentant Jew-baiting? In one respect, he is a kind of human embodiment of the resiliency of antisemitic sentiment and myths. Like those malevolent strains, he transcended limitation to any particular time or place. His career connects the antisemitism of pre-revolutionary Russia with that of 20th-century America and Western Europe, Weimar and Nazi Germany, and perhaps even Stalin’s USSR. He can be seen as a central figure in what might be called an “Antisemitic International” that schemed and fulfilled throughout the first half of the century, and doubtless still does. At the risk of sounding sacrilegious, if antisemitism was a Church, Brasol surely would merit sainthood. All that said, the above does not do total justice to the man. For reasons of focus and brevity, his literary efforts have been largely ignored, nor have his myriad contacts been mapped out to their full extent. That requires a more in-depth study.

Perhaps the last words about him, though, an epitaph of sorts, should go to one of the ADL informants: “Brasol is a crafty man. You feel this in your conversation with him. He is very careful about how he words his sentences and there is always the feeling of the cat and mouse.”

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125. Jones to Gordon A. Nease, July 17, 1958, ibid.
126. ADL, report of December 5, 1941, 4.