

PATHFINDER

DIGEST OF WORLD AFFAIRS

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Russia's 1,300th

Congratulations were in order in Soviet Russia last week. The occasion was the 20th anniversary of the famed N. K. V. D., secret political police, and celebration of that organization's success in "rooting out the enemies of the people."

That the N. K. V. D. had performed to the government's satisfaction was indicated by selection of the force's anniversary night to announce that eight more once high-ranking Communists had been liquidated by Red Army firing squads. All the victims had pleaded guilty to high treason on behalf of "a foreign power" and were executed immediately after a secret session of the military collegium of the Soviet Supreme Court pronounced the death sentences. Their destruction raised to 1,300 the known toll of lives in Dictator Josef Stalin's "purge."

Outstanding among these latest victims were Leo M. Karakhan, 65, formerly Vice Commissar of Foreign Affairs, and Avel Yenukidze, 60, who was an active Communist years before the revolution. As a result of his long experience in the Orient as the Soviet's first Ambassador to China, Karakhan, an Armenian by birth, doubtless knew more about Far Eastern affairs than any of his countrymen. Because of that knowledge he was sometimes referred to as "the master spy of the Bolsheviki in the Far East." In 1927 he became Vice Commissar of Foreign Affairs and head of the foreign office's Far Eastern division. Later transferred to the Near Eastern division, he was sent to Turkey as Ambassador in 1934. But Soviet displeasure over Near Eastern affairs resulted in his recall to Moscow last April, when he "dropped out of sight."

Under Lenin, Yenukidze stood high among the Kremlin's real rulers. Besides being closely associated with Lenin, he was the political mentor and

Happy Birthday, N.K.V.D



Karakhan: One of the Latest to Go

close friend of Stalin. For 18 years he served as secretary of the Central Executive Committee, supreme governing body of the Soviet Union—from 1917 to March, 1935. But after serving little more than two months as President of the Transcaucasian Republic he was removed from office in June of that year and expelled from the Communist party. Like a lot of other Old Bolsheviki, his downfall paralleled the rise to power of Nikolai I. Yezhoff, now Commissar of Internal Affairs and N. K. V. D. chief.

While official Russia sang the praises of the N. K. V. D. on its anniversary, however, sentiments of a far different nature were expressed by Alexandre Barmine, former Soviet Charge d’Affaires at Athens, Greece, who might have been one of those shot last week had he obeyed a recent recall order (PATHFINDER, Dec. 18). From his Paris haven Barmine, in a copyrighted article in the New York *Times*, again labeled the Moscow trials “frauds,” attacked Stalin as a “betrayal” and charged that more faithful officials had been liquidated than the government had revealed.

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