

ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA

Office of the Editor: 20 NORTH WACKER DRIVE • CHICAGO 6

January
10
1947

Miss Raya Dunayevskaya
c/o American Economic Review
American Economics Association
Northwestern University
Evanston, Illinois

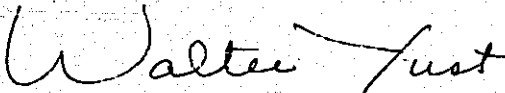
Dear Miss Dunayevskaya:

For some time my editorial staff has been assembling material for a new four-volume publication, Ten Eventful Years, which is to be published next summer. The set will contain articles on all the important events and developments of the years 1937-46 inclusive.

Included among these, we would like to have an article on SECRET POLICE (approximately 2000 words long). We are writing to ask if you would be willing to prepare the section on the Russian Secret Police in about 1,000 words. The article should contain as complete a summary of events and developments during the past decade as the space allotted will permit. The deadline for the article is February 1, and the regular Britannica rate of payment, two cents per word, will apply.

I hope that your commitments will permit you to accept this assignment. May we hear from you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely yours,



Walter Yust
Editor

WY:dfr

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ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA

Office of the Editor: 20 NORTH WACKER DRIVE • CHICAGO 6

January
15
1947

AIR MAIL

Miss Raya Dunayevskaya
c/o B. W. Adams
405 East 55th Street
New York 22, N. Y.

Dear Miss Dunayevskaya:

We wish to thank you for accepting our invitation to contribute the article on the Russian Secret Police to Ten Eventful Years. I am enclosing a Contributors' Guide for Ten Eventful Years. If questions arise during the progress of your work, do not hesitate to write me.

We wish to thank you, also, for giving this assignment preference over your other work.

Sincerely yours,

Walter Just
Walter Just
Editor

WY:df
enclosure

9158

January 29, 1947

Mr. Walter Yust,
Editor
Encyclopaedia Britannica
20 North Wacker Drive
Chicago 6, Illinois

Dear Mr. Yust:

I tried my best to keep the enclosed short article on the Russian secret police to within the 1,000 words "approximately" assigned to me. If you should find that you cannot allow it to run over the space, you may cut to suit. The only quotations used within the text are from official Soviet laws and these do not enjoy copyright privileges.

I appreciate the privilege of contributing to the ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA. However, I wish the biographical information about me to be limited to "Russian economist, contributor to American Economic Review."

Sincerely yours,

Raya Dunayevskaya
c/o B. W. Adams
405 E. 55th Street
New York 22, N. Y.

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RUSSIAN SECRET POLICE, CHEKA-OGPU-NKVD-MVD. The secret police of the U. S. S. R. developed from an Extraordinary Commission (Russian initials, Cheka) to an organic and permanent feature of governmental rule as the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD). Originally created in December, 1917, as a temporary commission to protect the newly-instituted Soviet power from "counter-revolution, speculation and sabotage", it was abolished at the end of the civil war (1922). In its stead, however, Article 61 of the first Constitution established the United State Political Administration (OGPU) as a regular organ of the State. When the OGPU was liquidated in 1934, the newly-organized Peoples Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) was ordered "to incorporate within it the OGPU." The new body was charged with "(a) defense of the revolutionary order, (b) defense of public (socialist) property, (c) records of vital statistics (births, deaths, marriages and divorces), and (d) frontier defense." The Supreme Soviet, at its session on March 15, 1946, decreed the reorganization of the Peoples Commissariats into Ministries, thus transforming the NKVD into the MVD.

The details of the functions of the secret police, of the size of its force and of its budget are not open to inspection. However, a spectacular demonstration of the power and the function of the NKVD were revealed by the Moscow Trials. The trials in August 1936, January 1937 and March 1938 were based almost exclusively on the confessions of the defendants, without important documentary evidence. This runs counter not only to the western world's notion of justice but to official Soviet theory. (See Criminal Trials. A Textbook for Law Schools and Juridical Courses by Prof. M. S. Strogovich, edited by A. Y. Vishinsky, Moscow, 1936.) Nevertheless, the Trial of the 16, headed by G. E. Zinoviev and Lev Kamenov, ended in the execution of all defendants. Henry Yagoda, who had discovered the alleged "Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Center", was himself removed after having been accused of "Trotskyism" and of implication in "medical assassinations". Nikolai Yezhov, who succeeded Yagoda, intensified the purge. There followed the Trial of the 17, headed by Y. L. Pyatakov and G. Y. Sokolnikov; the Trial of the 21, Nikolai Bukharin, Alexis Rykov and others, as well as the secret trial of the generals, notably

of Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky. Yezhov also disappeared and was replaced by L. Beria.

The charges at the Moscow Trials ranged from "political and moral responsibility" for the assassination of Sergei Kirov in 1934, to a desire "to restore capitalism"; from industrial sabotage to an alliance with the Hitlerite Gestapo; from secret agreements for parcelling out the Soviet Union to "foreign powers" to having been implicated in the attempt on Lenin's life in 1918. The film of history rolled back twenty years. With the sole exception of Joseph Stalin, Lenin's entire "General Staff of the Revolution" was liquidated. Thus what at first was established as an Extraordinary Commission to deal with "counter-revolution" had become an instrument of the State used against those who had led the revolution. The two chief defendants of all the trials were Leon Trotsky and his son, Leon Sedov, who were convicted in absentia. The world-wide sensation that this caused led to the establishment, in the United States, of a "Commission of Inquiry into the Charges Made Against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trials." This Commission, headed by Professor John Dewey, held the Moscow Trials to be "frame-ups" and the defendants, Trotsky and Sedov, "Not Guilty". However, both Trotsky and Sedov subsequently met death; Sedov died under mysterious circumstances in Paris; Trotsky was murdered in Coyoacan, a suburb of Mexico City.

Officials who had broken with the Soviet Government testified to the terror the NKVD exercised and the tension which gripped the country during the mass purge. Walter Krivitsky, who described himself as former chief of Soviet intelligence in Western Europe, estimated that mass arrests in 1937 alone numbered no less than 500,000. When the purge had run its course in 1938, there had disappeared all the eighty members of the Council of War, some members of the Executive Committee of the Council of Commissars, two Assistant Commissars of Foreign Affairs as well as ambassadors, plenipotentiaries and consuls, many leaders in all federated republics, two chiefs of the NKVD and many of their deputies, practically the entire staffs of Pravda and Izvestia, and high 9161

percentages of the directors of factories and agronomists, as well as many artists. Since that time the purge has become a regular feature of Russian life and the secret police is indis-
solvably associated with the purge. It is these trials and execu-
tions which did more than anything to give credence abroad to the
unceasing reports from Russia as to the terror exercised by the
secret police over the population.

Less spectacular than the executions but no less fundamental an
objective of the secret police is its control over the army of
forced labor, estimated to number many millions. The "corrective
labor institutions (detention homes, isolators, corrective labor
colonies and bureau of forced labor)" were transferred from the
Commissariat of Justice to the NKVD in October 1934. These
"corrective labor colonies" dotted the length and breadth of the
U. S. S. R. Their inmates included workers who had violated labor
laws, political prisoners and common criminals. This labor force
built canals, worked in lumber camps and was used in the "construc-
tion, repair and development of paved and unpaved highways." During
and after World War II this army was augmented by prisoners of war.
The extent and functions of the NKVD's army of forced labor were
greatly multiplied. An indication of the extent of the use of
forced labor in war industries was given by the appointment of Beria,
head of the NKVD, as chief of the Armaments and Munitions
Commissariat. A plenum of the All-Union Communist Party in 1946
elevated Beria to membership in the all-powerful Politburo (Political
Bureau) of the Party, upon which the Constitution bestows a monopoly
of political power. This plenum followed the sessions of the
Supreme Soviet which reorganized the NKVD into the MVD and divided
its functions between the Minister of Internal Affairs (Kruglov) and
the Minister of State Security (Merkulov); the latter had been
vice-chairman of the NKVD under Beria.

--Naya Dunayevskaya

Bibliography. In Russian, as primary sources, see:

Collection of Decisions and Decrees of the Worker-Peasant Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, (Moscow), 1923, 1934, 1937, 1938, 1941, 1943.

Administrative Legislation (Moscow, 1936), pp. 11, 12, 122, 126, 200-204, 229, and 253.

For session of the Supreme Soviet and the new laws enacted, see Pravda, March 15-30, 1946.

In English, on the relationship of the NKVD to the Moscow Trials, see:

Report of Court Proceedings in the case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Center, heard before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U. S. S. R. (Moscow, 1936).

(Identical verbatim reports were published "in the case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Center", 1937, and "in the case of the Anti-Soviet 'bloc of Rights and Trotskyites'", 1938.)

The Case of Leon Trotsky, Report of Hearings on the Charges Made Against Him in the Moscow Trials, by the Preliminary Commission of Inquiry. (New York and London, 1937).

Not Guilty, Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Charges Made Against Leon Trotsky in the Moscow Trials. (New York and London, 1938).

For personal accounts of NKVD activities by former Soviet officials, see:

In Stalin's Secret Service by Walter G. Krivitsky (New York and London, 1939).

I Choose Freedom by Victor Kravchenko (New York, 1946).

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January
31
1947

Miss Raya Dunayevskaya
c/o B. W. Adams
405 East 55th Street
New York 22, New York

Dear Miss Dunayevskaya:

Thank you for the article SECRET POLICE (1047 words) for Ten Eventful Years.

Enclosed you will find a check in the amount of \$21.00 to cover this work, together with a copyright release form for your signature, if you please, and a description form which we would appreciate your signing and returning to us at your earliest convenience.

We are grateful for your contribution to Ten Eventful Years.

Sincerely yours,

Walter Yust

Walter Yust
Editor

WY:RP
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March 3, 1947

Mr. Walter Yust,
ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. Yust:

I am sorry to have been so non-committal about my background, but it is prompted by the need for security. I had to apply the same rule to the BRITANNICA that I did in my contributions to the American Economic Review, where I was listed simply as "Russian economist, now living in New York." I had thought you might care to have in your files the reprints of that controversy on the Marxian value theory that had gained for them such wide publicity in the daily press, and were reprinted in French and Spanish. I accordingly enclose copy of the translation of the Russian article and my commentary upon it as well as rejoinder in the discussion that continued for an entire year.

Very truly yours,

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