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Justified Murder in Russia

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lieving her to be secretary for
a doctor; convicted.

L.—Woman, non-addict, posing as
fortune-teller, sold morphone to
wife of a respectable railway
employee; got all her money,
dresses, silver, jewelry, cut
glass, etc., in payment for
drugs.

M.—To infinity, the same story with
variations.

Ubiquitous Thieves

A physician friend warned me,
when I began these prosecutions,
that the addicts who came into the
office were likely to pick up any-
thing “adrift” or loose around the
place, “so be careful.” One day I
returned to my office to find the
clock gone, the desk fountain pen
missing, and the opium pipe, used
as an exhibit, stolen. Now we lock
the door!

Conclusion

The traffic in drugs is criminal
through and through: importing,
transporting, peddling and proselyt-
ing. Many criminals are drug ad-
dicts. Drug addiction causes de-
terioration and in many cases causes
criminalism.

The United States, especially
through the Department of Justice,
is waging ceaseless and unremit-
ting warfare against illegal traffic in
narcotic drugs. In this the govern-
ment has popular support because
the evils of drug addiction are be-
coming better realized and are cor-
dially hated.

A “JUSTIFIED” MURDER IN
RUSSIA

Vladimir Haensel

The report that follows is an ex-
tract from the official Soviet Rusan magazine: Prosveshcheniye Si-
biri published by the educational au-
thorities of Siberia. It is interest-
ing to Americans generally, because it illustrates the peculiar position of teachers in the Soviet schools. To
the readers of this JOURNAL in par-
ticular the report is doubly inter-
esting because of the extraordinary
ground it exhibits for the justifica-
tion of an act that in any civilized
country would be regarded as an
atrocious crime.

“On the twenty-seventh of Octo-
ber, 1930, at eleven o’clock p. m. in
the city of Andjero-Sudjenko (Si-
beria), in one of the dark streets,
the teacher of mathematics of the
local high school was shot and
killed on his way home. He was
a member of the Communist Party,
V. I. Lavrishev.

The murderer—a pupil in the
senior class in the same school—
was Peter Murashev.

15 Years Old.

Having carried out the planned
murder, Murashev appeared at the
police station and said—“I killed the
teacher.” But the State’s Attorney
interfered. He prepared a book of
a hundred and sixty pages based on
a preliminary investigation...

“The murder,” he said, “has been
committed and the murderer has con-
fessed in a most sincere way. Mu-
rasher, being a minor, this case
has been transferred to the Com-
mittee that considers the cases of
minor offenders.”

The inquiry disclosed the follow-
ing facts. Murashev’s father is a
member of the Communist party.
His brothers and sisters also belong
to the party. Murashev himself is
a very intelligent boy. He has
written poetry which by far sur-
passed some of the compositions of
adult poets of Soviet Russia. He
started out very well, his abilities were good. "During my first year," he writes in his confessions which were submitted to the State's Attorney, "my studies were very good. I could study because my abilities were good and till my third year I tried to keep myself up. But in the third year my ambition began to decline, I became lazy. My behavior was disorderly. Still, my rowdiness was not of a bad nature. In the fourth year I definitely became a rowdy. I was punished; the teachers made me stand behind the board or simply kicked me out of the class. Finally in the sixth year I was temporarily excluded from school for bad behavior."

Finally Murashev was again admitted to school. He tried to improve himself as he declared in his confession. He often thought about becoming a good working man. He explained also that he was aware that in prisons people got work and that the prison workshops were very good and pleasant. Once he said to his brother: "I ought to go to prison. I will be able to learn how to work and to become a good machinist." He asked his brother what would be the punishment for murder. The brother answered: "It depends upon whom you kill. They would give five years, maybe ten, or more." (By the way, his brother evidently did not know that according to the Soviet Criminal Code nobody can be sentenced to imprisonment for more than ten years, not even for patricide. There is capital punishment, if the crime consists in a counter-revolutionary act, that is if it was directed against the state or its authorities.)

From then on Murashev's main ambition was to go to prison. But in order to be able to get into the prison he must commit a crime. A murder would constitute a crime. Murashev selected his victim very carefully. His greatest enemy was the teacher of mathematics—Lavrishev. On the preliminary investigation Murashev was asked to give his reasons for "selecting" Lavrishev. He said:

"Lavrishev was a quarrelsome and a selfish man. We used to have quarrels with him about school discipline. Lavrishev called me a street-rough and reproached me representing that I had a bad influence on others. I became mad."

"Once on the way home he told me that if I should continue being insolent and quarrelsome, he would tear my head off. But I replied: 'We shall see—you better watch for your own head.'"

It is important to notice that a good many of Murashev's school friends knew about the coming murder. As a matter of fact, it was prearranged by a whole group of students, as the investigation showed.

A few days before the murder one of his school mates wrote in Murashev's notebook: "October Twenty-ninth, the shooting of the teacher." On the twenty-seventh, during the school hours, in presence of all students, Murashev sharpened the bullets for the gun and said they were prepared for Lavrishev. The meeting of the communist youth was held on October twenty-seventh instead of the twenty-ninth. After this meeting, it was expected that the teacher Lavrishev would return home. Thus, a convenient chance existed to execute the plan although it was before the planned date. What did Murashev and his school mates do? During the meeting they secretly met at the entrance of the school and discussed the new plan of mur-