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Justified Murder in Russia

Vladimir Haensel

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lieving her to be secretary for a doctor; convicted.

L.—Woman, non-addict, posing as fortune-teller, sold morphine 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 anything "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 proselyting. Many criminals are drug addicts. Drug addiction causes deterioration and in many cases causes criminalism.

The United States, especially through the Department of Justice, is waging ceaseless and unremitting warfare against illegal traffic in narcotic drugs. In this the government has popular support because the evils of drug addiction are becoming better realized and are cordially hated.

A "JUSTIFIED" MURDER IN RUSSIA

VLADIMIR HANSEL

The report that follows is an extract from the official Soviet Rus-

sian magazine: *Prosvescheniye Sibiri* published by the educational authorities of Siberia. It is interesting to Americans generally, because it illustrates the peculiar position of teachers in the Soviet schools. To the readers of this JOURNAL in particular the report is doubly interesting because of the extraordinary ground it exhibits for the justification of an act that in any civilized country would be regarded as an atrocious crime.

"On the twenty-seventh of October, 1930, at eleven o'clock p. m. in the city of Andjero-Sudjenko (Siberia), 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 confessed in a most sincere way. Murashev, being a minor, this case has been transferred to the Committee that considers the cases of minor offenders."

The inquiry disclosed the following 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 surpassed 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 communistic 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-