

JUSTICE OF SOVIET FAIR THROUGH STERN

Judges Free to Create Law
Under Russian System.

CRIME DECLARED LESS

Correspondent Compares Old and
New Regimes and Conclusions
Favorable to Latter.

BY LINCOLN EYRE.
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lished by Arrangement.)

PARIS, March 27.—In Moscow toward the middle of January I attended a session of a revolutionary tribunal trying Count Snamarin, former head of the Moscow nobility, and ten priests of the Russian church for treason against the soviet republic. The trial took place in a spacious chamber that had been the grand hall of the nobles' assembly building, now become the headquarters of the municipal trades unions.

It was a curious by-product of revolution that Snamarin should be placed on trial for his life in the very room in which as president of the most aristocratic organization in the Russian empire he must have been the central figure at many magnificent assemblages.

I watched him where he sat, muffled in a heavy fur coat, among his fellow prisoners, and saw his tired eyes roaming incessantly about the familiar apartment. What a shock it must have been for him to behold in these stately surroundings, where once there had foregathered only the most exalted personages of the imperial court in gorgeous gowns and full dress uniforms glittering with decorations, the motley crowd of nineteenth-century proletarians that made up the tribunal and audience! It was a well-behaved and orderly throng, however, for all its rough clothing and plebeian odor.

Scene an Ordinary One.

There was little to distinguish the scene from an ordinary American courtroom. Red militiamen guarded the doors, admitting only those armed with passes, lest a rush to attend some sensational trial should occur.

At the far end of the long room facing the spectators the three judges who comprised the tribunal sat behind a broad table covered with red baize and set on a dais raised about a foot above the floor. On their left was the public prosecutor, who chanced to be Krylenko, first commander in chief of the red guards. On the right, 11 prisoners were seated in two rows and looked much like a jury. Three lawyers acting as counsel for the defense occupied a small table immediately in front of the accused, all of whom, except Snamarin, were peepers, wearing the round black hats and long black cassocks of their calling.

Aged Monk Weeps.

They were charged with conspiring to overthrow the soviet government by the means of a so-called church soviet, an institution by which it was alleged they hoped to wear peasants away from the republic and back into the religious fold.

While I was present witnesses were testifying as to the dissolute habits of the priests. Photographs and literature said to have been found in their rooms were produced. One old monk from Troitsa monastery wept into his long white beard at the sight of these degenerate documents.

The judges were three young workmen attired in the clothes they doubtless wore in their factory. They had hard but kindly faces, and again the one in the middle, who was president of the court, asked a question of a witness. Subsequently witnesses for the defense were called. They were permitted as much freedom of statement as those for the prosecution. Absolute silence attended the proceedings, the only untoward sound being an occasional sob from an aged monk. The whole thing reminded me of a court-martial at which I had been present in Paris. As far as I could see, the only difference lay in there being three judges of like working class instead of seven judges of the officer class. The accused had as full a measure of protection in one case as in the other.

Reprieves Are Granted.

Later I learned that Snamarin and one of the priests had been sentenced to be shot, but were reprieved by the timely abolition of the death penalty. Thereupon they were sent with the rest to an internment camp for an indeterminate period. This is a favorite sentence with the revolutionary tribunals.

The revolutionary tribunals are not permanent courts, but are specially summoned to try particular cases. Most of the offenses brought before them nowadays are individuals charged with illicit speculation on a scale deemed a menace to the safety of the revolution. Particular severity is shown toward government functionaries who have used their official position for their own profit and toward other varieties of the genus grafter. Appeal from a revolutionary tribunal's decision may be carried before a supreme tribunal, which, sitting as a judicial branch of the central executive committee, is the highest court in the land. Only important cases, regarded as being of concern to the state, are placed on the calendar of these extraordinary tribunals. Minor cases of graft and crime, as well as civil suits between individuals, are tried by people's courts.

People's Courts Established.

The latter organization is a regular permanent establishment for the administration of justice. Under the soviets it came into being by decree of the central executive committee on November 20, 1918, which provided for the division of municipalities into districts, in each of which there should sit one permanent and from two to six temporary judges, all designated by the local soviet. It was ordained, moreover, that the uniform public law court, as it is officially termed, should try both civil and criminal cases, and that the proceedings should remain the same whatever the cost or character of any particular case might be. In trying civil cases other than divorce, one permanent judge (permanent judges are supposed to be elected from among persons having some juridical knowledge) and two assessors, to give the temporary judges their formal title, form the court. One judge and six assessors are required for criminal cases. In each instance the verdict is subject to review by a court of cassation, which is composed of all the permanent judges in the region in which it sits. Questions of domestic strife and misdemeanor are considered by one judge alone. He may also sit as an examining magistrate, the role of a grand jury being played by an inquiry commission which sifts the evidence laid before it by him or by the militia and de-

termines whether an indictment is permissible.

People's courts are bound to be guided by the soviet government's laws and decrees. But as the code is far from complete, judges are obliged not only to apply, but to create the law in which, according to the people's commissaries' ruling, they are to be governed by a sense of socialist conception of right. This is usually translated to mean that a manual laborer should be treated with greater leniency than anybody else.

Great reduction in the scope of private ownership brought about by the revolution has radically diminished the number of civil actions concerning property. Where in Moscow in 1914 civil cases, exclusive of divorce suits, totaled 33 per cent of the docket, they formed only 20 per cent in 1919. Since the first anniversary of the revolution indeed they have decreased by 12 per cent.

At the same time there has been a sharp diminution in the total of criminal cases tried. During the soviet fiscal year 1918-19, November to November, there were only 47,120 persons tried for crime in Petrograd as against 140,000 in 1914. The population for the former capital in the same period decreased more than 50 per cent, but still the reduction in crime is very considerable. In Moscow this reduction has attained about 27 per cent. During 1914, 1,500,000 criminal cases were brought before imperial tribunals in 24 governments and towns, whereas in 1918-19 scarcely more than 1,000,000 came before the people's courts in the same area. Murders and other crimes of physical violence have been particularly rare; burglary and highway robbery almost equally infrequent. Indeed, the only form of larceny that increased considerably is theft of foodstuffs.

Peace Is Kept.

Certainly the dictatorship of the proletariat understands how to compel its subjects to keep the peace. There is an informal ruthlessness in the soviet militia's treatment of criminals that in itself acts as a deterrent to lawbreaking. A burglar caught in the act probably would be forthwith shot by the nearest militiamen and no questions asked. One of the few agreeable features of life in Moscow or Petrograd is the complete sense of security one feels there as far as crime is concerned. I have walked alone and unarmed through unlighted streets in both cities late at night without the faintest sensation of that uneasiness I should certainly have felt in traversing certain New York thoroughfares at the same hour. Moreover, it never occurred to me to lock up any of my belongings when I went out, although most of them were worth large sums of money.

The percentage of convictions in cases tried by the people's courts—53—54 about the same as in the czar's tribunals. The same kind of punishment is inflicted, too.

Prison life in Russia, like most other things, has undergone a striking alteration under the soviet regime. At the start turnkeys, and in some institutions prisoners themselves, decided to form soviets and run things to suit themselves. In May, 1918, the central authority put a stop to this sort of chaos. The soviet government proclaimed its intention of treating convicts not like men cast out of society but as involuntary victims of a former social organization and as mental invalids who must be cured quickly and as wisely as possible.

Special commissions composed of medical men and penal authorities were created to study the inmates along these new lines. More than 100 prisons considered insufficiently sanitary were closed and additions made to medical staffs in the remainder.

STORY IS WIFE'S CLEW

Fireman's Complaint Causes Investigation and Divorce.

ALBANY, Or., March 27.—(Special.)—When Mrs. Gertrude Christensen of Brownsville read in a Portland paper a few weeks ago that some man had been fined in the municipal court in Portland upon complaint of Carl Christensen for giving liquor to the latter's "wife" she began an investigation which was concluded in the state circuit court here yesterday when she got a divorce.

Goats to Go to Alaska.

COTTAGE GROVE, Or., March 27.—(Special.)—Cottage Grove goats soon will be furnishing milk to the denizens of the frozen north. Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Spencer, who are here from Alaska, spending the winter, have shipped a nannie and two kids to their northern home and will themselves leave there as soon as they can get steamer reservations. Mr. Spencer is in the laundry business at Craig.

Phone your want ads to The Oregonian, Main 7070, A 6095.

A CONDITION THAT CALLS FOR A TONIC

When the health is run down from overwork, overstudy, lack of exercise or from whatever cause, a good tonic is needed.

Sometimes what is thought to be simple debility, is a symptom of a more serious disorder. Perhaps that tired feeling, weakness, repeated attacks of indigestion, headaches and dizzy spells are due to anemia or to the breaking down of the nervous system. By taking a tonic that is a specific for many disorders of the blood and nerves threatened invalidism may be prevented. That is what happened in the case of Mrs. Maude Thompson of No. 144 West Eighth South street, Salt Lake City, Utah.

When seated at her home recently Mrs. Thompson was glad to discuss her case as she hopes that others may be saved from unnecessary suffering. "It became so bad by degrees," says Mrs. Thompson, "that it was a great effort for me to get about. I felt as though I was losing strength every day. I became so nervous that I was irritable and jumped at slight sounds. I soon lost all desire for food, for a meal was generally followed by indigestion pains which often lasted into the night and prevented sleep. "I had often heard of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills and was reminded of them by reading an announcement in a newspaper. I began taking the pills and in two weeks knew that I had found the right remedy. My appetite improved at once and I was able to eat without fear of indigestion. Soon my strength returned, my complexion improved and my nerves became stronger. I am well today and owe my condition entirely to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills." Write today to the Dr. Williams' Medicine Co., Schenectady, N. Y., for the free booklet "Building Up the Blood." Your own druggist sells Dr. Williams' Pink Pills or they will be sent by mail, postpaid, on receipt of price, 60 cents per box—Adv.

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BLAIN IS AGAIN INDICTED

GRAND JURY STILL BUSY ON
ALLEGED SHIP FRAUDS.

Federal Government Names Seattle
District Attorney to Assist in
Conducting Prosecution.

TENDER DEBRIS DRIFTS IN

Wreckage of Concrete Vessels
Washed Up at North Beach.

ASTORIA, Or., March 27.—(Special.)—Persons arriving from North Beach, Wash., today reported that the entire beach was strewn with the wrecked houses of the concrete water tenders, Captain French, Captain Hammond and Captain Colquhoun, which were lost off the coast last January, while being towed to San Francisco by the tug Slocum.

The wreckage which is being brought ashore by the northwest wind includes a large quantity of ceiling, as well as a number of doors and several life preservers.

Veterans to Hold Smoker.
The Over-the-Top post, Veterans of Foreign Wars, will entertain its members and friends at a smoker in room Blain is the fifth to be returned since January 1, all based on the same charge of having accepted secret commissions from the Steward Davit & Equipment company, New York, while

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