

## ACCUSED OF SABOTAGE FOR COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY PURPOSES 53 TRIED IN RUSSIA

The Manchester Guardian  
Moscow, July 25—The incomplete reports of the trial of 53 persons accused of sabotage for counter-revolutionary purposes in the Russian coal-mining industry fill nearly 40 pages. It is impossible to read and to analyse those 40 pages of evidence and cross-examination without being compelled to abandon the theory that the Russians were in this case, as in certain previous cases, exploiting a mare's nest. It is equally impossible for an Englishman to read them without being shocked at the partisan character of the reporting. English journalists are accustomed to refrain even from suggesting comments on a case before they have heard the more authoritative comment of the court. In Moscow the reporting took the form of a disgusting hue and cry against the accused, whose guilt was assumed from the beginning, whether they admitted it or not. That in itself is enough to prejudice an English reader in favour of the accused. It is not enough, in this case, to obliterate the evidence.

Against a number of the individuals concerned that evidence is extremely weak, but it is enough to show beyond all possibility of doubt that there did indeed exist among the engineers in the mining industry an organization the object of which was to work in the supposed interests of the original owners of the mines and consequently against those of the State which had nationalized them. The extent of the actual harm done to the State, is of course, incapable of proof. It may not have been very great, but, whatever it was, there is evidence, in the money that was paid to the organization that it was highly valued by those who wanted. Slackness and carelessness in work is one thing, but slackness and carelessness for which someone is ready to pay as much as £4,000 in a single month is quite another, and the receipt and distribution of these big sums among members of the organization is confirmed by the mutually corroborative evidence of a number of the accused.

### Scorutto's Confession

At the close of the evidence, the chief counsel for the prosecution, Krylenko, in his address to the Court, asked for the death sentence on twenty of the fifty-three accused. Of these twenty, eleven had pleaded guilty to some of the counts in their indictment, and seven had pleaded not guilty. In the case of all but one of these the evidence against them included that of others of the twenty. Two of the twenty who had pleaded guilty asked for and obtained a new counsel on the ground that their own had improperly urged them to alter their plea of one to not guilty. One of the twenty who pleaded not guilty withdrew a previous statement. One, Scorutto, who pleaded guilty, had asserted his innocence up to the day before his examination in court, when he put in a declaration avowing his guilt. His wife, who was in court when he began to read it, shrieked at him that he was not guilty and was lying. He was so much upset by this that the President of the Court declared an interval of ten minutes to allow him to recover his calm. After the interval he withdrew his declaration and reasserted his innocence, but later in the day, after certain facts referred to in his withdrawn confession had been established on "investigation," he said, "This morning, after I had told the Court that I acknowledged my guilt, my wife's shriek so affected me that I withdrew my declaration. Now, however, I declare that all I wrote in my confession, not only with regard to my relations with the Volunteer Army and to my work in Georgia, but also all that I wrote of my membership of the counter-revolutionary organization is entirely true."

### Mining Engineers

Most of the accused engineers had occupied responsible positions in the mining industry before the revolution. Many of them left the mines when the Whites retired during the civil war in some cases returning with them when

they again advanced and taking some part in pointing out who among the workmen were sympathizers of the Reds. Among the witnesses were men who had worked in the White's Secret Service, and now described in the most matter-of-fact manner the actions of the field courts-martial in the district, while the Whites were in possession. "Workmen were shot in batches. Up to 50 were shot by the Popovka farm, 150 near Carriere, 300 behind the cemetery, 300 by the abattoir. . . . It is an astonishing sidelight on the state of affairs in Soviet Russia that engineers who were known to the workmen to have been on the side of the Whites, and to have relations with the service that picked out those who were to go before the courts-martial should, in some cases within a year of the end of the civil war, have been back in their own places at the head of the mines. It is less astonishing that the engineers who had seen Reds and Whites marching and counter-marching for so long, and had the profoundest disbelief in the ability of the Reds to restore or even hold the country, were convinced that sooner or later they would change masters again.

### The Temptation of Sabotage

The mineowners had emigrated, but their engineers remained, and among them were some who had been considerable shareholders in the mines and had everything to gain by their denationalisation. What was more natural than that of the men who felt they had been robbed of their property should regard their own engineers as interests in their enforced absence? The owners got in touch with first one and then another, and through him with a third, and began to send money. Now, for some years after the civil war the life of an engineer in Russia was an appalling struggle to make ends meet and to feed his children. Even for those engineers whose sympathies were not wholly with the dispossessed owners the temptation of the money was very great. Things still seemed to them uncertain. The bolsheviks themselves kept up a series of scares about imminent war. Supposing the Bolsheviki should fall, no engineer would stand so well as he who had looked after the absent owner's interests. To be in touch with the old owners meant present help and insurance against the future. Nor, in the general disorder of industry at that time, was it so very difficult to prevent, for example, a profitable shaft from being worked out and to divert energies to the working of shafts from which the original owners had no great hopes. When the government pressed for increase of production it was possible by lowering the quality (including inferior stuff) to increase the quantity and held the Bolsheviki to renewed optimism while at the same time deserving well of those of whom it seemed that every ton obtained from the State was a ton stolen from themselves. To some of the engineers it seemed that their best chance of a return to the old conditions was to bring the industry into such a state that the Government would be compelled to put it, in the form of concessions, into the hands of the old owners. The owners, on the other hand, were still dreaming of some form of intervention on their behalf, and among the instructions given were those paralysing the industry and so weakening the Bolsheviki in case of a foreign war. The existence of these instructions was admitted by some of the accused, one of whom said that they did not seem to matter much, for who could tell whether there ever would be another war of intervention.

### Large Sums

Gradually, however, the general feeling among the engineers began to change. When it became clear that the Bolsheviki were not only determined but able to do something to develop the industry, to buy new machinery for it from abroad, the same motives that led so many officers of the old army to take an active part in creating the new work among the engineers. One of them, who admitted being paid by the owners, said

with obvious sincerity that it had been a great satisfaction to him when the directions sent from the owners coincided with those of the State which was employing him. But, meanwhile, the individual engineers who were getting this illegitimate pay found themselves part of an organization from which it was difficult to break away, in spite of the marked improvement in their situation and legitimate salaries. From being an affair of guerillas the business of sabotage had grown to be the work of an organization with a centre in Moscow through which the money came. There was also more money. Engineers, members of the organization but trusted by the State, were sent abroad, at the State expense on minute business and used their opportunities to meet representatives of the original owners. These seem to have induced them to make reports not only to themselves, but in at least one case to an official in the French Ministry of War. They found sympathizers (including a brother of one of the accused) in the Russian department of a German firm from which large purchases of machinery were being made. Through these sympathizers, they say, they were able to arrange that they should receive a commission of one and a half percent on the purchase, which money was to go (perhaps without the knowledge of the firm) not to individuals (which in old days Russia would have seemed quite normal) but to finance the organization. One man said that with a companion he brought back from Paris 500,000 francs. Another said that he had through his hand 175,000 roubles. During part of one day the Court sat behind closed doors, investigating the channels through which the money came to the organization. The rest of the proceedings were in public.

Of the twenty for whom Krylenko demanded the death sentence, eleven received it, six of whom were recommended to mercy. The other five have been executed. Unfortunately it is unlikely that this case will be the end of the whole affair. Some of the evidence suggested that similar organizations existed in other branches of industry besides that of mining. Investigation is, no doubt, going on, and, whatever may be its results in further trials, it can but increase the mistrust of "bourgeois specialists" by their "proletarian employers" which the great majority of them had long ceased to deserve.

## BLACK FOX MEN HAD A GOOD YEAR

Montreal, July 24—Last year was the most successful year in the history of the Canadian Silver Black Fox Association, according to reports read at the annual meeting here. About 40,000 pups were registered, Prince Edward Island leading with 17,348; New Brunswick next with 6,361; Ontario 4,302; Quebec, 3,141; Nova Scotia, 2,612; Alberta, 1,847; Manitoba, 1,437; British Columbia, 873 and Saskatchewan, 793. Some 60,000 old foxes were re-inspected during the year. The membership of the association is 4,800, being 1,000 above that of the preceding year. The financial statement showed a surplus of \$23,000.

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## NEW FAMILIES FOR MARITIMES

Quebec, July 24—Canada's demand for British settlers has not been met so far this year and by a considerable margin, declared Dr. W. J. Black, director of the Canadian National Railways department of immigration and colonization, in making known, as he sailed from Canada for England, July 20 aboard the Cunarder *Ausonia* that 1,400 new families were settled on farms by the department within the present calendar year.

Dr. Black, former deputy minister of immigration and colonization at Ottawa, spoke of the increasing calls from farmers asking for British farm workers. This demand, he said, was particularly marked in Ontario and quite definite in the Maritime Provinces, the Canadian West being, also in need of some workers.

With reference to the apparent desire of the Maritime Provinces to absorb many more British farm settlers, the C.N.R. director said that the need was much greater than last year.

The English-speaking settlers brought out to Canada by the Colonization department of the railway had proved themselves worthy of optimistic predictions, it was learned from Dr. Black, and they were apparently well contented with conditions as they found them. This, he felt, was due to the rigid method of selection employed in the work of enlisting these settlers. They were, of course, said Mr. Black, a few cases of disappointment over wages paid in Canada, but that was inevitable considering the large number dealt with.

The colonization director will spend several weeks in Great Britain, it is understood, studying conditions likely to affect immigration to Canada next year. He announced that he would attend a conference of officers of the organization in London. R. L. Stead, secretary to the immigration secretary accompanied him aboard the *Ausonia*.

### STEVE ROCCO FIGHTS GENARO TO A DRAW.

Toronto, July 23—Battling for the world's flyweight championship at the Coliseum here tonight Frankie Genaro of New York the titleholder and Steve Rocco of Toronto flyweight champion of Canada fought to a ten round draw Genaro therefore retaining the crown.

## TWIN OF THE SUITCASE HAS FORD TROUBLE

(New York Sun)

Every village has its peculiarities and its peculiar people. Fontaine Fox invented Suitcase Simpson but his twin brother lives very near New York and is well known to the commuter.

There is a fire department in the village so that the twin can't earn a living "stomping" out fires. He has to work and in the course of time he saved money to buy a Ford car. That was before the new model came out. But although he had announced to the whole village that he no longer intended to travel afoot yet the car remained unbought and the twin refused to discuss the matter with anyone.

That he had lost money in a poker game was the general belief but when the new Ford was put on the market and the twin drove the first one down the main street they demanded an explanation.

"No" said the twin "I wasn't waiting for the new model. I bought an old model or rather I nearly did. Fortunately I found out in time that they were not suited to me. The new Ford has a different gear shift that makes it possible for me to drive. On the old model whenever I tried to throw in the clutch I stepped on the brake as well. You may have noticed that my feet are rather above the average size. They couldn't change the model for me and I couldn't reduce the size of my feet for them, so I just had to wait."

## FEWER MEMBERS IN MINER'S UNION

Llandudno, Wales, July 24—Marked decrease in the membership of the Miner's Federation, formerly one of the strongest of British unions, was revealed today by Herbert Smith, its president in his speech opening the union's annual conference.

Smith announced the present membership as 625,500, compared with 957,000 in 1921 and 784,000 last year. The decrease, Smith said, was due to unemployment, longer hours, lower wages, debts and internal quarrels among leaders.

It was recalled that the coal strike, which led to the now historic general strike, occurred in 1926.

## ONE LITTLE SECTION IN THE MIDTOWN BELT

(New York Sun)

There is a spot in the midtown section which possesses an atmosphere all its own. It's the little stretch of path that extends from the sidewalk on the south side of Thirty-fourth street, between Seventh and Eighth avenues, to the steps leading to the Long Island Railroad station in the Penn Terminal.

Here in the little string of shops that line the path, one may have his or her shoes shined and hat cleaned and listen to an orthophonic record or radio concert while waiting.

Real, woofy dogs recline in one of the windows awaiting purchase by commuters who are thinking of home and the kiddies. It is interesting to note the number of commuters who pick up the song that emanates from the radio shop and go hunting or whistling down the steps.

A little group usually sits upon a little side curb and listens to the music. Some appear to be members of that shifting group which neither sows nor reaps. To sit and listen carries a certain appeal. Music . . . a smoke . . . the passing throng of commuters. Hardware and popular songs—they also may be bought.

### BEAUTY OF THE MEADOWS

I dread the coming of the farmer's men  
To lay the beauty of the meadows low;  
The buds that in the sunshine blaze and glow,  
The seeded grass that bends and ripples when  
Soft breezes blow o'er wood and field and fen  
Above this beauty birds flit to and fro.  
Or sway a moment on a stalk and then  
Mount toward the sky; but now the time is here  
The glowing harvest soon will lowly lie  
Upon the ravished meadows dry and sere;  
But, oh! the sweetness of the winds that sigh  
Above this desolation—'tis the dear  
Last message of the grass and flowers that die.  
—ELISA VAN WYCK in New York Sun.

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