

MURDERER

at the Kemerovo Mines:

TROTSKYITE PLOTTERS AT WORK



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Death in the Mine

ON DECEMBER 28, 1935, Pichugin and Porshnev, two miners working in the Central Mine of the Kemerovo Colliery in the Kuzbas (Kuznetsk coalfield), were gassed by carbon monoxide and died of asphyxiation. It was only thanks to the caution of an experienced hewer, the Stakhanovite Velikzhanin, that the disaster was not worse than it actually was. Velikzhanin led the other workers out of the gas-filled gallery in good time.

The miners of the Central Mine grew very uneasy. They had several times complained that the ventilation was not in working order and that gas was seeping into the mine. On several previous occasions miners had shown symptoms of gas poisoning, but the mine management paid no heed to it. The very day before the disaster, December 27, several workers in the pit had shown signs of poisoning, but when the workers complained the mine engineers accused the workers of laziness and of sabotaging the fulfilment of the plan.

Bobrov, one of the miners, had appealed to Lashchenko, the engineer in charge of ventilation, to put the ventilation system into proper working order. Lashchenko promised to do so, but did nothing about it. When Chekalin and other workers again appealed to Lashchenko to see to it that the ventilation worked properly, Lashchenko replied: "We have no motors. We'll install motors when the Soviet government has money enough. Meanwhile we can do nothing about it."

"Look Out!"

THE death of Pichugin and Porshnev did not lead to any change in the intolerable conditions in the Central Mine. The lives of the workers were still in daily danger from gas; shot-firing still continued to be a game of life and death. One day Byelogolovy, a shot-firer, refused to fire a charge because he had ascertained that there was four per cent fire damp in the gallery and the shot might result in an explosion. Lashchenko and Leonenko, two engineers who were present in the gallery, assured the workers that the shot was absolutely safe and that Byelogolovy's fears were entirely unfounded. This constant talk about fire damp in the mine was just laughable, they asserted. Byelogolovy shook his head and gave the warning: "Look out!" At this instant Lashchenko and Leonenko took to their heels and ran as though for their lives. Apparently there was a mysterious gas in the mine which was absolutely safe for workers but highly dangerous

for engineers and experts. Byelogolovy once again shook his head and made up his mind to watch the engineers more closely. It was true that the engineers were called "comrades", but there was something fishy about it all the same. . . .

Several days later, Pozeluyenko, leader of a Stakhanov brigade in the Central Mine, fired a charge. An explosion ensued, but fortunately without loss of life. But the smoke that filled the gallery was so dense that Pozeluyenko had to call off work for three hours. When he reported the incident to Lashchenko, the engineer laughed ironically and said: "Why didn't you take your jackets off and drive the smoke away?" The ventilation engineer apparently thought that the Central Mine needed no other ventilation system than the workers' jackets. It is true that he himself took to his heels when the shot-firer Byelogolovy called "Look out!"—but the miners apparently were supposed to carry on amidst gas and smoke.

Sickness Among the Miners

THESE episodes and the behavior of the engineers caused much dissatisfaction and even bitterness among the miners. Too many strange and inexplicable things were happening in the mine. Borings were continually being undertaken which resulted in eruptions of quicksand and gas; blind workings were continually being formed, in which gas accumulated; drainage ditches were not dug, so that the miners frequently had to work standing in water; miners were continually fall-

ing sick and being sent to the hospital with signs of asphyxiation; sickness among the miners was becoming rife. Complains remained unheeded; the engineers either laughed them off or accused the workers of wanting to hamper coal output. Stickling, the chief engineer, a German subject, could not be persuaded to interfere, while Peshekhonov, the mine manager, accused the workers of "laziness". There seemed to be a conspiracy against the workers. Working conditions were no better than in any capitalist country, and if complaints were made the most one got was the ironical reply from some engineer: "Yes, it's a joyous life!"

The Disaster

IN SPITE of all these difficulties and obstacles, the Stakhanov movement spread to the workers of the Central Mine as well. The miners began to study how to arrange working conditions more rationally and to increase production on their own initiative. Expert workers who enjoyed the respect of their comrades, like Maximenko, Vdovin and Nemychin, began to arouse enthusiasm among the workers for Stakhanov methods and to lift them out of their state of depression. They made arrangements for a Stakhanov Week, which was to begin on September 23, 1936.

And on September 23, 1936, the first day of the Stakhanov Week, a terrible explosion took place in the Central Mine. Ten men were killed and fourteen severely injured. Among the dead were the finest Stak-

hanovites in the mine, Maximenko, Vdovin and Nemychin.

Accident or Murder?

Was this all mere accident? At the graveside of their dead comrades the miners recalled how Lashchenko and Leonenko had taken to their heels when the shot-firer Byelogolovy had given the signal "Look out!" They recalled Lashchenko's ironical remark: "Why didn't you take your jackets off and drive the smoke away?" They recalled his words: "We have no motors. We'll install motors when the Soviet government has money enough!" They recalled all the promises, complaints and suggestions for improvements which had come to nothing. They recalled all the strange instructions given by the engineers.

Was all this mere accident? Was it an accident that motors for the ventilating system were found concealed in the mine stores, although Laschenko had denied there were any? Was it an accident that in the first half of 1936 only 24 per cent of the assigned safety appliances were issued? Was it an accident that miners were set to work in gas-filled blind workings and that the safety devices did not function?

Was it an accident that so many workers had died in the Central Mine, or did they die because they were intended to die?

At the graveside of their dead comrades the survivors asked themselves, their hearts full of misgivings: "Were they murdered? And if so, who were the murderers?"

Workers murdered in Kemerovo! Workers murdered in the Soviet Union! Could there be enemies and murderers of workers in the workers' and peasants' state?

Like the organs of Soviet government, the miners of Kemerovo set seriously to work to find out the truth about the death of their comrades.

Who Was in Charge of the Mine?

WERE the engineers and the mine management just criminally negligent, just cynically reckless of the lives of the workers, or were they something more—enemies of the workers, murderers of the workers?

Who were these engineers and managers? Where did they come from? What was known about their past?

There was Emil Stickling, a German engineer who had succeeded Arimont. Arimont, also a German engineer, had been expelled from the Soviet Union for anti-Soviet activities. Stickling was a fascist; he made no secret of his fascist sentiments. His "Fuehrer" Hitler had sworn to exterminate Bolshevism. His party comrades were undermining the Spanish Republic and were throwing bombs on Madrid—on schools, kindergartens and hospitals. Stickling was chief engineer of the Central Mine and its leading expert. Are German engineers so ignorant as to undertake borings in the most dangerous places and to manage mines in such a way as to ruin them? Or . . . ?

There was Peshekhonov, the mine engineer. He had

been one of the accused in the Shakhty trial in 1928, the trial of a number of engineers for wrecking and counter-revolutionary activities. He was sentenced to deportation for three years and came to West Siberia. Since he had made a clean breast of it and had solemnly renounced his past, and since he was considered a good engineer in the bargain, he was taken on in the Kemerovo Colliery. His promotion to chief engineer followed very rapidly. His supreme chief, Piatakov, Assistant Commissar of Heavy Industry, had a soft spot for experts of Peshekhonov's stamp.

There was Shubin, the section chief. He had been an active Trotskyite since 1927. He had taken part in the Trotskyist conspiracy in Moscow, but in a letter to the Party he subsequently renounced his Trotskyist views and expressed the sharpest condemnation of Trotskyism, just like Piatakov.

There was Kovalenko, the assistant chief engineer, who was connected by many threads with the counter-revolutionary engineers who figured in the Shakhty trial. He had been a close friend of the German engineer Arimont, who was expelled from the Soviet Union for anti-Soviet activities.

There was the engineer Noskov who had been connected with the Trotskyites since 1929. There was the chief engineer, Andreyev, one of those bourgeois specialists of the old school who dreamed of the return of capitalism. There were the engineers Lashchenko and Leonenko, moral degenerates who thought themselves superior to the workers and who believed that it was

men of their type who should be in control of the state.

Why Had They to Die?

AND behind these specialists, who were inspired by enmity and antipathy for the workers and who dreamed of a state in which this "lazy gang", as they called the workers, would have no say, stood other people, who did not work underground in the mines, but worked underground in politics, and who sought to spread their deadly poison not only in the collieries but in every part of the Soviet state.

The miners of Kemerovo had to die because these people needed their deaths, so that they might rise to power on a ladder of corpses. They had to die as Kirov, the great leader of the workers, died. They had to die, as tens of thousands of workers in Spain had to die, because the working class had become too strong for the enemies of the workers. "Five hundred thousand Spaniards must die in order that we may reign!" said the Spanish rebel, General Queipo de Llano. "The finest members of the working class must die so that we may triumph!"—say the German fascists and their allies. The murder of workers is their program. The Kemerovo miners, who had hitherto known fascism only by report, learned to know it directly in all its frightful reality. And in the same way they learned to know the ally of fascism, Trotskyism, directly in all its frightful reality. They learned to know it at the graveside of their murdered comrades.

When the dead men were carried from the mine on September 23, 1936, the name of the poison that killed them was still unknown. The miners made it their business to discover the nature of the poison. Today they know the name and the nature of the poison. It is a deadly mixture of two elements: fascism and Trotskyism.

The trial which opened on November 19, 1936, of those accused of responsibility for the mine disaster revealed to them and to the world why the finest Stakhanovites of the Central Mine had to die on the first day of the Stakhanov Week.

The Gestapo Emissary

THEY had to die because Hitler ruled in Germany and was fomenting war against democracy and its firmest bulwark, the Soviet Union. Engineer Emil Stickling confessed that he had been working for the Gestapo. He confessed that while on leave in Berlin he had reported to the Gestapo about his activities in Kemerovo. He confessed that the German Consul in Novosibirsk controlled his activities and gave him instructions. What were these activities? He himself told the story in court.

He stated that he had come to the Soviet Union to carry on wrecking activities and, as he himself put it, "to help fascism". He stated that as chief engineer he had first disorganized the Central Mine and had then created a state of affairs in the mine that was bound to lead to disaster. He stated that he had repeatedly had borings made in unsuitable places so that the lives

of the miners were endangered, that he had arranged for blind workings in which gas accumulated, and that through his assistants he had got the ventilation system put out of order.

Why did he do all this? Because German fascism was doing everything it could to destroy the economic power of the Soviet Union and above all to damage industries of military importance. Because, while it did not itself possess sufficient raw materials for war purposes, it was mad enough to think that it could with the help of wreckers damage the vast sources of raw material of the Soviet Union. Because in the execution of its frenzied plans fascism was reinforced by a band of criminals who held out to it the prospect of disintegrating the Soviet Union from within and assisted the wreckers in their work. The fascist engineer Stickling considered that without such allies his work would have been hopeless and that he could never have brought about the murder of the workers.

In the Service of German Heavy Industry

How did he find his allies? One day Peshekhonov, the chief engineer of the mine, came to him and offered his services. How did Peshekhonov know that he could speak with Stickling openly? The counter-revolutionary specialist Stroilov, an undercover man and hired agent of German heavy industry, had instructed him in 1933 to establish this connection and to form a counter-revolutionary organization. Several months earlier Stroilov had instructed him to take

measures so that the sinking of new pits should be entrusted to foreign firms. Stroilov was selected for this job by his foreign employers, who were interested in penetrating into the Soviet coal industry both from economic and political motives. Stroilov was an unscrupulous adventurer, a type that can be found everywhere, an industrial spy, a tool that can be purchased by financiers who pay well enough. He cherished a long-standing hatred against the Soviet government; he had been connected with discontented elements in the old days; he was a typical product of decaying capitalism. His German employers had drawn his attention to Stickling, the agent of the Gestapo. Stickling and Peshekhonov easily and quickly came to an understanding.

Peshekhonov was in contact with Kovalenko, assistant chief engineer of the Central Mine. In 1934 Kovalenko had worked with the German engineer Arimont on the same footing that Peshekhonov was now working with Stickling. Arimont had proposed that he should damage the mine, disorganize the colliery and in this way undermine the economic basis of the Bolsheviki on this section of the front. When Arimont was expelled from the country, Kovalenko formed close contacts with Peshekhonov. In addition Peshekhonov enlisted the services of engineer Lashchenko in the execution of his plans. He introduced him to Stickling. These fascist specialists jointly recruited the engineer Andreyev and the young technician Leonenko. Leonenko was a reckless, foolish, pleasure-

seeking young man, a member of the Young Communist League. The fascist engineers promised him a fine apartment, his own automobile, a gramophone and a camera if he carried out their instructions. Leonenko allowed himself to be bought—and he got his camera. In return for the camera he bartered away the lives of his comrades to the fascists.

The Plan

THIS fascist group of specialists was led by Stickling, who knew better than the rest what he wanted. Their program was to undermine the Soviet economic system, to overthrow the Soviet government, to restore capitalism and to establish a fascist dictatorship. Andreyev declared in court:

“Our whole organization was started by fascists. Peshekhonov told me that we must help our friends abroad.”

The plan was to damage the ventilation system, allow gas to accumulate in the mine, murder the workers and to damage the power of defense of the Soviet Union. Leonenko added in court that the group considered it one of its most important functions to oppose the Stakhanov movement. The fascists know that every blow struck by the Stakhanovites is a blow at fascism.

Kovalenko stated in court that he, Andreyev and Leonenko had drawn up a scheme to gas the mine. Leonenko, Lashchenko and Kovalenko put the ventila-

tion system out of order and concealed the motors. In addition they created blind workings and abandoned workings in which gas accumulated and spread to other parts of the mine. Leonenko had, as he himself expressed it, "turned his section into a powder magazine". It was in Leonenko's "powder magazine" that the workers Pichugin and Porshnev lost their lives in December, 1935.

Such was the group of fascist specialists in the Kemerovo coalfield, led in the coalfield itself by the German fascist Stickling and from behind the scenes by the German Consul in Novosibirsk and by the adventurer Stroilov, the agent of German heavy industry. But in addition to this fascist group there was another group of wreckers in the Kemerovo coalfield.

Noskov Goes Into Action

ONE day Engineer Noskov came to Peshekhonov and offered his services. Who was Noskov, and how did he know of Peshekhonov's activities? In 1927 Noskov had taken part with Shubin, an old Trotskyite who was also working in Kemerovo, in two illegal Trotskyist meetings in Moscow; one of the meetings was led by Trotsky, the other by Smilga. Noskov was not an active Trotskyite at that time, but was only generally oppositionally-minded. As he himself admitted in court, he had been working against the Party line since 1929, but without ever opposing the Party openly. In August, 1935, Noskov met a leading Trotskyite, Drobnis, who had at one time been secretary of the

Ukrainian Communist Party. During a second meeting in November, 1935, Drobnis instructed Noskov to form an illegal Trotskyist organization in Kemerovo and to start wrecking activities. Noskov stated in court:

“There was no need to persuade me, because such activities were in harmony with my views.”

When he returned to Kemerovo Noskov got into contact with the former Trotskyite Shubin, using Drobnis's name as a recommendation. When Shubin learned that Drobnis would lead the group he at once expressed his readiness to join it. Noskov and Shubin took the former Trotskyite Kurov into their confidence, and Noskov then turned to Peshekhonov. Drobnis told him of Peshekhonov's past and political views and instructed him to establish contact with Peshekhonov. How was it that the Trotskyite Drobnis had such exact information about Peshekhonov, and why did he establish contact between his group and the fascist group of engineers in Kemerovo?

A Conversation with Piatakov

BEFORE 1934 Drobnis worked in Central Asia. In 1934 he came to Moscow and put up at the apartment of his old friend and factional comrade, Piatakov, Assistant Commissar of Heavy Industry. Piatakov acquainted him with the state of the Trotskyist organization and gave him fresh instructions. He sent him to West Siberia, to the industrial region of Kuznetsk, where Muralov and Boguslavsky led secret Trotskyist

groups. The instructions for this journey came from Smirnov, the organizational leader of the Trotskyists in the Soviet Union. Piatakov stated that the work in West Siberia needed reinforcing; what he chiefly had in mind were preparations for attempts on the lives of Bolshevik leaders. Drobnis stated in court:

“When I arrived in West Siberia I first met Muralov. Muralov told me that he was engaged in preparations for a terrorist attempt on the life of the Secretary of the West Siberian Regional Committee, Eiche. He and Shes-tov, who had reliable people at his disposal, were agreed that this job should be carried out. In the course of the conversation Muralov said that it was very important to reinforce the work in Kemerovo and to organize a reliable group there.”

Piatakov in Berlin

DROBNIS went to Kemerovo, where the Trotskyites Norkin and Kartsev had formed a terrorist group in addition to the Noskov group in the Central Mine. In the spring of 1935 Drobnis again went to Moscow where he met Piatakov. Piatakov had just returned from Berlin where he had been negotiating with German business men. He told Drobnis of a conversation he had had in Berlin with the organizational leader of the Trotskyites, Smirnov, and with Trotsky's son, Sedov. At this meeting, Piatakov said, they discussed terrorist acts against the leader of the Party, Stalin, and against other leading Bolsheviks, as well as the aims of the wrecking activities. Instructions were given to wreck

and damage industrial plants and to undermine the country's power of defense. Attention was chiefly to be concentrated on the important industries—coal, metals and chemicals. Piatakov pointed out that the coal industry in Kuznetsk was of particular importance and that it was necessary to act unitedly throughout the whole of this region. Every means was to be used—explosions, incendiarism, etc.—to bring mines to a standstill and in this way to incense the workers against the Soviet government.

When he returned to Kemerovo Drobnis assumed the leadership of the wrecking activities and set about uniting all the anti-Soviet forces and building up a common organization which was to include the German agent of the Gestapo, Stickling, the Russian counter-revolutionaries, Peshekhonov and Kovalenko, and the Trotskyites Noskov and Shubin.

Old Trotskyites

BUT in addition to the old Trotskyite Drobnis, Stroilov, who was in the pay of the German capitalists and who, as we already know, had put Stickling in contact with Peshekhonov in 1933, was also active. Stroilov on his own account approached the Trotskyites Shestov and Muralov in order to enlist them into his own system. Muralov had at one time played an important part in the Communist Party: he had been People's Commissar of Agriculture and was one of Trotsky's inner circle. Because of his anti-Party activities he had been banished to Siberia and was one of those few

Trotskyites who did not denounce their past and who did not place themselves at the disposal of the Party. There was a good reason for this: most of the former leading Trotskyites who pretended to have made their peace with the Party were recalled to Moscow and entrusted by the Party with important work. The Trotskyites, however, needed one of their leading people in the important region of West Siberia, and Muralov was therefore instructed not to return to the Party so as not to be recalled from exile to Moscow.

Like many of his friends, the old Trotskyite Shestov worked in heavy industry, where Piatakov, the Assistant Commissar, favored his old factional colleagues. He was the director of the zinc mines in Salair. On Muralov's instructions he came to Kemerovo to report on his activities and to assist Drobnis. Previous to this he had formed contact with Stroilov. In the course of a long conversation he established the fact that the work of the Trotskyites harmonized with the work performed by Stroilov at the orders of the German capitalists, and that closer contact was therefore desirable. Stroilov stated in court:

“Shestov told me that the wrecking work of the engineers in the Kuzbas (Kuznetsk coalfield) was not very active and was marked by too much intellectualism. This group had to be made more active, and the Trotskyites were prepared to undertake this task. After Shestov's departure I met several times another member of the illegal Trotskyite organization in the West Siberian Region, Muralov, who insisted that wrecking activities should be

continued and that relations with the German fascists should not be broken off."

In October, 1935, Drobnis and Shestov met. Shestov reported on Peshekhonov's group, with which Stroilov had put him in contact, and Drobnis instructed Noskov to cooperate with his group. In May, 1936, Peshekhonov was in a position to inform Stroilov that contact had been established with Noskov's Trotskyite group. This contact helped to enhance the activities of both groups and to breed disaster in the Kemerovo coalfield.

The Web Thickens

WE HAVE seen how the web grew thicker and thicker and how the various counter-revolutionary elements, the various enemies of the Soviet Union, lined up together to plot the massacre of workers. There was the German engineer Stickling, emissary of the Gestapo. There was the Russian engineer Peshekhonov, a survival of the old master class who dreamed of the restoration of capitalism. There was the unscrupulous adventurer Stroilov, in the pay of German heavy industry and ready to sell himself to the highest bidder. Stroilov brought Stickling and Peshekhonov together. Stroilov looked about for new allies; he found the Trotskyites Muralov and Shestov who hated the Soviet Union and were working for its violent overthrow. Shestov learned from Stroilov of the existence of the Peshekhonov group, he reported this to the leading Trotskyite Drobnis, who had come to West Siberia on Piatakov's instructions. Drobnis instructed the Trotskyite Noskov to

establish contact with Peshekhonov. The German fascist, the Russian fascists and the Trotskyites united for common action. Piatakov in Berlin had received new instructions from Trotsky's son, Sedov, namely, to unite all the anti-Soviet forces in order to damage the defensive power of the Soviet Union, to organize a massacre of the workers, to incense the workers against the Soviet Union and to assassinate the leaders of the Party.

At the bottom there was no difference of opinion; the German fascist Stickling, the Russian fascist Peshekhonov and the Trotskyites Drobnis, Shestov and Noskov were out for the same thing—the overthrow of the Soviet government and the restoration of capitalism. They were at one as to the end, they were at one as to the means. Just as there was no difference of opinion at the bottom, so there was none at the top: Hitler wanted the overthrow of the Soviet government and Trotsky wanted the overthrow of the Soviet government. The instructions given by the Gestapo to Stickling, the instructions given by German heavy industry to Stroilov, the instructions given by Sedov to Piatakov all agreed. They were at one as to the end, they were at one as to the means.

The Plot Against Molotov

THE web grew ever thicker—the web spun by that poisonous spider, the Gestapo, the web spun by the poisonous spider Trotsky, the web that fatally closed over the miners of Kemerovo. Shestov not only re-

ceived instructions from Muralov but was himself at the center of the conspiracy against the Soviet Union, against the lives of the Russian workers and against the peace of the world—in Berlin. Shestov stated in court:

“When I was in Berlin I received direct instructions from Piatakov to carry on destructive and terroristic activities in Kuzbas. He knew that I worked in the Kuzbas and said that I should carry on my activities in close conjunction with Muralov, the representative of the Trotskyite organization in Siberia.”

PROSECUTOR ROGINSKY: “Were you instructed to organize terrorist acts?”

SHESTOV: “Yes. I received direct instructions from Piatakov when I was in Berlin. Here, in Siberia, Muralov already knew of this and we only discussed how it was to be organized.”

PROSECUTOR ROGINSKY: “How did the instructions which Piatakov gave in Berlin to organize terrorism run?”

SHESTOV: “He instructed me to organize in the West Siberian Region and in the Kuzbas terrorist acts against members of the Political Bureau and against members of the government who visited the West Siberian Region, and also against Eiche, the Secretary of the West Siberian Regional Party Committee. In addition to the definitely worked out plan for a terrorist attempt against the life of Eiche, we plotted an attempt against the life of the Chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars, Molotov. This was in the autumn of 1934.”

PROSECUTOR ROGINSKY: “How did you intend to carry out this heinous crime?”

SHESTOV: “The execution of this attempt on the life of

Molotov was entrusted to the leader of the Trotskyite group in Prokopyevsk, Cherepuchin, an old Trotskyite who was embittered against the Soviet government and had become a moral degenerate. Cherepuchin was to assassinate Molotov in the mine, or to arrange an automobile accident. Preparations for this were in fact made. The driver of the automobile was the terrorist Arnold. The automobile overturned, but Arnold had not driven fast enough, so that nothing came of it. When I reported this to Muralov he called us weaklings and cowards."

"Greet Me Not Unter den Linden!"

THE attempted murder of Molotov in the autumn of 1934; the murder of Kirov in December, 1934; the murder of the miners Pichugin and Porshnev in December, 1935; the murder of the miners Maximenko, Vdovin, Nemychin and seven others in September, 1936—the murder gang was indeed working well, the "activization" of the fascist and Trotskyite murder groups by means of their union had borne bloody fruit. The murder center in Berlin, Hitler's and Trotsky's murder center, has brought murder into every country of the world. But the murderers professed their innocence; the German fascists denied the hundred-fold murders; they denied the crime that Stickling had confessed. The correspondent of the reactionary *Daily Mail* was expelled from Berlin for reporting that after examining the documents of the Kemerovo trial the German authorities were not in a position to dispute Stickling's guilt.

The Trotskyites denied connection with the German

fascists, they denied their responsibility for the murder of the workers of Kemerovo—and they were zealously supported by many Social-Democratic leaders. Trotsky's son, Sedov, stated in the *Manchester Guardian* that the murderers of the Kemerovo workers were not Trotskyites, that they had renounced Trotskyism long ago. Anxiety prompted him to add that it would again be asserted that he had met Piatakov in Berlin; but he had seen Piatakov only once in Berlin, and that was in the street, on "Unter den Linden". Piatakov had pretended not to know him and so he had also passed Piatakov by without greeting him. Sedov was obviously making fun of his readers; the meeting with Piatakov, as he describes it, is like an illustration to the catchword "Greet Me Not Unter den Linden!" Sedov and Piatakov followed the old saying: they did not greet each other on "Unter den Linden," just as fascism and Trotskyism did not greet each other. But nobody ever assumed that Sedov and Piatakov, the Gestapo and the Trotskyites, would meet on "Unter den Linden" to hatch their murder plans.

Incredible

WHILE Sedov does not deny the murder of the workers in Kemerovo, but only asserts that the murderers had long ago turned their backs on Trotskyism, Otto Bauer goes further and jeers at the Novosibirsk trial. He wrote in *Der Kampf* that he could well believe that conditions in Russian mines were at times terrible, that he also considered it possible that the Ger-

man fascists now and again carry on wrecking activities, but that it was ridiculous to implicate old and deserving Trotskyites like Piatakov, Muralov and Drobnis in such affairs. He could not believe it, and, therefore, it could not be true. As to the testimony of the accused and the testimony of the workers who came forward as witnesses and described the activities of the Trotskyite engineers, he passed it over with a smile.

Incredible and therefore untrue—a strange argument! Whoever uses such an argument will deny everything that is fantastic, monstrous, “incredible” in world history; he will hold Shakespeare, the greatest portrayer of human character in world literature, to be an extravagant writer, because he has drawn such characters as Richard III, Iago and Macbeth. And it is true that Trotsky, Piatakov and Radek are only to be compared to such utter scoundrels as are described in the plays of Shakespeare, that great student of human character; particularly Piatakov, who as Assistant People’s Commissar of Heavy Industry took a leading part in the building of socialism in the Soviet Union and at the same time undermined this constructive work, in a sense every day undoing his own work, just as Penelope unraveled at night what she had spun during the day. It is a monstrous picture. But this century in world history is rich in such pictures, in cases of men who so far excel the ordinary run of human wickedness as to approach the inhuman. And if we turn from the leading fascist and Trotskyite counter-revolutionaries, if we turn to their more humble assistants, we find the same

inhuman, the same "incredible" features. At the trial of the murderers of the Kemerovo workers the testimony both of the accused and of the witnesses revealed some gruesome details.

"What a Brain!"

TAKE the engineers Lashchenko and Leonenko, who tried to persuade the miners that there was no gas in the mine and who took to their heels when the shotfirer gave the warning; Lashchenko, the ventilation engineer, who damaged the ventilation system and told the workers they should have driven away the smoke with their jackets; Leonenko, who sold the lives of his comrades the workers for a camera and made the terrible confession in court that he had turned the mine into a "powder magazine", and who, when the engineer Shubin unfolded his plan to allow gas to accumulate in the mine, cried in delight: "What a brain to have thought of this!"

"Now Our Little Brothers Will Perish Like Rats!"

AND take Shubin, this Trotskyite hangman, who reveled in the preparations for the murder of the workers. When Stalin pronounced in his great speech, "Life has improved, life has become more joyous!" Shubin came to a meeting of his colleagues and said contemptuously: "We'll show the workers what a joyous life means!" With cynical frankness and thoroughness, Shubin related in court how he and Leonenko had arranged the blind workings as gas traps and had systematically neglected walling-up operations in order to turn the mine

into a "powder magazine". And he said to Leonenko, rubbing his hands: "Now our little brothers will perish like rats!"

It is of course "incredible" that men should lose the last semblance of humanity, that they should gleefully prepare for the murder of workers, that they should cry in pleasurable anticipation of murder: "Now our little brothers will perish like rats." One is reluctant to believe that such a monster as Shubin can exist—but must we therefore declare the evidence of the witnesses at the trial and the testimony of the accused themselves to be untrue? Hitler once wrote that wickedness which surpasses the usual run of wickedness is incredible to the great majority of people, and that one must draw conclusions from this. The fascists and Trotskyites have drawn their conclusions from this: they know that people are always willing to believe in petty villainies but are reluctant to believe in crimes that far surpass the usual run of criminality. People like Shubin, Trotsky and Piatakov are "incredible" because their crimes far exceed the usual run of criminality, because they commit acts of class treachery, murder of workers and counter-revolution with a cold-bloodedness that is positively inhuman. Taking advantage of this, the fascists and Trotskyites have the hardihood to deny proven crimes; taking advantage of this, the enemies of the working class and of the Soviet Union have the hardihood to defend confessed and proven criminals and to declare revolutionary justice to be criminal, and not the murder of workers.

The Murder of the Workers Has Been Proved

THE gruesome death of the Kemerovo workers resulting from the fascist and Trotskyite engineers allowing asphyxiating gases to accumulate in the Central Mine has been proved beyond a doubt. The miners testified in court that the ventilation system was maliciously damaged, that the engineers gave instructions which endangered the life of the workers, that they declared that motors could not be purchased for the ventilation system because the Soviet Union could not afford the money, and that they declared this in spite of the fact that motors were available. The miners brought the death of the workers home to the engineers, and with justified bitterness demanded the death of the murderers. The accused admitted their crime, and not only the Russian accused but also the German citizen, Stickling. They gave information on every detail and very circumstantially described their conversations with the leaders of the Trotskyites. The murdered workers of Kemerovo, like the murdered leader of the workers, Kirov, bear testimony against Trotskyism, but the Social-Democratic defenders of the Trotskyites sympathize more with the counter-revolutionary murderers than with the murdered workers. They are more ready to believe what the murderers whisper to them than what the comrades of the murdered men, the miners of Kemerovo, cry aloud to them. They had no response to make to the murdered Kirov and to the murdered miners of Kemerovo; they saved their tears and their

sympathy for the murderers who were shot as they deserved to be.

Death to the Murderers of the Workers!

BUT the workers all over the world sympathize with the Kemerovo miners. They who themselves work in mines and who know what gas and explosions underground mean, they who daily breathe the deadly fumes of capitalism, demand with the working class of the Soviet Union: "Death to the murderers of the workers!"

To them, the workers of the world, all traffic with fascism is an unforgivable crime against the working class. In Kemerovo the traffic between the Trotskyites and the fascists has been made patent even to those who previously doubted: the German fascist Stickling, the Russian fascist Peshekhonov and the Trotskyites Shubin, Noskov and Drobniis not only found a common language but also acted in common in murdering workers. The meaning of the fight waged against the Soviet Union by Hitler and Trotsky became clear in Kemerovo even to those who do not follow every political thread to its source: the meaning of this fight is the murder of workers, the poisoning and destruction of the working class. "Now our little brothers will perish like rats!"—this is the underlying note of fascism and the underlying note of Trotskyism; and this underlying note will more and more drown the lying speeches of the fascists and Trotskyites.

When Kirov was shot not every worker immediately understood that this was a shot aimed at all of us, that

it was a shot aimed at the breast of the working class. At the grave of the miners of Kemerovo everybody will understand that the fight waged by the fascists and Trotskyites is not merely a fight against the leaders, that it is not merely an "internal fight for power", as the hypocritical swindlers would have us believe, but that it is a fight against the lives of the workers, a fight waged with every possible weapon, with the bombs of the fascist airmen, with the instruments of torture of the Gestapo, with machine-guns and with fire-damp. The miners of Kemerovo were not political leaders, not representatives of the "Soviet bureaucracy"; as Trotsky is fond of calling the men who enjoy the supreme confidence of the Soviet people; they were nameless soldiers on the front of socialist construction—and that is why they had to die, that is why they were murdered. They had to die because the leaders of German fascism and the leaders of Trotskyism have given instructions that the building of socialism should be sabotaged, that the power of defense of the Soviet Union be undermined, and that the way be prepared for war against the Soviet Union. They had to die because they worked well, because they were Stakhanovites, and because they had organized a Stakhanov Week. They had to die because life had improved and been made joyous by socialism, and because Hitler and Trotsky hated the whole working class.

The fascists and the Trotskyites are working for the overthrow of the Soviet government. They are working for a war against the Soviet Union. They are working

to accomplish on a world scale what the Trotskyite Shubin expressed in the words: "Now our little brothers will perish like rats!"

The murderers of the workers are deceiving themselves. The workers will not perish like rats. They will successfully defend their world and their lives against Hitler's and Trotsky's murder gangs. In Spain they are fighting the murderers of the workers weapon in hand. In the Soviet Union they are fighting the murderers of the workers with the weapon of class vigilance, with the weapon of revolutionary justice.

The murder of the workers in Spain has roused the workers of the world to a high level of solidarity. The murder of the Kemerovo workers will also rouse them to a high level of solidarity.

Death to the murderers of the workers! Death to Franco and Mola! Death to Shubin and Drobnis! Death to the fascists! Death to the Trotskyites!

In Spain, in the Soviet Union, in all lands and continents, we declare: We will not perish like rats, we will exterminate the poisoners and destroyers of the working class!

In Spain, in the Soviet Union, in all lands and continents, our cry is: Show no mercy to the murderers of the workers, death to the murderers of the workers!

The murdered workers of Madrid and Kemerovo cry to the living workers: Defend your lives against the fascist and Trotskyite murderers of the workers!

To Combat the Menace of Trotskyism

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