

MURDERER AT LARGE

Convicted Slayer Enabled to Assault Woman

"HUSH" POLICY OF HOME OFFICE

A convicted murderer, sentenced to death, cast into gaol and then—released and allowed to walk the public streets in perfect immunity from the long, strong arm of the law. It sounds improbable. It seems impossible. But in this land of mistaken administration it would appear that most things are probable and almost anything is possible. Few would have been wise to the fact that Stephan Morge—called Stefan Monge—who is a murderer with a commuted death sentence to his discredit, was walking the streets of Brisbane if that precious rogue had not allowed his vicious temper to get the best of him a second time and so find his way before the court once more. That is the scandal of it—the Prisons Department's policy of "hush."

On Wednesday the name of Stefan Monge was called by the Court usher at the Central Police Court and a thick set, shuffling, half-blind Russian straggled towards the dock.

He was charged with committing an aggravated assault upon a woman—of punching a woman in the face and of breaking a window pane in the course of this cowardly feat—and when the halting figure found its way through the door of the court room there was at least one person in court who stared at the hesitating form in amazement.

And as the man with the scarred face and defective eyes stumbled into the dock and turned his disfigured face towards the magistrate on the bench any doubts of his true identity fled from the mind of the man who sat in the body of the court watching the scene before him.

He recognised the man called Monge as one whose hands were stained with the blood of murder, who, only four years ago, had been convicted by a jury in Cairns of the capital crime.

He saw in Monge none other than Stephan Morge, upon whom a judge had pronounced the dread penalty of death.

death.

Four and a half years ago, as the summer of 1922 was drawing to a close, a murder was committed in Cairns which, by its animal ferocity alone, startled the whole State.

One Russian killed another, and the meaningless slaying was hinged upon an uninteresting quarrel between two men who had been fast friends.

SUSPECTED THEFT.

The two men, both of that easily excited frame of mind typical in most foreigners, were living in adjacent rooms at a hotel in Cairns.

One of them, Zaharey Beznosuk, bought a revolver, and it was understood that the bargain he made when purchasing this weapon pleased him so mightily that he crowed about it to his friend, Stephan Morge.

Beznosuk proudly placed the firing arm in a drawer in his room, but when he came home from work one fine day he found that the revolver had gone.

His pet weapon. His proud purchase. Gone. It was not in the place where he had left it and it dawned on the excitable mind of Beznosuk that a thief had been around and ransacked the drawer.

The Russian mind works along fast lines. The enraged Beznosuk came to a quick decision.

It was to the effect that of all the

It was to the effect that of all the men in the world who were likely to place a depredatory finger upon the precious weapon the first was Stephan Morga.

Was not Morga the only man who knew where the gun was to be found? Was not Morga his confidant, and one of the few who knew that he, Beznosuk, had a revolver?

Did not Morga live but a few doors along the corridor, and would it not be an easy thing for Morga to stealthily creep along the passage, enter the room and—take the revolver?

Of all these mental interrogations the mind of Beznosuk alighted upon the single probability, that Morga had turned out his drawer and stolen the gun.

Many things hinged upon that deduction.

MORGA ENRAGED.

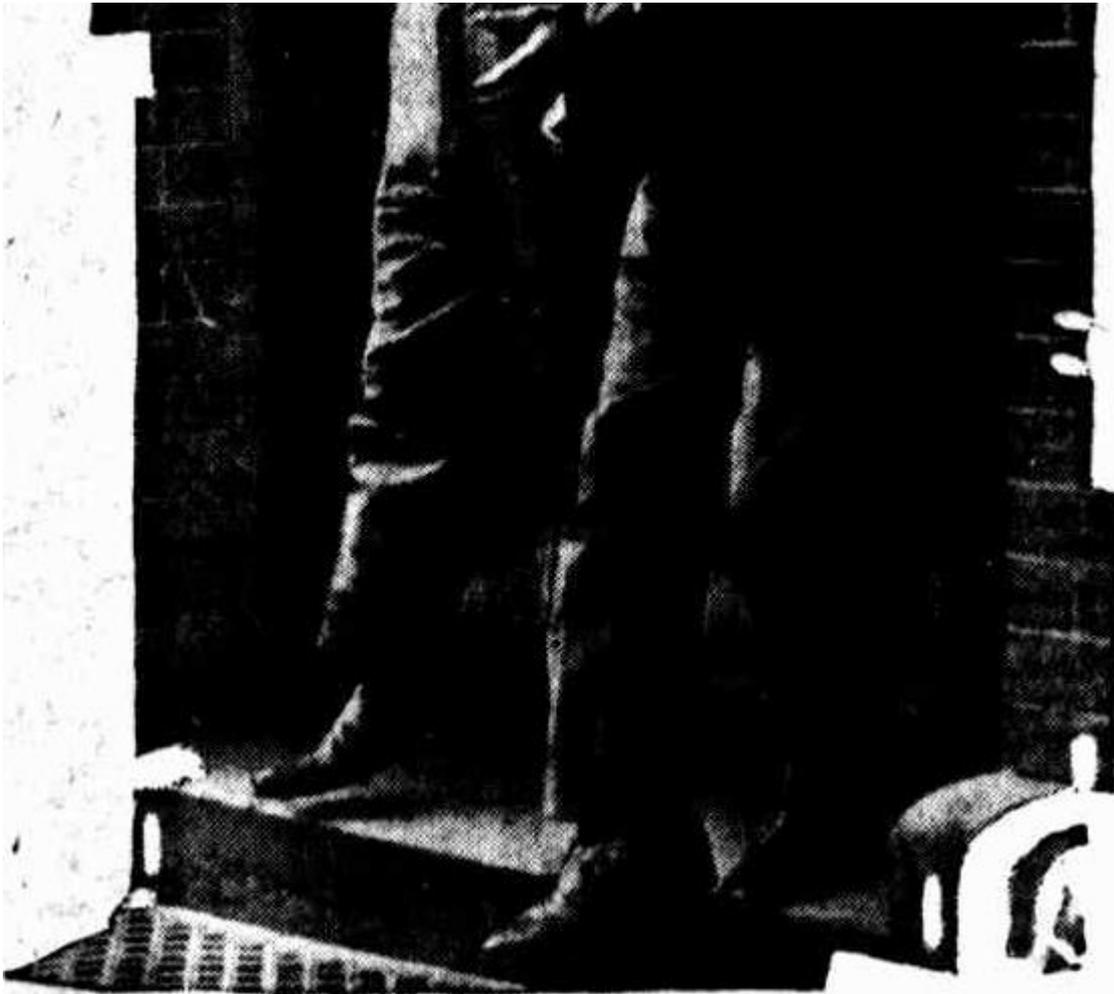
It came to Morga's knowledge that he was suspected of having stolen the weapon, and he considered it an act of considerable unfriendliness for Beznosuk to lay the blame upon him.

Beznosuk, who had been his pal. The ire of Morga rose to the surface and steamed with the heat of temper.

To suffer the suspicion of one who had been his closest companion aroused all the fireworks that were in Morga's sizzling brain.

His temper, always very short, came out with a sudden snap and relationships between he and Beznosuk from





Stephan Morgia—he with the coat on and the bandaged hand—picking his way down the Police Court steps after being sentenced to two months' gaol for assault.

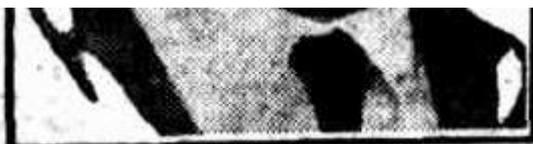
that time on were very strained, very strained indeed.

Came a certain Saturday afternoon when Ber Josuk was walking along one of the Cairns' wharves. He was idling away an hour and his aimless feet led him to a slanchion pillar in front of one of the wharf sheds.

Upon this he sat, and, while sitting there, he was presently approached by the excitable and bad-tempered Morgia.

Morgia challenged his countryman about the accusation concerning the revolver. The pair had words on the subject and, with a brave gesture,





Mr. Alf. Jones, Minister for Mines, is Acting-Home Secretary in the temporary absence of Mr. Stopford, and when "Truth" asked for an explanation of the freedom of Stephan Morga, the murderer, Mr. Jones calmly waived aside the question with "I have nothing to say."

He may continue to say nothing, but the public will think a lot. The policy of hush does not agree with the public palate.

Morga produced a revolver and flourished it in his late friend's face.

Beznosuk stood up. In fact, he jumped to his feet, not a little bit alarmed. He knew the temperament of Morga and he knew that a firearm in the hands of one like Morga was not a safe proposition.

Moreover, Morga was working himself into a frenzy, and matters looked distinctly black when the defenceless Beznosuk decided to beat a hasty retreat.

FEROCIOUS MURDER.

He parried the thrusting arm of Morga, and turning his back upon the frenzied man, walked hurriedly away.

But Morga was in one of his nastiest moods. He pointed the gun at the vanishing Beznosuk and pulled the trigger.

Once, twice, three times he fired. The third shot took effect, and just as the scared Beznosuk was hurrying across one of those railway lines by which wharves are always criss-crossed, he was struck by the bullet. He stumbled and fell on the line.

But that was not the end of his troubles. The blood lust had caught Morga, it seemed, and he brazenly walked over to the prostrate man. Callously he fired a volley of shots down into the trembling body.

With maddened ferocity he pulled the trigger again and again, and the sands of life quickly trickled out of the body of Zarahay Beznosuk.

Two uniformed policemen were on duty in the vicinity. They heard the shots and raced to the scene.

When they approached the body of the fallen Russian they were hailed

by the furious Morga. A rapid scrutiny was sufficient to see that

scrutiny was sufficient to see that Beznosuk was beyond all human assistance and the two officers turned towards the gesticulating Morga.

ATTEMPTED SUICIDE.

That worthy was slowly moving back from the scene. He had his gun pointed towards the policemen, and he threatened them that if they did not stop he would shoot them down.

Despite this deadly challenge, the two officers rushed the murderer. They closed on him in lightning fashion, but with one frantic effort the slayer tried to elude capture.

Instead of firing on the constables he raised the muzzle of the gun to his own temple and pressed the trigger. The bullet travelled right across the inner cavity of the forehead, going in one temple and out the other.

By one of those tricks of fate, Morga lived through this injury, and in the course of time he came to face a judge and jury for the murder of Beznosuk.

The jury found him guilty and the judge sentenced him to death. That sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment.

But, surprises of surprises, the man who walked through the doorway of the Brisbane court four years later, and into the dock on a charge of common assault, was Morga, the murderer.

Moreover, he has been out of gaol for some time.

An ex-Cairns resident, one who had been present at the trial of Morga, and who remembers, with horror, the inane brutality of the case, said that one of the first men he saw idling about the streets of Brisbane when he came down from the North over a year ago was the convicted slayer, Morga.

HUSH! HUSH!

How he came to be let loose on an unsuspecting public is beyond ordinary knowledge. For what reason he was allowed outside the prison gates, to run where and when he liked, to mingle with the most law-abiding of citizens, and obtrude his vicious presence into any manner of public places, is indeed a singular question.

It is a question that the Home Secretary's Department is apparently ashamed to face.

When approached by "Truth" on Friday for an explanation as to why Morga has been turned loose the Acting Home Secretary, Mr. Alf. Jones

Morga has been turned loose the Acting Home Secretary, Mr. Alf. Jones (Minister for Mines), who is carrying on at the Home Office in the absence of Mr. Stopford, declined to give any reason or have anything to say.

His refusal to place the facts of such an important public matter before the people was evidently made after consultation with officers at the department of the Comptroller of Prisons.

COWARDLY ASSAULT.

Morga was charged, before Mr. Archdall, C.P.M., on Wednesday, with having assaulted Miss Mary Beatrice Edwards, on November 27.

The case against the Russian was that he endeavored to get Miss Edwards, who is a dressmaker, to make him up a pair of pyjama trousers.

Morga, who worked at the Blind Institution, called on Miss Edwards at her home in Stanley-street, and tried to prevail upon her to do the work he wanted, but she told him that she was a dressmaker and not a tailor.

Morga exercised a little of his bad temper upon the lady when she refused on the first occasion, and he was ordered out of the shop.

Later, he went back to the house and stealthily crept round the veranda. When Miss Edwards heard someone walking about she went to the window and peered out.

When her face touched the glass she saw a man spring towards her. The fuming individual lashed out with his fist, which crashed through the window pane and showered splintered fragments over Miss Edwards' face.

The lady drew back, shocked and bleeding, and she recognised her attacker as Morga, the vicious Russian,

He, who in a fit of uncontrollable fury, had committed a dastardly murder, did not pause for second thoughts in committing a cowardly and dangerous assault upon a defenceless woman.

Two months' imprisonment was the sentence for this assault.

Presumably, when those two months are up, Morga, the murderer, the sentence-of-death man, and recognised monster, will be again loosed on to society.

That such an inadequate sentence was inflicted for such an offence, under such circumstances, reflects a ray of indiscrimination upon the trial mag'strate.

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That a murderer should be allowed to ramble at will outside the gaol is the Home Office's own scandal.