

Worker 4/22/38

Order Nazi Riot Probe; Legionnaire Near Death

Acting Mayor Newbold Morris Orders Police Investigate Nazi Attack—La Guardia Acts to Assure Prosecution

American Legionnaire Cecil Schubert hovered between life and death last night in Beth David Hospital, his skull crushed when Nazis assaulted veterans with blackjacks, belt buckles, chairs and daggers at a Bund "Hitler birthday Celebration" in Yorkville-Casino Wednesday.

At City Hall, acting Mayor Newbold Morris ordered Police Commissioner Lewis Valentine to launch a sweeping investigation with a view to preventing repetition of the outrage.

Referring to the Bund, Morris declared, "These European prejudices have no place in America." He said he had been assured by Valentine there would be "no duplication of such disorders."

Earlier Mayor F. H. LaGuardia telephoned at his own expense from Chicago to his secretary, James M. Kieran, asking whether the police were on the job. The Mayor's sentiments on Hitlerism are well known.

UNDER FIRE IN FRANCE LaGuardia changed trains at Chicago for Guthrie, Oklahoma, where he will participate in the Oklahoma Day parade today. He will visit other cities in the South west.

Cecil Schubert smiled bravely in his hospital cot last night. To talk to him you wouldn't think he was a mass of cuts and bruises, with his left ear almost torn off and a horrible, deep dent in the back of his skull.

Schubert has been under fire before. He was wounded in the trenches of France. But he doesn't know how serious is his condition. The superintendent of Beth David Hospital said that for 36 hours more it would not be able to say whether or not Schubert will live. His condition is now so critical that it is impossible to even X-ray the fracture.

If Schubert goes a wife and four children at home, 2927 16th St. Brooklyn, will have no husband, no father.

COMRADES ENRAGED

Phil Rosenberg, commander, Benjamin Goldstein, vice-commander, and others of Schubert's comrades from the Coney Island Post 1072 of the American Legion, stood watch at his bedside.

"We'll do every living being a favor if we succeed in driving these Nazis out of America," Rosenberg declared.

down four flights of stairs, belabored by chairs, blackjacks, and the heavy brass-buckled belts of the storm troopers.

Outside, thousands of anti-fascists sang the Star Spangled Banner, while the Nazis hissed and booed, and hurled light bulbs on the people below.

A picket line outside the hall of 200, organized by the German Workers Club, displayed signs demanding the Nazis be driven from Yorkville.

George Tieland, vice-president of the Club, told the Daily Worker last night at its headquarters at 1501 Third Ave., between 84th and 85th Streets, across the street from the offices of the Bund, that his organization would picket every single meeting Nazis attempt to hold.

PLAN DEMONSTRATION

"The Nazis do not represent the German-Americans, or the people of Yorkville," Tieland declared.

He said that towards the end of May all the anti-Nazi German societies, cooperating with American anti-fascist organizations, would hold a demonstration in Yorkville to drive out the Bund.

"The majority of the German-Americans—even the kids in the street last night—are against the Bund," Tieland declared.

Arthur Schutzer, a county leader of the American Labor Party and secretary of the Yorkville Consumers Conference, said the conference would hold a meeting at Yorkville Center, 268 E. 78th St., Wednesday. He has invited the injured legionnaires to present eyewitness accounts of the affair.

Those most seriously hurt, besides Schubert and Mathias, were Samuel Riger, Leo Hoffman, Stanley Gotthelf and Samuel Gunther.

NO COPS INSIDE

Many of the legion members last night bitterly criticized the police because not a single uniformed guardian of the law was inside the hall.

A member of the VFW, John Strasser of the German Workers Club, Eric Saenger, of the German-American League for Culture and George Lohr, secretary of the Yorkville Section of the Communist Party, addressed an impromptu street meeting following the picketing and Nazi riot.

"The ruthless brutality and violence demonstrated by Nazi storm troopers against American Legionnaires and other democracy-loving Americans last night must awaken every decent citizen of our country to the menace of fascism that is growing in our midst," Lohr declared in a statement to the press yesterday.

Also picketing the meeting were the Young Patriots, a Catholic youth organization. They passed out handbills denouncing fascism as "un-American" and anti-democratic. Two bund members arrested were

released yesterday. One of them, Otto Geissler, appeared before Judge Troy, himself vice-commander of the Catholic War Veterans, in bund uniform.

Strapped to Geissler's waist was a seven-inch dagger with the inscription in German, "Blood and Honor."

Facing a boycott, Benjamin Schnall, manager of the Yorkville Casino, announced last night that he would never again rent his hall to the Nazis. He has refused to return to the Bund two pictures of Hitler with which they had decorated his hall. One of them, a most 12 feet square.

Why does the government let them get by with it? Rosenberg wanted to know. "There must be a lot of money behind the Nazis." They weren't sure just how to stop Bund activity. "Maybe a thousand good Americans should have walked into the hall and occupied every seat before the meeting started," Rosenberg declared. But they were sure the rank and file of the Legion would not lay down their arms until the Nazis have been stopped.

Meanwhile Daniel J. Doherty, national commander of the American Legion, last night demanded congressional action to outlaw the German-American Bund.

John M. Dealy, national commander of the Catholic War Veterans, told the Daily Worker that his organization was "flat-footedly against Nazi-ism in all its forms." Dealy thought the Constitutional Convention should "do something to prevent recurrence of such an affair."

WON HIGHEST HONORS

The fight at Yorkville Casino started when Jean Mathias, diminutive 110 pound Jewish war veteran, who won the highest honors of the American and French governments when he wiped out a German machine gun nest single handed, stood up at the end of a speech by Otto Wegener, Bund propagandist, and said, "I would like to ask a question."

Wegener, who spoke in German, had made insulting references to President Roosevelt and to Secretary of State Hull, and had lauded Hitler as a greater man than Abraham Lincoln.

The thousand Nazis in the hall, assembled from New York, New Jersey, Long Island and Connecticut, 200 uniformed storm troopers at their head, fell on Mathias as one man.

A hundred veterans, men from various legion posts, from the Veterans of Foreign Wars, from the Catholic and Jewish war veterans organizations, who had paid admission to the meeting to investigate the activities of the Nazis, put on their overseas caps and went to Mathias' defense.

They had to fight their way