

PM recognizes its grave responsibility in printing this story. The editors debated many hours before deciding to publish it. Once before, the editors of PM debated many hours whether to publish a story—and in the end decided not to, in the interest of public safety. That story was the story of our Ed Scott on the Normandie. Early in January we told the proper authorities about the conditions which Ed Scott had found on the Normandie, and then we filed away the story, confident that something would be done about it.

It was a tragic day when that story came out of the files and went into PM—the day the Normandie caught fire because “competent authorities” had done nothing about the fair warning.

This time PM’s story of a serious threat to one of this country’s major assets does not go into the files. It is on this page and on the front page of this paper for this grim purpose: to incite to prevention of disaster.—R. I.

Nazi Sympathizers in War Plant Here Have Access to U. S. War Secrets

Affidavits Reveal Activities In Queens Shop

By AMOS LANDMAN

Today—15 weeks after Pearl Harbor—employees in a vital Queens war factory are openly heiling Hitler.

More than that, outspoken admirers of Hitler and others who ceased making public pro-Nazi statements only after Pearl Harbor have access to information about:

¶ The warships and submarines under construction by the U. S. A., their size and where they are being built.

¶ The size and rate of production of all our important plane factories.

¶ Where the U. S. A. is building bases overseas and how big these bases are.

¶ Sailings of ships carrying material to these overseas bases.

PM has more than 20 affidavits from other men working in this factory describing conditions there. Copies of these statements were turned over to the FBI 36 hours ago.

The company is the Liquidometer Corp., 36-16 Skillman Ave., Long Island City, Queens. It manufactures (the nature of the products is withheld by PM to avoid giving information to the enemy) for warships and planes.

Supervisors Included

PM also has been informed that a host of workmen in other war factories either publicly or privately favor an Axis victory—or openly did so before Dec. 7. Like their buddies at Liquidometer, they have access to important war information.

A number of the Liquidometer workers accused of having Nazi sympathies, or of having had them before Pearl Harbor, hold supervisory jobs. They have access to orders for Liquidometer products. These orders are left on top of desks, or in other exposed places, where they can be perused easily by employes who want to see them badly enough.

Liquidometer orders give the places where warships and planes are being built, the names of ships and their size, time when delivery is to be made. They also give significant clues to the rate of U. S. plane production and the construction of overseas bases. Sometimes they give ship sailings. British orders withhold this information.

Orders are readily available for perusal in the shipping department. Foremen Harry Barthman tries to keep men having no business there out, but the situation is beyond his control.

Perhaps the most outspoken Nazi sympathizer at the plant is Julius Weber, a stocky, first-class machinist who served on a German minesweeper during World War I.

Weber prefers German to English. He

Enemy Listening

Although outspoken Nazi sympathizers—past or present—have the run of the Liquidometer factory, a saboteur seeking access from the outside would have his troubles.

Armed guards are stationed at the entrance to the factory. A receptionist questions all callers carefully. He even asks whether the visitor is a citizen. The company is rigorous about badges for both employes and visitors. Employes are directed to memorize instructions on what to do during an air raid.

There are signs all over the place warning:

“Beware! The enemy is listening!”

wears a brown shirt and pants, similar to the costume of a Nazi storm trooper. He publicly gives the Nazi salute. He heils Hitler, and some of his fellow-Nazi sympathizers in the factory.

Prior to Dec. 7, he was seen selling chances to raise money for the support of German prisoners interned in Canada.

Weber is frankly anti-British, anti-Roosevelt, anti-Semitic and anti-Russian.

Once, before Pearl Harbor, in an argument with a fellow employe over an anti-Nazi magazine article, he shouted angrily:

“It’s a pack of lies. I’ve seen those lies before. The Third Reich I saw with my own eyes. It is a great thing.”

On another occasion, Weber is reported to have said:

“Hitler is the greatest man in the world.”

John Blaeser, a department supervisor known as Hans, has 15 men working under him. He has spoken glowingly of Hitler. Several of his men have reported that they have worked out methods of speeding work. These improvements, they say, never met with favor.



John Blaeser

One man, for example, devised a jig (an instrument used to simplify an operation) which reduced the time needed to sandpaper a part.

Blaeser shrugged and said the jig was impractical. He added, reluctantly, that its inventor might use it if he wished, but he didn’t think it was worth bothering about. The inventor did use it, and so did other men who were performing the same operation. They found it worked very well.

A few days ago, Paul Rindzunerov was assigned to a specialized task. An experi-

enced worker, who was being promoted to other work, offered to teach Rindzunerov how to do the job quickly. Blaeser said no, “I’ll take care of it.”

The experienced man brought up the matter again the next day. He pointed out that through simple systemization he could produce five times as much as Rindzunerov, that if production was to be kept up, something would have to be done, and that a bottleneck was being created which would ultimately mean many men would be without work.

Blaeser dismissed the matter: “Don’t worry about production so much,” he said.

Joseph Feilzer, a foreman, sits under a red, white and blue poster which proclaims:

“Time Is Short”

You wouldn’t think so to watch Feilzer. He casually lolls in a chair at his work bench, and reads a German-language newspaper during working hours.

On Mar. 20, two new men were assigned to Feilzer’s department. He was not at his bench when they reported. As Feilzer passed Andrew P. Vlachanchic, an assembler, Vlachanchic called out:

“Hey, Joe! Some new men are waiting at your bench to be put to work.”

Feilzer answered: “Let them wait. I have all day.”

Like his friends, Feilzer has engaged in numerous arguments with anti-Fascist men employed at Liquidometer. He has always upheld the Fascist cause and denounced the democratic cause.

On Feb. 26, one of the men in the shop asked Alfred Honigman, an assembler, to sing the *Horst Wessel Song*, the Nazi anthem. Honigman replied sarcastically:

“Don’t worry. You’ll have to learn it soon enough.”

Honigman has often defended Hitler and Nazism in bars and restaurants around the factory.

A week later someone asked another assembler how the *Horst Wessel Song* went. He appeared amazed and professed not to know, and a moment later was seen in a huddle with Feilzer.

The next day this assembler made a special point of seeking out the man who wanted to hear the *Horst Wessel Song*. He was unusually ingratiating. He sang the entire song, explaining that Horst Wessel was a man “who died for his political ideals,” and that he (the assembler) had



Joseph Feilzer

learned the song at parties and other gatherings.

Another man, whose name is being withheld because he fears reprisals, got into an argument over whether it would be proper to strike during wartime. This man, who will be called Jones, remarked that a striker in Germany nowadays would be shot. A supervisory employe in the plant shouted angrily:

“Why don’t you mind your own business, you Jew bastard?”

Jones replied:

“This is my business.”

The supervisory worker made some personal remarks, whereupon Jones declared:

“Don’t worry. The United States will beat Hitler.”

The supervisory worker answered by swinging. Jones blocked the blow with his arm, and the two were separated.

Extra-Curricular Activity

Until he discovered that one of his colleagues was Jewish, William Wiesenberg, department supervisor, repeatedly tried to induce the man to attend a party at his home in Yorkville. But when Wiesenberg learned that the man was Jewish, solicitude was replaced by incessant complaints about the man’s work.

Wiesenberg becomes furious if his name is spelled Weisenberg, or if the first syllable is pronounced *wise* instead of *wees*. One, he says, is Aryan; the other non-Aryan.

Wiesenberg is reported to have dawdled frequently over small jobs and to be as open in his devotion to Hitler and in his admiration for the German soldier as he is in his contempt for England and the U. S. A.

Three days after Pearl Harbor, Arno Baunack, tool and die maker in the experimental department, reproached one of the men in the factory for attacking Hitler at a union meeting.

“What right have you or any American to attack Hitler,” he demanded. “Hitler is the greatest man in the world. Look what he has done for Germany.”

Reminded of these remarks three months later, Baunack became enraged and shouted:

“There is more freedom in Germany than in this so-called democracy of our country. I was in Germany and I saw for myself.”

All the foregoing men meet from time to time outside the Liquidometer plant. For example, last November one of the Liquidometer employes overheard Feilzer ask Blaeser:

“Did you get a room to hold the meeting?”

Blaeser answered:

“I can’t get one in Ridgewood.”

Honigman then spoke up:

“Leave it to me and I’ll get one.”

MORE →

Company Has Its Doubts

Spokesmen for the Liquidometer Corp. admitted today they had heard talk that Hitler sympathizers and men who were Hitler sympathizers before Pearl Harbor worked in the vital war plant. However, they said, the company is not a law-enforcement agency, and the matter is up to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Army and Navy Intelligence officials.

The company officials were Harry T. Cullinan, youngish-looking vice president, and John J. Reis, plant superintendent.

Although employes in the factory were blatant about their sympathies in the war, Cullinan and Reis said they had no specific knowledge of the evidence unearthed by PM.

They doubted that the employes named in PM’s affidavits had access to information of much military value. PM’s informants, however, reply that an experienced me-

chanic can tell by examining the product what it is to be used for and the size ship or plane in which it is to be installed. The orders also provide this information.

As for deliberate loafing on the job, the company officials declared that production had been steadily increasing.

But, men in the plant say, this is in spite of the loafing. Were the loafing stopped, the rate of production would increase even more. Production, they say, has been going up because new methods are being devised, because men are becoming more proficient in their jobs, and because the management is learning more and more about the manufacture of its own product.

Charge Workers Use Official Navy Stamps

Several Liquidometer employes say naval inspectors in the plant sometimes direct workers to use the inspectors’ official naval stamp. This stamp is used to indicate that the product is in good working order, up to specifications and properly packed.

On Mar. 10 at 1:20 p.m., one supervisory worker used the stamp on certain plane parts (type of product and serial number withheld).

The officials thought there was nothing unusual about the story that an assistant foreman had used a Naval inspector’s rubber stamp to indicate that the Liquidometer products had been examined and approved. It might have been done with the approval of the inspector, they said. Besides, the products are again inspected when they arrive at their destination.

Cullinan pooh-pooed the fact that many of the persons named in PM’s affidavits are in supervisory positions. The statements, he thought, might represent the natural resentment of an underling against his boss.

“Every workingman hates his boss,” he observed.

On Mar. 17 at 2 p.m., this supervisor stamped products later found to be defective. They were hastily repaired.

Nearly everyone in the shipping department at one time or another has used the naval inspectors’ stamps. Sometimes boards are stamped before they are made into a packing case. If any stamped boards are left over, the stamp is scraped off.

Cullinan wanted to know what PM expected to do with its affidavits. He was told the men who swore them out feared reprisals if the material was turned over to the company.

“I assure you,” said Reis, “that the names of the men will be held in the strictest confidence.”

Reis offered to turn over the affidavits to the proper authorities, but PM elected to do this itself.

Before going to the FBI, PM laid its material before a high Air Corps official, who apparently had heard something of our investigation.

He questioned our story and said publicity might be harmful rather than helpful. He thought that the anti-Nazis who had sworn out affidavits against the pro-Nazis were motivated by an intraunion squabble in the Liquidometer shop. He overlooked the point that this dispute resulted in part from the pro-Nazi views of the men named in the expose.

The FBI welcomed the material turned over by PM. One agent said privately that he thought publicity might help to root dangerous men out of our war factories.