
Service Men in Second Raid on People's House: People Disperse Mob — Lee Blames Hylan for Trouble — Scab Herders in Crowd [event of April 7, 1919]

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“Down with the Bolsheviki!”

Muttering and shouting, a dozen soldiers, sailors, and marines entered the hall of the Rand School of Social Science, 7 East 15th Street, last night and began to tear down the posters on the bulletin boards. They were led by a Canadian soldier.

Almost immediately about 30 others in khaki and blue uniforms gathered on the outside, swaying and muttering.

Jack Carpf, in charge of the book store, removed the money from the register and locked up the store.

The quick arrival of a squad of policemen and a sergeant put a quietus to what might have developed into a serious situation. More than 100 people had gathered within 3 minutes of the entrance of the soldiers.

Socialist aldermen were holding a caucus in Alderman Algernon Lee's office when the men in uniform descended upon the school. Alderman Lee immediately called for a squad of police.

In the meantime the crowd was growing larger and the soldiers in the street were evidently gathering for an organized raid. The officer on duty was doing his best to pacify the ringleaders.

Ten minutes later the squad arrived and dispersed the men without making any arrests. The soldiers who entered the building did not penetrate any farther than the hallway.

This was the second raid on the Rand school by service men. The first occurred during the course of a lecture by H.W.L. Dana on the Russian situation in the auditorium of the school, Sunday night

[April 6, 1919], when a band of soldiers and sailors entered the school with considerable clamor and much excitement, shrieking they were “after the Bolsheviki.” The police reserves were summoned by a member of the People’s House and they speedily dispersed the raiders. The Dana lecture, contrary to reports, was not disturbed by the onslaught of the virtuous crew, Professor Dana proceeding with his remarks.

Another raid was made Sunday evening [April 6, 1919] on the Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines’ Protective Association, 123 East 23rd Street. The quarters of the organization were completely demolished by the uniformed men, who were in search of “reds.”

Alfred A. Levitt, Executive Secretary of the organization, declared after the raid that a private in the Canadian army by the name of Shelly who, it is alleged, is in the employ of the Tugboat Owners’ Exchange for the purpose of organizing discharged soldiers and sailors as “scabs” in the harbor strike, was the leader of the gang.

Scab Herders Back of Raid.

Levitt said:

“While the offices of the Soldiers, Sailors, and Marines’ Protective Association were closed yesterday, a malicious and unwarranted attack was made on the offices by a group of unknown vandals, and the building which housed the association was wrecked. Plate glass to the value of several hundred dollars was completely demolished. The raiders stole numerous American flags, some sweaters, several uniforms, an expensive tool kit, a typewriter, money, postage stamps, and a watch from the cash box, and carried away all the official records, which are invaluable to us. The total damage is estimated at \$1,000. The executive officers have decided to offer a reward of \$50 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the guilty parties, and intend to press this case vigorously.

“Statements made to the effect that we are identified with Bolshevik activities are absurdly unfounded and are based upon myths circulated by malicious and corrupted agents who have failed in their efforts to secure from us uniformed men to protect the strikebreakers substituting for the striking harbor workers.”

Lee Blames Hylan.

Algernon Lee, educational director of the Rand School and leader of the Socialist delegation in the Board of Aldermen, issued the following statement on the raid last night:

“This raid was, undoubtedly, incited. That it was deliberately led by a well-known strikebreaker seems to be well substantiated. Mayor [John F.] Hylan’s widely publicized letter referring to foreigners preaching murder and destruction probably helped to incite the mob spirit. These alarmist statements not based on fact are breeding prejudice and mob spirit. The Mayor does not seem to realize the danger of his utterances.

“When he issued his famous red flag proclamation the immediate effect was to cause a riot and almost bloodshed when a mob endeavored to attack a Socialist meeting in Madison Square Garden. At that time it was necessary to call the reserves, not too keep peace among the Socialists and their sympathizers, who were intelligently discussing the problems of the day, but to hold back the unthinking spirit of a mob virtually led by the Mayor himself in the guise of his proclamation. Sunday night’s affair also must be laid at his door by reason of the communication to which I have referred.

“He is taking a tremendous responsibility when he spreads factless statements that breed prejudice. The uniformed men of the Police Department have on other occasions exhibited a splendid sense of fair play, despite the actions of both Mayor Hylan and Commissioner [Richard] Enright in endeavoring to suppress free speech and free assemblies. It is interesting to note that the speaker at the Rand School last night discussing the Russian revolution was Prof. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Dana, a descendant of an illustrious line of Americans. If Mayor Hylan could only frame an ordinance prohibiting the use of the English language, except for purposes OK’d by him or his Police Commissioner, he would, no doubt, be overjoyed to issue an ukase forbidding men of Professor Dana’s type to hold discussions.”

Edited by Tim Davenport

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