
O'Hare Outrage Planned Six Weeks Ahead: Report to Civil Liberties Union Reveals Nearly All Groups in Twin Falls Implicated

[events of May 15-July 2, 1921]

Unsigned report in the *New York Call*, v. 14, no. 198 (July 17, 1921), pg. 2.

The abduction of Mrs. Kate Richards O'Hare, on July 2 [1921]¹ by members of the American Legion at Twin Falls, Idaho, was not the sudden execution of a hastily-prepared plan, according to further details of the outrage reaching the American Civil Liberties Union in this city and made public by it yesterday.

The Legionaries began assiduous preparation for this summary administration of "Americanism" as early as May 15, it appears. The intensive local campaign the Legion post waged for nearly 3 weeks against the appearance of Mrs. O'Hare on a public rostrum in Idaho town is revealed in detail in a report sent to the Civil Liberties Union by H.H. Freedheim, of Twin Falls, from whose home the Socialist lecturer was kidnapped.

Every organization — civic, fraternal, religious, and commercial — was visited by Legion representatives who, "wrapping themselves in the flag," appealed for support to prevent Mrs. O'Hare's scheduled address, Freedheim declares. Resolutions were printed in the Twin Falls press asking readers to pledge

¹ Kate O'Hare was kidnapped during the night of July 1/2, 1921.

themselves to support any action the Legion might see fit to take to uphold the tenets of "Americanism."

So active was the campaign of the Legion post that the chief of police and sheriff, before the Socialist lecturer arrived, waived all responsibility for what might happen.

Began May 15.

"The American Legion started the ball rolling some weeks back, shortly after May 15," Freedheim's letter says. "They first sent a delegation to me, consisting of Dr. Frederick Snook and Carl Delong, who stated, among other things, that they would never allow Kate O'Hare to come here and speak. They at last threatened that if she did come she would have to leave and others with her. They had a member call at different organizations, and when given the floor it is said he would wrap the colors about him and appeal for support to oppose the lady and her scheduled speech. One organization after another fell for the dope and passed resolutions condemning not alone Mrs. O'Hare and her intention to come here to speak, but also me as her sponsor.

"Feeling kept getting more acute, until a joint meeting of the officials of county and city met at night, and at 9:30 pm, June 29 [1921], called me into session.

"I was given a seat in a circle of chairs where about 25 or 30 persons were in attendance. Again and again they pleaded with me to refuse to allow her to come, and tried to impress me with the seriousness of the threats and objections of the organizations who protested her advent.

"The resolutions had been printed in the papers here, and time and again contained words to this effect: 'We hereby pledge our support to any action the American Legion sees fit to take to prevent the appearance of Kate Richards O'Hare.' The Knights of Pythias, Elks, Moose, Pan-Hellenic Club of Women,

GAR, Kiwanis, and others, but not the IOOF, nor Masons, nor some others. No churches took any action. The officials seemed clearly against the lady. They gave W.P. French, lessor of the only building we could secure, and myself no protection when we went to the officers and asked for security for person and property in face of the implied threats contained in the printed resolutions....

"The feeling here is gradually changing in her favor and against the outrage. They try to make it appear that they acted in the spirit of friendship for the community, in order to avoid their main bogey man, riot. I demanded of the joint session any proof or the names of the supposed rioters-to-be. They would not answer..."

The American Civil Liberties Union said yesterday that the exact legal steps to be taken to prosecute Mrs. O'Hare's abductors have not been decided upon. The union is in communication with Mr. and Mrs. O'Hare and with public officials with a view to inducing Federal officials in Idaho to proceed under the Federal statute penalizing persons who interfere with the exercise of rights guaranteed by the Constitution. An indictment under this section of the Federal penal code was brought against the men who deported the miners from Bisbee, Ariz., in 1917, but the case was never brought to trial, the indictment being quashed.

Under the rulings of the courts on the statute, a conviction against Mrs. O'Hare's kidnappers would be difficult, officials from the Liberties Union say, entirely aside from the difficulties of overcoming the organized prejudices and misrepresentation which would surround such a proceeding.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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