

THE
Jewish Veteran

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JEWISH WAR VETERANS OF THE UNITED STATES

Feature Articles

We Dare Not Be Silent
By WILLIAM GREEN

The Scarlet Trail
By FRANCIS ROTH

Jews With A Brogue
By MARTIN SELSTAL

The First Jewish Congressman
By GREGORY BLATTMAN

General Louis Bernheim
By BERTRAM JONAS

The First Boycott
By PAUL SEELEY

Here And There
By J. GEORGE FREDMAN

Jewish News And Views
By J. DAVID DELMAN

MARCH



1937



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WE DARE NOT BE SILENT

Nazi Tyranny Challenges Our Democracy

By WILLIAM GREEN

*.. President of the American Federation
of Labor ..*

**An appeal to American labor to
Boycott German Goods and
Services.**

THE EDITOR.

THE laboring people of the United States have been deeply concerned over the persecution which has followed the leaders of the German trade union movement and those they represent ever since Hitler established his autocratic rule four years ago. The destruction of the free, independent, democratic unions as one of the first acts of the Hitler administration was shocking to the working people throughout the world. This feeling of bitter resentment was intensified because of the Hitler charge that these trade unions were enemies of the state.

Such a charge was absurd and false. Not even the slightest foundation can be found for such an allegation. The facts of German history show that the German trade unions constituted a bulwark of strength in Germany. They represented the best there was in German life and in German growth and development. Furthermore, they believed in democracy, in democratic institutions and in the application of democratic procedure. It was because they believed in these democratic principles and sought to apply them broadly and constructively in the administration of German trade-unionism that they became the special target of Hitler's hatred and that is one of the reasons they were classified as enemies of the state. This fact is made clearer in the history of the last four years when we realize that democracy is the opposite of autocracy and is in constant conflict with the teachings as well as the policy of a dictator.

The free, democratic trade unions were ruthlessly destroyed by Hitler were like the trade unions represented by the American Federation of Labor, staunch and uncompromising defenders of democracy and all democratic procedure, both within the administration of trade unions and in the government as well. We who are associated with the American Federation of Labor will ever stand immovable in defense of majority rule expressed in free democratic fashion in conformity with parliamentary procedure. The substitution of minority for majority rule or for any other plan for democratic control or democratic procedure would result in chaos and failure. Because of the bond of sympathy and mutual admiration which existed between the free, democratic and independent trade unions of German and the officers and members of the American Federation of Labor was founded upon the devotion which each has ever shown to the principles of democracy, freedom and liberty, a close, sincere and fraternal relationship was established between them.

The reports which reach this country from Germany show that repressive measures are applied with ever increasing cruelty to those suspected of giving support to trade unions such as we have here in the United States. Working men and women who cry out for freedom and for the right to belong to trade unions are arrested, charged with high treason, brought before so-called Nazi police tribunals, found guilty and sentenced to long prison terms at hard labor. Frequently rep-

resentatives of labor here wonder what has become of those outstanding leaders of labor and social democracy who in the days of the German Republic occupied high places of responsibility and trust. Their voices are silent, their names no longer appear in the public press, they seem to have disappeared.

How cruel and despotic is a government that exacts for its toll the lives and liberties of such splendid men! Imagine the tragic conditions of these German workers whose souls and minds cry out for the enjoyment of their liberty when they are forced to associate themselves with the so-called German Labor Front, an organization established by Hitler's emissaries; Not only are the workers denied the exercise of the right to form their own unions, to elect their own officers, and to administer their own affairs in accordance with the expressed will of the majority but they are compelled by edict and order to become members of a hated, ready-made company union officered and administered by agents of the Hitler government.

The working people of the United States protest against this treatment accorded the officers and members of German trade unions. We protest just as vigorously and vehemently against the persecution of the Jewish people in Germany. On the fourth anniversary of the establishment of the Hitler dictatorship we call upon the people of the United States who believe in the protection of all classes of people regardless of creed or nationality and who believe in freedom, democracy and liberty to broadcast and apply the boycott against German goods and German services so long as persecution, intolerance and repression are imposed upon the working people of Germany and upon the Jewish race.

We cannot profess to exalt the virtues of our own form of government, we cannot express opinions and beliefs based on religious freedom and no discrimination be-

We believe that the rights of minorities guaranteed by treaties should be sacredly regarded and protected and that all treaties should be carried out in their true spirit. The declaration recently attributed to a government minister in the Polish Parliament to the effect that 3,000,000 of the Jewish population in Poland are superfluous and must migrate is violative of my conception of democratic principles and of fundamental human rights.—Senator Joseph T. Robinson, of Arkansas.

cause of race or creed, and at the same time remain indifferent to the tragic plight of the Jewish people in Germany. What crime have they committed? Are the standards of measurement by which we determine the worth of men to be applied to all except the Jewish people? Against such a policy and against such action we, in the name of labor and of the masses of the people, must emphatically protest. Men are men, not because of race or creed but because of worth, honesty and integrity.

We look to the future with hope believing that ultimately right and justice will prevail among the nations of the world. We have faith in the Ruler of the Universe and in the triumph of right over wrong. We cannot believe that a tyrant such as Hitler shall continue to shape the destiny of such democratic, liberty-loving people as the Germans have shown themselves to be. We shall all rejoice when the end of the reign of the dictator in Germany will be definitely reached.

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The C.I.C.'s Notebook

Posts adjacent to the areas suffering from the floods have contributed considerable sums of money for relief and have rendered valuable services to flood refugees.

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Received by the President at the White House on February 10th. Met Secretary of Agriculture Wallace and WPA Administrator Harry Hopkins. The President showed unexpected familiarity with objects of JWV as well as its history and that of Jews in the wars of the Republic.

* * * *

Have appointed Past C.I.C. J. George Fredman general chairman of the national memorial services.

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Conferred honorary membership in JWV upon Governor George H. Earle of Pennsylvania in Harrisburg. Spoke on national V.F.W. radio program together with national president of D.A.V.

* * * *

General Frank Hines, administrator of the Veterans' Bureau, who arranged a meeting with the President, has accepted invitation to address our national encampment at Asbury Park. He also spoke on our Washington's Birthday radio program on February 21.

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Attended installation of new Wynnfield Post No. 148 in Philadelphia, and new Parkside Post, installation of Hartford Post, installation of University Heights Post, social function of Mt. Vernon Post, installation of Cleveland Post No. 14, meeting of Departments of Ohio, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, visited new quarters of Italian American War Veterans in Hartford, U. S. Naval Hospital in Philadelphia and Newington Hospital in Hartford.

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Catspaws Of Nazism

People who have been puzzled to account for the amazing series of confessions by veteran Bolsheviks to plots against the regime which they helped create might do well to ponder what there is about Nazi propaganda that makes it so easy for it to deceive ordinarily hard-boiled and realistic men and women. No group of men knows the wiles and pitfalls of propaganda better than ex-servicemen. It is also a fact that veterans who have known the suffering and hate of war want no part of anything that will bring another. And it is also fairly well known, we believe, that the policies of the present German government are perhaps the chief threat to the peace of the world.

We are moved to these reflections by the fact that there was recently held in Berlin, at the invitation and under the auspices of the German government, what purported to be an international veterans conference. The principal object of the conference was to mobilize all ex-servicemen for peace. Fifty-one delegates from 14 countries, including three Americans, were present. Held in any other country a conference of this character at this critical moment in world affairs would necessarily have been a significant undertaking for peace. But under the sponsorship of men who have built up a gigantic military machine for the sole purpose of browbeating the world such a conference was bound to be of little significance. Words of peace by Hitler, Blomberg, Hess and Goering, the creators of the German military menace, mean nothing, as we have learned. Why then did the veterans of 14 nations allow themselves to be made the catspaws of Nazi propaganda?

We salute the American Legion for having made it clear that the three Legion members who attended the conference did not represent the Legion. Those three Americans claimed to represent Fidac. What has Fidac to say about it?

Passover

The keynote of Passover, which this year begins on the eve of March 26th, has always been "Freedom," for this holiday is the Jewish Fourth of July. "We were slaves under Pharaoh . . ." is the note of jubilation with which we have always read the Haggadah. For many decades Jews in America could make their seder a ceremony of tribute to their liberation from alien and hostile forces. There could be genuine exaltation in the increasing emancipation of Jews from the vicious and repressing influences of an alien world.

But Passover, 1937, has an extraordinary atmosphere of tragedy surrounding it, which is even more poignant in the light of the holiday which it is supposed to be. The past year has demonstrated with striking clarity that "the people of Israel are one." Persecution of Jews in Germany, Poland, Austria, Hungary and elsewhere in the world is not merely a subject for sympathetic comment. It becomes a matter of the deepest concern to us who live on a plane of equality.

This year more Jews will celebrate Passover than ever before because they will have a new conception of the phrases that describe the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt,—a new vision of what freedom means to a people. Passover is a perennial reminder to the Jew that he is not merely part of an ancient people but that the experiences of the moment are but reflections of the past. It becomes much easier to adjust oneself to hardship when one knows that those difficulties have been encountered before and have been surmounted.

Lesson In Americanism

We seem to have been laboring under an illusion. It has always been our belief, and of most Americans, that a naturalized citizen was equal in status and rights to a native-born citizen. But the Pennsylvania section of the Patriotic Order Sons of America thinks differently. When Governor George H. Earle appointed Russian-born Albert M. Greenfield of Philadelphia as chairman of the State Commission to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Federal Constitution, Charles B. Helms, State Secretary of the Order, publicly protested. He demanded the recall of Mr. Greenfield's appointment on the ground that the position "calls for a man of American birth and background" and insisted it was "unfair . . . to select a man said to be born in Russia . . . to head such an important American celebration."

Mr. Helms seems to have a perverted idea of patriotism and citizenship. In Germany a man's race and birthplace are important but in the United States only the man himself counts. We think the best reply to Mr. Helms and those who think and act as he does came from Federal Judge Albert W. Johnson, a past national president of the Patriotic Order Sons of America. Said Judge

Johnson: "As chairman of the commission, his (Mr. Greenfield's) life of service to the state and nation will be an example in loyalty and an inspiration to the native born as well as to the foreign born of our citizens to support our Constitution." And Governor Earle in characteristic fashion rebuked Mr. Helms by telling him that "to permit any consideration of race or religion to influence my judgment in the appointment of men to positions of public trust" would be "un-American and unpatriotic."

Mr. Helms had better do a little more studying in American history before he sets himself up as an authority on Americanism and patriotism.

Investigation Needed

Can you picture Nazis drilling in American uniforms under which they wear the swastika? Can you imagine Nazis saluting the American flag in an American armory? Can you conceive of Nazis enrolled in regiments of American soldiers? No, neither can we! But it might have happened because of the stupidity (we hesitate to call it something worse) of two officers of Battery D, 244th Artillery of the New York National Guard. Seeking recruits for the battery, Captain Joseph D. Curran, in charge of Battery D, and Lieutenant Frederick Harkin, chairman of the battery's recruiting committee, placed a paid advertisement in the *Deutscher Weckruf und Beobachter*, the official Nazi organ in this country.

The advertisement, the full text of which we print elsewhere in this issue, invited young Germans with their first citizenship papers to join Battery D. The advertisement was headed by the German word, "Auf-ruf" ("Call!"). When this amazing incident was discovered Captain Curran and Lieutenant Harkin denied knowing that the *Weckruf und Beobachter* is a Nazi sheet but admitted it was a blunder. Granting that it is only a serious error of judgment, we wonder why they thought it necessary to depart from previous custom of not accepting as recruits any men who had not obtained their second papers.

We take note of the statement by Adjutant-General Walter G. Robinson, commander of the New York National Guard, expressing regret for this affair and declaring that it will not happen again. But we cannot agree with him that no investigation is necessary because technically no rule has been broken. We can still remember the charges that Nazis were trying to join the 71st Regiment in 1934. If such things can happen twice in less than four years in New York, a sweeping inquiry is urgently required to see that they can't happen and won't occur again.

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