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# **Anti-Draft Meeting is Prevented by Police: Squad of Patrolmen Sent to New Star Casino to Disperse Crowds: Democracy vs. Conscription” was to be Discussed — Capt. Brady Takes Initiative**

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Captain Brady of the 39th Police Precinct prohibited the mass meeting against conscription that was to have been held last night in New Star Casino, 107th Street and Park Avenue.

A squad of policemen were sent to the hall at 8 o'clock to disperse the crowds of young men that sought admission.

Neither the police headquarters nor Inspector Frank J. Morris of the 5th Inspection District could give any reason why Captain Brady should have stopped the meeting, and it is believed that he acted entirely on his own authority. The meeting was called to discuss “Democracy vs. Conscription.” The speakers were to be Winter Russell, Professor Henry Mussey, Rev. Norman Thomas, and August Claessens.

## **Police Warn Owners.**

The proprietors of the hall, Halpern brothers and Schiffman, were notified on Monday [April 16, 1917] by the police captain that he would not permit the meeting, and they informed Julius Gerber, Secretary of the Socialist Party [of Greater New York] that pressure had been brought upon them not to open the hall.

They would not mention the name of the man who threatened them if they should permit the meeting, saying that they could not afford to further antagonize the authorities.

Monday night the big sign they had put out over the entrance advertising the meeting was taken down and a smaller sign hung saying that the meeting would not be held.

When Abraham Wilson of the Harlem Union Against Conscription brought the \$45 to pay for the hall yesterday it was refused by Schiffman.

## **Wants Socialists Conscripted.**

The young man then went to the 39th Precinct station at 177 East 104th Street and asked Captain Brady what authority he had to stop the mass meeting. He received no satisfaction from the police officer except the surly response that “all Socialists ought to be conscripted anyway.”

When he asked if street meetings would be permitted, the captain refused, saying: “You won't have any meetings in New Star Casino or anywhere else if we can help it.”

The desk sergeant at the station house last night was very reticent about the incident other than the fact that the meeting had been stopped because “it was contrary to the rules and regulations.”

## **Captain Brady “Out Patrolling.”**

All requests to speak with the captain were

useless, the information being constantly supplied that he was out “patrolling his precinct.”

This makes the second time police have denied citizens their right to freely assemble, which is supposed to be a fundamental right under the national constitution. The first instance was the action of Capt. Edwin West of the 285th Precinct a week ago in preventing a meeting of young Socialists in the Queens County Labor Lyceum in Ridgewood.

The only authority they have for it was the statement issued by Mayor Mitchel giving police captains the right to use their discretion in preventing war riots. Commissioner Woods has stated since the Queens meeting was suppressed that he would permit the right of the people to peacefully assemble without restriction.

Many more meetings of conscription are scheduled without having obtained the permission of police. Two will be held tonight, one at Beethoven Hall, 210 East 5th Street, and the other at 371 Willis Avenue, Bronx.

After the Harlem Union Against Conscription had been refused entrance to the hall by the proprietors, they served a summons on Schiffman in a suit for \$1,000 damages to reimburse them for the expense that had been incurred in advertising the meeting.

### **Brooklyn in Big Protest.**

A resolution protesting against conscription and its system of compulsory military and industrial service, and calling upon the youths and the workingmen of the city to organize so as to effectually oppose the enactment of the draft bill, was passed at a protest meeting in Plaza Hall, Havemeyer and Grand Streets, last night. The meeting was under the direction of the 4th & 14th Assembly Districts of the Socialist Party and the Socialist Propaganda League.

Under the direction of Lieut. De Las Evans, 21 uniformed and plainclothesmen were stationed

among the audience. They had nothing to do. The only emotion shown was the overwhelming sorrow. The women, gingham-aproned and shawled, with tired, sad faces, sat back and listened to the explanation of the speakers of the draft bill, conscription, and what it would mean if their sons were taken away from them.

It was when B. Vladeck, city editor of *The Forward*, got up and told of the years of anguish which are taking the place of the years of comfort which we should be having, taking into consideration modern inventions and improvements — when he told them of the war, with its devastations, and the sad, sad days of Siberia, and the still sadder days that were coming for America — it was then that the women in the audience began to sob.

### **Women Show Sorrow.**

One woman in the first row started to rock back and forth, hugging her arms against her breast as though she were cold. A baby, asleep in its mother's arms, snored, undisturbed by the sobs which shook her. Another tall, gaunt woman, sitting very upright with a tiny purse clutched in one large, strong hand, listened to the speaker with a faint, brave smile around her mouth. And she still smiled, although her eyes narrowed and two large tears rolled down her cheeks.

“Militarism robs man of every vestige of human sympathy and feeling,” Vladeck said. “Militarism means darkness. The last 40 or 50 years could have been a veritable paradise for the peoples of the world. Inventions of railroads, steamships, modern buildings, modern conveniences, should have made life a Garden of Eden. But militarism has burned up all of these advantages. It deadens every human spirit.

“Militarism has always been used to keep down the people when they were in revolt against unbearable conditions. The Russian Cossacks broke the spirit of the revolutionists in 1905. Only

3 years of contact with the horrors of war taught them their lesson, and they arose.

“Militarism in this country will be used in the same old way. Conscription is the biggest danger to liberty and freedom of any people.”

All the while Vladeck was speaking the crowds kept coming, until Plaza Hall was filled to overflowing. Every corner was jammed. Some of the speakers had to go outdoors and hold an overflow meeting on the corner. A crowd gathered which grew and grew. At 11 o'clock, when the indoor meeting was finished, the crowd on the street was so great that one could scarcely push through.

Louis C. Fraina, another speaker, said that the only way to combat militarism in this country was by a revolution. He advised the men to get out on street corners and speak against conscription.

“Pay no attention to the warning that the *Evening Sun* gave out in an editorial on April 12 [1917],” he said. “The editor of the *Sun* announced the anti-militarists who spoke on corners against conscription were on the straight road to a long jail sentences.”

Anti-conscription meetings will be held throughout the city this week as follows:

Tonight — Beethoven Hall, 210 East 5th Street. Speakers: Joseph D. Cannon, George R. Kirkpatrick, Samuel Beardsley, Jacob Panken, and Joseph Brodsky, chairman. Direction 3rd—10th Assembly District [branch], Socialist Party.

371 Willis Avenue — Speakers: George R. Kirkpatrick and William M. Feigenbaum. Joint direction of Local Bronx and Branch 1, Socialist Party. Volunteers to distribute throwaways are asked to report at the above address tonight between 7:30 and 8:00 o'clock.

Tomorrow [April 19, 1917] — Westminster Hall, 70 Lennox Avenue, between 113th and 114th Streets, under the direction of the Intercollegiate Emergency Peace League; college professors and students will speak. This meeting was scheduled for this evening, but was postponed so that it might not conflict with the Star Casino meeting.

Friday [April 20, 1917] — Stuyvesant Casino Hall, Blake Avenue and Hinsdale Street, Brooklyn. Speakers: Assemblyman A.I. Shiplacoff and Harry Waton. Direction 23rd Assembly District [branch], Socialist Party.

Admission to each of these meetings will be free. Each will start promptly at 8 o'clock.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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