
Dr. Ackerman Also Swears to Cops' Brutality at Russ Parade: Secretary to Third Assistant Secretary of War Makes Affidavit to Be Handed Hylan.

Identifies Gegan: Head of "Bomb Squad" Was Most Active Among Uniformed Assailants in Charge.

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Following hard upon the publication in yesterday's *Call* of Major Richard C. Tolman's protest against police activity last Wednesday [Oct. 8, 1919] anent the Washington Square protest against the Russian blockade comes the sworn declaration of Dr. Phyllis Ackerman, of 59 Washington Square, charging the police with "deliberate brutality of the most violent and unwarranted kind."

Dr. Ackerman's affidavit, together with that of Major Tolman and scores of others that are being drawn up by Charles Recht, counsel for the Russians, against whom the energies of the police had been directed, will be presented to Mayor Hylan, over the head of Police Commissioner Richard E. Enright, in the hope that adequate steps may be taken to avert the use of methods of the kind employed by the police last Wednesday, in which innocent bystanders — a reporter for *The Call* among them — were ruthlessly beaten up.

Recht, in making public Dr. Ackerman's affidavit, told a *Call* reporter yesterday that the sentencing of 7 Russians to the workhouse for indirectly participating in the demonstration was breeding more anarchy and disregard for the government than any actions on the part of those who were demanding that the blockade against Soviet Russia be removed by the Allies. He scored the slur cast by Magistrate Sweetser upon the demonstrators by calling them "foreign Russians."

Crowd in Perfect Order.

Dr. Ackerman, who appeared before Magistrate Sweetser in defense of the 7 Russians, is private secretary to the Third Assistant Secretary of War. She alleges:

1. There was perfect order when the paraders assembled.
2. Sergeant James J. Gegan of the Bomb Squad rained blows upon members of the crowd with a huge pole.
3. Women were struck unmercifully by police.
4. Brutality by the police was of the most violent and unwarranted kind.

Assistant District Attorney Rorke admitted yesterday that complaints against the police, alleging brutality in connection with the Washington Square affair, have reached his office.

Dr. Ackerman's Affidavit.

About 1 o'clock on the afternoon of Wednesday, October 8 [1919], I looked out of the window of my study and observed a crowd of people assembling in the square. My curiosity being aroused by the heavily increasing numbers, I went out among them to see what was happening. I found what I estimated to be between 2,000 and 2,500 men and women, and even some small children gathered there, some of them bearing banners, and found them all to be either

protests against our invasion of Russia or protests on behalf of the political prisoners now held in the United States jails.

I first watched the crowd at Washington Square South. A few mounted policemen and a few plain-clothesmen arrived. These officers of the law at first merely parleyed with what appeared to be the leaders of the group. Members of the crowd themselves insisted in keeping the roadway clear for traffic. There was perfect order, good nature, no jostling, no noise, no protests of any kind at the long delay.

I then made my way across the Square, meeting everywhere with perfect courtesy as I broke through their ranks, to the northeast corner of the Square. There 2 members of the crowd were whistling and keeping the roadway clear for traffic, and asked all to draw to one side of the street, leaving a lane for the trucks to pass along. In spite of that fact, however, 4 or 5 uniformed foot policemen came along and threw themselves with all their force against the crowd, jamming them up against the curb. Even under this provocation, however, the crowd remained good natured and made no retort, either in word or act. Suddenly the crowd turned right-about face and slowly began to file up Fifth Avenue.

I hurried up along Washington Square north to Fifth Avenue, and then up Fifth Avenue, following the procession. I got up the steps of the Brevoort Hotel, the procession having reached the corner of Fifth Avenue and 9th Street. I ran up the steps of the hotel to see what was going on. Suddenly there was a clatter of hooves and about a dozen mounted policemen crashed down the avenue from the direction of Washington Square and galloped at full speed into the crowd, swinging long clubs. They drove them against the iron fence and into the areaways of the houses, beating violently on all sides of them.

Immediately the steps in front of the Hotel Brevoort were cleared, but about 200 of the marchers had been jammed into houses and yards above that, toward 9th Street. The police ordered them out. The mounted police meanwhile rode up and down the sidewalk to catch chance passers and when these refugees attempted to come out, as the police had commanded them, the police, both mounted and men on foot, stood on either side of the sidewalk and beat them. Conspicuous among these police was the heavy-set, gray-haired man whom I have since had identified as Sergeant Gegan.

He had picked up a long pole, which had broken off one of the banners, and was beating so violently

at everyone who came past that he was gasping, red in the face, and perspiring. At every opportunity he rained brutal blows on every man or woman who came within reach.

I saw one policeman in uniform on foot follow a woman up, striking her violently half a dozen times, until she fell to the ground and had to be picked up by a man and assisted off. In two other similar cases I saw a man beaten to the ground, and when he attempted to rise, beaten again, going off staggering and still pursued by the blows of the police. The police also cleared the steps of the Brevoort, upon which some of the marchers had taken refuge, but it was a notable fact that they did not request me to move, though I had been walking with the crowd and might have been associated with them.

After most of the crowd had dispersed, the police, both on horse and afoot, continued to pursue any remnants of it they could see in sight, still beating violently. I noticed when a man was beaten and did not run they were apt to stop and beat the next man, but in every case where a man ran, the police, animated by the instinct of the hunt, pursued and continued to beat. The most dreadful piece of brutality I witnessed was a young foreigner in workingman's clothes, who was coming along the avenue, being beaten by the mounted police. The man ran along the sidewalk and dived into Washington Mews. Three of the mounted police and a foot policeman followed him. I believe a whistle was blown. Other police appeared at University Place, at the other end of the Mews, and the man threw up his hands, indicating surrender; but no mercy was shown him. He was driven to the next group, who still beat him. The next I saw him the mounted police were pursuing him through the University Place, still beating him.

It was conspicuous that anyone in working clothes, or who seemed to be a member of the working class, was beaten, shoved, told to move on, and followed up; whereas I, who deliberately pushed my way in with all my might among 3 policemen, was deliberately left alone, the policemen stepping aside. A tenement woman spoke of the policemen as brutes. Five of them pursued her with swinging clubs, but failed to hit her. I stood in front of 6 policemen and said the same thing with greater force, but they merely looked abashed and did not know what to say. The point I wish to emphasize is that the only disorder there was provoked by the police themselves, by deliberate brutality of the most violent and unwarranted kind.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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