
Legion Mob Kidnaps Mrs. Hazlett in Iowa: Banker's Son, Who is Local Commander, Leads Gang That Seizes Socialist Speaker, and Drives Her 20 Miles in Country and Back — Mayor Refuses Protection [event of Aug. 11, 1921]

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RED OAK, Iowa, August 12 [1921].— Mrs. Ida Crouch-Hazlett, National Organizer for the Socialist Party, touring Iowa in the face of American Legion mobs who have attacked her in numerous cities, arrived here today after another attack on her by the American Legion members at Shenandoah last night.

Led by the local Commander of the American Legion, a mob kidnapped Mrs. Hazlett, carried her into the country and then returned her, the authorities of the town doing nothing to uphold her constitutional rights or to punish the kidnapers.

She was speaking from an automobile when the mob appeared. Violent hands jerked her from her car and she was bundled into another automobile and driven 20 miles out of town before the gang decided to turn back.

Tom Murphy, son of the leading banker of Shenandoah and Commander of the local American Legion, is said to have been the ringleader of the kidnapers. The tactics were similar to those used in the attack upon the Socialist speaker at Boone, Iowa.

Interrupting the meeting, the Legion men demanded that Mrs. Hazlett stop speaking. She refused to do so, taking her stand on the constitutional right of free speech and assemblage. At the same time she called upon the city authorities to

give her protection.

An officer, taking his tone from the ex-service men, told her to stop speaking, declaring that she was inciting a riot. Mrs. Hazlett demanded that the officer arrest either her or those who were actually inciting to riot.

The officer declined to do either, and the Legion mob then demanded Mrs. Hazlett's arrest.

The officer, apparently afraid to go too far, continued to refuse to arrest her, however.

Mayor Refuses Protection.

Thereupon the Legion mob dragged the speaker from the car, bundled her into another car with 8 members of the ex-serviceman's organization, and drove at a reckless speed through the country.

The 8 "defenders of democracy" demanded that she promise not to attempt to speak any more. She refused to comply. They then asked her what they were to do with her. She told them that she could see that they were irresponsible, but that she declined to assume responsibility for them.

Twenty miles out in the country they turned around and returned Mrs. Hazlett to the Doty Hotel.

She immediately telephoned Mayor George Warner and asked protection for her party rights.

Mayor Warner, who is the richest man in town, refused, saying that she was inciting a riot.

Refused protection under the Constitution, Mrs. Hazlett informed a crowd that had gathered at the hotel after the Legionnaires had brought her there that there was no free speech in Shenandoah.

“The authorities have surrendered to the American Legion,” she declared.

Mrs. Hazlett spoke on 3 days without interruption in Burlington and was assured by the Mayor, who was elected with a labor administration, that there was free speech there, that she had the right to present her party program and to criticize both the government and the officials. The Mayor was formerly a member of the Socialist Party, belonging to the same local of which John M. Work was a member at Mystic, Iowa.

Has Been Attacked 5 Times.

Mrs. Ida Crouch-Hazlett, National Organizer for the Socialist Party and a veteran speaker, whose home is in Brooklyn, has been attacked 5 times by American Legion mobs in Iowa, where she was sent by the National Executive Committee of her party to organize branches of the party

that were broken up during and after the war.

She was first attacked at Newton on July 23 [1921], where the mob trailed her through the streets to the home of a friend, surrounded the house, and demanded that she leave the city, yelping at her heels as she made her way to the station, where they returned her suitcase, taken from her when her meeting was attacked before the courthouse.

She was attacked on July 24 and 25 by American Legion members in Des Moines, and at last held a conference with city authorities and American Legion men, the result of which was that the city at length agreed to protect her rights. She returned and addressed a huge crowd unmolested.

She was attacked at Boone on July 28, where she continued to speak in a rain of missiles, while the Commander of the American Legion tried to induce her to abdicate her right of free speech.

“The state of Iowa is in the hands of an American Legion mob of kids,” Mrs. Hazlett said at Boone, and added that the local government had fallen down in nearly every instance.

In face of this series of assaults she has continued her speaking tour.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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