

COMDR. J. F. SHAFROTH TOLD CONGRESS TODAY THAT A NAVY RECRUITING PARTY FOUND THREE NAZI SWASTIKAS PAINTED IN THE CREW'S QUARTERS OF AN AMERICAN MERCHANT SHIP THEY BOARDED AT NEW ORLEANS TO RECRUIT CREW MEMBERS FOR THE NAVAL RESERVE.

HE TOLD THE HOUSE NAVAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE THAT A FIST FIGHT BROKE OUT ON THE VESSEL WHEN THE PARTY TRIED TO INTERVIEW THE MEN. HE SAID THAT A LABOR LEADER HAD INSTRUCTED THE MEN TO REFUSE TO BE INTERVIEWED.

SHAFROTH IDENTIFIED THE SHIP AS THE S. S. DELTA ARGENTINA, OPERATED BY THE MISSISSIPPI SHIPPING CO. BETWEEN GULF PORTS AND SOUTH AMERICA. THE INCIDENT OCCURRED MAY 1.

"A RECRUITING PARTY BOARDED THE VESSELS IN NEW ORLEANS AND THE CHIEF MATE CALLED THE MEN TOGETHER TO BE INTERVIEWED," HE SAID.

FOUR WERE INTERVIEWED BEFORE IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT THE DELEGATE OF THE SEAFARERS INTERNATIONAL UNION (AFL) WAS INSTRUCTING THE MEN NOT TO BE INTERVIEWED.

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THEY WERE REFUSED TO SIGN UP AND WHEN INTERVIEWED THE MATE WASN, A. ANNIS, INDICATED HIS WILLINGNESS TO SIGN UP, HE WAS CONFRONTED BY ABLE SEAMAN A. CORY, WHO BLASPHEMED THE NAVY AND THE UNITED STATES AND TOLD ANNIS HE WAS A TRAITOR TO THE UNION.

"A FIST FIGHT STARTED WHICH WAS BROKEN UP BY A SHIP'S OFFICER. WHEN MEMBERS OF THE RECRUITING PARTY WERE TOLD THAT SWASTIKAS WERE PAINTED BELOW DECKS IN THE QUARTERS, THEY INVESTIGATED AND FOUND THREE."

THE COMMITTEE IMMEDIATELY ORDERED AN INVESTIGATION OF THE INCIDENT. CREW MEMBERS WILL BE SUBPENAED. SHAFROTH SAID HOWEVER, THE DELTA ARGENTINA IS ENROUTE TO SOUTH AMERICA. CHAIRMAN VINSON ANNOUNCED HE WILL INTRODUCE A BILL MAKING IT UNLAWFUL TO INTERFERE WITH NAVY RECRUITING AND THAT HEARINGS ON THIS BILL WILL START TOMORROW.

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NEW ORLEANS--LOUIS B. PATE, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE MISSISSIPPI SHIPPING COMPANY, ADMITTED TODAY THE FINDING OF "TWO OR THREE" SWASTIKAS IN THE PAINT LOCKER ROOM OF THE S. S. DELTARGENTINO. HE DENIED, HOWEVER, THERE HAD BEEN A FIST FIGHT ABOARD THE SHIP.

PATE HAD HEARD RUMORS THAT BOATSWAIN BLACKIE ANNIS WENT ASHORE AFTER THE NEW LUXURY SHIP DOCKED HERE APRIL 30 AND GAVE ALLEN COVY, DISCHARGE SEAMAN, A BEATING. HE SAID HE HAD NO KNOWLEDGE THAT THE REPORTED BEATING HAD ANY CONNECTION WITH THE FINDING OF THE SWASTIKAS.

COVY HAD BEEN WITH THE DELTARGENTINO SINCE IT WAS DELIVERED TO THE SHIPPING COMPANY LAST NOV. 8 IN BALTIMORE AND HAD MADE ALL THREE TRIPS TO SOUTH AMERICA SINCE THAT TIME. HE HAD BEEN ADVISED PRIOR TO DOCKING HERE ON THE LAST TRIP THAT HE WAS FIRED, PATE SAID.

THE PAINTING OF THE SWASTIKAS OCCURRED SOMETIME BETWEEN NOON THE DAY BEFORE DOCKING AND NOON THE DAY OF THE DOCKING, AN INVESTIGATION AT THE TIME INDICATED, PATE SAID.

"WE COULD NEVER FIND WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PAINTING OF THE SWASTIKAS," HE CONTINUED, "SO WE CONCLUDED IT WAS THE WORK OF A PRACTICAL JOKER."

PATE SAID THE COMPANY HAD "NEVER HAD ANY REASON TO DOUBT THE AMERICANISM" OF THE SEAFARER'S INTERNATIONAL UNION WHICH HAS A CONTRACT WITH HIS LINE.

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