

GOERING ACTS TO END TALK OF PERSECUTION

Says "Every German Smiles When He Learns" of Protests in U. S.

Berlin, March 25.—(AP)—Captain Hermann Goering, cabinet minister without portfolio, redeemed his pledge today to permit foreign correspondents to see and talk to prominent arrested Communists and other members of the left in order that they might satisfy themselves that the prisoners were neither dead nor injured.

The imprisoned man displayed by the police showed no evidence of having been hurt nor did they make any serious complaints.

Captain Goering made the pledge in an interview in which he asserted he would "never stand for persecuting a man simply because he is a Jew", and that foreigners visiting Germany this summer would enjoy the fullest freedom.

Referring to protests in the United States against alleged maltreatment of Jews, the cabinet minister said: "Every German smiles when he learns that on next Monday prayer meetings will be held in America".

Visit Thaelmann's Cell.

In their visits to arrested Communists the foreign correspondents were escorted by Rudolf Diehls, chief of the criminal police. They were taken first before the cell of Ernst Thaelmann, Communist member of the Reichstag and a presidential candidate last year.

"You will observe that Thaelmann looks physically fit," the police chief said. "That he is not spiritually comfortable need not surprise you, for Thaelmann does not like it that he who regards himself as a political prisoner is in the same jail with criminals."

"However, as he has been the leader of the party accused of inciting the Reichstag fire, that cannot be helped. Thaelmann further complains that he does not like the reading matter given to him."

Here Thaelmann, who had stood quietly looking at the correspondents, rather amusedly walked to his cot from which he took a volume entitled "Jolly Tales From Swabia."

He handed it to Chief Diehls, who said: "We can talk about that afterwards."

The Communist leader declined to permit photographers to snap him and also remained mum toward the correspondents. To the query: "Have you any complaint with reference to your food or physical well-being?" He shook his head. He looked well.

A few cells further on was Werner Hirsch, editor of the Communist Rote Fahne.

"Have you anything to complain about?" Chief Diehls asked the prisoner.

"Nothing," Hirsch replied, "except that the Nacht-Ausgabe yesterday claimed I had denied having seen anybody badly handled. On the contrary I saw police with bloody eyes and other injuries delivered here from the storm troop (Nazi) barracks."

"That," said Chief Diehls, "was during the first days of the revolution when to save these people from further violence we took them into protective custody."

Hirsch stated he had not been arraigned nor permitted to have counsel visit him. Food and care, he said, were good and he was permitted to smoke.

Meet Other Prisoners.

In Chief Diehls' office the correspondents next found Carl von Ossietzky, a Jewish man of letters and editor of the Radical Weltbuehne; Ernest Torgler, Reichstag floor leader for the Communists, and Ludwig Renn, militant pacifist.

Von Ossietzky politely bowed and introduced himself to every visitor. He stated that his treatment was no different from that accorded anybody taken into protective custody. No charge had been preferred, he said, nor had he anything vital to complain of. He seemed to take his situation good naturedly.

Torgler specifically denied to the Associated Press that, as reported, he had been beaten by a Nazi storm trooper.

"Nothing whatever happened to me," he said, "for I surrendered myself to the police."

What was hard for him, he continued, was the fact that he had not been permitted for four weeks to see his wife and children, but this was remedied Friday when they went to see him.

He vigorously denied having been at the Reichstag shortly before the fire February 27, for which the government held Communist incendiaries responsible. He also denied having left the Reichstag building at about the time of the fire in the company of Marinus van der Lubbe, alleged Dutch Communist, asserted by government authorities to have assisted in setting the blaze. The prisoner said he had nothing in a physical way of which to complain.

To a question about whether, as charged by Captain Goering, he "whined" when he was arrested, Torgler flashed: "That is absolutely untrue".

Renn, who stood defiantly in the police chief's office, seemed unimpressed to talk much, but he did complain of the food.

"These men could not be better cared for if they were under God's personal protection," Chief Diehls said after the prisoners had been led away. "In fact some of them would have fared badly if we had not arrested them protectively. A man like Torgler has high human qualities, which fact will certainly be taken into account."

In the interview preceding the visit to the prisoners Captain Goering expressed the belief that Jews and Socialists abroad were rendering poor service to German friends by making unfavorable reports on conditions in Germany and by holding protest mass meetings.