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ANTI-GERMANISM IN THE AMERICAN SOUTHEAST DURING WORLD WAR I

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This dissertation, written by William B. Gonzalez, and entitled Anti-Germanism in the American Southeast During World War I, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgement.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This study examines anti-German sentiment in the American Southeast during World War I. Most scholarly works that have examined anti-Germanism during the war have focused primarily on the Midwest where German-Americans were particularly numerous. Examining similar hysteria in the Southeast is worthwhile not only because of the lacuna in the existing literature, but also because this work contextualizes anti-Germanism with the two principal features of contemporary Southern distinctiveness: the race issue and the region's rural nature.

With regard to race, the Jim Crow South produced an idiosyncratic manifestation of anti-German hysteria - the fear that Germans would conspire with African Americans to sabotage the war effort. This fear was particularly prevalent in April 1917, when the US entered World War I. Aside from this feared German/Black alliance, the study will show that other elements of the hysteria, such as the spy scare, more closely followed the pattern of its manifestation elsewhere in the country. The attack on German culture was particularly fierce in the region and led to the banning of instruction of the German language in the schools of many communities. A principal source for the first two

chapters are newspapers published in the relevant states from April 1917 when the US entered the war until November 1918 when World War I ended.

The later chapters analyze the roles of the more notorious demagogic populist leaders of the region and local councils of defense in regard to the hysteria. Some of these populist politicians joined the wave of anti-German appeals, others, for a variety of reasons did not, and suffered severe political consequences. Although, there was no discernible difference between the patterns of anti-Germanism in rural areas as compared to the cities, archival material of the Council of National Defense and state-level council documents show that the women's divisions of these organizations played a significant role in disseminating anti-German propaganda to rural schools and casts a new light on the participation of women in the war effort.

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INTRODUCTION

The *Tampa Tribune* reported on April 9th, 1918, that pieces of ground glass had been found in bread served to customers at a local restaurant. Mr. Allen, the owner of the bakery that had supplied the bread, said he could not explain how this had happened as he had already fired all "suspicious Germans" from his business and most of his employees were black. After students from a high school also complained about adulterated bread, hundreds of calls were made to wives by their husbands instructing them to check on the bread in their homes. In the same edition, an article warned readers that there was no federal law that prohibited putting glass in food although the writer called for a new law to stop such examples of German "devilishness and ingenuity."[1] The following day, an elderly man was arrested after reporting discovering a piece of glass in his bread. The police immediately suspected the man of having placed the glass there himself, not least because the piece in question was much larger than the ground glass in the original cases. Mr. Allen eventually admitted that he, indeed, had one German employee, but nonetheless the authorities came to believe that the incident stemmed from an attempt by a local rival to damage Mr. Allen's business rather than any nefarious plot by German agents.[2]

[1] On bread with glass from Mr. Allen's bakery see: "GLASS FOUND IN BREAD: WARRENTS ARE ISSUED," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 10, 1918, 10. On the need for new laws see: "A FEDERAL LAW LACKING," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 10, 1918, 6.

[2] "INVESTIGATE REPORTS OF GLASS FOUND IN BREAD AND ELSEWHERE," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 11, 1918, 5.

This seemingly random exhibition of paranoia can be viewed as a symptom of the prevailing anti-German sentiment in the American Southeast during World War I, and this dissertation is intended to examine the nature and extent of this phenomenon in the region. With the entry of the United States in World War I the German community in America, previously welcomed by the country and lauded for its industriousness and business acumen, became a target of harassment. German-Americans were particularly numerous in the Midwest and, therefore, most scholarly works on anti-German sentiment during World War I have focused primarily on that area. This dissertation will expand on the topic by examining its manifestation in the Deep South, particularly in the states of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, North Carolina, and South Carolina. This is worthy of examination as anti-Germanism in the region has been barely touched upon in the existing scholarly literature.

This dissertation will also situate World War I anti-Germanism in regard to the particular sensibilities of the South where the issue of race was a dominant feature of the era. Accordingly, how anti-German hysteria was affected by the peculiarities of Southern racial discourse will be a recurring theme in this study. The end goal of the dissertation is not just a recounting of incidents that occurred in the Southeast as a result of anti-German hysteria (although many incidents will be discussed and categorized) but, rather, it is intended to highlight a unique dimension to Southern anti-Germanism, namely the fear that Germans were inciting African Americans to sabotage the war effort. Furthermore, the examination of a feared conspiracy between Germans and African Americans provides a new perspective for discussing racial discourse in the region. In addition,

through its focus on German-Americans, this work will shine a light on one aspect of immigration in the Jim Crow South by observing how quickly a respected immigrant community might be transformed into a marginalized group.

This study will also contextualize 'the German issue' with Southern ruralism- another distinctive aspect of the region in this era. This feature stands in stark contrast to the states of the industrial Midwest, where many German-Americans resided. According to the 1910 census, of the Southeastern states being examined in this work, Mississippi had the highest percentage of its population (88.5%) living in rural areas, defined by the census as communities with less than 2,500 people. Louisiana had the lowest percentage of rural population, with slightly more than 70% of its people living in such communities.[3] As a point of comparison, 44% of Ohioans lived in rural areas and 53% of Michiganders lived in communities of less than 2,500 in 1910.[4]

This study will broadly follow the format adopted for other local case studies of anti-German hysteria in various parts of the country. It will examine the patterns of the incidents including but not limited to those that were changed by the impact of Southern distinctiveness. On the timing of the incidents, it will show that a major factor in the more hostile coverage in the spring of 1918 came as a response to the German spring

[3] "1910 Census: Volume 2. Population, Reports by States, with Statistics for Counties, Cities, and Other Civil Divisions: Alabama-Montana," census.gov, date accessed March 27, 2023, https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1913/dec/vol-2-population.html.

[4] On Ohio see: "1910 Census Volume 2: Reports by States." On Michigan see: "1910 Census: Volume 3. Population, Reports by States, with Statistics for Counties, Cities, and Other Civil Divisions: Nebraska-Wyoming, Alaska, Hawaii, and Porto Pico," census.gov, date accessed March 31, 2023, https://www.census.gov/library/publications/1913/dec/vol-3-population.html.

offensive. Newspapers encouraged this anti-German resentment with hyperbolic coverage emphasizing rumors over facts. This study will also show that a campaign against German culture was a major component of the anti-German hysteria in the Southeast, with an attack on German language instruction being a notable aspect of that program. Populist politicians of the region and state-level councils of defense, to varying degrees, encouraged and/or participated in this wave of anti-German resentment. The actions and concerns of these councils highlight the role of the white South in wanting to maintain its black labor force while ensuring that these workers continued in their marginalized status. These councils also had a role in the other aspect of Southern distinctiveness, its rural nature, by supplying propaganda to rural schools.

Yet aside from the racial dimension to anti-German sentiment, one is struck by how similar the hysteria was in the Southeast to other parts of the country. The Deep South, prior to the Civil Rights Revolution, has tended to be the viewed as a place wholly different from the rest of the country yet during the war, federal government spending on the military and ports aided in the development of an economically-speaking backward South.[5] The work will reinforce a more recent notion in scholarly works that in many aspects the Deep South had greater commonality with the rest of the country than had been previously thought.

[5] On the South being viewed as the 'other' see: James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 318. On defense spending and patronage in the South during the war see: Joseph A. Fry, *Dixie Looks Abroad: The South and U.S. Foreign Relations, 1879-1973* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002), 165-167.

The Study in Context of the Literature

Before examining the specific literature regarding anti-Germanism during World War I, some discussion of German immigration to America in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is warranted. In one of many works on immigration in the nineteenth century, Thomas J. Archdeacon's *Becoming American: An Ethnic History* looks at the demographic history of immigration mostly in the 1800s with a focus on assimilation. This broad work provides some insight into the German-American community and contains several chapters covering both 'old' and 'new' immigrants as well as sections on individual immigrant groups. 'Old' immigrants is a commonly used term for immigrants that came to America in the early to mid-nineteenth century mostly from Northern and Western Europe. The term 'new' immigrants signifies immigrants that came to America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, generally from southern and eastern Europe, mostly Catholic and Jewish. The histories of the latter tend to highlight the greater difficulties and resistance encountered by the new immigrants as opposed to the old immigrants. Although some historians have discarded this categorization, it should be noted that it is still commonly taught in today's public schools.[6] Archdeacon dates the old immigrant wave in between 1790 and 1890. By the 1830s, America had become a magnet for immigrants encouraged by steamship agents in Europe and advertisements about the US in European newspapers. Germans, Irish, and British dominated this wave.

[6] On old and new immigrants in a standard textbook for 11th grade American History courses in Florida see: Mark Jarret and Robert Young, *Gateway to US History: The Bridge to Success on Florida's EOC Test* (Lafayette, CA: Florida Transformative Education, 2017), 100.

By 1890, over twenty million people in America were immigrants or children of immigrants.

Although *Becoming American* does not focus particularly on culture, some consideration of conflicting cultural tradition is unavoidable in Archdeacon's analysis of both confrontation and accommodation toward the immigrants. As will be discussed, the fear of German *kultur* was a major component of anti-Germanism during World War I. Archdeacon notes that Protestant white America became increasingly less tolerant not only to immigrants but to Native Americans and those of African descent as well.[7] Protestant unease over the growing number of Catholics in America is central to the Irish-American story and, to a certain degree, the German as well. This unease manifested itself in the issues of temperance, Sabbatarianism, and parochial schools. In fact, this dissertation notes examples of anti-Germanism intertwined with the push for Prohibition. Yet eventually the old immigrants reached an accommodation with American society. While the Irish mostly stayed in the eastern US and became a key part of the Democratic Party urban coalition, the Germans primarily went to live in the Midwest.

The author highlights the growing restrictionist movements that occurred concurrent with the new immigrant wave. Factors for this restrictionism included the increasing identification of immigrants with radicalism and the simultaneous decline in demand for unskilled labor. Germans, however, were not primarily targets of such restrictions. German-Americans were generally prosperous and looked upon favorably

[7] Thomas J. Archdeacon, *Becoming American: An Ethnic History* (New York: Free Press, 1983), 65.

compared to other immigrant groups although there were divisions between German Protestants and Catholics. This relative prosperity of the Germans in America did lead to resentment, as Frederick C. Luebke notes.

One of the few general scholarly works on anti-German hysteria in the US during World War I is Frederick C. Luebke's *Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I*. Interestingly, Luebke has a more nuanced approach to the causes for the anti-German hysteria than some other historians who tend to place the blame for this manifestation mostly at the feet of the federal government, even if Luebke also agrees with the other historians over the state's ultimate culpability. He does note that there was a latent animosity towards German-Americans as a result of a perceived sense of their cultural chauvinism even before such issues became inflamed by the war. One of the categories of 'incidents' highlighted by Luebke was the attack on German language instruction, something that was also prominent in the Southeast even though the region had relatively few German residents.

Luebke demonstrates when the peaks of hysteria occurred, makes suppositions as to the causes of these outbreaks, and cites examples of incidents that ran the gamut from petty rumor mongering to acts of physical violence. Focusing on the Southeast, the dissertation will also focus on the timing of the incidents, examine to what extent was it a top-down phenomenon rather than an organic development, while noting the differences between the states examined. As to the timing of the majority of incidents, Luebke focuses on Spring 1917, Fall 1917 and April 1918. Although not explicitly stated by the author, one can deduce how outside events led to these peaks of activity: America entered

the war in April 1917 and in April 1918 the German Army was launching a major offensive which led to significant American casualties. Yet Luebke places the blame for the hysteria on government action. As in other works on anti-German hysteria, he refers to the speeches of President Woodrow Wilson and former president Theodore Roosevelt. Regarding the American Protective League (APL), a group of private citizens seeking German sympathizers, disloyal Germans, and subversives sponsored by the US Justice Department and the Committee on Public Information (the CPI was essentially an American Ministry of Propaganda) the government, he claims, "cultivated a hatred of everything German."[8] This irritational hatred eventually and inevitably seeped down through all levels of society. State councils of defense, set up with the encouragement of the federal government, worked closely with the APL and were local instruments of enforcing *superpatriotism*, at least in some states. Not surprisingly this environment led to several acts of violence against Germans most notably the lynching of Robert Prager, a German immigrant, in Illinois.[9]

Between the various works on anti-Germanism during World War I on the national level discussed in broader works on attacks on civil liberties, a fairly consistent story is told. In the United States, propaganda efforts on an unprecedented scale and scope were mounted by an ambitious Progressive Era national government along with newly created local public organizations. These initiatives purposefully created if not

[8] Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I*, (De Kalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 213.

[9] Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 247, 273.

managed a wave of hysteria in order to promote 'loyalty'.[10] This dissertation, however, will highlight the South's unique manifestation of Progressive anti-Germanism, the rhetoric and actions of populist politicians that combined their racism with a veneer of Progressive reform. For the traditional view, one prominent example is Harry N. Scheiber's *The Wilson Administration and Civil Liberties, 1917-1921* which cites the so-called Progressive administration of Woodrow Wilson for its culpability in the hysteria. To Scheiber and other historians, the question is not whether the administration bears responsibility for the hysteria but to what extent was Wilson personally responsible for it. Scheiber certainly puts the blame for deliberate incitement of anti-German sentiment on the Wilson administration, albeit that he excuses Wilson himself. Scheiber begins with recounting Wilson's speech on December 7th, 1915 that put into question the loyalty of foreigners and called for the passage of laws to suppress disloyalty. Interestingly, the author views this attack on German-Americans as a tactic to deflect attention from the German government as Wilson was trying to mediate between the warring parties at the time, a point not mentioned by any of the other works in this brief review of the literature.[11] The author describes in detail the components of the Espionage Act that not only included punishment for interference with military operations and recruitment but also for the support of enemies. Other measures include the Trading With the Enemy Act that forced German language newspapers in America to translate their coverage of the war into English. Most notorious of all was the so-called Sedition Act, actually an

[10] Harry N. Scheiber, *The Wilson Administration and Civil Liberties, 1917-1921* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1960), 18-20, 43, 47, 49.

[11] Scheiber, *The Wilson Administration and Civil Liberties*, 7.

amendment to the Espionage Act, which made speech against the war illegal and gave the Postmaster General the power to censor mail with objectionable ideas. In addition, the APL became an auxiliary of the Justice Department. Scheiber defends the President by noting that unlike Abraham Lincoln, Wilson had these security measures passed by Congress.[12] Scheiber does concede, however, that Wilson should have taken a stronger public stand against attacks on personal liberty.

Most other works that examine the discord in America during World War I (such as David M. Kennedy's *Over Here*: *The First World War and American Society*) attributes the blame for the hysteria squarely with the Wilson administration which created an environment where enforcement of conformity and suspicion of disloyalty, not just of German-Americans, were ubiquitous. Kennedy is not as forgiving as Scheiber. He agrees that Wilson's December 1915 speech attacking disloyal elements among the foreign born was a seminal moment. A series of attacks on German-Americans occurred especially after the US entry in the war, most notably, the lynching of Robert Prager. The CPI, set up by the administration, had a Progressive muckraker put in charge of it. To the author, this office reflected Progressive reformers' faith in publicity and also the moralizing evangelist nature of Wilson himself.[13] In addition to noting the power of the APL, he correctly observes that the Postmaster General became censor in chief of the

[12] Scheiber, *The Wilson Administration and Civil Liberties*, p.13.

[13] David M. Kennedy, *Over Here*: *The First World War and American Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 47,48.

country.[14] Also, not surprisingly as the Progressives placed great emphasis on education, German language instruction in the schools came under attack. The hysteria was condoned, indeed it was ignited by the government, yet Kennedy also notes that Wilson ignored pleas to speak out against attacks on German-Americans.[15] In the Southeast, the attack on German language instruction was prevalent, and did produce results.

Two earlier works on America during the war also emphasize coercion by, and the ambitions of, the Progressive state. H.C. Peterson and Gilbert Fite in *Opponents of War, 1917-1918* note that many German-Americans and radicals were against conscription. Leaders of the anti-conscription movement were arrested, "the majority that favored conscription refused the right of opponents to criticize the policy."[16] Indeed, the argument in monographs such as Paul L. Murphy's *World War I and the Origins of Civil Liberties in the United States* also puts the blame on the administration. Murphy observes that the World War I era was fundamentally different from other periods in US history, as the centralized government which had already become an instrument of social control "was adopted to repress individualism and diversity of opinion in order to secure the unwavering allegiance of immigrants…"[17] To some Progressives the system had already become liberal, criticism against it was therefore unjustified.

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[14] Kennedy, *Over Here*, 75-76.

[15] Kennedy, *Over Here*, 86-89.

[16] Peterson, H.C. and Gilbert Fite, *Opponents of War, 1917-1918* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968), 29.

[17] Paul L. Murphy, *World War I and the Origins of Civil Liberties in the United States*, (New York: Norton, 1979), 27.

In a more general work on nativism as a whole, it is not surprising that John Higham in *Strangers in the Land: Pattern of American Nativism, 1860-1925* puts the anti-German sentiment during World War I in a broader perspective yet he also faults both national leaders and the federal government for generating the hysteria. After categorizing the three broad themes in American nativism during the nineteenth century, he notes the stresses of World War I brought about a reemergence of nativism. Former President Theodore Roosevelt's attack on 'hyphenated Americans' inflamed feelings against German-Americans although he does recognize that the movement toward *100% Americanism*, a phrase common during the war, had started in the 1890s. It implied universal conformity through total national loyalty. Although exhortations for conformity and loyalty were not new to the country, during the Progressive era statist methods were used to enforce them.[18] Though Higham characterizes the initial actions of the government following entry into the war as restrained, after the onset of the Espionage Act, these interventions became more expansive.

This dissertation, similar to a recent work by Jay Feldman, will show how the intemperate words of a leader of the National German-American Alliance and a German effort to influence American opinion, did indeed contribute to anti-German feeling in the Southeast. While agreeing with the consensus on the culpability of the Wilson administration, to his credit, Feldman in *Manufacturing Hysteria: A History of Scapegoating, Surveillance, and Secrecy in Modern America* does note the outspokenness of some German-Americans in favor of Germany coupled with the discovery that the

[18] John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Pattern of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 205.

German government had spent twenty-five million dollars on propaganda in the US which naturally generated some distrust towards German-Americans.[19] His focus, however, is on the government's suppression of dissent. Like the previously mentioned scholars, Feldman highlights the Wilson speech and Roosevelt's attack on 'hyphenated Americans' as generating anti-German American sentiment. Feldman characterizes the Espionage Act as "a crucial step in the marginalization of dissident minorities, narrowing the avenues of opposition and making protest against the war increasingly dangerous."[20] Feldman, rather graphically, labels the APL a government-backed lynch mob. To emphasize the draconian nature of the Sedition Act, Feldman observes that even Roosevelt felt that it went too far.[21]

For its focus on the role of defense councils and newspapers in anti-Germanism, a local case study by Tina Brakebill provides some useful insights. Although general works on anti-German sentiment during World War I across America as a whole have remained scarce, several historians have examined the local outbreaks of the phenomenon particularly in the Midwest which had a large German population. When trying to understand what caused anti-German hysteria during World War I, Brakebill studied its manifestation in McLean County Illinois and correctly notes that several factors contributed to the phenomenon, "no simple answers are available."[22] She begins her

[19] Jay Feldman, *Manufacturing Hysteria: A History of Scapegoating, Surveillance, and Secrecy in Modern America* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2011), 7.

[20] Feldman, *Manufacturing Hysteria,* 33.

[21] Feldman, *Manufacturing Hysteria,* 58.

[22] Tina Stewart Brakebill, "From "German Days" to "100 Percent Americanism": McLean County,

article by highlighting the vibrant German Day festival in Bloomington, Illinois which attracted twenty thousand people in 1913 including many non-Germans. Yet in a few short years the area was characterized by fear and distrust of German-Americans. The author blames the government, on the national, state, and local level. Although also recognizing that *100% Americanism* was not a new concept, once in the war the government propaganda emphasized it and *superpatriotism*. The Illinois Council of Defense put under its aegis all patriotic organizations in the state, "The Council's goal was apparently to completely script and control the information that the general public was receiving concerning the war in order to elicit the proper patriotic response."[23] Yet government action and propaganda alone was not the only factor. Local newspapers had generally positive coverage of Germans in the area. This ended in Spring 1918. The author, somewhat surprisingly, blames the change in tenor on reports of German atrocities in Belgium rather than the German Spring offensive. What followed in McLean in the last few months of the war were acts of intimidation including a mob forming in front of a school with many German-American pupils and threatening violence. Although recognizing the influence of events in the war for the worsening climate the author concludes that the hysteria can be viewed "in large part, as a reaction to the use of fear tactics and propaganda by those in power."[24] In regard to the timing of the wave of anti-German incidents in 1918, this dissertation will argue that in the

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Illinois, 1913-1918: German Americans, World War One, and One Communities Reaction," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, Vol. 95, No. 2 (Summer 2002): 150.

[23] Brakebill, "From "German Days" to "100 Percent Americanism," 159.

[24] Brakebill, "From "German Days" to "100 Percent Americanism," 168.

Southeast, it was clearly a result of the German Spring Offensive and the growing number of deaths of American soldiers on the battlefields of Europe. In the region, the councils did not have as pro-active role in the spread of anti-Germanism as may have been the case in McLean County.

This study highlights the role of councils in states with a tradition of limited government therefore Petra Dewitt's study of the German community in Missouri during World War I is of particular interest. Dewitt's analysis of anti-German hysteria also blames the national government but points out individual circumstances present in Missouri that made it less susceptible to the national campaign so that the state experienced fewer incidents than in other Midwestern states. The state government felt it simply did not have the authority to impose severe restrictions on the population. The Council of Defense in Missouri tended to not harass German-Americans if they remained quiet on the war. Dewitt also surmises that the propaganda from the CPI did not reach most of the rural areas of the state until late in the war. Even for those who heard the calls for coercion to enforce conformity, the state's tradition of distrust of government limited their effectiveness.[25] Similar to Luebke, Dewitt recognizes there were tensions between German-Americans and the rest of the community before the war. The issues included economic competition, the presence of Germans in the Socialist Party, and most Germans' stance against Prohibition among others, yet she blames even the limited incidents of paranoia on the national government.

[25] Petra Dewitt, *Degrees of Allegiance: Harassment and Loyalty in Missouri's German-American Community during World War I* (Columbus, OH: Ohio University Press, 2012), 60, 61.

The heated passions ignited by anti-Germanism during the war, brought about incidents of discrimination both serious and petty. This range and timing of incidents in the context of a major Midwestern city is the focus of *Burden of Ethnicity: The German American Question in Chicago, 1914-1941*. This dissertation's initial chapters will examine this range of incidents in the context of the Southeast in more depth than Tischauser's work and with an emphasis on the patterns of these incidents. Chicago was home to a large German community. As the war in Europe started, anti-German incidents were few and far between; over four thousand men from the community volunteered to fight in the German Army and the Germans were upfront in supporting politicians who wanted to avoid the US participation in the war. To the author, the turning point came even before the US entry to the war with the sinking of the Lusitania. Also unhelpful was that both presidential candidates in 1916, the incumbent Wilson and the Republican Charles Evans Hughes engaged (in the author's words) German-baiting. Interestingly, the notorious APL was started by Chicagoans who gathered information on Germans. Incidents of physical violence include a German almost thrown off a bridge for not wearing a US flag lapel pin.[26] Yet because of their large numbers, Germans stayed politically active in the city throughout the conflict and helped keep a Mayor in power who did not allow anti-war meetings to be harassed as well as a US representative who had voted against the war. A main theme of the dissertation is that these same types of incidents, to a large degree, occurred in a region with few German-Americans.

[26] Leslie V. Tischauser, *Burden of Ethnicity: The German American Question in Chicago, 1914-1941* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), 39.

Although anti-Germanism during World War I in the Southeast has not been a focus for scholarly works, Texas, a state on the Southern periphery, has been the subject of investigation. These works also reinforce the notion that although there was pre-existing resentment against Germans, and outside events factored in the waves of incidents, government propaganda and action were the main factors in producing anti-German hysteria. Mark Sonntag in "Fighting Everything Germans in Texas" notes anti-German sentiment had its precursor before the war as, "Texans' historic distrust of German Texans helped inspire anti-German activities."[27] German Texans had alienated various segments of Texan society by their support of the Union during the Civil War, and more recently against the drive for Prohibition, and against woman's suffrage. Yet, as Sonntag notes, local defense councils, affiliated with the state council, had the biggest role in anti-German action in the state. Local councils harassed German language newspapers to print pro-Allied news and to encourage its readers to purchase Liberty Bonds. As in other parts of the country, the instruction of the German language in schools was discouraged and after it was eliminated from elementary schools, local councils pushed it to be eliminated from higher levels as well. Some councils pushed for the elimination of the use of German language in Lutheran services. Victoria County's Council of Defense explicitly stated that they were fighting against everything

[27] Mark Sonntag, "Fighting Everything German in Texas, 1917-1919," *The Historian*. Vol. 56, No. 4 (Summer 1994): 656.

conceivably German.[28] According to the author, not surprisingly, this atmosphere of government intimidation led to several incidents of violence against Germans in the state.

The more recent work of Matthew D. Tippens, *Turning Germans into Texans: World War I and the Assimilation and Survival of German Culture in Texas, 1900-1930* agrees with Sonntag both in regard to issues of discord before the war and the dominant role of the of local councils of defense in encouraging anti-German sentiment. Beyond the 'triggers' mentioned by Sonntag, Tippens points out that the Germans tended to be successful and had been gradually assimilated into American society, but the discovery of the Zimmerman Telegram naturally caused much concern in the state and increased anti-German sentiment there. Tippens, more than Sonntag, highlights the role of the national government for purposefully inflating tensions into hysteria. According to him, CPI propaganda became more anti-German as the war continued.[29] The Sedition Act of 1918 not only promoted censorship but increased the feeling of fear and distrust in the state. The state council of defense openly used vigilantes and members of patriotic organizations as their muscle. Tippens, of course, also recounts how county councils of defense pushed to end the use of the German language in Lutheran services and the teaching of the language in schools. As will be shown, similar types of incidents occurred in the Southeast even though the Southeast had less of a German presence than Texas.

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[28] Sonntag, "Fighting Everything German in Texas, 1917-1919," 664.

[29] Matthew D. Tippens, *Turning Germans into Texans: World War I and the Assimilation and Survival of German Culture in Texas, 1900-1930* (Kleingarten Press, 2010), 92.

Anti-German rhetoric and actions were not solely limited to the United States. Any contextualization of the literature on anti-Germanism during the war should also examine the phenomenon from an international perspective. In Britain latent tensions played an even greater role than in the US. In Britain, the hysteria was more bottom-up than top down. In Britain, public animosity toward Germans obliged the government to take measures against Germans in the country. Both in the United States and Britain, events on the battlefield created waves of discontent among the public and added extra volatility. While anti-German hysteria in America can be represented as a story of an ambitious, expansive government aggressively and purposefully creating an environment that combined some latent tension against German-Americans and genuine alarm over events overseas to produce an unprecedented degree of hysteria to promote loyalty and conformity, in Britain, the government proved more of a reluctant mid-wife to the hysteria.

That is certainly the argument especially regarding the top leaders in the government in J.C. Bird's *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians in Great Britain, 1914-1918*. Bird does not view the hysteria as completely spontaneous, however, as propaganda from patriotic groups and some over-zealous politicians were also factors in stimulating anti-alien sentiment in Britain. Yet the focus is not on these players in the drama but the decision-makers in the ministry of H.H Asquith. Bird begins with the pre-war Alien Acts of 1905 that moderated Britain's previously laissez-faire attitude towards immigration. This act was reflective of a growing animosity toward foreigners. The work's primary focus is the Home Office and the efforts of the government to manage the issue of enemy

alien civilians in Britain. Unlike America, by the end of the war a large number of male enemy aliens, over thirty-two thousand, were interned. The government was tentative and ambivalent about the question of interning enemy aliens. Referring to the attitudes of the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary, Bird notes, "Asquith and McKenna mostly saw it as a regrettable necessity that would be discarded after the war."[30] In addition, the War Office simply did not want to lend soldiers for internment purposes that could be better used elsewhere. The public, however, put pressure on the government especially after the riots that resulted from the sinking of the Lusitania.[31] The press baron Lord Northcliffe is discussed in the work given that his newspapers constantly urged the government to do more. There is not much of a focus on the camps themselves, though Bird notes that the aliens were separated by class (in the British context, not surprising) and the conditions in the camps were not overly harsh. According to the author, there was not much difference between the governments of Asquith and David Lloyd George on internment. Bird concludes that moderate politicians tried to balance humanitarian concerns and pressures from the press, critics, and the public. In a volatile and tense times, it was hard to find the right path. Such hesitancy among the politicians was not common in the American Southeast.

Unlike the discussion of the newspaper articles in this dissertation, the scholarly works on the influence of the press in Britain during the war focuses primarily on one man, Lord Northcliffe. In a broad work on World War I, which includes economic

[30] J.C. Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians in Great Britain, 1914-1918* (New York: Routledge, 1986), 44.

[31] Bird, *Control of Enemy Alien Civilians*, 88-89.

analysis of the conflict and a somewhat revisionist view as to which party was at fault for the war, Niall Ferguson also includes some chapters on the British Homefront, in particular the role of the press. Categorized as the first media war, the German military leaders Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff, admitted that the Germans lost the propaganda war. The Germans blamed the press baron Northcliffe, owner of the *Times* which was influential with the elite, and the *Daily Mail* with a broader readership partly for their defeat. Certainly, Lord Northcliffe's newspapers held a strong anti-German government line before the war to the point that some politicians accused him of trying to drive the country into conflict. Yet even Northcliffe, at its start, was uncertain to what extent the British were going be part of the conflict, "as late as 5 August Northcliffe astonished his senior executives by coming out strongly against the sending of the BEF."[32] The press had diverse opinions at the start of the crisis that led to the war and although censorship was imposed, it was mild compared to the draconian measures implemented in the US. Leaders of the press were invited into the government and Northcliffe duly obliged but not before attacking various members of the Asquith government including the Prime Minister himself in his newspapers. Indeed, he hastened the downfall of Asquith. Although the effort was improvised, the British propaganda objectives were to suppress dissent, encourage purchase of bonds, and recruitment. Censorship enabled military secrets to be preserved.

Historian A.J.A. Morris highlights the anti-German line taken by Northcliffe's *The Times*. The focus is on the foreign correspondents of *The Times* in the two decades

[32] Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War: Explaining World War I* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 217.

leading up to the Great War and of course the outsized personality of Lord Northcliffe also owner of the *Daily Mail* and *The Observer.* On Northcliffe and others, "The most ardent, earnest advocates of British imperialism were those most concerned about the empire's decline."[33] Most who shared that viewpoint, including Northcliffe, saw the rising power of Germany as the greatest threat. Yet the narrative is not about the influence of one man. Instead, information is provided on a series of *Times* correspondents in Berlin highlighting their particular foibles and their varied reasons to be wary of the Kaiser and the German Empire. The book also highlights growing animosity between Germany and Britain in a series of incidents from the aftermath of the Boer War to the naval race- all exacerbated by the press. Ultimately, Morris is somewhat ambivalent on whether the so-called radical right press or scaremongers helped bring about the war, though they certainly had influence.

Another scholarly work on Northcliffe certainly recognizes his power though the focus is on his role during the war as both press baron and member of the government rather than a shaper of public opinion before the war. According to J. Lee Thompson in *Politicians, the Press, and Propaganda: Lord Northcliffe and the Great War, 1914-1919*, the noted influence of the press barons, in particular Lord Northcliffe, on the government and the public was palpable, "In the war years he developed a degree of power over political and public opinion that was real, not illusory."[34] As owner of *The Times* and

[33] A.J.A. Morris, *The Scaremongers: The Advocacy of War and Rearmament, 1896-1914* (London: Routledge, 2014), 7.

[34] J. Lee Thompson, *Politicians, the Press, and Propaganda: Lord Northcliffe and the Great War, 1914-1919* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1999), 238.

Daily Mail, he had his newspapers in the first months of the war focus on the danger of German spies in Britain and German atrocities in Belgium. This of course did raise anti-German sentiment in the country. Yet the author includes more details on Northcliffe's papers focus on the shortage of shells. The pressure he put on the government helped bring about the Coalition government of 1915. A Tory, Imperialist and a man who believed in constant action, he hated Asquith for his vacillations and helped engineer the Coalition government's collapse. Lloyd George wanted him on the inside rather than attacking the government on the outside. He was sent on a mission to America to improve relations with that country and was eventually put in charge of propaganda aimed at the enemy. Not all his influence was positive: his papers' constant defense of General Douglas Haig prevented Lloyd George from sacking him. Lloyd George's freedom of movement was limited since he headed a government built upon the Conservative Party machine, the press barons, and a number of Liberals loyal to him rather than Asquith. Once he won the election of 1918, he removed Northcliffe from the government.

Similar to Bird's monograph, a tentative government (again in contrast to the US story) and a public driven by events push for harsh measures against Germans (which certainly was present in the Southeast and America as a whole) is also confirmed in Panikos Panayi's *The Enemy in our Midst: Germans in Britain during the First World War*. Yet like works that discuss the anti-German resentment in America, the author is not hesitant in laying blame at the doors of those he felt were responsible. To Panayi the Radical Right had a key role in fomenting the already brewing anti-German sentiment in

the volatile environment of a country in a protracted war. He defines the Radical Right as nationalist groups such as the Navy League and the National Service League, hyper imperialists in the press, and certain nationalist politicians mostly Conservative but including some hawkish Liberals that had broken from the supposedly pacifist party line.[35] The press stoked anti-German hysteria though the public's anti-immigrant feeling was already present.

Similar pieces of evidence used by Bird are also noted by Panayi though with much more lurid language. The popularity of invasion literature, and the fear of an *Unseen Hand* working against British interests were also signs of the growing resentment. In Panayi's interpretation, the pre-war hatred of Germans was not ever increasing, rather it should be viewed as a "smouldering fire which occasionally came alight prior to the War, but, with the outbreak of hostilities, exploded."[36] The Alien Restriction Act of 1914 which gave the government the ability to restrict alien activities was criticized by the Radical Right as being too weak. Though consistently blaming the organized right, the author concedes that the sinking of the Lusitania in May 1915 by a German U-boat and the death in 1916 of Secretary of State for War, Lord Kitchener after a ship he was traveling in struck a German mine, brought about a public outburst that included anti-German riots and increased pressure on the government to hasten internment. Lord Charles Beresford, who was at the time a member of Parliament and

[35] Panikos Panayi, *The Enemy in our Midst: Germans in Britain during the First World War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 5.

[36] Panayi, *The Enemy in our Midst*, 41.

according to Panayi part of this loose clique, constantly criticized the actions of the government as ineffective and insufficiently harsh.[37] The dissertation will show that in the Southeast, strong criticism of the national government from the region's politicians remained negligible as almost all the politicians were of the same party as the President. Panayi recognizes the public popular hostility towards Germans as a major factor toward pushing the government towards internment and taking harsher measures against Germans. Indeed, he places this in the context of a pre-war and post-war anti-alienism among the British people. The riots, certainly unplanned by those above, compelled the government to act. Panayi, however, more than Bird, arguably apportions greater influence to certain elements of the Right.

In addition to the studies on anti-German resentment, recent works on the South, even though not centered on Germans or even immigrants, highlight elements of Southern distinctiveness which function as a prism through which to view anti-Germanism in the Southeast. Earl and Merle Black's *The Rise of Southern Republicans* history of the political realignment in the South defines the geographic parameters of the South and identifies Southern distinctiveness. The authors describe the South as the eleven states that fought in the Confederacy. The dissertation, however, in the interests of a tighter focus, and also because works on Texas have already been written, concentrates on the seven states of the Southeast. Importantly the authors identify the uniqueness of the South which of course shaped its politics, "the distinctiveness appears

[37] Panayi, *The Enemy in our Midst*, 40, 63, 83.

as the intersection of race and ruralism."[38] A much larger percentage of the population was black compared to the North and since whites in the South generally did not see African Americans as their equals, legal and informal discrimination and racial violence were commonplace. Since the Republican Party was associated with the Confederate defeat, the Republicans were at a severe disadvantage in the South. This is worth noting since a brief spurt of Republican resurgence in coalition with the Populist Party is key to the narrative of Chapter 3.

Race, of course, was a large player in the story. For several decades after the Civil War, African Americans in the South voted Republican yet many blacks were disenfranchised.[39] Those allowed to vote were unable to overcome the overwhelming white Democratic majority in general elections. Interestingly, the authors note how the proportion of blacks seemed to affect the political behavior of the politicians, "the larger the black population, the more "southern Democratic" the behavior of native whites."[40] The few Republican victories in the region tended to occur in states of the Southern periphery where the black population was less than fifteen percent of the total and, therefore, generally experienced less racial strife.[41] Therefore, it is not surprising that the states in the Deep South, with a large black population, produced populist race-baiting leaders and their role in anti-Germanism is a focus of a chapter in this study.

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[38] Earl Black and Merle Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 17.

[39] Black and Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans*, 43-45

[40] Black and Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans*, 22.

[41] Black and Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans*, 17.

Rather than domestic politics, Joseph A. Fry in *Dixie Looks Abroad* examines Southern distinctives in the context of the region's approach to US foreign policy. The author defines the South as the eleven formerly Confederate states and, unlike Earl and Merle Black includes Kentucky as well. Fry justifies this choice by noting that all shared elements of Southern distinctiveness- what he defines as, dependence on staple agriculture and the race issue, a white supremacist social and economic system that disempowered African Americans. Unlike the authors of the other works examined, he broadens the list of Southern distinctiveness to include other elements relevant to his focus, "concern for personal and national honor, and devotion to territorial expansion prior to the Civil War and economic expansion generally."[42] To Fry, because of the South's unique history with slavery, defeat in war and weak economic position, several themes are consistent in Southern policies: fear of centralized government power; desire for export markets; certain racial assumptions; and the use of personal violence which became equated with the willingness to use military force in foreign relations.

While the work by the Blacks focused on race and to a lesser extent religion and not class, *Dixie Looks Abroad* is centered on the importance of commercial and racial interests in Southern attitudes. Prior to the Civil War, southern commercial and racial attitudes compelled the expulsion of Native Americans from lands east of the Mississippi. These twin concerns also encouraged Southerners and in particular Andrew Jackson to hasten the withdrawal of Spain from Florida. Most certainly, commercial and racial concerns pushed Southerners to support the war against Mexico in the 1840s that gained

[42] Fry, *Dixie Looks Abroad*, 3.

for America a substantial portion of land that Southerners presumed would be open to the expansion of slavery.

The author notes, however, that Southern commercial interests were not able to overcome lingering anger at the Republican Party which had led the North in their victory over the South and brought about the end of slavery. Southern politicians tended not to support the increasingly assertive foreign policy of Republican administrations in the post-Civil War era even though the acquisition of territories would have opened up markets for Southern crops. Only with the onset of the Woodrow Wilson administration did Southern politicians resume support for an assertive foreign policy which was presumably beneficial to the South since it meant more markets abroad and increased defense spending.[43] Although a New Jerseyan, Woodrow Wilson was born in the South and many Southerners felt as if he was one of their own. In addition, as in the era before the Civil War, "the South was willing to endorse an assertive foreign policy, particularly if the president was a southern Democrat who embodied no threat to the region's racial practices."[44] Therefore, arguably, this factor rather than a broader nationalization of the South, made Southern leaders sympathetic to the federal government's lead on policies, including on the issue of anti-Germanism.

A further reason that makes the study of anti-Germanism in the Southern context intriguing is the extent to which the region was considered the *other* by the rest of America. Rather than centered on the intricacies of politics or foreign policy, James C.

[43] Fry, *Dixie Looks Abroad,* 6-7.

[44] Fry, *Dixie Looks Abroad,* 138.

Cobb in *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* focuses on the culture of the South, especially the modern South, though the first part of the work is relevant to this study. Certainly, as noted in its subtitle, Southern identity is at the heart of this work. In the first pages Cobb eschews a geographic definition of the South and instead highlights the words to the song *Dixie* to note the ingrained feeling that the South is *far away* from the rest of the country. Cobb points out the two images of the South that emerged after the Civil War. The North labeled 'the South' as the other and assigned all undesirable traits to it. The South, on the other hand, promoted the myth that slavery was never central to its culture. An identity is a perception of reality that is created in relation to other perceived identities, in this case the North. Unfortunately, therefore, post-Civil War, race became the cornerstone of Southern resistance. Cobb observes that some in the North believe that Southern identity is infecting the rest of America, not just on race. Some have blamed the South for conservative America including its willingness to use force, and Fry would presumably agree with this.[45] Some Northerners attack the fundamentalism of the South yet ignore the fact that many blacks in the region are fundamentalists as well. Cobb asserts that he agrees with noted historian Howard Zinn: southern qualities are American qualities.[46]

Naturally in a work on Southern identity, the author provides background on the race issue in the region using his lens of relational identity. For example, in the 1850s the South was aware of the Northernized vision of America that was being created and how

[45] Cobb, *Away Down South*, 319.

[46] Cobb, *Away Down South*, 324.

the South was found wanting, but since it was unwilling to abandon slavery, it became more hostile. After the War, Southerners embrace of the Lost Cause myth, including the *noble* cause of the Confederacy, became a vehicle for a self-indulgent Southern identity. This self-imagined identity to the point of caricature is reflected in several of the politicians discussed in the chapter on populist leaders of the region.

Methods and Sources, Questions that Will be Answered

Chapter 1 will discuss several types of incidents of anti-German hysteria in the Southeast. A common concern, and one that differed from the hysteria nationally, was the fear that Germans would incite blacks to violence and sabotage. Two concerns that followed the national pattern was the spy mania and suspicions regarding German-Americans loyalties. Chapter 2 will focus on fear of German culture. The attacks on German culture nationally, including German social clubs, music, and in particular language also was very much a large component of anti-Germanism in the Southeast. The German word *kultur* was commonly used in American print media, in the Southeast and nationally, to confer a negative connotation to the idea of German culture. A principal source for these first two chapters are newspapers published in the relevant states from April 1917 when the US entered the war until November 1918 when World War I ended. Anti-German incidents mentioned will be categorized to illuminate patterns such as the prevalence of different types of incidents and any changes to the same over the approximate year and a half of the US involvement in the war. To ensure that the study is not overly reliant on a particular newspaper whose editorial bias might not be indicative of the attitudes prevalent in a state, and to capture any rural/large city divide,

multiple newspapers from each state have been examined. Chapter 3 also uses newspapers from the era as primary sources for a more narrowly focused analysis of several of the more notorious demagogic leaders of the region in relation to anti-Germanism. A concise contextualization will be provided on the Populist challenge to Democratic dominance. To counter this challenge, a generation of politicians wielded power through a combination of broadly Progressive actions along with racist populist appeals to the white, mostly rural electorate. Some of these populist politicians joined the wave of anti-German appeals, others, for a variety of reasons, did not.

Chapter 4 focuses on the Council of National Defense and local state-level councils of defense in the Southeast. This is worthy of examination since some local councils, as the review of the literature has shown, were instrumental in the anti-German attacks, while others remained more passive. Archival material of the national and state-level defense councils found in the National Archives will be extensively used to illuminate the role of these institutions in the hysteria in the Southeast. Publications created by several of the state councils will illustrate what these organizations emphasized to the public. To shine a light on what the actual concerns of these organizations were, confidential reports by the national organization on the workings of the state organizations and correspondence from the state councils to the national office are analyzed.

A prominent area of analysis in this study is the racial component of the anti-German hysteria in the Southeast which leads to the question: how did the racial issue manifest itself in the anti-German hysteria in the Southeast? The fear that Germans would conspire with African Americans was certainly prevalent in the region throughout

the US involvement in World War I. This fear was the notable exception to the pattern of anti-German incidents in the Midwest and North. In April 1917 when the US entered the war, a slew of newspaper articles were published outlining the fear of local government officials that Germans would try to incite blacks to acts of sabotage and/or violence. The fear of African Americans as a result of German propaganda not enlisting in the army was also commonplace. Yet this paranoia subsided as few actual incidents occurred. Indeed, towards the final months of the war, several articles appeared noting the loyalty of African Americans, at least in their states.

Yet that is not the whole story. The region was home to nationally well-known populist race-baiting political leaders. In the general milieu of anti-Germanism, when the United States entered the Great War, some of the politicians from the region who had frequently attacked African Americans easily transitioned to attacking German-Americans and participating in the hysteria. This anti-German rhetoric was picked up by the newspapers in the region. Interestingly, the populist leaders who disagreed with US war policies, had anti-German populist rhetoric deployed against them, which demonstrates that anti-Germanism was at times not about Germans themselves but reframing battles within the local political culture.

Another question that this study will examine is the extent to which the same categories of anti-German policies and rhetoric present in the country, in particular the Midwest, were also manifested in the Southeast. A central conclusion of the paper is that similar types of incidents and rhetoric that occurred in the Midwest, which had a large population of German-Americans, were also present in the Southeast which had relatively

few German-Americans. Related to the previous question is to what extent the obsessions were similar between the states in the Southeast. Some manifestations in the region differed among the states, for example, the attacks on German music in the local newspapers were particularly acute and hysterical in Florida. In addition, while all states curtailed German language instruction, Georgia and Louisiana in particular changed laws to limit the instruction of the German language in schools. Certainly, one key difference, as has been noted, between anti-Germanism in the Southeast and the rest of the nation were white Southerners fears of the black components of their population.

The chapter on the councils of defense will show that even though the booklets generated by the state councils highlighting their work barely reported their activities involving African Americans, they were concerned about the community. Both the reports by members of the national office that visited the state councils' representatives and correspondence generated by the state councils note that a primary concern of the state organizations in the Southeast was that African Americans were leaving the area for the North, and not that they would instigate acts of sabotage at the behest of the Germans.

In addition to the race issue, another aspect of Southern distinctiveness of the era was its rural nature. This leads to a question that will be answered: how did the rural nature of the Southeast manifest itself in the hysteria? An exhaustive examination of the newspapers from 1917 and 1918 does not demonstrate a simple correlation of harsher rhetoric and violent actions in the more rural or "backward" areas of the states compared to more cosmopolitan cities. Indeed, some of the smalltown newspapers included opinion articles ridiculing the hysteria while other newspapers from rural areas were

vehement in their attacks on Germans. This is not surprising as the study by Tippens on the anti-German hysteria in Texas noted that incidents in the rural region varied, with fewer in rural counties with relatively larger numbers of Germans and more in rural counties in which members of the community were isolated. Yet the rural nature of the South is a factor in one of the institutions highlighted in this study.

The analysis of the documents of the National Council of Defense and the state-level councils in the region does reveal an intriguing dynamic of the councils' role in the distribution of propaganda to the rural South. The women's division of the state and local councils of defense were highly effective in the tasks initially assigned to them. These women's sections essentially made it their responsibility to disseminate educational material to teachers in the countryside. Much of this material was propagandistic and discussed the dangers of the internal threat, including, of course, from Germans. Therefore, although the focus of state council of defense organizations was not primarily directed towards German-Americans, through their women's committee, they also became involved in distributing anti-German material.

Another question to be discussed is to what degree was this hysteria a top-down process? As shown in the earlier review of the literature, historians examining the hysteria have noted the inflammatory rhetoric of President Wilson and former president Theodore Roosevelt, legislation such as the Espionage and Sedition Acts, and the actions of the government-sanctioned APL as primary factors. Luebke, in particular, stresses how the politicians amplified anti-German feelings already present in American society. Local case studies have focused on the prominent role of local defense councils, created

at the instigation of state defense councils which were in turn encouraged to form by the federal government, for stirring up hatred of everything German. However, in the southeast, the state defense councils tended to publicize their roles in concerns of the public, such as sedition, rather than creating the hysteria, though, the women's defense council had a role in disseminating propaganda to the rural schools of the region.

Aside from the region's populist political leaders and the government bodies such as the councils, the newspapers of the day had a significant role in amplifying the hysteria. All newspapers tended to hype the cacophony of rumors and false alarms present in April 1917 when the United States entered the war and in April 1918 at the time of the German Spring offensive. Many examples of hysterical reporting on spies, Germans inciting blacks to violence, German-American loyalty as a whole, and harangues on German kultur subsuming American society, will be discussed. At times, even the public that had been encouraged in this hysteria by the federal government, national and state council propaganda, and over-eager newspaper editors would write a letter to the editor asking for calm. As a reader of the *Times-Picayune* from New Orleans wrote in response to the paper's frequent calls to eliminate the German language instruction from schools, it was silly to believe that learning the German language would make a person less patriotic, that would be "analogous to saying that the German submarine commander mitigates his ruthlessness because of his knowledge of the English tongue."[47]

[47] "Teaching Foreign Languages." *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), September 3, 1917, 18.

CHAPTER 1: INDIVIDUAL INCIDENTS AND PATTERNS

Separate aspects of anti-German sentiment were prevalent in the Southeast at different times from the entry of the United States in World War I in April 1917, down to the end of the war in November 1918. Three elements of what was a national hysteria were particularly prominent in the region: the fear that Germans would conspire with African Americans; rumors of the ubiquitous presence of German spies; and the broader concerns over the loyalty of German-Americans. As we have already seen, Frederick Luebke, in *Bonds of Loyalty*, has demonstrated that there were increased number of anti-German incidents in the spring of 1917, the fall of 1917 and April 1918. A close examination of the newspapers in the Southeast shows that fear of Germans inciting blacks was very prominent in early April 1917 though when nothing materialized many articles switched their focus to comment on the loyalty of blacks in their particular state. The spy mania in the Southeast more closely resembled the pattern highlighted by Luebke: an explosion of rumors, false alarms, and hyperbole in April 1917 when America entered the war and in April 1918 at the time of the German Spring offensive. On German American loyalty as a whole, in April 1917 the coverage tended to emphasize that most were loyal to America yet as the war continued and especially in Spring 1918, Germans in America were viewed much more harshly.

Fear of Germans Inciting African Americans

In the Southeast, the fear of Germans conspiring with African Americans was a notable addition to the pattern of anti-German incidents and paranoia in the more heavily German-populated North and Midwest. The Southeast, dominated as it was by the logic

of Jim Crow, proved distinct from the North and Midwest. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Southern Democratic legislation effectively reversed many of the gains of African Americans during the Reconstruction era by imposing legally enforced racial segregation, this included separate bathrooms, building entrances, bus station waiting rooms, and the prohibition of blacks living in white neighborhoods. In addition, though the extent varied by state, the voting franchise of African Americans was severely curtailed. This uniqueness of the South and in particular of the Southeast was reflected in the manifestation of anti-German paranoia in the region.

In April 1917, when the United States declared war on Germany, the region's newspapers were full of stories reflecting the fear that Germans were conspiring or planning to conspire with African Americans to foment sabotage and revolt. For example, on April 4th, 1917 the *Birmingham News* reported the government's belief that German agents had infiltrated a black settlement in North Carolina "trying to incite the negro element of this part of the country."[1] The article went on to state that German efforts had extended to the cotton belts of Alabama, Georgia and Florida but had not yet proved successful. In the next three days several articles appeared in the same vein in the same newspaper with mentions of arrest of German agents in Tennessee, Louisiana, and Georgia. In Georgia, an article of early April noted efforts of German agents posing as Bible salesmen in Alabama, Louisiana, and Tennessee to incite Africans Americans to

[1] "GERMAN AGENTS SEEK TO INCITE NEGROES IN SOUTH TO RISE," *Birmingham News*, April 4, 1917, 1.

revolt.[2] These articles were very brief, with little to no details as to the actual actions undertaken by the Germans, let alone whether the Germans were naturalized citizens or not. In Louisiana, which tended to have less articles on this manifestation of anti-German hysteria than the other states examined, nonetheless featured similar stories of alleged incidents in other Southern states.[3]

Newspapers in Alabama and Mississippi also covered several stories that reflected this fear of Germans conspiring with blacks during the first week of April albeit that the focus was again on incidents and rumors that had occurred in other states and not their own. On April 5th, 1917, the *Montgomery Advertiser* published an article stating that federal agents had discovered evidence of an organized German movement that had tried to incite African Americans in parts of Mississippi and Louisiana to revolt against the US. Blacks were allegedly promised social and political equality.[4] In the small town of Columbus, Mississippi, the local newspaper noted that evidence had finally confirmed that Germans were trying to inspire African Americans to revolt, while in Birmingham, German government agents were haranguing a crowd of blacks urging them to move to Mexico. It was alleged that the agents had also recently been active in Mississippi. Indeed, it was rumored that, "the South was honeycombed with insurrectionists."[5] In North Carolina as well, the early press focus was on out of state incidents of Germans

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[2] "GERMAN AGENTS, SEEKING TO IGNITE NEGROES, POSE AS BIBLE SALESMEN," *Augusta Chronicle*, April 6, 1917 .

[3] "GERMANS WOULD INCITE NEGROES," *Alexandria Daily Town Talk*, April 5, 1917, 6; "GERMANS INCITE NEGROES TO REVOLT, *The Times* (Shreveport, LA), April 5, 1917, 1.

[4] "Political and Social Equality Promised," *Montgomery Advertiser*, April 5, 1917, 11.

[5] "GERMAN AGENTS INCITE NEGROES," *Columbus Circle* (Columbus, MS), April 8, 1917, 2.

and blacks conspiring. From April 4th though April 6th, several articles appeared describing this element of the paranoia in other states such as Virginia and Alabama. On April 4th, the *Bamberg Herald* in South Carolina noted that federal agents had arrested German agents in North Carolina for trying to incite Southern blacks. Similar to the article that appeared in Columbus, it highlighted the wide-ranging nature of the conspiracy, as the activities had allegedly extended to the "tobacco belts of Georgia, Alabama, the Carolinas, and parts of Florida."[6]

Although the focus of much press coverage, very few actual incidents of Germans inciting African Americans were in fact discovered. On April 5th, 1917, the same day that the articles mentioned incidents in other states, there was a short report in the *Tampa Tribune* noting that US marshals were maintaining a watch for Germans and German sympathizers attempting to incite African Americans to take up arms against the government.[7] The only Florida article that seems to have shown anything substantive in regard to such fears in April 1917 was a report on the small town of Starke in northern Florida. On April 14th the *Tampa Tribune* reported that the local sheriff had been informed that German sympathizers were meeting with African Americans and were promising them social equality after the war if they would help the Germans defeat the United States. Yet when the sheriff went to investigate no meeting was occurring and Africans Americans in the neighborhood raised doubts that the meeting had ever

[6] "EFFORTS TO INCITE NEGROES," *Bamberg Herald* (Bamberg, SC), April 12, 1917, 3.

[7] "At Work in Florida," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 5, 1917, 1.

occurred. Nevertheless, the sheriff sent armed personnel to guard the city's power plant and reservoir from any possible sabotage.[8]

The pattern was similar in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. In West Point, Georgia, a German minister who claimed to live in Atlanta was arrested for allegedly preaching to blacks urging them not to cooperate with the US government's war efforts. Prominent Germans from Atlanta informed the *Atlanta Constitution* that they did not know the minister and that as far as they knew he was not affiliated with the local Lutheran Church.[9] In Alabama, newspapers mentioned that German agents were under arrest in Birmingham. An article noted that in the same location that the German agents had been arrested, a black man had also been arrested for encouraging African Americans to move to Mexico. In Mississippi, a very brief article from the *Port Gibson Reveille* noted that a German spy had been arrested in Greenwood for trying to stir discontent among blacks. No further details were provided and no additional follow-up reports on the story was published in that newspaper nor in any other local newspaper.[10]

In North Carolina as well, rumors of blacks and Germans conspiring led to investigations by local sheriffs, but no evidence was discovered that any actual incidents of disloyalty were part of a wide-ranging plot. In Durham, the local sheriff investigated whether German agents were at work in the black neighborhoods of the city. The

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[8] "SOCIAL EQUALITY FOR BLACKS AFTER THE WAR," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 5, 1917, 5.

[9] "INCITING NEGROES CHARGED MNISTERS," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 8, 1917, 3.

[10] On the Germans arrested in Birmingham see "2 Germans Held for Inciting Negroes," *Montgomery Advertiser*, April 6, 1917, 13. The brief article on the arrest in Greenwood see: *Port Gibson Reveille* (Port Gibson, MS), April 26, 1917, 6.

Greensboro Daily News noted that as of April 5th the sheriff had not found evidence to confirm the rumor. According to the report, the relatively wealthier African Americans of the community stated that the reports were simply untrue. The article asserted that it is said the Germans were trying to instigate the poorer classes and that the sheriff's investigation was continuing.[11] Similar reports of incitements which led to investigations that produced no evidence of incitement occurred in the High Point area as well.

One of the few incidents of an arrest of an African American for disloyalty had no connection to the supposed link between Germans and African Americans. While discussing his hunt for German sympathizers (of any color), the New Bernian police chief announced that he had arrested a sixty-year-old black man for allegedly making disparaging remarks concerning President Woodrow Wilson and saying that he hoped that Germany would *whip* the United States.[12] It would seem that lacking evidence of either incitement by Germans or acts of sabotage by blacks, efforts in the Southeast turned to suppressing freedom of speech. This is shown in an opinion article in Louisiana's April 11, 1917 edition of the *State Times Advocate*. The writer noted, "It would be well that negroes of Baton Rouge who are in sympathy with the Central Powers to think three times before expressing themselves."[13]

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[11] "RESTRAINING ORDER IS GIVEN ON ELECTION BOARD," *Greensboro Daily News,* April 6, 1917, 2.

[12] "Didn't Keep His Mouth Shut Tight Enough," *Greensboro Record*, April 11, 1917, 2.

[13] "SPEAK NOT ILL OF UNCLE SAM, OR PAY," *State Times Advocate* (Baton Rouge, LA), April 11, 1917, 3.

Although acts of revolt or sabotage by blacks may not have materialized, another area of concern in the region was that Germans were behind the movement of African Americans out of the South. Known as the Great Migration, over six million African Americans moved out of the South to the north between 1910 and the 1970s. Certainly, the start of the migration and the reasons for it such as fleeing the inequities of Jim Crow legislation and seeking jobs in the industrialized North, predated the war.[14] The war, however, increased the need for the production of armaments while many working age men were drafted. This created an increasing demand for labor in the North which many African Americans moved to fill. In the article on the concern that Germans were pushing blacks to go to Mexico, which was published throughout the South, it also noted the work of the Germans were closely allied to the exodus of black laborers from the cotton belts of the South to the North. The editorial page of North Carolina's *Greensboro Daily Record*, however, suggested that the Germans were not at fault for the exodus, "The so-called German agents are more likely to be labor agents from the North down here to get the negro frightened and hustle him off to the North."[15] It noted that the scarcity of labor throughout the South's farm belts was a serious matter.

After the initial reports of early April, very few instances of Germans and blacks conspiring, actual or even rumored, appeared in the region's newspapers. Furthermore, none of the newspapers hereafter tried to heighten the paranoia concerning German

[14] Joe William Trotter, Jr., "The Great Migration." *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 17, No. 1, World War I (Oct., 2002), 31-32, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25163561, date accessed February, 18, 2023.

[15] "The Negro Wanted At North," *Greensboro Daily Record*, April 5, 1917, 4.

instigation of African Americans by connecting it with the attempt by Germans to provoke Muslim subjects of the Allied colonial empires to revolt.[16] Articles began appearing clearly showing over-reactions caused by the hysteria. For example, on April 15th, the *Atlanta Constitution* noted that a sales manager of a glass casket company was visiting Warrenton, Georgia when he was arrested. He was suspected of being a German spy trying to incite blacks to revolt because he had hired an African American as a driver when he was visiting the town on business. He was getting a drink in a drug store when the police rushed in pointing a weapon at him and yelling 'I gtcha now, you German spy.' Before he was released, he had to point out every black man he had seen on his route so the police could make sure that he had not tried to incite them.[17]

By mid-April the hysteria had diminished enough that the press could afford to depict the situation, for that era and region, in a humorous light. On April 7th, 1917, the *Montgomery Advertiser* included a poem written supposedly in the dialect of African Americans in the South. Although recognizing African Americans have had hard times the poem encouraged that they should stay loyal, "Quit talking about tha treason An cullud German spies. There ain't no cullud traitors, An de others it just lies."[18] The April 19th, 1917 *Tampa Tribune* included a poem on the response of an African American to German promises of social equality, "We know our white folks, and they know us

[16] Donald M. McKale, "The Last Khedive of Egypt and the Great Powers, 1914-18," *Middle Eastern Studies* , Jan., 1997, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Jan., 1997), 22, JSTOR, https://www.jstor.org/stable/4283845, date accessed February, 18, 2023.

[17] "WARRRENTON BELIEVED ATLANTAN WAS A SPY," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 15, 1917, 5.

[18] *"WHAT WHITE FOLKS DONE TO YOU," Montgomery Advertiser,* April 7, 1917.

n_____ too. To turn aroun' an' fight you fren', that ain't no way to do."[19] In May of 1917 the *Miami Herald* included a brief article on blacks pledging their loyalty to the US. Another sign of the diminishing fear is that reports of a German secret agent accused of inciting blacks in June 1917 was noted with skepticism. The actual wording of the subtitle on the June 2nd, 1917 article in the *Tampa Tribune* was, "Looks like a hoax, police are waiting" and the report noted neighbors who knew the suspect believed the charge was *silly*.[20]

After the initial hysteria of early April, the press coverage emphasized the loyalty of blacks. These assertions of black loyalty came from both the white and black community. In Mississippi, similar to other states in the region, the newspapers included many brief editorials on the trustworthiness of African Americans in the state. The April 12th edition of the *Daily Commonwealth* noted that one of the many foolish ideas that the Germans had was that they could incite the African Americans of the South to revolt. Of course, this commentary presumed that the Germans had actually attempted this feat. The April 26th *Neshoba Democrat* also dismissed the supposed German effort as falling flat. It affirmed that blacks are loyal, "Negroes are expressing their loyalty in no uncertain terms and many of them are offering their service to this country."[21] The newspapers in Georgia followed the same pattern. The *Brunswick News* affirmed that the Germans were wasting their time and money trying to turn African Americans against the

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[19] *"THE NEGRO AND THE WAR," Tampa Morning Tribune,* April 19, 1917, 6.

[20] "ST PETE IN THROES OF GERMAN SPY SCARE," *Tampa Morning Tribune,* June 2, 1917, 3.

[21] Foolish ideas see: *Daily Commonwealth* (Greenwood, MS), April 12, 1917, 3. On German efforts falling flat see: *Neshoba Democrat,* April 26, 1917, 3.

United States. On April 21st , the local newspaper in Savanah asserted that African Americans can be relied upon.[22] The *Watchman and Southron* of Sumter, South Carolina also made a definitive statement on blacks not being swayed by supposed German enticement, "We do not believe that one negro out of one hundred could be persuaded to follow a German or any other foreigner in an uprising against the government of the United States."[23]

Writers and editors, presumably white, of newspapers included discussions of the history of blacks in America when highlighting the failure of German recruitment of African Americans to their cause. The *State Times Advocate* of Baton Rouge, Louisiana noted it was an injustice on the part of Germans to believe that the blacks would be disloyal. The editorial reminded the newspaper's readers that blacks had always been loyal to the flag since the Battle of Bunker Hill.[24] Interestingly, this was the same newspaper that as previously mentioned, had stated that all blacks not loyal to America should stay quiet. This praise as to the loyalty of the black population led to discussions that might not have been appreciated by all of the white citizens of the region. An editorial in the *Winston Salem Journal* asserted, correctly, that African Americans had always been loyal to the country that freed them. It not only referenced their service in the Revolutionary War but also, surprisingly, noted approvingly of their efforts in the Civil War. It reminded its readers that not only had many blacks quickly signed up after

[22] *Brunswick News*, April 12, 1917, 5. On the assurance of black loyalty in Savannah see: "THE NEGRO IS LOYAL AND CAN BE RELIED UPON," *Savannah Tribune,* April 21, 1917, 4.

[23] *Watchman and Southron,* April 7, 1917, 5.

[24] "AN INJUSTICE DONE THE NEGRO." *State Times Advocate* (Baton Rouge, LA), April 10, 1917, 4.

the Emancipation Proclamation, but that their bravery and trustworthiness had been praised by their white officers.[25] The following day, the same newspaper published a letter to the editor from a black citizen who used a historical example of black loyalty that presumably was less controversial to white southerners. He wrote the ludicrousness of the alleged German attempts to incite African Americans noting how many blacks volunteered for military service during the Spanish American War. The letter mentioned that he also had volunteered during that war but was too young to be admitted to the military. He believed that with practically no exceptions, blacks were as loyal now as they were then to Old Glory.[26]

Several more examples appear in April and May of black citizens discounting the alleged efforts of Germans inciting them to revolt and pledging loyalty to America. In particular pledges of loyalty by black ministers were given prominence in the newspapers of the Southeast. In Atlanta, Georgia, the speeches of Minister Henry High Proctor, who helped formed the Interracial Committee of Atlanta after race riots a decade earlier, was given much coverage. On April 1st he called upon the black community to rise above their grievances. He reasoned that the place of their birth and the desire to strive for human liberty necessitated blacks to be loyal to the American flag. On April 6th a letter he wrote to the editor of the *Atlanta Constitution* was published. In this he recognized disagreements between blacks and whites, but he argued that while the war was being

[25] "PATRIOTISM OF THE NEGROES," *Winston-Salem Journal*, April 12, 1917, 4.

[26] "GROWING PATRIOTISM OF THE TWIN-CITIES NEGROES," *Winston-Salem Journal*, April 12, 1917, 4.

fought, all Americans had to act as one. The efforts by any to appeal to black dissatisfaction would not work. He went on to state that the church was encouraging young men of the community to get ready for military service and young women to train as nurses for the Red Cross.[27] On the fear of Germans conspiring with blacks, a meeting of black ministers in Greensboro, North Carolina on April 9th, 1917 approved a resolution noting that "whatever the desire or hope on the part of the enemy, such plan would result in utter failure."[28] It called on the press not to spread any unauthenticated rumors about the subject. On May 2nd, the *Manning Times* of Manning, South Carolina published a resolution passed in a meeting by black citizens of Clarendon County. These citizens pledged loyalty to America and, unsurprisingly, mentioned black service in the Spanish American War. It also, interestingly, noted how blacks protected white lives and property during the Civil War, which the resolution referred to it as the *war in the 60s*. Presumably, a reference of black service to the Union during the Civil War might be less effective in easing the fears about black loyalty among whites in small town South Carolina than it had been in Winston Salem, North Carolina.[29] Indeed, the praise of black loyalty to the country seemed to have its limits. In the summer of 1917, when it was known that black troops going were going to be trained in military camps in the South, many Southern politicians protested. Many politicians of the region used racist appeals to gather votes from the mostly white electorate since, as will be discussed in Chapter 3,

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[27] "NEGROES URGED BY LOCAL PASTORS TO STAY LOYAL TO THE FLAG," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 2, 1917, 6. On Proctor's letter to the editor see: "Proctors Say Negroes Are Intensely Loyal'" *Atlanta Constitution*, April 6, 1917, 6.

[28] "NEGRO MINISTERS OF CITY ON GERMAN SPY," *Greensboro Daily Record*, April 10, 1917, 10.

[29] "RESOLUTIONS." *Manning Times*, May 2, 1917, 6.

the black electorate had mostly been disenfranchised in several of these states. South Carolina's political leaders were particularly vocal about the black troops with Governor Richard Manning and noted segregationist Senators Ellison D. Smith and Benjamin Tillman leading a delegation of complaint to Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker.[30]

Spy Hysteria, Rumors

Aside from the reports as to the alleged conspiring between Germans and African Americans which at least referred to unnamed government officials worried about such a prospect, unspecified wild rumors about German sabotage and spying based apparently on no facts whatsoever were also ubiquitous in the early weeks of April 1917. Notwithstanding this, newspaper editorials called for readers to avoid believing and spreading such wild speculation. During the winter of 1917 and 1918, several instances were reported of accusations aimed at Germans and German-Americans by people who had personal grudges with the accused. There were even instances of the use of charges of disloyalty as a means to settle personal vendettas. In Spring 1918, calls for the government to show no leniency with German spies and to hang them became common though evidence of actual spies remained scant.

Many unfounded rumors of German spies and acts of sabotage circulated throughout the region in April 1917. In the April 1st edition of the *Pensacola Journal*, a writer in the course of highlighting Pensacola attractions noted that men with curly mustaches and strange-sounding names were accused of being German spies. Inevitably,

[30] "MANNING AND DELEGATION PROTEST AGAINST TRAINING OF NEGRO TROOPS IN STATE," *Evening Post,* August 21, 1917, 1.

several individuals were targeted in this culture of suspicion. For example, Bedena Brown, an owner of a Pensacola store dedicated to selling women's hats denied rumors she was a spy, had been arrested. Aside that she could speak German fluently because of her German mother, she had no idea how such stories concerning her had started.[31] On the same day Brown was defending herself in the *Pensacola Journal*, F.W. Mohr, a well-known baker in Tampa was defending himself in the *Tampa Tribune*. Mohr denied he was German or a German sympathizer, noted he was born in New York, and stated that to prove his loyalty he was willing to "take up arms for the United States and against Germany if necessary..."[32] On April 7th, two young men in Dublin, Georgia were arrested for being German spies. Apparently, the fact that they went door-to-door attempting to purchase false teeth, were strangers, and had made some inquiries about the town had raised suspicion among some of the local populace.[33]

In other states of the Southeast similar incidents of seemingly inconsequential actions led to arrests and constant calls for vigilance. In Opelika, Alabama a German named Fred Krauss aroused suspicion for looking too closely at the federal building and the Farmers Cotton Warehouse in the city. The local sheriff arrested Krauss and stated he was going to hold him in jail until the end of the war.[34] A letter to the editor in the *Montgomery Advertiser* on April 11, 1917 noted that everyone must do their part to help

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[31] "Showing hats While Rumor Said She Had Been Arrested as Spy," *Pensacola Journal*, April 7, 1917, 6.

[32] "Willing to Fight for the United States Against Germany if Necessary," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 7, 1917, 12.

[33] "Young Collectors of Old False Teeth Arrested as Spies," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 8, 1917, 4.

[34] "Arrest German Who Can't Explain Presence," *Montgomery Advertiser*, April 11, 1917.

the war effort. The author of the letter who identified himself as a former corporal who fought in the Spanish American War noted that since not everyone could enlist in the military another means of performing one's duty was to report German spies to the proper authorities."[35] A letter to the editor to a newspaper in neighboring Mississippi married patriotism with a bit of skepticism on the spy issue. James Harrison wrote in the *Columbus Circle* that all public buildings should fly the American flag, "it would be a source of inspiration to our people, a defiance to our enemies and a warning to spies and traitors, if any."[36]

An editorial in the *Greensboro Daily Record* launched a comprehensive attack on the loyalty of German-Americans and the prevalence of spies. It noted that there were over six million German-Americans and therefore the country was in danger since, "blood is thicker than water."[37] It declared as a certainty that spies were prevalent in the country, that railroad bridges would be dynamited and that many soldiers were needed to be kept on the home front to keep the peace and maintain order. Similarly, the *State Times Advocate* of Baton Rouge, on the day that the US declared war on Germany, also asserted the need for the National Guard to be deployed on the home front. An editorial noted that not all soldiers would be fighting in the fields of France. It continued that America's allies needed our resources, therefore, soldiers were needed for the vital task

[35] "A PATRIOTIC LETTER," *Montgomery Advertiser*, April 11, 1917.

[36] "A Suggestion." *Columbus Circle* (Columbus, MS), April 8, 1917, 3.

[37] "Forty-Eight States," *Greensboro Record*, April 4, 1917, 4.

of guarding those resources.[38] This fear of sabotage permeated the region, for example in the town of Thomasville, Georgia, the city council ordered the electricity and water plants to be protected by armed guards and to be lit by searchlights at night. This occurred even though rumors of German spies in the area proved not to be credible.[39]

The spy scare did not necessarily produce any greater hysteria in the small towns at least if the press coverage is any measure. There are examples of news articles and editorials in small town newspapers in North Carolina and Louisiana which took as a given that German spies were present throughout the country but unlike pieces already cited, did not call for troops to protect the home front. An opinion article in the *Commonwealth* from Scotland Neck, North Carolina noted both the need for caution and the need to avoid rumors and excessive alarm. The article asserted that in the capital of Raleigh, *scare crows* spread rumors of the presence of spies in that city. Yet the writer noted that the police were justified in keeping an eye on all suspicious strangers.[40] The *Bossier Banner* of Benton, Louisiana observed that though there were many German spies, there were also many Germans in the country that were not spies. Works of sabotage such as blowing up railroad bridges might occur in the country; however, the best advice was not to be alarmed, "but keep your weather eye open."[41] The newspaper in the somewhat larger town of Brunswick, Georgia also had an article calling for cautious

[38] "NATIONAL GUARD AT THE FRONT," *State Times Advocate* (Baton Rouge, LA), April 6, 1917, 12.

[39] "City Plants Guarded." *Atlanta Constitution*, April 15, 1917, 2.

[40] Maxwell Gorman, "News From The State Capitol," *Commonwealth* (Scotland Neck, NC), April 10, 1917, 2.

[41] *Bossier Banner* (Bossier, LA), April 5, 1917, 5.

vigilance. It asserted that it was *clear enough* that Germans were behind several incidents of recent damages of industrial plants and bridges in the country and therefore the registration of every alien would be prudent, yet it called for Georgians not to become hysterical about the spy danger.[42]

In South Carolina during April 1917, the newspapers included editorials on the topic of varying lengths that ranged the spectrum from measured discussion to alarmism. Similar to the articles in the other states of the region, all assumed the ubiquitous presence of German spies as a fact. In the *Lancaster News*, a brief article on the editorial page stated that German spies had been in town the previous week and that they came from Gaffney and Spartanburg. No details, let alone evidence, were provided other than the editors "have it on good authority."[43] No further word on the spies was included in future editions of the newspaper. A brief opinion piece in the *Edgefield Advertiser* was noteworthy in that it not only assumed many spies in the country but encouraged all citizens to help the authorities, "Every citizen should regard himself as commissioned for a spy-hunting duty."[44]

In Georgia, the same pattern existed, with an assumption that spies were present and therefore vigilance was needed. Unlike in the other states, there was a report of an alarming incident of sabotage in Georgia, even if no evidence for German 'spies' was provided. On April 6th, 1917 a mill in Kirby, Georgia caught fire. On the following day,

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[42] "THE NATIONAL SPY HUNT," *Brunswick News*, April 20, 1917, 5.

[43] *Lancaster News*, April 10, 1917, 5.

[44] *Edgefield Advertiser*, April 11, 1917, 5.

the *Atlanta Constitution* noted that the owners of the mill suspected enemy agents as the mill had just received a large government contact.[45] No evidence was added other than this general suspicion and subsequent editions provided no further mention of the spies who had burned down the mill. On the 24th of the month, the newspaper reported that two Germans, who claimed to be hikers, had been arrested by the government and ordered to be held indefinitely. They were currently being held at the Fulton County prison but expected to be sent to a detention camp. No reason for the arrest was provided.[46] Yet even though serious incidents occurred, clear examples of overreaction to the hysteria began to be reported by the middle of April 1917.

Even during this early stage of the spy hysteria, several articles were published in Florida, Alabama, and North Carolina trying to downplay the fear of widespread German spy activity. On April 5th, the *Montgomery Advertiser* noted that although it was necessary to closely guard railroad property, officials from the army and the national guard stated that there was no need to fear German spies in that section of the country. On April 12th, the *Brunswick News* recognized that all kinds of rumors of German spies were spreading throughout the cities. The article assured its readers that there were only rumors and that the police had reported that no one in the city had been arrested for being a spy.[47] The Florida newspapers quickly transitioned from the scare of early April to

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[45] "SPIES ARE SUSPECTED OF BURNING DOWN GA. MILL," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 8. 1917, 6.

[46] "TWO ALLEGED SPIES HELD BY THE GOVERNMENT," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 24, 1917, 3.

[47] On the need not to fear German spies see: "MAY INTERN GERMANS OF STATE HERE," *Montgomery Advertiser*, April 5, 1917, 1. On dispelling rumors in Georgia see: "MANY IDLE RUMORS." *Brunswick News*, April 12, 1917, 7.

urge their readers to avoid believing wild speculation and at times even explicitly defended Germans. A rumor that a German spy had attempted to blow up a railroad bridge and poison the water supply in a town by the Georgia-Florida border was described as unwarranted. More importantly, the *Tampa Tribune*, in a brief opinion article, lamented the present environment that generated accusations, "Every fire and explosion will be charged to German origin, regardless of the facts. This is unjust."[48] The *Pensacola Journal* was even more forceful in an April 15th, 1917 editorial when it attacked those who judged enemy alien citizens solely on their places of origin as "Weak minded, hysterical minded, malicious minded…"[49]

Similar to the change of tone in the reporting when the German-incited revolt of African Americans did not materialize, several explicitly humorous articles on the German spy hysteria appeared in the Spring of 1917. On April 20th, the *Roanoke Rapids Herald* of Roanoke, North Carolina included a brief note in their editorial page that flies would cause more deaths that summer than all the spies the Germans had sent over in the last decade. The *Greensboro Daily News* joked that the guards protecting the city hall should be sent home. The town could survive the city hall being stolen though unfortunately half of the police force would be taken along with it.[50] The *Montgomery Advertiser* had a single wry query on the fruitless search for German spies in the South

[48] On denying the rumor regarding the railroad bridge see, "MANY OF LEGISLATURE OFFER THEIR SERVICES," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 8, 1917, P.12. The quote on the injustices of the suspicions see: *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 12, 1918, 12.

[49] "RUMOR MONGERS," *Pensacola Journal*, April 15, 1917, 4.

[50] On the greater danger from spies than flies see: *Roanoke Rapids Herald*, April 20, 1917, 3. On the lack of concern of spies stealing the city hall building see: *Greensboro Daily News*, April 29, 1917, 4.

after the initial hysteria: "Have you seen any German spies hiding underneath your hay stack?"[51]

Presumably as the initial shock of the US entrance into the war passed and because of the newspapers' calls for calm, the incidents of rumor-mongering diminished. Yet unfounded stories and exaggerations persisted, and some caused damage to people's lives. L.T. Welch, a baker from Columbus, Mississippi was thought to be a German. This not only hurt Welch's reputation but the bakery's as a whole so, therefore, the owner of the establishment made the effort to get letters of reference from prominent citizens of Natchez, the hometown of the baker. In a letter that was published in the Columbus newspaper, the postmaster of Natchez assured the readers that the baker was born in that town, was of Irish descent though he put America first. Letters from the mayor, chief treasurer and newspaper editor also exculpated the baker from the charge of being a German.[52] On December 5, 1917 two men were incarcerated in Neshoba, Mississippi for being spies. The men claimed to be spectacle agents and they were in possession of several glasses. No evidence in the following day's local newspaper indicated any evidence that made them suspicious other than one of the men admitted being a German and the other claimed to be a Russian. The pair were handed over to federal authorities.[53]

In a similar vein, later in the year Alabama had an incident of 'spy sabotage' that at first seemed alarming but then proved to be misattributed. On December 16, 1917, a

[51] *Montgomery Advertiser*, May 30, 1917, 4.

[52] "MR. WELCH NOT A GERMAN." *Columbus Commercial* (Columbus, MS), November 18, 1917, 5.

[53] *Neshoba Democrat*, December 6, 1917, 6.

Hermann Landsberg was arrested for suspicion of selling poisonous tooth powder throughout the South. Landsberg, who claimed to be from New York, was imprisoned in Camp Sheridan for more than two weeks. On December 31st, an article noted that apparently insufficient evidence was found on the charge of selling the poisoned powder, therefore, he was transferred to city police station to be charged for vagrancy. Landsberg complained bitterly that he was too well-educated to be a vagrant and that he had been forced to work with other prisoners in the camp even though he had not been formerly charged. He was being represented by a prominent Montgomery attorney.[54]

In late spring of 1917, a Dr. St. Elmo Bishop was incarcerated in Augusta, Georgia for impersonating a government official and on suspicion of being a spy. Described as a well-educated man who had traveled the world, he reportedly offered to identify all the German spy and wireless stations located in this country. A news article update on June 28th stated that in the weeks since the initial sensational reports, he still had not identified the German spy stations albeit that he had reportedly attempted to send a letter written in code to the Mexican Army. Not surprisingly, Bishop's sensational claims proved to be false. In November, he was convicted of claiming to be a government official and defrauding a Mrs. C. J. Roberts of his board bill. He had told

[54] On the initial arrest see: "SPY SUSPECT SOLD POISONED FOOT POWDER TO SOLDIERS," *Montgomery Advertiser*, December 29, 1917. For the arraignment on vagrancy charges see: "LANDSBERG WILL BE TRIED BEFORE RECORDER TODAY," *Montgomery Advertiser*, December 31, 1917, 8.

Roberts that he was a government official investigating a land claim she had made. In the trial he disputed the fraud but did claim he was a clairvoyant and an investigator.[55]

Incidents both serious and otherwise related to the spy hysteria occurred in Florida throughout the latter parts of 1917 and early 1918. On a light-hearted note, speculation circulated that Dr. M. W. Moeller, a well-known physician of German descent who had practiced in St. Petersburg but had left town, had been arrested as a spy and possibly hanged for his crimes. However, on October 16th, 1917 the *Tampa Tribune* reported that he had written a letter stating that he was temporarily living with his father in Michigan but was planning to return to the Tampa area. On a more serious note, Hedwig Schaefer a teacher from St. Petersburg was cleared of disloyalty by the school board. A member of the board stated that comments made by Schaefer had been exaggerated and misconstrued by other faculty solely because she was German. The *Tampa Tribune* noted with frustration on February 27, 1918, "We might vary the monotony to good effect by dealing more severely with the man proved to be a German spy, and less severely with him only rumored to be."[56] Yet accusations continued. On March 3rd, 1918 the *Tampa Tribune* reported that Reverend Ludwig Oser, a registered enemy alien, was under investigation by a committee of Tampa Methodist ministers for passing himself off as an American. Reverend Oser claimed he considered himself an

[55] On the curious case of St. Elmo Bishop see: "SUSPECT IN JAIL OFFERS TO INFORM," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 10, 1917, 7. "U.S. PRISONER WRITES MEXICAN CODE LETTER," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 28, 1917, 10. "ST. ELMO BISHOP IS FOUND GUILTY," *Augusta Chronicle*, November 23, 1917, 7.

[56] On Dr. Moeller see, "Dr. Moeller Writes That Report of his Hanging was Exaggerated," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, October 16, 1917, p. 4. On Schaefer see, *Tampa Morning Tribune*, February 18, 1917, p. 3. For quote see, *Tampa Morning Tribune*, February 27, 1918, 6.

American and was in the process of being naturalized when the US declared war on Germany. Importantly, he blamed personal differences between himself and a fellow minister as the reason for the investigation.[57]

Yet even in this period of diminished hysteria, when the presence of the American Expeditionary Force in Europe was still negligible, an occasional alarmist report would appear in the region. The June 24th, 1917 edition of the *Atlanta Constitution* included an article imploring its readers to inform the government of anything that might seem suspicious. The article was accompanied by a cartoon showing a well-dressed man speaking somewhat furtively to an unshaven, swarthy appearing individual.[58] Later in the summer on August 16th, three articles in three different states appeared that urged citizens to maintain their alertness against spies. In its editorial page, Mississippi's *Columbus Circle* noted that although talk of German spies had appeared exaggerated, recent events in the country showed that German spies were indeed prevalent: "agents of the Kaiser are located in almost every industrial center in the United States…"[59] One of the events cited was a fire in an industrial plant in Gary, Indiana. Interestingly, the other piece of evidence cited was labor discontent in the country blamed on agitators employed by the German government. On the same day, a Georgia newspaper noted the danger of court plaster, an adhesive used to cover cuts or scratches on skin, being poisoned by German

[57] "METHODIST PASTOR IS REGISTERED AS GERMAN," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, March 3, 1918, 14.

[58] "Watch for Spies," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 24, 1917, 6.

[59] "INSURRECTIONISTS ACTIVE." *Columbus Commercial*, August 16, 1917, 3.

spies. It warned Georgia housewives to avoid buying such items from travelling peddlers.[60]

An accusatory piece citing no evidence whatsoever in the vein of the hysteria of the previous spring, was occasionally still published in the summer and fall of 1917. North Carolina's *Greensboro Record* in July lamented that spy activity still occurred in the nation. It chastised the government and the public for not grasping the enormity of the challenge and called for an end to half-measures, "Every German spy should be hanged. Every man aiding or abetting the enemy by word of mouth or otherwise should be imprisoned."[61] An editorial with a similar tone was also published that same day in South Carolina. The *Bamberg Herald* in its lead editorial referred menacingly to suspected spies in the community, *people under our noses*, bore scrutiny more than strangers.[62]

Similar to its stories on the issue of black loyalty, Charleston's *Evening Post* tended to have a less alarmist approach to the spy hysteria than other newspapers in the state and region. As for the rumors that the government's encouragement of the canning of as many fruits and vegetables as possible was to aid its efforts to confiscate food, the paper noted that there were without any foundation whatsoever. Indeed, the harmful rumors themselves were blamed on German spies. A brief opinion piece represents the tone mostly present throughout that the hysteria outpaced the actual danger, whereas

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[60] "Keep Your Eye on Court Plaster*." Brunswick News*, August 16, 1917, 2.

[61] "The German Spies*." Greensboro Record*, July 13, 1917, 3.

[62] *Bamberg Herald*, August 16, 1917, 3.

there may have been a lot of German spies in the country, this figure was "doubtless exceeded by the number of supposed German spies arrested by zealous police."[63]

This more measured take on the spy hysteria in the fall of 1917 was also reflected in several articles in North Carolina. On October 1st, the local newspaper of Lumberton, North Carolina reported the arrest of German spies in other parts of the country but noted positively that there were no reports of such activity in North Carolina so far. In a more humorous note, a housewife from High Point, North Carolina reported on a salesman she suspected as a spy since he discussed the war and shared negative opinions as to the government's policy and the public response. The local newspaper brushed off the possibility that the salesman was a spy but congratulated her actions as an example of the patriotic spirit of Southern women and that she deserved to be wearing fighting clothes.[64]

As has been noted, isolated examples of extreme, overheated coverage were present through 1917 and 1918, however, not surprisingly, such instances became more commonplace in April 1918. Shortly before April, Lancaster, South Carolina's local newspaper had a brief editorial noting that the country had been too lenient on spies. The *Americus Times Recorder* from Americus, Georgia wrote approvingly of calls for stricter espionage laws. Interestingly, though, the article had a very broad concept of what constituted espionage, since it presumed that with the new laws the authorities could

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[63] On the food campaign rumors see: "EFFORT TO THWART FOOD CAMPAIGN," *Evening Post*, September 25, 1917, 1. On the overzealous police see: *Evening Post*, November 8, 1917, 4.

[64] On the lack of spy activity and arrests in North Carolina see: 'MOST URGENT NEED IN NORTH CAROLINA," *Robesonian* (Lumberton, NC), October 1, 1917, 5. On dismissing the housewife's accusations while praising her patriotism see: "READY TO FIGHT-BUT," *Review* (High Point, NC), November 8, 1917, 7.

arrest, "the mealy-mouthed, white-livered, thin-blooded kind who are constantly fighting the government in a sneaking, insidious way."[65] The *Greensboro Record* in North Carolina in an editorial of April 2nd noted that it was just common sense to closely watch for spy activity. There were millions of Germans in America and, "in all baskets of eggs there are some bad ones."[66]

The tone of the reporting and editorials on the spy scare in April 1918 was mostly harsh. On April 1st the lead editorial in the *Robesonian*, the local newspaper from Lumberton, North Carolina was reflective of what was to come. It included a claim that there were two hundred and fifty thousand spies in the country and that the authorities had been too lenient with them. It went on, approvingly, to quote an individual who had called for the shooting of all spies and saboteurs. It concluded by noting that the newspaper did not approve of lynching but it would not be displeased to get news of a lynching of a spy, traitor, or pro-German individual.[67] On April 18th, the lead editorial of the same newspaper called for all German spies and sympathizers to be treated as mad dogs and rattlesnakes. The *Bossier Banner* of Benton, Louisiana had a similar call to action; its lead editorial on April 11th was titled SHOOT THEM![68] This language and use of exaggerated data was not just found in editorial pages. On April 10th during a liberty

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[65] "TIME FOR STERN STUFF." *Americus Times-Recorder* (Americus, Georgia), April 1, 1918, 3.

[66] On being overly lenient see: *Lancaster News* (Lancaster, SC), March 22, 1918, 5. On the need to keep a close eye on Germans see: "THE GERMAN SPIES." *Greensboro Daily Record* (Greensboro, NC), April 2, 1918, 4.

[67] "SOME KILLINGS NEEDED." *Robesonian* (Lumberton, NC), April 1, 1918, 5.

[68] On treating spies like mad dogs see: *Robesonian* (Lumberton, NC), April 18, 1918, 5. On the shrill editorial in Benton see: "SHOOT THEM!" *Bossier Banner* (Benton, Louisiana), April 11, 1918, 3.

loan drive in Bamberg, South Carolina the guest speaker also used the figure of two hundred and fifty thousand spies. He added that since he did not condone lynching, the spies should be "respectably shot." More alarmingly, on April 6th, effigies of German spies were hanged from several high poles in Birmingham, Alabama.[69]

Several individuals accused of being spies months earlier, appeared in the news once more in the Spring of 1918. St. Elmo Bishop got arrested again, this time in Charlotte, North Carolina. He had been released from jail on Christmas Eve 1917 after serving thirty-one days in the Augusta prison. Three months later he was charged with violations of the Espionage Act because of the suspicious documents he carried. A news article noted that he had many newspaper clippings about his previous arrests and maps with peculiar markings on them.[70] In April 1918, when the German Spring Offensive was advancing and lists of American casualties began to be printed in the newspapers, several people lost their jobs because of rumors and exaggerations. On April 23rd, 1918, an article on the St. Petersburg school system noted that Hedwig Schaefer would not return to teach. Although she had been cleared of charges, Schaefer, a German, had not been naturalized. This was a problem as the school board felt that "it is best not to have a German teaching in an American school."[71] In the same month Reverend Oser resigned

[69] On the effigies in Birmingham see: "PRO-GERMANS ARE HUNG IN EFFIGY IN BIRMINGHAM," *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), April 7, 1918, 11. "LIBERTY LOAN DRIVE ON," *Bamberg Herald* (Bamberg, SC), April 11, 1918, 11.

[70] "ST. ELMO BISHOP ARRESTED AGAIN," *Augusta Chronicle* (Augusta, Georgia), April 1, 1918, 8.

[71] On Dr. Moeller's return see, "ST. PETE GAS WORKS IS SHOWING GOOD PROFIT…" *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 3, 1918, 13. On Schaefer see, "TO DROP LIBERTY BONDS FLAGS IN ST. PETE," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 23, 1918, 12.

from the West Tampa Latin mission and the West Tampa Methodist Mission. Reverend Cooper, another Methodist minister, not the one that had personal grievances with Oser, stated that although Oser was a *good fellow* he was a German at heart who had made pro-German remarks when the war began. He concluded it was for the best that Oser had resigned.[72] To its credit, the *Tampa Tribune* railed against rumormongering, "any man who starts a rumor because a person is German should be taught a lesson in Americanism."[73]

As in all elements of the hysteria, after April 1918, there were many fewer incidents generated by the spy rumor-mill, yet these did not completely disappear. In Hamilton, Georgia a postal worker single handedly marched four men to jail on suspicion of being spies. The four men were speaking to each other in German. To the mail man that was reason enough to suspect espionage.[74] The four men apparently did not resist this act of citizens' arrest. Being German was sufficient cause to question one's loyalty.

Loyalty

In addition to the anti-German incidents described in the region's newspapers involving the fear of a German-African Americans conspiracy and wild speculation over German spies, there was also much discussion as to the broad topic of whether Germans in America were indeed loyal. This issue remained current throughout the US participation in the war but was most prominent in April 1917 and during the early stages

[72] "METHODIST MINISTER WHO IS A GERMAN HAS GIVEN UP POST," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 24, 1918, 7.

[73] *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 18, 1918, 6.

[74] "FOUR ALLEGED SPIES JAILED AT HAMILTON," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 2, 1918, 13.

of the German Spring Offensive in April 1918. Yet in April 1917, when fears prevailed of Germans and blacks working together for nefarious ends and the spy hysteria was ever present, the press tended to remind its readers that the large majority of German Americans were loyal. By 1918, similar to what had occurred with their coverage of spies, German Americans were increasingly viewed by the press with suspicion.

In April 1917 several articles appeared in the Florida newspapers stressing the loyalty of German-Americans. On April 1st, 1917, the *Tampa Tribune* published census figures on Germans living in the various regions of the country and added those that are disloyal in Tampa "can be counted on the fingers of two hands."[75] An incident that can be described as disloyalty, however, did occur in the state in this first month. A German woman who was a teacher at the State College for Women in Tallahassee was fired for displaying a German flag and having pictures of the Kaiser in her room.[76] Yet in these early months the press coverage was generally supportive of German Americans. The newspaper tended to highlight German-Americans who pledged their loyalty to America and noted that to the credit of German-Americans, the press in Germany were criticizing them for staying faithful to the US. Nonetheless the same paper did note that in a patriotic parade of early May 1917, some hyphenated Americans were displeased when the German flag was not displayed on a float that included the flags of the world. 'Hyphenated Americans' was a pejorative term. Labeling oneself German-American

[75] "GERMAN-AMERICANS," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 1, 1917, 16.

[76] "THE PROPER STEP," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 22, 1917, 11.

rather than just American implied divided political allegiance.[77] Aside from its coverage of the government prohibition of enemy aliens from the city's port written in mostly informative tone, the *Pensacola Journal* in the few mentions of Germans in the state tended to discuss them in harsher terms than the *Tampa Tribune*. It gave prominence to a leading German-American who had argued that to prove their loyalty German-Americans should do more than their fair share in the war effort. The *Miami Herald* did not make many accusations over people's loyalty in these early months but it did reprint an item originally appearing in the *Tampa Tribune* concerning a German man being fined for allegedly seditious talk.[78]

This relatively positive view of German-Americans continued in varying degrees throughout the Southeast in the spring of 1917. In Alabama, as in other states of the region, articles questioning the loyalty of German-Americans became more frequent in Spring 1918 but coverage in Spring of 1917, however, did not generally fan the flames of suspicion. For example, The *Montgomery Advertiser* on April 6th celebrated a speech by Secretary of State Lansing noting that foreign-born citizens who conducted themselves properly would not be molested by the government. Specifically, on German-Americans, the article vouchsafed for the loyalty of most, "Beyond doubt Americans of German descent or German Americans, in the main, will be law abiding and loyal."[79] It

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[77] On the German press criticizing German Americans see: *Tampa Morning Tribune*, May 17, 1917, 6. On the parade see, *Tampa Morning Tribune*, May 6, 1917, 10.

[78] "MORE THAN THEIR SHARE," *Pensacola Journal*, May 13, 1917, 5. On the *Miami Herald's* note on disloyalty in 1917 see: "Why Tolerate Further Disloyalty?" *Miami Herald*, November 7, 1917, 4.

[79] "ALL LOYAL CITIZENS SAFE." *Montgomery Advertiser,* April 6, 1917, 4.

concluded optimistically that America would be fair to those of German descent. This positive view of German Americans was highlighted in an early May article discussing Frank Baackes, a German-born American steel executive who created a stir in a speech at an American manufacturers convention. The prominent businessman stated that when the land of his fathers attacked the land of his children, there was no question but to defend the flag of his new country. The *Sea Coast Echo* from Mississippi also gave coverage to the same speech emphasizing a different line taken from Mr. Baackes' speech: although he was proud to be born in Germany, he was an American by choice.[80]

This praising of loyal German-Americans was common during this early period. The *Edgefield Advertiser* in South Carolina noted that the eldest son of a German family in Columbia had just enlisted under the Stars and Stripes. The local newspaper in Newberry, SC reminded its readers in an editorial that being a German did not mean one was a spy. In fact, it continued, many Germans who speak broken English were as good Americans as those who did not have a trace of German in their blood.[81] The *Atlanta Constitution* in an editorial of April 17 defended the loyalty of Germans even while attacking the German American Alliance. First it reported that the president of the alliance stated a few days earlier that even though Germans in America were backing the US against Germany, they were at the same time praying for the defeat of America's allies fighting against Germany. The editorial attacked the paradoxical nature of the

[80] "A MOTTO FOR FOREIGN-BORN CITIZENS." *Montgomery Advertiser*, May 6, 1917, 4. *Sea Coast Echo* (Bay Saint Louis, MS), April 28, 1917, 2.

[81] On the German enlisting in Columbia see: *Edgefield Advertiser* (Edgefield, SC), April 1, 1917, 5. On the loyalty of Germans even with limited English see: *Herald and News* (Newberry, SC), 5.

statement and asserted that unlike the president of the group, most German-Americans were fully loyal to the American cause. To further emphasize the notion, the same page of the newspaper included a letter to the editor calling for tolerance of German Americans, "they are good citizens and will respond to generous and chivalrous treatment."[82]

Yet even during this season of muted coverage on the topic German-American loyalty (as opposed to more fantastical reporting on German/Black cooperation and the spy hysteria), articles that contained a more prejudicial view of German loyalty were still published. On April 11, 1917, a brief editorial in the *Daily Commonwealth* of Greenwood, Mississippi wondered why Germans in American who preferred the Kaiser's rule rather than American freedom had not left for Germany. On the same day, a Baton Rouge newspaper, in an article putting on alert African Americans sympathetic to the enemy cause, also gave a warning to *white-hyphenated people*, presumably German Americans. It stated freedom of speech had its limits. To those wanting the Central Powers to win to, "think three times before expressing themselves when discussing the international crisis."[83]

Although the summer of 1917 did not have many articles explicitly focused on the loyalty of German-Americans, those that did appear mostly tended to defend their

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[82] On praising ordinary German Americans as opposed to the German American Alliance see: "SHOULD BE INTERNED." *Atlanta Constitution*, April 17, 1917, 8. On the need to treat German Americans generously see: "German-American Citizens As Rule Are Loyal to U.S.," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 17, 1917, 8.

[83] On those who prefer the Kaiser's rule see: *Daily Commonwealth* (Greenwood, MS), April 11, 1917, 3. On the limits of free speech see: "SPEAK NOT ILL OF UNCLE SAM, OR PAY," *State Times Advocate* (Baton Rouge, LA), April 11, 1917, 3.

loyalty. An example of positive coverage of German Americans is an article on June 13h praising John Obergefell of Itta Benna, Mississippi. Even though Obergefell was born in Germany, the article reported that he and his wife hosted fifty people at a patriotic dinner that included an American flag hoisted on a sixty-foot flagpole on his property and the interior was decorated red, white, and blue. The same newspaper in July included a brief editorial declaring that no German loyal to America should be deported. Presumably this suggests that calls for the deportation of all Germans were being made at the time.[84] Yet discrimination against German-Americans did occur. An editorial in the *Hickory Daily Record* of Hickory, North Carolina noted that the Red Cross had correctly been a target of criticism for denying top positions to those of German descent. It explicitly decried discrimination, "Some of the best friends of the cause are men and women of German extraction and it is unfair… that the discrimination was allowed."[85]

Toward the end of the summer, more articles casting a more negative light on German loyalty were being published. Interestingly, the *Winston Salem Journal* which had so forcefully defended black loyalty and even approvingly referenced black participation in the Civil War, participated in this early trend. On September 6th, the *Winston Salem Journal* admitted that although very few German-Americans were actively working to advance the Kaiser's cause in America, too many Germans had been lukewarm or indifferent to America's cause. This, it asserted, was a real drag on the

[84] "HERE'S A LOYAL GERMAN." *Daily Commonwealth* (Greenwood, MS), June 13, 1917, 5. On not deporting loyal Germans see: *Daily Commonwealth* (Greenwood, MS), July 16, 1917, 3.

[85] *Hickory Daily Record* (Hickory, NC), July 2, 1917, 3.

American war effort. The same newspaper on the 18th snidely remarked that those who were vocal in their complaints of a lack of free speech generally spoke with a German accent.[86] The harshest attack on German American culture, not surprisingly came from a Louisiana newspaper. The *New Orleans States* noted that German-American newspapers were having a debate on the future of German-Americanism. It concluded curtly, "the discussion is a waste of time. There is not going to be any future…"[87]

Florida, like Louisiana had relatively higher levels of immigrants than the rest of the Southeast and also produced several negative articles on German-Americans. Early in April 1918, the *Tampa Tribune* which had been sympathetic to German-Americans included a brief editorial note that any candidate who sought the pro German vote "should be sent to a concentration camp…"[88] On April 7th it included an article from a small newspaper in St. Petersburg declaring that those in the town who still had German blood in their veins should stay quiet about the war. Ten days later, the *Tampa Tribune* called for German sympathizers and the disloyal to be sent to Tallahassee as Governor Sidney Catts would deal with them. Governor Catts, who had previously mentioned that any German spy should be summarily executed, would presumably treat sympathizers harshly. This suggestion by the *Tampa Tribune* was particularly noteworthy as the

[86] On being lukewarm to the American cause see: "THE BETTER PART," *Winston-Salem Journal*, September 6, 1917, 4. On the lack of free speech see: *Winston-Salem Journal*, September 18, 1917, 4.

[87] *New Orleans States*, August 24, 1917, 6.

[88] On Houston's speech see: "HOUSTON DELIVERS SPLENDID MESSAGE ON WAR SITUATION," March 22, 1918 *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 1, 3. On seeking the pro-German vote see: *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 1, 1918, 4.

newspaper was usually a staunch critic of the governor.[89] The *Times Picayune* of New Orleans on April 8th printed a poem over fifty lines long calling to 'Hang the Hun'. It attacked the hyphenated Germans for not loving their land of adoption, for promoting the delay of needed legislation, to allegedly taking part in acts of sabotage, "Hang the Hun- the creeping, crawling snake, Who is by treachery allowed his toll to take."[90]

Although more American doughboys were engaged in the fight in the latter part of 1918 and with constant proclamations that the German Spring offensive had lost its momentum, the tenor of coverage on Germans and German-Americans became less strident. The 4th of July Committee organizing the annual parade in Tampa invited all loyal American citizens of German and Austrian birth to participate in the parade by carrying the US flag. After the parade the *Tampa Tribune* praised the melting pot nature of the city. The men who carried the flag were praised effusively, "men broad enough to denounce the principles of the land of their nativity, unashamed of their birth, proud of their allegiance."[91] In the fall with the war decisively tilted in favor of the Allies, several articles appeared highlighting people of German descent who had enlisted in the Army. For example, on September 15th, 1918 the *Tampa Tribune* highlighted a local youth, the son of naturalized Germans, who joined the armed forces. On German-Americans who

[89] On Governor Catts and disloyal Germans see: "SEND THEM TO CATTS," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 9, 1918, 6. On the *Tribune*'s typical view of Catts see: Wayne Flynt, *Cracker Messiah: Governor Sidney J. Catts of Florida*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1977), 173.

[90] "HANG THE HUN." *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), April 8, 1918, 8.

[91] On the invitation to Germans see, "TO THE LOYAL AM CITIZNS OF GER OR AUST BIRTH," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, June 29, 1918, 7. On the reaction to the parade see, "NATIONS MELT IN ACCORD IN TAMPA'S GREAT CELEBRATION," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, July 5, 1918, 5.

joined the armed forces, they "reflect credit not only on themselves and their families."[92] The following day in Alabama, an article appeared that congratulated the state for foiling German propaganda, though it recognized, that because there so few Germans in the state, Alabama was particularly well suited to quash these efforts. The German-born citizens of the state, it added, generally stayed quiet during the last year. They could be faulted though, as the Germans "we can remember were aggressive and somewhat arrogant before America entered the war."[93] Yet this new, more positive image, even in the last days of the war, had its limits. On October 31st, 1918 the *Tampa Tribune* reported rather vaguely that a certain man was flying a flag in honor of his nephew who was fighting in the German army and that the local Council of Defense was investigating the matter.[94]

Violence

During the heightened tension that existed throughout the country in April of 1918, a German coal miner named Robert Prager was lynched in Illinois and, not surprisingly, became a focus of discussion throughout the country including the Southeast. Editorials throughout the Southeast noted that it was lamentable that a person was lynched, but the blame was not put on those who had murdered the innocent man but on the government's leniency towards disloyal Germans. One of the few editorials that

[92] "ENLISTS IN ARMY AT AGE 18 YEARS," *Pensacola Journal*, August 8, 1918, p. 7. *Tampa Morning Tribune*, September 15, 1918, p. 9.

[93] "NEARLY A HUNDRED PERCENT AMERICAN." *Montgomery Advertiser*, September 16, 1918.

[94] "It is Being Investigated," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, October 31, 2018, 6.

vigorously attacked mob rule was the *Yorkville Enquirer* of York, SC. It noted that the initial facts showed that Prager was a loyal citizen and that mobs that attacked allegedly disloyal people did more harm than good. Spies, it continued, certainly need to be hanged according to the law, but mobs were dangerous, "as dangerous as mad dogs, and as cowardly as hounds."[95] The *Montgomery Advertiser* commented on the Prager story through a regional prism, it noted that it would have been unfortunate if the *poor devil* had been hanged from a Southern tree.[96] Yet most of the press focused negatively on the government treatment of spies, saboteurs and the disloyal as the *New Orleans States* noted explicitly on April 8th: "The government's gentle treatment of German spies is responsible for the mob violence now being manifested in different parts of the country."[97] Intriguingly, the argument echoes a justification for lynch mobs against blacks used by white southerners. The local newspaper from Manning, South Carolina combined a condemnation of mob rule with a call for a firmer hand from the government. Mob rule, "is to be deplored, but there is only one way to prevent it. That is for the government to recognize sedition wherever its rears its ugly head and crush it with an iron hand."[98]

Violence almost occurred in Tampa. On April 12th, 1918 six men whose loyalty was in question (though no details of this allegation were presented in the article) were

[95] *Yorkville Enquirer* (York, SC), April 16, 1918, 3.

[96] *Montgomery Advertiser*, April 7, 1918, 4.

[97] *New Orleans States*, April 8, 1918, 8.

[98] *Manning Times* (Manning, SC), April 17, 1918, 5.

hauled before a mob of over a thousand men. A judge led the proceedings in front of the city hall in which the six men were told to raise their hand quickly and prominently if they loved their country, if they were willing to die for America, etc. All had to say 'To Hell with the Kaiser' after the last query.[99] Yet the city avoided mob rule. Soon afterwards, St. Petersburg asked permission from Governor Catts to have the local County Guard, the organization that replaced the National Guard which had been sent overseas, to investigate German sympathizers. Apparently, the County Guard was perceived as a stabilizing influence. City officials felt guard members had stopped troublemakers in an incident in St. Petersburg, "there would have been disorder last night and possible mistreatment of one of the men questioned...[100]

Vigilantism towards the supposedly disloyal took another form in Pensacola. A short article which originally appeared in a smaller newspaper was reprinted in the *Pensacola Journal* noting that the Ku Klux Klan had been formed in the city to prevent disloyalty, German propagandists, and saboteurs. After the announcement the article included the words "Good! Next."[101]

Regarding physical violence, either bodily harm or property damage, the pattern of incidents in April 1917 and April 1918 repeated what we have already noted. As mentioned, a fire set in a Tampa boarding house in April 1917 apparently targeted two

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[99] "ALLEGED KAISERITES PUT THROUGH PATRIOTIC QUESTIONAIRRE IN OPEN," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 13, 1918, p.9.

[100] "ST. PETE TO ORGANIZE COUNTY SPY TRIBUNAL," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 17, 2018, 12.

[101] "NEXT!" *Pensacola Journal*, May 5, 2018, 3.

Germans. The fire was put out.[102] Another incident from early in April 1917 occurred in Concord, North Carolina where excessive drinking and the spy hysteria led to a shooting. According to the authorities, a local resident who was drunk was present when James A. Scott entered a café. The resident, Mr. Gillilian, not knowing Scott since he was a stranger in town, accused him of being a spy which led to Scott punching Gillilian. Two days later when Scott was in front of the post office, he was confronted by Gillilian who was armed, a scuffle occurred, and Scott was shot. Fortunately, the bullet struck Scott's spectacle case in his vest pocket leaving him with just a bruised chest. Gillilian was taken into custody by the police.[103] Though there were not many actual instances of physical violence, to what extent harassment led to suicides is unknowable. For example, a German-born local grocer in Charleston, North Carolina committed suicide on June 12, 1917 by tying himself to a twenty-five-pound rock and jumping into a lake. He had been a patient at a local sanitorium, yet a suicide note stated that he was hounded to death.[104]

More incidents of violence occurred the following April. The April 4th, 1918 *Tampa Tribune* reported that a group of citizens approached the German club in Jacksonville with hammers and chisels. They did not assault anyone but they did physically remove the words Germania Club from the building. Two weeks later a man from Jacksonville was on the verge of being tarred and feathered for reportedly saying

[102] "Ascribe St. Pete Fire to Pro-German Talk," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 12, 1917, 13.

[103] "THOUGHT STRANGER A GERMAN SPY, SHOT HIM," *Greensboro Daily News* (Greensboro, NC), April 4, 1917, 6.

[104] "STATE NEWS," *Robesonian* (Lumberton, NC), June 14, 1917, 5.

that Americans should take off their hats to the Kaiser. His captors decided just to strip him to his waist and forced him to kiss the US flag and buy Liberty Bonds.[105] Again, as the tide of war turned decisively in the Allies favor in the latter half of 1918, such major incidents ceased. However, petty animosities continued. In September 1918, the *Tampa Tribune* included a story of a house on Bayshore Boulevard in Tampa that had a white fence. Later, red brick columns with black concrete plates on top of the columns were added to the fence. Unintentionally, the fence displayed the German national colors. A neighbor, in the middle of the night, painted the black plates blue.[106]

Patterns: Unique and Otherwise

The anti-German hysteria in the Southeast was composed of different elements, with each element peaking at different times during the US participation in the war. The element of the hysteria most unique to the region was the fear that Germans were conspiring to incite African Americans. The fear was very prominent from the first days of April 1917 with newspapers focusing on rumors of such incidents in other states of the South. This type of conspiracy was even blamed for the migration of blacks to the North. As real incidents of incitement did not materialize, the press coverage shifted with many articles focusing on 'black loyalty' and on whites calling Germans 'foolish' for supposedly believing that they could tempt blacks to revolt. Although much of the South

[105] On the vandalism to the Germania Club see, *Tampa Morning Tribune*, "JACKSONVILLE CITIZENS CHISEL AWAY NAME OF THE GERMANIA CLUB, April 4, 1918, 1. On the averted tar and feathering see, "HOW JACKSONVILLE REBUKES DISLOYALTY," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 2.

[106] On the charges that the police were German sympathizers see, "CHARGES POLICE ARE GERMAN SYMPATHIZERS," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, July 13, 1918, 9. On changing the colors of the fence see "GERMAN COLOR SCHEME ON BAYSHORE BOULEVARD TOO MUCH FOR ONE CITIZEN," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, September 18, 1918, 9.

was predominately rural in nature there was no significant difference between the coverage of the hysteria by city and rural area newspapers. There are many examples of hyperbole and moderation on the topic in both large and small-town newspapers from that era.

Other elements of hysteria followed the national pattern. The spy hysteria peaked both in April 1917 and April 1918. Several incidents involving supposed spies were silly in nature such as the arrest of the glasses salesmen and the ongoing tale of the con man Elmo Bishop. The nature of these events changed from humorous to very serious in April 1918. Calls on the government to start hanging spies and the disloyal, no matter how flimsy the evidence became common. On German-Americans, most of the coverage early during the period of US involvement in the war tended to be positive though some Germans such as the teacher from Florida lost their jobs because of their nationality of birth. By April 1918 however, as the numbers of American soldiers being killed in the war increased, German-Americans tended to be viewed more negatively. The distinction between spies and the German-American community became blurred. Fortunately, the hysteria brought few instances of violence in the Southeast although almost all newspapers in the region agreed that the lynching of Prager in Illinois was a result of a government excessively lenient on naturalized Germans harming America. Another manifestation of anti-German hysteria which proved prominent in the Southeast, was the attack on German Kultur in America, as the next chapter will show.

CHAPTER 2: ATTACKS ON GERMAN KULTUR

The spy hysteria, the questioning of German American loyalty, and in the South in particular, the paranoia of blacks and German-Americans conspiring together, were not the only significant forms of anti-Germanism during World War I. Attacks on German culture were also prominent both nationwide and in the Southeast. Indeed, the German word *kultur* was commonly used in American print media to confer a negative connotation to the idea of German culture. As mentioned, Frederick C. Luebke in *Bonds of Loyalty* has argued that the war converted latent tensions already present with German-Americans into open hostility. Germans as a group (numbering about 8 million in the 1910 census) had advanced themselves economically in their new home.[1] In addition, they were very proud of their cultural heritage: "Many Germans could not forget that they came from a land which they remembered as having a superior culture."[2] Not surprisingly, an economically successful immigrant group with an innate sense of cultural superiority, would tend to engender resentment among the rest of the population and lead to accusations of arrogance. As will be shown, the resentment escalated to attacks on German social clubs, music, and German language, in particular its instruction in public schools.

After the war began but before the US enters into it, a leader of the German-American Alliance, Charles J. Hexamer infamously increased this bitterness towards German 'kultur'. In a speech in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1915 he declared, "No one

[1] Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 31.

[2] Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 47.

will find us prepared to step down to a lesser kultur. No, we have made it our aim to elevate the others up to us…Be strong and German. Remember you German pioneers, that we are giving to this people the best that the earth affords, the benefits of Germanic kultur."[3] Not surprisingly, when war came, the US government worked to amplify the resentment already felt in American society towards everything German.

After the US entered the war, the Committee on Public Information (CPI) focused on the subject of German kultur in one of their short propaganda books, *Conquest and Kultur*. Effectively, it used the words of Germans themselves not only to equate German kultur with militarism but also to identify German kultur as an instrument of their conquests. For example, it extensively quoted officials from the Pan-German League in Germany who extoled the importance of kultur in imperial Germany's expansionist plans. These sources were forthright in their objectives: "To treat and solve all questions bearing upon the bringing up of children and higher education in the Germanic sense. …To watch over and support all German national movements in all countries where Germans have to sustain a struggle in support of Deutsch, with the object of embracing and uniting all Germans on the globe. To promote an active German policy of interests in Europe, and across the seas..."[4] Education was therefore seen as a key element in spreading German ideals.

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[3] Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 100; see also: James A Henretta et al., *America's History* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2014), 692.

[4] *Conquest and Kultur: Aims of the Germans in Their Own Words*, eds. Wallace Notestein and Elmer E. Stoll, (Washington DC: Committee on Public Information, 1917), 87.

Closely connected to the topic of education is the issue of teaching the German language. The CPI pamphlet, also included the words of Pan-German League officials chosen for their likelihood to alarm Americans, "It is of the highest importance to keep up the German language in America, to establish German universities, improve the schools, introduce German newspapers, and to see that at American universities German professors are more capable than their English-speaking colleagues…"[5] The attack on German language was, therefore, a major component of anti-Germanism in the nation and the Southeast even though the region did not have a large German-American population. German social clubs and German music were also elements of German culture that came under attack in the Southeast after the US entered the Great War.

German Clubs

German clubs in the Southeast had difficulty surviving the war. In the early months of direct US involvement in the war, most German clubs of whatever variety continued with their social activities and their events were widely publicized in local newspapers without negative comments. Yet even in early 1917, some clubs had come under pressure. This is true of both German social clubs catering to German-Americans and dance clubs with a wider clientele.[6] As will be shown, in the Southeast, these dance clubs tended to be very active in Universities. Yet even these clubs which only had a

[5] *Conquest and Kultur*, Notestein and Wallace, 104.

[6] These German dance clubs originally focused on a variation of the cotillion, a French dance. Although in an American context, the dance, the clubs themselves, and later the balls they hosted, were identified as *German* clubs whose program of waltzes, polkas, mazurkas and assorted fun and games attracted couples from the elite of the community, see: Elizabeth Aldrich, *From the Ballroom to Hell: Grace and Folly in Nineteenth Century Dance* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 41-42.

tangential German connection eventually were pressured to change their names. Continuing the pattern discussed in the previous chapter, clubs came under pressure contemporaneous to the German spring offensive and the active participation of US soldiers in the fight. Unlike other manifestations of anti-German actions in America, this antagonism intensified in the summer and fall of 1918, when tide of war turned in favor of the Allies.

Participation in the Red Cross during World War I was a means used by German-Americans to prove their loyalty.[7] In Florida, Jacksonville's Germania Club offered its club house for use by the Red Cross, while the German Club in Tampa also offered its building for use by the Red Cross should it prove necessary. One club, however, did not survive long after the US declared war on Germany. On April 11, 1917, the board of the Germania Club of Miami unanimously agreed to dissolve the organization and pledge loyalty to the country and the president.[8] Yet in the early months of American participation in the war, most German clubs in the Southeast continued as normal with regularly scheduled dances and other social events.

The German clubs of North Carolina in Spring 1917 continued for the most part to thrive with multiple social activities. The society pages of the North Carolina newspapers eagerly promoted their events. On April 3rd, 1917, one day after President

[7] Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 18, 270.

[8] On Jacksonville's Germania Club pledge see: *Miami Herald*, April 9, 1917, 3. On Tampa's German Club pledge see: "GERMAN CLUB OFFERS USE OF BUILDING TO RED CROSS," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 11, 1917, 14. On Miami's Germania Club dissolution see: "GERMANIA CLUB DISCONTINUED," *Miami Herald*, April 13, 1917, 6.

Woodrow Wilson had asked the Congress for a declaration of war on Germany, the *Winston-Salem Journal* announced that the Twin Cities German Club was to have a fancy dress and masquerade ball in the Twin City Club on the upcoming Friday. The brief article went on to note that the annual event was part of the Club's Easter social activity and was one of its most popular activities. War was declared on April 6th, 1917 but the dance continued. Afterwards, the newspaper was effusive in praise for the event, "eclipsing in brilliancy all previous given by the Twin-City German Club."[9] Though, not surprisingly, the ballroom had been full of patriotic decorations, the young ladies of the town dressed in patriotic costumes and the orchestra played John Philip Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever". At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, on April 13th, the German Club also had an Easter dance. The dance along with other social activities at the University that week was well-attended. Similar to the dance in Winston-Salem, there was a patriotic element to the festivities and a military drill on April 14th unofficially marked the end of the Easter week activities.[10] On May 17th, The *Winston-Salem Journal* announced that the last dance of the season to be given by the German Club would be held on Friday May 18th which the article promised to be a pleasant affair. Indeed, on the 20th, the newspaper praised the event, "One of the most thoroughly enjoyable dances of the season," with more than twenty-five couples attending.[11] In Hendersonville, the German Club at a school held their last dance of the year on May

[9] "PRETTY DANCE AT TWIN-CITY CLUB," *Winston-Salem Journal*, April 4, 1917, 3.

[10] "JUNIOR WEEK CLOSES WITH AN EASTER DANCE," *Greensboro Daily News*, April 15, 1917, 2.

[11] The initial notice see: "Last Dance of the Season," *Winston-Salem Journal*, May 17, 1917, 3. On the effusive praise of the dance see: "Enjoyable Dance At The Twin-City Club," *Winston-Salem Journal*, May 20, 1917, 3.

27th. The local newspaper noted that Miss Tempie Zollicoffer was one of the two ladies to lead the grand march. It was also observed that Lieutenant T.B. Shipp of Raleigh, NC also attended the dance before leaving the following day for intensive training at Fort Leavenworth.[12]

In Georgia, during the early months of US involvement in the war, the coverage of a German social club (presumably catering to German-Americans and not exclusively focused on dances) tended also to center on social activities typical of peacetime. On April 14th, 1917 the *Atlanta Constitution* noted that the bowling team of the Savannah German Club was leading a Southern bowling event. The following day, the newspaper noted that a team from Jacksonville finished first in the competition, a team from Atlanta finished second, and the Savannah German Club finished third. The German Club hosted a luncheon for all the participants shortly before hosting a meeting of its executive committee.[13]

An announcement in May showed that the word German in an organization's title had not yet turned poisonous, at least in Augusta. On May 13th, the *Augusta Chronicle* announced that the local cotillion club was to be reorganized and a dance was to be held at the Albion Hotel on June 6th. Interestingly, now the cotillion club was to be called the German Club. Though eventually German names were to fall into disrepute in America,

[12] Fassifern Happenings," *French Broad Hustler* (Hendersonville, NC), May 31, 1917, 6.

[13] On the initial report on the Savannah German Club leading the tournament see: "ATLANTA MEN BOWLING AT SAVANNAH CONGRESS," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 14, 1917, 16. On The Club hosting the luncheon see: "BOWLING HONORS WON BY JACKSONVILLE MEN," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 15, 1917, 10.

at this time the article did not mention anything negative about the name change, "Augusta always had a German club in the past and there is no reason why the young people should not enjoy dances…"[14]

The German Club in Tampa, Florida which had maintained its status in the Tampa community even after the American entry in the war, became embroiled in controversy in June 1917. Before this, the club had been the scene of weekly dances to which non-Germans were invited. Notices of these dances were posted every week in the *Tampa Tribune*. According to the newspaper, at the June 3rd dance, when attendee Captain James McCants of the Florida National Guard heard the German patriotic song "Die Wacht Am Rhein" being played, he immediately complained to the orchestra leader Charles Heidt. Heidt supposedly stated that he would play what he pleased. Judge W.A. Carter who was present at a meeting of the newly formed Tampa Selective Draft Association to which McCants reported the incident vowed to investigate. The president of the club noted to the *Tampa Tribune* that the directors had not investigated the matter further because only a few bars of the song had been played in a potpourri. He continued that Heidt did not mean to offend anyone though he admitted some members of the orchestra were a bit *truculent*.[15] The day after the incident was reported in the newspaper, the club dismissed the orchestra. Obviously, the club's directors belatedly realized the damage that could arise from the controversy. Yet not everyone in the community agreed with the decision. On June 12th, 1917 the *Tampa Tribune* published a

[14] "Cotillion Club To Give Dance June 6th At Albion," *Augusta Chronicle*, May 13, 1917, 4.

[15] "GERMAN CLUB INCIDENT WILL BE INVESTIGATED," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, June 9, 1917, 5.

letter to the editor in which the writer asserted that although Heidt's playing of the German song may have been in poor taste, the expulsion of the orchestra was unnecessary.[16]

In the summer of 1917, nothing as dramatic as the incident in Tampa occurred at a German club in North Carolina or Georgia, some events did proceed without controversy, yet others showed how anything named German started to be viewed negatively. In Winston-Salem, North Carolina even though the dance season had apparently ended, a new event was announced. The society pages of the June 10th *Winston-Salem Journal* announced that this dance was to be held at the Twin-City Club. All members of the Twin-City Club and the German Club were invited to attend.[17] On the same day, the *Atlanta Constitution* included a brief note that the German club had given a delightful dance the past evening in honor of the Tubman graduates. A week later, the same newspaper discussed in more detail an event at the University of Georgia. First the article lamented that the commencement at the University of Georgia was not as elaborate or extensive as usual because of the war and in particular since many of the students had enlisted. The German club, however, hosted a *brilliant* dance in which the main hall was more beautifully decorated than ever before.[18] In Savannah however, there was a sign of what was to come elsewhere. The Savannah German Club (with its

[16] On the dismissal see, "GERMAN MUSIC WILL BE BARRED FROM CLUB," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, June 10, 1917, 13. The letter to the editor see, "MR. HOWARD ASKS SOME QUESTIONS," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, June 12, 1917, 6.

[17] "Subscription Dance At Club." *Winston-Salem Journal*, June 10, 1917, 3.

[18] "AUGUSTA'S SOCIAL SIDE," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 10, 1917, 1. On the German club dance at the University of Georgia see: "Athens, GA." *Atlanta Constitution*, June 17, 1917, 10.

aforementioned top bowling team) changed its name to the Chatham Recreation Club. The same article in the *Atlanta Journal* which announced the name change also noted that Savannah's Germania's Bank would also soon change its name. As the article noted, "Savannah organizations that bear names containing the term "German" are rapidly changing them."[19]

In the fall and winter of 1917 and 1918 the pattern mostly continued of German clubs mostly focused on dances and balls continuing their social activities without harassment from the press in North Carolina, South Carlina, and Georgia. Interestingly in November, the Winston-Salem German Club did have one event beyond their regularly scheduled dances. After a concert of the University of North Carolina Glee Club and Mandolin Club which included appearances by the Red Cross, Army and Navy in the chorus, the German Club included a dance with patriotic songs.[20] At least for the German Club in the Twin Cities, the popularity of their dances and the concerted effort to include patriotic music seemingly saved them from pressure to change its name.

Although there was not much news on the German clubs in South Carolina in the Spring and Summer of 1917, the coverage of German clubs in South Carolina was similar in style to what occurred in North Carolina: exuberant reports of dances and social events hosted by the clubs. The *Evening Post* of Charleston, South Carolina announced a dance hosted by the German Club of the College of Charleston. Apparently, the organization was quite prominent in the college, as it was to be the first dance of the season.

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[19] "Savannah Busy Taking "German" Out of Names," *Atlanta Journal*, June 27, 1917, 5.

[20] "UNIVERSITY BOYS MAKE GREAT HIT," *Winston-Salem Journal*, November 17, 1917, 2.

Interestingly, in the same page, there was an announcement that a social club was to have a dance on the same night in the German Artillery Hall. Presumably, therefore, the impetus to change names had not overcome the desire to have dances, at least as of that date.[21] A few days later, the same newspaper gave a glowing review of the dance, "it was a brilliant social affair and largely attended by a number of out-of-town visitors. A delightful dance program was furnished by Metz's orchestra…"[22] The article continued with a list of the names of many of the attendees and how they were dressed.

The rest of the winter, the pattern remained the same, of notices of dances and effusive praise of the events a few days afterwards. These dances that attracted the elite of the community, not necessarily Germans, seemingly continued unabated. For two Fridays in a row the *Evening Post* announced an upcoming dance by the German Club of the College of Charleston to be held on November 16th. On the 20th of the month, a long article followed praising the dance as an unqualified success. Citadel cadets attended the dance, scarcely signifying therefore these German dance clubs were viewed through an unpatriotic lens, and the Metz Orchestra provided the music.[23] The same pattern was true for the German Club at the University of Georgia in Athens. It hosted two dances in the latter part of October 1917. Though the articles were brief, the dances were praised as lovely and delightful. Not all such dances were hosted by German dance clubs affiliated

[21] *Evening Post* (Charleston, SC), October 19, 1917, 9.

[22] *Evening Post* (Charleston, SC), October 23, 1917, 7.

[23] On the notices of the upcoming dance on November 16, 1917, see: *Evening Post*, Charleston, South Carolina, November 9, 1917, 9 and *Evening Post* (Charleston, SC), November 16, 1917, 9. On the review of the dance see: "The College German," *Evening Post*, (Charleston, SC), November 20, 1917, 7.

with colleges: for example, the *Atlanta Journal* noted that on December 31, 1917, the Nine O'Clock German Club was to have a dance at the Piedmont Club that evening.[24]

Yet the winter saw signs of the decline of the German social club in Tampa and a change of name of a German dance club in Alabama. In Florida, although there was no further coverage on the difficulties encountered by the German Club in Tampa after the incident over the summer, several articles clearly indicate the club's decline. Shortly after the incident no additional notices of the weekly dances appeared in the *Tampa Tribune*. The next mention of a social function at the club was a dance held by the Red Cross Auxiliary in October 1917. On December 30th, 1917 the *Tampa Tribune* reported that the German Club offered to sell its building to the city for use as a hospital.[25] Anti-German hysteria did eventually impact German clubs primarily focused on dances. On February 6th, 1918, Auburn University voted to end the recognition of German clubs at the University, at least in terms of the usage of their existing names. According to the *Montgomery Advertiser*, class officers had argued for weeks as to what the clubs responsible for the dances were to be called. The article continued, that although traditionally these dance clubs were known as German Clubs, many in the student body

[24] On the two dances in October by the German Club of the University of Georgia see: "ATHENS, GA." *Atlanta Constitution*, October 21, 1917, 14 and ATHENS, GA." *Atlanta Constitution*, October 28, 1917, 9. On the dance on December 31st see: "Personal Mention," *Atlanta Journal*, December 31, 1917, 9.

[25] "MEDICAL OFFICERS SEE TAMPA HOSPITAL SITES, LIKE TAMPA BAY HOTEL," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, December 30, 1917, 16.

were loath to continue calling them that because of the war. As of the publication of the article, the favored new name was the Allies Club.[26]

In the Spring of 1918, when aspects of anti-German hysteria reached its peak nationally and the southeast in terms of violence and the spy scare, the effects on the German clubs varied in each state. In South Carolina, similar to what had occurred at Auburn University, the German Club of the College of Charleston changed its name. It was now to be called the Charleston College Cotillion Club or the Four C's Club.[27] Unlike the article explaining the reasons for the change at Auburn University, the coverage about the change in Charleston was brief with no details or commentary. In North Carolina, on the other hand, no name changes were reported. A German Club dance was held in the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A difference from the previous dances in the winter was that they were to have few refreshments and few decorations to eliminate as much expenses as possible.[28]

In Georgia in the Spring of 1918, the German Club at the University of Georgia continued hosting dances under its old name, however, the German social club in Savannah fell victim to anti-German sentiment. On March 21st, 1918 the *Atlanta Constitution* noted that at the University of Georgia, the German Club and the Alliance Club had a friendly rivalry as to which club had the privilege of hosting the Saturday

[26] "GERMAN CLUBS DISSAPPEAR FROM LIFE AT AUBURN," *Montgomery Advertiser*, February 7, 1918, 3.

[27] "College Club changes Name," *Evening Post* (Charleston, SC), April 17, 1918, 5.

[28] "OUTLOOK ENCOURAGING FOR A WINNING TEAM," *Greensboro Daily News*, March 7, 1918, 3.

night pre-Easter dance. There was much excitement in the student body over the issue and the dean was to settle matter shortly.[29] In Savannah, on the other hand, the federal government officers raided the Country Club, formerly known as the German Club and reportedly found prohibited beverages, mostly beer. According to the *Americus Times-Recorder*, the Mayor of Savannah, had pleaded for the raid in a recent visit to Washington.[30] This is not surprising as America was shortly to pass Prohibition and Georgia was a dry state. As German-Americans were prominent beer distributors and because the majority of German-Americans did not support Prohibition, increasingly, anti-German sentiment became intertwined with the anti-alcohol movement. In Florida, which was scheduled to have vote on Prohibition in the winter, many also tried to make that same connection. In July, a temperance speaker connected beer with the attempted German domination of the world. Breweries were portrayed as "German outposts in America."[31] The *Tampa Tribune* included opinion articles later in the year that equated alcohol with Germans and encouraged people to vote for Prohibition and without citing any evidence asserted that liquor was a great hindrance to the Allied cause.[32]

In the summer of 1918, a German club in Atlanta was closed. On June 5th, 1918 the president of the Turnverein Club announced that it would be closed, and all its

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[29] "Pre-Easter Social "Drive" Opens Tomorrow Night at University," *Atlanta Constitution*, March 21, 1918, 7.

[30] "FEDERAL RAIDS ON CLUBS IN SVANNAH," *Americus Times-Recorder* (Americus, GA), April 1, 1918, 9.

[31] "BEER SOAKED BRAINS PLANNED HUN ATTEMPT TO SUBJUGATE THE WORLD," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, July 12, 1918, 5.

[32] On alcohol and Germans see, *Tampa Morning Tribune*, September 2, 1918, 10. On liquor and the Allied cause see, "HUN AND RUM ARE ALLIES," *Tampa Morning Trib*une, October 8, 1918, 12.

fixtures sold. According to the *Atlanta Constitution*, for many years the club had been a staple in the city for Germans and those of German descent. The president of the club, Fred Wedemeyer, disclosed that a threatening note had been placed on the door. The note began "WARNING: To All Germans, Traitors, Pro-Germans, and Hun-Swine: You are advised to close instantly all your lodges or organizations…If you are Americans you will do this. If you are not, Americans will make you."[33] The president, who also was the deputy tax collector of Fulton County, lamented the closing. He noted that the club had been practically dead for two years. All members had to be American citizens or in the process of becoming so, and seven current members had family in the American military. Not surprisingly, he also touted the club's participation in liberty bond drives and cooperation with the Red Cross, as mentioned these actions were commonly used by German organizations to show their loyalty. As for Wedemeyer himself, he had served ten years in the US Army and never had been to Germany.[34]

In Savannah, where the German club had been raided by federal authorities a few months earlier, a possible religious component to the closure of the club was revealed. On June 16th, 1918, Reverend William Hoppe, the paster of the Lutheran Church of the Ascension, called for all German named and organized societies to disband immediately and surrender their property and funds to a trustee for administration. He specifically asked for the Country Club, previously called the Turnverein Club, to offer its building to convalescent soldiers. An article from the *Atlanta Journal* ended with an obvious

[33] "Doors of Turnverein Club Will Be Closed As Patriotic Measure," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 6, 1918, 9.

[34] "Doors of Turnverein Club Will Be Closed…," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 6, 1918, 9.

observation, the reverend's call was due to the fact that the public believed that the Lutheran Church was a German body and the reverend wanted to show that this belief was mistaken.[35] On the following day, the officers of the Country Club and the German Friendly Society of Savannah voted to disband. As Reverend Hoppe suggested, the property would be put under administration of a trustee and the funds on hand would be used for donations to the Red Cross and to invest in liberty bonds.[36]

The German clubs in Atlanta and Tampa were put to new use before the end of the war. The former Turnverein Club in Atlanta became the new office of the local draft board. While describing the transformation of the former club, the *Atlanta Constitution* could not resist bringing up the liquor issue, "the lockers of the German Club once used for sorting out grape juice and more ambitious liquids, have now been converted for files for questionnaires…"[37] While describing the same event, the *Atlanta Journal* mentioned in a somewhat condescending manner the role of African Americans, one of the few examples of news articles on German kultur mentioning Blacks, "some fifty colored registrants, who since had been induced into the service and are now at Camp Gordon, had the time of their lives in tearing off from the walls pictures and inscriptions favorable to Germany, which had hung there for years."[38] The Tampa Labor Temple Association bought the German Club building on October 8th, 1918. A local Labor leader noted that

[35] "German Clubs Must Go, Says Savannah Pastor," *Atlanta Journal*, June 16, 1918, 18.

[36] "SAVANNAH'S GERMAN CLUBS TO DISBAND," *Atlanta Constitution*, June 18, 1918, 12.

[37] "LOCAL BOARD NO. 2 IN NEW QUARTERS," *Atlanta Constitution*, September 26, 1918, 5.

[38] "FORMER GERMAN CLUB NOW SELECTIVE SERVICE BOARD," *Atlanta Journal*, September 26, 1918, 6.

purchasing the building would be good for Labor's image as it showed to the community that it was removing the last vestiges of *Kaiserism* from Tampa.[39]

Music

Not only did the playing of a snippet of a German patriotic song lead to controversy in Tampa, the playing of any German music at all in public, including staples of the classical musical repertoire caused much debate. The attack on German music in the Southeast did not fully materialize until Fall 1917. Before then, some musicians who included German music in their repertoire continued to perform as they had before the war while others eliminated German music from their performances. Starting with the Fall, local newspapers included much more coverage on whether such issues as individual artists included German music or not, broad discussion on the differences between German artists, short humorous attacks on playing German music and the efficacy and morality of eliminating German music. These types of articles lasted until the end of the war. Georgia and Louisiana newspapers tended to have many articles on the topic of German music while in Florida the editors of the *Miami Herald* in particular fought fierce campaigns in the war against German music.

In Spring 1917, the performing of German music was not a major focus of controversy in the Southeast. Mississippi and Alabama newspapers, which barely had any news on German clubs did include some articles on German music. The *Daily Commonwealth* of Greenwood, Mississippi, at least in these early months, was in favor of

[39] "ORGANIZED LABOR LINES UP FOR LABOR TEMPLE," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, September 23, 1918, 3. "LABOR TEMPLE DEAL IS CLOSED, PAYMENT MADE," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, October 9, 1918, 5.

allowing the performance of German music. An editorial noted that some had foolishly wanted to bar Wagnerian operas from the American stage and felt attacking German music was one way to get even with the Kaiser. The editorial asserted that President Wilson would not have approved of such sentiments and offered as proof that Wilson had recently attended a concert by violinist Fritz Kreisler who had served in the Austrian army just two years prior. The editorial concluded, "To this day we would rather listen to good German music than poor English music, which is usually the case."[40] The few other mentions of German music in Southeastern newspapers mentioned the topic in a tangential manner. The *Montgomery Advertiser* noted that on April 14th in Ramer, Alabama the Music Study Club held an event that included songs, poems, and concluded with gifts of picture puzzles of noted German and French composers.[41] No negative commentary was included in the article. In another link between anti-alcohol and anti-German hysteria, however, on April 18th the police in Mobile, Alabama seized eight cases of beer from the Froshinn Singing Society, a German singing organization.[42]

By the fall of 1917, the topic of the acceptability of German music became much more prevalent in the newspapers including those in Alabama and Mississippi. A brief humorous anecdote which indicated increasing anti-German sentiment appeared in the *Montgomery Advertiser* on October 21st. The anecdote was of a supposed conversation between two neighbors. The first neighbor stated that his daughter was patriotic and,

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[40] *Daily Commonwealth* (Greenwood, MS), May 12, 1917, 3.

[41] "Ramer Society," *Montgomery Advertiser*, April 15, 1917, 22.

[42] "POLICE SEIZE BEER AND FROSHINN MEAL IS TAME, DRY AFFAIR," *Montgomery Advertiser*, April 17, 1917, 3.

therefore, would not play any German songs. The second neighbor replied that it did not help any as she would probably play something else in place of it.[43] In Mississippi, on October 10th , 1917 the Greenwood local newspaper announced the group Matinee Musicale decided that pieces from Italian, Russian, German, French, and American operas were to be the focus of its upcoming season.[44] Also in the state, singers Ethel and Margaret Olsen, known as the Olsen Sisters, included a program of Scandinavian and German music in November. The *Stone County Enterprise* from the small town of Wiggins actually printed an article previewing the performance on its first page on two different days.[45] A few days later, in Montgomery, Alabama an operatic soprano was performing when she noticed that American and French army officers were in the audience. The artist upon viewing the audience decided to change her routine. According to the *Advertiser*, she immediately decided to eliminate four German language songs by the Czech composer Antonin Dvorak (at the time Czechoslovakia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire). It turned out to be a good decision, "The elimination of the quartette of German songs and the substitution of the Italian and French arias was a gracious act that the audience tremendously appreciated."[46]

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[43] *Montgomery Advertiser*, October 21, 1917, 30.

[44] "MATINEE MUSICALE MEETING AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS." *Daily Commonwealth* (Greenwood, MS) October 10, 1917, 8.

[45] "THE OLSEN SISTERS." *Stone County Enterprise* (Wiggins, MS), October 27, 1917, 1 and "THE OLSEN SISTERS." *Stone County Enterprise* (Wiggins, MS), November 3, 1917, 1.

[46] "HELEN STANLEY CUT OUT GERMAN SONGS FOR GOOD REASON," *Montgomery Advertiser*, November 7, 1917, 9.

In North Carolina, similar to how German dance clubs continued their prewar activities, performers in the state maintained the German repertoire in their acts. For example, on November 16th, 1917 a song recital in Greensboro was given by mezzo-soprano Lora Lulsdorff, faculty at the Music Department of the State Normal College. Her performance included two groups of English songs and one group of German songs. The performance was well-received, "The recital was a rare treat and greatly enjoyed by the audience, which showed its thorough appreciation by frequent and enthusiastic applause."[47] Presumably the applause was not solely for the performance of the English songs but for the German songs as well. In late November, the duo of Witherspoon and Hinkle performed in Winston-Salem. The program consisted of songs in various languages including German including some by Joseph Haydn, an Austrian classical composer. Similar to the performances earlier in the year in Mississippi, no criticism of the content of the program appeared in the local newspapers.[48]

The newspapers of Louisiana, a state both famous for music (though not necessarily German) and with the highest percentage of German immigrants of the states being examined, included several articles on German music. Most did not center on individual performances in state but on the topic of whether German music should be banned altogether. The articles featured both short, humorous jibes at the playing of German music, and more broad attacks on German music citing elements of musical history. One article, however, that did focus on a performance was a review of a concert

[47] "Miss Lulsdorff's Recital." *Greensboro Daily News*, October 17, 1917, 6.

[48] "CONCERT TICKETS AT SALE TODAY AT 2," *Winston-Salem Journal*, November 27, 1917, 6.

in Baton Rouge by noted American baritone singer Cecil Fanning. The review noted the program was varied and excellent, "It embraced numbers from many different schools and the absence of German music was entirely unnoticeable."[49] More common were short attacks at German music. On November 2nd, 1917 the *New Orleans States* reminded their readers of the sinking of the Lusitania by a German U-boat when noting that German music had lost some popularity, "Some people imagine that they hear it in the cries of the Lusitania babies."[50] The same newspaper later in the month used a brief attack on German music to include a reference to alcohol. After asking the question- "what has German music ever done?", the reply followed: "Well our observation is that after listening to it at the volkfest it makes them call for more beer."[51] On December 3rd, 1917, the *State Times Advocate* reprinted a brief article stating that, of course, German music may not have been Hohenzollern compositions but was being used in the United States to camouflage *Hohenzollernism*.[52]

Other articles in Louisiana made a broader attack on German music which were obviously written by authors who knew the content of German music or at least were well-versed in the subject of the elimination of German musical repertoire in America. The *Times-Picayune* of New Orleans took a unique look at this topic in their October 5, 1917 edition. At first it labeled as radical those who wanted to eliminate all German

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[49] "RECORD AUDIENCE ENJOY'S AMERICA'S SWEET SINGER," *State Times Advocate* (Baton Rouge, LA), 6.

[50] *New Orleans States*, November 2, 1917, 8.

[51] *New Orleans States*, November 27, 1917, 8

[52] "A MUSICAL CAMOUFLAGE." *State Times Advocate* (Baton Rouge, LA), December 3, 1917, 4.

music. These radical calls it asserted were mostly ignored. On the other hand, the writer continued, there had been reasonable requests to *soft-pedal* the German element of musical performances a call that had largely been accepted. After these statements, the writer focused on the main priority of his piece, attacking the ruthless business dealings of German composer Richard Strauss.[53] The following month the same newspaper took a less idiosyncratic look at the topic and concluded with an opinion. It noted that in the beginning of the war when many in France opposed performing German operas in their country, Americans in general were disappointed that racial and political animosities had invaded the field of art. The article acknowledged that American opinion on the subject had evolved since then. The evidence for this included the recent announcement by the Metropolitan Opera Company of New York to not perform any German operas in the upcoming season. Although not explicitly agreeing with the decision, the writer puts the blame on Germany, "due to the brutal manner it has adopted towards other nationalities, in which it has ridden roughshod over them and made itself so universally hated."[54]

Similar to Louisiana, during the fall and winter of 1917, the topic of eliminating German music was a point of debate in newspapers in Georgia. The *Atlanta Journal* on November 30th, 1917 included an article that tried to take a balanced look at the topic. It began by stating that, of course, the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and Ludwig van Beethoven could not be abandoned or ignored. The author posits that there were two strains of German music. One held to the ideal of lawless self-expression and that man

[53] "MUSICAL FRIGHTFULNESS." *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), October 7, 1917, 20.

[54] "OUR GERMAN RELATIONS." *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), November 1917, 12.

should not be subject to, but transcend, moral laws. This ideal was personified by Richard Wagner and his current acolyte Richard Strauss. The writer continued, older German composers, such as Johannes Brahms had too much artistic conscience and self-restraint in their music to be characterized as Prussian. Therefore, the writer called for nuanced decisions on what German music to play, "Our program makers have a chance to be discriminating in these days. If they give us German music, let it be that of the line of Bach and Brahms.[55] In the *Atlanta Constitution*, an article made an interesting argument against eliminating German music. If printed announcements were not given to the audience beforehand with contents of a musical program, the writer wondered, how many of cities that were calling for the banning of German music would know if the music being played was from an enemy or ally? Another question asked in the article was that since destroying cathedrals or works of art during wars were considered awful, why target songs and symphonies?[56] Similar to the previous article, though somewhat less learned, the *Augusta Chronicle* on December 7th made the argument against a blanket elimination of German music in America. The article asserted that many were ignorant of the creators of German music: "A good portion too, of the splendid so-called German music has not come, as produced, from the pure-blooded Germans, but from Jews."[57] Additionally, since Jews were considered largely against or at least apathetic to the current German government, their music was acceptable. However dubious, in many

[55] "A Choice of German Music," *Atlanta Journal*, November 30, 1917, 10.

[56] "NATIONALITY IN MUSIC," *Atlanta Constitution*, December 9, 1917, 4.

[57] "These Were Not Made in Germany!" *Augusta Chronicle*, December 7, 1917, 6.

levels, these assertions were, the writer used them to call on not banning all German music.

In Florida, rather than just commenting on the topic, the *Miami Herald* forcefully waged campaigns to ban German music. One incident involved the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs scheduled yearly convention in Tampa in November 1917. When it became known that music of Austrian and German composers was scheduled to be played at the opening session of the convention, many in Miami objected. The *Miami Herald* reported on a letter of protest wired to the vice president of the federation signed by several women in Miami. In addition to including the strident language of the letter, the writer of the article observed, "no one knows why, at a time of stress that American managers are eliminating German operas…German music should have been made a feature of the program."[58] Three day later the *Miami Herald* reprinted an editorial from the *Christian Science Monitor* that stated German music in America was being used to camouflage *Hohenzollernism*.[59] In response to the outcry, the federation decided to follow an excerpt of music by Carl Maria von Weber with a patriotic medley. The same day the federation admitted to that minor change, the Friday Morning Musicale of Tampa announced that as a result of public criticism, it would eliminate all German music from its program.[60]

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[58] "MIAMI WOMEN PROTEST AGAINST GERMAN MUSIC ON FEDERATION PROGRAM." *Miami Herald*, November 19, 2017, 3.

[59] *Miami Herald*, November 22, 2017, 3.

[60] On the change of music see: "FLORIDA FEDERATION CONVENTION OPENS FOUR-DAY SESSION WITH REPRESENTATIVE THRONG," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, November 21, 1918, 7. On

In Spring 1918, when all things German in America were being attacked, the coverage of German music in the local newspapers in the Southeast became much harsher. A trio of articles appearing in Georgia were a partial exception to the trend. On March 17th, 1918 a long article in the *Atlanta Journal* noted that German music had been pushed to the background in this country. The article does not approve of this fact, indeed, "there are always those who believe music is immortal, standing far above all wars and rumors of wars and belonging in its entirety to the world."[61] However, since the opposite view of music prevailed, it continued, American operas were now filling the void. Also in March, an article in the *Atlanta Constitution* made a similar point: now that German kultur in America had been downgraded, American audiences were searching for good American music. Again, the article did not explicitly state approval for the elimination of German music. One of the few articles from the Southeast in general during these months that explicitly argued against the elimination of German music was an article that appeared in the *Trench and Camp* newspaper published in Augusta, Georgia. This is particularly interesting since it was a newspaper established in October 1917 for US Army personnel and produced by the YMCA in conjunction with local newspapers. In a broad salvo against the mindlessness of anti-Germanism, it noted that the overwhelming majority of German-Americans were loyal even if there existed in many a feeling of separateness from the broader community. The responsibility for this feeling of separateness lay with Americans who denigrated anything German including

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the Friday Morning Musicale see: "GERMAN MUSIC IS TO BE CUT OFF PROGRAM LOCAL ORGANIZATION," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, November 21, 1918, 9.

[61] "Legends of "The Long House" Immortalized in American Opera," *Atlanta Journal*, March 17, 1918, 21.

German music. The article concluded that if America continued insulting German-Americans over their origins and their culture, "we shall pay for it in lessened efficiency for war and disordered political alignments in the coming peace."[62]

Yet this sentiment was rare. Even in North Carolina, where effusive praise of German club dances echoed throughout, several pointed articles in Spring 1918 called for the elimination of German music. On April 28th, the *Greensboro Daily News* included a long piece that explained that German music was an instrument of pan-Germanism in America. The point of the article was made very clear by beginning with the Chinese proverb, 'Let us spread sweet music though the camp of the enemy, so as to soften his heart.'[63] In the same newspaper, in an article somewhat more factual rather than opinionated a writer noted that the issue of suppressing German music was controversial and many musicians had thought the notion to conflate music with war ridiculous. The writer, however, pointed out that American public had already decided on the issue and German music had effectively been embargoed in the country.[64] Some opinion pieces had no ambiguities. An article in the May 16th *Winston-Salem Journal* not only supported the elimination of German music but also called for hatred of everything German, "We've got to learn to despise, loathe, and detest German music, German art,

[62] "SHOULD NOT BE SUCH A THING AS GERMAN-AMERICAN PROBLEM," *Trench and Cap* (Augusta, GA), April 10, 1918, 13.

[63] Stephen French Whitman, "Sweet German Music." *Greensboro Daily News*, April 28, 1918, 9.

[64] "Question of Hyphenate." *Greensboro Daily News*, May 25, 1918, 4.

German everything, till our hearts and souls are filled with rage that will make us rise in the full might of our population and beat the German army to its knees."[65]

In Florida, surprisingly, within the broad topic of anti-German hysteria, the performance of George Frideric Handel's *Messiah* in Miami was the single incident that generated the most press coverage in a Southeastern newspaper. Even though the German-born Handel lived most of his life in London, moving there after the Hanoverian elector took the throne of Britain, and the *Messiah* oratorio is sung in the English language, many citizens of Miami and the *Miami Herald* complained vociferously of its performance. On March 10th, 1918 the *Miami Herald* published an article with a large headline that German music was to be sung in the White Temple Methodist Church in Miami the following Friday. Most of the article is an angry screed of a citizen proclaiming that Miami residents listening to music by a German would, "warm the cockles of the Kaiser's heart…"[66] These comments and others that followed in the subsequent days ignored the fact that Handel's *Messiah* is an English-language piece. Two days later the *Miami Herald* included an opinion article asserting that the upcoming performance of Handel's *Messiah* would be an insult to all the parents of the soldiers fighting in Europe against the Germans. Shortly afterwards, the editor of the newspaper wrote an editorial stating that it was unfortunate that at a time when German textbooks

[65] "A HYMN OF HATE," *Winston-Salem Journal*, May 16, 1918, 9.

[66] "GERMAN MUSIC SUNG IN MIAMI," *Miami Herald*, March 10, 1918, 2.

were being banished and German newspapers were being suppressed, the *Messiah* was to be sung in Miami.[67]

As the performance approached, the newspaper printed a cacophony of complaints. In a two-day span it included a letter to the editor complaining about German music, a request to be kind by not playing German music, an editorial against the performance, a poem about not liking German music, an article refuting charges of hypocrisy from the minister of the church, and, on the first page, a statement from the American Defense Society attacking German music and *kultur*. The statement included a broad attack, all in capital letters, on German culture calling for its suppression not just during the war but in post-war America as well, "AFTER THE WAR IS OVER, THE LESS WE HEAR IN AMERICA OF THE GERMAN LANGUAGE AND OF GERMAN LITERATURE, MUSIC, ART, AND SCIENCE, THE BETTER FOR ALL CONCERNED."[68] Handel's *Messiah* was performed as scheduled. The attacks on all things German did not always succeed.

More examples, especially in Miami, of the war on German music followed. On March 30th, 1918, only a few days after the *Messiah* fiasco, an advert appeared for a concert that specifically noted that German music was not going to be played. In June and October, a wedding notice mentioned that German music would not be played in the ceremony and reception. In an additional sign of the hardening of attitudes against

[67] Among the many critical articles see: "GERMAN MUSIC IN MIAMI," *Miami Herald*, March 12, 1918, 10; "Was unfortunate," *Miami Herald*, March 14, 1918, 12.

[68] "Views of American Defense Society on German Music in America," *Miami Herald*, March 15, 1918, 1.

German music, the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs announced that the convention in 1918 would not include German music.[69]

As shown in the attacks on Handel's *Messiah*, criticism of the playing of German music became intertwined with onslaughts on all aspects of German culture. On April 3rd, 1918 an opinion article declared that both German music and teaching of the German language in schools were signs of disloyalty. In June 1918, the *Miami Herald* printed a sermon by a Baptist minister in Miami declaring a war on all things German. He stated that in the movement to eradicate German culture, the war had come in the nick of time. He thanked God that the war came when it did for if it would have occurred twenty-five years later, the country would have been Germanized.[70] In the latter stages of 1918, the *Tampa Tribune* also included a statement written in a measured tone from a prominent citizen calling for less German music and language yet the headline was hyperbolic "TREASON IN MUSIC".[71] As Americans were fighting and dying in Europe, this attack on German culture devolved into ethnic hatred. An article, not on the editorial page, in August 1918 noted German culture was a façade to hide the most brutish, vile people on earth, "it's in their blood, in the blood of all of them and may God damn their shriveled souls and torture their foul bodies in payment. The German race stinks in the nostrils of civilization."[72]

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[69] "NO GERMAN MUSIC ON FEDERATION PROGRAM." *Miami Herald*, October 29, 1918, 3.

[70] "MAKE WAR ON THINGS GERMAN," *Miami Herald*, June 4, 1918, 1.

[71] "TREASON IN MUSIC," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, 6.

[72] "No Let Up! Hammer the Huns Till they Cry, Mercy!" *Miami Herald*, August 26, 1918, 12.

Yet this feeling of hatred was much more than the writings of an overzealous newspaper editor. On August 25th, 1918, the *Montgomery Advertiser* published a letter to the editor. It called on eliminating everything German from society including German music which was still being played at many weddings. The letter continued, "Our boys have gone through terrible times in the battles recently and it is an injustice to them to so value German Music."[73] It was signed by a Soldier's Mother.

Language

Not surprisingly, as in other regions of the country, anti-German sentiment in the Southeast targeted the German language. Unlike the timing of the campaign nationally which as Luebke notes tended to coalesce in 1917, the focus on German language in the Southeast developed primarily in 1918, after the controversies over music, and continued until the end of the war. Of course, those months were concurrent with Americans fighting in Europe. Unlike the attack on German clubs and German music, this manifestation of anti-Germanism led to changes in laws as teaching German was banned in several states.

In Spring 1917, there were not many reports in the region of attempts to stop teaching German in schools. Indeed, one of the first mentions in the local press of the German language that year was actually not about schools but about German language publications. The *Tampa Tribune* on June 16th, 1917 included a brief commentary that former President Theodore Roosevelt was correct and that the printing of German

[73] "WHAT ABOUT GERMAN MUSIC?" *Montgomery Advertiser*, August 25, 1918, 4.

magazines and newspapers in the country should be prohibited. Two months later the *Pensacola Journal* included an editorial calling for the shutting down of a particular German language paper.[74]

Interestingly, in Alabama and Mississippi, several articles were written against the idea of banning the teaching and/or the use of the German language. The *Montgomery Advertiser* reprinted a short article from the *Tuskegee News* with a very open minded, internationalist perspective. It asserted that since our soldiers, businessmen and political leaders would be present in all countries of the world after the war, it would be best for our children to learn Russian, French, and German languages. Very sensibly, the article stated this would allow Americans to transact intelligently with anybody.[75] One of the few mentions on the topic in a Mississippi newspaper in 1917 was in a brief editorial by the *Columbus Commercial*. It recognized that there was a movement to discontinue the use of German in the country and sarcastically noted that it was particularly foolish because the use of 'Wednesday' would have to be discarded since it originally had been called Odin's Day after the Teutonic god Woden or Odin.[76]

Although German clubs in North Carolina, especially those that focused on dances, flourished in 1917, one of the earliest examples in the Southeast of discontinuing German instruction in schools occurred in North Carolina. Durham school officials

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[74] On the reaction to Roosevelt's speech see: *Tampa Morning Trib*une, Jun 16, 1917, 6. On *Pensacola Journal* wanting a newspaper shut down see: "INDULGENCE WILL CEASE WHEN PATIENCE ENDS," *Pensacola Journal*, August 23, 1917, 5.

[75] "BETTER LEARN MORE LANGUAGES." *Montgomery Advertiser*, May 27, 1917, 4.

[76] *Columbus Commercial* (Columbus, MS), August 26, 1917, 3.

decided not to allow the teaching of German in schools during the 1917-1918 school year. In West Durham, which was at the time not officially incorporated in the city of Durham, the high school also decided not to offer any German classes that school year.[77] In addition, a newspaper in the state included an early example in the Southeast of a long editorial against the teaching of the German language in schools. The *Winston-Salem Journal* included a wide-ranging editorial on the topic of the German government and German organizations attempting to promote disloyalty in countries around the world. It stated the German language and literature served the purpose of the German Empire. The editorial also targeted the teaching of German in American schools, "The teaching of German in American schools is in great measure the work of German societies that are seeking solely to advance the interests of the German Empire."[78] The article went on to point out that textbooks that flatter the Kaiser, German foreign relations and the nature of German society had not come into schools by accident but were introduced by German societies at the behest of Berlin.

In South Carolina in 1917, although the teaching of German was not prohibited, it became a topic of debate. Signs of the continuance of German instruction included a brief article in the smalltown *Abbeville Press and Banner* which noted that a woman who taught German at Queens College in Charlotte dropped by Abbeville to visit a friend. Not surprisingly in an article titled "PRETTY VISITOR", it did not include any negative

[77] *Greensboro Daily News*, September 7, 1917, 2. Also see: "Ban on German Language." *Review* (High Point, NC), September 13, 1917. 8.

[78] "PROMOTING DISLOYALTY." *Winston-Salem Journal*, October 13, 1917, 4.

comments on the visitor's profession.[79] More evidence that the discontinuation of teaching the German language had not yet swept the state, was a notice in the *Evening Post* of Charleston that a teacher of French and German was needed in Charleston High School.[80] Yet the attack on the German language was a point of contention in the state. The editorial page of the *Watchman and Southron* included an essay from an author from the Vigilantes, a group of writers who encouraged the participation of the US on side of the Entente and, after the US entrance in the war, wrote many essays against German kultur. This particular essay was written in the voice of a German official that could not believe the *silly* way America fought wars; it allowed German language newspapers that constantly attacked American allies. In the words of the imaginary German official, "I guess Uncle Sam can't read German, he is so dumm!"[81] On teaching German, a shorter editorial in the *Edgefield Advertiser* made its point by simply asking how many schools will be teaching German after the war ends?[82]

In Louisiana, the debate on teaching German in schools became a focus of fierce debate starting in the summer of 1917 that lasted until the end of the war. A few brief editorials attacking German classes in school appeared at this time. The *New Orleans States* included a short joke in its editorial page in July 1917 which presumably was for discontinuing German language instruction, "The result of teaching German in some of

[79] "PRETTY VISITOR." *Abbeville Press and Banner*, June 6, 1917, 6.

[80] "High School Teaching Vacancies," *Evening Post* (Charleston, SC), September 4, 1917, 5.

[81] "IGNORANT UNCLE SAM CAN'T READ GERMAN." *Watchman and Southron* (Sumter, SC), August 1, 1917, 5.

[82] *Edgefield Advertiser*, August 15, 1917, 5.

the public schools is the bad English the pupils speak."[83] Also brief, though less humorous, was a note the *Herald* of Algiers, Louisiana that mentioned a proposal to eliminate German from public schools, and then asked why it was taught in public schools in the first place.[84]

Editorial pages of the *Times-Picayune* of New Orleans were the venue for more reasoned debate that involved letters from the public on both sides of the issue and the editors of the newspaper. A letter to the editor dated August 4th attacked the teaching of German via a series of questions. For example, the author who was only identified as 'American Sentiment', asked was it necessary to teach in our public schools the language of a nation opposed to our ideals and blindly loyal to an autocrat? The letter also asked why our children should be taught a language that was a barrier to the truths of democracy. In a sign of how one manifestation of anti-German hysteria affected anti-Germanism as a whole, it also asked, "How long shall we tolerate the study of a language of a nation whose government fills our land with spies and corruption…?"[85] A month later, a letter to the editor was published seemingly in reply to first letter and those who wished to ban instruction of German. First, the writer dispelled the notion that knowing German would make someone less patriotic or democratic as that would be "analogous to saying that the German submarine commander mitigates his ruthlessness because of his

[83] *New Orleans States*, July 25, 1917, 6.

[84] *Herald* (Algiers, LA), October 25, 1917, 3.

[85] "German in the Schools." *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), August 6, 1917, 11.

knowledge of the English tongue."[86] He then went on to point out that learning a foreign language was essential to social advancement. The war was not going to last forever, therefore, he concluded it is best to prepare the children for the world of tomorrow.

A letter to the editor published September 5th tried to take a middle ground. Similar to the previous letter it noted that foreign commerce would eventually expand after the war and, therefore, it would be good to learn foreign languages. It assumed that no one with common sense would disagree with teaching German to high school and college students. The author conceded that it was understandable that some did not agree with teaching younger children German, so the solution was not to teach German in public elementary schools but to allow German instruction to the young under private auspices.[87] The editor of the *Times-Picayune* included several editorials that were also portrayed as seeking a compromise although it included some contested assumptions. An editorial on September 19th recognized that there was a wide-ranging discussion on the topic occurring in the country. It recognized the need for commercial or literary reasons to continue teaching German in the high school or college level. It disagreed with teaching German at the lower grades of public schools and equated foreign languages with being against America, "public schools should not be utilized to teach opposition to America and American ideas and to keep alive foreign languages and foreign ideas in this country."[88] The editorial continued that a practice that was meant to get votes from

[86] "Teaching Foreign Languages." *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), September 3, 1917, 18.

[87] "German in the Public Schools." *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), September 5, 1917, 6.

[88] "THE LANGUAGE QUESTION." *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), September 19, 1917, 15.

German-Americans was now encouraging un-American ideals. An editorial in November in the same vein asserted disloyalty was prevalent in America. It put the blame on teaching German since the language supposedly retarded patriotic sentiment in the country. Unlike the previous editorial two months earlier, it did not concede the need for German instruction in higher-level classes.[89]

Instead of a clear movement to ban German language concurrent with the Spring Offensive, in the Southeast there was already a clear momentum to eliminate German in classes in school at the beginning of 1918 that did not limit itself to commentary and editorials but included laws on city and state levels. On January 6th, 1918 the city council of Rome, Georgia passed a resolution calling for the school board to discontinue the teaching of German in the city's public schools. The resolution also requested the board to fire any teacher who had made any unpatriotic utterances (given rumors abounded that some teachers had made such unpatriotic remarks). Although these claims remained unproven the council felt an investigation by the board was needed.[90] On January 13th the Rome school board agreed to discontinue German at the end of the schoolyear. It stated that it could not end the classes earlier as a modern foreign language course was a college requirement and the German class was half over. It was too late to substitute it with another language. Interestingly, this did not end the discussion. On January 20th the city council reiterated its request to end German classes immediately as it would be

[89] "FOREIGN LANGUAGES." *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), November 28, 1917, 8.

[90] "Ask Rome School board to Discontinue German And Fire Some Teachers," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 7, 1918, 5.

unpatriotic to continue the classes. The city council did not mention the college language requirement issue that the school board had highlighted.[91]

By February, the school board president of Atlanta, Major R. J. Guinn, made news over his attitude on the teaching of German not only in Atlanta but also in Savannah. In a conference in Savanah, he predicted that soon the schools in that city would eliminate German classes. Presumably, that put pressure on the Savannah school officials to go forward with that decision. Two weeks later he announced that before the beginning of the next school year, he would call on the board to end teaching German in the Atlanta public schools. Interestingly, he added that he was firmly opposed to teaching German because he did not want to encourage trade between the US and Germany after the war.[92] Guinn introduced the resolution, and it was passed unanimously on March 28, 1918.[93]

More school districts in Georgia and eventually the whole state as well followed Atlanta's lead. On April 12th, the school board of Macon voted to end instruction of German. Although there were not many long editorials in the state newspapers as politicians and school officials were moving towards the elimination of German, there

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[91] On the school board response see: "ROME PUBLIC SCHOOLS STOP TEACHING GERMAN," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 14, 1918, 7. On the insistence of the city council see: "Rome School Board Asked to Discontinue German Lessons Now," *Atlanta Constitution*, January 21, 1918, 6.

[92] On the prediction of ending German in Savannah see: "TEACHING GERMAN SAVVANAH PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO CEASE," *Americus-Times Recorder* (Americus, GA), February 3, 1918, 2. On stopping German classes in Atlanta see: "WOULD CUT OUT GERMAN IN ATLANTA SCHOOLS," *Atlanta Constitution*, February 21, 1918, 4. Also see: "OBJECT TO GERMAN IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS," *Americus-Times Recorder* (Americus, GA), February 22, 1918, 2.

[93] "To End German Study." *Atlanta Constitution*, March 29, 1918, 9.

was some pressure to take such steps from the newspapers. For example, the *Americus Times-Recorder* on April 28th noted that the nationwide anti-German movement that had led to the elimination of teaching German in many schools was mostly commendable. Although the editorial recognized there was some danger of overly deprecating everything German, it felt it was a natural turn of events. In response to those that made the argument that it would be beneficial to learn German for post-war business opportunities, it replied that it would be better for the Germans to learn English.[94] In May 1918, Governor Hugh Dorsey and the state schoolbook commission in their purchase of schoolbooks for the next five years did not order any books for teaching German. The newspapers reported this as effectively ending the teaching of German in the public schools.[95] By the summer it became official: the state legislature passed and the governor signed into law a bill eliminating the teaching of German in the public schools of the state.

In Florida, the push against the German language began in earnest in April 1918. The school board of Duval County, whose biggest city is Jacksonville, announced that the instruction of the German language would no longer be part of the public school curriculum. Interestingly, the announcement was made at a local vigilance committee.[96] That same week, the *Tampa Tribune* had an editorial that called on Tampa schools to stop

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[94] "LET GERMANS LEARN ENGLISH." *Americus Times-Recorder* (Americus, GA), April 28, 1918, 2.

[95] "GERMAN IS BARRED IN THE SELECTION OF SCHOOL BOOKS," *Atlanta Constitution*, May 5, 1918, 5.

[96] "DUVAL COUNTY SCHOOLS ABOLISH GERMAN TONGUE," *Tampa Morning Trib*une, April 12, 1918, 11.

teaching German language and literature. Apparently as a response to the editorial, the *Tampa Tribune* on the following day included a statement from the principal of Hillsborough High School clarifying that German language classes had been dropped from the curriculum, however, those students that had previously enrolled in a German class would be allowed to finish the course.[97]

In May of 1918, as a bill on the suppression of the German language worked its way through Congress, Florida saw additional and varied attacks on the language. In Miami the local Rotary Club called for the elimination of teaching German in the public schools. Not surprisingly, considering its campaign against Handel's *Messiah*, in an editorial on May 12th, 1918 the *Miami Herald* appealed for the suppression of German music and the use of the German language. The following day, the *Tribune* covered the announcement that Volusia County had also decided to eliminate the teaching of the German language.[98]

The German language was not only eliminated in some public schools in the elementary and high school levels, but in June 1918, the state board announced that German courses also would be eliminated from state colleges and universities. An announcement on the dropping of German courses in the Women's State College of

[97] On the editorial regarding Tampa schools see: "German as a Text Book," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 18, 1918, 6. On the response by Hillsborough High see: "Status of German in the H.H.S. explained," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 19, 1918, 14.

[98] On the Miami Rotary Club see, "INTERESTING DISCUSSION AT ROTARY CLUB LUNCH," *Miami Herald*, May 10, 2018, 3. On the editorial on the German language see, *Miami Herald*, May 12, 1918, 12. On Volusia County public schools see "DE LAND," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, May 13, 1918, p. 6.

Florida was announced two weeks later. The *Tampa Tribune* added the comment after the announcement "Every little bit helps."[99]

Similarly, to what has been described as happening in the Midwest, the issue of the German language and church services was a point of contention in Florida as well.[100] In April 1918, an Evangelical Church in Tampa announced the discontinuance of German language services. Although the minister of the church noted that the language was never used as a device of disloyalty, it was best to end the practice. The same newspaper article that included the announcement also mentioned that the German Zion Lutheran Church had changed its name to the Zion Lutheran Church.[101] Name changes clearly occurred often in Northern and Midwestern cities as noted by Liesl K. Miller among many others, less so in a state like Florida with a small German population. Yet name changes did occur. The town of Kissingen Springs, named after a spring in Germany, decided to change its name to Egypt Springs. The announcement was made at a Shriner's barbecue. It stated that it was unpatriotic to have anything German in America and "it was not fit and proper that such a beautiful spot bear a German name."[102] In Georgia, a town that also wanted to change its name made a contest of the issue. The *Atlanta Constitution* noted that the *intensely patriotic* town of Bremen wanted a new name. Town officials

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[99] "Run Out of Our Place-," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, June 26, 1918, 6.

[100] Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 18. On the issue specifically in Chicago see: Liesl K. Miller, "The Great War: Ethnic Conflict for Chicago's German Americans," *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 2, No. 4, The Development of Nationalism and the Northwest Ordinance (Fall, 1987), pp. 46-51.

[101] "ABANDON GERMAN IN SERVICES AT THE FIRST EVANGELICAL CHURCH," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, April 24, 1918, 5.

[102] "Kissingen Springs Changed to Egypt, Which Isn't Hun," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, May 17, 1918, 5.

encouraged people throughout the country to send in ideas. If the writer's suggested name got picked, he or she would receive a ten dollar prize.[103]

In early April, the *Montgomery Advertiser* published a survey of the status of teaching German in schools in various cities throughout the state. The school boards of the towns of Huntsville, Alabama City, Anniston, Jasper, Gadsden, and Tuscumbia reported that there were no German language classes in their districts as there was insufficient demand for the classes. Naturally there were some differences between the cities. For example, both Gadsden and Tuscumbia had not offered the classes since before the war though apparently in Gadsden the local schoolboard noted that public sentiment would have caused the removal of the classes if they still had been offered, while Tuscumbia officials surmised there would not have been pressure to stop the classes if they had been active. Because of lack of demand, German was only offered as an afternoon study program in Mobile. Selma retained a small number of German language classes and reported practically no opposition to them, yet the superintendent was considering discontinuing the classes the following school year but planned to resume them once the war ended. Interestingly, the Birmingham superintendent forcefully stated that the city was intellectually calm and students who had begun their study in German were advised to continue it.[104] Peculiarly for a report published in a Montgomery newspaper, there was no mention of the status of German in Montgomery's

[103] "Hustling Ga. Town Will Rid Itself of German Name," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 13, 1918, 7.

[104] "ALABAMA SCHOOLS AND THE GERMAN LANGUAGE." *Montgomery Advertiser*, April 3, 1918, 3.

public school. In fact, the school district had eliminated the teaching of German. In May 1918 during a graduation ceremony at Montgomery's Sidney Lanier High School, the superintendent in his speech noted that the public schools had dropped German from the course of study. The superintendent stated that he did not want to condone Kultur, "which calls for the murder of women and children-by a study of the language in which it finds expression."[105]

In South Carolina, as some state legislators discussed the possibility of eliminating German instruction in the state, the *Evening Post* argued against the ban. In a short editorial, the *Evening Post* tried to separate the actions of Germany from the language, "Why should the legislature prohibit the teaching of German? It is not the German language that set the world on fire."[106] Not only the instruction of German in the public schools was in danger of being eliminated. On June 1, 1918, the board of trustees of Columbia College announced that it abolished the department of German language and German literature.[107] One example of a name change occurred in Walhalla, SC. In April 1918, the Lutheran Church in Walhalla changed its name. It was founded in the 1850s as the German Evangelical Lutheran Church. It was now to be called St. John's Lutheran Church of Walhalla. All the services had been in English for several years.[108]

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[105] "Large Audience Present When Graduates of Sidney Lanier Receive Diplomas," *Montgomery Advertiser*, June 1, 1918, 1.

[106] *Evening Post* (Charleston, SC), June 1, 1918, 4.

[107] "CUTS OUT GERMAN," *Evening Post* (Charleston, SC), February 4, 1918, 6.

[108] *Keowee Courier* (Pickens Court House, SC), April 10, 1918, 9.

In North Carolina, there were fewer examples of the elimination of the German language than many (though not all) the newspaper editorials demanded. Several of these editorials concentrated on the movement to eliminate German in schools nationally rather than focusing on North Carolina specifically. A short editorial with a sense of humor attacking German language teaching in schools appeared in the *Hickory Daily Record* on February 21st, 1918. It noted that German was being eliminated from various schools but since nine out of ten students who took the German courses did not learn enough of the language to be useful, it was for the best to stop the classes.[109] In a somewhat similar vein, the *Winston-Salem Journal* observed, "School boards are waking up and swatting the German language left and right."[110] A more substantive view on the topic was presented in a speech by a prominent lawyer from Asheville which was published in the *Greensboro Daily Record*. He argued that there were good faith arguments on both sides of the issue. Yet he asserted that, over the past two decades, the Teutonic nation had tried to Germanize America. The alleged proof he gave for this assertion were the large number of German immigrants, German professors coming to teach at America's universities, and the encouragement of German instruction in our public schools. German instruction needed to be eliminated from our schools, "The American student cannot study the German language and the German books without unconsciously being affected by the poisonous flavor that permeates all their writings."[111] An editorial later in

[109] *Hickory Daily Record* (Hickory, NC), February 21, 1918, 3.

[110] *Winston-Salem Journal*, April 21, 1918, 4.

[111] "Should the German Language Be Taught in United States?" *Greensboro Daily News*, July 7, 1918, 20.

the summer approved of the national movement to stop German instruction in schools. It agreed that some excesses had occurred in the effort, which the editor did not specify, and conceded past glories of German cultural achievement. The actions of Germany, however, had brought such ill repute to the Germans that "The world could do very well, for the time being, without German thought, clothed in German words."[112] In some far distant, happier future, it concluded, it might be needed again.

Specifically, on what occurred locally, a newspaper reporter asked a student from Monroe High School if he was learning German in school. The student did not reply. The Monroe newspaper noted that since the war began the number of students interested in learning German had declined. There were only fifteen to twenty students learning German, which the brief article labeled as the language of the enemy. Interestingly, the same newspaper, the *Monroe Journal*, published an editorial in July which began by noting that it had planned to come out against the teaching of the German language at Monroe High School. The newspaper, however, had received many letters from its readers noting that German music was still commonly used at weddings. Therefore, the editorial concluded, it would be hypocritical to ban German in public schools until Americans were willing to forego all things German.[113] In September of 1918, the *Winston-Salem Journal* lamented that the German language was still being taught in many schools in the state. It listed all the states that had eliminated German instruction

[112] "GERMAN IN THE SCHOOLS," *Hickory Daily Record* (Hickory, NC), July 11, 1918, 3.

[113] On the declining interest in German classes in Monroe see: "Local and Personal." *Monroe Journal*, Monroe, NC, May 10, 1918, 6. On the change in editorial posture see: *Monroe Journal* (Monroe, NC), July 2, 1918, 5.

or were planning to do so and noted that after the war Americans would be in more need of Spanish and French after the war. The editorial ended with this question, "So why not abolish German in North Carolina schools and colleges?"[114]

In Louisiana, similar to Georgia, the movement to eliminate German instruction intensified and bore fruition in 1918. Here, the newspapers had a role at pushing the school officials and politicians to act. As in other states, there were several editorials on the subject of teaching German. An example of a brief editorial against the use of German not targeted specifically to the status of German in the state was a *New Orleans States* piece published on February 9th. It observed that many state legislatures had already prohibited the teaching of German in schools. It declared that any American that wanted to learn German should go to Germany. A similar editorial which appeared in the same newspaper the following month stated the sooner that public schools kicked out the German language, the better for America and Americanism.[115] Another article on the topic as a whole appeared in Baton Rouge's *State Times Advocate*. It affirmed eliminating German instruction in schools was not an act of prejudice but simply common sense. Germany had made itself a pariah on the world stage because of its actions. Banning German was doing the world a favor, by ensuring the German people

[114] "ABOLISHING GERMAN," *Winston-Salem Journal*, September 9, 1917, 4.

[115] On going to Germany to learn German see*: New Orleans States*, February 9, 1918, 4. On kicking out German instruction being better for America see: *New Orleans States*, March 3, 1918, 11.

realize their status, "the surest way of making the German people understand is to discontinue the use of the German language…"[116]

Yet most of the editorials were focused on school policy in Louisiana (and in particular, New Orleans) which at the time still had high schools that taught German. As usual *Times-Picayune* had a long editorial on the subject. The February 14th editorial claimed that an investigation in New York revealed that the school system was permeated with disloyal teachings that effectively worked in the interests of the Kaiser. It asserted a similar situation existed in New Orleans. Therefore, it called on the school board to carefully examine the books being used in the school. After claiming that the government had waited too long to intern enemy aliens, it asserted that the local government had similarly waited too long in regard to schools, it "allowed the enemy to distribute the poison through our schools and to breed dissatisfaction and treason…"[117] The same newspaper printed letters to the editor to show that the people of New Orleans wanted the German language eliminated from the schools. A letter from a student printed March 4th took aim at the curriculum at the Boys High School in New Orleans. The student wondered about the purpose of teaching the language of a country that the whole civilized world was fighting against. It would be better, the student suggested, to replace the course with Civics. A letter to the editor in the March 15th edition noted that it was shocking that German was still taught in New Orleans. According to the writer, who just

[116] "THE TEACHING OF GERMAN." *State Times Advocate* (Baton Rouge, LA), March 13, 1918, 4.

[117] "GERMAN IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS." *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), February 14, 1918, 8.

identified himself as a loyal American, New Orleans had become the laughing-stock of the country.[118]

Yet different opinions on the matter appeared in the local newspapers. On March 5th the *New Orleans States* included an editorial which also wondered why the Boys High School of New Orleans was still teaching German. Yet the following day, an editorial was published in the same newspaper in favor of a middle ground. It noted that eliminating the teaching of German in all public schools was not necessary. The school board was to consider appointing a committee to investigate all books used in German classes and to eliminate those that had objectionable material. The article endorsed the idea. This was actually the suggestion of the *Times-Picayune* editorial in February. This editorial noted that it should not be difficult to perform this investigation since German was normally not taught in the elementary schools.[119]

April and May brought bans on the use of German in which the public officials appeared to be following public opinion as reflected in the state newspapers. On April 21st, the *Times- Picayune* published a letter to the editor which asked why Sophie Wright High School of New Orleans continued to teach German. On May 10th, the school board decided to not offer German at that institution in the upcoming 1918-1919 school year. Boys' High School had already decided to stop German instruction and therefore, Sophie

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[118] The letter recommending Civics as a substitute see: "German in Our High Schools." *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), March 4, 1918, 4. On New Orleans being a laughingstock see: "German in the Local Schools." *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), March 15, 1918, 8.

[119] Asking why German instruction continued see: *New Orleans States*, March 5, 1918, 8. On the committee to investigate the textbooks see: "GERMAN IN THE SCHOOLS." *New Orleans States*, March 6, 1918, 4.

Wright was the last high school in New Orleans that had been still scheduled to teach the language. Students at the school had petitioned the board to discontinue the program.[120] On May 13th, the *Times- Picayune* reported that the Louisiana school superintendent responded to a request by the Louisiana chair of the National Security League to eliminate German in all of the state's public school. The superintendent wrote that he agreed with the NSL on the matter and would ask the legislature to pass a bill that would ban German instruction.[121] The bill to eliminate German language instruction in both public and private schools, though the provision on private schools was constitutionally dubious, was introduced on Wednesday June 12th. By June 27th it had passed both chambers of the legislature. The bill was sent to the governor to sign into law the next day.[122]

The German language was not only removed from public schools. On June 4th, the board of supervisors of the Louisiana State University voted unanimously to bar the teaching of German in the University. Unlike the public schools, the ban became effective at once even though the summer session was about to commence. On June 7th, the *State Times Advocate* praised the move. According to the paper, the elimination of

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[120] Asking why German instruction continued at Sophie Wright see: "German in Our Public Schools." *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), April 21, 1918, 8. On the school board decision see: Stop teaching German After Present Session, School Board Orders," *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), May 11, 1918, 1.

[121] "GERMAN IN THE SCHOOLS." *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), May 13, 1918, 6.

[122] The introduction of the House bill see: "STOP TEACHING GERMAN," *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), June 13, 1918, 1. On passage in the Senates see "SENATE OPPOSES TEACHING GERMAN," *New Orleans States*, June 27, 1918, 9. On final passage see: "Stop Teaching of German." *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), June 29, 1918, 4.

the language was "an effective barrier against the spread of German influence.[123] Earlier in the spring , the *St. Tammany Farmer* announced on its first page that the Lutheran Church in Albita Springs had voted to remove the German inscriptions on its altar.[124]

Even after the changes of policy and law, the debate over the teaching of German continued. A letter to the editor published in the June 28th *Times-Picayune* argued against eliminating the German language indiscriminately. The writer of the letter used historical examples to make his argument, "Wherever a forced repression of any national mother tongue has been tried, such policy has bred rankling hated and irreconcilable estrangement."[125] On the other hand, the writer of a letter to the editor published July 7th wanted to expand the prohibition. The writer complained about the German language requirement needed for many PhDs. He recommended to replace the requirement with either Spanish or French. In his view this would remove the potential stain placed on the diploma.[126]

The attack on German kultur in America was a major element of the anti-German mania in the Southeast. German clubs, German music, and the German language, in particular its instruction in the public schools, were put under fierce pressure during the US involvement in the war. Unlike the other manifestations of anti-Germanism, such as

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[123] On the vote by the LSU board see: "Bars Teaching German At State university By unanimous Vote," *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), June 5, 1918, 2. Praising the decision see: "NO GERMAN IN UNIVERSITY." *State Times Advocate* (Baton Rouge, LA), June 7, 1918, 12.

[124] "LUTHERANS OF ALBITA STIKE OUT GERMAN INSCIRPTS," *St Tammany Farmer* (Covington, LA), May 25, 1918, 2.

[125] "The German Language." *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), June 28, 1918, 6.

[126] "The German Language." *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans, LA), July 7, 1918, 8.

the spy-hysteria and the fear of Germans conspiring with African Americans, the attack on German kultur was not directly correlated with the US entrance in the war in April 1917 and the German Spring offensive in 1918. Rather, the effort to suppress German kultur steadily intensified during the US participation in the war. German social clubs closed so that even German clubs focused solely on dances, which largely went unscathed in Spring 1917, decided to change their names. In April 1917 German music was regularly played and opinion articles were written in support of separating art from war. By the middle of 1918, the topic was much more contentious, and the performances of German music became rare. German language instruction in public schools was an area of much controversy and discussion from Spring 1917. By Spring 1918, many communities had banned the teaching of German and in Georgia and Louisiana, the instruction became prohibited by law.

CHAPTER 3: POLITICAL DEMAGOGUES AND ANTI-GERMANISM

The politicians in the Southeast who sought populist appeal varied greatly in their reactions to the anti-German sentiment that permeated the region and the country. The populists common in this era were partly a by-product of challenges mounted to the Democratic Party in the South in the 1890s. The common perception is that the end of Reconstruction led to unchallenged one-party Democratic rule until the Civil Rights movements of the 1950s and 1960s.[1] The reality is more nuanced. In the 1890s, the agrarian based Populist Party, representing farmers interests confronting the political/economic effects of the Second Industrial Revolution, made great inroads in the South and West. Nationally, the Populists and Democrats ran a common candidate for President in 1896. In the South, however, the Populists tended to ally themselves with Republicans to challenge the dominant power of the Democrats.[2] Democrats reacted by further restricting the voting rights of African Americans, the base of Republican support in the South, and catering to poor and working-class whites and small farmers who had voted Populist by adopting some broadly progressive policies along with extreme anti-black rhetoric and actions. The more infamous of these characters also used other means to appeal to the voters, "irresponsible campaign promises, flamboyant personal styles,

[1] On the common view of Reconstruction see: Gary B. Nash, *American Odyssey: The 20th Century and Beyond*, (New York: McGraw Hill-Glencoe, 2004), 184-191.

[2] Omar H. Ali, "Standing Guard at the Door of Liberty: Black Populism in South Carolina, 1886-1895," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine*, Jul., 2006, Vol. 107, No. 3 (Jul., 2006), 198, JSTOR, date accessed February 18, 2023, https://www.jstor.org/stable/27570822; see also: Rebecca Edwards et al., *America's History Tenth Edition Volume 2: Since 1865*, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2021), 660-662.

violent rhetoric…anti-intellectualism, and attacks upon the predatory corporate interests."[3]

When the United States entered the First World War, some of the politicians from the region who had frequently attacked African Americans easily transitioned to including anti-Germanism in their rhetorical vocabulary. Some of their intemperate remarks were amplified by the press and led to greater public suspicion of Germans. Others, however, because of their disagreements with US war policies, had anti-German rhetoric deployed against them. Anti-German slurs were not solely or in some cases primarily an expression of anti-German fears but a strategy to bludgeon political opponents.

Mississippi: Vardaman and Bilbo

James K. Vardaman was one such racist demagogue who fell from power for allegedly being pro-German. Vardaman had risen to prominence representing the interests of the poor white farmer.[4] As a state legislator, he participated in a convention that disenfranchised most of the black citizens of the state through the use of poll taxes and literacy tests. After failing to win the nomination for governor of Mississippi in the early 1900s, he and others were instrumental in replacing the convention system of party nomination with a direct primary. He used the primary system to catapult himself to the

[3] Hugh Davis Graham, "Demagogues," *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, University of North Carolina Press, 182, JSTOR, date accessed September 28, 2022, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469616742_ely.70.

[4] David R. Berman, "MIXING RACE AND REFORM IN THE SOUTH: The Deep South, with Tillman, Blease, Vardaman, Bilbo, Hoke Smith, and Comer," *The Governors and the Progressive Movement*, (Louisville, Colorado: University of Colorado Press, 2019), 100.

nomination on a platform of attacking both blacks and corporate interests aligned with the conservative element of the state's Democratic party. He appealed to the poor white farmers and workers with a package that included corporate regulation, public education for whites, not blacks, and prohibition of alcohol.[5] As governor, he argued against public education for blacks, on the basis that "The knowledge of books does not seem to produce any good substantial result with the Negro, but serves to sharpen his cunning, breeds hopes that cannot be fulfilled, creates an inclination to avoid labor, promotes indolence, and in turn leads to crime."[6] Known as the Great White Chief, after the passage of the 17th Amendment, he was the first Senator from Mississippi elected by the people, though the franchise was limited.

Vardaman, who was an isolationist in addition to a racist, voted against the war, and was attacked for being both unpatriotic and pro-German. Ironically for a demagogue, he argued on April 4th, 1917 that the war issue had enveloped the Capitol with *excessive passion* that had caused men to lose their poise. He called for caution as a declaration of war would be a death warrant to hundreds of thousands.[7] On April 6th, Vardaman was only one of eight senators (and the only from the South) to vote against the declaration of war. Even before the vote took place, he was being attacked for his expected stance. On April 5th, a figure representing Vardaman was burned in effigy by

[5] Berman, "Mixing Race and Reform in the South," 100-101.

[6] Albert D. Kirwan, "THE FIRST PRIMARY ELECTION," *Revolt of the Rednecks: Mississippi Politics 1876-1925*, University of Kentucky Press, 146, JSTOR, date accessed October 8, 2022, Stable URL: http://www.jstor.com/stable/j.ctt130j720.19.

[7] "Congress to Work on Resolution Until Disposed Of," *Daily Herald* (Biloxi, MS), April 4, 1917, 1.

the students at the high school in Meridian.[8] After the vote against the declaration of war, Vardaman started losing his appeal among the common man and past critics exploited his isolationism to make anti-German attacks against the junior senator from Mississippi. With his patriotism being questioned, he was hissed at for not standing for the national anthem during a in a dinner party at a Washington hotel. He defended his actions by stating that those singing the anthem were inebriated, "Just a lot of damned drunks."[9] Pointing to his time in the military, he declared that it was ridiculous that his patriotism was being questioned. On the day of the vote, the *Jackson Daily News* mischaracterized their own report from the previous day on the anthem incident to include anti-German rhetoric in their attack on Vardaman, "Herr Von Hardaman said he didn't stand up for the when the Star-Spangled Banner was played because he didn't recognize the air. The orchestra leader made a sad mistake. He should have played "Die Wacht am Rhein" and Vardaman would have shouted his head off."[10] The same page included unsubstantiated claims that Vardaman's reading of socialistic, atheistic German literature had removed whatever little sense he ever had. The newspaper did not specify what particular literature it was referring to. Presumably this antipathy toward the populist Senator from Mississippi had deeper roots than his stance against the war but it is telling that his opponents immediately sought to make political capital by alleging his 'Germanic' tendencies.

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[8] "MERIDIAN SCHOOL BURNS "VARDAMAN"," *Jackson Daily News* (Jackson, MS), April 5, 1917, 1.

[9] "Vardaman, Hissed When he Fails to Honor Flag, Says "Drunks" Did It," *Jackson Daily News,* April 5, 1917, 1.

[10] *Jackson Daily News,* April 6, 1917, 4.

Another episode which led to accusations being levelled against Vardaman was the vote on the Selective Service Act that enabled the raising of an army through the draft. Again, Vardaman was attacked in anticipation of the stance he would take. The smalltown *Water Valley Progress* may not have used anti-German rhetoric but did take a jibe at Vardaman's political persona by writing that Vardaman was against the universal service bill because it would put a gun "into the hands of a negro."[11] On April 15th, the attacks by the *Jackson Daily News* continued with and without a tinge of anti-Germanism. It accused the writer of a letter to the editor who had claimed that Vardaman had not lost any friends in the state because of the vote against the war of being a *wild-eyed jackass*. In a mocking attack on Vardaman's appearance (he typically had shoulder length hair and wore a cape) and his loyalty, "an inexplicable love for the ruler of the Germans has caused a shearing of the flowing locks of our junior senator, and that very ornate capillary adornment now lies dank and unkempt against the humiliated pole."[12]

A more serious criticism of the Senator appeared in the April 22nd edition of the *Jackson Daily News* on his expected vote on conscription. The editorial began by stating that it was not surprising that Vardaman was against conscription. It asserted, without any evidence, that his pro-German sentiments were well known. It did allow that some might be against the draft for reasons of ignorance or stupidity, not disloyalty and did note Vardaman's statement that conscription was unpatriotic, as white people had to be forced to defend the country. The editorial ignores the Senator's allusion to race and

[11] "Editorial Brevities," *Water Valley Progress*, (Water Valley, MS), April 7, 1917, 4.

[12] *Jackson Daily News*, April 15, 1917, 4.

slurs him, "Herr J. Kaiser Vardaman finds his animus in disloyalty…"[13] Of course, not all coverage of Vardaman's positions on war matters were tinged with anti-German rhetoric. The *Natchez Democrat* on April 26th, included a more straight-forward account of Vardaman's speech to the Senate in which he stated that he would not vote for conscription unless the volunteer system was proven to be ineffective and that he felt the pending bill was against the principles of democracy.[14] For a time after the vote on conscription (where, he was again, only one of eight to vote against) the attacks in the newspapers diminished significantly, even from the critical *Jackson Daily News*, but relief was to prove short lived.

Criticism of his votes against the war and conscription were used to damage his re-election effort in 1918. In August of that year, as the Allied armies were in the midst of a series of offensives which would eventually end the war, the Democratic primary election in the state was being held. As the Republican party in the South was not competitive, the Democratic primary would determine the winner. Earlier in the summer, anti-German rhetoric had not dominated the senatorial race. Representative Pat Harrison, Vardaman's main opponent in the election, made a long speech in late May that was extensively excerpted in the newspapers. The speech focused on Harrison's qualifications and Vardaman's disloyalty to Wilson, though it also claimed that

[13] "MISSING THE LANGUAGE," *Jackson Daily News*, April 22, 1917, 4.

[14] "CLARK PLEADS FOR VOLUNTEER SYSTEM," *Natchez Democrat* (Natchez, MS) April 26, 1917, 3.

Vardaman's speeches were used by the Kaiser's friends to bolster German propaganda.[15] A somewhat more contentious assertion was made by the third leading candidate for the senatorial election, former governor E. F. Noel. Noel claimed that Vardaman's votes shows that he was only twenty-five percent loyal. Interestingly, he equally claimed that Harrison was only fifty percent loyal since he had not served in the Army.[16]

As the election neared, the attacks highlighting Vardaman's supposed pro-German sympathies became fiercer. On August 2nd, 1918, the *Winston County Journal* included a headline covering its second page featuring former backers who had renounced their support for Vardaman. The principal article comprised a letter from Lauderdale County voters listing five reasons they were not supporting Vardaman which included his loss of influence in the Senate and his disloyalty to President Wilson. Notably, another piece claimed that all pro-Germans and Socialists supported Senator Vardaman. An additional justification for not backing Vardaman, based on somewhat circular logic, was the mere fact that Vardaman had to campaign in the state to deny that his votes were pro-German. This, it asserted, was a disgrace to the patriotic voters of the state. The letter concluded that Vardaman was not in sympathy with the American government in its great struggle against Prussian autocracy.[17] Not surprisingly, a few days before the election, the *Jackson Daily News* included a multi-article screed against

[15] "PAT HARISON REPLIES TO SENATOR VARDAMAN'S APPEALS," *Okolona Messenger* (Okolona, MS) June 13, 1918, 5.

[16] "NOEL PUTS HIS CANDIDACY ON LOYALTY BASIS," *Commercial Dispatch* (Columbus, MS), August 4, 1918, 1.

[17] "WHY WE HAVE QUIT VARDAMAN," *Winston County Journal* (Louisville, MS), August 2, 1918, 2.

the senator. The first two focused on his loyalty and his alleged pro-German inclinations. The first article noted that a large flag in the entrance hall at the Soldiers' Home in Beauvoir had a picture of Vardaman and Governor Theo Bilbo pinned on it. The article called for both pictures to be removed and stated that Vardaman's placement on the flag, in particular, was an act of desecration. The second article asserted that a certain doctor of German descent wagered a thousand dollars that Vardaman was going to win the nomination. The article claimed this same gentleman was known to make lectures on behalf of the German cause in the war.[18] Years of racial populism had not shielded Vardaman from the voters' ire for his vote against a popular war. On August 23rd, as the votes were still being counted, it was clear that Vardaman had lost re-election and the *Yazoo Herald* published a short poem written by a young reader of the newspaper, "Vardaman living on German Pie, If it kills him let him die. Nobody here will every cry, Cause he is every inch a German spy."[19]

At the time, the state was home to another well-known political demagogue, Governor Theodore Bilbo. He quickly rose from state senator, lieutenant governor to governor in the years 1908 to 1916. From a younger generation than his political idol Vardaman, Governor Bilbo had broadly followed the agenda of populist politicians of the region by promoting some progressive measures (in his case, more funds for schools and highways) along with white supremacist rantings. However, in contrast to Vardaman, during the war, he did not get into trouble with his voting base on the German issue.

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[18] "DESECRATING THE FLAG," *Jackson Daily News*, August 14, 1918, 4.

[19] *Yazoo Herald* (Yazoo, MS), August 23, 1918, 5.

Bilbo's statement in the summer of 1917 on his position on German-Americans clearly expressed his views. He asserted that any American citizen no matter where he was from who did not answer the call to service, did not deserve the blessings he enjoyed under the American flag. He continued that any man who hesitated to fight for America because of his heritage should be interned or shot at sunrise. He concluded that he did not have any sympathy for slackers or pro-German sympathizers.[20] Unlike Vardaman, he did not lose popularity for being on the *wrong* side of the 'German question' and enjoyed a long political career including a second term of governor in the 1920s and several terms in the US Senate in the 1930s and 1940s when he was one of the more prominent race-baiting politicians of the era.[21]

Alabama: Heflin

In neighboring Alabama, a demagogic populist made national headlines by getting into physical fight on the floor of the House of Representatives with a fellow congressman. This famous demagogue was Representative Thomas Heflin. The Populist Party garnered much support in Alabama in 1890s. Indeed, its candidate for governor narrowly lost the election to the Democrats and two of its members won House seats in 1894 with the support of the Republican party which was supported by blacks. After the Populists' defeat in 1896, Heflin was of the generation that further disenfranchised African Americans to ensure the dominance of the Democratic Party and white control.

[20] "Shoot Slackers at Sunrise, the Governor Writes," *Jackson Daily News*, July 3, 1917, 1.

[21] Roger Biles, "Southern Politics," *The South and the New Deal*, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1994), 150.

Heflin participated in the writing of the Alabama constitution of 1901 that disenfranchised most of the African Americans in the state.[22] As a politician, he appealed to whites by the deployment of naked racist rhetoric. He even shot a black man but escaped conviction. This incident occurred in Washington DC when an African American riding the same trolley car as Heflin was drinking whiskey. An argument ensued between the Representative, who also happened to be a prohibitionist, and the man. Heflin shot him in the head. He was severely wounded but survived. Heflin felt the incident added to his appeal, "Heflin boasted that the shooting of a drunken Negro was one of the highlights of his political career."[23]

Unlike fellow racist Vardaman of Mississippi, he was never accused of being pro-German, in fact he slandered others for being in league with the Germans, although not all of his slurs were explicitly anti-German. Fifty-three representatives voted against the war resolution including fellow Democrat and Southerner, Majority Leader Claude Kitchin of North Carolina who gave an impassioned speech against the war. Afterwards Heflin rose to speak to the chamber. He said as a Democrat it was humiliating to have someone from his side give that speech. He said that if he had been in Kitchin's shoes and made a speech in a similar fashion that attacked the American government he would have resigned his position as Majority Leader and also his seat in Congress. This attack on the Majority Leader brought hisses from his colleagues to which Heflin responded

[22] Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, *Heflin, James Thomas: 1869-1951*, date accessed October 8, 2022, https://bioguide.congress.gov/search/bio/H000446.

[23] "Senator Tom "Cotton" Heflin: Alabama's Iconic Racist," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, Summer, 2009, No. 64 (Summer, 2009), 45.

with accusations of disloyalty: ”you may hiss, you who speak for the Kaiser and not the President of the United States.”[24] Another Alabamian, John Lawson Burnett who also opposed the war resolution, challenged Heflin to circulate a petition to remove Kitchin if he felt he had the votes. He then stated Heflin should show his consistency by returning to Alabama and enlist in the army. Heflin responded from the chamber floor that he would resign and enlist in the army if needed and that some in his family had already joined up or would shortly enlist in the military. The shouting continued while Heflin made his final remark that day again connecting a fellow Congressman with loyalty to Germany, “Burnett might be speaking the sentiments of Germans, but not his constituents.”[25] At the end of the month, the representatives from Alabama were also on different sides of the draft resolution, Burnett against and Heflin in favor, however, no verbal fights or slanderous remarks were reported at that time.[26]

Heflin continued attacks on fellow lawmakers later in the Spring that while not explicitly anti-German nonetheless contained slurs against the loyalty of his colleagues to score political points. In May, Representative Joseph Moore, Republican from Pennsylvania, proposed a tax of two dollars and fifty cents per bale of cotton. Heflin, who of course represented a cotton-producing state, compared Moore unfavorably to Germans in the state, “Many Germans in Philadelphia were more loyal to the US than

[24] “Alabamian Scores Kitchin,” *The Birmingham News,* April 6, 1917, 9.

[25] “A Spectacular Incident,” *Birmingham News,* April 6, 1917, 9.

[26] “NO VOTE EXPECTED FRIDAY,” *Birmingham News,* April 27, 1917, 2.

some to be found on the floor of the House."[27] Representative James Mann from Illinois came to the defense of his colleague from Pennsylvania and noted that Heflin should follow the example of other members who did not talk much. Another example of Heflin not being explicitly anti-German was when a bill was proposed to exempt all those of German descent from military service against Germany. Heflin rose against the bill from Frederick Britten of Illinois, not coincidentally a state that had many German-Americans, declaring that it was insult to the manhood and courage of Germans who were loyal to the country.[28]

In the beginning of August, his accusations against the Congressmen from Illinois became more heated. He complained that important war measures needing to be passed had been delayed by Congress, he then added, "would the Kaiser have asked for more?"[29] He then complained about bills to weaken the selective service and the recent proposal to exempt German-Americans from the draft and again asked if Germany could have asked for more. He accepted that there may be anarchists and traitors among some Germans in the United States, naming two who had been recently arrested, and then continued apparently alluding to the suspect loyalty of the congressmen from Illinois: "If I were president, I would point out some others who belong in that class with them."[30]

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[27] "Mann Calls Heflin on the Floor of the House," *Selma Times* (Selma, AL), May 27, 1917, 1.

[28] "WILSON'S ADVICE, IT IS BELIEVED, WILL ELIMINATE CLAUSE," *Birmingham News,* July 1, 1917, 4.

[29] "HEFLIN GETS WARM AND HIS WORDS ARE ORDERED TO BE EXPUNGED," *Montgomery Advertiser,* August 4, 1917, 8.

[30] "HEFLIN GETS WARM…," *Montgomery Advertiser,* August 4, 1917, 8.

Although in these last two debates in the House Heflin at least recognized the loyalty of some Germans, Heflin the race-baiter nonetheless mentioned the anti-German trope so common in the South at the time: the supposed conspiracy between Germans and African Americans. The May 23rd, 1917 edition of the *South Aegis* noted that Heflin wrote a letter calling attention to the dangers of the activities of Germans among blacks of the South. These activities he believed were "an effort to stir up trouble among the South and to incite them to acts of violence against their white neighbors."[31] The letter ended with a call for every citizen to be on the alert and report any suspicious activity to government authorities.

In September his continuing slurs against fellow Congressman accusing them of explicitly working for Germany or at least being pro-German led to a physical altercation, which proved the most infamous incident of his career. That summer, the Wilson administration had announced that it had discovered that former German Ambassador to America, Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff, had used funds to influence American public opinion.[32] Heflin then inflamed tension via an interview in which he declared that there were thirteen to fourteen congressmen who acted suspiciously and that he heard that in Washington there was a card room where pro-Germans and pacifists (presumably politicians) would receive money. He did not accuse anyone specifically of receiving

[31] *Southern Aegis* (Asheville, AL), May 23, 1917, 2.

[32] "Lansing Opens His Bag of Horrors, Producing Bernstorff," *New York Tribune Review*, September 30, 1917, 3

money though he stated he could probably make out the names.[33] Representative Patrick Norton of North Dakota declared in the House that Heflin should either prove the statements or be punished. Heflin backtracked verbally by asserting that some of the words in the interview were misquoted and pointing out that the accusation of the existence of a gambling house run by Germans for the benefit of pacifists and German sympathizers was, as he stated, just a rumor, that he did not have the specific names of the thirteen or so who had received money in the 'card room', but that he suspected several because of their actions. He was willing to participate in a House investigation and name those, "that I think have not been loyal and are not now standing by the commander-in-chief."[34] Again further inflaming the situation without the benefit of evidence, Heflin said of course he was loyal to the President and the men fighting for the country, therefore, he could not stand by as others acted against the country, "without denouncing it and branding it as I think it ought to be denounced and branded…They know who they are. Let us be fair and honest with one another and be faithful to the country."[35]

Heflin's startling and baseless accusations, of course, caused a reaction. Representative Norton again called for Heflin to produce evidence, while Congressman William S. Howard of Georgia, who had also been accused of spreading rumors similar

[33] "PROBE OF EFFORT TO SWAY CONGRESS IS URGED ON HILL," *Evening Star* (Washington, DC) September 21, 1917, 2.

[34] "TOM HEFLIN DENIES THE ATTACK ON CONGRESSMEN," *Montgomery Advertiser*, September 25, 1917, 1.

[35] "MR. HEFLIN SAYS LETS BE LOYAL TO THE BOYS WHO'LL DIE." *Huntsville Times* (Huntsville, AL) September 26, 1917, 1.

to Heflin's, stated there would only be a full investigation in the House as to the card room matter only if President Wilson desired it and urged the leaders of the House to further investigate the charges. The *Montgomery Times* surmised that since the President presumably wanted a quick end to the congressional session and that House leaders wanted *cooler heads* to prevail, the powerful House Rules Committee would likely not report the call for investigation to the full House.[36] Yet cooler heads did not prevail, at least for a few more days. Not surprisingly the ill-considered remarks of a politician can lead to a chain reaction of innuendo by the press and generate greater suspicion among the public. Some of the press joined in on the call for an investigation. For example, the lead editorial in a local Alabama newspaper that same week noted there had been rumors of pro-German congressmen or who at least had been influenced by German gold. It stated that the revelations about the Bernstorff payoffs verified that these rumors had substance. It concluded that Heflin's charges had to be fully investigated, "Nothing should have left undone to discover who the traitors in Congress are, and if discovered they should be expelled from their seats and put in prison until the war is ended."[37]

The tension created by the unfounded accusations by Heflin reached its climax on September 28, 1917. The fight, or as the *New York Times* described it more properly, a wrestling match, occurred when Norton, angered that newspaper headlines now accused him of being one of the thirteen pointed out by Heflin, walked over to Heflin. Heflin

[36] "CONGRESS WILL PROBE THE HEFLIN CHARGE IF PRESIDENT SAYS SO," *Montgomery Times*, September 25, 1917, 1.

[37] "TRAITORS IN CONGRESS." *Lafayette Sun* (Lafayette, AL), September 26, 1917, 6.

pushed Norton then Norton threw him across a bench. They were quickly separated without much injury or damage, "beyond the ruffling of dignity and violation of the rules of parliamentary bodies."[38] Earlier in the day, the Rules Committee had decided against setting up an inquiry to consider Heflin's charges. A representative of the committee stated that because the Department of Justice was in the midst of a long-running investigation on German influence in America, a House inquiry was not needed. Presumably, the actual reason was that an inquiry on charges without any substantive evidence would only bring disrepute to the House, though the committee would not admit to it. The Alabama newspapers covered the story in a mostly straight-forward way, mentioning the fight, the lack of evidence for the charges, and the House's decision not to start a formal inquiry. The *Montgomery Times* did include an editorial partially backing Heflin, admitting that Heflin "may have been a little rash in his statement…may not have been in the bounds of parliamentary usage, but no one doubts the loyal intentions of the brilliant congressman…Tom has a mighty big foot and it has hurt some of the corns of the disloyal members of the law making bodies"[39]

The controversy, however, was quickly defused. Secretary of State Robert Lansing announced that there was no evidence that money from the German ambassador had been used to pay off US Congressmen.[40] Heflin conceded, under pressure or not, that he did not seek an investigation into whether or not Congressmen were being paid by the

[38] "HEFLIN AND NORTON FIGHT IN HOUSE," *New York Times*, September 29, 1917, 1.

[39] "HEFLIN'S LOYALTY," *Montgomery Times*, September 29, 1917, 4.

[40] "EASING CONGRESSIONAL EXCEITEMENT." *Montgomery Advertiser*, September 30, 1917, 4.

Germans but did want a Congressional inquiry into German payoffs in America more broadly. Speaker Champ Clark desperately wanted to put the controversy to rest though, of course, hurt feelings lingered. Norton observed, "It is not unusual for a guilty criminal when hauled before the law to argue that the wrong individual is being tried."[41] The *Dothan Eagle* on the other hand, published a letter to the editor sympathetic to Heflin: "he should be permitted to adduce his reasons for his belief. By boohooing it down members of the House disprove nothing."[42]

Nothing as notorious occurred to Heflin in the remaining year of the war. None of the politicians in statewide offices in Alabama garnered controversy over the German issue. The senators were not demagogic populists, indeed, Senator Oscar Underwood was a very outspoken critic of the Ku Klux Klan. As for Heflin, he did become a Senator though his political career was brought to a close because of his demagogic impulses. In addition to being anti-Black, he was also anti-Catholic. In 1928, the Democratic nominee for president was a Catholic, with the result that Heflin campaigned for Republican Herbert Hoover.[43] Although he aided Hoover in almost winning Alabama, a remarkable feat for a Republican in the Democratic Deep South of the era, the state Democratic party

[41] "PEACE DOVE SITS ON OLIVE GRANCH OVER LOVE FEAST," *Birmingham News*, September 30, 1917, 2.

[42] "Give Heflin a Chance." *Dothan Eagle* (Dothan, AL), October 2, 1917, 2.

[43] "Senator Tom "Cotton" Heflin: Alabama's Iconic Racist," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, 45.

worked to defeat Heflin, and in 1930 he lost the nomination for the senate seat by twenty points. Heflin unsuccessfully challenged the election results.[44]

South Carolina: Tillman and Blease

One cannot discuss any topic related to race-baiting populists without a focus on South Carolina which had two infamous demagogues at the time: Benjamin Tillman and Cole Blease. Benjamin Tillman was an early example of a racist populist in the post-Civil War South. In 1876 he actively intimidated blacks from voting. By 1890, he ran for governor in the name of the common man against the more conservative Democrats who ran the state party, "the common white people of the state whom he led in a war not only against the aristocrats but black people."[45] Although the Populist/Republican fusion never made much of an inroad in the state, he presided over the convention in 1895 that disenfranchised most blacks in South Carolina. As governor he promoted some progressive economic policies and peddled populist and racist rhetoric. He had universities created, increased corporate taxes, and lowered the hours for mill workers yet he also spoke in favor of lynch mobs. Although he briefly had national political aspirations, he became a fixture in the Senate in which he was known for advocating for

[44] Glenn T. Harper, "Cotton Tom" Heflin and the Election of 1930: The Price of Party Disloyalty," *The Historian*, May 1968, Vol. 30, No. 3 (MAY 1968), 408-409, JSTOR, date accessed February 18, 2023, https://www.jstor.org/stable/24441214.

[45] Berman, *The Governors and the Progressive Movement*, 97.

white supremacy.[46] He was in his fourth term in the Senate when the US declared war on Germany.

Tillman, the rabble-rousing populist, even before the declaration of war resolution passed through Congress, spoke ill-tempered words on the war which seemed to attack a whole community. Tillman harangued, "For my part I want to see the entire resources of this huge peace loving republic marshalled for the one purpose of killing Germans."[47] Obviously, his words did not distinguish between German soldiers fighting for the Empire on the battlefield and loyal German-Americans. Some in the state were concerned by these words: "We can see no good come from reproducing extremes of expression…Moderation in thought and expression is the best, safest, and most patriotic course to pursue."[48] It is safe to assume that editors who prized moderation in expression were not supporters of Tillman even before his statement.

In late April, he took a jibe at Germans but in a facetious manner. As ill-health started to overcome him, he announced that he had been in an Atlanta hospital for the past month. In a letter, he explained to a constituent that he was being treated for an infection in the wrist. A sore on his wrist had turned worse, he colorfully described the infection, "and surrounded at the edges by inflamed flesh in which the germs or

[46] "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman: The Most Lionized Figure in South Carolina History," *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*, Winter, 2007/2008, No. 58 (Winter, 2007/2008), 39, JSTOR, date accessed February 19, 2023, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25073824.

[47] "How's this for War Patriotism?" *Keowee Courier* (Pickens, SC), April 4, 1917, 4.

[48] "DANGEROUS EXTREMES." *Keowee Courier* (Pickens, SC), April 4, 1917, 4.

"germans" as we call them here were burrowing actively and festering..."[49] In a more serious note related to the senator, an incident in late May showed the extent to which incidents might be blamed on the Germans. On April 18, 1917, there was an attempted break-in at the senator's office. Although no evidence was revealed for the suspicion, the report noted that all assumed that it was a German spy who had attempted the forced entry since Tillman, as chair of the committee on naval affairs, presumably had sensitive documents in his office.[50]

Tillman, of course, was not hesitant in employing inflammatory rhetoric. In July he participated in the spy hysteria that engulfed the nation, "I have no doubt that there are spies in the departments, there are clever scoundrels, I believe, who are getting hold of the secrets of our government and betraying them to Germany. For my part I want to see these German devils ferreted out and want to see them hung."[51] He went to assert that he knew of a man with a German last name who had a position of importance in the Charleston Navy Yard. He was suspected of giving information to Germany. Tillman said he informed the Justice Department of the matter. It is interesting to note that this example of spy hysteria postdated the Spring 1917 outbreak of paranoia that had engulfed the nation. Also, one can observe how quickly the words of a prominent politician could generate controversy, suspicion, and presumably hate. The day after the remarks of the senator were reported, the *Greenville News* wrote an impassioned editorial on German

[49] CONDITION BETTER SAYS TILLMAN IN LETTER TO KOHN," *Columbia Record* (Columbia, SC), June 7, 1917, 10.

[50] "ATTEMPT TO ROB OFFICE." *Watchman and Southron* (Sumter, SC), April 25, 1917, 8.

[51] "TILLMAN WOULD HANG SPIES." *The Item* (Sumter, SC), July 6, 1917, 2.

spies. It stated that the government had been too lenient with German spies and those who made disloyal utterances. After extensively quoting Tillman's remarks, the editorial went on to state that although it did not know the particulars of the Navy Yard matter, undoubtedly the execution of some German spies would have a positive effect. It called for the government to use an iron hand and concluded, "There is no warrant for the toleration of traitors and enemies of the country."[52]

Race, not German ethnicity, was always a primary concern for Tillman. After this diatribe, one of his last major public utterances related to the war was not about German spies or disloyal citizens but about race. Tillman was part of a delegation of South Carolina politicians that met with Secretary of War Newton Baker over stationing African American and Puerto Rican recruits to military training bases in South Carolina. The delegation vehemently opposed them being trained with white officers in bases located in the state. The Secretary of War was non-committal during the meeting.[53] After the summer of 1917, Tillman's public interventions regarding Germany (or any other matter) became infrequent as his health deteriorated. Since he was up for re-election in 1918, this inactivity led several politicians to express their interest in his position, including his once protégé turned rival, former governor Coleman Blease. Tillman in June 1918 announced he intended to run for re-election setting up a colorful race for the Democratic nomination, but this race did not materialize as Tillman died on July 3, 1918.

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[52] 'ROUND UP THE SPIES AND TRAITORS." *Greenville News* (Greenville, SC), July 8, 1917, 4.

[53] "MORE RIOTS MAY HAPPEN AT ANY TIME," *Columbia Record* (Columbia, SC), August 24, 1917, 1.

Blease was once a follower of Tillman's and was every bit a race-baiter as his role model. Regarding blacks he once stated he would be willing to, "wipe the inferior race from the face of the earth."[54] Not only did he oppose black education but also encouraged lynching. Blease's appeal was mostly rhetorical not policy based. He appealed to small farmers and mill workers with attacks on blacks which he combined with class-based attacks on the so-called aristocrats. Although he called himself a reformer while governor of South Carolina, unlike Tillman, he did not propose any progressive reforms.[55] Though Tillman and Blease both rose to power with similar political bases, they eventually became rivals. Tillman did not endorse Blease's reelection bid in 1914 which he lost to Richard Manning. Blease also lost the rematch in 1916. Therefore, Blease in 1917 was a rabble-rousing politician seeking an avenue to return to power and the deteriorating condition of Senator Tillman seemed to offer him an opportunity.

Much like Vardaman in Mississippi, Blease was a populist politician who had his views on the war weaponized by his opponents to make demagogic attacks against him. On April 24th, 1917, as the Congress was debating the Selective Service Act, Blease announced that he was against the government's conscription plan and instead would prefer an all-volunteer force. He felt a military draft was against the principles of the country, "conscription is cruel, unfair, undemocratic and against the entire spirit of our

[54] Hugh Davis Graham, "Demagogues," *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, University of North Carolina Press, JSTOR, date accessed September 28, 2022, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5149/9781469616742_ely.70, 182.

[55] Berman, "Mixing Race with Reform," 98.

institutions."[56] In fact, he said he could form a brigade of volunteers within thirty days that would pick its own officers, though he would not seek to be one of those officers. Like Tillman, he did visit the War Department, though in his case, to complain that people from the Reform Party (the name used by those that affiliated with Blease) were being denied positions as officers in the two state regiments and on the state's draft board. While reporting the details of the meeting to a group of supporters he admitted that in addition to being against conscription, if he would have been in Congress, he would have voted against the war itself but now that the war had been declared, America needed to be united and stand shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy.[57]

Though Blease called for unity, his initial sentiments against the war became a club with which to beat him, politically. In November, the editor of the *Scimitar* newspaper, W. P. Beard, was found guilty of interfering with the US military and of attempting to cause mutiny and disloyalty. This was the result of an editorial published in his newspaper criticizing the war. He was sentenced to serve a year in a federal penitentiary in Atlanta. Obviously, several newspapers reported the conviction, although the *County Record* also highlighted the connection between Beard and Blease. It noted that the *Scimitar* and its editor were ardent supporters of Blease when he was governor and Beard had even worked on his campaign. Probably not coincidentally, after

[56] "COLE L. BLEASE WILL FURNISH BRAVE BRIGADE," *Newberry Weekly Herald* (Newberry, SC), May 1, 1917, 7.

[57] "REFORM COMMITTEE PUTS WAR DEPARTMENT WISE," *Newberry Weekly Herald* (Newberry, SC), May 22, 1917, 6.

discussing the connection with Blease, the article immediately noted that Beard was always pro-German in sympathy even before the United States had entered the war.[58]

Blease's stance on the war brought both reasoned and hyperbolic attacks on the former governor in articles analyzing the upcoming Senate race. Without mentioning Blease, the *Watchman and Southron* predicted that no one opposed to the war or the administration had any hope of victory in the state. The article later did name Blease when postulating that although he was not yet dead politically, his speeches against the war had significantly weakened him even among his supporters.[59] The *Manning Times* had a more emotional take on the Senate election and Blease. If Blease had put aside his disagreements with President Wilson, Blease's position would have been unassailable. Yet according to the writer, he allowed his personal venom to overwhelm his judgment. The writer then blamed him for giving Germany greater impetus to continue the fight, "His speeches, I have no doubt, were reported in Germany… and the German nation was animated to greater resistance because they thought one of our great leaders was their firm friend and supporter."[60] It concluded that if he were to win the Senate race, German soldiers would be inspired to greater effort, which would lead to thousands of American deaths. The *Times and Democrat* from Orangeburg also concluded that a Blease victory

[58] "YEAR IN PRSION FOR W.P. BEARD," *County Record* (Kingstree, SC), November 15, 1917, 1.

[59] "STATE POLITICS FORECASTED." *Watchman and Southron* (Sumter, SC), January 2, 1918, 2.

[60] Lowndes Browning, "MR. BROWNING AND THE ENATORIAL RACE," *Manning Times* (Manning, SC), February 13, 1918, 6.

would help German morale. Therefore, it hoped that Senator Tillman would decide to run for reelection to insure Blease's defeat.[61]

Blease officially began his campaign for Senator on March 30th, 1918. He did not directly mention his early opposition to the war though he belittled those who were *holier than thou* who wished to prove their loyalty by attacking the loyalty of others. Not surprisingly he took a swipe at the current governor and his political enemy and also injected race in the campaign by asserting that more white women had been assaulted by black men in the last three years than all the previous years going back to the Civil War.[62] Anti-Blease newspapers subsequently reprinted Blease's speeches from 1917 in which he stated he was against the war. The *State* newspaper printed the speeches without commentary, however, the names of the cities in which the speeches were held, Pomaria and Filbert, were used by Blease's opponents as shorthand for disloyalty.[63]

With Tillman's death, Blease was the most well-known candidate left in the Democratic nomination race and a series of multi-pronged attacks on Blease ensued. Criticism of Blease were even made by candidates running for offices other than the Senate. John L. McLaurin, a candidate for governor attacked Blease for being disloyal to the Democratic Party. McLaurin asserted that after losing the race for the Democratic nomination to Manning a second time, Blease considered running for governor as an

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[61] "Senator Tillman's Announcement," *Times and Democrat* (Orangeburg, SC), March 7, 1918, 4.

[62] "BLEASE OPENS CAMPAIGN WITH HIGHLY PATRIOTIC AND SPLENDID ADDRESS," Newberry Weekly Herald (Newberry, SC), April 9, 1918, 6.

[63] "CANDIDATES FOR SENATE AND CONGRESS HEARD BY CROWD DISPLAYING MUCH APPROVAL," *Greenville News*, August 18, 1918, 11.

independent. According to McLaurin, Blease believed Republican Charles Hughes was going to defeat Wilson for the presidency and would reward an independent Blease with much federal patronage.[64] In addition to questioning his loyalty to the Democratic party in a one-party state, Blease's persona as an anti-black champion was challenged as well. Several newspapers reported that Blease spoke to a group of four hundred African Americans at Allen University during his campaign for governor two years earlier. Even though Blease at the time denied that the speech occurred, one of Blease's opponents used the re-emergence of the report on the speech to attack Blease.[65] Presumably, the mere accusation that Blease made a direct appeal to black voters two years prior would be disqualifying to some voters, especially those in Blease's political base.

Yet the hammer to repeatedly attack Blease was his anti-war remarks from 1917. Those remarks led to charges from reasoned disagreement to sensationalistic slurs taking advantage of the anti-German milieu of the era. On July 31st, a candidate for governor noted that everyone in the state was patriotic except those who had taken German spy money. Leaving no doubt as to who he was accusing, he went on to claim that Blease had handled enough German money with his hands that he should be in jail along with the editor of the *Scimitar*.[66] On August 17th, at a reception for the senate candidates which Blease did not attend, his opponents lambasted his supposed disloyalty. One opponent stated that the Kaiser would be very pleased if Blease were to win the election.

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[64] "M'LAURIN ON RAMPAGE." *Watchman and Southron* (Sumter, SC), July 3, 1918, 6.

[65] "BLEASE'S NEGRO SPPECH." *Watchman and Southron* (Sumter, SC), August 21, 1918, 6.

[66] "STATE CANDIDATES SPEAK TO LARGE CROWD HERE," *Chesterfield Advertiser* (Chesterfield, SC), August 1, 1918, 1.

He even went on to welcome the arrest of Blease, "the people of the State would like to see Blease handcuffed to the Kaiser so that he could no longer disturb the peace of South Carolina."[67] On election day, the *Greenville News* made a less demagogic though still biting attack on Blease when it printed statements from former Blease supporters who were not voting for him this election because of the war question: "Every man who votes for Cole is not a pro-German, but every pro-German will vote for Cole L. Blease."[68] On August 27th, 1918 former governor Cole Blease lost the election for the Democratic nomination for US Senate by over twenty percentage points.

Georgia: Hoke Smith

As mentioned, not all populist politicians in the South shared similar views on the war nor were all of them populist in the same vein. Though not an infamous demagogic like Vardaman, Bilbo, et al., L. Hoke Smith of Georgia also appealed to the racism of the white population in Georgia, even though for the time and region he was considered a progressive governor and senator.[69] Unlike South Carolina, but similar to Mississippi and Alabama, the Populist Party was influential in Georgia in the 1890s. Indeed, the Vice-Presidential candidate for the fusion Populist/Democratic ticket of 1896 was Tom Watson of Georgia, a Democrat turned Populist. The young politician Smith, though wary of Populist economic policies, supported the ticket. In 1906, he ran for governor on

[67] "CANDIDATES FOR SENATE AND CONGRESS HEARD BY CROWD DISPLAYING MUCH APPROVAL," *Greenville News*, August 18, 1918, 11.

[68] "ANSWER AT THE POLLS, SOUTH CAROLINIANS!" *Greenville News*, August 27, 1918, 4.

[69] Berman, *The Governors and the Progressive Movement*, 96.

a progressive agenda but also calling for the further disenfranchisement of blacks in the state and the need put them "in their place."[70] Smith's victory in the election was aided by the endorsement of Tom Watson, who tended to use more anti-black and anti-Catholic rhetoric in the latter part of his career. The rhetoric of the 1906 campaign is credited to being a material factor in sparking the race riot in Atlanta that year.[71] As governor, Smith helped pass railroad regulation, food laws, and increases in education spending. He also put in place regulations that further disenfranchised African Americans. When the US entered the war, Smith was a US Senator.

Although Smith voted for the declaration of war and the Selective Service Act, he was vehemently attacked as a pro-German simply for disagreeing with the President on some of his policies on the war. In a taste of what was to come, the *Macon Telegraph* attacked him for previously being skeptical of the case for war and therefore aligned with Robert LaFollette, the Progressive Republican of Wisconsin who was a strict non-interventionist. The newspaper labeled Smith's vote for war as an act of political expediency, "Hoke is for Hoke. If Tombilly is slipping, Hoke isn't going to slip with him…he left the job of holding the pro-German fort to LaFollette, Stone & Co."[72] Smith voted for the conscription bill while the junior senator of Georgia, Thomas Hardwick, voted against it. In the spring and early summer, many of the administration-requested bills were passed in order to put the government on a war footing. One of these, a

[70] Berman, *The Governors and the Progressive Movement*, 105.

[71] Berman, *The Governors and the Progressive Movement*, 105.

[72] "TROUBLE IN THE WIND," *Macon Telegraph* (Macon, GA), April 12, 1917, 4.

proposed Transportation and Food Administration Bill became a point of debate in Congress.

In July 1917, Smith detailed his disagreements with the bills by stating he opposed going beyond the Constitution to win the war, a position that caused a political furor. On July 4th, Judge Andrew J. Cobb responded to the senator in a speech to a large crowd in the football stadium of the University of Georgia: "In times of war there are only two classes, all men are either patriots or traitors. When the President sets a policy, that is our policy for war. The man who antagonizes and fights it is an enemy of the country."[73] He specifically called out Smith by name and stated that the Constitution gave ample power to the President for his war measures. He concluded that any congressman who did not want to pass the president's war measures should resign. The *Atlanta Constitution*, in a clearly opinionated news article, noted that the people of Georgia were nearing the breaking point with the state's senate delegation and two representatives stated that unless Smith followed Wilson's policies, he would lose their support.[74] Senator Smith released a statement replying to Cobb's remarks on July 11th. He affirmed that any impression that he was disloyal to the country or the President was false. He pointed out that many administration-backed measures were passed by Congress in a remarkably short time. He concluded that Wilson was a great leader, "and

[73] "Judge A.J. Cobb Nails Members of Congress Who Delay War Bills," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 5, 1917, 1.

[74] "JUDGE COBB LAUDED FOR ATHENS SPEECH," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 6, 1917, 1.

I believe it the duty of every man to do all in his power to win this war, and help win it as soon as possible."[75]

The reply by Smith did not stop the attacks against him. Not surprisingly, the *Macon Telegraph* was vehemently opposed. He was accused of being pro-German and asserted (without proof) that he was linked to German associations. Again, similar to its accusation in April, it highlighted the elusive political nature of Smith. Interestingly, it credited Hardwick for having the courage of his convictions. Smith, they predicted, would soon spew anti-German rhetoric to maintain his political position.[76] Although not accusing Smith of being pro-German, the Georgia Historical Society wrote an open letter noting its displeasure with their Senators on their lack of action on recent legislation, "It is a matter of humiliation and just anger to patriotic Georgians that our senators are among those who are impeding the government in these matters."[77]

Smith forcefully defended himself from his critics. On July 23rd, Smith made public a letter to the Historical Society. The reply noted that the Society correctly praised Wilson's handling of relations with Germany, the declaration of war against Germany, and the conscription bill yet instead of acknowledging that he had voted for the war and the draft, the Society implied Smith was one of the unnamed pacifist or German sympathizers that were against these measures. Smith then discussed the particulars of the food bill he disagreed with. He then concluded, "You have been guilty of more than

[75] "SENATOR SMITH REPLIES TO COBB," *Macon News*, July 11, 1917, 7.

[76] "THE INCREDIBLE." *Macon Telegraph*, July 20, 1917, 4.

[77] "SUPPORT IS ASKED FOR THE PRESIDENT," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 1, 1917, 2.

inaccuracy. You have sent a skillfully worded document, partly true but partly false... utterly misrepresenting my course."[78] On July 25th, the *Atlanta Constitution* printed a letter from Smith in reply to the editorial by the newspaper criticizing his disagreements with the administration and calling for him to resign. Smith advised the paper that in many cases a president mostly focuses on broad policy in cabinet meetings, the cabinet secretaries and their departments concern themselves with the details of the bills. Therefore, his criticism of the details of the bills was not a criticism of Wilson's policies as such. After noting his disagreements with the transportation and food control bills, he declared that he was rendering real services to his country and his constituents and would not resign simply to please the editors of the newspaper.[79] Not surprisingly, at the end of the turbulent month of July, the *Macon Telegraph* again attacked the senator. Once more it made the charge that Smith voted for the draft out of political expediency not principle, noting as proof, that since the vote he had publicly stated his misgivings on conscription. The editorial even questioned why his son had not signed up for the war. Again, it made the claim that Smith was pro-German and in favor of Germany, "Smith was a careful but insistent apostle, as extensively as he dare, of the virtues and the policies of the criminal government."[80]

In the conference committee on the food control bill, Senator Smith voted against the proposed centralization of the food administration agency in the hands of Herbert

[78] "SEN. HOKE SMITH REPLIES TO CRITICS," *Macon News*, July 23, 1917, 3.

[79] "STATEMENT ISSUED BY SENATOR SMITH," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 25, 1917, 7.

[80] "HOKE SMITH-HIS RECORD," *Macon Telegraph*, July 29, 1917, 12.

Hoover, the future president. This centralization was approved anyway. The *Macon News*, in an editorial noted that it had been a supporter of the senator but that the vote made their defense of Smith more difficult, and more difficult for Smith to redeem himself from the vehement pro-German attitude of his past."[81] The *Macon Telegraph*, not surprisingly, more stridently tied the vote to the senator's supposed pro-Germanism, "serving his personal idol, the German thought, German aims and German ideals-doing the Kaiser's work in the committee room…[82] On August 3rd, the *Atlanta Constitution* noted that even a newspaper previously against the concept of recall, now felt that there was no recourse but to recall and quickly remove the pro-German senators of the state.[83]

After the food control bill vote, several months passed before the next controversy that embroiled Smith: his opposition to the Overman bill. Named after Senator Lee Overman of North Carolina who introduced this administration-backed bill, this proposed legislation would allow the President sweeping powers to reorganize departments and agencies during the war. Interestingly, earlier in the spring, Smith had backed another bill supported by Wilson, an amendment that would have expanded the Espionage Act of 1917 to include speech that aided the enemy or promote disloyalty. The amendment became known as the Sedition Act. Yet this support of increased presidential power, and an attack on dissent, did not save him from criticism when Smith announced his opposition to the bill on April 3, 1918. The *Macon Telegraph* again labeled Smith as

[81] "SENATOR SMITH'S FOOD CONTROL VOTE," *Macon News*, August 1, 1917, 4.

[82] "THE VOICE OF JACOB," *Macon Telegraph*, August 1, 1917, 4.

[83] "A CONVERT TO THE RECALL." *Atlanta Constitution*, August 3, 1917, 8.

pro-German. It noted in an editorial that Smith claimed the bill was too broad, however, according to the editor, Smith's real problem with the bill was that it worked too well, "too much war efficiency to suit that pro-German gentleman that occupies the senior Senate seat from Georgia."[84] Smith in the Senate gave a long speech justifying his vote including his belief that the bureaucracy, which had performed so well, should not be tinkered with during wartime. Indeed, he continued, changing the rules and procedures of the Interstate Commerce Commission and the Federal Reserve could hurt US industrial production and the financial system.[85] Before final passage of the bill, an amendment introduced by Smith to limit the scope of the bill was defeated in the Senate. Mocking of the Senator was not limited to the usual suspects; the *Columbus Ledger* included two short statements in its April 29th edition: "Wonder how the news that Senator's Hoke Smith's opposition to the administration was received in Berlin?"[86] The second wondered what he was thinking, if he was thinking at all. When summarizing the series of administration-backed bills that Smith had reservations on, the editorial from the *Athens Banner* printed in the *Macon Telegraph* charged both Georgia senators of giving great service to the Kaiser, yet while Hardwick was more public about his disagreements with the President, Smith was more dangerous: "he has been deceitful and cunning."[87] Unlike the more noted populists of the era, Smith did not make racist remarks to deflect criticism from his war votes, choosing instead to deploy reasoned discourse to defend his votes. In

[84] "THE SAME OLD HOKE," *Macon Telegraph*, April 13, 1918, 6.

[85] "SMITH EXPALINS POSITION REGARDING OVERMAN BILL," *Columbus Ledger* (Columbus, GA), April 15, 1918, 3.

[86] *Columbus Ledger*, April 29, 1918, 4.

[87] "Why Not Debate Senator Hardwick," *Macon Telegraph*, May 16, 1918, 6.

the end, Smith's logical and forceful defenses of his positions did not prevent him from being targeted with populistic tirades tinged with anti-Germanism during 1917 and 1918. Smith lost his re-election bid in 1920. He was defeated by Tom Watson who had rejoined the Democratic party, though to what extent lingering ire over Smith's votes on war measures caused the result is uncertain as Watson too had been initially against the war. Smith did not seek public office again.

Overman: North Carolina

The collaboration between the Populist Party and the Republicans was arguably most successful in North Carolina. The Republican/Populist coalition took control of the state legislature which in turn placed a Populist and a Republican in the two US Senate seats. In 1896 the Republicans won the governorship. This brought a fierce counterattack by the Democratic Party which included a riot that overthrew the bi-racial government of Wilmington and culminated in the disenfranchisement of most African Americans in the state, crippling the North Carolina Republican Party for decades to come. At the time of the US entry into the war, the two Senate seats were not held by infamous demagogues though both had been state legislators in 1900 involved in the disenfranchisement of blacks and both were willing to use populist racist rhetoric throughout their career. Senator Furnifold Simmons avoided controversy on the German issue, while the junior Senator for North Carolina, Lee Overman, became a nationally-recognized figure by encouraging the spy hysteria.

Before examining Overman, it should be noted that the Governor of the state not only eschewed populist attacks on Germans but, among politicians of the region, made

one of the more forceful defenses of German-American citizens. The day after the declaration of war, Governor Thomas Bickett issued a long statement in which he asserted that the citizens of the state were loyal. Germans, he continued, had helped build the state. He stated that it was natural for Germans to be sympathetic to their kinsmen fighting in the war, but now that America was at war with Germany, he had no doubt they would be loyal to America. He declared that Germans need not worry about their treatment in the state: they would feel safer in North Carolina than in Berlin. In this remarkable statement he also praised the loyalty of African American in the state: "I want the nation and the world to know that the loyalty of North Carolina is 99.99-100 pure. Cranks and lunatics may no doubt appear, but these should cause no suspicion to such to any class of our people."[88] This was released at a time in April 1917 when many in the region worried about Germans conspiring with African Americans. Although the state had plenty of incidents of anti-German hysteria, in 1917 the state leaders did not join in the race make inflammatory remarks alongside Heflin of Alabama and Tillman of South Carolina. This situation changed in 1918, however.

In March and April 1918, Senator Overman became famous for claiming that German spies had hampered US airplane production through sabotage in the Curtiss airplane factory in the state of New York. After a long afternoon of speeches in the Senate in which the Senators attacked each other for playing politics with the war, Overman dramatically entered the chamber with a huge bundle under his arm. He

[88] W.T. Bost, "GOVERNOR BICKTT HAS CONFIDENCE IN NEGRO," *Greensboro Daily News* (Greensboro, NC), April 8, 1917, 17.

showed a steel bracket that held a radiator rod which he stated was part of an airplane. He said it was cut in two, undoubtedly by a German spy. This sabotage, he claimed, delayed production of a particular type of plane for over two months in the Curtiss plant. He then reminded the Senators that he had been accused of exaggeration when he claimed in an earlier session that there were one hundred thousand spies in America. He now believed there was at least four hundred thousand spies in America.[89] He then smeared the loyalty of Germans in the working factory, "Some of the leading men in the plant had German names. I make no charges against those men; they may be innocent men, but they have strange names to me."[90] He called on the government to take control of the plant, fire all those under suspicion, and hire only loyal men.

This speech, quite naturally, caused a storm in the press and led to several investigations in Washington. The *Robesonian* noted that Overman furnished the chair of the Senate Military Committee with the names of the informants who had provided him the information. The committee began an inquiry behind closed doors.[91] An article restating the charges by Overman in the *Greensboro Daily News* made a-difficult-to-believe claim that there were no laws against vandalism, of and interference with, the construction of war material. The claim was based on the remarks of a high-ranking Justice Department official speaking anonymously: "the destruction of aeroplanes, gas masks or bridges by the enemies of the United States residing in this country, cannot be

[89] "OVERMAN WOULD FIRE EMPLOYEES IN CURTISS PLANT HIRE LOYAL MEN," *Greensboro Daily News*, March 29, 1918, 1.

[90] "OVERMAN WOULD FIRE...," *Greensboro Daily News*, March 29, 1918, 4.

[91] "SPIES DELAY AIRPLANE PROGRAM," *Robesonian* (Lumberton, NC), April 1, 1918, 4.

prevented under the laws of the United States as they are written at this present time."[92] This assertion appeared aimed at influencing the debate in Congress on the Sedition Act as the Justice Department official added: "We have appealed to the Congress to give us the necessary power to cope with this very serious situation, but as yet that body has not seen fit to grant us the authority we desire."[93] The *Rockingham Post-Dispatch* in an article on Overman's charges also noted that General Leonard Wood reported to the Senate that of twelve to twenty thousand planes promised to be sent to France by July 1st, 1918, only thirty-seven had been shipped so far.[94] Presumably by including this fact in the same article, the supposed spy ring in the Curtiss plant was made to appear responsible for the shortfall. A day later, the news story continued with a statement on how the committee members were sworn to secrecy on the investigation, yet the same article revealed the names of the military officials who had testified to the inquiry.[95]

Interestingly, as several investigations continued on the aircraft industry, Overman in particular, turned his focus to other issues. As noted previously, Overman introduced and helped pass a bill into law that enhanced the powers of the President to consolidate and coordinate executive agencies and bureaus in wartime as he saw fit. Unlike Senator Smith of Georgia, Overman aligned himself closely to President Wilson.

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[92] "NO LAWS TO PREVENT TAMPERING WITH WAR WORK OF THIS NATION," *Greensboro Daily News*, April 3, 1918, 1.

[93] "NO LAWS TO PREVENT…" *Greensboro Daily News,* April 3, 1918, 4.

[94] "NEWS REVIEW OF THE PAST WEEK," *Rockingham Post-Dispatch* (Rockingham, NC), April 4, 1918, 3.

[95] "SUBSTITUTED INFERIOR METAL," *Roanoke Beacon* (Plymouth, NC), April 5, 1918, 1.

Making spectacular accusations of espionage and ceding power to the presidency did not stop Overman from involving himself in racial matters, however. In September, he asked the War Department to make sure that the military hospital in Asheville, North Carolina would not be desegregated. Secretary of War Baker reportedly assured him that whites and blacks in the hospital would be segregated.[96]

On September 23rd, 1918, a subcommittee of Senate judiciary committee led by Overman was put in charge of investigating the political activities of the brewery interests. Several breweries in the US were owned by German-Americans. Specifically the committee was to investigate the role of German brewery money in the recent purchase of the *Washington Times* by Arthur Brisbane.[97] Apparently accepting the veracity of his accusations of spies in the Curtiss plant, the *Charlotte Observer* noted the Senator, "has been notably active in his efforts against German spy work so the public may rest under assurance that the Brisbane affair is to be well ventilated…"[98] As the Senator was out of town, speculation ensued that the scope of the inquiry would expand beyond Brisbane. Since Brisbane had written editorials against US allying itself with Britain in Hearst newspapers and apparently Brisbane and William Randolph Hearst partnered in the purchase of the *Chicago Herald* and its merger with the *Chicago*

[96] "LIEUT. M'RAE SAYS THE WAR WILL END IN 1919," *Winston-Salem Journal* (Winston Salem, NC), September 11, 1918, 1.

[97] "OVERMAN HEAD OF SUBCOMMITTEE," *Twin-City Daily Sentinel* (Winston-Salem), September 23, 1918, 1.

[98] "OVERMAN COMMITTEE GETS THE JOB." *Charlotte Observer* (Charlotte, NC), September 24, 1918, 4.

Examiner, the committee was to investigate if German money was used in the Chicago merger as well.[99]

After the war ended, in February 1919 the Committee expanded its scope once again; by shifting from investigating German operations to investigating Bolshevik and radical activities in America, so that "the Overman Committee took the lead in this process, reinventing itself as the primary congressional platform for crusading anti-Bolshevism."[100] It did not succeed at uncovering the extent of Communist propaganda and activities in the nation though it vigorously attacked Bolshevism and called for broader peacetime anti-sedition laws. Certainly, it played a role in the Red Scare of 1919 and 1920. In regards to Overman's charges of spies sabotaging airplanes at the Curtiss plant, an investigation completed for the President a month later blamed the lack of production on the misuse of funds, excessive profiteering and indifference to delivering weapons on time rather than on spies.[101] Furthermore, a recent study places the blame for the initial accusations themselves not on Overman but on a local patriotic organization in the Niagara area that focused on anti-labor and anti-German activities.[102] Overman, who took advantage of his opportunities to help stir anti-Black, Anti-German, and anti-Radical fears died in 1930 during his fifth term as senator.

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[99] "MAY ALSO PROBE THE HEARST MERGER," *Salisbury Evening Post* (Salisbury, NC), September 27, 1918, 6.

[100] Alex Goodall, *Loyalty and Liberty: American Countersubversion from World War I to McCarthy* (University of Illinois Press, 2013), 45.

[101] George W. Paschal, "The World of Moving Events," *State Journal* (Raleigh, NC), May 3, 1918, 3.

[102] John Olszowka, "The Niagara Frontier Defense League's patriotic war on labor: the case of Curtiss Aeroplane, 1917–1918," *Labor History*, (2012) 53:4, 451-469.

Florida: Catts

In regard to the two other states examined in this study, Louisiana surprisingly, did not have a well-known populist among its two senators and governor in 1917 and 1918, though one of the two senators, Joseph E. Ransdell, had his political career ended with his defeat in 1930 at the hands of Huey P. Long, arguably the most famous populist demagogue in the history of the South. As for Florida, during the US involvement in the war, the state was led by a noted populist, Sidney J. Catts. A minister, in 1904 he ran for a US House seat in Alabama which he lost to Thomas Heflin. In 1916, now living in Florida, he ran for the Democratic nomination for governor. He campaigned on, among other things, a fairer tax system, prohibition of alcohol and anti-Catholicism. Although, he lost the Democratic primary in a disputed election he won the governorship in November on the Prohibition Party line.

Rather than focusing on Germans and/or African Americans, the usual target of populist appeals in the South at the time, he focused his attacks on Catholics. After failing to pass many of his initiatives early in his administration, he complained of a wide-ranging conspiracy against him, "politicians who stand for railroads, corporations, Catholics, whiskey, and against my cleaning the state up as I have been doing…have been trying to get a chance to impeach me."[103] As he gained notoriety nationally, rumors circulated that he planned to run for president. He made a speech in Michigan in which he accused Catholic soldiers of being responsible for most of the alcohol smuggled into

[103] "GOVERNOR SEES PLOT TO OUST HIM WHILE HIS BACK IS TURNED," *Orlando Sentinel*, August 25, 1917, 1.

miliary training camps. His speech did not please many in the crowd.[104] Arguably, the most inflammatory remark by Catts during the war was on Catholic teachers in public schools. He sent a letter to the Pasco County school superintendent noting that he had read that nuns had taught in a public school in the county. He asked the superintendent if that was true and that if he wanted to maintain his position, he needed to make sure that *no* Catholics were teaching in the public schools next year. The superintendent replied that he did observe some teachers in religious garb, he did not inquire as to any teacher's religious affiliations although he would not be surprised that in mostly Catholic areas, schools would have Catholic teachers. The governor's reply to the superintendent made clear that his previous letter on not allowing Catholics as teachers did not only apply to nuns, "for I was elected on the proviso that no Catholics taught in the public schools of this state… and if any Catholics are employed in the public schools in San Antonio or any other place in your county next year, I shall certainly hold it to your charge and to the charge of the county commissioners."[105] Seemingly, the governor's ire toward Catholics left little time for anti-Germanism.

It is not surprising that politicians that rose to power catering to animosity against one group, African Americans, tried to use anti-Germanism to their advantage. Yet the demagogues in the Southeast were a not a monolithic group; those who took advantage of the anti-German environment present in 1917 and 1918 were usually rewarded politically, those who for policy reasons voted against the war or the draft suffered

[104] "CATTS IN KALAMAZOO," *Ocala Evening Star* (Ocala, FL), May 11, 1918, 1.

[105] "GOVERNOR ORDERS THAT NO CATHOLICS TEACH IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS," *Tampa Tribune* (Tampa, FL), August 23, 1918, 3.

electorally. The notorious race-bater in Mississippi, Senator James Vardaman, voted against the declaration of war and the creation of conscription through the Selective Service Act. He was vehemently attacked not solely on policy terms but as a pro-German and with anti-German slurs. He lost re-election. The notorious race-baiter demagogue in Alabama, Thomas Heflin, on the other hand, infamously attacked other members of the House as disloyal and pro-German. He eventually became a Senator. South Carolina was the home of two famous demagogues, Senator Ben Tillman who took part in the anti-German mania, and Cole Blease who could not overcome his initial posture on the war and the draft to win Tillman's former seat. Like Vardaman, he was accused of being pro-German and doing the bidding of the Kaiser. Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia was similarly tarred even though he voted for the war and conscription but had opposed some of the president's war policies. Interestingly, Senator Lee Overman, though not typically viewed as a populist successfully employed racism, wild accusations about German spies, and a crusade on radicals to have a long career in public office.

CHAPTER 4: COUNCILS OF DEFENSE AND ANTI-GERMANISM IN THE SOUTHEAST

There was a dichotomy between the concerns presented publicly by state level councils of defense and what was discussed by these organizations in their internal documents. The Council of National Defense (hereafter the National Council) started in 1916 as a means to coordinate the production of resources, promote farming and food conservation, and raise public morale. As America entered the war, individual states were encouraged to create state councils of defense and local defense councils. As discussed in the previous chapters, the public and to a certain degree the politicians, focused on the supposed ubiquitous presence of German spies, the doubts as to the loyalty of German-Americans, the fear of the supposed encroachment of German kultur, and, particularly in the South, whether Germans were conspiring with African Americans. State councils produced booklets that emphasized food production, public morale, Americanization efforts and vigilance against sedition by German-Americans and others. The internal documents of these councils note, in addition to matters of food production and conservation, a concern over potential dangers at home, though few tangible examples of actual sedition are cited.

The actions of the councils demonstrate how anti-Germanism was reflected through the prism of the primary elements of Southern uniqueness, race and ruralism. A major area of concern revolved around the black community: not as to whether their constituents were disloyal or conspiring with Germans, but the worry that so many were leaving for the North in an exodus causing a labor shortage in the South. An additional

issue was the distribution of propaganda to the rural South. The women's division of the state and local councils of defense were, by all reports, one of the most effective departments of the councils of defense. These sections took it upon themselves to take charge of providing educational material to teachers in the countryside. Much of this material was propagandistic and discussed the dangers of the internal threat. Therefore, although the focus of state council of defense organizations was not primarily directed towards German-Americans, through their women's committee, they nonetheless distributed anti-German propaganda. As to the reason for this dichotomy between the public and private concerns, confidential reports produced by the National Council portray most of the state councils of defense in the Southeast as being hampered by poor political leadership. In addition, and partly as a result of the lack of this strong leadership, the state councils of defense were poorly funded. These dysfunctional organizations highlighted and reinforced the dangers that many in the public felt to be present.

State Council of Defense: Background and Booklets

State councils of defense had a significant role in the anti-Germanism of the era. Frederick C. Luebke in his seminal work on the treatment of Germans in America during World War I, *Bonds of Loyalty*, argued that the state councils of defense were the direct agents of super patriotism, which the author defines not only as love of country but also a belief that German spies and sympathizers were threatening the foundations of society.[1] Yet according to Luebke, the individual state councils of defense varied greatly in

[1] Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 214.

authority and focus. In some states, the councils took the lead in harassing German-Americans, "These guardians of democracy were notoriously willing to use vigilante methods, in their pursuit of "slackers" and "Kaiserism"; thousands of Americans learned firsthand the meaning of guilt by association, accusation by secret informers, the loss of free speech, terrorism, and violence."[2] On the other hand, in other states, the councils took a mostly passive stance toward Germans.

A brief examination of the literature on anti-Germanism during the war shows the differences in the actions of state councils toward German-Americans. For example, Tina Stewart Brakebill describes the persecution of a once vibrant German community in a Midwestern county. According to the author, after the establishment of the county-level Council of Defense, German *kultur* was attacked and anti-German incidents including the forced purchases of Liberty Bonds, the closing of German schools and churches and arrests for disloyal talk began to proliferate. The author sees these actions as a top-down phenomenon as the hysteria was attributed "in large part, as a reaction to the use of fear tactics and propaganda by those in power."[3] The state council of defense acted very differently in Missouri, a state which similar to Illinois, had a significant German-American population. According to Petra Dewitt in *Degrees of Allegiance: Harassment and Loyalty in Missouri's German-American Community during World War*

[2] Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 214-215.

[3] Brakebill, Tina Stewart. "From "German Days" to "100 Percent Americanism": McLean County, Illinois, 1913-1918: German Americans, World War One, and One Communities Reaction." *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, Vol. 95, No. 2 (Summer 2002): 168.

I, the Missouri Council of Defense expressed little hostility toward those of the German community as long as its members stayed quiet.[4]

Although the state councils of defense in the Southeast, unlike in Illinois, did not actively join in the harassment of German-Americans, they did emphasize the internal threat in the literature produced for the public, so their materials did, therefore, contribute to the hysteria. The South Carolina Council of Defense produced a booklet on its efforts during the war. Interestingly, the first half of the booklet contained material provided by the National Council while the latter parts of the booklet focused on the local effort. The first half included a section on loyalty which noted that millions of Germans and those of German descent were willing to defend America against Germany. It also asserted, however, that there were millions of Germans who are not pro-American and in fact, "would stab the country in the back, would welcome to our shores the invading hosts of Germany's army of beasts and brutes…"[5] Another section in the first half provided tips for identifying those who were disloyal. The signs of disloyalty noted in the pamphlet included a propensity to change the subject when discussing the war, blaming Wall Street for the war, speaking negatively of America's allies, and cries of dictatorship and overthrowing of liberties when the President asks the Congress for an extension of

[4] Petra DeWitt, *Degrees of Allegiance: Harassment and Loyalty in Missouri's German-American Community during World War I* (Columbus, OH: Ohio University Press, 2012), 62-64.

[5] *The South Carolina Handbook of the War*, 48, Record Group 62, Box # 787, STATE COUNCIL SECTION 14e1 Memoranda, Reports, Etc. Indiana-NV, Folder: South Carolina, Council of National Defense, State Council Section, 14e1 Memoranda, Reports, Etc. Indiana-NV, National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as *The South Carolina Handbook of the War*).

powers to fight the war.[6] The second part of the booklet, the far shorter part, entitled THE VOICE OF SOUTH CAROLINA, included comments from prominent South Carolinians on the state council's work. It included a brief review of the state's effort on food conservation and production, the encouragement of the purchasing Liberty Bonds, and the importance of loyalty without any specific commentary on German-Americans.[7]

The booklet produced by the Alabama State Council of Defense does not explicitly attack German-Americans but does show that propaganda was a component of its activities. Beginning with a letter from the Governor of Alabama, the first page admits that the council was initially hampered in its effort because it was underfunded: the legislature was not in session and the federal government had not appropriated funds for the state for council activity.[8] In relation to the Germans, it noted that it was charged with the duty of placing enemy alien property under custodianship, though few examples of such property could be found. It did include several pages on coordinating the work of the 'Four Minute Men', volunteers who made prepared speeches supporting the war, and who were set up by the Committee on Public Information (CPI). In regard to their work on Americanization, which included teaching the foreign born English, the basics of American history, and encouraging them to become naturalized citizens, it assumed as a given that lack of Americanization efforts was a prime cause for German disloyalty: "It is

[6] *The South Carolina Handbook of the War*, 50.

[7] *The South Carolina Handbook of the War*, 87.

[8] *Report of the Alabama Council of Defense: Covering Its Activities From May 17, 1917, to December 31, 1918* (Montgomery, AL: The Brown Printing Company, 1919), 1, Entry PI 2 369; Record Group 62-130/62/20/00, Box #785, State Councils Section: Records Relating to State Council Activities, 1917-1918; National Archives, College Park Maryland (hereafter cited as *Report of the Alabama Council of Defense*).

no secret that great responsibility for many German spies rested upon the people because efforts were not being made to Americanize foreigners… (so they) were able to make their plans and carry out their purposes with little hindrance."[9]

In 1919, the Mississippi State Council of Defense also produced a booklet highlighting its work during the war. This had a higher production value than the previous two booklets discussed, including some words in color and pictures, which is ironic as the council was chronically underfunded. Naturally for an agricultural state, the first page of the booklet highlighted the importance of farming and food production, "For the man who strives in the fields to protect the lives and well being of his fellow man… is no less a patriot than the soldier who guards our rights on the battle front."[10] The booklet prominently discussed the council's role in public morale in a section titled 'Creating Sentiment'. Only towards the latter portions of the booklet, does it mention the women's division. Regarding African Americans, only one paragraph was included on their contribution to the war effort. It noted that some county level defense councils had sub-committees that included African Americans in their numbers. The purpose of these sub-committees, in an indirect allusion to the fear of blacks and Germans conspiring together, was, "to combat false and treasonable pro-enemy teachings."[11] The paragraph concluded with a recognition that African Americans had contributed more than their share in

[9] *Report of the Alabama Council of Defense*, 108.

[10] *Mississippi State Council of Defense*: *From April 1917 to January 1919*, 1, Record Group 62, Entry # P1, Container #22, Council of National Defense Research Staff, Clipping Files 1919-1921, Minnesota thru Mississippi, National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as *Mississippi State Council of Defense*).

[11] *Mississippi State Council of Defense,* 21.

purchases of Liberty Bonds and in volunteering for the army. While the public in the Southeast (especially after the US had entered the war) was concerned with the danger of Germans inciting African Americans to acts of sabotage, the public material produced by state council of defenses in the South did not discuss this matter in any detail and the little that was mentioned on the topic noted the danger of blacks receiving false information, presumably from Germans.

A Lack of Americanization Work, Vigilance Against Sedition

Although some of the booklets created by the state councils mentioned the need for Americanization of Germans and other immigrants, an examination of the correspondence sent from several of the state councils of defense to the National Council shows a lack of focus on Americanization because of the lack of foreign-born people in their states. Some state councils did focus on the issue of sedition, yet none provided any concrete examples of acts of sedition in their respective jurisdictions. Alabama noted that Americanization work was little needed in the state as there were so few immigrants there. By August 1918, the State Council noted that Americanization work had only been undertaken in one county of the state by local volunteers.[12] The Mississippi State Council also reported little need to focus on Americanization, "In as much as Miss. has practically no immigrants and very few industrial plants, it is sending on further

[12] *Alabama May Questionnaire*, May 7, 1918; *August Questionnaire*, August 7, 1918, Record Group 62, Entry 15-G4, Box #1, Abstracts of Information on the Organization and Activities of State Council of Defense Jan- Nov 1918, Alabama-Aliens-Americanization thru Indian-Transportation, (hereafter cited as Abstracts of State Councils Box 1, Entry 15-G4).

suggestions on Americanization only to the few counties that can use them."[13] Naturally since they were so few foreign-born, they also reported no Germans were actual members of the local councils.

Florida and Georgia, which had ineffective state councils, also not surprisingly did not do much work on Americanization. Florida still had virtually no functioning state council a year after the US entered the war. Even though, relatively speaking, it had more foreigners than most of the other southeastern states, in May 1918 the State Council reported it had not yet done any Americanization work and that the council was still searching for someone to head Americanization efforts in the state.[14] In Georgia, in July 1918, the State Council informed the National Council that an Americanization committee had been formed but had not yet written any reports on its efforts. Correspondence in September, however, makes it appear that no Americanization work had ever been done in Georgia, since the State Council begged to be excused from this task, "as population of the state is nearly 100% American."[15]

The Louisiana council reported they did not have a statewide Americanization committee but insisted that much had been accomplished nonetheless. In May 1918, the

[13] H.O. Pate, Mississippi, Aliens-Americanization, July 17, 1918, Record Group 62, Entry 15-G4, Box #2 Abstracts Of Information On The Organization And Activities Of State Councils Of Defense, Jan- Nov. 1918, National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as State Council Abstracts Entry 15-G4, Box 2).

[14] H.S. Howard, Florida, Aliens-Americanization, May 8, 1918, May 15, 1918, Record Group 62, Entry 15-G3, Abstracts of Information on the organization and Activities of State Councils of Defense Apr. 1917-Nov. 1918, Women's Service Registration Thru Finance- 2nd Liberty Loan, National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as State Council Abstracts Entry 15-G3, Box 2).

[15] State Council Abstracts Entry 15-G3, Box 2, Georgia, Price Gilbert, September 17, 1918.

committee reported that New Orleans, which had a larger foreign population than the rest of the state, was the focus of its Americanization effort. A subcommittee of the local New Orleans council working closely with the school board offered night classes for aliens and three hundred had taken advantage of the classes. The report admitted, however, that currently the effort was underfunded.[16] By October 1918, the effort was back on track so that in New Orleans several hundred foreigners had applied for naturalization, and the night school program had been expanded.[17] Although as the other states, the council noted there was not many people speaking a foreign language in the state.

North Carolina and South Carolina also did not pursue much of an Americanization effort given their shortage of foreigners. In a response to a questionnaire from the National Council, the North Carolina council reported that there were practically no foreign-born in the state, amounting to less than half of one percent of the population. Since there were so few immigrants, no Americanization committee was formed and, therefore, no German speaking people were participating in this work.[18] As to South Carolina, the women's division of the council, which became involved in the Americanization and naturalization effort in the state, noted that the issue was somewhat moot because of the absence of a foreign-born population. Using a slur, the women's

[16] State Council Abstracts Entry 15-G4, Box 2, John Marshall, May 28, 1918.

[17] State Council Abstracts, Entry 15-G4, Box 2, J. Marshall, Louisiana, Aliens-Americanization, October 4, 1918.

[18] State Council Abstracts, Entry 15-G4, Box 1, Questionnaire, May 18, 1918, June Questionnaire, June 5, 1918, North Carolina, Aliens-Americanization.

division characterized the immigrant presence in the state as "Only a few Dagoes who take charge of fruit stands."[19] Yet the council was ever vigilant and noted that they conducted strict surveillance to detect any pro-German sentiment. Of course, this latent prejudice was somewhat ironic given that the Italians were allies in the fight against the German-led Central Powers.

Several state councils remarked that they were vigilant against sedition, although no actual cases of treason or sabotage were noted. South Carolina's state council in March 1918 called upon the Department of War to take more stringent measures against German spies. It advised the use of the death penalty for more flagrant offenses to discourage further espionage.[20] Although it called for a hard line on German espionage, the council did not see espionage or sedition as a major problem in the state. On May 1st, the state council chair further observed that there were not many instances of traitorous utterances in the state but assured his readers that any rumors of nefarious talk or actions would be handled quickly by the council.[21] The minutes of the council meeting of June 6th 1918 noted that a suggested local ordnance of making a treasonous or disloyal utterance a crime of disorderly conduct (which many cities had adopted) had already

[19] Mayes, Mrs. F.L., South Carolina, Education-Americanization, October 29, 1917, Record Group 62, Entry 15-G3, Box #8, Abstracts of Information on the Organization and Activities of State Council of Defense Apr. 1917- Nov. 1918: Special Work Thru Food Production, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as State Council Abstracts Entry 15-G3, Box 8).

[20] State Council Abstracts, Entry 15-G4, Box 2, Minutes of State Council meeting, South Carolina, Sedition, March 7, 1918.

[21] State Council Abstracts, Entry 15-G4, Box 2, Reed Smith, South Carolina, Sedition, May 1, 1918.

proved to have had a positive effect.[22] In neighboring North Carolina, the council reported that the state, through the local county councils, had attempted to interview all those of questionable loyalty, and that arrests had been made only in extreme cases.[23]

The Alabama State Council also reported that it was involved in anti-sedition work though, like South Carolina, reported no specific arrests. In July 1918, it sent a list of what it characterized as pro-German books to librarians of the state. It requested the books to be kept out of circulation for the duration of the war.[24] Although it was ever vigilant to stop the spread of pro-Germanism, the council claimed it had prevented violence against the disloyal by encouraging the rule of law rather than vigilantism.[25] Even though the State Council of Defense was proud of its work in promoting loyalty and in turn ending vigilantism, by the end of the war it had notified the local councils that they should allow the American Protective League (APL) to take change of their anti-sedition efforts.[26] The APL was a network of two-hundred thousand untrained detectives who investigated sedition and disloyalty as a semi-official auxiliary of the Bureau of

[22] State Council Abstracts, Entry 15-G4, Box 2, Minutes of Meeting, South Carolina, Sedition, June 6, 1918, See also: Reed Smith, South Carolina, Sedition, June 8, 1918.

[23] State Council Abstracts Entry 15-G4, Box 2, Questionnaire, North Carolina, Sedition, August 7, 1918.

[24] State Council Abstracts Entry 15-G4, Box 2, Lloyd M. Hooper to Libraries, Alabama, Sedition, July 22, 1918.

[25] State Council Abstracts Entry 15-G4, Box 2, August Questionnaire, Alabama, Sedition, August 7, 1918.

[26] State Council Abstracts, Entry 15-G4, Box 2, Circular letter, Alabama, Sedition, October 26, 1918.

Investigations. Although the body did not catch a single spy, it did much to create a climate of fear among German-Americans.[27]

Louisiana, which had a very well-organized state council, had much to report regarding disloyalty. Certainly, the state government prepared itself for the possibility of sabotage in a special session of the legislature in July 1917 when Louisiana had passed a law in which any person found damaging or destroying a bridge to hinder the passage or supply of troops was to be jailed for one to five years and fined five hundred to five thousand dollars.[28] In addition, a law was passed that allowed the governor to raise a home guard to "repel invasion, suppress insurrection, riot or tumult, maintain order and enforce the laws."[29] Another law made it a felony punishable by one to five years in jail if any citizen or subject of a nation the US is at war with that had not started the naturalization process was found in possession of a firearm or explosive. A five-day grace period from the passage of the law, however, was allowed to enemy aliens to dispose of the firearm or explosive.[30] The same penalty would also be imposed for knowingly tampering with the water supply.[31] Interestingly, by April 1918, the state

[27] Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty*, 211-212.

[28] Act #31, Spce. Less. 1917. Louisiana, Legislation- State Defense, July 26, 1917, Record Group 62, Entry 15-G3, Box35, Abstracts of Information on the Organization and Activities of State Council of Defense Apr. 1917- Nov. 1918: Labor-Juvenile Farm Thru Organization- Community Council, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as State Council Abstracts Entry 15-G3, Box 5).

[29] State Council Abstracts, Entry 15-G3, Box 5, Act. #8, Sp. Session, Louisiana, Legislation, July 20, 1917.

[30] State Council Abstracts, Entry 15-G3. Box 5, Act. #12, Sp. Session, Louisiana, Legislation, July 24, 1917.

[31] State Council Abstracts, Entry 15-G3, Box 5, Act. #11, Sp. Session, Louisiana, Legislation, July 24, 1917.

council claimed it had aided the Justice Department in locating enemy aliens guilty of seditious utterances. However, no examples of this work were cited in their correspondence with the National Council.

State Councils and African Americans: The Actual Concerns

Although, as has been shown, the booklets created by the region's councils did not put much emphasis on African Americans, reports by the National Council on the effectiveness of the state councils demonstrate that a main concern of the state organizations in the Southeast was that African Americans were leaving the area for the North, rather than they would instigate acts of sabotage at the behest of the Germans. Many of these reports, confidential at the time, were written by Dr. J. A. B. Scherer. Formerly president of Newberry College in Newberry, South Carolina, and a pastor of a Lutheran Church in Charleston, he was president of a polytechnic institute in Pasadena, California. When the US entered the war, Scherer volunteered his services to the government and was made a member of the section on cooperation between the National Council of Defense and the states.[32] Presumably, his experience in South Carolina allowed him to obtain information more easily from local officials as to the true nature, workings, and concerns of the state councils in the region. On July 12th, 1917 Scherer was at a conference with prominent South Carolinians which included business leaders, newspaper men, and politicians. The migration of blacks out of the state was a major

[32] *Report of First Itinerary*: July 11-25, 1917, 12, Record Group 62, Box 784, Council of National Defense State Council Section Confidential Reports, Folder: South Carolina Section- Dr. Scherer's Report of July 11th on South Carolina. National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as *First Itinerary-Confidential Report on South Carolina*).

concern: "All agreed that the Negro egress problem is serious, but nobody had a solution for it."[33] As to the reason for the migration, not one of the prominent citizens blamed German incitement, despite this being a topic covered in many newspaper reports. One member present at the meeting curiously theorized that blacks were inspired by a *vague dread* to make this exodus to the North. Those who believed in this 'vague dread theory' such as Dr. Cromer of Newberry, partly blamed the ubiquitous and unusual display of flags as "the negro mind associating this with the omens of war, and becoming disturbed accordingly."[34] Others in the meeting, much more reasonably, blamed the migration on higher wages paid in the North and the desire for equal rights and better social advancement. Scherer noted in his report that he, of course, believed the latter reasons were more cogent than the nebulous idea of 'vague dread'.[35]

As to how to get blacks to return to the South, some, including the governor of South Carolina, was optimistic that this might yet prove possible. One official recounted an anecdote of an African American who had earned a lot of money in the North but nonetheless returned to work on a farm.[36] David Coker, the head of the state council, was more realistic. In a letter to the Office of Farm Management, he wrote that he did not

[33] *First Itinerary- Confidential Report on South Carolina*, 3.

[34] *First Itinerary- Confidential Report on South Carolina*, 4,10.

[35] *First Itinerary- Confidential Report on South Carolina*, 4, 10-11.

[36] *First Itinerary- Confidential Report on South Carolina*, 4.

believe much could be done to stop the exodus, "as long as the Northern munition plants are paying three of four times as much as the Southern farmer is able to pay."[37]

South Carolina was not the only state in the region that had concerns over its black population. The Mississippi Council of Defense was also the subject of confidential status reports by the National Council and its efforts were compared to its sister bodies in the region. Again, these reports do not reflect any hint of Germans and blacks working together. In a comparison of the Mississippi State Council of Defense with other Southern state councils, Mississippi was found wanting. While other states had organized parallel black council of defense organizations which had led to a supposed increase in the loyalty of blacks, Mississippi was credited only with giving lessons to African Americans on preserving food and home economics. In regard to the black exodus, the report only mentioned that the Mississippi council had urged employers to pay better wages and give black labor a fairer deal.[38] Indeed, the work of the State Council of Mississippi seemed to be of such great concern that the National Council also compared its work to that of South Carolina. In the section on African Americans, South Carolina was praised for its black councils of defense, and through this, cooperation between black and white men. No such effort at organizing of blacks was occurring at

[37] David R. Coker, letter to C.L. Goodrich, Office of Farm Management, July 9, 1917, Record Group 62, Box # 784, Council of National Defense State Council Section Confidential Reports, Folder: South Carolina Section- Dr. Scherer's Report of July 11th on South Carolina, National Archives, College Park, MD.

[38] *Comparison of the Work of the Mississippi State Council and Typical Southern State Councils Along Similar Lines*, Record Group 62, Box # 786- STATE COUNCIL SECTION 14e1 Memoranda, Reports, Etc. Indiana-NV Folder: Mississippi**,** National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter cited *Comparison of Mississippi Council to Other Southern Councils*).

the time in Mississippi.[39] Another report on Mississippi included further anecdotal and optimistic 'evidence' that blacks would return in large numbers. Scherer noted a report that two steamboats full of African Americans were returning home to the South. Scherer's report did not include his opinion of the veracity of this story or whether this represented an actual trend of blacks returning to the South, however, as has been noted in his report from South Carolina, he believed the migration crisis would not be curtailed unless the pay disparity issue was solved.[40]

Scherer wrote about Louisiana's council efforts concerning African Americans after a visit to the state in the summer of 1917. Again, there was no intimation of disloyalty among blacks shared by the council officials. The discussion arose as to whether black women were also to be allowed to register with the state council voting twelve to seven to allow black women to register as well. Scherer, optimistically, declared that "A new era is coming to pass in the South… concrete and positive evidence of the fair and generous attitude of former slave owners to their colored neighbors."[41] It is interesting to note that he did not characterize the relationship as one of equals but instead the working of noblesse oblige in favor of the humbler members of the community.

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[39] *Comparison of the Work of the Mississippi State Council and the South Carolina State Council Along Similar Lines*, Record Group 62, Box #786- STATE COUNCIL SECTION 14e1 Memoranda, Reports, Etc. Indiana-NV Folder: Mississippi, National Archives, College Park, MD.

[40] *IV. MISSISSIPPI*, 42-43. RG 62, Entry 14C4- 14D1, Box # 783 Declassified: National Council of Defense National Archives, College Park, MD.

[41] *Louisiana*. RG 62, Entry 14C4- 14D1, Box # 783 Declassified: National Council of Defense, Folder: Report of Second Itinerary, July 29th- August 11th, 1917, National Archives, College Park, MD.

The Scherer report on Alabama included more positive news on its state council than that for Mississippi, but it did emphasize some of the same problems that were also present in other states. In the first page of his report from July 1917, he noted two problems: the boll weevil destroying a large percentage of the state's cotton production in the previous year and, in the words apparently commonly used by officials at the time, the *negro egress* issue. The planters of the state, however, were as optimistic as some South Carolina officials in believing that their *help* would return.[42] Scherer concluded, however, that Alabama had not done enough to engage African Americans. By the summer of 1918, these confidential reports on states became less frequent though it is apparent, some states still had difficulties. The author of a report on Florida severely criticized the leadership of the state for the poor performance of its state council of defense, noting that lack of labor, presumably connected to the black migration issue, was a severe problem in Florida. He stated that he had pleaded with state officials to do more on issues of cooperation with African Americans, Americanization, and housing.[43]

The correspondence generated from the state councils themselves also revealed their concern over migration. The council correspondence reported that the head of the Mississippi State Council called for employers to pay blacks fair wages. It went further than the national report by noting the chair's call for the state to stop the petty persecutions of African Americans. The chair went on to ask the state legislature to

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[42] *Alabama*, 39, Box # 783 Declassified: National Council of Defense RG 62, Entry 14C4- 14D1, Folder: Dr. Scherer's Report of July 17th on Alabama, National Archives, College Park, MD.

[43] *Confidential Report on Mr. Allen's Trip to the Florida State Council Meeting*, August 15, 1918, RG 62, Entry 14C4- 14D1, Box # 783 Declassified: National Council of Defense National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as *Confidential Report on Mr. Allen's Trip to the Florida State Council Meeting*).

repeal statutes which encouraged financial penalties for African Americans. Ironically, in a call for fairness, the chair used a racist remark, "darkies are devilled to death by deputies."[44] In neighboring Alabama, as also indicated in the Scherer reports, the concern in the summer 1917 of was migration by blacks, although this also noted the planters' belief that many African American would return to the fields by the fall.

Georgia Council of Defense correspondence also highlighted the problem with migration. In a letter from May 1917, it reported that over fifty-thousand African Americans had already left the state. Interestingly, it also noted that the state government was authorized to prevent the exodus from continuing and asked for federal government aid in this endeavor. What exact means the state was going to use to prevent the migration was not specified.[45] It also called upon the state to assist the remaining African Americans in their work in food mobilization and "steadfastness at work."[46] Again, what actual actions they meant remained unspecified.

The issue of loyalty the of African Americans, a large concern for the public as we have seen in Chapter three, was not a primary issue in these correspondences though loyalty was, at times, referenced. In fall 1917, the Florida State Council of Defense noted that a Colored Women's Section of the Women's Committee of Defense had been

[44] State Council Abstracts Box 5, Mississippi, Labor-Negro, August 22, 1917.

[45] State Council Abstracts Box 5, Georgia, May 16, 1917.

[46] State Council Abstracts Box 5, Georgia, May 16, 1917.

organized in Florida.[47] In a correspondence justifying the creation of the black women council of defense in Florida, the point of emphasis was that working with the council led to more loyalty, "and it is the best policy in the south, to let them feel responsibility, and give them a chance to cooperate, it makes them more loyal."[48] A clipping of a Florida newspaper sent to the National Council from the State Council announced the creation of this black Women's Committee Division noting that the focus of the group was teaching other blacks food conservation and registering them for emergency services. It noted that other similar organizations would certainly arise in the South. In a statement of pride, "Florida takes the lead in bringing her colored people into line for this service."[49]

In South Carolina, as in the other states mentioned here, much of the focus of their correspondence highlighted the organization of blacks in the state and the black exodus issue. The state chair of the council of defense, in a letter from June 1917, wrote that black egress had other negative consequences in addition to causing labor shortage. He noted that young black men were leaving the state in considerable numbers causing an acute labor shortage in manufacturing and construction work as well as hampering military recruitment as the men who remained were needed to provide and protect their family at home.[50] No realistic solutions to the problem had been devised. Yet the

[47] Letter from Mrs. Wm. Hooker, October 18, 1917, Record Group 62 -- 130/67/10/00, Box # 8, Abstracts Of Information On The Organization And Activities Of State Councils Of Defense, Apr. 1917 - May 1918; Special Work Thru Food Production, National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as State Council Abstracts Box 8).

[48] State Council Abstracts Box 8, Florida, September 22, 1917.

[49] State Council Abstracts Box 8, Florida, clippings from *Florida Metropolis* October 15, 1917.

[50] State Council Abstracts Box 5, South Carolina, June 16, 1917.

organization of African Americans to aid the war effort was noted by the National Council as a positive aspect of the work of the South Carolina Council of Defense. In July, the state chair reported that black chairmen had been designated for each county. According to him, they had responded magnificently to the request.[51]

The correspondence from the North Carolina council also showed no signs of the fear of German-black collusion. Furthermore, while South Carolina and Florida, had included some African Americans in their council of defense by 1917, North Carolina remained uncertain as to how best to accomplish this goal towards the latter part of that year. On October 31, 1917, the North Carolina Council of Defense Women's Division reported that a committee of six, three men and three women, had been created to consider the best method to work with African Americans during the war. While recognizing that different localities would have different ideas, the committee wanted to implement a plan that would be practicable throughout the state.[52]

State council correspondence indicates that in 1918, organization of African Americans for the war effort and the possible ramifications of this for Jim Crow society was a major concern. In August 1918, the argument still continued in Alabama as to how to best organize blacks for the war effort albeit that the State Council of Defense felt it was unwise to have a joint committee of black men and women. Its chair claimed he was sympathetic to organization among blacks, but thought it was for the best that it was done at the county level. He thought it would not be prudent to create any statewide black

[51] State Council Abstracts Box 5, South Carolina, 342 Rpt of D. Croker, Sept 27, 1917.

[52] State Council Abstracts Box 5, North Carolina, Mrs., E, Reilly, October 31, 1917.

council of defense structure though he did not elaborate as to his reasoning.[53] By the end of August, no official structure had been initiated though an advisory committee of seven African Americans began regular meetings with the State Council of Defense chair on planning black organization and war-related work. In addition, the chair was to appoint five to seven African Americans to focus specifically on the role of African Americans in the county committees to direct their work in the counties.[54]

In Mississippi in 1918, the process of organizing African Americans was more developed while migration also remained a prime concern. In February, the Mississippi State Council of Defense notified the national office that in Noxubee County, a black auxiliary group was to be set up with a central committee and a program committee similar to the regular county council organizations.[55] By July, over fifty percent of the counties had black auxiliaries. The principal responsibilities were the promotion of Liberty Bonds, Red Cross subscriptions, and more efficient work practices. Several of these reports from the region on African Americans had a note of racial denigration. For example, "the negro committees are eliminating idleness among their race."[56] The complaint of insufficient labor because of black migration remained a constant. The state

[53] State Council Abstracts Box 5, Alabama, Lloyd M. Hooper, August 2, 1918.

[54] State Council Abstracts Box 5, Alabama, L. M. Hooper August 28, 1918.

[55] State Council Abstracts Box 5, Mississippi, February 12, 1918.

[56] State Council Abstracts Box 5, Mississippi, June Questionnaire, July 6, 1918.

chair noted that farmers were handicapped by lack of labor even though they were willing to pay good wages.[57]

In Florida, state council correspondence in 1918 on African Americans was focused on organization though there were some mentions of the issue of loyalty. In February, the state's Council of Defense noted that they had created a list of loyal African Americans to participate in the speakers bureau. This suggests therefore that there were believed to be 'disloyal' African Americans, although this point was nowhere made explicit.[58] Interestingly, since she praised the work of the black women's council organization, the chair of the women's division of the State Council of Defense looked unfavorably on the creation of an independent statewide black council of defense. Although praising the *bright and responsible* women appointed to the positions and the work of Eartha White, the black women council chair, in the food pledge and Red Cross campaigns, the women's division chair still called for black groups to be under local white supervision. In a condescending manner she elaborated, "they require the personal touch, and it seems to me, if each unit had its chairmen in charge of the negro work locally, it would be more effective."[59] Yet the remaining reports on African Americans during the year were invariably positive. In April, a Food Administration official with a

[57] State Council Abstracts Box 5, Mississippi, May 27, 1918.

[58] Rpt. of FLA, February 23, 1918, Box #1, Record Group 62 -- 130/67/10/00, Entry PI 2 426, Abstracts Of Information On The Organization And Activities Of State Councils Of Defense, Apr. 1917 - May 1918, National Archives, College Park, MD.

[59] Mrs. Wm. Hocker, January 23, 1918, Box # 2 Abstracts Of Information On The Organization And Activities Of State Councils Of Defense, Apr. 1917 - May 1918; Entry PI 2 426; Record Group 62 -- 130/67/10/00, National Archives, College Park, MD.

film on conservation was supposed to appear at an event for African Americans. Even though he did not appear, a report credited Eartha White for making the event a success before a large audience.[60] Although by the end of the war, no statewide black Florida State Council of Defense had been created (nor for that matter were blacks allowed to participate in the regular council of defense organization) because of the work of White and others, a department of black women had been organized, and a chair appointed in each county of the state.[61]

Interestingly, a year after the US entered the war, the Louisiana Council of Defense, unlike the other state bodies, claimed there was neither a labor shortage nor evidence for mass migration out of the state. The state chair stated the chief problem lay not in the exodus of blacks, but in the mis-apportionment of black workers' time between farms and he faulted farmers for not cooperating in exchanging farm help when appropriate.[62] The other reports from Louisiana concerning African Americans failed to mention Germans, loyalty, or even migration. When advisable local black auxiliary council of defense groups were to be encouraged focusing on promoting the sale of Liberty Bonds, the Red Cross, and food production. It was noted as preferable that black speakers addressed these local black councils.[63] And finally in a comment one might think to be pro forma and be understood at the beginning of the preparedness campaign,

[60] State Council Abstracts, Box 5, Florida, April 6, 1918.

[61] State Council Abstracts Box 5, Florida, October 10, 1918.

[62] State Council Abstracts Box 5, Louisiana, Circular Letter to Parish Chairmen, June 18, 1918.

[63] State Council Abstracts Box 5, Louisiana, June 6, 1918, June Questionnaire.

the state food administrator advised that he was willing to work with black organizations to the limit![64]

In Georgia, certainly, racism hindered the creation of black defense organizations which encountered opposition among the leadership of the Georgia State Council of Defense. In August 1918, at a meeting which included over one hundred prominent African Americans, a state black organization was finally created, and a constitution was adopted. The governor sent a representative to address the meeting. According to the state council, this was a positive development if African Americans stayed in their place, "if the tendency towards negro laudation and the furtherance of selfish interests can be suppressed and the idea of service to the country substituted for them."[65] Later in the month the council had a similar view regarding black speakers. The council correspondence noted that the state chair invited black speakers named by the CPI to the state capitol for a conference. Yet the chairman worried that the presence of black speakers might, in his view, occasion racial pride and feeling of self-importance which would not be a good thing. He felt the speakers might be "liable to overshadow realization of need of patriotic service rather than race betterment at the present moment."[66]

In 1918 in North Carolina, organization rather than sedition and questions of foreign influence remained the top issue in the state council regarding African

[64] State Council Abstracts Box 5, Louisiana, August 20, 1918, J.M. Parker.

[65] State Council Abstracts Box 2 Entry 15-G4, Georgia, August 10, 1918, PRICE Gilbert.

[66] State Council Abstracts Box 2 Entry 15-G4, Georgia, August 21, 1918.

Americans. In early February, a letter from the chair of the women's division of the state council noted the leader of the state council's opinion (with which she concurred) that the establishment of a state council for blacks was not ideal since the two races had to work together. Good results had been obtained, she continued, by incorporating African Americans in the county organizations: "Our present plan results in benefit not only to the work but to the negroes as well."[67] Several pieces of correspondence from the council defended the subsequent decision. Yet, as in the other states, an element of racism or at least racial condescension was a factor in its decision. On August 21st, the state chair after reiterating that a separate state organization was not beneficial and that having blacks work in county level organizations was best, detailing how each county council would appoint three African Americans who would meet with them occasionally. He defended this by stating there would otherwise be too many organizations, and the preferred system allowed suitable control of African Americans, as they "can be better handled this way."[68]

In 1918, in addition to concerns over labor shortage, the focus in South Carolina was also firmly directed towards the question of how to organize African Americans and how best to keep them under control. In January, the State Council claimed it was vigorously promoting the creation of black auxiliary councils. A letter on January 15th describes how the process worked in Richland County. A mass meeting was first held in an opera house in which several leaders of the community spoke about the importance of

[67] State Council Abstracts Box 5, North Carolina, W.D., Mrs. Eugene Reilly, February 2, 1918.

[68] State Council Abstracts Box 5, North Carolina, D.H. Hill, August 21, 1918.

the Council of Defense mission. A follow up meeting was held at the Chamber of Commerce at which white council leaders took charge and informed African Americans how the council would work. The black county chair would be appointed by whites though they would consider the preferences of African Americans. This was preferable because, in the words of the council leadership, it was "a little safer than allowing negroes to elect their own."[69] Eventually the black councils would be allowed to run their own meetings, though their leadership were invited to attend the white council meetings for suggestions and advice. Clearly, a main consideration was how to maintain control of African Americans, "Think least troublesome sort of organization would be counties, each subject to control of its white county organization."[70]

In regard to African Americans, state councils, which in parts of the Midwest promoted anti-Germanism, played a far different role in the Southeast. As has been shown, by 1918, in regard to African Americans, the state councils in the region moved beyond debating the efficacy of food conservation programs and the like to fundamental issues of loyalty and control. This was not about a fear of disloyalty prompted by German enticement but how to get an oppressed group to further support the war effort in a manner that would not encourage disloyalty to an unjust racial system. Indeed, while the public and the local authorities remained ever vigilant of Germans contacting blacks, the state councils were more worried about the proliferation of Northern influence. In a correspondence from June 6th, 1918, the state council chairman of South Carolina

[69] State Council Abstracts Box 5, South Carolina, Reed Smith, January 15, 1918.

[70] State Council Abstracts Box 5, South Carolina, Reed Smith, January 15, 1918.

reported that there was little if any disloyalty among African Americans in the state. Yet he felt care was needed to be taken as to which speakers from outside the region were allowed to speak to African Americans. He was especially wary of those *not conversant with the local situation*, especially northern organizations. "[They] Should not be allowed to send speakers without consulting the state council."[71]

Women's Division: Efficiency in Food Campaign Leads to Propaganda Effort

"WHY ARE WE AT WAR, GERMANY: Paid spies to burn, dynamite, and destroy our factories, bridges and wharves… She lies and spies"[72] Statements such as this one derived from a publication of the Women's Committee of the North Carolina branch of the Council of National Defense shows how women participants in the councils became adept at anti-German propaganda. This is surprising as the women's division of the Council of National Defense was originally set up for such efforts as promoting food conservation though canning and other means and early reports from the state councils demonstrate that these topics were indeed at the heart of their initial efforts. The confidential reports by the National Council on the workings of the state councils notes the state Women's Committees were often the most effective divisions of these councils. Eventually, the Women's Division at the national level decided that it was a natural conduit for directing education and propaganda materials to the schools working through a cadre of competent female state council officials. Rural teachers, in particular, came to

[71] State Council Abstracts Box 5, South Carolina, Reed Smith, June 1918.

[72] WOMEN'S COMMITTEE, NORTH CAROLINA BRANCH COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, Record Group 62, Box #628. Committee on Women's Defense Work Educational Propaganda Dept 13J-A3Correspondence Reports, Etc., October 1917- Feb 1919, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

view the women's division of the councils as a place to obtain propaganda to distribute to their students which included anti-German propaganda produced at the national level. This is an interesting dynamic because there was hardly any concern about Germans per se in the region's state councils. And of course, this is important to an examination of anti-Germanism in the Southeast since the rural nature of the region was one of its dominant characteristics.

The Committee on Women's Defense Work of the Council of National Defense was created April 21, 1917.[73] Its plan was to coordinate the women of the country through the mediation of those state organizations that were in the process of being formed. The idea was for every state women's division to be part of, or to closely coordinate work with, the state defense councils. For several months in 1917, individual committees within the national women's division did not have permanent chairs but the committees included the organization of the states, finance, registration of women for service, conservation, and thrift. Educational propaganda was seventh on the initial list of responsibilities of the women's division. Although the committees within the national division did not have permanent chairs in Spring 1917, the state women committees created in 1917 quickly became effective components of the state defense councils.

It is clear that food conservation was an early focus of the women's committees. In his report on his visit to South Carolina in July 1917, Dr. Scherer included a letter he sent to Louise Mays, the state council women's chair, who he had been unable to see on

[73] *A REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE AND OF ITS ADVISORY COMMISSION TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL*, 21, May 28, 1917, Record Group 62, Box #628, Committee on Women's Defense Work Educational Propaganda Dept 13J-A3 Correspondence Reports, Etc., October 1917- Feb 1919, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

his first visit. In the letter Scherer noted the priorities for women, "It is of utmost importance, especially, that we have your cooperation in the enrollment for Food Administration."[74] He went on to state that he understood that the council was hampered by lack of funds, since the legislature was not in session and, therefore, unable to authorize, the appropriate spending, but he had spoken to the governor to make certain that the women's committee had sufficient funds for the printing and distribution of food registration cards. A newspaper clipping included in Scherer's report also demonstrated the importance of food administration, "Answering whole heartedly the call of Herbert Hoover, national food administrator, and realizing fully that the last pound of food may win the war for democracy, leaders of all women's clubs and social organizations in convention here today… formed the Women's State Defense Council."[75] The first task was identified as registering all women in the food savings campaign.

In both poorly run and more efficient state councils of the Southeast, women committees proved very effective in this task. As previously mentioned, in Florida (a state which generally fell short of expectations in the reports of the National Council) African American women were instrumental to the efficacy of the state's food savings campaign. In Mississippi (whose state council again compared unfavorably to other state councils) the women's committee was viewed as one of its few strengths. In the first page of a report on Mississippi's council, under the title Strong Points, "The Women's

[74] *First Itinerary- Confidential Report on South Carolina*, 2, Letter to Louise Mays.

[75] *First Itinerary- Confidential Report on South Carolina*, 7, "South Carolina Women Will help to Save Food," *The State*.

Committee has been very active in enrolling women in the women's surveys registration. Canning demonstrations and courses were held in 60 counties last summer."[76] It also cited the beginnings of an educational program. The report did note, however, that there was some initial hesitancy by women of the state to sign the food pledge card since many thought they were signing up for the draft. In a comparison of the Mississippi State Council with sister bodies in other Southern states, the state's women's committee was commended for close cooperation with the main state council organization and the report also noted that its local organizations were being perfected.[77] A follow-up report in January 1918 praised the cooperation between the Women's Committee and the state committee.[78] In Georgia, which Scherer described as possibly having the most ineffective state defense council, the women's committee was praised for having proceeded admirably pursuing its responsibilities over food administration. Indeed, he had such respect for the Women's Committee chair, that Scherer asked her opinion on who would best fill the position of Executive Secretary for the Georgia State Council as a whole![79]

In Louisiana, which had a well-managed council, the women's committee work on food savings was also considered a strong point. The first page of a report on

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[76] *Mississippi*, *Organization*, April 5, 1918, Box 786.

[77] *Comparison of Mississippi Council to Other Southern Councils*, 2.

[78] *THE ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITIES OF THE MISSISSIPPI COUNCIL OF DEFENSE*, January 7, 1918. Box #786. COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE: STATEE COUNCILS SECTIONS, 14E1 Memoranda, Reports, Etc., Indiana-Nevada, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

[79] *II. Georgia*. 32-33, Record Group 62, Box # 786. COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE: STATE COUNCILS SECTIONS, 14E1 Memoranda, Reports, Etc. Indiana-Nevada, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

Louisiana noted the effectiveness of the Women's committee, "The Women's Committee was very active in urging household economy and in holding canning demonstrations. Meetings for household employees are to be held in New Orleans in April. Food pledge campaigns were successful."[80] In a separate report, Scherer, praised the leadership of the Women's Committee and noted that after the registration activities, the energetic ladies of the committee should be kept busy with something useful.[81] In North Carolina, the state's Women's committee chair in particular and the committee in general were highly praised. After writing that Mrs. J. E. Reilley, the state women's division chair, was very clever, Scherer added, "It seems to me that the women's work is at least as well done as the men's."[82] He continued that Reilley seemed to be the only member of the council who had the welfare of the community at heart and wanted the war work to be of permanent benefit to the community. On Alabama's Council of Defense, which tended to be ranked of middling efficiency, the pattern was the same: praise for the effectiveness of the Women's Committee. First, the National Council noted that there was no friction between the Women's Committee and the regular council as the leadership of the women's committee were also members of the latter. Secondly, committee work on the

[80] *LOUISIANA*, Folder: Louisiana, Record Group, Box # 786, COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE: STATE COUNCILS SECTIONS, 14E1 Memoranda, Reports, Etc. IN-NV, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

[81] *Louisiana*, 48-49, July 10, 1917, Box #786, COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE: STATE COUNCILS SECTIONS, 14E1 Memoranda, Reports, Etc. Indiana-Nevada, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

[82] *Report on Trip to Raleigh, North Carolina To Attend the Second Meeting of the North Carolina Council of Defense*. 3, Record Group 62, Box #787, COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE: STATE COUNCILS SECTION, 14E1 Memoranda, Reports, Etc. Indiana-Nevada, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

food pledge card was, according to the report, "excellent". It also acknowledged that the Women's Committee also collaborated closely with the schools.

In regard to the correspondence generated from the state councils to the national office, the letters tended to reflect a focus on the registration issue even if the focus later on became more directed towards the question of naturalization. On October 30th, 1917, South Carolina's Women's Committee of the state council of defense admitted that the effort to get women to register for service was somewhat of a failure. Only thirty-five thousand registered and of those most simply pledged for food conservation.[83] On December 26th of that year came a further update in that 3,916 service cards had been signed. Mays, the women's state chair, admitted that this number might seem small but that the card was overly complex, many of the volunteers on the council were home makers who had difficulty understanding it, and many of the prospective signees felt the wording implied an overly burdensome obligation.[84] Yet by March 1918, they were able to report to the national office that the Women's Committee in the state was well organized, with a branch in every county.[85]

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[83] Mrs. Mayes, South Carolina, October 30, 1917, Record Group 62, Entry 15-G3, Box #2, Abstracts Of Information On The Organization And Activities Of State Councils Of Defense, Apr. 1917 - May 1918, , National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as State Council Abstracts Box 2 Entry 15-G3).

[84] State Council Abstracts Box 2, Entry 15-G3, Mrs. F. Louise Mayes, Census- Women's Service Registration. December 26, 1917.

[85] South Carolina, Organization- Local, March 23, 1918, Record Group 62, Entry 15-G3, Box #8, Abstracts of Information on the Organization and Activities of State Council of Defense Apr. 1917- Nov. 1918: Special Work Thru Food Production, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as State Council Abstracts Entry 15-G3 Box 8).

In several states, the Woman's Committee had also been put in charge of Americanizing the foreign-born, yet the women's chair in North Carolina felt this was not a necessary program since as there were so few individuals to target. She went on to note the state only had some Greeks in the restaurant business, Italians in the fruit business and Waldensians who had extensive vineyards. As to Germans, the few in the state were categorized as loyal and, "appear to be in entire sympathy with every patriotic movement."[86] Similar with South Carolina, it initially had only limited success with the registration cards. However, like Florida's Women's Committee, it was also involved in outreach to the African American community. On October 15, 1917, the Women's Committee was proud to note that the State Council had asked three of its members to serve on the committee that was considering the best way to manage cooperation with the state's black population.[87]

Alabama reported a successful registration, though had a delayed and incomplete reporting of the results. It noted the registration opened with much publicity in 1917, but it was impossible to maintain attention of the people on the task without any update as to the results. This committee also found the wording of the registration cards to be unclear.[88] Georgia's women's committee, by April 1918, had become involved in organizing speakers. In an early sign of what was to come, on February 15th, it announced it had a speakers' bureau head working in conjunction with those in charge of

[86] State Council Abstracts Entry 15-G3 Box 8, Reilley, Mrs. E., October 31, 1917.

[87] State Council Abstracts Entry 15-G3 Box 8, Report, November 15, 1917.

[88] State Council Abstracts Entry 15-G3 Box 8, Parks, Mrs. J.B., Alabama, CENSUS-Women's Service Registration, April 27,1918.

patriotic education. The correspondence noted that they it proposed to supplement the work already done by women's organizations throughout the state.[89]

The women of Mississippi also reported on their registration work and some of their disappointments. On August 18th, 1917 the National Council received the minutes of a recent meeting of the State Council of Defense. The Women's Committee chair promised that over thirty women organization of the state would work together in harmony on registering women for service. Three days later, they reported they expected to have over a thousand recruiting stations all over the state.[90] The final report noted in addition to the food conservation pledges, 12,103 women volunteers had enrolled their names for service. Of those close to 6,000 were reported to have training in more than one vocation (the two most common being listed as agricultural and secretarial work).[91]

Louisiana, not surprisingly, provided much correspondence concerning registration activities. On October 8th, 1917, the State Council director asked the governor of Louisiana to make women's registration compulsory for all women over sixteen, both white and black, though as mentioned, there was some opposition to the

[89] Georgia, EDUCATION-SPEAKERS BUREAU, February 19, 1918; see also Georgia, EDUCATION-SPEAKERS BUREAU April 2, 1918, Record Group 62, Entry 15-G3, Box #6, Abstracts of information on the Organization and Activities of State Councils of Defense Apr. 1917- Nov. 1918, Organization & Plan Local thru Work to Date, National Archives, College Park, MD (hereafter cited as State Council Abstracts Box 6).

[90] State Council Abstracts Entry 15-G3 Box 2, Minutes of Meeting of S.C, Mississippi, CENSUS-Women's Service Registration, August 18, 1917; see also W.C. Mrs. McGhee, Mississippi, CENSUS-Women's Service Registration, August 21, 1917.

[91] State Council Abstracts Entry 15-G3 Box 2, W.C. October, Mississippi, CENSUS- Women's Service Registration December 12, 1917; see also W.C.-Enclosure, Newspaper clippings, Mississippi, CENSUS-Women's Service Registration January 14, 1918.

idea of registering black women. Yet the governor approved the measure.[92] The registration of women had already begun by October 17th and within two days the women's committee claimed that sixty percent of the eligible women of Louisiana had already registered. By November, the Women's Committee chair reported that the organization had counted over two hundred and fifty thousand registration cards, with several parishes not yet counted. Establishment for planning bureaus and training classes was already under way.[93]

Although the women's divisions in the states did not all report total success in their initial efforts, without exception, the women's committee in the seven states being examined in this study were praised by the National Council for their effectiveness in registration of women and the focus on food savings. Indeed, they were considered to be the most effective aspects of the individual State Councils. Therefore, it is not surprising that when the Council of National Defense in Washington was assigned a permanent chair to its educational propaganda office, the very capable women of the state organizations became leaders in the dissemination of the resulting educational propaganda.

The transition to this new focus occurred with the appointment of a permanent chair to Educational Propaganda office of the national women's committee. Carrie

[92] State Council Abstracts Box 2, Entry 15-G3, J.W. Lever, Louisiana, CENSUS- Women's Service Registration, August 8, 1917.

[93] State Council Abstracts Box 2, Entry 15-G3, E.G. Peasant, Louisiana, CENSUS- Women's Service Registration October 19, 1917; see also W.C. Mrs. Grace Lee Arney, Louisiana, CENSUS- Women's Service Registration November 26, 1917.

Chapman Catts (no relation to Governor Sidney Catts), who was also president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, sent a letter to all the state chairmen on October 6th, 1917 introducing herself as the head of the department. She promised that the work of her department would be carried out with vigor. [94] Over the next few months she proved true to her words. A supplement to the letter continued that there was widespread ignorance over the reasons as to why the US had entered the conflict and anti-war propaganda was prevalent throughout the country. According to Catts, as a result of the Women Committee's discussions with millions of women in the food pledge, it became aware of the spread of anti-war thinking. Yet, she insisted that the skepticism regarding the war could be combated largely through an untapped resource, "Women are the great sentiment makers in any nation, rarely has deliberate effort been made to convert them to an idea."[95] The combination of the women organizations through the state divisions of the Women's Committee of the Council of National Defense was, she proposed, the perfect vehicle to reach these women. Catts wanted to have the Women's Committee in each state have an *evening of propaganda* on why the US was at war and why it must win it. She proposed that every county chairwoman should hold a similar meeting in the principal city of each county.

From its inception, the focus of educational propaganda was on the local level and targeted rural society in particular. Already in the first monthly report after Catts became

[94] Department of Education, *Circular No. 54*, October 6, 1917, Record Group 62, Box #113, COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE REPORT 2-C2 (MAY 27, 1917), Folder: Committee of Women's Defense Work, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

[95] *Circular No. 54-a* (Supplementary to *Circular No.54*), October 6, 1917, Box #113.

National Chair of the department, thirty-one states had appointed chairs for educational propaganda. These state educational propaganda committees within the state women's committees became the vehicle for the pro-war speeches and classes in the cities and towns. Several states, though the monthly report did not specify the number, were also in the process of organizing rural teachers in patriotic leagues. Approximately sixty-nine thousand pamphlets from the CPI had been ordered through the Women's Council in just in two weeks of the effort.[96] In the following month's report, it was also noted the importance of having patriotic meetings in the counties and rural communities. There was an ongoing effort to closely coordinate with the CPI on mass meetings in the states.[97] By March 1918, seventy-seven meetings had been held in rural schools. The Educational Propaganda office of the women's committee was also aligned with the College Women's Speaking Bureaus. In a series of suggestions by the office for Five-Minute Speakers on the topic of '*Could the United States have kept out of the war?'*, the first was that Germany not only attacked our ships but "she filled our country with spies and intriguers."[98] The third of those suggestions highlighted the point that failure to enter the war meant that Germany would win the conflict and prove the superiority of German Kultur. By the summer of 1918, the Women's Committee had even forwarded to state committees suggested topics for school commencement speakers. The state committees

[96] *Monthly Report October 15 – November 15* (1917), Women's Committee of the Council of National Defense, 4, Box 113.

[97] *Monthly Report November 15th to December 15th* (1917)-Educational Propaganda, Woman's Committee of the Council of National Defense, Box 113.

[98] *Five-Minute Speeches Series- No.3, COULD THE UNITED STATES HAVE KEPT OUT OF THIS WAR!* Record Group 62, Entry PI 2 333, Box # 629, Records Relating to Americanization Activities: Educational Propaganda Dept.: Correspondence, Reports, Etc. 10-17 To 2-19, National Archives, College Park, MD.

were to forward the list to every high school and college in their respective states. Although not all the topics were necessarily anti-German, towards the top of list of approved subjects was: 'The defense of our country against German Intrigue and Propaganda in the United States'.[99]

The extent to which the state women's committees complied with these requests for patriotic meetings can be seen in their answers to questionnaires sent from the National Council.[100] On January 26th, 1918, the Alabama Women's Committee noted that a mass meeting was held in Mobile, Alabama. An additional mass meeting was scheduled for March 28th in which the head of the National Women's Committee planned to speak. The Alabama council though admitted it only had three county chairs of educational propaganda. Possibly in a sign that the disorganization of the Florida state council also affected its women's division to some degree, the answers to a circular on the mass meetings were completed by hand. It also recorded very little activity in the state. The Mississippi Women's Council in answers dated February 9th wrote that they held seventeen patriotic meetings and most of their counties had chairs of educational propaganda. The circular was returned with a letter sheepishly noting that they had answered the questions as best they could as the state organization was just in its infancy.[101] Interestingly, North Carolina had the most difficulty responding to the

[99] *Women's Committee Circular No.136, Department of Educational Propaganda Circular No. 10,* Suggested Topics of Commencement Themes, Box 113.

[100] *Circular No. 83B,* Report of the State Chairman of Educational Propaganda (Various States), Record Group 62, Box # 628, Committee on Women's Defense Work Educational Propaganda Dept 13J-A3, Correspondence Reports, Etc., October 1917- Feb 1919. National Archives, College Park, MD.

[101] *Report of the State Chairman of Educational Propaganda*, Mississippi, February 9, 1918, Box 628.

questionnaire. On February 7th the state chair wrote a letter to the National Office declaring that it was impossible to provide the information requested as that information was not compiled in the state. In addition, it was claimed that the women's work was subsidiary to that of the council and it had not cooperated with the women's division of the speaker's bureau and the women did not have enough funds to organize a speaker's bureau on their own.[102]

Louisiana, considered one of the better managed state councils according to the Scherer Reports, had the most professional response to the circular with typed answers for all the questions mostly with more than a sentence per answer. It reported that an *innumerable* number of meetings with speeches called by the Woman's Committee were held all over the state. Nearly all the counties had an educational propaganda chair. Also, it listed the items of propaganda that it deemed the most useful which included *The Menace of Premature Peace*, and a *War of Self Defense*.[103]

In what was described by the National Council as an interesting experiment in patriotic education, Catts wrote a letter to the Superintendent of Instruction of two counties in each state with a large rural population and asked for lists of the rural districts and the names of teachers in the schools.[104] The department then wrote individually to

[102] Letter attached to *Report of the State Chairman of Educational Propaganda*, North Carolina, February 7, 1918, Box 628.

[103] *Report of the State Chairman of Educational Propaganda*, Louisiana Division, February 4, 1918, Box 628.

[104] Untitled letter, Record Group 62, Entry Pl 2 333, Box # 629, Records Relating to Americanization Activities: Educational Propaganda Dept.: Correspondence, Reports, Etc. 10-17 To 2-19, National Archives, College Park, MD.

these teachers on the need for patriotic organizations and asking them to arrange war service meetings. The department sent each teacher suggestions for the meetings' agendas and several pamphlets from the CPI such as *American Loyalty* and *German War Practices*. The first meetings were to be held in the winter of 1917-1918. Questionnaires were sent to the individual teachers afterward. The replies from rural southeastern schools shines a light on the difficulties of education in early twentieth century America. In a letter dated November 2, 1917, an educator from Fife, Georgia who was in charge of the patriotic effort in what she described as a small-town country school, reported difficulty organizing meetings as the schools would not reopen until December since it was the cotton-picking season, and the children were needed in the fields. Interestingly, the teacher claimed that the trustees of the school warned her not to show too much patriotism, presumably because it might distract from the cotton-picking imperative! She continued, she would need all her patriotism and skill to perform her tasks because her two assistant teachers adhered to the community's thinking and did not cooperate with her efforts. She concluded by thanking the council for any help they could provide.[105] An educator from Arley, Alabama sent a letter to the National Women's Committee rather than a completed questionnaire explaining that an epidemic of measles in the community had prevented war service meetings in her community.[106]

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[105] *Letter from Ella May Baggett to Dr. Shaw*, November 2, 1917, Record Group 628, Box # 628, Committee on Women's Defense Work Educational Propaganda Dept 13J-A3, Correspondence Reports, Etc., October 1917- Feb 1919, National Archives, College Park, MD.

[106] *Letter from Minne [last name illegible] to the Department of Educational Propaganda*, February 13, 1918, Box 628.

One of the responses received in Washington noted some progress. A teacher from Marion, Alabama, which only had a population of one hundred and four in the school district, reported that all fifty-five students and an additional fifteen adults attended a war service meeting at the schools. In reply to the question of the prevailing sentiment in the neighborhood concerning the war, the teacher answered that all were solidly behind the war and the administration.[107] The school district of Deland, Florida, reported that twenty-one adults and their children had attended a mass meeting on January 20, 1918. Interestingly, this questionnaire had included a query as to how many Germans lived in the neighborhood and whether they were loyal to America or not. The reply indicated that there was one German living locally and that he was a both loyal American and that a son of his had enlisted in the military service.[108] Finally, in a report from Bethel, Mississippi with a population of a thousand in the school district, ninety adults were reported to have attended the mass meeting on July 6, 1918. In response to the German-related questions, the school official wrote that there were ten Germans in living in the neighborhood and that they were indifferent to the war. No elaboration on the supposed indifference of the Germans was included though on the question of the prevailing sentiment in the neighborhood on the war, the correspondence concluded with the remark that the people were warmly devoted to the county and were deeply patriotic.[109]

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[107] *Report of the War Service Meeting*, Marion, Alabama, District No. 62, February 6, 1918, Box 628.

[108] *Report of the War Service Meeting*, Deland, Florida, January 20, 1918, Box 628.

[109] *Report of the War Service Meeting*, Bethel, Mississippi, July 6, 1918, Box 628.

In addition to correspondence received from the rural teachers chosen to conduct war meetings, letters sent from the Educational Propaganda office of the Women's Committee in reply to requests from rural teachers not directly involved in the program, demonstrates the important role the national office had in distributing propaganda to rural communities. In reply to a request from Jamie Bryan from Greenville, North Carolina for a particular propaganda piece on instilling patriotism via language and literature, the office replied that it did not have any propaganda item specific to her request but was forwarding to her some materials that presumably fulfilled the same purpose.[110] In responding to Myrtle Whitney Snell from Birmingham, Alabama the office informed her that although Truth Series No. 1 was exhausted, they were forwarding her sixty-five copies of Truth Series No. 3.[111] A letter from the State Home Demonstration agent of the agricultural division of the University of Florida thanked the department of educational propaganda for children pledge cards although it was not specified whether it was university students or school children in the area who were meant to complete these papers.[112] By the end of the war, the work of the Women's Committee Educational Propaganda Department in disseminating propaganda had reached beyond their early objective of tackling schools. A letter dated October 16, 1918 from the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs thanked the department for providing outlines for club

[110] *Letter from Americanization Section to Jamie Bryan, Greenville, NC*, October 30, 1918, Record Group 62 -- 130/65/39/00, Entry PI 2 333, Box #630, Records Relating to Americanization Activities: Educational Propaganda Dept.: Correspondence, Reports, Etc. 10-17 To 2-19, National Archives, College Park, MD.

[111] *Letter from Americanization Section to Whitney Snell*, Birmingham, AL, Box 630.

[112] *Letter from Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics to the Department of Educational Propaganda*, October 11, 1918, Box #630.

programs which had already been mostly distributed to their clubs. However, the letter asked for more of the same as the number given was insufficient to meet the federation's needs.[113]

Weak Political Leadership, Lack of Funds, and a Search for Relevance

Why this dichotomy between what the councils said and what they did? Several of these State Councils of Defense were poorly led with insufficient funds to carry out their duties, and therefore, perhaps not surprisingly, highlighted efforts more aligned with public concerns over the German question to obtain more funding. There are many examples of correspondence of the National Council belittling the leadership of many of the region's councils of defense. In a confidential report by a National Council official on the Florida's State Council executive meeting on August 15, 1918 on organizing its local councils, the official attributed the blame for the poor state effort on Governor Sidney Catts. He described Catts as a florid speaking, big-featured man. He recognized he was seen as a lovable old man by some but Catts had no knowledge on how to run an effective organization, "He is a weak and silly figure as a State Council Chairman."[114] The description of Catts went on to note that one could easily envision him as a farmer in his shirt sleeves on the back porch of a farmhouse in the middle of nowhere, rather than as an effective leader, "Catts would be harmless if he did not try to run the State Council

[113] *Letter from Mrs. Edgar Lewis of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs to Department of Educational Propaganda*, October 16, 1918, Box 630.

[114] *Confidential Report on Mr. Allen's Trip to the Florida State Council Meeting*, August 15, 1918, 2.

himself. But he does."[115] The national official reported that he lectured the State Committee on how to organize the State Council, how to set up speakers bureaus, and how to raise funds. He concluded that the recently-appointed executive secretary of the State Council seemed competent. He suggested that the National Council should try to persuade the governor that he was too busy to be an active state chair and that responsibility should be transferred to the executive. It was necessary that the state council shake itself free from the governor, "an ignorant and provincial politician."[116]

Not all the state councils in the region were as poorly run as Florida's but several did have serious deficiencies because of poor political leadership. In several visits by the National Council's Dr. Scherer to the state of Mississippi, Scherer noted Governor Theodore Bilbo was not often found in the capital city of Jackson. Scherer admitted that Bilbo was a good orator and could be competent, when he made an effort, but he seemed more concerned with his personal appearance and appealing to the masses. Scherer colorfully described him in the report as a "peculiar little devil."[117] Scherer also felt that having Senator James K. Vardaman against the war also hurt the council's effort. Though Scherer reported that a trusted state council executive informed him that the people of the state just needed, "straight-forward speaking to arouse in them a spirit of martial loyalty."[118] Presumably, this was not something provided by the political leadership of the state. Alabama's council was somewhat better managed than the

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[115] *Confidential Report on Mr. Allen's Trip to the Florida State Council Meeting*, August 15, 1918, 2.

[116] *Confidential Report on Mr. Allen's Trip to the Florida State Council Meeting*, August 15, 1918, 5.

[117] *IV, MISSISSPPI*, 11.

[118] *IV, MISSISSPPI*, 47.

council in neighboring Mississippi, though Scherer felt Charles Henderson, a businessman turned governor, took on too many responsibilities on his own shoulders.[119] For South Carolina, Scherer characterized Governor Richard Manning as impressive, and the chair of the state council was described as patriotic and a man of ability, yet the state's council nonetheless had various limitations including complaints that the chair did not live in the capital and supposedly lacked vigor.[120] Not all the states had ineffective councils. Louisiana and North Carolina had by all reports the most efficient state councils of the region, but the region's most populous state, Georgia, had a non-functional state council. In August Dr. Scherer had to speak to the state legislature simply to establish the State Council of Defense. The state had a large Lutheran population, and although Scherer felt they were loyal, the leadership was "pernicious."[121] Scherer made a passing refence to Georgia's senators as being against the administration policies, though Scherer dismissed them as having no political future. More importantly, he felt former representative and Vice-Presidential candidate Tom Watson had a negative impact on the state's effort because of his so-called seditious talk. He felt the Justice Department should have Watson investigated.[122] More broadly, the state's ruling Democratic party was riddled with factions which Governor Hugh Dorsey was unable to

[119] *Dr Scherer's Report of July 17th on Alabama,* 39.

[120] *First Itinerary- Report on South Carolina*: *Confidential,* 1.

[121] *Dr. Scherer's Report on Georgia*, Second Itinerary, 16.

[122] *Dr. Scherer's Report on Georgia*, Second Itinerary, 15.

manage as he was ”young, unimpressive… and excessively cautious over anything that may affect adversely his political usefulness.”[123]

In addition to, and partly as a result of, incompetence among state political leadership, the councils in the region were plagued by inadequate funding. In the initial Scherer report on South Carolina’s council, the author noted that the State Council had simply run out of money. The council was not prepared to fulfill all of its responsibilities, “I understand that South Carolina “blew itself” in its food campaign, more or less exhausting its financial resources.”[124] In January 1918, it was reported Alabama had allocated no resources for the council, “The state council has had absolutely no money to carry out its work.”[125] The governor’s secretary, who was privately wealthy, had (up to the date of the memorandum) resourced the Council from his own funds. It was difficult to obtain official government resources as the state legislature only met once every four years. As noted earlier in the chapter, Mississippi’s State Council, in a glossy booklet published after the war, admitted its efforts had been hampered by a lack of funding.

A report from April 1918 on the State Council of North Carolina also shows a similar situation. It had no resources and its work had been primarily funded by its chair. The council had considered asking for funds from bankers or setting up a subscription

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[123] *Dr. Scherer’s Report on Georgia*, Second Itinerary, 17.

[124] *First Itinerary- Report on South Carolina*: *Confidential,* 1.

[125] *CONFIDENTIAL MEMOMARANDUM OF INTERVIEW WITH FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE ALABAMA COUNCIL OF STATE DEFENSE FOR STATE FOOD ADMININSTRATION*, 1, January 7, 1918, Box 783.

service but no final decision on finances had been taken. The frustrated author of the report on North Carolina summed up the situation, "Something should be done immediately."[126] Not surprisingly, Florida, which had a populist governor with no managerial experience but who still attempted to run the state council personally, had no devoted resources for its running. This was partly due to the politics of prohibition, "A deadlock existed between the reform prohibition Governor and the Legislature in the matter of appointing the State Council. This ended in the Governor appointing a Council which had no financial basis from the Legislature."[127] Georgia, with its dysfunctional State Council, also had few resources for its organization. With the aid of a speech to the Georgia legislature by Dr. Scherer, the state eventually created an official council but once it had been approved by the legislature, the governor of Georgia, contrary to the advice of Scherer, removed all officers from the non-statutory unofficial council that had been trying to fulfill the duties of the state council in the meantime. The members he removed were allies of the previous governor and led to additional Democratic factional infighting in the state which delayed any appropriation for the council from the legislature.[128] Even Louisiana's council, as noted earlier in the chapter, admitted to a lack of resources hurting its Americanization work.

The state-level Councils of Defense in the Southeast had a complex role in promoting anti-Germanism during World War I. In addition to their work on food

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[126] *North Carolina: Organization*, 1, April 6, 1918, Box 787.

[127] *FLORIDA- ORGANIZATION*, 1, April 4, 1918, Box 783.

[128] *II. Georgia*, p.17, Box 783.

production and conservation, the councils produced booklets which also emphasized their work on Americanization and their vigilance against sedition and disloyalty. The reality was that because relatively few immigrants lived in the Southeast, the state councils informed the National Council that Americanization efforts were not needed in their states. Regarding sedition, the region's state councils reported that they actively worked against sedition, with South Carolina and Louisiana councils in particular highlighting how their states had toughened laws, yet they provided no real cases of seditious activity. While the public feared that blacks would conspire with Germans, the councils were greatly concerned about the mass exodus of blacks from the region since it caused a labor shortage. There was much internal discussion on how best to organize African Americans to contribute to the war effort though the question of how to give African Americans some responsibility, or in some cases the appearance of responsibility, while still maintaining control in the hands of the white leadership of the councils. The women's division of the councils after showing their efficiency in the food pledge campaign became conduits of propaganda, some explicitly anti-German, created by the CPI and aimed at rural schools in the region. This peculiar reality gave an anti-German aspect to their work. These state councils, hampered in several of the states by what Dr. Scherer described as mediocre political leaderships, were perennially underfunded. These councils tried to emphasize their importance to get additional funding, both private and public. The state councils may not have been as explicitly anti-German as some of the councils in the Midwest (a region with many more Germans) but they did take advantage of existing anti-German sentiment to demonstrate their relevance.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation is a regional case study of a national phenomenon, the resentment and in many cases hysteria against Germans and people of German descent during World War I in the Southeastern states of the US. While Leslie V. Tischauser brief account of the hysteria in Chicago provides a look of incidents both petty and sometimes violent against Germans, this study, in a much more methodical manner, outlines the patterns of incidents, includes a focus on the rhetoric and actions of the politicians of the region, alongside an analysis of the role of councils of defense in relation to the hysteria. In addition, while Tischauser presents a cursory view of the attacks against German culture, this study shows how the campaign against German culture intensified as the war continued, unlike manifestations of the spy hysteria which had diminished by Summer 1918. In terms of length and level of analysis, this study has more in common in Petra DeWitt's monograph on the German community in Missouri. DeWitt focuses on a state with a tradition of limited government, similar to the states in the Southeast, but unlike the Southeast it had a large population of Germans. Similar to DeWitt's work, this dissertation has an extensive discussion of the role of the defense councils, though through its use of internal documents, this contribution provides a closer examination of the differences between the public activities and rhetoric of the organizations and their actual concerns. Furthermore, this dissertation has several commonalities with works that looks at anti-Germanism in Texas, an article by Mark Sonntag and a monograph by Mathew D. Tippens. Similar to those works, this study examines the role of defense councils and includes extensive discussion on the attacks on

the use and instruction of the German language. Yet apart from the other case studies briefly mentioned, this study examines a region with relatively few Germans and through the prism of the region's areas of distinctiveness (the dominance of the race issue and its rural nature). Of these areas of distinctiveness, the racial issue had a significant impact on the somewhat idiosyncratic nature of the hysteria in the Southeast.

African Americans

How and to what extent did race affect anti-Germanism in the Southeast? In a region dominated by legalized racial segregation in which African Americans were treated as second class citizens, it is not surprising that the race issue permeated several aspects of anti-German resentment. From the first days of the US involvement in the war, white southern society feared that Germans would instigate African Americans into acts of sabotage. In early April 1917, the newspapers of the region contained many articles reporting on the supposed contacts between Germans and African Americans. For example, on April 4th, 1917 the *Birmingham News* reported the government's belief that German agents had infiltrated a black settlement in North Carolina "trying to incite the negro element of this part of the country."[1] The reporting in the seven states seemed to follow similar trends. In the first week of April the articles tended to be very brief, with little to no details as to the actual actions undertaken by the Germans, whether the Germans were naturalized or not, and much of the content was based on rumors.

[1] "GERMAN AGENTS SEEK TO INCITE NEGROES IN SOUTH TO RISE," *Birmingham News*, April 4, 1917, 1.

In this early stage of the hysteria, several incidents indicated that racial fear led to responses that transcended the concern that blacks might conspire to aid a foreign power, and became more about exercising control over African Americans. Two early examples of this mentioned in the dissertation included the arrest of a sixty-year-old black man for allegedly making disparaging remarks of President Woodrow Wilson and saying that he hoped that Germany would *whip* the United States.[2] Another was an editorial that appeared in the April 11, 1917 edition of Baton Rouge Louisiana's *State Times Advocate*. The editorial warned, "It would be well that negroes of Baton Rouge who are in sympathy with the Central Powers to think three times before expressing themselves."[3] One element of the race issue that makes Southern anti-Germanism unique compared to other parts of the country was the fear that German agents had helped instigate the mass migration of African Americans to the North. This early stage of the Great Migration was certainly a major concern of the defense councils. However, claims that the migration was instigated by Germans rather than being the result of African Americans seeking better jobs in the North soon disappeared from the newspapers of the region.

Indeed, already in Spring 1917, the general fear of conspiracy between Germans and blacks had diminished, as reflected in the few newspaper articles on the subject. In contrast, many articles appeared that eulogized African Americans (especially the ones in their particular state) for their loyalty. Many opinion pieces also cited historical

[2] "Didn't Keep His Mouth Shut Tight Enough," *Greensboro Record*, April 11, 1917, 2.

[3] "SPEAK NOT ILL OF UNCLE SAM, OR PAY," *State Times Advocate* (Baton Rouge, LA), April 11, 1917, 3.

examples of the loyalty and worth of the African American community with an editorial in a Louisiana newspaper highlighting the African American contribution in the battle of Bunker Hill. An editorial in the *Winston-Salem Journal* not only referenced black service in the Revolutionary War but also, surprisingly, their efforts in the Civil War. It noted that blacks had signed up in great numbers after the Emancipation Proclamation, and their bravery and trustworthiness had been praised by their white officers.[4]

Some of these newspapers, included African American voices in their coverage to reinforce the proposition that blacks were loyal. The *Winston-Salem Journal* published a letter to the editor by a black man ridiculing the notion that Germans could incite blacks to revolt. He reminded the readers that many had volunteered for service during the Spanish-American War. He concluded that blacks were as loyal to the country now as they were then.[5] The Atlanta newspapers prominently reported on the sermons of prominent black minister Henry High Proctor who called for unity and, while noting that the black community had significant grievances, all Americans had to act as one during the war. Resolutions and pledges of loyalty by African Americans were posted in local newspapers from the region. Yet there were limits to this praise and to the respect extended to the African American community with a prominent delegation of South Carolina politicians complaining to the Secretary of War, for example, over African Americans soldiers training at military bases in their state.

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[4] "PATRIOTISM OF THE NEGROES," *Winston-Salem Journal*, April 12, 1917, 4.

[5] "GROWING PATRIOTISM OF THE TWIN-CITIES NEGROES," *Winston-Salem Journal*, April 12, 1917, 4.

The state councils of defense, examined in this study since they had a significant role in anti-Germanism in other parts of the country, played a less prominent but distinctive role in the Southeast in matters concerning race. The publications produced by the state councils in the Southeast did not ascribe a prominent role to the contributions of African Americans. Yet their internal documents show that African Americans, and in particular the migration of blacks to the North, proved a major concern for the state councils. The reports by Dr. Scherer, a liaison of the Council of National Defense to the states and a man familiar with the South, provides a unique window into workings of the state councils. The so-called *negro egress* issue and how to keep African Americans within the Southeast and lure some that had previously left to return, was a main concern of South Carolina officials in his first visit to the region as representative of the National Council. While some local officials had peculiar theories for the exodus, others such as David Coker, the head of the state council, was more realistic. Coker wrote that he did not believe much could be done to stop the exodus, "as long as the Northern munition plants are paying three of four times as much as the Southern farmer is able to pay."[6]

The reports from Dr. Scherer and the correspondence generated from the state councils of the region indicate that all the councils were preoccupied with the exodus of Africans. None of these reports mention incidents of Germans instigating or conspiring with African Americans. While some officials noted anecdotal reports of African Americans returning to the South, several officials realistically acknowledged that not

[6] David R. Coker, letter to C.L. Goodrich, Office of Farm Management, July 9, 1917, Record Group 62, Box # 784, Council of National Defense State Council Section Confidential Reports, Folder: South Carolina Section- Dr. Scherer's Report of July 11th on South Carolina.

only higher wages led blacks to the North but also the difficulties the community faced in the South. For example, in regard to the black exodus, the Mississippi council had urged employers to pay better wages and give black labor a fairer deal.[7] The council also called for a stop to petty persecutions of African Americans.

Aside from mass migration, much of the internal documents shows discussion on how to organize blacks into the councils while still keeping them under control. After the Women's Section of the Women's Committee of Defense had been organized in Florida, a correspondence justifying the creation of a black women council of defense in Florida emphasized that working with the council led to more loyalty, "and it is the best policy in the south, to let them feel responsibility, and give them a chance to cooperate, it makes them more loyal."[8] While some states such as South Carolina organized blacks in a statewide organization others such as Alabama felt it would be better to organize blacks on the county level. Its chair claimed he was sympathetic to organization among blacks, but he thought it would not be prudent to create any statewide black council of defense structure.[9] The Florida Women's Division chair who had praised the work of black women, looked unfavorably on the creation of an independent black state organization. Even in states that eventually allowed blacks in a statewide group, state council officials were explicit as to terms under which the organization was acceptable, "if the tendency

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[7] *Comparison of the Work of the Mississippi State Council and Typical Southern State Councils Along Similar Lines*, Record Group 62, Box # 786- STATE COUNCIL SECTION 14e1 Memoranda, Reports, Etc. Indiana-NV Folder: Mississippi**,** National Archives, College Park, MD.

[8] State Council Abstracts Box 8, Florida, September 22, 1917.

[9] State Council Abstracts Box 5, Alabama, Lloyd M. Hooper, August 2, 1918.

towards negro laudation and the furtherance of selfish interests can be suppressed and the idea of service to the country substituted for them."[10]

In short, on African Americans, the state councils in 1917 were primarily concerned about the ongoing mass migration and, as the war continued, more of their focus was on organizing blacks in the war effort while keeping them under control. The public's fear of Germans and blacks working together was simply not a concern at all of the councils. In fact, German-Americans were not mentioned in the same council correspondence that referred to African Americans. Yet circumscribed as they were by council officials and of course by the wider Southern society, African Americans made a difference. Even working with a barely functioning state council, by the end of the war, black women, through the efforts of Eartha White and others, had organized a department of black women with a chair appointed in each county of Florida.

Patterns

What types of anti-German incidents were prevalent in the Southeast and how did the pattern change over the year and a half of US involvement in the war? As noted, an element of anti-Germanism in the Southeast that was quite different from the hysteria nationally was the fear of German and Africans Americans conspiring together. Other types of incidents and manifestations of the hysteria were similar to what occurred in the rest of the nation and the timing of the frequency of the incidents was also similar. One such manifestation of the anti-German resentment was spy hysteria.

[10] State Council Abstracts Box 2 Entry 15-G4, Georgia, August 10, 1918, PRICE Gilbert.

Many unfounded rumors of German spies circulated throughout the region in April 1917. Some arrests were made, though most of these were not based on any real evidence. Yet even in these early days of American participation in the war, several articles were published in Florida, Alabama, and North Carolina that tried to downplay the fear of widespread German spy activity. An occasional alarmist report, though, would appear. Not surprisingly, at the time of the German Spring offensive in 1918 when Americans were being killed in significant numbers on the battlefields of Europe, the overheated rhetoric regarding the activity of spies returned in the newspaper reporting. Many called for harsher government actions against 'German spies'. One newspaper editorial from South Carolina noted that it did not approve of lynching, but it would not be displeased to get news of a lynching of a spy, traitor, or even a pro-German individual.[11] Yet by the Summer of 1918, when the tide of battle had turned more favorably toward the Allies, even though Americans were still dying in a large scale, the spy hysteria diminished.

On the broader topic of the loyalty of German-Americans, articles that appeared in the press repeated this pattern. In Spring 1917, the articles tended to praise individual examples of loyal German-Americans while exaggerating the spy hysteria and the German/Black alliance. For example, on the same day that the *Atlanta Constitution* had an editorial noting that most German-Americans were loyal, it included a letter to the editor calling for tolerance of German-Americans, "they are good citizens and will

[11] "SOME KILLINGS NEEDED." *Robesonian*, (Lumberton, NC), April 1, 1918, 5.

respond to generous and chivalrous treatment."[12] Yet even when the topic became less prominent later on, articles were still published that contained a more prejudicial view of German-American loyalty. In 1918, the articles on the topic followed the same pattern as the articles on the spy hysteria with sensational and emotion-laden copy attacking German-Americans during the enemy Spring Offensive and more balanced coverage after the tide had turned in favor of the Allies. For example, the *Times Picayune* of New Orleans on April 8th printed a poem over fifty lines long called 'Hang the Hun'. It included lines such as, "Hang the Hun- the creeping, crawling snake, Who is by treachery allowed his toll to take."[13] When the Allies started advancing on the Western Front, articles started to appear that praised the loyalty of German-Americans. Members of that community were also increasingly welcomed at public events. In the July 4th parade in Tampa, German-Americans were invited to carry the American flag.[14] In regard to incidents of violence, fortunately, there was no reported killing of any Germans as occurred in Illinois. Yet acts of physical intimidation occurred and the Ku Klux Klan in Pensacola was reformed with a mission to prevent disloyalty and hunt down German propagandists and saboteurs.[15]

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[12] On praising ordinary German Americans as opposed to the German American Alliance see: "SHOULD BE INTERNED." *Atlanta Constitution*, April 17, 1917, 8. On the need to treat German Americans generously see: "German-American Citizens As Rule Are Loyal to U.S.," *Atlanta Constitution*, April 17, 1917, 8.

[13] "HANG THE HUN." *Times-Picayune*, New Orleans, LA, April 8, 1918, 8.

[14] On the invitation to Germans see, "TO THE LOYAL AM CITIZNS OF GER OR AUST BIRTH," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, June 29, 1918, 7. On the reaction to the parade see, "NATIONS MELT IN ACCORD IN TAMPA'S GREAT CELEBRATION," *Tampa Morning Tribune*, July 5, 1918, 5.

[15] "NEXT!" *Pensacola Journal*, May 5, 2018, 3.

Unlike the spy hysteria, the supposed German/Black alliance, and questions over German-American loyalty, attacks on German kultur intensified during 1918 and lasted until the end of the war. German clubs, both social clubs catering to German-Americans and dance clubs with a wider clientele, came under pressure in April 1917, though many continued their activities for months to follow. In the Summer and Fall 1917, when they were relatively fewer incidents in the categories discussed earlier, some attacks on German kultur occurred that were a harbinger of what was to come. One particularly notable controversy involved the German Club in Tampa which was a key part of the social scene in Tampa. The club orchestra playing a German patriotic song "Die Wacht Am Rhein" started the downfall of the club. After initially downplaying the importance of the incident, the club fired the orchestra. Although the difficulties of the club in Tampa were the exception to the rule in the first half of 1917, by the winter, some university German Clubs, mostly focused on dancing, started removing the word 'German' from their titles, a trend that only accelerated in the following months. As for German social clubs, several of these organizations chose to highlight their participation in Liberty Bond drives and cooperation with the Red Cross in order to survive, nonetheless, several did not outlast the war. By war's end, the German Club in Tampa had sold its building to a union.

The campaigns against German music were more idiosyncratic. For the most part, German music was played without much controversy in the Southeast. The newspapers included editorials and opinions on the ongoing national discussion on the prohibition of German music. A particularly vehement position was taken by the *Miami Herald* whose attack on the performance of Handel's *Messiah* in Miami was probably the

single incident regarding music that generated the most press coverage in a Southeastern newspaper. The *Herald* went on multi-article screed over several days against a Church that planned to host a performance of Handel's *Messiah*. This was described as 'German music' even though the German-born Handel had lived in Britain for many years and the *Messiah* is sung in English.[16] Despite the *Herald's* disapproval, Handel's *Messiah* was indeed performed. Some letters to editors were published in various newspapers in support of banning German music and as we have seen the decline of the German social club in Tampa began with the performance of German music. However, at least in the case of vitriolic attacks on 'German music', individual editorial policy rather than a regional trend, seems to have been the decisive factor.

There was a concerted campaign to limit and prohibit the teaching of the German language particularly in the public schools. Unlike the other issues of contention discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, this went beyond overheated public rhetoric and sensationalist newspaper articles. School board policies and laws were changed throughout the Southeast. Unlike the other manifestations of hysteria, this did not simply peak in Spring 1917 and 1918. Instead, it was an issue that was debated in 1917 so that by 1918 these debates turned to action as several school boards in the Southeast banned the teaching of German. In some states, it went beyond local school districts to full state-wide bans. For example, in January 1918 Rome, Georgia voted to eliminate the teaching of German starting in the following school year. By February, the Atlanta superintendent announced a similar position for the following school year. Later in the Spring, the

[16] One of the many articles: "GERMAN MUSIC SUNG IN MIAMI," *Miami Herald*, March 10, 1918, 2.

Governor effectively eliminated the teaching of German in schools by not purchasing any books for German instruction and by the summer a bill to outlaw German instruction in the state became law. Although state-wide bans were not implemented in all the states being examined in this study, all of them had school districts that eliminated German instruction. Though this is beyond the purview of the study, in addition to pressures that all immigrant groups face to assimilate, the war and the consequent hysteria was certainly a catalyst for the Americanization of German-Americans in the years to follow.

Rural

How did the predominately rural nature of the Southeast affect anti-Germanism? In regard to the incidents of anti-Germanism, nothing suggests that there was harsher coverage of Germans in rural newspapers than in urban ones. In the early days of the war, newspapers from both small-towns and larger cities carried articles on the supposed German attempts to influence African Americans, and following the pattern already mentioned, these types of articles became less prevalent in both rural and urban areas. In the first weeks of April 1917, the newspaper from Scotland Neck, North Carolina included an opinion piece with a call for the public to avoid rumors and excessive alarm. The article even chastised the residents of Raleigh, the state capital, for excessive fear of spies which gave the impression that spies were everywhere. In the same week, the small-town *Bossier Benton* from Louisiana also called for calm from the public.[17] In regard to the attacks on German culture, the *Stone County Enterprise* of Wiggins,

[17] Maxwell Gorman, "News From The State Capitol," *Commonwealth* (Scotland Neck, NC), April 10, 1917, 2. See also, *Bossier Banner* (Bossier, LA), April 5, 1917, 5.

Alabama enthusiastically promoted a musical act whose performance included German music. It actually printed an article previewing the performance on its first page on two different days.[18] Signs of the continuance of German instruction included a brief article in the smalltown *Abbeville Press and Banner* which noted that a woman who taught German at Queens College in Charlotte dropped by Abbeville to visit a friend. Not surprisingly, in an article titled "PRETTY VISITOR," it did not include any negative comments on the visitor's profession. In short, there are many examples of hyperbole and moderation regarding anti-Germanism in both large and small-town newspapers from the era. In regard to actual incidents of anti-Germanism, there was also no discernable difference between rural and urban areas. In small-towns such as Starke, Florida and larger cities such as Birmingham, Alabama overzealous police did investigate Germans supposedly influencing African Americans.

Intriguingly, this dissertation has shown that as a result of vigorous leadership and competence, both the National Council Women's Division and the extremely able state councils' women's branches became primary distributors of propaganda to rural schools. Even before the National Council's Women's Division had appointed chairs for all its departments, the state councils' women's divisions had effectively performed the duties assigned to them: instruction as to food conservation and registering women for a food savings campaign. Dr. Scherer certainly praised the work of the women's division of Georgia as one of the few elements of that state council that was performing well. Even

[18] "THE OLSEN SISTERS." *Stone County Enterprise*, Wiggins, MS, October 27, 1917, 1 and "THE OLSEN SISTERS." *Stone County Enterprise*, Wiggins, MS, November 3, 1917, 1. "PRETTY VISITOR." *Abbeville Press and Banner*, June 6, 1917, 6.

in the relatively well-run North Carolina Council of Defense, Dr. Scherer noted that the women performed at least as well as men.[19]

When Carrie Chapman Catts, who was also president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association became chair of the Educational Propaganda department of the National Council, the women's divisions became foot soldiers in the propaganda wars. Catts immediately sent a letter to the state council chairs pointing out that through their interviews for the food savings campaign, the women council members had observed a significant anti-war sentiment among the public. She immediately ordered the women in the state councils to organize evenings of propaganda. From the beginning, the targeting of rural society was a priority. Several states organized rural teachers in patriotic leagues. Approximately sixty-nine thousand pamphlets from the CPI had been ordered through the Women's Council in just in two weeks of the effort.[20] Although the propaganda included a wide range of war-related topics, it of course included a focus on supposed German intrigue in America. Catts also initiated a program specifically aimed at rural teachers. Catts contacted the Superintendent of Instruction of two counties in each state with a large rural population and asked for lists of their rural districts and the names of teachers within them.[21] Teachers from these districts were asked to organize war service meetings. The questionnaires from these teachers provide a window into the

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[19] *Report on Trip to Raleigh, North Carolina To Attend the Second Meeting of the North Carolina Council of Defense*. 3, Record Group 62, Box #787, COUNCIL OF NATIONAL DEFENSE: STATE COUNCILS SECTION, 14E1 Memoranda, Reports, Etc. Indiana-Nevada.

[20] *Monthly Report October 15 – November 15* (1917), Women's Committee of the Council of National Defense, 4, Box 113.

[21] Untitled letter, Record Group 62, Entry Pl 2 333, Box # 629, Records Relating to Americanization Activities: Educational Propaganda Dept.: Correspondence, Reports, Etc. 10-17 To 2-19.

rural South of that era as a teacher from Georgia reported that her school was closed because the students were needed for the cotton-picking season. In addition to that specific program, the letters from other teachers not in the program and their replies make it clear that for many rural teachers in the Southeast, the Women's Division of the councils became a prime conduit for obtaining propaganda. Therefore, this study has shown that even though there was not a discernable difference of anti-German incidents in rural compared to urban areas, women did play a large role in disseminating propaganda many of them anti-German in nature to the rural areas, these predominated in the Southeast.

Top-Down?

To what extent did the government create the hysteria? Although it is impossible to apportion the blame for the hysteria precisely, the government, in a broad sense, certainly added to the sense of hysteria. The brief review of the literature on the topic of anti-German resentment on the national level in the Introduction indicates that the federal government, and more specifically the Wilson administration helped fan the flames of hysteria. Many historians generally tie this into the newly created Progressive era state that used its burgeoning power over society to manufacture this fear through propaganda with claims that the federal government built on existing resentment and jealousy of German-Americans. Even in the Southeast, with relatively few Germans, this resentment was a reality. An opinion article in an Alabama newspaper which noted that the Germans in the state had not caused any difficulties during the war, also observed that the Germans

could be faulted for the situation, as the Germans "we can remember were aggressive and somewhat arrogant before America entered the war."[22]

Any study focusing on the government and its leaders in the Southeast of this era must focus on the infamous race-baiting populist politicians. As noted, the region was a breeding ground for this type of politician. A generation earlier, the Populist Party had made a forceful challenge to Democratic party dominance in the South in coalition with the Republicans. Democrats reacted by further disenfranchising African Americans, therefore, crippling the Republican Party. Some Democrats in particular used Progressive reforms along with fierce race-baiting to attract the Southern white low-income and mostly rural voters that had voted for the Populists.

Some of these demagogues certainly joined the hysteria and included heated rhetoric that they apparently felt appealed to the masses, yet it is difficult to argue that they played a prominent role in initiating the resentment. Thomas Heflin, US Representative from Alabama, focused his anti-Germanism on his colleagues. When the Majority Leader of the House, a fellow Democrat and Southerner, spoke against voting for the war resolution, Heflin argued that he should resign. He was hissed by some of his colleagues for this remark. Heflin retorted that they spoke for the Kaiser rather than the President.[23] Of course, most notoriously, and after repeated insinuations that fellow members of Congress were being paid by the German government, he and one of the members had a physical altercation on the House floor. Although these antics created

[22] "NEARLY A HUNDRED PERCENT AMERICAN." *Montgomery Advertiser*, September 16, 1918.

[23] "Alabamian Scores Kitchin," *The Birmingham News*, April 6, 1917, 9.

much controversy and headlines, they were not instrumental in stimulating the hysteria. Even when verbally attacking his fellow Congressmen, he would argue that most German-Americans were more loyal than the politicians he was accusing. In a sign of Heflin being a follower rather a leader on the topic, in May 1917 he wrote an open letter to the public warning of the dangers of Germans stirring up trouble with African Americans. As has been shown in this study, by this time most newspapers in the region had switched their coverage suggesting the possibility of a German/Black conspiracy to highlighting the loyalty of African Americans, at least in their respective states. Senator Lee Overman of North Carolina certainly caused a stir with his accusation of sabotage in the Curtiss plant making airplanes for the war and his statement that over 400,000 German spies were present in America.[24] These claims were concurrent with a peak of the mania in Spring 1918; therefore, it cannot be said that he helped create hysteria though he certainly amplified it.

For those demagogues who disagreed with Wilson's policies on the war, racial populism did not shield them for being attacked as disloyal and pro-German. What occurred to US Senator from Mississippi James K. Vardaman is a prime example of this phenomenon. A fierce racist, known as the "The Great White Chief", he was one of five senators to vote against the declaration of war. He was fiercely attacked for the vote. His populist racist harangues could not save his political career and, after mentioning the race issue in a discussion of his vote, the *Jackson Daily News* editorial referred to the

[24] "OVERMAN WOULD FIRE EMPLOYEES IN CURTISS PLANT HIRE LOYAL MEN," *Greensboro Daily News*, March 29, 1918, 1.

Senator's allusion to race as a slur against him, "Herr J. Kaiser Vardaman finds his animus in disloyalty…"[25] He lost his re-election bid in 1918. Cole Blease, former governor of South Carolina and a racist demagogue, had a Senatorial bid handicapped by his remarks against the war in Spring 1917. Indeed, the names of cities in which he made speeches against entering the war, Pomaria and Filbert, became shorthand for disloyalty among his critics.[26] He lost his bid for the Senate in 1918. Even Senators from the region who simply expressed reservations about decisions over the declaration of war and conscription, while still voting for them, were not saved from negative political consequences. L. Hoke Smith was continuously attacked for his hesitancy over the votes for the war and the draft and lost re-election in 1920, though presumably other factors also contributed to his defeat. In short, the more notorious racist demagogic politicians in the region certainly participated in the hysteria though none can be argued to have led it. Yet even in the Southeast, which had few German-Americans, the passions generated were significant enough to end the political careers of the racial populists who expressed even hesitancy on the war.

If one is to broaden the definition of top-down to include the press, certainly the newspapers had a role in encouraging the hysteria. In addition to the region-wide trend of exaggerated and hyperbolic coverage of issues such as fears of a German/Black alliance, spy hysteria, and the rest in April 1917 and a return to the sensationalist reporting on many of the same themes in April 1918, some newspapers clearly had

[25] "MISSING THE LANGUAGE," *Jackson Daily News*, April 22, 1917, 4.

[26] "CANDIDATES FOR SENATE AND CONGRESS HEARD BY CROWD DISPLAYING MUCH APPROVAL," *Greenville News*, August 18, 1918, 11.

unique biases that in practice tended to promote anti-Germanism. As discussed, the *Miami Herald* led a fierce campaign against German music. The *Macon Telegraph* printed many attacks on the alleged pro-German sympathies of Senator Hoke Smith. The *Jackson Daily News* took particular glee in levying charges against Senator Vardaman. The latter two newspapers clearly had been opponents of the Senators before the votes on the war. The *Times-Picayune* led the charge against German instruction in New Orleans, though their attacks on German language was part of a broader campaign that included the public and local politicians.

Although as noted the women's divisions of the councils had a role in disseminating propaganda beginning in the Fall/Winter 1917, on the role of the state defense councils, which are government organizations, again one sees more of a reaction to the existing anti-German resentment rather than generating the resentment per se. A main concern of these councils at least in the Southeast, was a desire to stay relevant, and thereby presumably obtain funds, in a relatively poor region with a tradition of limited governments and, according to Dr. Scherer, burdened in many cases by incompetent state leadership. The defense councils certainly did not participate in the mass psychosis of the fear of Germans conspiring with African Americans though, as has been noted, the German/Black hysteria was mostly a phenomenon of early April 1917 when the councils were not yet established. Their main concern was the mass migration of blacks to the North causing a labor shortage in the South. The councils publicly highlighted their role in the Americanization of immigrants, even while their internal correspondence frequently noted that these campaigns were not needed as few immigrants lived in these states.

Ineffective state leadership certainly played a role in limiting the effectiveness of the state defense councils. As titular leaders of their respective state councils, governors in the region had some influence on the policies of the state councils. Several governors were not very effective. For example, Florida had a populist governor at odds with his legislature and without any managerial experience who yet insisted on his personal control of the council. However, his anti-Catholic crusade seemingly allowed him little time for an anti-German campaign.[27] In Mississippi, Governor Theodore G. Bilbo, a populist, led an underfunded and ineffective council. Scherer admitted that Bilbo was a good orator and could be competent, when he made an effort, but he seemed more concerned with his personal appearance and appealing to the masses.[28] For most of the duration of the US involvement in the war, Georgia did not have an official defense council. Governor Hugh Dorsey was characterized by the National Council as young, inexperienced, overly cautious, and unable to navigate the state's Democratic factions.[29] Interestingly, (and fortunately for the few German-Americans in those states) two of the more functional state councils, Louisiana and North Carolina, were led by governors who did not participate in the populistic harangues. Indeed, the governor of North Carolina at the time of the US declaration of war, made a statement praising the loyalty of German-Americans and their positive role in building the state.[30] Therefore, when considering the

[27] "GOVERNOR ORDERS THAT NO CATHOLICS TEACH IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS," *Tampa Tribune*, August 23, 1918, 3.

[28] *IV, MISSISSPPI*, 11.

[29] *Dr. Scherer's Report on Georgia*, Second Itinerary, 15.

[30] W.T. Bost, "GOVERNOR BICKTT HAS CONFIDENCE IN NEGRO," *Greensboro Daily News* (Greensboro, NC), April 8, 1917, 17.

institutions of government and politicians of influence in the Southeast, the hysteria was not a top-down phenomenon.

Although many of the incidents discussed in this study were based on rumors and might seem petty or simply absurd, the hysteria brought about real consequences. The following are a just a few of many individuals in the region hurt by it: Hermann Landsberg was arrested after being accused of selling 'poison tooth powder'; Hedwig Schaefer, a teacher, lost her job; Reverend Ludwig Oser had to resign his ministry for being German and making pro-German remarks when the war began; James A. Scott, a non-German, was shot by a drunk man who accused him of being a spy.[31] Beyond the impact on individuals, a club that was at the center of the social scene in Tampa felt forced to sell its building; the instruction of a language was suppressed.[32] In a region with relatively few Germans, the hysteria and the suffering it caused seems particularly non-sensical, though it should not be surprising. As noted by the *Pensacola Journal*, a newspaper that at times participated in this mania, the charged environment of rumors and false reports preyed on the "weak minded, hysterical minded, malicious minded…"[33] People respond to fear.

[31] On the individuals, in this study see the following pages: 55-56, 57, 62.

[32] On the club in Tampa see the pages: 83,91. On the suppression of the German language starting in the Spring 1918 see: 112-124.

[33] "RUMOR MONGERS." *Pensacola Journal*, April 15, 1917, 4.

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