

WELS Historical Institute

Journal

Volume 33, Number 2

Fall 2015



WELS Historical Institute Journal

Volume 33, Number 2
Fall 2015

- 1 The War to End All Germans
Wisconsin Synod Lutherans and the First World War—Part 3
Stephen S. Gurgel
- 33 The War to End All Germans
Wisconsin Synod Lutherans and the First World War—Part 4
Stephen S. Gurgel
- 58 The War to End All Germans
Wisconsin Synod Lutherans and the First World War—Conclusion
Stephen S. Gurgel

Editor: John M. Brenner

The *WELS Historical Institute Journal* is the official publication of the WELS Historical Institute, N16W23377 Stone Ridge Drive, Waukesha, WI 53188. Copyright 2015 by WELS Historical Institute.

Cover picture
Rev. G.E. Bergemann

The War to End All Germans

Wisconsin Synod Lutherans and the First World War

by Stephen Gurgel

Part 3

I. Special Visitors

Three weeks after the declaration of war, Rev. Emil Dornfeld of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Marshall, Wisconsin received a phone call from a man representing the *Milwaukee Free Press*, a publication which had favored peace during neutrality. This phone caller wished to gauge the opinions of Dornfeld and his congregation concerning the war situation. Dornfeld weighed his words during the conversation, but gave some indication where he leaned on the issue. He praised Wisconsin Senator Robert La Follette's stand against the war declaration, and said "there should be more men like him." The caller also asked for a lot of personal information. Dornfeld revealed that he was "forty years old; married and [had] five children, three to seventeen years old," and that he "[had] been pastor of this church for seventeen years and [had] a congregation of about 100 members."¹ When asked of his congregation's position, Dornfeld dodged the question and claimed his "people were very generous and noble." This interview never made it to the *Milwaukee Free Press*, not for lack of interesting content but because the caller was not from the *Free Press* at all, but instead Operative W.T.E., an agent of the American Protective League reporting to the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C.



Rev. Emil Dornfeld

The phone call with Dornfeld convinced W.T.E. to visit Marshall and find out more about the minister. He engaged the postmaster at Marshall in an attempt to uncover disloyalty through his mail. The postmaster could not give any substantial information, only that Dornfeld received "a great many letters from Milwaukee and other towns in Wisconsin."² W.T.E. then instructed the postmaster to reroute all suspicious mailings to Special Agent Fitch of the Justice Department. The postmaster appeared willing to cooperate, and even gave further evidence of Dornfeld's disloyalty, telling W.T.E. that Dornfeld "will not attend Memorial Day exercises or graduating exercises in the public high school and has not done so in the past altho [sic] each year has been extended an invitation."³ Upon hearing this, W.T.E. reported to the Justice Department that "this case will require further investigation," and he reminded the postmaster not to alert the town to the ongoing investigation.

Dornfeld's profession as a German Lutheran minister in a small German Ameri-

can town made him a top priority to the Justice Department. In a report to Bureau of Investigation director A. Bruce Bielaski, a US attorney claimed that "wherever there is a large German element in the population, the German Lutheran ministers...are, in my opinion, largely responsible for the hostility and opposition to the policies of the Government."⁴ Bielaski assured the sender that the report was read with interest. The crusade of the APL and the Justice Department against Lutheranism proved that these institutions shared this sentiment as well. In its course, ministers like Emil Dornfeld were sought out despite committing no prior infractions. The focus on Dornfeld's specifically Lutheran doctrinal behavior—his avoidance of ecumenical worship—is very telling. Whenever a search did find objectionable traits in a Lutheran minister or member, agents tenaciously pursued the subject to secure indictments. In the process, agents suppressed many fundamental constitutional rights—including religious rights—of Lutherans.

II. The Anatomy of an Investigation

Many popular rumors circulated about the Lutheran Church during the war. These often gave the impression that it was the church of the enemy. One story spread that Lutheran ministers, as part of their initiation, swore allegiance to the Kaiser.⁵ A YMCA official even suggested the Lutheran church received direct funding from the German government, "probably by pneumatic tube through the Atlantic Ocean."⁶ Agents often initiated investigations from rumors and hearsay. In one example, a Lutheran church was investigated because its church bell rang shortly after a German victory in battle.⁷ Two weeks after the declaration of war, two Wisconsin Synod Seminary students were held up by investigators, whereby their satchels were searched for bombs.⁸ Whenever Lutheran ministers gathered in large numbers, investigators suspected malevolent intentions. In Grand Rapids, Wisconsin, for example, agents were alerted to a pro-German meeting about to take place in that city. Upon further research, investigators concluded that "this was the regular meeting of the German Lutheran Church."⁹

The APL and the Justice Department typically instigated an investigation whenever they received accusations from locals or heard rumors of disloyalty concerning a minister. In southeastern Wisconsin, for example, Attorney William Coerper of Milwaukee wrote the Department claiming that Rev. F.J. Bliefernicht of Huilsburg, Wisconsin told people at a church festival that "there was no particular reason for the entry of the United States into the war."¹⁰ The festival just happened to be a celebration of Bliefernicht's 25th year in the ministry, an event which earned an impressive write-up in the Synod's bi-weekly publication, the *Gemeindeblatt*.¹¹ An APL agent then visited Huilsburg and questioned Coerper and others about Bliefernicht's attitude. The agent concluded that Bliefernicht was "decidedly pro-German in his sentiment," but quickly closed the investigation saying that "altho [sic] Bliefernicht is a bothersome individual, he is harmless."¹²

Many of these individuals forwarded rumors to the Department hoping they would take action against personal enemies. In Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, Rev. Henry

Gieschen confronted members of his congregation who were involved with a lodge—an activity prohibited by Lutheran doctrine because lodges often contradicted Lutheranism's belief in salvation through faith alone. After these members quit the church, one of them sent a rumor to the Justice Department stating that Gieschen, "upon the death of one Nehring, a soldier in the United States Army, made the remark that if the body was shipped to Wauwatosa in the uniform of a soldier and draped in the American flag, he would refuse to conduct the burial service."¹³ Upon receipt of this rumor, an APL agent visited Wauwatosa to investigate. He proceeded to Gieschen's home and interviewed him. Gieschen proved he had buried Nehring with full military honors, and that Nehring was dressed in his uniform and the casket draped in the American flag. He convinced the agent, who reported, "the statement alleged to have been made by Rev. Gieschen was misconstrued and there is no truth in it." Nonetheless, the agent saw an opportunity to investigate Gieschen's war stance. He asked Gieschen what work he had done to further the war effort from the pulpit. The agent reported that Gieschen "did not consider the church the proper place to make pleas to raise money for war needs and that it was against the Lutheran Church to bring politics into the pulpit." Upon this, the agent closed the investigation. Gieschen proved to be fortunate, for when Lutheran ministers declined on spiritual grounds to promote bonds and other war programs from the pulpit, investigators usually believed this to be a convenient cloak for pro-German leanings.

The actions of ministers during the tense neutrality period also prompted investigations after war was declared. Revs. Theodore Hartwig of Hartland, Wisconsin; August Bartz of Winthrop, Minnesota; and August Vogt of Dowagiac, Michigan all received attention because they previously favored peace.¹⁴ After tailing Bartz, who "was opposed to the shipment of ammunitions before the United States entered the war," an APL agent decided that "[h]e has apparently changed his point of view...he is all right now."¹⁵ August Vogt also appeared to have changed his behavior: "[I] have not heard any complaint about his utterances or having drawn pictures placed in public places." However, the agent discovered that Vogt "has an elaborate picture of the Kaiser in his home,"¹⁶ which prompted further investigation. Since Vogt was born in Germany in 1860 and moved while a young child, the agent endeavored to ascertain his citizenship status. If he was an alien enemy, any legal bounds for an investigation or internment could be more easily ignored.¹⁷

Investigations typically reached a dead end rather quickly. A German-speaking investigator visited the church of Rev. Henry Schmitt in Eagle River, Wisconsin only to hear Schmitt tell his congregation, "Perhaps the Germans are being punished for their sins," and later, "As Christians we are bound to obey the law, and as citizens to be loyal to this country."¹⁸ Trying another angle, the investigator visited the local Red Cross secretary, who testified that Rev. Schmitt donated \$5.00 and became a member of the local chapter, and "he had not been solicited," but instead "he wished to join." Realizing he made an unnecessary investigation, he "thought it best not to call on Rev. Schmidt [*sic*] and give him any inkling that he had been under observation by the Department of Justice." Another investigator looked into

Rev. J. Haase of Randolph, Wisconsin, and interviewed three separate people in town. The first claimed Haase to be "unquestionably loyal and not a talkative man."¹⁹ The second labeled Haase "a reticent man, and well liked in the community," and that he had never heard anything of a seditious or disloyal character being attributed to Haase. Not yet convinced, the agent interrogated a third witness, who claimed he had never heard of any seditious remarks emanating from Haase. For this agent, the spy catching would have to wait for later date.

While investigating Rev. Paul Hinderer of South Shore, South Dakota, an agent became very frustrated in his attempts to acquire information about the minister. Here, the Wisconsin Synod Lutherans' inclination to forming a close knit religious culture frustrated the agent, who wrote that "on being questioned on matters pertaining to activities of Hinderer they have refused to give anyone information... [and] have been very careful in making friends with strangers and have confined their relationships to those personally known as of German descent."²⁰ Noticing that his investigation was going nowhere, he decided to postpone any more activity until June, "as the German farmers of the vicinity [would] by that time have completed their farm work" and would be spending more time in the South Shore saloons, whereby "direct evidence [would] be more easily obtained." Having missed the last passenger train leaving South Shore, the agent left on a freight train at 2:10 a.m., and no record indicates his return.

Investigators often harbored ill feeling toward Lutheran teachings, and some made this plain in their reports to the Justice Department. Visiting a German Lutheran Church in Adrian, Michigan, an agent did not hear any disloyal remarks, but instead reported listening to "an orthodox, antiquated sermon based on the Bible."²¹ Another investigator visiting a Wisconsin Synod church in White, South Dakota, found "German books written by professors of the Minnesota Lutheran Synode [*sic*], dealing with the teaching of Luther and in these books, there are remarks that are absolutely not fit to be brought to the American people while this country is at war with Germany."²² A third complained to the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety concerning the Lutheran hymnal:

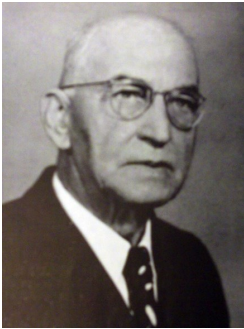
Go to this address and ask for the hymnbook for the Ev-Luth. Congregations of the unaltered Augsburg Confession...This German hymnbook is used throughout the States, therefore also in Carver County [MN]. Turn to the index. Find the patriotic hymns. You look in vain. They are not there. I'll admit I have found a verse or two in the middle or at the close of some hymn. But there are no patriotic hymns indexed.²³

This hymnal was published long before the war; Wisconsin Synod Lutherans traditionally did not sing hymns which glorified the state. This stemmed from their disapproval of a belief in a "tribal God," and a denial that America was "God's chosen nation." The synod often accused both American evangelicals and their own brethren in Germany of falling into this "dangerous" and "heathen" belief. To

agents, especially the ones with an evangelical background, Lutheran doctrine was often harmful to the war effort, even un-American.²⁴

III. Problem Areas

Amid their crackdown on Lutheranism, the American Protective League focused particularly hard on two areas in the Midwest: the Minnesota River Valley in South Central Minnesota and Western Wisconsin near the city of La Crosse. Both these locations included towns and cities of high German Lutheran concentration, and included events which drew the authorities' attention. In the Minnesota River Valley, the anti-draft movement that commenced in New Ulm forced the APL to keep a close watch over the area for the rest of the war. An agent noted that New Ulm "gained quite a lot of notoriety on account of its element of pro-Germanism."²⁵ Another decried its effect on the Germans of Minnesota: "It cannot be denied that the effects of the New Ulm meeting have carried far, especially in sections of this state in which people of German race or extraction are of the majority."²⁶ In Western Wisconsin, Otto Engel's American Liberty League, based in Norwalk, held considerable sway in this part of the state during the neutrality period. Authorities worked extra hard to stamp out the peace sentiment that still pervaded at the outbreak of war. Investigations of Lutheran ministers in these two areas then proved to be particularly thorough and invasive.



Rev. Henry Boettcher

Shortly after the outbreak of war, Rev. Henry Boettcher of Immanuel Lutheran in Gibbon, Minnesota withdrew his account from John W. Boock's bank of that city. The two were "at swords points" ever since.²⁷ Boock served as county chairman of the Committee on Public Safety, and he hoped to use his position to "see the other fellow humiliated," and to make an example of Boettcher. On 18 July 1918, Boock wrote the American Protective League stating that Boettcher was "none to [*sic*] demonstrative in his patriotism," and he urged the APL to curb the minister. The APL did not appear to take the appeal seriously, replying that the German ministers in that county were "not making any open statements and as long as they do not I waver to take no steps to antagonize them. I believe if we leave them alone they will come around alright."²⁸

Everything changed once the New Ulm episode erupted a week later, in which Gibbon held an anti-draft meeting of its own. Boock told the APL that Boettcher was responsible for securing the speakers for the Gibbon meeting, and this time authorities were willing to listen. Boock labeled Boettcher a "radical pro-German," and listed examples to prove his supposition.²⁹ According to Boock, he advised his parishioners "not to read newspapers and periodicals printed in English," saying English papers were all bought up by England, and "to only believe what is read in the *Volkszeitung* and *Viereck's Weekly*." He claimed an elaborate picture of the Kai-

ser adorned the Boettcher home, and then told the following story to prove his opposition to patriotic programs. Two ladies visited the Boettcher home to solicit contributions for the Red Cross. The ladies called on Mrs. Boettcher and asked her to contribute, when "the Rev. in an adjoining room overheard the request and in scant attire and smoking a pipe entered the room where the ladies were" and launched a "tirade" against ladies and the Red Cross, "impugning the motives of the ladies saying the money would not reach the Red Cross." When the women attempted to explain, he told them to get out of the house. Prior to that incident, according to Boock, Boettcher gave \$5 to another Red Cross solicitor, "throwing it down, saying he would give it but it was the most unwilling money he ever parted with." Further investigation revealed a rumor that the minister told a soldier a story about a transport ship bound to France which "mutinied and started back for New York, and that a British warship fired upon the transport, killing many soldiers, [which] compelled it to go to France." Investigators attempted to visit Boettcher at his home, only to receive no answer at the door.

The congregation at Immanuel also received special attention. Boock attempted to compile a farm labor census to organize and maximize the crop output of the county. The farmers, however, "absolutely refused to fill out the blank," and "claimed in doing it they were working for the interests of J.P. Morgan and Company."³⁰ Boock was certainly under a lot of pressure to take care of this issue. One member of the CPS told the secretary to "write Boock and drive home the fact that he is the 'boss' of the county and it is up to him to see that the township chairman gets the reports from the farmers."³¹ Red Cross workers also came across difficulty when dealing with congregation members. Boock claimed that "many if not all the ladies who were members of [Boettcher's] congregation refused to donate and all gave the same reason for refusing, namely: that the girls who collected this money used it to buy themselves new dresses and that it was a graft."³¹ This made Boock believe that Boettcher instructed his members to give this response to solicitors. Due to Boock's activities in the CPS, congregation members also withdrew funds from his bank in droves. Thus his pocketbook also increased the vigor of Boock's crusade.

Of all the stories circulating about Boettcher, only the one concerning the mutinies in the Atlantic could be considered an indictable offense, but this statement was also considered the most questionable evidence against Boettcher. He was never taken into custody. An improved situation in the Gibbon area also appeased authorities. Boock reported to the CPS later that year concerning the Liberty Loan in Gibbon:

Things are coming my way...sentiment is changing fast and the people who were strongly anti are now working for the loan. You are at liberty to state that Sibley County is doing nicely and considering the circumstances, is going to do its share. The Liberty Loan Campaign has in my estimation done more than anything else in uniting people and putting them behind the government.³³

While the Liberty Loan played its part, an ever looming government investigation certainly altered the behavior of Boettcher and his congregation. In the early months of the war, Lutherans openly dissented to government policies under the assumption of free speech rights. The investigation made clear that certain speech and behaviors would not be tolerated.

Ten miles west of Gibbon, community strife in Fairfax, Minnesota spilled over into a Justice Department investigation. An APL investigator noted "a great deal of strife between the town and country around it."³⁴ The Minnesota governor primary election of 1918 highlighted this rift. The countryside, which consisted mostly of Wisconsin Synod farmers, voted solidly for Congressman Charles A. Lindbergh, an anti-war and anti-central bank candidate. The town, which consisted of a more English-speaking element, cast their votes completely—with the exception of two votes—for current governor J.A.A. Burnquist. The agent also noted that "practically all the farmers in that section belonged to the Nonpartisan League," an anti-war organization which the Justice Department detested. This discord escalated when the school superintendent, R.D. Bowden, gave public speeches in the school which contrasted "German inhumanity...with actions of other more humane nations." The following school year, the Fairfax school board voted to depose Bowden as superintendent. Because the majority of the school board were German Americans, the cry rang out that the superintendent was being persecuted for his patriotic speeches. The move led an APL agent to label Fairfax a "hotbed of sedition," and the CPS stepped in to halt the dismissal of Bowden.³⁵

Patriotic informants in Fairfax revealed to APL investigators that the "disloyal influence centers around Im. F. Albrecht," pastor of St. Johannes Lutheran church in Fairfax. "This man is the moral backbone of the Hohenzollern influence here," claimed an informant, who also suggested the school board members were firmly under Albrecht's control.³⁶ They claimed Albrecht was "a vociferous shouter for every influence on the German side from La Follette down to local copperheads," and that "seditionists and disloyal agitators make this man's home their headquarters and evidently go to him for advice and aid." Any mention of German atrocities, "he immediately condemns as nothing but class hatred." To prove their theory that Albrecht fomented the move against superintendent Bowden, they shared an incident where Albrecht approached Bowden after one of his speeches. Albrecht told Bowden that he was "teaching class hatred and teaching enmity against the Germans and that he (Albrecht) would not stand for such falsehoods being taught in the schools and proposed to see that the talks stopped forthwith." The APL pursued an indictment of Albrecht, for this could teach the Lutherans in the countryside a lesson for opposing a patriotic superintendent.



Rev. Im. Albrecht

The investigation into Albrecht searched deeply, but it completely faltered. The

chief informant, P.A. Neff, "was unable to give any specific information or to make any direct charge" against Albrecht. The only proof he could give was that Albrecht opposed the war before the declaration was made. Frustrated, the agent wrote to his Justice Department superior that "whatever information [Neff] had was based entirely upon rumor." C.W. Heimann, a member of the school board and Albrecht's church, was subpoenaed, but his testimony put a dagger into the investigation. He revealed that superintendent Bowden lost the Fairfax school system its yearly \$1,100 state agricultural appropriation because of his "poor management," and that the opposition to Bowden was based on his inefficiency, not his loyalty talks. Heimann showed investigators his large contributions to the war effort to prove his patriotic sentiments. He also illustrated the not-so-guiltless characteristics of the vigilantes of Fairfax, stating that a "Vigilance Committee" painted his bank yellow shortly after declaration of war. As Lutherans from Gibbon pulled their accounts from Boock's bank in Gibbon, a better advertisement than the coat of yellow paint on Heimann's Fairfax bank could hardly be conceived.³⁷

In the heavily-watched region of western Wisconsin, Rev. Emmanuel Palechek's congregations at Chaseburg and Stoddard regularly received APL visitors. One week a German speaking informant reported that after a church service, Palechek read to members an article in the *Christian Herald* to inform them about the Conscription Act. When it quoted a part of Wilson's Proclamation claiming that the draft was "in no sense a conscription of the unwilling," Palechek in angst cast aside the paper and said it was "rotten." The agent reported the speech "seemed to be an effort to poison the hearts of the young men against America."³⁸

The APL subpoenaed Palechek "in order that he may be thoroughly grilled."³⁹ He was interviewed by an APL agent and a United States attorney. "A storm scene ensued," according to the APL agent. Palechek admitted to the *Christian Herald* incident, but denounced other rumors circulating about him. He claimed that his young men would cross the seas and fight but "they would never approve of the war." The attorney was particularly strong in upbraiding Palechek for his positions,

but "it seemed to have little effect on him." Palechek responded that he had not transgressed the law in any way. The APL agent agreed: "[this] seems to be true...In fact, he seems to be so well up on the definition of treason that Mr. Wolfe and myself feel he had been advised by some one." Nevertheless, the agent told Palechek that for his actions he would be listed as a suspect at Washington. This did little to curb the minister's activity. Three months later, Palechek was once again brought before the Grand Jury. This time, he made the alleged statement, "I am an American citizen and as an American citizen I wish to see our boys kept at home and not supplying England and being the catspaw of England."⁴⁰

The APL also investigated Palechek's work with the war programs. W.F. Goodrich gave testimony that he



Rev. Palechek

called Palechek and encouraged him to preach in favor of the Red Cross the following Sunday. He reported Palechek to have "been very abrupt and surly" when asked to do his duty, and shirked committing any sermon time to the cause.⁴¹ His congregation at Stoddard represented two-thirds of the population of that town, but only five out of "some one hundred" Red Cross members in Stoddard belonged to Palechek's congregation. His congregation in Chaseburg fared no better during the first Liberty Loan drive. The cashier at the Chaseburg State Bank reported St. Peter's congregation "subscribed only \$2,500 worth of bonds out of a total subscription of \$25,000...which they could easily have done."⁴²

Many of the church members were summoned by the APL and questioned concerning their minister, G.A. Wrobel. A member at the Stoddard congregation, said, "I have known Palechek for twenty-three years, and have never heard him make a derogatory remark about this country. Palechek has a son in the army at present; so it isn't likely that he would be in favor of anything that would injure his boy."⁴³ Zelma Wrobel claimed that Palechek mentioned the Red Cross at church, saying, "it is a good thing that we should give and help the soldiers. You can join if you wish." Charles Anderson of the Chaseburg congregation claimed that "while Paleshek [*sic*] did not advise his members to join the Red Cross, he said they should contribute since it was a good and worthy cause." The APL members considered the congregation members disloyal, so they received this testimony with a condescending ear. One agent claimed, "members of his church are so under his control that they will not say anything against him." To exemplify this, he alleged that, at Palechek's bidding, forty parishioners cancelled their subscriptions to the pro-war *La Crosse Tribune* and subscribed *en masse* to the *Milwaukee Free Press* and *La Follette's Magazine*.⁴⁴

Despite intensive interviews and undercover work, an indictment could never be secured against Palechek. An agent reported his frustration: "he will continue these disloyal remarks right up to the point where he believes he will be amenable to the law."⁴⁵ Cases like Palechek's increased the APL's demands for a stricter sedition law, which they received in May 1918, too late to prosecute Palechek for his actions. Palechek, however, received a far worse punishment than any government could inflict. His son, Walter Palechek, was wounded in France.⁴⁶

IV. Into Custody

While investigations served a good purpose, the real goal of APL agents was to put German spies and sympathizers behind bars. They succeeded six times in placing Wisconsin Synod pastors into custody. Some of these arrests left a more permanent trace than others. Not much is known today about the arrests of Revs. Gotthold Thurow of Wisconsin Rapids or H.M. Hendricksen of Gresham, Nebraska. Thurow, according to Rev. Otto Engel, was interned for a short time "by hotheads according to rumor."⁴⁷ This happened shortly after the outbreak in war, when the fear of German spies was at its height. In early 1918, Hendricksen was arrested for remarks in a private conversation which "obstructed recruiting

and enlistment." On 18 April 1918, he was tried and convicted for his statements.⁴⁸

The other arrests left a much larger paper trail. Herman Atrops of Zion Lutheran Church in White, South Dakota was under suspicion because he "worked strong to keep America out of war."⁴⁹ In January 1918, an informant named Werner Hanni visited Atrops at his home. The two talked for four hours. When interrogated by Hanni about his beliefs, Atrops openly shared his convictions. "Athrop [*sic*] says is [*sic*] somebody would ask him what America's case was to enter the war, he would say, that the Americans were listening to the wrong God...they went in it for the money." Hanni specifically grilled Atrops about his position before the war broke out. He admitted he sent petitions to Washington, but "he thinks they were never read and have been thrown in the waste basket." When asked about the 1916 election, Atrops claimed he did not vote for president because "both men, Wilson and Hughes were Easterner's [*sic*] and controlled by Wallstreet." Hanni then inquired what Atrops did with the government requests to preach for the Liberty Bonds, Food Pledge, and other matters. Atrops responded that "he naturally did not do such a thing and the Government can't do anything with me, because the constitution of this country believes in having the church separated from the state." This response especially antagonized Hanni, who reported, "Athrop [*sic*] thinks he can do anything he likes on account of being American born."

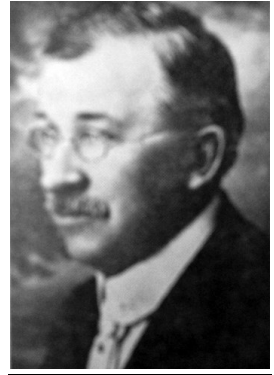
Hanni then perused through White to determine the effect Atrops had on the community. He discerned that Atrops "is doing lots of harm in this section of the country."⁵⁰ For example, the editor of the *White Leader* once clipped an article from *Brookings News* which condemned the "Huns." Several German Americans from White went to see the editor and "told him that if he prints another article like it they would stop the paper...today he has not the courage to say the least thing about Germany. The editor is dependent on his paper and the Germans made a coward out of him." Atrops's congregation also exhibited treacherous behavior. While they subscribed \$700 for the German Red Cross before the war, they donated only \$200 for the American Red Cross, "and after long arguments with the Red Cross Solicitors." White was such an "island of Germanism" that children of the second and third generations did not learn English, including Atrops's daughter, who "cannot speak English but speaks good German," which likely was not an exaggeration. Disgusted with his findings, Hanni recommended that "it is absolutely necessary to deal with Athrop [*sic*] very severe; conditions in White have become unbearable for the loyal Americans." The Justice Department agreed; Atrops was arrested for a short time by the U.S. Marshall of the Southern District of South Dakota for making seditious and pro-German statements, most of which were made in the interview with Hanni.⁵¹



Rev. Herman Atrops

Rev. Carl Auerswald served the congregations at Marinette, Wisconsin and Me-

nominee, Michigan, both near the state borders in the Upper Peninsula. This region, by virtue of its abundance of coal deposits, was of heavy importance to the war effort. Price controls on coal and other fuels set by the Fuel Administration also deeply angered the local population, so investigators considered the towns of Marinette and Menominee to be high priority areas. Amid the policing, an agent visited a church service at Christ Lutheran in Menominee, whereby he alleged Auerswald made disloyal and seditious statements to his congregation. Anxious authorities called for his arrest, and he was taken into custody in November 1917.⁵²



Rev. Carl Auerswald

Auerswald chose not to be represented by counsel at his trial, "as he had signified his ability to conduct his own defense." His trial turned into a family quarrel. J.J. O'Hara conducted the prosecution against Auerswald for his alleged seditious statements. O'Hara's father-in-law, Michael Doyle, the mayor of Menominee, was not in sympathy with O'Hara's position on Auerswald. According to an APL agent at the trial, Doyle "forced himself into the proceedings, assuming the role of counsel for the defendant and used every means possible to secure the acquittal of his client."⁵³ Doyle secured another attorney to defend Auerswald, named Bruno Schultz. The APL agent described Schultz's demeanor as "such a flagrant miscarriage of justice that if the American flag which had been ordered for the court room, had been hanging at the time of the trial he would have taken it down." After this storm scene subsided, Auerswald was still convicted for his statements but received no further jail time. His punishment was a fine of \$100, more than a month's salary for a Wisconsin Synod minister.

V. Rev. Edgar Guenther

In 1911, Rev. Edgar Guenther, a first year seminary graduate, began his work at the Wisconsin Synod's mission among the Apaches in Arizona. After a year of hard work, he and his wife, Minnie Guenther, began a mission school at East Fork, Arizona. Minnie was especially popular among the Apaches and also in synod publications. She was even honored with the title of national "Mother of the Year" later in her career. At the time, the Apache mission was the only mission of the Synod which reached out to a different culture, so the Guenther's work was often in the synod spotlight. For example, the *Northwestern Lutheran* reported a special trip made by the Guenther's and an "Indian boy," who "arrived at Milwaukee during the sessions of the synod by auto, having covered the distance of 2,400 miles in sixteen days. The travelers carried a camping outfit with them....Their appearance plainly shows the benefits one may derive from living in the open. On Monday forenoon the missionary addressed the synod in behalf of our work in Arizona."⁵⁴

Edgar Guenther's mission at East Fork was in close proximity to Fort Apache, where many soldiers trained during the war. Guenther often traveled to Fort



E. Edgar and Minnie Guenther

Apache looking to serve any soldiers from the Wisconsin or Missouri Synods. One day at Fort Apache, the commanding officer there, A.J. Tittinger, reported that Guenther "failed to come to attention or a respectful attitude at retreat formation when 'to the Colors' was sounded by the field music."⁵⁵ A few days later, on 21 May 1918, he was arrested by orders of Tittinger. He reported that Guenther was "very anxious not to bring the name of his mission into publicity." In order to make reparations for this offense, Guenther agreed to Tittinger's request to "perform in public an act of fealty to the flag on the date and hour to be designated by the Commanding Officer...to express his patriotism to the National Colors, the ideals and government that it represents, thereby exonerating himself from the stigma of being disloyal and unpatriotic." Upon performing this, Guenther was free to leave. Unknown to Guenther, however, this was only the beginning, as Tittinger reported, "To allay his suspicions that he is under surveillance I have informed him that after he had complied with the agreement as mentioned...that I would consider the incident closed as far as my official capacity was concerned."⁵⁶ The Department of Justice was then brought up to speed of the situation and asked to cooperate in Guenther's investigation. The Department happily replied they were "very much interested...for the reason that some suspicion has attached to other representatives of this same faith."⁵⁷

The APL and the Justice Department travelled to the East Fork Mission to uncover Guenther's disloyalty. One of their first findings was that "he continued to keep a picture of the Kaiser hanging in his house in a conspicuous place."⁵⁸ Many of Guenther's fellow citizens at East Fork were eager to share evidence of disloyalty. One public teacher "in the Indian Service" reported Guenther saying to him, "I do not believe my church is the place for the flag (we were discussing the American flag having been taken down by a Lutheran preacher), anything pertaining to politics has no place in the church." The teacher claimed that Guenther expressed his intention to place a flag on top of his church, "but I have noticed it has not been done and it is my belief he got uneasy and said this for a bluff."⁵⁹ A "House Keeper" at the United States Indian Schools in-



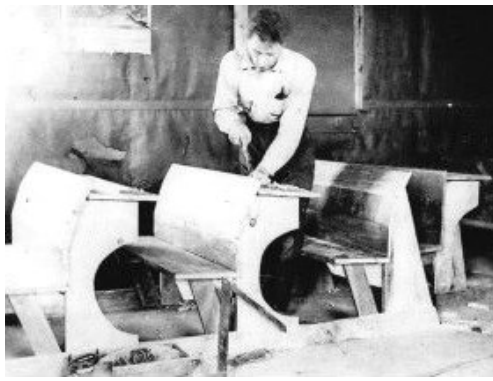
National Director of Military Intelligence M. Churchill advocated a hard line for Guenther.

formed investigators that she twice visited Minnie Guenther and asked her to assist the Red Cross by knitting, and that Mrs. Guenther both times turned her down, saying "she had no time to give to the Red Cross work."⁶⁰

These findings caused Edgar Guenther to be arrested *again* by military authorities on 22 August 1918 for charges of disloyalty. He was held until his military trial eight days later. In the meantime, a "careful search in his house" attempted to find incriminating correspondence or enemy propa-

ganda.⁶¹ Agent Breniman reported that no evidence was found, "except a few letters which...related to church correspondence." Some of these letters were written in German, and "translated by me after careful search for hidden meanings or other incriminating matter." At the trial, the charges against him could not be substantiated for lack of reliable witnesses, who gave "evasive, indefinite answers....It turned out to be nothing more than friendly neighbors taking a too active interest in other peoples [*sic*] affairs."⁶²

Guenther's second release from prison did not signal the end. Tittinger reported that "although the guilty [*sic*] of Mr. Guenther has not been established he will be under surveillance until further orders from Department Intelligence Office."⁶³ Another officer, H.L. Barnes, was enthused by Guenther's release. He told his superiors, "Now I believe I can get enough evidence to hang him."⁶⁴ Mr. Brittan, the Guenther's neighbor, told Barnes that "while he and Mr. Peterson were calling on subject, Mrs. Guenther opened amusements by playing 'The Watch on the Rhine.'" Once they met with Guenther and asked him to contribute spiritually to the cause, Guenther stated "that the Church was not the place to talk about the Red Cross and Liberty Bonds, and that no flags should adorn the interior," although, he added, "he would place one outside his mission." Brittan also shared that "when he tells Gunther [*sic*] how the Allies are beating the Germans, he gets red in the face and walks away." Barnes noted that every two weeks Guenther took a trip to Globe, Arizona, to meet with other Lutheran ministers. Guenther's other neighbor, Mr. Funk, informed Barnes "that it has just been since the war that Rev. Gunther went to Globe, Arizona so often." This was, in fact, true. In 1918, the synod made Guenther the acting superintendent of all the missions in Arizona, and this required him to travel to Globe to complete his work as superintendent. Barnes and Bureau chief Bielaski concluded that further investigation into Guenther "and the other Lutheran ministers who attend these conferences," required the investigation to relocate to Globe, Arizona.⁶⁵



Rev. Edgar Guenther constructs desks at First Lutheran School on the Apache Mission from donated scrap wood.

The Department of Justice and the APL kept a close watch on Guenther for the rest of the war. In November 1918 an agent "was lying on the ground very close to Rev. Gunther's house," and claimed he heard the Reverend say, "The Captain kept him posted."⁶⁶ He naturally assumed this to be a captain heading a German spy organization, which would prove Guenther to be a German spy. A second search of his home resulted in the finding of a tripod. This could have meant that Guenther was surveying the defenses of Fort Apache in preparation for a German attack. Guenther, on being questioned, said he had been using the tripod to survey land



Minnie Guenther was awarded National Mother of the Year in 1967.

for the Apaches. The end of the war did not result in the termination of the investigation, though it did remove its momentum. On 10 December 1918, a full month after the ceasefire, Bureau chief Bielaski prodded along his investigators, asking, "Please advise me as to the status of this matter, giving reference to reports rendered on the subject."⁶⁷ One agent apologized that "the influenza epidemic has kept me very busy." This appears to be the end of the investigation into Guenther, who continued his work at the Apache mission until his death in 1961, completing a half century of work there. In 1950, he became the first and only non-Apache to be honored with membership in the White Mountain Apache Tribe. Minnie survived her husband by twenty years and continued her work among the Apaches until her death.⁶⁸

VI. Rev. John Gauss

At the "German island" of Jenera, Ohio, Rev. John Gauss of Trinity Lutheran Church earned a reputation for his outspoken nature. Because of this characteristic, he became one of the dominant personalities of the Wisconsin Synod. His hometown in Jenera hosted two monumental Michigan Synod conventions, in 1912 and 1916. He then served as secretary for the newly formed Michigan District of the Wisconsin Synod in 1917. At the advent of an unpopular war for German Americans, however, these characteristics also made him one of the likeliest candidates in the synod to incite an investigation. Indeed, the Justice Department eventually took notice of Gauss and the town of Jenera, which could have reasonably boasted to host the most investigators per capita during the war.

It did not take long for the first complaint to arrive at the Justice Department. In May 1917, Dr. M.S. Williamson, a surgeon from Findlay, Ohio, wrote to the Department of the Interior protesting about the German Americans in Jenera, who were "walking confidentially among their friends and spreading arguments among people who [were] not well informed."⁶⁹ This behavior was detrimental to the interests of the country, according to Williamson. Furthermore, "The principal leader

is the Rev. John Gauss of the German Lutheran church...he doesn't preach denunciatory sermons to his congregation, but is still so Pro German that he can't hide his animosity in public." Gauss joined the Red Cross "after he learned that he was liable to be reported to the authorities...but his Pro German propaganda has not ceased and his [sic] is now he thinks immune from suspicion." To keep his reporting a secret from the eyes of stenographers, Williamson wrote this letter in pen. The Department of the Interior then passed this letter over to the Justice Department for further action.⁷⁰



Rev. John Gauss, 1918

The Department of Justice, although aware of the situation, did not investigate immediately, as "all agents were now swamped."⁷¹ The APL chief of northern Ohio, O.D. Donnell, was furious that the department let precious time lapse, and "demanded a warrant for Rev. Gauss."⁷² Finally, in September, an agent named R.E. Pfeiffer and "other volunteers" visited the city and reported their findings. Pfeiffer claimed that "Rev. Gauss educates town (possibly 1,000 population) and farming community mostly German to argue German side and against U.S. policy." The attitude of Jenera was rotten to the core. The town marshal "orders anyone who makes patriotic statements to 'shut up.'" National Guard officers visited Jenera to try a recruiting speech, and said "they never saw such a cool reception." Citizens were alleged to have said, "I'd like to stick a knife in Wilson's heart," and, "I'd like to tie Wilson to a horse and drag him thro [sic] the clearing and burn him on a brush pile." No U.S. flags were displayed in Jenera. The volunteers believed the community was still raising funds for the German Red Cross. A local store continued to publicly display medals commemorating a German battle victory over Russia in August 1914. Pfeiffer begged Washington "to send secret service man who can speak German, and let him spend a week painting, or working, in Genera [sic], and they claim he can send at least ten men to the penitentiary."⁷³

Pfeiffer himself secured the services of Joseph Gerstner, a private detective for a steel car company and a former member of the Austrian secret service. Gerstner had experience investigating discontented German American laborers and seemed like a good fit for the job. Gerstner worked as an insurance salesman in Jenera, setting his prices too high to actually have to sell the insurance. On the first day he attended a meeting on behalf of the Liberty Loan, at which only seven people in the entire community appeared. Before long the lights mysteriously went out "and being unable to find the cause, the meeting adjourned."⁷⁴ Gerstner had difficulty securing information, noting that "the few loyal citizens are afraid and refused to testify, although, they relate on hearsay that different men have made threats against the president." He was "unable to get acquainted with Rev. Gauss, but heard he re-

ceived much of his mail from Milwaukee." He even invaded the home of one of the suspected German sympathizers, finding copies of *Viereck's Weekly* and *The International*, a socialist publication. Despite the extra effort, this weeklong stay in Jenera achieved very little toward securing any indictments.

By November 1917 the German Americans of Jenera became painfully aware of the ongoing investigation. Chief Donnell, while still upset at the lack of indictments, "feels that indirectly our activities has [*sic*] produced good." Rev. Gauss "has suddenly had a change of heart and reported to Theodore Bayless, County Chairman, 50 food pledge cards."⁷⁵ Trinity Lutheran Church also published a resolution in the county newspapers expressing their patriotism and specifically denying alleged rumors that Gauss "ever designated resistance to law or to our land." This changed attitude was more genuine than the investigators perceived. In a private letter to one of his congregation members in the army, Gauss urged him to "try to be a good soldier, do your duties with joy and show that you, as a Christian boy, learned to obey your officers." Gauss also told the soldier, "nothing new and interesting has happened here since your departure," conveniently leaving out the widespread investigation of the town.⁷⁶ Due to this changed nature of the citizens of Jenera, any further investigations would likely reveal few ongoing disloyal activities. The Department of Justice and APL thus changed their approach; they now sought out loyal citizens in the area who could give testimony of previous disloyalty. While their search revealed many offenses, this type of evidence held less weight in the court of law.

The investigation found several witnesses who testified against Gauss. George Turner, a loyal barber in Jenera, claimed that Gauss, who had never previously conversed with Turner, confronted him while he was standing in front of a store in August 1917 and "read from a book written by Henderson, which book is well known and supposed to be against the Allies."⁷⁷ Reverend Gauss opened the book on the street and read a selection as follows: "It wasn't so about [Germany] cutting off hands and dismembering women and children." Gauss then allegedly told Turner, "You don't like that, do you barber? That's in favor of Germany. We know what you talk about in your shop." He also claimed that Gauss and his fellow Germans often could be seen "standing in a very heated discussion, shaking their hands and talking in animated conversation....The instant an American walks up this conversation will stop immediately." Alvin Reeder, a "staunch American," informed investigators that Gauss told him "[We] are getting tired of the people saying that the Germans here are burning grain elevators, blowing up ships, destroying shipyards, planting bombs, etc., and they are not going to stand for it much longer. There is one fellow in this town that has already gone too far and this person has had his day." Reeder construed this statement as a threat to the individual who spread those stories. Peter Bormuth of Jenera made an affidavit that Gauss claimed that President Wilson ought to be shot. Investigators appreciated this testimony, but looked for stronger evidence to convict Gauss with violation of the Espionage Act.

The "star witness" in the case against Gauss became Oren J. Urban, a twenty-six year old APL agent and drafted soldier. Urban recorded many conversations he

had with Gauss which proved his disloyalty. Shortly after he was drafted, Gauss allegedly told him, "You will not have to go to war. Wilson will back down on the attitude he has taken against Germany." Urban, instead of being reassured, claimed he took offense and declared he was going to France either way. Gauss then told him, "None of the Americans will ever get to Germany—they will be sunk on the ocean by submarines and they should be sunk, for we're meddling in something that isn't our business."⁷⁸ This conversation had no witnesses, but another one in a jewelry store did, Urban remembered "that Gauss said he had just returned from Wisconsin and that [Urban] should not believe the American papers."⁷⁹ This statement set off another "hot argument" between the two. Urban then reported activities at Trinity's church choir practices, where Gauss allegedly said, "Germany never intended to come over here."⁸⁰ Since Urban was supposed to leave for camp in mid-May, agent William Cuff suggested a deferment for Urban because of his importance to the case against Gauss.⁸¹

On 11 April 1918, the Justice Department issued warrants for the arrest of Gauss and three others in Jenera. Two days later, agents flooded the town. A report had surfaced that "a large quantity of arms and ammunition were stored in the Lutheran Church."⁸² These were reported to be in such sufficient quantity as to "blow up the whole town."⁸³ The church was searched "from the cellar to the tower, also barn in the rear of church, and Rev. Gauss' home, but found nothing in the line of arms and ammunition." After this fruitless search, agent M.F. Cantillon requested Gauss to accompany him to the post office, where he met United States Marshall Bartley. Bartley then served the warrants on the four men present, whereby he took the prisoners to Toledo, with Cantillon "acting as guard." After setting a "not guilty" plea, Gauss was detained in jail. The United States Commissioner set the bond for the four men at \$90,000. Adjusting for inflation, this amount equates to a bail of over one million dollars in 2012. Members of Gauss's congregation raised this exorbitant sum within two days and bailed out their minister and his fellow prisoners. This development perturbed one agent, who complained he had been warned "in the case Rev. Gauss was arrested the Pro-Germans would furnish all the money Gauss needed."⁸⁴

Now set free, Gauss began setting up his defense. First, he attempted to discern what had been said about him in testimony. He visited Bixel's Jewelry store and asked the owner, David Bixel, if he remembered anything from his reported conversation with Urban. Bixel told Gauss that he did not remember the specifics, but that from the conversation he figured Gauss to be pro-German. Gauss replied, "That is a conclusion, you can't go by conclusions...Don't you know that my wife is sick, don't you know what this means to me?"⁸⁵ Instead of this plea melting Bixel's heart, he reported this conversation to the Department of Justice. Gauss also called Chris Arras of Jenera over the telephone and asked him if he had ever said anything to Arras which might be actionable. Arras could not recall anything specific. After he hung up the phone, Arras instantly received another call from an APL agent. The agent "took Arras by surprise when he asked him what it was Gauss had said over

the telephone." Arras did not give any particular information, only that "Gauss is very much worried over the predicament he finds himself in."⁸⁶ Gauss had other reasons to be worried as well. His original attorney, Mr. Campbell, did not enthusiastically work for the interests of the defendants, even later telling investigators that he "believed them to be guilty of disloyal activities." Even though they already paid him \$3,200, they left Campbell and switched to the law firm Graves & Stahl, who had earned a reputation for defending individuals indicted under the Espionage Act. When informing Campbell that they must seek other counsel, Campbell told the defendants to "plumb to Hell."⁸⁷

The prosecutors also made the most of their time to build the case against Gauss. Nearly every aspect of Gauss's life became material for the investigation. While following Gauss, one agent spotted him "shooting a squirrel out of season."⁸⁸ Gauss received a \$25 fine for this infraction. Agents reported that Gauss three times received a package from Milwaukee, "about one foot square and 18 inches long." After further digging, they discovered these packages "were mailed out by the Northwest Publishing Co., Milwaukee, Wisc."⁸⁹ The packages contained German language books for the school at Trinity Lutheran. Investigating further, agent Cantrell reported "Gauss teaches German and German ideas to about 20 German children in that settlement, in the basement of his church on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of every week...He is supposed to be preparing them for confirmation under the Lutheran Church principles."⁹⁰ This school especially irked the "staunch Americans" because it kept the children out of the public schools the last two days of each week, where they could be taught true American ideals. During this time period, Mr. Urban—the father of the star witness—and other prominent men from the county travelled to Columbus in an effort to have the school discontinued. Cantrell lamented that they "were unsuccessful in this effort."

The prosecution anticipated that the defense would use Gauss's record with the Red Cross and Liberty Loans to portray his loyalty. Thus they attempted to undercut this strategy. They found witnesses to testify that Gauss was not emotionally involved in his Red Cross work. J.O. Shine, an APL agent and distributor of express mail in Jenera, reported that in December 1917 Gauss asked him if he had any express for him. Shine responded that he had an express bill from Cleveland, but the package had not arrived, to which Gauss responded, "Oh, well, that doesn't make any difference anyhow. It's only that Red Cross stuff." Gauss made this comment in the presence of two visitors from out of town. One of them spoke up after Gauss left, which was included in the report as follows, "What sort of a g- d- s- o- b- is that fellow? If he would come into our town and say such a thing he would get his g- d- head knocked off."⁹¹ Roy Thomas, a farmer from out of town, reported that while Gauss was distributing Red Cross literature, he handed a leaflet to Thomas and said, "The biggest piece of hypocrisy about this thing is that they...claim to treat friend and foe alike, but they let the German soldiers bleed to death."⁹² The prosecution also tried to prove that all monetary displays of patriotism only served a defensive purpose. The first and second Liberty Loan drives, which took place before the investigation, accrued a combined \$1,700 from Jenera. The Third Liberty Loan took place well after

the investigation became apparent, and \$46,000 was raised.⁹³ Investigators tirelessly worked around the clock until the final days to pursue this evidence. They were able to hand in their report one day before the trial began.

The long awaited trial commenced on 7 October 1918. Having invested countless hours toward putting Gauss behind bars, several APL and Justice Department agents attended the trial. The developments in the trial both shocked and outraged them. One agent who attended the opening statements bemoaned "the liberty allowed Scott Stahl of the firm Graves & Stahl," who took over an hour and "was permitted to make a complete argument of the case in which he mentioned names of the witnesses that would be called by the prosecution and informed the jury how he would contradict their evidence."⁹⁴ The agent had never in his twenty years of experience "heard an attorney mention the witnesses and state his methods of contradicting their evidence" in the opening statements. The following days proved to be worse. United States Commissioner Frank G. Crane commented to an APL agent, "I left that Gauss trial and think it's the most unusual trial I ever heard, I listened to that man for 45 minutes preaching a sermon on the stand to impress the jury with his innocence." The agent responded, "I understand that yesterday he was upon the stand for an hour and a half doing the same thing." Crane then shared an encounter with Scott Stahl, Gauss's attorney. Coming up an elevator together, Crane asked Stahl, "Well, is your client innocent?" Stahl "looked at me with that grin of his and said, 'All our clients are innocent,' as much as to say that all a defendant needed was to retain the firm of Scott & Graves in order to be found not guilty."⁹⁵

After the closing statements, the jury deliberated for eighteen hours, then returned with a verdict of "not guilty." The ruling left the investigators completely dejected, and they found little solace that the affair was "being criticized by various persons about the Federal Courts."⁹⁶ After the verdict, even the judge mentioned his surprise and admonished Gauss to "avoid further suspicion by adopting anglicized [church] services."⁹⁷ Having failed to catch their big fish, the Justice Department dropped all charges against the other defendants.

Gauss could not rest easy yet. On Friday, 18 October 1918, a "trophy train" carrying roughly twenty-five marines stopped at Jenera to display souvenirs from the war. One marine addressed the crowd that gathered: "I have been told by many people that Jenera is a pro-German place. My plan would be not to line these pro-Germans up against the wall and shoot them but to place them in their wooden shoes and...send them back over to Germany."⁹⁸ After smashing the saloon sign in town—the only saloon in Hancock County—into "toothpicks," a party of ten marines were shown to Gauss's home. Gauss had just returned from a synod conference and was unaware of any trophy train in town. One of the marines entered the home to find Gauss tending to his wife and four daughters, who were ill with influenza. The marine ordered Gauss to accompany them to the trophy train. They marched him down the street and placed him in front of the train, demanding that he must buy another \$100 worth of Liberty bonds. Gauss replied that he already bought all that he was able. It was then suggested that Gauss could meet this requirement by taking out a loan, to which Gauss agreed. After signing, Gauss was

permitted to leave, whereby the marines forced two other Jenera men to do likewise and then left town.

While one of the most dramatic examples, Jenera was one of countless "German islands" that were harassed and investigated during the war. Their existence alone irritated anxious public officials who labeled these towns as proof of the failure of Americanization. The smashing of the saloon sign also epitomized their frustration at these immigrant groups' failure to conform to "American" morality. The attempt to shut down Trinity Lutheran's confirmation school suggests the religion's association in the minds of investigators with foreign customs and morals. Lutheran ministers also served as a public symbol toward those ends. Rev. Gauss's electric personality, however, made his a higher profile case than many of the others. His perseverance also allowed him to weather this storm. In the summer of 1919 he followed the advice of the judge and started supplementary English services at Trinity.⁹⁹ He served the congregation for a total of fifty-two years, and later became president of the Michigan District of the Wisconsin Synod. He passed away at Jenera on New Year's Eve, 1949.

VII. Rev. Otto Engel

Two days after President Wilson delivered his war message to Congress, G.B. Horner of Ripon, Wisconsin forwarded to the White House peace propaganda he received from the American Liberty League, whose president was Otto Engel. Horner believed that "it is likely that this man Engel is being watched," yet he wanted to ensure that the government was aware of his activities.¹⁰⁰ Horner need not worry. For good measure, numerous other circulars from the American Liberty League poured into Washington from other disgusted citizens. The Justice Department was then forwarded all these complaints, whereupon they added them to their already existing file on Engel. The subsequent investigation of the minister proved to be the most thorough and intrusive for any member of the Wisconsin Synod. The Justice Department placed such a high importance on Engel's case that Bureau director A. Bruce Bielaski was consistently briefed on its undertakings. The thoroughness of the investigation of Engel exemplifies the importance the Justice Department placed on proper wartime opinion and speech.¹⁰¹

Less than a week after the declaration, operative A.L.S. travelled to Milwaukee on a fact-finding mission for the Justice Department. He interviewed Henry C. Campbell of the *Milwaukee Journal*, who supplied A.L.S. with the particulars. Engel, the pastor at St. Jacob Lutheran Church in Norwalk, Wisconsin, was "a young man, 32 years old, 5'7 or 8" tall, 170 lbs., dark hair and a clean cut fellow."¹⁰² Engel was born in Lodz, Poland, and he "organized the American Liberty League in an attempt to preserve peace." After discovering that Engel was also currently visiting Milwau-



Rev. Otto Engel

kee, A.L.S. sought out Engel and questioned him about his activities. Engel "declined to state how much money had been spent by his league or how many members he had," stating his records were all up at Norwalk. While A.L.S. wrote dismissively of Engel's case, Military Intelligence Director Marlborough Churchill felt convinced that Engel was a high profile target:

Engel is somewhat of a confused character, so that at first sight he may be considered as a harmless idealist, an eccentric, whose observation and investigation does not pay. But I have no doubt on account of my personal knowledge, that he is a rabid pro-German, who would not even spare his own life, if he can aid Germany and German agents.¹⁰³



Bureau Chief A. Bruce Bielaski personally oversaw investigations into Revs. Ed Guenther and Otto Engel.

Now aware that he was being watched, the prudent move would have been to tread lightly. Engel, however, remained combative. A letter, signed "A Disgusted American," was furtively sent from Engel to select United States Representatives, calling the proposed Espionage Bill "a reign of terrorism....Every man's liberty, property, right of ordinary free speech, or opinion is henceforth without constitutional guarantee....If we have no more constitutional rights then abolish the Constitution."¹⁰⁴ He then drafted a letter to his chief writer, Ernst Goerner, urging that the German Americans "must be mobilized for this time that is coming...We have formed an American Legal Defense Committee, whose object it will be to protect those people who are pestered by ultra-patriots."¹⁰⁵ Engel refused to disband the American Liberty League, and continued to collect and distribute pamphlets which bemoaned the high cost of living and

other ill effects of the war. He travelled twice to Minneapolis to take part in a convention of the People's Council, the organization which opposed the draft and helped instigate the episode in the New Ulm area.¹⁰⁶

All this while, Engel's indignation for the "ultra-patriots" refused to abate. In personal correspondence with Goerner, he called them "howlers," "conspirators," "professional snoopers," "insolents," and "traitors," who worked for the "establishment of an absolute tyranny."¹⁰⁷ One of the publications of the Liberty League, "Shameful Facts," exposed the actions of the Wisconsin Loyalty Legion, "the pack that claims patriotism as its own." He even taunted their efforts, telling Goerner, "The Wisconsin State Council of Defense wants to get at me...this affair can become interesting." In February 1918, when telling Goerner of a "government spy" in Norwalk, Engel claimed he was there "probably to find out if I am a descendant of a Chinese Prince."¹⁰⁸ Around this time, Engel started "collecting material pertaining to the curtailing of the rights of German Americans, including cases in

which German school-books and manuscripts or other property [were] being destroyed, contrary to law." Engel ultimately planned to write a book of his discoveries.¹⁰⁹

Investigators increased their vigor in 1918 when they attempted to decipher Engel's mailings. The Wisconsin Synod's Northwestern Publishing House received a visit "with a view of ascertaining the extent of dealings Engel may have had with them."¹¹⁰ The publishing house claimed it only executed one order for printing for Engel, which were eight hundred postcards carrying a poem entitled "Pirate Island," which was "a typical expression of German Anglo-phobia [*sic*]." These were produced during the neutrality period, so it did not violate the Espionage Act. Not completely satisfied, an agent returned ten months later and personally inspected the records of the publishing house. Finding only religious purchases by Engel, it became apparent the publishing house was a dead end.¹¹¹ Also busy during this time was John Kerrigan, the postmaster at Norwalk, who recorded every piece of Engel's incoming and outgoing mail. He informed the Justice Department that "on several occasions he sent out five hundred first class letters at one time, and once he sent out about one thousand letters."¹¹² Engel often evaded observation by receiving his mail directly through the railroad station agent, Charles Cronk. Cronk was a member of Engel's American Liberty League and in sympathy with his work. Frustrated, investigators then decided to intercept Engel's mail, noting that "several pieces of printed matter have been withdrawn from the mail and turned over to the United States Attorney."¹¹³ Postmasters across the country, from Seattle to New York, intercepted mailings from Engel and rerouted them to Washington.

In April 1918, APL operative C. Wesley Bong and Rev. J.G. Smith of Tomah, Wisconsin conspired to go undercover to catch Engel in disloyal talk. Rev. Smith travelled to Norwalk and addressed the expectedly unreceptive crowd on the subject "Why We Entered the War." At the end of his presentation, as planned, he opened up the floor for questions. As a "member of the audience," operative Bong vociferously asked Smith questions which "branded [Bong] as a red-hot pro-German socialist."¹¹⁴ Bong asked these prearranged questions in a way to allow Smith to give him a good drubbing. This maneuver had its desired effect. Having gained the confidence of those present, Bong and N. Neumann of Norwalk engaged in a conversation about the war. Bong pleaded ignorance on many of the war questions and asked Neuman for information to avoid future embarrassments. Also uninformed, Neuman was unable to give information, but suggested "that if I would ask the minister that had charge of the brick church in Norwalk, he could give me the information." So far, everything worked according to plan.

The next morning, Bong visited Engel's home. Bong reported that he attempted to appear "much worried and disturbed over the publicity I had given myself by making the questions at the meeting the night before, and said to him that I guess I had 'slopped over' pretty badly...that I wanted to ask him some questions...so that I could have a further talk with Rev. Smith."¹¹⁵ Engel turned suddenly to him and said, "Mr. Bong, you are a stranger to me." Bong reassured him that he visited on

Neumann's suggestion and that he was trustworthy. Persuaded, Engel asked Bong what he wanted to know. Bong asked Engel concerning a few "commonplace and unimportant matters." Engel "seemed disposed to dismiss the matter with a wave of the hand," and said, "Oh, it is very easy to answer questions like that." Yet he still refused to give Bong information, telling him "We are in war now and it doesn't matter what a man is at heart, he must appear to be loyal." Engel then gave some advice to Bong concerning his fake life insurance business, and Bong went on his way.

In the last statement of his report, Bong informed his superiors that "Engel is moving to Randolph, Wisconsin."¹¹⁶ Indeed, Engel had recently accepted a call to Friedens (Peace) Lutheran Church in Randolph, and moved within a week of Bong's investigation. The *Gemeindeblatt* recorded Engel's installation in Randolph on 7 April 1918, and closed with a prayer that "God put on him many blessings!"¹¹⁷ Since this move crossed Justice Department district lines, it caused an entire overhaul of the investigation. Supervision transferred from Agent W.N. Parker of the Western Wisconsin District to Agent R.B. Spencer of the Eastern Wisconsin District. Spencer, the more aggressive of the two, was brought to speed on the investigation through memorandums prepared by Bureau chief A. Bruce Bielaski and Military Intelligence director Marlborough Churchill, who also requested that "a cover be placed on his mail" at his new address.¹¹⁸

On 25 August 1918, Engel preached a dedication sermon for the new church of St. Johannes (John) in Pardeeville, Wisconsin.¹¹⁹ Around the same time, Agent Spencer made final preparations for a raid of Engel's premises. Less than a week later, a U.S. Commissioner issued a search warrant, and three agents descended upon Randolph and entered Engel's home. They conducted a "painstaking and thorough search of the entire premises and residence of Rev. Otto Engel."¹²⁰ Pamphlets, books, letters, circulars, and other correspondence were taken—"five large sackfull"—and brought to Milwaukee for inventory and translation.¹²¹ Not satisfied that the search was thorough enough, four agents returned to Randolph ten days later, "where a further search was made of the personal effects and everything in the dwelling occupied by Rev. Otto Engel."¹²² The agents then worked their way over to the church, going through "approximately fifteen thousand pounds" of printed matter and newspapers from various parts of the world, and also the library of about two thousand volumes. Everything that appeared to be of a contraband nature was brought to Milwaukee. Still unsatisfied, agents made a *third* raid of Engel's home on 14 September 1918, this time removing Engel's entire card index system from his home.¹²³ Since most of the confiscated material was in German, numerous agents were assigned to translation and laboriously worked this assignment for months. Several letters between Engel and Germans were unearthed and inspected, and not-yet-mailed pamphlets were collected and stacked. His largest collection was about 400 pamphlets entitled "The German-Americans in War," criticizing home front policing. These and others were taken into evidence.¹²⁴

After the searches, Special Agent in Charge Spencer arranged his most daring maneuver yet. He struck a deal with Ernst Goerner, who was Engel's most promi-

ment writer for the American Liberty League. If Goerner could accompany an agent on a mission which secured evidence from Engel, his punishment would be reduced. Goerner and a "confidential informant" arrived in Randolph early morning on Sunday, 29 September 1918. They took separate trains from Milwaukee to not raise any suspicion, and waited outside Friedens Lutheran Church until the services were over. The two met Engel around noon as he was leaving the church. The informant reported that Engel "was very disappointed that Goerner came to visit him, as he said the town was so small, and that the secret service knew of every step he made."¹²⁵ Goerner asked Engel to have an interview with him and his "friend," but Engel "said he was very busy, it being Sunday." He did, however, agree to meet Goerner at a hotel at 3 p.m., "and told us in a sneering way that if we could stomach some Liberty Bond and patriotic talk, that we should come to the aviation field at 2:30 in the afternoon." At the field, Engel gave a talk in honor of a lieutenant belonging to his congregation who was in Randolph with the "flying machine" that he piloted. Engel addressed the large crowd for fifteen minutes, where "he spoke mostly about the loyalty of the Lutherans, and of the Germans."

Although he agreed to meet Goerner at 3 o'clock, Engel did not arrive at the hotel until 4:15.¹²⁶ He took them to a private room to have a conversation. Once in the room, the agent reported that Engel "told us that he had only been asked that morning after church to make the talk at the aviation field, and that he jumped at the chance, he said he would take every chance he could get to do any patriotic speaking in the town in order to clear himself." The informant also observed that "I never saw a man as nervous as Engel was while we were in the hotel, his hands shook so that he could not hold a piece of paper." The informant asked Engel what made him so nervous. Engel was "surprised to think that I knew he was in such a state," and then said that "the secret service people knew where he was that very minute...that they have watched him for the past three years. That he was receiving no mail...[and] that a couple of men in his church had already asked him who the two strangers were." Engel then told them what they already knew, that his place had been raided three times, and he "partly blamed Goerner for his troubles." Engel told Goerner that he "was too CARELESS," and also too reckless in distributing his propaganda. Engel claimed he appealed to Governor Philipp after the raids but it did not do him much good. He was certain he would be indicted, and that "he would have to make arrangements for his family, before they were indicted." After this statement, the informant inserted in the report, "My opinion is that he might attempt to make a getaway."¹²⁷

At this point, Engel "was more nervous than ever," and, knowing that Goerner's train left at 4:45, he often checked his watch and reminded the visitors that they should be leaving. Before they left, both men quickly tried to secure any evidence against Engel. Goerner handed Engel some letters and asked him to read his views on the draft law, but "Engel was so nervous that he could not hold the paper, and did therefore not read it." The informant then asked Engel which of his activities he considered the most damaging, to which he replied his international correspondence from before the war which were taken in the raids. Engel then said

his greatest fear was that other pastors would be implicated from his correspondence with them. Running out of time, Goerner and the informant had to leave. Goerner gave Engel the address of a man named Pearson through whom he could reach Goerner. On their way back to the train, the informant judgmentally scribbled, "There are a bunch of autos in the yard of the church. No auto-less Sunday in Randolph."¹²⁸

Engel's greatest fears were realized in early October when the Justice Department simultaneously raided the homes of four others—including three Lutheran pastors—on account of their acquaintance with Engel. Revs. J.J. Bizer of Brillion, Wisconsin and William Stehling of Waupun, Wisconsin had their homes and churches scrupulously searched, but "nothing of a contraband nature was found."¹²⁹ Wisconsin Synod minister Herman Zimmermann of West Salem was also given a surprise search because it "appears he has been closely connected with Otto Engel." Both his home and Christ Lutheran Church were thoroughly searched, and the agents found "several letters, pamphlets, magazines, and books... considered to be of value to the Department." These items were seized and taken to Madison. Agent J.C. McFetridge then interrogated Zimmerman concerning his relationship to Engel. Zimmermann claimed he recently "had not been in regular contact with Otto Engel, nor has he received for distribution from Engel any pamphlets" for pro-German propaganda. Instead of trying to clear himself by disowning Engel, Zimmermann stated "that Engel is a man who had been very much wronged, as Engel was far more loyal than lots of others."¹³⁰ This led McFetridge to report that "regardless of subject's statements to the contrary, Agent feels satisfied that subject has been closely connected with Engel." Engel's family members did not escape the investigation. An agent inspected the bank accounts of Julius Engel, the father of Otto, and concluded that "Julius likely helped fund [Otto's] activities."¹³¹

Eventually, the Department considered nearly all of Engel's acquaintances as material witnesses, including children. Agents travelled to Norwalk to find Engel's former catechism students. One searched the town and found twelve year old Philip Koepke, who took private lessons from Engel during the winter of 1917-1918. Koepke told investigators that Engel was always busy reading and writing, but he had no idea for what purpose.¹³² Eleven other former students were tracked down and questioned, their ages ranging from twelve to sixteen. One twelve year old student admitted that she helped Engel fold circulars right before war was declared, and another claimed she addressed some envelopes. Gretchen Neuman admitted to the most work for Engel. She "did typewriting last summer, addressed envelopes, and also wrote some personal letters, though she cannot identify the letters she wrote as she did not put her initials or any other mark on the letters."¹³³ When asked to identify any circulars, none of the students were able to. Most of the students appeared short in their answers to the agents, likely out of fear and intimidation. The interrogation of young adolescents exemplifies how far the Justice Department was willing to go to secure an indictment for Otto Engel.

At this point, Special Agent in Charge Spencer received a report that Engel "was in a very nervous state and would make a full statement to a representative

of this Department if he was approached."¹³⁴ Spencer assigned himself the task of the visit, and brought along a stenographer. Finding Engel at his house, he advised Engel that "there was no compulsion on him to make a statement." Engel "appeared to be very nervous" but made the statement that "he had not knowingly done anything since...the declaration of war against Germany, which according to his heart and conscience, was hostile to his country." He told Spencer that he was willing to answer any specific questions concerning his international correspondence. Spencer did not demand explanation on account that "evidence against Engel looking to a violation of the Espionage Act seems to be strong and the disclosure of the Government's evidence did not seem to be wise at the time." Engel then repeatedly stated that in the past few months he had been making patriotic speeches and doing everything he could to assist the government in war work. Several times, Engel asked Spencer for advice as to how he should proceed or what he could do in the future to make himself right with the government. "No advice, of course, was given." Spencer on the whole found the interview unsatisfactory. Before he left, he chastised Engel, saying that if his conscience truly was clear concerning his activities, "then he must be a German and not an American."

Fearing an indictment to be inevitable, Engel approached a Wisconsin Synod lawyer, Ernst von Briesen, who had previously criticized Engel for taking part in politics. Engel asked von Briesen if he would take care of his legal matters should he be indicted by the Grand Jury. Von Briesen refused, however, and told him he "did not wish to have anything to do with matters of this kind."¹³⁵ In another private conversation, Engel told an acquaintance that he expected an indictment at any time.¹³⁶ Indeed, the Justice Department at one point seemed as assured of an indictment as Engel. However, after all the translating and undercover investigations, the Department was never able to uncover a "smoking gun" which could prove a clear violation of the Espionage Act or Sedition Act. In late November, one month after confident reports to his superiors, Agent Spencer admitted the case to be "very weak."¹³⁷ In desperation, Military Intelligence Director Churchill even suggested to Bielaski that he "ascertain Engel's citizenship with a view to interning him in the event that no more stringent action can be taken in the case."¹³⁸ In early 1919, with the war over and passions subsiding, investigators made one last ditch effort to prove a connection between Engel and the German government. One witness even testified that Engel wrote German Attaché Heinrich Albert in 1916 requesting propaganda material, and that the German government even included Engel in their list of German agents and sympathizers. Not only was this witness somewhat unreliable, but this action took place during neutrality.¹³⁹ The Engel case, at one point roaring hot, continued to dwindle as the months of 1919 passed. The Justice Department consoled themselves by becoming fully occupied in the new communist scare.

After enduring years of torment, Engel could finally begin to place this episode behind him. In 1923, he became the synod's first foreign missionary, as he was assigned to work among the war weary Germans in Lodz, Poland.¹⁴⁰ In a twist of irony, Rev. John Gauss, who also received a thorough investigation, wrote to the De-

partment of State claiming Engel's "mission is of a purely religious nature."¹⁴¹ When applying for his passport, however, a reverberation of the former investigation arose, as an investigator noted that during the war Engel was "considered a pro-German and was a member of the Worlds Peace Association."¹⁴² After deliberation, it was eventually decided to disregard this infraction and allow Engel to do his work. He was especially active at this mission, and even established the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Poland, which broke away from the Augsburg church, the state-subsidized Lutheran church of Poland. Engel's later work in the spiritual and physical relief efforts in Poland are well-documented in Wisconsin Synod history.¹⁴³

While fighting for a cause to benefit his people, Engel put himself far too deeply into the political spotlight for a Wisconsin Synod preacher. Ernest von Briesen's reprimand shows that not all German Lutherans approved of Engel's extracurricular activities away from the pulpit. However, the Justice Department's obsession for correct public opinion on the home front can hardly find a better archetype than Rev. Engel's case. The cooperation of opposing preachers, postmasters, newspaper editors, and other public figures in the investigation of Engel show how all-encompassing this crusade against dissent could become.

Otto Engel's case was an anomaly to the other investigations of Wisconsin Synod ministers. Most other ministers received attention for activities and statements they made with naive perceptions that they were not being watched. Even those arrested, like John Gauss and Edgar Guenther, conscientiously modified their behavior after it became apparent they had a target on their backs. Engel, on the other hand, continued to protest developments during the war through the American Liberty League, even though he became plainly aware that investigators were watching him. This behavior lasted until the numerous searches of his home and the apparent inevitability of his indictment.

Engel, as with all the synod pastors, could have quashed all suspicions by complying with the perception that religious leaders should serve as propagandists for the war effort. As shown in this segment, agents frequently grilled the "erring" ministers and asked why they refused to act like other ministers and propagate proper war themes from the pulpit to help win the war. Typically, however, this was where Wisconsin Synod ministers remained most defiant. Not only would this have caused antagonism from members of the congregations, but the Wisconsin Synod jealously guarded its autonomy from the state. Additionally, most could not stomach to scrap the sermon topic covering the doctrine of spiritual justification and replace it with the doctrine of food conservation, let alone preach the virtues of a holy war in Europe. The most an agent could usually hear from the Wisconsin Synod pulpits was a plea to obey the laws of the government in this difficult time. Indeed, even though agents frequented Wisconsin Synod worship services, only two investigations discovered "seditious" activities within the church walls, that being of Emmanuel Palechek and Carl Auerswald. Even in these cases, however, both statements came after the end of the worship service, not from the pulpit. Lastly, these investigations usually deflected into the decadent behavior of the German Lutherans of the community, from the saloon element to the parochial schools and

preservation of the German language in the church and community. The overarching theme of these investigative reports became that Americanization had somehow escaped this religious community.

Endnotes

1. Wm. S. Fitch Report, 28 April 1917, OG 13652.
2. *Ibid*, 1.
3. *Ibid*, 2.
4. Agent to A. Bruce Bielaski, 13 Aug 1917, OG 37083.
5. William Thomas, Jr., *Unsafe for Democracy: World War I and the U.S. Justice Department's Covert Campaign to Suppress Dissent* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 69.
6. "Ein Regierungbeamter," *Gemeindeblatt* 53:18 (1 September 1918), 287.
7. W.B. Farrar to Intelligence Officer, Camp John Wise, 18 September 1918, OG 338884. Farrar believed that the church rang the bell to signal German citizens to come purchase newspapers discussing the German war victories.
8. Otto Engel to H.R. Zimmerman, 26 April 1917, OG 5025.
9. R.B. Spencer Report, 10 November 1917, OG 7324.
10. Wm. S. Fitch Report, 4 May 1917, OG 14184.
11. "Amtsjubilaen," *Gemeindeblatt* 52:11 (1 June 1918), 170.
12. Wm. S. Fitch Report, 4 May 1917, OG 14184.
13. P.J. Kelly Report, 10 Oct. 1918, OG 317186. The lodge was one of the most pressing issues for Confessional Lutherans. Lodges and other secret societies typically unified Christians under a common denominator of "morality," which Lutherans believed would undermine their "faith alone" doctrine.
14. APL Report, "Applicant for Chaplaincy," 20 August 1918, OG 37082; Report: "Alleged Violation Conscriptio Act," 18 July 1917.
15. Wm. S. Fitch Report, 24 Aug 1917, OG 37082.
16. Wm. S. Fitch Report, 11 March 1918, OG 167232.
17. "Looking Back in Dowagiac," *The Dowagiac News*, 3 July 1963.
18. A. Viall Report, 27 Nov. 1917, OG 105855.
19. Julius Rosin Report, 28 April 1917, OG 12889.
20. AC. Moore Report, 10 May 1917, OG 18330.
21. Jenny C. Law Hardy to A. Bruce Bielaski, 17 Aug. 1918, OG 290766.
22. M. Eberstein Report, 23 Jan. 1918, OG 133065.
23. W.C. Rehwaldt to Chas. W. Henky, Publicity Director, 13 December 1918, 103.L.9.2F, CPS Records.
24. See Chapter 1 for Wisconsin Synod's rebuke of a belief in a "tribal God" during the neutrality period, or Hans K. Moussa, "The Fifty-fifth Psalm," *Northwestern Lutheran* 2:7 (7 April 1915), 50-51. Hans K. Moussa even shared some misgivings concerning the effects of the popular Christian hymn "Onward Christians Soldiers" in his article, "Correcting Paul," *Northwestern Lutheran* 1:19 (7 October 1919), 153.

25. P.A. Neff to National Committee of Patriotic Societies, 3 June 1918, OG 213154.
26. Robert F. Davis Report, 3 Aug. 1917, OG 47665.
27. W. O'Brien to Public Safety Commission, 18 July 1917, 103.L.8.4, CPS Files, p. 148.
28. *Ibid*, 148.
29. Robert F. Davis Report, 3 Aug. 1917, OG 47665.
30. John W. Boock to Chas. W. Hanke, 18 July 1917, 103.L.8.4, CPS Files.
31. H.E. Wreisner to S.W. Fraiser, 18 July 1917, 103.L.8.4, CPS Files, P.148.
32. Robert F. Davis Report, 3 Aug. 1917, OG 47665.
33. W. Boock to Chas. W. Hanke, 27 Oct. 1917, 103.L.8.2F, CPS Files, p. 101,2.
34. A.F. Kearney Report, 27 Sep 1918, OG 213154.
35. A.P. Neff to National Committee of Patriotic Societies, 27 May 1918 and 3 June 1918, OG 213154;
36. A.F. Kearney Report, 27 Sep 1918, OG 213154.
37. *Ibid*, 3-4.
38. R.B. Spencer Report, 16 June 1917, OG 26572. Palechek gave the speech because "he had been requested by the Governor to notify all young men to register." This is what led Palechek to read Wilson's proclamation to his congregation after the service.
39. R.B. Spencer Report, 16 June 1917, OG 26572.
40. Charles Daniel Fry Report, 17 Sep. 1917, OG 26572.
41. D.H. Barry Report, 29 Dec. 1917, OG 119524;
42. The German Lutheran was typically stereotyped as frugal and to have disproportionately large savings.
43. R.B. Spencer Report, 16 June 1917, OG 26572;
44. D.H. Barry Report, 29 Dec. 1917, OG 119524.
45. R.B. Spencer Report, 16 June 1917, OG 26572.
46. D.H. Barry Report, 29 Dec. 1917, OG 119524.
47. Otto Engel to H.R. Zimmerman, 26 April 1917, OG 5025.
48. American Civil Liberties Union, *War-time Prosecutions and Mob Violence* (New York: National Civil Liberties Bureau, 1918), 14, 18; Alleged Violation Conscription Act, OG 37082.
49. M. Eberstein Report, 23 Jan. 1918, OG 133065.
50. *Ibid*, 2.
51. "Report: Alleged Violation Conscription Act," 18 July 1918, OG 37082.
52. Wm. S. Fitch Report, 22 October 1917, OG 308131; A.A. Viall Report, 22 November 1917, OG 308131.
53. Wm. S. Fitch Report, 22 October 1917, OG 308131.
54. *Wisconsin Synod Proceedings*, 1912, p. 32; Friedrich 170; NW 21 July 1917, "A Long Auto Trip."
55. A.J. Tittinger to Wm. Neunhoffer, 1 June 1918, OG 209062.
56. R.L. Barnes to A.J. Tittinger, 4 June 1918, OG 209062.
57. Wm. Neunhoffer to Tittinger, 4 June 1918, OG 209062.
58. E.T. Needham Report, 20 August, OG 209062.

59. Marlborough Churchill to A. Bruce Bielaski, 11 June 1918, OG 209062;
60. E.T. Needham Report, 20 August 1918, OG 209062.
61. G.H. Wende Report, 22 Aug. 1918, OG 209062.
62. Chas. E. Breniman Report, 5 Sep. 1918, OG 283505.
63. A.J. Tittinger to H.L. Barnes, 5 Sep. 1918, OG 283505.
64. E.T. Needham Report, 5 Sep 1918, OG 209062;
65. VH Report, 12 Nov. 1918, OG 2090962.
66. H.L. Barnes Report, 6 November 1918, OG 209062.
67. A. Bruce Bielaski to G.H. Wende, 10 December 1918, OG 209062.
68. "Rev. Guenther, 50-Year Apache Missionary, Dies," *Tucson Daily Citizen*, 1 June 1961.
69. M.S. Williamson to E.M. Salzgeber, 25 May 1917, OG 20186.
70. E.M. Salzgeber to A. Bruce Bielaski, 29 May 1917, OG 20186.
71. R.E. Pfeiffer Report, 25 September 1917, OG 20186.
72. L.M. Cantrell Report, 7 February 1918, OG 20186.
73. R.E. Pfeiffer Report, 25 September 1917, OG 20186.
74. R.E. Pfeiffer Report, 11 and 13 Oct. 1917, OG 20186.
75. Robert E. Pfeiffer Report, 15 Nov. 1917, OG 20186.
76. John Gauss to Pvt. John Marquart, 14 Oct. 1917, Gauss Family Records.
77. L.M. Cantrell Report, 17 March 1918, OG 20186.
78. *United States v. John Gauss*, The United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio, 7-12 October 1918.
79. William A. Cuff Report, 23 April 1918, OG 20186.
80. William A. Cuff Report, 25 April 1918, OG 20186.
81. William A. Cuff Report, 10 Sep. 1918, OG 20186.
82. M.F. Cantillon Report, 13 April 1918, OG 20186.
83. *Lima News*, 15 April 1918.
84. William A. Cuff Report, 23 April 1918, OG 20186. This figure is nearly twice the amount that Jenera raised for Liberty Bonds throughout the entire war.
85. *Ibid*, 2-3.
86. William A. Cuff Report, 25 April 1918, OG 20186.
87. T.H.B. Patterson Report, 10 October 1918, OG 20186.
88. "Ohio Briefs," *Newark Daily Advocate*, 12 Dec. 1917.
89. L.M. Cantrell Report, 17 March 1918, OG 20186.
90. L.M. Cantrell Report, 26 March 1918, OG 20186.
91. L.M. Cantrell Report, 17 March 1918, OG 20186.
92. William A. Cuff Report, 25 April 1918, OG 20186.
93. T.H.B. Patterson Report, 5 Oct. 1918, OG 20186.
94. T.H.B. Patterson Report, 7 October 1918, OG 20186.
95. T.H.B. Patterson Report, 10 Oct. 1918, OG 20186.
96. T.H.B. Patterson Report, 9 Oct. 1918, OG 2018.
97. "Pastor is Found Not Guilty of Disloyalty," *Toledo Blade*, 12 October 1918.
98. "World War I," *The Echo Examiner* 10:36 (Winter 2011), Eagle Creek Historical Organization.

99. John Gauss Biographical Folder, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Archives.
100. G.F. Horner to President Wilson, 4 April 1917, OG 5025.
101. Henry P. Hamilton to Col. James Stewart, 6 April 1917, OG 5025; Jessie A. Clason to Paul Husting, 6 April 1917, OG 5025; J. Clabaugh to J.N. Jefferson, 14 April 1917, OG 5025; J.Clabaugh to R.D. Hood, 14 April 1917, OG 5025.
102. Wm. S. Fitch Report, 10 April 1917, OG 5025.
103. Marlborough Churchill to A. Bruce Bielaski, 28 September 1917, OG 5025.
104. Otto Engel to Senators or Representatives, 14 April 1917, OG 5025.
105. Otto Engel to Ernst Goerner, 24 April 1917, OG 5025.
106. Otto Engel to Ernst Goerner, 5 August 1917, OG 5025; See Chapter 3 for the relationship of the People's Council in the New Ulm Episode.
107. Otto Engel to Ernst Goerner, 25 November 1917, OG 5025; Otto Engel to Ernst Goerner, 27 March 1917, OG 5025; Otto Engel to Ernst Goerner, 18 April 1918, OG 5025; Otto Engel to Ernst Goerner 7 March 1918, OG 5025; Otto Engel to Ernst Goerner, 3 December 1917, OG 5025.
108. Otto Engel to Ernst Goerner, 25 February 1918, OG 5025.
109. Otto Engel to Ernst Goerner, 1 March 1918, OG 5025.
110. John E. Ferris Report, 16 March 1918, OG 5025.
111. Leo J. Brennan Report, 11 January 1919, OG 5025.
112. R.B. Spencer Report, 5 April 1918, OG 5025.
113. J.F. Nicholson Report, 21 May 1917, OG 5025.
114. R.B. Spencer Report, 5 April 1918, OG 5025.
115. *Ibid*, 91.
116. *Ibid*, 92.
117. "Im Auftrage," *Gemeindeblatt* 53:9 (28 April 1918), 140. In the Wisconsin Synod system, individual congregations themselves make a "call," or request, to certain synod ministers whenever they have a vacancy. The minister, Engel in this case, deliberates this new "call" and current "call." It is unlikely that the Randolph congregation knew about the ongoing investigation when they "called" Engel.
118. M. Churchill to A. Bruce Bielaski, 10 August 1918, OG 5025.
119. "Kircheweihe," *Gemeindeblatt*, 29 September 1918, 53:20, p. 311.
120. Wm. H. Steiner Report, 1 September 1918, OG 5025.
121. J.C. McFetridge Report, 1 September 1918, OG 5025.
122. Wm. H. Steiner Report, 12 September 1918, OG 5025.
123. Wm. H. Steiner Report, 14 September 1918, OG 5025.
124. Wm. H. Steiner Report, 4 October 1918, OG 5025; Frank F. Wolfram Report, 7 November 1918, OG 5025.
125. R.B. Spencer Report, 1 October 1918, OG 5025.
126. This was likely a calculated move to reduce the amount of time he would meet with Goerner.
127. *Ibid*, 206-210.
128. *Ibid*, 209-210.

129. Frank F. Wolfgram Report, 2 October 1918, OG 5025; Wm. H. Steiner Report, 2 October 1918, OG 5025; H.W. McLarty Report, 2 October 1918, OG 5025.
130. J.C. McFetridge Report, 2 October 1918, OG 5025.
131. Wm. H. Steiner Report, 29 January 1919, OG 5025.
132. W.D. Bird Report, 15 November 1918, OG 5025.
133. Frank F. Wolfgram Report, 27 November 1918, OG 5025.
134. R.B. Spencer Report, 4 October 1918, OG 5025.
135. Frank Wolfgram Report, 18 February 1919, OG 5025.
136. Frank Wolfgram Report, 28 February 1919, OG 5025.
137. R.B. Spencer to A. Bruce Bielaski, 25 November 1918, OG 5025.
138. M. Churchill to A. Bruce Bielaski, 21 October 1918, OG 5025;
139. M. Churchill to A. Bruce Bielaski, 28 September 1918, OG 5025.
140. Edward C. Fredrich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans: A History of the Single Synod, Federation, and Merger* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1992), 164, 166.
141. John Gauss to Department of State, January 1922.
142. M. Adam to M. Brist, 31 January 1922.
143. Otto Engel, "The Wisconsin Synod Mission in Poland," *WELS Historical Institute Journal* 6:2, Fall 1988, 37-47.

The War to End All Germans

Wisconsin Synod Lutherans and the First World War

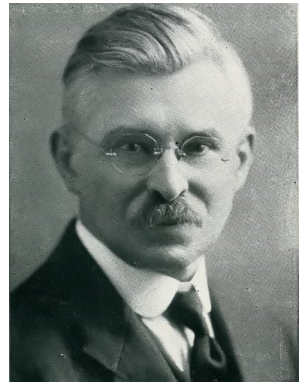
by Stephen Gurgel

Part 4

I. Patriotism, Apologetics, and Perseverance

Born in 1912, Reginald Siegler of Bangor, Wisconsin was only six years old at the height of the war, but he was well aware of the antagonism faced by his German church community. "I was old enough to think that people [who] were suspicious were creeping around the house and looking into [our] windows."¹ Reginald's father, Carl W. Siegler, the minister at St Paul's church in Bangor, also understood the issues at stake for his congregation. According to Reginald, "my father and mother often discussed the suspicions that were encountered, and... how careful they were to give nobody justification for being suspicious." For many Wisconsin Synod Lutherans, the burden weighed on their shoulders to disprove the notion that their church was an epicenter of disloyalty. This pressure caused a wide array of defensive actions from Lutherans to prove their loyalty and patriotism.

Some like Carl Siegler chose a direct method. R.M. Jones, an APL informant for the Justice Department, paid Siegler a visit in July 1918. He stated that Siegler's "pro-German attitude is strong enough to convince one that he is heart and soul with Germany."² Siegler had not made any public remarks to arouse suspicion, but this conclusion was drawn because he had "never been active in any move to aid the United States in the war." While confronting Siegler, Jones stated his belief that Lutheran ministers were "a menace to the country." Siegler stopped the lecture then and there. He retorted that he "hated to be classed...as a menace to the country." In his defense, Siegler stated that he was never one to make public speeches and was not qualified for that type of work. Instead, he called Jones's attention to his participation in patriotic programs and his encouragement to his congregation to buy Liberty Bonds and Thrift Stamps. Siegler also offered his rebuttal to Jones's statements on the language issue. He protested that the government was mistaken in attempting to bring about a change too fast. A middle ground was offered by Siegler, who suggested that the change be attempted over a course of three years to allow for transition within the congregation. Spirited retorts like this one did not always have their desired effect. However, in this case Jones closed his testimony with "the subject has not been far out of the way at any time."



Rev. Carl W. Siegler

While direct confrontation was not an option for most, Reginald Siegler and other German Lutherans used their actions to quell detractors. "I was aware there were people thinking I was the enemy," recalled Siegler, "I felt that they were foolish, and I participated in any activity that showed my support for the army and country."³ Even in a small town like Bangor, opportunities abounded for showcases of patriotism and loyalty. National holidays and Liberty Loan drives included demonstrations and parades in which many Lutherans of Bangor participated. The Ladies' Aid Society of the church assisted the Red Cross by sewing and collecting donations. In addition to this, they sewed together a service flag with around 25 stars representing members of the congregation serving in the war. Of those who served, one returned home with only one arm, and four paid the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Reverberations such as what happened in Bangor echoed across the Wisconsin Synod throughout the war. Whether their patriotic efforts to defeat Germany were genuine or for cover varied by the individual. The choice became much simpler once family and congregation members began serving in the war. Efforts to support their soldiers became the favorite method of contribution. Most congregations proudly erected service flags and posted honor rolls to pay tribute to the sacrifice of soldiers in the congregation. The Red Cross, by virtue of its sole purpose to provide welfare for soldiers, became the preferred program of Wisconsin Synod Lutherans to fund and participate. On the other hand, programs which conflicted with Lutheran goals, like the YMCA, received little support.⁴ Additionally, whenever a community attempted to bring churches together for patriotic displays, the Lutheran church obeyed conscience and stayed on the sideline. The Wisconsin Synod's search for a war service that was doctrinally acceptable is perfectly illustrated by its camp pastor program.

II. Soldiers and Camp Pastors

While the exact number of Wisconsin Synod "doughboys" was never tabulated, if the statistics compare similarly to Missouri Synod numbers, the total should be around 3,000.⁵ Many individual congregations hoisted service flags with over thirty stars. The stories of their courage and sacrifice provided congregations with much pride on the home front. It also caused difficulty for many families. Letters poured in to the writers of the *Gemeindeblatt* from family members wondering if they were allowed to write their soldiers in the German language. A few incidents of rejection spurred these questions. A train depot agent in Elkton, South Dakota, for example, refused to mail a letter from Julius Engel to his son, Walter, because it was written in German.⁶ Thankfully, when the Synod put the question to General Isaac Sherwood, he responded, "I don't believe any officer who is broad-minded and patriotic enough to appreciate the value of free speech and real patriotism, could possibly object to either fathers or mothers writing to their sons in the language in which they can best express their feelings and convictions."⁷ Nonetheless, the *Gemeindeblatt* felt the need to give further advice to parents corresponding with soldiers. For example, "If you write to soldiers in the army

or the navy, one should write the address as legibly as possible."⁸ The article also advised parents to put stamps on envelopes and to provide a full return address. While these steps may seem elementary, for many of these boys it was their first time away from home, and this may have been the first time parents needed to write their sons.

Their sons' extended absence from their religious community also worried parents and the church. The *Northwestern Lutheran* summarized these fears:

There is a real danger to the boys and therefore real needs. The separation from Christian homes and from the holy influences of the church is itself a most serious thing for any young man. The danger is doubly great when, separated from safe surroundings, he is encased among influences such as generally exist in army life...the strange and questionable atmosphere of the camp and army.⁹

The synod was then taxed with the problem of sustaining the church's religious culture for the soldiers scattered across the country. For starters, the synod was able to secure a pocket-sized English New Testament for every soldier, and even extras to share with others.¹⁰ Yet the issue remained of providing pastors for the soldiers. The simplified and cheaper route would have been to participate in the Lutheran Commission, a government subsidized chaplaincy program for Lutherans. Other synods pressured the Wisconsin Synod to join in this venture; the Norwegian Synod's J.A. Stubb urged Lutherans to be "one and dissoluble behind our boys," and that "we can return to our doctrinal, racial, or synodical differences after the war if we must."¹¹ Despite the financial and logistical benefits of this program, the Wisconsin Synod never seriously considered joining. A major fear within the synod also surfaced about the nature of the subsidized ministry programs. Said Wisconsin Synod minister Hans Moussa, "nearly all of the work was under management of sectarian (evangelical) organizations."¹² The Committee on Public Information even boasted that religious services at the YMCA camps "are so nondenominational, that a Mohammedan will find himself as much at home as a Protestant or Greek Catholic."¹³ Involvement in the government program therefore would invariably lead to participation in religious assimilation with denominations who were often antagonistic to Lutheran beliefs.

In its place, the Wisconsin Synod worked with the Missouri Synod and other members of the Synodical Conference to create the Lutheran Church Board for the Army and Navy. This organization would send these synods' own Lutheran ministers to serve the soldiers at their camps. With hundreds of training camps across the country, the task was daunting. Not only would numerous pastors need to leave their congregations for an unspecified period of time, but this program included a heavy price tag. As Wisconsin Synod president G.E. Bergemann explained to the Michigan District Convention,

A chaplain costs us monthly about \$200, not because their salaries are so exceptionally high, but because of the costly extras. Because of the great distances involved we had to buy Fords for several chaplains. We also have to supply our boys gratis such things as books, writing materials, and church periodicals.¹⁴

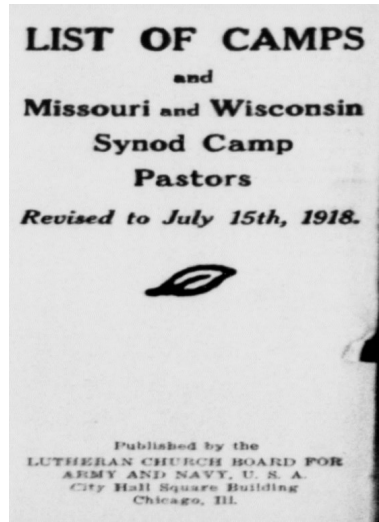
Another pricey aspect which Bergemann failed to mention was the construction of numerous "Lutheran centers" around the army camps. In many cases, the YMCA buildings, the place for official army chaplains, did not offer the Synodical Conference pastors any use of the building, or if they did, the time slot received was too inconvenient to conduct regular services. To remedy this, the Lutheran Church Board quickly assembled places for worship around the camps.¹⁵ In all, this camp pastor program cost roughly \$400,000. Considering the relative worth of the 1917 dollar, this figure translates to \$6 million in the early twenty-first century. This price tag would have been much higher and the task nearly impossible had it not been for the Missouri Synod, which had a footprint in the southern states where most of the army camps were located. This allowed many pastors from those areas to serve both their home congregation and the soldiers in the camps. Much credit is also due to the tremendous efforts of many camp pastors who served multiple army camps at great distances. Wisconsin Synod minister Arthur Sydow, for example, served seven different camps in the San Antonio area, and then found time to minister to soldiers in Laredo and Eagle Pass, Texas. William Beitz of Tucson, Arizona travelled to camps in Douglas and Nogales near the Mexican border, and somehow found time to minister to the camp up north in Prescott, Arizona, a roundtrip of over 700 miles. This lengthy traveling to serve the spiritual needs of Wisconsin Synod soldiers likely did not please members of the Fuel Administration.¹⁶

The need for a separate Lutheran mission to the soldiers was not self-evident to government officials. While discussing the Lutheran Church Board to another agent, G. Jones of the Justice Department commented, "It would appear...with regimental chaplains and YMCA workers, the troops would not suffer spiritually without [Lutheran] missionaries."¹⁷ Because of this judgment, nearly every aspect of the Lutheran Church Board came under suspicion and scrutiny. The Justice Department first focused on the money "presumably being raised for the support of Lutheran preachers enlisted in the service of the U.S. Army." Amazed that "every member of the church contributed from \$1.00 to \$5.00,"¹⁸ and that such collections were general throughout the German Lutheran churches, it was decided that "the use to which this fund is being applied may probably be the subject of investigation." Even though contact with Germany was strictly controlled through the Trading with the Enemy Act, officials still feared the prospect of Lutherans gathering large donations.

While the Lutheran Church Board fund raised eyebrows, the thought of German Lutheran ministers serving future soldiers sounded alarms for public officials. It was bad enough that Lutheran ministers "poisoned" efforts on the home front, but now it appeared to government officials that they were taking their seditious message on the road to the soldiers. One investigator noted that Synodical Conference "camp pastors with few exceptions refuse to preach patriotic sermons."¹⁹ Captain Lester testified before a Senatorial investigation that "great difficulty was experienced...on account of the activity of certain pro-German Lutheran clergymen in and about the camps among the soldiers."²⁰ Suspicions also arose that these camp pastors were reporting troop movements to Germany, with one official labeling the camp work of the Lutheran Church a "vast smooth running potential spy organization."²¹ The Department made investigations and gathered information for every single Lutheran Church Board camp pastor, and often used synod publications of camp pastor locations as the starting point.²² Investigators were to follow a four step process. First, locate the pastors who are or will be serving in or near a specified camp. Second, investigate the "nature of the activities of these men." Next, a subject should be determined loyal, disloyal or suspicious. And lastly, "if disloyal or suspected, state the facts upon which conclusion is based."²³

The criteria to make a camp pastor "pro-German," however, were especially vague. Even before the investigation of Pastor Arthur Sydow began, the case title read, "Rev. Arthur Sydow: Probable Pro-German."²⁴ Subtleties like this often show the disposition of agents making the investigation, and hence conclusions of "disloyal or suspected" should not surprise. Investigators heard rumors that Sydow spread stories of troop revolts on transport ships and that he told soldiers that the army should stay on American soil, but both turned out to be groundless. Despite the APL investigation which gave Sydow a "clean bill," the commanding officer at Camp Travis, San Antonio informed Sydow on 3 October 1918 that his services were no longer desired after October 27.²⁵

The creation of separate Lutheran Centers also raised suspicion, and after William Beitz established one at the University of Arizona in Tucson, an agent



The Justice Department made heavy use of this Lutheran Church Board Pamphlet, as indicated by numerous markings on the side.



Arthur Sydow with his wife

determined "this camp pastor will bear watching."²⁶ On another occasion, the Bureau of Investigation director A. Bruce Bielaski suggested that George Schmidt, an official of the Lutheran Army and Navy board, be kept under surveillance, noting that "in common with nearly all members of the Lutheran clergy he is an object of suspicion."²⁷ This guilty until proven innocent mentality also revealed itself in the investigation of the Missouri Synod pastor A.J. Soldan at the camp in Rockford, Illinois. The agent claimed "no one could be found who would testify to his loyalty," and based on this, felt "that an investigation as to loyalty of subject could best be made at the Leavenworth [Kansas] Penitentiary."²⁸

Many times, camp chaplains made the best informants. Rev. Carden, serving the Episcopal Church in Taylor, Texas, followed Missouri Synod pastor Arthur Hartmann and reported his activities to authorities.²⁹ While Wisconsin Synod camp pastors escaped arrests, a few Missouri Synod pastors were interned.³⁰ Paradoxically, if the Justice Department's main concern was the morale of the soldier, the internment of his spiritual counselor before he crossed the Atlantic to "save democracy" likely inflicted more doubt than any propaganda could have.

The war's end on 11 November 1918 was a welcomed blessing to the Lutheran Church Board. The war's short duration of 18 months allowed the program to avoid problems which may have surfaced over a prolonged war. A price tag of \$400,000 a year would have been financially unsustainable in a long war. The heavy work load of the camp pastors may have become too burdensome as well. Additionally, since war becomes more frustrating for belligerents as time passes, Lutheran camp pastors may have become scapegoats for setbacks in the war, and confrontations with the Justice Department may have multiplied. In a report after the war, the Justice Department declared that "the institution of camp-pastors is to be abolished, and the army chaplains attached to the military units are to take their place."³¹ Looking back, the synod did not have much good to say about the system in place, either:

Lutheran activities were sorely hampered in some cases by this unfortunate sectarian division of responsibility. We made the best of it and our work suffered a little, but it was humiliating at times to be dependent upon the good will of some YMCA secretary for opportunities to do our most essential work.³²

The camp pastor program met its end with enthusiasm from both the Synod and government officials, one of the few times both parties could agree about something.

III. Patriotism: Genuine, Awkward, and Ugly

Hans Moussa, one of the prominent writers for the *Northwestern Lutheran*, noticed a transition among his fellow Lutherans taking place only six months into the war. "It seems that this year we are trying to make up at one stroke the indifferences of former years," he observed.³³ He also noticed that the wartime program receiving the most enthusiasm was the Red Cross, and he approved: "It is well that there is general interest in the Red Cross. It is the only authorized national agency with an opportunity to soften the hardships of war." He even pointed out that the first local branch of the American Red Cross was organized at a Lutheran Church in 1881. Wisconsin Synod Lutherans' choice to support the Red Cross was plainly understandable and well-summarized by Moussa. Certainly, Wisconsin Synod Lutherans supported an array of government wartime programs, and many buried their animosity to the war and gave every effort for its successful conclusion. The line was drawn, however, whenever patriotic displays became excessive or required religious collaboration with those who rejected what the Synod confessed.

Red Cross work proliferated across the synod. In New Ulm, Minnesota, fifty three students at DMLC, over half of the student body, formed a Junior Red Cross chapter, and resourceful methods were used to fund the relief organization.³⁴ Fritz Reuter and Lydia Wagner composed "a national anthem," titled "America," to encourage donations to the Red Cross. The song was presented at a program which included the mixed choir, organ and piano. The song was considered such a success that the *Gemeindeblatt* advertised its sheet music for members to buy across the synod. Its lyrics exhibit a devoted love for their country:

America, most blessed land; Where freemen ever shall gather; Where high and low and rich and poor; United as man with man...; My country, my glorious, glorious land...³⁵

Lutherans in New Ulm perhaps felt extra incentive to display their loyalty for the United States ever since the draft meeting in July 1917. Unfortunately, events like the patriotic program at DMLC went seemingly unnoticed by the Minnesota Public Safety Commission, who were too busy looking for proof of disloyalty.

Ladies' Aid Societies, or *Frauvereins*, became essential to Wisconsin Synod congregations' work with the Red Cross. In Peshtigo, Wisconsin, an APL



St. Peter's Frauverein, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. These societies became the face of loyalty across the synod.

member visited St. Johannes to discover that every member of the congregation's *Frauverein* held membership in the Red Cross.³⁶ In Plymouth, Michigan, the *Frauverein* of St. Peter's Congregation became "determined to counteract the ignorant fanaticism of the hundred percenter Americans, who called everyone of German extraction a Hun."³⁷ They organized meetings every week to sew for the Red Cross and arranged clothing drives for war relief in Europe. A Red Cross flag was hung in the church parlor next to a service flag, the latter created by the society. These societies also took responsibility to provide care and holiday packages to their soldiers in camps across the country.³⁸

As previously demonstrated, Liberty Bond drives provoked some animosity among German Lutheran circles, especially early in the war. As the war progressed, however, Wisconsin Synod Lutherans displayed much more orga-



Rev. Otto Engel poses with St. Jacob's Frauverein in Norwalk, Wisconsin.

nized and enthusiastic support for Liberty Bonds. Government officials took notice, as a CPS official remarked, "This Liberty Loan is the best thing I know to change seditious people into patriots. A number of fellows that have sulked in their tents in the past, some of them decidedly pro-German, have even worked on the committee and are among our best hustlers."³⁹ Emmanuel Lutheran in Wellington, Minnesota held a church meeting where 52 of 57 eligible voting members attended.⁴⁰ Members of this meeting were asked to pay \$2.50 as soon as possible to buy bonds and war stamps. At Grace Lutheran in Milwaukee, the church accepted the US Secretary of Treasury McAdoo's request for churches to get involved in the Third Liberty Loan. At a congregational meeting, a synod member "explained this type of propaganda in convincing and clear ways how we as Lutherans, as patriots, should deal with this bond issue, and how the whole congregation should partake."⁴¹ The congregation decided to hang posters in the school and vestibule of the church "in order to bring the point across that one's money was needed." The pastor at Grace was even asked "to say appropriate words from the pulpit regarding this matter." While not all congregations would approve of Grace's promotion of bonds from the pulpit, their acquiescence in the matter shows how much outside pressure had taken a toll on a strong position taken by the Wisconsin Synod earlier in the war of non-pulpit participation in government propaganda.

The synod as a whole eventually felt obligated to organize and systematize work with Liberty Bond drives. The Committee on Public Information called for the enlistment "of all organized bodies in the coming campaign for the Third Liberty Loan." The Wisconsin Synod responded by designating a committee in Milwaukee to calculate the contribution of Wisconsin Synod Lutherans and to send a report to the CPI. Its director, George Creel, sent back this reply:

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter...and assure you that the so valued co-operation of the Lutheran Church along thoroughly organized lines in behalf of the Third Liberty Loan is most highly appreciated...To receive tabulation of final results as soon as possible will be greatly welcome, and is of great value, since it will enable us to embody same in our official report to the Secretary of Treasury.⁴²

Members of Wisconsin Synod congregations were told to report to their pastor or church committee to what measure they had taken part in the Loan, and that church was to gather this information and report it to the synod committee. The Wisconsin Synod committee ran into difficulty in receiving reports from all congregations, and pleaded in the *Northwestern Lutheran* that "a large number [of congregations] are still to be heard from." The final results are uncertain, but the committee claimed to be highly gratified by the

reports made by many Wisconsin Synod congregations. Officials of the synod were certainly anxious to see satisfactory results to refute those who doubted the loyalty of German Lutherans.

In total war, nearly every aspect of life can be made into a contribution to the war effort. Wisconsin Synod Lutherans found many other ways to support the United States. The *Gemeindeblatt* urged its readers to "save wheat, bread, sugar, oil, coal, and whatever else may be added." The publication decided to set an example for its readers by saving paper and ink through condensing its "Receipts" section from three columns to one and a half.⁴³ It later publicized a "thank you" to the government for refraining from "digging theology students for military service," for this would have caused many more vacancies than there already were.⁴⁴ Other Wisconsin Synod members publically put their loyalty on display. Professor M.J. Wagner, who spoke at the earlier New Ulm draft meeting, took part in a patriotic program on Lincoln's birthday and gave a speech entitled "Lincoln and Patriotic Address."⁴⁵ Upon a surprise visit from an APL agent, Pastor John Helmes of Menasha, Wisconsin showed membership cards of the Red Cross and Food Administration. When asked, he also furnished English copies of his sermons from the past two months. Fully convinced, the agent reported that "Rev. Helmes has been a capable supporter of the interests of this government in the successful prosecution of this war."⁴⁶ With the prospect of a visit from a government official always looming, it was prudent to blanket oneself with patriotic deeds.

Patriotic sentiments were not always expressed smoothly. A Wisconsin Synod pastor speaking in German to a crowd at Olivia, Minnesota spoke on the Matthew 22:21 text, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." Unfortunately, the member from the Commission of Public Safety heard, "So gebt dem Kaiser, was des Kaisers ist, und Gott was Gottes ist." Shortly afterward he was apprehended by the CPS, which tried to impose a fine for what they believed to be a pro-German speech. The pastor served as his own defense and exonerated himself by showing the CPS that the German word "Kaiser" did not refer to the German Kaiser, but rather a generic term denoting a ruler or king.⁴⁷ Another well-intentioned patriotic act gone wrong took place in Milwaukee, where a man named C.D. Reichle thought he could honor both church and state by displaying an American flag with the words "Ev. Salem's Gemeinde" sewed on. After an APL agent informed him of the statute forbidding the desecration of the American flag, the flag was quickly removed.⁴⁸

Because Wisconsin Synod Lutherans differed in their patriotic enthusiasm, some difficulties within congregations surfaced. The most unfortunate occurred at Rev. August Stock's congregation in Neosho, WI. Pastor Stock's participation in the war effort could make any APL member jealous. He organized the Home Guard Reserves in the town and encouraged congregation members to participate. He also put himself in charge of selling Liberty Bonds

in the town of Neosho and marketed War Savings Stamps to his congregation. In church, he organized a special collection to purchase numerous flags to decorate the church and preached on patriotic themes. At a time when synod churches were under investigation, these maneuvers provided sorely needed protection to the congregation. Yet for a church body which reluctantly entered the war and strictly guarded the church and state barrier, some conflict was inevitable.⁴⁹

Difficulties already arose by August of 1917. Many members of the congregation felt Stock was overbearing as he pushed the congregation to participate in patriotic activities. Rumors even spread that Stock reported to authorities every member who refused to participate in the Home Guard and Liberty Loan drives. Herman Schuett, the president of the congregation, filed a protest in October 1917 to Rev. Carl Buenger, the president of the Southeastern Wisconsin District of the Synod. Buenger and another minister visited the congregation to investigate the situation, but were unable to create peace. Two days after the visit, a Mr. Petsch and fourteen other members of the congregation sent a letter to Wisconsin Synod President, G.E. Bergemann, claiming they were unsatisfied with the investigation, and argued for more concrete action against Stock.⁵⁰



Rev. August Stock

During the following months, the strife escalated. After Stock dismissed a woman, Mrs. Griep, from the congregation for penning a public letter against him, she and some other members transferred to the synod congregation in nearby Woodland, Wisconsin. This caused tension between Stock and Rev. Lescow of Woodland, who admitted Mrs. Griep to his congregation against the protest of Stock. Buenger looked to transfer Stock to another congregation, but as he wrote to synod president Bergemann in February, "None of the other [district] presidents will nominate him, and I do not have any vacancies. I am afraid he digs his grave there." In a last attempt to remedy the situation, Buenger wrote a letter "in bruederlicher Liebe" (in brotherly love) to Stock in March. He pleaded with Stock to solely preach the gospel and to try to let the situation burn out. Stock was apparently unmoved, as Buenger wrote to Stock two months later, "It seems to me that you slandered me as well as Pastor Lescow to your church members by giving a one-sided report why the [synod] has not acted in the affair of Mrs. Griep." Buenger made another visit to Neosho in May, but the situation was clearly worsening beyond his control.⁵¹

The issue finally reached its culmination at a congregational meeting on 7 July 1918. As the meeting was about to close, a member, Frank Redlin, rose

and said that certain members asked of him as deacon to request that Stock desist in his activities with the Home Guard. Upon this request, Rev. Stock immediately demanded the congregation to close the official meeting, "as I would not allow any war talk in an official meeting." But the congregation's president, Herman Schuett, responded that the congregation had a right to demand this promise. Frank Redlin and August Otto reprimanded Stock and said that the congregation called him as their pastor and not the state, and that he should not serve both congregation and state. Another member, Robert Schmidt, arose and said if Stock did not stop all his war activities, "the congregation will be sent to pieces." In his defense, Stock claimed some of his positions were appointed to him from government officials, and he had to willingly obey the government. Mr. Otto replied that he "ought to shirk those things as other ministers do," and if he kept these activities up "our whole congregation would be laughed at and mocked at by the neighboring members of other neighboring congregations."⁵²

The quarrel progressively became more intense. After Stock continually refused to desist from his activities, Frank Redlin rose and spoke, "if you do not give us that promise today, I will not consider you as my minister and will resign as a deacon." Two other members also confirmed his statement. Before Stock could respond, Otto, Schmidt, and August Nell then asked Stock what he expected the congregation to do when Stock had to spend three weeks with the Home Guard Reserves at Camp Douglas. Stock denied that he was obligated to make such a trip, since the Reserves were only an auxiliary to the State Guards. Mr. Redlin seconded the charge, however, and claimed he was certain that the Reserves also must go three weeks to Camp Douglas. Thereupon the meeting moved to the parsonage, where Stock showed official letters from the Adjutant General supporting his argument. Since it was getting late, a member made the motion to close the official meeting. Stock seconded the motion and insisted upon it. It was decided to postpone the matter until Tuesday. Later that evening, however, after an English language service, Rev. Stock handed in a written resignation to the deacons of the church. Stock described his decision to resign with the following remarks:

I loved my congregation but I love my country more...yes that Mr. Herman Schuett and Mr. Frank Redlin were my most intimate friends, but when my most intimate friends in the spur of the moment try to barr [*sic*] me from doing my duties to my country, friendship ceases and my country first. I cannot even now forget the many personal favors of my most intimate friends...but it is my painful duty to say even to them: My country first. Only the omniscient God knows what battles in my heart I am fighting to take this view and action.⁵³

The events at St. Paul in Neosho brought about an investigation by the

APL the following day. Stock and the prominent participants in the meeting were interviewed separately. Fortunately, the unnamed agent was genuinely sympathetic to all sides. He even provided a translator for two of the four members who had difficulty communicating in English. He understood the viewpoint of the congregation as he remarked, "While Rev. Stock is a patriotic man and a hundred percent American I am afraid he is somewhat hysterical and has antagonized certain members of his congregation." He was also impressed with Frank Redlin and Herman Schuett's holdings in Liberty Bonds and War Savings Stamps, about \$400 each. He concluded that the members of the congregation did not object to Stock's activities from want of patriotism, but instead that such activities were provoking difficulties in church doctrinal matters, and this was the source of the objections. It is possible this APL agent understood Lutheran doctrine better than most agents; others, as previously shown, could never grasp that Lutherans withheld participation in some activities for religious convictions. The sad account of August Stock's resignation demonstrates the difficult situation Wisconsin Synod Lutherans encountered because of the all-encompassing war.⁵⁴

IV. Apologetics

Across the Midwest, the numerous State Councils of Defense tried to outdo their counterparts in Americanization legislation. South Dakota and Iowa forbade the use of German in all public gatherings and over the telephone.⁵⁵ The Nebraska State Council of Defense outlawed the use of any non-English language for all subjects, including religion, in all public and private schools.⁵⁶ The Minnesota Commission of Public Safety forbade all non-citizens from teaching in both public and private schools. Wisconsin banned German from all wireless stations, and shortly afterward APL agents dismantled Wisconsin Synod stations at the Lutheran *Altenheim* and *Kinderheim* in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.⁵⁷ Nearly every Midwestern state had bills pending in the legislature to duplicate these laws. States like Michigan, Nebraska, and Wisconsin circulated bills requiring attendance in public schools until the eighth grade. Amid the seemingly unending wave of state laws concerning the German language and parochial schools, German Lutherans sensed that their habits and institutions were in serious danger.⁵⁸ Across the synod, leaders and lay members took up the pen and defended their way of life from the "Americanizers" who attempted to use the war as a harbinger for change. The two types of works which appeared most often in the *Gemeindeblatt*, *Northwestern Lutheran*, and the *Theologische Quartalschrift* focused on the German language and the parochial school system.

A favorite method for these writers was to highlight a prejudiced article and dismantle it. A writer in the *Northwestern Lutheran* targeted an article in the Minneapolis Journal that advocated for the abolishment of foreign languages in newspapers, church services, and to insist "socially and legally" on

the use of the English language in America. The *Northwestern Lutheran* writer retorted, "We cannot understand by what process of reasoning a person at this time in our history should become nervous about the predominance of the English language in the United States," and later mocked, "We cannot believe that the editorial writer in the *Journal* has carefully considered what he wrote, but it must have been written in a weak moment of war fanaticism without careful consideration."⁵⁹

Writers often used American war propaganda to justify their position on the language question. One of the writers in the *Gemeindeblatt* put it aptly:

One of the freedoms we are fighting for is freedom of speech. It has been America's proud reputation, that every alien immigrant can use any language to write, speak and read, and indeed, America has its reward, for never has a nation of so many different types of people revealed such loyalty and unity to America now in its current crisis.⁶⁰

The article then pointed out how autocratic regimes in Europe outlawed the language of the enemy, subtly hinting that the United States was Prussianizing itself by implementing these laws. When writers were not busily defending the German language against outsiders, they were encouraging German Lutherans to stay strong despite outside pressure. "Just now we need to emphasize and exercise our Constitutional rights of free speech and free press. Let us not be intimidated to give up this unalienable right," wrote the *Northwestern Lutheran*.⁶¹ The *Gemeindeblatt* was much more blunt: "He is even a coward who lets anyone dictate anything to him."⁶²

Despite the apologetics for the use of the German language, most synod leaders understood that a transition to English was inevitable in the long run. A generational gap existed in language usage, with the younger more adept and comfortable using the English language for religious purposes. Despite this inevitability, the hope remained that the church would steer clear of the influences which often came hand-in-hand with the English language in the church. Seminary Professor August Pieper summarized these fears well:

In the German language lie all the roots of genuine, solid, strong Lutheranism and Christianity, in the English, not one. Tear this plant forcibly from the soil of the German language, and it will become a dry tumbleweed driven by the wind against the fence. We must *hold fast to the German language in church and school* as long as there still are those who can be edified better in German than in English. In our training-schools for pastors and teachers we must cling to the German language *until Judgment Day*...O that the Lutheran Church, especially as it becomes an English speaking church would guard against this moralistic gospel and common sense Christianity of the Reformed as against the

devil himself! O that we might say to them until Judgment Day as Luther said to Zwingli, "*You have a different spirit than we!*" This gospel of the sectarian churches is nothing else than the authority of the blind but proud human reason over the Gospel of Christ. If we as a Synod were already dominated by the Reformed spirit of reason, then no study of Scripture, be it ever so intense, could produce a spiritual renewal in us, but would become mere modern criticism of the Bible and rob us of our faith.⁶³

Even before the United States entered the war, Wisconsin Synod Lutherans sensed an animosity toward their school system. "There is an element in our American society which nurses a sullen resentment against every form of private and parochial schools," wrote Moussa in 1915.⁶⁴ The same forces which tried to undermine their parochial school system with the Bennett Law in 1890 reemerged during the First World War, and the rhetoric remained mostly unchanged. They claimed Lutheran parochial schools did not Americanize their students, that German language instruction left them ill-equipped for life, and that only one common school system could truly unite the country ideologically. Rev. Fred Graeber could see past the rhetoric: "The enemy is employing whatever our troublous times afford in the way of camouflage and is making another assault on our constitutional liberty."⁶⁵ When it came to their parochial schools, Wisconsin Synod Lutherans did not reject outright an "American viewpoint" for their pupils, but they flatly repudiated Americanization in morals and religion, and used their parochial school system as a bulwark against it.⁶⁶

Wisconsin Synod Lutherans understood who was behind these parochial school laws, which they claimed were "backed by the Reformed sectarian element and by the foes of our church generally." As a case in point, the *Northwestern Lutheran* referred to the proposed Blair Educational Amendment in the Senate. The amendment would empower Congress to enforce upon the public school the teaching of Christian religion, "and its object is to open the way for the national power to eliminate all parochial schools, and to take control of religious as well as secular education of the children of our nation." Senator Blair did not hide his intentions, and the author quoted one of his arguments: "If this idea of church authority should come to permeate the public school system, the parochial school would disappear."⁶⁷

As further proof of "sectarian" church involvement, the *Northwestern Lutheran* printed verbatim the sermon of A.A. De Larme, pastor of the First Baptist Church in Omaha, Nebraska:

I most heartily approve of some of the bills regarding the public schools of the state that have been recently introduced in the legislature. One of the most important, in my estimation, is that introduced by Senator Per-

ry Reed of Hamilton County, requiring boys from seven to sixteen years and girls from seven to seventeen years of age to attend the public schools during the full school year.⁶⁸

While citing his reasons for the abolishment of church schools, the preacher said, "Parochial schools devote considerable time to the teaching of antiquated creeds and dogmas that are anachronisms to this age. If taught at all, these things should be taught at home." Another *Northwestern Lutheran* article featured a Detroit lodge, which it believed was behind "this notorious anti-church school amendment that it hopes to spring on the voters this fall." The article shared a petition created by the society with the following argument:

We do not believe that there is anything in the Lutheran creed that would suffer, should their children be obliged to attend the public school; but if there is anything in their doctrine that would suffer, the sooner they abandon that part of their doctrine, the better for the Lutheran children and the people that adhere to it.⁶⁹

When defending their schools, writers most often appealed to the Constitutional right of parents to decide which education is best for their child. This argument became essential as states considered laws to make attendance at public schools compulsory. "The Constitution does not take from parents the right to train their children in their own Christian faith; nor does it take from them the right to repudiate compulsory acceptance of public teachers, high and low, whose chief business is to undermine the Christian faith of the children and the youth of the land," quoted the *Northwestern Lutheran*. No one, argued Rev. John Brenner, should enjoy a government-instituted monopoly over the young minds of the nation. "The inhibition of Church schools, whether parochial or academic, by the state is distinctly unconstitutional and un-American."⁷⁰

The verbal and legislative onslaught, however, continued to pour on parochial schools as the war dragged on, and many Wisconsin Synod members got involved in the struggle. On 13 January 1918, the *Milwaukee Journal* quoted a German Baptist pastor from Milwaukee, who said, "I absolutely disapprove of the parochial school, where the point of view and the language of the old country is kept up, and the children do not learn to think *in American terms*."⁷¹ Later in the article, a German Methodist pastor gave this tribute: "Our church has never believed in the parochial school, because we wanted the children to become thoroughly Americanized in the Public School." Anna Hoppe, a former Wisconsin Synod parochial student, came to the defense of the Lutheran parochial school and used herself, "a patriotic American," as evidence of its effectiveness. "Lutheran schools were not founded for the pur-

pose of maintaining the German language, but for rooting and grounding the children entrusted to their care in the infallible Word of the Lord," said Hoppe. The virtues inculcated were not specifically German, but "Christian virtues." She closed her article with a prayer:

God bless our Lutheran parochial schools, these bulwarks of Christian life, Christian citizenship, Christian patriotism, these staunch advocates of the greatest American principles: the separation of church and state... these defenders against the countless false doctrines and Isms of the day, which lay traps to ensnare and beguile the Church's treasures: its children.⁷²

When it came to the persecution of German Lutherans, Hans Moussa concluded the "Lutheran" half of the term played a more important role: "It has nothing, or very little, to do with the German character of the Lutheran church."⁷³ Instead, Moussa pointed out the offensive nature of Lutheranism to the "self-appointed guardians and exponents of American liberty and tolerance." First, Lutheranism's outspoken criticism of lodge and fraternalism often created animosity. Secondly, claimed Moussa, "Our policy of tenaciously clinging to our own schools" caused conflict as well. But most of all, "our refusal to be party to the unionism which the so called American churches are forever substituting for Christianity caused critics to grow peevish because we sometimes refuse to give encouragement to efforts which they heartily approve." Moussa may have somewhat downplayed the role of the anti-German sentiment during the war, but his conclusions about Lutheranism have much support. Another *Northwestern Lutheran* article was cynical about attempts to argue the Lutheran position in the war "Blank stares and frowns greeted every attempt to make plain that the Lutheran church, second to no other in its devotion to the state, did not propose to compromise its own faith by adopting every view any government official chose to promulgate."⁷⁴ The remedy to this, they claimed, was to stay strong to Lutheran principles, as Moussa argued, "Those unfortunates who try to escape from persecution by outwardly conforming to the wishes of the persecutors, are not winning the good will they seek. They are not respected but suspected." Contrarily, "Conscious of your own worth and public righteousness, you will win the respect of our enemy if you convince him, by remaining true to your principles, that you were never wrong."

While apologetics in the *Gemeindeblatt* and the *Northwestern Lutheran* encouraged German Lutherans, these publications had very little possibility of being read by the persecutors and detractors. The *Northwestern Lutheran* understood this: "We know little or nothing about those things which we instinctively dislike. They do not like us, therefore they do not want to know anything about us." The best apologetics, therefore, occurred on the individual scale:

There is but one way to combat the foulmouthed slanderer: begin at home. Do not attempt to effect sweeping change by publishing your sentiments broadcast, but go to the man next door and find out where he heard that last bit of slander...You have your Council of Defense. These men are human. Most of them decent. Hardly any know much about Lutheran affairs. Don't sit at home and mope about the injustice of it all; seek out the best men on the Council and talk it over with them. They will be grateful for every correction you make of their mistaken notions.⁷⁵

The best remedy for the injustice, however, was acceptance of the persecution, even rejoicing. The Michigan District Convention happily decreed, "If our Christianity arouses no opposition, we should question ourselves: Are we indeed followers of that Christ who shall be a sign that it is spoken against?" Lutherans, therefore, need only rejoice in their sufferings and to persevere through them.⁷⁶

V. Perseverance

Despite protests, many bills became law which severely restricted worship and school practices of Wisconsin Synod Lutherans. Even when laws were not in place, many APL members or other vigilantes tried to enforce change as they saw fit. Wisconsin Synod Lutherans used several different methods to cope with these changes. Sometimes even civil disobedience was advocated. "It is Christian duty to obey the law of the land; it is the duty of government to rule according to the law of the land. The government that nullifies the constitution under which it holds power has forfeited the right to the obedience of its citizens."⁷⁷ Moussa later reminded his readers that Martin Luther practiced civil disobedience when authorities tried to compromise his faith. This steadfastness was not without controversy, and one incident even found its way to the Supreme Court in Washington D.C.

With the extremity of anti-German laws varying between the states, borders between these states created opportunities for perseverance and conflict. Julius Engel's congregation in Elkton, South Dakota was forbidden use of the German language by the South Dakota legislature. After Engel made this announcement to his congregation, many members could be seen kneeling in the benches, crying and praying. Elkhorn's location and small size had allowed Engel and the congregation to previously converse almost exclusively in the German language. Engel was



*Rev. Julius Engel,
brother of Otto
Engel*

neither proficient nor conversant in the English language, and he expressed his difficulty in a letter to his parents in Milwaukee: "Right now I conduct all my services in the English language. What that means to me you have no idea. I must have the dictionary in hand the whole week and if I should deliver the sermon freely I must read it."⁷⁸ Since Elkhorn was just a few miles away from the Minnesota border, however, the congregation bypassed the South Dakota law by holding German services in Minnesota. One of the member's farms on that side became the favorite meeting place for the Lutherans at Elkhorn until the conclusion of the war.⁷⁹

The actions of the congregation in Elkhorn and other German Lutherans near the border angered Minnesota residents. Charles Chrisman wrote a letter of protest to the Minnesota Commission on Public Safety:

Dear Sirs: Enclosed find copy of the South Dakota order forbidding the use of German in that state. The result of this is that they come over to our side of the line and hold meetings in that jargon. If you are unable to make such an order for our entire state could you not cover the counties adjoining the state line? We have enough traitors living on our side without furnishing asylum for criminals from Dakota...Leniency does no good with those public enemies. Why not try some of the only medicine that reaches them: Force?⁸⁰

Chrisman then listed location where Lutherans had been gathering, most likely in the hope that agents of the CPS or APL would pay them a visit. Unaware to Chrisman, the APL had already visited Engel's congregation, where they dejectedly reported that he "preached the Bible from his pulpit and nothing else."⁸¹ To Chrisman's disappointment, no law passed in Minnesota to restrict the use of German for worship in Minnesota.

The German Lutherans in Pipestone, Minnesota, persevered through their crisis via compromise. E.N. Prentice, the minister at First Presbyterian Church in Pipestone, had it in for the Lutheran church ever since they declined to hold a joint patriotic religious procession, and instead determined to "pull off a so called patriotic rally at one of the country homes."⁸² The Lutherans at St. Paul in Pipestone had recently remodeled their church, and were planning a dedication service on 25 August 1918. Prentice and others tried to see to it that not one word of German would be spoken at that service, and threatened to use force if necessary. The congregation had used German exclusively in their worship up to that point, but Pastor Bonhoff agreed to split the service evenly between English and German. This somewhat abated the pressure, but Prentice was not pleased. He and another member of his church wrote Minnesota governor Burnquist pleading for intervention:

I assure you, my dear Governor, that I speak the sentiment of the men

of Pipestone County who willingly pledge their lives, their property, and their sacred honor for the defense of America in imploring you to immediately issue a proclamation permitting the use of the American language only in any public assembly in the State of Minnesota. Of course it is the hun [*sic*] and his language that hurts us the most and does the most damage and we plead with you to stop it at once.⁸³

Prentice and his church member subtly hinted that unless the Commission intervened, mob rule may intercede on behalf of the American position. "If they undertake to hold the services in German," said Prentice "they will in all probability be dealt with by a righteously indignant community." His member, J.H. Robson, considered force a foregone conclusion, and promised if the Commission flexed its muscle, "we will see that it is in force...with the use of less force than would be necessary without a proclamation."⁸⁴ Hans K. Mousa's earlier prediction that those who conform will nonetheless endure persecution came to fruition in Pipestone, Minnesota.

A very effective method that German Lutherans employed to persevere was to work together as a religious community to ward off attacks. The Missouri Synod set up a Bureau of Defense to assist congregations in the Synodical Conference "during the present crisis." The Bureau's duty was to investigate where persecution existed and to support congregations in need. The Bureau's objectives included the following:

1. To assume the official representation of our congregation and our synodical interests before our State authorities wherever a situation of distress arises;
2. To prepare and disseminate suitable literature to exhibit the attitude of our church on every moot question, and to rebut any erroneous or slanderous reports about our Synod;
3. To aid our people in making proper reply to such reports wherever they appear in the public press;
4. To advise our people as to their conduct whenever their cooperation is required at public meetings and demonstrations, and religious scruples arise whether they may conscientiously do so;⁸⁵

The Bureau also sent out a questionnaire to schools in the Synodical conference and tried to gauge the level of hostility each school was facing from the community. The common defense of German Lutheran institutions followed less organized channels as well. When the Axel-Johnson bill was being discussed in Madison, Wisconsin to eliminate foreign languages in all state schools, a large crowd of objectors arrived at the state capitol, including a significant bloc of Synodical Conference Lutherans. Ernest von Briesen of the

Wisconsin Synod made the principal address before the legislative committee, emphasizing the injustice of interfering with the rights of parents in the education of their children. Wisconsin chose to maintain freedom of language in religious instruction.⁸⁶

While the stories of German Lutheran patriotism and perseverance are numerous, nothing could signify these virtues quite like the soldiers fighting across the Atlantic. Hans Moussa understood this, and after the war he urged congregations to use the soldiers to personify the patriotism of German Lutherans:

Nearly every church has a service flag and an honor roll. Now...would be the time to make them a permanent and easily available record...Tell when they went, where they trained, to which part of the army they were assigned, and if they went to France, in what actions they were engaged. Tell of their wounds and hospital experiences...⁸⁷

Lest the historical record get it wrong, Moussa was convinced these accounts could serve as a rebuttal. "[They] would be a constant reminder that the Lutheran church did not fail its civic duties in the trying times of 1917-1918." This display could also help the church persevere in the uncertain years after the war, as Moussa claimed, "If we do something of this kind we will not be molested by officious 'patriotic' organizations." Moussa and his fellow German Lutherans hoped this would not be necessary, and prayed that peace and tranquility would return to the church in the following years.

If these war memorials served as the only testament to the Wisconsin Synod's reaction to the First World War, they would severely gloss over the ambiguities. In the early days of the war, many members in anger and dismay openly clashed with an equally hostile "war party." This culminated in the anti-draft movement at New Ulm and the anti-Espionage Act expressions of Otto Engel's American Liberty League. As German Lutheran ministers and members moved into the Justice Department's short list, this combativeness could not last. It is clear that many of the positive war contributions were brought about by the "stick" instead of the "carrot." This should not take anything away from the expressions of patriotism from the synod, however. This was simply a different brand of patriotism than that espoused by mainstream America. It advocated American ideologies such as freedom of conscience and religion, and took up the role of guardians of these principles. A strict focus on the dissent would also do a complete disservice to the thousands of Wisconsin Synod Lutherans who complied with the draft or volunteered their lives for their adopted country. As Rev. Palechek told an agent, "our young men will cross the sea and fight, but they will never approve of the war."⁸⁸ Otto Engel's nephew, Walter Engel, fits Palechek's description. During March 1918, Walter helped Otto distribute pamphlets for the Socialist Party—which advocated a

quick or immediate peace. Walter was then drafted one month later, whereby he reported and traveled to France for combat.⁸⁹ This sense of duty for these Lutherans usually trumped personal indignation.

Endnotes

1. Reginald Siegler, interview by author, La Crosse, WI, 5 July 2012, 1-2. Reginald Siegler, interview by author, La Crosse, WI, 5 July 2012, 1-2.
2. Chas. I. Rukes Report, 18 July 1918, OG 241152.
3. Reginald Siegler, interview by author, La Crosse, WI, 5 July 2012, 2-3.
4. Hans K. Moussa, "War Memorials," *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:24 (1 December 1918), 188.
5. Missouri Synod figures located in Julius Rosin Report, 3 December 1918, OG 284018.
6. Otto Engel, "The Anti-German Spirit Experienced by German Americans during World War I," *WELS Historical Institute Journal* 14 (1996), 38.
7. "Ist es erlaubt, an unsere Jungen in Heer und Flotte deutsche Briefe zu schreiben?" *Gemeindeblatt* 53:11 (26 May 1918), 167.
8. "Winke für solche, die an Soldaten schreiben," *Gemeindeblatt* 53:18 (1 Sep 1918), 279.
9. "A Real Danger," *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:5 (10 March 1918), 34.
10. Hans Moussa, "Has Your Soldier His Testament?" *Northwestern Lutheran* 4:17 (7 Sep 1917) 129.
11. Mark Braun, "Being good Americans and better Lutherans: Synodical Conference Lutherans and the Military Chaplaincy," *WELS Historical Institute Journal* 19 (2001), 27-28.
12. "Now is the Time to Say it," *Northwestern Lutheran* 6:15 (27 July 1919), 115.
13. John Brenner, "Why we do not Cooperate," *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:4 (24 February 1918), 31; Committee on Public Information: Division of Four Minute Men, "Maintaining Morals and Morale," *Official Bulletin* 19, (12 November 1917), 12.
14. Bergemann letter found in Edward C. Fredrich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans: A History of the Single Synod, Federation, and Merger* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1992) 137.
15. "Unsere 'Lutheran Centers'" *Gemeindeblatt* 29:20 (29 September 1918), 310-311.
16. Camp Pastor List Located in DOJ Files, OG 281118.
17. Special Agent in Charge Chas. Jones to John K. Wrenn, 11 December 1917, OG 112360.
18. E.B. Sisk Report, 8 August 1918, OG127609.
19. Report: Alleged German Activities, OG 37083, p. 33, 62.

20. U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Judiciary, *Hearings on Brewing and Liquor Interests and German and Bolshevik Propaganda*, 66th Cong., 1st sess., 1919, p. 1788.
21. Henry W. McLarty Report, 7 January 1919, OG 341691.
22. Confiscated Camp Pastor List located in DOJ files, OG 281118.
23. Wm. Neunhoffer Report, "Activities of Lutheran Ministers and Camp Pastors in the Southern Department," 21 November 1918, OG 37083.
24. Wm. Neunhoffer Report, "Rev. Arthur Sydow," 12 July 1918, OG 237146.
25. Louis De Nette Report, 1 October 1918, OG 237146.
26. Report: Alleged Violation of Conscription Act, 24 August 1917, OG 37082.
27. G. C. Van Dusen to Bielaski, 26 July 1918, OG 243145.
28. Report: Alleged German Activities, OG 37083, p. 58.
29. Ward E. Thompson Report, 8 July 1918, OG 236110.
30. Report: Alleged Violation of Conscription Act, 24 August 1917, OG 37082, p. 38.
31. *Ibid*, 117.
32. Hans K. Moussa, "Now is the Time to Say it," *Northwestern Lutheran* 6:15 (27 July 1919), 115.
33. Hans K. Moussa, "The American National Red Cross," *Northwestern Lutheran* 4:17 (7 September 1917), 134-135.
34. Morton Schroeder, "Adolph Ackermann, Chauvinism, and Free Speech," *WELS Historical Institute Journal* 2 (1984), 16.
35. *Ibid*, 16; "Buchertisch," *Gemeindeblatt* 53:9 (28 April 1918), 140.
36. A.A. Viall Report, 6 April 1918, OG 172536.
37. WLS Archives, Plymouth Folder, *Church History of St. Peter, Plymouth*, 27.
38. J.W. Behnken, "The Home congregation and Her Boy Under the Flag," *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:10 (19 May 1918), 79.
39. Thos. E. Cashman to CPS Sec. H.W. Libby, 103.L.8.2F, Folder 101, CPS Records.
40. Engel, 41.
41. Quarterly Meeting Minutes of Grace Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, WI, 11 April 1918.
42. F. Graeber, "Report on the Third Liberty Loan!" *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:11 (2 June 1918), 82.
43. "Sparen!" *Gemeindeblatt* 53:3 (1 February 1918), 42-43.
44. "Das Theologische Seminar," *Gemeindeblatt* 53:13 (23 June 1918), 199-200.
45. Schroeder, 16.
46. Wm. H. Steiner Report, "Rev. John Helmes," 29 April 1918, OG 186773.
47. Engel, 42.
48. A.A. Viall Report, 23 February 1918, OG 155126.
49. J.C. McFetridge Report, "Rev. A.C. Stock, et. al.," 2 July 1918, OG 263974, p. 1-3.

50. J.C. McFetridge Report, "Rev. A.C. Stock, et. al.," 2 July 1918, OG 263974, p. 1-3; C. Buenger to A. Toepel, 24 August 1917, WLS Archives, Neosho Folder. G.E. Bergemann to C. Buenger, 29 October 1917, *ibid*; C. Buenger to A.C. Stock, 6 December 1917, *ibid*.
51. C. Buenger to August Petsch, 9 February 1918, WLS Archives, Neosho Folder; C. Buenger to G.E. Bergemann, 25 February 1918, *ibid*; C. Buenger to Rev. C. Lescow, 6 March 1918, *ibid*; C. Buenger to A.C. Stock, 11 March 1918, *ibid*; C. Buenger to E. Griep, 10 May 1918, *ibid*; G.E. Bergemann to St. Paul Congregation, Neosho, WI, 10 May 1918, *ibid*; C. Buenger to A.C. Stock, 29 May 1918, *ibid*.
52. J.C. McFetridge Report, "Rev. A.C. Stock, et. al.," 2 July 1918, OG 263974, p. 1-3. This account comes from the testimony of Stock to the APL agent in charge of this case. This account was shown to the members in attendance and they all agreed that it gave an accurate account.
53. J.C. McFetridge Report, "Rev. A.C. Stock, et. al.," 2 July 1918, OG 263974, p. 3.
54. J.C. McFetridge Report, "Rev. A.C. Stock, et. al.," 2 July 1918, OG 263974, p. 5-6.
55. Engel, 41.
56. "Enemies of Lutheran Schools in Nebraska," *Northwestern Lutheran* 6:3 (9 February 1919), 21-22.
57. Wm. S. Fitch Report, "Wireless Stations," 28 April 1917, OG 14300.
58. "Wie haben wir unsere schulen einzurlichen," *Gemeindeblatt* 53:17 (18 August 1918), 265; F. Graeber, "Danger Threatens," *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:14 (14 July 1918), 107.
59. "Use the American Language," *Northwestern Lutheran* 4:10 (21 May 1917), 78.
60. "Uber die Frage der Sprachen," *Gemeindeblatt* 53:13 (23 June 1918), 202-203.
61. "Use the American Language," *Northwestern Lutheran* 4:10 (21 May 1917), 78.
62. "Obrigkeit und Sprache," *Gemeindeblatt* 53:16 (4 August 1918), 253.
63. August Pieper, "The True Reconstruction of the Church," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 62 (1965), 194. Emphasis is his.
64. "Sullen Resentment," *Northwestern Lutheran* 2:15 (21 August 1915), 127.
65. F. Graeber, "Danger Threatens," *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:14 (14 July 1918), 107.
66. F. Graeber, "Un-American Legislation," *Northwestern Lutheran* 6:5 (9 March 1919), 38-39.
67. John Jenny, "Would Eliminate Parochial Schools," *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:8 (21 April 1919), 61-62.
68. F. Graeber, "Intolerance," *Northwestern Lutheran* 6:7 (6 April 1919), 50.
69. F. Graeber, "Un-American Legislation," *Northwestern Lutheran* 6:5 (9 March 1919), 38-39.

70. John Brenner, "Our Schools," *Northwestern Lutheran* 2:15 (7 Aug 1915), 119-120.
71. Anna Hoppe, "A Defense of the Lutheran Parochial School," *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:2 (27 January 1918), 12-13.
72. Anna Hoppe, "A Defense of the Lutheran Parochial School," *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:2 (27 January 1918), 12-13.
73. Hans K. Moussa, "Are We to be Persecuted?" *Northwestern Lutheran* 4:15 (7 August 1917), 115.
74. Hans K. Moussa, "Again, Church and State," *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:26 (29 December 1918), 202.
75. "Fellow Citizens," *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:10 (19 May 1918), 73.
76. "Proceedings of the Michigan Dist. Synod Assembled at Scio, Mich, 1918," *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:15 (28 July 1918), 114.
77. Hans K. Moussa, "The Birth of Freedom," *Northwestern Lutheran* 4:21 (7 Nov 1917), 171-173.
78. Engel 38; Julius Engel was the brother of aforementioned Otto Engel.
79. *Ibid*, 38-39.
80. Charles E. Chrisman to Public Safety Commission, 24 Aug 1918, 103.L.9.2F, CPS Records.
81. Willis Toland Report, 28 May 1917, OG 21396.
82. E.N. Prentice to J.A.A. Burnquist, 16 August 1918, 103.L.9.2F, Box 15, CPS Records.
83. E.N. Prentice to J.A.A. Burnquist, 16 August 1918, 103.L.9.2F, Box 15, CPS Records.
84. J.H. Robson to Gov. Burnquist, 16 August 1918, 103.L.9.2F, Box 15, CPS Records.
85. Julius Rosin Report, "Synodical Wartime Bureau," 3 December 1918, OG 284018; The intentions and workings of the Bureau were investigated and discussed in the Department of Justice.
86. "Language Legislation," *Northwestern Lutheran* 6:6 (23 March 1919), 46-47.
87. Hans K. Moussa, "War Memorials," *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:24 (1 December 1918), 188.
88. R.B. Spencer Report, 16 June 1917, OG 26572.
89. Frank F. Wolfgram Report, 18 February 1919, OG 5025. Also the son of Julius Engel from this chapter. Despite his compliance with the draft, Frank Wolfgram still investigated Walter's activities with the Socialist party after he returned from the war.

The War to End All Germans

Wisconsin Synod Lutherans and the First World War

by Stephen Gurgel

Conclusion

I. No armistice Here

Armistice Day on 11 November 1918 triggered a collective exhale and sense of merriment across the country, especially among the Wisconsin Synod Lutherans. The students at Grace Lutheran School in Milwaukee, for example, "heard the excitement" from their classroom, and "ran out of school to join in."¹ The *Gemeindeblatt* posted poems which celebrated the newly arrived peace.² Anxious individuals with relatives in Germany, after not hearing from them for at least eighteen months, and often fearing the worst, looked into regaining contact. The *Northwestern Lutheran* informed its readers that "it will be some months before the usual exchange of mails may become effective."³ In the meantime, the publication listed instructions for synod members to send mail to their relatives through the American Red Cross. With the passing of the Hohenzollern dynasty in Germany, many detractors believed that German Lutherans met this development with despair. While the *Northwestern Lutheran* admitted Hohenzollern's demise was "not without interest," this development could hardly moderate the joy of the armistice. Besides, "the greatest injustice done the Lutheran church" in Germany was done by a Hohenzollern in 1817, when he "decreed the 'union' of the Lutheran and Calvinistic churches in his domain of Prussia in 1817."⁴ A new democratic regime in Germany could mean conditions "more favorable to the free and untrammelled development of the [Lutheran] church."

German Lutherans felt antagonism and disillusionment over developments after the war. In September 1919, President Wilson addressed a crowd with the following remarks: "Is there [anyone] here, who does not know that the seed of war in the modern world is industrial and commercial rivalry?...This war was a commercial and industrial war. It was not a political war... The commercial advantage will be ours [because of victory]."⁵ Wisconsin Synod Lutherans fumed over the inconsistency of rhetoric over the past two years. Wisconsin Synod minister John Jenny wondered what happened to "that humanity, the freedom of the world, the root of civilization, which, as was reiterated time and time again, were at stake?" In Wilson's rhetoric, a disconnect emerged between a war with moral and religious undertones and a war for commercial supremacy." Personally, we never took such [religious] statements regarding the issues of this war seriously, much less did we believe in them," Jenny further iterated.

Wisconsin Synod Lutherans generally understood that peace did not completely remedy the situation. "The outlook for a triumph of sane Americanism is not very bright," wrote the *Northwestern Lutheran*, nearly a year after the war. "The stories of mob violence...[are] too fresh in our minds to find consolation in the vaunted 'American sense of fairness and justice.' The idea that might makes right does not seem to be peculiarly and exclusively a European error."⁶ In an article titled "Will Religious Persecution Return?," Rev. Hans K. Moussa warned Wisconsin Synod Lutherans to "be awake to the fact that unless they guard their [religious] treasure bravely, they will lose it."⁷ Many men in the country, according to Moussa, "are eagerly seeking the opportunity to wipe out our parochial schools...they stoke the whole church by cutting off its children." Even though the synod already faced charges of disloyalty, Moussa claimed that "we have no right to make even the slightest concession to the forces that are cloaking their conduct and their persecution with many fine patriotic phrases." Seminary professor John Schaller, giving in to the fact that persecution would prevail, avowed that "we may as well make ready to meet all kinds of religious oppression with stout hearts, steeled to bear sufferings for Christ's sake."

War reconstruction efforts included the same cozy relationship between evangelical churches and the state. The Treasury Department announced a Victory Liberty Loan for 21 April 1919, "a purely financial enterprise of the government," according to Seminary professor John Schaller.⁸ Even without the war emergency, the Treasury dictated biblical texts for ministers to use in their sermons, and, with a calm assumption of authority, told them to "remember that a Minister's duty in this day of 'human service' stretches far out from the theological path." Those ministers who refused were threatened with the stigma of disloyalty. Most churches around the country complied, nonetheless, leading Schaller to remark, "the hysterical scheming of most churches to take a hand in the political reconstruction of all the world, including our own country, foreshadows nothing but disaster." Schaller hardly blamed the government for assuming the church to be its handmaiden. Instead, he blamed the "sectarian" churches, "who have for so many years engaged in political and social agitation, [who] have worked hard to produce this impression."

Despite the end of the war and the ensuing sense of respite, many Lutherans of the Wisconsin Synod were not out of the woods yet. As previously shown, numerous Department of Justice cases, from Otto Engel to Carl Fenska, spilled over into peacetime. Some investigations were just beginning. A month after the armistice, the Department of Justice received a complaint concerning a Wisconsin Synod church in White Bluffs, Washington. The sender reported that "the Rev. L.C. Krug...took up a subscription among Germans here about a year ago."⁹ He was naturally suspicious because "members of this man's church are well known by their sayings and action to have been

strong[ly] pro-German." The subscription check was traced to Wahluke, Washington, and it was suggested that an agent go over Rev. Krug's records and make a personal call on the minister. The Department thanked this informant and promised to send an agent to do just that at the first opportunity. A drop in urgency is noticeable here, however. Either the Department of Justice neglected to follow up or the agent failed to report his findings. Either way, the case file abruptly ends. In 1919, Wisconsin Synod president Rev. G.E. Bergemann was likely contacted by government authorities. Captain George B. Lester testified in 1919 in a hearing before the Senate: "I personally conducted a number of conferences with representatives of these large [Lutheran] synods, and pointed out to them the facts in reference to individual cases."¹⁰ Lester claimed he encouraged the better element, "the American element of the Lutheran Church," to curb these men. The "Americanization" of the Wisconsin Synod remained, nonetheless, a complicated and delicate matter.

II. Selective Assimilation

Before the war, Wisconsin Synod Lutherans already practiced selective assimilation to some extent. While their cultural and religious habits remained "foreign" to popular opinion, Wisconsin Synod Lutherans consistently professed their love for the American Constitution and its decrees of religious liberty. This became especially clear during neutrality, as many leaders consistently quoted the Constitution to defend non-aggression principles.¹¹ During the war crisis, officials consistently made their sentiment clear that this was not good enough. The Wisconsin Synod sought to compromise with these demands without giving up their religious nature. A practice of selective assimilation was needed and eventually applied.

While habit and a pride in German culture played a role in the particularly slow transition of the church to English, this issue had religious undertones as well. Lutheran histories were careful to point out that the loss of the German language typically went hand-in-hand with a compromise of Lutheran doctrine. A Lutheran history in 1916 used the term "American Lutheranism" to describe the synods which used English, by which he meant, "A Lutheranism modified by the Puritan element."¹² The author blamed this development on the lack of English Lutheran literature and the intermingling effects of learning the American language. The "American Lutherans" gave up on their parochial schools, joined lodges and other secret societies that promoted doctrinal indifference, and allowed "Methodists" and other evangelicals to "rant" from their pulpits on Sunday.¹³ Wisconsin Synod seminary professor August Pieper warned that "the gospel of the English [churches] is the product of common sense, the spirit of reason...*It is a terrible danger that threatens our Church from that source.*"¹⁴

Nonetheless, the wartime strife prompted reflection and even concessions concerning the language issue. At the convention of the Wisconsin Synod in 1919, its first resolution on the language question bluntly states, "The transition into the English language is unavoidable." It then pledged to continue using German as long as there were those who were better served through that language. Seminary students were to learn to preach in English, but also remain competent enough to read German Lutheran sources.¹⁵ Professor August Pieper confirmed this sentiment: "For the next fifty years we must become bilingual."¹⁶ The transition slowly took effect. The *Northwestern Lutheran* surpassed the *Gemeindeblatt* in readership in 1939.¹⁷ Churches across the synod rewrote their constitutions at varying speeds. St. Lucas Lutheran in Kewaskum, Wisconsin, for example, revised its church constitution to include both English and German services in 1939.¹⁸ A second World War with Germany certainly helped speed the process. It would be another thirty years before the *Gemeindeblatt* ceased publishing and the German language could not be consistently heard at Wisconsin Synod services.¹⁹

The synod also made small concessions concerning its parochial schools. The Convention of 1919 reaffirmed that "no government has the right to prescribe to us in which language the Gospel is to be preached in the church and school."²⁰ However, Synod leaders redoubled their efforts to put the secular education in the parochial schools on par with the public schools. August Pieper even conceded that states had a right to pass certain laws requiring that children be educated, and he encouraged synod teachers and principals to report statistics to the state promptly and correctly.²¹ Before the war, this opinion would have been met with scorn.

The major concessions eventually came from the church's opposition. After the failed experiment with national prohibition in the 1920s, such efforts dwindled in the ensuing decades. Sabbatarian laws met the same fate. These behaviors were eventually viewed as less of a danger to American society. In one of the many ironies of this narrative, the parochial school eventually became highly regarded among many evangelical religious groups. The development which spurred this change of opinion was the secularization of the public school. Now without an institution to instill pietistic norms to the young, the parochial school suddenly became an attractive alternative. Since the Lutheran and Catholic religions have the longest tradition of parochial schools, many Christians not of those faiths attempt to enroll their children at these schools.

Nearly one hundred years after the war, countless ministers across the country are still asked to preach for ecumenical religious ventures. Ministers from the Wisconsin Synod will either decline or, more likely, be avoided because the supplicant already knows the answer. The ministers decline because they know they must make concessions to Lutheran beliefs to participate. In this way, the Wisconsin Synod never assimilated. Like in 1918, detrac-

tors attack this policy as either intolerant or quixotic. Few understand the historical and religious basis for their actions. To this day, the Wisconsin Synod has not fully embraced "American Lutheranism."

Endnotes

1. Historical Archives of Grace Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, WI, 11 November 1918.
2. "Silvester 1918," *Gemeindeblatt* 54:3 (2 February 1919), 42.
3. Hans K. Moussa, "Letters to Enemy Countries," *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:25 (15 December 1918), 194.
4. Hans K. Moussa, "The Passing of Hapsburg and Hohenzollern," *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:25 (15 December 1918), 195.
5. John Jenny, "The Inconsistency of it All!" *Northwestern Lutheran* 6:21 (19 October 1919), 164-165.
6. John Schaller, "Untitled," *Northwestern Lutheran* 6:14 (13 July 1919), 107-109.
7. Hans K. Moussa, "Will Persecution Return?" *Northwestern Lutheran* 6:2 (26 January 1919), 10-11.
8. John Schaller, "Religious Freedom Endangered II," *Northwestern Lutheran* 6:12 (15 June 1919), 92-93.
9. R.R. Woods to Department of Justice, 20 November 1918, OG 332660.
10. A. Bruce Bielaski to R.R. Woods, 29 November 1918, OG 332660; A. Bruce Bielaski to F.A. Watt, 29 November 1918, OG 332660; F.A. Watt Report, "Rev. L.C. Krug," 9 December 1918, OG 332660; U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Judiciary, *Hearings on Brewing and Liquor Interests and German and Bolshevik Propaganda*, 66th Cong., 1st sess., 1919, p. 1788.
11. For examples of Constitution rhetoric during neutrality and the war, see Prof. Ackermann's remarks in the *New Ulm Review*, 4 April and 29 September 1917; Prof. M.J. Wagner in *New Ulm Review*, 1 August 1917; Rev. Atrops in Eberstein Report, 23 January 1918, OG 133065; R.H. Retzlaff in Robert Davis Report, 3 August 1917, OG 47665; Rev. Walter Hoenecke in "Etliche Fragen uber Prohibition," *Gemeindeblatt* 53:3 (1 February 1918), 37-38; Rev. John Jenny in "The Language Question," *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:23 (17 November 1918), 178-179; Rev. F. Graeber in "Danger Threatens," *Northwestern Lutheran* 5:14 (14 July 1918), 107; Rev. Hans K. Moussa, "The Birth of Freedom," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 4:21 (7 November 1917), 171-173; among numerous others.
12. Juergen Ludwig Neve, *A Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America* (Burlington, IA: The German Literary Board, 1916), 100, 104, 110-111, 113-114, 116, 145, 436-437.
13. Paul Kleppner, *Cross of Culture: A Social Analysis of Midwestern Politics 1850-1900*, (New York: Free Press, 1970), 81.

14. August Pieper, "The True Reconstruction of the Church," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 62 (1965), 193. Emphasis is his.
15. "Convention of Joint Synod," *Northwestern Lutheran* 6:21 (19 October 1919), 165.
16. Pieper, 201.
17. Schroeder, 18; John Brenner, "Forward in Christ: Doctrinal Challenges and Language Change," *Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Files*, 10.
18. Constitution at St. Lucas Lutheran Church, Kewaskum, Wisconsin, 1939.
19. James P. Schaefer, "Untitled," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 69:3 (February 1982).
20. "Convention of Joint Synod," *Northwestern Lutheran* 6:21 (19 October 1919), 165.
21. August Pieper, "Zum Kampf um die freie Christliche Schule," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 17:3 (1920), 177.

Picture Acknowledgments

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Cover | Rev. G.E. Bergemann (WELS Archives, Fond du Lac Congregation) |
| Page 1 | Rev. Emil Dornfeld (WELS Archives, Marshall Congregation) |
| Page 5 | Rev. Henry Boettcher, 1940 (WELS Archives, Gibbon Congregation) |
| Page 7 | Rev. Immanuel F. Albrecht (WELS Archives, Fairfax Congregation) |
| Page 8 | Rev. Emmanuel Palechek (WELS Archives, Chaseburg Congregation) |
| Page 10 | Rev. Herman Atrops (WELS Archives, White Congregation) |
| Page 11 | Rev. Carl Auerswald (WELS Archives, Menominee Congregation) |
| Page 12 | Guenther Family Photo (WELS Archives, Guenther Biography)
Marlborough Churchill, Director of Military Intelligence (National Archives) |
| Page 13 | Rev. E. Edgar Guenther building desks (WELS Archives, Guenther Biography) |
| Page 14 | Minnie Guenther, National Mother of the Year (<i>Northwestern Lutheran</i>) |
| Page 15 | Rev. John Gauss, 1918 (WELS Archives, Jenera Congregation) |
| Page 20 | Rev. Otto Engel (WELS Archives, Norwalk Congregation) |
| Page 21 | A. Bruce Bielaski, Bureau of Investigation Chief (National Archives) |
| Page 33 | Rev. Carl W. Siegler (WELS Archives, Siegler Biography) |
| Page 37 | Confiscated Lutheran Church Board Pamphlet (National Archives) |
| Page 38 | Rev. Arthur Sydow with his wife (WELS Archives, Sydow Biography) |
| Page 40 | Rev. Otto Engel with St. Jacob's <i>Frauverein</i> (WELS Archives, Norwalk Congregation)
St. Peter's <i>Frauverein</i> (WELS Archives, Fond du Lac Congregation) |
| Page 43 | Rev. August Stock (WELS Archives, August Stock Biography) |
| Page 50 | Rev. Julius Engel (WELS Archives, Elkton Congregation) |

The WELS Historical Institute was given formal approval by the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) in convention in 1981 to organize for the purpose of collecting and preserving historical data and artifacts that are related to the various periods of Lutheranism in America, especially of the WELS. In recent years the synod took over the responsibility of maintaining the archives. The Institute maintains a museum and publishes a *JOURNAL* and *NEWSLETTER*. Membership is open. Fees are as follows, which include the subscription fees: Individual: \$20.00; Husband/Wife: \$25.00 (2 votes but only one publication issue); Congregation, School, Library, Corporation: \$40.00; and Student: \$15.00. Fees may be sent to the WELS Historical Institute, N15W23377 Stone Ridge Drive, Waukesha, Wisconsin 53188.

The board members are: Prof. Robert Bock, president; Mr. Daniel Nommensen, vice-president; Mrs. Naomi Plocher, secretary; Mr. Ryan Haines, treasurer; Mr. Duane Kuehl, Prof. Joel Pless, Mr. Steven Miller, Prof. James Korthals, Rev. Joel Leyrer, Prof. Aaron Palmer, Rev. David Dolan, Mr. Kenneth Artlip, and Mr. Carl Nolte. Advisory members are: Prof. John Hartwig, Prof. John M. Brenner, and Ms. Charlotte Sampe, designer and museum curator.

For membership information contact:

Mr. Carl Nolte
(414) 615-5705 • noltec@nph.wels.net

Correspondence may be sent to the editor:

Professor John M. Brenner
11844 N. Luther Lane, Mequon, WI 53092
(414) 242 - 8138
Email: brennerj@wls.wels.net



Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

N16W23377 Stone Ridge Drive
Waukesha, WI 53188-1108

Address Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization

U.S. Postage

PAID

Milwaukee, WI

PERMIT NO. 2927
