However, the great bulk of his writings and speeches were devoted to issues of mobilization and loyalty, not to the progressive cause. In addressing Roosevelt's wartime stridency, Cooper notes that TR's stress upon service and sacrifice in 1917–18 allowed him to integrate his views on domestic and foreign policy better than at any time since 1912. His continued attacks on "materialism" revealed that he had certainly not forsaken the cause of renewal at home. No shallow, juvenile romantic, the ex-president welcomed the grim and brutal aspects of war, for only by passing through suffering could men gain full humanity. As TR himself wrote in September 1917, "To my fellow Americans I preach the sword of the Lord and of Gideon."[38]

As for the ultrapatriotic leagues, any positive effect gained by their activities was far exceeded by their destructive force. In many ways, however, the "countersubversive" activities of the National Security League and the American Defense Society are the logical outcome of their prewar undertakings, with their continual focus on a German menace. The American Protective League was a somewhat different matter, for relatively obscure leaders were engaging in major vigilante action. As in the case of Burleson's censorship activities, Wilson was acquiescent. Roosevelt could have served as a positive force, rallying both reformers and many mainline Republicans in support of the general war effort. As we will see, Roosevelt had legitimate concerns over abysmal training conditions and snags in weapons production. He could not, however, separate valid criticism from vindictive assaults. Serving as a antithetical model to such GOP leaders as William Howard Taft and Charles Evans Hughes, in reality he became something of a pathetic individual.

To see the antisubversion crusade, one must take a close look at its targets.

SIX

FOES OF OUR OWN HOUSEHOLD

THEODORE ROOSEVELT IMPLIED THAT THE "FOES OF OUR own household" lay primarily among his opponents in the Wilson administration. Many Americans, however, thought in terms of a far wider scope. Seldom if ever had the United States seen so much repression, legal or otherwise. Not since the presidency of John Adams had Congress passed a law to punish seditious speech and that legislation was short-lived. British publicist Norman Angell later recalled that "the mob mind in the United States often outdid that of Britain in violence and silliness." Only 10 out of 1,500 Americans arrested under the Espionage Act were actually accused of being German agents. Much suppression took place below the federal level, particularly in the West. State and municipal agencies, often working through Councils of Defense, were supplemented by private vigilante activity. In Minnesota, for example, the Commission on Public Safety was a de facto agent of the state government, with the state courts enforcing its edicts.[1]

Of all the ethnic groups in the United States, German-Americans were the most suspect. In 1917 they were a markedly distinct element in society, seeking to preserve their own identity and asserting themselves with vigor whenever

their ancestral land came under attack. According to the 1910 census, of the nation's nearly 92 million people, more than 8 million were either born in Germany or had a German parent. At least 14 percent of Nebraska's population was of Teutonic stock, in Wisconsin nearly 29 percent.

Yet, to many Americans, the words "German" and "atrocity" were synonymous. Recalled were the German U-boat sinking of the *Lusitania* passenger ship in 1915 and the Black Tom incident of 1916. By January 1918, Harvey's *War Weekly* reported that Canadian prisoners were literally crucified, nailed to the cross and left to die in agony (no locale was given). Its publisher, Colonel George Harvey, blamed the nation's entire German population: "It is the German people who murder and crucify and mutilate." That same month, William Kenyon told his Senate colleagues that the Germans shelled Red Cross hospitals, killed the wounded after battle, and placed women and children in advance of soldiers attacking French troops. "Germany has lost its soul," he commented. In July, the Reverend Henry Van Dyke, recently U.S. minister to the Netherlands, reported German mutilation of children and the killing of old women. Novelist Gertrude Atherton was undoubtedly not alone in saying, "Better to extirpate the whole breed, root and branch." Nor was Princeton's Robert McElroy isolated in finding the German soul "as black as hell itself."[2]

Some sought to counteract such rumors. In July 1918, AEF commander John J. Pershing denied that the Germans gave poison candy to children and hand grenades to play with, infected U.S. troops with tubercular germs, and rejoiced at children's dying writhings. In October, War Secretary Newton Baker declared that the U.S. Army found only two certifiable stories of German barbarism.[3]

In offering an invocation before the House of Representatives, Billy Sunday prayed:

> Thou knowest that Germany has drawn from the eyes of mankind enough tears to make another sea; that she has drawn enough groans and shrieks from the hearts of men, women, and children to make another mountain. We pray Thee that Thou wilt make bare Thy mighty arm and beat back the great pack of hungry, wolfish Huns, whose fangs drip with blood and gore.

At one point, the evangelist remarked, "If hell were turned upside down you would find 'made in Germany' on the bottom of it."[4]

American Germanophobia manifested itself in numerous ways, ranging from the utterly ridiculous to the utterly savage. By the fall of 1917, the nation was experiencing a hatred for everything Teutonic. To members of the American Protective League (APL), a German surname made one subject to investigation. Words such as "Hun" (barbaric Germans), "Boche" (German soldiers), "Schrecklichkeit" (frightfulness), and "Kultur" (bestial ideals) were tossed about with abandon. Socialist journalist William English Walling thought the East St. Louis race riots of early July 1917, in reality rooted in southern white malice, were fostered by German spies.[5] Sauerkraut became "liberty cabbage," German measles "liberty measles." Cincinnati saloons no longer offered free pretzels.

Germany's much touted culture was assailed. To New York mortgage lawyer Richard M. Hurd, board chairman of the American Defense Society in 1918, "everything German has to go." Former state senator Lafayette Young (R), chairman of the Iowa Council of Defense, saw Germany's much touted civilization as the most overrated in the world. He claimed that Gutenberg was the last major German inventor and that no German author had ever equaled Shakespeare.[6]

Congress's passage of the Espionage Act in June 1917 by no means allayed public fears. In 1920, George Creel noted that every fire, explosion in a munitions plant, or accident on land or seas was credited to the German "spy system." A cut in a child's hand that didn't heal quickly was because of Teutonic germs in the court plaster. If an experiment in a submarine or aircraft factory failed, German "spies" had tampered with the mechanism. If a woman's headache was not cured, the "Germans" had "doped" the particular pill or powder.[7]

In a July editorial titled "Spies" that addressed subversive elements within the German embassy, the *New York Times* warned that the government "should not wait until it has the quality of legal evidence that would justify a Grand Jury indicting a man for murder in the first degree." During the same month, Senator Benjamin ("Pitchfork Ben") Tillman (D-S.C.) demanded that "the German devils" infesting the government be "ferreted out and hanged." In November, the AFL's Samuel Gompers claimed that "German spies and Teutonic agents"

had honeycombed his organization's convention. At the end of the month, the *Literary Digest* warned of "furtive, ununiformed armies whose weapons are spying, sabotage, bomb-planting, incendiarism, murder, and a hundred forms of insidious and demoralizing propaganda." The article was titled "The Kaiser's Secret Army Here." From December 1917 through March 1918, muckraker Samuel Hopkins Adams wrote a series for *Everybody's Magazine*, "Invaded America," that even found disloyalty among Lutheran clergy. Nova Scotia-born Charles A. Eaton, minister of New York's Madison Avenue Baptist Church, called for the lynching of all spies and "propagandists," telling Newark ship workers, "You know where to get the rope, I'm sure."[8]

In his April 2, 1917, war message, Wilson had claimed that most German Americans were "true and loyal Americans," who "will be prompt to stand with us in rebuking and restraining the few who may be of a different mind and purpose." Yet the speech did contain a caveat: any disloyalty would be met with "a firm hand of stern repression."[9]

It did not take long for the president to change his tone. In his Flag Day address of June 14, 1917, Wilson warned that Germany "has many spokesmen here, in places high and low." They discretely keep within the law and do not engage in sedition, but they "proclaim the liberal purposes of their masters; declare this a foreign war which can touch America with no danger to either her lands or her institutions; set England at the centre of the stage and talk of her ambition to assert economic domination throughout the world; appeal to our ancient tradition of isolation in the politics of the nations; and seek to undermine the government with false professions of loyalty to its principles." Historian Michael Kazin finds that the president "all but equated opposition to the war with treason."[10]

One accusation of disloyalty led to a wrestling match on the House floor. In mid-September, Representative Tom Heflin implied that back in January at least thirteen members of Congress had received German bribes, the money being funneled through a Washington gambling house where "slackers and pacifists played cards." Moreover, funds from Berlin were financing an antidraft bill of Congressman William Mason as well as legislation advanced by Congressman Fred A. Britten exempting German Americans from overseas

service. On September 28, Congressman Patrick Norton (R-N.Dak.), believing that Heflin had slandered him, almost pushed the Alabama legislator through an adjacent table. Each took one swing at the other, then clinched and rolled to the floor. At this point, Congressman John M. Baer (Non-Partisan League-N.Dak.) took Norton by the neck, lifting him out of the way. Within a week, Heflin admitted he had no substantiating evidence. In October a special House investigating committee found all the accused innocent.[11]

German law allowed emigrants to retain full citizenship rights, a circumstance that added to charges of dual loyalty. The day he signed the war declaration, Wilson immediately forbade German aliens from owning firearms or coming within a half mile of military facilities. The *Providence Journal*, edited by the former Australian John Revelstoke Rathom, saw all German and Austrian aliens as spies until proven innocent. *New York Tribune* columnist Frank Simonds cried, "Intern all enemy aliens."[12]

Between April and November 1917, more than 4,500 aliens were arrested, of whom 1,200 were interned. On November 20, all German aliens older than thirteen were forced to register with the government. They were barred from wharves, canals, and railroad depots; more than five thousand were expelled from the District of Columbia. They needed permission to travel within the country and change their residence while being denied access to all ships but public ferries.

Tremendous pressure was put on German-language newspapers, which in 1914 had totaled 557 journals possessing a circulation of nearly 800,000. In certain localities, they drew more readers than their English-language rivals.

In July 1917, the *Atlantic Monthly* printed an article, "The Disloyalty of the German-American Press," by Frank Perry Olds, foreign-language editor of the *Milwaukee Journal*. Olds stressed the press's opposition to loans, food, and troops to the Allies, stances that gave "comfort to the enemy." A similar attitude was expressed by Hermann Hagedorn, a German American writer and intimate of Theodore Roosevelt, who informed *Outlook* readers how many German papers sneered at America's motives, abused Britain and France, and praised Kaiser Wilhelm II and Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg: "These newspapers are as wreckers on treacherous shores, flashing false signals

to signs at sea." By August, the National Security League insisted that 450 German American newspapers make a public confession of faith that included affirmation of Allied war aims, condemnation of German ones, and "the permanent effacement of the present Germany dynasty."[13]

At first the censors felt frustrated. In July, Attorney General Gregory told Wilson that many German American papers still printed disloyal material, but "there seems to be no way in most cases in which this can be prevented lawfully." In October 1917, Postmaster General Burleson personally asked pro-German editors: "Have you printed that Germans dropped bombs on Red Cross hospitals? Have you printed any atrocities practiced by Germans?" The Trading with the Enemy Act of that month required English translations of all war coverage before the Post Office Department would bestow mailing privileges. Realizing that translation was costly and could create crippling delays, practically all German American papers either stopped publishing or fell in line, voicing an ostentatious patriotic position. By 1920, only fifty-six daily German language journals remained, with circulation falling below 250,000.[14]

In April 1918, during the debate over the Sedition Act, Senator Lodge briefly proposed that all German publications sent through the mails must include a parallel English translation. Some legislators balked, Senator Nelson calling the proposal "a direct insult to the large German population." Warren Harding replied that many German-language newspapers carried "the finest utterances of American devotion." "Let us," said Senator Borah, "not discriminate against men because they are Germans."[15]

Language was deemed a particular threat. More than 9 million Americans spoke German as their first language. Twenty-four percent of American high school students studied German. It was the primary teaching language in many midwestern parochial schools and in certain institutions in Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Milwaukee.[16]

By March 1918, 149 schools had discontinued German language study and numerous cities had outlawed the use of German in public places. In Montana, German was banned from pulpits and schools. Thanks to Iowa governor William Harding, conversations on streetcars and over telephones were monitored. Books were often burned.

In calling for the disappearance of the German tongue, the American Defense Society warned, "The time for sentiment about Goethe and Schiller has gone by." Said the *North American Review*, "The speech of the Hun must be abolished in America." The ADS sought to change the names of any city bearing the names of Bismarck, Bremen, Dresden, and Hanover.[17]

Wilson's response to the general repression was uneven. In late March 1917, when a White House housekeeper told the president that the building's heating fires were tended by a German, the president remarked, "I'd rather the blamed place should be blown up rather than persecute inoffensive people." In July, St. Louis congressman Leonidas C. Dyer (R) wrote Wilson concerning "a campaign of slanderous attacks" upon German Americans, to which the president affirmed his "confidence in the entire integrity and loyalty of the great body of our fellow-citizens of German blood." In October, Wilson expressed concern to the cabinet upon hearing that the owner of the town hall of Aspinwall, Iowa, had been arrested for not permitting a Liberty Loan meeting. In April 1918, Wilson wrote Tumulty, saying he found opposition to teaching German "ridiculous and childish" but added that he did not want to get "involved" in the matter.[18]

At times even German music was forbidden. The ADS's Hurd warned, "Music is one of the most dangerous forms of German propaganda, because it appeals to the emotions and has the power to sway an audience as nothing else can." The *Los Angeles Times* called German music "the music of conquest, the music of the storm, of disorder and devastation." The *Outlook* expressed no hostility to Bach, Brahms, and Beethoven, but opposed works by Richard Strauss and also Richard Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* and *Siegfried*. Such music, it warned, "sets forth an ideal which German guns and German poisoned gasses and German atrocities are making repugnant to the world. " In Milwaukee, vigilantes set up a machine gun to prevent the performance of Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*, ironically a play protesting against tyranny.[19]

Several journals opposed such suppression. The *Chicago Tribune* remarked, "We disapprove of the Kaiser and his projects. Therefore we punish him by snubbing Beethoven." Noting in July 1918 that German music had been banned from the Los Angeles public schools, the *Nation* observed that Sir Henry Wood still played Brahms and Beethoven at Queen's Hall, London.[20]

Even musicians and conductors were not immune to the growing hysteria. In November 1917, the directors of New York's Metropolitan Opera House unanimously adopted a resolution to ban German opera. "Loyal" singers of German birth could appear in French and English works. March 1918 saw Austrian violinist Fritz Kreisler canceling all U.S. engagements because he had served as a lieutenant in his nation's army earlier in the war. The Bavarian-born conductor Karl Muck had been sufficiently pro-German to have endorsed the sinking of the *Lusitania*. In November 1917, he at first refused to play the "Star-Spangled Banner" at concerts of the Boston Symphony, declaring that "patriotic airs" had no place in a symphony program. Within several months he felt himself forced to relent. Muck, too, felt forced to resign his position and was jailed in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, for a year as an alien who threatened national security.[21]

When the matter of German music came up, the president again was equivocal. In early April 1917, the Metropolitan Opera asked Wilson if performances in German, sung by German artists, should be permitted. Wilson simply told Tumulty that "it would not be wise to express an opinion in regard to this matter, and yet personally I should hate to see them stop German opera." In November 1917 in response to an inquiry from the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, the chief executive replied that he did not find "any good music" unpatriotic. When, however, in August 1918, Leopold A. Stokowski, conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra, asked the president whether such composers as Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, and Brahms should be performed during the war, Wilson responded, "It is not a question which can be decided on its merits, but only on the feelings and present thoughts of the audiences to whom the Philadelphia Orchestra and the other orchestras of the country play."[22]

Lynching remained the ultimate form of repression. On April 4, 1918, at 9 p.m. in the town of Collinsville, Illinois, a mining town near East St. Louis, a mob executed Robert Paul Prager, a baker born in Germany. He had attempted to enlist in the navy, but a glass eye caused him to be rejected. A group of town drunks accused him of being a spy, stripped him of his clothing, wrapped an American flag around him, and—an hour later—hanged him.[23]

The following afternoon, Wilson's cabinet condemned the action. Attorney General Thomas Gregory, however, told the press that only

the state of Illinois could deal with the matter. Illinois's senator Sherman claimed that every man who participated in the lynching should be hanged. To the *Washington Post*, however, "enemy propaganda must be stopped, even if a few lynchings may occur."[24]

In mid-May, eleven of the lynchers began a three-week trial for murder. The jury took twenty-five minutes to return verdicts of not guilty, arguing that the evidence was contradictory and that, because the crime scene was dark, one could not say just who the guilty persons were. One juror shouted, "Well, I guess nobody can say we aren't loyal now." Governor Frank Lowden called the decision "a lamentable failure of justice." Colonel Harvey's *War Weekly* found that Prager lacked loyalty, but continued, "We cannot approve lynch law, not even for traitors." After making a thorough survey, historian Donald R. Hickey notes that most public statements were timid and qualified. The *New York Times*, for example, though condemning the "mob mind," praised the government's "almost saintlike patience" in dealing with "disloyal editors," "German propagandists," and "suspects generally."[25]

Prager was not the only victim of such murder. That April one S. J. Walker, though not a German American, was shot in Honolulu for calling the naval ensign "a dirty rag." A jury acquitted the assailant after deliberating six minutes. He received congratulations from the judge and was honored by a parade. In late July, Wilson issued a statement condemning the "many lynchings" and "the mob spirit" that had "shown its head among us," but he cited no examples.[26]

German American reaction to the war itself was mixed. According to historian Frederick C. Luebke, most were neither pro-kaiser nor superloyalist. Not surprisingly, particularly with immigration rates falling off, the younger generation focused more on the United States than on any ancestral homeland. Despite the vehement attacks, a healthy majority of German-language newspapers backed Wilson's policies, so much so that Luebke found them to be vehicles of patriotic propaganda. German Americans responded to the draft as willingly as any other group. In fact, 10 to 15 percent of the AEF was of German descent or birth; Pershing was himself of German stock, his family originally named Pfoershing. Nevertheless, as Luebke observes, German Americans found themselves in a bind. If they remained silent on the subject of the war or assented passively to it, as did most,

they would likely face accusations of lukewarm patriotism. If, however, they voiced enthusiasm for the conflict, they could be accused of hypocritically hiding their disloyalty.[27]

Some German Americans ostentatiously tried to prove their Americanism. Kuno Francke, honorary curator of Harvard's Germanic Museum, publicly remarked: "Germany is for the time being my country's enemy." In August 1917, New York publisher Bernard Ridder wrote Wilson, praising the "splendid attitude which the Administration has taken in its treatment of German subjects." Just a year later, Ridder's prominent *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung* condemned the German war record, remarking that "for a long time German-Americans were unable to see the peril, and rude was their awakening."[28]

One particularly scandalous case involved the Hamburg-born German-Jewish banker Paul M. Warburg, who felt forced to resign as vice governor of Federal Reserve Board. One of his brothers was serving as financial adviser to the German government and another represented the family banking firm in Sweden. Warburg had not communicated with either individual since the United States entered the war. Moreover, his only son had joined the AEF aviation service. In August 1918, Wilson publicly called the resignation a serious loss.[29]

That year Hermann Hagedorn wrote *Where Do You Stand? An Appeal to Americans of German Origin*, in which he accused the German American of being "the-man-without-a-country." "America is his wife, but he keeps Germany as his soul-mate," he added. Accusing his kinsmen of being pro-German before April 1917, Hagedorn feared a U.S. war against "a stronger Germany, not on our shores, perhaps, but in South America in defence of the Monroe Doctrine." Now his kinsmen "stand at the cross-roads" having to make a clear-cut choice.[30]

The National German-American Alliance (NGAA) (Deutschamerikanischer Nationalbund) remained subject to tremendous attack. Founded in 1901 and originally focused on fighting prohibition, the NGAA was a federation of various local clubs and societies. Though boasting 3 million members, it largely remained a paper organization. Before the United States entered the war, the group took a strong pro-German position, but once war was declared, it became ardently patriotic, participating in several Liberty Bond drives.[31]

In December 1917, the NGAA agreed not to hold a general congress, but it still faced strong hostility. The *Louisville Courier-Journal* claimed most NGAA leaders were German spies. In February 1918, the Senate Judiciary Committee investigated its operations. Henry C. Campbell, assistant editor of the *Milwaukee Journal*, saw in it one single purpose: to "Germanize America." Toledo lawyer Gustavus Ohlinger, president of his city's chamber of commerce, called the NGAA the "core of the Kultur cyst in the American body politic." Early in April, its executive committee voted to disband the organization. On July 2, by voice vote, the Senate adopted a resolution by William King annulling its charter.[32]

Some German Americans sought to prove their patriotism by establishing a new organization. In the fall of 1917, New York attorney Franz Sigel, son of the noted Civil War general, established the Friends of German Democracy. Abraham Jacobi, a famous physician whom the German government had once imprisoned for "high treason," was chosen honorary president. Renowned German-Jewish bankers Jacob Schiff and Otto Kahn each contributed a thousand dollars. Its secretary, Frank Bohn, war correspondent for the *New York Evening Post*, engaged in contacts with the European left. The organization sought a popular revolution against Junker rule, claiming the United States would make peace with a popularly chosen government. Never a large group, practically speaking the Friends served as an appendage of the Creel Committee.[33]

Surprisingly enough, the German-American *Issues and Events* survived until the summer of 1918. Edited by Frederick Franklin Schrader, former drama critic for the *Washington Post*, the weekly opposed loans to the Allies: "Our money, like our armies and our fleets, should be concentrated at its home bases and not dispersed abroad." The journal warned that Cecil Rhodes and Andrew Carnegie had sought to reintegrate the United States into the British Empire, a stock argument of Anglophobes. By backing conscription and pushing Liberty Loans, however, the weekly was able to ward off many attacks.[34]

More important, George Sylvester Viereck's journal generally remained in circulation throughout the war. Only thirty-two years old when the United States entered the conflict, he had been best known as a poet of "decadence" until 1914, when he began publishing *The Fatherland*, a magazine that defended Berlin at every turn. Nothing if not shrewd, in March 1917 he changed the title of his periodical to *Viereck's: The American Weekly*, which in September 1918 became a

monthly. The Post Office Department only withdrew one issue from circulation; it had criticized "entangling alliances" and found Wilson a hypocrite.[35] An anonymous column, "With the Military Experts," continually offered pessimistic reports of the western front. In issue after issue, Viereck gleefully reprinted attacks upon him verbatim, not even bothering to reply.

Within a week after Wilson delivered his war message, Viereck wrote that the conflict must be "for American principles only," not for "the Cecil Rhodes conspiracy for the reunion of the English-speaking world under the Union Jack." On May 9, 1917, he noted reports from American correspondents denying that Germany was sending U-boats into U.S. waters. He continually backed peace proposals, be they from the pope, the Reichstag, Russian revolutionists, remnants of the Second International seeking to meet at Stockholm, and Wilson himself, as manifested in the president's "peace without victory" speech of January 1917.[36]

In October 1917, Viereck summarized his platform, which included universal military service; a powerful army and navy; arbitration of international agreements; the initiative, referendum, and recall; U.S. acquisition of all foreign possessions in the Western Hemisphere; public ownership of national resources; protection of labor on the factory and farm; and a nonannexationist peace. The journal often endorsed Liberty Loans. By the beginning of 1918, one finds a push for such disparate causes as food conservation, woman suffrage, confiscation of wealth, termination of prohibition, and the continuation of German language teaching in American schools.[37]

In August 1918, Viereck proposed an entire slate of candidates: Robert La Follette for president, Stanford's former chancellor David Starr Jordan for vice president, and William Randolph Hearst for New York governor. Socialist leader Morris Hillquit would be New York City's mayor; *Masses* editor Max Eastman and Tammany judge Daniel F. Cohalan would represent New York State in the Senate.[38] Though the group was nothing if not varied in nature, all had strongly opposed U.S. participation in the conflict. Not surprisingly, Viereck often promoted anti-interventionist programs of the Socialist Party and the Nonpartisan League.

In May 1917, Viereck organized an Agricultural and Industrial Labor Relief Bureau. He boasted that this agency found employment

for about two thousand people, mainly aliens, and was endorsed by many state governors. When in July 1918 New York deputy attorney general Albert L. Becker accused the Bureau of massive fraud, Viereck could not produce records in its defense. The organization soon disbanded.[39]

During the debate over conscription, Viereck sought a legislative amendment exempting German American draftees from overseas service. "Let us not compel them to fight against their own kin," he wrote. "We can ask from a son no more appalling sacrifice than that he slay his own mother." Such troops could patrol the Mexican border, guard the nation's coastal defenses, or work on farms. In a letter to David Starr Jordan, he noted the attempted suicide of one young German American and actual suicide by another.[40]

Congressman Fred Britten, who had voted against entering the war, introduced such a bill, his Chicago district being home to many German-Americans. Several legislators who had long opposed Wilson's foreign policy backed the plan, as did poet Edwin Markham. The Socialist *New York Call* went further, wanting all unwilling soldiers exempted, including Irish Americans.[41]

Not surprisingly, the proposal met with much opposition. Mississippi governor Theodore G. Bilbo remarked: "Strictly speaking, there are no German Americans, and if a man hesitates to fight for America in this crisis because of his relationships, he should either be interned or shot at sunrise." Ohio governor James M. Cox (D) commented: "All of us are Americans and this is America's war, in which there can be no thought of individual desires." President Wilson burned his copy of the resolution. Theodore Roosevelt called the proposal treason. Suppose, during the American Revolution, those of English descent decided not to join the patriot army.[42] By fall, the proposal was dead.

Viereck did face some harassment. Once the 1917 Espionage Act was passed, his offices were raided and his book-distributing agency confiscated. Senator Miles Poindexter claimed the journal should be called the *German Weekly*, not the *American Weekly*. In July 1918, the Poetry Society of America, of which he was a founder, asked him to resign. He refused to do so, being supported by such prominent figures as Edgar Lee Masters, Harriet Monroe, Conrad Aiken, and George Bernard Shaw. When that month the Authors' League of America expelled him, stressing that no member should ever mention his name or

writings, Viereck mused, "This is charmingly medieval." At one point, after confronting hostile demonstrations, he abandoned his home in Mount Vernon, New York, to live in Manhattan.[43]

German Americans were not the only controversial ethnic group. Such groups as the United Irish-American Societies of New York pledged loyalty to the war effort but still advocated immediate establishment of an Irish republic. In April 1917, Wilson wrote Secretary of State Robert Lansing that the granting of "substantial self-government" would add much "satisfaction and enthusiasm" to American–British cooperation. When in January 1918, however, an Irish American delegation led by Senator James D. Phelan (D-Calif.) suggested that the president endorse nationhood for Ireland, Wilson replied that current British–Irish negotiations made it inappropriate for him to comment. Privately, Wilson was furious, finding such talk "almost treasonable." By April he was linking "Irish and Catholic intrigue" in the United States to "German intrigue."[44]

The Irish nationalist cause did receive some congressional support. Late in April 1917, 168 members of the House petitioned British prime minister David Lloyd George to settle the matter in accord with Wilsonian principles. The Hearst press preached "justice" for the Emerald Isle while expressing suspicions over British intentions there. Theodore Roosevelt privately hoped that Ireland, if not granted complete independence, would have representatives offering "a voice" within Parliament on major military and diplomatic matters. Yet sympathy only went so far. William Howard Taft conceded that Britain had misgoverned Ireland. However, Wilson's predecessor lacked sympathy for militant Irish American groups and found the nationalist cause "incidental" in relation to "the black threat of German domination."[45]

Militant Irish American journals and leaders kept up their attack. The *Gaelic American*, the organ of the Clan na Gael, responded to Wilson's war message by claiming that the president entered the conflict to save Britain. A victorious Britain would keep Ireland subject to "oppression and robbery." More important, the United States would be facing a superpower whose mastery of the seas could menace the entire human race. In November 1917, at a meeting held at Boston's Hibernian Hall, the journal's editor, John Devoy, defended Germany's execution of British nurse Edith Cavell in 1915 for helping Allied prisoners escape captivity. He also found German cruelty "nothing" compared to Britain's record in Ireland.[46]

In September 1917, government-released documents implied that New York Supreme Court justice Daniel Cohalan had conspired with the Germans. In 1916, Cohalan had been in secret contact with the German embassy, suggesting that the Reich attack Britain from the air while the Irish begin a rebellion. Soon such journals as *Bull*, the *Irish World*, the *Freeman's Journal*, and the *Gaelic American* were temporally barred from the mails.[47]

In early 1918, the Justice Department indicted Jeremiah O'Leary, a New York attorney who headed the American Truth Society, an anti-British organization. As editor of the *Bull*, O'Leary was charged with advocating insubordination in the U.S. armed forces, thereby violating the Espionage Act. O'Leary escaped to Washington State, where he lived under an assumed name and raised chickens. Once arrested, he experienced a mistrial and then a new trial for treason, from which he was acquitted.

Such repression did not cool down the rhetoric of the archnationalists. At a meeting in mid-May 1918 of the Friends of Irish Freedom, held in New York's Central Opera House, the audience of a thousand cheered one indictment of Britain after another: the British controlled the American press, were committing atrocities in Ireland, and were seeking the landing of U.S. Marines there. They were rushing U.S. troops to the front lines in France in order to release British soldiers to "massacre" the Irish people. Every member of Congress opposed to the nationalist Sinn Fein Party should be defeated in November.[48]

In the spring of 1918, the British government sought to conscript Irish males even if it would not enforce the policy until a new home rule bill was passed. The Irish and their American supporters were outraged, yet the American press generally supported the move. Colonel Harvey's ardently pro-Allies *War Weekly* commented, "Self-government is not to be secured by playing the part of catspaw to the Hun." By September, the *Outlook* went so far as to oppose Irish independence on the grounds that its harbors would nest German U-boats. When the war ended, it went on, Britain should establish a federal system in which local self-government could be combined with participation in the broader empire.[49]

Quite a different opposition to the war came from William Randolph Hearst, the most powerful—and hated—publisher in the United States. Beginning with his acquisition of the *San Francisco Examiner* in 1887, by mid-1918 he owned seven magazines and eleven newspapers: three in New York; two each in Chicago, Boston, and Atlanta; and one each in San Francisco and Los Angeles. His magazines drew an average circulation of more than 2 million readers, his newspapers more than 2.5 million. In April 1917, the *New York American* alone boasted 413,000 purchasers. Never in U.S. history had a single individual controlled so much of the nation's press.

Before April 1917 Hearst stood for a far more rigid neutrality than had President Wilson, but now he claimed wholehearted support for the war effort. Once the United States entered the conflict, he strongly favored conscription and backed the drive for Liberty Bonds. His *New York American* immediately established recruiting stations. The anti-German cartoons of Dutchman Louis Raemaeker often appeared on Hearst's front pages.

From the outset of U.S. entry into the war, the Hearst press pushed one great panacea for winning the war: air power. In June 1917, the *New York American* asserted that fifty thousand U.S. aircraft, each dropping a hundred "dynamite bombs" daily on German soil, would win the war. Most bombs would not take human life but would instead kill livestock, which would "make the German peasant determine that he MUST HAVE PEACE." By August it was demanding a hundred thousand planes.[50]

Yet if Hearst backed U.S. belligerency, it was decidedly on his own terms. In April 1917, his chain warned against "further drainage of our food supplies and our military supplies and our money supplies to Europe." His New York German-language paper, *Deutsches Journal*, denied Allied claims of fighting for humanity and the rights of small nations: "This war is nothing but a business proposition." A month later, his papers proclaimed that the United States should compel Germany to fight in U.S. waters ("see how she likes the taste of OUR GRANITE"). In June the Hearst press predicted that the war might last ten years, the United States eventually having to fight alone against a coalition of Germany, Russia, and Japan. The *New York American* approvingly quoted "a diplomat" who called the present conflict "a

European war for European ambition and aggression." By July the publisher sought a war referendum and also U.S. insistence that Germany, France, Russia, and Britain do likewise. Under such practice, he argued, Austria would never have made war in revenge for the assassination of "a worthless Grand Duke." In a signed editorial, Hearst wrote, "Better to make peace now than to look forward to year after year of such national and individual sorrow and sacrifice."[51]

Britain in particular met with Hearst's scorn. As the United States entered the war, his *New York American* accused it of simply reinforcing Britain's future aggrandizement. In June the *American* accused Britain of allowing France to maintain nine-tenths of the western front while it sat "comfortably at home, for the most part, surrounded by her steel wall of ships, accessible only occasionally to Zeppelin and aeroplane raids of no actual importance. . . . France has been allowed to sacrifice herself to protect England on land, and we will be allowed to sacrifice ourselves to protect England at sea."[52]

Needless to say, such views met with bitter opposition, particularly from the *New York Tribune*, a Republican paper that had long attacked Wilson's foreign policy for lacking the needed belligerency. In late September 1917, muckraker Samuel Hopkins Adams contributed an entire series on Hearst: "Behind the pretence of patriotism and the outward flag-flying of his newspapers lies a spirit that speaks subtly with a Prussian accent." Since the United States entered the war, so the *Tribune* claimed in September 1918, Hearst papers had defended Germany seventeen times, published sixty-three pieces of antiwar propaganda, and made seventy-four attacks upon the Allies. Even the far more liberal *Nation* remarked of Hearst himself in June 1918: "We doubt if any journalist in history has blacker acts to his discredit. . . . There is nothing sincere in any position that he takes."[53]

Other Hearst enemies were equally vocal. Former assistant attorney general James Beck publicly called the publisher the fountainhead of American pro-Germanism, his power for evil being "immeasurable." On October 2, 1917, New York mayor John Purroy Mitchel warned, "Mr. Hearst puts the Star-Spangled Banner on the front page and tries to stab his country in the back in his editorial columns." In a private letter, Theodore Roosevelt found him "the most sinister pro-German traitor in the country and much the ablest and most dangerous." Publicly, TR called Hearst a leader in "the cult of disloyalty."[54]

By the fall of 1917, Hearst's enemies accused him of having secretly met in 1916 with Paul Bolo Pasha, publisher of the *Paris Journal*, whom the French later executed for being in the pay of the Germans. New York State attorney general Merton E. Lewis claimed that Hearst had conspired with Bolo to raise $1.7 million to finance subversive activities in France. A year earlier, charged Lewis, the publisher had hosted German military attaché Franz von Papen and naval attaché Karl Boy-Ed in New York, both expelled from the United States for espionage activities. Hearst was easily able to refute such charges, noting that he only conversed with Bolo about how the Parisian could get the best and cheapest paper for his newspaper. In mid-1918, New York State deputy attorney General Albert L. Becker accused William Bayard Hale, Berlin correspondent for the *New York American*, of acting in Rumania in 1916 as an agent of the German Foreign Office, a charge soon proven unfounded.[55]

These assaults took their toll. In May 1918, the city council of Mount Vernon, New York, adopted a resolution—later overruled by the state supreme court—prohibiting the circulation of Hearst papers. At the same time, a group of National Guardsmen in Poughkeepsie burned copies of the *New York American*. In Cincinnati, librarians removed all Hearst dailies from their reading rooms. The Albuquerque Rotary boycotted Hearst's California papers. Chicago bartenders banned their city's counterparts. From Nutley, New Jersey, to Pasadena, California, citizens sought to prevent vending of Hearst papers.[56]

Hearst realized he was under fire. On Christmas Day 1917, he launched a massive fundraising drive to restore six French cities destroyed by the Germans. In this effort, he probably drew as much consensus as ever in his entire career. He won praise from people as varied as Colonel House, Harvard president A. Lawrence Lowell, architect Ralph Adams Cram, Boston cardinal William H. O'Connell, Supreme Court justice Louis D. Brandeis, and University of Chicago football coach Amos Alonzo Stagg. Only Theodore Roosevelt appeared to dissent, writing French premier Georges Clemenceau that Hearst was "as sinister and efficient a friend of Germany as is to be found in all the world."[57]

The Hearst press tried to meet such attacks by continually defending leading members of the Wilson administration. It called Daniels one of the most successful secretaries of the navy the nation had ever

seen. In time, similar praise fell upon Treasury Secretary McAdoo and Edward N. Hurley, chairman of the U.S. Shipping Board.[58] The chain even sought to prove its Americanism in small ways. For a brief time, Hans and Fritz of the cartoon "The Katzenjammer Kids" became Mike and Aleck of the "The Shenanigan Kids."

In September 1917, the *New York American*'s editorial director wrote Wilson: "I most heartily believe in you and your course." By October, Hearst papers editorialized, "The American people stand behind the President in the determination to fight this war to a finish." At a Fourth of July luncheon in 1918 at New York's Holland House, Hearst toasted the president.[59]

Wilson himself was less than enthusiastic about such an endorsement, writing Burleson that he regretted Samuel Hopkins Adams had found that the publisher, though "outrageous," had done nothing illegal. In the summer of 1918, however, Wilson aide Tumulty congratulated Hearst editor Arthur Brisbane for adding the *Chicago Herald* to the chain. Newton Baker fired Dr. James A. B. Scherer, Lutheran missionary and Japan expert, as chief field agent of the Council of National Defense for calling the Hearst press disloyal.[60]

Hearst did have some supporters. Forty-nine members of Congress, including five senators, accepted the publisher's invitation to view his 1918 Fourth of July loyalty parade in New York. Champ Clark declared, "Hearst has done a heap more good than all of those fellows together who are bully-ragging him." (Clark had been Hearst's original choice for president in 1912.) James Reed remarked of Hearst's critics, "They have employed the methods of cheap demagogues, the same from the days of Alcibiades on the streets of Athens, to the modern type."[61]

Hearst's leading columnist, Arthur Brisbane, himself owner of the *Washington Times*, stressed his own patriotism in his daily column titled "Today." Amid blasts against Wall Street, big business, and war profiteers, he continually denounced Germany. In September 1918, he wrote of the kaiser: "He secretly planned wholesale murder for years, preparing army and navy, drilling millions of men, then struck the treacherous blow against Belgium, the weak, brave nation." He also commented, "Every bullet that goes from an American rifle through the head or the heart of a Prussian is a good bullet that does good work."[62]

Such disclaimers did not prevent the *New York Tribune* from lumping Brisbane together with Hearst. *Tribune* staffer Kenneth Macgowen accused Brisbane of bitterly attacking Britain. Brisbane, claimed Macgowen, accused Japan of threatening the United States, portrayed Mexico as a danger, constantly emphasized the horror of warfare itself ("international murder"), and opposed food shipments to the Allies on the plea that American children were starving.[63]

If the Hearst chain ended up backing the Wilson administration and the man personally had never collaborated with the Germans, historian Ian Mugridge finds the publisher guilty of tactical errors and too often taking the approach of "a plague on both your houses."[64] Certainly Hearst was his own worst enemy. One could well argue that his portrayal of certain U.S. allies lacked any balance. Therefore, they could not help but undercut any coalition against the Central Powers.

Only one other figure as prominent as Hearst received such vilification. Senator Robert Marion La Follette had spoken for four hours against Wilson's war message. After the United States entered the conflict, La Follette fought conscription and the Espionage Act. He sought a 50 percent increase on the taxes millionaires must pay. On August 11, 1917, he introduced a resolution asking the Allies to restate their peace terms, warning that the Entente was fighting for punitive damages and annexation of new territory. "The people," he demanded, "have a right to know with certainty for what end their blood is to be shed and their treasure expended."[65]

La Follette's resolution drew little support. Historian Claude H. Van Tyne compared "the little Badger Napoleon" to Aaron Burr. The *New Republic* saw all penalties and annexations dependent upon Germany's good behavior. The *Outlook* warned that Berlin would use the senator's resolution to discredit the Allied cause. To Commerce Secretary William C. Redfield, La Follette's resolution stabbed the United States in the back.[66]

Such opprobrium was nothing, however, compared to the reaction to LaFollette's address delivered on September 20 to a Nonpartisan League audience of possibly 15,000 in St. Paul, Minnesota. He attacked the "kept press" and claimed that Congress had shirked its responsibility. In discussing the sinking of the *Lusitania*, La Follette asserted that Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan had warned

Wilson beforehand that the ship was transporting 6 million pounds of munitions to Britain. Even more significant, the senator was quoted as saying that "I wasn't in favor of beginning the war. We had no grievance." Within four days, La Follette stressed that his remarks had been deliberately misconstrued, but his denial was ignored.[67]

Seldom in U.S. history had a speech met with such scorn. Bryan denied he had foreknowledge of the *Lusitania*'s cargo. It was, however, La Follette's supposed statement of "no grievance" that led to many calls for his expulsion from the Senate. Such demands came from public safety commissions, chambers of commerce, merchants' and manufacturers' associations, service clubs, Councils of Defense, the National Security League, and the American Defense Society. Included was the Chattanooga Bar Association, the Rotary Club of Ithaca, the Massachusetts Republican State Convention, the U.S. Grant Post of the Grand Army of the Republic in Brooklyn, and a flying squadron of a thousand Liberty Bond salesmen. In Sheboygan he was hanged in effigy, an event later repeated on the state university campus in Madison. Theodore Roosevelt called the Wisconsin senator American democracy's "most sinister foe." To pro-war Socialist Charles Edward Russell, "La Follette is simply a big yellow streak." Taft referred to traitorous activities and seditious speech. Columbia University president Nicholas Murray Butler found his remarks akin to poisoning every U.S. soldier who went to war. When Wilson learned that the Wisconsin state and county councils of defense demanded La Follette's resignation, he told Tumulty to communicate "my warm appreciation of the patriotic feeling and purpose involved."[68]

On October 6, La Follette sought to defend himself before his Senate colleagues. He ignored his St. Paul speech, the focus of calls for his expulsion. Rather, his three-hour address stressed the duty of dissenting in wartime and the need for a popular war referendum and a declaration of U.S. war aims. The United States should frankly say, "We are not seeking to dictate a form of government to Germany or to render more secure England's domination of the seas."[69]

Rebuttals from his Senate colleagues came immediately. Just after La Follette spoke, Frank B. Kellogg, who had introduced an expulsion resolution, denied that the country entered the conflict so its citizens could ride on ships loaded with munitions or to assure the profits of

munitions makers. Joseph Robinson (D-Ark.), calling the conflict "a holy war," asserted that if the Wisconsin senator had his will, "liberty would become a memory." Albert Fall found that "no more dangerous doctrine has been preached." La Follette's only support came from James K. Vardaman, who pointedly shook his hand as debate ended. The Senate unanimously endorsed the creation of a subcommittee of the Committee on Privileges and Elections to examine the St. Paul speech.[70]

In February 1918, La Follette's own Wisconsin state senate passed a loyalty resolution 26 to 3 condemning the senator. One F. A. Huber dissented, seeing a conspiracy sparked by "all the war-profiteers that have so recently created a stench in the nation that smells to high heaven." After a stormy seventeen-hour session held that March, the state assembly concurred with the state senate, 53 to 32.[71]

Few opinion leaders came to La Follette's defense. Viereck's weekly reprinted major excerpts of the senator's October 1917 speech. Philosophy professor Horace Kallen of the University of Wisconsin bucked the overwhelming anti-La Follette sentiment of his faculty colleagues, finding the senator properly reflecting the progressivism of Wisconsin voters.[72]

Eventually the controversy died. Throughout 1918, La Follette was absent from the Congress, caring for an ill son. In late May, the Associated Press admitted it had misquoted the senator. Noting that the AP served a thousand newspapers, the *Nation* lamented, "No amount of apology can undo the serious wrong done by this error." After the 1918 congressional elections, the Republican Party, now holding only a 49–47 margin in the Senate, immediately realized it needed La Follette's vote. Hence, in January 1919, the Senate voted 50–21 to drop all charges. Practically every Republican backed La Follette, but such Democratic stalwarts as Thomas Walsh (D-Mont.), Key Pittman (D-Nev.), and Morris Sheppard (D-Tex.) still favored expulsion. To John Sharp Williams, the Wisconsin senator's remarks concerning the *Lusitania* were "an everlasting lie."[73]

To some promoters of national unity, the threat went well beyond unpopular ethnic groups, a flamboyant publisher, and a recalcitrant senator. The American left underwent blistering attack.

SEVEN
THE ANTI-RADICAL CRUSADE

THE LARGEST ORGANIZED OPPOSITION TO THE WAR WAS NOT the German American community, much less the Irish one. Nor was it followers of Hearst or La Follette. It lay in various left-wing movements, spearheaded by the Socialist Party.

The party itself had been in decline. Though its presidential candidate, Eugene Victor Debs, had won almost 900,000 votes in 1912, its 1916 standard-bearer, journalist Allan Benson, drew fewer than 600,000. Party membership dropped from its 200,000 high, reached just after the 1912 election, to 77,000 once the United States entered the war. In roughly the same time span, the circulation of the *Appeal to Reason* of Girard, Kansas, one of the widest circulated weeklies in the world, had dropped from 761,742 to 529,172. By 1916, only two Socialist dailies remained, the *New York Call* (circulation 15,000) and the *Milwaukee Leader* (circulation 37,000). Demographically, the base of the party was shifting from the agricultural and mining areas of the West and Southwest to midwestern and northeastern cities, where it found support among Germans, Poles, and Russian Jews.

In 1914, at the outbreak of the conflict triggered in Sarajevo, the party's executive committee claimed, "The Socialist Party is opposed to this and all other wars." The day