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14. ABSTRACT Russian information operations in the 2016 Presidential election was far from the only instance of foreign interference. Throughout U.S history, Foreign states have attempted to influence segments of U.S society based off ethnicity, political ideology, and class. Two historical cases show that two major powers, Imperial Germany (1914 -1918) and Soviet Russia (1919 – 1939), attempted to influence U.S domestic policy. Both failed to successfully exploit U.S societal seams to interfere in U.S policy construction due to directed Americanization efforts on the U.S immigrant community, domestic political fragmentation, and a robust U.S intelligence and security apparatus. As the U.S re-enters great power competition, foreign competitors are likely to exploit U.S historical socio-cultural and political seams. It is vital for the intelligence community today to better understand how U.S socio-cultural, political and security elements responded to foreign interference.						
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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

U.S Domestic Barriers Against Malign Foreign Interference

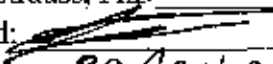
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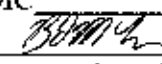
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: U.S Barriers Against Malign Foreign Interference

Author: Major Kevin Dwyer

Thesis: Between 1914 – 1939, Imperial Germany and Soviet Russia failed to sufficiently exploit U.S societal seams to interfere in U.S policy construction due to directed Americanization efforts on the U.S immigrant community, domestic political fragmentation, and a robust U.S intelligence and security apparatus.

Discussion: Imperial Germany and Soviet Russia sought to influence segments of U.S society based off ethnicity, political ideology, and class to indirectly exert influence on U.S policy construction. Both attempts to mobilize perceived ethnic blocs in America proved defeating as they both overestimated the homogeneity and support from their target constituents. Such missteps were further undercut by U.S government sponsored, but locally executed Americanization endeavors that sought to rapidly assimilate non-English speaking ethnicities into the American fabric. Additionally, the complex peculiarities of the American democratic framework served as a bulwark against German and Russian attempts to leverage the democratic processes to their advantages. Both Germany and Russia failed to produce political blocs of sufficient strength, form coalitions with likeminded organizations or penetrate the powerful labor unions. Finally, The U.S developed a robust intelligence and security architecture that oriented squarely against German and Russian interference efforts. This architecture mobilized a counter counter-intelligence apparatus paired with a severe restriction on American civil liberties. While it certainly complicated German and Russian interference efforts, it also turned the United States into a type of surveillance state never seen before or since.

Conclusion: Americanization served as a barrier against German and Russian interference whether it was instituted from the government or societally driven. Additionally, the U.S political landscape proved too diverse for Germany and Russia to mobilize sufficient political strength based off narrow ethnic and class distinctions. Coalitions were required but were less homogenous and harmonious. Finally, a robust security apparatus proves a powerful instrument against foreign designs, but it must guard against overreach.

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PREFACE

The era of modernity and the socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts that informed why conflict occurred inspired me to explore whether similar themes existed today. In the social media age, one may believe there is little value apply the socio-cultural lessons of a people long dead to the transformative world of today. Yet, authoritarian foreign competitors are undoubtedly weaponizing mass consumerism, handheld technology, and social media to sow disinformation and exploit seams within American society. Our ancestors can still speak through the litany of primary sources they left us. They want us to learn from both their success and their failures. It has been my honor to study their litigations, debates, letters, and reports to glean those lessons to help shape a better world today.

In truth, I could not have achieved this work without a wonderful support group. First, my wife, Jessalyn Dwyer, who supported me with love and understanding. Secondly, Dr. Paul Gelpi, Lt Col Brian McClean, and the Gray Scholar “Five-Thousand-Year-Old Mind” cohort provided me the best education on societies and great power conflict. Finally, Dr. Lon Strauss simultaneously gave me more individual mentorship, direction, inspiration, and subject matter expertise than I could have ever hoped to have. I am a better officer as a result. Thank you all for the most wonderful and fulfilling experience. It will be treasured for a lifetime.

Introduction

In 2019, Special Counsel Robert Mueller and the Department of Justice concluded that the Russian government interfered in the 2016 U.S Presidential election. They targeted fault lines within U.S society.¹ While the Russian meddling is undoubtedly true, scholars debate their level of influence. Were there domestic conditions that weighed more heavily? Some argue that race and ethnicity played a significant role, while others argued it was nationalism.^{2;3} There were studies on how propaganda from domestic media influenced opinion.⁴ Still others argue that years of lax U.S security and intelligence environments in the cyber realm paved the way.⁵ Yet, the 2016 Presidential election was far from the only instance when foreign states attempted to interfere in U.S affairs. What lessons can be gleaned from those historical episodes? Is U.S policy so contingent on domestic conditions that foreign interference is negligible?

Foreign states have attempted to influence segments of U.S society based off ethnicity, political ideology, and class. Two historical cases show that two major powers, Imperial Germany (1914 -1918) and Soviet Russia (1919 – 1939), attempted to influence U.S domestic policy. Foreign interference between 1914 – 1939 represented a combustible and turbulent part of U.S history that contain many of the same friction points as today. Namely, immigration, what it means to be American, and the role of U.S intelligence and security agencies in larger American society. Their attempted influence on the United States can shed light on the domestic conditions that hampered historic foreign interference.

Imperial Germany and Soviet Russia had to contend with unique American socio-cultural, political and security challenges that in the aggregate, frustrated their respective strategies. The U.S possessed a unique socio-cultural landscape given the colonial origins of the nation and the upswell of immigration from Ireland, Central and Eastern Europe between 1880 –

1924. This patchwork of cultures, languages and customs naturally caused tension with the Anglo-Saxon American nativists. Yet, it also gave political and social leaders the opportunity to further define what constituted “Americanism” and construct assimilation measures for the new population. Such measures naturally helped shape America’s diverse and chaotic political landscape as millions of new Americans experienced representative democracy for the first time. The U.S possessed a multitude of issue-specific political organizations that ranged from temperance to munitions embargos. However, because the Democratic and Republican parties overwhelmingly dominated the electorate, a lone issue-centric political organization did not possess sufficient strength on its own and thus needed to build coalitions. Finally, as it readied itself for war in 1917, the U.S government leeryly looked upon its diverse ethnic makeup and rapidly produced a large counter-intelligence service. Certainly, for both Germany and Soviet Russia, the U.S socio-cultural, political and security landscapes were complicated and ever evolving.

Ultimately, it is vital for the intelligence community today to better understand how U.S socio-cultural, political and security elements responded to foreign interference. The U.S possesses certain societal vulnerabilities and hypocrisies that transcend time. As a mostly immigrant nation, U.S society is a complex and convoluted web of enigmas that politics, economics, ethnicity, religion, class, and a myriad of additional factors influence with vacillations over time and geographic space. Such complexities and inconsistencies have befuddled both native-born Americans and decision makers in foreign states alike. They certainly influenced foreign designs on the U.S population. As such, Imperial Germany and Soviet Russia failed to successfully exploit U.S societal seams to interfere in U.S policy

construction due to directed Americanization efforts on the U.S immigrant community, domestic political fragmentation, and a robust U.S intelligence and security apparatus.

Americanization

Both Imperial Germany and Soviet Russia developed strategies designed to mobilize target U.S constituents to their respective causes. For the Germans, it was ethnic based as they targeted German Americans. For Soviet Russia, it was class based as they sought to influence the U.S immigrant labor class. However, both contended with focused Anglo-American efforts to assimilate non-English speaking immigrants. At the turn of the twentieth century, Lamarkism served as a popular racial theory in the U.S. that stipulated that an ethnicity's behaviors can adapt to the environment and then through "use-inheritance," be passed along to future generations.⁶ As such, Lamarskism served as the basis to Americanize large swaths of America's growing ethnic patchwork. Policies directed toward Americanization were conceived within the U.S Congressional and Executive Branches. However, the federal organs relied on local power structures to implement their policies. This local implementation took the form of coerced Americanization measures from local town officials, as in the German case, or factory owners as in the Soviet case. In each instance, gradual and informal social practices also played leading roles that facilitated immigrant assimilation through shared communal celebrations or shared labor strife. Regardless of formal or informal means, non-English speaking U.S aliens adopted Americanization which undermined German and Soviet attempts to politically mobilize their targeted blocs.

From 1914 – 1918, German Americans served as the first non-English speaking ethnicity to become subject to Americanization. On the surface, it seemed strange that this group required Americanization. A 1910 Census recognized 8.2 million self-identified German Americans with

most as first- or second-generation Americans. This figure represented 25 percent of the American population making it the largest ethnic group within the U.S.⁷ However, when the U.S entered the First World War in 1917, Germany became the enemy. In Congress, debate raged whether German Americans participated in a Pan-German alliance that sought to resist American assimilation and act as a unified voting bloc to force American policies favorable to Germany. Therefore, Congressional leaders directed a great deal of suspicion toward their German American citizenry, which became subject to intense Americanization efforts.⁸

U.S Congressional leaders were right to suspect Imperial German designs on the German American population. James A. Gerard, U.S Ambassador to Germany, passed to President Wilson that unnamed German government officials warned against U.S belligerency and threatened to mobilize German American opposition.⁹ A 1919 U.S subcommittee hearing on German propaganda corroborated Gerard's account on German intent when it noted:

“The Imperial German government had reason to feel confident in August 1914, that there was a powerful German influence in America, and if taken in hand and organized and properly directed by skilled agents of the German government, the American government's policies could be molded to suite the interest of Germany.”¹⁰

The subcommittee added that the principle aims of the German government were to prevent the shipment of American made war material to the Entente, maintain U.S neutrality and finally to “maintain its solidarity of the German and Austrian elements of our society and retard their assimilation.”¹¹ Propaganda directed at a supposed German American bloc served as the means to these ends. The New York City based German Information Services (GIS), the German Foreign Office and the German embassy acted as the vehicles to distribute the propaganda, principally through the American organized National German American Alliance (NGAA).¹² Indeed, there was little doubt concerning Imperial Germany's designs on the German American

population. However, they overestimated their means and placed too much faith in a homogenous German American population supportive of the Kaiser's political objectives.

Contrary to both Imperial Germany's nefarious designs and the U.S Congress' fear, there was little evidence that a Pan-Germanic bloc existed in America. That was because German American ethnic identities and shared histories facilitated their American assimilation rather than prevented it. The immigrant nature of America's cultural fabric reflected a unique society that possessed a heterogeneity in seemingly homogenous cultures. German Americans proved an apt example of this dichotomy. German American identity was more rooted in common cuisine, religion, and social practices than an association with a greater Germanic state and its geopolitics.¹³ Additionally, German American immigrants who arrived in the United States before the German unification of 1871 possessed a cultural heritage more firmly rooted in the idea of Bavaria or Saxony, for example, rather than a greater Germany.¹⁴

That regional attachment had a profound influence on German American attitudes toward Imperial Germany. The sense of regional identity over Pan-Germanism is exemplified in State Senator Julius Coller's 1917 address to the citizens of Jordan, Minnesota regarding German American loyalty. As a German American himself, Senator Coller framed the 1871 German Unification as a hostile Prussian takeover of previously peaceful and contented people. He evoked a regional sense of German identity that Prussian aggression plagued when he exclaimed, "You of Westphalia, Bavaria, Schleswig-Holstein and Hanover who enjoyed peace and happiness and contentment under your own Governments until a robber came and stole your land."¹⁵ He appealed to the audience's sense of a better future in their new home, the United States, and reminded them that they had now found a more prosperous life free of authoritarian rule.¹⁶ In doing so, he exposed the complex plurality embedded in German American identity

that was not easily reconciled with an overly simplistic Pan-Germanism. German identity simply did not always equate to an attachment to a German nation or the Kaiser.¹⁷

Such regional ethnic identification paired with an ambiguous sense of German culture helped facilitate gradual German American assimilation into their local townships in the decades before the First World War. German American assimilation was best characterized through the events of McClean County, Illinois. While foreign language newspapers in the U.S were just as common as English language newspapers at the time, McClean County's English language *Pantagraph*, reflected the general American acceptance of German culture in the early 20th century. As a sign of local approval of the German American community, the *Pantagraph* printed extensive coverage of the social and charitable activities of the secular German American "Turner" social group. The 1868 dedication of the Turner's downtown Bloomington Hall even warranted front page coverage.¹⁸

Additionally, in preparation for McClean County's 1913 "German Day" celebration, the *Pantagraph* was filled with adverts selling "German Day" bunting and German flags. Bloomington, Illinois Mayor, E.E. Jones, opened the event with a speech that celebrated German influence on American culture. Thousands attended of various ethnicities and the *Pantagraph* heralded it as the "greatest event for Central Illinois in 1913."¹⁹ It went on to publish, "The people of Bloomington are indebted to their German American fellow citizens...children of today will be able to tell the children of tomorrow...when nationalities of a free republic mingled and joined hands and marched in unison."²⁰ Against this backdrop, the idea of a socially isolated Pan-Germanic bloc, concealed as an American trojan horse and ready to respond to the Kaiser's bidding, is best relegated to the realm of conspiracy theories. Simply put, by 1914, German Americans were already Americanized by their local communities, albeit in a more gradual and

informal fashion. Yet, during the war years, this county served as an illustration of coerced Americanization that forced their German American neighbors to prove their loyalty.

Despite their gradual assimilation, German Americans faced new societal and governmental pressures to aggressively conform to a narrow interpretation of what constituted “Americanism.” The seeds of coerced conformity and assimilation became obvious in 1915 when President Wilson urged newly arriving immigrants to dispel with the notion that they belonged to any ethnic grouping other than American.²¹ The 1915 sinking of the *Lusitania* and the subsequent American propaganda campaign directed at vilifying all things German, placed additional pressure on German American assimilation (see figure 1). In a stark contrast to the Anglo-American celebratory acceptance of the benign “German Day” celebrations, “hyphenism” or “German-Americanism” was now labeled as unpatriotic. Despite the national propaganda, German Americans experienced distrust preeminently from their neighbors and local authorities.

Figure 1: Americanization Propaganda 1



Source: Chad R. Fulwider, *German Propaganda and U.S. Neutrality in World War I*. (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri, 2016), 160

McClean County again illustrated how coerced assimilation was executed at the local level. In Bloomington, Illinois, Mayor E.E. Jones served as the chairman for the McClean County Executive Committee for the State Council of Defense. In their 1 April 1917 meeting, several days before President Wilson asked Congress for a declaration of war, the committee made their coercive motives clear, and established an authority to “determine how to deal with citizens who by their acts appear disloyal, or who being financially able, refuse to contribute to war activities and to ascertain what steps may be taken to *force* contribution.”²² Additionally, the committee sought to stamp out Germanism and promote Americanization under the slogan “get right or get out!”²³ Furthermore, the committee debated the seizure of “disloyal” German American businesses and properties.

German American businesses were quick to demonstrate their loyalty to the U.S out of fear of retribution. The day after the McClean County Executive Committee adjourned, the Bloomington based *German American Bank* changed its name to the *American State Bank* to “conform to the spirit of the institution – 100 percent Americanism.”²⁴ Additionally, by March and April 1918, the Trinity Lutheran School and the Evangelical Lutheran Church demonstrated their loyalty through overt displays of patriotic fund raising to sell thrift stamps or purchase war bonds. Both the McClean County German American dominated Catholic Churches joined with the Lutheran Churches to form American Red Cross societies.²⁵ Finally, the committee coerced the editor of the German language newspaper *Bloomington Journal*, to publish only in the English language. The *Pantagraph*, in a reversal of its 1913 “German Day” coverage, noted that such an order was necessary to thwart foreign propaganda.²⁶

It is worth noting the speed and length at which German Americans were willing to conform to “100 percent Americanism.” Undoubtedly, fear of retribution motivated overt

displays of patriotism. It is understandable that most business owners chose not to challenge the McClean County Executive Committee's stance on property seizure since the Espionage Act gave little legal protection to those charged with disloyalty. To compound this dilemma, German Americans experienced physical acts of violence when they did not display acts of loyalty to the U.S. Nevertheless, while German Americans certainly experienced fear based coercive tactics, their gradual assimilation in the preceding years was also a contributing factor toward their conformity.²⁷ It stands to reason then, that the Imperial German government could not rely on a mobilized German American ethnic bloc due to a combination of coercive methods and prior assimilation, partial or otherwise. So pervasive and lasting was German American conformity that a 1927 Immigration and Naturalization subcommittee hearing on the Americanization of Adult Aliens set German Americans apart. Only a decade removed from the First World War, they were cited as the aspirational example of "100 percent Americanism" for new non-English European immigrants to follow due to their proficiency in the English language.²⁸

Critics may point to the German American Bund, formed in 1936, as evidence of Americanization's failure. However, the German American Bund was a product of Nazism which was unrelated to Pan-Germanism and more informed by the context of the Great Depression. Furthermore, German Americans demonstrated great apathy toward the German American Bund. At its zenith, the German American Bund only possessed 8,500 members and six thousand sympathizers compared to 30 million German American inhabitants. Ironically, non-German Americans made up the membership total as the German American Bund extended its recruitment to nativist fascist gatherings. As such, the German American Bund did not represent German American resistance to assimilation.²⁹

In the period immediately after the First World War, non-English speaking, ethnic minorities from eastern and south eastern Europe received Americanization in the labor force. Between 1880 – 1924, nearly 25 million immigrants entered the work force in two distinct waves. A first wave of mainly Irish and German immigrants was followed by a second wave of mainly non-English speaking immigrants from eastern and south eastern Europe at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Soviet Union sought to mobilize the non-English speaking immigrant labor force into the U.S Communist Party. To buttress Soviet machinations, Congress, individual corporations, and labor unions each sought to Americanize the new work force.

The uncertainty over national security during and after the First World War prompted Congress to explore a series of legislation designed to assimilate non-English speaking immigrants more efficiently into U.S society. English language proficiency underpinned many of the designs. The 1919 hearing before the U.S Senate’s Committee on Education and Labor regarding the “Americanization Bill” sought to redress the issue of a growing non-English speaking populace. The committee estimated that 3-4 million non-English speaking naturalized American citizens represented 50 percent of the industrial work force. Thus radical elements could exploit them.³⁰ During testimony for the “Americanization Bill,” Oklahoma’s Chief Mine Inspector blamed war-time copper mining strikes on radical elements that took advantage of ignorant non-English speaking laborers.³¹ Therefore, the “Americanization Bill” endeavored to impart upwards of \$750,000 of federal funding to state educational boards for the purpose of educating Immigrant minors in the English language up to a third-grade level.³² Congress deemed these measures successful enough that by 1927, the U.S House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization held a hearing to extend the educational opportunities to the adult immigrant population.³³

The U.S Congress' focus on English proficiency was not the result of benign intent. Testimony from the 1919 "Americanization Bill" and the 1927 hearing on the "Americanization of Adult Aliens" made it clear that governmental elements linked the country's linguistic plurality with the spread of radical thought. During testimony in front of the U.S House subcommittee on Immigration and Naturalization, the President of the Allied Patriotic Societies, Mr. Dwight Braman, blamed foreign language newspapers for propagating uncontrolled radical thought and identified 366 such foreign language radical newspapers in New York City alone.³⁴ Since there was a post war recession after World War One that dampened patriotic fervor, English proficiency was intended to act as a bulwark against socialistic and communistic influences.³⁵

In the manufacturing sector, industry leaders sought to utilize Americanization to adjust new non-English speaking immigrants to the factory environment. The influx of non-English speaking immigrants typically originated from pre-industrial areas of Europe and thus possessed societal values aligned with agrarian and artisan life. Meanwhile, in the U.S beginning in 1910, new production technology and methods further diminished craftsmanship in place of unskilled labor. Therefore, immigrants new to the factory environment required a cultural adjustment that was congruent with modern production methods. The Ford Motor Company served as an apt example as 70 percent of Ford's 12,880 workers in 1914 were from eastern Europe. Unsatisfied with their level of output, Ford instituted several Americanization methods that were typical of American manufacturers of the period and aimed at molding their work force's collective behavior.³⁶

Ford Motor Company's Sociological and later Educational Departments championed several practices and approaches in welfare capitalism. The popularly known Five Dollar Day

served as a profit-sharing scheme that incentivized unskilled workers to adopt American and industrial values. In the Ford Profit Sharing Plan, the worker's paycheck was comprised of two distinct parts. The first was the standard wage. The second was the profits the worker received under specific conditions. Profits were tied to standards in product efficiency and whether workers conformed to a "right" American standard of domestic life. Ford espoused such values as cleanliness, thrift, sobriety, and the quality of housing in an acceptable neighborhood.³⁷ One Ford pamphlet suggested:

"Employees should live in a clean, well conducted homes, in rooms that are well lighted and ventilated. Avoid congested parts of the city. The Company will not approve, as profit sharers, men who herd themselves into overcrowded boarding houses which are menaces to their health."³⁸

The Ford Sociological Department theorized the environment shaped the work force's individual and collective behavior which would transfer to the factory workplace. Ford's abhorrence to tenement living and focus on cleanliness was principally aimed at curbing absenteeism from disease and thus still possessed profiteering motivations. However, Ford's methods served a dual purpose. Middle class America held a common view that isolated immigrant communities in squaller conditions were likely to be radicalized.³⁹ Certainly not all immigrants were successfully assimilated under Ford's programs. Nevertheless, by espousing an "American standard of living" laden with monetary incentives, Ford provided what appeared to be a credible alternative to radical politics.

Not all companies shared Ford's enthusiasm for coerced assimilation. The Bethlehem Steel Company valued short term profits and may have fast tracked its employees to naturalization through unscrupulous methods. A 1923 U.S House committee on Immigration and Naturalization questioned the Bethlehem Steel Company on the need for 12-hour shifts in heavy industry since work hours prevented aliens within the work force from Americanizing. The

Bethlehem Steel Company testified that immigrant labor in their factories were required to attend one hour of Americanization classes two times a week as part of their standard 12-hour shift. However, Committee members expressed skepticism toward the company's benevolent stance. While the steel company attempted to boast of its 150 newly naturalized employees, the House committee noted the steel company's proximity to a county where naturalization fraud was rampant.⁴⁰ What was telling from the Bethlehem Steel Company account was the level of scrutiny U.S Congress paid to Americanization efforts to combat radicalism. It certainly illustrated that while not all parties readily complied, there was an institutional focus to use assimilation as a bulwark against radical mobilization.⁴¹

The manufacturing sector's reliance on unskilled immigrants certainly puzzled the labor movement as immigrant and nativist traditions clashed. As a result, labor's response toward increased immigration was mixed. In the early 20th century, the craft-based American Federation League (AFL) lobbied Congress for the 1924 Immigration Act which restricted immigration from Asia and eastern Europe through literacy tests and national quotas. The AFL feared masses of unskilled laborers and new production methods would undermine the union's influence on political and business leaders.⁴² Other unions, such as the Knights of Labor, welcomed immigrants. By the late 1930s, modern mass production methods and the demographic reality of the labor force made the AFL's platform obsolete. As it was, the AFL's rival, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) sought unskilled immigrant inclusion in its ranks. These organizations served as melting pots to Americanize immigrant communities from the bottom-up.

While top-down approaches were prevalent, bottom-up approaches through labor organizations may have contributed more toward immigrant Americanization. The shared toil

and strife shared by laborers of varying ethnicities combined with the income inequality with their employers formulated a lasting bond between otherwise clannish tendencies. Indeed, laborers were originally segmented in factory settings according to their ethnicity under a “clan” leader. Ethnic tension within the workplaces was rife. The labor union setting provided the space where the various ethnicities came together. The U.S commissioner of labor, Ehtelbert Stewart noted that the labor union, “represented the first, and for a time the only point the immigrant touches any influence outside his clan...and by virtue of this intercourse, clannishness is to a degree destroyed.”⁴³ Union meetings acted as a forcing function for members of different ethnicities to air grievances that concerned the entire factory labor force instead of their own “clans.” Local 183 at the Chicago Stockyards exemplified how labor solidarity brought about an Americanized cultural pluralism. At one meeting, an African American woman and a Polish woman were chastised by the Irish Chairwoman for using the union meeting’s call for grievances as a venue to air individual offenses at each other. She exclaimed, “...don’t you know that this question in our ritual don’t mean that kind of grievances, but grievances for the whole bunch of us?”⁴⁴ It was through such forums that diverse ethnic groups came together and learned about their individual rights, the U.S Constitution and methods of democratic government. While it served an indirect barrier against foreign interference, immigrant’s shared struggle prompted them to actively participate in America’s democratic processes. As such, the unions served to Americanize a new wave of non-English speaking immigrants.⁴⁵

America’s socio-cultural and ethnic plurality was the optimal Americanization attribute that buttressed foreign interference. Yet, during periods of strife, whole ethnic groups who were previously part of the community could automatically constitute a threat or become an enemy. In the 21st Century, Arab-Americans and Muslim-Americans know this all too well post September

11. As a result, there will be a tendency to promote coerced unity on the existing and incoming population. If that coerced unity is fear induced, and directed from the top to the bottom, it may only result in outward conformity. Gradual “bottom-up” assimilation built a stronger foundation that bulwarked foreign intervention. In the German American case, their gradual localized assimilation allowed them to rapidly conform to outside governmental and societal pressures. However, their loyalty was already assured in the decades that preceded the events of the First World War by their local township’s acceptance. Likewise, labor more efficiently introduced non-English speaking immigrants to American values than Congressional policies or corporate initiatives. The labor unions and German American assimilation demonstrated that successful Americanization endeavors were based on shared democratic values and not ethnic identity. Both instances proved to have outsized impacts on foreign political mobilization attempts targeting these distinct constituencies.

Political Fragmentation

Both Imperial Germany and Soviet Russia sought to mobilize political power within the existing American democratic construct. Germany attempted to mobilize German Americans and the Soviet Union attempted to mobilize the immigrant working class. In both instances, the complex peculiarities that constitute the American democratic framework, bulwarked German, and Soviet penetrations. Both Imperial Germany and the Soviet Union failed to mobilize political constituencies sufficiently strong enough to pressure U.S policy makers despite the availability of ready political vehicles. When they could not muster enough political power from their targeted base, both Imperial Germany and the Soviet Union failed to mitigate their weaknesses and exploit political alliances with likeminded organizations. Finally, both failed to penetrate the American labor movement at a time when its influence and political power was growing.

The German Information Service and Foreign Office faced difficulty penetrating American public opinion and sought first to mobilize a German American dominated constituency through the National German American Alliance (NGAA). The U.S Congress incorporated the NGAA in 1907, which was chiefly a German American organization formed to promote German American assimilation, bind together those of German lineage, honor German American contributions to the country's founding and celebrate German culture. The NGAA was the largest ethnic organization in the United States and claimed a membership of over two million.⁴⁶ As such, the Imperial German government viewed the NGAA as an organization that could represent German Americans as a homogenous group and distribute pro-German propaganda.⁴⁷

Direct links between the NGAA and German governmental organs relied on circumstantial evidence. Dr. Charles Hexamer's behavior, the NGAA president until 1917, was most notable.⁴⁸ First, Dr. Hexamer possessed unusually close relationships with Imperial German officials as Ambassador Bernstorff spoke at Dr. Hexamer's 50th birthday in 1912.⁴⁹ Furthermore, in the NGAA's official newsletter, the *Official Bulletin*, Dr. Hexamer continuously advocated for positions that could only be interpreted as advantageous to the German war effort. He authored plenty of articles aimed at the embargo of munitions production. However, his most damning articles argued for the German American resistance to assimilation and the maintenance of German ethnic distinctions.⁵⁰ In a 1917 *Official Bulletin* under the headline, "The Bulwark of Germanism", Dr. Hexamer wrote, "Only in vigorous unity does the welfare of American Germanism rest. Every division of our powers is a betrayal of the cause of German culture."⁵¹ Under the same headline, Dr. Hexamer exclaimed, "Also in the field of political activity, we must learn to obtain for ourselves elbow room."⁵² As such, U.S Senator Angus King surmised

that Dr. Hexamer signaled to Imperial German entities that German Americans would defend German policy positions in the U.S.⁵³ Therefore, while evidence linking the NGAA and the GIS was merely circumstantial, it did not prohibit the U.S Senate's judicial subcommittee from casually connecting both in their 1919 hearings on German sponsored propaganda.⁵⁴ The U.S Senate subsequently removed the NGAA's charter on suspicion of disloyal acts. Such a measure should be justified given the unusual behavior of the NGAA's national leaders and the organization's inconsistency with its own approved charter. Its national leaders were certainly willing instruments of German policy aims.

While Dr. Hexamer's sympathies were certainly an asset for the GIS, they placed far too much faith in Dr. Hexamer's capacity to politically mobilize his supposed German American base. In actuality, Dr. Hexamer had limited reach and influence in the local chapters. The NGAA's authority was so limited, and German American apathy so apparent, the organization could not collect annual membership dues from its reported 2-3 million members. Despite a potential budget of \$30,000 a year if each member provided one cent to the organization, the NGAA's annual operating budget barely exceeded \$4,600 annually.⁵⁵ In contrast to the NGAA's reported purchase of \$11,217 worth of Liberty Bonds and War Saving Stamps in the Pittsburgh area alone, the NGAA's limited reach comes into sharp focus.⁵⁶

The diffused organizational structure of the NGAA also hindered Dr. Hexamer's ability to politically mobilize German Americans. While the NGAA reportedly possessed over 1,200 branches across the nation, it was not a centralized hierarchal body vested with sweeping authority on its members.⁵⁷ Instead, it was a loose federation of local, regional, and state German American social organizations of varying types and forms.⁵⁸ To illustrate the diffused nature of the NGAA, the President of the Kansas based branch testified to the Senate Judiciary

Subcommittee that he was not even an officer of the national organization. His interactions with national NGAA officials only occurred sparingly. Over a six-year period, the Kansas branch president only interacted with national NGAA officers in three separate conference settings. He testified that the national NGAA branch held no authority over the Kansas branches' activities and provided no instruction save a general promotion of the German language. The NGAA's influence was relegated to the distribution the *Official Bulletin*, whose mailing list only included the Kansas branch president himself. He distributed it as he saw fit, if at all.⁵⁹ The GIS thus relied on a supposed national organization that was incapable of penetrating its own branches within the American heartland where the German American population was concentrated.

When broken down, it becomes clear why the GIS struggled to mobilize German American political support. Despite the German government's confidence in sympathetic NGAA leaders, the unstructured and diffused nature of the NGAA made political mobilization difficult. Dr. Hexamer simply did not possess the requisite command and authority over NGAA member branches. Additionally, individual apathy toward the NGAA is clear given the low collection of membership dues compared to the purchase of liberty bonds. The German Foreign Office and Information Service simply placed more faith in the NGAA than it deserved as a political organization, and thus failed to adequately mobilize the requisite political support needed to influence U.S policy.

While the German American political base appeared fragmented and diffused, Ambassador Bernstorff and the German Foreign Office also struggled to fully exploit political alliances. Even if Imperial Germany over estimated German American enthusiasm for its policies, other non-German American organizations with shared values were available to build national political coalitions. In January of 1915, nearly 12,000 Americans rallied in support of

the American Neutrality League's demand for an embargo on munitions sales. Furthermore, in June of that same year, a mass convention was held in Madison Square Garden by the United German Societies of New York. They were joined by the Star-Spangled Banner Association, the Socialist Party of New York, the German Catholic Federation, and the United Irish Societies. There, these alliances called for an "embargo, maintenance of peace, neutrality and defense of neutral rights."⁶⁰ It appeared Germany had found willing political allies in the United States. However, they all represented lost political opportunity. No group would demonstrate that more than American Catholics and Irish Americans.

The American Catholic dioceses and subsequent social organizations could have served as a political entity sympathetic to German policy aims of U.S neutrality. After all, as a religious institution, the Catholic Church did not support the conduct of war, and the church's narratives could be found in the various church sponsored literature. In Notre Dame, Indiana, the devotional magazine *Ave Maria*, maintained a narrative of strict neutrality.⁶¹ The St. Louis based Catholic magazine, *The Fortnightly Review*, also adopted a stance of neutrality and maintained a skeptical tone on all propaganda that laid blame at one nation's feet or the other.⁶² The Jesuit magazine *America*, was even anti-French given the French government's secular leanings.⁶³ There were some pro-Entente Catholic magazines such as the *Catholic World*.⁶⁴ However, they proved more the exception rather than the rule. The tone of the church literature mirrored Catholic American sentiment as Catholics joined neutrality leagues in increasing numbers.⁶⁵ Since the preponderance of American Catholics derived from German or Irish descent, the Catholic bloc served as a ready constituent for foreign mobilization. Instead, German strategy proved self-defeating. As early as 1914, Ambassador Bernstoff feared that the German High Command failed to appreciate the power of public opinion in democratic countries and thus

avored battlefield success over influence.⁶⁶ No act was more damaging than the Kriegsmarine's sinking of the *Lusitania*.

The German attack on the *Lusitania*, persuaded American Catholic clergymen to adopt restrictive stances on political participation. When the American Independence Conference attempted to elicit clerical support for Republican Presidential nominee Charles Evans Hughes, the Milwaukee diocese Archbishop Sebastian Messmer blocked all clerical political participation. Likewise, New York's Bishop Thomas Hickey, Boston's Archbishop William O'Connell, and the mid-west's Central Verein all denounced the prospect of a Catholic voting bloc.⁶⁷ Such statements were impactful given the degree of influence the clergy held within the immigrant Catholic community. They were also highly damaging for any supposed political alliance the Germans might have hoped to gain since they considered Charles Evans Hughes, a reliable candidate to maintain U.S neutrality and adopt an aggressive posture toward Great Britain's commercial violations on U.S shipping.⁶⁸ While many American Catholics still voted for Hughes, a sizable enough minority remained satisfied with Wilson's neutral stance.

The clergy vote proved the most illuminating. Nearly 3,500 of the 5,000 American priests voted for Wilson. Given the societal importance the church bestowed upon priests, no statistic better illustrated Germany's reversal. The German High Command's insistence on battlefield victories in the Atlantic undermined the simultaneous quest for American public opinion. Of the Catholics that favored Charles Evans Hughes, however, the Irish Americans stood apart.⁶⁹

Arguably, Irish Americans were the most hostile toward the Wilson administration since this bloc of voters was chiefly motivated to support Irish independence from Great Britain. Thus, they possessed a high level of Anglophobia. Irish American animosity reached its apex after the Wilson administration delayed the U.S Senate's clemency appeal for the 1916 Easter Rebellion

leaders. The clemency appeal only reached British authorities after they carried out the rebels' executions.⁷⁰ Therefore, an Irish American alliance with the NGAA seemed a powerful coalition. Bernstorff and German military attaché, Captain Franz von Papen, even worked with the Irish American Clan-na-Gael to secure arms for further Irish rebellions. Furthermore, they helped organize an Irish Race Convention designed to ferment American sympathy for Irish freedom and thus anti-British sentiment.⁷¹ Bernstorff's and von Papen's effort would be in vain.

Ambassador Bernstorff failed to capitalize on the Irish American vitriol of the Wilson administration during his 1916 Presidential re-election campaign. While the majority of Irish Americans opposed Wilson's re-election campaign, their isolated political mobilization was insufficient to topple him. Wilson was so confident in public support for his policy of "100 percent Americanism" that he was willing to isolate the "hyphenated vote." He went so far as to announce, "There are citizens of the United States...born under foreign flags but welcomed under our generous naturalization laws...who have poured poison of disloyalty into the very arteries of our national life...debased our policies to the uses of foreign intrigue."⁷² Wilson was right to possess such confidence. Despite the united Irish American voting bloc, they were not enough to overcome Wilson's support. Bernstorff and Hexamer let them down through their inability to unify German American voting power. As a damning indictment of Imperial Germany's faith of a unified German American voting bloc and the NGAA, most German Americans in Maryland and Ohio voted for Wilson.⁷³

In both the Catholic and Irish American cases, German attempts to form political coalitions failed because of their inability to coordinate the disparate requirements needed for coalition building. Whether it was adopting military doctrine compatible with the sensitives of American public opinion, or merely holding up their end of the political bargain, Imperial

Germany was exposed as an American political novice. They simply lacked the savvy and resourcefulness required to navigate the U.S political spectrum. However, instead of learning from their mistakes, the Germans doubled down on their failings and extended their political ineptitude to the labor realm.

Much like his failed attempts to form U.S political coalitions, Ambassador Bernstorff failed to hinder the American munitions industry through subversive labor activities. Along with German military attaché Captain von Papen and Austro-Hungario Ambassador Dumba, Ambassador Bernstorff sought to re-direct enough labor to undermine the profitability of American munition plants. In 1913, Hans Liebau, a prominent New York architect, created and ran a front company on behalf of Bernstorff and Dumba, named the Liebau's Labor Bureau.⁷⁴ The German and Austrian-Hungario governments financed the Liebau Labor Bureau to remove German and Austrian Americans from munitions plants and re-job them in non-war related industries. While the Liebau Labor Bureau's headquarters was in New York, its reach extended into America's heartland with branches in Chicago Illinois, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Bridgeport, Connecticut and Cleveland, Ohio.⁷⁵

Despite its extensive geographical range, the Liebau Labor Bureau struggled to attract German and Austrian Americans to its cause. It initially had limited success in the first six months of its operations. Over 8,000 German and Austrian Americans volunteered for their workers' relief program and 4,466 were eventually mobilized out of the munitions industry. Such figures were certainly modest. German and Austrian military conscripts who immigrated to America after their terms of service were still obligated to serve as a "reserve" to their home country's armies. U.S Congressional reports detailed fears of a million-man German and Austrian reserve army of subversives that existed within the country.⁷⁶ That so relatively few

Germans and Austrians participated in the workers relief program demonstrated both the apathy of Bernstorff's target audience and his limited reach. Added to that, most of the men who volunteered constituted unskilled labor that were easily replaceable. The skilled technicians Liebau and Bernstorff primarily sought could not be torn away.⁷⁷ A U.S Senate Judiciary sub-committee that investigated the Liebau Labor Bureau indicated that high wages within the munition's factories, and a general distaste for sabotaging one's own place of employment, kept German and Austrian Americans within the plants.⁷⁸ While this may be true, The German High Command again played a self-defeating role that resulted in isolated and disjointed attempts to mold American public opinion.

While Ambassador Bernstorff orchestrated the Liebau Labor Bureau affair, he did not possess authority over all the Imperial German organs shaping American public opinion. He particularly did not possess operational control over his alleged partner in the Liebau scheme, Captain von Papen. As an Imperial German military attaché, Captain von Papen oversaw Germany's U.S based War Intelligence Bureau, along with Naval attaché, Karl Boy-Ed. Neither von Papen or Boy-ed received direction from Bernstorff or the Foreign Office. Instead, they received their orders from the German High Command. While this arrangement placed the GIS on a back footing and forced it to react to domestic charges of German espionage and sabotage, it also undermined the Liebau Labor Bureau.⁷⁹ In September 1915, the New York Tribune published reports that the German War Intelligence Bureau threatened German Americans with prosecution under the German Penal Code if they continued to work in U.S munitions factories. Indeed, the War Intelligence Bureau did propagate a proclamation alluding to legal consequences, but it was primarily aimed at motivating German American moral and sense of duty. Additionally, they lacked any feasible means to enforce such a policy and no criminal

allegations were ever made. However, the specter of Imperial Germany enforcing its legal system in the U.S caused a domestic uproar.⁸⁰

The combination of uncoordinated influence operations, high wages and a general sense of German and Austrian American assimilation doomed German efforts to foment disruption in labor. By July 1915, the Chicago and St. Louis branches were erroneously reporting that German Americans were no longer employed in munitions factories. In actuality, fewer factory workers were self-identifying as German and thus not making themselves available.⁸¹ The conditions had worsened to such an extent that the new Austro-Hungarian ambassador to the U.S, Baron von Zwiedineck, pulled out of the arrangement by 1915.⁸²

In July 1915, Imperial Germany tried one last attempt to mobilize U.S Labor against the munitions industry. This time it subsidized a “Labor National Peace Council” led by Wall Street executive David Lamar. However, Lamar gained no traction as representatives of the AFL refused to endorse the measure.⁸³ By the U.S entry into the war, Germany’s influence in the U.S labor community had collapsed. Like his failure to form political alliances, Ambassador Bernstorff could not simultaneously compete with both his own government and navigate American temperaments in labor politics. The complex interaction between powerful labor unions, identity politics and daily capitalistic life in America proved too complex for any of the German U.S based organs to unravel. They had lost the public opinion war with the common man.

In a similar vein to German attempts in America, after the conclusion of the First World War, the Soviet Communists intended to export their ideology worldwide after their successful Russian Revolution. This meant that America was not free from foreign interference despite its war time victories. The post war economic slump made the prospect of socialism an attractive

option for working class elements that were economically suffering.⁸⁴ Since the working class was the target audience for the Soviet inspired Communist movement, they thought the United States was a ripe target for Communist exploitation. Therefore, while the German threat of foreign influence had subsided, the Soviet one merely replaced it. Like the Germans, the Soviets sought to mobilize internal American political power to exert influence on American policy from within. Unfortunately for the Soviets, the peculiarities of the American political arena hampered the Soviet aims in similar ways it did the Germans. Much like the Germans, the Soviets possessed a fractured political base that undermined political coalitions.

While the Germans and Soviets held separate geopolitical aims, they both sought to exert influence through American based political organizations. The Germans had the NGAA, and the Soviets controlled the U.S Communist Party. While there was only circumstantial evidence connecting the German government to the NGAA, there was more direct evidence that connects the Soviet leadership in Russia to the U.S Communist Party. The Russian controlled and Moscow based Communist International (Comintern) was formed in 1919 to coordinate the collective efforts of communist organizations worldwide. In 1920, the Second Comintern Congress instituted conditions that exerted the Comintern's control over the international member states. It mandated that the decisions arrived at the Comintern were binding for all international members. This effectively subjugated the U.S Communist Party to Moscow.⁸⁵ Thereafter, the U.S Communist Party acted as a direct vehicle for Soviet influence in the United States.

Unfortunately for the U.S Communist Party, it was unable to successfully navigate the American political landscape because it did not form a sufficiently powerful base. That is because the Comintern and the U.S Communist Party failed to address the diverse American

working-class constituency. When the U.S Communist Party manifesto stated, “the conquest of the power of the state is accomplished by the mass power of the proletariat,” they characterized the proletariat as a single, unitary entity.⁸⁶ Like Germany’s miscalculation of a unified German American voting bloc, the Comintern projected a European class and societal make up on a far more nuanced American society. Edward Lawrence Godkin, Editor of *The Nation*, explained the differences between the American and working class.

“There [In Europe], the working man on a strike is not simply a laborer who wants more wages: he is a member of a distinct order of society, engaged in a sort of legal war with the other orders...His employer is not simply a capitalist in whose profits he is seeking a larger share: he is a member of a hostile class, which...it is considered mean or traitorous for him to hope to enter. This feeling, we need hardly say, does not exist in America.”⁸⁷

While Godkin presented more controversial arguments on the blurred lines between capitalism and labor, he was correct to dispel concrete parallels between European and American labor classes. This is especially true because the U.S labor class was not an ethnically homogenous unit.

Issues on ethnicity already fractured the U.S labor constituency by 1919. A decade before the U.S Communist Party formed; the American Socialist Party struggled to bridge the chasms formed in the working class with the introduction of non-English speaking immigrants. During the 1910 Socialist Party Congress, members sought to pass a resolution to protect American workers against imported foreign labor from Asia. It was met with sharp debate. Militant Socialist Ernest Untermann praised the resolution when he stated, “I am determined that my race will be supreme in this country.”⁸⁸ Other Socialists, such as Sol Feldman, believed that all laborers across the world were equal.⁸⁹ Given the volatile nature of the American working class, it proved difficult for the U.S Communist party to unite an already-divided base. They were

starting from a weakened position. It was a position they were not able to improve upon because of their own internal divisions.

If the fractured labor constituency was not enough, The U.S Communist Party ruptured its own membership through in-fighting. At the organization's founding year in 1919, they were a fractured political body and consisted of two parties: The U.S Communist Party and the U.S Communist Labor Party. The latter leaned more heavily on Socialist principles. While they eventually merged into the United U.S Communist Party in 1921, internal fault lines remained. In 1925, the U.S Communist Party expelled whole factions on the grounds that they were insufficiently Bolshevik. Mirroring the turmoil in Soviet Russia, the U.S Communist Party also expelled the American Trotskyist factions between 1929 and 1931.⁹⁰

From this already weakened position, the U.S Communist Party had to compete with the American Socialist party for influence over their target constituency.⁹¹ The Socialist and Communist Party would have been natural partners, if their shared vision of improving the working class's conditions was enough. However, the American Socialist Party and the U.S Communist Party differed in their means to improve the labor class' environment. While disagreements on maneuver within the capitalistic system split the moderate and militant factions of the American Socialist Party, by in large, they both sought to improve the working-class conditions while maintaining a democratic framework. Strikes could become violent, but the American Socialist Party's objectives did not equate to pro-authoritarianism.

By contrast, the U.S Communist Party promoted a far more militant stance that linked the domination of the working class with the domination of the state. Their own manifestos stated that the "proletariat class struggle is a political struggle" and that "Communism does not propose to 'capture' the bourgeoisie parliamentary state, but to conquer and destroy it."⁹² Communist

editorials in 1920 claimed the Socialists were in the back pocket of the bourgeoisie, liable to align with the capitalist class and abandon class struggle.⁹³ As such, the Comintern viewed Socialist parties both in Europe and in America as their greatest enemy and branded them “Social Fascists.”⁹⁴ Disagreements devolved into violence. Bands of communists disrupted Socialist meetings, shouted down speakers and violently broke apart gatherings. In 1934, a force of 5,000 communists provoked a riot during a Socialist Party rally in New York City.⁹⁵

The chasm between the U.S Communist Party and Socialist party demonstrated the fractured state of the labor movement and working class. It was too divided along ethnic and political lines to morph into a single coherent proletariat. Without a class based unified political bloc, the U.S Communist Party struggled to penetrate the American political arena. To augment their weakened base, the U.S Communist Party needed to ally with sympathetic political organizations. Like the Germans, Comintern policies proved self-defeating amongst the U.S political landscape.

Lacking sufficient organic political strength, the U.S Communist Party sought political alliances in line with Comintern’s “United Front” strategies. The intent of the “United Front” strategies was to ally with militant Socialist leaning political organizations to gain access to their constituency. The “United Front” movement occurred from “below” or “above.” Leader to leader engagement characterized the latter while subversion characterized the former. Subversion was typically the preferred route.⁹⁶ The U.S Communist Party demonstrated the “United Front from Below” strategy in the 1924 Presidential election with disastrous results.

The 1924 Presidential election produced an opportunity for Comintern to test their “United Front from below” strategy in the U.S, and ally with a militant Socialist political faction. When the Minnesota based Farmer-Labor Union attempted to organize a national worker’s party,

the U.S Communist Party joined their conference under the guise of a coalition.⁹⁷ They sought to capture the 600,000 working class Americans the Farmer-Labor Union claimed to represent. To acquire those working-class Americans, the U.S Communist Party adopted a subversive strategy in lieu of a genuine alliance. During the 1923 Farmer-Labor Conference, they were allocated 10 of the 500 available delegates since they only represented 14,000 members. However, they covertly controlled over half of the total delegates in the conference and strategically placed party members in the various trade unions and political societies. As such, the U.S Communist Party took control of the conference and attempted to form a new party called the Federated Farmer Labor Party (FFLP). The Farmer-Labor Union caught the duplicity and walked out. In self-congratulatory fashion, the U.S Communist Party genuinely believed they had taken political control of a working-class movement. However, once the communist leadership role was outed, hundreds of thousands of working-class members left and the U.S Communist Party was left with a hollow organization.⁹⁸

The result was clearly disastrous for the U.S Communist Party. The Comintern's "United Front from Below" subversive methods proved inappropriate for the U.S democratic arena. Likewise, the U.S Communist Party lost its remaining credibility. Faced with a shrinking political base and an absence of allies, the U.S Communist Party was in a weakened state. Much like the Germans, the rambunctious American electorate and diffused electoral process had proved too complex for the Soviets to overcome. Taking a page from the German High Command's playbook, instead of adapting, the U.S Communist Party doubled down on their subversive strategies in the labor arena.

Since the Comintern sought power through the working-class proletariat, they targeted trade unions as viable political organs to mobilize the masses. In 1921, the Comintern directed its

member parties to subvert the AFL, the United Mine Workers of America and other trade unions to lead union members to the Communist Party.⁹⁹ The U.S Communist Party aimed to place communist sympathizers in key leadership positions within the various unions in a tactic termed “boring from within.”¹⁰⁰ The slow burning coup proved inept. When communist leaders orchestrated a 1926 strike at a New Jersey textile mill outside AFL channels, it quickly fell apart. The communist organizers’ bargaining positions were compromised, and they were forced to hand over the strike to the AFL. The AFL, in turn, organized a settlement with the company. The AFL subsequently expelled the outed communist leaders.¹⁰¹

The lessons from these examples lend credence to the resiliency of the U.S political system. It served as a vastly complex, diffused, and multi-layered albatross that proved difficult to penetrate. History bore out that foreign entities were capable of mobilizing fringe political organizations. However, attempts to translate that into genuine political power can be smothered. The Germans discovered this when they focused too exclusively on the German American constituency. The Soviets fell victim to this when they focused on militant labor. As foreign states today attempt to disperse propaganda and mobilize fringe political organizations, they too must navigate the turbulent undercurrents of the American democratic political system.¹⁰²

U.S Intelligence and Security Apparatus

Imperial Germany and Soviet Russia had to contend with a revamped U.S domestic intelligence and security structure never seen before on the American continent. During the First World War, various U.S military and law enforcement agencies acquired a robust counter-intelligence mission on the home front that saw the exponential growth and the professionalization of their organizations. They adopted counter-intelligence practices honed by the U.S Army’s Military Intelligence Division in the Philippine War, complete with a robust

informant network, undercover agents, and detailed dossiers on suspected subversives. Additionally, nearly 250 thousand private citizens acted as “semi-official auxiliary agents” whose legitimacy varied from badged investigative agents to vigilante mobs. Furthermore, the U.S legislature introduced laws designed to curtail civil liberties and stamp out subversion. Finally, this framework carried over into the post-war environment where the methods devised to counter German intrigues were turned against the Soviet threat in what was termed the First Red Scare.

After nearly a century without a domestic counter-intelligence agency, during the First World War, the U.S rapidly constructed a robust intelligence and security apparatus with interlocking organs across both defense and law enforcement pillars. In 1908, the Army de-activated its Military Intelligence Bureau, which had shaped U.S counterintelligence doctrine in the Philippine American War. By 1917, however, they were mobilizing for the First World War and thus re-created a similar organization named the Military Intelligence Division (MID). It grew from a single Philippine American War intelligence veteran to over 1,700 agents. Likewise, the existing Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) and Bureau of Investigation (forerunner to the FBI) were further enlarged and professionalized. The Bureau of Investigation grew from 300 to 1,500 professional agents while the ONI grew to over 500 agents.¹⁰³ These organizations worked collaboratively. However, the war, naval and justice departments used the MID as the clearing house for all information in potential foreign sponsored and domestic subversives.¹⁰⁴

While combat intelligence formalized on the front lines of Europe, the MID’s Washington D.C Headquarters focused on counterintelligence to surveil and intercede potential subversives on the home front. It deemed that the largest domestic threats arose from a mixed population susceptible to propaganda originating from their home countries.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, to

characterize subversives residing in the U.S, the MID viewed its counterintelligence tradecraft through an imperial lens. This included categorizing ethnic groups in the U.S according to their perceived level of threat to U.S security as a single homogenous group. They deemed Irish Americans, German Americans, African Americans, and Hindus as the populations that were most susceptible to German propaganda and thus required the greatest focus of surveillance.¹⁰⁶

US domestic security emerged during and the First World War as a state-society collaboration. Formed in 1917, the American Protective League (APL) served as the most famous self-organized societal instrument that sought to augment the official U.S intelligence agencies. Consisting of 1,400 local branches with 250 thousand volunteer agents, they conducted three million war time investigations on behalf of the MID. However, their organizational make up ranged from well-meaning middle class and influential community leaders to private eyes of dubious reputation with a history of breaking up labor stoppages.¹⁰⁷

Overall, the APL's performance was amateurish. Many APL branches devolved into vigilante groups while others used their influence to establish rackets.¹⁰⁸ In New York, they bungled various investigations by legitimate intelligence agencies designed to root out German espionage. In May 1918, lawyer, and APL "agent" Henri C. Harnickell attempted to investigate a women's reported suspicion of a German spy in the Ritz Carleton Hotel. He drunkenly accosted the "suspect" and openly denounced him as a "Dirty Hun", and thus exposed one of ONI's covert operatives.¹⁰⁹ The APL was only capable of routine investigations and by the end of 1918, their controversies and ineptitude led to their extinction.¹¹⁰ Taken in isolation, they would hardly seem worthy of examination. However, the sheer scale and speed of the citizenry's self-initiated mobilization is notable. Their counter-intelligence accomplishments were dubious, but their xenophobic and violent behavior established an environment of fear.

In stark contrast to the APL's amateurism, in 1917, the MID, BI, ONI, federal and local officials orchestrated a sophisticated attack against radical socialist labor unions who threatened to impede the flow of critical war time materials. The Industrial Workers Worldwide (IWW) was a militant labor union that orchestrated strikes in copper mines, oil fields and forestries in the American west during the U.S war time mobilization. They endorsed radical governmental change and subscribed to violent strikes and sabotage. To combat the threat to vital war materials, the MID recruited hundreds of private detectives skilled in penetrating labor.¹¹¹ Additionally, local, and federal officials leveraged the Committee of Public Information's "Minute Men" to help mobilize a non-IWW aligned western workforce. Neary 12 thousand responded in addition to the Loyal Loggers and Lumbermen (LLL); a U.S Army organized closed shop union that harvested timber for aircraft production.¹¹² Meanwhile, in the IWW's home base of Seattle, the MID teamed with the ONI, DOJ, and citizen auxiliaries to patrol the docks, conducted indiscriminate arrests, censored mail, and deported undesirables. Pro-union politicians were replaced, and union halls were closed. The culminative effects from this heavy-handed approach was the dismemberment of the IWW's support network. The organization was forced to go to ground and its leaders were convicted for violations against the Espionage Act. While the events in New York and Seattle both occurred in 1917, the events against the IWW showed that burgeoning U.S security apparatus was capable of more than mobilizing scale. Unlike the amateurish APL, the inter-agency and local collaboration against the IWW demonstrated the evolving sophistication and penetrating reach of the U.S security apparatus. Such a construct would go on not just to serve America's war time requirements, but also its post war threats.

The U.S security apparatus' focus on radical labor elements extended beyond the end of the First World War and culminated in the First Red Scare. In 1919, post war America saw nationwide labor and ethnic unrest that resulted in the continued growth of America's intelligence and security services while the rest of the Army demobilized. In January of 1919, fifteen thousand dock workers went on strike and crippled New York harbor. In response, the MID compiled a list of suspected foreign born "Reds" who were accused of organizing the strike and subsequently deported them.¹¹³ In February of 1919, 75 thousand strikers paralyzed the Seattle waterfront and the MID characterized the events as a Bolshevik styled revolution. The Army met the strikers with fixed bayonets, and the leaders were deported.¹¹⁴ This time the American Legion became the primary civilian auxiliary during the Red Scare. They destroyed stores that held radical literature, raided IWW offices and burned socialist texts.¹¹⁵ The suppression and violence were swift but became normalized over the years when backed by legal standing.

Stringent legislation eased civil protections and complimented the U.S security apparatus in the interest of national security. By 1917, the Espionage Act ensured American conformity and patriotism had become law. To guard against foreign interference and domestic subversion, the act itself cast a wide net as to what it considered unlawful acts. Such unlawful acts extended to the distribution of subversive correspondence through the U.S Postal Service. If caught by the censors, an individual faced up to five years imprisonment.¹¹⁶ Since the Espionage Act passed shortly after U.S entrance into World War One, it directed many of its articles toward the country's mobilization efforts. Espionage was loosely defined and addressed unauthorized access to a wide scope of war-related resources, production, and transportation networks.¹¹⁷ This approach was certainly reasonable as the German High Command sought to disrupt U.S based

munition production via the Liebau, Labor Bureau among other subversive attempts to disrupt U.S arms production.

Both the 1917 Trading with the Enemy Act and the 1918 Sedition Act served to bolster the reach of the Espionage Act. The Trading with the Enemy Act empowered President Wilson to establish a Censorship Board comprised of the Secretary of War, Navy, Chairman of the Committee of Public Information and Postmaster General who established protocols to censor private citizen's communication and censor subversive literature.¹¹⁸ The Sedition Act narrowed the U.S government's interpretation of dissent and included such subversive behavior as the willful profane or disloyal utterance toward the United States. One such example that demonstrates the sheer scope and depth of societal penetration of the U.S security apparatus concerned a German American named Mr. Hans Voss. During a 1918 loyalty meeting in Lake Field Minnesota, Mr. Voss softly muttered, "The U.S has no right to enter the war," "this war was started by big business" and "Germany had a right to draw a line and sink U.S ships who crossed that line."¹¹⁹ Federal agents opened a formal investigation on Mr. Voss and noted that the German American township writ large was a "hotbed of subversion."¹²⁰ The investigating agent determined that insufficient evidence existed to charge Mr. Voss. However, the very nature of the investigation aptly demonstrates the apprehensive societal environment, the scale of the security apparatus and the depth they were empowered to go armed with an unprecedented legal foundation.

As military units demobilized at the conclusion of the First World War, the U.S amplified its anti-subversiveness campaign against radical labor elements. The Russian Revolution sent a shock of fear through the U.S legislature about the prospect of communist inspired subversion in labor and in politics. During the sixty-sixth Congress, The U.S House of Representatives'

Committee of Immigration and Naturalization was taken aback at the rate the communist ideology spread in the U.S and were particularly unnerved that the Minnesota based Postal Service issued a “resolution of sympathy” toward the Soviet Union.¹²¹ Their actions underscored the vulnerable sense Congressional leaders had toward the maintenance of democracy, and the threat they perceived came from the Soviet Union. In that same committee hearing, the Congressmen avowed their commitment to introduce language that would strengthen the 1917 Espionage Act. Any foreign alien found to profess open oral or written dialogue that proposed a superior form of government would face deportation.¹²² Even flying a red flag could become a deportable offense.¹²³

This type of Anti-Red mania introduced Attorney General Michell Palmer and his “Palmer Raids.” Palmer utilized the amended language in the 1917 Espionage Act and the 1918 Immigration Act to launch nation-wide raids against organizations suspected of holding communist sympathies.¹²⁴ It armed both federal and local authorities to close organizational news presses, seize records, jail immigrant activists, and eventually deport them.¹²⁵ The 1918 Immigration Act enabled domestic security services to jail and deport any immigrant who provided advice, donated funds, or possessed literature of any organization the U.S government deemed sympathetic to communism.¹²⁶ The most notorious examples of the “Palmer Raids” were the prior mentioned 1919 New York Harbor and Seattle Harbor strikes.¹²⁷ In Seattle, the communist aligned IWW was forced to take to ground and many militant labor unions were left leaderless.¹²⁸ While the IWW’s relationship with the U.S Communist Party was far more nuanced and complicated than a simple alliance, what mattered was the U.S domestic intelligence agencies binned them both as foreign influenced militant labor organizations. In

many respects, the First Red Scare and the “Palmer Raids” were a forced Americanization on the U.S working class immigrant population.

Security legislation has continued to evolve since 1917. The 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) was crafted to serve as an additional tool against foreign interference and a safeguard against overreach. After September 11, 2001 proved that foreign actors could threaten national security from a domestic springboard, Congress granted the federal government expansive authorities under FISA as part of the U.S Patriot Act. From 2001 – 2005 U.S Attorney General Alberto Gonzales and FBI Director Robert Mueller cited a 74 percent increase for surveillance applications under FISA. None were denied.¹²⁹ While Edward Snowden’s revelations on expanded U.S surveillance methods reignited domestic debate on government overreach, former NSA and CIA Director General Michael Hayden offered a clear stance from a security perspective. He noted:

“American signals intelligence is limited by the demands of the Fourth Amendment and defined by the demands of American security. Absent political guidance to the contrary, if you are not protected by the US Constitution, and your communications contain information that would help keep America free and safe, information that would not otherwise be made available to the US government, then game on. Your privacy is simply not the concern of the NSA director.”¹³⁰

While General Hayden certainly illustrated the need to balance national security and civil liberties, he does present the dilemma through a binary lens. Much like in 1917, there are certain grey areas that obscure distinguishable foreign and domestic characteristics. Opponents point to such a nebulous environment in their objections.

Challengers to today’s security environment fear the U.S government has overreached in its attempt to thwart foreign interference. Like the example of German American Mr. Van Hoss and his 1917 investigation under the Espionage Act, opponents of expanded FISA authorities

worry that vague language within the FISA Acts create tenuous grounds between citizens or resident aliens and their international connections.¹³¹ Additionally, domestic groups inspired by international organizations could be subject to FISA authorized surveillance instead of the more strenuous criminal search and surveillance statutes.¹³² While the Patriot Acts were intended to, in part, guard against internationally motivated domestic terrorism, a modern day internationally inspired militant labor union in the vein of the IWW may fall under similar surveillance authorities. Finally, Section 206 of FISA approved “roving wire taps” allowed security professionals to collect broadcasted internet activity such as e-mails and phone calls without identifying a specific device to collect on.¹³³ Such authorizations are similar to the US Postal Service’s mail censorship authorities in the 1917 Espionage Act.¹³⁴ Therefore, when foreign influenced domestic groups threaten national security, stringent legislation will blur the authoritative lines between foreign and domestic security. If given a choice between security and personal privacy during periods of national crisis, security officials may advocate the former and thus risk overreach.

Conclusion

Despite the world’s ascendancy into the social media age, socio-cultural, political and security barriers against malign foreign interference still hold relevancy today. In his 2019 “Worldwide Threat Assessment” to the U.S Intelligence Community, the Director of National Intelligence, Daniel Coats, addressed how foreign influenced Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVE) faced similar domestic barriers as those that Germany and Soviet Russia experienced. He noted, “The United States’ well integrated Muslim population, fragmented HVE population and high level of vigilance will ensure a general inhospitable operating environment for HVEs.”¹³⁵ If he were speaking 100 years ago and referred to German and Russian designs on U.S policy, those words could certainly translate to Americanization, political fragmentation, and a robust

security apparatus. This suggests that these variables constitute a timeless domestic barrier against foreign interference and could be applied today against Russian and Chinese threats.

Americanization served as a barrier against German and Russian interference whether it was instituted top down or bottom up. Certainly, the former lends itself to societal driven abuse if the government takes an antagonistic tone toward an ethnic community, it is attempting to assimilate. However, the gradual bottom-up assimilation had enduring qualities. The optimal Americanization occurs when mixing various ethnic communities to celebrate U.S values, whether it occurs during “German Day” festivities or Labor Union meetings on the factory floor. Federal and locally sponsored education in language, government protected freedoms and equal rights underpins it all. Such bottom-up assimilation instills an enduring loyalty that survives prejudicial treatment during periods of national crises.

Additionally, the complicated U.S political landscape headed by a two-party system frustrated foreign designs to politically mobilize Americans in favor of their preferred policies. Both the German backed NGAA or the Soviet controlled U.S Communist Party remained on the fringes of the American political landscape. Any narrow ethnic or class based political mobilization simply does not carry sufficient political strength because of the multi-cultural make-up of the U.S. Therefore, foreign influenced political organizations must resort to coalition building to offset this numerical weakness. This is a complicated endeavor as other parties may not be willing participants to subversive activity as was the case with the U.S Communist Party and the Farm Labor Union.

Likewise, a robust and sophisticated security apparatus is instrumental to guard against foreign designs, but it must be cautioned against overreach. Like in 1917, today’s security apparatus can honeycomb society; each cell comprised of informants, investigators, and spies.

Modern surveillance infrastructure enhanced by future 5G telecommunications can help replace human informants and certainly provide the means for overreach. Such a scenario is already playing out in China today as their government responds to the COVID-19 crisis.¹³⁶ However, the First World War and subsequent Red Scare illustrated that the dual civil liberty and security requirements are exceptionally difficult to balance during periods of crisis. Often, the balance will tilt in favor of security and may result in overreach.

The U.S can expect additional foreign interference as telecommunication technology continues to advance. It will be worth monitoring how today's debates on immigration, political agendas, and security apparatus pivots to address the growing concern of domestic terrorism and subversion after the January 6, 2021 storming of the Capitol Building. Security services will certainly explore whether foreign interference was involved and the effect it had. In doing so, national leaders must recall what barriers helped the U.S survive previous attempts.

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