

# UNCOVERING THE ENEMY WITHIN: *British Columbians and the German Menace*

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THE STRESS OF WAR BRINGS out the best and the worst in human beings. This effect was evident in British Columbia after the British Empire (including Canada) went to war with the European Central Powers on 4 August 1914. War assists nation building by promoting solidarity, egalitarianism, and altruism within the dominant cultural group.<sup>1</sup> This was certainly true for British-Canadians. Two-thirds of British Columbians were British by origin and, before the establishment of Canadian citizenship in 1947, all Canadians were simply British subjects. The declaration of war inspired a show of loyalty, generosity, and a zeal to serve. There was an immediate outburst of British pride and demonstrations of Canadian patriotism. Parades and

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\* I am grateful to the late Charles W. Humphries, a colleague and friend in the UBC Department of History, who first drew attention to the potential of the British Columbia Provincial Police (BCPP) records in a speech about the role of rumours in the First World War, given at a BC Studies Conference banquet in 1981. His notes, now in the University of British Columbia Library's Rare Books and Special Collections Division, were an excellent starting point for research. While writing this article, I realized that I have a personal connection with this subject. My paternal grandmother, Emma (Grasser) Moogk was a third-generation Canadian of Alsatian ancestry who, in 1914, was ejected from the Weston, Ontario, Ladies' Fortnightly Club, a cultural society. In the 1830s, the Grassers had emigrated from Alsace when it was still a part of France. The region was incorporated into the German Empire after the 1870 Franco-Prussian War, and so my grandmother became "a damned German." Her family, although culturally German, was emotionally attached to the French Republic and, before 1914, flew the French tricolour when boating on Ontario's Grand River. After the First World War my father's immediate family redefined itself as being of Dutch origin. I had lived in the Netherlands from the age of ten to fourteen and was comfortable with that assumed identity. In my twenties, I learned that our surname, Moogk, had been brought to North America in 1841 by a German-speaking carpenter from the Duchy of Hessen-Darmstadt. This unsettling information came from my uncle Edward Moogk, who had a broadcasting career as "Ed Manning." My Dutch genetic heritage really comes from my mother's American Loyalist ancestors. Members of the Moogk family were roughly handled during the First World War, and a cousin, Frederick Krug, who was a store owner in Tavistock, Ontario, retained his position as postmaster by producing his passport from the Kingdom of Hanover, which bore the arms of the British royal house. This document, he argued, proved that he had been born a subject of the British crown.

<sup>1</sup> Michal Bauer, Alessandra Cassar, Julie Chytilova, and Joseph Henrich, "War's Enduring Effects on the Development of Egalitarian Motivations and Group Biases," *Psychological Science* 25, no. 1 (April 2014): 47-57.

military band concerts encouraged the flow of recruits to local militia regiments and to the naval reserve as units were brought up to wartime strength before being sent overseas. Many people who, because of age, family obligations, or disability, could not enlist formed paramilitary groups for the defence of Canada. The Canadian division of the Legion of Frontiersmen<sup>2</sup> and the North Vancouver Rifle Association augmented self-constituted Home Guard associations.<sup>3</sup> Money was collected through patriotic funds to support the dependents of soldiers who had gone overseas and through the Red Cross Society to provide comforts and nursing care for servicemen. These charities were later supplemented by the Canadian Field Comforts Commission. When it was apparent that Britain's enemies were better equipped with automatic firearms, the Machine Gun Fund was established in 1915 to arm Canadian troops with Maxim machine guns.<sup>4</sup>

At first, the population's mood was optimistic and confident. Local newspapers boasted of the British Empire's might. The German challenge to Britain's naval supremacy had been met in the preceding decade and there was little doubt that the German and Austro-Hungarian armies would be driven off the field in short order. The war was expected to be a swift, glorious march to victory with few casualties.

In 1914 the immediate, external threat to British Columbia came from Admiral Maximilian von Spee's German East Asia Squadron, originally based at the Chinese concession port of Tsingtao. These German warships were active in the Pacific Ocean. It was feared that an enemy cruiser might attack shipping and shell coastal installations, such as the Esquimalt naval base. In the first weeks of war the BC press speculated about the probable movements of German cruisers in the Pacific Ocean. In response, the coastal gun batteries at Victoria-Esquimalt were readied for action, and improvised gun batteries were set up at Vancouver and at Seymour Narrows. Two

<sup>2</sup> The legion was a non-governmental organization established in 1904 to defend the frontiers of the British Empire, Canada included. It was open to "any British subject of European descent" and provided training in "regular military drills, rifle range and revolver practice," according to *The Legion of Frontiersmen: Canadian Division* (Vancouver: BC Provincial Command Headquarters, 1943). Newspapers reported the meetings and parades of the Frontiersmen, who dressed in Stetson hats, riding breeches, with blue patrol jackets and Sam Brown belts – uniforms resembling those of the BC Provincial Police and Royal North-West Mounted Police. In August 1914, Calgary's "cattle king," Pat Burns, offered \$50,000 to arm and equip Canada's Frontiersmen. See the *Daily Province* (Vancouver), 8 August 1914.

<sup>3</sup> On the Home Guard associations, see James Wood, *Militia Myths: Ideas of the Canadian Citizen Soldier, 1896-1921* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 222.

<sup>4</sup> Castell Hopkins, *Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs*, 1915 (Toronto: Annual Review Publishing, 1916), 207-12.

submarines, purchased by the provincial government, were added to Canada's training cruiser *Rainbow* and the two sloops-of-war already guarding the coast. The late August arrival of British, Australian, and Japanese warships on the Pacific coast provided a reassuring presence. The departure of the German naval squadron from the Pacific and its destruction off the Falkland Islands in December 1914 removed that external threat.

Fear of an internal threat remained, and this fear revealed the dark side of human nature. In France and Britain scores of suspected spies and saboteurs were arrested. The 22 August 1914 War Measures Act gave Canada's federal cabinet the power to issue regulatory orders-in-council "with the force of law" without parliamentary approval. This act allowed the central government to censor all communications, to seize property, and to arrest and detain without bail anyone who is an "alien enemy, or upon suspicion that he is an alien enemy."<sup>5</sup> In British Columbia the provincial government set up a secret service and the British Columbia Provincial Police (BCPP) swore in special constables to secure vital facilities.<sup>6</sup> Armed guards were placed at strategic facilities to prevent sabotage. The Esquimalt dry dock, the Bamfield trans-Pacific cable station, the Point Grey radio station, railway bridges, explosives warehouses, power houses, wharves for seagoing vessels, and the legislative buildings were protected. The British consul at San Francisco sent British Columbia's lieutenant-governor reports about a party of German saboteurs who might try to enter the province from the neutral United States.<sup>7</sup>

Those immigrants from Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire who had settled in the province, but had not become naturalized British subjects, were now enemy aliens. The 1911 census identified 17,687 people of German or Austro-Hungarian ancestry in British Columbia – 4.5 percent of the province's population.<sup>8</sup> The province's 11,880 German

<sup>5</sup> "An Act to confer certain powers upon the Governor in Council and to amend the Immigration Act," 5 George V, chap. 2 (assented to 22 August 1915), *Statutes of Canada* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1914).

<sup>6</sup> Superintendent Colin S. Campbell to John L. Sullivan of the Secret Service, 28 April 1916, British Columbia Archives (hereafter BCA), GR 61, vol. 64, p. 669.

<sup>7</sup> J.B. Watson to the lieutenant-governor, 7 September 1914, BCA, GR 57, vol. 8, file 14. Letter from the consul on the same subject, dated 28 August 1914, is in BCA, GR 57, vol. 13, f. 1265-A. The saboteurs never arrived. A similar report about four men "hired by the German-Irish Association" of Seattle to set fire to the CPR docks in Vancouver was received from Bernard Pelly in Seattle. See Pelly to "Sir," 11 April 1915, BCA, GR 57, vol. 13, file 1265-B. It was concluded that Pelly wanted to become a paid informant and that his information was questionable.

<sup>8</sup> Canada, *Fifth Census of Canada, 1911* 6 vols. (Ottawa: C.H. Parmelee printer, 1912-13), 1:368, 2:370, 440-41. There were also 479 people of Turkish or Bulgarian origin who, despite their

Canadians were a long-established group – only 25.7 percent had been born in continental Europe. Most were British subjects by birth or naturalization, which shielded them from legal discrimination at the war's beginning. They were concentrated in the cities and included professionals, retailers, hotel keepers, and skilled craftspeople. The immigrants from the Austro-Hungarian Empire were mostly recent arrivals, overwhelmingly single men who were still foreign nationals. They had found employment as itinerant railway workers, miners, and loggers. Compared with the German Canadians, they had less formal education and fewer industrial skills.<sup>9</sup>

To deal with these foreigners the Government of Canada issued a proclamation on 15 August 1914. This proclamation, like the later War Measures Act, authorized the arrest of anyone, especially enemy subjects, who attempted to leave Canada to join their homeland's armed forces. Short-term military service was obligatory in the central European states, and so most men who came to Canada as adults had served in the army and were subject to a call-up in wartime. The proclamation gave assurance that "all persons in Canada of German or Austro-Hungarian nationality, so long as they quietly pursue their ordinary avocations[, would] be allowed to continue to enjoy the protection of the law and be accorded the respect and consideration due to peaceful and law-abiding citizens." Those caught fleeing from Canada or "attempting to engage in espionage and acts of a hostile nature" in support of the enemy were to be arrested and detained. The property of fugitives could be confiscated.<sup>10</sup>

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link with Canada's enemies, were ignored by the police.

<sup>9</sup> The social and economic differences are described in Tracy Reynolds's master's thesis, "A Case Study in Attitudes towards Enemy Aliens in British Columbia, 1914-1919," presented in 1973 in the history department of the University of British Columbia. This thesis provides the economic, social, and political context for the treatment of enemy aliens during the war and describes the postwar impact of returning Canadian veterans. I am indebted to Dr. Robert A.J. McDonald of the UBC history department, who drew my attention to this thesis during the writing of this article. In 1985-86 he supervised a history honour's thesis by Ruth Gump entitled "The Germans in British Columbia, 1930-1945: Perception and Reality of a Minority Group." Gump also submitted a master's thesis in 1989 entitled "Ethnicity and Assimilation: German Postwar Immigrants in Vancouver, 1945-1970."

<sup>10</sup> Such was the fate of the property of Gustav Konstantin "Alvo" von Alvensleben, Vancouver real estate promoter and German consul, who was visiting Germany when the war began. He was denied entry back into Canada, and his property was forfeited. The 22 October 1914 search warrant and report on the police search of his wife's home at Esquimalt are contained in BCA, GR 57, vol. 8, file 13. For sketches of his career in North America, see Janet Nichol, "Kaiser Bill's Realtor," in *Vancouver Exposed: A History in Photographs*, ed. Donald E. Waite, (Maple Ridge: Waite Bird Photos, 2010) 213-18; and Eve Lazarus, "Alvo von Alvensleben: Vancouver's Flamboyant Entrepreneur," *Vancouver Historical Society Newsletter* 52, 6 (2013): 1. There is a persistent rumour that von Alvensleben was returning to Canada in 1914 to act as a spy. As German consul, he was an enemy government's agent, but such a highly visible and well-known figure would make a poor spy. The best spies blend into their background

Notices in English were placed in BC newspapers directing citizens of the enemy powers to register with the local police. Police officers were authorized to demand that any enemy national sign a written undertaking to report regularly to the authorities and to refrain from any hostile or disloyal act. Those who refused to sign this document were liable to imprisonment under military guards.<sup>11</sup> Registered enemy aliens were to report to the local police or government agents once a month. There was a rush in applications for naturalization in order to escape the obligation to register and report, but the government authorities were reluctant to grant these requests.

In British Columbia detention camps for enemy nationals were set up at Nanaimo, Vernon, Revelstoke, Edgewood, Field, Mara Lake, and Morrissey near Fernie. In all of Canada 8,579 men were placed in twenty-four labour camps, and most of these internees, nearly six thousand, were single men from the Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>12</sup> Just twelve hundred were German nationals.<sup>13</sup> According to Bodhan Kordan, interned men “were used primarily on government works in the Rocky Mountains of the Canadian West – notably in road construction for the provincial government of British Columbia and, more particularly, in building up the infrastructure of various national parks.”<sup>14</sup> By 1917, most of the camps had closed and all but two thousand men were paroled to perform the civilian work of men who had enlisted in the armed forces.

It was naive to assume that these foreigners would read about the rules in English-language newspapers and obey them. Publications in an enemy language were now forbidden. “Austrian” and German workers at the Rogers Pass Tunnel failed to register or to sign the neutrality

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and pass unnoticed. In the United States, where he had taken refuge, von Alvensleben was arrested when the Americans went to war with Germany in 1917, and he was interned in Utah until 1920.

<sup>11</sup> Proclamation of 15 August 1914, BCA, GR 57, vol. II, file III.

<sup>12</sup> Patricia E. Roy, “Internment,” in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 3 vols. (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1985), 2:895. Over thirty thousand enemy nationals were interned during the Second World War.

<sup>13</sup> John Herd Thompson, *Ethnic Minorities during Two World Wars* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1991), 7. Thompson states that there were twenty-six of these “concentration camps.”

<sup>14</sup> Bodhan S. Kordan, *Enemy Aliens, Prisoners of War: Internment in Canada during the Great War* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), II. Kordan places the internment of enemy aliens, particularly the Ukrainian-speaking ones, “within the long tradition of nativist hostility and suspicion toward the [foreign] migrant worker in Canada” (8). Because British Columbians of German origin were not regarded as a threat to a culturally homogeneous Canada before 1914, their situation was different. With illustrations and documents, this book effectively recreates the experience of the interned men from the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

declaration because they could not read English.<sup>15</sup> Enemy nationals of military age were supervised by the Canadian army's Department of Enemy Reservists in Victoria, run by Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) William Ridgway-Wilson. Under a federal order-in-council of 3 September 1914, enemy residents were also expected to surrender any firearms, ammunition, and explosives in their possession. All these provisions seem reasonable and justifiable, but their application was increasingly harsh, punitive, and unselective.

What encouraged a hard interpretation of the rules was the changed perception of Germans and Germany. At the century's beginning the German Empire had been regarded as an upstart power – it was barely forty years old – testing British patience by its colonial ventures, by the rapid expansion of its navy, and by aiding the South African Boers in their resistance to the absorption of the Transvaal and Orange Free State into the Empire. On the other hand, the British royal family had kinship ties to Germany and was descended from Hanover's kings. The much-lamented Prince Albert was German, and King George V's consort, Mary of Teck, belonged to an aristocratic German family. The king's family name was indisputably German: von Saxe-Coburg Gotha. Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany was a grandson of Queen Victoria of Great Britain. Germans were foreigners but not as foreign as other Europeans. They had admirable qualities too.

Germans were admired for their scientific, industrial, and medical achievements and for their contributions to orchestral music. They were among the preferred nationalities recruited in continental Europe by Canadian immigration agents because of their cultural kinship with the British. They were expected to assimilate easily into Christian "Anglo-Saxon civilization." According to the racial theories of the time, Germans were close cousins of "the Anglo-Saxon Race." Germans, Scandinavians, and the Dutch were proverbially clean, orderly, hard-working, thrifty, and integrated well into Canadian society. Drawing on his experience in Manitoba, the Reverend James S. Woodsworth wrote: "Even those who detest 'foreigners' make an exception of Germans, whom they classify as 'white people like ourselves.' The German is a hardworking, successful farmer ... [T]hey are among our best immigrants. In one sense they are 'easily assimilated,' ... [N]otwithstanding some faults, we welcome the German."<sup>16</sup> Immigration by German-speakers to what

<sup>15</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel H.S. Tobin to Colin S. Campbell, Superintendent of the Provincial Police, 30 October 1914, BCA, GR 57, vol. 9, file 38.

<sup>16</sup> J.S. Woodsworth, *Strangers within Our Gates* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 84. Originally published in 1909, this later edition contains an informative introduction by

became Canada began in the 1750s, and British Columbia's first German-speaking settlers came by way of California in the late 1850s. They provided services for the mining population as "grocers, shopkeepers and brewers." They furnished transportation to the goldfields and even gave the mining town of Barkerville its popular dancing girls.<sup>17</sup>

The German language was widely used in commerce, administration, and science in Central and Eastern Europe, so German-speakers came to Canada from a variety of countries and not just from the future German Empire. They might be Americans from the Midwestern states, Lutherans from Danish Jutland, Mennonites from Russia, Roman Catholics from Bohemia, or Swiss Calvinists. In addition to the diversity of religions, these migrants spoke different varieties of German. There was no single, cohesive "German community." Nineteenth-century Europeans, however, made language a touchstone of national identity, and, in Canada, a German-speaker was regarded as a German.

British Columbia's European population was preoccupied with Asian immigrants, and German origins were not a bar to social acceptance before 1914. Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken of Victoria, born in England of German parents, was a member of the province's social elite. David Oppenheimer, a German Jew, was elected mayor of Vancouver in 1888 and served as president of the city's Board of Trade. Henry F.W. Behnsen, a cigar manufacturer from Hanover, represented Victoria City in the provincial legislature for three terms despite his ancestry and past service in the German army. In Vancouver, Gustav Konstantin "Alvo" von Alvensleben was a popular host who had made a fortune in real estate, established a German social club, and was a co-founder of the city's stock exchange. Members of the Loewen and Grauer families succeeded in a variety of fields. "For all these people," writes B. Ramsay, "the process of integration was rapid and easy. Within a generation they were not only part of the community, but leaders of it."<sup>18</sup> The September 1912 visit to British Columbia of the governor general, the Duke of Connaught, and his German wife<sup>19</sup> was an opportunity for German-born Canadians to

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Marilyn Barber that places the book in its time and in contemporary Canadian culture. At the time English-speaking Protestant Canadians thought that East European Slavs and South European Roman Catholics were less assimilable than migrants from northwestern Europe.

<sup>17</sup> B. Ramsay, "The Germans," in *Strangers Entertained: A History of the Ethnic Groups of British Columbia*, ed. John Norris (Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1971), 98-99.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>19</sup> Canada's governor general in 1911-16, the Duke of Connaught, was married to Princess Louise Marguerite of Prussia.

display their dual loyalty to the British Crown and to their fatherland. There seemed to be no conflict in these allegiances in 1912.

How did the industrious German become the bestial “Hun”? Across Canada, wrote John Herd Thompson, “the home-front propaganda war imprinted a new negative stereotype of the German to replace the positive pre-war image.”<sup>20</sup> Calling Germans “Huns” likened them to the feared nomadic and warlike peoples from Central Asia who had ravaged Europe in the fourth and fifth centuries. Ironically, the Germanic tribes were among their victims.<sup>21</sup> Contemptuous epithets, such as “Chink,” “Jap,” “Kike,” or “Nigger” facilitate discrimination because they deprive those so labelled of their individuality and humanity. In war it is a common practice to give one’s current enemies the names of despised adversaries of the past.<sup>22</sup> “Hate thine enemy” is a commandment of war. “Hun” was a new addition to the vocabulary of prejudice, and it had the sanction of wartime patriotism. Soldiers in contact with the foe were more inclined to recognize their enemy’s humanity with such nicknames as “Fritz” or “Johnny Turk.”

In Canada, blame for the First World War gradually extended from Kaiser Wilhelm II and the German High Command to all Germans. Making one person the embodiment of a certain quality, even if it is shared by others, is a natural human tendency. That figure becomes the personification of a trait, whether a hero or a villain. “Kaiser Bill” became the embodiment of aggressive German militarism, or “Prussianism.” In August 1914, Vancouverites burned the Kaiser in effigy.<sup>23</sup> Prime Minister Robert Borden’s early assurance that “we have absolutely no quarrel with the German people” was soon forgotten.<sup>24</sup> The belief grew that all Germans were collectively guilty. The assumption that the Germans had started the war was established as early as 1914. The role of Serb nationalists in sparking a conflict with Austria-Hungary, Germany’s

<sup>20</sup> Thompson, *Ethnic Minorities*, 6.

<sup>21</sup> Inspiration for this label is given to Kaiser Wilhelm II, who, in 1900, recommended that those involved in China’s Boxer Rebellion be dealt with ruthlessly, just as the Huns under Attila had dealt with the Europeans who opposed them. See “Huns” in <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huns>. The term “Huns” was revived in the late twentieth century by Roman Catholic, Irish nationalists in Northern Ireland to describe Protestant Loyalists.

<sup>22</sup> In the Balkan wars of the 1990s Serbs called Croats “Ustasha” (Croatian fascists) and, in turn, the Croats called Serbs “Chetniks” after the conservative Serbian nationalist guerrillas of the 1940s. These derogatory terms originated in the Second World War. In the Syrian civil war which began in 2011 Sunni Muslim rebels call the followers of President Assad “Majous” (non-Muslim Zoroastrians) while in Iraq Sunni Al-Qaeda fighters refer to the Iraqi government as “Safavid” after the Persian dynasty that introduced Shia Islam to Iraq. On these more recent epithets, see *Maclean’s Magazine*, 13 January 2014, 30–31.

<sup>23</sup> “City Stirred by News of Battle ... Kaiser Burned in Effigy.” *Daily Province*, 6 August 1914.

<sup>24</sup> Canada, Sessional Papers, Special War Session, p. 14, quoted in Reynolds, “Case Study,” 35.

ally, was ignored. The allies of Serbia were Russia and France, and, in order to strike a quick blow against the French before the Russians could mobilize their vast resources, the German army attacked France through neutral Belgium. The open terrain of Belgium and northern France provided the easiest invasion route. German violation of Belgian neutrality, guaranteed in 1839 by the European powers – including Britain – was indisputable. Reports of the German soldiers' conduct in Belgium were far more shocking. Canadians read stories of how the invaders had looted homes, set fire to towns, and shot civilians whenever they encountered armed resistance. Shooting non-combatants was contrary to the usages of war. It was alleged that the Germans had used women, children, and the aged as hostages for retribution or as human shields.<sup>25</sup>

The belief that the Germans had departed from all norms of civilized behaviour was reinforced by events in early 1915. The war had reached a deadlock in Western Europe and in the Dardenelles. Belief in a quick victory was no longer possible. In January 1915, German Zeppelin airships started to bomb British coastal towns, killing civilians. Air raids against cities, far from the battlefield, were a terrifying innovation. The war's ferocity touched Canadians too. In February the First Canadian Contingent arrived in France, and, in April, these soldiers were deployed in the Ypres Salient. Between attacks, constant shelling and sniping took their toll. Nearly six thousand Canadian soldiers were killed, wounded, or captured in April 1915. On 7 and 8 May, British Columbia's principal newspapers published two Canadian casualty lists showing that over four hundred men were wounded and that around three dozen were killed or missing.<sup>26</sup> Victoria's newspapers also published British casualty lists because they were of interest to the city's large number of British-born residents.<sup>27</sup> Local men who had died were highlighted in the press. The terrible cost of war was now evident. The departure of the Second Canadian Contingent was hastened by the need to make up the losses. When the German army launched two attacks against the Ypres Salient in April, using poisonous chlorine gas – an unprecedented and horrifying weapon – belief in Prussian barbarism was reinforced. The press also

<sup>25</sup> Government of Canada, *Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages Appointed by His Britannic Majesty's Government* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1916).

<sup>26</sup> "Casualties among Canadian Soldiers," *Victoria Daily Times*, 7 May 1915; "Canadian Casualty List," *Daily Province*, 8 May 1915.

<sup>27</sup> Over one-third, 35.57 percent, of the province's population had been born in Great Britain, according to the 1911 census. See Government of Canada, *The Canada Year Book, 1915* (Ottawa: J. Taché, 1916), 89. The proportion of British-born in the cities was greater.

circulated the story about a captured Canadian sergeant who had been crucified by “the Huns.”<sup>28</sup>

The tale of the crucified Canadian confirmed the damning picture of Germans established by the sinking of the British liner *Lusitania* and the consequent death of twelve hundred passengers, including women and children, on 7 May 1915. This maritime disaster was reported by British Columbia’s newspapers in great detail. The ship was hit by a torpedo fired, without warning, from a German submarine. That torpedo and a secondary explosion caused the vessel to sink within twenty minutes. The language used in the press to report this event was bound to excite emotions: Germany was the “mad dog of Europe” led by “Wilhelm the accursed.” The sinking was “savage and barbaric” piracy, another “Teuton outrage” over which these “savages” gloated. The *Victoria Daily Times* outdid other newspapers in its use of inflammatory language. Its 8 May headline read “1,364 WERE MURDERED BY THE GERMANS.” Other articles on the same front page bore the titles “Powers of Hell are Arrayed with Huns” and “Germany Knows No Law of God or Man.” This newspaper bears some blame for the two days of anti-German rioting in the city. Even Lieutenant-Governor Francis Barnard’s wife, Martha Loewen, was threatened because of her German parentage and suspected sympathy for the enemy.

Thus, the First World War was transformed from being a conflict of rival empires into “The Great War for Civilisation,” which is what was inscribed upon the victory medal (Figure 1) issued to Canada’s military veterans. Elevating the struggle to a confrontation between Christian civilization and ruthless German “kultur” gave lustre to Canada’s participation and helped to justify the sacrifices being made. Germans were now portrayed as an inherently criminal race that had to be crushed. This was not just a war: it was now a holy crusade against “a nation of murderers.” This recasting of the war and of Germans would have consequences for those in Canada who were linked with the Huns. The transformation of a benign view of German-speakers into a hostile caricature was a radical change in perspective. The corollary of war’s beneficial effect in promoting solidarity among members of the “in-group” is the rejection of those seen as belonging to the “out group.”<sup>29</sup> German Canadians were reclassified as dangerous outsiders.

<sup>28</sup> “BC Officer Murdered by Germans at Ypres ... Leaves Sworn Statement Regarding Crucifixion of a Canadian Sergeant,” *Daily Province*, 11 May 1915. This story had appeared with fewer details in earlier issues.

<sup>29</sup> Bauer et al., “War’s Enduring Effects,” 3.



Figure 1. The bronze victory medal presented to all allied veterans of the First World War and of the Russian expeditions. *Source:* Author's collection.

“A Nation of Murderers” was the heading given to the first of a series of anti-German editorials by John P. McConnell<sup>30</sup> of the *Sun* after the *Lusitania* sinking. He wrote: “We cannot see ... that ANY GERMAN in Canada deserves the slightest recognition as a human being unless he forswears his native land ... [T]he word ‘German’ stinks in our nostrils and ... any man who retains the slightest connection with the German nation is beyond the pale.” McConnell disavowed the destruction of German-owned property and proposed, instead, that all German- and Austrian-owned businesses be boycotted. Because the Vancouver police would not give him the names of enemy nationals who had to report to the authorities, he invited readers to provide that information: “The people of Vancouver have the right to know who are Germans and who are not and [the *Sun*] will publish any bona fide letters on this subject.” He warned that German proprietors hid behind businesses with English names, such as the “Kew Gardens” owned by the Schumanns and “the Dominion Bakery” run by Messrs. Schmid and Kruck. The latter, he alleged, showed their disloyalty by refusing to put war tax stamps on their cheques.<sup>31</sup> Schmid and Kruck engaged a law firm to demand a

<sup>30</sup> The editorials are unsigned. According to Sandra Boutilier, librarian of the Pacific Newspaper Group, “McConnell was publisher from 1912-17 and would have been responsible for the content of the editorials” although they might have resulted from a discussion of the editorial board. Communication of 17 April 2014 from Sandra Boutilier.

<sup>31</sup> *Vancouver Sun*, 10 May 1915. The writer states: “the German nation has branded itself as a nation of murderers.”

retraction of the story as they were naturalized British subjects who had lived in British Columbia for over a decade and because only one cheque had lacked a war tax stamp.<sup>32</sup>

The *Sun* was unrepentant. A later editorial maintained:

Today the German nation stands accused of the vilest crimes in history and every German who cannot prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that he is German only in name must remain an object of suspicion ... The authorities of Canada have been too unsuspecting and too lenient. There can be no doubt that there are many Germans in Vancouver, some of them perhaps naturalized Canadians, who gloat over the *Lusitania* incident and the slaughter of hundreds of women and children ... Alien enemies must be interned and ... the people of Vancouver should not spend one dollar with any business man or tradesman who is not loyal.

A German Canadian who had “two sons at the front, fighting with the Canadian Expeditionary Force” had proved that he was “a loyal Canadian and deserves the best treatment.” However, wrote the editorialist, “the onus of proof should be on the Germans resident in this country. We can no longer assume that they are innocent until they are proved guilty.” Once again, every reader is encouraged “to report immediately any suspicions he may have of the loyalty of Germans in Vancouver.”<sup>33</sup> Scores of British Columbians did report their observations and suspicions to the BCPP. According to McConnell: “Various people have sent us their opinion on the subject [of boycotting, and interning all German nationals] and some expressed the strongest censure of our attitude,” but “the majority were decidedly in favour of ostracizing all Germans who have not become naturalized.”<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> “An Explanation,” *Vancouver Sun*, 12 May 1915. The bakery owners said that the cheque in question was for sixteen dollars and they thought that cheques for less than twenty dollars were tax exempt.

<sup>33</sup> “The Germans,” *Vancouver Sun*, 12 May 1915. To buttress his position, the editor quoted Dr. Delbruck’s speech while introducing the German Nationality Act, which claimed that German nationality and the obligation to serve the fatherland could not be repudiated. See “Double Allegiance,” *Vancouver Sun*, 14 May 1915. Gustav A. Roedde, a Vancouver printer-bookbinder from Thuringia, suffered social discrimination despite the service of his son and stepson in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. This was a personal communication from Dr. Christopher Stocker, associate professor emeritus, in the UBC history department.

<sup>34</sup> *Vancouver Sun*, 11 May 1915. One such letter, by Edward Odium, a prominent businessman, was published in the 13 May 1915 issue of the *Sun*. Odium wrote that “Almost every German alien in the Empire, who carries the word ‘von’ in his name is an enemy to Britain.” An earlier letter in the 11 May edition of the *Sun* contained a letter by G.W. Ross which denounced Hermann T. Bahr as “a German of the most virulent order, hiding under naturalization papers [...] Why, he has not been sent to the detention camp with his German friends passes

One might ask why Anglo-Canadian outrage focused on the Germans rather than on Austrians, Germany's allies among the Central Powers. Canadian troops were fighting Germans in Flanders and France, not Austro-Hungarian troops. Immigrants from the Austro-Hungarian Empire were not as numerous as were the German Canadians. Moreover, the dual monarchy of Austria and Hungary was more difficult to comprehend because of the diverse and intermixed nationalities it ruled. Canadians, frankly, were ignorant of that Empire's complexity. Just as all immigrants from India were called "Hindoos" – Sikhs included – the term "Austrian" encompassed Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Croats, Slovenes, as well as those Ukrainians and Poles who lived under the dual monarchy.<sup>35</sup> The Canadian use of the geographic terms "Bukovenian," "Galician," and "Ruthenian" for different ethnic groups from Austria-Hungary reflected the confused notions of who these people were. Some of those nationalities were hostile to the Austrian emperor, but that did not save them from being classified as "enemy aliens" in Canada, and they were treated as such.

In addition to ignorance of Europe's complexity, English-speakers in early twentieth-century Canada had a pseudo-Darwinian view of nations. Nations were seen as biological species whose members had inherited physical *and* social characteristics. Influential writers, such as the historian Francis Parkman, spoke of the character traits of "the Anglo-Saxon Race" and "the French Celts."<sup>36</sup> Each group was deemed to have innate behavioural tendencies.<sup>37</sup> The ascendancy of Great Britain and the United States through warfare and territorial expansion in the

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understanding." There is no reference to the *Sun's* hate campaign in Shelley Fralic, *Making Headlines: 100 Years of the Vancouver Sun* (Vancouver: *Vancouver Sun*, 2012).

<sup>35</sup> Colin S. Campbell, Superintendent of the BC Provincial Police, to Captain J.R. Roaf, District Intelligence Officer, Military District II, 25 January 1916, BCA, GR 57, vol. 10, file 87. Upon investigation, "four Austrians" reported to be at Chemainus were found to be "Gallicians [*sic*]." East European Galicia and Bukovina were home to a variety of ethnic groups, such as Ukrainians and German-speakers.

<sup>36</sup> Francis Parkman, *The Old Régime in Canada* (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1898 [1874]). On page 30, Parkman writes: "The Germanic Race, and especially the Anglo-Saxon branch of it, is peculiarly masculine, and, therefore peculiarly fitted for self-government." The "French Celt" is described as having a contrary nature.

<sup>37</sup> As late as 1939 innate social tendencies were attributed to different nations in a scholarly work in anthropology. See Earnest A. Hooton, *Crime and the Man* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939). On page 11, Hooton writes: "While nationality does not connote race, it is by no means devoid of biological significance. For nations are, almost invariably, great inbred groups, and as such present certain recurrent physical types which are the result of the hereditary perpetuation of specific racial blends. These national physical types are often as easily recognizable as the so-called racial types, and show much more definite patterns of behavior." His thesis is that different nationalities are predisposed to distinct patterns of criminal activity.

1890s had demonstrated the superiority of Anglo-Saxons over other peoples. Culture, of course, is learned: it is not an inherited characteristic, like the colour of one's eyes. Canadians of the early twentieth century did not make a clear distinction between heredity and acquired social traits. They also believed in national, religious, and racial stereotypes. Jokes of the time played upon the assumed character and manners of a race or ethnic group – for example, the romantic and excitable Frenchman or the penny-pinching Scot.<sup>38</sup>

Ethnic and physical stereotyping explains why some of the reports received by the BCPP denounced people for disloyalty because they had “the appearance of a German” or behaved or sounded like Germans, as the informants imagined them to be.<sup>39</sup> Speaking in a foreign language or in English with a strong foreign accent were grounds for suspicion.<sup>40</sup> Scandinavians were accused of being Germans.<sup>41</sup> Jews, who often had Germanic surnames, could be denounced for being enemy aliens or pro-German.<sup>42</sup> The garbled spelling of German surnames in the police

<sup>38</sup> This comes close to “racialization,” which outsiders impose on other groups who are said to possess a nature that justifies their subordination. Racialization theory works best with reference to European colonial rule in Africa and Asia. It is an awkward fit for the changing perception of Germans in wartime Canada. They were not regarded as inherently inferior and thus, as a people, deserving of perpetual subordination.

<sup>39</sup> T.P. Brazil, Justice of the Peace at Port Renfrew, telegram to C.S. Campbell, 7 October 1914, BCA, GR 57, vol. 8, file 7. The man who had “the appearance of a German” was a Mr. Braim, a BC Electric Railway motorman who had come to British Columbia from Ontario. Eric Albrecht, a German subject who tried to go to Seattle, was described as “very erect and steps quickly ... has the appearance of an army man, but says he is not.” See Robert Armstrong, provincial police constable at Victoria, to C.S. Campbell, 10 October 1914, BCA, GR 57, vol. 8, file 5. Reliance on visual impressions extended to suspected criminal types.

<sup>40</sup> Report of Sergeant O’Leary, 15 April 1916, BCA, GR 57, vol. 8, file 3. The report pertains to a man called Jones who was buying chemicals and who “[spoke] with a foreign accent” and “look[ed] very much like Captain Bloomquist [a Swede?].” Among the damning charges made against a man in a Port Alberni hotel in March 1916 was the fact that he exchanged “a few words in a foreign language” and said, in English, something like “anyone would be a fool to say anything in this country.” See report of Constable A.C. Pallant at Port Alberni to Chief Constable D. Stephenson at Nanaimo, 20 March 1916, BCA, GR 57, vol. 10, file 93.

<sup>41</sup> Letters of J.B. Watson, postmaster at Port Renfrew, to C.S. Campbell, 13 March and 18 April 1916, BCA, GR 57, vol. 8, file 7. In the second letter Watson writes: “I find the Scandinavians are almost to a man disaffected too, & in this court of truth are not to be trusted.” See also F. Fryer, constable at Ganges, to C.S. Campbell, 31 January 1916, BCA, vol. 9, file 45, about a logging camp on Salt Spring Island run by the Klein brothers from the United States and that was denounced by an aggrieved employee as “a German hot bed.” Upon investigation, the ten workers at this camp were found to be mostly Canadians, with two Swedes and no Germans, although the Klein brothers were of German ancestry. Danes were accused of being Germans or pro-German too. See the Hans Salting Case, BCA, GR 57, vol. 11, file 143; and the Danish lighthouse keeper Peter Stuhr at Whiffen Spit near Sooke, whose case is discussed in BCA, GR 57, Vol.10, file 82, letters of 25 and 31 August 1915.

<sup>42</sup> Frederick Lighter, a Russian Jewish watchmaker at Cumberland, came under suspicion because he was “an Agitator” who had fled to Germany, spoke German, and then became a naturalized British subject in Canada. “It is a general gossip that he is a German spy, ...

correspondence reveals an ignorance of the German language. The popular association of Germans with beer led Victoria's rioters to attack local breweries on the assumption that they must be owned and run by Germans. After the riots brewery owners published notices denying that they had any connection with Germany or Germans. Ethnic and racial stereotypes were the common currency of gossip and rumour.

Pre-existing strains within BC society shaped popular reactions to wartime conditions. This is evident in the BCPP records of the period. Labour radicalism unnerved "the respectable element" and suspicion fell easily upon people associated with the Industrial Workers of the World (which promoted working-class solidarity among skilled and unskilled labourers of all origins) or radical political groups. Some migrant workers from Eastern Europe were recruited by social democrats and communists. There was also anxiety that the large-scale immigration of East European Slavs might dilute the British character of Western Canada's population. Some of the "Austrians" suspected of engaging in seditious activity had Slavic surnames.<sup>43</sup> The organizer of a "Yugo Slav Society" had advised Slavs from the Austro-Hungarian Empire to describe themselves as Serbs to avoid having to report as enemy aliens (Serbia was an ally of Great Britain).<sup>44</sup>

Among manual workers, the pre-war economic depression had sharpened the division between English-speakers and Eastern European workers. In May 1915 coalminers at Nanaimo demanded that the "large number of Austrians" employed at the Western Fuel Coal Company be dismissed.<sup>45</sup> In June, miners at Fernie went on strike to protest the continued employment of enemy nationals.<sup>46</sup> Later, friction developed between the "Austrians" and the Italians – whose homeland became an ally of Britain – employed at the East Kootenay Lumber Company near Cranbrook.<sup>47</sup> The war was an opportunity for ethnic factions among workers to get rid of their rivals.

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owing to him being a German sympathizer, and having a German woman keeping house for him at one time." Therefore, "his mail is closely watched." See John Macdonald, constable at Cumberland, to Chief Constable W.R. Dunwoody, Nanaimo, 17 February 1916, BCA, GR 57, vol. 11, file 122.

<sup>43</sup> See Chief Constable G. Welsby, Fernie, to C.S. Campbell, 31 October 1916, BCA, GR 57, file 11. This letter is about John Konjelava, who was suspected of aiding an escape from the internment camp at Morrissey. A Mr. Luckovitch was discussed in Constable Keir, Duncan, report to C.S. Campbell, 27 July 1915, BCA, GR 57, vol. 9, file 35.

<sup>44</sup> Inspector T.G. Wynn, Vancouver, to C.S. Campbell, 19 February 1917, BCA, GR 57, vol. 9, file 35.

<sup>45</sup> *Vancouver Sun*, 14 May 1915.

<sup>46</sup> *Daily Province*, 9 June 1915.

<sup>47</sup> C.S. Campbell to Constable George Welsby, Fernie, 13 December 1915, BCA, GR 61, vol. 62, p. 62.

Regular contributions to the Canadian Patriotic Fund, the Red Cross Society, or to the Victoria Patriotic Aid Society became a test of loyalty.<sup>48</sup> In June 1918, Margaret Gordon of Naramata refused to pay her water rates for irrigation because, she said, the water company's agent, Hans Salting, was an insolent German who "refuse[d] to pay one cent towards any of our various patriotic and Red Cross societies" and yet "he [was] cunning enough not to *say* anything sufficiently disloyal to intern him." Salting was found to be a Dane and a socialist "who [did] not believe in war." He had refused to contribute to the Red Cross. He was already disliked because he had detected people stealing water from the distribution system.<sup>49</sup> Since a lack of enthusiasm for the war was a hallmark of disloyalty, pacifists were despised.<sup>50</sup>

The newspapers fed paranoia about the internal menace by publishing reports of the arrest of alleged enemy spies and saboteurs in France and Britain. Enemy agents, spies, and saboteurs were assumed to be everywhere. When defensive artillery pieces were rolled into position on Vancouver's Point Grey in September 1914, one was found to have a cracked breech block. "That was no accident; only a man who knew how to destroy steel could have done that," said a militia major.<sup>51</sup> The provincial police were forced to investigate alarming reports of flashing lights at night, mysterious vessels offshore, hidden firearms, supposed caches of explosives, suspected radio installations, disloyal talk, and the presence of enemy nationals close to telegraph lines, railway bridges, and train tunnels.

What were innocuous activities in peacetime could be seen as sinister deeds in wartime, at least to the distrustful mind. For example, when

<sup>48</sup> BCA, GR 61, Vol. 62, p. 808; BCA, GR, 61, vol. 64, p. 883. Provincial constables were pressed to commit themselves to donate a day's pay each month to the Canadian Patriotic Fund. Once enrolled, it was difficult to have one's name removed from the subscription list. In 1915, Peter Stuhr, a Danish-born lighthouse keeper whom a member of the Sooke Harbour Conservative Association accused of having expressed "strong pro-German views," was found to have contributed ten dollars out of his fifteen-dollar-a-month salary to the patriotic fund. That contribution eased police suspicion about Stuhr's allegiance to Canada. See Captain G.E.A. Robertson, Agent of the Marine Department, to Commander F. James, RN, 31 August 1915, BCA, GR 61, vol.10, f. 82.

<sup>49</sup> Mrs. Gordon to the Attorney-General of BC, n.d., BCA, GR 57, vol. 11, file 143; report of Constable Ralph McDonald, 24 June 1918, BCA, GR 57, vol. 11, file 143.

<sup>50</sup> Chief Constable J.A. Fraser, Vernon, to C.S. Campbell, 14 November 1916, BCA, GR 57, vol. 11, file 113. This letter is about William Nelson of Oyama, who "claim[ed] to be an Englishman" and yet disapproved of the Boer War and "ha[d] strong socialistic views." The constable concluded that Nelson was harmless and that, when asked about him, local people "usually shrug[ged] their shoulders and sa[id] 'Bughouse.'"

<sup>51</sup> "Admiral Lucas Tells How City Was Fortified during the War," *Daily Province*, 15 January 1938.

the German-Canadian Graff brothers, farming near Vesuvius on Salt Spring Island, were said to be setting up radio aerials and sending smoke signals to unseen vessels, it was revealed that they were really erecting a wire fence and burning the old wooden rails that it replaced.<sup>52</sup> In 1915, the senior constable at Lillooet reported that two German brothers and a friend who reputedly “ha[d] been making kites, sufficiently strong for one man to ascend for observation purposes” were found to have had only one large, unfinished kite on the premises.<sup>53</sup>

After 1915, Germans were thought to be capable of committing the most dastardly acts. Among the bizarre tales passed on to the police was one in 1916 about a German priest who was preaching sedition to the Nicola “Indians” and encouraging them to arm themselves. The police found no German priest and no unusual purchases of guns or ammunition on the part of the Nicola.<sup>54</sup> In August 1917, the *Nanaimo Free Press* published a story that a cake sent to a prisoner-of-war in Germany had been returned to the sender, Mrs. Hugh Pettigrew of Victoria, and that, when it was fed to her chickens, it proved to be poisoned. When questioned, Pettigrew said that she had never sent parcels to Germany and had never heard of such a case.<sup>55</sup> Following a tip from a *Victoria Daily Times* reporter in January 1917, Constable H.D. Mainwaring visited Miss Mackie of 134 Clarence Street, Victoria. She told him that, when two unknown airplanes flew over the city, “they were flying so low that she could hear them [i.e., the two pilots] talking [to each other] quite plainly in French or German, being quite positive it was not English.” The sceptical policeman observed that Mackie, a woman in her mid-thirties, “appear[ed] to be perfectly sane and intelligent.”<sup>56</sup> Upon investigation, these stories turned out to be groundless, but they do reveal the extent of fear, suspicion, and distrust during the war.

Detecting the enemy within also gave home front patriots a feeling that they were playing an active and useful role in the conflict. This show of patriotic zeal may have raised their social status as well as their self-esteem. Being unable to retaliate against those who were killing

<sup>52</sup> C.S. Campbell to F. Fryer, provincial constable, Ganges, 8 December 1914, BCA, GR 57, vol. 9, file 45; report of Constable Fryer, 19 March 1915, BCA, GR 57, vol. 9, file 45. Looking for a reported radio transmitter in the home of Felix Fruehauf of Pender Harbour, the police found that his wife had a practice key for learning telegraphy. See Thomas Smith, Chief Constable at Vancouver, to C.S. Campbell, 14 May 1915, BCA, GR 57, vol. 9, file 34.

<sup>53</sup> Inspector T.G. Wynn, Vancouver, to Superintendent C.S. Campbell, 25 May 1915, BCA, GR 57, vol. 13, file 1265-B.

<sup>54</sup> BCA, GR 57, vol. 11, f. 102; BCA, GR 61, vol. 65, p. 673.

<sup>55</sup> Chief Constable A.T. Stephenson, Nanaimo, to C.S. Campbell, 14 August 1917, BCA, GR 57, vol. 13, file 1265-D.

<sup>56</sup> Report of Constable H.D. Mainwaring, 24 January 1917, BCA, GR 57, file 1265-D.

Canadian and British Empire troops, civilians in Canada directed their anger and hostility at those linked by ancestry to the enemy. After one more false denunciation of someone for being a German agent or for being pro-German, Captain G.E. Robertson of the Marine Department wrote: "I hardly think it fair that hearsay should be the means of possibly doing a man harm."<sup>57</sup> Those with an ancestral or family connection to the enemy powers were still distrusted.

Disasters, such as the burning of Canada's Parliament buildings in 1916, were blamed on enemy saboteurs. After Quesnel had a major fire in March 1916 suspicion fell on a naturalized German resident named Herman "Waldaphel" (Waldapfel?). When talking to various people, Mrs. Strand, whose hotel had been destroyed in the fire, blamed him. An investigating BCPP constable reported: "Several people have expressed the opinion that Waldaphel might have been responsible for the fire, but none of them can give any reason for thinking so, other than the fact that the man is a German & that there was about \$20.00 worth of Red Cross supplies in the Strand Hall at the time of the fire." Two other fires in the town were traced to "overheated stove pipes during the extreme cold weather."<sup>58</sup>

Another Quesnel constable, however, backed by the supposed authority of the 15 August 1914 proclamation, had already confiscated *all firearms* owned by "Austrians & Germans who had their Naturalization papers." He did this even though, as his superior pointed out, the weapons confiscation rule only applied to enemy aliens who had not become naturalized subjects. For his part, the constable's successor only returned .22-calibre rifles and shotguns to their owners. He refused to give back "rifles of heavy caliber."<sup>59</sup> This was discrimination and it went beyond the law. Misgivings about those connected to the enemy powers by ancestry had progressed to open hostility and violation of their civil rights.

Many Germans and Austrians had a nostalgic affection for their birthplace and, in Canada, some must have sympathized with the

<sup>57</sup> G.E.A. Robertson to Commander F. James, RN, 31 August 1915, BCA, GR 57, vol. 10, file 82. This was in connection with Peter Stuhr, the Danish keeper of Whiffen Spit lighthouse. In October 1914, W.D. Scott, the superintendent of immigration at Ottawa, wrote: "Oftentimes, the local people get suspicious and cause a great deal of annoyance to one who, while born in one of these countries, has become a resident or citizen of Canada and may be as loyal as those within the British Empire." See Kordan, *Enemy Aliens*, 10. Expressions of concern for the victims of false accusations became rare after 1915.

<sup>58</sup> H.V. Harris, provincial constable, Quesnel, report to Frank Aiken, Chief Constable, Clinton, 21 March 1916, BCA, GR 57, vol. 10, file 95. A 6 March 1916 letter from Superintendent C.S. Campbell to the Chief Constable at Clinton had initiated the investigation after a Mrs. Carry had told Campbell of the rumours circulating in Quesnel about the recent fire's origins.

<sup>59</sup> Report of Constable H.V. Harris, 21 March 1916, BCA, GR 57, vol. 10, file 95.

Central Powers during the war. Social clubs, choral societies, church congregations, and two newspapers had kept the German language alive in British Columbia. Their activities ceased during the war. Because the open expression of pro-German sentiment was dangerous in wartime Canada it is impossible to document this natural sympathy for one's homeland. Reserve officers of the German Imperial Army were most likely to return to their country of birth. Those who remained in Canada were reluctant to enlist in the Canadian army to fight against their homeland, and they resisted conscription in 1917. In 1916, "Mike Francy," who may have been an immigrant from Central Europe, was sentenced to two months of hard labour for assaulting two Russians in an attempt "to intimidate them from joining the 102nd Battalion," which was then being raised in British Columbia.<sup>60</sup>

The war allowed people to give a patriotic veneer to private disputes with those who had come from enemy countries. Robert Scharffe was the German-born postmaster at Lawn Hill near Queen Charlotte City in Haida Gwaii. The local constable was told in early 1915 that Scharffe possessed "two tons of stumping [gun]powder," that he had received German-language newspapers (forbidden reading matter) via Alaska, and that he was guilty of making seditious statements. The chief constable at Prince Rupert was in favour of arresting all German residents "before any damage [was] done," and the Haida of Skidegate, an Indian agent reported, had volunteered to "go to Lawn Hill and kill the Germans." W. Prescott, a provincial constable from Jedway, found no "prohibited mail matter" in Lawn Hill post office or in Scharffe's home. The postmaster was a naturalized British subject and he and his wife had been goaded by three men. One of the tormentors, "F.C. Wright[,] ha[d] been twitting Scharffe on German losses which had given rise to some of the statements." Another man, a Mr. Toupe, "tormented Mrs. Scharffe and so exasperated her that she had struck him over the head with a plate." The third, a Mr. Green, "with his usual indiscreteness [*sic*] commenced arguing with Scharffe on the war" and then spread rumours about the Scharffes' disloyalty. The constable blamed "residents who are intent on making trouble" for the conflict and yet lectured Robert Scharffe on the need to be more circumspect.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>60</sup> C.S. Campbell to Lieutenant-Colonel W. Ridgway-Wilson, officer commanding the Department of Alien Reservists, 28 February 1916, BCA, GR 61, vol. 63, p. 642. The information originated with a constable in South Fort George. At Vancouver in July 1915 Tony Gaciani was arrested for vagrancy after he publicly addressed fellow Italians, trying "to stop Italian reservists from joining their colors" by telling them "that they were fools go back and fight for Italy." See *Daily Province*, 29 July 1915.

<sup>61</sup> Letters dated 13 February 1915, 5 March 1915, and 4 October 1916, BCA, GR 57, vol. 10, file 59.

Another case of a vendetta with a patriotic colour arose in early 1916. Hans Otto Sacht, who had come to Canada as a teenager and had been naturalized in 1894, was a grocer and postmaster at Sayward-Salmon River. Military authorities had been told that Sacht had expressed “strong German sympathies.” J.F. Armishaw invited “all British subjects” to attend a meeting “in regard to taking the Post Office from Otto Sacht because he was a German.” Only six of the thirty-two people present at the meeting supported this demand for Sacht’s dismissal. Most were not prepared to turn against a familiar neighbour. Four of the proponents for dismissal were from the Armishaw family, and it came out that Sacht had offended them by refusing to deliver any more groceries to them on credit.<sup>62</sup> Parksville was the site of a similar episode.

A. Dohlie, a German, had been running a general store at Parksville, and his low prices attracted customers. This offended L. Compton Reade, who wrote to the provincial premier in February 1917 to complain about the “4 alien Germans” who were allowed to move freely about the municipality. In fact, two were naturalized British subjects and a third was an American citizen. Compton Reade described Dohlie as “an unnaturalized pure German” and thought it was scandalous that soldiers’ dependents who were receiving financial assistance from the Canadian Patriotic Fund spent their money at Dohlie’s store. By contrast, one of the two partners in a rival “British Store here” was in the army “at the front” and his associate was liable to be called to serve in the armed forces. His departure, according to Compton Reade, “would leave the field practically open to a German to wax fat in the Community.” The investigating chief constable interviewed Compton Reade and other residents, who “describe[d] him [i.e., Reade] as somewhat of a ‘crank’ on this subject” and concurred with an earlier decision of a policeman and an army officer that Dohlie need only report to the local justice of the peace regularly *even though he was a naturalized citizen*. The policeman did not endorse Compton Reade’s wish to see Dohlie interned.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>62</sup> C.S. Campbell to E.H. Fletcher, Post Office Inspector, Victoria, 6 February 1916, BCA, GR 57, vol. 9, file 47.

<sup>63</sup> L. Compton Reade to the premier, 6 February 1917, BCA, GR 57, vol. 11, file 118; Chief Constable W.R. Dunwoody to C.S. Campbell, 17 February 1917, BCA, GR 57, vol. 11, file 118. An unsuccessful bidder for the job of running a supply launch from Sidney to James Island linked a competitor with the enemy. The successful contractor was defamed in 1916 as “an Alien though naturalized of pronounced German sympathies.” The man so described as such was really a British veteran of the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve. See C. Campbell to Constable D. McDonald at Sidney, 5 June 1916, BCA, GR 57, vol. 8, file 19. In 1917, Matteo Falconi, who had the court translator’s job in Vancouver, was denounced as an Austrian by S.E. Raymer, who wanted to replace Falconi. See Inspector T.G. Wynn to C.S. Campbell, 19 February 1917, BCA, GR 57, vol. 9, file 35.

In May 1915, the *Sun* in Vancouver had already advocated an economic boycott of all German-owned enterprises: "We are unable to understand why the loyal people of this country should go on spending money towards the support of German tradespeople who are making a good living here while their compatriots are torturing British prisoners and murdering women and children."<sup>64</sup> German- and Austrian-owned businesses certainly were boycotted by people such as Compton Reade, but the extent and impact of this boycott is hard to assess.

Dismissing employees who had come from enemy countries had a precedent. In the mother country, immediately after the declaration of war, the Vancouver *Daily Province* reported that "British families [were] discharging German servants, governesses and chauffeurs."<sup>65</sup> It made sense to remove enemy nationals from defence-related jobs, and, at the Esquimalt Dockyard, an Austrian worker identified as "Poney Bryan" had been discharged in September 1914.<sup>66</sup> In the next year "a German named Schmidt, and a dangerous character," working as "one of the shore gang on [the warship] HMS *Kent*," was arrested and sent to the Saanich Prison Farm. Upon investigation, it was discovered that this "dangerous character" was British-born, had served in Britain's territorial army, and had earned the Queen's South African medal "with five clasps [campaign bars?]" in the Boer War. He aroused suspicion by discarding his German surname (there was only a newspaper notice about his name change) and then adopting the name "Stanley Macdonald."<sup>67</sup>

Less justifiable were the dismissals from purely civilian occupations. In October 1914, while investigating a report that an Italian had knocked over a British flag at a logging camp in Colwood, a provincial constable noted "that all foreigners had been discharged, and [that] it was the intention of the Company to employ no more of them."<sup>68</sup> Other companies did the same thing. The war exacerbated an older ethnic conflict among workers in the copper mines at Phoenix. According to Greenwood's constable: "There are two factions in Phoenix, the Austrians and Slavs or 'Bohunks' as they are commonly called, and the Welshmen and their

<sup>64</sup> *Vancouver Sun*, 11 May 1915.

<sup>65</sup> *Daily Province*, 6 August 1914.

<sup>66</sup> Commander Walter Hose, Esquimalt, to Attorney General Bowser, 25 September 1914, BCA, GR 57, vol. 8, file 15.

<sup>67</sup> Constable Hugh Allan to C.S. Campbell, 5 June 1915, BCA, GR 57, vol. 10, file 65; Commander F. James to C.S. Campbell, 6 June 1915, BCA, GR 57, vol. 10, file 65. Schmidt is also given as "Schmitz" in the correspondence. Commander James admitted that "the suspicion [was] without foundation."

<sup>68</sup> Constable Robert Armstrong, Victoria, to C.S. Campbell, 14 October 1914, BCA, GR 57, vol. 8, file 15.

sympathizers, this has been smouldering for some time and almost culminated in a riot on Dec. 27th 1912.” After newspapers reported that the “Austrians” had raised their flag at Phoenix, the investigating officer found that this report was untrue and, in reality, that “six or eight Austrians ... after being paid off [i.e., dismissed], bought a keg of beer and were sitting around in the evening, drinking, dancing and playing the goat generally.” The copper mines laid off single men from Austria-Hungary first. “A large number ... have already left Phoenix and, in a short time, will be scattered over the country looking for work. A number have been trying to cross the line into the United States, but have been turned back by the American Immigration authorities.”<sup>69</sup>

By January 1916, Superintendent Colin Campbell of the BCPP had come to the conclusion that, even if there were no official objection to the employment of “Aliens of Enemy Nationality as long as they behave themselves,” it would be “good policy” not to employ them at all “for fear of causing trouble in the [workers’] camp.” A day later, he wrote to Greenwood’s chief constable and, in addition to the list of enemy aliens already received, asked the chief constable to let him know if there were “any British Subjects in the district who could do the work that these Alien Enemies [were] doing.”<sup>70</sup> Under a federal order-in-council of 28 June 1915, unemployed enemy aliens were to be interned, so these men lost both their jobs and their freedom of movement.<sup>71</sup> Dismissing men from their jobs or confining them deprived families of their principal breadwinner, adding to welfare cases. The BCPP superintendent then wondered if the federal government was going to support the indigent dependents of interned men.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>69</sup> John Simpson, Chief Constable at Greenwood, report to C.S. Campbell, 14 August 1914, BCA, GR 57, vol. 13, file 1265-A. Enemy nationals had to apply in advance to enter the United States, and Canadian authorities also demanded that the emigrants take an oath that they only intended to seek work in the United States and would not attempt to join the armed forces of their native country.

<sup>70</sup> C.S. Campbell to Superintendent and Justice of the Peace T.B. Brazil, Port Renfrew, 13 January 1916, BCA, BC series, GR 61 (Provincial Police Papers, Letter Books), vol. 62, pp. 745 and 790; C.S. Campbell to Chief Constable John Simpson, Greenwood, 14 January 1916, BCA, GR 61, vol. 64, p. 267. In April 1916 Superintendent Campbell was disturbed by a report from Port Alberni that “Weiss, a German from Oregon,” was “bringing Germans from Oregon, U.S.A., to work in his logging camp.”

<sup>71</sup> Raynolds, “Case Study,” 58–60, describes the crisis for the welfare services created by all these dismissals. Premier William Bowser of British Columbia advocated the automatic internment of all enemy nationals, whether employed or unemployed.

<sup>72</sup> See BCA, GR 61, pp.206, 252, 255. The issue first arose in October 1915 with the case of Mrs. “Stiner” (Steiner?) and her two children in Fairview near Nelson. Her husband had been interned as a German. By 1917 most imprisoned enemy aliens were released on parole to perform paid work.

Fear of discrimination and, possibly, dismissal from work led a few families to change their surnames. An editorial in the *Sun* had advised German-born residents: "If [you] are Canadians at heart ... in some instances [you should] go to the length of changing [your] names, for everything German is today revolting to decent people."<sup>73</sup> Like Stanley Macdonald, formerly Schmidt, the Koenigs became Kingsleys and the Reinharts became Ryans. The German origins of some long-established Canadian families were already obscured by the Anglicization of their names: Baumann became Bowman, Neumann was altered to Newman, Schuhmacher evolved into Shoemaker, and Krause was transformed into Crouse. The reason for abandoning a German surname was made clear in the case of A. "Bloomhagen" or "Bloemhagen" (Blumenhagen?), a waiter at the Glacier Hotel near Golden. In December 1915, when the local chief constable investigated the waiter's apparent disappearance, it was discovered that Bloomhagen had changed his name and was now employed in shovelling snow off the hotel's roof: "Bloomhagen was advised last spring by Mrs. Young, Manageress of the Glacier Hotel, to change his name to Brown, as his name sounded too much German, and Brown would look better on the hotel payroll, and that he was likely to be discharged if the Suprintendent [*sic*] of CPR Hotels knew he was a German."<sup>74</sup>

Rather than deflecting hostility, name changes aroused greater distrust, and they were investigated by the police. A German-American tourist from Minnesota, Rowena Busch, registered at the Victoria YWCA as "Regana Rush." That led to a search of her possessions and her bedroom.<sup>75</sup> She was placed under surveillance until her return to the United States. Changing the name of the Victoria's Kaiserhof Hotel to the "Blanchard [*sic*] Hotel" did not protect it from anti-German rioters in May 1915. Like other German associations, Victoria's German Club had suspended its activities at the war's onset, but that did not spare its former quarters from being demolished during the riots. Even a summer cottage called "the Edelweiss" on Shawnigan Lake was considered suspicious.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup> *Vancouver Sun*, 12 May 1915.

<sup>74</sup> Chief Constable R.J. Sutherland, Golden, to C.S. Campbell, 15 December 1915, BCA, GR 57, vol. 9, file 38. Superintendent Campbell's letter of 9 December 1915, about Bloomhagen's apparent disappearance, is in the same file.

<sup>75</sup> Letters of 26 and 27 October 1915, BCA, GR 57, vol. 10, file 83 deal with the Rowena Busch case, as does BCA, GR 61, vol. 61, pp. 168-170 and 182. She also awakened the suspicion of Miss Mott, who managed the YWCA, by going for a walk to Esquimalt "to see Dry Docks."

<sup>76</sup> C.S. Campbell to J. Richardson Roaf, District Intelligence Officer, Esquimalt, 14 September 1915, BCA, GR 61, vol. 60, p. 499. The cottage was owned by Albert Wellman who spent six

The official distinction between enemy nationals and naturalized British subjects of German or Austrian origin faded. In April 1915, Major William Ridgway-Wilson, who was in command of the Department of Enemy Reservists, recommended the arrest and removal of Reinhold "Hipkes" or "Hipkoe" until his reliability and naturalization could be verified. He was a resident of Chilliwack River who had received a German-language newspaper from the United States and, reportedly, "became very jubilant" after reading about "the [German naval] bombardment of Scarborough," England. Thomas Smith, the BCPP's chief constable at Vancouver, where "Hipkoe" was imprisoned pending removal to the Nanaimo Detention Camp, favoured automatic incarceration: "This ... is the only system of dealing with the matter – seize these men and put them where they belong. I do not see why it should make any difference whether they are naturalized or not if they have been talking as this man has ... Nanaimo [Detention Camp] is the safest place for such as he."<sup>77</sup> J.B. Watson, Port Renfrew's postmaster, was of the same mind. In April 1916, he informed the BCPP superintendent, Colin Campbell, that there were an Austrian and one German (and, possibly, others) working for the Iowa Lumber Company. "They both claim to be naturalized," Watson wrote, "but as it is said a dead Indian is always a good Indian, I should think an interned Enemy alien, will likely prove good too."<sup>78</sup>

The BCPP learned of the feelings of those who were being harassed from an intercepted letter, written in 1916 by Josef Zielinski of Edgewood, British Columbia, to a Polish newspaper in Chicago: "The writer tells of the persecution of the Austrians in Canada." A copy of the letter was forwarded to the Nelson District's chief constable, who, it appears, was going to investigate the author.<sup>79</sup> The possibility that one's mail might be intercepted and read was anticipated by a German farmer and his wife

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weeks there alone.

<sup>77</sup> Major Ridgway-Wilson to C.S. Campbell, 28 April 1915, BCA, GR 57, vol. 10, file 60; and Thomas Smith to C.S. Campbell, 1 May 1915, BCA, GR 57, vol. 10, file 60. The report of Hipkoe's enthusiasm about the bombardment of Scarborough was supplied by one Edgar Ellison. New Westminster's senior provincial constable, A.T. Stephenson, added that Hipkoe had obtained a map of the Fraser Valley "showing all trails and passes from [the United] States." Another story was that Hipkoe had claimed that "there were 20,000 Germans and 200 machine guns in the States ready to come across to BC." See Senior Provincial Constable A.T. Stephenson, New Westminster, to C.S. Campbell, 23 April 1915, BCA, GR 57, vol. 10, file 60.

<sup>78</sup> J.B. Watson, Port Renfrew, to C.S. Campbell, 18 April 1916, BCA, GR 57, vol. 8, file 7. Watson hesitated to express his feelings publicly and asked the recipient "to treat this communication as personal" because a friend who said such things had been "boycotted" and "got himself into considerable bad odour locally." This indicates that there was some popular resistance to discrimination against naturalized residents.

<sup>79</sup> C.S. Campbell to A.P. Sherwood, Chief Commissioner of Police, Ottawa, BCA, 30 May 1916, GR 61, vol. 65, p. 142A.

on Salt Spring Island. The local constable reported that his English wife was “receiving mail from the Old Country under her maiden name [of] Miss Annie Steel, which she said was for the purpose of getting mail through from her friends without it being delayed.”<sup>80</sup>

In the course of the First World War “German” became one more insult that could be hurled at those who had offended you. An anonymous, hand-printed letter was mailed to the deputy minister of justice in Ottawa denouncing a justice of the peace at Creston as “a German Jew” who had “a good British subject arrested and sent to jail for seven days without a trial.” Colin Campbell, superintendent of the BCPP, asked the local constable to look into the matter and to let him know “if there [was] any truth in the statement that the Magistrate [was] a German Jew” and to uncover the identity of the anonymous letter’s author. The constable concluded that the denunciation had been written by a daughter of T.D. Bunce. Bunce had been convicted by Justices Watson and Lowenberg “for the theft of a quantity of manure and allowed to go on a suspended sentence.” When summoned to Small Claims Court in a civil case, Bunce “stood up, made insulting remarks and walked out of Court, refusing to be sworn.” The court immediately sentenced him to seven days in prison for contempt of court and issued a warrant for his arrest. When a constable delivered the arrest warrant to Bunce’s ranch on Goat River Flats, “Bunce exclaimed, I will fix that damned German Kaiser Lowenberg yet!” As for the accusation that Guy Lowenberg was a German Jew, the constable assured his superior in Nelson: “[The name] Lowenberg ... is a common German one, but Mr. Lowenberg was born in Chester, Cheshire [sic], England and his father was an Anglican clergyman. The Lowenberg’s [sic] are an old English family and can be traced back for centuries.”<sup>81</sup> Justice Lowenberg later changed his surname to “Constable.”

<sup>80</sup> Superintendent Colin Campbell to Chief Constable G. Welsby, Fernie, 3 July 1915, BCA, GR 61, vol. 38, p. 902. The advisability of opening private letters to “certain persons” at Prince Rupert was discussed as a way of finding out whether there really was “a German Secret Society at the St. Elmo Rooms.” See C.S. Campbell to H.H. Fletcher, Post Office Inspector, Victoria, 23 September 1915, BCA, GR 62, vol. 60, p. 693.

<sup>81</sup> C.S. Campbell to John T. Black, Chief Constable, Nelson, 13 October 1914, BCA, GR 57, vol. 9, file 25; and Constable W.C. Forrester, Creston, to John T. Black, Chief Constable, Nelson, 20 October 1914, BCA, GR 57, vol. 9, file 25. An online genealogical source gives Guy Lowenberg’s birthplace as Bury, Lancashire, some sixty kilometres from Chester, and 1882 as the year of his birth. The German Consul at Victoria until 1914 was Carl Lowenberg, whose tobacco shop and real estate office were attacked by rioters in Victoria. This fact may have drawn attention to Guy Lowenberg’s origins. There was also a Victoria realtor called Leopold “the Baron” Lowenberg, who is mentioned by B. Ramsay in John Norris, *Strangers Entertained: A History of the Ethnic Groups of British Columbia* (Vancouver: Evergreen Press, 1971), 100.

By 1917, any association with Germany was a liability. Berlin, Ontario, was renamed “Kitchener”;<sup>82</sup> the town of Prussia, Saskatchewan, became “Leader”; and Carlstadt, Alberta, was transformed into “Alderson” to honour the first commander of the Canadian Corps in Europe. Dozens of other Canadian places were purged of their Teutonic names. The British royal family changed its surname in July 1917 from “Saxe-Coburg Gotha” to “Windsor.” In 1947, Prince Philip, before his marriage to Princess (now Queen) Elizabeth, dropped his connection with the House of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg, whose German-speaking territories were formerly a part of Denmark, and adopted the surname of his maternal uncle, “Mountbatten.” The irony was that “Mountbatten” was an anglicized version of the German surname “von Battenberg,” chosen by Philip’s grandfather in 1917.

In 1918, the belief that the First World War was a moral struggle between Christian civilization and Teutonic evil started by the Germans and led by a kaiser bent on world domination was deeply entrenched in Canada. The United States was officially neutral before it joined the Allied cause in April 1917. An American citizen, Walter C. Barnes, was hired in 1917 as an “Instructor in History” by the University of British Columbia to replace a faculty member who had enlisted in the army and was on a leave of absence. Barnes’s BA from the University of Colorado was supplemented by an Oxford University baccalaureate obtained as a Rhodes Scholar, making him a respectable recruit for the history department.

During the spring of 1918, Barnes tried to get his Canadian students to take a more detached view of the war. At a university that had been mobilized to support Canada’s war effort, this enterprise was bound to cause trouble. According to one of his students, Chester Field, who wrote home to his cousin at Brisco in the Columbia River Valley:

Our University History Professor who is a liberal minded American, not a German American, says that the Germans are not to blame for this war, indeed it was partly forced on them. The German newspapers charge the British with similar atrocities with which they are charged. As for the violation of Belgian neutrality, all the European nations have done the like things before, even England to a certain part of Africa. Moreover Germany knew that the struggle was one for her existence. If she did not take a short cut thru [*sic*] Belgium there would be no longer a German Empire.

<sup>82</sup> Field Marshal Earl Kitchener of Khartoum was the British secretary of war at the beginning of the First World War.

Field concluded that “the only reason why Britain wont [*sic*] accept the German peace terms is because they [*sic*] want to totally crush Germany, and get all her boundless wealth. Her motives are not as unselfish as the newspapers are forced to say they are.” This novel view of the war undermined Field’s support for military conscription: “It is a mighty hard thing for a young fellow with all his life to look forward to [and to] die for nothing except the jealousy between nations. Of course you have the chance of coming home disabled and dependent upon friends for food to eat, and then you are called a hero.”<sup>83</sup>

This letter came to the attention of Field’s uncle at Brisco, who passed it on to the chief constable at Golden, who commented: “[It] looks as though German propaganda [is] being taught in the University of British Columbia.” The evidence was delivered to the deputy attorney general of the province, who demanded an explanation from the university.<sup>84</sup> The university’s Board of Governors responded that it had “made careful inquiry into ... the charges against Mr. Barnes ... in respect to his teaching concerning the cause and conduct of the war” and had interviewed three students from the classes he taught, as well as hearing from Chester Field. An investigating committee reached “the unanimous conclusion that the charges against Mr. Barnes were not proven” and the Board of Governors accepted its report “unanimously.”<sup>85</sup> Given the intensely partisan climate in wartime Canada, this defence of academic freedom seems courageous. On the other hand, Barnes was a temporary appointee and his employment at the university was abruptly terminated on 31 May 1918, well *before* the war had ended.<sup>86</sup>

The postwar odium of being connected with Germany was evident in the sharp drop in the number of Canadians who were prepared to acknowledge their German origins. In 1911, there were 393,320 residents of German origin. By 1921, only 294,636 Canadians were prepared to identify themselves as being of German ancestry.<sup>87</sup> The number of

<sup>83</sup> Chester Thomas Field, Vancouver, to Ralph Segart, Brisco, 4 April 1918, BCA, GR 57, vol. 13, file 1265-D. This is a certified copy of this letter, and it is accompanied by a sworn statement from the recipient, Ralph Segart, dated 27 April 1918, attesting to its authenticity. According to Ralph, Field “was an ardent and patriotic conscriptionist” when they last saw each other in July 1917.

<sup>84</sup> Chief Constable R.J. Sutherland, Golden, to Superintendent William G. McMynn, Victoria, 30 April 1918, BCA, GR 57, vol. 13, file 1265-D; and Provincial Secretary, memo to Deputy Attorney General, 9 May 1918, BCA, GR 57, vol. 13, file 1265-D. Information about Walter Barnes comes from *1917 Yearbook* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1917), 24.

<sup>85</sup> Board of Governors, University of British Columbia, to the Hon. J.D. MacLean, Minister of Education and Provincial Secretary, 31 May 1918, BCA, GR 57, vol. 13, file 1265-D.

<sup>86</sup> I am indebted to Erwin Wodarczak of the UBC University Archives who provided this information from the President’s Office records.

<sup>87</sup> Canada, *Sixth Census of Canada, 1921*. Vol. 1 (Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 1924), 354. The same trend was noted in K.M. McLaughlin, *The Germans in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical

people claiming to be Swiss-, Belgian-, Danish-, Austrian-, and Dutch Canadians doubled in a decade during which immigration was hindered by war. Alsatians could now describe themselves as “French” because their home region had been reattached to France after forty-eight years in the German Empire. German-speakers from Eupen-Malmédy, a region annexed to Belgium, were now officially “Belgians.” Germans in Upper Silesia were reclassified as Polish citizens. These territorial transfers in Europe, or even departures from Canada, do not account for the massive drop in the number of people acknowledging their German origins. One-quarter had decided to deny their connection with Germany to avoid being treated as reviled outsiders linked with an enemy power.

The First World War was a traumatic experience for Canadians of German origin and for those who spoke German at home. They had been a welcome addition to the dominant British-Canadian population before 1914. The attitude of Anglo-Canadians towards German Canadians had been cordial. In the war’s course people of German ancestry became “outsiders” – the enemy’s kin and the spawn of a murderous and brutal race. It was a dramatic loss of status. This transformation was the other side of a war that brought out so many admirable impulses in the dominant cultural group.

Being a naturalized British subject or even a British subject by birth did not protect those associated with the “Huns” from distrust, discrimination, and social ostracism. It took several months to replace the hitherto favourable impression of Germans with the image of the homicidal Hun. As the newspapers and police records show, many British Columbians were unwilling to revise their estimate of friends and neighbours of German origin. They did not accept the demonization of German Canadians. Nonetheless, police, politicians, and government officials ignored some of the civil rights of naturalized British subjects from Germany and Austria-Hungary. Under the Wartime Elections Act of 20 September 1917, all persons from enemy countries who had been naturalized after 31 March 1902 were denied the right to vote in federal elections unless a male family member was a serving soldier.<sup>88</sup> Christian pacifist groups, such as the Mennonites, were also disenfranchised. If truth is the first casualty of war, then it may be said that respect for civil rights is the second.

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Association, 1985), 12-13.

<sup>88</sup> John English, “Wartime Elections Act,” in *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 3 vols. (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1985), 3:1920. The vote was restored to these excluded people in 1920, and the bar to German immigration was lifted in 1923.