

THE WAR IN THE CLASSROOM:
THE WORK OF THE EDUCATIONAL SECTION OF THE
INDIANA STATE COUNCIL OF DEFENSE
DURING WORLD WAR I

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Understanding the State Councils of Defense of World War I.....	1
Chapter 2: The War Enters Indiana’s Schools: Cooperation and Collaboration with Wartime Agencies	22
Chapter 3: School Curricula and the War	59
Conclusion	88
Bibliography	95
Curriculum Vitae	

Chapter 1: Understanding the State Councils of Defense of World War I

Introduction

On April 6, 1917, the United States Congress, heeding President Woodrow Wilson's request, formally approved American entry into World War I. As many historians have noted, initial attitudes regarding the conflict abroad had more often than not resulted in American citizens campaigning for peace, neutrality, and isolation.¹ While many Americans expressed their sympathy for the Allied cause and rejected the militaristic and brutal spirit they saw in Germany and Austria, few recommended direct involvement by the United States.² Pulitzer Prize-winning author and historian, David Kennedy, commented on the reasons behind this attitude in his now classic 1980 study, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society*. According to Kennedy, "the United States had grown to maturity in a uniquely isolated and secure environment" and had spent over a century "consolidating its own continental domain, with scant energy or interest to spare for events elsewhere."³ True, the country had taken an active role in the Spanish-American War at the end of the nineteenth century, but most Americans hoped that this involvement in world affairs was an exception, rather than the norm, and quickly reverted back to their isolationist tendencies. As a result, when war broke out in Europe in 1914, it came as a shock to most Americans who wanted nothing to do with it. As the conflict progressed through 1916, most saw it as a foreign event confined to the countries

¹ For information on the United States' domestic experience during WWI, see David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980; reprint, 2004) (page citations in this chapter are to the reprint edition) and Neil A. Wynn, *From Progressivism to Prosperity: World War I and American Society* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986).

² Cedric Cummins, *Indiana Public Opinion and the World War, 1914-1917* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1945), 15.

³ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 378-379.

on the other side of the Atlantic. American citizens continued on with their normal routines, experiencing little change in their daily activities while the war raged abroad.

In spite of commonly held views in support of neutrality and isolation, however, when President Wilson signed his name to the bill authorizing American involvement in the war, the majority of the American public responded by fully embracing the conflict. This is not to say that the change in the country's position was universally supported, as some maintained neutral sentiments throughout the duration of the war. Nevertheless, as Kennedy stated, "the steadfast pacifists...increasingly found themselves isolated in a wilderness of opposition from which nearly all of their countrymen had fled by the end of 1917."⁴ Citizens willingly volunteered their time and energy to mobilize the nation for the cause.⁵ Many had come to believe that participation was unavoidable. Tensions with Germany, which had begun immediately following the outbreak of war, increased markedly as a result of the German sinking of a British ocean liner, the *Lusitania*, in May 1915. Americans continued to try to cling to their traditional isolationism, but by 1917 these tensions had reached their apex as a result of escalations in unrestricted submarine warfare in the Atlantic by the German Navy and the publication of the Zimmermann Telegram.⁶ The war that once seemed so far away soon appeared to be in the United

⁴ Ibid., 49-50.

⁵ Mobilizing meant more than just recruiting and training troops for military service. It meant partaking in a wide array of activities conducted on the home front in order to help win the war. These activities included conducting food drives, helping raise wartime funds, and, ultimately, cultivating patriotic sentiments throughout the country. Mobilization, as it is discussed throughout this thesis, relates to this second definition.

⁶ See Wynn, *From Progressivism to Prosperity*, 31-35 for an overview of German U-boat attacks in the Atlantic in the years leading up to American involvement in the war and a brief description of the Zimmermann Telegram. Sent by German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmermann to the German ambassador in Mexico, the telegram suggested that Mexico enter into an alliance with Germany in the event that the latter went to war with the United States. The British intercepted the telegram and publication of its contents aided in intensifying tensions between Germany and the United States.

States' backyard. Almost overnight, citizens organized and readied themselves and their country for war.

Among the numerous committees, organizations, and individuals that quickly became active in the mobilization process were the forty-eight state councils of defense. Encouraged to form by President Wilson and his administration in the days and weeks following U.S. entry into the conflict, the state councils grew as offshoots of the Council of National Defense (CND), which had been organized on August 29, 1916, under Section 2 of the Army Appropriation Act and served as an early leader in preparing the country for war.⁷ As Frederick Lewis Allen, chief of the Department of Publicity of the state councils described during the conflict, the formation of these organizations was not a novel idea. Several states had created various defense boards in the months preceding American involvement, eager to build support for the war. The Council of National Defense simply spurred further action by these groups and tried to formalize them "so that every state in the Union might finally be brought into a single scheme of work."⁸

The state councils varied in their structure and in the programs they undertook, but they stood united in their efforts to mobilize the country.⁹ Their overarching goals included organizing the resources of the state and coordinating all civic and social activities for the greatest efficiency. Key to all of this, though, was educating the public

⁷ Robert D. Cuff, "The Cooperative Impulse and War: The Origins of the Council of National Defense and Advisory Commission," in *Building the Organizational Society: Essays on Associational Activities in Modern America*, ed. Jerry Israel (New York: Free Press, 1972), 233-246.

⁸ Frederick Lewis Allen, "The Forty-Eight Defenders: A Study of the Work of the State Councils of Defense," *Century* 95 (December 1917): 261.

⁹ William J. Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home: Civilian Mobilization, Wartime Federalism, and the Council of National Defense, 1917-1919* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984). Breen is the leading authority on the state councils and his book offers a detailed analysis of these organizations. Utilizing the archival collections of many of the state councils, he explains the origins and activities of these bodies, noting regional similarities and differences among them.

on the magnitude of the crisis at hand and the ways in which each and every citizen could help the United States become victorious in it.

While many historians have explored the American home front during WWI, studies on the state councils of defense are surprisingly scarce. Some writers have made brief references to them in regard to their collaboration with particular federal and state agencies active throughout the war, but only historian William J. Breen and a handful of others have undertaken in-depth studies of the councils. This thesis therefore places the focus directly on these organizations and examines the work they undertook to make the United States ready for, and most effective in, wartime service. It seeks to give the state councils their due and illustrate the significant role that they played in mobilization, a role that has been largely overlooked in the literature on American involvement in the conflict. Starting with a top-down approach, this study explores the state councils collectively and considers their place in the history of the American home front during WWI before transitioning to an examination of one specific council and a subsection of that council. In particular, this thesis explores the work of the Educational Section of the Indiana State Council of Defense. By concentrating on this one section, readers may gain a better understanding of the lengths that the state councils went to in order to put every person – teachers and students included – on a wartime footing.

World War I was a different type of conflict than most of the wars the world had previously known. It was “total war,” a conflict that transcended the battlefields in Europe and significantly affected all of the participating countries and, as Roger Chickering writes in “Why Are We Still Interested in This Old War,” even some neutral countries as well.¹⁰ Chickering describes the difficulty historians have faced in defining

¹⁰ Roger Chickering, “Why Are We Still Interested in This Old War?” in *Finding Common Ground: New Directions in First World War Studies*, ed. Jennifer Keene and Michael Neiberg (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011), 12. For more information on “total war” as it related to WWI, see Jay Winter,

“total war,” but addresses its magnitude by detailing how it enveloped whole populations. Lines between soldier and civilian blurred as every person became crucial to the wartime effort. True, some have argued that the war was “total war” because of its “industrial character” and the death and destruction it caused.¹¹ For the purposes of this study, though, the earlier explanation is more relevant. WWI represented “total war” because it “required the absolute commitment of all human and economic resources” from the countries involved.¹² Even more telling is that in this war “it came to be expected that every person – civilian as well as soldier – would contribute his [or her] ‘bit.’”¹³ This last statement rang true in the United States due in large part to the state councils of defense, which played a significant, but oftentimes underappreciated role in mobilizing all aspects of society for wartime service.

The State Councils of Defense and Their Place in Historical Literature

Over the years historians have differed greatly in their analyses of the role of the state councils in America’s mobilization process. On one hand, the councils can be considered a mere extension of the federal government, simply carrying on national programs like recruitment and Liberty Bond sales on a local level. Although helpful to a degree, some historians ignore these actions as an indication of the councils’ usefulness. On the other hand, others regard their work as crucial to the wartime effort. Writing in

Geoffrey Parker, and Mary R. Habeck, eds., *The Great War and the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2000). The book focuses on European participation in the conflict, but describes “total war” as an “infection” that “sucked in more and more of the world’s manpower and resources” as it spread (2, 4).

¹¹ J.M. Winter and Blaine Baggett, *1914-1918: The Great War and the Shaping of the Twentieth Century* (London: BBC Books, 1996), 107-108, 128-130.

¹² Robert N. Manley, “Language, Loyalty, and Liberty: The Nebraska State Council of Defense and the Lutheran Churches, 1917-1918,” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 37 (June 1964): 1.

¹³ *Ibid.*

1917 in the *Century*, Frederick Lewis Allen was in the latter camp, stating that “it [was] the bewildering array of their spontaneous activities which testifie[d] most eloquently to the initiative of the state councils,” and referring to them as “a godsend to the Government.”¹⁴ In determining whether or not the state councils of defense were everything Allen made them out to be and if they did in fact encourage everyone to “contribute his [or her] bit,” particular attention must be paid to the changing interpretations and analyses of them found within the literature on America’s home front and mobilization during World War I. These analyses highlight how historians have either ignored and downplayed the role of the state councils or seen them as significant bodies that assisted in the nation’s drive for preparedness.

Again, quick searches for information about the state councils of defense reveal few books and articles dedicated solely to their purposes. Those that do exist tend to focus on a particular council, highlighting the work that it did in its home state. More common, however, are books that consider America’s organizational development in the years preceding and during World War I and how, if at all, the state councils factored into that development as the nation readied itself for war. From Robert D. Cuff’s analysis in “The Cooperative Impulse and War: The Origins of the Council of National Defense and Advisory Commission,” it is hard to say if they even played a role, as he completely disregards their existence under the CND.¹⁵ His piece appears in Jerry Israel’s edited book, *Building the Organizational Society*, which surveys the mobilization efforts of various groups of individuals who gathered together to reorganize America’s social order during the years 1870-1920. As the title of his work suggests, Cuff’s focus is on the creation of the Council of National Defense and its Advisory Commission. He spends

¹⁴ Allen, “The Forty-Eight Defenders,” 264.

¹⁵ Cuff, “The Cooperative Impulse and War.”

much of his time describing how members were drawn from private life into working with the CND and considers the technical expertise they brought with them as they coordinated their efforts to help shape modern society. Cuff believes that it was these members, taken from the private sector, who took the initiative in preparedness activity in the country in the years leading up to American involvement in the war.

In evaluating the contributions of the Council of National Defense and its Advisory Commission, Cuff considers the work they did, looking particularly at the nationwide industrial inventory they conducted to evaluate the United States' capacity for munitions production. As he explains, this work began with state committees of engineers in the spring of 1916, and sought to bring private industry and government together in closer cooperation. With war becoming a greater possibility as the months progressed, President Wilson and his staff realized the importance of organizing these engineers with other businessmen and creating a body that would help prepare the nation's industry for war, thus leading to the emergence of the CND. Cuff focuses on key individuals who played important roles in shaping the council and describes its broad functions, which included making investigations and recommendations on subjects such as railroad building, the amount and location of military supplies, and the importance of scientific and industrial research.¹⁶

While he acknowledges that the CND produced many ideas that were enacted by the government and helped the country prepare for war, Cuff seems to be more impressed with the philosophy behind its creation than with the council itself. Although its founding illustrated the importance of recognizing private individuals and the contributions they could bring to preparedness, the author states that the CND merely "lingered" on during the war, "superseded by more effective war boards...such as the Food and Fuel

¹⁶ Ibid., 242.

Administrations, the Aircraft Production Board, the Committee on Public Information, and the War Industries Board.”¹⁷ No reference at all is made to the state councils of defense that were organized under the CND or how they interacted with these agencies. For readers lacking any knowledge of these councils, this absence might not be missed. However, those aware of their existence might question why Cuff failed to reference them, particularly when one considers that like their parent organization, the CND, they illustrated the significant role that private individuals would play in mobilizing the home front. The omission illustrates an important part of the historiography on the state councils. For many historians, these organizations simply fell under the Council of National Defense umbrella and took a secondary position to war boards and bureaus aimed at specific lines of work during the drive for preparedness.¹⁸

David Kennedy takes a similar stance as Cuff in his discussion of the CND and the many agencies that he believes grew to outshine its efforts. Referring to the council and the Advisory Commission, he claims that “their charge was at once sweeping and vague; their power potentially large but formally nil.”¹⁹ Unlike Cuff, however, Kennedy’s study does not ignore the state councils of defense, but, rather, downplays the success Allen thought they had achieved in rallying the nation towards the war. His book illustrates how and why citizens worked together to prepare for the conflict and provides one of the most comprehensive examinations of the American home front to date. Kennedy traces life away from the battlefields and considers opinions regarding

¹⁷ Ibid., 233-234.

¹⁸ Cuff expands on his research on the Council of National Defense and includes more regarding its relationship to the state in *The War Industries Board: Business-Government Relations during World War I* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973). In this book, he explores the expansion of state powers, particularly focusing on the War Industries Board. Volunteer efforts throughout the states are examined, but they take a back seat to federal agencies and a clear explanation of the state councils of defense is again missing.

¹⁹ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 115.

American involvement, the organization of the economy and industrial sectors, the relations forged between business and government, and the experiences of many diverse populations in the United States with regard to the war. Looking at the various responsibilities that different portions of the population had to perform in concert with others, he evaluates whether or not these groups succeeded in their efforts.

In his analysis of the state councils, Kennedy begins by describing their formation and highlights how some were structured so well as to have county, community, and school district-level councils organized underneath them. This structural pattern and the creation of these smaller councils allowed the state bodies to reach every citizen in a given locality and encouraged them to get involved and do “their part” in the war effort.²⁰ From his description, it would seem as though Kennedy regarded the councils’ expansive work as significantly contributing to the country’s wartime focus, but this is not the case. Following Allen’s example, Kennedy mentions that the councils varied in their activities, but he does not expand on what these activities entailed. Instead, he reverts back to discussing the CND and examines its irrelevance and the “obsolescence...of the federal-state-county-school district organizational pyramid.”²¹ Relying on correspondence between Secretary of War Newton Baker and President Wilson as well as Wilson and George Creel, head of the Committee on Public Information, he details how the state councils generally felt unused and ignored. According to Kennedy, the councils were little more than “propaganda organs, occasionally given to fostering vigilantism against local dissenters and ‘slackers.’”²² In this interpretation, mobilization did not advance under the councils, but under the guidance of special agencies. Here, Kennedy sounds

²⁰ Ibid., 116.

²¹ Ibid., 116.

²² Ibid., 117.

much like Cuff, as he cites the Food Administration, the Fuel Administration, the Railroad Administration, and the War Industries Board and proceeds to provide lengthy descriptions regarding the many activities these bodies undertook to help the country.

Kennedy's interpretation of the state councils of defense as not playing an important role in mobilization is further evidenced in his description of women's participation in them. When a Woman's Committee of the CND was founded in April 1917, and work got underway to create similar committees at the state level, many women thought the councils would provide a means by which they could become active in significant war work. Instead, Kennedy writes that they had to "content [themselves] with organizing traditional middle-class women's 'volunteer' activities" that the government viewed as harmless, while men dealt with the business of war.²³ His use of the word "content" illustrates his opinions of these activities. Kennedy does not boast about the work or champion the cause. Instead, he appears to reinforce the idea that the state councils of defense, and the men and women who worked through them, did not significantly contribute to mobilization on the home front in comparison to other groups and organizations.

This interpretation of the state councils finds support among other historians of WWI. Writing twenty years after Kennedy first published *Over Here*, Robert H. Zieger also comments on the inefficiency of the organizations in *America's Great War*. Zieger's scope is larger than Kennedy's, as he spends more time on the international events that caused the United States to enter the war, but his emphasis on the consequences that the war had on the home front follows a similar pattern. In a discussion on the CND and the Advisory Commission that seems to parallel Kennedy's, Zieger expounds on the state and local network of councils and acknowledges that "in one sense, [their] activity did

²³ Ibid., 286.

represent an effort to anticipate and prepare for industrial mobilization.”²⁴ He commends the councils for their ability to instill cooperation among business, professional, and government leaders and, in particular, highlights the relationships they created between public and private sectors. Like earlier studies, he writes much on the organization of American society during the war and comments on how millions within the country volunteered their time and energy to the nation’s cause.

Zieger’s examination of the state councils of defense and the local councils below them quickly transitions from emphasizing their elaborate structure to describing that structure as too “cumbersome and unrealistic” to help the country prepare for war.²⁵ The standard interpretation of the councils as ineffective bodies confined to traditional activities like inventorying is reinforced. Zieger continues on in his analysis of life on the home front by discussing conservation, the campaigns to encourage war gardens and meatless and wheatless days, and efforts to promote the war and raise the enthusiasm of American citizens. However, all of this is spoken about as work of the special agencies that Cuff and Kennedy cited. The state councils of defense receive attention only long enough to reference how they were formed and how little they actively helped during wartime.

Moving beyond this interpretation, British historian Neil A. Wynn presents a much more positive view of the state councils. In *From Progressivism to Prosperity*, he examines the war’s social impact in an attempt to give the American home front a primary role in literature on the Great War. Starting with the Progressive era, Wynn traces reform efforts within the country and explores how groups began to organize themselves to deal with industrial growth. He considers various peace groups and their

²⁴ Robert H. Zieger, *America’s Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 68.

²⁵ Ibid.

activities from 1900 to 1914, and then proceeds to survey the mobilization of the general population, the government, the military, and the economy during the war. Although Wynn borrows from Kennedy's work, he also notes shortcomings in *Over Here*, stating that Kennedy only focused on certain aspects of the home front and that he should have spent more time examining work done by women and efforts in the labor sector as a whole.²⁶ Both of these areas are given more attention in *From Progressivism to Prosperity* to the benefit of the state councils of defense.

Wynn not only offers information on the origins of the CND, the Advisory Commission, the state councils, and their subordinate councils, but he also comments on the backgrounds of the people who were part of these organizations, differentiates between their successes and failures at the national and local levels, and provides examples of the work specific state councils undertook. While they were only one part of the mobilization process and do not constitute a large portion of the book, Wynn refers to them in many portions of his text and attempts to show that they do merit attention in studies of the home front during the war. He credits the CND with taking up the important role of coordinating the country's economic war effort and believes that the council effectively touched the lives of millions throughout the nation.²⁷ Wynn moves on to mentioning other agencies that formed to help with the wartime economy, but unlike the historians previously mentioned, he returns to his discussion on the CND and chronicles the work of the state councils. In his analysis, federal agencies did not overtake the state councils, but worked in cooperation with them. Readers learn that every state had one of these councils during the war and that together they comprised more than one million citizens. In addition to these state councils, county, community,

²⁶ Wynn, *From Progressivism to Prosperity*, xiv, xx.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 68.

and school district-level ones amounted to 184,000 additional groups working within the country.²⁸

Beyond numbers, Wynn also relays information about the activities in which the various councils participated. These activities included food production and conservation, clothing drives, loyalty drives, drawing up registers of those available for employment, Red Cross work, and child welfare work, among a host others. According to Wynn, women played a key role in organizing some of these undertakings. Though he believes that the Woman's Committee of the CND did not exert much power or influence, he holds the women working at the state and local levels in high regard. In Illinois alone, 20,000 women volunteered regularly with the state's council, with several thousand more helping on a part-time basis. Other states also boasted high numbers and Wynn uses their efforts to illustrate how the war affected American society by encouraging groups to organize and volunteer at home in order to help those fighting abroad. Overall, he sees the state councils as "important channels of communication for the federal government" and commends them for the assistance they provided in mobilizing segments of the country.²⁹

Wynn had support in his analysis. In his book, *America in the Great War*, Ronald Schaeffer also commented on the effectiveness of the state councils. Interestingly, Schaeffer explores the work of these organizations and their local counterparts before making any comments regarding the Council of National Defense. He provides examples from councils in Montana, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Minnesota, among others, and, ultimately, believes that these organizations "performed numerous valuable war

²⁸ Ibid., 68-70, 76-77.

²⁹ Ibid., 77, 137-138.

services.”³⁰ Like the authors previously mentioned, Schaeffer touches on the voluntary nature in which citizens joined the war cause and he uses the state councils to exemplify how people became involved. In examining how the councils fostered patriotic sentiments in the country, he considers the role that they played in fighting dissent. To Schaeffer, these bodies were first and foremost watchdog organizations that aimed to root out any perceived threats to the American cause in the war.

Schaeffer was not the first to view the councils in this light and articles on both the Nebraska and Oklahoma state councils of defense address the lengths that these organizations went to in order to ensure complete support for the country’s wartime programs. One sees this reflected most clearly in James Fowler’s work on the Oklahoma State Council, in which he describes the extreme opposition and violence citizens faced from members of the organization if they were suspected of being disloyal.³¹ Quoting from the council’s reports, Fowler explains how “the rulings of the State Council...[were] the supreme law of the land in Oklahoma since the declaration of war.”³² Those who refused to help the state mobilize or who were accused of sympathizing with the Germans were not tolerated and members of the state council saw to it that they were publicly punished so as to discourage similar attitudes. Robert Manley addresses this issue as well while writing about Nebraska’s state council. Though he acknowledges the work that the organization did in mobilizing the state’s economic resources and coordinating wartime activities with those at the federal level, he argues that “it soon became apparent that its real impact [was] in the field of loyalty

³⁰ Ronald Schaeffer, *America in the Great War: The Rise of the War Welfare State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 18.

³¹ James H. Fowler, “Tar and Feather Patriotism: The Suppression of Dissent in Oklahoma during World War I,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 56 (1978): 409-430.

³² *Ibid.*, 420.

investigations.”³³ Like Fowler, Manley’s piece addresses the hyper-patriotic aspect of the state councils and begs one to ask the question, were they ultimately a force for good or for evil? True, they assisted in preparing the country for war, but at what cost? While the interpretation illuminates what some might perceive to be the negative side of the organizations, it nonetheless serves as an example of their involvement in mobilizing the home front and ensuring that every person was engaged in the war.

Unlike the literature referenced earlier, Fowler and Manley’s articles stand out because they focus specifically on the state councils, rather than using them as one small example among many to talk about wartime mobilization and the changes the country underwent during the conflict. Authors Gerald Senn and William Breen are similar in this regard, offering in-depth interpretations of the state councils and highlighting their impact during the war years.³⁴ These pieces serve as examples of the small body of literature that exists that is dedicated to examining these organizations in the context of wartime society. Both authors are similar in their approach and begin by arguing that the councils have indeed been largely neglected in studies about mobilization during World War I, something they hope to rectify with their articles. Though they each consider the work of the state council system as a whole, Senn centers his attention on the Arkansas State Council of Defense and Breen investigates Connecticut’s council. Using typescripts from council meetings, letters between members and other organizations, newspaper clippings, and membership listings, the two authors provide a wide array of details to support their

³³ Manley, “Language, Loyalty, and Liberty,” 2.

³⁴ Gerald Senn, “Molders of Thought, Directors of Action: The Arkansas Council of Defense, 1917-1918,” *The Arkansas Quarterly* 36 (Autumn 1977): 280-290; William J. Breen, “Mobilization and Cooperative Federalism: The Connecticut State Council of Defense, 1917-1919,” *Historian* 42 (November 1979): 58-84.

views that, for a brief time, the councils exercised great power and provided a sophisticated response to the war.³⁵

In “Molders of Thought, Directors of Action,” Senn situates Arkansas’s council within the progressive approach to reform and attempts to analyze it in terms of business efficiency and social control.³⁶ To accomplish this, he looks at the composition of the council and the various committees it organized. Most members were upper middle-class businessmen appointed by the governor and they met weekly to discuss and assess their work. Despite this composition, Senn indicates that others were represented as well and includes information on women’s involvement and the creation of a colored auxiliary state council. Chief among the work of these men and women were efforts to root out laziness and idleness, as they believed everyone should be obligated to serve their state and, in turn, their country.³⁷ Senn shows that with their organization of committees on health conditions, Americanization, and children, the councils did in fact work in collaboration with other state and federal departments, rather than falling behind them. Breen also picks up on this point of collaboration, though he acknowledges that while they worked together at times, federal agencies and government departments also posed the largest challenge to the state councils.

Breen sees the Connecticut State Council of Defense as one of the most efficient and professionally organized ones in the nation.³⁸ Like Senn, he too comments on the fact that most members were upper class and that they tended to reflect Republican ideals. He also describes efforts to make the council more inclusive by adding female members and

³⁵ Breen, “Mobilization and Cooperative Federalism,” 77; Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 68-69.

³⁶ Senn, “Molders of Thought,” 282.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 284-285.

³⁸ Breen, “Mobilization and Cooperative Federalism,” 63, 67.

representatives from labor, agriculture, and the military.³⁹ With a budget of \$200,000, these men and women set off to get the entire state active in the war effort, establishing bureaus in 168 of the 170 towns in Connecticut and encouraging strong patriotic attitudes. Breen states that although most of the contributions of the state councils were not as remarkable as those at the federal level, they were nonetheless “real” and should not be disregarded.⁴⁰ He believes that through cooperative, voluntary work, rather than centralized bureaucracy, Connecticut’s council and other councils throughout the country made genuine contributions to the American wartime society.

Breen’s article in the *Historian* is just one among many that he published in the 1960s and 1970s on particular state councils of defense.⁴¹ The culmination of these articles, and the most detailed study of the state councils written to date, is his book *Uncle Sam at Home: Civilian Mobilization, Wartime Federalism, and the Council of National Defense, 1917-1919*. In it, Breen offers a comprehensive analysis of the councils that may be difficult for future historians to surpass. Exploring a wide array of source material, he makes use of many of the surviving records on the state councils, which he tracked down in state archives throughout the country. He applauds the work of these bodies throughout the text and it is clear from the focus and attention he gives them that he regards them as genuine contributors to America’s mobilization process. Nevertheless, Breen’s study is also a balanced one. He does not hesitate to include the shortcomings of the state councils or their ineffectiveness within certain parts of the country. His intention is merely to bring attention to these organizations and the work

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 62, 65.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 58.

⁴¹ For another example of Breen’s work, see William J. Breen, “The North Carolina Council of Defense during World War I, 1917-1918,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 50 (January 1973): 1-31. In this article, Breen offers an analysis of North Carolina’s council during the war, including its formation, key members involved, and the activities it promoted.

they performed to highlight the impact they had on the nation's home front during WWI. Rather than giving them a secondary position that is so common in the literature, Breen places them in the spotlight, believing it is where they belong.

Breen's focus throughout *Uncle Sam at Home* is on the relationships forged between the state councils of defense and other groups, organizations, and individuals that participated in mobilization. He begins by stating that the creation of the councils was largely an "experiment in federal-state relations," lacking any specific rules or guidelines.⁴² Without any clearly defined role, the state councils were frequently left to their own devices and set their own path as they worked to promote activity on the home front. Breen comes back to this point numerous times, making sure to note that the councils were not passive bodies that simply floundered under the CND and federal agencies, but that they were frequently initiators of mobilization activities.⁴³

Charting the growth of the CND and its Advisory Commission in the months preceding American entry in the war, Breen shows how the impetus for reform and voluntarism came from private individuals. Robert Cuff had made a similar point fourteen years earlier, but without any mention of the state councils that eventually developed. Even before the state councils were formalized, Breen writes that many states had begun organizing themselves and getting involved in preparedness activities that included making surveys of manpower, industrial power, and agriculture. This involvement only increased with the beginning of the state council system, as the councils themselves came to be seen as "great clearing-house[s] of information" that

⁴² Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, xiv, 14, 20.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, xv, 14. Breen is fair in his analysis though and writes about the state councils "as incubators of some important federal programs" while also acknowledging that many times they were forced to play a supplementary role and cooperate with federal agencies.

would help relay news about programs and activities between the states and federal agencies.⁴⁴

In an effort to trace the scope of the councils, Breen considers them according to geographical region, thereby offering another way in which to assess their work. With each region, he mentions that the success of a state council frequently rested on the governor and whether or not he thought his state's council merited attention. Breen starts his tour of the councils in the Northeast. Again he offers a fair analysis, describing the weaknesses of New York and New Jersey's councils, but praising Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts for their efforts. From there he proceeds to discuss the Midwest, which he believes had some of the strongest and most active state councils of any part of the country.⁴⁵ Expounding on this commentary, Breen cites the overall lack of power of the councils in the Northwest, the South, and the Southwest. For each of these three regions, he points to exceptions and indicates that some states did have very effective councils of defense. However, on the whole, he thinks they lacked broadminded men and that the governors of these areas failed to promote the councils as important parts in the mobilization process.

Like other historians, Breen also looks at the work of the state councils carried out by women, but in much greater detail. Dedicating two chapters to their efforts alone, Breen shows how they used the councils to take an active role in social reform and in many ways continued on in the work that women had conducted during the Progressive era.⁴⁶ Their activities included food conservation campaigns, relief work, the organization of black women in the South, and the highly acclaimed Children's Year, among many

⁴⁴ Ibid., 13.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 71.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 115-156.

other programs. In these discussions of activities, Breen comments on relations between the women's committees working through the state councils of defense and their counterparts in federal departments and agencies. While providing numerous examples of cooperation between the two, he also describes the many tensions that existed. This discussion is not unique to the chapters on women. Breen refers to the Fuel Administration, the Food Administration, the Red Cross, the Department of Agriculture, committees of the General Medical Board, and many others in his writings on state and federal relations. He admits that in many cases federal organizations simply bypassed the state councils when making decisions on board members or work they chose to pursue. Nevertheless, some work was done together and Breen shows that in certain cases, the states not only took the lead in mobilization, but they also directly contributed to reform on a national level. For instance, he describes how the liberty choirs started by the Connecticut State Council of Defense in an attempt to encourage patriotism became a nationwide movement popularized by multiple levels of government. Through Americanization and loyalty rallies, the state councils also influenced public policy by contributing to the passage of the Sedition Act in May 1918.⁴⁷ Because of their efforts, Breen illustrates that the state councils of defense did not sit on the sidelines during the war, but, rather, they played a crucial role in rallying society.

Conclusion

In studying the historiography of the state councils of defense, readers come to understand that evaluations of their function and contribution vary greatly. While standard interpretations of the World War I home front tend to ignore the councils completely or conclude that they did not significantly contribute to mobilization in

⁴⁷ Ibid., 86.

comparison to other agencies and organizations, other analyses praise their work and believe they played a key part in wartime society. Historians of the latter view specifically reference the state councils' ability to reach every citizen in a given locality and instill the ideas of voluntarism, hard work, and patriotism required in a "total war." Breen published his detailed study of the councils and their contributions to mobilization in 1984. Over twenty-five years later, though, historians are still expressing views of the councils as mere propaganda organs that were too cumbersome to be effective. What future studies of America's home front will focus on cannot be determined, but regardless of how people view the state councils of defense, one hopes that they do not return to a position of complete obscurity within the literature. Their multi-leveled structure, activities undertaken, and ability to touch the lives of millions warrants them more than that. These organizations reached down into the depths of society and did what they could to prepare the United States and all of its citizens for war. It did not matter where you lived in the country, what occupation you held, or what your age was. The state councils of defense, through their various local level councils and subsections, appealed to everyone and sought full cooperation towards the war effort.

Chapter 2: The War Enters Indiana's Schools: Cooperation and Collaboration with Wartime Agencies

“Men, women, and children of all ages found themselves enmeshed in war work [during World War I] – some voluntary, some forced, and some in between those extremes – militarizing whole populations.”⁴⁸ Historian Tammy Proctor wrote these words in her 2010 book, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914-1918*, as she stressed the various roles citizens in warring countries played as they were all pulled into the conflict. WWI may have raged across the Atlantic for almost three years before the United States became directly involved in the spring of 1917, but, by that point, Americans, like those in other countries, found themselves mobilizing the entire nation for war. Anyone who could provide some form of assistance was strongly urged to do so. This assistance was widespread and included fighting abroad, monetary contributions towards the war effort, knitting clothes for soldiers, food conservation, and even simply promoting the American cause. In some form or another, most people were asked to provide aid and do their part.

As in other states, citizens in Indiana did not hesitate to volunteer their services and assist in the wartime effort. Their attitudes regarding the conflict had paralleled those of others across the country. Hoosiers had read about the outbreak of war in 1914 in shock and disbelief, as local newspapers recounted the barbarous acts taking place in Europe. Anti-German sentiments ran high, with a majority of the state's citizens expressing their sympathy for the Allied cause in spite of the state's large German American population.

⁴⁸ Tammy M. Proctor, *Civilians in a World at War, 1914-1918* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 72.

In his book, *Indiana Public Opinion and the World War, 1914-1917*, Cedric Cummins commented on these views while tracing Indiana's early reactions and responses to the war and how Hoosiers' attitudes evolved as it progressed. According to Cummins, "public opinion about August 4 [1914] and for the following week or ten days was more pronounced and more united against the Central Powers than it was to be again until the sinking of the 'Lusitania'" in 1915.⁴⁹ Despite these feelings, however, Indiana embraced the isolationist spirit that was so common in the country at the time.⁵⁰ Public opinion may have immediately opposed the actions undertaken by Germany, but most Hoosiers neither wished nor expected to become involved in the European war. With the United States moving more quickly towards military preparedness in 1917, though, and, ultimately, declaring war in early April of that year, leaders of the state encouraged Indiana residents to do what they could to support their country.⁵¹ Governor James P. Goodrich led the way, declaring on April 27, 1917, that the "voluntary service of everyone in some capacity in this national crisis is a plain and patriotic duty."⁵² Like President Woodrow Wilson, Goodrich believed that sacrifice "must extend through every

⁴⁹ Cedric Cummins, *Indiana Public Opinion and the World War, 1914-1917* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1945), 14.

⁵⁰ Clifton Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau & Indiana Historical Society, 1968), 591-592.

⁵¹ George S. Cottman, "The Story of Indiana: James P. Goodrich – The World War," *Indianapolis News*, April 25, 1923, in "Indiana History – World War I" Newspaper Clipping File, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis.

⁵² Governor James P. Goodrich, "A Proclamation," April 27, 1917, Indiana State Council of Defense Collection, Indiana State Archives, Indianapolis, Accession 1921048. The Indiana State Council of Defense Collection is divided into numerous accession numbers that focus on specific sections of the organization, proceedings, and meeting minutes. Information from all circulars and letters in this chapter pertains to this accession number within the collection unless otherwise noted.

walk of life,” underlining the notion of total war discussed previously.⁵³ Responding to his statements, Indiana’s citizens set out to assist the state in preparing for the conflict, many of them ultimately joining or taking part in some capacity in the work of the Indiana State Council of Defense.

Officially organized by Governor Goodrich on May 19, 1917, the Indiana State Council of Defense quickly involved itself in the mobilization process, vowing to “co-operate with the federal government in all matters pertaining to preparedness.”⁵⁴ With this large scope, the state council became busy with any and all activities that could be done to assist in rallying the state towards the war effort. Governor Goodrich selected specific individuals to lead the organization and they, in turn, chose other men and women to work alongside them in the numerous sections of the council.⁵⁵ As in most states, men chaired a majority of these sections. But according to William Breen in his *Uncle Sam at Home*, “the Washington office pushed for the inclusion of at least one woman on [each] state council who would normally be chairman of the state’s woman’s committee.”⁵⁶ This was the case in Indiana, with Mrs. Anne Studebaker Carlisle of South Bend being selected as chair of the Woman’s Section.⁵⁷ Overseer of all of the state’s sections was Indiana lawyer, Will H. Hays, who served as chairman of the Indiana State

⁵³ “Proceedings of Conference,” July 12, 1917, Accession 1921052.

⁵⁴ *Year Book of the State of Indiana for the Year 1917* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, 1918), 839; “Indiana Follows Lead of Nation: Governor Goodrich Had Begun Work Before Call Came,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(1) (August 17, 1917), 1.

⁵⁵ For a listing of the members of the Indiana State Council of Defense and chairmen of particular sections see *Year Book of the State of Indiana for the Year 1917*, 839-841.

⁵⁶ William Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home: Civilian Mobilization, Wartime Federalism, and the Council of National Defense, 1917-1919* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 19.

⁵⁷ *Year Book*, 839, 841, 846.

Council of Defense from its inception until February 20, 1918, at which time he resigned to become chairman of the Republican National Committee. As detailed in the *Year Book for the State of Indiana for the Year 1917*, Governor Goodrich nominated attorney Michael E. Foley to take Hays's place and one month later he was formally elected to the chairmanship.⁵⁸

Hays and Foley, like Anne Studebaker Carlisle and other members of the state council, dedicated themselves to a wide list of endeavors as they worked to mobilize Indiana for the conflict. Their efforts included "promot[ing] a patriotic spirit in the people," "educat[ing] the public as to the magnitude of the war crisis," and "maintain[ing] a clearinghouse for labor," among others.⁵⁹ Members of the state council received no compensation for their time and efforts, but willingly rendered their services.⁶⁰ Minutes from the council's fourth meeting, held on June 20, 1917, show the eagerness with which these men and women sought to prepare Indiana for war, as they laid out wartime programs and activities for the rest of the state's citizens.⁶¹ This volunteer spirit was essential to the United States' successful execution of the war and

⁵⁸ *Year Book*, 840; "A Resignation and an Appreciation," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(28) (February 22, 1918), 1. The *Indiana Bulletin* of February 22, 1918, provides correspondence between Hays and Goodrich, with each congratulating the other on their service during the war. Expressing his sadness in seeing Hays leave, Goodrich stated "You have made Indiana the model state council in the Nation and brought great credit to our commonwealth...."

⁵⁹ *Year Book*, 840.

⁶⁰ "Proceedings of Conference," July 12, 1917; Minnie Elizabeth Wycoff, ed., Ripley County Historical Society, *Ripley County's Part in the World War, 1917-1918* (Indianapolis: Enquirer Printing and Publishing Co., 1920), 45. Not only were members not paid for their services, but Hays even went so far as to say that the council would not fail in helping in the war effort just because of a lack of money. Instead, he urged members to work on a local level and raise funds where possible.

⁶¹ "History of the Indiana State Council of Defense," Indiana Historical Bureau, 1931, Indiana State Council of Defense Collection, Folder 1 of 16, Accession 1921057. As described in the Indiana Historical Bureau's unpublished history of the Indiana State Council of Defense, the June 20, 1917, meeting was the first time any record was made of the organization's proceedings. No meeting minutes were created for the council's previous three meetings.

illustrates how Americans worked together for what they believed to be the common good of the country.

Resembling other state councils, Indiana's organization was divided into numerous sections, each consisting of a chairman and secretary among other positions. These sections of the council included areas such as public policy, finance, sanitation and medicine, transportation, military protection, publicity, and education.⁶² With each, the state aimed to get everyone on board and supporting the war cause, regardless of sex, occupation, or age. This last part is crucial in understanding World War I's effect on American society and the work that the state councils of defense set out to achieve. American involvement in the conflict required more than soldiers to fight; it required mobilizing the entire public for total war. Physical combat may have been confined to overseas, but the home front was no stranger in the battle and there, just as abroad, no slackers or "hesitating patriots" would be permitted.⁶³ The state councils of defense, acting in accord with state governments and the federal government, sought to coordinate all efforts towards the war and actively encouraged citizens to do their patriotic duty and support the country.

Few escaped these wartime messages, least of all the nation's schools. One among the many sections of the Indiana State Council of Defense that tried to promote mobilization in the state was the Educational Section. Working to shape public instruction and public opinion in conformity with the goals of the war effort, members of

⁶² "Indiana State Council of Defense," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(1) (August 17, 1917). The Indiana State Council of Defense collection at the Indiana State Archives holds the records of all of the sections of the organization.

⁶³ Robert Manley, "Language, Loyalty, and Liberty: The Nebraska State Council of Defense and the Lutheran Churches, 1917-1918," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 37 (April 1964): 1.

the Educational Section took an active role in the state's classrooms. To them, schools were the "second line of defense" in the conflict and students and teachers represented a second army. This army was not one that would fight abroad, but, rather, one composed of a pool of potential volunteers who could participate in conservation efforts, clothing drives, and fundraising, and, ultimately, promote the American cause. Through the introduction of wartime programs and activities in the schools, adjusted curricula, and suppression of the German language, the Educational Section worked ardently to transform Indiana's schools into war-supporting organizations and to develop their schoolchildren into knowledgeable, patriotic individuals who could effectively contribute to the war effort and inspire others to do the same.

In Indiana, the State Council of Defense asserted its opinions regarding schools and the war very early in its life. Even before the creation of the council, Governor Goodrich had recognized the role that students and teachers could play in providing service to the nation and organized a meeting with over 200 representatives of the various educational forces of the state. It included the presidents of Indiana's universities, colleges, and normal schools, county and city superintendents, and the heads of public, private, and parochial schools.⁶⁴ At this meeting, held in downtown Indianapolis on May 5, 1917, these men and women pledged their unanimous support to war service. They appointed a State Committee on the Mobilization of the Educational Forces of Indiana and gave it the responsibility of tracing all available resources for the war present in

⁶⁴ State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Indiana, circular to College Presidents, Indiana, June 22, 1917. See also Governor Goodrich, "A Proclamation," April 27, 1917, and "High School Policies Outlined by Teachers," *Indianapolis News*, May 7, 1917, p. 17.

Indiana's elementary schools, high schools, normal schools, and universities.⁶⁵ "All available resources" not only referred to buildings and equipment that might be useful to those on the home front, but to all available pupils and teachers as well. It was this committee that just a few weeks later became the Educational Section of the Indiana State Council of Defense.⁶⁶

Eager to get the schools on a wartime footing, Dr. Horace Ellis, chairman of the section and State Superintendent of Public Instruction, set about determining the best ways to enlist students and teachers in personal service.⁶⁷ His goal, in his own words, was efficiency, "efficiency in eating, in clothing, in production, in service, in health and in wealth."⁶⁸ Like Governor Goodrich, Ellis had also been active prior to the organization of the state council, brainstorming ways in which the state's schools could be of greater use

⁶⁵ Horace Ellis, letter to Honorable James P. Goodrich, May 29, 1917, Indiana State Council of Defense Collection, Educational Section, Accession 1921015, vol. 1 (hereafter cited as E.S. with appropriate volume number); State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Indiana, circular to College Presidents, Indiana, June 22, 1917. Most of the records that reference the early name of the Educational Section call it the State Committee. In Ellis's letter on June 22, 1917, he gives the full name, the State Committee on the Mobilization of the Educational Forces of Indiana.

⁶⁶ Horace Ellis, circular to County Superintendents, June 21, 1917; "Digest of the Minutes of the Educational Section State War Conference," December 14, 1917, E.S., vol. 1.

⁶⁷ Dr. Horace Ellis graduated from Indiana University in 1896 and served as superintendent of schools in Indiana in North Vernon, Marion County, and West Lafayette. In 1902, he accepted the presidency of Albion State Normal School in Idaho, but returned to Indiana in 1904 to serve as president of Vincennes University. Ellis ran for State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1914, but lost to Charles A. Greathouse. He ran again in the 1916 election and won. He assumed the position in March 1917 and served until March 1919. Ellis withdrew his candidacy for another two-year term and later moved to Chicago, where he continued to remain active in education. For more information, see "Horace Ellis, Principal Normal School," *Salt Lake Tribune*, January 1, 1903, p. 48; "New President at Vincennes," *Logansport Reporter*, June 20, 1904; "Master Minds Training Hoosiers of Tomorrow," *Indianapolis Star*, October 11, 1908, p. 24; "Allen County Elects Entire Democratic List," *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette*, November 4, 1914; "Horace Ellis," *Rushville Daily Republican*, November 8, 1916, p. 8; "Dr. Horace Ellis Dies," *Logansport Pharos Tribune*, December 30, 1932, p. 1; George E. Greene, *History of Old Vincennes and Knox County, Indiana* (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1911), 193-196. For information on the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Indiana, see Richard G. Boone, *A History of Education in Indiana* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1892), 138-140, 163, 252-254.

⁶⁸ "Education Section of State Council of Defense," *Fort Wayne Daily News*, June 12, 1917, p. 13.

to Indiana and the nation as a whole. As early as April 17, 1917, he wrote to Indiana's county superintendents, declaring that "all our people – must be either fighters or feeders."⁶⁹ Since the overwhelming majority of those in school were too young to be fighters, he naturally hoped that they would assume the latter role and contribute to the work being done on the home front. This was only the beginning of Ellis's wishes for his students and teachers. Throughout the course of the war he, along with his fellow committee members of the Educational Section, sent out regular notices to the schools informing them of the ways in which they could provide service.

Getting the Machinery in Place

Foremost among Ellis's and the Educational Section's list of goals was establishing clear chains of authority to help ease the flow of communication between the Council of National Defense (CND), the State Council, the Educational Section, and individual schools in Indiana. As chairman of the Indiana State Council of Defense, Will Hays had already begun advocating the creation of councils at the county level as a way to assist with the distribution of information regarding the war. He hoped these efforts would help engage large numbers of citizens in the mobilization process. Hays's suggestion was by no means unique to Indiana, as many state governors "began to form subordinate organizations in their counties and towns to bring their work home more closely to the people."⁷⁰ Latching onto this idea, Ellis immediately called for the

⁶⁹ Horace Ellis, letter to Indiana County Superintendents, April 17, 1917.

⁷⁰ Frederick Lewis Allen, "The Forty-Eight Defenders: A Study of the Work of the State Councils of Defense," *Century* 95 (December 1917): 261; Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 75. While this method of structuring the bodies spread throughout the country, Breen writes that Indiana, along with Missouri and Wisconsin, "were the first state councils in the Midwest to extend their organizations to the county and local levels."

formation of educational committees at the county level and hoped these committees would be further subdivided to city, town, township, and even high school levels.⁷¹

In particular, Ellis intended for each of these committees, or mini councils, to pattern their relationships on those that existed between the CND and the various state councils of defense, in which the two levels collaborated with one another to successfully carry out wartime measures.⁷² The desired effect of this method of organizing was twofold. First, one of the major responsibilities of all forty-eight state councils was, in Ellis's words, to ensure that all "local, county, state, and national work [would] coordinate into one unified, efficient program."⁷³ George Porter, the leader of the State Councils Section at the national level, reinforced this idea when he referred to these organizations as "a great clearing-house; to coordinate the efforts of the states; to put them in touch with each other; to avoid confusion and duplication."⁷⁴ By working together, the councils at the various levels of government could prioritize their projects and ensure that they were not duplicating their efforts and wasting valuable time and resources. Additionally, though, the partnership between the state and the county, township, and high school educational committees could help create a more personal relationship between those in charge and the general public.⁷⁵ Students and teachers would not just hear distant wartime messages from the federal government or even the

⁷¹ These educational committees represented a subsection of a particular county council of defense, just as the Educational Section represented a subsection of the Indiana State Council of Defense. For information on Indiana's high school councils of defense see pages 41-42 of this thesis.

⁷² Horace Ellis, circular to County Superintendents, June 21, 1917.

⁷³ Ibid.; Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 75.

⁷⁴ Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 22.

⁷⁵ Lannes McPhetridge, ed., Delaware County Council of Defense, *Delaware County in the World War, 1917-1918* (Indianapolis: Enquirer Printing and Publishing Co., 1919), 6.

state government and be expected to act, but would instead be contacted by people within their own localities. They would be made to understand that the war was not only a distant battle, but, rather, one that would profoundly affect the home front as well.

Historians of the state councils of defense have praised this method of structuring the organizations, claiming that it was this ability to reach down into each community and mobilize mass support that made them so effective in the war.⁷⁶ In order to get full participation in the mobilization process and successfully live up to the Educational Section's goal of "service for everyone, everyone for service," all individuals needed to understand the significant role they could play in the war effort.⁷⁷ County educational committees could help with this by reaching out to teachers and students in their respective schools and stressing the meaning of the conflict both on a large scale as well as its effect on those in a specific area.

With the necessary machinery in place, Ellis and his fellow members of the Educational Section began contacting county and city superintendents regarding how the latter should go about mobilizing their teaching staffs and students for service. The records of the Indiana State Council of Defense, housed at the Indiana State Archives, include considerable communication between these groups. In particular, the records of the Educational Section contain a vast amount of correspondence, reports, meeting minutes, and circulars that point to the relationships forged between the section and the various superintendents, as well as between those superintendents and principals,

⁷⁶ Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 46; Allen, "Forty-Eight Defenders," 261.

⁷⁷ "Service for Everyone, Everyone for Service: A Suggested Program for Mobilizing All of the Educational Forces of Indiana," undated, Accession 1921048; State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Indiana, circular to College Presidents, Indiana, June 22, 1917.

professors, and teachers. Working together to push schools towards their greatest potential in the conflict, these groups brought the war into Indiana's classrooms and in the process significantly altered school life during the war. To them, "every individual connected with the public school, from the kindergarten to the university, should be doing a specific work of value to the nation [during] the crisis" and they did everything they could to make sure that this was the case.⁷⁸

Opening the Floodgates: Collaboration with Wartime Organizations

To accomplish its objectives and successfully enlist students' and teachers' help in mobilization, the Educational Section collaborated with numerous state and federal wartime boards and agencies. They welcomed members of these organizations into Indiana's schools and encouraged teachers and students to become involved in the multitude of programs and activities they promoted. As will be discussed, teachers no longer went to work expecting to go through the typical school day and return home to grade and prepare for the following day's work. Students no longer merely went to class and went straight home having received lessons in math, history, English, and German. True, education in the classrooms continued, and lectures, grading, and lesson planning did not suddenly stop with the onset of the war. Nevertheless, due in large part to the goals and work of the Educational Section, WWI found its way into Indiana's schools and broke up the traditional school day, with teachers and students receiving unending appeals to do their part and help the United States win the war.

For teachers, the suggestions of the Educational Section increased their workload and changed the course of their days. While they continued to provide lessons and

⁷⁸ Horace Ellis, circular to County Superintendents, June 21, 1917.

support for their students, Horace Ellis and his committee members insisted that they volunteer their services assisting in programs on the home front. Determined not to waste any time in the mobilization process, Ellis wrote to the state's college presidents on June 22, 1917, informing them of a special program for war service for both public and private schools and encouraging all teaching staffs throughout Indiana to familiarize themselves with it.⁷⁹ He no doubt hoped that by getting this information out during the summer, teachers would have ample time to consider ways in which they could begin to adapt their work in the classroom and in the community at large that would be most beneficial to the state during the war.

Ellis and the Educational Section did not stop there, however. Schools may have been out of session, but it did not mean that it was a time to rest. Instead, the State Superintendent urged Indiana's teachers to use part of their summer taking courses that would equip them with the information they needed to be of service to the state and, in turn, the country during the war. The Educational Section created one of these courses, which focused on topics such as the teaching of thrift, clothing production, vocational education, and physical training, and the other was based on Federal Food Administrator Herbert Hoover's work in the field of home economy.⁸⁰ While the records of the state council do not indicate how many teachers did in fact enroll in these classes, one might assume, based on the spirit of volunteerism apparent during the conflict, that the classes were far from empty.

⁷⁹ State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Indiana, circular to College Presidents, Indiana, June 22, 1917.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*; "Service for Everyone, Everyone for Service."

These early classes geared for the war only represented a small segment of the Educational Section's agenda. Members quickly commenced sending out letters and official correspondence to Indiana's teachers informing them of many other ways they could get involved. Oftentimes this correspondence had an air of requirements more than it did suggestions, as members strongly urged teachers to do their bit. It should be noted, however, that like other sections of the state council, the Educational Section assumed a greater amount of authority than it actually had. As Claude H. Anderson, secretary of the New Jersey State Council of Defense observed in a 1918 article, only twenty-three states actually established their state councils by legislative enactment.⁸¹ Even in those cases, the powers of the organizations were still quite general, with the councils doing whatever they felt necessary to assist in the war effort. In Indiana, the state council did not come into existence on account of an act of the legislature, but was instead established by Governor Goodrich.⁸² Furthermore, it lacked any state appropriation.⁸³ Despite this, though, it took it upon itself to help mobilize Hoosiers for the conflict, relying on volunteerism among the state's citizens and appealing to them by shouting of patriotism and American ideals.

Because the state councils promoted the American (and Allied) cause, it is understandable that citizens, including many of the state's teachers, were quick to comply with their requests. For one thing, many throughout the country were eager to do what they could to help the United States win the war. Thanks in part to the work of the state

⁸¹ Claude H. Anderson, "The Civic Work of the State Councils of Defense," *National Municipal Review* 7 (January 1918): 473.

⁸² Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 72; *Indiana in the War: An Address by Hon. Edward C. Toner of Anderson*, October 25, 1918, p. 16, in "Indiana History – World War I" Newspaper Clipping File.

⁸³ Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 72; "Proceedings of Conference," July 12, 1917, Accession 1921052.

councils, citizens were given a long list of ways in which they could provide assistance. Moreover, what would it have meant to refuse such requests? How would it have looked to others, for instance, if teachers declined efforts to promote patriotic sentiments among their students or said they were uninterested in taking part in wartime programs? Some citizens may have complied with the urgings of the state councils merely in the interest of not appearing to be disloyal to the nation. Chapter 3 will examine these questions in greater detail and explore how fear may have contributed to individuals' participation in the state councils and other home front activities.

Indiana's teachers resembled the great majority of the state's citizens who listened to suggestions from Governor Goodrich, Will Hays, and chairmen of the various sections of the State Council of Defense and carried out programs that promoted wartime mobilization. A good portion of their work involved providing clerical support services. For example, the Educational Section asked teachers to become active in the Women's Service Enrollment Committee to help increase women's involvement in the war, as well as with each local Exemption Board to aid in executing the Selective Service Law.⁸⁴ In both August and October of 1917, Isaac D. Straus, Indiana's director of the United States Boys' Working Reserve, in cooperation with Horace Ellis and J.J. Pettijohn, secretary of the Educational Section, wrote about making every Hoosier teacher an enrolling officer for the Boys' Working Reserve and "every schoolhouse in the state a permanent enrollment office of the reserve."⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Horace Ellis, circular to Indiana County Superintendents, August 20, 1917; Horace Ellis, circular to "Dear Friend," November 20, 1917.

⁸⁵ "Indiana's Success Told by Mr. Straus: State Director of Boys' Working Reserve Instructs Others in Plan," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(3) (August 31, 1917), 5; "Every Teacher Made an Enrolling Officer": Bulletin from Federal State Director Isaac D. Straus of United States Boys' Working Reserve," *Indiana*

According to the *Indiana Bulletin*, which was published weekly by the Indiana State Council of Defense and intended as “a disseminator of public information” regarding the war, “full cooperation by all educational agencies [was] vital.”⁸⁶ Teachers stood at the heart of the system, most capable of making a difference. The state council appealed to them to support patriotic activities and encourage intensive war work among their students. Determined to promote home front participation in DuBois County, for instance, men and women of the educational committee there urged every teacher to lead by example and become a member of the Red Cross.⁸⁷ A little farther north, in Greene County, teachers received letters asking them “not to let a day go by without talking thrift stamps and war savings stamps to [their] boys and girls” and to illustrate their dedication by purchasing thrift cards of their own.⁸⁸ These counties were not alone in their efforts as the state council worked to make the entire state of Indiana a model for service during the war.

While the suggested activities helping with enrollment offices or working with the Red Cross added to teachers’ responsibilities, it was the time spent on the war in the classroom that best highlights the conflict’s effect on education. Teachers and students

Bulletin 1(11) (October 26, 1917), 6. Straus later served as secretary of the Indiana State Council of Defense.

⁸⁶ “Indiana Bulletin Published by the Indiana State Council of Defense,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(1) (August 17, 1917), 8; “History of the Indiana State Council of Defense,” Folder 1; “The School Teachers’ Duty,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(12) (November 2, 1917), 4. The State Council of Defense published the *Indiana Bulletin* from August 17, 1917 until November 8, 1918. In its September 20, 1918, issue, it became a joint publication of the state council and the Food Administration for Indiana. According to a history of the council from the Historical Bureau, “the doings of the county councils of defense were handled in the *Bulletin* with a view to stimulating interest and rivalry among the counties, and this plan worked with marked success.”

⁸⁷ Robert Eckert, letter to Sirs of the *Indiana Bulletin*, undated, E.S., vol. 1.

⁸⁸ “Patriotism in Indiana,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(31) (March 15, 1918), 2.

could not go one day without feeling its presence. From orators who were brought in by the Speakers Bureau to promote wartime service to leaders of the Liberty Loan campaigns, numerous groups invaded Indiana's classrooms and took away from time spent on more traditional learning.⁸⁹ How were teachers supposed to successfully conduct lessons when their classes were frequently interrupted by members of wartime organizations? How were they to balance teaching with supplying "all help possible" so that Indiana could lead the nation in Liberty Bond sales and food production?⁹⁰ There is no question that collaborating with wartime organizations allowed Hoosier teachers and students to join the nation's millions of other volunteers in contributing to the impressive work being done on the home front. Still, time spent on the war in the classroom meant sacrifices in learning elsewhere and changed the normal school routine.

Every day another wartime board or agency knocked on the doors of Indiana's schools requesting a base for their operations, promotion of the work they were undertaking, and perhaps most significant, recruits for "volunteer programs." Though this activity most likely would have occurred even if the Educational Section did not exist, what is unclear is how Indiana's schools would have responded. To what extent would they have been willing to cooperate with these organizations?

Aware of their responsibilities to the country in its time of need, it is fair to say that many superintendents, principals, and teachers would have acknowledged the calls for aid and tried to do their part to raise awareness and get students involved in the war effort. This last point is evidenced by some of the correspondence found in the Indiana

⁸⁹ Horace Ellis, circular to Indiana Superintendents, September 12, 1918; Horace Ellis, letter to Liberty Loan Superintendent, "Bulletin No. 1," March 23, 1918.

⁹⁰ G. Edward Behrens, Superintendent of Schools, Posey County, circular to Teachers, undated, E.S., vol. 1.

State Council of Defense records. Responding to a questionnaire in January 1918 from Dr. G.L. MacIntosh, chairman of the Committee on School Relations for the Boys' Working Reserve, about whether or not it was reasonable for the organization to enter Indiana's schools and urge students to be released from their classrooms to help with the planting season, Albert H. Douglass, superintendent of Logansport Schools, replied affirmatively. Douglass believed that schoolboys in particular should participate in the real affairs of the world and supported the efforts of the Boys' Working Reserve, stating, "if we can give [the boys] the opportunity, it is my belief that at the end of the school year, the working boys will have made as much progress in thinking out the problems of life as the boys who attended school."⁹¹ In fact, of the thirty-three superintendents who replied to Dr. MacIntosh's questionnaire prior to January 10, 1918, twenty-eight (including Douglass) favored releasing boys early from the schools in order to assist in war work.⁹² Opinions like these illustrate that some people in the education field strongly advocated the work of wartime organizations and did not object to having these groups come into Indiana's classrooms and ask for assistance.

Not everyone fell into Douglass's camp, however, with many actually protesting against what they considered to be invasions in the schools. Complaining to J.J. Pettijohn, who was a professor at Indiana University and secretary of the Educational Section, Superintendent Donald DuShane of Clinton exemplified this stance when he asked if there was "some way to head off [the] innumerable appeals which [were] neutralizing

⁹¹ Isaac Straus, letter to Horace Ellis, January 10, 1918, E.S., vol. 1. See the section "Food for Thought" later in this chapter for more on the Boys' Working Reserve and the efforts to release students from the schools to help work in the fields.

⁹² Ibid.

each other and disrupting school forces.”⁹³ Teachers and principals were quickly becoming irritated with the constant appeals for aid. No sooner would one organization leave the schools and another would show up in its place. It is possible that without pressure from the Educational Section of the Indiana State Council of Defense, school officials might have protested against outside groups knocking on their schools’ doors early on in the war or even prevented them from entering altogether.⁹⁴

Regardless of what the schools may have done without orders from above, though, numerous letters between Ellis and county and city superintendents make it clear that the Educational Section actively encouraged schools to work with these wartime organizations. Students may have been too young to participate in the physical fighting taking place abroad, but that did not mean that they should be excluded from helping win the war. In fact, far from being passive observers of the conflict, Ellis intended to “organize and direct an army of young people for constructive war service.”⁹⁵ The language of this quote highlights the extent to which the Educational Section regarded schools as the second line of defense in the war. Students were to become “soldiers” of the home front, battling problems such as shortages in labor, food, and clothing, and displaying an intense loyalty and commitment to their nation in the face of slackers, dissenters, and anyone suspected of showing sympathy to the German cause.

⁹³ J.J. Pettijohn, letter to Will H. Hays, November 10, 1917, E.S., vol. 1. Pettijohn informs Hays of messages he received from Superintendent DuShane on November 9, 1917, after DuShane’s schools witnessed appeals from the Food Administration and the YMCA.

⁹⁴ Ibid. In his correspondence with Hays, Pettijohn discussed the numerous organizations that were campaigning for funds and stated that the overwhelming number of appeals was actually resulting in the interests of the State Council “becoming more and more dissipated” and teachers “becoming more and more irritated.”

⁹⁵ Horace Ellis, circular to City Superintendents, June 21, 1917.

The many organizations that entered Indiana's public schools and tried to tap into the resource pool they saw available to them included the Red Cross, the YMCA, various groups working to help enlist men for combat and women for service, and, perhaps more than any other, the Food Administration. For these organizations, students and teachers represented extra bodies that could easily be used to complete wartime activities and bolster participation in the mobilization process. Each of them needed volunteers and they hoped to assemble a large number of them within Indiana's schools.

Although it advocated wartime service, the Educational Section was mindful of the disruptions these wartime organizations were causing for students and teachers. It thus worked to find some way to balance productive service with the normal school routine. After all, members depended on volunteerism among these groups and irritating them with a continuous barrage of requests most certainly would not have helped their cause. Their answer was the creation of a Committee on Approval. As its name infers, the Committee on Approval was established to examine the groups that were knocking on the doors of Indiana's schools during the war and to decide which ones to support and recommend throughout the state. Committee members included Jacob G. Collicott, J.J. Pettijohn, Thomas F. Fitzgibbon, T.T. Martin, Thomas C. Howe, and, later, Oscar H. Williams.⁹⁶ *The Speakers' Bureau of the State Council of Defense*, a bulletin produced by the Extension Division at Indiana University, described the Committee on Approval "as a

⁹⁶ Indiana University, Extension Division and Robert Emmet Cavanaugh, *The Speakers' Bureau of the State Council of Defense, University Extension War Service* (Bloomington, 1920), 12; "'Committee to Pass on School Soliciting': Educational Section Takes Notice of the Many Requests that Children Contribute to Patriotic Funds," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(15) (November 23, 1917), 8. James Collicott: State Vocational Director; T.F. Fitzgibbon: City Superintendent of Columbus, IN; T.T. Martin: Hendricks County Superintendent; T.C. Howe: President of Butler College; Oscar H. Williams: State High School Inspector.

clearing-house on matters pertaining to...war work” and members must have perceived it as a way to bring some sense of order to the schools during the conflict.⁹⁷

The committee decided that the most effective way to bring about efficient and productive service in Indiana’s schools was to give teachers and students some say in the work that they were being asked to do. As a result, it helped organize Indiana’s high schools into their own mini councils of defense. Much like the organization of the county, town, and township councils, the high school organizations served as another way to filter information down from the state level to a specific group of people (teachers and students) and make them feel like they had both a purpose and a say in wartime service. The *Indiana Bulletin* reported in February 1918 that, according to the Educational Section, these councils were “not an additional organization imposed upon the already over-burdened schools, but a device for coordinating war activities already being carried on.”⁹⁸

The high school councils had their own constitution and by-laws and stood by the motto “Help our country NOW.”⁹⁹ For each organization, the principal of that particular school served as the president of the body, unless he or she appointed someone else to take his or her place. Additionally, the high school councils divided themselves into three committees to most effectively consider what wartime activities they should approve for students and teachers. A committee on finance proposed a system of earnings and savings by the school and individuals at a given school; a committee on program established

⁹⁷ Indiana University, Extension Division and Cavanaugh, *The Speakers’ Bureau of the State Council of Defense*, 12.

⁹⁸ “Educational Section,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(25) (February 1, 1918), 7.

⁹⁹ “_____ High School Council of Defense Constitution,” undated, E.S., vol. 1.

regular meetings to discuss patriotic activities; and a committee on employment assessed the school's labor supply in relation to its community's need of labor.¹⁰⁰ Together, the high school councils of the state formed the High School Patriotic Service League, another channel and medium through which the Educational Section could counsel teachers and school officials on the types of war work in which they should be engaged. A sample constitution for the high schools read:

We the teachers and pupils of _____ High School in order to give loyal and efficient support to our country in the present crisis do hereby pledge ourselves to cooperate with the Educational Section of the County and State Councils of Defense through a High School Patriotic Service League in the efforts to utilize our schools in helping to win the war.¹⁰¹

With the creation of these high school councils and the High School Patriotic Service League, the Educational Section acknowledged that Indiana's schools needed some sort of buffer against the unending appeals they were receiving. Members of the section were all too eager to enlist teachers' and students' assistance in war work, but it needed to be an organized effort. To be sure, though, Ellis and his committee men had no intention of abandoning the rich source of volunteers present in the schools and they continued to promote patriotic sentiments throughout the entire state.

Analyzing whether or not the Educational Section was successful in its endeavors is no simple task and depends heavily on how one defines success. As described in Chapter 1, historians David Kennedy and Robert Zieger have discredited the state councils of defense, stating that it was really special wartime federal agencies such as the Food Administration and the War Industries Board that helped mobilize the nation in

¹⁰⁰ "Educational Section," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(25) (February 1, 1918), 7. The third by-law of the high school councils lists each of the three committees.

¹⁰¹ "_____ High School Council of Defense Constitution," undated.

1917 and 1918. Given their views and interpretations of the councils, it is unlikely that they would have found Indiana's Educational Section to be an exception. To be fair to Kennedy and Zieger, federal wartime agencies did make significant contributions to the war cause and helped mobilize millions of people and resources. It is hard to imagine how the conflict would have progressed without their efforts. To discredit or ignore the work of the state councils, however, gives readers an inadequate understanding of the American home front during the war. Although the councils were frequently bypassed by federal agencies, the two did collaborate a great deal in mobilizing the nation, as was the case with Indiana's state council. Furthermore, as William Breen states, in some cases the councils were actually "incubators of federal programs."¹⁰² One sees this reflected in the records of the Educational Section.

Members of the Council of National Defense sent a number of letters to leaders of the section expressing their excitement regarding Indiana's initiatives to utilize the resources of their state and modify schools and curricula for the war. Some even asked for further information about these activities to spread to other states.¹⁰³ Based on these letters and the dedicated efforts of the members of the Educational Section, it is clear that not all of the work that was done to prepare Indiana's schools for the war came from orders at the national level. Instead, Indiana took it upon itself to enlist volunteers in all sectors of the state, and teachers and students were no exception. In this regard, one could argue that the Educational Section was successful. It sought to introduce these groups to war work and inculcate them with patriotic fervor and it did so on a daily basis.

¹⁰² Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, xv.

¹⁰³ Elliot D. Smith, Information Department, to Gentlemen of the Educational Section of the Indiana State Council of Defense, August 31, 1917, E.S., vol. 1.

Even more so than working to enlist teachers in wartime service, the Educational Section wanted all of Indiana's youth organized to help in the fight. Gone were the days of attending school and returning home to do homework or help with regular chores. Not only were students' classes broken up with presentations and appeals from wartime organizations, but their lives outside of the classroom also changed to fit with support of WWI. Members of the Educational Section encouraged them to use their time to sell war stamps, assist in distributing food conservation pledge cards to every home in the state, and recount lessons on the conflict abroad to others, particularly parents and family members.¹⁰⁴ In Adams County, high school students worked in squads and assisted in compiling data for local conscription boards.¹⁰⁵ In Pike County, the superintendent of Petersburg public schools established sawbuck clubs so schoolboys could volunteer their time cutting firewood in an effort to help reduce the need for coal during the winter.¹⁰⁶ No matter where one went in the state, there were examples of students engaged in productive service. This work occurred both inside and outside of the schools and both during and beyond the normal school day and academic calendar. Sawbuck clubs actually sprang up in many of Indiana's counties during the war and the boys engaged in this sort of work not only labored after school hours, but often spent portions of their Christmas vacations dedicating themselves to their cause.

As mentioned earlier, oftentimes service was not just an option, but, rather, seemed to be more of an obligation to fulfill. The circulars and letters released by the

¹⁰⁴ Jacob G. Collicott, State Director of Vocational Education, letter to Will H. Hays, November 28, 1917, E.S., vol. 1.

¹⁰⁵ "Patriotism in Indiana," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(17) (December 7, 1917), 2.

¹⁰⁶ "Patriotism in Indiana," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(20) (December 28, 1917), 2.

Educational Section exemplified this point through their carefully chosen language. Members knew exactly what to say and what buttons to push to garner support. The term “patriotism” in and of itself was frequently all it took to make individuals feel like they had a commitment to the state during the war. Also effective, however, was the knowledge and fear that all Germans were working tirelessly across the Atlantic in an effort to defeat the Allies. The State Council of Defense sought to motivate Hoosiers this way and schoolchildren were far from exempt from service: “Every German is on a war footing. We must not forget that fact. Any plan, therefore is incomplete if it fails to utilize the boys and girls as active participants in the war.”¹⁰⁷

One way that students could help was in promoting the sale of Liberty Bonds throughout Indiana.¹⁰⁸ In speaking about these bonds, Ellis stated that “every pupil [had] a patriotic duty to perform in advertising [their] sale.”¹⁰⁹ These students might only have been in middle school or high school, but again, age meant very little. They were still expected to contribute just as the rest of the country had been asked to do. The language of Ellis’s quote implied much more than “suggested service.” It implied a responsibility students had, not only to their respective schools and counties, but to the state and country at large. The message was clear: their country needed their help.

In a similar manner as the Liberty Bond fundraising efforts, the Educational Section also worked with the YMCA and encouraged students to pledge \$10 contributions to the organization. Articles in the *Indiana Bulletin* provide numerous

¹⁰⁷ “Educational Section,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(25) (February 1, 1918), 7.

¹⁰⁸ “Students Asked to Take Part in Bond Drive,” *Kokomo Daily Tribune*, September 21, 1918, p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ Horace Ellis, circular to Indiana Superintendents, September 12, 1918.

stories of students making these contributions.¹¹⁰ For instance, on November 30, 1917, the *Bulletin* reported that 100 boys from Starke County had “responded nobly to the YMCA fund,” with each pledging the \$10; in Shelby County over sixty boys had done so; and in Switzerland County twenty-three boys made the pledge.¹¹¹ The same publication also reported that students and faculty at Purdue University had subscribed \$20,000 to the YMCA War Fund and those at Manchester College in Wabash County had subscribed \$1,300.¹¹² Similar stories of schools all around the state giving to the fund appeared in the *Bulletin* through late December 1917. These examples help illustrate some of the ways in which students became involved in the war on the home front.

It is important to note that while the Educational Section directed much of its attention to the work that schoolboys could do cutting wood or tending to the fields, war work did encompass everyone, regardless of sex. Indiana’s schoolgirls contributed thousands of hours towards work on the home front even when one does not consider the concurrent efforts of the Woman’s Section of the State Council of Defense. Much of this work took place in home economics classes, gardening clubs, and knitting groups, but it could extend to almost any program deemed worthy of attention during the conflict. In LaPorte County, for example, high school girls were organized into teams to prepare various raw materials from nearby gardens and stores for canning. Reports show that in just one month the material prepared by these girls included 15 bushels of beans, 14

¹¹⁰ “Indiana Bulletin Published by the Indiana State Council of Defense,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(1) (August 17, 1917), 8.

¹¹¹ “Patriotism in Indiana,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(16) (November 30, 1917), 2.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

crates of cherries, 25 bushels of peas, and 6 bushels of spinach and Swiss chard.¹¹³

According to the *Indiana Bulletin*, the girls even received school credit for this work, which seems only fair when one considers that boys also earned credit for some of their services. Similarly, just as boys gave up their vacation time to the war, so too did girls spend their breaks away from school helping tend gardens and sewing garments for those fighting in Europe. In Marion County, even as early as the summer of 1917, girls worked one morning every week through their vacation and made approximately twenty-three dozen articles of clothing for the Red Cross at the Whittier School, No. 33 in Indianapolis.¹¹⁴ Girls also labored in Rushville public schools, knitting sweaters and scarves for soldiers during the school year, and oftentimes remaining after school hours to do the work.¹¹⁵ One hundred of them also assembled themselves as “YMCA Backers” and helped the organization in its wartime endeavors. These types of activities became common across the state and are indicative of girls’ service during the war. If boys were in manual training classes or working on the farms, girls were enrolling in cooking classes, organizing gardening clubs, or making surgical dressings as members of the Junior Red Cross. Regardless of the task at hand, it is clear that just as the state council did not fail to notice the assistance that schools could offer on the home front, the Educational Section did not fail to notice the ways in which the state’s schoolgirls could help.

¹¹³ “Community Canning Popular in LaPorte: Steam Pressure Outfits Serve to Attract Many to Course of Instruction,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(8) (October 5, 1917), 3.

¹¹⁴ “Patriotism in Indiana,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(24) (January 25, 1918), 2.

¹¹⁵ “Rushville Public Schools Making Patriotic Record,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(19) (December 21, 1917), 4.

In a similar manner, while the records of the Educational Section make no reference to race, it should not be disregarded either. African American children participated in wartime programs just as other students did. An expert on African American history in Indiana, Emma Lou Thornbrough, addressed this issue when she described some of the voluntary work of the African American community during WWI in her book *Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century*. According to Thornbrough, “under the direction of Principal Mary Cable, pupils at the McCoy Colored School [in Indianapolis] collected magazines, sold Thrift Stamps, and raised war gardens.”¹¹⁶ In some state councils of defense, blacks attempted to have members of their race appointed to the organization to give them a voice in the service that many were asked to provide. This was the case in Missouri and although it did not take hold, it did at least encourage state council members there to agree to consult African Americans regarding wartime programs.¹¹⁷ Other states experienced similar occurrences. What is clear, however, is that although the state councils generally denied African Americans leadership positions within the organizations, they did not reject the services African American children could offer through the schools. In Indiana, black schoolchildren worked with many of the same wartime agencies as the rest of the state’s students and participated in similar volunteer activities, including fundraising efforts and food production and conservation.

¹¹⁶ Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana Blacks in the Twentieth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 45.

¹¹⁷ Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 108.

Food for Thought

More than in any other area, members of the Educational Section specifically sought to build and foster relationships between Indiana's youth (white or black, boy or girl) and the Federal Food Administration. Students in Indiana's classrooms received the same messages that the rest of the nation received; that "food, rather than ammunition, [would] decide the outcome of the present war" and that everyone could contribute to the war effort if they ate only what they needed and wasted nothing.¹¹⁸ These messages help underscore World War I as a total war. There could be no discounting the work of the American soldiers fighting abroad or of those working in the factories to produce munitions-related materials, but everyday citizens were undoubtedly involved in the conflict as well. Food production and conservation became issues of paramount concern for those both outside and inside the classroom.

Future president Herbert Hoover led the food campaign in the United States during the war, serving as Food Administrator. Appointed to the position by President Wilson on May 19, 1917, Hoover relied heavily on volunteerism among the American public as he sought to involve people of all ages and backgrounds in food production, while at the same time encouraging them to minimize consumption wherever possible.¹¹⁹ He believed that patriotic sentiment was strong enough to compel individuals to join the cause and he was not disappointed.¹²⁰ Hoover's messages spread quickly throughout the country, with many eager to render their services. Farmers spent countless hours tending

¹¹⁸ "Food Will Decide the Issue," *Indiana Bulletin*, 1(6) (September 21, 1917), 4; D. Clayton James and Anne Sharp Wells, *America and the Great War, 1914-1920* (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1998), 63.

¹¹⁹ James and Wells, *America and the Great War*, 63.

¹²⁰ Kennedy, *Over Here*, 117-118.

their fields and asking for volunteers to help them in their efforts. Families planted gardens and helped with canning projects.¹²¹ And among those who responded to the calls for aid and participated in the food campaign were the state councils of defense.¹²² In fact, according to William Breen, the “state councils were early in both encouraging food production and persuading farmers to increase crop acreage.”¹²³ Despite their efforts and their commitment to the cause, Hoover frequently bypassed these organizations, eager to maintain control over the food campaign without having to rely on or bow to the state council machinery. Instead, he approached them only when he saw fit and needed extra assistance for his programs. This behavior was not unique to the Food Administration, as other federal departments and agencies had the tendency to ignore the state councils in an effort to exert their own power and influence in mobilizing the home front. Nevertheless, the state councils remained active in their work throughout the duration of American involvement in the war. They took the initiative in reaching down into local communities and urging all people to get involved while at the same time lending assistance to state and federal agencies as much as possible.¹²⁴

Members of the Educational Section of the Indiana State Council of Defense encouraged Hoosier students to do their part and assist with food production and conservation by working in the fields, taking canning classes, and preserving

¹²¹ McPhetridge, *Delaware County in the World War*, 7-8, 34; Wycoff, *Ripley County's Part in the World War*, 67.

¹²² Lawrence Christensen, “Missouri’s Responses to World War I: The Missouri Council of Defense,” *Midwest Review* 12 (March 1990): 35-37; William J. Breen, “The North Carolina Council of Defense during World War I, 1917-1918,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 50 (January 1973): 21-22.

¹²³ Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 27.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 28-31.

foodstuffs.¹²⁵ Just as Hoover urged the rest of the nation to participate in meatless and wheatless days to increase the amount of food available to be distributed overseas, students were also encouraged to limit their consumption of various food items.¹²⁶ This was exemplified at West Ward School in Whitley County when the chairman of the county's board of defense suggested that schoolchildren there give up sugar from October 1917 until Christmas of that year. The *Indiana Bulletin* reported that leaders in France had requested approximately 100,000 tons of sugar during that period and Indiana's students were told that they could help them reach this amount by abstaining from candies and urging other schoolchildren to do the same.¹²⁷ Elsewhere in the state food conservation took on other meanings, with students saving such items as peach pits and hickory nut shells so that they could be used to make charcoal for military gas masks. While these tasks may seem trivial to us today, at the time they offered a means by which even the youngest schoolboys and girls could become active participants in the war. Circulars and bulletins of the Educational Section stressed such activities and worked to impress upon pupils how much the nation relied on their assistance.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ McPhetridge, *Delaware County in the World War*, 37-39, 120.

¹²⁶ "Publicity Does Good," *Daviess County Democrat*, December 21, 1917, p. 4. See also H.E. Barnard, "Indiana Patriotic League Articles: No. 2 – Food and the War," *Indianapolis News*, December 1, 1917, p. 17, for a sample program from the Food Administration to help reduce meat and wheat consumption.

¹²⁷ "How the School Children May Help Win the War," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(11) (October 26, 1917), 9. The article contains correspondence from D.V. Whiteleather, chairman of the Whitley County Board of Defense, to Will H. Hays about students' eagerness to assist in the war effort. Also included are letters between Whiteleather and Kathryn Ruckman, a student at West Ward School, about how students could get involved.

¹²⁸ Horace Ellis, circular to County Superintendents, September 23, 1918; "Fruit Pits for War Use: Public Asked to Save Seeds and Nut Shells for Gas Mask Making," *New York Times*, September 9, 1918, p. 16.

In assessing the degree to which students participated in these activities or made a difference in the food campaign, one need only look at the numbers. According to an article in the *Indiana Bulletin*, by mid-August 1917, over 40,000 boys and girls had enrolled in some type of home project work (e.g., helping grow corn, canning and preserving fruits and vegetables, assisting in feeding livestock).¹²⁹ Schools would not start until the following month and yet Ellis and his fellow committeemen and women were actively promoting student involvement on the home front. Once students and teachers were back in the classroom, appeals for their assistance in the war effort simply continued to increase.

Records of the Educational Section show that Ellis had actually been encouraging the mobilization of educational resources for the food campaign (both supplies and people) as early as the spring of 1917. In a letter to Indiana's county superintendents dated April 10, 1917, he described the importance of home projects and asked all high school boys and girls, as well as eighth grade students, to engage in them to help increase the state's agricultural output.¹³⁰ Furthermore, Ellis suggested that students receive full school credit for this work, bringing to light an issue that would become highly debated amongst the state's superintendents and members of the section during the 1917-1918 school year.

¹²⁹ "Public Schools to Assist Cause: Educational Forces are Mobilized to Serve the State," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(1) (August 17, 1917), 12. The title of this article gets at the heart of this thesis and helps illustrate how Indiana's schools were pulled into the war just as the rest of the country was. Students, teachers, and even school facilities were organized in a way that would maximize efficiency and be most effective in providing assistance for the country during the conflict.

¹³⁰ Horace Ellis, circular to Indiana County Superintendents, April 10, 1917; "Public Schools to Assist Cause."

Jacob Collicott, State Director of Vocational Education, reported that by November of 1917, 65 of Indiana's 92 counties had "definite projects in food production and conservation [that were] being carried out by pupils in public schools."¹³¹ Additionally, students had reportedly helped produce over \$350,000 in foodstuffs throughout the year.¹³² Much of this work was done at the urging of the Educational Section. In October 1917, the organization, working with the Food Production and Conservation Committee of the state council, had urged schoolchildren to dedicate a week to learning how to select and store seed corn.¹³³ High school students were pushed to select 100-200 ears of corn during this week and members also advised that every school organize seed corn testing clubs, with the goal that Indiana's schoolchildren would collectively test 1,500,000 bushels of seed corn by mid-March.¹³⁴ It is difficult not to praise students' contributions to wartime service when reflecting on these numbers. In addition to expansion of the corn crop, the U.S. Department of Agriculture had asked Indiana to increase its wheat crop production by 25 percent in 1918 and its rye acreage by 35 percent.¹³⁵ With so many young men being sent overseas to fight in the war, would Hoosier farmers have been able to answer such demands without assistance from the state's students? Over 10,000 youths from Indiana had joined the United States Boys'

¹³¹ Jacob G. Collicott, State Director of Vocational Education, letter to Will H. Hays, Chairman of the Indiana State Council of Defense, November 28, 1917, E.S., vol. 1.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ "More Wheat Asked of Indiana Farms: Better Livestock Also Planned as Source of Vastly Increased Food Supply," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(7) (September 28, 1917), 6.

¹³⁴ "Seed Corn Week in Indiana Successful," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(10) (October 19, 1917), 1, 8; Horace Ellis, circular to Indiana Superintendents, undated. The *Indiana Bulletin* reports that Seed Corn Week lasted from October 15-20, 1917.

¹³⁵ "Farmers Show Why They Need Laborers – Letter Addressed to Secretary of War Sets out Reasons for Appeal," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(3) (August 31, 1917), 3.

Working Reserve by September 1917, making Indiana the leader in the number of boys enrolled in the country.¹³⁶ This number grew as the war progressed and calls for aid continued. But how much time could be spent on wartime service before it jeopardized education within Indiana's schools? Balancing traditional instruction and involvement in volunteer activities was no simple task, as time spent on teaching students how to select and store seed corn or do other war-related activities in the agricultural sector meant sacrifices in regular school content. Still, it was an issue that the Educational Section and its Committee on Approval would have to deal with as they reflected on the schools and the war.

With the conflict the number one priority of the nation, the Educational Section was anxious to utilize any and all assistance teachers and students could provide. Responding to calls from Indiana's Committee on Food Production and Conservation for additional farm hands, members of the section voted unanimously in favor of a resolution recommending that all county superintendents in the state release their high school boys temporarily to help harvest crops in the fall of 1917.¹³⁷ This action raised several questions though, including whether or not students who were released should receive proportionate credit for the work they did outside of school, if class terms should be delayed and holiday breaks shortened to make up for lost time in the classroom, and who would ultimately be responsible for scheduling releases.

At the time, Indiana's schools responded favorably to the request of the Educational Section. In Lake township in St. Joseph County, for instance, schools closed

¹³⁶ "Educators Awake to Need of Times: Army Will Be Supplied with Specially Trained Men as Needed," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(5) (September 14, 1917), 1.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

for two weeks in October to give students time to help harvest grapes.¹³⁸ In Westfield and Clinton townships in LaPorte County, city school superintendents dismissed classes for a week to tend to the potato crop.¹³⁹ Elsewhere in the state, full or half days were dedicated to agricultural tasks during certain weeks, with some of the projects being taken up “as part of the regular school work.” It was this last part that caused problems for the Educational Section and the state’s schools. Should involvement in wartime programs and activities act as a substitute and replacement for traditional school curricula? If so, where should the cuts in lesson plans occur? The high school councils of defense and the Committee on Approval helped in assessing the situation in late 1917 and early 1918.¹⁴⁰ Members of these bodies worked to ensure that Hoosier students provided the maximum amount of service with a minimum amount of interruption of their school work.¹⁴¹ Schoolchildren continued to be released from classrooms in the spring and fall of 1918 to help in the fields, but such service came to be regarded as additional, not substitute work.¹⁴² The Educational Section made it clear that the regular school term should be

¹³⁸ “Practical Value of U.S. Boys’ Working Reserve,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(8) (October 5, 1917), 7.

¹³⁹ “Superintendents of Schools Will Assist: Purpose and Need of United States Boys’ Working Reserve Explained,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(10) (October 19, 1917), 5.

¹⁴⁰ “Minutes of Meeting of Educational Section,” November 26, 1917, E.S., vol. 1. Minutes describe how the formation of the high school councils of defense would help give school authorities control with regard to releasing students for war work.

¹⁴¹ J.J. Pettijohn and Robert Cavanaugh, letter to County Superintendents and Superintendents and Principals of High Schools, November 24, 1917, E.S., vol. 1; “Digest of Minutes of the Educational Section State War Conference,” December 14, 1917, E.S., vol. 1; Isaac Straus, letter to Horace Ellis, January 10, 1918, E.S., vol. 1; “Report of the Resolutions Committee,” to Members of the Educational Section of the State Council of Defense, undated, E.S., vol. 1. Members of this Resolutions Committee included T.F. Fitzgibbon, W.A. Millis, T.T. Martin, H.L. Smith, and U.O. Cox, among others who were absent at the time of the report.

¹⁴² “Report of the Resolutions Committee,” to Members of the Educational Section of the State Council of Defense, undated, E.S., vol. 1.

maintained where possible.¹⁴³ School authorities would have control with regard to releases and only those students in good academic standing would be eligible.

Furthermore, most educational authorities urged against granting full credits for good agricultural service and worked to ensure that students who were released for wartime service made up the work that they missed in the classroom.¹⁴⁴

Though Ellis and many county and city superintendents wanted Indiana's students to lead the nation in the amount and caliber of their service, they nonetheless recognized the importance of preserving traditional studies and worked to ensure that they were not forsaken.¹⁴⁵ The Education Section made it clear that the greatest way for students to make a difference was to stay in school and continue their education. This may seem odd considering how much time the section encouraged schoolchildren to dedicate to mobilization programs. However, members of the committee regarded schools as the second line of defense not just because they were places where wartime service could be accomplished on a large scale, but even more so because it was there where students could learn about the war and examine its causes and progress in great detail.¹⁴⁶ On a deeper level, schools helped prepare students for the future – a future that would require them to deal with the repercussions of the war and attempt to maintain peace. Should war

¹⁴³ James E. Gilley, "Daviness County School Notes," *Daviness County Democrat*, December 21, 1917, p. 4.

¹⁴⁴ Isaac Straus, letter to Horace Ellis, January 10, 1918, E.S., vol. 1; Guilford M. Wiley, Principal of High School at Greensburg, IN, to the Parent, "A Very Interesting Plan," January 15, 1918, E.S., vol. 1.

¹⁴⁵ J.J. Pettijohn, letter to Will Hays, Chairman of the Indiana State Council of Defense, November 10, 1917.

¹⁴⁶ Horace Ellis, letter to Indiana Preachers, Priests, and Rabbis, August 19, 1918, Accession 1921048. Ellis sent many appeals to Indiana's churches in order to stress the importance of education and get them to encourage their younger congregants to stay in school. He and his fellow committee members believed that it was in school where students could be of most help to the country during the war.

come again, these young men and women needed to be well-trained in how to handle it, making lessons on the conflict a necessary part of the curricula and attendance in school crucial.

Students found themselves in a unique position when the United States entered WWI. Too young to enter the military, but old enough to want to do more than help with conservation or thrift, many were eager to leave school to contribute more to the war effort. With members of the Educational Section constantly stressing how important it was that they “do their part,” it is not surprising that students felt they could be of more use outside the classroom than in it. Writing about subsequent high school student experiences during WWII, Richard Uglan states that young men and women experienced “a feeling of restlessness in the classroom.” They were excited with the thought of making a difference and truly helping their country, but ultimately disappointed and “frustrated in being unable to make the contribution they wanted to make.”¹⁴⁷ Relying on studies of boys in wartime activities, Uglan shows that many wanted “adult jobs, not believing their position big enough.”¹⁴⁸ Although these thoughts refer to students’ experiences during WWII, they were not uncommon to the young men and women living during the Great War. In order to prevent students from deserting their institutions and focusing all of their attention on the conflict, members of the Educational Section, working with county and city superintendents and teachers, attempted to portray schools as bastions of hope and opportunity for Americans. They considered schools to

¹⁴⁷ Richard M. Uglan, “Viewpoints and Morale of Urban High School Students during World War II – Indianapolis as a Case Study,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 77 (June 1981): 164, 166.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 165.

be “the sheet-anchors of our national safety – the cities of refuge to which our republic must fly in days of peril.”¹⁴⁹

On one hand, it is easy to see schools as a “refuge” and a place to escape from the evils of the world. Behind their doors, students were believed to be free from having to confront the war head-on and parents did not have to worry that they would lose these children in some bloody campaign. On the other hand, as has already been discussed in relation to wartime agencies’ involvement in schools, and will be discussed further in the following chapter, the war did extend itself into classrooms, due in large part to requests and actions of the Educational Section of Indiana’s State Council of Defense. The Educational Section charged schools with being “the sheet-anchors of our national safety” in the hopes that teachers would help prepare their students to understand the significance of the war, the ways that they could be of use in it, and their role in the resulting peace.

¹⁴⁹ Speaker’s Bureau, Indiana State Council of Defense, “Syllabus for Speakers for Educational Week, April 22-26, 1918,” April 1918. Often used as a nautical term, the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines “sheet anchor” as “something that constitutes a main support or dependence especially in danger.”

Chapter 3: School Curricula and the War

“The boy who can drive nails as well as appreciate Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* has the making of the type of citizen who will rehabilitate this world when peace comes.”¹⁵⁰

-Indiana Bulletin, September 1917

The above quote illustrates the fundamental philosophy and outlook of the Educational Section of the Indiana State Council of Defense during World War I. The boy driving nails could have been a girl sewing garments or surgical dressings for the soldiers abroad and “*Canterbury Tales*” could have been a history lesson on the Founding Fathers. The message, as reported by the state council’s *Indiana Bulletin*, nonetheless remains clear. The Educational Section believed in the importance of balancing traditional education in Indiana’s schools with practical, hands-on work. Students would not only be expected to master reading, writing, and arithmetic, or any of the other core subjects that had become standard in Indiana’s classrooms, but they would also be encouraged to pursue work applicable to the needs of the day – work that would ultimately help to prepare them for the future and the years after the war.

From its earliest days of statehood, Indiana promoted the cause of education and the establishment of schools to train its citizens. Article IX of the 1816 Constitution provided for a general system of education equally open to all on the basis that “knowledge and learning, generally diffused through a community, [was] essential to the preservation of a free Government....”¹⁵¹ According to Richard Boone in his *A History of Education in Indiana*, Governor Jonathan Jennings reinforced this statement in a speech

¹⁵⁰ “Ignorance or Indifference,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(7) (September 28, 1917), 4.

¹⁵¹ “Article IX,” *Constitution of 1816*, typescript, Indiana Historical Bureau, <http://www.in.gov/history/2460.htm> (accessed May 1, 2012).

to the state legislature that year, declaring that “the dissemination of useful knowledge will be indispensably necessary as a support to morals and a restraint to vice.”¹⁵² Despite these views, however, and attempts to emphasize the importance of education, Hoosiers made little progress in the field until the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁵³ To be sure, schools did exist in the state prior to 1850, but there was “no uniformity, no systematic record keeping, no central financing or direction.”¹⁵⁴ Student attendance was often irregular during this period as parents stressed the importance of assisting with household chores and other family responsibilities over public education. Reform did not come overnight, but as Indiana moved into the second half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century the state witnessed a more comprehensive and uniform approach to the school system.¹⁵⁵ Many reformers came to see public education as a way in which to better prepare students for the future and help them grow both mentally and physically. For these individuals, education was “more than just a responsibility of one generation to the next; it [was] a positive good, not only for the pupils themselves but for society – indeed, for the whole human race.”¹⁵⁶ Children are the leaders of tomorrow and many

¹⁵² Richard G. Boone, *A History of Education in Indiana* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1892), 13. Boone praises Indiana for its attitude on the question of education as stated in the 1816 Constitution, but also acknowledges the vagueness of the provision and the difficulty the state faced in creating such a system of education at the time.

¹⁵³ See pages 129-164 of Boone for information on education in the 1851 Constitution and the School Law of 1852. See also William J. Reese, *Hoosier Schools Past and Present* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), and Bethany Natali, “Chapter One: The Development of Education in Indiana,” in “The Impact of Caleb Mills on the Hoosier Education Debate: An Edition of Two Unpublished Addresses” (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 2007), 7-28, <https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/handle/1805/1001>.

¹⁵⁴ James H. Madison, *The Indiana Way: A State History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 110.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 114-115.

¹⁵⁶ Timothy J. McMannon, “Introduction: The Changing Purposes of Education and Schooling,” in *The Public Purpose of Education and Schooling*, ed. John I. Goodlad and Timothy J. McMannon (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1997), 4.

believed that by regularly attending school and gaining an understanding of various areas of study they would be ready to confront the issues of the day and assume their place in society.

Teaching Towards the War

During the Great War, the Educational Section viewed Indiana's schools in much the same light. Members of the organization understood the importance of schools in everyday life and as such they also recognized the role that they could play in helping mobilize the home front. According to William Reese, professor of Educational Policy Studies and of History at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, it was generally accepted that "public schools held great potential for promoting individual welfare and the common good."¹⁵⁷ In 1917 and 1918, the common good depended on wartime cooperation. Mobilizing students' support for the war and inculcating them with patriotic sentiments required more than merely working with wartime agencies and participating in service activities. It forced schools to adapt their curricula and teachers to adjust their lessons plans so that specific time could be dedicated to studying the conflict and its effects on society. Far from being a refuge from the war, the Educational Section helped transform Indiana's schools into training grounds and battlefields for it by encouraging superintendents to modify curricula so that they conformed to the fighting abroad and the struggles confronting those at home.

Staff and students felt the effects of the war in the classroom at the onset of each day as they were required to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and sing the "Star-Spangled

¹⁵⁷ William J. Reese, "Indiana's Public School Traditions: Dominant Themes and Research Opportunities," *Indiana Magazine of History* 89 (December 1993): 297.

Banner” in addition to other patriotic songs. In some schools such activities had occurred before the United States officially entered the war, but they became routine happenings during the country’s participation in the conflict. For instance, in the fall of 1917, Shelbyville schools, which had already had a custom of saluting the American flag each day, made the act a permanent rule for its students, emphasizing its significance on a daily basis.¹⁵⁸ Even as early as May of 1917, when the Educational Section was still the State Committee for Educational Mobilization, members instructed superintendents to organize flag raising ceremonies in the schools.¹⁵⁹ They considered these acts to be of critical importance at the time in helping to instill patriotic fervor in Indiana’s schools and encouraging students to do their part for the country they loved. Ellis insisted that all teachers memorize the lyrics to the “Star-Spangled Banner,” believing that the “situation today demands cultivating the sentiment of that inspiring song.”¹⁶⁰ In fact, the state council encouraged all Hoosiers to display their singing talents, holding firm to the belief that music offered a means by which citizens could be emotionally aroused and inspired. Schools were particularly targeted in this campaign.¹⁶¹ Music classes are common to us today, but the emphasis on singing and other displays of patriotism nevertheless serves as

¹⁵⁸ “Patriotism in Indiana,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(14) (November 16, 1917), 3. A copy of the *Indiana Bulletin* can be located within the Indiana State Library holdings. See page 36 in Chapter 2 of this thesis for information on the publication.

¹⁵⁹ “To Stimulate Constructive Patriotism: Chief Object of Speaker’s Bureau of Educational Section,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(2) (August 24, 1917), 11.

¹⁶⁰ State Superintendent of Public Instruction, circular to County Superintendents, March 27, 1917, Indiana State Council of Defense Collection, Indiana State Archives, Indianapolis, Accession 1921048. The Indiana State Council of Defense Collection is divided into numerous accession numbers that pertain to the various sections of the council, meeting minutes, proceedings, and miscellaneous reports and proclamations. Information from all circulars and letters cited in this chapter is taken from this collection unless otherwise noted.

¹⁶¹ “People are Urged to Join in Singing: Teachers Will Encourage the Idea of Community Music,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(2) (August 24, 1917), 4.

another example of the way in which the Educational Section instructed the state's schools to make sure day-to-day activities promoted the American cause. What better way to express love for one's country than to literally sing its praises?

Of more direct consequence than singing were actual classes and lessons that teachers adapted to address and promote the conflict. In order to align with the wartime activities that outside organizations wanted students to participate in, Ellis asked county and city superintendents to encourage their staff members to focus classroom lectures on topics such as thrift and conservation, agricultural work, and the importance of loyalty to the nation.¹⁶² Students needed to be educated on volunteer service if they were going to become actively involved in it. Lessons frequently considered America's position in the war, how the country became involved in the conflict, and the progress of the nation's troops. The goal was Americanization.¹⁶³ Children in every grade, from kindergarten up through college, had to understand the importance of patriotism and loyalty. Armed with this knowledge, the state council hoped that they would be ready to make their own contributions to the war effort and further assist the country once peace finally arrived.

Current events classes served as one way in which teachers could focus on the war in the classroom. In Salem, for instance, high school instructors requested copies of the *Indiana Bulletin*, which they utilized to ensure that students were cognizant of the various types of war work being done throughout the state.¹⁶⁴ In a similar fashion, other

¹⁶² Horace Ellis, circular to Indiana Superintendents, March 2, 1918; Horace Ellis, circular to Indiana Superintendents, September 12, 1918.

¹⁶³ "The School Teachers' Duty," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(12) (November 2, 1917), 4. The *Bulletin* argued that "it [was] the school that sen[t] the daily message of Americanism home to the people." This quote further highlights how the state council viewed the state's schools and the important role that they believed they played.

¹⁶⁴ "Will Study Bulletin," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(9) (October 12, 1917), 4.

educators distributed various pamphlets and bulletins regarding food conservation campaigns, Liberty Bond sales, and other ways in which individuals could display their patriotism.¹⁶⁵ Oftentimes, this literature came from the national level, with President Wilson and chairmen of federal wartime agencies working together to make sure the country's citizens were well-prepared and well-versed in the conflict. The main objective, as the Indiana State Teachers Association believed, was to relate school work and everyday lessons "more closely with actual life needs."¹⁶⁶

Vocational education represented one of the easiest ways to address real "life needs" during the war years, with students taking courses in agriculture, domestic science, and industrial training. Members of the Educational Section encouraged such studies for students in all grades. They believed that these fields lent themselves directly to productive, relevant work that not only advanced the individual, but helped the county, state, and nation as a whole particularly during the war. Members endorsed a plan to make a class in food production and conservation compulsory in the state's high schools during the 1917-1918 academic year.¹⁶⁷ They also targeted elementary schools in the hope that focusing on these types of courses "[would] contribute directly to the production and conservation of food" among younger students.¹⁶⁸ Despite the heavy emphasis on such schooling in 1917 and 1918, it is important to note that vocational

¹⁶⁵ James E. Gilley, "Daviness County School Notes," *Daviness County Democrat*, December 21, 1917, p. 4.

¹⁶⁶ "Teachers Pledge to Support the State: Indiana Educators Agree to Their Duty to Government in Time of Emergency," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(13) (November 9, 1917), 8.

¹⁶⁷ "Plan to Provide Indiana's Quota," *Rushville Daily Republican*, September 11, 1917, p. 3.

¹⁶⁸ "For Co-Operation During War Crisis," *Indianapolis News*, May 24, 1917, p. 3.

education did not originate during the war period.¹⁶⁹ In fact, manual training courses were added to the curriculum of many of the state's schools in the late 1800s in the hopes that they would lead to a richer education for students.¹⁷⁰ Manual training offered a way to educate not only the mind, but the hands and body as well. Students learned practical processes, such as how to tend a garden, carve items in woodshop classes, or sew – processes that would help them throughout their lives, but that coincidentally would be of great assistance to the country during the war. An examination of the courses of study for Indiana's high schools for 1915-1916 and 1918 illustrates that vocational education did begin prior to American involvement in the conflict. Both manuals addressed the need for agricultural, industrial, and domestic science work in Indiana's schools and there can be no doubting the significance of this work in the war period or the emphasis members of the Educational Section placed on these fields.¹⁷¹

The same could be said for the section's endorsement and support for physical education and athletic training in the schools.¹⁷² Members encouraged healthy lifestyles among students, wanting them in shape mentally, physically, and emotionally. Again, not

¹⁶⁹ Many states had introduced vocational training in the schools in the decades preceding WWI. The year 1917 did stand out though due to the passing of the Smith-Hughes Act (also known as the Vocational Act of 1917). This act helped establish federal support for vocational education and "provide[d] for cooperation with the States in the promotion of such education...." The federal government's involvement in the classrooms as a result of this statute, as well as the state councils' work in the schools, represented a significant change in education in the country, which had traditionally been handled at the local level. For more information on the Smith-Hughes Act, see "Smith-Hughes Act of 1917," Public Law No. 347, 64th Cong., 2nd sess. at <http://www.cals.ncsu.edu/agexed/aee501/smithhugh.html>.

¹⁷⁰ Reese, *Hoosier Schools Past and Present*, 43.

¹⁷¹ Charles A. Greathouse, *Uniform Course of Study for the High Schools of Indiana, 1915-1916* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, 1915); Horace Ellis and Oscar H. Williams, *Manual with Training Courses of Study for the High Schools of Indiana, 1918* (Indianapolis: Department of Public Instruction), accessed through HathiTrust Digital Library at <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?view=image;size=100;id=mdp.39015076533044;page=root;seq=3;num=1> (accessed April 26, 2012).

¹⁷² "For Co-Operation During War Crisis," 3.

only would this help improve society for the future, but in case the war demanded more young men, Indiana would be prepared to deliver them. No one expressed their opinions on the matter more soundly than Ellis himself when, according to the *Indiana Bulletin*, he argued that citizens could not let children be unprepared “for the sake of a little arithmetic.”¹⁷³ Ellis’ beliefs shed light on the mentality of the Educational Section. Wartime mobilization was the top priority. If school curricula had to be adjusted to help children prepare for the conflict, then so be it.

At the request of the Educational Section and the state’s administrators, teachers adapted core subjects to more properly suit the conflict. In Michigan City, for example, teachers gave credit in their English classes for essays written on the United States Boys’ Working Reserve.¹⁷⁴ Elsewhere in the state, instructors modified geography and history courses to study the European borders, the founding of the United States, the atrocities committed by the Germans, and the general attitude of the United States with regard to the war.¹⁷⁵ Recalling their experiences during WWI in an article published in the *Indianapolis Star* in 1977, four women briefly described how their classes changed because of the fighting. As students at Marshall High School in Parke County, they and their peers continued to study traditional subjects, but the war took a front seat and became a major focus in their classes. As one of the women stated, “charting war

¹⁷³ “Educators Awake to Needs of Times: Army Will Be Supplied with Specially Trained Men as Needed,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(5) (September 14, 1917), 3.

¹⁷⁴ “Patriotism in Indiana,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(16) (November 30, 1917), 5.

¹⁷⁵ “For Co-Operation During War Crisis,” 3.

activities on maps in [our] classrooms was part of [our] daily assignments.”¹⁷⁶ Indiana’s high schools were not the only educational institutions to see changes, as history courses at colleges and universities throughout the state quickly adapted to meet the demands of the war. Many introduced new industrial courses and programs in telegraphy.¹⁷⁷ Indiana University even began offering classes dedicated solely to the topic of civilian relief.¹⁷⁸

The Educational Section was proud of the initiative it took early on in mobilizing the schools and Ellis did not hesitate to boast about this to Chairman Hays or representatives from the Council of National of Defense. Having “declared that the whole enginery of [Indiana’s] schools shall be operated this year [1917] to the successful prosecution of the war,” he had set off to visit the state’s schools to try to rally principals and staff members to the cause at the onset of the new academic year.¹⁷⁹ Excited by the passion he saw in Indiana’s educators, he and the Educational Section worked to determine further ways in which they could maximize the inculcation of patriotism within Indiana’s students in the classroom. The result of these efforts was the creation of the *War Service Textbook for Indiana High Schools*.

¹⁷⁶ “Devil Dogs Hold Reunion: 5 Hoosier Cousins Helped ‘Wallopp the Kaiser,’” *Indianapolis Star*, July 17, 1977, in “Indiana History - World War I” Newspaper Clipping File, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis.

¹⁷⁷ Telegraphy courses became immensely popular and important during the Great War. Records of the Educational Section and articles in the *Indiana Bulletin* reference the country’s need for men trained in telegraphy. See “Educators Awake to Needs of Times: Army Will Be Supplied with Specially Trained Men as Needed,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(5) (September 14, 1917), 1, and “Army Telegraphers Asked by Uncle Sam,” *Fort Wayne Sentinel*, September 7, 1917, p. 24, for further information. According to correspondence from the Signal Corps to Will H. Hays, Indiana was asked to supply 900 telegraphers through the state’s educational institutions.

¹⁷⁸ Horace Ellis, letter to Will H. Hays, “Meeting of the Educational Section of the State Council of Defense,” October 30, 1917, Indiana State Council of Defense Collection, Educational Section, Accession 1921015, vol. 1 (hereafter cited as E.S. with appropriate volume number).

¹⁷⁹ Horace Ellis, letter to Will H. Hays, September 10, 1917, E.S., vol. 1.

The War Service Textbook

The publication of the *War Service Textbook* was among the most notable, most debated, and most highly praised parts of all the work in which the Educational Section of the Indiana State Council of Defense took part. Prepared as a tool that students could use to equip themselves mentally, physically, and morally for dealing with the war, the textbook illustrates the extent to which the Educational Section intended to influence public instruction and sway public opinion towards support for American participation in the conflict.¹⁸⁰ Members of the section voted to endorse the proposal for the textbook as early as September 10, 1917, and just two days later the state council “heartily endorse[d]” the section’s recommendation.¹⁸¹ Following suit, the State Board of Education, also under recommendation from the Educational Section, authorized the introduction of the textbook in all of the state’s high schools at its meeting on September 21, 1917.¹⁸² Teachers did not have much of a choice in deciding whether or not to use it when it was finally released in 1918. Ellis believed that the book would help improve the success of the “voluntary” war measures that the federal and state governments deemed necessary during the conflict. He and his fellow committee members had introduced it into the classrooms “for compulsory study” and, working with the State Board of Education, they ordered faculty to treat it “as a regular school subject.”¹⁸³ This meant

¹⁸⁰ Horace Ellis and Ellis U. Graff, eds., *War Service Textbook for Indiana High Schools* (Indianapolis: Indiana State Council of Defense, 1918).

¹⁸¹ “Endorsement of War Textbook,” September 21, 1917, E.S., vol. 2.

¹⁸² Horace Ellis, circular to Principals of all High Schools in Indiana, undated, E.S., vol. 1.

¹⁸³ Horace Ellis, circular to Indiana Superintendents, March 2, 1918, Accession 1921048. It is unclear from the records of the Educational Section what courses or lessons may have been eliminated or scaled back in order to accommodate teaching from the *War Service Textbook*.

using the book in at least two recitation periods every week and even testing students on its contents.¹⁸⁴

If there were any concern or confusion about how teachers should go about educating students on the war, the textbook relieved it. As Indiana writer George Ade commented in an early section of the publication, the state council believed that if citizens knew about the organization's goals and reasons for existence they might be better able to render service during the war.¹⁸⁵ The book provided a solution to this problem by informing students about the work of the state councils and what they could do to assist their cause. Early chapters focused on President Woodrow Wilson's address before Congress in April of 1917, Governor Goodrich's address to soldiers at Fort Benjamin Harrison near Indianapolis, speeches before the Indiana State Council of Defense, and descriptions of the work and structure of the state council and its respective county, township, and high school-level councils. Students learned about the magnitude of the crisis confronting the nation and the world at large and about the various organizations and government bodies that existed or were created to help prepare the United States for war. Additional parts of the book gave students further insights into food production, wartime savings, industrial and farm labor, and the specific relationship between the schools and the war. Key to all of this was the notion that the "school must not be neglected" for "the future of the United States depend[ed] upon the citizen of tomorrow being an educated and enlightened man."¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Horace Ellis, circular to Principals of all High Schools in Indiana, undated, E.S., vol. 1.

¹⁸⁵ Ellis and Graff, *War Service Textbook for Indiana High Schools*, 31.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.

Stressing the connection between education and citizenship, the textbook showed that schools could do their greatest part by doing exactly what they were created to do: educate and train individuals for the future. The future for those living in 1917 and 1918 would deal with issues of peace, as citizens would have to focus their efforts on rebuilding international relations to avoid another conflict like the one in which the world was involved at the time. Schools and resources like the textbook could be used to properly prepare people for these tasks by showing students how the United States became involved in the war and the ways in which those in the country worked together to fight it.

Despite the attention paid to the *War Service Textbook* and its contents, it was a modest volume. It measured only 8" x 5.5" and comprised just over 150 pages. Still, the state council intended for it to be the go-to source for Indiana's schoolchildren as they found their place in wartime society and in February 1918, 100,000 copies were distributed to the state's schools.¹⁸⁷ An address within its pages from Governor Goodrich alerted students to the fact that "no nation ever won a war waged in a half-hearted way." Ex-Governor Samuel Ralston also seemed to appeal to their service, stating that "all we have must be laid on the altar with willing hearts and brave minds. Unless we do this we fall short in our citizenship."¹⁸⁸ Similar speeches abounded throughout the textbook as the state council worked to entice students to assist in the war effort.

¹⁸⁷ "War Service Text Books Distributed: Indiana High Schools Receive Volume Dealing with Voluntary Activities from Authorities," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(28) (February 22, 1918), 4; "High School War Book Completed," *Indianapolis Star*, February 8, 1918, p. 9.

¹⁸⁸ Ellis and Graff, *War Service Textbook for Indiana High Schools*, 24, 27.

The records of the Indiana State Council of Defense contain innumerable references to the council as a “trailblazer” and a “model” for “the emulation and study of other state councils.”¹⁸⁹ According to an unpublished study by the Indiana Historical Bureau, the council “took the lead among the states in effectively organizing and advancing all war activities in full accord with the program laid down at Washington.”¹⁹⁰ One could of course debate the extent to which this statement was true. After all, it is plausible that states overly praised themselves and the work that they did to show that they were fully committed to the country and American ideals. Nevertheless, the Indiana Historical Bureau’s statement does seem to be supported at least in part by the Educational Section’s contribution of the *War Service Textbook*.

According to the National Bulletin of the U.S. Boys’ Working Reserve, “among the states of the Union, Indiana [was] the first to compile a distinctively war service text book whose subject-matter [was] compulsory in every high school of the state.”¹⁹¹ Praised by many of Indiana’s superintendents for all that it offered in terms of educating their staff and students on the war, news of the book quickly spread to members of the Council of National Defense in Washington, D.C., and members of other state councils across the nation. In Denver, Federal State Director of the U.S. Boys’ Working Reserve Joseph Jaffa was so excited by the book and the mine of information it included, he wrote to the Indiana State Council of Defense, saying “I am going to steal about half of your

¹⁸⁹ “History of the Indiana State Council of Defense,” Indiana Historical Bureau, 1931, Indiana State Council of Defense Collection, Folder 3 of 16, Accession 1921057.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ “National Bulletin Lauds Text Books,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(32) (March 22, 1918), 8.

ideas and I know you will forgive me for it.”¹⁹² In Chicago, Robert Childs, Special Assistant to the Attorney General, commented that he “hope[d] every state [made] such an effort to instruct young people.”¹⁹³ Federal State Director Jonathan Wagner of New Mexico also praised the book, asking for 100-200 copies to use for publicity purposes.¹⁹⁴ Even Herbert Hoover, head of the U.S. Food Administration, was excited by the publication and wrote to the State Council requesting a copy.¹⁹⁵ These comments and requests were but a few of the many positive words people across the nation had to say about the textbook. If the members of Indiana’s Educational Section intended to show their commitment to mobilizing the state’s schools, staff, and students towards the war, they had succeeded. The *War Service Textbook* was the embodiment of everything they had hoped to achieve and they used it to advance the American cause.¹⁹⁶ Contributing to adjustments in the normal school curricula, the book forced teachers to focus on the conflict being fought at home and abroad.

Despite all of the praise the Educational Section received on account of the book, however, one cannot overlook the fact that some continued to call into question the work

¹⁹² Joseph S. Jaffa, Federal State Director of the U.S. Boys’ Working Reserve, Denver, CO, letter, February 23, 1918, in “War Service Textbook for Indiana High Schools Contemplated,” undated, E.S., vol. 2. Jaffa’s comment is one among several excerpts that appear in the cited document from letters written by individuals commending the textbook.

¹⁹³ Robert W. Childs, Special Assistant to the Attorney General, Chicago, IL, letter, April 23, 1918, in “War Service Textbook for Indiana High Schools Contemplated.”

¹⁹⁴ Jonathan H. Wagner, Federal State Director of the U.S. Boys’ Working Reserve, Santa Fe, NM, letter, February 26, 1918, in “War Service Textbook for Indiana High Schools Contemplated.”

¹⁹⁵ “25th Meeting,” November 12, 1917, E.S. 1921015, vol. 2.

¹⁹⁶ “Endorsement of War Service Textbook,” September 21, 1917. The State Council recognized the textbook as a propaganda piece, stating during its vote to approve the resolution for the book that “it is so extremely necessary to extend all propaganda” and that it would help give publicity to the types of war activities with which Hoosiers should get involved.

being undertaken in the state's schools by the Indiana State Council of Defense. Just as teachers and superintendents complained about the innumerable appeals they received from wartime organizations (see Chapter 2), so, too, did some individuals protest against the publication and use of the textbook and the intrusion that they thought it caused in terms of educational instruction. To what extent should the Educational Section have been allowed to alter curricula in the state? At what point did it become too much?

There is no exact answer to either of the questions above, but that does not mean that the historical record is silent on these issues. In an editorial published in the *Indianapolis News* in early December 1917, American journalist Horace H. Herr openly questioned the value of a publication such as the *War Service Textbook*. While recognizing the need to teach a “healthy nationalism” throughout the country’s schools, Herr also suggested the possibility that the book might be little more than a piece of political propaganda, eventually doing more harm than good.¹⁹⁷ More than anything else, he asked why the Educational Section and State Board of Education in Indiana felt the need to prepare such a book when organizations at the national level, namely the Committee on Public Information, had already published pieces on why the United States was in the war and how its citizens should help fight in it. Herr feared that the book would end up being “sectional” and “provincial” and worried about what would happen if other states followed Indiana’s lead and produced their own copies, each tailored to their own laws and region’s customs. Rather than unifying the schools and helping educate students and teachers alike on the war and the many ways in which they could assist in

¹⁹⁷ Horace H. Herr, letter to the editor, “Doubts Desirability of Indiana War Book,” *Indianapolis News*, December 1, 1917, p. 17.

combating it, according to Herr the book actually threatened to divide groups around the country.¹⁹⁸

Herr was not the only person to oppose plans for the textbook, as even a member of the Educational Section took issue with the project. Worried about overstepping the organization's bounds, committee member J.L. Keach hesitated in agreeing to the book, remaining skeptical about how valuable it could be. On one level, he simply did not want the Educational Section to endorse such an expense at the time, as total costs for copies of the book totaled \$10,000. With no state appropriation for the council, funds to cover the book would have to be borrowed. More than the reservations about expenses though, he feared that getting involved in such an endeavor would only open up the Indiana State Council of Defense to criticism as people questioned the political agenda and motives for the publication.¹⁹⁹ Although Keach did eventually agree to the book, he remained a vocal critic throughout many the meetings and deliberations about it, constantly inquiring about its contents, costs, and how it would and should be used in the classrooms.²⁰⁰

Both the praise for and opposition to the *War Service Textbook* are important to note because they help shed light on the magnitude of the work that sections of the Indiana State Council of Defense became involved in during the war. Using the book was

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ W. M. Madden and C.T. Blizzard, "State Board of Accounts of Indiana: Department of Inspection and Supervision of Public Offices," *Examiner's Report*, April 29, 1918, E.S., vol. 2.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.; "26th Meeting," November 28, 1917, E.S., vol. 2; *Year Book of the State of Indiana for the Year 1917* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, 1918), 839; "History of the Indiana State Council of Defense," Folders 2 and 7 of 16. The *Year Book* lists J.L. Keach as a commission merchant in Indianapolis and includes him as a member of the Indiana State Council of Defense. In a history of the council, Keach criticizes the organization early on, stating that members were acting like children and getting nothing accomplished. Besides the publication of the textbook, he also questioned releasing school boys to do wartime service with the U.S. Boys' Working Reserve. For a positive look at Keach's work in the state, see "James L. Keach: A Career with a Lesson to Rich and Poor," *Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette*, June 8, 1919, p. 4.

considered a requirement, not an option, and it showed the amount of power the Educational Section tried to exert throughout Indiana's schools. Moreover, it highlights the extent to which the war invaded Indiana's classrooms and led to specific changes in curriculum at the time.

A Common Enemy. A Common Language.

If there remained any doubt about how to make the schools a battlefield for American democracy and inculcate students with patriotic fervor, the Educational Section and State Board of Education made their thoughts on the matter well-known through their measures regarding the German Americans of the state. Constituting the "largest and most influential minority racial group" in Indiana, German Americans came under severe attack during the war and constantly found their loyalties in question.²⁰¹ Many regarded them as a direct threat to national security and considered their activities in schools, clubs, and churches to be "part of the organized German propaganda to sweep the United States into the pan-German movement of the Kaiser and his Junker Government."²⁰² In order to combat this supposed internal enemy, the Educational Section tried to strike it down by removing the German language from Indiana's classrooms and ensuring that English was the dominant language of the state.

To understand both why and how the Educational Section sought to eliminate German from the schools and mobilize Indiana's teachers and students into its own quasi-

²⁰¹ Cedric Cummins, *Indiana Public Opinion and the World War, 1914-1917* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1945), 45; Clifton J. Phillips. *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau & Indiana Historical Society, 1968), 588.

²⁰² Carl Wittke, *German-Americans and the World War (With Special Emphasis on Ohio's German-Language Press)* (Columbus: Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society, 1936), 4.

army against the enemy, it is essential to begin by considering German Americans' experiences in Indiana prior to the war. Without this context and a comprehension of the mindset of those in the state, one fails to grasp how the Educational Section was able to do what it hoped and promote the war.

Far from being hated in Indiana, German Americans actually thrived in the state before fighting broke out in Europe in 1914. Some areas were so densely populated with them that English actually took a backseat to the German language.²⁰³ As Paul J. Ramsey notes in "The War against German-American Culture," those living in Indianapolis successfully established German-American churches, societies, and newspapers throughout the city in the latter half of the nineteenth century, while at the same time assuming key positions in the public schools. Schools provided the means by which the German language could continue in the state and the nation at large and beginning as early as 1868, Indianapolis's high school started teaching it in the classroom. Just one year later, the state passed a law requiring German-language instruction to be offered in Indiana's public schools. In 1907, only seven years before the beginning of WWI, Indiana passed another state law mandating that high school students wishing to take a foreign language had to be offered either German or Latin.²⁰⁴

Ramsey's article speaks to the fact that before the war, Germans were in fairly good standing throughout Indiana. Not only was the German language being spread

²⁰³ James H. Madison, *The Indiana Way: A State History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 173.

²⁰⁴ Paul J. Ramsey, "The War against German-American Culture: The Removal of German Language Instruction from the Indianapolis Schools, 1917-1919," *Indiana Magazine of History* 98 (December 2002): 290-292. See also Frances H. Ellis, "Historical Account of German Instruction in the Public Schools of Indianapolis, 1869-1919," *Indiana Magazine of History* 50 (June 1954): 119-138. The *Indiana Magazine of History* published the second and third parts of Ellis's article in September 1954 and December 1954.

amongst students, but so, too, was knowledge of the country's traditions and customs as the schools worked to get students in touch with German culture.²⁰⁵ All this quickly began to change with the onset of WWI. Following the lead of others across the country, most people in Indiana immediately sided with the Allied cause, rejecting the militaristic nature they saw in those in Germany and Austria.²⁰⁶ As the conflict dragged on and news of German brutalities abroad continued to spread, German Americans found themselves in an increasingly precarious position. Despite the fact that many had been born in the United States or had at least lived in the country for much of their lives, these men and women were nonetheless regarded as more German than American and some citizens began a crusade against them, their culture, and their language.

The Educational Section of the Indiana State Council of Defense played a significant role in this crusade as it sought to diminish German influences in the classrooms. Members of the section believed that winning the war required instilling both teachers and students alike with patriotic values and messages. Thus, promoting the German language and German culture in the state's schools, as had been the custom prior to the war, did not sit well with them. As has already been referenced, the section placed great emphasis on the "Star-Spangled Banner" and the Pledge of Allegiance during the period. Members also urged teachers to pack words like "America" into their daily lessons in the hopes that all of these actions would help unite the student body in supporting the American cause.²⁰⁷ What better way to promote unity, though, than to

²⁰⁵ Ramsey, "The War against German-American Culture," 293.

²⁰⁶ Cummins, *Indiana Public Opinion and the World War*, 9-10.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 186.

preach of a common enemy? In the eyes of Ellis and his fellow committee members (as well as many other citizens throughout the country), German Americans represented one of the country's chief adversaries during the war and they could not go unchecked.

Playing on citizens' fears, the State Council portrayed many German Americans as the antithesis of the loyal, patriotic individuals fighting for the American cause. Propaganda posters depicted their relatives across the Atlantic as barbarians and beasts who murdered people without remorse. Germans living in Indiana at the time or elsewhere throughout the country were quickly associated with them and their violent tactics. Likewise, suspicions also arose that the state's German-American population might be feeding secret information overseas and trying to cripple American efforts in the war. Responding to these fears, Michael Foley, chairman of the Indiana State Council of Defense after Will Hays's departure, made it clear that there was "no room in Indiana for the disloyal citizen" and that he was committed to prosecuting those deemed unfaithful to the American cause.²⁰⁸

Fear has always been a powerful factor in motivating individuals to act in a certain way. It has the ability to transform us and cloud our minds from compassion and understanding. Friends and neighbors that we may have known all our lives could become our enemies overnight as we call into question their loyalties. This was particularly true during WWI as fears abounded throughout the United States and nativist feelings intensified.²⁰⁹ Even German foods popular in the United States saw their names

²⁰⁸ "No Room in Indiana for Disloyal Citizen Says Chairman of Defense Council," *Indiana Bulletin*, 1(33) (March 29, 1918), 1.

²⁰⁹ David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 259.

altered during the war so that it would not appear as though citizens supported the enemy. Buildings and whole towns changed their names in some instances to remove German ties.²¹⁰

While the records of the Educational Section of the Indiana State Council of Defense reflect the attention placed on the positives of patriotism, there can be no denying its negative potential. Rallying support for the conflict not only meant uniting to advocate American ideals, but also uniting against almost any and all things German. Speeches and propaganda pieces led many to believe that “Americans had to loathe Germany in order for the nation to be fully mobilized.”²¹¹ As Paul Ramsey commented, it was a “perverse form of patriotism” that existed during the war.²¹² This is not to say that all those who promoted the American cause were wrong in doing so or that all displays of patriotism were corrupt and steeped in hatred. Still, it is imperative to note the extremes the country went to for Americanization and victory in the war.

Indiana’s students witnessed both sides of the patriotism coin as the Educational Section encouraged them to take part in wartime activities while at the same time warning them of the enemy that confronted the nation. Public events such as the

²¹⁰ “‘Pershing’ Changes Town’s Name,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(2) (August 24, 1917), 7; George Theodore Probst, *The Germans in Indianapolis, 1840-1918* (Indianapolis: German-American Center and Indiana German Heritage Society, 1989), 152-153. The *Indiana Bulletin* reports that “East Germantown” in Indiana changed its name to “Pershing” in honor of John J. Pershing, who was commander of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF). Additionally, Probst writes how “Das Deutsche Haus” became the “Athenaeum” and how the “German lettering on the front of Trinity Lutheran was changed to English.”

²¹¹ Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 244.

²¹² Ramsey, “The War against German-American Culture,” 293. See also David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 64-92, and Ronald Schaffer, *America in the Great War: The Rise of the War Welfare State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 6-30, for information on the fears common during the period and examples of wartime hysteria and extreme nativism.

Americanization Day Parade of July 4, 1918, organized by the Marion County Council of Defense, encouraged all loyal citizens to gather together to show their commitment to the United States; publications like the *Indiana Bulletin* ran stories about the dangers of the German language and demanded that citizens “be loyal or get out;” and the *War Service Textbook* even dedicated three pages to a section entitled “Our Foe” before launching into the types of work the schools could do in the war.²¹³ The message rang loud and clear: America was at war and it needed all of its citizens committed to the cause and completely devoted to the nation if it was going to succeed. Ellis reaffirmed this message after vilifying the United States’ adversaries and stating that “as State Superintendent of Public Instruction for Indiana, I appeal to you, the superintendents, teachers, school officers, and high school pupils, to ‘lend a hand’ in this hour of our nation’s need.”²¹⁴

Despite its knowledge of the supposed German problem in the country, the Council of National Defense made no definitive action or announcements regarding how the state councils of defense should handle the issue. Thus, each one was free to adopt its own policies, especially with regard to the teaching and use of German in the schools.²¹⁵ Many took a similar path, promoting American democracy while putting measures in place to combat what they perceived to be the great German-American threat. In Indiana, the Educational Section made its stance on the issue well known by prohibiting German from being taught in the state’s grade schools. Fearful that the language might leave the

²¹³ Bodenhamer and Barrows, *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, 259; John Bodnar, “Commemorative Activity in Twentieth-Century Indianapolis: The Invention of Civic Traditions,” *Indiana Magazine of History* 87 (March 1991): 8; “Be Loyal or Get Out,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(6) (September 21, 1917), 9; Ellis and Graff, “Our Foe,” in *War Service Textbook for Indiana High Schools*, 37-39.

²¹⁴ Ellis and Graff, *War Service Textbook for Indiana High Schools*, 39.

²¹⁵ Arthur W. Brady, Allen B. Philputt, George Ade, to the Indiana State Council of Defense, “Teaching and Using German Language,” undated, E.S., vol. 3.

wrong impression on Indiana's youth, members encouraged principals and staff of all elementary schools to eliminate it and recommended that the statute of 1869 requiring German to be taught be repealed at the following session of the legislature.²¹⁶ Their goal was to "make the American language the dominant language in Indiana and in the nation" and ensure that younger students were not corrupted by German sentiments.²¹⁷ Despite this measure, the section nevertheless recognized that learning German could also be valuable in understanding and combating propaganda released by their wartime enemy.²¹⁸ As a result, it suggested that high school and college students still have the opportunity to study the language if they so wished. However, members made it clear that German should be attacked whenever it was seen as being forced upon students and that any German instruction that did occur "should be given only by teachers who are thoroughly American in spirit."²¹⁹

Whereas some had complained about the measures enacted by the Educational Section in welcoming wartime organizations into the schools and forcing changes in curricula, responses towards measures related to the German language remained highly positive for the most part. Many superintendents, principals, and teachers were eager to remove it from their schools. Writing to the State Council in September of 1918, H.E. Stahl, superintendent of Cayuga Public Schools, said that even though it was permitted, German had been dropped from the high school curriculum altogether and that 75 percent

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Chairman, letter to J.H. Holtman, Seymour, Indiana, October 9, 1918, E.S., vol. 3.

²¹⁸ Brady, Philputt, Ade, to the Indiana State Council of Defense.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

of the high school students there were studying French that year.²²⁰ Another letter to the State Council from Seymour, Indiana, stated that teaching German was “unnecessary” and that it was “no time for anyone to foster, encourage, or attempt to force the children of America to take up the study of a language taken up by the enemy.”²²¹ Instead, many believed that English should be promoted more now than ever before. This was the case in Bartholomew County where pastors and teachers of the German Lutheran Church declared that the “teaching of English in the schools should be second only to the teaching of the Bible.”²²² This statement is interesting not only because of how drastic it seems, but also because of the group of people who made it. Even though they were teaching at a place rife with German culture, the pastors and teachers recognized the need for loyalty to the United States. They were not alone and throughout the war years many German Americans tried to portray themselves as overly patriotic so as not to incur attacks from citizens who might have otherwise seen them as traitors to the cause and an enemy to combat. Many schools of the state followed others’ leads and petitioned to have German dropped from the curriculum. More telling than any other example might have been the views of members of the State Association of History Teachers in Indiana, who believed “there should be in America but ONE nationality, ONE government, ONE flag, ONE allegiance, ONE language.”²²³

²²⁰ H.E. Stahl, letter to the Indiana State Council of Defense, September 21, 1918, E.S., vol. 3.

²²¹ The People of Seymour, Indiana, letter to M.E. Foley, September 12, 1918, E.S., vol. 3.

²²² “Patriotism in Indiana,” *Indiana Bulletin* 1(35) (April 12, 1918), 2.

²²³ “Expression of the State Association of History Teachers of Indiana,” April 13, 1918, E.S., vol. 1.

This hyper-patriotism was not unique to Indiana, as groups and individuals in all parts of the country denounced the German language and sought to stamp it out of schools, churches, newspapers, and organizations. Again, the state councils of defense were often at the forefront of this work. Paranoid that the use of the German language would threaten national unity and patriotic fervor and that German Americans would ultimately betray American trust, members of the councils were determined to keep a watchful eye on them. Writing about the Missouri Council of Defense, Lawrence Christensen shows that not only did its members also prohibit teaching German in Missouri's public schools, but in some counties, local councils even tried to prevent it from being spoken over the telephone.²²⁴ German Americans fared no better in Nebraska, where the State Council immediately "equated disloyalty with the continued use of German" and believed that "a proper patriotic spirit could never be secured as long as the German language continued to be widely used."²²⁵ By taking strides to downplay and sometimes completely eliminate German influences in the schools, the state councils of defense hoped to better unify students and the nation as a whole towards the American cause in the war.

In Indiana, the Educational Section's efforts to downplay German influences extended beyond removing the language from elementary schools, to also rooting out any and all books that promoted Germany or its position in WWI. Ellis sent many letters to Indiana's county superintendents in the hopes that such texts would immediately be

²²⁴ Lawrence Christensen, "Missouri's Responses to World War I: The Missouri Council of Defense," *Midwest Review* 12 (March 1990): 38.

²²⁵ Robert Manley, "Language, Loyalty, and Liberty: The Nebraska State Council of Defense and the Lutheran Churches, 1917-1918," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 37 (April 1964): 8-9.

removed from school bookshelves, viewing them as propaganda pieces that might confuse younger students. The list of banned material grew throughout the course of the war, with even a handful of school textbooks coming under question due to sections dedicated to German topics. In particular, Ellis ordered faculty members to examine their copies of the *Third Reader*, part of the *Child Classics* series used by students and teachers throughout Indiana, and see to it that those publications containing the poem “Kaiserblumen” were not viewed by school children.²²⁶ Also frequently cited among the banned material were copies of the *Voyage of the Deutschland*. These efforts to remove literature promoting Germany or German subjects represented another means by which members of the Educational Section worked to promote the war and, more specifically, promote patriotic sentiments among students within Indiana.²²⁷

In assessing students’ responses to the banned literature, one need only look at the *Indiana Bulletin*. Several articles describe Indiana’s students helping gather all German books, maps, and other literature in their respective schools, marching to their commons, and applying a match to them. In Dekalb County the students burned over 1,000 publications, and in Vigo County students at Wiley High School burned over 2,000 such pieces. At Napoleon High School in Decatur County, reports show that a large crowd

²²⁶ Horace Ellis, circular to Indiana County Superintendents, 19 September 1918, Accession 1921048; Georgia Alexander and Grace Alexander, *Child Classics: Third Reader* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company Publishers, 1909).

²²⁷ The *Indiana Bulletin* includes numerous articles listing many of the books that were banned throughout the war.

gathered at the school and sang patriotic songs as they watched their bonfire of books burn before them.²²⁸

Even schools at the university level tried to reduce the number of publications they had in their holdings detailing Germany's position in the war. Following suggestions from the Educational Section, they clearly stated that their goal was "to encourage the use of books showing the war from the United States' standpoint."²²⁹ These types of measures are not surprising when one considers both state and national sentiments with regard to Germany during WWI. In many areas of the nation, German Americans experienced outright persecution because of their ethnicity, regardless of how long they had been living in the United States.²³⁰ While such violence tended not to affect the schools, it nonetheless took on other forms, namely through the removal of the German language and suppression of German culture. In Indiana, these actions were enhanced by efforts to promote classes that examined reported German atrocities overseas and studied why the country was not a democracy.²³¹ The Educational Section was determined to indoctrinate Indiana's students with patriotic sentiments, and German influences, no matter how subtle, stood as a threat to the organization's goals. By removing the language from many of the state's schools and focusing public opinion on German

²²⁸ "Patriotism in Indiana," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(40) (May 17, 1918), 2; "Patriotism in Indiana," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(41) (May 24, 1918), 2; "Patriotism in Indiana," *Indiana Bulletin* 1(42) (May 31, 1918), 2.

²²⁹ William Hepburn, Librarian, Purdue University, letter to Will H. Hays, February 7, 1918, E.S., vol. 1.

²³⁰ See James H. Fowler, "Tar and Feather Patriotism: The Suppression of Dissent in Oklahoma During World War I," *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 56 (1978): 409-430, for information and examples of some of the violence German Americans, traitors, and slackers encountered as a result of the work of the Oklahoma State Council of Defense and its county councils of defense.

²³¹ H.E. Stahl, Superintendent of Schools, Cayuga Public Schools, letter to Indiana State Council of Defense, September 21, 1918, E.S., vol. 3.

brutality, members hoped to rally students to the American cause and, ultimately, encourage them to become involved in wartime service to defeat the enemy.

A New Army is Born

In reflecting on the work of the Educational Section of the Indiana State Council of Defense, one finds that the organization fully committed itself to putting Indiana's schools on a wartime footing. Rather than waiting on orders from the Council of National Defense or from Governor Goodrich, members frequently acted on their own initiative. They recognized the potential for getting students and teachers involved in mobilization efforts on the home front and devoted themselves to capitalizing on it. True, physical combat may have been restricted to overseas, but winning the war necessitated uniting all those in the United States towards effective wartime service. Students and teachers were not to be excluded from this effort, as they represented able bodies who could help with food production and conservation, clothing drives, Liberty Bond campaigns, and promotion of American values.

Writing about the state councils of defense in 1917, Frederick Lewis Allen acknowledged that "they [were] merely one part of our war-time government, not perhaps the most vital. But surely they are one of the most significant."²³² Looking at the efforts exerted by the Educational Section of the Indiana State Council of Defense, one can easily make an argument supporting Allen's claim. Through their cooperation with wartime organizations, their publication of the *War Service Textbook*, and their efforts to unite Americans in the face of the perceived German threat, members of the Educational

²³² Frederick Lewis Allen, "The Forty-Eight Defenders: A Study of the Work of the State Councils of Defense," *Century* 95 (December 1917): 266.

Section made schools both a training ground and battlefield for democracy. They carried out war work wherever possible and assisted in the mobilization process from the very onset of America's entry into the war. If the nation needed volunteers to provide service, it had a host of them thanks to Horace Ellis and his fellow committee members. Because of the work of these men and women, a new army had been created to assist the country. Composed of Indiana's youth, this army was capable of, and urged to provide practical, hands-on work that would assist the nation in its time of need. More importantly, though, it was educated on the significance of loyalty, patriotism, and efficient citizenship. The Educational Section made it clear that students would provide the greatest service by staying in school and advancing their education. By focusing on the war during their classes, learning about its causes, and becoming knowledgeable about the threats posed to the country, students would understand the importance of rendering aid both during the conflict and in the years to come. And, hopefully, they would be ready to stand united should war come again.

Conclusion

When the United States entered World War I in April 1917, many Americans quickly rallied to support the nation. Voluntarism soon became indispensable in the conflict, as countless groups and individuals offered their time, money, and energy to mobilize the country. As this study has illustrated, the state councils of defense represented a substantial, though largely overlooked segment of this voluntary effort. Even today, historians have continued to question the usefulness of these organizations, with many ignoring the councils altogether in their analyses of the American home front during the war. However, if the work of the Educational Section of the Indiana State Council of Defense is any indication, these organizations were extremely active in 1917 and 1918 and played a noteworthy role in preparing citizens for the conflict. Male or female, adult or child, most Americans were pulled into the war effort in one way or another. The state councils of defense significantly helped in this regard by reaching down into local communities and encouraging individuals to become involved in wartime programs and activities. Looking back today, one can argue that their work represented the embodiment of a “total war” philosophy. Everyone was expected to do their part in WWI, whether they were fighting overseas or working on the home front. The state councils, through their various sections and county, township, and school-level councils, made sure that this was the case. No segment of the population would be left to idleness or slacking.²³³

²³³ Robert Manley, “Language, Loyalty, and Liberty: The Nebraska State Council of Defense and the Lutheran Churches, 1917-1918,” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 37 (April 1964): 1; *Indiana in the War: An Address by Hon. Edward C. Toner of Anderson*, October 25, 1918, p. 20, in “Indiana History – World War I” Newspaper Clipping File.

Indiana's Educational Section did its part by targeting Hoosier students, teachers, and administrators. By studying this particular section, readers gain a better understanding not only of what the state's schools did to help with mobilization, but even more importantly, how the American home front as a whole operated during wartime. Working at the most local levels, the state councils and their respective sections brought messages of inclusion to communities and helped pull society together to fight the war. The Educational Section was no different and it hoped that its influence would spread throughout individual counties, states, and even the nation at large. It did not have to go far to reach its target audience. It already had a captive one in students who regularly attended school and could be educated about the conflict on a daily basis. Moreover, children could then take this information home and share it with their parents, extending the section's reach as it worked towards complete mobilization.

Members of the Educational Section, like so many others throughout the nation, championed the cause of patriotism as they sought volunteers for the war effort. What better way to secure assistance from the public than to speak of the grandeur of the country and the need for loyal citizens to protect it from its enemies? If individuals were not already self-motivated to join the cause and help the United States prepare for the conflict, many felt compelled to do so and contributed their services after hearing from the Educational Section. Correspondence from Horace Ellis and other members of the organization to county and city superintendents emphasized the responsibility teachers and students had in the war. While members lacked any formal authority that would have allowed them to force the state's schools to join in wartime programs, their language nonetheless conveyed a sense of requirement and obligation when it came to getting

involved in mobilization. They relentlessly urged teachers and schoolchildren to “do their part” and made it clear that “the one chief concern of the schools...[was] to cooperate with the federal government in every request the nation [made] upon its citizenship.”²³⁴

The above quote represents one of the cornerstones of the state councils of defense. These organizations formed to help establish a line of communication between the federal government and those in the states.²³⁵ The intention (as the state councils saw it) was for information to flow in both directions and cooperation and collaboration were essential in this regard. Not only would the state councils endeavor to find volunteers to carry out federal programs, but they would also forge their own paths and find their own ways to promote wartime mobilization. Again, one sees this reflected in the efforts of the Educational Section. Members welcomed federal wartime organizations into Indiana’s schools and encouraged participation among students and teachers in areas such as food production and conservation, Liberty Bond sales, and Red Cross work.²³⁶ At the same time, though, they acted on their own accord, creating courses that would assist teachers in focusing on the war in their classrooms, stamping out German from the state’s schools, and even issuing a textbook prepared for the sole purpose of encouraging students to embrace patriotic sentiments and become involved on the home front.

²³⁴ Horace Ellis, letter to Liberty Loan Superintendent, March 23, 1918, Indiana State Council of Defense collection, Indiana State Archives, Indianapolis, Accession 1921048.

²³⁵ William J. Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home: Civilian Mobilization, Wartime Federalism, and the Council of National Defense, 1917-1919* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 200.

²³⁶ As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Educational Section did eventually seek to curb the amount of appeals students and teachers received asking them for aid. Members of the section made it clear that education was still the primary focus in the schools and stood determined to ensure that it was not interrupted.

While those at the federal level gladly accepted such voluntary efforts when they suited their needs, they had no desire to relinquish power to the state councils. Instead, they sought to maintain complete control over wartime initiatives.²³⁷ This desire for control continued to grow in the years following the Great War, in some ways foreshadowing the expansion of the federal government in American society in the 1920s and 1930s.²³⁸

But what of the legacy of the state councils of defense and, in particular, the Educational Section of the Indiana State Council of Defense? As in other parts of the country, almost immediately following America's entry into WWI, Hoosiers set off to organize the state council and its various subsections. Within just a few weeks the machinery was in place and leaders were reaching out to individuals to inform them how they could join in mobilization. The sheer volume of correspondence between members of the Educational Section and Hoosier teachers and administrators is indicative of the active stance that these bodies took to get everyone involved in the campaign. Teachers and students assisted in food production and conservation, thrift, and Red Cross work among a host of other activities. Further, they studied the war in the classrooms, learning about its causes and progress, as well as the need for loyal and patriotic citizens. Much of this work was done at the urging of the Educational Section. Members were determined to make the Hoosier state a model for wartime service in the country. Not only would they get teachers and schoolchildren active on the home front, but their work also

²³⁷ Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 24.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 200-201; Ronald Schaeffer, *America in the Great War: The Rise of the War Welfare State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 217-218.

“provided through the public schools a direct line of communication into many homes that might not otherwise have received the message of patriotism.”²³⁹

The Educational Section, like other divisions of the Indiana State Council of Defense, completely dedicated itself to the war effort in 1917 and 1918. Just as quickly as it organized, however, it saw its work come to a rapid close once the conflict ended in November 1918. Meeting minutes of the state council indicate that by November 14, 1918, Chairman Michael Foley was already calling for certain departments and sections to cease their work. While members agreed that the state council and county councils could not completely dissolve just yet, future meetings would only be made by special call.²⁴⁰ The organization did assemble at least once more on November 26, 1918, to discuss the disposal of materials and supplies used by members, but the records do not indicate any later meetings.²⁴¹

Looking forward, William Breen has argued that “it is hard to measure long-term gains or to separate the particular contribution of the state council system to developments in the 1920s.”²⁴² However, some traces of the work of the state councils could be found in the years following the war, even in Indiana. For instance, one could argue that the Educational Section’s efforts (and those in other states) to root out the German language in the state’s schools assisted in the passage of the McCray bill of 1919, which made it illegal to teach German in Indiana’s public, private, and parochial

²³⁹ *Indiana in the War*, 22.

²⁴⁰ “Proceedings of the 76th Meeting of the Indiana State Council of Defense,” November 14, 1918, Indiana State Council of Defense collection, Indiana State Archives, Accession 1921050.

²⁴¹ “Proceedings of the 77th Meeting of the Indiana State Council of Defense,” November 26, 1918.

²⁴² Breen, *Uncle Sam at Home*, 200.

schools.²⁴³ When this ban was lifted in 1923, it met bitter opposition from many Hoosiers, specifically the Indiana department of the American Legion Auxiliary, which, seemingly echoing the Educational Section's views during WWI, believed the language had no place in the schools, particularly among younger students who could be more easily "corrupted" by it.²⁴⁴ Furthermore, this fear of Germans and the German language spread to other nationalities in the 1920s. Nativism took root, with many Americans resenting not only foreigners, but blacks and those of Jewish descent as well. In Indiana, the period saw the dramatic rise of the Ku Klux Klan and intense hatred towards those groups who were "unwanted" in the United States.²⁴⁵

On a more positive note, one could also argue that the Educational Section's work was reflected in the state as Hoosiers mobilized for war in the 1940s. Similar to the Great War, curricula during WWII were modified to focus on the ongoing conflict, and students, like others in the nation, were encouraged to contribute to the war effort.

While it is hard to prove any direct connection between these actions and the work of the Educational Section or the Indiana State Council of Defense as a whole in 1917 and 1918, they nonetheless encourage one to consider the impact that these organizations had on American society. While their legacy did in essence die with the war, the councils and their subsections still deserve their place in the history books. These were not passive bodies, but, rather, ones that eagerly sought to mobilize all segments of society for the conflict. Success in the war might have depended heavily on the soldiers

²⁴³ George Theodore Probst, *The Germans in Indianapolis, 1840-1918* (Indianapolis: German-American Center and Indiana German Heritage Society, 1989), 153.

²⁴⁴ "Legion Auxiliary is Against German Bill," *Indianapolis News*, February 17, 1923, p. 1. See also "Return of German to Schools to be Fought," *Indianapolis News*, January 20, 1921, p. 1.

²⁴⁵ John D. Barnhart and Donald F. Carmony, *Indiana from Frontier to Industrial Commonwealth* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1979 reprint), 2: 394.

fighting across the Atlantic, but also important was the common man back in the States. The country relied on these citizens to form a “second line of defense” on the home front, and thanks in large part to the state councils of defense they saw this line continuously strengthened by volunteer efforts throughout the duration of American involvement in the war.

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