

# Der christliche Apologete: German Prophet to America, 1914-1918

by James A. Dwyer

Methodism is widely seen as a movement of the British, by the British, and for the British and their subjects wherever they may be. Wesley, however, depended largely on alien groups in England and on non-Anglican thinkers for his most creative syntheses. John William Fletcher, Wesley's designated successor but for his prior death, was born near Geneva. The influence of the Moravian Societies, the Dutch Protestants, and the French Huguenot soldiers among whom Wesley worked, remains an open question.

It is not, then, surprising, that Methodism should have found a resonance in those immigrants to America, itself lately a *renegade* British colony, who had previous acquaintance with pietist and spiritualist movements in their native lands. What may be surprising is the life and vitality which German Methodists gave to their mother church and the zeal which motivated them to create twice as many German members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Germany as there were in the United States.

This cosmopolitan nature of Methodism has long been one of its chief distinctions, yet it has repeatedly led to serious problems. In this essay I will look to the question of German Methodism's expressing a unique, minority viewpoint on an issue of national and world significance: World War I. That German Methodism shared American views on temperance was one of its long suits. That it created vehicles for Americanizing vast numbers of rootless immigrants was a second. That it spoke out, at least in its official organ, *Der christliche Apologete*, against militarism and resolution of international disputes by war even in the face of growing national unity in favor of American participation in the World War, caused it to stand heroically above the tides of the moment, and may have speeded the inevitable loss of its peculiar institutions to our church.

My primary source is the editorial content of *Der christliche Apologete* for 1914, 1917, and 1918. On the premise that the key events and, therefore, the key determinations of editorial policy, took place in the above years, I have omitted the years of 1915 and 1916, for the sake of brevity. In the early issues of 1914, the general attitudes toward peace, the *Vaterland*, and the adopted homeland are made clear. In the latter issues the first responses and later reflections upon the war are evident. By 1917, the American experiment with neutrality was deteriorating, and those issues reveal the *Apologete's* response to that deterioration and to the entrance of America into the war. The issues of 1918 show the final crack resulting from pressure which had been placed upon German-Americans from the beginning, and after March 1918 we see a display of "150% Patriotism" for government consumption. The stresses and strains are evident even in 1914, but the final blows, dealt ironically by the educational and publishing interests of the church itself, initiated the passing of German Methodism from the American scene.

In all that follows, quotations will be from the German text of *Der christliche Apologete*, in my translation, unless otherwise noted.

As the year 1914 dawned, the position of *Der christliche Apologete* regarding peace became perfectly clear. The Balkan wars and the Mexican Civil War had drawn on for months and the Christmas editorial found in its January 7, 1914 issue made reference to this and to the total world situation in an unequivocal and firm condemnation of war as a means of solving international disputes and of militarism as the cause and necessity for the newly created and rapidly rising national debts of all the major powers in Europe and in Asia. The editor of the *Apologete* called upon all nations to cooperate to bring about an immediate end to the arms race in a plea for "Friede auf Erden."<sup>1</sup>

Almost simultaneously Andrew Carnegie expressed in no uncertain terms his convictions on war as a barbarism only slightly removed from cannibalism. The *Apologete*, though citing him approvingly, noted that his desirable hope for peace rested not on the sound hope of Christ, but rather on a theory of

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1. "Friede auf Erden," *Der christliche Apologete*, January 7, 1914, p. 3. All footnotes refer to *Der christliche Apologete* except as otherwise noted.

evolution.<sup>2</sup>

Although the *Apologete* was never quite so crass in its description of men in arms as Mr. Carnegie, yet we gain a definite feeling of antagonism toward any sort of military establishment, and a thorough-going self-identification of the *Apologete* and its editor, Albert J. Nast, with those peace movements and that social activism of the day which awaited the imminent dawn of the kingdom of God in the democratic and socialist movements of the nineteenth century. Walter G. Muelder notes in *Methodism and Society in the Twentieth Century*, "The first decade of the present century saw a rapid development of peace societies....The Methodists, however, were slow to develop their pronouncements on international affairs and war. When they did, they followed the ideals and hopes of the democratic movement of the times."<sup>3</sup> This is precisely the position in which I place Nast's editorial policy at the beginning of 1914 and, indeed, throughout the period under consideration.<sup>4</sup>

Yet, to whatever extent Nast, *Der christliche Apologete*, and German Methodists in general could be said to stand in the middle of the American democratic mainstream, even before war broke out, there was a certain feeling that their position was not well-represented outside their own circles, due in no small measure to the limitation placed upon them by their exclusively German publications. Indeed, the 1914 Central Assembly of German Methodists in their "Recommendations and Decisions" called for the establishment of a public relations office:

In view of the circumstance that the English-speaking part of our church is only partially or not at all informed about the history, the effects, and the tasks of German Methodism, that even the editors of the *Advocates* of our church neither come in contact with our work nor hear of our problems, undertakings, or successes, we recommend the establishment of a press office, out of which the general press and particularly our church newspapers shall be supplied with desired news items.<sup>5</sup>

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2. "Andrew Carnegie über den Krieg," January 14, 1914, p. 3.

3. Walter G. Muelder, *Methodism and Society in the Twentieth Century*, p. 99.

4. Cf., e.g., "Drei der wichtigsten Probleme der Neuzeit," May 20, 1914, p. 3.

5. "Empfehlungen und Beschlüsse der Zentral Versammlung," "XIII Ein Pressbureau für den deutschen Methodismus," July 22, 1914, pp. 4-6.

Once the war broke out with Germany's declaration of August 4, 1914 the *Apologete* was horrified, but refused at first to place blame; yet it was well aware that American sentiments, from the beginning, were generally against Germany. Expressing "mute horror," the editorial asserted, "It is useless at this point to ask who bears primary guilt for this world holocaust...." Yet, it held no truck with German treaty violations: "That which turned American public opinion against the Kaiser from the beginning was his occupation of Belgian soil for the purpose of an offensive against France, in direct violation of the international treaty which guaranteed Belgium's neutrality. . . ." Seeing no possible reduction of hatred or redress of grievances, it concluded: "The only possible comfort is hope for a general revulsion against war, and a recognition among the nations that the most reasonable idea is that of mutual disarmament....For the Commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' applies to nations as well as to the individual."<sup>6</sup>

It was inevitable that conflicts would begin to confront those whose ancestors spoke German instead of English, especially since the two "Old Countries" were on opposing sides of the battle at hand. Though hostility did not arise immediately, its possibility was explicitly acknowledged in the same issue of the paper in the form of a fraternal letter from a sensitive bishop, F. D. Leete of Atlanta. He offered high praise for German character and intellectual and artistic achievements, and called for continuing support for Methodist work among Germans in America and abroad; he closed with this pledge: "Please say to the Germans: We love you, and whatever other bands of love tie our hearts together, we will unite with you in most earnest prayers for the peace, the welfare and the future blessing of the German *Vaterland*."<sup>7</sup>

Appeals appeared for emergency aid to Methodists in Germany alongside reports of the outbreak of war. Because all mail and telegraph communication was broken off by Germany, the first word on the actual circumstances of the German Methodists was delayed until travelers were able to deliver it or until alternate telegraph routes were explored. Bishop John L. Nuelsen sent word through Switzerland in the succinct words:

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6. "Der Weltkrieg," August 26, 1914, p. 3.

7. "Ein Botschaft von Bishop F. D. Leete an die deutschen Methodisten," August 26, 1914.

'Pasteurs rapportent detresse dans les eglises. Secours financier necessaire [sic].'<sup>8</sup> And District Superintendent H. Schaedel of Berlin sent home a letter with friends from Philadelphia which described what seems like a manufactured hysteria and paranoia directed against French bombers and "Russian spies" carrying dynamite. He reported, almost gleefully, that the *furor teutonicus* had been awakened and the German military had responded magnificently, taking over the railroads almost immediately after the mobilization. Many other stirring details accompanied his report. The most exciting thing for Brother Schaedel, however, seemed to be the opportunity offered by war for evangelization of the morally indifferent:

This hard and terrible time will bring us a glorious revival, of which we can already see signs. The whole theological Liberalism will, of course, be confounded miserably because it offers the people stones instead of bread. How great will be our tasks even as Methodist preachers! We want to stand shoulder to shoulder with all believing clergymen, in order to bring our people the blessings of the positive gospel of entire salvation in Christ.<sup>9</sup>

Commenting on this misplaced enthusiasm, the *Apologete* said, almost in chastisement:

But a vital return to God in humility and remorse would also have as a result such an illumination of the Christian conscience to the abomination and the repugnance to God of mass fratricide, that, it would be hoped, Germany and the other European powers would be freed from that pressing militarism which will threaten world peace in an ever more advanced degree, if it is not eliminated.<sup>10</sup>

At the end of the report, these words of Jesus were added: "He who lives by the sword will die by the sword."

Within a week, Bishop Nuelsen had gotten a letter through in which he stated what might be identified as the consistent position of the *Apologete* for the months and years of war which were to come. He recalled the Christian's responsibility in the face of war:

God will not be pushed from his throne, but he will speak the last word in this war. We who call ourselves Christians should guard ourselves well from thinking contemptuously of our enemies or hating them. How could we want or be able to hate those who, just like ourselves, are created in

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8. "Erste direkte Nachrichten aus Europa," September 2, 1914, p. 3.

9. "Brief aus Berlin," September 2, 1914, p. 2.

10. "Erste direkte Nachricht," September 2, 1914, p. 3.

God's image and who are redeemed by the same dear blood of Jesus Christ?<sup>11</sup>

The following weeks and months saw the President of the United States call for a "Day of Prayer" for the restoration of peace and the establishment of a firm and nearly absolute position of neutrality on the part of the United States; the Methodist Episcopal Church put on a national campaign for emergency funds to aid Methodists in the battling nations, especially the German Methodists; and a national "Committee of Reference Counsel" suggested, among other things, that the churches build public opinion in favor of peace instead of loading down the President with suggestions and petitions!<sup>12</sup> Quoting another church magazine on the question of "what shall we pray for?", the *Apologete* wrote, in part:

Today those will pray properly, who pray that despotic militarism will be abolished and the power of the sword broken, and that conscience and reason may come to dominance.<sup>13</sup>

The *Apologete* followed the call to neutrality in an active way. Articles from Germany and from England, as well as those from neutral Switzerland, appeared describing the war and the divergent understandings of its causes and effects from nation to nation. "The Truth about the War," a brochure published by theologians, professors and writers in Germany, got equal time with "The British Response to the German Address to Protestant Christians around the World," and Dr. Herbert Welch, in his address as fraternal delegate to the Canadian Methodist Conference, explored the relationship between Methodism's cosmopolitan nature and the war:

The obligation to exercise care in the expression of our opinions is further strengthened by the cosmopolitan character of the Methodist Episcopal Church which I am to represent. Not only does my church have her missions in Mexico, South America and Africa, in Japan, Korea, China, Malaysia, Burma and India; not only in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Italy and Bulgaria, but also in Russia, in France, in

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11. "Der Krieg und der Christ," September 9, 1914, p. 3.

12. "Der Fonds für unsere vom Kriege heimgesuchten Geschwister," September 16, 1914. "Der Gebetstag um die Wiederkehr des Friedens," September 16, 1914, p. 2; September 30, p. 3; "Amerika im Gebet," October 14, 1914, p. 14. "Die amerikanischen Kirchen und der grosse Weltkrieg," September 30, 1914, p. 2.

13. "Wofür sollen wir am 4. Oktober beten?" September 30, 1914, p. 6.

Austria-Hungary and in Germany, where our membership consists in part of those who have transferred from Wesleyan British Methodism to our church and become totally a part of it. And in the United States itself we have ten German Conferences, and out of the 86,000 members of the church from other nationalities, over 60,000 are German. What can I say in such circumstances to properly represent my church, which is so constituted? I love all sections of our worldwide Methodism.... We pray for England. But we pray also for the men, women, and small children of every nation fighting. How much our hearts will rejoice, when peace is reestablished on a foundation of justice and mutual good will and when Jesus Christ can continue to build his Kingdom of peace, undisturbed.<sup>14</sup>

The only apparent breakdown of a policy of neutrality may have been the publishing of "A Patriotic Declaration of the Methodists to His Majesty the German Emperor and King of Prussia," a most obsequious document exceeded by nothing else published in the *Apologete*, except perhaps the equally cloying and syncophant protestations inserted by the Book Committee and the War Council over Albert Nast's objections. We shall see that equally degrading rejections of any extra- or supra-national loyalties were demanded shortly after the American declaration of the war from "hyphenated" German-Americans. The name of H. Schaedel, author of the "Letter from Berlin," appears first among the District Superintendents. Excerpts from the "Patriotic Declaration" follow:<sup>15</sup>

All gracious Kaiser and Lord! The undersigned representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church of North Germany have the honor of presenting most submissively for Your Majesty in the name of the congregations listed below the following proclamation:

Filled by the conviction that right...is on the side of Your Majesty and our German Realm, we believe firmly that God will give victory to our just cause....

It has also filled us with great joy and thankfulness, that...the proclamations and telegrams of Your Majesty have repeatedly expressed that unshakeable trust in God of Your Majesty....

It proves to be all the more a great honor and joyous satisfaction that about thirty-five of our preachers and almost three-thousand men from our congregations might follow the call of Your Majesty to the banners and in part assist in fighting the battles....

14. "Die Wahrheit über den Krieg," October 14, 1914, p. 3. "Die englische Erwiderung auf die deutschen Zuschrift an die evangelischen Christen im Auslande," October 21, 1914, pp. 14-16. "Der kosmopolitische Methodismus und der Krieg," October 21, 1914, p. 3.

15. "Eine patriotische Kundgebung der Methodisten an seine Majestät den Deutschen Kaiser und König von Preussen," November 4, 1914, p. 7.

The Thanksgiving message of *Der christliche Apologete* that year, however, called even America to penance, noting that her own non-involvement at that time was not due to her superior righteousness but to her providence to be situated where other nations do not claim her lands, and where nation does not jostle nation for land and power. "God," the *Apologete* prophesied, "holds us all the more responsible for recognizing him as our highest Regent and for furthering the work of peace."<sup>16</sup> Although not immediately set aside—indeed it was avidly pursued by many, including the President—the summons eventually fell victim to the enthusiasm of the day, as America was drawn further and further into the war in the weeks preceding the April 1917 declaration.

The days immediately before and after Christmas 1916 were full of shocks and surprises. A German call to negotiations was rejected by the Entente as a war maneuver, and a search for a basis for peace by President Wilson led to the conclusion that only a *de facto* unconditional surrender by the Central Powers would satisfy the Entente. Germany's final response was a resolution to fight to the bitter end using all means at its disposal, although President Wilson had in the meantime appeared *in persona* before the Senate to propose a plan of "peace without victory" on January 22, 1917. This, he said, could be the only means to a lasting peace. The *Apologete* insisted that even these events were not enough to justify America's entry into the war on the side of the Entente. In overwhelming irony, that editorial ended with words hastily added before the printing deadline: "P. S. Diplomatic relations with Germany were broken off at midnight on Saturday, the 3rd of February, 1917."<sup>17</sup> Another hastily added article that week mourned the move which Wilson had felt necessary: "What some have long wished for and others anxiously feared—a break between America and Germany—has unfortunately become sad fact. . . . We can only say: May God protect us in grace in the face of the next step which usually follows the breaking off of friendly relations between nations, and may he prevent U.S. entry into the war." And in an immoderate and uncharacteristic pique these words were added: "America has no excuse to enter such a war.

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16. "Amerika, bedenke zu dieser diener Zeit, was zu deinem Frieden dient!" November 25, 1914, p. 3.

17. "Amerika vor einer neuen Krise," February 7, 1917.

Germany was always America's best friend, which cannot be said for England...."<sup>18</sup>

An increasing, though not sharp, criticism of President Wilson can be found in the issues which follow, based primarily on his inconstancy with those peace principles which he had so ably propounded and less ably put into practice, even in United States policy. An English title "They Kept Us Out of War" alluded to Wilson's re-election slogan, while the article itself implied that the phrase can more appropriately be applied to the twelve senators who prevented passage of Wilson's "armed neutrality" bill.<sup>19</sup> The position the *Apologete* took toward the actual declaration of war shines through these words of April 11, although its acceptance of things as they are and loyalty to what must be are explicit (emphasis added):

The die is cast!...War between Germany and America has become fact  
...America was as the light to all humanity...How this beautiful dream  
has been shattered! Militarism shall be defeated by Militarism, War by  
War, Force by Force....

*Henceforth all discussion of the war and its justification must stop.  
Every American owes his government loyalty and obedience.*

Americans of German extraction need no exhortation to be true to their adopted Fatherland, the Land of their choice, whose banner they honor and love and whose free institutions they highly treasure. They are loyal....

All disciples of the Prince of Peace, of whatever nationality, may properly deplore war, but at the same time they can and must be true subjects of the country to which they belong and whose protection they enjoy.

Finally, a word to the citizens of the Reich: do nothing to raise suspicion and your rights here are fully guaranteed.<sup>20</sup>

As the loyalty of German-Americans came increasingly into question, the *Apologete* was careful to glean support for its more controversial positions from influential and respected members of the English-language press. A most sensitive example became the Espionage Bill and its measures to censor the press, especially the non-English. At this point, criticism of

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18. "Amerikas Bruch mit Deutschland," February 7, 1917, p. 7.

19. "They Kept Us Out of War," March 14, 1917, p. 3.

20. "Amerika tritt in den grossen Weltkrieg ein," April 11, 1917, p. 6.

the President was quite clear, but its source was quoted as the *New York American* and *The Chicago Tribune*:

The press of this land leads a bitter battle at the time against the censorship-clause in the Espionage Bill....

The serious danger of press censorship has been presented in passionate lead articles in newspapers such as the *New York American* and *The Chicago Tribune*. President Wilson felt required already last week to respond to these articles through an open letter to Arthur Brisbane in New York in which he challenged the protests against the Espionage Bill recommended by the Administration. This letter only served to place all the more clearly in view that rights would be given the President which could be misused to the great disadvantage of the nation....<sup>21</sup>

Although the Espionage Bill had become law, the campaign by the press, both English- and German-language, had so impressed the Congress that the press-censorship measures had been removed from it.

By August other press-censorship bills were in the hopper. One would have demanded that English translations be printed in all German language papers of all commentary on U.S. involvement in the war, or any comment on the role of any one of the belligerents. In light of the recently won battle, passage seemed unlikely, and the declaration of such a bill as unconstitutional appeared to be certain, yet the *Apologete* saw one possible good result from it. "An English edition of the war commentaries of German papers," they wrote, "would prove the patriotism of the German-American press," even though one would perhaps find certain tendencies parallel to those of the pro-British press. Nevertheless, loyalty to America was first in the thoughts and comments of both!<sup>23</sup>

Again, censorship was averted, but by October 6, 1917 the Congress had passed a law which must have placed a significant burden on the editors of the *Apologete* as they rushed to meet printers' deadlines. After this date, three possibilities were present for the continued publication of German language periodicals. Least desirably, they could avoid all mention of the war. As an interim or permanent measure, they could file with the Postmaster of their city a certified English translation of each and every article mentioning the war or war policy before

21. "Die Freiheit der Presse gefährdet," May 9, 1917, p. 6.

22. "Ist des Volkes Stimme Gottes Stimme?" May 23, 1917, p. 4.

23. "Unnötige Massnahmen," August 22, 1917, p. 5.

the issue in which the article appeared was given over to the Post Office for distribution. If their policies were not too suspect, they might receive a special permit, granted or revoked at the instruction of the President, which would allow their distribution without the prior submission of translated copies. The *Apologete* rejected the first course and was eventually granted a permit, but only after several other crises had befallen German Methodism in the U.S. The obvious purpose of the translation requirement was to bring the foreign language press under the thumb of the government. Nast and company recognized this, of course, and began immediately to seek to please their new readers. Let the *Apologete* speak for itself:

On the 6th of October a law was signed by President Wilson which places strong controls on all non-English language newspapers and other publications in so far as they deal with the government of the U.S. or any of the other nations involved in the war....

In this connection we would like to inform our readers that, beginning with the next issue, we will be printing the brochure "How the War Came to America." This is an authentic presentation, published by the "Committee on Public Information," which every American should own.<sup>24</sup>

The title of this "word of explanation," incidentally, is enclosed in a border of one-hundred-ten American flags!

Before all this had fully come to pass, however, the *Apologete* managed to fire off several unmistakable salvos in the summer of 1917. In two articles especially, entitled "America's Noble Opportunity" and "'America's Noble Opportunity' Revisited," the *Apologete* clearly explicated its view that the *kairos* for world peace was at hand, if only the American government could grasp it. On August 1, Nast wrote:

...the moment has come when our government, instead of inflaming the nation ever more with the spirit of 'militarism,'...should return to the earlier policy, as suggested by our President, of mutual international reconciliation on the basis of the principle of 'peace without victory;' it should ally itself with the new Russian republic in a call for a peace 'without annexation and war reparations.' All the more so, since the German Reichstag has put itself in basically the same position in its Peace Resolution, which was accepted with a vote of 214 to 116.<sup>25</sup>

On September 5, these words appeared, prefaced by a paren-

24. "Ein Wort der Erklärung," October 17, 1917, p. 2.

25. "Amerikas erhabene Gelegenheit," August 1, 1917, p. 3.

thetical comment that the President's response to the Papal peace proposals was now known, so that this article was partly obsolete:

Despite the fact that the basic conditions of a permanent peace as laid down by the Pope are almost identical with those of President Wilson in his note to the world powers of December 18, 1916 and in his two speeches to the Senate of January 22 and February 22, 1917, yet our government seems to lean towards opposing all thought of peace, in common with the Entente powers.

We pointed in the lead article of August 1, to the fearful responsibility which America takes on itself, if it turns a deaf ear to all these calls of justice, reason, and humanity, but it appears that our most terrifying fears will be realized. For right here in America the war fever burns strongest....

If the German people receive peace conditions under a new democratic form of government which itself is forced on them (in opposition to all democratic principles!), just as hard as there would have been under an autocratic form of government, what would become of all our democratic confessions of faith on the one hand, and our protestations, on the other, that we now have only friendly intentions toward the German people?...

...Peace is the highest expression of the Gospel which Jesus Christ declared to the world.<sup>26</sup>

A second article of September 5, written after Wilson's rejection of the Pope's suggestions, expressed bitter disappointment at the "immoderate and insulting way" in which Wilson attacked the Kaiser in his response, but acknowledged these positive points, 1) that American war aims were clearly set out: mercy was called for in Wilson's opposition to war reparations, any partitioning of nations, or any exclusively economic covenants; and 2) that it was now explicitly stated that he was willing to deal with any German government if it could convincingly demonstrate itself to represent the will of the people. Therefore, hope was seen in the re-assertion of the principles of mercy and democracy.<sup>27</sup>

The recurring question of hostility toward German ideas, things, language, and persons grew during 1917, though its peak lay yet ahead. In May, Nast had cleverly quoted the London *Methodist Recorder*—word from an American ally among the belligerents—that the voice of the people could not be identified

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26. " 'Amerikas erhabene Gelgenheit'—noch einaml," September 5, 1917, p. 5.

27. "Frieden oder fortgesetzter Krieg?" September 5, 1917, p. 3.

with the will of God; the church, of course, must harken to the latter.<sup>28</sup> In July, support was elicited from the words of Bishop R. J. Cooke, writing for the *Methodist Review* in "The Church and the Aliens." The church, he asserted simply, must approach aliens always with Christian love and goodwill.<sup>29</sup> The ultimate and strongest word at that season came directly from the mouth of the *Apologete*. "Why all this intolerance?"

The efforts which are now being made in our country to eliminate root and branch whatever has even the most distant connection with Germany is a hysteria, the likes of which we had thought impossible for the American people. Americans have excelled in tolerance and open heartedness till now....<sup>30</sup>

Examples of the intolerance suffered included the discontinuation of German language instruction, the elimination of all German newspapers and books in public newsstands and libraries, and even the withdrawal of any English books which had positive words about Germany. At the extreme, an Anglicization of personal names was expected! The final crunch at this point came in the first three months of 1918, and it came not from the 100 per cent patriots' patriots, but from within the church's own ranks; but that is a story to relate later.

Let us now consider the last fatal months of the war and the editorial policy of the *Apologete* at this time. By December 1917 a semblance of an improvement could be found in the relationships between the President and the *Apologete*—if indeed the President was aware of the careful criticism leveled against his outward vacillation toward the terms and means of peace. Nast first praised the clearness, sharpness, and unmistakable nature of Wilson's utterances, in which his opinions were always openly stated. Then he pointed to what the President's last speech revealed and how this speech supported a lasting peace:

The President repudiates any thought of peace until the current autocratic regime of Germany has toppled. ...but when it comes to a final determination of peace conditions, no people may be punished because of the sins of their rulers....

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28. "Vox Populi, Vox Dei?" quoted in "Ist des Volkes Stimme Gottes Stimme?" May 23, 1917, p. 4.

29. "Die Pflicht der Kirche den Fremdgeborenen gegenüber," July 11, 1917, p. 6.

30. "Wozu die Intoleranz?" August 22, 1917, p. 4.

The peace which is made must leave no hidden seed for future wars....

In this position of the President we believe we see a better guarantee for a permanent world peace than would probably have been the case if America had remained neutral and had not entered the war...and we believe now to be able to see the power of the often hidden providence of God....<sup>31</sup>

That the Methodist Episcopal Church as a whole supported the American role was clear from the English advertisement for support of "Aged Ministers" which appeared that same week. A presentation of the poem "Lafayette, We're Here" and a sketch of the famous scene at the general's grave, accompanied by a second poem "Oh Veteran of the Cross," drew an unmistakable parallel between supporting America in the war and caring for the Superannuates. In case one was unable to grasp the point, this word of direction was added: "The Methodist Episcopal Church needs Twenty Million Dollars for its Aged Ministers. Answer: 'Veterans, We're Here.'" The various German Conferences were undersigned, also in English.<sup>32</sup>

An editorial of January 16, 1918, discussed Wilson as a "Trailblazer for Peace" and reviewed his actions. Although he had temporarily acted against peace by bringing the United States into the war, his response to the Pope had been a definite positive contribution in that it called for "no war reparations" and "no partitioning." On the whole it comprised a very positive assessment of Wilson's role.<sup>33</sup>

The real issues of the following weeks, indeed throughout the first six months of 1918, were not those of church against state, but were serious internal struggles among Methodists. Although beyond the purview of this essay, the degree to which English-speaking Methodists were sundered by these issues would make a worthwhile complementary study. That certain English-speaking Methodists forced their own concepts of patriotism on German-speaking Methodists will become clear.

On January 23, 1918, the *Apologete* reported the founding of "The War Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church" at the Wesley Building in Philadelphia the previous week. This council included no German Methodist until after certain basic ac-

31. "Botschaft des Präsidenten," December 12, 1917, p. 3.

32. Advertisement, December 12, 1917, p. 2.

33. "Präsident Wilson als Bahnbrecher des Friedens," January 16, 1918, p. 3.

commodations had been made in two German institutions, *Der christliche Apologete* and Baldwin-Wallace College, although no hint was given that these were cause and effect. The very name of the German representative finally elected, W. A. R. Bruehl, may have been his admission ticket!<sup>34</sup>

The purpose of the War Council, explicit from the outset, can be easily deduced from its work in the arena of pro-war propaganda: "The Church and the War" identified the Gospel with political freedom, and America's cause with that of the Church.<sup>35</sup> "An appeal of the Bishops to the Church" parallels their own call for salvation of the world with General Pershing's cry for Germany's defeat.<sup>36</sup> We find even "A Patriotic Summons of the Unification Commission" in the same vein.<sup>37</sup>

The epitome of the War Council's influence is found in the following most repulsive and obsequious, syncophantic expression of the Book Committee, which appeared, in English, of course, in the issue of May 15, 1918, and is here presented in part. Its title? "Methodism and Americanism—A Patriotic Deliverance by the Book Committee":<sup>38</sup>

The Book Committee...having charge...the dissemination of moral and religious principles of justice, righteousness, and democracy and the spread of Christianity...directs that there be placed on its records this solemn declaration of its unimpeachable and unswerving loyalty to the President of the United States in this most pregnant hour of our national existence....

Methodists may well recall their invariable devotion to their flag, their steadfast allegiance to the government throughout nearly one hundred and fifty years of national life, and their swift and constant support of the government in every national crisis....

We therefore place all our resources, especially our many periodicals...at the disposal of the government...for the Americanization of men and women of other lands who...have not yet been fully possessed by the American spirit....

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34. "Der Methodismus als Mitarbeiter der Regierung," January 23, 1918, p. 8. "Der deutsche Methodismus im Kriegsrat der Bischöflichen Methodistenkirche vertreten," 20 March 1918, p. 3.

35. "Die Kirche und der Krieg," March 6, 1918, p. 3.

36. "Ein Appell der Bischöfe an die Kirche," April 3, 1918, p. 2.

37. "Ein patriotisches Aufruf der Vereinigungs-Kommission," April 24, 1918, p. 2.

38. "Methodism and Americanism—A Patriotic Deliverance by the Book Committee," May 15, 1918, p. 2.

Sickened in soul by hypocrisy, foul blasphemies, the wanton destruction of sacred places and conscienceless diplomacy, angered by unbelievable brutalities, daily practiced, the cries of outraged, starving, dying children and of women enslaved, the sanctioned treatment of conquered territory, and the exploitation of helpless inhabitants...and, believing in God, America, and in victory, we pledge the support of 'the people called Methodists' to our country and our allies for the holy task of winning the war and the redemption of the world.

In this light, the case studies which are to follow, involving Baldwin-Wallace College and the editorial leadership of *Der christliche Apologete*, will take on a certain transparency.

The first hints, at least in the *Apologete*, of trouble at Baldwin-Wallace are found in the issues of January 9 and 16 wherein we discover that allegations had been made concerning certain "pro-German" (by definition, anti-American) sentiments among the leadership there. The trustees, having requested outside advice, have decided that 1) the President, Dr. Arthur L. Breslich, must be temporarily relieved of his office; 2) Dr. Franklin G. Ream, Director of Religious Activities for the Board of Education, should take his place, as Acting President; 3) the superintendent of the German Indianapolis District, Dr. Albert B. Storms, should hold the fort until Dr. Ream arrives.<sup>39</sup> The final solution, however, was the election of Dr. Storms as permanent president, and the acceptance of the resignations of Dr. Breslich as president and of Albert J. Nast (editor of the *Apologete*) as President of the Board of Trustees. Regular reports in the *Apologete* kept the school's constituency informed of the changes made, including the final transformation of the school into a camp for the "Student's Army Training Corps" for the 1918-1919 school year. One of the trustees, Rev. Frank Hartl, in his article addressed to the German constituency of the school, says quite simply of its beleaguered ex-President, "World Events were against him."<sup>40</sup>

It is probably equally true that "World Events" were

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39. "Die Baldwin-Wallace College-Angelegenheiten," January 9, 1918, p. 6, and January 16, 1918, p. 6.

40. "Report of Investigating Committee in regard to Baldwin-Wallace College," March 13, 1918, pp. 10-11; "An die deutschen Konstituenten unseres Baldwin-Wallace Kollegiums" von Rev. Frank Hartl trustee, March 13, 1918, pp. 11-13; "Der Präsidentenwechsel in Berea, O." von Dr. G. E. Hiller trustee, March 13, 1918, p. 13; "Baldwin-Wallace College" von Vizepräsident Delo C. Grover, Ph.D., July 31, 1918, p. 10; "A Note from Berea," September 11, 1918, p. 2.

working against the proven editorial leadership of Albert J. Nast, for the events which led to the resignation at Berea made profound changes in the *Apologete's* Cincinnati offices equally inevitable. Nast foresaw the troubles ahead as he opened the new year. In his "Editorial Notes" he marked the beginning of the German paper's eightieth year. At that time only two Methodist papers could claim to be older, the New York *Christian Advocate* and the *Western Christian Advocate*, and none could claim only two editors, and those father and son, as the *Apologete* could. William Nast had been editor for fifty-six years before his son had succeeded him. Albert Nast had now completed 23 years of service. Concerning the paper and German Methodism as a whole he wrote:

What excellent progress it has been able to report! What difficult battles it has survived. And today there is no lack of dark clouds rising on the horizon of the New Year! What might not we have to report all this year of 1918? We do not know, but our German Work and our German Weekly stand in God's hand. We trust in the Lord of Lords. We wish all our readers the best gift of all gifts in the new year — the noble peace of God. And we ask from your side your hearty support in earnest petition and in true friendship!<sup>41</sup>

By January 23 the reader became aware of the specific "dark clouds" rising on Nast, as the church's publishing agents commandeered page three to reprimand Nast in English for his editorial disloyalty:

Since the United States declared war with Germany the Publishing Agents have felt that the policy of the Editor of *Der christliche Apologete* was not in full harmony with the spirit of the church and of the country....

The Agents distinctly and sincerely regret that the *Apologete* has not been outspoken in its support of the United States and our Allies...and in opposition to the war spirit....of Germany....

There can be but one attitude consistent with the American and Methodist spirit....

The Agents have, therefore, felt obliged to make such arrangements for the editorial conduct of the *Christliche Apologete* as will relieve it of all criticism of its patriotism. Henceforth it will sound a clear note for the utter defeat of Germany and its despotic military system and rulers, and for the complete victory of the United States.... There shall be no half hearted or divided allegiance.<sup>42</sup>

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41. "Editorelle Notizen," January 2, 1918, p. 7.

42. "Important Statement by the Publishing Agents," January 23, 1918, p. 3.

Although both Nast and his assistant Enderis signed a statement of agreement with these principles on the same page, it was clear he had been slapped in the face, and would eventually be replaced. On March 13 in another page three announcement the publishers made known the appointment of an associate editor for war matters who had already been at work in place of Nast, though his name was never entered on the paper's masthead.<sup>43</sup> The following week was the first week for the paper under its newly granted government permit. Now that Nast's views were silenced, government approval seemed to come quickly! Only one week later a letter came from the United States publicity officer, Frank L. Wilson, commending the *Apologete* for the patriotism of its issue of February 20, probably the first handiwork of the new war editor.<sup>44</sup> The inference is easily made that the Book Committee worked hand-in-glove with the government to silence Albert Nast. Supporting evidence other than circumstantial cannot, of course, be found in this public organ.

On May 1, 1918, Albert J. Nast announced his resignation as editor of the *Apologete*. In his "departing word" he noted that he had wanted to be able to fight for as much of the German publication program as might be rescued. Despite his efforts, all German-language materials for younger children were discontinued and the decision was made to merge the weekly *Apologist* with the monthly *Hearth and Home* effective July 1, 1918. He cautioned his disgruntled readers:

We must not forget that we live in abnormal circumstances, and we must reckon with them....The position which the *Christliche Apologete* took in its very first issues after the declaration of war, and its position since then is known to all our readers. It was and is a position of most unambiguous and decisive loyalty to our country and our government.

In disregard of this, our loyalty has been questioned, despite the fact that the paper was fully and totally accepted by the government several weeks ago....

We can be thankful that in these abnormal circumstances the Book Committee has provided for the continuing existence of [our papers].<sup>45</sup>

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43. "Publisher's Announcement," March 13, 1918, p. 3.

44. "Der 'Christliche Apologete' von der Regierung genehmigt," March 27, 1918, p. 3.

45. "Ein Wort zum Abschied," May 1, 1918, p. 3.

Only minor scenes follow in the life of *Der christliche Apologete* in 1918. The "Hilfseditor" resigned in September to take a pastorate and was replaced, and, generally speaking, "Our preachers lost faith in our leaders....The war experience reduced them to bread servants...."<sup>46</sup>

Ironically, Dr. F. W. Müller, the war-matters editor, was replaced, too, with Nast's resignation, but his mark had been left; he had robbed the *Apologete* of any prophetic voice and any credibility on the military issue. His rabid patriotism was supplanted only by a lack-luster, defeated report of the events that followed till the November 11 signing of the Armistice. Not that the facts were not there! Probably few other papers carried both English and German versions of the long and gruelling exchange of notes between the *Präsident* and the *Kaiser* which finally led to peace, but any willingness to delve into the events and find the truth went with Nast, with only his ghost moving occasionally through the pages.

This chapter of German Methodism is a heroic and a sad one. But it can indeed be said that German Methodism and *Der christliche Apologete* did represent a unique and extremely significant point of view so long as the strength to resist suppression remained. Once the "Germans" gave in, the tide of hostility began to ebb, even before the war was ended. In February the *Apologete* had written:

...Does a man say to his wife: 'I will try to love you'? no, he loves her because he can't do anything else. So likewise the true citizen is patriotic, because he can do no other, and he leaves his home fires for his country and the noble, praiseworthy principles it represents, and hurries to its undemanded defense in battle, even if it costs his life! Because of his blood relationship with the old Fatherland, a hyphen may yet lie in his soul, but out of his civil life and from the patriotism conceived in it the hyphen has disappeared for all time....We stand immovable in our loyalty as citizens of this land; for us and those like us this can be the only proper position to take.<sup>47</sup>

By June its new editors could quote with approval an editorial of the *Pacific Christian Advocate* written in behalf of Germans:<sup>48</sup>

We think it is time for words of defense and encouragement like this editorial to be spoken. We know that in times of high-strung national

46. "Wechsel in unserer Redaktionsstube," September 11, 1918, p. 5; Muelder, p. 88, quoting Douglass, *The Story of German Methodism*, p. 199.

47. "Der Bundestrich ausgemerzt," February 6, 1918, p. 3.

48. "German and Pro-German a Difference," June 26, 1918, p. 2.

enthusiasm excesses in thought, feeling and words are not entirely avoidable....

The *Pacific Advocate* argues as follows: 'Men should never be blamed for that which they cannot prevent or change....

'As for the German: there are many, many Germans as truly American as any one born on our soil. There are many, many Americans who speak the German language fluently.... Let them...edit papers for the Germans in America. It will be a shorter road to proper understanding than by the suppressing of all such sheets and attempt [sic] to reach in a language they can not well understand.'

From the article "The hyphen eliminated" of February 6, 1918, to "German and Pro-German a Difference" of June 26, 1918 is a distance of much more than five months. Though residual hostilities against German-language instruction lasted for many years, the worst was already over by mid-1918.

Perhaps even more difficult, however, was the position of the Methodists of the *Reich*, where any group of American descent must have been equally suspect, and that for four years, not one.