

German Instruction in the Public Schools of Indianapolis, 1869-1919

III.

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Open hostility towards German instruction may in a measure account for the static condition of German enrollment figures in the Indianapolis public schools for the years 1888 to 1890. Of 2,566 pupils who began German, 1,945 were still enrolled at the close of the year 1888, whereas in 1891-1892, 2,491 began the study, and 1,948 remained.¹ The number of schools that offered German had, however, increased during that same period from fourteen to nineteen.² In the annexes the method of using geography and history as a means of learning German was still being pursued with "very good results both in the acquisition of knowledge in the subjects taught and in the practical use and understanding of the German language."³ The supervisor of German had up to this time been obliged also to carry on his work of teaching every morning in High School No. 1, which made it impossible for him to inspect those German classes which were held during the morning; therefore on June 3, 1892, it was voted to relieve him of his teaching in order to enable him to devote his entire time to supervision. This was a forward step designed to improve the work in the German department.⁴

The added dignity did not devolve upon Charles E. Emmerich, however, because he was made principal of the newly opened High School No. 2, but rather upon O. Spehr of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, whose appointment took effect in September of that same year.⁵ Apparently he was efficient

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¹ *Annual Report of the Public Schools of the City of Indianapolis, 1887-1888; ibid., 1891-1892.* (These reports will henceforth be cited as *Annual Report.*) See *Indiana Magazine of History*, September, 1954, page 268, footnote 62.

² *Manual of the Public Schools of Indianapolis, 1887-1888; ibid., 1891-1892.*

³ Minutes of the Indianapolis Board of School Trustees, May 20, 1892. (These minutes, kindly placed at the author's disposal by Maxwell V. Bailey, will henceforth be cited as Minutes.)

⁴ *Ibid.*, June 3, 1892.

⁵ *Ibid.*, September 2, 1892.

but made no innovations, for during the two years that he was supervisor, there is only one item in the Minutes of the Indianapolis Board of School Trustees concerning German, and that was a recommendation for a new translation of the textbook in geography.⁶ Although the matter was made a special order for the next meeting of the board, it was not presented then, possibly because at that meeting Spehr resigned. No reason was mentioned.⁷ The committee on German, music, and drawing was granted expenses to visit other cities in order to interview prospective candidates. On September 7, 1894, Robert Nix of New Ulm, Minnesota, was appointed. With the advent of a new supervisor, the scope of his work was enlarged; he was now not only to be supervisor of German in the district schools, but in the high schools as well, and was to be so designated in the *Manual of the Public Schools of Indianapolis*.⁸

During the next decade and more there is little in the minutes regarding German. It was having a steady growth, indicated by the petitions coming in from more and more schools.⁹ The board consigned details to the supervisor and concerned itself for the most part only with the petitions, a mere formality, and with the acquisition of more rooms in which to teach the German.¹⁰ The granting of the petition sometimes depended upon the space available.¹¹

⁶ *Ibid.*, May 18, 1894.

⁷ *Ibid.*, June 1, 1894.

⁸ *Ibid.*, September 7, 1894. The following facts concerning the life of Robert Nix are from *Der tägliche Telegraph* (henceforth cited as *Telegraph*), October 17, 1910: Nix was born February 1, 1854, in Cleveland, Ohio; two years later he moved with his family to New Ulm, Minnesota. In 1880 he graduated from the University of Minnesota. After teaching there a year, he went to Germany to study at Berlin and Leipzig. From 1883 to 1894 he was principal of the New Ulm public schools.

⁹ See, for example, Minutes, September 7, 1897, September 2, 1898, September 14, 1901, January 27, 1903, November 10, 1906, November 12, 1908, and January 10, 1909. The first French class at High School No. 1 was authorized by the board on January 18, 1895.

¹⁰ See, for example, *ibid.*, July 25, October 30, 1906.

¹¹ See, for example, Minutes, February 14, 1911, in which is stated: "Messrs. H. E. Hagley and Earhard, M. D., appeared before the Board in behalf of patrons at school 41, relative to the possibility of securing the teaching of German in school 41. There is a growing demand for the introduction of teaching the German Language in said building. If it cannot be provided for the second half of 1910/1911 on account of lack of room in the building, they want some assurance that it be provided at the beginning of 1911/1912. The question was referred to the Superintendent of Schools."

The first drastic revision of the rules took place in 1900. They were greatly shortened and made to read as follows:

“Instruction in German:

“Section 1. There shall be appointed a Supervisor of German instruction in the Public Schools who shall devise such plans as may be expedient or necessary for furthering instruction in his department. He shall have immediate control of the German teachers and teaching, giving directions respecting the lessons, books and other matters pertaining to instruction in the German language and literature. He shall examine the different schools and classes at the end of every term, and shall, when desired, report to the superintendent of schools detailed information concerning the teachers, pupils, classes, and methods of instruction.

“Section 2. No teacher shall be deemed competent to instruct in the German department unless proficient in English.

“Section 3. Instruction in German shall begin in the second year.

“Section 4. The assignment of the German classes to places upon the general program of the school shall be a matter of agreement between the supervising principal and the supervisor of German, subject to appeal to the superintendent of schools. The instruction in the German language must adapt itself to the English classes.

“Section 5. The classes in German shall be formed at the beginning of the school year terms, and no pupil shall be admitted to them later, except after due examination and approval by the supervisor of German.”¹²

Under Nix’s supervision, German instruction made great strides. By 1902, it was being taught in thirty-four district schools and in both high schools. There were 375 German classes with 6,170 pupils in the district schools; twenty-five classes with 458 pupils in the high schools. Five teachers of German were employed in the latter, and thirty-seven, including two substitutes, in the former.¹³ In his report on German

¹² *Manual of the Public Schools of Indianapolis, 1900-1901*, Rules and Regulations, Article XX.

¹³ *Annual Report, 1901-1902*, p. 87. A few statistics from page 89 are of interest here:

No. studying German	June 14, 1895	June 14, 1901	June 20, 1902
District schools	2,775	6,095	6,170
High schools	194	352	458
Total	2,969	6,447	6,628

in the district schools for that year, Nix stated: "In all classes German is the principal medium of communication. The entire course is based on the spoken language. The vocabulary, work forms, and constructions learned orally are reviewed in the form of exercises in reading, writing, and translation. The systematic study of German grammar is begun in the sixth grade."¹⁴ In the high schools two groups of four year courses ran parallel to each other, courses for those who had completed the seven years of German in the grades, and alternate courses for those who began their German in high school.¹⁵

Not only was the supervisor interested in the pupils, but he also kept in close touch with the teachers under his direction. During the year 1902, for instance, thirty-five meetings for teachers of German were held. The supervisor further directed the examinations which the teachers had to take. They were of two kinds: one for the license to teach German, the other for those already licensed. The former was held twice a year, in August and May. Of the thirty-one applicants who took the examinations in 1902, only twelve, four men and eight women, obtained the required average of 75 per cent.¹⁶ The three highest, all men, were native Germans, trained in either a teachers' seminary, or at various German universities; four others had immigrated to the United States at an early age and like the remaining five candidates had had their training at American universities and normal schools, or were merely graduates of an Indianapolis high school.¹⁷

Nix deplored the fact that in many buildings stress for school accommodations had made it necessary to place the German classes in small and inadequate rooms. He recom-

Highest enrollment, with percentage:	Feb. 22, 1895		Feb. 22, 1901		Feb. 22, 1902	
	Pupils	%	Pupils	%	Pupils	%
Of German parentage	1,751	57	2,363	35	2,438	35
Of Non-German parentage	1,345	43	4,336	65	4,525	65
Total	3,096		6,699		6,963	

The total enrollment in the Indianapolis public schools: 1888, 13,277; 1891, 17,074; 1897, 22,215; 1902, 27,884.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁵ *Annual Report, 1901-1902*, p. 90.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* Eighteen meetings "were devoted to the study of Goethe's *Faust*, Second Part, Acts I and II." In 1902 the examination for those teachers already licensed was held May 24 and "consisted in the writing of essays on subjects selected from Goethe's *Faust*."

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 91.

mended that in all new buildings where German might be taught, a room ample in size be set apart specifically for the purpose of teaching German. He thought the policy should be "to give, wherever the funds would allow, all reasonable facilities for rendering the instruction the best obtainable."¹⁸

From 1902 to 1909 the enrollment in German seemed to be keeping pace with the increasing population of the city of Indianapolis. The 375 classes in the district schools of 1902 had increased to 404 by 1909, and the number of classes in the high school had almost doubled, from twenty-five to forty-seven.¹⁹ Serving the grades were forty-two German teachers, while eight taught in the two high schools. On February 19, 1909, 2,094 out of a total of 7,496 pupils who were studying German in the public schools, that is, 28 per cent, were of German parentage. Sixty of these had been born in Germany.²⁰ "The total cost of instruction in German in the district schools for the year 1908/1909 was \$28,142.58. This amount included teachers' and substitutes' salaries, sick pay, four-fifths of the salary of the Supervisor of German, cost of blank forms, etc." Based on the February enrollment this made the expenditure per pupil \$4.33.²¹

In discussing the methods of teaching German, Nix said: "In *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, one of the supervisors of the Pedagogical Province informs Wilhelm that each of the modern languages taught is spoken in turn for an entire month. 'This practice,' continues the supervisor, 'is based on the principle that nothing is learned outside of the element that is to be conquered. We regard our pupils as so many swimmers who perceive with astonishment that they are lighter than the element which threatened to swallow them, and that they are buoyed up and sustained by it.'

"The principle thus stated by Goethe has been successfully applied in the various methods of modern language teaching

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 92.

¹⁹ *Annual Report, 1908-1909*, p. 151.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 152. In addition to the sixty children born in Germany, the following numbers of foreign-born were listed, *ibid.*, 29:

Canada	28	Hungary	16
Austria	27	Italy	23
Denmark	12	Russia	145
England	29		

Altogether there were 400 foreign-born from twenty-six countries.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 153. Compare total attendance of all pupils with cost of instruction, *ibid.*, 22-28.

that are gradually superseding the translation method in European and, to a certain extent, in American schools. The feature common to these recent methods consists in using the medium of communication between teacher and pupil. The most flexible as well as the most comprehensive of the methods in question is known as the 'direct' method. The teacher using this method endeavors to equip the pupil with a practical vocabulary, to develop in him what the Germans call 'Sprachgefühl,' and to introduce him, at as early a stage as possible, to the study of the life and literature of the people whose language is taught. In the attainment of these ends, the most valuable traits of the other methods can readily be utilized.

"In the teaching of German in the district and high schools of Indianapolis the direct method is used, with such modifications and extensions as the age and progress of the pupils seem to demand. The following features of other methods are included in the work: Great importance is attached to correct pronunciation and to the part which the ear takes in the acquirement of language ('reform' method); the conversational exercises ('natural' method) are arranged in series based on the association of ideas ('psychological' method); grammar is taught inductively; and translation is restricted, in general, to the most difficult passages of the texts that are studied."²²

The books in use supplied the material for oral work and enabled the teacher to conduct continuous and systematic reviews in the form of exercises in reading and writing. Objects and pictures were used freely. Work in the grades was functional. "The child's life and surroundings in school and home" furnished "the main topics for the dialogues in the primary grades." In reading and writing, the Latin (English) characters were used exclusively for one and a half to two years, after which German print and script were introduced. Reading was preceded by oral work. In the review the story was read wholly or in part in dialogue form, sometimes even dramatized by the pupils, who then memorized and acted out the several parts. Beginning with the sixth grade, the written exercises were given the form of letters addressed to friends

²² *Ibid.*, 253-254.

and relatives.²³ The systematic study of German grammar was begun in the fifth grade. In all grades poems were memorized, stories dramatized and acted, enlivened by the singing of German songs.

According to the *Laws of Indiana, 1907*, German was specified among the subjects mandatory in the high school.²⁴ As has been stated, there were two kinds of courses in German in the high schools of Indianapolis, one for those pupils who began their German there, and another for those who had completed the seven-year course in the elementary schools.²⁵ For the beginners the work was designed to give grammatical knowledge in a natural way. Emphasis was laid upon correct pronunciation, practice of the ear in dictation, free composition and independent oral and written expression. This was augmented by a reading course arranged to give acquaintance with Germany, with the nature and customs of the people, with Germany's culture and with her intellectual life. Those pupils, however, who had completed the seven years in the grades were offered advanced German. This was essentially "a continuation and extension of the work done during the previous years."²⁶ That the work was thorough was evidenced by the fact that "each year a number of those who had completed the advanced four-year course, passed the examination for the license to teach German in the Indianapolis district schools."²⁷ Those who went to college obtained advanced standing there.²⁸

²³ *Ibid.*, 154-155. In the sentences employed, twenty-five verbs—strong, weak, irregular—were inflected in the present indicative active, while important single forms of more than a hundred verbs were used. Prepositional phrases, the direct and the indirect object, and the different types of work-order were introduced early in the course. In the fifth, sixth, and seventh grades, two books of German fairy tales and legends, and one or two of the following texts were studied: Hauff, *Der Zwerg Nase, Das kalte Herz*; Arnold, *Fritz auf Ferien*; Wildenbruch, *Das edle Blut*; Zschokke, *Der zerbrochene Krug*. The work of grades 7A-8A was based on selections from Schramm, *Deutsche Heldensage*, including the following legends: *Nibelungensage, Dietrich von Bern, Gudrun, Roland*. For the text in grammar in the eighth grade the pupils used Lyon, *Deutsche Grammatik*, a book published in Germany.

²⁴ *Laws of Indiana, 1907*, p. 324; see also *Annual Report, 1908-1909*, pp. 52-53.

²⁵ Compare note 14 above; see also *Annual Report, 1908-1909*, pp. 155, 156.

²⁶ *Annual Report, 1908-1909*, p. 155.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 156.

²⁸ The author speaks from personal experience here, for, after completing the German "A" courses at Shortridge High School, she entered Indiana University in the fall of 1910 with Junior standing in German.

Nix prefaced his outline of the courses of study in the high schools with the words: "By the intensive study of a number of master works, the pupil's mind is brought into contact with some of the greatest minds that directed the development of German thought and German ideals, and influenced in so remarkable a degree the highest intellectual life of the American people. To give the pupil an insight into modern German life, with its customs and manners, its joys and sorrows, and to render him more proficient in everyday conversation, the study of the classics alternates to some extent with the reading of modern fiction and plays. Those pupils who begin German in the high schools are offered courses of two, three, and four years, corresponding substantially to the three 'national grades' recommended by the Committee of Twelve of the Modern Language Association and adopted by the College Entrance Examination Board. While the direct method dominates the instruction, there is sufficient practice in translation to enable the pupils to pass the examinations in German required for admission to a number of college courses. During the first three semesters, a beginner's book is used, which assists in classifying and reducing to the form of paradigms and rules the facts of the language that have been acquired through oral exercises."²⁹

In the high schools a German club was made up from the advanced classes. Programs were varied; lectures were delivered in German on a wide range of subjects, for example during the year 1908-1909, German mythology was considered and several of Wagner's masterpieces were explained. Proceeds from entertainments given under the auspices of the club were used to decorate the German class rooms in typical style. According to the supervisor: "The German teachers hoped to contribute through these agencies, to the ideal realm of intellect in which Germany and America shall unite in solving the problems of humanity."³⁰

On October 25, 1910, Superintendent of Schools Calvin N. Kendall reported the death of Robert Nix: "I announce

²⁹ *Annual Report, 1908-1909*, pp. 156-157. Here also the reading material used in the two parallel courses in high school is listed.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 128-129. An item in the Minutes, November 24, 1908, corroborates the statement in the *Annual Report* about the decorating of class rooms: "Superintendent Kendall recommended. . . . that Peter Scherer, teacher of German in Shortridge High School be granted permission to decorate his class room, to be designated in the future as the 'German Room' of the Shortridge High School." The report was concurred in.

with great sorrow the death of Mr. Robert Nix, director of German, on October 16. For 16 years Mr. Nix had been the director of German. He carried on the work of his department with great intelligence, with energy, with good judgment and with devotion. It was fortunate that this important department of the schools was under such capable leadership. Mr. Nix's work with his teachers was positive and constructive.

"It is perhaps not generally known that he was one of the ablest scholars that has ever been connected with the Indianapolis Public Schools. He was a graduate of the University of Minnesota, and held degrees from German universities. He was always a student. He was a man of excessive modesty which was no small part of his personal charm. He had unusual executive ability which added greatly to the worth of one in his position. His influence upon the school system was always salutary. We had in him a highly creditable representative of the teaching profession. His death is a loss which cannot easily be made good."³¹

The *Telegraph* in its tribute to Robert Nix pointed out that he had carried the German department to a height which evoked the unrestricted praise of all schoolmen.³²

Two months after Nix's death Superintendent Kendall announced the appointment of Peter Scherer as Director of German. Since September, 1901, Scherer had been a teacher of German in High School No. 1.³³ He was a worthy successor to Nix, for under his direction German continued its vigorous growth. Among his other accomplishments he raised and standardized the requirements for a teacher's license in German.

On May 20, 1915, Scherer had submitted to the superintendent, J. G. Collicott, as part of a long report, the following article dealing with changes in the licenses and salary sched-

³¹ Minutes, October 25, 1910.

³² *Telegraph*, October 17, 1910.

³³ Minutes, December 13, 1910. For Scherer's appointment as teacher of German in High School No. 1 and in the grades, see *ibid.*, September 20, 1901. Peter J. Scherer was born in Wiesbaden, Germany, in 1864. He had his college training at Wiesbaden and Frankfurt am Main and taught at both places. Married in 1890, he came to the United States in 1892 and first settled at Nashville, Tennessee, where he taught modern languages. In 1895 he came to Indianapolis. Until September, 1901, he conducted a private school in German and French, piano and violin, at the old Propylaeum. The *Telegraph*, December 14, 1910, carried a column on the first page announcing Scherer's succession to Nix.

ules of German teachers: "License to teach German in the District Schools.

"Section 1. All teachers of German in district schools shall be required to hold special teachers' licenses, in which the following subjects shall be named: 1. Certificate of Qualification in English. 2. Ability as a teacher. 3. German grammar. 4. German composition. 5. General knowledge of German. 6. General knowledge of English. 7. Geography. 8. History. 9. Physiology. 10. Arithmetic. 11. German Literature.

"Section 2. In addition to the requirements in Section 1, a teacher under contract must hold a diploma or a certificate of a reputable normal school, college or university, showing the completion of the following subjects:

1. Psychology and Principles of Education (Not less than 14 hours)
2. History of Education (Not less than 20 hours)
3. School Hygiene (Not less than 20 hours)
4. Methods of teaching modern languages (Not less than 20 hours)
5. Phonetics (Not less than 12 hours)
6. Practice teaching (Not less than one year)

"Section 3. Graduates of commissioned high schools of Indiana, or of American educational institutions of equal or higher rank, in the estimation of the Superintendent of Schools, shall be exempt from examination in subjects 6-10, Section 1. Teachers who have completed equivalent courses in foreign schools shall be exempt from examinations in subjects 7-10, Section 1. A license authorizing the holder to teach English branches in American public schools may be accepted in lieu of an examination in any or all of subjects 6-10, Section 1. Graduates of National German-American Teachers' Seminary at Milwaukee shall be exempt from examinations in subjects 3-10, Section 1.

"Section 4. A teacher meeting the requirements in Sections 1 and 2 may be granted a license valid for 5 years.

"Section 5. For the renewal of the license, credit of at least 9 hours in subject 11, Section 1, is required. . . .

"The salary schedule range \$500-\$950.

"Four groups with top salaries in each group 825, 875, 925, 950.

"Automatic increases within each group until maximum has been reached.

"Young women with diplomas from standard colleges who have had teaching experience receive two years credit. College graduates, receive three years credit. Teaching service outside Indianapolis may be counted in determining the salaries of teachers of German."

This new system did away with the yearly examination, the result of which, as Scherer said, "might raise or lower the teacher's grade," and thereby determine his salary for the coming year, a practice "not in accord with the rule that a salary increase shall be determined upon the basis of experience or responsibility or both."³⁴

Petitions for the teaching of German at additional schools and repeated requests for more room in which to teach that German continued to be almost the only items referring to German recorded in the minutes of the board of school trustees until 1917. The petitions were usually referred to the superintendent of schools and by him to the board; if the supervisor of German had approved the petition, it was granted.³⁵

Again the introduction of German into a school sometimes depended upon the space available for such instruction, evinced, for instance, by the following entry in the minutes: "Messrs. H. E. Hagley and Earhard, M. D., appeared before the Board in behalf of patrons at school 41, relative to the possibility of securing the teaching of German in school 41. There is a growing demand for the introduction of teaching the German Language in said building. If it cannot be provided for the second half of 1910/1911 on account of lack of

³⁴ Minutes, May 25, 1915. The former salary range for German teachers had been from \$500.00-\$900.00 (compare Minutes, June 13, 1911). The range in salaries for other teachers at this time was: regular grade, \$500.00-\$875.00; industrial training-shop, \$900.00-\$1,350; cooking and sewing, \$750.00-\$1,000.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, March 10, 1914. The following letter from Scherer to the superintendent shows the procedure: "Relative to a petition from a number of citizens in Brightwood for the introduction of German in School 51, I beg to submit the following report:

1. That the petition is in compliance with the Indiana Law, Section 125.
2. That from 80% to 85% of the Graduates of that school go to High School.
3. That there are rooms suitable for German instruction available in the building.
4. Should the board decide to introduce German into School No. 51, I recommend that it be started in September, 1914, in the second and third grade."

room in the building, they want some assurance that it be provided at the beginning of 1911/1912."³⁶

A few random selections will further illustrate the increasing need for more room as the demands for German multiplied: "A report of a committee of investigation relative to German instruction in the Public Schools, which had no complaint to make except that 31 and 35 do not offer sufficient room facilities."³⁷ Another: "Request that the lower grades in main building at No. 57, in main building now half days, be put in upper room of purchased building and the room so vacated in main building be used for German purposes; which plan was approved."³⁸ Again, a letter from Scherer to Superintendent Collicott read: "The German classes in School No. 14 meet in a house west of the main building. The distance is about fifty feet. The passage is made possible by means of a board walk. When leaving either building in inclement weather the teachers give the children ample time to put on their wraps. Since March 9th, arrangements have been made that the children in the second grade, two classes, and another class, need not leave the main building for their German instruction. This is the best that can be done under the present crowded conditions. The other nine German classes must go to the house."³⁹ And as late as September, 1916: "Request of the Director of Modern Languages for arrangement of space in one of the cottages on the grounds to be used for excess classes in German. Request granted."⁴⁰

During the year 1915, there were three other bits of information dealing with German in the minutes: In June it was stated that forty-three German teachers were receiving automatic increases of salary.⁴¹ In October the board granted a request for printing pamphlets for supplementary work to be used by the beginning classes of German in the high schools.⁴² At the beginning of the school year, Scherer's title

³⁶ *Ibid.*, February 14, 1911.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, August 8, 1911.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, November 25, 1913.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, March 10, 1914.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, September 26, 1916.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, June 29, 1915.

⁴² *Ibid.*, October 26, 1915. The cost of the printing was between \$50.00 and \$75.00. The pamphlets were then to be sold at five cents a copy and the money refunded to the board.

of Supervisor of German had been changed to Director of Modern Languages.⁴³

Since Scherer's report to the superintendent at the end of June, 1916, was the last one made before World War I, and since it gives a comprehensive picture of the status of German in the public schools of Indianapolis at that time, portions of it are included here:

"The aim of the German department is to acquaint the pupils with the history, customs, manners, and ideals of the German people through a knowledge of their language and literature.

"The 'direct method' with some modification is used in teaching the subject. That is to say, German is, as far as practical, the language of the class room.

"Inasmuch as singing forms a vital part of German life, all the classes are taught the most familiar German songs and are permitted to sing them at intervals throughout the year.

"Another important feature of the German work is the programs arranged throughout the year for the benefit of the pupils and patrons. The most important of these are the 'Weihnachtsfeier' in which the idea of the German Christmas Celebration is carried out; the German play, which is given before the school annually as an auditorium exercise; and the 'Waldfest' which is given in one of the parks of the city each spring.

"1. Schools in which German is offered. German is offered as a branch of study in the public high schools, and in the public elementary schools of all districts in which a demand for such instruction was made conformably to the state law.

"2. Number of schools, classes and teachers. During the year 1915-1916, German was taught in forty-one district schools and in the high schools. In February, 1916, there were 476 German classes in the district schools, and 85 in the high schools. The district school classes in German were taught by forty-four teachers and six substitutes; in the high schools, German was taught by fifteen teachers. . . .

"3. . . . In June 1916, 332 graduates from the elementary schools had completed the German course; 273 received high school credit; 288 will go to high school; 271 enrolled in the advanced course of German in the high schools. . . .

⁴³ *Ibid.*, September 26, 1916.

"6. Elementary German in the District Schools. In the district schools of Indianapolis, German is begun as an optional study in the second year, and continued to the end of the eighth year. It is a well-known fact, that one who begins a modern language in childhood will acquire a thorough knowledge. In childhood the organs of speech are in a plastic condition. Good habits are easily formed; bad habits are easily corrected. Because the mind acts more naively and the memory is more tenacious, forms of expression are readily mastered as simple facts. Later, when the mind grows stronger and more rigid, when the period of analyzing and reasoning begins, and speech habits in the mother tongue have been fixed, it is difficult to acquire even a fairly good pronunciation, and thinking in the foreign language becomes a difficult task. 'With the dawn of puberty certain linguistic possibilities are lost beyond the power of retrieval. This, I think, is the consensus on the continent and most here realize that we begin too late.' (G. Stanley Hall, *Some Psychological Aspects of the Teaching of the Modern Languages*.) The time allotted to German in the district schools is from twenty-five to thirty minutes daily. German is the language in the class room. Books, objects and pictures supply the material for oral and aural work, reading and writing. In the primary grade the child's life and surroundings in school and home furnish the principal subjects. . . .

"The systematic study of grammar is begun in the fifth grade. In this grade the children become acquainted with little German stories and fairy tales. . . . In all grades poems are memorized, stories dramatized and acted and the singing of German songs enliven the class-room work and enrich the lives of the children.

"7. Advanced German in the High Schools (3½ years). Pupils who have completed the seven-year course in German in the district schools with a high school credit are offered 3½ years of advanced German in the high schools. This work is a continuation and extension of the work in the grammar grades. In the application of the direct method, translation is the exception, and not the rule, because the 'Sprachgefühl' has been developed to such a degree, and the vocabulary is of such wide range, that the subject matter can be treated in the foreign vernacular.

"Each year a number of those who completed the

advanced courses pass the written and oral examinations for license to teach German in the Indianapolis district schools. Those who go to college will obtain advanced standing in the German department there.

“The object of this course is to bring the pupil’s mind through the intensive study of a number of classics, modern fiction and plays into contact with some of the greatest minds in Germany, to give the pupil an insight into modern German life, with its customs and manners, its joys and sorrows, and to render him more proficient in every day conversation. He then will ‘feel the spirit of another nation, share its aspirations, understand its points of view, and thus strengthen the fraternal bonds and increase the motives of peace and good will.’ (Stanley Hall)

“8. Elementary German in the High Schools. In the courses offered to pupils who begin German in the high schools, the direct method dominates the instruction. There is, however, sufficient practice to enable the pupils to pass the examinations in German required for admission to colleges where the direct method does not prevail.”⁴⁴

Peter Scherer’s report was in reality the swan song for German instruction in Indianapolis. War was declared in April, 1917. The first indication of trouble came in May,

⁴⁴ *Annual Report, 1915-1916*, pp. 92, 130-133.

Highest Enrollment in German of the Year Pupils of German Parentage	Feb. 19, 1909			Feb. 25, 1916		
	Dist. Sch.	H.S.	Total	Dist. Sch.	H.S.	Total
Pupils of Non-German Parentage	1,793	301	2,094	1,568	527	2,095
Pupils of Non-German Parentage	4,708	694	5,402	6,593	1,252	7,845
Total	6,501	995	7,496	8,161	1,779	9,940
Enrollment in German at the end of the year:						
District Schools	June 18, 1909			June 9, 1916		
High Schools	6,186			8,151		
	946			1,641		

According to the *Annual Report*, 134, the status of French and Spanish at this time was as follows: “In October, 1916, 176 pupils were enrolled in 9 classes in Shortridge High School and Technical High School. In September, 1916, French was introduced in Technical High School. [The author taught this first class.] Spanish was introduced in Manual Training High School and Technical High School in September, 1916. In Shortridge High School Spanish had been taught for the last two years. In October, 1916, 105 pupils were enrolled in six classes, in the three high schools.” The report was signed: “Peter Scherer, Director of Modern Languages.” The last complete *Course of Study in German* for the Indianapolis Public Schools was published September, 1914.

when the school board received a letter from the American Rights Committee. The letter read: "To the Board of School Commissioners of the City of Indianapolis,

"We have been reliably informed that the children in at least some of the public schools in the City of Indianapolis have been and are being permitted and required to sing the 'Star Spangled Banner' and other patriotic songs in the German language.

"The language of the United States of America is the English language. The 'Star Spangled Banner' and 'America' are national songs and should be invested with the same high quality of affection and respect that is paid to the flag. They should no more be used as mere exercises for the instruction of children in foreign languages than the flag should be used for commercial purposes. They should be invested with only the highest patriotic significance, and such school children as do not know the English words of these songs should be required to learn them and be taught their meaning. We decidedly oppose the teaching of American children to sing American patriotic songs in a foreign language at any time, but for American children to be taught to sing the 'Star Spangled Banner,' 'America' and other patriotic songs in German when the United States is at war with Germany is an impropriety so glaring that it would be ludicrous, if it concerned matters less grave. Section 6582a Burns Annotated Indiana Statutes 1914 (being section 1 of an Act in force April 5, 1909) provides that the State Board of Education require the singing of 'The Star Spangled Banner' in its entirety in the schools of the state of Indiana upon all patriotic occasions. It is unbelievable that the Legislature, when it enacted this law, intended that our national songs should be sung by our children in a foreign language.

"We do not, of course, know that this practice has been sanctioned by your Board. We request that the Board make an immediate investigation of the facts and that if they are found to be as stated in the first paragraph of this letter, then, on behalf of this organization, which consists of about five hundred American citizens and tax payers of this City, we demand that the practice be abandoned forthwith and never resumed."

The signers of this letter were: Booth Tarkington, Frank S. Fishback, Garvin M. Brown, Samuel D. Miller,

Henry W. Bennett, Charles S. Lewis, Alex R. Holliday, Maurice E. Tennant, Hugh McK. Landon, and A. M. Glossbrenner.⁴⁵

Very noticeable in the minutes of the board, after war was declared, was the fact that delegations petitioning the board for enlarged school quarters or for a new building no longer included "and that German be taught" in their request. Instead there were requests that certain partitions be removed, partitions, no doubt, which had been put into rooms in recent years to create more space for instruction in German.⁴⁶

On September 11, 1917, the *Täglicher Telegraph und Tribüne* carried a short article which announced the abolition of German in the public schools of Hoboken, the only city in Hudson County, perhaps even in all New Jersey, in which German had been taught in the elementary schools.⁴⁷ The paper made no comment but the brief notice "cast its shadow before." An editorial in the same paper on October 1, 1917, said that Scherer had prepared a brochure containing remarks made by English and American specialists on the practicality of the study of foreign languages.⁴⁸ German was on the defensive.

On January 29, 1918, at the meeting of the board of trustees, Commissioner Clarence E. Crippin introduced the following resolution:

"Whereas, The second semester of the public schools of the city of Indianapolis will be begun as soon as the fuel situation will permit; and

"Whereas, The beginning of a school semester is the natural and most favorable time for the commencement or discontinuance of studies by the pupils

"Whereas, For many years the German language has, to the exclusion of all other modern foreign languages, been ordered by law to be taught in the graded schools of Indianapolis; and

"Whereas, A state of war exists between the Government of the United States and the Imperial Government of Ger-

⁴⁵ Minutes, May 8, 1917.

⁴⁶ See, for example, *ibid.*, March 12, 1918.

⁴⁷ *Telegraph*, September 11, 1917.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, October 1, 1917. The paper remarked: "Bekanntlich sind gerade in der jetzigen Zeit viele Stimmen gegen den deutschen Unterricht laut geworden."

many, and in consequence thereof many of the pupils have asked to be excused from the further study of German and parents of pupils have expressed a desire that the teaching of the German language be discontinued in the graded schools of Indianapolis; therefore be it

“Resolved, By the Board of School Commissioners of the City of Indianapolis that the teaching of the German language in the graded schools of the school city of Indianapolis be and hereby is discontinued from and after the date of the adoption of this resolution by the said board of School Commissioners and be it further

“Resolved, That the Board of School Commissioners of the City of Indianapolis subscribes to the belief that the public schools should teach our boys and girls the principle of one nation, one language, and one flag, and should not assist in perpetuating the language of an alien enemy in our homes and enemy viewpoints in the community; and be it further

“Resolved, By the Board of School Commissioners of the City of Indianapolis that the teachers now employed and under contract to teach the German language in the graded schools of Indianapolis be assigned to other duties by the superintendent of public schools until such contracts shall have expired; and be it further

“Resolved, That because and in consequence of the foregoing resolutions, the position of director of languages in the grade schools be and hereby is discontinued, and that the occupant of this position shall be assigned by the Superintendent of Schools to other duties during the life of his contract.”⁴⁹

The resolution was adopted. There was only one dissenting vote, that of Theodore Stempfel. His reply to the resolution was in part as follows: “This resolution has been introduced on account of the present political and international situation. It is my opinion that this makes it more than otherwise important that we, as school commissioners, should be absolutely free from bias and passion and treat the large question involved from a broad and constructive educational standpoint. Any radical change we may make in the curriculum of our schools will affect the education of the children of our city, not only for the present time, but also for the

⁴⁹ Minutes, January 29, 1918.

future. It is the easiest thing in the world to destroy. It would not require any thought whatever, but only a pre-arranged vote of three members of this board, to eliminate with one stroke from the school curriculum any subject which for years has been taught in our schools with good results. By passing this resolution offered, you are heartlessly destroying what has been successfully built up by the conscientious work of teachers for half a century; . . . You are doing precisely the opposite of the advice given by the United States Commissioner of Education, and by leading educators of our own country and abroad. . . ."⁵⁰ This protest was ordered spread on the minutes, but there is no record of its having produced a reconsideration of the step taken. As far as the majority members of the school board were concerned, German was irrevocably dropped from the curriculum of the forty-six grade schools in which it was being taught at the time.

This time the *Telegraph* was not able to take up the fight for German instruction as it had done in 1867, 1869, and 1890. This time German newspapers, too, were in just as much danger as German instruction, and it wasn't long until they went the same way. A brief editorial stating that the action was no surprise was the only comment the *Telegraph* ventured.⁵¹

Even after the drastic action of putting German out of the elementary schools, complaints continued to be made to the board. The United States was at war with Germany and at that time knowledge of the enemy's language was considered a liability, not an asset; hence the many criticisms hurled at the instruction of German which are recorded in the minutes were to be expected. On March 12, for instance, the board had sent out notices to all principals that the poem, "Kaiserblumen," in the third reader, was not to be read or studied by the children. It was suggested that it be eliminated by pasting together the pages on which it was written. By way of contrast, on that same date the board received a letter from the Robert Nix Memorial Association of Indianapolis, asking that the board transmit the association's entire income to the Teachers' Pension Fund, since the body of teachers from which the association's membership came no longer existed. The board wrote a letter of thanks in reply,

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Telegraph*, February 1, 1918.

saying in part: ". . . your generous donation is worthy of the high civic ideals always characterizing your esteemed Association. . . . this disposition . . . will be an incentive and an inspiration leading to a more unselfish type of citizenship and to a more enlightened and liberal public spirit among all classes of our people in this community. The Board regrets that circumstances have caused the dissolution of an Association, the value of which both educationally and socially, has been established here for so many years." On April 9, 1918, the following resolution was received and was adopted by the unanimous vote of the board:

"Whereas, complaints have been made by various patriotic societies of the City of Indianapolis, Indiana, relative to the use of a certain text-book in the German language known and entitled as 'Beginners German' and written or compiled under the directions of Professors Max Walter and Carl A. Krause, which said text-book is alleged to be pro-German in its tendencies, teachings and influence, and which was adopted and selected for use in the Schools of Indiana, by a former Board of School Book Commissioners, and Whereas, the Board of School Book Commissioners of the City of Indianapolis is desirous of protecting the youth of the city from all influences inimical to the principles of patriotism and true Americanism, and of keeping unsullied and pre-eminent in their minds and hearts, their devotion to our country and its matchless institutions:

"Therefore be it resolved, by the Board of School Commissioners of the City of Indianapolis, Indiana, that the Honorable Board of School Commissioners for the State of Indiana be requested to select and adopt such books for the use of classes in German, and otherwise, as shall not be susceptible to the criticism heretofore described, and which shall, in addition to the specific instruction intended, awaken and nourish those patriotic impulses and love of country, so essential to the maintenance of an enlightened and democratic form of government, and to the perpetuity of our great Republic."⁵²

Shortly after this, June 14, the Marion County Council of Defense submitted the following resolutions to the board: "Whereas the teaching of German in the Indianapolis public schools has been unduly promoted at great expense to the tax payers, while the teaching of French and Spanish languages

⁵² Minutes, April 9, 1918.

has been neglected and not given the attention that the interest of our country demands, and

"Whereas, the teaching of the French language was by the old Board of School Commissioners placed entirely under the direction of the Supervisor of the German language,

"Therefore be it resolved that the Marion County Council of Defense request that the Board of School Commissioners take the teaching and supervision of the French language out from under the control and direction of the German Supervisor and place it under the supervision of a competent person who is of known American loyalty and by birth and training in sympathy with the French people who have made such magnificent and supreme sacrifices in the cause of human Liberty and Freedom.

"Be it further resolved, that the Marion County Council request the said Board to incorporate in all contracts with teachers a clause as follows: This contract is entered into upon the representation of the teacher by whom it is signed that he or she has been, is now, and will continue to be thoroughly loyal to the United States and the nations joined with her in the present world struggle for human liberty and democracy, and it is mutually agreed that any act, utterance, or association with others on the part of said teacher, tending to inculcate or aid in the support of, or admiration for the German Kaiser or the existing Government, or Kultur of Germany, shall be sufficient cause for the termination of this contract." Again the board concurred.

Eleven days later there was a protest from L'union Fraternelle Française against the appointment of Peter Scherer as Supervisor of French, he being of German birth, education, and training and formerly employed as Supervisor of German. The president of the board assured the petitioners that their petition would receive consideration. The following month a delegation composed of Carl Lieber, Clemens Vonnegut, and George Mueller "appeared before the board, in behalf of Mr. Scherer, asking that he be retained in the position in which he had been employed the preceding year." The board solved its dilemma by means of the following resolution by Clarence E. Crippin:

"Whereas, it is considered advisable by the Board of School Commissioners of the City of Indianapolis to reorganize the Department for the teaching of Modern Foreign Languages in the Indianapolis Public Schools.

"Therefore, be it resolved, by the Board of School Commissioners that the position known as 'Director of Modern Languages,' be, and the same hereby is, now abolished. Be it further resolved that Mr. Peter Scherer be, and he hereby is, employed as 'Supervisor of German' in the High Schools of Indianapolis, to re-organize and consolidate the remaining classes in High School German during the semester ending on or about February 1, 1919."

This resolution "was adopted by a full affirmative vote of all of the members of the board, although Commissioner Tutewiler being absent, communicated her vote in favor of the resolution through Commissioner Crippin." After the resolution was adopted, the following clause of loyalty was inserted into the teacher contracts: The undersigned teacher further agrees that disloyalty to the United States of America on the part of the teacher either in spoken or written word or act, shall be ground for the teacher's discharge "for cause" within the meaning of that term as used herein.

Peter Scherer was placed in charge of German in the high schools only, but that, too, was an untenable position, for now there was only a pitiful remnant of German left in the high schools. At Shortridge High School in September, 1918, the enrollment was a mere 31, whereas in June, 1915, it had reached an all time high of 703, and in June, 1917, it had still been 520.⁵³ Technical High School reached its highest peak in 1916-1917 with an enrollment of 1,178, of which only 112 were left in September, 1918.⁵⁴ With such rapid decreases in one short year, it scarcely needed the action of the legislature, which, with a sweeping gesture, rooted out German instruction from all grade schools of the state, public and private, on February 25, 1919, and from the state's high schools on March 13.⁵⁵

⁵³ The records at Shortridge High School show the following:

Semester	Enrollment	Semester	Enrollment
September-January, 1915	639	January-June, 1917	520
January-June, 1915	703	September-January, 1918	305
September-January, 1916	607	January-June, 1918	204
January-June, 1916	603	September-January, 1919	31
September-January, 1917	513		

⁵⁴ The enrollment figures of Technical High School were:

1914-1915	731	1917-1918	705
1915-1916	985	1918-1919	112
1916-1917	1,178		

⁵⁵ *Laws of Indiana*, 1919, p. 50: "Section 1. *Be it enacted by the general assembly of the State of Indiana*, That all subjects and branches taught in the elementary schools of the State of Indiana . . . shall be

When we look back over the years and see the untold number of hours of labor which went into the building up of German instruction in the public schools of the city of Indianapolis—hours and labor contributed by men and women who worked for love as well as for pay, men and women who wearied, but never despaired, since they were inspired by an unshakable faith in all that was best in German culture—we realize that much was lost when German was banned from the schools of Indiana.

Now the circle is complete. Once again in the history of education, not just in one state but all over America, efforts are being made to make our country language-conscious and to begin teaching modern languages in the grades. Methods, aims, and immediate objectives advocated are quite similar to those in use during the flowering of German instruction between 1869 and 1919, despite a change in the terminology descriptive thereof. Boys and girls of a bygone day, who began their German in the second grade and continued it through high school, acquired a competence in the spoken language and in reading, a proficiency in writing letters and free compositions, as well as an insight into another culture, an insight progressively brought about by area studies, song, verse, lore, and literature. The circle is complete, but it has sprung its bounds. America's leadership in the world today has widened the outlook to include foreign language in the

taught in the English language only, and the trustee, and such other officers as may be in control, shall have taught in them, . . . such . . . branches of learning as the advancement of pupils may require, and the trustee, and other officers in control direct: *Provided*, That the German language shall not be taught in any of the elementary schools of this state. . . .

"Sec. 2. All private and parochial schools and all schools maintained in connection with benevolent and correctional institutions within this state which instruct pupils who have not completed a course of study equivalent to that prescribed for the first eight grades of the elementary schools of this state, shall be taught in the English language only, and the persons or officers in control shall have taught in them such branches of learning as the advancement of pupils may require, and the persons or officers in control direct: *Provided*, That the German language shall not be taught in any such schools within this state."

Ibid., 822-823: "AN ACT to amend section 2 of an act entitled 'An act in relation to high school', approved March 9, 1907. . . . Approved March 13, 1919. . . .

Section 1. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Indiana*, That Section 2 of the above entitled act be amended to read as follows: Section 2. The following enumerated studies shall be taught in all commissioned high schools throughout the state. . . . Latin or any modern foreign language except German."

plural and has directed our gaze beyond the boundaries of one land or two to encompass an understanding of our fellow men in whatever clime they may be. This is a fitting ideal for modern language study, an ideal which unwittingly modernizes a pattern of long ago, when in 1908, German teachers of Indianapolis hoped that through a knowledge of German culture in the broad sense of the word they might contribute "to the ideal realm of intellect in which Germany and America shall unite in solving the problems of humanity."