

DER ACKERMANN-FALL

Kevin Raddatz
Church History
Professor Fredrich
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Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library
11431 N. Seminary Drive. 65W
Mequon, Wisconsin

DER ACKERMANN-FALL

Fond du Lac, Wis., Jan. 30, 1918.

Hon. Ambrose Tighe,
Commission of Public Safety,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Sir:

Complying with the request of the committee and board, Prof. Ackermann has tendered his resignation, same to take effect immediately,

Respectfully,
G. E. Bergemann.¹

With this short note Wisconsin Synod president G. E. Bergemann informed the State of Minnesota that Professor Adolph Ackermann had resigned as professor and director at Doctor Martin Luther College. But this simple and straightforward letter belies the fact that the Ackermann matter was neither simple nor straightforward. It does not even begin to address the difficult moral questions that led to Ackermann's resignation and the deep and lasting hurt that it caused. But the sad fact is that the hysteria of the wartime crisis led both Ackermann and "the powers that were" to treat this matter as if it were simple and straightforward. As a result, the very difficult question of the relationship between prudence and principle may have been forgotten and was most probably abused.

In digging into the facts behind Ackermann's resignation we are somewhat handicapped. The dismissal, or requested resignation, of a college director is synodical "dirty laundry." Even if the dismissal were unquestionably appropriate, it wouldn't have been a pleasant subject to deal with, and an even less pleasant subject to read about, so virtually nothing of the

matter was written into the official records and publications of the synod.

I think it is safe to say the same thing about this matter from the state's point of view. In this matter the state was playing fast and loose with the Constitution. Here the state, in denying a private citizen his right to free speech and assembly, was also coming dangerously close to bridging the gap between church and state by dictating to a private religious body what action it should take regarding one of its called workers. And so we find the state's official records to be vaguely neutral or ambiguous, and its official correspondence to be somewhat inconsistent with the official record. Even so, the information that was recorded and that is still available, while it doesn't answer every question, does give us enough insight into the matter to make for an interesting study in the use or misuse of power and in the struggle between abandoning prudence for the sake of principles and abandoning principles when it seemingly becomes prudent to do so.

In his History of the Wisconsin Synod J. P. Koehler summarizes the matter into a simple and straightforward history and commentary:

Thru [sic] his own political activity and the subsequent spinelessness of the Synod higher-ups he [Ackermann] lost his position at the school in the World War I year 1917.²

In these few words Koehler lays the blame for the matter on Ackermann and the synod harshly criticizing the latter for its

handling of the matter. Koehler's free-standing commentary on the Ackermann matter leaves the reader with several questions of objective historical fact. First, what was Ackermann's political activity? Then, what forces did Ackermann's politics stir up against DMLC? And finally, how did the synod react to these outside pressures? These fairly simple questions must then be followed up by the more difficult subjective questions. Was Ackermann's political activity proper? Did it warrant his dismissal from his position? And finally, was Koehler justified in charging the DMLC Board of Control including Bergemann with "spinelessness"? In this paper we will review the evidence to try to answer these questions.

To properly understand Ackermann and the position of the state that charged him with disloyalty we need to look at Ackermann's background. Adolph Ackermann was born on January 11, 1871, in Mittel-Schlechtbach, Wuerttemberg, Germany, to Lutheran peasants. After attending the Lyceum at Reutlingen and the Latin school in Schorndorff, Ackermann entered the Mission Institute in Gross-ingersheim.

The young Ackermann had decided to become either a pastor or a missionary so at the age of fourteen the director of the mission institute advised Ackermann along with several of his friends to continue their education at DMLC in New Ulm, Minnesota. Ackermann enrolled in 1885, graduated in 1890, and taught at Immanuel Lutheran Church, rural Courtland until 1892, when he entered Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis.³

While at Concordia he studied under Pieper, Bente, Guenther, Stoeckhardt, Graebner, and Fuerbringer.⁴ It is interesting (although probably meaningless) to note that during the war Professor Friedrich Bente also was quite active in demonstrating for neutrality.⁵ Ackermann continued his studies at Concordia for less than two years, and instead of finishing the three-year course he returned to DMLC to assist the faculty in the spring term of 1894. During the summer of that year he accepted the call as full-time professor in New Ulm.⁶

The year 1897 was a milestone year for Ackermann. On January 9, he swore allegiance to the United States and became a citizen. Then on August 1, he passed a colloquy and was ordained as a clergyman. Eleven years later, in 1908, Ackermann accepted the call to be director of the college.⁷

By the time World War I broke out in 1914, Ackermann had spent the majority of his life in New Ulm and was considered one of her leading citizens. Since it was Germans who founded New Ulm, the German language which was spoken in New Ulm, and the German culture which was lived in New Ulm, it is no surprise that New Ulm to a large degree was opposed to going to war against Germany. In March 1917, a public referendum produced a twenty-three to one vote against entering the war.⁸ It should also be no surprise that Director Ackermann, himself a German immigrant, was also against going to war against Germany.

Adolph Ackermann had been a zealous student. As director he was zealous in promoting a growing DMLC. And as United States

citizen Ackermann was zealous in sharing his views on American involvement in the war. On February 14, 1917, Ackermann sent President Wilson and the local congressman F. F. Ellsworth a telegram.

Representative citizens familiar with public opinion, beg to submit that this community does not want war. Americans were warned to keep out of danger zone in Mexico, why not warned to stay off ammunition ships. Wall Street and ammunition manufacturers is [sic] not voice of the people. 'He kept us out of war' is good slogan.⁹

Ackermann's denunciation of Wall Street and the ammunition manufacturers was typical of his later speeches and the New Ulm anti-war movement in general.

On March 30, Ackermann was given the opportunity to share his views with the people. On that Friday evening almost a thousand people gathered in the local armory for a peace meeting. There they heard pleas for peace from Mayor Louis A. Fritsche, City Attorney Major Albert Pfaender, Father Robert Schlinkert, Captain Albert Steinhauser (war-hero turned radical newspaper publisher), DMLC professor A. F. Reim, prominent businessman F. H. Retzlaff (also a member of the DMLC Board of Directors), and Dr. O. C. Strickler. Ackermann, in making "the most extended address of the evening . . . discussed the situation from the standpoint of the Constitution of the United States."¹⁰ He reminded his audience of their constitutional rights of free speech and the freedom of the press and then he exercised his right to free speech:

. . . A subsidized press is parading their flaring headlines, urging war, before the people and we are moving rapidly toward a position where we cannot maintain peace. Before war is declared the people should be heard. They are the ones, who fight the battles of the country. . . it is also well that the ones, who do the fighting have something to say whether they are willing to go to war or not. Because a person does not favor this war is no sign that he is un-American."

"The editors of the metropolitan press, who are doing all they can to get us into war, will not have to fight the battles. The ammunition makers will not have to go to the front; the millionaires will not be found in the trenches, no it is the common people. They fight the battles and also pay the bills. I say keep out of war for humanity's sake. Humanity, like charity, begins at home. We should keep our citizens off munition ships and they will not run the risk of being killed. I submit to you there is no cause for war and I am for peace and we should use every means to avoid becoming entangled in the European situation.¹¹

The meeting ended with the passing of resolutions calling for peace and neutrality and a resolution to send a committee of citizens to make their case in Washington, D. C. Ackermann was supposedly chosen to be a member of that committee and was reported to have left for Washington apart from the other committee members. There is, however, no record of his actually having gone.¹²

One week after the March 30 peace meeting the United States entered the war against Germany. Ten days later, on April 16, the Minnesota Commission of Public Safety was created by the state legislature at the request of Governor Burnquist. Governor Burnquist was a strong supporter of the war and felt a need for a super-governmental agency to combat anyone and anything, plant, animal, or human, that might hinder the state's war-efforts.

Saloons, barberry bushes, the German language, and anybody not ardently pro-war became the targets of the Commission's almost unlimited power. Naturally, New Ulm was suspect and put under surveillance by the end of April.¹³

The Public Safety Commission's concern over New Ulm's loyalty didn't seem to bother New Ulm's peace faction. After losing the war to keep the United States out of the European conflict, the New Ulm anti-war movement became an anti-draft movement. If they couldn't keep America out of the war as a whole, they hoped to keep unwilling Americans, especially Germans, from being forced to fight the war. This impossible hope led to the "draft protest" meeting of July 25. Frederick Luebke describes this meeting as the nation's "only major ethnic demonstration against conscription."¹⁴ According to the organizers this meeting originally started out as a "draft education meeting" to explain the requirements of the draft to the public. Exactly how this "education" meeting became a "protest" meeting is unknown. At any rate, anywhere from five to ten thousand people from New Ulm and the surrounding area gathered at Turner Park along with newspaper reporters from the Twin Cities and state and federal detectives. The cast of speakers for this meeting was nearly identical to the speaker list for the March 29 meeting. Again Fritsche, Pfaender, Steinhauser, Retzlaff, and Ackermann spoke. Joining Ackermann from the college this time was Professor Wagner.¹⁵

It is interesting to note that it was F. H. Retzlaff, member of the DMLC Board of Directors, who asked Ackermann to speak at the meeting. In a letter written to the state Public Safety Commission in support of Ackermann, George Graff, director of the Lincoln County Public Safety Commission, commented "that his [Ackermann's] taking part in that meeting was in reality forced upon him by some of his superiors at the college who are not as yet right."¹⁶ Whether Graff was referring to Retzlaff is unknown. But we can be sure that his contention that Ackermann was "forced" to participate in the meeting was wrong.

Ackermann's testimony given at a state hearing into the matter on October 2 shows that when Retzlaff called him asking him to speak, he understood from Retzlaff that the meeting was to be held for the purpose of petitioning Congress not to send troops to Europe. He also testified that Retzlaff assured him that nothing disloyal would happen at the meeting. In fact in his speech he said that he was participating to attest to the loyalty of the city.¹⁷ (The New Ulm men saw no contradiction here, but the state saw things differently.)

Ackermann's speech of July 25 echoed many of the thoughts of his March 30 speech. Again he declared that the Constitution guaranteed the right of free speech and peaceable assembly and now added the right of petitioning Congress. He repeated the thought that they had a right to know who they were fighting for and that they didn't want to fight for Wall Street, England, or France. And again he suggested that the government should shift

its efforts from making war to creating humanity at home mentioning the recent killing of negroes in East St. Louis and the poor working conditions for men and women throughout the country.

New to this speech was the suggestion that the people send petitions to the president and to Congress because their representative in Congress, by voting for war, was failing to work and vote according to their interests. When he mentioned that more than eighty percent of the voters disagreed with their representative about his duty, the crowd applauded. But Ackermann responded: "I do not give a snap for your applause if you do not go to the polls and see to it, that this representative is not re-elected." Ackermann closed his speech with an appeal to the crowd not to forget their duties as citizens.¹⁸

Unofficial response to the meeting was quick. People either agreed and requested one of the New Ulm men to speak in their community or they disagreed and condemned New Ulm as treasonous. But Ackermann and the other leaders of the anti-draft movement were undaunted by the harsh criticism they found in the newspapers, in their mail, and even in New Ulm itself. Ackermann joined the rest of the anti-draft leaders on the speaking circuit with a speech in Gibbon on August 3 and shortly after that another in Glencoe.

Besides the July 25 New Ulm meeting it was the Gibbon meeting which caused Ackermann to receive special attention from

the state. In its article announcing Ackermann's resignation from the college the New Ulm Review reported:

The charge made against Prof. Ackermann is that he spoke at several meetings, especially the one in New Ulm July 25th 1917, and the one at Gibbon. . . . Special stress is laid on the fact that the Gibbon meeting was held in spite of the wishes of the members of the Public Safety Commission who had appeared there by a representative and wanted the meeting stopped.

The Gibbon meeting is a good example of how determined the New Ulm group was. Even when directly warned by the Public Safety Commission not to meet, they refused to yield. Before the meeting a representative of the Public Safety Commission met with the speakers, the village, and the sheriff in an effort to prevent the meeting from taking place. The outcome of this was that the village council decided to move the meeting outside the village limits. There Ackermann, along with Pfaender and Retzlaff, spoke to a crowd of about 2000. (The Public Safety Commission, perhaps to make the meeting appear to be more significant, estimated the crowd at 6000.)¹⁹

By the end of August the New Ulm men had recognized the futility of continuing their protests. Whether they realized that their effort had failed or they saw the Public Safety Commission readying itself to take action, on August 27, H. C. Hess, the director of the Brown County Public Safety Commission, could report that Ackermann, Fritsche, Retzlaff, and Pfaender had voted for a resolution that called for what amounted to a New Ulm loyalty meeting.²⁰

The meeting in Glencoe in early August is the last reported

incident of Ackermann's war and draft protesting. When we consider Ackermann's speeches we might wonder where he learned his politics. Professor Morton Schroeder, in his study of the Ackermann matter, suggests that Ackermann was influenced and confirmed in his anti-war position by the Gemeindeblatt and The Northwestern Lutheran.²¹ Without going into a study of their politics, in these magazines we see repeated references to Germany as "the Fatherland," and editorials and articles with a definite pro-German slant. When we read what the local newspapers reported of Ackermann's politics we see no reference to Germany as "the Fatherland." Nor do we hear Ackermann promote sympathy for the Germans. Instead we hear emphasized, on the one hand, the rights guaranteed to the citizen of the United States by the Constitution and the citizen's obligation to the government to fulfill certain duties, and on the other hand, a denunciation Wall Street, Big Business, and to a lesser degree England and France. Ackermann's opinion that the United States' involvement in the war was started and supported by Wall Street and the munitions makers and that the victims of the war would be the poor who would pay with their money and their blood closely paralleled the anti-war position of the Nonpartisan League. This group had taken a strong pacifist stand and had recruited thousands of members in western Minnesota during 1916.²² Whether he was actually speaking a member of the League or not is unknown. It seems more probable that he was simply speaking as the New Ulmite he was.

Regardless of the origins of Ackermann's politics, it is clear that he always considered himself a loyal citizen of his adopted country. It is also clear that at no time did Ackermann ever ask or intend to suggest that anyone be disloyal or break the laws of the United States. In his March speech he began by reading the oath administered to all naturalized citizens and reminded the naturalized citizens that when they took that oath of allegiance to the United States they had renounced the country of their birth.²³ And as we noted earlier, Ackermann ended his July speech by appealing to everyone not to forget his duty as a citizen.

To the Public Safety Commission it didn't matter much that Ackermann and the New Ulm men considered themselves loyal. The Public Safety Commission was operating with a war-time test of loyalty that didn't leave room for the basic constitutional freedoms of speech, assembly, and the press. The Public Safety Commission declared: "The test of loyalty in war times is whether a man is wholeheartedly for the war and subordinates everything else to its successful prosecution."²⁴ This left little room for Ackermann's politicking. In fact an editorial in the Public Safety Commission's war-time publication, Minnesota in the War," seemed to have Ackermann in mind when it defined "treason talk." "Treason Talk" is "Why are we in this war? . . . This is not our war. This is England's war. . . . This is a rich man's war."²⁵ With Ackermann's view of loyal activities so clearly at odds with the state's view, it not surprising that on

November 20, 1917, the Public Safety Commission decided to take action against the professor.

The Public Safety Commission had already taken action against the New Ulm public officials involved in the July 25 meeting. In August the Commission had sent the governor a report on the July 25 meeting. In this report the Commission indicated that proceedings would be instituted to remove Mayor Fritsche, City Attorney Pfaender, and Brown County Auditor Louis Vogel from office. No indication was made of any action to be taken against Ackermann. On August 22, the governor suspended the above officials from office pending official hearings, and on September 7, formal charges were drawn up against the officials. The state, however, was still silent concerning any possible action against Ackermann. Ackermann was called to the witness stand during hearings conducted on October 2, but the state was still primarily interested in the activities of the public officials.

Finally, on November 20, the Public Safety Commission directed its attention toward Professor Ackermann. Exactly why the Commission decided to take action against Ackermann at this late date (months after his last speech) is unknown. Perhaps it was the intention of the Commission to take action against Ackermann all along. And now with the cases against the New Ulm officials all but wrapped up with the final removal hearings scheduled for later in the week, the Commission felt it was time to proceed against Ackermann. Or perhaps it was a matter of public pressure exerted on the Commission. In announcing

Ackermann's resignation the New Ulm Review stated :

It is currently reported that citizens from here kept the matter alive and that even if the Public Safety Commission had wanted to forget their plans to have Prof. Ackermann ousted they were prevented from doing so by activities from here.²⁶

A third possibility is that the Commission wanted to exert more control over the state's teachers (especially those who taught in German). In his November 17 speech in St. Paul, Governor Burnquist declared: "Every official of the government, every school teacher, or municipal official who is not a loyal citizen should be forced out."²⁷ The same issue of Minnesota in the War that reported the governor's speech also editorialized on the importance of loyal teachers.

The teacher, more than any other agent of Americanism, is in a position to make the people understand the national peril; and the teacher, more than any other force, should be able to influence the American home to see and to do its duty in the war crisis.²⁸

Perhaps it was the Public Safety Commission's hope that Ackermann's removal would instill unswerving loyalty in the hearts of the rest of Minnesota's German-speaking teachers. Along these same lines the Ackermann action may have been intended to be something of an exclamation point to show that the Commission meant business when it recommended that school instruction in German be stopped. That German language recommendation was brought up in the November 20 meeting just before the Ackermann matter was discussed.

Whatever thinking may have been behind the Commission's actions, the official minutes from the Public Safety Commission

meeting on November 20, report:

Moved by Commissioner Lind, seconded by Commissioner Ames, that Counsel Tighe [the PSC attorney] be instructed to mail a copy of the testimony taken at Brown County hearing [October 2] to the trustees of Martin Luther College at New Ulm and ask their approval or disapproval of the stand of Professor A. Ackermann as given by him therein. Motion carried.²⁹

On the following day Public Safety Commission Attorney Tighe directed his efforts to the Ackermann matter with the following letter.³⁰ The last two paragraphs in this letter are especially interesting. After conveying the Commission's request for information, Tighe suggests that the Commission would be looking for the college trustees to take some action. Tighe then closes with a warning that leaves little doubt as to what that action should be.

Nov. 21, 1917.

Board of Trustees,
The Martin Luther College,
New Ulm, Minn.

Gentlemen:

The Commission has instructed me as follows:

1. To send you a transcript of the evidence of Dr. A. Ackerman [sic] as taken by the official reporter at the recent hearing in the proceedings for the removal of Albert Pfaender and others. I do this herewith,
2. To invite your attention to the character of Dr. Ackerman's [sic] evidence, and
3. To ask from you in your official capacity as trustees an expression of opinion as to the propriety of Dr. Ackerman's [sic] conduct in the premises, as to whether his position represents the position of the college in the matters involved, and as to what, if any, action you may be proposing to take under the circumstances.

A prompt answer will be appreciated. The Commission will not tolerate the continued operation in the State of any educational institutions the teachings and instructors in which are not unquestioningly loyal.

Truly yours,

Ambrose Tighe

On November 23, H. Klatt, secretary of the DMLC Board of Directors, acknowledged receipt of Tighe's letter and informed him that the board would take up the Ackermann matter at its regular meeting on December 5.³¹ At the December 5 meeting the DMLC Board of Directors set up a committee to investigate the Ackermann matter. Chairman of the committee was synod president G. E. Bergemann³² with Pastor J. Gamm of La Crosse,³³ and F. Schweppe of St. James,³⁴ serving as members.*

The committee seemed to get off to a slow start. It wasn't until December 31, that Klatt, after conferring with Bergemann through the mail, reported to the Public Safety Commission how the Board of Directors was proceeding in the Ackermann matter.³⁵

The Board of Directors of the Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., has appointed a committee to take the matter pertaining to Prof. A. Ackermann under advisement and to report to your honorable body. Because of the holidays and ministerial duties and because of the fact that the transcript is being sent to the individual members, said committee has not been able to finish the work.

The chairman of said committee is the Rt. Rev. G. E. Bergemann, 52 First Street, Fondulac [sic], Wis.

Trusting that you will have a little more patience with us in order that we may investigate thoroughly, we beg to remain

Yours respectfully,
The Board of Directors.

*The minutes of the meetings on both December 5, 1917, and January 29, 1918, are unavailable. The 1917 - 1918 DMLC catalogue lists Rev. E. A. Pankow, chairman, F. Kannenberg, secretary, W. H. Graebner, treasurer, F. H. Retzlaff, E. W. Zutz, Rev. J. Gamm, Rev. R. Siegler, and F. Schweppe as members of the board. G. E. Bergemann was an ex officio member as synod president. Schweppe, member of the special committee, was a judge in St. James. (Appendix A has the PSC-DMLC correspondence)

It was Bergemann's hope that this letter would explain the board's delay in responding to the Commission's demands and would also buy them some more time.³⁶

As Klatt related to the Commission a major factor in the committee's slow start was the problem of reviewing the transcript. In our age of photocopiers, fax machines, electronic mail, etc., getting the transcript into the hands of all the appropriate people would have presented no problem. But things were a bit slower in 1917. Although the transcript was presented to the board on December 5, it did not get into the hands of the committee members until over a month later. Evidently the transcript was first given to Ackermann for his review. On December 29 Bergemann asked Klatt to send him the transcript. Then on January 4 Ackermann finally sent it along to Bergemann commenting, "I have read it through and find that it exhibits some mistakes and omissions."³⁷ Perhaps if the matter had been handled more promptly, the committee would have asked to personally report to the Commission as they had originally intended, and Ackermann would have had the opportunity to take this up with the Commission; but as it was, he did not. After Bergemann was done with the transcript he sent it along to Pastor Gamm. Scheppe didn't get to see it until the middle of January.

By January 2, 1918, Tighe was getting a little bit impatient that he had not received any other response from the college. (He did not receive Klatt's letter of December 31 until January 8.) In a short note Tighe informed the college that he would

like to make his final report to the Commission on January 8.³⁸ When he finally did receive Klatt's letter of December 31, he replied that "it is entirely proper that the board of directors should have a reasonable time to consider the matter," but that he would also appreciate it if the Board would "fix a time limit beyond which you will not expect the Commission to withhold action."³⁹ This last comment about the Commission withholding action for the time-being appears to be a veiled threat that the Commission intended to take action if the college failed to do so promptly. Evidently Tighe had no intention of letting his Ackermann campaign get as bogged down as the European campaign.

On January 16, Bergemann reported to Tighe that "the Committee will report not later than February 20, 1918."⁴⁰ The following day Bergemann notified the committee, Gamm and Scheppe, that they would meet on January 28. This meeting was later changed to January 29. It was Bergemann's plan that there would still be time before February 20 for the full board to meet if the committee decided it was necessary.⁴¹

Bergemann's time limit of February 20 did not meet with Tighe's approval. He had hoped to make his final report to the Commission on January 8, but he was now being told to hold off until as late as February 20. Tighe did not accept February 20 as reasonable and he related that to Bergemann in no uncertain terms.⁴²

January 24, 1918.

Rev. G. E. Bergemann,
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Dear Sir:

By [sic] answer to your letter of the 16th inst., has been delayed by my absence from the city.

Your board evidently does not regard the matter of our correspondence with the same seriousness and as being of the same importance as does the Commission. Your suggestion that a report will be made not later than February 20th is not satisfactory. The transcript of Prof. Ackermann's testimony was furnished in November and a period of three months is surely not needed for its consideration.

The Commission meets every Tuesday. I shall report the situation to it on February 5th and ask its instructions. If your board in the meanwhile shall have taken any action which should have a bearing on the Commission's course of procedure, and you will advise me of it, I shall include what you write in my report. I feel that this is allowing you as much time as courtesy requires.

The Commission prefers that the elimination of pro-German teachings and teachers from the State's religious and educational institutions should be made by those directly in control of such institutions, but it will not hesitate to act itself in this direction where those so in control fail to.

Truly yours,
Ambrose Tighe.

IF there was any doubt as to what action the Public Safety Commission expected from the DMLC Board of Directors that doubt must have been completely erased by the last paragraph of this letter. Conceivably, Tighe's first letter of November 21, could possibly have left room for Ackermann remaining at DMLC if he could prove to the satisfaction of the Commission that he was "unquestioningly loyal." But because of its slow response the board was given the ultimatum -- "eliminate or we will."

Bergemann received this communication the day after it was written and he immediately replied that he hoped to report January 29 after the committee's meeting.⁴³ That same day he

also notified the Board of Directors that plans had changed and the entire board would meet on January 29 and then report to the state.

We have little information on how the committee prepared for its meeting of January 29. We know that Ackermann read the transcript and reported that it contained "errors and omissions." We also know that he consulted a lawyer on the matter.⁴⁴ But it appears doubtful if he ever had the opportunity to discuss the matter with the committee before January 29. President Bergemann also discussed the case with an attorney on at least one occasion. On December 28, Bergemann met with Attorney von Briesen.⁴⁵ The next day Bergemann wrote to Haase about a recent discussion (perhaps his discussion with von Briesen?).

The New Ulm matter has been discussed. We can not call Prof. Ackermann to an institution. We would thereby only make matters worse. A congregation could send him a call. I fear that he can hardly remain in New Ulm. (translated from German copy)⁴⁶

From this letter it appears that even before Bergemann had reviewed the transcript he felt that Ackermann would have to leave DMLC. This feeling was solidified by Tighe's ultimatum letter of January 24. The next day Bergemann wrote: "Sieht nicht gut aus."⁴⁷ From Ackermann's post-resignation actions it is clear that he didn't share Bergemann's pessimistic outlook and was in for a major disappointment at the board meeting.

We have no record available of the details of the January 29 meeting. We know that Bergemann had said that Ackermann should continue to receive his salary.⁴⁸ And we have the following

notice sent to Tighe:

Complying with the request of the committee and board, Prof. Ackermann has tendered his resignation, same to take effect immediately.

Reaction to the resignation was mixed. No doubt many people were ecstatic over this victory over the accursed Hun. Yet Nevertheless, even though local public pressure was reported to be the driving force behind the state's action against Ackermann, there appears to have been no major public celebration of the event or any local effort to ostracize him from the community. In fact, local opinion seems to have been much kinder to Ackermann than one would expect for an accused seditonist. F. H. Retzlaff reported to Bergemann:

It was quite a shock to most of our citizens here at New Ulm, to learn that director Ackermann was asked to resign. A great many of our people could not and yet do not understand the action of the Board. . . . [Retzlaff then discusses the matter of Ackermann continuing to receive his salary.] . . . Even the Masons of this city, at least so one of the high members in Masonry told me, were going to assist him financially. And yet you know this would give us some what of a bad odor in the face of the outside world.⁴⁹

(Later Ackermann did receive a collection from the Masons.⁵⁰) One state newspaper went so far as to suggest that Ackermann file a damage suit against the members of the Commission for conspiring to have him removed from his means of livelihood.⁵¹

As far as we know Ackermann did not follow this advice and sue the members of the Public Safety Commission. But on the other hand neither did he accept the state's and the board's actions without question. It is true that Ackermann did abandon

his anti-war protesting and turned to making patriotic speeches. A county Public Safety Commission director commended Ackermann to the state commission for his April 4, 1918, Lake Benton speech: "I can assure you that I have not heard a more urgent appeal nor a better definition of the duty that all citizens of this country owe to their country and their government."⁵² It is also true that Ackermann did step down at DMLC as requested. But for almost three years Ackermann actively sought justice from his synod and from his state.

In the March meeting of the local committee of the DMLC Board of Control he announced that he was not satisfied with the decision of the board and would appeal to the Synod. Attempts to dissuade him were to no avail.⁵³ After the meeting different rumors were circulating in New Ulm as to what redress Ackermann was seeking. One rumor had Ackermann remaining as director, while another had Ackermann resigning as director but remaining as professor.⁵⁴ It appears that Bergemann had the opportunity to speak with Ackermann in May. Just as the local people had failed to dissuade Ackermann from continuing his synod appeal so also Bergemann failed. After this meeting he wrote: "Ackermann is terribly embittered. In any event he is determined to cause as much trouble as possible. And he refuses to speak.(translated from German) Too bad!"⁵⁵

It should not be surprising that Ackermann was bitter. He had left his home in Germany to go to DMLC when he was only fourteen. For almost 30 of his next 33 years DMLC had been

Ackermann's home. And now without a chance to answer his accusers, an outsider from Wisconsin comes in and tells him to resign. Ackermann felt betrayed. Before January 29 Ackermann considered himself Bergemann's "treuverbundener" and Bergemann was "Mein lieber Praeses."⁵⁶ Now Bergemann was simply "Mien Werter Praeses."

Ackermann's disappointment and appeal did not mean that he intended to leave the synod. In June 1918, Ackermann asked the Public Safety Commission for a letter making it clear that the Commission would not interfere in his seeking employment.⁵⁷ Ackermann then sent a copy of the letter he received to Bergemann.⁵⁸ (Appendix B. has the letter Ackermann received from the Public Safety Commission.) Later in June, Haase sent Bergemann two letters requesting that Ackermann be given a call as soon as possible. Bergemann promised to do his part.⁵⁹ In September 1918, Ackermann became the pastor of congregations in Essig and Brighton.⁶⁰

The work of being a country pastor did little to soothe Ackermann's wronged spirit. In May 1919, Bergemann still had to say "Der Ackermann-Fall ruht noch nicht." To try to settle the matter before the synod convention Bergemann called a meeting of the special committee and the board to meet on May 19.⁶¹ In a seven hour meeting on May 20, a committee of five pastors heard both Ackermann and the board. After this committee advised Ackermann, Bergemann could finally write (in German): "Result: Complete settlement of this wretched business. God be thanked!"⁶²

In preparing for this meeting, the synod in the person of synod secretary A. C. Haase went back to the Public Safety Commission. It seems that over the 16 months since Ackermann had resigned some questions arose concerning Tighe's actions and their supposed authorization by the Commission as a whole. Earlier I mentioned that the Public Safety Commission's official records were "vaguely neutral or ambiguous." Read alone, the motion initiating action against Ackermann seems rather neutral and even non-threatening. But when it is read in the context of the actions which followed, some questions are raised. Was the motion meant to instruct Tighe or to simply find out the facts? Or did the Commission intend that Tighe receive from the trustees of DMLC a message of disapproval of Ackermann's position and that the only acceptable way to show disapproval would be by actions and not by words?

The question can be answered in part by the apparent significance the Commission placed on this motion. This motion was one of the few that were included under "Disloyalty" in the Commission's post-war report summarizing their actions.⁶³ If the motion were simply to start a fact-finding investigation, it would seem unlikely that the Commission would find it worth highlighting. More conclusive is the letter sent to Haase by the Public Safety Commission secretary.⁶⁴

St. Paul, May 19, 1919.

Rev. A. C. Haase,
Secretary, The Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod.
14 Iglehart Ave.,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Sir:-

I have for acknowledgement your favor of May 19th in which you ask for certain information in respect to the case of Prof. Ackermann.

In reply to your specific questions in the order in which same are presented I beg to state as follows:

1. The communication addressed to the Board of Trustees of the Martin Luther College from Counsel Ambrose Tighe represented the official expression of the Commission as a whole and was not merely a private expression of Mr. Tighe.

2. It was the judgment of the Commission that the character of Dr. Ackermann's evidence as disclosed by the transcript of the evidence taken by the official reporter at the New Ulm hearings that drastic action should be taken in his case and therefore Mr. Tighe's request for immediate action involving the elimination of Professor Ackermann as a member of the New Ulm faculty was authorized by the Commission. The request could not be regarded as merely a censure but was rather a declaration that the Commission would not tolerate the continued operation in the State of Educational Institutions the teachings and instructors in which were not loyal beyond doubt.

3. Mr. Tighe stated at the time that the elimination of Pro-German teachings and teachers should be made by those in direct control of such institutions. But authoritatively declared the Commission could not hesitate to act itself in this direction where the school authorities failed to act.

The Commission regards Professor Ackermann's case a closed incident and in so doing does not hesitate to re-affirm the position taken by it through Mr. Tighe at the time the unfortunate matter was pending.

The undersigned is mindful of the patriotic service and record of Professor Ackermann since 1917 and on behalf of the Commission I wish to say that I trust that this communication will be used in no way to unnecessarily embarrass him.

Very truly yours,
H. W. Libby,
Secretary.

When we compare the ambiguous wording of the motion with this letter clearly affirming that the Commission did authorize Tighe's aggressive actions against Ackermann, the natural question is "Why was the entry in the official minutes of the meeting so vague on the action to be taken by Tighe, while the intention of the Commission was so specific?" Perhaps it was just a case of innocent ambiguity, but it seems more likely that the vagueness was intended. Professor Ackermann was a called minister of the gospel serving at a religious institution. Any interference by the Commission in the operation of a religious school could have been reasonably interpreted as a violation of the separation of church and state. By delegating execution of the Commission's wishes to Tighe and keeping the official minutes innocent the Commission could accomplish its goal without too much danger to itself.

It was probably for this same reason that the Commission decided to operate through the college board of directors. If the Public Safety Commission tried to act on its own against Ackermann there almost certainly would have been an outcry against the state meddling in the church. But the Commission could be reasonably sure that the college, perhaps already shamed by the professor's unpopular position, would prefer to keep the entire matter as quiet as possible.

Apparently Ackermann didn't agree with the facts as Libby presented them to Haase. After the meeting in May 1919, Ackermann redirected his crusade for justice from the synod to

the Public Safety Commission. In the minutes from one of the last Commission meetings, on December 15, 1920, we have the following entry:

Communications: From Prof. A. C. Ackermann of New Ulm asking that the Commission furnish him with written assurance that the communication addressed to the Board of Trustees of the Martin Luther College from Counsel Tighe did not represent the official expression of the Commission re: Prof. Ackermann's dismissal as a member of the Martin Luther College. Further communications were presented in Professor Ackermann's behalf and Senator James H. Hall appeared and argued in favor of his contention. On motion the Secretary was instructed to forward him copies of all letters from Counsel Tighe, the Board of Trustees, the Martin Luther College⁵⁵ and to inform Prof. Ackermann that the following is the only reference in the records involving Prof. A. C. Ackermann: [The November 20, 1917 motion]⁵⁵

Ackermann was here asking the Commission to repudiate their secretary's explanation of their actions and admit that their legal counsel had overstepped his authority. Ackermann was asking much, but he was not just taking a shot in the dark. He had spent a good deal of effort seeking out documents and personal testimony to support his contention. He also gained the support of Senator James H. Hall who argued before the Commission in his favor. As Special Commissioner for the Public Safety Commission, Hall had conducted the special hearings against the New Ulm public officials.

Not surprisingly the Commission did not comply with Ackermann's request. But in a move which does seem somewhat perplexing the Commission did not affirm the Libby letter. Three

⁵⁵This correspondence can be found in Appendix A.

conclusions could be drawn here. First, Ackermann could have been correct in assuming that Tighe had overstepped his authority and the Commission was being vague in Tighe's defense. Second, Ackermann could have been wrong; Tighe's letters did represent the official position of the Commission, but the Commission now had no intention of jeopardizing themselves in the event that Ackermann took them to court. A final interpretation of the Commission's action could be that they considered the matter to be "bad business," with the less said, the better.

Ackermann didn't receive the official vindication he sought from the state, but the Minnesota District did exonerate him from the Public Safety Commission charges of un-American activities. The New Ulm Review reported that in the 1920 district convention district president Baumann

made a public statement on the floor of the Synod to the effect that certain charges that had been filed with him against Prof. Ackermann by unscrupulous politicians were absolutely unfounded. This official also admitted that he had been led to believe these false charges by the character-assassins who filed them without questioning their source.⁶⁶

The Minnesota District later elected Ackermann as its president, a position he served from 1936 to 1948.

Memorial Day 1921 serves as a fitting close to this troubled chapter of Ackermann's life. The New Ulm celebration featured speeches by both Ackermann and John Lind. John Lind had lived in New Ulm for many years, and had served as congressman, governor of Minnesota, and as a member of the Public Safety Commission. It was Lind who had made the Commission's November motion

directing Tighe against Ackermann. Now Lind hoped to heal some old wounds and set the record straight. Lind proclaimed before Ackermann and the rest of New Ulm: "It is a matter of record that there was not a single instance of disloyalty among the citizens of German descent."⁶⁷

Ackermann followed Lind with a speech that "pleaded for political liberty, for the rights and liberties guaranteed to all citizens of the United States by our Constitution." He stressed that just as all Americans owe allegiance to their country, it is also their duty to safeguard their constitutional rights. To surrender or to abridge those rights would be disloyal. True loyalty is compliance with the Constitution.⁶⁸ The very fact that Ackermann was invited to speak at this celebration of loyalty and national service shows that New Ulm recognized him as a man of conviction and worthy principles, and more importantly, a loyal American.

Near the beginning of this paper we asked the question "was Ackermann's political activity proper?" Based on his Memorial Day speech stressing the duty of Americans to defend their personal constitutional rights, I think it is safe to say that Ackermann continued to feel he had been right in speaking out. If Ackermann had the opportunity to relive 1917, I doubt that he would have said much different. But it is also evident that he recognized that he made mistakes. In reliving 1917, I think that he would have chosen his speaking forums more carefully. He probably would have yielded to the Public Safety Commission's demand that

the Gibbon meeting be canceled. And if he spoke at the July 25 New Ulm meeting he would have even more strongly stressed the importance of obeying the government, even in the draft.

Was Ackermann right to speak out against the war? As we said earlier this is a difficult case of principle struggling with prudence. If as a citizen of New Ulm, Ackermann was willing to suffer the charges of disloyalty along with the bad feelings and all the other setbacks that go along with such charges, he did have the constitutional right to speak out in accordance with his principles. But Ackermann's situation made it impossible for him to speak out purely as a citizen. Ackermann was also a minister of the gospel, a president of DMLC, a representative of his synod. Ackermann could not split himself into two people. And so he had to realize that what he said and did as American citizen he was also saying and doing as college president. If Ackermann became known as disloyal, then the college also would suffer the reputation of being disloyal. And so when we judge Ackermann's political activity, if we judge him only on the basis of his rights as citizen, we oversimplify the matter. Ackermann considered the matter simple and straightforward. He had the right to speak out, and so he did. But while Ackermann certainly did have the right to sacrifice his own well-being for the sake of his principles, he did not have the right to sacrifice the well-being and reputation of the college he represented. So whether we say it would have been more prudent for Ackermann to have voiced his opinions in a less provoking way, or if we say it

is listening to the Apostle Paul's higher principle that advises God's servants not to become stumbling blocks, we have to question Ackermann's involvement in New Ulm's anti-war movement.

The second question we asked was if the Public Safety Commission was justified in its action against Ackermann. Speaking constitutionally the answer is clear cut. Ackermann was within his rights in protesting the war and draft. By its action the state also deprived the professor of his right to due process of the law, to answer the charges made against him and defend himself. But even if we overlook the state's failure to respect Ackermann's rights, there could still be made a case that the Public Safety Commission was overreacting in its judgment against Ackermann. For one thing, Ackermann had quieted his protests by the time the Commission had begun its proceedings against him. But more importantly, the Commission's assessment of Ackermann's position was an overreaction. The Public Safety Commission considered Ackermann's participation in the July 25 meeting to be disloyal and seditious. But the pro-war Sleepy Eye Herald - Dispatch, from which one would have expected harsh criticism, responded with a more evenhanded assessment which is probably closer to the truth.

The meeting was calm and orderly and no trouble was seen at any time during the evening. . . . At no time did any of the speakers advise violating the laws of the country. . . . Contrary to the expectation of many there was little said that anyone could take serious offense. The speeches were mild and did not savor of any serious denunciation of the purposes of government.⁶⁹

A third matter which could be discussed is the Commission's interference in a religious institution. If the Commission truly felt that Ackermann were disloyal it should have taken legal action against him in the courts.

The Public Safety Commission saw the Ackermann matter as simple and straightforward. They saw a teacher whom they considered disloyal, so they sought to remove him from his position. In treating the matter as simple and straightforward they did a great disservice to justice by over-reacting, by callously trampling on an American's fundamental rights, and by interfering in a religious institution.

Finally we are left with the question as to whether the synod acted properly. This again demonstrates the struggle between principle and prudence. As a religious institution one could say that the synod should have opposed the Public Safety Commission's interference. As an institution committed to truth and principles one could say that the college Board of Directors would have stood up to the Commission, demanded that the truth be heard, and Ackermann's constitutional principles be upheld. But the college and the synod did not. Instead they decided it would be wiser to accede to the Commission's demands. Koehler called this "spinelessness." Perhaps that is fair. The synod should have made an earnest effort to meet with the Commission and clear up the misunderstandings. But it felt threatened and didn't make the effort. (A draft of an undated, unsigned, unexplained note that indicates consideration of opposition to the Commission is

in Appendix C.)

But we can look at the board's actions in is a somewhat better light. The board of directors was responsible for the college's continued operation and success. The Commission's action clearly threatened that operation. While Tighe's letters don't specifically mention the threat of the state closing the college, the possibility of that action had to be considered. Also, inherently necessary for the school's success was that the college have a good reputation. If Ackermann's continued presence would dishonor the college, perhaps Ackermann should be asked to leave. That is what the board decided to do. Perhaps it wasn't the principled thing to do, but it did seem to be the prudent thing to do. It wasn't an easy decision for the board to make and condemnation of that decision shouldn't come easily either. Bergemann expressed to Professor John Schaller the great difficulty the board had in making its decision:

Es ist wahrlich nichts Leichtes in solchen Fällen handeln zu müssen. Gott erbarme sich seinen Kirche!⁷⁰

APPENDIX A.

Correspondence between DMLC and PSC; November 1917 - January 1918

Nov. 21, 1917.

Board of Trustees,
The Martin Luther College,
New Ulm, Minn.

Gentlemen:

The Commission has instructed me as follows:

1. To send you a transcript of the evidence of Dr. A. Ackerman [sic] as taken by the official reporter at the recent hearing in the proceedings for the removal of Albert Pfaender and others. I do this herewith,

2. To invite your attention to the character of Dr. Ackerman's [sic] evidence, and

3. To ask from you in your official capacity as trustees an expression of opinion as to the propriety of Dr. Ackerman's [sic] conduct in the premises, as to whether his position represents the position of the college in the matters involved, and as to what, if any, action you may be proposing to take under the circumstances.

A prompt answer will be appreciated. The Commission will not tolerate the continued operation in the State of any educational institutions the teachings and instructors in which are not unquestioningly loyal.

Truly yours,

Ambrose Tighe

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New Ulm, Minn., Nov. 23rd, 1917.

Mr. Ambrose Tighe,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Sir:

Your letter and testimony of Prof. Ackerman [sic], dated November 21st, at hand. In answer will say that the board of directors of our college will have its regular meeting at St. Paul December 5th, at 10 A. M., when this matter of Prof. Ackermann will be submitted to the board of directors and duly considered.

Yours very truly,

H. Klatt,
Secretary.

(Appendix A. page 2. Correspondence between DMLC and PSC)

Jan. 2, 1918.

Martin Luther College,
New Ulm, Minn.

Gentlemen:

On November 21, 1917, I wrote you under instructions from the Commission. You answered to the effect that the matter would be considered at a meeting to be held December 5th. I have not since heard further from you. The Commission meets again on January 8th. I should like to be in position to make a final report at that time. Please let me hear from you.

Truly yours,
Ambrose Tighe.

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New Ulm, Minn., Dec. 31st, 1917.

Minnesota Commission of Public Safety,
Room #238, State Capitol,
St. Paul, Minnesota.

In re Professor Ackermann, New Ulm, Minn.

Gentlemen:

In my letter of November 23rd I stated the board of our College would meet in St. Paul on December 5th for the transaction of business then on hand.

At this meeting of the board I submitted your letter and the transcript of the evidence of Professor Ackermann to said board.

The Board of Directors of the Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minn., has appointed a committee to take the matter pertaining to Prof. A. Ackermann under advisement and to report to your honorable body. Because of the holidays and ministerial duties and because of the fact that the transcript is being sent to the individual members, said committee has not been able to finish the work.

The chairman of said committee is the Rt. Rev. G. E. Bergemann, 52 First Street, Fondulac [sic], Wis.

Trusting that you will have a little more patience with us in order that we may investigate thoroughly, we beg to remain

Yours respectfully,
The Board of Directors,
per H. Klatt, Sec'y.

(Appendix A. page 3.)

January 9, 1918.

Mr. H. Klatt,
New Ulm, Minn.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of the 31st ult., did not reach me until yesterday. I think it is entirely proper that the Board of Directors should have a reasonable time to consider the matter, but I should be glad if you would by return mail fix a limit beyond which you will not expect the Commission to withhold action. If the time named is such as in the Commission's judgment is proper, I have no doubt it will accede to the suggestion.

Truly yours,
Ambrose Tighe.

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Fond du Lac, Wis., Jan. 16, 1918.

Hon. Ambrose Tighe,
Minnesota Commission of Public Safety,
State Capitol,
St. Paul, Minnesota.

Dear Sir:

Regarding the Professor A. Ackermann case the Committee will report not later than February 20, 1918. Hoping that this will be satisfactory, I am

Respectfully yours,
G. E. Bergemann.

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January 24, 1918.

Rev. G. E. Bergemann,
Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

Dear Sir:

By [sic] answer to your letter of the 16th inst., has been delayed by my absence from the city.

Your board evidently does not regard the matter of our correspondence with the same seriousness and as being of the same importance as does the Commission. Your suggestion that a report will be made not later than February 20th is not satisfactory. The transcript of Prof. Ackermann's testimony was furnished in November and a period of three months is surely not needed for its consideration.

(Appendix A. page 4.)

The Commission meets every Tuesday. I shall report the situation to it on February 5th and ask its instructions. If your board in the meanwhile shall have taken any action which should have a bearing on the Commission's course of procedure, and you will advise me of it, I shall include what you write in my report. I feel that this is allowing you as much time as courtesy requires.

The Commission prefers that the elimination of pro-German teachings and teachers from the State's religious and educational institutions should be made by those directly in control of such institutions, but it will not hesitate to act itself in this direction where those so in control fail to.

Truly yours,
Ambrose Tighe.

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Fond du Lac, Wis. Jan. 25, 1918.
Hon. Ambrose Tighe,
Minnesota Commission of Public Safety,
State Capitol, St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Sir:

Arrangements have already been made for a meeting of our committee on the 29th inst. We hopd [sic] to be able to report the same day.

Very respectfully yours,
G. E. Bergemann.

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Fond du Lac, Wis., Jan. 30, 1918.
Hon. Ambrose Tighe,
Commission of Public Safety,
St. Paul, Minn.

Dear Sir:

Complying with the request of the committee and board, Prof. Ackermann has tendered his resignation, same to take effect immediately,

Respectfully,
G. E. Bergemann.

APPENDIX B.

Proofed copy of letter from PSC to Ackermann in Bergemann's Ackermann file.

St. Paul, Minn., June 14, 1918.

Prof. A. Ackermann,
New Ulm, Minn.

Dear Sir:

It has come to the attention of the undersigned that you are in the city attending the Minnesota German Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the thought comes to me that I am afforded the opportunity of addressing a communication to you while in St. Paul.

The Public Safety Commission is not unmindful of the appeals you are making throughout your County with true American spirit urging the citizens to recognize the duty they owe to their country and their Government in the present crisis.

I wish to assure you that the Commission will do nothing to interfere with any action your Synod may take in respect to an appointment nor will it in any sense interfere where employers in secular matters solicit your services.

Referring again to the Synod now in session permit me to say that the tremendous amount of good your church is doing to raise the moral standard of the citizens of this state is well known and every loyal person desires to extend to the great Lutheran Church its sincere thanks and appreciation for its loyal efforts and the church as a whole and every individual member should be encouraged in right acting and doing.

With best wishes for your future success,
I am,

Very truly yours,
(signed) H.W. Libby,
Secretary.

HWL:W

APPENDIX C.

Undated, unexplained, unsigned note in WELS Archives, Bergemann's files. Notation on top -- "Kannenberg Sec'y." (Kannenberg was the board secretary.

To whom it may concern:-

This is to certify that the Board of Directors of D. M. L. C. at New Ulm, Minn., has in several meetings had under advisement the case of Prof. A. Ackermann, bearing on his participation in a meeting held at New Ulm on July 25, 1917, and at the meeting held in Gibbon and Glencoe soon thereafter.

We have heard his statement that he regrets the mistake he made, and would, if similar conditions should arise not participate in any such meeting nor cause any one else to be a participant.

That he never did intend to defy or oppose the Gov't of the U.S., but insisted that its laws should be obeyed and its welfare promoted.

We find that at the institution at New Ulm nothing was done by him or others to antagonize the Gov't of the U. S.

In view of these statements we are ready to overlook the mistake he has made.

At the same time this board wishes to go on record as saying that it does not approve of his participating in these meetings and has informed him to this effect.

ENDNOTES

1. G. E. Bergemann letter to Ambrose Tighe, January 30, 1918. (PSC-A and WELS-A, B -- Ackermann file)
2. John P. Koehler, The History of the Wisconsin Synod (Sauk Rapids, MN: The Protestant Conference, 1981), p. 224.
3. "Tribute to Pastor Adolph Ackermann," 1950. (WELS-A, biographical file)
4. Morton A. Schroeder, "Adolph Ackermann, Chauvinism, and Free Speech," WELS Historical Institute Journal, 2 (Fall 1984), 11.
5. Frederick C. Luebke, Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I (DeKalb, Ill.: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), p. 105.
6. Schroeder, p. 11.
7. "Tribute"
8. Franklin F. Holbrook, and Livia Appel, Minnesota in the War with Germany (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1932), p. 40.
9. Brown County Journal, February 17, 1917.
10. "Patriotism Rings at Peace Meeting," New Ulm Review, April 4, 1917.
11. Brown County Journal, April 7, 1917.
12. New Ulm Review, April 4, 1917.
13. Martin Henry Steffel, "New Ulm and World War I," Master's thesis Mankato State College, 1966, pp. 16 - 18.
14. Luebke, p. 230.
15. New Ulm Review, August 1, 1917.
16. George Graff letter to Public Safety Commission, April 6, 1918. (PSC-A, Lincoln County file)
17. Brown County Journal, October, 4, 1917.
18. New Ulm Review, August 1, 1917.
19. New Ulm Review, February 6, 1918.
20. H. C. Hess letter to Public Safety Commission; August, 27, 1917. (PSC-A, Brown County file)

21. Schroeder, p. 13.
22. Steffel, p. 12.
23. New Ulm Review, April 4, 1917.
24. Luebke, p. 219.
25. Minnesota in the War, December 29, 1917.
26. New Ulm Review, February 6, 1918. (The Public Safety Commission files have no information about public pressure to have Ackermann removed.)
27. Minnesota in the War, January 5, 1918.
28. Minnesota in the War, January 5, 1918.
29. Minutes of Public Safety Commission meeting on November 20, 1917. (PSC-A, Minutes file)
30. Tighe letter to DMLC, November 21, 1917. (PSC-A)
31. Klatt letter to Tighe, November 23, 1917. (PSC-A)
32. Klatt letter to PSC, December 31, 1917. (PSC-A)
33. Bergemann letter to Gamm, January 17, 1918. (WELS-A, B, Ackermann file) Also Bergemann letter to Pastor E. A. Pankow of St. James, May 8, 1919. (WELS-A, B.)
34. Bergemann to Schweppe letter, January 17, 1918. The Bergemann letter to Pankow which confirmed Gamm's membership on this committee omitted Schweppe and had Pankow in his place. This appears to be an error. (WELS-A, B, Ackermann file)
35. Klatt letter to PSC, December 31, 1917. (PSC-A)
36. Bergemann letter to Klatt, December 29, 1917. (PSC-A)
37. Ackermann letter to Bergemann, January 4, 1918. (WELS-A, B, Ackermann file)
38. Tighe letter to DMLC, January 2, 1918. (PSC-A)
39. Tighe letter to Klatt, January 9, 1918. (PSC-A)
40. Bergemann letter to Tighe, January 16, 1918. (PSC-A)
41. Bergemann letters to Gamm and Schweppe, January 17, 1918. (WELS-A, B, Ackermann file)
42. Tighe letter to Bergemann, January 24, 1918. (PSC-A)

43. Bergemann letter to Tighe, January 25, 1918. (PSC-A)
44. Bergemann letter to Klatt, December 18, 1917. (WELS-A, B.)
45. Bergemann letter to Klatt, December 29, 1917. (WELS-A, B.)
46. Bergemann letter to Haase, December 29, 1917. (WELS-A, B.)
47. Bergemann letter to Pastor J. R. Baumann, January 25, 1918. (WELS-A, B, Ackermann file)
48. F. H. Retzlaff letter to Bergemann, February 11, 1918. (WELS-A, B.)
49. F. H. Retzlaff letter to Bergemann; February 11, 1918. (WELS-A, B.)
50. J. P. Meyer letter to Bergemann, March 27, 1918. (WELS-A, B.)
51. Unnamed, undated newspaper clipping; probably the Minneapolis and St. Paul American, from the first week of February 1918. (WELS-A, B.)
52. George Graff letter to PSC, April 6, 1918. (PSC-A, Lincoln county file.)
53. Klatt letter to Bergemann, March 14, 1918. (WELS-A, B.)
54. J. P. Meyer letter to Bergemann, March 27, 1918. (WELS-A, B.)
55. Bergemann letter Prof. J. Schaller, May 23, 1918. (WELS-A, B.)
56. Ackermann letter to Bergemann, January 4, 1918. (WELS-A, B.)
57. H. W. Libby (PSC secretary) letter to John F. McGee (PSC member); June 15, 1918. (PSC-A)
58. Ackermann letter to Bergemann, June 19, 1918. (WELS-A, B, Ackermann file)
59. Bergemann letter to Haase, June 24, 1918. (WELS-A, B.)
60. Brighton congregation history, (WELS-A, congregational file)
61. Bergemann letter to E. A. Pankow, May 8, 1919. (WELS-A, B.)
62. Bergemann letter to Schaller, May 22, 1919. (WELS-A, B.)
63. Report of Minnesota Commission of Public Safety, 1919, p. 156.
64. Libby letter to Haase, May 19, 1919. (WELS-A, B.)
65. Minutes of the PSC meeting on December 15, 1920. (PSC-A, minutes file)

66. New Ulm Review, June 30, 1920.

67. New Ulm Review, June 1, 1921.

68. New Ulm Review, June 1, 1921.

69. Sleepy Eye Herald Dispatch, July 27, 1917.

70. Bergemann letter to Schaller, January 30, 1918. (WELS-A, B.)

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Ackermann to Bergemann. January 4, June 19, 1918.

Bergemann to Baumann. January 25, 1918.

-- to Gamm. January 17, 1918.

-- to Haase. December 29, 1917; June 24, 1918.

-- to Klatt. December 18, 29, 1917.

-- to Pankow. May 8, 1919.

-- to Schaller. January 30, May 23, 1918; May 22, 1919.

-- to Schweppe. January 17, 1918.

-- to Tighe. January 16, 25, 30, 1918.

Graff to Public Safety Commission. April 6, 1918.

Hess to Public Safety Commission. August 27, 1917.

(Correspondence continued)

Klatt to Bergemann. March 14, 1918.

-- to Public Safety Commission. December 31, 1917.

-- to Tighe. November 23, 1917.

Libby to Ackermann. June 14, 1918.

-- to Haase. May 19, 1919.

-- to McGee. June 15, 1918.

Meyer to Bergemann. March 27, 1918.

Retzlaff to Bergemann. February 11, 1918.

Tighe to Bergemann. January 24, 1918.

-- to DMLC. November 21, 1917; January 2, 1918.

-- to Klatt. January 9, 1918.